RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

SIM4RDM
SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE MODELS FOR RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT

SIM4RDM is an EC-funded project aiming to improve research data management (RDM) policies and practices at institutional, national and European levels. Its vision is to enable researchers to take full advantage of the emerging data infrastructures in the European Research Area by ensuring that they have the knowledge, skills and support infrastructure necessary to adopt effective practices for managing research data.

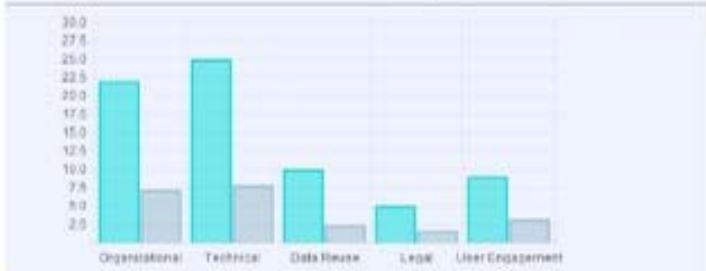
The project analysed funding programmes and policy interventions that encouraged good research data management, and produced funding and evaluation frameworks and policy recommendations that could be used by various stakeholder groups to improve their data management practices.

Building on the project outputs, an RDM self-assessment tool is currently being developed to help funders, researchers, academic institutions, infrastructure providers and publishers evaluate and improve their RDM practice.

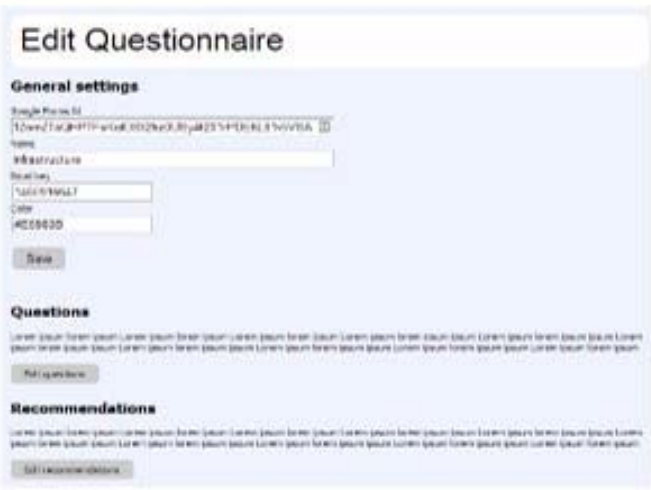
The tool has built-in partner discovery functionality to help users identify other stakeholders who are willing to work together on common RDM issues.

Users select the questionnaire that fits their background, and choose the RDM areas they wish to assess themselves

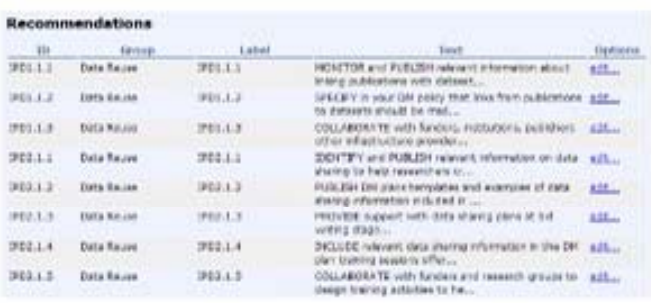
Users fill in the five sections of the online questionnaire (organizational, legal, technical, user experience, data reuse) by ticking the answer



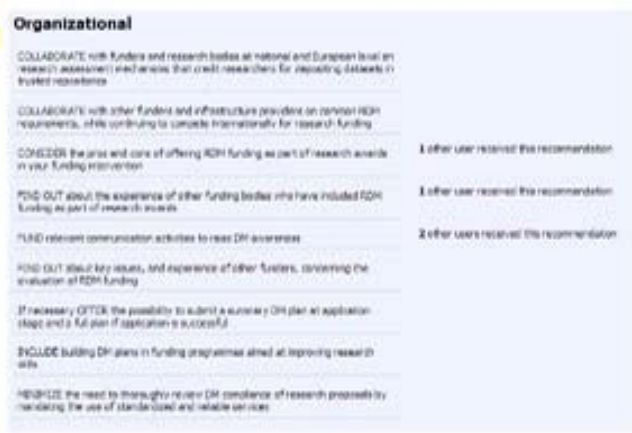
User results are sent to a web application that saves the results and generates a dashboard with absolute and benchmarked scores and visualisations of results.



The tool is administered via a simple CMS in which the questions, answers, recommended activities and resources can be easily edited



Based on the results, a set of step-by-step actions for improving RDM practice is suggested. These actions are crossreferenced, so that different users who were recommended similar activities can be put in touch for mutual support or joint action.



FUTURE FEATURES

- More advanced metrics and visualisations of questionnaire results
- Comparing current results with results from the past to get an idea of RDM improvement over a certain period
- Improved partner discovery functionality
- An appropriate channel for providing feedback on the online questionnaire, recommended activities, visualisation of results, in order to improve user engagement and tool functionality

HOW CAN USERS BENEFIT? TWO SCENARIOS

Scenario A: Research Institution A has implemented a rudimentary RDM policy a few years ago. They've heard about other institutions with more advanced policies, but they're not sure how to improve theirs. Having used the self-assessment tool, the overall score gave them an indication of the maturity of their RDM practices, and the charts showed how they were faring compared to other institutions. The list of recommendations, and resources to help them implement these, provided A with the relevant information and necessary confidence to update their RDM policy.

Scenario B: Research group B is struggling with some legal aspects of depositing research data. The self-assessment tool made this even more apparent, as they scored quite low in the legal section of the questionnaire. In addition to the activities suggested for improvement, the tool provided group B with links to background information on legal aspects. The crossreferenced activities also pointed them to previous users who had indicated that they wished to be contacted by other users who were recommended similar activities. One of these former users was an infrastructure provider who had initially also scored low in the legal section, but improved lately and was now looking for researchers willing to test a new functionality of their data repository. Group B got in touch with them, and the two users realised that they could help each other with their specific RDM issues.