In order to facilitate and speed up the processing and release of your data, below you will find some recommended steps that should be completed before you deposit your data with DSDR:

1. **Variable labels**: All variables should include variable labels, and these should be as descriptive as is necessary to understand what the variable is measuring. For example, the following is a poor variable label choice: XY2221 “Death” (we don’t know exactly how the variable XY221 relates to, or measures, death). A better variable label would be: XY221 “Cause of Death.” Variable labels should be in English whenever possible.

2. **Value labels**: All categorical variables should include value labels, even in simple binary cases. DSDR processors cannot make assumptions regarding what a particular value represents, and will thus request the value labels directly from the investigator if it is not supplied. This delays the processing of the data. For example, for a hypothetical variable GENDER, the values of 0 and 1 should have labels (such as 0 “Male” / 1 “Female”). Value labels should be in English whenever possible.

3. **Missing values**: For numeric variables, missing value codes should be declared missing, should be standardized whenever possible, and should include value labels. Often, negative values are the best way not to confuse missing values with valid values. For example, a possible standardized missing value scheme could be: -9 “Missing”, -98 “Don’t Know”, -99 “Not Applicable”, and -999 “Skip”.

4. **Character/string variables**: String variables be avoided whenever possible (i.e. for all non-open-ended responses), as they are particularly difficult to process. For example, for date variables, it is preferred that the Day/Month/Year information be split into three numeric variables rather than being encompassed in a single string variable.

5. **Documentation**: Each data deposit should be accompanied by the relevant documentation, which often includes a user guide (which is especially helpful when building a description of the study), a variable codebook with frequencies (which is especially helpful for the processing of the data), and/or a questionnaire (if a survey was conducted). A description of the data collection, including short reports providing relevant details (study method, collection method/time periods, response rates, etc.) may also be necessary for DSDR to create a study description (if a descriptive user guide is not supplied).