



IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

# Strategic Development Plan

2008–2011

Irish Manuscripts Commission © 2008  
45 Merrion Square  
Dublin 2  
Ireland  
[www.irishmanuscripts.ie](http://www.irishmanuscripts.ie)

ISBN 987-1-874280-92-7

Circulated 28 April 2008  
Revised 8 May 2008

Cite this document as follows:  
Irish Manuscripts Commission,  
Strategic development plan,  
2008–2011 (Dublin, 2008).

DESIGN: David Hayes & Associates  
Graphic Design Consultants





IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

# Strategic Development Plan

2008-2011



# Contents

## 4 Foreword

## 6 Looking forward

VISION

IRELAND'S PREMIER PUBLISHER OF PRIMARY SOURCES

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2008–2011

## 8 As publisher

LEADING PUBLISHER OF PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIALS  
FOR THE HISTORIES OF IRELAND

OBJECTIVE

SOURCING OF MATERIAL TO BE PUBLISHED

IMPROVING IMC PROCESSES

PROMOTING IMC PUBLICATIONS

## 10 As advisor

ADVISORY REMIT

OBJECTIVE

INFORMATION SHARING

## 11 Promoting awareness

PRESERVING RECORDS FOR THE FUTURE

OBJECTIVE

PROVIDING A REFERENCE POINT

## 12 Digitisation

BEST PRACTICE IN PRODUCING DIGITAL RESOURCES

OBJECTIVE

DIGITISATION OF IMC PUBLICATIONS

## 13 Summary

## 14 Organisation chart

## 15 Performance indicators

## Foreward

**T**HE IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION (IMC) is recognised nationally and internationally as publisher of primary sources for the histories and cultures of Ireland. Its remit is founded on the principles of dissemination, preservation and promotion of original source material—in public and private ownership—for the history and cultural heritage of Ireland.

Following on from the devastating loss of records suffered by the destruction of the Public Record Office in 1922, IMC was established in October 1928 to report on manuscripts and papers of literary, historical and general interest relating to Ireland, and to advise on their preservation and publication. It was also charged with arranging for the publication of calendars and catalogues of manuscripts, the publication of facsimiles of important codices, and revision and re-publication of important works already published but latterly out of print.

During the 80 years of its existence, there have been many changes in IMC's working environment. Other bodies have been established that are charged with responsibility for archives, while new technologies have revolutionised publishing, the core function of IMC today.

In the light of these developments, the Cultural Institutions Unit of the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism (DAST) appointed CHL Consulting in 2003 to conduct a review of the role, functions and organisation of IMC. In 2004 the review concluded that there would be no worthwhile gain achieved by transferring IMC's role and functions to another organisation—stating that 'IMC operates cost-effectively and its functions could not be more cheaply performed by another body' ('Review of the role and function of the Irish Manuscripts Commission, Interim report', CHL Consulting, March 2004)—and recommended instead fundamental changes to its structure and organisation.

These recommendations resulted in significant changes in the period 2004–6 and IMC was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee without share capital in January 2006. This has given IMC a framework within which to operate on a corporate level, while providing a stable basis for the Commission to develop into the future. The members of the current Commission were appointed by John O'Donoghue, T.D., then Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, on 7 April 2006.

IMC receives grant-in-aid from DAST. Without this funding, IMC could not operate and continued funding at 2008 levels is essential to underpin the current and future work plans of the Commission. It is important to stress that the members of the Commission receive no remuneration for their indispensable contribution to the management and peer-reviewing of publications, which makes it possible for the Commission to fulfil its remit. This tradition of service to both scholarship and the state has been maintained since the Commission's foundation in 1928. Only the chairperson receives an honorarium.

This strategic plan constitutes a roadmap for IMC development over a four-year period from 2008 to 2011. It focuses on IMC's core activity—publishing— and on its advisory role to DAST and the National Library of Ireland (NLI), as well as on its representation on the National Archives Advisory Council (NAAC). It stresses IMC's responsibility for promoting public and institutional awareness of the need to preserve, catalogue and store primary sources wherever they are to be found. This plan makes provision for a mid-term review to test performance to date and update strategies as high-level priorities are achieved.

In July 2007 a Strategic Review Committee (SRC) was formed under the chairmanship of James McGuire. The members of the SRC were: Nicholas Canny, David Edwards, Chris Flynn, James Kelly, Michael Kennedy, Máire Mac Conghail, John McCafferty, Deirdre McMahon, Mary O'Dowd, Jane Ohlmeyer, Anngret Simms and Gerry Slater. The brief of the SRC was to produce a draft strategic plan for presentation to the Commission in 2008. A strategy development process was initiated in September 2007. Following discussions in November and ensuing activity in December a draft strategic plan was presented to the Commission in May 2008. Subsequent to this, stakeholders in IMC publishing were canvassed for their comment. The strategic plan was formally adopted on 12 May 2008.



## Looking forward



### Vision

The vision of IMC is to promote awareness of and access to primary source materials for the histories, cultures and heritage of Ireland.

### Ireland's premier publisher of primary sources

This strategic plan builds on the reputation gained by the Irish Manuscripts Commission over 80 years of publishing primary sources for the histories and cultures of Ireland.

Between 1930 and 2007, IMC has published 153 editions of primary manuscript sources, covering all periods from the medieval to the twentieth century, and 40 issues of its serial publication, *Analecta Hibernica*. The Commission is known for the quality of its publications; each edition is peer-reviewed and produced to the highest scholarly standards, ensuring quality and reliability and the long-term preservation of the primary sources on which these editions are based.

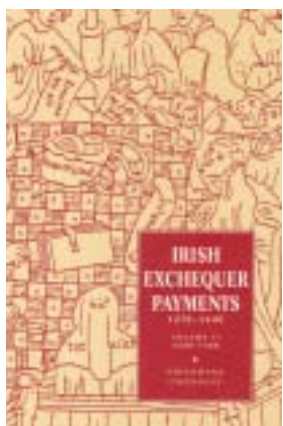
IMC embraces developments in electronic publishing and engages actively with organisations and bodies with expertise in this area to promote and enhance access to and use of its current and future publications.

IMC serves the cultural heritage and academic communities and supports progress towards meeting the goals and objectives of the **Business Plan 2008** published by DAST in relation to these sectors.

### Strategic priorities for 2008–2011

The following strategic priorities have been identified for the next four years. IMC will:

- improve awareness of and access to primary sources on a national and international basis by building on its reputation as publisher of primary source materials for the histories of Ireland;

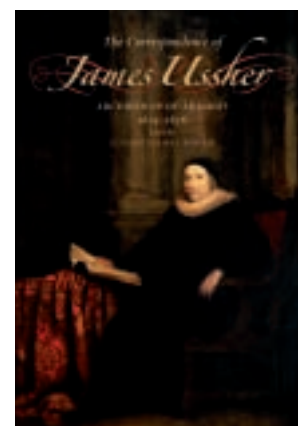




IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

**Strategic  
Development Plan  
2008–2011**

- continue to act as expert advisor on issues relating to historical manuscripts and primary source materials generally;
- develop strategies to promote awareness—in IMC’s traditional and non-traditional stakeholder communities—of the importance of preserving primary records of the present and the future;
- lead by example in the digitisation of selected IMC publications by following international best practice to produce digital resources that are capable of deployment on national and European platforms and for which a long term preservation strategy is clearly defined.



The Commission will identify the resources necessary to underpin the actions required to achieve these goals and will evaluate and review progress on a regular basis.



## As publisher



### Leading publisher of primary source materials for the histories of Ireland

In the period 2008–2011, IMC will further expand and develop its role as the preferred publisher of primary source materials for the histories of Ireland.

#### Objective

IMC will achieve this priority by publishing an average of 6 volumes per year.

The following actions are required to achieve this strategic priority.

#### Sourcing of material to be published

IMC will pursue the following strategies to enhance and expand its role as publisher:

1. IMC will actively identify two high profile, multi-volume projects between 2008 and 2011, and proactively seek funding for these outside of its annual grant.
2. Using the diverse experience and knowledge of its members, IMC will identify potential publishing projects from a broad range of sources pertaining to all aspects and eras of the Irish past, but in particular targeting scholars from the medieval and twentieth century periods.
3. IMC will continue to encourage proposals for publication submitted independently by individual scholars and by members of the public.



#### Improving IMC processes

In order to improve work flows and the transparency of project procedures IMC will:

4. Introduce a project-scheduling protocol to streamline project management;
5. Provide a contract for editors, which protects both IMC's future plans (such as digitisation) and editors' intellectual property rights;



IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

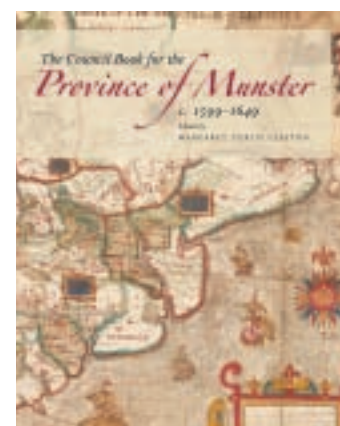
**Strategic  
Development Plan  
2008–2011**

6. Develop new editorial guidelines for contributors, internal editors and typesetters.

### Promoting IMC publications

The following actions will underpin the promotion of IMC publications, and hence IMC's reputation, nationally and internationally:

7. Development of a marketing and communications strategy that targets scholars, academics, and all students of history and culture, both nationally and internationally.
8. Expansion of IMC's existing customer base to include the potential market of those providing and those taking Irish Studies and Cultural Studies courses worldwide.
9. Design and distribution of a new catalogue of IMC publications available in print and online format through the IMC website; the production of themed flyers (e.g. new titles, Armagh registers, early modern period books, etc.) for specific occasions to enable marketing of publications in a targeted way.
10. Redesign of the IMC web site to:
  - improve ease of purchase of IMC publications;
  - give increased visual prominence to publications available for sale;
  - include images and summaries of publications to increase spontaneous purchases;
  - circulate information on new publications to existing customers.



## As advisor



### Advisory remit

IMC aims to consolidate its role as expert advisor on issues and policies relating to manuscripts and historical records.

### Objective

IMC will achieve this priority in the period 2008–2011 by proactively and reactively providing advice to government departments and other cultural bodies and institutions.

### Information sharing

The following actions are required to achieve this strategic priority.

11. Identify issues of importance to policy makers and practitioners in the cultural heritage community on which IMC feels it can assist in terms of developing policy or providing advice.
12. Identify expertise and areas of interest amongst the Commission members to ensure that quality advice is available when advice is sought.
13. IMC will exercise its statutory obligations in relation to the National Archives Advisory Council.
14. IMC will organise two high-level information seminars in the period 2009–2011. These seminars will bring together subject matter experts in areas of relevance to the development of the cultural heritage sector.





## Preserving records for the future

In the period 2008–11 IMC will develop strategies to promote awareness—in IMC’s traditional and non-traditional stakeholder communities—of the importance of the preservation of and improving access to primary sources for Irish histories and cultures.

### Objective

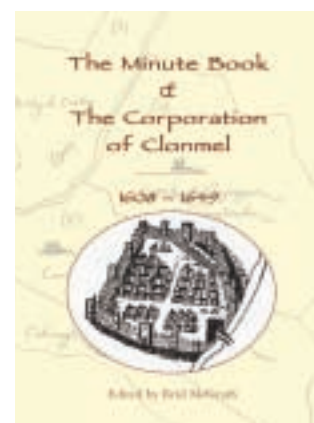
IMC will achieve this priority by expanding its engagement in the provision of advice on the value and relevance of preserving records as the primary sources of future histories.



## Providing a reference point

The following actions will be pursued in order to achieve this strategic priority.

15. A section of the IMC web site will be developed offering FAQs and advice about preserving records, particularly business records, and providing follow-up links to specialist institutions.
16. IMC will in future participate in Culture Nights (starting with the Culture Night scheduled for 2008 – Friday 19 September) to showcase the work and publications of IMC.
17. A series of events in 2008–2009 will be organised to mark the 80th anniversary of IMC’s foundation. These events will be used to illustrate the importance and use of primary sources that have been published in IMC editions.
18. IMC will sponsor an annual lecture between 2009 and 2011. This high-profile lecture will be hosted by a suitable body or society, and will illustrate how histories are based on the interpretation of primary source materials and the importance of preserving those sources.



## Digitisation



### Best practice in producing digital resources

In line with its policy document on digitisation (Dublin, 2007), IMC will pursue the digitisation of its published work—past, present and future. It will make the primary sources it publishes accessible to the widest possible audiences by ensuring that its digitised publications are available for deployment on a suitable national cultural heritage platform.

### Objective

IMC will make its publications—starting with titles selected from its back-list on the basis of proven and demonstrable demand, and all future titles—available in digital format.

### Digitisation of IMC publications

Contingent on the availability of appropriate funding, the following actions will enable the realisation of the strategic priority on digitisation in the period 2008–2011.

19. The digitisation of a carefully selected IMC work and the use of this project to develop a protocol for use in the digitisation of further IMC editions and series.
20. The development of a protocol that is compliant with international best practice and that produces digital resources that are interoperable and for which a long term preservation policy has been put in place.



# Summary

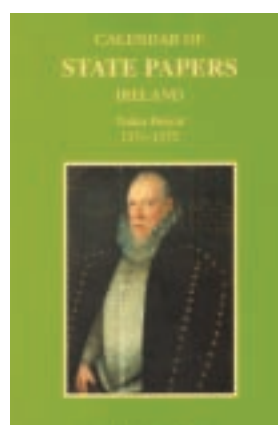


IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

## Strategic Development Plan 2008–2011

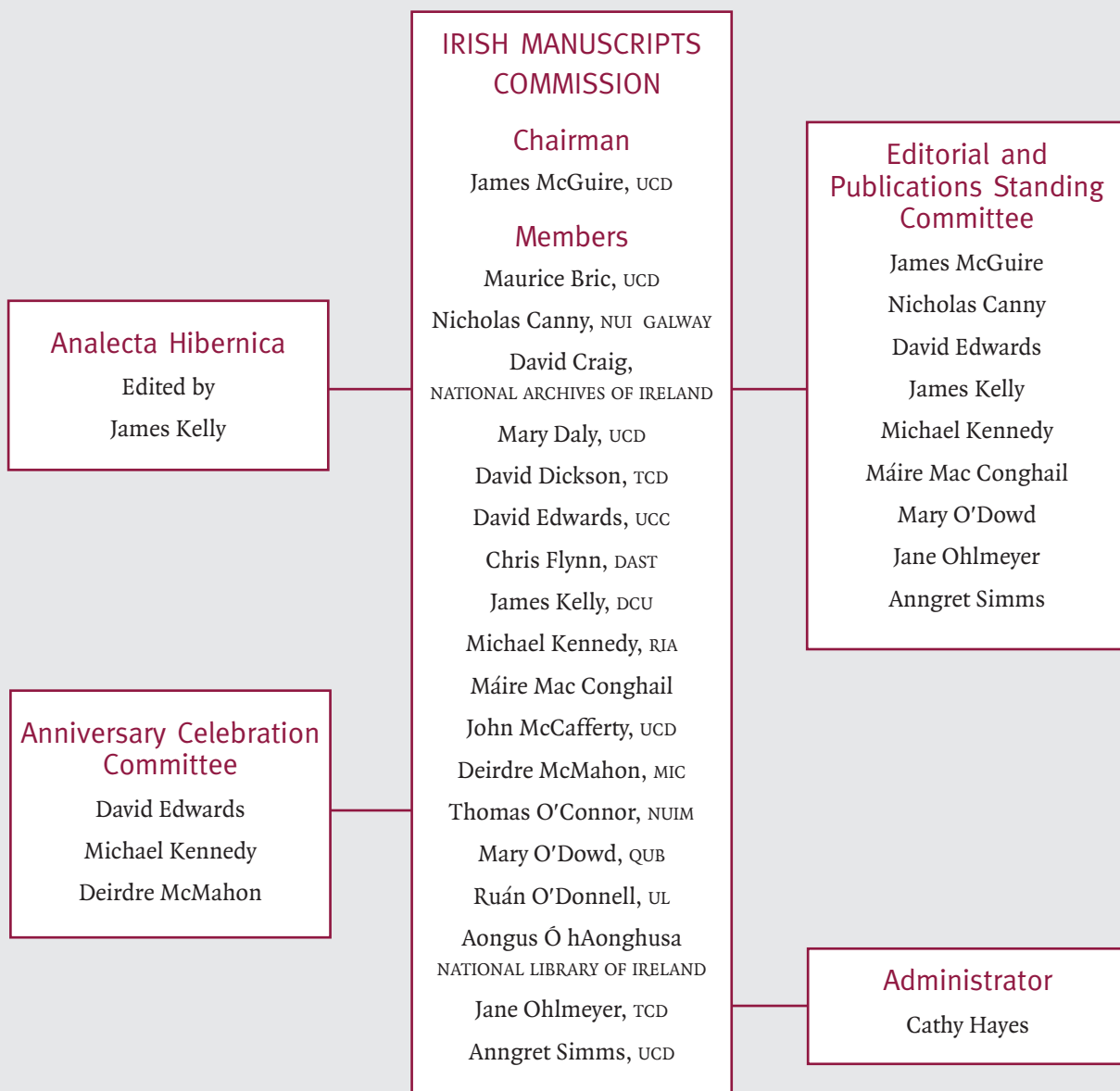
In all, IMC has identified twenty actions that will enable it to achieve its four strategic priorities for development in the period 2008–2011.

The continued involvement of a committed Commission, supported by sufficient administrative resources, is required to make possible the implementation of this strategic plan. Currently, financial support is available at a level that facilitates IMC in the realisation of its potential. But it must be stressed that the strategic objectives outlined in this plan are achievable only if that level of financial support is maintained.



## Organisation chart

The following diagram illustrates the organisation of Irish Manuscripts Commission as of May 2008.





The following are the key indicators of progress in achieving the strategic objectives for IMC in 2008–2011.

Strategic priority	Objectives	Key indicators of progress for mid-term review 2009/10
Build on IMC's reputation as publisher of primary source materials for the histories of Ireland	1 Identify two high-profile projects	Projects to be identified at IMC meeting on 17 November 2008
	2 Target scholars from the medieval and twentieth century periods in particular	Publish one edition of medieval and/or one of 20th century origin each year from 2009–11
	3 Encourage proposals from scholars and members of the public	Annual review of new proposals in place by 19 January 2009
	4 Introduce a project-scheduling protocol	Project schedules to be available in draft form by 17 November 2008
	5 Provide a contract for editors	All projects approved from 1 July 2008 will involve contracts signed by editors and IMC
	6 Update editorial guidelines for contributors, internal editors and typesetters	Draft guidelines by 22 September 2008. Guidelines to be available for distribution to all parties by 17 November 2008
	7 Improve current marketing and communications strategy	Advertising strategy for 2009 to be agreed on 19 January 2009; promotional activities in 2009 linked to high-profile projects prior to launch
	8 Expand customer base	Potential targets to be identified by 17 November 2008
	9 Design and distribute catalogue	Catalogue widely available in print and electronically by 22 September 2008
	10 Redesign website	New look to IMC website allowing for delivery of more services by 17 November 2008
Consolidate role as expert advisor	11 Identify issues of importance and disseminate information appropriately	Report identifying issues ready for meeting 19 January 2009

## Performance indicators

Strategic priority	Objectives	Key indicators of progress for mid-term review 2009/10
Consolidate role as expert advisor (cont'd)	12 Ensure quality advice	Report recording members' expertise made available on 17 November 2008
	13 Observe statutory obligations re cultural institutions	Biannual reports from IMC representatives on statutory bodies on 22 September 2008 and 23 March 2009
	14 Organise two information seminars of benefit to policy makers in the cultural heritage sector	Seminar on (1) metadata capture in digitisation projects (January 2009) and on (2) website service delivery for digitised data/objects (May 2009)
Promote awareness of the importance of preserving primary records	15 Develop website to provide information and contacts for people with business records	New section on web site in place by 17 November 2008 to encourage and to assist holders of business records to donate/preserve their archives
	16 Participate in public events for cultural institutions	Annual participation in cultural heritage events; Culture Night, 19 September 2008 and Heritage Week 2009
	17 Organise events to mark the 80th anniversary of IMC's foundation	A short history of IMC to be published, January 2009; series of lectures held in 2008/9
	18 Sponsor an annual lecture to promote the importance of record preservation and the use of primary sources	IMC to sponsor lecture at the Irish Legal History Society meeting in November 2008.
	19 Carry out scoping project to establish parameters for digitisation of IMC books	Sample digitisation of part of <i>Books of Survey and Distribution (1940-67)</i> produces draft recommendations for future digitisation of IMC editions for 17 November 2008
Digitise IMC publications and deploy digital editions on suitable national platform	20 Produce a protocol for digitisation of hardcopy editions that meets international standards for best practice, interoperability and sustainability	Rigorous protocol to be employed in all future IMC projects to be ready for use by 23 March 2009.

THE  
**IRISH**  
COMMISSION  
of  
1622  
  
AN  
INVESTIGATION  
of the  
BHM  
ADMINISTRATION  
1619-22  
and the Transition  
1623-24  
  
edited by  
Victor Thranehill  
  


**COURT**  
of  
**CLAIMS**  
  
Submissions  
and Evidence  
1661  
  
Edited by  
Lecturers Talbot  
and Sir Nicholas Harris  
LL.D. Honorary  
  


**ANDLECCA HIBERNICA**

THE  
DE  
VICE  
PAPERS  
  
  
  


The Hibernic  
Book of  
The  
Signification  
of  
Criminal  
  
1607 - 1647  
  
Edited  
by  
Paul  
McGrath  
  


THE  
CONTENT  
BOOK  
  
1615  
  
Edited  
by  
Lecturers  
Talbot  
and Sir Nicholas Harris  
LL.D. Honorary  
  


page seven





IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

45 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

Telephone: 00 353 1 676 1610

Fax: 00 353 1 662 3832

website: [www.irishmanuscripts.ie](http://www.irishmanuscripts.ie)