

To: RDA Steering Committee

From: Renate Behrens, RSC Chair

Subject: Archives Working Group

This document sets out the membership, terms of reference, and specific tasks for the RSC Archives Working Group. It supersedes [RSC/Chair/2024/14](#), which was prepared by the RSC as part of the call for participants for the group.

The purpose of the Archives Working Group is to support the improvement of the RDA standard by reviewing the guidance and instructions of relevance to the archival community and by recommending how they might be improved or expanded for use by those documenting archives. It is also tasked with exploring how the RSC might best interact with comparable organisations responsible for international standards for archival documentation. (Full tasks are set out at [Section 4 below](#)).

1 Background

Since its inception, RDA has been intended to be a standard that can be applied widely within the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) sector.

At its July 2024 RSC Meeting, the RSC discussed the formation of an Archives Working Group ([RSC/Minutes/468-482](#) Item 470.1.3) and decided that now that the [3R Project has concluded](#), and with expressions of interest from some groups within the archival community, the time is right to explore the issues involved in applying RDA to archival materials.

2 Membership

Martin Lüpold, Switzerland, Chair

Stephanie Becker, USA
Tamar Lewisohn, Israel
Lior Rashti, Israel
Becca Wiederhold, USA
Thomas Wildi, Switzerland

James Hennelly, ALA Digital Reference *ex officio*
Szabolcs Dancs, Translations Team Liaison Officer *ex officio*

3 Terms of Reference

The Working Group operates within [RSC/Operations/3](#), the general terms of reference for RSC Working Groups. As an Advisory Working Group, the Working Group is expected to serve for as long as needed, with individual members expected to serve for two years in the first instance (see [RSC/Operations/3/2025](#) Section 10).

4 Tasks

[Group to discuss if these are the best questions to ask, and the order in which they should be tackled]

1. Research the following questions:

- Are there institutions that are currently using RDA to document archival materials? Are there institutions that are using retrieval systems that search metadata prepared using RDA for library materials and another standard for archival materials? What are the challenges facing these institutions?
- Does, or can, RDA provide sufficient instructions and tools to archivists seeking to describe archival collections that are organised according to the principle of provenance and *respect des fonds*?
- Does, or can, RDA provide sufficient instructions or tools for archivists to record the custodial history of documents according to archival traditions?
- Is there a possibility for establishing an alignment between [RDA and Records in Context \(RIC\)](#), the new standard by the International Council on Archives Experts Group on Archival Description (EGAD)?
- Are there standards bodies with which it would be useful for the RSC to establish (a) protocol(s)?

2. Prepare a Discussion Paper for the RSC. Guidelines for Discussion Papers are set out in [RSC/Operations/5/2024](#).

3. Provide brief progress reports to the RDA Board and the RSC for each meeting. The RSC Secretary will prompt the Working Group Chair before each RSC meeting.

4. Provide an interim report to the RSC in December 2025. The RSC Secretary will prompt the Working Group Chair for this.

5. Provide a final report to the RDA Board and the RSC in December 2026. The RSC Secretary will prompt the Working Group Chair for this.

5 Reference sources

[RSC/Papers/2024/1](#) – *The Collections Model in RDA*, prepared by Damian Iseminger, Technical Team Liaison Officer, to provide a summary overview for the benefit of this working group and others interested in this topic. Also [available in ALAIR](#).