International Conservation Standards and Guidelines

ISO / TC 349 - Cultural Heritage Conservation

The International Standards Organization (ISO) Technical Committee 349 has been launched and it matters for cultural heritage conservation everywhere. The Standardization Administration of China (SAC) will serve as its secretariat, overseeing efforts to standardize terminology, technologies, materials, and equipment for monitoring, evaluating, preserving, and restoring cultural heritage.

The new ISO committee has a strategic business plan outlining a broad scope of potential working groups and can be found here on the ISO TC 349 web page. Early priorities will likely focus on process terminology and core concepts, but the ISO has ambitious plans to address conservation challenges across different materials, practices, and contexts including seismic activity. As standards and working groups come on line they will be published here.

The first meeting took place in September 2025 in Beijing, and the next meeting is planned for 22-24 September 2026 in Florence / Firenze, Italy. IIC has an official liaison A role to the ISO / TC 349 committee and will be providing updates via *News in Conservation,* **and here on the IIC website.**

IIC Fellows, members, Regional Groups and affiliated professional associations with an interest in the development of these international standards are encouraged to engage directly, where possible, via their national participating or observer member body, where they are listed here.

How to engage at a National Level and Stay informed

Each country will handle participation differently. If your country is designated as a 'P' (Participating) member, this indicates someone in your national standards body has already supported this initiative. You can see relevant information on country participation, the ISO TC 349 website page here.

If your country is a Participating (P) member, we encourage you to contact your national standards body to find out who has been handling correspondence on this topic. This is a great opportunity to introduce yourself and contribute to conservation efforts. Ideally, your approach should be coordinated through a national professional conservation body, a government agency, academic institutions, or a private company. Every country's process is different, but if you don't ask, you won't find out! If your country is a 'P' member, someone will be able to represent it any forthcoming TC meetings —whether in-person or online. We're eager to ensure a strong voice for conservators at meetings.

Standards work can be tricky, with many formalities, but the impact is significant, boosting global recognition for conservation practices, fostering international collaboration, and improving the care of cultural heritage. The specific impact of these standards will depend on national and regional arrangements, but the key takeaway is that international conservation standards are moving forward, and you have a chance to shape them.

The best way to stay informed? Keep an eye on ISO website to see what's coming up! IIC will also be publishing updates in *News in Conservation.*

Various documents published by international bodies concerned for the conservation of cultural heritage

The below information has been compiled by IIC staff and volunteers, and is meant as an overview. We strive for completeness and accuracy so if you think something is not correct or is missing, please get in touch with the IIC office by email: iic@iiconservation.org

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):

(1) Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954)

(2) Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)

(3) Recommendation for the Protection of Movable Cultural Property (1978)

(4) Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)

(5) Warsaw Recommendation on Recovery and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage (2018)

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS):

(1) International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter) (1964)

(2) The Washington Charter (1987)

(3) Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)

(4) Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas (2005)

International Council of Museums (ICOM):

(1) International Guidelines for Museum Object Information: The CIDOC Information Categories (1995)

(2) Statement of Principles of Museum Documentation (2012)

(3) International Committee for Documentation Conceptual Reference Model (2021)

International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC):

(1) Environmental Guidelines IIC and ICOM-CC Declaration (2014)

Cultural heritage standards issued by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

1. ISO 13822:2010, Bases for design of structures — Assessment of existing structures

2. ISO 21127:2014, Information and documentation — A reference ontology for the interchange of cultural heritage information

3. ISO 5127:2017, Information and documentation — Foundation and vocabulary

4. ISO 21110:2019, Emergency preparedness and response

5. ISO/TR 19263-1:2017, Photography — Archiving systems — Part 1: Best practices for digital image capture of cultural heritage material

6. ISO 13810:2022, Tourism and related services — Visits to industrial, natural, cultural and historical sites — Requirements and recommendations

7. ISO/CD 5727, Accessibility and usability of the built environment — Accessibility of immovable cultural heritage — General criteria and methodology for interventions

Cultural heritage standards issued by the regional organizations for standardization (The European Committee for Standardization, CEN/TC346- Conservation of Cultural Heritage

1. EN 15757:2010, Conservation of Cultural Property - Specifications for temperature and relative humidity to limit climate-induced mechanical damage in organic hygroscopic materials

2. EN 15758:2010, Conservation of Cultural Property - Procedures and instruments for measuring temperatures of the air and the surfaces of objects

3. EN 15999-1:2014, Conservation of cultural heritage - Guidelines for design of showcases for exhibition and preservation of objects - Part 1: General requirements

4. EN 16648:2015, Conservation of cultural heritage - Transport methods

5. EN 16782:2016, Conservation of cultural heritage - Cleaning of porous inorganic materials - Laser cleaning techniques for cultural heritage

6.EN 15898:2019, Conservation of cultural heritage - Main general terms and definitions

7. EN 17429:2020, Conservation of cultural heritage - Procurement of conservation services and works

Cultural heritage standards issued by various countries

Argentina

(1) IRAM 30801, Management system for collections of cultural or natural objects. Requirements

Australia

(1) AS/NZS 2789:2016, Information and documentation - International library statistics

(2) AS ISO 21127:2017, Information and documentation - A reference ontology for the interchange of cultural heritage information

China

(1) GB/T 23862-2009, Specification of shipping packaging of cultural relics

(2) GB/T 30686-2014, Bronze and iron collection's disease and illustration

(3) GB/T 37909-2019, Technical specifications for thermoluminescence dating of the ancient ceramics

(4) WW/T 0037-2012, Technical requirements for conservation & restoration of polychrome paintings on historic buildings

(5) WW/T 0104-2020, Monitoring for museum environment-Monitoring terminal-Temperature and humidity

Egypt

(1) E.S. 4044 / 2006, Information and Documentation - Library performance indicators

(2) E.S.2604-1/2008, Information and documentation - International library statistics Part 1: Vocabularies

France

(1) NF X80-002, Conservation of cultural heritage - Recommendations for designing, building, selecting and using a showcase for the exhibition of cultural heritage

(2) NF X80-003, Conservation of cultural heritage - Test methods - Evaluation of the effect of a treatment on porous inorganic materials by the measurement of the groove width

(3) NF Z40-014, Information and documentation - Requirements and criteria for the selection of paper and boards for the storage of paper and parchment documents

Germany

(1) DIN 67700,Constructing libraries and archives - Requirements and recommendations for planning

(2) DIN /TR 67702,Information and documentation - Management of the environmental conditions for archive and library collections

(3) DIN SPEC 67701, Information and documentation - Collections management for archives and libraries

(4) VDI 3798 Blatt 1:2020, Material cultural heritage - Documentation, examination, and preservation including consideration of environmental impacts

(5) VdS 3511, Security Guidelines for Museums and Showrooms

India

(1) IS 14850: 2000, Fire Safety of Museums - Code of Practice

(2) IS 15791: 2007, Museum Plywood – Specification

Italy

(1) UNI 11769: 2020, Applications for the cultural heritage - Evaluation elements for archival arrangement and description applications

(2) UNI 10705: 2007, Cultural heritage - X-ray fluorescence analysis using portable systems

Russian Federation

(1) GOST R 56198-2014, Monitoring of technical state of the cultural heritage objects. Immovable monuments. General requirements

(2) GOST R 56891.1-2016, The preservation of cultural heritage. Terms and definitions. Part 1. General concepts, the composition and content of the scientific and project documentation

(3) GOST R 70005-2022, Preservation of cultural heritage objects from biological damage. Classification, methods of protection and elimination of consequences. General requirements

Saudi Arabia

(1) SASO-ISO-21127, Information and documentation - A reference ontology for the interchange of cultural heritage information

Spain

(1) UNE 41810:2017, Conservation of cultural heritage. Intervention criteria for stone materials

United Kingdom

A full list of over 47 published standards can be found here on British Standards Institute (BSI) most recently including:

(1) BS EN 18056:2025, Conservation of Cultural Heritage. Waterlogged Archaeological Wood

(2) BS EN 17891:2023, Conservation of Cultural Heritage. Desalination of porous inorganic materials by poultices.

United States

(1) NFPA 909-2021, Code for the Protection of Cultural Resource Properties – Museums, Libraries, and Places of Worship

(2) ANSI/IES RP-30-2017, Recommended Practice on Museum and Art Gallery Lighting And others.