

Work Plan for FY 2025

1. Activity Focus and the Overview of Research Projects

The Work Plan for FY 2025 is developed under IRCI's Medium-Term Programme (FY 2022–2026), which was approved at the 10th meeting of the Governing Board of IRCI (17 November 2021).

A total of four projects are proposed for FY 2025: two projects under Activity Focus I (Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding), and two projects for Activity Focus II (Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies). Among them, the research information collection project scheduled to be completed in FY 2024 is proposed to be extended by one year, while a new preparatory activity will

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 (FY 2022–2025*)				
Asia-Pacific Research Forum for ICH Safeguarding				
			Online seminars	
Early Career Researchers Programme		Publication		
International Conference		Publication		
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			Preliminary Research on ICH and Ecosystems	(New project on ICH contributing to SDGs related to ecosystems)
Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management (FY 2020-2023)		Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Climate Change in the Asia-Pacific Region		
Research on ICH Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic				

*Initially scheduled for implementation during FY 2022–2024

be launched to develop a new research project on ICH Contributing to SDGs (Figure 1, Table 1).

Table 1: List of research projects in FY 2025

Activity Focus I. Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding	
Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States	
Asia-Pacific Research Forum for ICH Safeguarding	
Activity Focus II. Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies	
Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Climate Change in the Asia-Pacific Region	
New Project	Preliminary Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ecosystems

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 optimizing the use and sharing of research data
- (iii) In implementing the 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))

Activity Focus I aims to further promote the research for safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific region by providing various opportunities for discussions and interactions while

collecting and disseminating information on existing research through the IRCI Research Database.¹

The 'Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States' project (FY 2022–2025) is proposed to be extended for an additional year to allow the partner organizations in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to accomplish their goals, which could not be achieved by FY 2024 as previously planned, due to insufficient human resources in these countries. In addition to the complementary collection in SIDS, a sub-regional workshop for Central Asia will be organized to discuss ICH research and perspectives for future projects in this region.

In the 'Asia-Pacific Research Forum for ICH Safeguarding' project (FY 2022–2026), ongoing programmes will be continued in consultation with the planning committee. Specifically, a collection of papers presented at the international conference held in FY 2024 will be edited to be published, while the *Publication Programme for Early Career Researchers* will also enter the publication process of their research papers. In addition, online seminars will be planned in coordination with the new preliminary research on ICH and ecosystems.

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

In the 'Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Climate Change in the Asia-Pacific Region' project (FY 2024–2026) a full-scale study based on the preliminary research will be initiated in FY 2025.

The 'Preliminary Research for Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ecosystems' (FY 2025) is programmed as a preparatory project for the establishment of a new project to follow up on the previous research on ICH Safeguarding and SDGs (FY 2018–2019, 2020–2021,

¹ <https://www.irci.jp/rdb/>

2022–2024). The preliminary research will be conducted to review existing case studies and select sites to focus on for the new project starting in FY 2026, as well as identify potential partners to collaborate with in the study of the selected sites.

APPROVED

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 2022–2025*

*A one-year extension is proposed. This is due to limited human resources in SIDS, which resulted in the partner organizations being unable to complete all planned activities within three years. The extended year is primarily for these SIDS partners to accomplish their goals set in the project.

Geographic focus: Central 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 of 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, the IRCI Research Database covers 49 countries; however, the amount and quality of the collected information remain uneven throughout the region, and particularly the information from Central Asia and the Pacific Islands is still limited. In addition, research information concerning ICH and its safeguarding is not effectively shared at regional and international levels, even though understanding existing research plays a crucial role in promoting further research for safeguarding ICH.

Purpose:

The project aims to:

- 1) compile existing information related to research for safeguarding ICH and make collected information available through the IRCI Research Database, thereby facilitating access to the latest trends and situation of ICH research in each country;
- 2) enhance capacities of research institutions in the Asia-Pacific region to accumulate and analyse existing research information relating to ICH safeguarding and to identify areas requiring further input and development for safeguarding ICH in respective countries; and
- 3) encourage information sharing related to ICH and its safeguarding among research institutions in each country and also within sub-regions and beyond, leading to the

development of further collaboration in research and active discussions on ICH safeguarding.

Progress:

Partner organizations in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) will complete the collection of research information in FY 2024 and analyse the information collected throughout the project.

Partner organizations in SIDS (Fiji, Kiribati, Maldives, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu) are collecting research information on a full scale. However, many of them have difficulties completing all the planned collections due to personnel shortages. While the partner in Papua New Guinea is expected to meet the target by FY 2024 as planned, the other partners' collections cover approximately half of the publications on their bibliographical lists, with the remaining entries to be collected in FY 2025.

Specific activities for FY 2025:

- 1) For Central Asia, an in-person sub-regional workshop is planned to be held in one of the countries that participated in the collection of research information. This workshop will bring together partner organizations from Central Asia, including the Kyrgyz counterpart from the previous project, and local resource persons to discuss regional topics and issues related to ICH research in Central Asia based on the findings and results of the project over the past three years. The workshop also aims to strengthen regional collaboration and networking for ICH research within this sub-region and beyond.
- 2) For SIDS, the following activities are planned:
 - a) The collection of research information will continue to achieve the planned number of entries, with extensive support from IRCI for accessing targeted publications.
 - b) All information collected in each country throughout the project will be analysed by the corresponding partner organization and submitted as a final report.
 - c) A sub-regional workshop inviting all partner organizations will be held at the end of the fiscal year to conclude the project and exchange ideas for future projects targeting SIDS.

Specific outputs:

- 1) The research information collected from SIDS in FY 2025 will be incorporated into the IRCI Research Database and made available to the public.
- 2) A project report that summarizes the activities and analyses the collected

information in SIDS will be published online.

Project partners/cooperating researchers, and organizations:

- Partners in Central Asia: Kazakhstan ICH National Committee; Aigine Cultural Research Center in Kyrgyzstan; Council for Cultural Heritage Networking and Communication in Mongolia; ICH Center, Research Institution of Culture and Information in Tajikistan; and Center for Promotion of Culture and Art of Uzbekistan ‘Umrboqiy Meros’
- Partners in SIDS: Department of Culture, Heritage and Arts, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Culture, Heritage and Arts in Fiji; Culture and Museum Division, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kiribati; National Center for Cultural Heritage, Maldives; Belau National Museum, Palau; Papua New Guinea National Cultural Commission; Timor-Leste National Commission for UNESCO; and Vanuatu Cultural Centre;
- Regional organizations: International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS), Pacific Community (SPC), etc.
- UNESCO offices (in Almaty, Apia, Tashkent, and Tehran)

*See attached PDM for the detailed project design and targets.

**Activity Focus I. Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding
Asia-Pacific Research Forum for ICH Safeguarding**

Period of implementation: FY 2022–2026

Geographic focus: Entire Asia-Pacific region

Background:

Research is considered one of the measures for safeguarding ICH; however, opportunities to share and learn about research findings 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.

Over the past 10-plus years, IRCI has conducted various research activities in cooperation with researchers and research institutions in the Asia-Pacific region, including universities, museums, government sections, and NGOs. IRCI has organized a series of expert meetings, researcher forums, and conferences aiming at promoting

research for safeguarding ICH. This project strengthens such efforts by developing a new common framework for active interaction among researchers and research institutions in the Asia-Pacific region.

Purpose:

The project aims to further promote research for safeguarding ICH and strengthen the network of ICH researchers by creating and managing the Asia-Pacific Research Forum for ICH Safeguarding (hereinafter referred to as 'the Forum'), a platform for active interaction among researchers and research institutions in the Asia-Pacific region. Various activities focused on ICH and its safeguarding are programmed and offered through the Forum, including research seminars, international conferences, and workshops for early career researchers.

Progress:

A planning committee consisting of ICH experts from Australia, Fiji, India, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, and Malaysia was set up in 2022 to develop various programmes and activities for the Forum.

Online Seminars for Safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific Region have been offered since FY 2022 (three seminars per fiscal year), including the special seminar dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Convention. For FY 2024, two seminars dealing with the theme of ICH and climate change are planned.

The *Publication Programme for Early Career Researchers (2024–2025)* started in October 2024, using a multi-modal format combining online and on-site workshops. The workshop participants will write a paper under the supervision of an assigned mentor and present it at the international conference organized by IRCI in February 2025. By the end of FY 2024, the participants are expected to complete a manuscript for publication in the following year. There are three online workshops in FY 2024 to learn the basics of ICH research and academic writing in English.

The Forum's first international conference entitled *New Frontiers of Research for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage* is to be held in Osaka from 13 to 15 February 2025 to discuss new approaches and methodologies in ICH research and safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. More than 20 researchers from various disciplines will present on the topics including SDGs, migration and displacement, ICH transmission and pedagogies, community empowerment and inclusivity, and new technologies. The conference aims to attract 80 to 100 participants, including online audiences.

The Facebook Group launched in FY 2022 has an increasing number of members. It continues to be used as a meeting place for researchers to interact and share

information with each other, as well as a bulletin board for IRCI to disseminate information about the Forum events.

Specific activities for FY 2025:

- 1) *Online Seminars* will be continued, and at least two seminars will be held in FY 2025.
 - a) One or two seminars may be organized in coordination with the preparatory activities for the new research project focusing on ICH and ecosystems to be developed in the following years.
 - b) More efforts will be made to disseminate the information on the seminars, using the IRCI network as well as the networks of UNESCO field offices and Category 2 Centres, in order to attract wider audiences, including Japanese researchers.
 - c) Seminar recordings will be made available on IRCI's YouTube channel.
- 2) A collection of papers presented at the international conference will be published as an edited volume (rather than as conference proceedings). In this process, peer review, revision, and proofreading will be conducted. A partnership will also be sought with a journal publisher to explore opportunities for both national and international distribution.
- 3) The *Publication Programme for Early Career Researchers* will continue as Phase 2, and the participants will go through the publication process of their research papers. The compilation of their papers will be published by March 2026 and then distributed widely.
- 4) The Planning Committee meetings will be held three times,
 - a) to discuss topics of online seminars to be continued in FY 2025;
 - b) to discuss the publication process; and
 - c) to review the activities carried out in FY 2025 and to develop the programmes for the final year of the project (FY 2026).

Specific outputs:

- 1) Audio-visual recordings of online seminars to be published on YouTube channel
- 2) An edited volume of papers presented at the international conference
- 3) A collection of papers by early career researchers

Project partners/cooperating researchers, and organizations:

Planning committee: experts from six Asia-Pacific countries mentioned above.

*The Forum welcomes the participation of anyone interested in research for safeguarding ICH.

*See attached PDM for the detailed project design and targets.

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

Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Climate Change in the Asia-Pacific Region

Period of implementation: FY 2024–2026

Geographic focus: Asia-Pacific region (with special attention to coastal and small island communities)

Background:

Climate change poses significant threats to humanity, often manifesting as extreme hazards and disasters. It disrupts ecosystems and threatens the transmission of many ICH elements deeply rooted in the local environment. Rising sea levels particularly affect small island and coastal communities, potentially forcing them to abandon culturally significant areas. While there are global efforts to address climate change, local communities must take the lead in adapting to such changes. Recent efforts have highlighted the role of ICH in disaster risk reduction (DRR); however, it is necessary to review traditional knowledge and practices to determine if they are still effective in the context of climate change.

Purpose:

Building on the insights from the IRCI project on ICH safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management and the case studies conducted in vulnerable communities in the Asia-Pacific region, the project aims to understand how ICH practices adapt to environmental changes, cooperate with the communities of the case studies in developing community-based methodologies and action plans for safeguarding ICH through the adaptation to the changing environment and ecosystem, and create guidelines for community-led ICH safeguarding and climate adaptation. Through these efforts, it will also aim to clarify the role of ICH in climate change. This project will contribute to enhancing collaboration and dialogue on ICH, climate change, and DRR by organizing seminars, expert meetings, and symposia.

Progress:

As the preparatory stage of this project, existing literature has been reviewed to gather information on ICH and climate change and to identify potential cases to be studied and potential collaborators in the following years.

In FY 2024, two online seminars are planned in conjunction with the Forum project: one inviting an expert in the field of climate change, and the other on existing case studies in the Asia-Pacific region.

An online workshop will be held towards the end of FY 2024 inviting potential collaborators for this project and experts in the field of ICH and climate change.

While collecting relevant information, IRCI has been monitoring the development of UNESCO's guidance note indicating the principles to be applied to the safeguarding of ICH. Based on the guidance note, IRCI will coordinate case studies in this project.

IRCI has been cooperating with UNESCO and other Category 2 Centres on the collection of case studies on ICH and climate actions in the Asia-Pacific region. Its researcher has also been taking the role of one of the editors for the editing volume.

Specific activities for FY 2025:

- 1) IRCI will initiate case studies involving local communities in two or three countries in the Asia-Pacific region, in cooperation with researchers in the target countries and experts active in the research on ICH and climate change. The target communities will be selected in consultation with the cooperating researchers.
 - a) Particular attention will be paid to communities in remote areas including small islands and low-lying, coastal areas as well as arid areas that are affected by the effects of ongoing climate change.
 - b) The research plan is developed by the cooperating researchers and IRCI with the assistance of experts if necessary.
 - c) IRCI may participate in the fieldwork with local researchers to monitor the implementation of case studies.
- 2) An online meeting will be held towards the end of FY 2025 to share the progress of the case studies and discuss further activities in FY 2026.

Specific outputs (by the end of FY 2026):

- 1) A project report compiling case studies carried out in the project, focusing on community-based approaches to safeguarding ICH in the context of climate change.
- 2) Guidelines for safeguarding ICH in climate emergencies or some tools that could be used for community-based efforts to safeguard ICH.

Project partners/cooperating researchers, and organizations:

- Researchers and research organizations in the Asia-Pacific region
- Experts familiar with ICH, climate change issues, and disaster risk management in the Asia-Pacific region, including UNESCO

*See attached PDM for the detailed project design and targets.

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

Preliminary Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ecosystems

Period of implementation: FY 2025

Geographic focus: Asia-Pacific region

Background:

Over the past years, IRCI has implemented projects that examine the role of ICH in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The most recent project, which ran from FY 2022 to FY 2024, dealt with SDG target 11.4 and explored integrated approaches to safeguard tangible and intangible cultural heritage by examining the role of ICH in cultural landscapes including World Heritage Sites. Typically, the project dealt with built heritage and environment such as the Angkor region in Cambodia and George Town in Malaysia, and the findings have provided insights into the interaction and synergies between tangible and intangible heritage and highlighted the importance of designing community-based management plans. Following these results, IRCI propose to broaden the scope of its project to investigate the relationship between ICH and the natural environment, as well as ICH as part of ecosystems.

Purpose:

The project aims to explore existing research related to ICH and the natural environment and develop a better understanding of the relationship between the two. The knowledge acquired in this preliminary research will form the basis for the new project on ICH and ecosystems to be initiated in the following years. Specifically, specific themes, case studies, partners, and approaches to be taken in the new project are identified in the course of this preliminary research.

Potentially, the project will provide opportunities to promote a wide range of cultural practices and knowledge related to the environment and ecosystems as ICH. As a follow-up on the current project focusing on SDG target 11.4, this project highlights the linkage between ICH and natural heritage, while the project could also contribute to other goals such as SDG 14 (life below water, particularly targets 14.2 and 14.7) and SDG 15 (life on land, particularly targets 15.1–5).

Specific activities for FY 2025:

Preliminary research will be conducted to explore the potential and the direction of the project activities.

- 1) Preliminary research will be conducted in cooperation with potential collaborators to gain a better understanding of the relationship between ICH and the natural environment, including the identification of a wide range of ICH elements (knowledge and practices) that are significant for ensuring environmental sustainability and biodiversity as well as a wide range of practices that are closely linked to nature (rituals, handicrafts, subsistence and resource management strategies, foodways, etc.).
- 2) As part of the basic information gathering, various natural heritage and environments in the Asia-Pacific region will be studied, which could include UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Geoparks, and Biosphere Reserves for possible synergies with other UNESCO frameworks.
- 3) Specific cases that are targeted for further field research (case studies) in the following years will be selected.

Specific outputs:

Detailed project plan to be implemented in the following years

Project partners/cooperating researchers, and organizations:

- Researchers and research organizations in the Asia-Pacific region
- Experts familiar with ICH and ecosystems in the Asia-Pacific region, including UNESCO

*See attached PDM for the detailed project design and targets.

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 2025, IRCI plans to collaborate with Sakai City in the following activities:

- 1) Seminar for Understanding Intangible Cultural Heritage programmed by Sakai City
IRCI has collaborated on this event since 2021, by coordinating one seminar by sending a lecturer. This cooperation will continue in FY 2025, and IRCI will send a lecturer to speak on ICH-related topics.
- 2) Panel exhibition featuring IRCI's activities
The content of the exhibition is updated annually in accordance with IRCI's latest activities.
- 3) Distribution of IRCI brochures and other promotional materials
The Sakai City Museum cooperates in distributing IRCI brochures and other materials promoting ICH to its 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.

Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States		
Period: FY 2022–2025*	IRCI’s function (Agreement Article 5.2): (a),(b),(c),(d),(f)	
*A one-year extension is proposed for the SIDS partners to accomplish their goals set in the project.		
Expected results	Research for ICH safeguarding is enhanced through sharing related research information Capacities of research institutions in the Asia-Pacific region to collect and analyse information on ICH-related research are enhanced.	
Relevance of the project in relation to UNESCO’s Strategic Objectives and Outcomes	41C/4 strategic objectives: SO3 Outcome 5 Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expression.	Related paragraphs: 53
	42C/5: Output 5.CLT4 Member States’ and communities’ capacities strengthened to identify, safeguard and promote living heritage	Related paragraphs: 05003, 05005, 05008, 05019
Current issues:	Specific project goals (How can the issues be resolved or improved?):	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Grasping the current situation and recent trends of research related to ICH is crucial for ICH safeguarding. However, research information in Central Asia and SIDS has not been well compiled or analysed despite IRCI’s earlier efforts, and access to such information is still limited. Sharing information plays an important role in enhancing research for ICH safeguarding, but the current network of research institutions is not sufficient and research information on ICH and its safeguarding is rarely shared among them. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> By the establishment of partnerships with research institutions in Central Asia and SIDS to collect research information for consecutive years, information related to ICH and ICH safeguarding is more thoroughly and systematically collected. This will provide a foundation for a better understanding of the situation of ICH safeguarding and related research in these countries. Inter-institutional as well as sub-regional networks of research institutions are established and enhanced, whereby ICH research information sharing among them is promoted. 	
Details of specific activities:		
<p><u>FY 2022</u> The current data collection scheme can be applied to Central Asia, while another scheme needs to be developed for SIDS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct data collection in Central Asia. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> IRCI selects cooperating research institutions (counterparts) in each country to build partnerships. Each counterpart undertakes small-scale data collection by applying the current scheme while identifying their collaborators. (Minor revisions might be made to the scheme to be applied to Central Asia). For SIDS, suitable strategies for data collection are considered. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consult ICH experts specializing in SIDS/Pacific countries to grasp the current situation and needs of research data collection. Identify potential counterparts in each SIDS. Organize an online working session inviting potential counterparts and gather their input to develop a new data collection scheme that is applicable to SIDS. In the countries where data collection is ongoing in FY 2021 (the Philippines, Thailand, and Kyrgyzstan*), data collection is continued following the current scheme. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Counterparts continue data collection with their collaborators. Counterparts submit a final report on the activities and results of the data collection. <p>*Kyrgyzstan belongs to Central Asia, but the data collection is already being undertaken. This helps to grasp the situation in Central Asia, prior to the implementation of a region-wide data collection.</p> The submitted research data (1b) and (3a) are uploaded to the IRCI Research Database for open access. 		
<u>FY 2023</u>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> In Central/Inner Asia, the following activities are planned: 		

- a) Data collection is undertaken on a full scale by counterparts and their collaborators.
 - b) A sub-regional workshop inviting counterparts and their collaborators is organized 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.
 - c) In the process of collecting research information, a national workshop may be organized by the counterpart, inviting its collaborators and other ICH researchers.
2. In SIDS,
 - a) Counterparts commence data collection activities following a new scheme developed for SIDS.
 - b) IRCI may assist counterparts as necessary by maintaining close communication and locating specific reference materials.
 3. Research information submitted by counterparts in Central/Inner Asia and SIDS is uploaded to the IRCI Research Database.

FY 2024

1. For Central Asia, the following activities are planned:
 - a) Full-scale research data collection is continued by applying the data collection methodology developed in FY 2022 for Central Asia, in cooperation with multiple research institutions in each country.
 - b) A sub-regional workshop inviting counterparts and their collaborators is organized to report the result of data collection activities in these three years and discuss the situation of ICH research and associated challenges in each country and in Central Asia as a whole.
 - c) In the process of collecting research information, a domestic workshop is organized by a counterpart if necessary, inviting its collaborators and ICH researchers in their country to strengthen the data collection network.
2. For SIDS, the following activities are planned:
 - a) Each counterpart continues data collection activities, following the data collection scheme developed in FY 2022 for SIDS.
 - b) A sub-regional workshop is organized to report the result of data collection activities in these three years and discuss the situation of ICH research and associated challenges in each country and in small island nations as a whole.
3. A project report compiling the results of data collection is to be published online.

FY 2025

1. For Central Asia, an in-person sub-regional workshop is planned to be held in one of the countries that participated in the collection of research information. This workshop brings together partner organizations from Central Asia, including the Kyrgyz counterpart from the previous project, and local resource persons, to discuss regional topics and issues related to ICH research in Central Asia based on the findings and results of the project over the past three years. The workshop also aims to strengthen regional collaboration and networking for ICH research within this sub-region and beyond.
2. For SIDS, the following activities are planned:
 - a) The collection of research information continues to achieve the planned number of entries, with extensive support from IRCI for accessing targeted publications.
 - b) All information collected in each country throughout the project is analysed by the corresponding partner organization and submitted as a final report.
 - c) A sub-regional workshop inviting all partner organizations is held at the end of the fiscal year to conclude the project and exchange ideas for future projects targeting SIDS.

Targets and partners for the activities:

Geographical Focus: Central Asia and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) within the Asia-Pacific

Targets: Research institutions, including national universities, museums, and archives.

Partners (specify their roles):

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

Preconditions, assumptions, or external factors affecting the project implementation:

<p>Expected outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collected information that is made accessible through the IRCI Research Database enables ICH researchers to better access the up-to-date trends and situation of ICH safeguarding in each country in the Asia-Pacific region. 2. Capacities of research institutions that participated in the project to accumulate information relating to ICH safeguarding are increased, along with their ability to identify areas of ICH research requiring further input and development for safeguarding their ICH. 3. Information sharing related to research for ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region is enhanced, leading to the development of further research programmes and active discussions in the Asia-Pacific region. 	
<p>Performance Indicators:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish cooperative partnerships with research institutions in Central Asia (a) and SIDS (b). 2. Strategies for data collection in Central Asia (a) and SIDS (b) are developed, and modified in the following years if necessary. 3. Counterparts establish and develop inter-institutional networks for data collection in Central Asia. 4. Research information related to ICH is collected from counterparts in Central Asia (a) as well as SIDS (b) and becomes accessible through the IRCI Research Database. 5. Sub-regional workshops are organized for Central Asia (a) and SIDS (b) for sharing information. 	<p>Targets (FY 2022):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (a) Establish new cooperative partnerships with research institutions in at least 3 countries in Central Asia. (b) Potential counterparts in each SIDS are identified. 2. (a) Guidelines and instructions for data collection are developed and applied in Central Asia. (b) Advice from ICH experts as well as potential counterparts in SIDS is gathered to develop a data collection strategy for SIDS. 3. Each Counterpart builds an inter-institutional network for data collection in Central Asia. 4. (a) Research information related to ICH is collected from at least 3 counterparts in Central Asia and becomes accessible through the IRCI Research Database.
<p>Targets (FY 2023):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (b) Establish cooperative partnerships with research institutions in at least 5 countries in SIDS. 2. (b) Guidelines and instructions for data collection for SIDS are developed and applied in SIDS. 4. Research data related to ICH is collected from (a) at least 3 counterparts in Central Asia, and (b) at least 5 counterparts in SIDS, and becomes accessible through the IRCI Research Database. 5. (a) A sub-regional workshop is organized for Central Asia. 	<p>Targets (FY 2024):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. (a) At least 280 pieces of research information are collected in Central Asia, and (b) at least 140 pieces are collected in SIDS, and made accessible through the IRCI Research Database. 5. Sub-regional workshops are organized for both Central Asia and SIDS.
<p>Targets (FY 2025):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. (b) At least 100 pieces are collected in SIDS and made accessible through the IRCI Research Database. 5. Sub-regional workshops are organized for both Central Asia (a) and SIDS (b). 	
<p>Specific deliverables (if applicable):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research data related to ICH and ICH safeguarding in Central Asia and SIDS (available through the IRCI Research Database) 2. Project reports that analyse the collected information and ICH research trends (online) 	<p>Distribution and beneficiaries of the deliverables, how benefits are provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collected data will be uploaded to the IRCI Research Database and become widely accessible. 2. Project reports will be distributed to UNESCO, research institutions, and major stakeholders such as counterparts, their collaborators, and resource persons.
<p>Notes: Estimated budget for FY 2025: 10,000,000 JPY</p>	

Activity focus I: Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding

Revised as of 31 October 2024
 *Revised paragraphs are highlighted.

Asia-Pacific Research Forum for ICH Safeguarding		
Period: FY 2022–2026	IRCI’s function (Agreement Article 5.2): (a),(b),(c),(d),(f)	
Expected results	Enhancing research for safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific region Expanding and strengthening the ICH researcher network within the region Fostering young researchers working in the field of ICH in the region	
Relevance of the project in relation to UNESCO’s Strategic Objectives and Outcomes	41C/4 strategic objectives: SO 3 Outcome 5 Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions	Related paragraphs: 53
	42C/5: Output 5.CL4 Member States’ and communities’ capacities strengthened to identify, safeguard and promote living heritage	Related paragraphs: 05003, 05008, 05018
Current issues: 1. 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. 2. As ICH is a new heritage concept promoted through the 2003 Convention, the number of researchers working in this field is still limited. This situation needs to be improved by encouraging young researchers (including students). 3. IRCI has collaborated with various research institutions, including museums, universities, NGOs, and government organizations in the Asia-Pacific region. Cooperative ties with such institutions and researchers should be strengthened to further promote research for safeguarding ICH in the region.	Specific project goals (How can the issues be resolved or improved?): 1. A series of activities programmed in the project provides various opportunities for discussions on ICH safeguarding and its research. 2. Conferences, forums, and seminars programmed in the project enhance the understanding of ICH and its safeguarding, and some programmes contribute to nurturing young researchers. 3. Network of researchers working in the field of ICH safeguarding and IRCI’s capacity as a hub of research for the safeguarding of ICH are strengthened, to instigate various research activities to be initiated in the Asia-Pacific region.	
Details of specific activities:		
<u>FY 2022</u> 1. Establish collaborative relationships with selected research organizations and/or researchers in the Asia-Pacific region to form a committee to plan various programmes (planning committee). a) The planning committee holds constant liaison meetings to plan and discuss specific contents of activities to be implemented within the fiscal year and in the following years. b) The members of the committee should be selected to cover various countries within the Asia-Pacific region so that regional needs and interests can be incorporated into the activity planning. 2. Launch online research seminars on ICH, inviting researchers leading the field of ICH as speakers. a) Specific themes and speakers are decided in cooperation with the collaborators mentioned above. b) Expected participants are ICH researchers, including museum staff, government officials, and students in the Asia-Pacific region. Information on seminars is widely distributed through the networks of IRCI and collaborators. Using SNS is also considered to call for participation widely. c) Online broadcasting of the content is also considered. 3. As part of the liaison meetings mentioned above 1.a), start planning an international/regional conference or symposium to be held in FY 2024 and programmes for young researchers to start in FY 2023.		
<u>FY 2023</u> 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. Planning Committee meetings are held three times, to discuss: a) an international conference/symposium to be held in FY 2024 b) a workshop targeting young researchers to be held in FY 2024; and c) online seminars to be continued in FY 2024.		

FY 2024

1. Online research seminars are continued.
2. An international conference is held in Japan for 2-3 consecutive days around the middle of the fiscal year to discuss the latest trends in ICH research in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.
 - a) The event is organized as an academic and interdisciplinary conference. Leading experts working in the ICH field will be invited to have in-depth discussions from various standpoints. Specific contents and themes are discussed by the planning committee while reflecting local needs and interests.
 - b) Open calls for session topics or presentations may be sought to expand the network of ICH researchers. An online live-streaming option may be considered.
3. A face-to-face workshop targeting young researchers is held to encourage their active involvement in the research for safeguarding ICH.
 - a) The workshop will consist of presentation, discussion, and paper writing sessions to help young researchers develop professional skills. Liaising the workshop with the international conference will be explored.
 - b) Expected participants are not limited to literal 'young' but include graduate students, early-career scholars, and individuals engaged in ICH research. Five to six participants are selected from applicants who have submitted research topics and presentation abstracts, in consideration of geographical balance.
4. Planning Committee meetings are held three times, which discuss the following:
 - a) Planning and organization of an international conference and young researchers' workshop
 - b) Online seminars to be continued in FY 2025
 - c) Review and revision of the project having in mind the development of programmes in the remaining project years.

FY 2025

1. Online research seminars are continued.
2. A collection of papers presented at the international conference and further developed by the authors is published as an edited volume, not just as proceedings.
3. A collection of papers written and developed as part of the *Publication Programme for Early career Researchers* is published.
4. The Planning Committee meetings are held three times,
 - a) to discuss topics of online seminars to be continued in FY 2025;
 - b) to discuss the publication process; and
 - c) to review the activities carried out in FY 2025 and to develop the programmes for the final year of the project (FY 2026).

Targets and partners for the activities:

Geographical Focus: entire Asia-Pacific region

Targets: ICH researchers including young researchers and university students in related fields, government officers on ICH

Partners (specify their roles):

- Selected ICH researchers/institutions in the Asia-Pacific region (as planning committee)

Preconditions, assumptions, or external factors affecting the project implementation:

Expected outcomes:

1. A strengthened network of ICH researchers in the Asia-Pacific region accommodates further research activities targeting the region/sub-region, as well as multi-national collaboration.
2. IRCI's collaborative ties within the Asia-Pacific region are strengthened by introducing an online-based platform for discussion.
3. Research for safeguarding ICH is further promoted through the active participation of young researchers.

Performance Indicators:

1. a) IRCI establishes a planning committee, which includes researchers and/or research institutions in the Asia-Pacific region, and
b) Hold liaison meetings constantly for planning various activities.
2. Total number of researchers involved in at least one of the programmed activities, and the regional coverage of researchers
3. Successfully planning and convening each activity, and the number of participants:

Targets (FY 2022):

1. a) IRCI establishes a planning committee, with at least 5 researchers and/or research institutions in the Asia-Pacific region, and
b) at least 3 liaison meetings are held.
2. Total number of researchers involved in at least one of the activities reaches 40, covering at least 8 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
3. a) At least 3 seminars are held online, each having at least 20 participants

<p>a) online seminars; b) conference/forum/symposium; c) activities for young researchers</p>	<p>b) Overall concept and outline of the conference/forum/symposium is developed. c) At least 1 activity for young researchers is programmed to be implemented in FY 2023.</p>
<p>Targets (FY 2023):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IRCI holds at least 3 committee meetings for planning project activities. 2. Total number of researchers involved in at least one of the activities reaches 60, covering at least 12 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. 3. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) At least 2 seminars are held online, each having at least 20 participants. b) The concept and specific contents of the conference/ symposium to be held in FY 2024 are elaborated. c) Specific contents of a workshop targeting young researchers are developed through planning committee meetings. 	<p>Targets (FY 2024):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IRCI holds at least 3 committee meetings for planning project activities and reviewing the implementation for the development of the project in the remaining years. 2. Total number of researchers involved in at least one of the activities reaches 80, covering at least 15 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. 3. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) At least 2 seminars are held online, each having at least 30 participants. b) At least 30 people participate in the international conference. c) At least 5 young researchers participate in the workshop.
<p>Targets (FY 2025):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IRCI holds at least 3 committee meetings to plan project activities and review the activities implemented in FY 2025. 2. The total number of researchers involved in at least one of the activities reaches 85, covering at least 18 countries in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. 3. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) At least 2 online seminars are held, each with at least 30 participants. b) A collection of papers from the international conference is published as an edited volume with ISBN and/or DOI. c) A collection of papers written by early career researchers participating in the <i>Publication Programme for Early Career Researchers</i> is published with ISBN and/or DOI. 	<p>Targets (FY 2026): TBD</p>
<p>Specific deliverables (if applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seminar recordings as audiovisual resources - An edited volume of papers presented at the international conference - A collection of papers by early career researchers 	<p>Distribution and beneficiaries of the deliverables, how benefits are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audiovisual materials are made available through IRCI's website. - Edited volumes of papers are published and widely distributed to researchers, research institutions, and UNESCO offices as well as culture sectors of the government in the Asia-Pacific region, utilizing IRCI's network.
<p>Notes: Estimated budget for FY 2025: 4,000,000 JPY</p>	

Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Climate Change in the Asia-Pacific Region		
Period: FY 2024-2026	IRCI’s function (Agreement Article 5.2): (a),(b),(c),(d)	
Expected results	Enhance communities’ capacity for safeguarding ICH against climate change, while adapting to global climate change. Enhance communities’ sustainability by mobilizing ICH for climate actions.	
Relevance of the project in relation to UNESCO’s Strategic Objectives and Outcomes	41C/4 strategic objectives: SO2 Outcome 3 Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction SO3 Outcome 5 Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions SDG 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) Cross-cutting theme: crisis preparedness and response	Related paragraphs: 25; 27 45, 46, 49, 53
	42C/5: Output 3.SC3 SIDS empowered with strengthened capacities in UNESCO -fields of expertise to better address their specific challenges Output 5.CLT3 Member States’ capacities strengthened for better preparedness, mitigation and response to emergencies affecting culture, including in situations of armed conflict and disaster Output 5.CLT4 Member States’ and communities’ capacities strengthened to identify, safeguard and promote living heritage Output 5.CLT6 Member States’ capacities strengthened to promote, monitor and measure the contribution of culture to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the local, national and regional levels Intersectoral Output 5.IP3 Member States’ capacities and awareness strengthened to protect, safeguard and promote Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and languages through inclusive policies and targeted action.	Related paragraphs: 02001, 02004, 02008, 02009, 02010, 02017–02019, 05002, 05003, 05008, 05009, 05011, 05019
Current issues:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change is affecting humanity. It is often experienced as extreme hazards causing disasters, and the transformation of the local environment and ecosystem is increasingly affecting the viability of ICH. There are various efforts to address climate change at the international and national levels; however, as specific impacts of climate change are experienced locally, developing communities’ capacity to deal with climate emergencies is important. While local/indigenous knowledge is considered important for climate change adaptation, the complexity of such knowledge is not fully understood among climate scientists. The ICH sector’s active involvement in climate actions is necessary. 	Specific project goals (How can the issues be resolved or improved?): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The nature of the impact of climate change on ICH is examined and clarified through a series of case studies. The community’s capacity for adapting to climate change is strengthened by its participation in the case study. The roles of ICH in the climate change adaptation are exemplified through case studies, and opportunities for dialogue between the ICH and climate change sectors contribute to the promotion of culture-sensitive approaches to climate change adaptation.

Details of specific activities:**FY 2024**

The project will be conducted for three years from FY 2024 to 2026, and the first year will be a preliminary phase to set up cooperative partnerships and explore the potential of the project activities.

1. Preliminary research is undertaken in cooperation with potential collaborators to understand the impact of climate change on ICH, including the identification of ICH elements (knowledge and practices) that are closely linked to the environment and climate.
 - a) Collaborators, partners, and resources are explored through a desk study of existing case studies, including the materials produced by the UNESCO Living Heritage Entity, LiNKS programme, etc.
 - b) Online hearings and consultations are carried out with potential collaborators and partners to understand the current situation of ICH in relation to climate change.
 - c) As part of the above 1.b), opportunities to hear from the experts could be organized as 'online seminars' that are open to any interested individuals and organizations working in related fields.
2. Specific cases that are targeted for further field research in the following years are selected from the Asia-Pacific region (three to four cases).
 - a) Small island and coastal communities as well as remote and marginalized communities are prioritized as the scope of the case study under the project.
 - b) The case study to be conducted in the following years aims to enhance the capacity of the community to adapt to climate change while safeguarding their ICH in the context of changing environmental settings.
 - c) Depending on the availability of the budget, IRCI may visit a few target countries to discuss and prepare better for the field research in the next fiscal year.
3. An inception workshop/symposium is organized to explore the potential of the project, through sharing information concerning ICH in the context of climate change.
 - a) Some climate change specialists are invited to create an opportunity for dialogue with ICH researchers/specialists.
 - b) The format of the event will depend on the availability of the project budget, but a hybrid format combining online and on-site participation is considered feasible.

FY 2025

1. Case studies are initiated in selected two or three countries in the Asia-Pacific region, in cooperation with researchers in the target countries and experts active in the research on ICH and climate change.
 - a) Particular attention is paid to communities in remote areas including small islands and low-lying, coastal areas as well as arid areas that are affected by the effects of ongoing climate change.
 - b) The research plan is developed by the cooperating researchers and IRCI with the assistance of experts if necessary.
 - c) IRCI staff may join the fieldwork with the cooperating researchers to monitor the implementation of the case studies.
2. Towards the end of the fiscal year, an online meeting is held to share the findings of the case studies in each country among cooperating researchers and discuss further activities in FY 2026.

*Details of activities in FY 2026 are determined in the following year.

FY 2026

Supplementary research may be conducted.

A final workshop is held to summarize the project. A project report will be published compiling the results of the case studies.

Targets and partners for the activities:**Geographical Focus:**

- Asia-Pacific region

Targets:

- Researchers in ICH, climate change, and DRM fields, governmental and non-governmental institutions
- Indigenous communities and communities in remote areas, with special attention to coastal and small island communities
- ICH practitioners and communities whose ICH is affected by climate change

Partners (specify their roles):

- Researchers and research organizations in the Asia-Pacific region
- Experts familiar with ICH, climate change issues, and disaster risk management in the Asia-Pacific region, including UNESCO

Preconditions, assumptions, or external factors affecting the project implementation:

Efforts will be made to include a wide range of case studies in consideration of different environmental settings and climate change situations; however, the selection of countries targeted in the project may be affected and limited by the availability and capacity of potential counterpart organizations.

<p>Expected outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The community's capacity for safeguarding ICH in climate emergencies is enhanced through the project, which may also encourage policies at the local and national levels to acknowledge the significance of community-based actions. 2. Awareness is raised among the communities, governments, and climate change scientists/activists on the importance of ICH in climate change adaptation. 3. Enhanced dialogue between ICH and climate change leads to a better understanding of local/indigenous knowledge as ICH and the development of models for climate actions that incorporate the roles of ICH. 4. Further research and activities focusing on ICH and climate change are promoted. 	
<p>Performance Indicators:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number and the range of case studies carried out under the project 2. Monitoring of the implementation of activities as programmed in the annual work plan 3. Involvement of climate change and DRM specialists in the project activities 4. Publication of project results and outcomes 	<p>Targets (FY 2024):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 3 countries are selected for case studies in the following years, and counterparts are identified for each country. 2. a) At least 2 online public seminars that address ICH and climate change are planned and held. b) An inception workshop/symposium is held, inviting at least 5 presenters addressing aspects of ICH in climate emergencies in the Asia-Pacific region. 3. At least 2 climate change/DRM specialists participate in one of the project activities.
<p>Targets (FY 2025):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Case studies are initiated in at least 2 selected countries. 2. a) IRCI members will join the field research when possible. b) An online meeting is held to share the progress of research activities implemented in FY 2025. 3. At least 1 climate change specialist joins the project to provide guidance on the case studies. 	<p>Targets (FY 2026): TBD</p>
<p>Specific deliverables (if applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A project report, including a collection of case studies - Guidelines or tools for safeguarding ICH in climate emergencies 	<p>Distribution and beneficiaries of the deliverables, how benefits are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A project report is made available online. - Printed copies are distributed to ICH institutions in the Asia-Pacific Region, UNESCO, and Category 2 Centres
<p>Notes: Estimated budget for FY 2025: 4,000,000 JPY</p>	

Preliminary Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ecosystems	
Period: FY 2025	IRCI's function (Agreement Article 5.2): (a),(b),(c),(d)
Expected results	Preparing for research on the roles of ICH for ecosystems conservation and environmental sustainability
Relevance of the project in relation to UNESCO's Strategic Objectives and Outcomes	41C/4 strategic objectives: SO2 Outcome 3 Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water and ocean management and disaster risk reduction SO3 Outcome 5 Enhance the protection and promotion of the diversity of heritage and cultural expressions Related paragraphs: 14, 45, 46, 49, 50
	42C/5: Output 5.CL4 Member States' and communities' capacities strengthened to identify, safeguard and promote living heritage Output 5.CL6 Member States' capacities strengthened to promote, monitor and measure the contribution of culture to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the local, national and regional levels Intersectoral Output 5.IP3 Member States' capacities and awareness strengthened to protect, safeguard and promote Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and languages through inclusive policies and targeted action. Related paragraphs: 02004, 02010, 02012, 05003, 05005, 05007-05010, 05013, 05019
Current issues: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable management of natural resources and environment is a key to sustainable development (SDGs 14 and 15), but in reality, natural resource depletion and environmental degradation are major threats to our society. Traditional ecological knowledge developed by local communities offers valuable insight for sustainable environmental management but is often underutilized. IRCI's previous project focusing on SDG 11.4 emphasized the integrated safeguarding of tangible and intangible heritage. However, major cases explored in the project dealt with built cultural heritage, and linkage between ICH and the world's natural heritage is yet to be addressed. 	Specific project goals (How can the issues be resolved or improved?): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Basic understanding of the relationship between ICH and the natural environment as well as ICH as part of ecosystems is gained to develop and implement a new project. Possibilities of mobilizing ICH for sustainable environmental management is considered, which could become a focus of case studies. A detailed work plan for the new project focusing on ICH and ecosystems in the context of SDG 11.4 is developed to further advocate the role of ICH for sustainable development.
Details of specific activities: Preliminary research is conducted to explore the potential and the direction of the project to be implemented in the following years. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Preliminary research is conducted in cooperation with potential collaborators to gain a better understanding of the relationship between ICH and the natural environment, including the identification of a wide range of ICH elements (knowledge and practices) that are significant for ensuring environmental sustainability and biodiversity as well as a wide range of practices that are closely linked to nature (rituals, handicrafts, subsistence and resource management strategies, foodways, etc.). As part of the basic information gathering, various natural heritage and environmental sites in the Asia-Pacific region are studied, which could include UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Geoparks, and Biosphere Reserves, to seek possible synergies with other UNESCO frameworks. Specific cases that are targeted for further field research (case studies) in the following years are selected, along with the identification of project partners/collaborators. 	
Targets and partners for the activities: <u>Geographical Focus:</u> - Asia-Pacific region <u>Targets:</u>	

- Researchers in ICH, ecology, and environmental studies; governmental and non-governmental institutions
 - Indigenous communities and ICH practitioners
- Partners (specify their roles):**
- Experts familiar with ICH, ecology, and environmental studies in the Asia-Pacific region, including UNESCO

Preconditions, assumptions, or external factors affecting the project implementation:

Efforts will be made to include a wide range of ecosystems and ICH cases; however, the selection of countries and locations studied in the project may be affected and limited by various factors such as the availability and capacity of potential partner organizations.

Expected outcomes:

1. The relationship between ICH and the natural environment is explored and better understood, and various natural heritage and environment sites in the Asia-Pacific region are studied.
2. The findings of the preliminary research are used to select specific cases and make detailed plans for field research in the subsequent new project.

Performance Indicators:

1. Identification of cases and collaborators for field research (case studies) in the following years.
2. Detailed project design is developed.

Targets:

1. At least 3 case studies along with respective collaborators are selected for further research in the following years.
2. Detailed project design for a new project on ICH and ecosystems is developed.

Specific deliverables (if applicable):

- Detailed project plan for the new project on ICH and ecosystems

Distribution and beneficiaries of the deliverables, how benefits are provided:

Notes:

Estimated budget for FY 2025: 1,000,000 JPY