Energy Department Releases New Data Management Policy

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August 4, 2014, the Department of Energy (DOE) announced a new effort to promote open data through access to DOE funded public research. Along with push for public access to information, the department is implementing a new policy for data management that takes effect October 1, 2014.

According to Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz, "these new policies set the stage for increased innovation, commercial opportunities, and accelerated scientific breakthroughs." Like other government agencies looking to tap into the data they generate, DOE recognizes a great potential for economic and intellectual value. As Secretary Moniz noted, "increasing access to the results of research funded by the Department of Energy will enable researchers and entrepreneurs to capitalize on our substantial research and development investments."

The department is implementing a new policy for data management for all research funding through the Office of Science effective October 1, 2014. According to the policy, all proposals for research funding will need to include a Data Management Plan. As outlined in a statement from the Office of Science, "data management involves all stages of the digital data life cycle including capture, analysis, sharing, and preservation." These data management plans must meet requirements across areas like sharing and preservation, open data, resources, and protection.

> **Sharing and preservation:** Plans must outline data collection, access, sharing, and storage. Explanation will be provided for any data excluded from sharing or preservation. For example, cost considerations or limitations related to data protection driving decisions not to share or preserve data need to be fully described. The minimum requirement for the plans is to describe how validation of research results will be facilitated.

> **Open data:** Resulting research publications and supporting data is to be open, machine-readable, and publicly accessible. This includes chart data as well as figures and images. While supporting data may be made available as a supplement, the published research will need to identify how supporting data can be accessed.

> **Resources:** Since the data will result from research efforts, the plans are expected to reference the information and data management resources used for the research and include any necessary facility approvals where additional resource requirements are anticipated.

> **Protection:** Plans will account for sensitive data including confidentiality, personal privacy, Personally Identifiable Information, and U.S. national, homeland, and economic security. They are also expected to address proprietary data and intellectual property rights. (There is no requirement to share proprietary data.) And, of course, the plans must align with applicable laws, regulations, and DOE policies.

Sponsoring programs (or sub-program) or solicitations may include additional requirements or review criteria. Vendors can expect these data management requirements to start appearing in funding solicitations and invitations this October. Other Energy Department research offices are expected to implement requirements for data management plans with in the next year. The full details of the requirements being rolled out by the Office of Science can be found on **their website**.

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