

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) SOLAS
 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?

Approximately 1.5 years

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

To provide data producers and consumers from the SOLAS community with an easy-to-use resource that allows them to identify what data exists, where it was measured, and who to contact in order to get hold of it.

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?

Relative flexibility to suit our task.

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?

Once the keyword review is completed for the oceans, and our new keywords are added, this will be a much more powerful too for us. However, the GCMD staff (Melanie Meaux in particular) have been very helpful and worked with us to circumnavigate these problems and achieve our goal(s).

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?

It meets our needs very well.

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

Quite well-suited. It will be even better once the new keywords are created.

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

Yes, that's a specific component of the task we are undertaking.

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?

Not really – we've had to work around certain parts of the DIF, but it's been perfectly possible to do this.

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, I think so, although I'm not 100% sure I understand the question.