



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): Lao PDR

Project title:	Capacity Building for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage through creation of community-based ICH Inventory for Luang Prabang
Reporting period:	From: November 2019 to: November 2020
Budget:	<p style="text-align: right;">Total: US\$140,182</p> <p><i>Including:</i></p> <p>Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund: US\$99,886</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">State Party contribution: US\$40,296</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Other contributions: US\$</p>
Implementing agency (contracting partner or UNESCO Field Office):	Department of Information, Culture and Tourism in Luang Prabang, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao PDR
Contact person:	<p>Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Mr.</p> <p>Family name: Haekham</p> <p>Given name: Sonesay</p> <p>Institution/position: Technical Staff Officer</p> <p>Address: Department of Information, Culture and Tourism, Luang Prabang</p> <p>Telephone number: +856 20 5519 9529</p> <p>E-mail address: department.ict.luangprabang@gmail.com</p>
Partner agency (in the case of a service from UNESCO project):	n/a
Implementing partners:	Department of Information, Culture and Tourism in Luang Prabang

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

Lao PDR has been a beneficiary country of the UNESCO capacity-building programme since 2011. Through this programme, many practitioners, community members, ICH academic and national experts were trained and were identified as ICH resource persons.

Since 2015, after the Government of Lao PDR declared Luang Prabang as the centre for culture and traditions for the country, the Luang Prabang World Heritage Office has been carrying out community-based inventory activities at the local level and has strengthened its ICH provincial inventory list with its own financial contribution complementing a development partner's fund which continues until the end of 2018.

In June 2017, a policy mission was carried out by UNESCO in Lao PDR, conducted by UNESCO accredited experts. There were several recommendations among which was the need of linking safeguarding projects with sustainable development. It is crucial that a thorough understanding of the ICH elements requiring safeguarding is carried out in consultation with the communities concerned, before such plans are developed and put into place.

To achieve this, it is required that ICH trainers/resource persons will need tailor-made/contextualised training to become trainers at various levels (at the village level, district level, and national level respectively) and become ICH resource persons for the country in order to carry on inventorying and implementing safeguarding activities. This will require that training modules for training these trainers will have to be developed. In addition to this, simple manuals will also be developed for communities to understand the basic concepts of ICH, and to be able to carry out an inventory within their communities or village.

Having been a World Heritage site for more than 20 years, the community involvement in Luang Prabang with public participation in conserving the site has been quite strong. A provincial committee, district committee and village committee decision-making mechanism is already in place. Through this project, the integration of the safeguarding of ICH with the overall world heritage management plan of Luang Prabang is initiated.

The sample inventory carried out in Luang Prabang was not carried out by those who had undergone training under the capacity building program, and though there was an extent of community involvement, it was not carried out by the community members and practitioners to the extent to what is now proposed. However, this did provide the staff at Luang Prabang practical experience in inventory making on the ground. As this project involves the use of training materials that have been specifically created for community participation, they will provide a basis for comparison and a benchmark.

To complement the Province's efforts in raising-awareness among the provincial authorities and communities, to support capacity building activities and to supplement the Province's limited financial resources, there is a need for International Assistance which will enable the work done in Luang Prabang to have a ripple effect and be replicated throughout Lao PDR. This will build on the training workshops carried out previously as well as on the existing inventory.

Therefore, as part of the International Assistance application, the Luang Prabang World Heritage Office together with the Department of Information, Culture and Tourism in Luang Prabang proposes to carry out practical pilot community-based inventories in communities

including Had Hien village in Luang Prabang province. This workshop will be carried out by the trainers, and the materials to be used while for training the community as well as methodology will be tested.

The approach will aim at community initiatives as follows:

- a) TOTs will include the issue of empowerment of community members and provide clarity of the roles of trainers/facilitators
- b) Training materials will be developed and equipment will be accessible and well understood of its application,
- c) Community Consultation Meetings will be held to introduce the convention and get inputs from the community members.
- d) Identification of community members who will be involved and lead the inventorying groups.

The Training of Trainers will be organized at the provincial level. It will include those ICH resource persons who have undergone training in previous UNESCO capacity building programmes and be extended to include community members and practitioners of the province. These will become ICH resource persons capable of imparting training in the methodology, as well as ethics of a community-based approach at all levels. They will in turn work with communities enabling them to carry out inventories of their own ICH.

It is realised that a successful community-based inventory will lay the foundation for safeguarding projects which will be carried out later, which is the core of the UNESCO ICH 2003 Convention. The project will also conduct a survey in Luang Prabang province of ICH elements at risk, to better understand the overall situation of the ICH in the province.

Objectives and results attained

Overall, to what extent did the project attain its objectives? Describe the main results attained, focussing 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

1. Team members and experts were identified

Several consultations were organized in person and remotely to plan, come up with strategies and in preparation for the ToTs training and materials development. Therefore, several issues were identified during those consultations. Sensitivities were also taken into consideration and shared with the facilitators who are working on the materials and trainings.

2. Communities are in close consultation and information and work was based on their advice and comments and fields work undertaken closely with the identified communities, and two ICH elements were documented

Communities were identified together with the local authorities and the community members carefully. The elements selected were proposed by the communities and agreed upon by the local authorities. Letters to inform the communities prior to the field work were sent to the selected communities and received a greenlight and cooperation before planning for the field work. A few field work happened afterwards to interview those stakeholders in the communities which are related to the selected ICH elements. The documentations were done in writing, vdos recording and photographing.

3. Awareness were raised on the safeguarding aspect through consultation meetings that were organised and the visibility of the support from the UNESCO was seen.

After the documents were done by the team members, they were shared with the experts

and facilitators in order to get first feedbacks and further advice on missing documents.

4. Contextualization of the training materials made the materials and prepared for the trainings to be specific for the participants and the communities member. The strategy was carefully planned and the materials development is in progress.

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

1.1.1 Preparation and coordination of the working and technical team

From November 2019 to November 2020, experts and the facilitator were identified, and all the team members were formed. All the administration work were done at the Governor's Office level.

In November 2019 and November 2020, there were three consultation meetings and four remote technical meetings with facilitators details as below;

November 2019: A meeting to introduce the project to the team members

December 2019: A team meeting to discuss and identify the elements to be included in the training materials as well as identify communities to work with. Two elements were identified including Hmong Khaen making and Meet Sa Nak (bethal knife crafting)

January 2020: Meetings with community members in Had Hien community

February 2020: Meetings with community members in Had Hien community, and Khour - Thee - Neung village, Na- Cham - Phanh and Phou - Xang - Kham community.

During January to February 2020, there were several small team meetings and surveys to finalise the selection of the two elements to be integrated into the training materials development. The two elements identified are the Hmong Khaen and the traditional bethel knife. There was a desk study on the two elements to plan and draft a map of the communities. It was the first element from Hmong ethnic group to be deeply studied.

In February and March 2020, the team conducted several interviews with several community members in the three communities for the two elements. Those communities members were ICH bearers, practitioners, youth and women and community members.

The two elements were drafted and documented in close consultations with the communities and in coordination with the identified experts to prepare for the ToTs training materials.

March 2020 to July 2020: All the field work were paused due to Covid virus and as following the Government of Lao PDR lockdown measures.

Due to covid-situation the ToTs cannot happen according to the workplan, however the time were spent in preparing for the ToTs documents and the community-based training materials preparation as below;

1.1.2 Preparing of the training of trainers (TOT) material development

The materials specifically are to address the issues of how these participants will work to impart the basic understanding to the community members and empower them to be able to carry out a community based inventory. It means that fresh materials are being created and to sensitise the participants to their role as facilitators who will assist the community members. Strategies on how to involve community, how to train community members at a

level that they can understand, how to train them to use audio video and still cameras to capture the ICH are being in discussions and prepared.

The second lot of materials are materials that will be created which can be distributed to the community members and is intended for them ie the community members to use. It will simplify concepts and include a lot of opportunities and space for them to add their own insights perceptions and understanding. Thus, a couple of days will be provided to familiarise the participant-facilitators with the materials. The idea is to try out the materials through a workshop and then revise them according to the feedback of participants and community members.

Workplan has also been adjusted as attached.

In July 2020, the Government of Lao DPR is considering releasing some measurements in country and has allowed some important domestic travels.

Therefore on 4, 17, 20, and 25 August 2020 there were several team meetings including the field work in the following communities: Had Hien community, and Khour - Thee - Neung village, Na- Cham - Phanh and Phou - Xang - Kham community on 5-6 August, 18-19 August, and 26-27 August respectively to further strengthening the relationship with community members, interviewing community members, collect information and photos. The outputs are the living draft inventory documents of the two elements.

16, 23 September 2020, and 5, 12 October 2020: Technical meetings with facilitators and a liaison officer at UNESCO Bangkok. Powerpoint presentations (on community-based inventory and its principal) were made, questions and challenges from the fields were shared and received technical advice, and discussions on the current issues of the draft documents in order to be inputs into the Training materials development.

October to November 2020, the first draft of the Training of Trainer materials was developed with information from the field in order for the materials to be contextualised.

Several adaptations are being taken at the project planning and workplan implementation level.

Challenges are;

1. There are a lot of uncontrollable and almost unpredictable circumstances and that make planning and making changes and adjustments very difficult.
2. Technology accessibility is not enough all around in Luang Prabang. When everything has moved into online in order to move the work as usual, Lao people are not used to nor prepared to that. Most often than not, only minority of people has access to technology and internet. This is not to mention the internet literacy. Vulnerable people are ethnic groups, women and children in rural areas. Those people are left behind from what is happening in the world. Many people still depend on tv, and community radios.
3. Economic and mental impacts on Luang Prabang people are huge. When the priorities are shifted to economy and mental health of their family members to survive, safeguarding the ICH will not be their priorities.
4. Field work cannot happen; therefore we do not know how much the impacts are on those ICH bearers and practitioners and the communities. The impacts can be very bad and challenging to address within our project framework.
5. If everything has to be put online, there will be real challenge as it means no interaction, not being present to assess any situation and so forth. If it is online, the preparation of the material will also have to be different and still there are no evidence and uncertainties on how successful this can be.

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

Had Hien communities were closely consulted and worked together as below;

The village chiefs, women, practitioners, village fronts at Had Hien, Luang Prabang

- Mr. Som-Ok MANICHAN, Age 52 years old, head of Had Hien Village
- Mr. Vongduean SISOMBUTH, Age 49 years old, Technician of the betel knife
- Mr. Houmpheng MIDTAPHONE, Age 81 years old, Senior villager of Had Hien Village

Hmong communities were closely consulted as below;

The village chiefs, women, practitioners, the three villages, of Luang Prabang city.

- Mr. Neng che vang, Age 75 years old, Technician and Hmong Khaen player at Khour – Tee – Neung village,
- Mr. Xai chou her, Age 58 years old, Hmong Khaen Player and Senior villager of Khour – Tee – Neung village,
- Mr. Chour her Lee, Age 32 years old, Hmong Khaen Player, at Phou Lack cha lean Village,
- Mr. Va sa lao, Age 47 years old, Technician and Hmong Khaen player at Na Cham Phan village,
- Mr. Chear Chong Lee, Age 55 years old, Technician and Hmong Khaen player at Phou Lack cha lean Village.

The free form consents were obtained every time prior to going into the communities.

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

The communities needed to be even more closely consulted and agreed upon. They need stronger assistance on their finance and livelihoods than their safeguarding ICH at the moment. This needs to be revised and taken into consideration in order for the project to be sustained. The sustainability of the project can be done by adding on one more component of economic aspect. How ICH can contribute to the communities economically whether on

selling the products or promoting domestic tourism.

More skills are needed within the communities in order for them to be inclusive in any measures put in place by the Government. For example, IT skills, accessibility to information, information literacy and IT and digital equipment provision. In order to address the inequality of the communities (gender, literacy, to welfare, to education, financial support), these skills and empowerment are urgently needed.

External funds are being looked after more in order to complement the project for its sustainability.

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

Taking covid-19 as a big wave of realization, we have come to a clear conclusion that together with safeguarding the ICH, we need to think of components that can bring about improving the economy of those communities. The more risks of disappearing ICH, the higher significance to place on developing jobs or income generation for them.

The ICH safeguarding work needs to also include those aspect or capacity building for the community to build resilience. At the moment, we lack the ability to do so to help the community to be self-reliance and strengthen their resilience. Perhaps, we need to re-adjust the project components especially the last components on the survey.

In these difficult times when international travels and some domestic travels are limited and the technology and digital meetings were forced to be in use, it is almost impossible for here in Laos and especially for working with the villagers and at the communities level. The work therefore has to be delayed and waited for more normalcy. The new normal are not yet clearly seen in Laos therefore it is difficult to plan ahead. Flexibility, adaptability and agility is key.

The project management and implementation schedule needs to be flexible to adapt to any crisis and be agile enough to envision the future despite the uncertainty.

The sustainability of the project can be done by adding on one more component of economic aspect. How ICH can contribute to the communities economically whether on selling the products or promoting domestic tourism.

More skills are needed within the communities in order for them to be inclusive in any measures put in place by the Government. For example, IT skills, accessibility to information, information literacy and IT and digital equipment provision. In order to address the inequality of the communities (gender, literacy, to welfare, to education, financial support), these skills and empowerment are urgently needed.

More funds need to be raised if public funding were cut short. The economy of Luang Prabang has been hit hard by the lockdowns for four months and there is no financial support availability on that yet. Small guesthouses and medium hotels were closed permanently and some were bankrupted. There are more and more unemployed people who got laid-off from those guesthouses and hotels as well as other hospitality services like spas, restaurants and transportation services.

Having provided all the above, the project extension is being requested for at least 6-8 more months beyond September 2021. Official letters and adapted workplan will be submitted as

soon as it is ready.

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 I: The summary of the two elements were attached in English.

ANNEXII: DoICT contributed to the article provided by UNESCO Bangkok and was published in the Bangkok Post in April 2020 about the impacts on the living tradition in Luang Prabang.

ANNEX III: Adapted workplan 2020-2021 dated 1st July 2020

ANNEX IV: The minutes of the consultations were recorded in Lao and the original progress report was in Lao.

ANNEX V: Some examples of powerpoint presentations to clarify community-based inventory concept

ANNEX VI: First draft of the workbook (working version)

Name and signature of the person having completed the report

Name: Sonesay Haekham

Title: Technical Staff Officer

Date: 16 November 2020

Signature: 