Established in August 2024, the Community of Practice (CoP) in Research and Innovation (R&I) Evidence and Analysis is a network of professionals who work with R&I data, policies and strategies. Led by the London School of Economics and Political Science, the CoP is unique due to its cross-sector reach, bringing together professionals working in universities, funders, mission groups, government, policy organisations and beyond.

Vision
The CoP aims to create an environment where research professionals view their roles and their outputs as part of the metascience landscape and consequently pursue projects and initiatives which join up existing academic work with emerging practiced-based approaches.

Mission
The CoP facilitates training, networking and cross-sector collaboration, creating opportunities to showcase innovations in areas such as data creation and curation, the use of emerging technologies in the interrogation of R&I data, the role of R&I evidence in institutional or cross-sector policy-making, and evolving practice-based metascience projects and ideas.

Priority areas 2025-2026
In the CoP's opening stages, the focus will be on building the visibility of the CoP to enhance the reputation of practitioner metascientists, establishing a regular programme of activities, and promoting cross-sector collaboration.

1. Building visibility
As of early 2025, the CoP has approximately 100 subscribers to its JiscMail list. This has been achieved through minimal advertising and promotion. The next stage of the CoP's development will increase visibility through enhancing the webpages and establishing social media channels. With the support of the steering group, the CoP will also increase communication with relevant stakeholders such funders, government, mission groups, professional bodies (eg. ARMA and Knowledge Exchange UK) and HEIs. The aim will be to enhance the reputation of practitioner metascientists amongst the wider metascience community, whilst also encouraging research professionals to adopt metascientific practices in their roles to help facilitate evidence-based decisions.

2. Training and development programme
The CoP will establish a programme of training, ranging from full day in-person workshops to one-hour online webinars. The programme of training will focus on analytical skills, R&I data challenges, and creating outputs which support strategic decision-making. Ideas for formats and topics will be gathered through a survey of JiscMail list members. The results will be analysed by the steering group who will design annual programmes. The CoP will host up to 6 events per year.

3. Cross-sector collaboration
All CoP activities will be designed with cross-sector partnerships in mind. The CoP will focus on finding areas for collaboration with the aim of creating shared approaches which will enhance data analysis across sectors. The CoP will focus on generating new practice-focused metascience projects which enhance data sharing across organisations to establish a more joined-up approach to R&I evidence and analysis.

4. Practice-based metascience
In recent years, the field of metascience has adopted more inclusive definitions of its boundaries and actors. There is an increasing understanding that professionals working with R&I data are regularly undertaking practice-focused metascience. The CoP will therefore generate new practice-focused project ideas whilst also work alongside existing groups such as the Metaresearch Special Interest Group within ARMA to promote research professionals as metascientists.