

Calimera Country Report

**Cultural Applications:
Local Institutions Mediating Electronic Resources**

Sweden

Information on Public Libraries,
Local Museums and Archives



calimera

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Organisation

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Libraries

The Royal Library in Stockholm is the Swedish National Library, one of six libraries with a certain responsibility to collect, preserve and maintain printed objects (books, magazines, papers, brochures) and important manuscripts. The printed material is delivered free of charge from the printing mill or from the publisher.

The Royal Library has among their about 600 employees a lot of experts in different fields, i.e. lawyers, conservators, photographers, all specialized within the library profession.

The main tasks are:

- to preserve and supply printed and other cultural heritage (manuscripts ...)
- to support research and university studies

The Royal Library is formally a central government agency, funded by the Department of Culture and Education.

University Libraries

There are several – a twentieth – university libraries in Sweden. They are governed and funded by the universities, which in their turn are governed by the UHÄ (the Swedish University Administration).

There is a core of six university libraries (Lund, Stockholm, Uppsala, Linköping, Göteborg och Umeå) with at certain responsibility for preservation of printed cultural heritage.

The main tasks for these six university libraries are

- to preserve and supply printed and other cultural heritage (manuscripts ...)
- to support research and university studies

The main task for other university libraries is to support university students and scholars.

Other institutional libraries

There are also a lot of other specialized libraries, with scientific or cultural aims. The Nobel Library is one of these and specialized in literature (fiction, poetry, dramatics)

Public Libraries: Local level

There are public libraries in all 289 municipalities in Sweden. The municipalities are responsible for the public libraries, both in terms of activities and financially. Public libraries are a prime responsibility of local authorities and local authority contributions are decisive for the activities of public libraries.

There are public libraries in all local authority areas and they are the most widespread and well attended of all cultural institutions. The 289 local authorities control in total about 1 460 units. Total opening hours for main libraries are calculated to be up to 12 505 hours a week. Through the libraries, comprehensive outreach and promotion of reading activities are carried out in places of employment, childcare, care institutions, organizations and groups of various kinds.

Public Libraries: Regional level

There are also 20 county or regional libraries, four loan centers and one deposit library, which assist the public libraries with remote loans and book deposits. All libraries are part of a network, which co-operates to give citizens free access to books and information. The county libraries are responsible for coordinating and advising the municipal public libraries in a county. They are in charge of supplementing the need for material in the county; they give advice and information in areas such as competence development and management. They also have special services for children and the social services. Lately the county libraries have been given a more prominent role in the regional development and have been assigned to take part in building the regions competence.

State contribution to the field of public libraries has a long tradition. The task of the state is to support and stimulate public libraries according to cultural policy aims. State funding to public libraries at present aims

- to even out varying standards between different parts of the country/local authorities
- to promote development of new methods and forms of activity.
- increasing the public libraries' possibilities of reaching new groups

Public Libraries: National level

The Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs (Statens kulturråd) is the government authority that is responsible for matters concerning public libraries at national level. The Council follows developments in the cultural field and carries out studies and other tasks on behalf of the government. One important task is to evaluate the government's efforts and provide data on which to base government decisions concerning the cultural budget. Part of the Council's activity is to gather and disseminate information that promotes cultural development. The Council publishes a large amount of material. Reports, papers and statistics in cultural areas are published regularly in the series *Rapport från Statens kulturråd*. A task of the Council is to support and stimulate library activities, among other things to increase the libraries' chances of reaching new groups of library visitors and to develop new methods and forms of operation.

A board appointed by the government runs the Council. In order to guarantee expert knowledge for allocation of grants the board has appointed qualified experts in their fields to its working and reference groups. The secretariat has about 60 employees.

Public library services and facilities

All types of materials are represented in the Swedish libraries. No type is obligatory material. All material may be lent out, free of charge, except reference material.

Public libraries, scientific and specialist libraries are all parts of a national network. They cooperate in order to make specialist literature in various fields available to everybody, regardless of where one lives. There have been cooperative projects going on in some regions, for example to facilitate inter-loan. One of the most important library tasks is information supply. Two new public libraries are integrated with university libraries (Gotland and Härnösand). BIBSAM is the authority under the Royal Library (the Swedish national library) that is responsible for coordinating the university libraries.

Public library Funding

In the year 2000, costs of public libraries to the local authorities amounted to about 2,918 billion SEK, or 328 SEK per inhabitant. Public Libraries themselves mainly provide services, including Internet access, without charge to the end user.

The county libraries are financed both by the state, 30 %, and by the county, 70 %. Most of the county libraries are a part of the county authority. The central subsidies to regional public library activities (subsidy units) for 2001 amount to SEK 36,6 million (including SEK 11,3 million in grants to loan centers and deposit libraries). SEK 2.8 million is earmarked for developing regional library activities and may be applied for by county libraries.

Government subsidies for developing public library activities may be applied for by municipalities (public libraries). The following areas are given priority: new information technology, promotion of reading and outreach activity and establishment of workplace libraries. The grants are allocated on a continuous basis during the year.

During the 2001 budget year the National Council for Cultural Affairs will allocate over one billion SEK in grants to cultural activities of different kinds. Most will go to regional cultural institutions, regional museums, regional and local theatre, dance and music institutions, regional music activities and county libraries under established systems that assume that regional or local principals are responsible for the respective institution. For the three pilot counties, Skåne, Kalmar and Gotland, the respective regional decision-making body allocates these funds.

Projects that may be considered for grants should be of “national interest” and should be able to function as models for others. The projects should be innovative and contain activities that develop new work forms and/or reach new audiences or participating groups. Projects that develop new technology may also be considered. In order to qualify for a grant the applicants should make their own economic contribution as well as receive support from the municipalities and/or county councils concerned. Recurrent arrangements, projects already started and regular activities may not usually be awarded development grants.

Government subsidies for purchasing literature for public and school libraries may be applied for by municipalities. The intention of the grant is to increase the availability of literature for children and young people at public and school libraries. It is also meant to stimulate children's and young people's interest in reading books. The grant should be used for purchasing literature for children and young people. Applications must be submitted by 2 April. The grant totals SEK 25 million.

From 1999 there is an appropriation of SEK 500 000 for grants to municipal libraries for subscriptions to arts' periodicals.

Professional development

Mainly librarians and assistants are employed in the public library sector. Library directors are mostly librarians, but as the local authorities are free to decide they can recruit directors from different professions, especially if the public library is integrated with the cultural and leisure administration. Lots of librarians– and assistant staff too – have new roles. The situation is better described as changing the roles of the staff than opening up the libraries to new professionals.

There are four library and information training programs in Sweden. All of them are part of the university system. The state, the regions or the local authorities have supported several programs for staff training in IT.

Museums

Governmental museums

The most important of the governmental offices concerning cultural heritage is Riksantikvarieämbetet (the main office for cultural heritage). All other governmental museums are guided and Riksantikvarieämbetet inspects the regional museums and authorities.

There are many governmental museums within different fields. Most museums are located in Stockholm and Gothenburg.

Cooperation on national level

Samdok (Swedish acronym for cooperative documentation) is an organization within which Swedish museums cooperates around contemporary documentation and research.

Samdok was founded 1977 and it is built on the idea that Swedish museums better could handle a broad and qualified research concerning our contemporary society and culture were they working together and using a common philosophy. The goal is to provide – now and in the future – deep and reliable knowledge about the Swedish society from all aspects.

Samdoks work has throughout the years from 1977 given a lot of useful results. One has initiated and funded several investigations and analyses of contemporary Sweden. Today more than 80 – financially and organizationally independent – museums cooperate within the Samdok-project.

Regional level

Each county have their County Museum, specialized in the regional cultural heritage. The county museums cooperate with the regional governmental authorities about the protection, documentation and maintenance of cultural heritage in the region.

The regional museums – the County Museums – are partly dependent on grants from the governmental level (The Board for Cultural Affairs). The grants are connected to certain governmental objectives and demands. In this way governmental policies can penetrate and develop the daily work on the regional and the local level.

Local level

The government doesn't operate on the local level. But local authorities, societies and organization can build and handle museums – and there are very many of them.

Organizations

There are some cooperative and professional organizations which handles questions of common interest within the field of museums and cultural heritage. It is the Museiföreningen and ICOM Sweden.

Archives

The Swedish archives are of three main types: Governmental archives, local administration archives, private archives (business archives and archives organized by clubs and societies).

First: The governmental archives, which are organized in two levels.

At the top: The National Archives

The National Archives

The National Archives is one of the oldest government institutions in Sweden, dating back to the Middle Ages and the 16th century. Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna intervened in archival procedures by issuing the chancellery regulations of October 18, 1618, where he laid down the organization of "the old chancellery", i.e. the National Archives, as a separate office within the Royal Chancellery.

Its field of activities was initially restricted to the Royal Chancellery, but starting in the late 19th century the National Archives gradually became more involved with the formation of archives in other central and local state authorities. It did however not become an independent government authority until in 1878.

According to its present instructions, the National Archives is charged with the supervision of all public archives in Sweden. The National Archives exerts influence in all areas of archival processing at central government authorities, and through the Regional Archives it also acts at the regional and local levels.

Since 2003, Director-General Tomas Lidman is the head of the National Archives.

The overall objectives of the Archives Administration are to provide the public with the means of accessing public records, to secure information for judicial and administrative purposes, and to provide documentation for purposes of research.

The National Archives keeps the records of the Swedish Parliament, of the Government and the Ministries, and of the central government authorities and their predecessors. This wealth of accounts, statistics, correspondences, registers of population and taxation, minutes etc. depicts in detail the development of Swedish society through the centuries. The archives also contain maps, plans and drawings.

The reading rooms of the National Archives are open to the general public, and documents can be ordered out free of charge. The National Archives is housed in two different buildings, one in central Stockholm (Marieberg), one in its suburb (Arninge). Both localities have reading rooms and keep thousands of running metres of archives. The National Archives in Arninge also keeps microfiche for purposes of genealogical research. Written inquiries should be directed to the National Archives in Marieberg.

Regional level

The National Archives supervises the Regional Archives, the oldest of which were established around 1900 to keep the records of local and regional state authorities. The Regional Archives are situated in Gothenburg, Härnösand, Lund, Uppsala, Visby, Vadstena and Östersund. The Archives of the City of Stockholm and Värmlandsarkiv in Karlstad perform the functions of Regional Archives in their respective counties of Stockholm and Värmland.

2. Local administration archives

a: The Counties

Every county is responsible for their own archives – more or less sophisticated, depending on community size – which preserves and maintains the documents connected to their administration and documents connected to health care (documents from hospitals and health centres).

b: The local authorities (the municipalities)

All the 289 Swedish local authorities are responsible for their archives, which are more or less sophisticated, depending on community size.

3. Private sector

Preservation of information concerning the popular movements and Civil society organizations

Background

The popular movements has had a very important influence on the evolution / development of the Swedish society. Therefore the Swedish parliament has found it important that the documentation from the popular movements, voluntary organisations and CSO:s should be preserved. In 1973 the Swedish parliament (Riksdag) introduced a system for subsidies or grants to regional archives in the popular movements sector. These grants are nowadays extended to all counties in Sweden.

Sweden has a countrywide net of archives that preserve documents from the popular movements. The organisations have three levels, namely the national level, the regional level or county-level and the local level. We also have archives that correspond to these three levels.

National level

The Archives and Library of the Swedish Labour Movement was founded in 1902. It's the oldest of the popular movements archives and it is organised as a foundation whose principals are the Trade Union Confederation, the Swedish Government and the Swedish Social Democratic Party.

The TAM-archive (1984) keep records from white-collar and professional workers national unions dating from the end of the 19th century to the present.

Some organisations on the national level choose to keep their own archives. The Swedish Sports Confederation is an example of this.

Regional level or county level

We have 22 regional archives for the popular movements in Sweden. Normally these regional archives preserves the information from all kinds of popular movements, voluntary organizations, non-profit and civil society organizations in their county. The regional archive of Popular movements in Värmland has been active for 52 years and is the oldest in the country.

Local level

There are approximately 60-65 archives on the local level preserving the archives from local popular movements organisations. These archives are often founded by the organisations themselves. Some of them keep archives from a broad spectra of organisations, some concentrates on one type of organisation in particular, for example the labour movement, the temperance movement or sports organisations (not so common). Many of these local archives are supported by the local authorities, mainly municipals. These local popular movement archives are often located at the library, in the municipal archive itself or in another organisations office. These local archives have not the state subsidies as that the regional archives gets. These local archives often have to work in a rather tough reality especially regarding economy.

Folkrörelsernas Arkivförbund

Since 1968 there is an national organisation for the Swedish popular movement archives and the popular movement organisations and CSO:s on a national level, called Folkrörelsernas Arkivförbund. Its task is to give support to the national organisations and the popular movement archives. The key-word is education. In order to help their members Arkivförbundet publishes handbooks or manuals in different topics concerning how to deal with archives in a professional way. Furthermore the members are invited to courses and conferences for special knowledge.

3. Business archives

Many important companies have, since centuries back, their own, very professional archives. (Some examples: Stora Enso, SCA, Nordstjernan)

Also the governmental regional archives – i.e. Göteborg – and the local authority archives can – on demand – take care of archives from companies and enterprises.

From the beginning of the 1970ies many companies use different regional societies, which supplies archival premises and competence. The first society of this kind was Värmlands-arkiv, which today preserves documents covering 10 000 shelf-meters.

Policies and Strategic Activities

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The Swedish parliament established goals and guidelines for a national strategy for the new information technology (Riksdag record 1995/96:105). In the programme of action for the next years it was emphasised that education, the legal system and public information must be adapted to the new information technology. Among other things, laws on protection of integrity, electronic document handling, copyright and distance learning must be reviewed.

In spring 1996 the government presented a bill (1995/96:125) on the use of information technology. This mentions the important role of the libraries as regards all citizens' access to information via IT.

This attitude is seen again in the government bill (1996/97:5) on research and society. The government sees the library system, with state, municipal and county council libraries as an interactive resource. Students who participate in distance learning are to have the same right to good library services as other students.

In 1996 the parliament (Riksdag) established seven goals of cultural policy (including public library policy):

- to safeguard freedom of expression and create genuine opportunities for all to use that freedom,
- to work to create the opportunity for all to participate in cultural experiences and to engage in creative activities of their own,
- to promote cultural diversity, artistic renewal and quality, thereby counteracting the negative effects of commercialism,
- to make it possible for culture to be a dynamic, challenging and independent force in society,
- to preserve and use the cultural heritage,
- to promote education, - to promote international cultural exchange and meetings between different cultures within Sweden.

The next government bill concerning the information society (1999/2000:86) does not mention public libraries as a part of the information strategy, but as the earlier documents the stress is on lifelong education and public access to information.

Act on Library Services

Swedish Code of Statutes - SFS 1996:1596

There has been legislation on libraries in Sweden since 1997. The Libraries Act stipulates that there must be a public library in every municipality and that lending in all publicly financed libraries must be free of charge. One of the paragraphs decrees "the public library shall make computerized information available to all citizens".

Unofficial translation

The Libraries Act

The Libraries Act (SFS 1996:1596)

Swedish Code of Statutes - SFS 1996:1596, SFS 2004:1261

Unofficial translation

The Libraries Act

Issued 20 December 1996

In accordance with the decision of the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) the following is enacted.

- Section 1.** This Act contains regulations about library services provided through public agencies.
- Section 2.** In order to promote interest in reading and literature, information, enlightenment and education and also cultural activities generally, every citizen should have access to a public library. The public libraries shall work to ensure that data-based information is made available to all citizens. Every municipality shall have a public library.
- Section 3.** The public shall be able to borrow literature for a specified period from the public libraries free of charge. This provision does not prevent charges being made for expenses of photocopying, postage and other similar services. Neither does it prevent a charge being made in the event of a borrower not returning that which he or she has borrowed within the agreed time.
- Section 4.** There should be a county library in every county. The county library shall support the public libraries in the county with supplementary provision of media and other regional library functions. There shall also be one or more lending centres for the provision of supplementary media.
- Section 5.** Within the nine-year compulsory school and upper secondary school there should be suitably distributed school libraries in order to stimulate the interest of pupils in reading and literature and also to satisfy their needs for material in the education.
- Section 6.** There should be access to university libraries at all universities and university colleges. These libraries shall, within the fields connected with the education and research at the university or University College, be responsible for library services within the university and university College and, in collaboration with the library service in Sweden, generally provide library services.

- Section 7.** The municipalities are responsible for the public and school library operations. The county councils are responsible for the county libraries and for the libraries at universities and university colleges whose principal are the county and municipal county councils. The state is responsible for other university libraries and university college libraries and for the lending centres and also for such library operations, which the state is responsible for according to separate provisions.
- Section 7a.** /Valid from 2005-01-01/ Libraries and library bodies within library services provided through public agencies should cooperate. Municipalities and counties shall adopt plans for library services. (Law 2004:1261)
- Section 8.** The public and school libraries shall afford particular attention to people with disabilities and to immigrants and other minorities by, among other things, offering literature in other languages than Swedish and in forms particularly adapted to the needs of these groups.
- Section 9.** Public and school libraries shall afford special attention to children and young persons by offering books, information technology and other media adapted to their needs in order to promote language development and stimulate reading.
- Section 10.** County libraries, lending centres, university libraries and university college libraries, research libraries and other libraries funded by the state shall provide literature from their own collections free of charge at the disposal of the public libraries and otherwise co-operate with the public and school libraries and support them in their efforts to offer borrowers good library services.

This Act enters into force on 1 January 1997.
On behalf of the Government GÖRAN PERSSON
Marita Ulvskog (Ministry of Culture)

Archives

Law governs the governmental archives. There are many different laws, especially the Freedom of the press Act and the Archives Act from 1990, which are connected to the archives and it would be far too ambitious to print them in this paper.

Some laws, mainly concerning accounting and taxation, also govern company archives.

The aims of The National Archives (Riksarkivet) are amongst other things to:

-- Unauthorized and limping translation! --

- promote an increased understanding and interest in archives as a source of information and knowledge and to give a perspective of the development of the society and human conditions. More and new groups of users shall be reached.
- promote a development of a society, which is characterized by equality between women and men, respect and tolerance and where ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious multitude is made use of as a positive power and to make a contribution to a decrease in discrimination, xenophobia and racism. The National Archives shall direct a certain focus to the significance of cultural heritage for a democratic development of society.

Public Library Statistics 2002

No of administrative units		290
No of service points		1406
Collections	Books and periodicals	43,839,565
	Audio-visual documents	2 810 281
	Total collections	46,649,846
Additions 2002		2,130,050
Facilities and services	Free access documents	100%
	Total number of computers	5,388
	Total number of computers connected to Internet	3,292
Use and users	Population in Sweden	8,940,788
	Borrowing transactions	77,104,359
	No of visits to libraries	69,887,879
Library staff	Librarians	2,453
	Administrative staff	2,545
	Total staff	4,998
Current expenditure	Staff costs	180,744 euro
	Acquisitions expenses	44,236 euro
	Other expenses	124,290 euro
	Total expenses	349,270 euro

Museums (2003)

No of visits	16 300 000
No of visits by schools	1 500 000
Guided tours	75 000
City walks	1 800
Exhibitions	2 000
Total costs	363 000 000 euro

The National and Regional Archives Statistics		
Total cost 2004		47,6 millions euro
Number of offices under supervision of RA		896
Inspections and controls		434
Support to other archives (visits)		408
Training of other archives staff		75
Questions from state authorities		1,413
Written instructions		103
Archives (stock)	Paper	581,158 shelf meters
	Military publications	2,928 shelf meters
	Maps and drawings	1,953 045 units
	Microfilms	67,236 rolls (security copies)
Customer visits (research ...)		113,019
Delivered volumes		131,442
Microfiche for use		4,115 509
Microfiche sold		195,682
Microfiche rented		148,944
Web-visits		1,722,822

This section is intended to provide general information and evidence of the way in which the use of ICT is affecting the development of services provided by public libraries, local museums and local archives and details of any barriers or problems, which inhibit this

The Riksdag has established goals and guidelines for a national strategy for the new information technology. In the program of action for the next few years it is emphasized that education, the legal system and public information must be adapted to the new information technology.

Awarding grants to development projects for libraries is one of the tasks of the National Council for Cultural Affairs. The intention of the grants is to stimulate the libraries into developing methods and trying out new activities, such as new information technology. According to the criteria, the projects are to be generally applicable, so that other libraries can utilize the experiences. The projects may not be such that they could be assumed to lie within the scope of the municipalities' normal responsibility for library activities. Many projects with IT associations have been granted subsidies in the last ten years. They have covered such things as IT education and further training of library personnel, making IT interesting to target groups who are unused to computers, multimedia for children and young people, CD-ROM at libraries, development of local computer systems, regional information provision etc.

Several of the grants made by the National Council for Cultural Affairs to regional library activities have also been used to support IT projects, which have thus benefited whole regions. The grants, which are relatively large, have sometimes gone to projects, which have been going on for several years. The National Council for Cultural Affairs has thus given strategic support to development of information technology in libraries. Funds have been used, for example, for IT training and skills development, computerization of library buses, for testing CD ROM products' usability in libraries.

Internet is available to staff and users at almost all public libraries. According to the most recent statistics only two public libraries did not have computers for Internet neither for the staff nor for the public. Most of the local libraries have their own homepages or are a part of the local authorities' homepages. Local applications exist, such as children's book selectors. Several regions have local geography and history articles and books in a local database.

Some libraries have very good net-guides (Mölnadal, Ronneby), literary reviews (Malmö, Umeå, Luleå). The Cultural Net and run by some libraries in co-operation host an ask-the-librarian service. The Children's Library on the Net is run by a regional library but mainly supported by the state. The LIBRIS homepage is also a common resource for public libraries.

Some libraries have computer projects for the disabled. Those with defective vision can obtain information via large-print computers. A number of public libraries help customers in the use of Internet (school-children, elderly people etc.). No survey about this is available. Special instruction and special courses for groups not used to computers, such as pensioners, are generally available at libraries. All educational services are free of charge.

Co-operation with various interested parties/producers of public information is becoming more and more common. It may be a matter of co-operation with the employment office; via computers, job profiles and information about vacant jobs can be retrieved. Young people can obtain information about work and studies in Europe. Municipal decisions can be made public on line.

A national consortium (KULDA) for purchasing electronic licenses has recently been founded with support from the state. The Regional Library of Västra Götaland hosts the consortium. There are no consortia at regional level, but in some regions the regional libraries have paid for the use of the licenses in the whole region. 60 % of public library systems have automated their functions.

SUNET (the Swedish University Computer Network) began in the mid-1980s. On SUNET Swedish research libraries have had access to a high-speed network. In autumn 1996, the government decided to make SUNET available to all Swedish public libraries and county museums. By this decision, all local authority central libraries and county museums (there are 24) were to be offered a fast connection of at least 2Mbits/s. The state would meet the cost for the first two years. After that the condition was that the respective users should meet the costs over the three next years. After this period all regional libraries have access to SUNET and 140 (out of 289) public libraries.

The Swedish Royal Library is given the task of developing and running LIBRIS, which is one of the Swedish computerized library services for cataloguing, information searches, and interloan. LIBRIS came into existence as a union catalogue for Swedish research libraries. The public libraries were taken care of by BTJ (Bibliotekstjänst AB), which created a catalogue of its own, BURK, in which Swedish public libraries were to be included. In 1997 LIBRIS became available on the Internet.

The same year, the Swedish government gave LIBRIS the task of trying to create a common search system on the two databases, LIBRIS and BURK. The aim was to strengthen the national library system by making co-operation easier between state, county and local authority libraries. The general public, students and others were to have improved opportunities to take advantage of public-sector libraries' collected holdings. It has taken time to agree how the work is to be carried out, but since one month the two catalogues can be found at the same address www.bibliotek.se. The Z39.50 protocol is used.

The two systems are co-operating as to

- carry out searches free in LIBRIS and BURK through a common interface on the Internet;
- create a combined list of results so that duplication can be eliminated and the information on holdings sorted; and
- use the result of the combined search on the new, central, Web-based interloan system

Digitization

There is no national policy on digitization. Within the ongoing co-operation between archives, libraries and museums (ABM) there have been some digitization projects. The Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs has supported some digitization projects, one of the in cooperation with the north of Finland (Bothnica).

The most important initiative in this field is connected to a relatively new joint activity called ABM-centrum (MLA-center) hosted by the National Library (KB) in Stockholm.

Right now

For the moment there are activities and policymaking all over the country. But the initiatives come from the bottom – from the local areas and institutions. Most often the county libraries, but very often also museums and archives – are the spiders in the web. An intense debate is running within the MLA-field. The roles of the museums in the new landscape (media, information technology, multi-ethnic population) are scrutinized, the libraries are under the looking-glass and the growth of archives put forward a lot of difficult questions.

Work is in progress but it is hard to make a good summary valid for the nation as a whole.

Key Standards and Guidelines[Back to Contents](#)

Sweden takes very active part in the standardization for libraries (SC8/TC 46 and subcommittees) through The Royal Library and The Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs and for archives through The National Archives (especially for access and preservation of electronic information).

**Joint activities between
Libraries, Museums and Archives**[Back to Contents](#)

The most important joint activity progressing in Sweden right now is the ABM (MLA) center in Stockholm.

In a joint initiative of the Royal Library, National Library of Sweden, Nationalmuseum, the National Heritage Board, the Swedish National Archives and the Council for Cultural Affairs, a new secretariat "ABM-centrum" was established on 1 April 2004. The chief objective of the secretariat is to promote understanding and collaboration between archives, libraries and museums (ALM-institutions, or, in Swedish, "ABM"-institutions) and professionals. Emphasis is placed on stimulating the development of harmonised digitisation strategies and methodologies. Pending commitment from the Swedish government (the Ministries of Culture and Education, respectively) the activities of ABM-centrum will continue in project form until financial support enables making the organisation permanent.

The secretariat is housed at the Royal Library, National Library of Sweden.

An overview of ABM-centrum's objectives:

- to promote understanding and collaboration between archives, libraries and museums
- to stimulate and develop collaboration in digitisation between cultural institutions in Sweden
- to promote the use of new technology in providing greater access to collections
- to contribute to and promote skills development activities across institutional boundaries

Tasks:

- to monitor development in Sweden and internationally with regard to digitisation issues
- to disseminate "best practices" and new methods
- to organise collaborative efforts regarding quality and standards as well as within each phase of the digitisation process ie. project planning, selection criteria, preparation and postproduction treatment of the objects, image capture, registration and indexing, storage and media selection, and both short and long term accessibility
- to arrange educational sessions (meetings, seminars, guest lectures) on digitisation issues for professionals in the ALM-sector
- to create and maintain contacts and a network between central authoritative agencies and local authoritative agencies
- to stimulate and initiate concrete projects and maintain contact with project management
- to draft supportive documents which may serve as basis for national strategy and policy on digitisation
- to develop the Web site at <http://abm-centrum.se> as a support tool and information resource

Regional level

In the regions (counties) there are many examples of joint activities, one of the best known is ABM (MLA) Resource in Västernorrland. Also Värmland and other counties have taken some steps to promote a more structured MLA-cooperation.

Research

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The project LDB (persistent digital conservation), run by the National Archives, the Technical University of Luleå, the municipality of Boden and the National Insurance Office, is a new organization to build a national center for promoting competence and know-how within digitization of cultural heritage.

Also the National Archives in Stockholm has a research department. Much of the work and the development of methods and standards is done in cooperation with the MINERVA-project