CENL - Conference of European National Libraries
CENL Strategic Plan 2015-2018

CENL's Vision

The vision of CENL is to make the rich cultural and heritage collections of Europe's national libraries known and available to all.

CENL's Mission

The mission of CENL is to support the work of the national libraries of Europe to increase the visibility of their heritage collections, to promote a sense of common heritage to Europe, and open them up to new generations of users through exciting services. It does this through advocacy and promotion of the work of its member libraries, through collaboration between CENL members, through cooperation and partnership with organisations which share its vision and purposes.

CENL's changing environment

1. Background to our current position

Over the past decade, the CENL has put the bulk of its efforts and financial resources in to launching, building up and supporting TEL - The European Library. Conceived as a gateway to the collections and metadata of Europe's national libraries through a portal, TEL has developed a powerful infrastructure for aggregation of our shared data and enabled a wider dissemination of our digital and bibliographical records. In 2012, 7 academic libraries and the consortium RLUK (research Libraries UK) joined TEL, thus adding more value to the dataset. As an aggregation infrastructure in collaboration with Europeana, TEL has played a key role in numerous European projects and brought CENL and Europeana closer together.

At its meeting in Moscow in May 2014, the CENL General Assembly decided that the TEL service was sustainable enough to operate independently of CENL by 1 January 2015. This was based on the conclusions of a consultancy commissioned to review business models following the recommendations of the TEL Assessment Group into the future of TEL. The creation of an independent foundation has been thoroughly explored but revealed itself to be too expensive. The alternative option of integration into Europeana was agreed as the only viable option. National libraries can from now on rely on Europeana, its natural partner, to provide those aggregation services.

2. Our future direction

With the resolution of the future of TEL, CENL now has an opportunity to look at the wider changing environment facing its members and consider how best to serve their needs in this next few years. This transition gives CENL the opportunity to set new strategic objectives in order to be at the forefront of the changes facing European libraries. CENL's future strength as a membership organisation will lie in its capacity to advocate on behalf of its members, to lobby and to be an effective partner at European level. This will involve developing its role as an effective working community between its members. It will also involve cooperating in new ways with all organisations that share the same goals and face the same challenges such as Europeana, LIBER, CERL, CDNL and IFLA.

This strategic plan is a roadmap for the years to come, our very own Agenda 2020, well in line with the conclusions of the European Commission regarding the Report on Digitization, Online Accessibility and Digital Preservation of Cultural Material

3. Key strategic challenges

CENL members are facing many changes in the environment in which they work. The future CENL strategy must address these if it is to give members the support and advantages of close cooperation and collaboration.

a. Collections
Our collections and the information sources we collect are becoming increasingly digital. As we change what we collect, we also need to find new ways to manage, curate and preserve it for future generations.

b. User expectations
The people who use our collections are also experiencing an increasing number of different digital services online and through other organisations. Inevitably, this means they expect national libraries to offer new services, new ways of accessing collections and new ways of working with them. The increasing focus on digital services is to be 'instant and free'.

c. Technology
Technology continues to evolve rapidly. This means we have to develop our services faster to keep up with user expectations, which can be costly with uncertain value for money. But it can also offer us new opportunities for collaborating and sharing infrastructures, services and even collections with other organisations to make sure we offer the the type and speed of access to our collections which users expect.

d. Legal framework

At both European and national levels, the legal framework within which national libraries work is changing. The legal deposit models are more varied as countries introduce digital deposit in various ways. The regulations on issues such as copyright, data protection and public sector information are also changing fast, leaving libraries with a complex set of laws to navigate in developing their services.

e. Financial and political contexts

Many national libraries, alongside other public sector organisations, have faced an unprecedented period of budget cuts and restrictions over the past few years and it is generally expected that there is more to come in the future. At the same time as libraries are expected to demonstrate better value for money, they are also expected to be more 'open' to the public generally and to make their collections more widely available than in the past.

Purposes and benefits of CENL

The members of CENL believe we can achieve more through working together to address the challenges facing us. This means

- ➢ working together within CENL to build a stronger community of national libraries in Europe;
- ➢ working in closer collaboration and partnerships with other organisation such as Europeana, LIBER, CERL, EBLIDA and IFLA, CDNL to give national libraries strong alliances with other types of library and with other organisations who share our commitment to advancing knowledge and culture.

CENL members commit to supporting the CENL community through sharing information and best practice, through raising standards and through cooperation and collaboration on joint projects.

4. Priority areas for action 2015 - 2018

As a collaborative community we will focus our work in the following priority areas:-

Priority 1: Improve the stewardship and management of our collections
We will share information, identify best practice and support members to improve the standards of stewardship and management of our collections in all formats.

Actions

1. To work with Europeana to identify new models for a long term and sustainable hosting of metadata aggregation services.

2. To set up a new CENL Metadata Working Group to liaise with Europeana on metadata aggregation, linked and open data developments, data mining and identifiers (ISNI) and to advise CENL directors on future priorities.

3. To work with Europeana and others to scope and identify funding for European level digitisation projects, finding new models of funding including public private partnerships in line with recommendations of the Comité des Sages on Digitization of Europe's cultural heritage.

4. To monitor and disseminate best practices regarding digitisation operations, including the legal issues involved in copyright, data protection and orphan works.

5. To monitor and disseminate best practice on digital preservation and digital curation. As well as technical solutions, policy issues such as cross border digital archiving, digital reunification and digital repatriation of collections separated by war should be considered.

6. To share best practice and raise professional standards in all aspects of collection stewardship and management, particularly in collaboration with other professional groups such as LIBER, CERL, CDNL, EBLIDA and IFLA.

Priority 2: Improve the visibility and impact of our services

We will support members to improve the visibility of our collections through discovery and access services, and to increase the relevance and impact of national library services across Europe for the benefit of existing and new generations of users.

Actions

1. To monitor and disseminate activities of the European Commission related to the digitization of European heritage and copyright.

2. To advocate for copyright reform at the European level to enable more effective access to European heritage collections in digital format.

3. To support European or international projects developing multilingual search facilities and to consider multilingual issues when proposing new projects.

4. To share best practice in the delivery of innovative digital library access services, including e-learning.

5. To identify and share best practice on development of effective cultural programmes of exhibitions and events, both physical and digital, to improve access to European cultural heritage.

Priority 3: Develop our people

We will develop the skills and professional capability of the staff who work in our libraries to ensure they are able to lead our future development, manage our collections and meet the needs of our users

Actions

1. To identify the top priority areas for training and development of CENL staff, particularly in digital library management.
2. To develop and implement a multi-year programme for skills development in key areas.
3. To monitor and disseminate information on professional standards development and best practice operations.
4. To work with other European library organisations to identify funding for staff learning and development and to develop common programmes where possible.
5. To develop the CENL Working Group and Task Force models to enable wider staff involvement e.g. Metadata Working Group.

Priority 4: Improve the sustainability of Europe's national libraries as organisations

We will work to strengthen the sustainability of individual CENL members through effective advocacy, partnership and collaboration within the CENL community. We will also work closely and openly with other organisations with whom we share common goals.

Actions

1. To monitor and share experience in diversifying funding for national library activities, including philanthropic, private-public partnerships, commercial and research funded opportunities.
2. To represent Europe's national libraries with the Commission and develop CENL policy on advocacy on behalf of members at Commission level, in key areas such as cultural, social and economic impact of national libraries
3. To develop CENL policy on lobbying activities on behalf of members at Commission level in key areas such as copyright reform, role of libraries in the Information Society
4. To develop a strong collective voice for Europe's national libraries with all media channels including social media
5. To support Europeana in establishing sustainable funding from the European Commission and other sources
6. To explore potential for collaborative relationships with partner organisations such as LIBER, CERL, CDNL, EBLIDA and to develop renewed Memoranda of Understanding to support shared projects and collaborations
7. To explore potential for cross sector collaboration with European cultural organisations such as archives, museums and galleries

8. To continue to work collaboratively with European publishers, via the renewed CENL/FEP Working Group on Electronic Publications and to explore improved linkage with the Copyright Group.
9. To participate in consultations and hearings of international organizations such as UNESCO or IFLA on key issues such as digital libraries, copyright and access to information.
10. To continue to communicate and cooperate where appropriate, beyond Europe's borders, with IFLA including its national libraries section, CDNL and national libraries around the world.

Priority 5: Strengthen CENL as an organisation
We will work to develop CENL as an organisation to enable it to do more to support its members. We will do this by strengthening the CENL Secretariat which will focus on the coordination, implementation and monitoring of a refreshed set of activities and actions to support the CENL purposes and Strategic Plan.

Actions
1. To approve the principle of a rotating secretariat funded by CENL to a degree to be fixed through a funding model with different brackets according to the financial capacity of the hosting library from 2016 onwards.
2. To establish a sustainable funding model from 2016 onwards.
3. To develop and implement the new Secretariat to increase the scope of areas within which CENL can work. To define new tasks and missions allocated to the CENL Secretariat from 2015 onwards.
4. With the member organisations, formulate an annual set of actions and collaborative activities, which will support the purposes and the strategic aims (CENL Annual Operational Plan), taking into account in-year findings, developments and trends.
5. To explore the most effective ways of collaboration around the set purposes and actions and develop an implementation plan.

The proposed responsibilities of the new CENL Secretariat are:

- Ensure effective two-way communications with CENL members on all aspects of CENL business, including gathering feedback from members (EU and non-EU) to help shape strategy and priorities.
- Organisation of the annual meetings for CENL Board members and regular meetings of the Executive Committee
- Maintain the CENL membership files, mailing list and other key organisational documentation.
- Establishing and monitoring the budget
- Managing the fees model and collecting the fees
- Monitoring and reporting on the Annual Operational Plan and the works of the working groups, and disseminating progress reports to members as appropriate

- Development of the CENL website as the key source of information for members and also as a key channel of communication about CENL and its work.
- Develop and implement a communications plan for CENL to include press coverage and social media
- Organise the day to day communications with the EU Commission on behalf of the CENL Executive Committee and the membership by ensuring CENL participates in consultation initiatives and hearings, with special regard to the development of European projects, and to invite representatives of the European Commission and the Council of Europe to the annual meetings.
- Organise the day to day collaboration with Europeana, by ensuring CENL is represented on the Board of the Europeana Foundation.
- Organise regular meetings with the Executives of LIBER, CERL, CDNL and other key collaborative organisations.
- Monitoring advocacy and lobbying with the EU and international organizations
- Acting as a key information source on forthcoming European funding for projects, advising on their relevance to CENL objectives and monitoring CENL involvement in projects once running.

All members are entitled to chair the CENL. To make this financially possible the costs of the Secretariat must be funded collectively from central funds to an agreed level.

Draft strategic plan to be presented in Bern during the General Assembly to be held in Berne on May 18th and 19th 2015.