



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Intangible
Cultural
Heritage

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CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

**Fifth session
Kenya
November 2010**

**REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION NO. 00332
OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTS GREATER THAN US\$25,000
2010**

Name of the examiner: Dace Bula
Name of the expert (if different):
Date of the examination: (revised on) 16 July 2010
International Assistance request No. 00332 State Party: Belarus Title of request: Establishing of the National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Belarus
<p><i>Note: Information in italics in boxes is provided for the examiner's reference; it includes excerpts from the Operational Directives or from the explanations given to submitting States Parties in the International Assistance request form. The examiner shall rely upon the information provided within the request file. The examiner shall bring to bear his/her personal and professional knowledge in assessing the credibility and completeness of the information provided within the request, but his/her report shall primarily address whether or not the submitting State, within the request, has adequately demonstrated that the criteria for international assistance are satisfied. The examiner shall neither be a national of the State(s) party(ies) submitting the nomination nor have any conflict of interest that could influence in duly the results of the examination.</i></p>

Excerpts from the Operational Directives

Criteria for international assistance:

66. *When evaluating requests for international assistance, the Committee shall take into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution and the special needs of developing countries. The Committee may also take into account whether:*
- a. *the request implies cooperation at the bilateral, regional or international levels; and/or,*
 - b. *the assistance may have a multiplier effect and may stimulate financial and technical contributions from other sources.*
67. *The Committee will base its decisions on granting assistance on the following criteria:*
- a. *the community, group and/or individuals concerned participated in the preparation of the request and will be involved in the implementation of the proposed activities, and in their evaluation and follow-up as broadly as possible;*
 - b. *the amount of assistance requested is appropriate;*
 - c. *the proposed activities are well conceived and feasible;*
 - d. *the project may have lasting results;*
 - e. *the beneficiary State Party shares the cost of the activities for which international assistance is provided, within the limits of its resources;*
 - f. *the assistance aims at building up or reinforcing capacities in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage;*
 - g. *the beneficiary State Party has implemented previously financed activities, if any, in line with all regulations and any conditions applied thereto.¹*

Brief textual description of the international assistance request

The examiner should provide a brief description of the international assistance request, suitable for publication. This may draw upon item K of the Cover Sheet and item 1 'background and rationale', but should also draw upon the request as a whole to provide a summary overview of the essential features of the request. The description should be prepared based on the information provided within the request.

(175 to 225 words)

International assistance is requested by Belarus in order to create the national inventory of the intangible cultural heritage as envisaged in the UNESCO Convention of 2003. The project is aimed at a complex result that will include: (1) an internet-accessible database (the Inventory) displaying variety of elements of Belarusian intangible culture and structuring them with respect to their representativeness and need of safeguarding measures; and (2) supplementary informational products: (a) providing an insight into regional specificities of cultural heritage (6 catalogues in CD and DVD format); (b) presenting a selection of nationally most significant elements of intangible culture (an album) and (c) raising awareness of the ICH safeguarding initiatives and mechanisms (printed methodological materials).

Preparation of the Inventory envisages incorporation of both historical documentations of ICH and newly acquired data, as well as bringing together efforts of cultural heritage institutions and those of communities of contemporary ICH bearers. Project implementation plan comprises various activities, including contentual and technical elaboration of the Inventory (analysis of archived materials, field research, data processing), dissemination of knowledge (publishing) and awareness raising (workshops and seminars).

1. Note to examiners: Criterion g. will be reported by the Secretariat and need not enter into your examination.

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Excerpts from the request form

Provide a brief description of the current situation and the need that the proposed assistance would address. For safeguarding of a particular element, provide a description of the element, its viability and why safeguarding measures are required. For programmes or activities not focused on a particular element (e.g., preparation of inventories, strengthening of capacities, awareness-raising, visibility), please describe existing related programmes and activities, if any, and identify gaps to be addressed. For emergency assistance requests, describe the nature and severity of the emergency.

The request satisfactorily demonstrates the background and rationale:

Yes

No

Examiner's comments regarding whether the request demonstrates the background and rationale of the proposed assistance

The examiner should assess whether the submitting State Party has clearly and adequately described the current situation and the need the proposed assistance would address, providing a strong rationale for the proposed activities.

(150-200 words)

The description provides a contextual information of the proposed project regarding the judicial background, current situation and previous work carried out in the sphere of ICH safeguarding in Belarus. It refers to the Law on Protection of Historical and Cultural Heritage adopted in 2006. It also characterizes collections of ICH documentations that are in possession of different research and cultural heritage institutions. Previous collaboration among these institutions has been mentioned. 'Anthology of Belorussian Folklore' in 3 volumes is indicated as the main result of previous activities. The text is slightly less convincing with respect to the need that the requested assistance would address. Yet, it is possible to deduce that the implementation of the project will allow to create an operational structure, assuming tasks that, at present, are (presumably) not undertaken by any institution, such as: gathering the dispersed material within the unifying frame of the Inventory, comparing the historical data with contemporary situation, co-ordinating and consolidating the efforts of the involved institutions and communities of tradition bearers etc.

2. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

Excerpt from the request form

Describe what primary objective(s) will be addressed and what concrete results are expected.

The request satisfactorily demonstrates the objectives and expected results of the proposed assistance:

Yes

No

Examiner’s assessment of the proposed objectives and expected results

The examiner should assess whether the submitting State Party has clearly and adequately demonstrated what must be achieved and what kind of positive impacts and concrete accomplishments might be seen after implementing the proposed activities.

(150-200 words)

During the preparatory phase, the submitting State Party has reasonably revised the request file, and now it provides a satisfactory description of concrete results that will be achieved and produced through the implementation of the project: 1) an internet-accessible database (the Inventory) and (2) supplementary publications: (a) 6 CD and DVD catalogues displaying ICH of each historical region of Belarus; (b) an album representing a selection of nationally most significant elements of intangible culture and (c) 2 methodological publications raising awareness of the ICH safeguarding initiatives, mechanisms and practical solutions. These results are mutually complementary and form a well-conceived package. The statement of objectives, however, has remained unnecessary extended and based on general ICH safeguarding discourse instead of addressing the specificities of the proposed project. Some of the declared objectives (e.g., ‘to decrease the consequences of environmental change’) seem remote and weakly linked to the project’s direct purpose - establishing of the national ICH Inventory.

3. ACTIVITIES

Excerpts from the request form

What are the key activities to be carried out in order to achieve these expected results? Describe the activities concretely and in their best sequence, addressing their feasibility.

The request satisfactorily demonstrates the key activities:

Yes

No

Examiner’s assessment of the proposed activities

The examiner should assess whether the submitting State Party has explained clearly and in the great detail what the key activities are, and assess whether the proposed activities are well conceived and feasible to achieve the above-mentioned objectives and results.

(150-200 words)

Project implementation plan contains three main groups of activities: 1) collection, analysis, selection and processing of data to be included in the Inventory (examination of existing ICH documentations, field research, questioning, digitizing); 2) publication and dissemination of the results (internet database, printed and digital publications); 3) educational and awareness raising activities (regional seminars and an international workshop). These activities, in general, correspond to the planned objectives and results. The request file represents them in a logical succession, although, without much detail that would allow to anticipate the real processes in terms of their feasibility, e.g., it is not clear how and by whom consultation workshops will be organized, how many participants are expected; no rationale is given for the international workshop. The description does not cover all the activities listed in the work plan and budget sections (items 6a and 6b). At the same time, text size of item 3 seems to exceed the suggested limits as it includes paragraphs unnecessary re-stating the project’s goals (p.1) and providing information on community involvement (p.6) or coordination of responsibilities among implementing organizations (p.10) that would have been more relevant for other sections of the

document.	
4. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	
4.a. Community involvement	
<i>Excerpt from the request form</i>	
<i>Describe the mechanisms for fully involving communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals in the activities.</i>	
The request satisfactorily demonstrates the involvement of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals in the activities:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Examiner's comments on the involvement of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned	
<p>The examiner should assess whether the submitting State Party has demonstrated that the community, group and/or individuals concerned have participated in the preparation of the request and will be involved in the implementation of the proposed activities, and in their evaluation and follow-up as broadly as possible (Operational Directives paragraph 67.a). The examiner should also assess whether the submitting State Party has effectively and convincingly described the mechanisms for ensuring such participation and involvement.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(100-200 words)</i></p>	
<p>The request file repeatedly (items 3 and 4) provides overall characteristics of the country's wide and persistent involvement in ICH issues at regional and local levels. It lists a variety of institutions (local museums, houses of handicraft, culture centres etc.) and community structures (committees and associations of tradition bearers) that have been active during the previous phases of ICH politics in Belarus. Project's implementation envisages community involvement in three basic ways: (1) local communities and ICH bearers will be authorized to select and propose ICH elements for inclusion in the Inventory; (2) as questionnaire responders and fieldwork partners, they will contribute to the acquisition of information; (3) as participants in workshops and consulting seminars, they will be targeted by awareness raising and educational activities. There is no information, however, whether local initiatives have played any role in the elaboration of the proposed project or will be involved in its evaluation and follow-up phases.</p>	
4.b. Implementing organization	
<i>Excerpt from the request form</i>	
<i>Describe the implementing organization or body that may be responsible for implementing the project including name, background, structure, etc. Identify the human resources available for implementing the project.</i>	
The request satisfactorily describes the implementing organization or body:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Examiner’s comments on the implementing organization or body

The examiner should comment on whether the submitting State Party clearly and adequately described the implementing organization or body that would implement the project, and clearly identified the human resources within the organization or available to it.

(50-200 words)

The request file (item 4b) only names two institutions involved in the implementation of the project: Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Belarus and Belarusian State Institute for Culture Issues at the Belarusian University of Culture and Arts. No supplementary information is added. Thus, the submitting State Party has ignored both the guidelines for preparation of the request form and the additional information request of March 31 suggesting that structure of the implementing organization(s) and available human resources be described.

4.c. Partners

Excerpt from the request form

Describe, if applicable, coordination arrangements with any other partners and their responsibilities in the implementation of the project, including their available human resources.

The request satisfactorily demonstrates the coordination arrangements with and responsibilities of other partners:

Yes

No

N/A

Examiner’s assessment on the partners

The examiner should comment on whether the submitting State Party has clearly described such coordination arrangements and the respective responsibilities of cooperating bodies, and address whether the request implies cooperation at the bilateral, regional or international levels (Operational Directives paragraph 66.a). In case such cooperation is implied, the examiner should assess whether the cooperation is clearly described.

(50-200 words)

The project implies cooperation at the institutional level, identifying the Institute of Art, Ethnography and Folklore of the National Academy of Belarus as a partner. Also, cooperation with regional and local institutions (local and regional authorities, museums, houses of handicraft etc.) is envisaged. Although the item 4c of the request file does not explain the coordination of responsibilities between implementing organizations and the partners (and even does not list all the organizations that sporadically appear in different sections of the file), more information can be found in items 1, 3 and 4d, that, taken together, provide a relatively complete picture of division of tasks, activities and responsibilities among the cooperating bodies: the Ministry of Culture (monitoring), the National Commission for UNESCO (information and analysis), and the Institute for Culture Issues (inventorying, coordination, reporting, evaluation). The description of coordination arrangements would be more complete if it included a characterization of partners’ human resources. The project looks somewhat anonymous in respect to regional and local partners, as it does not indicate any concrete institution or cooperating body.

4.d. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Excerpts from the request form

Describe how the implementing organization plans to carry out monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the project. For larger or more complex projects, external monitoring and evaluation are preferable. Standard formats for reporting and evaluation are available from the Secretariat.

The request satisfactorily demonstrates how the State Party will carry out monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the project:

Yes

No

Examiner's comments on the monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The examiner should address whether the submitting State Party has described monitoring, reporting and evaluation, and assess whether they are appropriate to the size and scope of the proposed project.

(50-200 words)

The description of monitoring, reporting and evaluation specifies 'general control' (carried out by Ministry of Culture); 'informational and analytic work' (National Commission for UNESCO) and 'scientific monitoring' (Institute for Culture Issues). Several measures have been listed: round table discussions, quarterly financial reports, expert evaluations, although it is not quite clear by whom, how and when these measures will be applied. The request file and item 4d, in particular, lacks sufficient information about the place and role of the planned UNESCO monitoring and evaluation missions in this scheme, as they are only mentioned in the work plan and budget sections - items 6a and 6b.

5. CAPACITY-BUILDING, SUSTAINABILITY AND LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

5.a. Capacity-building

Excerpt from the request form

Describe how the project may contribute to building up capacities or strengthening existing resources, for instance in the communities and/or in the implementing organization concerned.

The request satisfactorily demonstrates how the project contributes to capacity-building:

Yes

No

Examiner’s comments on the capacity-building

The examiner should address whether the assistance aims at building up or reinforcing capacities in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (Operational Directives paragraph 67.f), and assess whether the submitting State Party has effectively described how the project will strengthen capacities within the communities and/or implementing body concerned.

(150-200 words)

In the description of capacity-building (as provided in item 5a), the submitting State Party puts stronger emphasis on general ICH safeguarding rationale than on expected effect of the project upon the enhancement of expertise and competence within communities and implementing organizations. However, a number of the envisaged benefits from project implementation can be qualified as substantial capacity-building achievements, especially its educational and awareness-raising effect (additionally described in item 5c). Thus, it is expected that the project, contributing to ICH preservation in Belarus, at the same time will widen public access to cultural resources. The dissemination of project’s results is believed to increase motivation of local communities and ICH bearers to participate in ICH initiatives. It is assumed that support and attention from national and local authorities will be activated due to increased understanding of ICH preservation matters. Some of the mentioned aspects (e.g., increase of cultural tourism) seem to be more appropriate for the description of multiplier effects.

5.b. Sustainability

Excerpt from the request form

Describe how the results and benefits of the project are expected to last beyond the end of the project.

The request satisfactorily demonstrates the sustainability of the project:

Yes

No

Examiner’s comments on the sustainability

The examiner should address whether it can be expected that the project will have lasting results (Operational Directives paragraph 67.d), and assess what measures the submitting State Party proposes to ensure that such results and benefits will endure beyond the life of the project itself.

(150-200 words)

The project envisages lasting practical results. The National Inventory of ICH is planned to be a permanently operating database that is periodically updated and augmented. This implies a continuation of the established cooperation between implementing organizations and communities. An enduring activity of inventorying ICH is foreseen in Belarus, expecting that financial and technical support from national and regional authorities will increase due to international assistance received for the project. It is also suggested that project implementation might have a lasting cultural political influence. The experience gained in the proposed dialogue between official organizations and local communities is likely to bring about a shift in the state’s cultural policy and render it more oriented towards culture bearers. However, project’s sustainability, instead of demonstrating State Party’s determination and concrete measures, is formulated in the modality of possibility or probability that makes it slightly less convincing.

Examiner’s assessment on the timetable

The examiner should assess whether the submitting State Party provided a clear and concrete timetable for the proposed activities, as requested.

(50-200 words)

Project’s implementation is planned in a logical and feasible succession. Nevertheless, the submitted documents fail to provide a clear and noncontradictory vision. The project seems to be designed for 24 months, yet the information given in different sections of the request file (items J, K and item 6a/appendix 1 of April 30) considerably differs - from 14 up to 28 months (I disregard years 2008-2009 that appear in the final version of work plan as a minor typing mistake). There are also several inconsistencies between description of activities (item 3) and work plan: not all activities that appear in the table (item 6a) are mentioned and/or properly characterized in the description.

6.b. Budget

Excerpts from the request form:

- 1) *Provide a detailed budget breakdown in USD of the amount requested, by type of cost (e.g. personnel, travel, fees, etc.) or by activity;*
- 2) *Indicate the contribution by the submitting State Party, if any.*

The budget should reflect only the activities and expenses for which international assistance from the Intangible Heritage Fund is requested, including the State contribution, if any.

The request provides an adequate budget:

Yes

No

Examiner’s assessment on the budget

The examiner should assess whether the amount of assistance requested is appropriate (Operational Directives paragraph 67.b), considering the scope and size of the activities, the local conditions for carrying out such activities, and the human and other resources available to the implementing body, and address whether the submitting State Party has demonstrated that it will share the cost of the activities for which international assistance is provided, within the limits of its resources (paragraph 67.e).The examiner should also assess whether the proposed budget breakdown is detailed enough for the Committee to understand how the State will use the requested budget, and whether the amounts are appropriate and feasible to carry out the proposed activities.

(50-200 words)

The submitting State Party envisages to share the costs of project implementation, adding US\$35,400 to the requested international assistance of US\$133,600, although it has not been indicated which expenditure components will be covered by the State Party, nor has the State’s contribution been included in the proposed budget breakdown. The budget breakdown is prepared in such a way that, in several cases, it is quite complicated to evaluate appropriateness of the requested amounts. For example, it is not completely clear, what kind of expenses form the costs of UNESCO monitoring and evaluation missions; how many persons will be employed as administrative personnel (whose fees have almost doubled if compared to the previous version), who and how will be paid for the collecting of data etc. More detailed information would be necessary for budget items 1-4, 9. Other expenses seem to be reasonable and appropriate. Yet, another weakness of the budget breakdown is its inconsistency with the work plan and

activity description: slightly different range of activities (also, their succession, numbering and/or naming) is shown in each section of the file: e.g., in place of 'international workshop' (request file, item 3; appendix of April 30, item 6a) 'workshops with the participation of bearers' suddenly appear in the final version of budget breakdown (appendix of April 30, item 6b).

Overall Recommendation

Recommend to approve the request:

Recommend not to approve the request:

Examiner's comments on the overall recommendation

Please provide comments on your recommendation to approve or not to approve this international assistance request.

(200-300 words)

Having weighed project's strengths against its weaknesses, I have arrived at the decision to recommend to approve the international assistance request of Belarus. This decision is based on the following considerations. First, the general idea of establishing a national inventory of ICH follows the lines of the UNESCO Convention of 2003 and, thus, is beyond doubt. Second, the planned results, forming a well-conceived package (a permanently operating ICH database; supplementary printed and digital publications), appear to be a reasonable and achievable outcome of the project. Third, project's implementation plan is based on logical succession of activities. Fourth, the project envisages community involvement; it will be implemented via institutional cooperation at national, regional and local levels, and it will contribute to the enhancement of international experience in the field of ICH safeguarding (international workshop). And, finally, project envisages lasting results; it will have a considerable educational effect and positive impact on capacity-building; the requested international assistance is expected to stimulate contributions to ICH safeguarding and diversification of their sources. I would like to stress the flexibility and willingness (although not indisputably successful) of the submitting State Party to prepare a convincing project proposal, demonstrated during the preparatory stage by trying to take into account received suggestions and revise the request file accordingly. I find all the above-mentioned aspects more decisive than certain inconsistencies and failures met throughout the request file with regard to clarity, completeness and structuring of information that are disclosed in my critical remarks. I would suggest that the submitting State Party be given an opportunity to elaborate the aspects most crucial for the implementation of the project, such as clarification of time frame, detalization of budget breakdown and harmonization of activity description with the budget and work plan.