

Project for Strengthening National Capacities for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development in Bangladesh

2016 – 2018

Project Background

Intangible cultural heritage is our living heritage which is continuously recreated and which evolves as we adapt our practices and traditions in response to our environment. It provides a sense of identity and belonging in relation to our own cultures. Therefore the General Conference of UNESCO adopted in 2003, at its 32nd session, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The adoption of the Convention became a milestone in the evolution of international policies for promoting cultural diversity, since for the first time the international community and state parties had recognized the need to support the kind of cultural manifestations and expressions that until then had not benefited from such a large legal and programmatic framework.

The ratification in 2009 by Bangladesh of the 2003 Convention and three elements on the Representative List of ICH of Humanity demonstrated its commitment to the living heritage of Bangladesh. But ratification of the Convention does not automatically ensure that the living heritage remains viable and all stakeholders are involved or that the mechanisms of the Convention are fully understood by all concerned. Therefore, building on previous efforts, and recognizing the need for capacity building on the 2003 Convention as well as an integrated effort in the identification and inventorying of the ICH of Bangladesh, to ensure its safeguarding, targeted action was decided in cooperation with UNESCO.



The project ‘Capacity Building for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Bangladesh’ was developed funded by the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund with the generous contribution of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

This 2-year project aims to strengthen the capacities of Bangladesh to safeguard its intangible cultural heritage through effective implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage with particular focus on the inventorying of ICH of Bangladesh.

The project is carried out from 2016 – 2018.



Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)



The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage aims to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, to ensure respect for it, to raise awareness about its importance and to provide for international cooperation and assistance in these fields.

The Convention focuses on the role of communities and groups in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and is concerned with processes and conditions rather than products, placing emphasis on living heritage that is performed by people, often collectively, and mostly communicated through living experience. It deals with heritage that communities deem important, and strives to contribute to the promotion of creativity and diversity, to the well being of communities, groups, and society at large, enabling a peaceful development and living together.

This intangible heritage under the convention is manifested inter alia in the following domains:

Oral traditions and expressions including language as a vehicle for intangible cultural heritage -- performing arts -- social practices, rituals and festive events -- knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe -- traditional craftsmanship

The Convention includes provision for ICH elements to be inscribed on two lists, the List of ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (USL) and the Representative List of the ICH of Humanity (RL) as well as a Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.

The List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding is composed of intangible heritage elements that concerned communities and States Parties consider require urgent measures to keep them alive. Inscriptions on this List helps to mobilize international cooperation and assistance for stakeholders to undertake appropriate safeguarding measures.

The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is made up of those intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate the diversity of this heritage and raise awareness about its importance.

List of ICH in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has three elements inscribed on the Representative List :

- ◆ Baul Songs (2008)
- ◆ Traditional Art of Jamdani Weaving (2013)
- ◆ Mangal Shobhajatra on Pahela Baishakh (2016)

Baul songs



Traditional art of Jamdani weaving



Mangal Shobhajatra on Pahela Baishakh



Project Activities

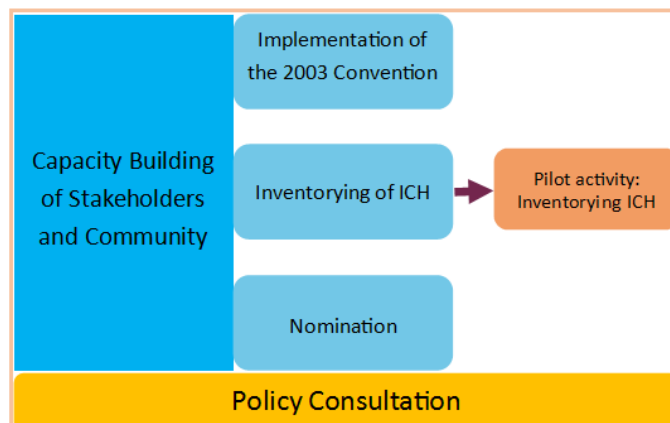
The project activities under this 2-year project comprise of three capacity building training workshops aimed at providing an overview as well as in-depth understanding of the Convention and addressing the obligations of Bangladesh as a State Party to the Convention. The three workshops are focusing on implementation of the Convention, on inventorying ICH of Bangladesh and nomination of ICH of Bangladesh to the two lists under the Convention, Representative List and Urgent Safeguarding List.

As identification, documentation and inventorying are key measures for the safeguarding of the ICH, a pilot activity is focusing on the inventorying of ICH in Bangladesh.

Finally a policy consultation provides opportunity for authorities and relevant stakeholders to discuss together with UNESCO and international experts what provisions are important in the Bangladesh context with regard to structure and mechanisms to ensure an enabling environment for a viable living heritage in Bangladesh which includes the full participation of the communities concerned.

Project Activities at a Glance

PROJECT ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
Training and Capacity Building	Training workshop on Implementation of the 2003 Convention
	Training workshop on Inventorying ICH
	Training workshop on Nomination of ICH elements to the two lists
Inventorying Pilot	Pilot activity to develop suitable mechanisms for inventorying ICH of Bangladesh with key stakeholders
Policy Consultation	One or more consultations amongst authorities, relevant stakeholders, experts and UNESCO To discuss structure and mechanism for enabling viable living heritage in Bangladesh under the ICH Convention



The Republic of Azerbaijan



The Republic of Azerbaijan is a strong supporter of UNESCO's activities in safeguarding cultural heritage and has generously contributed to the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Fund to support UNESCO's capacity building efforts towards member states. This project is a result of the contribution by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan towards safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage for sustainable development in Bangladesh.

Project Partners



Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy of Fine and Performing Arts is the national partner of this project. Shilpakala Academy was established in 1974 as a statutory organization under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Since then it has been working on promoting and protecting Bangladeshi arts and culture creating platforms and enabling environment for their development.

Government and Affiliated Bodies

- ◆ Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the People' Republic of Bangladesh
- ◆ Bangla Academy
- ◆ National Museum
- ◆ Bangladesh Folk Arts and Crafts Foundation

NGOs

- ◆ Asiatic Society
- ◆ Bangladesh National Craft Council
- ◆ Shadhana

Key Experts

UNESCO-accredited facilitators and ICH experts

- ◆ Ms. Noriko Aikawa
- ◆ Ms. Alexandra Denes

UNESCO Paris ICH Section, UNESCO Dhaka Office

