**Research Data Management Policy at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences**

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# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the principles for handling research data collected or produced as part of research conducted at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN), including the Graduate School for Social Research.

This document also responds to the adoption of European policies regarding access to and protection of scientific information (*European Commission Recommendation of 17 July 2012*; *Directive (EU) 2019/1024 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on open data and the re-use of public sector information*), as well as to the emergence of further national regulations at the statutory level (*Open Data and Re-use of Public Sector Information Act*) and at the level of grantors' requirements (*Guidelines for Applicants to Complete a DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN in a Research Project developed by the National Science Centre*). The priority of all these regulations is to strive for making research data available in accordance with the FAIR principles. This means ensuring that data are **f**indable, **a**ccessible, **i**nteroperable, i.e. that they can be combined with other data, used in different computer systems and analysed by different software, and **r**eusable. These policies are guided by the general principle: (data) as open as possible, as closed as necessary. **This means that, in principle, research data should be made available at the completion of a research project.**

Developing and making research data available is an element of scientific activity. Researchers of IFiS PAN, can present in the annual report – in the programme *Ocena* (evaluation) – the data sets they have developed.

**Basic Terms:**

**Research data** (hereinafter interchangeably "research data" or "data") refers to source materials that are the basis of scientific analyses. Examples of research data include: raw data sets from quantitative research, text documents which are the subject of analysis or the primary result of the research (e.g. interview transcriptions, content analysis materials, observation notes), records of results of experiments, audio and video recordings, photographs, content of databases.

**Metadata** means structured information describing a research data set or its individual elements. It relates to the form and content of the data set (or its elements) and facilitates the search, identification and management of the data set (or its elements). Metadata describing a research data set includes e.g.: title of the project, surname of the principal investigator, data collection period, sampling method. Metadata describing an element of the data set includes e.g.: the date of the qualitative interview or a brief characterisation of its content, file size and type. Well-developed, commonly used metadata systems are e.g. [Dublin Core](http://dublincore.org/) or [Data Documentation Initiative](http://www.ddialliance.org/).

**Principal** **investigator** refers to a person directly responsible for a scientific research project carried out at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

# 2. Research Project Preparation Stage

At this stage, the principal investigator should prepare a formal plan for the management of research data delt with in the project, which specifies:

1. what data will be collected or used in the project (including whether it will be primary or secondary data);
2. how the data will be collected;
3. how their quality will be ensured;
4. what documentation will accompany the collection, storage and development of research data, in particular how metadata will be documented;
5. how security of research data storage will be ensured during the project;
6. what legal requirements will have to be taken into account when collecting or using research data, and whether legal restrictions will not affect the possibility of the project's implementation;
7. whether the planned method of collecting, producing, storing, archiving, and making research data available meets ethical standards adopted in the scientific community (guidelines in this respect may be found in the Code of Ethics of Sociologist (PTS) or the Code of Ethics of Researcher (PAN); in many cases the consent of the Research Ethics Committee operating at IFiS PAN is required);
8. what will happen with the data after the project is completed (whether and where will they be archived, whether, when and under what conditions will it be possible to make them more widely available).

At this stage the principal investigator should also estimate the costs of collecting or producing, storing and processing the data, but also the costs of its subsequent archiving and making it available, and include these estimates in the overall project cost estimate.

Individual granting institutions may have different guidelines on how to create a research data management plan, for example the guidelines of the National Science Centre can be found here: <https://www.ncn.gov.pl/sites/default/files/pliki/regulaminy/wytyczne_zarzadzanie_danymi_ang_16_03_2020.pdf>.

# 3. Research Project Implementation Stage

## 3.1. Legal Requirements

Prior to the collection of data (or the use of existing data) it is necessary to ensure that these activities are carried out in accordance with the law, i.e. with the regulations concerning the protection of personal data, intellectual property law, internal regulations of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences and other regulations adequate to the specific situation.

### 3.1.1. Participant Consent

In the case of most research involving participants, it is necessary to obtain their informed consent for (a) participation in the research (including the method of recording research data, e.g. recording the interview) and (b) processing of their personal data by IFiS PAN. Making data available in an online repository, the consequence of which could be the disclosure of the identity of the subjects, requires obtaining the informed consent of the participants for archiving and making available the research data gathered from them, with the specification whether data can be archived and made available after anonymisation or pseudonymisation, or – in some cases – with the personal data of the participants preserved. Whenever possible, it is recommended to obtain the consents mentioned hereinabove in written form (traditional or electronic, e.g. as a scan of a signed form). An example of a consent form can be found on the website <https://ifispan.pl/dokumenty-do-pobrania/>.

### 3.1.2. Personal Data of Research Subjects

The processing of personal data of research subjects must be carried out in accordance with the *Personal Data Security Policy at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw*, which is available on the IFiS PAN website after logging in.

### 3.1.3. Ownership of Research Data Produced within the Employment Relationship at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences

The author's property rights to research data produced within the employment relationship at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences are held by IFiS PAN according to the principles set out in the provisions of the *Act of 4 February 1994 on Copyright and Related Rights* (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1231), the *Act of 30 April 2010 on the Polish Academy of Sciences* (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1796) and the internal regulations issued on its basis.

### 3.1.4. Rights to Intellectual Property Created by Persons who are not Employees of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences

The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences acquires copyrights to intellectual property created by persons who are not employees of IFiS PAN on the basis of the provisions of an agreement concluded with these persons.

### 3.1.5. Rights to Works Created in the Course of Doctoral Studies

Personal and economic rights to works created in the course of doctoral studies during the completion of the thesis belong, as a principle, to the author, with the provision that:

* in the event that works of the doctoral students are prepared within the framework of research and scientific work carried out by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the rights to the intellectual property constituting the results of this work may be reserved for the Institute, in accordance with the agreement concluded between the doctoral student and the Institute;
* the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences has a priority right to publish the dissertation of a doctoral student. If the Institute fails to publish the dissertation within 6 months of the thesis defence, the doctoral student who prepared it has the option of publishing it independently.

## 3.2. Collecting or Producing Data – Technical Issues

Research data may be collected (when, for example, the study concerns discourse analysis on the basis of press materials or materials published on the Internet) or produced (e.g. as a result of conducting a survey or interview). In any case, the material to be analysed is in the course of the project collected and stored by researchers – nowadays, mainly in digital form. This raises various technical issues.

### 3.2.1. File Formats

For research data collected and stored in digital form it is recommended to use open and lossless file formats, e.g. rtf, xml, tif, wav. It is also acceptable to use closed (proprietary) or lossy but commonly used formats, e.g. doc/docx, jpg, mp3. It is worth noting that recommended and acceptable formats differ depending on the data to be acquired, e.g. pdf is recommended for documentation and acceptable for image data.

### 3.2.2. File Organisation and Naming

It is recommended that a uniform naming convention be adopted for files containing research data or associated documentation. File and folder names should be short but meaningful (they should inform about the content). The name may include the acronym of the project title, the type of data – e.g. W – *wywiad* (interview), A – *ankieta* (survey) – and a sequential number. File and folder names must not contain letters with diacritical marks (i.e., in the Polish language, the letters ą, ć, ę, ł, ñ, ó, ź, ż) or any characters other than letters or numbers (exception: as spaces are not allowed, one should replace them with underscores or hyphens). When modifying files, it is recommended to adopt an unambiguous system of naming subsequent versions, e.g. to include in the name the date (and possibly the time) when the new version was created.

## 3.3. Research Data Security

The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences ensures that, during the implementation of projects, research data are stored in a manner that ensures their security and prevents their loss or access by unauthorised persons.

### 3.3.1. Recommended Location for Storing Research Data

During research projects, data can be stored on computers located at IFiS PAN or in the cloud (e.g. Google Drive). In both cases it is recommended to encrypt the data, e.g. with BitLocker or encryption software (e.g. VeraCrypt, Gpg4win, BoxCryptor, WinMend Folder Hidden, CloudFogger) and to create a regular backup copy (see point 3.3.6). Only the principal investigator and persons authorised by them (research team members) may have access to the data. Access shall be protected by login and password. Additionally, each computer from which data can be accessed must be equipped with up-to-date anti-virus and firewall software.

### 3.3.2. Storing Research Data on Portable Devices

In the case of field projects/archival searches where a portable computer (or a voice recorder, smartphone, memory stick) is the primary equipment used, storing data on such device is acceptable, but the data should be uploaded to the target location without undue delay and after creating a backup copy (see point 3.3.6) permanently deleted from the original location. The portable computer drive should have encryption enabled (e.g. using BitLocker), and access to the computer should be protected by a login and password.

### 3.3.3. Transferring Data via Commercial Services

Transferring data via commercial services (e.g. WeTransfer) is not recommended, but if, for some important reason, it is nevertheless used, care should be taken to protect files with a password. The password should be sent to the recipient via a different channel than the link to the material (e.g. text message).

### 3.3.4. Responsibility for Storing and Transferring Research Data

The principal investigator is responsible for defining the way of storing and transferring research data, in accordance with good practice and internal regulations of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The principal investigator should acquaint the research team with the method of data storage and transfer adopted in the project, while the persons belonging to the research team are obliged to follow those recommendations. In the case of any alert about a security breach, it is forbidden to log into any Internet accounts, including official mail. In such a situation, the IT department should be contacted immediately.

### 3.3.5. Handling Personal Data Linked to Research Data

If it is necessary to store personal data of research participants, care must be taken to ensure its security. It is recommended to store such data separately from research data. One of the solutions may be to pseudonymise data, i.e. to assign verbal or numerical labels to research data obtained from individuals. The key, i.e. the list of the assign labels together with the personal data of research participants, should be stored separately from research data. The principal investigator is responsible for ensuring the security of the processing of research participants personal data and for defining the rules of access to such data. All persons processing personal data contained in the research data must have an authorisation to process personal data (appendix no. 4 to the *Personal Data Security Policy at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw*). If the entity processing data is an external company – a data processing outsourcing agreement is necessary (appendix no. 10 to the *Personal Data Security Policy at the* *Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw*).

### 3.3.6. Back-up Copy

Research data should be kept in at least two copies, each on a different medium. Back-ups should be made regularly on portable drives which are used exclusively for this purpose and stored in a place where they cannot be accessed by unauthorised persons. Back-up files should be encrypted, e.g. placed in zip archives created using 7Zip or iZip software.

### 3.3.7. Handling the Loss of Research Data

In the case of research data loss, one should contact the principal investigator or directly a member of IT department staff, who will assess the extent of the loss and possibilities of data recovery. One should not attempt to repair media or mobile devices oneself. In case of loss of personal data related to research data, the Data Protection Inspector of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences should be immediately notified.

## 3.4. Metadata and Other Research Documentation

Research data should be accompanied by metadata and additional documentation, i.e. materials helping to understand, among other things, how the data were collected or produced, what they refer to, what their structure is, how they were processed, and how to handle them. The preparation and storing of metadata and documentation is the responsibility of the principal investigator, who may however delegate some of the tasks in this area to persons within the research team.

### 3.4.1. Documentation of the Research Data Collection Phase

Documentation of the data collection phase, such as description of the methodology (including its limitations), research tools (e.g. questionnaires, interview instructions) should be maintained and kept.

### 3.4.2. Documentation of the Research Data Processing Phase

It is recommended that the process of data processing is documented on an ongoing basis, as data is being processed or analysed, including e.g. changes made to the data set, methods of anonymising transcriptions, etc.

### 3.4.3. Documentation in the Perspective of Research Data Archiving

When planning to archive or make data available after the project is completed, it is important to become familiar with the metadata system that a particular archive or repository requires, and to apply the appropriate metadata description already at the stage of collecting and processing research data. Recommended locations for long-term storage and making research data available are described in point 4.3.1.

## 3.5. Data Quality

The principal investigator is required to take effective measures to maximise the chances of collecting high quality research data with appropriate metadata documentation. Criteria for data quality are described in the literature and may vary somewhat, depending on the type of data and the methodology adopted. Practices contributing to high quality date include: matching methods and techniques with the research issue, providing appropriate technical tools (e.g. voice recorder, computer software, scanner) and training in the use of the equipment, ongoing control of the data acquisition process. Supervision of data and documentation quality is the responsibility of the principal investigator.

# 4. Research Project Completion Phase

## 4.1. File Selection

At the completion of the project it is first necessary to check which research data and which elements of the documentation should be – according to the data management plan – kept, which should be archived and which should be destroyed. For example, intermediate versions of data sets which have subsequently been organised or described better, or personal data of study participants may be destroyed. In the case of destroying electronic files containing data allowing for the identification of study participants, a method ensuring permanent deletion of the files should be adopted. The selection of the method of file deletion depends on the type of media. Should there occur any problems, we recommend contacting IT department.

## 4.2. Research Data Retention Period

Research data collected or produced in the project is recommended to be stored for at least 10 years, especially if it has served as the basis for publication. It is good practice to store research data indefinitely, e.g. in the data repositories listed below.

## 4.3. Archiving and Providing Access to Data

### 4.3.1. Recommended Research Data Repositories

As a rule, social research data collected or produced at IFiS PAN should be archived in the Polish Social Data Archive (quantitative – PADS, <https://rds.icm.edu.pl/dataverse/pads>) or in the Qualitative Data Archive of IFiS PAN (ADJ, <https://rds.icm.edu.pl/dataverse/adj>)[[1]](#footnote-1) . Both Archives store data on the Social Data Repository (RDS) platform. Research data from philosophy projects can be transferred to other repositories, in particular to the Open Data Repository (RepOD, [repod.icm.edu.pl](https://repod.icm.edu.pl/)).

The repositories listed above follow the FAIR principles and accept research data intended to be made available online accompanied by appropriate documentation (including metadata). Each data set is given a permanent digital identifier (DOI). In principle, these repositories accept research data in anonymised or pseudonymised form, although exceptions to this rule are possible in the case of ADJ. Where necessary, access restrictions are imposed (e.g. a grace/embargo period – making data available only after the project results have been compiled and published, access only for registered users, granting access to data after the user has accepted certain conditions, etc.). Further information on the procedure for archiving research data in PADS and ADJ is available at respectively <https://pads.org.pl/> and <https://adj.ifispan.pl/>. The RDS regulations are available at: <https://rds.icm.edu.pl/terms-of-use-page.xhtml>, and the RepOD regulations are available at: <https://repod.icm.edu.pl/terms-of-use-page.xhtml>.

### 4.3.2. Other Digital Repositories

If it is planned to make research data available online and at the same time it is not possible to transfer the data to PADS, ADJ or RepOD for legitimate reasons (this may happen e.g. in some international projects), it is recommended to choose a research data repository that follows the FAIR principles and has a quality certificate (e.g. Core Trust Seal, <https://www.coretrustseal.org>).

### 4.3.3.  Procedure in Case of Projects Carried out in Cooperation with Other Institutions

In the case of projects based on cooperation, e.g. implemented in a consortium with other entities, it is necessary to specify as early as possible and in a precise manner (preferably in the cooperation agreement) how the issue of research data management will be solved, how and by whom the activities in this respect will be coordinated, and which tasks in this area will be entrusted to IFiS PAN.

### 4.3.4. Archiving Research Data in the Institute Archives of IFiS PAN

If research data cannot be made available on-line either at the completion of the project or in the foreseeable future, it should be transferred to the Institute Archives of IFiS PAN. Contact to the person responsible for the Institute Archives of IFiS PAN can be found at <https://ifispan.pl/en/administracja/>.

### 4.3.5. Cost of Archiving and Sharing Research Data

The costs related to archiving and making available research data collected or produced within the framework of grants implemented at IFiS PAN should be covered from the funds of these grants, in most cases from indirect costs. This also applies to grants implemented from statutory funds.

# 5. Support for Employees

Persons to contact with questions on research data management:

* Data Management and Archiving Specialist (assistance with developing and implementing data management plans, technical issues), datasteward@ifispan.edu.pl,
* IFIS Data Protection Officer (information on protecting research participants personal data), iod@ifispan.edu.pl.

1. In the case of mixed-methods projects, decisions are made on a case-by-case basis by agreement between the researcher and representatives of the Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)