RDA Secretary General Recruitment

1. Introduction

The Research Data Alliance (RDA) is recruiting a Secretary General to begin in April of 2017. The ideal candidate is a suitably experienced leader with a demonstrated ability to engage with the members, Council and senior stakeholders of the RDA, and the ability to be a key driver of the RDA mission of rapidly building the social and technical bridges that enable sharing of data.

The Secretary General reports to the co-chairs of the RDA Council.

The appointment to this position is intended to be for two years and renewable. The employment vehicle for the Secretary General is a contract between the Research Data Alliance Foundation and an organisation willing to host the Secretary General.

The Secretary General can be based in any country and will be expected to attend many international meetings, including all RDA Plenaries. At present most of these meetings take place in North America and Europe.

The Secretary General is appointed by the RDA Council. Queries about this role can be made to John Wood (john.wood@acu.ac.uk), co-Chair of the RDA Council. Applications for this role should be sent to applications@rd-alliance.org. The application should provide a description of the candidate's experience relevant to the role (including a response to the key selection criteria below), a CV, a note proposing the organisation that would host the candidate, and a letter of support from the proposed host and any particular requirements of the host. The closing date is February 15, 2017.

The role of the Secretary General is to support the RDA membership, and its supporting structures to achieve the goal of the Research Data Alliance - to accelerate international data-driven innovation and discovery by facilitating research data sharing and exchange.

The responsibilities of the Secretary General include:

Membership

1. Engage with and represent the RDA membership in accordance with the guiding principles of RDA.
2. Communicate with all members regarding the progress and issues facing the RDA.
3. Apply international experience in dealing with members and supporters from many countries with different cultures.
4. Assist Working and Interest Groups.

Secretariat

5. Manage the RDA Secretariat which includes managing a distributed team responsible for all matters related to the operations of the RDA. This includes supporting the RDA Council and the Technical and Organisational Advisory Boards as well as supporting the planning and organising of the plenary meetings of the RDA.
6. Active participation in the work of the Secretariat.
7. Operating the RDA legal entity as directed by the RDA Council, which allows members from any nation of the world to join and where there is no restriction for receiving funds from a wide range of funders.
8. Be responsible for the finances and other issues of governance of the RDA Foundation as a legal entity. The Secretary General is the responsible accounting officer for the purposes of tax and conforming to the legal requirements of a not for profit company under UK law.
9. Be familiar with UK Charity and Company law in as much as it affects the legal entity.
10. Prepare annual accounts and report for submission to the UK Charity Commission.

Council

11. Participate in the Council as an ex-officio member.
12. Attend all meetings of Council and appropriate Technical and Organisational Advisory Boards and liaise with their chairs on a regular basis.
13. Participate in strategic planning that builds a solid foundation for the RDA with Council.
14. Be conversant with the main issues facing the RDA as the field develops and be alert to changes in technology, practice, and international legal changes that may affect open access, intellectual property rights, and other related issues.
15. Prepare and present an Annual Report to the Council for approval.
16. Prepare and present to Council an annual Operations Plan for approval and update at each Council meeting depending on changing circumstances.
17. Develop both a Council and Management risk register.
18. Agree with Council the formation and operation of an audit and remuneration committee when funds become available.

General

19. Be able to present the work of the RDA to any audience including future supporters from a wide variety of backgrounds.
20. Represent the RDA in discussions with other parties and associated organisations as they arise.
21. Be willing to travel extensively on behalf of the RDA, especially to potential new countries that may wish to join the RDA in some capacity.
22. Develop and grow an organisational culture that is open, inclusive and provides no surprises, reflective of the RDA Guiding Principles.
23. Represent the RDA politically and be sensitive to cultural differences of supporters.

2. Research Data Alliance Guiding Principles

- **Openness** – Membership 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 moves forward by achieving consensus among its membership. RDA processes and procedures include appropriate mechanisms to resolve conflicts.

- **Balance** – The RDA seeks to promote balanced representation of its membership and stakeholder communities.

- **Harmonization** – The RDA works to achieve harmonization across data standards, policies, technologies, infrastructure, and communities.

- **Community-driven** – The RDA is a public, community-driven body constituted of volunteer members and organizations, supported by the RDA Secretariat.

- **Non-profit** - RDA does not promote, endorse, or sell commercial products, technologies, or services.

3. Selection process

The process will be run by the RDA Council. An international search will be conducted by February 15, 2017. Short-listing will take place by February 28, 2017. The interviews will be conducted by videoconference for all candidates. The RDA Council wishes to conduct these interviews before March 15, 2017.

The organisation can be determined during this process.

Candidates will be interviewed based on the following criteria:

Key selection criteria:
1. Proven management experience including board engagement

2. Proven experience in management of finance, human resources, planning, and operations of an organisation
3. Strong understanding of RDA
4. Proven community development expertise
5. Proven senior representation and leadership experience
6. Proven "doer" – the role requires an activist, as well as a leader
7. Able to arrange appropriate contractual relationship with the RDA Foundation

Desirable

8. Proven experience in international relations
9. Demonstrated experience of working in a culturally diverse international organisation
10. Data infrastructure expertise
11. Able to start quickly

4. Appointment

The successful candidate will be employed by an organisation local to the candidate. That organisation will be contracted to supply the services of the "RDA Secretary General", and would be provided the salary expenses and on-costs associated with that role. The contract will be between that organisation and the RDA Foundation.

5. Additional Context: Supporting Bodies of the RDA

The supporting bodies of the RDA provide the environment to support the work of the individual members, interest groups, working groups, and plenary, and ensure that the organisational perspective remains focused on the longer term aims of the Research Data Alliance. The RDA bodies are:

- *COUNCIL:* 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 RDA principles. The Council is responsible for the overall oversight, success, strategy, and sustainability of the RDA.

- *TAB:* The Technical Advisory Board (TAB) is responsible for the technical direction of the RDA and provides technical expertise and advice to the Council, as well as helping to develop and review RDA Working and Interest Groups to promote their impact and effectiveness. Membership of the TAB is elected from the RDA membership. A co-chair of the Technical Advisory Board serves as a non-voting, observer member of Council.

- *OAB:* The Organisational Advisory Board (OAB) provides organisational advice to the RDA Council. The OAB advises Council on the adoption of outputs, directions, processes, and mechanisms of RDA. A co-chair of the OAB serves as a non-voting, observer member of Council.

- ***SECRETARIAT:*** The Secretariat supports the administrative, logistical, and other activities of the RDA by implementing the processes defined in the planning documents. This includes supporting the Membership and Bodies of the RDA in their undertaking of RDA activities. The Secretariat is led by a Secretary General who is appointed by and reports to Council. The Secretary General serves as a non-voting, observer member of Council. An annual budget proposal is prepared by the Secretariat for Council review and approval.

6. Additional Context: From Governance Document: Responsibilities of the Secretariat

The Secretary General is the company secretary of the RDA Foundation.

The Secretary General is responsible for the work of the RDA Secretariat. The Secretary General is responsible for the effective and efficient operation of the Secretariat. All members of the Secretariat will work under the direction of the Secretary General though members of the Secretariat may be employed by many organisations, provided as an in-kind contribution by RDA organisational members. RDA staff provided by organisational members may be hosted within their home organizations but for RDA purposes will report to the RDA Secretary General. The size and constitution of Secretariat staff will be described in the annual Operating Plan and approved by Council.

The Secretariat will support the activities of the IGs, WGs, Plenary, Council, OAB and TAB as appropriate including logistical, administrative, and other support.

The Secretariat is responsible for operating the RDA in line with the RDA planning documents, including the RDA Organisational and Process Plan and the RDA Operations Plan.

The Secretariat is responsible for preparing and maintaining an annual Operating Plan which is approved by Council. The Operating plan includes a Financial plan, Staffing plan, and Activities plan.

The Secretariat is responsible for event and other planning for the RDA bi-annual Plenaries.

The Secretariat is responsible for communications and promotion of RDA efforts and outputs, including the development of appropriate reports to stakeholder groups and partners.

The Secretariat is responsible for open dissemination of RDA strategic documents, including the RDA Organisational and Process Plan, and the RDA Operations Plan.

The Secretariat is expected to work with the Council Nominations Committee and the TAB to conduct elections for Council and TAB members respectively.
The Secretary General is expected to provide operational and financial oversight to Council.