

International Partnership Programme for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage
“**Training Course for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage**”
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Case Study Report: Viet Nam
Inventorying Ca Tru and the lessons learnt

Department of Cultural Heritage

a. Background

Ca Tru is an age-old and unique cultural heritage element of Viet Nam. Ca Tru is a type of traditional performing art that used to serve for the old scholars and intelligentsia. The performing techniques in Ca Tru, such as music, poem, melodies, singing, etc. are very difficult to obtain. They require both players and audience to have certain cultural and social knowledge and skills to understand and enjoy when joining in a performance. In the past, Ca Tru had in time developed and reached its peak. But nowadays due to the modernization and fast development of social life, Ca Tru is gradually falling into oblivion. To rescue Ca tru, in 2005, the Vietnamese government decided to prepare and submit the nomination dossier of Ca Tru to UNESCO for its inscription onto the Urgent List.

b. Legal framework

The inventory activity of Ca Tru is implemented in the last years. However, up to 2005, the inventory job was concentrated and the implementation was directed to be conformable to the new conceptions of UNESCO 2003 Convention and the Vietnamese Law on Cultural Heritage. According to the Convention, the heritage element, which is nominated to UNESCO, must be inventoried with the participation of the community. The program of Ca tru nomination file building was implemented by various bodies and organisations throughout the country, including the Vietnamese Institute for Musicology, the programme has participation and support of many domestic and foreign researching experts from many different related fields, for instance: music, history, Han-Nom, literature. It included also local and central cultural managers, especially participation of clubs and holders of Ca Tru, etc. The results of inventorying contributed much to the completion of the nomination of Ca Tru to UNESCO. Through the inventorying results, we can know that Ca Tru is in urgent need of safeguarding, because of its decrease in performing spaces, activity environment, number of participants and folk artists, etc. And based on the findings, we can build more practical measures and safeguarding plans for such as:

c. Practical methodologies

- ✓ Doing survey, collecting preliminary documents.
- ✓ Using inventory forms under the guidance and supports of researchers of music and intangible cultural heritage; involving the participation of community (attached in this report).
- ✓ Training courses for local cultural staffing and representatives who take part in the inventory-making, filling out the questionnaires and forms;
- ✓ Sending researchers to support, observe and evaluate the results of the activities;
- ✓ Inheriting the achievements of the former research and existing inventories;
- ✓ Recording, photographing, etc.;
- ✓ Collecting, analysing and reading data and information;
- ✓ Assessing the inventory result and updating the information regularly.

d. The contents of the inventory:

- ✓ The inventory of Ca tru encompasses such items as: songs, dances, melodies of Ca Tru, etc.;
- ✓ The inventory of the people including: folk artists, performers, trainers and trainees, etc.. Through the Ca tru inventorying process, we found 21 artisans (in 2004) but 7 people died (by 2008).
- ✓ The inventory of Ca tru clubs: the club is a popular activity form of Ca Tru. There are usually various clubs in each province. According to the inventory in 2008, there are in total 22 clubs of Ca Tru in the whole country.
- ✓ The inventory of relics, which relate to Ca Tru: Communal Houses, temples/shrines devoted to the founders of Ca tru, etc.
- ✓ The inventory of artifacts, which relate to Ca Tru: musical instruments, carvings with images related to Ca tru , epitaphs, books, etc.

e. Practical lessons learnt

- ✓ Legal documents and policy system and guidance documents must be in comprehensive unity.
- ✓ There must be the participation and agreement of community and management sectors at all levels.
- ✓ The forms and contents of the interview must be carefully prepared; the questions of the questionnaires and interview must be simple and easy to understand and to fill out, to avoid misunderstanding
- ✓ Related space, place and artifacts should be also inventoried.
- ✓ Organising training courses/workshop to provide careful guidance before implementation is very important.
- ✓ It is very useful to inherit and collaborate with the researches of former inventories.

f. Conclusion:

This is only one of a few pilot projects, which was implemented with many difficulties; the inventory project of Ca tru, however has gained some certain effective results. This may be considered to be an initiative lesson or model for our future inventory projects.