



RDA Foundation Governance Document

Adopted by the Council on 5 February 2014

1 Status

This document describes the high level structures of the Research Data Alliance Foundation (the **RDA Foundation**) and its associate membership, known as the RDA. It has been adopted by the Council in accordance with the Articles of Association of the RDA Foundation. A separate suite of documents describe the processes and procedures governing the activities and administration of the RDA.

2 Introduction and Guiding Principles

The goal of the RDA Foundation is to accelerate international data-driven innovation and discovery by facilitating research data sharing and exchange in accordance with the charitable objects set out in its Articles of Association.

This is achieved through the development, adoption, and deployment of infrastructure, policy, practice, standards, and other deliverables. The emphasis of RDA Foundation is the adoption

and deployment of technology and infrastructure, rather than research and development of new technology or infrastructure which is undertaken in other projects.

To effectively facilitate the achievement of this goal, the RDA Foundation adopts the following Guiding Principles.

Guiding Principles of the RDA Foundation:

- **Openness** – Individual Membership of the RDA is open to all interested individuals who subscribe to the RDA's Guiding Principles. RDA community meetings and processes are open, and the deliverables of RDA Working Groups will be publicly disseminated;
- **Consensus** – The RDA Foundation moves forward by achieving consensus among its associate membership. RDA processes and procedures include appropriate mechanisms to resolve conflicts;
- **Balance** – The RDA Foundation seeks to promote balanced representation of its associate membership and stakeholder communities;
- **Harmonization** – The RDA Foundation works to achieve harmonization across data standards, policies, technologies, infrastructure, and communities;
- **Community-driven** – The RDA Foundation is a public, community-driven body constituted of volunteer associate members and organizations, supported by the RDA Secretariat.
- **Non-profit** – The RDA Foundation does not promote, endorse, or sell commercial products, technologies, or services.

These guiding principles will underlie and steer the conduct and evolution of the organization

3 Individual Member Participation

The heart of the RDA Foundation is its Individual Members who are actively involved in its efforts. Individual Members are associate members of the RDA Foundation and may participate through:

- **Interest Groups** which are clusters of Individual Members focused on a particular topic. Ideas and candidate Case Statements for Working Groups may arise from Interest Group discussions.
- **Working Groups** which carry out the technical work of the RDA Foundation. Working Groups operate to a defined objective and on a finite timeline which are described in the working group's Case Statement. Upon completion of the Working Group effort as described within the Case Statement, a Working Group will be disbanded.
- The **Plenary** which is the bi-annual meeting of the RDA Foundation's associate membership. **Attendance at the Plenary is open to all** RDA Individual Members, who are encouraged to participate in the Plenaries.

4 Organisational Member Participation

The RDA Foundation has associate Organisational Members (OMs), who participate in the RDA Foundation via the Organisational Assembly (OA). The OA is made up of representatives nominated by each of the Organisational Members. The OA hold a meeting at each RDA Plenary. The OA meeting enables OMs to help influence directions, hear about progress, and draw up recommendations from the Organisational Members. It provides a forum for OMs to discuss how RDA Foundation outputs are to be implemented and deployed. The rights and obligations of OMs (including details of membership fees), the conditions for admission to and termination of Organisational Membership and the procedures governing such Members are set out in RDA Organisational Member Process Document.

5 Supporting Bodies of the RDA Foundation

The following bodies support the work of the Individual Members, Interest Groups, Working Groups, and Plenary, and ensure that the work remains focused on the charitable objects of the RDA Foundation:

- **COUNCIL:** The Council members are the Trustees of the RDA Foundation. The **Council** is responsible for maintaining the vision of RDA, ensuring the guiding principles of the organisation are maintained, and formally endorsing the outcomes of the RDA activities in line with the RDA guiding principles. Evidence of general consensus within the RDA bodies in support of an action is a key factor in Council decision-making. Council members are expected to be committed to delivering the charitable aims of the RDA Foundation rather than promoting special or regional interests, domains or disciplines. The Council is responsible for the overall oversight, success, strategy, and sustainability of the RDA Foundation, as well as the development and maintenance of the RDA Strategic Plan document.
- **NOMINATION COMMITTEE:** The Nominations Committee is a committee of the Council that is responsible for nominating Council members and appointing those nominees that have been selected by the Individual Members present and voting at the Plenary. Details of the membership of the Nomination Committee (including the conditions for admission to and termination of such membership) and the regulations governing Nomination Committee proceedings are set out in the RDA Organisational and Process Plan.
- **TAB:** The **Technical Advisory Board (TAB)** is a committee of the Council that provides technical expertise and advice to the Council, as well as helping to develop and review RDA Working Groups to promote their impact and effectiveness. Membership of the TAB is elected from the Individual Membership. The TAB is responsible for the technical approach of the RDA Foundation and the development and maintenance of an RDA Technical Roadmap document. A co-Chair of the Technical Advisory Board serves as an observer, non-voting member of Council. The procedures which govern TAB membership and activities are described in the Organisational and Process Plan.

- **OAB:** The **Organisational Advisory Board** (OAB) is a committee of the Council that provides organisational advice to the RDA Council. Its membership is drawn from the Organisational Assembly and the RDA Organisational Affiliates. The OAB advises Council on the directions, processes, and mechanisms of RDA. With support from the Secretariat, the OAB is responsible for comment on the RDA Organisational and Process Plan document. A co-chair of the OAB serves as an observer, non-voting member of Council. The procedures which govern OAB membership and activities are described in the Organisational and Process Plan.
- **SECRETARIAT:** The **Secretariat** supports the administrative, logistical, and other activities of the RDA Foundation and its associate membership, the RDA, by implementing the processes defined in the planning Documents. This includes supporting the Membership and Bodies of the RDA Foundation in their undertaking of RDA Foundation activities. The Secretariat is responsible for the RDA Organizational and Process Plan document. The Secretariat is led by a Secretary General who reports to and serves as an observer, non-voting member of Council. The Secretariat is responsible for operation of the RDA including development and maintenance of the annual work plan. An annual budget proposal is prepared by the Secretariat for Council review and approval.