

CLIMATE CHANGE AND LATIN AMERICAN NATIONAL ARCHIVES: DIAGNOSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Claudio Ogass Bilbao - ICA-Climate Change Working Group

Mabel Tapia Ponce - Regional Archive of Atacama (Chile)

Francisco González Villanueva - University of Chile

Oscar Zamora Flores - Queens College, City University of New York



OBJECTIVES

01

Explore the level of institutional awareness and adaptation to climate change in Latin American National Archives (LANA).

02

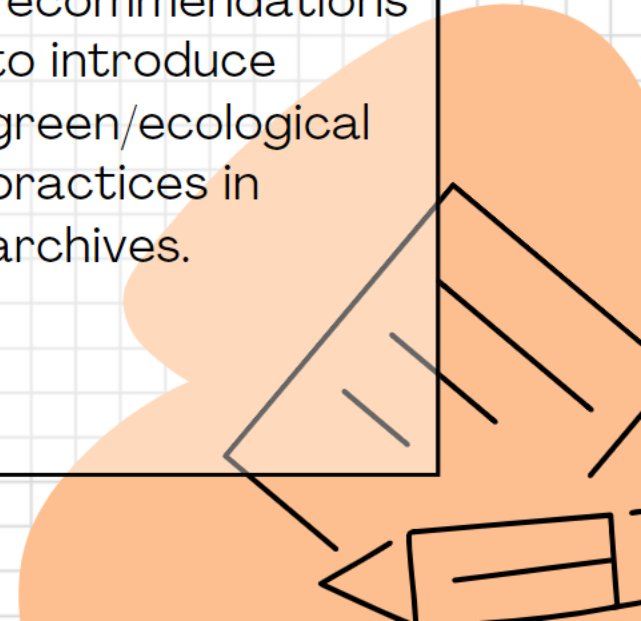
Display a diagnosis about current perceptions and actions about this phenomenon within these archival institutions.

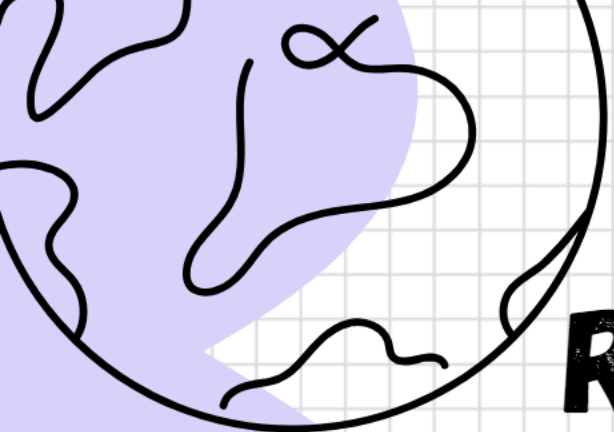
03

Analyse LANA's emergency plans to evaluate their capacity to face climate change.

04

Share a set of recommendations to introduce green/ecological practices in archives.





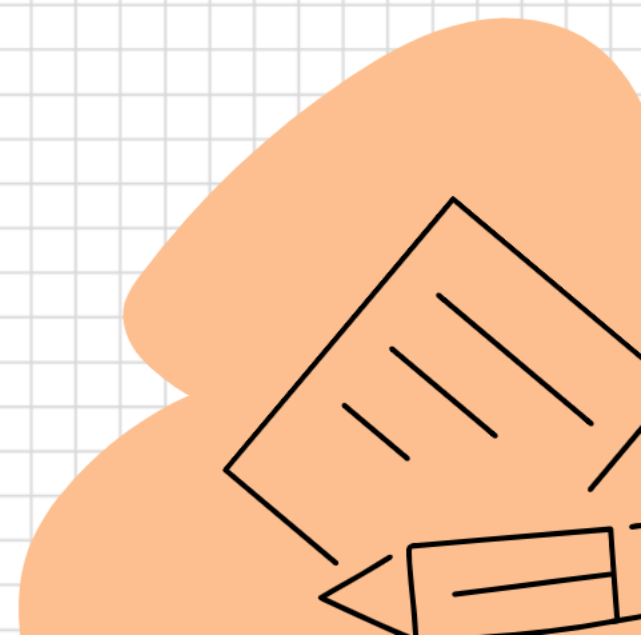
RESEARCH AND SOURCES

01

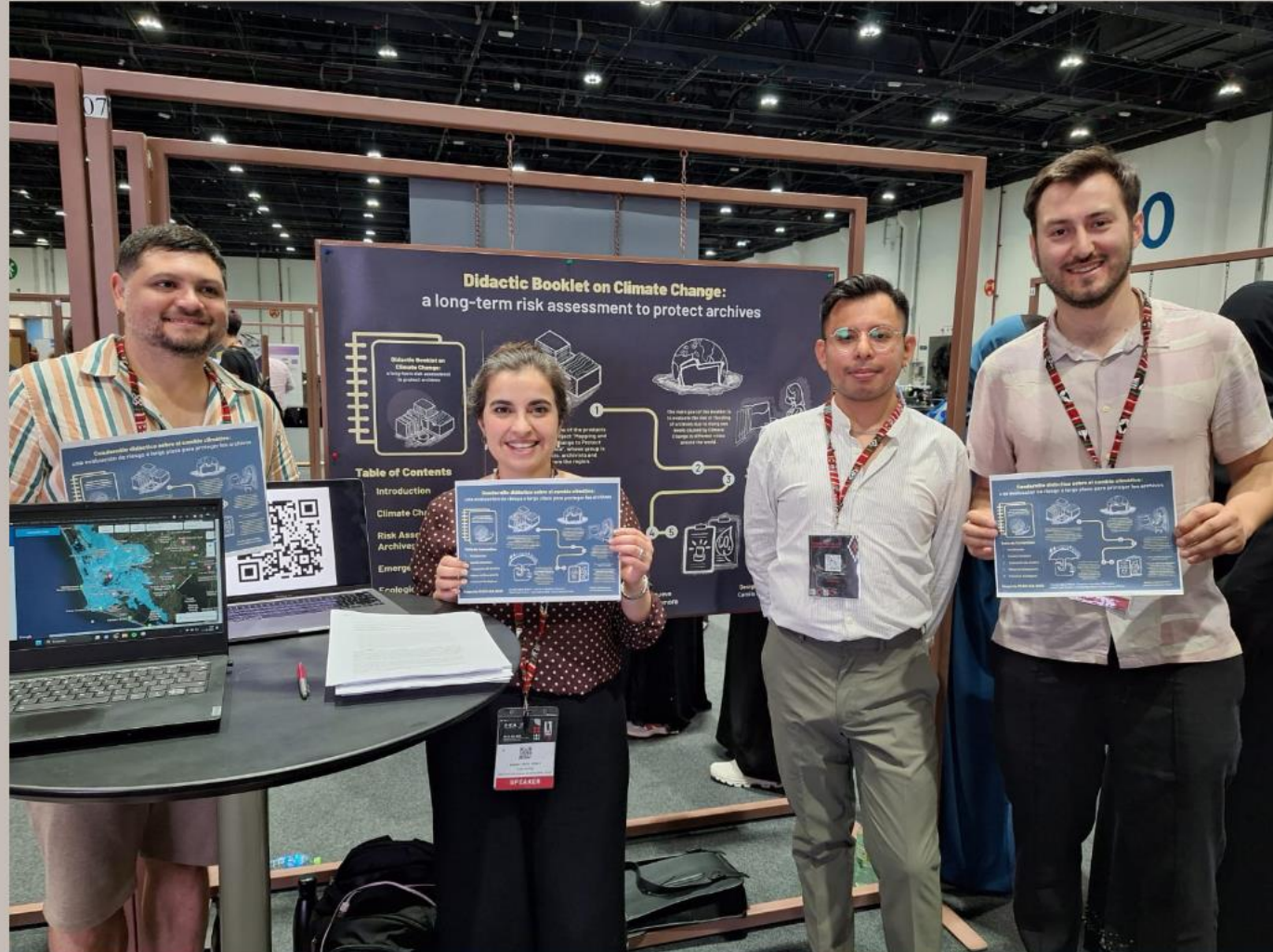
A survey was conducted to 16 Latin American National Archives between April and July 2023

02

An analysis of six emergency plans belonging to Latin American National Archives

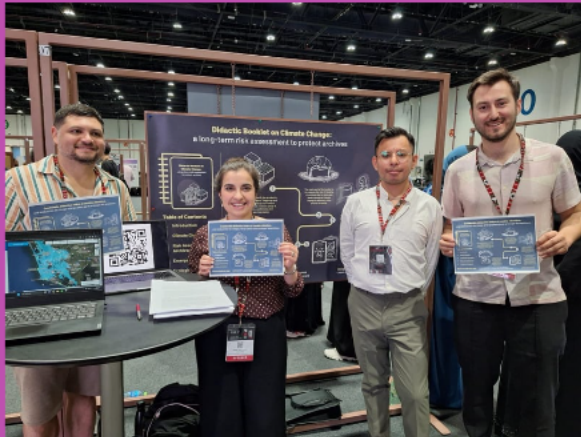


PCOM PROJECT TEAM



PCOM ICA
Programme Commission
Commission du Programme

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES



1

Climate change is a profound **violation of human rights** as it threatens a wide range of fundamental guarantees.

2

It is an **unavoidable and real problem** – supported by abundant and irrefutable scientific evidence.

3

Although not all countries and human beings contribute equality to global warming, all of us who inhabit the planet will feel **its negative effects**.


4

We join efforts to adapt and attempt to mitigate Climate Change as professionals committed to **creating a more sustainable world within our means**.

“Sustainable archival practice means making present-day archival choices that enable future archivists to carry out their jobs and ensure survival of cultural heritage”.



Eira Tansey, "Archival adaptation to climate change",
Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy, 11, 2
(2015).




“Creating a culture of sustainability within a single repository can begin with one archivist advocating for the purchase of green cleaning products”.

Heidi Abbey, “The green archivist: a primer for adopting affordable, environmentally sustainable, and socially responsible archival management practices” *Archival Issues*, 34, 2 (2012): 91–115.

**THE GREEN ARCHIVIST: A PRIMER
FOR ADOPTING AFFORDABLE,
ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE, AND
SOCIALY RESPONSIBLE ARCHIVAL
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

BY HEIDI N. ABBEY

ABSTRACT: In the past forty years, research and publications in the library science and museum studies fields have illuminated the growing imperative of adopting green practices in cultural, educational, and public heritage institutions in the United States. These initiatives are part of a much broader and global issue known as environmental sustainability, or meeting the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of the present without compromising the same needs of future generations. Numerous books, articles, and professional organizations currently advocate for sustainable library and museum services and facilities, including green building construction and management, and ecologically-sensitive business operations. However, within the field of archival science, investigations have concentrated on facilities design and environmental control rather than on a holistic approach promoting simple, attainable, green initiatives that archivists can readily implement. This article examines the state of scholarship in these arenas and is further intended to broaden the scope of the green discussion within the archives community. It also offers a pragmatic framework of strategies and resources needed to incorporate more affordable, sustainable, and socially responsible archival management practices into the profession.



Main results

50%

of Latin American National Archives have experienced some form of disaster in recent years.

81%

of Latin American National Archives are concerned about climate change at the institutional level.

69%

of the National Archives of Latin America are highly concerned about climate change.

56%

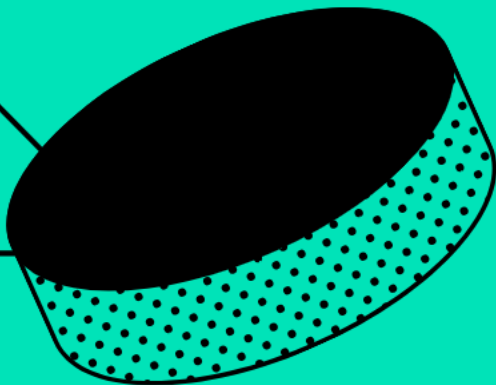
of National Archives of Latin America consider that they are adequately prepared to respond to climate change.

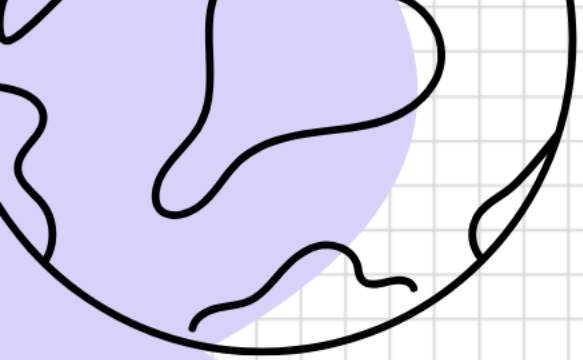
81%

of the National Archives of Latin America have drafted emergency plans to prevent and respond to disasters.

58%

of National Archives in Latin America have implemented green practices to control climate change.





FACTORS EXPLAINING THE LEVEL OF CONCERN ON CLIMATE CHANGE

01

8 of the 16 National Archives - that is 50% - have **suffered some catastrophe** attributed to this phenomenon in recent years.

02

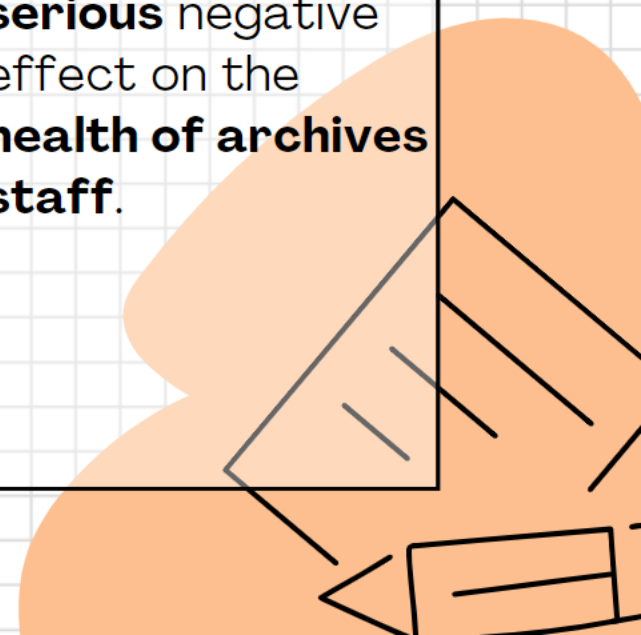
Threatens to destroy the **infrastructure of archives buildings** in the region

03

May **increase** the **budgets** of Archives

04

Might produce **serious** negative effect on the **health of archives staff**.





NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF LATIN AMERICA LOCATED IN AT-RISK AREAS

- 1 National Archives and Library of Bolivia
- 2 National Historical Archive of Ecuador
- 3 General Archive of the Nation of the Dominican Republic
- 4 National Archive of the Republic of Cuba
- 5 General Archives of the Nation of Puerto Rico
- 6 General Archive of the Nation of Uruguay



• BOLIVIA

"It is located in the historic centre of Sucre in an area susceptible to heavy hailstorms. In fact, in recent years, *rainstorms have put the building at risk*. In addition, it has underground water underneath that *can collapse when there are heavy rains*".

• PUERTO RICO

"The location of the building places the institution in a tsunami zone".

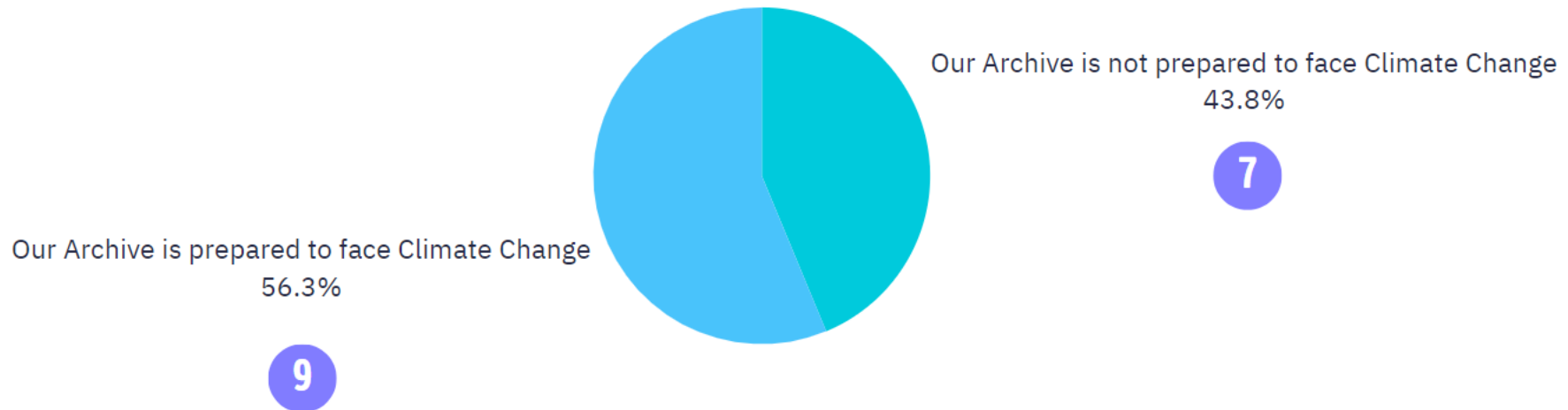
• DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

"The building is at risk of flooding due to constant cyclones and given our location in the Caribbean region".

• URUGUAY

"In 2019, the building suffered a roof collapse due to increased rainfall volume".

DO YOU THINK THE ARCHIVE IS PREPARED TO FACE CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGES AND RISKS?



ANALYSIS OF EMERGENCY PLANS

VARIABLES

- (1)country
- (2)date of creation or last update
- (3)level of scope (national, regional, institutional)
- (4)objectives
- (5)risks or emergencies for which it was designed
- (6)team or creation unit.

MAIN FINDINGS / CONCLUSIONS

- None of the emergency plans of the six National Archives consulted explicitly mention climate change.

- The real capacity of these institutions to plan, prevent and react to new disasters caused by climate change is almost non-existent.

LIST OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RISKS IN THE EMERGENCY PLANS OF LATIN AMERICAN NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Internal factors

- Gas leaks
- Fire due to faulty electrical system
- Flooding due to defective water system or water main breakage

External anthropic factors

- Explosive attacks
- Entry of mobs into the archive
- Theft and robbery of documents
- Warlike actions

External environmental factors

- Earthquakes
- **Fire forests**
- **Acid rains**
- **Gusts of wind**
- **Tsunamis**
- **Tropical storms**
- **Hurricanes**
- **Floods**

TYPES OF SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN LATIN AMERICA



5
(32%)

PAPER RECYCLING

3
(19%)

EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES (WATER AND ELECTRICITY)

3
(19%)

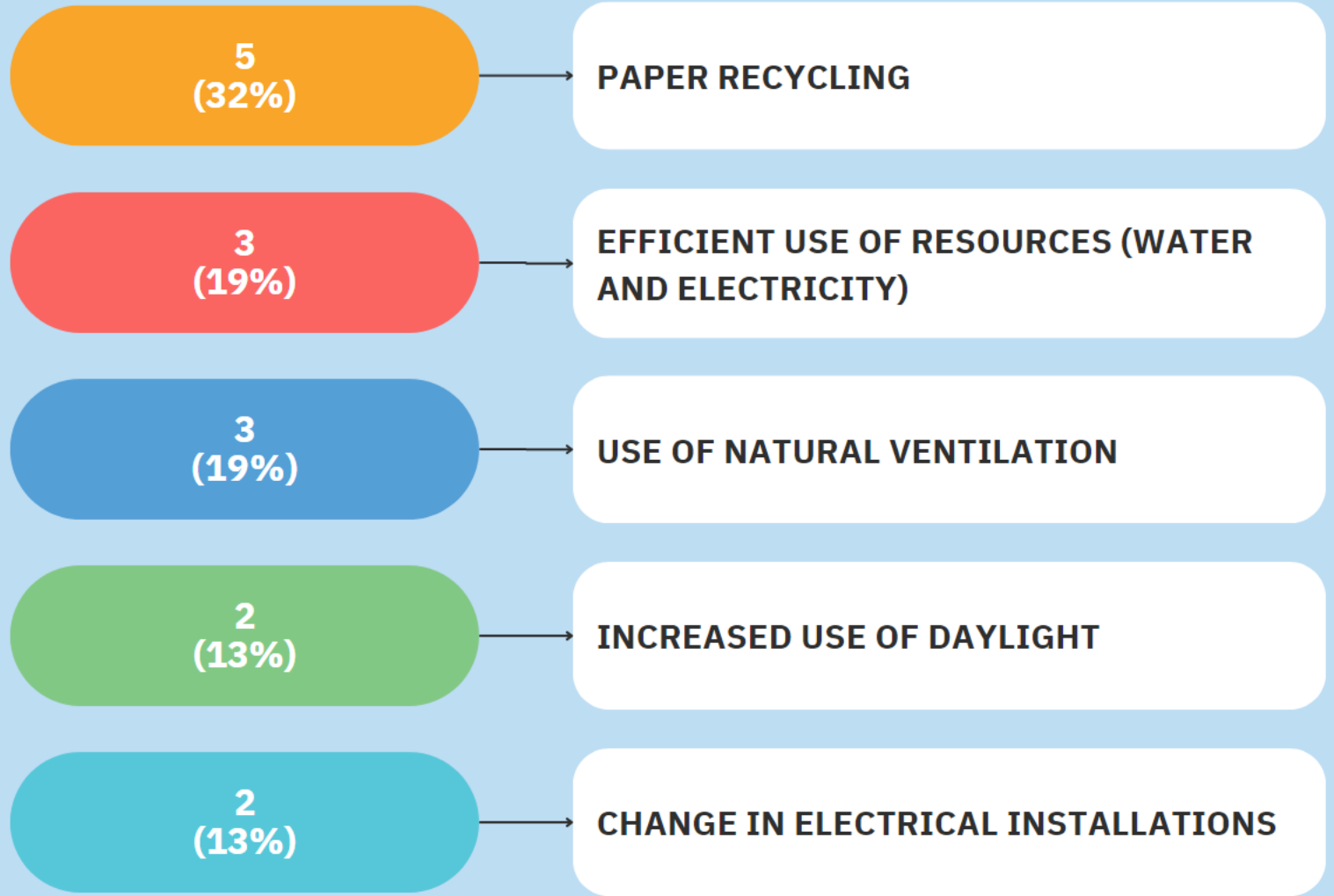
USE OF NATURAL VENTILATION

2
(13%)

INCREASED USE OF DAYLIGHT

2
(13%)

CHANGE IN ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS



HIGHLIGHTS

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF COSTA RICA

The National Archive of Costa Rica has a work plan with well-defined goals and indicators provided by its Environmental Management Commission.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF EL SALVADOR

The General Archive of the Nation of El Salvador stated that it has designed "an environmental impact regulation aimed at generating best practices in the exercise of its functions".

PROBABILITY OF INTRODUCING GREEN PRACTICES IN THE SHORT TERM

10 NATIONAL ARCHIVES (62%) INDICATED THAT IT WAS VERY LIKELY TO IMPLEMENT FOUR TYPES OF GREEN PRACTICES IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS



1

REDUCING THE USE OF EFFICIENT USE POLLUTING MATERIALS IN ARCHIVAL PROCESSES

2

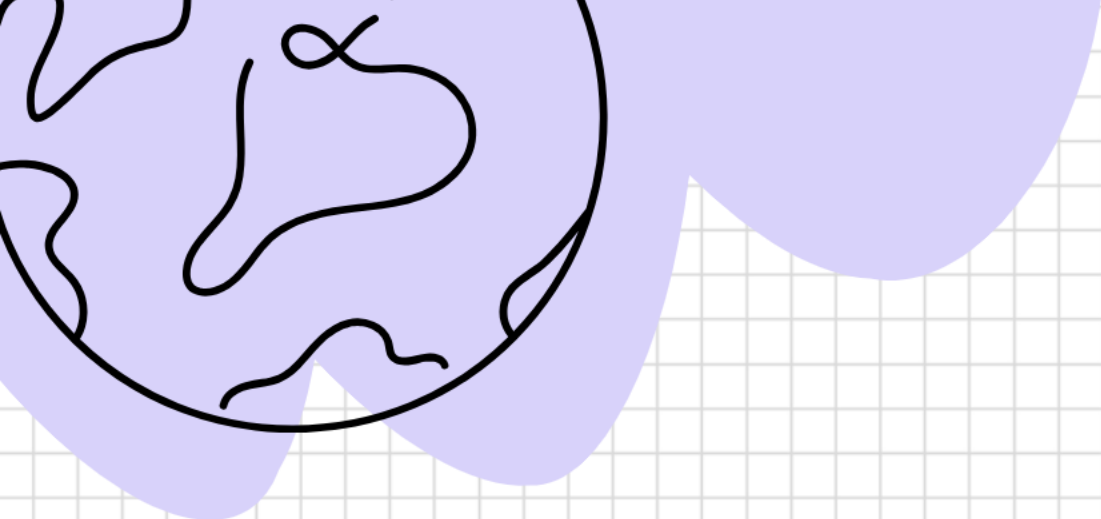
REDUCING UNNECESSARY USE OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY

3

REDUCING WATER USAGE LEVELS

4

RECYCLING PAPER USED IN THE WORK



RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONTROL CLIMATE CHANGE

Most recommendations were drawn from those archival institutions that are currently implementing this set of actions.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

Reduce paper printouts

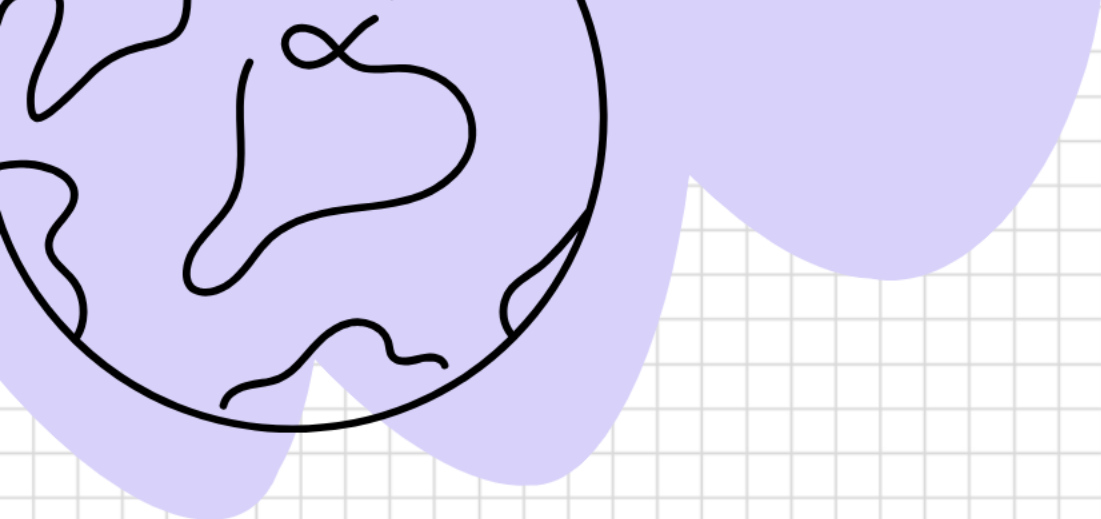
Recycle paper

Sorting waste for easy recycling

Reduce unnecessary water consumption

Reduce the use of electricity and increase the use of natural light

Reduce the use of polluting materials



RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONTROL CLIMATE CHANGE

These proposals are based on international experiences that were regarded with a high level of enthusiasm among the survey participants.

LONG-TERM ACTIONS

Create a strategic plan to transform the archive into a green institution

Assessing environmental impact with annual targets and indicators

Encourage staff to use cleaner means of transportation for commuting to work

Create catalogues on environmental and ecological issues to encourage research on these topics

To carry out dissemination and education activities to promote the importance of environmental care among different audiences

Conclusions

Climate change has been progressively impacting the National Archives of Latin America.

However, this is not enough to cope with the catastrophic consequences of climate change projected for Latin America during the 21st century.

One issue where the National Archives of Latin America has made strong progress is in the introduction of ecological practices to try to control climate change.





THANKS!

This is our email:

proyecto.archivosycc.al@gmail.com

