



# IRCI

National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, Japan  
**International Research Centre  
 for Intangible Cultural Heritage  
 in the Asia-Pacific Region**

**2022**

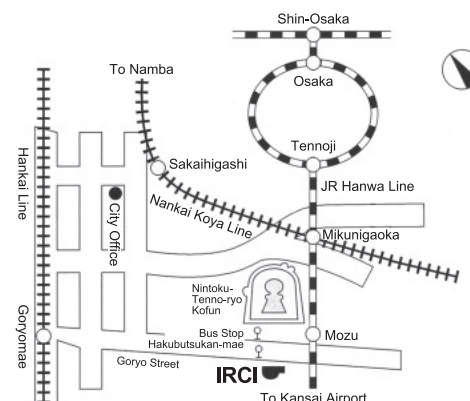


International Research Centre  
 for Intangible Cultural Heritage  
 in the Asia-Pacific Region

National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, Japan  
**International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage  
 in the Asia-Pacific Region 2022**

Published by International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage  
 in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI)

2 cho, Mozusekiun-cho, Sakai-ku, Sakai City, Osaka 590-0802, Japan  
 Tel: +81-72-275-8050





Contents

IRCI and UNESCO

Introduction

Greetings / Overview of IRCI

UNESCO Category 2 Centres

Operation of IRCI

UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

What is Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) ?

Activities of IRCI

Activity Focus and Research Projects under IRCI Medium-Term Programme FY 2022–2026

Projects in FY 2022

Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding

1. Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States

2. Creation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Hub of Research for the Safeguarding of ICH

Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies

1. Research on ICH Contributing to SDGs: Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities

2. Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management

3. Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic

Related Past Projects

Collection and Sharing of Research Information for ICH Safeguarding

IRCI Researchers Forum

Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education

Research on ICH's Contribution to SDGs: Education and Community Development

Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Natural Hazards

Study of Emergency Protection of ICH in Conflict-Affected Countries in Asia

Cooperation with Other Research Institutes

Public Relations

Cooperation with Sakai City

Timeline of Research Projects

Annex

International Meetings and Workshops

Reports and Publications

1

2

2

3

4

5

6

8

10

12

12

7

9

10

11

13

13

14

15

15

16

18

20



Centre  
Under the auspices  
of UNESCO

Logo of UNESCO Category  
2 Centre  
in the field of intangible  
cultural heritage



International Research Centre  
for Intangible Cultural Heritage  
in the Asia-Pacific Region

Logo of IRCI

Culture is an important element and heritage that imparts richness to nations. To transmit intangible cultural heritage through generations, connections among people are necessary. The IRCI logo incorporates the Japanese character for "culture" to indicate "people", who are the bearers of culture. This is symbolic of our vision of culture being transmitted from person to person within communities and groups. The background colours represent the Asia-Pacific region, with green signifying mountains, yellow the land, and blue the ocean.

Photo credits and captions on the front cover  
(left to right, top to bottom):

1. Almaz Akunov and the youngest members of the Salbuurun Federation, Kyrgyzstan ©Taalim Forum, 2021
2. Okinohara rice planting dance performed in Chitose Primary School, Japan ©Chitose Primary School, 2021
3. The Royal Cremation Ceremony in Ubud in July 2008, Indonesia ©OKABE Masami, 2008
4. Dhamail in rural setting, Bangladesh ©DAM, 2021
5. International conference "Safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage through education" in November 2021, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan ©Taalim Forum, 2021
6. Dhamail lyrics development workshop in September 2021, Shantiganj, Bangladesh ©DAM, 2021
7. Regional Workshop on "Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region" (Online, January 2022)
8. Nora, dance drama in southern Thailand ©Department of Cultural Promotion, Thailand, 2017, with the permission of UNESCO
9. 'Te Samoa, fine mat in Samoa ©Women in Business Development Inc., Samoa, 2004, with the permission of UNESCO

IRCI and UNESCO

Introduction

Greetings / Overview of IRCI

The International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI) was established as a Category 2 Centre of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). At the 35th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO held in 2009, the proposal of the "Establishment in Japan of the International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO" was approved. In August of the following year, the Agreement was concluded between the Government of Japan and UNESCO and the Centre officially opened in Sakai City, Osaka, as one of the institutions of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage (NICH) of Japan. IRCI aims to promote the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (the 2003 Convention) and its implementation, as well as to enhance the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) by instigating and coordinating research in the Asia-Pacific region.

ICH elements such as oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, and rituals are living heritage. Being transmitted from generation to generation and transformed with changing times, ICH nurtures cultural diversity, which is a source of unity, innovation, and creativity. However, many ICH elements are endangered today because of various factors such as globalisation, ageing, disasters, and conflicts. The safeguarding of ICH is an urgent issue, and cross-border cooperation is crucial. To address these concerns, IRCI, as a research hub in the region in the field of the safeguarding of ICH, is working to enhance it by implementing various research projects in close cooperation with UNESCO and other related institutions such as universities, research institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations, museums, and communities worldwide. The spread of COVID-19 has a significant impact on ICH and the people involved in it, as societies and organisations undergo major changes. IRCI has been conducting research activities and international conferences with utmost care. We sincerely hope that the pandemic will soon be settled, and the construction of a sustainable society will be accelerated. In October 2021, IRCI celebrated its 10th Anniversary. We will do our best to facilitate further research for safeguarding ICH for the next decade.

We appreciate your cooperation with the activities of IRCI.



IWAMOTO Wataru  
Director-General,  
International Research Centre for  
Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region

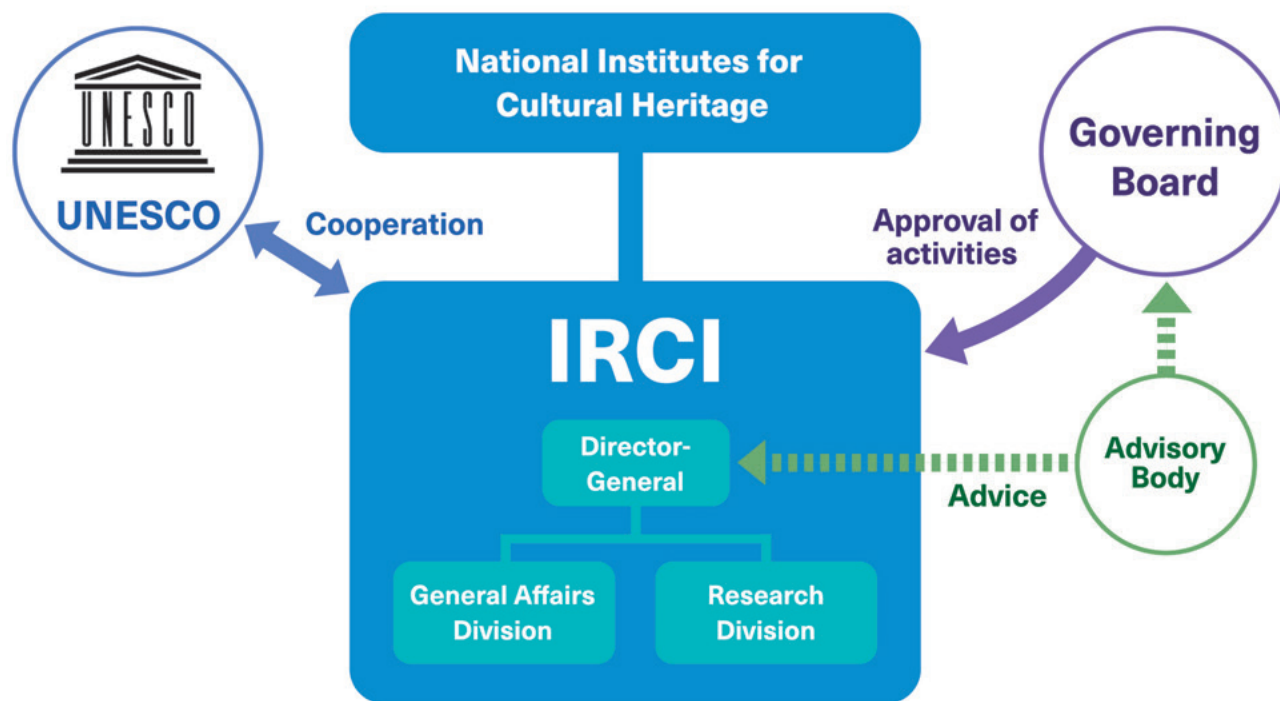


## UNESCO Category 2 Centres

Category 2 Centres are institutions that serve to contribute to the achievement of UNESCO's strategic objectives. There are currently eight UNESCO Category 2 Centres around the world, including Japan, in the field of the safeguarding of ICH. In the Asia-Pacific region, in addition to IRCI, there are Category 2 Centres in China and the Republic of Korea, with which IRCI cooperates and works in tandem. The three centres have different mandates: research for IRCI, information and networking for the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IHCAP) in the Republic of Korea, and training activities for the International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (CRIHAP) in China.

## Operation of IRCI

IRCI activities are implemented with the approval of its Governing Board. The Governing Board is made up of ten experts and representatives of specialised institutions inside and outside Japan including a UNESCO representative. The Governing Board deliberates and approves all IRCI activities, including long-term and medium-term programmes, work plans, and reports. In addition, IRCI's Advisory Body provides professional advice when planning research programmes. Furthermore, Mr. MATSUURA Koichiro, Former Director-General, UNESCO, was appointed as an honorary advisor of IRCI in October 2017 to provide advice and support concerning the operation of IRCI.



## UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded in 1945 for the purpose of promoting international collaboration in the fields of education, science, culture, and communication. Among its activities is the adoption and implementation of the legal instruments such as international conventions. Regarding culture, there are a total of seven conventions, from the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention), which was adopted at the 17th Session of the General Conference (1972), to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which was adopted at the 33rd Session of the General Conference (2005). Among them is the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (the 2003 Convention), which was adopted in 2003, about thirty years after the ratification of the World Heritage Convention which aims to preserve and protect tangible cultural heritage.

The 2003 Convention was the outcome of discussions held at UNESCO since the 1950s for the purpose of safeguarding folklore, including oral traditions and folk arts. The Convention has four objectives: (1) to safeguard intangible cultural heritage; (2) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned; (3) to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of intangible cultural heritage; and (4) to provide for international cooperation and assistance.

Intangible cultural heritage is defined in the text of the Convention as follows: "practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage" (Article 2(1)). More specifically, they are: (1) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (2) performing arts; (3) social practices, rituals and festive events; (4) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and (5) traditional craftsmanship. States Parties to the Convention are required to draw up inventories of their own intangible cultural heritage (Article 12).

There are two organs through which decisions regarding the Convention are made. One is the General Assembly of States Parties, which meets every other year to decide strategic directions to be taken for promoting the objectives of the Convention. The other is the Intergovernmental Committee, which is made up of member states elected by the General Assembly. The Intergovernmental Committee, composed of 24 states, is held once a year and works for the concrete implementation of the Convention. Its most important roles are to deliberate on inscriptions on two lists of intangible cultural heritage and to decide on good safeguarding practices of intangible cultural heritage.

In Articles 16 and 17, the 2003 Convention requires inscriptions on two lists, namely the "Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" (Representative List) and the "List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding" (Urgent Safeguarding List). The Representative List of the 2003 Convention takes the standpoint of not placing higher value upon one intangible cultural heritage than the other. The Representative List is merely to identify the diverse intangible cultural heritage of humanity around the world, and aims to bring international awareness. In the implementation of the 2003 Convention, more emphasis is placed on the Urgent Safeguarding List than the Representative List, and in this regard, it differs from the World Heritage Convention. The 2003 Convention focuses on the practitioners' daily lives in relation to ICH, and thus encourages the participation of communities to which the practitioners belong (Article 15).

Many member states that have ratified the 2003 Convention currently suffer from poverty, low rates of literacy, a lack of experts, a lack of interest among young people, urbanisation, conflict, and war. For this reason, assistance in developing legal systems, training of human resources, financial assistance, sustainable education, and so forth are seen as necessary. As particular emphasis is placed on the Urgent Safeguarding List laid forth in Article 17, it follows that an appropriate framework for international assistance and safeguarding measures need to be developed.

IRCI has implemented research projects in close cooperation with UNESCO and other related institutions such as universities, research institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations, museums, and communities worldwide. One example is a community-led documentation of intangible cultural heritage in danger of disappearing since 2012, conducted through discussions with practitioners of arts and craftsmanship and government officials. With a focus on the process by which elements of intangible cultural heritage have become in danger of disappearing, IRCI has used a variety of methodologies to make audiovisual documentation. As a research institution, IRCI aims to share the outcomes of such research with the communities and contribute to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. This is because, as stated above, the 2003 Convention places strong emphasis on communities, in other words, people who maintain and transmit intangible cultural heritage.



# What is Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) ?

ICH is living cultural heritage. Being transformed over time, it is transmitted from generation to generation and gives us cultural identity and richness. In the text of the 2003 Convention, the following examples of ICH are provided:

## Oral Traditions and Expressions



Palak, traditional folklore music (Tajikistan)  
© Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO, 2020, with the permission of UNESCO



Tradition of Vedic chanting (India)  
© Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, India, with the permission of UNESCO

## Performing Arts



Royal ballet of Cambodia (Cambodia)  
© International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI), 2013



Ca tru singing (Viet Nam)  
© Vietnamese Institute for Musicology, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Vietnam, 2006, with the permission of UNESCO

## Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events



Mask dance of the drums from Drametse (Bhutan)  
© Institute of Language and Cultural Studies – Sentsokha Bhutan, 2007, with the permission of UNESCO



Yeondeunghoe, lantern lighting festival on Buddha's birthday (Republic of Korea) © The Cultural Heritage Administration and the Yeondeunghoe Safeguarding Association, Republic of Korea, 2018, with the permission of UNESCO

## Knowledge and Practices Concerning Nature and the Universe



Nuad Thai, traditional Thai massage (Thailand)  
© Folk Medicine and Thai Health Network Association, 2017, with the permission of UNESCO



Falconry, a living human heritage (Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, etc.)  
© National Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic for UNESCO, 2019, with the permission of UNESCO

## Traditional Craftsmanship



Tais, traditional textile (Timor-Leste)  
© Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO, 2020, with the permission of UNESCO



Traditional skills, techniques and knowledge for the conservation and transmission of wooden architecture in Japan (Japan) © Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan, 2019, with the permission of UNESCO

# Activities of IRCI

## Activity Focus and Research Projects under IRCI Medium-Term Programme FY 2022-2026

IRCI marked its 10th anniversary in 2021. From FY 2022 onwards, IRCI is going to implement a range of research activities utilising its network with researchers and institutions within and outside Japan and following the two major activity focuses as set out in the renewed medium-term programme. By implementing various research projects, IRCI will strengthen its function as a research centre for safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific region.

### Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding

Research plays an important role in promoting ICH safeguarding. The following projects are implemented in FY 2022 to instigate research for ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region.

1. Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States
2. Creation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Hub of Research for the Safeguarding of ICH

### Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies

Practical case studies that address, from a viewpoint of ICH, ongoing international issues such as the disaster, climate change adaptation, and SDGs, are conducted in collaboration with research institutes, universities, and NGOs in the Asia-Pacific region. Following projects are implemented in FY 2022.

1. Research on ICH Contributing to SDGs: Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities
2. Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management
3. Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic





## Projects in FY 2022

### Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding

#### 1. Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States (FY 2022–2024)

Research information related to ICH and its safeguarding is essential to understand the current status and challenges of ICH safeguarding. To make such information more widely available, IRCI has been collecting research information in the Asia-Pacific region since FY 2013 and making it accessible on the IRCI Research Database. From FY 2019, research information related to ICH in seven countries, mainly in Southeast Asia, was collected as part of the Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region project.

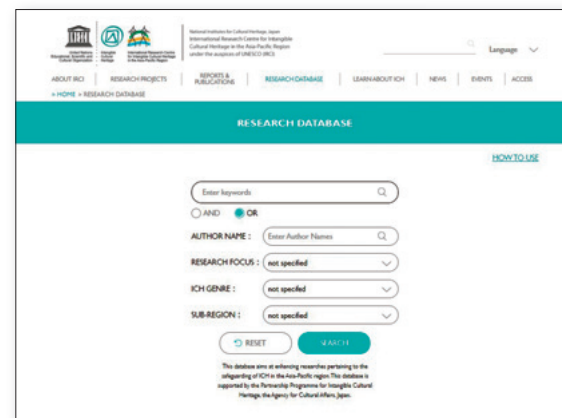
From FY 2022, research data collection will be implemented in the countries of Central Asia and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), where the current status of ICH research has not yet been fully grasped. In Central Asia, research information will be collected by partner institutions in each country by establishing a data collection network in their own countries. For SIDS, an alternative method that is appropriate for the region will be developed in consultation with experts to start collecting information in the following years. This project is expected to enhance the understanding of research trends related to ICH safeguarding in each country, while stimulating information sharing and discussions on ICH and its safeguarding within the country and the region.

#### Utilisation of IRCI Research Database

Since FY 2014, IRCI has been providing information of research on ICH and its safeguarding including publications, experts, and institutions in the Asia-Pacific region through the IRCI Research Database, aiming at effectively promoting research for safeguarding ICH in the region. As of March 2022, approximately 2,800 entries covering 48 countries have been registered, and they are now accessible online for users worldwide as the only research database focusing on ICH in the Asia-Pacific region.

The registered information, which includes considerable number of publications written in languages other than English, deals with various ICH genres such as oral traditions, performing arts, festive events, and traditional craftsmanship, and covers a wide range of research focuses such as policymaking, education, transmission, documentation, and heritage management.

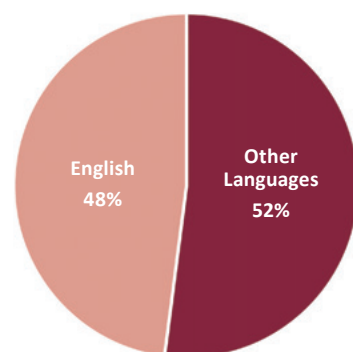
In FY 2021, the database was improved by integrating a pilot database linked to the repository of Yangon University, and its capability was improved by adding a search function by authors. IRCI continues to further enrich the content and improve its usability to provide comprehensive information not only for researchers and experts, but also for students, ICH practitioners, and local government officials.



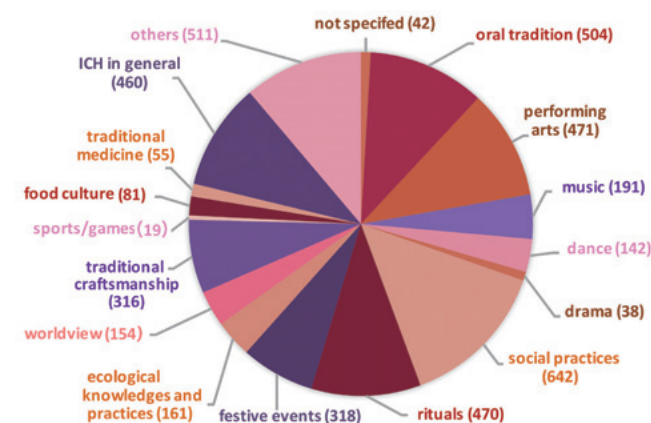
IRCI Research Database (Top page)

#### Characteristics of collected articles

Written language of collected articles



ICH Genres analysed in collected articles



### Collection and Sharing of Research Information for Safeguarding ICH

Information on available literature, researchers, research institutions, and research activities related to ICH is crucial for safeguarding ICH. However, such information is scattered across the region and countries, and thus, difficult to grasp. IRCI started collecting information on ICH research through the Mapping Project from FY 2013 to understand the state of research and to identify challenges for safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific region, while making the collected information accessible on the IRCI Research Database. In order to collect research information more systematically, IRCI launched the Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region project, in which research information was collected consecutively from FY 2019 to FY 2021 in cooperation with research institutions such as universities and NGOs in various countries, mostly in Southeast Asia.

Apart from collecting information, related activities such as meetings and workshops were also organised inviting cooperating researchers, institutions, and ICH experts, which contributed to the enhancement of sharing information on the current status and challenges of ICH research in the Asia-Pacific region.



The First Working Group Meeting (Tokyo, Japan, June 2019)



● Surveyed countries and region by FY 2018 (31 countries and a region)

★ Countries where partner institutions on "Sustainable Research Data Collection" project from FY 2019 are located (7 countries)

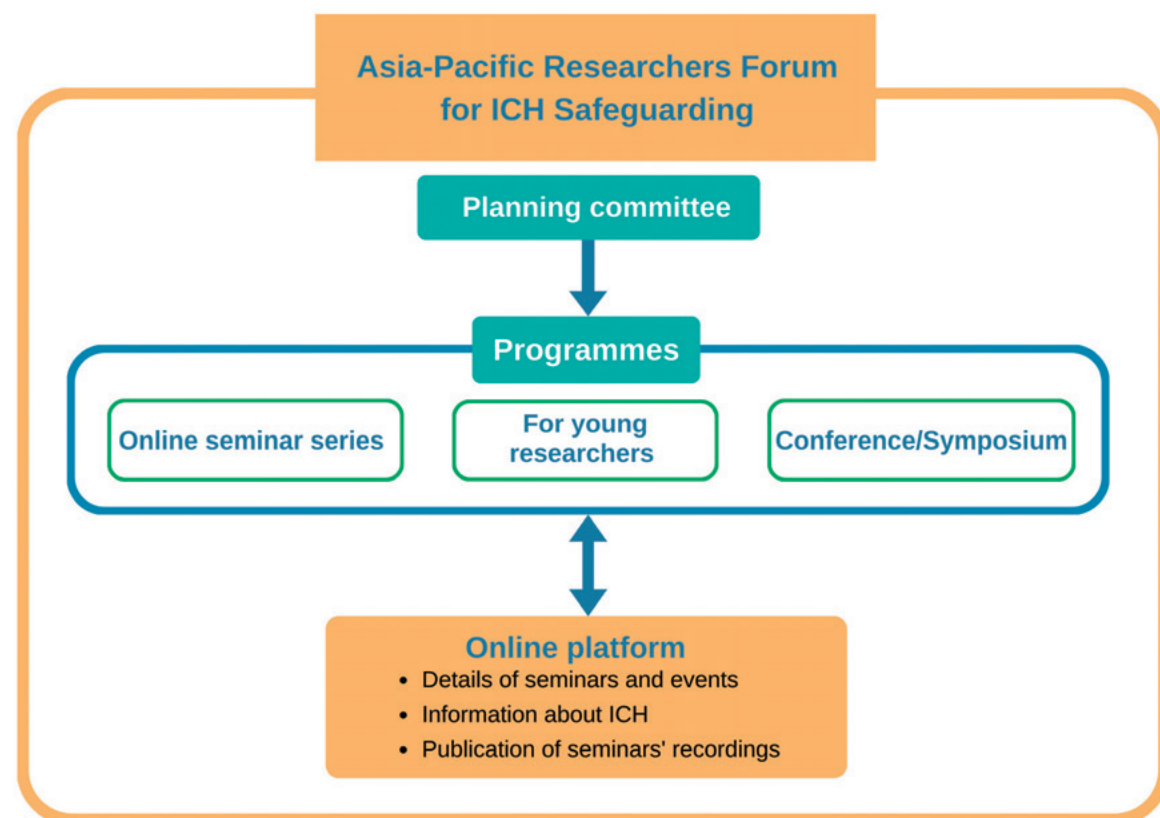
## 1. Creation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Hub of Research for the Safeguarding of ICH (FY 2022–2026)

IRCI's mission is to promote research for safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific region. Aiming to create a foundation for such research by providing a common place for academic discussions and to strengthen researchers network within the region, IRCI has organised in the past programmes such as researchers forums and expert meetings.

This project is a new framework to further enhance research activities and international collaboration among ICH researchers. By creating a new forum for promoting academic interaction and collaboration among ICH researchers and research institutions in the Asia-Pacific region and by employing the online format, various programmes including research seminars and international conferences that are open to all those who are interested in the themes are devised in this project.

In FY 2022, the first year of the project, a planning committee composed of leading researchers and representatives of research organisations in the Asia-Pacific region will be established to start developing specific programmes such as research seminars and conferences, reflecting the needs and interests shared in the region. Following the discussion among the planning committee, online seminars will be inaugurated as the first programme under the project. Inviting researchers active in the ICH field as guest lecturers, seminars will address various topics such as the challenges for ICH safeguarding and the latest trend of ICH research.

For the next fiscal year and onwards, various activities including a programme targeting young ICH researchers and a large-scale international conference will be developed.



### Related Past Projects

#### IRCI Researchers Forum

Under the Mapping Studies on the Safeguarding of ICH Project focusing on collection and analysis of research information on ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region, IRCI had held a series of expert meetings to encourage discussions among ICH researchers in the region. Building upon these discussions, IRCI started to organise the IRCI Researchers Forum on ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region biennially since FY 2017, to strengthen the network of researchers and provide a foundation for academic discussions. In the past forums, inter-disciplinary discussions were facilitated focusing on specific themes: the first forum co-organised by the National Museum of Ethnology was titled "Negotiating Intangible Cultural Heritage", and the second forum co-organised by the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties was on "Perspectives of Research for Intangible Cultural Heritage towards a Sustainable Society".

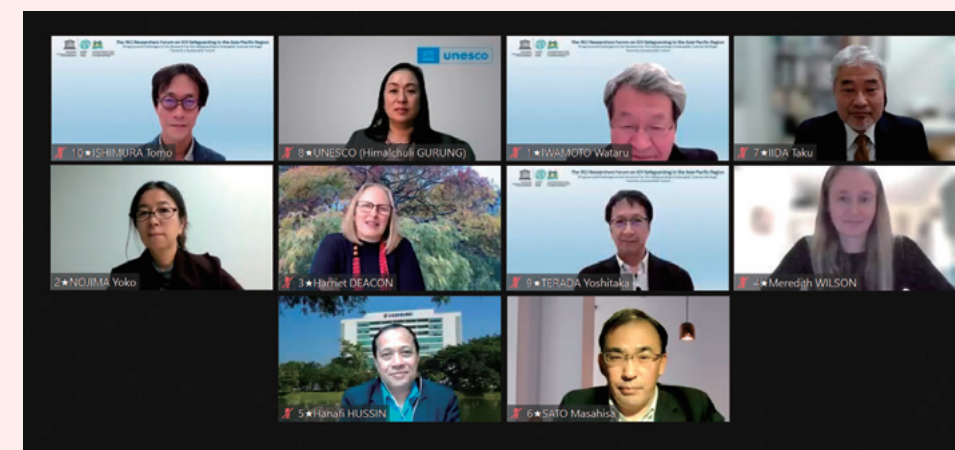


The First Researchers Forum "Negotiating Intangible Cultural Heritage" (National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan, December 2017)



The Second Researchers Forum "Perspectives of Research for Intangible Cultural Heritage –towards a Sustainable Society" (Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo, Japan, December 2019)

Marking the 10th anniversary of the establishment of IRCI, the third forum held online on 29 October 2021 was titled "Progress and Challenges in the Research for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage –Towards a Sustainable Future–". Ten experts, invited from Japan and abroad, reflecting on IRCI's research activities, deepened the discussions from various viewpoints on the progress of ICH research in the past ten years and prospects for further research in the future. The forum was open to general public, and 95 people from 21 countries participated and gave their feedback during the Q&A session.



The Third Researchers Forum "Progress and Challenges in the Research for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage –Towards a Sustainable Future–" (Online, October 2021)



## Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies

### 1. Research on ICH Contributing to SDGs: Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities (FY 2022–2024)

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations during the General Assembly in 2015, include goals 4 and 11 that explicitly mention culture. Although the target 11.4 of SDGs states that strengthening the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage leads to sustainable cities and communities, cultural heritage in this context is often regarded as tangible heritage. However, traditional knowledge and cultural practices that have been held over generations by the community also play an important role in realising sustainable cities and communities.

In this project, IRCI will implement case studies targeting cities and communities in the Asia-Pacific region that have well-known tangible cultural heritage or cultural landscape to investigate the situation of ICH in such places and how it contributes to sustainable cities and communities in cooperation with research institutions and researchers in the region. Through the process of research and workshops, issues related to the integrated safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage will be also discussed. Furthermore, Japanese cases of community development utilising ICH will be promoted to enhance such efforts.

This project is expected to raise awareness among government officials and community members of the importance of ICH in maintaining and transmitting cultural landscapes and lead to developing action plans for the communities to safeguard and utilise their cultural heritage, while advancing discussions on the integrated safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



#### Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education (FY 2018–2019)

Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goal on education (SDG 4.7) encourages the education that helps understand the contribution of cultural diversity and culture to sustainable development. This project investigated how ICH could be incorporated into education and contribute to SDG 4.7, by implementing two case studies in cooperation with cultural and educational research institutions in Viet Nam and the Philippines, focusing on formal and non-formal education respectively.

The guidelines for utilising ICH as educational tools were developed for each case and applied in actual classroom settings. The result proved that utilising ICH in education helped learners not only acquire the ICH knowledge and skills but also enhance their school performance in general. For educators and cultural practitioners, it became an opportunity to devise a new teaching methodology. It was also effective in fostering learners' pride and affection towards their community and building cooperative ties among stakeholders.



Classroom lesson: Tugging rituals and games in the experience activities class (Hanoi, Viet Nam, October 2019)



Subanen traditional song and dance in practice as a learning programme of the School of Living Traditions (SLT) (Lakewood SLT, Zamboanga del Sur, the Philippines, August 2019)

#### Related Past Projects

#### Research on ICH's Contribution to SDGs: Education and Community Development (FY 2020–2021)

Utilising ICH in education in the previous project showed the possibility that ICH plays a certain role in connecting education and the community. Accordingly, the project from FY 2020 explored its contribution to SDGs 4.7 and 11.4, focusing on the relationship among ICH, education, and community development, in cooperation with NGOs in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan.

Case studies in these countries exemplified that ICH had been appreciated and transmitted among people regardless of generation and gender, being adapted to the time. The above aspects are vital to fostering solidarity and affection towards their community, which is necessary for its development. In addition, education incorporating ICH was also effective in improving learners' non-cognitive skills such as a sense of discipline and creativity. Also, two symposia were held in January and December of 2021 in which Japanese youths, educators, a member of Junior Chamber International Japan and others, presented their case studies and shared their experiences of developing communities with ICH.



Community museum utilising yurt, a traditional nomadic housing in Kyrgyzstan ©Taalim-Forum



Traditional theatrical performing art Kethoprak in Indonesia ©DFCLC



Traditional folk song & dance Dhamail in a rural setting in Bangladesh ©DAM



## 2. Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management (FY 2020–2023)

Amid growing international concerns about the disaster risk management of cultural heritage, discussions concerning the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in emergencies have made considerable progress in the past 5 years or so. Alongside this development, from FY 2016, IRCI implemented a 3-year research project on ICH and disaster risk management in the Asia-Pacific region that is frequently exposed to various natural hazards, to explore the current situations and challenges. Building upon the recommendations that were adopted at the workshop held in December 2018 as a project outcome, the current project carries out more practical research for safeguarding ICH from disasters and mobilising ICH for disaster risk reduction.

Considering the difficulty of conducting field research due to the COVID-19, in FY 2021, IRCI conducted a desktop study for eight countries (Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, the Philippines, Vanuatu, and Viet Nam), in which potential disaster risks to ICH and aspects of ICH that are effective for the disaster risk reduction, response, and recovery were assessed for all ICH domains and typical disaster types.

Based on the results of this study, a regional workshop will be held in FY 2022 to discuss what we can do to reduce disaster risks to ICH and to utilise it for disaster risk reduction, while identifying specific issues and challenges in each country. This will be followed by field research to propose a detailed action plan.



Villagers discussing on their own ICH at a workshop (Vanuatu, 2017)

## 3. Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic (FY 2021–2023)

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect ICH in various ways. Thus, interest in understanding specific influences and emergency responses to safeguard ICH from the ongoing crisis is growing.

This project investigates the situation of practice, transmission, and safeguarding of ICH amid COVID-19 pandemic by implementing case studies in various countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Focusing on various changes that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, it will demonstrate the flexibility and adaptability of ICH and related communities, while accumulating the knowledge to make provision for future pandemics by documenting the specific details of ICH and its transition.

In FY 2021, a preparatory questionnaire survey was implemented in cooperation with research institutes and researchers from nine countries, namely, Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and Papua New Guinea to grasp the overall situation of ICH in each country in the COVID-19 pandemic and to assess reactions from related communities to the current situation.

Based on the cases identified in the questionnaire survey, field research is carried out in FY 2022 to demonstrate the adaptability of ICH and related communities to the pandemic. At the same time, the relationship between ICH and infectious disease will be explored to be prepared for future pandemics.

### Related Past Projects

Reflecting the increasing global awareness on the disaster risk management of cultural heritage, UNESCO has initiated discussions on ICH in emergencies since 2016, which led to the adoption of “Operational principles and modalities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies”. Concurrently with this trend, IRCI has conducted research projects in the Asia-Pacific region on the situation of ICH threatened by disasters triggered by natural hazards or conflicts, efforts to safeguard ICH from disasters, and the role of ICH in disaster risk management.

### Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Natural Hazards (FY 2016–2018)

During FY 2016–2017, case studies were implemented in five countries, namely, Fiji, Myanmar, the Philippines, Vanuatu, and Viet Nam in cooperation with researchers and research organisations to understand the situation of ICH in the context of natural hazards and disasters. The Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on ICH and Natural Disasters held in 2018 was an opportunity to discuss intensively the issues related to ICH and natural hazards, and the role of ICH for disaster risk reduction and management. “Statements and Recommendations for Safeguarding ICH in Disasters and Mobilising ICH for Disaster Risk Reduction”, which was the outcome of the final discussion, became the guidelines for activities that followed.



Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on ICH and Natural Disasters (Sendai, Japan, December 2018)

### Study of Emergency Protection of ICH in Conflict-Affected Countries in Asia (FY 2017–2020)

Armed conflicts destroy significant cultural heritage in the affected area. While the international frameworks for the restoration and protection of “tangible” cultural heritage damaged by conflicts have been developed, discussions have not progressed for safeguarding ICH in this context. However, the importance of ICH in the post-conflict revitalisation of people’s livelihood and communities has been gradually recognised. Against this background, IRCI has implemented this research project to safeguard ICH that was threatened by conflict in Afghanistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Timor-Leste. The project evidenced the difficulties and challenges in safeguarding ICH in conflict-affected situations. However, its activities enhanced the understanding of ICH and related research among the collaborators and fostered the knowledge among young researchers.



Field Research in Manufahi, Timor-Leste, 2017



Field Research in Marawi City, the Philippines, 2020

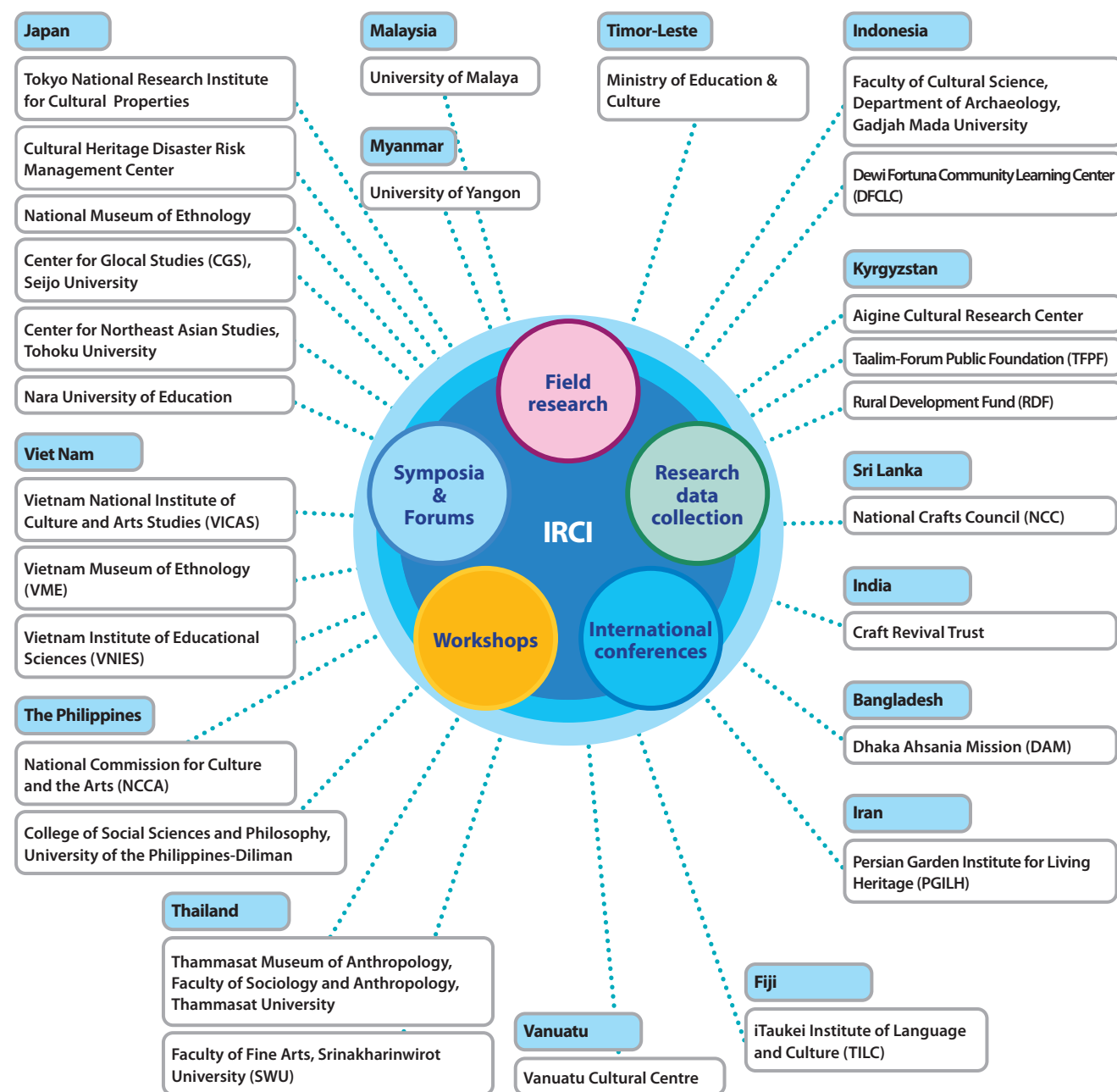


## Cooperation with Other Research Institutes

IRCI promotes research for safeguarding ICH in cooperation with research institutes, universities, museums, government agencies, and NGOs in Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. To date, IRCI has concluded memoranda of understanding with about 30 institutions to implement joint projects, such as field research, collecting information, and organising international conferences and symposia (see page 18).

IRCI has also strengthened its cooperation within the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, to which IRCI belongs. In the case of the Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management project, for instance, the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties has been working with IRCI since FY 2016 with its extensive experiences in the field of disaster risk management of ICH in Japan. Since FY 2021, the Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Center established in 2020 is also contributing to the project.

IRCI is further expanding its network and strengthening its cooperative ties with institutions within Japan and abroad to promote research for safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific region.



Research Institutes Cooperated in FY 2016-2021

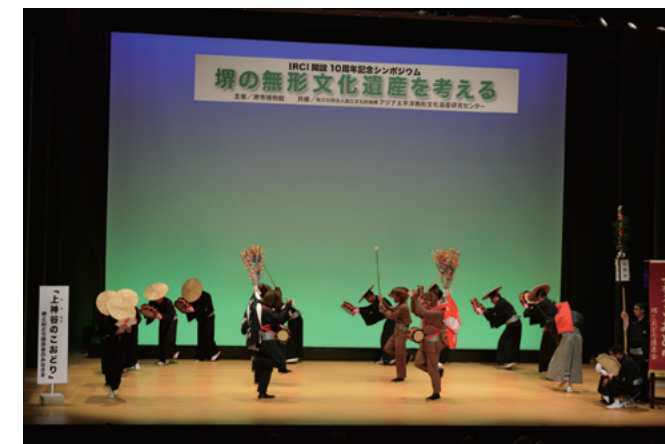
## Public Relations

IRCI releases information about its activities and ICH through various media in a comprehensible way. For example, the IRCI Brochure is published annually in Japanese and English and distributed to the UNESCO headquarters and field offices, Category 2 Centres, National Commissions for UNESCO in each country, as well as to research institutes and universities at home and abroad. The mobile-friendly IRCI website (<https://www.irci.jp/>) is regularly updated with information on the latest projects and activities. Major publications, such as project reports and proceedings, are also available in PDF format.



## Cooperation with Sakai City

IRCI cooperates with Sakai City to promote and raise awareness of ICH to the public. For instance, the Sakai City Museum, where IRCI is located, displays panels introducing ICH and IRCI's activities. IRCI also collaborates in the events and symposia organised by Sakai City for the general public to deepen their understanding of ICH.



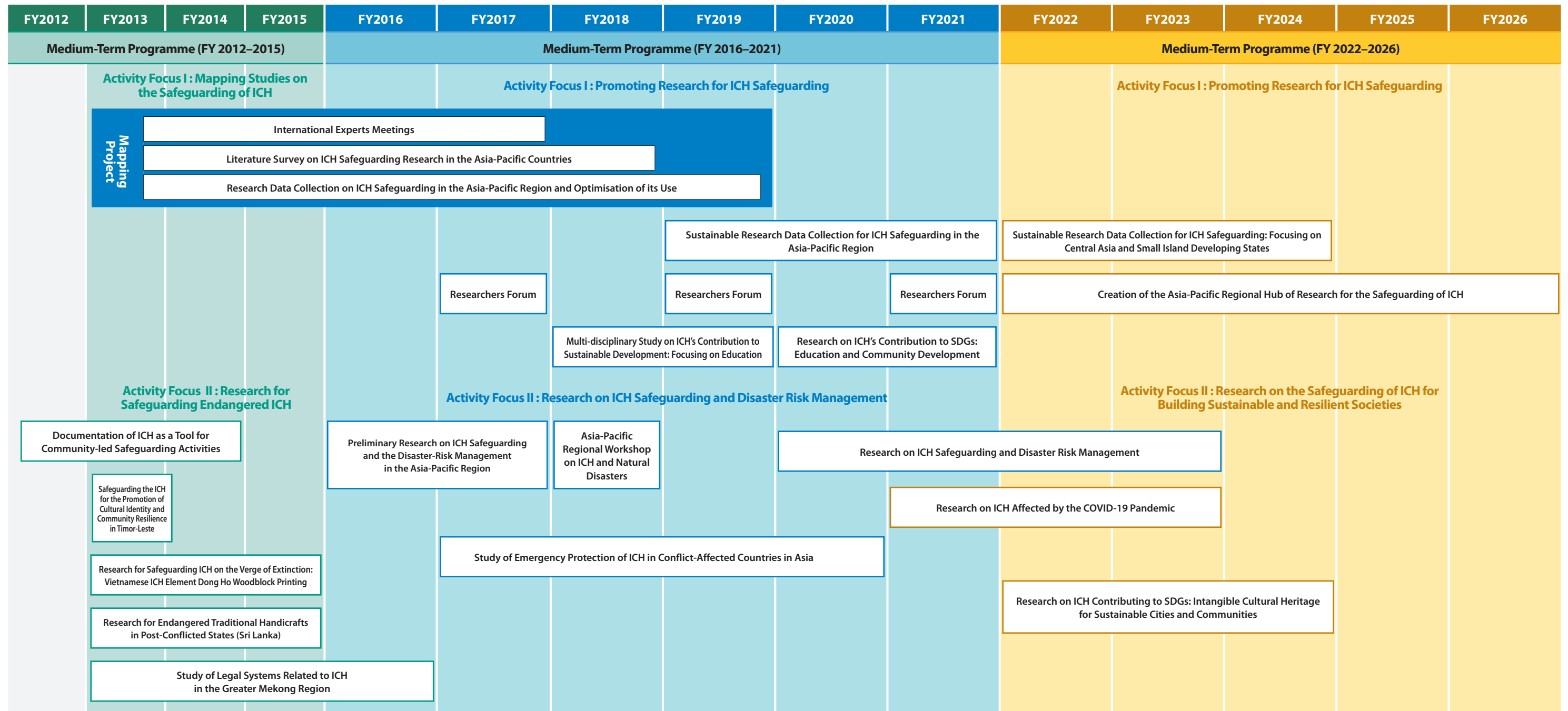
IRCI 10th anniversary symposium "Discussing the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Sakai" (Osaka, Japan, October 2021) (Picture courtesy of Sakai City Museum)



IRCI 10th anniversary symposium "Discussing the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Sakai" (Osaka, Japan, October 2021) (Picture courtesy of Sakai City Museum)



## Timeline of Research Projects



Research for Endangered Traditional Handicrafts in Post-Conflicted States (Sri Lanka). Meeting on further cooperation and sharing the final report with Hon. Minister Douglas Devananda, Ministry of Traditional Industries and Small Enterprise Development (Colombo, Sri Lanka, September 2014)



Research for Safeguarding ICH on the Verge of Extinction. A practitioner of Dong Ho Woodblock Printing in the community (Bac Ninh Province, Viet Nam, January 2015)



Documentation of ICH as a Tool for Community-led Safeguarding Activities. Presentation by a local officer of Timor-Leste in charge of culture at a workshop (Tokyo, Japan, March 2015)

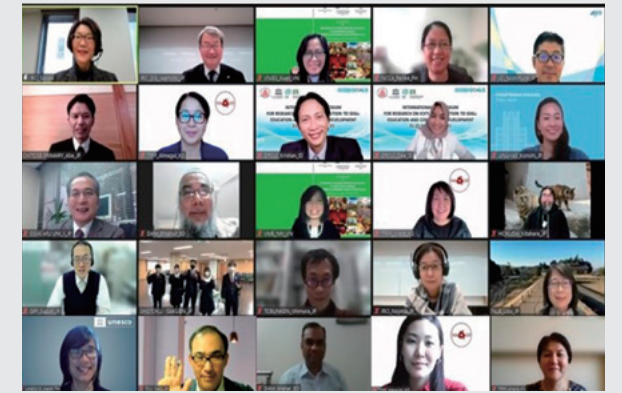


Study of Legal Systems related to ICH in the Greater Mekong Region. Discussion among experts at the final workshop (Hanoi, Viet Nam, December 2016)



## International Meetings and Workshop

Project / Theme	Year	Month	International Meeting / Workshop	Co-Organiser
Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding	2022	1	Regional Workshop "Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region"	
ICH's Contribution to SDGs: Education and Community Development	2021	12	International Symposium "ICH Contributing to Better Education and Sustainable Communities"	
	2021	1	International Symposium for Research on ICH's Contribution to SDGs: Education and Community Development	
Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education	2019	11	International Workshop for Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education	
	2019	1	IRCI's International Symposium for Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education	
Study of Emergency Protection of ICH in Conflict-Affected Countries in Asia	2018	12	IRCI Meeting for Study of Emergency Protection of ICH in Conflict-Affected Countries in Asia	
Mapping Studies on the Safeguarding of ICH	2017	7	International Symposium "Glocal Perspectives on Intangible Cultural Heritage: Local Communities, Researchers, States and UNESCO"	Center for Glocal Studies(CGS), Seijo University, Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan
	2016	11	IRCI Experts Meeting on Mapping Project for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region	
	2015	12	IRCI Experts Meeting on Mapping Project for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Countries	Aigine Cultural Research Center, Kyrgyzstan
	2015	1	International Experts Meeting of the Project "Mapping Research on the Safeguarding of ICH in the Asia-Pacific Region"	Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia
	2014	2	Preliminary Meeting of the Project "Exploring Research for the Safeguarding of ICH in the Asia-Pacific Region"	UNESCO Bangkok Office, Thailand
IRCI Researchers Forum on ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region	2021	10	The IRCI Researchers Forum "Progress and Challenges in the Research for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage – Towards a Sustainable Future –"	Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan
	2019	12	International Researchers Forum "Perspectives of Research for Intangible Cultural Heritage – towards a Sustainable Society"	Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan
	2017	11	International Symposium "Negotiating Intangible Cultural Heritage"	National Museum of Ethnology, Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan
Research on ICH Safeguarding and Natural Disasters	2018	12	Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on ICH and Natural Disasters	Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Japan
	2017	1	Preliminary Research on ICH Safeguarding and the Disaster Risk Management in the Asia-Pacific Region: International Working Group Session	
Study of Legal Systems Related to ICH in the Greater Mekong Region	2016	12	IRCI Final Workshop on the Study of Legal Systems Related to ICH in the Greater Mekong Region	
	2015	12	IRCI Second Workshop on the Study of Legal Systems Related to ICH in the Greater Mekong Region	
	2014	12	IRCI First Workshop on the Study of Legal Systems Related to ICH in Southeast Asia	Faculty of Law, Kyushu University, Japan
Research for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage on the Verge of Extinction: Vietnamese ICH Element Dong Ho Woodblock Printing	2015	1	Workshop on the Roles of the Community Centre in ICH Revitalization: A Case Study of Dong Ho Woodblock Printing	Vietnam National Institute of Culture and Arts Studies (VICAS)
Research for Endangered Traditional Handicrafts in Post-Conflict States (Sri Lanka)	2015	12	Discussion Meeting on Endangered Traditional Handicrafts in Sri Lanka	
Documentation of ICH as a Tool for Community-led Safeguarding Activities	2015	3	Intensive Working Session on ICH Documentation as a Tool for Community-led Safeguarding Activities	
	2014	2	Workshop for Community's Young Film Makers for ICH Audio-Visual Documentation	
	2013	2	Workshop on ICH Documentation as a Tool for Community Safeguarding Activities	
	2012	3	Intensive Researchers Meeting on Communities and the 2003 Convention	
Safeguarding the ICH for the Promotion of Cultural Identity and Community Resilience in Timor-Leste	2013	10	Study Tour for ICH Experts of Timor-Leste	UNESCO Jakarta Office, Indonesia
Research on the 2003 Convention	2013	1	2013 IRCI Meeting on ICH – Evaluating the Inscription Criteria for the Two Lists of UNESCO's ICH Convention	
	2012	6	The First ICH-Research Forum: The Implementation of UNESCO's 2003 Convention	Maison des Cultures du Monde (MCM), France
Current Status of ICH, in Particular, Research and Studies on ICH in Urgent Need of Safeguarding	2012	8	International Field School Alumni Seminar on Safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific	Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre (SAC), Thailand
Symposiums in Cooperation with Sakai City, Osaka, Japan	2016	11	2016 International Symposium on ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region "Transmitting Art and Spirit of ICH"	Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan Sakai City
	2013	8	International Symposium in Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH	Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan Sakai City
	2013	2	Symposium on ICH in the Asia-Pacific Region "ICH in the Asia-Pacific Region – Current Status and Important Issues"	Sakai City
	2011	10	IRCI Opening Commemorative Symposium	Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan Sakai City



International Symposium "ICH Contributing to Better Education and Sustainable Communities" (Online, December 2021)



International Workshop for Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education (Tokyo, Japan, November 2019)



Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Natural Disasters (Sendai, Japan, December 2018)



International Symposium "Negotiating Intangible Cultural Heritage" (Osaka, Japan, November 2017)



## Reports and Publications

\* Some publications are available for download on the website [https://www.irci.jp/report\\_publication/](https://www.irci.jp/report_publication/)



### Research on ICH's Contribution to SDGs: Education and Community Development: Project Report FY 2020-2021

(English, March 2022, 368 pages) ISBN-978-4-9909775-4-2 \*

This report presents the results of the project "Research on ICH's Contribution to SDGs: Education and Community Development" conducted in FY 2020-2021. It contains a summary of the international symposia held in FY 2020 and 2021 and three case study reports from collaborating organisations in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan.



### Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region: Project Report FY 2019-2021

(English, March 2022, 87 pages) ISBN-978-4-9909775-3-5 \*

This is a report of the "Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region" project conducted in FY 2019-2021. Research information related to ICH was collected in collaboration with research institutes in Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. This report summarises three years' activities, their results, and the main points of discussions that were conducted during workshops and meetings with collaborators.



### Proceedings of the IRCI Researchers Forum on ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region "Progress and Challenges in the Research for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage -Towards a Sustainable Future--"

(English, March 2022, 129 pages) ISBN-978-4-9909775-2-8 \*

This is the proceedings of the IRCI Researchers Forum "Progress and Challenges in the Research for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage-Towards a Sustainable Future--" held on 29 October 2021 to commemorate IRCI's 10th anniversary. The proceedings include the review of progress on the research for safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific region and the summary of discussions including future research perspectives and challenges.



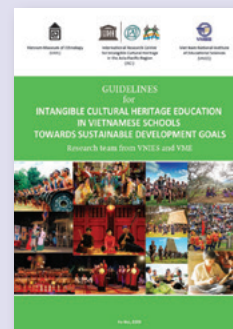
Project Report "Study of Emergency Protection of ICH in Conflict-Affected Countries in Asia" (online version) (March 2021)



Project Report "ICH's Contribution to SDGs: Education and Community Development" (online version) (February 2021) \*



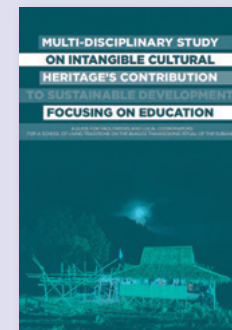
Guidelines for "Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education" for Non-formal Education in the Philippines (Subanen) (October 2020) ISBN 978-621-432-020-2 \*



Guidelines for "Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education" for Formal Education in Viet Nam (English) (July 2020) \*



Proceedings of the International Researchers Forum "Perspectives of Research for Intangible Cultural Heritage — towards a Sustainable Society" (March 2020) \*



Guidelines for "Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education" for Non-formal Education in the Philippines (English) (the first edition) (October 2019) \*



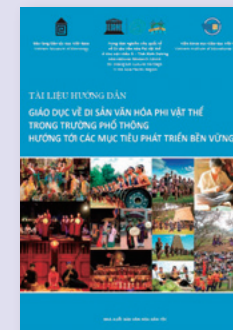
Preliminary Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management in the Asia-Pacific Region (March 2018) \*



International Symposium on ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region: Transmitting Art and Spirit of ICH (March 2017) \*



Project Report "Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education" (online version) (February 2020) \*



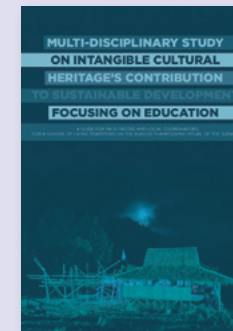
Guidelines for "Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education" for Formal Education in Viet Nam (Vietnamese) (the first edition) (July 2019) \*



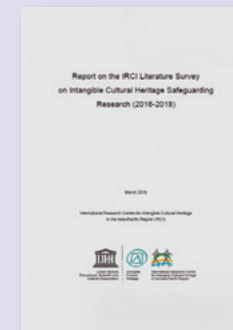
International Symposium Negotiating Intangible Cultural Heritage Report (March 2018) ISBN 978-4-9909775-0-4 \*



Research for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage on the Verge of Extinction: Vietnamese ICH Element Dong Ho Woodblock Printing (March 2017) ISBN 978-4-9906647-9-4



Guidelines for "Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education" for Non-formal Education in the Philippines (English) (the second edition) (February 2020) \*



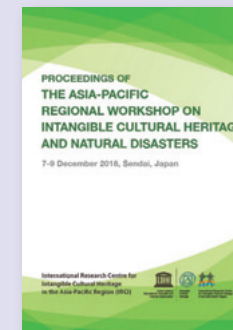
Report on the IRCI Literature Survey on Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding Research (2016-2018) (online version) (March 2019) \*



Proceedings of the International Symposium on Global Perspectives on Intangible Cultural Heritage: Local Communities, Researchers, States and UNESCO (November 2017) \*



Guidelines for "Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education" for Formal Education in Viet Nam (Vietnamese) (the second edition) (February 2020) \*



Proceedings of the Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Natural Disasters (March 2019) \*



Study of Legal Systems Related to Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Greater Mekong Region (March 2017)

- Documentation of ICH as a Tool for Community-led Safeguarding Activities (March 2016) ISBN 978-4-9906647-4-9
- Towards Safeguarding Endangered Traditional Crafts in Post-Conflict Areas of Sri Lanka (Japanese edition) (February 2016) ISBN978-4-9906647-7-0
- 2013 Study Tour Report: Toward Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage for the Promotion of Cultural Identity and Community Resilience in Timor-Leste (March 2015) ISBN 978-4-9906647-5-6 \*
- Towards Safeguarding Endangered Traditional Crafts in Post-Conflict Areas of Sri Lanka (English edition) (September 2014) ISBN 978-4-9906647-3-2
- 2013 IRCI Meeting on ICH: Evaluating the Inscription Criteria for the Two Lists of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention (Final Report) (March 2013) ISBN 978-4-9906647-1-8
- 2012 International Field School Alumni Seminar on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia Pacific (February 2013) \*
- The First ICH-Researchers Forum: "The Implementation of UNESCO's 2003 Convention" (Final Report) (September 2012) ISBN 978-4-9906647-0-1 \*
- The First Intensive Researchers Meeting on Communities and the 2003 Convention: "Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage as a Tool for Community's Safeguarding Activities" (July 2012) \*
- The Training Course for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage 2011 Final Report (2011) \*