

# Work Plan for FY 2022

## 1. Activity Focus under the Medium-Term Programme 2022–2026

As IRCI's Medium-Term Programme is required to be in alignment with UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy (C/4) and Programme and Budget (C/5), the proposed Medium-Term Programme (FY 2022-2026) has been drafted in consideration of UNESCO's draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41C/4) and the draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 (41C/5)<sup>1</sup>.

The draft Medium-Term Programme (FY 2022-2026) (IRCI/2021/10GB/9/Annex 2) underscores the directions and major focuses of IRCI's research activities in the next five years. More specifically, each Activity Focus corresponds to the 'Specific Contents of Activities' section of the Medium-Term Programme, stipulated as follows:

- (1) Promote research for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage through conducting the following activities regarding the practices and methodologies of safeguarding, in cooperation with research institutions and researchers actively working in the field of intangible cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region:
  - (i) Instigate research activities through regional/international conferences, workshops, seminars and publications, while strengthening IRCI's function as a hub of research for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region by forming a consortium of research institutes in the Asia-Pacific region
  - (ii) Collect research information in the Asia-Pacific region, paying special attention to developing countries and small island developing states (SIDS) and aiming at enhancing their research capacity, while examining and developing strategies for optimising the use and sharing of research data
  - (iii) In implementing activities mentioned above, special attention is paid to the following:
    - (a) foster young ICH researchers in the Asia-Pacific region, and
    - (b) actively promote IRCI's activities through various media including social networking systems, in collaboration with academic societies and other stakeholders
- (2) Conduct research for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region that is in line with and contributing to ongoing international

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO's next Medium-Term Strategy (41C/4(2022-2029)) and Programme and Budget (41C/5(2022-2026)) are currently in the process of being examined and to be approved at the 41st session of the General Conference (9-24 November 2021). Presuming the basic directions of the drafts will not be changed, the draft Medium-Term Programme (FY 2022-2026) of IRCI has been developed with reference to these documents.

frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which are outlined in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (41C/4) and Programme and Budget (41C/5).

(Draft Medium-Term Programme (FY 2022-2026))

Activity Focus I, corresponding to the item III(1) and entitled 'Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding,' retains the original scheme of instigating research which is the central function of IRCI. In the next Medium-Term Programme, this function is strengthened through the implementation of the new project 'Creation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Hub of Research for the Safeguarding of ICH.' In planning and implementing various research activities, special attention is paid to foster young researchers specialising in the field of ICH in the Asia-Pacific region.

Activity Focus II is 'Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies.' The scope of Activity Focus II is broadened to include other inter-related issues such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate change adaptations that are also considered important in the UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy, along with existing research themes such as disaster risk management (DRM) and ICH in emergencies. By aligning DRM, SDGs and climate change adaptation together, projects under this Activity Focus are able to address in a holistic manner the aspects of ICH contributing to sustainability and resilience. At the same time, a synergy among the projects, for instance between DRM and SDGs, is expected.

## **2. Overview of Research Projects for 2022**

A total of five projects are proposed for FY 2022: two projects under Activity Focus I, and three projects under Activity Focus II. As most of the research projects that are currently undertaken are completed at the end of this fiscal year, four out of five projects are new proposals that require the approval of the Governing Board of IRCI at its 10th session (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

### **Activity Focus I: Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding**

After six years of implementation of the 'Mapping project' from FY 2013 to FY 2018, a new project was proposed to develop an alternative framework for collecting research data and to prospect the future direction of the IRCI research as a whole. This 'data collection project' initiated in FY 2019 will be completed in FY 2021. To continue

collecting research data, IRCI will propose the ‘Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States’ (FY 2022-2024) as a second cycle of the project, focusing on geographical areas that IRCI has not been successful in thoroughly collecting research information.

‘Creation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Hub of Research for the Safeguarding of ICH’ (FY 2022-2026) is an attempt to consolidate a network of ICH researchers and research institutions in the Asia-Pacific region, involving a new scheme of implementing region-wide programmes such as seminars, forums, and conferences. It will be the foundation for strengthening IRCI’s capacity as a ‘Research Centre’ for safeguarding ICH.

**Activity Focus II: Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies**

‘Research on ICH Contributing to SDGs: Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities’ (FY 2022-2024) is a new project exploring the roles of ICH in developing and maintaining cultural/historical landscape. Projects dealing with ICH’s contribution to SDGs have been implemented until this year as part of Activity Focus I. However, as the next Activity Focus II has incorporated SDGs, activities relating to SDGs are moved under this Activity Focus.

In addition, the ongoing project ‘Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management’ (FY 2020-2023) will branch its research into two, creating another research project on the COVID-19 pandemic and ICH. The project ‘Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic’ (FY 2022-2023) will respond to the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19 by closely documenting the cases of ICH affected by it.

**Table 1. List of research projects in FY 2022**

Activity Focus I. Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding	
New Project	Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States
New Project	Creation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Hub of Research for the Safeguarding of ICH
Activity Focus II. Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies	
New Project	Research on ICH Contributing to SDGs: Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities
Ongoing Project	Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management
New Project	Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Figure 1. Timeline of research project in the next Medium-Term Programme 2022-2026**

FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
<b>Activity Focus I. Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding</b>	<b>Activity Focus I. Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding</b>				
Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region	Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States				
The Third IRCI Researchers Forum on ICH Safeguarding	Creation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Hub of Research for the Safeguarding of ICH				
Research on ICH's Contribution to SDGs: Education and Community Development	(See Activity Focus II. below)				
<b>Activity Focus II. Research on ICH Safeguarding and DRM</b>	<b>Activity Focus II. Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies</b>				
	Research on ICH Contributing to SDGs: Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities				
	Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management (2020-2023*)				
	Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic				

### 3. Individual Project Outlines

Activity Focus I. Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding

#### **Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States (NEW)**

**Period of implementation:** FY 2022-2024

**Geographic focus:** Central Asia and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) within the Asia-Pacific

**Background:** Since 2013, IRCI has been collecting research data on ICH in various countries in the Asia-Pacific region to map the current situation of research in this field, thereby contributing to the enhancement of research for ICH safeguarding. As of today, IRCI Research Database covers 43 countries; however, the amount and the quality of the collected information remain uneven throughout the region, and particularly the information from Central Asia and the Pacific Islands are still limited. Moreover, there are some island nations, such as Timor-Leste and the Maldives, from which research information has not been collected. In addition, the current network among research institutions is insufficient and research information concerning ICH and its safeguarding is not effectively shared among them, despite sharing research information plays a crucial role in ICH safeguarding.

**Purpose:** The project aims to 1) compile information related to research for safeguarding ICH and make collected research data accessible through IRCI Research Database, thereby facilitating better assess the up-to-date trends and situation of ICH safeguarding in each country; 2) enhance capacities of research institutions to accumulate information relating to ICH safeguarding, and to analyse research data to identify areas requiring further input and development for safeguarding their ICH; and 3) encourage information sharing related to ICH and its safeguarding among research institutions in their countries and also within the Asia-Pacific region, leading to the development of further research programmes and active discussions on ICH safeguarding.

**Progress/preparatory activities:** As a preparation for the FY 2022 activities, IRCI will gather reflections on the current data collection scheme at the regional symposium to be held in January 2022, and consider if any revision on the current scheme would be necessary to be applied to the data collection in Central Asia.

**Specific activities for FY 2022:** For the countries where data collection is ongoing in FY 2021 (the Philippines, Thailand, and Kyrgyz), counterparts continue data collection

in cooperation with their collaborators, and submit research information and the final report of their data collection activities.

Regarding the new target sub-regions, Central Asia and SIDS, the specific activities vary by sub-regions.

For Central Asia, following activities are planned.

- 1) Cooperating research institutions (counterparts) are selected for each country to build a partnership to implement data collection activities.
- 2) Each counterpart is going to undertake small-scale data collection by applying the current scheme, while identifying their collaborators. Minor revisions might be made to the scheme of data collection, reflecting the inputs gathered at the above-mentioned regional symposium.
- 3) Some neighboring countries in Inner Asia such as Mongolia could be included in consideration of geographical closeness.

Concerning SIDS, certain assessment on the situation and needs is necessary prior to commencing the data collection. Following activities are planned.

- 1) Consultations with ICH experts specialising in SIDS will be carried out to grasp the current situation and needs of research data collection.
- 2) Potential counterparts in each SIDS are identified.
- 3) An online working session is organised, inviting potential counterparts to gather their inputs and to develop the new data collection scheme.

**Specific outputs:** The research data collected from the Philippines, Thailand, Kyrgyz, and new counterparts in Central Asia in FY 2022 will be uploaded to IRCI Research Database and become accessible to the public by the end of March 2023. A project report compiling the results of data collection will be published online by the end of FY 2024.

**Project partners/cooperating researchers and organisations:**

- Research institutions, including national universities, museums, and archives in Central Asia as well as SIDS as counterparts.
- ICH experts specialising in SIDS as resource persons.

\*See attached PDM (IRCI/2021/10GB/10/Annex 2a) for the detailed project design and benchmarks.

Activity Focus I. Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding

## **Creation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Hub of Research for the Safeguarding of ICH (NEW)**

**Period of implementation:** FY 2022-2026

\*The project implementation should be reviewed and revised towards the end of FY 2024.

**Geographic focus:** Entire Asia-Pacific region

**Background:** Research is considered one of the measures for safeguarding ICH; however, opportunities to share/learn about the research for safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific region are still limited. IRCI's mission is 'to instigate and coordinate research into practices and methodologies of safeguarding endangered intangible cultural heritage elements present in the Asia-Pacific Region,' and thus, strengthening its capacity and function as a 'research centre' is crucial for promoting research activities.

IRCI has carried out in the past 10 years various research activities in cooperation with researchers and various research institutions within the Asia-Pacific region, including universities, museums, government sections, and NGOs, while organising a series of expert meetings, researchers forums, and conferences aiming at promoting research for safeguarding ICH. In this project, such efforts are strengthened by forming a consortium of research institutes and researchers in the Asia-Pacific region.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to further promote the research for safeguarding ICH and to strengthen ICH researchers' network, by developing a consortium of ICH researchers and research institutions in the Asia-Pacific region, and by programming a series of activities focusing on ICH and its safeguarding such as seminars, research forums, symposia, and international/regional conferences that are principally open to any interested individuals. Making use of online webinar format, various programmes under this project invite a wide range of participants, including researchers, government officials, museum staffs, and ICH practitioners within the Asia-Pacific region. Programmes specifically targeting young researchers in the region are also considered, to encourage their active contribution to ICH safeguarding.

**Specific activities for FY 2022:** 1) As a first step, IRCI establishes a planning committee that is composed of IRCI and selected collaborating researchers/research institutions that are active in the field of ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region. This committee becomes an entity to plan various activities to promote research for safeguarding ICH. Constant committee meetings are held to discuss specific contents of activities to be implemented in FY 2022, and the activities in the following years.

2) Online seminars on ICH are launched. Utilising online platforms, a series of lectures inviting researchers leading the field of ICH are programmed through the year. Specific contents of seminars are finalised after discussions with committee members. Seminar information will be widely distributed through IRCI's and collaborators' networks as well as SNS, to call participation of various researchers including museum staff, government officials and students in the Asia-Pacific region. Online broadcasting the content through the website could be also considered.

3) As part of the committee meetings, plans for the following activities are developed:  
a) an international/regional conference or symposium to be held in FY 2024; and  
b) a programme targeting young researchers to be implemented in FY 2023.

**Specific outputs:** Seminar recordings as audiovisual resources; conference reports/proceedings

**Project partners/cooperating researchers and organisations:** Selected ICH researchers/institutions in the Asia-Pacific region as planning committee

\*See attached PDM (IRCI/2021/10GB/10/Annex 2b) for the detailed project design and benchmarks.

Activity Focus II. Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies

### **Research on ICH Contributing to SGDs: Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities (NEW)**

**Period of implementation:** FY 2022-2024

**Geographic focus:** Entire Asia-Pacific region

**Background:** While the importance of cultural heritage for sustainable cities and communities has been emphasised in SDG 11.4, by and large it refers to the tangible aspects of heritage, and how ICH contributes in this process has not been investigated in detail. Since the 'Yamato Declaration on Integrated Approaches for Safeguarding Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage' was adopted in 2004, the importance of the integrated approaches for safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage has been recognised. For more than a decade, however, there has not been much progress to deepen our understanding in this topic. Sustainable cities and communities in the context of SDGs would provide an ideal ground to enhance the discussion on the integrated approaches for safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

**Purpose:** The project investigates the role of intangible cultural heritage for sustainable cities and communities, particularly focusing on the cases of the management of cultural/historical landscapes including world heritage sites, and

demonstrates how ICH could contribute to the achievement of SDG 11.4. Assuming that local communities having tangible heritage such as historical architectures, cultural landscapes and World Heritage sites are more aware of the management of their heritage, the project explores various 'intangible' aspects that shape their heritage. The project is expected to provide some insights for elaborating the integrated approaches for safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

**Specific activities for FY 2022:** 1) Preliminary research is conducted by IRCI to identify (a) target countries/communities in the Asia-Pacific region that have significant tangible cultural heritage/cultural landscape, and (b) cooperating researchers/institutions, through a desk study and online meetings, and to develop specific plans for the case study.

2) A workshop is organised to exchange ideas and experiences relating to the integrated heritage management, and to prepare for the case studies in FY 2023.

**Specific outputs:** A project report, including a collection of case studies and the results of the international symposium.

**Project partners/cooperating researchers and organisations:**

- ICH researchers in target countries (collaborator and counterpart in target countries)
- ICH experts who are also familiar with tangible heritage (resource person)
- Government officials related to culture (tangible or intangible cultural heritage)
- Community members

\*See attached PDM (IRCI/2021/10GB/10/Annex 2c) for the detailed project design and benchmarks.

Activity Focus II. Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies

**Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management**

**Period of implementation:** FY 2020-2023

\*A one-year extension is proposed. This is primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which made IRCI to revise the programmed activities. Notably, field research has to be postponed to FY 2022.

**Geographic focus:** Entire Asia-Pacific region, covering five sub-regions

**Background:** There has been a growing international awareness about the disaster risk management (DRM) of cultural heritage. In this context, UNESCO has initiated international discussions concerning the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage

(ICH) in emergencies. Alongside this development, in FY 2016 IRCI launched a three-year research project on ICH and DRM<sup>2</sup>, focusing on the Asia-Pacific region that is frequently exposed to various natural hazards. The outcome document of this 2016-2018 project<sup>3</sup> included a series of recommendations for the safeguarding and the mobilisation of ICH in disasters. Building upon the outcomes of this previous project, IRCI started in FY 2020 the second phase of the project, 'Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management.'

**Purpose:** The project investigates in details the potential risks and positive aspects of ICH in the DRM context, by taking into account the 5 ICH domains defined in the 2003 Convention, and the disaster cycle of preparedness, immediate response and recovery. Through the detailed examination of specific cases, the project aims to develop action plans to incorporate ICH and its safeguarding in the community's DRM. The project also provides an opportunity for researchers and experts in both fields of ICH and DRM to work together and stimulate dialogue between them.

**Progress/preparatory activities:** Since FY 2020, IRCI held meetings with the experts who are cooperating in the project to discuss the implementation of project activities including selecting target countries and how to conduct a survey to grasp the potential risks and positive aspects of ICH in the DRM context. In FY 2021, IRCI has established the survey guidelines and the worksheet with examples. By following these documents, the survey has started in cooperation with researchers/research institutions in 9 selected countries of Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, the Philippines, the Republic of Sakha, Vanuatu, and Viet Nam.

**Specific activities for FY 2022:** Based on the results of the survey that was undertaken in FY 2021, following activities are planned.

\* The activities involving field research may be reconsidered depending on the COVID-19 pandemic situation and associated safety measures set by the government.

- 1) An online-workshop is held by inviting researchers who have engaged in the survey in FY 2021 and other cooperating researchers. This workshop aims to discuss how specific risks identified in the survey could be reduced and how ICH could be mobilised for the risk reduction, while sharing the results of the survey in each country.
- 2) Field research will be undertaken in selected countries that have participated in the survey in FY 2021, to seek specific action plans to incorporate ICH and its

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.irci.jp/research/naturalhazard/preliminary2016-2017/>;  
<https://www.irci.jp/research/naturalhazard/workshop2018/>

<sup>3</sup> 'Statements and Recommendations for Safeguarding ICH in Disasters and Mobilising ICH for Disaster Risk Reduction' [https://www.irci.jp/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/IRCI\\_Sendai\\_Recommendations\\_Final.pdf](https://www.irci.jp/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/IRCI_Sendai_Recommendations_Final.pdf)

safeguarding in the community's DRM strategies.

- a) Field research should focus on selected communities, and further examine the risks and effectiveness of ICH in DRM context through community workshops and interviews.
- b) Cooperation between ICH and DRM researchers are encouraged in the research process, to seek practical ways to incorporate ICH in community's DRM.

**Specific outputs:** Project report (other deliverables are to be determined depending on the progress of the project)

**Project partners/cooperating researchers and organisations:**

- ICH and DRM researchers/institutions in the Asia-Pacific Region (collaborator and counterpart in target countries)
- Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (project partner)
- Individual researchers in: Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Center, NICH; National Museum of Ethnology; Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University; International Research Institute of Disaster Science, Tohoku University (as resource person)

\*See attached PDM (IRCI/2021/10GB/10/Annex 2d) for the detailed project design and benchmarks.

Activity Focus II. Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies

**Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic (NEW)**

**Period of implementation:** FY 2022-2023

**Geographic focus:** Entire Asia-Pacific region

**Background:** From the beginning of 2020, the worldwide spreading disease, COVID-19 has brought confusion to all human lives and continues to impact ICH in various ways. Reports and voices from researchers, local communities and practitioners of ICH stating the changes and modification on ICH during the past two and a half years due to the COVID-19 are making appearance and gaining attention. Especially, an online survey conducted by UNESCO<sup>4</sup> has not only gathered information on the difficulties and challenges faced by ICH practitioners, but reports positive alterations and new discoveries.<sup>5</sup> Discussions on ICH and the COVID-19 has been drawing increasing

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<sup>4</sup> <https://ich.unesco.org/en/living-heritage-and-the-covid-19-pandemic-01179>

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO has published a report providing recommendations on how to integrate ICH in post-recovery plans. [https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/Living\\_Heritage\\_in\\_the\\_face\\_of\\_COVID-19\\_-\\_High\\_Resolution.pdf](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/Living_Heritage_in_the_face_of_COVID-19_-_High_Resolution.pdf)

attention globally, and further research is urgently needed to enhance the safeguarding of ICH especially in relation to the COVID-19.

**Purpose:** Taking COVID-19 as a disaster, this project investigates the impact of COVID-19 on the safeguarding, transmission, and the practice of ICH, paying attention to various changes and alterations brought about by COVID-19 that could be negative or positive. By closely documenting the ever-changing situation of ICH practice and its transmission in relation to COVID-19, this project also aims to demonstrate the flexibility and the adaptability of ICH and related communities. Following these two targets, this project tries to build up our knowledge on ICH in relation to the pandemics in general, which enables us to correspond to the future pandemics.

**Progress/preparatory activities** A preparatory questionnaire-based survey is being conducted in FY 2021, to grasp the overall situation in selected countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and experiences of communities and ICH practitioners.

**Specific activities for FY 2022:** 1) By referring to the preparatory survey conducted in FY 2021, approximately 5 specific cases are selected for further research. The research includes the following procedures and methods.

- a) Researchers and research institutions to collaborate in the field research are selected from partners who have participated in the questionnaire-based survey in FY 2021.
- b) To discuss and plan the field research, meetings are held between IRCI and the collaborating researchers/research institutions.
- c) Document in details the situation of ICH, focusing on its safeguarding, transmission, and practice, the follow-up of the questionnaire-based survey to discover further alternations.
- d) Visual materials such as videos and photographs recording the current, altered way of practicing ICH are collected.

2) A brochure compiling findings from the questionnaire-based survey conducted in FY 2021 is produced and made available on the IRCI's website.

**Specific outputs:** A project report consisting contents from the field research and the workshop summary. Visual materials including short movies demonstrating specific changes to the ICH.

**Project partners/cooperating researchers and organisations:**

- Researcher / Research institutions
- Local communities

\*See attached PDM (IRCI/2021/10GB/10/Annex 2e) for the detailed project design and benchmarks.

#### **4. Cooperation with Sakai City**

In accordance with the new Medium-Term Programme (FY 2022-2026), and within the framework of its mandate as specified in the Agreement between UNESCO and the Government of Japan, IRCI has been contributing to the projects carried out by Sakai City for promoting ICH to the general public.

In FY 2022, IRCI will collaborate in organising seminars with Sakai City, and display panels introducing IRCI's research activities at the Sakai City Museum, while disseminating IRCI brochures and other promotional materials to the visitors.

Through these activities, IRCI aims not only to raise public awareness on the importance of ICH but also to improve the visibility of IRCI to the public.