Guideline – Records Disposition Authority (RDA) Development 6003.00.25

Issued By: Enterprise Information Management

1. Effective Date

This Records Disposition Authority (RDA) Development Guideline takes effect immediately upon approval by the Government Chief Information Officer.

2. Application

The three-party collaborative methodology outlined in this guideline is mandatory for GNWT departments and other government bodies who are Enterprise Information Management's (EIM) clients. The methodology outlined in this guideline is recommended but not mandatory for government bodies who are not EIM clients. Non-EIM clients work directly with the Northwest Territories Archives (NWTA) on the development and approval of RDAs.

3. Context

The purpose of this guideline is to provide a standardized methodology for developing a records disposition authority (RDA) for the operational records belonging to a single government body. This resource guides those assigned responsibility for the development of disposition authorities, including both employees and anyone contracted on behalf of the government body.

4. RDA Development Purpose

RDAs, such as an Operational Records Classification Schedule (ORCS), are the plans described in the *Archives Regulations*, section 1.

Government Bodies develop RDAs to comply with the legal requirements around the retention and disposal of public records. The RDAs are developed and approved pursuant to this guideline and the Records Scheduling Policy 6003.00.24 (as per the Operational Records Standard 6003.00.32)

The GNWT promotes the use of function-based records classification systems. Functional classification is recommended by the international records management standard, ISO 15489-1(2016) *Information and documentation – Records management – Part 1: Concepts and principles*, section 8.3, Business classification schemes. A functional classification system reflects the workflow used by document management systems more closely than subject systems.

5. Guidelines

The Guideline describes the roles and standard procedures involved in RDA development. The accepted standardized formats for RDAs in the GNWT are elaborated on in the supporting how-to documentation and templates.

5.1 Roles

5.1.1 Development and Validation Roles

5.1.1.1 RDA Developer

A government body will designate an RDA Developer to lead the process. The RDA Developer is either records management personnel, another staff member, or a contractor. The RDA Developer is involved throughout the entire process. It is the responsibility of the RDA Developer to notify EIM of their intention to start the development process, to draft the functional analysis and RDA, and to respond to questions and feedback from EIM and NWTA. The RDA Developer is also responsible for obtaining management approval from the applicable division or body and final signature from the Deputy Head.

5.1.1.2 EIM

EIM involvement begins from the initial determination of an RDA through to the finalization of the approval stage. EIM provides advice and guidance on the development of the records disposition authority, ensure that it follows one of the approved standardized formats, and reviews and identifies any concerns with the retention periods.

5.1.1.3 NWTA

NWTA involvement begins from the initial determination of an RDA through to the finalization of the approval stage. NWTA provides technical assistance, assist with research, identify records of enduring value, and specify final disposition actions.

5.1.1.4 Government Body Management

Management of the unit(s), Legal, Internal Audit, and other parties to which the RDA development process pertains (as referenced in the Records Scheduling Policy) will review and comment on the draft classification structure presented by the RDA Developer. The purpose of the review is to confirm that all the records created by the government body, division, or section have been identified and that the descriptions in the scope notes are complete and accurate. Management validates acceptance of the structure before it moves forward to endorsement/approval.

5.1.2 Approval Roles

5.1.2.1 EIM

EIM reviews the approval package to confirm the RDA conforms to the Records Scheduling Policy and associated standards and guidelines, and that it can be implemented within EIM's systems and services. By signing the cover sheet, EIM is recommending the RDA's approval.

5.1.2.2 Territorial Archivist

The Territorial Archivist reviews the approval package to confirm that the final disposition actions identified in the RDA are appropriate. By signing the cover sheet, the Territorial Archivist is also recommending to the Deputy Head that the RDA document be approved.

5.1.2.3 Deputy Head

The Deputy Head is accountable for the management of the government body's information, as assigned in the GNWT's Recorded Information Management Policy. By signing the cover sheet, the Deputy Head is approving the RDA for use within the government body.

5.2 Ongoing RDA Development Procedure

The government body identifies the need for a records disposition authority and designates an individual responsible for development. This is the RDA Developer. As soon as possible after the need for developing a records disposition authority has been identified, the RDA Developer consults with EIM and the NWTA.

5.2.1 Initial meeting

Once a government body indicates that they wish to start developing an RDA, EIM schedules a meeting between themselves, NWTA, and the RDA Developer. The three parties determine which path is taken, be it new RDA, amendment, or one-time RDA, and if a full or partial functional analysis is warranted. EIM introduces the development tools.

5.2.2 RDA Development Status Tracking System (RDA Development Tool)

The RDA Development Status Tracking System is used to monitor and track the progression of a records schedule through its development and approval (or cancellation) stages. It provides the RDA Developer with quick access to the key documents and tools used in the RDA development and approval stages. It also provides a time stamped repository for any comments from EIM, NWTA, and the RDA Developer to keep the other parties informed regarding the status at each step in the development and approval (or cancellation) stages.

5.2.3 Functional Analysis (RDA Development Tool)

The functional analysis process is recommended by the international records management standard, ISO 15489-1(2016) Information and documentation – Records management – Part 1: Concepts and principles, section 7, Appraisal.

The Functional Analysis documents the links between the government body's business and the records it produces. The Functional Analysis assists RDA developers in making decisions about how the records should be organized, classified, and scheduled. The information obtained in the Functional Analysis helps the government body demonstrate that the RDA meets its administrative, legal, evidential, industry, social, financial and audit requirements.

The Functional Analysis is completed by the RDA Developer in collaboration with EIM and the NWTA prior to developing and submitting an RDA document for review.

The RDA Developer studies the records and conducts interviews with the creators and users of the information in order to determine the recordkeeping requirements. This process is detailed in the supporting documents.

The Functional Analysis Template is developed and approved by EIM and the NWTA. This template is used to document the analysis and is part of this Guideline's supporting documentation.

5.2.4 RDA Development

The RDA Developer uses the information contained in the functional analysis to write the RDA and fill out the RDA Ongoing Template. The RDA Developer completes the RDA in collaboration with EIM and the NWTA.

The RDA Ongoing Template is developed and approved by EIM and NWTA. This template is used to identify the classes of records to which the RDA applies and the associated retention periods and methods of records disposal.

5.2.5 Cancelling an RDA Development Process

A government body has the option to cancel an RDA Development Process. Cancelling an RDA means that the RDA or amendment hasn't been approved and the government body is no longer pursuing approval.

RDAs are cancelled for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:

- The government body has decided they no longer have time or resources required to complete an RDA.
- The government body had completed a reorganization and the work that had started needs to be revisited.

To cancel an RDA development process, the RDA Developer contacts EIM and the NWTA in writing and informs them that the RDA development process is being cancelled. EIM will cancel the RDA in the RDA Development Status Tracking System.

5.2.6 Submitting an RDA for Approval

When EIM, NWTA, and the RDA Developer are satisfied with an RDA, EIM management will sign it, signaling endorsement. The RDA will then be forwarded for review and signature by the Territorial Archivist, approving its use for managing the retention and disposal of the records described within. The RDA will then be forwarded to the RDA Developer to obtain the signature of the Deputy Head or equivalent to approve its use within the government body. The RDA is approved when all three signatures are affixed.

5.3 Making Changes to an Approved Ongoing RDA

5.3.1 Corrigenda Process

A government body uses corrigenda to make minor corrections to an approved RDA, such as fixing a spelling or grammatical error or updating dates. These errors require correction to avoid confusion. The corrections do not impact the approved ownership of an RDA, classification structure, content, retention schedules, or final disposition. The corrigenda document follows the format agreed upon by EIM and NWTA and is signed by the Director or equivalent of the program area.

5.3.2 Amendment Process

Government bodies use an amendment to revise an existing RDA update. Changes requiring amendments include organizational change within a government body, the addition of new functions or activities, the need for additional records classes, or the need for different retentions or final dispositions.

The process for submitting an RDA amendment is essentially the same as the process used to approve the original RDA. However, the review and approval process for an amendment focuses on the portions of the RDA that have changed.

5.3.3 Rescinding an RDA

An RDA, or portion of an RDA should be rescinded when it has already been approved but it is no longer valid. A government body has the option to rescind an RDA for several reasons:

- The RDA no longer meets the requirements of the government body, and the government body has determined that an amendment will not meet its needs.
- The RDA has been replaced by a new RDA.
- The function has ceased to exist within that unit/division.

The government body identifies the RDA that should be rescinded for one of the reasons listed above and submits a rescindment request using the prescribed form and tracking sheet to NWTA. If there are no concerns, the Territorial Archivist approves the request. The government body notifies EIM that the RDA has been rescinded.

5.4 One Time Records Disposition Authorities

Government bodies develop One Time RDAs (OTRDA) to schedule and dispose of records that relate to a function no longer performed by the government body, when the government body that currently performs that function does not want to take custody of the records, when a government body inherits from a predecessor organization records that do not reflect current business processes, or when records relate to a function previously scheduled under a rescinded RDA.

5.4.1 One Time RDA Development Procedure

The government body identifies the need for an OTRDA and designates an individual responsible for development. This is the RDA Developer. As soon as possible after the need for developing a records disposition authority has been identified, the RDA Developer consults with EIM and the NWTA.

5.4.2 Initial meeting

Once a government body indicates that they wish to start developing an OTRDA, EIM schedules a meeting between themselves, NWTA, and the RDA Developer. The purpose of this meeting is to confirm the need for an OTRDA, its scope, and project requirements.

5.4.3 RDA Development Status Tracking System (RDA Development Tool)

The RDA Development Status Tracking System is used to monitor and track the progression of a records schedule through its development and approval (or cancellation) stages. It provides the RDA Developer with quick access to the key documents and tools used in the RDA development and approval stages. It also provides a time stamped repository for any comments from EIM, NWTA, and the RDA Developer to keep the other parties informed regarding the status at each step in the development and approval (or cancellation) stages.

5.4.4 OTRDA Development

The RDA Developer fills out the One Time RDA Template. The RDA Developer completes the OTRDA in collaboration with EIM and the NWTA.

The One Time RDA Template is developed and approved by EIM and NWTA. This template is used to identify the classes of records to which the RDA applies and the associated retention periods and methods of records disposal.

5.4.5 Submitting an OTRDA for Approval

When EIM, NWTA, and the RDA Developer are satisfied with the OTRDA, EIM management signs it, signaling endorsement. The OTRDA will then be forwarded for review and signature by the Territorial Archivist, approving its use for managing the retention and disposal of the records described within. The OTRDA will then be forwarded to the RDA Developer to obtain the signature of the Deputy Head or equivalent to approve its use within the government body. The OTRDA is approved when all three signatures are affixed.

5.5 Government Reorganization RDA Transfer Process

The Government of the Northwest Territories is in a constant state of re-organization. As such, when records identified in an RDA have been transferred to another government body or internally the other government body/division is authorized to utilize this RDA for up to five years after the re-organization has taken place. By the end of this period, the RDA is to be amended to reflect the change in ownership or rescinded and replaced by a new RDA. This is consistent with the Records Scheduling Policy: *Government bodies shall review their records disposition authorities at least once every five years to ensure that the descriptions of the records and the retention periods are still valid*.

5.6 RDA Maintenance

As per section 6.2.1 in the Records Scheduling Policy, government bodies are required to review their records disposition authorities at least once every five years to ensure that the descriptions of the records and the retention periods are still valid. Refer to supplementary how to document.

6. Reference

Records Scheduling Policy. 6003.00.24

Standard Operational Records. 6003.05.32

How To Documents and Templates

RDA Development Status Tracking System

NWT Archives Act

ISO Standard ISO 15489-1:2016 Information and documentation - Records management

7. Monitoring and Reporting

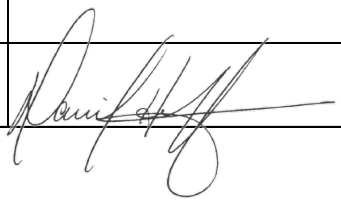
There is no monitoring or reporting requirement. Government bodies are responsible for conforming to these guidelines.

8. Inquiries

All inquiries regarding this guideline should be directed to Enterprise Information Management.

9. Approval

This guideline effective from the date approved below.

Government Chief Information Officer	Signature	Date
Dave Heffernan		January 30, 2025

Appendix A

Definitions

Active records are records that are required on a regular basis. They may be referred to daily, weekly, or every couple of weeks. Because active records are used frequently, they should be kept in the office where they were created.

Administrative Records Classification System (ARCS) is the government-wide standard for identifying, describing, organizing, classifying, managing, and disposing of all types of administrative (housekeeping) records. Administrative records support "housekeeping" functions such as the management of facilities, property, material, finances, personnel and information systems. Administrative records also relate to common management processes including committees, agreements, contracts, information services, legal opinions, and other similar functions.

Archival Records are records selected for permanent preservation and held by the NWT Archives.

Archival Selection refers to the process whereby the NWT Archives determines which government records will be retained permanently to document the history and operations of the GNWT.

Cancel to decide not to conduct or perform; to destroy the force, effectiveness, or validity; to bring to nothingness. Cancelling a schedule means that a schedule or amendment hasn't been approved and is no longer going any further down the path towards approval.

Control refers to the government body's power or authority to direct and make decisions about the management and use of recorded information.

Corrigenda are used when error(s) need to be corrected in an RDA. Corrigenda correct more than one error and the term corrigendum is used if correcting a single error.

Custody means safekeeping or care.

Digital Integrated Information Management System (DIIMS) is a corporate GNWT-wide solution that enables the GNWT to gain better access and control of its electronic information throughout the organization. It is a content lifecycle management system that provides organizations with the tools to manage and share corporate information through its lifecycle from a single repository.

Digitization is the process of converting records from analogue (physical) formats to digital formats.

Digitized record is a record that has been converted from an analogue record to a digital record format.

Electronic mail (e-mail) messages (also known as Outlook data files) are communications created, sent, or received on an electronic mail system and include the content of the communication, any attachments transmitted with the message as well as the associated transmission and receipt data. E-mail messages include those sent or received internally or externally. (see Microsoft Outlook Data Files)

Enterprise Information Management's (EIM) clients refers to departments, Housing NWT, the Legislative Assembly, and those public agencies who use services managed or coordinated by EIM, such as the Digital Integrated Information Management System (DIIMS) and the GNWT records centres.

Final disposition is the final action taken with regard to a group of records after their inactive phase has ended. It may be either destruction or transfer to the NWT Archives.

Functional Analysis Functional Analysis is a top-down hierarchical analysis starting with strategic goals and purpose, and then identifying the functions and activities which support them. At its lowest level, a Functional Analysis identifies transactions, which are the smallest parts of work processes. This is a mandatory review document that must be completed by a government body or agency prior to submitting an RDA for review by ERM and the NWT Archives. The purpose of the Functional Analysis is to find out how the government body is organized, to understand the legal environment, to identify the different functions that the government body does, and to identify how the different divisions relate to one another.

Government body means (a) a department, branch or office of the Government of the Northwest Territories, (b) an agency, board, commission, corporation, office or other body designated in the regulations to the *Archives Act*, or (c) the office of a member of the Executive Council.

Integrity refers to the record being complete and unaltered in all essential respects.

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is an independent, non-governmental, international standard setting body. ISO's membership consists of 162 national standards bodies, including the Standards Council of Canada (SCC). It is the world's largest developer of voluntary international standards.

Lifecycle means the span or time from the creation or receipt of a record through its useful life to its final disposition.

One-Time Records Disposition Authority is intended to be used one time only to dispose of records no longer being generated or have been transferred by the program area. They could also be created for records inherited by another government body wherein the function no longer is required or exists.

Operational Records Classification System (RDA) is the government-wide standardized system for the classification, filing, retrieval, retention and disposition of operational records. Each government body will have one or more RDA. Operational records are those records which relate to

the operations and services provided by a government body in carrying out the functions for which it is responsible according to statute, mandate, or policy. Operational records are distinct from administrative records and are unique to each government organization.

Preservation refers to systems that manage the creation, capture, storage, use, maintenance and disposition of recorded information and their metadata.

Public record means a record that is created by or for or is received by a government body in carrying out its activities, but does not include

> (a) a record of the Legislative Assembly, the office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly or the office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly,
>
> (b) a record of a committee of the Legislative Assembly,
>
> (c) a record of a member of the Legislative Assembly, other than a member of the Executive Council,
>
> (d) a record of a member of the Executive Council that relates to his or her activities as member of the Legislative Assembly,
>
> (e) correspondence sent or received by a member of the Legislative Assembly, unless the correspondence relates to his or her responsibilities as a member of the Executive Council,
>
> (f) a record of a member of the Legislative Assembly, including a member of the Executive Council, that relates to his or her constituency office or to his or her representation of constituents, or
>
> (g) a surplus copy of a record or a copy of a record that is created only for convenience of reference.

Rescind to take away (remove); to take back or cancel; to make void by action of the enacting authority or a superior authority (repeal). Rescinding a schedule means that the RDA has already been approved but it is no longer valid.

Record is a record of information, regardless of its form and characteristics, the means by which it was created and the media on which it may be stored and, without limited the generality of the foregoing, include

> (a) a document, book, ledger, photograph, image, audio-visual recording, x-ray, map and drawing, and
>
> (b) a record created or stored in digital or other intangible form by electronic means,
>
> but does not include software or a mechanism that produces records.

Records Disposition Authority (RDA) a plan respecting the preservation and destruction of public records as described in the *Archives Regulations*, which must (a) include a comprehensive description of each class of public records; (b) specify the criteria for determining whether a class of public records should be preserved or destroyed; and (c) specify the minimum periods during which the government body must retain each class of records that it intends to destroy.

Retention period refers to the length of time a record must be retained in order to satisfy administrative, fiscal, legal and research requirements of a government body. Retention periods are usually specified in number of years or by reference to the termination of a project or event.

Records series A group of related records filed/used together as a unit and evaluated as a unit for retention purposes (e.g., a personnel file consisting of an application, reference letters, benefit forms, etc.).

Three-party collaborative methodology refers to a structured approach to RDA development where three parties, consisting of the Government Body, Enterprise Information Management and the NWT Archives work together to complete an RDA development project. The RDA Developer represents the Government Body and its management team.

Total Retention refers to the total length of time a record must be retained in order to satisfy administrative, fiscal, legal and research requirements of a government body. This includes time in the office and in storage, if required.

Transitory records are records that are needed only for a limited time for the completion of a routine action or to prepare a subsequent record. Transitory records do not include records required by government organizations to control, support, or document the delivery of programs, to carry out operations, to make decisions, or to account for activities of the government.