

Report of the meeting of the International Council on Archives Committee on Descriptive Standards (ICA/CDS) Madrid, Spain, June 12 - 15, 2002

The Committee met for four days in Madrid, June 12 to 15, 2002, at the invitation of the National Archives of Spain. Its main task was the continuation of the review of ISAAR(CPF). The Committee's previous plenary in Brussels in October 2001 started the review process and, in the light of comments received from the international archival community, had decided to substantially overhaul the standard. For example, it was important that, in connection with recent initiatives to develop a Document Type Definition (DTD) known as Encoded Archival Context (EAC), to produce a substantial revision to the standard. It was also decided at that time that, because of the considerable changes proposed in the new draft ISAAR(CPF), there would need to be another round of input from the international archival community. The Brussels meeting produced a changed structure for the new ISAAR(CPF). The Brussels draft was the departure point for the work which had to be done in Madrid. Other business conducted was the appointment of a new Secretary and Project Director in view of the resignation of Kent Haworth, the current Secretary and Project Director due to illness, the examination and consideration for future action on the Open Source Archival Resource Information System (OSARIS) project and preparation for the next plenary meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, November 2002.

Discussion on the draft ISAAR(CPF) 2nd edition

The Committee spent all of June 12 and 13 and part of June 14 and 15 redrafting the ISAAR(CPF) document. Although consideration of the draft was almost finished, the time allotted proved just short of what was needed to thoroughly review the entire document and to finish the draft in final form. The remainder of the work to finish a draft for distribution to the international archival community will be done by e-mail, and by a discussion list for the members of ICA/CDS, which was proposed to be set up. The draft will be finished at the Brazil meeting in November 2002.

Modifications were made in wording in almost all areas of the draft standard, including the Preface, Scope and Purpose, Glossary of Terms and Definitions, Structure and Use of the Standard as well as the Elements of Description.

One of the more thorough revisions relates to the Relationships Area and the Related Archival Materials and Other Resources Area, (5.3 and 5.4 respectively). These areas may be linked or may be merged. The details of this part of the revision were not finished. This work will be completed in Brazil.

The two kinds of examples, in-text and full examples in an appendix, will be maintained.

For the purposes of the Brazil draft, only examples are needed for clarifying text that is not clear. The full examples would come after the draft has been released for comment to the archival community.

Members are asked to take as many and as complete examples along to Brazil for discussion purposes. Also minimum level of detail examples. Also, examples in different

languages.

Open Source Archival Resource Information System (OSARIS) project

Unesco asked ICA/CDS to produce a proposal outlining how this project could be moved forward. A meeting to work on the proposal for further action in the form of a work plan was to take place in Toronto in March, but did not materialize because of illness of the Secretary and Project Director and other circumstances beyond the control of the participants.

The Committee received information that Unesco could probably fund a larger project for producing what had been foreseen in the OSARIS document.

The committee is expected to provide a more clear and detailed work plan about the development of the OSARIS software tool foreseen in the report. This would include:

1. A submission of cost. If Unesco is to provide funds, it expects a more precise figure of cost;
2. A plan for the development of the software or tool in general.

After a long discussion where many issues were put forward indicating that the Committee could not proceed fully with the Unesco and ICA Headquarters expectations, it was decided that the following plan of action would give best results, would hopefully result in long range needed commitment of ICA at a higher level than committee level, and would not discourage the project from going ahead:

There should be a September meeting in Paris where the following delegates should meet:

- 3 persons from ICA/CDS
 - 3 persons from ICA/ICT
 - Evelyn Wareham and/or Joan van Albada from ICA Headquarters
 - representative from Unesco, Division of Informatics (Axel Plathe)
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This group would have to do the following:

- consider / confirm the OSARIS project recommendations and proposed functional requirements as presented in the ICA/CDS report dated October 2001
 - consider & agree on criteria for evaluation of existing software products
 - agree on process for evaluation of existing software products
 - consider possible feasibility study (including development, maintenance and training infrastructure and costs) for ICA/Unesco to either use existing software or develop new software tools.
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This decision will be communicated to ICA Headquarters.

Appointment of new Secretary and Project Director

Kent Haworth, the current Secretary and Project Director, resigned due to illness. Adrian Cunningham (Australia) was proposed as a candidate.

Adrian accepted, subject to the consent of his superior. The committee unanimously agreed that Adrian is the best candidate. A letter will be sent to the Executive Director of ICA asking him to appoint Adrian as soon as Adrian has indicated that his superior has approved his service.

In response to the resignation of two full members, some discussion took place regarding adding persons to the Committee as full members from the corresponding members.

ICA/CDS Web site

The site is currently hosted by the Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC), London, UK at URL: <http://www.hmc.gov.uk/icacds/eng/home.htm>

The Committee is thankful that the HMC has done this and the Chair, Stefano Vitali, thanked Dick Sargent, Committee member (UK-HMC) for negotiating the willingness of HMC to continue this service. A special thanks was asked to be conveyed to Hazel Bagworth-Mann, who does the actual Web site maintenance.

Agenda for Brazil

Vitor Fonseca, member (Brazil) read the official letter of invitation to the plenary of the ICA/CDS in Rio de Janeiro. He also presented the program of the accompanying conference to which members are invited.

The agenda for the Rio de Janeiro plenary will include the ISAAR(CPF) review and completion for presentation to the international archival community for comments; the study of the relationship of ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF) with Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and Encoded Archival Context (EAC). (This should not be done till the EAC has been published or on the Web.); and a set of procedures and a policy proposal for maintaining standards for ICA Executive approval; an OSARIS project status report; and a review of the Strategic Work Plan.

The meeting closed on Saturday, June 15, 2002 with a heart felt thanks to the National Archives of Spain for hosting the meeting, creating a most amenable and friendly environment and taking care of all the facilities and considerable logistics in providing the accommodation, meals and transportation.

Hugo Stibbe
Interim Secretary