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Discussion paper on Sections and Working Groups

This document is the outcome of discussions among the section chairs in late 2011. The idea is to establish a shared vision and understanding of the roles of ICA sections, working groups and meetings of section chairs.

1. Vision

To respond to the wide diversity of professional needs present throughout the international archival and records management community, ICA's sections provide opportunities for colleagues working in related fields of specialization to make comparisons and to collect and share information across national frontiers and cultures. Grouped around specialized interests, expertise, and institutions, each section reaches out to archivists and records managers in its specific field, the overall purpose being to support the cause of archives and records management worldwide, as stated in the ICA Constitution.

2. Definitions

An ICA section is a formally structured body of individuals who share an interest in the systematic development of a defined area of professional work in the field of archives and records management. The purpose of a section is to advance knowledge and to share good practices across international boundaries about widely-recognised types of records and archives. To be a member of a section, one must be either an individual ICA member (Category D) or an employee or designee of an ICA institutional (Category A or C) or association member (Category B). Each section shall adopt its own bylaws, consistent with the ICA Constitution and shall have an elected leadership, including a chair who shall serve on the ICA Executive Board as soon as the relevant conditions stated in the ICA Constitution are met.

An ICA Working Group is a body established by the Executive Board, PCOM or MCOM. It is composed of professionals with special expertise appointed to address a task defined in the group's mandate (terms of reference). It will have a defined time to do its work, which shall not exceed four years; depending on its mandate and on the need to pursue the work of the group this timeline can be extended for as long as required - maximum four years each time – by the ICA body which established it and to which it will have clear reporting-lines. In order to simplify and clarify responsibilities and reporting lines each Working Group will have a chair. The chair may be appointed by the body which established the group or designated by the members of the group itself.

3. Meetings of Section Chairs

The section chairs meet whenever required, typically twice a year, in conjunction with major ICA-meetings. At these meetings the section chairs decide on the repartition of the ICA section budget among the sections. They discuss other matters of common interest, including

joint projects, and are free to take decisions on common positions and actions – on the clear understanding that each section chair is accountable to his/her own section.

The section chairs must be consulted prior to any EB decision to establish a new section and will make recommendations to EB on whether or not a new section should be created. In this context, the section chairs will, in particular, consider whether it would make most sense to include the field of activities for a proposed new section in the responsibilities of an existing section or to create a new section.