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PROJECT SHEET

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MEDLIHER

Safeguarding Mediterranean Living Heritage

Timeframe	05/01/2009	To	05/01/2011
Total budget	€ 1.338.279	EU Contribution	€ 1.070.623
Coordinator	UNESCO - France		

<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00233>

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Partners

- Egypt *Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur (Commission nationale Egyptienne pour l'UNESCO)* (www.egnatcom.org.eg)
- France *Maison des Cultures du Monde* (www.mcm.asso.fr)
- Jordan *Ministère de l'éducation (Commission nationale Jordanienne pour l'UNESCO)* (www.jounesco.gov.jo)
- Lebanon *Ministère de la Culture* (www.culture.gov.lb)
- Syria *Ministère de la Culture (Direction de la sauvegarde du patrimoine populaire)*

Associated themes Intangible Heritage

Summary

*In 2003, the UNESCO adopted the text of the **Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**, a multilateral binding instrument to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. Amongst the Mediterranean partner countries, seven participated in the Convention: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia. However, no coordinated information about structures, programmes and experience connected with managing intangible cultural heritage is available to date in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. For this reason, the Medliher project intends to **reinforce the institutional capacities** of these four partner countries, and facilitate their effective participation in the international mechanisms established by the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.*

*The envisaged strategy is in three phases: the first phase will be devoted to **drawing up surveys** of existing structures and programmes connected with safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in the countries mentioned above, the second phase will involve developing national projects conceived **on the basis of the needs of each partner country**, the third phase to implementing national projects, and to preparing candidatures for inscription on the UNESCO Convention lists.*

The project, addressed to the partner countries' governmental communities and institutions, will lead to the safeguarding of the regional intangible cultural heritage according to the Convention's criteria, as well as with the reinforcement of governmental institutions' capacities. The Medliher project is lead by the UNESCO, in partnership with the "Maison des cultures du Monde" Association and the concerned ministries in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

Detailed description

Background, diagnosis and needs analysis

In October 2003, the UNESCO unanimously adopted the text of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, a first multilateral binding instrument to safeguard intangible cultural heritage.

According to the Convention, intangible cultural heritage is manifested, inter alia, in the following domains: oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; performing arts (such as traditional music, dance and theatre); social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; traditional craftsmanship.

Today, this cultural heritage is threatened by factors such as social and demographic changes that lessen contact between generations – for example, through migration and urbanization that often separate young people from their elders, who are steeped in this heritage, through lack of respect for traditional knowledge and skills, or because of the impact of an all-pervasive media.

The Convention, which entered into force in June 2008 and currently has 95 States Parties, aims at taking the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in their territories, at safeguarding and valorising their living cultural heritage, and cooperating with international initiatives to this end. States Parties must, in particular, identify and define intangible cultural heritage present in their territories and draw up one or more inventories in order to determine what can be considered intangible heritage. They must also endeavour to encourage the widest possible participation of the custodians of this heritage and introduce a national corpus of safeguarding measures which includes dissemination, education, research and revitalization, as well as awareness-raising programmes.

Amongst the Mediterranean partner countries, seven participate in the Convention: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia. These enjoy varying levels of knowledge, expertise and experience and are more or less advanced in the management of intangible cultural heritage and participation in multilateral programmes. To date, no coordinated information on structures, programmes or experience connected with managing intangible cultural heritage in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria is available.

Objectives

- *Safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage* of the partner countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) according to the UNESCO Convention's mechanisms and with the participation of concerned countries
- *Reinforcing partner countries' capacities* for the implementation of the Convention
- *Reinforcing the regional cooperation*
- *Awareness on the importance of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage* in partner countries

Detailed description (follow-up)

Activities

L'action sera mise en œuvre en trois phases successives :

- **Activity 1** : *The State-of-the-art in Mediterranean Partner countries*

Take stock of the existing structures, programmes and experiences in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Mediterranean Partner countries; acquaint national authorities with the mechanisms of the Convention and the proposed measures for its management and safeguarding; evaluate national capacities for the implementation of the Convention; inform partner countries of the implementation mechanisms of the Convention.

- **Activity 2** : *Development of national projects and creation of a network*

Evaluation of findings of the existing situation in Mediterranean Partner countries, and presentation of results during a meeting with authorities and representatives of main institutions and organisations active in the field of intangible heritage nominated by their government; identify national needs and priorities based on the evaluation results; design national or international projects; set up a network for the exchange of information and experiences through a multilingual database-structures website that will be managed by UNESCO. The website will be made accessible to the public in function of progress in the action; it will contribute to the visibility of intangible heritage of the region and will highlight its diversity and shared elements within it. . Ce portail sera rendu accessible au public au fur et à mesure de l'action.

- **Activity 3** : *Implementation of national projects*

Implementation of national projects and, if necessary, international projects related to safeguarding actions as identified and developed by the partners; preparation of applications for the lists of the UNESCO Convention (particular attention will be paid to projects involving the safeguarding of intangible heritage shared by many countries); evaluation of the impact of the projects and of the regional network in terms of cooperation; follow-up and evaluation of national projects as a way of identifying 'lessons learnt' and formulating recommendations and, whenever necessary, taking into account new needs, whether financial, or relevant to awareness-raising and visibility.

Expected results and outputs

- Evaluation of national capacities of Mediterranean Partner countries
- Strengthening of institutional capacities of Mediterranean Partner countries
- At least four national projects, which include safeguarding strategies drawn with the participation of communities and parties concerned
- Enhancing the visibility of the intangible heritage of the region and the inscription of some of its elements on the UNESCO Convention lists
- Recognition of the value of safeguarding the intangible heritage of the region
- A multi-lingual website including a database structure nourished by the different partners and accessible to the wider public