

International Partnership Programme for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage
“Training Course for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage”
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Case Study Report: Thailand
“Poom Ban Poom Mueng” Folk Wisdom

Office of the National Culture Commission

Introduction to the targeted ICH:

In accordance with the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Paris, France on 17th October, 1998, it is prescribed that the classification of intangible cultural heritage can be divided into 5 fields as follows:

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;
5. Traditional craftsmanship.

In this connection, the Office of the National Culture Commission (ONCC) therefore, set up a project titled “Poom Ban Poom Muang”; a project of folk wisdom concerning performing arts and craftsmanship.

The ONCC identified and set out categories of performing arts and craftsmanship as follows:

Performing Arts can be divided into 4 categories

1. Music
2. Dance
3. Music and dance in ritual
4. Folk songs

Craftsmanship can be divided into 10 categories.

1. Cloths and cloth products
2. Weaving products
3. Lacquer work
4. Pottery with coating and without coating
5. Metal ware
6. Woodworking
7. Leather products
8. Precious stones and ornaments
9. Handicrafts consisting of paintings, sculpture and casting work
10. General works

Objectives of the Project:

1. Study, gather, and record the background of Thai performing arts and craftsmanship systematically.
2. Study and analyse the current situation of the performing arts and craftsmanship.

3. Prepare the inventory and the designation of the performing arts and craftsmanship.
4. Promote and encourage the adaptation of the performing arts and craftsmanship to society and country development.

Methods of Project Implementation:

The Office of the National Culture Commission set up the criteria for intangible cultural heritage to be inscribed in the inventory by establishing a committee comprised of intellectuals, experts and artists.

The criteria of the performing arts and craftsmanship included;

1. Main essences

- Wisdom in selecting materials
- Wisdom appearing in product process and product method
- Wisdom appearing in the form of handicrafts (shape, structure and design)
- Wisdom corresponding to local culture e.g. used by and to the taste of the community

2. Importance of the items

- Items which are likely to be lost.
- Most valuable national culture heritages
- The qualified committee will check or monitor the quality of performing arts and craftsmanship obtained from the survey.

The ONCC cooperated with the Provincial Culture Office and the Provincial Cultural Council for investigation of ICH to be inscribed in the inventory.

The Provincial Culture Office and Council is responsible for:

1. 1st Committee, Chairperson of the Committee is responsible for enhancing the policy, framework including work mechanism of the project, to be implemented according to the objectives. He/ she also has to solve the problems, administrate, and verify the data recording system for further reference.
2. 2nd Committee, Slide/ Still Picture Recording Committee. He/ she is responsible for slide recording in the field and preparing a data recording system for further reference.
3. 3rd Committee, Motion Picture Recording Committee. He/ she is responsible for video recording in the field and preparing a data recording system for further reference.
4. 4th Committee, Sound Recording Committee. He/she is responsible for sound recording in the field and prepares a sound recording system for further reference.
5. 5th and 6th Committee, Substance Recording Committee. They are responsible for interviewing, gathering the information from other Provincial Culture Committee (from 1-4) to prepare a report.

Materials to be collected for the inventory

Paper, magnetic tape, still picture and motion picture

1. Filing the details of items e.g. name, surname, age and address
2. Kinds of performing arts and craftsmanship and their details
3. Recording the procedures and techniques in detail etc.
4. Day and time in filing data

Examination of the selection of ICH proposed by the provincial cultural office and provincial cultural council will be done by the committee set up by ONCC before it is listed in the inventory.

Outcomes:

Since 2006, there are at least 400 performing arts have been proposed. 300 items were examined and listed in the ONCC inventory. There are at least 650 pieces of craftsmanship had been collected throughout the country. 550 topics had been collected for verification, analysis and conclusion.

Next steps for these inventories are the preparation of code of data, and printing out of the abstract. The publications of the ICH in the inventory are produced in many forms of media including the digitalised publication which are to be available in the ONCC's website.

Conclusion:

The ONCC continues to collect the inventory of performing arts and craftsmanship and extend the inventory to include the oral traditions. Moreover, after conducting the inventory, the ONCC also organised a seminar to exchange the learning of performing arts. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for artists, scholars and local people to meet and exchange information on practice and transmitting the performing arts. The ONCC also provided a yearly budget to promote and dissemination of the performing arts and craftsmanship listed in the inventory through the provincial cultural office. There was also a project specifically aiming at training the local youth in performing arts and craftsmanship.

This fiscal year, the inventory is used as a resource for many projects connected with performing arts and craftsmanship. The inventory will be the main resources for the designation of the important intangible cultural heritage in Thailand. Moreover, it is the most important tool for the ONCC to develop the law on protection and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Thailand.