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

**Expert meeting in the framework of the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18 of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**

**Stockholm, Sweden**

**19 to 21 April 2023**

**Report**

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| As part of the expert consultation foreseen in the framework of the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18 of the 2003 Convention, a category VI expert meeting was organized in April 2023. This document describes the outcomes of that meeting. |

1. The expert meeting in the framework of the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18 of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter the ‘Convention’) was held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 19 to 21 April 2023, with the support from Sweden. Experts wish to put forward the following considerations to the Open-ended intergovernmental working group, which is scheduled to meet from 4 to 6 July 2023 at UNESCO Headquarters:

**General considerations**

1. Article 18 has the potential to fully reflect the purposes of the Convention, as stated in Article 1. Carrying on the overall approach confirmed by the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention, it is essential to put the communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals (hereinafter the ‘communities’) at the centre of the safeguarding efforts.
2. The original intent of Article 18 should be recalled: on the one hand, to form part of the listing system (together with Articles 16 and 17 of the Convention) giving the responsibility to the Committee to select and promote programmes, projects, and activities for the safeguarding of living heritage in order to provide inspirations to communities around the world with safeguarding examples best reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention. At the same time, Article 18 should be, considered in relation to Articles 19 to 24 in terms of facilitating cooperation and providing assistance to States Parties and communities concerned for planning, implementing and following up their safeguarding efforts.
3. The following key issues need to be addressed in order for Article 18 to become fully effective:
   * More good safeguarding practices through programmes, projects and activities should be made available than is currently enabled by the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices (hereinafter the ‘Register’), which currently has only 33 practices included.
   * The good safeguarding practices shared under the Convention should be more equitably distributed geographically, with reference to paragraph 6 of the Operational Directives, facilitating South-South and North-South-South cooperation.
   * A wider range of good safeguarding practices should be shared[[1]](#footnote-1), reflecting the diversity of living heritage covered in Article 2.1, the range of threats to viability of living heritage and the range of possible safeguarding measures indicated in Article 2.3 of the Convention and the Operational Directives.
   * A broader implementation of Article 18 should be accompanied by a wide involvement of stakeholders including community contact persons of inscribed elements and selected practices, country focal points for periodic reporting, Category 2 Centres, accredited non-governmental organizations, UNESCO Chairs and other experts. Wider use of good safeguarding practices by multiple stakeholders should be encouraged in particular to achieve the aims of the Convention, to fulfil the aims of the Overall Results Framework (ORF) and the needs of sustainable development.
4. Further implementation of Article 18 must be explored broadly, whenever possible, with reference to existing provisions of the Operational Directives (paragraphs 3 to 7, 9(c), 10, 12, 14, 20.1, 21(b), 27, 42 to 46, 70, 80(c), 96(c), 106, 107, 118, 121 and 123), the ORF of the Convention with its thematic areas, the periodic reporting mechanism which has been reformed to align with the ORF, the Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, as well as the international cooperation mechanisms of the Convention such as the listing system and International Assistance.

**Concerning ‘Improving the access to and increasing the visibility of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices’ (Topic 1) – see reports of breakout groups** [**A**](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/59532-EN.docx) **and** [**B**](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/59528-EN.docx)

1. Since 2009, Article 18 has been partially operationalized through the Register. The Register can be considered as directly reflecting the actions of communities and has the potential to serve as a tool for capacity-building and multiplying their safeguarding efforts. In order to improve the access to and increasing the visibility of the Register, the following issues need to be addressed taking into account the aforementioned provisions of the Operational Directives:

Relation with international cooperation mechanisms

1. The Register must be separated from the nomination process including the priority system and annual ceiling of nominations to be examined so that the preparation of proposals to the Register would not be in competition with nominations to the Representative List and the Urgent Safeguarding List. This may involve finding lighter ways of evaluating the proposals to the Register, relieving the Evaluation Body of this task.
2. In the sense of Articles 18.2 and 18.3, States Parties and other stakeholders should be encouraged to use International Assistance and/or to co-operate including through co-financing in an effort to prepare, implement and follow up proposals of programmes, projects or activities.[[2]](#footnote-2) Attention should be paid to undertake activities that focus on capacity building, exchanging, sharing and awareness raising to promote this endeavour.

Selection criteria

1. The selection criteria should be revised taking into account the following:

* Criteria should focus on the description of the programme, project or activity in the sense of Article 2.3 of the Convention, references to safeguarding measures in the Operational Directives, as well as in the principles and objectives of the Convention and the Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (criteria P.1 and P.3, which can be merged).
* The participation of the communities concerned should be an important requirement (criteria P.5 and partly P.7 with the inclusion of Ethical Principle 4).
* Furthermore, a demonstration of the effectiveness of the programme, project or activity is necessary, but this may make the requirement to carry out an assessment of the results redundant (criterion P.4 could be therefore kept and criteria P.8 deleted).
* Criterion P.7 may be adjusted to use ‘good practices’ instead of ‘best practices’.
* Reference to the possibility of using the good safeguarding practices as a model (P.6) may be included in the combined criterion for P.1 and P.3, but should not be limited to international level, as some models may be relevant at the national level.
* Some good safeguarding practices may be limited to local activities and criterion P.2 may therefore unnecessarily limit the diversity of the Register and could be deleted.

Paragraph 6 of the Operational Directives

1. While criterion P.9 was deleted from the selection criteria as a result of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention, paragraph 6 of the Operational Directives continues to mention the 'needs of developing countries'. The deletion of P.9 did not mean that the needs of developing countries are not important, but rather that safeguarding practices may be relevant to a specific context, and also cover the needs of developing countries. An intergovernmental discussion should take place on the continued relevance of paragraph 6 of the Operational Directives, and any possible amendments, including possibilities for cooperation when implementing Article 18.

Improving accessibility of good safeguarding practices

1. Good safeguarding practices shall be presented in a searchable way based on indexing, so that communities and other stakeholders will be able to understand and apply various approaches used to address safeguarding issues. Form ICH-03 can be revised to support this aim, including questions that facilitate the characterization of safeguarding approaches and their effectiveness, taking into account the thematic areas, assessment factors in the ORF.

Alternative ways of identifying good safeguarding practices

1. Relevant programmes, projects and activities mentioned in periodic reports or in nomination files may be put forward for selection and promotion by the Committee. The Committee may make calls to solicit proposals that correspond to specific thematic initiatives[[3]](#footnote-3). In this regard, survey tools used to support the Convention’s thematic initiatives (on the economic dimensions of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and climate change, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts), the report on Living Heritage and the COVID-19 pandemic, safeguarding initiatives included in International Assistance projects and nominations for the Representative List and the Urgent Safeguarding List could also be a useful modality. The preparation of proposals for selection may be supported by accredited NGOs and complemented by guidelines and capacity-building materials to increase accessibility for communities. The assessment of all the information collected should be taken into account to realize and harness the potential of Article 18.

Follow-up

1. A series of follow-up actions could be undertaken, for example:

* A revision to Form ICH-10 (periodic reporting) and inclusion of the topic in the capacity building process may encourage States Parties to give updates or reflect on programmes included on the Register (under A.5.3). Communities concerned may be asked periodically to provide information on and confirm their sustained consent with the safeguarding situation after the selection of the programme, project or activity, if relevant.
* States Parties could be further encouraged to include registers of good safeguarding practices on the national level, where present, under A.6 and B.7.2 of the Form ICH-10 (Inventories with a specialised scope).
* Under C.4 (Efforts to promote or reinforce the element) States Parties are asked to report on safeguarding measures related to the elements already included in the Representative List. The States Parties might indicate whether any of the safeguarding measures might be considered for sharing as a good safeguarding practice.
* Moreover, the question might be added to the part B.21 asking States Parties to describe good safeguarding practices that are not included in the Register.
* As part of the follow-up actions, communities or other stakeholders may be encouraged when appropriate to promote ongoing access to those who wish to learn from their safeguarding experience. Information about the good safeguarding practices could indicate where practices are no longer active or those for which the communities concerned cannot be contacted.

Role of the Committee

1. The role of the Committee does not stop with the selection of good safeguarding practices, but also includes encouraging research, documentation, publication and dissemination of good practices and models with international cooperation in generating safeguarding measures. Therefore, the Committee should review the application of paragraphs 42 to 46, and Article 7(b) of the Convention in the operationalization of Article 18.

**Concerning ‘Towards the creation of an ‘observatory’ for sharing good safeguarding practices’ (Topic 2) – see reports of breakout groups** [**A**](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/59529-EN.docx) **and** [**B**](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/59530-EN.docx)

1. The creation of a moderated online ‘platform’ for sharing good safeguarding practices is essential for fully operationalizing Article 18. Such a space is for communities and other actors to exchange, undertake dialogue and seek collaboration. The alternative terminology may be ‘hub’, ‘interface’ or ‘observatory’. Another possibility is to include a terminology in a national language with a meaning of sharing (e.g. ‘delning’ in Swedish, ‘yirkonguii’ in Fulah, ‘shiriki’ in Swahili).

Initial steps

1. An online platform can be used to help realize the safeguarding objectives of the Convention under Article 18 by promoting information sharing and cooperation among stakeholders at various levels around good safeguarding practices.
2. To start the process, the existing webpage of the Convention may be used by the Secretariat to highlight good safeguarding practices already included in existing materials as listed in report of the breakout group B under Topic 2 (the collection of required information would be swift as consent has already been given by the communities concerned for many of these materials).

Advisory group

1. A group composed of members selected by the Committee, representing experts, category 2 centres, the ICH NGO Forum, UNESCO Chairs, community contact persons for inscribed elements and selected practices, country focal points for periodic reports could provide advice to the Secretariat and the technical team in implementing the online platform for promoting Article 18, giving credibility to the process under paragraph 6 of the Operational Directives. For more information on the mandates of the advisory group and technical team, see report of the breakout group B under Topic 2.

Indexing

1. Experiences obtained through various mechanisms and initiatives of the Convention can be shared through the online platform as well as those related to thematic initiatives or information specifically related to safeguarding approaches or methodologies. As is the case for the further development of the Register, good safeguarding practices must be indexed, as indicated in paragraph 11.

Community participation

1. In order to facilitate the broad participation of communities in the use of an online platform:
   * The use of mother tongue languages should be encouraged with the use of automatic translation tools or other artificial intelligence application that might be developed in the next years.
   * Other communication modalities such as TV and radio and other analogue and digital technologies may be used to complement online tools to share information.
   * A dedicated interactive forum could be included in the online platform to allow dialogue. The possibility for communities to share planned events in a calendar of events could be foreseen on the online space.
   * The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (in particular its Article 27) and the Ethical principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage shall be respected in maintaining the online platform in the interest of community participation and necessary tools can be developed.

**Concerning ‘Any other issues to be identified’ (Topic 3) – see** [**report**](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/59531-EN.docx) **of expert group**

1. In addition to the issues described under Topics 1 and 2, the following ideas merit attention:

Funding

1. Additional financial resources, which complement the International Assistance mechanism, need to be made available to communities to help prepare, implement and follow up programmes, projects and activities that best reflect the principles of the Convention.

Awareness-raising

1. Specific initiatives aiming to raise awareness about the scope of Article 18 including the benefits of the Register may be taken up to recognize the safeguarding efforts of the community, for example:
   * On a non-competitive basis, award, prize, labels or certification for safeguarding practices,
   * The ‘good safeguarding practices’ days.

1. . With specific reference to paragraph 14 of the Operational Directives. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . With a specific reference to paragraph 9(c) and 21(b) of the Operational Directives. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . With specific reference to paragraph 4 of the Operational Directives. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)