



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Intangible
Cultural
Heritage

Progress report

Project Title	Strengthening the capacities of Suriname and Dutch Caribbean islands to implement the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
Target Country	Suriname and the Dutch Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten
UNESCO Budget code	199GLO4000.10
Funding source	Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund (earmarked contribution from the Kingdom of the Netherlands)
Total Budget approved	US\$324,00 (including 10% of programme support costs)
Reporting Period	May 2014 – October 2014
Executing Agency	UNESCO
Implementing partners	National focal institutes for intangible cultural heritage in the respective territories
Project starting date	May 2014
Project completion date	April 2016 (estimated)
Responsible Sector	Culture
Name of Persons completing Report	Andrea Richards, Project Coordinator, UNESCO Office Kingston Himachuli Gurung, Programme Specialist for Culture, UNESCO Office Kingston Rita Mae Hyde, Assistant Programme Specialist, Intangible Cultural Heritage Section

1. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

Through an earmarked contribution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, a two-year project was developed to build capacities in Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St Eustatius, St Maarten and Suriname to ensure the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention and the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in these territories.

The project was developed in keeping with the Convention's global capacity-building programme, while factoring the specific cultural context of each territory. It was also developed in line with the needs and issues identified during the 2013 meeting on ICH in Aruba, involving Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St Eustatius and St Maarten, and which brought to the fore the need to:

- Strengthen capacities on each island to inventory and safeguard ICH;
- Develop inventories and assess the state of safeguarding intangible heritage on each island;
- Carry out island consultations to involve all stakeholders and to build awareness of the 2003 Convention;
- Involve youth in all safeguarding and promotional activities;
- Address possible threats, such as fast economic development, migration processes, and tourism;
- Identify the effective means for cooperation with partners in the Netherlands such as the VIE (Institute for Popular Culture and Intangible Heritage of the Netherlands), as well as other sub-regional partners;
- Clarify procedures for submitting nominations in keeping with the internal processes of the Netherlands.

The project includes five major activities:

1. 2-day National consultations for Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St Eustatius and St Maarten;
2. A joint training on the Implementation of the 2003 Convention at the national level for all islands;
3. A joint training on Community-based Inventorying for all islands;
4. Field inventory exercises in Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St Eustatius and St Maarten;
5. A national training on the implementation of the Convention in Suriname

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION FOR THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

Activities undertaken

The period under review focussed on the successful delivery of two activities: (a) National consultations in 2 territories; and (b) the joint training on the implementation of the Convention at national level.

Planning also commenced for the implementation of the remaining national consultations in Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius, as well as the second joint training activity on community-based inventorying.

a. National Consultations: Curaçao

This activity was coordinated with the support of the Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO and other national authorities such as the National Archaeological Anthropological Memory Museum (NAAMM), and was held 24-25 June 2014. Approximately 20-30 persons (including women and youth representatives) attended the national consultations representing Government ministries and agencies, NGOs, community representatives and various cultural experts and practitioners. The great progress made by Curaçao was discussed in detail; however, work still remained to determine if the path to be taken would be *co-ratification* with the Netherlands or *accession*. Also discussed was the need to revise legislation and policy to incorporate ICH, the existing institutional framework to implement the Convention, improving communication on ICH, updating the existing inventory of ICH and building awareness of the Convention and ICH at the community level.

b. National Consultations: St Maarten

This activity was coordinated with the support of the St Maarten National Commission for UNESCO and was held 3-4 July 2014. Approximately 15-20 persons (including women and youth representatives) attended the national consultations representing NGOs focussed on oral traditions, the performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, traditional crafts, as well as the national ICH Committee. There was one participant who attended from French St Martin. From the meeting, a national framework for partnerships was developed, as well as a tentative list of what could be considered as the ICH of St Maarten.

c. Joint Island Training on the Implementation of the Convention: St Maarten

From 8-12 September 2014, the first joint training of the project was undertaken at the *Divi Little Bay Beach Resort* in St Maarten, welcoming 32 participants from Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St Eustatius and St Maarten, as well as observers from Anguilla, and the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO and the Dutch Institute for Popular Culture (VIE). The training was delivered by two UNESCO trained-facilitators along with co-facilitation from two future trainers from the wider Caribbean region (Jamaica and Belize); it covered key concepts and mechanisms of the Convention, tailored to the specific needs of the beneficiary territories. A field activity was undertaken to the Belvedere Afterschool programme where participants witnessed students being taught how to make model boats using skills passed from one generation to the next, as well as a traditional plant garden, which also utilized natural repellents as used by their ancestors. A visit followed to *Belle Plain* for traditional performances and foods.

The training was an opportunity to obtain information at the sub-regional level on the progress made by each country since the 2013 Aruba meeting, as well as share the successes and challenges of each island. Participants departed from the training indicating they were more aware of the Convention and parameters within which they could work, as well as knowing what was required to successfully implement the Convention. They requested greater cooperation between the islands, particularly those in close proximity to each other.

Outputs/deliverables generated

The activities to date have resulted in building a solid framework for dialogue between participants and countries. In most cases, the target groups of the project: youth, community groups/NGOs involved in ICH as well as those responsible for policy development were represented within the group of 3 participants from each island at the joint training. The outreach was of course much broader through national consultations, which resulted in fruitful dialogue and generated interest in the project. National consultations have to date, increased the awareness of approximately 50 persons on 2 islands (over 50% of which are females). It is

evident however, that national consultations should be continued, while seeking to involve more ICH practitioners, community groups and migrant communities. This will be beneficial in broadening the inventory of ICH, ensuring that it is more inclusive.

Outputs according to the project document are grouped as follows:

1. *Process of identifying ICH started:* In the countries that have already undertaken their national consultations (Curaçao and St Maarten), an initial list of ICH known to be present in the territories were drafted or plans made to update work already undertaken. There are presently no official inventories in the 6 islands. In the case of Bonaire, much work has already been undertaken on documenting and safeguarding ICH, with the training providing guidance on making the process more inclusive of local communities. At the joint island training, activities posed by the trainers encouraged participants to move from a listing to more comprehensive inventorying, thinking 'outside the box' as to what could be defined as ICH or identifying a community. The training also provided guidance on actively involving local communities in a more meaningful way; it is expected that this will promote the central role of the communities concerning the identification and safeguarding of their ICH.
2. *Local entities strengthening their capacities to effectively safeguard ICH present on each island:* This process is ongoing. From the national consultations and the joint training, participants were provided with information and guidelines to determine what would be required on the part of each territory to safeguard ICH. The project targets 3 persons from each island for the joint training with the expectation that these persons will in turn share this information and train others in ICH Committees or those who are involved in the safeguarding of this heritage.
3. *Tailored safeguarding measures identified, as well as a strategy – including financial planning - to allow the long term implementation of a safeguarding policy:* participants were provided with information through case studies and activities at the IMP training. However, this expected outcome is still to be attained.
4. *Cooperation to implement the Convention in the Kingdom of the Netherlands has been strengthened:* Already there has been improved cooperation between islands through a discussion on challenges facing each island. Encouraging greater cooperation was identified as a major recommendation from the recently concluded joint training. Links have also been established with the Dutch Institute for Popular Culture, focal institution for ICH in the Netherlands. For the national consultations, sharing has progressed between St Maarten and St Eustatius and Saba, and Bonaire with Curaçao and Curaçao has been providing technical support to Bonaire in the development of its Cultural Policy and for the inclusion of ICH.
5. *Synergies have been found among the islands and the Netherlands in Europe to allow a more efficient and sustainable safeguarding of the intangible heritage present in the Kingdom.* From the joint training, participants discussed more openly similarities in ICH, ways of possibly supporting their respective safeguarding efforts as well as the possibility to undertake joint nominations in this regard. They learnt how inventories and nominations were to be managed and submitted. Some islands were not clear as to the correct procedure to follow in the case of submissions, and to whom, while considering the context of each island, such as those who have co-ratified with the Netherlands (Aruba and St Maarten), and the cases of Curaçao and the islands of Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius. Participants indicated, however, that they had a

better understanding of the global context of the Convention as it relates to the individual islands and the Netherlands.

6. *A basis has been set to strengthen regional Caribbean cooperation in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, and in identifying cultural resources that contribute to the region's sustainable development.* The IMP training resulted in the increased knowledge of participants on the Convention's basic concepts and mechanisms, as well as the sharing of experiences on the implementation of the Convention and its customization. It initiated discussions on shared ICH, how joint nominations could be pursued, and examples of safeguarding practices from other Caribbean countries that could be adopted for other islands (for example, safeguarding initiatives of the Maroons of Moore Town, Chinese and German communities in Jamaica and the Garifuna community of Belize). Some islands have already started cooperation activities with other islands (i.e. St Eustatius reported that it collaborates with nearby English-speaking neighbours). Also, as mentioned previously, Curaçao has been providing technical support to Bonaire in the development of its Cultural Policy. It is expected that at the end of the project, islands will deepen their cooperation with other islands.

The ICH of the Caribbean sub-region plays a very important role in tourism and economic development, and as a result of having much shared heritage, opportunities exist for cooperation. The training on implementing the Convention at national level also emphasized the spirit of paragraphs 116 and 117 of the Operational Directives regarding the need for sustainable tourism that does not risk de-contextualisation or over-commercialisation of intangible cultural heritage.

III. PROGRESS TOWARDS RESULTS

The project is on target to meet its expected outcomes. Due to activities just commencing, attainment of expected results is partial or in progress. Countries are better informed about the Convention, and are therefore now more capable of relating it to their national contexts, while working on adapting it to local communities. They are also more aware of safeguarding initiatives. Training from the IMP activity and information from the national consultations have been imparted to government officials with responsibility for policy and specifically the cultural policies of each country, as well as NGO's involved in documenting and safeguarding ICH. The process has therefore commenced for the strengthening of national capacities in all countries, and from the national consultations, dialogue has commenced to incorporate ICH in existing cultural policies and those being developed. National consultations to date have had a 60-40 percentage of women versus men. The processes for ensuring a strengthened institutional framework are in progress with the involvement of NGO's dedicated to the safeguarding of ICH. It is also expected that the increased human resource capacities, the availability of information and an understanding of the requirements for the successful implementation of the Convention will continue to support this.

The successful attainment of project results is dependent on the continued strengthening of the various institutional frameworks in place. Some islands have culture departments that have begun to incorporate various safeguarding policies and have been participating in project activities to date. Other islands are presently at the level of an ICH Committee and it is planned to continue working closely with these committees and their national authorities in order to ensure that a more permanent system and supporting framework is in place.



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Summary Table

<p>Overall goal of the project:</p> <p>National capacities of Suriname and Dutch Caribbean islands strengthened for the effective safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage</p>	<p>Overall assessment:</p> <p>The national capacities of the Dutch Islands have been strengthened through a better awareness of the 2003 Convention and the requirements for its successful implementation and the safeguarding of ICH. Activities for Suriname have not as yet commenced, although the country is currently in process of ratifying the Convention.</p>			
<p>Expected Results</p>	<p>Performance Indicators (PI) and associated Target (T)/baselines (b)</p>		<p>Achievement(s)</p>	<p>Outputs/deliverables contributing to expected results</p>
	<p>Programmed</p>	<p>Attained</p>		
<p>Title of Expected Result N° 1</p> <p>States ratify the Convention and integrate its principles into cultural and other policies and legislation, applying a gender-responsive approach</p>	<p>PI:</p> <p>Number of countries benefitting from assistance for ratification</p> <p>T/b:</p> <p>3 countries/0</p> <p>at least one country and three territories/municipalities</p>	<p>yes</p>	<p>The national consultation in Curaçao discussed the matter of co-ratification versus accession. Aruba and St Maarten have already undertaken co-ratification of the Convention with the Netherlands. Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius as municipalities are covered under the ratification of the Netherlands. National consultations in St Maarten and Curaçao and the IMP training provided guidance to participants on how principles of the Convention could be integrated in policies and legislation related to culture.</p> <p><u>In total 5 territories/municipalities benefited from this.</u></p>	<p>Output/deliverable 1:</p> <p>Training and/or tailored capacity-building services on ratification delivered to beneficiary countries (notably officials from culture and other ministries, experts in legal affairs and other stakeholders)</p>

	<p>PI: Number of persons (from ministries, institutes, NGOs, universities, ICH committees) trained on ratification and basics of policy requirements</p> <p>T/b: at least 20 persons trained overall, 40% women</p>	<p>yes</p>	<p>22 (60% female)</p>	
<p>Title of Expected Result N° 2 Beneficiary countries/territories establish the institutional infrastructure required for the effective safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage</p>	<p>PI: Number of countries/territories with adequate institutional infrastructure (dedicated departments, committees, strategies or action plans, etc.)</p> <p>T/b: at least one country and four</p>	<p>(yes) partial attainment and in progress</p>	<p>5 territories/municipalities have reported dedicated ICH Committees; however, their permanence is to be ascertained. Work plans are in progress and two territories have commenced work on developing a tentative ICH List</p>	<p>Output/deliverable 2: Advisory support provided to put in place adequate institutional infrastructure (e.g. dedicated departments, committees, strategies or action plans, etc.) tailored to specific needs of safeguarding and applying a gender-responsive approach</p>

	territories/municipalities			
<p>Title of Expected Result N° 3</p> <p>Beneficiary countries/territories utilize the strengthened institutional and human resources, both female and male, from government, civil society and communities, for the effective safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage</p>	<p>PI:</p> <p>Number of cultural officers, community representatives and NGO members trained</p> <p>T/b:</p> <p>at least 15 from each country /territory/municipality</p>	<p>Yes/partial attainment</p>	<p>Through national consultations, 20 persons in St Maarten and 30 in Curaçao representing government, civil society, and individual practitioners, have benefited from increased awareness of the Convention and the identification and safeguarding of ICH</p> <p>Training on Community Based Inventorying will be undertaken February 2015</p>	<p>Output/deliverable 3:</p> <p>Training delivered on theoretical and practical aspects of community-based inventorying, applying a gender-responsive approach</p>
	<p>PI:</p> <p>Percentage of UNESCO-trained female actors who contribute to national decision-making processes</p> <p>T/b:</p> <p>at least 20% of persons trained</p>		<p>3 females to date representing 13%</p>	<p>Output/deliverable 2:</p>



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IV. SUSTAINABILITY

As activities have only recently commenced, it is not possible as yet to determine how much capacities have been built. All participants have reported meetings with their relevant ministries in order to discuss training to date and further elaborate country requirements for project implementation. To ensure the sustainability of the project, detailed follow-up have been undertaken regarding concerns raised by each island, as well as specific country monitoring of expected results against the context of each island. In order to undertake this activity, it was necessary to discuss with each island individually the challenges being encountered and practical solutions discussed to ascertain what will work at the national level for each territory. These discussions are undertaken with participants from the recent training who comprise the various ICH committees in each territory, all of which were appointed by the governing entity on each island.

For activities specific to each territory, stakeholders have been encouraged to formulate what their priorities are for ICH and what they would like to be addressed. This has resulted in greater interest in the project and has contributed to persons feeling that they have a more direct contribution in how the project is implemented sub-regionally and nationally.

Approaches and processes were adjusted upon determination of the needs and challenges of each country/territory. On some islands it has been determined that greater follow-up is needed and provision of support to ICH Committees. Outputs and deliverables have remained unchanged.

V. WORKPLAN

At the start of the project in May 2014, the work plan was reviewed and updated in consultation with project stakeholders and partners. The project is presently on track with all previously forecast activities taking place as planned or only slightly delayed.

Below is a forecast of project activities for the next 12 months (November 2014 – October 2015)

Activity	Nov'14	Dec'14	Jan'15	Feb'15	Mar'15	Apr'15	May'15	Jun'15	Jul'15	Aug'15	Sep'15	Oct'15
ICON Bonaire			20-21									
ICON Saba			15-16									
ICON St Eustatius			12-13									
Joint INV Training				22-28								
IMP Suriname									X			
Field Exercise (Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, St Eustatius & St Maarten)						X	X	X	X			

ICON – 2-day island/national consultation

IMP – Training on implementation of the convention

INV – Community-based inventorying training (Dutch islands)

FX – Field exercise in all islands

VI. VISIBILITY

Information sharing has been a key feature of visibility for this project. From the beginning of the project, information was shared regarding the background to the project being developed and expected outcomes via national commissions for the specified territories. On an ongoing basis, information is also shared with ICH committees, depending on what specified activities are going to take place. During the first joint training, an information sharing activity was hosted, attended by all participants. For this meeting, participants received more detailed information on project activities. For the upcoming joint training on community based inventorying, a detailed information sheet is being prepared on 'what to expect' from the theoretical training, the field inventory in each country, as well as what is expected on the part of each country.

For national consultations held in two islands (to date), these were featured prominently in the media in these countries, and the aims and objectives of the project highlighted. The first joint island training (and the field activity) were also featured in the media in St Maarten, websites related to culture in Curacao, St Maarten and Bonaire, as well the websites of UNESCO Kingston, Havana and ITH Section (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/news/Project-launch:-safeguarding-living-heritage-in-Suriname-and-the-Dutch-Caribbean-00097>).

In all media related activities (particularly the print media) for the project, the donor has been mentioned specifically as being the source of funding for the project. The Dutch Institute for Popular Culture, the donor's focal point for ICH Convention in the Netherlands, participated in the first joint island training and shared its experiences with developing inventories.

VII. CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNT AND MODIFICATIONS TO THE PROJECT THAT NEED THE DONOR'S ATTENTION (AND APPROVAL)

National consultations in Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius were postponed to later dates due to delays for administrative reasons, in the preparation of the agreement with the Netherlands National Commission to be charged with the coordination of national consultations with ICH committees in these countries, in cooperation with the UNESCO Kingston Office. Dialogue has commenced to agree on a suitable date and stakeholders to be invited to the national consultations of Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius. The planning for these consultations are now on track; to be concluded before the end of January 2015 and before the second joint island training. The delays created some confusion, which were, however, clarified through several collective information sessions, using skype. It is positive to note that as the first joint training brought everyone together for the first time in the project, persons are now much more comfortable in communicating by skype or in writing across the islands.

Due to internal issues, although confirming their participation, Aruba was not able to be present at the first joint training. Contact has been established with national authorities to discuss practical solutions and determine the institutional framework required for the effective implementation of this capacity-building project.

Practical solutions were also found to improve communication between the ICH Committee of the different islands, while also keeping information flowing with UNESCO and the Netherlands National Commission

As the project has just commenced no major modifications are foreseen.

VIII. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Photos



Figure 1: Participants at the national consultation of Curaçao © Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO



Figure 2: Participants at St Maarten's national consultation © St Maarten National Commission for UNESCO



Figure 3 & 4: Participants at the joint training on the Implementation of the Convention in St Maarten



Figure 5 & 6: Students showing (left) their traditional plant garden and (right) model boat making at the Belvedere Afterschool programme



Figure 7 & 8: (left) Traditional cultural performance (St Maarten) and (right) Joint cultural performance from Bonaire and Curacao of a shared ICH element (Tambu)



Figure 9 & 10: (left) Bonaire delegation addressing participants and (right) Discussion on the ICH elements of Curaçao



Figure 11: Participants enjoying the traditional foods and drink of St Maarten

Annex 2: Media articles

Cultural heritage workshops begin



St. Maarten's UNESCO Secretary-General Marcellia Henry (standing) shares with conference delegates what St. Maarten has achieved recently in terms of preserving culture. Delegates from St. Maarten are to her right, from St. Eustatius to her left and observers from the Netherlands behind her.

PHILIPSBURG--A five-day regional United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) series of workshops focused on preserving cultural heritage commenced at Divi Little Bay Beach Resort yesterday, September 8.

The project is called "Strengthening the capacities of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, St. Eustatius, St. Maarten, Saba and Suriname to implement the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)."

This week's workshops are expected to bring together key stakeholders of said countries that are involved in the implementation of policies relating to safeguarding heritage and to facilitate dialogue at the sub-regional level that will

contribute to the successful implementation of the Convention.

Participants shared what progress had been made since the last sub-regional meeting was held in Aruba in April 2013. While the participants generally had not achieved the passing of concrete policies, all had made progress in sensitising, being able to inform, and documenting and sharing ICH. Documentation by video seemed an important step for many participants.

Besides progress made in sensitising and informing the public, among other steps, the St. Maarten delegation shared an historical-to-modern day video on the island and a well-received performance by the National Institute of Art that featured poetry, song, drum-

ming and the Ponum dance.

The protection and documentation of culture in the broadest sense was encouraged as something that should be carried out as soon as possible, even if it concerns aspects of culture that ultimately may not be inventoried and put up for a UNESCO nomination. What aspects of culture will benefit or be affected negatively by being nominated is part of a discussion that will take place in the coming days.

The programme also includes case studies and discussions on defining ICH, stakeholder management, the process of inventorying and legal frameworks, among other topics.

In a welcome speech, Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Affairs Patricia Lourens-Philip encouraged participants to ask each other for help and provide constructive feedback. She cited psychologist Bruce Tuckman in saying that groups must go through four stages: forming, storming, norming and performing.

The event is being hosted by the St. Maarten National Commission for UNESCO in coordination with the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean. Participants in attendance hail from all the countries mentioned except Suriname and Aruba, which was scheduled to attend, but representatives could not make it.

A number of trainers and observers from Jamaica, Belize, Honduras, Anguilla and the Netherlands are also part of the meetings.

THE DAILY HERALD, Saturday, September 13, 2014



Minister of Culture Patricia Lourens, UNESCO Kingston cluster office for the Caribbean Project Coordinator Andrea Richards-Cummins and St. Maarten's UNESCO Secretary General Marcellia Henry (first, second and seventh from left, front row) pose for a group photo along with UNESCO meeting participants, trainers and observers from St. Maarten, the various Dutch islands and the Netherlands after the conclusion of a five-day meeting.

UNESCO meeting concludes, participants leave informed

PHILPSBURG—The five-day United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) series of workshops focused on preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) concluded Friday, September 12, at Divi Little Bay Beach Resort after a series of lectures, discussions and fieldtrips.

The project concerned, currently being implemented, is called "Strengthening the capacities of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, St. Eustatius, St. Maarten, Saba and Suriname to implement the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)."

Representatives of various islands are at different stages of the process of working towards the safeguarding of ICH, but the general feedback of the workshops seemed to be that the workshops were useful, insightful and included interesting debates and examples.

Besides figuring out what could be seen as particular examples of "intangible" cultural heritage that are suitable for safeguarding under the ICH convention: legal aspects, definitions, policies, the process of inventorying and nomination, as well as strategic tools for the process were discussed.

Some representatives had

a defined idea of what ICH was, and mainly benefitted from learning about these procedural aspects. Others said that the meetings mainly showed them a clearer perspective on ICH itself; for example, fishing boats are not ICH, but the craftsmanship in making them is.

A few participants commented that they were somewhat surprised and satisfied with the "bottom up" approach by UNESCO, given the strong focus on community involvement in the decision-making process. They were also encouraged to consider how nomination might affect any cultural practices, for example because of higher exposure.

The networking aspect as well as being able to hear about real-life examples, and hearing about each other's progress first-hand also seemed to be appreciated. Curaçao and Bonaire left good impressions in particular, in terms of how much their heritage has already been defined in general, while St. Maarten left an impression of having made much progress within this project's scope.

St. Eustatius has also made progress, which included gaining governmental acknowledgement. Saba delegates, who were newer to

the project in general, said that they were inspired as to what can be done and that they had a clear vision of the work ahead of them.

The meeting featured participants from Bonaire, Curaçao, St. Eustatius, St. Maarten and Saba. Although the project also includes Aruba and Suriname, these were not present. A number of trainers and observers from Jamaica, Belize, Honduras, Anguilla and the Netherlands also took part. Certificates were awarded to all participants, signed by the secretary of the convention based in Paris.

Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Affairs Patricia Lourens-Philip, who was present at the meeting's conclusion, said she hoped that the skills and the competencies gained during the workshop were "things that you can take back now to your country, or to your island, and also demonstrate or implement," adding that organisers had "done a fantastic job."

The event was hosted by the St. Maarten National Commission for UNESCO in coordination with the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean. Off-island delegates return today.