

CESSDA ERIC Agenda 21-24, Tasks 21-22

Widening of CESSDA European Coverage

D7 Tool(s), method and policy for monitoring developments and activities at CESSDA member and partner SPs, in member and partner countries, and at EU level

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Executive Summary

Monitoring the state and development of CESSDA SPs has always been an important part in CESSDA projects. Monitoring made it possible to recognise gaps and propose development of different tools, services and training in order to bridge them. This deliverable describes paths towards systematic and harmonised monitoring on three identified levels, namely organisation and funding of data repositories, their developments and ongoing activities and lastly developments on national and European level.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AUSSDA	Austrian Social Science Data Archive
CESSDA	Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives
CF	Core facilities
CTS	CoreTrustSeal
DAS	Data Archiving Service
EC	European Commission
EOSC	European Open Science Cloud
ERA	European Research Area
ERIC	European Research Infrastructure Consortium
ESFRI	European Strategic Forum on Research Infrastructures
FAIR	Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable
GA	General Assembly
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MO	Main Office
RI	Research Infrastructure
SaW	Strengthening and Widening
SEEDS	South-Eastern European Data Services
SERSCIDA	Support for Establishment of National/Regional Social Sciences Data Archives
SP	Service provider

1. Purpose of this document

This document describes CESSDA's approach towards monitoring the developments at CESSDA member and partner SPs, as well as developments related to Open Science in the member and partner countries, along with changes of recommendations and regulations at the EU level. Goals and objectives of monitoring are presented, and the methodology for collecting needed information is proposed. In the dedicated chapter possible use of outputs for CESSDA and addressed SPs is presented.

2. Goals and objectives of monitoring

In the framework of the Widening of CESSDA European Coverage task¹, the goals and principles of monitoring for CESSDA as a whole, for SPs and also for member states, need to be addressed. Three main paths for monitoring have been identified, namely organisation and funding of data repositories, their developments and ongoing activities and lastly developments on national and European level. Defining standardised processes and tools of monitoring which can be applied to SPs (with certain variations regarding the category of SP: CESSDA member, partner, non-partner in ERA, service provider outside ERA) is a general goal of this policy report.

Open Science field and with it FAIRification of survey data and its publication in trusted repositories is becoming more and more important and is changing rapidly in the last years. Requirements coming from the EC, also in the form of new regulation for openness in new financial perspective for research projects Horizon Europe, demand openness and availability of research data and related materials as well as data management plans. It is important that CESSDA follows these developments and tries to respond with its strategic decisions and planned agenda tasks. Monitoring, as introduced in this deliverable, will identify gaps but also strengths of partners and will serve as the basis for the future work of CESSDA. Systematic comparison between organisations will show positive elements of specific funding and organisational schemes, as well as it will address challenges. On the basis of this information SPs and partnering organisations will be able to decide, if such institutional framework could be realised in their situations.

3. Overview of past activities

Past activities on monitoring state and developments in the European social science landscape includes work on establishing national and regional networks of data archive

¹ Deliverable is outcome of CESSDA Agenda 21-22 Widening & Outreach Pillar Task 1 Widening of CESSDA European Coverage

initiatives, the SERSCIDA project² (2012-2014), and a follow up, the SEEDS project³ (2015-2017), which both focused on Western Balkan countries. Both projects provided an overview on the conditions and capacities of different organisations, residing in the national contexts, starting with identifying potentials and infrastructures for establishment of social science data archives. Monitoring the state of activities resulted in planning and delivery of intensive training, organisation building, development of technical infrastructure, and promotion and outreach activities. They brought partner institutions into the fold of an international movement of data publishing and networks that provided long-term benefits not only to these institutions, but more importantly to the respective national research communities. Some involved organisations are nowadays active service providers, representatives of their country in CESSDA.

The CESSDA SaW (Strengthening and Widening) project⁴ (2015-2017) examined the barriers to and the potential value and benefits from membership in CESSDA. A series of country reports⁵ mapping the current state of Data Archive Service (DAS) in each country and reflecting on the conditions that affect their position was produced. Information was collected on all ERA countries. Individual national development plans⁶ for aspiring CESSDA Service Providers were also drawn up. The findings served as a starting point for further development planning, and the results have been used for defining necessary steps to be taken to achieve a national data service sustainability, and to promote CESSDA membership.

CESSDA Widening Activities 2018 project followed up on developments reported in the past projects. As a part of the project, a system of monitoring of the state-of-play⁷ was set up and a report on recent developments at non-member countries⁸ had been prepared. Project proposed setting up a monitoring system based on regular short surveys of CESSDA Partners and other contacts established in non-member countries and gathering this information through the years in a living document. The report on developments summed up information gathered in the monitoring survey and interviews conducted in 2018 of respective CESSDA partners.

² SERSCIDA. Deliverables. <http://www.serscida.eu/en/deliverables> [6.12.2021]

³ SEEDS project. Deliverables. https://seedsproject.ch/?page_id=64 [6.12.2021]

⁴ CESSDA SaW - Strengthening and Widening CESSDA. <https://cessdasaw.eu/> [6.12.2021]

⁵ Štebe, J., Slavec, A., Vipavc Brvar, I., Bezjak, S., Vávra, M., Čížek, T., ... Stefanizzi, S. (2017, November 16). CESSDA saw D3.2: Country report on development potentials. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3769538>

⁶ Bornatici, C., Kleiner, B., Kvamme, T., Bradić-Martinović, A., Zdravković, A., Glavica, M., ... Van Den Eynden, V. (2017, November 16). CESSDA saw D3.4: National development plans for data services in non-CESSDA member countries in the ERA. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3769203>

⁷ CESSDA Widening Activities 2018 D7: Monitoring system of the state of play complemented with the needs of the CESSDA partners, 27/02/2019 [internal]

⁸ CESSDA Widening Activities 2018 D4: Report on recent developments in non-member countries, 18/01/2019 [internal]

In 2019⁹ some information on the situation in 2019 and plans for 2020 of CESSDA partnering SPs was provided through Mentorship¹⁰ as well as presented at CESSDA Widening event in Skopje¹¹. Comprehensive report was planned to be prepared and presented along the CESSDA Widening event in 2020. Event and with it also monitoring was postponed to late 2021 due to COVID-19 epidemic restrictions.

A summary of above mentioned activities was published in IASSIST Quarterly in 2020¹².

4. Harmonisation and alignment

There are not only past activities on Widening that need to be taken into consideration when developing instruments for future monitoring activities, but also other collections that are taking place in CESSDA.

Important achievements from Service Providers are regularly listed as Tour the Table for two main CESSDA meetings (Service Providers Forum and General Assembly). Service Providers that have already gained Core Trust Seal Certification provide information on organisational structure (among them mission, licences, continuity of access, organizational infrastructures), digital object management and technology in publicly available applications. With the goal of regular monitoring, but also addressing the gaps when they arise, CESSDA has set Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that will be collected yearly. KPIs are based and adjusted for CESSDA specific cases on the work done in the ESFRI Monitoring Working group (MWG). KPIs follow nine objectives of greatest relevance for RI that ESFRI MWG identified (ESFRI, 2019):

- Enabling scientific excellence,
- Delivery of education and training,
- Enhancing transnational collaboration in Europe,
- Facilitating economic activity,
- Outreach to the public,
- Optimising data use,

⁹ See CESSDA Annual report: Ron Dekker, Eleanor Smith, Ivana Ilijašić Veršić, Martina Draščić, Vanja Komljenović, John Shepherdson, ... Mari Kleemola. (2020, November 9). CESSDA Annual Report 2019. Zenodo. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4264305>

¹⁰ CESSDA Widening Activities 2019 D3: Report on the Online Support Service and the Mentorship Programme, 27/07/2020, https://serval.unil.ch/en/notice/serval:BIB_41B7B92313BE

¹¹ Widening Skopje 2019 - CESSDA. <https://www.cessda.eu/skopje2019/> [6.12.2021]

¹² Janez Štebe. (2020). Examining barriers for establishing a national data service (Version 1.0). IASSIST Quarterly, Vol 43(No 4 (2019)), 1–14. <http://doi.org/10.29173/iq960>

- Provision of scientific advice,
- Facilitating International co-operation and
- Optimising management.

In addition to above-mentioned regular activities there are ad-hoc monitoring activities taking place in CESSDA, such as the STERE project (in 2021), where interviews were conducted with representatives of Ministries from selected Member States with the goal of strengthening relationships and engaging with Member States.

This list is not conclusive. It does however show that alignment and harmonisation of collections as well as good communication between CESSDA MO, CESSDA pillars and Agenda Tasks, will be needed in the future in order to minimise the burden on respondents, avoid duplication and utilize gathered information in a more effective way. Special focus should be put in clarifying which information can be made public and which is sensitive business information for an SP. Actors should set general rules on storage, use and distribution of collected information and inform respondents about them.

5. Methodology

5.1 Coverage

In the CESSDA SaW project all 44 countries belonging to the European Research Area (ERA) were monitored. In the Agenda 21-22 monitoring task, the coverage of the ERA will continue, but there will be different levels of monitoring, depending on countries' involvement in CESSDA. The methods of monitoring will differ between the groups, with a more comprehensive review of the countries in groups 1 and 2, as identified below. Introduced grouping will be reconsidered for each task at hand and if necessary adjusted.

Furthermore, some countries outside Europe with developed research infrastructures for social sciences will be included, giving a global perspective and an outlook on developments outside of Europe.

The European Commission policy decisions on research infrastructures, on open science and research as a whole will pave the way for many national research infrastructures but also CESSDA as a whole. Recommendations to the EC from conferences such as ERA 2021¹³ will be important to follow. Expectations as well as recommendations of important players on the level of the EU will be investigated in the fifth group.

¹³ New European Research Area (ERA). (2021). Conference summary report and recommendations, <https://era-si.eu/porocilo/> [6.12.2021]

Group 1 - CESSDA member countries

This group comprises all of the SPs representing CESSDA ERIC member states. CESSDA SPs are listed here as one group. Past monitoring showed significant differences between organisations. This will be addressed in the time of analysis and subgroups of the countries addressed might differ upon studied topic. This group consists of the following 23 countries¹⁴ : Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

Group 2 - CESSDA partner countries

This group comprises all of the organisations that either have data service or there are initiatives starting one. Their respective member states did not join CESSDA ERIC yet. The group of thirteen countries is as follows: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine.

This group of countries can be further divided into two subgroups, depending on whether or not a service provider was already established. This will be further investigated in dedicated deliverables. The suggested division is between Group 2a where DAS is established (Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine, Bosnia & Herzegovina) and Group 2b where data archive initiatives were identified, but DAS was not established yet (Albania, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Latvia, and Montenegro).

Group 3 - ERA countries, currently no collaboration

The third group consists of eight ERA countries with which CESSDA has no current collaboration. These are Belarus, Cyprus, Faroe Islands, Israel, Malta, Moldova, Spain, Turkey. CESSDA had in the past collaborated with Spain (with Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas (CIS)¹⁵) and Israel Social Sciences Data Center (ISDC), which closed at the end of 2019. Data from ISDC were transferred to the Central Bureau of Statistics¹⁶. The situation in Spain shall be reviewed and possible further collaboration proposed.

Group 4 - Global collaboration partners

The development in Europe also needs to be seen in a global perspective and be compared to other larger data services. This will mainly be done by monitoring the development in three countries with organisations similar to the European SPs: Australia (Australian Data

¹⁴ As of July 2021.

¹⁵ Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas, <http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/EN/index.html>

¹⁶ Israel Social Sciences Data Center, <https://en.isdc.huji.ac.il/>.

Archives (ADA))¹⁷, Japan (Social Science Japan Data Archive (SSJDA))¹⁸ and USA (Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR))¹⁹.

Group 5 - Players on the level of EU

Work of SPs and CESSDA ERIC need to be viewed in a broader ecosystem, namely their position in European research space. The fifth group will not focus on countries but rather on organizations whose decisions and recommendations influence the work of Research Infrastructures. Analysis of implication of relevant EC policies will be made, as well as review of EOSC recommendations and Rules of Participation, collaborations (EOSC clusters) and working programmes of other ERICs as well as RIs and CF in order to recommend future strategic decisions on the level of CESSDA and its SPs. Possible implementation of work done in Science Europe and Research Data Alliance will be addressed as well.

5.2 Collection

5.2.1 Database of contacts

To be able to monitor the development in a country and its respective SP, contacts with different stakeholders are required. Finding the right contact to get the required information is often time consuming. It is therefore important to find a solution where re-use of identified contacts is simple and can be used by other CESSDA WGs and tasks.

During the CESSDA SaW project a centralised contact list was introduced, aiming to ensure orderly communications with stakeholders across the different activities of projects and tasks. This was particularly useful for contacts in CESSDA non-member countries.

After the end of the SaW project the contact list has been used for different Widening activities. Some information has been updated, but there has been no general update of the list. One of projects first tasks will be to update this database with relevant information, align the use of the instrument and define management and responsibilities with other CESSDA WGs that are collecting information from SPs either directly or via survey.

A Centralized database of contacts that could be used for contacting and gathering information for different CESSDA purposes will be regularly maintained. Since the database contains personal information a special focus will be given to providing controlled accesses to the document.

¹⁷ The Australian Data Archives, <https://ada.edu.au/>

¹⁸ Social Science Japan Data Archive, <https://csrda.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/english/>

¹⁹ Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/>

5.2.2 Collection instrument and method of data collection

The data collection method for the purpose of monitoring will depend on the target group, the time scope and the monitoring needs.

Regular monitoring activities aimed at developments at member SPs and partners will be realized on the basis of the self-completed questionnaires combining questions of standardized categories with open-ended questions allowing detailed and descriptive answers. Ideally this systematic monitoring will utilize the result of other regular data collections within CESSDA mentioned in the Harmonization chapter. In addition, semi-structured interviews will be conducted in order to explore a few relevant topics in depth. As compared to filling out the written detailed answers to open-ended survey questions, interviews allow immediate clarification and follow up questions. Interviews could also be perceived as a less demanding task in terms of invested efforts and time (oral narrations are often less formal; the interviews are mostly 1 hour long). Further, desk research can be used for collecting data that are easily available through documents, especially data on institutional settings. Desk research will be the primary collection method in countries with missing or unresponsive contact and for collecting information on developments on national level as well as for exploring different policy documents.

Regular monitoring will enable tracking of developments or lack-off them and provide enough information for further strategic decisions on development of CESSDA.

5.2.3 Areas and topics to be addressed in the monitoring reports

Three main areas to be addressed in the Agenda 21-22 are:

- Organisation and funding of SPs in CESSDA member and partner countries,
- Development and activities at CESSDA member and partner SPs,
- National institutional settings and developments in CESSDA member and partner countries, and on relevant EC policies, EOSC and on other ERICs/RIs.

Detailed content and research topics for each of these areas will be elaborated in the deliverables themselves and it could use, but is not limited to, general subject fields and sources described below.

Topics for monitoring and reporting on organisation and funding of SPs in CESSDA member and partner countries could cover:

- Organisational scheme (could follow and elaborate on CTS),
- Mission and scope,
- Disciplinary scope and data types coverage,

- Structure and status (e.g. part of university, research centre, consortium),
- Support offered by host institution and outsourced work,
- Collaboration with different actors, also ERICs in SSH,
- Links and connections between data archives and academic institutions (universities, research institutes),
- funding (structure (e.g. directly or via consortium) and level of funding, expectations and rules for funding from national funding agencies),
- sustainability of archiving activities (funding and service as a whole),
- investigate possible merging with other larger infrastructures.

Proposed topics for monitoring and reporting on development and activities at CESSDA member and partner SPs could be divided in four main sections:

- Development of the social sciences sector in the country (funding capacities, human resources and infrastructure, international collaboration and national studies as drivers of data production in the country). Financial and institutional statuses of social science.
- RDM policy and support setting (policies for data documentation and management facilitating data sharing, ethical and legal framework, data management plans, sustainability of long-term curation of research data, open science).
- Data sharing culture (behaviour/practises, attitudes and perceived barriers and incentives for data sharing, RDM support and practises including development of data stewardship as profession, FAIR principles). Conditions in which data sharing culture can flourish.
- Data infrastructure. Technical infrastructure, organisational activities, communication, and training.

In countries where DAS does not exist yet or is currently less active, assessment of above mentioned segments will be made.

Monitoring at national and European level will include:

- Monitoring of national institutional settings and developments on Open Access roadmaps.
- Analysing new EC policies and regulations, recommendations developed for Horizon Europe work programme, as well as work done in EOSC Association and respective Working Groups.

- Analysing outcomes and recommendations of projects important to SSH and RIs (e.g. FAIRsFAIR, SSHOC, TRIPLE, EOSC Future), but also organisations such as RDA, and OPENAire.

Consultation with CESSDA MO and Scientific Advisory Board about impactful documents and organisations will take place.

6. Outputs

Majority of past monitoring at CESSDA partner DASs was done with the intention to help and prepare DASs joining CESSDA ERIC and to improve capacities of its staff. Monitoring of CESSDA SPs and evaluation of their maturity was only done in the CESSDA SaW project. This document elaborates the need for regular monitoring of three areas. On the basis of this monitoring, categorization of SPs could be developed in order to provide different modes of support from the side of CESSDA.

Outputs should serve different purposes, first and foremost for strategic decisions of CESSDA in its widening and strengthening role and planning of future Agenda tasks in order to improve and stabilise the situation in studied counties and SPs. Outputs should also be available to partner and member SPs to compare among each other and inspire bilateral collaborations. With the intention to show the progress, achievements, and examples of good practices of SPs, countries and their inclusion in the Open Science community, a summary of outputs should be published on CESSDA website, pending approval. Summary of reports could be published in the CESSDA Annual Report as well.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

This document summarises monitoring activities on three areas that CESSDA should follow in the future. Goals, methodology for collecting information as well as proposed use of outcomes is described.

Monitoring reports should serve CESSDA and its working groups to make conscious strategic decisions about widening and strengthening activities in order to improve sharing of research data and promote open science. Reports will provide insight into the types of funding and organisational structure and help CESSDA prepare for challenges arising from different settings of its Service Providers. Different monitoring activities should be continuous efforts and should include collaboration between different working groups and tasks that are gathering information on CESSDA SPs in order to improve monitoring and support strategic decision making, and not to overburden respondents.

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Štebe, J. (2020). Examining barriers for establishing a national data service. *IASSIST Quarterly* 43(4), 1–14. <http://doi.org/10.29173/iq960>.

Štebe, J., Slavec, A., Vipavc Brvar, I., Bezjak, S., Vávra, M., Čížek, T., . . . Stefanizzi, S. (2017, November 16). *CESSDA SaW D3.2: Country report on development potentials*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3769538>.

Appendix 1

Example of a table from Database of contacts

Main contact persons						
	Institution	Function / title	Name	email	Notes	Date updated
Ministry						
CESSDA delegate GA						
CESSDA delegate GA						
Head / director of SP						
CESSDA delegate SPF						
W&O WG contact person						
Training WG contact person						
CESSDA MDO contact person						
CESSDA Comms group contact						
Follow-up of contacts:						
Date	Status of contact	Purpose of contact	Person contacted	Person initiating contact	Notes	