**WORKSHOP on providing technical assistance to STATES PARTIES requesting International Assistance**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room XIV**

**Annotated timetable**

International Assistance is at the very core of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the one among its international mechanisms that responds most directly to the Convention’s purposes, as set out in its Article 1, particularly the first purpose ‘to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage’ and the fourth, ‘to provide for international cooperation and assistance’. Regrettably, however, it has not yet fulfilled the vision of the Convention’s drafters, with few requests submitted by States Parties and even fewer of sufficient quality to warrant approval by the Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, or by its Bureau (in the case of emergency requests or those up to US$25,000). The Committee has regularly expressed its regret at the relatively low number of requests for such assistance, given the fundamental importance of international cooperation at the heart of the Convention and the many needs confronting States Parties.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Similarly, UNESCO’s Internal Oversight Service observed, in its [2013 evaluation of the implementation of the Convention](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-13-8.COM-INF.5.c-EN.doc), that ‘many States Parties do not have the human and financial resources to prepare elaborate project proposals’, and if required to choose whether to submit a request for International Assistance or a nomination (most often to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity), States Parties are often inclined towards the latter. The IOS evaluation concluded that ‘building State Parties’ capacities for the implementation of the 2003 Convention is an urgent priority and the International Assistance mechanism can play an important role in this.’[[2]](#footnote-2) In response, the eighth session of the Committee called upon ‘States Parties and the General Assembly, as well as the Secretariat, category 2 centres, non-governmental organizations and all other stakeholders, to […] promote international assistance as a tool for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and the implementation of the Convention’.[[3]](#footnote-3)

In its 2013 report, the Consultative Body also addressed this problem. It observed that ‘Submitting States face a number of conceptual and technical problems in framing the requests in a well-structured and rigorous manner, adequate to satisfy the relevant criteria and UNESCO’s financial and administrative regulations. The Consultative Body is confident that in the medium and long terms, the fruits of the Convention’s global capacity-building strategy will become increasingly apparent, but it also wonders whether there are not measures that could be taken in the shorter term.’[[4]](#footnote-4) It therefore suggested the possibility of a shorter-term mechanism: ‘For instance, in order to reverse the trend of under-utilization of International Assistance, the Committee may consider devising a means to provide technical assistance to States Parties for preparing International Assistance requests. […] the Secretariat could perhaps arrange for the provision of expertise, as described in Article 21 of the Convention, to assist the State to develop its ideas and requirements into a full-fledged request.’[[5]](#footnote-5)

The Committee accordingly decided to request the Secretariat ‘to devise a means, on a shorter-term basis, and experimentally, to offer technical assistance, through the provision of experts, as described in Article 21 of the Convention, to States Parties wishing to elaborate requests for International Assistance, thanks to the funds available in budget line 2 of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund.’[[6]](#footnote-6) Such a mechanism was created in 2014 and eight States Parties have received such technical assistance, resulting to date in two requests currently under examination by the Bureau:

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| **State Party** | **Title of request** | **Technical Assistant (TA) expert** | **Status** |
| Côte d'Ivoire | Inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in Côte d'Ivoire in view of its urgent safeguarding | Sidi Traoré | Emergency assistance request. Under examination by the Bureau. |
| Guatemala | Protection and dissemination of knowledge of the Maya-Mam people of the Municipality of San Pedro Sacatepequez, San Marcos, Guatemala | Soledad Mujica | TA completed December 2014; internal disagreements slowing submission of a revised request. |
| Uganda | Safeguarding and promotion of Bigwala, gourd trumpet music and dance of Busoga Kingdom in Uganda | Wim van Zanten | Under examination by the Bureau |
| Fiji | Reinforcement of the living human treasures system | Noriko Aikawa | TA started in February 2015 but cancelled in July 2015 at the request of national authorities. |
| Burkina Faso | Research and valorisation project of intangible cultural heritage related to West African Masks | Claudine Angoué | TA completed April 2015; national authorities needed more time and decided to postpone the resubmission of the revised request. |
| Togo | Inventorying, safeguarding and promoting manufacturing know-how and the practice of traditional music instruments of Togo | Pierre Bois | TA completed June 2015. Revised request submitted on 23 June 2015. |
| Lesotho | Comprehensive inventorying of intangible cultural heritage elements in the three regions of Lesotho | Wim van Zanten | TA ongoing since April 2015. |
| Seychelles | Capacity-building workshop on how best to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage of Seychelles | Rahul Goswami | TA ongoing since April 2015. |

Given the experimental basis of this mechanism, and anticipating the need to take stock of the experience gained in its early implementation, the Secretariat requested the Bureau’s approval of funds from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund to support the present ‘Workshop on providing technical assistance concerning international assistance’.[[7]](#footnote-7) A number of experts who have already provided such assistance, together with others who may be invited to do so in the future, will join UNESCO staff from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section to assess the experiences to date implementing technical assistance, review the latest advice of evaluators and decisions of the Committee concerning International Assistance as summarized in a draft aide-mémoire on requesting International Assistance, examine other informational materials developed by the Secretariat to support States Parties and technical experts, and provide guidance concerning the development of future capacity-building curriculum materials on International Assistance.

**The first day of the workshop** will be devoted to an assessment of experiences gained and lessons learnt in the eight initial technical assistance arrangements. After an initial introduction, experts who provided technical assistance will be asked to discuss their experiences, the challenges they faced and their suggestions for improvement. In the afternoon, the discussion will continue, topic-by-topic, to discuss a number of specific problems encountered and solutions reached, as they were identified by the experts in their reports to UNESCO or by UNESCO colleagues in their interactions with States Parties and experts. The first day’s discussions are expected to identify a number of signposts that can guide ongoing and future interventions.

**The second day** turns to a discussion of the information resources provided by the Secretariat – primarily those oriented towards submitting States such as a draft aide-mémoire for States Parties requesting International Assistance. Until now, experts providing technical assistance have done so based upon their own knowledge, with back-up from counterparts within the Secretariat, but the aide-mémoire is intended to serve as a public reference document available to all. The third in a series of such aides-mémoires, the draft document aims to synthesize the advice of evaluators and the decisions of the Committee in order to assist those who are elaborating requests. Experts will be asked to respond to the draft, identify any other topics requiring attention, and assess the general usefulness of the aide-mémoire. In addition, the possibility of elaborating an ‘unofficial’ guidance note for use by experts providing technical assistance will be discussed. As contrasted with the aide-mémoire that represents the published advice and decisions of the evaluators and Committee, respectively, this informal guidance note might summarize the experience gained by the Secretariat itself and its suggestions and hints to experts and submitting States. The afternoon session will be devoted to a practical exercise in planning and budgeting, using the [ICH-04 Timetable and budget](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ICH-04-2016-Timetable_and_budget_--EN.xls) form recently introduced by the Secretariat.

**The third day of the workshop** will look forward to the development of curriculum materials on International Assistance that will be integrated into the collection of training materials supporting the Convention’s global capacity-building strategy. After an outline of the planned materials and how they would be used, experts will be invited to provide feedback to UNESCO about their structure and content, and about particular topics that ought to be included in the curriculum. A closing session will review the outcomes of the meeting and summarize the next steps that will be taken by the UNESCO team.

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| Monday 20 July 2015 | |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Welcome and introduction of participants |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | General introduction and objectives of the meeting  *Presentation by Cécile Duvelle, Secretary of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* |
| 10:30 – 13:00 | Experiences to date in providing technical assistance  *Open discussion*  *Moderator: Cécile Duvelle* |
| **13:00** – **15:00** | **Lunch** |
| 15:00 – 18:00 | Experiences to date in providing technical assistance  *Discussion by topics*  *Moderator: Cécile Duvelle* |
| Tuesday 21 July 2015 | |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | Effectively supporting experts who provide technical assistance (correspondence, aide-mémoire, other ‘internal’ guidance notes)  *Presentation by Frank Proschan* |
| 10:30 – 13:00 | *Discussion*  *Moderator: Fumiko Ohinata* |
| **13:00 – 15:00** | **Lunch** |
| 15:00 – 16:30 | Planning and budgeting  *Presentation by Frank Proschan*  *Discussion*  *Moderator: Fumiko Ohinata* |
| 16:30 – 18:00 | Hands-on practicum with ICH-04 Timetable and Budget form (Excel) |
| Wednesday 22 July 2015 | |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | Strengthening the capacity-building curriculum to better support international assistance  *Presentation by Frank Proschan* |
| 10:30 – 13:00 | *Discussion*  *Moderator: Cécile Duvelle* |
| **13:00 – 15:00** | **Lunch** |
| 15:00 – 16:00 | Conclusions and next steps by Cécile Duvelle |

1. . See, for instance, Decision 8.COM 7.c. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . Evaluation by the Internal Oversight Service of UNESCO’s standard-setting work of the Culture Sector. Part I: 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Document ITH/13/8.COM/INF.5.c. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . Decision 8.COM 5.c.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. . Document ITH/13/8.COM/7.c. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . Document ITH/13/8.COM/7.c. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. . Decision 8.COM 7.c. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. . Decision 9.COM 2.BUR 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)