# Summary of UK TRE working group session on SDE / TRE Definitions

09/01/2024 Zoom call:

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## Summary:

Seventeen attendees (25 registered), covering commissioning through to technical architecture and delivery of SDE/TREs, discussed the scope and remit of the statement, following an explanation of its naissance by Pete Barnsley / Madalyn Hardaker (Leads of Working Group) – see slides. There were a wide range of viewpoints expressed, all very supportive of the need for an internal community semantic definition set.

“We are where we are, we need to look forward, working towards getting a more standard understanding of terms used by the community”, “SDEs and TREs are different, although they can be one and the same”, “what language do we need to have the productive and collaborative conversations”

“Different groups (Public / NHS) like SDE rather than TRE because it sounds/infers a less academic context”, “The use of the word Trust has implied meaning and inference, “trust trickles in, leaves on a bullet train”, it is earned and given by citizens.”

“I fully agree that a semantic meaning for these terms is needed”, “it is not a glossary collation exercise, we have many of these”, “it is about capturing semantics of these terms so we can reason about these things in the same way”, ”it is also not about how the public or how existing SDE/TREs communicate”,” at this stage it is about communicating within this UK TRE internal community”, “but showing where the same term is used in context and the definition is different because of context is an additional possible output”

“We need to be very mindful that the use of SDE / TRE in discussions asking for input may selectively engage people – they will not see it is them as they do not use that specific term”

“We need to make sure we test whether such terms will run into immovable problems if used externally with the public or other bodies”.

“There may be a baseline set of things we gai agreement on, and a more ambitious set where there is more push back”, “getting reactive responses to a proposal is likely to have more success that asking for input”, ”understanding what level, 50/50 or 99/1 agreement there is will be powerful”, “if we cannot agree then how are we as a community helping UK research be the best it can be”.

**SDE/TRE Definition model: Associated Info from participants**

Formal Ontologies: <https://tre-provenance.github.io/SHP-ontology/releases/v0.2/index-en.html>

EOSC via ELIXIR: <https://elixir-europe.org/focus-groups/eosc>

**Slides shared on session:**



Page 1: Illustration of today with SDE/TREs combined in the partially aggregated data domain.

Page 2: Proposal separating the TRE form the SDE and positioning it within the Trusted Research Edge Domain adjacent to the RPO Research Discovery Domain.

Page 4: A suggested outline draft for the definitions – to be worked on later

Page 3: Agenda for event

## Possible form of a Discussion Paper from this Working group:

Below is an indicative structure for a document to share with the UK TRE community and publish. It would be positioned as a discussion document and not policy. Please comment and critique.

**Why clear definitions are needed:**

An explanation of key reasons why this working group is important to the space overall and the UK TRE community.

**What are the similarities and differences between SDEs and TREs?**

An explanation for why SDEs and TREs are different.

**What are the proposed Definitions**?

Pictures and words that explain the set of “top-level” things (e.g. SDE / TRE, Project) and why they are different from the other things but link with them in a working ecosystem.

**How could this affect Information Governance (IG) processes?**

An outline discussion of the impact on a generalised IG process: the things that will remain the same; the things that will need to change; the things that may need to change; and possible options and advantages that result.

**How does this affect federation models and other working groups such as that looking at Citizen Agency?**

An outline / explanation of the implications of the agency options on how SDE/TREs are federated and the equivalent for any other working groups that have relevance.

**The level of Agreement within the UK TRE Community.**

How much agreement is there within the wide UK TRE community on these definitions? And what is the basis of any disagreement.

## Suggested Scope statement for Working Group

The SDE/TRE Working group is focussed on clarifying the terms used WITHIN the UK TRE community.

As a first phase, it will not aim to influence how existing facilities present themselves, nor how the public understands them.

Specific focus centres on the Secure Date Environment / Trusted Research Environment terms and things directly associated with these areas, the research objects and process.

It is not about a Glossary of terms, it is more about the semantic meaning of the terms, aimed at clarifying what makes things different.

Its first general aim is to be able to quantify how divergent the UK TRE community is on the key parts – possibly using agree / disagree surveys to capture the level of consensus.