

Research Information Sharing and Use Policy

**International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
(ICARDA)**



Scope

The scope of the research information sharing and use policy of the Center is to foster a culture of information and knowledge sharing within and beyond the Center and to facilitate appropriate and timely use of data. It also encourages and enables staff to voluntarily share and publicly disclose data and information.

All rights to information including title and copyrights etc. generated by ICARDA's scientists and their collaborating staff, as part of their official duties at the Center remains the property of the Center.

Objective

The Center is committed to information and knowledge sharing within the Center as well as among its partners and the public. It is the Center policy to routinely collect, archive and share all information generated in the course of its research related activities within its agreed research agenda and mandate.

Instruments of Information collection, cataloguing, access and sharing

To this end the Center will use the ICARDA Intranet platform. Intranet provides the tools for information collation, publishing, archiving as well as knowledge sharing. This information sharing system will contain all research data, project log frames, work plans, donor reports and any other related information. The Computer and Biometrics Services Unit of the Center will be responsible for facilitating this information collection and sharing process. All research data should be catalogued and the catalogue (metadata) be maintained centrally on the Intranet and be freely accessible. The source of the data, custodian of the data, restrictions and sanctions on data sharing and use must be detailed in the catalogue. For details of individual responsibilities refer to Responsibility section of this policy.

Information access and sharing process

Information collection and sharing process consists of following stages,

- i) activity form as the initial disclosure
- ii) data submission in activity form format
- iii) results and reports from data analysis (if required)
- iv) data access, restrictions and use (including publication), and
- v) delivery to public domain.

Procedures section related to this policy will describe steps involved at each of these stages in details.

Criteria of access to information and sharing differs as follows,

- i) Internal (local storage; restricted access)
- ii) Intranet (Center-wide access), and
- iii) Internet (public domain; free access).

Initially data and information will be retained in local storage locations. (This will be an assigned folder in the LAN server. Staff members are encouraged to use LAN server locations for data storage as routine weekly backups ensure data safety). Data and information should normally be 'locally' archived within three months of collection. Access to this data is restricted to the originator of the data.

After two months 'local' storage, data and information will normally be transferred to the Intranet. This database becomes an integral component of the Intranet and access to Intranet is freely available to all Center personnel. However for the use of such data and information staff must follow the specific guidelines of this policy. At a justified request from the data originator, movement of data from 'local' storage to the Intranet may be delayed.

After data and information has resided on the ICARDA Intranet site for three years from time of submission it will be placed on a similar site on the ICARDA Internet page and will be open to the public after the originator is informed. Staff members (data originators) may however request release of data into the public domain sooner than the specified three years or request for an extension beyond the 3 years as situations dictate. Staff members are however encouraged to support the culture of open information sharing with as many people as possible and as soon as possible. Information placed into the public domain will be accompanied by the following: i) an ICARDA copyright statement to avoid plagiarism, ii) a disclaimer for quality control, iii) a request for acknowledgment to credit the data source, and iv) software blocks to avoid full-scale data downloads without prior approval from the Center.

The long-term policy of the Center is to release information into the public domain for external access and use as quickly as possible.

Data capture, retention and sharing

Data sharing and archiving is an important area of research in the routine work culture of the Center therefore high professional attention is given to this process. Data archived in this information sharing system will neither be analyzed nor shared without prior authorization by the Center.

Information in the Center's Intranet is freely available for viewing but may require permission for extensive viewing, downloading and use for three years from the date of submission. Data in the public domain on the ICARDA Internet site is available freely for use unless restricted by the authority of the DG.

The Director General (DG) may restrict access to Center's data at any point in this information sharing process.

Unprofessional or unauthorized use of information may lead to disciplinary action. The following should be adhered to by all scientists and their collaborators:

- Data must be recorded in a durable and appropriately referenced form.
- Original data should be safely held for periods of at least seven years.
- The research program or unit should establish a procedure for retention of original data.
- The Megaproject Director or Unit Head should be notified of the location, storage method and custodian of the original data.
- Research staff should observe any requirements of confidentiality in relation to data.

Code of Conduct

ICARDA scientists shall agree to abide by the following code of conduct regarding unpublished research data:

- It is expected that data will be gathered consistent with the highest standards of ethical and scientific practice.
- Scientists shall recognize that the Center retains the right to set and alter access, use, copy and transfer rights of such data;
- Wherever possible, original data must be retained in the research program or unit in which they were generated. Retention solely by the individual researcher provides little protection to the researcher or ICARDA.
- Scientists should ensure that fair use of data obliges all to give appropriate and full citation to the source of that data set ;

- Decisions about how, when and where to publish data and any conclusions therefrom, should be taken jointly by all who have made a significant intellectual contribution to its accumulation and analysis. The publication of data from other sources must be adequately acknowledged.
- Researchers will not submit for publication any manuscript containing data they are not authorized to use. The principal scientist of a research project retains the right to control use of resulting unpublished data.
- Data related to publications must be available for discussion with other researchers. Where confidentiality provisions apply (for example, where the researchers have given undertakings to third parties, such as the subjects of the research), it is desirable for data to be kept in a way that reference to them by third parties can occur without breaching such confidentiality.
- Confidentiality agreements to protect intellectual property rights may be agreed between ICARDA, the researcher sponsor of the research and any other third party where appropriate. Where such agreements limit free publication and discussion, limitations and restrictions must be explicitly agreed. This must include guidelines on the establishment and ownership of and access to databases containing confidential information, and any limits on this.
- Copying of data is allowed for internal use *only* and no distribution is allowed by third parties, with or without fee;
- The originator of the data shall take no responsibility for errors, omissions, deficiencies and for updating the information
- Source code of software is not released outside ICARDA, unless explicitly authorized on a case-by-case basis;
- A research meta-database shall be developed and put into use for all data and information in the custody of individual scientists, and scientists are expected to contribute to this meta-database;
- Departing scientists have the obligation to submit terminal reports, according to an agreed format, on their research projects and the associated unpublished data. Intranet publication of these reports will be highly recommended.
- It is the Center's policy that its own information sources shall be for the benefit of the Center's stakeholders and not for commercial benefits of corporate companies.

Rewards

As an integral component of staff function, each staff member is encouraged to share information according to the policy guidelines. Staff members who are proactive in data sharing may be rewarded during the annual performance evaluation process. Quality control of information shared is the responsibility of the staff member originally submitting the data.

Procedures

Procedures for submission, entering and processing data are described in the ICARDA Procedures Manual.

Responsibilities

Each research Mega Projects Director / Unit Head is responsible for ensuring that the scientists concerned abide by this policy and related procedures. The Computer and Biometrics Services Unit is responsible for facilitating the implementation of this policy and providing the necessary software tools. The ADG-R will have overall responsibility for monitoring the adherence to the policy and for recommending to the DG any corrective and disciplinary actions that may be required.