

## Practice Abstract #47

### FAIR data management - it's all about the metadata!

In recent years, there has been a big movement towards multi-actor projects and “Open Science”, including in the EU’s Horizon research and innovation programme. The multi-actor approach encourages the co-creation of knowledge and innovation by connecting researchers and practitioners (e.g., farmers, foresters, and their advisors) in projects to address important societal challenges.

The **FAIR data principles** are one practical aspect of this movement and aim to ensure that the scientific community is committed to facilitating knowledge exchange by making their research outputs **Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable** (FAIR).

A key component of the FAIR data principles is the metadata which is attached to knowledge objects (documents, spreadsheets, slideshows/presentations, videos, podcasts, images, software applications, and datasets) to make them easy to find, reuse and manage – as well as to help understand their content and context.

Metadata is information about a knowledge object (“data about data”) and it is very useful for making best use of the knowledge object. For example, consider the simple case of a book. The title of the book, name of the author(s), publisher, publication date and cover notes are metadata which help to better understand what the book is about and what it can help with.

It is important that metadata is easily read by human and by machines (computers) to index knowledge objects globally, and help a wide range of stakeholders to find and access them. Metadata is therefore usually formally represented in a structured way and in many cases the format and required content for essential metadata is often guided by a specific community, sector/or data repository using a **metadata standard**.

