



## BACKGROUND NOTE

### GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR STRENGTHENING NATIONAL CAPACITIES FOR SAFEGUARDING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE:

#### ARAB REGION REVIEW MEETING

Kuwait City, 10-11 May 2014

#### A. Rationale

The global strategy for strengthening national capacities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage was conceived by UNESCO in 2009 to assist States Parties in creating institutional and professional environments favourable to the sustainable safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and in promoting broad public knowledge and support for the Convention's concepts and objectives. It became operational at country level in 2011 thanks to the commitment of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the generous support from donor countries.

By mid-2011 UNESCO had developed, updated, revised and started translating the initial training curriculum, based on the feedback from a first round of "training-of-trainers" workshops in spring 2011. Among this series, Abu Dhabi hosted in April 2011 the first Training-of-trainers workshop for the Arab region in which the initial curriculum was introduced, covering four content areas: ratification, implementation, inventories and nominations to the Convention's lists.

Four years have passed since then and thanks to consolidated efforts of the facilitators trained in Abu Dhabi, to the donors who provided support and to UNESCO colleagues in the region, the roll-out of the strategy in countries across the region began.

Today, already 7 UNESCO Member States in the Arab region<sup>1</sup> have benefited or are benefitting from capacity-building projects and at least 4 more country projects<sup>2</sup> are at the planning stage. These focus on the most urgent needs: policy and legal revision, setting up the institutional infrastructure required for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, developing inventorying methodology and mechanisms, and strengthening skills for the effective participation in international cooperation mechanisms. Indeed, more than 15 trainings combined with advisory services and pilot activities have been carried out in 7 countries from the region since mid 2011.

The 'Mediterranean Living Heritage (MedLiHer)', a multinational project supported by the European Union, was the first intervention to be implemented in the region that contributed to strengthening the

<sup>1</sup> Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Mauritania, Tunisia, Morocco, Iraq

<sup>2</sup> Palestine, Yemen, Sudan and the Syrian arab republic and Egypt

institutional capacity in Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan. A second multi-country experience, funded by a contribution from Norway to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, is underway since 2013 in Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia. In the same year, the project 'Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage' supported by the European Union was approved and aims at integrating an inclusive approach for the safeguarding of the cultural heritage in a context of crisis. It includes several training workshops in the field of intangible heritage as well as pilot safeguarding projects. Targeted interventions have been organized in Iraq including a needs assessment in Kurdistan and an implementation workshop in Erbil (Iraq) in April 2014. Furthermore, in February of the same year an agreement between UNESCO and the Government of Algeria was signed to create a category 2 center in Algiers for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Africa. This centre will enlarge the UNESCO network of the six regional centers already existing in Bulgaria, China, Japan, Peru, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Korea devoted exclusively to the intangible cultural heritage. All of them are essential partners for the implementation of the capacity building programme around the world.

Regarding the training materials, they were repackaged into a unit system to be more user-friendly and easily adaptable. Furthermore, new contents have been developed on the elaboration of safeguarding plans (tested and now being finalized), and work is ongoing to develop new materials on policy development, sustainable development and gender.

A first internal review meeting of UNESCO's global strategy took place in Beijing, China in November 2012, a second was organized in Cusco, Peru, from 17 to 19 September 2013. The review meeting from 10 to 11 May in Kuwait City is the third in this series held with the intention to take stock of the initial experiences, assess the lessons learnt and advise on ways forward. The present meeting is organized in close collaboration with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and Kuwait National Council for Culture, Art and Letters (NCCAL) and hosted by the Government of Kuwait.

## **B. Objectives**

The meeting intends to contribute to a first review of implementing UNESCO's strategy to strengthen national capacities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the Arab region in order to determine, if we are on the right track. More specifically it intends to:

- Take stock of the initial experiences of implementing the capacity-building strategy to identify lessons learnt and further improve the implementation process and tools in the Arab region
- Assess the experiences of training delivery from a substantive and pedagogic point of view to further improve training curricula, materials and methods
- Discuss the initial impact and advise on the ways forward in terms of outreach, new content areas and overall programme orientation, keeping in mind the larger objectives of sustainable development.

## C. Outputs

The meeting will essentially produce three kinds of outputs:

- A set of guidance notes on practical issues of programme implementation in the Arab region, to clarify the roles and responsibilities among the stakeholders involved in the delivering of services in the framework of the project interventions
- A set of suggestions and proposals to improve the tools and materials used in the capacity-building programme and the integration of new themes, such as policy advice and gender issues as well as the methodology for needs assessment
- A report on the review meeting, consolidating the insights and suggestions that emerged from the discussions and suggesting ways forward.

## D. Participants

The meeting will bring together up to 8 facilitators and 8 UNESCO program specialists from field offices and headquarters who have been closely involved in implementing the global strategy. It will also include a number of observers from ALECSO, the Kuwait Authorities and representatives of the category 2 center in Algiers for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Africa and thus amount to about 20 participants in total. (see list of participants)

## E. Meeting structure and facilitation

The meeting is divided into four parts:

**Part I: Introduction and assessment of the previously held regional workshops:** a general update of the capacity-building strategy will be provided and will be followed by some conclusions on the previous meeting 'Conceptual and institutional frameworks for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Arab States' held between 7 to 9 May and the application of its results to the capacity building strategy.

**Part II: Implementing capacity-building projects / activities effectively:** it will aim at exposing what has been implemented and achieved till now in the Arab region in the framework of UNESCO's global capacity-building strategy and what are the lessons learnt.

**Part III: Delivering the ICH capacity-building curriculum:** it will focus on the content of the capacity building programme and the training materials, assessing the strengths and weaknesses, including also, the pedagogical methodology applied to date.

**Part IV: Looking to the future** will introduce to the participants to the new contents and approaches proposed by UNESCO to improve the delivery of capacity-building programme and trainings.

The workshop sessions will include discussions in plenary and group work. All sessions will be facilitated by a UNESCO colleague (see the draft programme of the meeting).

## F. Organization

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Section is responsible for the substantive part of the meeting. Please contact: Susanne Schnüttgen, Chief of Unit for Capacity Building and Heritage Policy in the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section ([s.schnuttgen@unesco.org](mailto:s.schnuttgen@unesco.org)) or Marina Calvo, Assistant Programme Specialist and the Section's focal point for the Arab region ([m.calvo@unesco.org](mailto:m.calvo@unesco.org)).