



U.S. AMBASSADORS FUND
for CULTURAL PRESERVATION

AFCP Glossary of Terms

September 2021

This glossary includes definitions of many of the technical terms that appear in the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) Requests for Proposals and other AFCP materials. If you have a question about any of the items in the glossary or about a concept or term that does not appear below, please contact Martin Perschler at PerschlerMJ@state.gov.

Archaeological Collections: Groups of objects made or shaped by humans that have been scientifically removed from an archaeological site, can be seen or studied, and are typically kept together. *Archaeological Collections* is a category within the *Cultural Objects & Collections* focus area.

Archaeological Sites: Places above ground, underground, or under water recognized as being of architectural, artistic, historical, or other cultural (non-religious) interest that preserve the physical remains of past human activities. *Archaeological Sites* is a category within the *Cultural Sites* focus area.

Architectural Conservation: The examination, documentation, treatment, or preventive care and maintenance of ancient and historic buildings and other built sites, supported by research and education.

Budget Worksheet: The Microsoft Excel worksheet required for submission of project budgets, which includes U.S. government-approved budget categories.

Ceremony (Ceremonies): Acts traditionally associated with and practiced by a culture, usually on important days of the year or on special occasions in the lives of individuals or communities, such as marriages and harvests. *Ceremony* is a category within the *Forms of Traditional Cultural Expression* focus area.

Conservation (Needs) Assessment:¹ A professional and systematic survey of a cultural object/collection or site carried out to provide a thorough understanding of problems, threats, and priorities vis-à-vis the object/collection or site.

¹ In cases where professionally trained conservators having the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities for a conservation activity are not available in country, AFCP may support the participation of experts from a neighboring country or the USA.

Conservation Treatment: The professional stabilization or physical, chemical, or mechanical treatment of objects or sites to address damage or deterioration.

Conservator:² A professional whose primary occupation is the practice of conservation and who, through specialized education, knowledge, training, and experience, formulates and implements all the activities of conservation in accordance with an ethical code (AIC).

Contractual: An AFCP budget category reserved for the anticipated costs of goods and services that the applicant intends to acquire through a contract with a vendor, such as masonry repair and re-pointing services that include the costs of materials as part of a contract, or professional photographic services that include photographic prints as part of the contract.

Crafts: Activities involving the skilled use of one's hands to produce carpets, boats, mats, furniture, clothing, jewelry, household items, tools, hardware, and utilitarian and other objects traditionally associated with a culture. *Crafts* is a category within the *Forms of Traditional Cultural Expression* focus area.

Cultural Heritage: The legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present, and often bestowed for the benefit of future generations.

Cultural Objects & Collections: One of three AFCP focus areas; archaeological and ethnographic objects, paintings, sculpture, manuscripts, and other objects closely associated with the history or culture of a people or a nation.

Cultural Preservation (also Preservation of Cultural Heritage): The act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, authenticity, materials, or other essential attributes of a cultural object or collection, cultural site, or form of traditional cultural expression.

Cultural Sites: One of three AFCP focus areas; places closely associated with the history or culture of a people or a nation.

² Today's conservators of cultural objects, art, and historic buildings are typically trained in 2-3 year post-graduate (MA or MS or certificate) programs; pre-requisites depend on the specialization.

Architectural conservators have some architectural and engineering background. Historic preservationists' credentials are less regulated and more varied.

Objects conservators have some chemistry background, in addition to background in material culture, such as a degree or practical experience in art history, anthropology, or art.

Archaeological object conservators are also trained to recognize archaeological evidence and its value, so that it is not removed or destroyed in the conservation or stabilization of an object recovered from a buried context, for example.

Paintings conservators have formal conservation training and a background in art history or fine arts.

Dance: A series of motions and steps traditionally associated with a culture and usually performed to music. *Dance* is a category within the *Forms of Traditional Cultural Expression* focus area.

Digitization:³ The process of translating information (documents, images, film, etc.) from written or analog into digital form (binary coded files) through the scanning of images, the sampling of sound, the conversion of text on paper into text in computer files, or other means to enable access to the information without damage to the originals and to ensure the preservation of the originals.

Drama: Prose or verse compositions traditionally associated with a culture that tell stories and are intended for representation by actors impersonating characters and performing the dialogue and action. *Drama* is a category within the *Forms of Traditional Cultural Expression* focus area.

Equipment: An AFCP budget category reserved for all tangible, non-expendable (non-disposable) machinery, furniture, and other personal property having a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the project), and a cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

Ethnographic Objects: Traditional utilitarian, ceremonial, devotional, or other objects important to the cultural heritage of a people because of their distinctive characteristics, comparative rarity, or their contribution to the knowledge of the origins, development, or history of that people. *Ethnographic Objects* is a category within the *Cultural Objects & Collections* focus area.

Form of Traditional Cultural Expression: One of three AFCP focus areas; also called “intangible heritage;” traditional music, ceremony, traditional knowledge, indigenous languages, dance, drama, and ancient crafts closely associated with the history or culture of a people or a nation.

General Museum Conservation: An array of activities intended to preserve and protect objects and collections in a museum setting, such as conservation needs assessments, improvements to

³ Video tapes, diskettes, CDs, DVDs, and other digital storage media are susceptible to damage from extremes and fluctuations in temperature, exposure to the elements, chemical leaks, magnetic disturbance, and improper handling and use. They deteriorate at unpredictable rates but seldom show any outward signs of deterioration. Physical damage to these media is irreversible. Before committing to use digital technology in an under-resourced environment, cultural heritage preservation professionals often consider the following:

- Reliability of electrical supply (current and projected)
- Costs of paper, ink, and storage media (current and projected)
- Costs and availability of adequate repair services and technical support
- Costs of computer hardware and software upgrades Costs of reformatting or transferring data (files, database records, etc.) to new software or storage media when existing software or hardware becomes obsolete.

environmental and storage conditions, and collections safety and security improvements, etc. *General Museum Conservation* is a category within the *Cultural Objects & Collections* focus area.

Historic Buildings & Sites: Structures and sites made by humans recognized as being of particular architectural, artistic, historical, or other cultural (non-religious) interest that are occupied, used, or intended for supporting or sheltering a function. *Historic Buildings & Sites* is a category within the *Cultural Sites* focus area.

Inventory & Documentation: The professional implementation of a system of creating and managing records (narrative, graphic, photographic, digital, audiovisual, etc.) of a cultural object, collection, site, or form of expression that will serve as the basis for subsequent conservation, management, research, and protection activities.

Languages: Systems traditionally associated with a culture, which combine voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols to communicate thoughts and feelings. *Languages* is a category within the *Forms of Traditional Cultural Expression* focus area.

Manuscripts: Books, compositions, or other documents that are written by hand (not mechanically reproduced). *Manuscripts* is a category within the *Cultural Objects & Collections* focus area.

Music: Vocal or instrumental expressions traditionally associated with a culture that consist of tones organized melodically, harmonically, and rhythmically. *Music* is a category within the *Forms of Traditional Cultural Expression* focus area.

Natural Heritage: Physical, biological, and geological formations, paleontological collections, habitats of threatened species of animals and plants, fossils, and other natural phenomena.

News Media: Newsreels, newspapers, magazines, microfilm, or fiche of those materials, and other media recording historic or current events.

Other Direct Costs: An AFCP budget category reserved for other costs directly associated with a project, which do not fit any of the other categories. Examples include shipping costs for materials and equipment, and the costs of utilities (water, electricity, Internet) required for the project.

Paintings & Sculpture: Artistic compositions made by applying paints to a two-dimensional surface (paintings, including murals and frescoes) or by carving wood, molding plaster, casting metals, etc., in relief or in the round (sculptures). *Paintings & Sculpture* is a category within the *Cultural Objects & Collections* focus area.

Personnel: An AFCP budget category reserved for wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for an applicant on an AFCP-supported project.

Phased Project: A project whose methods and outcomes will lay the groundwork for subsequent AFCP-supported activities.

Pilot Project: A project whose methods and outcomes will encourage the expanded application of those methods either locally, regionally, or globally.

Preventive Conservation: Professional maintenance, management, and stewardship of cultural sites, or the improvement of storage and exhibition conditions for objects and collections to minimize risk of damage or deterioration of the site or object or collection.

Real Property: Land and improvements on it (buildings, etc.).

Reconstruction: The act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location. See also Replica.

Relocation of Cultural Sites: The removal of a site from one physical location to another.

Replica: A copy or reproduction of a cultural object or site having no original content or material. See also Reconstruction.

Reporting Requirements: The obligations that AFCP award recipients must meet according to the terms of the AFCP program; the reporting requirements involve biannual progress and financial status reports due the last days of January and July for the duration of the award period.

Rescue Excavation: The collection of remaining archaeological evidence, through scientific excavation, at a site that is shown to be at risk of imminent destruction.

Restoration of a Historic Building: The professional repair or treatment of an older structure to reveal its aesthetic and historic value.

Supplies: An AFCP budget category reserved for building, conservation, and other materials that will be consumed (used up) during the course of the project. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, then the item belongs under Equipment.

Sustainability (Sustainable): Able to be maintained at a certain level. In the AFCP context, a sustainable cultural preservation project is one that, in the case of sites and objects, refers to measures, steps, or plans in place to ensure that the preserved site or object will remain in

good condition after the AFCP-supported project is complete. In the case of forms of traditional cultural expression, “sustainable” refers to measures, steps, or plans in place to ensure the preservation and dissemination the documentation, knowledge, or skills either resulting or gained from the project.

Technical Training:⁴ A type of experiential training, led by professionals, that results in outcomes associated with the recall and application of specialized skills and knowledge related to specific equipment, machinery, devices, procedures, methods, processes, and systems (based on definition in Mel Silberman, ed., *The Handbook of Experiential Learning* [Philadelphia: John Wiley & Sons, 2007], p. 242).

Traditional Knowledge: Scientific, engineering, architectural, medicinal, culinary, and other practical experience traditionally associated with a culture, often accumulated through trial and error over time and passed down from one generation to the next. *Traditional Knowledge* is a category within the *Forms of Traditional Cultural Expression* focus area.

Travel: An AFCP budget category reserved for the estimated costs of travel and per diem (including meals and incidental expenses) for a project. Brief statements of justification are required for all proposed international travel.

⁴ Although AFCP does not support professional educational needs, it does support workshops focusing on specialized skills for trained professionals or technicians, such as workshops on masonry restoration and collections inventory best practices.