



## DDI Alliance and CODATA Establish Partnership for Collaboration

[CODATA](#), the Committee on Data of the [International Science Council](#), and the [Data Documentation Initiative \(DDI\) Alliance](#) have established a partnership for ongoing collaboration. In a recent letter of intent, the organisations outlined in the areas of shared interest and arrangements for mutual membership.

Furthermore, to strengthen cooperation, Steve McEachern, Chair of the Executive Board, will be the DDI Alliance delegate to CODATA, while [Simon Hodson, Executive Director of CODATA](#), is [a candidate for the Scientific Board of the DDI Alliance](#).

Two developments make this collaboration opportune and appropriate. On the one hand, CODATA has been mandated by the International Science Council, as part of the latter's [Action Plan 2019-2021](#), to develop and implement [a global, decadal programme entitled 'Making Data Work for Cross-Domain Grand Challenges'](#). The objectives of the programme are multiple, but first among these is to assist cross-domain research and policy monitoring by facilitating the interoperability, combination and integration of data from many different sources. The mechanisms being explored to assist this are also multiple and include: developing conceptual and semantic alignment between key metadata specifications, developing semantic tools to assist interoperability, developing methodologies and processes to assist harmonisation and data 'cleaning', and exploring the contribution that machine learning can make to some of these processes.

On the other hand, [DDI - Cross Domain Integration \(DDI-CDI\)](#) is a potentially significant development which includes definitions for core concepts, applicable across a range of research areas, and which will therefore greatly increase interoperability between data sets. Taken alongside developments such as DCAT, Schema.org, initiatives to standardise representation of experiments, observations and measurements, and the improved management of ontologies, DDI-CDI can make a positive contribution across domains and the collaboration between the DDI Alliance and CODATA is very timely.

In the recent past, the DDI Alliance and CODATA have engaged in a number of activities together:

- Jointly organized two "cross-domain" workshops on metadata standards, hosted at Schloss Dagstuhl in Wadern, Germany ([2018](#), [2019](#)).
- CODATA has supported the DDI-CDI public review, [helping to promote and conduct a series of webinars since May 2020](#) with an attendance of over 400 people across a wide range of domains. (Given the need for input to the specification from other

domains, CODATA's connections were invaluable in identifying the right group of participants.)

- CODATA is leading [an EOSC project to produce a report on the application of DDI-CDI within the EOSC environment](#), working with members of the DDI Modelling, testing and Representation (MRT) working group.
- Engaged in supporting projects which are implementing DDI, as part of the Decadal Programme ("Making Data Work for Cross-Domain Grand Challenges"). Notably, the INSPIRE Network development in east Africa is serving both as a test case for using DDI Codebook and DDI-CDI as part of their implementation, and acting as one of the initial use cases for the Decadal Programme on the subject of infectious disease.
- Discussed collaboration between the DDI Training Committee and various training programs on the topic of research data management which CODATA participates in, including the RDA-CODATA School of Research Data Science and work with FAIRsFAIR and GO FAIR around their competence centers in this area. A DDI introductory training workshop (51 participants) was conducted as part of the [International FAIR Convergence Symposium](#) in December 2020 as a first step in this collaboration.
- DDI in general and DDI-CDI in particular featured in a number of other sessions at the FAIR Convergence Symposium including a high level panel setting the key technical themes for the week (over 200 participants), a session on combining infectious disease data, including the INSPIRE Network above (over 30 participants) and a session on FAIR data provenance (over 60 participants).

## **ABOUT THE DDI ALLIANCE**

The DDI Alliance shares a commitment to meet worldwide demand for publicly available standards and semantic products that support the documentation and integration of social science data and other data necessary for understanding the human condition. The DDI Alliance is an international collaboration dedicated to establishing metadata standards and semantic products for describing social science data, data measuring human activity, and other data derived from observational methods. The DDI Alliance is composed of its Member and Associate Member Organizations and is governed by an Executive Board, a Scientific Board, and a Technical Committee. In addition, there are working groups that focus on developing specific areas of DDI.

## **ABOUT CODATA**

CODATA's mission is to connect data and people to advance science and improve our world. CODATA is an international non-profit organization mobilizing a global expert community. As the Committee on Data of the International Science Council (ISC), CODATA supports the ISC mission of advancing science as a global public good by promoting the availability and usability of data for all fields of research. CODATA works to advance the interoperability and the usability of such data: research data should be FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable). CODATA promotes the principle that data produced by research and of potential value for research should be as open as possible and only as closed as necessary. CODATA pursues its mission through strategic activities to build consensus and implement good practice, and through advancing data policies, data science and data education.