

REGIONAL INITIATIVE TEMPLATE

Please complete each section below.

1. Contact Details

Please provide the following contact details:

Name of individual or group submitting initiative	UNESCO
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2. Name of Initiative

Safeguarding Shared Pacific Cultural Heritage for Fostering Regional Identity and Integration

3. Background and Rationale

You may consider: What is the issue being addressed by this initiative? What are the causes of this issue? Are there relevant studies that have been carried out to support the issue? Are there links to national, regional or international goals/policies?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words. 750

The issue being addressed by this initiative is the current insufficient level of commitment to the culture sector by Pacific island states. This is demonstrated by the facts that the culture sector has been chronically underfunded with national budget and that the progress in the ratifications by Pacific island states of the international conventions in culture has been particularly slow, and that the Pacific region remains the least represented region on the international lists and register under the international protection by some of the UNESCO Conventions in culture, despite the fact that the Pacific people is the custodians of the diversity of cultures and that there has been an increasing recognition of the socio-economic contribution of the culture sector to sustainable development.

The causes of this issue are the limited national human and financial resources related to the culture sector, the insufficient level of investment for the existing regional coordination mechanisms for culture.

Link to regional policies: In the 1960s when the Pacific islands started to gain their independence and embrace their cultural traditions as symbols of national identity, the Pacific leaders launched a regional festival by and for Pacific peoples. With the success of the first festival held in Fiji in 1972, the South Pacific Commission created a mechanism for the Festival of the Pacific Arts (FOPA) to take place every four years, each hosted by a different island nation. FOPA has been held under the coordination of the Council of Pacific Arts and Culture (CPA), an advisory body to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). FOPA continued to grow, providing the occasion for Pacific islanders to meet, share and celebrate their cultural diversity.

An evaluation study of FOPA conducted with a financial assistance of UNESCO in 2009 recommended to strengthen its role as a cultural forum to address cultural policy issues in the Pacific. As a follow up of this recommendation, 2nd Meeting of Culture Ministers was held on the occasion of the 10th FOFA hosted in the Solomon Islands in 2012 – 10 years after the 1st Culture Minister Meeting held in Noumea in 2002. The Meeting took note progress in the UNESCO Culture Programme in the Pacific, endorsed the Regional Cultural Strategy: Investing in Pacific Cultures (2010-2020) as well as the Pacific Culture and Education Strategy (2010-2015). The Meeting urged CPA, SPC and partner agencies such as the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Secretariat, the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat, the Polynesian Leaders' Group, the Micronesian Chief Executives Summit, UNESCO, World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the Pacific Islands Museum Association (PIMA) to continue strengthening their work in the protection, preservation and promotion of culture with the full support and endorsement of the Pacific Ministers for culture. The Meeting also agreed that the Ministers for culture should meet biennially as per the Regional Culture Strategy.

Link to international policies: UNESCO Conventions in culture - Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), Convention for the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001), Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), Convention for the Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Cultural Property (1970), Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954 and 2009) – embody principles and guidelines based on best practices for policy developments at country and regional levels. Notable progress has been made in the World Heritage Convention (12 states parties) the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention (9 states parties). A Pacific World Heritage Workshop has been held when financial assistance was available through UNESCO and a five-year Pacific World Heritage Action Plan has been prepared as a coordination tool identifying priority actions both at national and regional levels. A Pacific ICH Workshop has been held in partnership with UNESCO Category II Centre.

Link to international goals: The SAMOA Pathway Outcome Document of the 3rd UN International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Samoa, September 2014) highlights the important role of culture to SIDS sustainable development (Paragraph 80). The SAMOA Pathway Outcome Document also invites SIDS to consider, if they have not done so, becoming parties to the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH) (Paragraph 58). Participants at the Parallel Event also decided to work towards establishment of the Pacific UCH Partnership. A final report on UCH and SIDS was presented at the Inaugural Pacific Ocean Alliance Meeting held in Fiji in May 2015.

4. Description

Please provide a brief overview of this initiative. Try to address the following: Does this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region? What makes this initiative of importance to the Pacific region as a whole? Who would implement this initiative? Who are the main beneficiaries? Are regulatory or legislative changes required at the national level to implement this initiative? How would the initiative be funded? Has this initiative been carried out previously? What are the key risks in implementing this initiative? Are there any complementary projects and programmes currently active? What is the proposed timeframe for this initiative? How would the initiative be sustained over the proposed timeframe?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words. 750

The overall objective of this initiative is to contribute to regional integration through fostering a regional identity through regional cultural heritage safeguarding projects. This will be done by strengthening the safeguarding of shared Pacific heritage in its all forms – tangible and intangible, cultural and natural, land-based and underwater, movable and immovable – with integrated approach to the heritage management with governments' commitment and community participation. Its specific objectives are;

(a) Strengthen capacity for the management of shared Pacific heritage in its all forms

At the request of Pacific member states, Pacific Heritage Hub (PHH) was established in 2012 at the University of the South Pacific (USP) as a regional facility for knowledge management, capacity building, and partnership development. PHH has been providing services for communication and awareness raising, the organisation of Pacific World Heritage Workshops, and regional trainings. The Australian Government through UNESCO supported the establishment phase of PHH, while USP has agreed to support PHH's operations till March 2017. With this as background, this initiative aims to support PHH's activities for this objective.

(b) Support the safeguarding of shared heritage in its all forms at regional level

There are a number of shared Pacific heritage which include, among others, "Traditional navigation systems", "Tapa making", "Traditional meeting houses and their building skills". Ongoing examples of trans-boundary nomination for World Heritage listing include "Yapese Stone Money" by Palau and Yap and "Taputapuatea", archaeological marae sites in French Polynesia, Cook Island, and NZ. This specific objective aims to support the existing regional coordination mechanisms through regional workshops to identify shared Pacific heritage and provide support to their protection and promotion. This will lead to an increased number of regional or multi-national nomination development projects for international recognition and protection by UNESCO World Heritage Convention and ICH Convention, contributing to fostering regionalism and collective sense of identity of the Pacific community.

(c) Empower cultural authorities and regional civil society organisations for heritage safeguarding

Under this specific objective, this initiative will support the biennial organisation of the meeting of culture Ministers. It will also provide assistance to the organisational development and capacity building of regional professional organisations involved in the heritage safeguarding, such as International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS Pasefica), IUCN Oceania, PIMA and other civil society organisations such as Voyaging Societies.

(d) Promote ratification of international conventions in the area of culture by Pacific community

Despite recent progress in the ratification of some of the UNESCO Conventions in culture, a progress in the ratification of other Conventions including the 2001 Underwater Cultural Heritage Convention has been slow. This Initiative aims to redress this Situation by supporting the promotion of the Conventions in the region.

The initiative will be implemented as a partnership between PIF, UNESCO, PHH and other CROP agencies (SPC and SPREP), regional professional organisations and civil society organisations involved in cultural heritage (such as ICOMOS Pasefica and PIMA). This regional implementation can only be effective if additional funding is secured through this initiative, as the culture sector is chronically underfunded.

A Steering Committee will be established for the initiative. Within the framework of the Pacific World Heritage Action Plan and ICH Safeguarding Strategy, a Pacific World Heritage Workshop and ICH Workshop will identify priority shared heritage, while a project team will be established to prepare and implement activities for each of the selected heritage.

The initiatives' main beneficiaries are the peoples of the Pacific as custodians of diversity of cultures.

Regulatory or legislative changes may be required for some of the Pacific island states so that national heritage register and ICH inventory will be established as management tools for heritage.

The key risks in implementing this initiative might include unexpected changes in government and natural disasters.

There is no similar ongoing initiative of regional scope at intergovernmental level.

The proposed timeframe for this initiative is 10 years (2016-2025).

The sustainability of the initiative will be ensured by the commitment of states parties in the region to the UNESCO Conventions.

Funding

UNESCO's regular budget continues to have a focus on the promotion of the UNESCO's Conventions in culture. Once countries join the Conventions, they can benefit from technical and financial assistances through international cooperation mechanisms, including international funds established by relevant Conventions, to implement the Conventions at national and regional levels.

PHH's capacity building activities will indeed to be funded with additional resources to be raised from UNESCO and other development partners

It is expected that, under this initiative, additional funding will be made available, eventually through PIF, for the above objectives.

5. Alignment to Regional Vision, Values and Objectives

Briefly describe how your initiative supports the vision, values and objectives set out in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. These can be found in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism document or in the submissions guideline document.

Please limit your response to no more than 500 words 190

This initiative supports the following vision, values and objectives set out in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

Forum Leaders' Statement: "Pacific peoples are the custodians of the world's largest, most peaceful and abundant ocean, its many islands and its rich diversity of cultures. We celebrate and draw strength from the culture and traditions, language, social values, and religious freedoms and beliefs that bind citizens and communities together, providing sustenance, social stability, and resilience."

Forum Leaders embrace Pacific regionalism as: The expression of a common sense of identity and purpose, leading progressively to the sharing of institutions, resources, and markets, with the purpose of complementing national efforts, overcoming common constraints, and enhancing sustainable and inclusive development within Pacific countries and territories and for the Pacific region as a whole.

Values identified by the Framework for Pacific Regionalism: "We treasure the diversity and heritage of the Pacific and seek an inclusive future in which cultures, traditions and religious beliefs are valued, honoured and developed."

Objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism: Sustainable development that combines economic, social and cultural development in ways that improve livelihoods and well-being and use the environment sustainably.

6. Additional Information

Please provide or attach additional information in support of this initiative.

Please limit your response to no more than 5 pages.

Status of Ratification by Pacific member states of UNESCO Conventions in Culture

	1954 Hague	1954 Protocol of Hague	1999 Protocol of Hague	1970 Illicit Trafficking	1972 World Heritage	2001 Underwater	2003 ICH	2005 DCE
Australia	1984			1989	1974			2010
Cook Islands					2009			
Fiji					1990		2010	
Kiribati					2000			
Marshall Islands					2002		2014	
Micronesia					2002		2013	
Nauru							2013	
NZ	2008	2013	2013	2007	1984			2007
Niue					2001			
Palau					2002		2011	
PNG					1997		2008	
Samoa					2001		2013	
Solomon Islands					1992			
Tonga					2004		2010	
Tuvalu								
Vanuatu					2002		2010	
Total	2	1	1	2	14	0	9	2

Justification for regional implementation

This initiative puts priority on the safeguarding of shared Pacific heritage that represents the region and also is at risk of disappearance due to several factors such as ill-managed development projects, rapid urbanisation, natural disasters including climate change, by strengthening the safeguarding policy and measures and management capacity and seeking for international recognition and protection for heritage and its custodians.

Within the framework of this initiative, a regional action plan for the safeguarding of shared heritage will be developed as a regional strategy.

The capacity building component of this initiative assists states-non-parties to the UNESCO Conventions in joining the Conventions. States parties in the Pacific to the World Heritage Convention and ICH Convention will drive the nomination development process for regional or multi-national heritage that the Steering Committee will identify and agreed upon through regional consultation process.

PIF, UNESCO in Apia, PHH at USP, CROP agencies (SPC and SPREP) will assist Pacific island states in implementing this initiative through policy advice, technical assistance and capacity building in order to overcome national capacity constraints and resource limitations. A biennial meeting of Ministers of culture will provide a forum for monitoring and evaluation of the initiative based on a progress report from the Steering Committee.

This regional implementation can only be effective if additional funding is secured through this initiative, as the culture sector is chronically underfunded with national budget of Pacific SIDS despite its intrinsic value of culture and its growing socio-economic contribution to sustainable development.

Examples of trans-boundary heritage that received international recognition and protection

World Heritage Convention

Asia: Silk Roads: The Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor by China, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan
Europe: Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps by Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Switzerland

ICH Convention

Mediterranean Diet by Cyprus, Croatia, Spain, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Portugal
Novruz, Nowrouz, Nooruz, Navruz, Nauroz, Navruz (New Year Celebration) by Azerbaijan, India, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan

UNESCO Online Resources

UNESCO Apia website: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/apia/>

World Heritage

Pasivika Islands Connected through Heritage: Final Report of the Pacific World Heritage Workshop (Suva, Fiji, November 2013)
World Heritage Papers No. 35: Understanding World Heritage in Asia and the Pacific – The Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting 2010-2012 (2012)
World Heritage Papers No. 34: World Heritage in a Sea of Islands – Pacific 2009 Programme (2012)
Final Report of UNESCO Pacific World Heritage Workshop (2011)
ICOMOS Thematic Study: Early Human Expansion and Innovation in the Pacific (2010)
ICOMOS Thematic Study: Cultural Landscapes of the Pacific Islands (2008)

Intangible Cultural Heritage

Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Pacific (2011)
Traditional Knowledge for Adapting to Climate Change (2013)
Traditional Knowledge and Wisdom: Themes for the Pacific Islands (2014)

Underwater Cultural Heritage

Workshop Report: Towards the Protection of UCH (Honiara, Solomon Islands, 2009) (2010)
Underwater Cultural Heritage in Oceania (2010)
Final Report - UCH and SIDS at the 3rd UN International Conference on SIDS (Samoa, 2014) (2014)

Museum Development

Final Report of UNESCO Pacific Workshop on the Protection of National Cultural Heritage: No to Illicit Traffic in Cultural Property (Nadi, Fiji, June 2011) (2010)

SPC Online Resources

Report of Meeting: Second Meeting of Ministers for Culture (Honiara, Solomon Islands, July 2012) (2012)

The Pacific ICH Mapping Toolkit (2012)

(3 pages)