



**Guidelines on the Use of the Resources
of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity**

Approved by the Conference of Parties at its second session (2009) and revised at its fourth session (2013) and ninth session (2023)

Article 18 – International Fund for Cultural Diversity

1. *An International Fund for Cultural Diversity, hereinafter referred to as “the Fund”, is hereby established.*
2. *The Fund shall consist of funds-in-trust established in accordance with the Financial Regulations of UNESCO.*
3. *The resources of the Fund shall consist of:*
 - (a) *voluntary contributions made by Parties;*
 - (b) *funds appropriated for this purpose by the General Conference of UNESCO;*
 - (c) *contributions, gifts or bequests by other States; organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, other regional or international organizations; and public or private bodies or individuals;*
 - (d) *any interest due on resources of the Fund;*
 - (e) *funds raised through collections and receipts from events organized for the benefit of the Fund;*
 - (f) *any other resources authorized by the Fund’s regulations.*
4. *The use of resources of the Fund shall be decided by the Intergovernmental Committee on the basis of guidelines determined by the Conference of Parties referred to in Article 22.*
5. *The Intergovernmental Committee may accept contributions and other forms of assistance for general and specific purposes relating to specific projects, provided that those projects have been approved by it.*
6. *No political, economic or other conditions that are incompatible with the objectives of this Convention may be attached to contributions made to the Fund.*
7. *Parties shall endeavour to provide voluntary contributions on a regular basis towards the implementation of this Convention.*

Strategic considerations and objectives

1. The purpose of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) is to finance projects and activities approved by the Intergovernmental Committee (hereinafter “the Committee”) on the basis of guidelines determined by the Conference of Parties, notably to facilitate international cooperation for sustainable development and poverty reduction to foster the emergence of dynamic cultural sectors in developing countries¹, in accordance with Article 14 of the Convention (Article 3 of the Financial Regulations of the IFCD).
2. The main objective of the IFCD is to invest in projects that lead to structural change through the introduction and/or elaboration of policies and measures that have a direct effect on the creation, production, distribution of and access to a diversity of cultural expressions, including cultural goods, services and activities, as well as through the reinforcement of institutional infrastructures deemed necessary to support viable cultural industries at the local and regional levels.

1. Parties to the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions that are recognized by UNCTAD as developing economies, economies in transition and least developed countries.

3. IFCD projects demonstrate the value and opportunities that the cultural industries bring to sustainable development processes, in particular to economic growth and the promotion of a decent quality of life.
4. The IFCD is managed as a Special Account pursuant to Article 1.2 of its Financial Regulations and, given its multi-donor nature, cannot receive tied or earmarked contributions.
5. Use of the IFCD's resources must be consistent with the spirit and provisions of the Convention. Pursuant to Article 18.3 (a) and 18.7, Parties shall endeavour to provide voluntary contributions on an annual basis. The Committee encourages Parties to provide contributions on an annual basis, the amount being at least equal to 1% of their contribution to the UNESCO budget. The resources of the IFCD will be used to fund projects in developing countries. Public development aid which is not tied may be used to fund the activities of the IFCD for projects approved by the Committee in accordance with the provisions governing UNESCO Special Accounts.
6. In managing the IFCD, the Committee shall ensure that the use of the resources:
 - 6.1. meets the programmatic and strategic priorities established by the Committee;
 - 6.2. meets the needs and priorities of beneficiary developing countries;
 - 6.3. promotes South-South and North-South-South cooperation;
 - 6.4. contributes to achieving concrete and sustainable results as well as structural impacts in the cultural field;
 - 6.5. respects the principle of ownership by the beneficiaries;
 - 6.6. respects, to the extent possible, an equitable geographical distribution of the resources of the IFCD and gives priority to Parties who have not yet benefited or who have benefited the least from these resources;
 - 6.7. satisfies the principle of financial accountability, as understood within the United Nations system;
 - 6.8. satisfies the need for funds to be spent principally on project activities and ensuring minimum overhead costs as referred to in paragraph 15.7;
 - 6.9. avoids spreading resources too thinly or supporting sporadic activities;
 - 6.10. promotes gender equality and the priority groups consisting of youth and Small Island Developing States (SIDS);
 - 6.11. promotes the participation of various social groups as identified in Article 7 of the Convention in the creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment of diverse cultural expressions;
 - 6.12. complements other international funds covering similar fields without, however, compromising the IFCD's possibility to provide funding to projects that have already received or could receive financial assistance from a third party.

Areas of intervention

7. Funds will be allocated:
 - 7.1. For projects that support the implementation of the Convention, in particular to:
 - 7.1.1. introduce and/or develop policies and strategies that have a direct effect on the creation, production, distribution, and access to a diversity of cultural goods, services and activities;

- 7.1.2. strengthen corresponding institutional infrastructure,² including professional capacities and organizational structures, deemed necessary to support viable local and regional cultural industries and markets in developing countries;
- 7.2. For assistance for participation, within the limits of funding decided by the Committee. This assistance may cover:
 - 7.2.1. the cost of participation of public or private organizations or individuals from developing countries invited by the Committee to its meetings for consultation on specific issues in conformity with Article 23.7 of the Convention;
 - 7.2.2. the cost of participation at the meetings of the organs of the Convention by government experts from least-developed countries that are members of the Committee, upon their request. Requests must reach the Secretariat of the Convention at least two months before each session of the Committee or of the Conference of Parties;
- 7.3. For the evaluation of projects by the Panel of Experts, to be constituted by the Committee, before their submission for examination to the Committee. Funds could also be allocated for a meeting between the Secretariat and the members of the Panel of Experts every two years in Paris;
- 7.4. For the implementation of communication activities and stakeholder mobilization;
- 7.5. For the evaluation of the medium and long-term impact of the funded projects in order to strengthen knowledge management in relation to the IFCD and to create a learning-driven fund;
- 7.6. For the implementation of technical assistance programmes.
- 8. Projects aimed at offsetting a deficit, repaying a debt or paying interest, relating solely to the production of cultural expressions or sustaining ongoing activities with recurring costs, will not be eligible for assistance from the IFCD.
- 9. Every two years, on the basis of the funds available in the Special Account, the Committee will adopt the provisional budget that will be allocated to each of the above-mentioned types of assistance.

Beneficiaries

- 10. Entitled to benefit from the IFCD:
 - 10.1. For projects:
 - 10.1.1. all developing countries which are Parties to the Convention;
 - 10.1.2. non-governmental organizations (NGOs) coming from developing countries that are Parties to the Convention, which meet the definition of civil society and criteria regulating admission of its representatives at meetings of organs of the Convention as mentioned in the Operational Guidelines relating to the role and participation of civil society;
 - 10.1.3. international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), which meet the definition of civil society and criteria regulating admission of its representatives at meetings of organs of the Convention as mentioned in

2. Institutional infrastructure refers to all public, collective and professional structures (excluding workspace and equipment, physical construction or restoration of buildings), capacities, and administrative and legislative (legal) provisions deemed necessary for policy implementation.

the Operational Guidelines relating to the role and participation of civil society;

- 10.1.4. micro, small and medium enterprises of the private sector active in the cultural field of developing countries that are Parties to the Convention, to the limit of available funds from contributions provided by the private sector, in full conformity with the domestic laws of the Parties concerned;

10.2. For participatory assistance:

- 10.2.1. of public or private organizations or individuals from developing countries, in conformity with Article 23.7 of the Convention;
- 10.2.2. of governmental experts from least-developed countries, which are members of the Committee.

10.3 To avoid any conflict of interest, National Commissions and any other organizations participating in the pre-selection or approval of projects submitted to the Secretariat are not eligible for IFCD funding.

Funding and submission ceilings

11. Regarding the funding and submission ceilings, the following shall be taken into consideration:

- 11.1. the maximum amount requested from the IFCD for each project is USD 100 000;
- 11.2. the project implementation period can be between 12 and 24 months.

Pre-selection process at the country level

12. Regarding the pre-selection process at the country level, the following shall be taken into consideration:

- 12.1. The Secretariat shall notify National Commissions or other official channels designated by the Parties of the launch of the call for funding requests as well as the submission deadlines;
- 12.2. National Commissions or other official channels designated by the Parties shall form a pre-selection panel made up of, in particular, Ministries of Culture and/or other Ministries responsible for the cultural industries, and members of civil society organizations specializing in the field of culture to evaluate and pre-select projects to be submitted to the Secretariat;
- 12.3. the pre-selection panel is to undertake an assessment on how the projects are relevant, meet the country's needs and priorities, and have been subject to consultation among stakeholders.

Procedure for the submission of funding requests

13. Regarding the procedure for the submission of funding requests, the following shall be taken into consideration:

- 13.1. the Secretariat shall launch the call for funding requests each year in March in accordance with the Committee's decision. All funding requests will be received by the Secretariat three months after the launch of the call at the latest. Those received after the deadline are considered ineligible;
- 13.2. funding requests by Parties and NGOs are submitted directly to the Secretariat through the IFCD online platform;

- 13.3. the Secretariat transfers funding requests submitted by Parties and NGOs to the National Commissions, or other official channels designated by the Parties, that ensure projects are relevant and meet the country's needs and priorities;
- 13.4. National Commissions or other official channels designated by the Parties can forward a maximum of four pre-selected applications per funding cycle, maximum two per Party (public authority/institution) and maximum two from NGOs;
- 13.5. funding requests by INGOs are submitted directly to the Secretariat through the IFCD online platform with written support from the beneficiaries concerned to ensure projects are relevant and meet the beneficiary's needs and priorities. Funding requests by INGOs must demonstrate a sub-regional, regional or inter-regional impact;
- 13.6. each INGO may present a maximum of two applications per funding cycle with written support from beneficiary countries;
- 13.7. upon receiving the requests from the Parties and NGOs preselected by the National Commissions and from INGOs, the Secretariat will perform a technical assessment to ensure that the applications are complete, fall within the areas of intervention of the IFCD and therefore are eligible. Upon completion, the Secretariat will forward eligible project files to the members of the Panel of Experts for evaluation.

Funding Request forms

14. Forms provided by the Secretariat on the website of the 2005 Convention shall be used and considered the official funding request forms.
15. All funding requests shall be submitted in either English or French and contain the following information:
 - 15.1. background information about the beneficiary, including mission, activities, capacity to implement similar projects, and biographical information about project staff members;
 - 15.2. a brief summary of the project;
 - 15.3. a project outline (title, short- and long-term measurable objectives, country context and needs assessment, activities and expected results, including the cultural, social and economic impact, beneficiaries and partnerships) supported by a justification of how the project contributes to achieving one or more of the expected results listed on the Convention's Monitoring Framework;
 - 15.4. the name and address of the representative of the beneficiaries' organization that will hold financial and administrative responsibility for implementation of the project;
 - 15.5. a work schedule and time frame;
 - 15.6. measures to promote the sustainability of the proposed project;
 - 15.7. a detailed budget, including the amount of funding sought from the IFCD, as well as other sources. Self or co-funding is encouraged to the extent possible. Expenditures for project-related overhead costs required to implement the project are limited to a maximum of 30% of the total project budget;
 - 15.8. any information relating to the status of completion of earlier funding requests from the IFCD.

Panel of Experts

16. A six-member Panel of Experts shall be proposed by the Secretariat to the Committee for its approval based on the following criteria:
 - equitable geographical distribution and representation;
 - university degree or professional experience in the fields of cultural policy and/or cultural industries;
 - experience in evaluating projects;
 - professional experience in international cooperation;
 - in-depth professional experience in one of the UNESCO regions;
 - gender equality;
 - fluency in French or English and, if possible, a good understanding of the other language.
- 16.1. Members of the Panel of Experts have a four-year mandate. Half are renewed each two years in order to ensure the continuity of work;
- 16.2. A coordinator shall be designated from among the six members of the Panel of Experts by the members themselves;
- 16.3. A meeting is organized for the Panel of Experts by the Secretariat every two years in Paris;
- 16.4. The Panel of Experts is responsible for preparing recommendations for the Committee for examination and possible approval. The Coordinator shall be invited to the Committee's ordinary session when it examines projects recommended by the Panel of Experts;
- 16.5. Each project application should be assessed by two experts using the evaluation forms provided by the Secretariat. No expert should assess a project from his/her country.

Recommendations by the Panel of Experts

17. The Panel of Experts shall undertake an evaluation of funding requests received from the Secretariat, using the official evaluation tools and taking into account the overall objectives of the IFCD.
 - 17.1. The Panel of Experts can recommend to the Committee:
 - 17.1.1. only projects that receive at least 75% of the maximum number of points attributable, within the limit of available funds;
 - 17.1.2. only one project per beneficiary;
 - 17.1.3. if applicable, adjustment of the funds requested for projects and activities from the IFCD with accompanying explanation(s).
 - 17.2. In order to promote certain strategic themes and/or geographical regions, in particular priorities groups as youth and SIDS, and support project proposals including concrete actions aiming to increase the representation of women in key areas of cultural life, the Panel of Experts can give 1 bonus point to projects in countries that have never received funding or that relate to the strategic theme.
 - 17.3. The Secretariat shall make available online four weeks before the Committee session, evaluations and recommendations by the Panel of Experts.

Decision-making of the Committee

18. The Committee shall examine and approve projects at its ordinary session.
19. To facilitate the decision-making of the Committee, the recommendations of the Panel of Experts will be accompanied by a detailed presentation, including:
 - 19.1. a brief summary of the project presented in the request;
 - 19.2. the potential impact and expected results;
 - 19.3. an opinion on the amount to be financed from the IFCD;
 - 19.4. the relevance/appropriateness of the projects to the objectives of the IFCD as well as to the areas of monitoring of the Convention's Monitoring Framework;
 - 19.5. an assessment of the feasibility of the project proposed, the relevance and effectiveness of its modalities of execution, as well as the expected structural impacts, where appropriate;
 - 19.6. an analysis of the sustainability of the project, reflecting the level of ownership demonstrated by the beneficiaries, plans for longer-term expected results that go beyond the output level, as well as the potential of projects to produce structural effects or put in place measures/create conditions for future structural effects to take hold;
 - 19.7. an assessment as to the interest of the project;
 - 19.8. an assessment of how the project takes into consideration gender equality and the priority groups consisting of youth and SIDS.

Monitoring

20. UNESCO shall develop a systemic and risk-based project monitoring system with adequate human and financial resources to identify and address project implementation challenges and to ensure project sustainability. This monitoring system shall be based on short- and long-term objectives and SMART indicators³.
21. All relevant UNESCO Field Offices shall designate a focal point to cooperate with the Secretariat in ensuring ongoing monitoring of IFCD projects, and their complementarity and synergies with UNESCO's other work at the country level. The involvement of UNESCO Field Offices should also facilitate the establishment of contacts and sharing of experiences between IFCD project partners and potential future donors.

Evaluation

22. An evaluation and audit of the IFCD shall be carried out every five years.
23. In addition, any project may be evaluated ex post facto at the request of the Committee with regard to its efficiency, and the achievement of its objectives relative to the resources spent. Evaluation of funded projects should present lessons learned, as well as the impact of these projects on strengthening and/or fostering the emergence of dynamic cultural industries in developing countries. The evaluation should showcase how experience gained could benefit other projects, with a view to compiling and disseminating best practices on the Convention knowledge platform.
24. Under the Financial Regulations applicable to the Special Account for the IFCD, the Financial Director is responsible for the necessary accounts. The accounts under the

3. SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

Special Account are part of the consolidated financial statements presented to the UNESCO External Auditor for audit.

Reporting

25. The beneficiaries shall submit a mandatory descriptive, analytical and financial report on the execution of the project and the realization of expected results to the Secretariat. The report must be presented using the reporting forms provided by the Secretariat in order for the beneficiary to receive its final payment. No financial contributions for new projects will be allocated to beneficiaries who have not received their final payment.