



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Intangible  
Cultural  
Heritage

## International Assistance

ICH-04-Report – Form

### INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND

#### PROGRESS NARRATIVE REPORT

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

Project title:	"Community Based Inventory of ICH in Albania with a view to safeguarding and transmitting to future generations"
Reporting period:	From: 21/02/2020 to: 17/05/2021
Budget:	Total: US\$ 248.785,00 <i>Including:</i> Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund: US\$ 213,260 State Party contribution: US\$ 35.525,00 Other contributions: US\$
Implementing agency (contracting partner or UNESCO Field Office):	Ministry of Culture of Albania
Contact person:	Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Dr. Family name: Kumbe Given name: Meri Institution/position: Ministry of Culture, Deputy Minister of Culture/ICH National Focal Point Address: Rr. Aleksandër Moisi Telephone number: +355692131092 E-mail address: <a href="mailto:meri.kumbe@kultura.gov.al">meri.kumbe@kultura.gov.al</a>
Partner agency (in the case of a service from UNESCO project):	
Implementing partners:	

## Background

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

*Not fewer than 750 or more than 1000 words*

*Since Albania ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention in 2005, the Ministry of Culture of Albania as the responsible authority has undertaken a series of institutional, promotional and safeguarding activities on ICH.*

*More specifically, an important initiative related to inventorying is to register ICH elements in the territory of the Republic of Albania, with the active participation of the community. In 2014, an interactive platform "Show your Culture" was launched aiming at encouraging all interested parties to upload audio-visual materials documenting the ICH elements that belong to their own families or communities, including minority groups. Throughout 2015 the interactive ICH map has been enriched with new elements. At the same time, specialized institutions (such as the National Center of Tradition Activities and the Institute of Anthropology and Art Studies) have introduced a number of processes, measures, and activities in the fields of identification, documentation and promotion of the intangible cultural heritage.*

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

*In response to challenging problems faced at institutional level, a legislative initiative was introduced with an aim to strengthen both the ICH institutions (public and private) and ICH bearers' communities. Additionally, a National List of seven (7) ICH Representative List was created by a special Order of the Ministry of Culture issued in 2010. In practice, however, the planned targeted activities for a thorough inventory of those 7 elements have not yet been implemented.*

*Apparently, there is an urgent need to draft a complete and more inclusive National ICH List which will bring into the light the rich diversity of the ICH in the territory of the Republic of Albania along with the most precious cultural values of each individual ICH element for the community practicing. Indeed, each and every single ICH element represents the community's geniality that has created it and passed it down through generations.*

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

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

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

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



## 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*

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

In addressing these issues, the current project implements a set of activities that include the drafting of the inventory methodology as well as setting out the process of inventory in three selected regions of Albania. The project adopts an innovative approach since the process of inventory involves both the communities and the bearers themselves by giving them a central role throughout the lifetime of project's activities, while ensuring their contribution's long-term viability.

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

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



## Description of project implementation

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

*Not fewer than 1000 or more than 1500 words*

During the reference period (21.02.2020-17.05.2021), the project has achieved the several objectives in compliance with the contract. Despite the odds caused by pandemic, the MoC has successfully realized the workplan that involves the activities in WP1 (1.1, 1.2, 1.3) and WP2 (2.1). Likewise, contracts have been negotiated and duly signed as per activity 3.1, while the process of procuring the equipment foreseen in WP3 (3.1.1) has been also finalized. Finally, several activities provided in the WP 4 and WP5 have been implemented.

### WP1: Coordination & Management

During the reference period, in accordance to WP1 objectives the first set of activities was focused on project's coordination and day-to-day management. The emphasis was put on active management by delegating the relevant responsibilities in compliance with the Ministry of Culture's (MoC) internal rules and regulations in order to ensure the monitoring of the project's progress and to guarantee its quality.

The Directorate of Conception and Feasibility of Cultural Projects (DRKK) of the (MoC) in the capacity of the leading partner have assumed the full supervisory responsibilities to coordinate the project's implementation plan in accordance to the contract. Despite the serious disruptions caused by the pandemic that have led to delay of planned activities, the leader managed to activate the working groups that according to the project's action plan are responsible for administrative and day-to-day monitoring tasks (Actions: 1.1 and 1.2).

#### 1.1 Establishment & operation of the Coordination Team;

During the period of reference, two bodies were established following a series of administrative acts and regulation. The first one, notably the "National Coordination Group" (NCG) (Action 1.1; Annex 1) had been established with a detailed implementation plan and agenda in full validity for the entire lifetime of the project. It is composed of a chairman and five members, two of whom are external experts. The NCG is entrusted with the tasks of coordinating the project's implementation according to the timeline; monitoring the implementation and project's financial resources; drafting periodic reports (quarters and annual); auditing of procurement procedures and monitoring/verification of contracts. At the same time, the Regional Directorates of Cultural Heritage (RDCH) in the pilot regions of Shkodra, Gjirokaster and Korca was tasked with the process of selection, coordination and proposing to the NCG the names/profiles of local experts and then forward them to the Minister of Culture for the final approval.

In compliance with the relevant protocols laid down in respective institutional regulations of MoC, two external members of the NCG and the two national experts (foreseen in the Action 2.2.1) tasked with drafting of the methodological guide were recruited and the respective contracts were duly signed.

The Collegium was the second decision-making body established in the framework of this project, tasked to monitor and review the administrative procedures regarding the organization and



development of the project. The members of the Collegium (a chairman and two members) are tasked with the revision, drafting, and implementation of the administrative acts by duly signing the individual decisions and forwarding them to the Minister of Culture. Last but not least, the General Coordinator of the project was also appointed with the task to report to the Minister of Culture on the project's progress and address any problems arising during its implementation.

### **1.2 Establishment and operation of 6 local teams;**

During the reference period, six (6) Permanent Local Teams (two per each region) had been operational with the exclusive responsibility to coordinate the project at the regional and local level. Their mission is to identify the bearers and community members and together inventory the ICH elements. By proactively empowering them the ultimate goal is for them to remain active even after the project's end while enhancing the safeguarding process both in regional and local level.

In accordance with the protocols laid down in the respective institutional regulations, the Minister of Culture issued the relevant Order regarding the recruitment of the expert group members in the pilot regions of Gjirokastra, Korca, and Shkodra (each of them composed of two groups with nine experts per group) and their scientific leaders (one per each region), and shortly thereafter their individual contracts were duly signed. Their selection had been preceded by eighteen (18) individual interviews with local experts per pilot region, amounting in total fifty five (54) local experts.

### **1.3 Establishing a protocol of informal meetings;**

The protocol of informal meetings had been drafted by NCG, the two staff members of the Ministry of Culture and three experts from the National Center of Folklore Activities, and then to be approved by the Coordination Team. Its methodology includes, among others, the ways to approach the local communities; to organize ad-hoc meetings with local actors; to conduct the fieldwork with the local bearers, and to raise awareness about the importance of inventorying the ICH elements.

## **WP2: Enhancing safeguarding mechanisms by involving communities**

The scope of WP2 is to enhance safeguarding mechanisms of preservation and promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage under the auspices of the Directorate of Conception and Feasibility of Cultural Projects of the Ministry of Culture; National Center of Folklore Activities and respective Regional Directorates of Cultural Heritage.

It is important to highlight that the session of training of trainers in inventorying of ICH sponsored by Sofia Center that was scheduled to take place in Tirana with the presence of two international facilitators was postponed due to Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, Actions 2.2 and 2.3 have been also postponed.

### **2.1: Drafting the methodological inventorying guidelines of ICH inventory;**

To start with, it should be noted that due to the emergency situation caused by pandemic some of activities were delayed or temporarily postponed.

However, the first phase of this activity has been implemented by two national experts (namely Persida Asllani and Dorian Cene) who have been selected and recruited in accordance with established procedures. In spite of delays caused by Covid-19 pandemic, the first draft of the inventorying methodological guidelines had been completed and it is under consultation process with the community members (Action 2.1.1) (including national institutions, NGOs and local government) and other related



ICH experts and institutions (Action 2.2).

More specifically, the three rounds of the inventorying methodological guidelines consultations have been scheduled to take place according to the following calendar: 24-30/05/2021 in Shkoder; 2-8/06/2021 in Korce, and 11-18/06/2021 in Gjirokaster. After appropriately revised, its final version is scheduled to be approved by the Coordination Team on 21/06/2021. Then, the National Committee of the Intangible Cultural Heritage will give the final approval to adopt it in the format of the National Inventorying Methodological Guidelines of the MoC, in pursuance to the Albanian legislation (Law no. 27/2018) (Action 2.1.2).

### **WP3: Expand the national inventory;**

The activities at this work package aim to expand ICH inventory in the entire country by focusing in three selected pilot areas. Due to the emergency situation and travel restrictions caused by the pandemic some of activities have been delayed or temporarily postponed.

#### **3.1 Inventorying ICH;**

During the reference period, this activity focused on the identification of community representatives and its bearers (assisted from the MoC, NCG, and RDCH); data collection; drafting the national ICH elements' list, and the identification and establishment of a national urgent safeguarding list. This list takes the form of a preliminary mapping drafted on the basis of the diversity of the domains and the geographical distribution. It is implemented by the six local teams (under Action 1.2), monitored by the Coordination Team (under Action 1.1) and assisted by institutions and researchers specialized on ICH.

More specifically, each local team had to inventory at least 15 elements. For the inventorying of each element three of the members of each local team were involved. Each team was assisted by one researcher (as it is foreseen in the Action 2.2), who supported them in writing and documentation of the inventory file.

Prior to this action (3.1), the administrative procedure (in pursuance to Albanian legislation) took place with regards to the material and equipment acquisition (Action 3.1.1). These equipments were of a crucial importance for the community to successfully achieve the goals of the activity. The equipments (as described in the budget) are managed from the MoC and used from its subordinate institutions according to the needs.

### **WP4: Awareness raising and dissemination of project results;**

Despite the worldwide disruption caused by pandemic, some limited activities foreseen in the WP4 regarding awareness raising and dissemination had taken place. These activities were mainly focused on conventional and social media promotion, as well as on TV channels. The project had been also introduced and promoted by the Deputy Minister of Culture, Dr. Meri Kumbe, in her public and media presence who explained the importance of this project for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Albania by acknowledging the contribution of UNESCO (Annex 4).

At the same time, the Coordination Team had drafted the strategy and mechanisms of dissemination (Action 4.1). The respective campaigns were organized by NCG and MoC and included conventional and social media, and information campaign in educational institutions (Action 4.1.2). However, the closure of the education institutions because of the Covid-19 restrictions and the relevant hygiene protocols changed the scheduled meetings' calendar. Thus, only several informal and closed meetings

took place such as the ones with the University Rectors and the Prefect of Shkodra.

### **WP5: Monitoring and evaluation**

With regards to WP5, certain steps had been taken in order to establish both the monitoring mechanism and the respective staff in charge of evaluating the project's progress and drafting the first progress report (Actions 5.1 & 5.1.1). To this end and in accordance with the protocols laid down in respective institutional regulations, two external experts have been recruited, namely a financial expert, and an expert for drafting the progress reports and while the respective contracts were duly signed.

Given the exceptional condition of pandemic impacting on the implementation of the project and in pursuance to Article IV (Amendments) of the Contract No. 4500414878 of February 21, 2020, the MoC has requested the amendment of the progress reports' deadlines as follows:

Progress Reports	Latest date for submission
1 <sup>st</sup> progress report & financial statement	17/05/2021
2 <sup>nd</sup> progress report & financial statement	30/10/2021
3 <sup>rd</sup> progress report & financial statement	28/02/2022
Final Report & Financial statement	30/07/2022

### **Community involvement**

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

*Not fewer than 300 or more than 500 words*

During the reference period of project's implementation, the Permanent Local Teams (two per each pilot region) have been established and they are fully operational with the exclusive responsibility to coordinate the project at the local level. Their mission is to identify the bearers and community members and together inventory the ICH elements. The added value of empowering the local community members is for them to remain active after the project's end while enhancing the safeguarding process both in regional and local level.



## **Sustainability and exit/transition strategy**

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

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

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

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

*Not fewer than 100 or more than 500 words*

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

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

## **Lessons learnt**

*Describe what are the key lessons learnt regarding the following:*

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

*Not fewer than 300 or more than 750 words*

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

## Annexes

List the annexes and documentation included in the report:

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

Annex 1: Ministerial orders

Annex 2: Signed contracts

Annex 3: Spending orders (financial report)

Annex 4: Others (minutes, letters, illustration material, video links, ecc)

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

Name: Eda Gemi

Title: Dr.

Date: 17/05/2021

Signature:

