



The DIVERSE (Digitalisation for Environmental Justice and Biocultural Diversity) project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme (Grant agreement No. 101124195)

Digitalization & Grassroots Transformation: Inside the DIVERSE Project and its Data Management Plan

When Indigenous communities use WhatsApp to coordinate a forest protection action or climate activists livestream protests - does this digital turn strengthen or undermine their movements? In other words, does the way digital tools are used impact struggles for environmental justice and biocultural diversity? That's the core focus of the DIVERSE project, a research initiative funded by the European Research Council (ERC).

Led by the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, the DIVERSE project aims to understand digitalization and transformation within and led by grassroots transformative initiatives (GTIs) - local, place-based movements ranging from Indigenous land/sea defenders to urban farming collectives - that are working to achieve environmental justice and protect biocultural diversity.

The Core Goal: Understanding the role of the Digital in Transformation

While digital tools can amplify marginalized voices, they can also introduce new forms of surveillance, data extraction, or cultural homogenization. So how exactly do digital tools help or hurt these grassroots efforts?

DIVERSE is tackling this question by collecting qualitative and quantitative data through interviews with global experts, surveys, and detailed local case studies. We will also employ data sharing agreements and web scraping to collect information on the digitalization of GTIs and how it impacts their capacity for transformation. The ultimate goal: generate insights that inform policies and practices, ensuring digitalization is equitable and supports the protection of cultural and ecological diversity.

The project, which runs from 2025 to 2029, is committed to generating both primary and secondary data to thoroughly investigate these processes.



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DIVERSE's Commitment: Making Data FAIR and CARE

When researching vulnerable communities, data management is not just administrative - it is fundamentally ethical. The DIVERSE team follows two crucial sets of principles: FAIR and CARE.

FAIR stands for **F**indable, **A**ccessible, **I**nteroperable, and **R**eusable. This means we use standards like persistent identifiers (DOIs) and comprehensive metadata so that other researchers can easily discover and build upon our findings.

CARE stands for **C**ollective Benefit, **A**uthority to Control, **R**esponsibility, and **E**thics. For instance, if we document local ecological knowledge, the communities we work with retain authority over how that information is shared and used. This principle guides our handling of all information, especially sensitive data.

Security First: Protecting People and Privacy

Since DIVERSE collects personal information through interviews, data security is paramount. The project follows strict ethical guidelines and adheres to GDPR requirements.

To ensure long-term preservation and accessibility, data will be deposited in trusted repositories like Zenodo. Raw interview audio files will remain closed and will be deleted after transcription. Only the anonymized transcripts - which remove names, specific locations, and identifiers - will be shared publicly via Zenodo, usually after an embargo period of up to five years to allow researchers time to publish findings and ensure participants aren't identifiable through publication timing.

The project will also create accessible outputs, like Podcast Audio Segments, featuring edited material to share insights with a broader audience while ensuring participant anonymity.

Through rigorous ethical practices and advanced security, DIVERSE ensures that its research on digitalization and environmental justice is both trustworthy and safely shared.



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Looking Ahead

By 2029, DIVERSE aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for how digital tools can support - rather than undermine - community-led environmental action.

Want to learn more? Explore our full Data Management Plan on Cora.DMP (<https://dmp.csuc.cat/plans/7429/export.pdf?export%5Bquestion%20headings%5D=true>), or follow the DIVERSE project as we document how digitalization is reshaping transformation movements worldwide.