Data Policy
at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Preamble

The WZB Berlin Social Science Center conducts basic research in the fields of social sciences. Its research is problem-oriented with a particular focus on the problems of societies. As a member of the Leibniz Association, the WZB favors making the results from publicly funded research projects easily accessible to the public free of charge.

[Purpose] Research data are both the foundation and the result of scientific work and are therefore of special importance in the scientific process. This Data Policy sets out the fundamental principles for the responsible handling of research data at the WZB. [Related texts] This Data Policy encourages the implementation of the DFG (German Research Foundation) Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice[i] as well as the Guidelines on the Handling of Research Data within the Leibniz Association[ii] and supplements the Open Access guidelines of the WZB. [Scope of application] These principles apply to all research data handled at the WZB. They are binding on all researchers and persons supporting research at the WZB (directors, employees, scholarship holders, guests, etc.).

[Definition] Research data are defined as all data that are generated or evaluated during scientific work. This includes survey data, measurement data, audiovisual information and texts. This Data Policy also applies to the documents that are directly associated with research data (e.g. questionnaires, syntax and documentation) as well as descriptive metadata.

Fundamental principles

[Principles] Making research data available to others as a basis for scientific statements creates transparency, reproducibility and reusability. This depends crucially on quality-assured documentation satisfying current standards in the field and on the long-term availability of research data. The WZB requires its researchers to publish research data created at the institute in a suitable data archive or repository.

[Recognition] Reusable research data benefit all areas of science. The WZB therefore encourages the recognition of research data as scientific output. In the assessment of research achievements, it treats citable, accessible research data in the same manner as a scientific text publication. At the same time, the WZB expects its researchers to observe the principles of good scientific practice when handling research data, e.g. to clarify authorship and to cite and acknowledge appropriately the research data published by others.

[Financing] The WZB is committed to create the conditions necessary for implementing the foregoing fundamental principles. They include in particular the infrastructure sup

porting the researchers, which is provided by institutional research data management.

Implementation

[Responsibilities] It is the responsibility of the researchers to handle research data in accordance with this Data Policy. Persons in positions of leadership in particular are responsible for ensuring that projects implement this Data Policy, e.g. by using a data management plan. The WZB requires its researchers to save securely and in the long-term the research data they produce at the WZB, to document them sufficiently, and to prepare them in an appropriate manner. The research data management supports the researchers towards the publication of their data in a suitable data archive or repository, and during quality assurance in line with current standards in their field according to the FAIR principles[iii]. Citation of published data is made possible using persistent identifiers. The data remain accessible for at least ten years. The WZB also expects publication of research data that are financed by third-party funding. Researchers should strive to achieve corresponding conditions of publication through the applicant when contracts are concluded with third-party funding bodies. [External cooperation] This Data Policy must also be implemented for research data generated in cooperative projects with researchers or service providers from outside the WZB.

[Guarantees regarding researchers] The WZB holds the use rights to research data obtained from research at the WZB. At the same time, it accepts the interests of the researchers in first use of the research data they have produced. The timing of publication should therefore be agreed between the WZB and the researchers.

[Guarantees regarding data] The handling of all research data at the WZB must comply with legal and ethical obligations. In particular, the standard regulations for the protection of personal data must be adhered to. In addition, confidential or sensitive matters, copyright regulations and obligations to third parties must be taken into consideration. Fulfillment of these obligations may mean that access to some of the institute's research data has to be restricted. In the case of external research data, the relevant conditions of the supplier of the data must be satisfied.

[Updating] Upon recommendation from the Academic Council, this Data Policy shall enter into force when it is passed by the WZB management on 02/25/2020. After a period of no more than two years it shall be reviewed by the institutional research data management to determine whether it requires updating, and adapted as necessary.

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[i]See: https://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/rechtliche_rahmenbedingungen/gute_wissenschaftliche_praxis/kodex_gwp_en.pdf
[ii]See: https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Bilder_und_Downloads/Forschung/Open_Science/Leitlinie_Forschungsdaten_2018_EN.pdf
[iii]According to the FAIR principles (Wilkinson et al., 2016, https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18), research data should be saved and stored "findable", "accessible", "interoperable", and "re-usable".