RTG Data Policy

PREAMBLE

The subprojects of the RTG are collecting/compiling extensive datasets. Many of the results and publications will arise within the subprojects. In addition, the RTG offers opportunities for collaborative results and publications across subprojects. This will allow exploiting synergies, gaining a wider interdisciplinary understanding of critical issues, and increasing the number and quality of publications. Moreover, the RTG – designed as a long-term project of international visibility and cooperation – requires careful data documentation, quality, storage, and accessibility. These aspects are subject of this policy.

§1 Coverage

    a) This policy applies to all RTG members: principal investigators (PIs), doctoral and postdoctoral researchers (irrespective of their individual funding source), student research assistants, and associate fellows, as far as research activities are carried out under the RTG Program or data shall be used that were generated within the RTG Program.

§2 Data Management and Publication Committee

    a) A Data Management and Publication Committee (DMPC) composed of the Executive Board Members and the Data Representative sets data standards and also serves to adjudicate possible disputes relating to this policy.

§3 Rights and responsibilities

    a) Each RTG member is responsible for entering her/his data into the central database (short "database").
    b) The coordination office oversees the management of this database and compliance with this policy.

§4 Documentation of datasets

    a) All individual datasets have to be documented with meta-information. All datasets will be stored in the database with information on who collected them, version of the data, date of the latest update, as well as any potential use restrictions.
    b) Details on deadlines and data formats will be specified in a separate technical document to be developed by the DMPC. Templates to facilitate meta-information and data entry will be provided by the coordination office.

§5 Access to data

    a) Each RTG member has unrestricted access to the meta-information in the database.
    b) Each RTG member should usually have access to the entire individual datasets via the coordination office. The researchers, who have originally collected (obtained) the data and the PI of the respective subproject will be asked for their consent prior to data sharing to other RTG members. All data sharing is moderated by the coordination office. RTG members making use of data supplied by other RTG researchers for scientific publication must acknowledge use of the data appropriately. Potential co-authorship has to follow the rules of good scientific practice. Before anything is submitted for publication, the PIs of the subprojects must be consulted.

c) RTG members pledge that they will not pass any data or passwords that enable access to the database to third parties. Until datasets are made publicly available (see point e of this paragraph), release of data to non-members of the RTG will be an exception for which explicit permission has to be sought from the DMPC, which will consider the opinion of the original data suppliers. Original data suppliers are the RTG members who were responsible for data collection/compilation.

d) All (non-confidential and non-licensed) data will be made available internally within the RTG two years after the person that collected (obtained) the data left the Program or finished his/her dissertation.

e) All (non-confidential and non-licensed) data will be made publicly available on the RTG homepage five years after the person that collected (obtained) the data left the Program or finished his/her dissertation.

f) If there are legitimate reasons, the PI of the subproject in which particular data were collected can apply to postpone the procedures described in points d and e of this paragraph). Decisions will be made by the DMPC.

§6 Use of data

a) Data use must always be based on an agreement between an original data supplier and the data user. The RTG database will offer the possibility to trace all downloads of a given data set. The following procedure will be implemented:
   - The data user discusses the intended use with the data supplier.
   - The data supplier gives his/her agreement in which the involvement in the use of the data is regulated. Agreements on co-authorship of publications must follow the rules of good scientific practice. Publications must acknowledge that the data were compiled in the RTG Program funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).
   - The coordination office provides the data of the data supplier to the data user upon receipt of this agreement. This ensures that the exact data version used can be documented.

b) Data accessed by a RTG member should be used for purposes necessary to carry out his/her own research in the RTG. Data accessed must only be used for scientific purposes, i.e., commercial use of data is not allowed. It is prohibited to distribute other researchers' data to a third party without the explicit consent of an original data supplier.

§7 Delivery of data and quality control

a) The project and meta-information have to be made available no later than three months after the request from the coordination office. The PIs of the subprojects are responsible for data supply within the period stipulated.

b) Full data need to be deposited as fast as possible, normally within one year after collection. An updated version of the data has to be deposited in parallel to handing in the dissertation in case of doctoral researchers (finalization of other research output or employment contract expiry in other cases).

c) Full data comprise the elementary (raw) data, meta-information, and all details required to understand the elementary data (i.e., sampling frame, description of data structure, methods used, documentation of the data-generating process, experimental design, questionnaire, etc.).

d) Compliance is controlled by careful review of the different components submitted to the database. The coordination office determines when submitted components are acceptable.

e) All data need to be stored in accordance with DFG and University rules.