Transforming the...

cessda
Council of European Social Science Data Archives

...Research Infrastructure

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).

In consequence, CESSDA is now completing Preparatory Phase Project (PPP) following the award of FP7 funding in January 2008. The PPP will facilitate CESSDA's transition to a fully integrated and formally constituted European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC). An application for follow-on funding for the construction phase of the ERIC is now being prepared.

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

The benefits of an enhanced CESSDA Research Infrastructure

The upgraded infrastructure will ensure:

- contributions to cross-national data harmonisation & 'question bank';
- national agreement and adherence to open access to publicly-funded research data, and where possible access to national government microdata;
- adoption and application of a common single sign-on user authentication system;
- adherence to OAIS reference model and approved certification of operational procedures and processes;
- compliance with interoperable metadata standards;
- harvesting all catalogue records by the data portal;
- downloadable data through common data gateways;
- 'local' language in the multi-lingual thesaurus;
- sharing of data archiving/preservation tools.

Governance of the new cessda-ERIC

The cessda-ERIC (European Research Infrastructures Consortium) 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.
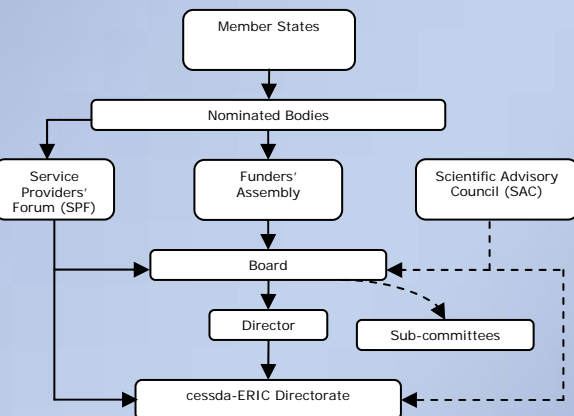
It will also be a co-ordinator, a facilitator and a broker. It will play a role in developing and implementing standards and common tools, and aims to ensure adherence to 'good practice' through the provision of strategic guidance.

As an ERIC, the new organisation will benefit from the "community legal framework" agreed by the European Commission in May 2009.

Full membership of the organisation is at State level, meaning that resource providers will be nationally designated and have secure financial support to required to provide high quality services for the research community.
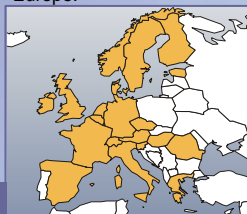
Provision has been made for associate members: inter-governmental organisations with common interests and the providers of similar services outside Europe.

The organisational and governance structure of the new cessda-ERIC could be represented as follows:

Member States → Nominated Bodies → Service Providers' Forum (SPF) / Funders' Assembly / Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) → Board → Director → Sub-committees → cessda-ERIC Directorate

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 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.

Which countries are involved in the PPP?

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

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

What's new in the PPP?

The PPP goals are now reaching completion:

- the cessda-ERIC statutes are now being finalised and are being used as a model for other Preparatory Phase Research Infrastructures;
- planning is underway for the construction phase of the cessda-ERIC;
- pan-European data deposit and user licences have been prepared;
- management tools and licences for the European Language Social Science Thesaurus (ELSST) are in the final stages of preparation;
- a prototype 'Single Sign On' system is nearing completion – demonstrating that authorised and authenticated researchers in one country can have immediate access to data from another;
- following a successful series of meetings with archives, researchers and national funding bodies in the Balkan region and a Factfinding mission to the Russian Federation and Baltic states, cessda-ERIC membership is likely to increase as new states are opening discussion on long-term funding for services;
- links with potential associate members are strengthening - the cessda-ERIC will work closely with a number of national statistical institutes during the next phase;
- 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;
- A series of detailed reports will be available on the project website.

www.cessda.org/project