

Criteria for the Canada Memory of the World Register

These criteria conform to section 4.1.6 of the *UNESCO Memory of the World: General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage*, which states:

“Selection criteria for regional and national registers will use the criteria for the international register as a template, making the logical variations, and may incorporate additional criteria appropriate to the regional or national context.”

Selection for inclusion in the Canada Memory of the World Register will result from assessing the documentary heritage on its own merits against the selection criteria presented here.

Preamble

The Canada Memory of the World Register is an ever-evolving list of documentary heritage representing Canada’s linguistic, cultural, geographic, gender, spiritual, political, scientific, economic, and artistic development and diversity since the beginning of the human occupation of the territory. As such, the Register includes documentary heritage that records notable events of Canada’s history, from the broadest perspective to more specific regions communities, and to the lives of individuals. Documentary heritage on the Register can range from single items to whole collections.

The Register is part of the nation’s documentary heritage and, thus, is owned by all Canadians. There will be no distinction between documentary heritage created in the public or private sector, nor between the documentary heritage owned by people or legal entities.

Documentary heritage consists of both content (e.g., words or images or sounds) and carrier (e.g., textual documents or photographs or audio recordings). An assessment of cultural significance takes into account both the content and carrier, and the relationship between them; neither element has pre-eminence over the other.

All forms of documentary heritage and all documentary heritage creators are equal under the Canada Memory of the World Register.

Definition of Canada

The Canada Memory of the World Register defines the word “Canada” as follows:

The geographical area now known as Canada has been inhabited by Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) since time immemorial. Indigenous Peoples’ ancestral connections to this land reach back in time and as such are defined by, but not limited to, traditional knowledge, oral histories, kinship, alliances, occupations, travel routes, trade networks, cultures, languages, and the use and stewardship of natural resources. Over time, people from all over the world have also made Canada their home.

Recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Memory and Knowledge

The Canada Memory of the World Register recognizes that the Indigenous Peoples of Canada transfer, teach, understand, and share their histories and stories in unique ways. Indigenous Peoples own their histories and stories. They decide when, if, and how to submit items to the Canada Memory of the World Register. Cultural sensitivities, including Indigenous communities' custodianship of their materials, and their guardianship of access, will be honoured. Inscription on the Register does not infringe on Indigenous peoples' ownership, control, access, and possession of their histories and stories.

The Canada Memory of the World Register recognizes Indigenous Peoples' rights as articulated in [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), and [the Joinet-Orentlicher Principles](#).

Recognizing Cultural and Social Diversity

The Canada Memory of the World Register recognizes that Canada is a highly diverse society composed of communities based on geography, language, ethnicity, culture, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, spirituality, and many other factors. The power and influence of these communities have varied over time. Communities that once formed a majority in a specific region or era may now be in the minority. Communities that were once invisible, shunned, or persecuted may now form part of the mainstream. Other communities may still struggle for recognition.

Selection Criteria

The mission of the Canada Memory of the World Programme is to facilitate preservation of documentary heritage, to assist universal access to documentary heritage, and to increase awareness of its existence and significance.

The three core criteria for inclusion on the Canada Memory of the World Register are: national significance (which incorporates time, place, people and society, subject and theme, form and style, and spiritual and community significance); authenticity; and uniqueness and irreplaceability. These selection criteria are described in more detail below.

National significance

The **national significance** of any documentary heritage added to the register is assessed in relation to how closely it meets at least one of the sub-criteria set out below.

1. **Time:** whether the documentary heritage is especially evocative of its time, which may have been one of significant social or cultural change or crisis.
2. **Place:** Is the documentary heritage significant because of the place it was created? It may contain meaningful information about a site, locality, or region, including the people who once lived there or who live there now.
3. **Peoples and society:** whether the documentary heritage contains meaningful information about the social and cultural context of its creation, as a reflection of the life or works of a person, people, movement, community, or society.

4. **Subject and theme:** whether the documentary heritage documents a particular aspect of our country and its peoples: this could include traditional knowledge, science, the humanities, spirituality, education, culture, communications, politics, ideology, technology, media, business, or sports.
5. **Form and style:** whether the documentary heritage serves as an important example of a distinctive aesthetic, stylistic, or linguistic form or style; or whether it is a significant example of a type of visual, oral or written presentation and custom.
6. **Spiritual and community significance:** whether the documentary heritage holds notable social, cultural, or spiritual value for our country and its peoples.

Authenticity

The **authenticity** of the documentary heritage must be demonstrated, through confirmation that its identity and provenance have been reliably established. Copies, replicas, forgeries, bogus documents, or hoaxes can – with the best intentions – be mistaken for the genuine article.

Uniqueness and irreplaceability

The **uniqueness and irreplaceability** of the documentary heritage must be demonstrated, through an explanation of how its disappearance or deterioration would impoverish our collective memory. This explanation may focus on the impact of loss over time and/or within a particular community.

Additional considerations

The following additional considerations will be taken into account when assessing the documentary heritage proposed to the Register:

- **Rarity:** whether the material in question is a rare surviving example of its type or time.
- **Integrity:** whether the material in question is complete or partial, or whether it has been altered or damaged.
- **Threat/Risk:** whether the material in question is subject to threats or risks and, if so, how those risks are being minimized.
- **Preservation and access:** Whether there is a plan in place to preserve and provide access to the material in question. The Committee encourages digitization for both access and preservation, and the application should explain whether digitization has been carried out or is planned.
- **Awareness:** Information about how the nominator of the material in question would raise awareness of the documentary heritage and of the Canada Memory of the World Programme, should the nomination be successful and the material be added to the Register.

Contextual information

To assess applications fully, the Committee requires additional contextual information, including the following:



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- **Descriptive information:** hyperlinks or samples of finding aids, catalogue entries, or other descriptive information about the documentary heritage being nominated. This information is essential to allowing the Committee to understand the nature and size of the documentary heritage under consideration.
- **Legal status:** details of legal ownership and administrative responsibility for the preservation and management of the material in question.
- **Copyright or intellectual property rights:** A description of the status of copyright or intellectual property rights for the material in question. CCUNESCO Memory of the World is committed to respecting the Intellectual Property rights of Indigenous people as recommended in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action #69, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the Updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity (2005), more commonly known as the Joinet/Orentlicher Principles.
- **Cultural/Moral/Ethical/Spiritual Status:** A description of any non-legal beliefs, customs, or relationships associated with the documentary heritage, such as whether any nations, communities, groups, or institutions, or any specific communities, or members of the families of people recorded or documented, have a cultural, moral, ethical, or spiritual relationship with the documentary heritage.
- **Consultation with Cultural/Moral/Ethical/Spiritual Stakeholders:** An explanation of all consultations undertaken with stakeholders in the process of preparing the nomination, with details about how their inputs/points of view/beliefs were incorporated. The Canada Memory of the World Register is committed to respecting the rights and entitlements of any communities directly associated with the documentary heritage under consideration.
- **Names and contact details of up to three people who can provide more information on the documentary heritage:** People could include Elders and community leaders, families, heritage professionals, academics, artists, etc. The Committee may contact these people to obtain additional information.
- **Visual and audio-visual documentation:** Up to three photographs or one piece of audio-visual material, to help the Committee visualize or listen to the collection or document. This documentation can be submitted via hyperlink, via other common file sharing programs, or on a USB key. Any additional materials must be submitted with the nomination form. Written documentation sent separately from the nomination form or in excess of the materials outlined in these guidelines will not be accepted.
- **Past or current use of the documentary heritage:** A description of how the documentary heritage has been used, or is currently being used, by the institution or community and/or people outside of it. Examples could include sacred, ceremonial, or diplomatic uses, exhibitions, films, television productions, artworks, educational materials, published works, or web content.
- **Associated materials:** A description of any other documentary resources specifically created by or directly associated with the materials in question (such as additional archives by the same creator) held in other institutions, whether in Canada or



internationally. This information allows the Committee to determine the “wholeness” of the nominated materials and their relationship to other items in other jurisdictions.

Legal Information

All applications must include the legal name of the institution, organization, or individual nominating the materials, a statement of their relationship to the materials (e.g., custodian, owner), and complete, up-to-date contact information.

The Committee will accept joint nominations from different institutions, or from institutions and individuals working in collaboration. The Committee will not accept applications if one of the nominators is not the owner/custodian of the materials in question.

Please note that, while inscription on the Canada Memory of the World Register is prestigious, it does not come with monetary prizes or other compensation. The Register also takes no ownership of the documentary heritage inscribed.