United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization · Intangible Cultural Heritage

**First annual meeting of category 2 centres
active in the field of intangible cultural heritage**

**Sozopol, Bulgaria
24 to 26 July 2013**

Report of the UNESCO Section for Intangible Cultural Heritage

I – Background and objectives:

Co-organized by the Section for Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, the first global meeting of category 2 centres active in the field of intangible cultural heritage took place from 24 to 26 July 2013 in Sozopol, Bulgaria.

This meeting aimed at providing an opportunity for the participants to take stock of recent developments in the life of the Convention and the larger trends underway at UNESCO concerning category 2 centres. It also aimed to encourage working together to integrate the Organization's medium-term strategy for 2014-2021 (37 C/4) and programme and budget for the quadrennium 2014-2017 (37 C/5) into the medium-term and short-term planning of the respective centres so that they can contribute effectively to UNESCO's work. As a follow-up to the recommendation of the Executive Board to 'improve alignment of category 2 institutes/centres' operations with UNESCO's results-based management approach and sectoral strategies' (190 EX/Decision 18), a major component of the meeting was to introduce participants to the RBM approach.

The meeting came at an opportune time, given that all of the centres authorized by UNESCO's General Conference in 2007 or 2009 have now become operational, that the 37th General Conference in November 2013 will adopt the Organization's C/4 and C/5 – already available in draft form – and that each of the centres will convene its own governing body in the last quarter of 2013 or first quarter of 2014 to adopt its own programme of work for 2014. Moreover, given the severity of the financial crisis currently facing the Organization and the enhanced scrutiny given by its governing bodies to the cost-effectiveness of different programmes and activities, the need for strengthened cooperation among the centres and particularly between them and the Secretariat is greater than ever.

In preparation for the meeting, the Section compiled a webpage for the intangible cultural heritage centres (http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Category2/) integrating the key statutory documents for each centre, ranging from the feasibility studies presented to the Executive Board and General Conference, the constitution or establishing document of each centre, its own regulations and bylaws, the proceedings of each governing board meeting, each centre's medium-term programme, its annual work plan and budget, and its reports. A meeting webpage (http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&meeting_id=00357) grew day-by-day to include all of the presentations featured in the meeting as well as a number of reference documents such as the 2011 audit by the Internal Oversight Services, the 2012 policy brief of the United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO, and relevant Executive Board and General Conference documents and decisions.

II – Participation:

The meeting brought together representatives of the six centres exclusively devoted to intangible cultural heritage:

- Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe (the 'Sofia Centre'), in Bulgaria
- International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (CRIHAP), in China
- Regional Research Centre for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia (the 'Tehran Centre'), in the Islamic Republic of Iran
- International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI), in Japan
- Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America (CRESPIAL), in Peru
- International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (ICHCAP), in the Republic of Korea

A seventh centre, the Lucio Costa Regional Heritage Management Training Centre, in Brazil, which has a dual mandate in world heritage and intangible heritage, was unable to participate. Centres were represented by their respective directors, by senior staff members and/or by members of their governing bodies (see the participant list, annexed).

UNESCO was represented by Cécile Duvelle, Secretary of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Chief of the Section for Intangible Cultural Heritage; Frank Proschan (Intangible Cultural Heritage Section), focal point for category 2 centres in the Culture Sector and representative of the Director-General on the governing body of the Sofia Centre; Tim Curtis (UNESCO Office in Bangkok), representative of the Director-General on the governing bodies of CRIHAP, the Tehran Centre, IRCI and ICHCAP; Fernando Brugman (UNESCO Regional Bureau for Culture in Havana), representative of the Director-General on the governing body of CRESPIAL; Othilie du Souich (Bureau of Strategic Planning), focal point for Results Based Management; Dulat Kasymov (Bureau of Strategic Planning), focal point for UNESCO category 2 centres; and Matteo Rosati (UNESCO Office in Venice).

The Sofia Centre generously and efficiently provided accommodations, meals and domestic transportation for two representatives of each centre and UNESCO staff, as well as international airfare for UNESCO colleagues, and took charge of all of the logistics of the meeting, allowing it to proceed with effectiveness under pleasant and relaxed conditions.

III – Discussions:

The meeting, considered very useful by all participants, responded to a clear need to strengthen the still-young network of category 2 centres devoted to intangible cultural heritage, particularly given the larger trends within the Organization to scrutinize all activities – both those undertaken by UNESCO and those undertaken by external partners – to ensure that they contribute directly to the strategic objectives and expected results defined by the General Conference. In that context, it is not possible for the centres to work in isolation both from Headquarters and among themselves. Frequent, timely and frank communication was identified by participants as a fundamental precondition for the needed collaboration to be effective. In particular, working towards an alignment and harmonization of the different category 2 centres' programming frameworks was deemed by participants to be crucial for strengthening the network and facilitating cooperation with UNESCO and informative reporting to its governing bodies.

Governance models, experiences and strategies

Discussions revealed divergent and even, in some cases, incorrect understandings of the role and functions of category 2 centres and their relations vis-à-vis UNESCO, including misunderstandings that directors reported on the part of their respective governing body members. It was therefore emphasized that the centres' directors – the Sozopol meeting's core participants – face a difficult challenge, particularly when working with their governing bodies, to support effective decision-making and agenda-setting so that the centres are able to fulfil their respective mandates, as agreed between UNESCO and the host governments, while also responding to the interests of those governments that typically provide the centres' budgets. One session of the meeting thus looked at the governance models shared among the centres as well as the specific differences in each governance model, in order to exchange experiences and good practices among the centres' representatives and identify how the centres' directors can work most effectively with their respective governing bodies. While some participants lamented that the diversity of governance models reduced overall coordination and efficiency, it was also acknowledged that different national contexts and legislation made it impossible to have a one-size-fits-all approach to governance, since each centre has to articulate with a different legal context.

Participants nevertheless agreed that certain good practices could be identified that could serve to strengthen the work of other centres. For instance, the CRESPIAL board includes one governmental representative from each country in the region that indicated its interest in participating in the centre's programmes, as well as one civil society representative from each country. With 14 countries already and potentially 28 members, this risks becoming unwieldy, although participants took note with appreciation of the fact that the centre's primary donor – the Government of Peru – was only one voice among 28, where in most other centres the host country insisted upon holding a majority of board seats. The CRESPIAL board's three-day meetings typically feature in-depth and substantive discussion of the centre's governance, its results reporting and its work-plan for the coming year. For some other centres, by contrast, only three hours are scheduled for the entire board meeting and its functions tend to be formalistic approval of documents rather than substantive discussion and decision-making. Not all centres need to adapt CRESPIAL's three-day format, but most centres agreed that greater involvement by board members in substantive discussion and more active governance could certainly improve the ultimate effectiveness of their programmes. Similarly, the IRCI director reported his intention to convene his governing board annually (more often than the two-year cycle established contractually as a minimum), since a biennial schedule did not allow the board to fulfil its governance role effectively, given that government budget revenues were approved only year by year.

Participants were also reminded of the importance of effectively mobilizing their board members on the 364 days per year that the board does not meet. Frequent and regular communication between the centre's director and the board members was seen as a way of involving them more fully in the work of the centre, and it was emphasized that the greater their knowledge is of the centre's activities and challenges, the easier it will be to secure their ideas, support and approval during the annual meeting. If they feel fully informed about and involved in the centre's operations – i.e. if they consider themselves members of the centre's team – they can exercise their governance functions during the annual meeting smoothly and in the most positive way, increasing trust and reducing disagreement.

The UNESCO colleagues sitting as the Director-General's representative on the centres' governing bodies also insisted on the importance of timely communication, particularly the early distribution of the working documents of the bodies. Too often, documents were provided to board members on the eve of the meeting, which did not allow members to play a constructive and substantive role in governance, as their positions demanded. This meant that the centre as a whole could not benefit properly from the collective wisdom and experience of its board members, who had not had adequate time to read the documents or to communicate with the centre director. UNESCO further emphasized the fundamental

importance of consulting the Director-General's representative on an informal basis before the statutory deadline for documents to be distributed to other board members (typically, two weeks to four weeks beforehand, according to each centre's rules of procedure). Early sharing of draft work-plans and budgets, for instance, could avoid embarrassing situations arising during the board meetings if proposed activities did not support UNESCO's expected results and the Director-General's representative would have to insist on their deletion from the plan.

In sum, participants agreed that the role of the centre director is essential to achieving the best possible results from the governance mechanism. She or he has the difficult challenge of balancing institutional interests that are sometimes in tension – e.g., the expectations or agenda of those who provide funds do not always converge perfectly with the contractual agreement between the host State and UNESCO, and the director needs to be able to steer the governing body to a wise decision should such divergences arise. The director's effectiveness in facilitating the informed decision-making of the governing body and helping it to bridge such competing interests will determine, in large part, the ultimate success of the centre.

Programming to support UNESCO's strategic objectives and expected results: RBM

It became apparent during the meeting that some of the centres (whether their directors or their governing bodies or both) interpret the 'functional autonomy' that is a fundamental principle of the Organization's integrated comprehensive strategy for category 2 institutes and centres as almost-total independence from UNESCO, rather than autonomy from their host-country government as intended. Some centres thus conduct their programmes more from a donor-driven approach (with funding mostly provided by their national governments or by provinces or municipalities) than to complement and help UNESCO achieve its expected results. The bulk of the meeting thus concentrated on examining UNESCO's own programming framework and its Results-Based Management system, in order that centres could better understand how, under the integrated comprehensive strategy and the recent decisions of the Executive Board, they are supposed to contribute to UNESCO's strategic objectives (in the medium term) and expected results (in the quadrennium time frame).

The Secretary of the Convention presented the draft 37 C/4 and 37 C/5 relating to culture and intangible cultural heritage, and recalled the expected contributions of category 2 centres as well as the need for category 2 centres to contribute to UNESCO's programme delivery and expected results, as stated in the different documents from the Executive Board and General Conference. She also emphasized the recent and sustained attention to the category 2 network from the Executive Board, Internal Oversight Service and United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO and explained that at a time of severely diminished resources available to the Organization, it becomes all the more essential that category 2 centres fulfil their mandates and that the opportunity costs for UNESCO of supporting category 2 centres be minimized and their benefits to the Organization maximized. The strengthened procedures for renewal, including obligatory pre-renewal evaluation, imply a stricter cost-benefit analysis: is a given centre's contribution to UNESCO's objectives and results substantially greater than its cost to the Organization? The pressure facing both the Secretariat and the centres is therefore to demonstrate very tangibly how their activities directly support the Organization. Renewal, it was emphasized, would depend on an independent evaluation that would assess the concrete contributions of each centre to UNESCO's expected results.

Key to an effective coordination of the centres' programming with that of UNESCO, it was suggested, would be the adaptation of UNESCO's Results-Based Management framework to the programming processes of the centres. This would help not only at the planning stage – i.e., to align the centres' medium-term strategies and work-plans fully with those of UNESCO – but also at the implementation stage and then at the monitoring and reporting stage. To the extent that the activities of the diverse centres would be driven by an RBM framework and undertaken in line with the Organization's results logic, it would be easier for the centres to

report their results to UNESCO and easier in turn for the Secretariat to bring them to the attention of the Organization's governing bodies. This is very much in the interests of all concerned: centres might be doing interesting and even effective projects, but it they are not 'reportable' within UNESCO's results framework, they disappear from the view of UNESCO's governing bodies and thus cannot help to demonstrate the centres' contributions to the Organization. Redefining the activity or prioritizing instead another activity that more clearly and directly contributes to the UNESCO results is therefore advantageous to all.

Given the importance of Results-Based Management within UNESCO and its applicability to the programming needs of the centres, almost a full day within the meeting was devoted to an introduction to UNESCO's RBM framework by the focal point for RBM in the Bureau of Strategic Planning, Othilie du Souich. She presented the core concepts and terminology of RBM and the fundamental principles underlying it, grounding them solidly within UNESCO's programming framework and key policy documents (the C/4 and C/5). The presentation connected the specific mandates of the centres to the overarching strategic objectives and the draft expected results for intangible cultural heritage, showing how they could elaborate specific activities within their mandates that aimed to contribute to achieving those objectives and results.

Participants agreed that the RBM approach constitutes a powerful tool for programming, from planning through implementation to reporting and evaluation, and that the benefits were substantial of integrating – to the extent possible – the programming of the diverse centres into the overall framework of the Organization. Ms du Souich emphasized that recognizing the value of RBM and committing oneself to using it did not by any means imply waking up tomorrow and being instant experts: rather, it was a matter of a process of continual integration. Pointing to UNESCO's own experience – adoption of RBM in 1998, with as-yet-incomplete implementation of RBM 15 years later – she reassured centres that they were not expected to master the approach fully before their next governing body meetings. Nevertheless, she insisted and participants agreed, the benefits of moving as quickly and carefully as possible towards RBM were not to be ignored. UNESCO colleagues pledged their willingness and availability to consult on an on-going basis with the directors and staff of the category 2 centres as they draw up their next series of work-plans so that, step-by-step, the advantages of RBM could be achieved. It was also agreed that the RBM approach worked best with a longer programming cycle than a single year, even if almost all of the centres are dependent on annual budgets that cannot always be predicted in advance. There are nevertheless ways to balance short-term budgeting horizons with a medium-term programming cycle, and the benefits of RBM could be realized even in a context of annual budgeting.

Closely related to the topic of RBM was the question of developing a sub-sector strategy for UNESCO's involvement with category 2 centres in the field of intangible cultural heritage for the period 2014-2021. As provided in the integrated comprehensive strategy for category 2 institutes and centres adopted by the General Conference in 2009, and as reiterated in the respective evaluations of the category 2 centre network by the Internal Oversight Service and UK National Commission, and in the resulting decisions of the General Conference and Executive Board, UNESCO is to elaborate 'specific sector strategies for engagement and interaction with relevant category 2 centres and institutes on specific themes' (35 C/22+Corr.). A session of the meeting was therefore devoted to brainstorming what the intangible cultural heritage sub-sector strategy might look like, given the challenges facing the category 2 centre network over the coming years. The Intangible Cultural Heritage Section will continue elaborating that draft strategy and will consult with the centres over the coming months.

Strengthening communication and collaboration

A recurrent theme throughout the three days of the meeting was the necessity of continuous communication between the category 2 centres and UNESCO – emphasizing that communication should proceed in both directions. The Secretary of the Convention and other

UNESCO colleagues reiterated the importance of early consultation on possible activities at the first idea stage, not when plans have already been elaborated and commitments already made. They emphasized that at present, the concerned UNESCO colleagues all too often learn about activities mere days before they will take place, or days or months afterwards, and typically from third parties and not directly from the category 2 centre itself. Overlaps with UNESCO's interventions often occur; these are sometimes benign, but in other cases they are not necessarily in line with the provisions of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, in particular concerning its community-based approach. The methodologies, training curricula and network of trainers made available by UNESCO are often not used, jeopardizing the overall coherence of the UNESCO capacity-building strategy.

Closer cooperation and coordination at the programme planning stage can address some of these problems, but the planning level is usually rather general and there will nevertheless be an on-going need for close and regular communication concerning the details of implementation. Typically, the medium-term strategy or annual work-plan identifies an activity without specifics as to its dates, partners, content, implementation strategy, etc. The fact that the Director-General's representative was present on the governing body when a work-plan was adopted does not mean that no further communication is needed before the activity is concretely implemented.

Close communication is essential not because UNESCO wishes to micromanage or control the activities of the centres, but because those activities can only be effective if they are properly integrated with the activities undertaken by UNESCO itself. The Secretary of the Convention mentioned numerous examples of specific activities undertaken or planned by category 2 centres in countries where similar activities have been, are being, or will be undertaken by the UNESCO Secretariat. If this is simply a matter of overlap, it is nevertheless regrettable that resources are wasted through duplication of activities, when non-served countries could potentially be beneficiaries. In some cases, however, this is a matter of contradiction or cross-purposes between the activities undertaken by UNESCO and those undertaken by the category 2 centre, and this is all the more regrettable. Beneficiary States often have small numbers of people working in intangible cultural heritage, and it is wasteful or worse if their time is invested in activities that are not mutually reinforcing but are instead contradictory.

From the viewpoint of the category 2 centres, there was also a certain degree of frustration that they did not receive more frequent and targeted communications from the Secretariat. UNESCO colleagues acknowledged that our communications efforts are rarely targeted at specific audiences, but that greater proactivity was an important goal. The centres agreed on the need for an interactive platform through which they could communicate together and with UNESCO, and it is hoped that one of the centres will come forward to host such a platform. In the meantime, the webpage of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section compiles many of the key legal, governance, planning and reporting documents for each of the centres, and that resource can continue to be expanded.

The Secretary of the Convention proposed that the Director-General's representative on the respective boards should be the primary point of contact for any activity – large or small – to be undertaken by a category 2 centre. Before contacting UNESCO colleagues from field offices or other sectors, before contacting UNESCO National Commissions or other national counterparts, before contacting specialized colleagues within the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section, the category 2 centre should first contact the Director-General's representative. It was emphasized that such communication should begin at the earliest idea stage, and should not wait until plans are fully elaborated or international commitments already made. The objective of such communication is that the activities of the category 2 centres be as effective as possible and make the greatest contribution they can to UNESCO's expected results and to achieving our shared agenda. Communicating early and often is the surest way to multiply the likelihood of success.

IV – Conclusions:

The participants agreed on the following conclusions, presented at the end of the meeting:

1. UNESCO is facing a difficult situation, and partnerships are more than ever necessary to help it deliver its programme; category 2 centres in the field of intangible cultural heritage still need to realize fully their potential in that regard;

2. Results-Based Management is an effective methodology, mandatory in UNESCO; all category 2 centres should engage in the adoption of an RBM approach in planning, implementation and evaluation of their programme and activities both so as to strengthen their own programming and so as to facilitate reporting;

3. All category 2 centres contribute directly or indirectly to capacity-building, but some of them have a direct mandate in that regard; the centres need to liaise with UNESCO before planning activities and should complement UNESCO's action, using the same tools and approaches;

4. The governance mechanisms of category 2 centres could be improved; directors and governing bodies of the Centres have crucial and complementary roles, and they both need to play their role effectively; increased and timely communication (not only at annual meetings, but throughout the year) would improve efficiency;

5. Cooperation among centres would be beneficial to all: one of the centres could offer to create and maintain a common platform for information and communication; UNESCO will convey an annual meeting of all centres, in conjunction with the General Assembly of the States Parties in the even years, and in one of the host countries in odd years.

6. Communication with UNESCO should be improved: informal communication should occur first, early and often; the representative of the Director-General at the governing body of the Centre should be the first entry point, before the UNESCO field office colleague or national counterpart; smooth and frequent communication multiplies our common effectiveness;

7. Category 2 centres shall report every six months on their results in attaining expected results of the intangible cultural heritage programme as defined in the C/5; their contributions shall be integrated in the report of the Secretariat in SISTER; the strategy and decisions of the Executive Board and General Conference for category 2 centres shall apply to all centres; new agreements will integrate all new provisions; independent evaluation shall be conducted before any renewal, the cost of which shall be borne by the centres;

8. A strategy for UNESCO's involvement with the intangible cultural heritage category 2 centres for the period 2014-2021 should be elaborated, following an RBM methodology: the expected results could be 1) centres' effectiveness increased through strengthened governance; 2) centres' contributions to UNESCO's programmes strengthened through an effective renewal process; and 3) centres' impacts in Member States deepened through reinforced synergies between the centres and with UNESCO.

Attachments/Annexes:

Annex A: List of participants
Annex B: Agenda

Annex A: List of Participants:

C2 Institute/Centre	Participant
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UNESCO Bureau of Strategic Planning	Othilie du Souich o.du-souich@unesco.org
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active in the field of intangible cultural heritage**

Sozopol, Bulgaria
24 to 26 July 2013

Tuesday 23 July 2013

Arrival of participants at Burgas Airport

Transfers from Burgas Airport to Santa Marina Residential Village, Sozopol

20:00   Dinner at Apollonia Restaurant

Wednesday 24 July 2013

08:00 – 09:00   Breakfast at Apollonia Restaurant

09:00 – 10:00   **Opening of the meeting**
Ludmila Dimitrova, Chairperson of the Executive Board, Regional Centre
for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern
Europe
Introduction of participants
Objectives and timetable of meeting
Frank Proschan, moderator

10:00 – 10:15   **Presentation**
Mila Santova, national expert, Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of
Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe

10:15 – 11:00   **Context of our cooperation: recent developments in the life of the
Convention and the Organization**
Cécile Duvelle, moderator

11:00 – 11:15   *Coffee-break*

11:15 – 12:45   **Introduction to Results Based Management (RBM)**
Othilie du Souich, moderator

Introduction: Purpose and objectives
UNESCO programme management framework
RBM: The transformative process
RBM programming framework

12:45 – 14:00   *Lunch at Veranda Restaurant*

14:00 – 15:30   **RBM working session 2: Formulating results**
Othilie du Souich, moderator

Formulation of results
Implementation strategy

| 15:30 – 15:45 | *Coffee-break* |

15:45 – 17:30   **RBM working session 3: RBM programming framework**
Othilie du Souich, moderator

         Recap of programming framework
         Questions and answers

17:30   *Projection of the film Carpets of Chiprovitzi*

20:00   *Dinner at Veranda Restaurant*

Thursday 25 July 2013

08:00 – 09:00   Breakfast at Apollonia Restaurant

09:00 – 10:30   **RBM working session 4: Implementation**
Othilie du Souich, moderator

         Monitoring
         Reprogramming
         Progress assessment
         Reporting
         Evaluation

10:30 – 10:45   *Coffee-break*

10:45 – 12:30   **Global capacity-building strategy**
Tim Curtis,
Fernando Brugman, moderators

12:30 – 14:00   *Lunch at Veranda Restaurant*

14:00 – 15:30   **Approaches to governance**
Frank Proschan, moderator

15:30 – 15:45   *Coffee-break*

15:45 – 17:30   **Opportunities for cooperation among the centres**
Tim Curtis, moderator

18:30 – 19:30   *Walking tour of Sozopol, organized by Sozopol Foundation Welcome speech: Kiril Arnautski, President of Sozopol Foundation*

20:00   *Dinner at Lazuren Bryag floating restaurant in Sozopol*

Friday 26 July 2013

08:00 – 09:00   Breakfast at Apollonia Restaurant

09:00 – 10:30   **Communication between the centres and UNESCO**
Fernando Brugman, moderator

10:30 – 10:45   *Coffee-break*

10:45 – 12:30	**Reporting and renewal exercises** Dulat Kasymov, Cécile Duvelle, moderators
12:30 – 14:00	*Lunch at Veranda Restaurant*
14:00 – 15:30	**Culture Sector strategy for category 2 centres: 2014-2018** Frank Proschan, moderator
15:30 – 15:45	*Coffee-break*
15:45 – 17:00	**Closing session** Cécile Duvelle, Mila Santova, moderators
20:00	*Dinner at Marina Restaurant*

Saturday 27 July 2013

Departure of participants