

The ESFRI Clusters at RDA House of Commons

Debating commonalities and
collaboration for thematic
services, training and
governance towards the
European Open Science Cloud

19 April 2021

13.00-16.00 CEST



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One and a half years after the [RDA session in Helsinki](#), the five ESFRI cluster projects, the RDA community, and European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) representatives come together again, to discuss the past, present and future of their collaboration during the journey of integrating thematic services into EOSC.

This time ESFRI clusters embarked in a house-of-commons styled debate. Looking at commonalities and collaboration in the ESFRI clusters, when contributing to the European Open Science Cloud on three pillar topics:

- ➔ **Thematic data services,**
- ➔ **Connecting to end-user communities**
- ➔ **Governance**

The ESFRI cluster projects asked for input **from members of the international RDA community**, the ESFRI community, EOSC ecosystem and **data experts and domain researchers** being the end-user community.

The impact achieved in the ESFRI clusters at RDA House of Commons

The ESFRI Clusters at RDA House of Commons was moderated by Martijn van Calmthout, science communicator, writer and moderator. The debates were kicked off with bold statements by 3 statement makers, to which 13 debaters magnificently played their theatrical roles debating for or against the statements made. The session was attended by over 100 people from the ESFRIs, EOSC and RDA communities and beyond, who actively engaged and contributed to the debates through the online chats.

This report does not aim to replicate the marvellous discussions held, and the animated engagement achieved. It merely aims to explain the topic of each of the three debates, distill the main points debated and define the recommendations made.

No recordings were kept of the ESFRI clusters at RDA House of Commons, as all debaters were asked to take on theatrical roles. The slides are available here: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4723644>

The team



Moderator

Martijn van Calmthout

(Science communicator, moderator, writer, science editor Volkskrant newspaper, head of communications at Nikhef)

The team



Mark Allen (ESCAPE)



Claudia Alén Amaro
(EOSC-Life)



Ari Asmi
(ENVRI-FAIR)



Daan Broeder
(SSHOC)



Ron Dekker (CESSDA,
SSHOC, EOSC Future)



Rudolf Dimper
(PaNOSC)



João Fernandes
(ARCHIVER)



Carole Goble
(EOSC-Life)



Hilary Hanahoe
(RDA Foundation)



Anca Hienola
(ENVRI-FAIR)



Yannis Ioannidis
(ESFRI)



Franciska de Jong
(SSHOC, EOSC
sustainability Working
Group (2019-2020))



Marialuisa Lavitrano
(EOSC Association)



Eetu Mäkelä
(FAIRsFAIR champion)



Eva Méndez
(FAIRsFAIR)



Stefano de Paoli
(TRIPLE)



Fotis Psomopoulos
(RDA Early Career
Researchers Interest
Group)

Debate 1 Thematic services



Eva Mendez

*"Metadata.
Everyone thinks
it's a great idea,
but no-one
wants to use
someone else's?"*



Carole Goble
EOSC-Life



Joao Fernandes
ARCHIVER/ CERN



Daan Broeder
CLARIN



Mark Allen
ESCAPE

VS

"Debaters are asked to play a theatrical role for the sake of The ESFRI Clusters at RDA House of Commons."



Debate 1: Thematic data services

Within the five cluster projects, **ENVRI-FAIR**, **EOSC-life**, **ESCAPE**, **PANOSC** and **SSHOC** we see different aspirations between infrastructure initiatives prioritising stable general data management services, and the research communities prioritising long-term user-driven data workflows. Obviously, the need for research data services to be findable and usable by projects and users is common to both groups, and in this regard, there is much to be learned from the international research data community. This debate was kicked off by **Eva Mendez** (FAIRsFAIR and RDA Europe 4.0 ambassador for interdisciplinary research), with the statement **"Metadata. Everyone thinks it's a great idea, but no-one wants to use someone else's"**.

Distilling the vivid debate

- ➔ **Reusability:** Metadata is needed for data reuse. It remains a challenge to use someone else's data, but it is practical and can improve the use.
- ➔ **Quality:** We need to increase the quality of metadata.
- ➔ **Interoperability:** Shared metadata schemas make data interoperable.
- ➔ **Usability of general vs. detailed metadata, respecting the diversity of disciplines;** stratification of metadata is needed.

Recommendations for improvement

1. **We need agreement as we are building a commons.** Standards mean you have to lose a bit of your domain for the benefit of the others.
2. **Standards have to be useful.** We must build them for use; not to fit theoretical ideas.

Debate 2

Onboarding Communities and End-Users



Hilary Hanahoe

"Onboarding the communities and end-users to EOSC still lacks a clear grassroots, bottom-up approach."



Ari Asmi
ENVRI-FAIR



Stefano de Paoli
TRIPLE



Rudolf Dimper
PaNOSC



Eetu Mäkelä
FAIRsFAIR champion

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Debate 2: Onboarding Communities and End-Users

In the context of EOSC discussions, the ESFRI cluster projects are in an excellent position to represent the interests of the research communities and claim and provide for an EOSC infrastructure that meets the required specificity and flexibility. An important aspect of connecting to communities and the success of EOSC are training, workshops, demonstrations and awareness raising efforts towards the research communities. In this discussion we looked at how the ESFRI cluster projects can use the existing commonalities to bridge the gaps for collaboration on onboarding communities towards EOSC, while learning from the best practices in the international RDA community and FAIRsFAIR champions' community. The debate was kicked off by RDA Secretary General **Hilary Hanahoe**.

The foreword to the European Open Science Cloud, Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (Feb 2021), states "EOSC was conceived as the solution to the problem of how to manage and exploit the unprecedented volume of data arising from digital technologies, in the interest of European science and scientists. By providing an open and trusted environment for accessing and managing a wide range of publicly funded research data and related services and complementary commercial services, EOSC will transform how researchers access and share data throughout the research lifecycle, helping European scientists reap the full benefits of data-driven science and giving Europe a global lead in both research data management and scientific progress."

In the Executive Summary of this same document, a set of guiding principles that have been agreed are laid out. They will help position EOSC within Horizon Europe and shape its development.

The first, and most important perhaps, states that **EOSC is Research-community centred**. EOSC places research at the centre of the initiative and thus prioritises engagement with research communities to understand their requirements, helping them and ensuring academic sovereignty of research data. It goes on to state that building on these guiding principles, a number of recommendations for research communities have been identified, to help them progress towards an Open Science ecosystem that is based on, incentivises and facilitates Open Science principles and practices in performing and sharing science.

And so, based on the immense importance of researchers and scientists, of their role in the centre of EOSC, the starting statement for the debate was that **"Onboarding the communities and end-users to EOSC still lacks a clear grassroots, bottom-up approach. This puts a timely EOSC in practice at risk."**

Distilling the vivid debate

- ➔ **The best way to get people to use things is to share what we are doing or building.** The challenge is, if universities are not interested in EOSC, the incentives for researchers and scientists will not be provided.
- ➔ **We are entering a new phase of the EOSC**, in a good position to bridge scientists and users. As soon as we have useful services, the grassroots approach will automatically succeed.

Recommendations for improvement

1. To build tools & services involving scientists and researchers
2. To keep on engaging with end-users (e.g. trainings, feedback)
3. To ensure the middle layer (mix of top down & bottom up) is set up or acknowledged, facilitated and involved.

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Debate 3 Governance



Franciska de Jong

"In the EOSC governance model, there is no clear link with research communities."



Fotis Psomopoulos
RDA ECE IG



Marialuisa Lavitrano
EOSC Association



Claudia Alén Amaro
EOSC-Life



Anca Hienola
ENVRI-FAIR



Yannis Ioannidis
ESFRI

VS

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Debate 3: Governance

Which models for shaping future collaboration and result exploitation have been identified as a suitable vehicle for the consortia involved in the current cluster projects? Which impact will the establishment of EOSC have on the interest from countries in funding European RIs? What are the best practices for formal collaboration with RIs outside of Europe? This debate will be driven by **Franciska de Jong** (director of CLARIN ERIC and in 2019-2020 member of the EOSC sustainability Working Group). The statement used in this debate was that **"In the EOSC governance model, there is no clear link with research communities"**.

Distilling the vivid debate

- ➔ Conflicting views of involvement in EOSC governance means no real consensus or sense of responsibility - issue for long-term sustainability.
- ➔ Communication lines need to be open between the 2 sides, e.g. via BoD research community representatives - dialogue should be mandatory.
- ➔ Clusters are important in the landscape and dialogue with EOSC despite limitations in terms of sustainability and coverage of the full researcher ecosystem.

Recommendations for improvement

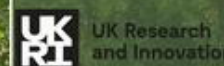
1. The establishment of the Advisory Boards should continue to be implemented.
2. The experts with interdisciplinary background in the Executive Board of Directors
3. Communities should have their governing bodies (RIs).
4. For individual researchers EOSC should become very straightforward and very natural.

RDA's 17th Plenary Meeting

20 - 22 April 2021, Edinburgh



Organised by



Jisc

The 17th Research Data Alliance Plenary Meeting

One of the major strengths of RDA is the global reach of the network. Members come from 145 different countries and plenary meetings rotate around the continents. This diversity of collaboration is required to address global challenges and broker solutions that work for a manifold of different contexts of data sharing. Richer outputs and standards occur as a result.

RDA's plenary meetings provide an opportunity for this diverse collaboration to make rapid progress in all areas of its work - initiating and joining new working groups, sharing interim results from in-progress work, identifying areas of overlap and synergy, and presenting completed work and successful stories of its adoption. The outputs developed by RDA groups all aim to ensure that data can be shared and reused, and made more open, in global and cross-domain environments.

The ESFRI Clusters at RDA House of Commons aimed to engage, learn and leverage on the RDA global network and its expert members at its 17th Plenary Meeting.



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