

**REPORT BY A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION ACCREDITED
TO ACT IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY TO THE COMMITTEE ON ITS
CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION**

**Deadline: 15 February 2023
for examination in 2023**

File may be downloaded at:
<https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms>

*Please provide only the information requested below.
Annexes or other additional materials cannot be accepted.*

A. Identification of the organization

A.1. Name of the organization submitting this report

A.1.a. *Provide the full official name of the organization in its original language, as it appears on the official documents.*

FIAT-IFTA - Fédération Internationale des Associations de Thanatologues - International Federation of Thanatologists Associations

A.1.b. *Name of the organization in English and/or French.*

Fédération Internationale des Associations de Thanatologues - International Federation of Thanatologists Associations

A.1.c. *Accreditation number of the organization (as indicated in all previous correspondence: NGO-90XXX)*

NGO-90253

A.2. Address of the organization

Provide the complete postal address of the organization, as well as additional contact information such as its telephone number, email address, website, etc. This should be the postal address where the organization carries out its business, regardless of where it may be legally domiciled. In the case of internationally active organizations, please provide the address of the headquarters.

Organization: FIAT-IFTA - Fédération Internationale des Associations de Thanatologues
- International Federation of Thanatologists Associations

Address: Apolloweg 325, 8239DC, Lelystad – Netherlands

Telephone number: 0031320322110

Email address: info@thanos.org

Website: www.thanos.org

Other relevant information: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/flatiftaworld>
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/flat_ifta/
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/flat-ifta-world-funeral-federation>

A.3. Contact person for correspondence

Provide the complete name, address and other contact information of the person responsible for correspondence concerning this report.

Title (Ms/Mr., etc.): Mr

Family name: De Luca

Given name: Emerson

Institution/position: Executive Secretary

Address: Apolloweg 325, 8239DC, Lelystad – Netherlands

Telephone number: 0031320322110

Email address: info@thanos.org

Other relevant information: Mobile 0044 7866413191

B. Contribution of the organization to the implementation of the Convention at the national and international levels (Chapter III and Article 19 of the Convention, paragraph 156 of the Operational Directives)¹

Distinguish between completed activities and ongoing activities contributing to the eight thematic areas of the Convention's Overall Results Framework², as well as to the preparation of periodic reports, nominations, proposals and requests under the Convention's international cooperation mechanisms. If you have not contributed, this should be indicated. Also, describe any obstacles or difficulties that your organization may have encountered in such participation.

B.1. *Describe your organization's contribution to strengthening **institutional and human capacities** for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.*

Not to exceed 250 words

FIAT-IFTA is a worldwide organization of the funeral sector with members from over 70 countries representing every continent of the world. The organization provides advocacy, education, information, products, programs and services to help members to enhance the quality of service to bereaved families in all countries.

The International Council of Direction of FIAT-IFTA is made up of 45 National Members, which in turn represent funeral branches in their respective countries – in total over 22,000 companies around the world.

One of the clear objectives of the organization is the safeguarding of the global funeral heritage, working with partner organizations to create awareness among governments and other international bodies.

FIAT-IFTA has its own Intangible Heritage Committee whose remit is to create awareness and to formulate concrete actions in co-operation with National Members. This promotes the issue of intangible cultural heritage to a significant proportion of the funeral industry worldwide as onwards to many local communities and thousands of individuals.

Despite the challenges presented to the funeral industry by the Covid-19 pandemic, some important steps were taken during the period since our last report in 2019. The information in this report will give an insight of some initiatives of FIAT-IFTA and its members in many parts of the world, which demonstrates our commitment to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

B.2. *Describe your organization's participation in activities related to the **transmission of and education** for intangible cultural heritage. Explain, in particular, how your organization cooperates with communities, groups and, where relevant, individuals.*

Not to exceed 250 words

FIAT-IFTA is committed to the transmission of knowledge concerning intangible cultural heritage both among its members and to the wider society.

The organization is expanding its Educational Program for members (previously known as its Exchange Program). A number of initiatives have taken place under this program. One of them was a pilot project where a member from Parque de Las Memorias in Bolivia participated at a training program in Japan. The training took place in May 2019 and was organized by ZENSOREN, the Japanese Funeral Organization. The objective was to learn about the industry in Japan as well as local funeral traditions and rituals. This project will serve as a template for other such initiatives.

1. In case your organization operates in several States, please indicate clearly which State or States are concerned by your answers where appropriate.
2. For further information on the Overall Results Framework, please refer to the Chapter 8 of the Basic Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/basic-texts-00503>

The Program was hindered by the pandemic due to travel restrictions and the organization is now looking in to expand this particular project, including offering financial support to applicants.

Also under the remit of the global Educational Project, FIAT-IFTA is supporting a course in Mexico in conjunction with Group Gayosso and the Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey. The course is dedicated to training for funeral managers and features a module on the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Funerals.

In 2022, the organization established Yan 'an Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritance and Protection Base (located at the Xianheling Cemetery and Funeral Home) which is dedicated to the study and transmission of knowledge concerning local funeral practices.

Additionally, FIAT-IFTA is continuing to forge new relationships with institutions for the transmission and education of intangible cultural heritage, including funeral museums in Austria (Bestattungsmuseum Wien Museum) and P.R. of China (Shanghai Humanism Memorial Museum).

B.3. Describe your organization's participation in the **inventorying and research** of intangible cultural heritage. Explain, in particular, how your organization cooperates with communities, groups and, where relevant, individuals.

Not to exceed 250 words

FIAT-IFTA produces a periodical heritage report which is distributed to its members. The last edition of the report was published in 2020 (see link below).

<https://magazine.thanos.org/funeral-heritage-report-2020/page/1>.

Work is underway on the next issue which will be presented at the organization's conference in Cracow in 2024. The organization has created a framework for research and a set of guidelines for recording information to ensure a consistency and quality between contributors. National Members have been engaged in this research which has been communicated via the organization's conferences, email and social media.

Fifteen items of intangible cultural heritage were represented in the report representing all parts of the world, including the Aboriginal Death Ritual (Australia), the Role of Music in traditional African American Funerals (USA), Mortuary Rites (Japan), Funeral Customs of the Sani Minority (P.R. of China), Traditional Oromo Burial Practices (Ethiopia), Carved Grave Markers (Hungary) and Giant Mayan Kites (Guatemala).

Other work undertaken has included:

- establishment of a database of Chinese funeral and burial cultural heritage that includes 251 ICH items, including five world-class items,
- co-operation between our National Member in China and the Rites Research Center of Peking University to hold an academic seminar in April 2019 on "Mourning Clothes, Rites and Rites",
- research on Intangible Funeral Culture on indigenous communities in Brazil by the National Member in Brazil, AFAI (Associacao Funeraria de Assuntos Internacionais). Some preliminary research has been done on Bororo funeral Rituals as well as Karuap Funeral Rituals. Another scope of the project is the research "Funeral Flower Wreaths" in Brazil.
- research on funeral traditions and customs in Mauritania, working with our local member Pompes Funebres Mauritanie.

B.4. Describe your organization's participation in developing **policies, as well as legal and administrative measures**, for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Explain, in particular, how your organization cooperates with communities, groups and, where relevant, individuals.

Not to exceed 250 words

Many of the National Members liaise directly with governmental, private and other non-governmental institutions on various aspects of the funeral industry and through this dialogue,

the organization seeks to pursue the objective of raising awareness at an institutional level of the need to safeguard intangible cultural heritage.

One example of this co-operation was the assistance given to the 101 Institute of the Ministry of Civil Affairs in China to compile the series of Funeral and Burial Culture System and to complete a cultural research report entitled "Funeral Customs in Northern Shaanxi".

B.5. Describe your organization's participation in promoting the **role of intangible cultural heritage and its safeguarding in society**. Explain, in particular, how your organization cooperates with communities, groups and, where relevant, individuals.

Not to exceed 250 words

FIAT-IFTA has added the subject of Intangible Cultural Heritage as one of the core projects of the organization, and has created a dedicated committee to address the subject. The Committee is led by Mrs. Yuanyuan, from the Chinese Funeral Association. Significant steps have been taken by China and in 2019 the Committee sent an invitation to all National Members to follow this lead. With the advent of Covid-19, we did not make as much progress as we would have liked, however some important steps have taken place.

One of the initiatives is to have a dedicated timeslot during our conferences for the discussion of intangible cultural heritage.

This initiative was introduced at our conference in Yokohama, Japan in June 2021, on the occasion of the celebration of 50 years of the organization. The organization was honored to receive a presentation on the subject of "Japanese Culture to the Future" from Her Imperial Highness Princess Akiko of Mikasa, from the Imperial House of Japan. It was an insightful presentation which helped immensely to promote the role intangible cultural heritage and its safeguarding in society.

During our conference in Budapest in June 2022, a presentation was received from Gábor Móczár, representing the National Heritage Institute of Hungary, which works on asset management for several multicultural cemeteries and acts as an umbrella organization uniting the national and historic memorials of Hungary.

B.6. Describe your organization's participation in **raising awareness** about intangible cultural heritage. Explain, in particular, how your organization cooperates with communities, groups and, where relevant, individuals.

Not to exceed 250 words

FIAT-IFTA acts as an agent for the transmission of ideas, goals and objectives from UNESCO to the organization's widespread global membership and from there into the communities that those members serve.

FIAT-IFTA is raising awareness via its participation at funeral fairs, where, by engaging with individuals and companies, both members and non-members, the organization is addressing the subject of intangible cultural heritage including publicization and presentation of the Funeral Heritage Report. During the last year alone, we were present in Dusseldorf (Germany) at the BEFA exhibition, in Coventry (United Kingdom) at the NFE Exhibition, in Bologna (Italy) at the FENIOF, and in Baltimore (United States) at the NFDA Exhibition.

Two other examples of how the organization is raising awareness in society at large include the production of television documentaries and the creation of exhibitions.

An example of the first was the production of a documentary film on Mourning Clothes in Northern Shaanxi, in cooperation with ICH inheritor, Liu Shabao, and the follow up publication in 2019 of a book named Marriage and Funeral Customs in Yanchuan.

An example of the second was the opening in 2022 of a public exhibition entitled *Funeral Customs of the Northern Shaanxi* at the Xianheling Cemetery. During the exhibition, we put on a series of cultural intangible heritage research activities, life education activities, and skills competitions for ICH inheritors. Meanwhile, traditional intangible culture education and research

will be conducted for primary and middle school students.

B.7. Describe your organization's participation in facilitating the engagement of communities, groups and individuals, as well as other stakeholders, for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

Not to exceed 250 words

The very nature of FIAT-IFTA makes it an organization embedded in the communities where each member operates. Dealing with funerals is always an emotional and sensitive matter and the participation and involvement of the community in particular with strong funeral traditions is pivotal.

One factor we have perceived is that many communities do not view their traditions, rituals, etc. as intangible cultural heritage, and it is the aim of the organization to step by step make them aware of the importance of their heritage as well as potential risks they face.

The many initiatives stated in this report, take place with and for the communities the industry serves. A further example is the World United for Life, an initiative undertaken by the FIAT-IFTA Regional Member in Latin America, ALPAR with the involvement of many Countries around the world. The initiative started in 2012 with the objective to celebrate life in different cultures and the last event which took place in September 2022 had the participation of 38 Countries.

B.8. Describe your organization's **engagement in cooperation at the bilateral, subregional, regional or international levels** for the implementation of the Convention, including initiatives such as the exchange of information and experience, and other joint initiatives.

Not to exceed 250 words

FIAT-IFTA has members in over 70 countries worldwide and our Heritage Committee is formed by a number of members from different countries:

- China (China Funeral Association)
- United Kingdom (National Association of Funeral Directors)
- Belgium (Funebra)
- Latin America (ALPAR, The Latin American Association of Funeral Directors)
- Mexico (Anemex, Mexican Association of Funeral Directors)
- Austria (Bundesinnung der Rauchfangkehrer und der Bestatter / Federal Association of the Funeral Industry)

The objective of this committee and the organizations they represent is to work on forging new relationships and projects relating to intangible cultural heritage.

Many other organizations mentioned in this report, have been taking part in discussions and collaborating with FIAT-IFTA in ongoing and new activities which reflect the scope and reach of the organization's Intangible Cultural heritage project.

B.9. Describe your organization's involvement in or contribution to the drafting of the national Periodic Report on the implementation of the Convention.

Not to exceed 250 words

FIAT-IFTA member in Austria Bundesinnung der Rauchfangkehrer und der Bestatter collaborated with Austrian Commission for UNESCO, for the inscription to the Austrian directory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of "funeral directors as knowledge-keeper of funeral culture and part of cemetery culture." This was an important step for the organization and will serve as a beacon project for others to follow.

Through the strengthening of its Heritage Committee and participation of its members via contacts at National Level in different countries, hopes in the future to further participate in the drafting of national Periodic Reports and believes that it has the ability to make a useful

contribution.

B.10. Describe your organization's participation in the preparation of nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List or Representative List, requests for International Assistance or proposals of Good Safeguarding Practices.

Not to exceed 250 words

As stated above, we are working on different projects and we hope that in the near future, we will be able to contribute on the preparation of nominations to the Safeguarding Lists and Representative lists.

We are working on the preparation for the nomination of the Yellow Emperor Mausoleum Memorial Ritual, a national intangible cultural heritage project of China, into the representative list.

The extensive research undertaken by the National Members of the organization and the collation of international knowledge by the organization itself will enable the organization to identify "At Risk" intangible cultural heritage and to make safeguarding recommendations.

C. Cooperation with UNESCO

Has your organization carried out activities in cooperation with UNESCO? If yes, please tick the relevant boxes and provide information in the box below.

- Direct cooperation with UNESCO (Headquarters and Field Offices)
- Activities for which you have received the authorization to use the emblem of UNESCO/of the 2003 Convention
- Cooperation through the 2003 Convention's Global Network of Facilitators
- Cooperation with Category 2 Centres
- Cooperation with National Commissions for UNESCO
- Cooperation with UNESCO Chairs
- Financial support from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund
- Financial support from the Participation Programme
- Other types of cooperation

Not to exceed 250 words

FIAT-IFTA has not yet had the opportunity to carry out any activities in cooperation with UNESCO.

D. Participation in the work of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

D.1 *Has your organization participated in the sessions of the Committee? If so, please indicate which sessions you attended and whether you had any specific role during these meetings.*

Not to exceed 250 words

FIAT-IFTA attended the 14th regular session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO, Fontenoy Building, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France, in April 2019 as well as the Ninth UNESCO Congress on Intangible Cultural Heritage in Paris, France in July 2022.

D.2 *Has your organization served as a member of the Evaluation Body (paragraphs 26 to 31 of the Operational Directives), or as a member of the Consultative Body (between 2012 and 2014)? If so, please indicate the period.*

Not to exceed 100 words

The organization has not served as a member of the Evaluation Body.

D.3 *In what way(s) has your organization provided advisory services to the Committee (paragraph 96 of the Operational Directives) or in what way(s) do you foresee that it might provide such services in the future?*

Not to exceed 500 words

FIAT-IFTA has not to date been requested to provide any advisory services to the Committee, however we believe that we would be able to make a valuable contribution.

Through the ICH NGO Forum, the intended participation in the UNESCO "Memory of the World" Program and by working with other UNESCO bodies, FIAT-IFTA aims to carry out coordinated activities with UNESCO in order to preserve and safeguard the world funeral heritage traditions, customs and rituals, such as:

1. With the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage as the framework for action, according to different national contexts, to draft relevant documents, reports and declarations, and put forward reasonable suggestions on ICH protection;
2. To make use of the social media and other online communication to connect members for professional information exchange, and provide support to members in various forms such as expert consultation;
3. To Produce and publicize the Funeral Heritage Report.

E. Capacities of your organization to evaluate nominations, proposals and requests (paragraphs 27 and 96 of the Operational Directives):

E.1. *Nominations, proposals and requests are available for evaluation only in English or French. Do members of your organization or your staff have a very good command of English or French? If so, please indicate which language(s) and the number of those members or staff.*

Not to exceed 250 words

The working language of the organization is English. Many members of the organization as well as staff of FIAT-IFTA are native English or French or are fluent speakers.

E.2. *Does your organization have experience in working across several intangible cultural heritage domains? Please describe your experiences.*

Not to exceed 250 words

Members of the organization are involved on a range of projects related to the funerals. Domains of intangible cultural heritage that are found within the funeral industry include rituals, music and poetry, craftsmanship and other local community traditions.

E.3. Describe the experience of your organization in evaluating and analysing documents such as proposals or applications.

Not to exceed 250 words

FIAT-IFTA has on several occasions helped evaluating and analyzing documents. The latest project we have been involved with was a review of the Compassionate Transportation Manual produced by the IATA (International Air Transportation Association) which resulted in a substantial edit of sections relating to protocols for international repatriation.

E.4. Does your organization have experience in drafting synthetic texts in English or French? Please describe your experience and indicate in which language(s) and the number of those members or staff.

Not to exceed 250 words

E.5. Does your organization have experience in working at the international level or the capacity to apply local experience to an international context? Please describe such experience.

Not to exceed 250 words

As described above, as the organization has members in over 70 countries and therefore has an international scope. The organization and its members work with many different institutions both nationally and internationally on regulations for the funeral industry, transportation of the deceased worldwide, exchange of experience and best practice

F. Membership in the ICH NGO Forum

Indicate below whether your organization wishes to (continue to) be part of the ICH NGO Forum. Please note that membership is contingent upon the decision of the Committee to maintain the accreditation of your organization.

For more information on the ICH NGO Forum and its activities, please see: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/ngo-forums-00422>.

Yes

No

G. Signature

The report must include the name and signature of the person empowered to sign it on behalf of your organization.

Name: Emerson De Luca

Title: Executive Secretary

Date: 02nd February 2023

Signature:

