

OPEN SCIENCE: PUBLICATIONS AND DATA

Starting in 2025, a new [Procedure for Open Access to Research and Experimental Development Results](#) will apply to project applications submitted for calls organized by the Research Council of Lithuania (RCL). Some of its provisions will take effect in 2030.

Ensuring Open Access to Publications

Under the current procedures, publications from RCL-funded projects (both those published before and after the project's completion) must be made openly accessible under a **CC-BY license**¹. It is recommended to plan the way of making the publication open access already when preparing the application so that, if necessary, the funds required for open access can be allocated in the project budget (see 2.1.). Open access to publications can be ensured in the following ways (**listed in recommended order of priority**):

1. **Submit articles to free open-access journals** (“diamond open access”). If you choose this way, it is important to ensure that the journal is of high quality, meets scientific standards, and is not predatory (more information can be found on the [VU Library website](#)).
2. **Submit articles to paid open-access journals** (“gold open access”), where:
 - 2.1. *The RCL may fund the open access fees for publications.* In this case, you must include the funds required for open access in the budget when preparing your application. It is important to note that the RCL can only fund the open access of publications released before the end of the project, and that funding is not provided for publications released in hybrid-access² journals;
 - 2.2. *The open access fees may be covered under agreements between Vilnius University and the Lithuanian Research Library Consortium with publishers.* The list of publishers may be found on the [VU Library website](#), and on the [Lithuanian Research Library Consortium website](#), you can check voucher balances and download journal lists. Additionally, upon your request, Eglė Juodė, Information Management Specialist at the Scientific Communication and Information Center of the Vilnius University Library, can compile a list of journals relevant to your field of research with publishers that have agreements in place for open access to publications.
3. **If your article is not published in a free open-access journal or if no funding is available for the open access fees, you must make the article available in the eLABa repository** (“green open access”). You can do this by uploading the accepted manuscript (or “postprint”) to the eLABa repository when you register the publication in the eLABa system. Before doing so, you must ensure that the journal does not impose an embargo period on this version of the article and that making the accepted version of the article open

¹ The Creative Commons Attribution International Public License. This license: requires the user of the work to attribute the authorship; allows the user to perform all lawful actions with the work (e.g., create derivative works, make copies, distribute, use for commercial purposes, perform text and/or data mining, etc.).

² A hybrid journal is a scientific journal that provides open access only to those articles for which the publication costs have been covered, while access to the remaining articles is granted only to subscribers for a subscription fee.

access is not prohibited. You can check the embargo policy of relevant journals on the [“Open Policy Finder”](#). If an embargo period applies to the accepted manuscript, when uploading this version of the article to eLABa, you must specify the date from which it will be openly accessible. For questions regarding registration in the eLABa repository, please contact Benas Putrimas from the Science and Research Department (benas.putrimas@tspmi.vu.lt). Important: If you choose this option, you must save the accepted manuscript (also known as a “postprint”) in advance, so that it can be uploaded to the eLABa repository.

For questions regarding open access for publications, we recommend contacting **Eglė Juodė**, Information Management Specialist at the Scientific Communication and Information Center of the Vilnius University Library, (egle.juode@mb.vu.lt), or the [IIRPS VU Science and Research Department project manager](#) administering your project.

Ensuring Open Access to Research Data

If you have created or plan to create a dataset in an RCL-funded project, it is important to know:

1. You must **handle all data collected during the project responsibly, in compliance with research ethics and personal data protection requirements**, following the data management plan submitted in the grant application (see Example 1 and the [Vilnius University Data Management Plan Guide](#)). If you have any questions regarding research ethics, you may contact [the Research Ethics Compliance Committee](#) at the IIRPS VU.
2. Under current regulations, **you are required to make the metadata (a brief description of the dataset) of the collected dataset available for reuse**. The metadata must be fully open, searchable, and machine-readable, and must remain accessible even after the data itself has been destroyed. It must be stored in a trusted data repository after obtaining a permanent identifier. Metadata is made available in the format specified by the repository (see point 4), which generally ensures compliance with these requirements. Along with the metadata, you may provide contact information for other researchers who may wish to access your research data.
3. **The data you have collected does not have to be made available, but it is recommended to follow the principle “as open as possible, as closed as necessary.”** Thus, data should be made available for reuse to the extent that this does not harm the interests of research participants or violate their rights. For example, if you are collecting interviews that contain personal data, you should restrict their access to others in order to protect the privacy of research participants. If you make the data open, it must be available free of charge. While the opening of data is currently not mandatory, it is encouraged because it enhances the scientific value of the project and ensures a long-term impact. When sharing data, you can choose the level of openness: fully open, open after an embargo, or open upon reasonable request. Starting in 2030, research data must be made open in all cases where there is no legitimate reason not to do so
4. Open data and/or its metadata must be uploaded to an appropriate repository. Data and metadata must be organized and made open in accordance with [the FAIR principles](#) (findability, accessibility, interoperability, reusability). Compliance of the dataset with the FAIR principles should be planned at the very beginning of the project. We recommend making data open (or just storing it) by uploading it to the repositories of the Lithuanian Data Archive for Social Sciences and Humanities ([LiDA](#)) or the National Open Access Research Data Archive ([MIDAS](#))³. You may also upload data to reputable international repositories, such as [Zenodo](#) or [the Open Science Framework](#).
5. According to the RCL guidelines valid until 2028, collected (meta)data (not necessarily open access) must be stored for at least 5 years after the project’s completion. Vilnius University recommends **storing (meta)data for no less than 10 years** after the project’s

³ LiDA is a repository exclusively dedicated to data in the social sciences and humanities, while MIDAS is an interdisciplinary repository that accepts data from various fields of science. It should be noted that MIDAS does not accept data containing personal information for storage, even if it is not made publicly available but is only archived in the repository.

completion. (Meta)data uploaded to the MIDAS repository (see point 4) is stored indefinitely.

6. The open data on which published works are based, or its metadata, must be **made open at the same time as the published works**. The metadata must be **linked to the publications**⁴. The requirements of this section will formally take effect in 2030.

For questions regarding the opening of data, we recommend contacting **Gintė Medzvieckaitė**, Research Data Manager at the Vilnius University Library (ginte.medzvieckaite@mb.vu.lt), or the [IIRPS VU Science and Research Department project manager](#) administering your project.

⁴ If the repository where the data is published has a metadata field for publications or related resources (e.g., MIDAS has a “Publications” field), these fields must be filled out. These fields should include the publication’s bibliographic description and its DOI. If there is no suitable metadata field, the publication must be mentioned in the dataset description and/or the accompanying *readme* file. When publishing the publication itself, a link to the dataset on which it is based must also be provided. In journals, this is usually done in a dedicated section titled “Data Availability Statement,” but if the journal does not have such a section, the dataset can simply be mentioned in the text and included in the reference list.

Example 1 – completed sections on the data management plan and research ethics for research project applications to the Research Council of Lithuania. When filling out the application, we recommend using this example as a guide, adapting it to your planned project and the current requirements of the application form.

3.2.4. Information on Data Collection and Management ⁶		
Indicate whether data will be collected during the project (select one answer)	YES	NO
<i>If YES, provide a data management plan in response to each of the following questions to ensure that data is collected and managed in accordance with the FAIR principles—research data must be findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable; if “NO” is selected, leave blank</i>		
1. What data do you plan to collect or generate? What are the anticipated data types, formats, and volumes? <i>(no more than 1,000 characters)</i>		
<p>- Interview data. Data formats: .mp3 or similar audio formats (for interview audio recordings), .docx, .pdf text formats (for interview transcripts, informed consent forms, dataset description), .xlsx format (interview metadata table). Volume – up to 1 GB.</p> <p>- Publicly available documents dataset. Data formats: .docx or .pdf text formats, .xlsx format (metadata table). Size – up to 1 GB.</p>		
2. How will data and its backups be stored during project implementation: where will the data be stored, how do you plan to recover corrupted data, and will you create data backups? <i>(no more than 1,000 characters)</i>		
Data will be stored in the “OneDrive” storage provided by VU, to which only project implementers will have access. A backup copy of the data will be stored on the project manager’s external hard drive, kept in a locked cabinet. The backup data will be updated every two weeks. This will allow for the restoration of data using the copy stored on the external hard drive in the event of data loss in the OneDrive storage or a data breach.		
3. How will you ensure the security of the collected data, what risks to data security might arise, and how would they be managed? <i>(no more than 1,000 characters)</i>		
<p>Potential risks:</p> <p>- Loss of collected data. The risk is managed by regularly backing up the data to a securely stored external hard drive; by appointing a project manager responsible for data management (see 3.2.4.2).</p> <p>- Leakage of personal data upon in the interviews. The risk is managed by minimizing the collection of unnecessary personal data; granting access to the data only to project implementers; deleting files from other devices after transferring interview audio recordings or transcripts for storage; pseudonymizing interview transcripts and informants’ names, consent forms, and storing interview audio recordings separately from pseudonymized transcripts; destroying unpublished data ten years after the project’s completion; having the project manager oversee data management; using pseudonyms for informants in published citations when publicizing the research, without providing details that would allow them to be identified (unless the informant chooses otherwise in the consent form) (see 3.2.5).</p>		
4. Which data are of long-term value and must be preserved, and which will be destroyed due to certain contractual provisions, legal, or other requirements? <i>(no more than 1,000 characters)</i>		
All datasets mentioned in the first column are of long-term value and will be preserved. Ten years after the project’s completion, the collected interviews will be destroyed, while the summary description of the dataset and the public dataset will continue to be stored in the MIDAS system indefinitely.		

5. How will you ensure data accessibility for other researchers (during and after the project): when, to whom, and under what conditions will the data become available for use? *(no more than 1,000 characters)*

The set of public documents will be published in the MIDAS archive at the same time as the publications based on them. MIDAS commits to ensuring the long-term availability of the published data.

The description of the interview dataset (metadata) will be made available in the MIDAS archive at the same time as the publications based on the interviews. The description will include contact information that other researchers can use to request permission to reuse the interviews. Access to the interviews will be guaranteed for at least 10 years after the project (after which the interviews will be destroyed). Researchers may be granted access to pseudonymized transcripts if they agree to comply with the conditions specified by the informants and project implementers. For security reasons, the pseudonymization key and audio recordings will not be provided. Only those interviews for which the informants expressed consent to the reuse of their interviews in the consent forms will be made available.

Data in the MIDAS system will be linked to publications and presented in accordance with the FAIR principles.

6. Who is responsible for data processing and management during and after the project? *(no more than 1,000 characters)*

The project manager will be responsible for data processing and management for at least 10 years after its completion. MIDAS undertakes to manage the data stored in the system for an indefinite period.

3.2.5. Information on ethical aspects related to project activities

Question <i>Answer the question with "YES" or "NO"</i>	YES	NO
1. Will the study involve the observation of individuals without their knowledge?		NO
2. Will the study involve socially vulnerable individuals (e.g., minors, prisoners, people with physical or mental illnesses, victims of violence)?		NO
3. Will the proposed study involve sensitive topics that could cause psychological harm (e.g., cause psychological trauma, painful emotional reactions, or memories in the research participant)?		NO
4. Will confidential personal data be collected and stored (e.g., related to ethnic origin, religious, philosophical, political, and other beliefs, or health status) whose disclosure could harm the reputation of the research participant, their relatives, or other people?	YES	
5. Does the planned research involve other aspects that, in your opinion, are ethically significant but were not mentioned in the previous questions?		NO

If you answered “Yes,” you must explain the ethical aspects of the research related to this issue and the proposed methods for addressing them (a statement that the matter will be referred to an institutional or professional ethics committee is insufficient).

Indicate whether the project will require permits from authorized institutions, informed consent, or other documents related to research ethics (attach a copy of the permit in Section 7 “Attachments” of the application or explain how and when you will obtain it; if a fee is required for the permit, funds may be allocated).

During the project, it is planned to conduct no fewer than [specify number] semi-structured interviews with [list informant groups]. They may contain personal data related to individuals’ political beliefs, attitudes, assessments of decisions made and implemented, or other sensitive information. Given the sensitivity of this information and the potential negative impact of its disclosure on interview participants (a leak could harm their careers, reputations, relationships with management, etc.), the research team will take the necessary measures to ensure research ethics.

During the project implementation period, efforts will be made to avoid collecting personal information about interview participants that is not publicly available. Interviews will be organized using publicly available information regarding the positions of potential interview participants, their work email addresses, and, if necessary, their phone numbers. If, as needed, contact information for potential interview participants is provided directly to the project researchers, it will be stored only until the end of the interview program.

Each interview participant will be informed in a language they clearly understand about the research being conducted, the protection of the informants’ rights, the management of potential risks to participants, the personal data being collected and the procedures for its use, and the storage of a summary description of the interview data set in the MIDAS archive by providing an information sheet. The voluntary nature of participation in the study will be confirmed by the study participants signing an informed consent form. Interview participants will be asked to give their consent to the recording of the interview, the processing of their data, the use of the interview for the study and its dissemination, the sharing of research data with other researchers (an optional condition for participation in the study), and the storage of data during the project and for ten years thereafter (at which point all personal data will be destroyed). Informants’ consent to participate in the project will be obtained via email or during the interview; this consent will be retained for as long as the personal data is stored. While their personal data is being stored, interview participants will be able to contact the research team to find out how and what kind of their personal data is being stored.

Project implementers will be provided with secure access to the data via the VU OneDrive data repository, to which only project implementers will have access. A backup copy of the data will be stored on the project manager’s external hard drive, kept in a locked cabinet. To prevent confidentiality breaches in the (highly unlikely) event of a data leak, each interview participant will be assigned a pseudonym or code number in the transcript, and the key linking the pseudonym or code to the person’s real name, along with the audio recordings, will be stored separately from the transcripts in a password-protected file. The project manager will be responsible for all data and its backups.

It is anticipated that, unless interview participants specify otherwise, data obtained during the interviews (specifically, interview quotes) will be pseudonymized in publications or other means of disseminating the research. That is, in the research-based output, they will be referred to by a pseudonym or code, avoiding details in quotes or elsewhere that could easily identify a specific individual.

For reuse, interviews will be made available only in the form of pseudonymized transcripts, subject to the project implementers’ terms and conditions, and only under the conditions specified in the informant’s consent form and only if the form includes the informant’s permission to make the data available for reuse.

Before beginning the research, the project team, if it identifies a need, may contact the Research Ethics Compliance Committee at IIRPS VU to seek approval of the planned research’s ethical compliance and to receive the committee’s consultation.

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[A guide to selecting journals](#) (prepared by Eglė Juodė, Information Management Specialist at the Vilnius University Library)