COLUMBIA CLIMATE SCHOOL
CENTER FOR INTEGRATED EARTH SYSTEM INFORMATION

Open Data Policy

Center for Integrated Earth Science Information (CIESIN), Columbia University

---

This CIESIN Open Data Policy has been established to promote the open and free exchange of data and information in support of research, decision making, education, and other applications. CIESIN intends this policy to support and comply with relevant open data policies, guidelines, and initiatives for scientific, government, and sustainable development data.[i] CIESIN's policy is to make data "open by default," with only narrow exemptions for genuine security, privacy, or legal concerns.

The data products covered by this policy include quantitative and textual data, digital maps, images, and other visualizations that CIESIN creates and publicly disseminates online, as well as CIESIN-authored documentation, metadata, and software code or scripts that are directly relevant to the data products (henceforth referred to as Data). In many instances, CIESIN disseminates Data created by, or in collaboration with, external individuals or organizations; for these Data, CIESIN will make best efforts to obtain permissions or releases in advance of the collaboration to ensure open access to these Data products. When Data are solely authored or owned by external individuals or organizations, CIESIN will negotiate the most open and unrestricted usage and redissemination rights possible before agreeing to disseminate the Data, taking into account the uniqueness and value of the Data to potential users. Where there may be legal or other constraints on fully open redissemination, e.g., due to privacy or security issues, CIESIN will explore opportunities to make anonymized or public-use datasets available or to provide access to qualified users on a non-discriminatory basis, e.g., through usage agreements.

To ensure clarity with respect to usage and dissemination rights and appropriate attribution and liability protection, CIESIN's policy is to apply an appropriate open, irrevocable license to the Data that it creates. The license will authorize anyone to use, copy, distribute, redistribute, transmit, and adapt the Data for any purpose, without fees or limitations. For co-created or third-party Data, CIESIN will work with the external copyright owners to identify and apply an appropriate license. In general, CIESIN will also choose a license that requires attribution, such as the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License, known as CC BY 4.0 (or successor versions).[ii] A recommended data citation will be provided together with the Data to encourage proper citation. Other recommendations or guidelines on usage requested by

authors may be included in the metadata or documentation, but are not binding on users. In some cases, CIESIN may require users to register to obtain a copy of Data directly, but such registration is not intended to restrict usage or redissemination of the Data. For all data products, CIESIN will generally utilize the most recent and relevant version of the Creative Commons family of licenses, since these have been ported to most jurisdictions around the world and are available in both human- and machine-readable formats.

CIESIN strives to disseminate quality Data and to provide accurate metadata and documentation consistent with best practices and accepted standards. This includes appropriate version control and archiving so that users understand changes to Data and can obtain previous versions for comparison purposes. Nevertheless, CIESIN, Columbia University, and their sponsors offer Data on a "where is, as is"[iii] basis and do not offer an express or implied warranty regarding quality, applicability, or accuracy.

---

[i] e.g., the Principle of Universality of Science of the International Science Council (ISC), formerly the International Council for Science (ICSU), Statute 5, (https://council.science/publications/annual-report-2017/universality-of-science/), the Data Sharing Principles of the ISC World Data System (ISC-WDS) (https://worlddatasystem.org/about/data-sharing-principles/), the Data Sharing Principles of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) (http://earthobservations.org/documents/GEO_Strategic_Plan_2016_2025_Implementing_GEOSS.pdf, p. 10), the G8 Open Data Charter (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-data-charter/g8-open-data-charter-and-technical-annex), the Principles and Guidelines for Access to Research Data from Public Funding of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264034020-en-fr), the Science International Accord on Open Data in a Big Data World (https://council.science/publications/open-data-in-a-big-data-world/), the Principles and Guidelines on the Legal Interoperability of Research established by the Research Data Alliance (RDA) and the ISC Committee on Data for Science and Technology (CODATA) (https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.162241), and the data principles articulated by the United Nations Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development (http://www.undatarevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/A-World-That-Counts.pdf, p.22).
[ii] https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode
[iii] Uniform Commercial Code, § 2-316. Exclusion or Modification of Warranties. Available online at https://www.law.cornell.edu/ucc/2/2-316.

Policy Review Schedule

CIESIN will review its policies at least every 3 years and will update the policies, if needed.

Revision Date: 18 September 2024

Approved Date: 18 September 2024