



**Book Industry
Communication**

BIC Task and Finish Working Group

**Project Name:
Data Recipient Best Practice**

bic.org.uk
info@bic.org.uk
44 (0) 20 4551 1570

Copyright © 2024, Book Industry Communication Ltd.



BIC Project Brief

The Purpose of the BIC Project Brief

The BIC Project Brief is required to enable necessary projects or pieces of work to progress from being a good BIC Board or Committee idea to a formal request for work that is submitted to the appropriate Task and Finish Working Group and consultant. The BIC Project Brief must be agreed upon and signed off initially by all members of the BIC Committee responsible for the project and then by the dedicated Task & Finish Working Group (if applicable), once established.

The BIC Project Brief should generally be short and provide an overview of the proposed project.

The finalised, signed off document will be made available to all BIC members, who will be able to provide comment or feedback on the intended project.

Document Status: FINAL VERSION
Project Name: Data Recipient Best Practice
Version Number: 1.0
Created by: Stephen Long
Created date: 4 April 2024
Finalised by: Stephen Long
Finalised date: 8 May 2024

BIC Board/ Committee Review

BIC Board/ Committee	Date Submitted
Karina Urquhart	4 April 2024
BIC Metadata Committee	11 April 2024

BIC Board/ Committee Final Approval

Approved by	Date approved
Karina Urquhart	12 April 2024
BIC Metadata Committee	24 April 2024

Document History

Version	Summary of Changes	Document Status	Date Published
0.1	Draft created	For review	4 April 2024
0.2	Draft updated to reflect comments from Karina	For circulation	11 April 2024
0.3	Draft updated to reflect Chris Saynor's/ EDItEUR's feedback	Not circulated	8 May 2024
0.4	Draft updated to reflect the BIC Metadata Committee members' feedback	Final Version	8 May 2024

Table of Contents

1. Purpose
2. Background
3. Project Definition
4. Outline Business Case
5. Quality Expectations
6. Ownership
7. Acceptance Criteria
8. Risks
9. Outline Project Plan
10. Budget/Costs
11. Authority Responsible
12. Project Consultant
13. Customers And Users
14. Reporting



1. Purpose

The ultimate purpose of this project is to agree, document and promote best practice for the collection and management of product information by the various recipients of that metadata. Recipients of the data will be UK or Island of Ireland based or be active in those markets.

The guidelines will be published with all stakeholders in mind. These include publishers, standards organisations, data aggregators, distributors, wholesalers, physical as well as online retailers, printers and manufacturers, freight forwarders and other third parties.

2. Background

Whilst there has been no specific workshop or event that has highlighted the need for this project, the guidelines will address issues captured as part of BIC's business as usual cycle of meetings, events and projects (such as the Metadata Map Project).

The challenges of receiving and managing growing volumes of rich metadata, as raised in various BIC meetings, include:

- a) Optimising collection.
- b) Misuse and misinterpretation of specific elements.
- c) Ownership and trustworthiness.
- d) Format.
- e) Compliance with recipient requirements.
- f) Enhancing discovery, visibility, representation and tradability along the metadata supply chain.
- g) "Smarter" ordering and returns.
- h) Problem resolution.
- i) The responsibilities of data recipients.
- j) The optimum timelines for processing inbound metadata.
- k) How best practice can enhance confidence in the quality, completeness and timeliness of the data, whilst also reducing compliance issues, delays and queries.

This new project has been approved by the BIC Board and forms part of BIC's strategic priorities for 2024 – 2025 (Supply Chain Efficiency).

3. Project Definition

3.1 Project Objectives

By the end of the project, BIC (i.e., the Board and the Metadata Committee) should be presented with best practice documentation for the receipt and processing of data in both the physical and digital supply chains, to be referred to in this document as "Data Recipient Best Practice". This will address issues that the BIC membership is already aware of, as well as further concerns that may be captured in the early part of the project. The documentation will also include a plan for consideration by BIC to ensure the socialisation of the best practice beyond the closure of the project. The documentation will be arrived at through the efforts of the Data Recipient Best Practice Task and Finish Working Group ("T&FWG") that will be set up for the purpose of this project. The project will be led by the Project Consultant who will have responsibility for ensuring the project runs and delivers to schedule.

The effort involved is envisaged to be:

- 1) 1 day per week of consultancy between April and November 2024, with a maximum 33 days budgeted.
- 2) Recruiting a Project Consultant (recruited as of March 2024).
- 3) Establishing which, if any, organisations outside the committees and board listed above should be approached to contribute information to this project.
- 4) Ensuring the Project Consultant has a clear understanding of the deliverables and purpose of the project.
- 5) Meeting via regular video calls. These meetings should be held at least once a month but may vary to reflect the project phase.
- 6) Regular catch-up sessions between BIC's Executive Director and the Project Consultant.
- 7) Two reports (long-hand and summary form) to be produced monthly by the Project Consultant for the Board and the Metadata Committee. The long-hand report will be published on the BIC website.
- 8) Final Best Practice documentation, accompanied by a marketing and adoption plan.
- 9) There is minimal impact on the BIC office as the Project Consultant will work remotely.
- 10) The Project Consultant together with the T&FWG will need to determine how best to manage the project. A series of shorter, concurrent or consecutive deliverables (work packages) is likely to be the optimum approach.

3.2 Project Scope

The project will focus on the processes associated with the receipt and management of inbound metadata in the business to business (b2b) supply chain. This will cover physical and digital products with an ISBN or GTIN as the primary identifier. The recipients of the data will either be UK or Island of Ireland based or be active in those markets.

The organisation types considered in scope include:

- a) Manufacturers of book related products.
- b) Printers (including print on demand).
- c) Publishers.
- d) Data senders.
- e) Distributors.
- f) Wholesalers.
- g) Freight Forwarders.
- h) Booksellers (physical and online).
- i) Platforms and resellers.
- j) Standards organisations.
- k) Metadata aggregators.
- l) Service and systems providers.

Whilst the focus is the needs of the BIC membership, the project may wish to approach non-BIC members on an ad hoc basis to reflect diverse metadata needs. The project will be mindful of the international nature of our industry and the concomitant standards that support it, whilst recognising the needs of the local market. The role of accessibility in metadata will feature throughout this project. BIC will also keep in mind and aim to reflect the needs of smaller organisations when researching and compiling the best practice documentation.

Areas in scope include (this list is not exhaustive):

- a) Product metadata relevant to the business-to-business supply chain:
 - i. Pre and post publication metadata.

- ii. Publishing detail, including publication and sales embargo dates, sales rights and restrictions.
 - iii. Product supply details, including market, supplier, price and availability.
 - iv. Physical and digital products.
 - v. All formats (including e-books, audio, e-audio, related products).
 - vi. Data elements considered mandatory, conditional or recommended.
- b) Full files as well as delta files.
 - c) Lead times.
 - d) File acknowledgements.
 - e) Data source and authority.
 - f) Visibility and integrity (uses, overrides, amalgamation).
 - g) Compliance with current iterations of industry standards including ONIX, EDItX, BIC Realtime and *Thema*.
 - h) Relevant legislation (current and upcoming, such as the EU Accessibility Act).
 - i) Common bespoke standards such as CSV, where defined and agreed in advance.
 - j) Printing and manufacturing.
 - k) Roles and responsibilities.
 - l) Best practice for the application and sequencing of additions, updates and deletions.
 - m) Management of emergency updates and takedown notices.
 - n) Conflict between book industry and other standards.
 - o) Service level agreements.

Areas out of scope include (this list is not exhaustive):

- a) Senders of metadata.
- b) Consumer direct fulfilment.
- c) Libraries and library suppliers.
- d) Scenarios considered to be unique to a business.
- e) Situations considered to be commercially sensitive or of a confidential nature.
- f) Legal advice.
- g) Events and festivals.
- h) International requirements.

3.3 Outline project deliverables and desired outcomes

Key deliverables in summary are:

- 1) T&FWG members' participation in the project is a demonstration of their organisations' ambition to adopt the project's deliverables within a reasonable timeframe after their publication. This may require collaboration with the senders or originators of the data. "A reasonable timeframe" is to be agreed by the T&FWG. As the project progresses, the T&FWG should regularly review the relevance and applicability of the individual deliverables to their own organisations and reflect on what adoption might look like.
- 2) Agreement between the Project Consultant and the T&FWG regarding how the project should be broken down into smaller, more manageable deliverables. At the time of writing, the proposed deliverables are:
 - a) Foundations (Data Recipient Map, Glossary, Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities).
 - b) Data collection.
 - c) Data management.
 - d) Supply Chain Accessibility.
 - e) Impacts along the supply chain (such as "smarter" ordering and returns).

- f) The value of Data Recipient Best Practice and the project's legacy (extending the impact of the project beyond its lifecycle).

The final decision on the deliverables for this project will be made by the T&FWG.

- 3) Project plan to show deadlines for each deliverable with actions and owners clearly assigned. This should be drawn up, shared with the T&FWG and kept up to date by the Project Consultant.
- 4) A force ranked list of issues to be addressed by the best practice documentation should be captured as part of the first project meeting (T&FWG1). Include items referenced in this document.
- 5) Regular progress reports from the Project Consultant to the BIC Executive Director, the Board and the Metadata Committee.
- 6) Two separate monthly reports, including one for publication on the BIC website (see above).
- 7) The best practice documentation to include reference to accessibility impacts where appropriate.
- 8) An outline marketing plan and a comprehensive adoption proposal.
- 9) A review of progress made by all T&FWG members regarding the measurable impact of adoption of the best practice guidelines no later than 12 months after their publication.
- 10) Project closure report.

3.4 Constraints

The efficient receipt and management of product information is key to an effective supply chain. The requirement to meet the specific needs of a range of data recipients, whilst adhering to recognised industry standards, is challenging.

The workload and time pressures of those individuals that the consultant will need access to may be a constraint.

It is important that the T&FWG participants commit their respective organisations to endorsing and promoting the best practice guidelines, as well as increasing awareness of and socialising the project's objectives and outcomes. Adoption of the best practice is to be encouraged.

3.5 Interfaces

BIC member groups outside the T&FWG will be interested in this project. However, it is the Metadata Committee that is ultimately responsible for the successful delivery of this project. Both the Physical and Digital Supply Chain Committees will also have a keen interest in the execution and success of this project.

The Project Consultant will need to keep in mind the impact of the best practice guidelines on the following standards and best practice resources:

- 1) ONIX 3.
- 2) *Thema*.
- 3) EDItX, including BIC Realtime.
- 4) BIC New ISBN Best Practice.
- 5) BIC Acquisitions and Divestments Best Practice.
- 6) BIC Digital Audiobook Best Practice.
- 7) BIC Metadata Map and its Metadata Capabilities Directory.
- 8) BIC Metadata Excellence Award Scheme.

- 9) BIC Discount Group Codes.
- 10) BIC Ordering Best Practice.
- 11) BIC Price & Availability.
- 12) BIC Weights and Dimensions.
- 13) BIC Industry Returns Initiative.
- 14) BIC Out of Print Best Practice.

4. Outline Business/ Industry case

Please refer to sections 1 (Purpose) and 2 (Background) above.

5. Quality Expectations

It is important that the project deliverables address all areas detailed in the scope above (section 3.2 of this document).

The importance of this project work will be in the following order of priority:

- 1) Quality.
- 2) Cost.
- 3) Time.

Quality is most important because BIC's work must always be of the highest standard. Misinformation or poor recommendations would be detrimental to BIC and its reputation. Cost is the second priority because BIC's budget is important and BIC's resources must be managed. Timeline is the least important: if the project is overrunning slightly, but still within budget and delivering optimum quality, then this is acceptable. The timeline and the budget especially are fixed.

6. Ownership

The Metadata Committee will assume responsibility for this project and will be mandated to make all necessary decisions to ensure the project runs to time, on budget and is delivered to a high standard. There is no scope for additional funding over and above what has been agreed in the budget.

7. Acceptance Criteria

The BIC Metadata Committee has responsibility for the final sign off on the recommendations and best practice documentation presented by the Project Consultant. The documentation submitted should address all areas in scope and should already be signed off by all T&FWG participants. Acceptance of this documentation will close the project, after which the marketing and adoption plan outlined in the best practice documentation will begin.

A meeting of the original project group to review adoption progress made will be called within 12 months of the closure of the project.

8. Risks

Given its unique position at the heart of our industry, BIC can lead the way in bringing clarity to how data recipients can optimise their collection and management of product information within the existing standards framework. Not doing so risks ignoring feedback from the BIC membership, as well as the wider industry. BIC has the opportunity to enhance its relevance, solve specific industry issues and advocate for the further adoption and development of metadata standards and best practice.

It is also possible that the best practice will have no impact beyond project participants. The Consultant, T&FWG and the BIC Metadata Committee should develop a strategy to promote wider industry implementation to mitigate these adoption risks. This will require ongoing activity from BIC and its members beyond the life of the project. See section 3.3, Outline Project Deliverables and Desired Outcomes.

9. Outline Project Plan

The Metadata Committee will be asked to sign off this project brief. Agreement on budget has already been given by the BIC Board. The next steps will be:

- **By 12 April 2024:** Obtain project brief sign off from the Executive Director.
- **By 24 April 2024:** Obtain project brief sign off from the Metadata Committee and capture any relevant feedback. This will be an agenda item for the Committee's April meeting.
- **By 25 April 2024:** Update the project brief to reflect feedback received from the Metadata Committee.
- **From 14 May 2024:** Issue the call for project volunteers and schedule on boarding meetings. Use social media to create project awareness.
- **By 31 May 2024:** Complete on boarding meetings and schedule T&FWG1.
- **By 21 June 2024:** Hold T&FWG1 (ideally face to face), and prioritise the immediate next steps.
- **June – November 2024:** The project is underway.

The anticipated end date for the project is November 2024. This is the date by which all the deliverables outlined in Section 3.3 will be achieved.

A more detailed project plan will be put together by the Project Consultant and will be one of their first actions.

10. Budget/ Costs

At the time of writing, the costs to BIC are limited to the agreed Project Consultant's fees. Meeting room costs, staff time and staff travel expenses are not anticipated at this point unless a face-to-face T&FWG1 meeting is held.

11. Authority Responsible

BIC's Executive Director.

12. Project Consultant

Stephen Long, Independent Book Industry Consultant, has been appointed by BIC's Executive Director.

13. Customers and Users

All BIC member organisations.

14. Reporting

This project reports into the BIC Metadata Committee for the duration of the project. This committee meets online quarterly. The frequency of project update reports to the Committee will be agreed between the Executive Director and the Project Consultant but is likely to be monthly. This reporting should include, but may not be limited to the following:

- i) Progress on deliverables vs. the agreed timeline and project plan.
- ii) Engagement and availability of stakeholders.
- iii) Potential and actual obstacles to delivering the project on time and in full.
- iv) Project KPIs, including actuals vs. budget.