



# Guidelines for Folklore Groups

CIOFF INTERNATIONAL CENTER  
Dissemination and documentation

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PEACE IS IN OUR HANDS  
CULTIVONS LA PAIX  
CULTIVEMOS LA PAZ



السلام بين أيدينا  
Мир в наших руках  
让我们播种和平

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# CIOFF

## Guidelines for Folklore Groups

### Attending International Festivals



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## 1. Introduction

**1.1** These guidelines are for folklore groups that are attending, or intending to participate in international folklore festivals. The guidelines have been prepared by CIOFF.

**1.2** There are three types of international festivals:

- CIOFF International festivals, which have met the quality requirements of CIOFF, and which are recognized as “CIOFF International festivals”. These festivals are expected to comply with certain conditions (see appendix 1 of these Guidelines);
- CIOFF Festivals are festivals associated to a National Section of CIOFF. These festivals shall be recognized by the responsible National Section.;
- Other international festivals which are intending to join their CIOFF National Section.

**1.3** CIOFF has identified three types of groups\*

- AUTHENTIC;
- ELABORATED;
- STYLIZED;

\* See appendix 2 for the characteristics of these three types.

Folklore groups may wish to use one of these terms to describe themselves.



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## 2. First Contacts and Invitations

**2.1** A group that wishes to participate in international festivals should initially contact its CIOFF National Section, giving details of the countries, or time of year, or specific festivals that it would like to attend. The National Section can then put the group in contact with an appropriate festival, via the National Section in that country.

**2.2** The group can write directly to a specific festival, or to the National Section in a specific country, but a copy of the letter should also be sent to the group's own National Section. In these circumstances, the festival or the festival's National Section is not obliged to reply to the group, but may do so if they wish.



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**2.3** Some festivals issue invitations over a year in advance, and festivals are recommended to issue invitations at least six to eight months in advance. Groups should therefore plan their visits to international festivals well in advance.

**2.4** Replies to letters of invitation and other information should be written if possible in one of the following languages: English, Spanish, French, German or Russian.

**2.5** When issuing an invitation, the festival should give as much information about the festival as possible. In return, the group should be ready to provide as much information about itself as possible.

**2.6** The group should provide the following information:

- Full name of the group;
- Name and address of the group's Director / Administrator, plus telephone and fax numbers, e-mail address and Website of the group;
- The main languages spoken by the Director / Administrator. If necessary, the name and telephone number of someone in the group who speaks the language used at the festival should be provided;

- The number of members of the group intending to visit the festival;
- Whether or not the group contains any children under the age of 16. If so, then the ages of the children should be given. If the group is a children's group, then the number, names and roles of adult supervisors/ carers should be given;
- Written documents about the group: history of the group, description of repertoire (including their place of origin), description of costumes, and description of musical instruments;
- Whether or not the group wishes to use fire in its performances (eg. torches, candles, fire-juggling, fire-eating, etc.). The use of fire may not be possible because of legal or insurance reasons;
- A video of the group;
- Good quality photographs of the group. Groups should provide a variety of recent photographs. The festival might require black and white or colour, prints or slides. The photographs should be taken by a professional photographer – usually they will be used in publicity, leaflets, programmes, press, etc.;
- Details on how the group intends to travel to the festival, eg. plane, bus, ferry, etc.;
- Whether or not the group members need to change costumes during performances.



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**2.7** Festivals should include policy statements in their invitations about recorded music and electric or amplified music. Most festivals insist that only live music is used, ie no tape-recorded music. If the group needs to use tape-recorded music, it should inform the festival at the time it replies to the invitation. Some festivals have a policy that electric or amplified instruments are not allowed. The group should make it clear to the festival if it intends to use this type of instrument.

**2.8** The invitation from the festival should also include the following information:

- Details of accommodation and meals offered by the festival, including the number of people sleeping in each room;
- Financial conditions (travel): the festival should state who will pay the cost of transport to the country of the festival, and state who will pay the cost of transport within the country of the festival. (The usual arrangement is that the group will pay the cost of transport to the country, and the festival will pay for transport within the country. This is obligatory for CIOFF festivals: see Appendix 1, 6.3.) The festival should also state which is the most convenient airport, ferry port or border crossing for the entry of the group;
- Financial conditions (pocket money/expenses): if the festival does not provide other financial support, then there will be a 'pocket money' compensation. (CIOFF Festivals are obliged to make this payment or its equivalent, and National Sections can determine the level of payment) ;
- If the invitation is part of an exchange of groups between two countries, then financial and other arrangements may be different, and should be explained;
- If the invitation is for a tour which includes more than one festival or other events, the festival will give full details of the itinerary, including the person(s) responsible for the tour arrangements;
- The length/duration of performances, including the length of the longest performance of the group at the festival;
- The date by which the group should reply to the invitation. If the group does not respond by this date, the festival is not obliged to accept the group.



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**2.9** Most festivals will only confirm the invitation to the group after it has received all the information requested. For example, many festivals will not confirm an invitation until they have seen a video of the group.

### 3. Confirmation

**3.1** When the festival has decided to accept the group, the festival will send written confirmation to the group, with a copy of the confirmation to the National Section of the group. Some festivals exchange written contracts with the groups. Groups are expected to confirm acceptance and / or return the signed contract as soon as possible, and certainly by the date requested by the festival.

**3.2** The group should now provide further information:

- The exact number of participants, including the number of men and women, number of dancers, musicians, directors/leaders and drivers. Festivals are not obliged to accommodate and provide meals for extra people, eg. family members. However, see earlier comments on children's groups;
- If accommodation is in private homes, then a list of names, ages and sex of all participants should be sent, plus preferred arrangements for shared accommodation;
- Details of food requirements, eg. diet restrictions because of religion or health, number of vegetarians, etc. The group should also indicate which foods they would prefer to eat;
- Language(s) spoken by members of the group;
- Confirmation that the group has arranged medical insurance. The group is responsible for paying all medical costs during its visit to the festival, including travel to and from the festival;
- Confirmation that the group has arranged visas, if required. The group should make visa applications as soon as possible. The embassies of many countries have an appointment system, and a waiting list for visa applications. Festivals will provide on request formal letters of invitation for the purposes of visa applications. The cost of visas is paid by the group;
- Confirmation of transport arrangements to the festival, plus details of flight times and numbers, ferry times, etc.



MONDIAL DES CULTURES DE DRUMMONDVILLE

**3.3** The festival will also give further details, and request information about the following:

- Description of the sound system: number of microphones available, availability of direct inputs, availability of radio microphones, etc. The festival will provide a stage plan, and request a sound specification. The group should return the sound specification as soon as possible;
- Description of the stage lighting. The festival will request a lighting specification. The group should return the lighting specification as soon as possible, based upon the festival's equipment.



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**3.4** The festival will also provide the following details:

- An outline of the programme, giving more details than the letter of invitation. Details of any special or extended performances will be given, as well as other activities in which the group will participate;
- Description of the stages, including size, and relative positions of the musicians and dancers;
- Location of changing rooms, relative to the stage;
- Arrangements for the group's rest times/day, ie times/day when the group has no performances.

**3.5** Agreement, confirmed in writing, should be made between the festival and the group regarding the financial arrangements, eg. the exact amount of pocket money/expenses, and the payment of any transport costs.

**3.6** No later than one month before the start of the festival, the group should receive:

- A programme of performances at the festival, including length of each performance;
- Travel directions, including a road map if possible, if the group is travelling in its own bus.

## 4. At the Festival

### 4.1 ARRIVAL

4.1.1 The festival will send a representative to meet the group at the arrival airport, ferry port or border crossing if necessary. The group should ensure that the festival representative meets the group's Director and/or Administrator.

4.1.2 When the group arrives at the festival, a festival official will meet the group to discuss any queries about the programme, etc. The group should ensure that the festival official discusses these issues with the group's Director and/or Administrator.

4.1.3 The group should confirm with the festival the list of the names of all group members. This will help the festival with allocating accommodation, and with security.

4.1.4 The festival will provide a guide for each group, preferably someone who speaks the main language of the group. In addition, the group should provide their own interpreter, especially if members of the group do not generally speak the language of the country hosting the festival.

4.1.5 When the group arrives, the group members will be allowed to have a reasonable time for rest and relaxation.

### 4.2 ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD

4.2.1 The festival will provide good quality accommodation, with beds, sheets, blankets and pillows. Flushing toilets, hot and cold running water, baths and/or showers will also be provided in sufficient numbers. Group members should bring their own towels.

4.2.2 The festival will provide three meals a day, at least one of which will be a hot meal. The festival should take care of special requirements, eg. because of religious beliefs, vegetarians, etc.



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The group should have sent the festival any special requirements in advance.

4.2.3 The group should accept that the food will be typical for the country of the festival.

4.2.4 If the accommodation is in private homes, then the group Director and/or Administrator will receive a list of where all group members are staying. Arrangements for transport to and from the accommodation and for all meals should be confirmed. Group members should respect the wishes of their hosts, should not use the telephone without permission and should behave as they would in the homes of friends.

4.2.5 The festival will provide facilities for drinks in between meals, free of charge or for purchase.

4.2.6 The festival will also provide drinks (non-alcoholic) at performances.



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### 4.3 TECHNICAL ARRANGEMENTS

4.3.1 The festival will arrange rehearsal time for the group on the stage if possible. A rehearsal room/space should also be provided.

4.3.2 The festival will arrange a full sound rehearsal for the musicians, singers and dancers. The number of microphones requested by the group should be provided, as well as a sound engineer to balance / mix the sound. The sound system should be good enough to amplify the voices of singers and the percussive sounds of the dancers' feet if the group requires this. During the sound rehearsal, the group should ensure that all instruments are used, as well as all combinations of instruments. During performances, musicians should stand or sit in the same positions as during the rehearsal.

4.3.3 The festival will arrange a lighting rehearsal if possible, so that the level and colour of lighting can be agreed with the group. Changes of lighting during a performance should also be agreed. Special effects, flashing lights, stroboscope lights, etc., should only be used with the agreement of the group.

4.3.4 See earlier comments on the use of fire.

#### 4.4 PROGRAMME

4.4.1 The advance programme should only be changed by the festival in special circumstances, eg. if another group does not appear at the festival, or if the weather requires a change in plans. The group should be flexible in these circumstances.

4.4.2 During the festival, the organizers should confirm the performance times and the length with the group at least 24 hours in advance. Groups must keep to the performance times given by the festival.

4.4.3 The director/leader of the group will be shown all performance venues before the performance, preferably more than 24 hours in advance of the performance.

4.4.4 The festival will arrange regular meetings between the festival director, or representative, and the Director and/or Administrator of the group to discuss issues which arise during the festival. Such issues may include choice of repertoire for performances, facilities provided for the group, and general conduct of the group members. During these meetings, the group should raise any problems which have arisen.



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#### 4.5 Other Matters

4.5.1 **GIFT EXCHANGE:** most festivals present gifts to the groups. Most groups will wish to present gifts to the festival and/or to local town officials. The festival will inform the group when and where this presentation will take place. The group should confirm the arrangements at the start of the festival. Most groups also present gifts to guides, etc.

4.5.2 **REST DAY:** adequate rest time should be allowed during the festival. This should be one full day for a festival lasting at least five days, and one day per week for festivals lasting more than seven days, if practical. During the rest day there should be no performances, and no requirement to wear national costumes. Detailed arrangements for the rest day will be given to the group at the start of the festival. The group should not expect the festival to arrange a bus trip many miles away from the festival.

4.5.3 **MEDICAL TREATMENT:** the group is responsible for making arrangements for medical insurance. The festival may be able to advise the group in advance of the festival. In an emergency, the festival will be responsible for arranging medical care. The festival should also be responsible for any injuries which take place during performances. First aid cover should be provided. The festival is not responsible for providing medical care for any medical condition which arises before the festival starts.



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**4.5.4 DISCIPLINE OF THE GROUP:** the Director and/or Administrator of the group are responsible for the discipline of group members. The group is a representative of its country, and group members should behave as guests.

Particular attention should be paid to punctuality, good relations with the other groups and with the officials of the festival, and noise especially during the night. Group members should not drink excessive amounts of alcohol, and should adhere to national/local regulations governing its consumption. The group is responsible for any damage caused by group members, accidental or deliberate. See earlier comments about the behaviour of group members staying in private homes.

**4.5.5 FRIENDSHIP:** the festival will give the groups the opportunity to get to know each other informally.

**4.5.6 FLAG:** the group is recommended to bring at least one flag for use in parades / processions, etc.

**4.5.7 INSURANCE:** the group is advised to have insurance for instruments, costumes, etc. The festival is not responsible for any loss or damage to instruments, costumes, etc.

**4.5.8 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:** many countries and organizations (including festivals) operate an Equal Opportunities Policy. If the festival has such a policy, or if national / regional legislation exists, then this should be explained to the group in advance. The group members are expected to abide by such a policy, even if no such policy exists in their own country. Such a policy normally states that everyone should be treated fairly and equally, and that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of age, colour, ethnic and national origin, gender, marital status, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

## 5. After the Festival

**5.1** Many groups write letters of thanks to the festival.

**5.2** Within one month of the end of the festival, the group should complete the questionnaire "Report on the Festivals", and send it to the Festivals Commission of CIOFF via its National Section. The group will be given this questionnaire by their own National Section. If the group has not been given this questionnaire in advance, the festival will be able to give a copy to the group. The festival should NOT insist that the questionnaire is completed at the festival and returned to the festival director – the group should send it directly to their own National Section.

**5.3** The festival director will complete the questionnaire "Report on the Groups" for each group attending the festival, and send it to the Festivals Commission of CIOFF. This questionnaire will assess the artistic level of the group, the co-operation of the group's Director, and the discipline of the group members.

## 6. Appendix 1: CIOFF International Festivals and CIOFF Festivals

CIOFF Internal Regulations, Article 7, CIOFF Festivals, states:

**6.1** General Principles

They bring together folk art performers in a peaceful and friendly atmosphere. With their program, the participants will give to the other participants as well as to a larger part of the population, an insight in folk tradition of their country, and they will strive for an understanding of the cultural heritage and tradition of other people. To strengthen these thoughts, the ensembles will mingle with each other in a friendly atmosphere.



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## 6.2 RECOGNITION OF CIOFF INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS AND CIOFF FESTIVALS

### CIOFF INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS

For recognition as CIOFF International Festivals following requirements shall be met:

1. The festival is able and willing to promote, within its competence, the aims and policies of CIOFF.
2. The festival is prepared to follow the rules and guidelines on CIOFF International Festivals adopted by the CIOFF General Assembly.
3. The festival has an identified, responsible organizer.
4. The relevant National Section supports the application of the Festival.
5. The festival has a cycle of one to five years and a duration of at least five days with a full programme, including one day of rest.
6. The festival invites to each edition at least five foreign groups from at least five different countries.

An international folklore festival may apply for recognition as a CIOFF INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL. The National Section shall endorse the application. Therefore the National Section shall verify the accuracy of the information provided by the Festival and must confirm that the Festival meets the requirements of a CIOFF International Festival. The National Section shall send the application to the Legal Commission and approval requires the agreement of both the Legal Commission and the Festivals Commission.

The President of CIOFF signs the Certificate. After recognition the Festival has the right to use the CIOFF symbol. Ten years after the recognition as CIOFF International Festival the recognition shall be renewed in the same way like above..

### CIOFF FESTIVALS

CIOFF Festivals are festivals associated to a National Section of CIOFF. These festivals shall be recognized by the responsible National Section. These CIOFF Festivals shall fulfill the conditions 1, 3 and 4 of the CIOFF International Festivals. CIOFF Festivals have the right to use the CIOFF logo.



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## 6.3 OPERATING CIOFF INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS AND CIOFF FESTIVALS

The festivals shall provide for each invited foreign group the following conditions:

- 6.3.1 Transportation inside the host country or a travel indemnity;
- 6.3.2 Full accommodation and meals during the stay in the festival's site;
- 6.3.3 A contribution to cover incidental expenses;
- 6.3.4 Adequate first aid, normal medical care for incidental illness and insurance against accidents, for which they are held responsible. Each group shall arrange by itself valid travel and medical insurance.

The festival shall conclude with each invited group a contract which clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of both parties. This can take place by an exchange of letters.

Invitations to the festival shall be sent to the relevant National Sections. In case the National Section has not reacted within one month, the invitations could be sent directly to the groups.



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CIOFF International festivals and CIOFF Festivals shall not arrange competitions for foreign groups.

## 7. Appendix 2: Groups Classification

A CIOFF International Conference of Experts was held in Fribourg, Switzerland, 21-25 October 1985 to consider Folk Dancing on the Stage. A report of the conference was published by CIOFF Switzerland in 1986, and reprinted in 1998. Festivals should use these terms to indicate the type of group they wish to invite.

The Report included the following descriptions:

### 7.1 AUTHENTIC GROUP

A group that, playing authentic instruments or instruments faithfully reconstructed or in harmony with the folklore of the country, dance traditional regional dances, without any arrangement or choreography and wear authentic costumes or costumes that have been recreated as faithfully as possible. The group's intention is to perform folklore in the way it was transmitted.

### 7.2 ELABORATED GROUP

A group that adapted certain elements of authentic folklore in order to provide entertainment: harmonization of traditional melodies, modification of elements in the dance, adaptation of elements in the costume, widening of repertoire with folklore from neighbouring regions. In the creation of new dances, the composer and the choreographer respect and utilize the traditional elements of authentic folklore. The group's intention is to use elements of folklore while taking into account contemporary expression and creation criteria.

### 7.3 STYLIZED GROUP

A group that, while drawing its inspiration from the folklore of the country, has modified the costumes, the dances, the function of the orchestra in order to adapt them to the needs of choreography and modern staging. The group's intention is to use elements of folklore to perform its own creative ideas.



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