

# ISSN INTERNATIONAL CENTRE ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2018

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



2018 was a productive year with significant achievements in alignment with the [2015-2018 Strategy](#) approved by the ISSN IC Governing Board and the ISSN IC Member States four years prior. In the lifespan of a serial publication, from creation to conservation, a key identifier such as the ISSN is crucial in disseminating information on the Internet. The aim of the ISSN IC is to give ISSNs better visibility and encourage its reuse by publishers, librarians, content providers, abstracting and indexing services and other stakeholders.

The ISSN IC tools, policies, services and training offers have made great headways. This year brought the opening of the new ISSN portal, the hosting of the new Transfer service, the signature of the Registration Authority Agreement with ISO, and the evolution of ISSN IC sales policy regarding the ISSN Register and ISSN assignments.

The 2015-2018 Strategy sets out 6 strategic goals of the ISSN International Centre, and progress towards these goals in 2018 was the following:

**Goal 1: improve the operations of the ISSN Network** by supporting existing ISSN National Centers through communication, advising and training.

Regional training and information sessions in 2018 have been instrumental in increasing cooperation and direct interactions between representatives of member states. This program will carry on in 2019.

The new ISSN International Centre Governing Board, elected in 2018 for a two-year mandate, is more diverse thanks in part to travel grants to encourage participation from more Member States. It now comprises four representatives of European member states, and two representatives each from Latin American, African and North American Member States.

Inclusiveness is also achieved by providing online information in the six official languages of the United Nations. The official website of the ISSN IC is already available in six languages. The interface of the new ISSN portal and extranet has been translated into French and Spanish. Arabic, Chinese and Russian portal interfaces will be implemented in 2019.

**Goal 2: enhance its data, products and services** and consequently better promote the ISSN brand.

The ISSN IC has been working with several ISSN National Centres and organisations to jointly amend incorrect records which were not visible in the online ISSN Register, notably with ISSN Algeria, IDICT Cuba, ISSN Egypt, ISSN Mexico, ISSN Morocco, ISSN Nigeria, ISSN Turkey, and ISSN Venezuela.

International standardization was another important topic in 2018 with the continued revision of the ISO 3297 standard and cooperation with RSC/RDA on the issue of bibliographic processing of serial publications.

The adherence to international standards promoted notably by ISO, IFLA, RSC/RDA and the contribution to the development of these standards are crucial for the ISSN IC and the ISSN Network which are acknowledged as centers of expertise for the identification and description of serials and continuing resources.

The revision of the ISSN standard within the ISO TC46/SC9/WG5 started in September 2017. The ISSN IC signed its new Registration Authority Agreement with ISO in October 2018 and this move will allow for a quick publication of the ISSN standard when the Final Draft International Standard (FDIS) is eventually approved by ISO ballot in 2019.

Another significant achievement was the ISSN Network's contribution to the RSC Aggregates Working Group to improve the bibliographic treatment of serials in RDA.

**Goal 3: enhance the ISSN International Centre's IT infrastructure.**

The opening of the new ISSN portal in January 2018 is the result of a one-and-a-half year IT design and agile software development project. Although much has been accomplished, the project aiming at

replacing Virtua by a full-web and up-to-date system is still before us with a provisional deadline set to April 2020.

This is also a major step in the upgrading of ISSN IC services that should be pursued in the coming years. Thanks to the portal, new partnerships can be explored with complementary services in the field of information management.

#### **Goal 4: Setting up new Partnerships**

In 2018, the partnership with the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) was renewed.

9,000 new ISSN records describing Open Access (OA) resources were added to ROAD in 2018 alone. To ensure the quality of these records we relied on the expertise of Internet Archive. They conducted a study for the ISSN International Centre regarding the validity of URLs in ROAD records. Based on the information Internet Archive provided, the ISSN IC plans to amend ROAD metadata by adding an internal field that automatically and regularly checks publications' web addresses.

Additionally, the ISSN IC, with the support of NISO Transfer Group, started hosting the new Enhanced Transfer Alerting Service (ETAS) (<https://journaltransfer.issn.org>) as from September 2018. This cooperation will continue in 2019 with regular meetings and a project to standardize Transfer publishers' denominations.

#### **Goal 5: Improving ISSN International Centre's governance and awareness**

The Governors are regularly updated on ISSN IC activities through interim reports and the annual report, which is also published online in a new layout and sent to ISSN National Centres and their host institutions.

The 2018 international marketing campaign was instrumental in the promotion of the new ISSN services with presentations delivered at conferences and fairs across three continents. Several advertisements were published in professional journals to raise awareness on the new ISSN portal. The ISSN IC Director delivered presentations in French, English and Spanish about predatory publishing, document identification, and electronic journals at several academic seminars.

**Goal 6: to share ISSN data with a wider community** while earning sufficient revenues to support and develop products and services.

ISSN IC governing bodies decided in 2016 to have the ISSN International Centre expose part of ISSN data as linked open data, implement a Customer Relationship Management tool and a new ISSN portal, and develop packages of enhanced services using ISSN data. In January 2018, a first version of the new portal and extranet was released, and additional functionalities were released later in 2018.

This important evolution of the ISSN IC's service offer has been supported by the ISSN IC team who organized several training sessions in 2018 for ISSN National Centres, ISSN users and publishers. Presentations were recorded and made available on the ISSN community extranet. A few were also published on Slideshare.

Moreover, these new services were presented at various professional events throughout 2018 and the feedback from professionals was very positive. ISSN IC customers renewed their subscriptions in 2018 and publishers located in countries without any ISSN National Centre started registering on the Publishers' Extranet to request ISSN assignments. ISSN National Centres were accustomed to the former ISSN portal based on VTLIS Virtua software implemented in 2004 but in 2018, they became more familiar with the new portal and started using it as part of their daily metadata creation routine.

With progress being made on our strategic goals in 2018, the ISSN International Centre is already working on the development of its 2020-2024 Strategy, on the agenda for the April 2019 Governing Board meeting and to be submitted to the General Assembly of Member States in April 2020.