

Progress report

Strengthening capacities at the national and local levels for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Dominica

Benefitting country(ies)	Dominica SIDS (Small Island and Developing State) in the Caribbean
Type of funding	Earmarked voluntary contribution to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund received from the State of Kuwait
Amount	\$65,000
Implementing field office(s)	UNESCO Cluster Office to the Caribbean in Kingston
Implementing period	2021-2024 (18 months)
Reporting period	Inception Phase

I. Background & Summary

In line with the priorities identified by the governing bodies of the 2003 Convention, this project aims at enhancing capacities for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Dominica. The need for support was expressed in the context of the recent periodic reporting exercise in Latin America and the Caribbean, which brought to the forefront that, to date, the implementation of the Convention in Dominica had not progressed significantly since its ratification in 2005. Therefore, this project intends to build a critical level of experience and knowledge, both in government institutions, civil society and at community level in Dominica and support the country in developing an appropriate framework for safeguarding intangible heritage, while also taking into account the context of disaster risk reduction. It will contribute to the longer-term goal of ensuring the viability of living heritage present in the territory of Dominica, based on a gender-responsive and inclusive multi-stakeholder approach, including collaboration with the indigenous communities in Dominica.

Concrete outputs of the project include: (i) a needs assessment to allow tailoring the planned activities to the local context; (ii) a pool of operational resource persons in Dominica to effectively implement the 2003 Convention; (iii) a framework and methodology for community-based inventorying; and (iv) a road map for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage together with policy recommendations from stakeholder consultations.

The project foresees an **18- month implementation period** with activity line as follows:

Activity line 1: Country specific Needs Assessment and stakeholder consultation.

Activity line 2: A series of trainings with government officials, civil society and community representatives in the core areas of the Convention: (i) basic concepts and mechanism of the Convention, (ii) community-based

inventorying and safeguarding with field exercises, and (ii) training on preparing international assistance requests.

Activity line 3: Policy advice and review of national policies, programming and strategies to ascertain how best to integrate intangible heritage and safeguarding and develop a roadmap for implementing the Convention.

II. Implementation of the project for the period under review

The UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean in Kingston with the support from the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention is implementing this project in close collaboration with the National Commission for UNESCO in Dominica, and the Division of Culture of the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Community Development. Technical assistance is being provided for using and adapting content and materials developed by UNESCO as part of its capacity-building curriculum. The training and advisory services are delivered through UNESCO's network of trained facilitators, who are familiar with the specific country context and trained to use and adapt the training materials.

An online planning meeting was held on 7 July 2021 to launch the project. Ms Romualda Hyacinth and Ms Lisa Louisy, from the Dominican National Commission to UNESCO, Mr. Lucien Blackmoore, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Community Development were present during the meeting. Dr. Saadia Sanchez-Vegas, the Director and UNESCO Representative for the Cluster Office for the Caribbean, delivered the opening remarks and was accompanied by Mr. Yuri Peshkov (Programme Specialist for Culture) and Ms Andrea Richards from the UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean. Mr. Leandro Peredo, Regional Officer from the Living Heritage Entity presented an overview on the capacity-building strategy of the 2003 Convention.

Another planning meeting with the Dominica National Commission to UNESCO and the Division of Culture of the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Community Development was held on 26 October 2021 specifically to discuss the implementation steps and verify the draft budget and workplan. The pre-final budget and workplan are under validation and are planned to be finalized by late 2021/ early 2022.

The implementation of the first activities (Country specific Needs Assessment) is foreseen to start in January 2022. Profiles of UNESCO ICH facilitators were also communicated to the national authorities and the facilitators are foreseen to be hired in January 2022.

III. Challenges and how they were addressed

The project has experienced significant delays due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

IV. Direct Beneficiaries, Key Partners and Other Stakeholders

Government of Dominica, Division of Culture of the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Community Development, Ministry of Kalinago Affairs, cultural institutions involved in preservation/safeguarding of cultural heritage, civil society organizations and communities, the Kalinago Territory community.

V. Communication and Visibility

A press [release](#) (see annex) was published on 7 July 2021 on UNESCO webpage reporting the organisation of an planning meeting with government officials and cultural experts from Dominica. Furthermore, a [project profile](#) webpage was created and hosted on the 2003 Convention webpage.

ANNEX 1 – PRESS RELEASE (7/7/2021)

UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean

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Supporting the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Dominica

07/07/2021 4 min

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On Wednesday, July 7, 2021, UNESCO representatives met with government officials and cultural experts from Dominica for the planning meeting of the project "Strengthening capacities at the national and local levels for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Dominica" generously supported by the State of Kuwait through the UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund.

The small Caribbean island of the Commonwealth of Dominica has ratified the [UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage](#) (2003 Convention) in the year 2005. As a response to Dominica's request for support to achieve significant progress in the implementation of the Convention in the country, this project provides technical support to the Government of Dominica, national culture professionals and civil society and at community level in guiding them in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage of the country.

At the opening, Saadia Sanchez-Vegas, Director and Representative of the UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean highlighted that "the intangible and human dimension of heritage is crucial for the survival of cultural traditions and is an essential vector for the transmission of cultures, identities, collective memory and social values to future generations."

Cultural heritage does not only refer to stills monuments and collections of objects from the past. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors, still being practiced in the present today. This can include oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe of the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

“ Living Heritage strengthens the resilience of communities. Safeguarding of ICH is an important step in improving life for communities, to enjoy and pass on cultural traditions, values, beliefs and practices. ”

— Saadia Sanchez-Vegas, Director and Representative, UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean

The safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage contributes to peacebuilding and security, the fundamental prerequisites for sustainable development.

From September 2021 to early 2023, series of trainings are to be conducted on basic concepts and mechanism of the Convention, community-based inventorying and safeguarding with field exercises and on preparing of international assistance requests. A road map for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage of Dominica is to be initiated together with policy recommendations from stakeholder consultations, considering the local context of disaster risk reduction and based on a gender-responsive and inclusive multi-stakeholder approach and in collaboration with the indigenous communities in Dominica.

The UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean in Kingston will implement this project in close collaboration with the Dominica National Commission for UNESCO, as well as relevant national partners and the support from the UNESCO Secretariat of the 2003 Convention. The training and advisory services will be delivered through UNESCO's network of trained facilitators, who are familiar with the specific country context and trained to use and adapt the training materials.

Taking the extraordinary current situation of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic into account, Leandro Peredo, Regional Officer for the Latin American and Caribbean Region from UNESCO's Living Heritage Entity, explained during the Opening Session, that UNESCO has designed an inclusive and accessible blended approach with online and synchronous training sessions.

Recent projects in the Caribbean sub-region for the safeguarding of ICH have been enrolled in [Antigua and Barbuda](#) and [Grenada](#).

What is the 2003 Convention?

Adopted in 2003, UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, ICH, is the first binding international multilateral instrument intended to raise importance on the protection and safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in countries today.

Once ratified, State Parties to the 2003 Convention must take necessary actions to safeguard the ICH present on their national territory which include to define and inventory the ICH with the participation of the communities concerned; adopt policies and establish institutions to monitor and promote it; encourage research; and take other appropriate safeguarding measures, always with the full consent and participation of the communities concerned.

Read the text of the Convention: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention/>

UNESCO, as the United Nations agency with a unique mandate in culture, works to safeguard cultural heritage and promote cultural diversity as a force for dialogue and development. It encourages international cooperation and knowledge-sharing and supports Member States in strengthening their human and institutional capacities.

Cover image: Traditional crafts from the Kalinago indigenous communities in Dominica. The skills and knowledge involved in this [traditional craftsmanship](#) are passed down through generations and help them sustain their livelihoods.

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