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| ITEM 7 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA |
| **Report of the Evaluation Body on its work in 2022** |
| Seventeenth session, Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco – 28 November to 3 December 2022) |

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| **Summary**At its sixteenth session, the Committee established a consultative body responsible for the evaluation in 2022 of nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List and to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and requests for International Assistance greater than US$100,000 (Decision [16.COM 16](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/16)). This document constitutes the report of the Evaluation Body, which includes an overview of the 2022 cycle (Part A), observations and recommendations on working methods and several cross-cutting issues (Part B), an overview of recurring issues (Part C) and a draft decision for the Committee's consideration (Part D).**Decision required**: paragraph 61 |

1. In conformity with paragraph 27 of the Operational Directives, the evaluation of nominations for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List and Representative List, proposals for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and requests for International Assistance greater than US$100,000 is accomplished by a consultative body of the Committee, known as the ‘Evaluation Body’ and established in accordance with Article 8.3 of the Convention and Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee.
2. By its Decision [16.COM 16](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/16), the Committee established the 2022 Evaluation Body at its sixteenth session. The Evaluation Body is composed of six experts qualified in various fields of intangible cultural heritage representative of States Parties non-Members of the Committee and six accredited non-governmental organizations. As indicated in Decision [9.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.COM/11), a system of rotation among the seats has been established, according to which the Committee reappointed nine continuing members and elected three new members. For the 2022 cycle, Ms Nahla Abdallah Emam (Egypt), Daniel Rubin de la Borbolla Center and Aigine Cultural Research Center – Aigine CRC were elected by the sixteenth session of the Committee, taking into consideration equitable geographical representation and their qualifications in various domains of intangible cultural heritage. The twelve members of the 2022 Evaluation Body, together with the State Party they represent in the case of experts, were/are:

**Expert representatives of States Parties non-Members of the Committee**

EG I: Mr Pier Luigi Petrillo (Italy)

EG II: Ms Ľubica Voľanská (Slovakia, until 7 July 2022)

EG III: Mr Nigel Encalada (Belize)

EG IV: Mr Kirk Siang Yeo (Singapore)

EG V(a): Mr Lemeneh Getachew Senishaw (Ethiopia, until 7 July 2022)

EG V(b): Ms Nahla Abdallah Emam (Egypt)

**Accredited non-governmental organizations**

EG I: Workshop intangible heritage Flanders

EG II: European Association of Folklore Festivals

EG III: Daniel Rubin de la Borbolla Center

EG IV: Aigine Cultural Research Center – Aigine CRC

EG V(a): Association pour la sauvegarde des masques (ASAMA)

EG V(b): Syria Trust for Development

1. Two memberships expired automatically when the States that they represented were elected members of the Committee during the ninth session of the General Assembly (5 to 7 July 2022, UNESCO Headquarters). This is because experts in the Evaluation Body are to be representatives of States Parties non-Members of the Committee, in line with paragraph 27 of the Operational Directives. As such, these two experts departed from the 2022 Evaluation Body after having completed their duty up to its second meeting in June 2022. Since the recommendations of the Body were made during its decision-making June meeting (the subsequent final meeting in September was to finalize the wording of the report of the Evaluation Body), it can be considered that the evaluations of the nomination files under the 2022 cycle (with the exception of the eleven files concerned by the dialogue process) benefitted from the presence of all twelve members of the Body, despite the departure of these two members mid-way.
2. Furthermore, following the submission and presentation of the report on its work to the seventeenth session of the Committee, the present Evaluation Body as a whole shall cease to exist with the establishment of the next Body. Based on the requirements described in Decision [16.COM 16](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/16), a new Evaluation Body will be established at the present session of the Committee. The seats for experts that fell vacant will be filled by the election to be held at the same session.
3. The report of the 2022 Evaluation Body consists of five working documents, as follows:
4. The present document LHE/22/17.COM/7 constitutes the general report of the Evaluation Body with an overview of all the 2022 files (Part A), general observations and recommendations on working methods and a number of cross-cutting issues (Part B), an overview of recurring issues in the 2022 cycle (Part C) and a draft decision for the Committee's consideration;
5. Document [LHE/22/17.COM/7.a](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-7.a-EN.docx) concerns nominations for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List as well as combined nominations for inscription on that List together with requests for International Assistance to support the implementation of the proposed safeguarding plan. It includes an assessment of the conformity of the nominations with the inscription criteria as provided in Chapter l.1 of the Operational Directives, including an assessment of the viability of the element and of the feasibility and sufficiency of the safeguarding plan and the risks of it disappearing, as provided in paragraph 29 of the Operational Directives, as well as recommendations to the Committee to inscribe or not to inscribe the nominated elements on the Urgent Safeguarding List or to refer the nominations to the submitting State(s) for additional information. For files that also include a request for International Assistance, the document includes an assessment of the conformity of the request with the selection criteria, as provided in Chapter l.4 of the Operational Directives, as well as recommendations to the Committee to approve or not to approve the requests or to refer the requests to the submitting State(s) for additional information;
6. Document [LHE/22/17.COM/7.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-7.b-EN.docx) concerns nominations for inscription on the Representative List. It includes an assessment of the conformity of the nominations with the inscription criteria, as provided in Chapter l.2 of the Operational Directives, as well as recommendations to the Committee to inscribe or not to inscribe the nominated elements on the Representative List or to refer the nominations to the submitting State(s) for additional information;
7. Document [LHE/22/17.COM/7.c](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-7.c-EN.docx) concerns proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. It includes an assessment of the conformity of the proposals with the selection criteria, as provided in Chapter l.3 of the Operational Directives, as well as recommendations to the Committee to select or not to select the proposals or to refer the proposals to the submitting State(s) for additional information;
8. Document [LHE/22/17.COM/7.d](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-7.d-EN.docx) concerns requests for International Assistance greater than US$100,000. It includes an assessment of the conformity of the requests with the selection criteria, as provided in Chapter l.4 of the Operational Directives, as well as recommendations to the Committee to approve or not to approve the requests or to refer the requests to the submitting State(s) for additional information.
9. As requested in [Decision 16.COM 16](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/16), the abovementioned nominations, proposals and requests are presented in their respective reports in the English alphabetical order, with the files of States whose names begin with the letter C. The files evaluated by the Evaluation Body for the 2022 cycle are available on the website of the Convention at: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/files-2022-under-process-01172>.
10. **Overview of the 2022 cycle**
11. In accordance with paragraph 54 of the Operational Directives, the deadline for the submission of files for the 2022 cycle was 31 March 2021. The Operational Directives provide that ‘the Committee determines two years beforehand, in accordance with the available resources and its capacity, the number of files that can be treated in the course of the two following cycles’ (paragraph 33). At its fifteenth session, the Committee determined that in the course of the 2022 cycle at least fifty-five files could be treated for the Urgent Safeguarding List, Representative List, Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and International Assistance greater than US$100,000 (Decision [15.COM 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/15.COM/9)).
12. Following the above-mentioned Decision [15.COM 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/15.COM/9) to have at least one file per submitting State processed over the two-year period 2022–2023 and applying the priorities set out in paragraph 34 of the Operational Directives, the Evaluation Body was informed that the Secretariat had treated a total of fifty-nine files, as follows:

By level of priority:

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| **Reference** | **Type of file** | **Number** |
| Decision 15.COM 9 – priority (0) | Files from States that did not have a file treated for the 2021 cycle  | 38 |
| Paragraph 34 of the Operational Directives – priority (i) | Files from States having no elements inscribed, good safeguarding practices selected or requests for International Assistance greater than US$100,000 approved | 5 |
| Nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List | 2 |
| Paragraph 34 of the Operational Directives – priority (ii) | Multinational files | 14 |
| Paragraph 34 of the Operational Directives – priority (iii) | Files from States with the fewest elements inscribed, good safeguarding practices selected or requests for International Assistance greater than US$100,000 approved | 0 |
| **Total** |  | **59** |

1. The Secretariat processed each of the fifty-nine files and contacted the submitting States between June – August 2021 about any further information required for the files to be considered as technically complete. Following this completeness check by the Secretariat, fifty-six files were considered as technically complete. Of the remaining three files, two files were subsequently withdrawn by the submitting States Parties, and one file had already been examined at the sixteenth session of the Committee.[[1]](#footnote-2)
2. A total of fifty-six files were completed by the submitting States in time for their evaluation by the Evaluation Body. These include one national file from a State with no element inscribed and one multinational file with at least one submitting State with no element inscribed. Among the fifty-six files, five files were referred in a previous cycle, including one request for International Assistance, and two files concern the extension of an inscribed element on the Representative List (one for a multinational file and one for a national file). The breakdown of the fifty-six files by mechanism is as follows:

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| Urgent Safeguarding List | 4 |
| Representative List | 46 |
| Register of Good Safeguarding Practices | 5 |
| International Assistance | 1 |
| **Total** | **56** |

The first meeting

1. The Evaluation Body met for the first time under the 2022 cycle on 23 February 2022. The meeting was organized online over one half day on 23 February 2022. The main objectives of the meeting were to review the tasks and working methods of the Evaluation Body for the 2022 cycle, conduct a mock nomination exercise to familiarize members of the Evaluation Body with the evaluation process, and discuss cross-cutting issues observed through past cycles. After consultation among the twelve members, the Evaluation Body elected Mr Pier Luigi Petrillo (Italy) as Chairperson, Ms Nahla Abdallah Emam (Egypt) as Vice-Chairperson and Mr Kirk Siang Yeo (Singapore) as Rapporteur.

The second meeting

1. The second meeting of the Evaluation Body was organized *in praesentia* from 20 to 25 June 2022 at UNESCO Headquarters. Two members of the Evaluation Body, each representing Daniel Rubin de la Borbolla Center and Association pour la sauvegarde des masques (ASAMA), participated in the meeting online as they were unable to travel. This was the first in-person meeting of the Evaluation Body that could be organised since February 2020.
2. As was the case for preceding cycles, the Secretariat established a password-protected, dedicated website through which members could consult the documents of the meetings as well as the files to be evaluated, together with any accompanying documentation. An email distribution list facilitated communication among members of the Evaluation Body. Every member of the Body evaluated each file online and prepared individual opinions and recommendations explaining whether and how it responded to the applicable criteria. The interface, which was fully operationalized in the 2021 cycle, allowed the Evaluation Body to exchange outside of the meeting, consult each other's evaluation texts and engage in written discussions before the June meeting.
3. The working methodology for the June meeting largely followed the same approach as in previous years, and the Body was successful in reaching a consensus in its recommendation for all but one file and their criteria, as well as for the cross-cutting issues. This was in large part made possible thanks to the intense preliminary work carried out by the members through the online interface, which they highlighted as a particularly useful and well-designed tool to facilitate their work. Based on the discussions held during the meeting and online, the Rapporteur prepared a draft decision for each file, as well as general observations and recommendations by the Body.
4. The abovementioned file for which the Evaluation Body was not able to come to a consensus concerns ‘Modern Dance in Germany’ (file no. 01858). The Body discussed extensively whether the nominated element corresponds to the definition of intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention. After a lengthy debate, the Body was evenly split in its assessment of the file, with six members recommending inscription of the element, and the other six members recommending not to inscribe the element. In view of the split decision, the Body decided to present to the Committee a draft decision with two options (Yes and No).
5. **Afghanistan**: Three nomination files involving Afghanistan (two multinational, one national) were treated under a slightly different process following the events of August 2021. A series of consultations took place with the national authorities of the coordinating States for the two multinational files and the Permanent Delegation of Afghanistan to UNESCO for the national nomination, who all expressed the wish that these files be maintained under the 2022 cycle. Taking into account the policies of the previous Taliban regime in the 1990's towards certain forms of living heritage, a set of measures were taken to secure the anonymity of individuals and organisations associated with the submission of the nomination files. All the nomination files were taken down from the website of the Convention in the days following the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. In addition, photos and videos were not made available for public viewing and these edited versions were also those to which the Evaluation Body members were given access to commence their evaluation work. However, in order to ensure that the members of the Evaluation Body could evaluate the files in their entirety, and with the same method and rigour applied to all others in the cycle, the Secretariat made hard copies of all the original and full versions of the files, including the films, available to all members of the Evaluation Body on the morning of 23 June 2022 in a private, and in-person, session. The Secretariat notified the Permanent Delegation of Afghanistan to UNESCO, and for the multinational files, the other States Parties involved on these procedures followed.
6. **Ukraine**: In response to the request made by Ukraine on 21 April 2022, the 2022 Evaluation Body was requested by the Bureau of the seventeenth session of the Committee to evaluate the nomination ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ for possible inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List, in reference to Article 17.3 of the Convention and with particular focus on inscription criteria U.2(b) and U.6 (document [LHE/22/17.COM 3.BUR/3](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM_3.BUR-3-EN.docx) and Decision [17.COM 3.BUR 3](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM_3.BUR-Decisions-EN.docx)). Following the same working methods used for evaluating the files of the 2022 cycle, the Evaluation Body discussed the case on 20 and 21 June 2022. Based on the recommendations of the Body (which was first presented to the Bureau of the seventeenth session of the Committee which met online on 23 June 2022; document [LHE/22/17.COM 4.BUR/5](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM_4.BUR-5-EN.docx) and Decision [17.COM 4 BUR 5](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions-bureau/17.COM%204.BUR/5)), the fifth extraordinary session of the Committee inscribed the element on the Urgent Safeguarding List, as a case of extreme urgency, on 1 July 2022 (Decision [5.EXT.COM 5](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/5.EXT.COM/5)).
7. **Dialogue process**: The 2022 cycle is the third cycle in which the dialogue process has been fully implemented. In this cycle, the dialogue process involved eleven files. All eleven files were nominations to the Representative List. In two cases, the Body asked questions on more than one criterion, for a total of twenty-five questions. In several multinational files, questions were posed to specific States within the group of submitting States, to seek clarifications from these specific States only, as the remaining submitting States had provided sufficient information in the file for the evaluation process. The questions from the Evaluation Body were sent to the submitting States concerned on 8 July 2022 with a four-week deadline (5 August 2022) to provide the information requested in the two working languages of the Convention. The questions from the Evaluation Body and the answers from the submitting States are attached to their respective nomination files on the [17.COM webpage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/17com).

September meeting

1. The Evaluation Body met again from 14 to 16 September 2022 to discuss, adjust and validate the draft decisions for each file and adopt its reports. The meeting was held in a hybrid format, with the Chairperson and Rapporteur *in praesentia* at UNESCO Headquarters, and the other members meeting online. The Body finalized its recommendations on the eleven files concerned by the dialogue process based on the answers provided by the States Parties concerned. In conformity with paragraph 55 of the Operational Directives, the outcome of the dialogue process has been directly included in the draft decisions presented to the Committee.

Recommendations of the Evaluation Body

1. Out of the 56 files examined by the Evaluation Body in this cycle, a total of 40 files (71 per cent) are recommended for inscription, selection or approval and 15 files (27 per cent) are recommended for referral. In one case, the Body presented a recommendation with two options, a recommendation to inscribe and a recommendation not to inscribe (see paragraph 15). Out of the eleven files which involved the dialogue process initiated by the Evaluation Body, nine were recommended for inscription and two for referral:
2. Compared to the previous cycle (2021), the number of files recommended for referral has slightly increased from 23 to 27 per cent. The number of files recommended for inscription has correspondingly decreased from 75 to 71 per cent.
3. Files were referred or not recommended for inscription, selection or approval on the basis of not satisfying the criteria as follows:

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|  | **Urgent Safeguarding List** | **Representative List** |
| **Number of files referred or not recommended on only one criterion** | 0 | 3(criterion R.1 in one case and R.3 in two cases) |
| **Number of files referred or not recommended on multiple criteria** | 0 | 11 |

1. Among the files that were referred or not recommended for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List or the Representative List, the recommendations of the Evaluation Body were based on issues concerning the following criteria:

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| **Criteria** | **Number of files in which the criterion was referred or considered as not met** |
| R.1/U.1 | 5 |
| R.2 | 9 |
| R.3 | 13 |
| R.4/U.4 | 5 |
| R.5/U.5 | 4 |

1. **General observations and recommendations**
2. This part of the report explains the working methods of the Evaluation Body and outlines the main issues, observations and conclusions that arose during its work. Although some of these issues are recurrent, members of the Evaluation Body discussed them with the utmost attention and due diligence.
3. **Neutrality of the members of the Evaluation Body**. To ensure neutrality and equity, and as has been the custom in the past, members of the Evaluation Body did not evaluate any files submitted by their country of nationality or the country in which the non-governmental organization they represent is located. Such members also did not take part in the discussions about the file or in the drafting of the recommendation. This was the case for seven files evaluated in this cycle, including two multinational files for which two members did not participate in the evaluation.

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| **File no.** **(Draft Decision no.)** | **Submitting States**  | **Nomination/Proposal title** | **Evaluation Body members who did not participate in the evaluation of the file** |
| **Representative List** |
| 01700 (17.COM 7.b.7) | Egypt | Festivals related to the Journey of the Holy family in Egypt | Ms Nahla Abdallah Emam (Egypt) |
| 01867(17.COM 7.b.16) | Iran (Islamic Republic of); Syrian Arab Republic  | Crafting and playing the Oud | Syria Trust for Development (Syrian Arab Republic) |
| 01902(17.COM 7.b.33) | United Arab Emirates; Bahrain; Egypt; Iraq; Jordan; Kuwait; Mauritania; Morocco; Oman; Palestine; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Sudan; Tunisia; Yemen | Date palm, knowledge, skills, traditions and practices | Ms Nahla Abdallah Emam (Egypt) |
| 01687(17.COM 7.b.40) | Austria; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Croatia; Hungary; Italy; Romania; Slovakia; Slovenia | Lipizzan horse breeding traditions | Mr Pier Luigi Petrillo (Italy)Ms Ľubica Voľanská (Slovakia) |
| 01705(17.COM 7.b.43) | Azerbaijan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan; Türkiye; Turkmenistan; Uzbekistan | Telling tradition of Nasreddin Hodja/ Molla Nesreddin/ Molla Ependi/ Apendi/ Afendi Kozhanasyr Anecdotes | Aigine Cultural Research Center – Aigine CRC (Kyrgyzstan) |
| 01869(17.COM 7.b.46) | Belgium; France | Living fairground culture and showmen's art | Workshop intangible heritage Flanders (Belgium) |
| **Register of Good Safeguarding Practices** |
| 01709 (17.COM 7.c.2)  | Italy; Belgium; Croatia; Cyprus; France | Tocatì, a shared programme for the safeguarding of traditional games and sports | Mr Pier Luigi Petrillo (Italy)Workshop intangible heritage Flanders (Belgium) |

1. **Collective decision-making**. The twelve members of the Evaluation Body, each representing different geographic areas and domains of expertise, evaluated each file individually, except for cases concerning their country of nationality or where the non-governmental organization they represent is based. The members, also for this cycle, used the online tool for sharing their individual evaluations through the online evaluation monitoring interface. Thanks to the online platform, the discussion during the *in praesentia* meeting in June was particularly fruitful and allowed members to focus on the most critical and problematic points. In evaluating the applications, the Body was able to devote more attention to those files on which - according to the evaluations published online in the platform - more discordant evaluations emerged. The Evaluation Body has found the online tool useful and recommends its continued use for future cycles but emphasises that the face-to-face meeting is absolutely essential in order to have a more effective and in-depth discussion, which is required for a robust evaluation of all the nomination files.
2. **Global reflection on the listing mechanisms**. The present cycle of evaluation took place as the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention came to a close, with the adoption of the amendments to the Operational Directives by the ninth session of the General Assembly (UNESCO Headquarters, 5 to 7 July 2022, see Resolution [9.GA 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/9)). The technical adjustments that this reflection brought about did not directly impact the work of the Evaluation Body. Nevertheless, the Body was cognizant of the main principles that underpinned the reflection, such as the central role that communities should play at every level of the inscription process, the need to strengthen the interlinkages between the Lists of the Convention, as well as the general process and workload of the Evaluation Body.
3. **Evaluation of the content of the files, rather than the element itself**. As an initial remark, it is important to note that the Evaluation Body based its evaluations on an analysis of the information included in the nomination files. As has been the practice in the past, the Evaluation Body did not make assumptions about any missing details, relying only on the information provided, and strictly followed the criteria defined in the Operational Directives. At the same time, the members respected Decision [7.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/7.COM/11), according to which ‘information placed in inappropriate sections of the nomination cannot be taken into consideration’.
4. **External information: request for note guidance**. During this evaluation process, the matter of external evidence was the subject of considerable debate, with the Evaluation Body members discussing the possibility that the information provided in the nomination file presents only a partial description of the element and may omit potentially problematic aspects. Issues encountered during the previous evaluation cycle (see Document [LHE/21/16.COM/8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-21-16.COM-8-EN.docx), paragraph 35 (ii)) arose again during this cycle. While it is evident that nomination files cannot contain exhaustive information on the element concerned, this can lead to the omission of some information that may be important for evaluating the nomination. In several cases, the lack of information in the dossiers, or their contradiction, could have been remedied through the use of external information sources, even if only online. This Body proposes that the Committee consider whether it would be appropriate to define ways for members of the Body to access external sources in a transparent and formalised manner.
5. **Consistency of the evaluation within and across the files in the 2022 cycle**. The members of the Evaluation Body made a concerted effort not to send contradictory or inconsistent messages to submitting States Parties and to maintain the maximal degree of consistency in its evaluation of the files. To this end, the Evaluation Body discussed and evaluated the files as unique cases and respected their individual circumstances as per the information contained within the nomination files. The Evaluation Body took into consideration previous decisions by the Committee pertaining to nominations submitted in previous cycles. In this cycle, the members noted improvements in the information provided on criterion U.2/R.2 and U.5/R.5. However, as some States Parties still found it difficult to provide comprehensive information, the Body remained consistent with previous recommendations for criterion U.2/R.2 and U.5/R.5 and did not recommend a referral merely on the basis that only criterion U.2/R.2 was not satisfied or when only criterion U.5/R.5 contained a small part of the information related to the periodicity of updating of the inventories.
6. **Consistency with previous Evaluation Body approaches**. The Evaluation Body recognized the importance of being consistent with the approach adopted by Bodies in previous cycles. At the same time, however, the members of the Evaluation Body took into consideration the particularities of each file and the specific contexts within which the element of intangible cultural heritage at hand is safeguarded.
7. **Use of the referral option as a tool for improving the quality of files**. As in the past, the referral option was applied when the information provided in the file was considered to be insufficient or missing. In such cases, the Body has indicated the reasons for its recommendation, pointing out the nature of the missing information or the specific reasons why the criteria were not met. In this cycle, with the exceptional case of the file with the dual options (Yes and No) (Paragraph 15), the Evaluation Body did not give a recommendation not to inscribe for any of the files, which is an option adopted when the information in a file is deemed adequate but did not meet the criteria. The Body wishes to emphasize to States Parties, and especially to the communities, groups and individuals concerned, that the recommendation to refer an element in no way constitutes a judgement on the merits of the element itself. The recommendation reflects only on the adequacy of the information presented in the nomination file. The Body also wishes to emphasize the importance of the referral option as a tool for improving the quality of files. All such cases are published on the website of the Convention and can thus be used as a reference by submitting States for upcoming files.
8. **Previously referred files**. Some files that had been referred in previous evaluation processes were resubmitted in this cycle. In particular, four previously referred files were examined, all of which were referred in the 2020 cycle. In this regard, the Evaluation Body has observed that while some files took on the comments from the Body and were notably improved in their re-submission, some States did not take full advantage of the referral process to improve the quality of their file and respond to the Body's comments.
9. **Outcomes of the dialogue process**. The Evaluation Body used the dialogue process in eleven cases in this cycle when the Body decided, in accordance with paragraph 55 of the Operational Directives, that a quick question-and-answer exchange with the submitting State(s) Party(ies) could clarify minor technical issues, so that the files can be recommended for inscription. The Evaluation Body wishes to emphasise that the dialogue process could not be used for files which lacked substantial information and the process is not intended for States Parties to provide new information that was not originally written in the file. By the same token, the dialogue process does not imply a critical judgement on the nomination file; it is particularly useful for highlighting, even in the case of the inscription of the file, an issue of particular relevance to which the State(s) Party(ies) should pay close attention. In this cycle, the questions raised by the Body primarily concerned the participation of communities in the safeguarding process, under criterion R.3. Of the eleven files that underwent the dialogue process, nine of the files were recommended for inscription. However, the Evaluation Body notes that two of the cases were recommended for referral, as the States Parties did not take full advantage of the dialogue process to provide sufficient clarifications to the Body's queries.
10. **Workload of the Evaluation Body.** The Evaluation Body successfully evaluated all 56 files for the cycle, and the additional nomination file of ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ submitted by Ukraine for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List. The immense workload was completed due to the dedication of each of the Evaluation Body members, with the support of the Secretariat. However, the Evaluation Body wishes to highlight that considerable time is needed for the in-depth evaluation of each file, and any further increases to the annual ceiling of files to be examined by the Body, will negatively affect the quality of the evaluation process.

***General comments***

1. The Evaluation Body congratulates the many communities, groups and individuals whose intangible cultural heritage was nominated, as well as those States Parties that submitted nominations that conform fully to the criteria outlined in the Operational Directives. During this cycle, the Body noted the increased number of good examples and well-drafted files. At the same time, the Body noted that the majority of the good examples were files submitted by Electoral Groups I and II, signalling the need for greater capacity building efforts in the other regions (see paragraph 50).
2. **Good examples**. The Evaluation Body is pleased to recommend some nominations from this cycle as good examples:
	* 1. **Register of Good Safeguarding Practices – Overall Files**

*‘Strategy for safeguarding of traditional crafts: bearers of folk craft tradition programme’* nominated by Czechia is a well-prepared file that demonstrates a good safeguarding model that can be adapted to other settings of traditional craftsmanship facing similar challenges.

*‘Tocatì, a shared programme for the safeguarding of traditional games and sports’* nominated byItaly, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus and France is a well-written file demonstrating strong community engagement and support for the programme in the safeguarding of their collective intangible cultural heritage at a large scale. The file also demonstrated effective collaboration among the submitting States.

* + 1. **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity – Overall Files**

‘*Lipizzan horse breeding tradition’*, nominated by Austria; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, is an exemplary multinational file that demonstrates close collaboration among the submitting states, in line with the principles of international cooperation and the promotion of mutual understanding of the Convention.

*‘Timber rafting’* nominated by Austria, Czechia, Germany, Latvia, Poland and Spain, is an exemplary multinational file, that demonstrates the effectiveness of communities from different countries working together to safeguard intangible cultural heritage and displays the close collaboration in the preparation of a multinational nomination, in line with the principles of international cooperation and the promotion of mutual understanding of the Convention.

‘*August 15th (Dekapentavgoustos) festivities in two Highland Communities of Northern Greece: Tranos Choros (Grand Dance) in Vlasti and Syrrako Festival’*, nominated by Greece, is a well-prepared file that highlights the role of intangible cultural heritage in fostering social cohesion and a sense of identity in small rural communities that are facing the challenges of migration and urbanization.

*‘Talchum, mask dance drama in the Republic of Kore’*, nominated by the Republic of Korea, is a well-elaborated file that clearly explains the social functions and cultural meanings of the element and describes ongoing efforts to address the risks of over-commercialization.

*‘Furyu-odori, ritual dances imbued with people's hopes and prayers’*, nominated by Japan, is a well-elaborated file that features strong participation of the communities, groups and individuals concerned in the overall nomination process.

* + 1. **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity – Specific Aspects**

*‘Beekeeping in Slovenia, a way of life’*, nominated by Slovenia, is a file that underlines the importance of traditional knowledge concerning nature and the universe and offers a positive example of the role of intangible cultural heritage as a tool for sustainable development.

*‘Manual bell ringing’*, nominated by Spain, is a file which includes a video that reflects all the key aspects of the element and allows viewers to understand the element in detail.

*‘Ancestral system of knowledge of the four indigenous peoples, Arhuaco, Kankuamo, Kogui and Wiwa of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta’*, nominated by Colombia, is a file that presented proposed safeguarding measures which are comprehensive and creatively designed, such as the National Consumption Tax on mobile phone services, where part of the resources received from the tax are allocated to the safeguarding plans of elements inscribed in the Lists of the 2003 Convention.

* + 1. **Urgent Safeguarding List with International Assistance**

*‘Xhubleta, skills, craftsmanship and forms of usage’*, nominated by Albania, is a file that includes a comprehensive safeguarding plan to revitalise an element that is under threat and in need of urgent safeguarding.

1. **Ownership, exclusivity and geographic origin**. The Evaluation Body recalls, again, that the inscription of an element on the Representative List or on the Urgent Safeguarding List does not imply ownership over or the exclusivity of an element of intangible cultural heritage and does not mean that other States cannot nominate similar elements practised on their territory. The inscription of an element on either of the Lists does not represent a means to reinforce geographic origin or the geographic indication of an element or to exclude other States. On the contrary, the Body wishes to stress that many elements are shared across different countries and are not restricted to specific nationalities.
2. **Issues in the textual quality of nominations**. As has been the case in previous cycles, many nomination files presented linguistic problems, including unclear and imprecise language, phrases that were difficult to understand (likely due to poor translations from the original language when preparing the nomination form), typographical errors and grammatical mistakes. The Evaluation Body noted that the indications given in previous reports of the Body concerning issues connected with the quality of the text in nomination files were, in many cases, not sufficiently taken into account. The Body therefore finds it necessary to recall the following:
3. **Applicability of the domains of intangible cultural heritage selected**. In several cases, the submitting States selected the boxes to cover many domains of intangible cultural heritage, whereas information was lacking in the nomination form to explain how the element is manifested across all these domains. On the other hand, the domains were not always ticked in a comprehensive manner to reflect the diversity of the element being nominated. It is important that clear information is provided as to the definition or description of the element, as it contributes to the overall understanding of its nature and scope.
4. **Use of inappropriate language**. States Parties are reminded to avoid the use of language that refers to the uniqueness, exceptionality, authenticity, and immutability of elements of intangible cultural heritage. In this cycle, expressions such as ‘unique’ and ‘authentic’ were used in some files which is contrary to the principles and spirit of the Convention. Additionally, many files still refer to the ‘preservation’ of an element instead of its safeguarding, which goes against the living and dynamic nature of intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, the Body recalls that the use of the term ‘label’, which refers more to the singling out of a commercial product rather than to the safeguarding of an element, could also be considered to be inappropriate, particularly in the context of inscriptions.
5. **Titles of elements**. As in previous cycles, the titles of the elements were a source of discussion during the meetings of the Evaluation Body. As the first presentation of an element, titles must be carefully formulated and give a clear idea of the nature of the element. The Body noted that certain titles were very general and suggested a common, widespread element that could exist anywhere. Other titles use generic terms to define the element, which generate confusion instead of providing a clear idea of its nature. At the same time, some titles are overly long and descriptive, which makes them confusing. Another issue is the mismatch between the title and the content of the nomination file. Some titles do not correspond to the description of the element or only indicate certain specific areas or communities, while the file clearly suggests that the element covers a wide range of communities or areas. In other cases, the title is used to claim ownership of the element by labelling it as ‘unique’, or contained descriptions that imply exclusivity of the element (such as the use of the word ‘of’ to denote ownership by a state, or the use of nationality-linked adjectives), an issue which was highlighted in paragraph 12 of Decision [9.COM.10](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-10%2BAdd.3-EN.doc). Although the inclusion of a location or the name of a particular community in the title may help explain the nature of an element, the Evaluation Body recommends avoiding references to exclusiveness, ownership or geographic and national origin in the title of elements.
6. **Clarity**. The Evaluation Body would like to recall that the quality of writing of files, or of their translation (i.e. when translating from the original language of the communities to English or French during the preparation of the file), is important to ensure the element is well-understood, not only by the Evaluation Body but by anyone that reads the file when it is available on the website of the Convention. Furthermore, nomination files are an important tool for promoting and presenting elements of intangible cultural heritage at all levels and, as such, it is important that they are written in a clear and understandable manner.
7. **Vague information and isolated statements**. The Evaluation Body noted certain cases in which information was placed in inappropriate sections of the nomination form, or the same text was repeated in different sections. In numerous nomination files, the questions in the nomination form are simply repeated rather than being answered; the concepts in question are merely restated without any elaboration and demonstration of how they are met. This issue emerges clearly in relation to criteria R.2, R.3 and R.4. In some cases, the expressions used were so general and vague that they could be valid for any element and for any State. In such cases, the Evaluation Body found it necessary to refer the file. In several cases, the Body noted the use of isolated assertions or statements instead of more detailed explanations and demonstrations throughout the file as a whole. This was particularly apparent in the sections of the nomination files dedicated to how the inscription of the element would contribute to ensuring the visibility and awareness of the significance of intangible cultural heritage in general (criterion R.2) but also in the section related to the viability of the element (criterion R.3).
8. **Nationalistic aspirations.** In some nomination files there were several references to nationalistic ideas in the context of intangible cultural heritage, like the ‘pride of the nation’, the ‘sense of duty’ to maintain a national character, or the feeling of being members of a nation. The Evaluation Body noted the repetition of essentialist notions as well as an increased focus on nationalisms and the construction or validation of the ‘image of the country’ through intangible cultural heritage. In some cases, the file highlighted how the nomination process was aimed at asserting national identity, thus claiming ‘ownership’ of the nominated element. The Evaluation Body was concerned by the use of the Convention to claim historical, cultural, geographical and political ownership and invites States Parties to show respect for the spirit of collaboration and sharing, which is a founding and guiding principle of the Convention.
9. **The definition of intangible cultural heritage**. During this cycle, the Evaluation Body encountered certain difficulties when assessing the understanding of intangible cultural heritage presented in certain nomination files:
	1. **Need for clear identification of the element and the communities, groups and individuals concerned**. The Evaluation Body encountered several files in which the definition of the element was too broad and the knowledge and skills associated with the element were not clearly identified and explained. This in turn made it difficult to ascertain the transmission of the element and the communities concerned. In such cases, the Evaluation Body chose to refer criterion R.1. In one case, the Evaluation Body put forth the two options of Yes and No for the Committee's deliberation (see paragraph 15). The Evaluation Body wishes to underline the importance of providing a clear identification and definition of the element in question as well as of the communities, groups and individuals that consider the element to be part of their intangible cultural heritage.
	2. **Focus on an artwork, item, product or instrument**. One recurrent issue that the Body encountered in the description of elements was an excessive focus on the material aspects of the element, rather than on the practices and techniques associated with the element and its social functions and cultural meanings for the communities concerned. The members of the Evaluation Body felt that the descriptions should focus on the practices of making the product or playing the instrument, as well as the knowledge and skills in which the element is transmitted, rather than on the product or instrument itself. This focus should also be reflected in the development and drafting of the safeguarding measures.
	3. **Standardised practices**. During this cycle, the Evaluation Body had long discussions on files where the proposed safeguarding measures involve the establishment of standards or standardised practices, which may encourage practices to be performed in the same or similar ways across the submitting State. The Evaluation Body would like to emphasize that safeguarding measures should be aimed at enhancing the viability of the element and should be consistent with the spirit of the Convention, and in particular with the concepts of human creativity and respect for cultural diversity. In all these cases, the Body found it necessary to use the dialogue process to obtain clarification from the State Party.
	4. **Craftsmanship and foodways**. The Body noted that nominations related to craftsmanship (32% or 18 files in 2022) and culinary heritage or foodways (20% or 11 files in 2022) have increased significantly in recent years and there are numerous files related to this domain for this cycle. In this regard, it is undeniable that traditional cuisines and artisanal food preparations as know-how related to the production of traditional crafts are expressions of intangible cultural heritage as defined by the Convention. However, the Body notes that, even in these cases, nomination files should focus on the knowledge and skills concerning the element, and not on individual food products, and the files should explain the social functions and cultural meanings that these practices (and not the products) have for the community. In the case where an element is associated with a sizable segment of the population of the submitting State and where it is impossible to identify all bearers or practitioners, it is important that emblematic communities which are representative of the element are identified and that these do not coincide with large-scale companies or producers. It is also important that the proposed safeguarding measures are aimed at enhancing the viability of the practice. The Evaluation Body noted that in several cases, the proposed measures involve commercial and business activities concerning the production of food items. While understanding, in principle, that such activities can be useful in ensuring the viability of an element, the Body stresses the need to avoid any risk of over-commercialization of the craft and foodway-related elements. The Body further emphasises that the inscription of an element does not represent an indicator of uniqueness, ownership, or authenticity of the element.
10. **Multinational nominations**. The Evaluation Body was pleased to examine fourteen multinational nominations in this cycle. This was a higher number of files compared to the 2021 cycle, which highlights both the increased capacity of States Parties in coordinating efforts across borders, as well as their growing interest in shared intangible cultural heritage. The Evaluation Body recognizes the complexity of preparing such files and commends the efforts made by the States Parties to achieve this. While the Body is aware that uniformity of information is difficult in such cases, it applied the same standard of evaluation as for nominations submitted by a single State Party. During this cycle, the Evaluation Body took note of several critical aspects relating to multinational files:
	1. **Collaboration between States**. It is important to recall that multinational files must be an expression of collaboration between the submitting States, following the principles of international cooperation and the promotion of mutual understanding among the States. In this sense, it is important that nominations be prepared collaboratively, with a focus on interaction and the sharing of information about the element.
	2. **Avoid ‘state by state’ paragraphs**. In many cases, the information provided is different for individual States and the files appear to have been written separately without effort to highlight the shared nature of the element among the submitting states. For multinational files, States Parties should endeavour to highlight common practices and characteristics of the element across the States and avoid only putting information in separate paragraphs for each State. The Evaluation Body points out that this procedure is not consistent with the spirit of the Convention, especially when each of the States presenting a multinational nomination provides a different definition of the cultural element and functions, and only specifies what the element means to each State. The Evaluation Body recommends that States Parties avoid using this technique of writing the file.
	3. **Imbalance of information among submitting States for the preparation of files**. In several multinational nomination files, it appeared that one State led the preparation of the file, and involved other countries that joined at a late stage near the deadline for the submission. This was evident from either an imbalance of information between the submitting States in some files, or from misplaced information that was intended for other sections or files, which suggest that insufficient time was set aside to prepare the multinational files. The Evaluation Body would like to emphasize that submitting States involved in multinational nominations should devote sufficient time and resources to coordinate the preparation of future nomination files and strive to provide sufficient and balanced information by all submitting States.
	4. **Collaboration between communities***.* Multinational nominations must demonstrate agreement not only between States, but also between all the communities concerned regarding the shared nature of the proposed element and their commitment to the multinational character of the nomination. In some cases, the communities' letters only indicated their consent for the nomination made by their respective States, and did not mention the ‘multinational’ nature of the nomination. In such cases, it was unclear if the communities expressed consent for the multinational nomination involving other States and their communities. In other cases, it appeared that the nomination process had been decided by the States and there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the communities were involved in all stages of the nomination process. Despite the difficulties involved in preparing multinational nomination files, the Evaluation Body encourages States Parties to avoid top-down approaches and that all submitting States should demonstrate active community participation at all stages of the nomination process.
	5. **Effective joint safeguarding measures**. While recognizing the specificity of each State, safeguarding measures in multinational files should include joint measures to safeguard the element as a shared element that can create ties and encourage dialogue between different communities in the submitting States. In some files, the absence of joint safeguarding measures, either by states or communities, prevents the criterion R.3 from being fulfilled. A multinational nomination should be based on the fact that two or more communities, belonging to different States, share an intangible cultural heritage element and decide to safeguard it together.
	6. **The possibility of extended nominations**. The Evaluation Body notes the interest of other States in joining multinational nominations and invites the submitting States to consider working towards the possibility of extended nominations in these cases.
11. **Guidance notes for multinational files**. The Evaluation Body, for the reasons expressed in the previous paragraphs, reiterates the importance of implementing Decision [15.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/15.COM/8), in which the Committee invites the Secretariat to prepare guidance notes for the preparation of multinational files in order to improve their quality, taking into account the global reflection on the listing mechanisms. Indeed, it is likely that the decision to confirm multinational applications as a priority will prompt an increasing number of States to submit shared elements - which is an important contribution to the implementation of the Convention. It is therefore necessary, in order to support States Parties and communities in the preparation of dossiers and in the creation of effective multinational collaboration networks related to the common living heritage nominated, that guidance notes be defined in the near future, in light of the decisions adopted at the ninth session of the General Assembly (5-7 July 2022, UNESCO Headquarters).
12. **Designated contact person**. The Evaluation Body points out that, in several files, the information provided on the ‘Designated Contact Person’ (point E.1 in the nomination form) was missing or incomplete. In this regard, the Body emphasizes the importance of the role played by the ‘Designated Contact Person’ as an essential point of contact between the communities, the State and the UNESCO Secretariat. The Body, also, stresses that the ‘Designated Contact Person’ could be an expression of the communities to ensure a direct and constant dialogue with them, even after the inscription of the element in the Lists, in line with the *Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage* adopted by the Committee at its tenth session.
13. **Relationship between States and communities**. According to the *Ethical Principles for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* adopted by the Committee at its tenth session, interactions between States and communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals who create, safeguard, maintain and transmit intangible cultural heritage, should be characterized by transparent collaboration, dialogue, negotiation and consultation, and contingent upon their free, prior and informed consent (Ethical Principle 4).
	1. **Top-down approaches**. In contrast, in many files, it was clear that the communities were involved in the nomination process only at the end, rather than all stages of the nomination process, and that the process was coordinated solely by public officials and did not actively involve communities or experts representing the communities. As the Body noted several times in previous reports, it is necessary to establish a collaborative process of participation with different stakeholders and communities involved in all stages of the nomination process, as well as devoting an adequate amount of time to ensure the quality of the participatory processes undertaken. The Evaluation Body reminds States Parties that community participation is not just a formal aspect of the evaluation criteria, but it is a key principle that communities should be involved throughout the nomination process and safeguarding of the element, and top-down approaches that fail to actively involve the communities concerned must be avoided.
	2. **Standardised letters**. In several cases, the letters provided by the State Party that attest to the consent of the communities are presented in a standard format, often identical or with only minor variations. Standardised letters should be avoided because they do not allow the Evaluation Body to identify the active and informed participation of the community and its representatives in the nomination process. In addition, such letters do not suggest the free, prior and informed consent of the communities, groups and individuals concerned. In some cases, the letters contain references to other Conventions, incorrect lists, or demonstrate a lack of knowledge on the part of the communities about the application process, its timetable and the concrete effects of possible inscription of the element.
	3. **Petitions**. Likewise, petitions, as a collection of signatures under the same text, can be of some help for determining the community's participation, but they do not fully demonstrate the free, prior and informed consent of the communities concerned. Such petitions should not be used to replace personalised or individual letters submitted from the communities, groups and individuals. The Evaluation Body considers that the use of audio-visual materials should be explored more fully to highlight the voices of the communities, groups and individuals.
	4. **NGOs and experts**. The Evaluation Body reminds States Parties that non-governmental organization representatives and – as the Committee has emphasized several times – experts from research institutes, universities, UNESCO Chairs and centres of expertise may play the role of interlocutors or brokers between State authorities and local communities in inventorying and other safeguarding activities. Such actors may serve as resource persons who assist community members in conducting interviews, identifying intangible cultural heritage and filling out inventory forms, or they might train community members to do so themselves. They may also act as resource persons to both government bodies and communities on the methodologies and approaches to be used in the inventory or documentation process. In a few cases during this cycle, the file described details of the relationships between NGOs, experts and communities. The Body considers this a good example of cooperation between State authorities, NGOs, experts and communities, and hopes that this model of sharing experiences and skills can be extended to an increasing number of cases.

***Thematic issues***

1. **Intangible cultural heritage and economic development**. As noted in the reports of the Evaluation Body from past evaluation cycles, elements of intangible cultural heritage could be directly linked to economic activities, either as part of a productive chain in the case of crafts, or foodways, or a tourist attraction, spectacle or other source of income for the communities concerned. While this link is not a problem in itself, many issues can arise as a result of it. The Evaluation Body noted, again during this cycle, the following issues:
	1. **Labels and trademarks**. In several files, the States Parties presented, as a safeguarding measure, the establishment of a ‘specific label’ to protect the practice or the know-how from any tentative of misappropriation. The Evaluation Body wishes to recall that the inscription of an element on the Representative List does not confer a special ‘brand’ or ‘label’ upon a practice or product. The Body raised particular concerns about references to ‘brandedv art forms as a result of the inscription of the element and about the inclusion of safeguarding measures relating to Controlled Designation of Origin. The Body reminds that inscription of an element should not be used as a means of claiming authenticity or ownership of that element and that it is contrary to the spirit of the Convention to claim, through the listing of an item on the List, the exclusivity of the element.
	2. **A ‘practice’, not a ‘product’**. In the case of crafts or culinary heritage, it is important to recall the difference between a ‘product’ and a ‘practice’. Some files described the use and decorative functions of the product rather than the cultural meanings and social functions of the practices, and the knowledge and skills related to the element. While the former aspects are important, nomination files should concentrate on the cultural meanings and social functions of the element and the safeguarding measures should be focused on them.
	3. **The need for a specific guidance note on commercialization**. The commercialization of an element can have both positive or negative aspects. On one hand, it could be a source of income for practitioners, but on the other hand, over-relying on the commercialization of intangible cultural heritage for the livelihoods of the communities could lead to decontextualization of practices. Several nomination files, especially the files related to craftsmanship and foodways, overlooked the problem by staying silent on such issues and did not elaborate on the potential unintended consequences of tourism or commercialization efforts, and did not include measures to monitor and address the risk of over-commercialization. The Evaluation Body wishes to reiterate the importance of this issue and invites all submitting States to recognize this threat by providing elaborations of such unintended consequences and to include corresponding measures to address them. The Body considers that the request made by the Intergovernmental Committee in 2019 for the development of a guidance note on commercialization and the prevention of decontextualization of intangible cultural heritage to be relevant and timely (Decision [14.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/10)). The Body looks forward to seeing the outcomes of specific guidelines under preparation.
	4. **Tourism.** Many issues related to tourism appeared also during this cycle, as with previous years. As with measures concerning commercialization, the Evaluation Body notes that tourism efforts can enhance the livelihoods of practitioners and the viability of intangible cultural heritage elements in some instances, but excessive tourism may cause harm, such as decontextualization and erosion of the social functions and cultural meanings of the intangible cultural heritage. In several files, tourism was an important part of the safeguarding plan, and the files positively elaborated on ways to manage sustainable tourism and implement monitoring mechanisms. However, in other files, there were no elaborations on the possible unintended consequences of tourism efforts and no measures directed at monitoring and preventing the potential impact of excessive tourism. The Evaluation Body wishes to recall the importance of considering the risks of potential decontextualization and jeopardization of an element because of tourism, as well as the need for its adequate monitoring.
	5. **Standardization**. In cases where the file describes practices that are handed down from generation to generation with the same ways and techniques, it is pointed out that the safeguarding measures involve the establishment of rules and laws aimed at ‘standardizing’ the practice and ensuring that the practice is performed in the same way. This issue, which is especially relevant to agro-food practices and craft production techniques, while useful in identifying the element and its characteristic forms, also risks crystallizing the living heritage and limiting human creativity. This issue became of particular importance during this cycle because it affected a number of files. In this regard, the Evaluation Body urges States to pay close attention to this issue and to demonstrate in the files how the ‘standardization’ rules adopted may impact human creativity and the vitality of the element.
	6. **Enterprise communities or producer associations**. In some cases, the communities mentioned in the files coincide with producer associations or individual producers, business activities, publishing activities, or other activities of economic importance. The Evaluation Body recognises that such organisations may play a relevant role in the nominated element, but such organisations alone do not adequately represent the communities, groups and individuals associated with the element. The Evaluation Body wishes to highlight that the communities described throughout the file, particularly in sections C, 3c and 4, should be consistent and representative of the bearers and practitioners who practice the element (as described in section 1.ii) and are involved in the transmission of knowledge related to the element (as, for example, in the case of private foundations, magazines, training schools inside producer associations, etc.).
2. **Human rights and violent traditions**. The Evaluation Body noted that when an element may possibly violate human rights (e.g. practices that involve physical harm to another practitioner or individual) or is disrespectful to another community, group or individual (e.g. in the form of stereotypes, satire, theatrical practices or oral tradition), the file should elaborate and provide context on how such practices are carried out and how mutual respect is ensured. Such files should not stay silent on these potentially sensitive issues. This issue also arises with reference to elements whose practices may involve causing bodily harm (whether deliberate or accidental) to others or involve the use of potentially violent objects, such as weapons. In these cases, the Body provided comments in the decision documents and encourages the States Parties to implement safety measures to ensure the well-being and safety of the practitioners during the practice of the element.
3. **Gender issues and ‘male or female dominated’ files**. The Evaluation Body noted that in several files there was a lack of information on gendered aspects and on the role of different genders in the practices. In two cases, the nomination files were “male dominated” and did not explain whether this was due to specific social and cultural contexts that are respected among the communities concerned. One file had the opposite effect, as it did not provide information regarding the role of men in the practice, and did not explain if there were cultural or social factors that resulted in the different gendered roles of the practitioners. The Body stressed the importance of clearly identifying the roles of different genders when describing the involvement of the communities concerned.
4. **Relationship between tangible and intangible cultural heritage**. The Evaluation Body noted that, especially during this cycle, several elements nominated for possible inscription were closely related to physical spaces, such as churches, shrines, historic centres or cultural spaces. The Evaluation Body notes that the preservation and protection of tangible heritage can contribute to the viability of intangible cultural heritage, and such measures should be acknowledged as part of the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. In some nominations, the link between tangible and intangible cultural heritage was clearly illustrated and demonstrated. At the same time, the Evaluation Body wishes to highlight the importance of articulating the knowledge, practices and skills associated with intangible cultural heritage in the file and to avoid an overemphasis on the tangible heritage aspects associated with the element.
5. **Biocultural diversity, environment and intangible cultural heritage**. In several files, numerous issues arose regarding the protection of biodiversity and the ecosystem as well as the sustainability, from an environmental point of view, of elements nominated. Under this cycle, elements concern environmentally conscious agricultural practices, the sustainable use of natural materials, raising awareness about biocultural diversity, traditional indigenous knowledge concerning nature, and relationships with animals. Based on the provisions of the Convention and the relevant Operational Directives, the Body paid close attention to this issue, recalling how the nominated elements must be compatible with the principles of sustainable development. The Evaluation Body takes note of the important need to consider cultural diversity as well as biological diversity and adopted this principle during the evaluation of the nomination files. For this reason, the Body underlined that it is important for States Parties to pay close attention to the monitoring of pollutant sources resulting from the practice of nominated elements, to adopt mitigation measures to address such concerns and to constantly assess the resultant effects on the health of practitioners.
6. **Capacity Building**. During this cycle, several States Parties submitted nominations for the first time. The Evaluation Body expressed great appreciation for the States' efforts in this direction. In many cases, unfortunately, the nomination files had not been drafted according to the Operational Directives and in compliance with the appropriate format, which meant that the Body was not always able to evaluate these files in a positive way. These difficulties require, in the opinion of the Body, even more significant action to support communities and States Parties, and therefore suggests strengthening the Global Facilitators Network and promoting other forms of cooperation to accompany nomination processes, especially by Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

***Specific issues related to criteria for inscription on the List of Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity***

1. **The definition of the element (R.1, U1).** The Evaluation Body appreciated the variety of the types of candidate elements confirming that intangible cultural heritage is the result of human creativity. Even in this cycle, however, some critical issues remain:
	1. **Name of the element**. In several files, the name of the element did not correspond with the description provided in the file or with the geographic location of the element provided in section G of the form. The Body recalls that nomination files for both Lists should be coherent, consistent documents, presenting relevant information for each criterion, without contradictions and with a clear presentation of the element.
	2. **Vague and generic definitions**. In some cases, the descriptions of nominated elements are so generic that it could be applied to any type of element. In others, the definitions of the elements are too broad and made it difficult to establish if the element was intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention. In addition, such files often lacked sufficient information on the knowledge and skills related to the element. Furthermore, if the element is not well-defined, the Body could question whether the communities gave their informed consent for the inscription of an element that was itself unclear, establishing an important link between criteria U.1/R.1 and criteria U.4/R.4.
	3. **The domains of intangible cultural heritage**. In some cases, the description of the element provided for criteria U.1/R.1 is not consistent with the domains of intangible cultural heritage presented in the file. The Evaluation Body invites States Parties to pay special attention to indicating the correct domains, which must correspond with the element.
	4. **Product-oriented descriptions**. During this cycle, some elements were described only in their material manifestation or by describing the product as a consequence of the candidate practice or technique. Some files tend to focus on the description of the object/instrument rather than a tradition or a practice and are focused on the object rather than knowledge and skills.
2. **Links between R.1 and R.2**. The Evaluation Body encountered several files that did not fully satisfy criterion R.1 in accordance with Article 2 of the Convention. As a result, criterion R.2 could not be met as these two criteria cannot be fully examined if an element is not clearly defined. Nonetheless, aspects of the responses to criterion R.2 were still acknowledged in the draft decision of the Evaluation Body.
3. **Approach for examining R.2**. The Evaluation Body recalled the recurring issue with criterion R.2 that was observed in past evaluation cycles and also during this cycle. Many State Parties, in their files, provided information only about the visibility and awareness of the nominated element itself, but did not provide any information about the visibility and awareness of intangible cultural heritage in general, and hence such files did not meet the criterion. Following the Body's previous decisions, and considering that this issue was discussed during the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, the Evaluation Body did not refer or reject any file solely on the basis of criterion R.2, even if a file was clearly deficient in its response to this criterion.
4. **Paying attention to safeguarding measures/safeguarding plans (U.3/R.3).** The Body has repeatedly emphasised the importance of the proposed safeguarding measures and plan for the nominated element are, and that the proposed measures must be specific, concrete, feasible, realistic, monitorable, and assessable. While nomination files for the Urgent Safeguarding List require a plan with a specific budget and timeline, such details are not required for safeguarding measures in files for the Representative List, but the measures must nonetheless be concrete and feasible. Unfortunately, during this cycle, the Body noted that the same problems already described in previous reports recurred, and in particular:
5. **Definition of the threats to an element**. The safeguarding plan for elements nominated for possible inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List (U.3) should be consistent with the threats defined under criterion U.2. If this is not the case, the safeguarding plan will be considered to be insufficient. This is also the case when the threats listed are too general and render it impossible to propose specific safeguarding measures.
6. **Lack of information about current, past and proposed safeguarding measures**. During this cycle, the Evaluation Body noted that in several files, there was insufficient information about the past and current safeguarding measures related to the element nominated. The Evaluation Body stresses that it is important that States Parties indicate clearly in the nomination form, the past and current measures linked to the safeguarding of the element concerned. In addition, the proposed safeguarding measures are an indication of the willingness of the States Parties and of the communities, groups and individuals concerned to continue to safeguard the element. In some files, the State Party indicated numerous proposed future measures, but omitted current or past measures. In these cases, the failure to indicate past or present safeguarding measures casts doubt on the effectiveness of the measures proposed for the future, as it is questionable whether a State that has never safeguarded an element in the past would begin to do so only after its possible inclusion in the Lists of the Convention. The Evaluation Body invites States Parties to pay close attention to this section of the file and to highlight measures taken in the past and present to ensure the viability of the element.
7. **Proposed measures must relate specifically to the nominated element**. In some cases, the safeguarding measures concern intangible cultural heritage in general, and are not specific to the nominated element. In other cases, the proposed measures are dedicated to safeguarding of the product, rather than the knowledge and practices of the element, for example, forms of support to companies or shops for the marketing of the products. These measures are not in themselves contrary to the Convention, but they cannot be the only or the main measures envisaged. In one case, the measures proposed by the State were aimed at restricting access to the practice to others or preventing the practice outside the national borders: these measures are contrary to the spirit of the Convention and the ethical principles adopted by the Committee.
8. **Lack of connection between the proposed measures and the problems for the viability of the element.** The Evaluation Body noted that in several cases, submitting States describe (in section 3.a) a number of problems related to the viability of the candidate element but then fail to identify, in section 3.b, adequate measures to address these problems. In these cases, the Evaluation Body decided to refer the file if the information provided is not sufficient to explain the concrete impact of the proposed measures. The Evaluation Body urges States to pay close attention to the consistency between sections 3.a and 3.b, recalling how the lack of consistency could result in the referral of the file.
9. **Community involvement in developing and implementing the proposed safeguarding measures**. During this cycle, the Evaluation Body discussed a serious concern related to the lack of information in several files concerning the involvement of the communities during the process of developing and implementing the safeguarding measures. In several files, the nomination form includes a list of communities, groups and individuals, with no explanation on how they were involved in the processes of developing and implementing the proposed measures. The Evaluation Body decided to refer such files, considering the importance of involving communities in the development and implementation of safeguarding measures. In a few cases, however, when the information provided by States in the file was not totally clear, the Evaluation Body decided to use the dialogue process to seek clarifications from States by asking specific questions. The Evaluation Body reminds States Parties that it is essential that safeguarding measures be defined, developed and planned jointly by the states and the bearers and practitioners of the element. In this regard, it recalls that according to the *Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage*, adopted by the Committee at its tenth session in 2015, ‘Communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals should have the primary role in safeguarding their own intangible cultural heritage’. The Evaluation Body will therefore continue to refer or suggest not to inscribe files in which there appear to be a lack of involvement of the communities, both in the initial drafting phase, in the subsequent implementation phase and in the final phase of monitoring the impacts arising from the inscription.
10. **Contradiction on the competent bodies involved in safeguarding and the proposed measures.** In order to understand the effectiveness of the proposed safeguard measures, a crucial element in the file is the indication of the competent bodies involved in safeguarding efforts. As noted during the previous cycle and also observed in this cycle, section 3.c of several nomination files appeared to be drafted hastily and in contradiction to the proposed measures. In cases where there is a discrepancy between the proposed measures and the competent bodies involved in their implementation, the Evaluation Body questioned how effective the proposed measures were and whether the file should be referred. The Evaluation Body invites States Parties to pay close attention to this section of the file (which has no maximum number of words), explaining, in detail, firstly, who are the bodies in charge of implementing the safeguarding measures described in the previous section 3.b, and secondly, what are the characteristics and tasks institutionally carried out by these actors in order for the Evaluation Body to understand the actual capacity of these actors to implement the proposed measures, and finally, the communities involved in this process (in line with Ethical Principle 1).
11. **Consistency in the identification of communities (criterion R.4/U.4).** In some cases, the Body pointed out that there was a contradiction between section C of the dossier (in which the references of the communities holding and practising the element are indicated) and the communities indicated in criterion R.4/U.4. In these cases, the Body considered that the indication of criterion R.4/U.4 prevailed, but invites States Parties to pay close attention to the need for each part of the dossier to be consistent with the others.
12. **Communities' participation and bodies involved in safeguarding (criteria R.3, R.4, U.3, U.4).** According to the definition provided in the Convention (Article 2.1), intangible cultural heritage must be recognized by the communities, groups or individuals concerned. Nobody else can decide for them whether or not a given expression or practice belongs to their intangible cultural heritage. During this cycle there were several issues related to this topic:
	1. **Nomination process**. According to criterion R.4, the element should be nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent. Although the nomination is formally submitted to UNESCO by States Parties, the nomination process must involve and be actively followed by the bearers and practitioners of the element. In some files, especially multinational ones, it seems that communities played marginal roles and this was often confirmed by some letters of consent which lacked details concerning their participation. In this regard, the Evaluation Body recalls that the role of the State Party, in the nomination process, is to support communities - who are the driving force behind the process and not mere spectators; for this reason, it is necessary for the State Party to define transparent and participatory mechanisms for the selection of nomination proposals, avoiding substituting itself for communities in the identification of the element and the preparation of the file. Considering this, during this cycle, the Evaluation Body decided to refer a nomination file in the case of an evident top-down approach as when there is a lack of coherence between the file and the letters of consent.
	2. **Widespread elements that are practiced by entire populations**. In some nominations, it was difficult to identify the communities concerned as they appear to correspond to the entire population of the submitting State. When the element nominated does not have a connection with a specific city or part of territories, and is nationally practiced, it is not possible to identify all bearers or practitioners and involve them in the nomination process. As in previous cycles, several files indicate ‘emblematic’ communities concerned with the element. The Evaluation Body noted that this approach is effective, provided that these identified communities are active in preparing the nomination file and promoting the nomination process.
	3. **Public officials and institutions**. Another issue is related to the role of public officials and whether such public institutions and officials should be considered as members of the community concerned. In several files, the communities concerned correspond to public administration bodies such as ministries, government agencies, or state operated museums. In addition, letters of consent are sometimes provided by public officials and government institutions. The Evaluation Body tend to consider that such public officials and institutions are part of the States Parties in the first place and therefore their roles should be clearly described if they were to be considered part of the communities of the intangible cultural heritage element that is being nominated. In certain cases, indeed, the chief of a tribe or the head of a troupe could be considered as the representative of the community authorized to provide consent on their behalf; this condition is strictly connected with the dimension of the States Parties or within specific cultural contexts.
13. **The importance of including free, prior and informed consents with nominations (criterion R.4/U.4).** On this topic, there were some recurring issues also during this cycle:
	1. **Standardised letters**. In many cases, letters were standard, pre-filled and only signed by members of communities. The Evaluation Body strongly discourages this kind of letters as they do not demonstrate the free, prior and informed consent of the communities concerned.
	2. **Not up-to-date letters.** In some cases of files that were resubmitted, the Body noted that letters of consent were outdated. The Evaluation Body stresses the importance of providing up-to-date letters of consent when re-submitting or extending a file, while ensuring the widest possible participation of the respective communities.
	3. **Reference to the wrong List**. In several files, letters of consent referred to the ‘wrong’ List, such as referring to the World Heritage List, instead of the Intangible Cultural Heritage lists. The Evaluation Body urges the States Parties to put in place mechanisms to raise awareness among communities, groups and individuals, on the Lists of the 2003 Convention and the objectives of the different lists.
	4. **Lack of information on participation process**. The Body noted that several files did not provide information about the process of obtaining the informed consents from communities. The Evaluation Body recalls that it is important for States Parties to elaborate in section 4, how the letters of consent were drafted and signed by the communities, and demonstrate that these letters were prepared in a manner that shows the free, prior and informed consent of the communities.
	5. **Letters which fail to mention multinational nomination process**. As already pointed out, in the case of multinational files, the Evaluation Body noted that the letters from the communities for several files, referred to national applications, without mentioning in any way the other countries involved in the multinational nomination. Such letters fail to demonstrate the consent of the communities for the multinational nomination and were evaluated negatively by the Evaluation Body.
	6. **Letters from institutions**. When there are consent letters signed by representatives, directors or heads of non-governmental organizations or organizations, the documents should specify who these organizations or individuals represent. This is because the support or commitment of an institution does not guarantee all its members actively participated in the nomination process. At the same time, it is important to clarify if the institution is writing as a competent body for safeguarding (indicated on section 3.c) or for supporting the nomination process or as members of the communities. As already pointed out in previous reports, the Evaluation Body reserves the right to assess, on a case-by-case basis, whether there are objective conditions to consider a public institution representative of the communities of practitioners and holders of the element.
14. **The credibility of the inventories affects the credibility of the Lists**. In many files, the Evaluation Body highlighted a lack of information regarding the processes of updating the inventories and the participation of communities in its implementation. The Committee, in the spirit of Articles 11(b) and 15 of the Convention, requests, in various documents (for instance Decision [14.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/10)), that States Parties ensure the ‘widest possible’ or ‘broad’ participation of the communities concerned in inventorying their own intangible cultural heritage. In this regard, it is necessary to underline these criticalities:
	1. **Community-based approach**. The spirit of the Convention requires that communities themselves agree to their identification and association with the relevant intangible cultural heritage element(s). This implies that the communities participate in the inventory process in a transparent and shared manner. The Evaluation Body considered referring those files where the type of inventory was not clear and where the inventorying process was managed exclusively or predominantly by public institutions, without the ongoing involvement of communities.
	2. **Officials-based inventory and updating**. In many cases, the Evaluation Body noted that the process for updating of the inventory was not clear. In some cases, state inventories appear to be managed exclusively by officials, and there is a lack of opportunity for communities to propose items to be included on the inventory and participate in updating the information of elements that have already been inventoried. In this regard, the Evaluation Body reminds States Parties that inventories should avoid crystallising the element, reduce or limit its nature as a living, evolving heritage as these actions are inconsistent with the Convention, and the Evaluation Body calls upon States Parties to ensure that inventories are structured in an open-source manner, developed with participatory tools and through the ongoing involvement of communities.
15. **Overview of recurring issues in the 2022 cycle**
16. **Positive aspects**. Based on its evaluation of the fifty-six files in the present cycle, the Evaluation Body wishes to highlight several positive aspects that have already been mentioned in previous decisions and working documents of the Committee. These are as follows:

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| **Issues** | **Most recent reference decisions or documents of the Committee** |
| Benefits of the referral option | Decision [12.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/11) (paragraph 7) |
| Benefits of the dialogue process | Decision [15.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/15.COM/8) (paragraph 5)[Decision 16.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/8) (paragraph 6) |
| Importance of multinational nominations and the need to further encourage nominations of shared intangible cultural heritage | [Decision 12.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/11) (paragraph 10)[Decision 14.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/10) (paragraph 11) |
| Contribution of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage to sustainable development | [Decision 11.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/10) (paragraph 21)[Decision 14.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/10) (paragraph 12) |
| Links between intangible cultural heritage and environmental sustainability | [Decision 15.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/15.COM/8) (paragraph 9) |
| Promote synergies between the 2003 Convention and the 1972 Convention as well as other relevant UNESCO conventions and programmes | [Decision 12.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/11) (paragraph 21) |
| Progress made thanks to the use of Form ICH-01 and Form ICH-02 containing a revised Section 5 | [Decision 13.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/10) (paragraph 7) |

1. **Recurring challenges.** The Evaluation Body would also like to point out that it identified several challenges faced by submitting States, to which previous decisions and working documents of the Committee have already referred on several occasions:

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| **Issues** | **Most recent reference decisions or documents of the Committee** |
| Confusion between inscriptions on the Lists and the establishment of a system of ownership | [Decision 12.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/11) (paragraph 9) |
| Use of inappropriate expressions or vocabulary that are not in line with the Convention in nomination files and titles of elements | [Decision 12.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/11) (paragraph 6) |
| Lack of coherence between information provided under different criteria for inscription in submitted files | [Decision 10.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/10.COM/10) (paragraph 7)Decision [11.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/10) (paragraph 14) |
| Importance of providing a clear identification and definition of the element | Decision [14.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/10) (paragraph 8) |
| Challenges related to criterion R.2 | Decision [10.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/10.COM/10) (paragraph 7)Decision [14.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/10) (paragraph 9) |
| Lack of attention to gender considerations and to the diversity of gender roles in enacting and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage | Decision [8.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/8.COM/8) (paragraph 8) |
| Possible negative impacts of commercialization and increased tourism | Decision [12.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/11) (paragraph 13) |
| Risk of the potential decontextualization and jeopardization of an element as a result of over-commercialization | Decision [14.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/10) (paragraph 13) |
| Absence of safeguarding measures to monitor the impact of inscription | Decision [11.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/10) (paragraph 18) |
| Concerns linked to a top-down and centralized approach in the elaboration of safeguarding plans and the preparation of nominations | Decision [14.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/10) (paragraph 15) |
| Confusion between the different purposes and criteria of the 2003 Convention and other programmes and Conventions of UNESCO | Decision [13.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/10) (paragraph 9) |
| Concerns regarding the participation of communities in the preparation and implementation of safeguarding measures  | Decision [11.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/10) (paragraph 19) |
| Community participation in inventory-making and the development and updating of inventories | Decision [13.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/13.COM/10) (paragraph 13) Decision [14.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/10) (paragraph 10) |

1. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

## **DRAFT DECISION 17.COM 7**

The Committee,

1. Recalling Chapter I of the Operational Directives,
2. Having examined documents LHE/22/17.COM/7, [LHE/22/17.COM/7.a](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-21-16.COM-8.a-EN.docx), [LHE/22/17.COM/7.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-21-16.COM-8.b-EN.docx), [LHE/22/17.COM/7.c](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-21-16.COM-8.c-EN.docx) and [LHE/22/17.COM/7.d](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-21-16.COM-8.d-EN.docx), as well as the files submitted by the respective States Parties,

**General**

1. Expresses its satisfaction with the work of the Evaluation Body, thanks its members for the quality of the present report and appreciates the assistance of the Secretariat to facilitate the work of the Evaluation Body;
2. Takes note of the observations and recommendations made by the Evaluation Body concerning its work for the 2022 cycle, recognizes that many of the issues raised in its previous decisions continue to prevail as summarized in the present report, and reiterates its invitation to States Parties to address these issues when submitting future nominations;
3. Congratulates those submitting States that have presented nominations that could serve as good examples for future nominations;
4. Further takes note of the increased number of files that are aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals and the nomination of several elements which highlight the positive links between intangible cultural heritage and the natural environment;
5. Recalls that the designations employed in the texts and documents presented by the submitting States Parties do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Committee nor UNESCO concerning a) the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, b) the legal status of its authorities or c) the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries;

**Definition of intangible cultural heritage elements**

1. Stresses the importance of providing a clear identification and definition for nominated elements of intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention, considering that an overly broad definition of an element makes it difficult to understand its connections with the communities, groups and individuals concerned and reminds States Parties to be consistent in the information they provide throughout their files while maintaining the links between the different criteria for inscription;

**Central role of communities, groups and individuals**

1. Recalls the importance of ensuring the broad and the most active participation of communities, groups and individuals throughout the nomination process, in line with the Ethical Principles for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and encourages submitting States to involve community-based organizations and resource persons when preparing nominations;
2. Emphasises the crucial importance of reflecting the voices of communities, groups and individuals when nominating elements of their intangible cultural heritage and advises States Parties to avoid taking a top-down safeguarding approach as well as using standardized letters of consent;

**Support to States Parties**

1. Observes that nominations submitted from States Parties with less experience continue to suffer from lack of knowledge on the inscription criteria, the forms and other requirements related to the nomination, and underscores the importance of the 2003 Convention's capacity building approach in assisting submitting States Parties with the preparation of nominations in cooperation with its Global Facilitators Network as well as accredited non-governmental organizations;
2. Notes with satisfaction the continuing trend of a high number of multinational nominations and commends those States Parties which have demonstrated close cooperation in safeguarding shared elements of intangible cultural heritage, in line with the principles of international cooperation and the promotion of mutual understanding of the Convention;
3. Underlines the importance of highlighting, when preparing multinational nominations, the shared nature of the element with common practices and characteristics across the submitting States Parties as well as details of collaboration amongst communities to demonstrate their commitment to the multinational character of the nomination and requests the Secretariat to prepare a guidance note on how to prepare multinational nominations;

**Thematic issues**

1. Encourages the Secretariat to take into account the observations made by the Evaluation Body on issues related to the economic aspects of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and its links to sustainable livelihoods, in the guidance note that is under preparation, with particular attention to both positive and negative aspects of commercialisation processes;
2. Further encourages the States Parties nominating intangible cultural heritage related to craftsmanship and foodways to be mindful that the ‘standardisation’ and ‘labelling’ of practices could run a risk of over-controlling the enactment of knowledge and skills, which would limit the viability of elements and human creativity, and reminds submitting States that nominations should focus on the practice, social functions and cultural meanings of the element rather than on products and food themselves;
3. Also takes note that a high number of nominations submitted concern a limited range of categories or domains of intangible cultural heritage and invites States Parties to consider the vast diversity of living heritage when presenting elements so as to ensure that the Lists of the Convention reflect this reality.
1. The 2021 Evaluation Body had already examined the nomination of ‘Joumou soup’, following the request made by Haiti, for possible inscription on the Representative List as an exceptional case and on an accelerated basis. The sixteenth session of the Committee inscribed the element on the Representative List and at the same time decided to bring this case to the attention of the General Assembly for its endorsement of the procedure followed by the Committee (Decision [16.COM 19](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/19)). The procedure was subsequently endorsed, on an exceptional basis, by the General Assembly at its ninth session in July 2022 (Resolution [9.GA 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/8)). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)