



International Committee of the Blue Shield

## Creation of a National Committee of the Blue Shield

# Manual

These documents constitute the first step for creating a National Committee of the Blue Shield in your country. It aims at facilitating the recognition of new National Committees by offering appropriate recommendations and exposing a global vision of the Blue Shield organisation and missions.

### **The Blue Shield**

#### [What is the Blue Shield?](#)

The Blue Shield is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross. It is the protective emblem specified in the 1954 Hague Convention (*Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*) for marking world cultural heritage threatened by natural and human-made disasters.

#### [What is the ICBS?](#)

The International Committee of the Blue Shield, created in 1996, works worldwide to provide protection for the world's cultural heritage that is threatened by armed conflict, political crises or natural disasters. It was founded by four non-governmental organisations: ICA (International Council on Archives), ICOM (International Council of Museums), ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), and IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions). In 2005, they were joined by CCAAA (Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations). It has taken up the emblem of the 1954 Hague Convention as its official symbol.

ICBS covers museums and archives, sites and libraries. It brings together the knowledge, experience and international networks of five expert organisations dealing with cultural heritage. ICBS is international, independent and professional. Its mission is to work for the protection of the world's cultural heritage by co-ordinating resources and expertise to meet and respond to emergency situations. Its main objectives are to facilitate international responses to threats or emergency threatening cultural property and to act in an advisory capacity for the protection of endangered heritage.

The vital work of the ICBS was recognised in the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention, agreed in April 1999 by 84 countries. This gives ICBS a new role, in advising the inter-governmental Committee for Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

### What are the National Committees?

Through its member organisations and their respective networks, ICBS is already present in more than 190 countries. To render this presence more effective, the international initiative of ICBS is taken up and supported by National Committees that have been established in numerous countries. They are organised under the mission and objectives of the ICBS and are created with the support of the local representatives of the five non-governmental member organisations of ICBS. Within each of their own countries they are expected to bring together experts from different heritage professions, local and national government offices, emergency services, representatives of the armed forces, etc. The National Committees of the Blue Shield have the strength of their accurate knowledge of the local context. They are therefore the perfect focal points and operational co-ordinators to conduct concrete actions aiming at the protection of cultural heritage against natural and human-made disasters.

### What is the ANCBS?

In order to co-ordinate the endeavours made by the National Committees, in December 2008 the Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield (ANCBS) was founded. It coordinates and strengthens international efforts to protect cultural property at risk of destruction in armed conflicts or natural disasters. It manages the operational actions of National Committees and serves as a communication platform for ICBS and the National Blue Shield Committees.

The ANCBS has its headquarters in The Hague.

### Why create a National Committee?

The ICBS strongly encourages the creation of National Committees. They are important to the success of the ICBS mission, since the protection of cultural heritage requires local involvement and initiatives. Within each of their own countries, National Committees bring together the experience and knowledge of professionals from different areas, all committed to the protection of cultural heritage. They provide a forum to improve emergency preparedness by sharing experiences and information. They provide a focus for raising national awareness of the threats to cultural heritage and promote the ratification and implementation by national governments of the 1954 Hague Convention.

## Principles and mandates of the Blue Shield

### The Strasbourg Charter

The four founding members of ICBS (ICA, ICOM, ICOMOS and IFLA) came together in Strasbourg on 14 April 2000 to set up the *Charter of the International Committee of the Blue Shield*<sup>1</sup>. The charter officially acknowledged the symbol of The 1954 Hague Convention as the official emblem of ICBS.

The charter devises the basic principles of the ICBS and its members and was adopted by the ICBS at its meeting in Paris, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2001. These principles were acknowledged by CCAAA when the organisation joined ICBS in 2005.

The basic principles that were agreed on in the charter are as follows:

#### **Joint actions**

*The international Blue Shield network seeks to share information and knowledge with international partners from both heritage and non-heritage areas, as well as national government bodies, in order to coordinate and mobilise cross-sectorial joint actions that will better protect cultural heritage against natural and human-made disasters.*

#### **Independence**

*International Blue Shield is a self-governed, non-profit and non-governmental organisation operating independently on all matters of its mission. It provides its own expertise and seeks to work with partners in order to share information and coordinate joint actions.*

#### **Neutrality**

*International Blue Shield may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature. It shall maintain autonomy in order to act always according to its principles and mission.*

#### **Professionalism**

*International Blue Shield gathers and collaborates with experts out of professional bodies and commits its missions and action to them. It ensures that its experts provide the necessary experience and knowledge that is required for preparedness for and response to natural and human-made disasters. Therefore it aims to train experts and develop their skills to better act before, during, and after disasters.*

#### **Respect of cultural identity**

*International Blue Shield respects the cultural identity of all humankind and seeks to protect the cultural heritage of humanity without any bias.*

#### **Work on a not-for-profit basis**

*International Blue Shield and its members are not seeking profit and work on a voluntary basis.*

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<sup>1</sup> To see the complete version of the Charter, please refer to the attached document

## The Radenci Declaration

In collaboration with UNESCO, ICBS initiated a seminar from 12-16 November 1998 in Radenci (Slovenia), that led to the outcome of the *Radenci Declaration on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Emergencies and Exceptional Situations*<sup>1</sup>.

Representatives from ICBS, UNESCO and delegates from Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden were noting and acknowledging the great loss of cultural heritage that was witnessed in the recent years due to armed conflicts and natural disasters. In examining the experiences of mitigation and response in different countries and different contexts, the participants agreed on basic principles of safeguarding and protection of cultural heritage in normal times, as well as in times of emergency. It was accepted, that ICBS advances the development of training activities in emergency preparedness and response for heritage institutions, and the improvement of monitoring methods during and after disasters.

The participants agreed to continue to share experiences and to cooperate in the context of the International Committee of the Blue Shield to develop national, regional and local initiatives to avoid loss of cultural heritage.

## The Torino Declaration

The *Torino Declaration* is the outcome of the first international meeting of the Blue Shield and was adopted on 24 July 2004<sup>2</sup>.

The participants<sup>3</sup> agreed to:

- Recommend the ratification of The 1954 Hague Convention and its both protocols by all state parties to the UNESCO and the United Nations,
- Recommend that the United Nations and other international organisations include the protection of all types of cultural heritage in the mandate of their peace support operations,
- Recommend that governments act to prevent looting and destruction of cultural heritage sites and buildings and illicit traffic in cultural property,
- Recommend the awareness-raising and capacity building of heritage professionals on risk preparedness response and recovery,
- Recommend the creation of Blue Shield National Committees, where such committees still do not exist and finally
- To establish and strengthen ICBS as a visible and effective entity.

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<sup>1</sup> To see the complete version of the Declaration, please refer to the attached document

<sup>2</sup> To see the complete version of the Declaration, please refer to the attached document

<sup>3</sup> The founding members of ICBS, the National Blue Shield Committees in Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Italy, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Madagascar, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom and Ireland, and Venezuela, and the representatives of Cultural Emergency Response and Cultural Heritage Without Borders

### *The 2006 Hague Blue Shield Accord*

On 27 and 28 September 2006, the representatives of ICBS and National Blue Shield Committees met in The Hague in order to agree on the creation of the Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield (ANCBS). Representatives of ICBS, National Committees of the Blue Shield and ANCBS agreed on distribution of responsibilities between the three levels of the international Blue Shield bodies<sup>1</sup>.

This is the first official text of the international Blue Shield that provides us with guidance regarding the specific purpose, functions, attribution, governance and operation of the National Committees of the Blue Shield.

### *The Seoul Declaration*

Engaging a very comprehensive number of international players (humanitarian, military, climate experts, etc.), the International Committee of the Blue Shield held its International Conference from 8-10 December 2011 in Seoul, to discuss the significant importance of protecting cultural heritage in emergency situations.

The gathering of professionals concerned with this issue, including heritage, military, meteorological, humanitarian assistance and information technology, led to the adoption of the *Seoul Declaration on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Emergency Situations*<sup>2</sup>.

The Seoul declaration attaches great value on the significance of cultural heritage as the expression of human creativity and a witness of the world's history, may it be movable, non-movable or intangible, and thus its need for protection against all types of threats. Special emphasis is put on damages to cultural heritage induced by environmental degradation and climate change, the rising complexity of armed conflicts, as well as economic crises.

In order to respond to the new challenges that concern the protection of cultural heritage, Blue Shield agreed in its Seoul declaration on exploring 1) the feasibility of establishing a fund for immediate cultural relief efforts in emergency situations, 2) the procedures needed to adequately plan and prepare the response to cultural emergencies throughout the world, and 3) the viability of forming partnerships with cultural and other relief organisations to improve operational on-the-ground responses to cultural crises wherever they may occur.

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<sup>1</sup> To see the complete version of the Accord, please refer to the attached document

<sup>2</sup> To see the complete version of the Declaration, please refer to the attached document

## Object of the Blue Shield

As mentioned in several official texts of the international Blue Shield, its primary objectives are:

### Protection of cultural heritage

- The respect for, protection and safeguard of cultural assets in case of major catastrophes, menaces to the state's interior security and armed conflict, while acting within an ethical and professional framework.

### Awareness-raising

- The national and international awareness-raising on the type of risks that endanger cultural heritage and the required needs to bring a concrete response;
- The promotion of The 1954 Hague *Convention for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict* and its two protocols (1954 and 1999), of its ratification and its full national implementation by concerned government.

### Training and emergency preparedness

- The promotion of a better preparation of concerned professionals against the menaces that are striking cultural heritage;
- The coordination of national capacity-building to train these professionals in the areas of preparedness and response against natural and human-made disasters.

### Cross-sectorial cooperation

- The development and maintenance of national, regional and local networks based on the networks of the five NGOs, and including governmental authorities, representatives of military authorities, meteorological agencies, disaster reduction agencies, emergency services, cultural organisations, civil emergency services and humanitarian organisations;
- The close cooperation with the members of these networks aiming at better protecting cultural heritage in emergency situations;
- The identification of common resources.

### Post-disaster planning

- The creation of an adequate methodology for accurate post-disaster damage assessment;
- The dissemination of Blue Shield official statements pertaining to emergency situations;
- The planning of adequate post-disaster cross-sectorial response/recovery measures;
- The support of any action aiming at replying to the threats provoked by cultural emergencies.

## Rules and Principles of the National Committees

As mentioned in the *2006 Hague Blue Shield Accord* and in other official texts of the international Blue Shield, a National Committee of the Blue Shield, as national representative of the international Blue Shield, is engaged to:

### Be set up in such a way as to conform to national legislation

The National Committee's structure should conform to the national legislation in order to guarantee legal operation within its own country and within the international mission of the Blue Shield.

### Be continually recognised by the International Committee of the Blue Shield, as a condition to the use of the term National Committee of the Blue Shield and the related emblem

The National Committee has to be officially and continuously recognised by the ICBS. Else it has no authorisation to use the term National Committee of the Blue Shield and the related emblem.

### Promote the aims of the Blue Shield

The National Committee is strongly invited to promote the aims of the Blue Shield in its country in order to raise national awareness of the threats to cultural heritage and promote the ratification and implementation by national governments of the 1954 Hague Convention.

### Define its own priorities within the mission of the Blue Shield, and guarantee compliance with the image and reputation of the International Blue Shield

The Blue Shield National Committee shall raise the national awareness of the value of its own countries' cultural heritage and the need for its protection. Therefore, the National Committee is invited to define its own priorities concerning the prevention, preparedness and response to emergency situations in case of armed conflict, political crisis or natural disaster that might affect its country. These actions shall be performed according to the basic principles of the ICBS.

### Handle the works and activities initiated by the International Committee of the Blue Shield

The works and activities introduced by the International Committee shall be implemented at the national level.

### Represent the International Committee of the Blue Shield with all the national and international institutions with which it collaborates

The National Committee is invited to autonomously represent its umbrella organisations at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), with all national and international organisations, and all individuals it collaborates with. National Committees of the Blue Shield therefore permanently represent the name, reputation, values and missions of the international Blue Shield.

## Manage its own fundraising

In order to guarantee the National Committee's status of a self-governed, non-profit and non-governmental organisation, it is essential to provide by its own means a sufficient fundraising that guarantees the National Committee's operation.

## Obligatory requirements for the recognition as a National Committee of the Blue Shield

### Inform ICBS Secretariat

Before going into the process of the creation of a National Committee of the Blue Shield, the Secretariat of ICBS should be informed about the initiative. It can be contacted at the following address: [secretariat.paris@blueshield-international.org](mailto:secretariat.paris@blueshield-international.org).

### Letters of support

The creation of a National Committee of the Blue Shield should receive the official support of the national representatives of its four founding organisations (ICA, ICOM, ICOMOS and IFLA). Therefore, letters of official support are required by ICBS Secretariat.

### The declaration form

The declaration form has to be signed by the members of the board of the National Committee of the Blue Shield<sup>1</sup>.

In this form, they declare:

- That they respect the *Charter of ICBS*<sup>2</sup> and its related principles.
- That they have the support<sup>3</sup> of all four founding organisations of ICBS in their country: the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Museums and Sites (ICOMOS), and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). In case of absence of official national representatives, official support will be granted by the General Offices of the concerned organisations.
- That they will provide with the basic valid information and documents requested by the Secretariat of ICBS.
- That they will comply with the principles and requirements that rule the Blue Shield and its member organisations.

### The application form

The application form provides ICBS with the basic information and documents needed in order to create a National Committee of the Blue Shield and seek for official recognition by the umbrella organisation. It also gives additional information regarding the purpose and the reasons of the creation of the concerned National Committee. Your answers will give ICBS a better understanding of the progress of the National Committee's creation. It facilitates follow-up of requests and dispensing of appropriate advices. It has to be filled and signed by the Chairperson of the National Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Who can – but must not necessarily – be the national representatives of the four founding organisations of ICBS

<sup>2</sup> See attached document

<sup>3</sup> This support has to be expressed through official letters signed by the concerned representatives

## **Optional requirements for the recognition as a National Committee of the Blue Shield**

### **The statutes guidelines and application model**

The International Committee of the Blue Shield encourages national initiatives that wish to seek recognition as National Committees of the Blue Shield to give themselves statutes in keeping with national legislations. National Committees of the Blue Shield are free to decide which details they will put in their statutes, according to the legislations in force in their respective countries. To facilitate this procedure, ICBS offers guidelines to create statutes<sup>1</sup>, as well as the model of an application form for the membership of its National Committees.

### **Websites of the member organisations of ICBS:**

ICA: <http://www.ica.org>

ICOM: <http://icom.museum>

ICOMOS: <http://www.icomos.org>

IFLA: <http://www.ifla.org>

CCAAA: <http://www.ccaaa.org>

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<sup>1</sup> See document entitled “Creation of a National Committee of the Blue Shield – Statutes Guidelines”