



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Strengthening capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage for sustainable development

Geographical scope/benefitting country(ies):	20 countries in all regions
Duration (in months):	24 to 36 months ¹
Name and Unit of project Officer	Cécile Duvelle, Chief, Intangible Cultural Heritage Section
Partner(s) institutions:	Ministries in charge of intangible cultural heritage and/or other governmental and non-governmental institutions with responsibilities relevant to intangible cultural heritage
Total estimated budget inclusive of Programme Support costs	US\$6 million of which US\$2 million for Africa, US\$1.5 million for Asia and the Pacific, US\$1.5 million for Latin America and the Caribbean, US\$750,000 for the Arab States and US\$250,000 for Eastern Europe

Rationale and background

UNESCO's highest priority for implementing the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is a global capacity-building strategy, put in place to strengthen countries' capacities for the sustainable safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and for harnessing its potential for sustainable development while promoting broad public knowledge and support for the Convention's concepts and objectives.

1. Typically the implementation of a full-fledged capacity-building project covering the expected results and activities proposed in this generic concept note takes 24 to 36 months. However, as explained further below, the results and activities follow a sequential and progressive intervention logic, with the output produced under one activity contributing to the success of the next. Therefore the scope and timeframe can be easily adapted to correspond to the budget envelope available and taking into account the specific situation and needs of the identified beneficiary country.

The strategy addresses the most urgent capacity-building needs:

- redesign of the institutional infrastructure to cater to the specific needs of ICH,
- revision of cultural and other policies and legislation,
- development of inventory methods and systems,
- development of effective safeguarding measures, and
- effective participation in the international cooperation mechanisms of the Convention.

All activities within the strategy aim at fully mobilizing all stakeholders (government, civil society and communities) in the decision-making, administration and practical aspects of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, with particular emphasis on articulating policies and initiatives that address the different needs, aspirations, capacities and contributions of women and men.

Why UNESCO?

A 2013 evaluation by UNESCO's Internal Oversight Section found that 'Of all the mechanisms established by the Convention and the Secretariat to support the implementation of the Convention, the capacity-building programme is considered by many to be the most important'. The evaluation confirmed the continued need for the programme and recommended reinforcing its attention to policy development and the links with larger development strategies, while fully integrating a gender-responsive approach.

Despite the programme already benefitting more than 40 countries since its inception in 2009, many countries remain to be served worldwide. The continuing demand for such support is expressed individually by Member States and collectively through the decisions of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention and the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.²

The present project aims to extend the reach of the capacity-building strategy to 20 additional countries that would not otherwise benefit. The highest priority will be for countries in Africa, with particular attention globally to Least Developed Countries and to Small Island Developing States. The project foresees a 24- to 36-month engagement with each beneficiary country during which it receives a series of technical assistance measures customized to its specific needs. Such a sustained investment in human and institutional capacities will see both immediate results and long-term impacts for the beneficiary States and for their communities.

2. See for example the decisions of the latest session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Decisions 8.COM 5.b and 8.COM 5.c.1).

Overall Goal/Objective

The project's objective is that beneficiary countries make development more sustainable, ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage present in their territories and strengthening relations within and between communities, through the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The expected impact of this programme is a vibrant collaboration between governmental and non-governmental institutions and communities to ensure that the latter can sustainably recreate and transmit their ICH to the next generation, while respecting the principles of the Convention. It will strengthen the place of intangible cultural heritage in sustainable development ranging from security, social cohesion and the search for relevant and quality education to food security, environmental concerns and health matters. Its long-term legacy will be institutions and particularly communities that have the capacity to safeguard and enjoy intangible cultural heritage effectively, thereby promoting mutual respect and appreciation, bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among them.

Main Expected results

Expected Result 1

States ratify the Convention and integrate its principles into cultural and other policies and legislation, applying a gender-responsive approach

Expected Result 2

Beneficiary countries establish the institutional infrastructure required for the effective safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage

Expected Result 3

Beneficiary countries utilize the strengthened institutional and human resources, both female and male, from government, civil society and communities, for the effective safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage

Expected Result 4

Beneficiary countries establish or revise a framework and methodology for inventorying intangible cultural heritage with the participation of communities, groups and relevant NGOs

Expected Result 5

States participate actively in the Convention's mechanisms for international cooperation, including International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund when relevant

Activities and outputs/deliverables relating to the achievement of expected results

Activity 1 – expected results 1 and 3

Technical assistance to encourage new ratifications, particularly in Africa

Output/deliverable 1.1

Training and/or tailored capacity-building services on ratification delivered to beneficiary countries (notably officials from culture and other ministries, experts in legal affairs and other stakeholders)

Activity 2 – expected results 1, 2 and 3

Technical assistance to develop the required institutional infrastructure and integrate intangible cultural heritage fully in policies for culture and development, particularly in Africa, applying a gender-responsive approach

Output/deliverable 2.1

Advisory support provided to put in place adequate institutional infrastructure (e.g. dedicated departments, committees, strategies or action plans, etc.) tailored to specific needs of safeguarding and applying a gender-responsive approach

Output/deliverable 2.2

Gender-responsive training provided to government officials, legal experts and other relevant stakeholders to integrate intangible cultural heritage fully into cultural and other policies

Output/deliverable 2.3

Specific technical assistance provided for applying a gender-responsive approach to policy revision

Activity 3 – expected results 3, 4 and 5

Technical assistance for safeguarding, including establishing or revising a framework and methodology for inventorying intangible cultural heritage, with the participation of communities, groups and relevant NGOs

Output/deliverable 3.1

Training delivered on theoretical and practical aspects of community-based inventorying, applying a gender-responsive approach

Output/deliverable 3.2

Support provided for development and testing of framework and methodology for inventorying intangible cultural heritage

Output/deliverable 3.3

Training delivered on community-led safeguarding in line with the principles of the 2003 Convention, applying a gender-responsive approach

Activity 4 - expected results 3 and 5

Technical assistance to develop capacities for participation in the international mechanisms of the 2003 Convention

Output/deliverable 4.1

Training delivered on the international mechanisms of the Convention and on preparing requests for International Assistance or nominations to the Lists

The project objectives will be achieved through a set of four key activities in each beneficiary country, to be implemented following a sequential and progressive intervention logic, with the output produced under one activity contributing to the success of the next. As shown in the results framework above, each activity contributes to the attainment of several of the expected results. Each activity features from one to three outputs/deliverables and encompasses both the provision of experts for individualized consultation as well as the organization of workshops and other training activities. African States will be a particular priority for all project activities, with specific targets where relevant. Activities aim throughout to address the different needs, aspirations, capacities and contributions of women and men.

Ratification of the Convention is a prerequisite for benefitting fully from it and is therefore the focus of Activity 1 (contributing to expected results 1 and 3), for those States that have not yet completed the ratification process. Ratification is not enough, of course: it must be accompanied by efforts to develop the required institutional infrastructure and integrate intangible cultural heritage fully into cultural and other policies (Activity 2, contributing to expected results 1, 2 and 3). Within the sphere of policy reform, particular attention will be given to the development and introduction of gender-responsive policies bearing on intangible cultural heritage.

Activity 3 turns to concrete safeguarding activities, starting with inventorying – a primary responsibility of States Parties – with assistance aimed at helping countries establish or revise a framework and methodology for inventorying intangible cultural heritage with the participation of communities, groups and relevant NGOs (to attain expected results 3, 4 and 5). The activity continues with training and technical assistance on how to develop community-led safeguarding plans in line with the principles of the 2003 Convention.

Once a solid foundation has been constructed in terms of institutional and human capacities, a receptive policy framework and communities fully mobilized for safeguarding, the project can conclude with Activity 4, strengthening national capacities for participation in the international mechanisms of the Convention such as preparing requests for International Assistance (where relevant) and nominations to the Lists, thereby contributing to expected results 3 and 5.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

Beneficiaries include the different actors involved in the decision-making, administration and practical aspects related to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. For the policy components the primary beneficiaries are officials from ministries of culture and other ministries willing to integrate the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in their work, institutes, NGOs, universities and community representatives. For the activities related to community-based inventorying and safeguarding, the primary beneficiaries are the communities concerned.

Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage typically requires the intervention of stakeholders from different fields and not from the cultural field alone. To mobilize them is a great challenge as they are not always aware of the role they play or can play in safeguarding. When UNESCO translates this global proposal into specific country proposals, such persons must be involved right from the start of project design.

The critical – indeed, indispensable – role of communities in safeguarding their intangible cultural heritage is recognized by the Convention. Therefore all activities carried out under this project will obtain the free, prior and informed consent of communities concerned, apply a rights-based approach, including the rights related to gender and customary law, and seize on the opportunities of involving a range of stakeholders.

Implementation strategy

The capacity-building process typically extends from 24 to 36 months per beneficiary State and is steered by UNESCO's network of field offices, in cooperation with national counterparts and with on-going technical support from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section. States are provided with a diverse complement of interventions designed – according to each State's needs – to strengthen and solidify its human and institutional capacities for safeguarding. While workshops and training activities are the most visible landmarks within the capacity-building programme, they are embedded within an integrated process of international cooperation and technical assistance to each beneficiary State.

The identification of beneficiary States is made by the Secretariat, taking account of the needs and implementation capacities of Member States and of UNESCO's delivery capacity in each State; the regional or bilateral priorities of donors can also be taken into account. In some cases, a preliminary needs assessment is built in to guide the development of specific interventions; in other cases such a needs assessment will already have been completed using other funds.

The strategy foresees establishing linkages with national development strategies, UNDAFs and CCA processes as part of the policy work in order to create an environment supportive to safeguarding and, vice-versa, to fully harness the potential of intangible cultural heritage for sustainable development. Attention will be paid to the equal involvement of men and women in all activities and to applying a gender-responsive approach to the policy revision in order to attain the gender-specific objectives.

The technical assistance will employ content and materials developed by UNESCO covering the entire thematic range covered by the capacity-building programme. These are available already in several languages and – where needed – translation will be built into a country project to support localization of the curriculum. The services are delivered through UNESCO's network of trained expert facilitators, with 78 members from all regions (43% from Africa and 40% women) who know the local realities and were trained to use and adapt the UNESCO training materials.

Sustainability and exit strategy

This programme has been devised to maximize its sustainability and multiplier effect. It aims to create in each country a critical level of national capacity, both in government institutions and among key players from communities and civil society, constituting a sustainable foundation for safeguarding intangible heritage and implementing the Convention.

By involving stakeholders from both the culture sector and other development fields, the programme facilitates the integration of provisions for safeguarding ICH into larger development strategies and programmes, thereby further sustaining the viability of ICH and harnessing it for the well-being of communities and societies.

This project includes frequent evaluation of the training and services provided and the materials produced as well as their potential revision to respond better to the identified needs at national and sub-regional levels. Over the course of the project, a Programme Evaluation and Monitoring Facility will be put in place to provide comprehensive assessment of the impact of the capacity-building strategy and the present project.