

Ref.: CL/4557

Subject: **Third consultation on the implementation of Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form (2015)**

Dear Minister,

Under Article VIII of UNESCO's Constitution, Member States are required to submit, every four years, a report on the measures they have taken to implement the conventions and recommendations adopted by the Organization.

In this context, I invite Member States to submit their report on the Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form (2015), in English or French, no later than **28 February 2027**, by completing the questionnaire accessible online from the new website of the "one-stop-shop" for the monitoring and assessment of the implementation of standard-setting instruments at the following address:

<https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/monitoring>

Member States are encouraged to organize all necessary consultations with relevant ministries and institutions as well as with key stakeholders, including professional associations, civil society partners and National Commissions for UNESCO.

In addition, Member States are requested to designate a contact person responsible for information sharing and cooperation with UNESCO regarding reports on the 2015 Recommendation. Member States should inform the Secretariat of this designation by **31 August 2026**, at the latest via the following e-mail address: 2015recommendation-ci@unesco.org.

Practical information on submitting the report is provided in the attached Guidelines for the Preparation of Reports by Member States on the Implementation of the 2015 Recommendation.

The Secretariat will submit to the 227th session of the Executive Board, in the autumn 2027, the third consolidated report on the implementation by Member States of the 2015 Recommendation for its consideration. This report, together with the comments of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations, will subsequently be submitted to the General Conference, at its 44th session in 2027. In line with the decision of the Executive Board, individual country reports will be made publicly available on the new website of the "one-stop-shop".

To Ministers responsible for relations with UNESCO



The Communication and Information Sector remains at your disposal for any further information you may require.

Please accept, dear Minister, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Khaled El-Enany
Director-General

Encl.: Guidelines for the Preparation of Reports by Member States on the Implementation of the 2015 Recommendation

cc: Permanent Delegations to UNESCO
National Commissions for UNESCO
UNESCO field offices

ANNEX

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF REPORTS BY MEMBER STATES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2015 RECOMMENDATION ON CONCERNING THE PRESERVATION OF, AND ACCESS TO, DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE INCLUDING IN DIGITAL FORM

Introduction

Member States are invited to complete the reporting on their implementation of the Recommendation concerning the Preservation of, and Access to, Documentary Heritage including in Digital Form (2015) (the “2015 Recommendation”). The reporting period is from November 2023 to November 2027.

To complete the reporting, Member States can consult the Implementation Guidelines¹ that have been prepared to assist Member States with the practical application of the various provisions of the 2015 Recommendation. The proposed questionnaire has been established based on the topics set out in these Implementation Guidelines.

Pursuant to Articles 15 and 16.1 of the Rules of Procedure concerning recommendations to Member States and international conventions covered by the terms of Article IV, paragraph 4, of the UNESCO Constitution, the Director-General of UNESCO invited Member States by the Circular Letter 4155 dated 28 April 2016 to submit the 2015 Recommendation to their competent authorities within a period of one year from the close of the session of the General Conference.

Furthermore, under Article VIII of UNESCO’s Constitution, Member States are required to submit a report on the legislative and administrative provisions and any other measures they have taken to implement the conventions and recommendations adopted by the Organization.

Submission and dissemination of reports

Please designate a contact person responsible for information sharing and cooperation with UNESCO in relation to reporting on this Recommendation.

Member States are encouraged to submit the questionnaire (in English or French) in one of the following ways:

- (i) Online (preferred): the consolidated questionnaire (one per Member State) can be completed and submitted online through a link to be found at:

Link:

<https://unes.co/3dr2015ci>

QR Code:



¹ [Recommendation concerning the Preservation of, and Access to, Documentary Heritage, including in Digital Form: implementation guidelines](#)

Upon receipt of the designation of the national focal point, the Communication and Information Sector will transmit the token, specific to each Member State, allowing the completion and submission of this questionnaire directly online.

- (ii) Email: the questionnaire can be completed electronically and sent to 2015recommendation-cj@unesco.org. The responses to the questionnaire, if sent by email, should respect the limit of maximum characters of each question and must be submitted in electronic form only (standard .doc, .pdf or .rtf format).

The reports will be made available on UNESCO's website in order to facilitate the exchange of information relating to the promotion and implementation of this Recommendation.

QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Country:

Organization(s) or entity(/ies) responsible for the preparation of the report:

Officially designated contact person/institution:

Name(s) of designated official(s) certifying the report:

Brief description of the consultation process established for the preparation of the report:

REPORTING ON THE SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF THE 2015 RECOMMENDATION:

General support:

1. Has the 2015 Recommendation been promulgated to appropriate ministries and institutions? (Section 1)
2. Has your country established any systematic monitoring mechanism to follow and ensure implementation of the 2015 Recommendation? (Section 1)
3. Has the 2015 Recommendation been translated into the national language(s) (if applicable)?
4. Has your country created a supportive, participatory, enabling and stable environment for all parties? (1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2)
5. How, if at all, has your country applied international standards and curatorial best practice (2.4, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.5)?
6. What consultation mechanisms does the government maintain with stakeholders in the documentary heritage sector (national and private memory institutions, professional associations, relevant NGOs)? (1.2)
7. What actions has your country taken in order to support memory institutions in establishing policies and standards by research and consultation, guided by internationally established norms? (1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2)
8. What major capacity-building measures and policies have taken place within the sector? Has such capacity-building included knowledge about connecting the protection of documentary heritage to law enforcement agencies, and in what ways? Is research and training for documentary heritage professionals organized in your country? How often? (2.4, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 5.1, 5.2)
9. What most significant insight and/or advice would you like to share with other Member States on the basis of your experiences in implementing the 2015 Recommendation over the past four years?

Legislation and mandates:

10. What legislation does your country have in place to:
 - protect your documentary heritage, including as part of cultural heritage-related legislation? (3.1, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1)

- define the authority, mandate, independence and governance structure of your national memory institutions? (3.1, 4.5)
 - guarantee the ability of memory institutions to take unhindered preservation action on documents in their collections? (3.5 to 3.7)
 - promote and facilitate maximum inclusive access by empowering memory institutions? (3.2)
 - support memory institutions providing access to material whose copyright status cannot be clarified? (3.5 to 3.7)
 - ensure statutory deposit of documents in memory institutions? (4.6)
11. Has government net funding of national memory institutions (in recent years) increased or decreased? By how much? (4.1)
 12. What long term investment in analogue and digital documentary preservation has been made, including in the deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) in this regard? (4.1)
 13. What encouragement has been given in the development of open-source software and access to proprietary codes by memory institutions? (4.7, 4.8)

Identification and preservation status of documentary heritage:

14. Do all national memory institutions have published collection development, preservation and access policies? Are there in your country established policies, mechanisms and criteria for selecting, acquiring and de-selecting documentary heritage? What policies have been developed recently? (1.1)
15. What documentary heritage has been identified as at potential or imminent risk (if any)? What action has been taken? Was it brought to the attention of competent bodies (including law enforcement)? (1.3, 2.7, 5.5)
16. What arrangements and procedures are in place to protect the documentary heritage from danger? For example: This may include foreseeing the eventuality of moving original documentary heritage or digital copies to safe havens within or outside your country. (5.4)
17. What practical support has been given to private, local and individual collections of documentary heritage? Are they visible in national directories? (1.3, 4.3)

Capacity-building:

18. What specific steps have been taken to encourage consistency of best practice, coordination and sharing of tasks among memory institutions? (2.1, 2.7)
19. What training schemes have been developed? (1.5)
20. What is the level of involvement of national memory institutions in international professional associations and networks? For example: This may include International Council on Archives (ICA), Safe Havens for Archives at Risk, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), etc. (2.8, 2.9)
21. Are there partnerships, including public-private ones and trade, established allowing sharing of costs, facilities and services? (2.2, 3.4, 4.2)

Memory of the World Programme:

22. Is there in your country a national Memory of the World committee? If not, what plans exist to establish one? (4.10, 5.6)
23. What recent nominations have been made to Memory of the World registers (international, regional, national)? (1.4)
24. Are there any Memory of the World outreach and visibility activities organized in your country enhancing accessibility of documentary heritage? Please give examples. (3.7)