



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Intangible
Cultural
Heritage

International Assistance

ICH-04-Report – Form

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND

PROGRESS NARRATIVE REPORT

Beneficiary State(s) Party(ies): Ministry of Culture of Albania

Project title:	"Community Based Inventory of ICH in Albania with a view to safeguarding and transmitting to future generations"
Reporting period:	From: 18/05/2021 to: 30/09/2021
Budget:	Total: US\$ 248.785,00 <i>Including:</i> Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund: US\$ 213,260 State Party contribution: US\$ 35.525,00 Other contributions: US\$
Implementing agency (contracting partner or UNESCO Field Office):	Ministry of Culture of Albania
Contact person:	Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Dr. Family name: Kumbe Given name: Meri Institution/position: National Coordinator Address: Telephone number: E-mail address:

Partner agency (in the case of a service from UNESCO project):	
Implementing partners:	

Background

Provide a brief description of the situation existing at the time of the request and the need that the assistance aimed to address. For safeguarding of a particular element, provide a description of the element, its viability and why safeguarding measures were required. For preparation of inventories, strengthening of capacities, awareness-raising, visibility or other safeguarding not focussed on a particular element, identify gaps that were to be addressed. For emergency assistance requests, describe the nature and severity of the emergency at the time of the request.

Not fewer than 750 or more than 1000 words

Since Albania ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention in 2005, the Ministry of Culture of Albania as the responsible authority has undertaken a series of institutional, promotional and safeguarding activities on ICH. In this respect, an important initiative related to inventorying is to register ICH elements in the territory of the Republic of Albania, with the active participation of the community.

Responding to this, in 2014, an interactive platform "Show your Culture" was launched aiming at encouraging all interested parties to upload audio-visual materials documenting the ICH elements that belong to their own families or communities, including minority groups. Throughout 2015 the interactive ICH map has been enriched with new elements. At the same time, specialized institutions such as the National Center of Tradition Activities and the Institute of Anthropology and Art Studies introduced a package of targeted measures and activities regarding identification, documentation and promotion of the intangible cultural heritage.

However, as a signatory part of the 2003 Convention, since 2005 Albania has registered only one ICH element on the UNESCO List of ICH Masterpieces, notably that of the inventory of Iso-poliphony and its constituent elements. And this, despite the large wealth and of high cultural and historical value the ICH elements that exist in country's territory.

In response to challenging problems faced at institutional level regarding registering ICH element, a legislative initiative was introduced with an aim to strengthen both the ICH institutions (public and private) and ICH bearers' communities. Additionally, a National List of seven (7) ICH Representative List was created by a special Order of the Ministry of Culture issued in 2010. In practice, however, the planned targeted activities for a thorough inventory of those 7 elements have not yet been sufficiently implemented. Under such circumstances, there is an urgent need to draft a complete and more inclusive National ICH List which will bring into the light the rich diversity of the ICH in the territory of the Republic of Albania along with the most precious cultural values of each individual ICH element for the community practicing. Indeed, it has been institutionally acknowledged that each and every single ICH element represents the community's geniality that has created it and passed it down through generations.

Adding to that, in 2014, in a piloted analysis report on the situation of ICH in Albania, the UNESCO's expert Prof. Nikolai Vukov identified the needs of the ICH while making recommendations on how to best address them for the benefit of the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage and its practitioners, including the following:

- To develop a strategy for inventorying ICH with practical guidelines and concrete involvement of communities and the relevant institutions in the inventorying process;
- To reinforce the knowledge and capacity of the decision makers, the government officials, the NGOs, and that of the relevant institutions and communities for adopting community-based approaches to inventorying the intangible cultural heritage with a view to develop an analytic framework and a methodology specially tailored to the context of Albania;

As an immediate response to those recommendations, in September 2015, forty (40) experts, specialists and community representatives attended a five day training course on the Implementation of 2003 Convention organized by UNESCO experts with the support of the ICH Centre in Sofia.

Taking into consideration the above and given the lack of a thorough national inventorying plan of ICH elements with the participation of respective communities, it is of utmost importance the drafting of an overall national inventory. This would definitely serve as a key to draw tailored Action Plans for ICH safeguarding and its transmission to future generations with the active participation of communities.

In addressing these issues, the current project implements a set of activities that include the drafting of the inventory methodology as well as setting out the process of inventory in three selected regions of Albania. The project adopts an innovative approach since the process of inventory involves both the

communities and the bearers themselves by giving them a central role throughout the lifetime of project's activities, while ensuring their contribution's long-term viability.

More concretely, this project is structured around the following main objectives:

1. To build a tailored methodology for inventorying ICH elements of Albanians and minorities in the territory of Albania, and
2. To draft a national inventory in the selected regions of Albania by means of:
 - creating a permanent mechanism for communities involvement in the safeguarding process;
 - improving and expanding the present limited inventory;
 - strengthening the processes of transmission of ICH knowledge;
 - improving the capacities of professionals to safeguard ICH in Albania;
 - improving the visibility of ICH; and
 - raising awareness of policy makers and communities about the importance of ICH and its potential to contribute to sustainable development and social cohesion of Albanian society.

Objectives and results attained

Overall, to what extent did the project attain its objectives? Describe the main results attained, focusing in particular on the perspective of the direct beneficiaries and communities. For each expected result identified in the request, explain whether it was fully or partially attained. Also describe any unexpected results, direct or indirect, whether positive or negative.

Not fewer than 100 or more than 500 words

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, the project has been brought back on track in full compliance with project's timeline, its contractual deadlines and deliverables.

During the reference period, the MoC has successfully realized the pre-scheduled activities in WP2 (2.2) and WP3 (3.1 and 3.3). Furthermore, the legal procedures regarding the call of interest and related procurements foreseen per activity 3.2 has been completed with the project's website being fully functional in the immediate future. Yet, actions in the framework of WP1, WP4 and WP5 have been implemented according to the workplan and the respective timetable.

In general, the expected results were attained. However, it should be highlighted the fact that despite the theoretical and practical learning seminars and workshops done with bearers, the process of empirical fieldwork raised some concerns regarding the quality standards of the collected materials/elements. Indeed, those concerns are partly attributed to the fact that most of the bearers are not quite familiar with new technologies and the employed methodology.

In response to that, the Ministry of Culture has taken measures by sending periodically its experts in situ to the regions and sites involved in order to continuously oversee the fieldwork and monitor the quality of collected elements. These visits have in addition taken the form of the empirical seminars that aim to train the bearers and raise their awareness on the significance and the usefulness of the methodology employed in their empirical fieldwork. Despite the efforts, it is acknowledged that there is still room for improvement of the quality of the IHC elements collected so far so as to get the proper information within the intended standards required by the project. Another issue that has emerged is the lack of a professional team/company that would be tasked with the editing of video materials that document certain elements of ICH.

Description of project implementation

Provide a description of the activities undertaken and the outputs they generated (e.g. trainings, consultation process, technical assistance, awareness raising, publications, toolkits, etc.). Also describe any problems encountered in project delivery and corrective actions taken. Describe the role of the implementing agency and of the partner agency (in the case of a service from UNESCO project) and the role of other implementing partners in carrying out activities and generating outputs.

Not fewer than 1000 or more than 1500 words

During the reference period (18.05.2021-30.09.2021), the project has achieved its overall objectives in compliance with contractual obligations including the deadlines and deliverables. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, the MoC has successfully realized the workplan that involves the activities in WP2 (2.2) and WP3 (3.1 and 3.3). It includes three (3) rounds of seven (7) days seminars and workshops with ICH local experts and institutions in three respective regions, namely Shkoder, Gjirokaster and Korce. The program of seminars revolved around the introduction to and explanation of Inventorying Methodological Guidelines in parallel with practice sessions and fieldwork taking place at local artisans' shops and laboratories. After the completion of above activities, two 2-day control seminars took place in the same regions. The aim was to assess/control the quality of the delivered results and to assist the local field experts. In parallel with above activities, the legal procedures regarding the call of interest and related procurements foreseen per activity 3.2 has been completed. This will result in the project's website being fully functional in the immediate future. In addition to that, actions in the framework of WP1, WP4 and WP5 have also been implemented according to the project's workplan.

Despite the organization of seminars that were structured around a combination of theory and practice, the process of the fieldwork has faced some shortcomings. This is most likely attributed to the high quality standards required by community members and bearers who indeed are not appropriately familiarized with new technologies and the employed methodology. In response to that, the Ministry of Culture has intensified the involvement of its experts to periodically visit in situ the regions involved in order to monitor and evaluate the work progress, to ensure that the methodology guidelines have been complied with, to make case-by-case corrections and targeted suggestion to improve the quality of ICH elements collected. Despite the efforts, it is acknowledged that there is still room for improvement regarding the quality of the ICH elements collected so far so as to get the proper information within the intended quality standards required by this project. Last, another issue that need to be addressed is the lack of a professional team/company that would be tasked with the editing of video materials that document certain elements of ICH.

WP1: Coordination & Management

During the reference period, in accordance to WP1 objectives the activities were focused on project's coordination and day-to-day management. The emphasis was put on (pro)active management by monitoring the outcome of legal, financial and logistic proceedings along with the implementation of project's actions in compliance with the Ministry of Culture's (MoC) internal rules and regulations (Annex 3).¹ Following the results of workshops and seminars, the "National Coordination Group" (NCG) was convened in order to formalize and give its approval for the list of elements cartelized in three (3) regions covered by the project (Annex 4).² Furthermore, following the Collegium's decision on the set of

¹ Minister Order 3007/3 Nr. 331-10.06.2021 on the subject of approving the workshops and seminars' costs on hiring venues, accommodation, travel, experts and the final product's expert (Contract with Cajupi Hotel 3007/4-10.06.2021, Contracts with P. Bilali Shkodra 3007/5-21.06.2021, Contract Terrova Korce 3007/6-21.06.2021, Contract vehicle Gjirokaster 3007/7-21.06.2021). Experts' monitoring contracts: 598/4-25.06.2021; 595/6-25.06.2021; 2836-01.06.2021, and 2836/1-31.06.2021. Experts' control seminars' contracts: 3007/8-21.06.2021; 3007/9-21.06.2021; 3007/12-30.07.2021. Monitoring stationary contract: 989/18-10.06.2021. Monitoring catering contract: 989/19-01.06.2021. Seminars venues' monitoring contracts: 3007/11-21.05.2021.

² The NCG meeting was held on 30.07.2021.

website's technical requirement³ the Minister Order's final approval was issued validating the above decision.⁴ Last, the Project Coordination Team traveled each month to visit the local groups of experts in the regions involved in order to monitor and evaluate the work progress, to ensure that the methodology guidelines have been complied with, to make case-by-case corrections and targeted suggestion in order to improve the quality of ICH elements collected.

WP2: Enhancing safeguarding mechanisms by involving communities

2.1: Creation of the methodological inventorying guidelines of ICH inventory;

Following the consultation process with the community members (Action 2.1.1) (including national institutions, NGOs and local government) and other related ICH experts and institutions (Action 2.2) and in spite of delays caused by Covid-19 pandemic, the inventorying methodological guidelines was appropriately finalized and then approved by the Coordination Team on 21/06/2021. Then, the National Committee of the Intangible Cultural Heritage gave its final approval to adopt it in the format of the National Inventorying Methodological Guidelines of the MoC, in pursuance to the Albanian legislation (Law no. 27/2018) (Action 2.1.2).

2.2 Organization of 6 workshops of seven days each

The three rounds of the 7-days local workshops titled "*Inventory and Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage based on the community*" were scheduled and organized according to the following calendar:⁵

1st Workshop: Shkoder, 24-30/05/2021;

2nd Workshop: Korce, 2-8/06/2021;

3rd Workshop: Gjirokaster, 12-18/06/2021

These workshops provided a general introduction to basic concepts, definition and directions on Intangible Cultural Heritage under the 2003 convention. While introducing the participants to the main steps of preservation of ICH and the contribution of the community, the seminars and workshops focused on a number of broad areas of the inventory process by particularly emphasizing the empirical methods and their *in situ* application based on the local tradition.

The Program of the Workshops

1st Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is Intangible Cultural Heritage? - Definitions under the 2003 Convention. ○ The main steps for the preservation of intangible Cultural Heritage. ○ What is "Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage? What do we gain from inventory? Key directives. ○ The role of communities and their inclusion in the inventory: Community Consensus; Participation; Respect for Gender Equality and Social Groups, and Inclusion. ○ The role of NGOs. ○ Ethical principles for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.
2nd Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stages of inventory development and ethical principles. ○ Planning: Approaches to planning: Identifying the community; Identifying the element.

³ Collegium decision 163/12-26.08.2021

⁴ Minister Order Nr. 540, 163/13-27/08/2021.

⁵ For more information on the agenda, the program and activities, the number of participants and instructors see Annex 4.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gathering information and documenting it: Observation-note, Interview; Photography, and Participatory video recording including Editing and its Ethics. ○ Issues of data protection rights by the interviewee and the interviewer. ○ Form and manner of expression of approval/consent for the provision of data. ○ Permit and approval form from the individual or community. ○ Cases when the interviewer does not fully approve the disclosure of his/her personal data. 	
3rd Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Voice recording; ○ Participatory mapping ○ Selection of the most suitable method (+ SWOT Analysis) ○ Systematic analysis and archiving of information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inventory closure and publication ▪ Updating data ▪ Accessibility: full, partial ○ Criteria on inclusion; ○ Criterion "Coherence with the definition of cultural heritage Intangible ○ Extended Interview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare for an interview; ▪ Establishing the first contact; ▪ Equipment needed for an interview; ▪ Choice of place; ▪ Organizing the interview; ▪ Appropriate questions for an interview; ▪ Ways of constructing questions; ▪ How to get the right answer; ▪ Closing the interview. 	
4th Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Criterion on "Conformity with the spirit of the Convention". ○ Explaining the meaning and the spirit of "Inherited from generation to generation" ○ Scopes (domains) of intangible cultural heritage under the ICT 2003 Convention ○ Traditions and expressions through speech (oral), including language as the bearers of intangible cultural heritage ○ Arts of spectacle; ○ Social practices, rituals and festive events; ○ Knowledge and practices on nature and the universe; ○ Knowledge-acting related to traditional handicrafts and crafts ○ Table templates of action's fields classification according to UNESCO. ○ Voice recording / Headphones / Background noise / Surrounding environment / Microphone positioning / Listening / Recording test / Group recording / Solo recordings. ○ Practice for voice recording 	
5th Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vocabulary of ethics in the inventory process. ○ How to get the approval from the community for the inventory process. ○ Inventory preparation and development. ○ Detailed explanation of the type card that interviewers will use to document the elements. ○ Element identification ○ Short element title. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The community that uses it. ○ Physical location of the element. ○ Short description of the element. ○ Characteristics of the element. ○ Stability of the element. ○ Restrictions on data retrieval. ○ References regarding the element. ○ Inventory data. ○ Learning practice for completing the type card and photography: <p>Shkoder: Silver Processors/Watermarks Gjirokaster: Manufacturer of folk costumes.</p>
6th Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inventory preparation and development. ○ Detailed explanation of the type card that the interviewers will use to document elements (2nd part). ○ Table templates of action's fields classification according to UNESCO (2nd part) ○ Practical knowledge related to artisan and traditional crafts. ○ Learning practice for completing the type card and photography: <p>Shkoder: Fabric weavers. Loom in the village of Zogaj. Woodworkers. Wooden ceilings.</p> <p>Korce: Artisans and pocerise. Clay processing. Artisan workshop. The reed processor.</p> <p>Gjirokaster: Artisan workshop. The ironworker. Artisan workshop. Engraving stoner.</p>
7th Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learning practice for completing the type card and photography: <p>Shkoder: Ahengu of Shkodra and wedding ceremony.</p> <p>Korce: Artisan workshop. Kujunxhiu. Silver processing. Artisan workshop. The ironworker. Artisan workshop. Fabric weavers with special techniques.</p> <p>Gjirokaster: Monophony, as a typical element of the Gjirokastra area. The Legend of Argjiro.</p>

WP3: Expand the national inventory;

3.1 Inventorying ICH;

During the reference period, this activity focused on the two-month intensive work of five (5) experts of MoC who were tasked with the identification of community members and its bearers; data collection; drafting the national ICH elements' list, and the identification and establishment of a national urgent safeguarding list (Annex 3).

For the 'Creation of the website' (3.2) the foreseen legal procedures regarding the call of interest and related procurements had been appropriately finalized. This results in the project's website being fully

functional in the immediate future. For the fulfillment of the first phase of this action five (5) staff members of the Ministry of Culture were tasked with the examination of the procedures for conformity assessment and suitability of the tender as well as the completion of formalities according to the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Culture (Annex 3).

WP4: Awareness raising and dissemination of project results;

Despite the disruption caused by pandemic, some activities foreseen in the WP4 regarding awareness raising and dissemination has taken place. These activities were mainly focused on national and local media and social media promotion, as well as on TV channels. In addition, the project has been introduced and promoted by the Deputy Minister of Culture, Dr. Meri Kumbe, who in her public and media appearances has stressed out the importance of this project for the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Albania while acknowledging the contribution of UNESCO (Annex 4).

Regarding the information campaign in educational institutions (Action 4.1.2), the closure of the education institutions because of the Covid-19 restrictions and the relevant hygiene protocols changed the scheduled meetings' calendar. Thus, only several informal and closed meetings took place during the first reference period of the project such as those with the University Rector and the Prefect of Shkodra.

Regarding the implementation of the Action 4.1.3 (local and national TV and radio interviews), the first seminar that was held in Shkoder on 24 May 2021 was broadcasted and disseminated in National and Local TV channel included Report TV,⁶ TV Rozafa,⁷ and TV AdriaNet,⁸ together with the interview given by the Project coordinator and Deputy Minister Dr. Meri Kumbe.⁹

In a facebook post of 8th of August 2021, the Minister of Culture added content and uploaded pictures illustrating the activities of seven-day seminars on the training of local experts in the framework of the project "Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage", supported by UNESCO (Annex 4). In the same post, it is highlighted that further to the introduction of the first 90 elements in the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the project envisages the establishment of a website, dedicated to all the material collected by local experts, bearers and artisans. The post concludes with the comment that this site will be a national database, valid and accessible for everyone.¹⁰

In another post on 18 August 2021,¹¹ in view of the seminar held in Shkodra, the Minister of Culture uploaded pictures in which she praised the city of Shkodra for its generously offered heritage. In the same post it was announced the end of the first phase of the project "Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage", supported by UNESCO. In addition, a particular emphasis was given to the final product which includes the registration of the 90 elements in the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage accompanied by special electronic cards, photographs, audio and video materials (Annex 4).

During the reference period, along with seminars in three regions, a series of consecutive informal meetings were organized with stakeholders in order to promote the objectives of the project and to ensure their cooperation in achieving the final goal (4.2.1) (Annex 4).

⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dp-Oi9x9Z2Q&ab_channel=ReportTV

⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10pft9ofkEc&ab_channel=TVRozafa

⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fu30VmfV4I8&ab_channel=TVAdriaNet

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=474402693663128>

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=2986653511578241&set=pcb.2986657624911163>

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=2992405131003079&set=pcb.2992405971002995>

WP5: Monitoring and evaluation

With regards to WP5, certain steps had been taken in order to consolidate the monitoring mechanism and the respective staff in charge of evaluating the project's progress and drafting the second progress report. To this end the external experts have been meeting regularly with all actors involved in order to collect the proper documents and evaluate the quality system in place, while finalizing both the technical and financial report for the second progress report (Actions: 5.2, and 5.2.1).

Community involvement

Provide a description of the mechanisms used for fully involving the community(ies) concerned. Describe not only the participation of the communities as beneficiaries of the project, but also their active participation in the planning and implementation of all activities.

Not fewer than 300 or more than 500 words

During the reference period of project's implementation, the community was fully involved in both the organization and implementation of the six 7-days workshops. The added value of empowering the local community members is for them to remain active after the project's end while enhancing the safeguarding process both in regional and local level.

Sustainability and exit/transition strategy

Describe how the benefits of the project will continue after the project has been completed. Where appropriate, describe the steps undertaken to ensure the following:

- Sustainability of activities, outputs and results, including with reference to how capacity has been built under the project. Also describe any planned follow-up measures to ensure sustainability.*
- Additional funding secured as a result of this project, if any. Indicate by whom, how much and for what purpose the contributions are granted.*

Describe how the ownership (of activities, outputs, results) by stakeholders and the community(ies) in particular has been promoted.

Describe, if relevant, how tools, processes, outputs, etc. have been adopted, adapted, replicated and/or extended for future use (e.g. in other regions, communities, elements, or fields of intangible cultural heritage).

Not fewer than 100 or more than 500 words

In terms of sustainability, after the implementation of the project, the Ministry of Culture is committed to continue the inventory process to all the remaining regions of Albania by applying the methodology employed in this project. The ultimate goal is that by the end of 2025, a complete National Inventory will be fully registered and active.

In long-term, by establishing sustainable and viable communication channels and partnerships with all actors involved in both private and public sector, this project would definitely contribute to foster intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. This include strengthening of the processes of transmission of ICH knowledge; improving the capacities of professionals to safeguard ICH in Albania, and increasing the visibility of ICH through raising awareness of policy makers and communities about the importance of ICH and its potential to contribute to sustainable development and social cohesion of Albanian society.

Lessons learnt

Describe what are the key lessons learnt regarding the following:

- Attainment of expected results
- Ownership of key stakeholders and community involvement
- Delivery of project outputs
- Project management and implementation
- Sustainability of the project after the assistance

Not fewer than 300 or more than 750 words

The key lesson learnt (mostly because of the pandemic) is how to anticipate the mitigation of risks in planning and implementing of project's activities.

Annexes

List the annexes and documentation included in the report:

- publications, evaluation reports and other outputs, when applicable
- progress reports prepared during the contract period
- list of major equipment provided under the project and status after termination of contract period
- other (please specify)

Annex 1: Ministerial orders and other MoC documents

Annex 2: Signed contracts

Annex 3: Spending orders (financial report)

Annex 4: Others (Seminars and workshop programs, minutes, letters, illustration material: photos)

Name and signature of the person having completed the report

Name: Eda Gemi

Title: Assoc. Prof. PhD

Date: 11/10/2021

Signature:

