

## **Comments of the UNESCO Ethics Office on the Memory of the World (MoW) Code of Ethics**

The Ethics Office was consulted by the UNESCO Communication and Information Sector in order to examine the Memory of the World (MoW) Code of Ethics as part of the documents approved by the International Advisory Committee (IAC).

After conducting an analysis of the documentation provided, the Ethics Office is of the opinion that this request falls outside the scope and mandate of the UNESCO Ethics Office, which is to provide confidential advice and guidance to UNESCO employees on ethics, standards of conduct and real or potential conflicts of interests.

Based on the foregoing, the MoW Code of Ethics appears to be more similar to a Standard Operating Procedure ('SOP') rather than an actual code of ethics, and questions remain outstanding concerning the scope of its applicability (compliance monitoring and enforceability) and the contractual status of the members of the MoW Programme.

Particularly, it should be noted that UNESCO staff are already bound by their own code of conduct: the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service. Therefore, any staff member who would be requested to sign an additional code of conduct (such as the MoW Code of Ethics) would need to ensure that this created no conflict of interests.

Most importantly, the MoW Code of Ethics indicates that it would be applicable to all "members of the Memory of the World International Advisory Committee (IAC), its subcommittees, working groups, the Secretariat and all those acting on their behalf". Accordingly, the provision of advice on a code of ethics applicable to non-UNESCO employees would not fall within the current mandate of the UNESCO Ethics Office.