



ENA STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN 2024



This document updates the strategic priorities for the Europeana Network Association (ENA) from those published in 2021. The intention is to seek its approval by the Members Council and the ENA General Assembly at the General Assembly meeting in November 2023, and it should form a basis for planning activities in 2024 and beyond. It is anticipated that the strategic plan will be updated annually on a rolling basis.

The Europeana Initiative is now at the heart of the common European data space for cultural heritage, and within this context the concept of the Initiative as a three-pillar construct has developed significantly, bringing ENA closer together to the Europeana Foundation (EF) and the Europeana Aggregators' Forum (EAF) to ensure its successful delivery. ENA plays a key role in helping to deliver capacity development, and its activities play an important role in the data space contract's Implementation Plan, including those related to Enhancing Collaboration and Cooperation Across the Europeana Initiative, Improving Outreach and Engagement, and Supporting Capacity Building Activities (such as training).

ENA is also closely involved through the participation of its members in key Working Groups and Task Forces on current and emerging cross-Initiative topics such as multilingual translations, storytelling, support for cultural heritage in Ukraine, capacity building, data governance, visioning the data space and decentralisation.

ENA representation, through its current Vice-Chair, on the Expert sub-group of CEDCHE (Commission Expert Group on the Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage) provides an important channel of knowledge and influence in relation to policy issues.

Engaging the network

Whilst ENA may now claim to be Europe's major transversal network of professionals concerned with digital cultural heritage, harnessing the huge potential of what has now grown to almost 4,500 members and is likely to reach 5,000 next year, remains a prerequisite for a sustainable and active network and continued attention is needed in this direction.

We look now, in the first instance, to the Country Groups initiative to energise the active engagement of a higher proportion of our members, improve their 'customer journey' and create satisfying experiences with a clearer personal impact in their daily work. In this way, we aim to increase the 'vertical' impact of Europeana and the data space in each country, involving greater collaboration and cohesion between ENA members - from cultural heritage institutions and reuse communities in education, research, creatives and beyond - and with the aggregators in each country.

The seven ENA Communities (Climate Action, Communicators, Copyright, Education, Impact, Research and EuropeanaTech) continue to be the driving force for ENA activities and impact and are a vital mechanism for the entire Europeana Initiative. More can be done to support the take-up of the many outcomes of the Communities' activities and

we see the potential of the planned Country Groups as one way to help achieve this and also to assist the elaboration of KPIs and an Impact Model.

The burgeoning interest in issues such as: the potential impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in cultural heritage; the role of 3D in the data space; the <u>ECCCH</u> initiative; and new sources and audiences for cultural heritage data, exemplifies the need to identify where expertise lies within the network to support the knowledge of the staff who manage and operate the Europeana service. Actions now planned and underway within the data space Implementation Plan are critical to progress in this respect and include a new Community Collaboration tool and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools together with market research approaches.

Sound and effective governance

Transparency, accountability and democracy – and perceptions of them - are still seen as central ingredients of good planning, communication, decision-making and harmonious relations within ENA and across the Initiative. The role and capacity for participation in ENA governance by the Members Council should continue to be strengthened by assessing and optimising the communications experiments which have so far taken place and by introducing new means of interaction between and among the Management Board, Members Council and the wider membership.

Clarifying the remit of Members Council, along with the expectations of its members, has been a subject of increased discussion, together with the development of options for its optimal size, shape and representativity. The next steps in this process should be approved by the Members Council and implemented in time for the 2024 Members Council election, so that the contribution it makes to ENA governance and the satisfaction of councillors with their role and engagement can be further improved.

Diversity and inclusion (D&I)

The diversity of individuals joining ENA, in terms of their country and the professional background of members joining is clearly growing, along with the size of the network. Projects are starting up within the Initiative to begin to address the problems associated with post-colonial 'legacy' content and metadata. However, little is yet known or measured about the extent to which people from marginalised and vulnerable communities participate in ENA. Initiatives are still needed to identify people from these communities and engage them so as to ensure more diverse and inclusive involvement and representation. The work done earlier by the New Professionals Task Force remains to be fully capitalised upon.

Funding ENA

During the period of the COVID pandemic and immediately afterwards, the existing annual ENA budget, received through the Europeana Foundation, has remained underspent but made available for redeployment in the following year. A truer estimate of the full resource cost of ENA has also been established recently, including that of EF staff time, on which the network depends heavily for implementation of its objectives but the deployment of which it does not control.

It is increasingly likely that developing and implementing innovations and mobilising a stronger and sustained contribution and engagement of network members to the delivery of the EI and DS, albeit on a voluntary basis, will require and can benefit from more funds. It is appreciated that there is very limited flexibility to meet this need within the existing funding of the EI operation under the DS contract. In light of this, it has been agreed that ENA, as a legal entity, may look to raise additional funding for its purposes. On this basis, the involvement of ENA in EU projects as a funded entity in its own right is already being pursued. Such efforts, in the first instance, will be carried out within the framework of the Europeana Initiative, where EF maintains a human resource infrastructure and financial administration capacity which ENA does not have.

Integration and full cooperation within the three-pillar Europeana Initiative remains our preferred option and, with that, the use of new funding to strengthen the staff complement of EF that is dedicated to ENA support is a sensible path. Nevertheless, there remain outstanding aspects relating to how any funds raised may be used and for what purposes and these should be resolved, wherever possible, in the coming year of the DS contract.



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