Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit

GUIDELINE 13:
Digital Recordkeeping Readiness Self-assessment Checklist for Organisations

PARBICA
Pacific Regional Branch International Council on Archives

The original version of this guideline was prepared by the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA) for use by countries around the Pacific. This means that the guideline may refer to things that you are not familiar with or do not use in your country. You may find that you need to change some of the advice in this guideline to suit your own government's arrangements. To obtain an editable copy of this guideline, contact the national archives, public record office or other records authority in your country, or contact PARBICA at http://www.parbica.org.

Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit

Guideline 13: Digital Recordkeeping Readiness Self-assessment Checklist for Organisations

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Like traditional paper records, digital records support and document the services that governments provide every day to agencies, private industry, and the public. As government services are increasingly automated and move online, digital records will be the basis for confirming various interactions between the government and the public – on matters such as pensions, resolving land claims, citizenship and voting rights, tax collection, audits and evaluations, and many other activities involving the transfer of information.

To deliver online services effectively, governments need the right infrastructure in place to manage digital records. In the digital environment, not having this infrastructure in place can lead to increased operating costs, gaps in organisational memory, problems for the public trying to access entitlements, a lack of compliance with laws and policies, and reduced transparency, accountability and trust.

This checklist allows your organisation to conduct a high-level assessment of your records management environment and infrastructure, (including policies, procedures, tools, technologies, resources and organisational culture), and determine whether this environment and infrastructure is capable of supporting a move towards digital recordkeeping.

Before completing this checklist, organisations are strongly encouraged to complete and take appropriate follow-up action covered in the more general Recordkeeping Capacity Checklist, which is Guideline 1 of the Toolkit.

DIGITAL RECORDKEEPING: SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST FOR ORGANISATIONS

How to use the self-assessment checklist:

The checklist consists of six sections, each of which is made up of different questions. A 'Yes' answer to each question is worth a particular value, which is shown in the column headed 'Y value'. If you answer 'Yes' for a question, write the Y value in the 'Your score' column. If you answer 'No' to a question or are unsure of the answer, leave the corresponding cell in the 'Your score' column blank. At the end of every section add up all your points in the 'Your score' column to get a subtotal, then add up all the section subtotals at the end to get an overall total.

Values range from 1 to 5 and are scaled according to how much digital recordkeeping readiness is demonstrated by a 'Yes' answer.

1. Policies and responsibilities

Whatever systems your organisation uses to carry out work or deliver services, it will need to establish internal policies and responsibilities for records and information management that suit the organisational structure, culture and resources.

	Y Value	Your score
Does your organisation have a basic records and information management policy? (For more information on a model recordkeeping policy see Guideline 3 of the Toolkit)	1	
If a policy exists, does it apply to all of the organisation's business processes?	2	
If a policy exists, is it used by management and staff?	2	
Do records and information management policies apply to both paper and digital records?	3	
Are records and information management policies supported by procedures and guidelines that are media-specific (ie paper, email, web content, etc)?	3	
Do certain staff in your organisation have formal responsibility for managing records and information?	1	
Do job descriptions include staff responsibilities for keeping records?	2	
Are staff recordkeeping responsibilities enforced by supervisors and supported by management?	2	
Do senior managers ensure that there is compliance across the organisation with records management policies and responsibilities?	3	
Are records managers responsible for drafting records management policies?	3	
Are records and information management policies regularly reviewed and updated, following consultation with stakeholders, to reflect changing business and technology environments?	3	
Subtotal		

2. Tools and procedures

Successfully implementing records management policies depends on developing various tools and procedures. These include records classification schemes, records metadata templates, records retention and disposal schedules, security and access classification schemes, search and retrieval indexes, repositories and equipment for the storage of physical and digital records (eg filing cabinets, file rooms, records centres and archives, digital storage media, digital storage systems and archives, etc), systems back-up and recovery procedures, and business continuity plans.

These tools should be developed along with procedure manuals providing guidance on creating, capturing, classifying, storing, retrieving, tracking, disposing of and preserving records.

		Y Value	Your score
	Does your organisation have up-to-date records classification schemes and records retention and disposal schedules?	2	
	Are these tools used regularly by management and staff?	2	
	Does your organisation store its paper records in a central repository and use a classification scheme, indexes and finding aids to access them?	2	
	Does your organisation store its digital records in central file directories, storage management systems, or electronic document management systems, and use a classification scheme, metadata and/or effective search technology to access them?	3	
	Do staff members manage digital records and information in corporately-managed locations, rather than on their individual computers or in personal drives?	3	
	Do your organisation's repositories for paper and digital records have security measures and access protocols that protect the records?	4	
	Does your organisation have procedures and guidelines for creating and capturing records in different formats (ie paper, email, web content, etc)?	4	
	Are records and information management procedures and tools integrated into the standard work flow, computer systems and staff operations manuals for all business processes?	5	
	Does your organisation have the ability to demonstrate that records and information created, captured and preserved as part of standard business processes are secure, authentic, complete, accessible and useable?	5	
	Subtotal		

3. Digital recordkeeping technologies

Various technologies and products – including Electronic Document and Records Management systems (EDRMS) and Enterprise content Management Systems (ECMS – are now available for managing digital records and digital information.

These technologies and products allow users to capture, classify, store and retrieve records regardless of their format (paper, email, web pages, digital documents, databases, etc). They enable scanning and imaging, management of records, documents and web content, email archiving, work flow and business process management, collaboration, back-up and archiving systems, storage platform systems, storage media solutions, and more.

Alternatively, recordkeeping functionality may exist within, be added to, business systems that are not designed specifically for records management.

	Y Value	Your score
Does your organisation currently use some digital records products and technologies?	2	
Are digital records products and technologies included in the organisation's ICT strategy?	3	
When business systems and IT hardware and software are developed, purchased and implemented, are records management, business, and technology experts consulted?	3	
When systems are developed, purchased or implemented, is the management of records that will be created using those systems considered?	3	
Does the organisation have an adequate and sustainable IT infrastructure, with whole-of-organisation IT support and suitably skilled and trained IT staff?	5	
When systems are developed, purchased or implemented, does the organisation address the need to streamline and integrate work flow processes, file formats, metadata, storage platforms or search and retrieval mechanisms across the business function and organisational units that the system will support?	5	
Does the organisation's ICT strategy focus on eliminating system and data 'silos', and aim to have integrated digital records and content technologies across systems, business functions and organisational units?	5	
Does the organisation recognise the need to integrate digital records requirements and product solutions into existing systems or into the functional requirements for future business systems?	5	
Subtotal		

4. Training and resources

Although your organisation may have established records and information management policies, tools and procedures, they will not be effective unless they are supported by trained records management staff and the resources needed to implement and maintain them.

	Y Value	Your score
Is there a designated records and information management unit within the organisation, with adequate staff?	2	
Do records management staff have the training or experience to develop and implement tools and procedures for managing digital records?	2	
Do records management staff have opportunities for ongoing training and professional activities?	3	
Does the organisation have a human resource strategy that recognises the need to recruit and train staff capable of developing and implementing tools and procedures for managing digital records and information?	3	
Are records management staff adequately paid in comparison with other public servants?	2	
Does the organisation have a regular budget to support records and information management programs, tools, equipment and staff?	3	
Does the records and information management unit have sufficient funds to operate records repositories, and to develop and implement records and information management tools and procedures?	3	
Subtotal		

5. Organisational culture and awareness

Records and information management polices, procedures, tools and resources will not be effective unless there is a meaningful commitment to implementing them. Managers and staff need to be aware of how important trustworthy and well-managed records are for delivering effective government services and for protecting the accountability and integrity of the organisation.

	Y Value	Your score
Do staff know which organisational unit or staff to speak with regarding questions about records and information management policy, procedures or tools?	1	
Do ICT staff consult the records management staff about digital records?	2	
Is your organisation's records and information program headed by a manager who commands authority and respect?	2	
Does your organisation include records and information management advice and information as part of its internal communications program, making sure that the benefits of records management are widely understood and appreciated by staff?	2	
Is records and information management recognised as a highly important component of your organisation's strategies and action plans?	3	
Do most senior managers, supervisors and staff recognise that well-managed and trustworthy records are vital to effective government service delivery and good governance?	3	
Does the head of the records and information management unit have the seniority to implement records and information policy, procedures and tools within the organisation?	3	
As part of their induction, are new employees, managers and staff introduced to records and information management responsibilities as outlined in their job descriptions, and taught how to use records and information management procedures and tools?	3	
Are decisions on the management of digital records and information made by records and information management staff and not only by technical staff that implement and support the organisation's ICT systems?	4	
Subtotal		

6. Monitoring and evaluation

Your organisation's records and information management infrastructure (including people, procedures, tools and technologies) must be regularly monitored and evaluated to find out whether it is meeting requirements and expectations. If there are problems or new challenges, action is needed.

	Y Value	Your score
Does your organisation monitor compliance with relevant legislation, policies and procedures, or evaluate whether its records and information management programs or initiatives are successful?	2	
Do senior managers support audits or evaluations in the area of records and information management?	2	
Does the organisation regularly audit the business functions and organisational units that cover records and information management compliance?	3	
Have some of the organisation's business units evaluated their records and information management infrastructure or asked for help from the national archives to do so?	3	
Do senior managers respond in a timely manner when records and information management problems or shortcomings are identified?	3	
Are individual staff members held accountable if they don't comply with records and information management policies and procedures?	3	
Does the organisation's records and information management unit regularly evaluate compliance with relevant legislation, policies and procedures for records management in each of the organisation's units?	5	
Does the organisation monitor records and information management compliance as part of its regular evaluations of efficiency?	5	
Do staff performance evaluations cover compliance with records and information management policy and procedures?	5	
Subtotal		
Overall total		

HOW TO SCORE

The table below divides the final scores into three categories: low, medium and high readiness. For each category there is a recommendation and suggested possible strategies.

Score	Assessment	Recommendation	Possible strategy
0 – 45	Low readiness	Your organisation should recognise that funds and effort may be wasted unless digital government initiatives are supported by a solid records and information management program within the organisation and associated technical skills and infrastructure. Take immediate steps to build the infrastructure required to manage both paper and electronic records.	Retain paper-based recordkeeping systems for the time being, using a print to paper policy for born-digital records. Review this approach in 3 – 5 years after addressing shortcomings in your organisation's state of digital recordkeeping readiness.
46 – 90	Medium readiness	Proceed with caution while addressing the records and information management risks that have been identified.	See Guideline 14: Choosing the Best Strategy.
91 – 130	High readiness	Proceed with implementing a digital recordkeeping strategy. Monitor records and information management risks during and after implementation.	See Guideline 14: Choosing the Best Strategy.