

Research Working Group **Mission Statement**

Background of the Working Group Research

The Working Group Research of the ICH-NGO Forum was established in Windhoek, Namibia, in 2015. Since then, Working Group meetings took place during the sessions of the General Assembly and the Intergovernmental Committee Meetings of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The objectives of the Working Group were defined in May 2016, when the first meeting took place over the course of the 6th General Assembly. More recently, the members of the ICH-NGO Forum proposed the topics to be presented every year. During the last Committees, the following issues have been discussed:

- 12 COM (Jeju, South Korea, 2017): the process of identification and inventory of ICH.
- 13 COM (Mauritius Island, 2018): participatory research.
- 14 COM (Bogotá, Colombia, 2019): short and long-term objectives of the group

Nature of the Working Group Research

The Working Group Research is a community of NGOs involved in the safeguarding of ICH, having collaborative research applied to ICH safeguarding as the major interest. It has been devised as a platform to share and discuss the research done by the NGOs that are part of the group. The website of the Forum is the main communication tool for the Working Group.

Guiding Principles of the Working Group Research

The Working Group Research is guided by the following values, that become the basis of our objectives and activities:

1. Communities, groups and individuals are the essence of every safeguarding process.
2. The Ethical Principles for safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage should be applied to research on ICH.
3. Diversity of research methodologies is a key component for safeguarding ICH.
4. Cooperation and exchange of knowledge, good practices and opportunities between the many actors of the safeguarding processes is an important condition for the success of every safeguarding process.
5. Reflexions emerging from the different approaches related to research and/for/in/on ICH, are fundamental for a good implementation and evolution of the 2003 Convention and for the Safeguarding of ICH in general.

Mission of the group

The mission of the Working Group Research is:

1. Foster knowledge exchange, information sharing and promote wide accessibility of the outcomes of research findings among the members of the ICH NGO Forum.
2. Promote collaborative research on topics relevant to bearers, practitioners, institutions and other stakeholders, offering support in safeguarding processes.
3. Strengthen the cooperation between different stakeholders taking part in safeguarding processes.

Objectives of the Working Group Research

Short term objectives

1. Develop and consolidate an internal communication channel within the group and with other groups of the ICH-NGO Forum.
2. Map the expertise of the ICH-NGO Forum members, in order to know how they can contribute to the work of the group.
3. Generate spaces to discuss relevant topics on research and/or/in/on the safeguarding of ICH during the meetings of the Committee and the General Assembly of the 2003 Convention.
4. Promote greater inclusion and participation of NGOs from underrepresented regions in the Forum.
5. Cooperate and realize exchanges with external groups and platforms on ICH and related research.

Long term objectives

1. Serve as a platform for sharing knowledge and capacity building for the accredited NGOs in this Convention.
2. Assist the Intergovernmental Committee of the 2003 Convention by assessing and reflecting on the implementation of the Convention, in issues concerning research.
3. Share reflections on participatory research, fieldwork methods, capacity building and other methodologies for the safeguarding of ICH.
4. Create a dialogue between the research done by NGOs, universities and communities.
5. Strengthen community's involvement in research.
6. Increase reflexivity to current debates on ICH research.
7. Strengthen the 2003 Convention's Research Agenda in connection with relevant debated topics.
8. Map ideas on field research, reporting, data mining, state reports, etc.
9. Co-build new knowledge through participatory, interactive and innovative approaches, involving both local and academic knowledge.

Topics to be addressed by the Working Group Research during the 2020 – 2025 period

An exhaustive list of topics to be addressed resulted from the discussions that have taken place until now. Two topics will be chosen at the annual meeting to be the subject of the webinar and the general meeting of the following year.

This list is permanently under construction, following the trends and needs of the ICH field and open to address particular issues, like COVID-19 in 2020:

- Ethics and research in the process of safeguarding ICH
- Collaborative research methodologies
- ICH and tourism
- ICH and politics
- ICH in emergencies
- Implications of the inscription of an element on the ICH Lists
- Implications of safeguarding the ICH concerning nature, related to sustainability, climate change adaptation and risk of zoonotic diseases
- Development of new adaptive strategies in situations of political, social, health and natural crisis
- Threats of over commercialization
- ICH in urban contexts
- Conflicts and controversies in the safeguarding process
- ICH and sustainability challenges
- Relation between ICH and tangible heritage
- ICH and youth cultures
- ICH, cultural rights and Intellectual property rights

Projects and activities for the 2021 – 2025 period

- Annual meetings during the General Assembly and Intergovernmental Committee Meetings.
- Database of researchers and research topics of the group.
- Annual thematic webinar.

Organization of the Working Group Research

The Research working group is coordinated on a biannual basis by a team of three members.

The intention is to involve all members even if not physically present at the meeting sessions happening in accordance with the Intergovernmental Committee Meeting. If less than three members express the intention to coordinate the working group, it will be coordinated by the ones expressing their interest, and the missing member(s) may be designated on the annual meeting.