



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Roles of communities and NGOs in safeguarding ICH



Hanaholmen, Espoo, Finland

31 October 2019

Questions

- Why community participation in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage? Why are communities so important?
- What are the roles of NGOs?
- What does the **Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage** say about the roles of communities and NGOs?
- What has been the experience so far ?



© Centro de la Diversidad, 2013

The Culture Conventions



Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954)



Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Cultural Property (1970)



Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)



Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)



Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)



Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)

The Convention today

- Adopted in 2003; entered into force in 2006
- **178 States** Parties to date

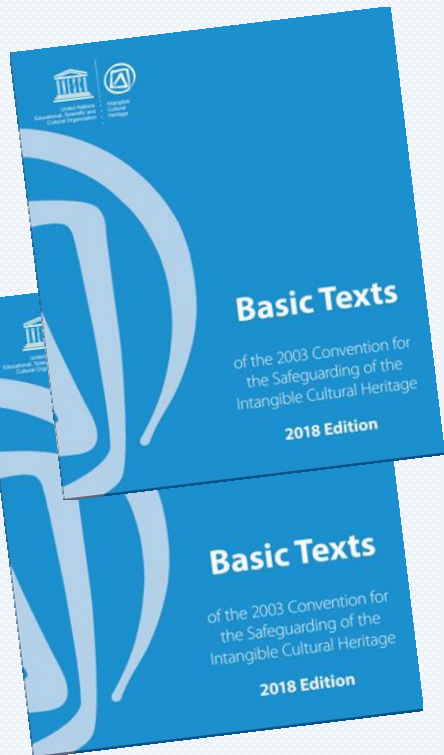
Some other figures:

- 176 accredited NGOs
- 179 Periodic reports
- 95 International Assistance
- 488 inscriptions on the Lists 59 USL +429 RL
- 20 Good safeguarding practices
- +100 countries benefitted from the global capacity-building programme



Ramman: religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, India
© IGNC, Ministry of Culture, India

Objectives of the Convention



- **To safeguard** the intangible heritage of humanity
- **To raise awareness** of the importance of ICH and ensure mutual appreciation thereof
- **To ensure respect** for it
- **To provide for international cooperation and assistance**

The definition

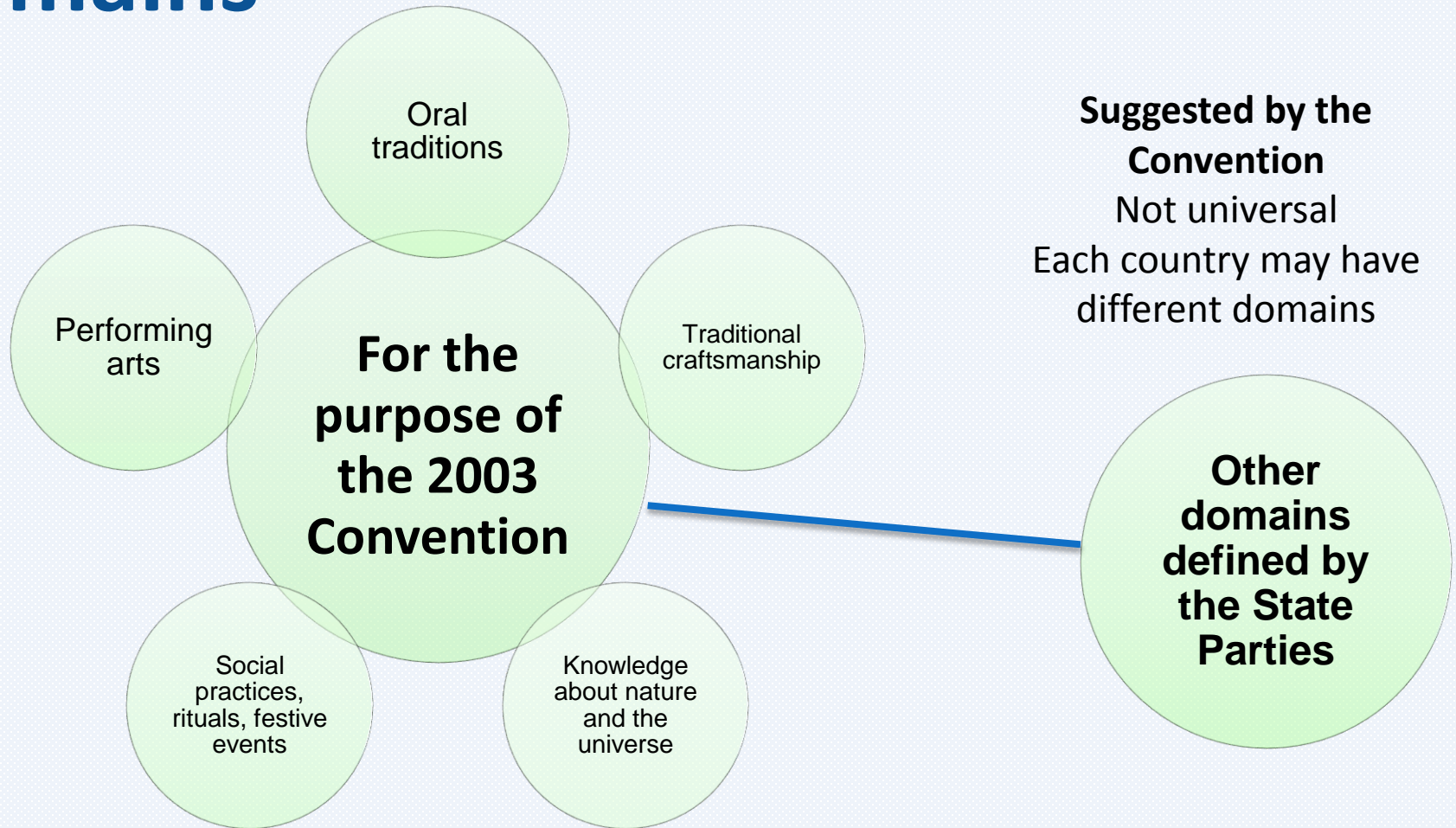
Article 2.1:

- The ‘intangible cultural heritage’ means the **practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills** – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – **that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize** as part of their cultural heritage.



© Land of Legends/Björn Gullander, 2015

Five intangible cultural heritage domains



Oral traditions



Kyrgyz epis trilogy: Manas, Semetey, Seytek, Kyrgyzstan



Tradition of Vedic chanting, India

Proverbs, riddles, tales, nursery rhymes, legends, myths, epic songs and poems, charms, prayers, chants, songs, dramatic performances, etc.

Performing arts



Nanyin, China



Bhojpuri folk songs in Mauritius, Geet-Gawai

Vocal or instrumental music, dance, theatre, pantomime, sung verse, certain forms of storytelling, etc.

Social practices, rituals, festive events



Nowruz



Fest-Noz, festive gathering based on the collective practice of traditional dances of Brittany

Activities that structure the lives of communities and groups linked to the life cycle of individuals and groups (initiation rites or burial ceremonies), the agricultural calendar, the succession of seasons or other temporal systems, etc.

Knowledge about nature and the universe



Vanuatu Sand Drawings



Andean cosmovision of the Kallawayas, Bolivia



Xooy, a divination ceremony among the Serer of Senegal



Chinese Zhusuan, knowledge and practices of mathematical calculation through the abacus

Traditional ecological wisdom, indigenous knowledge, traditional healing systems and pharmacopeia, rituals, foodways, beliefs, esoteric sciences, initiatory rites, divinations, cosmologies, cosmogonies, shamanism, possession rites, etc.

Traditional craftsmanship



Regional Centres for Craftsmanship, Austria

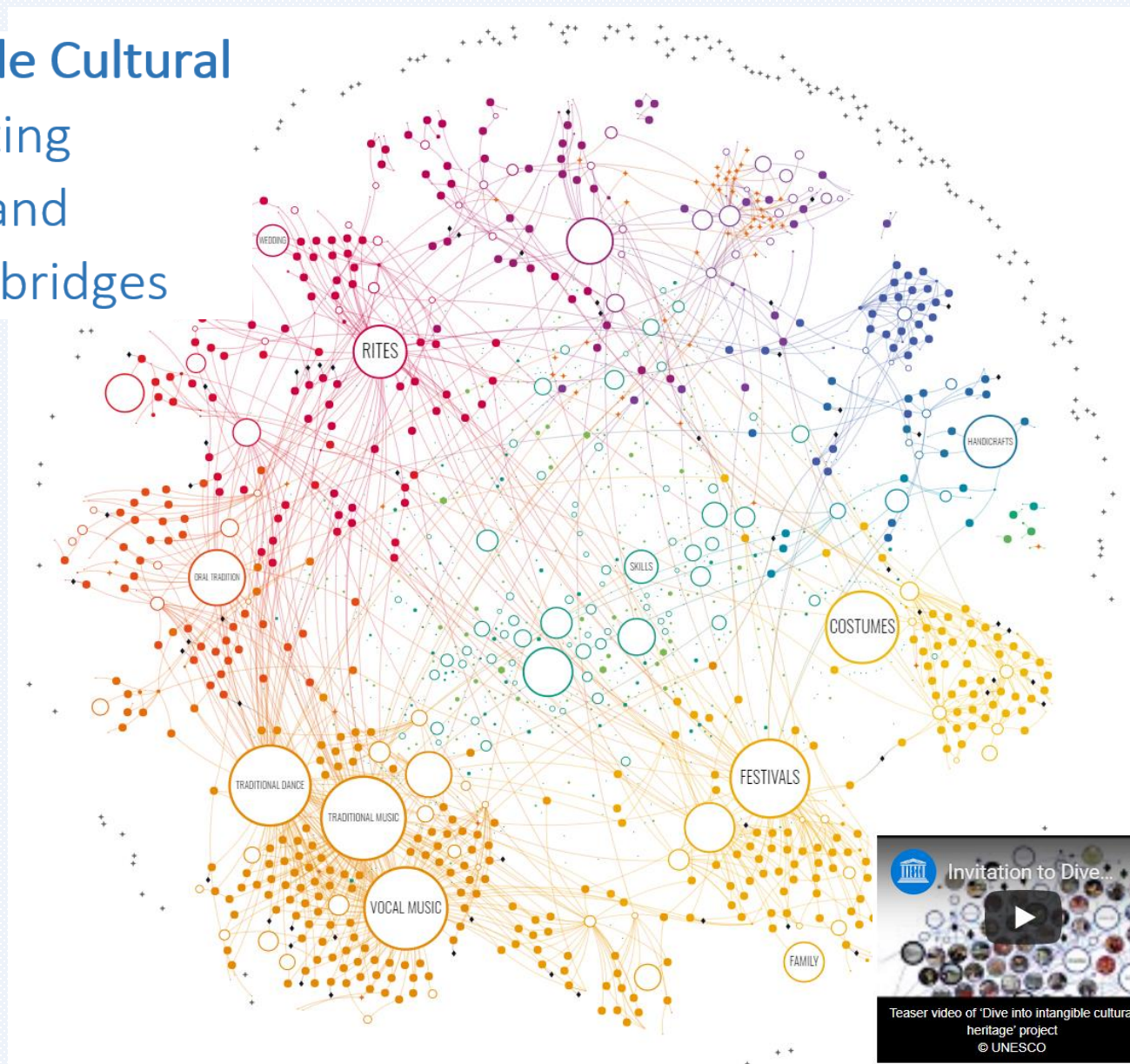


Traditional art of Azerbaijani carpet weaving in the Republic of Azerbaijan

Pottery making, engraving, weaving, embroidery, paper cutting, lacemaking, etc.

Dive into Intangible Cultural Heritage: celebrating cultural diversity and revealing cultural bridges

Since 2008, 470 cultural elements from 117 countries have been inscribed on UNESCO's lists of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. All these elements illustrate the cultural diversity of humanity and demonstrate how cultures are interrelated beyond borders.



Key concepts for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage

Intergenerational transmission

Community participation

Living/dynamic heritage

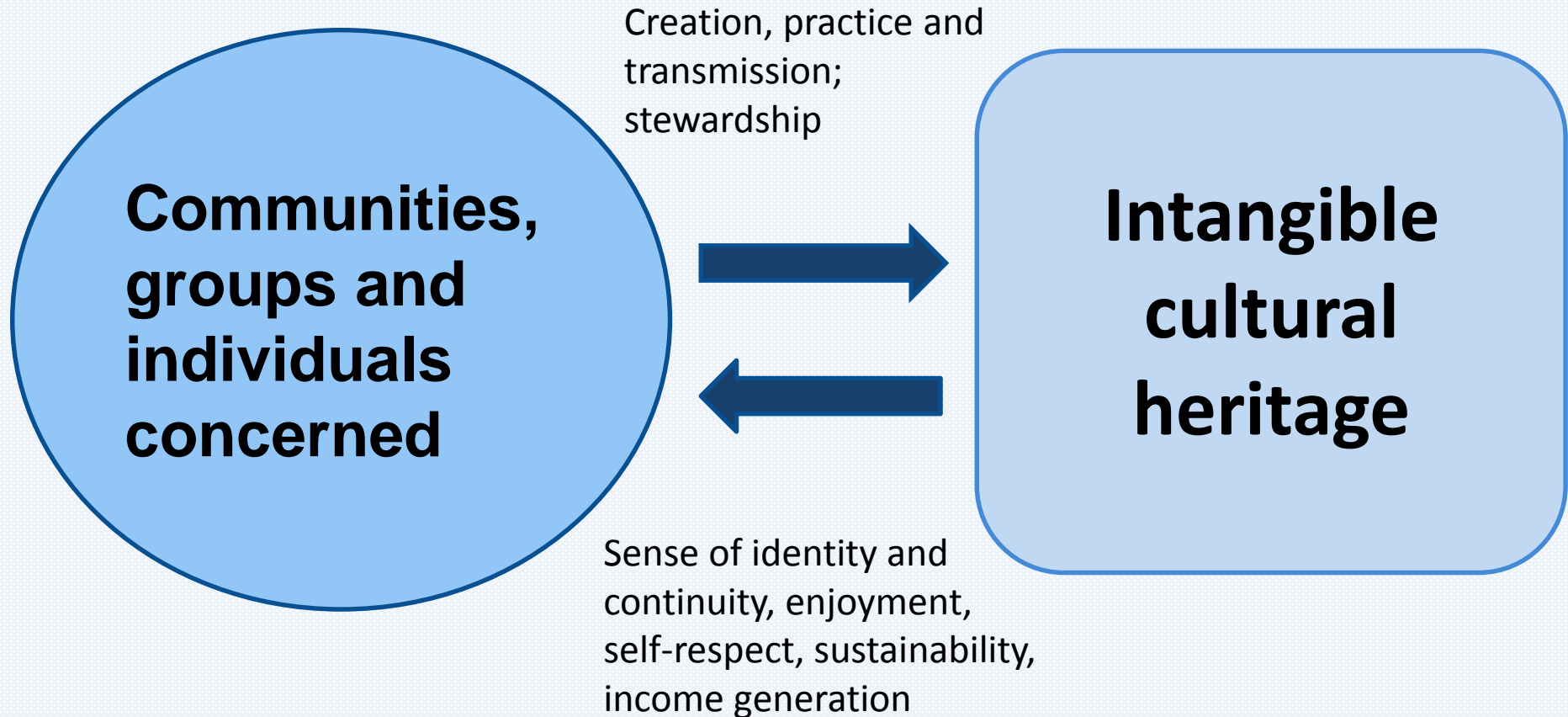
Why community participation?



© Centro de la Diversidad, 2013

- Communities, in particular indigenous communities, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of ICH (Preamble)
- Only communities can recognize particular practices, representations, expressions, knowledge or skills as their ICH (Article 2.1)
- Involve the communities concerned in safeguarding activities and management of their ICH (Article 15)

Relationship



Community participation in what?



© Winfried Clever, DESWOS, 2011

- Identifying and defining (Article 11(b), OD 80 (a))
- Inventorying (Articles 12 with 15, OD 80 (b))
- Raising awareness (Articles 14 with 15, 101 (b))
- Capacity building (Articles 14 with 15, OD 82)
- Safeguarding, management (Article 15)
- Elaboration and implementation of development plans, policies and programmes (OD 171)
- Conducting research (multiple ODs Chapter VI)
- Nominations (ODs 1, 2 and 7)
- International assistance requests (OD 12)
- Periodic reporting (ODs 157 and 160)

Identifying the communities concerned



© Juan Carlos Borjas. Grupo Guijarro. Consejo Nacional de Casas de Cultura, 2009

- 'Community' is not defined in the Convention
- No specific guidance on *how* to identify communities or how to involve them in safeguarding their ICH
- Participate directly or indirectly in the practice and/or transmission of ICH
- People may belong to several communities; leave or join communities
- Communities are generally not homogenous and may include different opinions

Community complexities

- Who is who within the community?
- Who decides who should or should not participate?
- Who participates and why? Who is left out and why?
- Is gender taken into account?
- What needs to be done to ensure equal opportunities are created and there is support for all to participate?
- Are there existing representatives or not? What is the mandate and legitimacy of representatives?



Obtaining free, prior and informed consent



Obtain and document the free, prior and informed consent of communities concerned (ODs 1, 2, 7 and 101(b))

- **‘Free’** – no undue pressure was exerted on those whose consent was sought
- **‘Prior’** – the information required to consider whether to give consent or not was given in advance
- **‘Informed’** – all relevant information required for making a balanced judgment was provided

Protecting the rights of communities and ensuring they benefit

- Practising ICH brings benefits to communities; so can safeguarding activities
- Communities should benefit from awareness-raising activities (OD 81 and 101(d))
- Communities should be the primary beneficiaries of any commercial activities (OD 116)
- Communities' rights should be duly protected when raising awareness about their heritage or engaging in commercial activities (OD 104)



© 2011 by Centre for Research and Development of Culture

Strengthening the role of communities

**The communities,
groups and
individuals
concerned should
be encouraged to
have ...**

- Networks with other communities (ODs 79 and 86)
- Networks with experts, research centres, NGOs etc. (ODs 79 and 86)
- Their capacities reinforced where needed (OD 82)
- Community centres and associations (OD 108)

... to help them safeguard their ICH

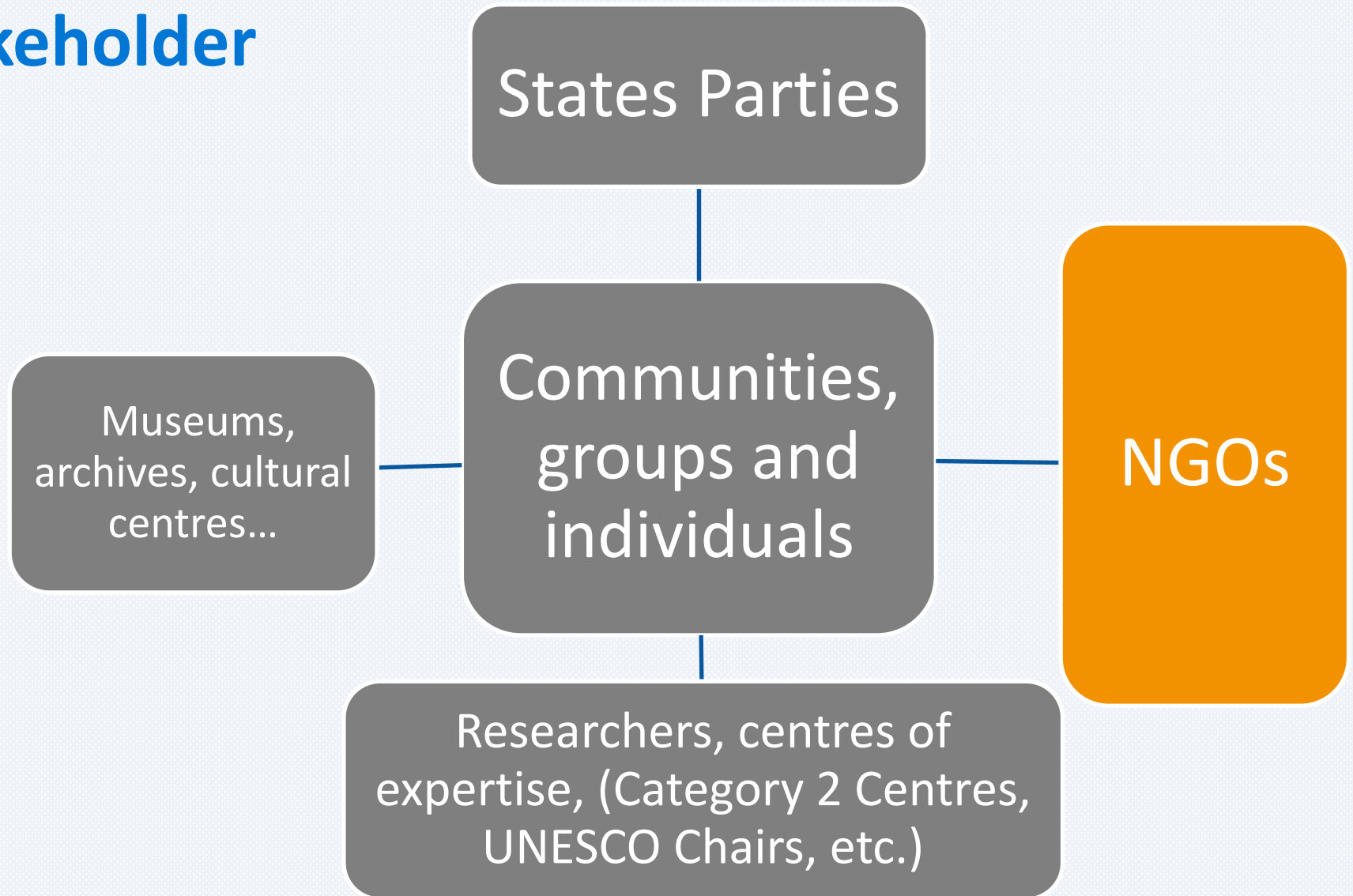
Information on experiences of community participation

- **Reports from the Evaluation Body** highlight good examples (See for example Report of the Evaluation Body on its work in 2018, document ITH/18/13.COM/10):
- **Periodic reports and the global summary report** (see for example Summary report prepared in 2018, document ITH/18/13.COM/7.a Rev.):

Key challenges observed

- Community participation sometimes only declared but not fully demonstrated
- Insufficient level of community participation
- Insufficient consideration of gender

Another key stakeholder



NGOs: roles at the national level

- Raising awareness about ICH (OD 109)
- Identifying and defining (OD 90)
- Inventorying (OD 80)
- Safeguarding (OD 90)
- Research (Article 13(c); OD 83)
- Preparing nomination files (OD 96(a))
- Collaboration and networks (ODs 79 and 86)
- Training in ICH management and safeguarding (OD 107)



NGOs: roles at the international level

- All NGOs, experts and centres of expertise, research institutions, etc. can engage in international networks, cooperation and exchange and may be invited to Committee meetings for consultation (Article 8.4)
- Some specific roles reserved for **accredited NGOs**



Accreditation of NGOs

Article 9 - Accreditation of advisory organizations

1. The Committee shall propose to the General Assembly the accreditation of nongovernmental organizations **with recognized competence** in the field of the intangible cultural heritage to act in an **advisory capacity** to the Committee.
2. The Committee shall also propose to the General Assembly the **criteria** for and modalities of such accreditation.

Which advisory functions?

- Current advisory functions (OD 96):
- Mainly relate to the evaluation of nominations, proposals and requests
- Fulfilled through the work of the Evaluation Body
- Only concern 6 NGOs (1 per region) at any one time

-
- Also include the evaluation of the effects of safeguarding plans for elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List



Boat-builder Berit Osmundsen shaping a garboard, a plank in the bottom of an Oselvar boat© Kjell Magnus Økland, 2015

Criteria for accreditation

Non-governmental organizations shall:

- have proven competence, expertise and experience in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage;
- have a local, national, regional or international nature, as appropriate;
- have objectives that are in conformity with the spirit of the Convention ;
- cooperate in a spirit of mutual respect with communities;
- Possess adequate operational capacities



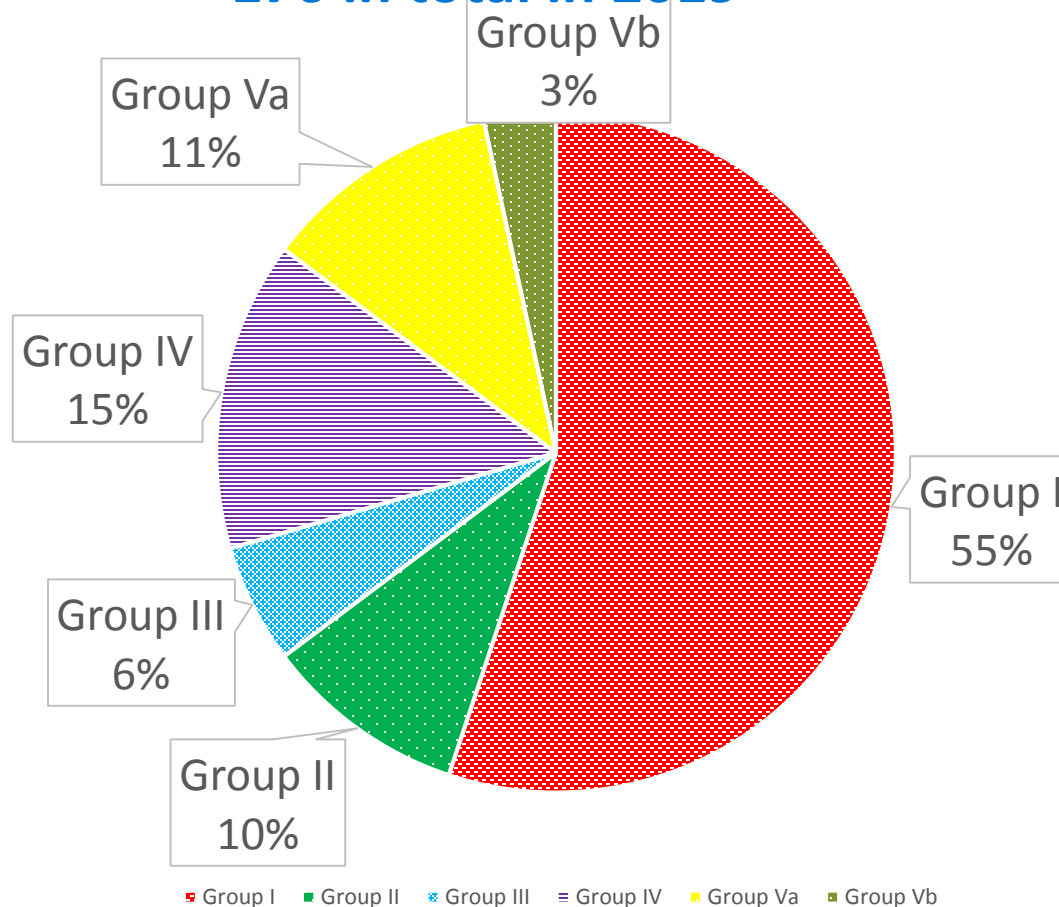
© Ministry of Culture of Bulgaria/Tsvetan Nedkov, 2013

Form ICH-09+ by **30 April** of odd-numbered years

Accreditation of Non-Governmental Organizations to provide advisory services to the Committee

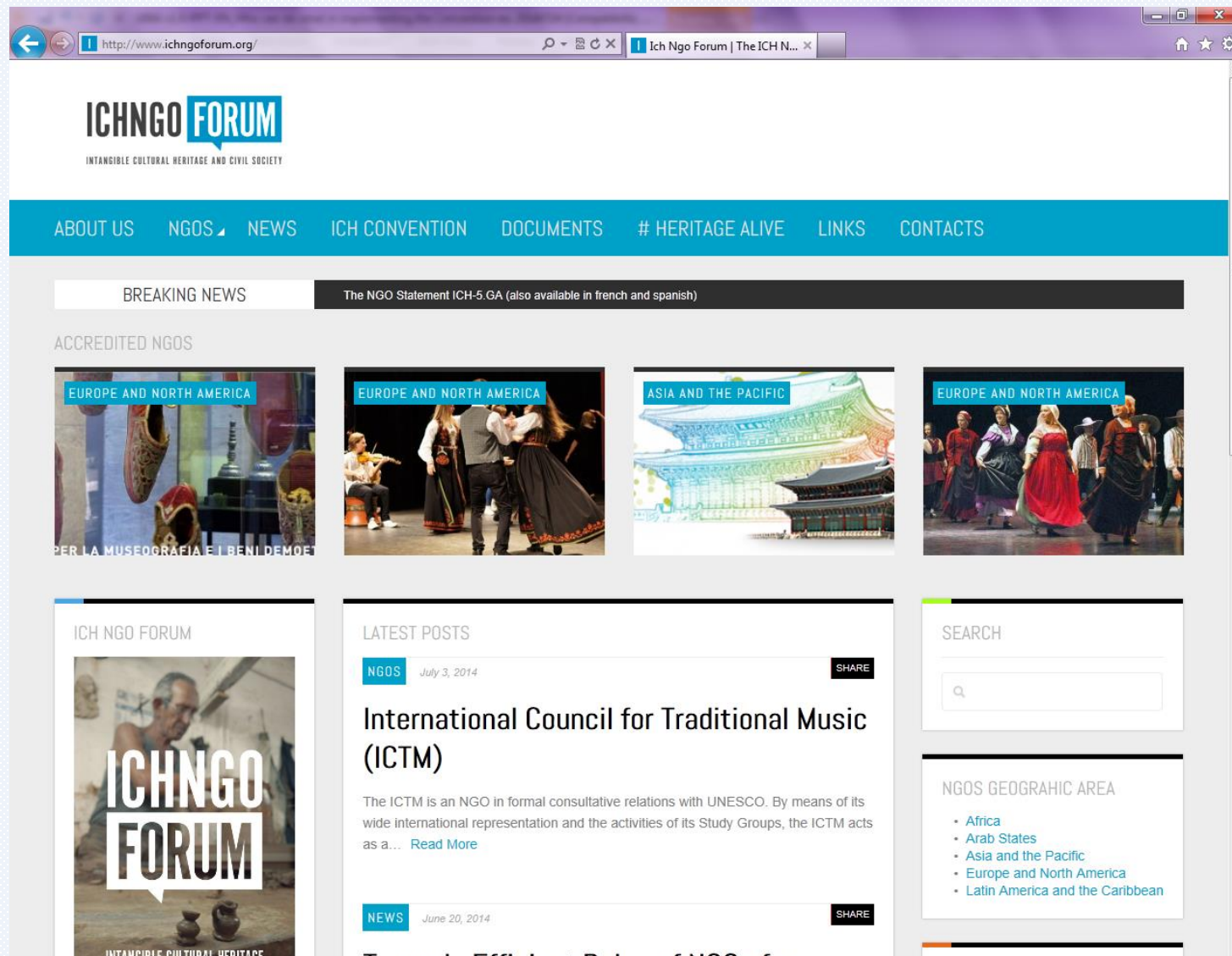
Geographical distribution of accredited NGOs

176 in total in 2019



Accredited NGOs in Nordic Countries

- Kansanmusiikki-Instituutti ry (Folk Music Institute) (Finland)
- Forbundet KYSTEN (The Norwegian Coastal Federation) (Norway)
- Norges Bygdekvinnelag (The Norwegian Society of Rural Women) (Norway)
- Norges Husflidslag (Norwegian Folk Art and Craft Association) (Norway)
- Norsk Folkemuseum/Norsk etnologisk gransking (The Norwegian Museum of Cultural History/Norwegian Ethnological Research) (Norway)
- Norsk håndverksinstitute (Norwegian Crafts Institute) (Norway) **Evaluation Body Mandates 2016-2019**
- Norsk Institutt for bunad og folkedrakt (Norwegian Institute of bunad and folk costume) (Norway)
- Norwegian Center for Traditional Music and Dance (*Norsk senter for folkemusikk og folkedans*) (Norway) **Evaluation Body Mandates 2009**
- Berättarnätet Kronoberg (Sweden)
- The Eric Sahlström Institute (Sweden)



<http://www.ichngoforum.org>

What we know from Quadrennial NGO Reports

Required for renewal

Strong and active participation of accredited NGOs in various **operational activities**:

- Identification, documentation, research (including inventory-making)
- Promotion, enhancement
- Transmission, formal or non-formal education
- Revitalisation

However:

Majority of the NGOs not involved in an **advisory function** in the work of the Committee, which is the objective of accreditation

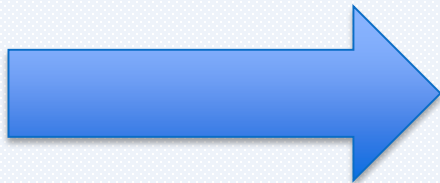
Reasons for reflection on the role of NGOs

Challenges

- Lack of clear definition of *inter alia* advisory functions
- Assymetry of criteria applied in accreditation and review processes
- Imbalance in geographical representation
- Workload of the governing bodies and of the Secretariat

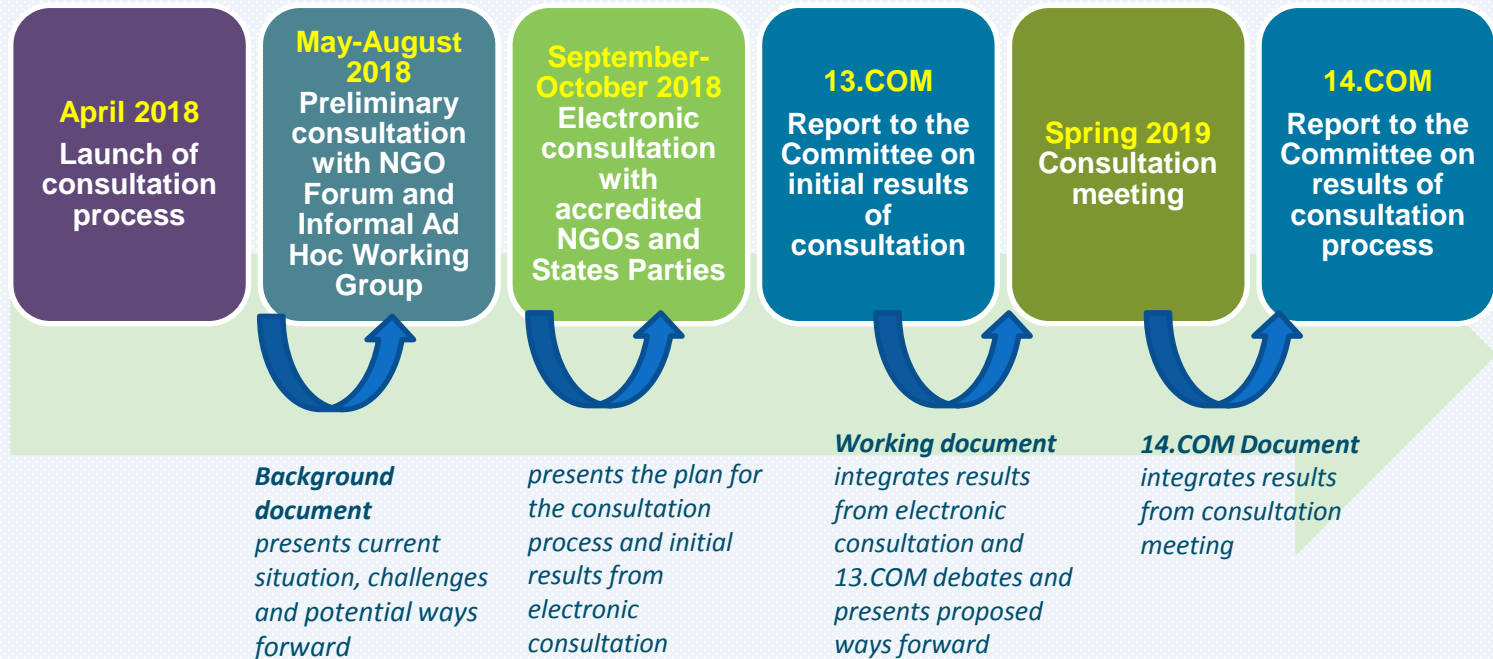
Other issues to be considered

- Regular increase in the number of accredited NGOs
- Diversity of profiles and expertise among accredited NGOs
- Role of the ICH NGO Forum



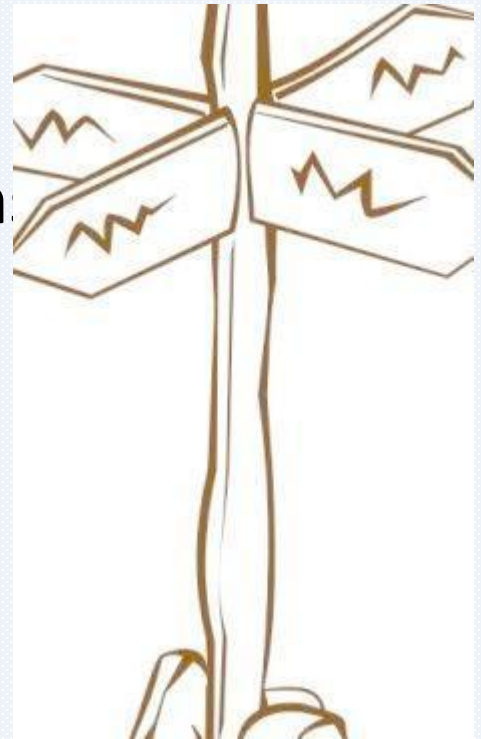
Does the current system fulfill its objectives?

Timeline



Conclusion of the reflection

- The accreditation system of NGOs has reached a crossroads
- Clearer definition of advisory function
- Capacity-building of NGOs



Conclusions

14.COM - Bogotá, Colombia, from 9 to 14 December 2019



The carnival groups ("comparsas") in the districts' parades have a new theme each year, enriched with colourful costumes (cachés)
© León Dario Peláez, 2005