



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): Mongolia

Project title:	Supporting natural and cultural sustainability through the revitalization and transmission of the traditional practices of worshipping the sacred sites in Mongolia
Reporting period:	From: 12/02/2019 to: 31/01/2021
Budget:	<p style="text-align: right;">Total: US\$149030</p> <p><i>Including:</i></p> <p>Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund: US\$98500</p> <p>State Party contribution: US\$13880</p> <p>Other contributions: US\$36650</p>
Implementing agency (contracting partner or UNESCO Field Office):	Foundation for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage
Contact person:	<p>Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Mr</p> <p>Family name: Norov</p> <p>Given name: Urtnasan</p> <p>Institution/position: Foundation for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage/President</p> <p>Address: #403, 4F, Peace Building 8/5, Sukhbaatar Street, 4th Khoroo, Chingeltei District, Ulaanbaatar 15160, Mongolia</p> <p>Telephone number: +976-9910 0184; +976-9989 6231</p> <p>E-mail address: n.urtnasan@gmail.com</p>
Partner agency (in the case of a service from UNESCO project):	

Implementing partners:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sciences and Sports</li><li>2. Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism</li><li>3. Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO</li><li>4. Government Implementing Agency - Department of Culture and Art</li><li>5. Government Organization - National Center for Cultural Heritage</li><li>6. Local Departments of Culture and Art, Governor's Offices in 21 provinces</li><li>7. NGO - Association for Safeguarding a Kinship Inheritance and Tradition</li><li>8. NGO - Research and Information Center for the Sacred Sites of Mongolia</li><li>9. MNB - Mongolian National Broadcaster</li><li>10. TV9 - National News TV Channel</li><li>11. www.medee.mn - Online News Agency</li></ol>
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## 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*

The tradition of worshipping sacred mountains and sources of water is one of the outstanding cultural heritage elements created, developed, and practiced by nomadic Mongolians since ancient times. The tradition was initially developed and thrived during the shamanic period and was later enriched with Buddhist teachings and rituals.

This traditional knowledge system was ignored, or even prohibited in Mongolia for a certain period of time in the world of communist ideology in the 20th century. The number of masters who are knowledgeable enough to properly conduct the traditional worship rituals and ceremonies has decreased dramatically due to aforementioned historical reasons. The traditional procedures of worship rituals and their symbolic meanings and expressions have almost been lost in many local communities.

Since the 1990s, the Government of Mongolia has taken on active policy to revive and promote national culture, customs, and traditions. Despite the efforts of Mongolian communities, worship practitioners, and the government's active initiatives towards reviving the traditional practices of worshipping sacred sites, several extreme challenges remain. Mongolia's rapid globalization, urbanization, and the migration of the herdsman population from sacred site areas to the cities have diminished the scope of the traditional cultural space of worshipping practices. Besides, as Mongolia is rich in minerals such as coal, gold, and copper, a considerable number of mining companies have been operating in the country. Therefore, a large area of Mongolian territory is under exploration and mining licenses, which threatens the sacred sites and viability of the traditional practices of worshipping sacred sites and their continued transmission.

The element was registered on the List of ICH in need of Urgent Safeguarding at the 12th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of ICH Convention in 2017.

Bearing in mind the importance of the revitalization of this tradition in such situations, UNESCO accredited NGO in Mongolia - The Foundation for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage (FPNCH) in close cooperation with Governmental Organizations, NGOs and related community-based organizations has initiated and developed a Project on "Supporting natural and cultural sustainability through the revitalization and transmission of the traditional practices of worshipping the sacred sites in Mongolia" and submitted a request for International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund in 2018. This request was approved by the Bureau of the Committee, and the contract for its implementation was executed in February 2019.

### 1.1 Preparation and coordination

i) The project is set to be implemented in accordance with the Work Plan for a duration of 30 months. Activities for the given period as scheduled in the Work Plan were successfully implemented.

ii) In close consultation with the officer of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sciences and Sports (MECSS) and with the consent of related Governmental organizations, NGOs, community-based organizations, and practitioners, the implementing organization has established an Organization Committee consisted of the representatives of sacred site related NGOs, communities, Governmental and religious organizations.

iii) The Organization Committee has developed an Operational procedure with purposes to

coordinate all stakeholders, monitor the activities and evaluate the outcomes. The Committee has also developed a General Guideline on the implementation of the project to ensure the efficiency of its proceedings. The Foundation, as implementing organization, is a responsible body to oversee the implementation of all planned activities, and coordinate all necessary communication with stakeholders including local and religious organizations, and the scientific and media personnel. The Foundation has developed a detailed-plan for preparing and organizing each individual activity and/or ceremony.

iv) With the proposal from the Project Coordinator, the Foundation initiated, within the framework of the UNESCO project, a Call for developing a “Nature and Culture Journey of the Mongols” Nationwide Campaign under the motto “Let’s appreciate and love Sacred Homeland and Our Heritage”. This initiation was supported and encouraged by more than 100 ICH related NGOs of Mongolia, MECSS, and the Government Implementing Agency – Department of Culture and Art. The Organization Committee has also positively supported this initiation and taken the decision to carry out the nationwide campaign.

v) Under the guidance of the Committee, the Foundation has established official and fruitful cooperation with local authorities of aimags (provinces), soums and communities. Letter (No.01/314) of cooperation dated June 18, 2019 addressed from the Department of Culture and Art was sent to every Governor’s Office of 21 aimags. The consecutive letter (No. 01/478) dated October 15, 2019 was sent to Governor’s Offices of every aimag to follow up on collaboration. Letters were aimed to introduce and reinforce the implementation process of the project, to broadly involve local authorities, NGOs and communities in the activities, and to organize a 2-day local workshops in 21 provinces and to carry out nationwide campaign.

vi) The Foundation established an Agreement with the National Centre of Cultural Heritage of Mongolia (NCCH) concerning joint action on establishing National inventory- information database for “Traditional practices of worshipping the sacred sites in Mongolia”. To this end, the Foundation established a Contract with a professional working team for establishing and developing the National inventory-information database.

vii) The Foundation established a MOU and Agreement with the “Association for Safeguarding a Kinship Inheritance and Tradition” (ASKIT) to cooperate for greater involvement of local ethnic and kinship communities in implementing the project objectives. The Foundation also appointed the ASKIT NGO’s press agent journalist Ms. S.Dulamsuren as a press specialist to promote the Project objectives and activities through ASKIT NGO’s newspaper called “Urag Udam” (or Inherited land and Descendants) where it’d be dedicated to the dissemination of ideas and activities of the project and its nationwide campaign. The specialist will be responsible to coordinate all activities on press-release and propaganda concerning the nationwide campaign and the project. In June of 2019, the Foundation issued 1,000 pieces of newspaper “Urag Udam” specifically dedicated to the project which were disseminated among stakeholders, local communities and public.

viii) The Foundation established an MOU with the Mongolian National Broadcaster (MNB) TV Channel and "Eco Asia" Institute to produce a series of TV programs and documentary films and disseminate them through broadcasts on different national and local TV channels and social networks.

### **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*

Project objectives were identified on the basis of urgent needs for revitalizing the element

and raising awareness among local communities, in particular, among younger generations.

Project objectives and results attained in following ways:

- With aims to ensure broader and inclusive participation of communities, groups and other stakeholders in the overall activities of the Project, the Foundation, in cooperation with the Governmental Implementing Agency – Department of Culture and Art, had launched a Nationwide Campaign to carry out for the duration of 2020 to 2021.
- In close cooperation with local communities, the Foundation has conducted research expeditions in four regions through field surveys, on-site documentation and other means as necessary. These expeditions commenced the research activities which will be continued until May 2021. All research activities including field surveys will result in the creation of Reference Books for each region and organization of a Scientific Symposium in May 2021.
- Based on the field research materials, the Foundation and NCCH are establishing a National inventory-information database. A guideline was developed and distributed to all local branches of the NCCH. Detailed instructions for creation of this database were given to participants of all national and local seminars. The final evaluation and integration of the database will be completed by May, 2021. As of December 31, 2020, the total of 811 sacred sites were registered in the National inventory-information database.
- A Guidebook (1000 pcs) and audio-visual materials were created and distributed to all soums of 21 provinces among local communities to improve their knowledge, awareness, and capacity-building.
- Along with the identified community representatives and specialists, a two-day national capacity-building workshop was organized in October 2019.
- The National Contest for Best practices to revive and promote worship practices was announced among communities from October 2019 until June 2021. The National Contest highly attracts general public and local communities and authorities of soums and bags.
- With assistance and guidance of trainers who participated in the national workshop, the Governor's offices of Provinces organized the local seminar in all 21 provinces in October and December of 2019. As a result, around 400 local community members, practitioners and cultural workers were trained and gained capacity to implement Project objectives.
- A series of two reference books for Khangai and Gobi regions were created based on the research materials documented during field research, and distributed to soums and provinces, and among local practitioners and young people.
- A series of two Documentary Films and one TV broadcast were produced with the on-site audio-visual materials documented during field expeditions.
- The Foundation organized monitoring activities on the progress of implementation of the Project twice in local areas.
- A National evaluation meeting (Forum) and an ICH Festival to be held at the end of the Project to highlight the importance of sacred sites in promoting sustainable development of communities. Prior to Forum, the Organization Committee will finalise the implementation of Nationwide Campaign, National Contest and other activities of the Project.

## 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 reporting period, the following activities were implemented.

### 1. Orientation Meeting to the UNESCO Project (Item.1.2.1) (1<sup>st</sup> period)

To introduce Project objectives and activities, the Foundation in cooperation with the Department of Culture and Art organized an Orientation Meeting on May 10, 2019, in Ulaanbaatar.

Over 50 individuals participated in the Orientation Meeting including representatives from MECSS, MNC for UNESCO, Department of Culture and Art and provincial Governor's offices, and representatives of concerned communities and NGOs, and the members of Organizing Committee.

Researchers have given instructions and recommendations for implementing the project and organizing Nationwide Campaign and conducting field expeditions. Fruitful discussions took place during the Meeting which has proven further commitment and active involvement by all parties in all Project activities.

### 2. Research expeditions in 4 regions (Item.1.2.2) (1st period)

Subsequent to the Orientation Meeting, the Foundation conducted research expeditions in four regions from June to October of 2019. Local authorities and representatives of ASKIT NGO have closely cooperated with the teams, and concerned communities and practitioners were actively involved.

National Coordinator has developed and approved a "Guideline for conducting research expeditions in the selected regions". Guideline includes sacred sites to be covered, and the itinerary of each expedition.

Each team consisted of competent individuals including team leader, main researcher, assistant researcher, cameraman, and driver.

Research expedition objectives

- To commence research activities;
- To clarify and understand the current state and viability of worshipping practices;
- To identify local practitioners and specialists of worshipping practices;
- To commence the establishment of an inventory-information database in provinces
- To create a region-specific book on the basis of research findings.
- To organize the National Symposium based on the results of the research materials
- To conduct documentation of sacred sites and practitioners.

Prior to commencing field expeditions, the "Form for Registration of Sacred Sites, Worship Practices and Communities" was developed to be used in surveying, and creating inventory-information database,

Research teams travelled 15,774 km in 64 days and covered 86 soums of 21 provinces, met with 176 officials of Governor's offices who are responsible to carry out project activities in their respective provinces and soums.

Team members visited 118 revived sacred sites for exploration and documentation and met 167 community members who were practitioners, religious representatives of local monasteries, or local herdsmen – members of various indigenous communities who have inherited the traditions from their kinship ancestors and practice the element at their respective sacred sites.

Research teams took account of 430 sacred sites, documented revived 118 sacred sites, and interviewed and recorded discussions of 86 individuals. They shot about 5,000 photographs and made audio-visual recordings of over 300 hours.

As a result, a large amount of material has been accumulated which will be reviewed, analysed and classified with respect to characteristics of the element and communities. Final results will be integrated into online database system, to be used as reference for creation of region-specific reference books, and organizing a scientific Symposium.

### 3. Establishment of National Inventory-information Database (Item.1.2.3) (1st period)

The Foundation and NCH are jointly working to establish National Inventory-information Database. An online based database system is created within a website [www.tahilga.mongoluv.mn](http://www.tahilga.mongoluv.mn). The working group has developed a Guideline to the functions of database system operation, regulations to creating account and registration procedures which was developed in exact format as the “Form for Registration of Sacred Sites, Worship Practices and Communities”. The evaluation of the integrated database will be finalized in May, 2021. At the end of Second Phase, 811 sacred sites are registered in the database.

### 4. Development of a Guidebook and Audio-visual material (Item.1.3.1) (1st period)

Under the coordination of the National Coordinator, the working group was established and created a Guidebook for Project implementation which contains the basic materials including Guidelines for implementing Project, Call for developing the Nationwide Campaign, Guideline for conducting Research expeditions, Creation of National inventory-information database, Form for Registration of Sacred Sites, Worship Practices and Communities, and etc. 1000 pcs of Guidebooks and 500 pcs of Project introduction video materials were published and distributed.

### 5. Organization of a two-day National Seminar (Item.1.3.2) (1st period)

On the basis of findings of research expeditions, and with aims to reinforce the Project implementation process and officially launch the Nationwide Campaign, the Foundation with its partner organizations organized a two-day National Seminar in Ulaanbaatar on October 23-24, 2019.

In total 70 people participated in the National Seminar including representatives from MECSS, MNET, MNC for UNESCO, Department of Culture and Art, and provincial Governor's offices and representatives of concerned communities, NGOs, specialists and members of Organizing Committee. During the Seminar, Organizing Committee presented materials for implementing the project activities and launching Campaign. Participants of the Seminar were appointed as trainers of local training workshops to be organized in 21 provinces. National Seminar became an important step forward to broaden the scope of the project and intensifying its process and encouraging local communities and practitioners.

With purpose to promote UNESCO project and bring its ideas closer to the public and local communities, the Foundation initiated a Nationwide Campaign with a Motto “Let's Appreciate and Love Sacred Homeland and Our Heritage”. The Campaign was officially launched at the end of the National Seminar (October 24, 2019) at the National University of Culture and Art in Ulaanbaatar city.

### 6. Announcement of a National Contest for Best Practices (Item.1.3.3) (1st period)

The Foundation and ASKIT NGO developed a Guideline for organizing the National Contest for Best practices for revitalization and promotion of worship practices among all communities, with eligibility and entry requirements, criteria of selection of the best entries,

duration, awards and etc. The National Contest was announced at Launching Ceremony of the Nationwide Campaign. The Contest will be finalized in June 2021 and representatives of 20 selected communities will be invited to the National Evaluation Meeting of the project and the National Festival to be awarded with Certificates of Honor and cash rewards.

#### 7. Organization of Local Seminars (Item.1.3.4) (1st period)

With active involvement of the Department of Culture and Art in provincial Governor's offices, the trainer-organizers who were trained in National Seminar have conducted local Seminars in their respective provinces in November and December of 2019. Local Seminars were conducted pursuant to the guidelines, instructions and recommendations provided in the Guidebook and materials and contents obtained during National Seminar. Provincial organizers have duly considered the specific cultural spaces and situations with respect to characteristics of their localities and communities.

As a result, around 400 leader-practitioners or cultural workers of local cultural centers received and gained greater knowledge and experience in conducting worship practices. These individuals have been actively engaging in Project implementation activities and carry out the Nationwide Campaign at local levels among indigenous communities. They organize all activities related to establishing and updating the inventory-information database at local level and organizing Contest's ongoing process.

#### 8. Creation of National and Regional Reference Books - Volume 2, 3 and 4 (Item.1.4) (2<sup>nd</sup> period)

With aims to create National Reference book on Sacred sites, the Foundation has established the MOU with Mongolian National Broadcaster (MNB) TV Channel and "Eco Asia" Institute. Within this scope, the field expeditions in four regions were organized for research and on-site photographic and audio-visual documentation.

-For creating regional reference books on sacred sites, the Organization Committee established 3 creative working groups:

- i) Group to produce National Reference book containing the World Heritage Sites and sacred sites registered in the National Tentative List to the World Heritage List;
- ii) Group to produce Region-specific reference book for Gobi region;
- iii) Group to produce Region-specific reference book of Khangai region.

-Based on research findings from expeditions conducted in 2019 and on-site documentation expeditions conducted in 2020, the Working groups 2 and 3 created two Region-specific Reference books (Volume 3-4) with a few months of delay due to Covid-19 Pandemic, and distributed among practitioners and communities. (Annex XI & XII)

-National Reference book (Volume-2) is currently being developed by Working group 1 with a few months delay as well due to Pandemic. This important and large in size book will be completed by July, 2021.

#### 9. Creation of Documentary Films & TV Series (Item.1.4) (2<sup>nd</sup> period)

-Pursuant to established MOU, the Working group, consisted of prominent specialists in the field of natural and cultural heritage studies and experienced film makers and operators of the Foundation, MNB TV Channel and "Eco Asia" Institute, had conducted a three separate expeditions to Gobi, Khangai and Eastern steppe regions in July, August, and October of 2020, and have gathered crucial data from practitioners, experts and specialists, collected a considerable amount of photographic and audio-visual materials on the sacred sites and worship practices. As a result, following several materials for raising awareness, promotion and dissemination of the heritage element were produced and disseminated.

- i) Documentary Film: Sacred Landscape of Great Steppe – PART I (Annex XIII)
- ii) Documentary Film: Sacred Landscape of Great Steppe – PART II (Annex XIV)



iii) TV Series: Sacred Landscape of Great Steppe (Annex XV)

The Documentary Film series and TV broadcast series for other region are being produced, and will be disseminated upon completion as planned (by June-July, 2021).

10. Concerning management, evaluation, monitoring activities, during second phase implementation organization together with members of the organization Committee has conducted necessary meetings with organizational purposes including the establishment of working teams for the creation of reference books and documentary films and TV series and supervising and monitoring further development of activities of newly established National inventory-information database and National Contest for Best Practices, and Nationwide Campaign for recovering traditional worshipping practices of sacred sites etc. National coordinator himself and some members of the Committee have been participating in field expeditions and had good possibilities to monitor the implementation of the project activities in ritual areas of four regions. Implementation organization and member of the Committee have visited more than 100 sacred sites and met many cultural workers, trainers, ICH bearers, worshippers and local authorities and so on. In a difficult situation of Covid-19 pandemic, the implementation organization is conducting online monitoring and meetings with organizers of the project implementing agreed activities in provinces, soums and communities.

### 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*

Project's main purpose is to work closely with really faithful communities, providing guidance, networking, and advice, but most importantly to ensuring and encouraging these communities and ethnic groups to shape their own spiritual identity and develop their own unique traditional rituals of worshipping sacred sites as independent practitioners. To this end, the community members and practitioners are involved through following ways and mechanisms.

- Main representatives of various ethnic and local communities bound together by sharing one sacred land and water and tradition were invited and directly involved in National and local Seminars/workshops.
- Local seminars were organized in 21 provinces which involved representatives of local communities and their leader-practitioners from each soum. These trained leader-practitioners are working in their respective soums and bags (smallest administrative unit in Mongolia) among local communities.
- Project organizers have launched the Nationwide Campaign "Let's appreciate and love our Sacred homeland and our Heritage" which has a prime purpose to bring the project goal and ideas to those communities who worship their own sacred site inherited from their ancestors.
- Activities of research expeditions were carried out in selected sacred sites in four regions worshipped by local communities. During the expeditions, research teams have met with representatives of those local communities and collaborated with their direct involvement in conducting the field research activities. Community representatives were involved in variety of forms and played important roles during such expeditions as a guide to sacred sites, interviewee on worship practices and traditions, and some of them being the main leaders who conduct the worship practices and rituals. Community representatives have been playing crucial roles in developing a dialogue, discussions, monitoring activities, evaluation meetings, and video documentation and filming. During expeditions, the introductory Guidebook, "Urag Udam" Newspaper and other audio-visual materials were broadly

disseminated among community leaders, practitioners, and local Government officials and NGOs.

- One of key activities of the project is to establish and develop the Nationwide inventory-information database of sacred sites in Mongolia. Description and explanation of the sacred site for inclusion in a database will be made by leaders-practitioners of communities with assistance of specialists and practitioners who participated in local Seminars. Therefore, to submit their entry of sacred site registration, the community members-leaders and specialists from Cultural Centers of local administrative unit (soum or bag) should work together and create the database at soum level and submit the Form for Registration through online registration procedure and integrate into the National Inventory-Information Database.

- In our case, the most effective and influential mechanism for involving the communities is an organization of a National Contest launched among local communities for their best practices of reviving and promoting the worshipping traditions and rituals. Communities are to freely participate in the National Contest submitting their experiences and best practices of worshipping sacred homeland.

- In general, all activities of the project are aimed to widely involve local communities because a sacred site itself is worshipped by community or group of 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*

-As a result of a two-day National Seminar, 21 individuals were trained in 21 provinces who are leaders and organizers of further activities of the project and Nationwide Campaign to support and promote practices of worshipping the sacred sites. These 21 trained leaders conducted local workshops in their respective provinces and further will continue to carry out the research work at the local level and advise practitioners and community leaders, including those who were trained during local workshops, on how to document sacred sites and create a database.

-The practitioners-leaders from each soum in 21 provinces who were participants in local workshops (around 400 persons) will be continuously engaged in implementing the project objectives to reviving and conducting traditional worshipping practices in their respective localities among indigenous ethnic groups or among one land and water communities.

-The research activity that has started by conducting field expeditions, is considered as the most important and prerequisite activity followed by such other measures as:

i) To review and analyse the gathered research materials during field expeditions and integrate them to a newly established inventory-information database.

ii) To continue to receive entry materials of the registration of sacred sites, worship practices and communities through newly established inventory-information database of "Traditional practices of worshipping sacred sites in Mongolia" and make evaluations for gaining desired results of research work and expeditions.

iii) To organize a scientific and practical Symposium on the basis of research materials and findings from field expeditions, and the entry materials received through registration on inventory-information database, and best practices selected as a result of a nationwide contest.

iv) To create and distribute a 2 volume region-specific reference books based on the research materials gathered from field expeditions.

-Within the framework of the Project, the Organization Committee plans to develop a recommendation for further policy-making to take practical measures for reviving and developing traditional practices of worshipping sacred sites. Consequently, the entire report of field research expeditions will be completed at the Symposium by May of 2021.

-When the UNESCO project was first introduced and the Nationwide Campaign initiated in May of 2019, we could not have foreseen the immense interest and enthusiasm this project would inspire. As early as we have anticipated, the Project and the Campaign have taken on a life of its own among various communities. During June-September months of 2019, many communities have organized worshipping rituals of their own sacred places: mountain, hill, lakes, rivers and headwaters and etc. Even though Covid-19 pandemic occurred through February to July, many local communities were able to organize their worship practices through June to September of 2020.

-Organization of the activities related to all these worshipping rituals and celebrations are being secured by additional fundraising by various partners, mostly local government agencies and private entities that are located within and around sacred sites concerned. For example, all Governor's offices of soums supported the participation of their representatives of communities in local Seminars providing additional financial resources to cover their transportation expenses.

## 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*

- All activities implemented during the last reporting period resulted in raising public awareness and understanding of the significance of traditions and meaningful rituals in our lives and protection of the Homeland and our Heritage. Since the Project and Call for developing a Nationwide Campaign were introduced, there is a growing interest and recognition of the value and significance of sacred sites both among general public and local communities, and our project in many cases has simply acted as a focus and catalyst for encouraging and developing ideas and wishes that were already there. In order to effectively collaborate with local communities who collectively worship their sacred homeland (mountain, spring, forest, headwater, sacred lake, rivers, trees, stone, ovoo, etc), the Foundation has signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the "Association for Safeguarding a Kinship Inheritance and Tradition" (ASKIT) NGO that has the active network of the representatives of all indigenous ethnic communities and inherited descendants. This MOU aims to revive forgotten practices among these specific local people, and disseminate the project objectives among them, and identify, document and register these sacred sites in the inventory-information database, and to actively involve these indigenous people in the National Contest.

This cooperation of the Foundation with one of the key stakeholders, "ASKIT" NGO, has become a good lesson of how to be close to local communities in reviving and promoting

worshipping practices through working with community or group of people who are inherited descendants from one family tree, or residents from one land and water area. This NGO is an Association of such kind of community people, and we have a good and active partnership to work successfully with indigenous communities and attain the desired results of the project.

- During the implementation of the project, starting from the planning phase to execution and implementation of planned activities and measures, we have learnt so much through close collaboration with different partners and stakeholders including Ministries, Governmental Agencies, National Center of Cultural Heritage, Governor's offices of provinces and soums, authorities of religious and civil organizations.

- However, there can be some factors to be considered that may cause obstacles to further implementation of activities. For example, the unfortunate situation of over-increasing internal migration of youths to urban areas existed at the time of a request for assistance is still continues further in the countryside where traditional worshipping practices could be revived and continued among young generations. In such condition, we have to reinforce the traditional way of education and upbringing children and young people within home-based cultural space and native homeland areas. To this end, we have announced and launched the Nationwide Contest for selecting Best practices of conducting worshipping practices and rituals "Let's appreciate sacred Homeland" among communities bound by strong kinship relations who worship one Homeland sacred Mountain, water source, lake, or river. Research materials and observations of field expeditions uncover that when such a community conducts worshipping ritual at their homeland and sacred site, all members of the community including elders, offspring and children gather, and wholeheartedly worship and pray for safeguarding their sacred land.

In relation to special circumstances occurred due to Covid-19 Global Pandemic in 2020, we were forced to make minor changes to the planning and implementation of the project activities due to the cancellation and/or postponement of some major state and local practices of sacred site worship which were scheduled throughout the country. However, we could manage to maintain the overall scope of activities planned for this year with slight delays.

One of the additional initiatives we implemented was the development of the "Project Implementation Safety Measures and Additional Recommendations to Follow Amidst/Against the Covid-19" and its distribution among all stakeholders and individuals involved in the Project implementation. This initiative has played a crucial role in creating positive impacts in achieving desired outcomes. As stated in the "Detailed Work Plan", we are undertaking the proposed activities with minor changes and with a few months of delay, in relation to the creation of Reference books and documentary film.

- The results, outcomes and lessons learnt are expected to continue during future project activities and beyond the end of the project due to raised awareness of the general public, local communities and Government officials, improved sense and understanding of value and significance of traditional worshipping practices of sacred sites in Mongolia.

## **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: Project Work Plan

Annex II: Foundation President's Order No.038 to Establish the Organization

Committee

- Annex III: Letters# 01-314 and 01-478 by the Department of Culture and Art
- Annex IV: A Guideline to Conducting Research Expeditions (Approved by Project National Coordinator)
- Annex V: Form for Registration of Sacred Sites, Worship Practices and Communities (Approved by Director of NCCH)
- Annex VI: Agenda to the Orientation Meeting (May 10, 2019)
- Annex VII: Agenda to the National Seminar (October 23-24, 2019)
- Annex VIII: "Urag Udam" Newspaper
- Annex IX: Project Implementation Guidebook: Sacred Homeland and Our Heritage - Nature and Culture Journey of the Mongols
- Annex X: Project Introduction Video Material: Sacred Homeland and Our Heritage - Nature and Culture Journey of the Mongols
- Annex XI: Book - Volume III. Reference Book for Khangai region
- Annex XII: Book - Volume IV. Reference Book for Gobi region
- Annex XIII: Documentary Film: Sacred Landscape of Great Steppe – PART I
- Annex XIV: Documentary Film: Sacred Landscape of Great Steppe – PART II
- Annex XV: TV Series: Sacred Landscape of Great Steppe
- Annex XVI: Brief Report of the Implementation of Project Activities (2019)
- Annex XVII: Brief Report of the Implementation of Project Activities (2020)
- Annex XVIII: Detailed Financial Statement – signed, dated and presented on letterhead paper

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

Name: Norov URTNASAN

Title: Mr

Date: April 22, 2021

Signature: 