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

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE  
SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Thirteenth session**

**Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius**

**26 November to 1 December 2018**

**Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Multiple submissions of International Assistance requests**

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| **Summary**  The Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee has been examining an increasing number of International Assistance requests up to US$100,000 submitted by a single country. Recognizing the possible implications of this trend, particularly for the overall implementation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, the Bureau requested that the Committee discuss this topic at the present session. This document proposes that consideration be given to revising the Operational Directives to limit the amount of International Assistance that a single country can be granted by the Bureau ([Decision 13.COM 2.BUR 7](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions-bureau/13.COM%202.BUR/7)).  **Decision required:** paragraph 13 |

1. In accordance with paragraph 47 of the Operational Directives, International Assistance requests up to US$100,000 (except requests for preparatory assistance) can be submitted at any time. Paragraph 49 further provides that these requests be examined and approved by the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereafter, ‘the Bureau’).
2. During its session on 22 March 2018, the Bureau of the thirteenth session of the Committee discussed the issues related to an increasing number of International Assistance requests being submitted to the Bureau by a single country, either at the same time or in quick succession. This discussion was triggered by the fact that the Bureau was asked to examine four International Assistance requests, during one sitting, submitted by a single State Party (see document [ITH/18/13.COM 1.BUR/3](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM_1.BUR-3-EN.docx)). The Bureau requested that the Secretariat take stock of its experience related to the granting of International Assistance, particularly as regards the number and amount of assistance requests submitted by a single country and present it at its next session ([Decision 13.COM 1.BUR 4](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions-bureau/13.COM%201.BUR/4)).
3. The question was discussed from two related points of view: the number of requests submitted to the Bureau, by a single country during a period of time; and the amount of assistance requested from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund by a single country through the Bureau. Recognizing that the issue will have an overall impact on the implementation of the Fund for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (document [ITH/18/13.COM 2.BUR/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM_2.BUR-7-EN.docx)), the Bureau, during its session on 7 June 2018, requested that an item concerning this topic be inscribed on the agenda of the present session of the Committee. The intention is that consideration be given to limiting the amount of International Assistance that a single country could be granted through the Bureau ([Decision 13.COM 2.BUR 7](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions-bureau/13.COM%202.BUR/7)), with a view to examining revisions to the Operational Directives at the fourteenth session of the Committee, if deemed necessary. When doing so, the Bureau suggested limiting the total amount that can be requested by a single country through it, either by year (US$100,000) or by biennium (US$200,000), regardless of the number of requests submitted. The Secretariat considers that it is more appropriate to limit the amount to US$200,000 by biennium as this would give more flexibility to States Parties to benefit from the International Assistance mechanism; the draft decision is proposed in this sense.
4. To discuss the issue at hand, it is however first necessary to consider the general context in which multiple International Assistance requests are submitted to the attention of the Bureau. Since 2008, when the International Assistance mechanisms became operational, a total of 173 requests from 73 States Parties have been received by the Secretariat with the objective of being processed to the Bureau. They concern the following three main categories of assistance:
   1. International Assistance requests up to US$100,000[[1]](#footnote-1) (Form ICH-04);
   2. International Assistance requests in cases of emergency, up to any amount;
   3. Preparatory assistance for the inclusion of an element on the Urgent Safeguarding List (Form ICH-05) or in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices (Form ICH-06).
5. The number of requests that States submitted to the Secretariat does not equal the number of requests finally examined by the Bureau. Of the above-mentioned 173 requests, this body examined only 97 requests submitted by 52 States Parties; 13 files are currently under process by the Secretariat. This is because those 63 requests which were not presented to the Bureau were: (i) considered by the Secretariat as ‘inappropriate’ – not submitted through an official government authority and therefore not processed (20 requests); (ii) still ‘incomplete’ and therefore sent back as such to the submitting States (8 requests); or (iii) withdrawn before their examination by the Bureau, often following the request by the Secretariat for additional information on the project (35 requests).
6. The Secretariat has planned to make information on International Assistance requests submitted, together with their status, available through the website of the Convention. This proposal forms part of the spending plan presented to this session of the Bureau (see document [ITH/18/13.COM 2.BUR/3](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM_2.BUR-3-EN.docx)) concerning the use of 20 per cent of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2019. Pending the completion of this work, the annex to this document provides a list of International Assistance requests received for the attention of the Bureau between 1 January 2008 and 30 June 2018.

**Number of requests submitted to the Bureau by a single country**

1. Over the past ten years, thirty-five States submitted only one request to the Bureau while six States requested assistance at least five times. It is worth noting that three States requested assistance more than ten times each, representing nearly one fourth of all the requests received with the objective of being processed by the Bureau. Another example of multiple submissions concerns seven States that submitted three or more requests simultaneously or in quick succession within a period of less than one year. While multiple requests by States have been submitted regularly and throughout the entire period under consideration, the trend has somewhat accelerated since 2016, with seven States submitting to the Bureau at least two requests in the same calendar year. The four requests from a single country examined by the Bureau in March 2018 confirmed this trend.

**Amount of assistance requested to the Bureau by a single country**

1. Since the Resolution of the General Assembly in June 2016 to increase the ceiling of International Assistance requests examined by the Bureau from US$25,000 to US$100,000 ([Resolution 6.GA 7](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/6.GA/7)), the average amount of assistance requested through the Bureau has increased by 152 per cent, from US$33,985 to US$85,766, leading to an increase in the total amount granted per year. Similarly, the total amount approved by the Bureau from January 2016 to October 2018 (US$2,382,215) is already 26 per cent higher than the cumulated amount approved from 2008 to 2015 (US$1,894,868). The higher amount that the Bureau can grant means that the impact on the Fund is correspondingly higher when there are multiple requests.

**Implications and possible measures**

1. The implications of multiple submissions could be discussed from different angles. One of the issues concerns States’ ability to absorb the responsibilities of implementing several projects at the country level at the same time. On a few occasions so far, the Secretariat has considered that multiple requests submitted together or with an overlapping implementation period may be processed if they concern different implementing agencies. This approach has been taken on the understanding that different agencies within the country should be able to benefit from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, as they may have different mandates and scopes of activities. This was also for an administrative reason, as the Secretariat is regularly faced with challenges in closing projects due to delays in their implementation at the national level; one case of a project that could not be closed for several years concerned a State that continued to submit several other requests to be implemented by different implementing agencies. In such cases, the conformity with criterion A.7 for new submissions could be questioned ([paragraph 12](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Directives/7.GA/12) of the Operational Directives). Taking into account the financial risk for the implementation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, the importance of compliance with criterion A.7 as a risk mitigation measure is of utmost importance.
2. Multiple submissions to the Bureau by a single country at same time or in quick succession could also present a concern for the sound governance of the Convention. In accordance with paragraph 51 of the Operational Directives of the Convention, International Assistance requests over US$100,000 shall be evaluated by the Evaluation Body and examined and approved by the Committee. However, multiple submissions up to US$100,000 may be used as a way to divide a single large request into several smaller ones presented to the Bureau, thus bypassing the authority of the Committee. Considering the level of authority bestowed upon the Bureau by the Committee, at the present session, the Committee might wish to propose limiting the amount requested by a single a country channelled through the Bureau, either by year or by biennium.
3. The implications of multiple requests will become even more significant following the approval by the General Assembly, in June 2018, of the new team that will be fully dedicated to better implementing the International Assistance mechanisms ([Resolution 7.GA 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/7.GA/8)). It is expected that the recruitment of this team will allow for an ever more accelerated increase in the volume of requests processed for the attention of the governing bodies by the Secretariat. Such an increase will be in addition to the one already noted (see document [ITH/18/13.COM/INF.5.2](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM-INF.5.2-EN.docx)) thanks to the efforts deployed by the Secretariat during recent years.
4. The Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention do not currently include any indications either regarding the number of files to be submitted simultaneously by the same State Party or the cumulative amount of assistance that a country may receive over a determined period. The sovereignty of each State to submit International Assistance notwithstanding, the Committee may consider it appropriate, following the recommendation of the Bureau, to introduce ‘revisions to the Operational Directives limiting the amount of International Assistance that a single country could be granted from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund through the Bureau’ ([Decision 13.COM 2.BUR 7](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions-bureau/13.COM%202.BUR/7)). As such a change would require revisions to the Operational Directives of the Convention, this item could be presented for examination by the eighth session of the General Assembly in 2020, and in order to prepare for that, the discussions by the Committee, if necessary, could be continued at its fourteenth session. Given the nature of these requests and the relatively small amount of such requests received, the Committee may also consider it appropriate to exclude International Assistance requests in cases of emergency from this limitation.
5. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 13.COM 12

The Committee,

1. Having examined document ITH/18/13.COM/12,
2. Recalling Decisions [13.COM 1.BUR 4](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions-bureau/13.COM%201.BUR/4) and [13.COM 2.BUR 7](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions-bureau/13.COM%202.BUR/7),
3. Takes note of the analysis prepared by the Secretariat regarding the emerging trends concerning multiple submissions of International Assistance requests by a single country through the Bureau;
4. Expresses concerns regarding the possible implications related to the administration of the International Assistance portfolio under the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund as well as the governance of the 2003 Convention, caused by multiple submissions of International Assistance requests by a single country through the Bureau;
5. Emphasizes the importance of compliance with criterion A.7 for new submissions of International Assistance requests, as a way to mitigate the administrative risks entailed by multiple submissions;
6. Requests that the Secretariat propose, for examination at the fourteenth session of the Committee, revisions to the Operational Directives reflecting its debates during the present session with a view to limiting the amount requested by a single country through the Bureau (excluding emergency requests) to US$200,000 by biennium.

**ANNEX**

**International Assistance requests received for the attention of the Bureau**   
**between 1 January 2008 and 30 June 2018**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Status of requests** | **Number of requests** | **Total amount in US$** |
| **Albania** | | **3** | **59,100** |
| **2010** | Approved | 1 | 24,500 |
| **2013** | Rejected | 1 | 24,800 |
| **2018** | Approved | 1 | 9,800 |
| **Argentina** | | **2** | **49,100** |
| **2012** | Rejected | 1 | 24,100 |
|  | Withdrawn | 1 | 25,000 |
| **Benin** | | **1** |  |
| **2012** | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 |  |
| **Bolivia (Plurinational State of)** | | **1** | **7,500** |
| **2008** | Approved | 1 | 7,500 |
| **Botswana** | | **2** | **93,261** |
| **2015** | Approved | 1 | 68,261 |
|  | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 | 25,000 |
| **Burkina Faso** | | **1** | **24,925** |
| **2013** | Referred | 1 | 24,925 |
| **Burundi** | | **1** | **89,467** |
| **2017** | Withdrawn | 1 | 89,467 |
| **Cambodia** | | **4** | **100,000** |
| **2011** | Incomplete | 2 | 50,000 |
|  | Withdrawn | 1 | 25,000 |
| **2012** | Withdrawn | 1 | 25,000 |
| **Cameroon** | | **1** | **98,200** |
| **2018** | Under Process | 1 | 98,200 |
| **Chad** | | **1** | **84,709** |
| **2017** | Referred | 1 | 84,709 |
| **Colombia** | | **3** | **224,350** |
| **2015** | Approved | 1 | 25,000 |
| **2018** | Approved | 2 | 199,350 |
| **Cook Islands** | | **1** | **100,000** |
| **2018** | Under Process | 1 | 100,000 |
| **Cote D’Ivoire** | | **4** | **335,805** |
| **2008** | Approved | 1 | 6,000 |
|  | Withdrawn | 1 | 5,000 |
| **2014** | Approved | 1 | 299,972 |
|  | Withdrawn | 1 | 24,833 |
| **Croatia** | | **1** | **99,500** |
| **2018** | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 | 99,500 |
| **Cuba** | | **1** | **65,744** |
| **2015** | Approved | 1 | 65,744 |
| **Djibouti** | | **2** | **121,900** |
| **2010** | Withdrawn | 1 | 25,000 |
| **2018** | Under Process | 1 | 96,900 |
| **Dominican Republic** | | **2** | **31,848** |
| **2008** | Withdrawn | 1 | 7,500 |
| **2010** | Incomplete | 1 | 24,348 |
| **Democratic People’s Republic of Korea** | | **1** | **98,000** |
| **2018** | Approved | 1 | 98,000 |
| **Democratic Republic of Congo** | | **2** | **103,000** |
| **2010** | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 | 13,000 |
| **2017** | Withdrawn | 1 | 90,000 |
| **Ecuador** |  | **2** | **62,300** |
| **2008** | Approved | 1 | 6,000 |
| **2017** | Withdrawn | 1 | 56,300 |
| **Egypt** |  | **2** | **30,000** |
| **2009** | Withdrawn | 1 | 5,000 |
| **2013** | Withdrawn | 1 | 25,000 |
| **El Salvador** |  | **1** | **24,995** |
| **2016** | Approved | 1 | 24,995 |
| **Eritrea** |  | **1** | **25,600** |
| **2013** | Withdrawn | 1 | 25,600 |
| **Eswatini** | | **1** | **54,028** |
| **2018** | Under Process | 1 | 54,028 |
| **Ethiopia** |  | **1** | **5,000** |
| **2008** | Approved | 1 | 5,000 |
| **Fiji** |  | **2** | **49,997** |
| **2010** | Withdrawn | 1 | 24,997 |
| **2014** | Approved | 1 | 25,000 |
| **France** |  | **1** |  |
| **2011** | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 |  |
| **Gabon** |  | **1** | **24,560** |
| **2013** | Approved | 1 | 24,560 |
| **Georgia** |  | **1** | **18,210** |
| **2014** | Withdrawn | 1 | 18,210 |
| **Grenada** |  | **1** | **25,000** |
| **2016** | Withdrawn | 1 | 25,000 |
| **Guatemala** |  | **3** | **56,957** |
| **2009** | Approved | 1 | 8,000 |
| **2014** | Withdrawn | 1 | 24,000 |
| **2015** | Referred | 1 | 24,957 |
| **Guinea** |  | **2** | **105,000** |
| **2010** | Withdrawn | 1 | 5,000 |
| **2018** | Under Process | 1 | 100,000 |
| **Haiti** |  | **1** | **98,970** |
| **2018** | Approved | 1 | 98,970 |
| **Honduras** |  | **3** | **30,000** |
| **2011** | Approved | 1 | 10,000 |
|  | Withdrawn | 2 | 20,000 |
| **India** |  | **1** |  |
| **2015** | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 |  |
| **Jordan** |  | **1** | **10,000** |
| **2018** | Withdrawn | 1 | 10,000 |
| **Kenya** |  | **11** | **379,455** |
| **2008** | Approved | 1 | 6,000 |
| **2011** | Approved | 1 | 17,668 |
|  | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 |  |
|  | Under Process | 1 | 15,214 |
|  | Withdrawn | 1 | 23,707 |
| **2013** | Approved | 3 | 191,866 |
| **2014** | Inappropriate / Not considered | 2 | 25,000 |
| **2018** | Referred | 1 | 100,000 |
| **Kyrgyzstan** |  | **1** | **99,950** |
| **2017** | Approved | 1 | 99,950 |
| **Lao People’s Democratic Republic** | | **1** | **99,899** |
| **2018** | Under Process | 1 | 99,899 |
| **Latvia** |  | **1** | **6,000** |
| **2008** | Approved | 1 | 6,000 |
| **Lesotho** |  | **2** | **49,998** |
| **2011** | Withdrawn | 1 | 25,000 |
| **2014** | Approved | 1 | 24,998 |
| **Malawi** | | **3** | **149,732** |
| **2011** | Approved | 1 | 24,947 |
|  | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 | 25,000 |
| **2018** | Under Process | 1 | 99,785 |
| **Mali** | | **3** | **339,807** |
| **2009** | Approved | 2 | 32,500 |
| **2013** | Approved | 1 | 307,307 |
| **Mauritania** | | **4** | **140,704** |
| **2009** | Approved | 2 | 19,600 |
| **2017** | Approved | 1 | 94,300 |
| **2018** | Under Process | 1 | 26,804 |
| **Micronesia (Federated States of)** | | **1** | **23,117** |
| **2016** | Referred | 1 | 23,117 |
| **Mongolia** | | **8** | **366,846** |
| **2008** | Approved | 2 | 12,500 |
|  | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 |  |
| **2009** | Approved | 1 | 24,000 |
| **2011** | Approved | 1 | 107,000 |
| **2013** | Approved | 1 | 24,900 |
| **2018** | Approved | 2 | 198,446 |
| **Morocco** | | **2** | **84,540** |
| **2014** | Approved | 1 | 14,100 |
| **2016** | Approved | 1 | 70,440 |
| **Mozambique** | | **2** | **125,610** |
| **2017** | Referred | 1 | 30,000 |
| **2018** | Under Process | 1 | 95,610 |
| **Namibia** | | **3** | **135,000** |
| **2011** | Incomplete | 1 | 25,000 |
| **2017** | Approved | 1 | 10,000 |
|  | Referred | 1 | 100,000 |
| **Nicaragua** | | **1** | **9,695** |
| **2009** | Approved | 1 | 9,695 |
| **Niger** | | **2** | **535,724** |
| **2017** | Approved | 1 | 257,829 |
| **2018** | Withdrawn | 1 | 277,895 |
| **Nigeria** | | **4** | **204,800** |
| **2011** | Withdrawn | 1 | 24,800 |
| **2014** | Rejected | 1 | 95,000 |
| **2018** | Inappropriate / Not considered | 2 | 85,000 |
| **Papua New Guinea** | | **2** | **38,850** |
| **2010** | Incomplete | 1 | 15,000 |
| **2015** | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 | 23,850 |
| **Peru** | | **1** | **72,200** |
| **2018** | Under Process | 1 | 72,200 |
| **Philippines** | | **1** | **7,393** |
| **2015** | Approved | 1 | 7,393 |
| **Poland** | | **1** |  |
| **2016** | Withdrawn | 1 |  |
| **Saint Kitts And Nevis** | | **1** | **99,443** |
| **2017** | Approved | 1 | 99,443 |
| **Senegal** | | **2** | **121,903** |
| **2012** | Incomplete | 1 | 22,014 |
| **2017** | Approved | 1 | 99,889 |
| **Seychelles** | | **2** | **99,862** |
| **2009** | Approved | 1 | 9,862 |
| **2015** | Approved | 1 | 90,000 |
| **Sudan** | | **2** | **186,647** |
| **2009** | Approved | 1 | 12,167 |
| **2014** | Approved | 1 | 174,480 |
| **Syrian Arab Republic** | | **3** | **51,175** |
| **2010** | Withdrawn | 1 | 25,000 |
| **2011** | Approved | 2 | 26,175 |
| **Tajikistan** | | **1** | **44,500** |
| **2017** | Referred | 1 | 44,500 |
| **Togo** | | **3** | **149,610** |
| **2009** | Approved | 1 | 24,770 |
| **2012** | Approved | 1 | 24,950 |
| **2017** | Approved | 1 | 99,890 |
| **Tonga** | | **1** | **85,912** |
| **2017** | Approved | 1 | 85,912 |
| **Uganda** | | **9** | **617,089** |
| **2010** | Incomplete | 1 | 46,617 |
| **2011** | Approved | 2 | 224,570 |
| **2012** | Approved | 1 | 10,000 |
| **2013** | Approved | 1 | 24,990 |
| **2016** | Approved | 1 | 97,582 |
| **2017** | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 | 65,000 |
| **2018** | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 | 83,580 |
|  | Referred | 1 | 64,750 |
| **Ukraine** | | **2** | **33,500** |
| **2008** | Rejected | 1 | 5,000 |
| **2017** | Approved | 1 | 28,500 |
| **United Republic of Tanzania** | | **1** | **25,000** |
| **2014** | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 | 25,000 |
| **Uruguay** | | **2** | **211,875** |
| **2010** | Withdrawn | 1 | 25,000 |
| **2011** | Approved | 1 | 186,875 |
| **Vanuatu** | | **1** | **23,908** |
| **2015** | Approved | 1 | 23,908 |
| **Viet Nam** | | **5** | **85,981** |
| **2008** | Approved | 1 | 6,000 |
| **2009** | Approved | 1 | 6,000 |
| **2010** | Approved | 3 | 73,981 |
| **Yemen** | | **1** | **77,760** |
| **2017** | Withdrawn | 1 | 77,760 |
| **Zambia** | | **12** | **446,748** |
| **2011** | Withdrawn | 1 | 25,000 |
| **2012** | Withdrawn | 1 | 24,000 |
| **2015** | Approved | 2 | 49,927 |
|  | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 | 25,000 |
|  | Withdrawn | 4 | 99,925 |
| **2017** | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 | 98,050 |
|  | Under Process | 1 | 25,000 |
| **2018** | Under Process | 1 | 99,846 |
| **Zimbabwe** | | **12** | **861,033** |
| **2010** | Approved | 2 | 37,000 |
|  | Incomplete | 1 | 25,000 |
| **2011** | Withdrawn | 1 | 22,622 |
| **2015** | Withdrawn | 1 | 94,725 |
| **2016** | Approved | 1 | 98,927 |
|  | Referred | 1 | 99,052 |
|  | Rejected | 2 | 199,714 |
| **2017** | Approved | 1 | 93,242 |
|  | Inappropriate / Not considered | 1 | 91,901 |
|  | Withdrawn | 1 | 98,850 |
| **Total** |  | **173** | **8,498,292** |

1. . Since the Resolution of the General Assembly in June 2016 to increase the ceiling of International Assistance requests examined by the Bureau from US$25,000 to US$100,000 ([Resolution 6.GA 7](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/6.GA/7)). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)