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FIDELIS Open Training

Hope for the best, plan for the worst

An information collection tool to support succession planning for repositories

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About EOSC-FIDELIS

The European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) aims to develop a web of FAIR data and services for science in Europe.

Within its three-year lifetime, EOSC-FIDELIS project establishes and operates **a European network of TDRs**, fostering their **harmonisation and interoperability** across repositories. As part of these efforts It will

- provide a **framework** to support repositories in becoming and remaining trustworthy and FAIR-enabling
- **contribute to the upskilling of repositories and expansion of the TDR network by offering a series of training and financial support programmes.**

https://eden-fidelis.eu/

Consortium



























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What happens to digital data when repositories go out of business?



Server Not Found

Waterfox can't connect to the server at **www.[redacted].org**.

What can you do about it?

- Check to make sure you've typed the website address correctly and try again in a few moments.
- Check your network connection.
- Check that Waterfox has permission to access the web (you might be connected but behind a firewall).

Learn more...

Try Again

Image source: own (screenshot 2026-10-26)

Some current examples

FlyBase Funding Update – March 2026

The NHGRI funding for FlyBase has been restored for US-based FlyBase teams but the foreign subaward that supported the essential curation team at the University of Cambridge UK has been terminated. Therefore, the Cambridge UK team now requests annual contributions from fly labs to support curation of new data into FlyBase and the Alliance of Genome Resources. Without these annual contributions, FlyBase will become frozen in its current state and become progressively less useful.

Please visit the 'Contribute to FlyBase' wiki page for details of how to contribute.

Screenshot flybase.org 2026-11-03

Current Transition to LISER

Following the decision to close the local research operations in Bonn, the organization is entering a new era. The renowned global IZA network is moving to LISER (Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research). Starting in early 2026, the network's activities and its scientific legacy will be managed from Luxembourg to ensure the continued excellence of international labor market research.

Closure/transition of IZA Institute. Screenshot 2026-11-03 https://www.iza.org/about-us/history

Data From SEDAC Are Available Again in Earthdata Search

SEDAC data became unavailable almost two months ago. Today, that status has changed, and all SEDAC data are accessible through Earthdata Search.

On April 30, 2025, the contract for NASA's Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC), managed by Columbia University's Center for Integrated Earth System Information (CIESIN), was terminated and the datasets SEDAC curated were no longer available. Since then, the Earth Science Data and Information System (ESDIS) project has been working to get the datasets rehoused. Starting today, all SEDAC datasets have been relocated to Earthdata Cloud and can be found in Earthdata Search.

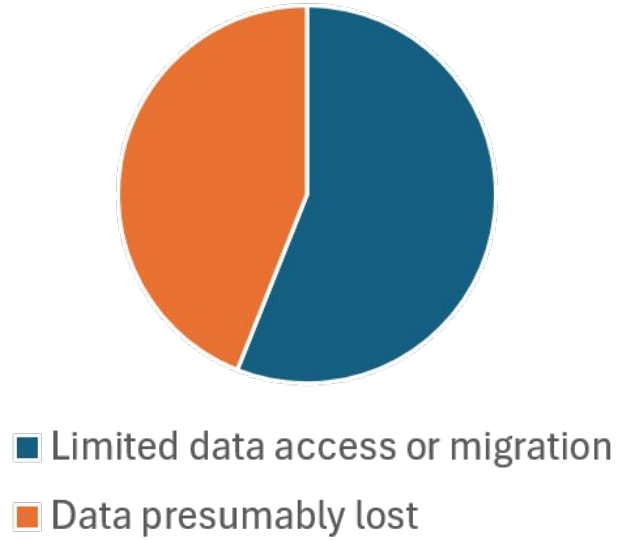
Transition after defunding of SEDAC - Screenshot 2026-11-03 https://www.earthdata.nasa.gov/news/data-from-sedac-available-again-earthdata-search

The “Disappearing repositories” study (2023)

Analysis of closed repositories listed in re3data

- 191 out of 3,069 met the defined criteria for being closed (6.2%)

- Of these
  - 23 (12%) still offered some kind of access to data (e.g. via FTP)
  - In 84 (44%) cases, evidence of data migration to another repository found.



Strecker, D., Pampel, H., Schabinger, R., & Weisweiler, N. L. (2023). Disappearing repositories: Taking an infrastructure perspective on the long-term availability of research data. Quantitative Science Studies, 4(4), 839–856. https://doi.org/10.1162/qss_a_00277

Digital preservation and organizational life cycles

"Digital preservation": activities to preserve availability and usability of digital assets for the long(er) term.

This entails **managing different types of change**, including

- technological, e.g. file formats, IT systems
- user-related, e.g. expectations, capabilities, needs
- organizational, e.g. staff/expertise/management → worst case scenario: closure of the repository

The CoreTrustSeal certification captures this in the Requirement “Continuity of Service (R03)”

- **R03. The Repository has a plan to ensure ongoing access to and preservation of its data and metadata.**

  “[...] The options for relocation or transition of the activity to another repository [...]. Such options should also include the levels of service that will be continued at relocation or transition (e.g. data retention only, or including other services)”

Activity 1

You learn that due to funding cuts your repository is forced to cease operation in 12 months' time.

Q1: What is your biggest challenge?

Q2: What is the first thing you do?

→ Provide answers in the chat or the shared notes document

Planning for cessation and succession - Where to start?



?

Repository has an exit strategy and an agreement with a successor organization

Information collection tool

A template to support repositories with the process of succession planning, created by members of the German Network of Educational Research Data (VerbundFDB).

Objectives

- Help repositories begin to consider what needs to be known, documented, and decided before a potential successor can be identified.
- Suggest criteria that may help a repository understand if another repository is a good “match”.

VerbundFDB Working Group Cessation. (2026). Template for preparing a cessation plan (Version 0.9.1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18935798

Content and data handling

Describe key characteristics of the data collection, prioritize datasets (if necessary), describe levels of care that data are receiving, and which services are needed to keep them usable.

Legal and organizational

Take stock of legal and contractual obligations between repository and data depositors, repository and data users (i.e. licenses), and repository and parent organization (if applicable).

Technical

Core technical and formal properties of the system(s) in which (meta)data is stored.

Example questions

Content and data handling

- Which collection priorities are defined in the collection policy and what is the actual scope and composition of the collection?
- What support and consulting services are offered?

Legal and organizational

- Do the archiving contracts contain clauses concerning the transfer of data to a successor organization?
- Does the superordinate or parent organization have a legal or otherwise binding obligation to preserve/archive the data?

Technical

- How can the data and metadata be exported from the system?

You are invited to browse the current draft version of the tool (link in chat)

- Do you have any questions or suggestions concerning the tool itself?

More generally:

- Which kind of support or guidance would help you to start succession planning for your repository?
- Which kind of support or guidance would help you in deciding whether or not to accept another repository's collection(s) as a successor?
-

Conclusion & Outlook

New version of tool forthcoming

- Includes mappings to CoreTrustSeal and TTRAMatrix
- We are thinking about more accessible formats beyond the current Excel file

Work on **best practices for succession** (planning) with the objective of creating hands-on guidance for repositories

We welcome your suggestions and feedback!

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References

Recker, J., Pegelow, L., Schuster, A., & Mauer, R. (2026). Hope for the best, plan for the worst: Reducing risks associated with repository cessation. International Journal of Digital Curation, 20(1). https://doi.org/10.2218/ijdc.v20i1.1091

De Sherbinin, A. (2026). Things Fall Apart: Lessons from a Defunded Data Repository. Data Science Journal, 25, 9. https://doi.org/10.5334/dsj-2026-009

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VerbundFDB Working Group Cessation. (2026). Template for preparing a cessation plan (Version 0.9.1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.18935798

Upcoming events



FIDELIS

Is your repository ready to provide transparent evidence of practice? The FIDELIS TTRAM approach to capability-maturity

This webinar introduces the FIDELIS TTRAM approach to capability-maturity and how repositories can...

25 November 2026 Online Read more



FIDELIS

1st FIDELIS Strategic Alliance Workshop

The FIDELIS Strategic Alliance Workshops bring together the organisations, initiatives and...

26 November 2026 Online Read more



FIDELIS

SIG Legal Challenges – Workshop 4

In this fourth workshop, we move to health data and the European policy landscape. The European...

26 November 2026 Online Read more

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