

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION
OF THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS**

**Sixteenth Session
UNESCO Headquarters, Room I
7 – 10 February 2023**

Item 8 of the provisional agenda: Report on the consultation of UNESCO networks in view of improving consultations with micro, small and medium-sized cultural and creative enterprises

In accordance with Decision 15.IGC 9, the Committee wished to undertake consultations with UNESCO networks in order to facilitate consultations with micro, small and medium-sized cultural and creative enterprises within the framework of existing mechanisms. This document presents the outcome of this consultation as well as some observations and proposals, with a view to informing the Committee's reflections and decisions on the next steps. The analysis of the consultation is contained in information document 8 (DCE/23/16.IGC/INF.8).

Decision required: paragraph 25

I. Introduction

1. At its fifteenth session, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereinafter "the Committee") examined the report on the feasibility study, conducted by the Secretariat, for the creation of a regular consultation mechanism of the Committee with micro, small and medium-sized cultural and creative enterprises (hereinafter "MSMEs") (documents [DCE/22/15.IGC/9](#) and [DCE/22/15.IGC/INF.9REV](#)). During the debate on this item, Committee members recognised the relevance of regular consultations with MSMEs and emphasised the added value that a strengthened role for these actors would bring to achieving the objectives of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereinafter "the Convention"). In this regard, the Committee requested the Secretariat to continue the consultation process with UNESCO networks in order to propose concrete ways to improve consultations with MSMEs within the existing mechanisms (Decision [15.IGC 9](#)).
2. As a reminder, the Conference of Parties at its eighth session in February 2022 invited the Committee to "continue supporting the good governance of the Convention and to broaden and diversify the range of stakeholders involved in its governance at the international level, notably by [...] considering the establishment of a regular consultation mechanism with micro, small and medium cultural and creative enterprises involved in the implementation of the Convention, taking into account possible synergies with existing participation mechanisms" (Resolution [8.CP 13](#)).
3. In accordance with Decision [15.IGC 9](#) the Secretariat launched on 25 May 2022 [an online survey with UNESCO networks](#) to gather information on concrete ways to improve consultations with MSMEs within the existing mechanisms.
4. This document presents the results of this consultation and the main observations and proposals with a view to informing the Committee's reflections and decisions on the next steps to be considered. It should be read in conjunction with information document DCE/23/16.IGC/INF.8, which contains the complete analysis of the information collected from the survey.

II. Objectives and methodology of the survey of UNESCO networks

5. The main objective of the survey was to examine, within the existing mechanisms, the best options for consultation of MSMEs by the Committee, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention and the discussions and decisions of the Committee.
6. The survey was launched by the Secretariat among UNESCO networks on 25 May 2022 and closed on 15 July 2022. A reminder was sent on 4 July 2022 to ensure an optimal response rate. The methodological approach adopted was an online survey accompanied by an [explanation sheet](#), which included information on the various existing consultation mechanisms in order to gather the essential elements to identify which of these mechanisms would be the most appropriate for MSMEs. The survey included nine closed-ended questions, giving the possibility to justify the answers, on the following topics:
 - the relevance of existing consultation mechanisms for MSMEs;
 - the frequency and format of possible written consultations;
 - the modalities of participation in the Civil Society Forum;
 - the organisation of hearings with the Committee or debates, panels and exchange sessions;
 - the main obstacles to participation and initiatives that would help facilitate their participation.

A section for open comments was also provided to collect any feedback deemed useful from the survey participants in order to improve consultations with MSMEs.

7. The UNESCO networks consulted were the National Commissions for UNESCO, the Creative Cities Network, the UNESCO Chairs, the Category 2 Centres active in the fields of the Convention, and the civil society organizations that participate in the meetings of the Convention's governing bodies.
8. A total of 208 responses to the survey were received, reflecting a very high level of participation by UNESCO networks.

III. General observations on the results of the survey of UNESCO networks

9. The online survey revealed a number of findings, the most important of which is that consultations between the Committee and MSMEs should be considered particularly necessary and useful to understand their needs and therefore better contribute to the implementation of the Convention's objectives.
10. It is useful to recall the main existing consultation mechanisms, as follows:
 - the possibility for the Committee to invite at any time public or private organizations or individuals to participate in its meetings for consultation on specific issues (Article 23.7 of the Convention);
 - the participation of representatives of civil society organizations, public or private organizations in debates, panels and exchange sessions organized by the Secretariat during the sessions of the Committee or the Conference of Parties;
 - admission of civil society organizations, at their request, to meetings of the statutory bodies as observers;
 - the presentation of written and/or oral reports to the Committee by civil society organizations;
 - the annual meeting of civil society representatives with the Bureau of the Committee prior to each Committee session;
 - the Biennial Civil Society Forum (since 2017);
 - the contribution of civil society to the preparation of the quadrennial periodic reports of the Parties through a dedicated form.
11. In this context, the majority of the participants in the survey considered that participation in debates, panels and exchange sessions organised by the Secretariat as well as hearings by the Committee would be the two most relevant approaches to consult the MSMEs. Of the 208 survey responses, these two mechanisms were ranked as the most relevant by 28.37% and 20.19% of respondents respectively (see table below). These consultation methods are perceived as being more dynamic and likely to get MSMEs more involved.

Ranking of mechanisms by order of relevance

Mechanisms	Number of responses	Percentage
Participation in debates, panels and time for discussion organised by UNESCO	59	28.37%
Hearings of public or private bodies or individuals by the Committee at its meetings with a view to consulting them on specific issues (Article 23.7 of the Convention)	42	20.19%
Presentation of written and/or oral reports to the Committee	37	17.79%

Contribution to the preparation of the quadrennial periodic reports of the Parties	36	17.31%
Participation in the Biennial Civil Society Forum	34	16.35%

12. Although respondents ranked participation in the Biennial Civil Society Forum lower (16.35%), the creation of a segment dedicated to MSMEs at the Forum using an open call was recognised by a majority of respondents as another relevant consultation modality. Indeed, 169 out of the 208 participants answered yes to the question of the relevance of creating a specific segment for MSMEs within the framework of the Forum. This response rate is logical and consistent since some MSMEs are indirectly represented at the Forum by civil society organizations to which they belong.
13. Consequently, mechanisms such as submitting written and/or oral reports to the Committee (17.79%) as well as contributing to the preparation of the periodic reports of the Parties (17.31%) were ranked among the least relevant for consultation with MSMEs.
14. Furthermore, the results of the survey indicate that consultations with MSMEs should focus on global themes and/or those directly related to UNESCO's programmes. It was also considered important to clearly identify the MSMEs solicited in the framework of the consultations in order to ensure that their contributions effectively support the work carried out in the framework of the Committee. In this respect, other key players working alongside MSMEs, such as chambers of commerce, could be considered and involved in such consultations.
15. The role of UNESCO Field Offices was seen as indispensable in the framework of such consultations to gain a better understanding of the needs of MSMEs in light of their specific characteristics found on national and regional levels.
16. According to the survey results, the top three obstacles identified by respondents in order of importance are:
 - the language barriers faced by representatives of MSMEs, especially those who do not master the two working languages of the Committee, namely English and French;
 - lack of knowledge of intergovernmental processes and in particular of the functioning of the governing bodies of the Convention;
 - lack of time to devote to such initiatives outside of their professional activities.
17. Finally, it was strongly recommended that such consultations could count on the support of UNESCO networks and benefit from their expertise in the field. In addition, communication efforts should be undertaken to present the benefits of participating in such consultations, to better explain how to participate and to follow up on the results of the consultations.
18. In this regard, the results of the survey highlighted five recommendations based on the opinions and comments made by the respondents, which are detailed in information document 8 (DCE/16.IGC/23/INF.8). These are:
 1. Create opportunities for dialogue between the Committee and MSMEs;
 2. Engage in online consultations;
 3. Clearly identify the participating MSMEs;
 4. Draw support from UNESCO Field Offices and UNESCO networks;
 5. Strengthen communication from the Secretariat.

IV. Proposals for future consultations within the framework of existing mechanisms

19. Based on the responses received from the survey and the discussions of the Committee at its fifteenth session in 2022, the following options are proposed to the Committee.

20. **Option 1:** This option responds to, firstly, the proposal of a participation mechanism for MSMEs in debates, panels and exchange sessions with the Committee (28,37% of the respondents) and, secondly, the proposal of a hearing mechanism that the Committee could organise (20,19% of the respondents). The debates, panels, exchange sessions or hearings have in common fairly similar formats and can be organised on the basis of themes defined by the Committee with a representative panel of MSMEs (with balanced geographical representation by field of activity and size of enterprise). This option has the added advantage of being organised online to reduce costs. It could be implemented starting from the seventeenth session of the Committee in 2024. Finally, this option, in its two components, represents an implementation of Article 23.7 of the Convention which stipulates that "the Intergovernmental Committee, in accordance with its Rules of Procedure, may invite at any time public or private organizations or individuals to participate in its meetings for consultation on specific matters".
21. **Option 2:** It concerns the organisation of, within the framework of the Civil Society Forum held prior to the Conference of Parties, a discussion segment, in the form of a workshop specifically dedicated to MSMEs, on a theme that is particularly strategic for these enterprises (see also the document on collaboration with civil society organizations and the organization of the fourth edition of the Civil Society Forum DCE/23/16.IGC/10). Civil society organizations that participate in the meetings of the Convention's governing bodies could help the Secretariat in identifying MSMEs so as to ensure an adequate representation of the creative sectors and equitable geographic representation among the participants of this workshop. The first discussion workshop could be initiated at the fifth edition of the Civil Society Forum in June 2025 and the conclusions could then be presented to the Committee at its nineteenth session in 2026.
22. Concerning other existing consultation mechanisms, such as the presentation of written and/or oral reports to the Committee as well as the contribution to the preparation of the quadrennial periodic reports of the Parties, which have been ranked lower, it is proposed that the Committee disregard them due to the limited results expected. Indeed, involvement in the written contributions or periodic reports is hardly feasible at the level of individual MSMEs, and would be rather feasible through their representative organisations, namely civil society organizations.

V. Next Steps

23. At this session, the Committee is invited, after examining this document and the results of the survey of UNESCO networks presented in information document DCE/23/16.IGC/INF.8, to indicate its orientations and the future actions it wishes the Secretariat to undertake within the framework of this process.
24. Considering the discussions of the Committee at its fifteenth session and the proposals arising from the survey, the Committee may wish to take into account that the modality of consultation of MSMEs proposed in option 1, within the framework of existing mechanisms, is the one that requires the least resources, both human and financial, for the Secretariat and also the representatives of the MSMEs.
25. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 16.IGC 8

The Committee,

1. *Having examined* document DCE/23/16.IGC/8 and information document DCE/23/16.IGC/INF.8,
2. *Recalling its Decisions 15.IGC 9 and 14.IGC 16 as well as Resolution 8.CP 13 of the Conference of Parties,*

3. Takes note of the results of the consultations of UNESCO networks and the proposals that aim to improve the Committee's consultations with micro, small and medium-sized cultural and creative enterprises within the framework of existing mechanisms;
4. Reaffirms the importance of undertaking regular consultations with micro, small and medium-sized cultural and creative enterprises in order to enable them to play a role as key players in the cultural and creative industries and therefore contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
5. Decides to select [Option 1 / Option 2] in order to consult micro, small and medium-sized cultural and creative enterprises and requests the Secretariat [(if Option 1) to organise an online exchange session, at its seventeenth session, with representatives of micro, small and medium-sized cultural and creative enterprises / (if Option 2) to provide for a discussion segment in the form of a workshop, specifically dedicated to micro, small and medium-sized cultural and creative enterprises, in the framework of the fifth edition of the Civil Society Forum which will be held in June 2025, prior to the tenth session of the Conference of Parties];
6. Further requests the Secretariat to transmit to the ninth session of the Conference of Parties the outcome of the consultations carried out in 2021 and 2022 and its decisions taken in this regard.