



## CESSDA Metadata Office

March 2020

### 1 CESSDA ERIC

[CESSDA](#) stands for Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives and ERIC stands for European Research Infrastructure Consortium. CESSDA is an alliance of social science data archives with currently 20 [member countries](#) (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom). CESSDA's aims are to promote the results of social science research and to support national and international research and cooperation. The Consortium was established in 1976. It started out as an umbrella organization of seven social science data archives. As a leading research infrastructure for the social sciences CESSDA was granted the status of a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) by the European Commission in 2017.

The CESSDA members work to improve data access for researchers. For this, CESSDA provides large-scale, integrated and sustainable data services to the social sciences and supports national and international research and cooperation. It brings together social science data archives across Europe.

### 2 CESSDA Metadata Office (MDO)

The CESSDA Metadata Office (MDO) project oversees strategic developments for all metadata-related issues within CESSDA, and the implementation of CESSDA tools and services. CESSDA ERIC has acknowledged the importance of metadata with several metadata projects over the years. The latest of these projects is the CESSDA Metadata Office (MDO) project. The MDO project started at the beginning of 2019. It is a continuation of its predecessor, the CESSDA Metadata Management project. The CESSDA Service Providers (SPs) working on the MDO are: [UKDS](#) (United Kingdom) and [GESIS](#) (Germany) with a joint lead, [FSD](#) (Finland), and [NSD](#) (Norway).

MDO forms a conceptual and strategic group to maintain and manage CESSDA's metadata-related material. The CESSDA Metadata Office is the principal point of contact for metadata issues within CESSDA. MDO stays up to date with metadata requirements of CESSDA SPs and CESSDA projects, while simultaneously providing recommendations to CESSDA SPs on metadata. Furthermore, MDO monitors metadata developments in other relevant consortia, institutions, initiatives, and projects. MDO defines strategic metadata requirements for CESSDA, to help plan as well as implement tools and services. Additionally, MDO manages the content of the European Language Social Science Thesaurus (ELSST) and related multilingual vocabulary services (for further information see below). The Metadata Office updates the metadata materials it is responsible for (such as the [CESSDA Metadata Model](#)) on a regular basis. Those materials are based on the [Data Documentation Initiative](#) (DDI) metadata standard.

### 3 ELSSST (European Language Social Science Thesaurus)

[European Language Social Science Thesaurus](#) (ELSSST) is a broad-based, multilingual thesaurus for the social sciences. ELSSST keywords are used to describe in detail the actual subjects and concepts covered by data.

ELSSST was originally based on the monolingual Humanities and Social Science Electronic Thesaurus (HASSET), developed by the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex. It has been enhanced and translated in the course of following projects. From 2019, ELSSST has been managed within the MDO alongside CESSDA's other key metadata assets, the [CESSDA Metadata Model \(CMM\)](#) and the [CESSDA Vocabulary Service \(CVS\)](#) (for further information see below). The ELSSST is managed by a dedicated team within the MDO project, in close cooperation with expert translators.

The latest version of the multilingual ELSSST was released in September 2019. The new release contains two major changes. Firstly, a new language, Dutch, was added to the thesaurus. Secondly, scope notes were added to the Slovenian version. ELSSST is now available in 14 languages (including the source language English), with translation of Preferred Terms 98-100% complete in each target language: Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Romanian, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish. Content development and structural work in 2019 have concentrated on the reduction of complex polyhierarchies, and revision of the POLITICS hierarchy. A full list of changes can be found on the [Changes to ELSSST](#) webpage, and in a post on the [CESSDA ELSSST blog](#).

### 4 CVS (CESSDA Vocabulary Service)

The [CESSDA Vocabulary Service \(CVS\)](#) provides a user-friendly source of standardized controlled vocabularies. Currently, there are 24 controlled vocabularies available in the CVS including the CESSDA Topic Classification. The vocabularies can be browsed online and downloaded in different formats. The CVS also contains an editor, where authorized users create, manage and translate the vocabularies. The service provides Uniform Resource Names (URN) for both the controlled vocabulary and for each version of it, as well as an Application Programming Interface (API).

The majority of the source (English) vocabularies included in the service have been created by the DDI Alliance. Translations of the DDI vocabularies have been provided by CESSDA member and associated organizations in different countries, as they use the vocabularies to describe research data. The other languages that can be found in the CVS are Danish, Finnish, French, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Serbian, Slovenian, and Swedish.

MDO has also released the CVS User Guide. It includes information for the general user, as well as instructions for editors on how to add, translate, and maintain a controlled vocabulary (CV) in the tool. The User Guide is available online to registered CVS users. It will be revised and updated periodically.

### 5 CMM (CESSDA Metadata Model)

MDO maintains CESSDA's official metadata schema, the CESSDA Metadata Model (CMM). The first version of the CMM was produced within the CESSDA Metadata Management project. It contains elements relevant for CESSDA, the CESSDA SPs and CESSDA tools. The CMM is built from

the viewpoint of quantitative social science data. Thus, it aims to help CESSDA Service Providers to make their quantitative data more discoverable and comprehensible to users. The CMM is based on the DDI Lifecycle metadata standard, because it is currently the most complete standard for the social sciences and promotes interoperability.

The CMM is updated on an annual basis. The first versions of the CESSDA Metadata Model (CMM) and the CMM User Guide were published (in May/June 2019) via Zenodo. The [latest version of the CMM](#) was published (in November 2019) via Zenodo. The document can be downloaded and cited using this DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3236171>. Please note that this DOI is a collective DOI, meaning that it will always link to the latest version of the document. Currently, the CMM is available in both Excel and PDF format. The CMM User Guide was revised at the end of 2019 and will also be uploaded on Zenodo as soon as it is officially approved.

## 6 DDI Profiles for CESSDA Tools, UML Class Model and CESSDA Metadata Validator (CMV)

The CESSDA Metadata Office is currently working on DDI profiles (<https://ddialliance.org/resources/ddi-profiles>) for the metadata schemas of the CESSDA Data Catalogue (CDC) and the CESSDA Euro Question Bank (EQB).

The MDO will produce DD1.2.2, DDI2.5, and DDI3.2 profiles for the CDC, as well as DDI2.5 and DDI3.2 profiles for EQB. The MDO is also working on a UML class model based on the CMM.

The profiles and the UML model are intended to promote the understanding and the implementation of CESSDA's metadata schemas for CESSDA SPs. To further assist the production of quality metadata by the SPs the MDO is currently working on the CESSDA Metadata Validator (CMV). This tool will help the CESSDA SPs to validate their metadata against the DDI profiles of the CESSDA tools.

## 7 MDO at large

In 2019, members of the MDO team contributed to the following conferences and workshops outside of CESSDA, presenting the work of the MDO project:

- [IASSIST 2019](#), Sydney
- [CLOSER workshop](#) 'Understanding metadata management in longitudinal studies', London ([Program](#))
- [Federal Statistical Office Germany colloquium](#) 'Potentials and applications of georeferenced data', Wiesbaden
- Sciences Po workshop 'Documenting longitudinal data', Paris
- [EDDI 2019 conference](#), Tampere

An article presenting the work of MDO 2019 has been accepted for publication by [the IASSIST Quarterly](#) journal and will be published in 2020.

The CESSDA Metadata Office MDO will continue its promotion inside and outside of CESSDA. Presentations on latest MDO work are intended for the [IASSIST conference](#) 2020 in Gothenburg and for the [EDDI conference](#) (the European DDI conference) 2020 in Paris.