

## External Expert in Periodic Reporting for Benchmarking Exercise to feed into the Evaluation of UNESCO's Periodic Reporting on the Culture Sector's Conventions and Recommendations

### Context

Advocating for standard-setting instruments is one of the five established functions of UNESCO. In the field of culture, UNESCO supports the implementation of six Culture Conventions and two Protocols<sup>1</sup>, as well as three Recommendations<sup>2</sup>. This normative architecture provides a robust foundation to protect and promote cultural and natural heritage, as well as creativity, at the national and international levels.

Conventions are subject to ratification, acceptance, or accession by States. For five of the six Culture Conventions, State Parties commit to submitting periodic reports on their national implementation as part of the operational guidelines of these instruments. States Parties to the 2001 Convention submit reports on a voluntary basis. Furthermore, UNESCO Member States submit reports on the implementation of three Culture Recommendations, even if the latter are not binding. These reports are key to determining how the fundamental principles and concepts of the Conventions and Recommendations are translated into policies and measures by the concerned Parties, providing data on implementation, progression, and promotion of the instruments' values.

The reporting mechanisms' formats, cycles, and platforms differ significantly among the Conventions and Recommendations, each one having been developed independently and at different points in time. As such, the periodic reporting systems lack a harmonized and complementary vision. Furthermore, they present challenges with the individual collection of data and its analysis. The design of the periodic reporting systems, along with support and guidance to Member States who use these systems, is managed by a fairly large group of UNESCO staff within the Culture Sector, both at Headquarters and in Field Offices. The support to periodic reporting by UNESCO's Culture Sector is also time intensive. It revolves around capacity building, technical backstopping, and the preparation of detailed analyses and related publications produced from the collected data.

Periodic reporting processes are furthermore important commitments that often require significant effort from States which become Parties to the Conventions. The challenges faced by States to complete their periodic reporting obligations are evidenced in the fluctuating numbers of incoming submissions, and in the varying quality of data submitted. Indeed, previous evaluations of UNESCO's Culture Conventions<sup>3</sup> have found periodic reporting to be valuable, but also strenuous for the States Parties concerned.

In 2025 UNESCO will prepare the first Global Report on Cultural Policies<sup>4</sup>, which will rely heavily on data from Periodic Reports. Several conventions (notably the 1954 Convention and the 2005 Convention) have

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<sup>1</sup> 1954 Convention on Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (and its two Protocols); 1970 Convention on Fighting Against the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property; 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 2001 Convention on Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage; 2003 Convention on Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; 2005 Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

<sup>2</sup> Recommendation concerning the protection and promotion of museums and collections, their diversity and their role in society (2015); Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, including a glossary of definitions (2011); Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist (1980).

<sup>3</sup> For example, see the 2021 IOS [Evaluation of UNESCO's action in the framework of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage](#) for analysis of the 2003 Convention's Periodic Reporting.

<sup>4</sup> The MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration, adopted unanimously by the participating 150 States at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development called on UNESCO to produce a Global Report on Cultural Policies, on a quadrennial

also recently launched individual reflections on ways to improve their respective periodic reporting mechanisms. Therefore, the time is opportune for taking stock and conducting a comprehensive reflection on the achievements and limitations and challenges of these complex systems in view of a way forward.

UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) Evaluation Office is conducting an **Evaluation of UNESCO's Periodic Reporting on the Culture Sector's Conventions and Recommendations**. The main purpose of the evaluation is to generate findings, lessons learned and recommendations regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of the periodic reporting mechanisms of UNESCO's normative instruments in the field of culture.

The evaluation aims to help the UNESCO Culture Sector, Senior Management and the Governing Bodies of the Organization's Culture Conventions strengthen, refocus, and draw quality data from the instruments' periodic reports. Finally, the evaluation shall serve as a learning exercise for UNESCO staff, Member States, and partners working on periodic reporting processes with the purpose to enhance coordination, efficiency and measurement of the impact of the Culture Sector's actions.

Given the specific and technical nature of the evaluation, IOS is looking for external expertise to conduct a benchmarking exercise which will be integrated into the full evaluation. The specific expertise is on reporting mechanisms of other normative instruments, such as in the field of human rights. The main purpose of this benchmarking is to learn from other normative instruments and the ways their respective organizations manage periodic reporting, disseminate its results and make use of the data collected.

### Scope of Benchmarking Exercise

The benchmarking exercise should explore the following questions (this list is non-exhaustive):

- How does reporting work in practice for other instruments (such as in the field of human rights?) (What are the formats, platforms, cycles, etc. used by other organizations?)
- What works well? What are the challenges facing organizations managing these reporting systems?
- What are the current resource levels (both staffing and financial) and workflows to manage reporting systems?
- How is the quality of reporting in other organizations? To what extent are States supported with the reporting processes and how?
- To what extent are the reporting systems feeding into the development of programmes in other organizations?
- How is the data from reporting being disseminated and used?
- What lessons can be drawn from the experience of other organizations for UNESCO?

### Methodology and Deliverables

The external consultant is expected to:

- Conduct a desk study of 5-10 reporting mechanisms related to normative instruments in the field of human rights or other related fields, such as the Universal Periodic Review and others to be proposed by UNESCO and/or the consultant
- Conduct remote interviews with persons responsible for overseeing reporting in respective organizations
- Prepare a paper of 10-15 pages presenting a description of periodic reporting for other normative instruments and an overview of lessons learned from these

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basis. This report would, for the first time, provide a comprehensive overview of the state of the Culture Sector with the aim of strengthening public cultural policies in the years to come, building on information, data and existing indicators provided by its Member States.

- Present the findings of the study during an online workshop in December 2023

## Calendar

Call for Proposals and Selection of Expert	August – Early September
Start of assignment	Mid-September
Draft paper on benchmarking	End-October
Final paper on benchmarking	End-November
Stakeholder Workshop with Presentation of Preliminary Findings	December

## Qualifications for external Evaluation Consultant

Expressions of interest will be sought from individuals with the following qualifications:

- No previous involvement in the implementation of UNESCO activities under review (occasional attendance of events or meetings may be accepted)
- University degree at Master's level or equivalent in law, social / political sciences, economics or related field
- Strong knowledge and understanding of periodic reporting mechanisms for normative instruments (demonstrated with examples of previous evaluation, research, publication, etc. on the subject area)
- Desired experience with periodic reporting in organizations other than UNESCO
- Familiarity with UNESCO or UN mandates and its programming in the framework of the Sustainable Development Agenda
- Demonstrated understanding of UN mandates in Human Rights and Gender Equality
- Excellent writing skills in English
- Ability to work in French (read documents, conduct interviews, send emails) is desirable
- Knowledge of other UN languages particularly Spanish is an asset

## How to apply

Proposals should be submitted in English, consisting of two separate attachments:

- A Technical Proposal which should include: a letter expressing interest and clearly identifying how the expert meets the required skills and experience, a curriculum vitae, an approach and methodology including proposed reporting mechanisms to be subject of the study, a workplan, and references (with names, titles and contact details of three references). Web links and/or electronic copies of any recent reports of relevance to this assignment may also be provided.
- A Financial proposal based on the proposed workplan and required tasks.

Proposals should be submitted no later than **6 September 2023**, midnight (Paris time) to the Internal Oversight Service ([ios@unesco.org](mailto:ios@unesco.org)). Please indicate the following reference in the email subject line: Proposal for Periodic Reporting Benchmarking. Please note that proposals submitted through other channels will not be considered. For any questions, please write to [e.sediakina@unesco.org](mailto:e.sediakina@unesco.org).