

Dinosaurs, Data, and Decisions:

Writing a Data Policy for a Natural History Museum

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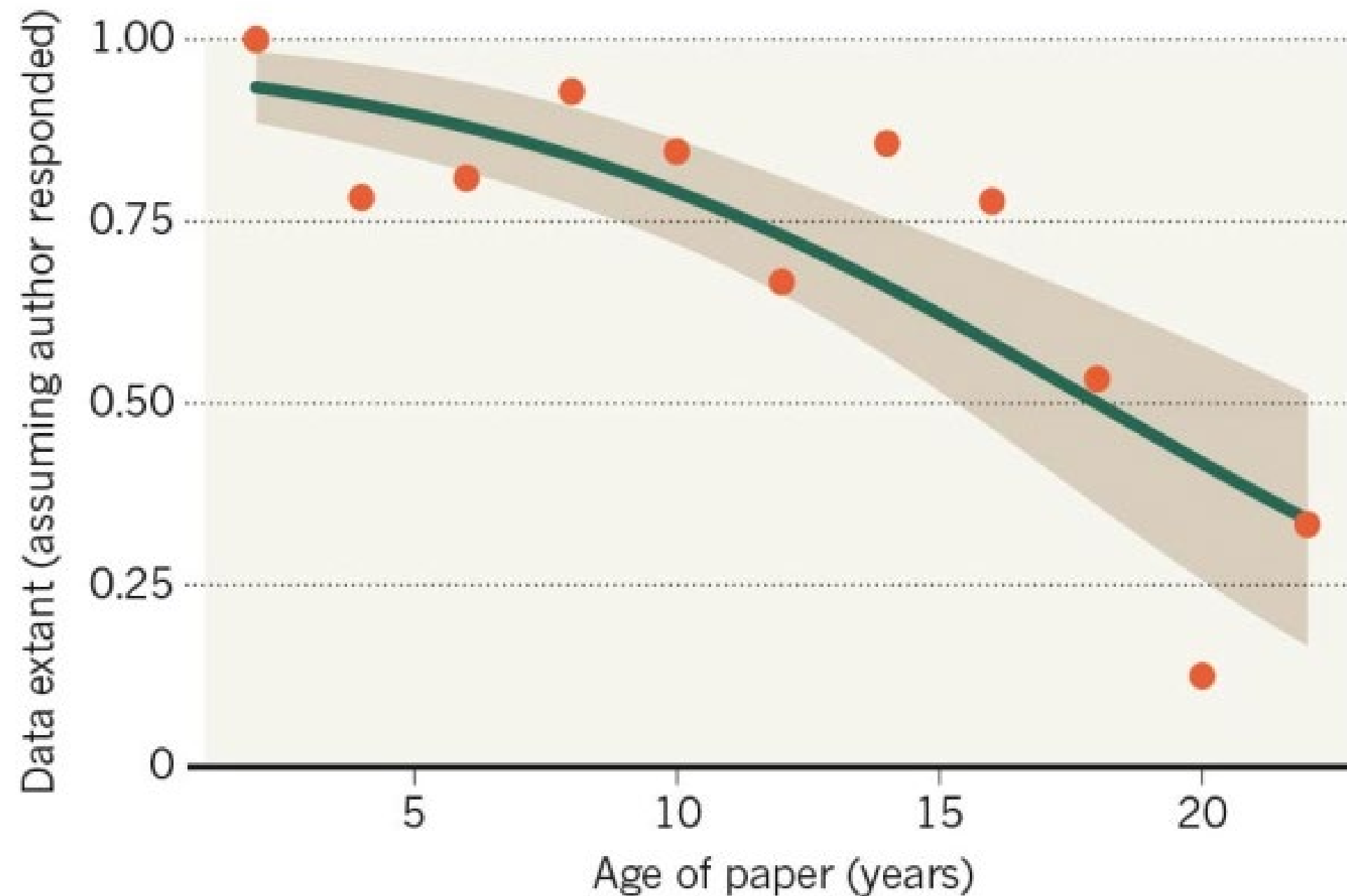


We Need a Data Policy...

- to establish an **institutional framework** for the adequate handling of research data at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin (MfN),
- to support an efficient and **modern management** of MfN research data,
- to refer to **legal requirements** and binding instructions regarding the handling of data,
- to identify recommendations for research data management in the national and international context,
- and to **promote the transfer of knowledge** on the handling of research data and relevant standards to impart subject-specific competencies in this field.

MISSING DATA

As research articles age, the odds of their raw data being extant drop dramatically.



Gibney, E., Van Noorden, R. Scientists losing data at a rapid rate. *Nature* (2013).
<https://doi.org/10.1038/nature.2013.14416>

The responsible handling of research data is essential for **scientific progress, knowledge dissemination, and traceability.**

The digital transformation of research presents new challenges, requiring clear institutional guidelines.

Without data procedures in place, studies show data is lost over time

How we got here...

EARLY 2020 INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

Falko Glöckler initiated the creation of a data policy in 2020, due to gap in our research institution. He began to construct the Guidelines and Measures.

JUNE 2020 SEMINARS

Falko held various seminars to introduce the policy and allow discussions on the Guidelines and Measures for those interested.

EARLY 2024 HANDOVER

Caitlin took over this project with an introduction and support from Falko & Mareike, to further develop the Guidelines, including to evaluate similar policies at other institutions. Also created the Measures documentation.

LATE 2024 MORE APPROVALS

Consultation with various experts, including for archiving, publishing, colonial data, etc. Others, including the directorate were also consulted and given the policy to review and request any changes

2025 IMPLEMENTATION

Final approvals and implementation of the policy.

The First Step: Research

The world of existing policies

We already have a policy for open access, copyright, colonial context data... do we really need another policy?

Looking at our networks

Leibniz, DFG, NFDI, all have their own policies – these were acknowledged and incorporated

Other institutions

We looked at public data policies of other local and global institutions to see how they did it

Defining the Scope of the Policy

Who is Covered?

All MfN staff, researchers, visiting researchers, and partners.

Applicable Projects?

Internal projects, third-party funded projects, and digitization efforts.

Other Obligations?

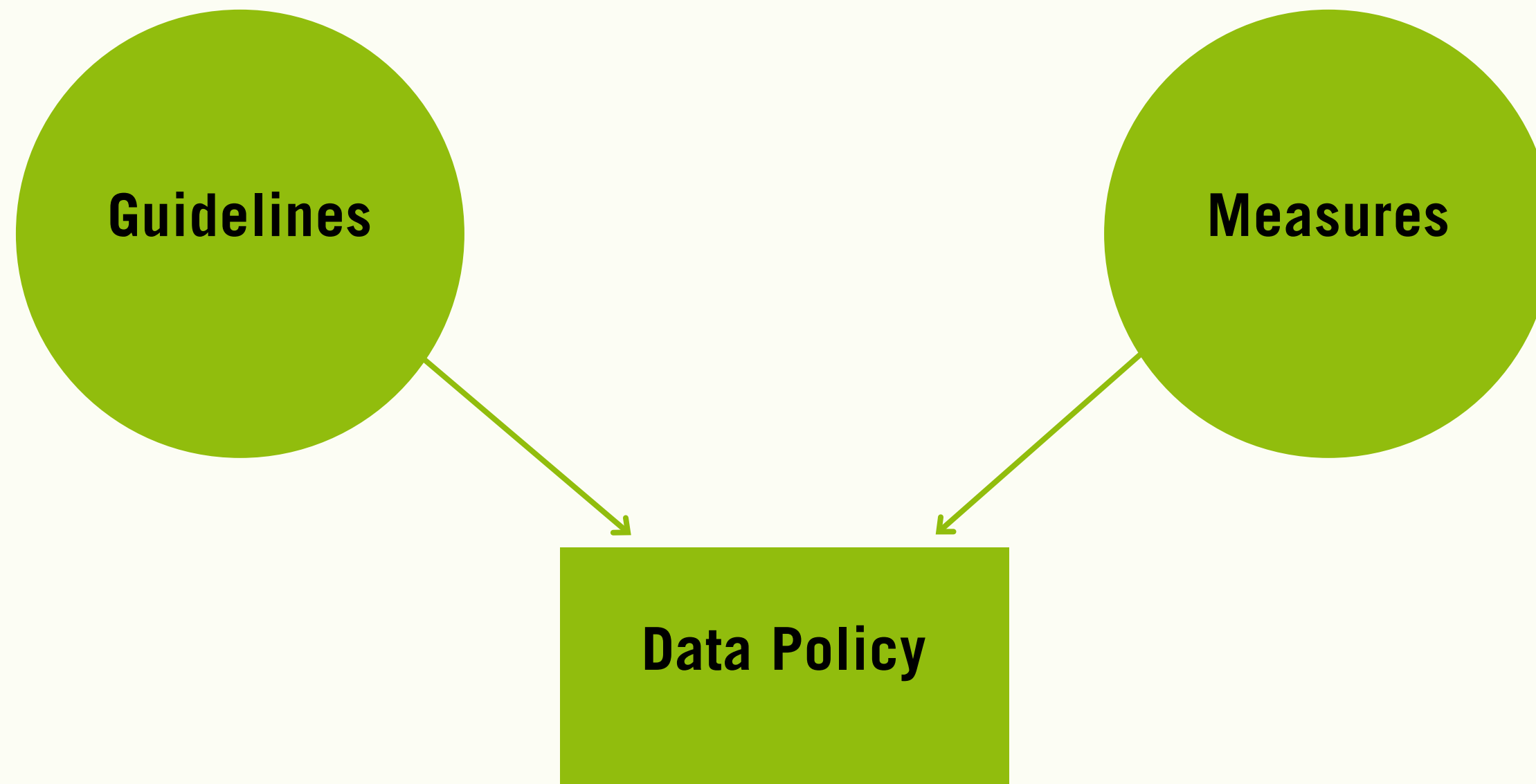
Adherence to other policies, including specific funder rules.

Who is Responsible?

Researchers & relevant staff are responsible for following the policy.

Department responsible for data management (with IT) must enable infrastructure.

Components of the Policy



GUIDELINES

Guidelines inform the measures and are structured like this:

Preamble

1 Basic definitions

2 Principles

3 Scope

4 Measures

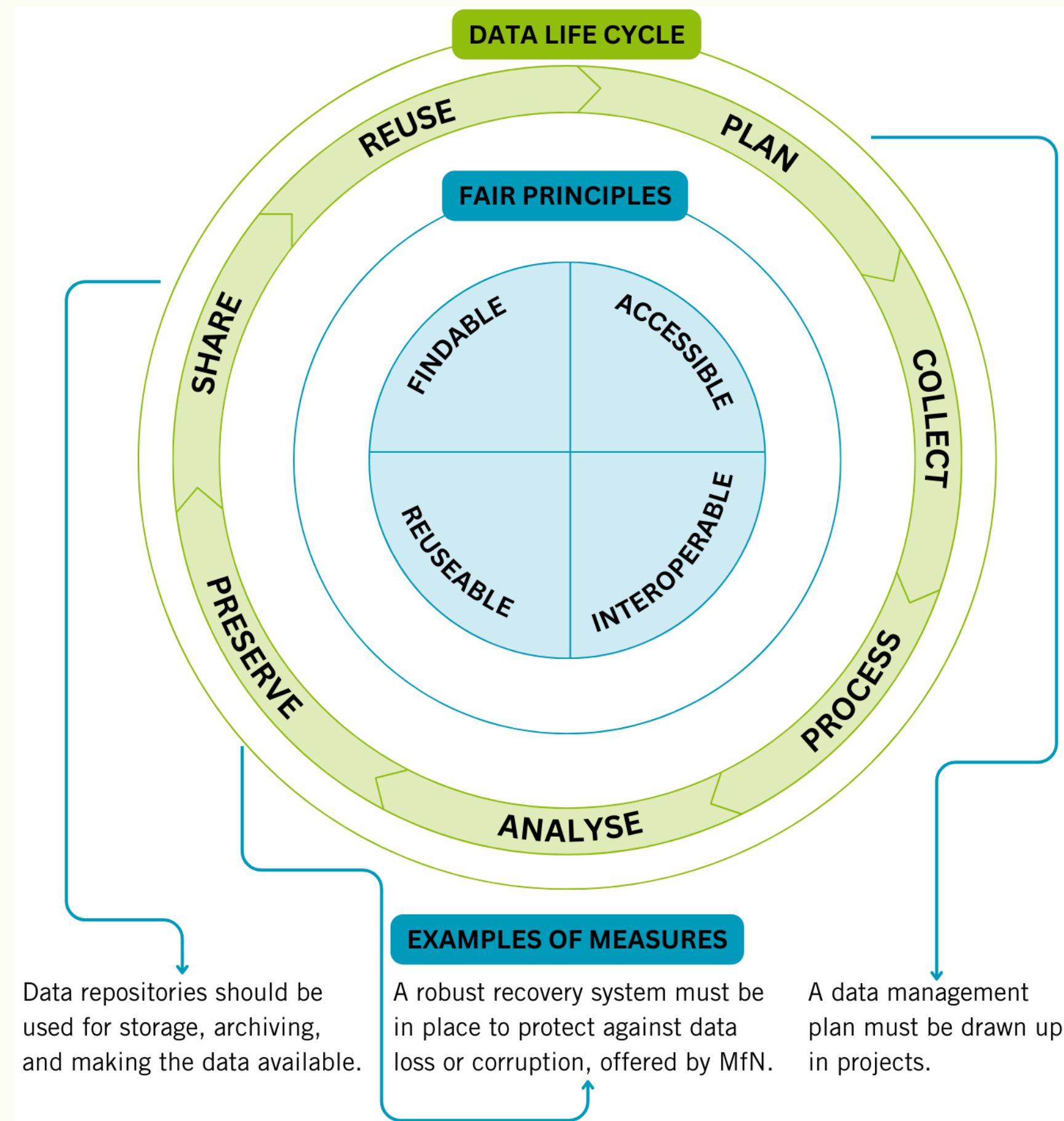
5 Changes, validity and conflicts

MEASURES

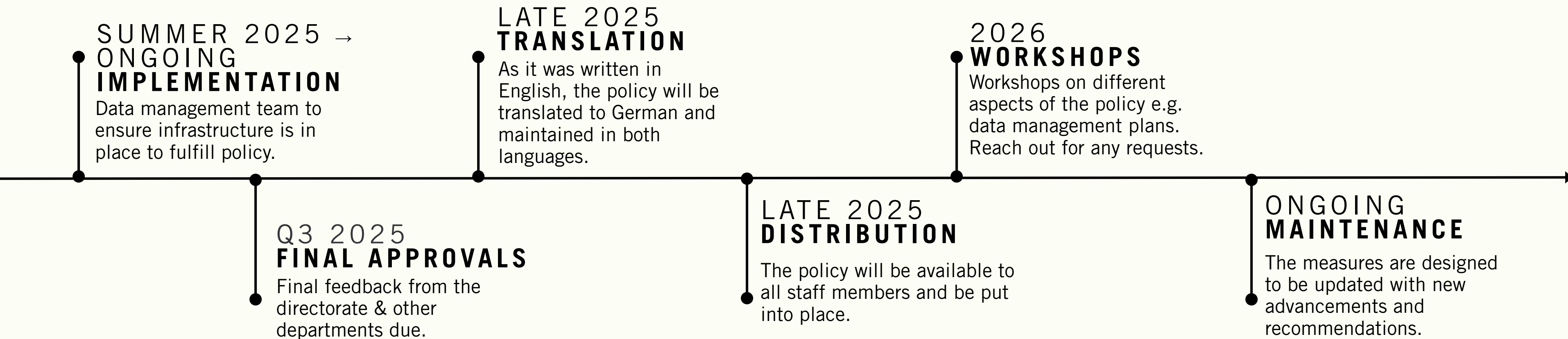
Measures are practical steps to enable the guidelines. They are organised into sections:

- Planning & Training in Data Management
- Data Acquisition & Documentation
- Data Management Infrastructure Offerings
- Publication & Subsequent Use of Data
- Data Archiving

The data policy encompasses all aspects of the Data Life Cycle and FAIR data principles.



What's next?



Discussion Questions

Can data policies help museums future-proof their collections?

Should all institutions have their own data policy or should overarching networks/associations apply their policies to all of their institutions?

How do you measure the success of a data policy?

How can we collaborate with other museums and research institutions to harmonise data policies?

QUESTIONS & CONTACT

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THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING



THANK YOU

Various people have been consulted in the development of this document, including:

- Mareike Petersen
- Falko Glöckler
- Jessica Zimmerman – Archiving
- Giuditta Parolini – Sustainable data management
- Katja Kaiser – Colonial context data
- Marie Käbel – Publications and reporting
- Jana Beutler – Publications and reporting

Thank you for your efforts in the creation of this policy