



ADS 579 – USAID’s Policy on Development Data

WHAT

[ADS 579](#) is USAID’s policy on sharing Agency-funded data for public benefit, while ensuring proper protections for privacy and national security. The policy notes that all USAID operating units, including its worldwide missions, must ensure that USAID-funded data is centrally cataloged and made available to the public by default, with limited exceptions. This is in keeping with [USAID’s Evaluation Policy](#) and the Office of Management and Budget’s [Open Data Policy \(M-13-13\)](#). ADS 579 defines USAID’s data governance structure; establishes the Development Data Library (DDL) as the Agency’s repository of USAID-funded data; creates Data Stewards in each USAID operating unit; outlines the process for USAID staff and implementing partners to submit data to the DDL; defines the data clearance process; and outlines special considerations for research data.

WHY

Making U.S. Government data accessible, discoverable, and usable by our partners and the international community fuels entrepreneurship, innovation, scientific discovery, and enhanced development outcomes. It contributes to improved design and implementation of development programs while reducing expensive and duplicative data collection efforts. Studies estimate that trillions of dollars in economic value can be unleashed globally by opening untapped data sources. Many of the countries where USAID operates also recognize the value of proactively releasing government data to the public, as members of the [Open Government Partnership](#).

HOW

With the issuance of ADS 579 and its associated changes to award terms, new and existing USAID awards now require USAID implementing partners to [submit datasets](#) generated with USAID funding to the Development Data Library (DDL) in machine-readable, non-proprietary formats. Partners tag the data with labels (metadata) to help consumers better understand, find, and use the data. Datasets are published at www.usaid.gov/data, unless legally exempted, after undergoing an internal clearance process. Published datasets also appear automatically at Data.gov. An Agency-wide rollout plan, including webinars, trainings, and other engagements with implementing partners and USAID operating units is currently underway.

WHO

The [Information Governance Committee](#) (InfoGov) of USAID’s [Management Operations Council](#) (MOC) is overseeing USAID’s roll-out of ADS 579. A Permanent Working Group (PWG) under InfoGov is coordinating detailed implementation, including rollout, training, and socialization with implementing partners.

WHEN

ADS 579 became effective October 1, 2014, and applies to existing USAID awards as well as those issued on or after this date. Be sure to visit the Development Data Library at www.usaid.gov/data for new datasets as they become available.

A PRESUMPTION IN FAVOR OF OPENNESS

The Open Government Directive (OMB M-10-06) notes that, “With respect to information, the presumption shall be in favor of openness (to the extent permitted by law and subject to valid privacy, confidentiality, security, or other restrictions).”

This means that to the extent practical and subject to valid restrictions, U.S. Government agencies should publish information online in open formats, rather than waiting for specific requests for information (for example, via the Freedom of Information Act).