



ACTIVITY PLAN 2026

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2026: THE YEAR WE PROVE THAT NETWORKS WORK

Dear ENA-members,

dear colleagues, peers and friends,

Over the past years, we've firmly rooted the Europeana Network Association in the Common European data space for cultural heritage. ENA has established itself more than ever as a network with solid governance structures, strong community frameworks, smooth coordination workflows, granular activity mechanisms and accessible, high-quality capacity building programs. We've talked about the diversity and spread of expertise within our ecosystem, about voluntary collaboration and the challenge of balancing individual commitment with collective agency. Now, in year 4 of the data space contract, comes the crucial question: does our vision of a democratic, thought-leading, dynamic and inclusive network actually deliver?

2026 is the year we demonstrate that the answer to that question is 'yes'. Our members should be able to yield tangible value from their engagement. The cultural heritage sector should be able to experience that communities of interest can genuinely contribute to European digital infrastructures. Policy makers and opinion formers should be able to assess that networks such as ENA are much more than nice-to-have additions to traditional organisational models.

I'm confident that we can indeed demonstrate all that. Not through grand proclamations, but through the accumulated impact of what we do together: communities that advance practice in their domains; Country Groups that connect local practitioners to European opportunities; training programs that build real skills and capabilities; use cases that prove the data space creates value; governance

models that enable and activate rather than constrain or add weight.

This Activity Plan maps how we'll make that happen across six strategic priorities. It connects directly to our Strategic Priorities document, as it translates vision into action.

What strikes me most as I look at this plan is how far we've come in organisational maturity. Three years ago, we were finding our footing within the data space. Today, we're coordinating complex initiatives across multiple pillars, piloting innovative engagement models and grappling with questions of long-term sustainability that speak to our permanence rather than our fragility.

But maturity brings responsibility. We can no longer rely on novelty or potential. Every Community work plan, every Country Group expansion, every outreach activity or training session represents an opportunity to create value for our members and demonstrate impact for our stakeholders.

The challenges are real. Managing organisational transitions while maintaining momentum. Proving governance enhancements actually enhance. Expanding Member States engagement without diluting quality. Making reuse tangible when it's inherently complex. Securing sustainable funding in uncertain times. All while serving a membership that grows more diverse and more demanding - as it should!

Yet I look at this list and see how the opportunities rather than the obstacles stand out. Each challenge represents a chance to innovate, to learn and to demonstrate that networks can solve problems that siloed entities cannot. We have nearly 6.000 members across Europe and beyond - including practitioners, experts, innovators, creatives and casual consumers - all bringing unique perspectives. If we can effectively harness that distributed intelligence, there's no limit to what we might achieve.

This year matters because it's the final year of our current data space contract. How we perform will shape not only ENA's future but broader perceptions of what professional networks can contribute to the European digital cultural heritage landscape. That's a privilege: we have the chance to consolidate ENA as a best practice, as an exemplary representation of the human individual in a digital universe.

So read this plan not as a collection of prescriptive mandates but as an expression of coordinated possibilities: ways in which you might contribute, collaborate, learn and co-lead. Whether you're active in Communities, interested in Country Groups, eager to share your knowledge or acquire new skills via the Europeana Academy, or simply want to stay connected with developments in digital cultural heritage, there's a place for you to get involved and a role for you to step into. Let's prove our worth and show what we can do!

Sofie Taes, Chair of the Europeana Network Association

Executive summary

As 2026 is dawning on us, the Europeana Network Association stands at a pivotal moment. With over 5.700 members, we have matured into one of Europe's most voluminous and influential digital cultural heritage networks. This final year of the current data space contract is not an ending, but a threshold: an opportunity to prove that networks deliver results that siloed approaches cannot match.

Our strategic priorities for 2026 focus on 6 interconnected areas:

- **Demonstrating organisational impact** through enhanced governance and community management
- **Expanding Member States engagement** via Country Groups and the Ambassadors' Network
- **Making reuse tangible** by supporting use cases and building communities of practice

- **Strengthening core member value** through networking opportunities, peer support and collaboration
- **Reimagining our digital presence** through the Europeana Pro transition
- **Addressing emerging challenges** including AI, heritage in crisis and long-term sustainability

These priorities reflect both contractual commitments and stakeholder needs. They position ENA to complete Year 4 of the data space contract successfully while building foundations for sustained impact beyond 2026. In the Activity Plan, we explore how the strategic priorities help us to achieve the expectations and aspirations for the coming working year and how we envision to complete all necessary actions jointly, as a Network of free agents with a joint interest and collective commitment.

1. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & OPERATIONALISATION

Strategic Priority 1: Demonstrating organisational impact

Why it matters: We have developed enhanced structures for community management, membership benefit demonstration, governance and cross-initiative workflows and procedures, Working Groups and Task Force terms of reference... but do they work? The Enhanced Community Management Model, the Long-term Sustainability and Governance Task Force outcomes, the workflows we've established: all require evidence of impact. We must show these frameworks enable better support, more effective collaboration and valuable outcomes.

What we'll do in 2026:

- **Measure and communicate impact** of the Enhanced Community Management Model through systematic evaluation of member satisfaction, community outputs, and cross-Initiative collaboration
- **Crystallise and consolidate governance improvements** emerging from the Sustainability Task Force, including clarified decision-making processes, clear accountability lines and decision making processes across the Europeana Initiative
- **Establish systematic frameworks** for (cross-initiative) Working Groups and Task Forces with clear terms of reference, transparent initiation processes, and defined pathways from recommendations to implementation and distribution

- **Demonstrate cross-Initiative collaboration** through joint planning sessions, shared KPIs and tangible examples of coordinated action across EF, EAF and ENA

Expected outcomes: Evidence-based assessment showing governance enhancements lead to improved member experience and amplified community outputs - Documented processes for initiating and managing collaborative work - Visible examples of how ENA's distributed expertise model delivers unique value - Foundation for future: organisational development beyond current contract period.

Strategic Priority 2: Expanding Member States engagement

Why it matters: The Country Groups pilot in Bulgaria, Italy and Slovenia validated a fundamentally different engagement model: one combining grassroots practitioner networks with strategic national coordination. This approach increases awareness, helps to develop skills, fosters cross-sectoral connections, enables peer learning and creates sustainable national networks connecting local practitioners to European opportunities.

What we'll do in 2026:

- **Implement Country Group governance structures** developed in 2025, enabling support for existing groups and facilitating new ones emerging across Europe while maintaining flexibility for different national contexts

- **Conduct and evaluate the Finland Ambassadors' Network pilot** to determine whether and how high-level advocacy mechanisms can complement practitioner-focused Country Groups, opening doors to policymakers and translating practitioner needs into policy realities
- **Aid the Europeana Foundation in implementing a centralized coordination system** for aligning country-specific activities across data acquisition, capacity building, editorial work and engagement, thereby providing a holistic understanding of activities in each country and optimizing resource allocation
- **Support individual ambassadors** through materials, guidance and recognition

Expected outcomes: Governance framework enabling systematic expansion of Country Groups while respecting local contexts - Evaluation report and recommendations on Ambassadors' Network model and scalability - Enhanced multi-level engagement strategy working vertically within countries and horizontally across Europe.

Strategic Priority 3: Making reuse tangible and achievable

Why it matters: The European Commission's review of the achievements in Year 3 emphasized the continued need for more and more diverse reuse scenarios, helping to demonstrate that the data space creates actual value for researchers, educators, creative practitioners and other stakeholder groups. While substantial progress has been made on the data side of things, we must now show and facilitate the data space's meaningful use.

What we'll do in 2026:

- **Support use case development and validation** by drawing on ENA member expertise across education, research and creative reuse to collect, document, and validate scenarios that demonstrate the data space's value to specific audiences

- **Develop social proofs and success stories** that motivate participation and adoption, showcasing how real users - from teachers to researchers to artists - derive value from cultural heritage data
- **Revisit the work of communities** as a source for reuse scenarios, enabling practitioners to share approaches, tools and experiences, and accelerating innovation and adoption
- **Deliver capacity building** that encompasses data (re)use, helping diverse audiences understand and leverage the data space through Europeana Academy training, community and cross-community workshops, and online or onsite events

Expected outcomes: Enriched portfolio of validated use cases spanning education, research, creative industries and public engagement - Documented success stories resulting from community work, providing social proof for different audience segments - Training programs and resources enabling diverse audiences to engage meaningfully with cultural heritage data.

Strategic Priority 4: Strengthening core member value

Why it matters: Member motivation research shows clearly what people value: networking, collaboration, professional development and staying current within the field. Our Communities remain the heart of the network: they form spaces where shared interests drive voluntary collaboration and knowledge creation. But members also want more structured support, mentorship and easy-to-access opportunities for meaningful connection.

What we'll do in 2026:

- **Optimise community management** through enhanced inter-community collaboration, systematic impact measurement and stronger support for member-led initiatives, proving that communities create real value for members' professional practice

- **Examining support actions** to address the 8% increase in members seeking structured guidance, mentorship, and collective problem-solving matching experienced practitioners with those seeking advice
- **Refine events programming** including quarterly Europeana Academy instructor-led training, enhanced online networking features that facilitate genuine connection rather than passive consumption, and Country Group-linked activities as well as pop-up-Network-events bringing the network closer to members' daily contexts
- **Strengthen knowledge exchange** through systematic documentation of Community outputs, better dissemination of emerging practices, and additional pathways for sharing expertise across the network

Expected outcomes: Measurable improvements in member satisfaction and engagement with Community activities - Diversified events portfolio serving different learning styles, time zones and professional profiles - Stronger sense of connection and belonging among network members.

Strategic Priority 5: Reimagining our digital presence

Why it matters: The decommissioning of Europeana Pro and development of its successor represents far more than a technical migration. It offers a unique opportunity to reimagine how ENA presents itself online, how we communicate with members and prospective members, and how we facilitate the connections and knowledge sharing that members value.

What we'll do in 2026:

- **Co-create requirements through workshops** gathering input on needs, desired features, and priorities for the new platform, ensuring it serves actual needs rather than assumptions
- **Implement automated workflows** for gathering and updating member information and facilitating efficient, iterative membership renewal based on objective criteria rather than disruptive mass campaigns

- **Execute migration plan** ensuring continuity of essential functions while significantly improving user experience, supporting community activities, integrating with training programs and facilitating Country Group coordination
- **Enhance discoverability and connection** making it easy for members to find expertise within the network, discover opportunities for engagement and understand the value proposition for considering membership

Expected outcomes: Digital presence reflecting organisational maturity and strategic priorities - Streamlined administrative processes freeing resources for member-facing activities - Digital presence supporting Community collaboration and knowledge exchange - Enhanced and streamlined storytelling as a means to communicate ENA's value to current and prospective members in a compelling way.

Strategic Priority 6: Addressing emerging challenges

Why it matters: Cultural heritage does not exist in isolation from forces reshaping society. Our strategic priorities must address the realities members face daily, including particularly pressing challenges where ENA can demonstrate thought leadership, facilitate knowledge exchange and connect practitioners grappling with similar issues across different contexts.

What we'll do in 2026:

Continue to invest in cross-community activities around the topic of AI bringing together perspectives from Copyright, Tech, Climate Action, and other Communities to explore implications for practice, ethics, professional development and responsible adoption in cultural heritage contexts

- **Address environmental sustainability concerns**, mainly through support of the Climate Action Community's initiatives to connect cultural heritage to climate action agendas
- **Address heritage in crisis** by considering how the network can support colleagues facing acute challenges through natural disasters, armed conflicts or political instability, and furthering conversations on how digitization contributes to preservation and resilience
- **Position ENA as a thought leader** on emerging challenges through events, resources and knowledge exchange that look outward, engage expertise beyond the sector and think critically about possibilities and responsibilities

Expected outcomes: Whitepaper on responsible AI adoption in cultural heritage - Strengthened capacity for environmental sustainability in digital heritage practices - Mechanisms for supporting colleagues and heritage in crisis contexts.

Securing long-term sustainability

Underpinning all 6 strategic priorities is fundamental work to secure ENA's future beyond the current data space contract. This includes:

- **Clarifying ENA's role in projects and partnerships** through formalised processes, risk assessment mechanisms and clear frameworks for participation
- **Investigating governance questions** around representativity, resource allocation, management structures and decision making processes versus accountability lines through the Sustainability and Governance Task Force work
- **Diversifying funding streams** by identifying grant opportunities, developing partnerships with aligned organizations and investigating innovative models

- **Building organisational capacity** through revisited administrative workflows, CRM development and ‘chains of command’ enabling effective participation in complex partnerships

The work of the Long-term Sustainability and Governance Task Force will be crucial, addressing fundamental questions about governance models, funding structures, and relationships that enable us to realise our 2030 vision.

2. ORGANISATION OF WORK

Moving into a new year of activities, we intend to organise our work in-keeping with established practices. At the same time, we envisage that ongoing discussions with regards to sustainability and governance might prompt us back to the drawing table in the course of that year. The Management Board and the Members Council commit to communicating about significant redirections in workflows or responsibilities with the ENA membership if and when initiative-wide support for such redirections is achieved. At this point in time (October 2025) we foresee activities of ENA in 2026 to be organised as follows:

ENA Members Council

The [Members Council](#), a body of elected ENA representatives, actively helps the Europeana Initiative to implement its strategy, and supports the digital transformation of the cultural heritage sector and the deployment of the data space.

The Council currently counts 36 Members that have all become well-imbedded in the Europeana leadership ecosystem - no elections take place in 2025, so the same group of Councillors will remain in place.

Previous investigations towards increasing the involvement and the efficiency of this important body have led to stronger expressions of expectations from Councillors in the procedure for submitting their candidacy, as well as in the

operations of the MC throughout the year and the expected involvement in preparation of and during MC meetings in particular. This approach has yielded excellent results, with increased interaction and participation in meetings, both internally and externally, that help to familiarise and engage a variety of stakeholders with ENA, Europeana and the Data Space. The active participation of the full scope of MC members is something we need to work on and improve further.

Chief responsibilities of the Members Councillors include:

- evaluating and steering the activities of the communities, Task Forces and Working Groups, ensuring their progress as well as the state of ENA governance and budget.
- taking up an active role in at least one of the communities, Task Forces or Working Groups
- active involvement in the evaluation of the Country Group pilots and the possible continuation or expansion of the pilot, including championing the data space via a Country group in Councillors' own countries

- executing tasks committed to in the Implementation and Roadmap towards the realization of the data space contract
- contributing to the representation of currently untapped, silent or unserved stakeholder groups and communities
- engaging in activities supporting and expanding ENA's communications efforts

The Council meets three times a year - of which at least one meeting is an in-person event - to discuss ENA's priorities and progress towards the Europeana Strategy in line with activities of the [Europeana Foundation](#) and [Europeana Aggregators' Forum](#). We welcome Members Council representatives to propose hosting in-person meetings on their premises, with a view to increasing involvement and representativity of our work as a governance body.

ENA Management Board

The current [Management Board](#) was elected in January 2025.

The MB will continue to lead the development of the ENA's strategic vision, play an active role in discussion on DS governance, policies and budget, and make sure that across the Initiative membership provisions are made where and when applicable. MB will continue to be involved in long-term visioning processes and follow the activities of the Supervisory and Advisory Boards as well as the CEDCHE in its capacity as an advisory body supporting the EC.

In liaising with the other two pillars of the Europeana Initiative (EF, EAF), MB continuously invests in strengthening collaborations and improving governance towards co-decision making. Furthermore, MB meets up monthly with the other two pillars and has bilateral conversations with the EAF.

Furthermore, the MB provides guidance and frameworks for ENA Communities, Task Forces and Working Groups, including the evaluation of the progress of their work in line with the strategic direction of the ENA.

The MB will continue to meet monthly online and to communicate regularly with the MC through in-person meetings, emails and Basecamp messages as well as dedicated WhatsApp groups. Communications with the wider ENA membership are mostly conducted via the co-curation of the monthly ENA Newsletter. How improved communication can be achieved via ENA's online representation, will be examined in the process of decommissioning Europeana Pro.

ENA Secretariat

The ENA Secretariat, run by [Zuzana Malicherova](#) and supported by the Europeana Foundation's Community and Partner Engagement Team, will continue to provide day to day support to both the Members Council and the Management Board as well the Communities, Task Forces and Working Groups.

ENA Communities

The seven [ENA communities](#) are ENA's most important instrument in addressing the challenges faced by cultural heritage institutions in this age of digital transformation. The communities will continue to function as trans-national networks of professionals and experts who come together to cultivate and share knowledge and practices around

relevant topics. With a view to the new digital reality presented by the data space, the particular role of the communities in the execution of the data space contract's Work Package on capacity building, as well as in the scope of the emerging Country Groups, is considered to be vital.

Community members can sign up to receive community newsletters, join various communication channels and social media groups, and attend community-related events and meetings. The major focus of the communities will be on implementing their 2026 work plans, including activities in the scope of current and emerging [Task Forces](#). The work plans will be drafted on the basis of a new template, co-developed with the EF, and will be monitored by the community Steering Groups, the Management Board and the Members Council.

ENA Membership

Active engagement and empowerment of [ENA members](#) is our key priority. So far, our accomplishments in attracting young professionals and underrepresented communities/regions, while keeping the existing network engaged and active, have remained below the level desired. We will actively seek to increase engagement with these audiences and expect the Country Groups to have a positive impact on this area of action.

In terms of numbers we expect to start 2026 with around 6.000 members. We hope to continue to gain between 30 and 80 new members every month throughout the next year. New members are approved by the ENA Management Board on a monthly basis. The process involves the collation of new applications by the ENA secretariat and the review of each applicant's profile and expression of interest by MB members, using an assessment framework that was developed in 2022. Of note for 2026 is the refreshment exercise that will be initiated, revisiting compact contingents of members with the request to reconfirm their membership.

ENA Working Groups

The [Governance Working Group](#) remains responsible for offering recommendations regarding transparent, fair and effective governance to the Management Board and Members Council, as well as any changes in the underlying governance principles and procedures for ENA governance. Several cross-initiative WGs are active as well: the WG [Supporting the digital cultural heritage of Ukraine](#), the [Capacity Building Working Group](#) and the [Innovative Operating Models WG](#). All the ENA Working Groups report on their progress at Members Council meetings, including the General Assembly. A new working group dedicated to heritage in crisis is emerging at the time of the compilation of this document.

ENA General Assembly

Our members will have the opportunity to come together at the ENA General Assembly, in the fall of 2027. During the Assembly, they will be able to express their opinions on governance matters, progress made with the implementation of the tender, approve key documents, and launch the Members Council elections and voting. The communities will have an opportunity to present their key activities.

ENA Communications

ENA will continue to work with the EF on the presentation of ENA on [Europeana Pro](#), on planning the decommissioning of Europeana Pro and related planning for the presentation of ENA on the common European data space for cultural heritage website. Discussions on how to make information about ENA more easily accessible and available as multilingual content will inform this longer term planning.

We will continue to co-curate and contribute to the monthly [Network Newsletter](#). The Europeana [LinkedIn Group](#) (7,490 members in October 2024) will continue to provide a discussion forum for ENA members. We will also promote our communication efforts and dedicated campaigns on relevant social media platforms using ENA hashtags. The hashtag [#EuropeanaCommunities](#) brings the ENA, its specialist communities and other Europeana-related networks together.

Next to these established paths, we are aiming at increasing engagement and collaboration between ENA MB, MC, communities, WGs, TFs and the wider membership as well as cross-pillar communication by examining improved CRM performance and communication tools that would align with this.

Cross-Initiative cooperation

The implementation of the tender includes an investigation into optimising collaboration among the three pillars of the Initiative. Representatives of EF, ENA, and EAF meet monthly to discuss and align common areas of work, (re)assessing priorities, exchanging insights into developments within each of the groups, and keeping track of progress in achieving tender commitments as well as joint ambitions. Our cross-initiative, cross-sectoral member state advocacy groups (Country Groups), launched as a pilot at the end of 2023, were evaluated early in 2025 and a continued effort is planned for end 2025 and throughout 2026.

3. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS PER QUARTER

Q1: January to March 2026

Communities: Task Forces and work plans approval

The communities will have until January 2026 to estimate their budget requirements and finalise and publish their work plans for the year, making use of the new template shared by the EF. The process will include an advanced discussion on how to implement the directions proposed in the Enhanced Community Management plan.

Members Council meeting

The first meeting of the Members Council will take place in March 2026 with a focus on discussing issues of strategic importance for ENA and projecting activities for the coming year. Depending upon availability and opportunity, this meeting might be hybrid. A partial overlap with the

Europeana Aggregators Forum, with a view to weaving the pillars closer together, is currently under investigation.

Q2: April to June 2026

Task Force and Community Steering Group meetings

Community Steering Groups or running Task Forces may plan their own meetings and events.

Q3: July to September 2026

Members Council meeting

In early summer 2026, the Members Council will hold its second meeting. The agenda will focus on the work of the communities and formalities related to ENA governance, budget and membership, as well as strategic issues such as the adoption of AI in the sector and alignment with priorities of the rest of the Europeana Initiative.

Task Force and Community Steering Group meetings

Community Steering Groups or running Task Forces may organise meetings in this period.

Start of the 2026 voting preparations

The Governance Working Group will nominate the annual Elections and Voting Committee, which will start preparing the 2026 election and voting process, which concerns annual approval of formal ENA documents. A communications plan and timeline will be drawn up in collaboration with the

ENA Secretariat. Various announcements around the voting process, championed by the Chair of the Committee.

Start of the 2026 General Assembly preparations

In September 2026, the Management Board, in collaboration with the Elections and Voting Committee and the ENA Secretariat, will begin the preparatory process for the 2026 General Assembly meeting. This includes setting the agenda, preparing documentation, convening the General Assembly and managing all communications surrounding the meeting.

Q4: October to December 2026

Community work plan evaluation

Community work plans will go through a process of evaluation by the Management Board and the Members Council, and the community chairs will be asked to present their main deliverables and milestones achieved in the ENA annual report.

Delivery of Task Force recommendations

Running Task Forces will be required to submit their final recommendations to the Members Council by the end of the year 2026. Once reviewed, the Task Force chairs will be asked to promote their outcomes through Europeana Pro news, Network newsletter and social media.

Members Council meetings and General Assembly

In this period, the ENA Secretariat will organise the third Members Council meeting of the year, as well as the General Assembly meeting. After the General Assembly, ENA members will be called to action via e-mail to formally approve the annual ENA documents and cast their vote in the 2026 MC

election and voting process. The events will be promoted via regular channels as well as dedicated campaigns via email, the Network Newsletter, LinkedIn and X. It is for the ENA MB and MC to discuss how far it is suitable, desirable or necessary to seek overlap or complementarity between two or more of these meetings.

Community Steering Group & Task Force meetings

Community Steering Groups or running Task Forces will have an opportunity to organise separate community meetings also in this period.

Launch of the 2026 elections & voting

The voting period - expected to last for a week - will be launched by the Management Board at the General Assembly meeting, and will be overseen by the Elections and Voting Committee. The results of the MC election and voting process will be communicated through regular channels as well as in a dedicated communication campaign.



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