DUTCH CARIBBEAN DIGITAL COMPETENCE

WORKING SESSION

St. Martin and the Dutch Caribbean Digital Competence Network

University of St. Martin · September 2026 · Raymond Jessurun and Rendell de Kort

TODAY

We came to listen more than to present

1

Who we are

A six-island network for data competence, funded by Open Science NL and anchored at three universities.

2

What we have heard

What people across the region tell us gets in the way when they work with data.

3

What you need

Most of the hour belongs to you: the data you hold, where it gets stuck, and which training would be worth your staff's time.

And one ask at the end: five minutes on our onboarding survey.

Much of the region's data expertise works outside the universities

Most doctorate holders in the Dutch Caribbean work in ministries, central banks, statistics offices, hospitals and firms, often in roles that decide what happens to the data their organisation produces.

The data exists. It is kept in separate places, documented in separate ways, and seldom travels between institutions, let alone between islands.

A network lets the people who hold that data compare notes, learn the same methods, and decide together what should become easier.

> Data sharing is frustrated by the lack of an accessible platform for data sharing and the lack of an open data culture in research in Aruba.
>
> Respondent, DCDC onboarding survey, 2026

Six islands, three universities, one network



Aruba	Curaçao	Bonaire	St. Martin	Saba	Sint Eustatius
University of Aruba	University of Curaçao	*No coordinator yet*	University of St. Martin	*No coordinator yet*	*No coordinator yet*

FUNDED BY

Open Science NL (NWO), four years from 2025

ASSOCIATED PARTNER

Instituto Pedagogico Arubano (IPA)

REPORTS TO

CHECK, where the three rectors meet with IPA

Your contacts on each island



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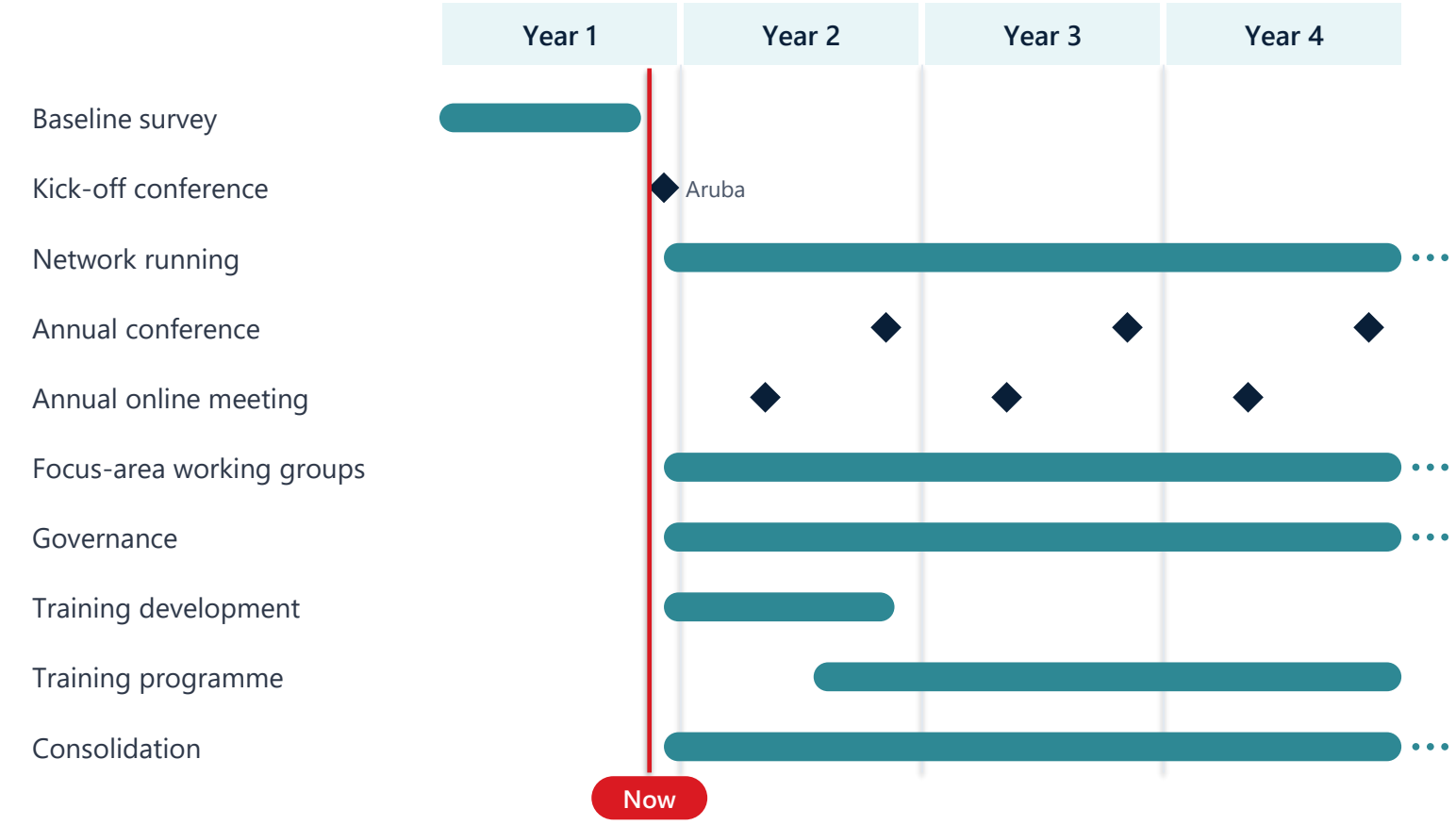
Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba have no local coordinator yet.

Members decide what the network works on

The network follows the Open Knowledge Foundation model. Members stay independent, meet regularly, and whoever has the expertise and the interest leads a topic.

After the kick-off, working groups form around the focus areas members choose. Each one produces something concrete: a policy brief, an event, a training module.

People who complete the training programme become Local Network Transformers, able to teach it inside their own organisations.



Adapted from the timeline in the network's Open Science NL proposal.

What gets in the way, in members' own words



The first twenty survey responses, August 2026

Twenty responses. Nineteen reported serious difficulties working with data.

Joint first: not enough time or staff, and data not shared between organisations.

Second: concerns about sharing data.

Joint third: unclear rules or policies, and finding data in the first place.

Asked what they would change with a magic wand, most named skills first, then a shared place to store and find data.

41 answers so far are shaping the November programme. St. Martin's share of it is still open.

What membership could mean for your organisation

Training that stays in the region

Free, hands-on, open-source courses taught on the islands. Introduction to R for SPSS users ran on Aruba in April and on Curaçao in September, each time built around local data.

Peers across islands and sectors

Working groups on the topics members choose, led by members rather than run from one office.

Shared practice you can adopt

Openly licensed guides on documenting, sharing and preserving data, and a knowledge base the network builds together.

A say in what gets built

The kick-off conference and the training calendar are shaped by what institutions tell us, this conversation included.

Anything the network takes on with you is confirmed in writing by the project leader.

Your data stays with you

Custody	The network works on how data is documented, shared and preserved. The data itself stays with the institution that produced it.
Cost	Membership, training and materials are free. Open Science NL pays for them.
Capacity	A small core team in part-time roles, with a training budget.

YOUR TURN

What would make data easier to work with here?

1. What data does your organisation hold, and who outside it depends on that data?
2. Where does working with it get stuck: time, skills, rules, or sharing?
3. Which skills would your staff need to do more of this in-house?
4. Which training would be worth their time, and in what form?
5. Who else on St. Martin should we be talking to?

Take the network survey

dcdc.network/survey

About five to seven minutes.

One response per person, not per institution. The colleagues who handle your data day to day are the ones we most need to hear from, so please pass the link on.

Your answers shape the kick-off conference and the training calendar, and you receive the quarterly newsletter.

Scan to open the survey

COMING UP

Where to meet the network next

10 to 12 November 2026

Kick-off conference

University of Aruba. Two days of workshops built from the survey results, with room for the topics participants bring.

30 September 2026

Dutch Data Prize nominations close

Open to the Dutch Caribbean this round, for teams and individuals. Each category winner receives €3,500 to improve the FAIRness of their data.

researchdata.nl

Every quarter

DCDC newsletter

Network news, training dates and calls from all six islands. Survey respondents receive it.

dcdc.network

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Thank you

For your time, and for what you told us.

Website	**dcdc.network**
Network survey	**dcdc.network/survey**
LinkedIn	**DCDC Network**
Instagram	**@dcdcnetwork**
YouTube	**@DCDCNetwork**

LOCAL CONTACTS

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OPEN SCIENCE NL

The DCDC Network is funded by NWO through the Open Science NL programme.

FAIR data, in one slide

F — Findable

Descriptive metadata and a persistent identifier, so people and machines can locate it.

A — Accessible

Open where possible. Where not, clear procedures for who may access it and how.

I — Interoperable

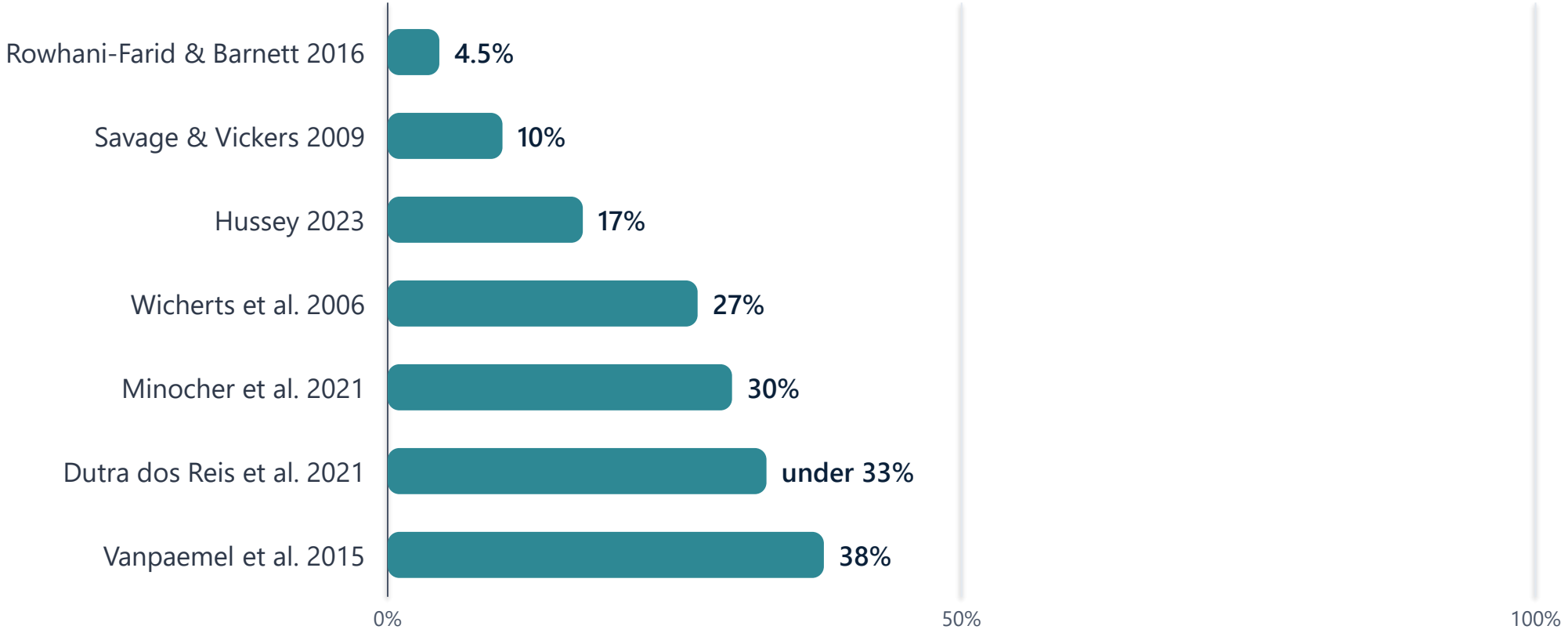
Formats and vocabularies that let it combine with other data, applications and workflows.

R — Reusable

Documented and licensed, so someone else can use it correctly without asking.

Definitions after The Turing Way, CC BY 4.0, book.the-turing-way.org

How often “available on request” produces the data



Share of requests or articles that produced the data, seven studies. Compiled by Esther Plomp, Open Research & IPA, March 2026, doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19049737

How the network is meant to grow



Adapted from Figure 2 in the network's Open Science NL proposal.