

II. Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory

1. National Inventory

Until 2009, Vietnam did not have an official national inventory of intangible cultural heritage. In recent years, many organizations and institutions all over the country, including state research institutes, localities, professional institutions, and NGOs, as well as individuals have implemented various projects for surveying, researching, collecting, documenting, revitalizing, and transmitting intangible cultural heritage, created databases and inventories, and in the process, have helped raise awareness of the communities involved. The inventories were constructed in different ways, based on types or on geographical areas, and initially identified the variety of the country's cultural heritage in general and intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in particular. For example, the Institute of Culture and Arts Studies divides its inventories of around 400 items into 4 basic different domains: festivals, performing arts, craftsmanship, and rituals of human beings' cycle of life. It also made inventories based on geographical areas: ethnic villages, communes, or districts. The Musicology Institute has inventories of different types of traditional music and dance, etc. However, a study on the status of inventorying ICH in Vietnam carried out by the Department of Cultural Heritage with the support of UNESCO in 2008 showed that those inventories had been set up mostly for research purposes and according to the tasks of the implementers, and did not aim directly to the safeguarding of ICH as it is instructed in the 2003 UNESCO Convention. Therefore, the issue of how to carry out ICH inventories in an appropriate manner has been raised while amending and supplementing the Law on Cultural Heritage eight years after it was first implemented. The Amended Law on Cultural Heritage passed in June 2009 and became valid on January 1, 2010 (as mentioned in the earlier part of this report).

In line with the Amended Law No 32/2009/QH12 on Cultural Heritage, in which regulations on inventory-making were supplemented in the spirit of the 2003 UNESCO Convention, a circular (herein after referred to as Circular No 04) on inventorying ICH and on building scientific files of ICH for possible inscription into the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (or National Inventory) was es-

established and promulgated nationwide by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MOCST) on June 30 2010. As defined in Circular No 04, the crucial purpose of inventorying ICH is to identify the viability of elements and to implement appropriate measures for safeguarding them, especially those in need of urgent safeguarding.

Regarding the establishment of the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Article 10 of Circular No 04 stipulates that a scientific file shall be created for any ICH item that satisfies all of the criteria listed below, and it shall be submitted to MOCST for inscription into the National List. The criteria (Article 10) are:

1. possessing a representative quality and constituting the identity of the relevant community and locality;
2. representing the cultural diversity and the creativeness of humanity, having been inherited and passed down through generations;
3. having the consent of the relevant community that makes the nomination of their own free will and are committed to safeguarding the heritage;
4. having a possibility of revival and sustainable existence.

Circular 04 also states that during the ICH inventorying process, it is the duty of the Provincial Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism to identify and put forth a list of local ICH elements meeting the criteria of Article 10, as part of its consultation for the relevant Provincial People's Committee to prepare scientific files for ICH items to be submitted to MOCST for possible inscription on the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

According to Circular 04, a board for the assessment of scientific nomination files of ICH elements has been established by MOCST. After reviewing the proposed list and the documents of ICH elements submitted by the Chairman of the Provincial People's Committee and listening to the recommendations made by the Assessment Board, the Minister will decide whether or not to inscribe each ICH element and will release a new updated ICH National List yearly.

- **Responsible governmental organization**

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MOCST)

Office in charge: Department of Cultural Heritage

From the entry into force of Circular 04 in 2010 to July 2015, more than 39,366 ICH elements in the territories of 60 out of 63 provinces and cities² of Vietnam have been inventoried by the communities and authorities of the respective localities. Among them, Hanoi City has conducted a tremendous project for the comprehensive inventory of their ICH to be implement from 2013 to 2015. They set up their own criteria for identifying and inventorying ICH items. Those criteria are:

1. existing in the community(ies) (still being practiced in the communities);
2. created, preserved, and transmitted from generation to generation;
3. recognized by communities as part of their cultural heritage, important to their life, and critical to their sense of identity;
4. representing cultural diversity and promoting respect among communities and the groups concerned.

Hanoi's Comprehensive Inventory Project is still under development, but after a two-year implementation, encouraging achievements have been accomplished. More than one thousand ICH items have been inventoried in sixteen rural districts and two urban districts of Hanoi city. Among them, two elements have been inscribed in the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage by MOCST. Nomination files for possible inscription on the National List are being prepared for six other elements. In addition, nearly one hundred ICH elements in need of safeguarding were selected to be prioritized in receiving appropriate safeguarding measures, and six urgent safeguarding projects for six of these ICH elements are to be carried out soon.

Hanoi city has used methods of inventorying ICH that employ large-scale participation of concerned communities and an enthusiastic involvement of scientists, experts³, and local authorities. These high-quality methods serve as a good example of an effective implementation ICH inventorying (A guidebook and forms for the ICH inventory are attached to this report).

² A total of 3.300 square kilometers of adjacent rural areas and peri-urban villages of the former Ha Tay province were recently amalgamated into the municipality of Hanoi.

³ Experts and reseachers from CCH are invited to advise the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Hanoi in the above-mentioned project.

2. Non-governmental Inventory

In Vietnam, several non-governmental organizations are working actively on the fields of safeguarding ICH by doing research and inventorying work. Some representative organizations are: the Association of Vietnamese Folklorists, the Vietnam Cultural Heritage Association, and the Association of Preservation of Traditional Culture and Arts, among others.

Association of the Vietnamese Folklorists (AVF)

1) Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory

“View toward 2010” is the name of a long-term project (2000-2010) aiming at listing the ICH elements of fifty-four Vietnamese ethnic groups. In 2009, the leaders of AVF said in an interview that they were still in the process of surveying and listing ICH elements to determine the status of ICH and the number of items in the cultures of each of the fifty-four ethnic groups in Vietnam. According to an investigation conducted from 2000 to 2010, the project had restored and maintained more than one hundred endangered ICH elements of the cultures of thirty-one of the fifty-four ethnic groups. The leaders added that they included folklore in their definition of ICH, which they divided into the following main categories:

- various kinds of customs, habits, rites, ceremonies, and festivals;
- various kinds of folk literature, such as verses, idioms, proverbs, tales, riddles, children’s songs, fables, and epics;
- various kinds of performing arts, such as music, dance, theater, puppetry, games, and plays;
- various kinds of fine art, decoration, and architecture;
- various kinds of beliefs, religions, and their rituals;
- various kinds of local knowledge, such as handicrafts.

2) Publication

The above-mentioned categories of folklore are the subjects for the AVF investigation and publication. The classification and designation of ICH items will be carried out during the 2010-2015 term. The leader of the association stated that AVF would publish all investigation materials in 2010.