

# **OSARIS**

## **Functional Requirements for Archival Description and Retrieval Software**

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# 1 General

## 1.1 Main functions

- 1 The application supports the following functions:
  - Vocabulary control (section XX)
  - Classification (section XX)
  - Multi level description of archival materials (Chapter X)
  - Authority control (Chapter X)
  - Retrieval (Chapter X)
  
- 2 The logical data model must be adhered to at each level.  
Comment: This requirement will appear throughout the document citing specific data elements
  
- 3 Date fields must support international date formats; year must be mandatory, month and day optional. In case a given date is an interpretation of the archivist, this must be indicated. An additional field may contain a less precise description of the date (e.g. 19th century). Only the latter will appear than in the output M  
  
Comment: This could lead to a new standard on date equivalents. Within our archive there has always been suggested rules for text dates such as 19th century and 1920s, early 19th century and so on. These have been implemented with actual date equivalents but there would have to be wider agreement on these.

## 1.2 Vocabulary control

- 4 The application must have a functionality for vocabulary control M

## 1.3 Classification

- 5 The application must support various classification schema's M

Comment: A class in a classification schema is not the same as a level of description. A class may contain whole series, as well as single items. It must be possible to apply more than one classification schema to one fonds and its component parts in order to include schema's used in the past (original orders).

#### **1.4 Customizing and support**

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 6  | Terminology used in field names (labels) must be customizable ('hiding ISAD and ISAAR terminology) | M |
| 7  | The application supports various database formats, respectively input/output formats               | M |
| 8  | The application includes a search function to support description (input)                          | M |
| 9  | The application is scaleable   | M |
| 10 | Full security functionality is supported at various levels of access and update functions          |   |

#### **1.5 Various**

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 11 | The application has the ability to link (at levels as appropriate) with digital image/images   | M |
| 12 | The application should clearly distinguish data about archival materials, records creators, repositories, and (optionally) location within a repository.<br><br>Comment: Location does not imply space management functions (e.g., "which shelves are empty in the repository?") | M |
| 13 | In case the input of information on a specific type of entity (archival materials, records creators, repositories, locations) is divided over more than one screen, mandatory elements should be to filled out in the first one.   | O |

## 2 Description of archival materials

### 2.1 General (requirements for all levels)

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | The application supports multilevel description  | M |
| 2 | The application does constrain the number of levels<br>Comment: The application allows this to be configurable by the institution to support its business rules  | M |
| 3 | The labels (names used in the screens) for the levels can be customized according to local terminology.  | O |
| 4 | At any level all ISAD-elements are supported.<br>See for details the sections on the individual levels (fonds, series, item)   | M |
| 5 | The application allows the institution to select those elements required by local business rules, however the mandatory elements cannot be left out.<br>[not necessarily as dedicated fields]  | O |
| 6 | Lower levels can be assigned to a higher levels  | M |
| 7 | Higher level constructs can be described as a part of lower levels (e.g. a fonds can be a series or an item of another fonds)<br>Comment: This recursivity may not be supported by all institutional business rules, however the requirement may be essential for complex collections. | O |
| 8 | Relations between levels can be modified (e.g. an item can be assigned to another series)  | M |
| 9 | A description of archival material (at any level, but at least at fonds level) can be linked to a record creator, a repository, and (if implemented) a location within a repository.   | M |

- 10 Higher level relations to records creators, repositories, and locations) are automatically assigned to lower levels that are linked to the higher the level. O
- 11 Relations to records creators, repositories, and locations, that are automatically assigned through higher levels (see requirement 3.2.1-10) can be modified at lower levels. M  
 Comment: This requirement may violate institutional business rules, and therefore could be configurable to either allow it or not.
- 12 At any level is represented: M  
 (a) all higher levels (minimal the highest level, and the level next higher to the unit of description  
 (b) the next lower level  
 Comment: This implies that the fonds is not always the highest level. In the revised ISAD(g), the fonds level is not required. This is important to those institutions, which take a more series based approach.
- 13 The arrangement on the screen of the units in the lower level is defined by the describer. Minimal options: (a) according to reference code; (b) alphabetically on title; or (c) chronologically on date. O
- 14 Datefields support various formats. M  
 See for details chapter on the Database
- 15 It must be possible to indicate separately the dates of the bulk of the materials.

## 2.2 Fonds level

- 16 A fonds level description must include the following information: M
- reference number
  - title
  - dates of materials
  - extent
  - scope and contents
  - repository(s) that has (have) the materials in custody
- These information must be structured in separate fields.
- 17 Fonds level descriptions may include other information, according to ISAD(G), and or local requirements. M
- 18 Fonds level descriptions can be linked to repositories. O
- Linking may be implementing by a picklist from the existing repository table. Linking may also be implemented by having the repository at the highest level (see section XX).
- These relationships will automatically be assigned to lower levels (see before, section xxx, req xx
- See also section on authority control.
- 19 A fonds can be linked to 0, 1 or more repositories. M
- 20 Fonds level descriptions can be linked to records creators.
- Linking may be implementing by a picklist from the existing records creator table.
- These relationships will automatically be assigned to lower levels (see before, section xxx, req xx
- See also section on authority control.
- 21 A fonds can be linked to 0, 1 or more records creators M
- Comment: The implementation of many-to-many relations in the data model is crucial. As any archival object has at least one producer, a link to 0 could only mean you do not know who the creator was. In the case of a miscellaneous fond, “week” links (not to a particular series) should be possible to give a general presumption of the producer.

- 22 From the fonds level description screen the screens for lower level descriptions to be linked to the fonds can be opened. M  
 See for data modelling details chapter on database structure.  
 See also the general section xxx about the number of levels.  
 Comment: A full data model has to be developed
- 23 The describing archivist is free to choose a lower level, appropriate for that fonds. M  
 E.g. sub-fonds, series, item.  
 Comment: Some institutions may constrain the number of levels based on business rules. This should be configurable by the institution?
- 24 All types of lower level descriptions can be – simultaneously - directly linked to a fonds. M  
 (e.g. One fonds may consist in a number of series, plus a possible miscellanea of items not belonging to any series. Of course an archivist can create a ‘dummy’ series miscellanea to get a homogeneous structure, but the application should also support heterogeneous structure of the fonds.)  
 Comment: A Miscellanea series might be a collection of series or items produced by different records creators, i.e. coming from different fonds. In this case the application should create different links to different fonds in the same miscellanea.
- 25 At the moment of opening a lower level description, it will be automatically linked with the records creator and repository assigned to the fonds (if any). M  
 See also the general section about ‘over-writing’ at the lower levels. This will be repeated at the appropriate level.
- 26 It is possible to describe the next lower level units (e.g. sub-fonds, series) with indication of only a few elements (including reference code, and title), without completing the full information which is mandatory according to ISAD(G). At a later stage the describing archivist may create full descriptions at the lower levels. O
- 27 The fonds level input screen displays the existence of next lower level units of description. M

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 28 | If desired by the describing archivist subsequent levels can be displayed   | M |
| 29 | The fonds level input screen displays the name of the repository/ies where the materials are kept.                            | M |
| 30 | At demand of the describing archivist detailed information about the linked repository/ies can be displayed.                  | O |
| 31 | The fonds level input screen displays the name of the person(s), family (families) or organization(s) that created the fonds. | M |
| 32 | At demand of the describing archivist detailed information about the linked record creator can be displayed.                  | O |

### 2.3 Subfonds

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 33 | A subfonds can only exist as a part of an existing unit of description (usually a fonds)  | O |
| 34 | The application does not constrain the number of sub-fonds  | M |
| 35 | Units at any level can be linked to a sub-fonds (including fonds, and sub-fonds)  | M |
| 36 | <p>Links with record creators and repositories established at the higher level can be over-written. This new relationship will be automatically assigned to lower levels that are linked to the sub-fonds. The higher level links will not be automatically modified.</p> <p>Comment: In order not to violate institutional business rules this requirement should be configurable.</p> | M |
| 37 | <p>The sub-fonds input screen has basically the same format, functionality and lay-out as the fonds screen.</p> <p>[to be specified by indicating the reqt numbers]</p>   | M |
| 38 | The sub-fonds input screen displays the reference code and title of the higher level unit of which is it a part.  | M |

## 2.4

### Series

- 39 A series level description screen must include:
- Reference code
  - Title
  - Dates
  - Extent
  - Scope and contents note.
- These information must be structured in separate fields.
- 40 Series level descriptions may include other information, according to ISAD(G), and or local requirements. M
- 41 A series description can exist without being linked to a higher level description (e.g. fonds, sub-fonds) M
- 42 A series description can be linked to any higher level description. M  
Comment: Not only to one higher level description; the requirement should be configurable in order not to violate institutional business rules
- 43 A series can be linked to 0, 1 or more records creators. Relations inherited from a higher level description can be overwritten. M
- 44 A series can be linked to 0, 1 or more repositories. Relations inherited from a higher level description can be overwritten. M
- 45 From the series level description screen the screens for lower level descriptions to be linked to the series can be opened. M  
See also the general section about the number of levels.
- 46 At lower level any type of unit of description is permitted. (e.g. a fonds as a part of a series). M

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 47 | <p>All types of lower level descriptions can be - simultaneously - directly linked to a series.</p> <p>(e.g. One series may consist in a number of sub-series, plus a possible miscellanea of items not belonging to any sub-series.</p> <p>See also fonds requirements</p>   | M |
| 48 | <p>In case the records creator and repository has been modified, at the moment of opening a lower level description, it will be automatically linked with the records creator and repository (re)assigned to the series (if any).</p> <p>See also the general section about ‘over-writing’ at the lower levels. This will be repeated at the appropriate level.</p> | M |
| 49 | <p>It is possible to describe the next lower level units (e.g. sub-series, items) with indication of only a few elements (including reference code, and title), without completing the full information which is mandatory according to ISAD(G). At a later stage the describing archivist may create full descriptions at these lower levels.</p>                  | O |
| 50 | <p>The series level input screen displays the existence of next lower level units of description.</p>   | M |
| 51 | <p>If desired by the describing archivist subsequent levels can be displayed</p>  | M |
| 52 | <p>The series level input screen displays the name of the fonds, and - if applicable - the level next higher than the series.</p>   | M |
| 53 | <p>At demand of the describing archivist detailed information about the linked repository/ies can be displayed.</p>   | M |
| 54 | <p>The series level input screen displays the name of the person(s), family (families) or organization(s) that created the series.</p>  | M |
| 55 | <p>At demand of the describing archivist detailed information about the linked record creator can be displayed.</p>   | O |

**2.5 Sub-series**

56 The sub-series input function is similar to the series description. M  
[probably not all requirements apply]

57 A sub-series can be divided into (sub)subseries). The application does not M  
constrain the number of sub-series levels.  
Comment: Some institutions may want to constrain the number/type of  
levels, so making this configurable would be good.

## 2.6 Item

58 An item level description screen must include: M  

- Reference code
- Title
- Dates
- Extent
- Scope and contents note.

These information must be structured in separate fields.

59 Item level descriptions may include other information, according to M  
ISAD(G), and or local requirements.

60 An item description cannot exist without being linked to a higher level M  
description (e.g. fonds, sub-fonds)

61 An item description can be linked to any higher level description. O  
Comment: configurable

62 An item can be linked to 0, 1 or more records creators. Relations inherited M  
from a higher level description can be overwritten.

63 An item can be linked to 0 or 1 repository. Relations inherited from a M  
higher level description can be overwritten.

- 64 From the item level description screen the screens for eventual lower level descriptions to be linked to the series can be opened. O  
See for data modelling details chapter on database structure.  
See also the general section xxx about the number of levels.
- 65 At lower level any type of unit of description is permitted. (e.g. a fonds as a part of a series). M
- 66 In case the records creator and repository has been modified, at the moment of opening a lower level description, it will be automatically linked with the records creator and repository (re)assigned to the item.(if any). M  
See also the general section about ‘over-writing’ at the lower levels.
- 67 It is possible to describe the next lower level units (pieces) with indication of only a few elements (including reference code, and title), without completing the full information which is mandatory according to ISAD(G). At a later stage the describing archivist may create full descriptions at these lower levels. O
- 68 The item level input screen displays the existence of next lower level units of description. M
- 69 The item level input screen displays the name of the fonds, and - if applicable - the level next higher than the item. M
- 70 At demand of the describing archivist detailed information about the linked repository/ies can be displayed. M
- 71 The item level input screen displays the name of the person(s), family (families) or organization(s) that created the item. M
- 72 At demand of the describing archivist detailed information about the linked record creator can be displayed. O

## 2.7 Piece level (optional).

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 73 | If any, a piece level description must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reference code</li></ul>  | M |
| 74 | Other data elements are to be decided by the describing archivist; they may include: title, date, extent.   | O |
| 75 | The application supports different types of piece level description.  | O |
| 76 | (If any), the piece level input screen displays reference code and title of the item of which the piece is a part, as well as of the fonds.                               | M |
| 77 | (If any), at request of the describing archivists the piece level input screen displays the records creator. It is possible to link the piece to another records creator. |   |

### 3 authority control

#### 3.1 General

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | General application level requirements apply (section 1)  | M |
| 2 | The application supports the description of persons, families, and corporate bodies, that can be record creators, repositories (owners), or appear in any responsibility related to archival materials.   | M |
| 3 | A description of an authority complies with ISAAR<br>Minimum fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• reference code</li><li>• name</li><li>• previous names</li><li>• dates of existence</li><li>• administrative history / biographical sketch</li></ul>   | M |
| 4 | An authority can be linked to one or more addresses.  | O |
| 5 | Each link of an authority to an address contains the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• dates (from - to)</li><li>• scope and contents</li></ul> <p>Comment: It may become a requirement that the authority record links to an external entity. This has been a point of discussion more recently about the need to share authority records</p> | O |

#### 3.2 Addresses

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 6 | General application level requirements apply (see section 1) | M |
| 7 | The application allows for the input of separate addresses   | O |

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 8  | <p>An address entry includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• street + civic number</li> <li>• place (town)</li> <li>• ZIP-code</li> <li>• Country</li> <li>• telephone number</li> <li>• telefax</li> <li>• e-mail</li> <li>• web-site</li> </ul> | M |
| 9  | <p>An address can be linked to one or more authorities</p>  | O |
| 10 | <p>Each link of an address to an authority contains the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dates (from - to)</li> </ul> <p>scope and contents</p>  | O |

### 3.3 Roles (linking authorities)

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 11 | <p>General requirements apply (see section 1)</p>   | M |
| 12 | <p>Authorities can be linked to descriptions of archival units at any level</p>                                     | M |
| 13 | <p>A relationship between an authority and an archival unit will automatically be inherited by all lower levels</p> | M |
| 14 | <p>At lower levels inherited links can be overwritten</p>   | O |
| 15 | <p>A relationship can be a records creator or a repository</p>  | M |

### 3.4 Repositories

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 16 | general requirements apply<br>The attributes of a repository are similar to those of an authority | M |
| 17 | Descriptions can be linked to repositories  | M |
| 18 | Repositories can be linked to parent organizations (authorities)                                  | M |

## **4 Search and Report functions (lists)**

### **4.1 Search functions (to facilitate the description process)**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | Input screens include search functionality   | M |
| 2 | All input fields are searchable  | M |
| 3 | Functions which link entities to other entities (e.g. archival materials to authorities etc) are supported by pop-up windows | M |

### **4.2 Reports**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | The application includes functionality for creating reports, both on screen, as a file, and as a hardcopy.<br>Comment: Output in the form of an electronic file can be input for any word processing software for further editing | M |
| 5 | The data elements to be included in the reports are customizable  | M |
| 6 | The report layout is customizable   | M |
| 7 | Report functions include listing in EAD and EAC<br>Comment: See further section 5 for on-line retrieval functionality   | M |

## **5 End user search and retrieval functions<sup>1</sup>**

### **5.1 Interface**

- 1 The application should have more than one user interface; all interfaces are user friendly

Comment: The application must be adapted for various kinds of users, independent of their experience with computers, information seeking or knowledge of archives. Therefore it is recommended that the application has more than one user interface, so that different types of users can work with it effectively.

- 2 The layout of the interface is unambiguous and transparent.

- 3 At the top of each page the user finds an answer to the “W” questions

Comment: “W” questions (including who, what, where, why, when, which) should be answered rapidly so that the user knows why a page appears.

- 4 A user must know at all times where he is in the application.

- 5 Special archival terminology must be avoided as far as possible for archival concepts and search terms.

### **5.2 Searching and browsing**

- 6 A user must be able quickly to put a question to the application.

- 7 A user must be able to browse through the databases to find the fonds that might be relevant for his research.

Comment: ideally databases allow for browsing through fonds, and through records creators. Titles and names are presented alphabetically. The required fonds can be clicked on to get a screen with detailed information.

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is written by Tamara Groot

- 8 A simple search function includes the following search options:
- Title of the fonds
  - Name records creator
  - Time span
  - Reference code
  - Keywords
  - Free text
- An advanced search function adds the following options:
- name previous records creators
  - language
  - Access
  - Location
- 9 A user must be able to search in the accessions database.
- 10 A user can define his own search terms, and/or can choose them for a keyword list
- 11 A search can be supported by boolean operators
- 12 Truncation and/or masking of search terms is possible
- 13 It should be possible to combine results from previous search, or to search within a result list
- 14 The user can interrupt a search action
- 15 During a search the user is informed how long it takes the application to fetch the results.

### **5.3 Presentation of results**

- 16 Upon entering the search a result screen appears, including the following elements:
- Name Fonds
  - Name Records Creator(s)
  - Inclusive dates
  - Scope and contents note
- Additionally suggestions for further research are given.
- 17 The result list contains at least the first 250 results
- 18 A user is enabled to organize the results in various ways
- 19 Words within a description which meet the search terms are highlighted.
- 20 The search history is preserved during the session
- 21 Users are notified that possibly not all required information could be retrieved
- 22 Users are pointed to other sources that might be useful for their research
- 23 A detail screen contains the finding aid as it is available in the reading room
- 24 A user must be able to print, download and/or save the results
- 25 A user should be able to order through the application (the internet) items to be consulted in the reading room, or – as far as available – consult them in a digital format.

#### **5.4 Help function**

- 26 The help function must be available at any place and at any time
- 27 The help function is context sensitive

- 28 The help function fits into the level of experience of the user
- 29 The help function has an understandable structure
- 30 The help function includes FAQ functionality
- 31 During search the user is informed about the possibilities and constraints of the application
- 32 Access points are explained
- 33 A user is informed about the expected competencies to understand the retrieved records
- 34 A user can ask the archivist for help by sending an e-mail through the application
- 35 Users are able to exchange information among each other through the application