



Evaluation of the Flemish Institute for Archiving 2012-2014

Management summary

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Background, objectives and evaluation approach

The Flemish Institute for Archiving or VIAA¹ digitises, stores and provides access to audiovisual material, photos, documents, etc., together with partners from the cultural, heritage and media sectors. The report about the evaluation of VIAA² presents the results of the evaluation of VIAA's added value in the period 2012/2013 to 2014, including the way in which VIAA has fulfilled its mission, objectives and tasks, not only in adhering to the agreements (with the Flemish government and with vzw³ Waalse Krook⁴), but also against the background of the policy context and the results that were achieved.

The Flemish government gave the go-ahead for the establishment of VIAA on 21 December 2012. The operationalization of VIAA was entrusted to the strategic research centre iMinds^{5,6} and the strategic supervision of VIAA to vzw Waalse Krook. iMinds' task to facilitate the establishment of VIAA is foreseen to be completed by the end of 2014. In the course of 2014 (15 March 2014), iMinds has presented a strategic plan (for the period 2015-2019) to the Flemish government with a view to preparing the possible privatisation of VIAA. This, however, posed problems, given that general elections were drawing near⁷ and the previous Flemish government (Peeters II) therefore opted to leave the decision about VIAA's future to the new government. Nevertheless, to preserve the results already achieved and not to interrupt the digitisation process, the previous Flemish Government decided (on 9 May 2014) to extend iMinds' mandate (i.e. the specific addendum to the Covenant was extended) regarding VIAA till 15 March 2015. This decision was taken under the provision that the continuation of (VIAA's) operations "can only be considered after a thorough evaluation of the added value of a Flemish Institute for Archiving. This evaluation together with the Strategic Plan 2015-2019 should be submitted to the next Flemish Government." In view of this provision, the Flemish government's department of Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI) launched a public procurement procedure⁸ to carry out the evaluation of VIAA.

The company Dialogic carried out this evaluation, which consists of five elements:

- Desk research to provide an analysis of VIAA's operations, the surrounding policy context and its evolution.
- Interviews with a number of stakeholders to ascertain their views of VIAA's performance and operation and how they position VIAA in the broader Flemish context.

¹ "Vlaams Instituut voor de Archivering" or "Flemish Institute for Archiving" in Dutch and abbreviated as VIAA.

² This report is only available in Dutch.

³ VZW can be translated as 'Association without lucrative purpose'.

⁴ vzw Waalse Krook is a not-for-profit association. Its board consists of several stakeholder from the Flemish government, local government and representatives from the media and cultural heritage sector. vzw Waalse Krook is assuming a supervisory and strategic role towards VIAA.

⁵ By way of an addendum to the covenant 2012-2016 between the Flemish government and iMinds. The covenant outlines the specific mission and tasks of iMinds as a Flemish strategic research centre.

⁶ iMinds is a strategic research centre of the Flemish Government, focusing on ICT. The founding of VIAA was entrusted to iMinds, which currently hosts the activities of VIAA.

⁷ General elections took place on May 25, 2014. The new Flemish Government was installed at the end of July 2014.

⁸ Terms of reference with number EWI-2014-03 and entitled (in Dutch) "*Specifieke opdrachten in het kader van de evaluatie van het Vlaams Instituut voor de Archivering (VIAA)*".

- An international benchmark comparing VIAA with three foreign initiatives: INA⁹, NIBG¹⁰ and NFSA¹¹. The results include a brief qualitative description of each of these initiatives, presents the scores of each on a number of agreed criteria including a mutual comparison, and finally outlines what can be learned from this analysis.
- VIAA has compiled its own self-evaluation (ex post and ex ante)¹². A panel of experts was assembled to assess this ex ante self-evaluation.
- The findings from the above research steps were combined in a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), resulting in a series of conclusions and recommendations for the future.

The evaluation assignment was conducted under the guidance of a steering committee, composed and chaired by the Department of Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI).¹³

Objectives, governance and activities

VIAA has set itself the following mission: “archive the digital heritage of Flanders and make and keep it accessible to everyone.” iMinds’ task to operationalise VIAA was commissioned through an addendum to the covenant 2012-2016 of iMinds, stating: “iMinds together with vzw Waalse Krook will achieve the start-up of a Flemish Institute for Archiving”. This addendum also states that within three months of signing it, a collaborative agreement must be reached between iMinds and vzw Waalse Krook, and cooperation should be established with existing initiatives such as the digital archive platform of the FelixArchief, KU Leuven/LIAS and the Flemish Parliament, as well as with educational platforms directed at education in general and schools in particular. Finally, an agreement with the Flemish public broadcasting organisation VRT should also be established.

VIAA’s work has three strands: Digitalise audio-visual content, develop an archive infrastructure, and make this information available for the target groups: education, public libraries and research institutes. VIAA aims to have a strong conducting role in a digital cultural heritage network. VIAA’s digitisation programme is first and foremost aimed at broadcasting organisations and cultural heritage organisations. As a starting point, VIAA is giving priority to the most endangered audio and video carriers (hereafter carriers). Mass-digitisation is done as much as possible in order to reduce costs.

⁹ Institut national de l’audiovisuel - in French abbreviated as INA - is a French equivalent of VIAA.

¹⁰ Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid in Dutch - abbreviated as NIBG - is a Dutch equivalent of VIAA.

¹¹ National Film and Sound Archive - abbreviated as NFSA - is an Australian equivalent of VIAA.

¹² Amongst others based on the instructions provided by the EWI-department regarding the self-evaluation to be carried out.

¹³ The steering committee’s role was to both monitor the quality and progress of the evaluation as well as to ensure it resulted in concrete recommendations that fit into the regulations. On various occasions during the evaluation, Dialogic has discussed the approach to and progress of the evaluation with the steering committee, who both commented on the draft report and validated this in the meantime. In accordance with the EWI department’s evaluation practice, VIAA was also given the opportunity to check the final report (as validated by the steering committee) with a view to correcting any material errors. The identified material errors have been rectified in this current report.

Establishment of and working (together) with VIAA

In 2013 a core team within iMinds was put together to achieve the ambitions envisioned about VIAA. Within iMinds, VIAA is an independent department that aims to become self-sufficient later on. In a short period of time (around 20 months), VIAA has developed as a young organisation and currently employs 14 FTEs. If we include the temporary contracts plus the external workers at VRT, then about 30 people are actively working for VIAA. Bystanders speak of a skilled and ambitious team. According to most interviewees, the preparatory activities during the start-up phase offer VIAA a good starting position.

The collaboration between VIAA and iMinds is good. The communication lines are short. iMinds provides its facilities and expertise. Most interviewees agree that the logical choice was indeed for iMinds to have been appointed to facilitate VIAA's development. Regarding the future, there are concerns however about continuing the current construction due to the diverse objectives and stakeholders of iMinds as a strategic research centre.

VIAA's collaboration with vzw Waalse Krook is also good. The Board of Directors of vzw Waalse Krook is kept well informed, and for its part, offers support for VIAA's plans with respect to policy and stakeholders.

The collaboration between VIAA and PACKED¹⁴ is both constructive and reciprocal. The latter, as a centre of expertise, was an important gateway for VIAA to the cultural heritage sector. VIAA on the other hand offers PACKED a platform for its guidelines. The collaboration with VRT can also be described as productive. VRT provides VIAA with expertise and manpower, charging VIAA monthly for its input.

VIAA has established a network with more than 40 content providers. Formal partnership agreements have already been signed with a limited number of them. Content providers show a strong need for VIAA's activities (legitimation). Several consulted content providers indicate however, that it is hard to keep up with VIAA. According to several interviewees, VIAA underestimates the time and capacity content providers need to annotate their material.

The current governance-structure with iMinds acting as 'host' and vzw Waalse Krook as 'supervisor' works effectively. There is a clear division of tasks, but people suggest that this dual control should be structured differently once privatisation comes along. Some have also expressed the desire to review the current group of representatives and their influence in the Board of Directors of vzw Waalse Krook.

The quality and frequency of VIAA's reporting is sufficient both for its Directors and to policy makers. Alongside financial accountability, VIAA offers good insight into its plans. The very technical nature of some of these plans is often too complex for the Board of Directors of vzw Waalse Krook, necessitating the engagement of external experts. VIAA also presents progress reports to its content providers every quarter through 'Via VIAA' meetings.

Position, added value and additionality

Although formally we can speak of an '*institute in the making*', VIAA has laid a significant foundation for its work fields of digitising, archiving and interaction. This profile is observed by its bystanders, who indeed see a role for VIAA within these fields.

¹⁴ PACKED is a Flemish centre of expertise for digital cultural heritage.

VIAA ranks itself as a 'networked service organisation' and (deliberately) not as a classical Archive office. VIAA wants to join in the dynamics of other players in the field and support these with its services. Initially there will sometimes be cases of overlapping activities. In the long run, VIAA hopes to be allowed to take over its content providers' digital storage. The future will tell whether VIAA can fulfil this role of catalyst. The DAV-project¹⁵ in particular would seem to be a significant test case in this respect.

VIAA's most important additional value for society is to secure Flemish heritage by digitising (the content of) endangered carriers as well as making the information available to as wide an audience as possible. Through VIAA economies of scale are achieved by pooling the digitisation projects. For most carriers, this results in prices negotiated with external service providers at least a 50% lower than would be paid if the projects were not pooled. This realisation of VIAA is especially beneficial for smaller content providers. VRT itself already has a high volume of carriers to digitise and so does not need VIAA to negotiate a better price with service providers.

If VIAA had not been established, digitisation would be done by the various content providers on an 'every man for himself' (fragmented) and 'project' basis, resulting in decentralised retrieval possibilities, variations in format, no or a limited accumulation of knowledge and higher pricing by service providers. Above all, the small content providers do not possess the means to tackle such a task internally. Consequently, their material will, in time, be lost. Thanks to VIAA, VRT has a different route for funding its digitising activities by the Flemish government.¹⁶ VIAA benefits from both the scale and expertise of the Flemish public broadcasting organisation. Via VIAA, VRT expects to fulfil its task to make its content accessible to education, researchers and the general public .

Apparently there is a limited overlap between VIAA and the other actors in the digitising and archiving landscape. In some cases it is the archival role of VIAA that overlaps, while in other cases, its intended interaction development and activities aimed at a wider audience. VIAA is taking steps to resolve this issue by engaging in partnerships, including one with the DAV-project. Furthermore, clear arrangements about its role and authority are incorporated in the collaboration agreements with content providers.

From a financial perspective, up till now VIAA has used its basic funding of EUR 11.8 million (by way of a grant) correctly. Part of the (underutilised) budget of 2013 and 2014 has been transferred to subsequent years. The allocation of the funding over the three categories mentioned in the addendum to the iMinds covenant, was carried out as agreed beforehand. At this moment (October 2014) there is an underutilisation of the funding of about 38%, but the start-up phase VIAA is still going through, has two quarters left. Two additional grants have been awarded to VIAA through the O&V [Education and Training] department. In the future, VIAA hopes to retrieve roughly 12% of its income from sources other than the Flemish government funding, such as European projects, contributions from content providers and its location De Waalse Krook.

¹⁵ Digitaal Archief Vlaanderen, in Dutch abbreviated as DAV is a project which was initiated by the department of Public Governance Flanders of the Flemish government by the end of 2012. DAV was started to develop a shared services center for digital preservation in the public sector.

¹⁶ Management Agreement 2012-2016 between the Flemish government and VRT (22 July 2011).

Achieving objectives and impact

When VIAA received its assignment, (fairly) general objectives were drawn up without KPIs. Most of the interviewees are positive about the results achieved so far. If we look closer at the aims of the 2011 Strategic Plan, the following issues stand out:

- VIAA has taken an important step by compiling an inventory of endangered carriers. This inventory maps the extent of the problem ('puts it on the agenda'), and has partly determined the priorities for the digitisation policy of VIAA. Mass digitisation is applied, but without studying the content. Despite the possible squandering of resources, from the point of view of conservation however, this is a logical decision.¹⁷ Furthermore VIAA has had to adapt its aims regarding film. This is demonstrated for example by the fact that (up till now) no digitisation project has been set up for film. VIAA has determined that such content does not lend itself for mass digitisation due to different cost models and as a consequence, it has devised a separate plan to deal with film.
- A concrete approach to processing 'born-digital' content seems to be lacking, despite this being listed as a secondary objective. VIAA recognises the urgency and counts born-digital content among its responsibilities in the collaborative agreements with content providers. A thorough approach, however, has not yet been devised. There are signals from both the interviewees and the panel of experts that VIAA underestimates this.
- Work has kicked off on the first digitisation round (after a European call to tender). VIAA only started digitising in the spring of 2014 due the time needed for the tendering process for and implementation of its digital archive. VIAA takes on many digitisation activities simultaneously. In the process, it pushes both the content providers as well as the capacity of the service providers to whom the activities are outsourced to the limit. For the time being, VIAA's own resources allow it to operate thus. The awarding of the next two digitisation rounds is imminent. VIAA stresses that despite having started various digitisation projects, most of the supporting activities still need to be implemented.
- After completing numerous procurement procedures, VIAA purchased a (redundant) archiving system. It brought in external know-how and expertise to test whether their request for proposals meet international standards. Consulted content partners indicate they have not been able yet to test both the quality of their digitised content within VIAA's digital archive and how this content can be retrieved.
- With respect to providing access (to the archived content), preparatory work has been instigated through various test site projects, especially for the target group education. We have not been able to observe any concrete activities aimed at serving the research institutes. VIAA is struggling with several issues related to unlocking the digitised content, on the one hand regarding copyrights and on the other hand the content providers' own commercial motives. No services have yet been finalised for the target groups of education, public libraries and research institutes.¹⁸

¹⁷ According to VIAA, selecting video and audio beforehand is more expensive than digitising everything at once. With film, selection does count but different cost models apply to that.

¹⁸ Around the time this evaluation was being carried out (October 2014), VIAA offered a group of 300 teachers access to its online platform 'Testbeeld'. These pilot teachers were asked to use VIAA's educational platform in their lessons, thereby constructively helping to realise this platform (in development), See: <http://www.vrt.be/nieuws/2014/10/300-leerkrachten-aan-de-slag-met-vrt-beeldarchief>.

About the impact of VIAA and its activities only a few comments can be made, given that VIAA was only established at the end of 2012. Due to the start-up phase and several years' of necessary incubation time, an impact analysis will have to be repeated in the future. Our initial observations on impact are discussed below:

- Collaboration has led to a joint approach to digitisation. This offers an environment that encourages the accumulation of knowledge. In this way VIAA bridges the gap between the media and cultural heritage sector. Opinions differ, however, on which standards to apply.
- VIAA is already known within the cultural heritage and media sector. Because its services (platform) do not yet have a mature status, VIAA has (deliberately) not started a campaign for its target groups yet.
- A first survey among teachers and library assistants, carried out by VIAA at the end of 2013, shows that people recognise the added value of VIAA. Although the platform 'Testbeeld' has not yet been completed, teachers do see a great deal of additional value in enriching their educational material with audio-visual (AV) content. It is noticeable that only 40% of the library assistants state that their library is equipped with the infrastructure needed for watching or listening to AV material. This will restrict VIAA's plans to use libraries in order to enabling the public at large to have access to (the archived) content. No surveys have yet been carried out among researchers.
- Whether the urgency to digitise certain heritage items has been reduced (since VIAA was established), opinions differ. One group of interviewees emphasises that VIAA's task is permanent and never-ending (in line with the initial aims). Conversely, there is another group of interviewees who realise that the urgency will diminish once the (identified) carriers have been digitised. People do argue, however, that born-digital will require a great deal of effort in the future. It should also be noticed that archiving and interaction are topics that will require permanent attention.

International benchmark

Based on an international benchmarking, and compared to the considered foreign institutes (INA, NIBG and NFSA), we can ascertain that VIAA's objectives cover a wide field, given all the target groups, type of content and content providers it intends to serve,. If we set these objectives against the number of FTE and the budget VIAA was given at the start-up stage, we have to conclude that VIAA is dealing with a lot of activities with relatively few resources. Compared to the foreign equivalents, VIAA has a more limited budget at its disposal (considering the indicator budget per 1,000 inhabitants).

Because of the fact that VIAA was established later than these foreign institutes, it is inevitably lagging behind in digitising activities and in creating an archive, when compared to its foreign equivalents. In its own words, VIAA, despite the later start-up, has however not suffered from the 'handicap of a head start'. Thanks to its wide focus, VIAA might even be able to take the lead.

We note that the Flemish government's contribution to VIAA is currently higher compared to the considered foreign institutes.¹⁹ In 2013 this was 100% for VIAA, whereas NIBG and NFSA came out at an average of 85% government contribution. The French INA deviates

¹⁹ In the future VIAA hopes to obtain about 12% of its income from sources other than Flemish government funding.

strongly from this pattern because of its strong emphasis on commercialising content and service provision.

By making an inventory, we see that the other institutes – just like VIAA – also have born-digital as a pillar within their assignment. We have not been able to determine what progress the institutes have made on this topic.

Assessment of the (draft) Strategic Plan 2015-2019

As part of this evaluation, VIAA was asked to compile an ex-ante self-assessment, which in essence boils down to a (draft) Strategic Plan 2015-2019. VIAA is deemed by the experts to be a suitable organisation for executing the plans outlined in its (draft) Strategic Plan. The experts also report that VIAA has secured commitments from the major content providers and has become an interlocutor for the intended users of the digitised material. At the same time, the experts recognise that the scope of VIAA's work is extensive and complex, bearing in mind both the number and diversity of its collaborating partners. This scope could stretch beyond the capacity of a relatively small organisation like VIAA.

All the experts have a positive view on the extent to which the ex-ante self-assessment of VIAA is in line with the SWOT-analysis (in the Strategic Plan). They do raise a number of points, however, such as:

- Insufficient attention and preparation for the necessity to organise, plan, create and finance a robust infrastructure for archiving born-digital materials.
- The realism of a comprehensive collaboration agreement between VIAA and the copyright management organisations wherein authors' rights are transferred to VIAA being signed.
- The extent to which efficiency can be achieved through scale and mass digitisation, because the type of material to be digitised, the options for use and the target groups are different every time.

According to the experts, the selected performance indicators are logical but not particularly creative or innovative, as many indicators put more emphasis on access and less on the use by or impact on target groups. In addition, the experts would like to see more qualitative indicators, such as indicators about the composition, structure and balance of the collection of digitised materials and/or indicators reflecting the amount of material submitted by content providers.

SWOT

One of the main **strengths** of VIAA is the fact that it is an efficient organisation with its own know-how and expertise that has secured a wide support base in various sectors. VIAA is target-group oriented and has initiated collaboration with the educational field, public libraries and the research community.

The main **weaknesses** of VIAA are the current short-term assignment and (VIAA's dependency on) its temporary funding. These are tough to match with the long term nature of the work to be done and the partner relationships this requires. A further weakness is the current governance structure led by both iMinds as well as vzw Waalse Krook. Finally, the current lack of clarity about copyright is seen as a weakness.

The greatest **opportunity** for VIAA lies in building up its service provision to other sectors (e.g. public sector administration or arts) as well. Furthermore, there appears to be an arguable demand from users for VIAA's interactive platform. In addition, the further mediatisation of society offers opportunities.

The major **threat** to VIAA is the uncertainty concerning the Flemish government's decisions on future policy and available resources. A further threat is the level of digital equipment available in schools and libraries to play AV material. In addition, a large increase in (differentiated) partners poses a threat to the efficient functioning of the organisation and its customer satisfaction.

Recommendations for VIAA

1. In the past two years, VIAA has extended its role towards non audio-visual content (especially towards documents) and other sectors (above all the public sector and the arts). Compared to the foreign equivalents considered, it is noticeable that VIAA works on many topics at the same time. Expansion implies taking into account additional stakeholders and extending work routines. From a feasibility perspective, we recommend that VIAA first creates a solid niche around the digitisation and archiving of AV content (including born-digital) and then conducts other work by using a project based approach. With this aim in mind, we advise VIAA to build its arsenal of content partners in the first instance within the domains of culture and the media. We also envisage additional value for VIAA by linking up with commercial content partners. The DAV-project should serve to demonstrate to what extent VIAA can position itself regarding documents and the public sector. For this purpose, a future evaluation of the project 'Nieuws van de Grote Oorlog' [News from the Great War] may help to clarify this.
2. The investment related to the physical location De Krook consists of two components, namely accommodation for VIAA and its staff (office building), and an exhibition and reception area (public activities). Costs for the former would seem inevitable considering that the current accommodation arrangement at iMinds is temporary. VIAA underlines the usefulness and necessity of the latter activities in a study by the company Handelsreizigers in Ideeën (August 2013). The five international cases and five focus groups which are discussed within this study provide an initial justification 'on paper'. We recommend exploring the needs and opportunities further through a wide-scale survey of the various target groups (including visitors) that VIAA will serve at the physical location. Furthermore, a staged funding would seem appropriate to finance these public activities. The costs are probably more easily met at a later stage than at this moment in time.
3. VIAA should actively promote further privatisation of the organisation, that is to say VIAA becoming both physically and legally separate from iMinds. In our opinion, the legal entity 'VZW' (non-profit organisation) for VIAA is preferable to VIAA becoming a government agency, as the latter would hinder VIAA in obtaining broad support and funding. The advantage of a VZW is that it allows VIAA more freedom in its own human resources management and in plotting its own course. Additionally, in a VZW the Flemish government can influence the design of the respective Board of Directors. In this respect we recommend setting up a separate Sounding Board so that the Board of Directors can be limited to the main stakeholders.
4. VIAA should continue down the road of both formalising partnerships with content providers and phased expansion (see first recommendation). This gives its work a lasting legitimacy. Currently, collaboration agreements are settling aspects such as copyright, own contribution, pace of digitisation and to what extent VIAA can access specific digital content via its own channels in order to avoid 'competing' with the content providers' digital channels. Avoid creating 'customised agreements' and try to identify as many collections 'free of copyright' as possible

that can be unlocked. Looking to the future, VIAA must remain vigilant not to apply a two-fold policy regarding the standards and quality norms it imposes on content providers in the media and cultural sector. The sustainable preservation concerns allow VIAA to 'set the bar' unequivocally high.

5. VIAA must devise a planned approach for archiving and unlocking 'born-digital' content. Rapid advances are made in this form of content and VIAA could really make its mark in that field. When devising this plan – just as with the other endeavours – attention should be paid to examining whether the knowledge and experience gained in processes and techniques may easily be transferred into adjacent domains. VIAA's assumptions in this regard seem to be rather optimistic.
6. VIAA also needs to devise an approach for collaborating with research institutes. At the moment VIAA is (rightly) focusing strongly on education and on public libraries. In the long term however, it is necessary that VIAA engages more strongly within both the Flemish knowledge economy and the research community. Its digital archive offers a source for scientific research, both for language, and historical research as well as for more ICT related research topics (techniques such as 'speech-to-text', Big Data, etc.).
7. For the medium term, VIAA has to examine what role it can and should play in the Flemish digital archiving landscape. Soon more and more endangered heritage will be digitised (by VIAA) and more and more endangered heritage will be delivered by 'born digital' content providers. It is not self-evident that VIAA has a permanent and 'never-ending' assignment in the field of digitisation.
8. VIAA – entirely dependent on Flemish government funding – needs to consider what other financial sources may be tapped. Various business models are already being reviewed, but the uncertainty about (future) public funding makes this even more urgent.
9. Based on the current evaluation, we would like to propose the following performance indicators to VIAA:
 - a) The number and type of content providers (and the evolution therein) with whom VIAA has concluded a cooperative agreement;
 - b) The reliability of VIAA as institution and the measurement whether VIAA becomes known by the general public. For instance by using an indicator to determine to what extent VIAA meets the requirements of the international standard related to a *Trustworthy Digital Repository*;
 - c) The number of items in the catalogue that are annotated or enriched and / or contextualised by content providers;
 - d) The amount of contributions, knowledge transfer (instruction documents, courses, ...) and research projects in which VIAA participates (and the results obtained in the form of papers, etc.);
 - e) The amount of material that VIAA has digitised and archived, how much of it has been unlocked for the target groups and how that is evolving over time. This should include paying specific attention to the influx and accessibility of the number of born-digital items;
 - f) The use and the impact of digitised content on VIAA's target groups.

Recommendations for the Flemish government

1. VIAA is currently publicly funded through different departments of the Flemish government. This is inevitable for the near future, given the cross-cutting theme of 'digitisation' (unless it is assigned to one department in the future). To limit the both problems in decision making and the administrative burden for VIAA's organisation, we recommend a delegated principal from one department.
2. The Flemish government could indicate more firmly what role it expects VIAA to fulfil: the digitisation, archiving and unlocking of Flemish cultural heritage and/or making that cultural heritage accessible to the public at large at a physical location. As the latter activity is also an objective of the individual cultural institutions, it should be well established *if* and *where* VIAA's activities are complementary.
3. In the short term (by the end of 2014), the Flemish government should provide clarity about the assignment of and funding for VIAA. The uncertainty over these aspects affects VIAA's operations and impact in a negative way, as it undermines for instance the willingness of content providers to make long-term agreements with VIAA. Likewise, VIAA must also be able to provide clarity to its staff as it might soon be facing the threat of redundancy.
4. The Flemish government must continue to stimulate the cooperation between (or even integration of) public initiatives aimed at digitisation in order to reduce any overlap and avoid duplicate funding and competition with each other. A good example of this is the DAV-project – under the guidance of the Department of Public Governance - wherein practical agreements are made between various *overlapping* actors (including VIAA) about who undertakes what tasks. Furthermore, we advise the Flemish government to agree with the content providers (at least the public broadcasters) financed by the Flemish government, about a *period* the dual archiving that currently exists between them and VIAA may continue (e.g. mid-2020 transfer of collections for long-term preservation to VIAA).
5. The Flemish government must assist VIAA in identifying and obtaining content without copyright, since the 'limitation' that copyright brings, determines VIAA's interaction capabilities. The Flemish government could also bring this issue to the attention of the media and cultural institutions which it finances (as one of the funding conditions) or (partly) owns (agenda setting).
6. The Flemish government should further invest in the digital skills and the level of digital equipment available to VIAA's target groups (educational sector, museums, libraries and research institutes).
7. In consultation with VIAA, the proposed set of performance indicators for the period 2015 to 2019 should be refined in order, on the one hand to fulfil VIAA's aims, and on the other hand, to provide the necessary the control information and follow-up. When allocating indicators, VIAA must clearly specify an actor. After all, content providers will evaluate VIAA on the provision that all their material is digitised and permanently stored, whereas the target groups will evaluate VIAA on the extent of online accessibility and the possibility to (re)use digital collections. VIAA's progress can be measured through interim monitoring, (self)evaluation and by surveying content providers and target groups.





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