

From Policy to Practice

THE RISE OF DATA MANAGEMENT PLANS IN CROATIAN INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES

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► BACKGROUND

In 2022, the Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ) introduced a new policy requiring the submission of Data Management Plans (DMPs) for funded projects.

Institutional repositories in Croatia are supported by DABAR, a national digital infrastructure that provides technical and organizational frameworks for research outputs. DABAR enables the storage and long-term preservation of DMPs, making it a valuable source for analyzing compliance with HRZZ requirements.

This poster explores how the Croatian research community has responded to this mandate, focusing on deposit trends, levels of openness, and the extent to which projects outside HRZZ funding are represented.

► METHODS

The analysis used metadata from the DABAR repository infrastructure covering the years 2020–2024. Deposited DMPs were counted and classified according to year of submission, openness status, and funding source.

Particular attention was paid to whether DMPs were associated with HRZZ-funded projects or with other funding bodies. Trends were visualized to capture growth in submissions over time and to assess the effect of the 2022 HRZZ policy change.

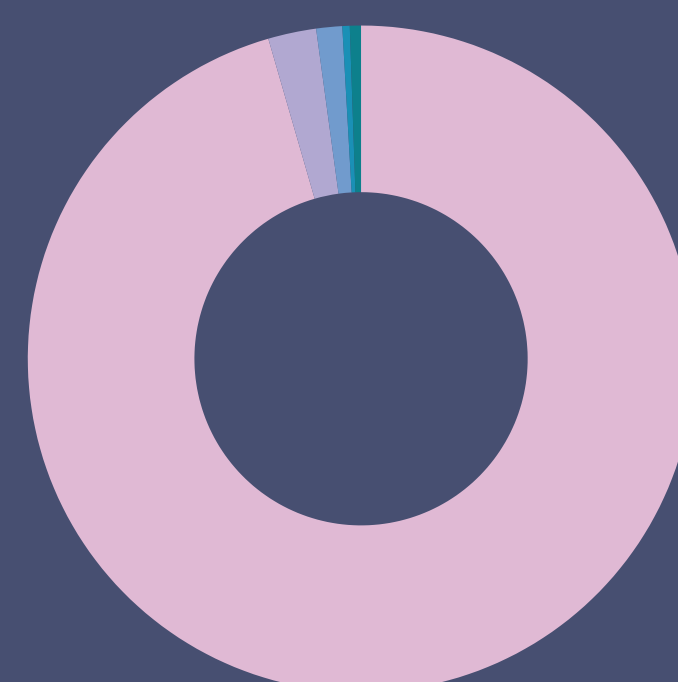
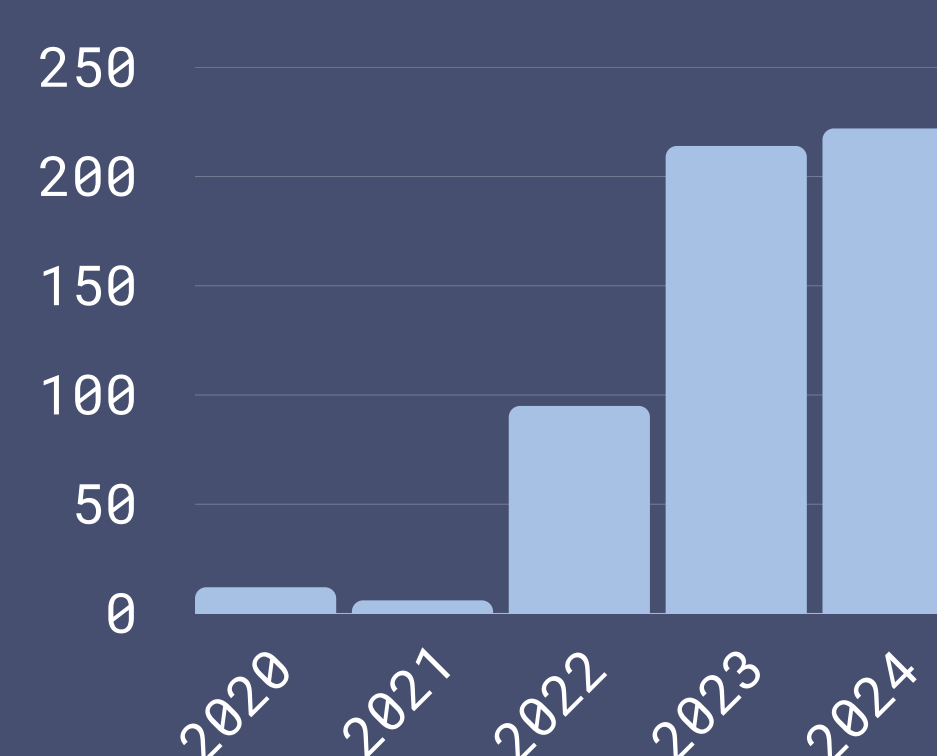
► RESULTS

The number of deposited DMPs has risen in just a few years. In 2020, there were only 13 submissions. By 2022, the number had increased to 96, and in 2023 it more than doubled again to 215. By the end of 2024, the repositories contained **557 DMPs**, showing the accelerating effect of the policy mandate.

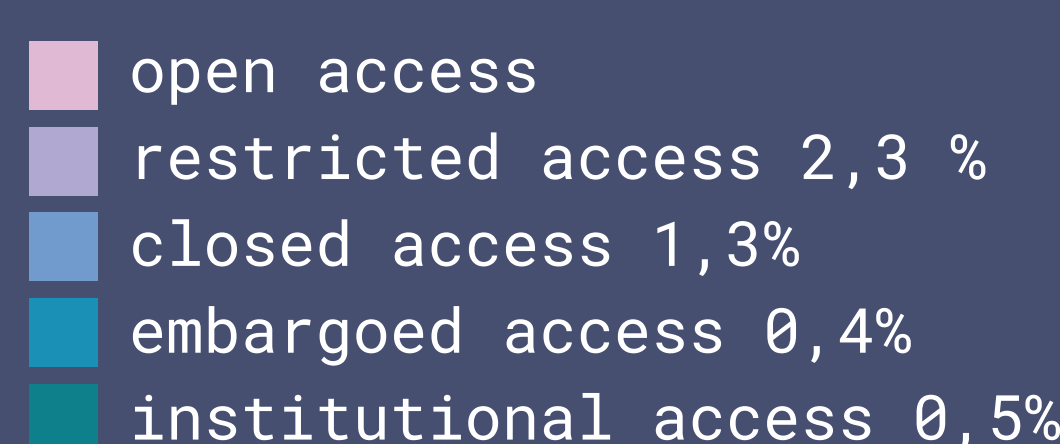
Analysis revealed that almost all DMPs were associated with HRZZ-funded projects, with only 6 DMPs linked to another source of funding. This finding suggests that the HRZZ policy is currently the primary driver for DMP preparation and deposition in Croatia.

In terms of openness, about **95%** of the submitted DMPs are **freely available** for consultation. However, accessibility varies between institutions and projects, and some DMPs remain closed.

Growth of DMP submissions (2020–2024)



Open vs. closed DMPs



► DISCUSSION

The rapid increase in DMP submissions demonstrates the strong impact of funder mandates when combined with a supportive national infrastructure like DABAR. Researchers responded quickly to the HRZZ requirement, showing that compliance can be achieved when both incentives and tools are present.

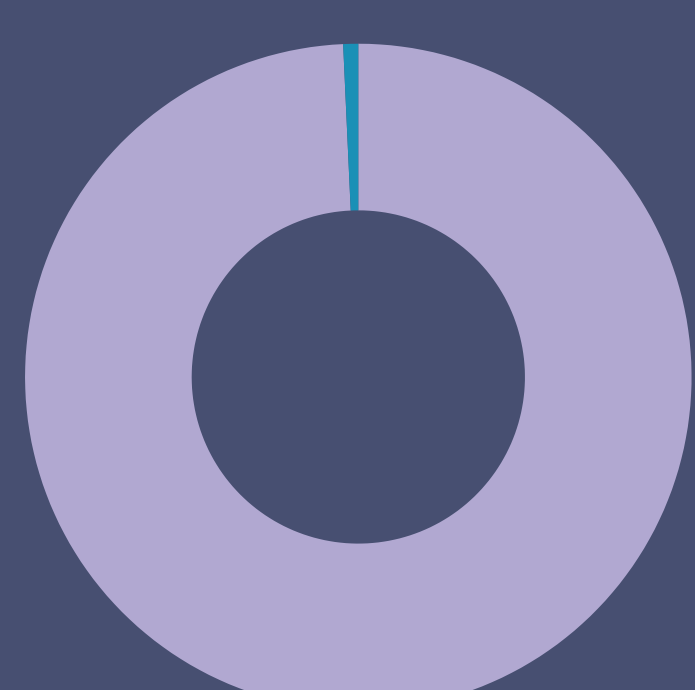
While the quantity of submissions has grown, openness and alignment with FAIR principles remain partial. This indicates that compliance is primarily policy-driven rather than culture-driven, and further efforts are needed to embed research data management as a standard part of scientific practice.

► CONCLUSION

The HRZZ mandate has successfully stimulated a significant increase in DMP submissions, illustrating how national policies and infrastructure can shape research practices. However, the long-term goal of fostering a culture of open and FAIR data management is not yet fully realized.

To move from compliance to sustainable practice, research needs a national RDM strategy, integration of data management into research evaluation and assessment, and ongoing training, support, and incentives for researchers.

Together, these measures could ensure that the promising growth in DMPs leads to meaningful improvements in how Croatian research data is managed, shared, and preserved.



HRZZ vs. non-HRZZ funded