

Partnerships, Project Planning and Resources

9.1.4.3 Even large, professional sound archives may consider sending parts of their collection to specialised institutions or service providers for the purposes of transfer. This may especially be so for some historical analogue and digital carriers.

9.1.5 Outsourcing

9.1.5.1 Whenever material is outsourced for the purpose of signal extraction, especially to private entrepreneurs, it is important to accurately define the tasks to be fulfilled. This is best achieved by specifying the standards provided by IASA in these Guidelines as part of the contract.

9.1.5.2 When outsourcing any audio processes it is essential to establish a quality control system that provides a high level of assurance that all contracted work has been carried out appropriately. Such measures should be based on stringent delivery of preservation metadata, accompanied by tests of randomly chosen samples, including unannounced visits at service providers and testing of the transfer equipment. Specific attention should be given to test the automated and manual quality control systems established by the supplier; their capacity to manage long term contracts through the use of project management methodology, experience with similar contracts and with specific carriers, equipment maintenance, and finally the balance between cost and quality. Before the start of the production level digitisation phase specific small tests should be performed to ensure all aspects of the process meet criteria before commencing to process on a larger scale.

9.1.5.3 It is a responsibility of a sound archive to manage and control access to its collections in accordance with any legal, moral or ethical constraints which are associated with the content: Outsourcing the processes does not allow the archive to abrogate its responsibilities in this matter. When archival material is given to a third party to undertake any audio processes it is necessary to define in contract the restrictions under which the service provider must operate. For commercial copyright material the legal limitations are probably described in law and can be referred to. Where privacy or other ethical rights are of concern, these should be defined and the service provider should acknowledge their agreement to comply. It is also important to specify how and when copies will be eliminated from the contractor's storage system when their responsibility comes to an end and the material and content is returned to the owners or archive.

9.1.6 Quantitative Assessment of Project Dimensions

9.1.6.1 Whether preservation is carried out autonomously in-house, or partly or fully outsourced, an indispensable pre-condition for seriously planning preservation is the quantitative assessment of the project. Serious and costly mistakes are often made by underestimating the amount of work needed for the optimal signal extraction from original carriers. Therefore, the first step is to count the numbers of carriers and their playing time. With mechanical carriers, compact cassettes, and optical carriers there is a fairly clear relation between the number of carriers and their respective playing times. This may be more complex in the case of magnetic open reel collections as the playing time is dependant on the length of the tape, the speed of recording and the numbers of tracks. However, with good knowledge of the specific collection, some well founded assumptions can often be made which lead to reasonably accurate estimates. In poorly documented or undocumented collections, a situation often encountered in the estates of prominent persons, this assessment can be extremely time consuming.

9.1.6.2 Once the duration of the carriers to be transferred is assessed, a second important factor is their physical condition. The time factors given in the respective parts of Chapter 5, Signal Extraction from Original Carriers, relate to well preserved items. Any cleaning and restoration measures required may add substantially to transfer times, and must be included in the calculations accordingly.