Unit 11

Nominations: Overview

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lesson plan

Duration:

2 hours 30 mins

Objective(s):

Build knowledge on the Lists and Register of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage[[1]](#footnote-1) and how these may contribute to the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) present in the State’s territory.

Description:

This unit covers a brief introduction to the Urgent Safeguarding List (USL), the Representative List (RL), the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices (Article 18), as well as the procedures, timetables and criteria for submitting, evaluating and examining nominations to these Lists and proposals to the Register. It also includes a brainstorming exercise on the effects of inscription on the Lists of the Convention.

Proposed sequence:

* Nominations to the Lists of the Convention
* Nominations to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices
* Number of files treated every year
* Examining and evaluating nominations
* Effects of inscription on the Lists of the Convention

Supporting documents:

* Facilitator’s narrative Unit 11
* Unit 11 PowerPoint presentation
* Participant’s text Unit 11
* Case study 50
* Case study 51
* Participant’s text Unit 3: ‘Evaluation Body’, ‘Elements of ICH’, and ‘Shared or cross-border heritage’.
* Aide-mémoires for completing nominations for the Urgent Safeguarding List and the Representative List (available online at http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/forms/)
* UNESCO. *Basic Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (referred to in this unit as Basic Texts). Paris, UNESCO. Available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00503>.

Unit 11

Nominations: Overview

facilitator’s narrative

###### Slide 1.

Nominations: overview

In the previous units, participants discussed the implementation of the Convention at the national level. All States Parties have the same right to participate in these mechanisms, which affect the implementation of the Convention at the national level in different ways.

###### Slide 2.

In this presentation …

###### Slide 3.

Nominations to the Lists of the Convention (subheading)

###### Slide 4.

The Lists of the Convention

Participant’s text Unit 11.1 to 11.3 give an overview of the two Lists of the Convention.

These Lists are also briefly introduced in Units 2 and 3. The slide shows their main distinguishing features.

**Note**: The slide does not show the current number of elements inscribed on each List present by electoral groups. The facilitator can also refer to the ‘Lists’ webpage of the website of the Convention: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/lists>

The value of making inscriptions to the Lists

For the communities concerned, inscription on one of the Lists is an important event: it raises awareness about the element and means that the State recognizes and supports community interest in safeguarding it (for more information, please refer to the part on ‘Effects of inscription’ further within this unit).

By nominating elements to the Lists, States Parties demonstrate that they take safeguarding ICH seriously since the management and safeguarding of inscribed elements becomes a common concern for communities and submitting States Parties. They also show that they are making real efforts to implement the Convention by identifying and inventorying elements of ICH at the national level, with the participation of the communities concerned. By making nominations to the RL, States Parties highlight cultural and social diversity within their territories and their commitment to raising awareness about ICH. By making nominations to the USL, they also highlight their commitment to safeguarding activities, assessing the viability of their ICH and developing safeguarding plans for endangered ICH.

By submitting multi-national nominations to one of the Lists, when an element is found in the territories of two or more countries, the submitting States Parties contribute to dialogue between cultures and communities. Even if each State Party has the sovereign right to decide whether to submit a national nomination or a multi-national one, shared nominations are strongly encouraged. States Parties can also announce their intention to submit files, and other States Parties can learn of opportunities for cooperation in elaborating multi-national files. This mechanism can be found on the following webpage: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00560>

Balance of inscriptions on the Lists

To date, far more nominations have been made to the RL than to the USL, and far more nominations have been submitted than the Committee can process. Their regional distribution has also been unequal..

###### Slide 5.

Lists of the Convention: nominations

Refer to Participant’s text Unit 11.1, 11.6 and 11.12.

Participant’s text Unit 11.1 provided some basic information about making nominations. Participant’s text Unit 11.6 discusses the process in greater detail.

Participant’s text Unit 11.12 outlines the reporting obligations for elements inscribed on the Lists and Register.

Community involvement in nominations

The communities concerned should be involved in all the following processes when developing nominations (be it national or multi-national):

* identifying an element suitable for nomination and describing it;
* identifying values and functions associated with the element;
* identifying the element’s viability and any threats to it;
* identifying previous and ongoing safeguarding actions;
* developing safeguarding measures and plans;
* elaborating and updating of inventory(-ies);
* reviewing the nomination file; and
* deciding whether or not to nominate the element.

For further information: Aides-mémoires for completing nominations: ‘Section 4. Community participation and consent in the nomination process’ <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/forms/>

###### Slide 6.

Which List?

Participant’s text Unit 11.4 discusses how to determine whether a specific element might be suitable for nomination to the USL or the RL.

The Committee’s assessment of the viability of an element

So far, the examiners and the Committee have not questioned reports about the state of viability of elements nominated to the Lists of the Convention. As a result, the USL has a range of more or less seriously endangered elements and the RL has a range of more or less viable elements.

State Parties to the Convention with elements inscribed on the Lists must submit periodic reports explaining the current viability of these elements. These reports are every four years for the USL and every six years for the RL as a part of the general report on the implementation of the Convention (Article 29).

For further information: Aide-mémoire for completing nominations for the Urgent Safeguarding List: ‘Section 2. Viability and risks’ <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/forms/>

###### Slide 7.

Evaluation criteria for the two Lists of the Convention

These criteria are introduced in Participant’s text Unit 11.7.

###### Slide 8.

Criteria common to both Lists

Participant’s text Unit 11.7 discusses the three criteria common to both Lists of the Convention.

###### Slide 9.

Criteria specific to the Urgent Safeguarding List

Participant’s text Unit 11.8 discusses the three criteria specific to the USL.

Cases of extreme urgency

OD 32 discusses cases of extreme urgency: they may be brought to the attention of the Committee by the States Parties concerned, or by the community concerned, or by an advisory organization. The Bureau of the Committee (assuming that the case is reported between sessions of the Committee) may then invite the States Parties concerned to submit extremely urgent nominations, which will be examined as soon as possible, in consultation with the States concerned.

###### Slide 10.

Criteria specific to the Representative List

Participant’s text Unit 11.9 discusses the two criteria specific to the RL.

###### Slide 11.

Lists of the Convention: preparatory assistance

Participant’s text Unit 12 contains information about preparatory assistance for the USL. No preparatory assistance is provided for making nominations to the RL. Assistance requests for other purposes are discussed in Participant’s text Unit 12.

See: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/forms/>

###### Slide 12.

Proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices (subheading)

###### Slide 13.

Register of Good Safeguarding Practices

Participant’s text Unit 2.9 gives information on Article 18 and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.

ODs 42 and 44 give further information about how the Committee should promote the Register.

OD 42 The Committee shall encourage research, documentation, publication and dissemination of good practices and models with international cooperation in generating safeguarding measures and creating favourable conditions for such measures that have been evolved by States Parties in the implementation of selected programmes, projects and activities, with or without assistance.

OD 44 In addition to the register of selected programmes, projects and activities, the Committee shall compile and make available information about the measures and methodologies used, and experiences gained, if any.

For further information and examples: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Register>

###### Slide 14.

The Register: criteria for selection (OD 7)

Participant’s text Unit 11.10 discusses the criteria and procedures for making proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. OD 7 gives nine criteria for selecting good practices for the Register.

###### Slide 15.

Three examples of Good Safeguarding Practices

Participant’s text Unit 11.10 outlines the inscriptions for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.

Unit 2 describes The School Museum of Pusol project.

Further information on these good practices can be found on the ICH website:   
http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Art18/00306 (Pusol) http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/24771-EN.pdf (Batik)   
http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Art18/00299 (Aymara)

###### Slide 16.

Number of files treated every year

Interest in nominations is growing rapidly with more nominations submitted every year. The Secretariat cannot treat all the files due to its limited human resources and capacities.

In order to address this issue, the General Assembly decided to establish an order of priorities to be applied to all files within a single year:

(i) files from States having no elements inscribed and nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List,

(ii) multi-national files, and

(ii) files from States with the fewest elements inscribed.

The number of files is determined by the Committee two years beforehand and is currently set at 50 per year. The number of files includes nominations for the Urgent Safeguarding List, Representative List, requests for international assistance greater than US$100,000 and proposals for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. The Committee decided that every year it first examines those files which could not be treated in the previous year.

###### Slide 17.

Evaluating and examining nominations (subheading)

###### Slide 18.

Evaluation Body

Participant’s text Unit 11.11 explains the responsibilities of the Committee, Evaluation Body and UNESCO Secretariat in treating, examining and evaluating nomination files.

See Participant’s text Unit 3: ‘Bureau of the Committee’ and the ‘Evaluation Body’.

###### Slide 19.

Nominations timetable

Participant’s text Unit 11.11 explains the timetable for making and examining nominations.

Referral of files

OD 36 provides for a situation in which, if a file is found to be incomplete after evaluation, the Committee may refer it back to the submitting State Party. These files must be completed before they can be resubmitted at a later date. It is important to know that, in cases of referred files, a criterion having been satisfied will not be considered automatically as such in the future examination of the resubmitted file.

The inscription process

Inscription of elements on the Lists of the Convention and proposals of good practices for inscription in the Register occur in the ordinary session of the Intergovernmental Committee, between September and November each year. Those attending the meeting include:

* the twenty-four States Parties that are Committee members;
* representatives of other States Parties to the Convention;
* representatives of some States that have not ratified the Convention;
* Associate members of UNESCO;
* the UNESCO Secretariat;
* representatives of NGOs accredited under the Convention; and
* other interested parties, mainly from the State that hosts the meeting.

The inscription of an element or a good practice is the culmination of an eighteen-month process of examination and evaluation of the nomination files. States Parties usually withdraw nomination files that are unlikely to be successfully inscribed after the Secretariat has informed them of the Evaluation Body’s negative recommendation. States Parties may withdraw a nomination file at any time before the Committee’s session (OD 25).

The Secretariat prepares an inscription decision for each file, on the basis of the recommendation. It is sent to the Committee members one month before the beginning of the session and simultaneously published on the ICH website.

Before the Committee examines nominations in plenary, the report of the Evaluation Body is presented. This report, which is available on the websites of the Committee meeting in question, is an important document and provokes substantial discussion in the Committee.

The Committee then examines the nomination files. The selected elements are inscribed on the appropriate Lists and the selected safeguarding practices on the Register. A representative of the State Party concerned, and perhaps also of the community or group concerned, may give a word of thanks. They may not ask for the floor during the examination of the element proposed by them for inscription.

###### Slide 20.

**Effects of inscribing elements on the Lists of the Convention (subheading). *(optional)***

The inscription of an ICH element on a List can have different effects (positive and negative) on the element itself, its community and viability. This part of the unit reflects on what these effects could be, what control the concerned community could have over the effects, and how these effects might be sustained, avoided or mitigated. It represents a brainstorming exercise, where participants identify and formulate themselves the effects of inscription in shorter or longer term.

The exercise starts with the participants reading two case studies (50 and 51) without telling the them in advance which of them highlights relatively positive or negative effects of inscription.

For better running of the exercise, the facilitator is invited to use a whiteboard and a marker.

###### Slide 21.

**Objectives of RL and USL** *(if necessary or as a stand-alone section)*

This slide recalls the purpose of the RL and USL as a point of departure to reflect on the effects of inscription.

###### Slide 22.

**Case Study: Rite of the Khalifan Kings.**

This slide refers to Case study 50 on a fictitious element called ‘Rite of the Khalifan Kings’ from the country Sorobria, inscribed in 2009 on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

###### Slide 23.

**Case Study: The Zana Gi – the royal court music of Schrabistan.**

This slide refers to Case study 51 on a fictitious element called ‘The Zana Gi – the royal court music of Schrabistan’, inscribed in 2006 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

###### Slide 24.

**Effects of listing**

The case studies are now discussed in plenary and participants are asked what the effects of inscription of the two elements are. The facilitator may start the brainstorming by dividing the whiteboard into two separate columns – one for negative and the other for positive effects – and ask participants to bring forward their ideas. The effects can also be specific to the List on which the element from the case study is inscribed (this is why the reminder about the purposes of inscription at the beginning of this exercise is important). Having discussed the effects drawn from the case studies, the participants are then asked to brainstorm about other effects of inscription (negative or positive) that they think might exist.

Finally, participants are invited to reflect on the effects formulated on the whiteboard and discuss how they can be sustained/ strengthened or, on the contrary, avoided/mitigated. The facilitator can show these guiding questions on the screen to animate the discussion.

Effects of inscription

The effects of inscription are linked to a clear understanding of the objectives of the List on which an element is inscribed. They depend on how well-defined and resourced are the safeguarding measures and how well they correspond to the purposes of the List in question. These effects will also be influenced by a participatory approach to the implementation of post-inscription plans, which ensure that communities are at the centre of the safeguarding efforts. Effects of inscription might include, among others, effects that are internal or external to the practising community and the element, intended or unintended, as well as driven by the concerned community in response to inscription or going beyond its control.

The States themselves in their periodic reports, advisory bodies (Consultative Body, Subsidiary Body, Evaluation Body) and the Intergovernmental Committee itself in their documents, decisions and discussions have highlighted some positive effects of inscription that include, among others, the following:

* **Increased national and international visibility of the element**. The RL sets out to ensure the visibility of the element and of ICH in general. Thus once the element is inscribed, communities within and outside the country will have access to information about it. The successful implementation of ICH plans may have the effect of increased visibility after inscription and act as models for future interventions.
* **Enhanced** **viability of the element**. The objective of inscription under the USL is to promote safeguarding measures of an element at risk. Once the element is inscribed, safeguarding efforts that strengthen transmission mechanisms and safeguarding activities enhance its viability. A successful case can also motivate other communities to apply for the safeguarding of ICH elements that are at risk.
* **Enhanced recognition and understanding of ICH.** Once an element is inscribed, the concerned communities gain recognition and exposure through interaction with other communities and through access to information on other elements that have been inscribed.
* **Enhanced community identity and cohesion.** The national and international attention paid to the concerned community often brings to the fore its existence and highlights the significance of the element in question. In cases where an inscribed element is shared by a number of communities that are collectively recognized, this fosters an enhanced sense of common identity and social cohesion. In the longer term, this could result in strengthened mechanisms to safeguard an element.
* **Enhanced respect for cultural diversity and dialogue.** Inscription of an element may provide increased information about particular communities and their living heritage, thus facilitating learning and fostering mutual respect when communities discover similarities with other communities in traditional practices or ways of life and beliefs or have access to information to understand the rationale for certain cultural practices.
* **Improved national legal and policy frameworks on ICH.** Inscription may contribute to the establishment of national legal and policy frameworks to fully support inscribed ICH, resulting in the development of regulations and guidelines on ICH safeguarding, with direct support from State resources. In some cases, as a result of inscription, States also enhance their institutional resources and designate specific departments or agencies to address issues of ICH safeguarding.
* **Improved intersectoral approaches to ICH safeguarding.** Inscription often involves engaging other sectors, beyond authorities concerned with culture (such as natural resources management, agriculture, economic and social affairs, tourism, etc.) that may have an impact on the element. An emphasis on intersectoral approaches creates an opportunity for concerned communities to familiarize themselves with these universal concepts and principles and to contribute to synergy across sectors.
* **Visibility of the Convention and UNESCO, increased international cooperation.** Inscription of elements raises awareness about the Convention and the action of UNESCO to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. It can also potentially increase States’ ratification of the Convention. Inscription of multi-national elements, which involves close cooperation between all the States concerned, promotes another objective of the ICH Convention – to provide for international cooperation.

According to the advisory bodies the negative effects of inscription can include, among others, the following:

* **Isolation of the element.** Inscription often results in the identification of specific communities concerned often led by specific individuals, groups or institutions to manage the safeguarding efforts on their behalf. If these representatives choose to adopt a top-down approach to implementing safeguarding measures, they may alienate the traditional bearers and practitioners, and inadvertently isolate the element, detaching it from its social functions and cultural meanings.
* **Weakened** **transmission systems.** Ideally, inscription should result in strengthened modes of transmission where elements find themselves in need of urgent safeguarding due to interruptions or disruptions in the traditional channels and means of transmission. Inscription may trigger wider support for transmission systems and resource persons that were previously little known. The involvement and possible domination of heritage experts, research and academic institutions may, however, weaken traditional modes of transmission. This problem highlights the need to strike a balance between reinforcing non-formal transmission mechanisms alongside formal safeguarding mechanisms.
* **Externally driven modifications to the element**. The inscription of ICH elements associated with craftsmanship and creative, performing and visual arts can lead to an increased demand for crafts and other products. It can also lead to the creation of new opportunities for performances and forms of expression, increases in attendance at public events or to the generation of income for tradition-bearers. With increased visibility, imitation and modifications to the element may arise, affecting its form, quality, presentation and most importantly, its social functions and cultural meanings. Such modifications may also affect the concerned community’s sense of identity and distort the meaning and expression of their heritage.
* **Overwhelming** **tourism**. Safeguarding efforts often include aspects of cultural tourism to support publicity, income generation, employment (remuneration to tradition bearers) and expansion of audiences. Inscription may, on the one hand, increase the tourism appeal of an element; on the other, depending on the local context, tourism can overwhelm and undermine the primary objective of safeguarding, with a resulting disregard for the social functions and cultural meanings of an element. This may require measures to mitigate such effects of inscription.
* **Over-commercialization.** Although State Parties are cautioned to guard against over-commercialization (ODs 116 and 117), once inscription has taken place, this advice may or may not be strictly adhered to in the face of intensified demands for the cultural products and practices linked to an element, such as craftsmanship, traditional performances and processions. Increased demand could lead to overexploitation of natural and other resources, mass production using modern equipment that not only excludes traditional bearers and practitioners, but renders their knowledge and skills redundant, and undermines the relevance of transmission mechanisms.
* **Disregard for customary practices.** States Parties are required to pay particular attention to and respect customary restrictions on access to specific aspects of ICH. Intensified tourism pressure and over-commercialization may result in compromises on customary restrictions to enhance tourist experiences. It is highly recommended to develop codes of conduct and ethics or other legal guidelines to ensure that these restrictions are respected.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* **Exclusion of women.** Women are important players in the creation, maintenance and transmission of ICH. It is, therefore, important that the central role they play (alongside men) is properly recognized and celebrated. If an element is inscribed without sufficiently taking into account the central role of women, inscription may reinforce the exclusion of women and their contribution to ICH in general. Such inscription is then likely to serve as a disincentive to women whose sense of identity with an element is undermined. Such lack of motivation and involvement may affect the sustainability of safeguarding efforts where women’s role is central in the practice and transmission of the element.

1. . Frequently referred to as the ‘Intangible Heritage Convention’, the ‘2003 Convention’ and, for the purpose of this unit, simply the ‘Convention’. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . The Committee recommended the need to respect customary practices in the Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. Please see <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/ethics-and-ich-00866>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)