

CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES ARCHIVES  
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES

COMMITTEE ON  
DESCRIPTIVE  
STANDARDS



COMITÉ SUR LES  
NORMES DE  
DESCRIPTION

**Minutes**

Rio de Janeiro meeting  
November 19-21, 2002

**Present:**

Adrian Cunningham (Australia – Secretary ICA/CDS)  
Blanca Desantes (Spain)  
Vitor Manoel M. da Fonseca (Brazil)  
Michael Fox (United States)  
Per-Gunnar Ottosson (Sweden)  
Dick Sargent (UK)  
Stefano Vitali (Italy - Chair ICA/CDS)

**Absent with apologies:**

Nils Brübach (Germany)  
Herman Coppens (Belgium)  
Bruno Galland (France)  
Juan Manuel Herrera (Mexico)  
Gavan McCarthy (Australia)  
Lydia Reid (United States)

**1. Welcome and introductions**

Stefano Vitali, Chair, opened the meeting welcoming all present. He thanked Vitor Fonseca, Jaime Antunes da Silva and the Arquivo Nacional for hosting the Committee meeting in association with the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Seminar of Archives in the Iberian Tradition.

Jaime Antunes da Silva, Director-General of the Arquivo Nacional, welcomed the Committee to Brazil and wished it a successful week of deliberations on its very important work. He awaits the finalization of the new ISAAR (CPF) standard with great interest.

Vitor Fonseca thanked Jaime for the support for Brazilian membership of the CDS that he has provided over many years. Stefano noted the very important contributions to the work of the Committee that have been made by Vitor and the Brazilian professional community over the course of the past 8 years.

## **2. Approval the agenda.**

Agenda was approved without change.

Per-Gunnar Ottosson noted the number of absent members from the meeting and asked the Committee to reaffirm the need for employers of Committee members to commit to allowing their staff to have the time to participate fully in the work of the Committee. It was agreed that Stefano would write to ICA Secretary-General Joan Van Albada about this matter.

### **3a. ISAAR (CPF) review of draft**

Stefano Vitali introduced this agenda point by asking members to report briefly on feedback they had received from their national colleagues on the Madrid draft of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of ISAAR (CPF).

Dick Sargent reported that in the UK the response has been generally very positive. UK archivists especially value the flexibility for providing descriptions that consist of a mixture of structured and unstructured information that the new draft permits. There has been some confusion about some of the new terminology in the standard and a range of different views on the value of the Control Area.

Michael Fox reported that there is not very much authority control work currently performed in United States archives. However, the CUSTARD project which is developing a common North American archival data content standard that mirrors both ISAD and ISAAR, should help to change this situation for the better. He noted that separating general rules from specific applications and implementations can often pose difficulties for practitioners.

Blanca Desantes reported that in Spain there was some confusion concerning the distinction between the narrative and structured text options. Some Spanish archivists feel that the Control Area is too large. There are also concerns about the Relationships with Archival Materials and Other Resources Area, with many being of the view that this Area should not logically be part of the ISAAR standard, but rather a bridge between the ISAAR and ISAD standards.

Adrian Cunningham reported that reaction to the draft from the members of the Australian Descriptive Standards Committee and others was quite positive. He noted that Australia is currently developing its own formal national codification of the Australian 'Series' System, which has been implementing ISAAR-style descriptions for many years.

Per-Gunnar Ottosson reported that the view in Sweden is that the new draft ISAAR is a substantial improvement over the 1<sup>st</sup> edition. The new draft is consistent with the Swedish national system and is being implemented more broadly within European Union library manuscript departments via the LEAF Project and its use of the Encoded Archival Context draft DTD.

Vitor Fonseca reported that generally Brazilian archivists like the proposed new ISAAR, although for many it is still a very new concept. Some have difficulty with the Relationships Area, while some others feel that some of the information elements are too 'broken up'.

Stefano Vitali reported that in Italy the proposed new ISAAR is considered to be much clearer than the 1<sup>st</sup> edition. In particular, the shift from just managing authorized forms of names to more broadly describing entities is greatly appreciated. He reported that there is strong interest in sharing authority data between libraries and archives as well as in exploring the potential for linking to data and other resources in disciplines such as museums and galleries.

Members were reminded that most of the structure and content of the draft standard had been approved at the Brussels and Madrid meetings and that these matters should not be reopened for discussion at this stage. Thus, the discussion should be restricted as much as possible to finalizing those Areas of the draft that had not yet been discussed in detail, namely the Relationships Area and the Related Archival Materials and Other Resources Area.

#### **Discussion of draft**

The Committee had set aside 2 days for the review (November 19 and 20).

*(Note: The precise details of the discussion are reflected in the new draft of ISAAR (CPF), which all Committee members have received. Hence, only a brief summary of some of the more important changes appear in these minutes.)*

In the **Relationships Area**, the Committee decided to expand the text for the purpose statement for the Area to incorporate guidance on describing complex hierarchies and administrative changes. It was also agreed to reorder the elements in the Area, making the Name/Identifier element the first element. Two of the categories of relationship (the Part/Whole and Provider/Client relationships) were dropped as separate categories and included as examples in the Associative category.

It was decided to rename the Related Archival Materials and Other Resources Area as **Linking Archival Authority Records to Archival Materials and Other Resources**. After extensive discussion it was agreed to remove this Area from the body of the Authority Record standard itself and create a separate Chapter (Chapter 6) for these data elements. The reason for this is that it was agreed that these elements serve as the bridge between archival authority records and ISAD(G)-compliant descriptions of archival materials. It was agreed that long lists of related archival materials and other resources are not logically part of the authority record. As with the Relationships Area it was agreed to reorder the elements in Chapter 6 to make the Identifier/Title of the related resource element the first element in the Chapter. It was also agreed that Blanca's diagram that illustrates the linking of archival authority records to ISAD(G) descriptions should be added to Chapter 6 as

Figure 1, rather than included as a separate appendix to ISAAR (CPF).

Written comments on the Madrid draft provided by Kent Haworth were also considered. It was agreed to reaffirm the decision made in Brussels to retain the numbering and section structure for the new edition of the ISAAR in order to be in conformity with the structure for ISO standards. It was not agreed to make element 5.2.2 (History) a mandatory element, but it was agreed to alter the text in Area 5.2 to clarify the distinction between the use of structured and/or unstructured description in **Area 5.2 (Description)**. The Committee agreed not to adopt Kent's suggestions regarding element 5.1.5 (Other forms of name) because 'see also' references are dealt with in the Relationships Area and because the creation of 'see' references between different forms of name is an implementation issue, that does not need to be addressed in the ISAAR.

The Committee discussed written comments from Lydia Reid of NARA suggesting that the ISAAR accommodate multiple **Authorized forms of name (element 5.1.2)** in the case of entities that change their name. While Stefano and Adrian were supportive of the suggestion, the rest of the Committee disagreed, preferring instead to await comments on the draft from the international professional community. As such, the change of name scenario should be accommodated through use of element 5.1.5 (Other forms of name).

Finally, a suggestion from Joan Van Albada that the name of the ISAAR (CPF) standard be changed to ICA ISAAR (CPF) was discussed. The Committee was not in favour of this suggestion because it feels that the acronym is already long enough and that making it even longer would hinder understanding of and communication about the standard.

### **Agenda item 3b ISAAR (CPF) Examples and Appendices**

It was agreed that both in-text and full examples would be included in the exposure draft of the new ISAAR (CPF), with the full examples appearing in Appendix B. Ultimately, the printed 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of ISAAR should include fewer full examples that was the case for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of ISAD(G), but a greater range of full examples should be provided in the Web edition of the new ISAAR. For the purposes of the exposure draft, only one full example from each Committee member is required. While in-text examples can be extracted from the full examples, members are welcome to provide additional in-text examples if they wish.

### **Agenda item 3c Process for seeking comments on the Rio draft**

It was agreed that Committee members should endeavour to forward their examples to Adrian by 15 December, so that the exposure draft of the new ISAAR including examples can be prepared for publication on the CDS website by 15 January. Comments on the draft will be invited from the international professional community, with a deadline of 15 July for the receipt of comments by the Committee Secretary.

It was agreed that Adrian should seek advice from Kent Haworth and/or Evelyn

Wareham (ICA, Paris) regarding ICA language protocols for the issuing of drafts for comment, including the languages that the draft and associated notifications should be issued in and languages in which comments can be received.

#### **Agenda item 4**

##### **Open Source Archival Resource Information System (OSARIS) project**

Stefano Vitali reported on a meeting that was held in Paris on 7-8 October between representatives of CDS, CIT, UNESCO and ICA Headquarters. Stefano, Bruno Galland and Nils Brübach represented the CDS at this meeting. He reported that \$US18,000 has been made available by UNESCO to fund phase 2 of the project. A team consisting of Peter Horsman and Rob Mildren (Scotland) has been appointed to conduct the work for phase 2, with the assistance of 8 co-readers (Stefano, Bruno, Nils, Adrian, Vitor, Marcel Caya, Eduardo Pedruelo and Evelyn Wareham). A work plan for phase 2 has been developed, with the completion date given as June 2003, after which there will be another meeting of stakeholders in Paris. The main work involved in phase 2 is the assessment of existing software against the agreed functional specifications and the preparation of a feasibility study. Joan Van Albada has expressed a preference for the ICA to own the intellectual property of any OSARIS software that is ultimately developed.

Discussion by the Committee reaffirmed a strong preference that the software product should be both free and open source and that it should ideally be a multi-purpose archival management tool, not just a tool for encoding archival descriptions. Given the level of commitment that would be required to maintain and support such software, the Committee is of the view that the ICA does not have the resources to do this on its own and that the project requires ongoing cooperation between the ICA and UNESCO if it is to be viable. It was also agreed that EAD and EAC experts should be added to the list of co-readers.

An official letter will be sent to Joan van Albada communicating these views and suggestions. Stefano agreed to circulate the work plan for phase 2 to all CDS members.

#### **Agenda item 5**

##### **The relationships between ISAD, ISAAR, EAD and EAC**

Michael Fox described the new version of EAD that has recently been released. Some of the changes were necessary for EAD to comply with the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of ISAD(G). EAD continues to receive support from the Society of American Archivists, the Library of Congress, the Research Libraries Group and an international EAD Working Group.

Per-Gunnar reported that there had been some progress on the EAD DTD in recent months. The draft DTD is available on the University of Virginia website together with some examples. Per-Gunnar has also prepared a cross-walk between the draft new ISAAR and the draft EAC. EAC has been successfully tested in the context of the LEAF project in Europe. To take the EAC initiative forward a tag library is

required. EAC will also need to catch up with the latest changes to the ISAAR draft. There was some discussion as to who should be responsible for taking the EAC work forward and it was decided that Dick Sargent should liaise with Daniel Pitti about harmonizing EAC with the Rio draft of ISAAR and over the development of an EAC Tag Library.

Michael Fox circulated a draft report on the conceptual relationships between ISAD, ISAAR, EAD and EAC (reference: CDS Strategic Work Plan item 5). This draft will be revised for discussion and approval at the CDS meeting in Canberra in October 2003. Ultimately, the paper should be published on the CDS website and submitted to *Comma* for print publication by the ICA.

### **Agenda item 6.**

#### **Policy and Procedures for the future maintenance of CDS standards**

The Committee held some preliminary discussions on this matter, with a final position to be determined at the Canberra meeting. Stefano stated that he does not envisage a need for a fixed schedule of revisions for ISAD and ISAAR into the future. The CDS will, however, require a process for receiving and considering suggestions for modifications to the two standards.

It was foreshadowed that the CDS could in future develop a standard for describing functions. Michael Fox suggested that the CDS should develop a document outlining the functional requirements for archival description in a manner similar to the FRBD document published by IFLA.

It was agreed that Adrian would draft a document for submission to the ICA for consideration at the Canberra meeting that would report on CDS activities during 2000-2004 and make recommendations for future work of the Committee including a process for managing rolling revisions to the Web versions of both ISAD (G) and ISAAR (CPF). In preparing this draft it may be necessary to obtain clarification from ICA headquarters in Paris about the rules for securing ICA approval of changes to these standards.

### **Agenda item 7. Preparations for the 2004 ICA Congress in Vienna**

A report from Bruno Galland about his attendance at the CITRA meeting in Marseille was distributed together with a notice from Joan Van Albada about the 2004 Congress. It was noted that proposals for sessions at the Congress need to be submitted by 1 February 2003.

After some discussion it was agreed to prepare five session proposals on behalf of the Committee:

1. A plenary session on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of ISAAR (CPF) – Adrian and Stefano.
2. An 'avant guard' session with demonstrations of working models of EAC systems – Dick Sargent, Historical Manuscripts Commission and Per-Gunnar on LEAF or Max Kaiser from Austria.

3. An 'avant guard' session on the application of ISAD and ISAAR (Italy, Spain, Brazil)
4. An 'avant guard' session on EAD – Michael Fox to prepare a proposal possibly drawing on Bill Stocking and Catherine Dherent of France.
5. A German language workshop on descriptive standards in Eastern Europe – Nils to prepare a proposal possibly drawing on Poland and the Czech Republic.

**Agenda item 8      Review of ICA/CDS Strategic Work Plan**

It was agreed that Adrian would review, revise and recirculate the Strategic Work Plan after the Rio meeting.

**Agenda item 9      Agenda for Canberra meeting, October 2003**

The agenda for the Canberra meeting will include:

- consideration of the comments on the exposure draft of the new ISAAR and finalization of the new ISAAR for publication;
- consideration and approval of Michael Fox's paper on the relationships between ISAD, ISAAR, EAD and EAC;
- Recommendations to the ICA on the future work of the CDS and the future maintenance processes for CDS standards.

The meeting concluded at 4.30 pm on Thursday 21 November.