

General Guidelines¹ of the Memory of the World (MoW) Programme

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The concept of Memory of the World (MoW) evolved in the early 1990s, following the creation of the UNESCO Sector for Communication, Information and Informatics in 1990, under which had been assigned the implementation of the General Information Programme (PGI). The General Conference of UNESCO in 1991 invited the Director-General, Federico Mayor Zaragoza, “with regard to archives, to promote the safeguard of, and access to the archival heritage, through: advisory services on the establishment of regional audio-visual technical laboratories, and audio-visual archives development plans in four Member States; the reconstitution of the archival heritage through microfilming”². The widespread use of the internet was still in the future, but growing global concern about the preservation of fragile and endangered documents was a contemporary reality.

1.2. In order to help prevent the irrevocable loss of collective memory, UNESCO thus set up the MoW Programme in 1992 with the objectives of safeguarding the documentary heritage, facilitating access to it and disseminating it, and raising public awareness of its significance and the need to preserve it. The MoW Programme is underpinned and guided by various UNESCO standard-setting instruments, most recently the [2015 Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form](#) (hereafter referred to as “the 2015 Recommendation”).

1.3. Further historical details on the MoW Programme can be found on the [MoW website](#).

2. VISION, MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

2.1. The **vision** of the MoW Programme is that the world’s documentary heritage belongs to all, should be fully preserved and protected for all and, with due recognition of cultural mores and practicalities, should be permanently accessible to all without hindrance.

2.2. The **mission** of the MoW Programme is to increase awareness and protection of the world’s documentary heritage, and achieve its universal and permanent accessibility.

2.3. The MoW Programme has three main **objectives** that are closely interlinked, namely:

(a) to facilitate preservation, by the most appropriate techniques, of the world’s past, present and future documentary heritage. This may be done by direct practical assistance, by the dissemination of advice and information and the encouragement of training, policy development and implementation by linking sponsors with timely and appropriate projects, or in other ways fostering the development of widely available resources in all forms.

¹ As approved by the UNESCO Executive Board during its [211th Session](#) (211 EX/10 Decision).

² 26C/Resolution 11.31 of the General Conference (1991).

(b) to assist universal access to documentary heritage. This may be done by encouraging institutions and individuals holding documentary heritage to make it accessible as widely and equitably as possible, in analogue and/or digital form, as appropriate. This includes publications and products, and the placing of digitized copies and catalogues on websites. Where access has implications for owners or custodians, these are respected. For example, such implications may refer to legislative limitations on the accessibility of archives. They may also refer to cultural sensitivities, including indigenous communities' ownership or custodianship of their materials and their guardianship of access.

(c) to increase awareness worldwide of the existence and significance of documentary heritage and thereby foster dialogue and mutual understanding between people and cultures. This may be done by developing the MoW registers, the media, promotional and informational publications, exhibitions, prizes, awards, educational programmes and use of the MoW logo. Preservation and access, in and of themselves, not only complement each other, but also raise awareness, as demand for access stimulates preservation work.

2.4. In its pursuit of these three main objectives, the MoW Programme recognises that "history is an unending dialogue between the present and the past"³ or, in other words, the interaction between primary sources and their ongoing interpretation. The MoW Programme's concern is with the preservation and accessibility of primary sources, not with their interpretation or the resolution of historical disputes. That is appropriately the province of historians, researchers and other interested parties.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. For the purposes of the present General Guidelines and as defined by the 2015 Recommendation, it is understood that:

3.1.1. A **document** is an object comprising analogue or digital informational content and the carrier on which it resides. It is preservable and usually moveable. The content may comprise signs or codes (such as text), images (still or moving) and sounds, which can be copied or migrated. The carrier may have important aesthetic, cultural or technical qualities. The relationship between content and carrier may range from incidental to integral.

3.1.2. **Documentary heritage** comprises those single documents – or groups of documents – of significant and enduring value to a community, a culture, a country or to humanity generally, and whose deterioration or loss would be a harmful impoverishment. Significance of this heritage may become clear only with the passage of time. The world's documentary heritage is of global importance and responsibility to all, and should be fully preserved and protected for all, with due respect to and recognition of cultural mores and practicalities. It should be permanently accessible and re-usable by all without hindrance. It provides the means for understanding social, political, and collective as well as personal history. It can help to underpin good governance and

³ E H Carr, *What is History?*, 1961, Cambridge UP, pp. 123-132.

sustainable development. For each Member State, its documentary heritage reflects its memory and identity, and thus contributes to determining its place in the global community.

3.1.3. **Memory institutions** may include but are not limited to archives, libraries, museums and other educational, cultural and research organizations.

3.2. These and associated terms are further elaborated on the MoW website.

4. DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGY

4.1. The five strategies for the MoW Programme are set out in the 2015 Recommendation as follows: identification of documentary heritage; preservation of documentary heritage; access to documentary heritage; policy measures; and national and international cooperation. The 2015 Recommendation sets out a range of recommended actions by Member States of UNESCO that are needed to adequately identify, preserve, and provide access to their documentary heritage, and to raise public awareness of its existence and importance. Putting them into practice, over time, will involve the shared actions of Member States, memory institutions, professional associations, the education and heritage sectors, partnerships and sponsors, software and hardware developers, civil society organizations, benefactors and individuals. National and regional MoW committees of the MoW Programme will also have a part to play as the tasks unfold.

4.2. For additional details on how the five strategies may be implemented, you may consult, on the UNESCO website, the [questionnaire](#) for the preparation of reports by Member States on the application of the 2015 Recommendation.

5. STRUCTURE OF THE MoW PROGRAMME

5.1. The MoW Programme is carried forward by a tripartite structure of committees in which each sphere (international, regional, national) operates separately, but is part of a single network as described in the present General Guidelines.

5.1.1. International Advisory Committee (IAC)

5.1.1.1. The [IAC](#) is the peak MoW Programme body, responsible for advising UNESCO on the planning and implementation of the MoW Programme as a whole.

5.1.1.2. As provided for in its Statutes, the IAC comprises 14 international experts, chosen for their expertise in safeguarding documentary heritage. The experts are selected taking due account of geographical and gender representation, and in such a way as to represent the various disciplines and schools of thought prevalent in this field within Member States and in the main international professional organizations, such as the International Council on Archives (ICA) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). The members of the IAC are appointed by the Director-General who then presents their names in an information document for the UNESCO Executive Board to take note of, after consultation with the National

Commissions of the concerned Member States, and serve in a personal capacity, not as representatives of States or any other affiliated entities. They will not seek or accept instructions from governments or other authorities.

5.1.1.3. The IAC is assisted by a Secretariat, based at UNESCO headquarters in Paris (hereafter referred to as “MoW Secretariat”). The MoW Secretariat carries out administrative functions, including maintenance of the main MoW Programme website and liaison between the IAC and its sub-committees, national and regional MoW committees as well as partners established within the framework of the MoW Programme. The Director-General or his/her representative participates in the work of the IAC or its subcommittees but without the right to vote.

5.1.1.4. As needed, the IAC establishes subcommittees which it deems useful to further its work. It assigns their terms of reference and, in consultation with the Director-General of UNESCO, appoints their chairs who, assisted by the MoW Secretariat and in discussion with appropriate professional bodies, selects the members and informs the IAC chair. These bodies report to each meeting of the IAC and, when necessary, the Bureau.

5.1.1.5. Details on subcommittees in operation at any one time can be found on the MoW website. Currently, they include the Register Sub-Committee (RSC), the Preservation Sub-Committee (PSC) and the Education and Research Sub-Committee (SCEaR).

5.1.2. National MoW Committees

5.1.2.1. [National MoW committees](#) are autonomous entities operating at the national level.

5.1.2.2. The establishment of one national MoW committee in every Member State where it is practicable is a goal of the Programme. There shall be no more than one national MoW committee in each Member State. A national MoW committee may be established by an individual, a group of individuals or a Member State’s National Commission for UNESCO or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO. When the national MoW committee is established by an individual or group of individuals, the individual or group of individuals shall seek the endorsement of the National Commission for UNESCO or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, in order for the committee to have official recognition. The National Commission or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, shall notify the MoW Secretariat of the establishment of a national MoW committee.

5.1.2.3. National MoW committees are composed of members serving in a personal capacity, or as representatives of memory institutions or cultural authorities. Whether highly formalised and structured or more informal in approach, the essence of a committee is that it is a gathering of experts from across the documentary heritage field in its country.

5.1.2.4. National MoW committees are expected to meet the following requirements:

- An operational link with its National Commission or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO. If there is a regional MoW committee, a connection is encouraged;

- Membership which reflects the Member States' geographic character, the important cultural groups, gender, and the relevant knowledge and expertise;
- Written terms of reference and rules, including the basis of membership and succession;
- Ability to discharge their role. This may include funding and support, links to major memory institutions and government bodies;
- A commitment to awareness raising through regular reporting to the National Commission or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO (copied to the MoW Secretariat and, if appropriate, regional MoW committee).

5.1.2.5. National MoW committees will vary in their roles and range of activities but all national MoW committees must ensure that their roles and activities reflect the vision, mission and objectives of the MoW Programme, as set out in **Section 2** of the present General Guidelines. Operating a national MoW register is one possible activity and some Member States have quite substantial registers.

5.1.2.6. National MoW committees established pursuant to **Section 5.1.2.2** shall apply for the use of the MoW name and logo in line with the Directives Concerning the Use of the Name, Acronym, Logo and Internet Domain Names of UNESCO. More details on the MoW logo are available on the MoW website (see also **Section 6** of the present General Guidelines).

5.1.2.7. A template for terms of reference of national MoW committees is available on the MoW website.

5.1.3. Regional MoW Committees

5.1.3.1. [Regional MoW committees](#) are autonomous entities operating at the regional level. They are cooperative structures that bring together, on a voluntary basis, national MoW committees which share a geographic area, or other common interests such as a shared culture. They provide a means of addressing issues which fall outside the practical scope of the IAC on the one hand, or individual national MoW committees on the other.

5.1.3.2. The initiative to establish a regional MoW committee may come from a group of national MoW committees, the IAC, or the MoW Secretariat.

5.1.3.3. Regional MoW committees are expected:

- to operate a regional MoW register;
- to pursue advocacy and publicity over a large geographic area;
- to run cooperative events such as training workshops on chosen topics;
- to bring delegates of national MoW committees together for periodic meetings;
- to “backstop” for countries in the region that do not have a national MoW committee;
- to assist in forming and mentoring new national MoW committees;
- to maintain up-to-date contact details for members and associates across the region;
- to produce regional publications, in line with the UNESCO Publications Guidelines.

5.1.3.4. Administrative and funding arrangements for regional MoW committees shall depend upon the constituting national MoW committees.

5.1.3.5. Regional MoW committees are required to submit a formal report biennially to the IAC, through the MoW Secretariat.

6. The MoW logo

6.1. The Memory of the World logo permits regional and national MoW committees as well as institutions holding items listed on a register to demonstrate their link with UNESCO. This can be useful in publicizing the work of the committee in promoting or protecting documentary heritage, or in highlighting an inscription on a register. However, its use is subject to the provisions which are set out in the Guidelines for Logo Use available on the MoW website.

6.2. The Guidelines for Logo Use are themselves in compliance with the Directives Concerning the Use of the Name, Acronym, Logo and Internet Domain Names of UNESCO. UNESCO determines the conditions under which the logo can be used and may request the cessation of use in the case of unauthorized, or a violation of, usage. For national MoW committees and institutions holding items on a register, an application can be sent to the MoW Secretariat through a National Commission for UNESCO or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO. To be entitled to use the MoW name and logo, regional committees must apply for permission from the MoW Secretariat. The Secretariat may, on the advice of the IAC or its Bureau, grant such permission.

6.3. The logo is a symbolic graphic in which the concentric circles can be interpreted to represent various document formats, as well as the diffusion and preservation of memory. The breaks in the circles thereby represent lost and missing memory.

7. MEMORY OF THE WORLD ACTIVITIES

7.1. Fulfilling the MoW Programme's objectives leads to a range of activities that are constantly evolving. A reading of the 2015 Recommendation will suggest the future trajectory of the MoW Programme, and the opportunities and challenges ahead. The activities of the MoW Programme are, but not limited to, the following:

7.2. Workshops and seminars

7.2.1. MoW workshops and seminars are held in the national, regional and international domains and would be organised by MoW committees, the MoW Secretariat, or international non-governmental organizations in partnership with the MoW Secretariat, such as IFLA and the ICA. They may be stand-alone events, or linked to other events.

7.2.2. MoW workshops and seminars take various forms and are of varying duration. For instance:

- *Special events*: anniversaries, launches of projects or publications, public awareness raising;
- *Policy and strategy*: implementation of the 2015 Recommendation and of other UNESCO standard-setting instruments;
- *Capacity building*: training in preservation, collection management, access and other professional topics;

- *Nomination preparation*: mentoring first-time nominators in preparing and submitting nominations.

7.3. Publications

7.3.1. MoW-branded or MoW-related publications may be directly commissioned or produced by UNESCO, or co-produced with commercial publishers. They are also produced by individual MoW committees. In addition, UNESCO facilitates the publication of relevant texts and manuals by professional associations. Publications may be hard-copy or electronic, or both. Hard copy publications may be distributed through commercial channels, memory institutions or UNESCO offices; electronic publications are often accessible on websites.

7.3.2. The main MoW website carries an indicative but not exhaustive list of publications. Categories include the following:

- *Professional manuals*: Guidelines and standards on preservation, digitisation, library management, professional philosophy;
- *Registers*: Illustrated books about inscriptions on various MoW registers – national, regional and international – and related ebooks and websites. MoW registers are typically accessible on the websites maintained by the responsible MoW committees;
- *Academic and research*: in-depth theses, articles, newsletters and books on the principles of MoW, its socio-cultural importance and its place in the educational and research spectrum and disciplines;
- *Guidelines*: The General Guidelines and related publications are produced in several languages;
- *General*: Books, booklets and web publications on topics ranging from legal deposit legislation to lost memory.

7.4. UNESCO International Days

7.4.1. The United Nations General Assembly designates a number of “International Days” to mark important aspects of human life and history. Specialized agencies, including UNESCO, can also proclaim International Days. In this case, the proclamation of international days depends on their governing bodies and internal regulations only.

7.4.2. UNESCO thus celebrates United Nations International Days related to its fields of competence, in addition to the other International Days proclaimed by UNESCO's governing bodies or other institutions.⁴ All entities and individuals active in the MoW Programme are encouraged to participate in relevant activities related to these International Days.

7.4.3. Many of these International Days are related to documentary heritage and therefore to MoW. An indicative list of such International Days is available on the MoW website.

7.5. Prizes and awards

⁴ See <http://en.unesco.org/celebrations/international-days>.

7.5.1. In various settings, the MoW Programme may provide awards and other forms of recognition, including Certificates of Inscription for documentary heritage added to any of its registers, and certificates of attendance at seminars and training events.

7.5.2. [The UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World prize](#), which commemorates the inscription on the International MoW Register of the *Buljo jikji simche yojeol*, the oldest existing book printed with moveable metal type, is funded by the Republic of Korea through the Municipal Council of Cheongju City. The cash prize is awarded every two years by the Director-General of UNESCO to an individual, institution or other entity that has made a significant contribution to the preservation and accessibility of the documentary heritage.

7.6. Standard-setting instruments

7.6.1. UNESCO adopts standard-setting instruments. They are classified into three types: conventions, recommendations, and declarations. A full explanation of this is available on the UNESCO website.

7.6.2. The 2015 Recommendation is an example of such an instrument. It sets out international best practice relating to preserving and accessing documentary heritage, and calls on Member States to undertake a range of actions in this regard. The Appendix of the 2015 Recommendation lists a number UNESCO standard-setting instruments relevant to the objectives of the MoW Programme.

7.6.3. UNESCO standard-setting instruments are particularly useful to memory institutions when developing their own policies and rules, because they can be cited as authoritative international benchmarks on which institutional policy and practice can be based.

7.7. Other texts

7.7.1. There are other texts which do not fit the above UNESCO classification but which are also important and useful reference points.

7.7.2. Several of these are also listed in the Appendix to the 2015 Recommendation. The following merit special mention:

- The Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (last amended in 1979);
- The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom (1999);
- The Universal Declaration on Archives (2010), accepted by the International Council on Archives (ICA) and endorsed by UNESCO (2011). It is a succinct statement of archival principles;
- The “Vancouver Declaration” (2012): The Memory of the World in the Digital Age: Digitization and Preservation. This statement was the outcome of an international conference of specialists and is a reference point for principles and practice.

7.8. Research and education

7.8.1. The MoW Programme encourages the disciplines of research and scholarship using documentary heritage as source material in historical research, incorporating the use of MoW registers as a starting point for research. Including MoW issues in school and university curricula,

and linking them to memory institutions, will encourage an awareness of the preservation of documentary heritage and will help the experiences of the past speak to the present.

7.8.2. The IAC Education and Research Sub-Committee oversees this strategy and develops networks of educational and memory institutions, together with knowledge centres, as an aid to awareness raising, research and publication. In this way, the MoW registers and publications are seen as a starting point for a journey of research and discovery.

7.9. Exhibitions and events

7.9.1. Exhibitions can take many forms, ranging from a series of posters to a large scale curated and multi-media experience at a memory institution. On-line exhibitions, presented on a website, or in a 'virtual' gallery or museum, are a variation of the concept. Typically, exhibitions are built around documents which have been inscribed on MoW registers. Significant documents can be put on display, and they satisfy a natural public curiosity to see 'the real thing'. Exhibitions are often inspired by a MoW committee, partnering with an organisational host which provides the budget, space and facilities for display.

7.9.2. Sometimes public events, such as lectures or film screenings, are organised in conjunction with an exhibition – or, in a further variation, with the public presentation by UNESCO of a Certificate of Inscription to a custodial institution. The options available for raising awareness and attracting public attention to the documentary heritage and the objectives of the MoW Programme are really limited only by imagination.

7.10. The International, Regional and National MoW Registers

7.10.1. The Memory of the World Programme was established to assist Member States to preserve documentary heritage at large. There are three types of register which help to draw attention to this need for documentary heritage preservation. [The International MoW Register](#) was established in 1995, with the first inscriptions being added in 1997. Nominations to this International MoW Register are invited and processed in biennial cycles. Over time, regional and national MoW committees have established their own public registers and the number is constantly growing. The registers serve as a showcase for documentary heritage which, by its obvious significance and symbolism, draws the attention of decision makers as well as the general public to a much larger need. The inscribed documents represent a small portion of equally important documents. They help to make a generalised ideal – the preservation of documentary heritage – accessible and concrete.

7.10.2. The selection criteria for all registers are based on the criteria set for the International MoW Register, although the wording may vary to reflect regional and/or national specificities. The registers are differentiated by their geographic coverage, and whether the influence of the heritage inscribed is judged to be of international, regional or national significance, a term which refers to the values and meanings that items and collections have for people and communities. As new national or regional MoW registers are established, their selection criteria and nomination process must first be approved by the relevant UNESCO Regional Office, the relevant National

Commission or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO.

7.10.3. All MoW registers operate autonomously and to their own time frames. All inscriptions have equal importance in the eyes of UNESCO. The world's documentary heritage is so vast and complex that a single register would be unwieldy and unworkable. The tripartite approach allows regional and national expertise to be applied to assessing nominations in a way that would be impossible if there was just a single international register. Where a given document or a collection fulfills the selection criteria for inscription, it may appear in more than one register simultaneously. Given the autonomy of national registers, the selection of items for possible inscription on such national registers may include an informal tentative list of items of documentary heritage considered worthy of inscription at the national, regional and/or international level. Such a list, where it exists, is managed by the Member State concerned.

7.10.4. For each register, all successful nominators receive an official Certificate of Inscription. A formal certificate presentation is potentially a high-profile media event that benefits both the recipient institution and UNESCO. Official Certificates of Inscription are either hand-delivered or delivered by mail. But this is to miss an opportunity to promote both the document and its moment of inscription.

7.10.5. Owners and custodians of inscribed documentary heritage are encouraged to publicize their status and to draw public attention to the items that have been inscribed. Many memory institutions have placed selected items on public display; they have digitized them so that they are readily accessible; they have promoted their recognition through websites and social media; they have sold reproductions as retail products; they have published histories and descriptions of them in order to further explain their significance for communities, nations or regions.

7.10.6. In addition, owners and custodians of inscribed documentary heritage or organizers of MoW Programme related activities are entitled to use, and are encouraged to apply for, a personalised or localised version of the UNESCO/MoW logo, in accordance with the Directives Concerning the Use of the Name, Acronym, Logo and Internet Domain Names of UNESCO.

7.10.7. Below follows a detailed description of the International MoW Register, which is operated by the MoW Secretariat. Regional and national MoW registers operate in a similar manner, though with individual variations, and readers should refer to the websites of the relevant MoW committees operating these registers for further information.

8. THE INTERNATIONAL MoW REGISTER

8.1. Introduction

8.1.1. The International MoW Register is one of the means available for achieving the three main objectives of the MoW Programme, as set out in **Section 2.3**. Accordingly, in administering the International MoW Register, the concern of the MoW Programme is with the preservation and accessibility of primary sources, not with their interpretation or the resolution of historical disputes.

8.1.2. In recognizing the need to preserve and provide for access to all documents of significant and enduring value to a community, a culture, a country or to humanity generally, and whose deterioration or loss would be a harmful impoverishment, the International MoW Register reinforces the 2015 Recommendation.

8.1.3. Consequently, the importance of the International MoW Register lies in the fact that it is the most visible part of the MoW Programme and functions as a means of raising awareness among the public, memory institutions, governmental, non-governmental and other stakeholders of the need to create a supportive policy environment for the protection, promotion, access and utilization of documentary heritage as a whole.

8.1.4. To seek inscription on the International MoW Register, a nomination on the prescribed [nomination form](#), available on the MoW website, must be duly lodged with the MoW Secretariat. It will undergo subsequent assessment in line with the criteria for inscription set out in **Section 8.3** below.

8.2. Inadmissible nominations

8.2.1. There are some limitations and exclusions on the scope of documents that may be nominated. These are detailed in the explanatory [Companion](#) to these General Guidelines, available on the MoW website.

8.2.2. In summary, the following list of documents may be regarded by the Register Sub-Committee of the IAC as inadmissible for nomination:

- *Papers of contemporary political leaders and political parties*: Normally, these would be relevant to national or regional MoW registers, according to the due decisions of their MoW committees. However, the need to be – and to be seen to be – even-handed and objective can conflict with the current political circumstances in which every MoW committee operates. MoW registers should avoid being subject to any accusations of political partisanship.
- *National constitutions and similar documents*: These may be appropriate candidates for national MoW registers, but would not normally qualify for the International or regional MoW registers because their influence is usually restricted to the country concerned. Exceptions would be documents that have clearly had wide geographic influence, for example in serving as models for other national constitutions, or in pioneering what have since become universally accepted principles.
- *“Whole of institution” nominations*: While the nomination of a collection, a fonds or a group of collections and fonds is welcome, the nomination of the entire contents of a memory institution is unlikely to be successful, unless it demonstrates a significance, unity and coherence beyond the coincidence of material which happens to reside in the same institution.
- A severely degraded document, if its content and character have been compromised beyond the possibility of restoration.
- Any documents that promote issues and ideas in opposition to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the UNESCO Constitution and/or promote any

form of denial of human rights, foster hate speech or promote racist or discriminatory rhetoric.

8.3. Criteria for inscription

8.3.1. Using a consistent set of criteria facilitates more accurate analysis and helps elucidate the unique characteristics and meanings of each item or collection. All criteria are considered when making an assessment, but not all will be relevant to the item or collection. One or more criteria may apply and be interrelated. It is not necessary to find evidence for the application of all criteria to justify that an item is significant. Indeed, an item may be highly significant under only one primary criterion, with clarification added by considering the comparative criteria. The criteria are a prompt for describing how and why the item or collection is significant. They will have different shades of meaning depending on the type of item or collection under consideration.

The following criteria are applied to all nominations throughout the assessment process.

8.3.2 Assessment is comparative and relative. There is no absolute measure of cultural significance. Selection for inscription results from assessing the documentary heritage on its own merits against the selection criteria, against the general tenor of these General Guidelines, and in the context of past nominations, whether included or rejected.

8.3.3. Authenticity and integrity. The threshold test is whether the documentary heritage is what it appears to be. **Authenticity** is the quality of being real, true or genuine and not corrupted from the original. Has its identity and provenance been reliably established? Copies, replicas, forgeries, bogus documents or hoaxes can, with the best of intentions, be mistaken for the genuine article. For a document, **integrity** is the quality of being whole and complete. Is part of the documentary heritage being kept elsewhere and not included in this nomination? Is it all of the same age or have missing parts been replaced with newer copies? Is it an original – or if not, is it the earliest known generation? What percentage of the heritage remains in its original state?

8.3.4. This can be a complex matter, depending on the nature of the documents in question. Some documents – such as audiovisual media, digital files, and medieval manuscripts – may exist in variant versions of the same or differing antiquity, integrity or state of preservation.

8.3.5. World significance: *Primary criteria*

8.3.5.1. The IAC considers documentary heritage as having world significance if the documentary heritage meets one or more of the following three criteria. Nominators may make comments in relation to one or more of these criteria. *Not all the criteria will necessarily apply to a particular nomination – only those relevant should be chosen.*

8.3.5.1.1. **Historical significance.** What does the documentary heritage tell us in relation to the history of the world? For example, does it deal with:

- Political or economic developments, or social or spiritual movements;
- Eminent personalities in world history;
- Events of world-changing import;
- Specific places relating to times, events or people;

- Unique phenomena;
- Noteworthy traditional customs;
- Evolving relations between or among countries or communities;
- Changes in patterns of life and culture;
- A turning point in history, or a critical innovation;
- An example of excellence in the arts, literature, science, technology, sport or other parts of life and culture.

8.3.5.1.2. **Form and style significance.** Significance may lie in the physical nature of the documentary heritage. Some documents may seem unremarkable in this respect – for example, hand written manuscript or typescript paper records – but can, for example, have stylistic qualities or personal associations that deserve attention. Other forms of documentary heritage may display innovative qualities, high levels of artistry or other notable features. For example:

- The documentary heritage may be a particularly fine exemplar of its type;
- It may have outstanding qualities of beauty and craftsmanship;
- It may be a new or unusual type of carrier;
- It may be an example of a type of document that is now obsolete or superseded.

8.3.5.1.3. **Social, community or spiritual significance.** It may be that the documentary heritage attached to a specific existing community is demonstrably significant. For example, a community may be strongly attached to the heritage of a beloved (or even a hated) leader, or to the documentary evidence related to a specific incident, event or site with particular associations. Or it may revere the documentary heritage associated with a spiritual leader or a saint. Information should be provided on how this attachment is expressed.

8.3.6. World significance: *Comparative criteria*

8.3.6.1. The IAC needs further information on the character of the documentary heritage itself.

8.3.6.1.1. **Uniqueness or rarity.** Can the document or the collection be described as unique (the only one of its kind ever created) or rare (one of a few survivors from a larger number)? This quality may need elaboration: a collection or manuscript or other item may be unique but not necessarily rare. There may be other collections or items which are similar but not identical.

8.3.6.1.2. **Condition.** The condition of a document may not, in itself, be a test of its significance but it is relevant to its eligibility for inscription. A severely degraded document may be ineligible if its content and character have been compromised beyond the possibility of restoration. Conversely, a document may be in good condition but be poorly or insecurely housed, and may therefore be at risk. Depending on the nature of the document or the collection, the description in the nomination form will need to be sufficiently detailed to allow an appreciation of current risk and/or conservation needs. It provides the baseline from which, if inscribed, their ongoing condition and security is monitored.

8.3.7. Statement of Significance

8.3.7.1. Nominators should include in their nominations a statement of significance. This is a summary of the points made under the primary and comparative criteria, and the test of authenticity and integrity.

8.3.7.2. It should go on to explain:

- Why this documentary heritage is important to the memory of the world and why its loss would impoverish the heritage of humanity.
- What its impact – positive or negative – is or has been on life and culture beyond the boundaries of a nation state or region.

8.4. Formalities for submitting nominations

8.4.1. The documentary heritage may be publicly or privately owned.

8.4.2. The instructions set out in the nomination form, available on the MoW website, are part of these General Guidelines.

8.4.3. For practical reasons, nominations are limited to two per country in each two-year cycle. When there are more than two, the relevant national MoW committee or UNESCO National Commission or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, will be asked to make a choice and explain their reasons for the choice.

8.4.4. Two or more nominators in different Member States may submit joint nominations where collections or groupings are divided among owners/custodians: there is no limit on the number of such nominations nor on the number of partners involved. Where the nominator is not also the owner/custodian, the owner/custodian would need to consent to the nomination. If the owner/custodian withholds consent, the nominator would need to explain the reason.

8.4.5. There are some specific limitations on the types of documentary heritage which may be nominated. More information is provided on this issue in **Section 8.2**.

8.4.6. A nominated bibliographical or archival collection and a fonds must be finite, with clear beginning and end dates, and must be closed. Vaguely described or open-ended nominations will not be accepted. Typical examples are a closed archival fond identified by box and location numbers, a database of fixed size and content, or an inventoried collection. If catalogue or registration details are too unwieldy, provide a description of the contents with sample catalogue entries, accession or registration numbers or add such details as an appendix.

8.4.7. Where documentary heritage exists in multiple copies and similar but variant versions – for example, books and feature films – the nomination will be deemed to apply to the work itself, rather than just the specific copy or copies cited, although at least one specific copy must be identified in the nomination. Under certain circumstances, further copies of exemplars of documents can be proposed for addition to an existing Register inscription. **Section 8.7** provides further details on this issue.

8.4.8. **Brevity.** Nominations should be comprehensive but no longer than necessary: they are judged by quality, not quantity. There is no mandatory length, but a maximum of about fifteen A4 pages is usually sufficient.

8.4.9. **Pictures, lists, graphics or digital files** can be added as appendices when needed, and these can be very helpful to the RSC/IAC's assessment. Acceptance of a nomination by the MoW

Secretariat is deemed to grant UNESCO permission to publish the nomination form, including its images and graphics, on both the online platform for Member States (see **Section 8.5.3.2.1** for details of this platform) and on the MoW website. Unless declared otherwise, it is also deemed to grant UNESCO the right to publish and use images and graphics for publicity purposes should the nomination be inscribed. It is expected that digital files will be kept to a reasonable size for the sake of practicality.

8.4.10. Objectivity. Every nomination stands on its own merits. Nominations should be based on fact, and written in impartial and objective language. The use of grandiose or unprovable claims, or derogatory, propagandistic or polemical language, is counter-productive and makes assessment more difficult. Nor is it helpful to add interpretations, such as drawing parallels with other historical events. Such nominations may be rejected or returned to the nominator for revision.

8.4.11. Accessibility. Nominators are encouraged to make their documentary heritage publicly accessible, whether on-site or on the internet, wherever practicable. While this is not a precondition for inscription, accessibility is an objective of the MoW Programme and is obviously helpful in the assessment process.

8.4.12. Legal. The posting of nominations on the online platform for Member States or on the MoW website or the inscription of documentary heritage on a register does not place any legal or financial obligations on the MoW Secretariat. It does not formally affect ownership, custody or use of the material. It does not, of itself, impose any constraint or obligation on owners, custodians or governments. By the same token, it does not impose any obligation on UNESCO to resource conservation, management or accessibility of the material. It does, however, represent a commitment of the owners/custodians of inscribed heritage to its preservation and accessibility.

8.5. The nomination process

8.5.1. Submission

8.5.1.1. Every two years, after the Executive Board has fixed the date for the nomination cycle, the MoW Secretariat issues a call for nominations on the MoW website. The call for nominations includes a deadline for the submission of the nominations, which shall be at least 4 months after the issuance of the call, as well as the selection criteria the nomination must meet.

8.5.1.2. Nominations, including joint nominations as defined in **Section 8.4.4** above, may be submitted to the MoW Secretariat, electronically and in hard copy, only by Member States through their National Commission for UNESCO or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, involving, if one exists, the relevant national MoW committee.

8.5.1.3. Notwithstanding **Section 8.5.1.2** above, any person or organisation, with the prior written consent of the owners or custodians, may submit nominations through the National Commission for UNESCO or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in

charge of relations with UNESCO, involving, if one exists, the relevant national MoW committee, of the Member State concerned by the nomination.

8.5.1.4. The following international organizations may submit nominations through the MoW Secretariat:

- The United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system with which UNESCO has concluded mutual representation agreements;
- Organizations of the United Nations system with which UNESCO has not concluded mutual representation agreements;
- Intergovernmental organizations; and
- International non-governmental organizations that are in an official partnership with UNESCO, in accordance with the Directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations.

8.5.1.5. If the nomination concerns one or more Member States, the concerned Member States shall approve the nomination submitted by international organizations. Such international organizations may apply for approval through the National Commission for UNESCO or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, of the Member States concerned.

8.5.1.6. The nomination must follow the prescribed nomination form on the MoW website.

8.5.2. Registration of nominations by the MoW Secretariat

8.5.2.1. The MoW Secretariat registers each nomination, confirms the receipt to the nominator, and verifies its completeness. If the nomination is incomplete, the MoW Secretariat will promptly request missing information to the nominator. Further action will not be taken until the nomination is complete.

8.5.2.2. If the nomination is complete, the MoW Secretariat notifies the nominator, copying the concerned Permanent Delegation, National Commission for UNESCO or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO. In case the nomination is about a document that refers to, or emanates from, a concerned Member State, the Permanent Delegation, National Commission for UNESCO or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, or the National MoW Committee of this Member State is also notified by the MoW Secretariat. The MoW Secretariat may also notify the relevant Regional MoW Committee, if one exists.

8.5.2.3. The MoW Secretariat uploads the nomination form on the online platform for Member States.

8.5.2.4. The MoW Secretariat will then transmit the nomination to the Register Sub-Committee (RSC) for assessment.

8.5.3. Admissibility and assessment of nominations by the Register Sub-Committee (RSC)

8.5.3.1. Admissibility

8.5.3.1.1. As part of the process, the RSC will determine the admissibility of the nomination, taking into account the list of inadmissible documents in **Section 8.2.2**.

8.5.3.1.2. The RSC's decision as to whether a particular nomination is inadmissible is final, and will be communicated to the nominator by the MoW Secretariat.

8.5.3.2. **Dissemination of information**

8.5.3.2.1. Once the RSC has cleared those nominations that are admissible for assessment, the MoW Secretariat uploads them on the online MoW platform set up to host all documentation on nominations to the International MoW Register. The MoW Secretariat announces the upload to Member States. The platform is accessible to Permanent Delegations to UNESCO, National Commissions for UNESCO or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, Regional MoW Committees and National MoW Committees. Member States are automatically notified by email of any new information uploaded onto the platform. Member States may provide access to nomination files hosted on this platform to non-public documentary heritage and/or relevant national stakeholders for the purpose of facilitating the submission of comments or contestations by any individual or entity, as specified in **Section 8.5.3.3.2** below.

8.5.3.3. **Submission of comments or contestations**

8.5.3.3.1. Once all nominations are uploaded onto the platform for Member States, during a period of 60 days from the upload, extended up to a maximum of 90 days upon request by a Member State, Member States may provide comments, additional information, including contestations, using a **fixed form** established by the MoW Secretariat and available on the MoW website. The MoW Secretariat confirms the receipt of the **form** and forwards it to the nominators, the RSC and the IAC.

8.5.3.3.2. Subject to **Section 8.5.3.2.1** on access to nomination files hosted on the online platform to non-public documentary heritage and/or relevant national stakeholders, a specified window will also be declared during which public comments, support or other information relevant to aspects of any current nomination, may be lodged by any individual or entity through Member States, using the National Commission for UNESCO or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, involving, if one exists, the relevant national MoW committee. For instance, the sender may wish to provide information to supplement the nominator's case, or may contest the nomination on the grounds of its content or whether the admissibility and selection criteria have been met. Comments which go beyond these areas, however, will not be considered by the RSC.

8.5.3.3.3. If a Member State contests a nomination, the applicable process is described in **Section 8.6 "Incidental Process"**.

8.5.3.4. **Assessment**

8.5.3.4.1. The RSC is charged with the thorough assessment of each nomination, which will include consultation with expert referees proposed by the nominator as well as other experts independently chosen by the RSC. The RSC seeks comment and evaluation from whatever

appropriate sources it considers necessary, and will compare every nomination with similar documentary heritage, including heritage already inscribed on the International MoW Register.

8.5.3.4.2. The assessment process is transparent, while having due regard for privacy concerns which may require confidentiality, and to the Code of Ethics of the IAC. The RSC operates at arm's length from the nominator so that its objectivity is not influenced. All communication with the nominator is through the MoW Secretariat.

8.5.3.4.3. As the RSC's assessment of the uncontested nominations proceeds, the MoW Secretariat may request additional information from the nominator, who may modify or update the nomination in compliance with the criteria set out in **Section 8.3**.

8.5.3.4.4. The RSC's assessments and recommendations are the result of collegial discussion and conclusion by the whole group. The work of individual RSC members is not identified.

8.5.3.4.5. When the RSC makes its recommendation to the IAC, the MoW Secretariat notifies the nominator in writing about the nature of the recommendation made, copying the Permanent Delegation, the National Commission for UNESCO or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, Regional MoW Committees and the National MoW Committees of the Member State concerned.

8.5.3.4.6. The nominator will be given the opportunity to respond. If the RSC is not fully convinced, the nominator may be asked to provide an adapted nomination form with additional information or a stronger argument.

8.5.3.4.7. Based on the responses of the nominator, the RSC can then reconsider its assessment before submitting its recommendations to the IAC.

8.5.3.4.8. With respect to any nomination, the RSC will recommend to the IAC one of the following courses of action, with supporting reasons:

INSCRIPTION: the selection criteria have been met.

PROVISIONAL INSCRIPTION: the selection criteria have been met but some technical details are incomplete. A date for submission of the missing information will be specified, and if duly provided inscription automatically follows.

REFER AND RESUBMIT: the nominated heritage may potentially meet the criteria for inscription but the information provided is inadequate to fully establish this. The nominator is invited to submit a fuller nomination for assessment in the next biennial cycle.

REJECTION: the nomination does not demonstrate that the criteria for inscription set out in **Section 8.3** has been met. Rejection of a nomination is not necessarily a negative comment either on the significance of the documentary heritage, or the nomination form itself. For example, the RSC may feel that the documentary heritage would more appropriately be nominated for a national or regional MoW register. It may determine that it would be best as part of a joint nomination rather than on its own. Or it may conclude that the nominator has not made a convincing case on this occasion. Rejection does not

preclude re-submission. A nomination, including the original submission, can be submitted up to a maximum of three times, if the content of the nomination is unchanged.

8.5.3.4.9. The RSC submits its recommendations, with supporting explanations, to the IAC at least two months ahead of its ordinary biennial meeting.

8.5.3.5. **Assessment of nominations by the International Advisory Committee (IAC)**

8.5.3.5.1. The assessment process is transparent, while having due regard for privacy concerns which may require confidentiality, and to the Code of Ethics of the IAC. The IAC operates at arm's length from the nominator so that its objectivity is not influenced. All communication with the nominator is through the MoW Secretariat.

8.5.3.5.2. On the basis of the RSC recommendation, the IAC makes its recommendation on each nomination.

8.5.3.5.3. The IAC will recommend one of the following courses of action, with supporting reasons:

INSCRIPTION: the criteria for inscription set out in **Section 8.3** have been met.

PROVISIONAL INSCRIPTION: the criteria for inscription set out in **Section 8.3** have been met but some technical details are incomplete. A date for submission of the missing information will be specified, and if duly provided inscription automatically follows.

REFER AND RESUBMIT: the documentary heritage may potentially meet the criteria for inscription set out in **Section 8.3** but the information provided is inadequate to fully establish this. The nominator is invited to submit a fuller nomination for consideration in the next cycle.

REJECTION: the nomination does not demonstrate that the criteria for inscription set out in **Section 8.3** on the International MoW Register can be met. Rejection of a nomination is not necessarily a negative comment either on the significance of the documentary heritage, or the nomination form itself. For example, the IAC may feel that the documentary heritage would more appropriately be nominated for a national or regional MoW register. It may determine that it would be best as part of a joint nomination rather than on its own. Or it may conclude that the nominator has not made a convincing case on this occasion. Rejection does not preclude re-submission. A nomination, including the original submission, can be submitted up to a maximum of three times, if the content of the nomination is unchanged.

8.5.3.5.4. The IAC will recommend to the Director-General to include an item on the agenda of the Executive Board of UNESCO. This item will propose that the Executive Board endorse the nominations decided upon by the IAC. The details of nominations will be contained in an information document to the Executive Board.

8.5.3.5.5. The MoW Secretariat shall notify the nominators of the outcome and announce the successful nominations to the media. Inscriptions will be put on the MoW website.

8.5.3.5.6. Any request by a Member State addressed to the MoW Secretariat for information regarding a nomination shall receive a response within 30 calendar days of receipt.

8.6. Incidental process

8.6.1. Only contestations raised by Member States which are concerned by a particular nomination will be taken into account.

8.6.2. Contestations by other Member States, or, as appropriate, by other stakeholders, will be taken into account only if they concern the criteria for inscription set out in **Section 8.3**, or the threshold for admissibility of documents highlighted in **Section 8.2**.

8.6.3. From the day nominators are notified by the MoW Secretariat of contestations expressed over their nomination, nominators have 30 days, extended upon request by a Member State up to a maximum of 90 days, to respond. Member States expressing such contestations may indicate within 30 days of the date they receive the response by the nominators if they maintain or withdraw their contest. At the expiry of this period, and if there has been no reply from such Member States, their contestations will be considered to have been withdrawn.

8.6.4. All communications are carried out through the MoW Secretariat, which uploads them in a timely manner onto the online platform for Member States and forwards them to the contesting Member State, and, if applicable, to the RSC and the IAC.

8.6.5. Nominations may be contested on technical or other grounds. The nature of the contestation will determine the process employed for a possible resolution of the issue.

8.6.5.1. Nominations contested on technical grounds

8.6.5.1.1. Nominations are contested on technical grounds if they raise issues associated with the list of inadmissible nominations specified in **Section 8.2** and/or the criteria for inscription specified in **Section 8.3**. Such contestations may be expressed by any individual or entity through Member States, using the National Commission for UNESCO or, in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, involving, if one exists, the relevant national MoW committee, as specified in **Section 8.5.3.3.2**. In this case, the RSC shall be requested to examine such contestations and offer technical advice as to how the questions raised may be addressed by the nominator.

8.6.5.1.2. If the parties concerned are satisfied by the advice of the RSC, the nomination gets back on track as de-contested, and therefore proceeds for formal RSC/IAC assessment, as specified in **Section 8.5.3.4** and **Section 8.5.3.5**. If not, within 30 days from the receipt of the final advice from the RSC, the concerned parties may use the procedure indicated in **Section 8.6.5.2**.

8.6.5.2. Nominations contested on other grounds

8.6.5.2.1. Nominations are contested on other grounds if the reasons advanced for the contestation fall outside the scope of the admissibility threshold and the criteria for inscription as set out in **Section 8.2** and **Section 8.3** respectively. Such contestations shall only be expressed formally, in writing, by a Member State during the periods or events mentioned under **Section 8.5.3.3** above.

8.6.5.2.2. The IAC shall treat all admissible nomination files equally, taking into account **Section 8.6.5.2.4** below.

8.6.5.2.3. If a nomination file has been formally contested by one or more Member States on other grounds, an expert evaluation of the file by the RSC may be conducted and results of such evaluation are kept confidential and not notified to anyone, unless the concerned parties agree that the RSC evaluation could prove helpful in resolving the contest. Any further processing of the file through the cycle will be pending on the results of the dialogue process established by the concerned parties. While the dialogue process is underway, the nomination file will be stored on the platform.

8.6.5.2.4. If one or more parties to the contest object to the evaluation process as provided for in **Section 8.6.5.2.3** through a written request addressed to the UNESCO Director General indicating that they are ready to engage into a mediated/facilitated dialogue process, the Secretariat shall immediately instruct the IAC that the RSC evaluation and all other subsequent steps of processing the file through the cycle shall be withheld and dependent on the results of the dialogue process.

8.6.5.2.5. Within a period between 3 to 6 months after the receipt of the written request as mentioned in **Section 8.6.5.2.4** above, the Director General, after consultation with the concerned parties, shall nominate a mediator/facilitator agreed by the concerned parties, who shall engage in good faith and in a spirit of understanding and cooperation among nations, into a genuine dialogue process without time limit.

8.6.5.2.6. The costs incurred for the mediation/facilitation process shall be covered by the concerned parties or through voluntary contributions made for this purpose.

8.6.5.2.7. The Secretariat shall inform the Executive Board at the end of every cycle on the progress of the dialogue on all ongoing contests in the form of an information document.

8.6.5.2.8. While the dialogue process as provided for in **Section 8.6.5.2.5** is underway, the nomination file will be stored on the platform under the name “Pending Nominations” accessible only by the concerned parties. The title and a short, factual explanatory note on the state of the file shall be published on the platform instead of the file itself.

8.6.5.2.9. The nomination file will be reintroduced with priority in the ongoing cycle after the Secretariat has been informed by the concerned parties that the contest has been resolved.

8.6.5.2.10. The outcome of the dialogue may not be prejudged but the Member States concerned are expected to conduct such dialogue in the spirit of the 2015 Recommendation, “underlining the importance of documentary heritage to promote the sharing of knowledge for greater understanding and dialogue, in order to promote peace and respect for freedom, democracy, human rights and dignity.”

8.7. Additions to existing inscriptions

8.7.1. Where individual documents exist in multiple copies and variant versions – for example, printed books or feature films released in differing versions or multiple languages – the nomination will relate to the intellectual entity – the work – itself, rather than just the specific copy(ies) cited.

If further copies of comparable integrity and antiquity are subsequently identified, they may be proposed for addition to an existing inscription.

8.7.2. The same mechanism will also apply to inscribed collections that prove to be incomplete: for example, where the collection is spread over multiple institutions and further parts of the collection are later identified. Further, as inscribed collections grow incrementally there may be a case for updating an existing inscription, provided this does not change the character or attributes of the inscribed collection.

8.7.3. As detailed in the [Companion](#) to these General Guidelines, available on the MoW website, the retention of dynamic born digital material on the International MoW Register may require an update subsequent to the original inscription.

8.7.4. In all these cases, the process may be initiated by the owner/custodian, by the IAC or its Bureau, or the MoW Secretariat. The attendant case work is assigned to the RSC and may involve:

- reviewing the existing nomination and establishing standards of authenticity, uniqueness, integrity and rarity appropriate to the particular case;
- identifying the proposed exemplars, their owners/custodians and relevant management plans;
- preparing the case for adding the exemplars to the existing inscription;
- reviewing whether the currently inscribed document(s) continue to meet the selection criteria.

8.7.5. The MoW Secretariat then contacts the relevant owners/custodians to obtain their agreement to add the copies to the inscription.

8.7.6. Proposals utilise a simplified nomination form available on the MoW website. Beyond this, the closing date and other processes required for the biennial intake of nominations apply, with the outcome announced at the same time as the list of new inscriptions. A Certificate of Inscription is awarded to the owning/custodial institutions concerned.

8.8. Monitoring and reporting of inscriptions

8.8.1. Consistent with the provisions of the 2015 Recommendation, the status and well-being of inscribed documents needs to be systematically monitored:

- to provide an assessment of the impact of inscription on the preservation of documentary heritage within a Member State or organization;
- to provide an assessment of the condition of the inscribed documents and of measures being taken to maintain it;
- to establish a framework to seek advice on preservation should their condition have deteriorated or be otherwise at risk;
- to promote collaboration and sharing of experiences across the MoW network and maintain the credibility of the MoW Programme.

8.8.2. All entities and individuals having custody of inscribed documentary heritage should file a report on its condition when requested by the MoW Secretariat, on a cycle of no more than six years, and in accordance with a calendar maintained by the MoW Secretariat. Reports will be referred, as appropriate, to the Register Sub-Committee (RSC) and the Preservation Sub-Committee (PSC), which will in turn recommend any follow up action. Failure to lodge a timely report will automatically initiate such follow-up action, and could potentially result in the IAC proposing the removal of the inscription from the International MoW Register by the UNESCO Executive Board.

8.8.3. The IAC will mandate the standards and methodology for the monitoring procedure, which may include, when necessary, institutional visits by experts designated by the MoW Secretariat. Notwithstanding the six-year cycle, should the MoW Secretariat receive advice from any source, including a third party, that inscribed heritage has seriously deteriorated or that its integrity has been compromised, the RSC and/or PSC will be tasked with investigation. If the advice is substantiated, the MoW Secretariat will transmit the resulting report to the nominator or custodial institution, as appropriate, for comment. The RSC and/or PSC will evaluate the comments and make a recommendation to the IAC for removal, corrective action or retention. If the IAC supports a recommendation for removal, all parties will be informed.

8.9. Removal from the International MoW Register

8.9.1. Once inscribed, a documentary heritage remains permanently on the International MoW Register unless circumstances arise, through cyclical review or other means, which require a reappraisal.

8.9.2. In addition to the cyclical review process described above, removal of documentary heritage from the International MoW Register may also be justified if new information warrants a reassessment of its inscription and demonstrates its ineligibility against the criteria under which it was inscribed.

8.9.3. The review process may be initiated by any individual or entity (including the IAC) through the National Commission for UNESCO or, in its absence, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, involving, if one exists, the relevant national MoW committee by way of an expression of concern, in writing, to the MoW Secretariat, which will refer the matter to the RSC for investigation and report. If the RSC finds that the concern is substantiated, the MoW Secretariat will contact the original nominator (or, if unavailable, other appropriate body) for comment. The RSC will evaluate the assembled data and make a recommendation to the IAC for removal, retention or other corrective action. In turn, the IAC may recommend to the Executive Board, through the Director-General, the removal, retention or other corrective action in relation to such documentary heritage. The MoW Secretariat will inform all parties concerned of the outcome and ensure any necessary adjustment to the International MoW Register.