United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Memory of the World

Thirteenth Meeting of the International Advisory Committee (IAC) of the Memory of the World Programme

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris (Bonvin Building, Room XVI)

24 to 27 October 2017

Advancing the PERSIST Initiative

13th Meeting of the

**International Advisory Committee
of the
Memory of the World Programme**

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, FRANCE
24 to 27 October 2017

Agenda Item 9:   Advancing the PERSIST Initiative

A Proposal for the Establishment of an IAC Subsidiary Body for the Oversight of the PERSIST Project

Summary

The PERSIST steering committee has been meeting regularly to advance the Memory of the World PERSIST Project.   While progress has been made on some fronts, most notably the publication of the PERSIST Content Selection Guidelines, the Steering Committee believes that for PERSIST to become an effective and influential initiative of the Memory of the World, it needs to be more formally constituted as a recognised subsidiary body of the International Advisory Committee, in compliance with IAC Rule 11.

If established, the subcommittee will (with the approval of the IAC) publish its mission, Rules of Procedure and programme of activities on the MoW website. The UNESCOPERSIST.org website is well established and will be used as the principal information portal for the work of the sub-committee and its wider network.

Following recent consultation with the Sub-Committee on Technology (SCoT), the opportunity to incorporate the scope and functions of the proposed sub-committee into an augmented SCoT will be investigated.

Recommendation

It is Recommended that:

1. The IAC endorses the need for a "Digital Sub-Committee" as a subsidiary body of the IAC;
2. The IAC endorses the Rules of Procedure (attached);
3. The IAC appoints Mr David Fricker as the *ad interim* Chair of the DSC;

4. Prior to permanent establishment of a new DSC, a more thorough investigation is to be undertaken into the incorporation of the proposed scope and functions of a DSC and the existing SCoT into a single subsidiary body of the IAC;
5. The outcomes of this investigation be considered by the Bureau prior to the next ordinary session of the IAC.

Proposal

The mission of PERSIST is to develop effective policies, strategies, and practices for the preservation and sustained use of digital artefacts. Its vision is for the World's Digital Heritage to be accessible to future generations, without barriers such that they will be able to experience and learn from digital artefacts that represent achievements of humanity.

PERSIST is a creation of UNESCO, a direct result of the "Vancouver Declaration" made at the UNESCO international conference "Memory of the World in the Digital Age: Digitization and Preservation" in Vancouver in 2012. Among the recommendations of the UNESCO/UBC Vancouver Declaration was the need to establish a roadmap with solutions and policies ensuring long term access and preservation.

In the years since the Vancouver Declaration, a great deal of work has been done to advance the structure and strategies of PERSIST and to engage the interest and support of Memory Institutions, Academia, the Open Source Community and the ICT Industry. Indeed, PERSIST has been one of the main platforms upon which IFLA and ICA have given shape to their collaborative relationship with UNESCO. The PERSIST group organised the UNESCO sessions for IFLA WLIC in the last three consecutive years; ICA has featured PERSIST sessions at each of its last four annual conferences.

Expert group meetings have been held in UNESCO Headquarters April 2015, a side event was held during the General Conference of November 2015, and a major international experts' group meeting was hosted by National Archives UAE in March 2016. However, firm partnerships cannot be made across the community unless there is a stronger, more formally recognised link with UNESCO and the Memory of the World Programme.

This more formal link can be achieved by the proper establishment of PERSIST within a subsidiary body. With this in mind it is recommended that a subsidiary body be established, tasked with the mission of PERSIST: to develop effective policies, strategies, and practices for the preservation and sustained use of digital artefacts. This will continue the work started by the Vancouver Declaration.

It is proposed to name the sub-committee the "Digital Sub-Committee" (DSC), to reflect the broad agenda of its work and its stated mission.

Rule 11 of the IAC stipulates:

In order to fulfil the requirements of Rule 11, proposed Rules of Procedure for the new sub-committee are attached.

With the approval of the IAC, the DSC intends to establish a network of expert advisors, and its own workgroups to address areas of specialisation in technology, policy, best practice and other areas. The extended network of experts and advisors will not be full members of the DSC. However, they will be formally recognised and acknowledged as contributors to the sub-committee and the Memory of the World programme. It should be stressed that this approach will ensure a rich diversity of contributions from a wide range of institutions and experts without imposing an unsustainable burden on the MoW Secretariat. It is expected that the Workgroups will manage their own meetings and activities.

Figure 1 illustrates the intended structure to coordinate contributions to and activities of the sub-committee. There is a relationship between PERSIST and the IAC Sub-Committee on Technology. SCoT is concerned with digitization technologies and standards, and has also in the past looked at Preservation and Access. However, the Vancouver Declaration, the 2015 Recommendation and the broader work of the MoW Programme have demonstrated that as well as technology we must focus on the specific challenges regarding the preservation of the world's digital documentary heritage and, in so doing, ensure its ongoing accessibility by future generations. In order to investigate further the potential relationship between the DSC and SCoT and avoid duplication of purpose across the IAC subsidiary bodies, consultative discussions between the PERSIST Steering Committee and our colleague, Mr Jonas Palm, Chair of the SCoT, were facilitated by the MoW Secretariat on 11 September 2017. The meeting agreed that there was overlap between the two entities and that further investigation should be undertaken to evaluate the merits of incorporating the scope and functions of both entities into a single subsidiary body of the IAC. The DSC also proposes to engage with the IFAP Working Group on Information Preservation to ensure that activities are complementary.
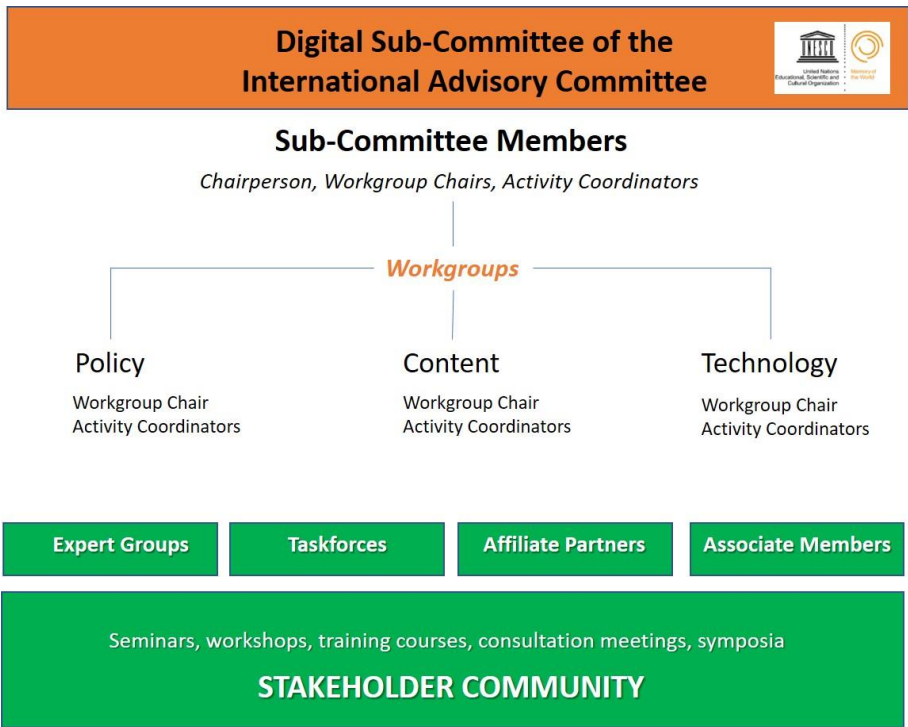
Figure 1. Proposed Structure of DSC and its associated network of contributors

DIGITAL SUB-COMMITTEE
OF THE
MEMORY OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME

Rules of Procedure
as endorsed at the meeting of the
International Advisory Committee, Paris, 24-27 October 2017

Preamble

The UNESCO PERSIST Programme (PERSIST) is a project of the UNESCO Memory of the World (MoW) Programme. It is set up to ensure long-term access to the World's Digital Heritage by facilitating development of effective policies, sustainable technical approaches, and best practices in ensuring long term access and use of digital artefacts.

PERSIST is concerned with digital aspects of the MoW programme which is dedicated to the identification of, access to and preservation of digital heritage in general.

PERSIST complements the existing MoW initiatives by focusing on policies, strategies, and practices related to **the preservation and sustained use of the digital artefacts**. It works closely with key stakeholders and provides a focal point for initiatives concerned with long term use of software as a critical aspect of digital content. It intends to empower the government, memory, cultural, and scientific institutions and citizens to secure sustainable access to the digital heritage through:

- o *Policy.* Assist in the development of policies for preserving and making accessible digital heritage;

- o *Content.* Advise memory and cultural institutions how to select valuable content from a growing amount of digital information that represents the digital heritage of humanity; and

- o *Technology*. Foster technological solutions to reduce the impact of ageing software on access to digital information.

In accordance with Rule 11 of its Rules of Procedure, the International Advisory Committee has established the Digital Sub-Committee as a subsidiary body to pursue the implementation of the PERSIST project for the Memory of the World. As part of the UNESCO Organization, the activities of the Digital 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 – Membership

1.1   The Digital Sub-committee (DSC) shall be composed of a minimum of five members, comprising a Chairperson appointed by the International Advisory Committee (IAC) and members chosen for their specialist expertise. A rapporteur shall be selected by the DSC from among its members.

1.2   The term of office of members of the DSC shall be four years. They are immediately eligible for re-appointment. In order to ensure continuity of the working methods of the DSC, no more than three persons shall be replaced every four years.

1.3   The DSC shall establish a network of expert advisors, and its own technical subcommittees to address areas of specialisation in technology, policy, best practice and other areas. The extended network of experts and advisors will not be considered full members of the DSC however will be formally recognised and acknowledged as contributors to the sub-committee and the Memory of the World programme.

1.4   The DSC shall establish and publish guidelines about the engagements 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 2 - Functions

2.1   The DSC shall direct its activities consistent with its mission: to ensure long term preservation of, and access to, the world's digital documentary heritage by facilitating development of effective policies, sustainable technical approaches, and best practices.

Rule 3 - Sessions

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

Rule 4 - Agenda

4.1   The agenda shall be drawn up by UNESCO's Secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson of the DSC. It shall be communicated to the members of the DSC 2 weeks before the opening of each session.

4.2   The Secretariat may invite sub-committee members to propose the inclusion of additional items in the agenda.

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 DSC 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 DSC shall be provided by the Memory of the World programme of UNESCO.

6.2   The sub-committees and working groups of the DSC shall provide their own secretariat functions.

Rule 7- Working language

7.1   The working language of the DSC 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 DSC.

Rule 9 - Points of order

9.1   During the discussion on any matter, a member of the DSC 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 DSC 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 DSC is three 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 DSC 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 DSC 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 DSC shall present reports on its work, its outputs and its recommendations to the IAC.