

Work Plan for FY 2023

1. Activity Focus and the Overview of Research Projects

The Work Plan for FY 2023 is developed under the scheme of IRCI's new Medium-Term Programme (FY 2022–2026), which was approved at the 10th Governing Board Meeting of IRCI (17 November 2021).

A total of five projects are proposed for FY 2023: two projects under Activity Focus I (Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding), and three projects for Activity Focus II (Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies) (Table 1). Being at the second year of the current five-year term, major research activities are conducted in the projects that commenced in FY 2022, while some projects are at the final stage of concluding major activities (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Timeline of research projects in Medium-Term Programme 2022–2026

FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Activity Focus I. Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding				
Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States				
Creation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Hub of Research for the Safeguarding of ICH				
Activity Focus II. Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies				
Research on ICH Contributing to SDGs: Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities				
Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management (FY 2020-2023)				
Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic				

Table 1. List of research projects in FY 2023

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

Activity Focus I: Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding

Promote research for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage through conducting the following activities regarding the practices and methodologies of safeguarding, in cooperation with research institutions and researchers actively working in the field of intangible cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region:

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

(Section III (1), Medium-Term Programme (FY 2022-2026))

The Activity Focus I aims to further promote the research for safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific region.

Following the Mapping Project (FY 2013–2018) and the first cycle of the Sustainable Research Data Collection (FY 2019–2021), the second cycle of the project (FY 2022–2024) has been focusing on Central/Inner Asia and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). For both regions, major data collection is commenced in FY 2023.

Under the Creation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Hub of Research for the Safeguarding of ICH (FY 2022–2026), a programme for young researchers is implemented to encourage their active participation in the research of ICH safeguarding, while online seminars are continued. It is expected that ICH researchers' networks and interdisciplinary exchange in the Asia-Pacific region are enhanced through the implementation of these specific programmes.

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

Conduct research for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region that is in line with and contributing to ongoing international frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which are outlined in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (41C/4) and Programme and Budget (41C/5).

(Section III(2), Medium-Term Programme (FY 2022-2026))

Under the Activity Focus II, various research projects investigating specific cases of ICH contributing to sustainable and resilient societies are implemented.

Research on ICH Contributing to SDGs: Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities (FY 2022–2024) explores the contribution of ICH to the target 11.4 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through case studies focusing on the integrated management of safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Following the preliminary research undertaken in FY 2022, major field research is conducted in target communities and countries. An international symposium will be held to share the results of the case study and to discuss integrated approaches for safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage leading to sustainable community development.

Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management (FY 2020–2023) marks the final year of investigating potential risks and positive aspects of ICH in the disaster risk management (DRM) context. Based on the field research undertaken in FY 2022, a regional workshop is held to discuss specific action plans to safeguard ICH from disasters and to incorporate ICH and its safeguarding in the community's DRM strategies.

Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic (FY 2022–2023), which has been managed as an independent project after implementing a preliminary survey in FY 2021, also is at the final year of the project. A regional conference is planned to discuss the relation of ICH and epidemics, while sharing the findings of the field research undertaken in FY 2022 on ICH under COVID-19.

The international symposium, regional workshop and conference programmed under the projects in Activity Focus II are planned as onsite events, because active interaction among participants is extremely significant for discussion. However, these events may be held online or in a hybrid format, depending on the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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2. Individual Project Outlines

Activity Focus I. Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding

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

Period of implementation: FY 2022–2024

Geographic focus: Central/Inner Asia; Small Island Developing States (SIDS) within the Asia-Pacific region

Background: Since 2013, IRCI has been collecting research data on ICH in various countries in the Asia-Pacific region to map the current situation of research in this field, thereby contributing to the enhancement of research for ICH safeguarding. As of today, IRCI Research Database covers 48 countries; however, the amount and the quality of the collected information remain uneven throughout the region, and particularly the information from Central Asia and the Pacific Islands are still limited. Moreover, there are some island nations, such as Timor-Leste and the Maldives, from which research information has not been collected. In addition, despite sharing research information plays a crucial role in ICH safeguarding and for the advancement of related research, information concerning ICH research and safeguarding is not effectively shared among research institutions.

Purpose: The project aims to:

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

Progress: New cooperating institutions in Central/Inner Asia have been identified in Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. In Kyrgyzstan, the counterpart institution has been implementing the project activities since FY 2021 and undertaking the final phase of data collection activities in FY 2022. With the participation of research institutions in these countries, an online workshop is organised on 10 August 2022 to discuss suitable data collection methodology for

Central/Inner Asia and the direction of data collection activities in the following years. After the workshop, a certain number of research information is collected as a trial, while a list of bibliography on ICH is compiled in each country.

Regarding SIDS, various issues and challenges are noticed, such as limited human resources in the field of research and an imbalance of available research information by country. For identifying potential cooperating institutions, IRCI has consulted knowledgeable experts including the UNESCO office in Apia and researchers specialising in the Pacific. In order to discuss and develop an appropriate approach for collecting research information in cooperation with institutions in SIDS, an online working session is planned in December–February.

Specific activities for FY 2023: Given that the situation in Central Asia and SIDS are considerably different in terms of institutional settings and associated research programmes, specific activities undertaken in these two regions are developed separately, to maximise the effect of the project.

For Central/Inner Asia, the following activities are planned:

- 1) Major research data collection is undertaken by applying the data collection methodology developed after the online workshop in FY 2022.
- 2) Each counterpart establishes a data collection network by cooperating with research institutions in their country and conducts data collection activities with them.
- 3) A sub-regional workshop inviting counterparts and their collaborators is organised to report the result/progress of the data collection and discuss the current state of ICH research and associated challenges in each country and in Central Asia as a whole.
- 4) In the process of collecting research information, a national workshop may be organised by the counterpart, inviting its collaborators and other ICH researchers.

For SIDS, the following activities are planned:

- 1) Reflecting the result of the online working session held in FY 2022, IRCI finalises a data collection scheme suitable for SIDS in consultation with counterparts.
- 2) Each counterpart will commence data collection activities following a new scheme developed for SIDS.
- 3) IRCI may assist counterparts as necessary by maintaining close communication and locating specific reference materials.

Specific outputs: Research information collected in Central/Inner Asia and SIDS in FY 2023 is uploaded to the IRCI Research Database and becomes accessible to the public by the end of March 2024. A project report compiling the results of data collection will be published online by the end of FY 2024.

Project partners/cooperating researchers and organisations:

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

*See attached PDM (IRCI/2022/11GB/7/Annex 2a) for the detailed project design and benchmarks.

Activity Focus I. Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding**Creation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Hub of Research for the Safeguarding of ICH**

Period of implementation: FY 2022–2026

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

Geographic focus: Entire Asia-Pacific region

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

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

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

Progress: As the first step of the project implementation, IRCI established a forum named 'Asia-Pacific Research Forum for ICH Safeguarding', which serves as a platform for better communication and professional interaction between researchers, research institutions and individuals related to ICH safeguarding in the region.

The planning committee consisting of experts from Australia, Fiji, India, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, and Malaysia was organised to develop various programmes under the project, and the first committee meeting was held in July 2022. Further meetings are planned twice within FY 2022, which should finalise specific contents of online seminars and the direction of the programme for young researchers.

Online seminar series inviting researchers leading the field of ICH are to be launched later in FY 2022, as the first programme under the project.

A Facebook Group is created for effectively disseminating the information on specific programmes and calling for active participation of ICH researchers.

Specific activities for FY 2023: 1) Online seminars on ICH are continued. At least two seminars are planned, one of which may be linked to mark the 20th anniversary of the 2003 Convention.

2) A programme targeting young researchers is implemented. It aims to encourage young researchers to become more engaged in the research for safeguarding ICH by providing them opportunities for the interdisciplinary exchange and for their research to be recognised. Event styles such as online meeting sessions and paper competitions are under consideration. Specific contents of the programme are finalised in consultation with the planning committee.

3) Planning Committee Meetings are held for three times, through which plans for the following activities are developed:

- (a) an international conference/symposium to be held in FY 2024; and
- (b) online seminars to be continued in FY 2024.

Specific outputs: Seminar recordings are made available online; Conference reports/proceedings

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

*See attached PDM (IRCI/2022/11GB/7/Annex 2b) for the detailed project design and benchmarks.

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

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

Period of implementation: FY 2022–2024

Geographic focus: Entire Asia-Pacific region

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

Purpose: The project investigates the role of ICH for sustainable cities and communities, particularly focusing on the cases of the management of cultural/historical landscapes, and demonstrates how ICH could contribute to the achievement of SDG 11.4. Assuming that local communities having well-known tangible heritage such as historical architectures, cultural landscapes and World Heritage sites are more aware of the management of their heritage, the project explores various ‘intangible’ aspects that shape their heritage. The project is expected to provide some insights for elaborating the discussion on integrated approaches for safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Progress: Cambodia, Fiji, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka have been selected for case studies. IRCI has been communicating with collaborators in each country to discuss the specific research focus in the case study, including research locations, methods, and budget for research. In addition, IRCI has been studying a series of projects relating to the traditional living space and cultural landscape of Ainu people in Hokkaido as one of the cases in Japan incorporating ICH into sustainable community development.

As a kick-off event, an international symposium is to be held in late January to discuss issues related to the safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and how such approaches could contribute to SDG 11.4, while reporting the result of preliminary survey conducted in 4 countries mentioned above. Taking this opportunity, an additional closed session is planned to discuss detailed research plan to be conducted in FY 2023.

Specific activities for FY 2023: 1) Field research involving the major data collection is conducted in Cambodia, Fiji, and Malaysia, based on the plan developed by the end of FY 2022. As part of the research process, local workshops inviting related stakeholders including the community members and ICH practitioners could be programmed, to discuss specific issues and challenges associated with the management of their heritage.

2) Some cases are explored in cities/communities in Japan, where some activities or projects dealing with ICH in relation to tangible heritage are in place.

3) An international symposium is held in Japan to discuss the role of ICH in managing tangible heritage sites and cultural landscapes, with a view to contribute to the sustainable development of the communities, by sharing the results of case studies undertaken in the project. Participants are also invited from Japan to exchange ideas for utilising ICH for sustainable cities and communities.

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

Project partners/cooperating researchers and organisations:

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

*See attached PDM (IRCI/2022/11GB/7/Annex 2c) for the detailed project design and benchmarks.

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

Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management

Period of implementation: FY 2020–2023

Geographic focus: Entire Asia-Pacific region

Background: There has been a growing international awareness about the disaster risk management (DRM) of cultural heritage. In this context, UNESCO has initiated international discussions concerning the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in emergencies. Alongside this development, in FY 2016 IRCI launched a three-year research project on ICH and DRM¹, focusing on the Asia-Pacific region that is

¹<https://www.irci.jp/research/naturalhazard/preliminary2016-2017/>;<https://www.irci.jp/research/naturalhazard/workshop2018/>

frequently exposed to various natural hazards. The outcome document of this 2016-2018 project² included a series of recommendations for the safeguarding and the mobilisation of ICH in disasters. Building upon the outcomes of this previous project, IRCI started in FY 2020 the second phase of the project.

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

Progress: In FY 2021, IRCI developed the survey guidelines and the worksheet to assess the potential risks and positive aspects of ICH in the context of disasters, and the desktop study was undertaken by the collaborators in 8 countries of Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, the Philippines, Vanuatu, and Viet Nam. Based on the result of this desk study, online workshops were held on 5 August and 7 September 2022, to discuss the result of worksheets and to develop field research plans in each country. Field research is conducted by the end of FY 2022 in 7 countries* to examine the risks and effectiveness of ICH in relation to disasters at the community level. The field research encourages the collaboration between ICH and DRM researchers, so that the research leads to the development of practical action plans, including the development of DRM strategies incorporating ICH.

* Related developments in Japan in the area of ICH and DRM are shared throughout this project in cooperation with the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, and the Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Center both belonging to the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage.

Specific activities for FY 2023: Based on the results of the regional workshop and field research undertaken in FY 2022, following activities are planned.

- 1) A regional workshop is organised to be held in Japan to examine the result of the field research by inviting researchers who undertook the field research, experts in ICH and DRM fields, and UNESCO. The discussion reflecting the result of case studies should exemplify certain models for safeguarding ICH from disasters, while elucidating challenges that remain for developing DRM and ICH safeguarding strategies for the community as well as at the national and international levels.
- 2) A project report is published, which may become the compilation of research papers

² 'Statements and Recommendations for Safeguarding ICH in Disasters and Mobilising ICH for Disaster Risk Reduction'
https://www.irci.jp/jp/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/IRCI_Sendai_Recommendations_Final.pdf

reflecting the discussion at the regional workshop, contributed by collaborators and experts.

Specific outputs: Project report

Project partners/cooperating researchers and organisations:

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

*See attached PDM (IRCI/2022/11GB/7/Annex 2d) for the detailed project design and benchmarks.

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

Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic

Period of implementation: FY 2022–2023

Geographic focus: Entire Asia-Pacific region

Background: From the beginning of 2020, the worldwide spreading disease, COVID-19 has brought confusion to all human lives and continues to impact ICH in various ways. Reports and voices from researchers, local communities and practitioners of ICH stating the changes and modification on ICH during the past two and a half years due to the COVID-19 are making appearance and gaining attention. Especially, an online survey conducted by UNESCO³ has not only gathered information on the difficulties and challenges faced by ICH practitioners, but reported positive alterations and new discoveries related to ICH.⁴ Discussions on ICH and the COVID-19 have drawn attention globally, and further research is urgently needed to enhance the safeguarding of ICH especially in relation to the COVID-19.

Purpose: Taking COVID-19 as a disaster, this project investigates the impact of COVID-19 on the safeguarding, transmission, and the practice of ICH, paying attention

³ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/living-heritage-and-the-covid-19-pandemic-01179>

⁴ UNESCO has published a report providing recommendations on how to integrate ICH in post-recovery plans. https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/Living_Heritage_in_the_face_of_COVID-19_-_High_Resolution.pdf

to various changes and alterations brought about by COVID-19 that could be negative or positive. By closely documenting the ever-changing situation of ICH practice and its transmission in relation to COVID-19, this project also aims to demonstrate the flexibility and the adaptability of ICH and related communities. Following these two targets, this project tries to build up our knowledge on ICH in relation to pandemics in general, which should enable us to respond to the future pandemics.

Progress: In FY 2021, a questionnaire-based survey was conducted as part of the DRM project, to grasp the overall situation of ICH in the selected countries as well as actual voices given by ICH practitioners and communities on their experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was undertaken by collaborators in 9 countries of Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, India, Iran, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and Papua New Guinea. The survey results are under analysis, while preliminary report has been released.

Field research is being conducted in FY 2022 in the above-mentioned countries to further document the situation of cases as reported in the questionnaire.

Specific activities for FY 2023: 1) A regional conference is held in Japan to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on ICH to build an understanding of the relation of ICH and epidemics in general, while sharing the result of case studies undertaken in the project on ICH affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, inviting researchers who undertook the field research.

- 2) A project report is published, summarising the result of the field research conducted in FY 2022 and the above-mentioned regional conference.
- 3) Visual materials such as videos and photos collected during the field research in FY 2022 are edited as short movies and photo albums, to be made available on IRCI's website, to disseminate the project result to a wider audience.

Specific outputs: Project report; Visual materials for disseminating the project result

Project partners/cooperating researchers and organisations:

- Researchers and research institutions in the Asia-Pacific region

*See attached PDM (IRCI/2022/11GB/7/Annex 2e) for the detailed project design and benchmarks.

3. Cooperation with Sakai City

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

In FY 2023, IRCI will collaborate in events and seminars with Sakai City, and display panels introducing IRCI's research activities at the Sakai City Museum, while disseminating IRCI brochures and other promotional materials to the visitors.

Through these activities, IRCI aims to raise awareness among the general public of the importance of ICH, while enhancing the visibility of IRCI itself.