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RDA

Organisational Membership

Processes

V0.01	First version - I have tried to bring together material about Organisational Membership from the Governance doc and elections derived from the TAB election process to provide a concrete proposal to focus the discussion. All points are open for discussion.
V-07-01-14	With comments from JS/LH/ALN/FK/JB, for discussion at meeting on 8 Jan 2014.
V-10-01-14	Integrating comments after the IOAB meeting of 8 Jan 2014
V-28-01-14	Cleaned up for discussion at meeting on 5 Feb
V-05-03-14	After meeting on the 5 Feb
V-07-03-14	Quality check
V-28-03-14	Final approved version with some small edits from Council
V-04-03-14	Updated criteria for Affiliate members as agreed at the Council

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Abstract: This document describes Organisational membership of the RDA. It also briefly covers Organisational Affiliates.

Contents

11	RDA	1
12	ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERSHIP.....	1
13	PROCESSES	1
14	ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERSHIP OF RDA	2
15	ORGANISATIONAL AFFILIATES	3
16	THE ORGANISATIONAL ASSEMBLY	4
17	THE ORGANISATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD	4
18	OAB ELECTIONS	7
19	PROCESS FOR ORGANISATIONS TO BECOME MEMBERS OF RDA	8

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21 **Organisational Membership of RDA**

22 Organisational Membership is critical to the success of Research Data Alliance (RDA), because
 23 organisations are instrumental in implementing the global data exchange systems that RDA enables.
 24 Organisational Members of RDA (OMs) will exercise considerable influence in the development of
 25 standards for data exchange and will be seen as pioneers in realising full value from research data.
 26 Unlocking value from research data is a key competitive advantage in the 21st century and RDA and
 27 its members are at the heart of building this new economic model from exchanging research and
 28 scholarship data.

29 Organisational Members help to guide and support the RDA, and provide an important route for
 30 adoption of RDA outputs to promote data sharing. Benefits of organisational membership include:

- 31 • Being seen to act as early adopters for newly developed standards and protocols
- 32 • Adding influence to their work on data interoperability in their sectors, markets and geographies
- 33 • Having a voice inside RDA, providing advice on the needs of their sectors and the problems faced
 34 in data exchange
- 35 • Providing advice to the RDA Council through the Organisational Advisory Board
- 36 • Being recognised on the RDA Website and at RDA Meetings as a leader in world data
 37 interoperability
- 38 • Receiving regular briefings on the progress of RDA’s work
- 39 • Interacting with other Organisational Members (OMs)

41 Organisational Members can be R&D agencies, for-profit companies and non-profit foundations,
 42 community organisations, institutions, or any other organisation which has an interest in furthering
 43 the goals of the RDA. It is desirable that Organisational members of the RDA:

- 44 • Work towards the aims of the RDA and subscribe to the RDA Guiding Principles¹
- 45 • Work to accelerate international data-driven innovation and discovery by facilitating research
 46 data sharing and exchange, use and re-use, standards harmonisation, and discoverability
- 47 • Provide ongoing financial support in the form of member fees to the RDA for the term of their
 48 organisational membership
- 49 • Attend and vote in the Organisational Assembly (OA) meetings

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Membership	Membership is open to any organisation that subscribes to the RDA Guiding Principles.
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¹ About RDA: <https://rd-alliance.org/get-involved.html>

Joining	Organisational Members apply to join through the RDA website and are approved by the RDA Council.
Termination	An Organisational Member can leave RDA at any time by giving one month's notice. After due warning, Organisational Membership can be revoked by Council from any member who is found not to be operating in line with the aims of the RDA.
Duration	Organisational Membership is annual, and shall renew for an unlimited subsequent terms of one year by mutual agreement of both parties. No refund of membership fee is allowed.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in all RDA Organisational Forums • Receive regular updates on the work of the RDA • Attend and vote at the Organisational Assembly meetings, physically or remotely, with one vote per Organisational Member • Provide advice to Council through the Organisational Advisory Board • Be recognised on the RDA Website and at RDA Meetings as a supporter of data interoperability
Desirable Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards the aims of the RDA and subscribe to the RDA Guiding Principles • Contribute financial support to the RDA at a level defined in the published fee structure for the term of their membership • Actively participate in RDA activities

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55 **Organisational Affiliates**

56 The Research Data Alliance wishes to work with likeminded organisations in order to coordinate
57 efforts in mutual areas of interest and to avoid unnecessary duplication and conflict. Each
58 Organisational Affiliation will be considered on its own merit, and the particular circumstances will
59 determine the approach to collaboration in each case.

60 There are no financial considerations on either side, but there should be demonstrable mutual
61 benefit from the affiliation. For example, Affiliates are expected to participate actively in RDA
62 activities and to present a summary of their relevant organisational activities to RDA. They will be
63 invited to attend the Organisational Members session(s), to vote in Organisational Advisory Board
64 elections, and can run for and be elected to the Organisational Advisory Board. Affiliates will in turn
65 reciprocate the affiliation status to RDA in those cases in which it is appropriate.

66 An exchange of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) letters will formalise the relationship, which
67 can be terminated on request by either party.

68 The criteria for organisations to become Affiliate members are the following:

- 69
- Have a related mission to RDA and directly or indirectly contribute to data sharing and interoperability
- 70
- 71
- Work globally
- 72
- Define and implement explicit points of collaboration with RDA in an MoU such as joint
- 73
- WG/IGs, adoption agreements, shared services, etc. which would deliver mutual benefits
- 74
- Not disciplinary specific (yet broad within a domain is ok)
- 75
- Provide an equivalent affiliate role for RDA in their organization (preferably with voting
- 76
- rights)

77 **The Organisational Assembly**

78 The Organisational Assembly (OA) is the body of representatives from the Organisational Members
79 and Organisational Affiliates. The OA holds a meeting at each RDA plenary. The OA meeting enables
80 OA members to help set priorities, hear about progress, and draw up recommendations from the
81 Organisational Members. It provides a forum for discussion of how RDA outputs are to be
82 implemented and deployed.

83 The OA elects an Organisational Advisory Board, with its membership drawn from representatives of
84 the Organisational Members and Affiliate Organisations.

85 **OA Membership**

86 OA Members are nominated by their organisation and represent their organisation rather than their
87 personal view.

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- The OA meets at each plenary to discuss its members' roles and plans in taking forward RDA
89 outputs and to develop a collective view about how the work of RDA is progressing

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- The OA will decide on whether to invite other individuals to participate in their activities, for
91 example, individuals from organisations which are considering joining as organisational
92 members

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- The OA elects the Organisational Advisory Board by the process described in the next sub-
94 sections

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96 **The Organisational Advisory Board**

97 The Organisational Advisory Board (OAB) is constituted from members of the OA selected by the
98 election process described below. The OAB advises Council on the directions, processes, and
99 mechanisms of RDA. With support from the Secretariat, the OAB is responsible for commenting on
100 the RDA Organisational and Process Plan document. A co-chair of the OAB serves as an observer
101 member of Council.

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Organisational Advisory Board - Roles and Responsibilities	
Function	The Organisational Advisory Board is constituted from representatives of RDA organisation members and provides advice to Council on RDA organisational and process issues, overarching strategy, etc.
Membership	Organisational members will nominate a representative of the organisation to be a member of the OAB. Member organisations may replace their organisational representatives at their discretion. The OAB will annually elect two co-Chairs and identify one co-Chair who serves as a non-voting observer member of the Council.
Duration	OAB members may serve on the OAB as long as their organisations are approved organisational members of the RDA with a limit of two years, after which re-election is required. Organisational Members approval is the responsibility of Council.
Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OAB will be supported by the RDA Secretariat in executing its activities • One co-Chair of the Organisational Advisory Board will participate as a non-voting observer member of the RDA Council
Expectations and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OAB provides input to Council on the organisational processes, structure, strategic direction, and sustainability of the RDA • The OAB advises the RDA Secretariat on the RDA Organisational and Process Plan • OAB members are expected to subscribe to the RDA Guiding Principles and attend OAB meetings and the bi-annual Plenaries • OAB members are expected to act as links between their organisations and the RDA • The OAB is responsible for the maintenance of this document, with review by the Council

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106 **OAB scope** is both organisational and technical;

107 **OAB discussion** will be via two lists/forums – one open to all, one open to OAB members only.

108 Unless there is specific reason not to do so, all communications should be made via the open list.

109 **OAB meetings** The OAB will decide on the frequency and mechanisms for its meetings. An initial
 110 schedule might be that meetings are held monthly via videoconference. The meeting times will be
 111 chosen to share the pain of time zones fairly across the members. The quorum for a meeting should
 112 be two thirds of the membership. OAB meetings will be supported by a member of the secretariat.
 113 Notes will be made available through the open OAB list.

114 **OAB reports** to Council through an open report, submitted twice a year one month before the
115 plenary.

116 **OAB decision-making** – The OAB will make decisions by consensus where possible. It will define its
117 own procedures for operating and reaching consensus under the guidance of the co-chairs whose
118 role includes encouraging and detecting that consensus. The decision and outputs of the OAB will
119 be made open for discussion in the online forum.

120 **OAB Membership**

121 The OAB consists of 12 elected members including 2 co-chairs, and some ex-officio participants as
122 described below.

123 Term of elected OAB members

- 124 • OAB members are elected for two years. There are no restrictions on re-election
- 125 • One half of the OAB members are replaced each year

126 The role of ex-officio OAB participants is to ensure coordination of OAB with other RDA bodies. The
127 ex-officio members will include:

- 128 • A representative from the Secretariat, specifically the Secretary General or their
129 delegate
- 130 • A representative from the Technical Advisory Board (TAB), specifically one or both of
131 the TAB co-chairs or their delegate
- 132 • A secretary to OAB, from the secretariat

133 The OAB will decide on whether to invite other individuals to participate in their activities, for
134 example individuals brought in for specific tasks if and when needed and agreed by the OAB.

135 Term of ex-officio OAB participants

- 136 • Ex-officio OAB participants are appointed for the duration of their other role or until
137 replaced by the organisation they represent. There is no time limit on their appointment

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139 **OAB Membership Constraints**

140 **Overlaps between OAB and other RDA bodies**

- 141 • OAB members should be members of the RDA
- 142 • OAB members should be associated with an organisation in the OA

143 **OAB resignation**

- 144
- OAB members can resign at any time during their term. If a place on the OAB is vacated during a person's term, it can be filled by nomination from the OAB at its discretion or left open and one extra place elected at the next OAB election
- 145
- 146
- 147
- OAB members will stand down from their position on OAB if they cease to fulfil the criteria of membership described above
- 148

149 **OAB Elections**

150 *This section describes the OAB election process once it is in a steady state. The process will need to be*
151 *slightly different during the first two years until the rotation of OAB places is established. This*
152 *initialisation process is described below in the section "Bootstrap OAB election process".*

153 **Aim**

154 OAB members are chosen from the OA for their expertise in organisational operations.
155 Qualifications for selection include operations experience, subject matter expertise, and willingness
156 to serve. Membership should reflect the diversity of RDA members, in terms of region, organisation
157 type, and organisation focus.

158 **Process**

159 There is a permanent forum to support the OAB election process.

160 The process is run on a fixed 12 month cycle, with a fixed schedule for each stage. The cycle is
161 synchronised with the Plenary so as to make best use of face-to-face discussions at the Plenary.

162 Any member of the OA can put themselves forward as a candidate for election to the OAB. OA
163 members can discuss qualifications with the candidates. These discussions will be conducted via an
164 open forum and at the OA meeting at the plenary.

165 Voting will take place at the OA meeting at the plenary. Each Organisational Member and each
166 Organisational Affiliate present will have one vote. When the vote takes place the candidates will
167 leave the room and the total number of votes for each candidate will be recorded.

168 In the unlikely event of a draw the election will be held again and if that does not resolve the tie a
169 decision will be made by lottery.

170

171 **Election of the OAB Co-Chairs**

172 *Note: This section describes the OAB election process once RDA is in a steady state. The bootstrap*
173 *process is described later.*

174 At any given time there are two co-chairs of the OAB.

175 The OAB co-chairs are elected from the OAB members by the OAB members.

176 The OAB co-chairs are elected for 2 years at a time. There is no limit on re-election. The co-chair
177 elections are staggered so that one co-chair is elected each year.

178 The OAB co-chairs are elected by simple majority voting with one vote for each OAB member.

179 The OAB co-chair elections are held immediately after the OAB elections with voting by the new OAB
180 members.

181 **OAB Balancing**

182 The OAB should ideally reflect the breadth of types of organisation in the OA. There is no formal
183 process by which this is enforced but the OA will encourage candidates to stand so that this can be
184 achieved.

185 **Bootstrap OAB Election Process**

186 During the first two years, the election of the OAB needs to be adjusted so as to introduce the
187 staggering of the elections. The first OAB will consist of the initial co-chairs and 10 elected members.
188 Half of the elected will be members for one year and half for two years. Towards the end of the first
189 year, the chairs will ask for volunteers who want to stand down or stand for re-election. If there are
190 not enough volunteers the rest will be decided by lottery.

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192 **Bootstrap OAB co-chair election process**

193 After one year, one of the initial OAB co-chairs will stand down. That person may then stand for re-
194 election alongside any other candidate who wishes to stand for election as co-chair. The choice of
195 which co-chair will stand down first could be voluntary or by lottery.

196 **Process for Organisations to become members of RDA**

197 The process for joining the RDA as an Organisational member consists of 3 stages:

198 1. The organisation completes and submits Organisational Member Application form to the
199 RDA Secretariat. The organisation then becomes a candidate for membership².

200 2. The candidate enters into formal membership negotiations with the Secretary General. The
201 accession criteria are described in the Appendix for this document. Note there are two ways by

² The Organisational Membership application form is available for download at the address: <><https://rd-alliance.org/rda-organisational-membership.html>. Note you need to become an RDA member first (subscribe to RDA at <https://europe.rd-alliance.org/Content/Registration.aspx>)>

202 which an Organisation can become an OM: either by paying a subscription to the RDA or by signing
203 the membership agreement and paying the member fee.

204 3. When the negotiations have been completed, the Candidates Membership application is put
205 to Council who make the decision on whether the Organisations in accepted as an OM.

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207 **Organisational Membership Fees**

208 The organisational membership fee of RDA depends on the size of the organisation as detailed in the
209 table below.

Size of Organisation	Annual Amount
Fewer than 50 employees	\$1,000 US
Over 50 but fewer than 250 employees	\$2,000 US
Over 250 employees	\$10,000 US

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