PART 1

Introduction to the *Records Management Roadmap*

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WHAT IS THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT ROADMAP?

The *Records Management Roadmap* is a multi-part toolkit, designed to help governments and public-sector organizations implement strategic and coordinated improvements in records management.

The primary audience for this *Roadmap* is governments, organizations, or other agencies around the world that wish to develop and improve the management of their organizational records or other sources of documentary evidence.

The *Roadmap* is a self-contained resource, including instructional information and guidance, assessment tools, explanations of terms and concepts, and resource materials, to allow organizations to evaluate their own records management needs and priorities and identify priorities for action.

In **Part 1: *Introduction,*** we explain the purpose and structure of the *Roadmap,* discuss the intended audience for the tools, and offer suggestions for how you can use this tool to support records management for your own organization.

WHAT IS RECORDS MANAGEMENT?

Records management is the process of creating, storing, using, preserving, and disposing of records and other sources of evidence so that they serve as authentic and reliable proof for as long as they are needed. Records management

- improves effectiveness and efficiency
- upholds accountability and transparency
- protects rights and responsibilities
- promotes good governance and development
- provides the evidential basis for collective memories.

People often perceive of records management as a narrow speciality: work performed by a designated records manager, not relevant to others in the organization. Other people see records as a "problem" to be "solved" by technology. Both perspectives are common. Neither is accurate.

Records management is a collaborative effort. Good records management involves everyone across an organization, who work together to create and keep records and other sources of evidence as authentic sources of proof. Records are important to sharing information, documenting decisions, confirming actions, and helping everyone succeed in achieving the organization's mission and goals.

By working together, everyone in an organization can help manage and protect the **records and evidence** they create as part of their work: from a physical document such as a report or memo, to an electronic record such as an email or spreadsheet, to a collection of digital data such as the names and addresses in a client database.

WHY IS RECORDS MANAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

What happens if we do not manage records and evidence? What happens if records are not protected as authentic proof? Without records and evidence, organizations cannot operate efficiently and effectively. Citizens cannot access proof of decisions and actions made on their behalf. Governments cannot demonstrate their commitment to accountability and transparency.

When we purchase a vehicle, we need to maintain it. If not, we lose the investment we made. Our vehicle starts to break down. It will not start when we need it. When it does run, it may not be safe. The engine may seize up if the oil and water are not checked. The tires may go flat if a puncture has not been repaired. The body may rust if we do not clean off the dirt and mud. We place ourselves and our passengers at risk if we do not keep our vehicle in good condition.

But if we do maintain our vehicle, whether it is a car or a motor scooter or a bicycle, it could serve us well for decades. We can use it to travel to and from the office, to bring our children to school, to transport supplies and food home from the shop. Someday, we may discover the vehicle has lasted long enough to become "vintage"! That happy outcome is only possible, though, if we care for that vehicle from the day we acquire it.

The same is true for records. Acting efficiently and effectively from the moment a record is created – or before! – helps everyone in the organization create and preserve authentic and reliable sources of evidence for as long as needed. Money is saved, time is well spent, and people's rights are protected. There is no "downside" to a records management program, if it has been designed effectively, supported adequately, and maintained consistently.

Records management is even more important in the 21st century. Governments and organizations around the world are struggling not only to care for traditional paper or analog records but also to manage electronic records effectively. Today, records management is really "evidence management," because documentary evidence can take so many different forms.

Evidence can refer to any form of recorded information that serve as an objective representation of actions, transactions, decisions, opinions, or ideas. Evidence can include

> **Paper-based textual records**: physical pieces of paper, such as handwritten or typed reports, memos, or letters.
>
> **Analog and multi-media records:** audiovisual or multi-media records created using non-digital technologies, such as audiocassette tape recordings, videos or films, or phonographs or other recordings.
>
> **Electronic records:** records or data sources that can be stored, transmitted, or processed by computers or other digital equipment.

In some cultures, documentary evidence can also include oral traditions, songs, stories, carvings, and many other forms. Our focus in this *Roadmap* is specifically on the types of documentary evidence

defined above: paper-based textual records, analog and multi-media records, and electronic records. (We generally refer to these different forms of record in two groups: paper/analog in one group and electronic in another.) Managing these different types of evidence is increasingly complicated as technologies change. But *not* managing these sources of proof is a much greater threat. Without records and other sources of evidence, organizations cannot uphold rights, fulfil responsibilities, or document their actions, transactions, or decisions.

Records matter. No matter their form.

WHY SHOULD YOU USE THE ROADMAP?

This *Roadmap* aims to help your organization plan and design an effective records management program, one that your organization can support and maintain over time. The several parts that make up this *Roadmap* form a package – a "toolkit" – that helps organizations

- assess the strengths, gaps, and weaknesses in current records management practices
- set targets for change and improvement in those practices
- plan strategic actions to enhance operations
- identify best-practice resources
- achieve continuous improvements over time.

WHAT DOES THE ROADMAP INCLUDE?

The *Records Management Roadmap* contains eight parts:

Part 1: This **introduction,** which explains the purpose and scope of the *Roadmap.*

Part 2: A **map** illustrating all the destinations and milestones in the *Roadmap.*

Part 3: An **overview** of key records management principles and practices, which provides a conceptual framework for the assessment tool.

Part 4: The records management **assessment** tool, to help the organization determine its strengths and weaknesses in records management.

Part 5: An **assessment checklist,** to confirm the organization's levels of progress for the different destinations and milestones identified in the assessment.

Part 6: A list of **outputs** (documentary products) that the organization might develop to support improvements in its records management operations.

Part 7: A list of **resources** to help the organization locate best-practice examples and guidance in records management planning and development.

Part 8: A **glossary** of key records management terms used in the *Roadmap.*

WHO IS THE ROADMAP FOR?

This *Roadmap* has been developed by records management specialists at the World Bank Group, with the help of specialist consultants and advisors, primarily to support governments and public-sector organizations. We have emphasized the value of records management for accountability, transparency, efficiency, and economy, which are central aspirations for public agencies around the world.

While our primary audience includes public-sector agencies, we believe that the *Records Management Roadmap* is useful for any type of organization, anywhere. Effective and accountable records management is important in the private world as much as the public, and we hope that the *Roadmap* will prove useful for anyone who needs advice and guidance to support the care of records and evidence as sources of authentic and reliable proof.

The World Bank Group developed the following criteria to guide our development of the *Roadmap.*

- The primary audience is the **public sector:** governments or organizations that provide publicly accountable services to their citizens and communities. Businesses or private-sector organizations may find the information useful, however.
- The audience is **international:** even though the toolkit and primary resources are in English, we have made every effort to make the *Roadmap* useful in different environments around the world.
- The *Roadmap* may be used at **multiple levels:** it may be used to support a whole-of-government assessment of records management, or it may be used by officials in ministries, departments, or business units to determine records management capacity within their own offices.
- The primary users of the tool are **line officers:** officials who create, manage, and use records as part of their daily duties. Records managers or staff in Archives and Records Management Departments may find the tool useful, but the *Roadmap* has not been designed for use by records management professionals.

To ensure the *Roadmap* meets the needs of a variety of audiences, we have used the term "organization" to refer to all levels and types of government, agency, department, public-sector entity, or other unit of business, particularly but not only within a public sector environment. The term is generic, and we do not intend it to exclude any specific type of administrative unit.

We also use the terms "officials" and "staff" throughout, but we apply those terms broadly. The teams you develop to work through the *Roadmap* may include permanent employees, contractors, consultants, students, interns, and others in your organization, in both paid and unpaid positions.

Anyone responsible for creating and managing records for any organization should participate in the care of those records. We have designed this *Roadmap* to support and encourage this sense of collective responsibility.

HOW IS THE ROADMAP ORGANIZED?

The *Roadmap* is a strategic planning tool. We have identified key goals (destinations) and objectives (milestones) that all organizations should address to strengthen their management of records and evidence. We have adopted the analogy of a journey, which we believe suits records management planning well. Every government or organization will identify different records management goals and objectives – different destinations and milestones – depending on current needs and conditions.

Some organizations may urgently need to improve the management of current records, as filing cabinets and computer storage devices fill up with unidentified and inaccessible documents. Other organizations may want to fill gaps in their policy framework: new government legislation may require a different interpretation of records and evidence. Yet other organizations may be struggling to manage paper records. Yet others may need help integrating electronic records management into daily operations. Rather than assume every organization will follow the same path, this *Roadmap* helps organizations choose the right path for them. The *Roadmap* is flexible, allowing users to identify and address their own priorities.

In this way, the *Roadmap* helps you plan a journey. To get from A to B safely, you need a vehicle in good condition, a safe and accessible roadway, and maps that outline the best route to take. But the vehicle, road, and map will all differ depending on the circumstances – on where you want to go and why.

In keeping with the transportation theme, therefore, the *Roadmap* includes destinations, milestones, and levels of progress, as well as team members and recommended outputs. These different elements are coded using the symbols below.

Destinations = ideal goals or results for your organization to achieve to help you determine where you want to go and how to get there, to establish and maintain effective and accountable records management.

Milestones = the primary objectives your organization can address to help you move closer to your destination; the assessment questions and guidance will help you determine whether you have reached the milestones for each destination. (Milestones are *outcomes;* the actual products are *outputs.)*

Levels of progress = your organization's current level of capacity or success in achieving the milestones and thus reaching the destination; levels of progress are shown using variations on the red, yellow, and green colors of traffic lights.

Team members = suggestions for specialists or staff members who might work together to research a milestone and help develop strategies for action.

Outputs = a list of documentary products that your organization might create as you work to accomplish the actions recommended for a milestone.

WHAT ARE THE ROADMAP *DESTINATIONS?*

The *Roadmap* includes seven records management **destinations** or goals, linked to records management priorities, as listed below. In the ideal world, every organization should reach these destinations eventually. (The overview map in **Part 2** summarizes the destinations and milestones.)

Destinations

	Destination 1:	Our organization recognizes the value of managing records effectively.
	Destination 2:	Our organization's records management program is managed strategically.
	Destination 3:	Our organization commits sufficient resources to support records management.
	Destination 4:	Our organization recognizes the link between records and information technology.
	Destination 5:	Our organization manages records effectively and accountably.
	Destination 6:	Our organization provides appropriate access to records.
	Destination 7:	Our organization stores records appropriately and disposes of them regularly.

In keeping with the transportation theme, these destinations focus on a good outcome – driving safely from Point A to Point B – not on perfection – winning a Formula One race.

Reaching these destinations is never easy, and the journey is rarely quick. And in the end, there is no "perfect" records management environment. The guidance provided for each destination is structured to help you determine strategic actions you can take to help you achieve success with these goals.

WHAT ARE THE MILESTONES?

Within each destination are several **milestones.** These milestones represent specific objectives or outcomes your organization can achieve to help you reach the desired destination.

For example, below are the milestones for **Destination 1: Our organization recognizes the value of managing records effectively.**

Sample Milestones

	Milestone 1:	Our organization is **aware of the value** of records management for organizational success.
	Milestone 2:	**Senior managers** actively **support** records management.
	Milestone 3:	Our organization links records management with **legal, regulatory, and policy requirements.**
	Milestone 4:	Our organization works with **allied agencies** to support a coordinated approach records management.

For each milestone, the *Roadmap* presents a series of statements. Your organization can review each statement to determine your level of progress toward that milestone. Tracking your organization's levels of progress with each milestone, you will end up with an overview – a map! – of your current capacity for records management. You can then use the guidance and resources to determine what actions to take to increase capacity. Again, success is not easy, but the guidance and resources provided for each milestone will help you plan how to move forward strategically.

WHAT ARE THE LEVELS OF PROGRESS?

The different **levels of progress** help you measure where your organization is on the path to the desired destination, as explained in the chart below. Assessing your levels of progress allows you to analyze your current capacity for records and evidence management.

If you find your organization "between levels," we recommend you select the lower level rather than the higher. That way, you will benefit from more of the guidance and support offered for that milestone. You can always move ahead more quickly as your capacity increases. (We have also included an "In Progress" level in the checklist in **Part 5**, so you can keep track of the milestones you are still assessing.)

Levels of Progress

UNMANAGED	The organization is unaware of records management needs in general and/ or in relation to its activities. The **unmanaged level** applies when the organization's responses show a lack of awareness of the issue.	Red signals STOP, DANGER, BEWARE. At this level, you should review the feedback provided in the assessment to determine key changes you can make.
EMERGING	The organization is aware of records management needs in relation to its activities. An organization at the **emerging level** may be aware of records management needs but may not have taken concrete actions to implement initiatives, or the organization may have carried out selected informal activities only.	
DEFINED	The organization has planned and/ or implemented actions to address records management needs. An organization at the **defined level** may have planned and/or implemented actions to address or improve the creation, management, or care of records, but these actions may have been implemented in an ad hoc manner, not fully or consistently.	Yellow represents a reasonable level of progress. At this level, you are progressing well, but you can take more action.
MANAGED	The organization has implemented various records management initiatives. An organization at the **managed level** will have carried out various initiatives, whether organization wide or department specific, according to reasonable and measurable standards.	Green signals good progress toward the destination. At this level, you have established a strong records management program, though more improvements are always possible.
PROACTIVE	The organization is committed to records management. An organization at the **proactive level** has taken consistent actions, in a planned and measured way, to address the issue in question; demonstrates a commitment to achieving consistent, standards-based records management; and takes innovative action to monitor, review, and improve on practices.	
NOT RELEVANT	The statement **does not relate** to the organization.	The **not relevant** category rarely applies.

HOW DO YOU USE THE ASSESSMENT?

By working through each milestone for each destination in the *Roadmap,* your organization can determine which statement best reflects your current situation. You can then decide what actions to take, and what outputs to produce, to improve your level of progress for that milestone and destination.

We think that organizations would benefit from following the destinations in the order in which we present them. That order starts with the conceptual and policy framework for records management and then follows the process through the records life cycle. But the *Roadmap* is designed to allow users to start with the destination that best addresses their current priorities, as illustrated in these examples.

- Your organization's current priority may be to ensure all staff create records that are authoritative and reliable. You may want to start with **Destination 5.**
- Your ministry may have announced a plan to purchase new computers, and you need to develop processes to manage electronic evidence and records effectively. You may want to work through the milestones for **Destination 4.**
- Your department may be participating in a government-wide strategic planning exercise that includes changes to the creation and management of records. You may want to begin by addressing the issues outlined in **Destination 2.**

No matter what approach you take to the assessment, we encourage you to work through all the destinations within a reasonable time. And we hope you will revisit milestones and destinations regularly, to reassess operations and seek continuous improvements. The *Roadmap* is designed to help you develop your own strategic plan, which should always be reviewed and revised periodically. We hope you will review your records management program periodically, perhaps every 3-5 years, to assess your progress and determine new priorities.

SHOULD YOU WORK AS A TEAM?

Absolutely! Race car drivers do not win races by themselves. They are part of a team, which may include drivers, navigators, mechanics, and others. Records management success also depends on teamwork and collaboration. The *Roadmap* supports a team-based approach to planning and action.

We recommend you start with a core team: who should become your key records management specialists in the organization? These people may not be records management professionals, but they may carry out duties that involve creating and managing records and evidence. They may be just the right people to take on records management duties. Involving them from the start will help them develop the skills and knowledge they need to become leaders in the future.

After you identify a core team, we recommend that you bring together key people to help with different milestones. For example, when you assess financial resources for records care (for **Destination 3, Milestone 1**) you may want to seek advice from budget officers, accountants, and financial planners. When you determine information technology needs for records management (for **Destination 4, Milestone 2**) you might want to include information technology specialists and managers in charge of decisions about equipment and technology.

This variety in the composition of teams is a strength of the *Roadmap.* Addressing different destinations and milestones allows you to involve people across the organization in records management planning when their expertise is needed. They help with records management planning, and they learn more about the value of records and evidence. Everyone benefits!

We have included suggestions for possible team members for each milestone. Of course, as with all effective projects, we recommend that you identify one person or group to oversee progress with the milestone and to track all actions and decisions.

HOW DO YOU TRACK YOUR PROGRESS?

Part 4 of the *Roadmap* contains the assessment tool. **Part 5** is the assessment checklist, which you can use to track your decisions for each milestone. Recording your organization's level of progress for all milestones and destinations allows you to assess your organization's current records management capacity. This information will help you identify priorities for change.

We urge you not just to tick off the boxes on the assessment checklist. We hope you use the assessment as an opportunity to learn more about your organization's strengths and weaknesses in records management. Just as mechanics keep logbooks of car repairs, and navigators track the progress of their journey on maps, you will benefit from tracking your research for each milestone and destination. Creating your own "logbook and map" of progress through the *Roadmap* will also leave you with a consolidated resource – an ever-growing knowledge base.

WHAT OUTPUTS DO YOU CREATE?

The *Roadmap* focuses on *outcomes,* not *outputs.* If the goal (the destination) is managing records effectively and accountably, then a key objective (milestone) would be to identify and organize records. The two outcomes for that milestone would be (1) that records are identified and (2) that records are organized. The outputs might be a records inventory – which identifies records and achieves the first outcome – and a classification scheme – which helps organize records and achieves the second outcome. But we do not want to focus only on outputs.

Every organization will create different documentary products to meet its own needs: one organization might create a paper-based inventory; another might capture information in a spreadsheet. We do not want to dictate the precise nature of the product but instead encourage your organization to take steps to achieve the desired result.

Still, it helps to know which types of output to prioritize, and to see examples of different products. To help you succeed with the outcomes (milestones), we have included suggestions for different outputs for each milestone, such as reports, briefing notes, training materials, and strategic plans or business cases. We have consolidated those suggestions in a list of recommended outputs in **Part 6.** (Remember, several outputs will be useful for different destinations. For example, an inventory of records and evidence is useful for documenting the existence of records, for **Destination 5,** but it is also useful for tracking the location of records – important for **Destination 3** – or identifying different information technologies – important for **Destination 4.**)

HOW DO YOU USE THE RESOURCES?

The citations in **Part 7** of the *Roadmap* will lead you to examples, websites, training materials, and other resources. It is impossible to include all resources on a topic, so we have selected resources that we think offer a useful starting point for non-professionals.

We see the resources as a records management equivalent to maps. A large-scale map, at 1:100,000 km scale, will help you travel from one side of a country to another. But as you close in on your destination, you may need a more detailed map – at 1:1,000 km scale, say.

The resources in this *Roadmap* are similar. They will help your organization move away from the danger zones of UNMANAGED or EMERGING levels of progress. But as your organization moves closer to the safer zones of DEFINED, MANAGED, or PROACTIVE, you will need more specific guidance than we can provide here. You may, for instance, need help from professional associations or consultants, or you may need to hire qualified records managers yourself. We have included links in **Part 7** to help you identify where you can go to find that help.

HOW FAST SHOULD YOU GO?

The *Roadmap* helps your organization go on a journey, but it is not a race! We encourage every organization using this toolkit to take as much time as they need to move through the milestones and destinations in a way that suits their own situation.

You can pause the assessment at any time. You may find it useful to do some research or seek advice from expert advisors before proceeding, or you may choose to focus entirely on one destination before considering others. We hope you will review the entire Roadmap first to determine your top priorities, and we encourage you to o revisit the *Roadmap* regularly, as part of a formal strategic planning process, to reassess your levels of progress and determine new priorities. The ultimate goal? Reaching the PROACTIVE level of progress in all destinations and becoming a records management leader!

READY TO START YOUR JOURNEY

Before you set off, please review the overview map (**Part 2**) and then read **Part 3:** an overview of records management principles and practices. This short but important section introduces key records management terms and concepts and outlines the central qualities of an effective, efficient, accountable, and transparent records management program. Think of the overview as the records management equivalent of an orientation manual for drivers.

Of course, the overview will not answer all your questions about records management. Records management is its own area of expertise, and records professionals spend years learning the principles and practices associated with managing records and evidence. Much of that learning is embedded in this *Roadmap.* All of us at the World Bank Group hopes you find the guidance and resources useful and inspirational as you plan your own records management journey!