Engaging with the Research Data Alliance

**The Value of the Research Data Alliance to Infrastructure Providers**

***The Research Data Alliance’s vision is Researchers and innovators openly sharing data across technologies, disciplines, and countries to address the grand challenges of society***

The Research Data Alliance (RDA) is a community-driven organization whose mission is to develop the social and technical data infrastructure needed to drive innovation surrounding data sharing and data interoperability. Established in 2013, RDA supports more than 8,900 international members representing 137 countries, has generated 32 concrete outputs (eight of which are recognized as European ICT technical specifications) with over 100 documented adoption cases (Sept 2019).

The Research Data Alliance enables data to be shared across barriers through outputs developed by focused Working Groups and Interest Groups, formed of volunteer experts from around the world and drawn from academia, private sector and government. Participation in RDA is open to anyone who agrees to its guiding principles of openness, consensus, balance, harmonisation, with a community driven and non-profit approach.

RDA has a grass-roots, inclusive approach covering all data lifecycle stages, engaging data producers, users and stewards, addressing data exchange, processing, and storage. It has succeeded in creating the neutral social platform where international research data experts meet to exchange views and to agree on topics including social hurdles on data sharing, education and training challenges, data management plans and certification of data repositories, disciplinary and interdisciplinary interoperability, as well as technological aspects.

In the current, Open Science context, research infrastructures are increasingly requested to establish data policies and to manage and share their data, with FAIR data and data management plans as core elements among many others. The Research Data Alliance offers a forum for discussion, identification and development of these policies as well as solutions.

Research infrastructure providers need to meet the needs of researchers. Because research disciplines are global, providers of infrastructure for researchers need to ensure that they are providing services that are compatible with those used by the international collaborators of their users. In the area of research data management and services, the pre-eminent organisation for ensuring globally developed services is RDA.

# why should research infrastructure providers engage with rda, and what’s in it for infrastructure experts?

The Research Data Alliance offers many solutions and benefits for providers of research infrastructure and their staff:

* RDA is a gateway to an extraordinary network of international colleagues and organisations with a broad set of experiences, perspectives, practices, and intellectual frameworks relevant to data-driven innovation - participants can share approaches and lessons learnt, and collaborate with each other through an open and leading-edge community;
* As a bottom-up, international organisation with multi-disciplinary and multi domain data professionals collaborating to identify and create research data interoperability solutions, the Research Data Alliance offers a neutral forum for the creation of open, international agreements on technical, social and governance mechanisms for research data interoperability – this enables an organisation to shape, gain early access to and adopt infrastructure approaches in areas that are crucial to its research end users;
* RDA is a global community offering a unique opportunity to collaborate with leading research related organisations, research institutes and funders – this enables organisations to extend and sustain their international network and allow key staff at the enterprise to engage with the best in the world on organisational best practices and policies in open science and research data management;
* Membership in RDA provides access to an international forum that facilitates the harmonisation, integration and/or implementation of standards and methods for research data interoperability, thus providing research infrastructure entities with access to the tools required to deliver research relevant infrastructure;
* RDA membership provides opportunities to partner with international expertise to augment peer engagements and nurture specific infrastructure communities of interest;
* Knowledge gained through membership provides a means of managing risk with regard to research data management and data quality, thus helping research end users to manage research data obligations around these elements;
* Entities and individuals have the opportunity through RDA to participate in Proof of Concept activities trialling the latest approaches driving research data practice, and research innovation.

## **WHY DOES RDA WANT TO PARTNER WITH INFRASTRUCTURE PROVIDERS?**

RDA is a multi-disciplinary and cross-domain global initiative, offering an all-encompassing community of stakeholders. As the global community works towards the harmonisation of research data management, research infrastructure experts have skills and expertise which can contribute greatly to the development of best practices. Research infrastructure providers have significant contributions they can offer to the Research Data Alliance by:

* Augmenting and enriching the worldwide network of international data experts and information professionals to address data challenges via RDA groups;
* Contributing to the development and maintenance of high-quality, practical solutions for data interoperability in research infrastructure providers across the globe, as well as addressing real-world challenges when creating and shaping RDA’s future Recommendations;
* Acting as the bridge and communication hub for all activities relating to the challenges of providing research infrastructure;
* Acting as RDA adopters who amplify, direct, and promote RDA Recommendations for the greatest effect and utility in research infrastructure.

## **HOW CAN INFRASTRUCTURE PROVIDERS ENGAGE WITH RDA?**

**Join:**

* Become part of a large and international data community such as that offered by RDA, where experts meet from a range of domains and countries. Provide an organisational perspective of RDA, influence its direction, and assist in the implementation and adoption of RDA’s Recommendations. For many global organisations, RDA is a vehicle to help incorporate data sharing technologies. Join RDA as an **organisational member** and contribute an annual subscription fee based on the number of employees (< than 50 employees: USD1,000 per year | 50 and <250 employees: USD2,000 per year | >250 employees: USD10,000 per year)**.**
* As a research infrastructure director, leader, manager, encourage your staff to become RDA community members. **Individual membership[[1]](#footnote-1)** of the Research Data Alliance is free of charge.

**Participate:**

* Nominate research infrastructure staff to be involved in the Working and Interest Groups of relevance to research infrastructure providers - see <https://www.rd-alliance.org/groups> for a full list
* Propose a new group to discuss and resolve a research data challenge that your research infrastructure (or groups of related research infrastructures) are facing - <https://www.rd-alliance.org/creating-and-managing-rda-groups.html>

**Attend:**

* Send representatives from your research infrastructure to engage with the RDA Community at the RDA biannual Plenary meetings - <https://www.rd-alliance.org/plenaries>

**Adopt RDA outputs:**

Adoption of RDA Recommendations and Outputs can also help to support the strategic aims of research infrastructure providers in relation to research data management, data curation and preservation.

* Adopt an RDA Recommendation or Output - <https://www.rd-alliance.org/recommendations-and-outputs/all-recommendations-and-outputs>. Specific examples include
  + Data Centres, research infrastructures that curate and provide access to data archives: [https://www.rd-alliance.org/group/repository-audit-and-certification-dsa–wds-partnership-wg/outcomes/dsa-wds-partnership](https://www.rd-alliance.org/group/repository-audit-and-certification-dsa%E2%80%93wds-partnership-wg/outcomes/dsa-wds-partnership)
  + Network providers: <https://rd-alliance.org/group/rdawds-publishing-data-workflows-wg/outcomes/rdawds-publishing-data-workflows-wg>
  + Data-producing and curating facilities: <https://rd-alliance.org/group/fairsharing-registry-connecting-data-policies-standards-databases-wg/outcomes/fairsharing>
* Promote the adoption of RDA Recommendations and Outputs through your national and domain connections

# Data Archiving and Networked Services ([DANS](https://dans.knaw.nl/nl)) Adoption Case - The Core Trust Seal

CoreTrustSeal offers to any interested data repository a core level certification based on the [DSA–WDS Core Trustworthy Data Repositories Requirements](http://www.coretrustseal.org/requirements/) catalogue and procedures. This universal catalogue of requirements reflects the core characteristics of trustworthy data repositories, and is the culmination of a cooperative effort between the Data Seal of Approval (DSA) and the World Data System of the International Science Council (WDS) under the umbrella of the Research Data Alliance (RDA) to harmonize their data repository certifications.

The [Repository Audit and Certification Catalogues](https://www.rd-alliance.org/group/repository-audit-and-certification-dsa%E2%80%93wds-partnership-wg/outcomes/dsa-wds-partnership), a two-part recommendation produced by the [RDA Repository Audit and Certification DSA–WDS Partnership WG](https://www.rd-alliance.org/groups/repository-audit-and-certification-dsa%E2%80%93wds-partnership-wg.html) created a common procedures and requirements for certification of repositories at the core level, drawing from the procedures and catalogues of criteria already put in place by the DSA and WDS. On the basis of this effort, the DSA and the WDS Certification of Regular Members merged into the [CoreTrustSeal](https://www.coretrustseal.org/), thereby gradually replacing these predecessor certification standards.

The mission of **Data Archiving and Networked Services** ([**DANS**](https://dans.knaw.nl/)) in the Netherlands is to promote and provide permanent access to digital research information. DANS is and has always been heavily involved in creating and achieving certification for the trustworthiness of digital repositories. Over the years DANS went through the process of acquiring certification with two goals: first, to show their stakeholders the trustworthiness of their repository, and second, to improve their internal processes and update their documentation. Preparing for certification was a perfect opportunity to raise the bar and reinforce collaboration between their archive, IT, policy and legal departments.

*“DANS has used the CoreTrustSeal to sustain and display its reputation as trustworthy data repository in a transparent way, which induces stakeholder confidence and differentiates us from others. At the same time, it helps us raise awareness on digital preservation and the importance of long-term availability of data for reuse. Next to that, the procedure of getting certified improves (internal) communication on our overall mission and goals, but also has a positive effect on our processes and procedures making them even more effective and efficient.” ---* Dr. Ingrid Dillo, Deputy Director, DANS, The Netherlands

Click [here](https://rd-alliance.org/system/files/DANS_final.pdf) for more information on this adoption story.

1. <https://www.rd-alliance.org/get-involved/individual-membership.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)