

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

**BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR SAFEGUARDING LIVING HERITAGE AND PREPARING
NOMINATIONS TO THE LISTS OF THE 2003 CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF
THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN AFRICA**

REGIONAL EXPERIENCE-SHARING WORKSHOP

**10 and 11 June 2026
Online**

**Session I: 10 June 2026, 10.00 a.m. – 12.40 p.m. (Paris time / UTC/GMT+2)
Session II: 11 June 2026, 10.00 a.m. – 12.40 p.m. (Paris time / UTC/GMT+2)**

Concept note and agenda

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Context and rationale

1. The Japanese Fund-in-Trust cooperation project 'Building capacities for safeguarding living heritage and preparing nominations to the Lists of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Africa' contributes to safeguarding and promoting the rich diversity of intangible cultural heritage across Africa, with a focus on nine countries that, at the time of the preparation of the project in 2023, had neither elements inscribed on the Lists of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereafter 'the Convention') nor any projects and programmes selected for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices (hereafter 'Register'). The partner countries are Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Sao Tome and Principe, and South Sudan.¹

2. Supported by the government of Japan, the project aims to strengthen the knowledge and skills of States Parties to prepare nomination files to the Lists of the Convention as well as proposals for the Register. Through a combination of capacity-building initiatives, peer learning and experience-sharing among stakeholders, it fosters South-South cooperation for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding. It also supports dialogue among States Parties in Africa and encourages the integration of living heritage into broader cultural policies and sustainable development frameworks.

3. The first phase of the project focused on capacity-building activities at the country level, including workshops and follow-up technical support on nominations. Between September 2025 and April 2026, capacity-building workshops were conducted in Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Sao Tome and Principe and South Sudan. These workshops strengthened national capacities to prepare nominations for the Lists and proposals to the Register, tailored to each country's needs and priorities. They also enhanced understanding of synergies among UNESCO's culture conventions, supporting more integrated cultural policy approaches.

4. Following the completion of the capacity-building workshops, four countries (Comoros, Eswatini, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe) received tailored follow-up technical support for either the submission of nomination files or for a preparatory assistance request (to prepare future nominations) in view of the statutory deadline of 31 March 2026.

5. At its twentieth session in 2025, the Committee inscribed on the Representative List the first element from three project countries, namely, Comoros, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe. As to Eswatini, Lesotho and South Sudan, there are nominations submitted by these States under evaluation in the context of the 2026 cycle. Furthermore, Comoros and Lesotho submitted nominations for the 2027 cycle, while Eswatini requested Preparatory Assistance to prepare a nomination for the 2028 cycle. Six out of the nine partner countries are therefore currently engaged in nomination-related processes of the 2003 Convention.

6. The planned workshop builds on the country-level capacity-building activities and provides a regional platform for countries to exchange experiences on the preparation of nomination files. It focuses on identifying challenges and developing practical, experience-based approaches in nomination processes.

Objectives

7. With a view to strengthening the skills and knowledge of States Parties in Africa in preparing nomination files for the Convention's Lists, as well as enhancing policy development and regional cooperation, workshop participants will:

¹ The selection of project countries was confirmed in the revised project document, approved by the donor on 12 February 2026.

- deepen their technical understanding of the preparation of nomination files under the Convention through peer exchange of concrete experiences;
- identify practical, experience-based solutions to common challenges in nomination processes;
- strengthen their capacity to engage with the Convention's international cooperation mechanisms and foster continued exchange among participating countries.

Participants

8. It will bring together the nine participating countries and selected African countries with recent experience in nominations (namely Cameroon, The Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, and Senegal). Participants will include national project focal points, resource persons involved in nominations, facilitators from the Convention's global network, and UNESCO staff from field offices and Headquarters.

Dates

The regional online workshop will be organized over two half days on 10 and 11 June 2026.

Structure and approach

9. Discussions will focus on key topics, central to the nomination process, as they are closely related to the criteria for inscription on the Lists. These include, in particular, ensuring the widest possible participation of the community in the nomination process and their free, prior, sustained and informed consent; the elaboration of inventories of the intangible cultural heritage; and the elaboration of safeguarding plans or measures. The specific case of multinational nominations, as a tool for international cooperation, will also be addressed.

10. The workshop will alternate between plenary sessions and breakout group discussions². Plenary sessions will serve to refresh participants' understanding of key concepts and to present significant experiences around a key topic. Countries invited to share their experience will be informed in advance by the Secretariat and will be invited to prepare a five-minute intervention.

11. Each plenary session will be followed by breakout group discussions. This format is intended to encourage the active participation of all countries through more informal exchanges in smaller groups. The groups will focus on concrete challenges encountered in preparing nomination files under the Convention and will promote the sharing of practical solutions. To support these discussions, one country per group will be invited in advance to present a specific challenge they have faced and how they addressed it.

² Group composition will be as follows: Group 1 – Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, The Gambia, Eritrea, Kenya, South Sudan; Group 2 – Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe; Group 3 – Cameroon, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Senegal.

Agenda

Wednesday, 10 June 2026	
10.00 – 10.30	<p>Item 1: Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming remarks by Ms Fumiko Ohinata, Secretary of the 2003 Convention • Welcoming remarks by Mr Shin Saito, Counsellor, Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO
10.30 – 12.00	<p>Item 2: Sharing project results at the country level</p> <p>Plenary session</p> <p><i>Moderated by the Secretariat</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the implementation of the project • Intervention of each project country (Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Sao Tome and Principe, and South Sudan) to share three key benefits from the project (5 minutes each)
Item 3: Inventories of intangible cultural heritage	
12.00 – 12.25	<p>Breakout groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The breakout groups will provide an opportunity for each country to share a challenge and solutions related to the elaboration and updating of inventories. • Trigger questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How did you identify and define the elements of intangible cultural heritage in your context? What challenges did you face? ○ How did you engage communities and groups concerned, and non-governmental organizations, in the elaboration of inventories? What worked well, or did not? ○ How did you manage and update your inventories over time (including how information is presented and maintained)?
12.25 – 12.50	<p>Plenary session</p> <p><i>Moderated by Mr Léonce Ki</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by Mr Sidi Traore, facilitator from the UNESCO global facilitators' network (10 minutes) • Experience-sharing by Comoros (5 minutes) • Experience-sharing by The Gambia (5 minutes)
Thursday, 11 June 2026	
10.00 – 10.05	Secretariat: Refresher of day 1 and programme of day 2

Item 4 – Ensuring the widest possible participation of communities, groups and individuals	
10.05 – 10.25	<p>Plenary session <i>Moderated by Ms Emily Drani</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by Mr Sidi Traore (5 minutes) • Experience sharing by Lesotho (5 minutes) • Experience sharing by Equatorial Guinea (5 minutes) • Experience sharing by Senegal (5 minutes)
Item 5 – Elaborating safeguarding plans and measures	
10.25 – 10.40	<p>Plenary session <i>Moderated by Mr Lovemore Mazibuko</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by Mr Sidi Traore (5 minutes) • Experience-sharing by Kenya (5 minutes) • Experience-sharing by Sao Tome and Principe (5 minutes)
Breakout groups for Item 4 and Item 5	
10.40 – 11.10	<p>Breakout groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The breakout groups will provide an opportunity for each country to share a challenge and solutions related to the widest possible participation and to the elaboration of safeguarding plans and measures. • Triggering questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On Item 4 (15 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How did you ensure the widest possible participation of communities in the nomination process? ▪ How did you reflect the diversity of opinions within communities? ▪ How did you include the voices of people of all genders, ages, origins and backgrounds within communities? ○ On Item 5 (15 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How did you identify the risks and threats to an element, and how did this shape your safeguarding approach? ▪ How did you prioritize and sequence safeguarding measures in your plan? What criteria guided your decisions? ▪ How did your country mobilize resources for the implementation of the safeguarding plan or measures, and what obstacles did you?
Item 6 – Multinational nominations	
11:10 – 11:25	<p>Plenary session <i>Moderated by the Secretariat</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by Mr Sidi Traore (5 minutes) • Experience-sharing by Gabon and Cameroon on “Mvet Oyeng, musical art, practices and skills associated with the Ekang community” (10 minutes)
11.25 – 11.50	<p>Breakout groups: working on an example proposed by the facilitator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The breakout groups will provide an opportunity for countries to reflect on how to address the challenges of a specific example provided by the facilitator. • Trigger questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How did you ensure coordination between national administrations in the context of a multinational nomination? ○ How did you coordinate the participation of the concerned communities in a multinational nomination? ○ How did you present joint safeguarding measures, while ensuring balanced representation of the States Parties in the nomination file?
11.50 – 12.30	<p>Item 7 – Wrap-up of the workshop and next steps in the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next steps by the Secretariat (5 minutes) • Open discussion <i>moderated by Sandra Mascarenhas</i> (20 minutes) • Wrap-up by the Secretariat (5 minutes)
12.30 – 12.40	<p>Item 8 – Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing remarks by Mr Hilaire Mputu, Officer-in-Charge, UNESCO Regional Office for Central Africa (10 minutes)