

Examining the Methodologies of the Collaborative Work of ICHCAP for ICH Safeguarding

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I. Introduction

The Asia-Pacific region can be called a treasure house of ICH because of its diverse heritage and rich cultural environment. However, much of the ICH in the region is facing the possibility of disappearance because the value of ICH isn't fully understood and there is a shortage of institutional and administrative support. In particular, developing or underdeveloped countries in the region are experiencing difficulties in effectively safeguarding ICH in the context of maintaining sociocultural traditions and promoting sustainable development because globalisation, urbanisation, and modernisation stand as obstacles.

Recognising the shortcomings in ICH safeguarding, ICHCAP, a UNESCO Category 2 Centre, has recently been established based on the approval of UNESCO General Conference in 2009 and the agreement between UNESCO and the government of the Republic of Korea. The main roles and functions of the Centre focus on information and networking in the ICH safeguarding field. ICHCAP has contributed to ICH safeguarding and has learned a lot from the activities the

Centre has conducted and participated in over the past four years.

In this paper, I will introduce the main roles, functions, and collaborative works of ICHCAP in relation to ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region. I am hoping that the information provided here will also contribute to developing useful methods and cooperative measures in the ICH field among Asia-Pacific Member States and ICHCAP.

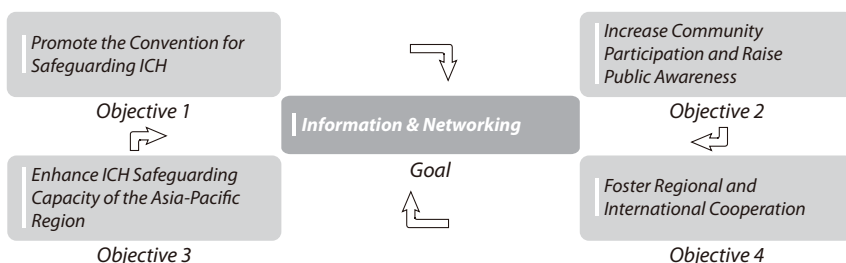
II. Objectives of ICHCAP

Guided by its mission of enhancing cultural diversity and expanding sustainable development through ICH, ICHCAP's aim is to help Member States of the region reinforce the capacity of the Asia-Pacific region. To this end, ICHCAP's objectives¹ are to

- promote the implementation of the 2003 ICH Convention;
- increase the participation of communities, groups, and individuals and raise awareness;
- enhance the capacity for safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific region through coordination and dissemination of information; and
- foster regional and international cooperation for ICH safeguarding.

In other words, the objectives of ICHCAP are to safeguard ICH in relation to the implementation of the 2003 ICH Convention; actively encourage the participation of relevant communities, organisations, and individuals; enhance awareness among the general public, especially youth, regarding the importance of ICH safeguarding; reinforce regional and international cooperation through ICH safeguarding activities; and build future-oriented environments for the ICH safeguarding by using information and communication technology.

1) Agreement between the government of the Republic of Korea and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) regarding the Establishment in the Republic of Korea of an International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the Auspices of UNESCO (Category 2), UNESCO, Republic of Korea, 2009, Article 7 – Objectives and functions.



[Figure 1] Objectives of ICHCAP

III. Main Functions of ICHCAP

ICHCAP will focus on the primary functions of information and networking. Information specifically refers to the entire information distribution system of collecting and producing information related to ICH using digital technology and global online systems for both production and distribution. Networking includes online and offline networks in relation to ICHCAP. These also imply relations with communities, transmitters, experts, specialised centres and institutes, and the general public who may take part in ICH safeguarding activities of ICHCAP.

In light of this, the specific functions of ICHCAP² are as follows:

1) Establish an information system to ensure the effective management of ICH and construct an ICH database

ICHCAP supports countries in the region for the identification and documentation of ICH and constructing an ICH database. Moreover, ICHCAP will assist in the restoration, conservation, and digitisation of old and damaged data and materials on ICH as well as facilitate networking among ICH archives by developing metadata on ICH

 2) Ibid., Article 7 – Objectives and functions.

2) Disseminate and use accumulated information and data on ICH

ICHCAP will produce secondary information materials that are processed into digitised ICH data. ICHCAP publishes promotional materials, such as relevant books and audio-visual materials, to raise public awareness, and promotes the protection of intellectual property rights in relation to ICH

3) Build networks among concerned communities, groups, and individuals to reinforce the transmission and dissemination of ICH

ICHCAP supports the organisation of public events, such as performances and exhibitions, at the regional and international level. ICHCAP also identifies and publicises exemplary activities for ICH safeguarding. Furthermore, ICHCAP organises network meetings among communities or groups to ensure the viability of ICH

4) Strengthen international and regional networks to exchange information and knowledge concerning the safeguarding of ICH

ICHCAP plans to build an international network among centres and institutes in the field of ICH. In relation to this, ICHCAP will create and use a pool of ICH specialists for the effective implementation of safeguarding activities. Also, ICHCAP will put forth effort in providing a portal website to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information regarding ICH

IV. Strategic Tasks and Collaborative Works of ICHCAP

Based on ICHCAP's main functions of information and networking, ICHCAP will implement tasks related to ICH safeguarding based on five categories: 1) identification and documentation, 2) transmission and dissemination, 3) policies and institutions, 4) transmission and enhancement, and 5) exchange and

cooperation.³ ICHCAP will develop effective methodologies so that the measures and tasks within these categories can be utilised to establish information and networking system while taking into consideration the needs of the Member States of the region.

1) Identification and documentation⁴

ICHCAP will assist in conducting field surveys to identify the current situation of ICH in the region to document and understand the transition of ICH elements. In the process of making national inventories and documentation, relevant information and support may be provided by ICHCAP through cooperative projects, meetings, and so forth. In particular, ICHCAP will develop guidelines and manuals with regional organisations and provide specialised institutes with technical assistance to establish inventories in their respective countries.

A. Identification

In relation to identification, ICHCAP has been implementing several projects. The following includes examples of joint projects that ICHCAP is working on in collaboration with other Member States:

- **Field Survey:** The project began in 2009, and it aims to collect relevant information on ICH safeguarding efforts of Member States in the region. As a basis for establishing ICH information systems, ICHCAP invites researchers from each country to conduct a field survey of the ICH safeguarding status. The appointed researchers of each country answer a comprehensive questionnaire that will provide relevant information about the status of domestic ICH situations and safeguarding activities. ICHCAP will also publish and disseminate guidelines following the survey. ICHCAP has been working on field surveys with twenty countries in the Asia-Pacific region over the last three years.

3) UNESCO, 2003, Article 2 – Definitions, 3. ‘Safeguarding’ means measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalisation of the various aspects of such heritage.

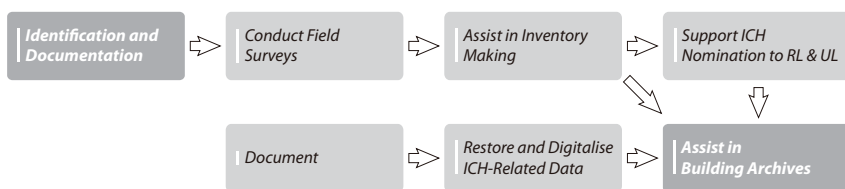
4) UNESCO, Republic of Korea, 2009, Article 7 – Objectives and functions, 2 (b).

- **ICH Identification (Inventory-Making Support):** This project aims to create a foundation for ICH safeguarding through identifying and documenting ICH in the Asia-Pacific region. ICHCAP is currently working with Bhutan to assist in their ICH inventory-making efforts. Bhutan announced their intention to develop an ICH inventory after successfully completing the 2010 field survey project. The three-year project was set up, and to identify ICH elements in Bhutan, we expect a small-scale pilot survey will take place shortly.
- **ICH Inventory Making of Central Asia Utilising Online Tools:** This project aims to create an online system that will support ICH inventory making in Central Asia. ICHCAP is currently working in collaboration with four Member States of the sub-region: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Each state will identify ICH elements in their territory and create a web-based inventory system.
- **Supporting ICH nominations of Member States to the UNESCO ICH Lists:** ICHCAP will also collaborate with Member States in identifying ICH elements and nominating them to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding
- **Assisting in Preparing ICH Inventory Making and an Online Database:** The Centre conducted ICH inventory-making and online database-building projects to strengthen regional capacity and promote the implementation of the Convention. The online database project was carried out in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in New Delhi. The purpose was to build a web-based archive so that various ICH elements in India could be categorised according to their domain and region. This archive allows more people to have access to ICH information. The Cultural Atlas of India database system has been developed, and sample data from four provincial partners in India was obtained. Moreover, as a part of the inventory-making process, ICHCAP will be providing assistance to nominate ICH elements to the UNESCO ICH lists. This project was a special effort by participating organisations to inventory ICH elements in critical condition and in need of urgent safeguarding.

B. Documentation

To assist in ICH documentation, ICHCAP is focusing on documentation manual development, data restoration, and ICH digitisation in the Member States of the region. In these efforts, ICHCAP plans to develop documentation manuals; support other Member States in documentation efforts, especially in recording elements at risk of disappearance; and support archiving efforts in collaboration with relevant organisations. The following includes examples of documentation-related projects:

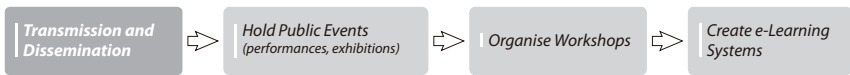
- **Video Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region:** This project aims to raise public awareness and activate educational activities by producing a professionally documented video to promote ICH visibility in the Asia-Pacific region. ICHCAP will work with experts of Member States to record high-definition video, and the selection of ICH elements will be decided in cooperation with the government of the partner country. A video guideline will be produced through the project. The outcome of the documentation can be used for educational purpose and raising public awareness. The video can also be used to assist in nominating ICH elements to the UNESCO ICH lists.
- **Restoration and Digitisation of ICH-Related Data:** This project aims to secure resources of superannuated and damaged ICH-related data and to raise awareness of this data through restoration and digitisation. ICHCAP has already conducted a preliminary study regarding the restoration of analogue materials that require urgent action in Mongolia. ICHCAP will assist in restoring superannuated ICH-related data damaged by time and environmental factors. The outcome materials could be used for publishing promotional videos and e-books to raise public awareness.
- **Assisting in Building Archives:** ICHCAP will also research classification systems and metadata for the systematic storage and management of data, produce and supply guidelines to establish archives, support related institutes in building archives, and organise networks to link archives through a central portal website.



2) Transmission and Dissemination

ICHCAP will organise public events to raise ICH visibility. These events will include creating and operating a transmission programme targeted towards the general public, particularly the youth, to encourage sustainable transmission. In addition, by using information technology, ICHCAP will develop intangible heritage–related digital contents and make them available online via an e-learning system.

- **Public Events:** ICHCAP will hold open events, such as travelling photo exhibitions, performances, and international festivals, for the general public to foster increased contact and interaction with ICH. The Centre will also provide onsite programmes that offer chances to experience and learn about different forms of ICH.
- **Expert Networking Programme:** ICHCAP is working in collaboration with Member States to create ICH expert networks. The project aims to reinforce networks among ICH experts in the Asia-Pacific region through the development of professional programmes. This programme is designed to share information on the newest international issues related to the UNESCO 2003 Convention and to provide an opportunity to discuss encountered difficulties. This project began in 2009, and each year since then, twelve to fifteen cultural heritage experts and government officials have participated.
- **Online Knowledge System:** ICHCAP will also move towards creating an online knowledge system that will allow experts, transmitters, and the general public better accessibility to ICH-related knowledge and information while strengthening information sharing for those involved in the ICH field.

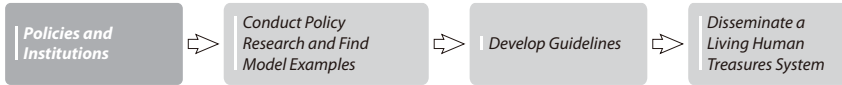


3) Policies and Institutions

ICHCAP will promote cultural policies to safeguard ICH and encourage Member States to adopt appropriate legal and administrative safeguarding systems. The Centre will collect ICH information on policies and exemplary cases of safeguarding as well as produce guidelines related to ICH safeguarding. It will also promote dissemination projects related to the UNESCO Living Human Treasures System.

- Establishment of ICH Safeguarding Systems and Policies: This project aims to assist Member States in developing ICH safeguarding policies and measures. ICHCAP supports Member States in identifying exemplary case of ICH safeguarding activity, developing ICH safeguarding policies, and disseminating ICH safeguarding measures. ICHCAP also organises expert seminars, and an ICH guidebook will be published using ICH data produced throughout the project. At present, ICHCAP is working with Tonga and Lao PDR.
- Policy Research and Model Examples: ICHCAP will research and explore exemplary cases of ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region and use these cases to establish support for safeguarding systems that can be adjusted and applied to other countries in the region, taking into account specific social and cultural characteristics. In addition to this, ICHCAP will develop practical guidelines for ICH measures. These guidelines related to ICH safeguarding measures include identification, documentation, research, preservation, systems, promotion, transmission, and revitalisation.
- Dissemination of UNESCO LHT System: The aim of the project is to share information and experience in creating and managing ICH safeguarding systems with Member States in the Asia-Pacific region and to promote safeguarding activities. Additionally, ICHCAP has been working closely with the governments of Viet Nam and Mongolia since 2007 to assist in the

introduction of the Living Human Treasures System. ICHCAP invited ICH experts from Viet Nam and Mongolia and provided them with opportunities to share their experience in the ICH safeguarding field. Korean experts have also been delegated to both countries to provide advice and to exchange opinions regarding safeguarding systems and measures.



4) Promotion and Enhancement

ICHCAP will use accumulated ICH data to increase ICH visibility. ICHCAP will also provide a venue for the debate on concerning intellectual property rights of ICH and help solve the issues of intellectual property right infringement that could arise in the process of collecting and using ICH information. In addition, ICHCAP will make efforts to disseminate ICH promotional materials and contents for distribution to promote the social and cultural value of ICH.

- Publication and PR for Promoting ICH: ICHCAP publishes ICH-related books and newsletters to provide information on ICH and raise public awareness about ICH. To this end, three publications of UNESCO ICH books in the Korean language titled *2009 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists*, *2008 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List*, and *Understanding Intangible Cultural Heritage (Kit on ICH)* were published and widely distributed. Also, a reference book on the Mongolian ICH was published in 2010.
- Newsletter: ICHCAP also contributes to introducing Asia-Pacific ICH and addressing international ICH issues by publishing the *ICH Courier*, ICHCAP's quarterly newsletter. This project aims to enhance ICH visibility and to promote ICHCAP's activities by disseminating information about ICH and issues regarding ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region. Every issue of the newsletter since the winter of 2009 is available for download from the ICHCAP website (http://www.ichcap.org/en/publications/publicationList.jsp?bbs_name=BOARD_ICH1_ENG).

- **ICH Enhancement Project for Raising Awareness of ICH:** This project aims to raise awareness of the importance of ICH safeguarding through an international prize award and to contribute to promoting the visibility of ICH safeguarding activities. Currently, feasibility research for establishing an international ICH prize is on-going. This project will catalyse ICH safeguarding activities and promote the visibility of ICH safeguarding activities.
- **Develop ICH-Related Digital Contents:** This project aims to contribute to raising public awareness, especially for young generations, by developing and disseminating ICH-related digital contents. To create added value using ICH, ICHCAP will support the development of digital contents to be accessed through the Internet and other media. ICHCAP will also assist in developing an ICH website at the national and regional level and constructing ICH-related online links.
- **Protecting Intellectual Property Rights in Relation to ICH Information and Documentation:** This project aims to develop a guideline through research for protecting intellectual property in the process of information building and sharing. ICHCAP organised expert meetings to discuss problems that could arise in the process of ICH information building and sharing and to develop solutions. ICHCAP is conducting a survey project with ICH information-related institutes in each country through experts in the information and intellectual property fields. In collaboration with these experts, ICHAP plans to develop a guideline that will be disseminated throughout the region.



5) Exchange and Cooperation⁵

ICHCAP will promote international and regional cooperation among relevant institutes for ICH information and knowledge exchanges. ICHCAP will also establish cooperative networks for ICH safeguarding and pool related experts. There are also plans to operate an ICH-related portal site.

- **Sub-regional Collaborative Expert Networking Meeting:** This project aims to discuss regional tasks and strategies for sub-regional collaboration regarding the implementation of the 2003 Convention. ICHCAP has held sub-regional meetings in the Pacific, Central Asia, and South-East Asia.
- **Intangible Cultural Heritage Expert Networking Workshop in the Asia-Pacific Region:** This project aims to organise network programmes to encourage information sharing and to build networks among policymakers and experts in the ICH field in the Asia-Pacific region. Each year, ICHCAP invites fifteen to twenty ICH experts from region to participate workshops to build cooperative networks. Invited participants make presentations on specific themes and have group discussions. ICHCAP plans to develop an online cooperation network system using a Social Network Service (SNS) to strengthening expert networking.
- **National ICH Expert Networking Meeting:** This project aims to introduce UNESCO ICH activities and to build a national collaborative network. ICHCAP holds national network meetings among ICH communities and experts on a regular basis. Through these network meetings, participants will be kept up to date on issues related to ICH safeguarding and implementing the Convention. In particular, the meetings create opportunities for experts to seek measures involving ICH safeguarding in the region and to strengthen safeguarding capacities.
- **Manage Portal Website:** ICHCAP also plans to develop integrated ICH

5) UNESCO, Republic of Korea, 2009, Article 7 – Objectives and functions, 1. The Centre shall specialise in information and networking and its objectives shall be to: (d) foster regional and international cooperation for the safeguarding of ICH.

information systems through a portal website. This web portal will function as an integrated information centre to collect ICH-related data in the Asia-Pacific region as well as to integrate and link various related websites so that related organisations and individuals can exchange data and information through an online platform.



V. Challenges and Strategies

Through the experiences and activities mentioned above, ICHCAP has recognised the challenges involved with planning and implementing projects with countries in the region. Above all, ICHCAP understands that it should continue to learn more about the current challenges in the region by listening to local communities and experts from areas where ICH is still practiced. In this regard, through meetings and workshops, ICHCAP will facilitate networking among ICH experts and communities. The demands and needs that arise from various actors, especially communities in the region, should be reflected in ICHCAP's projects.

Establishing consistent mid- to long-term strategies for reliable safeguarding activities is also one of the challenges ICHCAP encounters. To sustain the viability of ICH and its transmission, it is important to ensure feasible projects and programmes on effective and sustainable.

ICHCAP should also encourage integrated approaches for tangible and intangible cultural heritage since the two forms of heritage are closely interrelated. Holistic approaches towards cultural heritage has been emphasised by stakeholders and experts in both fields.

To this end, ICHCAP should engage in developing and disseminating various methodologies on safeguarding measures, strengthening cooperative partnerships with relevant institutions and other stakeholders in the ICH field at the regional and international level, and carrying out activities with a multilateral and inclusive approach that focuses on information sharing and network building.

ICH is composed of various forms of art that reflect the diverse historical background of a country or region and its diverse cultural influences. As a UNESCO Category 2 Centre in the ICH field, ICHCAP will play an active role in ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region by managing various issues. It is the Centre's vision to promote a 'culture of peace' internationally to parallel UNESCO's ultimate goal. The origin of ICH derives from the mind and spirit of individuals and communities, and the main activities of the Centre are to safeguard and transmit ICH to the next generation. ICHCAP intends to build a regional and international culture of peace through conducting collaborative ICH projects. The Centre's efforts will attempt to promote cultural diversity and sustainable development through ICH safeguarding activities. As cultural heritage is a valuable resource, the fundamental basis for protecting cultural diversity and creative activities in each society for future human development is pertinent. Therefore, the Centre's activities will focus on safeguarding ICH elements efficiently and systematically and reinforce accessibility for the general public.

ICHCAP will endeavour towards developing and disseminating various measures and methodologies for ICH safeguarding in close cooperation with the Member States of the region and other relevant institutions.