

**DECISION 13.COM 2.BUR 4.4**

The Bureau,

1. Recalling Article 23 of the Convention as well as Chapter I.4 of the Operational Directives relating to the eligibility and criteria of International Assistance requests,
2. Having examined Document ITH/18/13.COM 2.BUR/4 as well as International Assistance request no. 01439, submitted by Namibia,
3. Takes note that Namibia has requested International Assistance for the project entitled **Okuruuo, Holy Fire and the associated rituals:**

Implemented by the Namibia National Commission for UNESCO, the proposed 28-month project is aimed at safeguarding Okuruuo (Holy Fire and the associated rituals), a sacred ritual currently practised in the Omaheke, Otjozondjupa, Kunene and Erongo regions. Thus far, inventorying and documentation initiatives have centred on the Omaheke region only, creating a dire need to expand the exercise to the other regions concerned. Threats such as a rapid increase in urbanization, the influence of other beliefs and practices and an increased movement of community members from rural to urban areas threaten the continuity of the element. To address this situation, the proposed project aims to carry out safeguarding measures relating to awareness raising, capacity building, inventorying and documentation. The first step will be an awareness-raising campaign among the target community, followed by community-based capacity-building interventions aimed at empowering local communities to drive the inventorying and documenting process, with trained community members expected to conduct the inventories and documentation exercises. The project anticipates an increase in the visibility of the element at the national level, strengthening national capacities in inventorying and sub-regional cooperation, improving inventories and data collection, and leading to the submission of a nomination file for the possible inscription of Okuruuo on the Representative List.

4. Further takes note that this assistance is to support a project implemented at the national level, in accordance with Article 20 (c) of the Convention, and that it takes the form of the **provision of a grant**, pursuant to Article 21 (g) of the Convention;
5. Also takes note that Namibia has requested assistance in the amount of US\$100,000 from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the implementation of this project;
6. Decides that, from the information provided in file no. 01439, the request responds as follows to the criteria for granting International Assistance given in paragraphs 10 and 12 of the Operational Directives:

**Criterion A.1:** The information provided in the request demonstrates that wide consultations have taken place amongst community members while designing the project and preparing the request. The project foresees the comprehensive involvement of community members throughout the implementation process as the core participants of the awareness-raising meetings and inventorying and documentation activities. The request further ensures that the aspirations and perspectives of the communities will be reflected by means of their involvement in the monitoring and evaluation stages, through community meetings facilitated by community leaders;

**Criterion A.2:** Although the presentation of the budget is generally clear, the absence of a budget estimation and allocations for certain activities, such as 'Prepare final report and submit to UNESCO', 'Organize an exit meeting with all stakeholders' and 'independent evaluator to carry out mid-term evaluation', makes it difficult to ascertain whether the amount requested is appropriate. A detailed description of the activities

would have been appreciated to provide a sufficient justification for the planned expenditures in the proposed budget. For example, the lack of an adequate explanation for the different daily subsistence allowance rates applied to the same type of beneficiaries, participating in Activities 1.1 and 1.2, does not help determine the appropriateness of the requested amount;

**Criterion A.3:** The request proposes six major activities, from awareness-raising meetings to capacity-building programmes, inventorying and documentation and the preparation of a nomination to be submitted for the inscription of the element on the Representative List. Although the various activities are clearly identified, neither the activity proposed for the preparation of a nomination to the Representative List nor that proposed for the preparation of a proposal to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices can be considered as an eligible activity under International Assistance through Form ICH-04. In addition, the absence of sufficient information on the activities and the inconsistencies between the activities and the proposed budget and timetable make it difficult to assess whether the activities are well-conceived. Furthermore, considering the national scope of the project, which covers four regions, the coordination strategy of the implementing organization with the different communities concerned needs to be further explained;

**Criterion A.4:** The project's potential to have lasting results is shown through the conception of mainstreaming activities, such as quarterly refresher courses and awareness-raising activities, in the work plans of the Directorate of Heritage and Culture Programmes concerned, within the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. Furthermore, the project foresees increasing regional cooperation in the southern African countries in the field of intangible cultural heritage. However, in the absence of explicit information on how these activities would continue to be financed and implemented, the sustainability of the results of the project cannot be clearly demonstrated. More precise information on how this project would contribute to a sustainable strategy for safeguarding the element concerned would also have been appreciated;

**Criterion A.5:** The requesting State will share 31 per cent of the overall budget of the project for which International Assistance is requested from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund;

**Criterion A.6:** The information provided in the request foresees reinforced capacities among community members, as a result of the knowledge and experience they would acquire through the proposed capacity-building activities focused on inventorying and documentation. However, further clarification is required as to how the project could contribute to strengthening existing national efforts to safeguard the element concerned, as well as to certain high-impact actions such as the 'review and formulation of new national culture policies', the 'provision of the national budget' and 'high level engagement from political decision makers', as indicated in the request;

**Criterion A.7:** Namibia benefitted from preparatory assistance for the preparation of the nomination of 'Aixan (gana/Ob +ans tsi//khasigu), ancestral musical sound knowledge and skills' to the Urgent Safeguarding List (file no. 01418, 2017-2019; US\$10,000); the work stipulated by the contract related to this assistance is being carried out in accordance with UNESCO regulations;

**Paragraph 10(a):** The project is national in scope and involves cooperation with local and national implementing partners, including traditional authorities, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, the Ministry of Local Government and universities;

**Paragraph 10(b):** The requesting State is hopeful that the project would attract the interest of potential donors in supporting the process of safeguarding the element concerned. The request also implies a potential multiplier effect in terms of tourism activities leading to raised awareness about intangible cultural heritage. However, such

possible financial and technical contributions in the future are referred to in general terms and require further explanation.

7. Decides to refer to the requesting State the International Assistance request for the project entitled **Okuruuo, Holy Fire and the associated rituals** and invites it to submit a revised request to the Bureau for examination at a forthcoming session;
8. Encourages the State Party, if it wishes to resubmit its request, to revise the content of the project, taking into account the above-mentioned concerns, to ensure an overall coherence between the proposed activities, timetable and budget and to give full attention to the development of a rigorous and transparent budget providing an allocation, estimation and sufficient justification of the planned expenditures.