Towards Building an International Policy Agenda for the Preservation of Analogue and Digital Documentary Heritage

Issues for Disaster Risk Reduction

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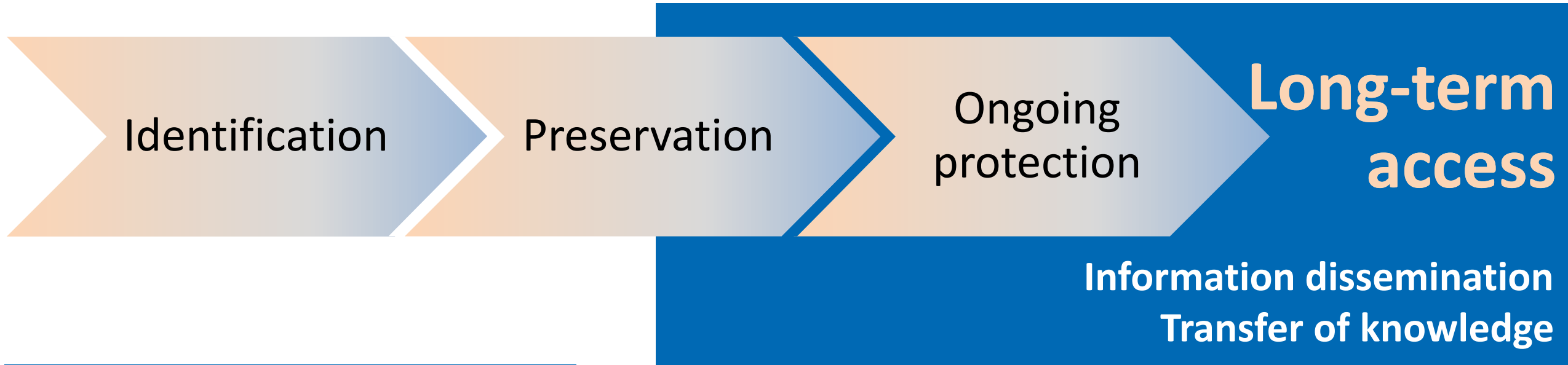
Importance of Documentary Heritage

UNESCO is committed to protecting, preserving and promoting access to the world's documentary heritage, from preserving documents in libraries, archives and museums to the software that is driving the digital transformation.

Documentary heritage is a key resource that helps us learn from the past.

Documentary heritage is essential for effective Disaster Risk Reduction strategy and implementation.

Documentary heritage must remain accessible

Identification → Preservation → Ongoing protection → **Long-term access**

Information dissemination
Transfer of knowledge

Ongoing protection of documentary heritage is key.

Enabling and managing access are essential to achieve the purpose and impact of preserved documentary heritage.

What have we achieved: Practices

Physical artefacts

Selection and conservation of physical artefacts

Digitization to create digital representations of physical artefacts and analogue recordings.

Natural disasters
Social and political factors
Human-caused disasters (political conflicts, terrorisms and wars).

Intangible cultural heritage

Creation of physical and digital records to document customs, spoken languages, skills and practices.
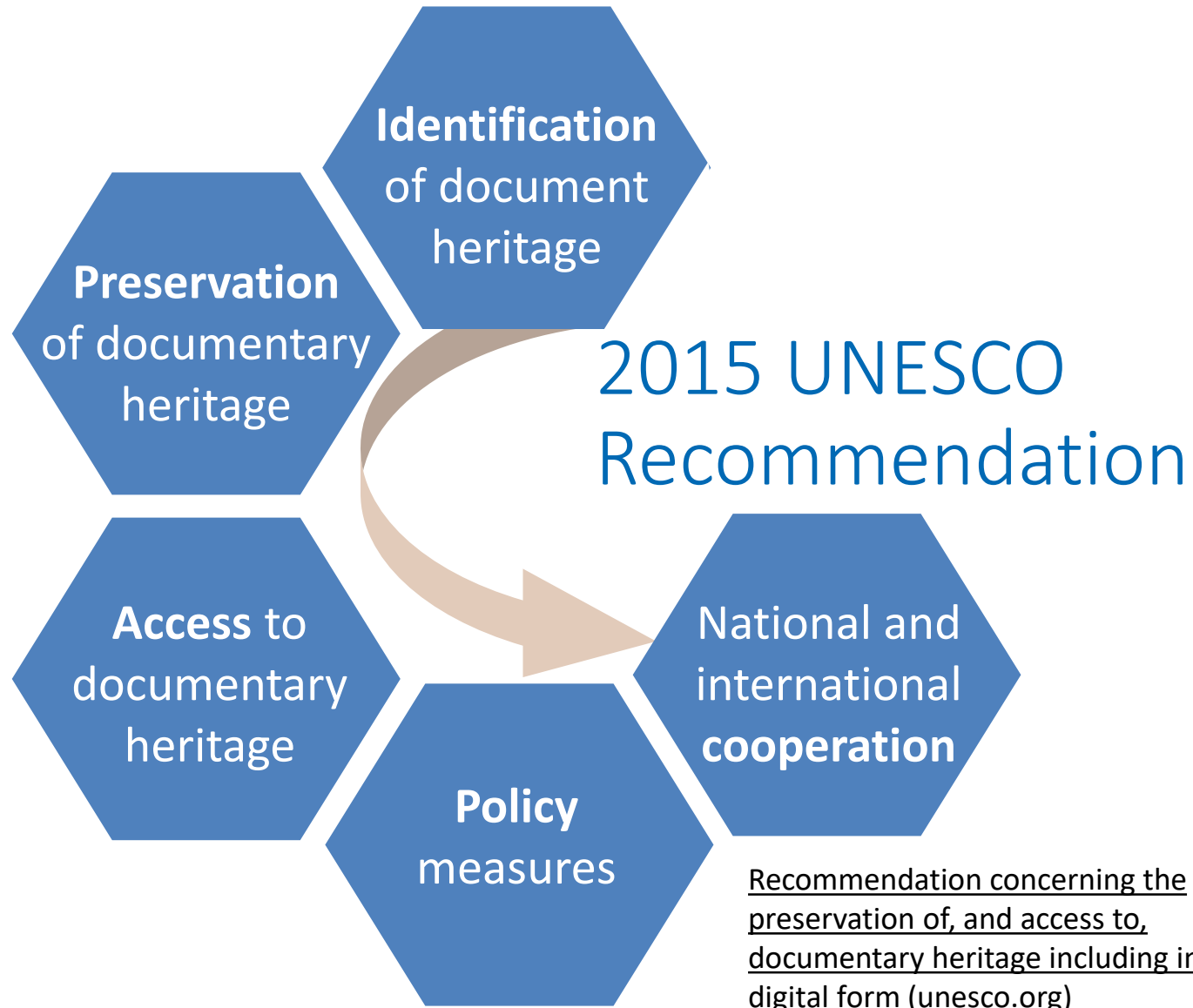
Rapid socio-economic changes that affect societies and cultures
Human factors (reduced and aging population).

Digital artefacts

Selection guidelines for digital repositories.

Preservation workflows.

Technology obsolescence – storage media, software tools.
Scale and high-growth rate.
Software licenses.
Sustainability: socio-economic factors (cost, prioritization), human factors (use of legacy applications and systems).

What have we achieved: Global understanding

Identification of document heritage

Preservation of documentary heritage

Access to documentary heritage

Policy measures

National and international **cooperation**

2015 UNESCO Recommendation

Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form (unesco.org)

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, **meeting in Paris from 3 to 18 November 2015**, at its 38th session,

Considering that documents produced and preserved over time, in all their analogue and digital forms through time and space, constitute the primary means of knowledge creation and expression, having an impact on all areas of humanity's civilization and its further progress,

Also considering that documentary heritage records the unfolding of human thought and events, the evolution of languages, cultures, peoples and their understanding of the world,

Underlining the importance of documentary heritage to promote the sharing of knowledge for greater understanding and dialogue, in order to promote peace and respect for freedom, democracy, human rights, and dignity,

What have we achieved: Policies

2015 UNESCO Recommendation on Policies (Section 4)

4.1 Member States are urged to consider their documentary heritage as an invaluable asset, and to apply the same conscientiousness to the development of this heritage as they would to other valuable assets. They must recognize the importance of investing resources in preservation and maintenance of different types of originals in analogue format, in digital infrastructure and skills, and to adequately endow memory institutions.

Long term investment

4.2 At the same time, Member States should encourage memory institutions, beyond the practicalities of infrastructure, and encourage logical partnerships and cost sharing with other entities in setting up shared facilities.

Cost sharing

4.3 Private and personal documentary heritage collections need public encouragement and support as well as adequate visibility in national directories.

Support private collections

4.4 Member States should promote access to documentary heritage, encouraging their use in education and research on documentary heritage and their presence in the public domain.

Access, education, research

4.5 Through legislation and policy, Member States are encouraged to provide in a participatory manner appropriate incentives to stimulate activities among memory institutions in order to improve accessibility and use of documentary heritage in the public interest.

Incentives for supporters and investors

4.6 Member States are encouraged to periodically review copyright codes and legal deposit regimes to introduce exceptions, for preserving documentary heritage. This would also promote interoperability and alignment of existing policies.

Legal deposit, copyright exceptions

4.7 Where preserving and accessing documentary heritage requires the use of software or access to protected information, Member States should encourage unlocked versions.

Provision of needed technologies

4.8 In order to facilitate optimal exchange of data, Member States should encourage the use of open source software and open standards, and seek the sharing of existing data and content. In developing proprietary technologies, Member States institutions should aim for international standardization and interchangeability of cataloguing methods and metadata.

Open source and standardized tools

4.9 Member States should develop policies affecting documentary heritage, including monitoring the status of documentary heritage inscriptions.

Monitoring and status

4.10 Member States should develop synergies between the Memory of the World programme and other programmes in order to assure further coherence of actions.

Synergies among UNESCO programmes

What has changed? Why do we need an international policy agenda?

Digital revolution

Global economy

Connected world

- Global adoption of technologies and platforms
- Increased production of knowledge and documentary heritage in digital form
- Global information and communication infrastructure - Internet
- Content and information beyond national boundaries.

Fast societal changes

Rapid technology obsolescence

Content diversity; large data volumes, effort and cost

Lack of content control and security.

The first step: Identify policy gaps

UNESCO Policy Dialogue: Key Takeaways from 27 October 2020 Discussions

BY **UNESCO PERSIST** *on* **6 NOVEMBER 2020** · ⬭ (**0**)

UNESCO builds an international policy agenda for digital preservation of documentary heritage

📅 05/11/2020   🕐 6 min

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Priority issues:

Preservation action
Protecting cultural identity at risk

Sustainability
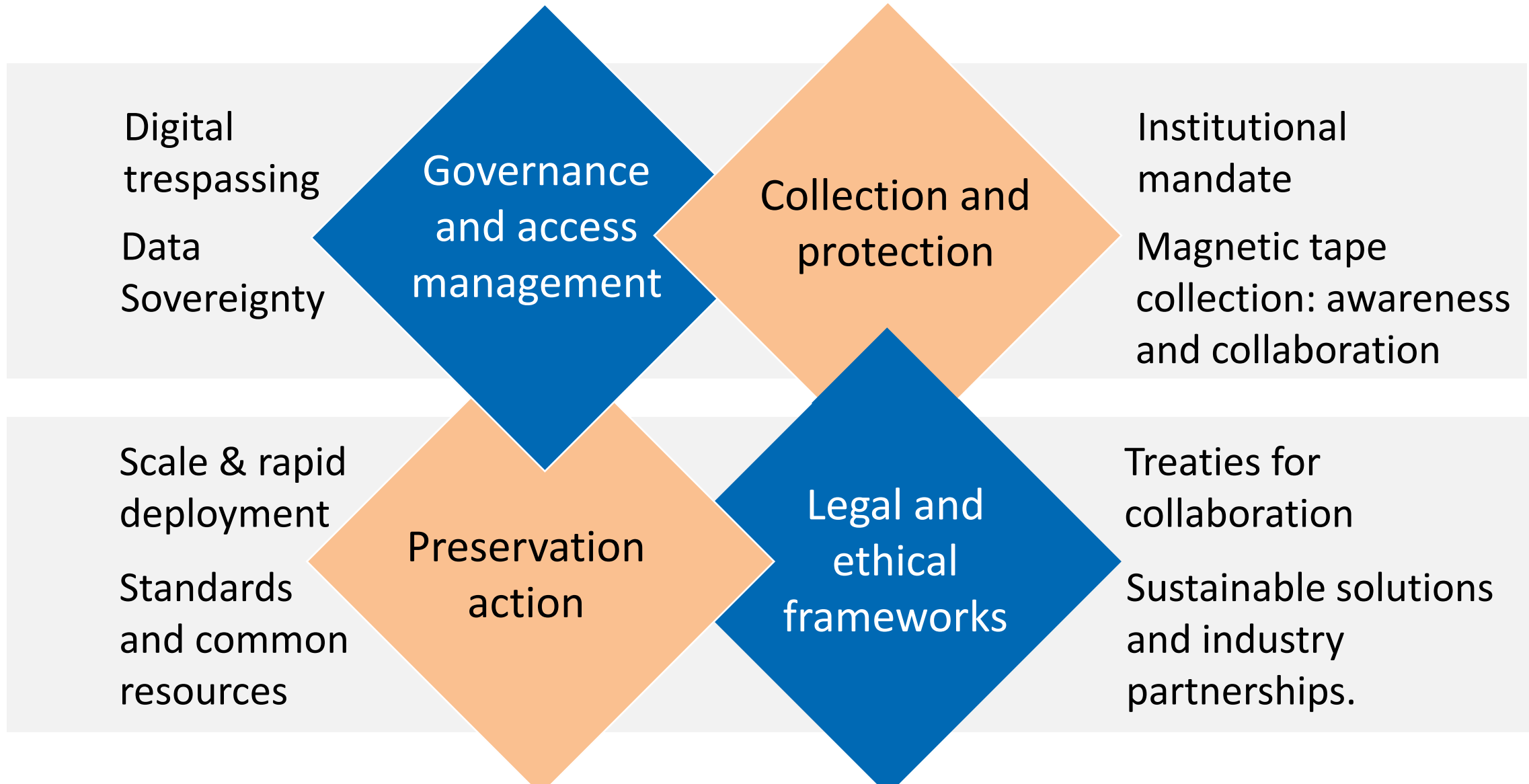Creating sustainable partnerships for preservation

Technology
Preventing loss of documentary heritage due to the rapid obsolescence of technology

Legal frameworks
Upholding enabling legal frameworks for effective functioning of memory institutions.

UNESCO Policy Dialogue: Key policy gaps

Digital trespassing

Data Sovereignty

Governance and access management

Collection and protection

Institutional mandate

Magnetic tape collection: awareness and collaboration

Scale & rapid deployment

Standards and common resources

Preservation action

Legal and ethical frameworks

Treaties for collaboration

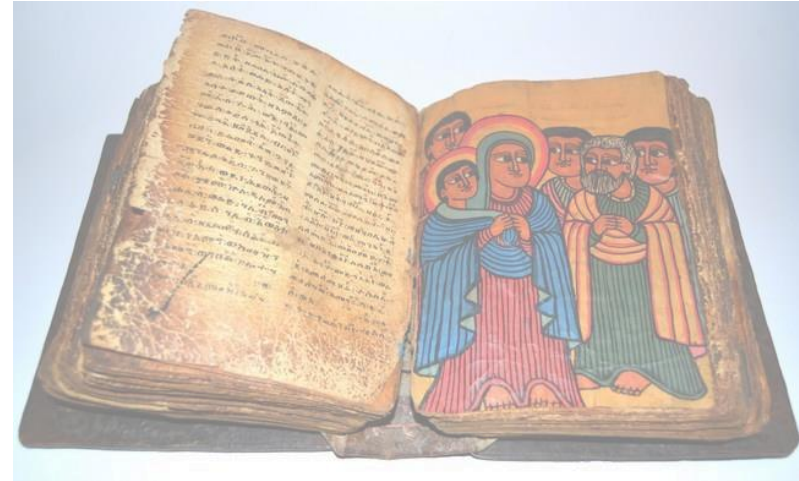Sustainable solutions and industry partnerships.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) agenda

Digitization is a common Disaster Risk Reduction activity

Digitization is used to create documentary records of deteriorating physical artefacts and analogue recordings.

Digital media is easily replicated and shared, providing redundancy and easy access.

Risks: Ongoing deterioration and easy destruction of digital.

> Deterioration is due to fast technology obsolescence.

> Destruction is due to un-managed access and use (security).

Ongoing and fast deterioration of born digital

> Digital content requires readers, i.e., legacy software that can open archived files

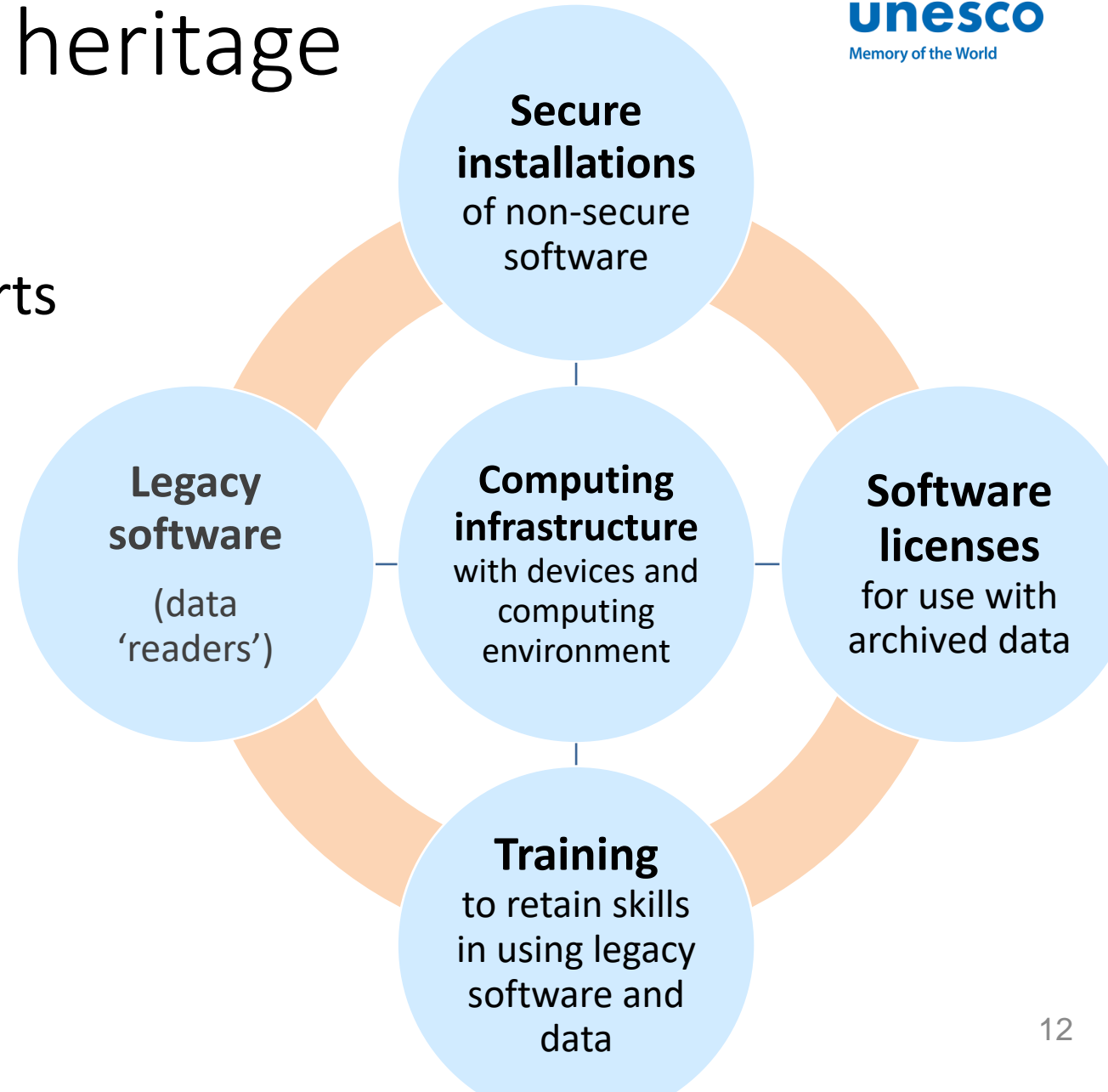> Digital requires sophisticated devices and computing environment

> Legacy software is non-secure and require extra security measures

> Licenses of operating systems and software may not be readily available

> New technologies replace old and user skills fade over time.

Improving Disaster Risk Reduction for digital documentary heritage

Work with international associations of computing experts

Identify best methods and practices for long-term use of software and digital content

Use proven solutions to advise on the policy and practices

Invest in research to continue developing effective solutions.

Secure installations of non-secure software

Legacy software (data 'readers')

Computing infrastructure with devices and computing environment

Software licenses for use with archived data

Training to retain skills in using legacy software and data

Thank you!

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