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

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

**Meeting of the Bureau**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room VIII**

**1 October 2024**

**10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

**Item 4 of the provisional agenda:**

**Administrative management of International Assistance projects**

|  |
| --- |
| **Summary**Based on the needs identified through the implementation of International Assistance mechanisms under the Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the present document proposes administrative solutions to better manage budget re-allocation requests made by beneficiary States Parties.**Decision required:** paragraph 7 |

1. International Assistance has proven to be an effective international cooperation mechanism of the 2003 Convention, supported by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. Since its operationalization in 2008 and as of 30 June 2024, 79 States Parties were granted financial assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, for a total of US$13 million in support of 154 projects. In addition, there are currently 46 ongoing projects funded under the International Assistance mechanism. While the mechanism supports the safeguarding efforts of communities and States Parties around the world, the broadened reach and scope of the projects implemented so far have highlighted the need to further optimize the administrative management of the International Assistance provided. Most notably, in the absence of written guidance, clarity must be given on how to respond to requests from beneficiary States Parties wishing to modify the budget allocation of a given project during the course of its implementation.
2. Responding to the issues raised during its first meeting held on 5 March 2024, the Bureau of the nineteenth session of the Committee requested that the Secretariat prepare a working document for a future meeting of the Bureau. The present document proposes possible ways forward to better manage budget re-allocation requests made by beneficiary States Parties.
3. Following the approval of an International Assistance request by the Committee or its Bureau, the Secretariat establishes a contract (using the ‘Intergovernmental Body Allocation Contract’[[1]](#footnote-1)) with the designated implementing agency to carry out the activities described in Form ICH-04 according to the specified timeline and budget. Situations that require budget revisions vary and may include a significant increase in the price of equipment or travel costs, the need to increase or decrease the number of project beneficiaries (i.e., community members, workshop trainees and experts), and exchange rate fluctuations. The need for modifications can be justified for projects with a relatively long implementation period (between 24 to 36 months). Moreover, such requests remain exceptional, and in the past modifications were requested only once or at best twice during the lifetime of a project.
4. The Secretariat has accommodated budget modification requests if all the following conditions are met: (a) the total amount of the budget approved for the project remains unchanged; (b) the adjustments do not exceed 5% of the total amount of the approved project[[2]](#footnote-2); (c) the changes do not modify the overall aims and objectives of the project and (d) the request is in line with the terms and conditions of the contract. In addition, the implementing agencies have been asked to respect the contract, which stipulates that any changes to the work plan and/or budget must be formally notified and receive prior clearance from UNESCO.

Proposed ways forward

1. The following practice might be introduced under the 2003 Convention to deal with budget reallocation requests from the implementing agencies during the course of the implementation of International Assistance projects:
2. Requests that modify the budget allocations up to 5% of the total amount of International Assistance projects are to be administered by the Secretariat, regardless of whether the assistance was initially granted by the Bureau or the Committee (continuing the current practice).
3. Requests that modify the budget allocations by more than 5% and up to 10% of the total amount of International Assistance projects are to be presented by the Secretariat to the Chairperson of the Bureau of the Committee for approval, if the assistance was granted initially by the Bureau. The Chairperson’s decision will be communicated to the beneficiary State(s) Partie(s) and the implementing agency in a timely manner. In addition, the Secretariat will report regularly on the outcomes of the consultation to the Bureau.
4. Following the completion of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms (2018–2022), the Committee is tasked with examining International Assistance requests submitted simultaneously with a nomination to the Urgent Safeguarding List or in the context of the request to transfer an element from the Representative List to the Urgent Safeguarding List (paragraph 51 of the Operational Directives). It is to be understood that the existing practice within the Secretariat to approve budget reallocation requests by up to 5% of the total amount of International Assistance continues to apply to those projects approved by the Committee (but no modifications would be administered if the requests concern more than 5% of the total amount of International Assistance projects).
5. The Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 19.COM 3.BUR 4

The Bureau,

1. Having examined document LHE/24/19.COM 3.BUR/4,
2. Recalling Articles 22 to 24 of the Convention as well as Chapter I.4 of the Operational Directives concerning the admissibility and selection criteria for requests for international assistance,
3. Takes note of the existing practice within the Secretariat to approve budget reallocation requests by up to 5% of the total amount of International Assistance, regardless of whether the assistance was granted initially by the Bureau or the Committee,
4. Decides that requests to modify budget allocations for International Assistance projects may be dealt with as follows, while respecting the terms and conditions of the contracts concerned:

Requests that modify the budget allocations by more than 5% and up to 10% of the total amount of International Assistance projects are to be approved by the Chairperson of the Bureau of the Committee, if the assistance was granted initially by the Bureau. The decisions of the Chairperson will be communicated to the beneficiary State(s) Partie(s) and the implementing agency in a timely manner.

The total amount of the budget approved for the project must remain unchanged, and the changes must not modify the overall aims and objectives of the project.

1. Requests that the Secretariat regularly inform the Bureau of all requests to modify budget allocations that have been examined by its Chairperson and report on the outcomes of such consultations;
2. Encourages beneficiary States Parties to carefully prepare realistic budget allocations, to the extent possible, when submitting International Assistance requests to minimize the need for modifications of budget allocations.
1. The specific provisions governing this type of contract are defined in Chapter 7.6 of the UNESCO Administrative Manual. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This rate is in line with UNESCO's internal practice since the Director-General, in accordance with paragraph 3 of [42C/Resolution 80](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark%3A/48223/pf0000388394/PDF/388394eng.pdf.multi) adopted by the General Conference at its forty-second session in November 2023, is authorized to make transfers between UNESCO regular programme credit lines up to a limit of 5% of the initial amount. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)