

IRCI 2023



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

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Centre
Under the auspices
of UNESCO



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

National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, Japan
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Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region

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Greetings

The International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI) was established in Sakai City, Osaka, in 2011 as a Category 2 Centre of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which is one of the institutions of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage (NICH) of Japan. IRCI operates as an international research hub, aiming 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 such as oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, and rituals, is also called living heritage. Transmitted from generation to generation and transformed over time, ICH nurtures cultural diversity, which is a source of innovation, creativity, and exchange. In the current world, with increased globalization, where we face the issues of maintaining cultural diversity and promoting sustainable development; the expectations for the contribution of culture to sustainable development are high. In addition, as mentioned in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the role of ICH including traditional knowledge and cultural practices held over generations by communities should be further recognized.

The Asia-Pacific region, which covers two-thirds of the world population, is the treasure house of ICH. However, this rich cultural diversity is currently endangered by various factors such as social transformation, ageing, disasters, and conflicts. Safeguarding ICH is an urgent issue, and international cooperation is crucial.

To address these concerns, IRCI, as a research hub in the field of ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region, is committed to creating a platform for ICH research and conducting various case studies on practices that address ongoing international issues, including Disaster Risk Management, SDGs, and the COVID-19 pandemic. These activities are carried out in close cooperation with UNESCO and other related organizations such as universities, research institutes, governmental and non-governmental organizations, museums, and communities worldwide.

As an international institution in Japan and the forerunner of ICH safeguarding, IRCI will continue its efforts alongside diverse actors to revitalize ICH and promote its safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region by implementing and facilitating relevant research programmes.

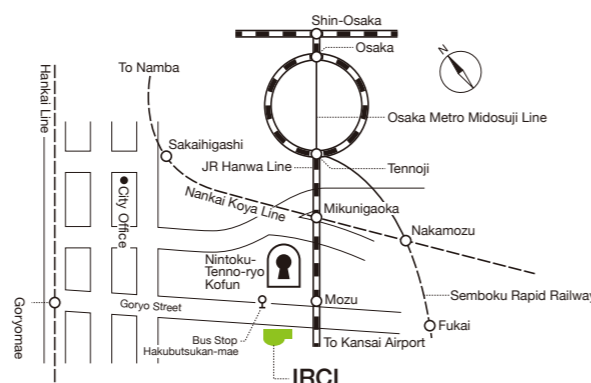
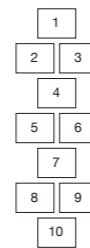
We appreciate your cooperation with the activities of IRCI.



MACHIDA Daisuke
Director-General
International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI)

Photo credits and captions on the front cover

1. Visit to cooperating institute in Almaty, Kazakhstan (March 2023)
2. Villagers discussing on their ICH (2017, Gaua, Vanuatu)
3. A process of traditional handloom weaving in the village of Bhujodi, India (@R.Sethi)
4. Rice ritual of Ifugao in the Philippines (@Save the Ifugao Terraces Movement)
5. Traditional basket weaving in Cambodia (@APSARA National Authority)
6. Traditional dance performance in New Britain, Papua New Guinea (@N.Falk-Simet)
7. Traditional patterned weaving in Kyrgyzstan (@Institute for Sustainable Development Strategy)
8. Group discussion at the workshop (December 2018, Sendai, Japan)
9. A production process of *Batik*, traditional textiles of Indonesia (@Mahirta)
10. Traditional *Baul* singers in Bangladesh (2022, Manikganj, Bangladesh)

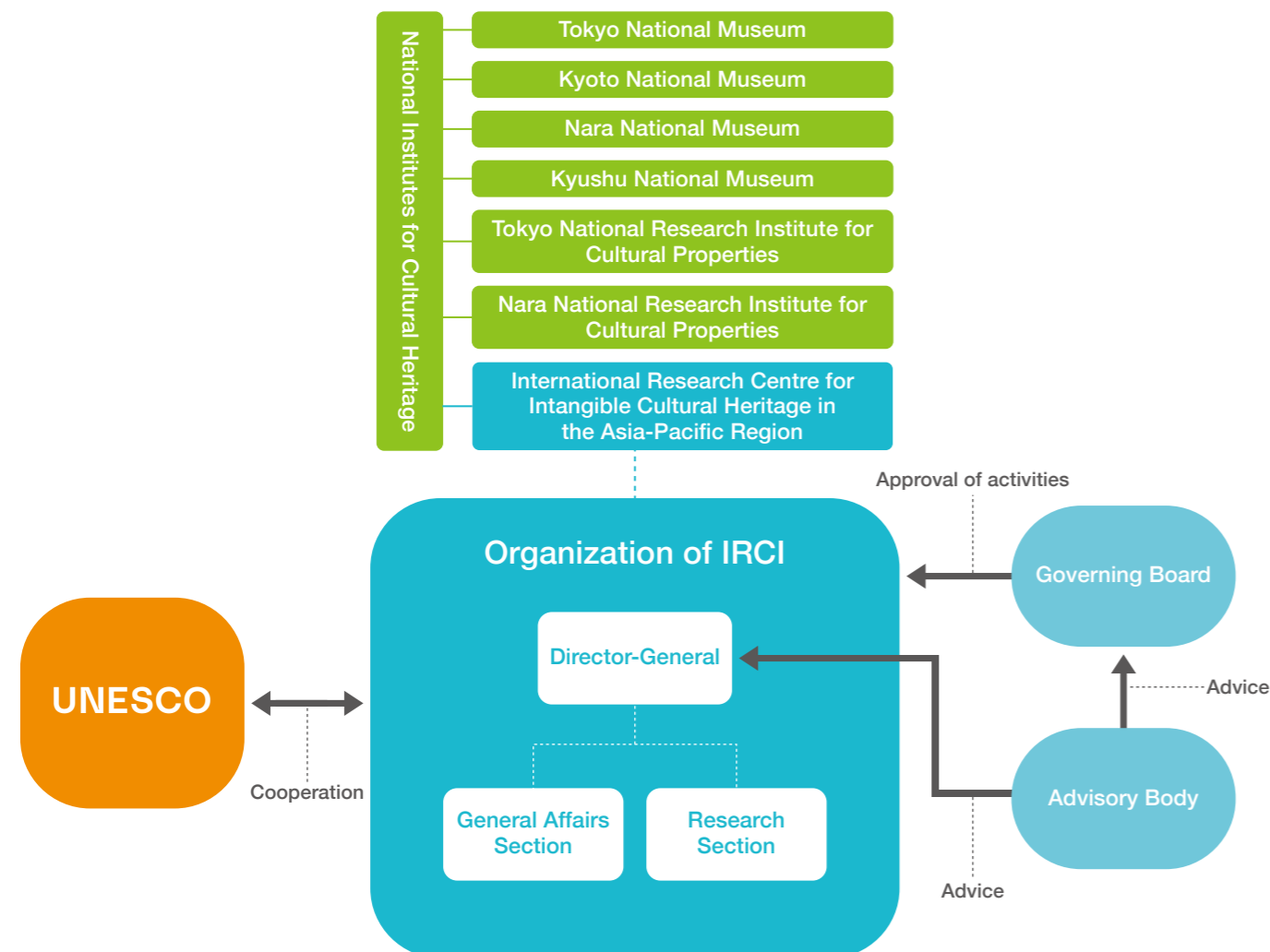


UNESCO Category 2 Centres

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 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 specialized 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 adviser 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, including 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), and 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 30 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 around 1970 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 recognize 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 the 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 the inscription 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 the Intergovernmental Committee to establish, keep up to date and publish 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 showcases the diversity of 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 intangible cultural heritage, 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, urbanization, 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 institutes, governmental and non-governmental organizations, 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

- 1 Falak, traditional folklore music (Tajikistan)**
©Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO, 2020, with the permission of UNESCO
- 2 Pantun, a form of Malay verse (Indonesia, Malaysia)**
©Policy Research Center of Education and Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia, 2017, with the permission of UNESCO



Performing Arts

- 3 Royal ballet of Cambodia (Cambodia)**
©International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI), 2013
- 4 The art of Bâi Chôi in Central Viet Nam (Viet Nam)**
©Vietnamese Institute for Musicology, 2014, with the permission of UNESCO



Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events

- 5 Kumbh Mela, pilgrimage and festival in Hinduism (India)**
©Sanjay Jagtap, India, 2015, with the permission of UNESCO
- 6 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

- 7 Nuad Thai, traditional Thai massage (Thailand)**
©Folk Medicine and Thai Health Network Association, 2017, with the permission of UNESCO
- 8 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

- 9 Tais, traditional textile (Timor-Leste)**
©Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO, 2020, with the permission of UNESCO
- 10 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



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

IRCI implements a range of research activities utilizing its network with researchers and institutions within and outside Japan, following the two major activity focuses as set out in the 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

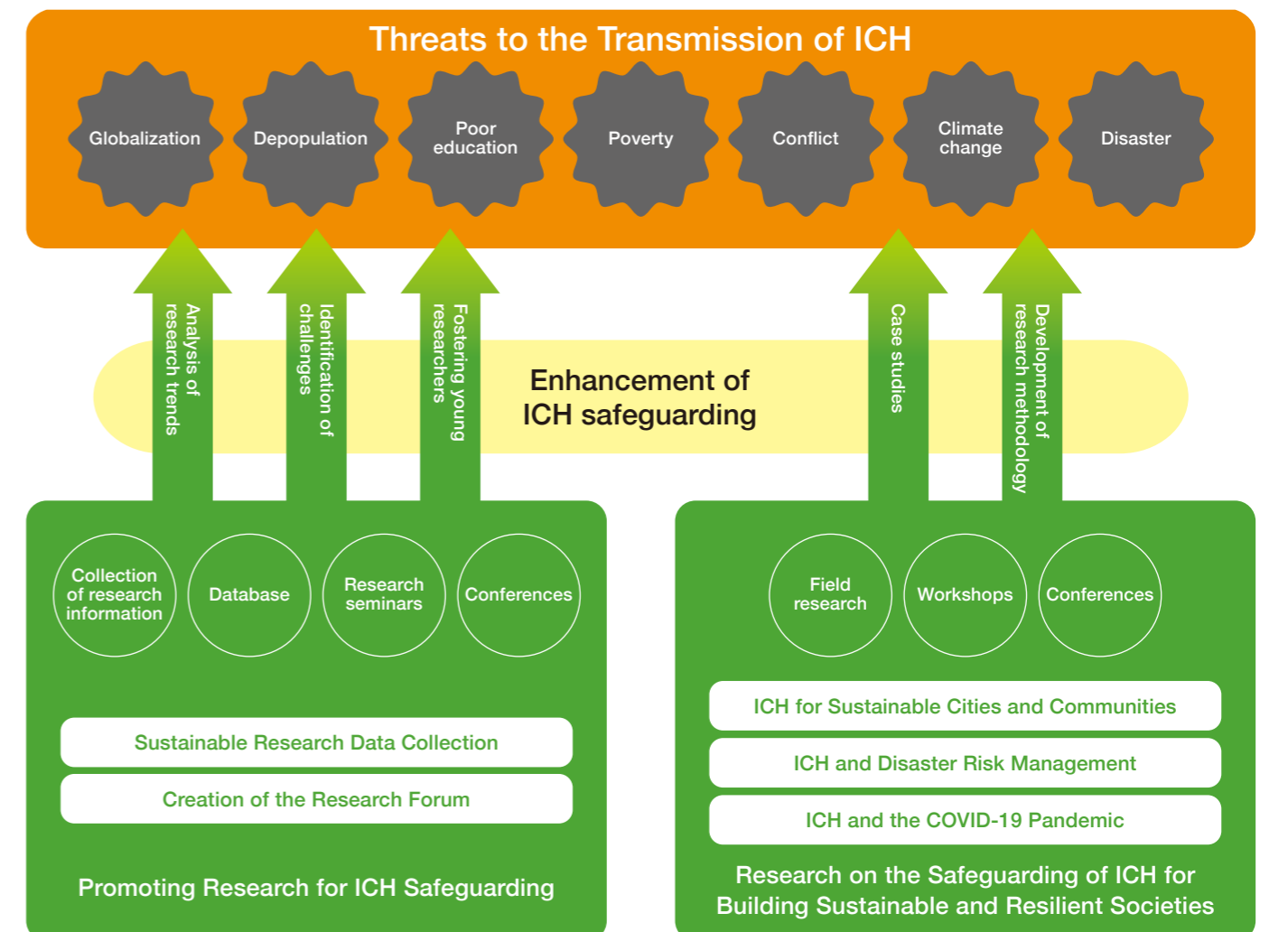
Research plays an important role in promoting ICH safeguarding. The following projects are implemented in FY 2023 to instigate research for ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region.

- 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 ongoing international issues, such as disaster risk management, climate change adaptation, and SDGs, from the perspective of ICH, are conducted in collaboration with research institutes, universities, and NGOs in the Asia-Pacific region. The following projects are implemented in FY 2023.

- 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 2023

1

Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding

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

Research information such as literature related to ICH and its safeguarding is essential for understanding the current situation and challenges of ICH safeguarding. Therefore, IRCI has been collecting research information contributing to ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region since FY 2013 and making it accessible on the IRCI Research Database. In FY 2019, IRCI launched the project “Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding” to systematically accumulate information through institutional collaboration, and data collection activities were mainly conducted in Southeast Asia. Since FY 2022, the project has shifted its regional focus to Central Asia and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), where the current situation of related research has not been fully understood, to update information on research in these regions.

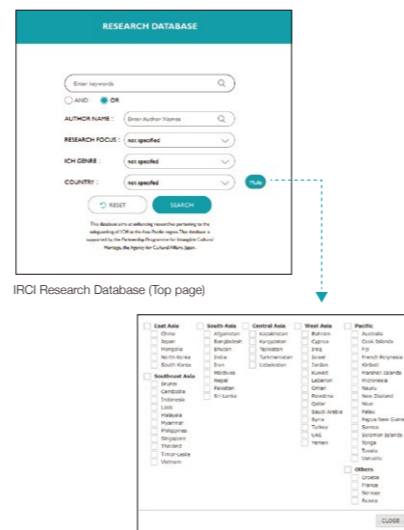
In this fiscal year, full-scale data collection activities are being undertaken in Central Asia in cooperation with partner organizations in Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, along with the collaborating institutions in their respective countries. For SIDS, IRCI has already established cooperative partnerships with institutions in Fiji, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu, and several countries including Maldives are expected to join the project this year. Considering that human resources are limited in small island countries, the institutions in SIDS will collect information to the maximum extent possible, while IRCI will continue to provide the necessary support. This project is expected to help its partners accumulate research information related to ICH safeguarding in each country and to analyze research trends, thereby stimulating discussion and research activities related to ICH safeguarding within the countries and the region.

Utilization of IRCI Research Database

Amid the growing importance of research on ICH and its safeguarding, IRCI has been providing information on publications, researchers, and institutions related to ICH and its safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region through the IRCI Research Database since FY 2014 to share research information and promote research on ICH safeguarding in the region.

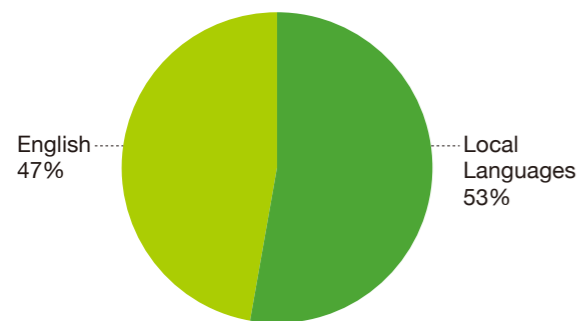
The database contains information on various ICH genres such as oral traditions, performing arts, festive events, and traditional craftsmanship, and deals with broad research fields, including documentation, policymaking, education, capacity building, and disaster prevention. As of March 2023, approximately 3,000 entries covering 48 countries had been registered. By providing English abstracts, information written in the local languages has attracted more users worldwide.

This database has been upgraded several times since its release. In FY 2022, it was further improved by the addition of a search function by country and links to detailed information on researchers and institutions. IRCI continues to refine the database by improving search functions, advancing usability, and enriching its content for all potential users, such as researchers, experts, students, ICH practitioners, and government officials.

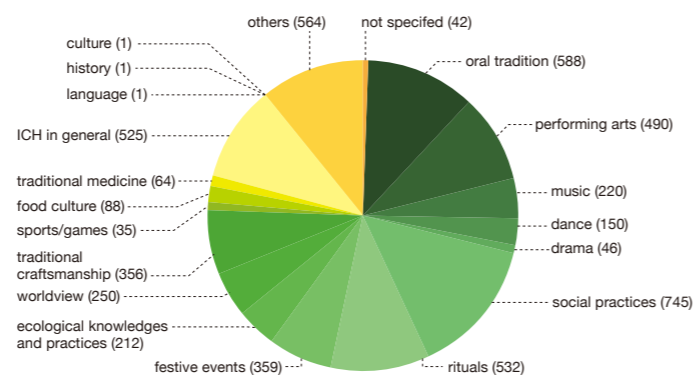


Characteristics of collected articles

● Written language of collected articles



● ICH Genres Analyzed in collected articles



Related Past Project

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.



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

Apart from collecting information, related activities such as meetings and workshops were also organized 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.



● Surveyed countries and region by FY 2018 (31 countries and a region)
 ● Countries where partner organizations on “Sustainable Research Data Collection” project from FY 2019 are located (16 countries)

Projects in FY 2023

2

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

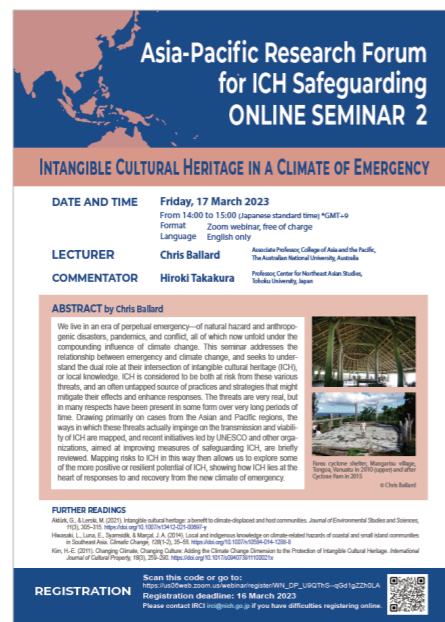
IRCI's mission is to promote research for safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific region. Aiming to strengthen researchers' regional collaborations and provide them with opportunities for interdisciplinary discussions, IRCI has carried out international conferences such as researchers forums and expert meetings.

This project is designed to stimulate research activities and international collaboration by creating and managing a new platform Asia-Pacific Research Forum for ICH Safeguarding, a common place for interaction among the researchers and research institutions involved in ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region. Employing an online format, various programmes have been implemented through this forum, such as research seminars, international conferences, and workshops for young researchers, which are open to all those interested.

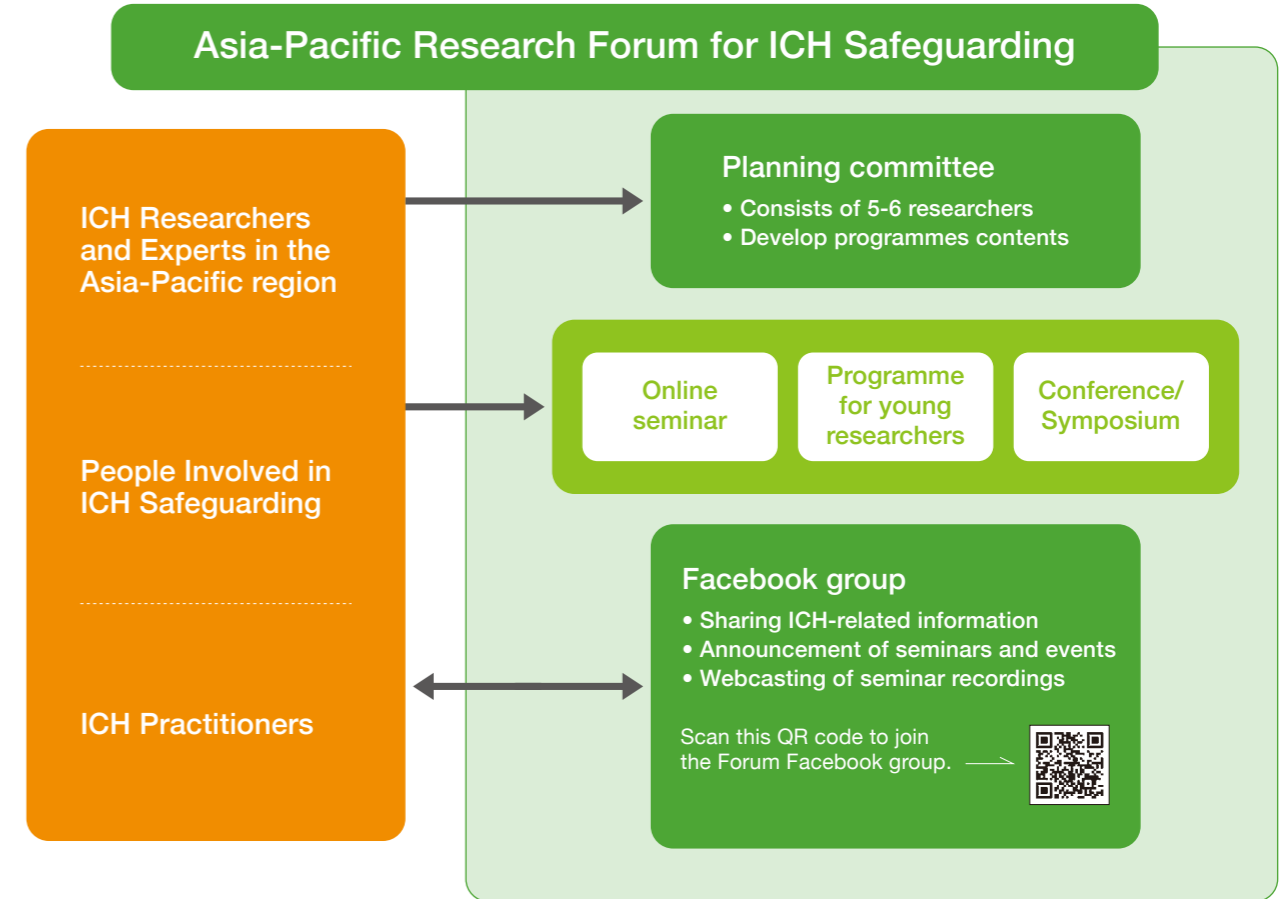
In FY 2022, a planning committee composed of leading experts in the Asia-Pacific region was established to develop programmes. Reflecting the needs and interests shared in the region, a series of online seminars were launched to explore various topics, such as the challenges in safeguarding ICH and latest trends in ICH research. Three seminars were held in FY 2022 by inviting researchers active in ICH safeguarding as guest lecturers. Online seminars will be continued in FY 2023, one of which will be dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the 2003 Convention. Furthermore, activities such as a workshop targeting young ICH researchers and an international conference are also under preparation, to be held in the coming years.



The Second Online Seminar (March 2023)



Flyers of Online Seminars



Related Past Project

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 held a series of expert meetings to encourage discussions among ICH researchers in the region. Building upon these discussions, IRCI started to organize 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-organized by the National Museum of Ethnology was titled “Negotiating Intangible Cultural Heritage”, and the second forum co-organized 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” (December 2017, National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan)

Marking the 10th anniversary of the establishment of IRCI, the third forum titled “Progress and Challenges in the Research for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage—Towards a Sustainable Future—” was held online on 29 October 2021. Reflecting on IRCI's research activities, the forum facilitated discussions from various viewpoints on the progress of ICH research in the past ten years and the prospects for further research in the future.



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

Projects in FY 2023

1

Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies
Research on ICH Contributing to SDGs: Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities (FY 2022–2024)

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted in 2015 as common goals to be achieved by international society by 2030, has now progressed halfway through the target period. IRCI has been implementing research projects on the importance of ICH in the context of the SDGs since FY 2018. From FY 2022, IRCI began to focus on SDG 11.4 aiming to strengthen the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage for sustainable cities and communities. In cooperation with institutions in Cambodia, Fiji, and Malaysia, the project has been investigating how tangible and intangible cultural heritage shapes the cultural and historical landscapes of communities and, in particular, how ICH plays a role in developing and maintaining sustainable cities and communities.

In FY 2022, preliminary research was undertaken in each country, and the results were presented at the international symposium held in Nara, Japan. During this symposium, case studies from Japan, Nepal, Philippines, Tajikistan, and Vanuatu were also shared, and views on various issues related to safeguarding, transmitting, and utilizing cultural heritage were exchanged among participants. The discussion also emphasized that tangible and intangible cultural heritage are inseparable in realizing sustainable cities and communities. Collaborators in each country will proceed to full-scale field research from this year to achieve sustainable communities by working closely with communities through activities such as local workshops.



Leather crafting in Siem Reap, Cambodia ©APSARA National Authority, 2022



Workshop for bamboo basket in Notoaika Village, Fiji ©Taukei Institute of Language & Culture, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs Culture Heritage and Arts Fiji



Preparation of food distribution at Dato Koyah Shrine by Persatuan Warisan Dato Koyah in George Town, Penang, Malaysia ©Adam Malik and George Town World Heritage Incorporated, 2022

Related Past Project

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) 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 utilizing ICH as educational tools were developed for each case and applied in actual classroom settings. The result proved that utilizing 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.



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



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

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

Utilizing 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 youth, educators, members of the Japan Junior Chamber, and others, presented their case studies and shared their experiences of developing communities with ICH.



A community museum utilizing Yurt, a traditional nomadic housing in Kyrgyzstan ©Taalim-Forum



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



Traditional theatrical performing art Kethoprak in Indonesia ©DFCLC

Projects in FY 2023

2

Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies
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 ICH in emergencies have made considerable progress in the past six years or so. Alongside this development, IRCI implemented a three-year research project from FY 2016 on ICH and disaster risk management in the Asia-Pacific region, which is frequently exposed to various natural hazards, to explore the current situation and challenges (see page 13). Building on the recommendations 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 mobilizing ICH for disaster risk reduction.

Considering the difficulty of conducting field research due to COVID-19, IRCI developed a worksheet for assessing the potential disaster risks to ICH and aspects of ICH that are effective for disaster risk reduction and recovery to be applied for all ICH domains and typical disaster types. Using this worksheet, a desk study was conducted in cooperation with researchers and institutions from eight countries (Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, Philippines, Vanuatu, and Viet Nam). In FY 2022, field research was undertaken in these countries, after discussing the results of the desk study through an online workshop. In FY 2023, the final workshop will be held in Japan to summarize all the activities and discuss what we can do to reduce disaster risks to ICH and utilize ICH for disaster risk reduction, with a view to developing practical action plans.



Villagers discussing on their ICH (2017, Gaua, Vanuatu)



Interview with local residents (2018, Ifugao, Philippines)

3

Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies
Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic (FY 2021–2023)

The global COVID-19 outbreak has affected human lifestyles in many ways. During this pandemic, many ICH elements were faced with enormous difficulties in continuing their practice as the pandemic restricted social interaction, and such emergencies caught worldwide attention. Therefore, this project was developed to investigate the practice, transmission, and safeguarding of ICH during the COVID-19 pandemic by conducting case studies in the Asia-Pacific region. It also aims to demonstrate the flexibility and adaptability deeply embedded in ICH and related communities by exploring how the practice and transmission of ICH were modified or transformed during this pandemic.

This project was conducted in cooperation with research institutions and researchers from nine countries (Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, and the Republic of Korea) in the region. First, a questionnaire survey was conducted to assess the overall situation of ICH in each country. Based on the results of this survey, field research was implemented in FY 2022 to document and follow specific cases of ICH highlighted in the questionnaire. In FY 2023, a regional conference will be held to conclude the project. Inviting cooperating researchers from each country, this conference will address the issues and challenges associated with ICH and epidemics in general, while sharing and reflecting on the results of case studies.



Interview with Baul practitioners (2022, Manikgani, Bangladesh)



Interview with a villager (Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan)
 ©Rural Development Fund)

Related Past Project

Reflecting the increasing global awareness on the disaster risk management of cultural heritage, UNESCO initiated discussions on ICH in emergencies since 2016, which led to the adoption of the “Operational principles and modalities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies”. Concurrently with this trend, IRCI 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 (December 2018, Sendai, Japan)

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



Interview with local residents (2017, Manufahi, Timor-Leste)

The Armed conflict destroys 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 revitalization of people’s livelihood and communities has been gradually recognized. Against this background, IRCI implemented this research project to safeguard ICH that was threatened by conflict in Afghanistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Timor-Leste. The project evidenced the difficulties and challenges in safeguarding ICH in conflict-affected situations. Nevertheless, its activities enhanced the understanding of ICH and related research among the collaborators and cultivated the knowledge among young researchers.

Timeline of Research Projects

	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026
	Medium-Term Programme (FY 2012–2015)				Medium-Term Programme (FY 2016–2021)						Medium-Term Programme (FY 2022–2026)				
Mapping Project	Activity Focus I Mapping Studies on the Safeguarding of ICH				Activity Focus I Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding						Activity Focus I Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding				
	International Experts Meetings														
	Literature Survey on ICH Safeguarding Research in the Asia-Pacific Countries														
	Research Data Collection on ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region and Optimisation of its Use														
					Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region						Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States				
					Researchers Forum		Researchers Forum		Researchers Forum		Creation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Hub of Research for the Safeguarding of ICH				
					Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education						Research on ICH's Contribution to SDGs: Education and Community Development				
											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				
	Activity Focus II Research for Safeguarding Endangered ICH				Activity Focus II Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management						Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management				
Documentation of ICH as a Tool for Community-led Safeguarding Activities				Preliminary Research on ICH Safeguarding and the Disaster-Risk Management in the Asia-Pacific Region		Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on ICH and Natural Disasters				Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic					
Safeguarding the ICH for the Promotion of Cultural Identity and Community Resilience in Timor-Leste															
Research for Safeguarding ICH on the Verge of Extinction: Vietnamese ICH Element Dong Ho Woodblock Printing				Study of Emergency Protection of ICH in Conflict-Affected Countries in Asia											
Research for Endangered Traditional Handicrafts in Post-Conflicted States (Sri Lanka)															
Study of Legal Systems Related to ICH in the Greater Mekong Region															



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



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



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



Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development. A workshop inviting ICH practitioners from the Subanen community (October 2019, Manila, Philippines)

International Meetings and Workshops

Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding

- February 2023“Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding” Online Working Session for SIDS
 August 2022“Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding” Online Workshop for Central Asia
 January 2022Regional Workshop “Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region”

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

- February 2023The First International Symposium of “Research on ICH Contributing to SDGs: Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities”

ICH's Contribution to SDGs: Education and Community Development

- December 2021International Symposium “ICH Contributing to Better Education and Sustainable Communities”
 January 2021International 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

- 11/2019International Workshop for Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education
 January 2019IRCI'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

- December 2018IRCI Meeting for Study of Emergency Protection of ICH in Conflict-Affected Countries in Asia

Mapping Studies on the Safeguarding of ICH

- July 2017International Symposium “Glocal Perspectives on Intangible Cultural Heritage: Local Communities, Researchers, States and UNESCO”
 Co-Organiser: Center for Glocal Studies(CGS), Seijo University, Japan/Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan
 November 2016IRCI Experts Meeting on Mapping Project for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region
 December 2015IRCI Experts Meeting on Mapping Project for ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Countries
 Co-Organiser: Aigine Cultural Research Center, Kyrgyzstan
 January 2015International Experts Meeting of the Project “Mapping Research on the Safeguarding of ICH in the Asia-Pacific Region”
 Co-Organiser: Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia
 February 2014Preliminary Meeting of the Project “Exploring Research for the Safeguarding of ICH in the Asia-Pacific Region”
 Co-Organiser: UNESCO Bangkok Office, Thailand

IRCI Researchers Forum on ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region

- October 2021The IRCI Researchers Forum “Progress and Challenges in the Research for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage – Towards a Sustainable Future –”
 Co-Organiser: Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan
 December 2019International Researchers Forum “Perspectives of Research for Intangible Cultural Heritage – towards a Sustainable Society”
 Co-Organiser: Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Japan/Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan
 November 2017International Symposium “Negotiating Intangible Cultural Heritage”
 Co-Organiser: National Museum of Ethnology, Japan/Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan

Research on ICH Safeguarding and Natural Disasters

- December 2018Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on ICH and Natural Disasters
 Co-Organiser: Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Japan
 January 2017Preliminary 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

- December 2016IRCI Final Workshop on the Study of Legal Systems Related to ICH in the Greater Mekong Region
 December 2015IRCI Second Workshop on the Study of Legal Systems Related to ICH in the Greater Mekong Region
 December 2014IRCI First Workshop on the Study of Legal Systems Related to ICH in Southeast Asia
 Co-Organiser: Faculty of Law, Kyushu University, Japan

Research for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage on the Verge of Extinction: Vietnamese ICH Element Dong Ho Woodblock Printing

- January 2015Workshop on the Roles of the Community Centre in ICH Revitalization: A Case Study of Dong Ho Woodblock Printing
 Co-Organiser: Vietnam National Institute of Culture and Arts Studies (VICAS)

Research for Endangered Traditional Handicrafts in Post-Conflict States (Sri Lanka)

- December 2015Discussion Meeting on Endangered Traditional Handicrafts in Sri Lanka

Documentation of ICH as a Tool for Community-led Safeguarding Activities

- March 2015Intensive Working Session on ICH Documentation as a Tool for Community-led Safeguarding Activities
 February 2014Workshop for Community's Young Film Makers for ICH Audio-Visual Documentation
 February 2013Workshop on ICH Documentation as a Tool for Community Safeguarding Activities
 March 2012Intensive Researchers Meeting on Communities and the 2003 Convention

Safeguarding the ICH for the Promotion of Cultural Identity and Community Resilience in Timor-Leste

- October 2013Study Tour for ICH Experts of Timor-Leste
 Co-Organiser: UNESCO Jakarta Office, Indonesia

Research on the 2003 Convention

- January 20132013 IRCI Meeting on ICH – Evaluating the Inscription Criteria for the Two Lists of UNESCO's ICH Convention
 June 2012The First ICH-Research Forum: The Implementation of UNESCO's 2003 Convention
 Co-Organiser: Maison des Cultures du Monde (MCM), France

Current Status of ICH, in Particular, Research and Studies on ICH in Urgent Need of Safeguarding

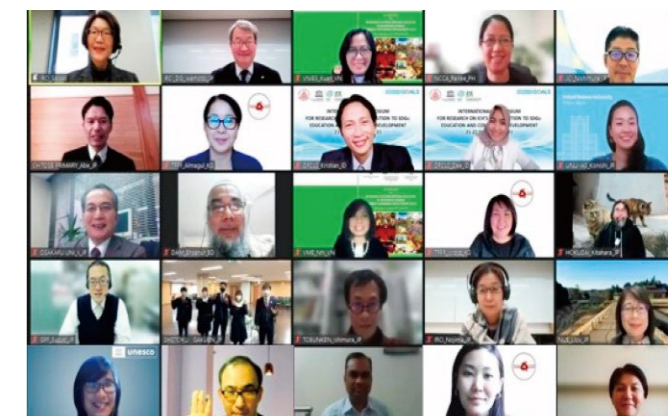
- August 2012International Field School Alumni Seminar on Safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific
 Co-Organiser: Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre (SAC), Thailand

Symposiums in Cooperation with Sakai City, Osaka, Japan

- November 20162016 International Symposium on ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region “Transmitting Art and Spirit of ICH”
 Co-Organiser: Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan/Sakai City
 August 2013International Symposium in Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH
 Co-Organiser: Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan/Sakai City
 February 2013Symposium on ICH in the Asia-Pacific Region “ICH in the Asia-Pacific Region – Current Status and Important Issues”
 Co-Organiser: Sakai City
 October 2011IRCI Opening Commemorative Symposium
 Co-Organiser: Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan/Sakai City



The First International Symposium of “Research on ICH Contributing to SDGs: Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities” (February 2023, Nara, Japan)



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



International Researchers Forum “Perspectives of Research for Intangible Cultural Heritage – towards a Sustainable Society” (December 2019, Tokyo, Japan)

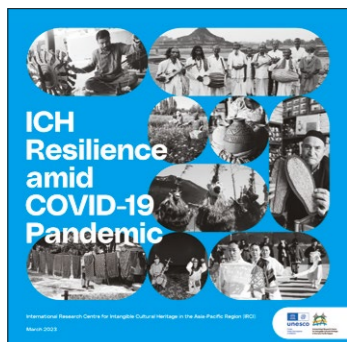


Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Natural Disasters (December 2018, Sendai, Japan)

Reports and Publications

*Some publications are available for download on the website https://www.irci.jp/report_publication/

ICH Resilience amid COVID-19 Pandemic (March 2023, 9 pages) ISBN-978-4-9909775-5-9*



This booklet introduces the results of the questionnaire survey conducted in FY 2021 under IRCI's project "Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic" (FY 2021-2023) to the general public. It describes, with visual images, major findings of the survey, including the overall situation of ICH in the Asia-Pacific region during the COVID-19 pandemic and voices from ICH practitioners and local communities.

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.

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*

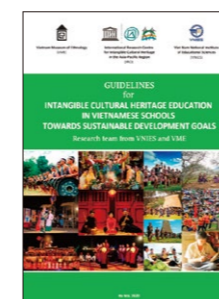


This report presents the results of the project "Research on ICH's Contribution to SDGs: Education and Community Development" conducted in FY 2020-2021. It contains a summary of the international symposia held in FY 2020 and 2021 and three case study reports from collaborating organisations in Bangladesh,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



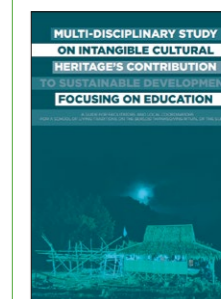
Guidelines for "Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education" for Formal Education in Viet Nam
(English) (July 2020)*



Proceedings of the International Researchers Forum "Perspectives of Research for Intangible Cultural Heritage – towards a Sustainable Society"
(English) (July 2020)*



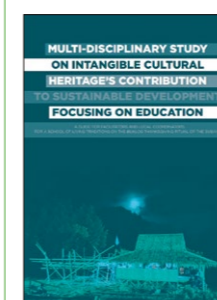
Project Report "Multidisciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education"
(online version) (February 2020)*



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



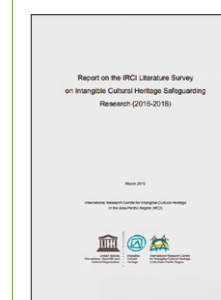
Guidelines for "Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education" for Formal Education in Viet Nam
(Vietnamese) (the second edition) (February 2020)*



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)*



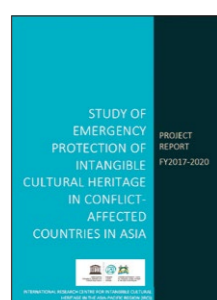
Guidelines for "Multi-disciplinary Study on ICH's Contribution to Sustainable Development: Focusing on Education" for Formal Education in Viet Nam
(Vietnamese) (the first edition) (July 2019)*



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



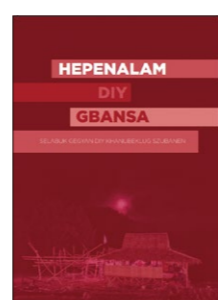
Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic: "A Preliminary Report of the Questionnaire-Based Survey Conducted in FY 2021"
(August 2022, 26 pages)*



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



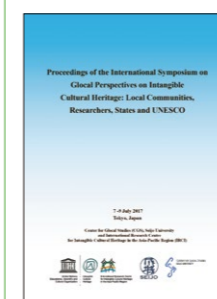
Project Report "ICH's Contribution to SDGs: Education and Community Development"
(online version) (February 2021)*



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



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



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

- Study of Legal Systems Related to Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Greater Mekong Region
(November 2017)
- International Symposium on ICH Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region: Transmitting Art and Spirit of ICH
(March 2017)*
- 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
- 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 978-4-9906647-4-9
- 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)*