

## World Data System Scientific Committee (WDS-SC) 2015–2018 Teleconference #4

*Teleconference #4 was held in Thursday, 10 December 2015 at 13:00 UTC*

### **Summary:**

#### **Review of Action Items**

- The International Data Accord was formally approved by Science International, and will be circulated as part of the next WDS Newsletter.
- The ad hoc Subcommittee on New Membership had a first teleconference and has made some initial progress. It is planning to have a second teleconference early next year to continue this activity.

#### **Report from GEO-XII Plenary + FE Data Task Force Meetings**

- The 12th Plenary of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) took place in Mexico on 11–13 November. As a participating organization of GEO, ICSU-WDS was represented by its Executive Director (ED). One of the main outcomes from a WDS perspective was that Arona Diedhiou of the WDS-SC was appointed to the GEO Programme Board that guides the future developments of GEO under the supervision of its Executive Committee.
- The WDS declaration stated a wish to contribute to GEO, and reminded the Plenary of the activities ICSU-WDS is currently involved in—particularly, ICSU-WDS submitted content and led on some of the sections for the GEO Data Management Principles Implementation Guidelines. Since GEO is reaching the point of implementing the Principles, WDS also offered its certification framework as a method for doing that.
- ICSU-WDS continued its engagement on data issues with Future Earth (FE) by organizing two meetings: one in Mexico, co-located with the GEO Plenary; and one back-to-back with other FE meetings in Tokyo. At the second meeting, the FE Science Committee officially recognized the Data and Information and Observations Task Force as part of the FE structure, and the two co-chairs were formally appointed. The proposal is that the Tokyo Hub of the FE Global Secretariat plays a central role such that collaborations can be easily continued through the WDS International Programme Office (WDS-IPO).

#### **Implementation Plan 2016–2017**

- The time period of the Plan will now cover 2016–2017, and thus some dates need amendment. Because this document will be publically available, everyone should be able to see how actions are progressing. To do that, each deliverable must have a realistic completion date.
- The WDS-SC proposed to try and get the Implementation Plan on the WDS website before the holidays. Deliverables without an agreed lead or completion date by that point will be labelled 'To be confirmed' so that there is no further delay whilst sorting out the final details.

#### **Data Ecology Document**

- ICSU has two data bodies and there are also many other data-related organizations in the world. Non-specialists are often unclear on the roles of these organizations and the issues they are trying to address. Furthermore, when data management issues are discussed in the general science community, there can be a lack of comprehension about their importance. Although lots of documents make formal statements about the importance of data, the practical difficulties are often not well explained.
- The rationale for the Data Ecology document is to make transparent why so much effort is being invested in data. From an ICSU viewpoint, the World Data System and the Committee on Data for Science and Technology (CODATA) are expected to draw up a joint strategic plan in the future, and to do that, a clear vision is needed on the parts of the data lifecycle and the issues being tackled by each body. The notion is that the document should be a guidebook on the problems that can arise concerning data and how they are addressed. It should briefly discuss data types and their attached issues, and the concepts that revolve around data; and then mainly focus on the data lifecycle, the different steps when dealing with data, and the sorts of challenges one has to overcome.



- ICSU really wants something that lays out the data landscape in an obvious way, and has stated that it might be able to provide funding to write the Data Ecology document. The initial stage in creating this document is therefore a scoping exercise to prepare a proposal that lays out the practicalities.
- The WDS-SC gave a number of comments in response to a first outline of the scoping, and SC members were requested to go through the text and to email thoughts to the WDS-SC Chair in early January so that it can be revised. The IPO will then calculate what it would take to produce the Data Ecology document.

### **WDS Nominations for RDA Council**

- The RDA Council is the Research Data Alliance's (RDA's) most influential body. It is comprised of nine members from different geographical regions, with each member's 3-year term skewed such that every year three seats are renewed. New members are selected through a Nomination Committee consisting of representatives of the three initial funders. RDA has welcomed nominations from the WDS-SC for the seats up for renewal. However, the three people due to leave the Council have stated their willingness to be re-nominated.
- The WDS-SC was previously asked to suggest nominees and four highly talented candidates had been put forward by the time of the teleconference. The WDS-SC delegated its Executive Committee to select two names from the slate and formally nominate them for the RDA Council.

### **IDW 2016**

- RDA US will sign the contract with the conference planner on behalf of the three host organizations. CODATA and ICSU-WDS will then sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with RDA US to clarify each organization's liability. The cost of the International Data Week (IDW) will primarily be covered by registration and sponsorship. For the latter, the three organizations will jointly engage in fundraising for IDW as a whole.
- The WDS ED made the WDS-SC aware of the financial implications before signing the MoU on behalf of ICSU-WDS. SciDataCon 2014 had a local host who provided the venues, signed the contracts, and took on a lot of the financial responsibility, and although ICSU-WDS and CODATA still had some liability through arrangements with a conference planner, it was at a lower level. The differential this time will attempt to be filled through sponsorship, and it is considered likely that the shortfall will be covered. The WDS-SC thus mandated that the ED sign the MoU once the draft had been circulated and no major issues found.
- The WDS-SC was also given the draft Call for Sessions and the proposed process for the Calls for Sessions and Papers. SC members were urged to look at the content of the Conference and the proposed theme and scope, and to send any feedback to the IPO.
- The WDS-SC felt that the proposed deadline for the first Call was not sufficient to get session proposals prepared, and suggested to move both deadlines back, and to give session conveners two weeks to approve the papers. This will still then leave adequate time for participants to organize their travels.

### **Membership Applications**

- The WDS-SC approved an Expression of Interest for WDS Network membership from the South African Environmental Observation Network.
- The WDS-SC agreed on Reviewers to provide feedback on the WDS Regular Member application of The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre.
- The WDS-SC would like to involve WDS Members more in the review process, as an increase in reviews over the coming years will make the current model—where the WDS-SC conducts the majority of reviews—unsustainable. Although a community approach is preferred, amending the WDS Bylaws cannot happen until the Members' Forum in September 2016. As an initial step, the IPO will therefore ask for volunteers on behalf of the WDS-SC.