# RDA Governance Model

## 1 Introduction

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.[1]

This document describes the governance model. The described model is based on the foundational legal document, the RDA Agreement 2018, signed by the three Copyright Holders: the American Library Association, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.

## 2 Principles for the governance model

- Flexible
  *The Board is open to different ways of working to achieve the strategic plan.*
- Future-focused
  *The Board will be responsible for developing and achieving the strategic plan.*
- Sustainable
  *The Board will ensure that the governance structure is effective and efficient.*
- Internally coordinated
  *The Board will build and sustain coordinated action and communication between the bodies that constitute the governance structure, especially between the Board and the RDA Steering Committee.*
- Inclusive
  *The Board will seek to reflect different communities in line with the strategic plan (e.g. non-English speaking communities, cultural heritage sector, data communities).*
  *The Board will work to extend the diversity of the community using RDA.*
- Collaborative
  *The Board will work with and draw on the expertise of other groups and organizations*

[1] The RDA Board was formerly called the Committee of Principals and changed name in 2016.

## 3 RDA governance model

The governance model is designed to ensure participation from all regions of the globe. The model refers to six regions based on the UN geographic regions: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm
The six geographic regions are: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Oceania.

Any country on the border with another region can ask to be covered by a different region if it makes sense because of language or a history of partnership work. Such requests should be discussed with the Chair of the RDA Board and Chair of the RDA Steering Committee.[2]

The governance model is also designed to ensure coordinated action and communication between the two principal bodies, the RDA Board and the RDA Steering Committee, in order to achieve strategic plans fully and efficiently.

## 4 RDA Board

The RDA Board is responsible for setting the strategic direction for the development of RDA. They sign off development plans, ensure good governance, monitor risks and finance and ensure that the strategic plan is achieved. They also have a role to play in raising the profile of RDA in their region.

Membership of the RDA Board:

- Representatives of the three Copyright Holders
- Representative from ALA Publishing (non-voting)
- Chair of the RDA Steering Committee (non-voting)
- Six National Institution representatives, one from each of the geographic regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Oceania)
- RDA Fund Trustees (non-voting)

There is the possibility of adding two co-opted representatives if needed.

For a diagram, see Appendix 1.

[2] Any approved changes will be documented on the website of the RDA Toolkit.

### 4.1 Copyright holders

Three associations hold the copyright for RDA: American Library Association (ALA), Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) and Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). Each copyright holder will have a representative on the Board.

Association representatives represent the interests of the Copyright Holders and are responsible for overall governance and budget control.

The selection of the Copyright holder representative is the responsibility of the individual association.

#### 4.1.1 Chair of RDA Board

The Chair of the RDA Board will rotate between the three Copyright Holders. The Chair's term will be two years with an optional extension of an additional term.

The term of the RDA Board Chair will run 1st January – 31st December

The terms of the RDA Board Chair and RSC Chair will be staggered to avoid both post holders stepping down at the same time.

### 4.2 Chair of RDA Steering Committee

The current Chair of the RDA Steering Committee sits on the RDA Board to act as the liaison between the Board and Steering Committee and as an adviser to the Board.

### 4.3 National Institution representatives

Each of the geographic regions will have a National Institution Representative on the Board.

A national institution is defined as a national agency which has implemented RDA or will have implemented RDA within a calendar year.

RDA Board will publish guidance for the selection process.

National Institutions may be a National Library or a National Bibliographic Agency (as defined by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)):

> *"…the organizational unit established within a country's library system, which undertakes responsibility for the preparation of the authoritative and comprehensive bibliographic records for each new publication issued in the*

*country, making the records in accordance with accepted international bibliographic standards and publishing them with the shortest possible delay* "[3]

The National Institution representative serves for a four-year term. The intention of the RDA Governance Model is that the role of regional representation rotates among the qualifying National Institutions in the region. However, during the selection process, it may become evident that there are no alternative National Institutions that qualify when using the IFLA definition. In such a case, the RDA Board will also consider applications from a major library or service in the region that meets this criterion: a major library or service that provides national or international leadership in metadata creation through its policies and work on standards, as well as the preparation of comprehensive bibliographic records.

As interest in RDA adoption widens out to other sectors, it is expected that the RDA Board will also investigate broadening the definition. For example, a National Institution might also include a national archival institution:

"*Central archive directorates, federal archival institutions, or national archival institutions that are governed by primary legislation and are responsible for the development of national or federal archival policies and programmes"*

(International Council on Archives)[4]

### 4.3.1 Role of the National Institution representative

The role of the representative is:

- To represent the region and to bring forward to the Board the interests and concerns shared by RDA implementers in that region
- To provide the RDA Board with insight into the impact, challenges and opportunities related to RDA implementation and any other relevant feedback, presenting the perspectives of the National Institution represented, other National Institutions and other institutions in the region that have implemented or are considering the adoption of RDA.
- To contribute to the development and delivery of the RDA Board strategic plan for the development of RDA.
- To contribute to the overall governance of the standard including oversight of strategy, delivery, finance and risks.

[3] IFLA International Office for UBC. *Guidelines for the National Bibliographic Agency and the National Bibliography.* Paris: UNESCO, December 1979, p. 7. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000048658

[4] International Council of Archives. International Council of Archives Constitution. Approved 20 October 2021. Section 3.3.1.1. https://www.ica.org/discover-ica/our-mission-our-objectives/

- To help raise the profile of RDA in their region.

### 4.3.2 Selection process and term

National Institution representatives serve for a single four-year term. The process for application and selection is documented in Appendix 3.

The duties of National Institution representatives will also include:

- Ex officio attendance of the final 1-2 meetings of their predecessor's term, in order to familiarize the new National Institution representative with the RDA Board meeting process.
- A period of assistance to their successor that extends for 6 months after the end of their term. This assistance should include briefing the successor on current issues facing the Board, ongoing outreach projects in their region, and other activities. They should also provide an introduction to the regional committee if present.

The selection process will usually take place in June of the year before the term is due to start.

The selection of the National Institution representative is based on two criteria:

a) The eligibility of the National Institution
b) The qualifications of the nominated individual to act as the National Institution representative

### 4.3.3 Protocol for Replacing NI representatives following postholder resignation

In the event that a National Institution representative must resign their position before the conclusion of their term, the following protocol is to be followed in the order it appears:

1) On receipt of the resignation of the departing representative, their National Institution shall be invited by the Board chair and ALA Publishing representative to nominate a new National Institution representative to replace the departing representative, to cover the remaining duration of the departing representative's term.

2) If the National Institution cannot, or declines to, nominate a new National Institution representative, the Board chair and ALA Publishing representative shall next approach the most recent former representative for that region, and invite them to return to the Board in order to serve for the remaining duration of the departed representative's term.

3) If the former representative is unable or unwilling to return to serve the remainder of the departing representative's term, the Board chair and ALA Publishing representative will next review the other applications submitted for the role of National Institution representative at the time of the departing representative's appointment. The Board chair will then recommend appointments from this pool of past applicants to the Board, following the usual appointments process, inviting the most successful candidate to fill the post for the

remaining duration of the departed representative's term.

4) If none of the individuals who applied for the role of NI Rep at the time the departed representative was appointed are now able or willing to serve, or if there were no other applications submitted, the Board will open nominations for a new representative across the region, with the proviso that the successful candidate shall serve only for the remainder of the departed representative's original term.

### 4.4 ALA Publishing representative

The ALA Publishing representative has responsibility for the development and delivery of the Toolkit. The representative informs the Board of key developments and issues and provides appropriate advice. The representative consults with the Board on development plans that impact the RDA Fund.

### 4.5 RDA Fund Trustees

RDA Fund Trustees (nominated representatives from the Copyright Holder organisations) are permitted to attend the RDA Board meeting and participate in discussions, but they have no vote. However, to help reduce costs, it is usually expected that the Copyright Holder representative will represent the Trustee's interests at both the Copyright Holders meetings and the RDA Board.

### 4.6 Co-opted representatives

Co-options can be identified and chosen by the RDA Board based on the key communities, knowledge or skill sets that they would like to see represented.

The Board will decide the required term for the co-option based on the Board's requirements, but it is expected that this would be a maximum of 3 years.

### 4.7 Decision making and voting rights

While RDA Board will always aim to reach a decision by consensus, it is acknowledged that there are times when an agreement cannot be reached in this way. In this case, decisions will be reached by a simple majority of voting members. Only the following Board members have voting rights:

**4.7.1** Copyright Holders
**4.7.2** National Institution representatives
**4.7.3** Co-opted representatives

In the event of a tied vote, the Chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

Once a decision has been reached, this will be presented as the collective view of the Board with all members adhering to it.

### 4.8 Board Working Groups

The RDA Board will set up Working Groups when required for specific tasks. The Board will establish Terms of Reference for all Board working groups and monitor their progress.

## 5 RDA Steering Committee

The RDA Steering Committee (RSC) is responsible for the development and content of the standard. Revisions, consolidations, additions, and other changes may be made to RDA only with RSC approval.

The Copyright Holders Committee reserves the right to refuse proposed revisions if they would undermine the viability of the standard. (See RDA Agreement 2018, section 6.2)

The RSC will create a development programme based on expertise and user consultation, use defined working practices to develop the standard, liaise with their representatives in their region, oversee working groups, and form strategic partnerships with other international groups.

Membership of the Steering Committee:

- Six regional representatives, one each from the geographic regions of Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Oceania
- Chair of the RDA Steering Committee
- Education and Orientation Officer
- RDA Examples Editor
- Technical Team Liaison Officer
- Translations Team Liaison Officer
- Wider Community Engagement Officer
- Secretary of the RDA Steering Committee (non-voting)
- Representative of ALA Publishing (non-voting)
- Chair of the RDA Board (non-voting)

### 5.1 RDA Regional Representative Bodies

The RDA Steering Committee has provision for a representative from each of the geographic regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Oceania. These

representatives are selected by an approved RDA regional representative body. The regional representative bodies are approved by the RDA Board in collaboration with the Chair of the RDA Steering Committee and a list of these regional bodies is published on the RSC website.

### 5.1.1 Requirements for RDA regional representative bodies:

The RDA Board has identified the following key requirements for a regional representative body (as outlined in the RDA Agreement 2018).

The body:

- Does not need to be a legal entity, but should have terms of reference or a constitution
- Has terms of reference endorsed by the RDA Board; if the body changes its terms of reference after the initial approval, the body notifies the Board so that the changes can be endorsed
- Should be constituted in a way that enables representation of countries in that region and organisations within those countries that have implemented RDA
- Provides communication channels for those organisations that have implemented RDA within their region to feed into the development of RDA
- Has a procedure in place to appoint an appropriate representative to the RSC and a substitute, should the representative be unable to attend the meeting
- Is committed to using the RDA online infrastructures to develop and give feedback on proposals
- Fosters development of supporting structures (e.g. regional working groups, national groups)
- Supports RSC working groups by helping to identify possible members

### 5.1.2 Requirements of the regional representative to RSC

Regional representatives will be nominated by an approved regional representative body (approved by the RDA Board in collaboration with the RSC Chair). Regional representatives will represent their region and bring forward the interests and concerns of RDA implementers in their region. They will also actively contribute to the development of RDA. The detailed role requirements for the regional representative are documented at the RSC website: Operations documents.

Representative bodies are given the flexibility of determining their own terms of reference and processes for nominating a representative to RSC.

However, RDA Board have identified the following criteria which must be met:

- Representatives must serve for a minimum of two years
- To be eligible for nomination, the representative must work for an institution that has implemented RDA

- Representatives must have expert knowledge of RDA

### 5.2 Members appointed for specific roles

There are six members of RSC specifically appointed to carry out specific roles:

- Chair of the RDA Steering Committee
- Education and Orientation Officer
- Examples Editor
- Technical Team Liaison Officer
- Translations Team Liaison Officer
- Wider Community Engagement Officer

The RSC Chair is appointed by the RDA Board. The other five positions are appointed by the RDA Steering Committee.

Job descriptions for each role are developed and updated by the RDA Steering Committee in liaison with the RDA Board Chair. The job descriptions and selection process are detailed on the RSC website: Operations documents.

Roles will be filled by application and selection allowing adequate time for overlap and a managed handover. The RSC Chair is usually appointed for a 4-year non-renewable term. The others selected for these roles are usually appointed for a 2-year term with the possibility of one renewal.

### 5.3 RDA Steering Committee Secretary (RSC Secretary)

The Secretary is a paid role jointly managed by ALA Publishing and the RSC Chair. The Secretary supports the work of the RDA Steering Committee and as such is a full member of the Steering Committee.

### 5.4 ALA Publishing representative

The ALA Publishing representative has responsibility for the development and delivery of the Toolkit. The ALA Publishing representative sits on the RDA Steering Committee. The representative informs the RSC of key developments and issues and provides appropriate advice.

### 5.5 Chair of RDA Board

The Chair of the RDA Board will sit on the Steering Committee to act as a liaison between the Board and Steering Committee, providing advice and oversight as needed.

### 5.6 Decision making and voting rights

While Steering Committee members will always aim to reach a decision by consensus, it is acknowledged that there are times when an agreement cannot be reached in this way. In this case, decisions will be reached by a simple majority of voting members.

In the event of a tied vote, the RSC Chair has a second or casting vote.

Once a decision has been reached, this will be presented as the collective view of the RDA Steering Committee with all members adhering to it.

### 5.7 RDA Steering Committee Working Groups

The RDA Steering Committee is able to use working groups to further the development of RDA. A list of current working groups can be found at https://www.rdatoolkit.org/rsc/workinggroups.

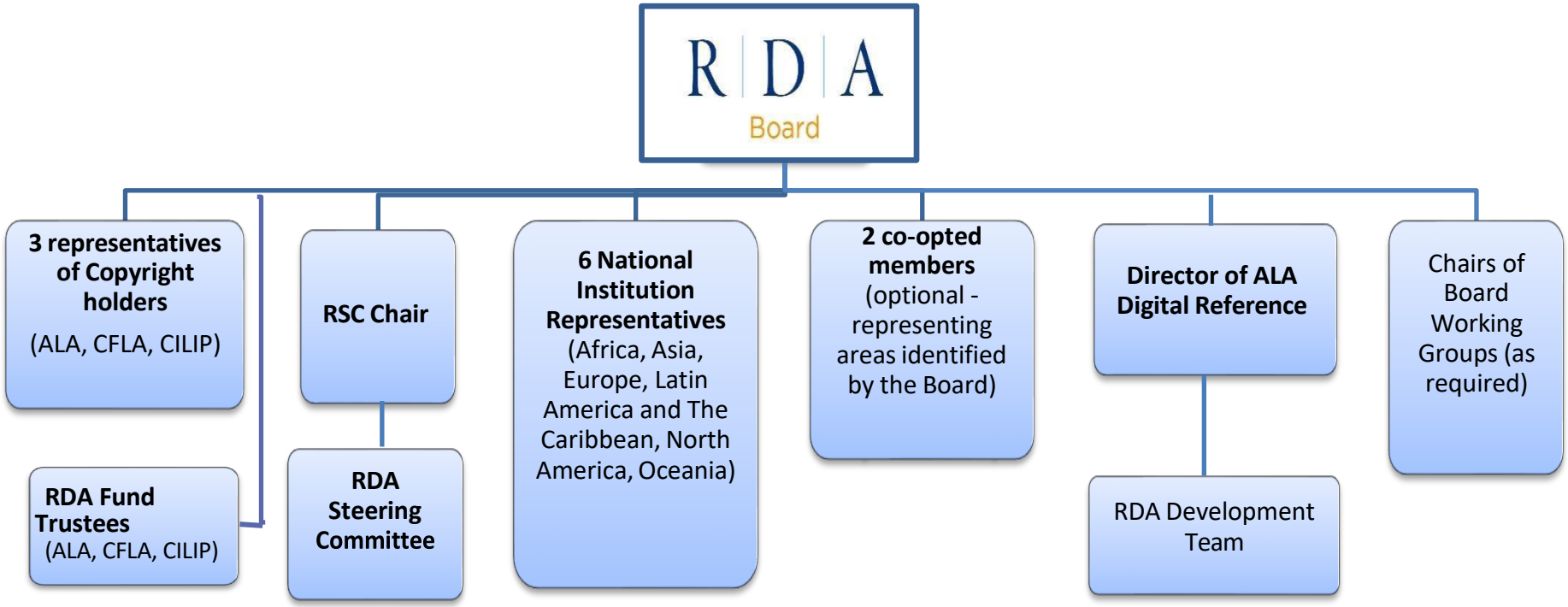
It is expected that members of working groups will be selected based on their knowledge, expertise and the contribution they are able to make to the group. When determining the membership of working groups, RSC should aim to have at least one representative from each region, if possible.

The Examples, Technical, and Translation working groups are permanent or standing working groups.

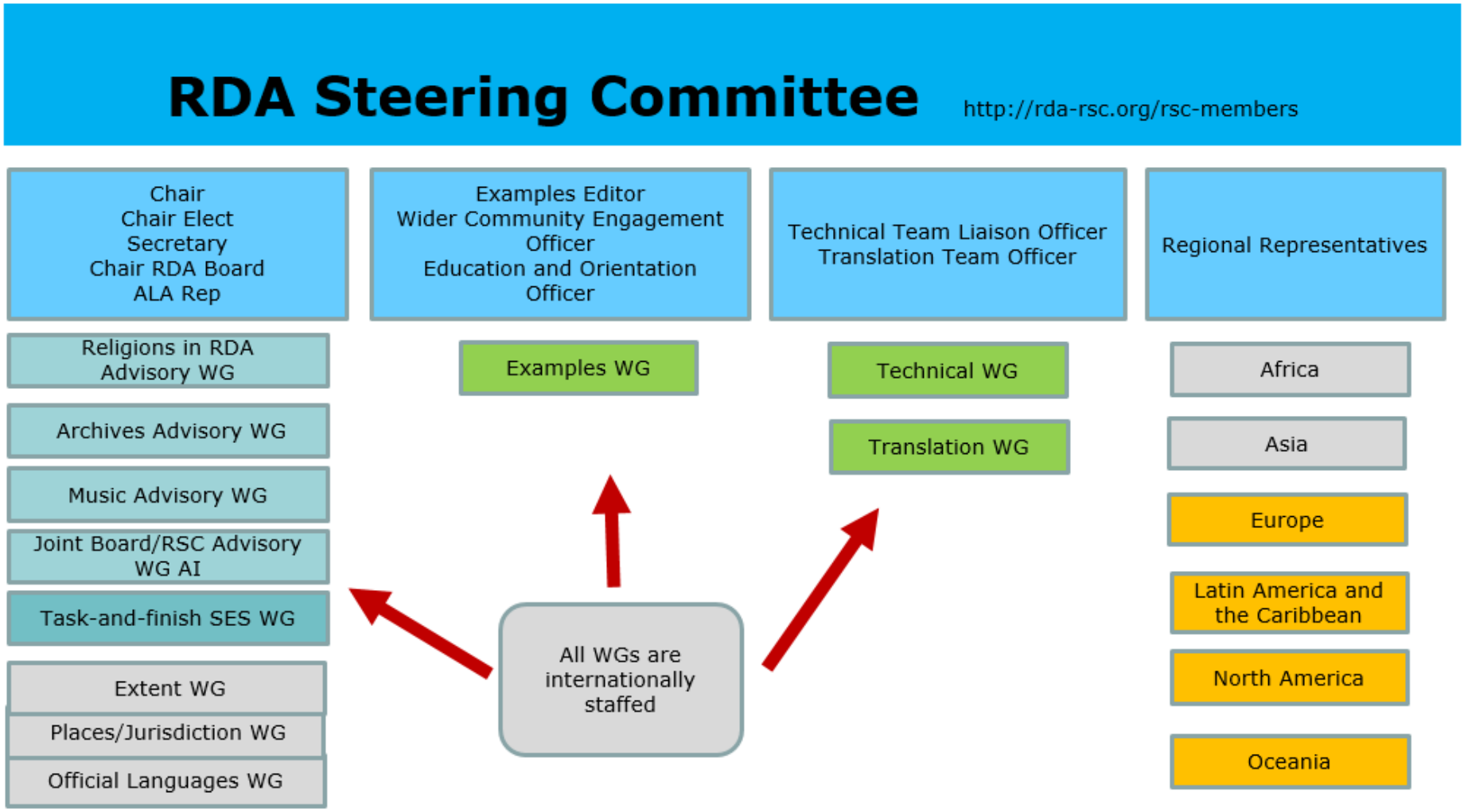
Task and finish working groups are set up to address a particular topic and have a fixed term.

In addition, it is possible to set up advisory working groups with no fixed terms.

**Appendix 1 RDA Board structure**



**Appendix 2 RDA Steering Committee**



## Appendix 3 Selection process for a National Institution Representative

- Criteria will be reviewed for each call to provide RDA Board with flexibility in attracting particular skill sets/perspectives.
- The RDA Board will issue a call to National Institutions in the region seeking applications.
- National Institutions will be required to submit a statement supporting the eligibility of the institution and the nominated individual. Each National Institution will nominate only one individual.
- If there is only one nomination, that institution shall be selected to serve.
- If there is more than one nomination, RDA Board will review the applications and select the most suitable applicant based on criteria which will be published within the call. If there is more than one qualified candidate, the RDA Board will vote.
- National Institution Representatives are not able to participate in the selection of their own region.
- If there is a tie vote, the votes of the three Copyright Holders will be used to determine the successful candidate.
- If there are no applications, RDA Board will co-opt a national representative for the region (including going back to a previous representative) if they are willing to serve again.
- This process will be overseen by the Chair of the RDA Board and the decision ratified by the Board.

The RDA Board will continue to review the effectiveness of the selection process to ensure it remains fit for purpose.