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<p>Nadhir Serier Abdallah</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RESEARCH ARTICLE </p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">Measuring the Maturity of Records Governance in Local Administrative Systems: An ARMA-Based Assessment of the Municipality of El Affroun</h2> <p>Dr. University of Blida 2 Lounici Ali Algeria Email: sous1988@hotmail.com</p>	
<p>Keywords</p>	<p>Records Governance; Information Governance; Local Administration; ARMA Model; Archival Management; Public Sector Governance</p>	
<p>Abstract</p>	<p>Records constitute a critical informational asset for researchers, public authorities, and decision-makers, serving as a foundational component of administrative, legal, and organizational processes. In contemporary governance frameworks, the effective management and control of records has become increasingly essential for ensuring transparency, accountability, and institutional efficiency. This study aims to evaluate the maturity of records governance within local administrative systems through the application of the ARMA Information Governance Maturity Model. Adopting a descriptive-analytical research design, the study investigates the current state of records management practices within the Municipality of El Affroun (Algeria), identifying key structural, procedural, and organizational challenges. Empirical data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The findings indicate that, despite a growing awareness of the importance of records management, the municipality lacks a coherent governance framework, including clearly defined policies, standardized procedures, and strategic oversight mechanisms. Furthermore, existing practices remain significantly misaligned with internationally recognized standards, particularly ISO 15489 and the ISO 30300 series, which provide the conceptual and operational foundation for effective records governance. Based on these findings, the study proposes a set of policy-oriented recommendations, including the institutionalization of records governance within local administrations and the establishment of high-level strategic committees to oversee implementation and compliance. The study also highlights the potential for scaling such governance frameworks across broader public sector institutions.</p>	
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Introduction

Archives and records represent a vital component of institutional memory, embodying not only administrative continuity but also the cultural and historical identity of societies. As repositories of documented evidence, they play a crucial role in supporting governance, ensuring legal accountability, and facilitating informed decision-making processes.

In recent decades, the growing complexity of administrative systems, coupled with the increasing strategic value of information, has necessitated the modernization of records management practices. This transformation has been particularly

evident in local administrative structures, where the demand for efficient information management has intensified in parallel with broader public sector reforms.

In the Algerian context, legislative and institutional developments concerning local governance—particularly within municipalities and provinces—have underscored the importance of records and archives as integral components of administrative functionality. However, despite these advancements, significant challenges persist in the organization, control, and strategic utilization of documentary resources.

The emergence of governance paradigms has further expanded the conceptual scope of records management, integrating it into broader frameworks of transparency, accountability, and institutional performance. In this regard, records governance is increasingly recognized as a critical mechanism for enhancing administrative efficiency and supporting democratic processes. As emphasized by the International Council on Archives, effective records management is not merely a technical function but a fundamental pillar of good governance.

Against this background, the present study seeks to assess the maturity level of records governance within local administrative systems using the ARMA Information Governance Maturity Model. Focusing on the Municipality of El Affroun as a case study, the research aims to provide an empirical evaluation of existing practices while identifying opportunities for institutional improvement and strategic development.

Research Problem

This study examines records governance as an emerging framework addressing persistent challenges in document and information management within public administration, particularly at the local level. Despite the increasing strategic importance of information, the condition of records in many administrative institutions remains problematic, characterized by technical, organizational, human, and material deficiencies.

In the Algerian context, these issues are explicitly highlighted in Circular No. 301 (2000) issued by the National Archives of Algeria, which reports that archival practices do not comply with established legal and regulatory requirements. In particular, the lack of modernization in document management systems—especially the limited integration of digital technologies—has significantly affected the efficiency and quality of public administrative services.

Against this background, the present study seeks to evaluate the maturity of records governance within local administrative structures, focusing on the Municipality of El Affroun in Blida Province as a case study.

Accordingly, the central research question is formulated as follows:

What is the current state of records governance within local administrative systems in Algeria?

To address this overarching question, the study explores the following sub-questions:

- What is the conceptual and practical significance of records governance in contemporary administrative systems?
- What is the current level of maturity of records management practices in local administrations when assessed through the ARMA Information Governance Maturity Model?
- To what extent have local administrative institutions implemented measures to improve and modernize records management systems?

2. Research Hypotheses

To guide the empirical investigation, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **H1:** Ineffective mechanisms for managing and preserving records negatively affect the performance and efficiency of document management systems in local administrations.
- **H2:** The implementation of records governance frameworks contributes to the optimization and standardization of records and archival management practices.
- **H3:** Limited adoption of international standards in records management adversely impacts the effectiveness and reliability of local administrative archives.

3. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study stems from both its theoretical and practical contributions. At a theoretical level, it advances understanding of records governance as an integrated framework for managing institutional information resources. At a practical level, it provides an empirical assessment of records management practices within local administrative systems in Algeria.

Records governance offers a comprehensive approach for ensuring effective control over documentary resources, based on internationally recognized standards and best practices. This is particularly relevant in the context of ongoing administrative transformation, where local authorities are transitioning from traditional paper-based systems to digital and hybrid information management environments.

4. Rationale for the Study

The selection of this research topic is motivated by several considerations:

- The need to provide an evidence-based assessment of the current state of records and archives management in local administrative institutions;
- The importance of identifying structural and procedural deficiencies and proposing practical solutions;
- The growing relevance of evaluating the feasibility of implementing records governance frameworks within the Algerian public administration context.

5. Objectives of the Study

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine the structure and management of records within local administrative institutions;
- To assess institutional awareness regarding the importance of records and archival practices;
- To evaluate the current state of records management through a field study of the Municipality of El Affroun;
- To analyze the conceptual relationship between records governance and administrative document management;
- To measure the maturity level of records governance practices using the ARMA model.

Literature Review

In recent years, records and information governance has emerged as a central concern in public administration, driven by the growing complexity of institutional processes and the strategic value of information as an organizational resource. Scholars increasingly emphasize that effective records governance is essential for ensuring transparency, accountability, and administrative efficiency in both public and private sectors (Smallwood, 2020; Franks, 2018).

The conceptual foundations of records governance are closely linked to broader governance frameworks, which focus on the coordination, control, and optimization of institutional activities. Governance, in this sense, extends beyond traditional management practices to include mechanisms that ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, and ethical standards (Mamdouh, 2009). Within this framework, records governance has been defined as a strategic approach to managing documentary resources across their entire lifecycle, ensuring their authenticity, reliability, and accessibility (ARMA International, 2013).

International standards play a crucial role in structuring records management practices. The ISO 15489 standard, widely recognized as the cornerstone of records management, provides guidelines for the creation, capture, and management of records within organizational systems (International Organization for Standardization [ISO], 2016). Similarly, the ISO 30300 series introduces a management systems approach, emphasizing continuous improvement, accountability, and integration with organizational strategy (ISO, 2018). These standards are fundamental to establishing effective records governance frameworks and are frequently cited in empirical studies as benchmarks for best practices (Arnaud, 2012).

The role of records governance in supporting institutional performance has been extensively explored in the literature. Studies indicate that inadequate records management systems can lead to inefficiencies, increased operational risks, and reduced accountability (Lemieux, 2016; Ngoepe & Ngulube, 2014). Conversely, the implementation of structured governance frameworks enhances decision-making processes, strengthens compliance mechanisms, and improves service delivery in public administration (Katu, 2020).

The ARMA Information Governance Maturity Model provides a practical tool for assessing the effectiveness of records governance systems. By defining a set of principles and maturity levels, the model enables organizations to evaluate their current practices and identify areas for improvement (ARMA International, 2019). Previous empirical research has demonstrated the applicability of this model in public sector contexts, particularly in evaluating governance maturity and guiding institutional reforms (Anderfuhren, 2018; Pagnamenta, 2014).

In the context of developing countries, including Algeria, the implementation of records governance remains limited. Existing studies highlight significant challenges, including the absence of standardized procedures, insufficient integration of digital technologies, and limited awareness of international best practices (Brabah, 2018). Furthermore, the lack of localized research

in this field has led to a reliance on Western frameworks, which may not fully reflect the institutional realities of public administration in these contexts.

Overall, the literature suggests that while the theoretical foundations of records governance are well established, there remains a significant gap between theory and practice, particularly in local administrative systems. This study contributes to addressing this gap by providing an empirical assessment of records governance maturity within the Algerian local administration context.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into the current state of records governance within local administrative systems in Algeria, particularly in the Municipality of El Affroun. The results reveal a clear discrepancy between the theoretical principles of records governance and their practical implementation, confirming observations made in previous studies (Lemieux, 2016; Ngoepe & Ngulube, 2014).

One of the most significant findings concerns the lack of clearly defined responsibilities in records management. The absence of a dedicated records management officer reflects a structural weakness that undermines accountability and coordination. This finding aligns with the ARMA framework, which emphasizes responsibility as a fundamental principle for effective governance (ARMA International, 2013). Without clearly assigned roles, records management processes remain fragmented and inefficient.

The study also highlights major deficiencies in retention practices, particularly the absence of a formal retention schedule. This gap represents a critical limitation, as retention policies are essential for regulating the lifecycle of records and ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements (ISO, 2016). The lack of such mechanisms increases the risk of information loss, improper disposal, and legal non-compliance, which can negatively impact institutional performance.

Another important aspect identified in this study is the limited level of compliance with international standards. Although some awareness of records management principles exists, their practical application remains weak. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that public sector institutions in developing contexts often face challenges in adopting and implementing international standards due to resource constraints and institutional inertia (Katu, 2020).

The maturity level identified in this study (approximately Level 2) indicates that the municipality is in a transitional stage, characterized by emerging awareness but limited formalization of governance practices. This stage is typically associated with informal procedures, lack of standardization, and reliance on individual efforts rather than institutionalized systems (ARMA International, 2019).

From a broader perspective, the findings suggest that the successful implementation of records governance requires a comprehensive institutional transformation. This includes the development of clear policies, the adoption of international standards, the integration of digital technologies, and the establishment of dedicated governance structures. Moreover, capacity building and training programs are essential to enhance staff competencies and ensure the effective implementation of governance frameworks (Franks, 2018).

Finally, the study underscores the importance of adopting a strategic approach to records governance, viewing records not merely as administrative tools but as critical assets that support decision-making, accountability, and institutional memory. This perspective is increasingly emphasized in contemporary governance literature and is essential for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration systems (Smallwood, 2020).

Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, combining theoretical analysis with empirical investigation. This methodology enables the systematic examination of records management practices and facilitates the interpretation of collected data within a structured analytical framework.

Data Collection Methods

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for direct engagement with key administrative personnel. This method provided in-depth insights into existing practices, challenges, and institutional perceptions related to records management within the Municipality of El Affroun.

Scope of the Study

- **Geographical scope:** The study focuses on the Municipality of El Affroun, located in Blida Province, Algeria, which comprises 25 municipalities.
- **Temporal scope:** Data collection was conducted between 5 September 2025 and 16 February 2026.

Conceptual Definitions

Governance

Governance refers to the capacity of institutions to manage economic and social resources effectively, ensuring transparency, accountability, and adherence to the rule of law. It also encompasses the mechanisms used to coordinate, regulate, and control institutional activities while balancing stakeholder interests.

Records Governance. Records governance is defined as a strategic framework through which organizations manage, secure, preserve, and optimize their documentary resources. It includes the oversight of records throughout their lifecycle, ensuring their authenticity, accessibility, and compliance with legal and regulatory standards.

Local Administration. Local administration refers to decentralized governmental entities, such as municipalities and provinces, responsible for managing public services at the local level. These entities operate within a defined legal framework while maintaining functional autonomy in the execution of administrative responsibilities.

Previous studies on governance and records management highlight the increasing importance of structured information governance frameworks.

At the national level, research on corporate and local governance in Algeria emphasizes the role of governance in improving administrative efficiency and combating corruption. At the international level, studies such as those by Arnaud (2012) underline the importance of records management policies in establishing strategic records governance systems, particularly through adherence to international standards such as ISO 15489 and ISO 30300.

Furthermore, guidelines developed by the International Council on Archives stress the central role of records management in ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective public administration.

Study Limitations

The study encountered several limitations:

- Limited availability of national research on records governance in Algeria;
- Scarcity of empirical studies focusing on maturity assessment models;
- Heavy reliance on international literature due to the lack of local academic sources.

Despite these constraints, the study provides a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding and improving records governance in local administrative systems.

Methodological Framework for Measuring Records Governance Maturity (ARMA Model)

The assessment of records governance maturity in this study is grounded in the framework developed by ARMA International, which provides a structured and widely recognized model for evaluating information governance practices within organizations.

The ARMA Information Governance Maturity Model conceptualizes governance maturity as a progressive and systematic process, enabling institutions to evaluate current practices, identify performance gaps, and implement continuous improvement strategies. In this context, the measurement of maturity is conducted through a multi-stage methodological approach comprising five key steps:

- **Defining strategic objectives:** Establishing clear objectives for each of the eight ARMA principles in alignment with the organization's operational and regulatory requirements;
- **Assessing maturity levels:** Determining the current maturity level of each principle and identifying discrepancies between existing practices and the desired level using the ARMA maturity scale;
- **Identifying risks and opportunities:** Evaluating potential risks associated with inadequate records governance, as well as opportunities for institutional improvement;
- **Prioritizing actions and responsibilities:** Defining strategic priorities and assigning responsibilities to relevant stakeholders in order to enhance governance processes and organizational performance;
- **Ensuring continuous improvement:** Establishing a quality management framework based on regular monitoring, evaluation, and the implementation of corrective measures to ensure sustained development of records governance practices.

This structured approach enables a comprehensive and systematic evaluation of governance maturity, while also supporting the development of actionable strategies for improving records management systems.

2. Principles of Records Governance Maturity Measurement

The ARMA model is based on eight fundamental principles that collectively define the framework for effective records governance. These principles serve as key indicators for assessing the maturity of information governance practices within organizations.

The following table presents the core principles adopted by ARMA, along with their conceptual definitions (Anderfuhren, 2018):

Table 1. Principles of Records Governance Maturity Measurement

(Source: Adapted from Anderfuhren, 2018; ARMA International, 2013)

Principles	Definition
Responsibility	A senior executive or supervisor (or anyone with similar authority) oversees the information governance program and delegates the management of records and information to designated individuals. The organization adopts policies and procedures to guide employees and ensure program compliance.
Transparency	All organizational operations and activities, including the information governance program, must be documented in an open and verifiable manner. These documents must be accessible to all relevant stakeholders.
Integrity	The information management program must be designed to ensure that the information produced or managed by the organization guarantees authenticity and reliability.
Protection	The information management program must ensure an appropriate level of protection for records and information that are private, confidential, privileged, essential for business continuity, or require protection for any reason.
Compliance	The information management program must comply with applicable laws, regulations, and organizational policies.
Availability	The organization must manage its records and information so that needed information can be found, retrieved, and used quickly, efficiently, and accurately.
Retention	The organization must retain its records and information for an appropriate period, considering legal, regulatory, financial, operational, and historical requirements.
Disposition	The organization must ensure the proper and secure disposal of records and information that are no longer required, in accordance with applicable laws and policies.

Third: Levels of Information and Records Governance Maturity

(Table 2, Maturity Levels of Information Governance) (Anderfuhren, 2018).

Level 1 - Substandard	This level describes an environment where concerns related to information governance and records management are either not addressed or handled in an ad hoc manner. Organizations at this level risk failing to meet legal or regulatory audit standards and do not effectively meet business needs.
Level 2 - In Development	This level reflects an environment where there is growing awareness that information management and records retention impact the organization. However, practices remain undefined, incomplete, or ineffective, making the organization vulnerable to legal and regulatory reviews.
Level 3 - Essential	This level represents the minimum standards required to meet legal and regulatory requirements. It is characterized by defined policies and procedures and the implementation of processes designed to improve information and records management. Organizations may still struggle with efficiency and cost control but have established the basic elements of an effective program.

<p>Level 4 - Proactive</p>	<p>This level describes an organization that has established a proactive information management program across all activities, along with continuous improvement processes. Information governance considerations are systematically integrated into decision-making. The organization exceeds minimum compliance requirements and meets legal obligations effectively.</p>
<p>Level 5 - Transformational</p>	<p>This level describes an organization that has fully integrated information governance into its infrastructure and business processes. Compliance with program requirements and legal responsibilities is systematic. The organization recognizes that effective governance reduces costs, enhances competitiveness, and improves customer service, and has successfully implemented strategies to achieve these benefits.</p>

2: Study of Indicators for Applying Records Governance in the Municipality of El Affroun According to the ARMA Standard

First: Preparing the Interview

The interview was the tool used to collect specific information that enabled the measurement of records governance maturity.

A. Interview Design: Interview questions were prepared to conduct an evaluative assessment of the maturity of records governance within the local administrative apparatus. A municipality from Blida Province, namely the Municipality of El Affroun, was selected. An interview was conducted with its Secretary-General, as he is a permanent employee (not elected for a limited term) and the responsible of the archives department.

The ARMA guide (for measuring the maturity of practices related to information and records management) was used as a reference, four relevant indicators were carefully selected from the eight previously presented principles to effectively measure governance maturity.

B. Description of Interview Questions: Four (04) principles were selected from the eight ARMA principles, as they were considered the most indicative and directly related to records management. This selection was based on the same methodology used in a study conducted at the Graduate School of Management in Geneva (specializing in records information) (Pagnamenta, 2014)., which is the only study identified that addressed measuring governance maturity using the ARMA standard.

The selected principles are:

- Responsibility: Without clearly defined responsibilities, no action or control is possible.
- Compliance: Public institutions must comply with laws and regulations.
- Retention: Preserving the institutional and national memory is essential.
- Disposition: Determining the fate of records (retention or disposal) and proper destruction methods is crucial.

These principles complement each other, with particular emphasis on Responsibility and compliance as foundational elements necessary for implementing the other principles.

Empirical Assessment of Records Governance Indicators in the Municipality of El Affroun (ARMA-Based Approach)

Interview-Based Data Collection

To evaluate the maturity of records governance within the local administrative apparatus, this study employed a **qualitative** empirical approach based on semi-structured interviews. The interview method was selected as the primary data collection tool due to its capacity to capture detailed, context-specific insights into institutional practices, organizational structures, and managerial perceptions related to records management.

Interview Design

The interview instrument was specifically designed to support an evaluative assessment of records governance maturity in accordance with the framework developed by ARMA International.

A case study approach was adopted, focusing on the Municipality of El Affroun in Blida Province (Algeria). This municipality was selected as a representative local administrative unit, enabling an in-depth analysis of records management practices within a real institutional setting.

The primary respondent was the Secretary-General of the municipality, who holds a permanent administrative position and is directly involved in overseeing archival and records management functions. This ensured the reliability and relevance of

the collected data, as the respondent possesses both operational and strategic knowledge of the institution's records management system.

Selection of Governance Indicators

The ARMA Information Governance framework identifies eight core principles for evaluating governance maturity. However, for the purpose of this study, a focused analytical approach was adopted by selecting four key principles that are most directly relevant to records management practices.

This selection is consistent with prior empirical research, particularly the study conducted at the Graduate School of Management in Geneva (Pagnamenta, 2014), which applied a similar methodological approach in assessing information governance maturity.

The selected principles are as follows:

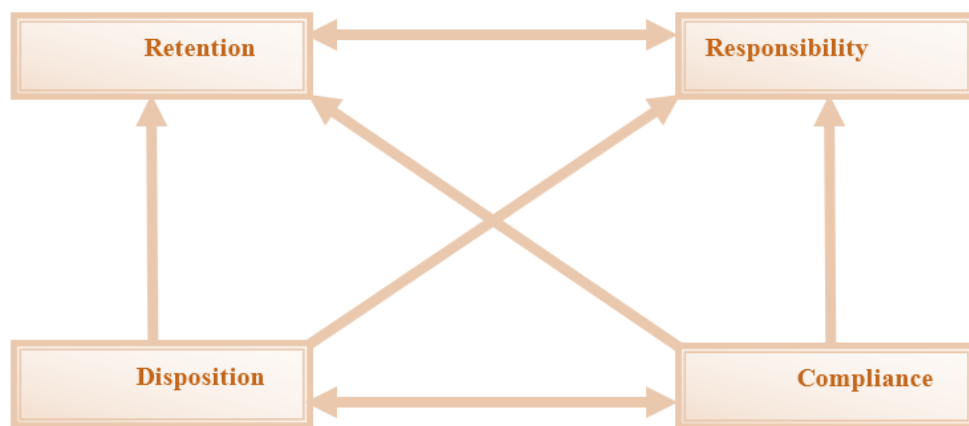
- **Responsibility:** Refers to the clear assignment of roles and accountability for records management processes. Without defined responsibilities, effective governance and control mechanisms cannot be established.
- **Compliance:** Relates to adherence to legal, regulatory, and institutional requirements governing records and information management.
- **Retention:** Concerns the preservation of records over appropriate time periods, ensuring the continuity of institutional memory and legal evidence.
- **Disposition:** Involves the systematic and secure disposal of records that are no longer required, based on predefined retention policies and legal frameworks.

Analytical Rationale

These four principles were selected due to their strong interdependence and their foundational role in establishing effective records governance systems. In particular, **Responsibility** and **Compliance** are considered core pillars, as they provide the structural and regulatory basis necessary for implementing retention and disposition mechanisms.

Together, these principles enable a comprehensive yet focused evaluation of governance maturity, capturing both organizational capacity and procedural effectiveness in records management.

Figure 1. The four selected principles from the ARMA governance maturity model



The interview questions were divided into two parts:

- The first part included four (04) questions addressed to the Secretary-General.
- The second part included sixteen (16) questions addressed to the head of the archives department in the same municipality.

Secondly: Interview Analysis

In the following, we will present and analyze the interview data to assess the maturity of records governance.

First: Presentation of Interview Results According to the ARMA Information and records Governance Maturity Model
 The results of the interview responses are shown in the table below.

Table 3. Quantitative Analysis: Results of Interview Responses

Maturity Level	Question	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Average Question Levels
	Responsibility	A		X			
2		X					
1			X				
B			X				
Compliance	5 and 6		X				3
	7		X				
	3 and 4				X		
	C				X		
Retention	11 and 12		X				2.25
	8 and 13		X				
	10			X			
	D		X				
Disposition	14 and 15			X			2.66
	16			X			
	9		X				

Qualitative Analysis. Analysis of the Principle of Responsibility

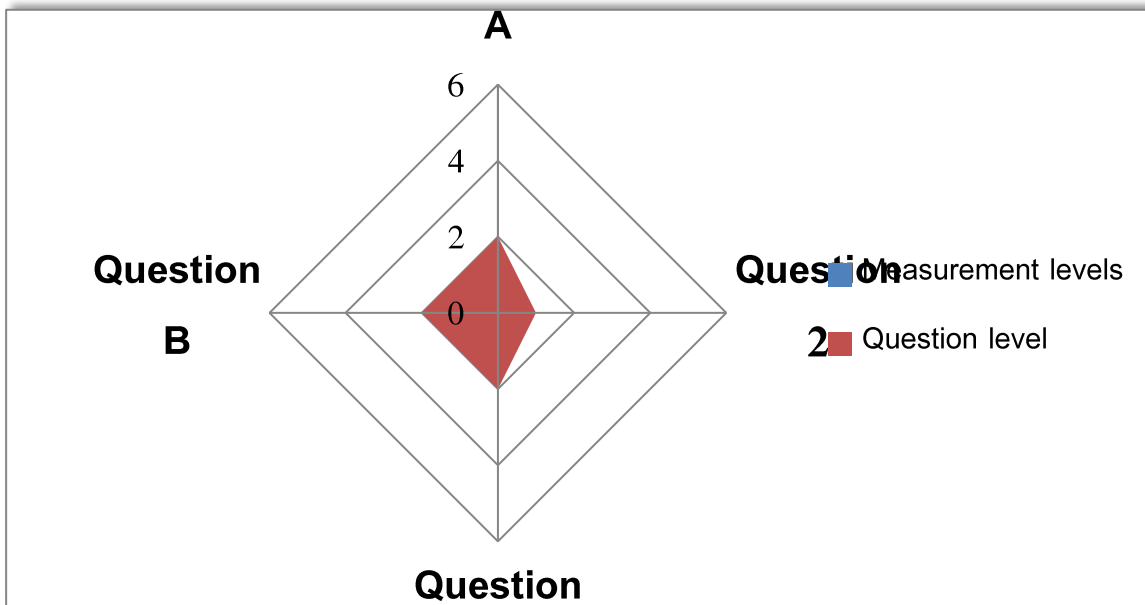


Figure 2. Level of Responses to Questions Related to the Principle of responsibility

The principle of Responsibility is very important and fundamental. One of its key indicators is the necessity of appointing a person responsible for records management. This role greatly contributes to controlling processes and ensuring proper governance. The records manager is expected to enforce control over documents and establish an effective records

governance policy, ensuring proper handling of all records produced and received by the municipality in the course of its normal activities.

According to ARMA, the principle of Responsibility aims to define roles and responsibilities related to information and records governance, as well as to establish procedures that enable the implementation of governance programs.

In other words, the individual responsible for records management plays a proactive role by enforcing strict procedures and precise working methods among relevant staff.

Additionally, the organization should adopt appropriate policies and procedures to guide employees in handling and managing records.

This position should ideally be placed at a high level within the municipal organizational structure to ensure legal authority in proposing effective records management policies.

It is also advisable to establish a records governance committee responsible for evaluating and guiding records management practices and ensuring alignment with strategic objectives.

The main indicators of this principle, presented to the Secretary General of Affroun Municipality, included four questions addressing structural, regulatory, and communication aspects.

The findings revealed that there is no dedicated records manager; instead, an archivist oversees both the archives and library services. However, there is a general willingness to organize records across departments, and no procedures contradict records management guidelines.

Despite these efforts, the average score for this principle is 1.75, which does not reach even the second level according to ARMA standards, and is therefore insufficient.

A. Analysis of the Principle of Compliance

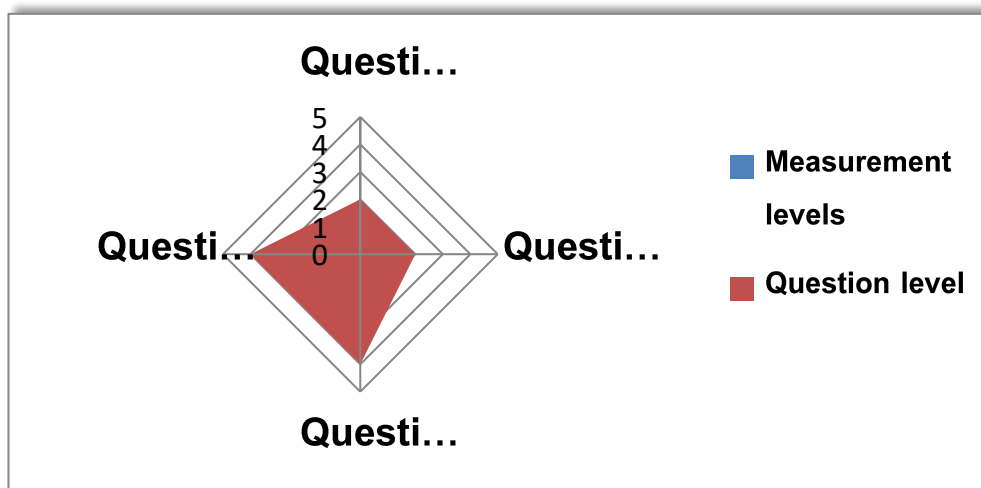


Figure 3. Level of answers to questions related to the principle of compliance

The compliance principle is essential in any organization, as it measures adherence to laws, regulations, and internal policies in daily operations. According to ARMA, records management systems must comply with applicable archival laws and align with organizational policies. Failure to comply with laws such as Law 88-09 and other regulations inevitably leads to organizational issues, including disorganized procedures and ineffective tools. The collected data shows increasing awareness of legal compliance, especially since the archivist is professionally qualified in library and information science. It also relies on an internal classification plan based on the organizational structure of the municipality to organize payments, which have recently been carried out in a more structured manner, while rejecting unorganized and non-preplanned payments. We also observed that the work within the department is entirely manual (100%), with no existing database for tracking the available balance. This was explained by the fact that the work is still in its early stages and that efforts are underway to reorganize and develop this department. The reasons were attributed to a shortage of supporting human resources and the lack of specialized training in this field. The average level of the questions related to this principle is 3, which indicates the existence of the minimum level required to meet legal and regulatory requirements

B. Analysis of the Principle of Retention

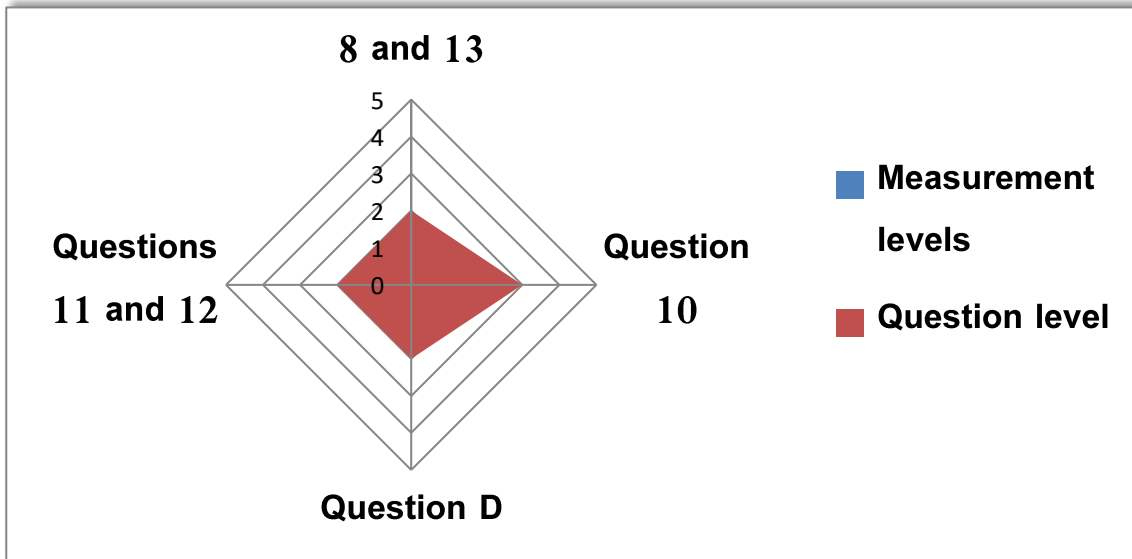


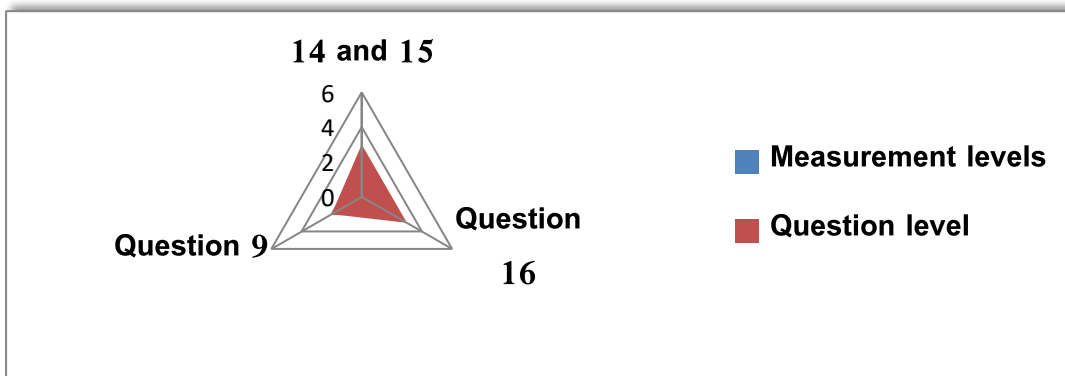
Figure 4. Level of Responses to Questions Related to the Principle of retention

Retention refers to preserving records and ensuring their integrity for future use. It is a cornerstone of records governance.

ARMA defines retention as maintaining records for appropriate periods based on legal, financial, operational, and historical requirements. Proper retention requires suitable storage conditions and tools. A key instrument is the records retention schedule, which determines how long records should be kept and their final disposition. Although a retention schedule specific to municipalities is under development, delays persist. The archivist currently relies on the provincial retention schedule. Storage conditions remain inadequate: poor ventilation, humidity issues, and limited fire protection. The average score for this principle is **2.25**, indicating it is still under development.

C. Analysis of the Principle of Disposition

Figure 5. Level of Responses to Questions Related to the Principle of disposition



According to ARMA, organizations must establish clear and documented rules for the secure disposal of records that are no longer needed. Disposition involves identifying records eligible for destruction while avoiding accidental loss of important files. Regulations require that disposal be conducted by authorized committees and in accordance with legal frameworks. Due to the absence of a finalized retention schedule, disposal processes are currently difficult to implement. The average score for this principle is **2.66**, also indicating a developmental stage.

E. Gap Analysis Between Current Results and ARMA Maturity Levels

After analyzing the maturity level of records governance at the El Affroun municipality using the four previously selected principles, we will now attempt to conduct a gap analysis to identify the difference between the current situation and the desired one. Based on the above, the indicators of the four principles can be summarized as follows:

- A records management officer must be appointed, responsible for defining clear policies and rules for records management.

- A program must be established to ensure compliance with applicable laws, policies, and records management standards.
- The organization must retain its records and information for an appropriate period, taking into account legal, regulatory, financial, and historical requirements.
- The organization must provide clear, documented, justified, and easy-to-apply rules for the secure and appropriate destruction of records and information, as well as those selected for disposal in accordance with laws, standards, and institutional policies.

Accordingly, the gap between the achieved level of these principles and the desired level (limited here to Level 4) can be illustrated in Figure (05), which represents the current level (in red) and the target level (in green). This gap makes it possible to identify priorities in terms of the actions that need to be taken, thereby enabling the development of a clear roadmap of priorities and measures required to improve the records management system at the El Affroun municipality.

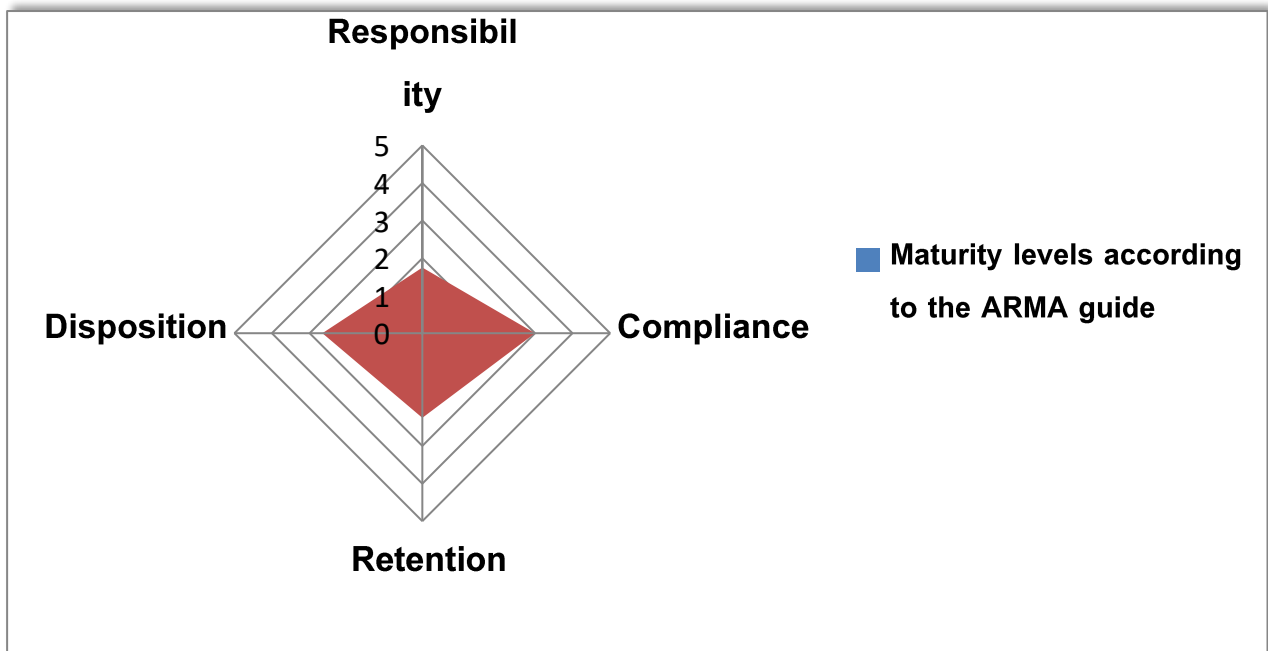


Figure 6. Gap Between the Average Results of the Obtained Principles and the Levels of Records Governance Maturity Measurement According to the ARMA International Guide

Accordingly, we can state that the level of records governance at the El Affroun municipality is classified as **below average**.

(Table 4, Gap Between the Current Level and the Target Level According to the ARMA International Guide)

Principle	Current Level	Target Level	Gap
Responsibility	1,75	4	2,25
Compliance	3	4	1
Retention	2,25	4	1,75
Disposition	2,66	4	1,34

Results

The analysis of the maturity assessment () reveals several critical gaps in the implementation of records governance within the Municipality of El Affroun. Among the four evaluated principles, Responsibility demonstrates the most significant discrepancy between the current and desired maturity levels. This gap is primarily attributed to the absence of a formally designated records management officer responsible for overseeing and coordinating records-related activities.

Currently, responsibility for records management is largely centralized in the role of the archivist, who manages document flows both within administrative departments and between operational units and archival services. However, this arrangement lacks the structural clarity and accountability required for effective governance. The findings suggest that appointing a

dedicated records management officer is essential to ensure systematic supervision, coordination, and implementation of records management procedures.

The second most critical gap is observed in the Retention principle. The absence of a formally implemented records retention schedule represents a major structural deficiency. Despite being a fundamental requirement under international standards—particularly ISO 15489—this tool has not yet been fully developed or operationalized within the municipality. The retention schedule is essential for regulating the lifecycle of records, defining retention periods, and identifying responsible custodians, thereby reducing risks associated with premature disposal or uncontrolled accumulation of documents.

The average maturity gap across the four evaluated principles is calculated at 1.58, which corresponds approximately to Level 2 (Development Stage) within the ARMA maturity framework. This level reflects an environment characterized by emerging awareness of the importance of records management, yet lacking formalized structures, standardized procedures, and institutionalized governance mechanisms.

Overall, the findings indicate that the Municipality of El Affroun is still in a transitional phase, where recognition of the strategic value of records is increasing, but practical implementation remains limited. Employees engage with records on a daily basis; however, their understanding of proper management practices is often insufficient and largely dependent on direct supervision rather than systematic training or institutional policy.

Furthermore, the analysis highlights significant risks associated with non-compliance. Only a limited number of departments demonstrate partial adherence to legal and regulatory requirements. This is particularly evident in the absence of key operational tools, such as the records retention schedule, which is essential for ensuring compliance and accountability.

The results also reveal a broader structural issue: the lack of a comprehensive and coherent records governance framework. The municipality currently operates without a clearly defined records management policy, standardized workflows, or appropriate technological tools. In addition, there is minimal reliance on internationally recognized standards and best practices in records and archival management.

6. Conclusion

This study confirms that records governance represents a contemporary and strategic approach to managing documentary and informational resources within an integrated framework grounded in efficiency, accountability, and institutional control.

By applying the ARMA Information Governance Maturity Model to the case of the Municipality of El Affroun, the study provides an empirical assessment of the current state of records management within local administrative systems in Algeria. The findings demonstrate that, despite increasing awareness of the importance of records, the existing system remains underdeveloped and does not meet the requirements of international standards, particularly ISO 15489.

The study highlights that the establishment of an effective records governance system requires a comprehensive institutional transformation. This includes the development of clear policies, the implementation of standardized procedures, the adoption of appropriate technological solutions, and the alignment with international records management standards.

A key conclusion of this research is that successful records governance depends on the creation of a collaborative and integrated environment involving all stakeholders in the archival sector. Such an environment should support strategic planning, continuous monitoring, and systematic evaluation of records management practices.

Moreover, the findings underscore the urgent need to establish specialized governance structures, including the designation of records management officers and the creation of supervisory bodies responsible for monitoring compliance and performance.

In its current state, the local administrative apparatus—represented by municipalities and provincial authorities—does not yet fulfill the fundamental requirements of modern records governance systems. Therefore, comprehensive reforms are necessary to enhance institutional capacity, improve administrative efficiency, and ensure the long-term preservation and effective use of documentary resources.

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