

**EUROPEAN BUREAU OF  
LIBRARY, INFORMATION  
AND DOCUMENTATION  
ASSOCIATIONS**

**STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE  
2001-2005**

May 2001



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

..... **PRESIDENT'S FORWARD**

**PART ONE: MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY**

1. .... **MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY**

2. .... **STRATEGY FOR EBLIDA**

**PART TWO: OPERATIONS**

3. .... **OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS**

4. .... **RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS OF FUTURE ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMMES**



## **PRESIDENT'S FORWARD**

This strategic plan has been produced at the request of the EBLIDA Executive Committee and Council by a working group consisting of the President and Director of EBLIDA and invited experts [David Fuegi, Rolf Hapel and Ariane Iljon]. The Executive Committee approved the working group. For further information, see *EBLIDA Strategy for the Future Outline Plan*.<sup>1</sup>

Since its foundation in 1992, EBLIDA has functioned well, achieving its objectives and earning a solid reputation. The membership and executive feel it is appropriate to undertake an objective review and to consider a suitable strategy for the medium term and a work programme for the shorter term. This document reviews the work and achievements of EBLIDA in the light of current circumstances and makes recommendations for future direction.

The plan enables EBLIDA members to have a clear idea of the focus and direction of EBLIDA over the coming years. It is also a promotional tool for our target groups and to attract new members.

A draft version of this document was submitted to the membership for consultation and amendments were agreed by the Executive Committee in the light of comments received. The Executive Committee then presented the document to the EBLIDA Council for approval. Following discussion and further comment by members at the annual Council meeting in Bremen in May 2001, the strategic plan was approved.

This document is in two parts. Part 1 is the EBLIDA Medium Term Strategy. Part Two will become part of EBLIDA's annual work programme, as and when the Director and Executive Committee put elements of it to the Council in one or more annual work programmes. The strategic plan reaffirms the role and policy goals of EBLIDA over the coming years.

Britt-Marie Häggström  
President EBLIDA

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<sup>1</sup> [www.eblida.org](http://www.eblida.org)

## **PART ONE: MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY**

### **1. RATIONALE**

#### **1.1. Why EBLIDA?**

- The member associations and institutions of EBLIDA work at national level;
- however, crucial issues affecting library, archive and information services are increasingly addressed at an international level;
- of central importance are the institutions of the European Union, where the framework is set for national laws and policies and for wider international agreements;
- EBLIDA members need one mechanism at European level to co-ordinate their views and to lobby efficiently and cost-effectively;
- to make their case and to ensure equitable access to information and culture for all European citizens, EBLIDA members speak with one voice derived from a consensus of the members;
- their voice is EBLIDA.

#### **1.2. Why review?**

Since its foundation in 1992, EBLIDA has functioned well, achieving its objectives and earning a solid reputation. The membership and executive felt it appropriate to undertake an objective review to consider a suitable strategy for the medium term and a work programme for the shorter term. The review has resulted in recommendations that strengthen the organisation and increase its effectiveness. The strategy and actions advocated arise from a SWOT [**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, **T**hreats] analysis undertaken by the working group (see Appendix 1).

### **2. STRATEGY FOR EBLIDA**

#### **2.1. Mission statement**

In the light of the key roles of libraries and archives in:

- formal and informal education at all levels, including lifelong learning;
- making culture and cultural diversity in all its forms accessible, and securing their preservation;
- supporting scientific and technical development;
- ensuring access to information in all formats;
- supporting economic and social development at individual, corporate and community levels;
- securing access for all to the benefits of the information society, EBLIDA articulates the following;

#### **Mission Statement**

EBLIDA is the representative and legitimate voice of librarians, information scientists and documentalists in Europe. Its mission is to lobby and engage with relevant policy making and executive bodies at European level as well as business interests on issues of concern to its members, ensuring that these views are reflected in policy documents and legislation. It acts as a single, representative voice at international level. EBLIDA provides its members with services related to its mission.

## 2.2 Objectives

The objectives of EBLIDA are stated in the legal foundation document. The following text restates and reinforces the original.

Statement of objectives for EBLIDA:

- To be the voice of the library, archive and information profession in Europe.
- To represent the views of its membership to the European Commission, the European Parliament, other institutions of the European Union, the Council of Europe and in other relevant international policy-making bodies and to ensure by lobbying and other means that members' legitimate interests are heeded.
- To increase the influence, impact and cohesion of the library and archive profession by acting as its representative voice in European matters.
- To support library and archive development in Europe.
- To identify European policy issues of legitimate interest and lobby for favourable outcomes.
- To mobilise the membership at European level on matters of common concern.
- To have the active involvement of its members and widest possible membership and support consistent with its mission and objectives.
- To seek involvement in projects and in partnerships that increase the influence and impact of EBLIDA.
- To provide services consistent with its mission and objectives.

## 2.3. Policy issues

EBLIDA should be involved in relevant aspects of a wide range of policy issues including:

- Information Society policies, especially
  - Copyright and related rights
  - Telecommunications policy [including universal service issues]
  - Lifelong learning
  - Preservation of digital and traditional materials
  - Freedom of information
  - Access to public sector information
  - Social inclusion and "the digital divide"
  - Definition and development of new professional skills for the sector
  - E-commerce
- The role of libraries and archives as centres of culture and learning in the knowledge society, including European policies on cultural heritage
- Developing co-operation and joint policies with archives
- Policies on books and reading
- Library and archive aspects of trade policy
- Regional policy
- EU enlargement
- VAT on electronic products

## 2.4. Membership

EBLIDA should increase its size and effectiveness by:

- increasing the membership base including the archive sector;
- adopting an "active membership" approach;
- increasing its financial strength;

- 
- seeking appropriate partnerships;
  - reviewing its services within a marketing framework.

## **PART TWO: OPERATIONS**

### **3. OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS**

EBLIDA's achievements have been impressive but there is much work still to do. There is potential for EBLIDA to develop substantially over the next few years.

**Membership** is a crucial issue because both legitimacy and financial strength depend on it. The membership needs to grow and needs to play a more active role. Within this topic, developing the relationship with archivists' organisations is an important issue.

**Services** are a key issue. EBLIDA provides services for its members by lobbying on their behalf and by providing briefings. Services need to be reviewed in some detail to ensure that they meet the needs of their target markets efficiently and cost-effectively.

**Financial and human resources** are a vital part of the health of any organisation. EBLIDA has good potential to increase its income and human resources.

**Co-operation** with other organisations is an important issue for EBLIDA.

### **4. RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS OF FUTURE ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMMES**

#### **4.1. INCREASING MEMBERSHIP**

EBLIDA's great potential strength is its legitimacy based on the membership structure of national associations as well as individual institutions. It is already the single authoritative voice of libraries and information science in Europe and will increasingly represent archives as its membership base expands.

##### **4.1.1. INCREASING THE NUMBERS OF MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES**

In the short to medium term EBLIDA should undertake the following:

**Membership recruitment.**

- **EU applicant countries.**<sup>2</sup> Make a systematic effort to draw eligible associations in EU applicant countries into associate membership where membership is lacking e.g. the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Turkey. Contact should also be made with other European countries which might wish to belong, for example Moldova, Albania, Ukraine. We note that EBLIDA has decided to canvass for support from archivists' associations.

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<sup>2</sup> Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

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- **Increase associate membership.** Seek to substantially increase associate membership from the current 120 by improving awareness of EBLIDA's mission and improved marketing of its services.
  - **Recruitment of sponsors.** Seek to substantially increase the number of sponsors from the existing 4 basic sponsors in the EU countries.
  - **Archive associations.** Draw up a work programme to systematically bring archivists' associations into membership, to represent archives and libraries on issues of common concern where convergence is taking place such as preservation, copyright and technical issues around resource discovery and delivery.

#### **4.1.2. INVOLVING MEMBERS IN INCREASING MEMBERSHIP**

Full members of EBLIDA should undertake the following where appropriate:

- **Recruitment of members.** Offer to take responsibility for recruiting certain countries. As the work proceeds, it will become clear that some associations who wish to join cannot afford to do so. The larger and/or richer EBLIDA members should volunteer to sponsor new members on a voluntary basis by offering to pay their membership fees.
- **Recruitment of associates.** Where appropriate, volunteer to recruit associate members. Each EBLIDA member could propose a target for itself. EBLIDA should not neglect its potential market outside Europe. Wealthier countries where English is widely understood would perhaps offer most potential. Responsibility for addressing this market should be assigned. Institutions involved in international projects are an obvious potential source of associates in Europe.
- **Recruitment of sponsors.** Volunteer to recruit at least 3 basic sponsors in each country in 2002-2003. The basic sponsors should be reviewed now and regularly in future with a view to inviting them to increase their contribution [perhaps by sponsoring new members or becoming patron sponsors]. Care should be taken to ensure that organisations capable of being patron sponsors are identified and approached correctly. EBLIDA should not neglect its potential market outside Europe. Sponsorship may include sponsoring activities e.g. publishing the annual report, EBLIDA events.

#### **4.2. CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

EBLIDA has much to gain from co-operation. A clear policy should be developed on which organisations have been selected and why. Different levels of co-operation may be appropriate e.g. exchanging information, gaining observer status on the board of the organisation or a formal co-operation agreement. As part of the exercise it will be helpful to devise a taxonomy of organisations e.g. [the list is not exhaustive]

- library and archive organisations at European and international level e.g. European Information Association, LIBER, IFLA, ICA;
- other organisations including European chapters of US organisations, UNESCO;
- related lobby organisations e.g. BEUC, European Forum for the Arts and Heritage, European Association for the Education of Adults.

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#### **4.4. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

##### **4.3.1. FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

EBLIDA's main source of funds is subscription income from members and this should continue. Whilst this income source is solid and ensures independence, it is not dynamic. It will only increase if more members and associate members can be attracted into membership. At present it is likely that more members CAN be found. In the medium term, however, if EBLIDA needs more money for its work, it will obviously have to come from other sources.

EBLIDA **should** expand its activities and will therefore need more resources but a general increase in subscriptions is not feasible. Member associations should make additional voluntary contributions and contributions in kind, as described elsewhere which will lead to a stronger subscription base. **Implementing the recommendations under membership and services can very substantially increase core income.**

EBLIDA's financial reserve is too small. This leads to caution in approaching new opportunities because of [justified] fear of cash flow problems. The membership should plan to allow EBLIDA to build up its financial reserve. Existence of an adequate reserve should not be seen as a reason for complacency or reduction of subscriptions, but instead as a mechanism to a dynamic and pro-active organisation.

##### **4.3.2. HUMAN RESOURCES**

EBLIDA has made a considerable external impact as a large network with a small secretariat. It remains unbureaucratic and needs to ensure that it remains outward looking and pro-active.

EBLIDA can increase its human resources substantially through participation in appropriate projects and thus increase its capacity to engage in new policy areas. As a pre-requisite, it should increase its reserves to avoid cash-flow problems.

When EBLIDA is in a position to expand its human resources, it needs to consider the relative benefits of conventional office-based posts in The Hague and a more distributed virtual organisational structure.

The use of consultants rather than employees should also be considered, particularly if it expands its brief to new and complex policy areas as we recommend.

Some external assistance with marketing and financial planning could be beneficial. Stronger support from member associations and co-operation may play a part in providing the specialist inputs required.

#### **4.5. IMPROVING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

- **Hot News and Update on EU developments** are valuable and under-exploited products. EBLIDA should explore the possibility of moving up the information chain and earning revenue as a news provider for others. Clients who re-publish all or part of the information should pay for the privilege. Electronic publication could be on a weekly basis if clients desire this. Encouraging subscribers to opt for electronic delivery could perhaps cut production costs. Member associations might be able to recruit clients for this service.



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- **Information Europe** is a good product which needs to be more closely linked to its market. Potentially it is a valuable marketing tool for EBLIDA and increased circulation is very much in EBLIDA's interest. A marketing plan should be devised, grounded on customer research, to substantially increase the present paid subscriber base of 103. In this context, a name change should be considered. Member associations could assist EBLIDA in carrying out the marketing plan.
  - **The EBLIDA website.** As an international organisation EBLIDA needs an up-to-date informative website as a key marketing and service delivery resource. More human resource needs to be found to achieve this.
  - **Projects.** EBLIDA should lend its support to valuable initiatives and market itself in new areas by joining or creating worthwhile projects. EBLIDA 's involvement in the PULMAN project<sup>3</sup> is a good start.
  - **Conferences and workshops.** Through PULMAN EBLIDA will organise an international policy conference. EBLIDA should consider the possibility of organising such an event, perhaps every two years, in the country of the EU presidency with the active involvement and support of its members in the country concerned. We believe that such an event could be influential and profitable.
  - **Awards.** EBLIDA should examine the feasibility of establishing a European award for achievement in the information world. This would raise the profile of EBLIDA and the profession.

#### **4.6. OTHER MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

##### **Priorities**

In order to improve its services to members and its effectiveness as a lobby organisation, the priority for EBLIDA is to increase membership and income. Services should be reviewed continuously and improvements requiring additional resources should be introduced in priority order as resources come on stream. Policy issues are identified, prioritised and taken forward by the Executive Committee and Council.

##### **Business planning and reporting**

- EBLIDA should produce a brief non-bureaucratic annual report. Member and associate member associations should be invited to translate and publish it in their journals [with added editorial if desired], discuss it in their committees and give feedback to EBLIDA. When published, it should be accompanied by information on subscription rates and how to join.
- The style of EBLIDA's annual workprogramme should be changed somewhat to be more specific about targets and outcomes.
- EBLIDA should consider conducting a marketing workshop to focus on its products and services and to:
  - Identify gaps in the market for new and existing services to fill.
  - Identify client groups (markets) who will use the services.
  - Tailor the services to fit those client groups.
  - Review issues of pricing and conditions of use.
  - Identify what marketing and promotional actions need to be undertaken.
  - Decide who will be responsible for those marketing actions, and
  - Prepare a marketing plan.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pulmanweb.org/>



### **Role of the executive committee**

The incoming executive committee should review its role. The offices of Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary should be reviewed. In order to support the secretariat with key aspects of the work programme, specific responsibilities could be assigned to executive committee members e.g. membership recruitment, co-operation with other organisations and becoming more representative of archives associations.

**Appendix 1  
SWOT analysis**

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|---|---|
| <p><b>Strengths:</b><br/>EBLIDA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the voice of the library community in Europe.</li> <li>• Was founded to meet a real need that still exists.</li> <li>• Is truly representative and legitimate.</li> <li>• Has a good reputation based on good information products and successful lobbying.</li> <li>• Has sound, albeit tight, finances.</li> <li>• Has good staff, is soundly managed and enjoys the goodwill and support of its members.</li> <li>• Is flexible and non-bureaucratic.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Weaknesses:</b><br/>EBLIDA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is perceived by some as a single-issue organisation with too great an emphasis on public libraries.</li> <li>• Limited human resources and is not realising its potential.</li> <li>• Is not generating enough active support from its members given the range and importance of European issues to be addressed.</li> <li>• Suffers from the fact that its core funding base of membership subscription is not dynamic.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Opportunities:</b><br/>EBLIDA could</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on its strengths by becoming more proactive and engaging in issues, which inspire the members and are inspired by the members.</li> <li>• Widen the range of issues in which it engages.</li> <li>• Widen and deepen its membership and support base and generate more active support from members.</li> <li>• Improve the range and take-up of its services.</li> <li>• Increase its financial strength.</li> </ul>                                   | <p><b>Threats:</b><br/>EBLIDA could</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lose sight of its purpose or suffer reduced effectiveness.</li> <li>• Lose the support of its members.</li> <li>• Face competition from other organisations.</li> <li>• Suffer from financial weakness.</li> </ul>   |