

To: Renate Behrens, Chair, RDA Steering Committee
Cc: Anne Welsh, RSC Secretary
From: Chris Holden, Technical Team Liaison Officer
Subject: Technical Working Group Formal Response to RSC/NARDAC/2025/4 – Scope note for Corporate Body

The Technical Working Group thanks NARDAC for raising this issue. As the proposal states, this has been a known problem since at least 2019.

However, the group disagrees that the examples raised by NARDAC should be considered instances of Corporate Body. We believe the LRM clearly states that things such as events (fairs, festivals) and vehicles (ships, spacecraft) are Collective Agents, but not considered Corporate Bodies. Changing the basic definition of any RDA entity has a large impact on the integrity and re-usability of well-formed data, and there should be strong evidence for doing so.

The proposal states: “*if RSC would prefer to incorporate the language NARDAC proposes under Definition and Scope of Collective Agent instead of Corporate Body, NARDAC is not opposed.*” We appreciate NARDAC including this second option within the proposal, and believe that looking at these things as instances of Collective Agents would be a better way forward.

There is some confusion surrounding the minutes of the 2019 Santiago meeting cited in the proposal. While the minutes read ‘*The ORDAC “further thoughts” paper proposed the creation of a new entity “Collective Event” as a subclass of Collective Agent,*’ the Technical Working Group has referred to this paper and this is not the case. Both the cited paper and the previous minutes of the 2019 September asynchronous RSC meeting indicate a collective desire to avoid creating a new subclass of Collective Agent. Nonetheless, the Santiago minutes indicate a desire to find a solution for Collective Agents that do not necessarily function as a Corporate Body or Family, including event-based collective agents (fairs, festivals), conferences (for which it is unclear if they are events or not), buildings, vehicles (vessels, ships, spacecraft), and perhaps even musical groups (which are mentioned in the LRM as something separate from Corporate Bodies).

One possible resolution would be to use the **Collective Agent: category of collective agent** element to distinguish different kinds of Collective Agents without establishing new RDA entities or forcing certain kinds of Collective Agent into Corporate Body or Family. A community could develop an external vocabulary encoding scheme for **category of collective agent**.

While we agree in principle that the concepts mentioned in this proposal should be incorporated into the Collective Agent entity, we believe that this proposal, as well as the minutes from the Santiago meeting and associated documents, are evidence that further discussion is needed on the various kinds of collective agents, especially surrounding events and conferences. The Santiago minutes section on collective agents ended with an action item: “*The RSC will consider setting up a working group to explore creating a separate entity to represent occasional groups in RDA.*” This idea was mentioned in several RSC action plans in the subsequent years, but the working group was never established. We recommend the RSC establish this working group to examine these issues, using NARDAC’s proposal as a starting point.

Recommendation 1. Under Entities > Corporate Body revise the definition and scope by adding a scope note: Disapprove. We feel that, if any definition and scope should be revised, it should be those of Collective Agent.

Recommendation 2. Revise the glossary entry for Corporate Body by adding a scope note. Disapprove. We feel that, if any glossary definition should be revised with a scope note, it should be that of Collective Agent.

For both recommendations, the Technical Working Group strongly prefers to refer these issues to a future working group for collective agents.