A Practical Guide for developing policies for Research Institutions

Preparing and implementing a policy

The following key points should be addressed by research institutions in developing and implementing a policy for data management and open access to research data:

- **Knowledge of international institutional policies** to assess institution's position, participate international fora
- **Participation in dialogue and collaboration** among stakeholders within the institution and outside of it (e.g. funders, scholarly societies, data managers) for policy development
- **Assessment of state of existing and necessary infrastructure** to support policy implementation through economies of scale and collaborative initiatives
- **Cost assessment for policy implementation** for research data management (especially for long-term provisions), infrastructure and service development, training and education and awareness activities, and earmarking of funds
- **Policy content development** with clear description of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved
- **Data Management in research practice.** Where data is generated, data management should form an essential element of research practice by providing appropriate resources, reviewing and monitoring of related practices

- **Guidance to researchers.** Development of appropriate tools such as templates for data management and resources on data management and DMP, and relevant training to researchers

- **Rewards for researchers** through the formal acknowledgment of research data as a criterion for career progression

- **Policy monitoring mechanisms** to assess and measure compliance and efficiency and revise policy, where necessary.

Policy content

A policy should address the following issues:

- **Open access as default.** The policy should set open access for research data as the default requirement and provide appropriate support and funding (e.g. expenses for storage). Such policy should be mandatory and not voluntary. The possibility for closed data should be accommodated when ethical, copyright, confidentiality, security and similar issues are demonstrably of key concern.

- **Responsibilities.** The policy should define in a clear way the responsibilities of the institution and its researchers. Researchers carry the obligation to manage their research data according to specific standards and the institution assuming the responsibility of providing the necessary services (infrastructure, training etc.).

- **Locus of deposit.** The policy should specify that data are to be deposited in the institutional repository. In the case of absence of an institutional repository the related policy should provide guidance on deposit in trusted repositories (list of trusted repositories or criteria that researchers can use for selecting the appropriate repository).

- **Time of deposit.** The policy should require data supporting publications to be made open ideally at the latest at the same time with the publications and link to it, while other data by the end of the project.

- **Licensing.** The policy should require that research data is accompanied by licensing describing the terms of use, such as Creative Commons licenses. Preferably licensing information should be machine-actionable.

Practical checklist for research institutions

- Does your policy include statements on:
  - Open access as the default and mandatory position and the possibility for closed access when necessary
  - Distribution of responsibilities to involved parties
  - Target data for open access
  - Time of deposit
  - Locus of deposit
  - Technical specifications
  - Licensing
  - Requirement of Data Management Plan
  - Compliance and monitoring statement
- Have you involved stakeholders both within and outside the institution in developing the policy?
- Have you assessed your infrastructure and services and have you considered potential collaborations with data centres?
- Do you offer guidance and support to researchers at your institution to enable researchers to comply with your policy?
- Have you made provisions to provide incentives to researchers for making their research data open? (e.g. open data as a formal criterion for career progression?)
- Have you established a monitoring and compliance mechanism?
- Have you decided how and when to evaluate the efficacy of your policy?