

DEVELOPMENT TARGETS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES 2024–2026

The National Archives of Estonia (NAE), operating within the area of government of the Ministry of Education and Research, ensures the preservation and use of information reflecting the Estonian society. The key strengths of the organisation are its devoted staff, good IT infrastructure and extensive relationships with partners in the public and private sector. NAE is an atypical government agency, having diverse functions in the fields of research, education and culture, alongside guaranteeing the protection of citizens' rights and duties as well as state archival administration.

The National Archives' approach is customer-driven and based on employees' commonly recognised and shared values: openness, reliability, competence and teamwork. We value employees who give importance to self-development and apply new knowledge, skills and experience, thus supporting the organisation's development.

One of the biggest recent priorities for NAE is participation in the reconstruction of the National Library building. Once reconstruction is complete, NAE's Ristiku and Maneeži units will move into the Endla Street wing of the National Library building. This will provide conditions for improved efficiency of services and support functions and open up innovative opportunities for synergy.

The major challenges faced by the National Archives relate to complex development tasks in the digital society in general and within the organisation. Two areas of focus have been adopted for the near term: **(1) National Archives as part of e-governance and information society** and **(2) National Archives as an open organisation and partner for communities**.

This document lays out the key development targets for NAE in these areas of focus during the timeframe prior to moving into the Endla building. The targets were adopted at NAE's development seminar in autumn 2023 and are a continuation to the targets adopted for the period 2021–2024.

1. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AS PART OF E-GOVERNANCE AND INFORMATION SOCIETY

The National Archives has been part of e-governance and information society for a long time. The National Archives has developed information systems for decades with some of its solutions revolutionary on the global stage. There is therefore a need to update central archives management systems and integrate them for customers and employees. Our work becomes more effective and we support the development of our employees by designing workflows. The National Archives is continuing to work with domestic and international partners and guide processes that give rise to mutually beneficial technical developments.

Key objectives

- Archiving with the click of a button (seamless archiving).
- Agencies' paper records have largely been transferred to the archives.
- The conditions of storage of archival records of any type, category and medium are appropriate.

Period end

1. The National Archives continues to be ready to absorb the growth in acquisition volume arising from the consolidation of government document management. The Madara Street building in Tallinn must stay in use to maintain acquisition capability.

2. The list of creators of archival records (agencies obligated to transfer) is reviewed and cut if possible.
3. The agency archival transfer planning and scheduling solution through ASTRA system is completed. Transfer of archival records is maintained mostly on the basis of that.
4. The National Archives has tested providing short-term archival support services to organisations and individuals to ease the administrative difficulties arising from transfer.
5. Artificial intelligence has been tested in pre-ingest activities (e.g. describing the creators of archival records).
6. Archiving of databases is faster and more streamlined.
7. The digital archives preservation system Preservica is integrated with systems supporting transfer of archival records.
8. Archival rules are updated with the aim of reducing administrative burden and facilitate digital information processing.
9. A view has been adopted with regard to the acquisition of commercial television networks' content.
10. The Estonian information security standard (E-ITS) security measures have been adopted to ensure network and information system security of the National Archives.
11. Information related to archives and records management is continually shared with the public and private sectors. A blog and newsletter are aimed at them, with the target group being maintained from the business sector to not-for-profit organisations and NGOs.

2. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AS AN OPEN ORGANISATION AND PARTNER TO COMMUNITIES

In the previous period the National Archives has substantially increased the number of services provided as part of archival education. In addition to the support activities to general education and higher education we need to increase our involvement in adult education while also expanding our programmes targeted at people with special needs. The National Archives has the opportunity as part of the Education Strategy 2021–2035 to contribute to the development of flexible and personalised learner's pathways.

Archival administration today is increasingly community-oriented. For ten years now, the National Archives has involved volunteers in indexing and transcribing archival collections, launched several crowdsourcing projects with hundreds of participants and organised initiatives targeted at the general public. All of this will continue but in an even more deliberate manner.

Key objectives

- Central online user environments are subject to constant development and increasingly more convenient to use.
- The data quality and accessibility of digital content is improved using artificial intelligence.
- In a targeted manner, communities are included in the activities of the archives, the palette of crowdsourcing is expanded.
- The archival education programme is more diverse than ever and aimed at more target groups, and the National Archives is an important partner to teachers.

Period end: user environments

1. A full analysis of the user environment has been completed to design a simpler user flow and cut down on different brands in use.
2. The VAU and Saaga systems have been transformed into sub-components of the AIS-based integrated solution.

3. The National Archives' website is updated, allowing for easier access to user information, user guidelines, publications, full texts of Tuna magazine.
4. AIS' new interfaces have been developed for the display and search of born-digital content and content generated through text and object recognition technology.
5. A data audit has been conducted to improve the interoperability of different systems and quality of archival descriptions.

Period end: digitization of collections

6. Large-scale digitization projects have been completed thanks to EU digital transformation funding: archives of Soviet-era creative unions, cultural and scientific organizations (2 million images); land registers of property archives (1 million images); video recordings of Riigikogu sessions 1999–2012 (VHS, 4,200 hours).
7. Digitization of collections part of evacuation lists continues to be a focus area among other digitization priorities.
8. New collaboration projects with foreign partners (Ancestry, Family Search) are completed.
9. The digitization speed of magnetic audio tracks of films has been raised.
10. The production of reading room self-service scanners is included in the online digital collection.
11. The disclosure of digitized content on the web is automated.
12. Web access has been granted to 20th century's 1st half family history sources (family register, etc.) transferred by the Ministry of the Interior.

Period end: communities

13. The National Archives has taken on board experience of Estonian and foreign memory institutions to develop its community strategy, defining target groups, specific metrics and responsibilities.
14. Archival descriptions and metadata are updated based on user feedback (interface with Facebook, feedback across environments, etc.).
15. Crowdsourcing projects continue. Volunteers and communities are involved in digitization and post-processing of automated text and object recognition results.

During the period: archival education

16. The range of target groups exposed to archival education is expanded:
 - new target groups, for example through youth centres and hobby schools, as well as day centres for the elderly, heritage enthusiast societies and other organisations;
 - expansion of the area of target groups, made up of more teachers and students from the counties of Võru, Valga, Jõgeva, Ida-Viru and Lääne-Viru;
 - classes aimed at adults are developed;
 - development of solutions for visually and hearing impaired people and use in educational programmes.
17. Archival education based on the national curriculum is clearly distinguished on the website from that aimed at a broader audience.
18. A broader spectrum of services provided and more digital solutions:
 - a streaming platform and the Arkaader education module are used to feature the film collection;
 - events aimed at target groups can be monitored in calendar view;
 - classes and study materials (incl. based on curriculum) focused on teaching history will be continued to be developed;
 - lessons and learning materials integrating multiple disciplines (digital archives, conservation, art history, scientific background, introduction to optical character recognition and artificial intelligence, etc.) are diversified.
19. The diversity of analogue content of the film archives is featured using various storage media found in the collections.