Memorandum of Understanding between the Research Data Alliance (RDA) and the Global Alliance for Genomics and Health (GA4GH)

April 2024

The Research Data Alliance (RDA) and the Global Alliance for Genomics and Health (GA4GH) are organizations with related missions. Whereas RDA builds the social and technical bridges that enable open sharing and re-use of data, the mission of GA4GH is to accelerate progress in human health by establishing a shared global approach to responsible, broad, and democratised use of genomic and related health data. GA4GH focuses on advancing human health through genomic data. Coordination between the organisations, particularly focused on synergistic activities, will be beneficial to RDA and GA4GH and their stakeholders, as well as to the activities themselves.

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to state clearly the intention of GA4GH and RDA to cooperate and coordinate their efforts in areas of mutual interest. Moreover, the MoU defines the conditions under which RDA and GA4GH will cooperate and coordinate their efforts in these areas in order to promote a successful working partnership and to avoid duplication and conflict. This document is not legally binding.

1. RDA aims to accelerate international data-driven innovation and discovery by facilitating research data sharing and exchange. This is achieved through the development, adoption, and deployment of infrastructure, policy, practice, standards, and other deliverables. The emphasis of RDA is the adoption and deployment of research data solutions, rather than the development of new infrastructure. The work of RDA is primarily undertaken through its Communities of Practice (CoPs), Working and Interest groups. Participation in Working Groups (WGs) and Interest Groups (IGs), starting new WGs, IGs and CoPs, and attendance at the RDA community focused plenary meetings is open to all individuals who subscribe to the RDA Guiding Principles[1] and Code of Conduct[2].

2. The Global Alliance for Genomics and Health (GA4GH) is the international standards organization for genomics. Its mission is to accelerate progress in human health by establishing a shared global approach to responsible, broad, and democratised use

[1] RDA Guiding Principles: Openness, Consensus, Inclusivity, Harmonization, Community-driven, and Non-profit and technology-neutral. For complete details see https://www.rd-alliance.org/about-rda

[2] RDA Code of Conduct: https://rd-alliance.org/rda-code-conduct-and-how-report-breach

of genomic and related health data. Formed in 2013, GA4GH unites an international community dedicated to advancing human health through genomic data. We build technical standards and policy guidance that will expand responsible, voluntary, and secure use of genomic and other related health data. All of its work builds on the Framework for Responsible Sharing of Genomic and Health Related Data.

3. GA4GH will become an Organizational Affiliate of RDA. As defined by the RDA Organizational Member Process Document[3], RDA Affiliates are like minded organizations that seek to coordinate efforts in mutual areas of interest and to avoid unnecessary duplication or conflict.

4. RDA will become a Strategic Partner of GA4GH, with the rights and obligations of members as enumerated in GA4GH's constitution and membership agreement, available at ga4gh.org, and amended from time to time.

5. It is the intention of RDA to contribute to GA4GH and to collaborate with its governing bodies. In particular,
   - Provide frequent, timely and strategic updates to GA4GH's Executive staff on RDA plans and activities
   - Provide tailored communications on RDA activities that are of direct and relevant interest to GA4GH members on a frequent basis
   - Promote relevant GA4GH news, activities and events to the RDA international community
   - Offer GA4GH the same benefits as organisational members of RDA, in terms of publishing job application notifications which will be posted free of charge on the RDA web site and to its members worldwide;

6. It is the intention of GA4GH to contribute to RDA, and to collaborate with its Council, Regional Advisory Board, and Technical Advisory Board. In particular, GA4GH shall endeavour to send a representative to at least one RDA Plenary meeting each year and shall present a summary of recent and relevant organizational activities. A GA4GH representative will be invited to attend the Organizational Assembly session(s), to vote in Organizational Advisory Board elections, and to run for, and be elected to, the Organizational Advisory Board.

7. GA4GH and RDA may:
   a. Organise, where feasible and relevant to GA4GH & RDA communities, joint webinars, workshops and events. In the spirit of good partnership, both organizations will make their best efforts to coordinate these joint activities

[3] https://www.rd-alliance.org/get-involved/organisational-membership

and to communicate on issues pertaining to them. Such joint activities will also be promoted and publicised as being collaborative in official GA4GH and RDA documents and communication media.

b. Agree on a process for approving joint activities, such as working groups, (that doesn't unnecessarily duplicate effort or complicate existing processes)
c. Reach out to one another upon receiving work proposals relevant to the other entity before establishing a new working group to determine if work is already ongoing in the area and whether work should be pursued jointly. For RDA, this may include proposals related to human genomics; for GA4GH, this may include proposals that are out of scope or domain agnostic.
d. Ensure effective ongoing communication through (i) virtual meetings of RDA and GA4GH leadership at least twice per year, (ii) sharing updates and announcements with one another's networks when appropriate, (iii) joining one another's regular meetings, such as the quarterly GA4GH Steering Committee meeting and the monthly RDA General Assembly meeting, and (iv) sending delegates to one another's annual plenary meetings.

8. There will be no financial considerations on either side, and both organizations will refrain from using each other's logos and trademarks to make direct financial profit without explicit authorization from the respective governing body.

9. This MoU will enter into force upon signature by both parties and will continue until either organization records its express wish to terminate it. It will be reviewed annually.

10. This MoU is to be signed between RDA and GA4GH by the respective heads of organizations or their authorized delegates.

SIGNED
(On behalf of GA4GH)

Date: 15-04-2024
Name: Peter Goodhand
Position: CEO

SIGNED
(On behalf of RDA)

Hilary Hanahoe
Secretary General
Research Data Alliance

Date: 11-04-2024
Name: Hilary Hanahoe
Position: Secretary General