



Data stewardship for FAIR data management: how WUR organizes data governance

Jacqueline Ringersma (MSc), Coordinator Data Management, Wageningen Data Competence Center
Dr. Paulien Adamse, Researcher Agrochains & Coordinator Data Stewardship for RIKILT

Background

Open Science, societal demand for transparency in research, and data requirements from funders increased the pressure on researchers to invest in FAIR data handling in their data workflows. The existing support units, usually within the Library and IT departments are experiencing an evenly increasing demand on services. Furthermore these generic support units are usually not able to provide domain specific support, especially for the I(nteroperability) principle.

An emerging role of Data Steward @ WUR

At Wageningen University & Research (WUR) we observe that in many groups researchers or technical staff take up data stewardship tasks to support their fellow researchers. Sometimes they just take care of the group data management plans, but in other cases they advise on sustainable and suitable storage solutions, provide assistance with data analysis, creating interoperable linked data, or advice on subject specific data repositories. These Data Stewards invest time and knowledge, but so far meet little recognition or reward.

Objective

WUR wants to be FAIR in 5 years' time. Sustainable data stewardship is one of the prerequisites to achieve this goal. In our project we work on the creation of a Data Steward @ WUR network and obtain overall recognition for the role of the Data Steward and data stewardship tasks in FAIR data handling and develop a training curriculum for FAIR data stewardship.



Meet your peers!

We started by connecting the Data Stewards @ WUR. Through the graduate schools and personal contacts we identified around 110 people in WUR that had taken up data stewardship tasks. Most of them attended the first **"Data Stewardship@WUR: meet your peers"** network meeting. The result of this meeting was a list of issues that needed to be addressed urgently:

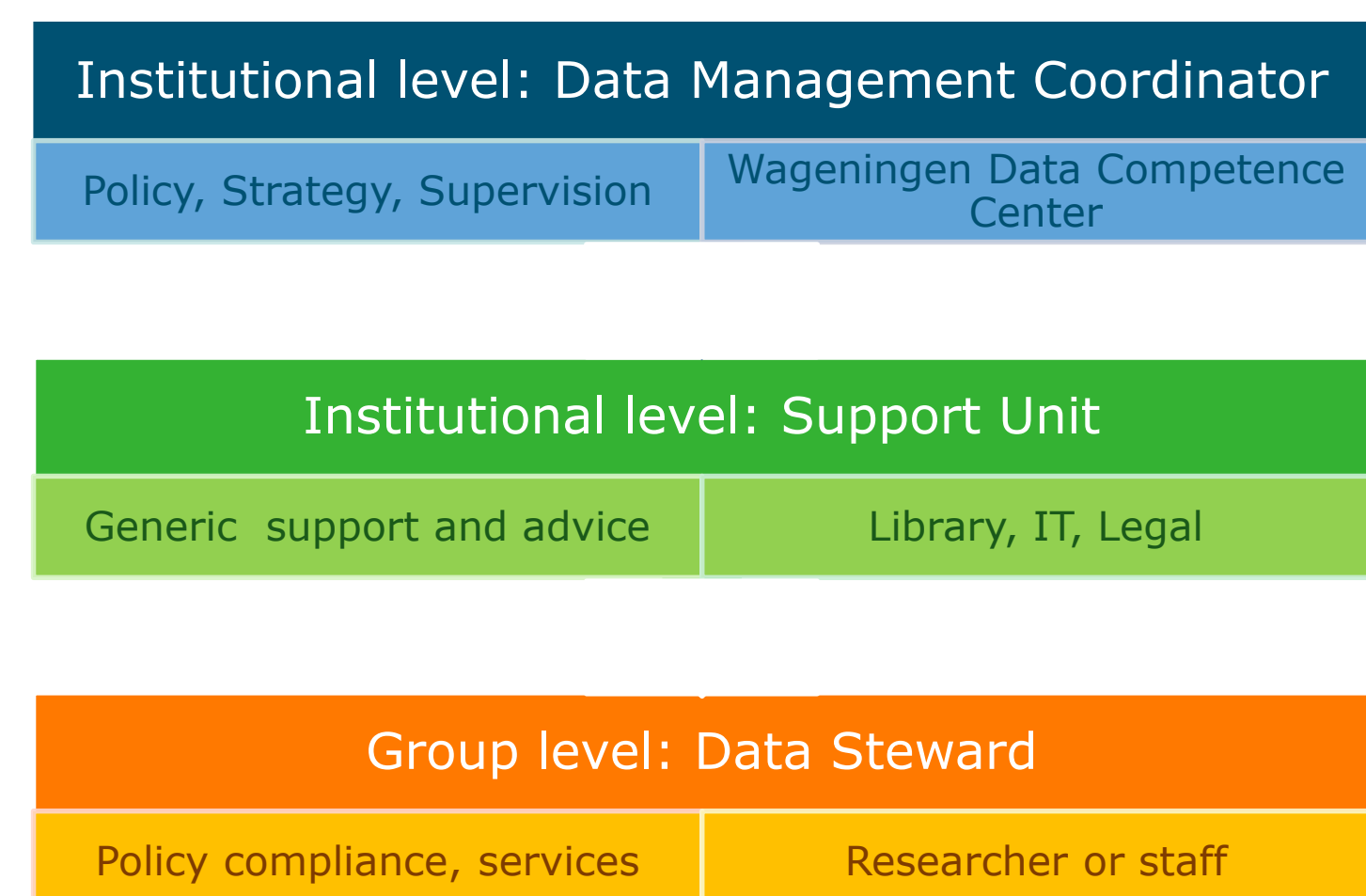
- A role and tasks definition for Data Stewards and data stewardship;
- Recognition, some form of formalization of the role, and time attribution;
- Responsibility demarcation and data governance organization structure;
- Centralized tools and services connected to the Data Steward network;
- Communication platforms and direct lines.



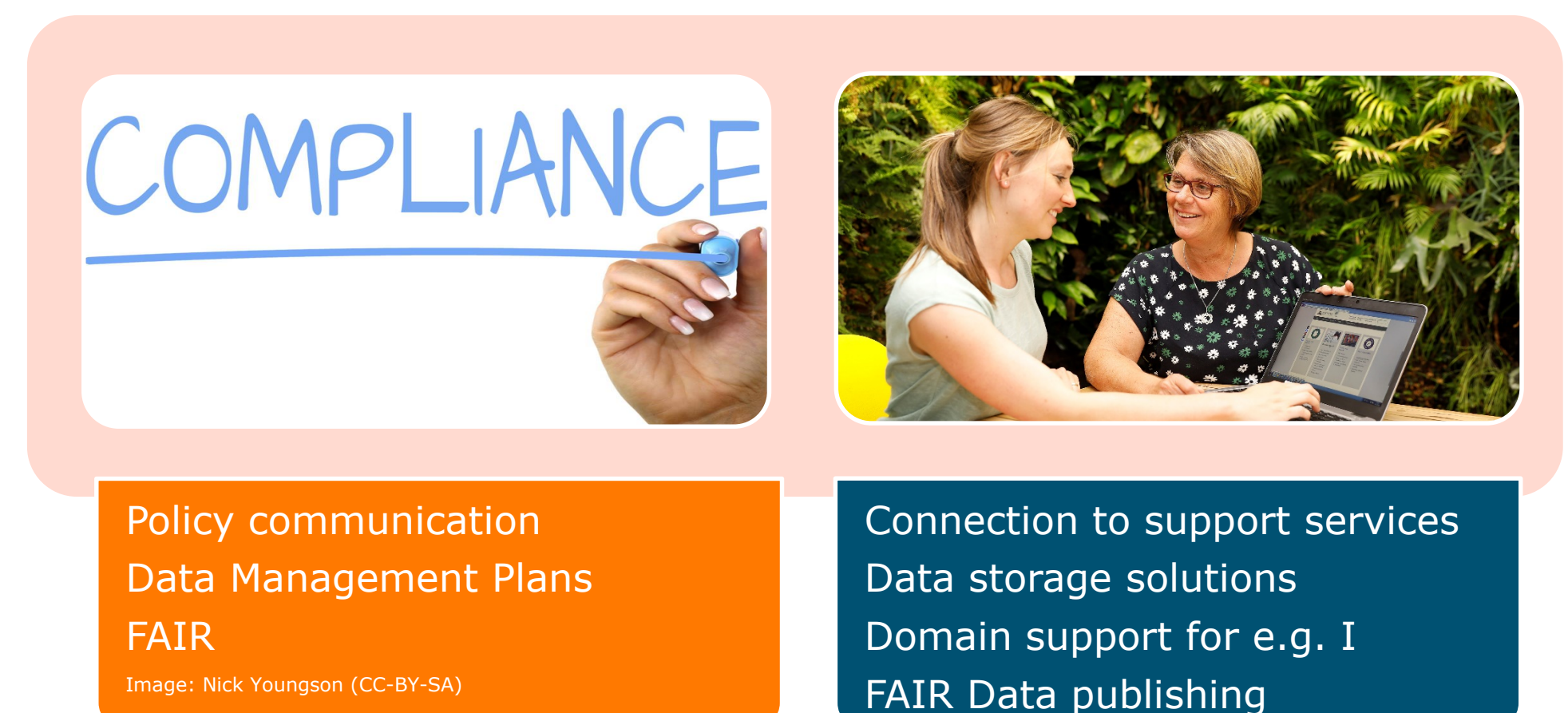
Discussing data issues at one of the WUR data symposia

Roles, tasks and responsibilities

Data stewardship tasks come in three levels. The Data Steward is working at the most operational level, within the research community.



Data steward tasks come in two main categories: Policy compliance and services.



In all cases the Principle Investigator of a research project, chair holder or group managers remain the final responsible for the implementation of the FAIR data handling by the researchers.

We estimate that for sustainable and FAIR data stewardship a time investment of about 0.2 full time equivalent (1 day a week) is minimally required.

Communication and networking

We are creating a network of data stewardship specialists in the agro-food domain. We connect this network to the institutional data services and facilities. Connecting people, connecting data, creating more value for Wageningen University & Research.



Results

The network of Data Stewards is one step further towards FAIR data governance at Wageningen University & Research. With the installation of this network WUR shows that "WUR is serious about Data".

