The World Data System (WDS) builds on the 50-year legacy of the World Data Centres and Federation of Astronomical and Geophysical data analysis Services established by ICSU (now International Science Council [ISC]) to manage data generated by the International Geophysical Year (1957–1958). These bodies were later disbanded by the ICSU General Assembly in 2008 and replaced by WDS in 2009.

Mission

WDS aims at facilitating scientific research endeavours by coordinating trusted data services for the provision, use, and preservation of relevant datasets. To fulfil its remit, WDS is striving to build worldwide ‘communities of excellence’ for scientific data services by certifying Member Organizations—holders and providers of data or data products—from wide-ranging fields using internationally recognized standards. WDS Members are then the building blocks of a searchable common infrastructure with which to form a data system that is both interoperable and distributed.

Scientific Committee

The WDS Scientific Committee (WDS-SC) is the governing body of WDS. It covers a broad range of disciplines and geographical areas, and is made up of leading researchers actively involved in data/computer sciences and dealing with large dataset issues.

WDS-SC members for 2018–2021
Chair: Sandy Harrison. Vice Chairs: Alex de Sherbinin & Ingrid Dillo.
Members: Aude Chambodut, Arona Diedhiou, Elaine Faustman, Isabelle Gärtner-Roer, Toshihiko Iyemori, Marc Nyssen, David Patterson, Ioana Popescu, Alfredo Tolmasquim. Ex officio: Heide Hackmann (ISC), Yasuhiro Murayama (NICT), Benoît Pirenne (ONC).

WDS Objectives

- Enable universal and equitable access to quality-assured scientific data, services, products and information
- Ensure long-term data stewardship
- Foster compliance to agreed-upon data standards and conventions
- Provide mechanisms to facilitate and improve access to data and products

WDS supports ISC’s vision and mission by promoting universal and equitable access to, and long-term stewardship of, quality-assured scientific data and data services, products, and information covering a broad range of disciplines across the Natural, Health, and Social Sciences, and the Humanities.

TRUSTED DATA SERVICES FOR GLOBAL SCIENCE

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Working Groups

Working Groups coordinate the implementation of activities and projects addressing the objectives of WDS through voluntary contributions from Members and other interested stakeholders.

Active groups cover the following areas:
- WDS Early Career Researcher and Scientists Network
- Publishing Data (jointly with Research Data Alliance)
- Citizen Science (jointly with CODATA)
Membership

Candidate Members are evaluated by the WDS Scientific Committee on criteria such as access to high-quality data, data stewardship, and participation in broad harmonization and interoperability efforts.

As of October 2018, WDS has accredited 86 Members and co-opted another 29:

75 Regular Members—organizations that are data stewards and/or data analysis services.
11 Network Members—umbrella bodies representing groups of data stewardship organizations and/or data analysis services.
10 Partner Members—organizations that are not data stewards or data analysis services, but that contribute support or funding to WDS.
19 Associate Members—organizations interested in the WDS endeavour, but that do not contribute direct funding or other support.

1 Regular and Network Members must go through a certification process to join WDS, whereas Partner and Associate Members are co-opted. All WDS Members are required to sign a Letter of Agreement (or a similar document) with ISC.

Why join WDS?

- For improved local and International recognition: heightened profile, increased visibility, improved funding prospects, facilitated interactions and data exchange
- To demonstrate your commitment to Open Science: adherence to the WDS Data Sharing Principles, becoming certified as a trustworthy scientific data service
- To increase your performance and agility: Enhanced discovery of your data and increased disciplinary and interdisciplinary user base, improved practices and process, facilitated citation of your data

International Programme Office

The International Programme Office coordinates WDS operations and is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Scientific Committee and for outreach and promotional activities.

Staff: Takashi Watanabe (Senior Advisor), Rorie Edmunds (Programme Officer), Yuko Nikaido (Administrative Officer).

For more information, please contact ipo@icsu-wds.org