**CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE  
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE  
SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Tenth session**

**Windhoek, Namibia**

**30 November to 4 December 2015**

**Item 7.b of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Report by the Secretariat on its activities**

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| **Summary**  The Secretariat provided a detailed report on its activities in 2014 to the ninth session of the Committee ([Document ITH/14/9.COM/6](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-6-EN_.doc)), complemented by a report on its activities (June 2012 to June 2014) to the fifth session of the General Assembly ([Document ITH/14/5.GA/4.3](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-5.GA-4.3-EN.doc)) The present report deals with the Secretariat’s activities and results since the beginning of the 2014–15 biennium.  **Decision required:** paragraph 85 |

1. The Secretariat provided a detailed report on its 2014 activities to the ninth session of the Committee in November 2014 ([Document ITH/14/9.COM/6](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-6-EN_.doc)) and a cumulative report on its activities (June 2012 to June 2014) to the fifth session of the General Assembly in June 2014 ([Document ITH/14/5.GA/4.3](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-5.GA-4.3-EN.doc)). Integrating key achievements presented in the report of the Secretariat at the ninth session of the Committee, the present report concerns the activities of the Secretariat – including the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section at Headquarters and UNESCO Field Offices – since the beginning of the current biennium in January 2014.
2. The structure of the present report seeks to reflect the extent of the Secretariat’s work during the reporting period based on the results framework adopted within the Organization’s Programme and Budget 2014–2017 ([Document 37 C/5 Approved](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002266/226695e.pdf)), and more specifically, the eight performance indicators of Expected Result 6 within Major Programme IV: National capacities strengthened and utilised to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, including indigenous and endangered languages, through the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention, also evident in the SISTER programme that supports its implementation. This structure constitutes the overarching framework for all of the Secretariat’s activities, whether funded from UNESCO’s Regular Programme or from a variety of extrabudgetary sources.
3. The present report should be read in tandem with the following documents: the report of the Committee to the General Assembly on its activities ([Document ITH/15/10.COM/7.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-7.a_EN.docx)), the financial report of the Convention’s Fund for the Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage included in [Document ITH/15/10.COM/8](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-8_EN.docx) and the report on follow-up on audits and evaluations ([Document ITH/15/10.COM/15.c](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-15.c_EN.docx)), as well as the Director-General’s periodic reports to the Executive Board on the execution of the programme adopted by the General Conference (EX/4).
4. **Duties, structure and composition of the Secretariat**
5. The primary responsibilities of the Secretariat, as set out in the Convention, are to assist the Committee and to ‘prepare the documentation of the General Assembly and of the Committee, as well as the draft agenda of their meetings, and […] ensure the implementation of their decisions’ (Article 10 of the Convention).
6. Since 2014, the Section has been composed of two units – a Programme Implementation Unit and a Capacity-building and Heritage Policy Unit. Regional responsibilities are distributed transversally across the two units, with ‘regional officers’ for each of the six regional groups.
7. The Programme Implementation Unit is responsible for the preparation, efficient conduct and follow-up of meetings of the Governing Bodies of the Convention. The Unit also undertakes treatment of nominations to the Lists of the Convention, International Assistance requests, proposals for Best Safeguarding Practices presented by States Parties, as well as requests for accreditation and renewal of non-governmental organizations and periodic reports; the organisation of thematic meetings and other processes that allow reflection on and development of the Convention also falls under the responsibilities of this Unit, together with overall reporting and fundraising at the Main Line of Action level.
8. The Capacity-building and Heritage Policy Unit is responsible for development and coordination of the global strategy for strengthening national safeguarding capacities to translate the principles of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage into policies and programmes at country level. As such, it assumes coordination of the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of capacity-building programmes undertaken by the Section, Field Offices and Member States. It is also entrusted to develop training materials, maintain the network of expert facilitators and upgrade their competencies.
9. As of this date, the Section includes 13 established posts under the Regular Programme: 5 from ‘general services’ and 8 ‘professionals’. The Secretary of the Convention also functions as Chief of the Section; a Chief of Unit supervises each of the 2 units.
10. In addition to the Regular Programme staff, the Section also relies on a number of people under various temporary assignments.

* Two temporary professional positions are supported by contributions from States Parties to the sub-fund of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, and two temporary posts have been made possible in the Fund’s support to the knowledge management system and the capacity-building programme.
* Furthermore, two additional temporary posts exist; one established in December 2014 with funding from the UNESCO/Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority Funds-in-Trust and the other beginning in March 2015 with funding from the UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. In addition, an expert seconded by China joined the Convention team in the first semester of 2014 and a project coordinator was recruited to manage a capacity-building project in Portuguese speaking Africa (May 2014 to December 2015) funded by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund thanks to an earmarked contribution from Norway.
* Under the reporting period, 7 temporary personnel contributed to the work of the Secretariat of the Convention for various periods, financed by the Regular Programme. One expert from Japan and one associate expert from Spain completed their assignments in July and October 2014, respectively.

1. As explained in [Document ITH/13/9.COM/6](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-6-EN_.doc), and in line with the restructuring plan approved by the Director-General, the Culture Sector established a Conventions Common Services Unit in mid-2014 aimed at providing all convention secretariats with a platform of pooled resources for several common needs linked to the logistical aspects of statutory meetings, as well as communication, outreach and partnerships. Since its establishment, the Unit is assisting the Section in the organization of statutory meetings particularly on logistical aspects and on the travel arrangements of meeting participants, as well as administrative and procedural issues linked to cooperation with category 2 centres and the treatment of requests for patronage and use of the Convention’s emblem.
2. **Expected Result and Performance Indicators**
3. The activities of the Secretariat are in line with the new eight-year [Medium Term Strategy (2014–21)](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002278/227860e.pdf) and the four-year Programme and Budget (2014–17) of UNESCO. The Approved Programme and Budget for 2014–2017 (37 C/5) contains one Main Line of Action: Supporting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions, the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, and the development of cultural and creative industries – for which one Expected Result on the 2003 Convention was established: National capacities strengthened and utilised to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, including indigenous and endangered languages, through the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention. The following eight Performance Indicators (PIs) have been developed for this Expected Result:

PI 1 Governing bodies of the 2003 Convention exercise sound governance thanks to effective organization of their statutory meetings;

PI 2 Number of supported Member States utilizing strengthened human and institutional resources for intangible cultural heritage and integrating intangible cultural heritage into national policies;

PI 3 Number of safeguarding plans, including indigenous languages and endangered languages, developed and/or implemented by Member States;

PI 4 Number of International Assistance requests submitted and effectively implemented by Member States, nominations submitted by Member States and best practices submitted by Member States and disseminated by them and other stakeholders;

PI 5 Number of periodic reports on implementation of the Convention at national level submitted by States Parties and examined by the Committee, and those addressing gender issues and describing policies promoting equal access to and participation in cultural life;

PI 6 Number of States Parties to the Convention increased;

PI 7 Number of organizations within and outside the United Nations system, civil society, and the private sector contributing to programme delivery;

PI 8 Number of stakeholders involved in implementation of the Convention contributing information to the knowledge-management system.

1. A significant proportion of the services provided by the Secretariat – particularly relating to strengthening institutional and community capacities for effectively safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, raising awareness of such heritage and its significance, and disseminating information about best safeguarding practices – are only possible through the support of the line ‘Other functions of the Committee’ of the Plan for the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund adopted by the General Assembly. The use of the funds that the fifth session of the General Assembly (Resolution 5.GA 7) allocated for this purpose was approved by the Bureau (Decision 9.COM 2.BUR 1) based in a proposal that already fully integrated the principles of results-based management and was expressed in terms of results, outputs and indicators. Footnotes below establish the link between these indicators and those at the MLA level.
2. In order to illustrate the performance indicators identified to measure the achievement of the Expected Result, the following narrative includes both qualitative and quantitative information.

**Performance Indicator 1: Governing bodies of the 2003 Convention exercise sound governance thanks to effective organization of their statutory meetings**

1. The Secretariat’s support to the Convention’s governance mechanisms is most visible immediately before and during the actual sessions of the Committee and General Assembly, but indeed takes place throughout the year and often over the course of several years. For example, nominations assessed by the Evaluation Body in 2015 included three dating from 2012, one from 2013 and seven from 2014. Even while the Evaluation Body met to evaluate nominations for examination by the Committee at the present session, the Secretariat was simultaneously treating nominations submitted for possible examination in 2016 and 2017.
2. During the 23-month reporting period from January 2014 to November 2015, the Secretariat organized 18 statutory meetings:

Nine meetings of the governing bodies:

* fifth session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2 to 4 June 2014);
* ninth and tenth sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (24 to 28 November 2014 and 30 November to 4 December 2015);
* two meetings of the Bureau of the Committee (13 October 2014 and 6 October 2015) and four electronic consultations of the Bureau (April 2014; June 2014; November 2014; and June 2015).

Six meetings for advisory services:

* joint meeting of the Subsidiary and the Consultative Body (27 and 28 March 2014);
* meeting of the Subsidiary Body (1 to 5 September 2014);
* meeting of the Consultative Body (8 to 11 September 2014);
* three meetings of the Evaluation Body (3 to 4 March 2015; 15 to 19 June 2015; and  
  9 to 11 September 2015).

Three expert meetings as requested by the Committee:

* one expert meeting on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level, Istanbul, Turkey (29 September to 1 October 2014);
* one expert meeting on a model code of ethics for intangible cultural heritage, Valencia, Spain (30 March to 2 April 2015);
* one expert meeting on developing a follow-up and evaluation mechanism for capacity‑building activities, Paris, France (1 to 3 June 2015).

1. The General Assembly, where more than 600 delegates and observers participated, in June 2014, debated 15 agenda items and sub-items over the course of 4 days, electing 12 new members of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and adopting important revisions to the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention – notably, the creation of a single ‘Evaluation Body’ (numbering 6 experts representing States Parties to the Convention non-members of the Committee and 6 accredited non‑governmental organizations) whose task is to evaluate all nominations, proposals and requests to the Convention's mechanisms for international cooperation.
2. The ninth session of the Committee in November 2014 was the largest ever, with more than 1,070 delegates from 138 countries. The Committee welcomed significant progress made in implementation of the Convention and expressed its appreciation of the overall strategy of capacity‑building set up by UNESCO to support States and communities in their safeguarding efforts. The tenth session of the Committee in November-December 2015 will examine 30 agenda items including sub-items over the course of 5 days. In anticipation of the ninth and tenth sessions of the Committee, information and exchange meetings were organized respectively on 3 November 2014 and 6 October 2015 to present the provisional agenda and timetable, as well as practical information facilitating the participation of Member States to the sessions of the Committee.
3. In March 2014 and 2015, the Secretariat organized two orientation meetings for the evaluation bodies, which aimed to present the nature and procedures of the tasks to be accomplished and provide a general overview of the files for examination during the following months. Such meetings further determined their working methods and schedule in preparation for the evaluation meetings held in September 2014, June 2015 and September 2015. In preparation for these evaluation meetings of advisory services, the Secretariat treated all documents received from State Parties concerning nominations and requests and made them available through a dedicated online interface for members of the evaluation bodies.
4. The Secretariat’s assistance to the General Assembly, Committee and advisory bodies includes all logistical arrangements to allow those bodies to work under conditions most conducive to fruitful debate. Notable among these are the travel arrangements for experts representing States Parties or accredited non-governmental organizations based in developing countries and participating in the sessions of the Committee and its advisory bodies (158 trips in the reporting period).
5. The Secretariat is also responsible for providing the working documents of the statutory bodies in English and French for the Committee, and in six languages (also Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish) for the General Assembly, as well as simultaneous interpretation in those same languages during the sessions. Extrabudgetary support has to be mobilized in order to provide interpretation at sessions of the Committee in languages other than English and French. In the reporting period, unlike earlier, such support was only obtained for Arabic interpretation at the ninth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.
6. An important part of the Secretariat’s work in preparing documentation of the statutory bodies comes with the treatment of nominations to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, proposals to the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices, International Assistance requests and periodic reports of States Parties. The Secretariat had been unable to meet the deadlines set out in the Operational Directives for the treatment of files until the 2015 cycle. However, the treatment of the nominations for the 2016 cycle is currently on track with the Secretariat having managed for the first time to send letters by the deadline of 30 June to submitting States concerning information needed to complete their files.
7. Category VI expert meetings are organized upon the request of the Committee to provide recommendations with regard to specific issues and themes, which may also provide orientation and support to State Parties pertaining to safeguarding plans and measures. At the request of the Committee, UNESCO organized an expert meeting on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level in Istanbul, Turkey, from 29 September to 1 October 2014, generously funded and hosted by the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?meeting_id=00454>). The meeting drew up preliminary recommendations for a possible new chapter of the Operational Directives, which were discussed by the Committee at its ninth session ([Document ITH/14/9.COM/14.b](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-13.b-EN.doc)) and will be further examined at its present session ([Document ITH/15/10.COM/14.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-14.a_EN.docx)). Furthermore, responding to the Committee’s request in Decision 7.COM 6 and to the generous invitation of Spain, the Secretariat organized an expert meeting in Valencia, Spain, from 30 March to 2 April 2015 to initiate work on a model code of ethics that will assist in improving the quality of safeguarding efforts worldwide (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?meeting_id=00463>). Based on the outcomes of the expert meeting, a set of 12 principles have been elaborated to guide efforts from States Parties to integrate ethical considerations in the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage ([Document ITH/15/10.COM/15.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-15.a_EN.docx)). In addition, an expert meeting held in Paris from 1 to 3 June 2015 was organized with the primary aim of following up on the impact of the capacity-building programme of the Convention and beyond to contribute to further development of the overall results framework of the 2003 Convention. Finally, the expert meeting on intangible cultural heritage and climate change (Decision 8.COM 12), originally scheduled for the first half of 2015, did not take place as the funding proposed by Viet Nam for this purpose has not yet become available.
8. The Cultural Convention Liaison Group (CCLG), comprising of the heads of the Convention Secretariat and established in 2012 to increase coordination among conventions, continues to hold regular meetings to identify potential synergies. Furthermore, during the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee in Bonn, Germany, the Chairs of the six UNESCO culture conventions (or their representatives) met for the first time on 29 June 2015 to discuss ways of working together more effectively. In the context of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, this provided a unique opportunity to reflect on the future of the Organization’s standard-setting actions in the face of contemporary challenges and emerging needs. This is particularly important as the international community has adopted the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which linkages between culture, development and peace are more fully recognized and projected forward. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chairs released a [statement](http://whc.unesco.org/document/137645) outlining their concerns and emphasizing the need for a renewed political will to support UNESCO’s culture conventions and encouraging the United Nations to ensure that the protection, safeguarding and understanding of cultural and natural heritage, cultural diversity and creative expressions worldwide be recognized as a cross-cutting issue in the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda.

**Performance Indicator 2: Number of supported Member States utilizing strengthened human and institutional resources for intangible cultural heritage and integrating intangible cultural heritage into national policies**[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. The Convention’s global capacity-building programme continues to support countries with the development of their national policies and human and institutional resources for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Responding to the recommendations of the Internal Oversight Service’s comprehensive 2013 evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the 2003 Convention ([Document ITH/13/8.COM/INF.5.c](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-13-8.COM-INF.5.c-EN.doc)), the Committee specifically asked the Secretariat to (Decision 8.COM 5.c.1):

- strengthen support to countries in developing policies and legislation for intangible cultural heritage;

- establish a follow-up and evaluation mechanism for capacity-building activities to gather data about their effectiveness;

- constantly adapt the content and format of the Convention’s capacity-building programme to respond to the major implementation challenges at the national level.

1. **Capacity-building services effectively delivered to beneficiary countries**
2. As explained extensively in previous reports to the Committee and the General Assembly, the delivery of capacity-building services in countries is at the heart of the capacity-building strategy, often bundling several complementary country programmes within a larger multi‑country package implemented by one or more Field Office(s). Typically such a project extends from 24 to 36 months and aims to address the most urgent requirements in a single country:

* revision of policies and legislation;
* redesign of institutional infrastructures;
* development of inventory methods;
* development of safeguarding measures and plans; and
* effective participation in 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 due respect to gender equality in terms of different needs, aspirations, capacities and contributions.

1. Capacity-building activities were initiated or implemented in more than 70 countries over the last 2 years, covering all regions of the world. Africa received particular attention in this regard, with 26 beneficiary countries. The capacity-building support took diverse forms; for example, some of them were short-term projects only with needs assessment in the first instance or covering one theme, others were multi-year projects with several training components; projects were funded by extrabudgetary resources, regular budget of UNESCO, with national matching funds in some cases; self-benefitting funded projects were also implemented.
2. One important improvement over the course of the biennium concerns the introduction of in‑depth needs assessments in the project elaboration phase. This new approach facilitates collaborative planning with national counterparts from the start, affords time to clarify the scope and possibilities for support under the global strategy beforehand, strengthens cooperation among national and local partners and ensures that future projects reflect the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries. Such needs assessments were completed in 10 countries. In this regards the dedicated multi-year needs assessment project carried out in seven countries in Africa and the Arab Region (Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Madagascar, Palestine, South Sudan and Sudan) with funding from the UNESCO/Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority Funds-in-Trust was innovative and exemplary.
3. Training workshops are the most visible delivery modality of the global programme. However, other support is provided, taking the form of advisory services, for policy and legal development. Among the training workshops carried out during the reporting period, community-based inventorying were most frequent. Analytical reports from facilitators explain how this component plays a key role in helping countries establish or revise a framework and methodology for inventorying intangible cultural heritage with the participation of communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organizations. The training and pilot activities are typically restricted to a specific region of the country, since the methodology requires participation of communities at local level. Beneficiary countries then use the new knowledge to replicate a similar process in other regions as part of their safeguarding strategies. Some seek funding from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund through international assistance requests, while others find the resources required within their respective countries.
4. **Follow-up and evaluation mechanism established and implemented for capacity-building activities to gather data about their effectiveness**
5. The Secretariat advanced the establishment of a follow-up and evaluation mechanism for capacity-building activities to gather data about their effectiveness (Decision 8.COM 5.c.1) by organizing a workshop bringing together in June 2015 national counterparts (including National Commissions for UNESCO), expert facilitators and UNESCO colleagues working in the different regions of the world to develop the conceptual framework and indicators. The Secretariat is currently finalizing the data collection tools required for implementing the new mechanism.
6. **Facilitators’ network and relevant education institutions strengthened**
7. With a pool of more than 80 expert facilitators from every region of the world, the Secretariat is drawing upon a large resource of expertise when designing and delivering capacity-building activities. Their analytical reports, often on training activities but also on needs assessments, provide a precious source for monitoring and adapting the programme.
8. Facilitators from four regions benefitted from workshops to assess lessons learnt from delivering capacity-building services, update their knowledge on recent developments in the life of the Convention and train them on newly developed curriculum materials in areas of safeguarding plans, gender and policy advice. The learning is mutual. While facilitators strengthen their knowledge on the subject matter, they at the same time provide valuable advice to UNESCO colleagues from Headquarters and Field Offices on how to further improve the formats and content of the capacity-building strategy. The Secretariat was able to organize four regional workshops during the reporting period thanks to the generous support from different host institutions:

* **Review meeting with experts facilitators implementing capacity-building services in the Arab region,** hosted by the Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters with the support of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) in Kuwait City, Kuwait, in May 2014.
* **Review meeting with experts facilitators implementing capacity-building services in Europe and Central Asia**, hosted by the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe in Sofia, Bulgaria, in September 2014.
* **Workshop on safeguarding plans and policy support for intangible cultural heritage for experts facilitators from the Asia-Pacific Region**, hosted by the International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (CRIHAP) in Shenzhen, China, from 19 to 23 January 2015.
* **Workshop on s**upportingpolicydevelopment in the fieldof intangible cultural heritage **with** expertfacilitators **implementing capacity building in Africa**, hosted by the National Centre of Research on Prehistory, Anthropology and History (cnrpah) in Algeria and the *Manifestation Constantine, capitale de la culture arabe 2015* in Constantine, Capital of Arab Culture 2015.
* In regions where the demand for capacity building exceeded the availability of facilitators, the Secretariat expanded the network, which was the case for Asia and the Pacific, where four newcomers integrated through their participation in the above-mentioned workshop in Shenzhen. In the Caribbean, mentoring was used to expand the network by brining on board three incoming experts during the reporting period: an active participant in a capacity-building programme accompanied a senior facilitator in training activities in another country, allowing him or her to acquire the skills required to become a future facilitator. The UNESCO Offices in Harare and Windhoek, with funding from Flanders (Belgium), followed yet another approach. They identified strong participants from capacity-building activities previously implemented in a number of countries in southern Africa, in order to train them to be the future trainers for their respective countries.

1. The Secretariat recognises the critical role of universities and other relevant institutions in training future decision-makers, administrators and actors in the field of intangible cultural heritage, which are an important complement to UNESCO’s capacity-building efforts in this area. Therefore the Secretariat, through the UNESCO Bangkok office, convened a **regional symposium for tertiary education institutions in Asia and Pacific** (2 to 3 November 2015) to encourage the development of postgraduate intangible cultural heritage programmes in universities of the region.
2. UNESCO’s support for strengthening capacities for safeguarding extends beyond those activities it implements directly. In many countries, established universities or organizations can effectively integrate intangible cultural heritage into broader programmes in heritage. In this regard UNESCO provided advisory and technical support for the following capacity-building activities during the reporting period:

* Two trainings for teachers and instructors from universities and specialized non-governmental organizations, hosted by the **Norwegian Centre for Traditional Music and Dance in Norway**. The first focused on implementing of the Convention (May 2014) and the second on community-based inventorying (October 2015) in Trondheim, Norway.
* A capacity building workshop **hosted by the Lombardy region in Italy and the canton of Graubünden in Switzerland** on the implementation of the Convention in Tirano (province of Sondrio, Italy) and Valposchiavo, Switzerland (June 2015).
* A training on community-based inventorying for in-country stakeholders **hosted by Monaco** (October 2015).
* The first of a series of three capacity-building workshops for staff of the[**Hamdan Bin Mohammed Heritage Center**](http://hhc.gov.ae/) in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates on the implementation of the Convention (October 2015).

1. **Content and format of the capacity-building programme reviewed and adapted**
2. The capacity-building curriculum is continually reviewed and adapted in order ‘to ensure that it responds to the major implementation challenges at the national level’ (Decision 8.COM 5.c.1). This entails, for instance, updating all curriculum materials to reflect decisions of the Committee and General Assembly. The curricula are also being expanded to cover themes that are of high importance to States Parties. New training materials on gender are now available and the materials on sustainable development are being updated to reflect references to the recently adopted 2030 development agenda. In addition, new training materials on policy development and International Assistance requests are being developed, as well as revision of the materials on elaborating nominations, which includes adding thematic units on the effects of inscription and on periodic reporting of inscribed elements. Furthermore, the Secretariat developed, tested and peer-reviewed comprehensive training materials on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage for a five-day workshop during this reporting period and organized a first training-of-trainers workshop on their use in January 2015.
3. The formats and presentations of the curriculum materials are also subject to continuing improvement. A major restructuring of the materials began in late 2013 and was completed in 2015: converting them into a set of some 50 distinct units rather than four separate courses. In this manner, facilitators are now able to select from the sequence of units those that are best adapted to the particular needs of their trainees, assembling a workshop from the different building blocks that can respond to the circumstances and situation of each beneficiary country. The Secretariat finalized the English materials during the reporting period as well as half of them in French, Spanish and Russian. Translation of the remaining units into French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian is ongoing.
4. **Appropriate capacity-building formats and approaches developed and tested to support countries in the development of legislation and policy**
5. A priority has been the identification of appropriate capacity-building formats and approaches to support beneficiary countries in developing legislation and policy concerning intangible cultural heritage (Decision 8.COM 5.c.1). The Secretariat analysed approaches to policy advice that are used elsewhere in UNESCO and in other agencies to learn from them. It organized a workshop on 25 June 2014 at Headquarters with the participation of colleagues from the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention and that of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and guest speakers from United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNESCO’s Education Sector and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).
6. The reflections resulted in a comprehensive substantive UNESCO Guidance Note addressed to experts engaged by UNESCO to provide advisory services for policy development in the field of intangible cultural heritage. Accordingly, dedicated budgets for advisory services for policy and legal development were integrated in new multi-year projects developed for 13 countries during the reporting period and needs assessed for policy development in a further 11 countries. Support to policy and legal development is ongoing in 35 countries in total.
7. Currently the Secretariat is developing a thematic training unit on policy development for intangible cultural heritage, for use in workshops with national counterparts involved in policy‑making, notably officials from the ministries in charge of policy decisions that affect the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and other key stakeholders. It will draw upon the different papers commissioned by the Section on issues such as the comparative advantages of a stand-alone and comprehensive intangible cultural heritage policy versus the integration of intangible cultural heritage in other policies in the field of culture or non‑culture, as well as on the outcomes of discussions held with expert-facilitators and UNESCO colleagues from Field Offices at the workshop on supporting policy development in the field of intangible cultural heritage in Africa organized in Constantine, Algeria, in September-October 2015.
8. **Capacity-building programme planning, implementation and monitoring strengthened through improved information systems**
9. The organization, management and implementation of the capacity-building programme require the effective utilization of information systems. The Secretariat is, therefore, developing new information technology functionalities for monitoring and evaluation of capacity-building projects, for curriculum management and information-exchange among facilitators. The dedicated capacity-building web interface has been reviewed and the information on strategy and information on the facilitators’ network updated, making presentation more succinct and user‑friendly. New web pages now provide consolidated information on projects implemented in cooperation with UNESCO. They present, in particular the budget and timing of all capacity‑building projects managed by the Secretariat along with related news and meetings. A new functionality is available providing facilitators with improved access to capacity‑building materials and a complementary tool is under development to help facilitators compose their workshops and download all related materials. New utilities to specifically facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of project activities allowing facilitators to report and provide information directly through online tools are in the making.
10. **Mobilizing resources for the implementation of the capacity-building strategy**
11. In line with the Organization’s policy of strictly aligning the Regular Programme and the Complementary Additional Programme, the Secretariat’s resource mobilization efforts concentrate essentially on extending the reach and effectiveness of the global strategy. In addition to support from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund through the budget line ‘other functions of the Committee’, as described above, supplementary voluntary contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund and Funds-in-Trust contributions are essential to the success of capacity-building efforts. During the reporting period, eight donors have contributed to the implementation of the capacity-building strategy (Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority, Azerbaijan, Belgium [Flanders], Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea and Spain).
12. To inform donors of the funding requirements of the global capacity-building programme, the Secretariat developed a [Concept Note](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-7_Rev.-EN.doc) for the 2014–2017 Complementary Additional Programme entitled Strengthening capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage for sustainable development, available for consultation on UNESCO’s global partnership web page. The Concept Note was approved by the Committee at its ninth session in November 2014 (Decision 9.COM 7).

**Performance Indicator 3: Number of safeguarding plans, including indigenous languages and endangered languages, developed and/or implemented by Member States[[2]](#footnote-2)**

1. More than 130 safeguarding plans have been developed and submitted by Member States during the reporting period, including safeguarding plans incorporated in International Assistance requests and nominations to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In order to provide guidance to Member States on how to prepare nominations to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, including the elaboration of safeguarding plans and pursuant to the request of the eighth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Baku, Azerbaijan, December 2013), two aides-mémoires have been prepared by the Secretariat and made available on the website in 2014. A third aide-mémoire that provides submitting States with useful information when elaborating International Assistance requests including for the development of safeguarding plans has also been prepared.
2. It is to be noted that a total of 82 elements that have been inscribed since 2008 on the Lists established under the Convention belong to the domain of oral traditions and expressions – for which indigenous and endangered languages are the primary vehicle. Safeguarding plans or sets of safeguarding measures have been developed by States Parties and submitted to the Committee as part of the inscription process for all of these elements.
3. The Committee at its eighth session in 2013 called upon States Parties and the General Assembly, as well as the Secretariat, category 2 centres, non-governmental organizations and all other stakeholders to ‘complement the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices by developing alternate, lighter ways of sharing safeguarding experiences such as dedicated websites, e-newsletters, online forums, etc.’ and to ‘strengthen informal sharing of interesting and innovative examples on working on the Convention, including about intangible cultural heritage safeguarding, development of policy and legislation, intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development, innovative partnerships and others’ (Decision 8.COM 5.c.1).
4. Due to time constraints and lack of human resources, the Secretariat has however to date only been able to focus on the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices and on publishing the experiences of selected projects. This concerns the compilation of pedagogic materials about the methodologies and experiences of two safeguarding practices: ‘Education and training in Indonesian batik intangible cultural heritage in Pekalongan, Indonesia’ and ‘Fandango’s Living Museum’. For each practice, a brochure of some 30 pages is available in English and French, together with a 15-minute video and three-minute video on the Convention’s website (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Register>).
5. In addition, the periodic reports of States Parties on their implementation of the Convention at the national level as well as on the status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List constitute a rich and growing resource for drawing lessons about effective safeguarding practices and measures (Documents [ITH/14/9.COM/5.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-5.a-EN_.doc), [ITH/14/9.COM/5.b](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-5.b-EN.doc), [ITH/15/10.COM/6.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-6.a_EN.docx) and [ITH/15/10.COM/6.b](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-6.b_EN.docx)). These reports offer a wide-ranging picture of safeguarding measures being used by States Parties and constitute a critical mass of experience. For the 2015 cycle, the Secretariat took the initiative to provide a summary of each report on the implementation of the Convention submitted in order to facilitate access to information.

**Performance Indicator 4: Number of International Assistance requests submitted and effectively implemented by Member States, nominations submitted by Member States and best practices submitted by Member States and disseminated by them and other stakeholders**

1. During the reporting period, a total number of 141 files, including nominations to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, proposals to the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices and International Assistance requests, were submitted by State Parties to the Secretariat, as follows:

|  | **2014** | **2015** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity | 42 | 42 |
| List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding | 8 | 7 |
| Preparatory Assistance for elaborating a nomination for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List | 1 | 1 |
| List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding combined with International Assistance | - | 1 |
| Register of Best Safeguarding Practices | 2 | 6 |
| International Assistance (requests greater than US$25,000) | 6 | 2 |
| International Assistance (requests up to US$25,000) | 8 | 13 |
| Emergency Requests | 1 | 1 |

All of them have been or are being processed by the Secretariat. Of these files, 16 were withdrawn by the submitting State Party or considered inappropriate by the Secretariat and therefore, were not presented to the Committee or the Bureau in their respective cycle.

1. The geographical distribution of the 141 files submitted[[3]](#footnote-3) to the Secretariat during the reporting period demonstrates the participation of the six regional groups to the international mechanisms established by the Convention, as follows:
2. During the reporting period, a total of 15 requests for international assistance have been or will be examined by the Intergovernmental Committee and Bureau of the eighth and ninth sessions of the Committee. As previously requested by the Bureau, the Secretariat assessed each of the requests to be examined to the Bureau and prepared a recommendation, which was then submitted to the Bureau for review. Ten of these requests were approved as follows:

|  | **2014** | **2015** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Preparatory Assistance for elaborating a nomination for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List | 1[[4]](#footnote-4) | 0 |
| International Assistance (requests greater than US$25,000) | 1 | N/A[[5]](#footnote-5) |
| International Assistance (requests up to US$25,000) | 2 | 4 |
| Emergency requests | 0 | 2 |

1. At its ninth session in November 2014, the Intergovernmental Committee approved on an exceptional basis one International Assistance request due to special circumstances in the submitting State (Sudan). The Committee considered that this request still required further improvement and delegated authority to the Bureau to approve the revised version (Decision 9.COM 9.c.2). With the assistance from the Secretariat and the Field Office such revised request was duly submitted to the Secretariat. The Bureau examined in October 2015 the revised request and considered that it satisfied the preoccupation of the Committee.
2. In order to improve the quality of International Assistance requests to be examined by the Committee and the Bureau, the Secretariat writes detailed and comprehensive letters indicating any missing information and advises the submitting State how to improve the request so that it may be examined in the best possible situation. Furthermore, in response to the low number of International Assistance requests and States Parties’ difficulties to prepare requests that satisfy the criteria, as well as the administrative and financial regulations of UNESCO, the Committee asked the Secretariat to provide, on an experimental basis, technical assistance to States Parties wishing to elaborate such requests (Decision  8.COM 7.c.). The Secretariat implemented this new mechanism, identifying a first batch of eight requests, including six submitted by States Parties from Africa, where it deemed that technical assistance was likely to permit the State Party to submit a revised request with a good prospect of satisfying the criteria. The primary mode of technical assistance being offered is consultation through e-mail, telephone and Skype, for up to10 person-days of expert assistance over the course of three months. A longer period of assistance is made available as appropriate, including the possibility of a mission to provide the opportunity for the expert to work face-to‑face with the national team preparing the request. To date, following technical assistance:

* three revised requests have been submitted, all from States Parties in Africa of which one was an emergency request, and all three were approved by the Bureau in June and October 2015;
* two requests for technical assistance were cancelled at the request of the national authorities;
* in two other cases, national authorities decided that more time was needed to revise the request, which is considered by the Secretariat as a positive result of the technical assistance in increasing the understanding of the principles of the Convention and of the International Assistance criteria.

Since then, other States Parties have requested such technical assistance to support them in this process. Hence, initial results of technical assistance are positive and encouraging, and the approach being used seems to produce the desired improvement in the quality and fundability of the requests and in the likelihood of effective safeguarding.

1. To improve the efficacy of this experimental mechanism, the Secretariat convened, from 20 to 22 July 2015, a workshop at UNESCO Headquarters in order to train a core of facilitators and experts so that they can provide effective technical assistance to States Parties wishing to elaborate International Assistance requests, as requested by the Bureau in its Decision 9.COM 2.BUR 1. Centring on experiences to date with the experimental mechanism to provide individualized technical assistance to States Parties requesting International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, the workshop also explored other efforts underway or planned by the Secretariat to (i) provide comprehensive information to States Parties about the criteria and procedures for requesting such assistance; (ii) develop practical tools to facilitate the preparation of timetables and budgets for International Assistance requests; and (iii) expand the existing curriculum materials of the global capacity‑building programme to include in-depth treatment of International Assistance.
2. In conjunction with its decision at its eight session to create an integrated mechanism permitting States Parties to simultaneously nominate an element for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List and request International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund to finance the proposed safeguarding plan, the Committee requested the Secretariat to create a combined ICH-01 and ICH-04 form accordingly and to report at its tenth session on the implementation of this mechanism (Decision 8.COM 7.c). As a result, the form ICH-01bis was elaborated by the Secretariat and was made available on the website in November 2014. At the time of writing, only one request using the new combined form ICH-01bis has been submitted to the Secretariat.
3. During the reporting period, three elements were inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding which now numbers 38 elements, and 34 elements on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Of the 163 States Parties (as at 2 November 2015), seven including two African States had their first inscriptions on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2014, which now totals 314 elements. At its seventh session, the Committee decided to establish an online resource, the Mechanism for Sharing Information to Encourage Multinational Files ([Document ITH/12/7.COM/14](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-12-7.COM-14-EN.doc)), through which States Parties can, on a voluntary basis, announce their intentions to submit files and other States Parties may learn of opportunities for cooperation in elaborating multinational files. The Secretariat prepared this [online platform](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00560&key=117) and integrated it into the website in 2014. At the time of writing, three intentions to nominate an element have been included in the online platform.
4. Pursuant to the Committee’s request for States Parties to avoid unnecessary reference in the titles of elements to specific countries or adjectives of nationality that may inadvertently provoke sentiments contrary to the Convention’s principle of international cooperation (Decision 9.COM 10), the Secretariat has worked together with submitting States in order to align titles of nominations with the decision of the Committee.

**Performance Indicator 5: Number of periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention at the national levels submitted by States Parties and examined by the Committee, and number addressing gender issues and describing policies promoting equal access to and participation in cultural life**

1. According to the Operational Directives and the guidelines adopted by the Intergovernmental Committee, the Secretariat informed the 19 States Parties that had ratified the Convention in 2007 and the 19 States Parties that had ratified the Convention in 2008 of the 15 December deadline for submission of their periodic reports one year prior to the deadline. To these 38 States should be added 37 States that, for different reasons, did not submit complete reports in previous cycles. The Secretariat prepared an aide-mémoire for completing the reporting form that provides submitting States with useful information when preparing their reports. Of the total 75 States Parties expected to submit their periodic reports for examination during the 2014 and 2015 cycles, 51 submitted a final report.
2. Of these 51 reports, 17 were final reports from States that had initially submitted them during prior cycles (1 in the 2012 cycle, 15 in the 2013 cycle, and 1 in the 2014 cycle) but wished to take additional time to provide missing information identified by the Secretariat. The remaining 34 reports were submitted for the first time in December 2013 and December 2014; the Secretariat registered them, sent a letter to the States Parties to acknowledge receipt, and began its internal examination. In accordance with paragraph 165 of the Operational Directives, the Secretariat contacted those States Parties to inform them about missing information and advised them on how to complete their report. The 34 final reports were then submitted and, together with the 17 mentioned above, were the subjects of examination by the Committee. Twenty-seven reports were examined by the Committee at its ninth session and 24 reports will be examined by the Committee at the present session. The Secretariat is currently working on generating systematic summaries of periodic reports to improve their accessibility.
3. Starting from last year, in the overview of the reports the Secretariat has also included an in‑depth study on a specific topic: inventory-making for the 2014 cycle and transmission and education measures for the 2015 cycle. This provides the Committee with a cumulative focus on those topics based on all reports submitted since the first cycle in 2011.
4. In addition to the reports on implementation of the Convention and in accordance with the Operational Directives (paragraphs 160 to 164), the Secretariat received a total of 11 reports on elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. Of the 12 reports expected for elements inscribed in 2009, eight were submitted on time and examined by the Committee during the 2014 cycle. Of the four reports expected for elements inscribed in 2010, only one was submitted, as well as two extraordinary reports for elements inscribed in 2013. The three will be examined by the Committee at the present session.
5. This year, in accordance with the Operational Directives (paragraphs 168 and 169), the Committee will also examine the report submitted by a State non-party to the 2003 Convention on its two elements inscribed on the Representative List, which had previously been proclaimed Masterpieces. This report has been duly submitted by the Russian Federation in December 2014.
6. Based on internal evaluation carried out by the Secretariat, 20 reports examined by the Committee in 2014 and seven reports to be examined at the present session of the Committee addressed gender issues and described policies promoting equal access to and participation in cultural life. Further detailed analysis of the reports is provided in Documents [ITH/14/9.COM/5.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-5.a-EN_.doc) and [ITH/15/10.COM/6.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-6.a_EN.docx).

**Performance Indicator 6: Number of States Parties to the Convention increased**

1. During the reporting period, five countries newly ratified the Convention (Bahrain, Myanmar, Bahamas, Kuwait and Marshall Islands). At the time of writing, the total number of States Parties has reached 163. Meanwhile, the Secretariat continues efforts to further promote ratification of the Convention. For instance, the Secretariat supports the organization by the International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia and the Pacific Region (CRIHAP) of a workshop in Sydney, Australia, in November 2015 for States of the Pacific region which have not ratified the Convention.

**Performance Indicator 7: Number of organizations within and outside the United Nations system, civil society, and the private sector contributing to programme delivery**

1. **Category 2 centres supported to contribute to programme delivery**
2. The Convention’s primary external partners are its network of category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO, established and funded by Member States to contribute to the achievement of UNESCO’s objectives by way of global, regional, sub-regional or interregional activities. The Secretariat maintains active relations with eight such centres: seven are devoted exclusively to intangible cultural heritage and the eighth has a dual mandate in world heritage and intangible heritage. The Secretariat manages a dedicated web page (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Category2/>) with key documents for each centre including its recent work plans and annual reports, together with reference documents about the category 2 centre network.
3. During the reporting period, the Secretariat organized the second and third annual coordination meetings of category 2 centres in the field of intangible cultural heritage, respectively in June 2014 in Paris (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?meeting_id=00436>) and from 6 to 8 July 2015 in Guiyang, China, hosted by CRIHAP (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?meeting_id=00478>). These two coordination meetings constituted platforms for participants to take stock of recent developments in the life of the Convention and larger trends underway at UNESCO concerning category 2 centres and to facilitate joint efforts for the integration of the Organization’s medium-term strategy (37 C/4) and programme and budget (37 C/5) into the medium-term and short-term planning of the respective centres. It also offered the occasion to brief the centres fully about the new Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres adopted in 2013 by the UNESCO General Conference (37/C Resolution 93), and the need for the centres to align their work plans to UNESCO’s expected results in the field of intangible cultural heritage, in close coordination with the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section. Whereas the first two meetings in 2013 and 2014 aimed at establishing a common understanding of UNESCO’s global strategy, the third annual meeting focused on peer-to-peer exchanges on the themes of information and networking, collaboration with UNESCO in the global capacity-building programme, programme planning and budgeting, governance, cooperation with Member States, and evaluation and renewal of category 2 centres.
4. The evaluation and renewal process of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America (CRESPIAL) in Cusco, Peru, has been completed. A similar process for the International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI) in Sakai, Japan, is well underway. The International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia‑Pacific Region (ICHCAP) in Jeonju, Republic of Korea is in the middle of the process.
5. **Cooperation strengthened with organizations within the United Nations system**
6. With regard to questions of intellectual property, the Secretariat participated in an expert meeting convened in June 2014 by the United Nations Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the ‘the impact of intellectual property regimes on the enjoyment of the right to science and culture’ within the framework of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976). Furthermore, the Secretariat collaborated with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in organizing a conference on ‘Intellectual Property, Intangible Cultural Heritage and Traditional Medicine in the context of policies for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in the countries of South-Eastern Europe’ hosted by the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 23 to 24 April 2015. The workshop allowed mapping and analysis of some of the key issues related to harnessing intellectual property rights for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, but also showed that more expert reflection and training is required to effectively advise States Parties of the 2003 Convention on this matter. Therefore, it was agreed with WIPO to collaborate on jointly developing training materials for capacity-building on this theme. The Secretariat also participated in a WIPO seminar organized from 23 to 25 June 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland, on issues relevant to the work of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore. The seminar contributed to the global debate initiated by WIPO on effective protection of traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and genetic resources, exploring initial ideas for cooperation to create synergies with relevant standard-setting instruments, including the 2003 Convention. UNESCO will pursue this collaboration in the context of its capacity-building programme.
7. The Secretariat enhanced its cooperation with the World Bank for revision of the World Bank’s environmental and social safeguarding policies, including its policy on physical cultural resources. In this regard, the Secretariat participated in the World Bank workshop on developing guidance for implementing the World Bank safeguarding standard for protecting cultural heritage in development projects, organized from 27 to 28 April 2015 in Paris, France. The Secretariat shared its expertise and made various suggestions to ensure that key principles of the Convention were reflected. The need for free, prior and informed consent of indigenous people and local communities was particularly highlighted.
8. Intangible cultural heritage is at the core of people’s identity and has increasingly been a key target during conflicts and crisis situations over past years resulting in an increasing number of requests to the Secretariat to take action to safeguard intangible heritage in such contexts. While intangible cultural heritage cannot be disconnected from the communities who are its bearers, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in a crisis situation means first and foremost to protect the bearers, i.e. the populations, from oppressive restrictions in engaging in their living heritage. Examining UNESCO’s role and responsibilities for culture in conflict areas at its 196th session in April 2015 and at its 197th session in October 2015, the Executive Board of UNESCO invited the Director-General ‘to continue and enhance efforts to protect culture in times of armed conflict and transition, notably by strengthening the capacity of UNESCO […] through the operationalization of the relevant provisions of the various UNESCO cultural conventions’, ‘to enhance UNESCO’s role within the United Nations system in order for the cultural dimension to be taken in due consideration’ ([Decision 196  EX/29](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002328/232890e.pdf)) by ‘embedding the protection of cultural heritage and cultural diversity in humanitarian action, global security strategies and peace building processes, by means of all pertinent United Nations mechanisms and in collaboration with the relevant United Nations Departments’ (Decision 197 EX/10). To this end, the proposed amendments to the Operational Directives on ‘Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level’ include dedicated provisions to peace and security ([Document ITH/15/10.COM/14.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-14.a_EN.docx)). At country level, considering UNESCO’s mandate and operational means, the Secretariat is developing initiatives to integrate capacity-building for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in emergency responses carried out by the international community. In Syria, a pilot capacity-building activity is under preparation in the context of a larger project funded by the European Union on emergency safeguarding of the Syrian cultural heritage. It aims to build knowledge of staff from international organizations, local NGOs and peacekeeping forces that intervene in conflict zones to understand the concepts and provisions of international law in the field of cultural diversity in general and intangible cultural heritage in particular, and enable them to act in support of its safeguarding. Given the limited scale of the human and financial resources UNESCO can realistically bring to bear, such upstream interventions offer the greatest likelihood of real impact and effectiveness. Based on the results of this pilot activity, the programme could be expanded to other crisis situations.
9. **Cooperation enhanced with civil society**
10. According to the Operational Directives (paragraphs 90 and 96), non-governmental organizations shall be involved by States Parties in the implementation of the Convention at the national level, *inter alia* in identifying and defining intangible cultural heritage and in other appropriate safeguarding measures, and may be invited to provide advisory services to the Committee, as provided in Article 9 of the Convention. The General Assembly has to date accredited 178 non-governmental organizations, including 22 during the reporting period (Resolution 5.GA 6). In addition, the Secretariat has treated during the reporting period a total number of 54 accreditation requests, which will be examined by the Committee at this present session.
11. Paragraph 94 of the Operational Directives foresees that every four years following accreditation of a non-governmental organization, the Committee reviews the contribution and commitment of the advisory organization and its relations with it, taking into account the perspective of the non-governmental organization concerned. In line with the Operational Directives, the renewal process is ongoing for the 97 non-governmental organizations accredited by the General Assembly in 2010 (Resolution 3.GA 7). The Secretariat reviewed 69 reports submitted by these non-governmental organizations. Recommendations for maintaining of their accreditation are presented to the Committee at this present session ([Document ITH/15/10.COM/16](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-16_EN.docx)).
12. Furthermore, considering that the network of UNESCO Chairs can serve as a bridge builder between academia, civil society, local communities, research and policy-making, the Secretariat reviews all applications to establish a UNESCO Chair in a field related to intangible cultural heritage, taking into consideration their potential and capacities to inform policy decisions, establish new teaching initiatives, generate innovation through research and contribute to the enrichment of existing university programmes while promoting the principles of the Convention at the regional or sub-regional levels and strengthening North-South-South cooperation. The network of UNESCO Chairs comprises 11 UNESCO Chairs carrying out activities related to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in 11 different countries.

**Performance Indicator 8: Number of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Convention contributing information to the knowledge management system**

1. **Knowledge management services optimized and utilized for effective implementation and information-sharing[[6]](#footnote-6)**
2. Knowledge management has become more and more indispensable as the Convention’s growth continues, and management of the large quantity of information associated with the work of the Committee and General Assembly is made possible only through the Section’s purpose-built knowledge management system supported entirely through the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. Based on Decision 5.GA 7 and 9.COM 2.BUR 1 about the use of the resources of this Fund, work has continued during the 2014–15 biennium on improving both the functioning of the Convention’s knowledge management system and its usefulness and accessibility to its diverse constituencies.
3. In 2014, the Secretariat released dedicated web pages to present all of the projects undertaken by the Convention whether implemented by States Parties after approval of financial assistance requests by the Committee or implemented directly by UNESCO with financing from its regular programme budget or extrabudgetary funds. The online meeting registration tool was also enhanced to automatically inform Permanent Delegations of ongoing registrations.
4. The Secretariat is currently developing a fully renovated website with the objective to improve browsing experience and provide more user-friendly interfaces. This website should allow States Parties, members of the Secretariat and the public to follow more closely all the processes linked to implementation of the Convention (nominations under process, International Assistance requests and implementation status, capacity-building projects, status of States Parties vis-à-vis periodic reporting and linkage between inscribed elements and related periodic reports). This renovated website will also include a search engine to facilitate searches for web pages, elements, decisions, projects, etc.
5. Furthermore, intensive work is underway to provide easier access to statutory meeting documents and decisions. The Secretariat is processing all past statutory meeting documents to systematically insert cross-linking and include them into UNESDOC – the UNESCO-wide repository of documents. Simultaneously, all decisions of the Committee and resolutions of the General Assembly are being individually indexed in the database, which will considerably improve their accessibility.
6. In addition to improving access to existing information, the Secretariat is developing new online tools to elaborate and submit online International Assistance requests. This new functionality should significantly accelerate the circulation and treatment of these requests. By the end of the year, expert-facilitators will also be able to fill-in online their reports on every workshop organized and the Secretariat will benefit from a new tool: a dashboard that will consolidate information on the diverse tasks each of the Section’s staff members is responsible for, together with deadlines and status updates.
7. Overall, the number and type of stakeholders contributing to and benefitting from the knowledge management system are significantly increasing, from meeting participants (more than 1000 by the last session of the Committee) to representatives of Member States requesting International Assistance (around 20 submissions a year), capacity-building trainers and Evaluation Body members.
8. **Better visibility of intangible cultural heritage and awareness of its significance ensured through publication and dissemination[[7]](#footnote-7)**
9. During the reporting period, and thanks to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, efforts focused on editing, designing and publishing electronic brochures in English and French for the 2012 and 2013 Urgent Safeguarding List and the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices, with the Representative List published exclusively through the interactive website in English, French and Spanish. The editorial preparation of the [2014 edition of the Basic Texts of the Convention](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230504e.pdf) – integrating the amendments to the Operational Directives adopted by the fifth session of the General Assembly and amendments to the Committee’s Rules of Procedure adopted at its eighth session – was completed in the six working languages of the General Assembly. Electronic versions of these publications are made available online. Moreover, the information kit on the Convention has been reprinted with two additional thematic brochures on gender and sustainable development.
10. The website of the Section provides updated information on a regular basis with additional multilingual web content. For instance, 60 news items have been published during the reporting period (33 in 2014 and 35 in 2015 at the time of writing). Videos of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List and Representative List are made available by the Secretariat through a cooperative arrangement with [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/unesco). These continue month after month constituting more than 80% of videos viewed online from UNESCO – a remarkable rate (see the monthly reports of the Division of Public Information). The Committee’s sessions also continue to rank among the highest-visibility events in UNESCO’s calendar, with appreciable increases in web page visits and peaks of news coverage in print and electronic media.
11. The Secretariat also receives requests for patronage and use of the emblem of the Convention, which are then processed by the Conventions Common Services Unit. During the reporting period, 21 such requests were received and 15 resulted in the granting of the Convention’s patronage. States that are granted patronage are requested to report on the use of the Convention’s emblem and the relevant activities’ impact on the visibility of UNESCO and the Convention with specific target audiences; the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section is making a systematic effort to collect such reports and make them available on the Convention’s website. Furthermore, during the same period, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section received 74 requests for the use of copyrighted multimedia materials available on the website of the Section. Sixty-five such requests were approved for the use of a total of 1,635 photos and videos by external partners.
12. **Conclusion and prospects**
13. The Secretariat of the Convention continues to be strongly committed to efficient and effective implementation of the Convention. Members of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section which assume the role of the Secretariat, in cooperation with Field Offices, strive to provide States Parties with professional support.
14. Such effort has concentrated around two pillars: support for the governance of the Convention (in particular the organization of General Assembly, evaluation bodies, Committee) and the treatment of nominations, requests and reports submitted through statutory mechanisms on one hand, and the expansion, on the other, of the capacity-building programme to a larger number of beneficiary countries. As a whole, steady progress has been made to meet the targets and benchmarks for the biennium and quadrennium. The principle that runs behind every aspect of the work of the Secretariat has been to provide with the most conducive environment for encouraging international cooperation and better implementation of the Convention at the national and international levels for the benefit of communities, groups and individuals for whom intangible cultural heritage is crucial for their identity and continuity.
15. Under the reporting period the Secretariat also tried its best to respond to the requests of the governing bodies by helping the international community to address a number of cross-cutting thematic areas such as sustainable development, codes of ethics, post-conflict and post-disaster management and the role of gender. In addition, improvements have been sought in terms of increasing the efficiency in supporting States Parties be it introducing new methodologies such as Technical Assistance for revising or elaborating International Assistance requests, streamlining of processes, or better access to information about the Convention. Similarly, action has been taken to start developing a stronger and more comprehensive monitoring mechanism that would allow qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the effectiveness both short-term and longer-term of the capacity‑building programme.
16. The situation concerning human resources of the Secretariat remains very difficult, given the high responsibilities and large volume of tasks assigned to it by the Convention, Operational Directives, governing bodies and the Organization. While the Secretariat is grateful for the support it is receiving from States Parties in the form of detachments, associate experts and project appointments, it must also be recalled that assignments of limited duration require a substantial investment in training and does not provide a sustainable solution. The financial constraints facing UNESCO call once again for creative solutions of focusing and prioritizing the Secretariat’s work so that it can continue to be in a position to offer the highest quality service possible to the Committee, General Assembly and to Member States.
17. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 10.COM 7.b

The Committee,

1. Having examined document ITH/15/10.COM/7.b,
2. Welcomes the new structure of the report of the Secretariat by performance indicators;
3. Commends the Secretariat for its initiatives to ensure the effective implementation of the decisions of the Committee, the effective organization of statutory meetings and its steady progress towards the longer-term expected results over the past biennium, and takes note with interest of a number of improvements made in the working methods of the Secretariat such as the provision of Technical Assistance, summary for periodic reports and the timely treatment of nominations;
4. Welcomes with satisfaction the expanded reach and continued effectiveness of the global capacity-building programme and also appreciates the regular review, adaptation and enrichment of its content and format to respond effectively to major implementation challenges at the national level, while noting the effort of the Secretariat in establishing a follow-up and evaluation mechanism for capacity-building activities to generate data on their effectiveness;
5. Thanks the States Parties that have generously provided extrabudgetary support to make the global capacity-building strategy possible and to support the other statutory functions of the Secretariat and invites States Parties to offer further support, particularly in the form of contributions to the sub-fund for enhancing the human resources of the Secretariat in order to allow it to address longer-term efforts;
6. Further welcomes the initiative from the Secretariat to develop a fully renovated website that facilitates access to existing information, and encourages the Secretariat to continue exploring the possibilities of further developing online tools;
7. Appreciates the efforts of the Secretariat to coordinate the growing network of category 2 centres and stimulate their ability to contribute effectively to UNESCO’s strategic objectives in the field of intangible cultural heritage.

1. . This performance indicator also reflects the outcomes of the Secretariat’s work against the Expected Result 1 ‘Capacity-building programme strengthened to effectively support countries in developing their national policies and human and institutional resources for intangible cultural heritage’ of the results framework that was approved by the Bureau (Decision 9.COM 2.BUR 1) and that guides the Secretariat’s utilization of the funds made available from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for ‘other functions of the Committee’ for the periods of 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015 and 1 January to 30 June 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . This performance indicator reflects the outcomes of the Secretariat’s work against the Expected Result 3 ‘Guidance provided on best safeguarding practices and recommendations made on measures for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage’ of the results framework approved by the Bureau (Decision 9.COM 2.BUR 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . The total of 141 files includes three multinational files involving States Parties from different regional groups. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. . The Request for Preparatory Assistance for elaborating a nomination for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List was approved by the Bureau of the Committee in 2014 (Decision 9.COM 4.BUR/2). The corresponding contractual arrangements were completed and the assistance is currently being implemented. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . Two requests will be examined by the Committee at its tenth session in 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. . This performance indicator reflects the outcomes of the Secretariat’s work against the Expected Result 2 ‘Knowledge management services optimized and utilized for effective implementation and information‑sharing’ of the results framework approved by the Bureau (Decision 9.COM 2.BUR 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. . This performance indicator reflects the outcomes of the Secretariat’s work against the Expected Result 4 ‘Better visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and awareness of its significance ensured through publication and dissemination’ of the results framework approved by the Bureau (Decision  9.COM  2.BUR 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)