

# IASSIST REGIONAL REPORT: AFRICA

June 2012 –May 2013

## 20130129 South Africa: **First World Data System (WDS) Member Organisation in Africa**

In January 2013 DataFirst, at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, was accepted as a member of the International Council for Science's (ICSU) World Data System (WDS) <http://icsu-wds.org/> Regular Members are components of a network of data systems that curate data and provide data services. The strict accreditation procedure prescribed by WDS provides quality assurance for DataFirst's data repository and data support services. Membership now connects this African data portal to high-quality, interdisciplinary data systems around the world.

## 20130221 South Africa: **National Data Working Group provides Policy input to South Africa's Integrated Cyber-Infrastructure Framework**

The Data Intensive Research in South Africa (DIRISA) User Group met in February 2013 to provide data policy input to SAs current Cyber-infrastructure to support research. The group was convened by SA's Department of Science and Technology (DST) to interrogate strategies for

- Long term data preservation roles and responsibilities
- Data management funding models
- Cross-domain capability of DIRISA services
- Certification of trusted digital repositories
- Data curation training

## 20130403 Namibia: **Namibia Statistics Agency embraces Open Data**

The Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) has established a data portal to place Namibian data in the public domain. Namibia's recently-appointed Statistician-General, Dr John Steytler, is keen to promote the country's data assets, and provide online access to these for researchers and government decision-makers. Namibia's latest Labour Force Survey and Income and Expenditure Survey are now available on the NSA website <http://www.microdata.nsa.org.na/index.php/catalog> Namibia joins several African countries which provide data from government surveys online. Other data sharing NSOs are those in Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda.

Photo: Lynn Woolfrey with NSA staff Sapalov Quita and Daniel Oherein

#### 20130415: South Africa: **First Secure Data Service in Africa**

DataFirst was established in 2001 to provide data services to staff and postgraduate students at the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa. In 2009 data services to provide South African data were extended to the international academic community via DataFirst's web portal <http://www.datafirst.uct.ac.za/catalogue3/index.php/catalog>. The service provided public use data and licensed data online. However, the datasets currently available have reduced geographic and personal data in order to protect respondent confidentiality, and this limits their research potential. Thus academics have requested more detailed government data for research purposes. While this data is not currently available to researchers, DataFirst has in the past assisted researchers at the university to obtain such data from government on an ad-hoc basis. As demand has increased, it seemed more sensible to establish a formal system to make more detailed national data available to responsible researchers to enable cutting-edge research.

In April 2013 the Secure Data Service was established to formalise sharing of potentially sensitive national datasets within a trusted repository at UCT. DataFirst received expert support from the UK Data Archive and input from knowledgeable IASSIST members in setting up the service. Currently researchers can use restricted-access data from South Africa's National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) of 2008-2011 in the Centre, and DataFirst is planning to provide firm- and school-level data through the service <http://www.datafirst.uct.ac.za/home/index.php?/secure-data-service>

#### 20130430 South Africa: **University of Cape Town the First African University to offer Digital Curation Training**

The University of Cape Town, South Africa has introduced a training course in digital curation, to skill up South Africans for careers in the management of South Africa's digital assets. The course, commencing in July 2013, is a module in the MLIS offered by the Library and Information Studies Centre. The course includes a session on the curation of datasets by IASSIST member, Lynn Woolfrey. Subjects covered in the module include Information Governance, Open Access and Open Content as well as metadata standards. Course conveners Richard Higgs and Jaya Raju, LISC Head see the module as helping to fill the current gap in digital curation expertise in South Africa and on the African continent in general.

#### 20130510 **New Data Portal at the National Institute of Statistics Rwanda**

The National Institute of Statistics Rwanda (NISR), launched an online data portal at a Workshop on Open Access to Data held in May 2013 in Kigali. The NISR currently provides public access to data from thirteen national surveys <http://microdata.statistics.gov.rw/index.php/catalog>