

**Measuring success:  
Assessing the achievements of the IfA's Strategic Plan 2000 – 2010**

**by Andrea Bradley**

The IfA Strategic Plan for 2000-2010 included targets against which to measure progress towards the six main Objectives of the plan. We review those targets below, discussing whether the type of targets set were capable of providing a measure of our success, how successful we were in meeting them, and what kind of targets will enable us to measure the achievements of our new Strategic Plan effectively as we head towards 2020.

**Objective 1**

We aimed to measure whether we had achieved 'proper recognition of and respect for archaeologists and their role in society' through feedback from Heritage Counts and other surveys – hoping that they would show an increasing understanding of the contribution of archaeology and the historic environment to our daily lives. Although recent and imminent government publications (for example the Government's *Vision Statement on the historic environment*) may demonstrate a much increased profile of the *historic environment* in policy making, Heritage Counts has not provided the detailed data we had hoped for. Furthermore, it would be very difficult to isolate the Institute's contribution to any changes we could perceive in society's or government's view. A better target might have been 'more frequent acknowledgement by other professions or professionals of the role and status of archaeologists by 2010'. This information would have had to have been actively sought, perhaps through other professional institutes, at the beginning and end of the plan period.

**Objective 2**

We aimed as an Institute, to 'act as the professional voice of all sectors of the discipline in the UK' by 2010, and to measure the balance of that representation through analysis of our membership and committee profiles. We also aimed to have at least 300 student members by 2010. The IfA does represent all parts of the UK, with active Scotland and Wales groups and 244 student members (all joining since 2004). We do still have a long way to go in terms of wide representation – the IfA represents relatively few archaeologists working in museums, academia, aspects of archaeological science and the voluntary sector.

**Objective 3**

We intended to 'have a high profile and to be recognised internationally within and beyond the profession as the leading professional archaeological organisation in Europe in terms of influence, membership and recognition'. Our targets were to achieve 2900 members by 2010 (this target will be met, with membership at 2830, up from 2000 in 2004), as well as 76 ROs (target missed by 14, but up 12 from 2004). We also aimed to have an 'institute for archaeologists with a Royal Charter of Incorporation by 2010'. This target was not met, but will be carried forward into the next Strategic Plan. We did not set targets to measure our 'European influence' objective. The Institute is increasingly called on by European colleagues (often through the EAA network) to provide advice and support to growing professional bodies in Europe, and while there is no measure of how this recognition and influence has grown over the last ten years it is obvious that IfA is widely admired elsewhere in Europe and provides the model that other associations seek to emulate. Developing relationships with these organisations will be a target of our new Strategic Plan.

#### Objective 4

We aimed to be able to say by 2010 that 'IFA membership and registration are reliable evidence of archaeological competence and professional behaviour'. To measure this achievement, we set six targets

- 1) We intended, by 2010, to be 'routinely approached by other sectors to provide information about archaeological services'. We have been approached to work with government departments, the training and education sector, the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA), the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), and their Site Investigations Steering Group SISG, as well as the CIOB (for early discussions about a memorandum of understanding) over the plan period, producing a number of publications in partnership with them<sup>1</sup>.
- 2) Our target that 75% of commissioners of archaeological work would require or strongly recommend IFA membership or registration by 2010 cannot be measured, but we would gauge that we have not met it. If this target is used again, we would need to consult curators or other commissioners of archaeological work (consultants, other agencies and government departments) at the beginning and end of the plan period.
- 3) We also aimed to meet a target of IFA membership or registration being a condition or recommendation of 90% of scheduled monument consents/excavation licences by 2010. EH's Guidance note for applicants does specify that commercial applicants should seek professional archaeological advice, and CADW that an 'approved person' should carry out investigatory work, but IFA membership is not specifically required by any of the national authorities.
- 4) Our target that IFA membership would be recognised as a professional qualification in 95% of HE sector advice on careers in archaeology by 2010 has not been met. We are aware that careers advice in relation to professional archaeology is lacking across the UK, and will be setting targets to improve this situation in the new plan.
- 5) Our target to provide the structure for vocational training leading to IFA membership has been achieved in the context of the new (2007) NVQ in Archaeological Practice, - NVQ holders now qualify for fast-track membership. Our target of 'sufficient' vocational training being available is hard to measure, but is almost certainly not being met at present.
- 6) Our target of being 'able to respond more effectively to formal allegations of misconduct, and to be able to dismiss authoritatively any unsubstantiated complaints' is again hard to measure. A revised procedure has been implemented and a recent review of those disciplinary processes by Mr Peter Savill (Counsel) found that that 'the IFA, its officers and those tasked with performing roles within the disciplinary process, have acted diligently and properly' in all cases undertaken in the last three years.

#### Objective 5

Our targets relating to the 'promotion and influence over the development of policies affecting cultural heritage' have been met. We aimed to be regularly consulted by governments and heritage agencies on archaeological policy – our list of consultations (<http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/index.php?page=217>) confirms that the IFA has been active – and furthermore has input to new policy often

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Archaeology and development: A good practice guide to managing risk and maximising benefit (C672)' CIRIA 2008; ICE Conditions of Contract for Archaeological Investigation Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) September 2004; Site Investigations Steering Group's revision of the Specification for Ground Investigation prepared by the Institute of Civil Engineers (Thomas Telford, 1993)

prior to formal consultation. We believe that we are represented on the most relevant UK committees relating to the development of policies (our target was 80% of committees). We have contributed to a material improvement in policy, in the form of recognisable input to the draft Heritage Protection Bill, the PPS, improvements to marine archaeological legislation and other measures, though our influence is less outside England. We aimed to be involved in at least one such effective policy initiative every year of the plan after 2005 – a target hard to deliver with the number of potential opportunities outside our control. Again it is difficult to isolate the specific influence of IfA over these documents, particularly as much of our consultation is through The Archaeology Forum (which we convene), but we appear to be averaging above the target rate.

#### Objective 6

Finally, we aimed to provide reliable and effective support and services to our members. Our targets were to have created an effective and universally understood division of staff/committee/secondment roles, and to have a recognised high quality journal and magazine by 2010. Both these we believe we have achieved (our journal's first edition is due in June 2010). However without systematic qualitative feedback from staff and members, success against these targets is hard to measure. We aimed to be able to run all the core activities of the IFA without need of subsidy by 2010 – this we have achieved. We aimed to have standards and technical guidance on all major archaeological activities and professional concerns by 2010 – a review of what is still needed will be included in the next Strategic Plan. We have had positive feedback from our conference, even though our target of being the best-attended UK annual archaeology conference has not been met (we wonder if that matters); but we know that there are changes needed to the conference format and structure in the coming years, for which new targets must be set. We have not achieved (in our limited capacity for influencing) parity in wages with other professionals – clearly market forces have the greatest influence on wages - though we invest heavily in encouraging Registered Organisations and members to observe fair business practices. We have made some advances in providing a career structure for archaeologists, again something that individual commercial and organisational circumstances dictate in large part, but career paths are much clearer as a result of our work on National Occupational Standards. We do encourage our Registered Organisations to train and develop their staff, have promoted the National Occupational Standards and NVQs, workplace training and mandatory CPD, but more work is needed to embed this culture fully in the profession.

The Objectives we set ourselves are listed below with a measure of their success against the targets we identified for each, summarised from the review above. While we can be pleased with many of our achievements, we believe that more precise and measurable targets will enable us to monitor our progress in the next ten years much more effectively.

Objective no.	Objective	Result
1	Recognition and respect for archaeologists	Unable to measure
2	To be the professional voice of all archaeologists in the UK	Partly met
3	To lead in Europe in terms of influence, membership and recognition	Met (although difficult to measure)
4	IfA membership to be reliable evidence of competence	Met (though there is a need to improve our processes)
5	To have strong influence over policy	Met (although difficult to measure precisely)

6	To provide effective support and services to members	Partly met (unable to measure precisely)
---	--	--

In setting our targets for 2020, we aim to

- a) ensure that qualitative targets include a mechanism by which quality will be assessed at the start and end of the plan period
- b) ensure quantitative targets will be kept realistic and include focussed interim targets
- c) only include targets that are within our control in terms of process, or measurable by us in terms of outcome
- d) include targets not met in the current plan period if still appropriate – for example targets to measure
  - recognition and respect for archaeologists
  - IfA representation across the profession
  - the improvement of career structure and career advice for those in HE
  - the chartership process
  - the importance of IfA membership to commissioning bodies
  - the availability of vocational training opportunities
  - the range of Standards and guidance we offer
  - improvement in our services to members (including conference and publications).