cessda ppp
Council of European Social Science Data Archives

How to find out more

Interested readers can find general information about CESSDA at:

www.cessda.org

More information about the CESSDA PPP is available directly from:

www.cessda.org/project/

Further information is also available from the Project office:

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Partners

The CESSDA PPP is co-ordinated on behalf of CESSDA at the UK Data Archive, and includes seventeen full partners and eighteen associate partners drawn from across Europe, North America and Australia. The full partners are as follows:

Yhteiskuntatieteellinen tietoarkisto, Tampereen yliopisto (Finnish Social Science Data Archive);

(National Centre for Social Research, Greece);

Service suisse d'information et d'archivage de données pour les sciences socials (Swiss information and data archive service for the social sciences);

Archivo de Estudios Sociales , Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Social Studies Archive, Centre for Social Investigation, Spain);

Társadalomkutatási Informatikai Egyesülés (TÁRKI Joint Research Centre, Hungary);

Sociologick_ datov_ archiv, Sociologick_ ústav Akademie v_d _eské republiky (Sociological Data Archive, Czech Republic);

Arhiv dru_boslovnih podatkov, Univerza v Ljubljani (Social Science Data Archive, Slovenia);

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste (Norwegian Social Science Data Services);

Arhiva Romana de Date Sociale, Universitatea din Bucuresti (Romanian Social Data Archive);

Archivio Dati e Programmi per le Scienze Sociali, Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca (Data Archive for Social Sciences, Italy);

Gesellschaft Sozialwissenschaftlicher Infrastruktureinrichtungen (German Social Science Infrastructure Services);

Dansk Data Arkiv, Statens Arkiver (Danish Data Archives);

Réseau Quetelet, Centre National de da Recherche Scientifique (Quetelet Network, National Centre for Scientific Research, France);

Data Archiving and Networked Services (Netherlands);

Wiener Institut für sozialwissenschaftliche Dokumentation und Methodik (Vienna Institute for Sociological Documentation and Methodology, Austria);

Svensk Nationell Datatjänst (Swedish National Data Service).

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FACT SHEET ⬡ OCTOBER 2008

Welcome!
This is the first fact sheet for the Council of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA) Research Infrastructure (RI). It will be an occasional publication intended to keep the many stakeholders up-to-date about CESSDA's activities.

What is CESSDA?

The CESSDA network provides efficient data services to support European Social Research by facilitating network access to more than 25,000 data collections for thousands of users world-wide. CESSDA includes twenty European social science data archives and has existed for over thirty years. Since the 1970s member organisations have significantly improved access to social science data for researchers, policy makers and students through the negotiation of data access agreements with data producers and management of cross-national data transfers.

The CESSDA data portal has also provided access to important social science data materials and to national collections including: census collections; household, health and labour market data; election and political studies data; social and demographic indicators; attitudinal data; and digitised historical materials. CESSDA also serves as the gateway to key data investments such as the European Social Survey, the Eurobarometers, the International Social Survey Programme and the European Values Surveys. To facilitate use, in recent years CESSDA has developed resource discovery and data management and access tools, including the Nesstar data browsing and tabulation tool and the multilingual resource discovery tool as part of the CESSDA Data Portal.

What does the CESSDA Infrastructure do?

In 2007 CESSDA:

- **held over 25,000 data collections;**
- **delivered 70,000 data collections to 6,500 separate users;**
- **provided workshops, online information and support to**
- **over 200,000 researchers and learners across Europe;**
- **collectively had 43,000,000 web site hits.**

What is the CESSDA PPP?

The CESSDA Preparatory Phase Project (PPP) is a strategically important award under the EC 7th Research Framework Programme. It will facilitate the transition of CESSDA from an informal grouping of data archives to a formally constituted and more fully integrated European Research Infrastructure ERI).

The PPP also enables CESSDA to consider its future funding and governance, make strategic plans for the management of intellectual property and ensure that CESSDA remains at the forefront of technical developments in data preservation, management and dissemination.
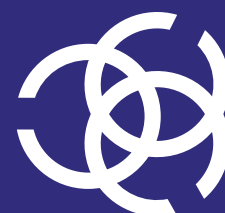
Seventeen of the twenty CESSDA members are partners to the project and the PPP has been designed to allow the remaining CESSDA members to contribute to the discussions and consultation exercises that will define and secure CESSDA's future. In order to plan ahead and ensure as wide and as inclusive an RI as possible, the PPP is also engaging with countries that do not yet have member organisations.

Members of the project team will also be working closely with national funding agencies and will engage with key national data producers and EUROSTAT, with the aim of making a wider collection of data available from a greater number of European countries.

Why should you be interested in an enhanced CESSDA?

Our efforts are directed at improving opportunities for three main stakeholder groups: data producers; the social science and humanities research and learning community; and digital access, preservation and support to professionals (data archivists).

We are working with research funders to provide advice and information to ensure that data collected at public expense are preserved for future generations and, where possible, are made more immediately accessible for secondary analysis, within the legal constraints of data protection and privacy laws.

This work will also benefit the research and learning community as the amount of available, high quality, reliable data increases and is more easily accessible and better supported. In particular, users will gain as the existing CESSDA data portal is further developed to provide a single entry point to more European data, including data from countries and organisations currently outside of the network.

Topics being addressed:

- common authentication and access in order to make it easier to access data from across Europe;

- cross-European resource discovery, facilitated by the development of thesaurus management tools;

- use of secure data facilities, or the use of statistical disclosure control software, to increase availability of data which pose statistical disclosure risks;

- improvement to the quality of data through the adoption and development of internally approved metadata standards such as the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI);

- use of grid-based technologies to provide improved mechanisms for data dissemination and analysis;

- feasibility of a European question bank of survey responses following the development of data harmonisations tools.

- Data archivists should be interested in the CESSDA Infrastructure because it will provide them with access to professional training. Their organisations will have the opportunity for certification to demonstrate their achievement of, and adherence to, internationally recognised standards for the profession.

What's been happening since the award was confirmed?

Much has been achieved since the project began in January 2008. Some of the highlights, to date, are featured below. Full details of the project's many varied activities can be found on the CESSDA PPP website.

We have begun to consider different organisational models under which CESSDA can operate in the foreseeable future. This is a complicated task because the structure chosen will need to accommodate multiple organisations, each of which is governed within its own national framework and context. The option currently being given major consideration is the proposed new legal entity, the European Research Infrastructure (ERI).

We have continued to contribute to the update to the ESRFI Roadmap and the ESFRI process, in particular in relation to Virtual Research Infrastructures (VRI) and e-Infrastructures.

European experts met in Paris to discuss issues surrounding data harmonisation.

Recommendations have been drafted concerning the future management of the CESSDA multilingual thesaurus.

A series of meetings have been held at EUROSTAT to discuss increased data access.

A series of discussions have been held with associate PPP members, including a team from ICPSR in the US as well as with potential contributors from Belorus, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and the Ukraine. Topics included setting requirements, the CESSDA portal and Persistent Identifiers.

We have met with other social science RIs included on the ESFRI Roadmap to explore synergies and cross-working.

What's in the pipeline?

The PPP is about to enter one of its busiest working periods. During the early months of the award we focussed on information gathering through surveys and consultation meetings. This information is now being analysed and assessed and will be used to prepare consultation documents and requirements specifications for technical development. During the next six months, the PPP team will:

- work with the CESSDA web group to provide web-based information and advice for research funders wishing to preserve and widen access to the data collections they have funded;

- convene a meeting with Eurostat to discuss wider access to official data;

- meet with staff at DG Research to discuss preservation and access to their project outputs;

- undertake a survey of National Statistical Institutes;

- begin work on a prototype authentication system for European researchers;

- produce a functional specification for the future maintenance and management of the ELSST multi-lingual thesaurus;

- prepare tender documents for an assessment of the potential for a statistical disclosure control module for integration into the CESSDA RI data dissemination systems;

- commission reports on the potential and theoretical implications of grid-enabling social science and humanities data and on the resource and sustainability issues relating to the implementation of a future CESSDA cyber infrastructure;

- commission work to determine the technical specifications for a databank of questions;

- prepare draft reports on training needs and standards for CESSDA archives.

Out and about

An essential element of the award is the active engagement of team members with stakeholders. In consequence, the PPP has contributed to a number of forums, made conference presentations, initiated bilateral meetings and contributed to the update of the ESFRI Roadmap.

The CESSDA PPP was highly visible at the 34th IASSIST Conference "Technology of Data: Collection, Communication, Access and Preservation" on 27-30 May 2008, Stanford, California, USA. Session H1 "The CESSDA ESFRI Project: Setting up a one-stop shop for European Data" was devoted to the project. Presentations are available via the CESSDA PPP website.

Kevin Schürer (Project Co-ordinator) and Roxane Silberman (Director, Réseau Quetelet, France) have attended bilateral meetings with Eurostat and presented on CESSDA to representatives of European National Statistical Institutes.

Hilary Beedham (Project Manager) has attended several RI meetings in Brussels including one which discussed the new legal framework for ERIs and one on project reporting requirements.

Adrian Dusa (RODA, Romania) and Brigitte Hausstein (GESIS, Germany) organised meetings in Bucharest to discuss widening and strengthening the CESSDA RI.

In September Kevin Schürer and Hilary Beedham met with lawyers to discuss the legal implications of establishing CESSDA as an ERI.