



ICH NGO FORUM BYLAWS

SECTION I – NAME AND PURPOSE

- Article 1: The name of the organization shall be ICH NGO Forum¹. It has been legally registered in 2017 under this name as a non-profit organization in the Official Journal of the French Republic, Section “Laws and Decrees”, 149th year, number 9, announcement 1387, page 86, Paris, France. The official address of the headquarters of the ICH NGO Forum is: 3, Passage de l’Union, 75007-Paris, France.
- Article 2: The ICH NGO Forum is an association of NGOs accredited to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (the Convention) to act in an advisory capacity to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (the Intergovernmental Committee). It may also advise other stakeholders of the Convention and civil society at large.
- Article 3: The official languages of the Bylaws are English and French, reflecting the working languages of the accredited NGOs. Both the English and French versions of the Bylaws are to be regarded as authoritative.
- Article 4: The ICH NGO Forum, inter alia, shall:
- (a) serve as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas about safeguarding ICH;
 - (b) act as a platform for networking, promote high-level dialogue and identify opportunities for cooperation and synergies among ICH NGOs;
 - (c) foster ethical principles, environmentally responsible practices and participation of civil society for the safeguarding of ICH;
 - (d) provide resources, reports, briefing documents and information about safeguarding practices to UNESCO, States Parties, communities, practitioners and other ICH stakeholders;
 - (e) support ICH NGOs in advancing their cooperation with relevant governmental and intergovernmental entities (such as National Commissions for UNESCO, regional offices of UNESCO, Category 2 centers), especially as regards implementation of the principles of

¹ ICH NGO Forum stands for Intangible Cultural Heritage Non-governmental Organizations Forum

community agency and community-based, participatory, bottom-up approaches;

- (f) contribute to the capacity building programme and to experience sharing on good safeguarding practices;
- (g) advise the Intergovernmental Committee on specific thematic issues, and participate in reporting and monitoring on inscribed ICH elements and safeguarding practices;
- (h) organize symposiums, conferences, presentations, workshops and similar activities, aimed to build capacity building, foster partnerships and highlight the work of all Accredited NGOs, during the sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee; the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention and any additional activity that helps achieve its goal to serve the Accredited NGOs to the 2003 Convention;
- (i) Promote the publication of journals, books, newsletters, videos, websites and other media outlets, within digital and analogue environments that supports and respects the intellectual and cultural property of communities, groups and bearers of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Article 5: The Executive Board of the ICH NGO Forum shall oversee the preparation and adoption of a code of conduct for the members of the ICH NGO Forum.

SECTION II – MEMBERSHIP

Article 6: NGOs shall complete the registration form to join the ICH NGO Forum, consisting of basic contact information and the name of the contact person. Each NGO shall identify its primary country and electoral region of establishment for the purposes of governance and the administrative functioning of the Forum.

Non-accredited NGOs and any other stakeholders engaged in ICH safeguarding may subscribe to the Newsletter; and they may take part in the ICH NGO Forum meetings and the General Assembly, as observers without voting rights and can only take the floor if invited by the Chair.

SECTION III – MEETINGS AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 7: The annual meeting of ICH NGO Forum shall occur at the time and venue of the annual session of the Intergovernmental Committee and should be held in a hybrid format (virtual and in-person) to ensure the maximum attendance and, when this is not possible, it should be in a virtual format. The General Assembly of the membership shall occur during the annual meeting at the date and time to be determined by the Executive Board. The Chair and/or the Vice-Chair shall preside at the General Assembly.

- Article 8: Additional extraordinary meetings may be called by a simple majority of the Executive Board.
- Article 9: Notice of each session of the General Assembly of the ICH NGO Forum shall be given on the partner communication channels of the ICH NGO Forum (<http://www.ichngoforum.org>, <http://ichngo.net>) and by direct email to all its members no less than four weeks prior to the meeting, or once the agenda of the Intergovernmental Committee Meeting is confirmed by UNESCO.
- Article 10: The minimum quorum required to conduct a General Assembly shall comprise 20 Accredited NGO members of the ICH NGO Forum representing at least four electoral groups of UNESCO, with a minimum of three member NGOs from each of those four regions present (virtual or in person) at the General Assembly.
- Article 11: A simple majority of votes is necessary to adopt any decision.
- Article 12: No less than six weeks prior to the General Assembly, the Executive Board shall prepare and distribute: 1) the annual report on the Forum's programmes, services and partnerships; 2) the annual financial report, including the sources of funding, the use of funds, and explanation of any significant variations between budgeted and actual revenues and expenses; and 3) an annual plan providing a framework for the Forum's activities that is concordant with available resources. All three documents shall be submitted to the General Assembly for its examination and approval.
- Article 13: The meetings will address topics of relevance to the purposes of the ICH NGO Forum. The meeting Agenda shall be coordinated by the Executive Board. Member NGOs who wish to propose an agenda item, must submit their proposal to the Executive Board at least four weeks in advance of the date of the General Assembly meeting. Proposed items shall be examined under "Other Items" of the Agenda. Should urgent matters be addressed, then a three quarter majority vote by the General Assembly is required. All items under "Other Items" will be noted and addressed by the Executive Board at the following meeting.
- Article 14: The General Assembly shall examine and approve the annual report on the Forum's programmes, services and partnerships, annual financial report, and annual plan providing a framework for the Forum's activities.
- Article 15: Member NGOs are required to register their in-person or virtual attendance at the General Assembly to the ICH NGO Forum.
- Article 16: Meetings and the General Assembly will be held in English and French, and reports will be published in both languages.

SECTION IV – Executive Board

- Article 17: An Executive Board shall be established that acts as the executive body for the ICH NGO Forum. It is responsible for implementing the policy decided by the General Assembly of the Forum and manages its operations, finances,

administration, and affairs. Throughout the year, it oversees communication around Forum's activities through, amongst other means, the newsletter and partner communication channels such as websites and social media.

- Article 18: The Executive Board's mission is to coordinate, for the benefit of the accredited NGOs, the activities of the Forum, including but not limited to:
- liaison with UNESCO Secretariat of the Convention for collective matters dealing with Accredited NGOs;
 - coordinate activities of the ICH NGO Forum at the ordinary and extraordinary sessions of the Convention's statutory bodies (General Assembly of States Parties and the Intergovernmental Committee)
 - in a spirit of transparency and good governance, develop communication around the Forum's activities, including those of the Executive Board, such as reporting on its monthly meetings. The approved minutes must be published on the partner communication channels of the ICH NGO Forum (<http://www.ichngoforum.org>, <http://ichngo.net>) a maximum of one month after the Executive Board meeting, and these will be archived for further use.
 - develop the network of accredited NGOs, including facilitation of dialogue, exchange of information and best practices, and identifying opportunities for cooperation and synergies among its member NGOs;
 - initiate thematic activities through, amongst others, the organization of workshops, conferences and symposiums;
 - organize capacity building activities, which may be carried out in coordination with UNESCO Secretariat of the Convention;
 - coordinate dialogue and initiatives with States Parties or other entities designed to foster financial sustainability of collective activities of accredited NGOs;
 - promote fundraising programmes and manage funds that have been raised for the Forum's activities;
 - promote participation of civil society for the safeguarding of ICH.

Article 19: No member of the Executive Board shall participate in deciding a matter in which she or he has a direct interest. Each member of the Executive Board shall disclose in writing all potential and actual conflicts of interest in a signed conflict of interest statement.

Article 20: The Executive Board shall comprise six members serving two-year terms, with eligibility for re-election for no more than one additional consecutive term. In order to respect the principle of equitable geographical representation, NGOs will be elected on the basis of the electoral groups of UNESCO (Western Europe and North America, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the

Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Arab States, Africa), with the elected members representing an NGO headquartered in each of the aforementioned six regions. In the absence of candidates from NGOs with headquarters in the region concerned, the term of office of the current member will be extended until the next election for Executive Board members, regardless of whether she or he already served for the maximum of two consecutive terms. The election of members shall be on a rotating basis, with members from each of three regions one year, and for each of the three other regions in the following year. Detailed electoral rules and procedures are described in the document "ICH NGO Forum Electoral Rules" [adopted by the General Assembly of the ICH NGO Forum in 2022].

Article 21: If a member of the Executive Board acts as a member of the official delegation of a State Party (member of the Intergovernmental Committee, non-member of the Intergovernmental Committee or delegation of a non-State Party to the Convention) during an ordinary or extra-ordinary session of a statutory meeting of an organ of the 2003 Convention, a potential conflict of interest shall be deemed to have occurred.

As a consequence, the aforesaid member of the Executive Board shall declare a conflict of interest, to the President or the Secretary of the Executive Board in writing in advance of the relevant Executive Board meeting, or when a matter for discussion is raised during an Executive Board meeting, or during any other communication relating to a policy issue of the Forum that directly concerns the State Party mentioned in the previous paragraph. They shall recuse themselves for the entire duration of the discussion and during any further activity of the Executive Board relating to that matter.

Article 22: The Executive Board members shall receive no compensation for their service other than reimbursement of reasonable expenses, if such funds are available. The Executive Board shall develop a document for requesting financing from the ICH NGO Forum that justifies or contains a cost-benefit analysis of the requested amount.

Article 23: All other policies and procedures regarding the election of the Executive Board shall be determined by the Electoral Officers appointed for this purpose each year by the current Executive Board as set out in the aforementioned Electoral Rules.

Article 24: Each year and three months prior to the General Assembly of the ICH NGO Forum, the Executive Board will make a call to Accredited NGOs to nominate candidates for the renewal of the Executive Board as specified in the aforementioned Electoral Rules.

Article 25: The Executive Board shall meet every month through any shared means of communication, and also during the sessions of the Convention's statutory bodies. Meetings will be conducted in English and French. Executive Board members must have written notice of official meetings at least one week in advance.

The Executive Board will take the initiative to meet with the UNESCO Secretariat of the Convention at least two times during the year, at the beginning of the year to introduce the new Executive Board and the working plan of the year, and previous to the ordinary session of the Intergovernmental Committee to make the arrangements for the symposium, side activities, Elections and General Assembly of the ICH NGO Forum.

Article 26: A minimum quorum of four elected members of the Executive Board is required before motions can be proposed and voted. Decision making is carried out in the spirit of consensus, in case of a tie, the Chair has a casting vote.

Article 27: Each year the Executive Board shall appoint four officers, namely a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer at their first meeting, following their election. In order to take advantage of the experience gained during the previous year, the Chair and Vice-Chair should be members who are entering their second year on the Executive Board.

The office of the Chair of the Executive Board cannot be renewed for a second year. The Chair is responsible for convening Executive Board meetings and presiding during these meetings, and in their absence the Vice-Chair will serve as Chair.

The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping records of Executive Board activities, including taking minutes at all Executive Board meetings, sending out meeting announcements, distributing copies of the minutes and the agenda to all Executive Board members, and assuring that ongoing records are maintained.

The Treasurer shall report on finances at each Executive Board meeting, assist in the preparation of the budget, help develop fundraising plans, disburse funds and sign cheques, and make financial information available to Executive Board members and the ICH NGO Forum members.

The Executive Board may establish Ad Hoc Committees for specific tasks related to its own operation, such as drafting of internal Rules of Procedure and drafting a Code of Conduct for the Executive Board. Following approval by the Executive Board, any new instruments should be adopted by the General Assembly.

Article 28: Resignations from the Executive Board must be in writing and addressed to the Secretary or the Chair. If an accredited NGO notifies the Executive Board that the person serving on the Board no longer represents their organization, the person is no longer eligible to serve as an Executive Board member. An Executive Board member shall be removed if she or he has three unjustified absences from the regular meetings in a year.

Article 29: Vacancies occurring on the Executive Board may be filled at any time by appointment of the Chair and with the approval of two-thirds of the Executive Board. The person filling the vacant position must be from an Accredited NGO

with headquarters in the same region as the person who vacated the position. The member appointed will replace the elected Executive Board member for the remainder of the year and an exceptional election will be held in the coming General Assembly to fill the vacant position[s].

SECTION V – WORKING GROUPS AND AD HOC BODIES

Article 30: Working Groups (WG) are created on the basis of a common interest of Accredited NGOs around ICH, and Ad Hoc Committees (AHC) are appointed by the Executive Board to address a specific task.

Article 31: To create a new Working Group requires a signed request by Accredited NGOs from at least three different Regions. The Executive Board shall approve the request or provide the reasons for its rejection to the promoters. Participation in a Working Group will be open to any member of an Accredited NGO affiliated to the ICH NGO Forum.

Article 32. Every Working Group or Ad Hoc Committee approved shall be listed in the ICH NGO Forum communication channels. They should have a description and state a clear goal (document, workshop, report, recommendation or a special activity) as reflected in a programme of activities that covers a period of no longer than two years.

Once an Ad Hoc Committee has accomplished its stated goal its members will present their findings and results to the Executive Board, to be included in its report to the General Assembly. Once these have been approved by the General Assembly the Ad Hoc Committee may be dissolved.

Once a Working Group has accomplished its stated goal, it can ask the Executive Board to reserve a side event during the next session of the Intergovernmental Committee, to present their findings and results to all ICH NGO Forum members. The period of operation of a WG shall be no longer than two years, in order to encourage participation by Accredited NGOs; however, if necessary, the members of a Working Group can apply for an extension of two more years.

Article 33: Working Groups or Ad Hoc Committees may request funding from the Executive Board and the Executive Board can also help them fundraise.

Article 34: Every Working Group and Ad Hoc Committee should select a Chair to convene meetings and serve as its representative to the Executive Board and a Secretary who will write the report of its activities, findings and results. In cases where the Working Group or Ad Hoc Committee manage funds, they should appoint a Treasurer to oversee and report on their use. No person can serve as the Chair, Secretary or Treasurer in more than one Working Group or Ad Hoc Committee at any given time.

Article 35: The Executive Board may revoke a Working Group's or Ad Hoc Committee's official status:

- (a) upon the recommendation of the Working Group or Ad Hoc Committee itself;
- (b) upon the recommendation of the majority of the Executive Board, which shall show cause that the Working Group or Ad Hoc Committee has been conducted in a manner contrary to the purposes inter alia of the ICH NGO Forum, as set out in Article 4 of these Bylaws; and/or
- (c) if the Working Group neither meets during the year, nor provides any report that shows progress towards fulfilling its goal.

SECTION VI – AMENDMENTS

Article 36: These Bylaws may be amended when necessary by a two-thirds majority of designated representatives of accredited NGOs attending in person or online to the General Assembly of the ICH NGO Forum.

The first Bylaws of the NGO Forum were adopted by the General Meeting of the ICH NGO Forum in Bogotá on 11 December 2019, incorporating the previous official document – “ICH NGO Forum Executive Board: Mission and tasks of the Committee; General profile of members of the Committee and election process” – that was adopted by the General Meeting of the ICH NGO Forum in 2016 and amended in 2017. The current revised Bylaws were adopted during an extraordinary meeting held online on 2 November 2022. The minutes of the extraordinary meeting are held in the archive of the website of the ICH NGO Forum.