

Towards a shared digital future: A digital archive management system in Constantine

Digitalisation at the service of urban management

Promoting sustainable urban management through digitalisation remains a major concern for local authorities. It significantly influences various domains, from the social, environmental, and economic to the urban and political sectors. In Algeria, the context of the digitalisation of urban services is experiencing a gradual transformation. However, other challenges persist due to the rapid urban growth, such as the increased demand for infrastructure and the necessity to ensure efficient urban services.

The regional project “City-to-City Cooperation Maghreb-Germany” (KWT II), commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), was implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in cooperation with the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) of Engagement Global gGmbH, from March 2020 to February 2024. Among other activities, the regional project supported project partnerships between German and Maghreb cities. The good practice highlighted in this fact sheet has been developed by the partner cities of Constantine and Aschaffenburg. This practice will be scaled up as part of the follow-up regional project “Urban Adaptation to Climate Change in the Maghreb”, running from March 2024 to February 2027.



Exchanges with Aschaffenburg on the digital archiving of the municipality of Constantine

In Algeria, the regional project KWT II was implemented in collaboration with the National Urban Planning Agency (ANURB) of the Ministry of Housing, Urban Planning, and the City.

Facing the saturation of the physical archiving space at the municipal headquarter, and with the aim of preserving archives of historical value, the municipality of Constantine has embarked on a project to digitise the city's archives.

After several exchanges with the German city of Aschaffenburg, the Algerian city drew up a roadmap for the gradual digital transition of the archive office. This action plan described the approaches to be adopted, and the major challenges linked to Constantine's specific context for setting up a digital archiving system.



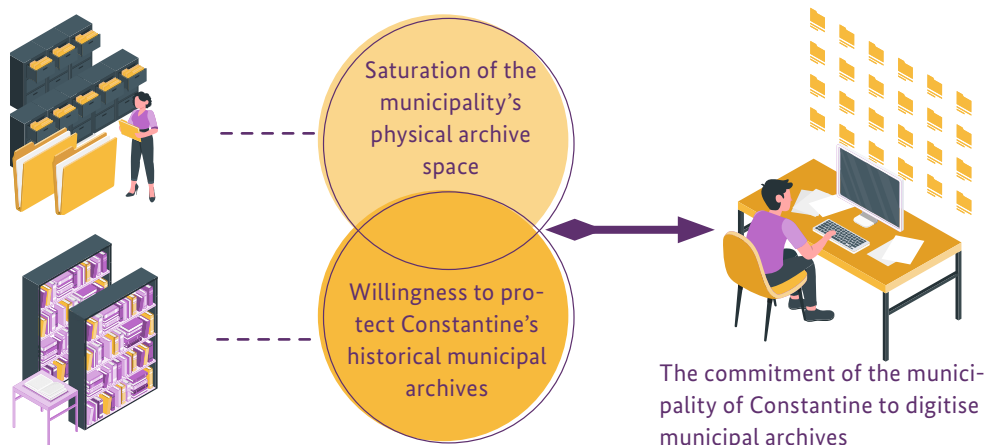
Approaches and actions

The project to digitise the archives of Constantine followed the approach shown in diagram 01 and is as follows:

a) Exchange of experiences: Exchanges between the municipality of Constantine and the city of Aschaffenburg on traditional and digital archiving techniques facilitated the acquisition of technical know-how. These exchanges highlighted similarities and differences in their methods and legal frameworks.

b) Needs assessment: The study conducted in collaboration with the technical staff of Constantine's archiving office focused on three key areas:

- legal framework and guidelines,
- working methods and technical approaches,
- human and physical resources.



The commitment of the municipality of Constantine to digitise municipal archives

Diagram 01: Background to the project's emergence. © GIZ

The aim of the needs assessment was to identify the **main challenges and opportunities** associated with digitising the archives of the municipality of Constantine.

c) Action plan: based on the findings of the needs assessment, a strategy was developed covering the following aspects:

➤ **A technical exchange and capacity development plan:** A capacity development programme on digitisation for archivists and archive assistants was organised by the GIZ. Furthermore,

the topics of virtual exchanges with the Aschaffenburg partners were tailored to address the specific needs identified in the needs assessment.

➤ **Building on Constantine's archiving context:** The archiving office drafted a note outlining the working methodology and standards used by their department. It also produced a summary of the legal framework for archiving in Algeria.

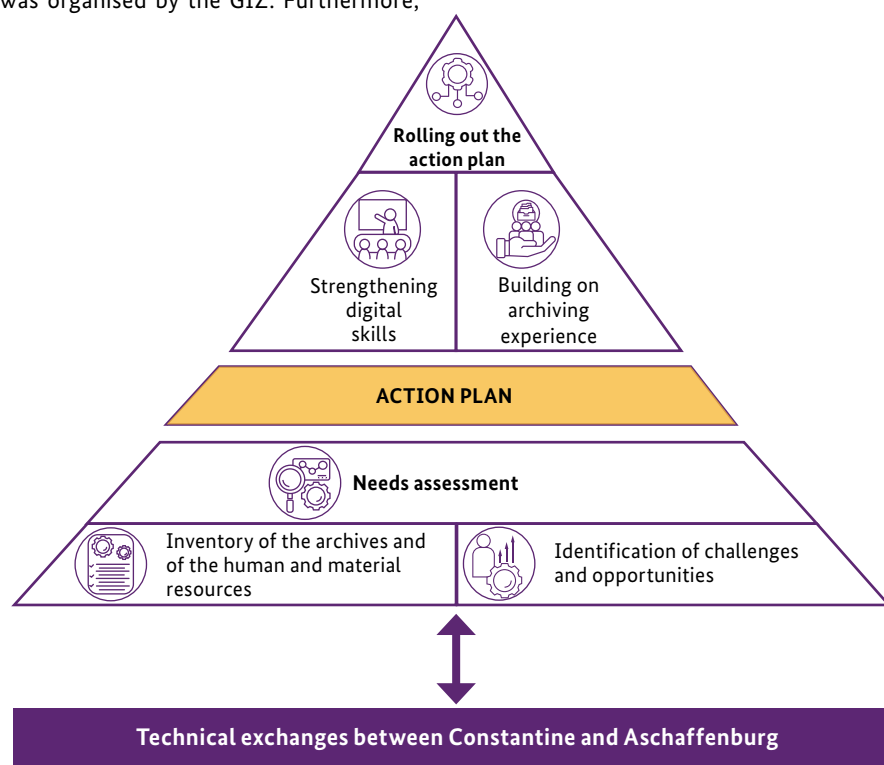


Diagram 02: Methodological approach. © GIZ



Achievements

The following results were achieved by the project to digitise Constantine's archives (diagram 03):

Capacity development in digitisation



30% of technical managers trained in digitisation and digital communication tools.

Exchange of know-how on digital archiving



Several exchanges between Constantine and Aschaffenburg on the methods and stages of digital archiving.

An action plan for the digital archiving project in Constantine



- Preparing a comprehensive inventory of human and physical resources, as well as archived and non-archived documents
- Summarising the methodology and tools used by the Constantine Archiving Service
- Compiling an updated list of key regulatory directives from the Algerian Official Journal related to archive management
- Developing a roadmap outlining the methods and tools for effective and sustainable digital archive management

Diagram 03: Achievements. © GIZ



Challenges

Several challenges were identified, requiring appropriate solutions (diagram 04):

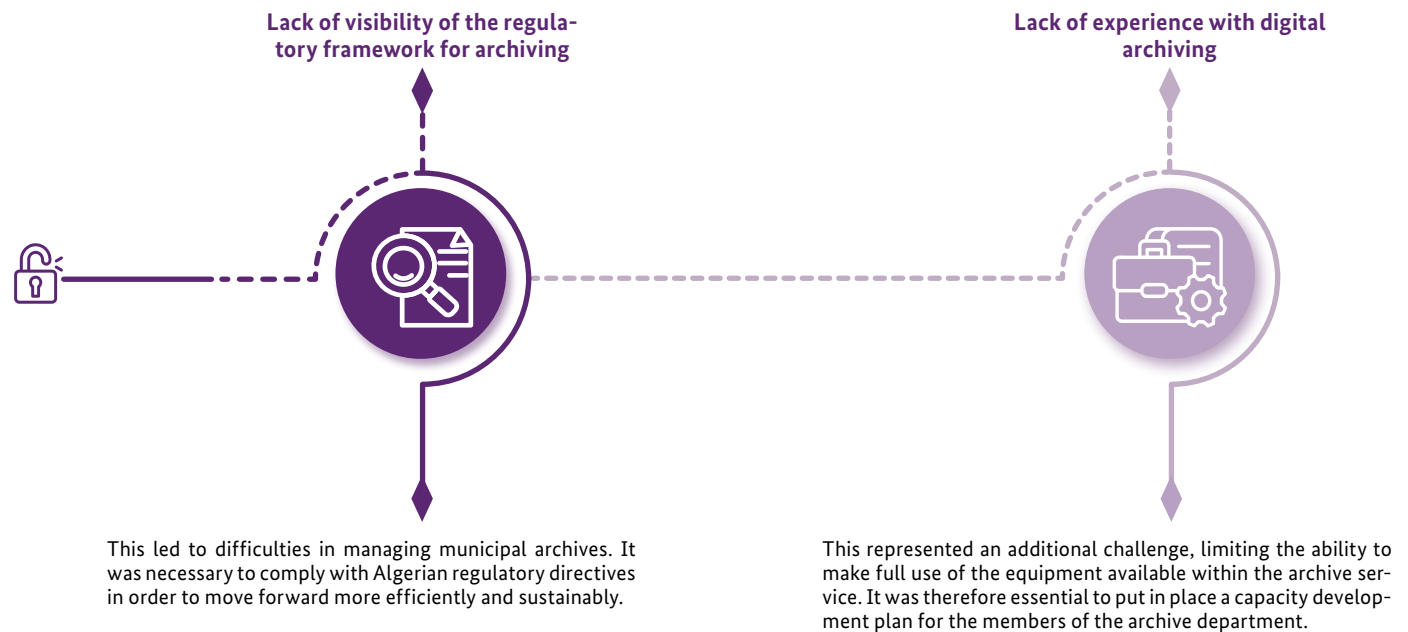


Diagram 04: Challenges encountered during the implementation of the project. © GIZ



Innovative aspects and strengths

The digitisation of the archives of the municipality of Constantine stood out for its strong points, reflecting a commitment to modern and efficient management of administrative information. Here is an overview of the innovative aspects of the project (diagram 05):

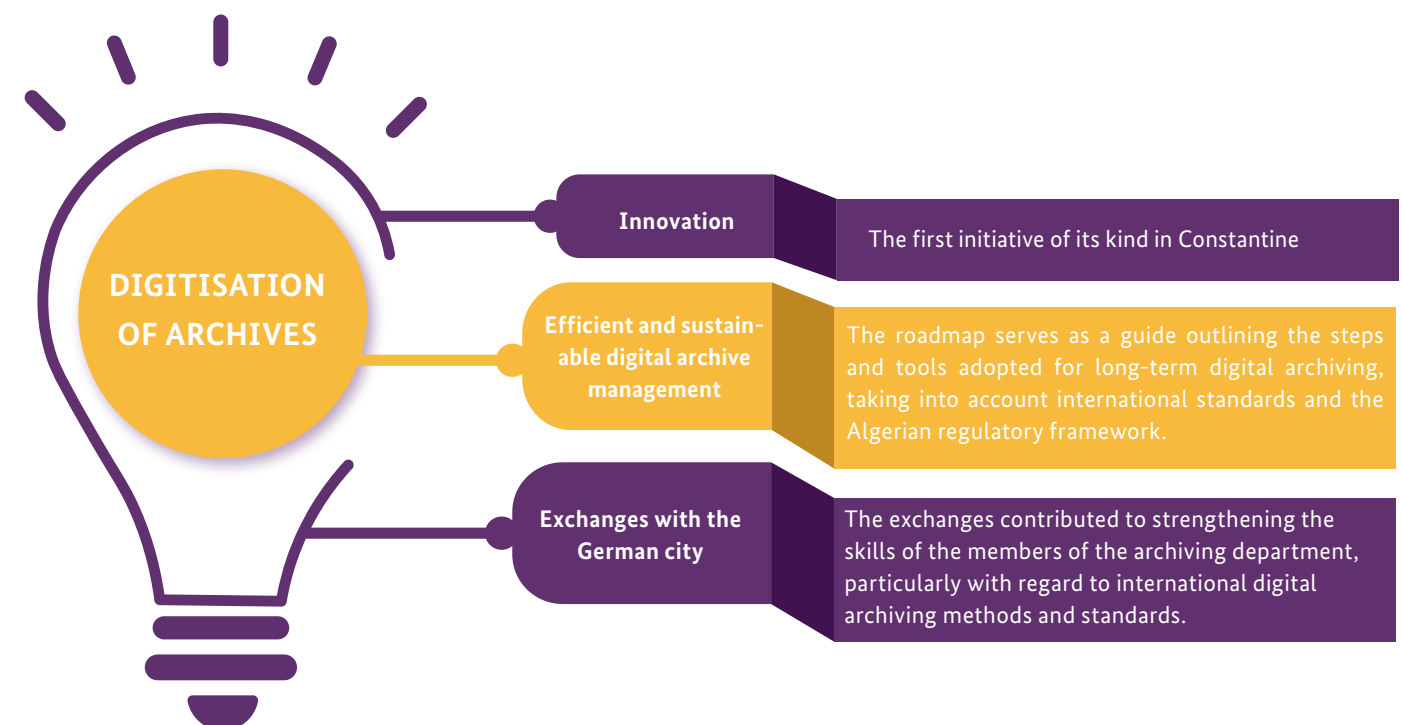


Diagram 05: The project's strengths. © GIZ



Exchange between the partners from Constantine and Aschaffenburg on the potential of Constantine's historical city archives, including architectural site plans and construction plans, for digital archiving.

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Best practices, lessons learnt and advice

The best practices, lessons learned and advice from the first phase of the digital archiving pilot project in the municipality of Constantine serve as a valuable reference for similar initiatives. These can be summarised as follows (diagram 6):



Diagram 06: Best practices, lessons learnt and advice. © GIZ

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