

ENDANGERED ARCHIVES PROGRAMME

Guidelines for producing surveys

1. Rationale

The Endangered Archives Programme awards Pilot Project grants for researchers to investigate the survival of archival collections on a particular subject, in a discrete region, or in a specific format and to determine the feasibility of their future recovery through a Major Project. As part of the Pilot Project, researchers will normally undertake a survey of the material under investigation and the results should be submitted as part of the project's final outputs. The survey should aim to provide a broad overview of the content and context of the material. It should gather basic information on the location(s), extent, format, physical condition, provenance, interrelationships and administrative or biographical context of the material.

2. Information gathering and organisation

Surveys should be used to gather information in a systematic and consistent way. You should use it as a means not just to provide a list, but ideally to collect information on the context and background of the material. You need to collect information on the material itself (what and how much), its context (administrative/biographical background), its physical condition, and its ownership (provenance). The survey should also look for an existing order, or impose one which, where possible, respects the order in which the material would have been maintained by the original owner. When organising the information you have collected, please consider how this information will be used in the future. If the material is to be the subject of a Major Project you should familiarise yourself with the EAP Listing Guidelines.

3. Format of your survey

Do not use the EAP Listing Template as a guide for your survey, the purpose of this spreadsheet is to collect the relevant information that will be entered into the British Library's cataloguing database. Although there will be similarities, the information collected during your survey will naturally be of a different type and focus. Your survey should aim to increase your overall knowledge of the material, its scope and physical condition, and its arrangement. Your survey should be designed to allow you to collect relevant information (see section 4). This information should be gathered in a way that best suits your project. This may take the form of a Word document or Excel spreadsheet(s). The information collected should be formatted in a way that makes interpretation of the data easy and meaningful. It should be organised by provenance or collection. The information elements should be clearly marked. Examples of information elements include: the description of the material, titles of individual manuscripts, files, etc., dates, extent, language, physical format and physical condition.

4. Content of your survey

The survey should include a description of your survey method. It should contain an explanation of how much material you expected to include in the survey, its physical storage conditions, the geographical areas to be covered (if relevant) and the criteria used to sort through the material and order the survey. Your survey should collect information relevant to the material. For example, material belonging to family collections may contain a wide variety of material with different physical types (for example, manuscripts, photographs, videos). Your survey will need to note the different types of material, giving details such as the type of paper used, manuscript binding, photographic method, etc. Material from political, religious or other organised groups may have complex administrative backgrounds and functions which will need to be included in the survey. If you are

surveying material currently kept in different locations or in collections from different geographical areas, your survey will need to identify these different locations and areas. It will need to collect information that ties the material being surveyed to the area and to the owners. It will also need to explain the relationship between the items and collections. Project Leads are in a unique position to collect vital contextual information, which will be important for assessing the value and scope of the material. Administrative and/or biographical details about the collection(s) and its creators and/or collectors should be gathered where possible. Interrelationships between the materials surveyed should be explained. For example, material created by organisations that have undergone re-structuring or name-changes may have complex interrelations. Another example of interrelated material is correspondence between individuals from two separate family collections. You should also record whether the individual or organisation holding the material is interested and willing to be involved in a future Major Project. You will need to note who has current ownership of the material and associated rights (for example, copyright). If your survey is based at an institution, you should also identify a principal contact for each set of material. Also think of who will be reading this document, try and make it accessible and coherent. Surveys that include photographs are always more interesting. We recommend you have a look at the EAP website and read the results from previous projects. Here are some links to earlier surveys that we hope will be helpful. This is not an exhaustive list, but highlight the diversity of locations and situations where surveys have taken place.

[EAP427 A survey of the libraries of Abéché, former capital of the Sultanate of Waday \(Eastern Chad\)](#)
(Word document)

[EAP524 A survey of the East India Company and Colonial archives, St Helena, South Atlantic](#)
(Word document)

[EAP906 A survey of private records of some leading business families of early colonial Bengal](#)
(Word document)

[EAP913 Documenting the Arabic manuscript collection of the Yattara Family Library, Timbuktu, Mali](#)
(Spreadsheet)

[EAP1100 A survey of archival material in small Jewish communities in rural areas in Argentina](#)
(Spreadsheet with introductory text)

[EAP1123 A survey of Thai-Mon palm-leaf manuscripts](#)
(Word document)

5. Submitting your survey

They should be sent to the EAP Lead Curator at the end of your project (jody.butterworth@bl.uk). If your Pilot Project also includes sample digitisation, please ensure the survey is also saved on the hard drive. They may be in the form of a Word document or Excel spreadsheet (which will be converted into PDFs). Do not send the results in any databases as these use proprietary software.

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