

# **Guidelines on the Handling of Research Data at the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS)**

(Version of 18 June 2019)

## **Preamble**

Research data are both the basis for and the important result of academic work. The responsible handling of research data is a central principle of good academic practice and assists the transparency of the research process. The IRS is committed to a responsible and transparent handling of research data embedded in a sustainable and quality-conscious research process. In line with the German Research Foundation's "[DFG Guidelines on the Handling of Research Data](#)" (2018) as well as the "Guidelines on the Handling of Research Data within the Leibniz Association" (2018).

IRS supports its researchers in the implementation of a quality-conscious management of research data by ensuring systematic archiving of, and structured access to, research data even after a project has been completed.

## **Subject matter**

Research data is understood to mean all digital and digitised data created in the course of research work through observation, collection, and further processing for generating and validating research results. Also included are reused secondary data and research data generated from it as well as metadata and descriptions of data structures. Research data management comprises the process of planning and collecting, securing and storing, preparing and documenting, as well as archiving and, if necessary, making available of the data.

## **Guidelines**

Responsibility for handling research data lies with the project leaders and their researchers, so that ethical and data-protection requirements, as well as those of the funding bodies, are observed. For these matters, the IRS' data protection officer and the data curator are the advising contact persons.

To ensure a conscientious handling of research data used in the research process, data management plans (DMP) are applied at IRS, being created, wherever possible, at the start of a research project and continuously updated over its duration. The DMP documents project-specific specifications on the type and extent of data and its protection, records the necessary metadata, and includes provisions on access and usage rights as well as

agreements on responsibilities of handling the research data. Appropriate templates for a data-management plan are provided to researchers by the IRS.

At the end of a project, to the extent that data-protection laws allow, primary data collected in the research process, and the utilised secondary data, are archived in digital form at the IRS for a minimum of ten years. The archiving of digital research data occurs systematically and independently of specific individuals involved. The IRS assists researchers in the archiving of research data by providing the necessary infrastructure and the support of a data curator.

The research data generated by and used in the research process at the IRS predominantly include qualitative data, often related to persons and organisations that informants consider confidential. Access to the secondary use of data from research by the IRS is therefore only possible in restricted form in particular cases. However, the principle "as open as possible, as closed as necessary" should be put into practice when data shall be made available for secondary use. As a matter of principle, the IRS encourages researchers to make research data available in repositories suitable for this purpose in accordance with the FAIR Data Principles as well as discipline-specific standards.