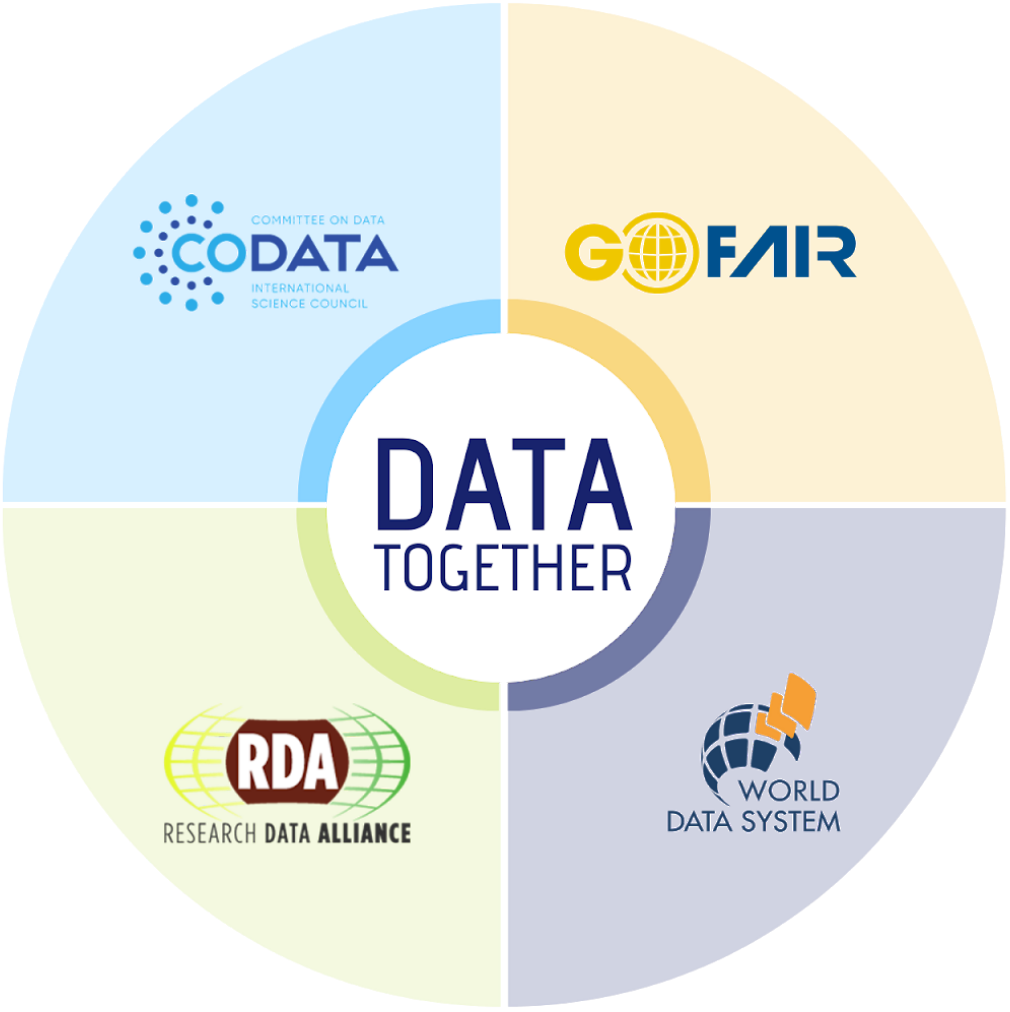
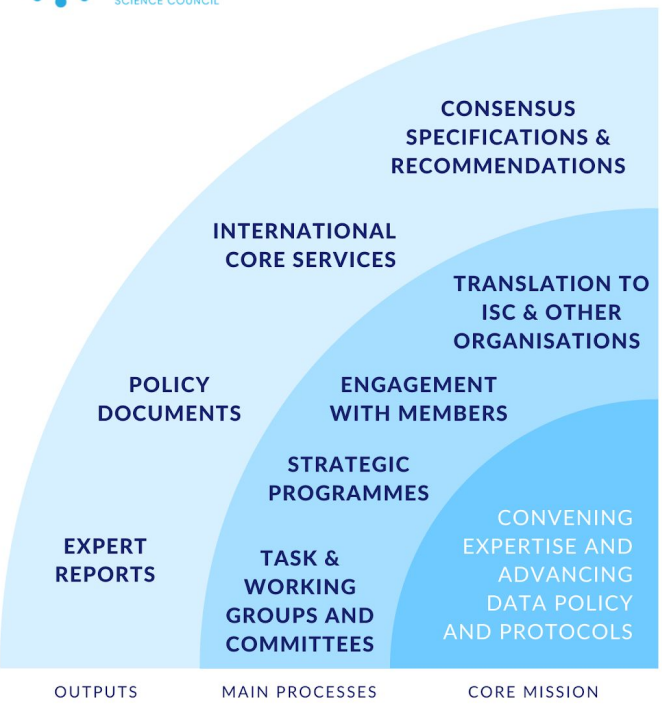


Articulating the collaboration among the four major international data organisations to optimize the research data ecosystem

March 2020

With this document, the four major international data organisations outline their joint commitment to work together to optimise the global research data ecosystem and to identify the opportunities and needs that will trigger federated infrastructures to service the new reality of data-driven science.

Who we are



CODATA, the Committee on Data of the International Science Council (codata.org)

CODATA's mission is to connect data and people to advance science and improve our world. As the 'Committee on Data of the International Science Council (ISC)', CODATA supports the ISC's mission of 'advancing science as a global public good' by promoting Open Science and FAIR data. CODATA convenes a global expert community and provides a forum for international consensus building and agreements around a range of data science and data policy issues, from the fundamental physical constants to cross-domain data specifications. CODATA's membership includes national data committees, scientific academies, International Scientific Unions and other organisations.

Research Data Alliance (rd-alliance.org)

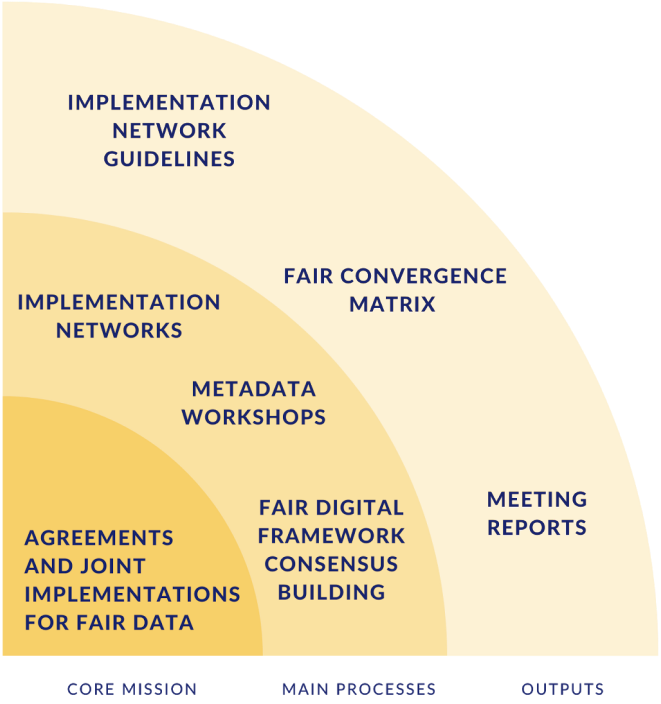
A global, consensus-based, community-driven organisation of over 10,000 individual and institutional members from 144 countries whose mission is to provide a platform to drive innovation surrounding data sharing and interoperability. RDA enables data to be shared across geographical, technological and disciplinary boundaries through outputs developed by focused Working Groups and Interest Groups of volunteer experts from around the world and drawn from academia, the private sector and government. Established in 2013, RDA draws its membership from individuals and organizations across the data management ecosystem.

World Data System (world-data-system.org)

A research programme of the ISC that enables data repositories to use infrastructure and protocols that ensure long term custody of data, and to define services and resources that achieve greater interoperability between repositories and applications that consume data. Established in 2008, WDS draws its membership from data repositories and service providers who implement agreements that strengthen these organisations, and promote best practices.

Global Open FAIR (go-fair.org)

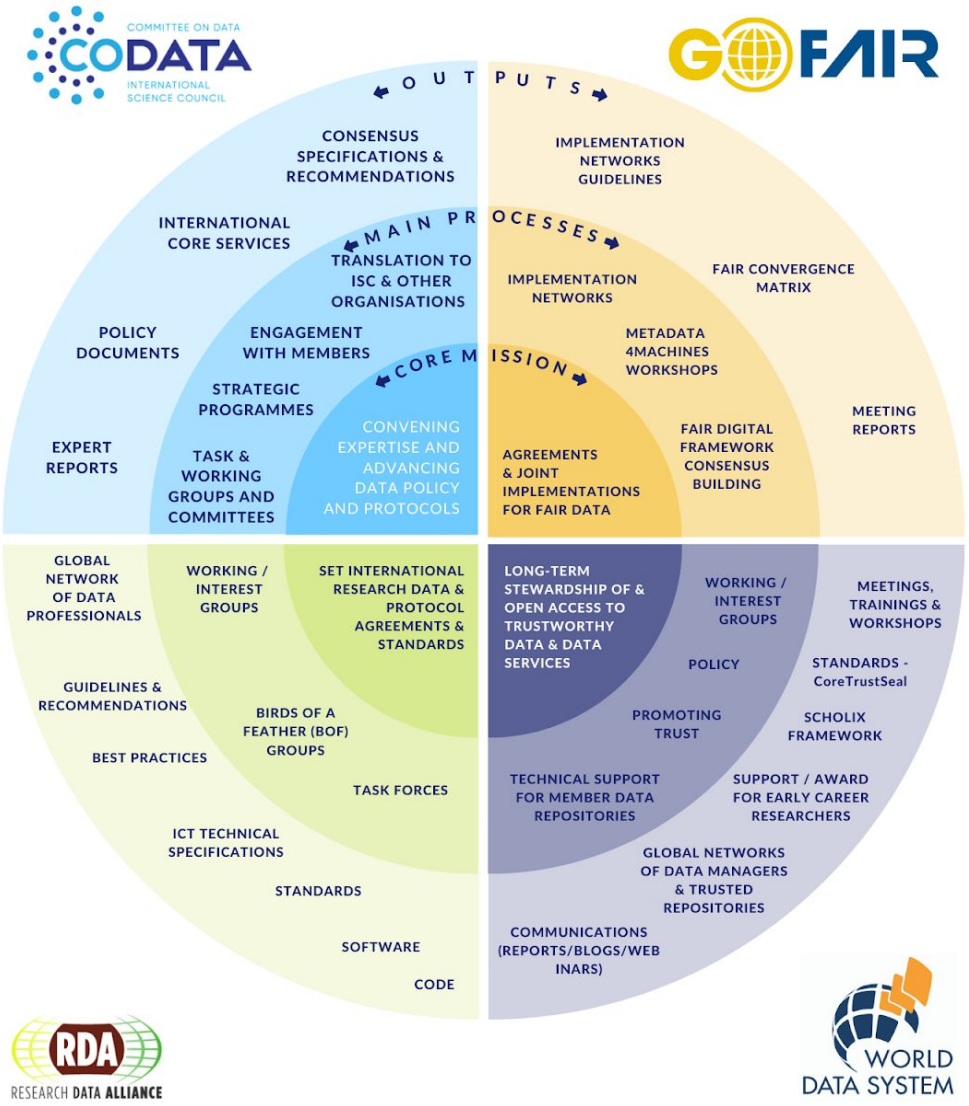
A global initiative of community-driven implementation networks that enable data-related agreements, data services and protocols that support FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) sharing and reuse of data and related tools. Established in 2017, GO FAIR draws its membership from domain-specific communities of practice that are invested in the development of best practices for data management.



What we do

Each organisation has a unique *modus operandi* and works with different stakeholders, but they share a number of characteristics:

- Each has a global mandate from their respective constituency.
- All are impartial and independent, serving the international data community without a particular political bias.
- They operate at a supra-disciplinary level, and especially address data related issues that emerge in that scope.
- All are pathfinding and strategic without being funding agencies.



Why we collaborate

The availability and integrity of data is central to scientific research and crucial for decision- and policy-making. Existing statements about data access policies describe how the research data ecosystem should function in an ideal world. Directives and protocols from funders, publishers and scientific organisations at the national and international level encourage data access and reuse.

Implementing these guidelines and mainstreaming open data for scrutiny, reuse, and equitability is not easy. Several organisations are involved in facilitating the implementation process.

How we work together

For data to be effectively shared and reused at scale, to advance research and to benefit society, a number of things are necessary, including:

- Generalised agreements
- Policy recommendations
- Protocols, technologies and infrastructure
- Specifications and standards
- Community engagement and building trust
- Developing community consensus
- Coordinated responses to specific issues

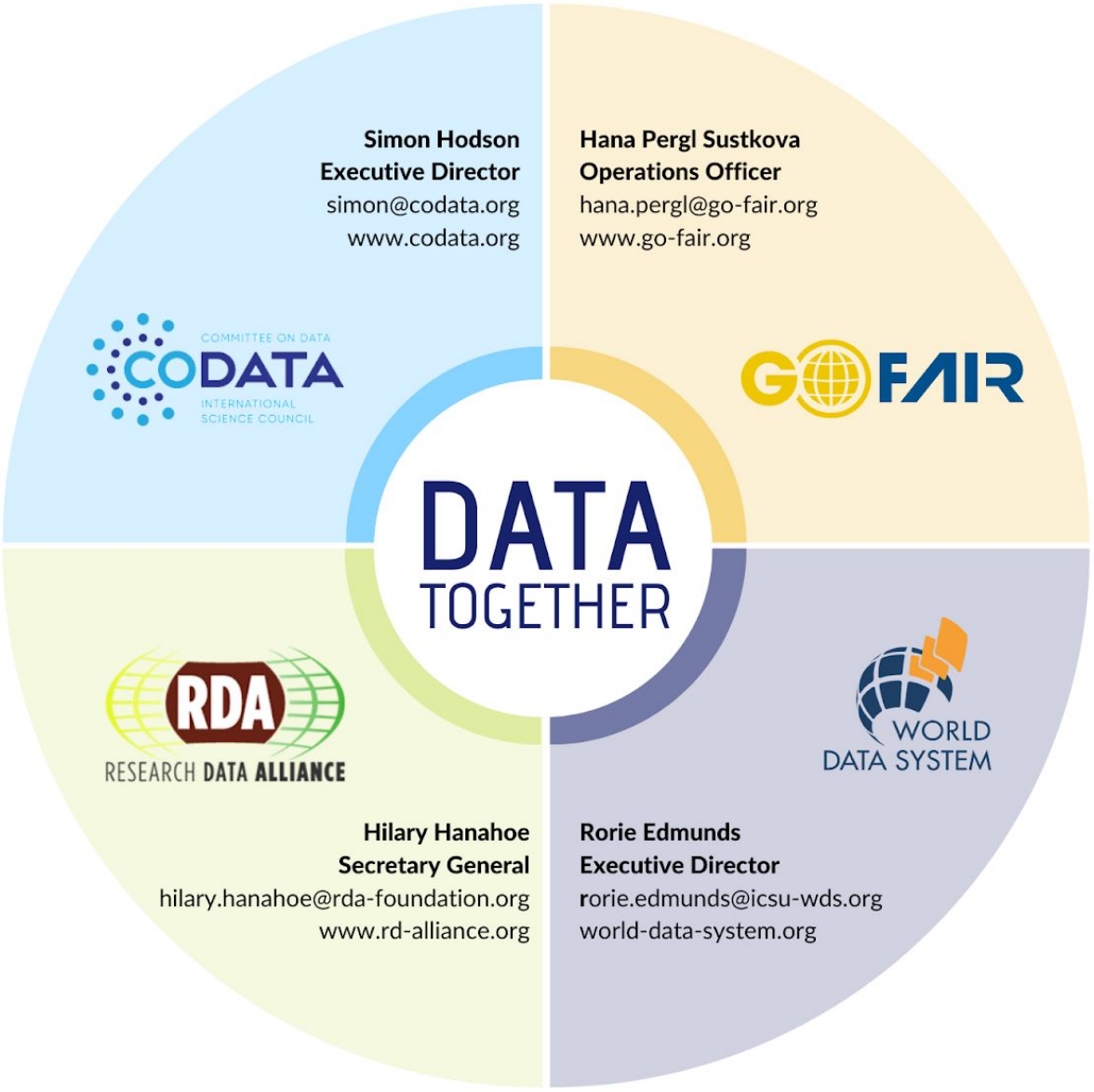
Worldwide research activity is vast and the task of developing and implementing these components is enormous. It requires support from the stakeholder communities, as well as the activities, engagement and support mechanisms developed by the four partner organisations.

In many instances these groups have shared objectives and serve overlapping communities. At the same time, each organisation draws on separate mandates, diverse funding streams, and advances distinct but complementary strategies and outcomes.

The shared and distinct objectives of the four organisations will be achieved more efficiently through transparent coordination and cooperation. This document takes a first step towards clarifying the organisations' distinct and complementary missions and roles. It also lays out areas of collaboration, below.

Through regular dialogue and strategic meetings, it is intended that this should become a framework and roadmap to address the challenges of global research Data Together.

Contact Us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