

# **Proceedings of 2015 IRCI Experts Meeting on Mapping Project for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Safeguarding in Asia and the Pacific**

**(8-9 December 2015, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic)**



14 June 2016, IRCI



## **Foreword**

In order to fulfil its principal mandate: “to instigate and coordinate research into practices and methodologies of safeguarding endangered ICH elements present in the Asia-Pacific Region”, IRCI launched in 2013 a project entitled: “Mapping Research on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).”

As a project activity in FY2015, IRCI held “2015 IRCI Experts Meeting on Mapping Project for ICH Safeguarding in Asia and the Pacific Countries” on 8-9 December 2015 in Bishkek with participation of experts from 6 sub-regions of the Asia-Pacific region. At the meeting, Participants presented the result of survey conducted in the Asia-Pacific countries. Following their presentations, they discussed its analysis, findings, difficulties and challenges of current situation of ICH safeguarding research based on the result.

With contribution of participants, especially that of co-chairs Ms Aikawa Noriko-Faure and Ms Janet Elizabeth Blake, the Bishkek meeting bore many fruitful results. This proceedings is a summary of the meeting and would be a milestone of our “Mapping Project.”

I take this occasion to express my sincere thanks to National Commission for UNESCO of the Kyrgyz Republic and its Secretary General, Ms Elnura Korchueva, and Aigine Cultural Research Centre and its Director, Ms Gulnara Aitpaeva.

14 June 2016



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**2015 IRCI Experts Meeting on Mapping Project for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Safeguarding in Asia and the Pacific (8-9 December 2015, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic)**

Rapporteur: Akio Arata (Director-General, IRCI)

**1. 1st day (8 December 2015)**

The meeting started with the welcoming speech delivered by Ms. Elnura Korchueva, Secretary-General, Kyrgyz National Commission for UNESCO, on behalf of the host country. She thanked International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI) for having chosen Bishkek as the venue of the important meeting on the safeguarding of ICH. She also shared with the participants some of the points dealt with at the 9<sup>th</sup> Intergovernmental Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Windhoek, 30 November – 4 December 2015, the Kyrgyz Republic being one of its members. Director-General of IRCI, Mr. Akio Arata, then gave an opening speech on behalf of the organizing institution, also welcoming the participants and expressing appreciation to the authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic for hosting this meeting in Bishkek, and for the assistance provided by the Aigina Cultural Research Center. He then explained that the main mandate of IRCI is to instigate and coordinate research into practices and methodologies of safeguarding endangered ICH elements present in the Asia-Pacific Region, and that the present survey had been conducted within the frame work of the project entitled: "Mapping Research on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)" launched by IRCI in 2012. He also mentioned that the purpose of the survey was to review existing literature and research studies undertaken on the concepts, practices and methodologies relating to the safeguarding of ICH in countries of the Asia-Pacific region and that of the current meeting was to assess the surveys carried out in order, (a) to take stock of the current situation of research conducted in the Asia-Pacific region into the practices and methodologies of the ICH safeguarding, (b) to identify domains of research that have not yet been well developed in the Asia Pacific region but that could be encouraged, and (c) to obtain advice from the experts/participants on the follow-up activities that IRCI could carry out from 2017 onwards.

After the introduction of participants, Ms Noriko Aikawa-Faure, one of the Co-Chairs (the other Co-Chair was Ms Janet Blake) explained the time table and proceeded to the first session:

Report of the surveys undertaken by each sub-region: findings, difficulties/obstacles encountered and challenges

## **1.1 East Asia**

### **1.1.1 The Republic of Korea**

Ms Hanhee Hahm, Professor, Department of Archaeological and Cultural Anthropology, Chonbuk National University, Republic of Korea, presented the results of her review of 36 publications in ROK. Out of 12 sub-fields of research focus, research on “policy making (related to ICH safeguarding)” was the most frequent topic (12) followed by transmission (7), promotion (6) and documentation (5). The concentration on policy may be explained by the following; The safeguarding policy on ICH in ROK was critically reviewed, in comparison with UNESCO’s 2003 Convention on ICH Safeguarding, and it was envisioned its future from the perspective of a new framework. Transmission and documentation are also frequently dealt with. Some researchers are critical of the top-down approach in safeguarding policies, particularly in transmission and documentation matters as well as of the notion of authenticity applied to ICH. Those researchers argue that the right to make decisions should be recovered by individual bearers, groups and communities of ICH, while the government, along with specialists, scholars and local leaders, exercise power and control.

In terms of genres, most research studies in ROK are carried out on ICH in a general way rather than on specialized one, given that the current research tends to focus on policy, transmission and documentation of ICH. Those researchers indicate the safeguarding of vanishing ICH in remote areas as the most imminent challenge, calling for development of a vigilant and in-depth approach to deal with complex issues. Comparative studies with those in foreign countries are increasing. A new paradigm of safeguarding methods through digital platforms and technology is also presented in some research works.

Ms Hahm added that researchers should start working on multi-national nominations (shared nominations) as well. Ms Aikawa-Faure gave an explanation that due to the limitation in the number of nominations that can be submitted and examined annually , the Intergovernmental Committee now encourages shared nominations. Ms Aikawa-Faure, the Co-Chair, congratulated researchers in ROK for working together to push the government into modifying the existing law and policy on ICH in line with the 2003 Convention’s spirit. She, nonetheless, expressed her impression that large part of the research is concentrated on the Representative List of ICH while the very spirit of the 2003 Convention is focused on safeguarding. Ms Aikawa-Faure emphasized also that researchers should think, in future research, on those ICH elements which were not inscribed in the lists, international, national or local.

### **1.1.2 China**

The Co-Chair, Ms Aikawa-Faure informed the meeting of the absence at the last minute of Mr. Junhua Song, Professor, Institute of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage, Sun Yat-sen University, China. She considered Prof. Song's report as one of the best examples to follow for future survey, and introduced its main features as follows:

- So many researchers work on basic theories of ICH safeguarding
- On ways and methods, they already published many articles such as those in the "Development Report of Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding in China" edited by researchers Messrs. Baocheng Kang and Junhua Song
- How to use/harness education into safeguarding: Researchers are very much in favor of promoting ICH practices in education institutions.
- Protection of Intellectual Property Rights.
- Economic development and protection of ecology, and ICH.
- Study on ICH has begun to be a distinct research discipline
- Comparative studies, with the cases in ROK, Japan, France, Italy etc. are conducted
- The characteristics of Chinese research on ICH safeguardings are top down
  - Kunqu proclamation as masterpiece stimulated setting up ICH related policies and legal protection system and instigated research on its safeguarding methodologies,
  - Evolving from non-professional to professional
  - Creation of new theories such as "productive safeguarding" and cultural ecology.
  - Inspiration taken from foreign experiences
  - Shift from valuing ICH to valuing transmission, etc.

### **1.2 South East Asia**

#### **1.2.1 Viet Nam**

Ms Thi Hien Ngueyen, Vice Director, Vietnamese Institute for Cultural and Arts Studies (VICAS), a folklore specialist, presented the outcomes of her survey in Viet Nam.

Most research is conducted by scholars/researchers working at the Department of Cultural Heritage, VICAS, the Institute of Music, and other institutes of the Viet Nam Academy of Social Sciences. Their publications focus on concepts, inventorying and safeguarding of the various ICH expressions of ethnic groups. The types of ICH concepts covered in the research literature are mostly in folklore

expressions, focusing on genres like legends, stories, village festivals, folk songs, dances, music, handicrafts, traditional textiles, customs, folk dramas, indigenous languages of ethnic minorities. There are very few writings on knowledge and skills of carving, textile traditional house making, etc.

Most of the research writings emphasize safeguarding measures such as inventorying, documentation, classification, popularization. A number of articles treat the roles of museums and role of elderly people in a village, as well as master practitioners, in keeping and in transmitting ICH to young people, as well as the role of mass media in raising awareness. Many articles also focus on transmission of ICH in schools. For some researchers, museums are also the venues for encounters and for learning ICH for young people.

Clubs, set up by bearers and/or communities, provide opportunities for performance and practice. While a majority of research work studies focus on traditional village festivals, very few cover knowledge relating to traditional housing, handicrafts, textile, carving technics, or religious rites.

Boundaries between the management by the state and the role of the communities concerned are not clear. Many research works still emphasize the role of the authorities in the safeguarding and yet, there are some showing active roles which can be played by the communities and the bottom-up approach.

Ms Nguyen added that the survey on Viet Nam research is being updated.

Ms Aikawa-Faure drew the attention to the existence of some critics addressed by some Vietnamese scholars regarding the aspect of over commercialization related to tourism of ICH elements, through the activities undertaken by Clubs such as those set up for Gong.

Ms Ngueyen admitted that there were articles criticizing such aspect.

Ms Janet Blake raised a question as to whether IRCI could consider translating those research works done in local language into English so that the international research community can benefit from the richness of what has been done, e.g. in China.

Ms Aikawa-Faure suggested that the Chinese authorities could be encouraged to translate their research works into English.

### **1.3 South Asia**

#### **1.3.1 India**

Ms Shubha Chaudhuri, Associate Director-General (Academic), American Institute of Indian Studies, Archives and Research Center for Ethnomusicology, India, presented

the summary outcomes of her survey on research on safeguarding of ICH in India.

She started by saying that though India had been one of the earliest countries to ratify the 2003 Convention and Kuttiyattam had been one of the first on the Masterpieces list, the development of ICH has not kept pace. There is a vast literature on what we can term as domains of ICH but very little on the Convention and its impacts or on Safeguarding. India still not had established a government policy on ICH. The questionnaires were distributed widely but only few responded with inputs. There are many institutions dealing with ICH but not many dealing with ICH safeguarding. Public awareness of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH is a problem in India and there has been little reaction by or impact on academics as the 2003 Convention has not been implemented in the areas of research, in contrast to the cases in ROK or China. ICH as such is a rather new idea in India, with folklore having traditionally been a discipline, and it is only recently that seminars and workshops on ICH have drawn attention to issues like safeguarding in academic circles. Her survey could not identify few publications as a result of such seminars and workshops although there had been a fair number of them. The inscription of Indian ICH elements to the Representative List (RL) has led to creation of certain specialized institutions, but not yet the production of research publications. Even in the research community, awareness of the nomination of those ICH elements to the RL is weak. There are 21 UNESCO accredited NGOs in India, but Ms Chaudhuri did not succeed in obtaining responses to her questionnaire from them. She considered that some different approaches should be looked into (e.g. networking) so as to obtain concrete contributions.

Ms Aikawa-Faure, the Co-Chair, mentioned that it was to notice with regret that the Indian Government had yet to show strong interest in promoting ICH. Ms Chaudhuri responded that the only thrust of the government is on nominations. However the Sangeet Natak Akademi has been appointed as the nodal agency for ICH, and there are future plans for creating a ICH mission. The SNA at this time also makes project grants for ICH..

Ms Janet Blake, the other Co-Chair, drew the attention of the participants to the fact that the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of ICH had a very limited definition of ICH, and that research may treat those elements which would go beyond the narrow definition of ICH adopted in the Convention. Ms Blake further clarified that, when we talk about research, research can mean (1) “research” as a way of safeguarding, (2) “research” on safeguarding which can be sub-divided into (i) research within the framework of the 2003 Convention, and (ii) research going beyond the 2003 Convention.

### **1.3.2 Bangladesh**

Mr. Saymon Zakaria, Assistant Director, Folklore Department of Bangla Academy, Bangladesh, presented his survey on Bangladesh. He started his presentation by saying that most Bangladeshi scholars did not understand the definition of safeguarding in the 2003 Convention. He continued his presentation by describing many genres of Bangladesh ICH, though providing little information on research work on safeguarding.

Ms Aikawa-Faure asked Mr. Zakaria what the nomination mechanism was in Bangladesh, and whether there had been any impact of the inscription of Bangladeshi ICH elements into RL. Mr. Zakaria responded to the second question saying “Yes, both positive and negative impacts”. Marketing has increased (a positive) but it has allowed not-original elements to slip into the performances used in commercialization, in the case of Baoul Songs. In this connection, Ms Hanhee Hahm informed the participants that 2 directions were proposed (1) sticking to the original and authentic ICH, and (2) adaptation to modern tastes, especially for younger generation to continue. Ms Chaudhuri alerted that the approach (2) would not help safeguarding but affect negatively by not transmitting spiritual background and social functions inherent to the ICH elements concerned.

## **1.4 Central Asia**

### **1.4.1 Tajikistan**

Mr. Dilshod Rahimov, Head of the Department of Folklore, Rudaki Institute of Language, Literature and Oriental Studies, the Republic of Tajikistan, presented the outcome of his survey on Tajikistan. While many research studies were undertaken on ICH in Tajikistan, very few are on safeguarding of ICH. The main cause for this may be the lack of specialized institutions to conduct research on safeguarding ICH, working in collaboration with communities for inventorying and preparing local lists of ICH. Methods used in literature of safeguarding of ICH in Tajikistan are, scientific (21%), followed by descriptive (15%). Among the ICH genres, research treating all genres of ICH comes in large number (30%), followed by oral tradition (27%) and by traditional craftsmanship (27%). More research works were published in 2015 (33% of all the research works reviewed). He also clarified, in response to the questions from Mr. Paroum Yadollah that the capacity-building training conducted in Deshanbe in 2012, 2013 and 2014 had been in Russian. He added that there had been some research articles on transmission of folklore, music and so on. Ms Aikawa-Faure raised a question about the policies concerning the transmission, knowing that the

Conservatoire and the University of Fine Arts were teaching traditional music. Mr. Rahimov responded that those institutions invite traditional masters to teach students. He clarified that there were two modes of transmission, one, the traditional master to apprentice method, and a second, using formal education.

#### 1.4.2 Uzbekistan

Ms Gularo Abdulloeva, Head of Branch, State Conservatory of Uzbekistan, presented her survey result on Uzbekistan. She explained the government measures undertaken since 1991 as a background, and further elaborated policies linked to the legislation. She informed the meeting about the scientific conferences, expeditions to several provinces (2012 and 2013), as well as the creation in 2012 of an ICH Documentation Department within the Republican Scientific-Methodological Center for Folk Arts, under the Ministry of Culture and Sports. Ms Abdulloeva further elaborated the past and current situation related to ICH. She summarized the current status of research on ICH in Uzbekistan as follows:

- 1) Most research pays more attention to performing arts but less on such domains as traditional craftsmanship, sports, food culture or traditional medicine.
- 2) There is a strong need to create a digital database of Uzbekistan's ICH.
- 3) Poor English language proficiency hampers many Uzbek researchers from presenting research papers to the international academic community.
- 4) Need to learn from the experience of foreign countries advanced in the domain of ICH safeguarding.
- 5) Need for financial support for publishing scientific books and manuals.

#### 1.4.3 Kyrgyzstan

Ms Perizat Kurbanova, Aigine Cultural Research Center, together with Ms Gulnara Aitpaeva, Director, Aigine Cultural Research Center, presented the outcomes of the survey conducted by Ms Kurbanova in the Kyrgyz Republic. Ms Kurbanova informed the participants that the survey only covered Kyrgyz ICH, while there are ICH elements of ethnic minorities, such as Tajiks, in Kyrgyzstan. There is very little understanding of ICH safeguarding among many of the researchers contacted. There is a lot of literature on ICH but very few materials on its safeguarding, even though there are laws, projects and activities aimed at safeguarding ICH in Kyrgyzstan. Out of 49 books collected, folklore (15), sacred sites (8), craftsmanship (6) are the major topics worked on. Ms Aiptaeva announced that the Aigine Cultural Research Center had just been recognized by UNESCO as an accredited specialized NGO on ICH. To a question as to what the impact of the inscription into the Representative List (RL) of a Kyrgyz ICH

element was, Ms Aitpaeva responded that there was a direct impact as, after Manas was inscribed in RL in 2013, it became a national phenomenon in two years, in terms of dissemination of information, furthering safeguarding efforts, etc. Ms Aikawa-Faure congratulated Kyrgyzstan stating that the Kyrgyz experience in benefiting from NGOs connected with communities should inspire our future work.

## **1.5 West Asia**

Mr. Parmoun Yadollah, Director, Regional Research Centre for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia, Tehran (Iran), started his presentation by providing an overview of the centre he represents, its mandate, research fields, and approaches. He then raised a question about definition of research of the ICH safeguarding. He posed some distinction between different research methods: general/descriptive, theoretical/applied, synchronic/diachronic and micro/macro.

He then showed the general overview of four countries he surveyed, stating that in the countries issues concerning ICH are raised, and that the capacity, quality and quantity of research undertaken are different. In countries like Iran, there is a long history of research in the field of ethnography and anthropology, which is not recognized as 'ICH research'.

### **1.5.1 Afghanistan**

Mr. Yadollah presented, using Power Point, the various actors on the fields of research on ICH safeguarding in Afghanistan as follows:

- Directorate of Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture
- National Archives of Afghanistan
- Firooz-Kooh (an NGO) working on the old city of Kabul
- Foundation of Culture
- Ostad ("Master Musician")
- Ghazne Cultural Office 2013
- University of Kabul
- Academy of Science of Afghanistan

Women's participation in safeguarding activities is now rapidly improved by the NGO's activities in the domain of traditional crafts.

### **1.5.2 Iran**

Legal documents for the safeguarding of cultural heritage have been maintained in Iran after the ratification. Some dead ICH recorded in old texts are now being revitalized. Documentation is conducted by some archives and documentation centres. Concerning the registration of ICH at the national level, Iran has already listed 2,000 elements. Archiving of ICH elements, texts, music, medicine, ethnic games and so on has been undertaken by some institutes but the quality of these collections varies from one to another.

### **1.5.3 Pakistan**

Although its ratification of the 2003 Convention was at a relatively early stage, Pakistan also requires capacity building just like the other three countries. LOK VIRSA is the national institute which safeguards ICH through research, collection, documentation, preservation and dissemination of oral tradition and religious culture. The institute has various kinds of archives and databases on the ICH of Pakistan in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations and has been conducting various research projects in collaboration with professionals and local communities.

### **1.5.4 Turkmenistan**

Central Asian Crafts Support Association submitted crafts of Turkmenistan to the UNSECO Award of Excellence of Handicrafts in 2008 and 2012. UNESCO also supports the enhancement of local craft industries. Turkmenistan's inventory of ICH has already been created.

From a participant, he was asked how a national inscription process worked, for example, whether local communities could be involved and he answered that, in Iran, governmental organizations did the inscription and made the national list.

## **1.6 Pacific**

### **1.6.1 Fiji**

Ms Elizabeth Edwards, Director/Producer/Editor and Coordinator, Mai TV, Fiji, and the co-author of the survey summary report, presented the outcomes of the survey in Fiji. Fiji now comprises many different ethnic groups with the indigenous people iTaukei, living alongside a population of Indian, Chinese, Pacific islander and European settler descent.

An intensive national research initiative was led by the Fiji Government. Fiji has an inventory of ICH as a result of the comprehensive mapping programme existing

since 2003 which covers 1,075 villages in 14 provinces in Fiji. Out of 14, twelve provinces have been mapped by the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs since 2004. The current desktop survey reviewed 338 entries. Topics covered in publications were documented and recorded mostly in English, Fijian and Rotuman languages. The research documents everything from the Fijian worldviews: history, herbal medicine, tradition, religion, the islands and their inhabitants, etc. There is a significant amount of audiovisual documentation produced locally in Fiji. The survey shows that there has been much research written and documented through different media on ICH safeguarding practices but not brought together. Ms Edwards said the existing network of researchers in Fiji as well as the easy accessibility to information through the Internet, were considered strengths. She also provided information concerning the sources of documentation and references to which she was able to have access.

### **1.7 The IRCI Research Database on Research on ICH Safeguarding**

Mr. Shigeaki Kodama, Associate Fellow, IRCI, presented IRCI's current database on research on ICH safeguarding. He emphasized that expected users of the database in question were: researchers, government officials, local communities involved in research, or beneficiaries of the findings of such research. If the scope of users was to be enlarged, IRCI would need to add other functionalities in order to facilitate the access by those who may not be specialists in the field of ICH.

Ms Shubha Chaudhuri suggested that websites and audiovisual materials such as documentaries be added to the database. Mr. Kodama expressed his view that, nowadays, research documents are costly, generally speaking, and that we could perhaps think of free-use, and that community people's and local/layman "research network" would need to be incorporated.

### **1.8 Wrap-up**

The Co-Chair Ms Janet Blake presented the following summary of the debate of the first day of the meeting:

- The exposés showed predominantly descriptive presentations of ICH, rather than the status of research on safeguarding of ICH.
- It is important that we can distinguish research relevant to "ICH" as understood in the Convention from folklore studies, for example, whose subject is different.
- The fundamental inter-play between the notions of "ICH" and "safeguarding" (especially the idea of viability) needs to be explored.

- By the expression “and any other measures ensuring viability of ICH”, the 2003 Convention allows a wide range of measures for ICH safeguarding to be undertaken.
- What is the purpose of research? This question has two possible responses:
  1. Research as a safeguarding measure
  2. Research on safeguarding
- Nomination/Inscription into RL and its impact on safeguarding and validity of ICH elements concerned was discussed.
- Social environment in which ICH is rooted needs to be respected.
- ICH related research works are scattered physically as well as methodologically: how can we access research published in various languages and in a number of different types of institutions (including non-governmental bodies)?  
The Co-Chair Ms Noriko Aikawa-Faure added the following:
- As anticipated, there has not been much research on safeguarding collected.
- The question of who the audience of the database is needs to be made clear.

## **2. 2nd Day (9 December 2016)**

### **2.1 South East Asia**

#### **2.1.1 Thailand**

Ms Alexandra Denes, Professor, Faculty of Social Science, Chiang Mai University, Thailand, made, via Skype, the following presentation on the result of her survey on Thailand:

The Department of Cultural Promotion of the Ministry of Culture has the primary task of managing ICH. As of today, Thailand is still not a Party to the Convention and there is quite a lot of deliberation over this and some reluctance from various stakeholders. An issue of terminology over what actual translation to use for “intangible cultural heritage” has been debated back and forth and whether or not to use the term more familiar to the Thai heritage which is more along the lines of “local wisdom” or to adopt a new terminology, that reflects the emergence of new discourse around ICH. This is one of the reasons for the slow ratification. Another reason has been the development and drafting of an ICH law. The original draft Thai law presented in public forums was quite controversial. It had numerous articles that were in direct conflict with the core principles of the 2003 Convention in terms of having some potential penalties for what was deemed to be a distortion of intangible heritage and also other articles that did not fit the overall spirit of the convention. These have now

been removed. The revised draft was being put forward. It looks like fairly soon Thailand plans to become signatory.

Thailand launched its national registry in 2009. During the first year, 25 elements were registered and, as of 2014, a total of 286 elements have been listed on the registry. Thailand has been very active. Regarding the specific domains, by and large, the majority of them are performing arts. And this is followed by traditional handicrafts, folk literature, sports, games and local wisdom, social practices, rituals and festivals, and then, knowledge about nature of the universe and language. Interestingly, Thailand has added two domains, namely sports and games together with local wisdom and, then, also explicitly has added language.

What Ms. Denes did in the Thailand survey of research was focused primarily on the research funded by the Department of Cultural Promotion with the understanding that the focus of this survey is to get a better picture of the impact of the UNESCO Convention on safeguarding activities. There were 28 reports funded by Department of Cultural Promotion and five research projects that are academic in nature, dissertations also dealing exclusively with the idea of intangible cultural heritage as articulated by UNESCO. There were limitations to the Thailand survey in the sense that Ms. Denes could not go to all of the regional universities where there may have been some research undertaken on ICH and safeguarding. It was only possible to look at the main universities, Chulalongkorn, Thammasat, and Silpakorn, all of which are in Bangkok as well as the Department of Cultural Promotion. It was not within scope of the possibility to go to other universities in Thailand and see what may have been done.

There is clearly a growing awareness among heritage authorities as well as academics, experts about the need for community participation and ownership of the safeguarding process. Looking at the 33 studies, half of the projects referred to made some effort to involve communities in some ways, either in documenting or developing some kind of transmission initiatives or discussing how to move closely with the community members in the data collection process. (After giving two studies as example), these two studies reflect very much the spirit of participation that is expressed in the convention and other of the studies to a greater or lesser degree also reflect this understanding of what it means to support participation. That was an encouraging finding of this survey.

Another strength was that there were some good examples of taking a more holistic and contextual approach, going beyond mere kind of description of traditional practices or elements and looking at the historical context, the interconnections between tangible and intangible and also reviewing some of the complexities within

communities in terms of different understandings of practices and their value and meaning.

The primary weakness is the lack of assessment of long term impact of safeguarding. Another weakness is that, while half of the reports and research reveals a kind of understanding of the new conceptualization of ICH, the other half was very much, old school, more descriptive, non-participatory, just not providing a sense of the living content of ICH, also not discussing the issues of threats or liability. Still really half of the research was of this kind, much more descriptive.

Then, also a lack in theory: What theoretical approaches should we indeed be using or promoting? A question for us is to think about what are the theoretical frameworks that are most appropriate or fruitful for discussing intangible cultural heritage and safeguarding approaches. Another issue in Thailand was limited accessibility.

One of the recommendations from the Thai case is to emphasize the need for longer term assessment research on the impact of safeguarding initiatives. Another recommendation is for fuller multimedia outlets on safeguarding ICH, i.e. not just the collection of data, but to ensure that research and data is useful for communities.

The following exchange of views followed on this presentation:  
The need for long term studies is a key issue, because we need to consider what the impacts of safeguarding ICH are. It might be worth looking to the field of environmental science to find some research strategies. (Ms Blake)

The operational directives have not looked at yet the post-inscription impact study. This is a lacuna currently within the framework of the implementation of the convention. (Ms Denes)

Policy is one of the most important components of safeguarding. (Ms Aikawa)

While recognizing the importance of policy, research on safeguarding ICH should ideally be, to an anthropologist, more case study based, on the ground field research looking at what it means to develop together with communities safeguarding initiatives broadly within the measures that are outlined in the convention, although there are for the moment only a few attempts in Thailand. (Ms Denes)

**2.2 Analytic Summary of all of the surveys conducted within the present IRCI project**  
Ms Alexandra Denes provided an oral presentation of her analysis set out in her more detailed written regional report, as follows:

As of 2015, a total of 33 out of 56 in Asia-Pacific have ratified the Convention and successful in terms of the speed at which this Convention has been ratified in the region. Despite enthusiasm for nomination to the Representative (RL) and Urgent

Safeguarding (USL) lists, there is only limited understanding of the impact of the ratification and the listing on safeguarding initiatives.

IRCI should be given a credit for this ambitious and important effort to undertake this survey to try to fill this gap by compiling research on safeguarding ICH and not just on ICH itself.

Guiding questions provided by IRCI for the regional survey report were:

1. What is the strength or weakness of the current research activities?
2. What kind of ICH genres/methodological approaches are predominant in available research studies?
3. What kinds of ICH genres/methodological approaches are not well researched?
4. What kind of methodologies or approaches have to be strengthened?

This analysis of the surveys included 11 State Parties and two non-signatory nations, Thailand and Australia, thus offering interesting comparison between State Parties and non-signatories.

The guidelines explicitly stated that the country survey should focus on research on safeguarding of ICH, not on ICH itself. But this distinction was difficult to maintain partly because there appears to be very little research, in fact almost none focused solely on safeguarding ICH. There is so much research about ICH. Those research works may include some elements or aspects of safeguarding. There is a real challenge in determining what to include in the survey. Many of the country surveys did not necessarily assess the impact of the ICH convention on safeguarding activities per se, but rather include more descriptive studies of cultural practices which were considered to be part of national cultural heritage. The national surveys nonetheless offered insights in terms of different country level understandings of the definition of safeguarding ICH and the objectives of the 2003 Convention, also providing the contextual and policy background.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

In terms of the strengths, several of the country reports clearly indicated that the ratification of the convention had prompted much needed re-conceptualizations and reforms of the policies and approaches to heritage management. In the Republic of Korea (ROK), a high percentage of research was actually focused on policy issues, followed by transmission and promotion. It was explained as due to the fact that these new definitions and the understanding of living cultural heritage found in the convention are in fact in conflict with the 1962 Cultural Properties Protection Law. This is an encouraging opportunity and strength to see that this debate is taking place in the context of research on ICH and safeguarding in ROK.

A number of other country reports identified this paradigm shift by different way of approaching and thinking about heritage in research on safeguarding. In China, since becoming a State Party, there has been a wide array of new research and scholarship on methods to safeguarding, the idea of identification of successors, documentation, a lot of discussion about filing, archiving, digitization also intellectual property rights issues, as well as critical debate about the differences between ICH and folklore. We saw some of this as well in Vietnam that the kinds of research and initiatives being supported by the Ministry of Culture that are exploring methods for revitalization, transmission, and promotion of ICH. Similarly in Thailand, the non-signatory, research is nonetheless exploring participatory approaches. The India report suggests also that a lot of studies in India are looking at ICH as a whole and grappling with these issues and questions. The Australian report explicitly mentioned research on community participation in the safeguarding of ICH. A real strength is this kind of trying to grapple with and re-conceptualize ICH and some community based efforts and initiatives.

Turning to the weakness of the research, one of the main problems is that research on ICH tends to be overly descriptive and static in its representation of ICH, lacking contextual, critical analysis (i.e. historical change, impact of heritage policies, issues of transmission). The Bangladesh report describes research on ICH by organizations such as the Asiatic Society, the Bangla Academy that appears to be rather narrowly focused on collection, documentation of old traditions, while issues of state policy and community engagement in safeguarding were not discussed. The report on Cambodia indicates that while Cambodia has been active in the ratification and subsequent nomination of 2 elements to the RL, the country still lacks resources and capacity to undertake in-depth research on safeguarding. The report on Lao PDR only described the broader legal and heritage policy context but there was no specific research on ICH mentioned or discussed. It was difficult to assess from this report whether there is any research on ICH for safeguarding initiatives. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan all appear to have similar issues with overly descriptive accounts of ICH lacking broader analysis of historical change, policy and the involvement of communities in safeguarding. Authors of these reports have indicated that there is still limited understanding of the definition of ICH and safeguarding among cultural heritage researchers. Much ICH research still seems to be following what we can call a kind of established norms of top-down data collection and archiving of heritage.

### **Predominant ICH genres and methodological Approaches in Research**

Ms Denes found this aspect of the analysis difficult to do and to give a regional snapshot on it, because of different methods of research compilation in each country and she conceded it was not easy to compile the data in an effective way. She provided in her written report the summary table on a country-by-country basis. The question, she asked, was, what was it we wanted to know, what would it tell us when we were looking for dominant genres and domains? A more important or relevant question to ask regarding the research on safeguarding was, she said, what kinds of safeguarding measures were predominant in the research?

Ms Denes continued her presentation. Most of the research seemed to be focused on documentation and different kinds of documentation and archiving. But there were few countries engaging in research on other measures including transmission and revitalization of ICH. In Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, there were some interesting descriptions and examples given on research on ICH transmission through the educational system. And the China report talks about promotion of ICH via various forms of media using those traditional and non-traditional forms, web based resources, television, etc.

Regarding the question as to what kinds of ICH genres/methodological approaches are not well researched yet, Ms Denes presented the following findings: The genres of ICH that are not well researched are: knowledge of nature and the universe, traditional medicine and rituals. On the methodological approaches, participatory action research and in-depth ethnographic research on safeguarding is still under-represented.

On the question “What kinds of methodologies or approaches have to be strengthened?”, she analyzed as follows:

Participatory and ethnographic approaches research on safeguarding that involve communities and culture bearers more directly in the research process and in the designing and implementation of safeguarding plans and activities, need to be strengthened. So far the research compiled for this regional report indicates that most research on ICH and ICH safeguarding follows the top-down approach of information gathering by experts, rather than the approach of engagement with communities to assess threats to ICH and determine viable measures for safeguarding.

### **She presented the following conclusions and recommendation**

The country reports reviewed for the survey presented somewhat uneven picture of research on safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific. While we see that several countries (China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Vietnam) have in fact been actively engaged in research

on safeguarding measures since becoming Parties, many of the other countries such as Bangladesh seem to be more involved in the descriptive documentation of ICH. And, then, there is the research on policymaking that we see in Lao PDR and the Republic of Korea. Overall, there was seemingly little use of the conceptual framework of viability in the research on safeguarding to analyze specific threats to the ICH.

Finally, apart from Australia and to some extent also India, it seems there was no research on customary practices and there is no customary law governing the use and access to intangible cultural heritage, which would represent another gap in the research on safeguarding. What are the kinds of protocols and restrictions that the culture bearers themselves have on transmitting heritage? They are crucial in terms of what the longer term sustainability and safeguarding of ICH into the future would be, that we wish to see more research on as well.

In terms of the final recommendation, examples of high quality research on safeguarding could be compiled and distributed regionally, translated if necessary to illustrate research which addresses the important questions of threats and viability, community participation and the impacts of measures or skills towards transmission, promotion, and revitalization.

The Co-Chair Ms Aikawa-Faure first invited Mr. Zakaria from Bangladesh to reply to Ms Denes's query. Then Mr. Zakariya clarified that there had not been much work on safeguarding with the exception of one UNESCO led project on Bauls and revitalization and four workshops and that he would revise his report to bring these issues into the text of the report as well and also to describe forthcoming activities in the area of safeguarding in Bangladesh.

Ms Chaudhuri congratulated Ms Denes for the analysis she made out of the various reports which were diverse in many ways. She added that, though we have a definition of ICH in UNESCO terminology, we do not really have a close definition of what we mean by safeguarding. She agreed with Ms Denes that we all question what research on safeguarding is all about. She also suggested that we open a scope of survey by including audiovisual materials, unpublished project reports, websites, etc., as possible resources.

Ms Denes thanked Ms Chaudhuri and agreed with her comments. She further said that we perhaps should enlarge the scope of research on safeguarding, by including what may be slightly beyond the definition given in the 2003 Convention, which might bring some new, innovative approaches.

The Co-Chair, Ms Aikawa-Faure, reminded the participants of the mandate of IRCI which is first to promote the Convention, its main function is to instigate and coordinate the research onto the methodology and practice of the safeguarding of ICH.

She agreed with Ms Denes that, although the impact of the inscription was important, we should not limit ourselves to research on inscribed ICH but that we should be concerned with non-inscribed ICH as well.

Ms Hanhee Hahn of ROK talked about the question of boundaries of “communities”, the government thinking of the nation as a community in the cases of Arirang and Kimuchi, for example, anthropologists considering communities as traditional villages, and the bearers of ICH regarding the group of practitioners and their followers as their communities. Ms Denes responded to her by saying that research on safeguarding should reveal this complexity as opposed to try to somehow simplify and come up with a more streamlined definition of community that works across the border and that there is no way around the complexity and the different levels of contextualization and what community is.

Ms Aikawa-Faure explained that precisely because of this complexity, there exists no definition of “community”, neither in the Convention nor in the Operational Directives. She referred to the case of Mongolia where rural population is nomads with no villages. She also revealed that there was a discussion on the glossary of the convention but that all the governmental experts decided purposely not to include it into the Convention, because each culture has a different manner of defining certain terms, particularly the word “community”.

Ms Aiptaeva of Kyrgyzstan reacted to Ms Denes’ analysis in reference to the Kyrgyz report. She said she and her colleague Ms Kurbanova tried to differentiate research on ICH and that on safeguarding which was challenging.

With the question as to community involved in the research or not, and participatory character or not, they selected 49 research papers included in the survey. She continued that a community itself could be a point of research on safeguarding, and raised a question how, in different societies, we see a community which is responsible for safeguarding an ICH element.

She finally referred to customary law, customary practice, taking a taboo as example. She said there was a lot of research on taboos themselves about their characters, about their functions, about their cultural dynamics but that there was no research which would bring focus on the safeguarding measures of this taboo. She added also that reports of many sorts could be used as source of information but research should have something more than reports.

Ms Janet Blake reminded the participants of the Art 2 paragraph 3 of the 2003 Convention which says that safeguarding means measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage. She emphasized that we should all ask the question what viability with regard to ICH is? And comes the next question what the

measures are that have both purpose and end result of ensuring the viability. We should therefore not limit ourselves to the measures mentioned in the text of the Convention. She also pointed out that most research that addresses the question of safeguarding measures aiming at ensuring viability may probably be happening in disciplines outside your own, such as development, or environment, hence the importance of interdisciplinarity.

Ms Denes echoed the interdisciplinary approach referring to the research on ethnic Karen and their assertion of their cultural rights without however drawing upon the language of the UNESCO Convention, and raised a question whether the future surveys within the IRCI project could include such research. She also agreed with Ms Aiptaeva's pointing out of the importance of raising guiding questions in terms of what we are looking at on this research on safeguarding.

Mr. Arata, Director-General of IRCI, responded to the question affirming that if researchers consider such approach would bring wider and perhaps profound insight into research on safeguarding of ICH, IRCI would go along as it would enhance the quality of research on the subject and through which we could contribute to UNESCO.

Mr. Tomiyuki Uesugi, Professor, Anthropologist, Seijo University, Japan, raised the issue of research conducted by local people, local researchers, and urged that they be included in the scope of our research and survey. Ms Denes responded to the subject he raised, saying that there are many local historians or community leaders who are very committed to documenting the local practices or oral histories and narratives which are very rich and diverse literature. As anthropologist herself, she said that she mined such resources, however questioned how to include such resources in the survey mandated by IRCI and doubted that it might require tremendous human and financial resources as well as time. She agreed with him that they are potentially very rich at the same time complex endeavor to include them.

Mr. Parmoun Yadollah, Director, Regional Research Centre in Teheran, suggested that IRCI come up with some sort of guidelines and checklist to check which type of information they should search for.

Ms Denes agreed that there should be guidelines on questions, different from the current ones provided by IRCI, more specifically breaking down what is meant by safeguarding.

Ms. Thi Hien Nguyen, clarified that, in Viet Nam, there are not only research on safeguarding measures but also those on policymaking and on documentation like ROK or China. She introduced her view on viability of ICH in Viet Nam saying that many ICH elements in Viet Nam live a healthy life, with viability, in which case we need not try to involve in safeguarding which may not be relevant to them.

The Co-Chair, Ms Aikawa-Faure suggested to the participants that if we publish this report, we make it clear that this country survey is focused on the safeguarding, that country survey is treating survey on ICH in general and so forth. She said that we need some disclaimer on top of each paper.

Ms Shubha Chaudhuri thought that we all need to include a methodology section which would include our thinking about how we approached it conceptually.

Ms Elizabeth Edwards of Fiji contributed her experience in Fiji where the Heritage Department and Culture Department already has a database on the natives, on the indigenous people, what they have – whether it's the gifts in their communities, it's already there. She went on that all we have to do is go in and ask for access and that they are more than willing to give it to us as researchers which she had done on her side. And it worked well without requiring 10 years.

Ms Denes asked whether one could find in those databases in Fiji locally produced materials on heritage. Ms Edwards responded positively but that it was not on safeguarding but general information on a certain village, what they do if they are mat weavers, another village if they are fire walkers, another village if they are mat or masi makers, everything is documented.

Ms Aikawa-Faure informed the participants that, to read more in detail, one could open the UNESCO website, Intangible Heritage List and 2016 cycle 5, where there is a nomination from Fiji on best practice of cultural mapping. One can see more in detail about this project.

### **2.3 Discussion on IRCI Mapping Survey Project**

Mr. Shigeaki Kodama, Associate Fellow, IRCI, introduced the 2016 programme activities of the IRCI Mapping Project which comprise (1) an International Conference of Researchers on Safeguarding of ICH scheduled to be held in Sakai (Japan), (2) the continuation of the Survey on 10 more countries of the region, and (3) the updating of the Database.

Based on the draft guidelines presented, there were many questions, clarifications and suggestions regarding these, and a version incorporating suggested adjustments was to be finalized by IRCI.

Mr. Arata, on behalf of IRCI, clarified the position of IRCI, in particular, budgetary aspects and whether the update of the surveys conducted in 2015 could be envisaged in 2016. In summary, he clarified as follows:

- i)     IRCI will not try to produce an additional layer to the research on ICH, and will stick to, and limit the scope to research on safeguarding of ICH corresponding to IRCI's mandate.

- ii) Within the budget ceiling for the Fiscal Year 2016 activities already endorsed by the Governing Board, the IRCI secretariat will see whether we could find room for accommodating updating work in 2016 of some of the surveys conducted in 2015, if the participants decide to recommend it to IRCI.

The two Co-Chairs suggested, with the consent of the participants, that the meeting take the findings and recommendations of the analytical summary report as our conclusion. The IRCI secretariat took the tasks to communicate with the Co-Chairs and Ms Alexandra Denes to determine the concrete wording of the conclusion. The conclusion thus agreed upon is the following:

#### **2.4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The meeting reviewed the country surveys conducted and the analytical report on them. The meeting found the following characteristics:

The country surveys presented somewhat uneven picture of research on safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific. While we see that several countries (China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Vietnam) have in fact been actively engaged in research on safeguarding measure since becoming Parties to the Convention, many of the other countries such as Bangladesh seem to be more involved in the descriptive documentation of ICH. And, then, there is the research on policymaking that we see in Lao PDR and the Republic of Korea. Overall, there was little use of the conceptual framework of viability in the research on safeguarding to analyze specific threats to the ICH.

Apart from Australia, and to some extent also India, it seems there was no research on customary practices and there is no customary law governing the use and access to intangible cultural heritage, which would represent another gap in the research on safeguarding. What are the kinds of protocols and restrictions that the culture bearers themselves have on transmitting heritage? They are crucial in terms of what the longer term sustainability and safeguarding of ICH into the future would be, on which we wish to see more research.

The participants of the meeting agreed the following as their recommendations,

1. Examples of high quality research on safeguarding may be compiled and distributed regionally, translated if necessary, to illustrate research which addresses the important questions of threats and viability, community participation and the impacts of measures or skills towards transmission, promotion, and revitalization.
2. The draft guidelines for the survey to be conducted in 2016 should be adjusted reflecting the comments and suggestions made by the participants during the

meeting discussion, which are summarized as follows:

- The survey guidance should be given on:
  - i) The definition of the term *Safeguarding* sticking, at this initial stage, to the 2003 Convention on Safeguarding of ICH, without enlarging it, in order to ensure that those conducting surveys will share a common ground.
  - ii) Targeted materials for the survey: published research materials in books and periodicals and unpublished research materials: thesis, project reports, audiovisual materials,
  - iii) Survey on the research focused on:
    - Analysis on the threat and viability taking into account the environmental evolution and sustainable development,
    - Community participation in the designing, implementing and evaluation/monitoring of the safeguarding measures,
    - Customary laws governing the use and access to ICH as safeguarding measures,
    - Impact of the safeguarding measures implemented on the ICH elements
  - iv) Survey should include the status of ICH in the country concerned (i.e. signatory status, trainings, forums, level of public awareness)
- 3. IRCI may study the possibility to accommodate activities in its Fiscal Year 2016 activities to allow the update and completion of some of the surveys conducted in 2015.

## Annex 1

### Regional Survey Summary Report—Asia-Pacific

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#### Project Background, Scope and Objectives

As of 2015, a total of 33 out of 50 states in the Asia-Pacific region (Group IV) have ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, hereafter referred to as the ICH Convention.

**Table 1. Asia-Pacific States Parties to the ICH Convention (2015)\***

Member States	Elements Listed	Member States	Elements Listed
1. Afghanistan	-	22. Nepal	-
2. Bangladesh	2	23. Pakistan	1
3. Bhutan	1	24. Palau	-
4. Brunei Darussalam	-	25. Papua New Guinea	-
5. Cambodia	2	26. Philippines	2
6. China	38	27. Republic of Korea	17
7. Democratic People's Republic of Korea	1	28. Samoa	
8. Fiji	-	29. Sri Lanka	-
9. India	11	30. Tonga	1
10. Indonesia	7	31. Turkmenistan	-
11. Iran	10	32. Vanuatu	1
12. Japan	22	33. Vietnam	9
13. Kazakhstan	2		
14. Kyrgyzstan	5		
15. Lao People's Democratic Republic	-	<b>Total Signatory States Parties</b>	<b>33</b>
16. Malaysia	1	<b>Total Listed Elements (RL and USL)</b>	<b>145</b>
17. Marshall Islands	-		
18. Micronesia	-		
19. Mongolia	12		
20. Myanmar	-		
21. Nauru	-		

\*data adapted from UNESCO website <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/>

In spite of the rapid ratification of the ICH Convention in the Asia-Pacific region over the past decade and enthusiasm for nomination to the Representative (RL) and Urgent Safeguarding (USL) lists, little is known about the ICH safeguarding initiatives that have been implemented in response to ratification. In order to fill this gap in our understanding of the Convention’s impact on safeguarding activities, the International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI) launched the “Mapping Research for the Safeguarding of ICH in the

Asia-Pacific Region.” The aim of the survey is to compile available research on the safeguarding of ICH, and then to analyze these findings in terms of research methodologies and ICH genres, in order to identify further research needs.

The guiding questions provided by the IRCI for this regional survey report were as follows:

1. What is the strength or weakness of the current research activities?
2. What kind of ICH genres/methodological approaches are predominant in available researches?
3. What kind of ICH genres/methodological approaches are not well researched yet?
4. What kind of methodologies or approaches have to be strengthened?

Since it was not feasible to undertake the survey in all 33 States Parties in the Asia Pacific region, the current summary report reflects findings from 11 states as follows: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China (including Inner Mongolia), India, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Viet Nam. This regional survey also includes findings from two non-States Parties: Australia and Thailand, thus offering comparative insights from two countries that have yet to ratify the ICH Convention.

All the researchers were instructed to survey the publications on ICH safeguarding, including books, articles, reports, conference papers and doctoral theses. The guidelines given to researchers also explicitly stated that the country surveys should focus on research on “safeguarding of ICH,” not research on the ICH itself. Nevertheless, in practice, this distinction proved difficult to maintain for a number of reasons. First, in most countries surveyed, there was little or no research focused solely on safeguarding ICH. Rather, to learn about safeguarding initiatives, it was necessary for the country researchers to look at existing research about ICH, to see whether safeguarding issues of identification, documentation, transmission, revitalization, and promotion had been included.

A second reason why this distinction between research on safeguarding of ICH vs. ICH itself was difficult to maintain was because much of the research on ICH that was reviewed and included actually pre-dated the ICH Convention. In other words, most of the country surveys included publications written about cultural practices before that member state had become signatory to the ICH Convention. This means that many of the country surveys do not assess the impact of the ICH Convention on ICH safeguarding activities per se, but rather also include more descriptive studies of cultural practices long considered to be part of national cultural heritage.

These points regarding determining the scope of research on ICH were also raised by the India report, which noted that the state’s concern with traditional culture began in the post-Independence period, when India began to construct a national identity in part through the work of arts and cultural institutions. Decades of research and documentation of traditional culture and “folklore” have generated a vast literature

on cultural heritage, including performing arts, oral literature, traditional knowledge and crafts, and yet, as the author notes, these studies pre-date the convention and thus can not be considered to assess the impact of the 2003 ICH Convention.

In spite of these ambiguities regarding the scope of the survey, the country surveys offer valuable insights in terms of the different country-level understandings (or misunderstandings) of the definition of safeguarding intangible culture and the objectives of the ICH Convention. Many of the country reports also provided important contextual background about state policies and the levels of institutional support for the operationalization of the ICH Convention.

### **1. Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Research on Safeguarding ICH**

In terms of the strengths of current research on safeguarding ICH, several country reports clearly indicated that the ratification of the ICH Convention has prompted much-needed reconceptualizations and reforms of the policies and approaches to cultural heritage management. For example, in the Republic of Korea, it was found that a high percentage of the research on safeguarding ICH focused on policy issues, followed by transmission and promotion. The author explained that this emphasis on policy was due to the fact that the new definitions of living cultural heritage found in the ICH Convention are in conflict with the 1962 Cultural Properties Protection Law. While the 1962 Law established criteria (originality, excellence and superiority) for the selection of intangible heritage worthy of state-supported preservation, the ICH Convention rejects such aesthetic criteria and focuses instead on the value of the cultural practices to the identity of the community. Research has emphasized the need for new, bottom-up approaches to safeguarding which prioritize the values and meanings of ICH to the culture bearers and take advantage of new digital technologies to encourage community engagement. However, this is a challenge in Korea given the prominent role of experts and officials in the heritage sector.

A number of other country reports also identified this paradigm shift in the research on safeguarding ICH. In China, becoming a State Party to the ICH Convention has clearly prompted a wide array of new research and scholarship, including research on methods for safeguarding ICH, the identification of “successors,” documentation methods of safeguarding (filing, archiving, digitization), intellectual property rights issues, and critical debates about the difference between ICH and “folklore.” Similarly, In Viet Nam, signatory status has given rise to new research initiatives supported by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism exploring methods for the revitalization, transmission and promotion of ICH, such as Ca Tru music and Xoan singing.

India also appears to have a number of institutions—namely INTACH and Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS)—which are engaging with the UNESCO 2003 Convention and unpacking the concepts of “safeguarding”. And yet, as the author notes, the literature dealing specifically with “ICH” in UNESCO’s terms is much scantier than the extensive literature on culture and traditions more broadly defined.

The Bangladesh report mentioned the fact that Bangladesh is already a signatory to the ICH Convention, and has two elements inscribed on the Representative List (Baul Songs and the Traditional Art of Jamdani Weaving). The report also mentions a wide range of safeguarding activities implemented as a result of the 2008 listing of Baul songs, including documentation, training workshops, and academic seminars, suggesting that the listing has had a significant impact. However, the report does not mention how the 2013 listing has affected safeguarding research and activities around Jamdani weaving.

While not yet a signatory to the ICH Convention, Thailand’s Office of National Culture Commission under the Ministry of Culture has been studying the ICH Convention and actively supporting research on ICH safeguarding since 2009. A particular strength of the Thai research is that approximately half of the studies (17 out of 33) made some effort to involve the communities of culture bearers actively in the research process. For example, in the study entitled “Weaving and Textile Design of the Phu Tai in Thailand,” the researchers organized focus groups not only to identify craftspeople in the community and document traditional patterns, but also to collectively formulate safeguarding strategies for the intergenerational transmission of weaving skills.

The only other country that explicitly mentioned research on community participation in the safeguarding of ICH was Australia—another non-signatory country. In the latter case, research on ICH safeguarding has focused on the tangible-intangible interface; in particular, on indigenous populations’ traditional relationships to the land as expressed through oral traditions, ecological knowledge and worldviews. Unlike most ICH research, which tends to compartmentalize cultural practices according to the Conventions five “domains,” research on indigenous ICH in the Australian context is more holistic, addressing broader historical, ecological and political issues, particularly the linkage between ICH and land and resource rights of aboriginal communities.

Turning now to the weaknesses of the research, one of the main problems is that the research on ICH is overly descriptive and static in its representation of ICH, and lacking contextual, critical analysis (i.e. historical change, impact of heritage policies, issues of transmission). In the Bangladesh report, for example, research on ICH by organizations such as the Asiatic Society and Bangla Academy appeared to be narrowly focused on the collection and documentation of oral traditions, “folklore” and social practices, while issues of community engagement in safeguarding were not addressed, apart from the example of Baul songs mentioned above.

The Cambodia report indicates that while Cambodia has been active in the ratification of the ICH Convention and subsequent nomination of 2 elements to the RL, overall, the country still lacks resources and capacity to undertake in-depth research on safeguarding. As the author notes, universities lack funds for this kind of research, and private and independent research on cultural heritage tends to be descriptive rather than analytical. Ministry of Culture staffs have been involved in

research for the ICH inventory and for developing curricula for use in schools, but once again, these do not delve deeply into the issues around safeguarding in collaboration with communities and stakeholders.

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan all appear to have similar issues with overly descriptive accounts of ICH lacking broader analysis of historical change, policy and the involvement of communities in safeguarding. While these countries have been quite active in organizing numerous symposia and supporting research on ICH since ratifying the ICH Convention, the authors of these reports have indicated that there is still limited understanding of the definition of ICH and safeguarding among cultural heritage researchers in these countries. Researchers do not delve deeply enough into issues of safeguarding in terms of identifying specific threats or discussing the possible measures to be taken in collaboration with communities and other stakeholders (local government, schools, etc.) In spite of these analytical weaknesses, there appears to be a strong commitment to the study of ICH and support for its safeguarding.

The report on ICH research in Lao PDR is particularly problematic in that the author only described the broader legal and cultural heritage policy context, but no specific research on ICH was discussed. Hence, it is not clear from this report whether Lao PDR has any research on ICH or safeguarding initiatives.

In terms of an overall assessment of the weaknesses of research on ICH in the Asia-Pacific, it is evident from the country reports that there is not enough focus on the role of communities in all stages of the safeguarding process. In particular, the concepts of community participation and rights of culture bearers are starkly absent, with the exception of Australia and some examples in Thailand. In this sense, much ICH research seems to be following established norms of top-down data collection and archiving of heritage, rather than the new, participatory and rights-based approaches advocated by the ICH Convention.

Another overall weakness of the research is the lack of detailed discussion of “viability” or “threat assessments” of the ICH elements’ social function. As stated in the UNESCO Aide-Memoire for Completing a Nomination to List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (2015), it is important to identify and articulate the *specific* threats to an element’s viability, not simply to state that it is threatened by globalization, modernization or cultural change in general terms. Most of the research discussed in the country reports referred to these general threats, but did not explain how these forces are threatening the viability of practices in local contexts (i.e. if youth are no longer learning a form of ICH, what are the specific factors contributing to this shift in terms of changing employment, education, etc.)

## **2. Predominant ICH Genres and Methodological Approaches in Research**

Given the different methods of data compilation and analysis used by each of the country report authors, it is difficult to provide a clear overall picture of the “predominant ICH genres” in the region. Therefore, Table 2 in this section provides a brief summary on a country-by-country basis.

**Table 2. Predominant ICH Genres and Methodological Approaches**

Country	Predominant ICH Genres/Elements	Methodological Approaches
Australia	Oral traditions, ecological knowledge and practices (knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe) of Aboriginal populations, tangible-intangible interface	Ethnographic, participatory, community-based
Bangladesh	Oral traditions, performing arts, and festivals, with some inclusion of traditional medicines, food culture, ecological knowledge and handicrafts	Descriptive, historical, academic, non-participatory
Cambodia	Performing Arts	Descriptive, historical, non-participatory
India	Performing Arts, crafts, oral traditions, traditional medicinal knowledge	Academic, policy-based, some participatory
China (including Inner Mongolia)	All genres, including legal and policy aspects	Descriptive, historical, academic, non-participatory
Kazakhstan	Performing arts, traditional craftsmanship, sports, ecological knowledge	Descriptive, non-participatory
Kyrgyzstan	Oral traditions, social practices, rituals, handicrafts, food culture	Descriptive, non-participatory
Lao People’s Democratic Republic	tangible-intangible interface	Descriptive
Republic of Korea	Performing arts, rituals, sports, food culture, handicrafts	Ethnographic, academic, policy-based, participatory
Tajikistan	Oral traditions, handicrafts, performing arts, rituals	Ethnographic, descriptive, academic
Thailand	Oral traditions, performing arts, handicrafts, festive events, rituals	Ethnographic, descriptive, academic, some participatory
Viet Nam	ICH in general, performing arts, festive events, rituals, handicrafts	Ethnographic, descriptive, non-participatory, visual documentation

Perhaps a more important or relevant question to ask regarding the research on safeguarding is what safeguarding measures were most prevalent in the research? On this point, it is clear that most of the research was focused on documentation of ICH, with only a few countries engaging in research on other measures, such as transmission and revitalization. In Thailand, for example, research on language

documentation and revitalization (Chong and Yakru) not only described the endangered languages and the communities but also provided a detailed picture of the process of collaborating with the communities to develop and implement transmission and revitalization activities.

Uzbekistan and Tajikistan also have research on ICH transmission through the educational system. For instance, several studies from Uzbekistan (particularly dissertations) analyzed the incorporation of ICH into the formal educational curriculum, such as one entitled, “The use of national traditions and customs in educating primary school pupils in the hard-working spirit (1999).” In Tajikistan, a study entitled “Craftsmen Should be Supported (2013)” examines the transmission of knowledge of the folk crafters of the Badakhshan of Tajikistan via seminars and trainings, while the study entitled “Socio-cultural Factors of Safeguarding and Development of Decorative-applied Folkcraft in Tajikistan (2006),” examines the social and cultural factors affecting safeguarding and development of the folk crafts, including education.

China also appears to have significant research on safeguarding measures, including the promotion of ICH via various media, and transmission of ICH via both traditional and non-traditional forms. While the annotated bibliography could not be consulted, the China country report refers to research on the use of documentary film, television and digital media to promote ICH, as well as research on traditional master-apprentice relationships and transmission of ICH via formal school education.

Lastly, the Viet Nam report refers to several research studies on promotion and transmission of ICH, looking at the role of mass media and education in raising awareness about the safeguarding of ICH.

### **3. What kinds of ICH genres/methodological approaches are not well researched yet?**

Overall, from the 13 country reports, the genres of ICH that are not well researched are: knowledge of nature and the universe, traditional medicine (with the exception of India), and rituals. The methodological approaches that have not yet been employed adequately are participatory action research and in-depth, ethnographic research on safeguarding.

With regards to the safeguarding measures, more research should be conducted in the areas of promotion, transmission and revitalization, looking to examples from countries already mentioned above.

### **4. What kinds of methodologies or approaches have to be strengthened?**

As stated above, the methodologies which should be strengthened are participatory and ethnographic approaches to research on safeguarding, which will involve communities and culture bearers more directly in the research process and in the design and implementation of safeguarding plans and activities. So far, the research

compiled for this regional report indicates that most research on ICH and ICH safeguarding follows the top-down approach of “information gathering” by experts, rather than the approach of engagement with communities to assess threats to ICH and determine viable measures for safeguarding.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

All in all, the country reports reviewed for this regional survey present a somewhat uneven picture of research on safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific. While several countries (China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Viet Nam) have been actively engaged in research on safeguarding measures since becoming signatory to the ICH Convention, many other countries have been more involved in descriptive documentation of ICH (i.e. Bangladesh) and research on policy-making (Lao PDR, Republic of Korea).

Overall, research on safeguarding in the region did not use the conceptual framework of “viability” to analyze specific threats to the ICH, and there was still limited research on community involvement in the safeguarding process.

Finally, apart from Australia and India, there was no research on customary practices or customary law governing the use and access to ICH, which represents another gap in the research on safeguarding.

To conclude with a final recommendation, examples of high quality research on safeguarding could be compiled and distributed regionally (and translated if necessary) to illustrate research which addresses the important questions of threats and viability, community participation, and the impacts of measures geared towards transmission, promotion and revitalization.

## Annex 2

### **Timetable of “2015 IRCI Experts Meeting on Mapping Project for ICH Safeguarding in Asia and the Pacific” Bishkek, 8-9 December 2015**

#### **8 DECEMBER:**

**Morning sessions (9:00 – 12:30)**

##### **Opening session (9:00 -9:30)**

- Elnura Korchueva, Secretary General, National Commission for UNESCO of the Kyrgyz Republic, Kyrgyz Republic
- Akio Arata, Director-General IRCI, Japan

##### **Report of the surveys undertaken by each sub-region: findings, difficulties/ obstacles encountered and challenges**

###### **East Asia (ROK) 1h (9:30- 10:30)**

Presentation on ROK,  
Q and A

###### **South-East Asia (Vietnam) 1h (10:30-11:30)**

Presentation on Vietnam  
Q and A

###### **South Asia (India and Bangladesh) 1h (11:30 – 12:30)**

Presentation on India, Bangladesh  
Q and A

##### **Lunch (12:30 -13:30)**

**Afternoon sessions (13:30 – 17:30)**

##### **Report of the surveys undertaken by each sub-region: findings, difficulties/ obstacles encountered and challenges (Contd.)**

###### **Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)**

###### **1h15m (13:30- 14:45)**

Presentation on Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan  
Q and A

**West Asia (Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan) 1h (14:45 – 15:45)**

Presentation on Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan  
Q and A

**Pacific Sub-Region (Fiji) 1h (15:45 – 16:45)**

Presentation on Fiji  
Q and A

**Research Database on ICH safeguarding 45min (16:45 – 17:30)**

Presentation on IRCI's database  
Q and A

**9 DECEMBER**

**Presentation on Thailand by Alexandra Denes (Skype) (9:00 – 9:30)  
Analytic summary of all of the national and sub-regional surveys – findings, difficulties and challenges (9:30 – 10:30)**

Presentation by Alexandra Denes (Skype)

Comments and observations by discussants (10:30 -12:00)

Discussants: Shubha Chaudhuri, Hahm Hanhee, Gulnara Aitpaeva,  
Janet Blake, Tomiyuki Uesugi  
Q and A followed by discussions

**Discussion on IRCI Mapping Survey Projects (12:00 - 13:30)**

Presentation on IRCI Mapping Survey project in 2016 as well as a draft template for further survey.(presentation by IRCI secretariat)

**LUNCH (13:30 – 14:20)**

## Annex 3

**“2015 IRCI Experts Meeting on Mapping Project for ICH  
Safeguarding in Asia and the Pacific Countries”**

8-9 December 2015, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<b>Chairs</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	
AIKAWA-FAURE, Noriko	Advisor for Intangible Cultural Heritage, Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan	
BLAKE, Janet Elizabeth	Assistant Professor Department of Islamic Law, Faculty of Law, Shahid Beheshti University, Iran	
<b>Participants (10)</b>		
<b>Region</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
East Asia	HAHM, Hanhee	Professor, Department of Archaeological and Cultural Anthropology, Chonbuk National University, Republic of Korea
South-East Asia	DENES, Alexandra (via Skype)	Professor Faculty of Social Science, Chaing Mai University, Thailand
	NGUYEN, Thi Hien	Vice Director Vietnam Institute for Cultural and Art Studies, Vietnam
South Asia	CHAUDHURI, Shubha	Associate Director General (Academic) American Institute of Indian Studies, Archiveand Research Center for Ethnomusicology, India
	ZAKARIA, Saymon	Assistant Director Folklore department of Bangla Academy, Bangladesh
Central Asia	ABDULLOEOVA, Gularo	Head of branch State Conservatory of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan
	GULNARA, Aitpaeva	Director Aigine Cultural Research Centre, Kyrgyz Republic
	RAHIMOV, Dilshod	Head of the Department of Folklore, Rudaki Institute of Language, Literature and Oriental Studies, Republic of Tajikistan

West Asia	YADOLLAH Parmoun	Director, Regional Research Centre for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia, Iran
Oceania	EDWARDS, Elizabeth	Director/Producer/Editor & Coordinator, Mai TV, Fiji
<b>Resource Person (2)</b>		
BAK, Sang-Mee (via Skype)	Professor  Division of International Studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Republic of Korea	
UESUGI, Tomiyuki	Professor, Department of Cultural History, Faculty of Arts and Literature, Seijo University, Japan	
<b>Observers (4)</b>		
AHMADISHADMEHRI, Mohammad	Financial Chief,  Regional Research Centre for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia, Iran	
CHOCHUNBAEVA, Dinara	Director, Central Asian Crafts Support Association's Resource Center in Kyrgyzstan (CACSRG-kg), Kyrgyz Republic	
PARK, Kijong	Chief, IT Management Section, International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO, Republic of Korea	
TAVAKOLI, Alireza	Programme specialist of promotion,  Regional Research Centre for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia, Iran	
<b>Organiser (2)</b>		
Name	Title	
ARATA, Akio	Director-General  IRCI, Japan	
KODAMA, Shigeaki	Associate Fellow  IRCI, Japan	