

Handbook on the Office of Special Books

Books Desk

Bureau of Publishing

SOE MediaCorp

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Preface

This Handbook provides guidance on the establishment, organization, and operations of the Office of Special Books within the Books Desk of the Bureau of Publishing, SOE MediaCorp. It codifies the mandate, structure, procedures, and standards by which the office conducts its work, and it serves as the authoritative reference for officers, support staff, and the parent bodies to which the office reports.

The Handbook is addressed principally to the officers and support staff of the Office of Special Books, who are expected to be familiar with its provisions and to conduct their work in accordance with them. It is also addressed to the Director of Books Desk, the Bureau of Publishing, and the senior leadership of SOE MediaCorp, as the framework against which the office's performance is assessed and its resource requirements are evaluated. External readers — counterpart institutions, prospective partners, and scholars of publishing practice — may also find the document of use.

The Handbook is organized in twelve chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 establish the office's mandate and organizational structure. Chapters 3 and 4 set out the editorial and production standards that govern the office's work. Chapters 5 through 8 describe the catalog framework, edition structure, regional and linguistic coverage, and distribution arrangements. Chapter 9 governs officer appointments. Chapters 10 and 11 address financial administration and records management. Chapter 12 provides for periodic review and the revision of this document.

The Handbook is maintained under the authority of the Director of Books Desk. It is reviewed every five years and may be amended between reviews when circumstances require. Amendments are issued under the same authority as the Handbook itself and take effect on the date specified in the amending instrument.

Chapter 1 — Establishment and Mandate

1.1 Establishment

The Office of Special Books is established within the Books Desk of the Bureau of Publishing, SOE MediaCorp, as the office responsible for the publication of cultural, scholarly, and diplomatic editions that lie outside the ordinary trade and educational publishing programs of the Books Desk. The office operates alongside the Office of Government Books and the Office of Educational Books, each of which serves a distinct purpose within the Books Desk's broader portfolio. The Office of Special Books is distinguished from the other two offices by its focus on works whose value is cultural and representational rather than instrumental or instructional.

The office is established as a permanent operational unit. Its establishment is recorded in the Bureau of Publishing's organizational instrument and is reflected in the annual budget of SOE MediaCorp. The office's complement, as set out in Chapter 2 of this Handbook, is small by comparison with the other offices of the Books Desk, reflecting the specialized and selective nature of its work. The office is not configured for high-volume output; it is configured for the production of a limited number of titles each year, each prepared to a standard appropriate to its cultural and diplomatic purpose.

The office reports to the Director of Books Desk, who in turn reports to the head of the Bureau of Publishing. The office's work is conducted within the policies and standards of SOE MediaCorp and is subject to the financial, administrative, and audit arrangements that apply across the corporation. Where the office's work engages diplomatic or protocol considerations, it coordinates with the relevant authorities through the Director of Books Desk.

1.2 Mandate

The mandate of the Office of Special Books is to produce publications that contribute to the cultural standing of the state and to the conduct of cultural diplomacy. The office publishes works of literary, historical, philosophical, and artistic significance, with particular attention to works that express or illuminate the cultural traditions of the regions within the office's coverage. Its publications are intended to serve as cultural artifacts of lasting value, suitable for retention in private and institutional libraries and for presentation as diplomatic gifts.

The office's mandate is distinct from that of the Office of Government Books, which produces official documents, white papers, and ceremonial publications for the instrumental use of the state, and from the Office of Educational Books, which produces textbooks and instructional materials for the educational system. The Office of Special Books does not produce works that are means to some other end; it produces works that are themselves the end. This distinction is fundamental to the office's identity and is reflected in every aspect of its operations, from title selection to manufacturing standards.

The mandate includes a stewardship function. The office is responsible for ensuring that the works it publishes are prepared in forms that will endure, that their attribution and sourcing are

accurate, and that their scholarly apparatus supports their use by future readers. The office's publications are intended to remain in print for extended periods and to serve as reference points for subsequent scholarship and cultural engagement. This stewardship function is given concrete expression in the editorial principles set out in Chapter 3 and in the records and archive provisions of Chapter 11.

1.3 Functions

The office discharges its mandate through five principal functions. The first is curatorial: the selection of works, authors, and themes for publication, and the determination of the editorial shape of each title. The second is editorial: the preparation of texts, including the verification of attribution, the preparation of translations, and the writing of commentary and apparatus. The third is design and manufacturing: the typesetting, binding, and physical production of each edition to the standard appropriate to its purpose. The fourth is distribution: the placement of published works with diplomatic, institutional, retail, and subscription channels. The fifth is representational: the conduct of the office's external cultural relationships, including engagement with scholars, counterpart institutions, and the cultural public.

These functions are not sequential stages in a production pipeline; they are concurrent and continuous responsibilities of the office. Curatorial work proceeds continuously, with titles entering the office's program at different stages of development. Editorial work on multiple titles proceeds in parallel. Design and manufacturing arrangements are maintained on a standing basis with qualified suppliers. Distribution and representational work are ongoing and are not tied to the publication cycle of individual titles. The organizational structure set out in Chapter 2 reflects this functional organization.

The representational function merits particular emphasis. The office's officers are expected to maintain external cultural profiles — through their own scholarly, literary, or artistic work, through participation in cultural institutions, and through engagement with the cultural public. This external activity is not a diversion from the office's work; it is a component of it. The cultural standing of the office's officers contributes directly to the cultural standing of the office's publications, and the office's publications in turn contribute to the cultural standing of the officers. This reciprocal relationship is recognized in the appointment provisions of Chapter 9 and in the conduct standards that govern officers' external activities.

1.4 Strategic Horizon

The office conducts its work against a strategic horizon of twenty years. Editorial decisions — the selection of titles, the choice of entries within titles, the framing of commentary, the commissioning of translations — are made on the basis of whether they will be defensible two decades after publication. This horizon is longer than that applied to ordinary trade publishing and reflects the office's stewardship function. A work published for short-term relevance will be superseded; a work published for long-term relevance may enter the canon.

The twenty-year horizon is a principle of editorial discipline, not a forecasting exercise. It does not require the office to predict the cultural judgments of a future generation; it requires the office to make editorial decisions that are not contingent on the immediate moment. A title selected because it serves a current political line is unlikely to remain defensible; a title selected because it occupies a permanent place in the cultural tradition is more likely to do so. The horizon is applied as a test of editorial intention rather than as a prediction of reception.

The horizon has implications for the office's operational tempo. A publishing program oriented to a twenty-year horizon cannot be evaluated on a quarterly or annual basis alone. The office's performance is assessed through the periodic review arrangements set out in Chapter 12, which provide for both annual operational review and longer-term strategic review. The financial administration provisions of Chapter 10 are similarly designed to accommodate the office's longer horizon, with budget structures that distinguish operating expenditure from the capital investment in titles whose returns accrue over extended periods.

Chapter 2 — Organizational Structure

2.1 Officer Complement

The Office of Special Books is staffed by a small complement of officers, in accordance with the principle that the office's work depends on senior cultural judgment rather than on volume of personnel. The complement consists of one Manager (Special Books), who serves as the head of the office, and between five and eight Officers (Cultural), who carry the principal editorial and representational responsibilities. The complement is supported by between one and three Clerks or Specialists, who provide production, administrative, and technical support.

The Manager (Special Books) is appointed at the Manager rank within the operational structure of the Table of Ranks and reports to the Director of Books Desk. The Manager holds overall responsibility for the conduct of the office's work, for the integrity of its editorial standards, and for its external relationships. The Manager chairs the office's editorial review meetings, signs off on the publication of each title, and represents the office in its dealings with the parent bodies and with external counterpart institutions.

Officers (Cultural) are appointed at the Officer rank and may hold the Leading Officer grade as their tenure and responsibilities develop. Each Officer is assigned a portfolio — typically defined by region, language, or thematic area — within which they exercise primary editorial responsibility. The portfolio assignments are determined by the Manager and are reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain aligned with the office's program. Officers are expected to maintain external cultural profiles appropriate to their portfolios, as set out in Chapter 9.

Clerks and Specialists provide the production, administrative, and technical support that the office requires. Their work includes the operation of the office's production systems, the maintenance of its records, the coordination of its relationships with external suppliers, and the execution of the manufacturing and distribution arrangements described in Chapters 4 and 8. The number of support staff is kept small, consistent with the office's overall complement, and their work is organized to maximize the time available to officers for editorial and representational duties.

2.2 Officer Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Officers (Cultural) are organized around four categories of work. The first is editorial judgment: the review of curatorial candidates, the disposition of translation drafts, the resolution of contested attributions, and the approval of commentary. Officers are expected to exercise independent judgment within their portfolios and to bring contested questions to the office's editorial review meetings for collective disposition. The principle that officers dispose while support systems propose is fundamental; an office in which officers routinely approve work without substantive review is one in which the editorial function has failed.

The second category is external representation. Officers represent the office at cultural events, scholarly gatherings, and institutional meetings. They maintain relationships with scholars, translators, and counterpart institutions within their portfolios. They participate in the broader

cultural life of the regions and languages for which they are responsible, attending exhibitions, lectures, and conferences as appropriate. This external activity is recognized as part of the officer's responsibilities rather than as a competing demand on their time.

The third category is strategic commissioning. Officers identify candidates for publication, develop proposals for the office's program, and contribute to the shaping of the office's catalog as set out in Chapter 5. The office's program is not determined solely by the Manager; it is the product of collective deliberation among the officers, with each officer bringing forward candidates from within their portfolio. The fourth category is scholarly engagement: officers contribute to the scholarly apparatus of the office's publications, write introductions and notes where appropriate, and engage with the scholarly reception of the office's work.

The distribution of an officer's time across these four categories varies with the stage of the publication cycle and the character of the portfolio. An officer whose portfolio is in active production may devote more time to editorial judgment; an officer whose portfolio is in development may devote more time to strategic commissioning. The Manager is responsible for ensuring that the distribution of work across the office is balanced and that each officer's time is used to best effect.

2.3 Technical and Production Support

The office's technical and production support is organized to enable the work of the officers rather than to substitute for it. The support function operates the office's production systems, which include the curatorial and drafting tools used in the preparation of titles, the design and typesetting systems used in their visual realization, and the records and document management systems used in their administration. The support function also coordinates the office's relationships with external suppliers — printers, binders, typesetters, and distributors — and ensures that the office's standards are observed in the work of those suppliers.

The production support function is configured to handle the volume of work generated by the office's publication program. The office's annual output, as set out in Chapter 5, is modest by the standards of trade publishing, and the support function is sized accordingly. The intention is not to maximize throughput but to ensure that the support function is sufficient to enable the officers' work without requiring officers to perform routine production tasks. The boundary between officer work and support work is maintained deliberately; officers do not perform typesetting, and support staff do not exercise editorial judgment.

Specialist support is engaged from outside the office's permanent complement where the office's work requires expertise that is not available in-house. This includes external translators, designers, illustrators, and scholarly consultants. The engagement of external specialists is governed by the procurement and contract arrangements of SOE MediaCorp and is coordinated by the support function under the direction of the relevant officer. External specialists are bound by the same editorial and quality standards as the office's own staff, and their work is subject to the same review processes.

2.4 Reporting Relationships

The Office of Special Books reports to the Director of Books Desk. The Manager (Special Books) is accountable to the Director for the conduct of the office's work, for the observance of its editorial and financial standards, and for the achievement of its program. The Manager reports to the Director on a regular basis, provides such information as the Director requires for the oversight of the office, and brings to the Director's attention any matter that requires the Director's decision or the decision of higher authority within the Bureau of Publishing or SOE MediaCorp.

Within the office, the reporting relationships are direct and short. Officers report to the Manager; support staff report to the Manager through a senior officer or directly as the Manager determines. The office's small complement and its concentration of senior responsibility mean that the chain of command is correspondingly compressed. The Manager is expected to maintain direct working relationships with all officers and to be familiar with the substance of the work underway in each portfolio.

Where the office's work engages the responsibilities of other offices within the Books Desk or other parts of SOE MediaCorp, the Manager coordinates through the Director of Books Desk. This includes coordination with the Office of Government Books on matters of common editorial concern, with the Bureau of Publishing's financial and administrative functions on matters of common process, and with other bureaus of SOE MediaCorp where the office's work has implications for their activities. The office does not maintain direct operational relationships with other bureaus; such relationships are conducted through the Director of Books Desk and the Bureau of Publishing.

Chapter 3 — Editorial Principles

3.1 Selection Criteria

The selection of titles for the office's program is governed by five criteria, applied jointly. The first is literary and cultural merit: the work must possess a quality of expression, thought, or aesthetic significance that warrants its preservation and presentation in the form the office produces. The second is canonicity: the work must occupy, or be capable of occupying, a recognized place in the cultural tradition to which it belongs. The third is translatability: the work must be capable of rendering in languages other than its original without such loss of meaning as would defeat the purpose of publication.

The fourth criterion is diplomatic relevance: the work must serve, or be capable of serving, the cultural and representational purposes for which the office is established. This criterion is applied with discretion; not every title must serve an immediate diplomatic purpose, but the program as a whole must be defensible in terms of the office's mandate. The fifth criterion is fit with the strategic horizon: the work must be capable of remaining defensible over the twenty-year horizon set out in Chapter 1. A work selected for its immediate relevance alone is unlikely to meet this criterion; a work selected for its enduring significance is more likely to do so.

These criteria are applied by the office's editorial review process, as set out in section 3.2 below. They are not applied mechanically; they are weighed together in the judgment of the officers and the Manager. A work that is strong on one criterion and weak on others may be selected if the office judges that its strengths compensate for its weaknesses. A work that is moderately strong on all criteria may be preferred over a work that is exceptional on one criterion alone. The criteria are tools of judgment, not substitutes for it.

3.2 Editorial Review

Every title proposed for the office's program is subject to editorial review before it is accepted into the program and at successive stages of its development. Editorial review is conducted by the officers of the office, meeting collectively under the chairmanship of the Manager. The review process is documented in the office's editorial records, as set out in Chapter 11, and the disposition of each review is recorded in the office's decision log.

Editorial review proceeds in stages. The first stage is the consideration of a curatorial proposal, prepared by the officer whose portfolio the proposal falls within. The proposal sets out the work, its sources, the case for its publication, and the proposed editorial shape of the title. If the proposal is accepted, the title enters the office's development program and is assigned to the proposing officer for further work. The second stage is the review of the developed editorial content, including the selection of entries, the preparation of translations, and the drafting of commentary. The third stage is the final review of the title before its approval for manufacture.

The discipline of editorial review requires that officers be willing to reject, refine, or override work that does not meet the office's standards. This includes work prepared by their fellow officers,

work prepared by the office's support systems, and work prepared by external contributors. The principle of editorial review is that no work is published without the affirmative approval of the office, given through the collective review process. An office in which review is perfunctory has failed in its editorial function, regardless of the quality of the individual contributions.

3.3 Attribution and Verification

The attribution of every text published by the office is verified against canonical source materials before publication. The office does not publish attributions that cannot be sourced to a recognized edition, manuscript, or scholarly authority. Where attribution is uncertain, the uncertainty is acknowledged in the published apparatus rather than resolved by editorial preference. The fabrication or unacknowledged approximation of attributions is a serious failure of editorial standards and is treated as such.

Verification is conducted by the officer responsible for the title, with the assistance of the office's support systems and, where necessary, external scholarly consultants. The verification process is documented in the editorial records, including the sources consulted, the basis for the attribution, and any residual uncertainty. The documentation is sufficient to allow the verification to be re-examined by a subsequent reader or reviewer, and it is retained as part of the office's permanent archive.

The office's publications include a full scholarly apparatus that sets out the sources of every text. This includes the specific edition or manuscript from which the text is drawn, the author and date of the original composition, and any relevant information about the transmission of the text. The apparatus is prepared to a standard that permits scholarly use of the publication and that supports the office's stewardship function. The specific requirements for the apparatus are set out in section 3.5 below.

3.4 Translation Policy

Translation is treated as a co-equal literary act within the office's publications. The English translation of a Chinese poem, or the Chinese translation of a Russian prose extract, is not a courtesy to the reader who lacks the original language; it is a literary work in its own right, prepared to a standard that permits it to be read as such. The office's translations are prepared by translators of demonstrated competence in both the source and target languages, and they are subject to editorial review on the same basis as the original-language texts.

The office publishes in multiple languages, as set out in Chapters 6 and 7. The languages of publication for each title are determined at the editorial review stage, and the translations are prepared in parallel where practicable or in sequence where the office's capacity requires. The translations of a single title into different languages are prepared to the same standard and are reviewed to ensure consistency of interpretation, while permitting each translation to find its own voice in the target language.

Translators are acknowledged in the published apparatus of each title. Where the translation is the work of the office's officers or support staff, the acknowledgment records the translator's name

and position. Where the translation is the work of an external translator, the acknowledgment records the translator's name and the terms of the engagement. The office does not publish anonymous or pseudonymous translations; the translator's name is part of the publication's scholarly record.

3.5 Scholarly Apparatus

Every title published by the office includes a scholarly apparatus appropriate to its character. The apparatus is not an optional addition; it is a required component of the publication, and its absence is a disqualifying defect. The apparatus signals the seriousness of the publication and supports its use by scholars, librarians, and subsequent readers. The specific composition of the apparatus varies with the title but always includes the elements set out in this section.

The required elements are: a bibliographic note identifying the source editions or manuscripts from which the texts are drawn; source notes for each entry, identifying the specific location of the text within the source; a list of references consulted in the preparation of the commentary; and an index, arranged by author, source, and theme. Where the title includes translation, the apparatus includes a translator's note describing the principles followed in the translation. Where the title is part of a series, the apparatus includes a series note placing the title within the series.

Additional apparatus may be included where the character of the title warrants it. This may include an introduction placing the work in its historical and cultural context, a bibliographic essay surveying the relevant scholarship, a glossary of terms, and a chronology. The decision to include additional apparatus is made at the editorial review stage, on the recommendation of the responsible officer. The apparatus is prepared to the same editorial and verification standards as the main text, and it is subject to the same review process.

Chapter 4 — Production Methodology

4.1 Production Pipeline

The production of each title follows a pipeline that proceeds from commission through curation, drafting, editorial review, design, manufacturing, and distribution. The pipeline is not strictly linear; stages overlap, and work on successive stages may proceed in parallel. The pipeline is documented in the office's production records, and the progress of each title through the pipeline is tracked by the support function under the direction of the responsible officer.

The commission stage establishes the title, its editorial shape, and the officer responsible for it. The curation stage assembles the candidate content of the title — the texts to be included, the sources from which they are drawn, the entries or sections into which they are organized. The drafting stage prepares the translations, commentary, and apparatus. The editorial review stage, described in Chapter 3, examines and disposes of the work of the preceding stages. The design stage prepares the visual realization of the title, as set out in section 4.3 below. The manufacturing stage produces the physical books, as set out in section 4.4. The distribution stage places the books with the channels described in Chapter 8.

The duration of the pipeline varies with the complexity of the title. A title drawn from a single source in a single language, with a small number of entries, may complete the pipeline in twelve to eighteen months. A title drawn from multiple sources in multiple languages, with extensive apparatus and parallel translation, may require three years or more. The office's program is planned to accommodate this variation, and the Manager is responsible for ensuring that the pipeline is balanced and that the office's annual output is sustainable.

4.2 Curation and Drafting

The curation and drafting stages are conducted by the responsible officer, with the assistance of the office's production support systems and external contributors as required. The curation stage assembles the candidate content of the title from the relevant sources, applying the selection criteria set out in section 3.1. The output of the curation stage is a complete list of proposed entries, with sources identified and any contested selections flagged for editorial review.

The drafting stage prepares the editorial content of the title: the translations, where translation is required; the commentary that accompanies each entry; and the scholarly apparatus described in section 3.5. The drafting stage is the most time-intensive stage of the pipeline, and its conduct is the principal substantive work of the responsible officer. Drafting is conducted with the assistance of the office's production systems, which prepare initial drafts of translations and apparatus for the officer's review and refinement.

The officer's role in the drafting stage is editorial, not clerical. The officer reviews the work of the production systems, refines it, rejects what is unsatisfactory, and approves what is satisfactory. The officer is responsible for the editorial quality of the drafted content, regardless of the means by which the initial drafts were prepared. The principle that officers dispose while support systems

propose, set out in Chapter 2, applies throughout the drafting stage. The output of the drafting stage is a complete editorial manuscript, ready for editorial review.

4.3 Design and Typesetting

The design and typesetting of the office's publications follow a house style that is maintained by the office and applied consistently across all titles. The house style is not a matter of decoration; it is a matter of typographic discipline. The office's publications are characterized by restraint in ornament, by clarity in typography, and by attention to the proportions of the page, the leading of the text, and the hierarchy of headings. The house style is reviewed periodically and may be revised, but revisions are made deliberately and applied consistently.

Restraint in design is a production value, not an aesthetic preference. The office's publications are intended to endure, and enduring design is design that does not draw attention to itself. Ornament that is fashionable in one period becomes dated in the next; typographic discipline that is observed consistently remains appropriate across decades. The house style favors established typefaces, traditional page proportions, and minimal use of decorative elements. Where ornament is used, it is used sparingly and with purpose.

Typesetting is conducted in-house by the support function, using the office's typesetting systems. The office does not subcontract typesetting to external suppliers; the typographic realization of the title is too integral to its quality to be delegated. The support function works under the direction of the responsible officer, who reviews the typeset pages and approves them before manufacture. The review of typeset pages is a substantive editorial act, not a formality; the officer is responsible for the typographic quality of the published work.

4.4 Manufacturing

Manufacturing is conducted by qualified external suppliers, selected through the procurement arrangements of SOE MediaCorp and maintained on a standing basis by the office. The office maintains relationships with a small number of printers and binders whose work meets the office's standards, and it does not change suppliers without cause. The continuity of the manufacturing relationship is a component of the office's quality control; suppliers who understand the office's expectations are more likely to meet them consistently.

The office's manufacturing standards specify the paper, binding, and finishing appropriate to each edition tier. The standards are documented in the office's production records and are reviewed periodically. The standards favor archival-quality materials — acid-free paper, sewn bindings, and durable covering materials — that support the long-term retention of the office's publications. The standards also specify the quality control procedures to be observed at manufacture, including inspection of proofs, sampling of finished copies, and rejection of substandard production.

The responsible officer approves the proofs before manufacture begins and inspects a sample of the finished copies before the edition is released for distribution. The approval of proofs is a substantive editorial act; the officer is responsible for confirming that the typeset pages have been

correctly rendered in the manufactured form. The inspection of finished copies is a quality control act; the officer confirms that the manufactured books meet the office's standards before they are released. Copies that do not meet the standards are rejected and replaced at the supplier's cost.

4.5 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is conducted throughout the production pipeline and is not confined to a final inspection. The office's quality assurance practices include the editorial review described in Chapter 3, the design review described in section 4.3, and the manufacturing inspection described in section 4.4. The office maintains a quality assurance record for each title, documenting the reviews conducted at each stage, the issues identified, and their resolution.

Pre-publication review is conducted by the responsible officer and the Manager jointly. The review examines the complete publication — text, apparatus, design, and manufacture — and confirms that it meets the office's standards before it is released for distribution. The pre-publication review is documented in the office's decision log, and the Manager's approval is recorded as the authority for publication.

Post-publication audit is conducted for each title within twelve months of release. The audit examines the reception of the title, any errata identified, and any lessons for future production. Errata are recorded and, where significant, are corrected in subsequent printings. The post-publication audit is documented in the office's production records and is reviewed at the office's periodic operational review, as set out in Chapter 12.

Chapter 5 — Catalog Framework

5.1 Catalog Categories

The office's catalog is organized in three categories, each serving a distinct purpose within the office's mandate. The first category is cultural anthologies: curated collections of texts drawn from a defined cultural tradition, prepared in bilingual or multilingual form, with editorial commentary and scholarly apparatus. The Chinese Quotes trilogy is representative of this category. Cultural anthologies constitute the principal output of the office and are the primary vehicle through which the office's curatorial and editorial standards are demonstrated.

The second category is gift editions: publications prepared specifically for presentation as diplomatic or ceremonial gifts, typically in limited numbered form, with binding and finishing appropriate to their purpose. Gift editions may be derived from titles in the cultural anthology category, prepared in a de luxe form, or they may be commissioned as standalone publications for a specific occasion. The gift edition category is described in greater detail in Chapter 6.

The third category is scholarly critical editions: annotated editions of significant works, prepared with full scholarly apparatus, intended for use by scholars, libraries, and serious readers. Scholarly critical editions are the most demanding category of the office's work, requiring the highest level of editorial and scholarly competence, and they are undertaken selectively. The office's scholarly critical editions are intended to serve as reference points for subsequent scholarship and to contribute to the scholarly record of the works they present.

5.2 Acquisition of Titles

Titles enter the office's program through three principal routes. The first is internal generation: titles proposed by the office's own officers, arising from their curatorial work within their portfolios. Internal generation is the primary route, reflecting the principle that the office's program is the product of the office's own editorial judgment rather than a response to external proposals. Officers are expected to bring forward curatorial proposals on a regular basis, and the office's program is shaped substantially by the cumulative outcome of these proposals.

The second route is commissioning: the deliberate solicitation of titles to fill identified gaps in the office's program or to develop the office's coverage of a particular region, language, or theme. Commissioning is initiated by the Manager, on the recommendation of officers or in response to strategic priorities identified by the Director of Books Desk. Commissioned titles may be prepared by the office's own officers, by external scholars or translators engaged for the purpose, or by a combination of the two.

The third route is unsolicited proposals: titles proposed by external parties — scholars, translators, publishers, or cultural institutions — and submitted to the office for consideration. Unsolicited proposals are reviewed by the relevant officer and brought forward to editorial review if the officer judges them to merit consideration. The office does not undertake to acknowledge or

return unsolicited proposals that are not brought forward, but it undertakes to consider all proposals submitted in accordance with its published submission procedures.

5.3 Series Architecture

The office's catalog is organized in series as well as in standalone titles. Series architecture allows the office to build a coherent catalog identity, to develop its coverage of a region or theme over multiple titles, and to offer readers and collectors the opportunity to acquire a coherent set of publications. The office maintains a small number of series, each with a defined scope and editorial character, and adds new series only when the office's program warrants.

A regional anthology series is maintained, comprising bilingual or multilingual anthologies of short poetic or prose forms from each of the office's priority regions. Each volume in the series is prepared in the same house style, with the same editorial structure, and is intended to stand alone while also forming part of the series. The series allows the office to build coverage across its priority regions in a coherent manner, and it allows readers to acquire a comparative view of the cultural traditions of the regions concerned.

Standalone titles are published where the character of the work does not fit within an existing series or where the office judges that the work is better presented as a standalone publication. Standalone titles are held to the same editorial and production standards as series titles, and they may be incorporated into a series at a later date if the office's program develops in that direction. The decision to publish a title as standalone or as part of a series is made at the editorial review stage, on the recommendation of the responsible officer.

5.4 Reprints and Revisions

Titles that have sold through their initial print run are eligible for reprint, subject to the office's assessment of continued demand and the availability of the manufacturing capacity. Reprints are not automatic; the office assesses each reprint on its merits, considering the rate of sale, the level of institutional and subscription demand, and the contribution of the title to the office's catalog. A title that has sold through its initial run slowly may be reprinted in smaller quantities; a title that has sold through quickly may be reprinted in larger quantities or revised before reprinting.

Revision of an existing title is undertaken where the office judges that the editorial content, apparatus, or design requires substantial updating. Revision may be prompted by the identification of errata, by the availability of new source materials, by developments in the relevant scholarship, or by the office's own reassessment of the title. A revised edition is prepared to the same editorial and production standards as the original, and it is identified as a revised edition in the published apparatus. The original edition is not withdrawn; it remains part of the office's catalog and archive.

Supersession of an existing title — its replacement by a new title covering the same ground — is undertaken only where the office judges that the existing title no longer serves its purpose and cannot be remedied by revision. Supersession is rare and is undertaken with care, as it may affect the standing of the office's catalog and the expectations of readers and collectors who have acquired the

superseded title. Where supersession is undertaken, the superseded title is acknowledged in the apparatus of the new title, and the superseded title remains available in the office's archive.

Chapter 6 — Editions and Formats

6.1 Edition Tiers

Each title published by the office is issued in one or more edition tiers, determined by the character of the title and the audiences it is intended to serve. The office maintains three edition tiers: the limited numbered edition, the trade edition, and the reference edition. The edition tiers differ in their binding, paper, finishing, and distribution, but they do not differ in their editorial content. The text, apparatus, and design of a title are identical across all edition tiers in which it is issued.

The limited numbered edition is the highest tier, prepared in a small print run with superior binding and finishing, and intended for the diplomatic gift channel, the collector subscription market, and institutional acquisition. The trade edition is the standard tier, prepared in a larger print run with durable but less costly binding, and intended for general retail and institutional distribution. The reference edition is a specialized tier, prepared for library and institutional acquisition, with binding and finishing optimized for heavy use.

The edition tiers in which a title is issued are determined at the editorial review stage, on the recommendation of the responsible officer and the Manager. Most titles are issued in both limited numbered and trade editions. The reference edition is issued where the office judges that there is sufficient institutional demand to warrant a separate printing. The determination is recorded in the office's production records and is reflected in the manufacturing and distribution arrangements for the title.

6.2 Limited and Numbered Editions

Limited numbered editions are produced in print runs of between two hundred and five hundred copies, with the specific number determined by the office's assessment of demand and the manufacturing economics. Each copy is numbered sequentially, and the number is recorded in the office's distribution records. The edition is signed by the responsible officer and, where appropriate, by the translator or external contributor. The signature is part of the publication's record and is not a mere formality.

The binding and finishing of the limited numbered edition are specified in the office's manufacturing standards and are superior to those of the trade edition. The standards favor archival-quality materials, sewn bindings, and durable covering materials. The standards also specify the design of the binding, the placement of the number and signature, and the form of any protective enclosure. The limited numbered edition is intended to endure as a physical artifact, and its manufacture is held to the standards appropriate to that purpose.

The pricing of the limited numbered edition reflects the cost of manufacture, the limited size of the print run, and the value of the edition as a cultural artifact. The pricing is set by the office in consultation with the Bureau of Publishing's financial function, and it is reviewed periodically. The office does not pursue aggressive pricing strategies; the limited numbered edition is priced to recover

its costs and to provide a reasonable return, not to maximize revenue. The pricing of all edition tiers is governed by the financial administration provisions of Chapter 10.

6.3 Trade Editions

Trade editions are produced in larger print runs, typically between one thousand and three thousand copies, with the specific number determined by the office's assessment of demand. The trade edition is bound in durable but less costly materials than the limited numbered edition, and it does not carry the numbering or signature of the limited edition. The editorial content and design of the trade edition are identical to those of the limited numbered edition; the difference is in the physical production, not in the publication itself.

The trade edition is the principal vehicle for the office's reach beyond the diplomatic and collector markets. It is distributed through the trade channels described in Chapter 8, including general retail bookstores, online retail, and institutional acquisition. The pricing of the trade edition is set at a level that permits broad distribution while recovering the costs of manufacture and providing a contribution to the office's operating budget. The trade edition is intended to make the office's publications accessible to readers who would not acquire the limited numbered edition.

The trade edition is reprinted as demand warrants, in accordance with the reprint provisions of section 5.4. The office monitors the rate of sale of the trade edition and adjusts the print run of subsequent printings accordingly. The office does not pursue large print runs in pursuit of volume sales; the trade edition is sized to meet the realistic demand for the title, and excess inventory is avoided. The discipline of conservative print runs is part of the office's stewardship of its financial and physical resources.

6.4 Multi-Language Coordination

Titles published in multiple languages are coordinated to ensure consistency of editorial content across the language editions. The coordination is the responsibility of the responsible officer, who oversees the preparation of all language editions and ensures that they are reviewed to the same standards. The translations are prepared in parallel where the office's capacity permits, or in sequence where it does not. The sequence of translation is determined at the editorial review stage and is recorded in the office's production records.

The language editions of a single title are issued as separate publications, each in its own binding and with its own apparatus. The office does not produce single-volume bilingual editions; the bilingual or multilingual character of the office's publications is achieved through the inclusion of original-language and translated text within a single volume, not through the issue of parallel language editions. Where a title is published in separate language editions, the editions are identified as such in their respective apparatus, and the relationship between them is acknowledged.

Where the content of a language edition diverges from that of the original-language edition — for example, where a translation includes additional apparatus not present in the original, or where editorial decisions are made differently for a different-language readership — the divergence is

acknowledged in the apparatus of both editions. The office does not publish language editions that differ in their substantive editorial content without acknowledgment; the relationship between the language editions is part of the publication's scholarly record.

Chapter 7 — Regional and Linguistic Coverage

7.1 Coverage Framework

The office's regional and linguistic coverage is determined by the principle that the office should engage with regions where cultural publishing infrastructure is undersupplied or where cultural diplomacy fills a recognized gap. The office does not seek comprehensive coverage of all regions or all languages; it concentrates its resources on a defined set of priority regions and languages where its work is most needed and most likely to contribute to the office's mandate. The coverage framework is reviewed periodically and may be adjusted as circumstances require.

The coverage framework reflects the office's strategic horizon. The office's publications are intended to remain defensible over twenty years, and the regions and languages within the office's coverage are selected with a view to their cultural and diplomatic significance over that period. The framework gives weight to regions whose cultural and economic standing is likely to rise over the coming decades, and it gives correspondingly less weight to regions whose standing is established or static. The framework is not a forecast; it is a considered judgment about the distribution of the office's effort.

The coverage framework is given concrete expression in the office's catalog, as set out in Chapter 5. The office's series and standalone titles are drawn substantially from the priority regions and languages, and the office's editorial and representational effort is concentrated accordingly. The framework does not preclude the office from publishing titles outside the priority regions where a compelling case is made, but such titles are exceptional and are undertaken only on the affirmative decision of the editorial review process.

7.2 Priority Regions

The office's five priority regions are East Asia, Maritime Southeast Asia, Central Asia, East Africa, and West Africa. Each region is defined by its cultural traditions, its linguistic characteristics, and its significance to the office's mandate. The regions are not mutually exclusive; cultural and linguistic traditions cross regional boundaries, and the office's coverage of a tradition is not constrained by the regional framework. The framework is a tool for organizing the office's effort, not a set of boundaries on its work.

East Asia is a priority region, with particular attention to the Chinese, Korean, and associated cultural traditions. Maritime Southeast Asia is a priority region, with particular attention to the Indonesian and associated Malay-world cultural traditions. Central Asia is a priority region, with attention to the cultural traditions of the region as expressed in Russian and the languages of the region. East Africa is a priority region, with attention to the Swahili and associated cultural traditions. West Africa is a priority region, with attention to the Hausa and associated cultural traditions.

The priority regions are reviewed every five years as part of the periodic strategic review described in Chapter 12. The review considers the continuing appropriateness of the regional priorities, the balance of the office's coverage across the regions, and the case for any adjustment.

Adjustments to the priority regions are made deliberately and are reflected in the office's program over the following period. The office does not adjust its regional priorities in response to short-term developments; adjustments are made on the basis of considered judgment about the office's strategic horizon.

7.3 Language Policy

The office's primary working languages are Chinese, Russian, Indonesian, Swahili, and Hausa. These languages correspond to the office's five priority regions and constitute the core of the office's linguistic capacity. The office maintains officer competence in each of the primary working languages, as set out in the appointment provisions of Chapter 9, and it conducts its editorial and representational work in these languages as a matter of course.

Limited additional coverage is maintained in Kazakh, Somali, and Korean. These languages are of significance to the office's regional coverage but do not warrant the same level of officer competence as the primary working languages. Limited coverage may be maintained through officer competence at a lower level of proficiency, through the engagement of external translators and consultants, or through institutional partnerships. The office does not undertake publications in these languages except where the responsible officer is competent to oversee the work or where external competence is engaged to the office's standards.

The office publishes in multiple languages, as set out in Chapter 6. The languages of publication for each title are determined at the editorial review stage and are reflected in the translation and manufacturing arrangements. The office's publications are typically issued in the original language and in English, with translation into additional languages where the title's purpose and audience warrant. The translation policy set out in section 3.4 governs the preparation and review of all translations, and the multi-language coordination provisions of section 6.4 govern the relationship between language editions.

7.4 Regional Editorial Partnerships

The office maintains editorial partnerships with scholars, institutions, and editorial advisors in each of its priority regions. The partnerships are intended to ensure that the office's work is informed by the best available regional expertise and that the office's publications are received as serious and credible contributions to the cultural life of the regions concerned. The partnerships are maintained by the relevant officers within their portfolios and are coordinated by the Manager.

Regional editorial partnerships may take several forms. The office may engage individual scholars as editorial advisors or contributors, on a standing or project-specific basis. The office may establish institutional partnerships with universities, cultural institutes, or publishing houses in the regions concerned, for the purpose of co-edition arrangements, scholarly exchange, or the development of regional coverage. The office may also participate in regional cultural events, scholarly conferences, and institutional gatherings as a means of maintaining its regional relationships.

Co-edition arrangements, where the office's publications are produced in partnership with a regional publisher, are undertaken where the arrangement advances the office's purpose and where the partner's standards are consistent with the office's own. Co-edition arrangements are governed by formal agreements that specify the respective contributions of the parties, the editorial and production standards to be observed, and the distribution of the published work. The arrangements are reviewed periodically and may be discontinued where they no longer serve the office's purpose or where the partner's standards decline.

Chapter 8 — Distribution and Protocol

8.1 Diplomatic Distribution

The office's publications are distributed to the diplomatic channel through arrangements with the protocol authorities of the state. The protocol authorities identify the occasions on which the office's publications are appropriate for presentation as diplomatic gifts — state visits, official receptions, the establishment or renewal of bilateral relationships — and the office provides the publications in the quantities and editions required. The diplomatic distribution is recorded in the office's distribution records and in the gift register maintained by the protocol authorities.

The selection of titles for diplomatic use is made by the protocol authorities, in consultation with the office and with the relevant diplomatic missions. The office provides the protocol authorities with a current catalog of its publications, with descriptions of each title and its suitability for particular diplomatic contexts. The office does not determine which titles are used for diplomatic purposes; that determination is made by the protocol authorities, who are responsible for the conduct of the state's diplomatic relationships.

The diplomatic distribution is the principal channel through which the office's limited numbered editions reach their intended recipients. The office's limited numbered editions are designed and manufactured to a standard appropriate to diplomatic presentation, and the diplomatic distribution is the primary purpose for which the limited numbered edition tier exists. The relationship between the office and the protocol authorities is maintained by the Manager, in coordination with the Director of Books Desk.

8.2 Subscription and Direct Sale

The office maintains a subscription program through which collectors and institutions may acquire the office's publications on a standing basis. Subscribers receive each new title in the subscribed edition tier automatically upon publication, with the option to decline specific titles. The subscription program is administered by the office's support function, and the subscription records are maintained in the office's distribution records.

Direct sale to institutions — libraries, museums, cultural institutes, and educational institutions — is conducted through the office's support function, in coordination with the institutions' acquisition procedures. Direct sale permits the office to place its publications with institutional purchasers without the margin concessions required by trade distribution, and it permits the office to maintain direct relationships with the institutions that acquire its work. Direct sale is conducted at the published prices, with such discounts as are customary for institutional acquisition.

The subscription program and direct sale arrangements are reviewed periodically to ensure that they are serving the office's purpose and that they are financially sustainable. The office does not pursue aggressive growth in subscription or direct sale; the program is sized to the realistic demand for the office's publications and is managed to maintain the quality of the office's relationships with

its subscribers and institutional purchasers. The financial administration of the subscription program and direct sale is governed by the provisions of Chapter 10.

8.3 Museum and Specialist Retail

The office's publications are placed with museum shops, specialist rare-book dealers, and cultural-institution bookshops where the character of the publications and the audience of the retail outlet are well matched. Museum shops are of particular importance, as they place the office's publications in the context of the cultural engagement of their visitors and as they reach an audience that is predisposed to acquire cultural publications. The office maintains relationships with a selected group of museum shops and specialist dealers, and it does not pursue broad retail placement.

Specialist rare-book dealers are engaged for the placement of the limited numbered edition, where the dealer's clientele and the edition's character are well matched. The office maintains relationships with dealers whose standards are consistent with the office's own and whose clientele includes collectors of cultural publications. The dealers are provided with the office's current catalog and with such information as they require to represent the office's publications to their clientele.

Cultural-institution bookshops — including those of universities, research institutes, and cultural foundations — are engaged for the placement of both the limited numbered and trade editions, where the institution's audience is appropriate. The office's relationships with cultural-institution bookshops are maintained by the support function, in coordination with the relevant officers. The office does not pursue placement with general trade bookstores through the museum and specialist retail channel; that placement is conducted through the trade distribution channel described in section 8.4.

8.4 Trade Distribution

The office's trade editions are distributed through general trade channels, including retail bookstores, online retail, and institutional wholesale. Trade distribution is conducted through arrangements with trade distributors, who handle the placement of the office's publications with retail outlets and who manage the logistics of trade sale. The office's trade distribution arrangements are maintained by the support function, in coordination with the Bureau of Publishing's distribution function.

Trade distribution is selective rather than comprehensive. The office does not seek placement of its trade editions in every retail outlet; it seeks placement in outlets whose audience is appropriate to the character of the publications. The office's trade editions are priced and produced for a readership that is seriously interested in cultural publications, and they are placed accordingly. The office monitors the performance of its trade distribution and adjusts its arrangements as warranted.

Online retail is an increasingly important channel for the office's trade editions, as it is for trade publishing generally. The office maintains arrangements with online retailers for the placement of its trade editions, and it ensures that the online presentation of its publications — including descriptions, images, and reviews — is consistent with the office's standards. The office does not pursue exclusive

online distribution arrangements; its trade editions are available through all major online retailers that meet the office's standards.

8.5 Protocol and Gift Use

The use of the office's publications as diplomatic gifts is governed by the protocol arrangements described in section 8.1 and by the conduct standards set out in Chapter 9. Each gift copy is registered in the office's gift register, which records the recipient, the occasion, the title and edition, and the date of presentation. The gift register is maintained by the support function and is reviewed periodically by the Manager.

The office's publications are not used as gifts outside the diplomatic and ceremonial contexts for which they are intended. Officers do not present the office's publications as personal gifts, and the office's publications are not used for purposes that are inconsistent with their cultural and diplomatic character. The discipline of the gift register supports the observance of this principle and provides a record of the office's gift use that may be reviewed by the protocol authorities and by the office's parent bodies.

The office's publications may be presented at cultural events, scholarly gatherings, and institutional meetings where the presentation is appropriate to the occasion and where the recipient is appropriately acknowledged. Such presentations are recorded in the office's distribution records, distinguishing them from diplomatic gift use. The office's publications are not used as promotional items or as giveaways; they are cultural artifacts, and their presentation is governed by the standards appropriate to such artifacts.

Chapter 9 — Officer Appointments

9.1 Qualifications

Officers (Cultural) of the Office of Special Books are appointed on the basis of three principal qualifications. The first is cultural standing: a record of scholarly, literary, or artistic achievement that establishes the candidate's authority within the cultural field of their portfolio. Cultural standing is assessed by reference to the candidate's published work, their participation in cultural and scholarly institutions, and the recognition they have received from their peers. The office does not appoint officers who lack external cultural standing; such standing is a requirement of the office's representational function and a precondition of credible editorial judgment.

The second qualification is language competence appropriate to the candidate's portfolio. Officers are expected to be competent in the languages of the regions and traditions for which they are responsible, at a level that permits the reading of source materials and the review of translations. For the primary working languages identified in Chapter 7, officers are expected to hold certification at a level appropriate to their rank. For languages in which the office maintains limited coverage, officers may rely on external translators and consultants, but they must possess sufficient competence to oversee the work of those contributors.

The third qualification is suitability for representational duties. Officers are expected to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the office's external relationships, to participate credibly in cultural and scholarly gatherings, and to represent the office and the state with distinction. Suitability is assessed by reference to the candidate's record of public and institutional engagement, their conduct in previous positions, and the references of those who have worked with them. The office does not appoint officers whose conduct would reflect poorly on the office or the state.

9.2 Selection and Appointment

The selection of officers is conducted by a process that combines solicitation of candidates, review of qualifications, and consultation with relevant cultural and scholarly authorities. The process is initiated by the Manager when a vacancy is identified or when the expansion of the office's complement is authorized. The Manager solicits candidates through the office's networks, through the cultural and scholarly institutions with which the office maintains relationships, and through such other channels as are appropriate to the position.

Candidates are reviewed by the Manager, in consultation with the Director of Books Desk and with such cultural and scholarly authorities as the Manager judges appropriate. The review considers the candidate's qualifications against the criteria set out in section 9.1, the fit of the candidate's portfolio with the office's program, and the candidate's capacity to discharge the responsibilities of the position. The review is documented, and the basis for the selection decision is recorded in the office's appointment records.

Appointments are made by the Director of Books Desk, on the recommendation of the Manager. Appointments are made at the Officer rank, with the grade determined by the candidate's experience

and the office's requirements. Appointments are for a term of five years, renewable as set out in section 9.3. The terms and conditions of appointment are governed by the human resources arrangements of SOE MediaCorp and are consistent with the Table of Ranks applicable to the Officer rank.

9.3 Tenure and Performance Review

Officers are appointed for a term of five years, renewable. Renewal is considered in the final year of the term and is based on a performance review conducted by the Manager, in consultation with the Director of Books Desk. The performance review considers the officer's editorial contributions, the conduct of their representational responsibilities, the development of their portfolio, and their contribution to the office's collective work. The review is documented and is discussed with the officer.

Performance indicators for officers are calibrated to the long-horizon character of the office's work. Annual output of titles is not a primary indicator; the quality of editorial judgment, the development of the officer's portfolio, the maintenance of the office's external relationships, and the standing of the office's publications are the principal indicators. The office's performance review practices recognize that the value of editorial work may not be fully apparent within a single annual cycle and that the assessment of an officer's contribution requires a longer view.

Renewal of appointment is not automatic. An officer whose performance has not met the office's standards may be offered a non-renewal, with adequate notice and with such transition arrangements as are appropriate. An officer whose performance has been exceptional may be offered advancement in grade, with the concurrence of the Director of Books Desk. The office's appointment practices are conducted in accordance with the human resources arrangements of SOE MediaCorp and with such civil service regulations as are applicable to the Officer rank.

9.4 External Cultural Activities

Officers of the Office of Special Books are expected to maintain external cultural profiles, through their own scholarly, literary, or artistic work, through participation in cultural and scholarly institutions, and through engagement with the cultural public. These activities are recognized as part of the officer's responsibilities rather than as competing demands on their time. The cultural standing of the office's officers contributes directly to the cultural standing of the office's publications, and the office's publications in turn contribute to the cultural standing of the officers.

External cultural activities are subject to the conduct standards set out in section 9.5 and to such disclosure requirements as are established by the office. Officers are required to disclose their external cultural activities to the Manager on an annual basis, including their published work, their institutional affiliations, and their participation in cultural and scholarly gatherings. The disclosure is recorded in the officer's personnel file and is reviewed by the Manager.

The office does not restrict the external cultural activities of its officers beyond what is necessary to maintain the office's standards and to avoid conflicts of interest. Officers are free to publish their

own work, to participate in cultural and scholarly institutions, and to engage with the cultural public, provided that their activities do not conflict with the office's interests and do not compromise the officer's discharge of their responsibilities. The office's recognition of external cultural activities is given concrete expression in the performance review practices described in section 9.3.

9.5 Conduct Standards

Officers and support staff of the office are bound by the conduct standards applicable to all personnel of SOE MediaCorp and by such additional standards as are necessary to maintain the office's integrity. These include standards governing conflict of interest, the receipt of gifts, public statements, and political activity. The standards are documented in the office's personnel records and are reviewed with each new appointment.

Conflict of interest standards require the disclosure of any financial, personal, or institutional interest that may bear on the officer's discharge of their responsibilities. Officers are required to disclose such interests to the Manager on appointment and whenever a new interest arises. The Manager determines whether the interest requires recusal from specific decisions or other mitigating action. The office's conflict of interest standards are applied with particular care to the selection of titles, the engagement of external contributors, and the conduct of editorial review.

The receipt of gifts is governed by the gift and hospitality standards of SOE MediaCorp. Officers and support staff are required to disclose gifts received in the course of their duties, with such exceptions as are specified in the standards. The office's publications are not used as gifts between officers and external parties; the use of the office's publications as diplomatic gifts is governed by the protocol provisions of section 8.5. Public statements by officers on matters within the office's portfolio are subject to the office's communications arrangements, and political activity by officers is subject to the restrictions applicable to all personnel of SOE MediaCorp.

Chapter 10 — Financial Administration

10.1 Budget Structure

The office's budget is structured in three components: the operating budget, the capital budget, and the project budget. The operating budget covers the recurring costs of the office, including personnel, accommodation, and the standing costs of the office's production and distribution arrangements. The capital budget covers investment in the office's longer-term assets, including its production systems, its archive, and its standing relationships with external suppliers. The project budget covers the costs of individual titles, from commission through manufacture.

The operating budget is prepared annually by the Manager, in consultation with the Bureau of Publishing's financial function, and is submitted for approval through the standard budget process of SOE MediaCorp. The operating budget is sized to the office's complement and its standing arrangements, and it is not adjusted in response to short-term variations in the office's output. The operating budget is reviewed annually as part of the office's operational review, as set out in Chapter 12.

The project budget for each title is prepared by the responsible officer, with the assistance of the support function, and is approved by the Manager at the editorial review stage. The project budget covers the costs of curation, drafting, design, manufacturing, and distribution, and it is monitored throughout the production pipeline. Variations from the project budget are reported to the Manager and are reflected in the office's financial records. The financial administration of each title is governed by the same standards as the office's other financial arrangements.

10.2 Revenue and Cost Recovery

The office recovers a portion of its costs through the sale of its publications, with the balance met by the operating budget provided through the Bureau of Publishing. The office's revenue is generated through three principal streams: the sale of trade editions through trade distribution, the sale of limited numbered editions through subscription and direct sale, and the recovery of diplomatic allocation costs through the protocol authorities. The office's revenue is recorded in the financial records of SOE MediaCorp and is reported in the office's annual report.

The sale of trade editions is the largest revenue stream by volume, though not necessarily by value. Trade edition revenue is generated through the office's trade distribution arrangements, with the revenue shared between the office and the trade distributor in accordance with the standard trade terms. The sale of limited numbered editions through subscription and direct sale generates higher per-unit revenue but smaller volume, reflecting the limited size of the limited numbered print runs and the specialized character of the subscription and institutional market.

The recovery of diplomatic allocation costs is conducted through arrangements with the protocol authorities, under which the protocol authorities reimburse the office for the cost of publications provided for diplomatic use. The reimbursement arrangements are governed by formal agreements between the office and the protocol authorities, and they are reviewed periodically. The office does

not pursue profit from diplomatic allocation; the reimbursement is set at a level that recovers the cost of the publications provided, including a reasonable contribution to the office's overhead.

10.3 Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure by the office is governed by the capital budget arrangements of SOE MediaCorp and is undertaken where the investment supports the office's longer-term capacity. Capital expenditure includes investment in the office's production systems, the development of its archive, the establishment of its standing relationships with external suppliers, and the acquisition of such equipment and materials as are necessary for the office's work. Capital expenditure is planned over a multi-year horizon and is reviewed as part of the office's strategic review.

The office's production systems constitute its principal capital asset. The systems include the curatorial and drafting tools, the design and typesetting systems, and the records and document management systems described in Chapter 4. The systems are maintained and upgraded on a planned basis, with the cycle of maintenance and upgrade determined by the office's requirements and by the lifecycle of the systems concerned. The office's capital investment in its production systems is sized to the office's requirements and is not expanded beyond what the office's work warrants.

The office's archive, described in Chapter 11, is also a significant capital asset. The archive includes the office's editorial records, production records, distribution records, and historical archive, and it is maintained as a permanent resource for the office and for future scholarly use. Capital investment in the archive includes the physical infrastructure of its storage, the systems for its management and access, and the work of its curation. The office's capital investment in its archive is recognized as a stewardship responsibility, as set out in Chapter 1.

10.4 Audit and Reporting

The office is subject to the audit arrangements of SOE MediaCorp and to such additional audit as may be required by the office's parent bodies or by external authorities. The audit examines the office's financial records, its observance of financial standards, and the integrity of its financial reporting. The audit is conducted on an annual basis, and its findings are reported to the Manager, the Director of Books Desk, and the relevant audit authorities.

The office prepares an annual report, which is submitted to the Director of Books Desk and is made available to the office's parent bodies and to the public. The annual report describes the office's activities over the year, the titles published, the state of the office's program, the office's financial performance, and such other matters as are appropriate. The annual report is prepared by the Manager, with the assistance of the support function, and is reviewed by the Director of Books Desk before publication.

Financial disclosure by the office is conducted in accordance with the disclosure standards of SOE MediaCorp. The office's financial records are available for inspection by the relevant authorities, and the office's financial performance is reported in the annual report and in such other reports as are required. The office's financial administration is conducted with the transparency

appropriate to a public body, and the office's officers and support staff are expected to cooperate fully with such audit and review as may be conducted.

Chapter 11 — Records and Archive

11.1 Editorial Records

The office maintains editorial records for each title, from the initial curatorial proposal through the final publication. The editorial records include the curatorial proposal, the editorial review minutes and decisions, the drafting materials, the editorial correspondence, the verification records described in section 3.3, and the pre-publication review records. The editorial records are maintained as a permanent record of the office's editorial work and are retained in the office's archive.

The editorial records are sufficient to allow the editorial history of a title to be reconstructed by a subsequent reader or reviewer. The records show what curatorial proposals were considered, what selections were made and why, what translations were prepared and reviewed, what issues arose in the editorial process, and how they were resolved. The records are prepared contemporaneously, by the responsible officer and the support function, and are maintained in the office's document management system.

Access to the editorial records is governed by the office's access policy. The records are available to the office's officers and support staff in the course of their duties. The records are available to external researchers and scholars on application, subject to such restrictions as are necessary to protect confidential information, the integrity of the editorial process, and the rights of contributors. The access policy is reviewed periodically and is published as part of the office's public documentation.

11.2 Production Records

The office maintains production records for each title, documenting the design, typesetting, and manufacturing of the publication. The production records include the design specifications, the typesetting files, the manufacturing specifications, the quality control records, the supplier contracts and correspondence, and the proofs and samples retained from the manufacturing process. The production records are maintained as a permanent record of the office's production work and are retained in the office's archive.

The production records are sufficient to allow the production of a title to be reconstructed or repeated if required. The records show what design decisions were made, what typesetting was prepared, what manufacturing specifications were observed, what quality control was conducted, and what suppliers were engaged. The records are prepared by the support function, under the direction of the responsible officer, and are maintained in the office's document management system.

The production records are also of value in the office's periodic review of its production standards and practices. The records permit the office to review the consistency of its production across titles, to identify areas for improvement, and to maintain the continuity of its house style and manufacturing standards. The records are reviewed as part of the office's operational review, as set out in Chapter 12, and they inform the office's periodic revision of its production standards.

11.3 Distribution Records

The office maintains distribution records for each title, documenting the placement of the publication with the distribution channels described in Chapter 8. The distribution records include the subscription records, the direct sale records, the trade distribution records, the museum and specialist retail placements, and the gift register described in section 8.5. The distribution records are maintained as a permanent record of the office's distribution work and are retained in the office's archive.

The distribution records are sufficient to allow the distribution of a title to be reconstructed and audited. The records show how many copies of each edition were produced, where they were placed, at what price, and with what revenue. The records also show the recipients of gift copies, the subscribers who acquired the title, and the institutional purchasers who acquired the title through direct sale. The records are prepared by the support function and are maintained in the office's document management system.

The distribution records are subject to the data protection and privacy standards applicable to the office's records. The records include personal information about subscribers and individual purchasers, and this information is handled in accordance with the data protection standards of SOE MediaCorp. The records are available to the office's officers and support staff in the course of their duties, and they are available to external auditors as required. The records are not made publicly available, except in aggregate form that does not identify individual subscribers or purchasers.

11.4 Historical Archive

The office maintains a historical archive, which is the permanent repository of the office's records and the principal long-term resource for the study of the office's work. The historical archive includes the editorial, production, and distribution records described in sections 11.1 through 11.3, together with such other materials as are appropriate to the office's historical record. The archive includes copies of every title published by the office, in every edition tier, retained as a permanent record of the office's output.

The historical archive is maintained as a permanent resource. The office does not dispose of materials in the archive, except in accordance with the documented retention policy and with the approval of the Manager. The archive is stored in conditions appropriate to the preservation of its materials, with attention to the environmental conditions, the security, and the accessibility of the storage. The archive's physical and digital infrastructure is reviewed periodically and is maintained to the standards appropriate to a permanent cultural record.

Access to the historical archive is governed by the office's access policy, as described in section 11.1. The archive is available to the office's officers and support staff in the course of their duties. The archive is available to external researchers and scholars on application, subject to such restrictions as are necessary to protect confidential information and the integrity of the office's records. The office recognizes the archive as a resource for the broader scholarly community, and it facilitates access where the office's standards and the applicant's purpose permit.

Chapter 12 — Review and Revision

12.1 Periodic Review of Operations

The office's operations are reviewed on two cycles: an annual operational review and a five-year strategic review. The annual operational review examines the office's activities over the preceding year, the titles published, the state of the office's program, the office's financial performance, and such other matters as are appropriate. The annual operational review is conducted by the Manager, in consultation with the Director of Books Desk, and is documented in the office's annual report.

The five-year strategic review examines the office's strategic position, the continuing appropriateness of its mandate and regional coverage, the state of its catalog, and the development of its program over the succeeding period. The strategic review is conducted by the Manager, in consultation with the Director of Books Desk and such external advisors as the Director judges appropriate. The strategic review is documented in a strategic review report, which is submitted to the Director of Books Desk and is considered by the Bureau of Publishing's senior leadership.

The periodic review arrangements are intended to ensure that the office remains aligned with its mandate and its strategic horizon, that its operations are conducted to the required standards, and that its program develops in a manner consistent with its purpose. The reviews are not intended to direct the office's editorial judgment; they are intended to confirm that the conditions for the exercise of that judgment are maintained. The reviews are conducted with the recognition that the office's work is assessed over a longer horizon than the review cycles themselves, and that the assessments made in the reviews are necessarily provisional.

12.2 Revision of This Document

This Handbook is maintained under the authority of the Director of Books Desk. It is reviewed every five years, in conjunction with the strategic review described in section 12.1, and may be amended between reviews when circumstances require. Amendments are proposed by the Manager, considered by the Director of Books Desk, and approved by the head of the Bureau of Publishing. Amendments take effect on the date specified in the amending instrument and are recorded in the office's records.

Amendments between reviews are undertaken where a change in the office's circumstances, the framework within which it operates, or the standards it observes requires a corresponding change in the Handbook. Such amendments are exceptional and are undertaken with care, as the Handbook is intended to provide a stable framework for the office's work. The office does not amend the Handbook in response to short-term developments; amendments are made on the basis of considered judgment about the office's ongoing requirements.

The revision history of the Handbook is recorded in the office's records, and each amendment is documented with its date, its substance, and the authority for its adoption. The current edition of the Handbook is the authoritative reference for the office's operations, and earlier editions are retained in

the office's archive for historical reference. The office's officers and support staff are expected to be familiar with the current edition and to conduct their work in accordance with it.

12.3 Effective Date

This Handbook takes effect on the date of its issuance by the Bureau of Publishing. On that date, it supersedes any previous guidance governing the establishment, organization, and operations of the Office of Special Books. The office's officers and support staff are expected to be familiar with the provisions of this Handbook and to conduct their work in accordance with it from the effective date.

Transitional provisions apply where the office's existing arrangements do not conform to the provisions of this Handbook on its effective date. Such arrangements are brought into conformity over a period determined by the Manager, in consultation with the Director of Books Desk, and the transition is documented in the office's records. The transitional period is kept as short as is practicable, and the office's officers and support staff are expected to cooperate in the transition.

Questions regarding the interpretation of this Handbook are referred to the Manager, who is responsible for its interpretation in the first instance. Questions that cannot be resolved at the level of the Manager are referred to the Director of Books Desk, whose determination is conclusive. The interpretation of this Handbook is not a matter for individual discretion; it is a matter for the office's collective determination, in accordance with the principles and standards set out in this document.