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

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

**Meeting of the Bureau**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Room VIII**

**22 March 2018**

**Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Discussion on multiple submissions of   
International Assistance requests from a single country**

|  |
| --- |
| **Summary**  There have been an increasing number of International Assistance requests of less than US$100,000 submitted by a single country, either at the same time or in quick succession. The Bureau may wish to reflect on how to deal with such multiple submissions in the future, particularly as regards the implications this has for the overall implementation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. The present document provides background information that may facilitate the initiation of such considerations.  **Decisions required:** paragraph 6 |

1. As per paragraph 47 of the Operational Directives, International Assistance requests up to US$100,000 (except requests for preparatory assistance) can be submitted at any time. Paragraph 49 further provides that requests up to US$100,000 are examined and approved by the Bureau of the Committee. The present Bureau was asked to examine four International Assistance requests submitted by Zimbabwe ([ITH/18/13.COM 1.BUR/3](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM_1.BUR-3-EN.docx)). It is somewhat unusual for the Bureau to be asked, during one sitting, to examine multiple International Assistance requests of less than US$100,000 sent in by the same State Party. In the past, in various Bureau meetings requests have been examined even when they were concomitantly submitted by a single country, because not all requests are completed at the same pace. In other words, there may be an element of coincidence in these four requests having been presented to the Bureau on this occasion. Having said that, the Secretariat has recently started to receive several International Assistance requests, either submitted at the same time or one after the other in quick succession.
2. The Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention currently include no indications to guide submissions by States Parties to request financial assistance under the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, particularly in situations in which:

(a) multiple requests are submitted by the same State Party;

(b) a new request(s) is submitted while there is another project under implementation with assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund;

(c) a new request(s) is submitted when there is another file being completed for examination by the Bureau or the Committee for the same or different types of assistance.

1. On a few occasions so far, the Secretariat has considered that multiple requests submitted together or with an overlapping implementation period may be processed if they concern different implementing agencies. This approach has been taken on the understanding that different agencies within the country should be able to benefit from the Intangible Heritage Fund, as they may have different mandates and scopes of activities. At the same time, the advice to submitting States has also been not to put forward multiple requests for the same implementing agency in order to avoid privileging a single entity; this was also for an administrative reason, since UNESCO normally prefers to establish one contract with a given organization at any time. Should a new request be received while the same agency is in the process of implementing another project with financial assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, the Secretariat has advised submitting States to wait until the ongoing project is completed before asking for assistance with a new request.
2. In reality, however, these principles were not always followed to the letter when there were country-specific situations involved, and there have been a limited number of cases in which States were granted assistance for multiple projects with an overlapping implementation period. Having administered six cycles of the International Assistance mechanism, there seem to be a certain number of additional issues that need to be addressed, such as the cumulative amount of assistance that a country may receive over a period of time and across different types of assistance. Another issue that merits attention is the interpretation and application of the criteria and considerations concerning the eligibility and selection criteria of International Assistance requests that are currently provided in the Operational Directives under sub-chapter I.4. Paragraph 10 on the ‘principle of equitable geographical distribution’ and the ‘special needs of developing countries’ as well as criterion A.7 regarding ‘previously financed activities, if any, in line with all regulations and any conditions applied thereto’ are particularly relevant to the question at hand.
3. The Bureau may wish to take stock of the experiences of granting International Assistance so far and to reflect - on behalf of the Committee in the first instance - on how to deal in the future with multiple submissions from a single State implying an overlapping implementation period, and on the implications of this tendency for the overall implementation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. This is particularly timely since the monetary implication of the multiple submissions has become bigger, following the increase from US$25,000 to US$100,000 in June 2016 of the amount of request that the Bureau is mandated to examine. This exercise is also important as the issue under question could become a recurrent matter since the Bureau is receiving an increasing number of International Assistance requests and this tendency is forecasted to continue with the planned operationalization of the International Assistance mechanism.
4. The Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

**DRAFT DECISION 13.COM 1.BUR 4**

The Bureau,

1. Recalling Articles 22 and 23 of the Convention as well as Chapter I.4 of the Operational Directives relating to the eligibility and criteria of International Assistance requests,
2. Requests that the Secretariat assist the Bureau in taking stock of its experience related to the granting of International Assistance, particularly as regards the number and amount of assistance granted to a single country, together with any other pertinent administrative issues, so that the Bureau can examine them during its meeting scheduled in June 2018 with a view to proposing appropriate measures to the Committee, if they are deemed necessary.