Dear Mr Phothisane,

I am writing with reference to the request for financial assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund in the amount of US$99,899, submitted by the Lao People's Democratic Republic to implement a project entitled 'Capacity-building for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through community-based inventory in Luang Prabang Word Heritage town and in Luang Prabang Province'.

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.
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,

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

Enclosure: Secretariat's technical assessment

cc: Permanent Delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to UNESCO
Lao National Commission for UNESCO
Request for International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund

General

- The proposed project is not restricted to capacity building for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through community-based inventorying, but also relates to the development of an existing inventory. The title of the project could be revised to reflect the scope of the proposed project in this regard. Revising the title could also be an opportunity to clarify the location of the project (since Luang Prabang World Heritage town itself is supposedly located within Luang Prabang Province).

- The timetable and budget sections should be revised using Form ICH-04 Timetable and budget, available on the webpage (https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms).

- Three sections need to be revised to respect the indicated word limits (the texts in Sections 4, 10 and 22 are too long).

- 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). For example, the timeline proposed for the activities related to Component 1 is twenty days, whereas in the budget section it is thirteen days.

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

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

Section 9. Scope of the project

- The current project will be implemented at the local level, so the only box that should be ticked is 'local (sub-national)', even though the project is expected to be implemented at the national level at a later stage.

Section 11. Purpose of request

- Since the proposed project includes community-based inventorying, the box indicating the 'elaboration of inventories' should also be ticked.

Section 12. Forms of assistance requested

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

Section 13. Background and rationale

- The background situation is clearly described, providing a good understanding of the context in which the project is proposed. The needs that the project would address regarding increased awareness among communities about intangible cultural heritage, especially those elements in need of urgent safeguarding, are also clearly demonstrated.

- 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, should be described here, whether or not they were successful; in particular, further information would be helpful on the challenges experienced and lessons learnt through the implementation of prior activities in order to better understand the feasibility and possible impacts of the proposed safeguarding activities.

Section 14. Objectives and expected results

- The 'expected results' might also include other points, for example: (i) the further development of existing inventories; and (ii) the identification of elements of intangible cultural heritage in need of urgent safeguarding.
- The 'expected results' could also be reformulated to ensure they are specific and measurable, for example: (a) xx number of community members would be trained to carry out an inventory with the support of academic and government officials; (b) a network of xx community-based trainers would be developed for Luang Prabang Province.

Section 15. Activities

- The clarity of the request would be increased if this section were revised to clearly indicate that the training on community-based inventory is to take place by adopting the materials already developed on this subject through UNESCO's capacity-building programme, and with the involvement of those national trainers previously trained through that programme.

Section 16. Timetable of the project

- The revised request should be constructed using Form ICH-04 Timetable and budget, focusing on demonstrating a seamless relation between the proposed activities (Section 15), the timetable (Section 16) and the budget (Section 17), so that the bureau can readily assess whether the activities are well-conceived and feasible. For example, the timeline mentioned in Section 15 should be consistent with the revised timetable, corresponding to twenty-four months.

Section 17. Budget overview

- A clear, rigorous and correct budget is an essential requirement for assessing whether the amount of assistance requested is appropriate. The budget submitted is incomplete as it only covers expenses up to Component 2. Furthermore, an Excel version of 'ICH-04 Timetable and budget form' should also be submitted.
- The 'Description' column of Form ICH-04 Timetable and budget should specify the details of the calculations (units x unit cost) and avoid lump sums as much as possible. Moreover, this section should specify the nature and logic of the calculations, avoiding a mere succession of figures in a multiplication.

Section 18. Community involvement

- The request demonstrates the active involvement of the community in most stages of the project cycle. However, no information on community involvement in the monitoring, reporting and evaluation phases is provided.

Section 19. Implementing organization and strategy

- The information provided in this section is somewhat confusing as the indication that the project is to be implemented by the Luang Prabang ICH team does not match
with the information given in Section 8. If the Department of Information, Culture and Tourism (DICT) in Luang Prabang will continue to function as the overall partner organization, then the role of the ICH team could be clarified here or moved to Section 20.

Section 21. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

- This section should be reviewed again once the designation of the implementing agency has been clarified. This is because the implementing organization, as mentioned in Section 8, should be responsible for the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the project.

- As regards community involvement in the monitoring, reporting and evaluation phases, see the comments in Section 18.