Data is the very foundation of research, and each year the quantity and velocity of data produced increases. Sharing of research data has the potential to revolutionise the way research is conducted by accelerating discovery and improving society -- but sharing research data globally is challenging.

The RDA (Research Data Alliance) is now one year old: it is a global, grass-roots organisation dedicated to developing the tools, infrastructure, services, standards and practices that the research community requires to share and exchange its data treasures. All parts of the research community are involved, from agriculture to particle physics, from humanities to bioinformatics. All parts of the data lifecycle are addressed from foundational data terminology to data publication and re-use.

The third RDA plenary meeting, taking place in Dublin (Ireland) from 26 to 28 March 2014, is focused on harnessing global partnerships built in the data sharing community through the RDA’s activities to date, combining these with existing infrastructure and best practices across the data sharing community, and enabling the community to drive forward the changes needed for global data exchange. This plenary meeting is about exploiting RDA’s work to date to its full potential.