

To: RDA Steering Committee
From: Renate Behrens, RSC Chair
Subject: General Terms of Reference for RSC Working Groups

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1 Introduction

This document sets out the general terms of reference for an RSC Working Group. It supersedes [RSC/Operations/3](#), updating it with the new class of Working Group approved by the RDA Board at its meeting in December 2024 ([Section 10](#)).

Each RSC Working Group will have specific terms of reference within the general terms of reference set out in this document.

2 Background

The RDA Steering Committee (RSC) is responsible for the content of *RDA: Resource Description and Access*, a package of data elements, guidelines, and instructions for creating library and cultural heritage metadata that are well-formed according to international models. The overall structure is based on the IFLA Library Reference Model.

These metadata are intended to support the discovery and identification of resources in library and other cultural heritage collections.

RDA Toolkit provides guidelines and instructions about the user-focused entities, elements, and vocabulary encoding schemes intended for an agent who creates metadata.

RDA is developed in a collaborative process led by the RSC. The work of the RSC relies heavily on the members of its regional communities:

- Europe: the European RDA Interest Group (EURIG)

- North America: the North American RDA Committee (NARDAC)
- Oceania: the Oceania RDA Committee (ORDAC).

Regional committees are also anticipated for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

The RSC has a number of Working Groups. As at January 2025, there are 3 [Standing Working Groups](#) (Examples, Technical (which has oversight of the RDA/MARC 21 Alignment Task Force) and Translations), 1 [Task and Finish Working Group](#) (Extent, whose term ends on 31 December 2025) and 2 [Advisory Working Groups](#) (Archives and Religions in RDA). There is also a Joint RDA Board / RSC Task and Finish Working Group on Artificial Intelligence.

3 Purpose

The purpose of an RSC Working Group is to support the RSC in the development of RDA by producing discussion papers, recommendations, proposals, and other documents for consideration by the RSC.

4 Charge (Duties and Responsibilities)

An RSC Working Group is charged to:

- Carry out the tasks assigned by the RSC in a timely and appropriate fashion.
- Seek the views of expert groups and individuals outside of its membership to inform its activities.
- Reach consensus on the content of documents developed by the group before submission to the RSC.
- Follow standard procedures and policies for submitting documents to the RSC, and any ad hoc instructions issued by the RSC Chair.
- Identify new tasks within the group's specific terms of reference and propose them to the RSC.

5 Members

Membership of the groups may include RSC members, individuals from RSC communities, representatives of external groups, or individuals from other communities. Working group members will be selected based on their knowledge, expertise, and the contribution they are able to make to the group. If possible, working groups will have at least one representative from each region. A typical working group will have 7-15 members.

Each member is expected to:

- Bring professional or specialist knowledge to the group.
- Make an effective contribution to the work of the group.
- Promote the work of the Working Group and the RSC to peers.
- Give feedback to the member's community or external group, if applicable.

6 Tasks

An RSC Working Group will normally be assigned a set of specific tasks approved by the RSC and numbered for identification and reference. Adjustments, such as the revision or addition of tasks, may be proposed by either the RSC or the Working Group. The RSC and the Working Group must agree on all tasks.

Tasks will be reviewed and approved by the RSC at its annual meeting, and at such other times as deemed necessary.

7 Resources and Method of Working

The RSC will not normally provide funding to support an RSC Working Group or its members.

The RSC will provide access to RDA Toolkit and to internal RSC documents, as needed, to members of an RSC Working Group.

The RSC will provide public information about each RSC Working Group on the RSC website, including its terms of reference, current membership, current tasks and activities, and formal output.

An RSC Working Group is expected to carry out its tasks using a variety of communication channels, including:

- meetings
- remote conferencing facilities
- email
- collaborative workspaces.

The RSC can arrange access to remote conferencing facilities and to a collaborative workspace provided by ALA Publishing.

8 Standing Working Groups

The RDA Board has established three standing working groups: the Examples Working Group, the Technical Working Group and the Translations Working Group. The chairs of these three groups are also voting members of the RSC. Their selection and terms of service are described in RSC/Operations/1.

Standing working groups may only be established, reviewed, or terminated with the permission of the RDA Board.

Selection of standing working group members

Standing working group members are selected based on specific expertise and/or roles.

Examples Working Group members are appointed to two-year terms with the possibility of one or more renewal.

Technical Working Group members are appointed to two-year terms with the possibility of one or more renewal.

Translation Working Group members represent the different translation teams. They are selected by their language communities, who also determine their terms of service.

Term limit exceptions may be made with the agreement of the RSC.

Task forces

With the approval of the RSC, standing working groups may form task forces to carry out specific work within a specified time frame. Members of the task forces will be nominated by the working group and the RSC. The RSC will approve the continuation of such task forces and their members on an annual basis.

As at January 2025, there is one Task Force, the RDA / MARC 21 Alignment Task Force. The Technical Working Group has oversight over this.

9 Task and Finish Working Groups

The RSC establishes task and finish working groups to address specific topics. Such working groups normally serve one to two years. Their duration may be extended in consultation with the RSC.

Selection of task and finish working group members

RSC members nominate potential members of an RSC Working Group. The RSC approves the final membership list.

Task and finish working group members normally serve for the duration of the working group. If the group exists for more than two years, members may be reappointed with the agreement of the Chair of the Working Group and the RSC.

Chair

The Chair of a task and finish RSC Working Group comes from among its members and is normally selected by the RSC. The responsibilities may be divided between two individual co-Chairs. In some cases, the working group may select its own Chair with RSC approval.

The Chair of an RSC Working Group is expected to:

- lead the Group by setting agendas, timescales, etc.
- liaise with the RSC Chair on a regular basis

- submit to the RSC regular reports of the activities of the Group and the status of its tasks
- present the output of the Group to the RSC at its meetings, as appropriate:
 - in person
 - using remote conferencing facilities
 - via a proxy
 - in a written report.

A working group chair serves for a two-year term, with the possibility of one renewal.

Reporting line

An RSC Working Group reports via its Chair to the RSC Chair. The Chair of the Working Group may nominate a proxy when appropriate.

Review

The RSC will review the need to continue each task and finish RSC Working Group on an annual basis.

Termination

The RSC will terminate a task and finish RSC Working Group if it deems that the Group has completed its activities, is no longer required, or is ineffective.

An RSC Working Group, through its chair, may ask the RSC to terminate the Group at any time. In either case, within three months of its termination, the Chair of the Working Group will send the RSC Secretary any relevant archival material, such as interim drafts of documents and data gathered to inform its activities, subject to data privacy and protection considerations. This material may be used for the future development of RDA. The RSC will not normally publish such material without the permission of the members of the Working Group.

10 Advisory Working Groups

At its meeting in November 2024, the RSC identified the need for a class of Working Group between Task and Finish and Standing Working Groups [insert link to Minutes]. It applied to the RDA Board for permission to institute Advisory Working Groups, which can exist for a longer period of time than Task and Finish Working Groups.

The RDA Board approved the creation of Advisory Working Groups at its meeting in December 2024. It also approved a change in status of the Religions in RDA Working Group from Task and Finish to Advisory Working Group. Further, it approved the creation of the new Archives Working Group as an Advisory Working Group.

Further Advisory Working Groups may be established only with permission from the RDA Board.

General Terms of Reference for RSC Working Groups

Selection of Advisory Working Group Members

RSC members nominate potential members of an RSC Working Group. The RSC approves the final membership list.

Advisory Working Group members are appointed for two years in the first instance, with the possibility of extension. Any extension must be approved by the RSC.

Chair

The Chair of an RSC Advisory Working Group comes from among its members and is normally selected by the RSC. The responsibilities may be divided between two individual co- Chairs. In some cases, the working group may select its own Chair with RSC approval.

The Chair of an RSC Working Group is expected to:

- lead the Group by setting agendas, timescales, etc.
- liaise with the RSC Chair on a regular basis
- submit to the RSC regular reports of the activities of the Group and the status of its tasks
- present the output of the Group to the RSC at its meetings, as appropriate:
 - in person
 - using remote conferencing facilities
 - via a proxy
 - in a written report.

A working group chair serves for a two-year term, with the possibility of one renewal.

Reporting line

An RSC Working Group reports via its Chair to the RSC Chair. The Chair of the Working Group may nominate a proxy when appropriate.

Review

The RSC will review the need to continue each RSC Advisory Working Group on an annual basis.

Termination

The RSC will terminate an RSC Advisory Working Group if it deems that the Group has completed its activities, is no longer required, or is ineffective.

An RSC Working Group, through its chair, may ask the RSC to terminate the Group at any time. In either case, within three months of its termination, the Chair of the Working Group will send

the RSC Secretary any relevant archival material, such as interim drafts of documents and data gathered to inform its activities, subject to data privacy and protection considerations. This material may be used for the future development of RDA. The RSC will not normally publish such material without the permission of the members of the Working Group.