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

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE  
SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Twelfth session**

**Jeju Island, Republic of Korea**

**4 to 9 December 2017**

**Item 11.c of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Removal of an element from the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and its transfer to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**

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| **Summary**  The present document includes the recommendation of the Evaluation Body on the removal of an element from the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and its transfer to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (Part A), along with a corresponding draft decision for the Committee’s consideration (Part B). An overview of the 2017 files and the working methods of the Evaluation Body is included in Document [ITH/17/12.COM/11](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-11-EN.docx).  **Decision required:** paragraph 2 |

1. **Recommendation**
2. As a result of the evaluation process described in document [ITH/17/12.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-11-EN.docx), the Evaluation Body recommends that the Committee remove the following element from the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and inscribe it on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:

| **Draft  Decision** | **Submitting State** | | **Nomination** | **Report/ File No.** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 12.COM 11.c | | Viet Nam | Xoan singing of Phú Thọ province, Viet Nam | [Report ICH-11 (00538)](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/download.php?versionID=44139)  [01260](https://ich.unesco.org/en/11c-removal-and-transfer-of-an-element-00950) |

1. **Draft decision**
2. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

**DRAFT DECISION 12.COM 11.c**

The Committee,

1. Recalling Decision 6.COM 8.23 and Nomination file No. 00538,
2. Takes note of the request of Viet Nam to transfer the element **Xoan singing of Phú Thọ province, Viet Nam** from the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:

As a performing art, Xoan singing of Phú Tho province includes singing, dancing, drumming and clapper beating. It is closely linked to the worship of the Hùng Kings, a belief rooted in the ancestor worship practice of the Viet people. Bearers and practitioners form four guilds, in which the male and female Trum play the most important role: they preserve the songs, select students, transmit the singing styles and repertoires and organize practices. They are also active in introducing and teaching Xoan singing at the four Xoan guilds, and in clubs and guilds. As a community performing art, Xoan singing fosters cultural understanding, community cohesion and mutual respect. The Vietnamese Institute for Musicology has collected thirty-one Xoan songs, and thanks to the efforts of several Xoan artists four guilds have been established. Thirty-three dedicated clubs also exist, and seminars are held to expand knowledge of Xoan. Leaders and senior Xoan artists transmit the singing orally, combined with the use of written songs and audio and visual recordings. Experienced artists also teach Xoan singing to members of clubs and to music teachers in schools, who then transmit this knowledge to other club members and students.

1. Recalls that it decided in Decision 10.COM 19, on an exceptional basis and pending the adoption of relevant procedures by the General Assembly, to concurrently examine the report on the status of the element ‘Xoan singing of Phú Thọ Province, Viet Nam’, inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and the new nomination of the same element to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, in order to make a decision on the requested transfer;
2. Further recalls that it had decided in Decision 10.COM 19, provided that voluntary supplementary contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund are received in due course, to convene an open-ended intergovernmental working group to discuss draft operational directives on the procedure for the removal of an element from a List and the transfer of an element from one List to the other;
3. Takes note that the Operational Directives still need to be revised in order to establish clear procedures for the removal of an element from a List and the transfer of an element from one List to the other based on the experience acquired during the Committee’s examination of the present request submitted by Viet Nam;
4. Also recalls that the nomination of the element to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in the 2017 cycle will only be examined if, after examining the report, the Committee first decides to remove the element from the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding;
5. Decides that, from the information included in the report on the status of the inscribed element **Xoan singing of Phú Thọ province**, **Viet Nam**, which was submitted by the State Party in 2016, and after assessing the implementation of the safeguarding plan, the nomination does not satisfy one or more criteria of the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding List as follows:

The report on the status of the element demonstrates that Xoan singing is no longer in need of urgent safeguarding since recent efforts by the local communities and the government have considerably restored its viability since its inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2011. For example, in 2009 the four Xoan guilds had around 100 singers and instrumentalists who operated irregularly, with more than half being over 60 years of age. Today, the guilds have nearly 200 members with an average age of 35. In 2009, out of 31 of the oldest artists (aged from 80 to 104), only 7 were capable of performing and transmitting the old Xoan repertoires to others. Today, a total of 62 successors have been trained, all of whom are fully equipped to teach the Xoan repertoires. The number of young people involved is growing fast. However, certain challenges still persist. For example, there is the threat of homogenizing the performances. Young people still leave the villages in large numbers in search of work and to study, thus losing the opportunity to perform. Somewhat better safeguarding results could have been achieved through synergies with national projects for sustainable development.

The project for the safeguarding and promotion of Xoan singing, implemented since 2013 and to be continued until 2020, has played an essential role in safeguarding and reviving the element, with the full support of the community. The safeguarding measures combined training in Xoan singing, training in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, the restoration of spaces needed to perform the element, the collection of folklore materials in the field and their publication for educational purposes and the introduction of the element in schools. The four guilds of Xoan singers have made tremendous contributions to the safeguarding of Xoan singing from the 1980s to the present day. It is their knowledge and continuing practice that has made it possible to restore the genre.

The Xoan guilds and the communities, practitioners and institutions concerned have actively participated in the preparation of the report, and approved it, enthusiastically taking part in interviews, discussions and seminars. Furthermore, the element was extensively inventoried with the participation of the communities from 2012 to 2015, with the information being updated every year. Xoan singing is included in various inventories, such as the one at the Vietnamese Institute for Musicology within the Vietnam National Academy of Music.

1. Removes **Xoan singing of Phú Thọ province, Viet Nam** from the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding;
2. Further decides that, from the information included in the file **Xoan singing of Phú Thọ province**, **Viet Nam** (No. 01260), the nomination satisfies the following criteria for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:

R.1: Xoan performances involve music and singing as a way of worshipping and expressing gratitude to the Hùng kings. The performances invoke good health and fortune, and include songs of courtship. Xoan practitioners are organized into music guilds. The leaders of each guild are called ‘Trùm’: they preserve the songs, select students, transmit singing styles and repertoires and organize the practices of the guild. The nomination file demonstrates how the communities have invested significant energy into spreading knowledge and passing on the practice of Xoan singing to a large group of new bearers, thus confirming the further strengthening of the social function of the practice. As a form of community performing art, Xoan singing provides the residents of Phú Tho Province with a strengthened sense of cohesion, harmony, mutual respect, identity and continuity, thereby connecting the living legacy of the practice with present-day needs. The tradition also reflects the central message behind a common Vietnamese proverb – ‘when drinking water, remember the source’ – which it seeks to transmit, especially to young practitioners. The lyrics are often suited to the age and interests of young people. No element of Xoan singing is incompatible with existing instruments of international human rights or hinders sustainable development.

R.2: Given that the element experienced a critical decline during the twentieth century and has been successfully revitalized thanks to the considerable efforts of the local communities and other stakeholders, its inclusion on the Representative List could serve as an example of a good practice and inspire dialogue with communities worldwide on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. This is also an opportunity to honor the artists, encouraging them to pass down their knowledge to younger generations.

R.3: The efforts described should be considered within the context of the long-term project for the safeguarding and promotion of Xoan singing (2013-2020). The viability of the element is being ensured by the communities, groups and individuals concerned through studies, efforts geared at revitalization and transmission, the collection of Xoan songs, the establishment of Xoan guilds and the organization of Xoan clubs. The State Party and authorities have invested considerable funds and human resources into safeguarding the tradition, although the resources available were otherwise quite limited. The measures proposed are realistic and feasible. They include establishing a safeguarding fund for Xoan singing, providing support for each Xoan guild, restoring Xoan singing spaces, organizing regular festivals, publishing books, producing documentaries on Xoan singing and carrying out research, regular media programmes and training sessions. Surveys on the element’s viability are carried out regularly.

R.4: The process of developing a nomination file to inscribe the element on the Representative List was carried out with the active participation of the communities of the four Xoan guilds. An ongoing consultation process was pursued between the practitioners and the Phú Thọ Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the Cultural Heritage Department, the Centre for Research and Promotion of the Cultural Heritage of Việt Nam and the Vietnamese Institute for Musicology. This was demonstrated through the provision of written letters of free, prior and informed consent from community members and local officials.

R.5: The element was included in the National List of Việt Nam Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2012. Together with the communities concerned, the Phú Thọ Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism updated the inventory entry of Xoan singing from 2012 to 2015.

1. Inscribes **Xoan singing of Phú Thọ province, Viet Nam** on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity;
2. Invites the State Party to ensure the community consents to the removal of the element from the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and to its transfer to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and that the community consenting to the removal and transfer includes at least the same community members that consented to the inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding;
3. Encourages the State Party to complete the implementation of the safeguarding plan as foreseen in the report on the status of the element.