How to Propose a Change to RDA

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Status of RDA Change Process

- For original RDA, 2010-2016
  - Formal discussion papers and proposals considered by JSC/RSC: nearly 240
    - From constituent bodies, JSC/RSC working groups, and other standards bodies (including ISSN)
  - Fast track changes made to instructions, glossary, relationship designators, etc.: over 1,750
    - Count includes minor edits for capitalization, changing indentation, and correcting punctuation
- Process paused during 3R Project, 2017-2020
  - RSC needed a stable text to work from when creating official RDA
- For official RDA, 2021-
  - Formal proposals considered by RSC thus far: 9
    - From regional RDA committees, working groups, and RSC members
  - Fast track changes considered to date: 34 (not all were approved)
    - Count is by proposal, not by affected instructions or elements; does not include simple editorial corrections

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What Kinds of Changes?

- Must be to "base RDA"
  - RDA guidance chapters
  - RDA entity pages, element pages, glossary, and vocabulary encoding schemes
- Includes
  - Revisions
  - Additions
  - Deletions

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Changes not in Scope

- Changes that contradict the IFLA Library Reference Model (LRM)
- Changes that are not international in scope, including
  - Extensions of existing string encoding schemes
  - Additions to closed vocabularies
- Changes associated with soft deprecated elements
  - With the **Prerecording** paragraph: "The following option is recommended."
  - These elements will be considered for removal from official RDA in the next 3 years or so
- Creation of elements addressing administrative metadata
- Changes to the unconstrained element set in the RDA Registry
- Changes to policy statements, community resources, etc.
  - Not part of the RSC's responsibilities
    - Must be directed to the communities developing and maintaining them

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RDA Change Suggestions

- Suggested changes to RDA are
  - Reviewed by the Technical Working Group
    - Who confirm that the recommendation is technically and semantically compatible with RDA
  - Discussed and voted on by RSC members
  - Implemented in RDA if they are approved by a simple majority
- Except for the following, which do not require RSC approval
  - Simple editorial corrections
    - Implemented by RSC Secretary
  - MARC 21 mapping changes
    - Referred to the RDA/MARC 21 Alignment Task Force
  - Suggestions about examples
    - Referred to the RDA Examples Editor

Who are the RSC Voting Members?

Position holders

- RSC Chair
- Education and Outreach Officer
- RDA Examples Editor
- Technical Team Liaison Officer
- Translations Team Liaison Officer
- Wider Community Engagement Officer

Regional Representatives

- Europe
  - EURIG Representative
- North America
  - NARDAC Representative
- Oceania
  - ORDAC Representative

and future regional representatives from

- *Africa*
- *Asia*
- *Latin America and the Caribbean*

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Different Ways to Propose Changes

- RDA Toolkit feedback link

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  - Best for
    - Typos or errors in the text
    - Display issues
    - Reporting bad links
    - Complaints about existing Toolkit features
    - Suggestions for new or improved features in the Toolkit

- Submitted directly by Toolkit users
  - Triaged by RSC Secretary

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Different Ways to Propose Changes

- ***From*** you, your cataloging agency, your specialist community, or your national cataloging committee
  - ***To*** your regional RDA committee (EURIG, NARDAC, ORDAC) – as long as you have one
- Example
  - Catalogers in a particular institution identify a missing element
  - They write up the situation and one or more proposed solutions and submit it to the regional body
    - *Note:* in the U.S. (other than LC), this would first go to Core's Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access for discussion and vote
      - If approved, a version of the document would then go to NARDAC for discussion and vote
- If approved by the regional RDA committee, and if the changes meet the requirements for RSC consideration
  - A version of the document would then be submitted to the RSC

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Different Ways to Propose Changes

- ***From*** one or more catalogers or cataloging agencies who do not have a regional RDA committee
  - Currently any RDA users from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean
- They write up the situation and one or more proposed solutions and
  - Submit it ***to*** the RSC's Wider Community Engagement Officer (WCEO)
- If the suggested changes meet the requirements for RSC consideration, the WCEO submits the document to the RSC

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Different Ways to Propose Changes

- Directly *from* the regional RDA committee *to* the RSC
  - If the RSC representative volunteered their committee to work on a particular issue
    or
  - If the RSC assigned that community a particular problem to investigate
  - Up to the regional committee to determine the best way to proceed in terms of gathering feedback from their community

- Directly *from* the regional RSC representative *to* the RSC
  - If the RSC representative volunteered to work on a particular issue
    or
  - If the RSC assigned that representative a particular problem to investigate
  - Up to the regional representative to determine the best way to proceed in terms of gathering feedback from their community

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Different Ways to Propose Changes

- ***From*** RSC task and finish working groups
  - In response to their assigned tasks
  - Submitted directly ***to*** the RSC Chair
  - If the suggested changes meet the requirements for RSC consideration, the Chair submits the document to the RSC

- ***From*** information standards groups
  - Typically in relation to retaining alignment between their standard and RDA
  - Submitted directly ***to*** the RSC Chair
  - If the suggested changes meet the requirements for RSC consideration, the Chair submits the document to the RSC

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Proposer's Responsibilities

- Identify and analyze the problem
    - Consider and propose solutions

- Submit the document in English

- Make sure the suggested changes
    - Are in scope
    - Conform to the RDA Board's Internationalization Principles
    - Are compatible with the IFLA Library Reference Model
    - Are in harmony with the Objectives and principles governing RDA

- Work within your community to develop and refine
    - More reviewers and comments = more likelihood of success!

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RSC Member's Responsibilities

- In the initial stage
  - Consults with potential proposers, advising on
    - Scope
    - Content
    - Framing
    - Category of change

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March 27, 2023

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RSC Member's Responsibilities

- In the submission stage
  - Provides a gatekeeping role to ensure that suggested changes are in scope and merit RSC consideration
    - If not, returns the suggested changes to the proposer with an explanation
    - If so, submits the document to the Technical Working Group
    - If it is semantically compatible, the Technical Working Group sends to the RSC Chair and RSC Secretary

- The RSC Chair and Secretary give final confirmation that the suggested changes are appropriate for RSC discussion
  - If not, they notify the submitting RSC member and suggest next steps

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Four Categories of Changes to RDA

- Simple editorial changes (correction of typos, etc.)
  - Managed by RSC Secretary as identified; no review/approval needed
- Fast track changes
  - Modifications that do not have a broader impact
  - Approved/rejected by a vote of RSC
- Discussion papers
  - Explore a potential change
  - Discussed by RSC members, who identify next steps
- Change proposals
  - Make specific suggestions for changes
    - May present options
  - Must have votable propositions
  - Approved/rejected/redirected by a vote of RSC

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Best Practices for Change Suggestions

- Articulate use cases with well-formed RDA in mind

- Include a list of affected elements, and their inverses if applicable

- Use actionable links to RDA element pages, entity pages, and guidance chapters

- Refer to related RSC documents with document numbers as applicable

- Rely on element definitions, not element labels for understanding

- Include all implementation scenarios as applicable
  - Do not include restrictive assertions
  - Do not provide MARC 21 examples or include other encoding practices

- Be specific; include numbered recommendations
  - Do not include vague statements about next steps

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A Closer Look:
Fast Track Proposals

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Fast Track Scope

- A streamlined method for modifying RDA
  - Suggestions may originate from RDA users, RDA regional committees, RSC members, etc.
- Suggest improvements for consistency in wording or structure
  - If they go beyond simple editorial corrections
- Propose uncomplicated additions to [RDA Vocabulary Encoding Schemes](#)
- Recommend other straightforward changes without negative or significant impact on RDA users
- *Not in scope for fast track*
  - Changes to element labels
  - Changes to element hierarchies
  - Adding new options, or condition/option combinations

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Fast Track Procedures

- May be submitted at any time
- May be considered by the RSC at any time
  - Normally only one at a time
  - Done asynchronously, utilizing the RSC's Basecamp collaborative workspace
  - Typically discussed for one week, followed by a week-long voting period
- Timing depends on the fast track queue and overall workload of the RSC
  - Determined by the RSC Chair and RSC Secretary
- All RSC voting members participate; no written responses required
- Regional consultation at the discretion of the RSC regional representatives
- Not made available publicly during the discussion/voting phase
- Any RSC member may request a referral to the proposal process instead

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Fast Track Proposals Include...

- Title [element label, or summary]
- Name of proposer
- Change [description]
  - Be as short and concise as possible
  - Make it easy for RSC members to see what change is proposed
  - Describe your thinking/Show your work
  - Number recommendations, if applicable
- Marked-up version
- Clean version
- Background [if needed for context]
- Rationale [if needed]

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Fast Track Outcomes / Implementation

- RSC decisions
  - Accept as is
  - Revise
    - Accept with revisions suggested during the discussion period
  - Refer to the formal proposal process for a fuller review
  - Reject
- RSC Secretary tracks discussion and vote
  - Summarizes any significant issues raised during the discussion
  - Records the final decisions in an official RSC document
- Changes resulting from approved fast track proposals will be implemented in the next appropriate Toolkit release
- Listed in Toolkit's Revision History

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A Closer Look: Discussion Papers

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Discussion Paper Purpose

- Raise topics for RSC consideration before formal proposals are prepared
  - May suggest a need for investigation of issues related to RDA development
  - May identify issues related to other standards
  - Raise and address other questions, etc.
- Discussion papers are the recommended first step for suggesting substantial changes
  - Allows for RSC discussion and refinement of the issues at hand

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Discussion Papers Include…

- Abstract that explains the purpose

- Background statement

- Explanation of issues under discussion

- May include
  - Tentative recommendations
  - Analysis of the impact of making the potential changes
  - A list of additional considerations
  - Discussion questions

- Options need to be presented as votable propositions

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Discussion Paper Procedures

- May be submitted at any time
  - Reviewed by the Technical Working Group to assure sematic integrity with RDA
  - RSC Chair and RSC Secretary determine when it will be discussed
    - Must allow sufficient time for the RDA regional representative bodies and RSC members to translate (if applicable), consider, and comment on proposed changes
    - Will be discussed during a public session of an RSC meeting (either in person or virtually) to provide transparency and to benefit from public input

- Made available on the RSC website
  - Via the "Current RSC Documents" page
    - Additional page created for the discussion paper and responses to it, identified by the proposer
      - No examples for discussion papers for the official Toolkit yet

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RSC: Preparing for the Discussion

- Before the formal review
  - Space set up in RSC Basecamp site for informal discussion by RSC members
  - Regional representatives consult with their committees/communities
- Written responses due no later than two weeks before the public discussion date, submitted to RSC Chair and RSC Secretary
  - From all RSC voting members – required
    - Exceptions: submitter (or submitter's community), RSC Chair, and a position holder who has contributed to a regional committee's response
  - From RDA users, either as individuals or groups – optional
- The discussion paper may be revised based on feedback
  - Significant revisions may lead to a change in when the paper will be discussed by the RSC

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RSC: Formal Discussion

- RSC considers
  - Proposed changes and choices among options, if applicable
  - Responses from the regions
  - Responses from RSC members
  - Responses from other RDA users
  - Comments from "in-person" observers at the RSC meeting
- Submitting RSC member may withdraw the discussion paper at any time prior to the RSC's final decision
- RSC voting members determine next steps

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Discussion Paper Outcomes

- RSC decisions
  - Refer back to the proposing group or individual for further development or investigation
    - May include creating a formal proposal based on the RSC discussion
  - Refer to another appropriate group for more work
  - Defer to a later date
  - Reject
- The vote and any adjustments to the discussion paper will be recorded in an official RSC document
  - Proposing group or individual notified of the outcome
    - Including advancing a discussion paper to the proposal stage

A Closer Look: Proposals

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Proposal Purpose

- Formal recommendations to add, amend, or delete RDA content
  - Must be based on the latest release of the English language version of RDA from the official RDA Toolkit
- May be the next step from a discussion paper

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Proposals Include...

- Abstract that highlights the major changes of the proposal
- Justification for the suggested revision
  - Including a statement of the issue(s) requiring resolution
- Estimate of the impact of the proposal
  - Including the impact on policy statement writers and translators
  - Indication if other elements or guidance chapters would be affected
- Clearly identified and numbered recommendations specifying the changes
  - Framed as votable proposition
- Marked-up copy showing changes and corresponding clean copy
  - Use double underscore for additions, and strikeout for deletions instead of word processing software's "track changes" feature
- May articulate a minority position

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Proposal Procedures

- May be submitted at any time
  - Reviewed by the Technical Working Group to assure sematic integrity with RDA
  - RSC Chair and RSC Secretary determine when it will be discussed
    - Must allow sufficient time for the RDA regional representative bodies and RSC members to translate (f applicable), consider, and comment on proposed changes
    - Will be discussed during a public session of an RSC meeting (either in person or virtually) to provide transparency and to benefit from public input

- Made available on the RSC website
  - Via the "Current RSC Documents" page
    - Additional page created for the proposal and responses to it, identified by the proposer
      - Example: See RSC/EURIG/2021/1 – Proposal to adjust label, definition, and alternate labels for Expression: relief type

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RSC: Preparing for the Discussion

- Before the formal review
  - Space set up in RSC Basecamp site for informal discussion by RSC members
  - Regional representatives consult with their committees/communities
- Written responses due no later than two weeks before the public discussion date, submitted to RSC Chair and RSC Secretary
  - From all RSC voting members – required
    - Exceptions: submitter (or submitter's community), RSC Chair, and a position holder who has contributed to a regional committee's response
  - From RDA users, either as individuals or groups – optional
  - Must state whether the proposed changes are accepted or not, with an explicit response to each recommendation
- The proposal may be revised based on feedback
  - Significant revisions may lead to a change in when the proposal will be discussed by the RSC

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RSC: Formal Discussion

- RSC considers
  - Proposed changes and choices among options, if applicable
  - Responses from the regions
  - Responses from RSC members
  - Responses from other RDA users
  - Comments from "in-person" observers at the RSC meeting
- Revised/updated proposals may occasionally be presented during the RSC discussion
  - The RSC will be clear in their deliberations about which version of the proposal is under discussion
  - The RSC may decide to postpone discussion until a future meeting
- Submitting RSC member may withdraw the proposal at any time prior to the RSC's vote

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Proposal Outcomes

- RSC decisions
  - Accept
  - Revise
    - Based on feedback and discussion
  - Refer to a group or individual for more work
  - Reject
- The vote and any adjustments to the proposal will be recorded in an official RSC document
  - Proposing group or individual notified of the outcome
  - RSC member who submitted the proposal will review the related RSC Decisions document before it is posted on the RSC website

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Proposal Implementation

- Final decisions on all matters of wording or style are the responsibility of the RSC Secretary and the Technical Team Liaison Officer
- Changes resulting from approved proposals will be implemented in the next appropriate Toolkit release
  - Which may not be the next actual release based on additional workflow considerations
- RDA Reference data will be published in a GitHub release
- Translators and policy statement creators receive advance notification of pending changes
  - Along with the planned date of publication in the Toolkit

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Refined RDA Change Process
A Balancing Act

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2010-2016 RDA Change Process

Benefits

- Formal discussion papers and proposals shared on JSC/RSC website
    - Formal responses also shared
- Substantial time given for feedback from communities/cataloging agencies
    - Including time for translating proposals – especially useful for Europe
- Transparency in decision making

Drawbacks

- Difficult for regional constituencies to collaborate on a suggested change
- No opportunity for informal discussion in advance among JSC/RSC members
- Timings associated with translations of the proposals, feedback, etc., combined with the JSC/RSC annual meeting schedule meant that substantive changes to RDA could only be considered once per year

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The Updated Change Process

- Retains transparency
  - Formal discussion papers and proposals shared on RSC website
    - Along with responses to them
  - Deliberations and vote held during public RSC meetings
  - Outcomes posted on RSC website
- Encourages less formality in responses
  - Simple agreement
  - Instead of a document that formally thanks the proposer and then states agreement
- Supports informal discussion among RSC members before the scheduled deliberation
- Can be part of any of the RSC quarterly meetings
- *Anticipated:* Better support for collaborations among regional committees

A Closer Look

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Useful Documentation

- Documents which articulate RSC processes; reviewed and updated as needed on an annual basis
  - RSC/Operations/4 -- Policies and Procedures for Updating RDA Content
  - RSC/Operations/5 -- Guidelines for Discussion Papers, Proposals, and Responses to Them
- Successful post 3R proposals
  - Such as RSC/RSCSecretary/2022/1 – Proposal to improve consistency in "supertype" elements

Interpreting RSC Document Numbering

- All documents bear standard information in the upper right-hand corner of each page, with the following elements, separated by slashes
  - RSC
  - Brief name of proposing individual or group (e.g., Chair, NARDAC)
  - Year
  - Sequential number from the individual or group, by year
  - Date of the document in the form Day Month Year
  - Page number
  - An appropriate extension if the document is a response or revision
- No distinction in numbering between discussion papers and proposals since 2019

RSC Document Numbering Examples

- **RSC/TranslationsTLO/2022/1**
  - ○ The 1st proposal/paper from the Translations Team Liaison Officer in 2022 [in this case, a proposal]
  - ▪ **RSC/TranslationsTLO/2022/1/NARDAC Response**
  - ○ The NARDAC response to that proposal
  - ▪ **RSC/TranslationsTLO/2022/1/RSC Decisions/rev2**
  - ○ The 3rd revision of the final RSC Decisions document arising from that proposal

- **RSC/RSCSecretary/2022/4**
  - ○ The 4th proposal/discussion paper from the RSC Secretary in 2022 [in this case, a proposal]
  - ▪ **RSC/RSCSecretary/2022/4/rev**
  - ○ A revision of the proposal
  - ▪ **RSC/RSCSecretary/2022/4/rev/RSC Decisions/rev**
  - ○ The 2nd (and final) RSC Decisions document arising from the proposal

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2022 Fast Track Example

- FT2022-01: Place: preferred name of place / non-preferred script (Jan. 2022)
  - Originated from a comment on RDA-L in August 2021
  - RSC discussion included a significant revision – and one that the RSC wanted to follow
  - RSC voted to reject this version and try again
- FT2022-02: Revised Place: preferred name of place / non-preferred scripts (Feb. 2022)
  - Follow up revision of FT2022-01
  - No additional comments by RSC, since this incorporated suggestions from the earlier discussion
  - Voted to approve
  - Changes appeared in the March 2022 release

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2021 Proposal Example

- RSC/TechnicalWG/2021/1 –
Proposal for Realignment of Expression to Expression Relationship Elements
  - Arose from the Technical Working Group's analysis of the alignment between RDA and IFLA-LRM
  - Contained 9 recommendations; most were changes in the alignment and hierarchy of elements for relating two expressions
  - Shared with RSC and published on RSC website in June 2021
  - Discussed during July 2021 asynchronous RSC meeting
  - Revisions made as a result of the RSC discussion – twice
    - RSC/TechnicalWG/2021/1/rev (13 July 2021)
    - RSC/TechnicalWG/2021/1/rev2 (14 July 2021)
  - RSC approved …/rev2
  - Changes appeared in the December 2021 Toolkit release

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Keeping Track of Change Suggestions

- RSC website (http://www.rda-rsc.org)
  - Page for Current RSC Documents
    - **The** place to find recent RSC documentation of all kinds
      - Right now, recent = 2021-present
    - Section for *Recently Posted Documents*
      - Broken down by year
      - Includes proposals, discussion papers, and responses to them, as well as minutes, presentations, etc.
    - Section for *Proposals and Discussion Papers*
      - Further categorized by submitter
      - Includes proposals, discussion papers, and responses to them
  - Availability of proposals for review also included on the News and Announcements page
  - Also a log of changes to the site by year: http://www.rda-rsc.org/node/701

RDA Change Workflow
(Simplified)
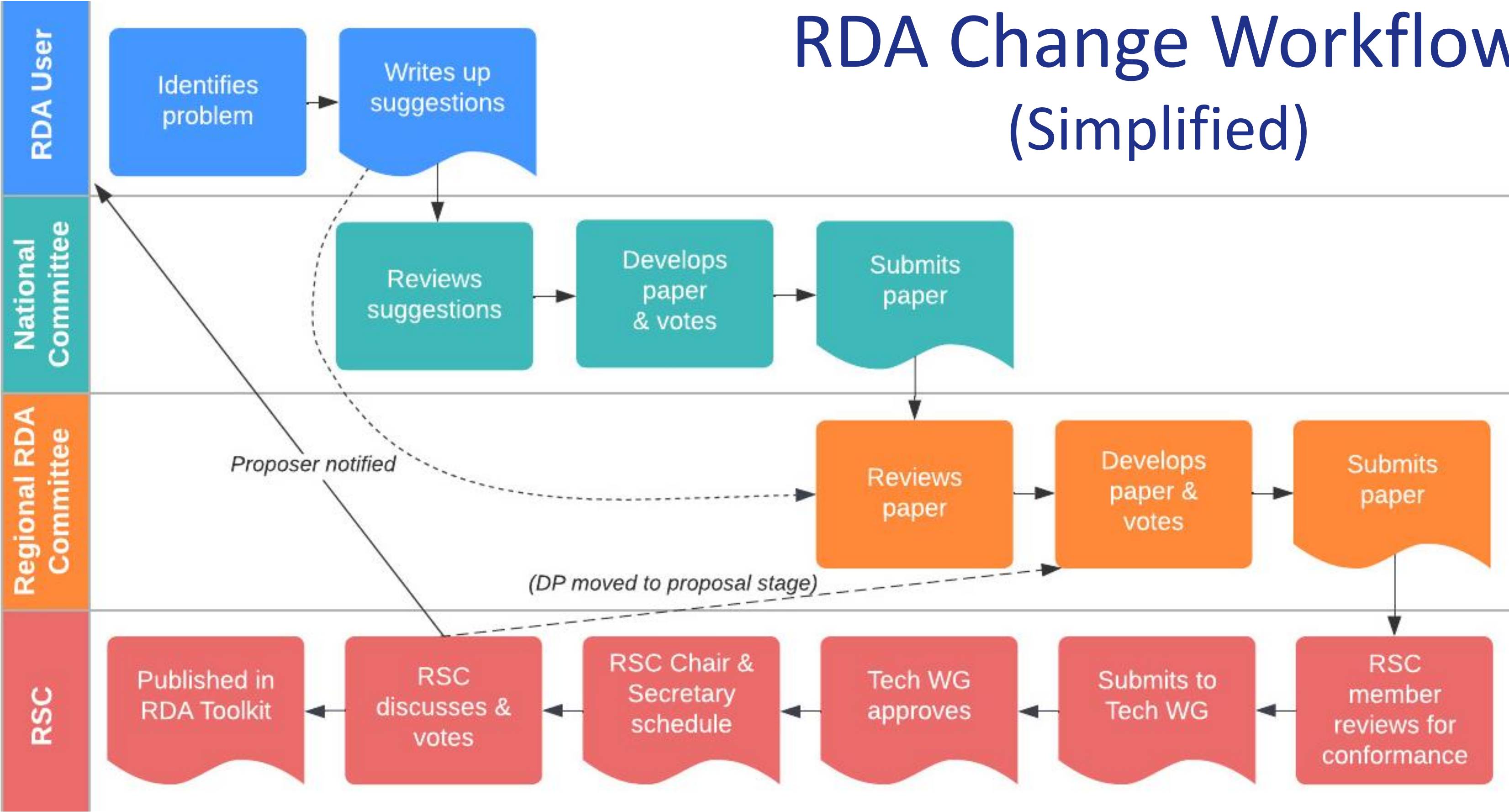
Questions? Ask now!

or email me later: kglennan@rdatoolkit.org

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