

Terms of Reference of Consultancy Contract

Assignment title	Consultant
Level of Assignment	Middle
Sector	Natural Sciences
Duty Station	Remote/UNESCO Office, Kathmandu, Nepal
Period of consultancy	15 September 2025 to 15 June 2026

Background

On 16 August 2024, a Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) severely impacted Thame, a historic Sherpa village within Nepal's Sagarmatha National Park (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). The flood damaged vital infrastructure and displaced over 130 people, threatening the community's cultural continuity and traditional knowledge systems. While scientific assessments by Himalayan Cryosphere, Climate and Disaster Research Center (HiCCDRC), Kathmandu University, and Digo Bikas Institute examined the physical damage and hazards, the cultural impact remains undocumented.

In response, and in consultation with local authorities, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), the project aims to document the impacts of GLOFs on the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of the Indigenous community of Thame. Anchored in the 2003 UNESCO Convention, the LINKS Programme, and the 2025 International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, the project will contribute towards safeguarding cultural practices, explore the role of living heritage in disaster resilience based on which an action plan will be developed to inform the ongoing revision of the Sagarmatha National Park Management Plan. It will also raise awareness through a documentary video and serve as a pilot for broader application in other climate-vulnerable regions.

Output

It is within the 42 C/5 results framework of Outputs:

- 3.SC1 – Inclusive knowledge and capacities of Member States strengthened to advance and apply science for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem and biodiversity conservation and restoration, and disaster risk resilience, and

- 5.CLT4 - Member States and communities' capacities strengthened to identify, safeguard and promote living heritage, in line with the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Contribution to UNESCO Performance Indicator

It contributes to following Outputs:

- 3.SC1 PI 8. Number of gender-responsive scientific assessments conducted and knowledge networks supported that mobilize, enhance and reinforce transmission of local and Indigenous knowledge particularly transmitted by women contributing to climate change issues, ecosystems and biodiversity monitoring including in the UNESCO designated sites.
- 5.CLT4 - PI2 - Number of Member States sustainably safeguarding living heritage through enhanced international cooperation and assistance mechanisms of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Objective of the work

The Consultant will support in ensuring that the environmental, climate change and DRR dimensions are integrated into the documentation process, training, and the final action plan for safeguarding ICH. The consultant will also provide technical expertise on the intersection of climate change, GLOFs, and disaster risk reduction within the context of ICH safeguarding. Support capacity-building for local stakeholders including UN Community Volunteers, on integrating DRR into community-based ICH inventorying. He/she will contribute to the documentation, analysis, and validation of the impacts of GLOFs on the living heritage of Indigenous Peoples in Thame. Finally, the consultant will contribute to the development of DRR-focused recommendations for the Action Plan to inform the revision of the Sagarmatha National Park Management Plan.

Coordination and Supervision

Under the overall authority of the Head of the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu and the direct supervision of the Head of Unit and Project Officer of the Natural Sciences Unit and Culture Unit, within the framework of the project, the consultant shall undertake the following assignment for the project.

Assignment details

The consultant will be responsible for working collaboratively with other consultants, with the following tasks:

1. Capacity Building and Technical Guidance

Design and deliver training modules on integrating DRR and climate change adaptation into ICH inventorying, aligned with the 2003 Convention. Include a session on climate hazards in the Sagarmatha region, with a focus on community-based resilience strategy. Integrate Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles into all training and community engagement.

2. Field Research and Documentation

Participate in two field missions to Thame village:

2.1 First Mission (approx. 7 days, Oct/Nov 2025) for Community Engagement and Data Collection in order to

- Conduct stakeholder consultations with indigenous peoples, local leaders, women and relevant organizations.
- Organize an orientation workshop for UN volunteers and indigenous community engaged in inventory.
- Engage with the indigenous community to carry out:
 - Surveys
 - Interviews
 - Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

2.2 Second Mission (5 days, May 2026) to:

- Present preliminary findings to the community and stakeholders.
- Co-facilitate a validation workshop with approximately 70 participants.
- Refine DRR recommendations based on feedback.

In preparing and carrying out these two missions, the National ICH Expert, UNESCO Culture staff and community volunteers, the consultant will ensure that environmental and DRR perspectives are embedded in the ICH inventory.

Following the two missions, the consultant shall document Indigenous knowledge systems related to hazard prediction, preparedness, and coping strategies for GLOFs.

3. Action Plan Development

Contribute DRR and climate resilience components to the Action Plan for safeguarding living heritage.

Ensure recommendations are practical, culturally appropriate and aligned with national DRR frameworks and the Sagarmatha National Park Management Plan.

4. Technical Input to Communication Outputs

Provide fact-based DRR and climate change content and data for web articles, documentary video, infographics and social media materials. Review scripts, short write ups and stories to ensure scientific accuracy on the causes, impacts, and preventive measures of GLOF. When required, provide photos and short videos from field and missions closely consulting with UNESCO's communications focal person.

Ensure acknowledgement of UNESCO, HEF and its donors in reports, document, speeches, public meetings and other activities as a part of the project.

Consult with UNESCO's Communications focal point before publishing any materials related to the project on any form of media (online and offline).

5. Reporting and Documentation

Submit detailed field notes, activity reports, and consultation summaries including final report. Provide inputs to the final mission reports and ICH inventory document. Support the review of FPIC documentation and ethical compliance.

***Logistics and Travel**

The consultant must be available for two field missions (one in October/November 2025 and other in May 2026) to Thame village (approx. 7-10 days each). Travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the project, based on standard UN rates (in accordance with UNESCO policy).

Deliverables and payment schedule

N o.	Deliverable (s)	Timeline	Amount	Percentage
1	Submission of training module	8 October 2025		
2	Summary report of field consultations, interviews, and FGDs	30 November 25		
3	Submission of draft inventory integrating DRR and climate change adaptation into ICH inventory and draft action plan.	January 26		
4	Submission of final mission report, validated Action Plan- DRR section,	March 26		

	and reviewed communication material			
	Total			

Qualifications and Experience

EDUCATION

- Master's degree in environmental science, climate change, disaster risk reduction or related field.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- At least 7 years of professional experience in DRR, climate adaptation, or related environmental fields.
- Experience with GLOF risk assessment or climate hazards in mountain ecosystems is highly desirable.
- Familiarity with UNESCO's 2003 Convention and ICH safeguarding approaches.
- Experience working with Indigenous Peoples will be an asset.
- Strong facilitation, coordination, and participatory engagement skills.

LANGUAGES

- Excellent written and spoken Nepalese.
- Excellent written and spoken English.