Dear Mr Norov,

I am writing with reference to the request for financial assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund in the amount of US$97,320, submitted by Mongolia to implement a project entitled ‘Supporting natural and cultural sustainability through the revitalization and transmission of the traditional practices of worshipping the sacred sites in Mongolia’.

The Secretariat has carefully read and analysed your request and considers that additional information is needed to provide the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee with all the necessary information to examine your request and decide on the granting of assistance.

Enclosed with this letter, you will find the Secretariat's technical assessment of the sections where we believe that revision will help ensure your request meets the selection criteria.

We hope that this analysis will be useful in your revision work. However, you may also wish to refer to the Aide-mémoire for completing a request for International Assistance. This is available at www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/forms.

I invite you to submit a revised version of your request in electronic format (standard .rtf or .doc format) to ich-assistance@unesco.org. This request should address the issues raised by the Secretariat and be submitted as soon as possible, and in any case no later than 17 July 2018. The Secretariat will then substitute it for the request previously submitted, assess it one last time and transmit it to the Bureau with a recommendation to approve or not to approve it, or to refer the request to you for additional information.

Please note that if a revised request does not reach us by the above-mentioned deadline, the Secretariat shall then consider that the initial request may be submitted to the Bureau, as it stands.

...

Ref.: CLT/CRE/ITH/18/0144300008
Should you require further clarifications, the regional officer responsible for your country in the Intangible Culture Heritage Section, Mr Giovanni Scepi, can be contacted at the following email address: g.scepi@unesco.org or by telephone: +33(0)1 45 68 07 22.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Tim Curtis
Secretary, Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
Chief, Intangible Cultural Heritage Section

Enclosures: Secretariat's technical assessment

cc: Permanent Delegation of Mongolia to UNESCO
Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO
Request for International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund

Technical assessment from the Secretariat

General

- While the objectives of the project are clear, namely to support and strengthen the viability of traditional practices related to the worshipping of sacred sites in Mongolia, the request does not make it clear whether International Assistance is being sought in consultation with the communities concerned and whether they will be involved in every step of the implementation of the project in the sense of Article 15 of the 2003 Convention.

- It is essential to maintain a sound level of consistency and proper alignment when revising Sections 14 (Objectives and expected results), 15 (Activities), 16 (Timetable) and 17 (Budget).

- The State Party requesting International Assistance is required to provide the Word document of Form ICH-04, along with a signed PDF copy.

Section 7. Previous financial assistance from UNESCO for similar or related activities

- This section will be pre-filled by the Secretariat.

Section 10. Location of the project

- The proposed project is to be implemented in all twenty-one provinces of Mongolia, divided into four regions. This section could be revised to provide a more specific description of the particular areas identified in each of these regions. The description of the type of sacred sites could also be moved, for example to Section 13, ‘Background and rationale’.

Section 11. Purpose of request

- In addition to the box ‘safeguard heritage inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List’, another box (‘elaboration of inventories’) should also be ticked in accordance with the descriptions in Sections 14 (Objectives and Expected results), 15 (Activities), 16 and 17 (Timetable and Budget for the Project).

Section 12. Forms of assistance requested

- This section refers to the form in which the requesting State wishes to receive assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. In this case, the project only requires financial resources from UNESCO. The section will be pre-filled by the Secretariat accordingly.
Section 13. Background and rationale

- The background is clearly described, providing useful information about the element, the current situation regarding its viability and the related threats it faces, together with the needs the project would address. However, as the element is inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, it is important to provide more information on how the State Party is addressing the key threats and safeguarding the element by providing further details about the policies and plans being implemented.

- Considering that ‘International Assistance provided to States Parties for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is supplementary to national efforts for safeguarding’ (paragraph 8 of the Operational Directives), prior efforts by the requesting State, within the limits of its available resources, may be usefully described here whether or not they were successful.

Section 14. Objectives and expected results

- This section should draw a clearer distinction between the long-term, medium-term and short-term objectives, so as to justify the appropriateness of the activities proposed in Section 15 to achieve the expected results in the time foreseen.

- The current request mixes ‘objectives’, ‘expected results’ and ‘activities’. It is recommended that they be clearly distinguished in Sections 14 and 15. The expected results should refer to concrete accomplishments from the implementation of the activities described in Section 15 and should be visible, measurable and verifiable within the project implementation period.

- At the same time, these two sections should be coherent and complementary; for example, while the current request proposes a two-day local workshop in twenty-one provinces and nine districts of Ulaanbaatar in Section 15, the impact of this activity is not taken note of in Section 14.

Section 15. Activities

- This section should provide a description of all the activities in a detailed and structured manner. The activities should be presented in a logical sequence demonstrating their feasibility and ability to lead to the expected results and contribute to the objectives set out in Section 14. For example, no information on the establishment of the Organization Committee and Orientation meeting has been provided (Activity 1.1 as per the timetable). Similarly, the selection criteria for the facilitators and community involvement are also not mentioned in the current request.

- A discrepancy in the total number of participants in Activity 2.3 (‘2 day national workshop’) can be seen across the different sections. For instance, Section 14 details sixty participants, while the budget accommodates for thirty. Also, no information on Activity 2.5 (‘Evaluation Meeting and ICH Festival on Promotion and Safeguarding of Sacred sites’), mentioned in Sections 16 and 17, is provided in Section 15.

Section 16. Timetable of the project

- The revised request should show a seamless relation between the activities proposed (Section 15), the timetable (Section 16) and the budget (Section 17) so that the bureau can readily assess whether those activities are well-conceived and feasible. For example, Activity 1.6 (‘Creation of inventory making and information database’) seems to continue after the final elaboration of the activity and the financial report.
The feasibility of conducting activities within the proposed timeframe should be reconsidered. For instance, it is proposed that Activity 2.4 ('2 day local workshop'), to be conducted in twenty-one provinces and nine districts of Ulaanbaatar, will take place in two months, which does not seem realistic.

Section 17. Budget overview

A clear, rigorous and correct budget is an essential requirement for the Bureau to decide whether the amount of assistance requested is appropriate. All the expenditures displayed in the 'ICH-04 Timetable and budget form' should be described in sufficient detail.

The level of detail for the cost descriptions is insufficient. The 'Description' column should provide details of the calculations resulting in the amounts indicated for each line, and lump sums should be avoided as much as possible. For instance, it is recommended that Activity 2.4 be broken down into individual and more detailed costs, given the significance of the amount ($15,000). In the current version, this is settled with a simple lump sum, which tries to bring together up to thirty workshops.

There are many inconsistencies in the budget and some of the calculations need to be revised as they present errors. This is the case, for example, with Activity 2.3 ('Accommodation'), where the description given sums of up to US$4,500 instead of US$5,000, or 'Venue Rental' (US$240 instead of US$360).

Section 18. Community involvement

As stated in the general section above, the request should be revised to demonstrate that this International Assistance request is being sought in cooperation with the community. Furthermore, the request should demonstrate the active involvement of the community in all stages of the project cycle; for instance, the current request provides no details on how the community is involved in the monitoring, reporting and evaluation phases.

Section 20. Partners

This section should describe the coordination arrangements amongst the entities listed. It is also important to describe the human resources available in each of the entities involved to help the Bureau evaluate the request.

Section 21. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The request should explain how the monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanisms will provide a channel through which the concerns and aspirations of the communities can be raised and the impact of the project improved. The mechanism should further take into account the active involvement of the community as per the comments under Section 18, 'Community involvement'.

Section 23. Sustainability after the assistance ends

The request needs to explain how, after the closure of the project, the mechanism established would further continue to sustain the impact achieved during the project implementation phase. A clear indication of the organization(s) involved and responsible in this regard should be provided.