SECTION A - ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

PROPOSAL TITLE

Sixteenth to eighteenth century pictographs from the record group “Maps, drawings and illustrations” of the National General Archives of Mexico

1. SUMMARY

The National General Archives of Mexico presents this proposal to UNESCO for registration in its Memory of the World Programme, of 334 documents with pictographs of the record group “Maps, documents, drawings and illustrations, dating from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries” during the Viceroyalty of New Spain. They contain mapping, genealogical and tax information, characterized by a "distinctly Indian style or Indian influence." They also include representations and pre-Hispanic glyphs, that is, images whose meaning is constructed through signs and may be ideographic and phonetic, based on expressions of traditional indigenous writing. The documents also contain pictorial elements and graphic evidence of enormous wealth, deep symbolism and meaning and continue being

1 We give special thanks to Luis Enseñat, Rosa María Fernández de Zamora, Miguel León Portilla, Diana Magaloni, Barbara E. Mundy, Dorothy Tanck, Marie Vander for their help and recommendations. The recent preventive maintenance of maps and digitization of images was possible thanks to the aid received from the Programa de Apoyo al Desarrollo de Archivos Iberoamericanos ADAI (Ibero-American Development File Support Program).

2 Miguel León Portilla argues that in the Indian codex or writings, the handwriting included "stylized" representations of many objects, that is, pictographs, ideograms and glyphs of phonetic type. Miguel León Portilla, Introducción al libro Cartografía de Tradición hispanoindígena. Mapas de mercedes de tierras, siglos XVI y XVII. México: UNAM/AGN, 2003. From the same author “La historia y los historiadores en el México antiguo”. Discurso de ingreso del Dr. Miguel León Portilla al Colegio Nacional, 1971 available in the web site: http://www.colegionacional.org.mx/SACSCMS/X Static/colegionacional/docs/espanol/leonportilla_discing.pdf

When the Nacional General Archives of Mexico Published el Catálogo de Ilustraciones it was specified that the documents with pictographic elements were the ones with glyphs from the pictographic mesoamerican tradition. See Catálogo de ilustraciones. AGN, Vol. 14, 1982, pag. 245.

3 Joaquín Galarza explains that the word glyph (from grec –glifé- recording), is the meaning, the figure or signo f the pictorical representation. Glyphs correspond to people, guns, badges, animals, plants or constructions. Also they representa places, objects, names, and actions. The pre-Hispanic glyphs could be pictografic (that Express only what the image represent); ideographic (idea representations) and phonetic (represent sounds and syllables) considering the Indian writing is syllabic, nor alphabetic. See Joaquín Galarza. Amatl, Amoxtli, el papel, el libro. Los códices mesoamericanos. Guía para la introducción al estudio del material pictórico indígena. México: Editorial Tava, 1990.
the subject matter of comprehensive study, not only by researchers and academic specialists on the subject, but also by the heirs of New Spain Indians and indigenous communities, who nowadays still access them in order to understand and renew their own past as well as defend their right to the land.

The proposed documents are mostly maps belonging to the Hispanic and indigenous traditions *(hispanoindígena)*\(^4\) that were found within the Colonial records in the subgroup "Lands" *(Tierras)*.\(^5\) *(see APPENDIX Video Land record subgroup)* The remaining documents are also part of the Colonial records and include maps and drawings related to the issuance of evidence of merit and noble lineage (through pedigrees), and those carried out by the Office of the Holy Inquisition. These last are mainly the pieces that retain pre-Hispanic features, considering that the Indians were exempted from the Inquisition trial and punishments from 1542 on.

The value of the documents proposed lies in being key pieces to understand the worldview of the various indigenous cultures that populated the American territory in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and left a legacy of multi-ethnicity in Mexico, still alive in the XXI century. In that sense they constitute the historical memory that survived European settlement in America.

These documents are currently physically sheltered within its deposit in the Graphic Information Center of the National General Archives of Mexico and are available for consultation in digital version through the Internet portal at http://www.agn.gob.mx/mapilu/index1.htm.

\(^4\) Term used in Montes de Oca Vega, Mercedes, Salvador Reyes et al., in the book *Cartografía de Tradición Hispánicoindígena. Mapas de mercedes de tierra, siglos XVI y XVII*. México: UNAM/AGN, 2003. "Mercedes" was the Spanish term used to refer to the territory that the Spanish crown granted individuals.

\(^5\) The linear measures of the records group are almost 3 linear kilometers (281 meters) and includes 3,855 bound volumes and 6 boxes with independent files.
2. NOMINATOR

Aurora Gomez-Galvarriato, Ph.D presents this proposal as Director General of the National General Archives of Mexico. The institutional e-mail where she can be reached is argena@segob.gob.mx. Her work email address is agomeza@segob.gob.mx, and her personal email is aurorag@mac.com

The staff member in charge of registering the current proposal is the Head of Research and Standardization of the National General Archives of Mexico, Yolia Tortolero Cervantes, Ph.D (ytortolero@segob.gob.mx).

The proposal was developed with help from a multidisciplinary team that includes Paola D’Rugama Villa, Head of the Department of Conservation and Restoration (pdrugama@segob.gob.mx), Beatriz Bastida Santoyo, Head of the Graphic Information Center (bsantoyo@segob.gob.mx), Guillermo Sierra, Head of Archive Certification and Digital Reproductions (gsierra@segob.gob.mx), Sergio Ortiz Camacho Head of Technical Support (siortiz@segob.gob.mx) and Anahi Juan Duran, Head of Systems Development (ajuan@segob.gob.mx)

3. IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1. Name and identification details of the items being nominated

Sixteenth to eighteenth century pictographs (1522-1797) from the record group “Maps, drawings and illustrations” of the National General Archives of Mexico

Address:

Archivo General de la Nación
Avenida Eduardo Molina s/n Esquina Eje 1 Norte Albañiles,
Delegación Venustiano Carranza,
3.2. Description

The documents are dated between the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (1522-1797). They include paintings, codex, maps, plans, drawings, and genealogies carried out in various formats: cotton paper, cloth, dyes and natural fibers (indigenous paper), made in color, sepia, black and white.

The record group “Maps, drawings, and illustrations” includes 5,050 documents, which contain a total of 334 pieces with pictorial elements (see APPENDIX 1: Index by reference) of the record group Maps, drawings, and illustrations with pictorial elements. For the present proposal we selected 105 digital images (see APPENDIX 5: Digitized documents). This sample was formed with pieces mostly located in the “Lands” subgroup.* Their common denominator are the features that show the presence of pre-Hispanic cultural remnances. To appreciate their value they were grouped into the following categories:

I. **Canvas**: generally made with materials and textile techniques with fiber and natural dyes (see APPENDIX_Video_Lienzo)

II. **Colonial Codex**: * made after the Spanish conquest with pre-Hispanic pictorial elements and techniques.

III. **Documents with pre-Hispanic glyphs from the Lands subgroup**: maps or plans with place names (toponymy) or drawings, ideograms and pictographs that are testimony of the presence of indigenous pre-Hispanic worldview, expressed in the ways they graphically depicted human settlements and nature. Many of these documents have an
additional practical importance, since, many of them still are used as legal evidence in court when resolving land disputes.6

IV. Maps oriented East-West or West-East: * In the indigenous world view, such as in other ancient traditions of universal mapping, the representation of space based on the sacred value of the sun’s movement (east-west or vice versa) was dominant. During the Spanish colonization, this feature was maintained among Indian tlacuilos (codex painters) and Spanish surveyors in charge of mapping during the Viceroyalty of New Spain. Even among these maps we can find Western criteria incorporated especially those regarding the degree of geometric precision and the tendency to take the cardinal points, north-south or south-north as their basis.

V. Genealogies: Even though there were many families of European and indigenous origin who kept their respective traditions of genealogy registry, the ones that are particularly interesting are those that include pictographic features of indigenous origin. The Moctezuma family genealogy is emphasized in a document dated in 1707, a work of art and part of Mexico's primal history. 4

VI. Tax Documents:* developed to record the personal services and tribute that the Indians offered and delivered within the jurisdiction of the parcels granted by the Spanish Crown.

VII. Inquisition documents: the Holy Office of the Inquisition operated in New Spain since the year 1522, formalized its inception in 1535 and instituted a court of the Inquisition of New Spain in 1539. In 1542 the “New Laws” established that Indians were no longer subject to the inquisitorial courts and would henceforth rely on the bishop concerned with morals and faith. Among the documents found in the graphic files of the Inquisition, we can find examples dated between 1539 and 1540 of

3. Since 1846 the Regulations of the National General Archives of Mexico established that the head of the institution would be authorized to certify the historical documents of the archive records, in order for applicants to resolve land disputes.
trials for polygamy and idolatry and these include features of indigenous origin.

3.2.1. Description and inventory, including catalogs, guides or other similar sources of information

The main description instruments include:

- Sánchez de Bonfil, Ma. Cristina (Coordinator). *Catálogo de Ilustraciones*, volumes 1 to 11. Mexico, Archivo General de la Nacion, 1979 to 1982. *(see APPENDIX (DVD) Catalogo de ilustraciones)* This catalog contains a registry per document that includes a photograph, title, year and classification. It also includes a thematic, chronological and topographical index. Volume 11 includes an index of documents with pictographic elements *(see APPENDIX 2: Index)*

- Archivo General de la Nación. Electronic guide of the record group Maps, Drawings and Illustrations (includes access to digital reproductions of the collection’s documents with a search engine by year, century, type of document, place name (toponymy), classification and word):
  
  [http://www.agn.gob.mx/mapilu/index1.htm](http://www.agn.gob.mx/mapilu/index1.htm)


3.2.2. Bibliographic and registration details
The following references constitute the basis for creating and structuring the records group “Maps, Plans and Illustrations”:


- Anónimo *Indice de planos y mapas del Archivo General de la Nación*, s/f (manuscrito).


About cartography and worldview in New Spain and its territory see:

- Ángel Julián García Zambrano, *Pasaje mítico y paisaje fundacional en las migraciones mesoamericanas* (Cuernavaca: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos, 2006).


### 3.2.2.1 Summary of its provenance

The record group “Maps, Drawings and Illustrations” of the National General Archives of Mexico was conformed in 1976 when a systematization project, which lasted six years, ended. The project consisted of doing an inventory, photographing and cataloging the existing artwork in the repository (from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century).

As a result of this effort we were able to identify 5,310 documentary pieces and graphical elements in approximately thirty thousand volumes of historical records (sixteenth to nineteenth century) from the National General Archives of Mexico. Most of them (2,091) were found in the Colonial subgroup Lands (*Tierras*) (see [APPENDIX Video_Land_subgroup](#)). Overall while identifying materials we were able to locate maps, drawings, illustrations, drawings, badges, manuscripts, paintings and canvases, that for conservation reasons were removed from their records,\(^7\) preserving the specific reference to its original location to allow cross-

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\(^7\) Others remain in the same file as they are the same size.
location and consultation of both sources. Among the most important documents that we identified, we can highlight codex, paintings and maps or drawings containing glyphs with pre-Columbian pictographs. Henceforth, all projects of archival arrangement and description undertaken by the National General Archives of Mexico follow the same policy to find artwork, so the record group is continually growing and currently includes 5,505 documents.

3.2.2.2. Analysis or assessment of physical state and condition

The facilities where the record group is located has no equipment to control the humidity and temperature. However, we keep a detailed record of daily changes in these parameters. Thus, we are aware that unfortunately our environmental conditions are not within the recommended international standards ISO 9706 (Information and documentation - Paper for Documents - Requirements for Permanence), which recommends a temperature of 18 with a variation no greater than 2 ° C and a relative humidity between 45% and 55%, with a range no greater than 5%. The humidity and temperature conditions exceed these ranges, and there are also considerable variations in both factors on the same day, which greatly affects the proper conservation of artworks. During the summer the temperature has reached 25°C and relative humidity has reached 60%. However, we are undertaking the building of new depository facilities that will comply with all international standards. We are expecting that these new facilities will be completed by the beginning of 2012.

The conservation status of the record group is adequate. We recently undertook a stabilization and digitization project. We carried out physical and chemical cleaning processes in select pieces that needed it. We placed reinforcements and completed a few rolling processes. All specimens were placed in a protective guard, depending on their size. Small format media were guarded with acid-free cardboard, with a protective polyethylene film (Mylar ®), attached with double sided acid free tape. For larger work or for pieces that contained information on the
back we placed a Tyvek® guard, a synthetic fiber made from polyethylene and a waterproofing membrane. Very large maps and drawings were placed on rigid polypropylene cases.

3.2.2.3. Visual documentation where appropriate: for example, photographs or documentary heritage video tape and location site. (See APPENDIXES)

3.2.2.4. Bibliography: indicate a maximum of three publications describing the documentary heritage in question


- Other relevant publications include:


  - Carrera Stampia, Manuel. “Relaciones geográficas de Nueva España, siglos XVI y XVIII” (en) http://www.ejournal.unam.mx/ehn/ehn02/EHN00212.pdf


- Elia Rocío Hernández Andón. “Los cuerpos de agua representados en códices y mapas prehispánicos y coloniales” presentado en el Simposio sobre el agua en el Instituto de Geofísica de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), 2007. Disponible en http://www.geofisica.unam.mx/posgrado/simposio_agua/presentaciones/Hern%E1ndez%20Roc%EDo.doc

3.2.2.5 Referees: where possible, list names, qualifications and contact details of up to three independent people or organizations

• Dr. Miguel Leon Portilla, Emeritus Professor. Institute of Historical Research, UNAM. El Colegio Nacional. Calle Luis González Obregón # 23. Centro Histórico. Delegación Cuauhtémoc Mexico City, 06010. Phone: (+52-55) 57-89-43-30, 57-02-17-79. Email: contacto@colegionacional.org.mx.

4. Justification for inclusion/ assessment against criteria

The Colonial records with native pictographs of the record group “Maps, Drawings, and Illustrations” of the National General Archives of Mexico provide graphic evidence of enormous value to understand the worldview of Pre-Hispanic cultures in America and the permanence of their legacy during and after the Spanish colonization. Their importance lies in being the main written evidence that carried on the tradition of painting, testimonial and narrative of pre-Columbian codex.

This set of documents shows that during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries the inhabitants of New Spain produced not only European maps of the regions conquered, but a new Indian-influenced style that some authors have called “mapping of hispanic indigenous tradition”. This new tradition included the expression of technical development for mapping and representation.

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of geographical landscape, and also pictorial elements that were "culturally rooted and therefore reflect a worldview."  

Most documents included in this proposal are part of the files and volumes of the Colonial subgroup of *Lands* (Tierras). They were the result of the role that the Spanish crown took in New Spain, based on the powers assigned by the Inter Caetera Bull, dated 1493 and issued by Pope Alexander VI that confirmed the Crown’s ownership and possession of the lands of the New World. This bull settled the formal rights of the kings of Spain in America and was used to support territorial heritage and the obligation to undertake the evangelization of the Indians. Thus, excluding those reserved for indigenous rights before the conquest, the rest of the vast lands could only go to individual or private domain by virtue of a royal grace or grant (*merced real*). In this regard, the Viceregal government instituted the different administrative authorities relating to land ownership and among its functions recognized as Indian villages the "places with high concentrations of indigenous people that in ancient times were part of a political-territorial entity called the *altepetl*, a Nahuatl word, which had a hereditary noble ruler."  

By recognizing these domains as Indian villages, the Spanish continued to some extent the political division that had existed before the conquest. Moreover, also "in the sixteenth century the Spanish who participated in the conquest were granted parcels as rewards. These concessions did not mean the ownership of village lands, but the right of the encomendero to receive tribute and personal service of encomienda Indians." Another variant of the allocation of land by the Viceregal government, "was the award of grants, which by law must be located in areas not occupied by the Indians and that did not affect the interests of others.”  

Because Indian manuscripts on this subject continued to be produced until the eighteenth century, the task to be accomplished with traditional pictorial material "mapping" or of "geographic" content is immense. The demand for

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9 Ibid  
10 Tanck de Estrada, Dorothy. Atlas de los Pueblos de Indios (en) Introducción.  
11 Ibid.  
12 Ibid.
such documents was great in every period of these three centuries (sixteenth to eighteenth) as the conflicts arising from the possession of the land, led to endless litigation in the courts of New Spain and in all cases required the submission "maps" and "plans.\textsuperscript{13}

The maps of the land records were produced by anonymous authors of Indian origin (the \textit{Tlacuilos} or codex makers), by the same scribe who wrote the file, or by officials (mayors, magistrates, etc.) and Spanish surveyors, engaged in drawing the maps and plans that allowed them to identify uninhabited areas, existing human settlements, populations, human resources and its geographical and natural characteristics. Most of them were produced as part of the functions to request applications for title to define people, parcels and gifts or regulate the allocation of land, however, they were also produced as part of litigation or agreements reached by owners, whether native or \textit{encomenderos} or owners of royal grants, to define precisely the boundaries of their territories. For this reason, most maps that were developed for this purpose (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries) are still available for consultation at the National General Archives of Mexico as evidence to settle ancestral disputes between populations, families and local and regional geopolitical areas.

4.1 \textbf{Authenticity}. We know with certainty the provenance of these documents because it is an integral part of the historical heritage of the National General Archives of Mexico since 1790 when it was founded. Additionally, the restoration workshop of the Archive has regularly put to the test documents to identify the type of inks used and carry out paper assessment to certify its historical originality.

4.2 \textbf{World significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability}

These documents, mostly created during the sixteenth century, constitute a rich and original culture that sheds some light on the process of reformulation of categories in response to such radical events as the Spanish conquest. Its originality reflects the enormous creative power of the Indian peoples against colonialism. They are the product of a unique mixture. In terms of their universal value, due to the fact that these documents allow to understand the eternal problems that arise through the process of colonization (or even globalization) when different cultures, ethnicities and worldviews come together and generate new ones. In countries that were colonizers or were colonized there is a constant need to resort to the past to understand the roots of their current problems related to the construction of their identity, land conflicts, social inequality, exploitation of natural resources, racial conflicts, or intolerance towards different ways of understanding the world, nature, religion or culture.

In short, the demise of these documents would mean the irreparable loss of the heritage and graphic vestiges of pre-Hispanic origin that survived after the sixteenth century and remained at least until the eighteenth century. They are the testimony of the dual heritage of the New Spain (and present Mexico) from the Mesoamerican and from the Judeo-Christian civilizations.

Another serious consequence of their destruction would be the lack of evidence to prove land rights for trials related to land disputes. The Mexican anthropologist Arturo Warman has pointed out that few archives around the world have, as the National General Archives of Mexico, the honor and responsibility to provide documentary evidence to help settle the agrarian struggle. In his reflection he adds:

*We often find in the Archive peasants from throughout the country, appealing their right to the land. They always come in groups, with the same attitude that they enter Church. They come to find the old papers of their people, seeking the historical proof of their possession to claim or defend their land.*
Their findings not only satisfy their curiosity about the past but are a powerful weapon in their struggle that is still valid today. They constitute legal proof that must be taken into account and respected by the agricultural authorities. It is a curious fate for old papers that are filed, especially those found in the Lands subgroup about four thousand volumes of papers. There are deeds and maps, records of purchase and sale transactions, especially legal documents which claim rights and offer evidence. Here we can find the titles, and the first documents granting or recognizing the property of the people and communities over a territory.  

In terms of their aesthetic, artistic and technical value their disappearance would be terrible because their testimonies, composition, reading, supports, colors and dyes are irreplaceable and unique elements, both for their timing, originality and authenticity as for the talent of their authors and the inability to rework the same meanings, cosmology, pigments, natural dyes and indigenous papers with fibers and handmade techniques.

4.3 Criteria of a) time, b) place, c) people d) subject and theme

Time. The documents with Colonial pictographs from the record group “Maps, drawings and illustrations” of the National General Archives of Mexico are, in terms of historical sequence, documents which were continuously developed over three centuries (sixteenth to eighteenth) (see APPENDIX 2: Index by date) and therefore kept alive the tradition and techniques of the ancient pre-Hispanic codex as Indian features survived the conquest and colonization to represent space, events, glyphs, place names or ancient techniques of dyes and natural fibers. In this sense, time transcended with them on a par with the worldview of indigenous culture, through maps that were drawn to meet the need of the Viceroyalty of New Spain to regulate land property.

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People. The maps of the subgroup of Lands, unlike other cartographic documents produced in New Spain used to solve specific issues related to military or maritime matters, or population censuses, have the virtue of being mostly the product of efforts aimed at the process of documenting land property, which was crucial at the time both for the native population and also for the conquerors and colonizers, but especially for their descendants and heirs, who to date continue to use this information and files to settle land disputes between individuals and communities.

Subject, topic and location. The complexity of agricultural disputes was an issue that preoccupied the Spanish crown in the sixteenth century because of the process of conquest and colonization in a populated area, specifically in the Mesoamerican region. The deeds of land, usually rich cartographic sources and testimonies, responded to the specific role of land distribution in New Spain. For this reason, the documents that were created to legalize land ownership were always subject to scrutiny. Their importance is certainly the graphic and testimonial value of plans and maps, but also must be construed in the context of the files that accompany them (see APPENDIX_Video_Land_subgroup) and offer testimony of the whole sequence of procedure or case and the facts and arguments that those involved gave for requesting to regularize land or property.

Form and style. Its important to highlight many of the aesthetic and artistic features of the documents with Indian pictographs. Some of them have been studied by specialists in ancient art techniques attending to natural fibers, dyes or watercolors to represent pieces of art full of color and creativity. Aside from the richness of their glyphs as fundamental elements of visual language, both symbolic and phonetic that characterized Indian origin languages, including Nahuatl, they allow a deep understanding of pre-Hispanic cultures. Their heritage and evolution through pictorial tradition were lost over time, together with traditional techniques used to make these documents such as pigments, media and fibers. An example

15 Alessandra Russo does an interesting artistic analysis of many maps located in the National General Archive of Mexico, Op. Cit.
of the evolution of these representations is the way they used to indicate paths. In pre-Hispanic times the typical feature is the presence of footprints, however, this tradition during the colonial period also came to include mule tracks to mark the passage of beasts of burden on the roads (see the glyph feet with horseshoe Map number 1749 of the digital images Appendix or see APPENDIX in the Executive Presentation of this proposal).

4.4 Rarity, integrity, threat and management

Rarity. According to experts, the paintings, maps or drawings of the colonial era that include features of pre-Hispanic origin, contain complex expressions of traditional Indian painting. From the perspective of sixteenth century Western thought these are doubtless rare maps drawn in the east - west direction based on the movement of the sun rather than the north - south direction based on the axis of the earth’s rotation. Maps in particular are a clear example of the differences between the worldview of indigenous and European cultures and the ways in which the former actively assimilated foreign concepts to create a new tradition.

Considering that only during a short period before 1542 the Indians were subject to the inquisitorial courts, the documents found in the graphic files of the Inquisition, (dated from 1539 to 1540) show few and rare examples of trials for polygamy and idolatry which include features of indigenous origin.

Moreover, the rarity of the documents that are hereby postulated to become part of the Memory of the World Programme also lies in the lack of exact proportion of the objects represented and the absence of measuring geometric techniques used to reconstruct urban and rural areas. Some authors note that the pictographs of indigenous origin comprising colonial maps can be read from different angles, sides and perspectives observed both from a horizontal and a vertical plane, in a top-down and circular view and move at the same time as the order and sense of the story indicates the reader the beginning, sequences and end of the tales as is
the case. Hence it is essential to always appreciate them in close connection with the information content of their records and the case or issue that led to its creation. In these maps and plans the dimensions of the figures tend to be proportional to other elements, although some exceed their size. This may respond to the logic of attaching more importance to figures, depending on their size. Such recourse has been considered a pre-Hispanic style characteristic. The elements that become outstanding due to their size include hills, water, place names and buildings.

In the same vein, many Colonial maps with indigenous features show differences amongst themselves in the proportion and the measures of their elements. For example a house can be drawn larger than a mountain or a church. A river may encompass almost the entire box or the various houses and hills of the same map can be drawn in different positions as if they had been turned and could be read at angles of 90, 180, 270 or 360 degrees. It is also common to find maps without the location of the cardinal points because they may have been commissioned to strengthen an argument, as judicial or discourse evidence or as part of land registration, to describe the environment, construction and natural resources or property of a population more than to identify the exact location and geometry of a property in the manner of Spanish cartography.

**Integrity.** Pictographic manuscripts share among themselves a thematic unity and also maintain a physical integrity in that they add a significant number of documentary pieces that together are found within the same archive deposit to ensure the preservation of its supports and avoid bending, breaking and improper handling. Our record group is worth comparing with other similar collections of colonial maps and plans of the same type sheltered in collections located abroad,

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which unfortunately were separated from their original records and with this disintegration the context and wealth in which the graphic documentary was created was lost completely. That is why the pieces from the National General Archives of Mexico are of exceptional value and are integral to the files and volumes that make up the record group, even though for physical and conservation reasons, each individual document is sheltered in a chart-table appropriate to their size, which allows better control for placement and management (see APPENDIX_Video_map_deposit). This also encourages their preservation as they are prepared with inks and dyes that require specific care due to the increased susceptibility of these materials.

**Threat:** Although most works are sheltered in chart-tables, the institution lacks an ad-hoc space built expressly to house the map deposit and does not have metal size plans made to fit the exact size of each of the documents comprising the record group. To date we have attempted to furnish space and furniture to suit their sizes and supports, however some of the maps and drawings found in the files, specifically those measuring more than 2 or 3 meters and those with wide-format materials have lacked appropriate spaces for safekeeping. Today even these large materials remain over each other in a table 5 meters long, located at the center of the archive deposit (APPENDIX_Video_map_deposit), within the special cases made from acid free materials including polypropylene plates used as backing to provide rigidity to the base. For this reason and due to their broad dimensions, these materials have not been scanned.

**Management.** The subgroup “Maps, Drawings, Illustrations” is administered by the Graphic Information Center under the Head of the Central Historical Archives of the National General Archives of Mexico. Even though we have insufficient inputs and financial resources for the proper management and preservation of these documents, we are carrying an encompassing reform that includes the building of new facilities and the implementation of a computer program to manage the records, in order to guarantee their permanent conservation and a better access to
them. The institution is also undertaking a program of digitization in order to facilitate their access to a wider audience through the internet outreach programs.

5. Legal information

a) Ownership. The documents that comprise this proposal were generated over the existence of the Viceroyalty of New Spain and have since become part of the Secretariat of the Vice Regency House, founded in 1790, and in 1823 became the General and Public Archive, immediate predecessor of the National General Archives of Mexico. For this reason they are considered public property as provided in Article Sixth, Section XVIII of the General Law of National Assets in force today, which states:

They are subject to the regime of Federal Public domain furniture that by their nature are not usually replaceable, such as documents and office records, manuscripts, incunabula, editions, books, documents, periodicals, maps, plans, brochures and property, ethnological and paleontological pieces, type specimens of flora and fauna, scientific and technical libraries, films, photographic archives, magnetic or computer tapes and other items that contain images and sound, and are part of artistic or historical museums.\(^2\)

b) Accessibility

Since 1979 and 1982, when the catalog of illustrations that includes maps and plans, was published, it provided access to consult the records. The physical handling of original documents decreased since the catalog included a photo of each piece signed, thus preventing the deterioration caused by physical handling of the pieces. Subsequently, access and review of original documents was regulated by controlled authorization, so that researchers and scholars interested

\(^{2}\) Ley General de Bienes Nacionales, published in the Official Gazette (Diario Oficial) on 31 August 2007.
in studying them had to be certified by a letter or support from their academic institutions. Another important factor used to regulate access to materials includes preventive conservation measures that the institution implemented, so that the approval of access also depended on a prior assessment of the conservation status of the documents in order to allow consultation. Finally, beginning in 2005, it was thanks to the digitalization of the documents comprising the proposal that access was guaranteed, especially when successful dissemination of the institution’s website included digital images of the documents, and a descriptive register in the Archive’s general guide.

Today the challenge is to complete the process of digitization of materials to facilitate access and completely avoid manipulation of the original documents to prevent irreversible damage, given the fragility of the supports and the dyes with which they are made.

c) Copyright Status

Given that the documents in question are public property, the National General Archives of Mexico have vested property rights and granting licensure to avoid profiting from its exploitation. For this reason, users and researchers seeking to use reproductions of archival documents for editorial purposes are required to sign a commitment letter to specify which images they will use and how they will use them as well as a commitment to credit the institution.

d) Responsible administration. The institution legally responsible for safeguarding the documentary heritage is the Ministry of the Interior of Mexico in adherence to Article 48, Section III of its Rules of Procedure that authorizes the National General Archives of Mexico to meet the following attribution:

Guard, organize, preserve and describe the documents and files that make up their collections, facilitating and promoting public consultation and public use. Access to consultation documents that have been transferred to this
decentralized administrative body, may occur at any time, in cases provided
the generating institution. Otherwise, the search may be completed in the
time and manner stipulated by the Federal Law of Transparency and Access
to Public Government Information and other applicable provisions.

e) Other factors: are there other issues worth mentioning

The Ministry of the Interior through the National General Archives of Mexico is the
institution legally responsible for the safeguarding of documentary heritage.

6. Management Plan Summary

The record group “Maps, Drawings and Illustrations” of the National General
Archives of Mexico was established in 1976 with the aim of being housed in the
Graphic Information Center (GIC), which is one of the departments available to the
Directorate of the National General Archives of Mexico (NGAM). This department
was established in the early seventies and from the outset established a
management plan aimed at preserving and disseminating graphic documents that
are part of the collections of the Fond and that were included in the volumes and
historical records of the institution or those that were sold or donated by
individuals. The GIC has three areas: photographic collections, Map deposit and
genealogy.

In particular, the map collection currently protects about 8,000 documents that
include maps, plans and illustrations from the sixteenth century to the twentieth
century, which are located on different mediums such as paper, fabric, leather and
indigenous paper. It also has a vast mapping collection.

Because graphic material is widely consulted by researchers and the public that
visit the Archive, the department in a permanent fashion carries out activities
oriented towards shelter, preventive conservation, reproduction and dissemination
of the documents. Although there is no written management plan drawn up, the department has a set of guidelines, manuals and work plans reviewed and updated on a regular basis to define action policies, aimed on the hand at the dissemination of the archive record and on the other, at implementing organization, description, digitization and preventive maintenance (including emergency planning and disaster forecast) projects. Among them, its main policy is to avoid manipulation of the originals to prevent spoilage. For this reason, since the publication in 1982 of the catalog of illustrations as the main reference tool for accessing information and references on the collection of maps and plans, in addition to technical assistance to researchers, the department conducts ongoing programs and projects in the archive record based on the following activities:

1. Develop and periodically update the diagnosis of the Fond and of each individual document

2. Identify damaged materials and request the restoration workshop that the file be cleaned and restored with acid-free materials.

3. Conduct a continuing program of digitization to promote protection of the documents, prevent manipulation and ensure its dissemination.

4. Carry out continuous archival activities to identify, do an inventory, produce documentary piece descriptive cards and top-level cases to ensure its preservation and capture database update the archive record general guide.

Annually the budget allocated to this department is very limited, so that the institution on a permanent basis carries out Fundraising activities and external support to channel these resources. It is worth noting that between the years 2005 and 2009 the Archive secured 51,000 Euros from the Programa de Apoyo al Desarrollo de Archivos Iberoamericanos (Ibero-American Development File Support Program) which were exercised through the Foundation of the National
General Archive of Mexico, A.C. to restore, digitize and disseminate on the Internet 2,270 graphic documents from the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries from the Map deposit. This in particular has been one of the most ambitious and greater scope projects and one of the largest budgets executed since the establishment of the Graphic Information Center in 1976.

7. Consultation with the Mexican Committee of the Memory of the World Programme

This proposal was submitted to the Mexican Committee of the Memory of the World Programme and the authors carefully addressed all of their substantive and editorial suggestions.

SECTION B - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

8. Assessment of risk

- Current political situation. These factors do not constitute so far, risks to the protection and safeguarding of the documentary heritage detailed in this proposal.

- Environmental conditions inside and outside the building. The National General Archives of Mexico is undertaking the refurbishment of its facilities and the construction of a new building with adherence to international standards for conservation and prevention of documentation. Derived from the project to be developed in three phases that began in 2009 and will conclude in 2012 we have taken into account the technical requirements to build the archive record which will house the Map deposit and are also taking measures relating to the regulation of temperature and moisture conditions within collections, and with the proper functioning of drainage to prevent flooding. We are also in the process of developing sustainable projects to make efficient use of water and energy.
• Insufficient preservation budget. With the budget assigned to the National General Archives of Mexico we are working to improve the conditions of the archive record, in order to have an efficient system for keeping dehumidification moisture at a rate between 45 and 55% or a cooling system to maintain the temperature at 18°C ± 2°C. We aim to keep a stable environment, without significant changes that will prevent the deterioration and aging of the collection.

• Material conditions of the heritage documents. All documents submitted in this proposal include at least one first level case, those located outside of the chart-table have a second level case. All materials used for the inside cases are made with acid-free materials of archival quality to avoid being a source of damage or acidity. The only adhesive used is acid-free double-sided tape and this was placed on the secondary support side and the Maylar® cover.

• The extent and nature of the access conditions. Today, because the documents included in this proposal are already scanned, the originals are used only for exceptional cases as reproductions available in digital version can be provided.

9. Assessment of preservation

9.1 Details about the context of preservation of the proposed documentary heritage.

Currently the National General Archives of Mexico has a Department of Conservation staffed with qualified personnel, with three staff members holding a bachelor’s degree in conservation and restoration work with heritage value, including two of them specializing in photography. The Department also includes
ten members with technical training. The work is always done in teams under the coordination and supervision of senior personnel.

The department’s priority is the preservation and conservation, as well as minimal intervention and respect for the original work and historicity. Projects are undertaken to manage resources and donations, as well as diagnostics, staff training and updating the conservation and restoration processes.