This is the second of four memos to the RDA community, which will outline the work done by the RDA4EOSC project to support the implementation of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and bring the community up to date with the activities and outcomes of the project.

In this memo, we will give an overview of the new type of RDA group - Community of Practice - and look out how these groups can develop the connections between the RDA, EOSC, and stakeholders outside these areas.

**Overview: RDA Communities of Practice**

Communities of Practice (CoPs) were announced as a new type of RDA Group in December 2020. The motivation for establishing this new type of Group is to fulfill RDA’s intention to focus on building connections within specific domains and disciplines. CoPs are intended to complement existing RDA Working and Interest Groups, with members of CoPs drawn from specific domains as opposed to the representation of many different domains and disciplines in most Groups.

The aim is to both strengthen the connections within domains and to facilitate communication and engagement with those outside RDA, providing a forum for discussion and knowledge exchange beyond the specific data-sharing issues addressed in Working and Interest Groups. In doing so, CoPs will look to draw together those who do not deal primarily with data sharing issues in their work, e.g., those working in commercial or services industries, citizen science communities, public and private sectors, etc. Due to this more outward facing scope and focus on engaging new communities, it is also hoped that CoPs will increase the uptake and adoption of domain-agnostic RDA Recommendations and Outputs in new areas.

**Agricultural Data CoP**

The first Community of Practice is currently in the process of being formed. The Agricultural Data Community of Practice is being created out of the Interest Group on Agricultural Data (IGAD), building on the successes of this Group; that is, the impact it has had in terms of engaging with stakeholder communities and in providing a basis from which other Interest and Working Groups, with their related Outputs, have been produced.

Expanding on the success of the group IGAD as an Interest Group, the CoP format will allow additional scope for the Group to advance its engagement with different communities. As IGAD co-chair Cynthia Parr pointed out during a presentation at RDA VP17, there are organisations who are not engaged with by IGAD, but who could be. Following the guidelines set out in the ‘Framework for the Creation and Management of RDA Communities of Practice (CoPs)’, the Agricultural Data CoP will be able to engage with institutional and organisations outside RDA to a greater degree, raising awareness of RDA Outputs where relevant.

To do this, the Agricultural Data CoP will employ a ‘hub-and-spoke’ model, acting as a meeting point for organisations such as GODAN, CGIAR, Ag Gateway, and the Open Geospatial Consortium.
Liaisons from these organisations (who also act as ‘hubs’ in their own right in their networks) will not necessarily become RDA institutional members; in this sense, CoPs are designed to extend the reach of RDA to outside organisations and their members. The Agricultural Data CoP will also serve to link relevant Interest and Working Groups (both those under the IGAD umbrella and those not) to outside organisations. Though these connections are often made by RDA members, with CoPs this will become a much more intentional activity.

The Agricultural Data CoP has also outlined its intention to address the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its work; in particular SDG #2 - Zero Hunger. Though much of the work that IGAD does is of relevance to addressing the targets and indicators associated with this SDG, the intention is to further the discussion within the Agricultural Data CoP to identify areas where the group can have a greater impact, whether in continuing to promote data driven agricultural science, in advocating for interoperability and transparency around data used in measuring progress against SDG indicators, and in focusing on innovations around data in the global south.

**CoPs, RDA Strategy, and EOSC**

The task to identify and prepare new scientific and research communities to engage with EOSC which was carried out as part of the work on the RDA4EOSC project (outlined in another memo in this series) will serve to highlight discipline and domain communities that could benefit from the establishment of a Community of Practice. However, similar to Working and Interest Groups, the RDA as an organisation will not be taking a prescriptive approach to this; instead, it will be up to Working and Interest Groups, either collectively or individually, to come together to establish a CoP and develop the CoP Agreement documentation. As it will likely be the first to be established, the Agricultural Data CoP will serve as a valuable test case on the benefits that moving from an IG or WG to a CoP can afford.

The alignment between the future direction of EOSC, as outlined in its SRIA document, and the RDA Strategic Plan is realised in part through CoPs; specifically, through the requirements on geographical diversity of CoP membership, as noted in the ‘Framework for the Creation and Management of RDA Communities of Practice (CoPs)’. Looking at the issue of how the RDA4EOSC project is supporting the internationalisation of EOSC, it should be clear that the requirements for CoPs to have a geographically diverse membership and the capacity for CoPs to engage with outside organisations will expedite any input that international communities can provide to EOSC. Conversely, the increased levels of integration across communities that CoPs will provide will allow for the results of Europe-based initiatives to have a positive impact beyond the region.

1 https://www.rd-alliance.org/rda-announces-new-group-category-communities-practice
2 https://youtu.be/oFT3tQuF7L0?ti=4789