

MEMORY OF THE WORLD (MoW) PROGRAMME

CODE OF ETHICS¹

1 Introduction

1.1 The following principles and requirements apply to members of the Memory of the World International Advisory Committee (IAC), its subcommittees, working groups, the Secretariat and all those acting on their behalf. Regional and national MoW committees are expected to adopt their own Codes of Ethics which uphold the central values expressed in this Code but are adjusted to accommodate regional or national cultural norms.

2 General principles

2.1 Experts serve in a personal capacity, not as representatives of states, authorities or other entities, and in exercising their roles they represent themselves accordingly. They do not seek or accept instructions from governments, institutions or other external parties.

2.2 Experts endeavour to ensure that they have no real or apparent conflict of interest that would affect the exercise of their responsibilities. If they become aware of any such conflict they are required to declare it.

2.3 Potential conflicts of interest may include:

- Being cited as an expert referee in a register nomination
- Having an active relationship with a nominating organization
- Having governmental, commercial or private responsibilities which may conflict with the free exercise of one's expert opinion within the context of the Programme
- Expressing opinions which could be construed as prejudicing the outcome of a nomination, creating false expectations or which are otherwise contrary to the *General Guidelines*.
- Casting a vote on a nomination from one's own country

¹ This Code is based on the Ethics Protocol adopted by the IAC in 2011 for the guidance of IAC and RSC members. In the light of experience its scope has been expanded to include all IAC subcommittees.

2.4 Members accept an obligation to devote adequate time to the responsibilities of their roles, including becoming fully conversant with the *General Guidelines*, the *Recommendation* and other relevant reference points.

3 Management of register nominations

3.1 At every stage the nomination assessment process aims to be completely objective by testing nominations against prescribed criteria and nothing else. Being a committee-based process, and subject to the final decision of the Director General, no prediction can ever be made of the success or otherwise of a particular nomination.

3.2 **Mentoring and advisory role.** Because the nomination process can be complex and even daunting, it is appropriate for IAC and RSC members, and others qualified to do so, to provide encouragement and technical advice to intending nominators in developing their proposals for the International Register. This will usually happen in the following ways:

- Identifying heritage for which it *may* be possible to construct a case for inscription. This is particularly the case for countries which have little or no representation in the Register, or where the logic and process for nomination needs to be better understood
- In the context of structured workshops or training events aimed at developing the skills for preparing nominations
- When a RSC member has been specifically assigned by the RSC or the Secretariat to work alongside a potential nominator in helping them prepare a nomination

Such involvements should be declared to the next IAC or RSC meeting.

“Technical advice” means helping nominators to interpret the nomination form and to provide the fullest range of relevant information for the informed assessment of their nomination. It does not include constructing the nominator’s case on their behalf.

3.3 **Relations with nominators.** During the assessment phase, nominations are assigned among RSC members for research and preparation of an initial report to the RSC. Correspondence and contact with nominators during this time is normally the responsibility of the Secretariat. RSC members do not engage in direct contact with nominators unless authorised by the Chair of the RSC or the Secretariat to do.

IAC and RSC members may **not**:

- Prepare a nomination form, or prepare the argument or “case” for inscription, on behalf of a nominator. This must be entirely the work of the nominator.
- Offer an opinion to the nominator concerning the likely success or otherwise of the nomination, or its eligibility or suitability for the Register, or otherwise express support of, or antipathy to, a nomination

- Express a partisan stance in relation to a nomination and its passage through the MOW process
- Express or imply personal support for a nomination through the acceptance of gifts or inducements of any kind
- In any other way compromise the objectivity of the assessment process

3.4 **Committee protocol.** Where an IAC or RSC member has a real or apparent conflict of interest in relation to any nomination, that conflict is to be declared in advance and its resolution documented in the relevant minutes. This includes occasions on which the member has provided mentoring or technical advice, as mentioned above. In such cases, the member may provide information or otherwise contribute to IAC or RSC discussion when invited by the Chair to do so, but will abstain from lobbying for, or any voting in relation to, the nomination.

4 Lobbying, gifts and inducements

4.1 Both register inscription and broader association with the MoW Programme is prestigious and desirable. Governments and institutions may engage in lobbying activities in pursuit of their objectives, for example in an effort to maximise the possibility of a successful outcome for particular nominations, or conversely to minimise this possibility for nominations of which they disapprove.

4.2 From time to time, members may be contacted by those with an interest in an active nomination, seeking advance information about its likelihood of success. Such approaches should be discouraged by invoking the confidentiality provisions that bind IAC and RSC members in regard to the nomination process: once a nomination is accepted for assessment, all such questions should be directed through the Secretariat. Such incidents should be documented and reported to the RSC Chair and the Secretariat.

4.3 Lobbying can take many forms, including gifts and offers of travel, hospitality or calls for private meetings with IAC or subcommittee members. The practice has different implications and nuances in different cultures; what is deemed improper in one culture may be no more than good manners in another. Careful judgment is required in order to avoid conflict of interest on the one hand, and giving needless offence on the other. At the same time, countries or institutions in a position to fund lobbying activities must not thereby gain an assessment advantage over nominators who are not in such a position.

4.4 Mindful of the principles set out in this Code, members should weigh such approaches carefully and, if in doubt, consult with the Secretariat or the chair of RSC or IAC. The relevant issues to be weighed are:

- What are the assumptions or expectations of the party making the approach?

- Is the party fully aware of, and does it accept, the ethical constraints which bind members of the IAC and its subcommittees?
- Would a positive response by a member usefully add to the information available for assessing a nomination or project (for example, an opportunity to inspect nominated heritage at first hand)?
- Would a positive response by a member advance the Programme in some other way (for example, an opportunity to meet with a national MoW committee)?
- Would a negative response cause genuine offence to the detriment of the MoW Programme?

4.5 To ensure transparency, all such approaches, and the actions taken in relation to them, are to be documented by the member concerned at the time and promptly reported to the Secretariat. The reports will be considered at the next IAC or subcommittee meeting and will be annexed to the report of that meeting.

