

Terms of Reference: Research Data Canada Steering Committee

Background

Research Data Canada (RDC) is a stakeholder-driven and supported organization dedicated to maximizing the value of research data in Canada through better data management practices. RDC was established following a recommendation in the 2011 Canadian Research Data Summit Report, “Mapping the Data Landscape”, and plays an essential role in realizing the vision developed at the Summit.

Canadian governments and researchers, many of them publicly funded, produce large amounts of data that hold enormous potential for additional discovery and innovation. These data have virtually unlimited potential to be re-used in innovative ways – by researchers, industry, policy makers, and civil society – if they are properly managed in an infrastructure that provides long-term preservation and access.

No single institution can address the challenges of managing this data alone. Several stakeholder groups across the country are now engaged in developing and delivering a range of research data management services and platforms. RDC brings together these and other key stakeholders to develop strategy, facilitate communication and partnerships, recommend best practices, promote education and training, measure progress, and bring attention to gaps. RDC also acts as single point of contact for Canada with international initiatives, ensuring engagement with stakeholders.

In 2014, the wider research community reported that support for research data management (RDM), and for RDC as a key instrument for furthering the cause of research data management in Canada, was critical. CANARIE, through funding of RDC core activities, recognizes that RDC’s role as a convener requires it to maintain a level of independence that allows RDC to act as a neutral third party. Therefore, while ultimate responsibility for the governance of RDC funds rests with the CANARIE Board of Directors, the RDC Steering Committee (SC) acts as the source of strategic direction for the organization and its Executive Director.

Role

The Steering Committee represents the multiple stakeholders with an interest in and a responsibility for some aspect of RDM in Canada. Through the Executive Director, Committees and Working Groups, as well as directly through its own efforts, the SC facilitates:

- effective governance and operations of RDC on behalf of the stakeholder community;
- effective and regular communication to stakeholders, at the institutional and individual level;
- promotion and support of RDC and its activities, and the sharing of plans and strategies for implementing RDM best practices;
- a forum for the exchange of information, knowledge and experience of RDM;
- effective leadership and participation of RDC in RDM activities internationally;
- advice and strategic support to stakeholders.

Membership

Members at Large

1. The CEO of CANARIE (1)
2. The CEO of Compute Canada (2)
3. A representative from CUCCIO (3)
4. The Director of the CARL Portage Network (4)
5. A library director from a research-intensive Canadian university or college (5)
6. A senior representative from each of the Tri-Agencies (8)
7. A senior representative from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (9)
8. A senior representative of Open Science leadership in the Government of Canada (10)
9. A senior representative of the National Research Council (11)
10. Two Vice-Presidents Research (1 to serve as RDC Chair) (13)
11. Two senior data intensive researchers (15)
12. A senior representative of an international research data management organization (16)
13. A senior representative from the Leadership Council for Digital Infrastructure (17)
14. A representative of the Provincial Open Data community (18)
15. A senior representative of the Provincial research funder community (19)
16. A representative of the non-profit/NGO research community (20)
17. A senior representative of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (21)

Ex-Officio Members

18. RDC Executive Director (22)
19. Past Chair of the RDC Steering Committee (23)
20. RDC Committee Chairs (27)

Terms of Reference

The RDC SC has the duties, responsibilities and authorities as set out below.

1. Advise CANARIE on the appointment and annual review of the Executive Director.
2. Provide advice and direction to the RDC Executive Director on:
 - a) best practices, programs, and other activities;
 - b) the development of annual work plans for the Executive Director and Committees;
 - c) communications strategies that strengthen understanding of the value of Canadian research data holdings and RDM in agencies such as the federal government, granting agencies, provincial governments and other research agencies, as well as with researchers, other stakeholders, and the public generally;
 - d) the development and implementation of RDC programs and funding opportunities.
3. Ensure an inclusive approach to the involvement of the full stakeholder community in RDC activities, and support and promote stakeholder involvement in the work of RDC.
4. Ensure the timely reporting of developments that have a significant and material impact on RDC.
5. Identify collaborative opportunities among the stakeholders and with international bodies.

Procedures

1. The Chair of the SC shall be nominated from the VPs Research members and be elected by the Committee members. The Committee Chair is expected to serve for a 2-year term, renewable.
2. The SC will make decisions based on consensus, with a voting process called upon as required and as determined by the Chair. Quorum is 50% plus the Chair and Executive Director.
3. The SC shall meet quarterly and when possible annually in person, or at any other time by request of a majority of members. Meetings will normally be held by video and/or teleconference. Observers (non-voting) may request attendance, or be invited to attend meetings at the discretion of any of the members.
4. A core principle of the RDC, and one that highlights its support for open data, is to make the outputs of the SC, Committees, and Working Groups available to the full stakeholder community, and where feasible the broader public.
5. Additional RDC Committees or Working Groups may be created as required to deliver on the Terms of Reference of RDC, in consultation with Committee Chairs, and at the

discretion of the Executive Director.

6. CANARIE will provide secretariat support for the SC, as necessary, to carry out the work of RDC and its various groups.

Reviewed and Approved

Date	By	ACTION / Changes
June 10, 2015	Pam Bjornson	Created
April 11, 2016	Mark Leggott	Edited to reflect new Terms and Membership
April 14, 2016	CANARIE SMT	Updated
May 10, 2016	Mark Leggott/Pam Bjornson	Updated
June 1, 2016	Mark Leggott/ SC Comments	Updated
June 28, 2016	Mark Leggott/ SC Comments	Updated
July 22, 2016	Final Version	Uploaded to RDC SharePoint site

