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

**Open-ended intergovernmental working group**

**in the framework of the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18 of the**

**2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room XI**

**4 to 5 July 2023**

**Item 4:**

**Report to the Intergovernmental Committee**

**Introduction**

1. A global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was held from 2018 to 2022 and culminated in a series of decisions that were adopted by the ninth session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention in 2022 (Resolution [9.GA 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/9)). One of the outcomes of that reflection was to initiate a separate reflection to explore a broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention. The Intergovernmental Committee, at its seventeenth session in Rabat, Morocco (Decision [17.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/10)), established the present Open-ended intergovernmental working group (hereinafter the ‘working group’).
2. The working group met at UNESCO Headquarters from 4 to 5 July 2023 in the framework of the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18 of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.
3. The working group expressed its gratitude to the Government of Sweden for supporting the reflection, including the earlier expert consultation by hosting the Category VI meeting of experts in Stockholm, Sweden, from 19 to 21 April 2023. The working group also extended its appreciation to the experts who participated in that Category VI meeting, laying the ground for the discussion of the working group.
4. The meeting of the working group was chaired by Mr Martin Sundin (Sweden); the recommendations of the working group annexed to this report benefitted from the careful attention of the following Bureau members who also acted as Rapporteurs: Estonia, Peru, Philippines, Angola and Morocco.
5. The working group will present the results of its deliberations, including the summary records, to the eighteenth session of the Committee, to be held from 4 to 9 December 2023 (Kasane, Republic of Botswana).

\*\*\*

**Annex**

**Recommendations of the Open-ended intergovernmental working group**

General considerations

1. Article 18 of the Convention has the potential to fully reflect the purposes of the Convention, a broader implementation of which will open up new possibilities for supporting safeguarding efforts and contributing to the further development of the Convention.
2. The further implementation of Article 18 must be explored with reference to existing provisions of the Convention and the Operational Directives, the Overall Results Framework of the Convention, the Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, while linking it also with the periodic reporting and International Assistance mechanisms of the Convention.

Topic 1: Improving the access to and increasing the visibility of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices

1. The selection criteria for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices are to be adjusted taking into account the following specific proposals:
2. **Criteria P.1 and P.3** are to be merged in order to focus on the description of the programme, project or activity in the sense of Article 2.3 of the Convention, including its principles and objectives:
   * The revised criterion should refer to the relevant Operational Directives and the Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage.
   * Form ICH-03 should be revised to include references to the Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, in particular principles 1, 3, 4, 10 and 12.
3. **Criterion P.2** is to be deleted, since it may unnecessarily limit the diversity of the Register by focusing on regional, subregional and/or international levels;
4. **Criterion P.4** is to be kept, since the demonstration of the effectiveness of the programme, project or activity should remain a requirement for selection in the Register. Form ICH-03 should be revised to include a description of the initial situation which called for safeguarding and the situation after the successful execution of safeguarding measures;
5. **Criterion P.5** is to be kept, as the participation of the communities concerned should remain an important requirement for selection and the word ‘sustained’ should be added between ‘prior’ and ‘informed’. Form ICH-03 should be revised to include a reference to Ethical Principle 4 on free, prior, sustained and informed consent of communities;
6. **Criteria P.6 and P.7** are to be merged and adjusted to refer to ‘good practices’ instead of ‘best practices’. The revised criterion should also demonstrate how the safeguarding practices can inspire coordination and cooperation between States Parties, communities and other stakeholders, including at the local level (moving away from the idea of good safeguarding practices as ‘models’ but rather as a source of inspiration);
7. **Criterion P.8** is to be deleted, as the requirement to carry out an assessment of the results of the selected programme, project or activity could be redundant in light of the requirement of criterion P.4;
8. **‘Chapeau’ paragraph 7 of the Operational Directives**: the working group is of the opinion that the current chapeau text should be adjusted to understand that proposals should satisfy all of the selection criteria.
9. The working group requests that the Secretariat presents all its recommendations for examination by the eighteenth session of the Committee to be held in Botswana in December 2023, together with a set of draft amendments to the Operational Directives for those recommendations which would require them.
10. On the issue of whether the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices should be separated from the nomination process, including the priority system and the annual ceiling of nominations to be examined, the working group expressed that since extensive discussions took place in the context of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention (2018 – 2022), the issue should not be re-opened in the present reflection.
11. Good safeguarding practices should be analyzed and presented in such a way that they can easily be searched using an indexing system, so that communities and other stakeholders can understand and apply various approaches used to address safeguarding issues. Such an indexing system could be connected to the goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and its further development.
12. The implementation of Article 18 should be broadened:
13. to facilitate cooperation and provide assistance to States Parties and communities in particular in emergency situations in planning, implementing and following up on their safeguarding efforts with reference to Articles 19 and 24 of the Convention. Capacity-building and awareness raising actions should be undertaken to facilitate access to International Assistance for States Parties with regard to the implementation of Article 18;
14. to better connect to the periodic reporting mechanisms by soliciting information on the follow-up and monitoring of ongoing programmes included in the Register; the reflection year for the periodic reporting may provide an opportunity to consolidate the necessary changes and identify avenues for a broader implementation of sharing good safeguarding practices; caution was raised, however, not to overburden the already heavy system.

Topic 2: Towards the creation of an online platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences

1. The working group recognises that the creation of a moderated online ‘platform’ for sharing good safeguarding experiences is beneficial for further operationalizing Article 18. It is also expected that a wider participation of communities in this endeavour will highlight the role of living heritage safeguarding in addressing global challenges.
2. While the working group noted that this was a worthy proposal, some raised questions about the financing of the implementation and maintenance costs of such a platform, but hopes were expressed to find solutions.
3. The working group recommends that the relation between the elements on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and the practices to be found on the platform be clarified.
4. The main objective of such an online ‘platform’ would be to provide a space for communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals, as well as the contact persons for elements already inscribed and selected practices, non-governmental organizations accredited under the Convention, the ICH NGO Forum, country focal points for periodic reporting, Category 2 Centres, UNESCO Chairs and facilitators of the global capacity-building programme of the Convention, to share good safeguarding experiences, particularly in terms of exchanges, follow-up, communication, collaboration and capacity building:

* The principle of equitable geographic distribution amongst participants must be respected. To this end, low-cost and widely-accessible technology should be prioritised.
* The UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace must be taken into account, as well as ethical considerations concerning the free, prior, sustained and informed consent of participants.
* The platform should also serve to share experiences and to call attention to safeguarding living heritage in emergency situations, as well as support bearers of such practices.
* The possibility of integrating this platform with other existing applications with which the communities might be more familiar or have better access should be explored, to achieve the objective of sharing good safeguarding experiences.

1. The online platform could be created through the following step-by-step approach:
2. Better highlight the safeguarding experiences already selected for the Register through the webpage of the Convention;
3. Establish the online platform to provide opportunities for the contact persons for elements already inscribed and selected practices, non-governmental organizations accredited under the Convention, the ICH NGO Forum, country focal points for periodic reporting, Category 2 Centres, UNESCO Chairs and facilitators of the global capacity-building programme of the Convention to exchange information regarding elements/programmes following their inscription/selection on the Lists and the Register and to share safeguarding plans and methods;
4. The online platform could include safeguarding experiences in the widest sense, beyond those already selected in the Register and safeguarding plans of elements inscribed on the Lists, including intangible cultural heritage identified within States Parties. The Committee may call for proposals characterized by international cooperation and/or focusing on specific priority aspects of safeguarding with reference to paragraph 4 of the Operational Directives;
5. An advisory group could be formed to accompany the creation of the online platform, with members selected from contact persons for elements already inscribed and selected practices, non-governmental organizations accredited under the Convention, the ICH NGO Forum, country focal points for periodic reporting, Category 2 Centres, UNESCO Chairs and facilitators of the global capacity-building programme of the Convention, respecting the principle of equitable geographical distribution among participants.
6. The working group requests the Secretariat to present to the eighteenth session of the Committee a detailed plan for establishing the online platform, including administrative set-up as well as expected financial and operational implications for each of the steps outlined in paragraphs 11 and 12, and possible funding options.

Topic 3: Any other issues

1. Specific attention should be paid to the ways in which safeguarding experiences identified and shared through a broader implementation of Article 18 can be connected to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals as well as to the elaboration of the post-2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
2. Encouragement should be given to communities, groups and individuals for sharing their safeguarding experiences through the meetings of the governing bodies of the Convention, for instance, by organizing side events.
3. Capacity-building initiatives should be reinforced to better raise the awareness of stakeholders of the Convention about the scope and benefits of the full implementation of Article 18.
4. In order to encourage a higher number of proposals to the Register and to promote extended sharing of safeguarding practices, it is proposed to enable and to support exchange programmes between practitioners and communities, groups and, if applicable, individuals associated with selected programmes, projects or activities on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.