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[SUMMARY]

ICHCAP Field Survey Report on ICH Safeguarding Efforts in Some South-East Asian Countries (2009-2013)

Introduction

Based on the *ICHCAP Field Survey on Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding Efforts* in some South-East Asian countries (2009-2012), this summary provides a brief overview on the ICH situation in Cambodia, Thailand, Viet Nam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Laos, and Myanmar¹.

The summary focuses mainly on ICH safeguarding systems, safeguarding policies, and ICH inventories as well as on pending issues and the urgent safeguarding needs of these countries. Moreover, information on the main entities in charge of ICH safeguarding and opinions of each country on the issue of community involvement are provided. To give a quick overview these countries' participation in ICH safeguarding at the international level, some additional information related to UNESCO is specified as well. Apart from the main topic, information on the situation of intellectual property related to ICH safeguarding in each country is included.

This survey report offers a large sample of the diverse ICH situations in South-East Asian countries. Each country has a different background on the issue of intangible heritage. For instance, Indonesia is the only country participating in the field survey that has a programme in the Register of Best Practices. Viet Nam developed ICH-related definitions in its Law on Cultural Heritage; whereas the Philippines has a strong legislative background and solid network of public structures protecting cultural heritage. Cambodia recognises the link between cultural heritage and development of national economy and runs relevant activities on promoting traditional culture while maximizing its economic benefits to the country. For Laos, training local artists rather than researchers in ICH safeguarding, including IPR, is deemed to be essential, as the artists are the important resources that master their arts. Among the South-East Asian participants, Thailand and Myanmar are the newest to approach ICH safeguarding.

Although all countries are concerned about the threats ICH faces, most countries participating in the survey haven't defined ICH and haven't established national ICH lists. Meanwhile, drawing up an inventory of traditional cultural expressions in different forms—register, cultural map, or database—is a common activity in these countries. Moreover, each country expresses a high degree of motivation and encouragement for safeguarding ICH, sharing experiences, and promoting international cooperation.

¹ Listed according to the date of the field survey.

Abbreviations

- ICH Intangible Cultural Heritage
- UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- RL Representative List
- USL Urgent Safeguarding List
- IGO Inter-Governmental Organization
- NGO Non-Governmental Organization
- GO Governmental Organization
- IP Intellectual Property
- IPR Intellectual Property Rights

CAMBODIA

- Ratified the ICH Convention in 2006; conducted survey in 2009
- As of December 2014, has two elements on the RL and two accredited NGO

Safeguarding System and Policy

Cambodia does not have a specific national law on ICH. The main legal document concerning cultural heritage is the Law on Preservation and Conservation of Cultural Heritage, which was adopted in 1996. The following are also part of legislative framework on cultural heritage:

- Constitution of Cambodia (1993)
- Law on Copyright and Related Rights (2003)
- Sub-decree on the Management of Cinema and Video (2002)

Furthermore, sub-decrees on the Living Human Treasures System, and on managing artwork and the exploitation of production of fine arts and handicrafts are pending for an adoption by the government.

ICH Inventory

The “Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Cambodia” was published in 2004. Composed of three parts, this inventory lists 221 elements of Cambodian intangible heritage in the following categories: performing arts (197 elements, including lost and reinstated elements of royal and classic dance and drama), oral cultural heritage (19 elements), and artisan skill (5 elements). The inventory does not have detailed information on each element and bearers, so the need for further development is stressed in the report.

Apart from the inventory, a list of Selected Masters is provided. Established by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts by covering six ICH fields, there are thirteen people listed for performing arts and costume (three), Chapei Dorng Veng (three), traditional mask and Khmok (one), plastic arts (one), traditional Khmer script (one), and storytelling (one).

Pending Issues and Urgent Needs on Safeguarding ICH

Cambodia hasn't established a national USL, RL, or similar instrument yet. The field survey report states that Cambodian intangible heritage is still alive, including dancers, acrobatics, tug-of-war (women against men) teams, buffalo horn and leaf blowing musicians, popular poetic reciters, weavers, metal smiths, boat builders, potters, woodcarvers, basket and mat makers, fish paste makers, and palm sugar makers. However, many elements have suffered from the effects of thirty years of socio-political instability—many of the craftspeople, dancers, and musicians are either lost their lives or were displaced. In many cases, these traditions survive in the minds and hands of only a few elderly people.

The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in Cambodia has a policy of providing incentives to local people, individuals, and artists to promote and support cultural heritage. National artist awards are presented annually on National Cultural Day. The national museum is also developing a public education programme.

In regard to the needs for safeguarding Cambodian ICH, the survey mentions promoting international cooperation and exchange of cultural activities and organizing personnel training, seminars, and workshops as well as publishing research materials. Moreover, the report also highlights the importance of considering the contribution of cultural heritage preservation to cultural and socio-economic development.

Main Governmental Body in Charge of ICH

Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts

Community Involvement

No comments provided as the survey didn't include this question at that time.

Remarks

Among the Cambodian ICH domains, performing arts, especially dance and drama, seem to be the centre of attention.

Although the Law on Copyright and Related Rights is mentioned as legislative background on cultural heritage, no further details are provided.

Cambodia recognises the link between cultural heritage and the development of national economy, and the country runs relevant activities to promote traditional culture while maximizing culture's economic benefits to the country.

THAILAND

- Has not ratified the ICH Convention; conducted survey in 2009
- As of December 2014, has no elements on the ICH Lists of UNESCO and two accredited NGOs

Safeguarding System and Policy

Although the Field survey report doesn't give any information on state policy and safeguarding system on ICH, the National Culture Act (1942) and the Amendment Act to the National Cultural Act (1943) seem to be the main legal documents on culture. There is no national law or policy specifically dedicated to ICH. According to the Ministry of Culture's 2008 annual report, a policy on religion, art, and culture was implemented with the following point on traditional culture: "Revitalize and ensure the preservation and passing on of the diverse Thai culture, including ways of life, traditions, positive values, local wisdom, and maintenance of historical parks, archaeological sites, and museums, for learning and benefiting from it adding value based on Thai knowledge and identity; and promoting and developing archaeological sites into world heritage sites".

ICH Inventory

There is no national ICH inventory. However, the Office of the National Culture Commission has implemented databases for ICH in performance and traditional craftsmanship fields. The data has been collected by local scholars and communities who are the holders of these traditions. The project started in 2005, and it continues under the name *Phum Ban Phum Muang*.

Pending Issues and Urgent Needs on Safeguarding ICH

Launched in 1985, the National Artist Award is a tool to promote

- the compilation of directories of artists (especially national artists)
- the search and selection of national artists and people of outstanding talent in cultural service
- the transmission and dissemination of the national artists' work at the national and international levels
- the National Artists Centre.

As of 2009, the Office of the National Cultural Commission has awarded 181 national artists.

The field survey report provides information on festivals, myths and folktales, historical and archaeological sites, and performing arts in Thailand (eight elements) but no comprehensive details are given on the state of Thai ICH, safeguarding efforts, challenges and expected contributions from international society.

Main Governmental Body in Charge of ICH

Ministry of Culture—Office of the National Culture Commission

Community Involvement

No comments provided, as the survey didn't include this question at that time.

Remarks

Considering the relevance of the information provided in the field survey report, one can suppose that Thailand does not have much involvement in the ICH field and has not developed or adopted the concept of ICH. However, there are some activities aiming to promote traditional cultural expressions, especially in the performing arts at the national and international levels. It seems that Thailand emphasizes “national culture” rather than “traditional culture”.

VIET NAM

- Ratified the ICH Convention in 2005; conducted survey in 2009
- As of December 2014, has seven elements on the RL, two elements on the USL and has seven accredited NGOs

Safeguarding System and Policy

The Law on Cultural Heritage (2001), amended in 2009 under the title Law of Amending and Supplementing certain Articles of the Law on Cultural Heritage, defines ICH as

[the] mental products that are closely linked with (a) certain community(ies) or individual(s), related object(s) and cultural space(s), represents historical, cultural and scientific values, reflects the identities of the community(ies); constantly recreated and transmitted from one generation to another by, inter alia, oral, professional instruction and demonstration and other forms and means.

Chapter 2 of the Law on Cultural Heritage is entirely dedicated to ICH safeguarding. This law stipulates the provisions concepts of ICH inventorying, various safeguarding measures, the responsibilities of the provincial chairman and the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the nomination files to submit to the UNESCO, regulations on safeguarding traditional festivals, and the state's enhancement of master artists.

Policies preserving and developing ethnic cultures are implemented through some general and specific development projects. Two projects, for example, are *Developing Culture and Information Activities in the Central Highlands until 2010* and *Developing Cultural and Information Activities in the Mekong Delta until 2010*. Moreover, the *Strategy for Culture until 2020* was approved by the Prime Minister in 2009.

ICH Inventory

A national ICH inventory has been under development. The criteria for designating ICH elements into the national ICH Inventory are defined.

Before this inventory, a number of inventories were made based on the types of elements or geographical areas. Initially the various elements of the country's cultural heritage were identified in general and ICH in particular.

In Viet Nam, several non-governmental organizations are working in the ICH safeguarding field and conducting ICH research with their own approaches and classification. For instance, the Vietnamese Institute for Musicology drew up an ICH inventory of seventeen elements, covering the categories of performing art (five elements), folk music (four elements), festival (five elements), and folk music and festival (three elements). In addition to the inventory table, a list of Vietnamese artisans is provided in the report. This list has a total of eighty-six individuals of different ethnic groups in Viet Nam, including the bearers of performing arts (fifty-nine bearers), rituals (two bearers), social practices (two bearers), festive events (one bearer), and traditional craftsmanship (twenty-three bearers).

As an alternative to the Living Human Treasures system, Viet Nam has been carrying out the Master of Folklore award since 2000. Run by the Association of Vietnamese Folklorist, the programme has designated and awarded 128 individuals with this title by 2010.

Pending Issues and Urgent Needs on Safeguarding ICH

No national RL, USL, or similar instrument is indicated in the field survey report. As an endangered ICH, Ca trù singing, an element inscribed on the UNESCO USL, is mentioned. The changing socio-cultural environment, the high degree of difficulty to practice Ca trù singing, the declining number of practitioners, and the advent of new technologies that attract young generations' attention to non-traditional culture are the challenges facing efforts to safeguard Ca trù singing.

The pending issues for safeguarding ICH in Viet Nam are listed as the shrinking of cultural spaces and the contrasting competition between the old traditions and new lifestyles. It is necessary to raise everyone's awareness about the significance of ICH safeguarding, and to develop a coherent and strong legal framework on ICH.

Documentation, inventorying, transmission, research, publications, and event organization are the measures planned to ensure the viability of Ca trù singing. Furthermore, national targeted programmes on culture have been implemented since 1997.

Viet Nam needs international collaboration in cultural studies, capacity building for human resource training—especially for cultural staff in building policies and managing ICH, sharing data and information, joining a network of ICH databases, collaborating in preparing multi-party nomination files for inscriptions to the UNESCO lists, increasing presentation and performance exchanges, and providing technical assistance.

The roles expected from ICHCAP include organizing regular regional seminars and workshops on ICH management, providing forums for Member States in the region to share experiences in inventorying and writing nomination files, providing technical assistance in ICH documentation and management, and producing promotion tools to raise awareness of communities' responsibilities in ICH safeguarding at national and global levels.

Main Governmental Body in Charge of ICH

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism—Department of Cultural Heritage

Community Involvement

No comments provided, as the survey didn't include this question at that time.

Remarks

Viet Nam is very active in the field of ICH. Unlike many other countries, Viet Nam developed definitions on concepts related to ICH in its Law on Cultural Heritage.

People's Folk Artist or Excellent Folk Artist titles are granted to encourage and promote the artists of traditional performing arts.

INDONESIA

- Ratified the ICH Convention in 2007; conducted survey in 2010
- As of December 2014, has two elements on the USL, four elements on the RL, one programme on the register of best safeguarding practices, and five accredited NGO

Safeguarding System and Policy

The legal framework on cultural heritage is made up of the following:

- Constitution of Indonesia (1945)
- Act on the Cultural Property (1992)
- Presidential Regulation of the Republic Indonesia No. 78 concerning the Acceptance of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2007)
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Culture and Tourism and the Department of Justice and Human Rights concerning Safeguarding, Development and Utilization of Intellectual Property of Traditional Cultural Expressions of the Indonesian Nationals (2007)
- Joint Ministers' Declaration of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism concerning Guidelines on the Safeguarding of Culture (2009)

Up to now, all the mentioned regulations implicitly categorize ICH under the terms of "cultural property", "culture", or "traditional cultural expressions". However, there is a notion to establish a specific regulatory measure on ICH.

Two policies for cultural development, which encompass the protection and promotion of traditional culture, have been implemented. The first is the Policy for Development in the Field of Culture (2004-2009), through which a programme for developing culture and a programme for managing cultural diversity were carried out. Currently, the Policy Direction of Development of Culture (2010-2014) is being implemented, and in the framework of this policy is a programme for increasing public awareness of diversity and creativity of cultural values, arts, and film.

ICH Inventory

The Inventory and Documentation of Local Culture Project started in 1976, and different developments have been made through the projects, including a cultural map and an integrated cultural information system. Since 2009, Indonesia has had an ICH inventory system drafted in the form of a book called *Practical Handbook for Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Indonesia*. Compliant with the UNESCO 2003 Convention's definition of ICH domains, this inventory contains seventeen data fields for each element. As of 2010, there were 1727 elements were recorded. Besides an offline system, a website was constructed for this inventory system.

Besides the mentioned inventory, there are many others compiled by different stakeholders in Indonesia. One example of such inventories is the Indonesian Wayang Database Centre, established by the Indonesian National Wayang Secretariat.

As an alternative to the Living Human Treasures system, Indonesia has been carrying out the Maestro of Traditional Arts programme since 2007. As of 2010, forty-five individuals were designated and awarded with the Maestro title.

Pending Issues and Urgent Needs on Safeguarding ICH

No national USL, RL, or similar instruments are mentioned. It is hoped that the complete implementation of the inventory system will provide an overview to evaluate the different statuses of the ICH elements. Examples of Indonesian ICH in danger of disappearance are the Saman Dance of Aceh and the Wayang Palembang and Wayang Banjar.

The rapid advance of globalization and modernization, advent of new technology, and busyness of the younger generation for their compulsory education are factors affecting ICH. Efforts, such as integrating ICH education to the school curricula, promoting ICH elements, and holding various events, are being made. Moreover, Indonesia launched the Living Human Treasures System in 2007 under the name Maestro of Traditional Arts. The central government has been conducting ICH socialization in various parts of Indonesia in cooperation with the culture and tourism service in all provinces.

Limitations in funding for safeguarding projects, difficulties in motivating people to be engaged in safeguarding projects on a regular basis, and the lack of teaching materials for ICH are difficulties encountered during ICH safeguarding projects. General public awareness on ICH is low, thus community involvement in inventorying ICH and other safeguarding measures are not yet optimum. Safeguarding measures have to be tailored according to the particular situation and condition of each respective element of ICH.

Sub-regional and regional information-sharing workshops are emphasized. The country expects ICHCAP to continue facilitating information-sharing workshops and training in ICH safeguarding. Furthermore, Indonesia suggests circulating the *ICH Courier* more broadly and regularly in the Asia-Pacific region as well as fostering networking among all those involved in ICH safeguarding in the region.

Main Governmental Body in Charge of ICH

Ministry of Culture and Tourism – Directorate General for Cultural Values Arts and Film

Community Involvement

To ensure community involvement, workshops need to be conducted on a local level to increase the practical capacities for safeguarding ICH.

ICH stakeholders, including the researchers, institutes, local governments, and communities, are invited to participate in establishing the Indonesian ICH inventory through the nation's website. However, as not all provinces are familiar with new technology and interactive virtual platforms, community involvement is not yet satisfactory.

Remarks

Of the countries from the Asia-Pacific region participating in the field survey, Indonesia is the only one that has an ICH programme considered to best reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention.

Compared to the other South-East Asian countries, Indonesia has a national ICH inventory with a specific method, criteria, and procedure. Consideration of IP rights of ICH bearer communities, groups, and individuals is given in the inventory system criteria. Moreover, a ministry-level document, “Safeguarding, Development, and Utilization of Intellectual Property of Traditional Cultural Expressions of the Indonesian Nationals” was published.

PHILIPPINES

- Ratified the ICH Convention in 2006; conducted survey in 2010
- As of December 2014, has two elements on the RL and three accredited NGO

Safeguarding System and Policy

A number of acts and normative instruments constitute the Filipino legislation on culture, art, and cultural heritage. The following legislation is mentioned in the survey report:

- Presidential Decrees on Creating the Cultural Centre of the Philippines (1972)
 - on declaring a specific number of sites as national shrines, monuments and landmarks defining the implementing agencies and providing funds thereof (1973)
 - on granting certain privileges and honours to National Artists and creating a special fund thereof (1973)
 - on amending provisions of the act known as the “Cultural Properties Preservation and Protection Act” (1974)
- Presidential Proclamations
 - on establishing the National Artists Award to honour Filipinos who have distinguished themselves and made outstanding contributions to Philippine arts and letters (1972)
 - on creating the award and decoration of international artist (1973)
- Act to Declare Fort Santiago a National Shrine and to Preserve Historical Monuments in the Walled City of Manila (1956)
- Act on Establishing the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (1965)
- Act on Establishing the National Integrated Protected Areas System (1992)
- Law on Creating the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (1992)
- Act on Creating the National Museum System (1998)
- Act on Creating the Cordillera Autonomous Region (1997)
- Rules and Regulations on Administrative Complaints for Violation of Laws Involving Intellectual Property Rights (2001)
- Rules and Regulations on the Selection of Manlilikha ng Bayan Awardees as Amended (2004)
- Guidelines on Additional Benefits and Funeral Assistance for the Manlilikha ng Bayan Awardees and Grants Programme for the Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan Awardees.

Definitions of “cultural heritage”, “cultural property”, “intangible cultural properties”, and “national inventory of ICH” are stipulated in the Filipino National Cultural Heritage Act (2009). Moreover, the Act on Creating the National Living Treasures programme (1992) defines “traditional folk art” and specifies the criteria, method, and procedures to create the system. The Philippines uses the ICH definition provided in the UNESCO 2003 Convention. The adoption of the Implementing Rules and Regulations to establish the Intangible Cultural Heritage Office was pending in 2010.

ICH Inventory

The following organizations maintain diverse inventories on cultural and natural heritage in their own specific focuses:

- National Commission for Culture and the Arts

- Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan
- National Museum
- National Library
- National Records and Archives Office
- Commission on National Language
- Cultural Centre of the Philippines
- National Historical Commission

Among these, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) is the main body in charge of the Philippine Registry of Cultural Property (PRECUP), which is a national inventory established in accordance with the five ICH domains defined by UNESCO. Established in 2010 and currently including 263 ICH items in three general categories—intangible, tangible, and endangered—the central inventory at the NCCA is contained in the Cultural Data Bank (CDB) in the NCCA portal. Specific working modality and procedures have been established for the inventory.

In addition to the mentioned public structures, private and non-governmental organizations hold cultural heritage collections and inventories. The report provides a list of 168 private collections, galleries, and private school museums in the Philippines.

As a Living Human Treasures system, the Philippines has been carrying out the National Living Treasures Award since 1992.

Pending Issues and Urgent Needs on Safeguarding ICH

According to the report, practically all forms of Filipino ICH are faced to danger of disappearance due to inevitable socio-cultural evolution. On this matter, a distinction between the socio-cultural changes (which is specific to particular cultures) and the deliberate attack against the heritage is noted.

Apart from the mentioned national ICH inventory, no national USL, RL, or similar instruments are mentioned in the survey. For the Philippines, the most alarming issue is the lack of awareness on ICH. Furthermore, projects funding and a lack of professional human resources are two major challenges encountered when implementing ICH safeguarding projects. The report states that a competent staff needs to be appointed at all the different structural levels. No specific future projects are noted in the report.

The Philippines needs expert exchange opportunities to share expertise and publications on ICH safeguarding. Moreover, networking, information sharing, and financial support are expected from ICHCAP.

Main Governmental Body in Charge of ICH

National Commission for Culture and the Arts—Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee

Community Involvement

Concerning this matter, the report notes that “Snob appeal is effective. Make it socially relevant and prestigious to be part of the safeguarding. The community seemed to be more inclined to get involved when the elite actively lead, more especially if these are the elders”.

Remarks

A strong legislative background and a solid network of public structures in this multicultural country encompassing eighty major ethno-linguistic cultures were observed.

Concerning the IP of ICH, in the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines (1997), “traditional culture” and “folklore” are not mentioned in the scope of the copyright and in the works not protected by copyright.

LAOS

- Ratified the ICH Convention in 2009; conducted survey in 2011
- As of December 2014, has no elements on the ICH Lists of UNESCO and three accredited NGOs

Safeguarding System and Policy

The Law on National Heritage (2005) is the main legal document on protecting cultural heritage, covering cultural, historical, and natural heritage in Laos. This law defines national heritage as

tangible objects, intangible items, moveable property and immovable property which are of high outstanding value from the point of view of culture, history, science or technology, thereby becoming national property, and which have been inherited from generation to generation in different eras

Moreover, Article 9 defines the ICH as

Cultural heritage in intangible items refers to [items of] intangible heritage which are of high outstanding value from a cultural point of view, such as: local innovation, knowledge, public philosophies, beliefs, fine traditions which are expressed in livelihood practices, social behaviour, languages, alphabets, numbers, scripts, legends, novels, proverbs, poems, traditional music, traditional songs, dances, melodies, folk songs, formulas of traditional medicine and others which are inherited from generation to generation.

Article 46 is on the protection and conservation of national heritage in the form of intangible items.

In addition to this law, the First Presidential Decree Concerning the Preservation of Cultural, Historic and Natural Heritage (1997) serves as a legal tool for protecting cultural heritage.

ICH Inventory

No comprehensive national inventory has been established yet. However, the Lao People's Democratic Republic was planning to designate ICH elements by 2011 and take relevant preparatory actions, such as setting up criteria of designation, establishing executive committee for designation, making documentation provisions, promoting through mass media, and so on for an inventory in the domains of oral traditions and traditional performing arts.

Pending Issues and Urgent Needs on Safeguarding ICH

Laos hadn't established a national USL, RL, or similar lists by the time of the field survey.

In 2011, a preliminary field survey on ICH was conducted with the sponsorship from a company in the Vilabouly District in Savannakhet Province. The survey target covered two ethnic groups and focused on local folktales, local songs, traditional rituals, and poems. The problems and obstacles for the survey included the lack of comprehensive knowledge of ICH, expectations of high remuneration, local language barriers, and low-quality equipment used in data collection.

As far as the activities related to ICH safeguarding, national folklore and ethnic festivals, the Elephant Festival in Sayabuly Province, Buddhist-related calendar festivities, Lao New Year or Water Festival in Luang Prabang, boat racing, alms possessions, shadow puppets, and the Ramayana dance are enumerated in the field survey report.

Regarding the future plans, the following actions are foreseen: elaborate legislation tools, build capacity at the national and local levels, identify and document ICH elements, establish a national inventory, and prepare nominations to the UNESCO USL and RL.

The challenges facing ICH safeguarding in Laos include the low level of awareness and responsibility on ICH, a lack of human and technical resources, and a weakness of legislation on ICH.

Consequently, the following measurements are required: adopting a general policy that aims to support and integrate ICH safeguarding and data collecting in a set of strategic plans; establishing one or more organizations with the proper capacity to undertake safeguarding activities; support scientific research; and approve appropriate legal measures. Moreover, training local researchers in ICH IPR is essential.

Main Governmental Body in Charge of ICH

Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism

Community Involvement

No comments provided.

Remarks

Training local artists, rather than researchers, in aspects related to ICH safeguarding, including IPR matters, is deemed essential, as the artists are important resources that master their arts.

MYANMAR

- Ratified the ICH Convention in 2014; conducted survey in 2012
- As of December 2014, has no elements on the ICH Lists of UNESCO and no accredited NGOs

Safeguarding System and Policy

No information on the legal background of cultural heritage protection is provided.

ICH Inventory

Myanmar has not yet established a national ICH inventory, and there is currently no non-governmental inventory as well.

Pending Issues and Urgent Needs on Safeguarding ICH

A national RL, USL, or similar instruments on ICH haven't been established yet in Myanmar. The field survey report notes that tattooing on the face of Chin nationality's women is disappearing. Wearing long bronze rings on Kayah women's necks is also disappearing, and it is now a very rare cultural heritage in Myanmar. These heritage elements are in danger because the young generation do not want to be involved with these practices. On the point of view of the ladies, for example, tattooing the face can spoil their beauty, and their rights to not have a tattoo should be respected.

ICH safeguarding is ensured through teaching stage performance, holding exhibitions, conducting competitions, publishing books, reading research papers, and participating in national events. For instance, the National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon) and the National University of Arts and Culture (Mandalay) are transmitting some Burmese ICH elements. According to the report, during safeguarding projects, difficulties with transportation are a constant problem because the places where ICH situated are out of reach.

Myanmar believes most ICH can be safeguarded through the tourism sector and the international media, so broadcasting centres and documentary recording agencies should contribute to promoting Myanmar ICH. There is a need for programmes and projects provided by ICHCAP to favour ICH safeguarding. As of 2011, Myanmar would like to nominate six ICH elements to the RL of UNESCO.

Main Governmental Body in Charge of ICH

Ministry of Culture

Community Involvement

To encourage community involvement in ICH safeguarding, the use of products developed through ICH should be promoted and widely distributed in Myanmar. Through profits, the community will automatically and willingly cooperate and collaborate to safeguard ICH.

Remarks

Although Myanmar is very new to the UNESCO spearheaded ICH safeguarding steps, it has strong ambitions for safeguarding its ICH.