

Overview

ICA is about professional solidarity, sharing and development and PCOM, responsible for directing and coordinating the professional programme, is at the heart of all of this. PCOM has a coordinating role with respect to the programme-related activities of ICA. This is challenging, given the spread of ICA's network geographically, culturally and in terms of competencies or specialisations. The key to this coordination is effective communication. Thus one of PCOM's tasks is to coordinate the translation and publication of ICA's professional tools.

PCOM is guided by ICA's 6 strategic objectives, of which the first three are the most relevant to ICA's professional programme:

1. To Raise Awareness of the Importance of Archives
2. To Respond to the Challenge of New Technologies
3. To Develop Capacity in the Archives Profession

But the other three, strengthening the ICA network, improving ICA's performance and building partnerships are both supported by and provide ways to achieve the first three.

PCOM's goal is to support Section and Branch programme-related activity with advice, expertise and by making connections with other parts of the ICA network that are interested in the same issues. Thus the necessarily limited funding that ICA has available to develop projects, tools and content which takes shape as publications, guidance, conferences, seminars, standards or training material, to give a few examples, can be most effectively directed. It can be used strategically to build on the volunteer resource which is one of the greatest strengths of ICA and focus on the overall programme priorities of digital recordkeeping, preservation and good governance. More specifically, the goals as agreed at the 2014 Spring meeting of the Programme Commission in Paris, the goals are:

- Delivery of the annual conference and quadrennial congress programme
- Coordination of programme-related activities of all parts of ICA network
- Oversight of the Expert Groups and Working Parties
- Involvement of branches in delivery of the programme
- Liaison with Sections over their programme-related activity
- Publication and dissemination of information about the professional programme and its results

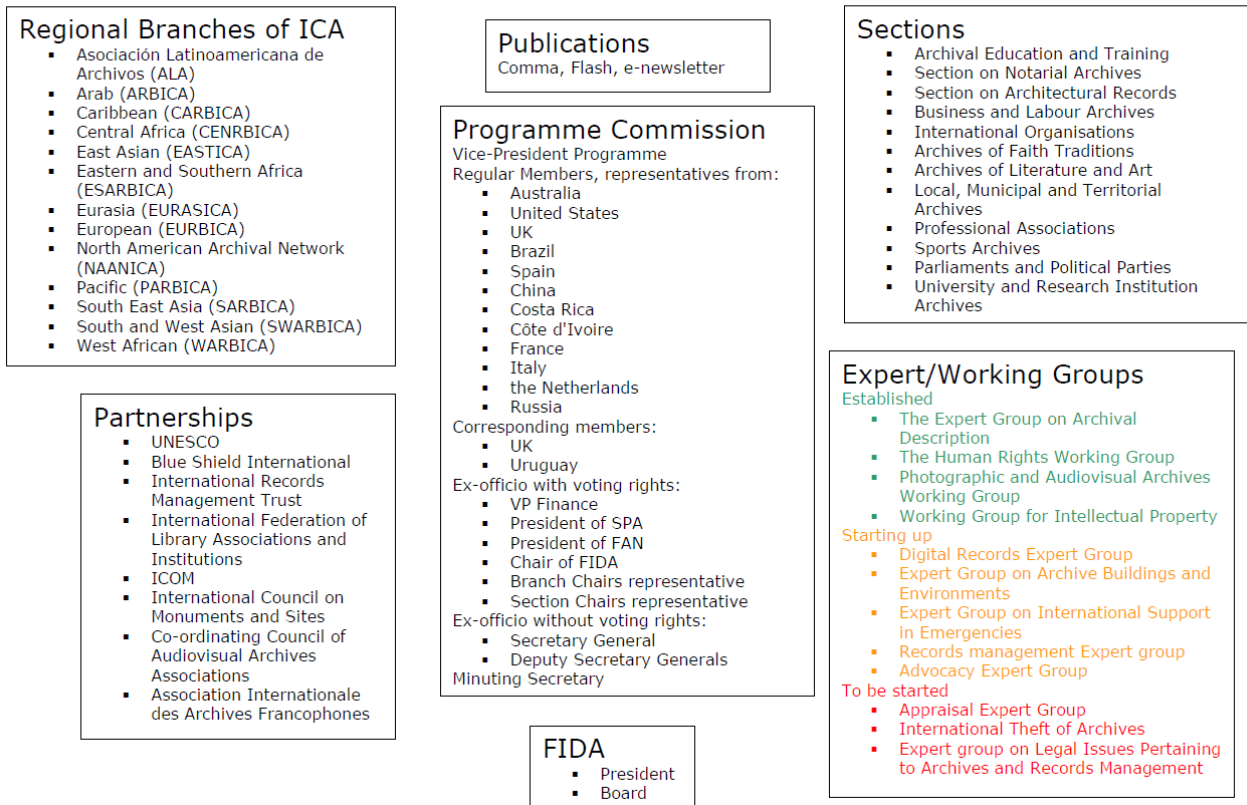
At the Spring meeting, PCOM members defined its short to medium term priorities as:

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1. Establishing the full range of expert groups necessary to provide advice and develop publications, standards and tools across the whole range of the professional domain
2. Set up a project register which will provide details of on-going projects as well as completed projects and link to the outcomes and products of the projects
3. Take the lead in renewing the ICA website, to make it the first port of call for members and the wider archives and records management community for professional resources and information
4. Initiation of the ICA Africa Strategy which will be the result of consultation with African colleagues, led by their needs and informed by their own knowledge and expertise with the overall aim of making a lasting positive contribution to archives and records management, from physical preservation issues through the range of professional competency to matters of good governance and human rights recordkeeping

PCOM is chaired by the Vice-President Programme and there are twelve regular members, from the four different geographical groupings usually represented in ICA groups: Oceania, Africa and the Arab Countries; Latin America and the Caribbean; Europe and North America. There are also two corresponding members, some ex-officio members with voting rights, such as the President of SPA, the President of FAN, the Chair of FIDA and the Branch and Section Chairs representatives. The Secretary General is ex-officio without voting rights, as is the Deputy Secretary General, who is the PCOM Secretary. The Advisor on Translations and Publications attends meetings and takes the minutes.

Programme Commission Interrelationships



Key Initiatives

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Africa Strategy

PCOM is initiating the ICA Africa Strategy which will be the result of consultation with African colleagues, led by their needs and informed by their own knowledge and expertise with the overall aim of making a lasting positive contribution to archives and records management, from physical preservation issues through the range of professional competency to matters of good governance and human rights recordkeeping.

New Professionals Programme

A New Professionals programme is being established by PCOM members which will help recent incomers to the archives and records management field access events and tools that PCOM develops and promotes. It also aims to support them in establishing their own international networks and encourage them to appreciate the challenge and rewards of working internationally. In time these new professionals should become the leaders of ICA bodies themselves.

Projects and Products

One of PCOM's biggest responsibilities in recent times has been the management of funding for projects to support members. Money is awarded according to a set of criteria designed to ensure that the network creates and nurtures professional content by and for the membership. PCOM is now aiming to affect a change in the kind of projects that are awarded funding. This is partly in the way the projects are conceived - they should come more from the ICA entities, the Branches, Sections, Working and Expert Groups in response to evident needs of the membership or identified gaps by the entity or PCOM. It is also in the kind of project so that PCOM can support projects that are more likely to have a good impact on archives and records management around the globe. The corollary of this is that it forces entities, as well as members from different sections or countries to work together - and this can only improve the quality of the product. So, for example, instead of funding translation projects to render an PCOM-funded outcome into another language, the initial project should contain team members from different cultures and languages and include a strategy to get the resulting material translated into at least one other language.

One of PCOM's four priorities is to set up a project register which will provide details of on-going projects as well as completed projects and link to the outcomes and products of the projects. The ICA-Req implementation guidance and training materials is an example of a PCOM project deliverable, as is the Multilingual Archival Terminology (a wiki-based resource for definitions of archives and records management terms in various languages). The MAST project to create an app to provide records management resources in places internet access for desktop computers is unreliable or unobtainable is an example of a project which is in the pipeline. Other products arising out of PCOM work, or for which PCOM has responsibility include:

- ICA-Req Implementation Guides
- Good Governance Toolkit
- Short guides for managing audio-visual records
- AtoM

Standards

Over the years ICA working groups and project teams have developed a number of international standards which PCOM is responsible for promoting and ensuring that they remain relevant and usable. They include:

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- **ICA-Req** an International Standard (ISO 16175:2010, Principles and functional requirements for records in electronic office environments) which provides a set of globally harmonised, generic principles and functional requirements for software used to create and manage electronic records in office environments. It is also consistent with the International Standard on Records Management, ISO 15489. There are implementation guides and training materials to go with the standard.
- **ISAD(G)**, the International Standard on Archival Description providing a set of standard fields to use when describing archives and which permit the international exchange of descriptive data.

Expert groups and working groups

The Programme Commission is setting up a range of expert groups to address specific areas of professional work and particular issues which do not fall within the remit of any of the Sections. There are some more established Working Groups already in existence and some expert groups are yet to be activated. Their remit at present is to act as advisors to PCOM, the Secretary General and the Elected Officers in their area of expertise and to survey publications, products and tools created either by ICA or elsewhere to identify gaps and where things need to be updated. This initial work will give way to a more proactive agenda to develop new material, raise awareness and publicise good practice throughout the ICA network and beyond.

Annual conferences and congress

Whilst the Conference Host (usually the head of the archives in the city or country where the Annual Conference or Congress is held) and the Secretariat team are responsible for the logistical organisation of the main ICA conferences and Congress, PCOM has a vital role to play in establishing the parameters of the professional content and in developing the programme. For three years running there is a conference and every four years an international Congress, which is the culmination of ICA's four-year cycle. They provide the space for ICA bodies to discuss the most important professional issues and offer the chance for the governing bodies to hold business meetings. PCOM strives for the content matter to be relevant as well as practical and useful. ICA, as the international body for archival organisations and individuals, is in a unique position to put together conference programmes which deliver expertise and open discussion at the highest professional level. At the same time there is the opportunity for members to network and meet in person.

Last year's conference in Brussels, with a programme focussed on records management issues, attracted over 500 participants. This year's conference is focusing on the relationship of archives and archivists with the cultural and creative sectors and registration has already got off to a good start. The Programme Commission takes an active interest in selection of the programme themes, as well as development of the programme. The records management theme of 2013 reflects one of PCOM's three programme strands, Good Governance. 2014's theme reflects the interests of the conference's local and regional archives constituency and was enthusiastically ratified by PCOM. 2015's programme theme is as yet undecided but PCOM members have already been debating which key professional issue should be its focus via email and the PCOM workspace.

The 2016 International Council on Archives Congress has the title "Archives, Harmony and Friendship" proposed by the host and PCOM has been identifying the major themes this suggests. In all of these conferences PCOM plays a major role in programme development. The VP Programme is Chair or Co-Chair and PCOM members make up a considerable percentage of the Programme Committee membership. They

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contribute to the development of the themes and the call for papers and they review the submissions to evaluate them relative to one-another so as to select the speakers. The DSG Programme leads on ensuring that PCOM items such as project outcomes are included in the final programme to give participants (ICA members) the opportunity to learn more about PCOM's work and what ICA's professional programme has to offer them.

FIDA

The International Fund for Archival Development (FIDA) plays a key role in delivering ICA's archives solidarity agenda, being designed to meet the needs of archive institutions and professional archivists in low-resourced countries. It has a dual mission of giving support to archive institutions and archivists with the greatest development needs and providing its Trustees with a platform to attract external funding from the private sector and international organizations, which will then be used to serve the needs of archives in developing countries

PCOM and the FIDA Board work closely together. FIDA and PCOM calls for proposals are synchronised to enable liaison over mis-directed applications and advice about potential support for projects from other parts of the ICA network FIDA projects often make use of PCOM products

Opportunities for participation in ICA

ICA membership can be very cheap, particularly for individual members (30 Euros), and the benefits in terms of access to publications, resources and a network of expertise are immeasurable. Some possibilities are:

- Suggest or work on a project to develop a product with international application
- Join a Section Steering Committee
- Attend a regional branch conference
- Volunteer for an expert group
- Propose a paper for an Annual Conference
- Sign up for the New Professional programme
- Become a volunteer translator
- Write an article for *Comma*