Consortia Advancing Standards in Research Administration Information (CASRAI)

PRESENTER NAME

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OVERVIEW AND GOALS

CASRAI is an international nonprofit organization with a mandate to help solve the persistent and expensive problem of 'disconnect' between organizational stakeholders in the research enterprise.

The modern research enterprise is highly collaborative, distributed and partnership-driven. Collaborations and partnerships span multiple disciplines, sectors, organizations and jurisdictions. For this collaborative research ecosystem to function there are myriad 'research administration' processes at every stage of the research lifecycle that must be managed. In CASRAI parlance 'research administration' means any work processes that are necessary to the overall research enterprise but that are not actually 'doing research'.

For research teams this includes (but is not limited to) finding & securing collaborators, developing & iterating project proposals, engaging industry partners, applying & reporting to multiple funders, serving on committees, managing compliance (ethics, biohazards, animal care), finding & accessing infrastructure, interacting with publishers and libraries, disseminating to new channels and translating results into broader societal impacts. The research funders and institutions are crucial stakeholders in these work processes and they are mandated to focus on quality, productivity, accountability & societal returns in their roles as stewards of public and private investment in the sector.

This 'administrative ecosystem' is complex and decentralized by nature. While we are massively dependent on good research administration information flowing within and between organizations we are chronically unable to share and reuse data.

CASRAI exists to play a crucial piece in a larger puzzle aimed at solving this problem and during a time of increased budget pressure and unprecedented opportunities arising from decentralized digital exchanges and data-driven processes

STRUCTURE OF PROJECT

CASRAI is a member-based nonprofit network of stakeholder organizations in the research enterprise. It is organized into self-governing but integrated national constituencies (ie CASRAI-CA, CASRAI-UK, CASRAI-US, etc.). Each national constituency is organized into an Executive Council, Standards Committee and Review Circle. The Standards Committee convenes project-based Working Groups to undertake standards tracks that are linked to the national priorities identified by the Executive Council (in consultation with the wider community). The outputs of the Working Groups are vetted in annual cycles by a representative Review Circle before they are approved by that national constituency and promoted into the online CASRAI dictionary. National working groups are mandated to first consult the current dictionary and to only add new terms or extensions to existing terms if the gap exists with their national requirements. On an annual basis the leadership of each national constituency communicates to its international counterparts on the progress they've made adding elements to the dictionary. International suppliers then implement the dictionary into their software solutions in order to enable a business network of information exchange between any two organizations.

A key element in the CASRAI structure is the active engagement with the other organizations around the world that also play key roles in solving this problem. ORCID and euroCRIS (fellow presenters) are two such collegial organizations but there are many others that need to integrate and coordinate their mandates to solve the complete puzzle. Persistent identifiers for key entities like People, Projects, Outputs and Organizations are key success factors in the value of the standards dictionary (hence integration with orgs like ORCID and the DOI Foundation). Also key are stable and performant 'blueprints' for technological implementation of common concepts in our databases (hence integration with orgs like euroCRIS and VIVO/Duraspace).

PARTICIPATION

CASRAI welcomes members of the following types:
1. Funders. Organizations with a primary mandate to fund research. Examples include government agencies, charitable or private sector funders.
2. Institutions. Organizations with a primary mandate to directly host and facilitate research. Examples include universities and colleges (and their libraries), research centres and teaching hospitals.
3. Partners. Organizations that work with researchers, funders and institutions in the research domain. Examples include professional associations and scholarly societies but also policy or statistical agencies.
4. Suppliers. Organizations that provide products or services to funders, institutions and partners. Examples include software vendors and systems integrators but also publishers and infrastructure hosts.
5. Industry. Organizations that partner with research institutions to bring new knowledge to market.

MAIN CONTRIBUTION TO MEASURING SCIENCE

A key subset of research administration is the measurement of scientific and scholarly activity. CASRAI standards, where implemented, contribute greater data-quality and data-accessibility when that data is collected and stored across a multiplicity of databases, organizations, and national jurisdictions. CASRAI helps reduce the risks of GIGO (garbage-in-garbage-out) in our common efforts to quantify and measure the key elements of the enterprise (people, projects, orgs, infrastructure, outputs, impacts).

NEXT STEPS

- Advancing new national constituencies beyond CA, UK and US
- Advancing and internationalizing the contents of the online standards dictionary
- Implementing the 'connectors' that must attach to our databases in order to start the data flows.