

Report of the plenary meeting of the International Council on Archives Committee on Descriptive Standards (ICA/CDS) Canberra, Australia, 27-30 October 2003

The Committee met for four days at the National Archives of Australia. The main task of the Committee was the finalization of the review and revision of the *International Standard Archival Authority Record (Corporate Bodies, Person and Families)* – ISAAR(CPF). An exposure draft of the new 2nd edition of ISAAR(CDS) had been published on the CDS website in early 2003 and comments had been invited from the international professional community on the draft. 28 sets comments from 18 countries were received for consideration by the Committee. After translation and editing, the new Standard will be published in hard copy and on the Web in time for the ICA Congress in August 2004.

Other business included the status and future maintenance of the Encoded Archival Context (EAC) standard, preparations for the ICA Congress in Vienna in 2004 and the composition and work plan for the CDS for the 2004-2008 quadrennium.

ISAAR(CPF) Review

Stefano Vitali noted that the comments received from the international professional community had been largely favourable. He observed that ISAAR still represents a new concept to many European archivists and that there is still a general lack of awareness and understanding of the standard globally. There is a need for an imaginative education and promotion campaign for the 2nd edition highlighting the application of the standard. He noted that the CDS website could be used to present a working model of ISAAR-compliant records in use as well as ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ and possibly a virtual training program.

It was agreed to strengthen as much as possible the linkages between ISAAR(CPF) and ISAD(G) and to emphasise the important distinction between the rules in the standard and different approaches to implementing the rules as reflected in the various examples – ie. the latter should not be confused with the former.

It was agreed that the 2nd edition should be dedicated to the memory of Hugo Stibbe and Kent Haworth, former Secretaries of the CDS who passed away during 2002/03.

In *Section 1 (Scope and Purpose)*, the Committee decided to broaden paragraph 1.4 to include all entities associated with archives, not just the creators of archives. It was also agreed to move paragraph 4.2 from the Rio draft into Section 1.

It was agreed to rename *Section 2* to ‘Related Standards and Guidelines’ and to adopt the suggestions made by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) on related publications.

It was agreed to rename **Section 5** to **Elements of an Authority Record**. Comments and suggestions received on the various elements in 5.1-5.4 were discussed in sequence, with a number of minor changes being agreed to. The Committee discussed comments from NARA, Italy and Australia suggesting that the ISAAR accommodate

multiple *Authorized forms of name (element 5.1.2)* in the case of entities that change their name. It was agreed that the ISAAR should permit the use of multiple Authorized forms of name where national rules/systems permit such practice and that this issue should be specifically alluded to in paragraph 4.12.

It was decided that the information specified in rules 5.2.3-5.2.9 may be recorded as separate, structured elements and/or as narrative text in element 5.2.2. It was agreed to drop **Other significant information (element 5.2.9)** and to rename **element 5.2.3** to **Places** and element **5.2.7** to **Internal structures/Genealogy**.

It was agreed that the Notes element should be split into two new elements, **Sources (element 5.4.8)** and **Maintenance notes (element 5.4.9)**.

After much discussion it was agreed to rename **Chapter 6** as '**Relating Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families to Archival Materials and Other Resources**' with some consequential alterations to the introductory text for the chapter. **Element 6.1** was retitled '**Identifiers and titles of related resources**' and **element 6.4** was retitled as '**Dates of related resources and/or relationships**'.

It was agreed that the Secretary would add a paragraph to the Preface explaining the rationale for the changes made between the 1st and 2nd editions of the ISAAR.

Update on the development of EAC – Encoded Archival Context

Per-Gunnar Ottosson provided an update on the development of EAC, which has progressed in parallel with the review of ISAAR(CPF). The draft DTD has been tested in the EU LEAF (Linking and Exploring Authority Files) project, with authority records from various counties being converted into the EAC format. In September 2003 he, Dick Sargent and Daniel Pitti met in Stockholm to complete the Beta version of the DTD and to commence work on drafting a tag library. More updating will now be required to ensure consistency between EAC and the Canberra version of the ISAAR. An XML schema should also be developed for EAC.

There will need to be a decision on a maintenance agency for EAC, with likely contenders being the UK and Swedish National Archives. There is also the issue of ownership of the intellectual property in EAC. It was agreed that Per-Gunnar and Michael Fox would draft a proposal for submission by the CDS to the ICA on this issue. The submission will also canvass matters such as future support for an EAC Working Group, an EAC website and documentation management (including translations), training and promotion, costs, etc.

Blanca Desantes also provided a report on the status of EAG – Encoded Archival Guide, for the standardised encoding of information on archival repositories. A Beta version is at an advanced stage of development, but requires more testing.

The relationships between ISAD, ISAAR, EAD and EAC

Michael Fox undertook to revise his Rio Conference paper from 2002 on this topic for consideration by the CDS in early 2004. Once approved, the paper could be translated into French and published in both languages on the CDS website. The paper could also be submitted for publication in the ICA journal, *Comma*.

Open Source Archival Resource Information System (OSARIS) project

The current status of this project is uncertain, although some draft functional requirements have been prepared in the Netherlands under the guidance of Peter Horsman. Once this document has been translated it will be circulated for comment.

Policy and Procedures for the future maintenance of CDS standards

No major revisions of ISAD(G) or ISAAR(CPF) are scheduled following 2004. Low-level maintenance of the web versions of the two standards will suffice for the foreseeable future.

It was noted that the CDS memberships of Michael Fox, Vitor Fonseca and Stefano Vitali would not be renewed after 2004, as each of these three members will have served two full terms.

The Committee expressed its appreciation for the splendid job carried out by Hazel Bagworth-Mann (UK Historical Manuscripts Commission) over the past few years in developing and maintaining the CDS website.

Preparations for the 2004 ICA Congress in Vienna

The CDS has been advised by the ICA that the five session proposals made on behalf of the Committee will be incorporated into the program for the Congress:

1. A plenary session on the 2nd edition of ISAAR (CPF) – Adrian, Stefano and Nils.
2. An ‘avant guard’ session with demonstrations of working models of EAC systems – Dick Sargent, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Per-Gunnar on EAC and Max Kaiser (Austria) on the EU LEAF Project.
3. An ‘avant guard’ session on the application of ISAD and ISAAR (Italy, Spain, Brazil)
4. An ‘avant guard’ session on EAD – Michael Fox, Bill Stocking (UK) and Catherine Dherent (France).
5. A German language workshop on descriptive standards in Eastern Europe – Nils to coordinate, with Tomas Kalina and Miroslav Kunt (Czech Republic).

It was also noted that Gavan McCarthy will also present a paper on the use of ISAAR in relation to records of radioactive waste management.

The Secretary will organise a handover meeting between members of the old and new CDS Committees and will send out invitations to those involved.

Review of ICA/CDS Strategic Work Plan

The following work plan items were suggested for inclusion in the 2004-2008 CDS work plan:

- Creative approaches to education and training in ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF)
- Development of a standard for describing archival functions, commencing with a white paper proposal
- Functional requirements for archival description, similar to the IFLA functional requirements for bibliographic records

- The EAG DTD
- Revise the CDS website to provide an overview of relevant standards
- An investigation of the relationship between metadata schemas and archival descriptive standards
- A guide to applying ISAD(G) to the description of digital records
- Guidelines for describing photographs
- Update the 1998 comparison between ISAAR(CPF) and the IFLA MLAR standard (Joint project with IFLA FRANAR Working Group)
- Ongoing liaison with IFLA FRANAR Working Group
- Statement of high-level functional/user requirements for archival systems
- Liaison with the Museums Community (ICOM) and with the ISO Records Management and Archives Committee (TC46/SC11).

Following the completion of the plenary meeting members of the Committee spoke at a one-day International Seminar on the Use of Standards in the Development of Online Access Systems for Archives at Parliament House, Canberra on 31 October. Presentations from this Seminar can be found at:

<http://www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/rkpubs/papers.html>

Adrian Cunningham
Secretary