



Appendix: the Case and Procedure for Postponing the CODATA General Assembly

A) The Case for Postponing the in-person General Assembly

- 1) The uncertainties regarding the current COVID-19 epidemic and consequent travel restrictions will significantly limit our ability to plan and hold an effective General Assembly (GA) and conduct the selection of Task Groups (TGs) and elections for the new Executive Committee.
- 2) By unanimity, the Executive Committee agreed that it is in the best interest of the organisation and the pursuit of its mission to postpone the full, in-person GA to 2021.
- 3) Although technological means are available, we consider that these are not currently optimal for the purpose of selecting TGs and running the elections: there is considerable benefit in bringing CODATA members and delegates together at that conference to enable detailed discussion of the organisations' strategic priorities.
 - a) Time zone constraints mean that there are often only short windows where participants from around the world can interact with each other contemporaneously.
 - b) Virtual meetings are good for 'reporting' activities (particularly if structured to be questions on a pre-submitted written document) but very challenging for anything creative and strategic.
 - c) Running the hustings, evaluating and interrogating presenters of 'pitches' whether for election or Task Group proposals is difficult particularly if time is constrained.
 - d) The constitutional requirement of a majority vote in favour of each person elected to the ExComm often results in a series of run-off votes, which would be difficult to conduct in a virtual environment.
 - e) Face-to-face interactions are particularly important when small groups (e.g. ExComm) will be formed and then expected to work together.
- 4) Additional secondary (but important) considerations include:
 - a) The work of the current TGs is already being hampered by travel restrictions, although they will do their best to mitigate the effects, an extension to 2021 will help ensure they can deliver.
 - b) Although National Committees can continue their work virtually, the nomination and election process will be more effectively conducted when travel restrictions are lifted.

- c) There is a considerable ancillary benefit in moving the in-person GA to take place with International Data Week, which many members and delegates are also likely to attend.
- d) In 2021, CODATA aims to launch the Decadal Programme: Making Data Work for Global Grand Challenges. It will be more propitious and effective to engage the CODATA membership and delegates with this initiative at a major conference and General Assembly held in that year.

B) The Procedure to Postpone the General Assembly

1. The President hereby convenes a General Assembly, 'to be held using technology' (CODATA Constitution Statute 5.1.c) and as 'required by a resolution of the Executive Committee' (CODATA Constitution Statute 5.1.b).
2. In respect of the timescales laid out in Statutes 14 and 15, the virtual GA will take place on 25 June at 11:00-13:00 UTC.
3. The virtual GA will be asked to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee to hold the next full, in-person GA in 2021, with International Data Week.
4. This requires approval of the following points (as a package) *as necessary steps to allow the continuation of terms to the next GA*:
 - a. that subsequent in-person GAs will resume the two-year cycle in 'odd'-years, generally collocated with International Data Week (currently planned for at least 2021 and 2023);
 - b. a one-year extension, to 2021, to the current Task Groups (which will receive an additional years' support from CODATA);
 - c. a one-year extension, to 2021, to the terms of the current ExComm members, Treasurer and Secretary General;
 - d. a one-year extension to the terms of the President and Vice-Presidents whose offices would next be up for election in 2023;
 - e. that this additional year's service for Officers and Executive Committee members will be regarded as 'extraordinary', and will not count towards the 'maximum, aggregate number of consecutive years' service' (Statute 6.2.a). *No sitting Officer or Executive Committee member is immediately affected, but it is possible that without this clause the single additional year may, at a future General Assembly, make a current member ineligible when without having served this extra year they would otherwise have been eligible.*
5. The mechanism for voting will be determined to ensure due process and full participation.

6. It is intended that the virtual GA should also provide an opportunity to brief members and the CODATA community on a number of activities, including the [ISC CODATA Decadal Programme: Making Data Work for Cross-Domain Grand Challenges](#), and other strategic initiatives.

C) Next Steps

All CODATA members (national members, ISC bodies and institutional members) are requested to confirm the name of their delegate no later than 18 May.

The CODATA Secretariat, will:

- No later than 27 April, circulate the precise texts of the recommendation to postpone the in-person General Assembly and the associated, necessary changes described above,.
- No later than 20 May, provide details to all delegates of the technological platform and voting mechanism, and take all reasonable steps to ensure that every named delegate (or named substitute if necessary as with in-person General Assemblies) can participate adequately and cast their vote appropriately