

Introduction to the RDA Board

RDA Governance and RDA Board

RDA Governance

- RDA Agreement

- RDA Copyright Holders Agreement

- RDA Fund

- Governance Model

RDA Board

- Structure

- Purpose and Roles

- Meetings and Communication

- 2026 Membership of the RDA Board

New standard, new governance

up to 2016	Committee of Principals and Joint Steering Committee (the infrastructure that had supported the Anglo- American Cataloguing Rules (AACR))
	Decision to develop a new governance structure for RDA to match its role as an international standard
2016-2017	Transitioning to the new governance model and new names
2018	RDA Board operating fully under the new model with full representation

RDA Infrastructure

RDA, the standard, and its continuing development is made possible because of the infrastructure that supports it.

Infrastructure:

- RDA Board

- RDA Steering Committee (RSC)

- ALA Digital Reference

Close cooperation among all three parts.

The RDA Agreement

- the foundational legal document
- work on this agreement began in 2017; final version signed in 2018
- specifies the transition from and termination of the past AACR legal documents
- sets out a high-level framework for RDA governance
- signed by the 3 copyright holder associations
- changes to the RDA Agreement require changes to a legal document and signatures of the appropriate officers from the 3 copyright holder associations
- <https://www.rdatoolkit.org/rdaboard/rda-governance>

Role of the Copyright Holders

- RDA Agreement begins with this statement:

“This RDA Agreement is made among the American Library Association (ALA), the Canadian Federation of Library Associations/La Fédération canadienne de bibliothèques (CFLA) and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) (together, the Copyright Holders).”

- First piece of infrastructure defined in the Agreement: Copyright Holders Committee

the 3 association representatives plus the ALA Digital Reference representative acting as chair

Copyright Holders' responsibilities

RDA Agreement 4.1:

Final responsibility for all policies and programs relating to RDA rules, the publication/dissemination of RDA, the affairs of subordinate bodies provided for in this Agreement, and all other aspects of the implementation of this Agreement shall rest with the Copyright Holders Committee in collaboration with the RDA Board.

- behind the scenes → significant legal role
- in practice → function seamlessly as part of the RDA Board
- on the public side → historically have maintained low visibility, so as not to reduce the focus on RSC

Two legal agreements

- RDA Agreement (2018)
- RDA Copyright Holders Agreement (last updated 2023)

The 2nd agreement – RDA Copyright Holders Agreement:

- focuses on legal and financial responsibilities
- royalties are paid first to the RDA Fund
- the Agreement determines the amount of royalties paid to the RDA Fund
- if annual income exceeds annual costs, royalties may also be paid to the Copyright Holder Associations according to the proportions set out in the Agreement (with ALA receiving the major share since it provides the major support)

RDA Fund

- RDA Fund is the fuel for RDA's continuing availability and development
- source of income = royalties, mainly from RDA Toolkit, and licensing fees for permissions
- legitimate expenses:
 - administrative support for RSC
 - development and research work
 - travel for in-person meetings
 - mitigate debts accrued by the Fund

RDA Fund trustees

- the RDA Fund trustees manage the RDA Fund
- one trustee representing each Copyright Holder association
- may be the same person as the Copyright Holder representative
- a representative for ALA Digital Reference is the chair and calls the meetings
- considered non-voting members of the RDA Board; in theory they may attend the RDA Board meetings; in practice, they focus on RDA Fund meetings

Governance Model document

- based on the content of the 2018 RDA Agreement
 - RDA Agreement = high-level overview
 - Governance Model = details on procedures, policies and structures that are derived or inferred from the RDA Agreement
- guides the functioning of the RDA infrastructure
- elaborates the base requirements in the legal Agreement to ensure an infrastructure that is efficient and fit for purpose
- also acts as a starting point for operations documents
- <https://www.rdatoolkit.org/rdaboard/rda-governance>

Governance Model document (2)

- a policy document; not a legal document
- the document is maintained by the RDA Board
- can be amended by the RDA Board in consultation with RSC as long as the changes do not contravene any of the specifications in the RDA Agreement
- all changes reflect decisions to adjust the governance structure while remaining in accordance with the principles in the 2018 RDA Agreement

for example,

changing length of terms for National Institution representatives from 3 to 4 years

adding the positions of incoming and past Chair of the RDA Steering Committee

RDA Board

From the introduction of the Governance Model document:

“The RDA Board is a decision-making body responsible for the strategic direction for the development of RDA. A key part of its mandate is ensuring good governance for all the committees engaged with the development of RDA.”

- the document also outlines a series of 6 principles that should shape the way that the Board makes decisions on governance:

Flexible

Internally coordinated

Future-focused

Inclusive

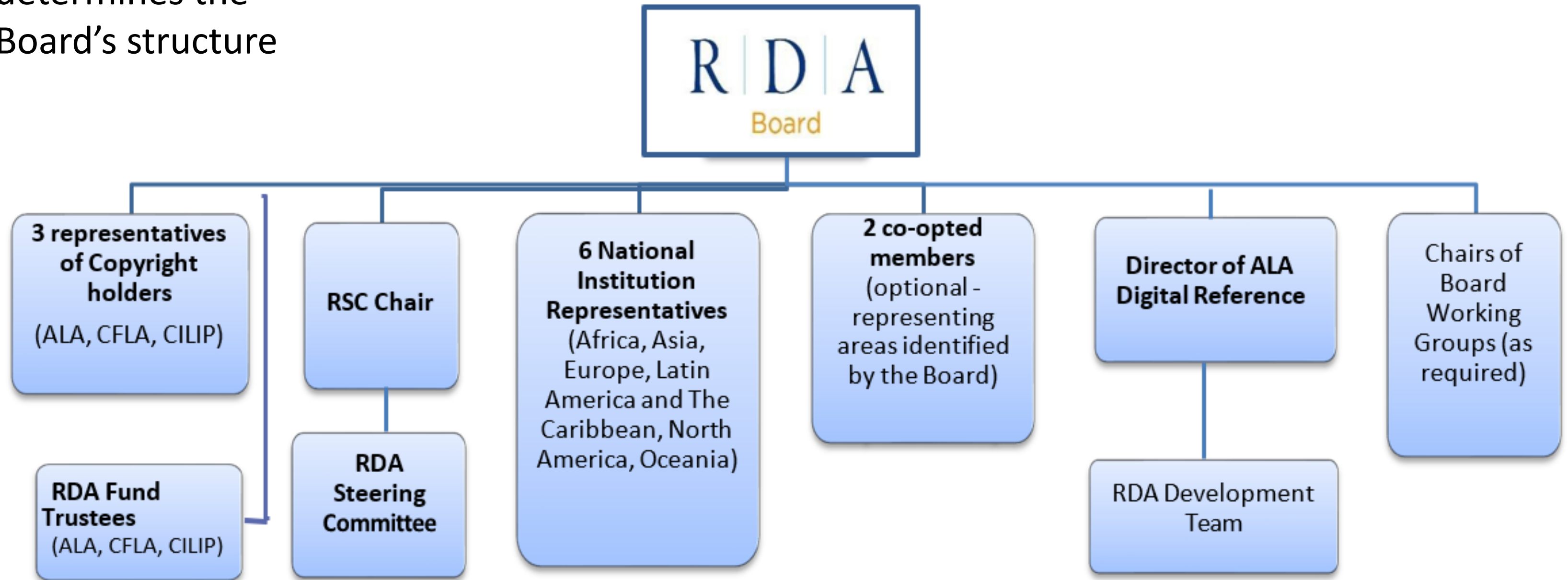
Sustainable

Collaborative

RDA Board members

- 3 Copyright Holder representatives
- ALA Digital Reference representative (called ALA Publishing representative in the Agreement) *ex officio*
- 6 National Institution representatives
- RSC Chair *ex officio*
- RDA Fund trustees *ex officio* (in practice, rarely attend Board meetings)
- up to 2 co-opted members
- working groups as needed

Governance Model determines the Board's structure



Copyright Holder Representatives

- members of the Copyright Holders Committee in practice function mainly within the framework of the RDA Board
- undertake the work of the RDA Board in the same way as other Board members
- as a “Committee”, they usually meet only once a year; often before a Board meeting so that there is immediate reporting to the Board
- occasionally consulted on an urgent issue identified by the ALA Digital Reference representative

Role of the Copyright Holder reps

- provide an administrative structure for the Board:
 - responsible for overall governance and financial oversight
 - responding to imminent risks
 - ensuring the strategic plan is relevant and up-to-date
 - the role of chair of the RDA Board rotates among the 3 Copyright Holder representatives

National Institution (NI) Representatives

- one from each of the 6 regions
- each representative serves one 4-year term
- intention is to circulate among all eligible institutions in a region
- criteria for selection: eligibility of the institution and qualifications of the individual
 - institution: has implemented RDA or about to implement RDA within calendar year
 - individual: familiar with RDA, experience with bibliographic control, cataloguing management
- focus on “national institutions” because of their leadership role in their communities
- recruited and approved by the Board

Role of NI Representatives

- unique role of the NI reps is to bring forward regional intelligence and perspectives
 - represent the region; indicate issues and concerns
 - provide insight about the impact, challenges and opportunities
 - help raise the profile of RDA in their region
- NI representatives also share in the governance and strategy roles of the Board as a whole
 - contribute to the development and delivery of the RDA Board strategic plan
 - ensure that the overall governance of the standard continues to support internationalization

Communication and meetings

- like the Copyright Holders Committee, the RDA Board has historically not had a highly visible role: behind the scenes and supporting the RSC
- becomes visible when needed to lend weight to decisions such as the countdown clock and retirement of the original RDA Toolkit
- RDA Board meets four times a year
- relies on Basecamp as the main means of communication among members
- asynchronous meetings over a week with one video call within that week

Examples of topics discussed by RDA Board

- the countdown clock and reactions to its start
- agreement to changing the post of Education and Orientation Officer from a temporary, co-opted two-year position to a permanent named position on the RDA Steering Committee
- exploring sustainable business models that would provide viable alternatives to the subscription model
- updating the strategic plan and ensuring that internationalization remains a key focus
- giving attention to the regional concerns and issues identified by the NI representatives

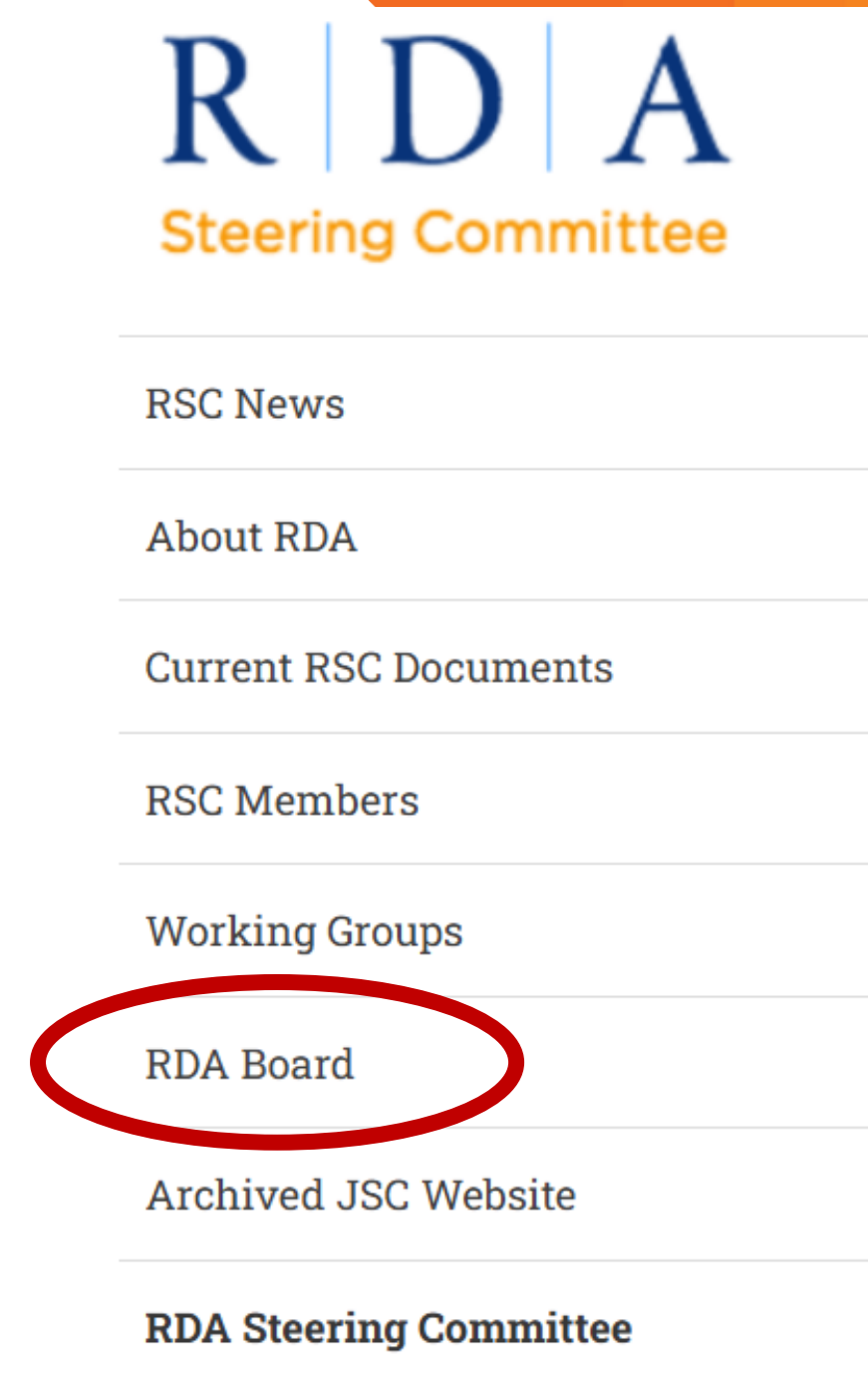
Finding the RDA Board website

- true to its role of not seeking the limelight, the RDA Board website is also not prominently visible, but it is publicly accessible
- <https://www.rdatoolkit.org/rdaboard>
- navigation:
(1) in the footer of any [rdatoolkit.org](https://www.rdatoolkit.org) web pages



Finding the RDA Board website (2)

- navigation:
(2) select “RSC” on the top banner of any rdatoolkit.org web pages and then RDA Board appears in the RSC navigation menu



2026 membership of the RDA Board

ALA Digital Reference

James Hennelly

Copyright Holder reps

Colleen Barbus for ALA

Jenny Wright for CILIP

Chris Oliver for CFLA (chair, 2026-2027)

NI representatives

Rania Osman for Africa

Hui Ling Ng for Asia

Hannes Lowagie for Europe

Ángela Quiroz Ubierna for Latin America and the Caribbean

Thi Bao Tran Phan for North America

Laura Jamieson for Oceania

2026 membership of the RDA Board (2)

RSC Chair Renate Behrens

To support smooth transitions between incoming and outgoing members, there are intentional overlaps in membership at certain points close to transitions.

Incoming RSC Chair Robert Maxwell

RDA Fund Trustees Rachel Hendrick, American Library Association
Chris Oliver, Canadian Federation of Library Associations
Andrew James, Facet Publishing, CILIP