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

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

**Nineteenth session**

**Asunción, Republic of Paraguay**

**2 to 7 December 2024**

**Item 15 of the provisional agenda:**

**Number of files submitted for the 2024 and 2025 cycles and**

**number of files that can be treated in the 2026 and 2027 cycles**

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| **Summary**In order to manage the listing mechanisms of the Convention, the Committee is to determine the number of files to be treated during the following two cycles and to do so two years beforehand. This document a) provides an overview of the files submitted for the 2024 and 2025 cycles and b) proposes a plan for the 2026 and 2027 cycles.**Decision required:** paragraph 18 |

#### Background

1. Following the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention (2018–2022), the system regarding the number of nomination files that can be included in a cycle and the priorities for selecting those files are laid out in paragraphs 33 and 34 of the Operational Directives of the Convention, as last amended by the ninth session of the General Assembly in June 2022 (Resolution [9.GA 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/9)). The following provisions were applied for the 2024 and 2025 cycles:
	1. Paragraph 33 stipulates that: ‘[t]he 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 which in total is set at no more than sixty’; and
	2. Paragraph 34 establishes the priorities for selecting those files as follows:

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| priority (0) – files from States which had no file treated during the preceding cycle; priority (i) – files from States having no elements inscribed, best safeguarding practices selected, and nominations to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding; priority (ii) – multinational files; andpriority (iii) – files from States with the fewest elements inscribed and best safeguarding practices selected, in comparison with other submitting States during the same cycle.In case they submit several files during the same cycle, submitting States shall indicate the order of priority in which they wish their files to be examined and are invited to give priority to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. |

1. The present document reports on the number of files submitted for the 2024 and 2025 cycles with an analysis of the situation for these two cycles (Section A), in response to the request made to the Secretariat to report on the number of files submitted for those cycles and on its experience in applying the Operational Directives and the decisions of the previous sessions (most recently Decision [17.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/17.COM/15)). Based on this experience, the document proposes an overall number of files that can be treated for the 2026 and 2027 cycles (Section B).

#### Reports on past cycles

1. The 2024 and 2025 cycles were the first nomination cycles in which the outcomes of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention (2018–2022) have taken full effect. In addition to the abovementioned amended paragraphs 33 and 34 of the Operational Directives, further outcomes of the global reflection process implemented for the 2024 cycle onwards, included a) the implementation of the revised, simplified or newly created forms for nominations, proposals and requests, b) initial adjustments made to the selection criteria of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, c) newly established procedures on transferring elements between the Lists of the Convention or inscription on an extended or a reduced basis, as well as on the removal of an element from one of the Lists and a follow-up mechanism for a currently inscribed element, and d) the adjusted division of tasks between the Committee and its Bureau as regards the examination of International Assistance.
2. The Committee requested that the following files be included above the annual ceiling for the 2024 and 2025 cycles (Decision [17.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/17.COM/15), paragraph 4): requests for transfer from the Representative List to the Urgent Safeguarding List and vice versa, inclusion of safeguarding experiences in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices following a transfer from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List, inscriptions on an extended or reduced basis, and follow-up of inscribed elements.
3. Furthermore, based on the experience of the 2021 and 2022 cycles, in which some multinational files could not be treated, the Committee decided that in the event that the inclusion of all multinational files in the 2024 or 2025 cycles bring the number of files to be treated above sixty, priority be given within multinational files to (a) multinational files with at least one submitting State that has no national elements inscribed; and (b) multinational files with the fewest elements inscribed per submitting State concerned, taking note that groups of submitting States who have submitted more than one multinational file in a given cycle may be requested to choose which of their multinational files should be considered (Decision [17.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/17.COM/15), paragraph 7).

#### Report on the 2024 cycle

1. As of the 31 March 2023 statutory deadline, 74 nominations were newly received by the Secretariat. In addition, pending files from the 2023 cycle and those from previous cycles that were not previously treated due to the established ceiling (called ‘backlog files’) were taken into consideration. For the 2024 cycle, a total of **seventy-one files** could be processed[[1]](#footnote-1) as follows:
	1. Sixty-one files were included within the annual ceiling (consisting of three files for the Urgent Safeguarding List, fifty-five for the Representative List, and three for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices). This included all files under priority (0) and priority (i), together with all twelve multinational files received under priority (ii) and nine files under priority (iii). Under priority (0), thirty-one States with one or more elements already inscribed on the Lists that did not have a file in the 2023 cycle (excluding multinational files) could have a file included. Nine States with one or more elements inscribed could not see their ‘national’ files processed under priority (iii).
	2. Ten files were treated outside the annual ceiling: that is six nominations to the Representative List on an extended basis and four requests for the transfer on an element from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List.

#### Report on the 2025 cycle

1. For the 2025 cycle, an even higher number of 120 files were received, in addition to twenty-two ‘backlog files’. A total of **sixty-nine files** could be processed under this cycle[[2]](#footnote-2), as follows:
	1. Sixty files could be processed within the annual ceiling (consisting of forty-eight files for the Representative List, eleven for the Urgent Safeguarding List, and one for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices). This included all files under priority (0) and priority (i), together with five multinational files received under priority (ii), all of which included one State with no element inscribed (excluding multinational inscriptions) and no file under priority (0) or (i) in the same cycle. Because of the exceptionally high number (48) of files that fell under priority (0) in the 2025 cycle, thirteen multinational nominations could not be treated as they would have significantly exceeded the annual ceiling. The identification among all eighteen files received under priority (ii) proceeded according to the priority system established for multinational files by Decision [17.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/17.COM/15). Finally, twenty-five States with one or more elements inscribed could not see their priority (iii) files included and will therefore be considered as priority (0) for the 2026 cycle.
	2. Furthermore, nine files were treated outside the annual ceiling: seven nominations to the Representative List on an extended basis and two requests for the transfer on an element from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List.

#### Trends concerning recent cycles

1. **General observations**. A total of 140 files from 119 States (65% of all States Parties) were treated in the 2024 and 2025 cycles, five of which were withdrawn by the submitting States concerned during the completeness check of the files. This is the highest number of files treated over a biennium since the introduction of an annual ceiling, in part due to the files treated outside the annual ceiling. The balanced geographical distribution of these files shown below demonstrates the increased capacities and engagement of States Parties across all regions:



1. **Multinational files**. Out of the 730 elements on the Convention’s listing mechanisms, 85 multinational elements (12% of all inscriptions) involving 103 States Parties have been inscribed; more than half of these inscriptions (44 elements) have taken place since the 2020 cycle, demonstrating a continuous trend of a high number of multinational nominations. This can be considered as a success for the Convention, as a catalyst for international cooperation among States and communities. However, while all regions contribute to the increasing number of multinational inscriptions, a disparity exists between regions[[3]](#footnote-3): Group I (37 multinational inscriptions), Group II (33), Group III (9), Group IV (24), Group Va (8), Group Vb (18). Furthermore, ten States (four in Group I, one in Group II, three in Group IV, two in Group V(b) have between eight and thirteen multinational inscriptions. A steep increase in the number of multinational files submitted was observed in the 2020 cycle (16 files against 14 files in the 2017, 2018 and 2019 cycles combined). Ever since, the number of newly submitted multinational files has stabilized at this high level (fourteen files per year on average), with a peak at eighteen multinational submissions for the 2025 cycle, not including the seven requests for extension.
2. As similarly seen in the 2021 and 2022 cycles, a number (13) of multinational files corresponding to priority (ii) could not be included in the 2025 cycle, in particular due to the combined high numbers of priority (0) files and of multinational files submitted for that cycle. This raises the issue of prioritization among these multinational nominations, in particular when such nominations cannot be treated in their initial cycle of submission and run the risk of remaining in the ‘backlog’ for more than a cycle. Building on its previous decisions, the Committee may wish to encourage States Parties to refrain from submitting multiple files in the same cycle and to submit multinational nominations involving States Parties with no inscribed elements, so as to allow for a better representativity of the Lists.
3. **Files treated outside the annual ceiling**. The 2024 and 2025 cycles saw the submission of the first ‘harvest’ of requests processed outside the annual ceiling. Across the two cycles, nineteen such files were treated including (a) nine extensions at the international level, (b) three extensions at the national level, (c) one request combining an extension at the international level and an extension at the national level, as well as (d) six requests for the transfer of elements already inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List. If this trend continues or amplifies, the treatment of these files beyond the annual ceiling could become a source of concern in terms of workload.

#### Proposals for the 2026 and 2027 cycles

1. The 2026 and 2027 nomination cycles will be established pursuant to paragraphs 33 and 34 of the Operational Directives, as well as the decision to be adopted by the Committee under the present item. Following the approach taken for the past two cycles, the Committee may wish to request that the Secretariat includes again ‘no more than sixty’ files per cycle as stipulated in paragraph 33 of the Operational Directives. In doing so, the Secretariat shall ensure that all files under priority (0) are included.
2. Based on the most recent experience of the 2025 cycle, in which some multinational files could not be treated, the following prioritization system may be considered within multinational files in the event that the inclusion of all multinational files in the 2026 or 2027 cycles bring the number of files to be treated above sixty:
	1. multinational files that could not be treated in the previous cycle;
	2. multinational files with at least one submitting State that has no element inscribed (excluding inscriptions via multinational nominations) and no other file included in the same cycle;
	3. multinational files with the fewest elements inscribed per submitting State concerned. If necessary, groups of submitting States who have submitted more than one multinational file in a given cycle shall be requested to choose which of their multinational files should be considered.
3. In order to ensure the good administration of multinational nominations, the Committee may wish to:
	* + - 1. consider that States Parties shall be able to indicate a multinational file as ‘priority (0)’ for the 2026 and 2027 cycles;
				2. decide specifically for this next cycle, that multinational files that could not be treated in the previous cycle, be included in the 2026 cycle, while requesting groups of submitting States who have submitted more than one multinational file to choose which of their multinational files should be considered, bearing in mind the annual ceiling of files.
4. In addition, while sixteen States have been able to already benefit from the simplification of the procedure for the extension of inscribed elements and for the transfer of inscribed elements from one list to another, it is proposed to maintain the possibility for such files to be treated outside the annual ceiling. For the purposes of the 2026 and 2027 cycles, the following requests and procedures would continue being treated outside the annual ceiling:
5. Requests for the transfer of an element from the Representative List to the Urgent Safeguarding List (paragraph 54 of the Operational Directives);
6. In the context of a transfer of an element from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List, the inclusion in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices of the successful safeguarding experience described in the transfer request (paragraph 39.3 of the Operational Directives);
7. Procedures for the follow-up of elements inscribed on the Lists of the Convention (paragraphs 40.2 and 40.3 of the Operational Directives);
8. On an experimental basis, requests for the transfer of an element from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List and those for inscription on an extended or reduced basis.
9. With the proposed abovementioned provisions, a forecast could be that around eighty files might be treated in each the 2026 and 2027 cycles. This represents a potential 34 per cent increase in comparison with the 2022 and 2023 cycles and therefore an increased workload for the Committee, the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat.
10. Taking into account that the under-utilization of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices by States Parties (3% of all files processed in the 2024 and 2025 cycles), the Convention’s governing bodies have recently taken several measures[[4]](#footnote-4), through both the global reflection on the listing mechanisms and the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18, to further improve access to and increase the visibility of the Register. It may be premature to assess the effectiveness of these measures, as several of them have not yet been fully applied. However, in addition to encouraging the submission of proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, the Committee may wish to underline the necessity to monitor the above-mentioned measures and possibly discuss other ways to promote the Register, such as the introduction of a dedicated quota under the annual ceiling, bearing in mind the potential impact of such a quota on other priority levels.
11. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 19.COM 15

The Committee,

1. Having examined document LHE/24/19.COM/15,
2. Recalling the relevant paragraphs of the Operational Directives concerning nomination procedures, Decision [17.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/17.COM/15), as well as [Resolutions 9.GA 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/9) and [10.GA 7](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/10.GA/7),
3. Takes note that the number of files treated for the 2024 cycle is seventy-one (sixty-one files within the annual ceiling and ten files outside) and that for the 2025 cycle sixty-nine files are treated (sixty files within the annual ceiling and nine files outside);
4. Decides that for the 2026 and 2027 cycles, the number of nominations to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, proposals of programmes, projects and activities that best reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention that can be treated is determined to be no more than sixty per cycle;
5. Further decides that the Secretariat may exercise some flexibility if that will permit greater equity among submitting States with equal priority under paragraph 34 of the Operational Directives;
6. Considers that submitting States may indicate multinational files as their priority file under priority (0) for the 2026 and 2027 cycles, and requests that within multinational files under priority (ii), priority be given to:
* multinational files that could not be treated in the previous cycle;
* multinational files with at least one submitting State that has no element inscribed (excluding inscriptions via multinational nominations) and no other file included in the same cycle;
* multinational files with the fewest elements inscribed per submitting State concerned, taking note that groups of submitting States who have submitted more than one multinational file in a given cycle may be requested to choose which of their multinational files should be considered.
1. Also decides to include in the 2026 cycle, multinational files that could not be treated in the previous cycle, while requesting groups of submitting States who have submitted more than one multinational file to choose which of their multinational files should be considered, bearing in mind the annual ceiling of files;
2. Invites States Parties to take the present decision and current situation as regards multinational files into account when submitting files for the 2026 and 2027 cycles and to show restraint from submitting several multinational files in the same cycle so as to allow for a better representativity of the Lists, and requests the Secretariat to continue monitoring trends concerning the inclusion of multinational nominations in future nomination cycles;
3. Further takes note that continuing for the 2026 and 2027 cycles, requests for the transfer of elements from one List to another, the inclusion in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices of the successful safeguarding experience resulting from a transfer from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List, requests for inscriptions on an extended or reduced basis, as well as the follow-up of inscribed elements, will be treated outside of the annual ceiling;
4. Notes the under-utilization of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, encourages States Parties to consider the submission of proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and requests the Secretariat to continue monitoring trends concerning the treatment of proposals to the Register Good Safeguarding Practices while operationalizing the online platform currently being established for a broader implementation of Article 18;
5. Further requests that the Secretariat report to it on the number of files submitted for the 2026 and 2027 cycles, its experience in applying the Operational Directives and the present decision at its twenty-first session in 2026, in particular concerning multinational nominations and proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, as well as on its experience with the treatment of requests outside the annual ceiling.
1. Four of the seventy-one files were withdrawn by the submitting States concerned during the completeness check of the nomination. The list of files for the [2024 cycle](https://ich.unesco.org/en/files-2024-under-process-01303) is displayed on a dedicated webpage of the Convention. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. One of the sixty-nine files was withdrawn by the submitting State concerned during the completeness check of the nomination. The list of files for the [2025 cycle](https://ich.unesco.org/en/submitting-states-and-priorities-2025-01348) is displayed on a dedicated webpage of the Convention. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Twenty multinational inscriptions involve States from multiple Electoral Groups. These are counted under each of the relevant Electoral Groups. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Measures include (a) the possibility to include successful safeguarding experience in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in the context of a transfer (paragraph 39.3 of the Operational Directives), (b) the simplification of selection criteria (paragraph 7 of the Operational Directives), (c) the operationalization of the Register through better connections with other mechanisms (International Assistance, periodic reporting) or (d) the establishment of a moderated online platform to share good safeguarding experiences (see document [LHE/24/19.COM/10](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-24-19.COM-10_EN.docx)). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)