



STRATEGY

Summary 2018 – 2022

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1. Our vision

“We make the UK book supply chain more efficient by developing standards and encouraging their adoption. We define best practice and connect experts and stakeholders to enable innovation.”

This strategy summary document identifies the key priorities required to deliver both our vision and ongoing value to members. A core objective will be BIC’s transition towards becoming a more transparent organisation offering value and accountability to its members.

For the next 4 years the 4 overarching strategic priorities BIC will be working to deliver are as follows:

- Promoting adoption of standards and best practice (including education and training)
- Developing standards and best practice
- Membership and financial viability: BIC’s business development
- Connecting experts and stakeholders

The strategy also includes the governance and metrics required to manage implementation of the priorities together with high level objectives for the period. Due to the inevitable resource, scheduling and operational challenges in both the book industry and BIC, implementation detail will be covered by annual plans for each calendar year and informed by contemporary BIC governance priorities.

2. Purpose

This document identifies the strategic principles, priorities and governance structure by which BIC’s progress in delivering the strategic objectives for the period 2018-2022 can be measured and managed effectively. The strategy will be supported by annual implementation plans describing the tasks required to achieve strategic priorities, address legacy issues and meet future requirements. A roadmap summarising the activity currently planned for the period of the strategy has also been produced to accompany this document.

3. Context

Having undergone a period of great and positive change since 2012, it is vital that BIC continues to deliver value to its members and the UK book industry supply chain over the coming years. BIC needs to continue to identify, engage and support the next generation of supply chain experts to fulfil its vision effectively. It is the first time in BIC’s history that this degree of transparency and accountability to members regarding strategic direction and objectives has been given. It is hoped that members find this new approach useful and informative.

4. Stakeholders and Uses

BIC works for and on behalf of organisations trading from within or with the UK book industry, and has a diverse collaborative membership including: publishers, retailers, printers, service providers, libraries, wholesalers, library providers, trade organisations and affiliates. Uses of BIC’s

information, advice and services is for members and non-members and all users can freely access the BIC website for further sources of information.

5. Challenges

As a small, not-for-profit organisation with very limited budget and resources, BIC relies heavily on volunteers from its member organisations (which in turn has a direct impact on member organisations' own resources and at busy times cannot (understandably) be guaranteed) to help with the running of projects. Striking an effective balance between project delivery and resource limitations is always an ongoing concern for BIC and is one of its main challenges.

6. Implications

By achieving greater visibility with regards to BIC's strategy and activities for the coming 4 years, it is hoped that BIC's stakeholders and users will be further encouraged to continue their support of and engagement with BIC. It is also hoped that this greater degree of transparency may attract new members, and additional funding.

Given the challenges BIC faces (see above), the strategy will help enable both BIC and its members to stay on track with regards to project deliverables and overall performance. Delivering a plan for each year that details and monitors approved projects and activities will enable BIC's Executive Director, and BIC's Executive and Operational Boards to better manage limited time and resources.

7. Strategic Principles

To deliver the Strategy, the following core principles were agreed to guide development and implementation. The principles require that:

- The Strategy be published on the BIC website for all users to view
- The Strategy be kept up to date and any changes are communicated to the BIC membership
- Governance and performance metrics are agreed
- The Operational Board receives quarterly updates from the Executive Director on Strategy Implementation Plan activity and progress
- Each one-year Strategy Implementation Plan be reviewed quarterly
- The 4-year Strategy is reviewed on a rolling basis, annually after Frankfurt

8. Strategic Priorities for BIC 2018 - 2022

Over the next 4 – 5 years, the 4 overarching strategic focus areas are (in no order of priority):

Strategic Focus Area 1:

Promoting adoption of standards & best practice (including education & training)

BIC will seek to promote its standards and documented best practice to as wide an audience as possible and gain an understanding of what the barriers to adoption are. This promotion may take the form of events (workshops, seminars, BIC Breakfasts), training, surveys, accreditation schemes, mailings, and utilising social media wherever appropriate, and collaborating with other

trade bodies both nationally and internationally as required. We will also work closely with our member organisations to help us in this regard. 2020 sees the continuation of the Metadata Map project – a flagship project for BIC.

Strategic Focus Area 2:

Developing standards and best practice

We will continue to develop new and maintain existing standards and best practice for those areas of the book industry supply chain that are deemed necessary and important by our membership. We will develop a strategic overview of standards implementation and interconnections in the book industry supply chain, to ensure awareness and use of the most efficient standards available.

Strategic Focus Area 3:

Membership and financial viability: BIC's business development

We will ensure that BIC's business model is sustainable and delivering sufficient funds to enable us to efficiently carry out our work for the BIC membership and the wider industry. We will continue to promote the work BIC does, develop and maintain strong relationships with existing members and recruit new members to ensure the future viability of the organisation.

Strategic Focus Area 4:

Connecting experts and stakeholders

One of BIC's many strengths is that it provides a neutral, non-commercial forum for its members which encourages productive collaboration on BIC projects and activities. We will continue to connect experts and stakeholders in all our activities and seek out new opportunities for facilitating this wherever possible. We will share our strategy with interested stakeholders and improve opportunities for stakeholder access to supply chain expertise.

9. Delivering the Priorities

Governance and Support

To address the challenges noted above BIC has created a governance structure responsible for ensuring that an effective operational strategy is developed and implemented.

The core groups are currently:

- **The BIC Executive Board** – contains representatives from The Booksellers Association, The British Library Board, The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, and the Publishers Association and currently chaired by Nick Poole (CILIP).
- **The BIC Operational Board** – is an expert group with representation from areas across the supply chain responsible for advising the BIC Executive Board on operational issues and currently chaired by Ruth Jones (Ingram Content Group).

The Operational Board will monitor the Strategy Plan implementation performance against agreed metrics and approve the submission of business cases in support of the Strategy Plan. The BIC

Secretariat Team is tasked with the responsibility of undertaking or supporting activities required for delivery of the Strategy.

Please note that BIC is currently undergoing a Governance Review which will see the structure described above transition to a simpler, more agile/responsive single Board of Directors.

10. Implementation

Annual implementation plans supporting delivery of the strategic priorities will be developed. Related business cases will be coordinated with wider strategic activities and scheduled to fit with BIC's planning and financial schedules. A changing operational environment makes it difficult to accurately predict all steps necessary for the implementation of the strategic priorities, but high-level objectives for delivery by the end of the strategy period are presented in the accompanying Strategy Schematic for 2018-2022 and include:

Implementation Priorities 2018 (in no order of importance):

- **PRIORITY 1: Begin work on the development of a supply chain metadata map** to improve stakeholder awareness of metadata usage and provide a strategic overview for future efficiencies. This is a key project for BIC which aims to document and improve the flow of product information in the metadata supply chain and to raise awareness of issues, standards and best practice. For more information please refer to the Project Brief here. The project will have three phases and is scheduled to run for 2-2.5 years with phase one of the project due for completion by the close of 2018.
- **PRIORITY 2: Support for adoption of the ONIX 3.0 standard** including promotional and training activities.
- **PRIORITY 3: Creation of a BIC 3-year business plan** together with measures designed to ensure the long-term viability of BIC through increased membership.
- **PRIORITY 4: Improved stakeholder communications** via the exploration of options for online community engagement to provide opportunities for access to supply chain expertise and agreeing BIC's website policy. This priority builds on BIC's unique ability to bringing together a diverse range of industry players and experts in order to openly collaborate on the work BIC does for the book industry as a whole. BIC's broad membership base is a major factor in the success of BIC's work. As a neutral, not-for-profit organisation, BIC is able to bring members together from a wide range of sectors including publishers, distributors, service and systems providers, libraries, libraries suppliers, retailers, printers, shippers and so on.
- **PRIORITY 5: Document physical supply chain issues arising from recent system changes** to identify root causes, increase engagement with BIC, and better serve the interests of both our members and our members' customers.

All 5 implementation priorities above are to be carried out in addition to business as usual activities, which are detailed in the accompanying Strategy Implementation Plan for 2018.

Implementation Priorities 2019 (in no order of importance): (Updated March 2019)

- **PRIORITY 1: Physical Supply Chain issues**
Prioritise and address the physical supply chain issues identified by BIC members in the recent "Supply Chain Map" exercise to better serve the interests of both our members and our members' customers.
- **PRIORITY 2: Membership and Governance**
Establish terms and conditions for BIC memberships; a communications and marketing exercise to be delivered promoting BIC's work and its relevance to the industry at large – reaching outside the "BIC Club"; governance review to ensure that BIC is equipped to meet requirements of constituents; targeted new member recruitment drive; research external/other funding opportunities.
- **PRIORITY 3: Metadata**
There are 3 metadata priorities for BIC in 2019: Agree and publish Out of Print Best Practice Guidelines; continuation of the Metadata Map Project to improve stakeholder awareness of metadata usage and provide a strategic overview for future efficiencies; announce new Product Data Excellence Accreditation scheme.

All 3 implementation priorities above are to be carried out in addition to business as usual activities, which are detailed in the accompanying Strategy Implementation Plan for 2019.

Implementation Priorities 2020 (in no order of importance): (Updated June 2020)

- **PRIORITY 1: Membership and Governance**
Implement the recommendation from the BIC Governance Review that was started in 2019, which should include: establishing a new Board of Directors; finalising new terms and conditions for BIC memberships.

Priority 1 also includes a communications and marketing exercise to be delivered promoting BIC's work and its relevance to the industry at large – reaching outside the "BIC Club", to increase industry engagement.

Priority 1 also includes a targeted new member recruitment drive to increase membership by at least 5% (by net value compared to end 2018 figures) and by organisation count, ensuring it is fully representative. This to run in parallel with a member retention initiative.
- **PRIORITY 2: Greening the Supply Chain**



BIC is the book industry's dedicated supply chain organisation and it is in the supply chain that significant changes can be made by the book industry to lower our carbon footprint and improve our green credentials. Every part of the supply chain needs to be scrutinised –

printing, production, shipping, distribution, returns, packaging, materials and retail environments are all places that have a significant carbon footprint and BIC is focussed on developing and promoting industry standards to help reduce this and help organisations become more sustainable. BIC is committed to championing the green agenda and providing leadership to provide organisations with the tools and resources to help them make their supply chains greener and more sustainable. Throughout 2020 and beyond BIC will continue to align with other UK industry trade organisations and initiatives to ensure progress at a fast but compatible pace.

- **PRIORITY 3: Metadata**

There are 3 metadata priorities for BIC in 2020: Agree and publish Out of Print Best Practice Guidelines; launch, promote and monitor the Metadata Capabilities Directory as part of the Metadata Map Project to improve stakeholder awareness of metadata usage and provide a strategic overview for future efficiencies; successfully begin the transition to the refreshed Product Data Excellence Accreditation scheme by March 2021.

- **PRIORITY 4: Physical Supply Chain Issues**

Prioritise and address the physical supply chain issues identified by BIC members in the recent "Supply Chain Map" exercise to better serve the interests of both our members and our members' customers. This includes the review of ordering processes, standards and best practices project.

All 4 implementation priorities above are to be carried out in addition to business as usual activities, which are detailed in the accompanying Strategy Implementation Plan for 2020.

Implementation Priorities 2021 (in no order of importance): (Updated July 2021)

PRIORITY 1: Membership and Governance

Complete the transition to the new Governance Model by the end of October 2021. This to include: establishing a new Board of Directors, holding the first AGM for members, and agreeing budgets for each of BIC's strategic committees. Includes a communications and marketing exercise to be delivered announcing the new structure, new board and promoting BIC's work and its relevance to the industry at large – reaching outside the "BIC Club", to increase industry engagement. Also includes the creation of a refreshed, accessible BIC website to better reflect BIC's new approach and operation. Continuation of the targeted new member recruitment and retention initiative to increase membership revenue and organisation count, ensuring it is fully representative.

PRIORITY 2: Greening the Supply Chain

As per last year: BIC is the book industry's dedicated supply chain organisation, and it is in the supply chain that significant changes can be made by the book industry to lower our carbon

footprint and improve our green credentials. Every part of the supply chain needs to be scrutinised – printing, production, shipping, distribution, returns, packaging, materials, and retail environments are all places that have a significant carbon footprint and BIC is focussed on developing and promoting industry standards to help reduce this and help organisations become more sustainable.

BIC is committed to championing the green agenda and providing leadership to provide organisations with the tools and resources to help them make their supply chains greener and more sustainable. Throughout 2021 and beyond BIC will continue to align with other UK industry trade organisations and initiatives to ensure progress at a fast but compatible pace.

Additionally, BIC will prioritise the promotion and management of the International Green Book Supply Chain Alliance (GBA) with Book Industry Study Group (BISG) in the United States, and Book Net Canada, and the creation, launch and productivity of the BIC Green Supply Chain Committee.

In order to develop and build upon the work already done and to deliver a clear message to the industry with regards to BIC's commitment to the green agenda in the supply chain, BIC will recruit an environmental consultant to help research, identify and deliver against key supply chain areas of activity for BIC and the wider book industry - to include liaison with other UK trade bodies to establish work already in progress, areas for joint collaboration and so on. This consultant will also assist with GBA projects (with matching contributions for this area from BISG and BookNet Canada).

PRIORITY 3: The Book Industry Supply Chain Review

The priority here for BIC in 2021-22 is to deliver against the Ordering Best Practice project on time and to budget.

PRIORITY 4: Metadata

There are 3 metadata priorities identified here for BIC in 2021: i) Agree and publish Out of Print Best Practice Guidelines; ii) live launch, promote and monitor the Metadata Capabilities Directory as part of the Metadata Map Project to improve stakeholder awareness of metadata usage and provide a strategic overview for future efficiencies; iii) complete the transition to the refreshed Product Data Excellence Accreditation scheme by July 2021.

PRIORITY 5: Digital Audio Book Supply Chain

A digital audiobook workshop was held in April 2021, and the key priority is to map a top level, early version of the digital audiobook supply chain to help inform subsequent work on documenting Best Practice Guidelines for the digital audiobook supply chain. The workshop and subsequent documentation (including mapping) is already budgeted for in 2021-22. The Operational Board agreed that Digital Audiobook Supply Chain Best Practice should be a project for 2022-23.

11. Metrics

In order to enable the effectiveness of the strategy to be measured, metrics will be grouped by strategic priority as highlighted above and will include a quarterly report on progress made with regards to each of the outputs detailed in the accompanying Strategy Implementation Plan for 2021,



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and against the milestones listed in the BIC business strategy plan checklist (appendix A) to monitor internal performance against deadlines, document risks, resource issues etc. To be compared to prior year/quarter's figures (where applicable).

12. Communications

The success of the Strategy relies in great part on continued engagement from BIC membership organisations. To encourage and strengthen this engagement BIC will communicate its Strategy and progress made, to its members and interested non-members. It is intended that all strategy documents will be made publicly available in a dedicated area on the BIC website and that there be regular updates made in relation to progress made following each quarterly review. BIC will also share the Strategy and progress updates on social media. The Strategy and its goals and deadlines will be referred to as appropriate in all BIC projects and working groups. In addition to BIC staff, all Committee Chairs, and project leads will be walked through the Strategy papers to ensure they are familiar with the overall goals and schedule.



THE BOOK INDUSTRY'S SUPPLY CHAIN ORGANISATION