ARCHIVING POLICY AT CERN

PREAMBLE

Science does not exist in a social vacuum; therefore cultural, economic and political developments also find their expression in the records of scientific activity.

"CERN is not just another laboratory. It is an institution that has been entrusted with a noble mission which it must fulfil not just for tomorrow but for the eternal history of human thought."

(Albert Picot, 3rd Session of CERN Council, Geneva, 10 June 1955)

The aim of this document is to establish a general policy on archiving at CERN. The rules and the implementation of this policy are defined in Operational Circular N° 3.

I. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CERN ARCHIVES

1. At its meeting on 27 April 1979, CERN Committee of Council decided to launch a project to write the History of CERN and to create the CERN Historical Archives, as support to the CERN History Study. This project was adopted by Committee of Council on 31 October 1980.

2. On 17 November 1980, the Directors-General informed the division leaders of the CERN History Study and requested their cooperation in making source material available to the CERN Historical Archives.

3. On 23 September 1988, the Directorate decided "to set up an ad hoc committee to establish a policy and procedures for the archives of CERN". The recommendations of this committee were approved by the Directorate and by the Management Board in December 1988. Thus, the mandate of the original archives was enlarged beyond the scope of the History Study and the CERN Historical and Scientific Archives (hereinafter referred to as the CERN Archives) were established, together with the infrastructure of the Archive Committee and of the divisional archive representatives.
II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

4. The archives of a scientific organization comprise any records that document the results of scientific endeavour and the process of scientific work, seconded by the necessary administrative and technical support.

5. Archiving not only involves the preservation of documents of long-term interest, but also requires organized records management and the application of defined standards at the moment of creation of a document.

6. The integrity and authenticity of archives are guaranteed by applying the principle of provenance. Archives established in this manner reveal an organization's structure, activities and organizational changes.

7. The specific nature of CERN is reflected in its archival material because:
   - CERN is an international organization with its specific legal status and administrative structures.
   - It is a world laboratory for fundamental research, collaborating with universities and other research institutions. Any scientific activity using CERN facilities creates records, some of which are of long-term value. These activities should be documented in the CERN Archives.
   - Its research is based on the development and running of accelerators and particle detectors, requiring applications from various branches of science and technology.
   - Its activities result in a number of spin-offs (socio-cultural, technological and organizational).

8. Archival material, regardless of its physical form or technical support, created or received in the course of activity in an official function at CERN, is the property of the Organization and must be handled accordingly.

9. Effective records management, including well-established classification plans and retention schedules, combined with proper archiving at CERN will prove economically beneficial to the Organization, reducing wasted manpower and storage space. Archives facilitate the internal decision-making process by assuring access to reliable documentation concerning past decisions at CERN, which may involve scientific, economic, political or legal interests of the Organization.

10. Pending the adoption of specific guidelines for preserving electronic documents, the archiving of a hard copy of important documents is essential and must be made compulsory in order to ensure that all such documents are archived. Nevertheless, their electronic form should not be destroyed.

11. There exist collections of files to which special archiving obligations apply.
III. CERN ARCHIVES

12. As a place of research, the Organization endeavours, through the CERN Archives, to preserve the memory of its activities and of its important scientific and cultural role. The CERN Archives are a repository of this original and genuine information and serve as an information source for everyday operations and for historical research.

13. The main objectives of the CERN Archives are:
   - To evaluate and preserve archival material (administrative, scientific and technical) of use and interest to the Organization and for historical research.
   - To give advice to the originators on records management and on the organization of current files with a view to future archiving.
   - To formulate relevant guidelines.
   - To make the Archives' holdings readily available to authorized users.
   - To ensure that potential contributors and users are aware of the existence of the CERN Archives and Operational Circular N° 3.

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