

To: RDA Steering Committee
From: Renate Behrens, RSC Chair
Subject: Operations for Changing the Text of RDA

Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	RDA Development.....	2
3	Change Process	4
4	Proposing Changes to RDA	6
5	Preparing and Submitting a Discussion Paper	8
6	Preparing and Submitting a Proposal.....	10
7	Formal Responses to Proposals and Discussion Papers	12
8	Fast Track Proposals	17
9	RDA Vocabulary Encoding Schemes (VES) and Vocabulary Terms.....	19
10	Scheduling of RDA Changes	19
	APPENDIX	20
	<i>Sample Discussion Document Layout</i>	20
	<i>Sample Proposal Layout</i>	21
	<i>Sample Response Layout</i>	23

1 Introduction

The RDA Steering Committee (RSC) is constituted in the [RDA Agreement](#) (2018) which governs the development of *RDA: Resource Description and Access*.

This document outlines operational policies and procedures for the RSC. It supersedes [RSC/Operations/4/2025 – Policies and Procedures for Updating RDA Content](#) and [RSC/Operations/5/2025 – Guidelines for Discussion Papers, Proposals, and Responses to Them](#) and reuses the title [RSC/Operations/2](#), which previously covered *RSC Positions and Responsibilities* and was subsumed by [RSC/Operations/1/2026 – Structure of the RSC and Guide to its Operations](#). The change in the structure of the Operations Documents reflects a need

Structure of the RSC and Guide to Its Operations

observed by the RSC Chair and Secretary for RSC members and others to find information at speed. It is important to note that there are no changes in the way the RSC conducts its operations. Changes to the Operations Documents this year (2026) are superficial, changing the order of the information in them, not the information itself.

The RSC Secretary was approved to edit the Operations Documents at the November 2025 RSC Meeting ([RSC/Minutes/538-555](#) Item 554). At the January 2026 RSC Meeting ([RSC/Minutes/556-584](#) Item 559) a change in the cycle of the review of the Operations Documents was approved so that there would no longer be a workload imbalance with the Annual Report and Action Plan. It was agreed that the Annual Report and Action Plan would be prioritised for the first meeting in the RSC calendar and the review of the Operations Documents would be carried out for the second meeting in the RSC calendar. Subsequently, the continued unbalanced workload led to the Operations Documents being presented in the July meeting.

2 RDA Development

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

2.1 Language

The working language of the RSC is English, and all changes to RDA are developed first in English before being applied to other language translations.

2.2 RDA Content

The official content of RDA includes:

- Base RDA, which is the RDA text contained in the guidance chapters, entity pages, element pages, glossary and the RDA vocabulary encoding scheme pages
- Alignments and mapping from RDA to related standards
- The English language text of RDA, including all guidance and entity chapters
- The content in the resources tab generated by RDA Reference
- The linked data representation of RDA Reference excluding the unconstrained element set which supports interoperability of RDA and non-RDA data

2.3 RDA Toolkit Content

The *RDA Toolkit* also includes:

- Examples. The RDA Examples Editor has primary responsibility for providing consistent, accurate and relevant examples in the English language text of RDA. Translations teams

amend and adjust the examples as appropriate for their language and cultural contexts. The RDA Examples Editor and Examples Working Group consult with translators on their example choices as required.

- Policy Statements. At the time of writing, the following Policy Statements have been published:
 - BLPS (British Library Policy Statements)
 - LAC PS (Libraries and Archives Canada | Bibliothèque et Archives Canada Policy Statements)
 - LC-PCC PS (Library of Congress Program for Cooperative Cataloging Policy Statements)
 - MLA BP (Music Library Association Best Practices Policy Statements)
 - NLNZ PS (National Library of New Zealand | Haere mai ki Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa Policy Statements)
 - OLAC BP (OLAC Best Practices Policy Statements)
 - RBMS PS (ALA (American Library Association ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries) Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Policy Statements

The ALA Director of Digital Reference works directly with the Policy Statement Writers Group and has developed the *Toolkit* so that Policy Statements appear alongside official RDA. He is the first point of contact for organizations developing Policy Statements.

- Content in the Community Resources section. Community resources (CR) provides access to guidance on community-specific topics that are not within the scope of RDA.
 - Legacy Instructions – these are instructions that have been removed from the official RDA content but still deemed to have value to some members of the RDA Community.
 - Partner organizations – this includes CR content added through the Toolkit's content management system and address issues that are of specific interest to the community of the contributing organization . This option does involve an agreement with the publishers of RDA and a fee.
 - Contributing organizations -- this includes CR content added through the HTML editor found in the Toolkit. There is no fee with this option, but permission from the RSC is still required.

Access to the CR space is managed by the Director of ALA Digital Reference. To request permission to contribute to the CR space, complete and submit this [online form](#).

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- User-created content in the Documents area. The Documents section of the RDA Toolkit allows users to create documents that can be used privately or shared locally or globally.

Documents are created using a simple HTML Editor that includes a range of helpful macro buttons to assist with formatting and link creation. Users can subscribe to a document created by someone else and shared with the RDA Toolkit community. This feature is managed by the Director of ALA Digital Reference.

2.4 Derivatives of RDA, including Translations

The RSC and ALA Digital Reference work together to oversee and approve derivatives of RDA content. The RSC is responsible for the accuracy of derivative RDA products, including simplified guides and extractions for particular categories of resources. The Translations Working Group leads the derivatives process for both full and partial translations. For information about creating a new translation, see the [Policy for New Translations of RDA](#), which sets out the policy developed by the Copyright Holders of RDA, in consultation with the RDA Board and the RDA Steering Committee (RSC), for the creation and maintenance of translations of RDA.

2.5 Community Resources

The RSC exercises oversight over community-based application profiles, policy statements and other community resources published within the *RDA Toolkit* to ensure that these remain compatible with the RDA standard. The RSC is available to consult with community groups as they develop additional supplementary guidance and training documentation. The Technical Team Liaison Officer should be consulted as community refinements are prepared to assure RDA conformance.

3 Change Process

3.1 Goals

The change process was streamlined from earlier processes used by the RSC's predecessor, the JSC (Joint Steering Committee). The RSC has the following goals in managing changes:

- Ensuring an efficient process that allows for consideration of change proposals at any RSC meeting, with the benefit of community review and feedback
- Being transparent in decision-making
- Allowing enough time to make informed decisions, without holding up decisions that are perceived to be complex and / or difficult
- Compared to previous practices, requiring less formality, time and effort to prepare responses to proposals.
- Being mindful of the different time zones and cultural conditions of RSC members wherever possible
- Promoting collaboration among RSC members, including in the preparation of discussion papers and proposals

3.2 Stages

There are up to four stages in changing the text of RDA:

- Development of discussion papers and proposals, submission and scheduling
- Informal and formal discussion and community review
- RSC approval
- Implementation

3.3 Format of recommendations

Changes to the text of RDA are proposed in three different formats:

- Discussion Papers – for big ideas and new concepts. Examples of recent Discussion Papers include:
 - [RSC/TechnicalWG/2025/1 – Discussion Paper on Soft-deprecated Parallel Elements](#). This introduced the Technical Working Group’s ideas for tackling a complex issue and received feedback and comments from the wider RDA cataloguing community that were valuable in the development RSC/TechnicalWG/2026/6 which will be presented at the November 2026 RSC Meeting. The community review of this Discussion Paper aided the Technical Working Group in developing a proposal that it hopes will meet the needs of cataloguers across the Regions.
 - [RSC/ExtentWG/2024/1 – Discussion paper on the Development of Extent Elements in RDA](#). This introduced the Extent Working Group’s initial thoughts on the topic. Based on feedback from the wider RDA cataloguing community, the Working Group was able to adjust its approach, which impacted the final proposals that they presented in November 2025 (RSC/ExtentWG/2025/1-8).
- Proposals – for specific changes to the text of RDA. Proposals are always circulated for community review and always specify edits to the text. Some proposals are derived from Discussion Papers, while others do not need a Discussion Paper first. Recent examples of proposals include:
 - RSC/TechnicalWG/2026/6 which will be presented at the November 2026 RSC Meeting. It follows the Discussion Paper [RSC/TechnicalWG/2025/1](#) and is part of a suite of proposals dealing with the soft-deprecated terms from the 3R Project.
 - [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/1](#) which was presented at the April 2026 RSC Meeting. The Translations Team Liaison Officer drafted this proposal following informal discussion amongst the Translations Working Group that identified an absence of terms that rare books cataloguers currently use, and which are not

specific to one geographic community, but across multiple language and cultural groups. This proposal was positively received by the wider RDA cataloguing community, but one set of terms was identified as problematic and several Regions suggested an additional set of terms that had not been considered in the proposal. This resulted in a further proposal [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2](#) which considers solely the problematic terms from RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/1 and will be discussed in the July 2026 Meeting of the RSC.

- Fast Track proposals – for changes that are editorial in nature but which the RSC Secretary and / or Technical Team Liaison Officer believe exceed their authority to make individually. A good example of this is RSC/FT2025-6 – Fast Track Proposal - *base access point / base of access point*. [As RSC/FT2025-6/Decisions](#) puts it, the Fast Track proposal “sought explicit permission from the RSC to implement changes that I [RSC Secretary] believed could be inferred from [RSC/FT2025-1/Decisions](#), but in which I was, as always, cautious of accidentally overstepping my editorial authority.”

The RSC values the time of the wider RDA cataloguing community, and is always grateful to those who take the time to feedback on Proposals and Discussion Papers.

4 Proposing Changes to RDA

4.1 Objectives and Principles Governing RDA

All recommendations must be in harmony with the [Objectives and Principles Governing RDA](#) which are set out in the *RDA Toolkit* guidance chapter on this topic. Submissions that do not meet these conditions are rejected. Examples include changes that are not international in scope, additions to closed vocabularies, and changes contradicting the IFLA Library Reference Model (LRM). If a proposal is rejected, the proposing group or individual will be informed and provided with an explanation.

4.2 Who Can Submit Discussion Papers and Proposals

Discussion papers and proposals may originate from:

- Any member of the RSC, submitting to the RSC Chair and copying the RSC Secretary
- An RDA regional representative body, via their Regional Representative, who submits Discussion Papers and Proposals to the RSC Chair and copies the RSC Secretary
- An RSC Working Group, whose Chair submits Discussion Papers and Proposals to the RSC Chair and copies the RSC Secretary
- Any other user of RDA. In the first instance, most members of the wider RDA community should contact their Regional Representative. Those in regions without a Regional Representative should contact the Wider Community Engagement Officer in

the first instance. If you are unsure whom to contact, you can approach the RSC Secretary who will direct you to the appropriate member of the RSC (usually your Regional Representative, but in specific cases perhaps the Technical Team Liaison Officer or Translations Team Liaison Officer instead or as well.

It is not uncommon for the Director of ALA Digital Reference, the Technical Team Liaison Officer, the Translations Team Liaison Officer or the RSC Secretary to receive informal queries from members of the wider RDA community about issues they encounter with RDA. These are usually editorial issues (i.e. they can be dealt with directly by the appropriate member of the Editorial Group (the Director of ALA Digital Reference, the RSC Secretary (also known as the RDA Toolkit Editorial Consultant), the Technical Team Liaison Officer and the RDA Examples Editor)). The easiest way to report such issues is via the form at https://www.rdatoolkit.org/RDA_feedback. Each release of the Toolkit includes issues submitted this way, and submitters are contacted with updates on the progress of their feedback query. Some Fast Track proposals and proposals have started life from feedback submitted in this way – if the RSC Secretary or Technical Team Liaison Officer feel that a change requires consultation with the full RSC (Fast Track proposal) or the wider RDA community (proposal), they contact the submitter of the feedback and let them know what is happening, asking for other information if needed. If you are unsure whether an issue in the text of RDA needs a proposal, please do feel free to suggest it via the feedback form and one of the Director of ALA Digital Reference, the RSC Secretary and the Technical Team Liaison Officer will be in touch with you.

4.3 Discussion Papers

Discussion Papers raise topics for RSC consideration before formal proposals for change are prepared. They may:

- suggest a need for investigation of issues related to RDA development OR
- identify issues related to other standards OR
- raise and address questions, etc.

Options in discussion papers should be presented as votable propositions ; this allows the RSC to decide between multiple viable options. See [Section 3.3](#) for examples of recent Discussion Papers.

4.4 Proposals

Full proposals are formal recommendations to add, amend or delete RDA content. See [Section 3.3](#) for examples of recent proposals.

4.5 Fast Track Proposals

Usually Fast Track Proposals deal with inconsistencies in the text of RDA. Where the RSC Secretary or Technical Team Liaison Officer believe their editorial powers are exceeded by a change, it will be referred to the whole RSC. See [Section 3.3](#) for examples of recent Fast Track Decisions¹.

5 Preparing and Submitting a Discussion Paper

5.1 Language

All discussion papers must be submitted in English.

5.2 Publication

By submitting a Discussion Paper, the submitter acknowledges that the RSC may post the document in full on its public website and archive it to ALAIR.

5.3 Discussion Papers Originating Outside the RSC

As set out in [Section 4.2](#), the RSC welcomes submissions originating outside the RSC and its Working Groups. In such cases, the Regional Representative or Wider Community Engagement Officer will normally be the first point of contact, and either they will work with the originator to prepare the Discussion Paper and / or they will request support from a member of the RSC with expertise in the topic.

For example, if someone from Europe approaches the Europe Representative to the RSC to suggest a Discussion Paper on music cataloguing, the Europe Representative would be sensible to bring the Chair of the Music Working Group into the initial conversation. The resulting Discussion Paper may proceed, then, under the RSC/Europe heading OR it may be deemed more appropriate to proceed through the Music Working Group under the RSC/MusicWG heading.

5.4 Involvement of the Technical Working Group

The Technical Team Liaison Officer must be informed of intended Discussion Papers as soon as practicable. The Technical Working Group checks that all Discussion Papers are technically and semantically possible and compatible with RDA. Usually the Technical Team Liaison Officer is involved when ideas for Discussion Papers are first mooted.

¹ Because of the Quotidien nature of the topics covered by Fast Tracks, the RSC [publishes only the Decision Documents](#), which provides transparency in decision-making without occupying too much of the wider RDA community's valuable time. The publication of Fast Track Decision Documents was introduced in 2024 by RSC Chair Renate Behrens and RSC Secretary Anne Welsh as part of their mandate to increase the transparency of RSC decision-making. Prior to 2024, Fast Track Decisions were not published.

5.5 Discussion in Public Session

Discussion Papers are scheduled for discussion during a Public Session. Public Sessions are open to members of the wider RDA community to attend as observers. The RSC Secretary issues calls for observers ahead of each RSC Public Session and sends information for attendance to registered observers. Many Discussion Papers reach their decisions during the Public Session. If there is not enough time for decisions to be reached, the Chair may decide to conclude the discussion in the Executive Session OR they may decide to carry discussion over to the next Public Session.

5.6 Timing of Public Session

RSC Meetings normally include a Public Session. When a Discussion Paper is submitted, the RSC Chair and Secretary determine which Public Session will include the Discussion Paper. Although they do usually schedule Discussion Papers as soon as practicable, they have to ensure that:

- the Discussion Paper is in the correct format, all links work (ALAIR URIs are preferred to RSC website URLs) and the Technical Working Group has been consulted
- there is adequate time for constituencies to read, discuss and feedback to their Regional Representative / the Wider Community Engagement Officer and for the Regional Representatives and Wider Community Engagement Officer to prepare their responses
- there is space in the Public Session for discussion (i.e. that all the time is not already occupied by discussion of other Discussion Papers and proposals)

Working Group Chairs and members of the RSC usually let the RSC Chair and Secretary know as soon as they start working on a Discussion Paper or proposal so that the RSC Chair and Secretary are aware not only of the papers they expect for the next Public Session but also of papers under preparation.

5.7 Required Elements

Discussion Papers must include:

- An abstract that explains the purpose of the paper
- A background statement
 - Where a topic has been discussed by the RSC in the past, this should include references to the Minutes and / or Decision documents, using ALAIR URIs (not RSC website addresses)
 - Where a topic has not been discussed before, the background may include a brief statement of the issue, with reference to any supporting documentation.
- An explanation of the issues under discussion

- Impact statements covering the following areas:
 - Impact of proposed change(s) on users
 - Impact of proposed change(s) on cataloguers
 - Impact of proposed change(s) on legacy data
 - Impact of proposed change(s) on RDA

Impact statements should be explicit. Where there is no impact, it should say so specifically. One of the common reasons that the RSC Secretary has to contact a Discussion Paper writer is that they have not anticipated how their proposed change(s) will impact one or more of these three groups – either positively or negatively.

5.8 Layout and Typography

See [Appendix for a sample layout](#). The preferred font is Times New Roman 12 point. If unsure about the typography, contact the RSC Secretary who will assist. The numbering of Discussion Papers falls under the aegis of the RSC Secretary. If in doubt, contact them for assistance

6 Preparing and Submitting a Proposal

6.1 Language

All proposals must be submitted in English.

6.2 Publication

By submitting a proposal, the submitter acknowledges that the RSC may post the document in full on its public website and archive it to ALAIR.

6.3 Proposals Originating Outside the RSC

As set out in [Section 4.2](#), the RSC welcomes submissions originating outside the RSC and its Working Groups. In such cases, the Regional Representative or Wider Community Engagement Officer will normally be the first point of contact, and either they will work with the originator to prepare the proposal and / or they will request support from a member of the RSC with expertise in the topic.

For example, if the North America Representative were approached by a constituent about a proposal dealing with Artificial Intelligence, it would be sensible for them to ask for support from the Chair of the Joint RDA Board / RSC Working Group on Artificial Intelligence.

6.4 Involvement of the Technical Working Group

Structure of the RSC and Guide to Its Operations

The Technical Team Liaison Officer must be informed of intended proposals as soon as practicable. The Technical Working Group checks that all proposals are technically and semantically possible and compatible with RDA. Usually the Technical Team Liaison Officer is involved when ideas for proposals are first mooted.

6.5 Discussion in Public Session

Proposals are scheduled for discussion during a Public Session. Public Sessions are open to members of the wider RDA community to attend as observers. The RSC Secretary issues calls for observers ahead of each RSC Public Session and sends information for attendance to registered observers. Many proposals reach their decisions during the Public Session. If there is not enough time for decisions to be reached, the Chair may decide to conclude the discussion in the Executive Session OR they may decide to carry discussion over to the next Public Session.

6.6 Timing of Public Session

RSC Meetings normally include a Public Session. When a proposal is submitted, the RSC Chair and Secretary determine which Public Session will include the proposal. Although they do usually schedule proposals as soon as practicable, they have to ensure that:

- the proposal is in the correct format, all links work (ALAIR URIs are preferred to RSC website URLs) and the Technical Working Group has been consulted
- there is adequate time for constituencies to read, discuss and feedback to their Regional Representative / the Wider Community Engagement Officer and for the Regional Representatives and Wider Community Engagement Officer to prepare their responses
- there is space in the Public Session for discussion (i.e. that all the time is not already occupied by discussion of other proposals and Discussion Papers)

Working Group Chairs and members of the RSC usually let the RSC Chair and Secretary know as soon as they start working on a Discussion Paper or proposal so that the RSC Chair and Secretary are aware not only of the papers they expect for the next Public Session but also of papers under preparation.

6.7 Required Elements

Proposals must be based on the latest release of RDA and must include:

- An abstract that highlights the major changes recommended in the proposal
- A background statement
 - Where a topic has been discussed by the RSC in the past, this should include references to the Minutes and / or Decision documents, using ALAIR URIs (not RSC website addresses)

- Where a topic has not been discussed before, the background may include a brief statement of the issue, with reference to any supporting documentation.
- A justification for the suggested revision, including a clear statement of the issue(s) requiring resolution
- Clearly identified and numbered recommendations specifying the additions or revisions to RDA, framed as votable propositions
- Impact statements covering the following areas:
 - Impact of proposed change(s) on users
 - Impact of proposed change(s) on cataloguers
 - Impact of proposed change(s) on legacy data
 - Impact of proposed change(s) on RDA

Impact statements should be explicit. Where there is no impact, it should say so specifically. One of the common reasons that the RSC Secretary has to contact a Discussion Paper writer is that they have not anticipated how their proposed change(s) will impact one or more of these three groups – either positively or negatively.

- Marked-up copy that uses strikeout for deletions and double underlining for additions and a corresponding clean copy of the proposed changes. Do *not* use the track changes feature in word processing software. See the Appendix for examples.

6.8 Layout and Typography

See [Appendix for a sample layout](#). The preferred font is Times New Roman 12 point. If unsure about the typography, contact the RSC Secretary who will assist. The numbering of Discussion Papers falls under the aegis of the RSC Secretary. If in doubt, contact them for assistance

7 Formal Responses to Proposals and Discussion Papers

The process for providing a formal response is the same for proposals and Discussion Papers.

7.1 Necessity of Formal Response

All voting members of the RSC (except for the submitter(s)) must provide a formal response to each proposal. Responses are not compulsory for Discussion Papers, but a voting member may choose to submit a formal response if they believe this will help discussion.

For example, in [RSC/TechnicalWG/2025/1/ExamplesEditor](#), we can see that the Examples Editor is discussing issues that deal specifically with rare materials. She is aware that not all cataloguers habitually catalogue these, and so it is both sensible and courteous of her to have provided a written response ahead of the RSC Meeting as this allowed those without rare materials

experience to think about the issue and be prepared for the points when she raised them verbally. In other words, this response levelled the playing field between the Examples Editor, a native English speaker who not only catalogues rare materials but teaches others to catalogue rare materials and any other member of the RSC community, whether they were native speaking rare materials catalogues or not. Similarly, in [RSC/TechnicalWG/2025/1/NARDAC](#), the North America Representative was aware they were raising issues from their community that were nuanced and may or may not be specific to their community. The formal response allowed everyone, including those outside the MARC 21 cataloguing community and outside North America, to think about the subtle distinctions the North America representative raised in the Meeting. Both the Examples Editor and the North America Representative were abiding by the spirit of transparency in decision-making that the RSC aims to achieve.

Where a voting member of the RSC decides to make a formal response to a Discussion Paper, it takes the same format as a formal response to a proposal, including the way in which its number is generated.

7.2 Language

All formal responses must be submitted in English.

7.3 Consultation

Regional Representatives consult with their constituencies and include the majority position of their Region in their formal response. They may also include minority positions, noting that they are a minority position. It can sometimes be the case that the minority position in one Region is a majority position in another, and so it is helpful to capture the whole position of the Region. Including minority positions is also in keeping with the RSC's aim of transparency in decision-making.

7.3.1 Time

The RSC Chair and Secretary have observed that the speed of consultation varies from Region to Region and, in some cases, can vary within regions according to the time of the year. While the RSC Chair and Secretary try to take account of this in the length of consultation period afforded, it is vital for a Regional Representative to let them know as soon as possible if they find that consultation within the allocated timeframe is not possible. It is usually possible for an extension to deadlines to be given if needed. In the unlikely event that consultation cannot be completed ahead of a Meeting, Chair's discretion can be used to move discussion of a particular proposal or Discussion Paper into a later Meeting.

7.3.2 Responses from Areas without Regional Representatives

Responses from those outside Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and Oceania can be sent to the Wider Community Engagement Officer (WCEO). These may take the form of a formal response (set out below) or may be an informal email to the WCEO and then they will include the response in their formal response.

7.4 Publication

The RSC posts formal responses in full on its public website and archive it to ALAIR.

7.5 Summary of Responses

The RSC Secretary prepares a summary of formal responses which aids the Chair in allocating time in the Meeting and is useful for members of the wider RDA community who are not native English speakers. The /summary document sets out responses in tabular form so it is easy to see areas of agreement and the issues raised. You can see examples at [RSC/TechnicalWG/2026/3/summary](#) ; [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/summary](#) ; [RSC/ExamplesEditor/2026/1/summary](#)

7.6 Discussion in Public Session

All Discussion Papers and proposals are discussed in Public Session. Although there is usually a vote on issues / recommendations in Discussion Papers, the discussion of Discussion Papers is often free-flowing. At Discussion Paper stage, the RSC is seeking to capture thoughts on issues at a conceptual or broad-brush level and then determine next steps. Formal responses are not required of RSC members for Discussion Papers.

All proposals receive formal responses from voting members of the RSC. It is very unusual for a member of the RSC to raise an issue in verbal discussion that they have not first raised in their formal response. They do sometimes respond to an issue raised in another RSC member's formal response, but it is rare indeed for an RSC member to raise a brand new issue in discussion, and might be considered slightly bad form to do so.

Similarly, *new terms* cannot be added to RDA without full constituency review. Where new terms are suggested in formal responses and discussion, follow-up proposals are required so that the wider RDA cataloguing community is consulted.

For example, the term *wood engraver* was mooted in some of the [formal responses to RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/1](#). Although there was a majority approval of the term amongst the RSC members in the Meeting, it was necessary to take the term out for constituency review in [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2](#). We can see in [RSC/TranslationsTLO/2026/2/summary](#) that this was a necessary and important stage, as the responses received surfaced issues from the wider RDA community that warrant discussion.

Many Discussion Paper and proposal decisions are reached in Public Session. Where a decision cannot be reached, the RSC Chair has the option to carry the decision over into the Executive Session or into the Public Session at the next RSC Meeting.

7.7 Required Elements

Formal responses should include:

- A response for each recommendation. Usually, respondents copy the list from the Summary section of the original proposal and then under each heading, at a minimum, they respond either:
 - Approve
 - Approve with amendment
 - Reject

Where the response is either “Accept with amendment” or “Reject” the respondent usually includes a brief explanation of their reasoning.

7.8 Layout and Typography

See [Appendix for a sample layout](#). The preferred font is Times New Roman 12 point. If unsure about the typography, contact the RSC Secretary who will assist. The numbering of Discussion Papers falls under the aegis of the RSC Secretary. If in doubt, contact them for assistance

7.9 Voting process

Once the Chair calls the discussion to a conclusion, the voting members of the RSC will be asked to vote on the Discussion Paper or proposal.

Although the RSC prefers to make decisions by consensus, a majority vote is possible to carry a recommendation. Where there is a tie, the RSC Chair holds the casting vote.

7.10 Outcome

The outcome of a vote for a Discussion Paper will vary according to the issues raised. Often Discussion Papers lead to the tasking of a member of the RSC or a Working Group to write proposals.

The outcome of a proposal will usually result in one of the following four outcomes:

- Accept
 - In this case, the recommendations will be implemented by the Editorial Group as soon as practicable.
- Revise

- In this case, the proposer will be asked to revise the proposal. Revised proposals include a link to the URIs in ALAIR for the original proposal, its /summary document and its Decision document. Usually revised proposals have the same number as the original proposal with /rev added at the end. If in doubt, the RSC Secretary will let proposers know the number to use.
- Refer to a group or an individual for further development
 - In this case, the group or individual will be asked to formulate their next steps based on the Decisions document prepared by the RSC Secretary.
- Reject
 - This is the rarest outcome. By the time a proposal makes it to a Public Session, it is usually clear that there is a need for it. However, it is possible that the RSC reject a proposal outright.

7.11 Decisions Document

The RSC Secretary prepares a Decisions document for each proposal, on which further actions are based – whether the actions are to implement the proposal or for an individual or group to undertake further work towards a /rev proposal. In the event that a proposal is rejected, its Decisions Document makes this clear.

7.11.1 Timing of Decisions Document

Depending on the actions to be taken, a Decisions Document may be compiled before or after the Minutes of the Meeting. The RSC Secretary always refers from the second-produced of these to the first-produced of these.

In the Minutes, the Secretary usually records:

“ACTION: Secretary to prepare [Proposal]/Decisions”

Where the Decisions Document is published before Minutes are authorised by the RSC for publication, a footnote is usually added that states:

“[Proposal]/Decisions was published on [date]”.

The title is usually linked to the URI for the Decisions document in ALAIR.

7.12 Implementation

The implementation timetable is set by the publisher in consultation with the Editorial Group². Unless the RSC specifies that a proposal not be implemented until a second or later proposal in the same suite of proposals is decided, the aim of the Editorial Group is to coordinate actions and implement as soon as possible, subject to workload considerations for themselves, the Translations Team and the Policy Statement Writers' Group.

The RSC Secretary maintains a record of the stage each proposal has reached at the top of its page on the RSC website, so the wider RDA community can check what has happened with decisions in which they are interested.

8 Fast Track Proposals

Fast Track proposal recommendations

- Suggest improvements for consistency in wording or structure
- Propose uncomplicated additions to RDA Vocabulary Encoding Schemes
- Recommend revisions or additions to Guidance chapters which reflect decisions the RSC has already made
- Recommend other straightforward changes without significant impact

8.1 Language

Fast Track proposals must be submitted in English

8.2 Impact

There must be *no negative impact* foreseen from a Fast Track recommendation.

Fast Track proposals should contain the same impact statements as full proposals. (See [Section 6.7](#) for these).

8.3 Ineligible for Fast Track

Certain kinds of changes are not eligible for the Fast Track process. Broadly, these are:

- Changes to element labels

² This Group, chaired by the Director of ALA Digital Reference as publisher, consists of the Director of ALA Digital Reference, the RSC Secretary, the Technical Team Liaison Officer and the RSC Examples Editor, with the RSC Chair.

- Changes to element hierarchies
- New option or condition/options
- Any other issue that can be predicted to have a wide-ranging impact and / or would benefit from full constituency review

8.4 Scheduling

The RSC Secretary is responsible for scheduling Fast Tracks, taking into account the workload of voting members of the RSC.

In general, the Secretary schedules Fast Track proposals to take place in the Executive Session of an RSC Meeting, but where this is not possible (because the meeting agenda is full or because a change would be best dealt with at great speed), they can set up a Basecamp discussion between meetings, as long as all voting members are able to take part.

8.5 Discussion and Voting

In an asynchronous RSC Meeting, the RSC Secretary sets up a Fast Track discussion Monday-Wednesday and then sets up the votes on the Thursday.

In an in-person meeting, the RSC Chair and Secretary schedule the discussion early in the week and the voting process on the last day of the Executive Session.

When discussion and voting take place between RSC Meetings, the RSC Secretary sets up a Fast Track discussion one week and a vote the following week. The rationale behind the longer amount of time is because between meetings, voting members do not have the advantage of having blocked out time for an RSC Meeting, and so their day job's demands may assume to be greater.

8.6 Outcome

For a Fast Track to be approved, the vote in favour must be unanimous. All voting member must vote unless there are extenuating circumstances. Any voting RSC member may request a Fast Track be referred to the full proposal process at any time.

8.7 Decisions document

The RSC Secretary prepares a Decisions document. Since 2024, Fast Track Decisions documents have been published on the RSC website and posted to ALAIR. Prior to 2024, Decisions documents were not published.

8.8 Implementation

Fast Track Decisions are implemented as soon as practicable.

Structure of the RSC and Guide to Its Operations

9 RDA Vocabulary Encoding Schemes (VES) and Vocabulary Terms

RDA Reference, through its value vocabularies, provides the infrastructure for the RDA vocabulary encoding schemes (VESs). Each RDA VES contains individual vocabulary terms. New VESs, and the addition or removal of specific terms, require the review of the Technical Team Liaison Officer before being passed on to the RSC.

Proposed changes follow the full proposal process and should include information about the element(s) with which they are associated.

10 Scheduling of RDA Changes

RDA follows a planned release schedule, with Toolkit releases 3 times a year. There are also *ad hoc* GitHub releases of RDA Reference data.

The release schedule takes into account the following workloads and responsibilities:

- RDA Reference data published in a GitHub release (Technical Team Liaison Officer)
- Policy statements (ALA Digital Reference)
- Mappings to other standards, e.g., MARC 21, Dublin Core, IFLA LRM (Technical Team Liaison Officer and ALA Digital Reference)
- Examples (RDA Examples Editor)
- Translations (ALA Digital Reference)
- Derivative products other than translations, e.g., *RDA Essentials*; special extracts for particular categories of resource, etc. (ALA digital Reference with RSC responsibility for accuracy of derived content, review, and proofreading)

10.1 Release Notes

As published, the Director of ALA Digital Reference compiles release notes for each Toolkit release. Toolkit subscribers can access pdfs of the changes in the Revision History tab. The Director of ALA Digital Reference also publishes a news item for each new release on <https://www.rdatoolkit.org/news>. The RSC Secretary republished this on <https://www.rdatoolkit.org/rsc/news>.

APPENDIX

Sample Discussion Document Layout

RSC/[Submitter]/[Year]/[Number]
[Day Month Year]
Page 1 of [total number of pages]

To: Renate Behrens, RSC Chair
CC: Anne Welsh, RSC Secretary
From: [Name and affiliation of submitter]
Subject: Discussion Paper on [topic]

Abstract

[Sentences summarising discussion paper]

Background

[Sentences describing the reason for the Discussion Paper and linking to any prior RSC discussion on the topic]

Issue

[Sentences summarising the issue, linking to any relevant documentation (RSC or external)]

Impact

[At least one sentence each on the impact on each of: catalogue users ; cataloguers ; legacy data ; RDA. Where there is no impact on a group, state this explicitly]

Recommendation / Issue

[Sentences describing the recommended action or a question on which the RSC should vote. Repeat this section for each recommendation, and number them (e.g. Recommendation 1 ; Recommendation 2 / Issue 1 ; Issue 2)]

Summary of Recommendations / Issues

[State each recommendation or issue in brief, numbered as in the previous section(s). All Discussion Papers should contain at least one recommendation / issue phrased here in the form of a question for the RSC to discuss]

Sample Proposal Layout

RSC/[Submitter]/[Year]/[Number]
[Day Month Year]
Page 1 of [total number of pages]

To: Renate Behrens, RSC Chair
CC: Anne Welsh, RSC Secretary
From: [Name and affiliation of submitter]
Subject: Proposal on [topic] / Proposal to [aim of proposal]

Abstract

[Sentences highlighting the changes recommended in the proposal]

Background

[Sentences describing the reason for the proposal and linking to any prior RSC discussion on the topic – many proposals are preceded by Discussion Papers, for example]

Issue

[Sentences summarising the issue, linking to any relevant documentation (RSC or external)]

Impact

[At least one sentence each on the impact on each of: catalogue users ; cataloguers ; legacy data ; RDA. Where there is no impact on a group, state this explicitly]

Recommendation

[Sentences describing the recommended change. Repeat this section for each recommendation, and number them (e.g. Recommendation 1 ; Recommendation 2 ; Recommendation 3. Many proposals need sub-numbering, in which case use the form Recommendation 1 ;

Recommendation 1.1 ; Recommendation 1.2 ; Recommendation 2 ; Recommendation 2.1 ; Recommendation 2.2)]

[Here is an example of text mark up. Most proposals consist of both deletions and insertions which you can set out like this:

Citation number (where available in the Toolkit) linked to the link in the Toolkit. Text in the current release of the Toolkit. You do not need to reproduce the font or the colour of the webpage. Just using plain Times New Roman text is fine. Use strike-through to show recommended deletions and double underlining to show insertions like this:

Marked up copy:

Citation number (where available in the Toolkit) linked to the link in the Toolkit. Text in the current release of the Toolkit. You do not need to reproduce the font or the colour of the webpage. ~~Just using plain~~ Using plain Times New Roman text is fine. Use strike-through to show for recommended deletions and double underlining to show for insertions.

Clean copy:

Citation number (where available in the Toolkit) linked to the link in the Toolkit. Text in the current release of the Toolkit. You do not need to reproduce the font or the colour of the webpage. Use Times New Roman text. Use strike-through for deletions and double underlining for insertions.

Sometimes it is helpful to show what comes next in the Toolkit, particularly if there are lots of options and condition options.]

Summary of Recommendations

[State each recommendation in brief, numbered as in the previous section(s). This helps the Chair and Secretary to ensure that each and every recommendation is voted on in the RSC Meeting.]

Sample Response Layout

RSC/[Submitter]/[Year]/[Number]/[Responder]³
[Day Month Year]
Page 1 of [total number of pages]

To: Renate Behrens, RSC Chair
CC: Anne Welsh, RSC Secretary
From: [Name and affiliation of responder]
Subject: Formal response to [subject of Discussion Paper / proposal]

Introduction

[Usually the responder thanks the submitter for their work on the proposal / Discussion Paper. For proposals, they usually also indicate if they approve / approve with amendments or reject the recommendations / most of the recommendations]

Recommendations

[Usually the responder copies the recommendations from the Summary section of the Discussion Paper / Proposal and then indicates under each whether they approve / approve with amendments or reject it. Where they approve with amendments or reject a recommendations they usually give an explanation / rationale. If they need to suggest insertions or deletions, they use the same mark-up as is used in proposals. (See [Sample proposal](#) above)]

³ The submitter information included is as follows:

Latin America and the Caribbean Representative	/ALyC
Education and Orientation Officer	/EOO
Europe Representative	/EURIG
Examples Editor	/ExamplesEditor
North America Representative	/NARDAC
Oceania Representative	/ORDAC
Technical Team Liaison Officer	/TTLO
Translations Team Liaison Officer	/TranslationsTLO
Wider Community Engagement Officer	/WCEO