Statement of Purpose for Electronic Archival Guide Project, Georgian National Archives, Tbilisi, Georgia.

The Friends of the Georgian National Archives (FGNA) plans to create an electronic guide to the Central Historical Archives (CHA) in Tbilisi, Georgia in a project that is to extend six months beginning July, 1998. The larger aim is to resolve problems of software design that impede the collection and distribution of archival resources worldwide where conditions of infrastructure are deficient. The CHA exemplifies the plight of many of the world's archives and underscores the urgency needed to utilize new technologies to make guides to their holdings accessible to the international community for wider exposure and freer exchange of information. Located in a decaying archival complex, the CHA operates on an erratic flow of electricity, a sharply reduced budget, and a staff with limited, if any, exposure to computers. And yet at no time has the opportunity for undertaking such a project been better. Georgia inherits a well-organized and extensive archive system, whose administrative staff enthusiastically welcomes the opportunity for collaboration to make their holdings accessible to the world community. In recognition of the project's importance for promoting innovation in archival software and greater exposure to former Soviet archives, the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX, Washington, DC) has awarded FGNA an initial $15,000 in Title VIII funding to run the project.

The immediate goal is to create an electronic and printed guide that will consist of high-level descriptions of the 839 record groups for inclusion in the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). Because of budgetary constraints and design requirements, we have chosen to utilize Microsoft Access as a database that will enable us to capture descriptive information on-site in relatively primitive working conditions in as flexible and teachable a manner as possible. The electronic records must comply with international standards and be exportable to larger databases, while the software must remain flexible enough for substantial emendations and more detailed descriptions at a later time (at the inventory level). A second issue concerns the multi-language format of the proposed guide. We plan to create a tri-lingual guide, whose primary language will be Georgian but whose descriptive entries will also be available in Russian and English. This objective requires that we generate modular authority files that accomodate multiple transliteration schemes without actual translation. Thus, the software must accomodate three separate alphabets (Roman, Georgian, and Cyrillic) in which to construct corresponding authority structures initially for government bodies and individuals (and geographical place names later). Microsoft Access

allows us to meet these demands while maintaining the possibility of encoding the descriptions in SGML for the creation of an archival guide using EAD.

Our longer-term plan is to extend the design and technology for this particular guide to the creation of finding aids for several of Georgia's other major national archives, including the famous Institute of Manuscripts, the Archive of Contemporary History, and the Film Archive. Together these archives hold documents dating from the sixth century to the present that pertain to Georgian, Caucasian, Russian, European, and Middle Eastern history. FGNA undertakes this project not only with the firm support of the highest levels of the Georgian archival administration but also the long-term endorsement of the President of the Republic, Eduard Shevardnadze. Finally, we plan to publicize as widely as possible the results of our efforts and to make accessible to archives the software we develop for the project.

Pertinent URLs:

- http://www.georgia.net.ge/laag/
- http://www.sanet.ge/
- http://www.fgna.org/

Data Structure:

Relationships

FGNA_Fonds
- **FondUID**
- FondNumber
- ContentsDescription_Brief_G
- ContentsDescription_Brief_E
- ContentsDescription_Brief_R
- ContentsDescription_Full
- AltNumbers
- FondCreateDate
- SeeAlso
- Category
- ShelfLocation
- PhysicalDescription
- AcquisitionSource
- Restricions
- OfficialCitation
- ArchivistsNotes
- FondOrganization
- TotalOpis
- TotalDelo
- MainLanguage
- InclusiveDateBegin
- InclusiveDateEnd

FGNA_c_Fond-Name
- **UID**
- FondUID
- NameUID

FGNA_Names
- **NameUID**
- FirstName
- LastName
- BirthDate
- DeathDate
- AltSpell
- Title

FGNA_c_Fond-Institution
- **UID**
- FondUID
- InstitutionUID

FGNA_Institutions
- **InstitutionUID**
- GeorgianName
- RussianName
- AltSpell
- BeginDate
- EndDate
- Summary
- SubordinateUnits

FGNA_c_Fond-Opis
- **UID**
- FondUID
- OpisUID

FGNA_Opisi
- **OpisUID**
- Title
- BriefSummary
- TotalDela