

To: Renate Behrens, Chair, RDA Steering Committee  
CC: Anne Welsh, RSC Secretary  
From: Robert L. Maxwell, NARDAC representative to RDA Steering Committee  
Subject: Response to RSC/ReligionsWG/2024/1 – Proposal to Revise Name of Corporate Body

NARDAC generally supports this proposal but has some comments and a few reservations.

**Recommendation 1:**

NARDAC generally supports this recommendation, but some constituents commented that removing “church councils” could potentially lead to confusion, at least for some catalogers: “It is true that church councils are a kind of religious body, but they are also a relatively impermanent kind of religious body, in that they typically exist for a few years and then are dissolved. In this, they are akin to conferences and are treated as such.” On the other hand, “it is not uncommon in historical works to treat these councils as events as well as religious bodies, and there is good reason to think that that this dual interpretation, as body and event, is pretty widespread in the popular mind. Given this ambiguity in the status of councils, not everybody may think of them as religious bodies (as opposed to events).”

In light of that concern, NARDAC proposes as an alternative wording for **Recommendation 1** (markup based on existing RDA text):

Examples of ancient or international bodies include religious bodies (including church councils), fraternal and knightly orders, ~~church councils~~, and diplomatic conferences.

**Recommendation 2:**

NARDAC approves of this recommendation.

**Recommendation 3:**

NARDAC approves of this recommendation but notes that one occurrence of “local” remains in the first condition. Was this intentional?

We suggest:

CONDITION

A corporate body is a religious institution that congregates ~~at~~ in a particular place ~~of~~ activity.

#### Recommendation 4:

NARDAC could support this recommendation, but has concerns:

1. The addition of a final condition option in **Recommendation 4** is confusing in relation to the existing condition options.
  - a. When/why should the *conventional name*, which the RDA Glossary defines as “A name, other than the real or official name, by which a corporate body has come to be known” (i.e., it is presumably the commonly known name of the body), *not* be the basis of the preferred name?
  - b. How does the inclusion of this new condition option enhance the coverage of non-Christian religions in RDA? (As always) examples would be helpful in understanding why adding this option is necessary. We would have liked an explanation as to why preferring an official name is more appropriate for certain religions.
  - c. In short, why is this addition necessary in accomplishing the goal of generalizing and removing Christian bias from religiously-oriented RDA instructions?
2. If this recommendation is accepted as is by RSC, based on wording used elsewhere, the condition option should read:

CONDITION OPTION

Record an official name.

However, we believe there are other issues with the condition and condition options associated with Religious orders and societies that warrant a more extended discussion in the RSC.

The existing language leaves implicit conditions unmentioned. The two existing condition options present an alternative: either a best-known form of the name can be determined and it is then chosen, or such a form cannot be determined and other names can be chosen, in a specific order of preference.

We think it would make more sense and the instructions would be clearer if 1) the implicit conditions were made explicit, resulting in a new set of conditions,<sup>1</sup> and 2) the new option were integrated into

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<sup>1</sup> This analysis is based on the equivalent instruction in the original toolkit. The instruction about religious orders and societies was placed under 11.2.2.5.4, Conventional Name, as one of many exceptions to the general instruction saying to use a conventional name in the language of the body. The first sentence of the instruction for Religious orders and societies did not mention the terms “conventional name” or “real or official name”, but said to choose “the best-known form of the name in a language preferred by the agency creating the data, if possible.” “In case of doubt” Instructions followed, which became the second condition option in the official toolkit. Some orders only have one name (although the name might exist in more than one language). That is, they might have a “real or official name” but do not have a “real or official name” AND a “conventional name” as specified in the condition. The Suore collegine della Sacra Famiglia example in the official toolkit seems to be such a case. We therefore think that the second line of the first condition, added in the official toolkit, is too restrictive and should not have been included.

each set of conditions, preserving the alternative. Some inconsistencies in the wording could also be corrected at the same time:

1. The second line of the condition, “A corporate body has a real or official name and a *conventional name*.” seems strange (aren’t all names real?). Since we believe the real distinction between the two condition options is whether the cataloger is or is not able to determine a well-established form of a name for the body, not whether it has “real”, “official”, or “conventional” names, we suggest simply deleting that line (see also our analysis of the phrase in footnote 1 on page 2).
2. The term “best-known” in the first condition option is used only here in RDA. We suggest “well-established,” language used elsewhere (e.g. under [Ancient and International bodies](#)) to express this concept.

Our suggested language:

#### CONDITION

A corporate body is a religious order or society.

~~A corporate body has a real or official name and a *conventional name*.~~

A value of Corporate Body: name of corporate body has become well-established in a language preferred by an agent who creates the metadata.

#### CONDITION OPTION

~~Record the ~~best-known~~ a well-established form of the name in a language preferred by the agent who creates the metadata.<sup>2</sup>~~

#### CONDITION OPTION

Record an official name.

#### CONDITION

A corporate body is a religious order or society.

A value of Corporate Body: name of corporate body that is well-established in a language preferred by an agent who creates the metadata cannot be determined.

#### CONDITION OPTION

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<sup>2</sup> The suggested text, including deleting “in a language preferred by the agent who creates the metadata” from the condition option, follows the pattern used under [Ancient and International bodies](#).

Record a value that is chosen in this order of preference:

1. a conventional name by which members of a corporate body are known in a language that is preferred by an agent who creates the metadata
2. a form of name in a language that is preferred by an agent who ~~records~~ creates the metadata and used by units of the order or society located in places where that language is spoken
3. a name of the order or society in a language of a place of its origin

CONDITION OPTION

Record an official name.

Note: NARDAC shares the Examples Editor's concern about Recommendation 4 (RSC/ReligionsWG/2024/1/Examples Editor response) but is not prepared to outright reject the recommendation.