

Directory Interchange Format (DIF) Usability Survey

NASA's Earth Science Data Systems Standards Process Group (SPG) is considering the DIF (Directory Interchange Format) specification, developed by the GCMD (Global Change Master Directory), for adoption as a community standard. Your responses to this survey on the usability of the DIF and the suitability of this specification for Earth science data will be helpful.

Please answer as many of the questions below as you can..

1. Please provide your name, organization and contact information (including email address).

2. Are you answering for your entire organization, for a smaller group, or individually?

a) Entire organization

b) Smaller group (please specify) _____

c) Individual response

3. Are you a data producer, data consumer, or both?

a) Producer b) Consumer c) Both

4. How long have you been using the DIF?

Since 1992.

5. Please describe how the DIF is used in your organization.

- **GHRC uses the DIF to catalog and publicize data holdings by providing descriptions to GCMD.**

For the following, you can answer either about the DIF alone, or relative to other, comparable specifications.

6. What are the strengths of the DIF? How has the use of the DIF helped your organization?

- **The GCMD Science Keywords provides a reference for metadata helping us keep consistent terminology within our data center.**

- **The GCMD maintains a master keyword listing which allows for interoperability among the NASA data centers.**
- **The instrument and platform keywords provide a reference for common names and acronyms.**
- **Related URLs allows the provider to customize access to data or more information.**

7. What are the weaknesses of the DIF? What would you like to change about the DIF or what would make the DIF a better specification?

- **It would be helpful if the GCMD would provide and maintain scheduled keyword update lists of additions and deletions to the Science keywords.**

8. How well does the DIF solve your metadata storage, discovery, and/or interchange needs? Are there specific areas it is applicable to vs. areas where it is not applicable or not used?

- **The DIF assists interchange needs by providing a registration of our data holdings.**

9. How suitable is the DIF for representing your data holdings?

- **The DIF has multiple attributes which allow descriptions to be clearly and correctly categorized.**
- **The DIF meets our needs.**

10. Do you use the DIF to track your own data holdings (i.e. do you use DIF in your own data management activities)?

- **GHRC provides DIFS for each of our data holdings.**
- **The DIF entry id is provided to ECHO.**
- **GHRC's internal dataset shortname is used as the DIF entry id.**
- **GHRC utilizes the Keyword Glossary.**

11. What are the **limitations** of the DIF? Does the DIF prevent you from doing things you would like to do? Does its use make other things more difficult?

- **GHRC has found no limitations.**

12. Do you think ESDS-RFC-012 (and thus the DIF) should be endorsed as a NASA Earth Science Data Systems Standard? Why or why not?

- **Yes. ESDS-RFC-012 should be endorsed as the NASA Earth Science Data Systems Standard because**
 - **adheres to ISO standards and uses required attributes of FGDC standard**

- registers metadata with FGDC clearinghouse
- provides wide scope of scientific data such as Atmosphere, Oceans, etc.