FROM REQUIREMENTS TO CAPABILITY

Measuring records management maturity

The emerging ISO/TC 46/SC 11 approach to ISO 15489, ISO 30301 and organizational improvement

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KEY DISTINCTION

A standard is not a capability.

Organizations own standards, cite standards and write policy from standards without consistently achieving the outcomes those standards describe.



THE GAP

What good looks like is not where we are.

THE STANDARD

ISO 15489

ISO 30301

Principles, practice and management-system requirements

?

This is the space the **maturity work** makes visible

THE CAPABILITY

People

Systems

Processes

Records

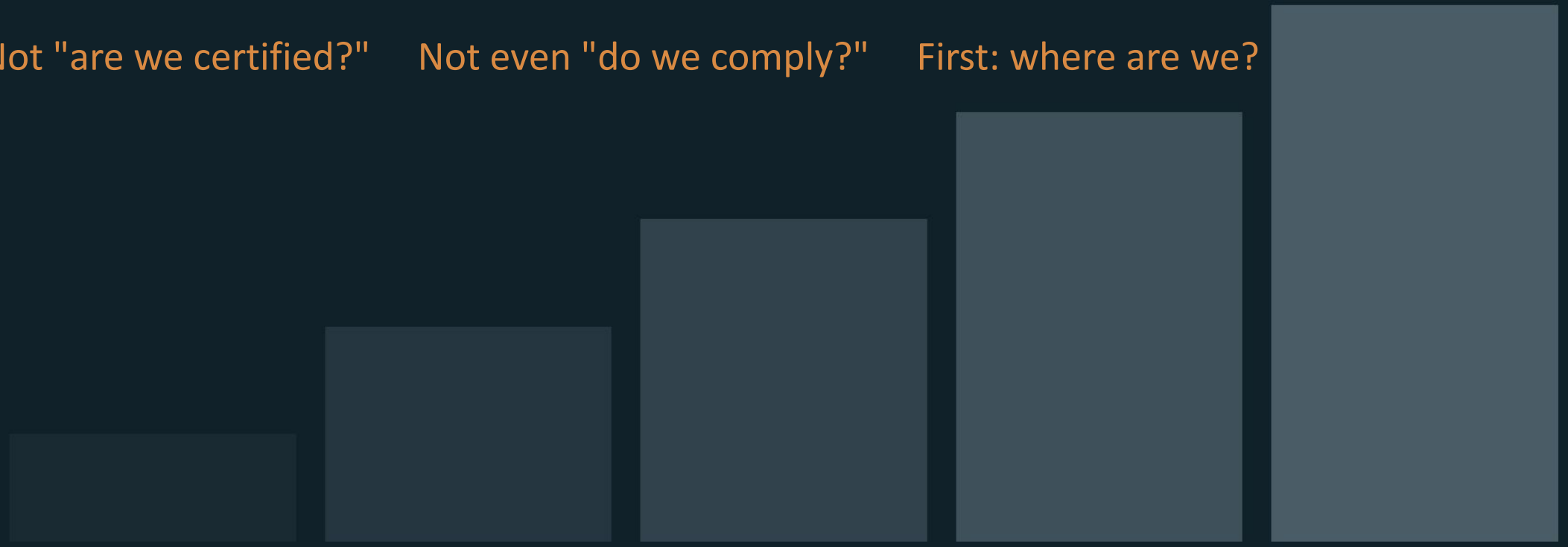
What the organization can actually deliver, every day

Where are we now?

Not "are we certified?"

Not even "do we comply?"

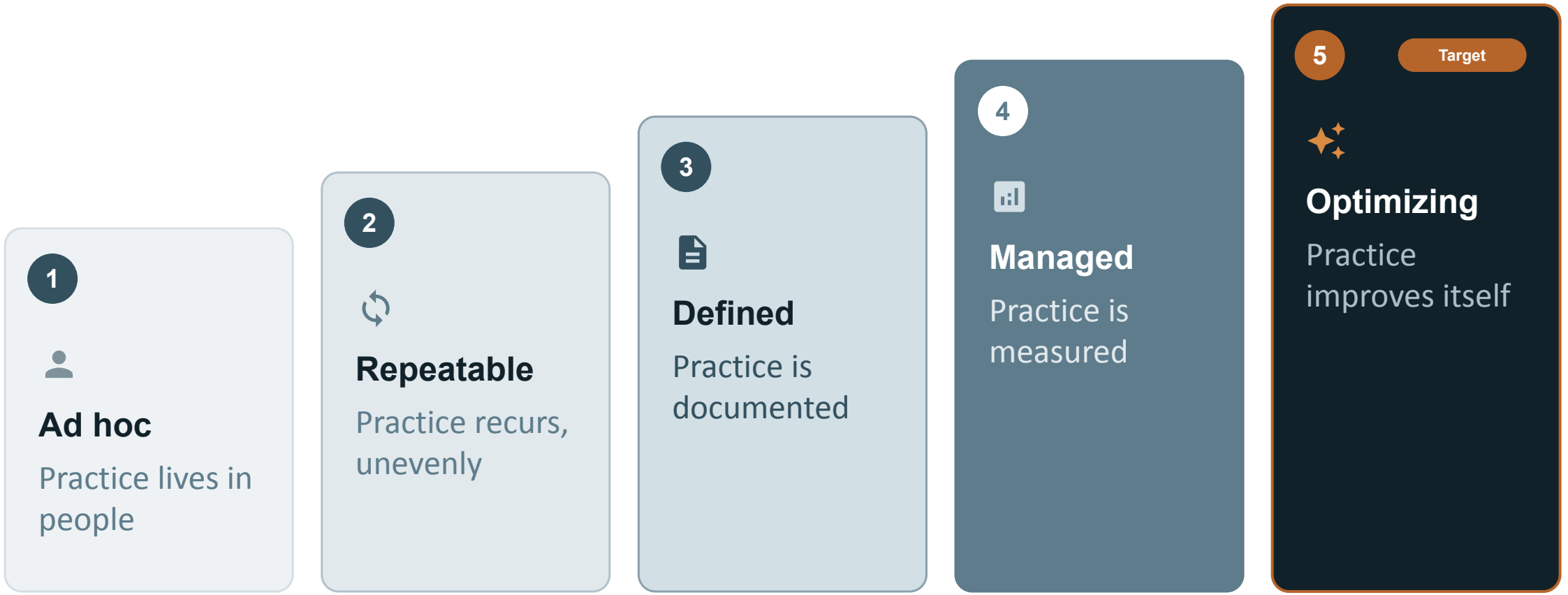
First: where are we?



THE SHAPE OF MATURITY

From dependence on individuals to organizational capability

Level names here are illustrative. The terminology in the ISO work is still being developed.



A POINT ABOUT BLAME

Maturity is not a score for the records manager.

Not this



Isolated Focus

Evaluating records maturity as the sole responsibility of a single individual.

This (Shared Responsibility)

Leadership

Governance, policy & resource allocation

IT and systems

Technical architecture & automated controls

Business units

Day-to-day creation & proper capture

Legal and risk

Compliance rules & retention requirements

HR and training

Skills, awareness & culture enablement

Records & archives

Framework design, guidance & oversight

Records management capability is distributed. A low maturity result describes an organization, not a professional.

JUST ENOUGH ARCHITECTURE

Two standards, two different jobs

PRACTICE & ACTION

ISO 15489

Concepts, principles and practice for managing records

Guidance meets requirements

SYSTEM & FRAMEWORK

ISO 30301

Requirements for a management system for records

KEY INTEGRATION

The maturity work sits across both:

- How consistently are the principles applied?
- How ready is the organization for a management-system approach?

THE DIMENSIONS

What must an organization be capable of?

Govern

Mandate, accountability, policy and resourcing

Design

Appraisal, retention rules, metadata and controls

Operate

Capture, classification, disposition in real systems

Enable

Roles, skills, awareness and everyday behaviour

Assure

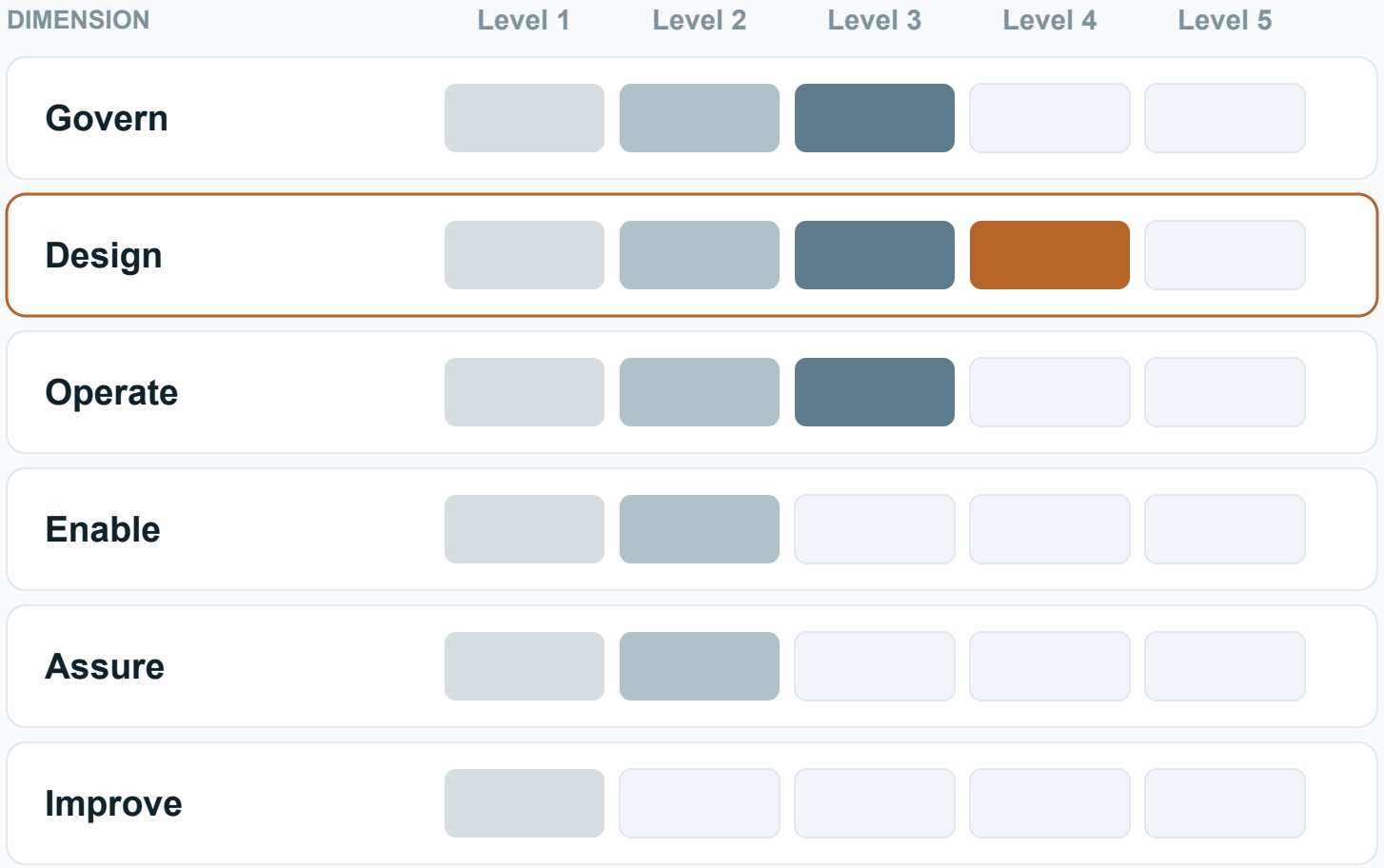
Monitoring, audit, evidence of performance

Improve

Acting on findings and absorbing change

THE SIGNATURE FINDING

Organizations mature unevenly.



KEY INSIGHT

A single maturity number hides the thing worth knowing.

Strong retention rules and weak awareness produce the same average as mediocrity everywhere.

MATURITY GAP

Ranges from **Level 1** (Improve) to **Level 4** (Design)

A FICTIONAL ORGANIZATION

Kommun A

Mature e-archive

Transfer procedures work. Preservation is resourced and understood.

Retention rules exist

Comprehensive, approved, and applied inconsistently outside core systems.

Business systems drift

Recordkeeping requirements arrive after procurement, when they arrive.

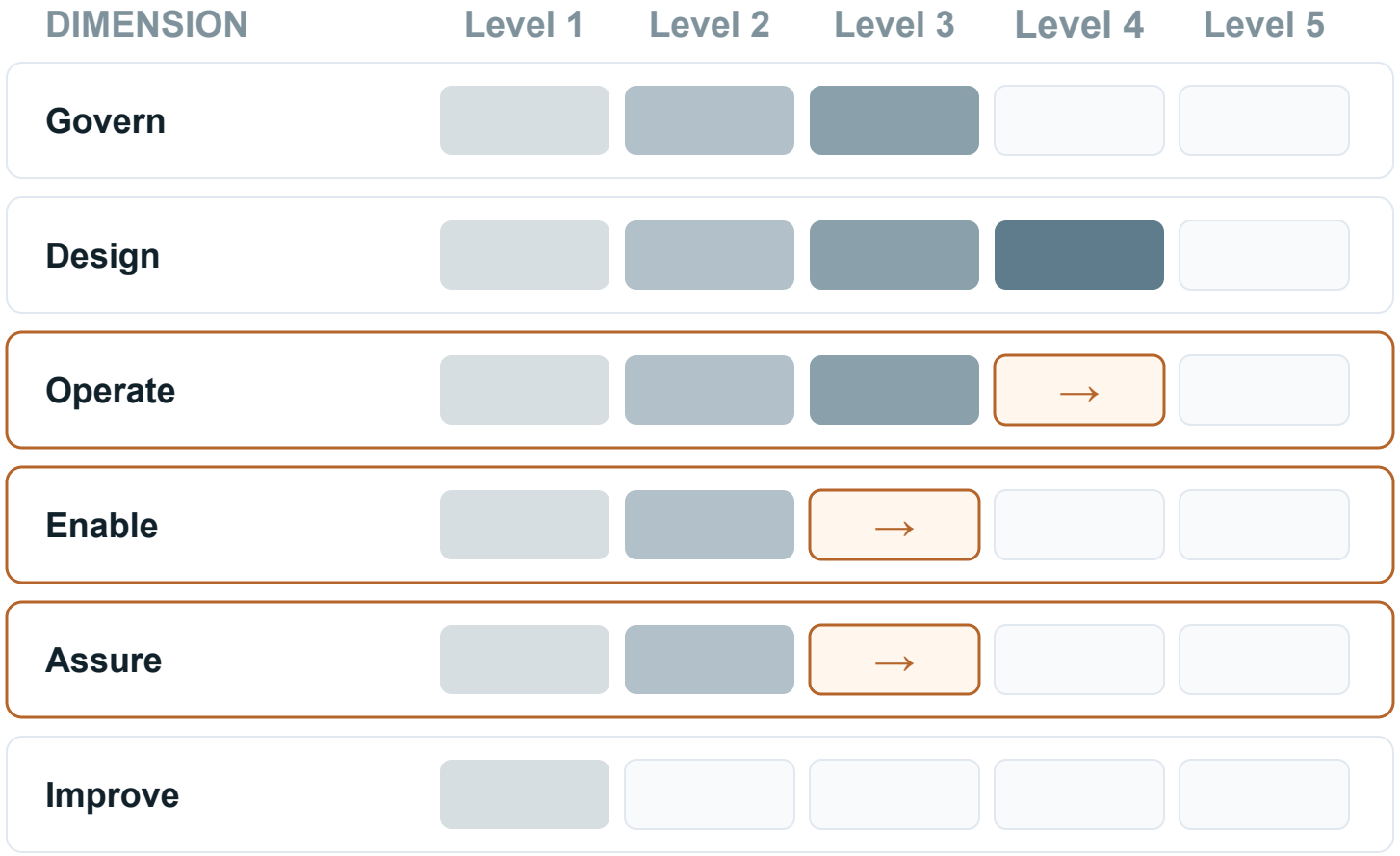
AI policy emerging

A draft exists. Responsibility for AI-generated content is unsettled.

Key Takeaway: Nothing here is dysfunctional. Uneven is the normal organizational state.

ASSESSMENT, NOT GRADING

What should Kommun A do next?



NEXT ACHIEVABLE MOVES

3 Target Priorities

1. Operate → Level 4
Advance operational governance

2. Enable → Level 3
Build organizational capability

3. Assure → Level 3
Establish verification loops

"A useful model names the next achievable move. Three priorities beat one number."

WHY IT COMPLEMENTS A MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Assessment is a loop, not a verdict.

Maturity assessment earns its place when it feeds management review and investment decisions, rather than producing an occasional report nobody acts on.

01



Assess

Evaluate baseline state and identify current maturity level.

02



Prioritize

Focus resources on high-impact gaps and realistic target moves.

03



Improve

Implement targeted process and policy enhancements.

04



Measure

Track outcome metrics and performance indicators.

05



Reassess

Close the loop and re-enter strategic review.

CORE OBJECTIVE

Continual Improvement

Ensures assessment findings directly drive management reviews, investment decisions, and recurring governance cycles.

THE AI PIPELINE

Then AI arrives.

01

PROMPT

User instructions & operational inputs

02

MODEL

Algorithmic engine & contextual weights

03

OUTPUT

Generated content, code, or synthesis

04

ACTION

Execution & downstream decision

THE CORE GOVERNANCE GAP

Nothing in this chain announces itself as a record.

Without intentional hooks, prompts, outputs, and automated decisions pass through systems completely invisible to corporate memory and compliance frameworks.

THE CAPABILITY TEST

Five questions, asked before the policy exists

01

RECORD?

Is this declared, or merely stored?

02

CONTEXT?

What made the output meaningful?

03

RESPONSIBILITY?

Who owns the decision it fed?

04

EVIDENCE?

Can the decision be reconstructed later?

05

RETENTION?

How long, and under whose rule?

LOW-MATURITY ORGANIZATION

Improvises an answer each time the technology changes.

MATURE ORGANIZATION

Already has the mechanism that asks these questions.

THE SESSION BEFORE THIS ONE

The same question, at two scales

01 • REPOSITORY SCALE

ISO 16363

Can we trust the repository?

Self-assessment against standard

02 • ORGANIZATIONAL SCALE

ISO 15489 / 30301

Can the organization consistently manage its records?

CORE TAKEAWAY

Different standards. Different scope. One organizational question underneath.

PRECEDENT

From GARP to an international model

01

Principles

GARP set out recognizable principles for information governance

→

02

Maturity thinking

It showed that principles can carry a graded self-assessment

→

03

International consensus

ISO work adds agreed terms across sectors and jurisdictions

→

04

Organizational improvement

Linked to 15489 practice and the 30301 management system

SUMMARY & SCOPE

The conference programme compares this work with GARP. The comparison is fair, and the difference is scope.

PRECEDENT

National models inform the international work

The developing ISO model is grounded in established maturity-model experience across several jurisdictions.

01 UNITED STATES

National maturity-model experience

Records-management programme assessment and organizational improvement

02 CANADA

National maturity-model experience

Information and recordkeeping capability, governance and improvement

03 AUSTRALIA

National maturity-model experience

Domain-based assessment, progressive maturity and capability benchmarking

↓ ↓ ↓

INTERNATIONAL SYNTHESIS

Broader than any one precedent

The ISO work draws together shared patterns and lessons, then makes them flexible enough for use across sectors and jurisdictions.

WORKING GROUP

International participation shapes the model

WG 20 brings together records-management experience from 11 national contexts across several regions.

- AUSTRALIA
- NEW ZEALAND
- CHINA
- UNITED STATES
- UNITED KINGDOM
- SWITZERLAND
- SPAIN
- NORWAY
- NETHERLANDS
- SWEDEN
- SOUTH AFRICA

↓

INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS

Different contexts.
One shared model.

The framework is being tested through multiple national perspectives—supporting language and expectations that can travel across jurisdictions.

OVER TO YOU

Would this help, and what would make it useful?



The work is still open

Feedback and collaboration are welcome to refine these frameworks for real-world impact.

01 Benchmarking against comparable organizations

02 A structured internal improvement plan

03 Language that management and auditors accept

04 Evidence for investment and resourcing decisions

05 Preparation for an ISO 30301 management system

A standard tells us
what good looks like.

**A maturity model helps
an organization get there.**

Andrew Potter · MetaArchivist · ISO/TC 46

CONTACT & CONNECT / KONTAKTA & ANSLUT

Thank you for attending! / Tack för din medverkan!

Let's stay connected and continue the conversation. / Låt oss hålla kontakten och fortsätta konversationen.

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