



Europeana Network Association

Input for the independent evaluation of Europeana

15 September 2016

The Europeana Network Association welcomes the recommendation from the Council Conclusions on *The role of Europeana for the digital access, visibility and use of European cultural heritage* (June 2016) to present to the Council, by October 2017, an independent evaluation of Europeana and give clear orientations for the mid- and long-term development of Europeana. The Europeana Network Association recommends a two-step approach in this evaluation. The first step is a summative evaluation of Europeana in the three areas identified in the Europeana Impact Framework, which results in an overall assessment of Europeana as it currently operates and in an overview of the main lessons learned. The second step is a review of the refined strategy that Europeana will have developed as a follow-up to the Council Conclusions. This step results in recommendations for the vision of Europeana beyond 2020 and for the implementation of a new Europeana Strategy. The Europeana Networks Association suggests to apply this two-step approach, as it strongly believes that each step requires different expertise within the group of evaluators.

Step 1: Summative evaluation of Europeana

The key question in the first part of the evaluation is: **Is the impact that Europeana has had according to expectations and in line with the investments made?** As a methodology to provide an answer to this question, the Europeana Network Association suggests to use the [Europeana Impact Framework](#), developed with the Europeana Network. This framework identifies three impact areas:

- Social-Cultural impact ('Deeper understanding')
- Innovation impact ('Innovative and Influential Network')
- Economic impact ('Improved Welfare')

Social-Cultural impact

The *Social-Cultural impact* relates to Europeana's end user groups and their appreciation for the cultural content and the functionality provided by Europeana. We do not expect the evaluation to include the results of a new extensive survey on overall user satisfaction. There have already been several user and impact studies on Europeana that can be taken on board in the



evaluation (e.g. the impact study of Europeana 1914-1918). There are also many other reports addressing the use and types of users of digital cultural heritage in general. The Europeana Network Association would like to particularly point out that *The New Renaissance* report (published in 2011) might provide a good point of reference for expectations regarding access and use of digital cultural heritage in general and Europeana in particular.

In general terms, the Europeana Network Association would expect that the independent evaluation will provide an overall assessment of the relationship between Europeana and its user base, in all its varieties, through all its channels (portal, social media, local events etc.). It would make sense if in this respect a distinction is made between general use (focused on access through a single point of entry to cultural content according to interest) and re-use (focussed on high quality material with rights cleared). Since Europeana considers Education, Research and Creative Industries among the primary re-users, these groups should get special attention in the evaluation.

Innovation impact

The Innovation impact relates to the achievements of Europeana by showing leadership in the cultural heritage domain to address the challenges that emerged with the digital shift in society. The evaluation should make clear to what degree the cultural heritage domain has benefited from the work of Europeana collectively (at the European level and at the national level) and individually (at the institutional level).

The Association recommends that the evaluators look in more detail at how Europeana has served as a catalyst in the following area's:

- Technology (e.g. platform, search and retrieval, cloud services)
- Services (e.g. multilingual access and distribution of digital cultural heritage)
- Data standardisation (e.g. EDM, data quality)
- Sustainability of project results from Europeana-related projects (E.g. Europeana Fashion, Europeana Sounds, Europeana inside, Europeana Space, Europeana Local, APEX, EU-SCREEN, ENUMERATE, etc.)
- Advocacy (e.g. policy development, copyright reform)
- Networking (shared expertise building, outreach and inclusiveness, governance; this point should also look at relationships that Europeana has built with initiatives in other parts of the world).

Economic impact

Finally, the *Economic impact* has, in the view of the Europeana Network Association, two dimensions that need to be taken on board in the evaluation. On the one hand it would be good to assess the level of cost reduction that Europeana has established by being a centrifugal force



in the entire cultural heritage domain in Europe. Europeana has done this, for instance, by establishing common international standards, frameworks (e.g. EDM) and guidelines, by managing shared services, by creating a level playing field for ICT and content providers across Europe and by providing a focus for national governments to develop national policies for digital heritage. On the other hand, it would be good to look into the activities that Europeana has undertaken to stimulate entrepreneurship (through challenges, hackathons etc) with digital cultural heritage across Europe.

Governance

Besides these three impact area there is one internal issue of Europeana that is addressed in the recommendation in the Council Conclusions, and that should be incorporated in this evaluation: the governance of Europeana. We invite the evaluation committee to have a look at the way that Europeana has taken measures to guarantee that all the voices of its major stakeholders are heard. These measures could relate to the making of strategic choices as well as to including experts from all heritage domains and from across Europe. The Evaluation Committee should assess the Europeana Governance structure, whether it represents all its major stakeholders in a balanced way. On a more generic level, it would be interesting to know whether the current organisational model of Europeana is fit to manage the Cultural Digital Service Infrastructure for the European single market.

The Europeana Network Association expects that this first step of the independent evaluation results in a report that includes overall assessments on the three impact area's in relation to the topics raised above, from which can be deduced whether Europeana has had a transformative role and as such provided value for money. In addition, we expect the report to include a set of lessons learned, that can be taken on board in the second step of the independent evaluation, in which the new vision on the future development of Europeana will be assessed.

Step 2: Review of the revised Europeana Strategy

The key question in the second part of the evaluation is: **Does the refined vision and strategy of Europeana set the right priorities for enlarging its impact?** The publication of the Council Conclusions on the role of Europeana has led to a partial revision of Europeana's current strategy. The plan to have an independent evaluation provides a good opportunity to assess this new direction that Europeana has set for itself to own its position in the long-term. In this evaluation, it is important to not only look at Europeana, but also at the environment in which Europeana operates, such as cultural policy development, technological innovation and changes in digital user behaviour. The evaluation should help assess whether Europeana shows sufficient awareness of these and other outside factors that have an impact on its own



success. As this review requires different expertise among the evaluators, the Europeana Network Association suggests to have a separate procedure for this review and not include it in the evaluation as performed in Step 1. The lessons learned from the evaluation as performed in Step 1 however, will provide a good context to assess whether Europeana's new strategy will mitigate sufficiently the challenges that currently exist.

The recommendation on evaluation of Europeana in the Council Conclusions provide some two main topics that can be addressed in the review of the new Europeana Strategy: the future scope and sustainable public funding, whilst taking account of the dual nature of Europeana as both a cultural and digital innovation project. The Europeana Network Association would like to present here some questions on each of these issues that may give shape to the setup of the review.

The future scope

In its proposed change to the current strategy, Europeana addresses five issues that together determine the future scope of Europeana: Platform, Content, Users, Creative Industries and European value. We would encourage the reviewers of the new strategy to address these issues explicitly, for instance by providing answers to the following questions:

- In line with user needs Europeana is shifting strategically from a focus on quantity (aggregating more content from more content providers) to a focus on quality (better data for end user services). Is this seen to be sufficiently beneficial to the cultural heritage institutions and the EU Member States?
- Besides running the European single entry point for search and retrieval, Europeana will have invested more in Thematic Collections and an online exhibition platform, to be able to better reach and server users. Can the reviewers assess the scalability and sustainability of Thematic Collection Partnerships to increase the reach of and benefits for end user communities?
- Does Europeana have the ability to strengthen their B2B relationships with Education, Research and Creative Industries?
- Is it realistic of Europeana to expect that Cultural Heritage Institutions are willing and able to (continuously) improve their (meta)data to improve the search functionality?
- Is there value in offering shared semantic services for professional partners such as national aggregators and individual institutions?
- Are the choices that Europeana intends to make for further technological development of the platform, future-proof?
- Which innovation and research opportunities are provided by the platform and the accumulated big cultural data? What is the added value of aggregations in relation to big



data pools that are, under their own sovereignty, created by cultural heritage institutions and other institutions across the EU Member States?

Sustainable funding

- Does the Evaluation Committee consider the public funds made available to Europeana as adequate for managing and improve a Cultural Digital Service Infrastructure for the European single market?
- Are there opportunities missed to acquire more private funding for Europeana?
- Will the strategic choices that Europeana has made for improving their shared services contribute to further cost reduction across the entire cultural heritage domain in Europe?
- Are there in other domains alternative funding mechanisms that are supported by the EU and/or EU Member States that might be applicable to Europeana in order to increase Europeana's sustainability (e.g. the ERIC's in the sciences?)

Value of Europeana as both a cultural and innovation project

Finally, we invite the Evaluation Committee to provide an overall assessment of the value of digital culture to build stronger connections within Europe (markets, people, cultures). This would require the Evaluation Committee to also look into future cultural policy developments in both the EU and its Member States. What are the tangible and intangible benefits of a culturally connected Europe via digital means? The ultimate question for this review would then be: do these benefits validate the planned investments in Europeana?

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Suggested selection criteria for evaluators

Evaluators should have expertise in:

Publishing technologies, Distributed systems, Partnership building, Customer relationship building, Network building and maintenance, standards setting, market and impact assessment and platform performance,

They should have access to skills in audience analysis, ux design, multilingual search retrieval, data modeling.



The Europeana Network Association so far suggests the following people as potential evaluators:

- Simon Tanner – professor dealing with Impact in the digital world - impact
- Joost Poort – Potential Market evaluator - eg. size and potential of markets: education etc
- Sue Gardner – ex Wikipedia Executive Director - platform
- Reviewers - Gianna, Jared -
- Mia Ridge – Social media, digital library and museum expert - users / reusers
- Mark Hahnel, founder of Figshare, UK-based platform for scientific publishing - platform
- Dries Buytaert, founder of Drupal (popular open-source CMS) and Acquia, a platform for content marketing, Brussels-based - platform
- Kaitlin Thaney of Mozilla - search
- Makx Dekkers, an independent consultant with an extensive experience in information technology, standardisation and international co-operation. - knowledge of decisions in the context the time they were made... no longer directly involved
- Pedro Szekely (<http://usc-isi-i2.github.io/szekely/>) from University of Southern California (the American Art Collaborative) - semantic web
- Dan Brickley, Google - semantic web
- Carole Goble (researcher on knowledge and information management, distributed information systems and interoperability of applications and new ways of doing *in silico* science, scientific publication and curation. <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/research/Carole.goble/personaldetails>)
- Simon Rein (srein@google.com), he is the programm manager of the Google cultural Insitute and a former colleague of Ellen Euler, with understanding of role of Europeana
- Felix Sasaki, fellow of the W3C team. He knows the Europeana environment, but is not directly associated and is semantic web, data and standardisation expert

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