RDA WG Template - Establishing an RDA Working Group

Abstract: The purpose of this document is to provide all information about RDA Working Groups and how to create one using the Case Statement template.

Introduction

RDA Working Groups (WGs) should tangibly accelerate progress in concrete ways for specific communities with the overarching goal of increasing data-driven innovation. Efforts are intended to promote data sharing and exchange, interoperability, data use and re-use, data discoverability and analysis, data stewardship and preservation, and best practice for substantive communities.

Working Group Expectations

Working Groups (WGs) are expected to:

- Develop clear outcomes, in particular a [Recommendation](), and put them into action to create tangible progress (see also [Working Group Goals and Outcomes]() and the [RDA Outputs and Intellectual Property Policy]()).
- Work openly and transparently with respect to the community.
- Document their efforts as they operate.
- Meet regularly with the RDA to facilitate coordination and communication.

RDA WG members should commit their time and effort to making the WG successful, and should carry out the WG "action plan" within their home organization, institution, or group to the best of their abilities. Each recognized RDA WG should include [adopters]() for the stated outcomes and deliverables, and members who can make substantial impact through efforts within their home organization, institution, or group. RDA working group constituencies should be international and multi-sector.

With approval of a Case Statement (see template below) by the RDA Council, a recognised RDA Working Group is formed. The RDA Secretariat and Technical Advisory Board (TAB) will work closely with the WG during its operation to facilitate progress and communications and to coordinate with other WGs and RDA bodies. WGs are expected to operate transparently and utilize the RDA website and online interaction channels to:
- engage the community
- keep the community informed of their efforts
- make intermediate and final deliverables/outcomes available to the community.

The WG should plan for dissemination and communication about WG activities, results, and outcomes, and to keep the community informed on WG progress. Other vehicles for communication and public and community engagement (including published work, news releases, etc.) may also be appropriate. The Secretariat can assist with communications.

As WG efforts complete, the WG Chairs will inform RDA of relevant outcomes and how they will be sustained. Recommendations will undergo a formal RDA review process as outlined on the [Creating or Joining an RDA Working Group page](#). The group will also provide a record of relevant notes, minutes, and materials from the WG for archiving by the RDA. Working Groups will be invited to report out at all plenary meetings that occur during their period of activity.

Working Group Case Statement

In order to be considered by the RDA Council as a recognised RDA Working Group, groups should prepare a Case Statement to be assessed by the community, the Technical Advisory Board (TAB), who review it from a technical perspective, and RDA Council, who review it from a strategic perspective. Please contact enquiries [at] rd-alliance.org if you want to submit a Case Statement.

A Case Statement describes:
1. What is the research case (will the WG produce something useful)?
2. What is the business case (will people use it)?
3. Is there capacity (are the right people involved to adopt and implement).

Case Statement Content/Template

A Case Statement must contain the following components:

1. **WG Charter**: A concise articulation of what issues the WG will address within a 18 month time frame and what its "deliverables" or outcomes (including a Recommendation) will be.
2. **Value Proposition**: A specific description of who will benefit from the adoption or implementation of the WG outcomes and what tangible impacts should result.
3. **Engagement with existing work in the area**: A brief review of related work and plan for engagement with any other activities in the area.
4. **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** *(An explanation of how the Group and its activities will contribute to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). See [here](#) for a list of the 17 goals and please specify which goals, if any, are relevant to this Group's work.)*
5. **Work Plan**: A specific and detailed description of how the WG will operate including:
   - The form and description of the final Recommendation of the WG,
   - The form and description of milestones and intermediate documents, code or other deliverables that will be developed during the course of the WG's work,

- A description of the WG's mode and frequency of operation (e.g. on-line and/or on-site, how frequently will the group meet, etc.),
- A description of how the WG plans to develop consensus, address conflicts, stay on track and within scope, and move forward during operation, and
- A description of the WG's planned approach to broader community engagement and participation.

6. **Adoption Plan**: A specific plan for adoption or implementation of the WG Recommendation and other outcomes within the organizations and institutions represented by WG members, as well as plans for adoption more broadly within the community. Such adoption or implementation should start within the 18 month timeframe before the WG is complete.
7. **Initial Membership**: A specific list of initial members of the WG and a description of initial leadership of the WG.

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Working Group Chairs

The WG should nominate 2-4 co-Chairs who will lead the group and be responsible for communication within the RDA and more broadly. The WG Chairs take primary responsibility for the quality, scope, timeliness, and usefulness of the work in progress. The Chairs ensure that there is an effective organizational structure in place for the WG and that there are individuals, groups, and processes that can ensure progress in infrastructure and tool development, the development and editing of policy and written documents, and other tangible outcomes. The responsibilities of the WG Chairs, other leaders and members should be described in the WG Case Statement, and followed during operation of the Group.

Case Statement Review Criteria

Each submitted Candidate Working Group (CWG) Case Statement will be made available for input from the RDA community. This input and the submitted Case Statement will be reviewed by the Technical Advisory Board (TAB) and finally the RDA Council.

WGs should deliver specific, concrete, and needed outcomes that help researchers and related communities share and exchange data. Many mechanisms exist for developing high-level studies, recommendations, and guidance. Where RDA seeks to add value is by demonstrating the data exchange and implementing the actual tools and mechanisms called for by these studies and that truly meet community needs. Efforts that would lead to papers, recommendations, etc. are meant to complement rather than serve as deliverables of RDA Working Groups.

Council seeks to ensure that the efforts of the groups are well aligned with the RDA mission and principles. For Working Groups, Council will consult with the TAB on the content of the Case Statement and assess the level of community consensus that emerged during the creation and discussion of the Case Statement.

Each CWG Case Statement will be evaluated (by the community, TAB, and Council) based on the following criteria:

Focus:

- *Are there measurable outcomes?*

Impact and Engagement:

- *Will the outcome(s) of the Working Group be taken up by the intended community?*
- *Will the outcome(s) of the Working Group foster data sharing and/or exchange?*

Timeframe:

- *Can the proposed work, outcomes /deliverables, and Action Plan described in the Case Statement be accomplished in 12-18 months?*

Scope/Fit:

- *Is the scope too large for effective progress, too small for an RDA effort, or not appropriate for the RDA?*
- *Overall, is this a worthwhile effort for the RDA to take on? Is this an effort that adds value over and above what is currently being done within the community?*

In assessing these criteria, Council will consider whether the Case Statement addresses the following questions. These are all questions of impact, rather than technical merit.

1. What is the evidence that the research community wants this?
    - The specific research communities who will benefit are <WHO?> and that benefit is <WHAT?>.
    - Specific benefits of the work that connect distinct communities are <WHAT?>.
    - This will enable the specific researchers to address <WHAT RESEARCH ISSUE?> more easily.
    - Comment: Adopters and beneficiaries of the deliverables must be represented in the Working Group to demonstrate research community demand and drive its impact.
2. What are the practical outcomes?

- In the course of this work, <WHAT?> will be adopted by the <WHO from 1a?>. (This provides evidence that demonstrates that the deliverables are useful.)
- Comment: Deliverables are expected to be implemented code, adopted policy or practice, implemented infrastructure or tools, etc.
- Comment: Deliverables are expected to directly benefit the research community during the course of the working group.
- Comment: Reports and recommendations alone are not aligned with the notion of RDA deliverable.

3. How do the deliverables make it easier for researchers to do their work? What significant changes will be made in how research is undertaken?
- The deliverables will make it easier for research communities to do their work <HOW?> and <TO WHAT BENEFIT?>.
- What barriers to data sharing or exchange are being removed and how?
- Could the deliverables disrupt current practice?

4. Who will implement or adopt the deliverable, and are the adopters and beneficiaries included in the Working Group?
- Who are the adopters?
- Who are the beneficiaries?
- How are they included in the Working Group and what are their roles?
- What is the Working Group's strategy for broader adoption?

5. What is the schedule for implementation or adoption of the deliverables during the course of the Working Group?
- Comment: Milestones should reference groups and deliverables from questions 1 and 2.

6. What are the advantages of the proposed approach compared to existing approaches?
- What else is being done now?
- Why is the adoption of the proposed deliverables an improvement?
- What are the impediments to global adoption?