

Long-Term Data Retention Task Force

Terms of Reference

1. TF Background and Scope

The EOSC-A Long Term Data Preservation Task Force worked on defining the vision on Long Term Data Preservation, proposing the adoption and application of clear 'levels of care' (including the differentiation of initial curation from active, long-term preservation), and providing a set of assertions and recommendations for preservation in the context of EOSC. These assertions and recommendations included the need for additional work on retention, appraisal, and re-appraisal of digital objects as a continuous process to evaluate a digital object with a view to retaining it, assigning or changing a level of care, or deleting it. A clear and defined (re)appraisal cycle is a dependency for informed and transparent decisions around the proper level of care. The growth in data production through research and of relevance to research, with an associated increase in costs and demand for limited storage capacity, implies a need for clearer criteria around what should be kept and cared for, including through long-term preservation.

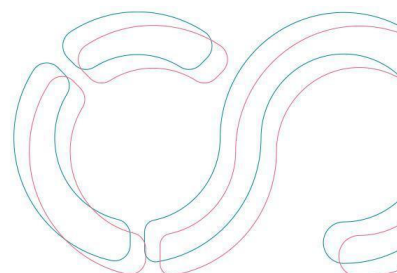
Digital objects are the primary reusable assets of federated research infrastructures and therefore an understanding of the criteria and the decisions that inform retention and the level of care is vital to the future and continued success of EOSC. Topics related to retention and long-term preservation, including data quality and a framework to identify what data are candidates for long-term preservation, are being addressed in the HORIZON-INFRA-2024-EOSC-01-04 call. Engagement with the projects that result from EOSC-01-04 and other relevant projects (e.g. HORIZON-INFRA-2024-EOSC-01-03) will be crucial. This task force aligns with several objectives of the SRIA related to the co-design and adoption of principles, practices, and frameworks by communities. Moreover, this TF is aligned with the SRIA's Strategic Objectives SO6 (reuse of European research) and Operational Objective OO1 (EOSC MVE). Additionally, the work of the TF will be fully aligned with the Multi-Annual Roadmap through the liaison to HEU projects (in objective 1), fostering the use of FAIR-enabled trusted repositories (in objective 2) and long-term preservation (in objective 3).

1.1. Main Objective

The task force will engage with the repository landscape to support an improved understanding of the different scientific community's status, needs and challenges in data retention, appraisal, and re-appraisal. The work will include discussions on wider typologies and definitions of retention, curation, and preservation, with the objective to reach a broad understanding and agreement by the EOSC community concerning these definitions. The task force will consider recommendations on all forms of retention, curation, and preservation, specifically towards their engagement with the INFRA-2024-EOSC-01-04 and HORIZON-INFRA-2024-EOSC-01-03 winning bids. The task force will continue to monitor gaps and formulate advice for new priorities and objectives to be included in the SRIA and MAR.

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1.2. Key Focus Areas

- KFA1: The task force will produce a landscape report on the different scientific community's status, needs and challenges in data retention, appraisal, and re-appraisal to make strategic recommendations on continued actions (SRIA, MAR ...).
- KFA2: The task force will provide feedback and recommendations on retention, curation, and preservation to the EOSC-A Board and to ongoing and starting projects such as INFRA-2024-EOSC-01-03/-04.

1.3. Expected Membership

Membership is open to a wide range of stakeholders across the digital object management lifecycle but should preferably include:

- Relevant parties from EOSC related projects, specifically HORIZON-INFRA-2024-EOSC-01-03 / -04.
- Other bodies and activities related to the new scope of the TF (national service providers, ERICs/Science Clusters etc).
- The task force will welcome input from data curators and data stewards with a diverse representation from organisation (European, National, Institutional), repository (generalist/specialist), collection/catalogue and at digital object type level.
- We encourage active participation from Research Performing Organisations to get a good balance of project, service providers and RI representatives.

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