

**CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE  
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**INCEPTION PHASE RESULTS WORKSHOP**

**INTERNATIONAL FOOD ATLAS AND DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR SAFEGUARDING,  
PROMOTING AND TRANSMITTING FOODWAYS TO FUTURE GENERATIONS**

**10 March 2025  
Online**

**Concept note**

## Introduction

Foodways are a defining marker of cultural identities. They involve knowledge, know-how, and social practices transmitted within communities concerning the sourcing, preparation, and consumption of food, including the provision of ingredients and the roles of all people involved. Traditional foodways, both those related to everyday life as well as those associated with special occasions (such as rituals, social practices and festive events) constitute an important part of the intangible heritage of communities everywhere in the world.

Practices and knowledge associated with food can enhance synergies between culture and local development by reinforcing local economies, social cohesion, and nurturing a sense of local pride – thus strengthening transmission and safeguarding of living heritage. Recognizing the value of foodways as living heritage and their holistic contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the project, ‘International Food Atlas and Digital Platform for safeguarding, promoting and transmitting foodways to future generations’ aims to advance knowledge and develop interactive tools to safeguard these cultural practices by:

- Developing a digital platform to strengthen the visibility of foodways as living heritage—showcasing their diversity and their interlinkages with sustainable development and highlighting good safeguarding experiences from communities and countries around the world.
- Creating opportunities for stakeholders to engage in dialogue and learning about safeguarding foodways as living heritage, through national and international gatherings, tailored capacity building activities, as well as peer-to-peer exchanges.
- Generating knowledge on the contribution of safeguarding foodways towards community well-being and sustainable development, through research and analytical study.

The project is generously funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia within the framework of the UNESCO Programme on Culture and Digital Technologies. As a project partner, the Culinary Arts Commission is further contributing its expertise and previous experience in safeguarding food-related practices.

Implemented by UNESCO, the project draws on the global network of facilitators for the implementation of the 2003 Convention. It ensures regional balance in participation by incorporating diverse examples and experiences related to foodways from around the world. Furthermore, the project seeks to strengthen synergies with other UNESCO culture conventions and international frameworks, to leverage the potential of safeguarding foodways for sustainable development.

## Inception phase

Foodways as living heritage have emerged as a new thematic focus within the 2003 Convention, and their growing prominence is well demonstrated through the 50 foodways-related inscriptions currently on the Lists of the Convention from 54 countries around the world. To further develop this thematic focus and lay a solid foundation for the implementation of the Food Atlas project – including the development of an innovative digital platform – an inception phase of the project was launched in October 2023 and concluded in December 2024.

This phase involved comprehensive desk review, expert consultations, and field research in

selected countries, generating valuable insights into the current state of foodways as living heritage, their safeguarding needs, and capacity building priorities. Maintaining a community focus, the inception phase also included a reflection on how to integrate UNESCO Global Priorities and priority groups in implementation.

The expert consultations ensured diverse participation, including voices from Afro-descendant communities and Indigenous Peoples, also placing a special emphasis on gender dimensions. Field research was carried out in selected countries in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. It included Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). In addition, the research also identified various community-based safeguarding initiatives led by or involving youth and Indigenous Peoples.

The reflections on the digital platform of the project also gave way to meaningful synergies with other ongoing work of the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, notably the online platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences, which aims to provide a space for communities and other stakeholders of the 2003 Convention to share, exchange, follow-up, collaborate and build capacities about good safeguarding experiences. The platform is being developed as part of a broader implementation of Article 18 of the 2003 Convention, which refers to programmes, projects and activities that best reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention. The digital platform of the Food Atlas project will be developed within the platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences, as a thematic focus.

Based on the rich insights generated during the inception phase, an implementation strategy for the project has been established to guide the community-based capacity building and peer-learning activities as well as the digital platform development.

### Workshop objectives and participants

The present workshop is being organized in order to share the results of the inception phase with contributing partners and specialists. The workshop will gather experts from previous Secretariat-led workshops (October 2023 and March 2024), specialists who conducted research (June and October 2024), the Culinary Arts Commission and the Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as a UNESCO team with colleagues from eight field offices.

The main objectives of the workshop are to:

- share the results of the inception phase, including insights from the four expert workshops and project research;
- present the project implementation strategy; and
- gather participants' feedback on the proposed capacity building, peer-learning activities, and digital platform development.

### Workshop information and contacts

This session will take place online on **10 March 2025, from 3.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. (Paris time)**, and will have interpretation in English/Spanish/Arabic.

Workshop documents will be posted under the following link:

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/events/international-food-atlas-inception-phase-results-workshop-01030>

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