

The CESSDA Preparatory Phase Project

In 2006 CESSDA was identified as a social science research infrastructures (RIs) of excellence by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI).

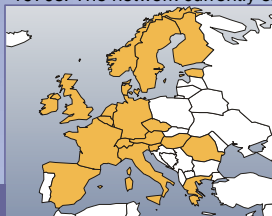


Consequently, CESSDA was awarded FP7 funding to undertake a Preparatory Phase Project (PPP) lasting two years. The PPP will facilitate CESSDA's transition to a fully integrated and formally constituted European Research Infrastructure (ERI).

This will benefit three main stakeholder groups: Data Producers, The Social Science and Humanities Research and Learning Community and Data Archivists.

About CESSDA

CESSDA has promoted the acquisition, archiving and distribution of electronic data for European social science teaching and research since the 1970s. The network currently extends across 20 countries in Europe.



Collectively, CESSDA holds over 25,000 data collections. Its Data Portal provides a seamless, bilingual interface to datasets held by member organisations. These collections include the European Social Survey, Eurobarometers, and the International Social Survey Programme.

The benefits of an enhanced CESSDA Research Infrastructure



The upgraded infrastructure will ensure:

- compliance with interoperable metadata standards;
- adoption and application of a common single sign-on user authentication system;
- harvesting all catalogue records by the data portal;
- downloadable data through common data gateways.

The Data Portal and multi-lingual thesaurus build on the work of earlier EU-funded projects Multilingual Access to Data Infrastructures of the European Research Area (MADIERA) and Language Independent Metadata Browsing of European Resources (LIMBER).

CESSDA's website provides comprehensive guidelines for sharing and accessing data.

- 'local' language in the multi-lingual thesaurus;
- sharing of data archiving/preservation tools;
- adherence to OAIS reference model and approved certification of operational procedures and processes;
- contributions to cross-national data harmonisation & 'question bank';
- national agreement & adherence to open access to publicly-funded research data, and where possible access to national government microdata.

Which countries are involved in the PPP?

Seventeen of the twenty members of CESSDA are full partners to the PPP:

Slovenia	Italy	Spain	France
The Netherlands	Denmark	Switzerland	Finland
Germany	Greece	Norway	Romania
Czech Republic	Sweden	Hungary	UK
Austria			

The project also includes associates from the following countries:

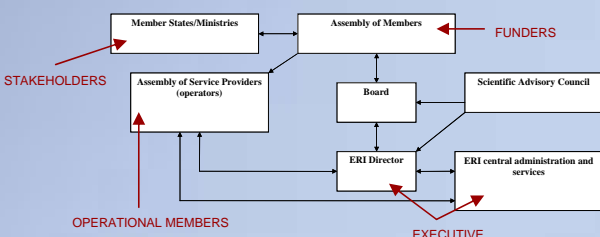
Poland; Russia; Luxembourg; Estonia; Portugal; USA; Canada; Croatia; Ireland; Ukraine; Latvia; Bulgaria; Slovakia; Serbia; Macedonia; Belarus; Lithuania.

Governance of the new ERI

The new centralised CESSDA ERI will *not* create a big new European Data Archive. It will offer a portal service for data discovery and access – providing a gateway (with common authentication) to a **distributed** (and increasingly diverse) set of data collections.

It will be a co-ordinator, a facilitator and a broker. It will play a role in developing and implementing standards and common tools, and aims to ensure adherence to 'good practice' through the provision of strategic guidance.

The new social science ERI, expects to have a multi-tier governance structure to manage the expansion of the current CESSDA federation and the **distributed** nature of its operational structure – the central ERI functions (the umbrella international infrastructural activities) will be integrated with **distributed** operational functions (the national operational requirements and activities). The organisational and governance structure of the new social science ERI could be represented as follows:



A year of expansion

- European experts met in Paris to discuss data harmonisation;
- Recommendations drafted concerning the future management of the multilingual thesaurus;
- PPP undertook a series of meetings in the Balkans with data archives, researchers and national funding bodies. A similar meeting is planned to Russia and the Baltic. Both aim to raise awareness of ESFRI and the new ERI and facilitate discussion on long-term funding;
- Joint meeting with Eurostat and ONS: *Microdata Access – New Developments and a Way Forward*. The results of the CESSDA PPP survey of National Statistical Institutes were presented;
- Exploring synergies and cross-working - discussions are ongoing with other ESFRI RIs (e.g. CLARIN, DARIAH and ESS), associated project teams and organisations, including e-IRG, Clinical Research Infrastructures and DAMES;
- The CESSDA-PPP was highly visible at the 34th IASSIST Conference 2008;
- Technical meetings with organisations outside of the PPP have focused on cross-infrastructure issues, such as Persistent Identifiers, Single Sign On and Multi-lingual thesauri.