



Kuala Lumpur, 25-26 July 2008

## ICA: Strategic Direction 2008-2018

### Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a clear statement of **why** ICA has chosen this strategic direction and **what** it wishes to achieve over the next ten years.

The International Council on Archives (ICA) is a worldwide Non-Governmental organisation, with about 1,500 institutional and individual members in over 190 countries and territories. National archive services play a prominent part in ICA, together with colleagues from professional records management and archival associations, other archival institutions and individuals. With its combination of geographical branches and sections focusing on different professional interests, ICA has developed an organisational structure enabling international co-operation in the area of archives. ICA is the international body that aims to ensure the efficient management of records and archives throughout the world, including permanent preservation and public access. It acts as the voice of archive institutions and professionals on the global stage.

We provide a forum for professional discussion across political divides and champion the cause of archives throughout the world. Over 50 years ICA has produced a wide range of important publications, most of which are still invaluable works of reference for practising archivists today, and it will continue its active publications programme. It plays a key role in the development of major standards in the intellectual management of archives, enabling archivists to play a full part in emerging online information networks. By developing new tools and standards, it is helping archivists to make the paradigm shift from being only the curators of historical documents to occupying the pivotal, strategic position of information manager in both the public and private sectors.

**This Strategic Direction is intended to guide the activities of ICA members throughout the world. It will be underpinned by a series of two-year business plans, the first of which will be developed and published by the end of 2008. In the business plan the various ICA bodies (branches, sections, working groups and secretariat) will commit themselves to achieving performance targets.**

### 1. Vision

*Through ICA's activities, key decision-makers in national and international organisations and the general public throughout the world will understand that effective records and archives management is an essential precondition for good governance, the rule of law, administrative transparency, the preservation of mankind's collective memory, and access to information by citizens.*

### 2. Mission

*ICA promotes the central role of record-keeping and archives in protecting the rights of individuals and states, and in supporting democracy and good governance, through working for the effective management of archives from the moment of their creation, the permanent preservation of archives as the documented memory of nations and societies, and the widest possible public access to that memory. It strives to build a better understanding across societies through fostering international co-operation, while respecting linguistic and cultural diversity*



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*ICA advocates the importance of archives and records management to policy makers, while providing opportunities for professional contact, information exchanges, research and education, and while taking a leadership role in developing best practices and standards which support records and archives professionals throughout the world. It is a central source of information on archives and the archival profession for society..*

### **3. Core Values**

In fulfilling ICA's mission, its members strive to uphold the values of equality, diversity, freedom of access to information, openness and mutual respect across national boundaries and cultural traditions. It will be as transparent as possible to our members and provide them with full value in return for their contributions (whether monetary or in kind) to the organization.

### **4. Strategic Objectives/Core Activities**

Critically, at this time ICA needs to do the following:-

- Act as an effective advocate for record keeping and archives with international as well as national organisations and raise the profile of archives with the general public
- Give more support to records managers and archivists in their efforts to master new technologies and to influence their introduction and use
- Seek new ways of developing products and services, to supplement its traditional reliance on voluntary effort
- Reinvigorate the network so that it remains a genuinely multi-cultural organisation with a worldwide presence
- Improve transparency and communications within ICA, in order to develop a relevant and consistent professional programme
- Find options for more external funding, including grants and sponsorship, so that ICA can increase the number of its products and the rate at which they are developed

In order to accomplish this, it has, therefore, set itself the following six strategic objectives:-

#### **1. Raising Awareness**

- Persuading key decision makers that archives matter for good governance, administrative transparency and democratic accountability
- Underlining the strategic importance of archives as an information management asset in public administration and the private sector
- Providing tools for archivists to make the case for effective information and archives management to key decision-makers in their own institutions
- Helping archivists throughout the world to convince decision-makers and the wider public that, if archives are not preserved and made accessible, societies will suffer an irrevocable loss of collective memory as a result
- Stimulating the wider public to increase their general knowledge of archives and to use archives
- Highlighting the relationship between archives management and broader information legislation at national, regional and international levels



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2. *Influencing the Development and Use of New Technologies*

- Supporting archivists in their efforts to meet the challenge of managing the enormous quantities of documents and records created in electronic form
- Assisting archivists to increase their influence in administrative processes as part of e-government and similar reform programmes
- Facilitating solutions to the problem of preserving electronic records of enduring historical value
- Exploiting new technologies (both 'born digital' records and digital copies of archives in other media) to improve access to archives
- Helping to shape new intellectual property law related to electronic media, so that archival material can be accessible by as many people as possible

3. *Building Capacity in the Records and Archives Profession*

- Developing and promoting best practices and standards in the main areas of professional activity (advocacy, records management, appraisal, preservation and disaster preparedness, archival description, access, reference services, outreach and education)
- Promoting education, training and continuing professional development for records and archives professionals around the world, through the provision of workshops, courses, scholarship programmes and online resources
- Producing and making readily available printed and online publications that are focussed on meeting the identified needs of members

4. *Strengthening the ICA Network*

- Recognizing and supporting the important role of national archive institutions in advancing the interests of the profession
- Encouraging the sections and professional associations so that they are valued and involved in ICA governance
- Running membership campaigns to attract more institutional and individual members
- Launching initiatives in those parts of the world where the network needs to be reinforced
- Organising annual conferences and quadrennial Congresses, focusing on the latest professional developments and on key global trends, and disseminating the results in a timely manner to the global archival community
- Transforming the ICA website as a tool to facilitate communication and collaboration among members about topics of widespread interest
- Devise ways of keeping members with poor or non-existent Internet access, informed and involved in ICA
- Improving direct communications between ICA bodies (branches, sections, working groups) in the organization's formal structure, reducing the need for involvement from the ICA secretariat
- Facilitating the creation of special ICA interest groups which handle issues of short or long term concern in a more informal manner

5. *Improving the Performance and Accountability of ICA*

- Ensuring ICA's decision-making processes are fully documented, auditable and completely transparent
- Clarifying the remits of the various governance bodies so that they facilitate the efforts of ICA members
- Introducing a business planning framework but retain capability for flexible response



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- Enhancing ICA's web services as a major membership benefit
- 6. *Building Partnerships*
- Developing more joint initiatives with other international NGOs
- Making more systematic contacts with regional organisations (for example, the European Commission, ASEAN) to obtain funding for projects that meet common objectives
- Reviving the long-standing relationship with UNESCO but extending coverage to other organisations in the UN system to achieve visibility for archives at the highest level
- Forming new relationships with development organisations
- Cultivating closer relationships with the private sector to enable the rapid development of major ICA products
- Establishing relationships with the international networks of other professions which make frequent use of records and archives

## 6. Achievements and Outcomes

ICA will be successful when the following results are achieved:

- It influences major international organisations so that records and archives management feature much more prominently in their programmes than is presently the case
- It secures more funding from funding institutions and partners globally
- ICA is widely perceived as an efficient and trustworthy partner
- ICA produces high-quality services and products which attract greater sponsorship
- ICA's membership experiences a significant increase, and membership surveys indicate greater satisfaction with ICA services
- More members attend CITRAs, Congresses and other major ICA events, and more countries offer to host these events
- Many more members see the ICA website as place to come for valuable information about archives and for interaction with colleagues around the globe on professional issues of common concern
- More members of the public use the ICA website and other services for essential information about archives
- More members become active in ICA by taking part in project groups and other bodies
- There is a more balanced representation of the world's different cultures at all levels in ICA, with more participation from Africa, Latin America and Asia in particular
- More archivists, who have been in the profession for less than 10 years, become members of ICA
- ICA is recognized as a leader in the development of archives and records theory and practice
- Archival institutions around the world will be stronger and public understanding of their importance will be increased

For many of these indicators, it will be necessary first to establish baselines of current levels of activity in 2008 as a basis of assessing future improvements. **The alignment of objectives with precise quantifiable results will be a major element in the two-year business plans.**

## 7. Reviewing this Strategy

One of the few certainties on which ICA can rely is that the world in ten years' time will look very different. The various trends associated with globalization will continue to have major impact on



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the international archival community. In addition, there will be unexpected threats and opportunities to which the organization will have to respond, sometimes at short notice. This strategy will, therefore, be reviewed every two years. The review will be carried out on the basis of critical evaluations of ICA's programme activity, in particular the implementation of the two-year business plan. We will also try to anticipate future changes. We will constantly seek feedback from our members and listen to their concerns. In future revisions of this Strategy we will continue to reflect the varied interests and cultures of ICA members throughout the world.