



## Performance Indicators for National Libraries

### A list of possible indicators, taken from the new draft of the standard ISO 11620 and from practical examples tested by national or regional libraries

Since several years, National Libraries have seen the need of getting consensus on a common list of relevant indicators for assessing the quality of their performance. Several groups, e.g. within the IFLA Section of National Libraries and CENL, have tried to assess the present use of performance indicators in National Libraries and discussed possible indicators, preferably using indicators in existing handbooks and standards.

In the frame of **ISO** (International Organization for Standardization) performance measurement for libraries is collected in the standard ISO 11620 Library performance indicators<sup>1</sup>. The ISO standards aim at comprising indicators for all types of libraries. Nevertheless, not all indicators collected there are relevant for all types of libraries. This, therefore, seems to be the adequate moment to assess how far the new standard will comply with the needs of National Libraries, and what additional performance indicators would be necessary in order to cover the main tasks of National Libraries. In its meeting in Paris in May 2006, ISO TC 46, SC 8: Information and documentation – Statistics and performance evaluation decided to propose as new work item a Technical Report on performance indicators for National Libraries.<sup>2</sup>

National Libraries are unique institutions in their countries, and their data are not easily comparable. As Maurice Line stated, “no type of library varies so much in nature, size, types of media covered, range of acquisitions, functions and services”.

The main **problems for measuring performance in National Libraries** are:

- National Libraries may have several functions (e.g. university and national library)
- National Libraries have no specified clientele or primary user group like public or university libraries. Therefore output data cannot be set in comparison to “members of the population”.
- Purpose (mission), tasks and functions differ between countries. Therefore cost data will not often allow for comparison.
- One of the main goals of National Libraries is the collection and preservation of the national cultural heritage. One interesting indicator is therefore the coverage of that heritage. But it will not always be possible to assess the amount of publications in a country, especially in the non-commercial sector.

#### **This draft**

- tries to adapt performance indicators out of ISO 11620 to the goals of National Libraries
- and to add special measures where ISO 11620 does not seem to consider the special tasks of National Libraries.

It is a first draft with only short descriptions of possible indicators; full descriptions of methods could be added.

The draft is restricted to performance indicators, that means to combinations of data showing the **quality**, not the **quantity** of performance. Statistics about visits (walk-in or website visits), acquisitions, bibliographic entries, loans and interlibrary loans, events and attendances could of course also be used for comparison, but would only show the output, not the quality of the services.

Indicators for **outcome and impact** are not included in this draft, though it would of course be most interesting to show the National Libraries' contribution to knowledge, information literacy, social inclusion, academic and professional success, or cultural life. Such indicators are still in development and might be added later.

As all efforts of assessing the quality of an institution should start from the institution's mission and goals, a statement of the general mission and tasks of National Libraries is given for comparison with the proposed indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> The second revised addition is now on voting as Draft International Standard.

<sup>2</sup> This draft is meant for preliminary discussion in preparation of the new work item of ISO.

## National Libraries: Mission and Goals<sup>3</sup>

### 1. Collection

- 1.1 To collect via legal deposit the national imprint (both print and electronic)
- 1.2 To collect the national heritage in the form of manuscripts, archival materials, maps, pictures, photographs and audiovisual documents in conventional or digital forms
- 1.3 To collect foreign publications in the national language and/or about the country
- 1.4 To maintain a broad collection of foreign publications<sup>4</sup>

### 2. Access

- 2.1 To create the national bibliographic record
- 2.2 To provide the best possible access to the collections for research, learning, and personal development
- 2.3 To provide remote access to the collection by digitizing relevant materials
- 2.4 To provide central services (e.g. reference, bibliography, lending) to users both directly and through other library and information centres

### 3. Preservation

- 3.1 To preserve and promote the national cultural heritage, including the electronic collection

### 4. Cooperation

- 4.1 To engage in library and information affairs on a national and international basis
- 4.2 To join in library and information research

### 5. Management

- 5.1 To ensure efficiency by innovative technology and adequate management methods
- 5.2 To provide for staff development

### Additional tasks:

1. To provide a centre for library education
2. To serve as national forum for international programmes and projects

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<sup>3</sup> Sources used for this compilation are mission statements of national libraries, the website of IFLA National Libraries Section, and papers in library journals.

<sup>4</sup> The collection of foreign literature may be universal or restricted to subjects, e.g. humanities.

## Proposed Indicators

### A. Building the national collection

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<p><b>1. Percentage of national publications acquired by the National Library</b> To assess to what degree the library covers the national production</p>	Tested by KB/Netherlands and a German library with regional deposit (Münster)	<p>Method 1: to assess only the coverage of commercial publications by taking samples of publishers' catalogues</p> <p>Method 2: to include non-commercial publications by sampling sources like regional bibliographies. Commercial and non-commercial publications should be evaluated separately.</p> <p>Print and electronic publications should be evaluated separately.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of national publications (sample)</li> <li>- number of those acquired</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>
<p><b>2. Percentage of required titles in the collection</b> To assess to what extent titles required by users are owned by the library</p>	ISO 11620	<p>Titles = only material that because of origin, language, or national relevance should have been acquired by the National Library</p> <p>Users = includes other libraries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of titles required (loan, ILL, document delivery)</li> <li>- number of those in the collection</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>
<p><b>3. Percentage of unique titles in the collection</b> To assess to what degree the library covers that part of the national production that is not collected by other libraries</p>	Tested by the German Special Subject Collections Programme	<p>Method: to assess for a sample of titles in the collection whether there are additional copies in other libraries of the country</p> <p>Titles = only material that because of origin, language, or national relevance should have been acquired by the NL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of titles in a sample that can only be found in the NL's collection</li> <li>- number of all titles in the sample</li> </ul>	<b>optional</b>

*The indicators assess - from different viewpoints – whether the National Library is covering a high percentage of the national production.*

## B. Building a collection of foreign publications

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<p><b>1. Percentage of the total library expenditure spent for foreign literature</b></p> <p>To assess to what extent the library engages in the task of building a universal collection</p>	No source available, but data should be accessible	Method: Expenditure for foreign publications compared to the total recurrent expenditure of the library Foreign literature includes publications about the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total recurrent expenditure (on employees, acquisitions, operations and maintenance of computer network, building maintenance, repair or replacement of equipment )</li> <li>- Expenditure for foreign publications (all formats, including licenses)</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>

*The indicator assesses to what extent the library tries to ensure a broad coverage of research material from other countries. The collection of foreign literature might be restricted to certain subjects, e.g. to humanities.*

## C. Making the collection accessible: Cataloguing

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<p><b>1. Percentage of new entries in the national bibliography that refer to publications of the last 2 years</b></p> <p>To assess the speed of acquisition and cataloguing</p>	No source available, but new entries are counted in several National Libraries	Entries of one year are investigated as to the year of publication of the titles. Example: Entries during 2006, of those titles published 2005 and 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of new entries during one year</li> <li>- number of those published in the last 2 years</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>
<p><b>2. Percentage of rare materials catalogued - of those in web catalogues</b></p> <p>To assess whether the rare collections are accessible via catalogues and especially via the web</p>	No source available	Rare material includes manuscripts, incunabula and other rare print material of the 16 <sup>th</sup> to 20 <sup>th</sup> century The indicator could be split up as to materials. If the real number is not available, an estimate could be given.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of rare materials</li> <li>- number of those catalogued</li> <li>- number of catalogued items in web catalogues</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>

*The indicators assess the library's engagement in making its collections accessible via web-based bibliographies and catalogues.*

#### D. Making the collection accessible: Quick and easy access

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<p><b>1. Median time of document processing</b> To assess whether the processing procedures are efficient as to speed</p>	ISO 11620	Method: counting the medium number of days between a document's arrival at the library and the day it is available for the user (usually: on the shelves)	- number of days between a document's arrival at the library and the day it is available for the user	<b>obligatory</b>
<p><b>2. Shelving accuracy</b> To assess to what extent documents that are recorded in the library's catalogue are in their correct place on the shelves</p>	ISO 11620	Method: checking a representative sample of shelves Electronic documents are excluded	- number of documents in the sample - number of those in their correct place	<b>optional</b> important for internal management
<p><b>3. Median time of document retrieval from closed stacks</b> To assess the effectiveness of the retrieval system</p>	ISO 11620, National Library of Australia	Method: For a sample of documents in closed stacks that are requested by users, register the date and time when the request was handed in and the time when the document was ready to be collected by the user. The indicator could be split up as to onsite and offsite storage.	- the median time between a request for a document placed in close stacks and the moment it is available to the user	<b>optional</b> important for internal management
<p><b>4. Speed of interlibrary lending</b> To assess the time interval for successfully completing an interlibrary loan or document delivery</p>	ISO 11620	Method: Taking the sample of a typical week Time received is the date and time the request is received by the lending library. Time sent is the date and time the item requested was sent to the requesting library The time interval is measured in library business hours (hours the library is open for business, excluding weekends, holidays, other days the library is closed).	- the number of hours required for library staff to successfully complete an interlibrary loan or document delivery request. - the number of interlibrary loan plus document delivery requests	<b>obligatory</b>

**Indicator 1:** The indicator assesses the library's efficiency in media processing.

**Indicators 2 –4:** The indicators assess the library's speed and accuracy in delivering required items to users.

## E. Making the collection accessible: Usage

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<p><b>1. Loans + interlibrary loans + document delivery transactions per document acquired during the last 3 years</b></p> <p>To assess to what extent there is a demand for the new part of the collection</p>	ISO 11620 (only loans)	Method: Count the number of loans + ILL loans + document delivery transactions registered during a year for all documents acquired during the last 3 years. Compare with the total number of documents acquired during the last 3 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the total number of loans + ILL loans + document delivery transactions for documents acquired during the last 3 years</li> <li>- the total number of documents acquired during the last 3 years</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>
<p><b>2. Percentage of successful interlibrary loans</b></p> <p>To assess the fulfilment of interlibrary loans and document delivery requests</p>	ISO 11620	Method: Taking the sample of a typical week Requests for materials outside the National Library's collecting policy should be excluded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the number of successful interlibrary loan and document delivery transactions</li> <li>- the total of all interlibrary loan and document delivery requests</li> </ul>	<b>optional</b>
<p><b>3. Number of content units downloaded per database</b></p> <p>To assess whether the library offers databases that are relevant for users</p>	ISO 11620 (per capita)	Method: Counting the number of content units downloads per each database the library offers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the number of content units downloaded from a specified database</li> </ul>	<b>optional</b>
<p><b>4. Percentage of virtual visits of all library visits</b></p> <p>To assess to what extent users make use of the library's website for getting access to library services</p>	ISO 11620 (all library visits per capita)	Method: Compare physical visits (entering the library premises) with virtual visits (accessing the library's website)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the number of physical visits</li> <li>- the number of virtual visits</li> <li>- the total number of visits</li> </ul>	<b>optional</b>

*The indicators assess the usage of services the library offers.*

## F. Making the collection accessible: Digitization

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<p><b>1. Percentage of titles digitized per year per 1000 titles in the collection</b></p> <p>To assess to what extent the library fulfils its task of making the cultural heritage publicly available</p>	No source available, but titles digitized are counted in several National Libraries	Digitization may be performed by the library itself or other (commercial) institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of titles in the collection</li> <li>- number of titles digitized per reporting year</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>
<p><b>2. Number of content units downloaded per document digitized by the library</b></p> <p>To assess whether the library has digitized documents that are relevant for its users</p>	No source available	Method: Recording all content units downloads from documents that have been digitized out of the library' collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of content unit downloads from documents digitized by the library</li> <li>- total number of documents digitized by the library</li> </ul>	<b>optional</b>

*The indicators assess the library's effort in making the collection accessible for remote use.*

## G. Offering reference services

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<p><b>1. Correct answer fill rate</b></p> <p>To assess to what extent the library provides correct answers to reference questions</p>	ISO 11620	Method: Unobtrusive testing by proxy users with a representative set of questions and answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the total number of enquiries handled</li> <li>- the number of enquiries answered correctly</li> </ul>	<b>optional</b>
<p><b>2. Percentage of information requests submitted electronically</b></p> <p>To assess the use made of electronic means for submitting enquiries</p>	ISO 11620	Method: Recording all information requests received during a representative (sample) period and – as a subdivision – the requests submitted electronically (email, online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- total number of information requests received during a specified time period</li> <li>- number of those submitted electronically</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>

*The indicators assess the reliability of the reference service and the growing percentage of remote reference use.*

## F. Offering facilities for in-library work

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<b>1. Public seating occupancy rate</b> To assess the use of seats provided for reading and working in the library and to show the value of the library as physical place	ISO 11620	Measurement may be conducted at specified times of the day, the week or the year. This should be stated explicitly when comparing results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- total number of public seats provided</li> <li>- number of public seats in use at the time of investigation</li> </ul>	<b>Optional</b>

*The indicator assesses, exemplarily for seats, whether the library offers adequate in-house working possibilities.*

## H. Building potentials for development

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<b>1. Percentage of library staff providing electronic services</b> To assess the extent to which the library invests human resources in providing technical support for electronic services	ISO 11620	Method: number of staff (full-time equivalent) planning, maintaining, providing and developing IT services and technically developing and improving the library's web-based services, divided by the total number of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- total library staff (FTE)</li> <li>- number of library staff (FTE) providing, maintaining and developing IT and/or web-based services</li> </ul>	<b>optional</b>
<b>2. Number of attendance hours at formal training lessons per staff member</b> To assess the improvement of staff skills	ISO 11620	Number of staff = number of persons (not full-time equivalent) Training is organized in pre-planned lessons which can be held in-house or externally and hosted by library staff or external experts. Informal (point-of-use) training is excluded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- total number of staff members</li> <li>- number of attendance hours at formal training lessons during the year</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>
<b>3. Percentage of library means received by special grant or income generated</b> To assess the library's success in obtaining additional financial resources	ISO 11620	The overall library means include means for capital expenditure. The means received by special grants or income generated include those means for capital expenditure that were not paid by the funding bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the overall means of the library in the reporting year</li> <li>- the library means received by special grants and income generated</li> </ul>	<b>optional</b> comparison might be difficult

*The indicators assess the library's investment into staff competences and technical development and its capability of obtaining resources.*



## I. Preserving the collection

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<b>1. Percentage of items that have received preservation treatment per 1000 items in the collection</b>	No source available	The indicator could be split up as to preservation/conservation methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- microfilming</li> <li>- digitization</li> <li>- de-acidification</li> <li>- traditional preservation methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of items in the collection</li> <li>- number of items that received preservation treatment in the reporting year</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>
<b>2. Percentage of the collection in stable condition</b>	British Library	The percentage is established by condition surveys, taking a representative sample of 400 items of the collections or targeted part of the collections. Stable material may have some damage but can be used without immediate risk of further damage. Unstable material will be further damaged if used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of items in the sample (400)</li> <li>- number of those in stable condition</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>
<b>3. Percentage of the collection in appropriate environmental conditions</b>	British Library	Appropriate conditions of temperature and relative humidity, related to collection type, are monitored. They must usually fall within the ranges recommended in BS 5454:2000: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Temperature 16 - 19° C and within this range a variation of only <math>\pm 1^\circ</math> C</li> <li>- Humidity 45 – 60 % and within this range <math>\pm 5\%</math></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of items in the sample (400)</li> <li>- number of those in appropriate environmental conditions</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>

*The indicators assess the library's efforts in preserving the collection, including the electronic collection.*

## J. Cooperating internationally

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<b>1. Percentage of staff in international tasks and projects</b> To assess the degree of international cooperation	No source available	Method: number of staff (full-time equivalent) planning, maintaining, and developing international cooperation and working in international projects, including project staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- total library staff (FTE)</li> <li>- number of staff (FTE) in international cooperation and international projects</li> </ul>	<b>obligatory</b>

*The indicator assesses the international engagement of the library.*

## K. Identifying user needs

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<p><b>1. User satisfaction</b> To assess the degree to which users are satisfied with the library services as a whole or with different services of the library</p>	ISO 11620	<p>Method: surveys to a representative sample of active or potential users The survey lists the library's services and asks for user satisfaction, usually on a 5-point scale. Data can be collected by postal questionnaire, electronic questionnaire, telephone interview, or face-to-face interview In National Libraries, a survey to other libraries as users would be more important.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the sum of the values for each service indicated by the users</li> <li>- the number of persons/libraries answering the questions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Optional</b> comparison might be difficult</p>

*The indicator assesses the quality of the library services from the users' (or non-users') view.*

## L. Managing efficiently

Indicator	Source	Details	Data to be collected	Proposed status
<p><b>1. Cost per title catalogued</b> To assess the staff costs for producing bibliographic records</p>	ISO 11620 (ed.1998)	<p>Method: total hours spent for producing bibliographic data, multiplied by cost per hour of labour, divided by the number of titles catalogued (sample)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- total number of hours spent, during the sample period, for producing bibliographic data</li> <li>- cost per hour of labour (wages divided by the regular working time of the relevant staff)</li> <li>- number of titles catalogued during the sample period</li> </ul>	<p><b>obligatory</b></p>

<p><b>2. Cost per loan</b> To assess the staff costs of the library' lending and delivery services related to the number of loans (sample)</p>	<p>ISO 11620 (includes all costs, not only staff costs))</p>	<p>loans = for National Libraries this should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- local loans (incl. in-house loans)</li> <li>- interlibrary loans</li> <li>- document delivery</li> </ul> <p>Method: total hours spent in local lending, interlibrary lending and document delivery, multiplied by cost per hour of labour, divided by the number of loans + interlibrary loans + document deliveries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- total number of hours spent, during the sample period, in local lending, interlibrary lending and document delivery</li> <li>- cost per hour of labour (wages divided by the regular working time of the relevant staff)</li> <li>- number of loans + interlibrary loans + document deliveries during the sample period</li> </ul>	<p><b>optional</b></p>
<p><b>3. Employee productivity in media processing</b> To measure the average number of acquired media processed per employee during a year The indicator shows whether workflows for processing media are well organized.</p>	<p>ISO 11620</p>	<p>Method: The number of acquired media is divided by the number of employees (FTE = full time equivalents) involved in media processing (acquisition and cataloguing, excluding retrospective cataloguing).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of print and electronic documents acquired in a certain period. For electronic periodicals, an annual subscription is counted as one volume</li> <li>- number of staff (full-time equivalent) involved in acquisition and cataloguing</li> </ul>	<p><b>obligatory</b></p>

***The indicators assess the efficiency of the organization***

2006-08-30

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