

## Guide

### Question 6: What metadata and/or data standards will you be using to describe your data?

- The term metadata is commonly defined as "data about data," information that describes or contextualises the data.
- Metadata helps to place your dataset in a broader context, allowing those outside your institution, discipline, or software environment to understand how to interpret your data. (Source: [MANTRA](#))
- You are strongly encouraged to use community standards to describe and structure data, where these are in place. The Digital Curation Centre (DCC) offers a [catalogue of disciplinary metadata standards](#).
- If you are using a specific metadata scheme or standard, please state what it is and provide the references.
- If you are not using a specific metadata scheme or standard, describe the type of metadata (e.g. descriptive, structural, administrative, etc.) you will be providing, if any.

#### Additional Information:

- Three broad categories of metadata are:
  - Descriptive - common fields such as title, author, abstract, keywords which help users to discover online sources through searching and browsing.
  - Administrative - preservation, rights management, and technical metadata about formats.
  - Structural - how different components of a set of associated data relate to one another, such as a schema describing relations between tables in a database, variable list, directory and file listing and taxonomy.
- The difference between documentation (refer to DMP question 7) and metadata is that the first is meant to be read by humans and the second implies computer-processing (though metadata may also be human-readable).
- Metadata may not be required if you are working alone on your own computer, but become crucial when data are shared online. Your data management plan should determine whether you need to apply metadata descriptors or tags at some point during your project.