Despite major technological advances and standardization efforts in the field of electronic records management, the reality of public and private administrations provides countless examples which debunk the myth of the paperless office. Every kind of administrative structure is currently confronted with a hybrid environment of records: paper-based, digitized and digital born, some of them being (re)printed for several reasons. The lack of clear management policies for such heterogeneous records results in a lot of confusion, redundant or lost information, waste of valuable resources and potential legal conflicts which hamper the efficiency of public services.

The HECTOR research project aims at developing a model for the transformation, organization and curation of hybrid records in Belgian federal administrations in order to facilitate the transition to a trustful, secure and effective electronic government. More specifically, the project will deliver a coherent framework for the following issues:

- Documents & files digitization processes that preserve the authenticity of the document (traceability & integrity) and ensure its effective use (quality, accessibility & content exploitation)
- Appraisal & disposal policy after digitization with criteria for
  - The need for retention or destruction of the paper original & of its digital copy,
  - The determination of the respective retention durations of the original paper & of its digital copy (disposal schedules based on the administrative, legal, organizational & patrimonial value of the document)
- Metadata schemes and filing plans: appropriate classification & description of the digitized documents/files, including elements of authenticity, traceability, retention & accessibility
- Effective access to digitized information policy with regard to the balance to be found between transparency (access to public sector information) & privacy/confidentiality
- Policy for the joint management of paper and digital documents/files, incl. the hypothesis where such a joint management is necessary.

The research will be based on an interdisciplinary approach, crossing law & information sciences (records management & archival sciences). A bottom-up approach will be followed: from a selection of relevant and generalizable case studies from different administrations, the project will proceed to field analysis in order to identify the functions performed by the type of selected document/file, the needs, opportunities, risks, constraints & barriers for hybrid management and for full electronic records management. Finally, two transverse models focusing on the above mentioned issues will be jointly elaborated, respectively for hybrid documents management & for hybrid files management, which could be applied in other administrations and services.

Throughout the project, close collaboration will be developed with the Follow-up Committee which will act as a sort of external partner gathering potential users' representatives, providing insightful feedback, facilitating the integration of the results within the target application field and its strategic matching with the action plans of the federal government.
HECTOR

To support the research progress, research tools, products and workshops will be developed all along the project:

- **Research tools:**
  - extranet platform with collaborative tools,
  - toolkit for case study analysis
- **Research products:**
  - Functional model for hybrid document management (draft & final version)
  - Functional model for hybrid files management (draft & final version)
- **Research workshops:**
  - Interdisciplinary launching seminar between the Research team and the Follow-up Committee
  - Two testbed workshops to present the functional models to the Case study representatives and to the Follow-up Committee for discussion & feed-back

To promote and valorize the research results, the following actions will take place:

- **Awareness rising** through the organization of training sessions towards project managers of the federal administrations & the publication of Guidelines based on the functional models
- **Valorisation through scientific publications**, participation in / organization of national & international conferences & integration of the research results within existing teaching and training programmes of the partners’ institutions
- **Diffusion on the web**, notably on the open-access website of the project (in FR, NL & EN)
- **Network diffusion** within the contacts, networks and communication channels of the partners.

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LINKS

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