

International Partnership Programme for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage  
“**Training Course for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage**”  
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## **Case Study Report: Republic of Uzbekistan**

*National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO*

### **LEGISLATION**

After the joining the 2003 UNESCO Convention on Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 29 April 2008, the Republic of Uzbekistan started the process on elaboration of a new state policy on protection of cultural heritage. In particular, the National Parliament of Uzbekistan initiated several activities:

1. The Lower House of the National Parliament of Uzbekistan (Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis) organised several expert meetings during September-December 2008 with the purpose of elaboration of appropriate amendments into the Law on “Safeguarding and Utilisation of Cultural Objects of Uzbekistan”. The amended Law was adopted by Legislative Chamber in January 2009 and, according to local legal procedure, the document was transferred to the Senate for final approval.
2. The Upper House of the National Parliament of Uzbekistan (Senate of the Oliy Majlis) organised several expert meetings in December 2008 – May 2009 with the purpose of elaborating a new State Programme on Cultural Heritage which covers issues on safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, the main subject of which is inventory-making studies. Moreover, the Senate initiated the process of revision of all legal acts of Uzbekistan, where the term “cultural heritage” exists. The decision of the Senate (No. 598-1 of 30 December 2008) stipulates that all regional municipalities should elaborate local action plans to be reflected in the national plan of actions on safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
3. The Ministry of Culture and Sports of Uzbekistan prepared the provisional Inventory List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Inventory List was submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan for approval.

### **STATE PROGRAMME ON CULTURAL HERITAGE**

The Draft State Programme on Cultural Heritage includes measures related to protection of the following domains of the ICH: oral traditions and expressions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge, practices on nature and the universe; traditional craftsmanship.

A Draft State Programme on Revitalisation, Preservation and Development of the ICH was prepared by the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Uzbekistan in cooperation with the Academy of Sciences, Academy of Arts and National Commission for UNESCO. The document is subject to approval by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Prime Ministers Office).

The Draft State Programme contains the following:

- Development, adoption and implementation of management plans on safeguarding of ICH (plan of preservation, updating of support plans, etc);
- Measures on contemporary inventory-making process (GIS);
- Long-term plan of interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary scientific researches and publications;
- Programmes of cooperation with secondary schools, professional colleges and higher educational institutions on integration of ICH component into the curricula of formal and non-formal education (for example, arts education, handicrafts skills development, etc.);
- Improvement of professional skills of experts in the field of protection of intangible culture properties;
- Programmes of cooperation with “Makhalla” institute (local community) and private sector, on support of bearer communities for transmission of ICH cultural practices to future generations (via traditional Master-Apprentice system), organisation of various contests on best preservation of ICH;

Programmes of integration of ICH component were into the cultural tourism strategy, museums development projects and mass media broadcasting.

Following to the articles 11 and 15 of the 2003 UNESCO Convention, there are many nation-wide local NGOs which are involved in the process of safeguarding ICH, such as “Makhalla” (Community) Foundation, “Oltin Meros” (Golden Heritage) Foundation, “Sen Yolgiz Emassan” Foundation, “Forum of Culture and Arts of Uzbekistan” Foundation, “Kamolot” Youth Social Movement of Uzbekistan, “Hunarmand” (Artisan) Association, Union of Composers, “Uzbekraqs” (Uzbek Dance) Association, and many others.

The Republican Scientific Centre of Folklore (under the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Uzbekistan) organises various festival-contests in order to support and promote diverse cultural forms and expressions in the field of ICH, such as: Triennial Exhibition of Young Artisans, Triennial Festival-Contest of Story Tellers (Epics Bearers), Biennial Festival-Contest of Folk-Ethnographic Community Ensembles, Biennial Festival of Traditional Circuses and Askya (Folk Humour Bearers) , Triennial Festival-Contest of Lapar and Ulan Dance and Music Performers, Triennial Festival-Contest of Performances on Ancient Musical Instruments, Triennial Festival-Contests of Maqom, Katta Ashula (Great Song) and Alla (Cradle Song) Music Performances, Triennial Festival-Contest on Traditional Theatre and Puppet Theatre, Triennial Festival-Contest of Family-Based Folk Ensembles.

Starting from 1997, under the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan and patronage of UNESCO, “Sharq Taronalari” (Melodies of the East) International Music Festival has been organised in Samarkand every biennium in August. Between 2002-2005, the International Folk Festival “Boysun Bakhori” was organised in Boysun District of Uzbekistan. Since 2008, “Forum of Culture and Arts of Uzbekistan” Foundation has organized “Asrlar Sadosi” (Echo of Centuries) Folk Festival in various regions of Uzbekistan (2008 – Qashqadaryo Region, 2009 – Tashkent Region).

In the field of traditional knowledge with application in handicrafts, in accordance with Decree of the President of Uzbekistan, all artisans have tax immunities for their activities. Such decision has provided great support for revitalisation of famous artisan schools and indigenous knowledge bearers. Meantime, handicrafts schools in towns and villages were

reestablished and developed (Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Urgut, Nurota, Tashkent, Shakhriyabz, Quqon, Margilon, Boysun and many others).

There are 5200 clubs on ICH functioning within the structure of the Ministry of Public Education of Uzbekistan (2008-2009) as non-formal learning centres. As a result, the annual “Kids’ Folklore Festival” and “Kids’ Traditional Games Festival” are organized annually by the Ministry of Public Education of Uzbekistan. In addition, within the formal curriculum, there are state standards on “Arts Education” in all general secondary schools.

Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education of Uzbekistan is also contributing to the policy on promotion of ICH among youth by organising annual folk festivals among students.

Most of the important features of ICH preservation in Uzbekistan consist of activities of local communities (makhallas). There are 8449 makhallas in Uzbekistan, covering all the country. Every region of Uzbekistan organises the festival-contest among makhallas on various forms of ICH. Governmental (through branches of central ministries and local municipalities) and non-governmental organisations (for example, Women’s Committee) are actively participating in actions in makhallas. There is a partnership concept paper “Family-Makhalla-School” adopted in 1994.

## **INVENTORY LIST**

Scientific studies on ICH inventory-making are implemented by several organisations, such as Navoi Institute of Literature and Language of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Institute of Fine Arts of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Tashkent State Institute of Culture, Uzbekistan State Institute of Arts, Uzbekistan State Conservatoire and special faculties of the universities.

The working group of experts, established by the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Uzbekistan carried out interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary academic studies (archive and desk studies, field trips to local communities) for the purpose of identification of the ICH in Uzbekistan.

At the first stage, before the ratification of the Convention, the National Commission of Uzbekistan for UNESCO (according to the recommendations of the UNESCO) coordinated the elaboration of the Tentative List of ICH of Uzbekistan which consisted of seven cultural forms (Cultural space of Boysun, Shashmaqom music, Katta Ashula, Navruz, Lapar, Bakhshi and Askya). Two of them (Cultural space of Boysun, Shashmaqom music) were proclaimed by UNESCO as Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2001 and 2003 respectively.

After ratification of the Convention, the nomination documents of two other cultural forms of ICH (Katta Ashula and Navruz) were prepared by the working group of experts and submitted to the consideration of the 4th session of the Intergovernmental Committee on ICH (28 September – 2 October 2009, Abu Dhabi, UAE) for inclusion into the UNESCO Representative List of ICH.

In addition, the project on preservation of “Katta Ashula” received the 2009 ACCU Prize of the Second Contest for Better Practices in Community’s ICH Revitalisation.

The working group of experts, established by the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Uzbekistan, already prepared a new draft comprehensive inventory of ICH, which is subject for approval by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Prime Minister's Office). The new preliminary ICH inventory contains 267 cultural forms.

At the first stage (before the ratification of the Convention) the experts from Uzbekistan used the experience of ACCU in formatting the ICH inventory ("Data Bank on Traditional/Folk Performing Arts in Asia and the Pacific: A Basic Model", ACCU, 2000), which was based on 1989 UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore. After ratification of the Convention, the format for ICH inventory was extended to other domains of ICH. The inventory is kept in printed format (inventory example attached in the Annex).

Annex

## **ORAL TRADITIONS AND EXPRESSIONS**

**Purpose:** to preserve oral traditions and expressions.

**Tasks:** to support epics bearers and transmission of oral heritage to the youth.

**Events:** development of educational and scientific programmes on preserving and promotion of epics, rewarding epos tellers (bahshi), organisation of folk festivals, including epics performance into the programmes of cultural tourism.



**Alpomish Epics**

### **The reason for selection**

UNESCO was associated with the celebration of 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alpomish Epics in 1999. Alpomish is a folk epic based on ancient myths and legends of Uzbekistan and Central Asia and representing the cultural identity of several regions of Uzbekistan.

### **The location**

Surhondaryo Region, Qashqadaryo Region, Syrdaryo Region, Karakalpakstan.

### **Essential elements of the performing art**

Music, poetry, folk musical instruments.

### **Detailed explanation**

The Alpomish epos is wide spread in Central Asia and it has been performed by bahshis (story tellers) for centuries. It was handed down from generation to generation by

orator-artists known as ‘bahshis’. The main idea of the epos is protection of motherland from invaders. The main character of the epos is Alpomish – hero, who fought against the enemies. This heroic epic is of very considerable importance both to the people of Uzbekistan and to the whole region. It is sung in towns and villages, where it still arouses enthusiasm, and recounts the rich cultural past of the countries of Central Asia. The epos present lifestyle and traditions, values and world perception of local people starting from the very ancient times.

#### **Publication and textual documentashion**

1. “Alpomish”, edited by Prof. Tura Mirzaev, 1999;
2. “Alpomish -the Epos”, by Prof. Mamatqul Djuraev, 1999.

#### **Audio Documentashion**

Archives of the Navoi Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan.

#### **Visual documentation**

Archives of the Uzbekistan National Television and Radio Company.

#### **Institution/organization involved in preservation and promotion**

Department of Development of Folklore and Amateur Arts of the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Uzbekistan, Republican Scientific Center of Folk Arts, Navoi Institution of Language and Literature of the Academy Sciences of Uzbekistan, Tashkent State Institute of Culture.

#### **Data provider**

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