Conducting a data integration project

The arrangements for data integration involving Commonwealth data for statistical and research purposes (the Commonwealth arrangements), specify three stakeholder roles in a data integration project that uses Commonwealth data (the project). These are the data user, the data custodian and the integrating authority.

Roles and responsibilities

The **data user (researcher)**, is the person or entity who accesses the integrated dataset (at a unit record level) to conduct research. For example, the data user can be an academic working in a research institution, or an employee in a State/ Territory government agency.

The **data custodian** is the entity responsible for the source data and any activities relating to it, such as its collection, management, protection and access approval. Often their responsibilities are set out in relevant legislation.

The **integrating authority** is the single organisation ultimately responsible for the sound conduct of the statistical data integration project. It is responsible for the implementation of the data integration project and the management of the integrated dataset throughout its entire life cycle, ensuring full compliance with commitments made to data custodians, and in line with the Commonwealth arrangements. The integrating authority is also responsible for providing data users with safe and secure access to the integrated data in line with the requirements of data custodians.

For more detailed information about these roles, see Information Sheets 4–7 or the **Roles and Responsibilities** pages of **A Guide for Data Integration Projects Involving Commonwealth Data for Statistical and Research Purposes (the Guide).**

The process for conducting a project

There are many ways a data integration project can be conducted. On the reverse side of this information sheet a process map outlines the stages a project will generally go through to align with the Commonwealth arrangements, although there may be variations depending on specific project requirements. Most of the stages should already align with existing project approval procedures, with only some additional steps incorporated to reflect the requirements of the Commonwealth arrangements.

For more detail about the different stages a project will generally go through, see the **Project Application** and **Project Delivery** pages of the guide.

The Arrangements for Data Integration Involving Commonwealth Data for Statistical and Research Purposes

A Process Map for Data Integration Projects

Project proposal	Key stakeholders by colour: Data custodian,–green,–Integrating authority,–blue,–Data user,–orange
	Data user approaches data custodian(s) with a project proposal (1)

Project Approval	Data custodian(s) ensure the project is in scope, they have the authorisation to release the data, determine whether they support the project and if it should proceed (e.g. considerations may include: level of community acceptance, a cost-benefit analysis, Privacy Impact Assessment and whether independent approval is required, such as ethics committee approvals)
	Data custodian(s) complete risk assessment (can be done in consultation with integrating authority) (2)
	In-principle approval is given by data custodian(s)
	Data custodian(s) appoint an integrating authority For **ALL** high risk projects an **accredited** Integrating Authority must be appointed
	The integrating authority finalises project details (in consultation with data custodian(s) and data user). This may include: outsourcing or partnership arrangements, Human Research Ethics Committee approvals, Privacy Impact Assessments, data management and drafting project agreements
	Project agreements are signed between the integrating authority and data custodian(s), and between the integrating authority and data user → Integrating authority registers the project and submits risk assessment

Project Delivery	Data custodian(s) transfers data to integrating authority
	Integrating authority prepares, links (3) and merges the data
	Integrating authority confidentialises (4) and completes final quality checks on integrated data
	Integrating authority provides data user with secure access to integrated data
	Data user uses integrated data for research and statistical purposes
	Data user returns integrated data to integrating authority
	Integrating authority destroys or securely stores integrated data

Project Completion	Integrating authority undertakes project evaluation and completion — Data user publishes results/findings
	Integrating authority updates 'Project findings' on Public Register of Data Integration projects on the NSS website