



WED

WED Governance

The World Elite Database (WED) project is an international consortium of scholars working together to develop a new standardized data regime to study and share data about (economic) elites across the world. It aims to solve the problem of comparability and heterogeneity in the study of national power structures, and to foster a cooperative community of scholars interested in studying elite populations systematically.

1. Goals

The WED project has the following goals:

- 1.1 Develop the first comparative database for the study of elites across the world.
- 1.2 Build an international, cross-disciplinary, inclusive and collaborative community engaged in research on elites (for instance along gender, race, career status, geographical area, etc.).
- 1.3 Engage in public debates on the role of elites for inequality and the social structure in the contemporary world.
- 1.4 Make the data on (economic elites) available to a wide community of researchers according to the FAIR data principles.

2. General Principles of WED collegiality

- 2.1 All WED members, regardless their position in the academic hierarchy, can contribute to the design of the research, the collection of the data and its implementation.
- 2.2 WED supports interdisciplinarity, open science practices, and sharing of data according to the FAIR principles.
- 2.3 WED encourages co-authorship as the privileged option for publication of its community.
- 2.4 Participation within the WED rests on the adherence to its core goals: to generate high-quality, internationally standardized, and informative data about elite populations at global scale. The contribution of WED participants rests on the ethic of contributing to this collective endeavour and all the associated responsibilities that contributing to a common pool resource entails.

3. WED Membership

WED has individual members and country members. The *individual members* of the same country are part of the same *country member* (only one country member per country).

Each country member has the following responsibilities:

- 3.1 to agree to the WED working principles.
- 3.2 to complete the baseline module of WED data collection – the so called “London Consensus”.
- 3.3 to participate regularly in the annual WED general assembly.
- 3.4 to sign a data sharing agreement and to share its national data with the whole WED community.

Each country member has the following rights:

- 3.5 to use the data of all other WED country members, after informing the concerned country members and offering them the opportunity to cooperate.
- 3.6 to elect the members of the steering committee, the method committee, and their respective chairs (during the annual general assembly).
- 3.7 to participate in the different committees and working groups.
- 3.8 to communicate their activities and events on the WED website.

4. Admission procedure

New countries eager to become WED members must first contact the “admission coordinator” of the Steering Committee. The admission coordinator discusses the situation of the new country team with respect to the admission criteria, will pre-assess this information and prepare the candidacies for the meetings of the steering committee.

The steering committee then decides about the admission of the new country member.

Once a new member is accepted, it will be contacted by the chair of the methods committee, who will organise the “check-in procedure” in collaboration with other members of the methods committee. The admission criteria and the check-in procedure are formalised in a specific document.

Individual members (from countries that are already members) can join their country team. They first contact the national coordinator of the country team and need to be unanimously pre-approved by the current members of the latter. The national coordinator then informs the steering committee, who confirms this new individual membership and informs the secretariat.

5. WED Governance Groups

WED his composed of the following groups:

- Secretariat
- Steering committee
- Methods committee
- Coordinators of national teams
- General assembly.

Secretariat:

- 5.1 Coordinates calendars, invitations, and the minutes of meetings.
- 5.2 To ensure co-ordination and communication, one of the members of the secretariat is part of the steering committee and another is part of the methods committee.
- 5.3 Documents the regular meetings, shares information between the teams, responds to the questions of the other participants.
- 5.4 Animates the WED website that serves as an internal and external information platform.
- 5.5 Manages the data management system that allows to collect, store and manage the data internally, according to the FAIR data principles (in conformity with GDPR and the data protection regulations in different countries). Provide access to every WED Members to the DMS with an account (with certain rights) to enter and extract data.
- 5.6 The secretariat is elected by the WED general assembly (one country, one vote).
- 5.7 The mandate of the secretariat lasts usually two years.

Steering Committee:

- 5.8 Supervises the overall WED project and defines the long-term WED strategy.
- 5.9 Validates membership, identifies funding opportunities, suggests scientific options and collective publications.
- 5.10 Defines membership rules and the procedures to include or exclude country members and individual members.
- 5.11 Proposes new rules on collaboration and co-authorship in publishing.
- 5.12 Can create working groups which will work on specific subjects.
- 5.13 To ensure co-ordination, one of the members of the steering committee is from the secretariat and another is from the methods committee (liaising between methods and steering committee).
- 5.14 Usually meets monthly and organises a yearly planning of topics that are regularly discussed in the steering committee.
- 5.15 Takes care of conflicts within WED (such as ethical conflicts, conflicts with country teams, misuse of data and publications, inclusion and exclusion of countries, overall balance/ hierarchies within WED governance and publications).
- 5.16 Decisions are based on a qualified majority of 2/3.
- 5.17 Has at least 5 members and always an uneven number of members.

Methods Committee:

- 5.18 Defines overall methodological strategy.
- 5.19 Makes decisions on sample, variables, operationalization, on developing the WED database, selection criteria, data collection and storage, and (re)coding scheme.

- 5.20 The Methods Committee Chair has the duty and responsibility to ensure that the quality of national team data meets the standards specified by the Methods Committee. Open and timely communication with country teams is paramount.
- 5.21 The Chair of the Methods Committee has the ability to accept or reject data coming in from national teams, either in whole or in part, if their quality or quantity is insufficient.
- 5.22 Keeps regular contact with the national teams to communicate/ negotiate the implementation of the methodological decisions.
- 5.23 Can create working groups which will work on methodological subjects.
- 5.24 Trains and instructs new members, e.g., on methods, sample construction, data entry, etc.
- 5.25 Holds monthly meetings plus meetings with the national teams.
- 5.26 Decisions are based on a qualified majority of 2/3.
- 5.27 When the methods committee is not able to reach a qualified majority, the issue goes automatically to the steering committee.
- 5.28 Has at least 5 members and always an uneven number of members.

Coordinators of country members:

- 5.29 The coordinator of each national country team is responsible for the data quality of their country team.
- 5.30 Represent the country and vote (as representatives of their country) in the general assemblies.
- 5.31 Communicate regularly with the methods committee and liaise between the WED committees and the members of country-teams.
- 5.32 Organize the data collection in their respective countries.

General Assembly:

- 5.33 Is held at least once a year (either virtually or as in person meeting).
- 5.34 Intermediate general assemblies can be convoked by the steering committee or by a group of at least a third of all WED country members. Intermediate general assemblies are the place to deal with specific concerns and/ or with more complex and fundamental issues of WED.
- 5.35 The General Assembly decides on rules on collaboration and co-authorship in publishing.
- 5.36 Decisions are based on a simple majority of country members; or on a qualified majority of 2/3 when the decision pertains to new rules on collaboration and co-authorship in publishing.
- 5.37 If the General Assembly fails to reach a decision, it can return a proposition/issue to the steering committee and mandate the steering committee to elaborate a new, improved proposition (non-closure mechanism).
- 5.38 Elects the secretariat with a simple majority (every two years).
- 5.39 Elects the members of the methods committee and the steering committee with a simple majority (every two years).
- 5.40 To assure the diversity of the committees, an ad-hoc nomination committee proposes a diverse slate of candidates (in terms of gender, career status, geography, race).

5.41 Every country has one vote, the voting right is given to the coordinators of country members (the coordinator is expected to consult with the individual members of the country team).

5. Communication between WED Groups

WED Groups will closely cooperate and share all the needed information to achieve the goals of WED. The main means of communication are the WED mailing list (kept up to date by the secretariat) and the WED website: www.worldelitedatabase.org

6. Scientific Dissemination and Communication

WED will have a website, will provide workshops and training courses, and is fully engaged in disseminating public knowledge, and to purposely communicate with citizens, trade unions, NGOs, advocacy and activist groups, policymakers, and national and international institutions.

7. Funding and Partners

WED will apply to international and national funds and is open to global partnerships with universities, foundations, civil society, public and private organizations.

8. Ethical and legal considerations

Each country member should be responsible for the ethical clearance, according to the ethical/ legal contexts of the respective countries. Each country member must sign a data sharing agreement which addresses data storage, data sharing and publication based on WED data and complies with the ethical/legal rules of its respective countries.