

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?

About 1.5 yr

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

Cataloguing/making accessible our datasets internationally, using uniform metadata standards through the WDC Portal of the GMCD; querying metadata for 'external' datasets on e.g climate and land use/cover.

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?

As a small organization, DIF of GMCD allowed us to increase international awareness about, as well as access to, our datasets using uniform metadata standards. In first instance, we provided our metadata (ISO19139, with some ESRI elements) through the Dutch GeoLoketten portal (Geo<http://www.groene-omgeving.nl/Portal/ptk>). However, in practice, we found its 'user community' to be too limited geographically. As such, we welcomed the development of the World Data Centers Portal of the Global Change Master Directory (GCMD).

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?

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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?

Fine as is for our spatial data. However, DIF may not be appropriate for describing all our WDC collections.

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

Fine for spatial data sets (see 8).

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, partially (see above).

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?

Fine for our present uses.

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?

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