

The background image shows a large group of people, likely in a rural setting, participating in a traditional dance or performance. They are wearing colorful, patterned clothing and headpieces. The scene is outdoors with trees and a building in the background. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

ICHNGO FORUM

Forum des ONG du PCI

Information Note

NGO Contributions and Collaboration in Implementing the Overall Results Framework (ORF) and in Periodic Reporting by States Parties



Information Note

NGO Contributions and Collaboration in Implementing the Overall Results Framework (ORF) and in Periodic Reporting by States Parties

**Prepared by the Working Group on Policy and Legal Development,
ICH NGO Forum**

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How to use this information note

In the State Parties there are many ways of working on the Safeguarding of living heritage and implementing the UNESCO 2003 Convention. Thus, for example, NGOs often commit to the safeguarding processes and in various ways contribute to the goals of the Overall Results Framework (ORF). Moreover, there are multiple ways in which NGOs and States Parties interact therein. These activities bring a rich array of possibilities and nuances in the work on Convention. They contribute greatly to the realisation of the ORF and, by extrapolation, they also enrich periodic reporting in countries.

To provide some overview in the myriads of NGO activities considering the ORF and Periodic Reporting, we will here break the NGO activities down into **five different types of interaction among NGOs and States Parties in the Convention work**. By presenting relevant **examples** we also illustrate some concrete ways in which this can operate.

We hope this will be helpful to States Parties when they are considering how they can draw upon the resource that NGOs represent in their country's progress in implementing the Convention and realizing the ORF and, currently, in drawing up their periodic reports.

We have identified five different types of interaction among NGOs and States Parties in the light of the Convention's ORF and periodic reporting:

A group of people, likely dancers, are performing in an open field. They are wearing traditional, colorful, fringed skirts and are captured in motion, suggesting a dance performance. The background shows a line of trees under a clear sky.

1

There is a direct obligation on the State Party to collaborate with NGOs

The 2003 Convention requires states to work directly with NGOs in two main ways:

- 1 First, by proposing organizations for accreditation to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee (Article 9(1)) and,**
- 2 second, for States Parties to collaborate with NGOs in identifying and defining the various elements of the intangible cultural heritage present in their territory (Article 11(b)).**

The latter has been extended by the Operational Directives to include such collaboration also in other appropriate safeguarding measures (OD 90). So this is now a rather broad requirement relating to all possible safeguarding measures as set out in Article 2(3).

At the international level, the Operational Directives also foresee the advisory role of accredited NGOs to the Committee with respect to files within the Listing mechanisms and requests for International Assistance (OD 96).

1. There is a direct obligation on the State Party to collaborate with NGOs

Inventoring of ICH elements within the countries is probably the most obvious activity in which NGO involvement is envisaged according to Article 11(b). This relates directly to **Assessment Factor (AF) 8.1** that “Communities, groups and relevant NGOs participate inclusively in inventoring which informs and strengthens their safeguarding efforts”.

It is part of **Indicator 8 of the ORF**, that aims to assess the degree to which the inventoring process is “inclusive, respects the diversity of ICH and its practitioners and supports safeguarding by communities, groups and individuals concerned”.

Showing direct involvement of NGOs in the process of inventoring, is one important means to demonstrate the presence of such an inclusive and supporting approach, and to explain concretely how this is being done in your country.

AF 8.1 EXAMPLE - ICHPEDIA

ichpedia

Republic of Korea

The Center for Intangible Culture Studies (CICS) is a UNESCO accredited NGO, established to promote safeguarding activities of and encourage research regarding ICH in 2013. The main activities of this NGO are research and **inventory projects**.

CICS is operating Korea's first 'Intangible Cultural Heritage On-line Inventory', based on the guidelines recommended by UNESCO: ICHPEDIA.

With a view to encourage participation in the inventory process by the communities, groups, individuals, NGO's and others concerned, CICS has developed the online ICHPEDIA system and helps with the recording. Starting in 2010, there are currently 70,000 elements inventoried.

Find out more



<https://www.ichngoforum.org/ngos/the-center-for-intangible-culture-studies/>



1. There is a direct obligation on the State Party to collaborate with NGOs

As noted above, OD 90 also refers to including NGOs in “other appropriate safeguarding measures”. Given the importance of education and transmission in the realm of safeguarding measures, this is another area where the periodic reporting enquires the involvement of NGOs (and of other stakeholders).

AF 4.3. relates to this, by evaluating the extent to which “**Educational programmes and/or extra-curricular activities** concerning ICH and strengthening its transmission, undertaken by communities, groups, **NGOs** or heritage institutions, **are available and supported**”.

AF 4.3. EXAMPLE - HERITAGE EDUCATION PROGRAMME



Uganda

The NGO Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU) supports **more than 80 cultural heritage clubs in Uganda's secondary schools through the Heritage Education Programme**. Out of the classroom, young people learn about their culture and heritage.

Schools are linked to community museums as points of reference on cultural heritage and through **CCFU's work with the National Curriculum Development Centre**, culture has been incorporated in the **secondary schools' curriculum** since 2017.

Find out more

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos/accredited-ong-00946>





2

State support is expected towards NGOs



2. State support is expected towards NGOs

Article 15 of the 2003 Convention calls on States Parties to “**endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals** that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management”.

As we know, this is one of the most innovative aspects of the Convention and represents a paradigm shift in UNESCO’s cultural heritage treaties. Although NGOs are not named as such in this provision, it is obvious that NGOs’ grass roots activities with bearer communities can be an extremely valuable means through which States Parties can fulfil this requirement. Indeed, we understand from this article that the 2003 Convention frequently **envisages a facilitating role for the state parties, in which they support the initiatives of non-governmental actors.**

NGO initiatives that realise participatory work around heritage management and safeguarding are very common. There is a fairly large number of Assessment Factors that help to assess the degree of support and collaboration by States to such participatory safeguarding activity, including the involvement of NGOs in this:

2. State support is expected towards NGOs

Some Assessment Factors measuring the level of support include, for example:

AF 1.4 on fostering institutions, organizations and/or initiatives for ICH documentation and use of their materials to support continued practice and transmission of ICH;

AF 2.3 on community- or NGO-based initiatives providing training in ICH safeguarding and management;

AF 9.2 on the fostering of research on approaches towards and the impacts of safeguarding ICH (in general or specific elements, inscribed or not);

AF 22.2 on the existence of an enabling environment for NGOs and other civil society bodies to monitor and undertake studies on ICH safeguarding programmes and measures;

AF 25.2 on international networking among ICH bearers/communities, NGOs, experts, centres of expertise and research institutes that are active in the field of ICH.

AF 1.4 EXAMPLE - ARCHIVE NORWEGIAN CENTRE FOR TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND DANCE

Norway

The NGO Norwegian Centre for Traditional Music and Dance is a private, independent foundation **financed by the Norwegian state**. The Centre holds one of **Europe's largest archives** of traditional music and dance with audio and video recordings from early 1900s until today. Practice of the tradition **continues to be documented** up to today.

The archive is used for research, **education, transmission**, and revitalisation, and can be accessed under supervision of experts. The archive consists not only of Norwegian folk music and dance, but also dances from other cultures, nations, and immigrant communities in Norway.

[Find out more](https://www.ichngoforum.org/ngos/norwegian-centre-for-traditional-music-and-dance/)



<https://www.ichngoforum.org/ngos/norwegian-centre-for-traditional-music-and-dance/>



Art for Life © Contact Base India

AF 2.3 EXAMPLE - ART FOR LIFE

India

Since 2005 the **NGO** Contact Base in eastern India has developed a **flagship initiative for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage**, called Art for Life (AFL). Overall, NGO Contact Base works with a mission of fostering equitable development and synergizing cultural and economic development. The Art for Life programme particularly aims at revitalizing traditional skills in performing arts and crafts and **building community-based** creative enterprises, including cultural tourism.

Contact Base develops community-based models of governance of cultural heritage, management of access and control of ICH elements, and also examples of rejuvenation of heritage by indigenous communities. Since 2005 AFL has led to the revival and revitalization of 15+ art and craft forms and fostered socio-economic empowerment of 10000+ folk artists and crafts persons in eastern India. Training in ICH safeguarding and management are at the core of these programmes.

Find out more

<https://www.ichngoforum.org/ngos/contact-base/>



AF 9.2 EXAMPLE - Aigine Cultural Research Center

Kyrgyzstan

Aigine Cultural Research Center (Aigine CRC) works in the field of traditional knowledge, education, humanities and social research. Founded in 2004, Aigine CRC set a goal of studying and preserving cultural and natural heritage and diversity in Kyrgyzstan.

Having started with primarily academic projects such as the study and documentation of the ancient tradition of pilgrimage practices to sacred sites, the Centre adopted **Participatory Action Research** approach as the main working principle of the Centre. The majority of Aigine's projects are aimed at documenting and **safeguarding intangible cultural heritage**. Aigine's work is being promoted by the National Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic for UNESCO, however **for funding the NGO mostly needs to rely on international funds**.

Find out more

<https://www.ichngoforum.org/ngos/aigine-cultural-research-center/>



<https://ich.unesco.org/en/news/safeguarding-practices-and-rituals-in-sacred-sites-in-kyrgyzstan-13322>



AF 22.2 EXAMPLE - ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR NGO'S

Belgium

In the region of Flanders in Belgium, the government launched a **new legal framework** for Cultural Heritage since 2017 supporting heritage work both for tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The Decree enables (non-governmental or other) heritage organizations to apply for funding regarding the various types of cultural heritage care activities they may develop, such as: inventorying, documentation, education, awareness raising, research and other measures. Thus, **safeguarding ICH as well as monitoring the effects and impacts of such measures have become an integral part of the heritage sector's work** as enabled and supported via the Flemish policies.

[Find out more](https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/view-file/52127)

<https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/view-file/52127>



AF 25.2 EXAMPLE - INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

International

International networking involving NGOs is very common. A lot of mutual exchange and networking happens for example among UNESCO-accredited NGOs within the ICH NGO Forum and in the context of transnational collaborations over ICH elements and safeguarding, etc. You can share here examples of international networking on ICH among various actors (e.g. communities or groups, NGOs, experts, centres of expertise and research institutes ...) indicating who is involved, and how networking is being encouraged and supported.

For example, think of the networking related to shared ICH practices such as Nawrouz (Nawrouz, Novruz, Nowrouz, Nowrouz, Nawrouz, Nauryz, Nooruz, Nowruz, Navruz, Nevruz, Nowruz, Navruz) traditions, Dry Stone walling, Falconry, or Arabic calligraphy.





Networking also occurs over international meetings and conferences: In October 2023, the Persian Garden Institute for Living Heritage (PGILH) based in Iran brought together two Category 2 Centres (the Tehran ICH Centre in Iran and ICHCAP in Republic of Korea) to co-organize an Expert Meeting in Isfahan on building resilience to climate change and the role of NGOs in this. During this meeting, representatives of six NGOs (five accredited to the 2003 Convention) from the West and Central Asia region presented case studies.

The Traditional Arts Association, an accredited NGO based in Türkiye, held a meeting in İstanbul in October 2024 in which representatives of 12 accredited NGOs from all geographical regions of UNESCO presented papers and shared experiences. This provided an invaluable opportunity for peer-to-peer learning and sharing of experiences.

[Find out more](#)



<https://ich.unesco.org/en/news/category-2-centres-in-asia-call-attention-to-links-between-living-heritage-and-climate-change-13499>



<https://kulturyolufestivali.com/en-us/new-approaches-to-safeguarding-living-heritage-and-the-2003-unesco-intangible-cultural-heritage-convention-an-international-forum-of-ngos-istanbul>

3

NGOs act in partnership with state actors



A third type of State-NGO interaction is a **more mutual form of cooperation between state actors (governmental authorities, state cultural institutions, etc.) and NGOs** where they **act as partners**.

In such cases, we see state actors playing a more central role and working alongside NGOs, generally enjoying the benefits of sharing diverse competencies and the added value this can give.

Examples of assessment factors that can fall under this category include:

AF 4.1 which looks for the inclusive involvement of practitioners and bearers in designing and developing educational programmes related to ICH and/or in actively presenting and transmitting their heritage.

The mention of “practitioners” as well as bearers suggests that NGOs are likely to play an important role in such activities: They often serve as a bridge between the state actors and bearers, commonly working directly with them in the design and development of such programmes and in the presentation and transmission actions. Further, NGOs also operate in partnership with museums, cultural centres, schools and other state-supported institutions. In addition, they can be key to achieving the “inclusive involvement” referred to here since they are often in a privileged position vis-à-vis ICH bearers and other practitioners which allows them to ensure that such activities are truly inclusive.



Home-workshop of Pasto Varnish mopa-mopa, Zambrano family. Pasto, Nariño, Colombia, 2023. © Giovany Arteaga Montes

AF 4.1 EXAMPLE

Colombia

Accredited NGO Mundo Espiral Foundation carried out a project to enhance capacities and conditions for learning and transmission initiatives **led by the bearers and practitioners of Pasto Varnish ‘mopa-mopa’ to guarantee the safeguarding of the element.** This project was realized during the period 2022–2024, with the international assistance of UNESCO, and the cooperation of the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Knowledge of Colombia, and the help of the Secretary of Culture of Pasto.

With this strategy, 55 practitioners participated, through the **development of workshops and the application of practical tools for the structuring of education and transmission programs** in traditional workshops and spaces for harvesting of the mopa-mopa raw material, woodworking, and decorative varnishing. As a result, a pilot programme for an apprenticeship learning model on the knowledge and techniques of the element was implemented, in which each practitioner worked together with an apprentice in an applied one-on-one transmission project.

Find out more

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos/accredited-ong-01327>



3. NGOs act in partnership with state actors

AF 9.3 which again refers to “practitioners and bearers of ICH” concerns their participation in the management, implementation and dissemination of research findings and studies as well as ensuring their “free, prior, sustained and informed consent” in these actions.

Acting alongside governmental and private scientific institutions, NGOs represent one of the other actors who commonly undertake ICH-related research and studies and, importantly, they frequently involve ICH bearers in this work as partners in a manner that ensures their fully informed consent.

AF 9.3 EXAMPLE - ERIGAIÉ FOUNDATION

Colombia

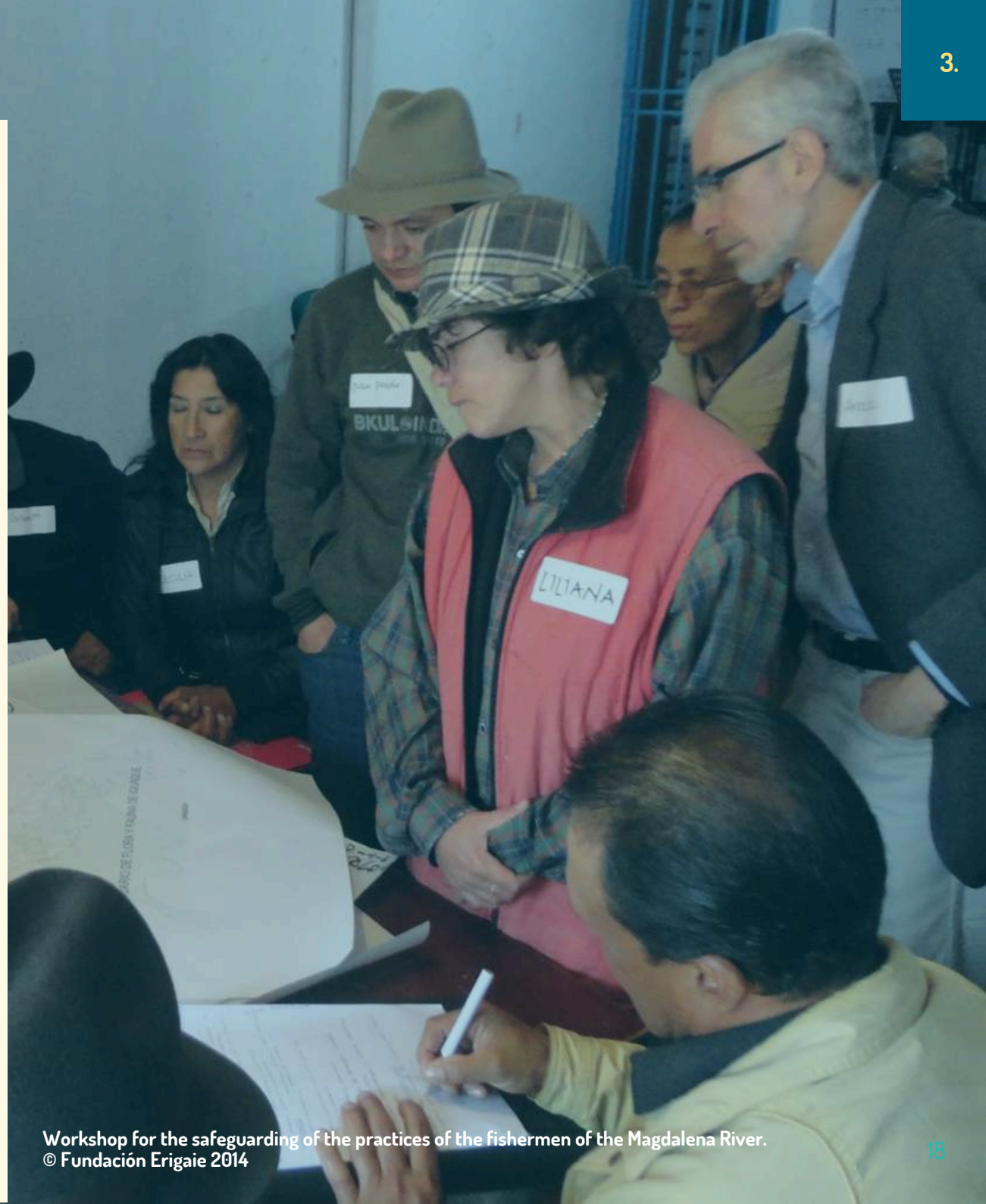
Since 1991, the Erigaie Foundation (Colombia) has opened several lines of work that involve living heritage. Its work is based on a main strategy: To regard research as a tool for development, for dialogue and transfer of knowledge, and as an instrument **to mediate between the official, academic and community spheres.**

The NGO has adopted an interdisciplinary and **action-participation approach** to help local communities recover and use their traditional knowledge for environmental management. It has supported the Colombian Ministry of Culture and other governmental institutions in several projects involving a community-based research approach for planning and implementing safeguarding activities. This approach has been used, among others, for preparing nomination files for the UNESCO lists and safeguarding plans.



Find out more

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos/accredited-ong-00665>



4

NGOs acting as independent actors



Of course, there are many situations in which the activities of NGOs are undertaken wholly independently of state actors. Some of these may incidentally reflect the purposes and objectives of the 2003 Convention, such as endeavours in the field of inclusive social development. At the same time, some NGOs are also working consciously within the framework of ICH safeguarding.

There are therefore some assessment factors which can most easily be responded to by citing such NGO activities.

AF 21.2 is a clear case which concerns the participation of NGOs and other civil society actors in safeguarding ICH in general as well as specific ICH elements.

This falls under Indicator 21 that measures the extent to which engagement for safeguarding ICH is enhanced among stakeholders, and so clearly benefits from evidence of activities undertaken by NGOs and other civil society actors.

AF 21.2 EXAMPLE - COORDINATORA DE COLLES CASTELLERES DE CATALUNYA & WORLD MARTIAL ARTS UNION

Multiple countries

There are many examples in most countries of non-governmental organizations committed—from their own motivation and mission—to the **safeguarding of specific ICH elements**. For example, the Coordinadora de Colles Castelleres de Catalunya on human towers practices in the region of Catalonia (Spain), or the Camará Capoeira Association in Brazil for the traditional sport of capoeira.

Another segment of NGOs is engaging out of commitment with the **safeguarding of living heritage in a somewhat broader sense**: this can be a wider geographic area or ICH related to a particular ethno-cultural community. Or it may for example be thematic NGOs that are working on one ICH theme across multiple countries, e.g. on traditional music, on martial arts, on traditional mask practices, on lace making, on traditional sports and games. These include the World Martial Arts Union based in Republic of Korea and with 66 member organizations in 46 countries and ASAMA - the Association pour la sauvegarde des masques, based in Burkina Faso.

Find out more

<https://www.womau.org/>

<https://castellscat.cat/ca>

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos/accredited-ong-00785>



To get a sense of the wide range of possible and existing NGO approaches, you can easily explore the overview of NGOs accredited under the 2003 Convention.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos/accredited-ong-00665>

AF 16.1 is another factor that will often implicate NGO-based activities, as to whether ICH safeguarding plans and programmes are inclusive of all sectors and strata of society.

It makes reference in particular to: Indigenous peoples; groups with different ethnic identities; migrants, immigrants and refugees; people of different ages; people of different genders; persons with disabilities; and members of vulnerable groups.

Although, of course, governmental institutions may also have programmes that implicate some of these social groups, much relevant work that affects them is conducted by NGO actors.



AF 16.1 EXAMPLE - ART FOR REFUGEES

Transnational

Many NGOs make efforts towards inclusivity in general in their activities.

Some NGOs work on inclusion of specific groups: for example, Association Île du Monde aims for the integral **safeguarding of local and trans-local cultures**, notably in multicultural urban contexts with the aim of constructing an **intercultural society**.

Or, the NGO Art for Refugees in Transition helps rebuild individual and community identity for **refugees** worldwide, drawing upon their living heritage and Indigenous art forms. Another example is the West Africa Coalition for Indigenous Peoples' Rights (WACIPR) that advocates for the traditional knowledge and living heritage of the over 147 **indigenous communities** it represents.

Find out more

<https://iledumonde.org/>
<https://www.artforrefugees.org/>
<https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos/accredited-ong-00593>



AF 10.3 asks if the results of research, documentation and other studies on ICH are employed to improve safeguarding, which is often the case with NGO-driven research and studies.

AF 18.2 concerns the existence and implementation of specific cooperation activities or programmes for ICH between various ICH stakeholders and media organizations, including capacity-building activities. Again, it is quite easy to envisage an NGO being one of the cooperating actors in such a scenario.

AF 10.3 EXAMPLE - #HERITAGE ALIVE JOURNAL

#HeritageAlive

Multiple countries

Numerous non-governmental organizations work on research and documentation with a view to safeguard the living heritage in their home countries. When browsing the overview of **accredited NGOs** on the UNESCO website, you can see that most NGOs indicate documentation and research to be part of their safeguarding measures. A nice illustration of this is the #Heritage Alive online journal published by the ICH NGO Forum sharing experiences regarding safeguarding. The Journal already includes subjects such as storytelling, traditional foodways, crafting musical instruments and traditional medicine.

For example, results of NGO research, oral history and documentation **on traditional medicine and herbalism** in Curaçao, Uganda, Vietnam or Korea have contributed to securing traditional knowledge. Similarly, **crafts research** by NGOs often is crucial in the safeguarding of craftsmanship in our fast-changing societies.

Find out more

<https://www.ichngoforum.org/heritage-alive/>
<https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos>



AF 18.2 EXAMPLE - EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF FOLKLORE FESTIVALS

Bulgaria & Europe

The European Association of Folklore Festivals (EAFF) in Bulgaria works mainly through “Euro Folk” festivals and through the worldwide Internet television channel called “Euro FolkTV”. The main feature of the festivals is the filming of all the performances using professional TV equipment together with the creation of various audio and TV products. So far, 6,000 groups with more than 120,000 participants have taken part in the “Euro Folk” festivals.

Notably for this indicator, EAFF operates in cooperation with television channels from Bulgaria and Europe along with folklore ensembles, groups, municipalities, community centres, schools and other organizations of cultural activities and so acts as a kind of culture broker. There is an extensive list of media partners available on the EAFF website.



Find out more

<https://eaff.eu/en/media/partners>

AF 18.2 EXAMPLE - INDIGENOUS MEDIA FOUNDATION

Nepal

Run by a **not-for-profit organization**, the Indigenous Media Foundation, is **Nepal's first community television founded by journalists belonging to diverse indigenous communities**.

The channel has its reach across Nepal through fibre cable network and the world through mobile apps, website and social media. Launched on the occasion of the World Indigenous Peoples Day on 9 August 2016, the 24-hour channel is the source of news, views as well as educational, cultural and informative programs on the issues of indigenous communities in their own languages.



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
OF FOLKLORE FESTIVALS

UNESCO
ICH advisor

A group of people, likely dancers, are performing in a grassy field. They are wearing traditional, colorful skirts with orange, yellow, and white patterns. The background shows trees and a clear sky. A large yellow number '5' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

5

NGOs are primarily a source of information

5. NGOs are primarily a source of information

Finally, NGOs will be a rich source of information for working on the ORF and periodic reporting. NGOs can be repositories of relevant information and data that may not be available elsewhere.

For example:

Indicator 15 concerns the extent to which the importance of ICH and its safeguarding is recognized in society at large and by the heritage bearers. This requires an information set that can be difficult for state actors to access.

AF 15.1 addresses the question as to whether bearers use their ICH for their well-being, including in the context of sustainable development programmes. NGOs that may be working with them on a variety of social and economic programmes can help to provide this information. Importantly: these are not necessarily NGOs that specialize in culture or cultural heritage.

AF.15 EXAMPLE - FOUNDATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN MONGOLIA

Mongolia

The Foundation for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Mongolia has applied its research work for the safeguarding of ICH. One clear example is in the area of traditional animal husbandry which they have identified as an important paradigm for social and economic development. The lifestyles of communities practising nomadic husbandry are sustainable (except in the face of natural disasters, such as heavy snow or drought) and herdsmen can **answer their needs from their livestock without dependency on the market.**

In response to this research, the government has initiated special policies for improving the livelihoods of nomadic herdsmen and the Foundation is also working on related programmes and measures for safeguarding this ICH, especially with young people.

Find out more

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos/accredited-ong-00662>



AF 16.2 is concerned with the fostering of self-respect and mutual respect among ICH bearers through safeguarding plans and programmes for ICH (both in general and specific elements) which is, again, a challenging question for state bodies to find information about.

AF 16.2 EXAMPLE - AIGINE CRC & CHINA FOLKLORE SOCIETY

Kyrgyzstan and China

Aigine CRC in Kyrgyzstan has used the epic tradition where female characters, such as the wife of Manas, are presented as strong and are well-respected to challenge contemporary misogyny and domestic violence. They work with epic tellers in this, not imposing any outside view but using what is already found in the tradition, to show that **respect for women is part of their heritage**.

The China Folklore Society (CFS) is a large NGO in China with over 3,000 members all of whom are scientific experts in the social sciences and humanities. They conduct research and documentation activities on a number of ICH elements. This work has promoted **the visibility of ethnic minority elements** such as oral epic legends of southwest China and Mongolia and encouraged government policy to include these in safeguarding. It furthermore fed into the preparation of nomination files to the Convention's international lists.



Find out more

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos/accredited-ong-01057>

Find out more

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos/accredited-ong-00421>





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