**FIFTH ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETING OF
CATEGORY 2 CENTRES ACTIVE IN THE FIELD OF
 INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Shiraz, Islamic Republic of Iran**

**10 – 11 September 2017**

**Report**

**Background**

Co-organized by the ITH Section and the Regional Research Centre for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia (Tehran centre), the fifth global meeting of category 2 centres active in the field of intangible cultural heritage took place from 10 to 11 September in Shiraz, Islamic Republic of Iran. Around 20 persons attended the meeting (see [List of participants](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/37712-EN.pdf)) plus some local participants. The Centre provided accommodations, meals and local transportation for the representatives of each centre, and, in addition, international airfare for UNESCO staff.

A webpage for the meeting (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/events/fifth-meeting-of-category-2-centres-in-the-field-of-intangible-cultural-heritage-00611>) grew day-by-day to include all of the presentations featured in the meeting as well as some reference documents. The specific webpage for the category 2 centres is also being constantly updated (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Category2/>) integrating the key statutory documents for each centre.

**Summary**

The first half day of the meeting, was dedicated to the presentations from UNESCO. The first one from Tim Curtis was an introduction to the objectives of the meeting and a presentation of the recent developments for UNESCO and in the life of the 2003 Convention. In particular, it was highlighted the new proposed Programme and Budget for the Organization (39 C/5), its strategic vision, guiding principles and new content, including performance indicators and assessment factors dedicated to the 2003 Convention. A second presentation from Giovanni Scepi was focused on the results of the recent ‘Audit of the UNESCO’s Management Framework for Category 2 Centres’; it was underlined the heavy workload of UNESCO Secretariat for ensuring the cooperation with and evaluation of category 2 centres, as well as the mismatched expectations between UNESCO and category 2 centres.

The second half of the first day and the first half of the second day were dedicated to the presentations of the workplans, future activities and strategies of the six category 2 centres present at the meeting. This gave a good possibility of interaction between the centres themselves and with UNESCO colleagues. Finally, on the last day, a comprehensive discussion focused on the working methods and processes between centres and UNESCO FOs as well as on how to strengthen the synergies and cooperation amongst the Centres and with UNESCO Secretariat. Himalchuli Gurung and Hanh Duong Bich were able to present the results of a meeting held in Bangkok in August 2017 to review the evaluation of a multi-year capacity-building project, reflect on the ongoing ICH capacity-building activities and strategize on UNESCO’s actions for the next biennium in the Asia and the Pacific. It was highlighted the importance that UNESCO attaches to category 2 centres for the implementation of core activities in the region, especially in the field of capacity building, networking and research in various field. Katherine Muller-Marin was also able to present the cooperation with CRESPIAL for implementing activities in Latin America and possible ways to further strengthen it. At the end of the meeting Tim Curtis gave an update on the situation of ongoing renewal of the agreements for four of the centres and recalled the planned examination by the Executive Board at its 202nd session. The centres were informed that the sixth annual meeting will take place after the General Assembly of States Parties in June 2018; CRESPIAL expressed its interest in hosting the seventh session in 2019.

A cultural excursion had been organized by the Tehran centre and local organizers on 12 September for all participants to visit several cultural and historical sites in the city of Shiraz, as well as the archaeological site of Persepolis inscribed in 1979 on the World Heritage List.

**Conclusion and follow up**

The meeting was successful and pertinent, since its purposes were fully achieved, and it was considered very useful by all participants because it responded to a clear need to strengthen the cooperation among the category 2 centres, particularly given that the they tend to work in isolation, and sometimes even in competition.

Finally, the centres were informed about the coordination meeting with category 2 centres and UNESCO Chairs related to Culture that will be organized by the Culture Sector at UNESCO Headquarters on 23 and 24 November 2017.