



**PRESERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE
OF THE
MEMORY OF THE WORLD
PROGRAMME
Formerly Sub-Committee on Technology**

Enhancing the mission of the Preservation Sub-Committee: the Inclusion of PERSIST

Background

Amongst the first activities of the newly established International Advisory Committee (IAC) of the Memory of World Programme in 1993 was the formation of an expert group to advise and coordinate the technical aspects of the MoW Programme. This group was then officially established as the **Sub-Committee on Technology (SCoT)** of the IAC at its 2nd Meeting in 1995.

Major activities have included inter alia:

- Writing of recommendations for the preservation of documents of all kinds;
- Drafting of digital standards for the minimum resolutions of digital surrogates used for preservation and access;
- The evaluation of technical aspects of Memory of the World Projects;
- The review of technical aspects of nominations for the International Register;
- Examination of the technical viability of Jikji Prize nominations;
- Organisation of meetings with manufacturers of key equipment used by archives and libraries to reduce the impact of obsolescence;
- Organisation of training events;
- Preparation of the conference *The Memory of the World in the Digital Age*, Vancouver, September 2012.

PERSIST is an initiative based on recommendations made at the 2012 UNESCO Memory of the World Vancouver Conference, with a concentration on the long-term aspects of the preservation of digital documents with the aim of ensuring the sustainable access to digital artefacts in the long term.

In order to prevent possible inefficiencies by uncoordinated parallel actions by the two groups, the inclusion of the PERSIST initiative as a core reportable function of the Preservation-Sub-Committee (PSC, formerly SCoT) is recommended.

Mission and Scope of the Preservation Sub-Committee (PSC, formerly SCoT):

The Preservation Sub-Committee oversees and coordinates all activities related to preservation of the Documentary Heritage. Its role includes:

- All technical aspects to ensure the preservation of, and access to the documentary heritage in its entirety (in accordance with the "Recommendation"), covering historical, present and future forms of documents, analogue and digital;
- Building and storage;
- Disaster preparedness and recovery;

- Capacity building on national, regional, and global levels;
- Organisation of training courses and summer schools;
- Support of permanent on-the-job training.
- Advice to the IAC on nominations for Registers and prizes;
- Recommendation and approval of publications under the Memory of the World label.

In order to cover its tasks, the Preservation Sub-Committee PSC is pursuing the following approaches:

- Monitoring the global situation and developing realistic strategies under the prevailing circumstances;
- Encouraging and facilitating development of effective policies, sustainable technical approaches, and best practices, specifically in cooperation with international archives associations;
- Assisting memory institutions by dissemination of standards and best practices, including translations into all UN-languages and beyond;
- Reporting on a regular basis, through the IAC, to Member States, the Executive Board and the General Conference on the condition of the Documentary Heritage, including updates of recommendations and urgent alerts;
- Setting up permanent or temporary Task Forces for the study of specific problems; and
- Offering technical advice for the assessment of nominations for the Jikji award.

PERSIST has been established as an initiative following the Vancouver Conference “The Memory of the World in the Digital Age- Digitization and Preservation”, September 2012, to specifically deal with problems related to the vulnerability of digital documents due primarily to technological obsolescence but also the lack of adequate policy frameworks. It was set up to facilitate development of effective policies, sustainable technical approaches and best practices in ensuring long term access and use of digital artefacts, by – inter alia – reducing the impact of ageing and unsupported technology and software; and the specificities of long-term preservation of complex digital objects.

In order to keep its momentum and expertise, PERSIST shall be established within the PSC as a permanent core reportable function o that complements the existing Sub-Committee’s initiatives by focusing on policies, strategies, and practices related to **the sustained accessibility and use of digital artefacts, that would otherwise be inaccessible through technological obsolescence**. PERSIST will work closely with key stakeholders and provide a focal point for initiatives concerned with long term use of software as a critical aspect of digital content. It intends to empower governments, memory, cultural and scientific institutions as well as the general public in supporting sustainable access to digital documents.

To ensure the effective continuation of the PERSIST initiative, the PSC will include three PERSIST experts. This Sub-Committee will coordinate the entire work of the PSC, including the activities that constitute the PERSIST initiative as integral parts of the MoW contributions to ensure sustained access to the entirety of the Documentary Heritage.

Rules of Procedure (including elements of the former SCoT RoP)

In accordance with Rule 11 of its Rules of Procedure, the International Advisory Committee has renamed the previous Sub-Committee on Technology by Preservation Sub-Committee and enlarged its mission by merging it with the PERSIST Initiative. As a subsidiary of the International Advisory

Committee for the Memory of the World Programme, the activities of the Preservation Sub-Committee will follow the guidelines set in the “Regulations for the general classification of the various categories of meetings convened by UNESCO” (adopted by the General Conference at its 14th session and amended at its 18th, 25th, 33rd and 37th sessions).

Rule 1 – Scope and Functions

- 1.1 The PSC shall be responsible for providing advice to the IAC on matters relating to the selection, preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage in all its forms and its supporting technologies. The PSC will ensure that this advice is adequately covered by its work, including all its subsidiary bodies.
- 1.2 The PSC will coordinate a programme of activities consistent with its responsibilities identified in 1.1 above. Activities may be initiated by the PSC or referred to it by the IAC.

Rule 2 – Membership

- 2.1 The Preservation Sub-Committee shall be composed of a minimum of eight members. The Chairperson will be appointed by the International Advisory Committee (IAC). Members shall be invited autonomously by the group and chosen for their specialist expertise. Collectively, their expertise will cover the entire field of preservation of documentary heritage in all its forms. A *rapporteur* shall be selected by the PSC from among its members.
- 2.2 The PERSIST initiative shall be established as a permanent and core function of the PSC. At least three members of the PERSIST initiative will be members of the PSC.
- 2.3 Additional temporary members may be invited to attend a specific meeting or take part in a Task Force, if the PSC feels that special expertise is required for the discussion of a particular topic.
- 2.4 The PSC shall establish a network of expert advisors. This will enable the PSC to address areas of specialisation in technology, policy, best practice and other areas.
- 2.5 The extended network of experts and advisors will not be considered full members of the PSC. They will, however, be formally recognised and acknowledged as contributors to the sub-committee and the Memory of the World Programme.
- 2.6 The term of office of members of the PSC shall be four years. They are immediately eligible for re-appointment. In order to ensure continuity of the working methods of the PSC, no more than four persons shall be replaced every four years.
- 2.7 The PSC shall establish and publish guidelines for engagement with the communities of stakeholders and enforce procedures for forming and dissolving collaborations and partnerships strictly within the guidelines of the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme.

Rule 3 - Sessions

- 3.1 The PSC shall normally meet at least once every six months, either in person or by use of telepresence technology. However, meetings and consultations shall be arranged as the need arises to ensure the momentum of work is maintained.

Rule 4 - Agenda

- 4.1 The agenda shall be drawn up by the Chairperson in consultation with the members of the Sub-Committee and the UNESCO’s Secretariat. It shall be communicated to the members of the PSC one month before the opening of each session.

Rule 5 - Functions of the Chairperson

- 5.1 The Chairperson shall declare the opening and closing of meetings, direct the discussions ensure observance of these Rules, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce

decisions. S/he shall rule on points of order and, subject to these Rules, shall control the proceedings and the maintenance of order.

5.2 If the Chairperson is no longer able to hold office, the PSC shall choose one of its members to become Chairperson for the unexpired portion of the term of office.

Rule 6 - Secretariat

6.1 The secretariat of the PSC shall be provided by the Memory of the World Programme of UNESCO.

Rule 7- Working language

7.1 The working language of PSC shall be English.

Rule 8 - Working documents

8.1 The working documents shall be communicated to the members one month before the opening of each meeting of the PSC.

Rule 9 - Points of order

9.1 During the discussion on any matter, a member of the PSC may at any time raise a point of order, which point of order shall forthwith be decided upon by the Chairperson. Any member may appeal against the ruling of the Chairperson, which can only be overruled by a majority of the members present and voting.

Rule 10 - Suspension, adjournment, closure

10.1 Any member of the PSC may at any time propose the suspension or adjournment of a meeting or the adjournment or closure of a debate. Such a motion shall be put to the vote immediately and decided upon by a majority of members present and voting.

Rule 11 – Quorum, voting rights

11.1 Quorum of the PSC is five members. The chairperson must participate to make up the quorum. If the chairperson is not able to participate in the meeting, the chairperson may by explicit decision for that meeting authorise any of the other members as acting chairperson for the meeting.

11.2 Each member of the PSC shall have one vote. Consensus will be sought as the normal basis for decision making. Otherwise decisions will be made on the basis of a simple majority vote of those present. In case of a tie, the Chairperson will have the casting vote.

11.3 A representative of the Director-General of UNESCO shall participate in the work of the PSC without the right to vote. The representative may at any time submit either oral or written statements on any matter under discussion.

Rule 12 - Suspension

12.1 Any provision of these Rules, except when it reproduces provisions of the Statutes of the International Advisory Committee or decisions of the General Conference, may be suspended by a decision taken by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.

Rule 13 - Reports

13.1 The PSC shall present reports on its work, its outputs and its recommendations to the IAC.