

# International Resource Sharing and Document Delivery: Principles and Guidelines for Procedure

*First agreed by IFLA 1954*

*Major revision 1978, modified 1987*

*Major revision 2001*

Revision February 2009

The shared use of individual library collections is a necessary element of international co-operation by libraries. Just as no library can be self-sufficient in meeting all the information needs of its users, so no country can be self-sufficient. The supply of loans and copies between libraries in different countries is a valuable and necessary part of the Interlibrary loan process.

Since every country must determine the ways in which it provides resource sharing and document supply, the following principles and guidelines have no mandatory force. However individual countries and libraries are strongly encouraged to use these guidelines as a basis for the conduct of international lending. The principles protect the interests of all libraries, and set out the recommended practice by individual nations for access to collections.

There are eight major principles, each of which is supported by a number of guidelines.

The terms *lending*, *interlending* and *interlibrary loan*, and the terms *document supply* and *document delivery*, have been used interchangeably throughout this document.

## Principles and Guidelines for Procedure

### 1. National responsibility

**Each country should accept responsibility for providing access to its own publications to any other country, by loan, photocopy or other appropriate method. This applies certainly to those published from the present date, and as far as possible retrospectively.**

1.1. Each country has a special responsibility to supply its own national imprints to libraries in other countries. The concept of universal availability of published material (UAP) relies on this principle, and this responsibility should be accepted readily by all countries.

1.2. No country or library is under an obligation to supply a work that has been requested, but all reasonable efforts should be made to satisfy international requests.

1.3. Particular effort should be made to satisfy requests received from libraries in less developed countries, in support of the concept of UAP.

1.4. All communication should be in clear and simple language in order to avoid misunderstanding across linguistic barriers.

## 2. National resource sharing system

**Each country should aim to develop an efficient national resource sharing system, since national resource sharing systems are the essential infrastructure of international resource sharing.**

2.1. Recommendations on developing efficient national resource sharing systems are outside the scope of these guidelines, but readers are referred to the *Model National Interlibrary Loan Code*, (see at URL: <http://www.ifla.org/VI/2/p3/model.htm>) also produced by IFLA, which sets out the basic requirements of a national system.

## 3. National policy for international resource sharing

Each country should have a national policy for international resource sharing and document delivery of its own publications. The policy should be disseminated through the national library, national library association, or other major interlending institution. It should also be made easily available from the web pages of these organizations. That national policy should state explicitly the advantages of international and global resource sharing, should advise on best practices and work in favour of a growing interlending cohesion, whatever the library organization might be in each particular country.

3.1. Where a country has a national centre for interlibrary loan and document delivery, this centre should be the main focus for the development of a national policy. Where there is no national centre, responsibility should rest clearly with the national library, a national interlending co-ordinating body, major resource sharing institutions, or national library association.

3.2. All libraries in the country involved in international resource sharing or document delivery should be aware of, and work within, national policy.

3.3. The national policy for international resource sharing should be made available to all libraries outside the country via the national library (and included on the national library's web site) or by other individual libraries that receive international interlending requests. Similarly, all major libraries should make available to requesting libraries their own policy on handling international requests.

3.4. The national policy should indicate whether ongoing requests should be sent via the national centre, where one exists, or whether individual libraries may send requests direct to supplying libraries inside the country.

3.5. Similarly, the national policy should make clear whether incoming requests should go via the national centre (where one exists), and to what extent individual libraries should accept and satisfy international requests. The IFLA publication *Guide to Centres of International Lending* and *Guide to Centres of International Document Delivery* list institutions to be contacted in the first instance if in doubt.

3.6. All libraries within the country should aim to handle requests from other countries in a consistent manner in order to offer a clear, consistent, and effective service for international requests.

3.7. Whichever the organisation mentioned in 3.1 takes the lead; it should put forth influence, effort, and support on behalf of system interoperability, at the national and international level.

#### **4. Sending the request**

**Supplying libraries should accept requests submitted in any format wherever possible. Requesting libraries should be aware that not all formats will be accepted by all supplying libraries. Accuracy should be ensured at all points in the request process.**

- 4.1. The requesting library should endeavour to use electronic ILL request facilities whenever these are available.
- 4.2. Requests submitted by e-mail, fax, or other fast methods should conform to recognized standards, such as the *IFLA Guidelines for Email Requests*, (see URL <http://www.ifla.org/VI/2/p3/g-ill.htm>) the *IFLA Fax Guidelines*, (see URL <http://www.ifla.org/VI/2/p3/g-fax.htm>) or the ISO ILL Protocol, if appropriate.
- 4.3. Requests using paper forms should be on *IFLA Request Forms*, (see URL: <http://www.ifla.org/VI/2/intro.htm>) or on other forms authorised by IFLA.
- 4.4. Where the loan of an original or a specific type of copy is essential, this should be stated on the request.
- 4.5. Where the loan of an original is required, reasonable effort should be made to ensure that no copy is available in the requesting library's own country before a request is sent abroad.
- 4.6. Incomplete or inaccurate requests cause delays and may have to be returned to the requesting library for further checking. It is the responsibility of the requesting library to verify and, where necessary, complete the bibliographic details of the item requested to the best of its ability.

#### **5. Supplying the item**

**The decision whether to supply a substitute copy or to loan the original rests with the supplying library. Each country should be sympathetic to the requesting library's ability to access the supplied format.**

- 5.1. The supplying library should send the item or provide a response as quickly as possible and by the fastest available method.
- 5.2. Items should be sent direct to the requesting library, except where it is specifically stated that they must be sent to a national centre.
- 5.3. All items lent should be clearly marked with the name of the owning library.
- 5.4. The supplying library should be as generous as possible in setting the due date for the return of loaned items, taking into account the time required for postal delivery and return of the item.
- 5.5. Where an item cannot be supplied, the reason for non-supply should be given as clearly and as fully as possible. *The IFLA multilingual list of ILL Response Codes* (see URL <http://www.ifla.org/VI/2/p3/rcodes.htm>) should be used for this purpose.

#### **6. Copyright**

**Due regard must be given to the copyright laws of the supplying country. While material requested on international ILL may often fall within 'fair use' or 'fair dealing' provisions, responsibility rests with the supplying library to inform the requesting library of any copyright restrictions which might apply.**

- 6.1. These guidelines relating to copyright and international resource sharing support the *IFLA Position Statement on Copyright in the Digital Environment*. (see URL <http://www.ifla.org/V/press/copydig.htm>) Libraries should be aware of this position statement.
- 6.2. Each supplying library should be aware of, and work within, the copyright laws of its own country. In addition, the supplying library should ensure that any relevant

copyright information is made available and communicated to requesting libraries.

6.3. Lending, and limited copying for purposes such as education, research or private study, are usually exceptions within national copyright legislation. The supplying library should inform the requesting library of these exceptions.

6.4. The requesting library should pay due regard to the copyright laws of the supplying library's country.

6.5. Each supplying library must abide by any licenses agreed to by their organisation, which may place some restrictions on the use of electronic resources for ILL transactions.

6.6. Libraries should be aware of the *IFLA/CLM Licensing Principles* (see URL <http://www.ifla.org/V/ebpb/copy.htm>) considering providing copies from licensed sources.

6.7. The supplying library is not obliged to participate in services which enable copyright fee-paid copies to be supplied.

## **7. Responsibility for loaned material**

**The requesting library assumes responsibility for borrowed materials from the time the material leaves the supplying library until it is safely received back. Fast, secure methods should be used for supplying and returning items.**

7.1. Loans should be packaged and labelled by both the supplying and requesting libraries to ensure that they conform to customs requirements. It is the responsibility of both the requesting and supplying libraries to ensure they are aware of current customs regulations with respect to the international loan of items.

7.2. Original documents, when received by the requesting library, must be used in accordance with its normal regulations unless the supplying library stipulates certain conditions.

7.3. It is the responsibility of the requesting library to ensure that the item is securely packaged, clearly labelled and adequately insured for its return.

7.4. Items should be returned by the fastest service reasonably available to the requester. Airmail should be used whenever possible.

7.5. From the moment a library dispatches an item to a requesting library until it returns, the requesting library is responsible for any loss or damage incurred. The requesting library is responsible for replacing the item or for paying the supplying library the full estimated cost of any such loss or damage including, where requested, any administrative costs involved.

7.6. The requesting library should request renewal of the loan period well before the due date. Where no response is received, the renewal may be assumed to have been granted. If renewal is known to be unavailable on an item loaned abroad, this should be communicated to the requesting library at the time of delivery of the item.

## **8. Charges and payments**

**The decision whether to charge a fee for transactions rests with the individual library. Where such a charge is made, the library should endeavour to keep the mechanism for charging and payment as simple as possible.**

8.1. Transaction charges may be made or waived according to agreements between the two libraries involved.

8.2. Requesting libraries should indicate their willingness (or otherwise) to pay a fee (and the maximum amount they are willing to pay) at the time of making the request. If the charges are greater than the maximum cost, the supplying library is not required to fill the request.

8.3. Both supplying and requesting libraries must be aware of possible requirements under national copyright law which relate to making a charge for copies supplied.

8.4. Suggested simplified payment methods include:

- Prepaid systems such as the *IFLA Voucher Scheme*: (see URL <http://www.ifla.org/VI/2/p1/vouchers.htm>) where libraries buy numbers of vouchers in advance and send an agreed number of vouchers with each request or send them after the potential supplying library has checked the item's availability for loan. Libraries may also decide that vouchers may be sent upon return of the requested item to the lending library.
- Deposit accounts: whereby the supplying library holds a sum deposited by a requesting library and deducts an amount from it according to each item supplied.
- Flat rate payments: where an average or unit cost per item is determined. This method may be combined with prepayment or deposit accounts.

## Bibliography

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- IFLA Guidelines for Email Requests, IFLA Office for International Lending, 2000. Leaflet available from IFLA Office for International Lending, also available on IFLANET at <http://www.ifla.org/VI/2/p3/g-ill.htm>.
- IFLA International Loan/Photocopy Request Form, available for purchase from British Library Document Supply Centre in packs of 100. Order forms and further information available from IFLA Office for International Lending, or on IFLANET at <http://www.ifla.org/VI/2/intro.htm>. A web image of the request form is also available at this location.
- [IFLA Licensing Principles](#)
- IFLA Multilingual List of ILL Response Codes, IFLA Office for International Lending, 2000. Leaflet available from IFLA Office for International Lending, also available on IFLANET at <http://www.ifla.org/VI/2/p3/rcodes.htm>
- IFLA Position Statement on Copyright in the Digital Environment. A copy of the statement is available from IFLA Office for International Lending, or on IFLANET at <http://www.ifla.org/V/press/copydig.htm>.
- IFLA Voucher Scheme. Further details about this payment system are available from IFLA Office for International Lending or on IFLANET at <http://www.ifla.org/VI/2/p1/vouchers.htm>
- Model National Interlibrary Loan Code, IFLA Office for International Lending and IFLA Section on Document Delivery & Interlending. Major revision, 2000. Also available on IFLANET at <http://www.ifla.org/VI/2/p3/model.htm>