




AUSSDA

AUSTRIAN  
SOCIAL SCIENCE  
DATA ARCHIVE

# DATA COLLECTION POLICY

Version 1.1

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## Introduction

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AUSSDA – The Austrian Social Science Data Archive is a core social science research infrastructure in Austria, offering research data and high quality, sustainable, and easy-to-use solutions for archiving digital data, along with world-wide access. It has a mandate from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) to archive and distribute social science data for all interested users in Austria. Being the official Service Provider for Austria, AUSSDA participates in the European Open Science Cloud through its participation in the Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA ERIC). Currently, AUSSDA has offices at the Universities of Vienna, Graz, and Linz.

The archive ensures that data can be deposited and made available for reuse to benefit science and society. The archive stands for integrity and authenticity in data archiving and promotes ethical research principles. It supports the open data movement and works towards maximizing the potential for data use.

This document outlines the principles determining the collection and the development of AUSSDA. The policy acts as a reference, making the selection process transparent for data depositors.

## Criteria for inclusion in the collection

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### Data criteria

Data collected by AUSSDA are primarily digital quantitative social science data, accompanied by sufficient documentation, outlining the research specifications, and adhering to scientific and ethical standards. The data or the depositor should have a link to Austria.

Archiving data has the purpose of allowing:

- (1) secondary use in research, (2) validation of published results, (3) access to data for teaching, learning, and as a valuable source of information for any interested citizen, or
- (4) safe storage and distribution.

A best practice in dealing with research data is to adhere to the FAIR principles (**F**indable, **A**ccessible, **I**nteroperable and **R**eusable).<sup>1</sup> Data should be adequately described, using standardized documentation procedures where possible. Research data should ideally be accessible as open data, available for sharing and reuse. Due to legal requirements, not all

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<sup>1</sup> Wilkinson, M. D., et al. (2016). The FAIR Guiding Principles for scientific data management and stewardship. *Scientific Data*, 3, 160018. doi: [10.1038/sdata.2016.18](https://doi.org/10.1038/sdata.2016.18)

research data can be open, but best practice is to make data “as open as possible, as closed as necessary”.<sup>2</sup>

AUSSDA’s main priority is in collecting digital quantitative social science data. AUSSDA accommodates various methods of data collection such as surveys, content analyses, experiments, and others. Other data types than digital quantitative data are added to the collection if they provide valuable scientific insight for the archive’s designated community.

All data that are made available must be in accordance with data protection law and intellectual property rights. The data must be provided in standard formats and be accompanied by metadata and documentation following the archive’s standards, outlining the technical and methodological aspects of the dataset.

AUSSDA has the right to refuse to archive data as outlined in the terms of service and deposit contracts.<sup>3</sup> Reasons include that the data do not originate from social sciences or social science methods. In such a case, AUSSDA might inform depositors about other archive options. Other reasons to decline storage of data can be: insufficient documentation, no agreement with respect to access and dissemination conditions, outdated formats of files, non-digital data or possible financial claims of the depositor or other license holders.

In order for data to be selected in the collection, the data or the depositor should have a link to Austria, may it be through the collected data or through the background of the researcher:

#### EXAMPLES

(A) A group of researchers based at different Austrian universities in cooperation with Austrian non-university research organisations would like to deposit their data on *Migration Patterns in South America* at AUSSDA. Since the depositors have a link to Austria, the data meet the general inclusion criteria.

(B) A research project based in Lithuania conducts a comparative content analysis on governmental policies in 10 international countries, one of them is Austria. Since the data is linked to Austria, the data can be archived at AUSSDA.

## Target disciplines

AUSSDA archives data from all disciplines of the social sciences. Examples include political science, sociology, media and communications, economics and business, educational sciences, law, psychology, social and economic geography, public health, demography, contemporary and social history, as well as other social sciences or interdisciplinary studies.

## The data depositors

Our archiving services are tailored for use by social scientists, including professors, senior and junior researchers, doctoral candidates, students and researchers from research institutions (universities, public as well as private institutions), federal and provincial institutions and other public or commercial sources (e.g. market research).

Nevertheless, anyone can deposit data for reuse. The data depositor must have all necessary rights to share the data with AUSSDA and to make them publicly available for reuse. This includes the right to publish the data and documentation under the chosen licenses. This might

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<sup>2</sup> European Commission. (2017). *Guidelines on FAIR Data Management in Horizon 2020*. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants\\_manual/hi/oa\\_pilot/h2020-hi-oa-data-mgt\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/oa_pilot/h2020-hi-oa-data-mgt_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://aussda.at/en/terms-of-service/>

also include having obtained consent from study participants, funding agencies or third parties who might also hold certain rights to the datasets or documentation. By depositing and archiving data, a depositor affirms that scientific standards and ethical principles were followed. The data depositor must also adhere to applicable laws and ethical guidelines when preparing data for sharing and reuse.

## Documentation and metadata standards

Documentation of the uploaded data is essential for making the context of the data understandable and interpretable for others, while also ensuring transparency of the data collection process. The documentation of data should include detailed specifications of all methodological and technical aspects essential to the data collection and data processing.

### DOCUMENTATION

Instruments of data collection, which are of high importance, are a questionnaire, a codebook and a method report. Other forms of documentation that are welcomed: project reports, data management plans (DMP), project proposals, interviewer guidelines, interview cards, data processing syntax, program code used in the interviewer software, documentation about incentives, contacts, recoding protocol, Informed consent form, etc.

AUSSDA follows the metadata scheme suggested by the Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives.<sup>4</sup> The mandatory metadata fields conform to international archival standards. CESSDA ERIC strives to increase the sharing of research data within Europe, supporting multilingual documentation.

### EXAMPLE

A researcher would like to deposit the data from a survey among music festival attendees. The deposit contract is signed and the researcher submits the dataset, a consent form, her questionnaire including interviewer instructions, a method report/codebook and metadata information to AUSSDA.

The metadata are published with her data and documentation and make important information available and citable at a glance: title, authors, keywords but also methodological information like sampling procedure, time of fieldwork, how the survey was administered.

## Related information

Mission statement: The policy leading AUSSDA's development.

<https://aussda.at/en/about-aussda/mission/>

Recommended formats: List of data formats AUSSDA is able to accommodate.

<https://aussda.at/en/faq-downloads/faq/#c798251>

Access policy: The policy regulating access to AUSSDA's data.

<https://aussda.at/aussda-access-policy>

Metadata document: An overview of the metadata that is requested with every deposited study.

<https://aussda.at/aussda-metadata>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.CESSDA.eu/Tools-Services/For-Service-Providers/Vocabulary-Service>