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

**Expert meeting on developing an overall results framework for the Convention**

Beijing, China, 7 to 9 September 2016

**Background document**

Context of the meeting

1. In 2013, as part of its evaluation of the standard-setting work of UNESCO’s Culture Sector,[[1]](#footnote-1) UNESCO’s Internal Oversight Service (IOS) noted that no overall results framework exists for the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereafter, the Convention). In the ‘absence of objectives, indicators and benchmarks’ to monitor the implementation of the Convention it is difficult to draw conclusions about the progress, accomplishments and challenges faced. The IOS report therefore recommended the ‘development of an overall results framework for the Convention (with objectives, time-frames, quantitative and qualitative indicators, and benchmarks)’ and suggested that ‘pending discussion, the draft Convention Theory of Change presented in chapter 1.3 [of the evaluation] could serve as a basis for the results framework.’
2. Such a results framework is consistent with the Results-Based Management approach in use at UNESCO, and responds to the expectations of Member States that increasingly demand evidence-based demonstrations of the Organization’s effectiveness that can be convincing within their own national decision-making processes. Developing a results framework for the Convention through a consultative process can help all the diverse stakeholders to highlight successes and identify challenges in its implementation, thereby raising the visibility and standard of the work being carried out, and helping to develop a clear, credible and evidence-based vision for the future implementation of the Convention. This can help UNESCO to maintain and demonstrate its effectiveness in supporting the implementation of the Convention, and thereby maintain its accountability to Member States. It can help States Parties to identify, support and share effective ways to support communities, groups and individuals concerned in safeguarding at the national and international levels, and make periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention an effective monitoring tool.
3. When the Committee debated this item at its eighth session in 2013, States Members fully shared the view that an overall results framework was much needed in order to be able, on an on-going basis, to evaluate the degree to which the implementation of the Convention is accomplishing its mission. However, Committee Members stressed in their discussion that the process of developing an overall results framework should be led by States Parties and is one in which they should be fully involved. In its [Decision 8.COM 5.c.1](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/8.COM/5.c.1), the Committee thus decided to ‘develop an overall results framework for the Convention including clear objectives, time-frames, indicators and benchmarks.’
4. In that decision, the Committee deleted reference to the draft Theory of Change put forward in the IOS report of 2013. That Theory of Change set out certain assumptions which, Members felt that, while thought-provoking, it was not yet in the view of the Committee ready to serve as a foundation upon which an overall results framework could be constructed. This suggests that if a Theory of Change is to be used to assist in the development of a results framework, it will need to be revised and further discussed, with the participation of States Parties and other stakeholders. IOS confirmed that this was indeed an initial and tentative proposal ‘not meant to represent any overall consensus among State Parties about how the Convention is expected to work, but rather serve as a living draft that hopefully will be further discussed and improved in the future’[[2]](#footnote-2).
5. Responding to the requests in [Decision 8.COM 5.c.1](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/8.COM/5.c.1), the Secretariat invited the ninth session of the Committee to discuss a process and timetable by which a results framework for the Convention could be developed. It suggested that an open ended intergovernmental working group of the Committee could be convened in 2016, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources. That plan was welcomed by the Committee, which recognized ‘the necessity for an inclusive process of consultation and discussion in the development of such a framework’ ([Decision 9.COM 13.e](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/9.COM/13.e)) and decided to convene such an intergovernmental working group in 2016 to examine preliminary recommendations of possible Operational Directives, on the condition that adequate extra-budgetary resources were mobilized.
6. Although no donors came forward in sufficient time to permit such a meeting to be organized in 2016, the National Commission of the People’s Republic of China for UNESCO offered to support a smaller, less formal meeting of experts that could elaborate a preliminary framework for submission to a subsequent intergovernmental working group. In this way, when the working group convenes it can benefit from the perspectives and experience of a diverse and geographically representative group of experts, ensuring that from the beginning the framework reflects the desired ‘inclusive process of consultation and discussion.’ In its [Decision 10.COM 9](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/9), the Committee therefore ‘Accept[ed] with gratitude the generous contribution of the National Commission of the People’s Republic of China, approve[d] its specific purpose and request[ed] the Secretariat to ensure the proper organization of the expert meeting.’
7. The present meeting, made possible through the support of China, will bring together 23 experts from different UNESCO Member States and Associate Members, working in governmental and non-governmental institutions, in communities or practitioner groups, as well as seven members of UNESCO’s Secretariat. Discussions during the meeting will be co-facilitated by an expert experienced in designing results framework and an expert familiar with the Convention and its implementation. This meeting is organized as a category VI expert meeting, in UNESCO’s terminology: experts thus participate in their private capacity and not as representatives of any government or organization. Meetings of this nature are private and its recommendations are not ascribed by name to any participant.
8. The aim of the meeting is to bring a wide range of experts together to share their own experiences and analytical insights to build consensus around a first structure and scheme from which a preliminary results framework for the Convention can be developed, based on a better critical understanding of:
9. the aims and objectives of implementing the Convention;
10. experiences in implementing the Convention, and the potential for achieving its aims in the future;
11. the purpose of evaluating implementation of the Convention, including the kinds of evaluation ‘products’ that may be useful to key stakeholders;
12. what aspects of its implementation by different stakeholders could or should be monitored and/or evaluated, and
13. how those aspects could be monitored and/or evaluated, using quantitative and qualitative indicators for interventions or other inputs, as well as the outputs and outcomes of those interventions. This may help to inform the identification of a draft set of core indicators for a results framework linked to both the main obligations of States Parties under the Convention and the desired outcomes and impacts of the Convention.
14. The results of the discussion of the present meeting will be shared in a report to the eleventh session of the Committee in November 2016. Based on the outcomes of both the present meeting and the debates during the eleventh session of the Committee, a preliminary overall results framework will be developed and then debated by representatives of States Parties during an open-ended intergovernmental working group which could take place in 2017, should voluntary supplementary contributions to cover all related costs be received into the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund not later than January 2017. At its twelfth session at the end of 2017, the Committee could then examine draft Operational Directives based on the overall results framework on which the open-ended intergovernmental working group would have reached agreement and submit it to the General Assembly for its examination during its seventh session in June 2018.

Issues to consider in developing a results framework for the Convention

1. An important discussion that will need to take place in the present meeting is to determine the scope of the overall results framework. The Convention’s Preamble describes the context for the Convention and some of the assumptions shared by its States Parties, and its Article 1 defines its purposes. Both are ambitious and wide-ranging.
2. Like any other convention, the 2003 Convention is a treaty among States, and States Parties are its primary actors. Other actors (including communities, groups and individuals concerned who practice and transmit their intangible cultural heritage) are not given any specific obligations under the Convention, because it is an agreement between States, but nevertheless contribute to its purposes. A major challenge for development of an overall results framework will therefore be to bring community inputs into the processes of elaborating it and periodically revising it.
3. States Parties undertake actions in implementing the Convention, which stem from the obligations agreed to in the text of the Convention. The Convention text itself imposes few obligations on States Parties aside from reporting as well as some administrative and financial obligations. States Parties ‘shall’, for example:
* ‘take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory’ (Article 11[a]);
* ‘among the safeguarding measures referred to in Article 2, paragraph 3, identify and define the various elements of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory, with the participation of communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organizations’ (Article 11[b]); and
* ‘to ensure identification with a view to safeguarding, […] draw up, in a manner geared to its own situation, one or more inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory’ (Article 12.1)
1. The Convention does not define what, under Article 11, comprises the ‘necessary measures’ to support safeguarding. All of the obligations and some or all of the measures recommended in the Convention and its texts will likely be considered ‘necessary’ by States, depending on their local context. Policies for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and capacity building are for example not always needed at the national level. Conversely, measures others than those mentioned in the texts may be considered necessary by some States to implement the Convention. Implementing these measures, of course, does not always achieve the desired result.
2. The Convention does make some strong recommendations to guide the action of States Parties to support safeguarding, pursuant to the general obligation mentioned under Article 11. In Articles 13-15, the Convention strongly encourages States Parties in various courses of action, including policy-making, education and capacity-building. The Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention[[3]](#footnote-3) approved by the General Assembly of States Parties, or other principles adopted by the Committee, such as the Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage[[4]](#footnote-4),may also make recommendations and impose some obligations on States Parties within the framework of the Convention, although they remain legally subordinate to the Convention text.
3. Some principles such as community participation and sustainable development, have been given fuller consideration in the Convention’s texts than others. Article 15 of the Convention encourages each State Party to endeavour ‘to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit intangible cultural heritage, and to involve them actively in its management.’ Community participation is thereby considered essential to ensure that activities generate the expected outcomes, i.e. the continued practice and transmission of living expressions and manifestations within those communities and groups that recognize them as part of their cultural heritage. In the context of the main international mechanisms under the Convention (Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity [Article 16], List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding [Article 17], Register of Best Safeguarding Practices [Article 18] and International Assistance [Articles 19 to 24]), the selection criteria established in the Operational Directives systematically *require* community involvement in the preparation of files[[5]](#footnote-5). The Ethical Principles are even more explicit on the need for community participation and consent. For example, Ethical Principle 1 states that communities, groups and individuals concerned ‘should have the primary role in safeguarding their own intangible cultural heritage.’ Ethical Principle 4 states that ‘All interactions with the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals who create, safeguard, maintain and transmit intangible cultural heritage should be characterized by transparent collaboration, dialogue, negotiation and consultation, and contingent upon their free, prior, sustained and informed consent.’
4. The principle of sustainable development is also present in the text of the Convention and was gradually integrated in its Operational Directives. The Convention’s Preamble describes intangible cultural heritage as a ‘guarantee of sustainable development’, and as a ‘factor in bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among them.’ Article 2.1 does not establish an obligation on States Parties to promote sustainable development, but has the effect of preventing intangible cultural heritage being taken into consideration at the international level if it is ‘not compatible with the requirements […] of sustainable development.’ Chapter VI of the Operational Directives on Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level, as recently approved by the sixth session of the General Assembly in June 2016, recommends wide-ranging courses of action to States Parties in fostering the linkages between safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development. It also goes a step further by stating that States Parties ‘shall direct their safeguarding efforts solely on such intangible cultural heritage that is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.’[[6]](#footnote-6)
5. Specific challenges arise from developing an overall results framework for an international normative instrument such as the 2003 Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which is atypical of the kind of organizations and programmes on which monitoring and evaluation work typically focuses. There are currently very few examples of evaluations of the implementation of normative instruments such as the UNESCO Conventions, i.e. legal instruments that set standards for achieving certain goals.
6. The most similar exercise which has arguably been undertaken to date is the above-mentioned evaluation of the standard-setting work of UNESCO’s Culture Sector. Its overall purpose was ‘to generate findings and recommendations regarding the relevance and the effectiveness of the standard‐setting work of the Culture Sector.’[[7]](#footnote-7) It is important to emphasize that any overall results framework of the Convention cannot concern only the work of the UNESCO Secretariat but rather encompass the efforts of diverse stakeholders, ranging from the States Parties that ratified the Convention (including their various ministries, agencies, institutions, universities, etc.) and the Convention’s governing General Assembly and Intergovernmental Committee, to a multitude of diverse civil society organizations, public and private bodies, as well as the UNESCO Secretariat and the communities, groups and individuals who are the primary focus of the Convention. Yet, in order to have an idea of the work that such a normative instrument aims to achieve, it might be useful, as the IOS report did, to recall the working definition of normative work as agreed by the UN Heads of Evaluation in 2012 and which can be broken down into three categories:
7. the development of norms and standards;
8. support to governments and others to integrate the norms and standards into legislation, policies and development plans; and
9. support to governments and others to implement legislation, policies and development plans based on the international norms, standards and conventions.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Given that the Convention was adopted by UNESCO’s General Conference in 2003 and has since been ratified by more than 160 countries, the first part of that work has been accomplished (at least as far as the international level) and an overall results framework for the 2003 Convention should rather focus on its implementation, both at the policy level and at the programme level.

1. Developing a results framework for an international normative instrument whose implementation relies on such a wide range of actors therefore poses the challenge of reflecting the diversity of views and aspirations. How do actions undertaken by various stakeholders contribute to the purposes of the Convention? Article 1 of the Convention lists four main purposes:
	1. to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;
	2. to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned;
	3. to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof; and
	4. to provide for international cooperation and assistance.
2. Starting from these stated purposes, it may be useful to consider how different actors identify and measure success in implementing the Convention to agree on a number of changes that the Convention would aim to accomplish in the world. The assumption might be that undertaking most of the obligations and the recommended actions under the Convention appropriate to the context may promote its purposes, but these assumptions may need to be tested, or refined. Different kinds of measures may be appropriate in different contexts. What evidence is needed to find the answers to these questions, and how can it be collected (if at all)? Are there other ways in which the purposes of the Convention can better be achieved in the future?
3. In attempting to answer these questions, factors such as the openness of the definition of intangible cultural heritage developed for the purpose of the Convention (Article 2.1) or the lack of definition of ‘community’ in the Convention may raise additional challenges. The Convention nevertheless does suggest some characteristics of what it is considered intangible cultural heritage for the Convention’s purposes, including:
* that ‘communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize [intangible cultural heritage] as part of their cultural heritage’;
* that it is ‘transmitted from generation to generation;
* that it ‘is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history’, and
* that it ‘provides them with a sense of identity and continuity.’

The continued presence of these characteristics could therefore indicate that the intangible cultural heritage is being safeguarded to the satisfaction of the communities, groups and individuals concerned.

1. This kind of assessment relies therefore more on community consensus than on external ‘scientific’ measures of success; some community members may have different opinions as to the viability of specific intangible cultural heritage elements, or dispute the representation of their element. Even where there is a fair degree of internal consensus on the safeguarding of a particular self-defined element, reviewing the broader landscape of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding remains challenging. Have the communities, groups and individuals concerned and the expressions or practices that they recognize as part of their cultural heritage been appropriately identified? Different communities and groups can claim the same intangible cultural heritage element, and be in dispute with each other. In this context, indicators such as the number of elements on an inventory, or the amount of money spent on safeguarding activities, may be poor proxies for success, at least in isolation from other measures.

What is a Results Framework?

1. According to the Results-based Management (RBM) Task Team of the United Nations Development Group,[[9]](#footnote-9) a results framework ‘explains how results are to be achieved, including causal relationships and underlying assumptions and risks.’ By reflecting strategic thinking across an entire organization or a programme, a well-constructed results-framework can therefore be beneficial for monitoring, management and evaluation in multiple ways. The World Bank How-to Guide lists them as follows: i) it helps focus on specific outcomes; ii) it highlights the key linkages in the theory of change that underpin interventions; iii) it helps establish an evidence-based approach to monitoring and evaluation; iv) it helps measure progress towards strategic objectives and v) it helps achieve strategic objectives[[10]](#footnote-10).
2. UNESCO’s Mid-Term Strategy ([37C/4](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002278/227860E.pdf)) designates the Results-Based Management (RBM) approach as essential for a culture of accountability expressed in terms of expected results and impacts. Within the United Nations, RBM is understood as a cyclical ‘management strategy by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of results, ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes and higher level goals or impact). The actors in turn use information and evidence on actual results to inform decision making on the design, resourcing and delivery of programmes and activities as well as for accountability and reporting.’[[11]](#footnote-11) Results frameworks are therefore explicit articulations (graphic or tabular representations) of such strategies that display the relationship between objectives, actions and the measurement of indicators showing progress towards expected outcomes.
3. The results framework most often utilized within UNESCO takes the form of a log-frame (or logical frame, also called ‘log-frame matrixes’). At UNESCO, as in the United Nations more broadly, a log-frame is an obligatory element of every work-plan or extra-budgetary project proposal. UNESCO’s in-house programming and budgeting tool, SISTER,[[12]](#footnote-12) supports the Organization’s RBM and Results-Based Budgeting through a hierarchy of log-frames that together constitute a results chain, with smaller activities contributing to the achievement of larger activities or groupings, then to programme-level expected results and on to main lines of action.
4. Log-frames may take diverse forms, but they typically involve concise statements of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, results and impacts (see UNESCO RBM Glossary below) and involve a defined period of time. They may include a column making explicit some of the assumptions or contingencies involved. They may include a column identifying which actor or actors are responsible for which interventions. They often differ substantially in the level of detail provided and in the complexity of programme described. The outputs, outcomes, results and/or impacts typically include explicitly defined indicators to allow effectiveness to be measured; such targets are often expressed in terms of changes (increases or decreases) as compared to a benchmark. Result indicators are usually required to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound), and are most often expressed in quantitative terms (though qualitative indicators are also possible and, in UNESCO’s RBM approach, preferable). Thus an output indicator might be expressed as ‘X additional workshops organized’, while a result indicator might be expressed as ‘Trainees effectively influence policy process in X additional provinces.’ At all levels, in selecting indicators it is crucial to consider how easy it will be to collect verifiable data and the resources required.
5. A log-frame is well-suited to a relatively linear theory of causality. For instance, UNESCO defines the ‘Intervention logic (or transformative process)’ for its own programming approach as follows:

Inputs ☞Interventions (actions) ☞Outputs ☞ Results (outcomes and impacts).

A framework of causal relationships links inputs to outputs, results and eventually impacts. The expected result is the last step of the intervention logic, where inputs (financial, human, material, technological and information resources) are used to undertake interventions (actions taken or work performed) leading to outputs which contribute to a desired change in state or condition – the expected result. [[13]](#footnote-13)

1. Thus, for example, working back along the chain above, if the desired impact is the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage at the national and local level, one of the desired outcomes underlying such an impact is improved institutional capacities at the national and local levels for supporting safeguarding by communities, groups and individuals concerned and developing improved capacities within them to identify, document and safeguard their own intangible cultural heritage.
2. There are a number of very basic quantitative indicators that UNESCO is already using to track progress and to assess the effectiveness of its interventions, i.e. if the intended results were achieved, such as the number of capacity-building workshops conducted or the existence of policies dealing with intangible cultural heritage or inventories. However, there might not be a direct link between the frequency, presence or absence of these kinds of interventions and the broader purpose of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, because much depends on *how* such interventions are designed and implemented, the context in which they are delivered, as well of course as to whether they are sustained after by participants or institutions. It may also therefore be important to have a measure of the number of participants who are community representatives or who can work with communities, groups and individuals concerned to support safeguarding (and this may be difficult to define). Yet, while some indicators might be relatively easy to measure, whether they are good proxies for the outcomes and impacts sought might not be easy to determine. Further indicators (perhaps qualitative in nature) may therefore be needed to assess whether a training workshop actually contributed in some way to stronger capacities at a broader level than the individual level.
3. Given the numerous challenges above-mentioned, a log-frame seems therefore ill-suited to involve the broader range of actors involved in implementing the Convention and reflect their aspirations and perspectives. The complexity and non-linearity of the causal links between actions taken under the umbrella of the Convention also represent a significant obstacle to putting the Convention’s potential for change into a simple log-frame. Indeed, in developing a results framework for the Convention, one might consider which actions *contribute* to its purposes (or serve them badly), whether they can be clearly *attributed* to it or not.
4. The particular aspects of the IOS draft Theory of Change for the Convention which raised the Committee’s well-founded concerns did not refer to the approach itself. Therefore, the Convention Secretariat, having considered the advantages and limitations of using such an approach in the development of an overall results framework for the Convention, and discussed with more than ten experts experienced in the field of monitoring and evaluation, proposes to use the Theory of Change approach, bearing in mind that ‘like any tool, Theory of Change can be good or bad, useful or not; it needs to be used critically.’[[14]](#footnote-14).
5. As the World Bank How-to Guide states ‘a simple but clear results framework engages constituents in thinking through the theory of change underpinning the intervention. […] This participatory discussion serves a critical role in building consensus and ownership around shared objectives and clarifying different interpretations of the elements of the hypothesis’[[15]](#footnote-15). In the meeting, a revised draft Theory of Change based on the IOS report, and associated indicators focused on the purposes of the Convention as laid down in Article 1, will be proposed by the facilitators to be used by experts as tools for critical reflection on assumptions about the relationships between actions and results. It is expected that this may assist in the development of indicators for a results framework and a discussion about how such a framework could be operationalized and used.

What is a Theory of Change, and how can it be used?

1. The Theory of Change approach is relatively new within UNESCO but is increasingly employed by the United Nations and its specialized agencies and widely used in monitoring and evaluation approaches by donors and foundations and other international, national or local organizations. The Theory of Change approach can be used in different ways: as a planning tool, most likely ‘an extension of the “assumptions” box in a logframe’; as a communication tool both internally and externally in an organization; or as a less formal ‘thinking tool’, to facilitate creative discussion and consensus-making in developing a log-frame.[[16]](#footnote-16) The present meeting intends to use it mainly in its third meaning.
2. ‘Theories of change are the ideas and hypotheses people and organisations have about how change happens. These “theories” can be conscious or unconscious and are based on personal beliefs, assumptions and a necessarily limited, personal perception of reality.’[[17]](#footnote-17) The steps leading to various stages of change can be formulated as a series of ‘if-then’ statements that make explicit certain assumptions, which can then be tested and challenged if necessary. By making explicit the assumptions on which interventions are founded and by clearly delineating the impacts that they are expected to have, the Theory of Change approach can provide a framework against which their implementation can be compared and assist in developing appropriate indicators for a monitoring and evaluation process.
3. Developing a Theory or Theories of Change is challenging, however, especially if many actors with differing perspectives, goals and interests contribute to a complex set of impacts. Theories of Change can be presented both textually and graphically, with the latter highlighting the role of different actors, their respective responsibilities and actions, and how those actions enable or contribute to subsequent or parallel actions, outcomes and impacts. At the same time, Theories of Change need to strike a balance between complexity and simplicity: ‘politically expedient or simplistic’ Theories of Change can ‘please donors’, or ‘build consensus among teams on varying goals’, but their very expediency discourages ‘serious critical reflection on the underlying assumptions for an intervention’, which is what they set out to do.’[[18]](#footnote-18)
4. The process of developing a Theory of Change needs to involve different actors, and represent their views. As Valters says, ‘if a Theory of Change prioritises a top-down understanding of change, this can have negative effects when communicated to donors and other stakeholders.’ ‘Theories of Change need to be honest accounts of change when they are widely communicated, yet they may also need to align with other actors’ understanding of change, particularly in politically difficult contexts. This perhaps points to the need to have layers of Theories of Change for different audiences, but also to the general difficulty of developing Theories of Change that respond to these different actors and their needs.’[[19]](#footnote-19)
5. This is also why, once developed, a Theory of Change usually requires frequent revision. It can be tested and amended as further evidence is gathered, or new perspectives accommodated. A learning loop has to be built in so that experience feeds back on an on-going basis into successive iterations of the Theory of Change. As Valters explains, ‘Theories of Change can act as a kind of iteration and learning diary, updated as important contextual shifts take place and/or when key assumptions come unstuck.’[[20]](#footnote-20) This is not a matter of formulating a new Theory of Change, but of continually revising it. Such a practice, however, presents challenges to an intergovernmental normative instrument such as the 2003 Convention. This is not a question of reviewing progress in achieving expected results and impacts, since this would henceforth be integrated into the on-going programme monitoring and evaluation, but rather of reviewing the adequacy of the Theory itself.

What existing reporting or data collection mechanisms are already in place?

1. A key challenge for developing an overall results framework will be to identify mechanisms by which the implementation of the Convention can readily be monitored and impacts assessed. These will necessarily have to rely to the largest extent possible upon existing mechanisms, and avoid as much as possible to require different actors to do double work. In addition to on-going monitoring and regular reporting, however, a phase of periodic assessment and evaluation needs to be foreseen.
2. UNESCO has two main sets of institutional planning documents: the Medium-Term Strategy (C/4 document) and the Programme and Budget (C/5 document), which together constitute the programmatic and conceptual framework for all of UNESCO’s action. The C/5 is translated into operational quadrennial Workplans (Regular Programme and extrabudgetary). The Medium-Term Strategy is the overarching planning document of UNESCO. It is an 8-year rolling document determining the corporate strategy of the Organization. The 37 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy is built around the following mission statement for UNESCO: ‘As a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO – pursuant to its Constitution – contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information’[[21]](#footnote-21). The strategic orientations laid out in the Medium-Term Strategy document are translated into two consecutive Programme and Budget documents (C/5), each covering a four-year cycle. As part of UNESCO Secretariat, the Convention Secretariat submits statutory reports to UNESCO’s Governing Bodies every six months on progress achieved. As the Convention Secretariat, it submits reports to the Committee and its Bureau, once a year, and to the General Assembly once every two years.
3. On their side, States Parties have a number of self-reporting mechanisms under the Convention (as described in Article 29 of the Convention and Chapter V of the Operational Directives, see also Article 12.2 of the Convention). The Operational Directives impose a periodicity of six years for a State Party to report on its implementation of the Convention, and four years for it to report on the status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List. For States Parties that are recipients of international assistance, there is also an additional reporting requirement in Article 24.3 of the Convention; these projects typically last a maximum of three years.
4. Beneficiaries of capacity-building activities may also have additional reporting obligations. In fact, at the same time that IOS identified the need for an overall results framework for the Convention as a whole, it also called for more robust results reporting for the global capacity-building programme that had been established in 2009. In 2013, the Committee therefore requested the Secretariat to ‘establish, with the full involvement of UNESCO Field Offices and in cooperation with UNESCO National Commissions, a follow-up mechanism for capacity-building activities to gather data about their effectiveness (Recommendation 6)’ ([Decision 8.COM 5.c.1](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/8.COM/5.c.1), paragraph 11). In mid-2015, an expert meeting was convened in Paris on ‘Developing a follow-up and evaluation mechanism for capacity-building activities.’[[22]](#footnote-22) This work will now be aligned with the current initiative to develop an overall results framework for the Convention.
5. States Parties are encouraged to involve communities, groups or individuals in the elaboration of their periodic reports on specific elements, and further encouraged ‘to engage in multi-stakeholder consultations in the preparation of their reports and to continue their efforts in including in their periodic reports information provided by relevant non-governmental organizations, research institutes and centres of expertise’ ([Decision 10.COM 6.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/6.a); cf. [Decision 9.COM 5.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/9.COM/5.a)). This may therefore provide another means by which to promote a diversity of perspectives in the on-going monitoring and reporting of expected results.
6. Currently, 164 non-governmental organizations have been accredited under the Convention to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee (Article 9 of the Convention).[[23]](#footnote-23) In requesting accreditation, non-governmental organizations have to provide information on ‘activities in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage’ and ‘experiences in cooperating with communities, groups and intangible cultural heritage practitioners’[[24]](#footnote-24). Furthermore, every four years following accreditation of an NGO, the Committee reviews the contribution and the commitment of the advisory organization and its relations with it, taking into account the perspective of the NGO concerned[[25]](#footnote-25).
7. It is expected that the development of an overall results framework for the Convention will help align these multiple planning and reporting exercises by different actor. The meeting should consider the role of these existing reporting mechanisms in providing information to a results framework and the possibilities of developing new mechanisms for data collection. It could also consider how the results framework can be operationalized, and feed back into the development of the Convention’s work in the future.

Further information about Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Participants in the meeting have been invited because of their experiences with the implementation of the Convention; they are not expected to be knowledgeable about monitoring and evaluation approaches. However, should participants wish to read more widely in the field of monitoring and evaluation before the meeting, particularly useful resources include:

Simister, Nigel. Developing an M&E approach and Developing a Plan (INTRAC, 2015) <http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/853/4.-Developing-an-ME-Approach.pdf> and <http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/848/Developing-a-Plan.pdf>

Isabel Vogel, *Review of the use of ‘Theory of Change’ in international development.* United Kingdom Department for International Development, 2012. <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/r4d/pdf/outputs/mis_spc/DFID_ToC_Review_VogelV7.pdf>

UNEG Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work in the UN System, 2013. <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1484> (English, Spanish and French versions)

The Better Evaluation website: <http://betterevaluation.org/>

UNESCO RBM Glossary[[26]](#footnote-26)

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| **Benchmark:** | Reference point or standard, including norms, against which progress or achievements can be assessed. |
| **Evaluation** | ‘An assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, institutional performance, etc. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or the lack thereof. It aims at determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the interventions and contributions of the organizations of the United Nations system. An evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of the organizations of the United Nations system and its members.’ (Norms for evaluation in the United Nations System were endorsed by the UNEG in 2005). |
| Impact | Impact implies changes in people’s lives. This might include changes in knowledge, skill, behaviour, health, income, or living conditions. Such changes are positive or negative long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. These effects can be economic, socio-cultural, institutional, environmental, technological or of other types. Impacts should have some relationship to the internationally-agreed development goals, national development goals, and national commitments to international conventions and treaties. |
| **Input** | The financial, human, material, technological and information resources used for development interventions. |
| Outcomes | Outcomes represent changes in the institutional and behavioural capacities or development conditions. At the planning stage, these are articulated as expected results. |
| **Outputs** | Outputs are the products, goods and services which result from a development intervention. They are within the control of the Organization and attributable to it. Outputs may include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of the expected results. They can be tangible or intangible. |
| **Performance indicator** | A performance indicator is a unit of measurement along a specified scale or dimension. Performance indicators are a qualitative or quantitative means of measuring an output or result/outcome, with the intention of gauging the performance of a programme or investment.Performance indicators of expected results refer to what the direct beneficiaries are to do differently after the intervention. Performance indicators will assist you in ensuring that the expected result is measurable. They allow to identify to what extent direct beneficiaries/target groups have been reached and hence provide indications of the change (or level of attainment) allowing to assess the level/degree of the achievement. |
| **Results** | Results are changes in a state or condition that derive from a cause-and-effect relationship. They can be intended or unintended, positive and/or negative.An expected result expresses the "desired" change which is expected to be induced by the implementation of programmes, activities or projects carried out in the context of the Programme and Budget (C/5 document).It should convey how a specific situation is expected to be different from the current situation. For this reason, it should articulate what is to be different rather than what is to be done. It often relates to the use of outputs by the intended direct beneficiaries.Performance in achieving results will be measured by both quantitative indicators and qualitative indicators. |
| **Result Framework** | Results Framework is designed to guide the planning/programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluation at all levels of the Organization. A Results Framework is defined for all C/5 expected results as well as all programmes, activities or projects. It provides the internal logic, ensures that it is consistent in itself thereby favouring the quality of the programme, activity or project by linking the outputs to the results that are to be achieved through its implementation. For both of these it presents performance indicators and associated information such as baseline as well as quantitative and/or qualitative targets allowing to measure both achievements towards results: or impact and to measure outputs produced: or performance. |
| **Result-Based Budgeting (RBB)** | RBB is the budgeting component of the RBM framework of UNESCO. It refers to a budget process that directly connects resource allocation to specific, measurable results. It provides the framework for costing (inputs) and the basis for prioritizing the budgets for expected results during the programme planning phase, as well as for managing financial resources during the implementation phase to ensure the efficient use of resources. |
| **Results-based management** | Results-based management reflects the way an organization applies processes and resources to undertake interventions to achieve desired results.It is a participatory and team-based management approach to programme planning that focuses on performance and achieving results and impacts. It is designed to improve delivery and strengthen management effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. |

1. . ‘Evaluation of UNESCO’s Standard‐setting Work of the Culture Sector: Part I – 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage’ available in [English](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002230/223095e.pdf)|[French](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002230/223095f.pdf)|[Spanish](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002230/223095s.pdf)|[Arabic](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002230/223095a.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . ‘Evaluation of UNESCO’s Standard‐setting Work of the Culture Sector: Part I – 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage’, paragraph 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . Current version, as amended by the sixth session of the General Assembly (June 2016) available at [English](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ICH-Operational_Directives-6.GA-PDF-EN.pdf)|[French](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ICH-Operational_Directives-6.GA-PDF-FR.pdf)|[Spanish](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ICH-Operational_Directives-6.GA-ES.doc)|[Russian](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ICH-Operational_Directives-6.GA-RU.doc)|[Arabic](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ICH-Operational_Directives-6.GA-AR.docx)|[Chinese](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ICH-Operational_Directives-6.GA-ZH.docx). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. . At its tenth session in Windhoek, Namibia, from 30 November to 4 December 2015, the following twelve ethical principles for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage were endorsed by Intergovernmental Committee ([Decision 10.COM 15.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/15.a)):

[English](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/2003_Convention-Ethical_principles-EN.docx)|[French](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/2003_Convention-Ethical_principles-FR.docx)|[Spanish](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/2003_Convention-Ethical_principles-ES.pdf)|[Russian](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/2003_Convention-Ethical_principles-RU.pdf)|[Arabic](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/2003_Convention-Ethical_principles-AR.pdf)|[Chinese](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/2003_Convention-Ethical_principles-ZH.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . Operational Directives, paragraphs 1, 2, 7, 12 and 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. . Operational Directives, paragraph 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. . ‘Evaluation of UNESCO’s Standard‐setting Work of the Culture Sector: Part I – 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage’, Executive Summary. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. . UNEG Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work in the UN System, 2013. <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1484> (available in English, French and Spanish). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. . United Nations Development Group Results-based Management (RBM) Handbook (2011), <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. . The World Bank, ‘Designing a results-framework for achieving results : a how-to guide’, 2012, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTEVACAPDEV/Resources/designing_results_framework.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. . United Nations Development Group Results-based Management (RBM) Handbook (2011), <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. . SISTER (System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results) is UNESCO’s knowledge management and decision-making IT-based management tool. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. . Results-based programming, management and monitoring (RBM) approach as applied at UNESCO: guiding principles ([BSP/RBM/2008/1.REV.6](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001775/177568e.pdf)), September 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. . Zaira Drammis cited in Valters, Craig, 2014. Theories of Change in International Development: Communication, Learning, or Accountability? The Asia Foundation, Justice and Security Research Programme. JSRP Paper 17. <http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/JSRP/downloads/JSRP17.Valters.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. . The World Bank, ‘Designing a results-framework for achieving results: a how-to guide’, 2012, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTEVACAPDEV/Resources/designing_results_framework.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. . Valters, Craig. 2014. Theories of Change in International Development. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. . Policy Brief: Hivos and Theory of Change 2014. <http://www.theoryofchange.nl/resource/hivos-policy-brief-theory-change>. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. . Valters, Craig. 2014. Theories of Change in International Development, p.19. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. . Valters, Craig. 2014. Theories of Change in International Development, p.8. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. . Valters, Craig. 2013. Can Theories of Change Help Us ‘Do Development Differently?’ <http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2014/12/10/can-theories-of-change-help-us-do-development-differently/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. . UNESCO 2014, [37 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002278/227860E.pdf): page 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. . For the documents of this meeting see the Convention’s website <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/events/developing-a-follow-up-and-evaluation-mechanism-for-capacity-building-activities-00475> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. . For a list of these organisations, see the Convention’s website: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/accredited-ngos-00331> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. . Operational Directives, paragraph 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. . Operational Directives, paragraph 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. . The document gathers a selection of the terms defined in Results-based programming, management and monitoring (RBM) approach as applied at UNESCO: guiding principles ([BSP/RBM/2008/1.REV.6](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001775/177568e.pdf)), September 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)