

Gov.uk Open Consultation - 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/2003-unesco-convention-for-the-safeguarding-of-the-intangible-cultural-heritage>

26th January 2024 Roundtable discussion, focus on England

DCMS provided a short summary of some of the key points of the roundtable discussion and chat:

There was lots of discussion about the **taxonomy of ICH**. Some individuals felt that focusing on hyper specific traditions could be detrimental to the wider culture of a tradition. They would prefer to see traditions grouped largely then broken down into smaller descriptions within that nomination. Some expressed a desire to focus mostly on the older events/traditions. Others felt that the varied and new traditions are just as important as they lead to traditions adapting with change. Others felt that the local, regionalised traditions were key to holding communities together. A suggestion was made that the more specific traditions be used as good examples of safeguarding - i.e. how a tradition has adapted to meet specific needs.

Some individuals thought the **criteria of 'must be currently practised'** was an important distinction, but others felt it was too restrictive - it could isolate disabled practitioners who are unable to practise, as well as traditions which are more ad hoc or infrequent. Questions came up regarding who will advocate for the traditions which are not currently practised.

There was a discussion about taking an **intergenerational approach to defining ICH**, with some speaking about not defining traditions as being too new, and others favouring a broader definition and not wanting the inventory to become too exclusive.

The idea of **using commercial gain as a criterion** for exclusion was felt unworkable, as this would exclude a lot of crafts, for example.

There was a discussion about **representation and respect**. A point about minority groups being unable to access the consultation was raised. Additionally, a discussion about linguistic diversity and language occurred. General support for ensuring that everyone feels represented and respected.

Individuals asked **what category their tradition would fall into**. More emphasis is needed going forward on how traditions could fit within multiple categories - how the categories are not designed to be restrictive. A discussion was had about how to domesticate the language of the Convention and make it more user-friendly/sensible for UK communities.