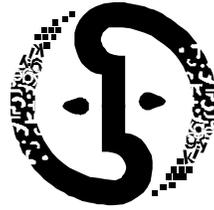


**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES ARCHIVES**



***Committee on Best Practices and Standards / Sub-committee on archival description  
Comité des normes et des bonnes pratiques / Sous-comité des normes de description***

**Report from Claire Sibille – de Grimouard, SAA liaison to the ICA Committee on Best practices and Standards  
July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

The Archives school of Marburg (Germany) hosted the annual meeting of the CBPS sub-committee on archival description, 2009, 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> May. As it had been stated during the last international congress on archives at Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), 2008, 21<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> July, the main purpose of the meeting was to identify the needs for harmonizing the 4 ICA descriptive standards and to look at the possibility of developing a compendium explaining the relationships between ICA standards and existing or forthcoming standards such as Encoded Archival Description (EAD), Encoded Archival Context - Corporate bodies, Persons, Families (EAC-CPF), Encoded Archival Guide (EAG). Another important matter was the ICA-AtoM software, a free open source tool which is being developed by a Canadian company, Artefactual Systems, for ICA.

**Membership**

Padre Baroan (Ivory Coast), Marion Beyea (Canada; CBPS chair), Nils Brübach (Germany), Blanca Desantes (Spain), Vitor da Fonseca (Brazil), Beatriz Franco (Spain), Michael Fox (United States), Hilary Morgan (Canada), Victoria peters (UK), Bogdan Popovici (Romania), Claire Sibille-de Grimouard (France; CBPS secretary), Stefano Vitali (Italy), Amy Warner (UK)

**Review of ICA descriptive standards and conceptual modeling**

The sub-committee identified different levels in the needed changes: harmonization of the 4 ICA standards, of the content of the rules and of the application of the standards. However, it was decided that the more substantial changes should be considered later. ICA standards are not used at the same level. ISAD(G) is recognized as the basis for archival description and it is very common in many countries, but we can't say the same thing for the three others. The

main priority of CBPS is to explain to the international community how descriptive standards relate to each other.

Some countries have already started to develop a conceptual model for archival description focusing on relationships. For instance, the Commission on Spanish Archival Descriptive Standards (CNEDA) has developed a document entitled “Conceptual Model of Archival Description and Basic Data Requirements for Descriptions of Records, Agents and Functions – Part 1: Entity Types” (this draft is available at [http://www.mcu.es/archivos/docs/NEDATiposEntidad\\_20081215.pdf](http://www.mcu.es/archivos/docs/NEDATiposEntidad_20081215.pdf)). The aim of this first document is to identify the principal entity types (and entity subtypes) of the conceptual model of archival description. It also provides information about the identification of the principal relationships between these entity types (and entity subtypes). CBPS also plans to review the work of professionals in related disciplines (e.g., FRBR / FRAD, CIDOC-CRM, ISO work on 2146).

So, the sub-committee decided **to establish a compendium** with additions (for example a common area for the control of archival descriptions) and focusing on the **relationships between the different types of entities**, but with **no fundamental changes of structure of the 4 ICA standards**. This document will be made up of different self contained parts which will describe records, records creators, functions of creators and institutions with archival holdings. It will contain a general introduction including a history of the ICA-standards-related activities, a data model and a section explaining the relationships between the different archival entities (archival material, creators, functions of creators and archival institutions), a set of elements of description for each type of entity and appendices for crosswalks and references to articles in different languages about conceptual modeling. This document, which would be released in 2012, is to be considered as an intermediate step before a call for comments and a full revision of the standards for the term 2012-2014.

### **ICA-AtoM software**

The Canadian Company Artefactual Systems is developing a free open source multilingual software enabling institutions to create and to put on the web archival descriptions to create and to put on the web archival descriptions compliant with ICA descriptive standards. The origin of the project was the preparation of an archival guide on human rights (AtoM is the acronym of “Access to memory”). Sponsors are the Archief School (Netherlands), the Center for Documentation and Research (Arabic Emirates), the Direction des Archives de France, Library and Archives of Development (Bank WorldGroup) and Unesco.

An on-line demo (<http://ica-atom.org/demo/>) enables anyone to test the 1.0.7 beta release of the software. Archival institutions can also participate in ICA-AtoM beta testing: the institution can host its own version of the software or Artefactual can host it on its server at no cost during the beta testing phase.

It is an interesting idea to provide local institutions with an open source tool, enabling us to disseminate ICA standards. The sub committee on descriptive standards is actively reviewing AtoM and will prepare a report.