



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT ARCHIVES POLICY

1. Introduction

The Public Works Department Archives holds a huge amount of material such as plans, maps and designs of various places around the Maltese Islands. The Department recognises that these records are important sources of administrative, significant, and historical value. They are a national treasure, and their safety and upkeep management are deemed necessary as a contribution to the Maltese history. This Policy aims to comply with legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute towards customers' queries from different strata and for the opportunity to exhibit and showcase its repository.

This policy will manage the archive as part of its everyday business. Changes can be done in its module to comply with adjustments in the demands of the archive usage which in turn must preserve and conserve the material within the archive.

2. Scope

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for managing the Archives' records, to support its management and the upkeep of the material it holds.

This policy applies to all records created, received, maintained, and accessed by the Public Works Department Archives employees, volunteers, and the public.

3. Definitions of the Archives

A record is a document in any format that has been generated or received by the Public Works Department Archives during its activities and has been or may be used by the Archives as evidence of the department's decisions and actions or because of the relevant information content. Records can be held in any format with no limits to any category.

Records management is the main strategic and systematic control of the creation, maintenance, use and preservation of the records within the repository.

The Archives is committed to preserve and conserve in all possible ways the records within its repositories. This will ensure that the Public Works Department's corporate legacy is sustained, and it shall serve as a resource for citizens' queries and research purposes.

An electronic archive is an exclusive space for record keeping in an electronic format. All the material in the Archives possession will be digitalised, catalogued, classified, and indexed. As the Archives are composed of different repositories, a common system must be in place for better management, corporate handling and enhanced research facilities. An electronic archive will give us a safe space to store the material. Servers need to be duplicate, so the scanned material is always safe with two copies distinct from each other archived in two different servers. Access to such storage will be limited to a certain number of people in connection with the Archives.

4. Legal Basis

The records of the Public Works Department are subject to and therefore relevant to Maltese legislation. It is imperative to note that all the material in hold is government property exclusively managed by the Public Works Department. Such material is important to the department which can avail of the said records in the managing of its projects, both current and future ones. The material created within the said framework must be protected by relevant intellectual property, Freedom of Information and the GDPR legal instruments.

All the material created by the department resources is property of the said structure and therefore its material must be classified as the Department's property and ownership. Then the material will be catalogued for the public's disposition to view and research relevant material. Once projects are closed, they are deemed as historical data. Therefore, they will not be susceptible to any data breach or at risk of technical copyright damages that can ultimately infringe with the department's operations.

As per research, the Department's Legal Office must perform due diligence in lieu of queries concerning land property, state security and critical infrastructure.

5. General Statement of Principles

The Archives is committed to create, keep, and manage its records in a manner that accurately documents the department's projects and works along time. It is committed to maintain its hard and soft copies records in the long-term and to preserve their authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability for future generations. It is as well committed to a culture of openness and access to records wherever possible, in accordance with statutory requirements such as those stated in this policy.

6. Ownership of Records

All records created and received by the Public Works Department are owned by its Archives and not by the individuals or who had created the records. Records should not be removed from its repository or used for any activity or purposes, but solely for internal use, research, and exhibition purposes unless approval otherwise is granted. Leasing of the said material on exception is guided by agreement here within as a separate document. Students, researchers and exhibits must cite the Archives in their works and if any relevant literature will be published, a copy of said work must be presented to the Archives to be kept within its records.

7. Purpose of Records Management

Records management is defined as a field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, distribution, storage, and disposal of records.

Access to records is granted by the Archives Manager in accordance with approved procedures from the administration of the Public Works Department. If the manager finds any difficulty in granting such access for any reason, he/she shall liaise with the current administration to assist accordingly. Records that will be utilised for any research, queries or exhibits must be logged and kept for records information. Identification and preservation of the records which are all deemed worthy is the main fulcrum of the Archives, thus protecting the department's corporate legacy and national heritage.

The Archives must keep in touch with other similar archives both in Malta and overseas. From such communication, the Archives will gain knowledge of experiences, good practices, access

to material and to contribute as part of corporate efforts in the preservation and exploration of the national history and heritage.

8. Responsibilities

Effective records management is a shared responsibility. The Senior Management is responsible for approving and promoting compliance with the records management and procedures, thus supporting the implementation of the Records Management Programme guided by the Archives Strategic Plan and other strategies. The Archives Manager is responsible for delivering the operational activities of the daily running of the repository. Heads of Departments are responsible for the ongoing maintenance, compliance and support of the premises and IT and support services. Record keeping procedures are also another responsibility. The Department's human resources and the public are responsible for creating and maintaining records in accordance with best practices.

9. Implementations

Record keeping in good condition always offer a bigger challenge. All measures currently available must be applied as per several constraints' boundaries for the archives' material to be kept in the best possible condition. Digitalisation, cataloguing and indexing of the material are therefore main pivotal procedures.

10. Procedures

All the Department's human resources, researchers and the public who may contact the Archives for any information, must be aware of this policy and other relevant policies which are currently in place and/or other policies that may be created for the smooth management of the Archives and keeping of the records in its best practices.

The public can visit the premises and search for the material in need. The client can utilise one of the following procedures to make use of this facility:

- (a) An email can be sent requesting the material one is looking for with an explanation on archives.pwd@gov.mt. From the Department's end, an electronic Request for

Information (RFI) form will be sent. Once this form reaches the Archives, it will be vetted, and an approval can be issued.

(b) The client can visit the Archives without prior appointment and can ask for a particular material. Then the client needs to fill the Request for Information (RFI) form.

(c) The client can fill in the form that can be accessed online through this [link](#).

If the request involves private matters, the research cannot be approved before the client provides a proof of ownership of the premises/land involved. The endorsement then will need to be issued by the Department's Legal Officer. The public can also call to fix an appointment before visiting the Archives either on +356 2292 7799 or +356 2292 7251.

11. Human Resources

Only the staff is authorised to handle material and its access rights. Proper training in archiving is a top priority. Trained personnel within the Archives are responsible for ensuring that all material is properly digitized, archived, catalogued, and indexed. The designated staff members are responsible for overseeing the archiving process, archives general management and reply to queries such as data requests and its access.

As for handling material, the staff must do its utmost to preserve the holdings, and movement must be kept in the lowest manner possible. The staff must also be responsible to inspect the material accessed by third parties before they leave the premises. It is important that staff members advise clients on care and conservation of the records.

12. Archives Contributory Fund

An Archives Contributory Fund is established, and its set up is detached from the normal accounts of the Department. The said fund gathers an administration fee from specific clients utilising the Archives. Non-commercial customers such as students and researchers are exempt from paying this administration fee. This money will be deposited in the mentioned fund which in turn will be utilised for training, procurement of new equipment for the Archives itself and for restoration of the Archives' material. The Public Works Department Director General can waive the contribution fees at his discretion.

13. Related Policies:

a. Different repositories, one archive

Although the Department has within its structure different repositories such as historical data and projects data within the technical side, common efforts must be made so that all the department documentations are in one archive. One must be aware that current projects will eventually transform into historical data, forming part of the Department's corporate memory and the national heritage.

b. Leasing of artefacts

Leasing of artefacts must be taken in high critical protection awareness due to their unique and fragile conditions. An administrative fee will be charged which will be deposited in the Archives Contributory Fund. The artefacts leasing is governed by a separate policy in line with this policy and by separate agreements agreed and signed between the Department and the third parties.

14. Conclusion

This policy is to provide definitions, guidelines and governance which are definite. Whilst the Archives are static, they represent a path of movement of tangible material. These artefacts belong to our history and the Public Works Department Archives is committed to preserve and keep them in good conditions as they serve the true proof of history in the making.

Although history cannot be changed, updated methods of preservation and conservation in the digital world are constant. Thus, the pivotal work of this archive is the safety and upkeep of its documents in all possible ways.

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