

REVIEWING AND REVISING CGIAR'S OPEN ACCESS AND DATA MANAGEMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Locations Worldwide

Dates 01/03/2020 - 31/07/2020

Summary

Timely and accurate decisions are critical to the success of food systems around the world. Accessible and well-managed data promotes more efficient research and greater visibility and transparency for organizations that conduct it. With this in mind, CGIAR promised to publish their research data openly and free from restriction through the development of the *CGIAR Open Access and Data Management (OADM) Policy* in 2013. In this project, CABI led a review of the policy (and accompanying implementation guidelines) to determine how it was implemented across the CGIAR System and whether updates were required to remain relevant to today's research landscape. With findings from this assessment, recommendations were made to ensure the policy included best practice (for example inclusion of the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) data principles) and was reflective of CGIAR staff experiences. Implementation Guidelines were also developed in consultation with those implementing them.

The problem

As food systems come under increasing pressures due to factors such as growing populations and climate change, the importance of making timely and accurate decisions becomes ever more critical. Well-made decisions depend on:

current, accurate and available information; effectively managed data and publications; and the tools to turn information into insight.

In 2013, the CGIAR System committed to publishing its research data and other information products openly and free from restriction through the development of their *OADM policy*. In 2014, the corresponding *Implementation Guidelines* were developed to help operationalize this policy.

While the previously published OADM policy and Implementation Guidelines made important steps towards CGIAR advancing an open culture, there are varying levels of engagement with open access and data management across the organization. Additionally, the understanding of the importance of data sharing has developed substantially, with funders, publishers, and research organizations increasingly mandating the publication of well-managed data. Perhaps the most notable development has been the widespread adoption of the FAIR data principles as a guiding framework for research data management. Within CGIAR itself, there has been major strides in advancing the use of data, such as its Platform for Big Data and Global Agricultural Research Data Innovation and Acceleration Network (GARDIAN) discovery tool.

What we are doing

In light of the changes in the digital and data management landscape, the CGIAR System commissioned CABI to conduct a review of CGIAR progress in data sharing, specifically assessing whether the OADM Policy is still fit for purpose, seven years after first drafting.

The review assessed how well the OADM policy incorporated best practice research data management frameworks and how it has been implemented within Centers.

To inform this, the team conducted 17 interviews with Data and Information Managers from across the organization to understand the successes and challenges they have encountered during the implementation of the 2013 OADM Policy. The policy and guidelines were also assessed against the “How to Write a FAIR and Open Policy” checklist.

The results were used to inform the gaps in the previous policy and implementation guidelines and to indicate which aspects were successful. The findings of the investigation were used to draft a series of recommendations and a revised version of the OADM Policy and framework for the Implementation Guidelines. The Implementation Guidelines represent a baseline framework which should be built upon with data and information specialists across the Centers.

Results so far

An in-depth report of our key findings and recommendations was produced and presented to the CGIAR in August 2020 together with a revised draft OADM Policy. The revised policy committed to making research objects as open as possible and was explicitly framed around the FAIR data principles.

The revised OADM policy was officially approved by the System Management Board and renamed the CGIAR Open and FAIR Data Assets Policy, with effect from 16 April 2021. This policy supersedes and replaces in its entirety the 2013 Open Access and Data Management Policy. It addresses funder and publisher requirements, the recommendations from CABI’s external assessment and responds to a 2020 Data Management Maturity Assessment.

CABI is committed to working with CGIAR to share the insights from our studies with donors of agricultural development research – donors have an important role in helping shape career-relevant incentives to share data.

Donors

Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIAR)

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