



RDA INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE SURVEY RESPONSES

DRAFT 2.0, JULY 2021

In December 2020, the RDA Council set up a [Financial Sustainability Task Force](#) to openly investigate a series of different financial and business models. The idea of an individual membership fee is one of a number of approaches to improving the long-term financial stability of the organization. An open survey on possible RDA individual membership fees was launched in April 2021 to properly assess the potential model and understand the community perspective. The survey was open until 31 May 2021 and 349 people responded. The survey was completely anonymous and all currency references were in USD.

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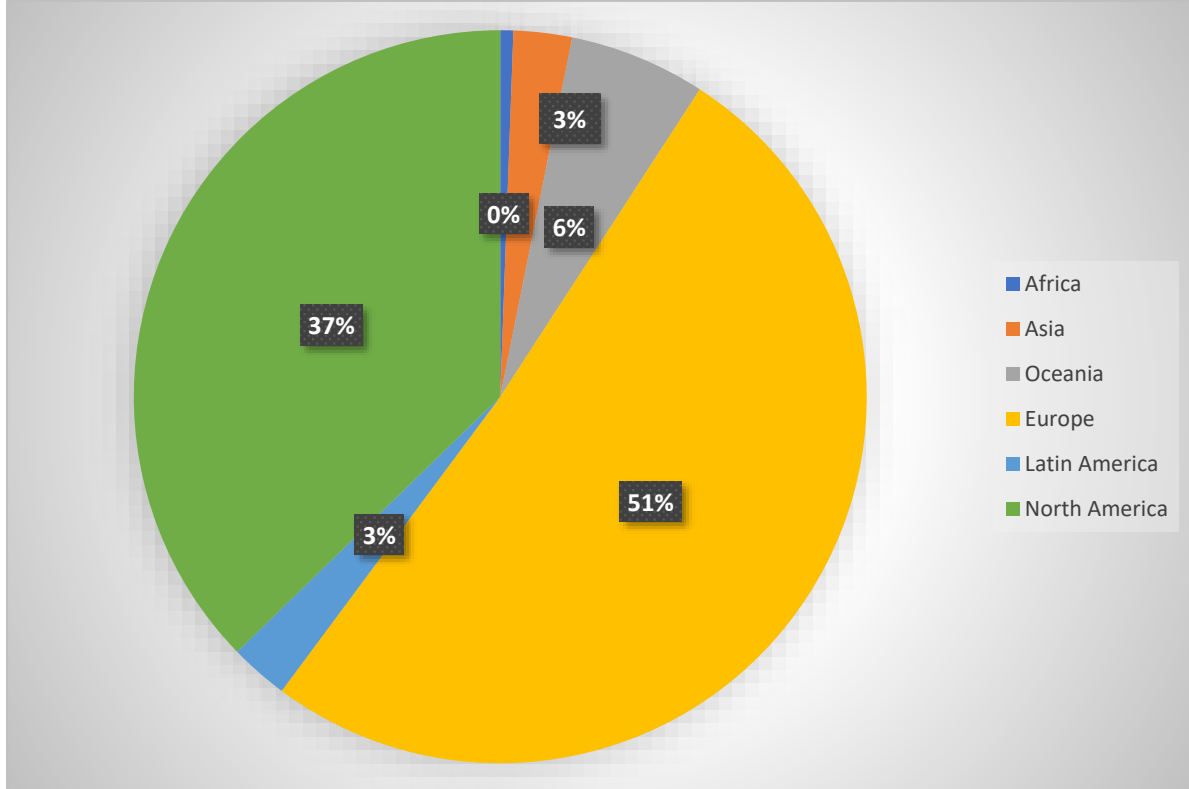


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Continental representation

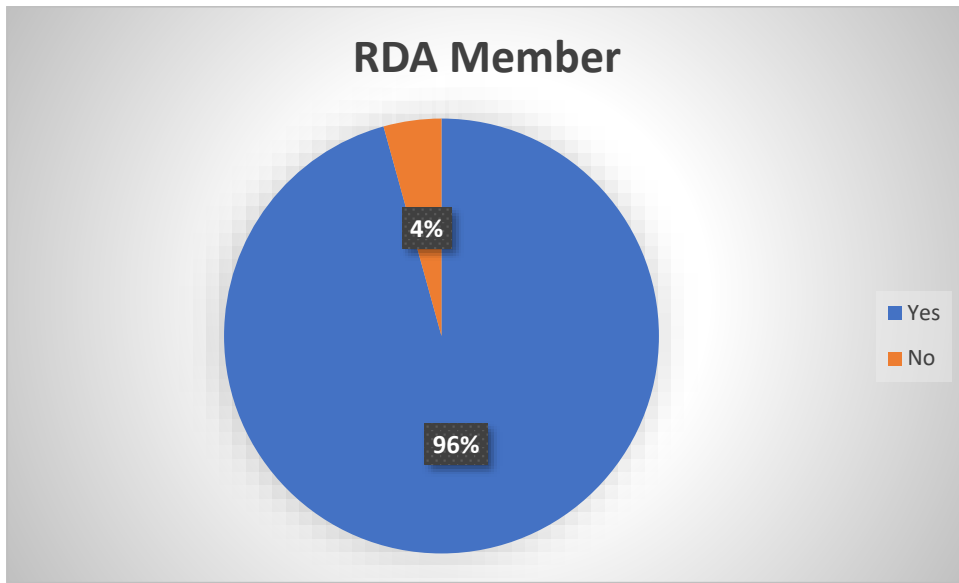
We do ask you to provide your country of residence so we can adequately understand regional differences



Africa	2
Asia	9
Oceania	21
Europe	178
Latin America	9
North America	130
Total respondents	349

1. Are you currently an individual member of the RDA (i.e. are you registered on the web site)? *

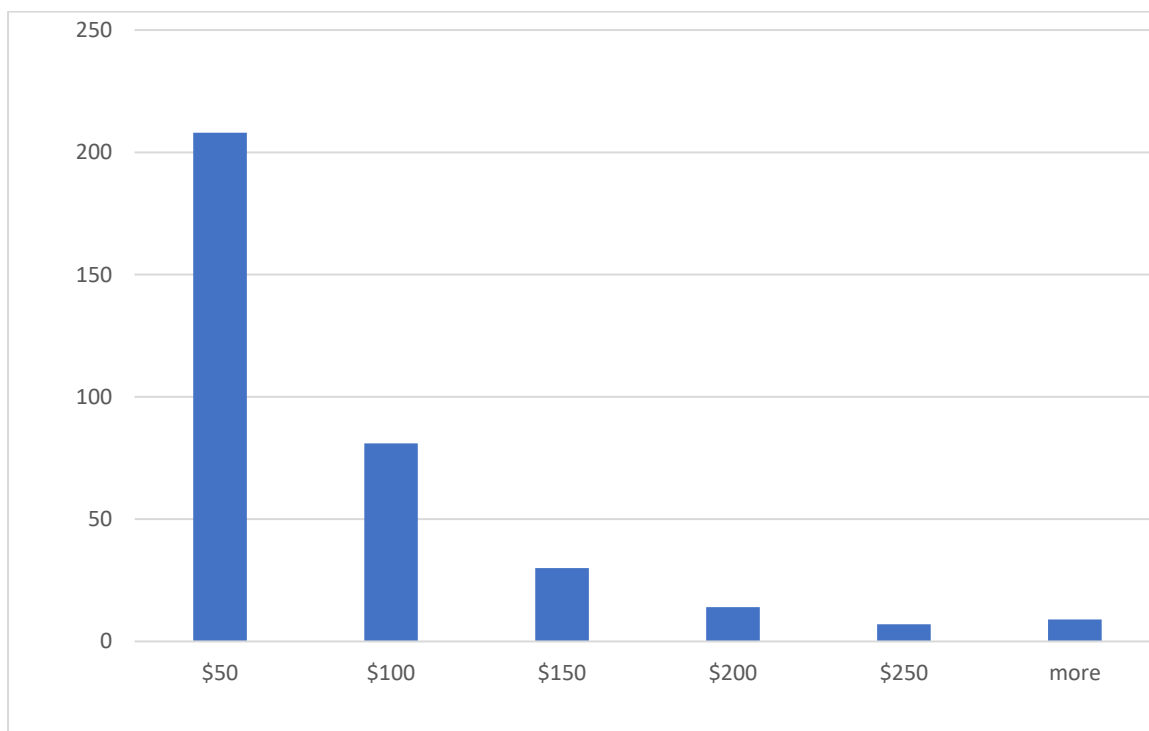
- Yes
- No



Yes	334
No	15

2. If the RDA were to introduce an annual individual membership fee as part of its long-term sustainability, what is the highest amount that would be feasible to pay (USD)? *

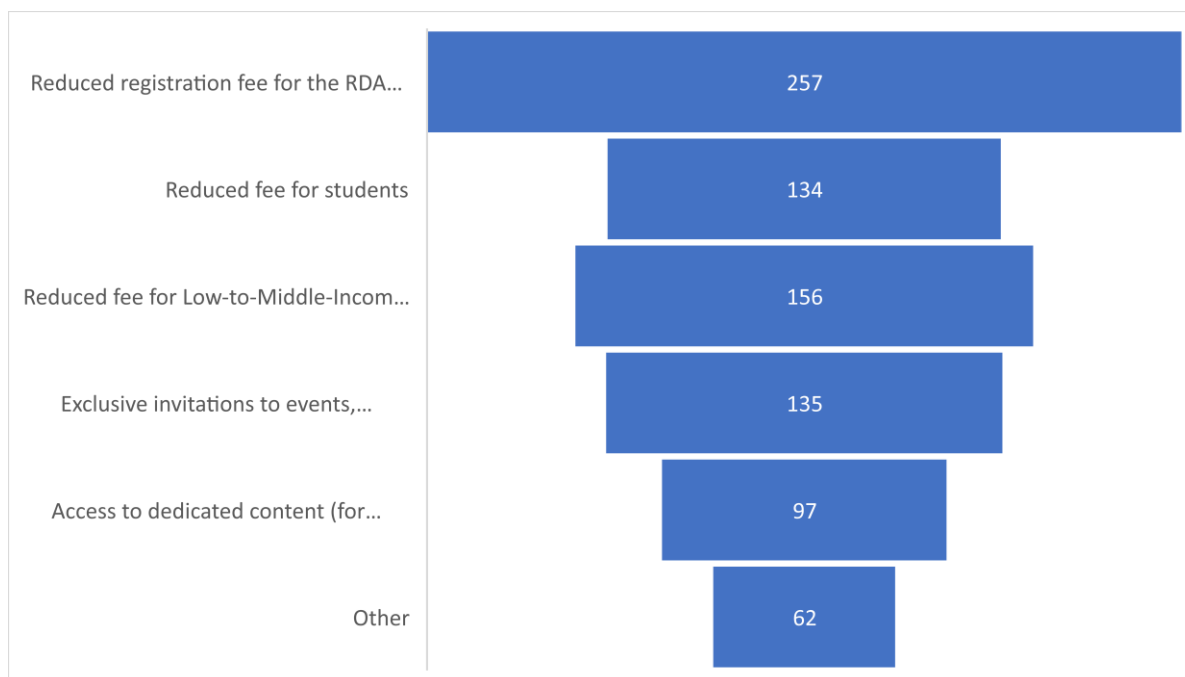
- \$50
- \$100
- \$150
- \$200
- \$250
- more



what is the highest amount that would be feasible to pay	No.
\$50	208
\$100	81
\$150	30
\$200	14
\$250	7
more	9

3. Would any of the following benefits or adjustments make a membership fee acceptable TO YOU? (SELECT THOSE APPROPRIATE TO YOU) *

- Reduced registration fee for the RDA Plenary
- Reduced fee for students
- Reduced fee for Low-to-Middle-Income countries
- Exclusive invitations to events, tutorials, training, etc.
- Access to dedicated content (for example, white papers, etc.)
- Other



Reduced registration fee for the RDA Plenary	257
Reduced fee for students	134
Reduced fee for Low-to-Middle-Income countries	156
Exclusive invitations to events, tutorials, training, etc.	135
Access to dedicated content (for example, white papers, etc.)	97
Other	62

Free text responses for Other

The responses below are those given in answer to “Other. If Other, please specify” option. To make them more legible they have been categorized according to the type of answer provided.

Administrative aspects

- I am not sure I would be able to stay in RDA if there would be a membership fee. The individual membership fee would certainly be a problem in Hungary.
- "These benefits accrue to the institution, primarily, as they pay for me to attend the plenary, but the membership fee is to an individual. If you give a benefit of reduced plenary fees, I would be subsidising this from my fees, but I would have to compete for a place in my institution and, likely wouldn't get it in a normal year when travel costs are high.
- If you can find a way to charge the institution, but benefit the individual, that would help."
- "an option for an ""in kind"" fee/contribution: chairing of groups, producing outcomes, ...
- would be helpful for members from the Global South, though also for members in the Global North in precarious financial situations"
- "It's impossible to answer this without knowing what membership would look like, and hence whether or not my employer would pay (or whether it was, for example, bundled with organisational membership.) If it were, then I would not benefit from reduced plenary fees,



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since my employer (or someone else) pays those also. If it were out of my own pocket - the benefit might still accrue to someone else.

- I would be opposed to the idea of dedicated content for members under any circumstances."
- it would be difficult to pay yet another fee on individual participation
- Why not make it optional, ie members are invited to make a contribution.
- Transparent accounting that is pro-actively made available to the members. This must include all other sources of income.
- I'm a retiree and don't have any institutional support.
- I currently signed up as a member on my own initiative so I can follow the activities and developments in the RDA (so I am a passive member). If there was an individual membership fee I would have to convince my management of the benefits for the institution of me being a member or otherwise pay it out of my own pocket (which I probably wouldn't do).
- I probably wouldn't take out an individual membership but if we can communicate the community benefits to our employing institutions, there may be an institutional membership model that would work.
- This depends hugely on whether my work would reimburse it and I'm not sure they would. If there was no work reimbursement I don't think I would become a member. Another persuading factor if my work would pay for it would be if there were reduced membership if you're taking an active part in the RDA as chair of an IG or other group. At the moment, I already dedicate a lot of time to do things for RDA which don't directly benefit my work so if they also had to pay for me to do that I'm not sure they'd be interested.
- "In my case, any information access and/or registration fee that I can justify as important for my job would be paid by my employer, however, individual membership will come out of pocket.
- To the next question, whether I will or will not leave the RDA depends on the cost."

Dedicated Content

- "Possibly no fees for members from low income countries. The other benefits (registration fee, exclusive invitation) would be nice but not necessary
- I think all or most RDA content should continue to be open access"
- "I would like to keep RDA as open as possible, i.e. no material that is only available for paying members.
- It is after all, the members who produce the material."
- Please do NOT offer content exclusive to members - that's against all principles of openness
- "Couple of points:
 - If RDA organises training and some sessions for my personal development I'm naturally willing to pay about those and naturally if an individual fee means bit lower prices for these, why not.
 - I hope that there is not models which divides individuals in the RDA to two groups; those who can afford to be member and participate really in the community and those who can't (so I'm not favor of those exclusive invitations)
 - If there is this kind of training benefits etc. I hope that they works like some courses for example in the Coursera nowadays; materials and lessons are freely available,

but if you like to have a certificate you have to pay for it. Actually this certificate based business model is in use in some organisations either.

- Perhaps RDA can develop global Really-FAIR certificate for all components of the research data workflows."
- I am not favorable to exclusive invitations, or access to specific content; reduced fees as indicated are fine;
- I don't think there should be any special content only available to dues paying member. That is somewhat in violation of the RDA openness principle.
- exclusive events and content might make a fee more acceptable, but I think events and content should not be exclusive
- "I am strongly against the idea that access to dedicated content (white papers etc.) should be reserved to paying members, even if this is applied only to e.g. pre-views and/or some embargo period. This goes IMHO completely against the concepts the RDA stands for - openness, collaboration, sharing knowledge etc.
- I also think that ""exclusive invitations to events"" is an idiotic idea - by all means, make these activities free for paying RDA members, but allow anyone to participate (non-members paying a fee)."
- Exclusive access to dedicated content, e.g., white papers, may seem to be a natural way to go for paid members. It will be, however, a big mistake in my opinion if RDA decides to take that approach as it will derail the mission of RDA for sharing data, information, and knowledge without barriers.
- Not an "Other", but I would be very much against exclusive events, tutorials, and training. It goes against the Openness and Sharing core values of RDA.
- I think making access to dedicated content like white papers is contrary to open science and open scholarship. I selected \$200 as the maximum but that really would be contingent on making it much more affordable to Low-to-Middle-Income countries -- perhaps close to free. I think a fee of \$150 is probably more reasonable for me in the U.S. context. I don't get reimbursed for membership, but value this organization's work.
- Training would be the most useful thing. However, I'm also happy to support non-exclusive non-dedicated content, and for white papers I prefer that they be open not dedicated.
- Perhaps access to dedicated content, but I am generally not in favor of an individual membership fee.
- Be careful not to make membership a barrier to needed information.
- "only members to be able to be formal members of IG and WG, whereas BOFS, COPs could be open more widely.
- given the goals of RDA it would seem to be a backward step if some content e.g white papers was to be restricted to members only"

Facilities / Web

- web platforms for deploying prototypes for demonstrations
- ROI for members has to be in place so paying individuals can easily see the benefit (either in plenary discounts, or in access to other tangible benefits)
- a certification program where holding a certificate significantly influences the hiring decisions of employers



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- I participate in several data groups. Within these groups the RDA functions as communication-infrastructure-as-service.
- Forum to learn about research data and analysis to improve research outcomes.
- Advanced registration access to limited space events.
- Featured interest groups
- RDA Community Standards/Guidelines
- Would like to see additional functionality with respect to member (individual) profiles (e.g., pictures, links to ORCID, links to WGs one participates in), better functionality for members in Working Groups (e.g., member listing, communication request to join WGs, etc).

LMIC related comments

- In order to be truly global it must be considered that there are huge inequalities between countries regarding science funding
- "RDA swag Also, though none apply to my situation currently: reduced fees for students, LMIC, (USA) community college members or members of institutions that are not well-funded."

Plenary Meeting related comments

- Fee could be annually part of the plenary registration: if you register and pay for the plenary you will automatically become a member. A voting model where paid members and organisations have votes for electing e.g. TAB would also be a possible benefit
- I am just reflecting: everyone needs to be RDA member for attending the Plenaries - in this case, a reduced fee for RDA members would not make sense....
- Please connect RDA Fees and membership to the attendance of a RDA Plenary. So we can put the fees on our travel reimbursements. Similar to the AGU practice. If that's the case, the cost is not as relevant to most people as if they pay by themselves.
- I would prefer to keep membership low, even if no reduction of fees for RDA Plenary. This is because my employer can pay the latter but the membership fee would come out of my pocket.
- No fee for the RDA Plenary: Lots of professional organisations only have a membership fee.
- None of these would make individual membership fees acceptable, because an individual membership fee would not be acceptable. I just dropped my individual membership to another association, since my employer does not reimburse these fees, but they will pay registration fees. Consider increasing meeting registration fees, instead.
- It would be best if you charged for training and events; memberships fees are like changing access to an already white boys club
- If the benefit is a reduced rego fee, then I would support a higher amount than I answered under Q2 (on the basis that my organisation normally covers the rego fee anyway)

Voting comments

- Voting rights potentially becomes an issue with differential registration fees
- Voting right in organizational governance

Tiered membership comments

- "A tiered model with those in higher income countries paying significantly more than those in LMICs would be vital to implement. For those in the West, individuals are highly likely to

be able to claim tax breaks for membership of professional societies, or for contributions to charities (in case RDA is considering charitable status).

- I would strongly suggest ensuring that all RDA outputs, training etc are kept openly accessible to all, otherwise RDA will just be replicating a subscription journal model. Part of the success of RDA has been that outputs have been open to everyone.
- Further success will come from better governance to reduce duplication of work - the TAB should be clear to new group submissions if they are attempting to solve an issue that has already been discussed. It may help to expand TAB membership and carry out multiple reviews of new group/session proposals."
- "I would say one angle to work on is to present the RDA as an organisation of data professionals. Being able to say ""I am a member of the RDA"" should become an item that people put down in their CVs. I'd also say that one should think about this in stages - member, fellow (or professional), advanced fellow etc. The wording here is very important but the idea is to have a progression. For example membership continues to be an open house but the next levels require demonstration of skills.
- This is particularly true if we are building a cohort of Data Stewards - the RDA could play a key role in terms of stating ""this is the curriculum that they should know"" and actually assessing. That is expensive but as this is about career progression then people or institutions will pay for it.
- Reduced fee for academia and/or early career researchers.
- Reduced fee for early career professionals (with in 5 years of degree, etc.).
- If any membership fee is accepted, I think it's critical that it be on a sliding scale to allow for individuals from low-income areas, students, etc to become members. Perhaps scholarships or other incentives as well. RDA, and any global org really, needs to be understanding of the huge disparities in wages among countries, while continuing to extend our reach to under-represented areas.
- The problem will be to involve young researchers who will not get the fee covered by the institute. Everyone who is employed or is enjoying a grant can afford a \$50 fee but people who are not employed or are still studying will have a major challenge. The question for RDA is now, who are the important RDA wants to include in the work?
- I am retired, but still very much interested ... My other professional organization has a retired status with lowered membership (and conference) fees.
- Only if my fee subsidized a "free tier" for others
- "Fees should employ a progressive sliding scale, so that those of us who make more income at our jobs, pay higher membership dues. In this way those that make more underwrite the lower fees from those who make less, and therefore pay less.
- Those that pay higher dues should NOT get perks. This is not a loyalty scheme at a casino or store."
- I could go higher in membership fees, depending on what was offered. Consider also things like membership tiers. The Association for Computing Machinery and IEEE have Senior Membership, and ACM also has Advanced Membership, as levels below Fellows. This kind of formal professional recognition is useful in many circles for people at different career stages. When there's only the Fellow level, there's little for early- and mid-career people.



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Other comments

- I have selected all options because they all add to the value of the membership, but aside from supporting those who have less capacity to pay then they are not essential.
- No. Introducing an individual membership fee should provide some kind of value for money for all members.
- None of the benefits or adjustments would make a membership fee acceptable.
- "A LOT of transparency in how the funds are being used
- Scholarships"
- Sharing leadership needs / issues experience like the webinar today on RDA Finances and Planning.
- Setting a membership fee is a bit like setting up a paywall, with all the associated pros and cons. Please see my alternative suggestion below.
- No fee for the speakers

No incentive necessary

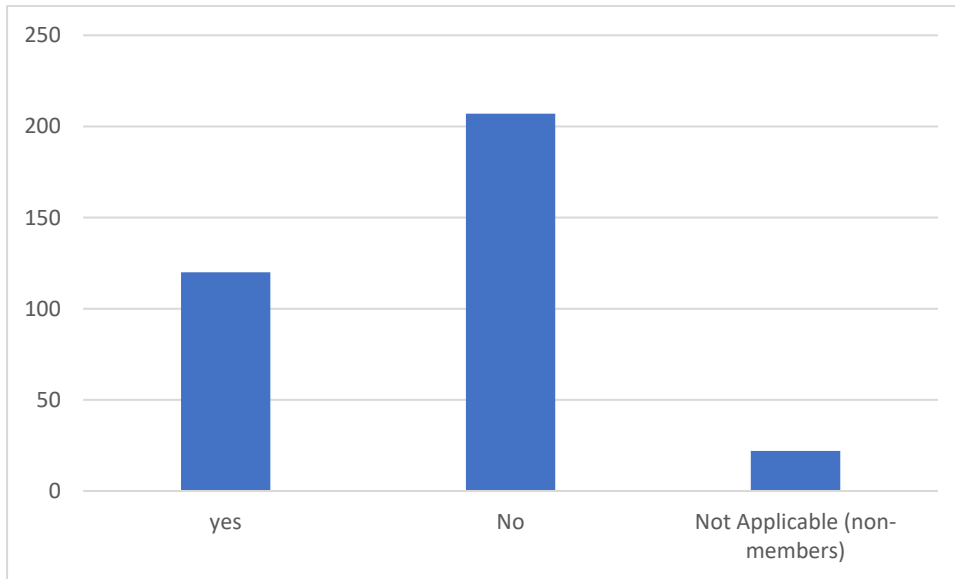
- Probably none necessary for me.
- nothing
- None of the above
- For me, I don't need an incentive to pay a fee.
- none of the above
- I need no incentives to support such a fine organisation as the RDA.

Questionnaire related comments

- question 2 doesn't have a "none" option, so expect very unreliable results :/ (yes, I know this box wasn't meant for such a comment, but I'm [*****]!)
- The question 2 above should have had also a "0" fee or something like I will not pay any membership fee. And also have something like 10-20 dollars.
- The lowest value for your membership fee is \$50. You require an answer to that question. You are forcing the respondents to say that they can afford a \$50 membership fee. What kind of "survey" is this?
- The lowest value for your membership fee is \$50. You require an answer to that question. You are forcing the respondents to say that they can afford a \$50 membership fee. What kind of "survey" is this?
- Nothing, but this question is required and doesn't have a "nothing" option, so...
- "I cannot pay an individual membership fee. Your prior question is prohibiting me from submitting this form because the lowest amount listed is \$50, which is too much. I am forced to choose \$50. This problem with your survey completely invalidates any results you get! So, I suppose I should just not submit it. Why bother!
- Your conclusions will erroneously say that people agree to \$50 or more! Now, I'm really upset!"
- I wouldn't pay \$50 but that isn't an option

4. If an individual membership fee were required for RDA participation, would you leave the RDA? *

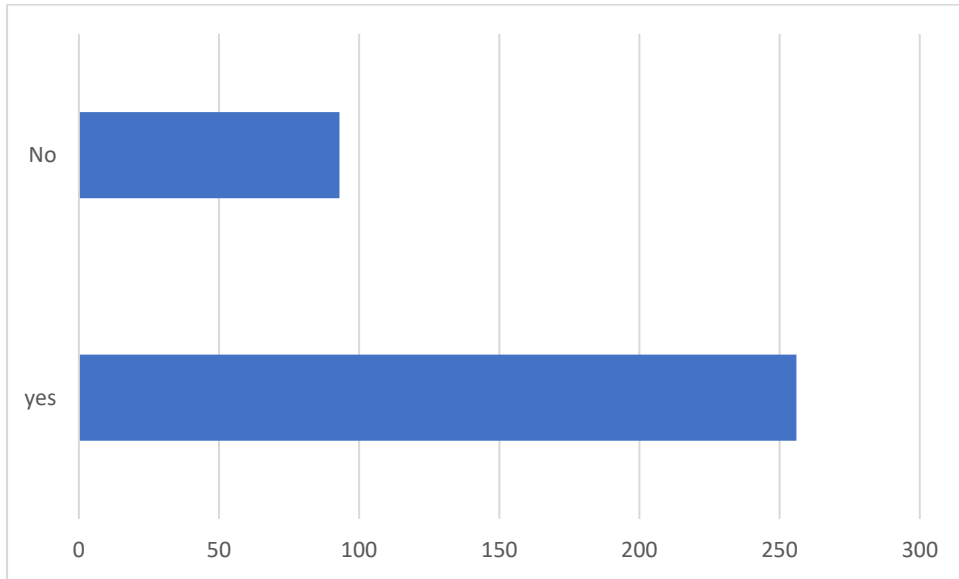
- Yes
- No
- Not applicable



yes	120
No	207
Not Applicable (non-members)	22

5. Are you an individual member of other professional societies / associations? *

- Yes
- No

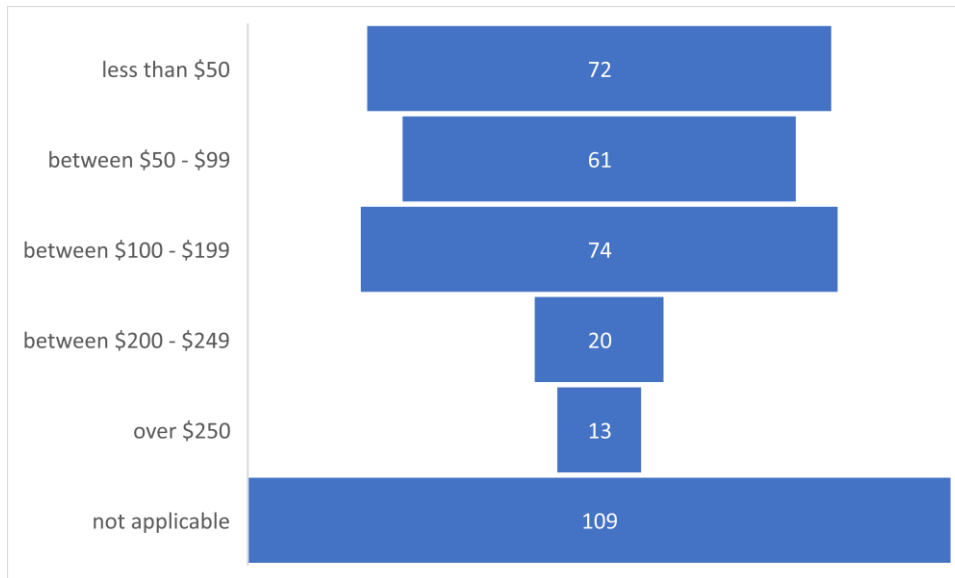


5. Are you an individual member of other professional societies / associations?

yes	256
No	93
	349

If yes, how much is the annual fee? *

- less than \$50
- between \$50 - \$99
- between \$100 - \$199
- between \$200 - \$249
- over \$250
- not applicable



Fee	
less than \$50	72
between \$50 - \$99	61
between \$100 - \$199	74
between \$200 - \$249	20
over \$250	13
not applicable	109

6. Briefly, if you are a member of the RDA, why did you join? What does it offer you?
 The responses given have been classified according to different areas for improved legibility.

Community related feedback

- "1. It is a great course for the community. 2. It enables to tap on international experts on the work I am doing locally. 3. It also enables to contribute and do something interesting work outside my work environment."
- A community to engage with.
- This was for me. It was constant as I moved between institutions. It was my community. I built capital for my career and supported myself when I was with an unsupportive institution.
- I registered because I thought I need that to participate at a plenary and as a sign of solidarity, that I agree/support the goals of RDA.
- community building, accessible to each and everyone
- being part of this amazing initiative!
- community of practices, experience sharing, work groups
- A forum to discuss ideas about data publishing
- Access to a community interested in my research
- Community of experts, follow-up of outputs ...



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- I joined because I work with data management since 2005 and always dreamed about a truly international community to exchange experiences and learn. RDA does offer that and much more, it is great to get to interact with so many wise people and to feel I am not alone in the data world.
- Community/network, tie-ins to conversations/efforts, ways to get things done on a larger scale.
- international perspective, multiple disciplinary perspective on data topics, amazing network of friendly and passionate folks
- Community. Access to experts. Collaboration on sticky problems,
- I joined because I care about open, FAIR access to scientific resources, and I want to be part of a community that tries to advance these priorities.
- I've led a variety of RDA working/interest groups and had success impacting the shape of data sharing among the publishing community. Connecting with researchers, users, and the community of data repositories has been very valuable.
- I joined RDA to participate in collaborative activities and to attend the meetings where such collaborations are facilitated.
- I joined because I entered an research technology leadership position at a university and wanted to ensure I was across new developments in research data management. I have found RDA valuable far beyond that, however - it's a great community and I continually learn a wide range of things.
- Information about global activities. Opportunities to collaborate with others in the field.
- Best global community dedicated to research data and connected topics.
- Insight into the developments in the national and international RDM community.
- To connect with other stakeholders across the world
- To take part in RDA activities
- Currently, RDA and other associations offer an opportunity to work with others, without fees.
- Started from the beginning, it's mostly about connecting to interesting people, often outside of immediate professional circles
- RDA is an excellent community driven organisation for research data matters. RDA is important!
- "to be part of and help form a global community of research data professionals.
- to help shape technologies, practices and policies on research data"
- Was asked to do more internationally.
- International communities of interest
- Community, network, info
- I wanted to keep track of what's happening globally in support of RDM, however, most of that knowledge comes via the plenary rather than being a member. My main reason for joining as a member was to get information sent to me rather than to just keep checking the website, and to get more involved and see if I could share what I'm working on with a bigger group. I now do this through being a co-chair and by leading working groups, but I would rather not pay for this privilege - it's a lot of work and I could probably carry out the same things just within my own country albeit with less impact.
- To learn from and contribute to the wider global data community.



RESEARCH DATA ALLIANCE

- to be part of the community and work in the community projects (working group, interest groups, etc.)
- I joined because it didn't cost anything and I believe in the mission of RDA.
- Community and vision are aligned with my professional goals.
- It's a useful community to be part of
- I joined RDA because I see good outputs, and it seems like there are good subgroups, and a lot of people I admire are involved with RDA. However, personally I have found it hard to get involved in RDA. Maybe I'm in the wrong groups, or maybe I don't have the right settings on my communication. But I rarely see RDA communication, other than about the plenary.
- RDA offers me the opportunity to work with like-minded colleagues from around the world. Without my connections at RDA I wouldn't be as comfortable with the pace and activities of my organization around data management.
- Interested.
- Contact with big data community
- Community engagement - seeing my problems from a different perspective, seeing international approaches and solutions, possible networking and collaborations. Importantly, an opportunity to attend meetings in exciting locations.
- When I have time, I enjoy participating in the innovative work of the working groups and the community of practice facilitated by interest groups
- A way to find my community.
- Place where you can have some broad, international collaboration
- Connect with like minded people
- I believe in the mission of the RDA and support HOW RDA achieves its mission through community building and conversation spaces. This is required for driving culture change.
- I helped set it up, and I still believe it provides a unique international coordination function, enabling volunteers to contribute to something larger than themselves. It offers me a ready-made community of folks who care about the same data goals as me and who are smarter than me in more areas than me!

Knowledge related feedback

- It helps me to get an idea of what others are working on in the field, prevents my organisation from duplicating work or working in a silo in terms of what we do.
- Joined right at the beginning to move the data world forward
- "Network, knowledge that I can use in my work. I am doing it for work.
- My employer may pay if a membership would become necessary."
- I thought it was a unique and highly important way to promote evidence based policy - we need data sharing cross disciplines, nations and sectors to encounter global challenges
- I work in data publishing so a lot of the discussions are relevant and I want to be a part of them provision of knowledge and discussion in a cross-disciplinary setting. to learn more about research data (education), to be involved
- I'm one half of a small non-profit, and we try to compete with scholarly metrics providers. We're in that weird little space between academia and the publishing industry, and joining RDA allows us to get a better understanding of what people do, and what people need.



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- As corporate data strategist / business developer - need wide and deep understanding on data governance, lifecycle management, roles, key considerations - all of it
- "Opportunity to participate in recommendation elaboration Updates on topics of interest Networking Material"
- We put the activities of our working group under the RDA umbrella, because it makes us somehow more organized. This particularly means: website; as well as pushing us 2 times a year to meet and move on with the activities of the WG.
- National RDA node offered interesting content for research data management. We ended up organising RDAPleanry, so I have attended some of the plenaries after our plenary. A lot of groups are really interesting, but I'm mainly following the discussion since the national open science work takes most of my time.
- RDA activities are relevant for my job activities.
- Networking in the WGs and IGs, opportunity for more participation.
- Participation in WG/IG at a formal level - I already talk to most of the community leaders at other venues
- knowledge exchange, coordination of efforts, communication
- Good baseline information, RDA provides a great start for new data scientists. Stay updated with the main technical discussions in data management.
- Kind of obligatory due to where I work.
- I work for a global data platform, and there are so few resources (standards, peer platforms, services) that are relevant for global use. RDA, along with its outputs, is one of these few globally-relevant resources, and also generally includes participation of the relevant important but non-global organizations.
- I joined because it is an active community promoting the ethos that I find necessary in the modern research environment and for the development of the world. I started to search for groups dealing with open data and FAIR and DMP. Now it is part of my job as a domain specialist in sensitive data.
- Networking, update on state-of-art in my field and related fields. Sometimes collaborating.
- Exchange or information especially because it covers many disciplines
- "- collaborate with my colleagues and people who makes similar things with research data architectures
 - evaluate where other world goes with RDM issues
 - find some new ideas for parctical RDM services
 - find some colleagues to discuss about services, technologies, data support services"
- Close to my interests and job responsibilities
- "I've been a member since 2013 what RDA has offered me has changed over time and there have been a number of years when I was not actively participating due to a change in job role when RDA was not relevant.
- I joined in order to participate in IG/WG that were directly relevant to my role, to inform my working practices and to form networks."
- Exchange, collaboration, Knowledge
- Specific topics that are relevant to me professionally. WG recommendations and participation in some of the communities (IGs).
- group work; support for running group work



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- I am actively involved in RDA groups.
- To join an open, international community to discuss open research and specific topics. To join different groups and share updates with the work I'm involved in.
- An organization to facilitate an interest group in biomedical data management and to work with other RDA interest groups in general data management issues.
- Primarily it is about being kept up to date with new and upcoming initiatives and developments in the community and, in principle, being able to contribute to working groups, although I never seem to actually have time to contribute much!
- I joined to be parts of various disciplinary working groups. RDA is a good forum for focus on data methodology, something that I find lacking in other larger conferences.
- To read what the Interest Groups talk about
- I work in Libraries. I have wanted to be connected to organizations like RDA for multiple reasons, mostly to see what the greater communities of practice are doing out there. Seeing the recommendations RDA makes, and some of its content, is why I wanted to join.
- I joined so I can learn more about research data and how other research professionals are dealing with them. However, I did not really take part in anything RDA offered.
- Access to community of similar people, knowledge and idea exchange, access to documents...
- The organization I am with in the Philippines generates research data and archives them itself. It also submits to international archives, but not consistently at 100%. Information about international development regarding research data is most welcome.
- Information Exchange, Insights, Participation, Drive things
- I started working at an RDM helpdesk (my background: researcher). RDA helps me to learn about the latest developments in the field, differences among countries and solutions in other countries. It gives me the opportunity to contribute and helps to join global forces and align measurements for RDM globally and among several stakeholders (researchers, governments, publishers, funders, librarians, IT staff, ...).
- Meeting experts from around the world and staying across cutting edge developments
- for alliance, updates and learning
- Updates, general interest in knowing what the community is doing.
- I joined to follow the discussion in different WGs of interest via subscription. The results were already useful to make decisions based on previous experiences. A good thing about RDA is that many disciplines come together and a wider view on specific topics is provided.
- As a new member it would be too early to sum the benefits. The registration was made early this year in the hope to collect relevant info and experience on RDA I might apply on my area of interest.
- I need to for my job
- As an academic librarian offering Research Support on data management, it is useful to be updated on the developments in the field
- A community that's leads the discussion about open science.
- Academic focus on data/metadata
- "Learn from others
- Work towards recommendations that can benefit FAIR research



RESEARCH DATA ALLIANCE

- IGs are great as longer-term centres of excellence/experience with WGs set up for specific tasks
- Major problem: too many parallel sessions at plenaries (too many groups)"
- Access to information exchange and initiatives related to data management.
- My job revolves around persistent identifiers - RDA provides communication channels and events related to PIDs
- Access to the experience and feedback of a larger community of practice, and a greater awareness of research data activities happening outside of the US. RDA also helps me expand my definition of "data professional" and thus exposes me to points of view I might not otherwise find.
- Networking, practical knowledge
- Global forum within which to develop data outputs I need for my research and which are only useful if developed and endorsed by my broader domain
- Since I have an administrative function at a university and we are implementing open science, this discussions are very important.
- I am interested in watching the progress of various working groups
- Currently, I am only reading the papers, guidelines etc. published by RDA. I'd like to attend a plenary meeting, but never had time.
- For a while, and today, data are an important (and very interesting) subject. I'm an university librarian, and I would (I need) to keep up for myself and for my users.
- I joined as I have an interest in my current employment in the long-term retention and management of research data. However, there doesn't seem to be much activity in the RDA in this area.
- To keep abreast of current developments
- Better ability to keep up with international developments in the field.
- information about data management and open science so that i can learn more about this topics
- Access to community and informative website/newsletters
- I joined as a way to keep myself up-to-date with the international research data landscape. It offers me a place to manage this from an official perspective.
- Insite to how things are done in the rest of the world. It broadens my horizon.
- RDA is critical to my work.
- Participation in WGs and IGs of interest, community discussions, networking
- It provides access to communities of practice, resources and expertise that are discussing a range of topics, problems and opportunities. There's something for everyone!
- I joined because I wanted to be part of a community that works together towards improving research data management practices and the services that sustain these - in a bottom-up manner, making sure that all voices are heard. In the beginning I was truly a novice, but was nevertheless able to meet and discuss with world experts in their fields - who treated me and my often quite primitive questions with the same respect and seriousness that they would afford their peers. Now after 5+ years, I have learned so much, and hopefully contributed at least a little bit towards a number of RDA outputs - and I hope that I have been able to repay this by acting in the same welcoming and inclusive manner to everyone I am working with in the RDA context.



RESEARCH DATA ALLIANCE

- I joined because it's a place where experts can come together to write recommendations for research data management and use. But the quality of the outputs and the discussion is far lower than I would expect. Compare with equivalent organisations like IETF. Most people seem to participate to learn.
- Important platform to develop standards and policies for sharing of research data.
- It helps me network with people in my field of work and keeps me up-to-date with the latest trends, technologies and solutions for research data management.
- I joined because RDA is a place where members can freely discuss topics that are of interest of a particular community. It gives me the opportunity to meet experts from different fields and countries and sets up a platform for discussion and publication of results obtained. These topics discussed in RDA are often not suitable for a specific research project because they are often very concrete and limited to a specific community.
- Networking with peer organizations and projects, participation in Interest and Working Groups, information about new developments for research data management
- Monitoring developments in the Research Data Management community
- Community with related interests. I am also a member of the International Society for Biocuration which charges a 40 euro fee. For other organizations membership depends on if am attending a conference and is paid by my org. ISB I pay myself.
- Keeps me current with issues I am still working on.
- To ensure my knowledge regarding research data management is up to date; it provides a great resource and community of practice for all things data management related.
- I was motivated by the request of someone in my community of having my standardization work run through an RDA process. I then joined and have been lurking in a number of IGs/WGs in order to have a better understanding of what RDA is doing.
- It is difficult to keep up to date with all the changes in the research data field and RDA is one route to monitoring discussions and initiatives in the area.
- Became part of RDA since I work within data curation field and current updates regarding various aspects of data curation standards/etc. are essential.
- I joined because of disciplinary alignment with my career and interests. I became further engaged when a mentor asked me to attend an RDA Plenary 3 co-located mtg in his stead. After that I was "hooked"
- I want to stay up to date on recent developments in the open data ecosystem.
- I'm currently a PhD candidate researching research & government funded data sharing. Being a member of the RDA allowed me to a) attend plenary (16 & 17), b) look at the activity of various working groups, c) keep apprised of activity through the mailing lists.
- I've only just joined, the reason being I think I can make a contribution and learn a lot.
- Relevant to my research interests.
- I work in the research data management sphere so RDA gives me access to current conversations around progressing all aspects of research data and a chance to influence those conversations.
- I'm researching about FAIR principles.
- I wanted to learn more about research data.
- Networking; implementable practices; keeps me attuned to current and emerging standards.



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- RDA activities and initiatives are directly related to my work supporting lifecycle research data management in a science agency. It's a place to share ideas and approaches, and to learn and be inspired by my colleagues around the world. It's also one of the few places where researchers and data managers/information professionals directly interact and collaborate to develop solutions and best practices.
- The RDA offers a community that shares concerns about the future of data preservation.
- I appreciate the opportunity to hear what data management practices people are doing around the world. I also like hearing what people are doing in different fields around data management.
- Collaborating with and learning from experts across all disciplines on the subject of research data management, sharing, and preservation.
- Someone suggested I join recently. Thus far I haven't really understood the benefits of this organization, but I'm sticking around to learn. So I would be willing to pay a little, but not a lot.
- RDA brings together significant contributors to current standards on scholarly data management, which is an important topic in my research.
- Connection to information. Look towards further contributions and interactions but have focused on other more local association efforts.
- Because, as a person working in Earth science informatics, the proceedings and outcomes of many RDA interest groups, working groups are of interest to me.
- The plenaries are amazing. I love the IG and WG model. I am looking forward to participating more in IG and WGs and getting things done.
- Want to keep updated on current trends on research data
- I joined because RDA is relevant to my professional role and provides connection to working groups, people, events, recommended practices, and information related to research data and data sharing.
- Access to strategic information about data policies, technologies and initiatives.
- I participate in several data groups. Within these groups the RDA functions as communication-infrastructure-as-a-service. This infrastructure for the most part can be obtained for free via google-groups. The RDA brand sounds cool. White papers can be hosted in any of our community's institutional repositories - or zenodo (and get a free DOI).
- Keeping up to date on RDA activities
- I'm interested in data. So, I am interested in many RDA topics. I went to and participated at early meetings that were held in person. I'm very interested.
- News on ongoing progress of interest and working groups; resources; engagement across education, government, and global entities.
- My research is strongly aligned with RDA's mission and I joined to learn more about existing work in the data access space.
- Professional development for research data management. It offers me access to more communities and information. I've been a member since I attended the 1st (?) plenary in Washington, DC but haven't attended one since. I'm not very active, but I do value the information I get from the group.



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- To track of major trends in the world of data-driven research, data management, data sharing, etc. as it is a direct part of my individual research and an indirect part of my administrative activity.
- I joined to see what was going on in RDA as an organization. So far it hasn't offered me much the one activity I tried to join had a fee.
- Joined to see how global colleagues are handling / working on community based solutions to common problems that are outside a specific subject domain.
- To stay abreast of developments/issues in this area.
- The groups are a good source for information and networking
- "I joined because it is a Professional Network Association, and it gives me access to vendors and products.
- Your organization gives information professionals access to information, and now you want to sell it as a commodity. Shame on you, shame on you,
- I would not join, and I would encourage my colleagues not to join RDA because information and knowledge sharing should be free. Charging a fee to disseminate knowledge is counterintuitive; Open Science is a movement designed to remove such barriers, and changing a fee adds barriers, like a paywall."
- The general topic of data interoperability is highly relevant to my job.
- The possibility to stay update
- I work with research data management and need to follow the developments in the field
- "- access to reseach data managment information and networks
 - knowledge base
 - kepping up to date
 - identify peers"
- To stay informed of research data management efforts on a global scale

Network related feedback

- network of expertise
- "Useful information, Networking opportunities, Adds weight to my profile as a RDM expert"
- As a data professional, RDA is THE PLACE TO BE to engage with others working to improve the research data landscape.
- Meeting the key data professionals from around the world, the networking opportunities.
- Joined to make connections with and learn from colleagues around the world working in similar areas. The RDA is great in terms of its structure and organisation, and the momentum is invigorating, too - feeds directly back into my day job. Thanks for all your hard work!
- Joined to make connections with and learn from colleagues around the world working in similar areas. The RDA is great in terms of its structure and organisation, and the momentum is invigorating, too - feeds directly back into my day job. Thanks for all your hard work!
- "networking after a professional detour and break, (re)enter the field of currently rapidly progressing infrastructure development in my domain"
- Joined to participate in RDA plenaries.
- Network of experts



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- I have just joined RDA and am trying to learn how I can contribute. However, I joined this organization as a personal contributor (it is not directly related to my work) which limits how much I can be involved.
- Networking & practical tools (and ability to contribute to the latter). Interacting with people I wouldn't normally have a chance to.
- It offers a network and access to the latest developments in the field
- I wandered into the RDA on a nearly random basis and turned up because someone said "Go to it - we'll cover your costs". I didn't have a plan. Now - I would say it's the fact that I get to meet and interact with colleagues, like I do with other conferences.
- Offers the opportunity to meet with people outside of my immediate discipline and to learn about shared problems and discuss potential solutions.
- networking and community
- "Connections to our like minded data sharing and software sharing individuals the world over
- Opportunities to work with these individuals on concrete problems at hand"
- It's difficult to separate the benefits to me as an individual and the benefits to my organisation. In both cases it allows us to achieve something in collaboration with others that we would struggle to achieve alone, or never even start. As a global organisation it allows us to communicate easily with people outside the more regional networks that we otherwise have and to understand what challenges and solutions are truly global and when regional/national/research domain issues become relevant.
- I joined the RDA because it is a unique forum the people involved in scientific data sharing
- I wish to support open data and meet other scientist with the same objective
- "networking
- scientific collaborations and discussions"
- Research data is of my professional interest and it is good to have a network of people who share similar interest for discussion, events and possible collaboration.
- Initially (when I first started working in the RDM space) I wanted to see what was happening internationally - I was an observer of various groups for a few years. When I changed roles into a management role, I became more involved in one or two groups and began attending Plenaries and contributing to activities, because this was part of my job to bring international perspective to Australia.
- a way to disseminate my ideas to a broad community
- Access to contacts and expertise
- Ability to engage with a diverse and committed community of knowledgeable and competent practitioners with an interest in and experience of managing and disseminating research data.
- I join for the networking, the opportunity to keep current with leading practices and new emerging work, and to have a venue for global discussions on issues (rather than national).
- I joined to be able to participate and learn from others. I have moved role within my organisation to a part where funding for attending meetings is more difficult and as I already belong to 2 chartered professional organisations and the UK RSE association, which I pay for myself, I don't think I can justify outlay for the RDA.
- "access to a wide community and to different approaches



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- new ideas and new horizons
- stimulation for my work"
- Ability to engage with a diverse and committed community of knowledgeable and competent practitioners with an interest in and experience of managing and disseminating research data.
- I joined for the networking and my interest to promote the RDA.
- I am co-chairing a WG and thus I have a main interest. It gives me the opportunity to collaborate with a number of researchers on the same field. We can develop together recommendations and best practices.
- It's more an opportunity to collaborate internationally. The plenary meeting just provides a set date range we all agree to set aside. The meeting content itself is less of a draw.
- I joined, because I'm working in research data management and the RDA as the main vehicle for international collaboration and networking.
- Networking, new developments.
- The strong international participation and a yearly F2F meeting.
- The strong international participation and a yearly F2F meeting.
- Networking towards knowledge in data sharing. Sharing of experiences.
- I'm not sure it offers me much at a practical level at all. I like the networking though.
- It's all about the community and networking, i.e. finding the right people in other countries working in the same area, so that we can solve some of our data problems.
- prestige and opportunities for contacts for collaborations
- I am involved in the national project to manage R&D data in the field of materials science. I believe the global scale collaboration for big-data infrastructure would provide us significantly improved R&D environment for novel materials design.
- connect to people of the same interest
- I first heard about the RDA in Dublin at the IDCC20 from other people who were members and from talks at the IDCC20. I was interested in joining when I saw how many relevant groups there were to my role and I was able to attend the RDA Plenary 15 because it was made freely available online. I then attended the RDA Plenary 16 (invited to talk) and RDA Plenary 17. The Interest and Working Groups have been a good way to network at the moment and find out what other institutions are doing.
- Networking, staying up-to-date with developments (mainly conferences)
- To collectively work on solutions to research data management challenges with experts internationally, and to learn from others.
- The opportunity to connect with the expertise that is combined in the coalition of RDA members and work together using that combined cognitive surplus!
- Most important exchange platform for cross-cutting topics in RD interoperability
- "Networking, learning, collaborating
- having the perspective of an institutional support service infrastructure."
- Network; update on efforts and drivers around data, particularly coming from data science; connect across disciplines and global regions I wouldn't otherwise; some of the outputs are useful in considering approaches in my discipline.
- It was recommended to me as a way to potentially get involved with other data scientists, but it's been so big and confusing I've never really gotten into it.



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- I'm a member of the profession and it's a good way to connect with others in my field and current trends.
- RDA provides a unique exchange and opportunity to establish common goals and strategies for solutions specific to Research Data focused areas. The international aspect supports scientific collaboration and it offers innovation and partnerships which are otherwise difficult to achieve, i.e. constraints within organization or domain specific organizations
- It offers a community and opportunities to collaborate internationally.
- Professional networking and learning opportunities
- Access and opportunities to engage with a community of experts, create and share new developments and experiences, very valuable for networking and professional development!
- For the evolving expertise the network seemed to offer.
- Opportunity to create a stronger community and useful outcomes for data community.
- "to build networks and connections to participate in IG/WG contribute to research data community"

Other feedback

- RDA is obviously good, only there is a huge difference in funding levels at different countries.
- Work with RDA is a part of my job.
- "RDA is based on members' work, it would be not really fair to make them pay too.
- A solution is to make institutions pay."
- I have wanted to be more involved with the working groups, but they are very focused on the work that happens at plenaries. I am unable to travel outside the US and have my organization pay for the trip, therefore, I have not been able to attend non-virtual plenaries. I have focused my time in other organizations that do not rely on attendance at the plenaries to accomplish tasks.
- I have growing doubts about RDA. Many individual IGs and WGs are imbalanced, not inclusive, or poorly attended relative to the scope of their stated mission. Many are generating outputs that are not informed by balanced or inclusive input and thus, I am hearing objections to some RDA recommendations.
- "Initially, I joined because my work responsibilities were navigating into the data management and sharing domain. As it turned out, that didn't happen. I stayed a member because I was interested in keeping up with RDA's activities (I support its mission and goals) even though it was not currently part of my work.
- The work tide is shifting again and it appears that I may become more involved in semantic interoperability issues and being part of RDA will be useful."
- Strongly believe in this organisations, it's mission and values
- I joined in order to volunteer my time and effort towards breaking down barriers to data sharing, for the betterment of the global research enterprise.
- "I joined in the run-up to the Berlin Plenary. I've not been involved much since then,
- as discipline-specific standards concern me a lot more (and of course I'm severely unhappy with the widespread use of proprietary, non-standard services in RDA processes -- most shockingly perhaps Google docs)."
- When I joined around Plenary 2, it was a novel data-focused organization that was not bound to any research domain. It initially offered "pioneering" opportunities for



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participation in IGs/WGs, but the range of activities, groups, outputs, governance matters, etc. quickly mushroomed in later years to become a rather "high maintenance" membership.

- Member since the start of the RDA in the understanding that it would be a temporary movement. Institutionilising RDA is a bad idea. Rethink how the legacy of RDA should be sustained, and not necessarily going on as usual.
- Because I thought that it would be for science. Up till now I am not convinced. But I hope that something useful could arise.
- Joined out of curiosity (since it was free, I wanted to find out more about what it is all about, the work of the different groups etc.). Now I have been a member for several years, and I see there is so much interesting stuff going on, but I have so little time... so the POTENTIAL benefit is huge (if I had the time to follow up on everything I'm interested in), but realistically speaking, the ACTUAL benefit is not very much.
- At present, I pay membership fees of \$100 or so to my primary research societies, such as AAAS, ACM, ASIST, and less to a couple of professional societies. These three memberships include subscriptions to scholarly journals. RDA does important professional work in convening communities around data management practices and I want to support that work. However, we all are limited in the number of personal subscriptions we are willing to pay for organizations in our areas of interest.
- I want to contribute to the work. It offers a lot of opportunities to do more work. And frankly, I'm not all that interested in paying for that privilege.
- If I had had to pay to become a member, I might have never registered, RDA being of relevance but not at the core of my research work. I do see value in RDA's work, hence I'm supportive of a small membership fee, even though this results in paying to do work. However, infrastructural organizations like RDA are hard to be funded externally, so I understand the rationale. I do think it will result in a shake-out of members.
- No particular reason, I registered years ago and suddenly was a 'member'
- I am an individual member of RDA to search for collaboration and sharing efforts to build white papers and so on. But it is from a personal perspective, at the institutional level they still do not see the interest that this supposes.
- I joined initially to present at a conference, but I would consider continuing my membership. I pay more for other organizations as they are more relevant to my day job.
- Curiosity. Many other colleagues supporting research data at other institutions were joining when RDA was launched. However, I've only been minimally involved and haven't been able to regularly attend Plenary meetings.
- Because in 2013 we definitely needed RDA... there wasn't enough awareness of the challenges, issues, etc and RDA provided a forum for those who were engaged in the challenges of research data to meet, collaborate, learn, etc.
- "Honestly - during the pandemic RDA has offered me more than it ever did before - having the RDA Plenary online was the first time I could ever ""attend"" an RDA Plenary.
- RDA is so big and I have some many others things to do - I do not realize what RDA is doing until a white paper is published and asking for community feedback.
- Why did I join --- I am a steering committee member of the USDA group called AgBioData. I work for a research database and wanted to learn more about metadata and more associated with managing a research database."



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- I joined in order to attend a local RDA plenary. I am usually not able to travel abroad to attend plenaries, although I would like to be more involved. I think the way forward will be to offer virtual plenaries, in addition to some in person events.
- Very little, frankly
- Honestly I'm still trying to figure this out. I joined last year because my research relies on harmonizing data from multiple sources to feed into models and this seems relevant to RDA. In practice I've found RDA confusing to navigate and difficult to figure out how to participate in.
- I haven't been able to figure out how to be involved in RDA even though I've been a "member" for over 5 years. I find the website hard to use.

7. Do you have any other views about a possible individual RDA membership fee?

Cost related responses

- If a fee is charged, then the organisation needs to do its part to keep costs down. As we've seen recently, online meetings can often be used to avoid travel costs etc. So it would be ideal to see this behavior being adopted.
- "I am currently a ""passive member"" and just attended the first plenary. My RDA ""membership"" is more of symbolic nature and therefore I'd have no reason to pay for a membership and probably would close my account if an individual fee would be introduced.
- I think maybe you should separate between passive and active members, so that e.g. only active members may vote in elections or join WGs officially. At least if you want to keep track of the ""silent majority"" (which I assume exists, including me) that might just attend plenaries to get updated on results and is interested in RDA outputs."
- I see RDA membership as a beneficial thing, but I would need to weigh up those benefits against the financial burden introduced by the membership fee. The final decision would depend on the size of the fee and the possibility of receiving support from my organisation.
- "As a tiny non-profit, we were priced out of previous RDA plenaries, because RDA fees are usually significantly higher than registration fees for other conferences we attend. I was able to attend this year thanks to the support of RDA France.
- I'm truly worried that high membership fees (and by high I mean anything higher than \$50/year, including a discount for the plenaries) would turn RDA into yet another millionaires' club.
- I know that funds don't appear out of thin air, we all do. I don't *want* to leave RDA if you introduce individual membership fees, but I might have to.
- See also the PID community's scoping study re: setting up a PID Federation: <https://zenodo.org/record/4059557>. "So much of Scholarly Communications today is based on being able to pay to have a voice and to take part. And otherwise you are just picking up the dregs of the people that are building the system, because they can afford to be paying it and building it in their image.""
- "I would look at other organisations, like EGU or AGU with individual annual membership fees of 20-60 USD/Euro which includes a reduced fee for participating the meetings. The latter is an accepted argument for the reimbursement of the membership fee by institutions .. ""the reduction as a member is more than the individual membership fee""...



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- however, up to now, you need to be RDA member anyway for attending the plenaries..."
 - "I wonder if my employer (my manager) would agree to pay that fee.
 - Actually, I cannot tell which fee amount my employer would consider as acceptable."
 - I would have to clarify if the membership fee is covered by my employer (university). If not, I would not be able to pay it from my private income (i.e. would have to leave RDA). It might be a better option to charge a higher registration fee for the meetings, as this usually gets reimbursed by the university.
 - "Keep it low even for richer countries since for tax reasons we are meant to pay out of our own pocket.
 - But also lobby the orgs that gave us seed money to continue to sponsor RDA."
 - I understand the necessity for sustainability of RDA. I also believe that with membership fees, RDA will have a more dedicated group of individuals to do the work of RDA. But until the plenaries either move towards a hybrid in-person/online model, or rotate the plenaries regularly outside of Europe, widespread international participation will not be possible. In addition, my organization does not pay for professional organization membership fees, so I will need to pay the RDA membership fee out of pocket. I do not join organizations that required fees of \$200 USD or more for this reason.
 - It might be nice to do a sliding scale where you pay what you can. Students and folks from lower income or not supportive employers might not be able to afford a fee so it's nice to keep the fee low to maintain their participation. I'd recommend that you set a suggested rate with an option to give what you can
 - I belong to multiple professional societies. Some of these are \$50 USD a year, some of them are over \$250 USD. There is a lot to keep up with, and I do not have unlimited funds for all of them. Many of the groups I am in are Free. I am considering a major revamp of the societies I am in, dropping several as I transition in my career (but still in libraries). I am not as active in RDA as I am in most others, but if RDA were to institute a membership fee it is likely I would drop it.
 - "question 4: depends on the amount of the fee
 - question 5, second part: per society or all together? I clicked the average -> in €: 20+60+80"
 - "I would not have paid a membership fee to join when I was just an observer (unless I was going to RDA Plenary and got a discount). I would expect my job to pay for my membership now, as it's an important part of my role (but I don't know if they will).
-
- I think it would be a shame if white papers etc were only available to paid members - this goes against open data / open access principles. But perhaps there could be an embargo on these for a while."
 - In question "4. If an individual membership fee were required for RDA participation, would you leave the RDA?" a choice for "Undecided" might have been useful, and/or "it would depend on the annual fee." And in question 5., whether that's the highest or lowest annual fee for those who are members of more than one soc./assoc. - or ask about both highest and lowest.
 - In question 4 - my actual answer is, it depends on how much the fee is, and whether my employer would be willing to pay



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- In Brazil we have to pay 5 times higher considering a fee in US dollar. It is quite expensive for us even \$50, unfortunately.
- I understand and agree with why this is necessary. Because I am less of a contributor and more of a watcher of the RDA activity I probably wouldn't register until I 'needed to' ie. to participate in a working group or attend an event
- I would not pay an individual membership fee as membership of other organisations (Australian Society of Archivists and Digital Preservation Coalition) is more relevant to my current employment.
- Currently I do not have the funds to pay an additional membership fee so I would have to prioritise and likely leave the RDA
- I certainly acknowledge the idea of individual RDA membership fee. However I would probably leave the RDA if the membership fee is too high.
- I'm not sure if I'd be willing to pay an individual fee, if it was higher than \$50 I'd definitely not.
- "What we need is to broaden the base of membership, also attracting researchers and practitioners, not just ""experts"" from different arenas. Already now many WGs and IGs are facing difficulties in attracting enough _active_ membership who actually work towards fulfilling goals, and not just join occasionally to see what's happening. With a fee system in place, I'm afraid that part of the ""hard workers"" will drop off, especially if they are faced with having to pay themselves rather than having their employers cover the cost.
- Finally, a comment on question 4 above: you should have included the option ""possibly"", as my decision would certainly be depending on the size of the fee! (I.e. for me it's not a question of principle, but of cost, as I will have to pay out of my own pocket.)"
- I suspect that RDA would lose a large number of members - not just from LMIC countries, but those in particular. In Germany, there are institutions (such as my former) which can reimburse conference fees, but not membership fees. Thus, the regular membership fee of EGU is just 20 EUR: <https://www.egu.eu/membership/apply/>
- I think the individual RDA membership fee should be less than \$50, perhaps in a range of \$25-35 if financially feasible for RDA.
- Problem is that individual membership fees cannot be paid by employer, in the same way as conference participation fees, due to different taxation rules.
- "I am a member of 4 societies
 - AAAS = 80 dollars per year (and you get a weekly subscription to Science, plus lots of newsletters including major scientific news from all over the world, this one once a week)
 - IEEE = 250 dollars per year with access to its digital library of thousands of papers, and discounts in registration in events
 - ACM = 100 dollars per year, basically the same kind of services as IEEE and same kinds of discounts
 - the Brazilian Computer Society - roughly 30 dollars/year, with 20% in discounts in its events (average 40 conferences and workshops per year)
- RDA value is more intangible, but considering the above it cannot charge more than USD50 a year, in particular considering LMIC, where people would pay out of their pockets (as I do away all of my memberships)."



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- I'd really rather not see a fee introduced. I answered that I would leave RDA if a fee were to be introduced, but it would depend on how much it was. What will our potential fees be used for? What costs does RDA have?
- If it hadn't been for the RDA15 Plenary being free and online it is unlikely that I would have got involved with the RDA. I have a very limited training budget so can usually only travel to a Conference once a year at most and only within Europe. It is therefore likely that I will not be able to engage once the RDA goes back to in-person events. It is also unlikely that I would be able to get my organisation to pay for a membership fee, which means I would have to fund it myself. If the cost was low than that would be ok but I already pay for a number of other memberships.
- "In my opinion a pay-subscription would lose the philosophy of the RDA, but could have a free subscription and a paid one. The pay option, it would have advantages to carry out courses, seminars, etc. The free subscription could be to participate in working-groups and access to the continguts dels treball groups.
- I am subscribed to another professional association at the regional level, which I pay as an individual user, because it serves to practice my profession.
- At an institutional level, we are member of several networks, one of them a network of national libraries (specialized and universitites libraries, free of charge) where we are working on research data management issues. Besides, at European and international level we are member of a specialized library networks with a low cost of \$ 50 per year with access to services such as library loans that are highly valued for scientists but we also have training sessions, conferences and so on, and we also have open access and data repositories, and open and research data management is an effort. Among many other subscriptions that the institution already has, what I mean is that in my case, it is very difficult that the institution wants to invest in a ""paid subscription"" if clear benefits are not obtained."
- For some, the fee might be reimbursed by the employer. That is something to consider in certain part of the world. A sliding scale membership might be also helpful.
- I'm not really getting much out of membership, which is why I indicated I would leave if a fee was introduced.
- "Fees should employ a progressive sliding scale, so that those of us who make more income at our jobs, pay higher membership dues, as a percentage of our incomes. In this way those that make more underwrite the lower fees from those who make less, and therefore pay less.
- Those that pay higher dues should NOT get perks. This is not a loyalty scheme at a casino or store."
- I understand you need funds but I do not get enough from RDA to pay more than \$50 a year for a membership. I do not have funding to attend RDA Plenary in different locations - but I would pay a \$10-25 fee to attend a virtual RDA plenary.
- "My only struggle with individual dues above \$100 is that it's becoming increasingly difficult to manage my multiple professional memberships, especially as most of them are now reaching the \$150+ range. There is some expectation that one is engaged in these professional orgs for career growth and advancement, and it's therefore a difficult decision to discontinue those memberships, despite increasingly daunting fees.



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- I saw that 'not applicable' was a response option for the question regarding whether or not I would remain if an individual membership fee were required. That option confuses me a bit, because I don't know if an underlying assumption here is that an organizational membership is being considered that might cover multiple employees of that organization. Organizational memberships could be a way to get broader participation from stakeholders. I'm certainly willing to join as an individual member if the fee is relatively affordable, preferably <\$100 US."
- Given that professional development funds, when available, generally do not cover memberships, all memberships are out of pocket. Given that the memberships for the major disciplinary societies I am basically required to have for my profession are prohibitively expensive, I have to be very judicious about adding additional memberships. I would imagine that corporate or institutional sponsorships or partnerships may be less sustainable, but might be more just than putting the sustainability of the organization on the shoulders of individual members.
- I think this would be a good way to work towards long term financial stability, however I am concerned that many wealthy institutions can sponsor participation for employees while individuals with less institutional support will be unduly burdened.
- Needs to stay competitive with other memberships. Some of us belong to two, three and even four others that are related.
- To me it doesn't seem appropriate to charge a membership fee when so much of what RDA does is volunteer service, which is quite unlike other professional orgs I'm part of/familiar with. It seems odd to ask me to pay my own money to be able to volunteer my time.
- I have appreciated being part of this organization without a fee. I think it's probably good to implement a modest fee. \$50 would have my ready support, but obviously I would go as high as \$200 if there was strong support for people from low and middle income countries.
- I want to support RDA because it's such a great association. But I belong to several other associations already, with dues ranging from \$40 to \$200. I've been cutting the more expensive ones even when I get good information from them, because there are so many associations and societies to belong to. RDA is confusing and hard to engage with if you're not being guided by an existing insider, so, I have found it hard to get involved with RDA activities. I would pay a modest (definitely not more than \$100 USD) for RDA just to support their good work on guidance and advocacy. But I can't afford a larger fee simply to support RDA for the principle of supportiveness, when I have 7 other associations I'm paying dues for that are also doing good work and are more directly impactful to me.
- Potential have a fee paying and non fee paying category with the fee-paying category having benefits such as reduced conference fees, access to certain content.
- Free membership made it easy to sign up and get involved. I probably would not have joined if there was a cost. I understand the need for funding, but want the cost for individuals to be as low as possible. For an organization that thrives on community involvement, having many people pay a small amount is much better than having a few people pay a large amount. Potentially offer "first year free" for newcomers to get involved easily, and a very low renewal cost thereafter.
- I'm a member of the American Association of Geographers which has a sliding membership fee based upon how much money you earn in your job (if US-based) and whether or not you



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have student status (US/global location). It also has its own price points for folks located in the Global South/lower income countries.

- Being retired, I am still trying to stay in touch with people and stay up on topics. However, I cannot pay fees anymore.
- I think it's a really great idea! I'm torn because it's tough to spend my limited research money on this as an expense, but I also don't have a ton of extra personal money and I already spend too much of my own money per year on work-related expenses.
- For question 5, regarding the membership fee for other societies, I belong to more than one and the fees range from 50.00 USD to 250.00 USD.
- I respect that a membership fee may be necessary for sustainability. I might re-up my membership periodically if there were a fee, but I would be less likely to be a consistent member (i.e. I would likely let my membership lapse periodically due to financial need).
- registered accounts =/ active members... while I want to see RDA be sustainable I also have not derived enough benefit to pay for it out of pocket as my employer cannot pay for professional membership fees.

Inclusivity responses

- "ad #3 ""Exclusive invitations to events, tutorials, training, etc. Access to dedicated content (for example, white papers, etc.)"" This seems to be quite contrary to the idea of RDA, to be honest >:-("
 - The most important approach we can make to individual membership fees is that we have a sliding scale, based on income. And because RDA is a global organization, we also need to take into account the standard of living or wage scale by region or country. Folks in low income countries should not be inconvenienced or prevented from joining. That means that folks from wealthier countries should plan on subsidizing lower income members, and RDA needs to be up front about that, as key diversity, equity, and inclusivity goal.
 - The fee would definitely need to be tailored to the individual.
 - I think it is necessary and I can afford it. I am in favour but would like to make sure that measures are in place to include those who can't afford it.
 - "Charging membership fees is ok BUT it's essential that low and middle income countries, grad researchers, etc are not pushed away as a result. One of the best things about RDA is about how welcoming the community is, beyond even it's philosophical/intellectual goals. That is, you would not want membership fees to work against the guiding principles of the organisation.
-
- So, on the one hand charging membership can generate income, but simultaneously it creates a lot of overhead on what might otherwise be a more streamlined enterprise. I would be happy to pay, but given how much work members put into IGs/WGs, the 'pay to play' model is a bit odd, esp as the plenary is not a typical conference. Therefore, I would want something in exchange, but again, this just creates more work for everyone involved!"
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- That would definitely kill the dynamic within the youngest of our (potential) members, unable to have an institution covering the fees. Plenaries are already expensive, and I'm pretty sure a survey would show that only the members able to have the fees covered by their institutions are able to take part.
- "I believe it will negatively impact participation and the overall work / climate of the RDA - not just because of the financial barrier but also due to the additional organisational barrier - whatever method is used - when payment is taken it will be an additional step - at the very least it should not be linked to signing up and initial access to RDA

- I wonder if an individual membership model similar to the indie promisory payments system might be worth considering? e.g. the ""Pay what you want"" Humble Bundle (<https://www.humblebundle.com/about>) - even adopting access to different tiers - co-chair / IG - WG formation depending on payment?
- Overall I believe organisations, preferably at the national funder level, should provide sustainability for RDA but if individual fees are introduced they should be discretionary and member led"
- justified if utilized to enable participation of young scientists and scientists from low income countries
- Tiered fee system, exclude low-income members.
- The RDA is a very open community, and it is important that the organization remains open and inclusive, even if individual membership fees should be necessary.
- It is important that the fee does not create a block for access from lower and middle income countries or income of individual members (in case one has to pay out of their own pocket) It is also important that the fee does not create Tiers between members, but rather act as an opportunity for those who can contribute to do so.
- "Couple of views and thoughts:
 - I can afford individual membership fee 0-200\$/y (but I'm not sure if I'm willing to pay some)
 - I do not have any possibility to negotiate with my employer if they are willing to pay this (basically, they are not because this is individual feel)
 - If there will be an individual fee system, it should not divide community in two parts (those who are paying and those who are not)
 - Have you thought about volunteer fee? (i.e. Support Memberships); You can get all community possibilities and benefits even if you are paying or not, but if you pay

some sum you can get fancy RDA T-shirt (if you pay enough) or pin or just a friendly letter for Christmas from the secretary general or something like this. Some organisations use this kind of approach. (It is near of donation approach, but...)"

- If you implement this it should be scalable and also offer reductions for anyone that would need it (unemployed / no financial support from their institute etc).
- "It would be nice to have incentives for students and early career professionals as prizes (for poster, lightning talks or even better - incentives for innovative ideas) that waive payment for a certain period of time FUNding Friday from ESIP is a nice idea that can be adapted"
- As a student from a LMIC, even a \$50 fee would be too high.
- I think the membership fee would have to be low to encourage self-funding and low-income country participation.
- "My concern is that the introduction of a fee will significantly impact the RDA's reach and inclusiveness, and therefore that's the RDA role in this discourse qill necessarily change.
- I know this is a difficult problem, but I would be weary..."
- I'd like to see any fees be very low (or non-existent) for students and professionals from under-represented countries.
- I do not like it, because then it seems to be an exclusive "club". Moreover, I am a member because I am working in this field. But I don't think that my employer (a university) would pay my membership, or even that of 5 colleagues. So I would have to pay it privately.
- The question "4. If an individual membership fee were required for RDA participation, would you leave the RDA?" doesn't make much sense. If the fee will be 50USD I will probably stay, if it is more I will probably leave. (2) It would be good to have a free (or very cheap) trial membership (one year? six months?) so people can explore and then decide whether they want to become an actual (paying) member. (3) I think it is VERY important that people who don't have access to funds for this (or only very limited access) can benefit from a reduced fee (students; unemployed (between jobs); members from low/middle income countries; but also anybody else who due to personal circumstances cannot pay the full fee at a given moment).
- "How much I'd be prepared to pay would vary depending on the additional benefits available.
- Paying for membership is better than advertising. :)
- I do want to make sure that membership is still viable for people from lower income countries/communities.
- I'd be happy to pay extra or to sponsor/contribute to a membership for someone who had less ability to pay."
- The membership fee should not exclude people with lower income.
- I'm really not keen on this, since most of us are devoting our personal time and energy already to these working groups. And then to add basically then pay to do so! My organization doesn't cover these sort of professional memberships, and so this would be my own personal cost. Plus, I do most of my involvements on my own time. This could be a really huge deterrent to get new members, or members from less represented regions.
- How about individual membership is free, and you ask every member to make a voluntary contribution (you could suggest various different levels . This would keep the Alliance open to everyone not matter what their financial circumstances. Wikipedia uses a similar model.



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- If there is one, it must be affordable - perhaps variable depending on country and career status. But I think that a community organization that really tries to impact and bring in the world shouldn't put up roadblocks that prevent people from joining in
- I'm really concerned about accessibility to the org by those who can't afford a membership fee. Would love any ideas for membership "scholarships" / funding for those folks.
- Be very careful how this is implemented. As I mentioned above, it would need to find a way to preserve the Openness and Sharing aspects that are so central to RDA.
- I would strongly discourage making white papers and tutorials anything but open access.
- It will significantly decrease interest/number of members
- I think it is reasonable to have a membership fee, although coming from the US, pay to participate is a common model, I think that keeping the cost at a nominal level, and offering for support when the fees are difficult for participation, i.e. perhaps have a lottery or something such that people which can not pay for the membership can stay involved. It would not be good to be exclusive organization, I very much believe RDA should continue to be inclusive and grassroots supporting.
- Access to white papers and other RDA products would be counterproductive to getting wider community agreement on the RDA work.
- Important to keep the fees low, to secure access / involvement by all interested professionals and researchers (otherwise it may be only those in management positions).
- "Your organization gives information professionals access to information, and now you want to sell it as a commodity. Shame on you, shame on you,
- I would not join, and I would encourage my colleagues not to join RDA because information and knowledge sharing should be free. Charging a fee to disseminate knowledge is counterintuitive; Open Science is a movement designed to remove such barriers, and changing a fee adds barriers, like a paywall."
- it is unlikely that my institution would pay the membership fee as there are strict rules around payment of membership fess so it would have to be met personally, you have suggested reduced fee for LMICs and students are you considering different tiers of fees for other category of individual membership e.g. ECR etc?

Network related responses

- I am afraid it would make clear that most of the 11500 people currently members only "visited once". So, it should not be the first thing needed if people want to become members of the groups, because if we lose all of those people in the WGs we may lose the image that RDA represents a broad group of stakeholders world-wide.
- Most professional memberships support a progression ladder which is exclusive and puts individuals at the mercy of their institutions. RDA was different and I will miss it.
- We should think of RDA as a professional society for research data practitioners. I think almost all professional societies have membership fees.
- Our WG joined the RDA umbrella to make us somehow more organized (website & 'forced' meetings of the WG two times a year). More probably than not, an individual fee would mean for us to continue the work outside of RDA (setting up a website at one of our partners and organize our meetings as a satellite of some other conferences).
- I would be able to claim this back as part of my day job.



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- The number of members will probably decrease, but those who are already working in groups and find the work useful, will pay and continue working with RDA.
- In my view RDA is very it technician orientated. Make more offers towards the librarians, as it seems they are a largely seperate world with very similar topics.

Openness related responses

- I think closing access to RDA products, such as reports or white papers, would be counterproductive.
- I am not sure if RDA would not lose a lot of members, especially researchers, for who it might be complicated to get their membership fees reimbursed. I am a bit in doubt, if there are a lot of people who would like to pay the membership fee out of their own pocket. Also getting new members on board might be more complicated if the content and the possibilities to cooperate are behind a paywall.
- As this is not related to my employment any membership fee (not the \$50 the survey forced me to select) would be paid personally by me and so any fee would be outside my ability to pay. I cannot afford to attend conferences either. I believe in the values of RDA so I hope that by being a member I can find others ways to contribute to the community.
- We are working for open science, in my opinion, if there is closed access for dedicate content only for members, this would be the opposite to open
- "1. ""restricting access to dedicated content"" to members only is in contradiction to RDA's purpose. Outputs and products should continue to remain openly available to all.
- 2. Question: Would people have to be a member in order to participate in the IGs and WGs? That's not clear to me. We hosted our first BoF and are trying to get our discipline community more involved in RDA. The challenge is many of those researchers, informaticians, etc. have their own societies/associations that they are members of and the ability/willingness for them to pay, yet another, membership fee is likely not going to happen. If they could still participate, without being a member that would be very helpful.
- 3. Perhaps stipulate if you want to co-chair, submit a poster, etc. you have to be a member.
- 4. In looking at how other community-driven organizations are funded (e.g., ESIP, CGIAR), they rely solely on organizational sponsors. Especially with ESIP (<https://www.esipfed.org/partners>) it has been helpful having organizational sponsors because that 'top level' endorsement supports staff time working on RDA products and helps facilitate adoption. Many organizations currently benefit from the work that their staff do for free at RDA. Frankly, they should be contributing in my opinion.
- 5. ""exclusive invitations"" - would suggest reduced fee. If there is a sufficient gap between the member and non-member fees, that will prompt people to consider membership (as long as it's a reasonable amount <\$200).
- 6. I support a reduced fee for students and LMICs."

Organisation related responses

- Reach out to various organisations that by becoming paying members could get access to RDA member competencies and expert advice - we can mobilize a significant amount of expertise within a short time in very diverse fields. Tis is a benefit we could offer to externals
- Since I would like my organisation to pay the fee for me, a model with organisational membership that includes a number of individuals would probably be better for me.



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- "I am trying to encourage my organisation to be a institutional member. Including some individual memberships in that fee would help.
- Also, while we are a large organisation (by your employee numbers) there are only a couple of people who are RDA members and interested in research data. this is making it hard to persuade people about the value for money."
- "1) For corporations: Do Not tie the corporate membership fee to its turnover. It kills the interest / possibility for Co's to join. Keep it on personal membership level as planned
- 2) Consider co-operation with Analyst / Consultancy sector who bridge the academic / business worlds - there's massive interest towards data topics. They could be interested in co-development raising the value and visibility of RDA - for them the co-op could offer insights, new ways of thinking / perspectives, even the mere listing of topic handled could interest them (Gartner, McKinsey, Accenture, etc etc). Co-op could produce joint papers, webinars etc with income to RDA as well."
- I am active in RDA as part of my function (and projects I am involved in). This is the case for a lot of my colleagues. I consider having access to RDA activities part of my job. So RDA membership issues will also be a matter of my and my employer (I hope you understand what I mean). I am not sure if I would pay a membership fee on my own account.
- Since I think many people are involved with RDA through their work and institutes are not willing to pay the member fee, I think RDA might lose some people by addressing a fee. It is similar to for example EOSC and would be silly to have a fee. Other professional societies I am involved are small and local and something you don't do while working, but rather on your spare time. There should be rather institutional fees (if fees are needed) than individual. No one wants to pay to do their work.
- It would be good to make it possible that fees are paid by organizations. Like for a researcher sometime University can pay the membership fee.
- For me it seems fair to ask for this as the work the RDA is doing is so valuable and picked up by so many projects and initiatives, though I should prefer to convince my organisation to join instead.
- I am not a member yet, but wanted to become one. I am already a member of RDA Germany. A membership fee would be an issue for me as it is very complicated to have it reimbursed by the university. It would be much easier to have a higher fee paid for plenary attendance. I would be willing to have a small fee paid myself, but it should be rather symbolic (20, maximally 30\$/year). If a majority of 11.000 members paid this, this would still be substantial compared to the current budget. I also wonder if acquiring more institutional members is not a much better strategy, given the amount of effort one needs to invest in collecting 10.000 individual fees from all over the world. Lastly, if an individual fee it were to be introduced, I would favor - in the long term - a scheme where national RDA chapters receive a fixed share so that one does not have to deal with several fees.
- An institutional membership would be more appealing
- Rather than individual membership, maybe can consider institutional membership?
- "Please note that in Hungary country-wide professional associations have a yearly membership fee of ca. 10 USD. I understand it is hard to compare a small-country association with RDA, still it might be a too high jump for people from these countries.



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- It would be also great to provide possibility for institutional membership fee as in many other cases."
- I think it would become a priority with our research support staff at our university to be members so that we will have the fees covered by our budgets.
- I think the fee should definitely be institutional, not individual. The bureaucratic hassle of individual fees is much higher both for RDA and the members. The institutional fee could be a few hundred dollars per year.
- Fees should be paid by the employer not the individual.
- "Most individual members are employed by an organization. It would be better to engage the organization in a new proposition considering how the RDA legacy can better be framed (if necessary). Other not employed members are mostly not in a financial position to pay a membership fee.
- RDA was in the beginning n regarded as a temporary movement to promote awareness and get things changed. It is a bad idea to go on as usual. Have a discussion what would be the best strategy from now on and consider if any organization would be required. Perhaps becoming part of a standards promoting cooperation would be best. For example <https://www.sae-itc.com>"
- "It is difficult to set this at the right level to ensure even participation, both world-wide and within countries. Have you also considered organisational/individual membership where an organisation can purchase a number of ""individual"" members?"
- For those not based in the US, it is important that the person applying doesn't have large charges for paying in a foreign currency (although as a worldwide organisation this may be impossible to achieve)
- Also the cost of collection shouldn't outweigh the amount raised!"
- I would hope that my employer would pay it so bundled memberships for institutions would be helpful
- How about institution fees?
- "Individuals are already contributing on pro bono basis with their IP and time to IGs and WGs and introducing membership fees for participation could create a barrier for broader participation. I think research performing organizations - those who contribute input to RDA activities and adopt the results - should be the ones tasks to support the work of RDA. In the current model however there is no clear benefit for members of funding organizations, this should be evolved to create an incentive for organization to become a funder.
- I suggest looking at the IETF funding model in case this was not already considered."
- See above. Consider a tiered personal membership, combined with institutional memberships whereby my university might subscribe to series of journals or white papers, for example.
- "It's a bad idea. IETF doesn't have one and functions well without.
- Sustainable RDA financing should be based on cost recovery from i) organisational support and ii) returns from essential service initiatives based on RDA recommendations."
- What about institutional memberships?
- "My other (individual) professional membership gives me something personal and is more about my own career and personal development. RDA doesn't really give this kind of personal benefit and is much more production focused - working together to help move



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RDM forwards globally. I'm donating my (mainly work) time and efforts to something, for which I would be strongly against paying for as an individual. However, I could imagine that the benefit for my employer of being part of this work would make it interesting for them to consider an organisational contribution based on the number of people involved, which gave a discount on other paid services (plenary, events, etc).

- At the moment, the mechanisms in place mean you can claim a tax discount on individual membership of professional associations, but your employer won't refund them."
- Institutional membership should also be considered, as there are repositories/data archives that may be interested in institutional membership options.
- "I think it is fine. I've been active in the W3C for years as a small tech business owner. You could have individual membership fees (\$50 or \$100), small business and government agency memberships (I think W3C annual fee is \$8k), and then the higher end of town. In the case of the RDA, I imagine that is the big STM publishers. The publishers derive considerable value (I suspect having worked with them in the past), so charging them should definitely be part of the bus dev model!
- PS. You run an excellent, professional organization. I hope that I can remain connected -- extremely important work and meticulously executed. I love your 'big tent' approach to inclusivity. Very well done. Give yourselves a big pat on the back :-))"
- My answers are based on the assumption my employer would pay for the membership and I think I could justify the amounts specified in terms of budget allocation. It would be interesting to know if you are considering an organisational membership model as well, although I'm not sure what this would look like.
- My primary professional association (IASSIST) is an organizational member, and I've been supportive of that level of financial contribution. If RDA participation became contingent on an individual membership fee, I'm uncertain I would continue, but I would consider it at the \$50 mark or lower.
- With mounting dues to other social and professional organizations, I will not be able to pay for another membership. I imagine others are in the same boat. If you go with individual membership fees then provide free membership for those who belong to an institution with an institutional RDA membership. This might encourage institutions to sign up to provide resources for their staff.
- It is preferable not to have a fee if it can be managed with institutional funding from various organizations in the participating countries.
- I think an individual fee will drive down participation whereas driving for more institution and sponsor funding would encourage increased participation of individuals.
- Better to have institutional memberships for all members of an organization -- hard to get critical mass or diverse representation only from individual members.
- I would much prefer if my individual fee were covered by the organizational membership since NIH where I work supports RDA.
- If you were to introduce such fees I would strongly recommend doing this in parallel to introducing group membership for organisations which have more RDA members
- Be sure to coordinate corporate and individual membership such that you don't lose corporate memberships.

Plenary fee related responses

- "my organization won't reimburse membership fees, but the full plenary costs
→ higher plenary fees for financing RDA Global"
- Could it be a "bonus" for registration to any plenary, i.e. increase the registration fee but give a 1yr membership as part of it, that makes its easier for many people to claim it via expenses if its a registration fee for a conference.
- With limited academic research funding currently available to me for research activities in the RDA domain, it would be difficult for me to continue membership. I would prefer if RDA would maintain free membership but perhaps increase plenary registration fees if needed.
- Please think about increasing the meeting registration fees instead of trying to force individuals to pay annual membership fees. Meeting registration fees are legitimate project expenses that can be reimbursed by employers.
- Recommend that you connect paying an annual registration fee to an event - such as registering for a meeting or webinar. Otherwise it's difficult to ensure yearly membership.
- Increase the conference registration fees instead of charging a membership fee.
- "I get it, its crazy out there. I'd suggest lowering costs by having fewer in person meetings. We are global and digital and I think have figured out how to work together over distance and time. Plus less plane trips =better for our environment."
- "Q4 was badly put, as it did not state an amount. There would definitely be some level of fee that would cause me to leave.
- Once in-person meetings begin again, I would look to conference fees to begin to make up some of the shortfall.
- Finally, consider an RDA publication. OA w/ page charges."
- "I understand the need for an individual RDA membership fee.
- If I thought that I was not attending the plenary, I might not buy the membership."
- "I would suggest having multiple options for membership that don't put the burden of cost on the individual's private financial situation. As an example, I may not be able to pay a \$50 or \$100 yearly membership fee out of my own pocket, but if that membership fee was included in the conference registration my institution would be able to subsidize it. My institution, however, can't outright pay for a membership fee because of state and federal regulations, so if it was on me as an individual, I'd have no choice but to pay out of pocket.
- I'd advise finding 2 or 3 different ways for people to pay for membership because the rules for different countries are so different."

Other comments

- Would be great if this could be linked to professionalisation accreditation scheme for research data management.
- Ideally access to training and dedicated content would not be restricted to members. This would likely reduce adoption, and would reduce relevance and access for those not yet participating.



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- It would have to be clear what the fees are used for. For example, I do not understand how the fees for the plenary were so high when it was completely virtual. Social events during break time are a nice idea but really not useful. All of the academic content I'm interested in, was produced by volunteers.
- It isn't clear what would be available to non-members and therefore what the advantages of individual RDA membership fee would be (apart from the sustainability of RDA). For example would only members be able to participate in the WG/IG etc?
- "Pay-walled ""dedicated content"" seems antithetical to RDA.
- It is sneaky survey design on question #2 to provide a ""more"" option, but not ""less."" Unless the survey is really meant as a persuasive tool and not for information collection.
- Have you considered a ""pledge/membership"" system in the vein of USA public radio/television?
- Would encourage reduced fees based on other personal circumstances. A missed opportunity in this survey is the question of who pays for the individual membership for other societies/associations. A fee is felt differently depending on whether it comes from a personal pocket or an institutional pocket. Smaller institutions pay smaller salaries, too.
- When considering an individual fee, it adds on a question that RDA must be prepared to answer: What makes RDA the organisation that I choose to spend my limited, out-of-pocket budget on, as compared to where I have previously been spending that money?"
- I'll reiterate the points I made above. I think it entirely plausible that people will pay membership fees but you need to align that more with people's career progression. The RDA seems to be unique in that it's the one place where Research Data Professionals of all shapes and sizes get together. These people have found a home and this can actually help them in terms of their standing at their institution.
- It looks like it may be necessary. Thanks for all you do!
- "I think it would put up at par with other professional associations. Additional resources will allow for the growth of the institution but, more importantly, can be invested in the wider dissemination of WG recommendations. \"
- you could also open the possibility for individuals or companies to cover the fees for a number of named individuals (for example a developed country individual paying for two and a low income country member being covered by this way
- "It should only be a minor part of the RDA business model. Individuals do all the work, but the primary beneficiaries of RDA are governments (especially research-related agencies) and institutions, therefore they should be the primary funders. NIH is a classic example. They have benefitted greatly from RDA work over the last 8 years but have contributed very little. It is somewhat cold comfort that they have signed up for an organisational membership at presumably \$10,000 per year. Govt agencies should pay much more something like 50-250k p.a as org. members depending on size. Institutions should channel some of their wasteful library subscription budget to org. membership, and the whole institution should join not just a small project.
- RDA is different from professional societies which primarily benefit their individual members, so it's not really a fair comparison."
- The number of members would drop with the introduction of a membership fee. Some organisations require membership to attend their conferences (EGU, AGU).



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- I'd have to get my employer to pay. It would require a business case to be accepted so having a justificatoin document ready to use would be useful. If a block of free individual memberships came included with an organisational membership that would help. A fee will inevitably reduce the number of people involved and the danger is the RDA community will become siloed and exclusive.
- My office is looking to create an interest group within RDA. The connection to the engineering side of research data management is a big benefit, but RDA has little recognition without our science domain. I am afraid a member ship fee will prevent potential members from the science domain from being engaged. Most importantly, can there be a tiered membership that will ensure we can recruit people to assist on working groups without the need for them to pay membership fees?
- I does occur to me that the greatest benefit I gain from the RDA (apart from the plenaries) are the published reports and outputs but since these are made available under open licences as you would expect, access is not dependent on my being a member. On the other had, I'm assuming that the infrastructure that supports these publications and the working groups from which they arise will suffer without the contribution of membership fees.
- "The range of options suggested (starting at \$50) will exclude many, I fear, whilst also being affordable for many in the global north. If we proceed down this path, I think a wider range of fee scales will be necessary.
- I should note that the other professional membership I have is my trade union - it really isn't comparable as membership fees are the only source of union income and there are of course tangible and significant benefits. My expectations of RDA are very different. (The union membership is also tax-deductible.)"
- I think that 50 USD is too much. I hear that the EGS has a lower membership fee and that it works. I am afraid that with any membership fee we will lose members. Also a risk with regional/organisational contributions? The RDA site content should remain accessible to non members to attract people willing to participate. I would be in favour of a non-mandatory membership fee (safer for regional/organisational contributions). It would be worth to explore the possibility to enable donations, even if there is a membership fee.
- My funding for membership fees would come from my organization. Those not affiliated with an institution might be more limited and concerned with funding than I am (although within reason -- we are a non-profit!) I expect it will hamper the growth of RDA, although I can very much appreciate the importance of sustainability.
- As well as donating my own time, I also have to make a business case to my institution about how spending my work time, and a portion of a tight budget, on my involvement with RDA directly benefits the institution. If I were to try to pass on the cost of RDA membership to my institution, this would make that case incrementally harder to make. I already bear the costs of professional society membership as a pre-requisite for employment in my profession, so bearing the costs of RDA membership personally as well, I would have to consider whether there are commensurate career benefits.
- My current involvement is already sporadic due to this being an extra part of my role. I myself have not been able to attend a plenary since Berlin, primarily due to the high costs of attendance, and with the introduction of anything more than a nominal annual membership fee, I would be forced to drop my participation altogether.

- I missed an option that 0\$ would be the feasible amount - I had to tick 50\$ although that is not true. I generally miss an overview of what the money is needed for at all, i.e. the Financial plan and Situation of RDA.
- I've seen the RDA as an organisation that by and large has a low-involvement membership, which would make it unlikely that it would survive a move to funding through private channels. But perhaps that's the bias of someone who had low involvement.
- I don't have a clear understanding of what RDA offers so I would not purchase a membership.
- I recently discontinued my membership in an international academic association because on a retirement pension it was not valuable enough. RDA does pass that test.
- "I fully understand the difficulty of managing expenses of an ever expanding organization as RDA. But in order to discuss the introduction of individual membership fees we need first to:
 - re-discuss the different types of memberships (individual/organization/ - academic/business - etc.)
 - explicitly define the rights that come with those membership fees
 - discuss what happens with all the individual contributions which are open and free as well
 - re-discuss new role(s) for RDA: does RDA turn to an organization like ACM/IEEE? Or a professional association? Or a purely scientific organization? And many similar questions to be addressed.
- I consider the survey badly placed and badly made: the question on other associations is misleading since I participate in a few, some have membership fees, some not - what to answer? The question of leaving or not RDA is also misleading: it is a combination of different choices, e.g. how one values the participation in the different interest/working groups? As said, how is volunteer work valued there? It is a bit disappointing that such an issue is handled in a rather hasty way ...Thanks for listening."
- I have always been surprised that RDA doesn't have a membership fee like most other academic / professional organisations. If it makes financial sense, I don't see a reason not to do it.
- I feel strongly that any benefits/adjustments as referenced in (3) should be limited to fee adjustments for LMICs, students, or anyone else who can show a real problem in meeting the fee requirement. The idea of making events or training, and particularly reports, exclusive, I think is just antithetical to what our community is trying to achieve. Event fees should be charged if necessary and it would be reasonable to discuss member v. non-member rates, this is typical. But exclusivity, this is a rather old-fashioned view of what this type of organization should use as "rewards" for membership.
- Maybe try out a donation based model?
- There are few people doing work at RDA and lots "just attending". As a consequence of introducing fees, there will be less "just attending" people, and hence the possibility to disseminate ideas will be lower. This, in turn can make it less appealing to those who do the work, who may want to look for other places to promote their work.
- I think other financing options should be pursued prior to resorting to individual membership fees.
- I think it would be a mistake to make it obligatory although I appreciate that voluntary contributions can be difficult to predict.



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- a Return of Investment (ROI) regarding the level of participation and contribution in research.
- I am sure this has been discussed already, but to me, public funding (i. e. from the EU digitalization budget) would be the best option.
- Seems like a reasonable ask to me.
- "These are poorly designed questions. If I belong to multiple memberships (question 4) what happens if one has a fee of \$25 but another has a fee of \$75, how do I answer question 5? (is it an average? The highest? The total cost for all?).
- Also question 4 - what about maybe? or it depends? If the fee to be a member was \$200, no I could not afford it. but if the fee was \$50, then yes, etc.
- I also do not see any questions about intuitional memberships? My org joins, pays a fee, and then now all staff can have access/members? (see ESIP model).
- I can appreciate a membership fee maybe necessary to support this and would be willing to pay for one, but I am also an early career person. RDA has offered many opportunities in the past for emerging scientists to engage with leaders of the field. I worry that a significant fee or a fee without any modifiers for early career folks, might price out these emerging leaders/create barriers to access for only those who are senior or can afford the fee."
- "Is RDA having a major impact for research on labs ?. Having individual fees means that RDA brings a real service to individuals. What is the real impact of RDA for individuals ?
- My impression is that RDA seems to be quite oriented towards developing items to assess research rather than to support research. If this is really the main line of RDA, then I would suggest to lobby governments in order to achieve sustainability. They obviously need open science, tracing, provenance, etc... in order to decide their funding policies."
- Seems like a reasonable ask to me.
- Some professional societies / organizations provide a discounted annual membership fee if you pay for multiple years in advance. For example, membership fee for 1 year is \$120 while membership fee for 2 years is \$220.
- I think it is a good idea if it keeps RDA running.
- "My guess is that RDA must introduce a fee at some stage because otherwise the members database will be corrupted in the long run as very few persons will leave. Introducing a fee will maintain the database. However, the question is now who are the persons RDA wants to reach out to? The challenge will be to recruit young people and citizen scientists who will most likely not join if there is any kind of fee? Perhaps some kind of hybrid approach is preferred where those who have a job (permanently employed, on grants...) can pay an amount that is enough to support those who will not have the money but should be members? Perhaps on a yearly basis so that the ""free riders"" don't stick for eternity but long enough until they can pay themselves? When you introduce the fee you will see a sharp drop in the number of members and it might be good to have a contingency plan as people perhaps don't want to join with a fee if the members are very few! The chicken and egg problem. Anyway I wish the best for the future!
- I think the individual fee should be accompanied by concrete value. and I would recommend diversification upon specific "services". for example a low basic fee could include joining a single WG, and then members could be asked to pay more in order to join more groups.



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access to specific services could be on discount for members, and definitely I would appreciate a discount to participate to the RDA plenary as a RDA member.

- Fees are needed, but RDA needs to think about its value proposition. Currently, it's rather weak. The organization crosses academic and professional boundaries and as a result doesn't serve either areas well.
- I think you should go ahead and introduce it.
- There might be more lucrative models if sustainability is an issue. Investing in the content of the meetings and the quality of the working groups gives RDA an opportunity to monetize that content. One example would be how the Knowledge Graph Conference (KGC) sells access to its meeting content (video recordings) after the conference is over - for folks who couldn't attend in person or to folks who do attend in person to review or see meetings they missed. This also gives you an opportunity to sell different levels of in-person attendance (w. post-event viewing content access). Talking to the KGC might be useful as they've built what seems to be a successful community & business model.
- It needs to come with a complete website overhaul. The current website is awful and un navigable
- I think it is a necessary step for RDA to gain sustainability, but it needs a careful analysis of the business model. Professional societies rarely live off the membership fees, but rather off revenue from meetings and/or publications.
- It is reasonable and should be kept reasonable as one means of sustainability.
- It is reasonable and should be kept reasonable as one means of sustainability.
- The focus needs to move from theoretical to practical, in my opinion. Although the networking is great.
- Personally, I have so many other obligations that I would see this as an excuse to step away. But in terms of financing RDA, it seems like you have every possible competency needed in your membership to build some digital tool or game or crypto scheme that you could monetize to offset operational costs. Think of it as a high-tech bake sale.
- Personally, I have so many other obligations that I would see this as an excuse to step away. But in terms of financing RDA, it seems like you have every possible competency needed in your membership to build some digital tool or game or crypto scheme that you could monetize to offset operational costs. Think of it as a high-tech bake sale.
- I simply would get my info elsewhere
- I'm not sure I would pay a fee at this time. Once I become active in a group, I would imagine it would make more sense. I'm *not* a fan of having content be behind a paywall. i.e. I would be willing to pay (essentially donate) in order to keep RDA running but the output of the work I then volunteer should be open.
- RDA was initiated by funders as a top down initiative, so why are membership fees needed anyway?
- I think the mission of RDA and benefits offered to members would need to be clear. There are other venues where research data is being discussed. Maybe prepare something on what RDA has achieved over the past few years. The identity of different organisations can become blurred in a complex, international landscape.
- The question about "what is the fee" is impossible to answer with the radio buttons, some are below \$100 and others are above, but in general many professionals in the USA are

paying for upwards of half a dozen individual memberships annual and it adds up ! if RDA wants to bite a chunk out of that spending there's no reason not to try ? Some examples of orgs with individual membership to be informed by: ACM is an example of a group where the benefits are relatively high, AGU is an example of a group where there is a strong hook - meeting presenters on proposed panels for papers, etc pretty much have to be members and the submission system challenges them to pay their dues before they can propose anything or be listed by others. This can suppress who is willing to present at their events. ALA is an example of an org that members are leaving because there is no ROI for them and they feel the org's values eats their time and money and their individual ROI is low and their values are no longer represented in the org's spending priorities.

- "I only joined recently and do not have a good sense of what value RDA provides to individual members or to the scientific community as a whole.
- I am not sure what value RDA even could provide given the resources at its disposal."
- Sustainability is important.
- Question 4 should have included an option for "depends on the level of fee". RDA has been helpful to my work but is not comparable to the primary organizations in my field. I would also like to hear more about expenses side of this picture, where the costs have been, what has changed during the pandemic, what are different options to support needs and activities of working groups, etc.
- I honestly wouldn't pay even \$50. I'm not saying that's not a reasonable amount, but I haven't been able to figure out how to get anything out of being in the RDA. It just seems to big and intimidating, and I've gotten more communication about the governance of the society than about the topic of the society.
- I think it's required for sustainability.
- It sounds like a bad idea. I'm thinking that people might buy a \$15 RDA t-shirt more readily than a professional membership fee. The volunteer nature and fluidity of membership in small niche groups makes the brand valuable.
- Whatever model is adopted needs to be transparent. The current model may be clear to long-time members but can be confusing for new members.
- I think every activity the RDA undertakes that requires this membership money should be examined. I don't think everything RDA does today is worth keeping.
- I wonder if you should offer the opportunity to make personal donations. I am sure my employer would cover membership fee but I would personally be more generous I suspect as I care about RDA and would happily put my own money into it
- "The organization is a prominent player in the data space, but the way it currently operates privileges teams that basically use it as a forum to promote their strongly held ideas that they work on as part of their daily jobs. This might not be such a problem in and of itself if there was a way for uninitiated participants to get meaningfully engaged. I have found both RDA and the frequent and super intense plenaries too difficult to navigate and have over time become much less active despite my initial hopes. I suppose if I was one of the people who are able to use RDA as a vehicle for their ongoing work, I would probably be willing to pay an individual membership fee and a higher amount than what I am indicating here.
- Also, on your question 4 you should have had a ""not sure"" option. That is my real answer. On question 3, since you made it mandatory as well, ""none"" should have been an option."



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- If It possible more training occasions
- I think we need a business model but modest dues won't get us all the way there.



ANNEX: Survey text and form

OPEN UNTIL 31 MAY 2021

Dear All

The RDA has grown significantly since its inception in 2013, and must now develop a new financial sustainability model, as original sources of seed funding are no longer available or sufficient to keep running the organisation. If we continue with our current and limited income streams, the organization will face major financial challenges, with the possibility that the operations supporting the governance, management, promotion and communication of the working and interest groups will be substantially downsized. Given the incredible success of the RDA thus far, a diminished presence would be unfortunate, and would limit the RDA's potential value and impact.

In December 2020, the RDA Council set up a Financial Sustainability Task Force to openly investigate a series of different financial and business models. The idea of an individual membership fee is currently being discussed as one of a number of approaches to improving the long-term financial stability of the organization.

Your feedback on RDA individual membership fees is needed so we can properly assess this potential model. As this is both an important and urgent issue for the RDA, we very much appreciate your participation in this short, anonymous survey that will be open until 31 May 2021.

Thank you.

Please note all currency references are in USD.

Survey Content

Please note that all responses are anonymous and you should not be logged in to your RDA account when responding. We do ask you to provide your country of residence so we can adequately understand regional differences. Answers to all questions marked * are mandatory.

Disclaimer

The data obtained in this survey is for RDA internal use only. Your answers will be stored securely on a server in Europe, and pseudonymised extracts will be analysed by other RDA members. It is anticipated that these results will be used to assess financial sustainability models for the RDA. It will not be possible to identify you as an individual. For more information, please see general privacy policy.

Country *

1. Are you currently an individual member of the RDA (i.e. are you registered on the web site)? *

- Yes
- No

2. If the RDA were to introduce an annual individual membership fee as part of its long-term sustainability, what is the highest amount that would be feasible to pay (USD)? *

- \$50



- \$100
- \$150
- \$200
- \$250
- more

3. Would any of the following benefits or adjustments make a membership fee acceptable TO YOU? (SELECT THOSE APPROPRIATE TO YOU) *

- Reduced registration fee for the RDA Plenary
- Reduced fee for students
- Reduced fee for Low-to-Middle-Income countries
- Exclusive invitations to events, tutorials, training, etc.
- Access to dedicated content (for example, white papers, etc.)
- Other

If Other, please specify:

4. If an individual membership fee were required for RDA participation, would you leave the RDA? *

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

5. Are you an individual member of other professional societies / associations? *

- Yes
- No

If yes, how much is the annual fee? *

- less than \$50
- between \$50 - \$99
- between \$100 - \$199
- between \$200 - \$249
- over \$250
- not applicable

6. Briefly, if you are a member of the RDA, why did you join? What does it offer you?

7. Do you have any other views about a possible individual RDA membership fee?