RDA COMMUNITY MEMO

Gaining International consensus and input on EOSC

This is the fourth 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.

The broad remit of the RDA4EOSC project has been to look at the "areas of complementary activity" between RDA and EOSC, in both organisations' current and future guises[1]. There are a number of areas where new developments within RDA have overlapped with EOSC's areas of concern; these include alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals, identifying under-represented communities, and the development of strategies to engage with these communities. In this memo, we will look in more detail at areas for potential further cooperation.

RDA and EOSC strategies

As outlined in the RDA's Strategic Plan 2020-2023, the next stages of RDA's strategy will focus on its People, Processes, and Products.

• The goal in focusing on its People is to grow the RDA membership, with an increase in the diversity and geographical spread of members, and to engage with a wider range of discipline and domain groups through new Communities of Practice. Alongside this is a specific priority to strengthen connections with the Southern Hemisphere.
• For Processes, the priorities are the financial sustainability of the RDA, the formalisation of relationships with RDA regional entities, and reinforcing the value of RDA Groups in responding to discipline, community and global needs and challenges around data.
• For Products the focus is on improving the value of the RDA website as a collaborative platform, and the quality and sustainability of all RDA Recommendations and Outputs, including the process and workflows which are followed to create these.

Similarly, the EOSC has set out the goals and priorities it will work toward in the next few years. As outlined in the various EOSC documents describing how it will move into its 'implementation phase', it is clear that some of its areas of concern and priorities are in common with the RDA; it is also apparent that the RDA is uniquely placed to be able to address the priorities around extending the global reach of EOSC.

In the EOSC Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) document published in February 2021[2], the proposed benefits and challenges to gaining more international input in EOSC are outlined. There are a number of initiatives taking place within the RDA that can facilitate and complement the goals concerned with EOSC having a more global impact. For example, one of the goals set out in the SRIA document it to "Promote the uptake of the building blocks of EOSC, (such as the EU ICT technical specifications [EC_ICT_TechSpec], the rolling plan for ICT standardisation [EC_ICT_Standard], FAIR, PIDs, AAI, APIs, CoreTrustSeal, etc.) and open source solutions abroad, given that formal standardisation is difficult in the current fast-changing, open source environment of research."

[1] https://www.rd-alliance.org/sites/default/files/attachment/rda4eosc_project_pillars_overview.pdf
[2] https://eosc.eu/sites/default/files/EOSC-SRIA-V1.0_15Feb2021.pdf

In this regard, the RDA's Supporting Outputs and its endorsed Recommendations can play a role in fostering shared practices between researchers and research support staff within Europe and beyond, using outputs that have been developed with a broad audience of intended users in mind. Similarly, the EOSC SRIA priority of engaging with other global research commons initiatives references the RDA directly, specifically the Global Open Research Commons Interest Group, whose efforts will be harnessed in the production of EOSC's proposed Global Open Data Commons Charter.

These are just two ways that EOSC's medium and longer-term goals crosscut with RDA activities. When considering how the EOSC intends to approach these and delineate the work around them, it is also worth noting that the EOSC Association's proposed Advisory Groups and Task Force areas, along with their expected memberships and methodologies, can leverage the work done by RDA's Working and Interest Groups. The work done by these Task Forces in turn can potentially create new areas where RDA Groups and Communities of Practice can foster the internationalisation of EOSC results and outputs.

RDA and EOSC-Future

The shared commitment to addressing the grand challenges of society mean that there are many potentially fruitful areas of collaboration between the RDA and EOSC which have the potential to be mutually beneficial. As outlined in other memos in this series, understanding just what these areas of collaboration are and how they can be realised was the focus of the RDA4EOSC project; it was also one of the topics of discussion at the RDA VP17 co-located event, 'Open, trusted and digitally enabled science for an International Community'. One of the themes that ran through this workshop was the importance of international alignment for EOSC and around open science and research more generally. RDA's future collaboration with EOSC has already been set in place through the EOSC-Future project, which RDA Secretary General Hilary Hanahoe described at the co-located event. The work done as part of the RDA4EOSC project will act as a springboard into the EOSC-Future project; engagement with different research and scientific communities, synchronising the EOSC with other international research commons, and facilitating the production of standards that can aid researchers in their work and provide a connection to other communities are the objectives of this work.

The overall sense was that there are many complementary activities within the EOSC and outside which can be linked to promote further international alignment across different commons, communities and organisations. The goal is to build on the work done during the RDA4EOSC project, identifying and harnessing these activities, using the relevant platforms and forums that are already in place to do so.

³ https://rd-alliance.org/groups/global-open-research-commons-ig
⁴ https://www.eoscsecretariat.eu/events/eosc-rda-vp17-open-trusted-and-digitally-enabled-science-international-community