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

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE  
SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Eleventh session**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**28 November to 2 December 2016**

**Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Report of the Evaluation Body on its work in 2016**

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| **Summary**  At its tenth session, the Committee established a consultative body responsible for the evaluation in 2016 of nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List and to the Representative List, proposals to the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices and requests for International Assistance greater than US$25,000 ([Decision 10.COM 12](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/12)). This document constitutes the report of the Evaluation Body, which includes an overview of the 2016 files and its working methods (Part A), observations and recommendations on a number of cross-cutting issues (Part B) and a draft decision for the Committee’s consideration (Part C).  **Decision required:** paragraph 66 |

1. In conformity with paragraph 27 of the 2014 Operational Directives, which were in force at the time of establishment of the present Evaluation Body, evaluation of nominations for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List and on the Representative List, proposals for the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices and requests for International Assistance greater than US$25,000[[1]](#footnote-1) is accomplished by a consultative body of the Committee established in accordance with Article 8.3 of the Convention, as well as Rule 20 of its Rules of Procedure, and known as the ‘Evaluation Body’.
2. By its [Decision 10.COM 12](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/12), the Committee established the present body at its tenth session (Windhoek, Namibia, 30 November to 4 December 2015). The Evaluation Body is composed of six experts qualified in various fields of intangible cultural heritage representative of States Parties non-Members of the Committee and six accredited non-governmental organizations. As indicated in [Decision 9.COM 11](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/9.COM/11), a system of rotation among the seats was established, according to which the Committee retained nine continuing members and elected three new members – Mr John Moogi Omare (Kenya), the Norwegian Crafts Institute and the Czech Ethnological Society – at its tenth session ([Decision 10.COM 12](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/12)). They were elected by the Committee taking into consideration equitable geographical representation and their qualifications in various domains of intangible cultural heritage. The 12 members of the Evaluation Body, together with the country they represent in the case of experts, are:

**Expert representatives of States Parties non-Members of the Committee**

EG I: Ms Amélia Maria de Melo Frazão Moreira (Portugal)

EG II: Mr Saša Srećković (Serbia)

EG III: Mr Víctor Rago (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

EG IV: Ms Masami Iwasaki (Japan)

EG V(a): Mr John Moogi Omare (Kenya)

EG V(b): Mr Ahmed Skounti (Morocco)

**Accredited non-governmental organizations**

EG I: Norsk Håndverksinstitutt / Norwegian Crafts Institute

EG II: Czech Ethnological Society

EG III: Associação dos Amigos da Arte Popular Brasileira – Museu Casa do Pontal/Association of Friends of Brazilian Folk Art – Casa do Pontal Museum

EG IV: 中国民俗学会 / China Folklore Society (CFS)

EG V(a): The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU)

EG V(b): The Syria Trust for Development

1. Following submission of a report on its work to the eleventh session of the Committee, the present Evaluation Body shall cease to exist. A new Evaluation Body will be established at the eleventh session of the Committee following the requirements described in [Decision 9.COM 11](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/9.COM/11).
2. The report of the Evaluation Body consists of four working documents, as follows:
   * 1. The present document ITH/16/11.COM/10 constitutes its general report with an overview of all 2016 files and its working methods (Part A); general observations and recommendations on a number of cross-cutting issues (Part B); and a draft decision for the Committee’s consideration (Part C);
     2. Document [ITH/16/11.COM/10.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-10.a-EN.docx) concerns nominations for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, as well as a combined nomination for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding together with a request for International Assistance to support implementation of the proposed safeguarding plan. It includes, together with corresponding recommendations to the Committee to inscribe or not to inscribe the nominated element on the Urgent Safeguarding List or to refer the nomination to the submitting State(s) for additional information, an assessment of the conformity of nominations with the inscription criteria as provided in Chapter I.1 of the Operational Directives. This entails an assessment of the viability of the element, and of the feasibility and sufficiency of the safeguarding plan and the risks of the element disappearing as provided in paragraph 29 of the Operational Directives. The document also includes an assessment of the request for International Assistance with the selection criteria as provided in Chapter I.4 of the Operational Directives and an associated recommendation to approve or not to approve the request;
     3. Document [ITH/16/11.COM/10.b](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-10.b-EN.docx) concerns nominations for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. It includes an assessment of the conformity of nominations with the inscription criteria as provided in Chapter I.2 of the Operational Directives, as well as a recommendation to the Committee to inscribe or not to inscribe the nominated element on the Representative List or to refer the nomination to the submitting State(s) for additional information;
     4. Document [ITH/16/11.COM/10.c](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-10.c-EN.docx) concerns proposals to the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices. It includes an assessment of the conformity of the proposals with the selection criteria as provided in Chapter I.3 of the Operational Directives, as well as a recommendation to the Committee to select or not to select the proposals or to refer the proposals to the submitting State(s) for additional information.
3. The nominations and requests evaluated by the Evaluation Body are available on the website of the Convention at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/files-2016-under-process-00774>. For this cycle, the Evaluation Body examined for the first time a nomination to the Urgent Safeguarding List together with a request for International Assistance to support implementation of the proposed safeguarding plan.
4. **Overview of 2016 files and working methods**
5. The deadline for submission of files for the 2016 cycle was 31 March 2015 (paragraph 54 of the Operational Directives). The Operational Directives provide that ‘The Committee determines two years beforehand, in accordance with the available resources and its capacity, the number of files that can be treated in the course of the two following cycles’ (paragraph 33). At its eighth session in Baku (2013) and confirmed at its ninth session in Paris (2014), the Committee determined that in the course of the 2016 cycle, a total of 50 files could be treated for the Urgent Safeguarding List, Representative List, Register of Best Safeguarding Practices and International Assistance greater than US$25,000 (Decisions [8.COM 10](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/8.COM/10) and [9.COM 12](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/9.COM/12)).
6. Applying [Decision 8.COM 10](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/8.COM/10) to have at least one file per submitting State processed over the two cycles of 2015 and 2016 and the priorities set out in paragraph 34 of the Operational Directives for the 2016 files, the Evaluation Body was informed that the Secretariat had treated a total of [51 files](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/submitting-states-and-priorities-for-2016-00773)[[2]](#footnote-2) as follows:
   1. 11 files from States (Belgium, China, Croatia, France, India, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Spain, Turkey and Viet Nam) that had submitted files for the 2015 cycle, which could not be treated within the ceiling of 50 files in the 2015 cycle ([Decision 8.COM 10](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/8.COM/10));
   2. 12 files submitted by States having no elements inscribed, no best safeguarding practices selected or no requests for International Assistance greater than US$25,000 approved, and six nominations to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding – see priority (i) of paragraph 34 of the Operational Directives;
   3. Three multinational files not covered under priority (i) – see priority (ii) of paragraph 34 of the Operational Directives;
   4. 19 files from States having up to three elements inscribed, best safeguarding practices selected or requests for International Assistance greater than US$25,000 approved  
      – see priority (iii) of paragraph 34 of the Operational Directives.
7. Six States had a similar level of priority under priority (iii) with 3 elements inscribed, best safeguarding practices selected or requests for International Assistance greater than US$25,000 approved. To ensure fairness among submitting States with equal priority ([Decision 8.COM 10](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/8.COM/10)), the Secretariat included the files submitted by the six States in the 2016 cycle and hence treated a total number of 51 files.
8. Twelve States (Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia [Plurinational State of], Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Iran [Islamic Republic of], Italy, Mongolia, Morocco and Peru) that submitted files for the 2016 cycle could not see their files treated within the ceiling of 50 files in the 2016 cycle: they are seeing their files examined with priority in the 2017 cycle, following the principle of at least one file per submitting State during the two-year period ([Decision 9.COM 12](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/9.COM/12)).
9. The Secretariat processed each of the 51 files and in June 2015 informed the submitting State(s) of information that was further required for the files to be considered technically complete (with the exception of seventeen files initially complete). When treating the nominations for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List and on the Representative List, as well as the proposals for the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices, the Secretariat focused its attention exclusively on basic technical requirements.
10. In the course of the process, one file remained technically incomplete and consequently could not be transmitted by the Secretariat to the Evaluation Body. A total of 50 files were completed by the submitting States in time for evaluation by the Evaluation Body, as follows:

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| Urgent Safeguarding List | 5 |
| Urgent Safeguarding List combined with International  Assistance | 1[[3]](#footnote-3) |
| Representative List | 37 |
| Register of Best Safeguarding Practices | 7 |
| Total | 50 |

1. Among the nominations evaluated for inscription to the Representative List, five are multinational nominations, two are nominations withdrawn by the submitting States after a recommendation not to inscribe by the Subsidiary Body in 2014 and one is a nomination of extension of an element inscribed in 2009 to include two elements nominated for the Representative List referred by the Committee in 2011. Among the proposals submitted for selection of the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices, one was withdrawn by the submitting State after a recommendation not to select by the Consultative Body in 2014.
2. The Evaluation Body met at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 10 and 11 March 2016 to determine its working methods and schedule. After consultation, the Body elected Ms Masami Iwasaki (Japan) to serve as its Chairperson, Mr Eivind Falk (Norwegian Crafts Institute) to serve as Vice-Chairperson and Mr John De Coninck (the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda) to serve as Rapporteur.
3. As it had done for preceding cycles, the Secretariat established a password-protected, dedicated website through which members could consult the files together with accompanying documentation, as well as the files originally submitted and requests from the Secretariat for additional information. An email distribution list facilitated communication among members of the Body. Every member of the Evaluation Body evaluated each file online and prepared an individual report on it explaining whether and how it responded to the applicable criteria.
4. The Evaluation Body met from 20 to 24 June 2016 to collectively debate its recommendations and reach a consensus on each criterion for every file as well as on cross-cutting and other relevant issues. On this basis, the Rapporteur elaborated draft decisions for each file, as well as general observations and recommendations from the Body. The Evaluation Body met again from 21 to 23 September 2016 to validate the draft decisions for each file and adopt the Body’s reports. The resulting draft decisions presented in the four respective reports thus represent the consensus of the Evaluation Body.
5. **General observations and recommendations**
6. This part of the report outlines some of the issues, observations and conclusions that came about during the deliberations of the Evaluation Body in this cycle. After issues arising from the working methods adopted by the Body, an overview of the submissions for the cycle is proposed, followed by an examination of emerging issues that cut across some of the files that were examined. Comments and suggestions are also offered on more specific issues related to the evaluation tools and criteria used.

**Working methods**

1. ***Evaluation of the contents of the files*.** The Evaluation Body, as has been the practice in the past, focused its evaluation on the contents of the files, and not on an element as such, or on its interpretation of an element or its practice.
2. ***Consistency across files*.** The Body was keen to ensure consistency in its evaluations. Particular attention was paid to applying criteria R.2 and R.5 as uniformly as possible across the reviewed files. To enhance consistency and compliance, suggestions for improvement in the presentation of the requirements for R.2 and R.5 in the forms are made below. The Body was also aware that, whilethe Committee clarified at its tenth session in 2015 the requirements for meeting criteria U.5 and R.5 ([Decision 10.COM 10](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/10)), the 2016 cycle files had been submitted before this decision was taken.



1. ***Linkages between criteria*.** The Body paid attention to linkages between criteria. Thus, in the case of inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List, if the threats to an element are not well-defined (U.2), it proves difficult to evaluate the adequacy of safeguarding plans (U.3). Similarly, if an element is poorly defined under criterion R.1, the Body considered that this could have an impact on meeting criterion R.2, while limited evidence of community involvement under criterion R.4 has an impact on the evaluation of criterion R.1. Submitting States are therefore reminded to pay attention to the need for coherence in their files.



1. ***Evaluators’ neutrality*.** To ensure neutrality and equity, and as has been the custom, a member of the Body did not participate in the evaluation of a nomination submitted by the country of domiciliation of the non-governmental organization he/she represents or by the country of nationality of an expert or of a representative from a non-governmental organization. This was the case for 10 of the 50 files examined in this cycle. While the need for impartiality is recognized, it was noted that, in the case of one multinational file, half of the Body members could not participate in the evaluation, thus significantly reducing the range of input. Should more situations of this type occur in future, this might hamper the Evaluation Body’s ability to function.
2. ***Role of Vice-Chairperson.*** Having reflected on its working method, the Evaluation Body discussed the role of the Vice-Chairperson in the process of preparing the report. The Body suggests that the Vice-Chairperson play a more active role in working with the Chairperson and Rapporteur during and in between its meetings so that the Vice-Chairperson is better prepared in case he or she is called upon to replace or support the Chairperson during the sessions of the Committee.
3. ***Referral option*.** The present Body started its evaluation work in March 2016 when the referral option was available only for nominations to the Representative List. In June 2016, the sixth session of the General Assembly revised the Operational Directives to extend the referral option to the other three mechanisms of the Convention – namely the nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List, the requests for International Assistance and the proposals for the Register of Best Safeguarding Practice ([Resolution 6.GA 7](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Resolutions/6.GA/7)). Following this development and prior to the second meeting of the Body, the referral option was promptly made available to the Body for all four mechanisms using the online interface allowing members to adjust the evaluation of the files. The referral option made it possible for the Body to propose more nuanced evaluations and recommendations when technical and/or substantial information was missing ([Decision 9.COM 13.c](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/9.COM/13.c)). It is important to note that the referral option was not used as a tool for compromise to overcome divergences of opinion among members of the Body. Where the option was used, the Body indicated the nature of the missing information to provide submitting States with appropriate feedback.
4. ***Evaluation of criteria with regard to the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices***. The Body’s working method when evaluating proposals for the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices focused on the use of the options to select, not to select or to refer for additional information for each criterion as a guide for discussion, rather than as a determining decision. This reflects the inherent difficulty in applying a decision to select or not to select for each criterion. The Body focused its evaluation on an overall assessment of the proposal for selection.
5. ***Status of submitted documents and presentation of information*.** The Body considered documentation material, including photographs and videos, as essential information to take into account in its evaluation, together with the information provided in a nomination form itself. The Body noted several cases where the description of an element lacked clarity in the form and where it had to rely on supporting documentation (such as video). It reminds submitting States that documentation material cannot be a substitute for information that must be included in the form ([Document ITH/13/8.COM/7.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-13-8.COM-7.a+Add.2-EN.doc) and [Document ITH/12/7.COM/8](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-12-7.COM-8-+Add.-EN.doc)). The Body also reiterates the need for submitting States to place the required information in the appropriate sections of the form ([Decision 7.COM 7](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/7.COM/7)).
6. ***Extension of an inscription to other communities within the same country or in different countries*.** In evaluating the extended scope and scale of nomination files that concern already inscribed elements, the Body resolved that the level of information in the newly submitted nomination should meet the criteria across all locations/countries including those covered by the initial inscription. Concern was expressed with the practice of ‘recycling’ community consent given at the time of initial inscription of the element, which does not clearly refer to the extended nature of the nomination.
7. ***Combined mechanism of nomination for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List with request for International Assistance***. During this cycle, the Body evaluated for the first time a nomination file using this combined mechanism. Prior to its evaluation, members of the Body discussed the relevance of each set of criteria and a number of scenarios that could occur for files using this combined mechanism, ranging from a negative recommendation for both mechanisms, or positive recommendation for only one of the mechanisms to a positive recommendation for both mechanisms. The Body agreed that more experience in the use of this combined mechanism would be needed before reflecting on its adequacy and relevance.

**Overview of files**

1. ***Quality and diversity*.** Overall, the Evaluation Body found that the quality of the nomination files had improved compared to earlier cycles. The growing number of multinational files and their expansion to additional countries, as well as the degree of international cooperation required, were appreciated. While the Body recognizes the challenges involved in elaborating such files, it urges the States concerned to continue improving the quality of these files. The Body also noted an increasing number of proposals for the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices and a first combined nomination for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List and request for International Assistance to implement the proposed safeguarding plan.
2. ***New perspectives*.** The Evaluation Body found a diversity of submissions in this cycle, with files covering new perspectives on intangible cultural heritage (including forms of social organisation, socio-political governance systems, forms of ancient cultural heritage with a global outreach and relatively recent forms of cultural heritage rooted in educational institutions). Such submissions triggered useful discussions on the contours of intangible cultural heritage and on diverse perceptions arising from different cultural and political contexts. Several elements are also related to sacred sites and/or are shared by different religions and there appeared to be a growing interest in objects/spaces associated with elements, thus strengthening the link between intangible and tangible aspects of cultural heritage.
3. ***Good examples*.** The Evaluation Body noted the following points in particular:
4. The quality of some of the files submitted for selection of Best Safeguarding Practices. The file ‘Regional Centres for Craftsmanship: a strategy for safeguarding the cultural heritage of traditional handicraft’ ([File No. 01169](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/files-2016-under-process-00774#1169)) was appreciated in terms of content, form, presentation, and community involvement, while the file ‘Community project of safeguarding the living culture of Rovinj/Rovigno: the Batana Ecomuseum’ ([File No. 01098](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/files-2016-under-process-00774#1098)) highlights a successful link between revitalizing an element of intangible cultural heritage and development, with an impact on an entire community.
5. The linking of intangible and tangible cultural heritage. The file ‘Winegrowers’ Festival in Vevey’ ([File No. 01201](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/files-2016-under-process-00774#1201)) establishes a strong link between intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and protection of the World Heritage property ‘Lavaux, Vineyard Terraces’. Through its inscription on the Representative List, it is expected to enhance the visibility of the 2003 Convention and its complementarity with the 1972 Convention.
6. The use of dedicated monitoring mechanisms to track the impact of nomination. The file ‘Carnival of Granville’ ([File No. 01077](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/files-2016-under-process-00774#1077)) for inscription on the Representative List provides a model practice where such a mechanism is rooted in the community concerned and provides for the results of any evaluation of the effects of inscription to be communicated to the community for possible action.
7. The attention given to the environmental impact of a practice and how this issue has been tackled. The file ‘Yama, Hoko, Yatai, float festivals in Japan’ ([File No. 01059](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/files-2016-under-process-00774#1059)) demonstrates how communities affected by natural disaster (the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011) made use of the element and how the communities concerned have implemented measures for the sustained use of timber products associated with the element.

**Thematic issues**

1. ***Linguistic quality*.** As has been the case in previous cycles, the Evaluation Body faced difficulties with files that either incorporated unclear language or were poorly translated. With regard to the former, imprecise language and text can lead to ‘second guessing’ information provided, thus placing the submitting State at a disadvantage. With regard to the latter, the Body notes that poor translation can penalize submitting States, especially where incomprehensible information has to be disregarded.
2. ***Inappropriate language and unwarranted publicity*.** Submitting States are reminded to avoid inappropriate language, such as ‘world(wide)/global heritage’, ‘masterpieces’, ‘original’, or ‘unique(ness)’ that is not in keeping with the spirit of the 2003 Convention. Unnecessary publicity for specific organizations or personalities should also be avoided.
3. ***Title of element*.** [Decision 9.COM 10](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/9.COM/10) has clarified that claims of ownership and exclusivity should be avoided. Submitting States are, therefore, encouraged to avoid any unnecessary reference or implication of exclusiveness or ownership in the title of an element. Thus, a title referring to a country or location is preferable to the use of a country’s adjective and the Body proposed a modification every time it seemed appropriate. The Body also encourages States Parties to be precise when providing a title and thus avoid any risk of ‘monopolizing’ an element or form of expression: the inclusion of a location in the title (as “in country X”) or its link with (a) particular ethnic group(s) may often be appropriate to discern the specificity of an element. It is also recommended to ensure that titles reflect the content of nomination files and avoid titles that may lead the Body to think that the proposed element may not be considered as intangible cultural heritage according to the definition of the Convention (Article 2.1).
4. ***Emphasis on nation-building*.** The Evaluation Body expresses concern with nomination files that emphasize a nation-building (or nationalistic) purpose in the submission, as this is not in accordance with the spirit of the Convention and may tend to give prominence to authorities concerned at the expense of the communities who bear and practice the element in question.
5. ***Historical accuracy*.** Although making abstraction of the historical context in which an element is situated is both unrealistic and unhelpful, and considering that any attempt to ‘freeze’ an element in time is discouraged (Article 2 of the Convention), the Body evaluates its current practice and meaning, rather than its past significance. Nevertheless, many elements have roots in violent historical events (such as in the colonial domination over indigenous populations) whose memory in contemporary expressions of intangible cultural heritage may now act as factors of unity. Where this may be the case, the submitting State is encouraged to present the historical context in as balanced a manner as possible.
6. ***Human rights*.** While all nomination files must address the issue of compliance with the provision of human rights instruments, this is especially important for certain types of elements, such as initiation rites. Similarly, the rights of children need to be fully respected in the course of practising an element. A file needs, for instance, to clarify whether their participation is a part-time activity or whether it may result in depriving them from schooling.
7. ***Animal rights*.** States Parties are reminded that, while cultural appropriateness should be taken into consideration when it comes to animal rights, the treatment of animals needs to be carefully explained with due regard to the sensitivity of diverse publics, given the international audience of the inscriptions.
8. ***Environmental sustainability*.** Some of the nomination files raised the question of the environmental sustainability of practices, for instance regarding the use of scarce materials. This raises questions about the viability of an element, access to protected species and replacement opportunities. Where relevant, States Parties are encouraged to address such issues proactively.
9. ***Relation between intangible and tangible cultural heritage*.** Notwithstanding the importance of this link, nominations need to focus on the intangible aspects when it comes to the identification of threats and safeguarding plans/measures. This orientation needs to be respected to avoid an over-emphasis on specific aspects, such as tourism or on a physical site where a practice is enacted. Where tangible aspects (such as objects and spaces) constitute an integral part of the practice in question, sufficient information towards these aspects should, however, be provided and the appropriate safeguarding measures proposed.
10. ***Intangible cultural heritage and sport.*** The Evaluation Body considered files where a sport (including martial arts) was submitted as an element of intangible cultural heritage. Where this was the case, the Body sought adequate information on the cultural and social significance of the practice, and the degree to which the communities concerned were not limited to commercial practices of the sport by professional practitioners.
11. ***Clear and comprehensive definition of communities, groups and individuals*.** The Body reiterates the need to clearly define and identify the communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals concerned with a particular element, and apply this definition consistently within and across the different criteria ([Decision 8.COM 8](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/8.COM/8)). Vague definitions (such as ‘all men in country X’) make the evaluation of a nomination file problematic. The gender dimension should also be carefully described when defining and identifying communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals concerned, their respective roles in the practice of the element, and in the elaboration and implementation of safeguarding measures.
12. ***Quality of videos*.** Submitting States are encouraged to highlight the social and cultural dimensions of the element, rather than over emphasis on staged performances. In accordance with [Decision 10.COM 10](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/10), submitting States are reminded and further encouraged to include the voices of the communities rather than an emphasis on interviews of experts and officials and to add subtitles to videos so that lyrics and other information can be understood by the evaluators. The Body proposes that this requirement be made explicit so that the Body is assisted to determine whether an element is in conformity with the spirit of the Convention.

**Specific issues related to criteria for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**

1. ***R.1/U.1****.* ***Elements of a ‘generic’ nature*.** The Body considered how to treat elements of a generic nature (akin to a social system, form of organization, or common belief), especially when their scope is broad and the bearers and practitioners not precisely identified. The Body considered that in such cases it is helpful if the file demonstrates that communities recognize the element as part of their intangible cultural heritage, and identify with its transmission mechanisms; the practitioners identify with a specific community in terms of sense of identity and continuity; and if the file presents clear evidence on the specificity of the element in a particular context.
2. ***R.1/U.1 Defining the element*.** The Body examined several files with lengthy technical descriptions of the element. States Parties are reminded to avoid placing emphasis on the history of a practice and technical details at the expense of social and cultural dimensions ([document ITH/14/9.COM/10](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-10+Add.3-EN.doc)).
3. ***R.2 continues to present challenges*.** Similar to previous evaluation bodies, the Body noted that information provided to meet criterion R.2 often includes statements of good intent rather than detailed evidence, such as explaining how inscription of an element could enhance the visibility of intangible cultural heritage in general. In many files, the response also tends to erroneously focus on the consequences of inscription on the element itself. In this cycle, 11 of the 21 nomination files recommended for referral have been considered as not having met criterion R.2. While the criterion constitutes the essence of the Representative List, the Body regrets that its original intent is not adequately reflected in the files concerned. In this light, the Body would welcome a reformulation of the sub-questions in the nomination form to avoid ambiguities.
4. ***U.2 Identification of******threats to the viability of an element***. Submitting States are reminded that U.2 concerns the specific threats affecting the viability of an element, and not only common threats to intangible cultural heritage as a whole.
5. ***R.3/U.3 Level of detail required in the description of safeguarding plans*.** The Evaluation Body sought details in the nomination files with regard to proposed safeguarding measures, including financial information, timelines and evidence of commitments by States Parties. Submitting States are invited to avoid general intentions and ambiguous information on the measures/plans as these may in time impact on the feasibility of their implementation.
6. ***R.3/U.3 Communities’ role in elaborating safeguarding measures*.** A ‘top-down’ centralized approach to the elaboration of safeguarding measures was observed in some files where community involvement, if at all in evidence, was limited at best and where a safeguarding plan was mainly initiated by a government or an academic institution, rather than by the element’s practitioners. The Body stresses the importance of demonstrating the communities’ central role in elaborating and implementing the proposed safeguarding measures/plans. The Body also expresses concern about safeguarding measures that are not community-driven and where non-compliance may lead to unspecified legal sanctions. While it welcomes that States Parties take legal measures to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, the Body encourages measures from States that are in the spirit of the Convention and that are not coercive.
7. ***R.3/U.3 Unintended consequences of inscription*.** The Evaluation Bodyemphasizes the importance of clear statements and explanations on how to counter any negative impacts and unintended consequences of inscription, such as tourism and over-commercialization of an element. The Body also wishes to draw attention to the risk of safeguarding measures themselves leading to decontextualizing an element. The Body recognizes that a balance often needs to be struck between the implementation of safeguarding measures aimed at developing tourism with the imperative of ensuring the viability of the element.
8. ***R.3 Coordination between countries*.** In the case of multinational files, the Body emphasizes the importance of coordination between countries when developing and implementing safeguarding measures.
9. ***R.4/U.4 Community consent*.** While there is no standard requirement on the number, diversity or form of evidence of consent to be provided by submitting States, and while style, length and numbers vary markedly from one country to another, the Committee has indicated a preference for the use of non-standard, personalized evidence ([Document ITH/14/9.COM/9.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-9.a+Add.2-EN.doc)) and for a broad representation of the bearers and practitioners of the element, as well as of non-governmental organizations ([Document ITH/13/8.COM/7.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-13-8.COM-7.a+Add.2-EN.doc)). The Body, therefore, took into consideration the diversity of formats and what could constitute a consent form according to different national contexts. Petitions alone were not considered acceptable.
10. ***R.4/U.4 Representation of communities*.** The Body reviewed files that included ‘proxy’ consent and consent by community ‘representatives’. In recognition of the risks of a top‑down approach, States Parties are reminded that the nomination should demonstrate how the communities were consulted, and in what way any intermediaries are indeed representatives of the community, and of which sections thereof ([Document ITH/13/8.COM/7.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-13-8.COM-7.a+Add.2-EN.doc)).
11. ***R.5/U.5 Completeness of information*.** The Body experienced difficulties in tracing the required information and in establishing consistency as to the extent to which all requirements under this criterion were met. In light of [Decision 10.COM 10](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/10) taken by the Committee in 2015, the Body proposed a revision of the forms in terms of format and presentation so that the submitting States are assisted to systematically present detailed and comprehensive information. This would enable the Secretariat to check all fields and request any missing information from the submitting State during examination of its file’s technical completeness.
12. ***R.5/U.5 Regular updating of the inventory*.** Given the lack of precise guidance regarding the required frequency of this updating, and while awaiting the development of a guidance note on inventorying following [Decision 10.COM 10](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/10) taken by the Committee in 2015, the Body considered the mention of updating as sufficient, including a stated intention from the institution responsible for the maintenance of the inventory concerned to establish an updating mechanism. Where information on updating was only available in supporting documents or through website links, this was only considered as admissible evidence if it was made available in either English or French. In this cycle, a total number of 10 nomination files have been recommended for referral due to the lack of updating mechanism for the inventory concerned, eight of which were recommended for referral based on this sole reason. In light of this, the Body expresses the hope that the guidance note on inventorying under preparation and the revised forms will assist submitting States in addressing all requirements of criterion R.5/U.5.
13. ***R.5/U.5 Inventory extract*.** The [Decision 10.COM 10](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/10) of the Committee indicates that the inclusion of an element in an inventory (national or otherwise) requires more evidence than a listing but should comprise a description (if basic) and an extract. While awaiting the development of a guidance note on inventorying following the same decision, the Body considered it appropriate to apply flexibility in interpreting this requirement in this cycle and privileged the obligation for States Parties to draw inventories ‘in a manner geared to [their] own situation’ as described in Article 12 of the Convention. The Body also considered that in the case of the extension of an element already inscribed on the Representative List, an inventory of the different parts of the element can be accepted in lieu of the inclusion in this inventory of the proposed element as a whole.

**Specific comments related to International Assistance and to combined nomination for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List with request for International Assistance**

1. ***Form******ICH-01bis*.** The Body was challenged in its evaluation of the first file that followed the ICH-01bis format. First, the Body noted a number of discrepancies between the criteria to grant International Assistance indicated in the Operational Directives and the questions in the form, and between the way objectives and results are defined in different parts of the form itself. Furthermore (and this also applies to requests for International Assistance), while recalling that not all criteria need to be met for the granting of International Assistance, the Body observed that Consideration 10.a may not apply where an initiative is limited in scope and, as this aspect is not included in the form, the submitting State may not have to provide information on this. The Body calls for a revision of the form.

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| **Specific comments related to the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices** |

1. ***Nature of best safeguarding practices***. Overall, the Body reaffirmed that the purpose of the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices is to recognize practices best reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention while demonstrating effectiveness in ways of safeguarding. Furthermore, the Body considered that ways and means to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, such as a measure or policy, were eligible. Building inter-sectoral partnerships (e.g. across government ministries) to enhance safeguarding measures was, for example, noted as a potentially innovative and effective contribution to the viability of intangible cultural heritage.
2. While the Body recognizes that the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices has been designed to meet the particular needs of developing countries, it is also aware that the Register can play a useful role in highlighting good practices elsewhere. The Body therefore wishes to underline that a safeguarding practice should be relevant and customized to the local context, and provide learning points. Nevertheless, the Body underlines the great need for examples of good practices applicable to developing countries.
3. The Body notes that there exists some confusion between the purpose of the ‘Register of programmes, projects and activities that best reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention’– to select effective safeguarding practices to be promoted, disseminated and potentially replicated elsewhere – and the currently used shortened title (Register of Best Safeguarding Practices) that tends to place emphasis on the register as a mechanism aiming to select only the ‘best’ safeguarding practices. In light of this, the Body recommends to use the shortened title ‘Register of Good Safeguarding Practices’ as a way to better reflect the intent of the Register and to avoid encouraging any competitive tendency that is not in accordance with the spirit of the Convention.
4. ***P.3*** The Body wishes to drawthe attention of submitting States to the need to demonstrate how the practice reflects the principles and objectives of the Convention, rather than solely a description of the implementation of the programme or activity in question.
5. ***P.4*** The Body wishes to remind submitting States thatthe file has to demonstrate the ‘effectiveness’ of the programme/activity in contributing to the viability of the intangible cultural heritage concerned. Submitting States are, therefore, advised to demonstrate the effectiveness of past or ongoing activities/programmes and to desist from outlining future intentions or initiatives.
6. ***P.5*** The Body wishes to remindsubmitting States that information required should be directly linked to the participation of communities in the implementation of safeguarding measures or other activities that are part of the practice in question. Where relevant, submitting States are also reminded to demonstrate consent from the diversity of bearers involved in the programme or activity being proposed for selection.
7. ***P.6*** The Body decided to interpret this criterion to include programmes/activities that can serve as a theoretical model and/or be rooted in a particular practice.
8. ***P.7*** The Body recalls that the criterion relates to the commitment of the State and other parties involved to promote the practice concerned. Given the difficulty involved in gauging intent, the submitting States are encouraged to provide supporting evidence of such willingness by the, group or individuals concerned.
9. ***P.8*** The Body reminds States Parties that the focus for this criterion is the impact of the programme/activity being proposed for selection as a best practice, rather than any other safeguarding measures.
10. ***P.9*** The Body pointed out the difficulty in applying this criterion, especially where a safeguarding practice (particularly in a developed country) had not been designed with the criterion in mind. This could include a focus on ‘replicability’ (and under which circumstances), or on fostering international cooperation or sustainable development.
11. **Draft Decision**
12. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 11.COM 10

The Committee,

1. Recalling Chapter I of the Operational Directives,
2. Having examined documents ITH/16/11.COM/10, ITH/16/11.COM/10.a, ITH/16/11.COM/10.b and ITH/16/11.COM/10.c, as well as files submitted by the respective States Parties,
3. Appreciates the growing diversity of elements submitted by States Parties, which reflects cultural diversity and testifies to human creativity;
4. Welcomes nominations concerning elements that highlight the linkages between intangible and tangible cultural heritage;
5. Congratulates in particular those submitting States having presented nominations for the first time and those that can serve as good examples for future submissions;
6. Further welcomes the first submission of a nomination for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List combined with a request for International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, takes note of the initial observations from the Evaluation Body and encourages the States Parties to take advantage of this new combined mechanism;
7. Reiterates its concern regarding the limited number of nominations for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and requests for International Assistance;
8. Commends the seven States Parties that submitted proposals to the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices and encourages States Parties to continue submitting effective and innovative examples of good practices in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in order for the Register to include a critical mass of practices that could benefit communities, States Parties and other stakeholders;
9. Recalls that Article 18 of the Convention states that programmes, projects and activities best reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention shall be selected and promoted by the Committee, reaffirms that this mechanism is meant to provide a platform for sharing and learning rather than to define the ‘best’ and therefore suggests that the Secretariat use the shortened title ‘Register of Good Safeguarding Practices’ (rather than ‘Register of Best Safeguarding Practices’) when referring to the Register;
10. Expresses its satisfaction with the work of the Evaluation Body and thanks its members for their efforts and the quality of the present report;
11. Further appreciates the assistance of the Secretariat to facilitate the work of the Evaluation Body;
12. Reminds States Parties of the importance of linkages between the different criteria for inscription and underlines that a clear definition of the proposed element and of communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals that consider such an element as part of their intangible cultural heritage, is crucial for the elaboration of adequate safeguarding measures;
13. Encourages States Parties to proactively provide pertinent information in nomination files regarding the compatibility of the proposed element with existing international human rights instruments;
14. Further recalls that the purpose of the Representative List is to ensure better visibility and awareness of intangible cultural heritage in general, and to encourage dialogue which respects cultural diversity, invites States Parties, when responding to criterion R.2, to clearly elucidate among the possible consequences of inscription those related to this overall purpose, and requests the Secretariat to adjust the nomination form to facilitate the provision of appropriate answers to this criterion;
15. Further reminds States Parties of the importance of including in safeguarding plans the establishment of mechanisms to monitor the impact of inscription, including potential negative and unintended consequences of inscription;
16. Expresses its concern towards nominations that seem to describe a top-down governmental and centralized approach or the establishment of coercive measures in safeguarding plans, and emphasizes the importance of the central role of communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, in elaborating safeguarding plans and nomination files;
17. Takes note of the guidance note on inventorying currently being developed by the Secretariat and welcomes the adjustments to the nomination forms concerning R.5/U.5 following Decision 10.COM 10 that should facilitate the submission of complete nominations by States Parties;
18. Also appreciates the efforts of States Parties to address the contribution of the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage to sustainable development, notably in terms of environmental sustainability, enhancement of local economies, intercultural or interreligious dialogue, and encourages States Parties to continue elaborating submissions that address these aspects, thus contributing to the objectives of the Convention;
19. Reiterates, as emphasized in Decisions 9.COM 10 and 10.COM 10, the need to elaborate nominations, including titles of nominations, with the utmost care in order to avoid inappropriate expressions or vocabulary that are not in line with the objectives of the Convention or may provoke misunderstanding among communities and affect dialogue and mutual respect;
20. Further expresses its concern towards nominations emphasizing nation-building or even nationalistic purposes and reminds States Parties that nominations shall remain in accordance with the objectives of the Convention and contribute to mutual respect among communities;
21. Also welcomes the submission of multinational nominations and nominations extended at the national level, reiterates, in reference to Decisions 9.COM 10 and 10.COM 10, that such nominations must demonstrate the awareness of all stakeholders concerned regarding the shared nature and, if applicable, extended nature of the proposed element, and reminds States Parties that extended nominations must pertain to the newly defined element as a whole and not only to new aspects of the element;
22. Also reminds States Parties to provide translations of lyrics and verse, including in videos, for nominating elements that involve oral traditions to achieve greater overall audience understanding, thus encouraging dialogue and mutual respect beyond national and language boundaries;
23. Further encourages the Secretariat to continue offering technical assistance and other support to States Parties wishing to request International Assistance and invites States Parties to take advantage of these possibilities.

1. At its sixth session in June 2016, the General Assembly approved a revision of the Operational Directives, whereby the budget threshold for International Assistance requests that the Evaluation Body examines was increased from US$25,000 to US$100,000 (Resolution 6.GA 7). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/submitting-states-and-priorities-for-2016-00773> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Cambodia made use of the new integrated mechanism introduced for the first time in the 2016 cycle and submitted a nomination to the Urgent Safeguarding List and simultaneously requested International Assistance to support implementation of the proposed safeguarding plan. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)