Data Management Policy, Environmental Policy Group, Wageningen University

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Introduction

This document stipulates the procedures for the data management of research that is carried out by staff, PostDocs, and PhD researchers of the Environmental Policy Group of Wageningen University. ENP is responsible for organizing and maintaining its own data management arrangement.

Data management

"Data management" in this context implies:
1) the recording of data collection procedures and the archiving of processed data. This part of data management is introduced to increase the traceability of research in cases of external inquiries. Data management can also increase the use rate of data at a later stage; data management is furthermore required by some funding agencies.
2) Making clear agreements on how and when data is shared and by whom. In the context of research projects with partners from different institutions all over the world, as well as with increasing requests of making data accessible, research collaboration needs clear agreements on how to share data.

Ad 1) Data collection procedures and archiving of data

Responsibility for recording data collection procedures and archiving data is with PhD researchers in the case of PhD projects, with a final supervisory responsibility by the daily supervisor. Without PhD researchers involved, responsibility is with the respective project applicant / leader.

PhD researchers have to compile a "Data Management Plan" (see Annex 1 for a standard plan for ENP) as annex to the submission of their thesis proposal. The Plan has to be stored in a personal Data Management Repository on the W drive, where also the final data files are stored. The Data Management Plan operationalizes ENP's Data Management Policy; the PhD researcher adjusts the text of the ENP Standard Data Management Plan to the conditions of the respective PhD research project.

Project leaders of projects without involvement of PhD researchers also have to adjust the text of the ENP Data Management Plan to the conditions of their project, and store the Plan in a project Repository on the W drive, where also the data are later added.

All data that is used in publications, as well as data that needs to be stored according to requirements from the funding agency, have to be stored in an individual repository on the W-drive for the duration of 10 years (unless specified otherwise by the funding agency). The repository contains
1. The PhD research proposal (if applicable)
2. The Data Management Plan
3. Empirical tools (e.g. questionnaires, interview guidelines)
4. Processed data (e.g. excel sheets, transcripts)
5. Documentation of how data has been processed (i.e. coding form, lists relating anonymous data to resource persons) and of the programmes used to analyse the data
6. Data sharing agreements.

If (processed) data is not archived with ENP (but e.g. with a partner institute), access to this data (in the form of processed data) has to be warranted by the means of a data sharing agreement.

All data collected by research done at ENP is at least co-owned by ENP. The PhD researcher, ENP supervisor and ENP adjunct manager have access to this repository during the time of their employment at ENP. Without involvement of a PhD researcher, the project leader and ENP adjunct manager have access to the repository. When researchers (PhDs after graduation, Post-docs, staff) leave ENP, data remain stored at ENP and are owned by the responsible researcher(s) and ENP. Use of data is by mutual agreement.

The ENP adjunct manager (corry.rothuizen@wur.nl) is the official contact for data disclosure requests by third parties, and will pass these requests to the responsible project leader / PhD supervisor. The contact for data inquiry requests is made public on the ENP website.

Data Management Plans have to be stored on the W drive before submission of the PhD proposal to the graduate school, or one year after a project has been granted. All six repository items listed above have to be stored on the W drive before PhD graduation or before the final project report is submitted.
The ENP adjunct manager furthermore at random checks repositories for documentation during the project duration and will contact the PhD researcher and the respective supervisor or the project leader in the case that the repository shows signs of lacking documentation.

Ad 2) Data sharing agreements

Data sharing agreements will have to be drafted and signed for any research project where data is used or (co-)produced by researchers outside of the ENP group. If staff / PhD researchers / PostDocs of ENP are collaborating with researchers of other institutions who are in the possession of data, data sharing agreements have to guarantee access to this data in cases of inquiries by a third party.

A data sharing agreement contains
- the kind of data to which the agreement applies (collected by which method, where and when; sample size)
- the frame within which data is collected (project and funding source / grant number)
- which partner will obtain a copy of which kind of data (set)
- who has access to the data within the participating institutions (including ENP)
- how long data will be stored
- the procedures that stipulate if and under which conditions (e.g. time; authorship; anonymity) data can be made accessible to third party researchers or other requiring parties within and outside the research institutions collaborating in the research.

See Annex 2 for an ENP Standard Data Sharing Agreement template.

Annexes (not included)
Annex 1: ENP Standard Data Management Plan
Annex 2: ENP Standard Data Sharing Agreement