cessda ppp
Council of European Social Science Data Archives

WORKPACKAGE NEWS

The CESSDA-PPP is comprised of twelve workpackages, each addressing a specific issue relating to the upgrade of the Research Infrastructure. Work over the past six months includes:

Successful completion of the National Statistical Institutions survey. Results show that 93% of responding organisations provide some form of access to microdata files and that of the organisations that do not already have links with a data archive, 50% will consider establishing such links in future;

Collaboration with Richard Sinnott of the National e-science Centre at the University of Glasgow, UK began during January 2009. Professor Sinnott is working with the WP11 team to produce two reports relating to CESSDA's future technical development. The first will consider the possibilities and theoretical implications of grid-enabling social science and humanities (SSH) data collections in the context of the cessda-ERI and the second will consider resource and sustainability issues associated with the implementation of a future social science data cyberinfrastructure;

Work on upgrading the CESSDA Portal and Thesauraus function is well underway. Prototypes for Shibboleth-based single sign on and the thesaurus management system are now being built. The team working on controlled vocabularies and the thesaurus are now preparing a detailed document on the use, (including the obligations of cessda-ERI members) and proposed licensing arrangements for the CESSDA multilingual thesaurus. The document also describes a management and maintenance structure for the thesaurus and discusses the protection of its IPR;

Co-ordination of technical aspects of the project, involving representatives from six workpackages, through a workpackage co-ordination meeting hosted by GESIS, Germany;

Discussion at the Vienna Management Board meeting on 3 April 2009 of the draft Service Level Agreement and legal documentation for the future cessda-ERI;

The WP9 report to describe a general system model and the technical design of a Question Data Bank for CESSDA will be completed during May 2009. The draft report has been accepted and the consultants are currently working through a number of use cases. The design is expected to offer an elegant solution to a complex problem, requiring a system that allows access to resources residing in several locations, in the databases of the many different archives.

OUT AND ABOUT

The CESSDA-PPP continues to actively engage with Stakeholders, and to promote the project in a variety of ways. Since October 2008, PPP team members have engaged in:

Representation of CESSDA at the e-Infrastructure Reflection Group workshop's discussion on "How the ESFRI Roadmap projects estimate their e-Infrastructure needs?" in Paris, France;

Participated in the National Grid Service Innovation Forum 2008;

Contribution to the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) Best Practice Expert workshop in Germany during November last year;

Promotion of CESSDA at the Market Research Society's "How geodemographics is being applied across an ever expanding Europe" conference;

Exchange of experiences with other PPP Project Managers and Co-ordinators at the January ESFRI-SSH Project Meeting.

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SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

CESSDA moves towards Strategic Goals

CESSDA's status as an ESFRI recognised Preparatory Phase Research Infrastructure has provided the opportunity for CESSDA to move rapidly towards its goal of reforming itself into a newly-established legal entity.

In October 2008 a meeting for national funding bodies was held at the British Academy in London. This provided the opportunity to present the emerging plans for the new organisation to national research funders and ministerial representatives, and allow them to ask questions about the proposed structure for the new legal entity. Twelve member states were represented at the meeting, alongside representatives of the European Commission and the research community.

Following this meeting, and taking into account discussion points and the views of national representatives, during December and early January the governance team prepared first drafts of key legal documents for the proposed new ERI. Following circulation the current CESSDA members discussed these at the CESSDA-PPP Management Board meeting hosted by GSDB-EKKE (the Greek data archive), in mid January and agreed a number of changes and the need for a small number of additional annexes. Building on the discussions and recommendations from the Athens meeting, the draft governance documents were substantially revised and extended during February and re-circulated to the CESSDA membership organisation for consideration and comment in March.

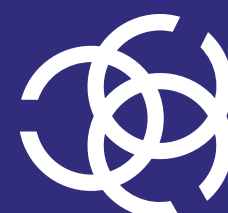### What does the CESSDA Infrastructure do?

In the first 15 months of CESSDA's Preparatory Phase Project, we have:

- Planned 28 events… involving a total of over 50 members of staff from across the project's 17 partner organisations;
- Contributed to meetings in 36 cities and a total of 30 countries;
- Invited contributions from 43 experts;
- Organised five surveys.

This second period of consultation was then followed in early April by a joint meeting of the CESSDA General Assembly and PPP Management Board, hosted by WISDOM, the Austrian data archive. This useful meeting concentrated on discussing detailed points relating to the new proposed ERI and benefitted greatly from the presence of Annika Thies of the European Commission who is responsible for legal aspects of Research Infrastructures at DG Research.

Following minor changes resulting from the discussions in Vienna, the next step is for the collection of governance documents to be circulated to national funders for their consideration before the upcoming ESFRI meeting in June at which countries will be asked, once more, to indicate and confirm their support for the ESFRI Roadmap projects.

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Widening the CESSDA RI: Fact Finding tours I & II

Widening the CESSDA Research Infrastructure (RI) is crucial to CESSDA's future development. Building on the work of EDAN (East European Data Archive Network) and the UNESCO conference on Eastern European Social Science Data Archives in 2002, the PPP is examining the diverse organisational needs, resources and technical requirements of potential CESSDA members. To gain greater insight into specific issues facing archives in different countries, two fact finding missions were scheduled during the PPP.

Kevin Schürer (right) with Yantislav Yanakiev, Vice-President of REGLO, Sofia.

(Photo credit: Brigitte Hausstein)

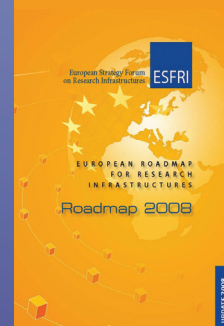November 2008 saw the successful completion of the PPP's first fact-finding tour of the Balkan region. Visiting five different national data archives and meeting with each country's funding bodies, Principle Investigator of the PPP, Kevin Schürer (UKDA) and Brigitte Hausstein (GESIS) ended their tour of the region with the project's second workshop on training and staff development in Ljubljana, Slovenia. During March 2009 Brigitte and Kevin visited the Baltic States and the Russian Federation.

Through face-to-face discussion with archive staff and funders, and by raising awareness of the ESFRI process, the project has gathered invaluable evidence to support the case for individual, tailored responses to the issues facing each archive, whilst recognising that many archives face similar issues. This tailored approach will be reflected in the future cessda-ERI's membership criteria, which, through its multi-level structure, will be able to recognise each archive's current achievements, whilst providing appropriate support to help archives reach independently approved preservation, data management and dissemination standards.

At the Latvian Social Science Data Archive (LSSDA)

(Photo credit: Brigitte Hausstein)

ESFRI Roadmap Update 2008

On 9-10 December 2008, representatives from four of the CESSDA-PPP project partners (DANS, GESIS, NSD and UKDA) attended the European Conference on Research Infrastructures (ECRI 2008) at Versailles, France.

ECRI 2008 was attended by over 600 high level policy makers, RI managers, leading scientists and industry representatives from 30 countries. The key event of the conference was the publication of the ESFRI 2008 Roadmap, in which the CESSDA RI is described as having achieved "advanced preparation for construction." The CESSDA-PPP is therefore making good progress in working towards its goal of enabling the sharing of research data across the European Research Area by establishing itself as a European Research Infrastructure (ERI).

Two crucial issues dominated ECRI 2008: resolving the current impasse over the proposed legal framework to set up pan-European organisations; and securing adequate funding for projects given the worldwide economic downturn. Other topics under discussion included capacity building, governance and the design of the next generation of RIs.

Digital Preservation Workshop

Convened by the Director of CESSDA member archive Data Archiving and Networked Services (DANS, The Netherlands) Peter Doorn, and CESSDA-PPP Principle Investigator Kevin Schürer (UKDA), CESSDA members contributed to the joint workshop "Towards Trusted Digital Archives for Social Science and Humanities Data" in the Hague during January 2009.

With contributions from Digital Preservation Europe, Data Seal of Approval Assessment – International Board (DSAA IB) and fellow ESFRI Roadmap organisations DARIAH and CLARIN, the workshop focused on defining the standards an archive will need to meet to be considered eligible for the proposed "Trusted Digital Archive" (TDA) status. The starting point for the day was an examination of existing guidelines, in particular the Data Seal of Approval (DSA) developed by DANS. Other issues covered included confidentiality, long-term preservation, enforcement and certification.

Microdata Access: New Developments

CESSDA, the Office for National Statistics (ONS, UK) and Eurostat co-organised a two-day workshop in Luxembourg on Microdata Access during early December 2008. The workshop has proved invaluable in enabling CESSDA to better understand how the requirements of government data producers and researchers can be balanced to generate new systems for data access. On the one hand, the European research community needs access to more high quality data but on the other, access to high quality data is often subject to legal and ethical constraints.

Presentations were made by experts who described several models for microdata access, for example remote access and safe centres, and included a presentation from the Norwegian data archive (NSD) on the experience of managing access to confidential data through a data archive.

The workshop provided an excellent starting point for continued discussions and future collaboration between CESSDA, EUROSTAT and National Statistical Institutes.

CESSDA sponsors Qualitative Data Workshop

Bringing together researchers and archivists involved in Qualitative research was the aim of a recent CESSDA-PPP sponsored one-day international workshop on Qualitative Longitudinal Research and Qualitative Resources in Europe.

Held in Bremen, Germany and involving around 40 data archivists, data managers and researchers, the workshop was organised jointly by the UK Data Archive, the Timescapes Qualitative Longitudinal Study and Archive (University of Leeds, UK), and the Bremen Life Course Archive (University of Bremen).

Through country reports and the exploration of strategic questions, meeting participants have contributed to a report outlining current resources and the infrastructure across Europe, recommending strategic developments and future collaborations. This much needed overview of a currently underdeveloped area of social science data sharing provides an excellent basis for the continued exchange of good practice and increased collaboration – areas which the future cessda-ERI will develop.

Missed our October 2008 Factsheet?
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