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## **Towards A National Research Data Management Strategy for South African Universities**

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Amidst a growing number of Open Science mandates for data sharing and reuse, South African universities are scrambling to provide services to the research community to facilitate compliance with the various requirements of numerous international funding agencies. The impending burden posed on institutions to fund this requirement was brought sharply into focus with the introduction of a similar mandate by the national research funding agency, the very lifeblood on which the academic enterprise is reliant.

This paper will outline a journey of collaborative effort towards the concept of a shared data service in an exceptional paradigm shift enabled by a proposal for a Tier 2 data node in the national cyberinfrastructure. Insights will be shared of a process of converging interest in a national strategy for research data management, led by DIRISA, the Data Intensive Research Initiative of South Africa, a component of the National Integrated Cyberinfrastructure System (NICIS).

### **HPC content**

At a time when nationwide student protest action has highlighted the financial constraints on the higher education sector, the need to act collaboratively is imperative to sustain levels of excellence reflected in the worldwide university rankings – that conversely have driven South African universities into competition with one another in the past. The national research data management strategy signals a new way of thinking about library and IT services, that marks a clear divergence from research infrastructure development of the past.

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