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# CESSDA Annual Report 2024



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# Foreword by the Chair

The core business of CESSDA ERIC is to create and sustain a network of trusted data archives for social science research data. On the national level, Service Providers deliver the services, ingest, process, and distribute archived data for reuse and functioning in a FAIR-enabling manner. During the summer 2024 CESSDA organised its first CESSDA Conference in Split, Croatia, celebrating ten years since the establishment of the CESSDA Main Office and the ERIC in 2014. Beside an expert seminar on data citation, workshops on AI and computational social sciences were organised. Attendees praised the quality of the presentations, panel discussions, workshops, and the excellent networking opportunities proving that CESSDA is more than just the sum of its Service Providers and functions of its Main Office.



CESSDA strives to widen its membership to the partner countries. The current 12 partners were also invited to participate in the CESSDA Conference, and the invitation was well received. During the year CESSDA had closer discussions with Lithuania to go forward with becoming the 23<sup>rd</sup> full member of CESSDA ERIC.

My own institute, Finnish Social Science Data Archive, FSD, has been involved in CESSDA cooperation since FSD was founded in 1999 and CESSDA was a loose cooperation between data archives. Indeed, the year 2024 marked the 25th anniversary for FSD. During that time many changes have taken place, but the motivation for data archiving is even stronger.

Another major highlight in 2024 for the CESSDA community was that Professor Matthew Woollard was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his services to data science and higher education. As Director of the UK Data Archive and UK Data Service (UKDS) from 2010 to 2023, Professor Woollard led pioneering developments in data curation and active preservation across the social sciences. As a leading expert in the field, he also assisted policymakers in developing key legislation, including the Digital Economy Act (2018).

At the end of 2024 I stepped down from my position as Chair of the General Assembly in November. The two terms were, at times, busy as well as full of rewarding engagements and collegial meetings. It was very much also a learning experience. My thanks go to the Main Office staff for their support and to Director Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch for her wise approach in steering CESSDA. I was happy to leave the General Assembly in the capable hands of two well experienced colleagues, Matthias Reiter-Pázmándy now transferring from vice-Chair to Chair and Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim to take vice-Chairs position. All the best to our new power duo for 2025!

**Helena Laaksonen, Chair of the General Assembly**

# Foreword by the CESSDA Director

The year 2024 was marked by CESSDA's chairing of the Social Sciences and Humanities Open Cluster (SSHOC) and its monitoring by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructure (ESFRI) Landmark Monitoring Process.

An overall priority for SSHOC is the representation of the Social Sciences and Humanities Community at the European level and the promotion of its communities. In this context CESSDA became part of the executive Board of the ERIC Forum Executive Board, the representative body of all ERICs in Europe. CESSDA also represented SSHOC during the creation of the Swiss SSHOC-node, demonstrating that the SSHOC model has gained traction at the national level.

Other high level events, where CESSDA represented SSHOC were the 20 years of the European research infrastructure for heritage science networks (E-RHIS) and International Conference on Research Infrastructures (ICRI) in Brisbane.



The preparation of the material for the ESFRI landmark monitoring process provided a good opportunity to reflect upon CESSDA's past and future pathways in a rapidly changing research environment. CESSDA as a consortium is proud to report that CESSDA's role in Europe and increasingly in the global context in shaping global standards for metadata interoperability and data-sharing practices was acknowledged. Other positive impacts mentioned in the feedback report were the geographic inclusiveness of its network and tailoring of services to meet the needs of all its partners, ensuring that high-quality data is accessible and usable across the region. On behalf of CESSDA I would like to thank the reviewers, the Chair and participants of the ESFRI monitoring process, the colleagues from the Service Providers present at the hearing and the CESSDA management team.

Finally, I would like to thank the Chair of the CESSDA General Assembly Helena Laaksonen, Director of the Finnish Social Science Data Archive, for her dedication to CESSDA and continuous support to the Main Office. In 2025 Matthias Reiter-Pázmándy from the Directorate General for Scientific Research and International Relations in the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) will act as the new CESSDA General Assembly Chair. Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim, Director of the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Sikt) has been voted as the new CESSDA vice-Chair.

**Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch, Director and CEO**



# CESSDA 2024 Highlights

## CESSDA Governance

The General Assembly of CESSDA met twice in 2024: in June in Split, Croatia and in November in Bergen, Norway. The major discussion points were:

- CESSDA Membership matters;
- Fostering existing and new partnerships (see chapter below on researchers and data experts);
- The discussion of installing a biannual budget;
- The revision of the CESSDA statutes.

The CESSDA Service Providers' Forum (SPF), an advisory body to the Director, consisting of representatives of CESSDA national Service Providers met in June in Split and virtually in November 2024.

The major discussion points at the SPF were:

- The work plan 2025;
- The creation of a new Service Provider WG on AI;
- The creation of European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) nodes;
- EU-Funded Projects.

## CESSDA Conference

In June 2024 CESSDA organised its first CESSDA conference marking its 10th anniversary when the CESSDA Main Office was set up in Bergen, Norway. The Conference was dedicated to the different main stakeholders of CESSDA: the Service Providers, the researchers, policy makers and the Member Countries. The focus topics of the conference were on contemporary challenges in the social sciences, on interoperability of data and metadata, and cross-disciplinarity.



## CESSDA Membership

### Lithuania

Lithuania's research community joined forces to become the 23rd member of CESSDA ERIC.

On the 14th of November CESSDA's Director presented CESSDA ERIC and the European landscape at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities of the Kaunas University of Technology (KUT). The overall theme of the conference was how to strengthen Lithuania's potential in the Humanities and Social Sciences through LiDA, the Lithuanian Data Archive and its envisaged membership in CESSDA.<sup>1</sup> The event also included the announcement of a national advisory board made up of representatives from other Lithuanian Universities

<sup>1</sup> <https://lida.dataverse.lt/>

from the social sciences and the humanities, and representatives from the cultural heritage, NGOs and opinion poll sector. This inclusive approach may have the potential to lay the base for a future Lithuanian SSHOC strengthening the national SSH community.



## ESFRI Landmark Monitoring

On 29 April 2024, CESSDA successfully submitted its documentation to ESFRI in the context of the Landmark Monitoring process with a questionnaire on governance, management, and the impact of CESSDA at the national and European level. CESSDA's Key Performance Indicators (C-KPIs) and interviews with CESSDA members were also part of the documentation. These interviews, along with case studies demonstrating how researchers use CESSDA's tools and services, highlighted the importance of CESSDA. The documentation package also included a publications list and recent policy documents.

A list of recent policy documents is available here:

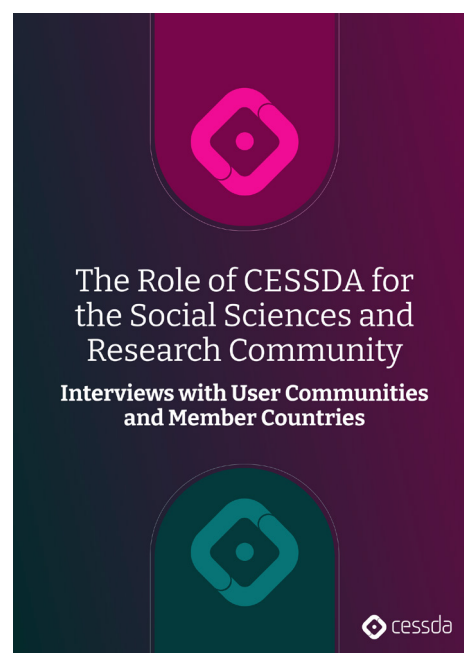
→ [https://www.cessda.eu/News/List-images/CESSDA\\_Recent\\_Policy\\_Documents.pdf](https://www.cessda.eu/News/List-images/CESSDA_Recent_Policy_Documents.pdf)

A list of recent publications is available here:

→ [https://www.cessda.eu/News/List-images/CESSDA\\_Bibliography.pdf](https://www.cessda.eu/News/List-images/CESSDA_Bibliography.pdf)

A complete list of records deposited in Zenodo is available here:

→ <https://zenodo.org/communities/cessda/records?q=&l=list&p=1&s=10&sort=newest>



## Results of the ESFRI Landmark Monitoring Process

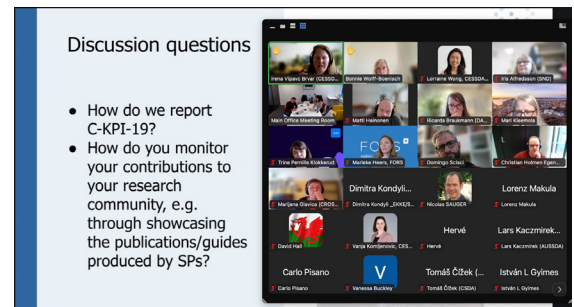
The preparation of the materials for the ESFRI Landmark Monitoring process provided a good opportunity to reflect upon CESSDA's past and future pathways in a rapidly changing research environment. CESSDA received very positive reviews and recommendations. CESSDA's role in Europe and increasingly in the global context in shaping global standards for metadata interoperability and data-sharing practices was acknowledged. Other positive impacts mentioned were the geographic inclusiveness of its network and tailoring of services to meet the needs of all its partners, ensuring that high-quality data is accessible and usable across the region. A recommendation for the future is to continue assessing and addressing the needs of its users, including researchers, research data managers, and policymakers. By



collecting user stories, CESSDA can showcase and leverage best practices for accessing and finding relevant data in exemplary projects.

## CESSDA-KPI Workshop

A 2-day online workshop took place to discuss the CESSDA Key Performance Indicators (C-KPIs). About 30 participants from Service Providers (SPs) convened to discuss ways to refine the C-KPIs to amplify CESSDA's contribution to scientific excellence and policy development. Workshop participants reflected on the key recommendations from the draft ESFRI 2024 Landmark Monitoring Report and the evolving expectations from governments. The workshop sessions highlighted the importance of clarifying definitions in the C-KPI Handbook, collecting qualitative indicators (i.e., impact stories), and incorporating new metrics to capture citations, user needs, researcher engagement, policy influence, and strategic partnerships. Key takeaways include proposing modifications to the C-KPIs and agreeing with SPs on the C-KPI Handbook updates. These changes will be reflected in the forthcoming C-KPI data collection cycle in 2025.

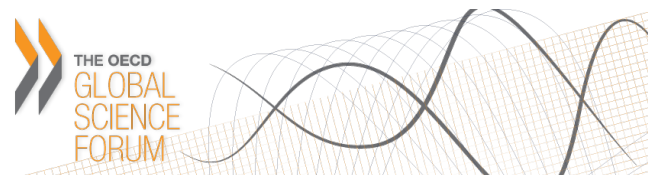




# CESSDA in the International and European Landscape

## OECD Workshop on Research Ecosystem

The OECD Global Science Forum (GSF) held a workshop investigating added values, challenges, and new models for the development of national research Infrastructure ecosystems on 28 February 2024. CESSDA's Director presented the work of CESSDA with a focus on the rationales for developing CESSDA, as well as options and solutions developed in the context of CESSDA's governance, sustainability, user access, and data policy.



## Scientific Diplomacy

CESSDA participated in a Forum on Scientific Diplomacy on 20 May 2024 in the framework of the Annual Conference of the European Academy of Religion in Palermo. The invitation came from RESILIENCE, the European Research Infrastructure on Religious Studies, a project on the ESFRI preparatory list and SSHOC member since 2021. RESILIENCE aims at supporting excellence in science, by improving access to digital as well as physical data on religion and to advanced tools, training, existing research infrastructures and expertise for new, digitised and data-oriented research in the field of research on religion on a global level. The event with participation of researchers and ambassadors discussed how diplomacy is enhanced by research infrastructures, scientific programmes and cultural exchange. It also explored how the study of religious aspects, notions, elements can properly address EU priorities.



*From left to right: Monique Bossi, Infrastructure Manager of the Einstein Telescope Infrastructure Consortium; Francesca Cadeddu, General Director of Resilience; Alessandro Capra, Professor at the Department of Engineering "Enzo Ferrari" University of Modena; Asher Maoz, Professor at the Peres Academic Center Law School; Herman Selderhuis Professor of church history and church polity at the Theological University of Apeldoorn, H.H. S.E. Ahmed Saleh Al-Rashdi, Undersecretary of the Sultanate of Oman; Evarist Bartalo, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch, CEO of CESSDA ERIC, Lidia Borrel-Damián, Secretary General of Science Europe and Alberto Melloni, Professor at Università di Bologna and secretary of FSCIRE.*

## Standards and Metadata

Alen Vodopijevic, CESSDA's Head of IT represented CESSDA at the Dagstuhl Workshop, *Aligning Technology Architectures with Cross-Domain Metadata Models* hosted by the Leibniz Center for Informatics in Germany at the Schloss Dagstuhl. The annual event brought together international experts, including representatives from CESSDA member data archives (e.g., UKDS, Sikt, DANS, GESIS), esteemed organisations such as Harvard Dataverse and W3C (the World Wide Web Consortium), universities, and research institutions. This gathering fostered interdisciplinary collaboration. It underscored the importance of international partnerships in advancing metadata standards to promote data interoperability and FAIR principles.



## World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR)

CESSDA ERIC, GESI (the German Data archive), and LiDA (the Lithuanian Data Archive) were invited to discuss in a featured panel with colleagues and partners from Korea, Hong Kong, and the US at the 77th World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) annual conference on 28-31 July, 2024 in Seoul, Republic of Korea.<sup>2</sup> The conference *The soul of public opinion research: Liberty, Quality, and Humanity* discussed the latest developments in public opinion research, misinformation, and the study of campaigning and voting behavior. The focus was on challenges and opportunities posed by internet technologies such as social media platforms, artificial intelligence or quantum computing. In this context, the important role of data archives was highlighted in a panel discussion on *Long-term memory: a prerequisite for survival - how archiving elevates the social science of opinion research and ensures its enduring positive impact on society*.



The WAPOR 2024 was hosted by the Sungkyunkwan University, which was founded in 1398 as the highest national educational institute in the early years of the Joseon Dynasty in Korea, and is the oldest university in East Asia. Co-organisers were: the National Research Council for Economics, Humanities, and Social Sciences, the Korean Sociological Association, the Korea Social Science Data Archive (KOSSDA), the Korean Association of Party Studies, the Korean Association for Survey Research, and the Institute of Social Development and Policy Research at Seoul National University.

In the picture: Panel members and colleagues at a networking dinner Vaidas Morkevičius (LiDA), Christof Wolf (GESIS), Ho Kim (KOSSDA), Lydia Repke (GESIS), Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch (CESSDA) and Brett Powell (Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University).

<sup>2</sup> <https://wapor.org/wp-content/uploads/2024-WAPOR-CONFERENCEPROGRAM-August-01-2024.pdf>

## ICRI 2024 in Brisbane Australia

In cooperation with the European Commission, hosted the International Conference on Research Infrastructures (ICRI), the biggest forum for the global research infrastructure community in Brisbane from 2 to 5 December, 2024.<sup>3</sup> The biannual event delivered by CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, brought together policymakers, research performing leaders, research infrastructure operators and users from around the world. Key topics discussed ranged from digital research infrastructure, delivery of societal impact, with a focus on international best practices and examples of RI-enabled translation into policy, community, and industry applications to Indigenous knowledge, global collaboration and global challenges. Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch attended the high-level networking research infrastructure policy event. and participated in the ICRI's side event *Enabling global FAIR data: WorldFAIR investment recommendations for research infrastructures* hosted by CODATA. The session explored the challenges and opportunities of research infrastructures and how they can provide the necessary data engineering support to fully implement the FAIR principles. The event was also an occasion to meet and network with colleagues from the Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC), the Australian Data Archive (ADA) based at The Centre for POLIS: Social Policy Research, at the Australian National University (ANU), and many other colleagues from Australian and global research infrastructures. The event closed with the Brisbane Statement on a Collaborative Global Research Infrastructure Ecosystem to address global challenges and the strengthening of international research infrastructure collaborations that can help to solve them.



<sup>3</sup> <https://icri2024.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/ICRI-2024-Conference-Report.pdf>



# European Member States and Partner Organisations

## Ukraine

A joint event of the ESFRI Strategy Working Group on Social Sciences and Humanities and SSHOC was organised with the Horizon Europe Office in Ukraine, and the National Research Foundation of Ukraine on 1 October, 2024.<sup>4</sup> Participants discussed challenges for Ukrainian researchers, for instance in the field of data collection, data archiving and data access for SSH disciplines. There is also a growing interest in tools and collaborations to understand the dynamics of the Ukrainian diaspora across European countries.

The webinar aimed at establishing collaborations among researchers, policy makers and funders from the field. Specific support mechanisms, through national and European actors, were further discussed.

Supporting research infrastructures is not only a question of supporting research and science, but of a wider effort to produce evidence for policy. Research infrastructures in SSH collect data on society and culture that can support decision making in social, economic, cultural or health policy.



## The ERIC Forum

On the 27 and 28 February 2024, representatives of 28 ERICs and projects on the ESFRI preparatory list met for the annual General Assembly in Brussels.

The event was in the presence of guests from the European Commission, the EOSC Association, ESFRI, and EU Member States and focused on the progress of the ERIC Forum Project 2.0, which was launched on 1 September 2023.

The General Assembly discussed key activities of ERICs such as international collaboration, access to research infrastructures, upskilling of ERIC staff, VAT exemption, resource management, and communication and outreach matters.

Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch chaired the roundtable discussion on collaboration between ERICs and other national and international research infrastructures, the long-term sustainability of Research Infrastructures and the implementation of Open Science policies.



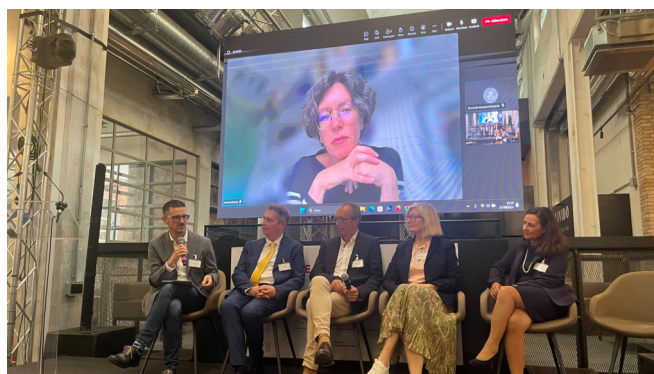
*In the photo from left to right: Anders Ihr (ESS-ERIC), Ana Portugal Melo (Director of MIRRI-ERIC), Florian Gliksohn (ELI-ERIC), ExBo Members of the ERIC Forum: Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch (CESSDA-ERIC), John Eriksson (Euro-Biolmaging), Harald Schwalbe (Instruct-ERIC), Thomas Feurer (EIRO Forum Chair) and John Collier (ARIE Board of Chairs).*

<sup>4</sup> <https://sshopencloud.eu/events/ukraine-webinar-developing-transnational-access-european-research-infrastructures-social>

# Researchers and Data Communities

## E-RIHS - the European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science Implementation Phase Project

On 24 September 2024, the European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science Implementation Phase project (E-RIHS) hosted a public event in Florence to commemorate its forthcoming conclusion and two decades of E-RIHS activities. Organised by the Institute for Heritage Science of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR ISPC) in collaboration with Fondazione CR Firenze, the event highlighted E-RIHS's transition to a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) based in Florence, a milestone achieved with support from Fondazione CR Firenze. As SSHOC chair Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch presented the importance and activities of SSHOC (the SSH Open Cluster).



## Driving Open Science Forward: The Foundation of SSHOC Switzerland Open Cluster

On 24 April 2024, in Bern, Switzerland, over 60 representatives from various national research infrastructures, the Swiss nodes of European ERICs and long-term projects within the social sciences and humanities met to establish the "Social Science and Humanities Open Cluster Switzerland (SSHOC-CH)".<sup>5</sup> This initiative aims to enhance collaboration, find synergies among social sciences and humanities infrastructures, and coordinate national resources to better support SSH scholars in their research and in managing their data in the spirit of Open Science and FAIR principles.



Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch praised the initiative, reflecting on SSHOC's evolution from a top-down European Commission project to a sustained collaborative effort backed by a Memorandum of Understanding among European Research Infrastructures that is now also reaching out to the national level.

The founding meeting discussed a whitepaper contextualizing SSHOC-CH within the broader national and European framework, outlined the mission and potential activities, which include participating in the ongoing national policy dialogues, developing joint policies especially with respect to data management and sharing, creating an inventory of existing resources, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, enhancing community engagement, and coordinating funding strategies and training programs.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://sshoc.ch/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://sshoc.ch/\\_media/sshoc-ch\\_white\\_paper\\_v04.09.2024.pdf](https://sshoc.ch/_media/sshoc-ch_white_paper_v04.09.2024.pdf)

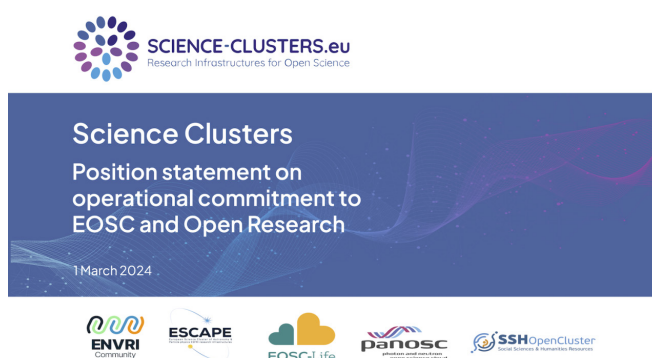
The founding assembly also formalised the organisation by approving its Statutes, electing a Board with 10 members, and appointing Georg Lutz, director of FORS (Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences), to the President position.

In his concluding remarks, Georg Lutz emphasised the need for the SSH community to leverage existing resources effectively. The SSH community should design and build robust, valuable projects and infrastructures that bring added value and services to the different research communities and that are professionally managed. However, he also stated that this should lead to a better recognition of SSH infrastructure needs and ongoing clustering efforts by key policy makers in Switzerland.

## The Science Clusters

The Science Clusters, operating as a cluster of clusters, have released a Position Statement (PS) on their operational commitment to EOSC and Open Research.<sup>7</sup> The PS articulates the vision of the five Science Clusters towards the goal of a successful implementation of the EOSC in the future. The Science Clusters emphasise the importance of access of researchers to data, tools, and resources for data-driven science. They also emphasise their contribution to the development of a cross-border

open innovation environment for FAIR data management and analytical services. The PS also expressed the Science Clusters' determination to establish thematic communities such as virtual competence centres, and the potential implications on the interconnection with the EOSC EU Node and national nodes. The Science Clusters offer an ideal platform to formulate a unified vision for the research infrastructure landscape while maintaining the diversity of research disciplines. To fulfil this role, support from Horizon Europe and future framework programmes is required to enable the operational role of the Science Clusters.



<sup>7</sup> <https://zenodo.org/records/10732049>



# CESSDA Supporting the Building of the EOSC

CESSDA's Service Providers (SPs) such as AUSSDA (AU), DANS (NL), FSD (FI), Sikt (NO) and UKDS (UK) and the Main Office are strongly represented in EOSC. They take part in EOSC working and focus groups establishing a Community of Practice. SPs and the Main Office is also involved in writing of the EOSC federation handbook.

## The EOSC EU Node

The EOSC EU node was launched on the 10 October by the European Commission. The building of the EOSC EU Node was provided through third-party managed services to support the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) initiative. Sigma 2 is a subsidiary of Sikt with strategic responsibility for, and operates, the national e-infrastructure for computer science in Norway was involved. This Node promotes the creation of a "Web of FAIR data and interoperable services," and serves as a foundation for the EOSC Federation's growth over an initial three-year period. It provides essential services for scientific research, such as single-sign-on, resource catalogs, and cloud based tools, while also setting a blueprint for future EOSC Nodes to join the federation under a unified architecture and interoperability framework.

## The EOSC Symposium

The EOSC Symposium took place in Berlin from 21-23 October 2024, focusing on shaping the build-up phase of the EOSC Federation and marking the official launch of the first node of the EOSC EU Node. ERICs played a significant role in the program, highlighting the importance of their perspectives in the ongoing development of EOSC. Notable contributions came from ERIC Forum ExBo member Bonnie Wolff-Boenisch (CESSDA ERIC), Natalie Haley (INSTRUCT-ERIC), Andreas Witt (CLARIN ERIC), Aastha Mathur (Euro-Biolmaging ERIC) as well as Petr Holub, Irene Schlünder, and Jens Habermann from BBMRI-ERIC.



# CESSDA Consortium Activities

## CESSDA Conference

From 11-13 June 2024 CESSDA organised its first CESSDA conference<sup>8</sup> celebrating its 10th anniversary when the CESSDA Main Office was set up in Bergen. The Conference was dedicated to the different main stakeholders of CESSDA: the Service Providers, the researchers, policy makers and the Member Countries. The conference focused on data, metadata and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Over the course of the four days, CESSDA and its SPs hosted also several workshops for the participants.



### Expert seminar on data citation

Nearly 50 participants joined the CESSDA Expert Seminar on data citation, a 3-hour session focused on the work of the CESSDA Data Citation Key Topic Working Group and its practical recommendations for six key stakeholder groups. A survey showed broad adoption of core citation practices, with room for improvement in advanced features such as interoperability and citation export tools. The seminar reinforced CESSDA's commitment to improving data citation practices and supporting open science and research reproducibility across Europe.



### Workshop on AI's role in CESSDA Service Providers

The workshop focused on how artificial intelligence (AI) can support and transform the work of CESSDA Service Providers. The session featured presentations from experts across Europe, showcasing AI applications in metadata enrichment, keywording, marketing, and statistical analysis. Speakers from UKDS, FSD, ADP, DANS, and GESIS demonstrated how AI tools can streamline data management processes and improve efficiency. The workshop emphasised the ethical and legal challenges AI presents, including privacy risks, bias, transparency, and environmental concerns.



<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cessda.eu/CESSDA-Documents/Conference%20summaries/CESSDA%20ERIC%20Conference%202024-2.pdf>

## Enhancing Reproducibility in Computational Social Science: Workshop Highlights

The session focused on tools and strategies to improve research reproducibility in computational social science. During the workshop, the speakers demonstrated how MyBinder transforms Git repositories into interactive notebooks, making it easier to share and reproduce computational research. JupyterHub was introduced. It provides scalable and persistent access to computational resources, supporting long-term research projects. A key feature discussed was the integration of BinderHub with JupyterHub, allowing researchers to create predefined environments using Docker. This ensures consistency across different research setups and facilitates collaboration. Participants took part in hands-on exercises, gaining practical experience with MyBinder and JupyterHub. The session highlighted how these platforms can streamline research workflows, enhance transparency, and maintain reproducibility. Throughout the workshop, the importance of reliable computational environments for collaborative research was emphasised, demonstrating how these tools contribute to advancing reproducibility in computational social science.



# CESSDA's Internal Work

In 2024, CESSDA focussed on the following areas:

Tools & Services, Trust & Standards, Data Citation, Sensitive Data and Dataverse.

## The Tools & Services Working Group

### Short Introduction

The Tools & Services Working Group (Tools Working Group) focused on the user's perspective of researchers and Service Providers. The group monitored the status of CESSDA's services, coordinated and evaluated tasks. In addition, maintenance of the group enhanced the available CESSDA services and provided direction to new and future services. The group provided a discussion forum for the Service Providers and organised online 'Tools Open Hours' to exchange best practices on CESSDA's tools and services, Dataverse, and metadata validation. The working group supported CESSDA's goal to provide appropriate tools and services for Service Providers and researchers to curate, preserve, publish, find, access and re-use research data in a multilingual environment.



### Highlights in 2024

The Tools Working Group Leader was a member of the EOSC Task Force on FAIR Metrics and Data Quality that was tasked with implementing FAIR metrics for EOSC by assessing their applicability across research communities and testing a range of tools to enable uptake (see below under CESSDA's involvement in EOSC). This EOSC Task Force made recommendations on metrics and tools, the governance of FAIR, and surveyed the state of the art of FAIR and data quality.<sup>9</sup>

## CESSDA Data Catalogue

The user experience of the CESSDA Data Catalogue (CDC)<sup>10</sup> was enhanced by adding a function that enables the filtering of search results immediately based on keywords and by improving the visibility of topic classifications and keywords on the individual data description pages. In addition, accessibility improvements were made and an accessibility statement is now available for the CDC.



<sup>9</sup> <https://eosc.eu/advisory-groups/fair-metrics-and-data-quality>

<sup>10</sup> <https://datacatalogue.cessda.eu/>



## CESSDA ELSST

The European Language Social Science Thesaurus (ELSST)

<sup>11</sup>is a broad-based, multilingual thesaurus for the social sciences. It is available in fifteen languages: Czech, Dutch, Finnish, English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Romanian, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish. According to web statistics, ELSST is used across many countries globally.



## CESSDA Vocabulary Service

The CESSDA Vocabulary Service (CVS)<sup>12</sup> is a platform for managing and providing controlled vocabularies which are part of the metadata scheme. These standardised collections of terms facilitate the uniform description and categorisation of research data, thereby improving their retrievability and reusability.



The CVS was developed and maintained in 2024 through regular coordination meetings between developers, administrators and the service owner. The vocabulary was continuously updated, including in collaboration with the DDI CV Working Group. New terms such as 'unit of analysis' were integrated to meet the changing needs of the scientific community. Training courses were also offered by the service owner, including a special course for Japanese administrators in August 2024.

The current version 3.4.0 of CVS was released on 18 March 2025. It contains technical improvements to increase stability and performance as well as optimised security measures and an improved user interface. A key goal is the seamless integration of CVS with other metadata services such as CDC and ELSST to provide users with easier access to relevant information.

## CESSDA European Question Bank

In 2024, CESSDA-ERIC decided to revamp and formally establish the CESSDA European Question Bank (EQB)<sup>13</sup>, based on preparatory work completed in previous years, and this time around to be based on the third-party



solution Colectica. Urged forward by FORS and a few other Service Providers, it was agreed that CESSDA would provide the initial investment to create with the Colectica software a searchable online platform of survey questions from important national and international surveys, as a rich source and reference point for questionnaire construction, question translation, and data discovery. Towards this aim, FORS worked with the CESSDA Main Office and Colectica to define user needs and needed features for a future tool. The CESSDA EQB will be based on a buy-in model, whereby Service Providers can become partners by paying an annual fee and therefore have rights to populate the EQB with their national questionnaires. It is expected that 4-5 Service Providers will formally be partners in 2025, with more to join in the future<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://elsst.cessda.eu/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://vocabularies.cessda.eu/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.cessda.eu/Tools/EQB>

<sup>14</sup> <https://eqb.cessda.eu/>



# Aligning Technology Architectures with CrossDomain Metadata Models

The annual event<sup>15</sup> brought together international experts, including representatives from CESSDA member data archives (e.g., UKDS, Sikt, DANS, GESIS), esteemed organisations such as Harvard Dataverse and W3C (the World Wide Web Consortium), universities, and research institutions. The workshop focused on advancing the DDI-CDI (Cross-Domain Integration) specification, emphasizing tools, syntax representation, and fostering collaboration with W3C.<sup>16</sup> Highlights included: Syntax representation: The development of ShEx, SHACL, and JSON Schema for RDF syntax validation, facilitating easier adoption within the FAIR community. W3C liaison: Progress in integrating DDI-CDI's capabilities, such as the variable cascade, with W3C standards like CSV on the Web and DataCube. This collaboration could lead to a formal joint working group. Tools development: New features for Harvard's Dataverse platform were outlined to enhance DDI-CDI support. Prototypes for metadata generation tools, including Croissant ML, were also developed. Qualitative data: A significant proposal was made to integrate qualitative and mixed media data into the DDI-CDI model.

## Trust & Landscape Working Group

The CESSDA Trust & Landscape Working Group mission derives from the Service Providers' obligations under Annex II Obligation 7 to "Adhere to the principles of the Open Archival Information System reference model and any agreed CESSDA ERIC requirements for operating trusted repositories".<sup>17</sup> The WG aims to support Service Providers in improving practices, to foster collaboration and to enhance contributions to the research community.

CESSDA has selected the CoreTrustSeal<sup>18</sup> as the Trustworthy Digital Repository Standard the national Service Providers need to achieve. In 2024, the WG continued to support the Service Providers in their journey to certification and in improving their FAIR-enabling capabilities. The support options included peer review of documents, general guidance, and creating common evidence. More than half of the SPs have been certified, and most of the uncertified ones are working on their application.

Over the course of the year, the Working Group monitored the trust landscape and facilitated discussions with the SPs on current issues. Topics varied from trust support, certification, FAIR and KPIs to curation and preservation levels and EOSC. These conversations informed a landscape report that was shared within CESSDA and will be further developed into a public Brief in 2025.



*Leader of the Trust & Landscape Working Group Mari Kleemola (FSD)*

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.dagstuhl.de/24413>

<sup>16</sup> <https://ddi-alliance.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/DDI4/pages/3125674192/2024+Aligning+Technology+Architectures+with+Cross-Domain+Metadata+Models>

<sup>17</sup> Open Archival Information System reference model (OAIS): <https://public.ccsds.org/Pubs/650x0m2.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> CoreTrustSeal: <https://www.coretrustseal.org/>

## Training

In 2024, the CESSDA Training resources became a service on its own. With the start of the Infra4NextGen project (see below), a major task was to showcase all new resources developed by CESSDA SPs for the project. The goal was to make sure that the training resources are reusable and can be used by researchers interested in the topics as a source of expertise but also by research support staff and SPs alike to train others. More training resources are expected to be fed into the training resources soon with more events being held.



## The CESSDA Data Archiving Guide

The CESSDA Data Archiving Guide (DAG)<sup>19</sup>, first published in November 2021, is designed to support social science data archives in the onboarding of new employees by providing a general understanding of the work a data archive performs and the various standards of practice that may be in place. The DAG is not prescriptive and instead seeks to highlight the diversity of approaches to trustworthy data archiving across CESSDA SPs while providing resources to new and established data archives alike. In 2024, the entire DAG received a version upgrade (now in version 3.0), focusing on readability, external resource links, and continuity. Planned updates for the immediate future include an additional chapter on replication studies as well as a linked glossary, in addition to regular updates.

## Data Management Expert Guide

The CESSDA Data Management Expert Guide (DMEG) is a comprehensive source of information for researchers, data stewards and curators. It provides practical guidance on the effective management of research data - from collection and storage to archiving and reuse.



In 2024, the focus was on a comprehensive update of the guide. Outdated content was revised to incorporate new scientific findings and best practices. A particular focus was on improving user-friendliness, for example by replacing outdated links and updating references to relevant resources.

Continuous development of the DMEG is planned for the coming years. Regular meetings with the contributor group will ensure that the guide always meets current requirements and provides reliable support for the research community.

<sup>19</sup> <https://dag.cessda.eu/>

## Data Citation Working Group

In 2024, the CESSDA Data Citation Working Group comprised representatives from 11 CESSDA SPs. The group's core objective is to improve data citation practices across the academic community by enabling and facilitating data citation and promoting their interoperability.

Over the course of the year, the working group engaged in several key activities to further this objective. A highlight was the organisation of the CESSDA Expert Seminar on Data Citation in the context of the CESSDA conference, which convened nearly 50 participants for an interactive three-hour session focused on current trends, challenges, and solutions in the field.

In 2024 the Working Group conducted an analysis of existing data citation practices across CESSDA SPs. This assessment identified current strengths and highlighted areas for further harmonisation and development, laying the groundwork for future activities. In parallel, the Working Group started to work on recommendations for Data Citation. The document is expected to be ready in 2025.



*Leader of the Data Citation Working Group Christina Bonatici (FORS)*

## Sensitive Data Working Group

The CESSDA Sensitive Data Working Group was established at the beginning of 2024 and includes at least 15 regular members from the different Service Providers. The group meets once per month online. An overall objective of the group is to share information and develop future solutions for access to sensitive or personal data that cannot easily be stored and disseminated through normal archival systems. The first half of 2024 was focused on the gathering of information from Service Providers about their current policies, solutions, and objectives concerning the provision of access to sensitive data. Results from this landscape analysis were presented at the CESSDA summer conference in Split, Croatia. In the second part of 2024 much of the work involved defining and advancing “mini-projects” on relevant topics of interest to Service Providers, such as standardised vocabularies for access to different categories of data, development of basic guidelines and training for staff in secure facilities, and improving tools for data anonymisation using AI.



*Leader of the Sensitive Data Working Group Brian Kleiner (FORS)*

## Dataverse Working Group

As many Service Providers are using the Dataverse software to offer services for storing, managing, and publishing research data, the working group has developed into an important hub for knowledge exchange and growing together. In 2024, several meetings of the Dataverse working group were held to coordinate the further development of the platform and collaboration within the consortium.

Important topics included the assessment of the implemented technology stack at the Service Providers, the coordination of common development goals and the FAIR principles (findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability of data). The group stressed the importance of support for multilingual metadata in order to improve the international usability of the platform. In addition, the integration of technology that support standardised terms (e.g. ELSST), the linking with external services (e.g. Research Organisation Registry, ROR), and the implementation of funding information were addressed.

For 2025, the focus is on optimising the platform and working towards a joint roadmap which will facilitate collaboration and offer researchers an even more efficient infrastructure.



*Leader of the Dataverse Working Group  
Lars Kaczmirek (AUSSDA)*

## Task Force on Artificial Intelligence

In December 2024, CESSDA established a Task Force on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to advance innovation, ethical practices, and practical application of AI in data archiving. The task force will serve as a platform to bring together SP experts with broad technical and policy perspectives to identify challenges and opportunities in AI. Even though the task force is based on in-kind contribution, 33 SP experts have expressed interest in contributing to the task force. This illustrates the emerging role of AI in social science data archiving. The first task force meeting will be held in early 2025.



# CESSDA's Involvement in EU-Funded Projects - Strategic Choices

In 2024 CESSDA was involved in 15 EU-funded projects – six of them started in 2024. The majority of the new projects are connected to the build of the EOSC (OSTrails, EOSC Beyond and EOSC-ENTRUST). OSCARS focuses on the increased engagement of researchers with EOSC. Infra4NextGen pools data from key social science research infrastructures to help to inform the NextGenerationEU programme and European Union youth policy. Lastly, QUANTUM works on data quality and a utility label for HealthData.



- **EOSC FUTURE** (EOSC FUTURE)
- **FAIR-IMPACT** (Expanding FAIR Solutions across EOSC)
- **BY-COVID** (Beyond COVID)
- **HumMingBird** (Enhanced migration measures from a multidimensional perspective)
- **COORDINATE** (COhort cOMmunity Research and Development Infrastructure Network for Access Throughout Europe)
- **eRImote** (European Research Infrastructures - Pathway to Improved Resilience and Digital and Remote Access)
- **RI-TRAIN Plus** (RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE TRAINING PLUS)
- **ERIC FORUM II** (ERIC FORUM II)
- **GGP-5D** (The Generations and Gender Programme Preparatory Phase Project)

NEW

- **EOSC Beyond** (EOSC Beyond: advancing innovation and collaboration for research) and
- **EOSC-ENTRUST** (A European Network of TRUSTed research environments)
- **OSTrails** (Open Science Plan-Track-Assess Pathways)
- **OSCARS** (Open Science Clusters' Action for Research and Society)
- **QUANTUM** (Quality, Utility and Maturity Measured; Developing a Data Quality and Utility Label for HealthData@EU)
- **Infra4NextGen** (providing research infrastructure services to support Next Generation EU)

## Building the EOSC

### EOSC-Beyond

The ambition of EOSC Beyond is to support the growth of the EOSC by integrating more services and increasing the number of active users. The project provides new technical solutions that allow developers of scientific application environments to easily compose a diverse portfolio of EOSC Resources as integrated capabilities to researchers.



CESSDA Main Office along with Service Providers in Greece (EKKE) and Hungary (TÁRKI) contributes to key objectives of accelerating the development of scientific applications, enabling Open Science through dynamic resource deployment, fostering innovation with testing environments, and aligning EOSC architecture with European data spaces.

## EOSC-ENTRUST

The EOSC-ENTRUST project was launched in March 2024, with the aim of enhancing European interoperability for sensitive data access and analysis. The project will build a European network of Trusted Research Environments (TREs) for sensitive data.

CESSDA Main Office, with its Service Providers from Hungary (TÁRKI), Germany (GESIS), and the UK (UKDS), represent the Social Sciences sector and will provide their expertise and TRE capabilities to inform legal, operational, and technical specifications. They will identify and promote common standards to enable sensitive data sharing by testing and expanding the framework set in past and present transnational projects such as SSHOC.



## CESSDA and FAIR

### OSTrails

OSTrails is a 3-year Horizon Europe project, coordinated by OpenAIRE, that aims to set the necessary foundations to streamline FAIR assessment and machine actionability in the European Open Science Cloud by enhancing and connecting the planning, tracking, assessing phases of research. The consortium builds on the technical expertise, managed services and research communities of 38 partners. CESSDA is participating with two of its Service Providers from Finland (FSD) and the UK (UKDS).



In the context of the project an analysis of the OSTRails Interoperability Framework Tools Compliance was published in September 2024 in which the CESSDA MO and FSD participated as authors. CESSDA suggested several of its tools for review in this analysis, which made sure that the standards set by CESSDA and SSHOC were taken into account in the assessment.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> <https://zenodo.org/records/13880235>

## OSCARS

OSCARS aims to further consolidate past achievements of the Science Clusters into lasting interdisciplinary FAIR data services and working practices.

The first call issued on 15th March provided a good opportunity for the SSH community to get involved with EOSC (the European Open Science Cloud) and connect with colleagues from all research domains in the field of open science and research infrastructures.

OSCARS received 264 proposals. Among the five Science Clusters, SSHOC performed very well with about 26% of the of the proposals in the Cluster specific domain and about 20% of the proposals in the cross-cluster initiatives coming from SSHOC.

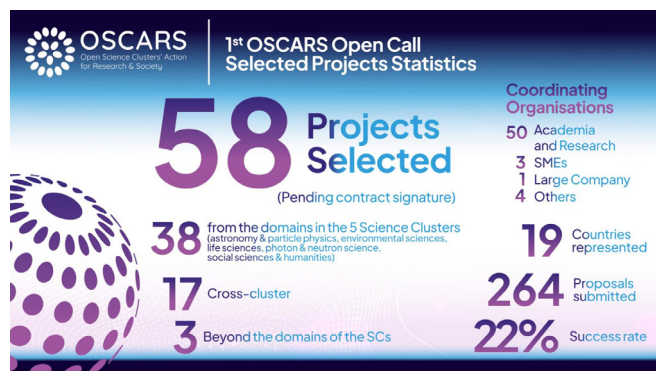
### Results

The 1st OSCARS Open Call for Open Science Projects and Services concluded in July resulting in a total of 58 projects being selected for funding.

Coming from the five domains of the OSCARS consortium (astronomy and particle physics, environmental sciences, life sciences, photon and neutron science, and social sciences and humanities), 40 projects were selected for funding. Meanwhile, 15 projects were categorised as cross-cluster. Additionally, three projects have been selected for funding from areas not included in the domains represented in the OSCARS consortium. They all together cover the widest possible range of types of activities and diversity of subjects.

The coordinators of the projects selected for funding are spread out across 19 countries. As expected, the majority, 50 organisations, come from academia or research, the rest being SMEs (3), one large company and other types of organisations (4). 48 projects have opted for the full 24 months duration. The majority of proposals (50) have requested a contribution of more than € 200,000. Only eight projects have asked for less.

The funded projects can be found under the OSCARS webpage.<sup>21</sup>



## FAIR IMPACT

With the ambitious goal to realise an EOSC of FAIR data and services, the FAIR-IMPACT project supports the implementation of FAIR-enabling practices, tools and services across scientific communities at a European, national and institutional level. The focus is on persistent identifiers (PIDs), metadata, ontologies, metrics, certification and interoperability, starting with real-life use cases on social sciences and humanities, the photon and neutron sciences, life sciences and agri-food and environmental sciences. Two Service Providers, in the UK (UKDS) and Norway (Sikt), participate with CESSDA in this project.



<sup>21</sup> <https://www.oscars-project.eu/projects>.

In April 2024, UKDS published the results of the use case conducted on “Change triggers impacting PID generation for sensitive data within the Social Sciences”<sup>22</sup>. It defines and identifies all the possible scenarios for ‘change triggers’ that could impact PID generation, PID metadata changes (change logs) and the ‘declaration’ of a new object during the various phases of the research data life cycle.

In September 2024, the FAIR IMPACT National Roadshow series visited Norway for an event titled “Data Interoperability: From Discussion to Practices in Norway”<sup>23</sup>, in which Sikt discussed interoperability issues across data from social and environmental sciences.

## Science Advice

### QUANTUM

With a consortium of 36 partners, QUANTUM is an EU-funded project that aims to create a common label system for Europe that assesses and communicates the quality and utility of datasets in all countries for scientific and health innovation purposes. These labels will enable researchers, policymakers, and healthcare professionals to identify high-quality data for research and decision-making.

CESSDA brings to QUANTUM the perspective of data holders in social sciences, providing the possibility of fitting the quality and utility label to different types of science. CESSDA’s expertise in Open Science is also a valued contribution to the aims of the project. CESSDA participate with Service Providers from the Netherlands (DANS), Greece (EKKE) and the UK (UKDS).

During the first year of implementation, EKKE, UKDS and DANS participated in a focus group with data holders responsible for collecting and curating data for secondary use. The purpose of the focus group was to define specifications for a Europe-wide common understanding of quality and utility for datasets that will eventually populate Healthdata@EU so as to enhance both the quality of the data and its value for research purposes. DANS, EKKE, and UKDS also participate in the design, development and testing of QUANTUM’s labelling mechanism, targeting a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 7.



### Infra4NextGen

The EU-Funded NextGenerationEU programme intends to boost Europe’s economy and make our societies stronger and more resilient. It focuses on improved strength and resilience in the areas of education and skills, business and healthcare. It is the largest ever stimulus package undertaken in the EU, setting the blueprint for a new growth model based on a clean, innovative and inclusive economy and digital and tech sovereignty.



<sup>22</sup> <https://www.fair-impact.eu/use-cases/change-triggers-impacting-pid-generation-sensitive-data-within-social-sciences-0>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.fair-impact.eu/events/fair-impact-events/data-interoperability-discussion-practices-norway>



Infra4NextGen focuses on five key areas: Make it Green; Make it Digital; Make it Healthy; Make it Strong; and Make it Equal.<sup>24</sup> The project is coordinated by the European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC) and includes the Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA ERIC), the European Values Study (EVS) and the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) at its core.

CESSDA's Service Provider from Germany (GESIS) leads the work on facilitating access to existing distributed European survey data through harmonisation. The Service Provider from Austria (AUSSDA) leads the effort on developing training for the next generation together with GESIS and the Service Provider from Slovenia (ADP).

Highlights in 2024 include the training delivered by AUSSDA on the visualisation of research data with a webinar and a Hackathon, as well as a webinar on Research Data Management in the Social Sciences and a workshop on Open Science and Reproducible Research in RStudio and Jupyter Notebook.<sup>25 26</sup>

## CESSDA and the Social Sciences Research Communities

### BY-COVID

Since 2021, the BY-COVID project has united 53 partners from 19 countries in a groundbreaking interdisciplinary effort to deliver open, accessible data on SARS-CoV-2 and other infectious diseases. By integrating scientific, medical, public health, and policy perspectives, this initiative developed key resources like the COVID-19 Data Platform and the Pathogens Portal and contributed to improve Europe's preparedness for future pandemics and enhancing rapid response capabilities.

Key contributions from CESSDA included the development of a sustainable metadata harvesting tool, implementation of harmonised metadata standards, and improvement of discoverability through the COVID-19 Data Portal. CESSDA participated alongside five Service Providers in the Netherlands (DANS), Finland (FSD), Greece (EKKE), the Czech Republic (ČSDA) and Slovenia (ADP). The Project officially ended in September 2024.



<sup>24</sup> <https://infra4nextgen.com/about-infra4nextgen/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://infra4nextgen.com/events/data-visualization/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://infra4nextgen.com/events/research-data-management/>

## HumMingBird

The HumMingBird project aimed to enhance the understanding of evolving migration flows, their driving forces, and the changing geographies of migration. It focused on analysing migration patterns and motivations while estimating population figures and forecasting emerging trends. A key objective was to assess the potential long-term impact of today's policy decisions on future migration dynamics.



CESSDA and its Service Providers played a crucial role in the project, contributing to data management, research, and knowledge dissemination. The CESSDA team—comprising the CESSDA Main Office, So.Da.Net/EKKE (Greece), and DCS/IEN (Serbia)—focused on several key activities:

- Mapping migration data systems and harmonizing definitions.
- Analyzing migration policies and their impact on trends.
- Enhancing the CESSDA Data Catalogue with a thematic Migration Data Catalogue using project datasets, while addressing ethical considerations in migration research.

As part of these efforts, EKKE co-organised the “Voices in Transit” workshop in Athens in 2023, bringing together scholars to discuss migrant experiences. Meanwhile, DCS/IEN conducted expert interviews in Serbia, highlighting key challenges faced by migrants. Additionally, CESSDA contributed to the publication *Data Science for Migration and Mobility* with a chapter on the CESSDA Data Catalogue and supported the development of the thematic migration data catalogue, now available in the So.Da.Net Repository. Through these initiatives, CESSDA reinforced its role in supporting migration research, improving data accessibility, and fostering international collaboration. The project officially ended in May, 2024.

## COORDINATE

The Coordinate project aims to fill the gaps in the availability of robust and suitable data for the monitoring and evaluation of child wellbeing in Europe. CESSDA participates with three Service Providers from Slovenia (ADP), Croatia (CROSSDA) and Finland (FSD). The CESSDA team was particularly active in the training and outreach activities and in the work on improving data findability.



ADP and CROSSDA successfully organised two major training events in 2024, a Summer School on Life Course Research and Sequence Analysis (June 2024, Barcelona, Spain) and an Interactive Training Statistical Course (December 2024, Zagreb, Croatia). Both training events were in high demand and well attended, demonstrating the need to continue investing in capacity building initiatives within the research community.

In 2024, CROSSDA produced guidelines for overcoming obstacles to data sharing (to be published in 2025) and organised an international conference on data sharing and secondary analysis in child and youth well-being research. The conference brought together researchers and data archivists, providing a platform to discuss the benefits and challenges of data sharing, share experiences in secondary analysis, and foster collaboration in building research data infrastructures.

FSD contributed to increase the visibility and accessibility of research data on child and youth well-being by creating a virtual access platform called the COORDINATE Portal<sup>27</sup> that is open and accessible to everyone. It is built on the CESSDA Data Catalogue and the CESSDA metadata harvesting system. The work done, expected to be completed in 2025, provides building blocks for establishing a common access procedure for virtual access, and can be seen as a precursor for future efforts to improve the discoverability and re-use value of relevant surveys.

## eRImote

The eRImote project ended in November 2024, after 2.5 years working on identifying strategies and solutions to enable the transition to more remote and digital access to Research Infrastructure (RI) services across ESFRI domains. CESSDA participated with UKDS, the Service Provider in the UK. The project concluded with the final event “Discussion on challenges and opportunities of remote access to research infrastructures” (October 2024, Brussels, Belgium).



In 2024, a diverse team of experts, including CESSDA Service Providers and the CESSDA Main Office, authored a “green paper” on *Facilitating Remote and Virtual Access in European Research Infrastructures – Requirements, Issues, and Recommendations*. The publication focuses on the critical role of remote and virtual access in advancing scientific research across various disciplines in the evolving RIs landscape in Europe, a process that has been accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>28</sup>

## RltrainPlus

This project brings together research infrastructures, core facilities, business management Schools and European universities to transform the access and empowerment of human resources for national and international scientific facilities in Europe. The CESSDA team includes three Service Providers, from Slovenia (ADP), Switzerland (FORS) and Austria (AUSSDA).



In 2024, CESSDA and ADP continued supporting the organisation of the Community of Practice (CoP) workshops and online meetings, focusing on peer-learning and sharing knowledge and experience among Research Infrastructure personnel. Additionally, AUSSDA conducted an evaluation report of the RltrainPlus pilot courses on research infrastructure management, offering valuable insights into the programme’s future development and considerations for the final round of RltrainPlus courses.

<sup>27</sup> <https://coordinate.cessda.eu/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://open-research-europe.ec.europa.eu/articles/4-152/v1>



# CESSDA's Support to the Research Infrastructure Landscape

## ERIC Forum Implementation Project II

The ERIC Forum Implementation Project, now in its second edition, brings together the ERIC community to strengthen its coordination and enhance its collaborations. In 2024, CESSDA actively contributed to several key areas within the ERIC Forum, supporting the development of strategic frameworks, regulatory analysis, and capacity-building initiatives.



### Developing Knowledge and Reporting Platforms

- ➔ CESSDA helped define a strategy for collecting and curating ERIC-related data while specifying the requirements for a dedicated reporting platform. This work laid the foundation for improved data sharing and reporting across ERICs.

### Policy Implementation and Sustainability

- ➔ CESSDA contributed to the development of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan which was based on the recommendations from EGERIC (the Commission expert group to assess the implementation of the ERIC Regulation and identify best practices and potential recommendations) and OECD reports and the project's outputs, ensuring ERICs remain aligned with European science policy. Additionally, efforts were made to ensure the sustainability of ERIC services by assessing long-term integration and interoperability needs.

### International Engagement and Capacity Building

- ➔ CESSDA was involved in fostering international collaboration, including pilot projects with third countries and global organisations. It also played an active role in advancing gender mainstreaming across ERICs, supporting the implementation of three webinars aimed at increasing awareness among ERIC personnel on gender equality matters. These sessions addressed key topics such as unconscious bias, undesirable behaviors, and the integration of the sex and gender dimension in research.

### Regulatory and Legal Contributions

- ➔ CESSDA was actively involved in regulatory discussions, contributing to analyses on European employment contracts and ensuring compliance with ERIC regulations, including VAT exemptions. These efforts aimed to create a more harmonised legal framework for ERICs.

### Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

- ➔ Enhancing communication efforts, CESSDA mapped key stakeholders and strengthened outreach through digital platforms, including its website, social media, and newsletters, to improve visibility and engagement.



# Communications Activities

## CESSDA in the Community

During 2024, CESSDA finished releasing its “Spotlight” video series, by releasing a total of eight video interviews on its Service Providers, projects we are involved in, and other Research Infrastructures we cooperated with. The interviews highlighted the work being done in the different organisations and projects, and how they contributed from working with CESSDA and CESSDA’s tools. The spotlight video of 2024 were:



- [Spotlight on the Australian Data Archive, interview with Steve McEacheron, director and manager of ADA](#)
- [Interview with Ahmad Wali Ahmad-Yar from DARIAH-IT on the HumMingBird project](#)
- [Spotlight on the Croatian Data Archive CROSSDA with acting manager Marijana Glavica](#)
- [Spotlight on the PROGEDO Data Infrastructure with Director Sébastien Oliveau](#)
- [Interview with Emiliano Degl'Innocenti from DARIAH-IT](#)
- [Spotlight on the social sciences data archive of North Macedonia with Aneta Cekikj](#)
- [Spotlight on the Icelandic Social Science Data Services DAT.ICE with Kjartan Ólafsson](#)
- [Spotlight on the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research - Sikt, with Bodil Agasøster](#)

## Finnish Service Provider with a strong 2024

2024 was a big year for CESSDA's Finnish service provider Finnish Social Science Data Archive (FSD). On the year of their 25th anniversary, FSD received the prestigious CoreTrustSeal certification for the reliable curation and long-term preservation of digital data for 2024–2027, highlighting its commitment to reliable digital preservation and the promotion of data reuse. This international recognition affirmed FSD's adherence to high standards in data curation, accessibility, and long-term preservation, ensuring its role as a trusted resource for researchers worldwide. In the same year, FSD was also included in Finland's national roadmap for research infrastructures for 2025–2028. The Finnish Research Infrastructure Committee (FIRI Committee) within the Research Council of Finland granted roadmap status to a total of 21 national research infrastructures. The Roadmap guides investment and supports research, development, and innovation. Its aim is to keep infrastructures internationally competitive, responsive to scientific challenges, and capable of generating new knowledge and expertise while interacting with RDI actors.



## New leadership for the French Service Provider

Nicolas Sauger has been appointed as the new Directeur of the French SP for France, PROGEDO, as of 1 January this year. Nicolas has been a Professor of Political science at Sciences Po (Paris, France). He was previously the Director of another French SSH data archive, the CDSP. As a political scientist, Nicolas has been working in the field of elections and electoral systems, political attitudes, and party competition. Nicolas has also been involved in several surveys, especially the European social survey, now as a member of its Methods advisory board, but also as the PI of the French election studies.



## Social Media

CESSDA were active on their social media channels all throughout 2024. On LinkedIn, June was the organisation's most prolific month, with over 13 000 exposures on our posts, thanks to very active posting during the CESSDA conference. The CESSDA conference also generated the most reactions and comments, driving engagement further. CESSDA also used Twitter/X actively to promote events and projects, and to share news posted on the CESSDA webpage. In total, CESSDA made 119 posts on Twitter/X during 2024, with the majority of those coming in the earlier months of the year. Despite having more than twice the number of followers on Twitter/X compared to LinkedIn, LinkedIn often saw from five to ten times the engagement from followers. Therefore, LinkedIn became the favored social media platform, and CESSDA's main platform for reaching the community on a weekly or daily basis.

## CESSDA Website

In 2024 CESSDA website news section was populated with 46 different news pieces, spanning announcements, dissemination of EU project results and calls, different strategic events and new releases of CESSDA tools.

The website is also used to promote events from both projects and service providers. During 2024, 39 events were created on the website. These were then further promoted via newsletters and social media channels.

## CESSDA Newsletter

The CESSDA Newsletter goes out thrice each year. The content of the newsletter was recently reorganised for more efficiency and better coverage of internal and external activities. An Editorial Board was created to help with this. In 2024 the CESSDA Newsletter had a stable number of almost 800 subscribers.<sup>29</sup>



<sup>29</sup> <https://www.cessda.eu/Newsletters>

# CESSDA ERIC Members, Observers and Service Providers in June 2024

Country	Representing entity	Service Provider	GA Delegates	SPF Delegates
Austria	Austrian Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research, BMFWF (former Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF))	AUSSDA - The Austrian Social Science Data Archive	Matthias Reiter-Pázmándy, BMBWF (Vice-Chair until 17 October 2024, Chair from 17 October 2024)  Bettina Glaser, BMBWF (deputy)  Lars Kaczmirek, AUSSDA	Lars Kaczmirek  Franziska Krauss
Belgium	BELSPO - Belgian Scientific Policy Office	SODHA - Social Sciences and Digital Humanities Archive	Aziz Naji, BELSPO	Johan Van Der Eycken  Oliver Lenaerts (until September)  István Gyimes (from September)
Croatia	Ministry of Science and Education and Youth	CROSSDA - Croatian Social Science Data Archive, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb	Jelena Ilić Dreven, Staša Skenžić, Ministry of Science, Education and Youth	Marijana Glavica
Czech Republic	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	CSDA - Czech Social Science Data Archive	Nad'a Dřizga, Ministry of Education and Sport  Jindřich Krejčí  CSDA	Yana Leontiyeva

Country	Representing entity	Service Provider	GA Delegates	SPF Delegates
Finland	Research Council of Finland, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture	FSD - Finnish Social Science Data Archive	Helena Laaksonen (Chair until 17 October)  Vilma Lehtinen, Research Council of Finland  Mari Kleemola, FSD	Helena Laaksonen  Mari Kleemola
France	Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research	PROGEDO/CNRS - National Centre for Scientific Research	Fabrice Boudjaaba, CNRS  Johanna Etner Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research (until June 2024)  Myriam Baron (from June 2024)	Nicolas Sauger  Ami Saji
Germany	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)	GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences	Miriam Schriefers, DLR Project Management Agency;  Katharina Pijnenburg, BMBF  Alexia Katsanidou (until September)  Katrin Weller (from September)	Libby Bishop (until November)  Katrin Weller (from November)
Greece	Greek Research Infrastructure for the Social Sciences	So.Da.Net/EKKE	John Kallas, University of Aegean  Dimitra Kondyli, So.Da.Net/EKKE	Dimitra Kondyli



Country	Representing entity	Service Provider	GA Delegates	SPF Delegates
Hungary	The National Research, Development and Innovation Office (NRDI Office)	TÁRKI Foundation	Péter Aranyi, NKFIH (until 1 May 2024)  Réka Bozóki-Gál (from 1 May 2024)  Péter Hegedűs, TARKI	Péter Hegedűs
Iceland	Ministry of Culture, Innovation and Higher Education	DATICE - The Icelandic Research Data Service	Guðbjörg Andrea Jónsdóttir, Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation of Iceland	Kjartan Ólafsson
Ireland	Research Ireland	ISSDA - Irish Social Science Data Archive	Rosemary Sweeney, Research Ireland  Marina Milic (deputy), Research Ireland	Vanessa Buckley
Italy	Italian National Research Council (CNR)	DASSI - Data Archive Social Sciences Italy	Mario Paolucci, CNR  Saverio Foti, CNR	Sonia Stefanizzi  Domingo Scisci
Netherlands	The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)	DANS - Data Archiving and Networked Services	Merve Tosun, NWO  Anja Smit, DANS	Ricarda Braukmann
North Macedonia	Ministry of Education and Science	MK DASS - Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje	Borčo Aleksov, Ministry of Education and Science	Aneta Cekikj
Norway	Research Council of Norway (RCN)	Sikt - Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research	Olja Toljagic, RCN  Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim, Sikt (Vice-Chair from 17 October)	Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim  Bodil Agasøster

Country	Representing entity	Service Provider	GA Delegates	SPF Delegates
Portugal	Ministry for Science, Technology and Higher Education  Institute of Social Science, University of Lisbon (ICS - UL)	APIS - Portuguese Archive of Social Information	Pedro Moura Ferreira, APIS  José Manuel Mendes, Centre for Social Studies	José Manuel Mendes  Pedro Moura Ferreira
Serbia	Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MPN)	DCS - Data Centre Serbia for Social Sciences	Aleksandra Bradić-Martinović, DCS  Marija Veličković, MPN	Aleksandra Bradić-Martinović
Slovakia	Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic	SASD - Slovak Archive of Social Data	Miloslav Bahna, Institute for Sociology of Slovak Academy of Sciences;  Simona Foltinová, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport	Miloslav Bahna  Katarina Strapcova
Slovenia	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (MVZI)	ADP - Social Science Data Archives	Albin Kralj, MVZI  Janez Štebe, ADP	Janez Štebe  Irena Vipavc Brvar
Sweden	Swedish Research Council (SRC)	SND - Swedish National Data Service	Susanna Bylin, SRC (until September)  Kenneth Nelson, Stockholm University  Alexander Darin Mattsson, SRC (from September)	Iris Alfredsson
Switzerland	SERI  State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation	FORS - the Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences	Lea Bühlmann, SERI  Brian Kleiner, FORS	Marieke Heers  Alexandra Stam

Country	Representing entity	Service Provider	GA Delegates	SPF Delegates
United Kingdom	<p>Department for Business, Energy &amp; Industrial Strategy (BEIS)</p> <p>Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, UKRI)</p>	UKDS - UK Data Service	<p>Richard Welpton, ESRC UKRI</p> <p>John Sanderson, UKDS (deputy, until September)</p> <p>Steven McEachern, UKDS (from September)</p>	<p>Herve L'Hours</p> <p>Darren Bell</p>

# Financial Statements 2024

## Income Statement (EUR)

Operating income and expenses	Note	2024	2023
Operating income	1	1 990 959	1 887 930
<b>Total operating income</b>		<b>1 990 959</b>	<b>1 887 930</b>
<b>Operating expenses</b>			
Payroll expenses	2	619 401	477 308
Correction of prior period errors		0	300 222
Other operating expenses		672 964	860 962
<b>Total operating expenses</b>		<b>1 292 365</b>	<b>1 638 492</b>
<b>Operating profit/loss</b>		<b>698 594</b>	<b>249 437</b>
<b>Financial income and expenses</b>			
Other interest income		40 351	37 701
Other financial income		262 557	333 295
Other interest expenses		11	0
Other financial expenses		216 049	380 485
<b>Net financial income and expenses</b>		<b>86 848</b>	<b>-9 488</b>
<b>Annual net result</b>		<b>785 442</b>	<b>239 950</b>
From/to other equity		785 442	239 950
<b>Net brought forward</b>		<b>785 442</b>	<b>239 950</b>



## Balance Statement (EUR)

Assets	Note	2024	2023
<b>Current assets</b>			
<b>Receivables</b>			
Accounts receivables		10 125	0
Other short-term receivables	4	409 885	156 985
<b>Total receivables</b>		<b>420 010</b>	<b>156 985</b>
<b>Bank deposits, cash and cash equivalents</b>			
Bank deposits, cash and cash equivalents	5	2 240 347	1 409 870
<b>Total bank deposits, cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>2 240 347</b>	<b>1 409 870</b>
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>2 660 357</b>	<b>1 566 855</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>2 660 357</b>	<b>1 566 855</b>

## Balance Statement (EUR)

Equity and liabilities	Note	2024	2023
<b>Equity</b>			
Other equity		1 579 800	845 051
<b>Total retained earnings</b>		<b>1 579 800</b>	<b>845 051</b>
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>1 579 800</b>	<b>845 051</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade payables		230 803	165 132
Public duties payable		45 143	40 421
Other current liabilities	5	804 611	516 251
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>1 080 557</b>	<b>721 804</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>1 080 557</b>	<b>721 804</b>
<b>Total equity and liabilities</b>		<b>2 660 357</b>	<b>1 566 855</b>

## Accounting Principles

The annual accounts have been prepared in conformity with the Accounting Act and NRS 8 - Good accounting practice for small companies.

The reporting currency of the financial statement is Euro. By the end of the reporting period, balance sheet items are converted from Norwegian Kroner to Euro using the rate on the balance sheet date, and profit and loss items are converted using the average rate of the reporting period.

## Foreign Currency

Monetary foreign currency items are valued at the exchange rate on the balance sheet date.

## Operating Revenues and Expenses

Revenues consist mainly of grants and project revenues. Received payments related to activities not carried out at year-end are recognised in the balance sheet as unearned income and classified as other short-term debt.

Expenses are recognised in accordance with the matching principle. This means that expenses are recognised in the same period as the related income.

Revenues from EC projects are recognised according to submitted financial reports approved by EC or other direct cost which will be covered by pre-financing from EC.

## Tax

CESSDA ERIC is a non-profit organisation and is not liable for corporation tax in accordance with the Tax Law § 2-32.

## Classification and Valuation of Fixed Assets

Fixed assets include assets included for long-term ownership and use. Fixed assets are valued at acquisition cost. Property, plant and equipment are entered in the balance sheet and depreciated over the asset's economic lifetime. The depreciation period for real property acquired after 2009 is divided into the part that represents the building and the part that represents fixed technical installations. Property, plant and equipment are written down to a recoverable amount in the case of fall in value which is expected not to be temporary. The recoverable amount is the higher of the net sale value and value in use. Value in use is the present value of future cash flows related to the asset. Write-downs are reversed when the basis for the write-down is no longer present.

## EC Projects

Prefinancing of EC projects is classified as other current liabilities.

Accrued cost is classified as other short-term receivables.

## Receivables

Receivables from customers and other receivables are entered at par value after deducting a provision for expected losses. The provision for losses is made on the basis of an individual assessment of the respective receivables.

## Pension

The Norwegian branch has established a defined benefit pension scheme. The pension premium is classified as a payroll expense.

## NOTES

### Note 1 Revenues

Breakdown of income	2024	2023
Members' contributions	1 990 959	1 892 412
Other income	0	- 4 483
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 990 959</b>	<b>1 887 930</b>

### Note 2 Salary Costs and Number of Man-Years

Salary costs	2024	2023
Salaries	567 018	480 273
Employment tax	80 796	80 603
Pension costs	50 769	42 304
Other benefits	20 043	11 337
Salary costs related to EC Projects	- 99 226	-137 209
<b>Total</b>	<b>619 401</b>	<b>477 308</b>

In 2024 the company employed 9 man-years.

### Note 3 Equity

Assets	Currency translation differences	Retained earnings	Total equity
Equity as of 01.01.	-6 827	851 877	845 051
Currency translation	-50 692	0	-50 692
Result of the year	0	785 442	785 442
<b>Equity as of 31.12.</b>	<b>-57 519</b>	<b>1 637 319</b>	<b>1 579 800</b>

## Note 4 EC Projects

EC Projects	2024	2023
EC projects; pre-financing, received as at 31.12	-722 448	-424 720
EC projects; accrued costs as at 31.12	158 148	103 691
<b>Net EC projects</b>	<b>-564 300</b>	<b>-321 029</b>

## Note 5 Bank Deposits

Bank deposits	2024	2023
Restricted cash-employee tax deduction funds	23 519	15 375
Restricted cash-deposit funds	29 808	30 881
Bank deposits in NOK	572 688	66 218
Bank deposits in EUR	1 614 332	1 297 395
<b>Total bank deposits</b>	<b>2 240 347</b>	<b>1 409 870</b>

CESSDA ERIC has a currency risk associated with the exchange rate developments. Allocated funding to projects is paid in Euro. The bank deposits are in Norwegian Kroner and Euro.







