

MEMORANDUM

September 4, 2015

From: Rita Colwell, Chair
Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative Research Board

To: GoMRI (RFP-I) (RFP-II) (RFP-IV) Investigators

Subj: Clarification and update of GOMRI Data Policy

I convey to you on behalf of the Research Board an update of the data compliance policy and the expectation that GOMRI researchers must live up to the Master Research Agreement (MRA)-based Board policy that all data be available “as soon as possible”. At present the Board interprets this as being submitted to the GRIIDC data management unit no later than one year from data collection or at the time of publication whichever is the earlier, and these are the rules in force at this moment.

At the recent GRIIDC Advisory Committee meeting there was much discussion with consortia Data Managers and the GRIIDC Advisory Committee about ensuring all GOMRI data, whether supporting a publication or not, are available in accordance with the Board Policy as stated above. And while many PIs have followed this policy with great care we have found that this is by no means universally true.

In practice, the GoMRI Administrative Unit and GRIIDC have typically received notice of publications at the time of submission of quarterly reports. Thus, publications may have been out for two or three months before we are made aware of them. If data are not submitted until the time of publication and since it takes significant time for the GRIIDC team to carry out a review of completeness and quality of metadata, it may be some weeks after that before the data are properly archived and accessible.

This present time lag between publication and data availability is a matter of great concern to the RB. In the spirit of meeting the MRA and RB data policy we must have more timely submissions of data supporting any GoMRI publication. The request is that direct links to the supporting data deposited within the GRIIDC system (preferably with an associated DOI) be provided in the published paper and that these are immediately available to all.

The Research Board now reaffirms in writing that;

- All research publications should include direct links to the publication’s supporting data,
- that the supporting data be available within the GRIIDC system at the time of publication and/or
- within 1 year of collection (whichever is sooner).

This is not new as it was publicly discussed at the 2014 and 2015 Annual Science Conference. This is also a part of a national trend. Both AAAS and AGU publication leaders have had several recent meetings about the expectation of immediately available supporting data for each published paper. The Board’s, and your, efforts in the area of data sharing are thus not arbitrary, but are at the front of the curve in ensuring data transparency; this is an expectation and an obligation of all GOMRI researchers.

The purpose of this memo is to remind you of the MRA (<http://gulfresearchinitiative.org/about-gomri/master-research-agreement/>), the Research Board's Data Policy (<https://data.gulfresearchinitiative.org/RB-data-compliance>) and the expectation that data links be included in your publications.

This memo is also to remind you that **Carry Forward and Continuation decisions which are made in late October by the Board will include a formal review of publication data compliance. If any publication does not have data links identified either in the publication or through follow-up correspondence with GRIIDC then you/your team may not be approved for Continuation and Carryforward; this will hold for subsequent funding in 2016.**

Our process for project closeout will include verification that all data sets are populated and available, and that all publications have associated with them identified data sets. Furthermore, contracts developed by GOMRI for RFP-V projects and beyond will clearly state financial consequences for shortcomings in data compliance, just as we do for research performance. We will have more discussion about this at the 2016 Annual Science conference in Tampa, but wanted to alert you to the Research Board's concern about varying compliance by some and to inform you of this increased responsibility.

Please do contact the GoMRI Chief Science Officer with any questions or concerns.