



IDOS Research Data Guidelines

I. Preamble

The German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS) supports a global common good policy geared towards the concept of sustainable development through interdisciplinary research, impact-oriented policy advice and knowledge cooperation and training with an international focus. Collaborating with partner organisations, particularly from low-income and middle-income countries and from Europe, IDOS generates and shares knowledge and vocational expertise. It makes its research findings available to policy-makers, the scientific community and society at large in the form of advisory services, training opportunities, text publications and research data.

By making research data available on a long-term basis in established research data repositories open to the public, IDOS enables the further use and analysis of the data, as well as the replication of the research results in the spirit of open science; it also supports the answering of future research questions. IDOS recognises that collecting research data, processing such data and making it available for potential reuse are independent academic achievements by the researchers.

The research data management (RDM) necessary for this purpose is based on the principles of leading German research organisations,¹ takes into account the standards of scientific disciplines² and complies with the requirements of good research practice as set out by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG).³

By publishing these research data guidelines, IDOS aims to provide its researchers with guidance on sustainable and hence long-term RDM.

II. Scope

These guidelines are geared towards all IDOS staff members who work in the field of research, policy advice, training and the supervision of junior researchers. They also apply to visiting researchers in research projects implemented by IDOS.

These guidelines apply to collaborations with external organisations. If, in connection with research collaborations the partners are subject to other guidelines on handling research data, project-specific rules are to be drawn up (for example as part of a memorandum of understanding or a data management plan) that do not violate these guidelines.

If the specific research is funded by third parties and the underlying funding guidelines contains particular provisions regarding RDM, these take priority.

1 Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (2015): DFG Guidelines on the Handling of Research Data. https://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/grundlagen_dfg_foerderung/forschungsdaten/guidelines_research_data.pdf
Alliance of German Science Organisations (2010): Principles for the Handling of Research Data. https://gfzpublic.gfz-potsdam.de/pubman/item/item_2949914

2 https://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/principles_dfg_funding/research_data/recommendations/index.html

3 Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice (DFG, 2019) <https://wissenschaftliche-integritaet.de/en/code-of-conduct/>
Guidelines on Safeguarding Good Research Practice and Preventing Research Misconduct at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS, 2023) https://www.idos-research.de/fileadmin/user_upload/pdfs/ueber_uns/2023_good-scientific-practice-guidelines_IDOS_EN.pdf

III. Legal and ethical aspects

IDOS owns the rights of use to the research data. However, ownership of the rights of use may be otherwise defined in other agreements (funding guidelines).

IDOS and its researchers comply with ethical, data protection and other confidentiality requirements when handling research data and participate in the relevant institutional processes.⁴ Personal data must be collected and processed in compliance with the relevant legal provisions.⁵ IDOS, represented by the RDM team based in the IDOS Library, in coordination with the IDOS IT department, advises researchers on the implementation of technical and organisational measures to comply with data protection requirements.

IV. Handling research data

In addition to requirements stipulated by funders or publishing companies, IDOS supports and promotes free access to research data unless there are any legal or ethical reasons that prevent this. Not least in the interests of quality assurance, researchers are thus expected to ensure that research data that forms the essential basis of published findings or that substantiates such findings is published in a research data repository in compliance with the FAIR data principles⁶ of Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability and Reusability. Any embargos on research data, for example due to text publications that are under way or planned by the copyright holder(s), are taken into account. IDOS aims to publish all research data in a separate community in the Zenodo repository.⁷ After consultation with the RDM team, research data may be published in other, more subject-specific repositories or in repositories of publishers (if requested by them).

Research data that is vital as evidence and for reproducing published research results or for internal reuse within IDOS, or that might potentially be used as such, but that cannot be published for legal or other reasons must be stored in compliance with the principles of good research practice for at least ten years after completion of the research in a research data archive provided by IDOS that is not freely accessible. To this end, the research data must be quality assured by the data provider(s) in line with the standards specific to the relevant discipline and documented using metadata.

To ensure that research data is handled efficiently and in compliance with IDOS guidelines, even research projects that have not been required to do so by the funder are expected to produce a data management plan (DMP) at the beginning of the project.

In the event that IDOS infrastructure is to be used jointly for RDM as part of cooperation with external research partners, this must be recorded in a DMP and coordinated with the institutional RDM.

V. Responsibilities

IDOS undertakes to create the conditions required for meeting these principles. In addition to providing the necessary infrastructure, IDOS provides technical, organisational and legal advice on all aspects of RDM. It supports its researchers in particular in producing DMPs, in the active data management during data collection and processing in the course of research work, and in selecting and implementing the appropriate archiving strategy and, if necessary, the right publication strategy upon completion of the research project.

Researchers manage research data in accordance with the principles enshrined in these guidelines. During the research process, researchers are responsible for storing research data securely, processing such data and documenting the collection and processing of the data to facilitate any reuse. If research

4 For example, the process for the ethical review of research projects or participation in internal training sessions at IDOS on data protection.

5 The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the data protection laws of the Federal Republic of Germany (Federal Data Protection Act – BDSG) and federal state data protection acts.

6 <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

7 <https://zenodo.org/communities/idos?q=&l=list&p=1&s=10&sort=newest>

data are to be published for the purpose of re-use by third parties, this will only be done in consultation with the FDM team.

Project leaders are responsible for ensuring that the researchers implement the RDM in accordance with this guideline respectively the data management plan of the project. This also applies to any application for additional project-related funding for RDM from the funders. To this end, it is necessary for the project to inform the Library⁸ about its intentions already in the application phase so that the Library can support the initiation of the necessary steps for RDM in the projects, including the creation of a DMP.

In order to facilitate sustainable, institutionalised feedback between researchers and the RDM team and at the same time to supplement systematic quality management, an RDM working group will be set up. The working group will meet twice a year and is tasked with advising the RDM team on refining the services it offers and using technical innovations. The research programmes each second a representative and a deputy to the working group. Further representatives from other service facilities (e.g. the IT Department) may also be invited.

VI. Validity

The present guidelines were adopted by the IDOS Institute Council on 30 January 2024 and will enter into force upon their publication within IDOS. As RDM at IDOS is in the process of being developed at the time the guidelines enter into force, the guidelines will be reviewed after two years and supplemented by references to workflows and to instructions and recommendations for action that have yet to be drawn up.

Glossary

Research data

Research data includes quantitative data sets, indicators, survey data, qualitative interview transcripts and notes, ethnographic data, e.g. from participatory observation and field journals, audiovisual information, texts, measurement data, laboratory results, objects from collections, and samples that arise or are developed or analysed during research work. Testing methodologies such as questionnaires, software, simulations and metadata may also be key findings of academic research and should therefore also be defined as research data.⁹

Research data management (RDM)

RDM includes all measures – including those relating to organisational aspects above and beyond research activity in the narrower sense – that need to be undertaken to obtain high-quality data, to ensure good research practice in the data lifecycle, to make results reproducible, to make data available for reuse and to meet any existing documentation obligations.¹⁰

Data management plan (DMP)

A DMP structures how the research data of a scientific project is handled. It describes – usually at the beginning of a project – how research data are to be handled during and after the project term.¹¹

All the links listed in this document were last verified in August 2023.

The document was produced based on:

Hiemenz, B., & Kuberek, M. (2018). *Empfehlungen zur Erstellung institutioneller Forschungsdaten-Policies. Das Forschungsdaten-Policy-Kit als generischer Baukasten mit Leitfragen und Textbausteinen für Hochschulen in Deutschland*. DOI: 10.14279/depositonce-7521.

8 Using the following email address: rdm@idos-research.de

9 DFG (2015): DFG Guidelines on the Handling of Research Data. https://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/grundlagen_dfg_foerderung/forschungsdaten/guidelines_research_data.pdf

10 German Council for Scientific Information Infrastructures (2016): Begriffsklärungen. Bericht des Redaktionsausschusses Begriffe an den RFI. <http://www.rfi.de/?wpdmdl=2039>

11 <https://forschungsdaten.info/themen/informieren-und-planen/datenmanagementplan/>