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LifeWatch ERIC Metadata Catalogue -

Metadata Longevity Plan

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1. Introduction

This document presents the longevity plan for the LifeWatch ERIC Metadata Catalogue (https://metadatacatalogue.lifewatch.eu).

The plan focuses on long-term sustainability, continuous improvement of metadata quality, periodic reviews, and implementation of improvements to the Metadata Catalogue service, which aligns with the objective "to plan, implement and review improvements to services and processes".

The plan includes six sections representing the main goals with the corresponding steps and is tied to the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable), being part of our core philosophy.

Please, contact the Service Centre ICT team for any information, suggestions, or clarifications: service.centre@lifewatch.eu.

This document is part of the ITSMF (Service Operating and Controlling) under Continual Service Improvement Management process.

2. Technical sustainability

In order to ensure the long-term functionality and usability of the LifeWatch ERIC Metadata Catalogue, technical sustainability is prioritised. In order to achieve such results, LifeWatch ERIC implements the following steps:

- **Continuous Interoperability Alignment**. The metadata management platform and associated metadata standards are evaluated annually to ensure compatibility with evolving standards and emerging metadata architectures. This includes periodic assessment of alignment with FAIR principles and next-generation metadata frameworks.
- **Backup and disaster recovery system**. Regular backups of the Catalogue are performed. These backups are managed according to LifeWatch ERIC's internal IT procedures and stored securely on institutional servers. Periodic integrity checks are conducted to confirm that backup copies are complete and accessible, ensuring data protection and service continuity.
- **Infrastructure monitoring and maintenance**. Appropriate tools to guarantee the

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continuous monitoring are employed with the aim to detect and address performance issues or security threats in real-time. Moreover, in-depth maintenance checks are scheduled on a yearly basis to identify potential vulnerabilities and optimise system performance.

- **Scalability planning**. The Catalogue has been designed to handle increasing amounts of metadata as new resources are added. Annual evaluations are planned to assess storage and processing capacity, scaling resources as needed to maintain and guarantee performance.

- **Technology independence and migration readiness**. While GeoNetwork is the current implementation, this longevity plan commits to maintaining FAIR compliance and metadata portability independent of platform choices. This ensures that if a superior platform emerges or maintenance becomes unsustainable, the metadata can be migrated without loss of discoverability or structure.

- **Technical documentation.** We maintain comprehensive documentation of the current implementation of the Catalogue to ensure maintainability, operational continuity and ease of transfer if required.

3. Metadata availability in case of absence of data

LifeWatch ERIC recognises that cross-references to third-party data may degrade over time, resulting in broken or stale links. To mitigate this, metadata descriptors will be preserved to ensure continued access to essential information about datasets, even if the data itself becomes unavailable. These descriptors will include details like the dataset's original context, methodology, and associated International Resource Identifiers.

By adhering to FAIR Principles, metadata within the Catalogue will remain discoverable and usable, independent of the availability of the underlying data (principles F3 and A2).

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4. Data quality and relevance

Ensuring the quality and relevance of metadata is essential for the credibility and usability of the LifeWatch ERIC Metadata Catalogue. To achieve this, LifeWatch ERIC:

- Builds upon the existing validation protocols that ensure metadata entries comply with community-agreed metadata standards (currently ISO, EOSC and EML) before publication. These rigorous checks are also paired with custom validation rules associated to the different metadata fields to maintain high-quality metadata;
- Conducts regular relevance assessments to identify and address outdated or redundant metadata. Moreover, a check is done on all URLs in the Catalogue on a weekly basis (scheduled job) to identify potential failures. Irrelevant records will either be archived or flagged for further review, ensuring that the Catalogue remains an up-to-date and effective resource.

5. Metadata quality feedback mechanisms

To maintain metadata quality and relevance over time, LifeWatch ERIC implements feedback channels to gather user suggestions, identify issues and emerging user needs.

Regular feedback collection informs metadata improvement priorities and ensures quality standards are sustained long-term.

6. Governance and maintenance

The main actions for the Catalogue's governance and long-term sustainability are:

- **Policy development**. We develop and periodically review governance policies to ensure alignment with organisational goals, compliance with FAIR principles, and adaptability to emerging needs.
- **Agreements development**. When needed, we define dedicated Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with partners (e.g., in the context of European projects) to specify clear and measurable service commitments within a formal contract, to ensure both parties align on goals and responsibilities.
- **Stakeholder collaboration**. We foster collaboration with stakeholders, including

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researchers, institutions, and metadata providers, to ensure the Catalogue remains relevant and responsive to user needs.

- **Secure long-term funding**. We identify and secure sustainable funding sources to support ongoing operations, updates, and user engagement activities. This may include grants, collaborations, or dedicated institutional support.
- **Define roles and responsibilities**. We ensure a clear governance framework, including roles, and user support staff to manage and oversee the Catalogue effectively.
- **Ongoing training and capacity building**. We provide continuous training to staff, partners, and contributors to sustain metadata quality and relevance. This includes workshops, online modules, and other resources to build expertise in metadata management and FAIR principles.
- **Continuity and exit strategy**. We define procedures to ensure the transferability and preservation of the Catalogue in the event of organisational restructuring or discontinuation.

7. Standards alignment and metadata interoperability

To ensure metadata longevity and portability across evolving platforms and technologies, LifeWatch ERIC:

- **Maintains standards-based interfaces**. The Catalogue implements standard protocols (e.g., OAI-PMH, REST APIs, etc.) to enable metadata harvesting, export, and exchange with other catalogues and research infrastructures. These interfaces ensure metadata can be accessed and reused independently of the current platform.
- **Aligns with community standards**. We actively engage with the relevant scientific communities and adopt community-agreed standards (FAIR principles, RDF, schema.org, domain-specific vocabularies) to ensure interoperability and long-term compatibility with evolving frameworks.
- **Supports metadata federation**. We establish technical connections with complementary metadata platforms to enable distributed querying, federated search, and seamless metadata exchange. This creates resilience through distributed access and reduces dependency on a single platform.
- **Ensures format portability**. Metadata is maintained in standard, machine-readable formats (RDF, JSON-LD, XML) that can be easily exported and migrated to

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alternative platforms if needed. Format agnosticism enables long-term preservation independent of technology choices.

8. Document Revision History

Revision	Reason for and description of change	Authors	Date
1.	First issue	Lucia Vaira, Eftychia Tzafesta	21-01-2026