



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
NAMIBIA NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO**

PROJECT NARRATIVE REPORT

CONTRACT NUMBER 4500423685

**SAFEGUARDING OF OKURUUO THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED CAPACITY
BUILDING, INVENTORYING AND DOCUMENTATION INTERVENTIONS IN
NAMIBIA**

REPORTING PERIOD: 29 SEPTEMBER 2020 - 06 DECEMBER 2021

**INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND**

PROGRESS NARRATIVE REPORT

Beneficiary State(s) Party(ies): Namibia

Project title:	Safeguarding of Okuruuo through community-based capacity building, inventorying and documentation interventions in Namibia, Contract no: 4500423685.
Reporting period:	From: 29 September 2020 to: 06 December 2021
Budget:	Total: US\$37, 687.47 <i>Including:</i> Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund: US\$26,502.78 State Party contribution: US\$11, 184.69 Other contributions: US\$825.95
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Contact person:	Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Mrs. Family name: Moombolah - //Goagoses Given name: Esther Institution/position: Director: National Heritage & Culture Programme & Commissioner for Culture

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<p>Partner agency (in the case of a service from UNESCO project):</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Implementing partners:</p>	<p>Ministry of Education, Arts & Culture: Directorate of National Heritage & Culture Programmes</p> <p>UNESCO Windhoek Office</p> <p>Namibia Broadcasting Cooperation</p> <p>Traditional Authorities (Ovaherero, Ovambanderu, Hoveka, Kambazembi, Zaraeua, Maharero)</p> <p>Otjiuana tjOvapue (An association for Okuruuo practitioners)</p>

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Background

Provide a brief description of the situation existing at the time of the request and the need that the assistance aimed to address. For safeguarding of a particular element, provide a description of the element, its viability and why safeguarding measures were required. For preparation of inventories, strengthening of capacities, awareness-raising, visibility or other safeguarding not focussed on a particular element, identify gaps that were to be addressed. For emergency assistance requests, describe the nature and severity of the emergency at the time of the request.

Not fewer than 750 or more than 1000 words

Safeguarding of Okuruuo through community-based capacity building, inventorying and documentation interventions in Namibia is a project aimed at implementing activities with a specific focus on ritual practices around Okuruuo. Okuruuo encapsulates various rituals conducted at a sacred fire place where ancestral blessings are invoked during ceremonies such as welcoming of a new-born baby, occupation of a new homestead, invoking fortune, spiritual healing and blessing of a new car. The rituals are conducted by Ondangere. This is usually an appointed male who is the head of the household given the responsibility to oversee and conduct any of the stated rituals. He mediates to the ancestors on behalf of the individual or household members in need. The ancestors are believed as mediators between the living and the Creator. These practices are common among the ovaHerero, ovaHimba, ovaMbanderu and ovaZemba communities living predominately in Omaheke, Otjozondjupa, Kunene and Erongo regions of Namibia. The values and practices of these ethnic groups revolves around Okuruuo.

In all these communities, the sacred fire is lit every morning by the wife to the Ondangere. Children, youth and other members of the homestead keep the fire lit throughout the day. During any of the ceremonies mentioned earlier, the Ondangere performs rituals by invoking the ancestors. His performances include okuravaera (chanting to the ancestors) and okutjukutjura omeva (splash/ spray people at Okuruuo with water by mouth) which are essential ritual acts performed around the fire that gives homage to the ancestors. The practice goes beyond the household set up as it may allow members from one clan to join another and be part of the household especially in terms of marriage.

The rituals and associated practices are transmitted from generation to generation through various safeguarding measures such as the appointment of a successor to the seating Ondangere by elders or Ondangere himself. The successor who could be a son, nephew or sibling takes charge of responsibilities at Okuruuo after the Ondangere dies or is no longer able to carry out the tasks. The transfer of knowledge and skills is done through observations and induction. This is followed by a ritual that introduces the successor to the ancestors. However, the practice is diminishing with the passing of time due to the socio-economic factors such as rapid increase in urbanisation of the cultural and natural spaces and influence from other beliefs and practices. The situation threatens the continuous practice of the element which necessitate strengthening of safeguarding measures for its sustainability. For instance, during the recent Otjozondjupa consultation meetings, one Ondangere from Okakarara raised concerns on the decline in numbers of Omaruuo from 110 in 2000, 70 in 2010 and only 49 active ones in 2021. The safeguarding measures in terms of awareness-raising, capacity building, inventorying and documentation will encourage the viability and continuous practice of the element.

Capacity building workshops for Training of Trainers (ToT) targeting culture officers and community representatives were organized nation-wide from 2010. The trainings among others, focused on community-based inventory and documentation. However, inventorying and documentation of Okuruuo were only carried out in Omaheke region. Hence, the dire need to expand these exercises to other regions where it is also being practiced as it plays fundamental role in the lives of all these communities.

The above identified activities will fill the gaps in Erongo, Kunene and Otjozondjupa. Trained community members will use the acquired knowledge and skills to sensitise and build capacities in inventorying, documentation and safeguarding processes of the ICH elements in their communities. The project will increase opportunities of community members in the concerned regions to further transmit their knowledge, skills, experience and exchange ideas on how to best practice the element in a sustainable manner.

The project will further, enhance capacities of public servants, implementing agencies and partner organisations by for instance, adopting the ToTs to enable them to further carry out capacity building at grass-root level. The same process will be replicated to other ICH elements (through national funding) which will strengthen the safeguarding mechanisms nation-wide.

Project activities such as radio programs, involvement of traditional authorities, and distribution of promotional materials during exhibitions will enhance the engagement with political decision makers and increase their understanding of the element. To this extent, it will influence the national budget for further activities, research and institutional capacity building programmes. Furthermore, during consultations with relevant regional authorities, the implementing team continues to strongly advocate for the allocation of a dedicated budget for the safeguarding of ICH.

Awareness raising and capacity building activities that will be carried out during this project, will revitalise the knowledge of community members on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. To this end, community members and stakeholders will be able to analyse and review existing national culture policies which best suit them and reinforce the safeguarding programmes of ICH for their benefit.

The funding of safeguarding mechanisms laid by this project is a foundation block that strengthen the national commitment by providing strategic framework for further capacity building projects. This project further leads to sustainable management of the environment and pave ways to effective implementation of future activities and further research undertakings.

Objectives and results attained

Overall, to what extent did the project attain its objectives? Describe the main results attained, focussing in particular on the perspective of the direct beneficiaries and communities. For each expected result identified in the request, explain whether it was fully or partially attained. Also describe any unexpected results, direct or indirect, whether positive or negative.

Not fewer than 100 or more than 500 words

The project objectives were attained to a greater extent through a number of activities undertaken at both national and regional levels as below:

The official launch of Okuruuo Project, on 07 December 2020, in Omaheke Region was the first activity to raise awareness about the project, this further enhanced the awareness of ICH in general.

- Senior managers in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, representatives from UNESCO National Office, National Commission for UNESCO, senior political representatives as well as traditional authorities and managers in the region attended the launch. The presence and presentations of the above senior officials particularly that of the political and traditional leadership gave an assurance of their support of the project at both regional and national levels. Furthermore, the launch was published on the UNESCO's social media pages. This further increased the awareness and visibility of the project.

- At regional levels, consultation and awareness raising meetings were held with governors,

constituency councilors and traditional authorities.

- During preliminary meetings, traditional authorities were visited and homesteads with Omaruuo (plural form or variations of Okuruuo) as well as practitioners of Okuruuo were identified (see samples, annexure A). A total number of 16 regional community consultation meetings were conducted. A radio talk show, 3 radio announcements, one by an official and 2 from concerned communities as well as a radio interview were aired on community radios in 3 target regions. The Namibia Broadcasting Cooperation Television interviewed the Deputy Director for National Heritage & Culture Programmes during a live broadcast on the on the 29th December 2020 regarding the project.

- Written consents (accepting participation and approving project implementation) were obtained from communities and groups from Omaheke, Otjozondjupa and Erongo regions (annexures B).

- At inception of the project, the plan was to have four meetings (1 in each of the 4 target regions). However, in order to reach as many community members as possible, the project team resolved to carry out meetings in constituencies, settlements and villages resulting in more meetings than initially planned. This approach resulted in a total of 16 meetings, with 335 participants, exceeding the target of 120 participants.

- A total number of 24 community Focal Point Persons (annexure C) were nominated by the community members themselves from the 4 regions for further Okuruuo Project engagement and ICH in general.

Some of the unexpected results of the project were:

- The standard practice of Okuruuo is that Ondangere is usually an older married man. However, in Opuwo Rural Constituency the project encountered an 18 years old Ondangere. This is a good sign that young people are involved in the rituals around Okuruuo.

- In Okangwati there was an overwhelming attendance, 60 instead of the expected 20 participants turned up for the meeting.

- Although Okuruuo and Christianity are perceived threats to each other, In Okakarara, Otjozondjupa region an Ondangere who is also a pastor turned up for the meeting.

Description of project implementation

Provide a description of the activities undertaken and the outputs they generated (e.g. trainings, consultation process, technical assistance, awareness raising, publications, toolkits, etc.). Also describe any problems encountered in project delivery and corrective actions taken. Describe the role of the implementing agency and of the partner agency (in the case of a service from UNESCO project) and the role of other implementing partners in carrying out activities and generating outputs.

Not fewer than 1000 or more than 1500 words

1. Preparatory workshop for the project

Following the official communication about the approval of the Okuruuo project from UNESCO secretariat, a preparatory workshop to conduct ground work for the implementation of the project was organised. This took place at Kubata Restaurant in Windhoek. Ten members of the ICH National Technical Committee attended the meeting comprising management and officials from the Directorate of National Heritage and Culture programme, UNESCO, NatCom as well as Ministry of International Relation and Cooperation (annexure D1). It was at this workshop that the project work-plan was outlined and revisited. Preparations regarding the launch as well as monitoring and evaluation modalities of the project were among the issues that were discussed. The meeting also set up a secretariat to administer the project.

2. Project launch

The Okuruuo project was launched on 07 December 2020, in Omaheke Region (see

attendance register, annexed as D2 & program as E1). During the launch, the audience listened to several speakers such as the late Dr. Jarimbovandu Kaputu, a prominent senior Okuruuo practitioner. In his remarks, Dr. Kaputu emphasised the significance of Okuruuo within the objectives of the project. He was among key drivers of the 2003 Convention in Namibia at community level. Unfortunately, he passed on during the time of community consultation meetings.

The Deputy Executive Director and other senior managers in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, representatives from UNESCO National Office, National Commission for UNESCO, senior political representatives, traditional authorities and regional managers attended the launch. The presence of the above senior officials particularly that of the political and traditional leadership gave an assurance of their support for the project at both regional and national levels. This was further articulated in their speeches (See annexures F1, speech by the Deputy Executive Director & F2, statement of the Governor of Omaheke region).

3. Preliminary community consultations

Prior to the official commencement of the project, culture officers in the 4 regions raised awareness about the project. This was done in collaboration with offices of regional governors, constituencies, settlements and traditional authorities in the respective regions. These offices supported the project in various ways. Local authorities funded preliminary field trips and follow up trips by providing vehicles, fuel and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) expenditure for culture officers in the regions, in some instances venues used for meetings were offered free of charge. In some regions, traditional authorities and constituency councilors raised awareness about the project through the media and encouraged participation of Ozondangere in the planned community consultation meetings. Traditional authorities further assisted with the identification of Okuruuo custodians, practitioners (Ozondangere) and mobilised communities (refer to sample annexure A).

4. Community Consultation meetings

Community consultations in the 4 regions took place over a period of 5 months i.e. December 2020 to April 2021. The purpose was to keep communities aware of the project activities, seek their consent for project implementation and request them to identify their representatives to serve as focal persons. Traditional Authorities of the concerned communities nominated representatives to attend consultation meetings. The meeting participants comprised custodians, representatives from traditional authorities, constituency offices, office of the Governor, women and youth forums.

The first awareness consultation meetings in Omaheke Region coincided with the launch of the project on 07 December 2020 in Otjinene. There were 32 community participants at the launch (refer to attendance register, annexure D2 & program E1) and 9 at the community consultation meeting (Annexure D3 attendance register, program E2). Consultation continued until 11th December 2020 as follows:

08th December 2020 - Epukiro constituency (Epukiro Pos 3), 15 community members attended the meeting (Annexure D4),

09th December 2020 – Otjombinde constituency (Eiseb Block), had 25 participants (Annexure D5)

10th December 2020 - Otjombinde constituency (Talismanus), 13 participants (Annexure D6)

11th December 2020 - Aminius Constituency (Corridor 13), 11 participated (Annexure D7)

In this region a total of 105 community members participated in all consultation meetings of which 19 were females and 86 were males.

Consultation meetings in Otjozondjupa Region were from 08th – 12th March 2021 in the following order:

08th March 2021- Omatako constituency, the meeting took place at Okandjira with 19 community participants from Okandjira & Ovitoto settlements (Annexure D8 attendance register, program E3).

09th March 2021 - Okakarara constituency, there were 18 community participants (Annexure D9).

10th March 2021 – for Coblenz & Otjituuo settlements, people met in Coblenz with 5 participants (Annexure D10).

11th March 2021 – Ten (10) Community members from Okondjatu & Okamatapati settlements met in Okondjatu (Annexure D11).

12th March 2021 – Gam settlement, with 30 community participants (Annexure D12).

In this region a total number of 82 community members participated in the consultation meetings, 17 females and 58 males.

Erongo Region consultation meetings took place from 29th – 31st March 2021 as follows:

29th March 2021 – Otjimbingwe settlement, with 13 community participants (Annexure D13 attendance register, program E4)

31st March 2021 – Omatjete settlement, with 25 community participants (Annexure D14)

Erongo region recorded a total number of 38 participants of which 09 were females and 29 were males.

Kunene Region held consultation meetings from 06 - 09 April 2021 as follows:

06th April 2021- Sesfontein constituency, with 17 community participants (Annexure D15 attendance register, program E5).

07th April 2021 – Opuwo Rural constituency (Otuani), with 20 community participants (Annexure D16).

08th April 2021 – Opuwo Urban constituency, with 17 community participants (Annexure D17).

09th April 2021 – Epupa constituency (Okangwati), with 60 community participants according to a head count conducted even though only 32 participants signed the attendance register (Annexure D18).

For Kunene, one hundred and fourteen (114) participants; 30 females and 84 males Participated in meetings during this exercise.

A total of 335 representatives from the concerned communities attended the meetings in the 4 regions, exceeding the overall projected representation of 120. This was possible due to an overwhelming interest from communities and the support rendered to the project by traditional authorities and regional councils. In all regions communities that participated demonstrated positive attitude towards the implementation of the project. Additionally, 24 community focal persons were nominated to serve as community representatives in this project.

5. National consultation workshop

Subsequent to the regional community consultation meetings, a National Consultation Workshop took place from 25 – 30 April 2021 in Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region. A total number of 50 participants drawn from traditional authorities, government officials and communities from the 4 target regions participated (see attendance register annexed as D19). This number include the 22 community focal persons. A fair representation of the youth was observed during the workshop. There were speeches and remarks from both the Deputy Executive Director and the Governor 's office (Annexure F3 & F4).

Participants reviewed activities that took place in the 4 regions and validated the information gathered prior and during regional community consultation meetings (Annexure E6, program). The workshop further proposed and discussed other possible safeguarding measures for the element. The Namibian Government had translated the basic text of the 2003 Convention into Otjiherero, Oshikwanyama and Khoekhoegowab languages. The Otjiherero version was printed and distributed during regional consultation meetings as well as at the national consultation workshop for a better understanding of the provisions of the 2003 Convention (Annexure G). The roles of the community focal persons were discussed and adopted, giving the project a clear distribution of mandate at community level.

6 Quarterly review meetings for the Technical Committee members to assess project implementation and prepare intermediate report.

Two meetings were convened to review progress of the project;

The first was convened from 13 -15 October 2021, at the National Museum of Namibia. This meeting assessed and evaluated the progress made on the implementation of the project (see register of attendance, annexed D20). It further discussed strategies for the finalisation of the narrative and financial report on the first instalment of the project funds. Challenges such as COVID-19 Pandemic, submission of pending consent letters by the concerned communities and institutional strike of the National Broadcasting Corporation that delayed project implementation were discussed during this meeting.

The meeting nominated three additional members to the National ICH Secretariat, which now has a total of eight members. All members of the Secretariat were served with assignment letters and terms of reference. Another resolution taken was for the Secretariat to organise a three days meeting that was held at Khorixas, Kunene Region for the purpose of finalising the national workshop as well as the intermediate report.

As agreed during the meeting at the National Museums of Namibia, the three - days meeting took place from 08 – 12 November 2021 in Khorixas. This meeting was made possible by additional funding to the ICH fund, sourced from UNESCO Windhoek Office. The additional fund covered DSA for officials. The Director and Deputy Director of National Heritage and Culture Programme were among attendants (Annexure D21).

The meeting compiled information required for the finalisation of the intermediate report. Information generated from the regional reports was validated and consolidated to further work on the intermediate report for submission to UNESCO, see program (Annexure E7).

7. Produce and broadcast special community programme on Omurari Radio Station (Otjiherero radio station) focusing on the safeguarding measures of Okuruuo.

As stated earlier, the activity, on Omurari Radio was delayed as a result of the industrial strike by the National Broadcaster. Activities under this outcome are ongoing and its output will be reported in the second phase of the project.

8. Implementing agency / partners in carrying out activities

The Namibia National Commission for UNESCO (NatCom) has been involved in the implementation of projects and management of funds deposited into its account in Namibia, including that of the current contract. For instance, during the period under review NatCom disbursed funds to service providers and ensured provision of quality goods and services.

Additionally, NatCom serves on both the technical committee and secretariat to administer, monitor and evaluate activities of the project.

The Directorate of National Heritage and Culture Programmes continues to avail staff members, transport, venues and render technical backstopping to the project at both national and regional levels. For instance, during community consultations, the Directorate, through the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture availed funding for transport and travel allowances at regional level. State contribution at both national and regional levels is captured in the financial report.

9. Problems encountered & corrective measures taken:

The restrictions of the numbers of public gathering as per COVID-19 health regulations resulted in cancellation and suspension of a number of activities and meetings. At some point only ten persons were allowed per gathering. Nothing could be done with regards to delays caused by COVID-19 Pandemic.

Although communities in Kunene region demonstrated positive attitudes towards the project, written consents were not obtained due to COVID-19 restrictions which impeded follow up meetings with the communities. However, consultations are ongoing.

Engagement with NBC after the strike ended has resumed and it is recommended that progress on this activity form part of the next progress report.

Community involvement

Provide a description of the mechanisms used for fully involving the community(ies) concerned. Describe not only the participation of the communities as beneficiaries of the project, but also their active participation in the planning and implementation of all activities.

Not fewer than 300 or more than 500 words

Community members were actively involved in the planning, hosting and participated in consultation meetings. Upon receiving invitations to attend regional meetings and national consultation workshop, concerned stakeholders such as the traditional authorities, women organizations, governor's office, youth forums and constituency councillors organized themselves to nominate their representatives and mobilized communities to attend meetings.

Identification of custodians and other community participants during preliminary meetings was facilitated by stakeholders and carried out by community members themselves. In some regions, for instance in Kunene, some community members provided transport to others that came for meetings. They further, carried out administration roles such as registrations of attendees during community meetings.

Furthermore, communities played an important role in ensuring that sanitary measures related to COVID-19 protocols are adhered to. They for instance, assisted with distribution of masks, sanitisation and disinfection during the meetings.

Local service providers from concerned communities provided meals to all meeting attendees at their respective areas. This was necessary as the provision of services exposed small and medium rural business enterprises to income generating opportunities.

Offices of the traditional authorities and communities nominated their focal point person(s) to serve as liaison officers between the regional culture offices and communities concerned. Focal point persons were instrumental at the National Consultation Workshop. One of them offered to be an interpreter during the National Workshop. They also contributed to the drafting and adoption of other possible safeguarding measures for the element. Following the national workshop, focal point persons continue to raise awareness about the project and facilitate the exchange of information and documents between communities and

government officials.

After the National Consultation Workshop, the focal point persons further facilitated the processes of obtaining consent letters from traditional authorities and other concerned groups.

Members of communities also played an important role in awareness raising campaigns by explaining their understanding of the project activities and defining the objectives of the project and its' benefit to the general public.

Communities participated in talk shows, radio announcements to encourage others to take part in the project.

Sustainability and exit/transition strategy

Describe how the benefits of the project will continue after the project has been completed. Where appropriate, describe the steps undertaken to ensure the following:

- *Sustainability of activities, outputs and results, including with reference to how capacity has been built under the project. Also describe any planned follow-up measures to ensure sustainability.*
- *Additional funding secured as a result of this project, if any. Indicate by whom, how much and for what purpose the contributions are granted.*

Describe how the ownership (of activities, outputs, results) by stakeholders and the community(ies) in particular has been promoted.

Describe, if relevant, how tools, processes, outputs, etc. have been adopted, adapted, replicated and/or extended for future use (e.g. in other regions, communities, elements, or fields of intangible cultural heritage).

Not fewer than 100 or more than 500 words

1. The established working groups such as secretariat, community and official focal points persons and tools such as terms of references, work-plan provide a foundation for continued capacity building which will be replicated in other ICH safeguarding projects.
2. The activities for Okuruuo are mainstreamed in the work plans of the Directorate responsible for culture.
3. As part of monitoring and evaluation as well as reporting components of the project, meetings are continuously held to gauge progress and identify necessary corrective measures.
4. Awareness raising activities through community radio are ongoing.
5. Regional culture offices continue working in consultation with communities, groups and individuals such as traditional authorities, custodians and practitioners to promote continuous practice of the element.
6. Transmission of knowledge and skills to younger generation is encouraged and strengthened throughout the duration of the project.
7. Traditional authorities, communities, groups and individuals have mandate to re-appoint or replace community focal persons as their representatives on project matters and ICH in general.
8. Focal point persons suggested other possible safeguarding measures to promote and raise awareness about Okuruuo and ICH in general.

Lessons learnt

Describe what are the key lessons learnt regarding the following:

- *Attainment of expected results*
- *Ownership of key stakeholders and community involvement*
- *Delivery of project outputs*
- *Project management and implementation*
- *Sustainability of the project after the assistance*

Not fewer than 300 or more than 750 words

Awareness raising and sensitisation of communities went smooth and communities were eager to work together with the state in the safeguarding of the element. One of the lessons learnt is the interest generated from communities as they demanded a wider coverage of consultations.

The program gained support from all levels of leadership, both traditional and political. This is a good foundation towards sustainability of the project.

Community representatives, showed interest and the project further recorded satisfactory youth and women participation. This trend is critical for transmission and sustainability of the element.

Communities, groups and individuals from Kunene region have demonstrated positive attitudes towards the project. However, consultation processes could not be conducted through a once-off meeting, hence the need for further consultations in order to obtain informed written consents. The project team resolved to further consult with the concerned traditional authorities during the second phase of the project. This exercise will guarantee full and continued support and ownership of the project.

The structure through which communities were consulted were complex, in some cases government officials were advised to follow traditional authority hierarchy for consultations. It was believed this was necessary for thorough consultations with traditional authorities and other stakeholders in order to ensure awareness and involvement of all concerned parties. However, these complex structures delayed project implementation to some extent.

Annexes

List the annexes and documentation included in the report:

- *publications, evaluation reports and other outputs, when applicable*
- *progress reports prepared during the contract period*
- *list of major equipment provided under the project and status after termination of contract period*
- *other (please specify)*

- A. List of identified Okuruuo practitioners (Sample)
- B. Consent Letters
- C. Lists of focal point persons
- D. Attendance Registers
- E. Programs
- F. Speeches

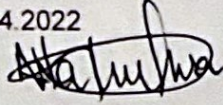
Name and signature of the person having completed the report

Name: Nehoa H. Kautondokwa

Title: Culture Programme Officer

Date: 22.04.2022

Signature:



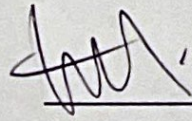
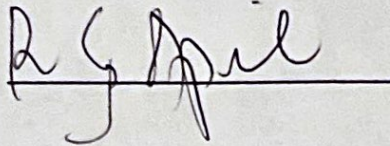
Signed by:

Name

Signature

Date

Secretary-General



13/05/2022

Namibia National Commission for UNESCO

