■ RDA AUSTRIA – REMOVING BARRIERS IN DATA SHARING

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Abstract: *Research Data Alliance Austria (RDA-AT) is a national RDA node dedicated to representing emerging research and data management communities throughout Austria. RDA-AT will operate as a formal participant of RDA Europe and RDA Global, linking Austrian data management initiatives and RDA Working and Interest Groups, providing assistance in adoption of RDA recommendations, and allowing Austrian stakeholders to benefit directly from RDA support mechanisms. These new connections will bring key Austrian issues to the global data management table, and global discussions back to Austria. This paper details the goals of the RDA-AT and describes its community and sustainability plans.*

Keywords: *Research Data Alliance Austria (RDA-AT); Data Management; Austria*

RDA AUSTRIA – ABBAUEN VON HINDERNISSEN BEIM TEILEN VON DATEN

Zusammenfassung: *Research Data Alliance Austria (RDA-AT) ist ein nationaler RDA-Node, der sich der Vertretung aufstrebender Forschungs- und Datenmanagement-Communities in ganz Österreich widmet. RDA-AT wird als formeller Teilnehmer von RDA Europe und RDA Global fungieren und österreichische Datenmanagementinitiativen und RDA-Arbeits- und Interessengruppen zusammenführen, Unterstützung bei der Umsetzung von RDA-Empfehlungen bieten und österreichischen Stakeholdern ermöglichen, direkt von RDA-Unterstützungsmechanismen zu profitieren. Diese neuen Verbindungen werden wichtige österreichische Themen in das globale Datenmanagement einbeziehen und globale Diskussionen nach Österreich bringen. Dieser Beitrag beschreibt die Ziele RDA-ATs und dessen Community- und Nachhaltigkeitspläne.*

Schlagwörter: *Research Data Alliance Austria (RDA-AT); Datenmanagement; Österreich*

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1. Mission

RDA Austria[1] aims to act as a national node of RDA Europe, as well as RDA Global region, and to serve cross border as a professional connector for global activities dedicated to promoting and facilitating research data sharing. RDA Austria enables both national and transnational engagements, creating professional pathways to address data-related issues that are critical to both the research community and the public at large. The primary goal of RDA Austria is to mitigate the full range of technical, organisational, and cultural challenges that currently discourage open and effective sharing of publicly funded research data assets.

The primary goal of RDA Austria is not to create a platform just for meetings and knowledge exchange but rather to go for more practical approaches, initiating concrete adoption projects to disseminate outputs from RDA global initiatives on a national level, while at the same time ensuring that input collected at the national level is fed into the global RDA initiatives. RDA Austria also wants to avoid replications of existing projects and initiatives. RDA Austria will organize events and trainings that promote best practices in research data management, effectively providing an incubation space for the development of shared services and common standards, including policy development, data management planning, and infrastructure interoperability requirements.

Planned activities further include the establishment of structures, cooperation with RDA in other regions/countries and the coordination of data management working groups. As such, representatives of RDA Austria are already involved in both institutional as well as national projects serving this mission, such as:
- the cooperation with projects like Open Education Austria or e-Infrastructures Austria, a national initiative carried out by nine Austrian universities that aims to implement infrastructure for e-science,
- the adoption of data citation solutions in national research infrastructures such as the Climate Change Centre Austria,

- the development of a DMP infrastructure, or the ongoing collaboration on the development and adoption of research data management policies across several institutions in Austria.

We aim to continue and expand these activities to strengthen collaboration both on the national as well as international level.

RDA Austria's primary responsibilities include:
- Facilitating national and transnational engagements, including the creation of working groups to address data-related issues critical to the Austrian research community and the public at large by connecting them to the respective WG initiatives at the RDA global level
- Organizing events and training to support the adoption of best practices in research data management across Austria
- Providing an incubation space for the development of shared services and common standards, including policy development, data management planning, and infrastructure interoperability requirements
- Serve as an information conduit and professional connector for international activities, including the European Open Science Cloud and the EGI Federated Cloud
- Promoting local adoption of RDA recommendations with the support of RDA seed funding
- Connecting Austrian research data stakeholders
- Promote and sustain international know-how transfer

2. Planned Working Groups and WG Branches

Aligning with RDA structures, the acting principles of the working groups is a problem-solving approach and avoidance of topics that are already dealt with in other initiatives and projects, linking national and global initiatives. The goal of these Working Groups is not a replication of structures from an RDA Global level, but to establish national branch meetings and activities to connect regional stakeholders to the global RDA WG and IG activities, and to support local adoption of RDA outputs via local events. The first working groups, some of them planned to start in 2019, will deal with the following topics: Data citation, discovery and reuse; Machine-actionable data management plans.

3. Involvement in the European Open Science Cloud

On 11 April 2018, RDA Austria sent an endorsement to the October 2017 Declaration of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) to the European Commission. RDA Austria declared that it would actively support the principles of the EOSC Declaration in the following areas: data culture, FAIR principles, data stewardship, skills, data management plans, technical implementations, standards, legal aspects and governance models. Furthermore, Austria was involved in the organisation of EOSC related events during the Austrian presidency, starting from July 2018. RDA Austria is actively supporting the efforts of the work package "Creation of FAIR Reference Points at Austrian Research Infrastructures" within the project e-Infrastructures Austria. Members of RDA Austria are furthermore engaged in several projects in this context, such as the EOSC Secretariat or EOSC Pillar.

4. Community endorsements and support

4.1. Pre-existing networks

Through the Austrian-wide, government-supported projects e-Infrastructures Austria (2014–2016), e-Infrastructures Austria Plus (2017–2019) and Open Education Austria (2016–2018), a stable and sustainable network of stakeholders from RPIs, libraries, ICT services, research support offices, policy and decision makers and scientific communities has been established. Involvement in international data and research data management initiatives have additionally been achieved through participation in European projects (Tempus, Europeana, LEARN, OpenAIRE, and others), part of COAR (Confederation of Open Access Repositories) and participation in networks like RDA Global.

In order to receive broad agreement and support by the management level of research institutions, a letter to the rectors' conference was sent out in April 2018. It was explicitly addressed to the Vice-Rectors of Research of Austrian universities to explain the aims and included the request to invite interested persons at their institutions in the areas of data management, research, big data, policy and infrastructures to participate in RDA Austria. Even preceding this initial outreach activity, RDA Austria has already attracted institutional and individual memberships, resulting in over 30 members, with further membership applications pending.

4.2. Composition of founding board

The founding board members come from TU Wien, the University of Vienna, the national competence centre on security Secure Business Austria, and the legal consulting firm IVOCAT and have thus a proven record of expertise in the fields of data science and research data management. These founding board members, as well as the individuals joining already at the first meeting, represent a broad network of stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds.

TU Wien is the largest technical university in Austria. It covers a wide spectrum, from pure research and the fundamental principles of science to applied technological research and partnership with industry. TU Wien links theory and application and thus adds value to both research and teaching. Open Science and Open Research Data is a key value to TU Wien. It has recently established a new Centre for Research Data Management, bridging the boundaries between the central computing facilities, the library and information services, the Research and Transfer Services Units, as well as the research faculties. TU Wien is further an institutional member of RDA Austria. TU Wien is a member of TU Austria, the network of all technical universities in Austria. TU Wien hosts and operates the Vienna Scientific Cluster (VSC), which is a collaboration of several Austrian universities that provides supercomputer resources and corresponding services to their users. Installed in 2014, it is a throughput-oriented general-purpose Linux cluster with approximately 2,000 compute nodes and a few special-purpose nodes such as GPUs, ranking a position 85 in the top-500 list at the time of installation. It further hosts and operates data centres such as the Earth Observation Data Centre, offering Petabytes of data and access to Teraflops of computational power.

The University of Vienna, which was profoundly involved in these projects, has been a technology leader in the Austrian academic sector for the last 10 years. The Vienna University Library provides various service infrastructures in order to support members of the university and offers data managing and archiving solutions with a focus on mid-term and long-term preservation of digital resources and research data. In addition, it is continually transferring know-how and technology to 16 academic institutions in five European countries and to the national funding body FWF. From June 2015–June 2017, the library was a partner in the H2020 project LEARN and took lead in the work package "Policy Development and Alignment". One of the two Austrian National E-IRG Delegates is based at Vienna University Library and is member of the Board of RDA Aus-

tria. Vienna University Computer Center is the largest academic computer center in Austria. The department is responsible for the central network, telecommunication and IT infrastructures of the University. It is the leading unit of the cooperative infrastructures of Austria like the Vienna Internet eXchange, the Austrian national research and education network (Austrian Academic Computer Network – ACONet) which also operates the ACONet CERT, the Computer Emergency Response Team. The Computer Center maintains strong involvement in software development for research and e-learning software.

SBA Research is a research center for Information Security funded partly by the national initiative for COMET Competence Centers for Excellent Technologies. Within a network of more than 70 companies, 15 Austrian and international universities and research institutions, and many additional international research partners we jointly work on research challenges ranging from organizational to technical security to strengthen Europe's Cybersecurity capabilities. It is involved in numerous initiatives regarding research data infrastructures, including investigations of infrastructure security, the development of reproducibility platforms, long-term accessibility of digital information.

IVOCAT is a legal consulting firm specializing in legal and ethical issues, intellectual property management, terms of use for digital eco-systems, data protection, copyright and IT management. It has a long-standing involvement with the research data community and on-going cooperation with several stakeholders in Austria.

4.3. Composition of Member Forum

At the 1st RDA Austria Member Forum on 2 March 2018, the association registered 28 individual members from various Austrian research institutions in five provinces as well as two institutional members, with a third institutional member having joined in June 2018. RDA Austria strives for orderly growth and would like to go beyond the academic field and specifically address people from public and industrial data centres, domains scientists as well as representatives from funding organisations and politics. The individual members come from 15 different Austrian research institutions and organisations (among them five Austrian universities and the Austrian Academic Computer Network). They represent many different disciplines and cover various fields of expertise:
  – Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
  – ACONet (Austrian Academic Computer Network)

- AUSSDA – The Austrian Social Science Data Archive
- Climate Change Center Austria (CCCA)
- Earth Observation Data Center (EODC)
- IST Austria
- IVOCAT
- Know-Center Graz
- Open Knowledge Maps
- TU Wien
- University of Graz
- University of Innsbruck
- University of Salzburg
- University of Vienna
- Vorarlberger Landesbibliothek
- ZAMG

5. Sustainability plans

Individual memberships are preferred over institutional memberships because it is perceived that the success of a network will depend on the initiative and commitment of individuals, which will also become members of RDA Global. However, as research institutions are key stakeholders, RDA Austria does include them as well on an institutional level. RDA Austria is financed by nominal membership fees. This membership fee, while not providing significant operational funds, is seen as a clear sign of commitment both by the members to contribute to joint activities as well as by RDA Austria to serve the needs of its members. Further funding sources and larger numbers of institutional and project specific contributions will allow the association to grow its activities in a focused manner.

Immediately after its inception, RDA Austria has drawn a lot of interest both from individual researchers as well as institutions. Without a broad marketing initiative, RDA Austria has received numerous membership requests. As of July 2018, there were three institutional memberships:
- TU Wien
- TU Graz
- Know-Center Graz

RDA Austria plans to grow in a slow, sustainable way, with a strategic approach. For further expansion, RDA Austria is particularly interested in including industry partners, SMEs and also large data centres from Austria.

In order to foster cross-border communication and to ensure a thorough exchange with the RDA Global network, the language for documentation will be primarily English.

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1   https://www.rd-alliance.org/groups/rda-austria