



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: February 2021 to: April 2022
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):	
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 program since 2011. Through this program, 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 center 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/contextualized 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 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 are 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 with 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 training the community and 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 community members' input.
- 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 programs 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 and 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 realized 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*

The project has achieved its objectives so far as it has strengthened the capacity of the communities, academic personnel and government officers in conducting the community-based inventory and has developed two sets of training materials for trainers (TOTs) and community members (Community-based workshop) which have been tested on the ground during the two training and workshop. It has enhanced the participation and leadership of communities in creating inventories and thus of ICH safeguarding in the province of Luang Prabang, and further development of existing inventories is being planned.

The project has also been successful in awareness-raising at all levels of significance of safeguarding ICH, and reemphasized the principals of the 2003 Convention especially the roles of the community members in making their own inventory and documentations.

40 community members, academic personnel and government officers have been trained and gained thorough understanding of the concepts of ICH safeguarding and 40 community members were trained in carrying out an inventory, with the support of academic personnel and government officers. Luang Prabang provincial network of 20 community trainers were developed and 15 focal points for ICH at the district level (one per district of 11 districts and 1 capital and 2 per central districts) were identified.

In details, the concept of a community led approach, of a bottom up approach to documentation and inventorying as the principal aim of this workshop was well received. It was very encouraging and heartening to see that the IA ICH team members were now totally convinced of this approach and were conscious of using every opportunity to



underline this in their presentations as well as in their reactions to exercise outputs and in discussion.

The success of the two workshops was that the basics of the convention and inventorying seemed to have been comprehended. However the idea of a community led inventory, free prior informed consent or community ownership will need a lot more efforts in the times to come. The IA ICH team is well placed in a position to train and support the inventory will surely help this endeavour.

A positive outcome was the result of the constant inclusion of safeguarding issues as part of inventorying was that most participants had included safeguarding elements in their exercises.

### 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*

**Activity 1: Pilot Community-based Inventory Training for the Communities Workshop for community members from 11 districts in Luang Prabang and its materials development**

The aim of this workshop was to introduce the fact that since it is the community who owns the culture and the traditions, and since they are the experts in the practice of the ICH, they are the best people to carry out the inventory. As ICH is part of their lives, it is an ongoing activity and thus they are in a position to keep documenting and recording events, processes and activities at any time. This is also in consonance with the 2003 UNESCO Convention and its Operational Directives. The workshop was highly interactive in which the participants contributed their own ideas about how a community can take ownership of its own culture.

The workshop was organized on 23-27 March 2022, with 46 participants including community members, members from institutions, schools and universities, a representative from an INGO and government officers.

The IA ICH team members including eight representatives from DICT LP, Luang Prabang World Heritage Office, Supphanuvong University, Santhiphap School, IT Technician – Photographer, and Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre (TAEC), prepared the workshop together with the ICH Expert Facilitator Dr. Shubha Chaudhuri, and UNESCO Culture Programme Officer, Ms. Kamonrat Chayamarit. The aims of the workshop and the workshop materials were explained and trained to the IA ICH team members, especially the facilitators guide. DICT LP were selecting the community representatives/members from all the 11 districts and 1 capital. The IA ICH Team undertook documentation of two ICH elements in Had Hien communities for Meet Cha Nak and Hmong Khaen in order to give inputs to develop the Me and My Village booklet. The community members from the communities also were selected to take part in the workshop and be the leaders in their communities later on.

The success are;

-A facilitators team has been officially set up who can train or guide and support community members to be able to carry out their own inventory, including working with community members to create a pilot inventory. These facilitators team has also learned and practiced what their role are as facilitators, and how to support the community, not treating them as informants.

-A group of community leaders from 11 districts and one capital in Luang Prabang province



has been created to continue the work in the communities. Most importantly all those who participate in this workshop have committed to working for the entire duration of the project and to working to empower and train the community members.

The workshop has become Community Trainers or Facilitators, and created a framework for collaboration.

-The basics of the convention and inventorying seemed to have been comprehended. However, the idea of a community led inventory, free prior informed consent or community ownership would need a lot more efforts in the times to come. A small team that is in a position to train and support the inventory will surely help this endeavor. A positive outcome noticed was the result of the constant inclusion of safeguarding issues as part of inventorying was that most participants had included safeguarding elements in their exercises.

Activity 2: Finalization of Me and My village booklet – a community-based guidebook and its materials (October 2021 onwards)

“Me and My Village” guidebook and a set of Power Point presentations were finalized. An important addition was also to add the concept of Safeguarding, cultural mapping as well as space associated with ICH, whenever possible. Materials for this workshop also included simple handouts for the community to serve as a primer for carrying out a pilot inventory in their village, and the guidelines for the facilitators to introduce these materials and assist and support the community members to work with them for the pilot inventory. An exhaustive list of sub domains was created including the ICH elements with which everybody identified and sensitized them to creating such lists or drawing on these during working with the community to create the pilot inventory.

The materials include a) the guidebook for the community members, b) powerpoint presentations to introduce the concepts in the guidebook, and c) the facilitator guidebook.

This is an outline of issues that were covered through Power Point presentations, through the guidebooks and Exercises are the below;

“Unpacking” ICH

- Introducing ICH as a living evolving way of looking at culture
- Cultural heritage of the people – high art to everyday life (Domains to elements)
- ICH is important as everyday customs and traditions are threatened

The details of the guidebook include;

1. A simple introduction to the salient points of the ICH Convention. It is not assumed that all those who use this would have been through the Capacity Building Workshop. Apart from the main points, it will seek to convey the “spirit of the convention”.
2. Introduction to Community Based Inventorying
3. Suggestions for organising the community
4. Section with simple instructions or guidelines for using recording technologies
5. Section that explains concepts of oral history, participatory mapping, digital storytelling etc
6. Suggestions for the way forward

The Me and My Village guidebook, Power Point Presentations, and the Facilitator Guidebook were tested during the workshop and was finalized after the workshop. The next step is to put the three guidebooks into a layout by a graphic designer.

Activity 3: Reflection from the TOTs, Had Hien community field work and secondary



research on the ICH in the Luang Prabang province (March 2021-December 2021)

During the COVID 19 restriction from March 2021 to December 2021,

☐ Had Hien community and Hmong community field works for Meet Xanak (bethel knife) and Hmong Khaen (Hmong traditional music instrument) documentation

Several community field works took place, in order to introduce the project objectives and to work with the community members to assist and guide the Meet Chanak and Hmong Khaen inventory and documentation. Two complete documentations were done during these period and prepared as inputs for the Community-Based workshop in March 2022.

☐ A series of consultation meetings between the ICH Facilitator, UNESCO Bangkok Culture Programme Officer and IA ICH Team members on the TOT workshop, and the field work in the two communities

The meetings reflected how the community members were organized to explain the project, how the community representatives chosen, how the data collected, how to list other ICH elements, and reflect on the community observations on those elements, what problems the community members faced in carry out the inventory by themselves, ICH elements that the team observed and its difference (if any) from other ethnic groups, and the team general impression on the field work activities. These meetings were very helpful to generate knowledge and deepen the principals of the 2003 Convention in practice with the IA ICH Team members.

☐ Secondary research and ICH LP Provincial ICH Inventory List of LP was expanded

The Luang Prabang Provincial ICH Inventory sub-domain categories were created by the IA ICH Team and this will set as a standard to expand the current ICH LP Provincial List whilst they are going to the ICH survey fieldwork in the 11 districts in the next six months.

### 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*

The team members and heritage owners of the ICH elements in the Luang Prabang province were identified by the team and experts as models for the collection of elements to submit to the International Expert to be integrated into the training materials development through the community of Luang Prabang. The team has been in close contact and consultation with the community, in order to collect the information clearly, which was very important in developing a good and consistent guide to the community in Laos.

In preparation, we were working with stakeholders to focus on the development of community ICH safeguarding by identifying stakeholders from government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and communities in Luang Prabang as follows:

-Participants from LuangPrabang Province in 12 districts: 12 people

-Participants from the community in LuangPrabang: 12 community representatives

-Participants from the DICT: 8 people

-Participants from the institutions including high school, university, ICH institution: 5 people

This training was very important to provide participants with a clear understanding of the importance of the 2003 Convention, the various aspects of our ICH inventory facilitation. At the heart of this training was the participation of all, especially the community members, in



determining their ICH work plans in their own community, in the management, so that everyone in their community was fully involved for the maximum benefit of their community. The free form consents were obtained every time prior to going into the communities. List of participants attached.

### **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 sustainability of the project is ensured by the community ICH leaders being trained identified as a culture focal point and committed to transmit all the knowledge gained about how to use the guidebook to raise awareness and assist the other community members in inventorying and documenting their own ICH. Those focal points were also acknowledged by the DICT LP and networked well among themselves. Each community also took on the guidebook and will find opportunities to translate them into their ethnic languages as appropriate in order to contextualise them to fit their community context and also engage youth in their communities in making inventory, documenting and safeguarding their own ICH. The DICT LP plans to maintain the network for the ongoing ICH projects and the future project in order to build upon and strengthen the capacity gained during this IA project.

The Me and My Village is being designed and will be proposed for officially adopted as an official reference to work on ICH at the community level, and later will be adjusted to fit the school and academic context.

### **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 institutions and the community members chosen for participation were a good cross section of those who are related to ICH. The combination of the participants this time was the best mix of government officials all the 12 district ICT offices, academics, and community members. The majority of the participants were community members and the gender balance was well represented. This should be extended in the future.

In summary the feedback from the participants was that they got a basic understanding of the concept of what Safeguarding is and the difference between the various forms. This is as far as one can expect. We have to provide time for concepts to be discussed debated in their community and understood to be absorbed.



The Government of Lao PDR was keen on developing capacity in this area, being encouraged by the successful of the two workshops supported by this IA. The Government of Lao PDR also has borne in mind that an important aspect of the current forms of nomination is that they require more and more exact information on a national inventory and on safeguarding practices in the past, present and future. This was true of all the three forms of nomination. Thus a successful nomination is not only a matter of learning how to prepare a dossier but requires integrity of work done towards the implementation of the convention, especially of a community based inventory and safeguarding projects that involve the community.

The Government of Lao PDR therefore has developed the ICH workplan and strategy for 2021-2025 including development of safeguarding ICH plan and strategy nation-wide, making the national inventory of ICH under threats and its documentation as well as digitalisation, continuing enhancing the competency of Lao PDR in safeguarding the ICH with the focus at the community level, and to strengthen the regional and international cooperation towards the safeguarding the ICH.

#### Role of the UNESCO Bangkok Liaison Officer:

The role of Project or Workshop coordinator Ms. Mali Kamonrat Chayamarit was a very critical one and aided substantially in the success of the workshop. Her role is not to be confused with that of a trainer (or Facilitator in the UNESCO parlance) but one that was needed to pull together the various strands that are essential in such a program as well as contextualise the materials and liaise with the IA ICH Team and also to continue assist the Government of Lao PDR in ICH work in the country.

Kamonrat was very useful in the communication with the Heritage Department, DICT LP and the UNESCO accredited trainer or facilitator. Direct communication for the expert with the Heritage Department was desirable but not easy given various factors. As Kamonrat is in charge of Lao PDR at the UNESCO Bangkok office she is in constant touch with the government agencies and thus has necessary experience. Her knowledge of the 2003 Convention also aids in keeping the programs that are planned in keeping with the spirit of the 2003 Convention. Most importantly she has been involved with the Capacity Building workshops which were organised by UNESCO since 2013 as well as the Heritage Department and thus is familiar with all the issues. She played a key role in the organisation regarding the TOR for the expert, the schedule of the workshop, the content of the materials and workshop programme and communication lines on both sides. During the workshop she provided support by introducing the convention, providing assistance in carrying out the exercises, contextualise the discussions and general coordination.

#### Role of the Trainer:

The role of the UNESCO Accredited Trainer, Dr. Shubha Chaudhuri, has been significant to bring the workshop up to the international standards especially under the framework of UNESCO 2003 Convention of which Lao PDR has ratified since 2009. Dr. Shubha Chaudhuri has been familiar with Lao context because she was appointed to be a facilitator for all the capacity building series implemented in Lao PDR since 2011. Dr. Shubha has extensive experience in the areas of audio visual archiving and ethnomusicology for over the decades. Her field work in India and South Asia also provided comparative inputs and expertise into all the workshops she co-facilitated. She also is an expert in issues related to intellectual property rights in the areas of intangible cultural heritage.

The role of the trainer(s) and coordinators in Lao PDR is very crucial because those persons need to have background knowledge of the region and the context of the country, combined with right attitudes, patience and perseverance towards the longer term safeguarding the ICH in Lao PDR.



## 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: Me and My Village Final (word doc. version)

ANNEXII: Facilitator guidebook (word docs. version)

ANNEX III: Power Point Presentations

ANNEX IV: Participants list

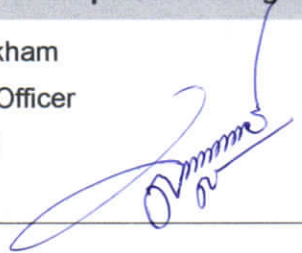
## Name and signature of the person having completed the report

Name: Sonesay Haekham

Title: Technical Staff Officer

Date: 22 August 2021

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sonesay Haekham', is written over the signature line. The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal stroke.