**INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND**

**PROGRESS NARRATIVE REPORT**

Beneficiary State(s) Party(ies): Ministry of Culture of Albania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>&quot;Community Based Inventory of ICH in Albania with a view to safeguarding and transmitting to future generations&quot;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting period:</td>
<td>From: 30/09/2021 to: 11/03/2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budget:</td>
<td>Total: US$ 248,785,00</td>
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<td>Including:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund: US$ 213,260</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State Party contribution: US$ 35,525,00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other contributions: US$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing agency (contracting partner or UNESCO Field Office):</td>
<td>Ministry of Culture of Albania</td>
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<td>Contact person:</td>
<td>Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Dr.</td>
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<td>Family name: Kumbe</td>
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<td>Given name: Meri</td>
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<td>Institution/position: National Coordinator</td>
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<td>Address:</td>
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<td>Telephone number:</td>
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<td>E-mail address:</td>
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<td>Partner agency (in the case of a service from UNESCO project):</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Implementing partners:</td>
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Background

Provide a brief description of the situation existing at the time of the request and the need that the assistance aimed to address. For safeguarding of a particular element, provide a description of the element, its viability and why safeguarding measures were required. For preparation of inventories, strengthening of capacities, awareness-raising, visibility or other safeguarding not focussed on a particular element, identify gaps that were to be addressed. For emergency assistance requests, describe the nature and severity of the emergency at the time of the request.

Not fewer than 750 or more than 1000 words
Since Albania ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention in 2005, the Ministry of Culture of Albania as the responsible authority has undertaken a series of institutional, promotional and safeguarding activities on ICH. In this respect, an important initiative related to inventorying is to register ICH elements in the territory of the Republic of Albania, with the active participation of the community.

Responding to this, in 2014, an interactive platform “Show your Culture” was launched aiming at encouraging all interested parties to upload audio-visual materials documenting the ICH elements that belong to their own families or communities, including minority groups. Throughout 2015 the interactive ICH map has been enriched with new elements. At the same time, specialized institutions such as the National Center of Tradition Activities and the Institute of Anthropology and Art Studies introduced a package of targeted measures and activities regarding identification, documentation and promotion of the intangible cultural heritage.

However, as a signatory part of the 2003 Convention, since 2005 Albania has registered only one ICH element on the UNESCO List of ICH Masterpieces, notably that of the inventory of iso-polypolyphonia and its constituent elements. And this, despite the large wealth and of high cultural and historical value the ICH elements that exist in country’s territory.

In response to challenging problems faced at institutional level regarding registering ICH element, a legislative initiative was introduced with an aim to strengthen both the ICH institutions (public and private) and ICH bearers’ communities. Additionally, a National List of seven (7) ICH Representative List was created by a special Order of the Ministry of Culture issued in 2010. In practice, however, the planned targeted activities for a thorough inventory of these 7 elements have not yet been sufficiently implemented. Under such circumstances, there is an urgent need to draft a complete and more inclusive National ICH List which will bring into the light the rich diversity of the ICH in the territory of the Republic of Albania along with the most precious cultural values of each individual ICH element for the community practicing. Indeed, it has been institutionally acknowledged that each and every single ICH element represents the community’s geniality that has created it and passed it down through generations.

Adding to that, in 2014, in a piloted analysis report on the situation of ICH in Albania, the UNESCO’s expert Prof. Nikolai Vukov identified the needs of the ICH while making recommendations on how to best address them for the benefit of the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage and its practitioners, including the following:

- To develop a strategy for inventorying ICH with practical guidelines and concrete involvement of communities and the relevant institutions in the inventorying process;
- To reinforce the knowledge and capacity of the decision makers, the government officials, the NGOs, and that of the relevant institutions and communities for adopting community-based approaches to inventorying the intangible cultural heritage with a view to develop an analytic framework and a methodology specially tailored to the context of Albania;

As an immediate response to those recommendations, in September 2015, forty (40) experts, specialists and community representatives attended a five day training course on the Implementation of 2003 Convention organized by UNESCO experts with the support of the ICH Centre in Sofia.

Taking into consideration the above and given the lack of a thorough national inventorying plan of ICH elements with the participation of respective communities, it is of utmost importance the drafting of an overall national inventory. This would definitely serve as a key to draw tailored Action Plans for ICH safeguarding and its transmission to future generations with the active participation of communities.

In addressing these issues, the current project implements a set of activities that include the drafting of the inventory methodology as well as setting out the process of inventory in three selected regions of Albania. The project adopts an innovative approach since the process of inventory involves both the
communities and the bearers themselves by giving them a central role throughout the lifetime of project's activities, while ensuring their contribution's long-term viability.

More concretely, this project is structured around the following main objectives:

1. To build a tailored methodology for inventoriring ICH elements of Albanians and minorities in the territory of Albania, and

2. To draft a national inventory in the selected regions of Albania by means of:
   - creating a permanent mechanism for communities involvement in the safeguarding process;
   - improving and expanding the present limited inventory;
   - strengthening the processes of transmission of ICH knowledge;
   - improving the capacities of professionals to safeguard ICH in Albania;
   - improving the visibility of ICH; and
   - raising awareness of policy makers and communities about the importance of ICH and its potential to contribute to sustainable development and social cohesion of Albanian society.
Objectives and results attained

In general, the project has attained most of its main objective with regards to its deliverables in compliance with contractual tasks and actions. By focusing in particular on the project’s beneficiaries and respective communities of reference, a special attention was paid in the continuation and follow-up seminars and workshops in three pilot cities, namely Shkodra, Korca, and Gjirokaster, realized in two-time cohorts. In the period October 21-January 22, these activities were primary focused on monitoring and quality control of the work done by local experts that included the appropriate completing of the cards, the photos and the video materials for each element. The second round of quality control took place in the same three pilot cities, in the period February-11 March 2022.

In the end of these activities the members of community and their local working groups submitted the original materials collected during the empirical field work for about 90 elements researched. The pool of original materials that contained the cards, the photos, the videos, and the statements of consent of the interviewees, was delivered to the group leaders for evaluation and fine-tuning adjustments in order to achieve the best or a desired outcome. Meanwhile, the logo and the digital materials for the branding of the project’s web page have been finalized.

On the management field, the contracts’ monitoring processes have been finalized, too. These include the following contracts with:

- The experts charged with the drafting of the guide for the Inventory of intangible cultural heritage,
- The leading experts of seminars and workshops,
- The external experts of the national coordination group,
- The legal entity in charge of regional transport of local groups,
- The legal entity in charge of catering and coffee services for these seminars and workshops,
- The legal entity that oversees the process of publishing the guide for the inventory of intangible cultural heritage.

In general, the expected results were attained. However, due to the exceptional circumstances and related restrictions created by the Covid-19 pandemic - which were still in place during the period of reference – the implementation of final activities is slightly extended in time.

In addition, some quality flaws were encountered in video editing process of the video materials from the fieldwork, possibly caused by the inability of some experts to handle digital technology. For this reason, there is a delay in making those cards available for the project’s website, which in turn, imposed the need to extend some project’s deliverables by the June 2022. To guarantee the quality of this process, the Ministry of Culture has made the necessary preparations to hold several informative meetings in period May-June 2022.
Description of project implementation

Provide a description of the activities undertaken and the outputs they generated (e.g. trainings, consultation process, technical assistance, awareness raising, publications, toolkits, etc.). Also describe any problems encountered in project delivery and corrective actions taken. Describe the role of the implementing agency and of the partner agency (in the case of a service from UNESCO project) and the role of other implementing partners in carrying out activities and generating outputs.

Not fewer than 1000 or more than 1500 words

During the reference period (01.10.2021-11.03.2022) the activities undertaken focused on producing the final outputs generated by the project. By focusing in particular on the project’s beneficiaries and respective local communities, a special attention was paid to the continuation and follow-up seminars and workshops in three pilot cities, namely Shkodra, Korca, and Gjirokaster, that took place in two cohorts. In the first cohort, notably October 21-January 22, the activities undertaken were primary focused on monitoring and quality control of the field work materials delivered by local experts that included the completing of cards, photos and videos for each element. In the second cohort another round of quality control took place in the same three pilot cities, that were realized in the period February-11 March 2022.

Following the completion of the above activities the members of community and the local working groups handed over the original materials collected during the empirical field work for about 90 elements under research. The bulk of original materials that contained the cards, the photos, the videos, and the consent forms of the interviewees, was delivered to the group leaders for evaluation and fine-tuning adjustments in order to achieve the best of the desired outcome.

On the management field, the contracts’ monitoring processes were finalized, while the logo and the digital feeding materials for the branding of the project’s web page were also made available.

However, due to the exceptional circumstances and related restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic the implementation of certain activities is slightly extended in time. Furthermore, some quality flaws encountered in video editing process of the video materials created backlog in making those cards available in the project’s website, which in turn, imposed the need to extend the project’s final deliverables till June 2022. To guarantee the quality of final deliverable and facilitate the whole process, the Ministry of Culture has made the necessary preparations to hold several informative meetings in May-June 2022.

WP1: Coordination & Management

During the reference period, the activities were focused on project’s coordination and day-to-day management. The emphasis was put on (pro)active management by monitoring the outcome of legal, financial and logistic proceedings along with the implementation of project’s actions in compliance with the Ministry of Culture’s (MoC) internal rules and regulations. In this direction, the following steps were undertaken:

- Monitoring minutes of the work progress of the member of the “National Coordination Group” (NCG), Mr. Artan Puto, for September-November 2021 (Action 1.1).¹
- Monitoring minutes of the work progress of the members of “National Coordination Group” (NCG), Mr. Artan Puto, for the period December 2021- February 2022 (Action 1.2).²
- Monitoring minutes of the work progress of the member of the “National Coordination Group” (NCG), Mrs. Arlinda Kondi, for September-November 2021 (Action 1.1).³

¹ Prot. Nr 6320/07.12.2021
² Prot. Nr. 1233/03.03.2022
³ Prot. Nr 6389/10.12.2021
- Monitoring minutes of the work progress of the member of “National Coordination Group” (NCG), Mrs. Arlinda Kondi, for the period December 2021-February 2022 (Action 1.2).\textsuperscript{4}
- Minutes from contract’s monitoring process for the work performed by the local experts in Shkodra region (Action 1.2).\textsuperscript{5}
- Minutes from the contracts’ monitoring process for the work performed by the local experts in the Korça region (Action 1.2).\textsuperscript{6}
- Minutes from the contracts’ monitoring process for the work performed by the local experts in the Gjirokastër region (Action 1.2).\textsuperscript{7}
- Meeting’s minutes of the “National Coordination Group” for the logo and branding of the project’s website and the publication of the Guide for the inventory of intangible cultural heritage.\textsuperscript{8}

WP2: Enhancing safeguarding mechanisms by involving communities

2.1: Creation of the methodological inventorying guidelines of ICH inventory;

Following the consultation process with the community members (Action 2.1.1), the corresponding organizations and other related ICH experts and institutions (Action 2.2) the inventorying methodological guidelines were finalized and then adopted in the format of the National Inventorying Methodological Guidelines of the MoC (Action 2.1.2). Furthermore, during the reference period the following tasks were finalized:

- Monitoring process’s minutes for the tasks delivered by the expert Mr. Dorian Cene for the preparation of the Guide for the Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Action 2.1.1).\textsuperscript{9}
- Monitoring process’s minutes for the tasks delivered by the expert Mrs. Persida Asllani for the preparation of the Guide for the Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Action 2.1.1).\textsuperscript{10}
- Monitoring process’s minutes for the contract’s implementation of the expert Mr. Dorian Cene for the seminars/workshops with the local experts (Action 2.1.1).\textsuperscript{11}
- Monitoring process’s minutes for the contract’s implementation of the expert Mr. Klevis Gjergji for the seminars/workshops with the local experts (Action 2.1.1).\textsuperscript{12}
- The Order\textsuperscript{13} issued of the Minister of Culture for the publication of the guide for the inventory of Non-material Cultural Heritage and the Paris Convention of 2003 for the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage (Actions 2.1.2 and 2.1.3).
- Signing the contract with the legal entity “Gent Graphic” for the publication of the guide for the inventory of Non-material Cultural Heritage and the Paris Convention of 2003 (Actions 2.1.2 and 2.1.3).\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{4} Prot. Nr. 1232/03.03.2022
\textsuperscript{5} Prot. Nr. 1497-1497/16-11.03.2022
\textsuperscript{6} Prot. Nr. 1499-1499/17-11.03.2022
\textsuperscript{7} Prot. Nr. 1502-1502/17-11.03.2022
\textsuperscript{8} Prot. Nr. 16/09.12.2021
\textsuperscript{9} Prot. Nr. 662/08.02.2022
\textsuperscript{10} Prot. Nr. 683/08.02.2022
\textsuperscript{11} Prot. Nr. 1489/11.03.2022
\textsuperscript{12} Prot. Nr. 1490/11.03.2022
\textsuperscript{13} Order Nr. 821, Prot. Nr. 6345/10-15.12.2021
\textsuperscript{14} Prot. Nr. 6345/11
2.2 Organization of 6 workshops of seven days each

Following the three rounds of the 7-days local workshops titled "Inventory and Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage based on the community" that took place in the previous reference period, another round of seminars/workshops were realized. More specifically, during this reference period, a special attention was paid to continuation and follow-up seminars/workshops in three pilot cities, namely Shkodra, Korca, and Gjirokaster, that took place in two cohorts. In the first cohort, notably October 21-January 22, the activities undertaken were primary focused on monitoring and quality control of the field work materials delivered by local experts that included the completing of cards, photos and videos for each element. In the second cohort another round of quality control took place in the same three pilot cities, in the period February-10 March 2022. The events' calendar is as follows:

- 2-days seminar/workshop in Gjirokaster, 27-28 October 2021.
- 3-days seminar/workshop in Shkodra, 27-29 January 2022.
- 3-days seminar in Korca, 23-25 February 2022.
- 3-days seminar in Gjirokaster, 8-10 March 2022.

Following the completion of the above activities the members of community and the local working groups handed over the original materials collected during the empirical field work for about 90 elements under research. The bulk of original materials that contained the cards, the photos, the videos, and the consent forms of the interviewees, was delivered to the group leaders for evaluation and fine-tuning adjustments in order to achieve the best of the desired outcome.

In the same context, the monitoring process’s minutes refer to the contract related to the catering and coffee services delivered during the implementation of seminars and workshops of the company legally represented by Mr. Dhimiter Cacali (Action 2.2.4).^{15}

WP3: Expand the national inventory;

During the reference period, this activity focused on the monitoring of the following contracts:

- Monitoring process’s minutes related to the contract’s obligations of Mr. Enigell Seriani on the field trips of local groups of experts in the areas within the region of Gjirokaster (Action 3.1.2).^{16}
- Monitoring process’s minutes related to the contract’s obligations of Mr. Ilir Terova on the field trips of local groups of experts in the areas within the region of Korca (Action 3.1.2).^{17}
- Monitoring process’s minutes related to the contract’s obligations of Mr. Petrit Bilali on the field trips of local groups of experts in the areas within the region of Shkodra (Action 3.1.2).^{18}
- Monitoring process’s minutes of contracts’ obligations and the work performed by the local experts in Shkodra region (Action 3.1).^{19}
- Monitoring process’s minutes of contracts’ obligations and the work performed by the local experts in the Korça region (Action 3.1).^{20}
- Monitoring process’s minutes of contracts’ obligations and the work performed by the local experts in the Gjirokastra region (Action 3.1).^{21}

^{15} Prot. Nr. 1496/11.03.2022
^{16} Prot. No. 1493/11.03.2022
^{17} Prot. No. 1494/11.03.2022
^{18} Prot. No. 1495/11.03.2022
^{19} Prot. Nr. 1497-1497/16-11.03.2022
^{20} Prot. Nr. 1499-1499/17-11.03.2022
^{21} Prot. Nr. 1502-1502/17-11.03.2022
For the ‘Creation of the website’ (3.2) and following the legal procedures of the previous period, the logo and the digital materials for the branding of the project’s web page were finalized. However, due to some quality flaws that were encountered in video editing process of the video materials from the fieldwork, there is a delay in making those cards available for the project’s website, which in turn, imposed the need to extend some project’s deliverables for June 2022. To guarantee the quality of this process, the Ministry of Culture has made the necessary preparations to hold several informative meetings in period May-June 2022. More specifically, during the period of reference the following steps were taken:

- Issuance of a special Order for the announcement of the competition of the intangible cultural heritage logo and the brand of the website under construction (Action 3.2).  
- Issuance of a special Order of the Minister of Culture announcing the winner of the competition for the logo and branding of the project’s website (Action 3.2).  
- The official letter addressed to the National Coordination Group in which it is informed about the reasons for the extension of the contract with TOK Digital for the project’s website (Action 3.2).  
- Minutes of the National Coordination Group’s meeting about the postponement of the deadline for the construction of the Website by the company TOK Digital (Action 3.2).  
- Amendment of TOK Digital contract (Action 3.2).  

WP4: Awareness raising and dissemination of project results:

Despite the disruption caused by pandemic, some activities foreseen in the WP4 regarding awareness raising and dissemination has taken place. These activities were mainly focused on national and local media and social media promotion, as well as on TV channels. In addition, the project has been introduced and promoted by the Deputy Minister of Culture, Dr. Meri Kumbe, who in her public and media appearances has stressed out the importance of this project for the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Albania while acknowledging the contribution of UNESCO (Annex 4).

Regarding the information campaign in educational institutions (Action 4.1.2), the closure of the education institutions because of the Covid-19 restrictions and the relevant hygiene protocols changed the scheduled meetings’ calendar. Thus, only several informal and closed meetings took place during the first reference period of the project such as those with the University Rector and the Prefect of Shkodra.

Regarding the implementation of the Action 4.1.3 (local and national TV and radio interviews), the first seminar that was held in Shkoder on 24 May 2021 was broadcasted and disseminated in National and Local TV channel included Report TV, 26 TV Rozafa, 27 and TV AdriaNet, 28 together with the interview given by the Project coordinator and Deputy Minister Dr. Meri Kumbe. 29

In a facebook post of 8th of August 2021, the Minister of Culture added content and uploaded pictures illustrating the activities of seven-day seminars on the training of local experts in the framework of the project “Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage”, supported by UNESCO (Annex 4). In the same post, it is highlighted that further to the introduction of the first 90 elements in the National Register of

22 Prot. No. 5829/1-705/01.11.2021  
23 Prot. No. 78/15.02.2021  
24 Prot. No. 740/1-14.02.2022  
25 Prot. No. 740/2-15.02.2022  
26 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dp-Oi9x8Z2Q&ab_channel=ReportTV  
27 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1opIT9FkEc&ab_channel=TVRozafa  
28 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fu3YmtVyl4I&ab_channel=TVAdriaNet  
29 https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=7440269363128
Intangible Cultural Heritage, the project envisages the establishment of a website, dedicated to all the material collected by local experts, bearers and artisans. The post concludes with the comment that this site will be a national database, valid and accessible for everyone.  

In another post on 18 August 2021, in view of the seminar held in Shkodra, the Minister of Culture uploaded pictures in which she praised the city of Shkodra for its generously offered heritage. In the same post it was announced the end of the first phase of the project "Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage", supported by UNESCO. In addition, a particular emphasis was given to the final product which includes the registration of the 90 elements in the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage accompanied by special electronic cards, photographs, audio and video materials (Annex 4).

During the reference period, along with seminars in three regions, a series of consecutive informal meetings were organized with stakeholders in order to promote the objectives of the project and to ensure their cooperation in achieving the final goal (4.2.1) (Annex 4).

WP5: Monitoring and evaluation

With regards to WP5, certain steps had been taken in order to consolidate the monitoring mechanism and the respective staff in charge of evaluating the project's progress and drafting the second progress report. To this end the external experts have been meeting regularly with all actors involved in order to collect the proper documents and evaluate the quality system in place, while finalizing both the technical and financial report for the second progress report (Actions: 5.2, and 5.2.1). Furthermore, a new contract was signed with the project's evaluation expert, Mr. Bledar Korkaj on project's activities and final products (Action 5.2.1).  

Community involvement

Provide a description of the mechanisms used for fully involving the community(ies) concerned. Describe not only the participation of the communities as beneficiaries of the project, but also their active participation in the planning and implementation of all activities.

Not fewer than 300 or more than 500 words

During the reference period of project's implementation, the community was fully involved in both the organization and implementation of the seminars/workshops, empirical fieldwork and delivering the final products. The added value of empowering the local community members is for them to remain active after the project's end while enhancing the safeguarding process both in regional and local level.

30 https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=2986653511578241&set=pbc.2986657624911163
31 https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=2992405891310030798&set=pbc.2992405891310030798
32 Prot. No. 701/09.02.2022
Sustainability and exit/transition strategy

Describe how the benefits of the project will continue after the project has been completed. Where appropriate, describe the steps undertaken to ensure the following:

- Sustainability of activities, outputs and results, including with reference to how capacity has been built under the project. Also describe any planned follow-up measures to ensure sustainability.
- Additional funding secured as a result of this project, if any. Indicate by whom, how much and for what purpose the contributions are granted.
- Describe how the ownership (of activities, outputs, results) by stakeholders and the community(ies) in particular has been promoted.
- Describe, if relevant, how tools, processes, outputs, etc. have been adopted, adapted, replicated and/or extended for future use (e.g. in other regions, communities, elements, or fields of intangible cultural heritage).

Not fewer than 100 or more than 500 words

In terms of sustainability, after the implementation of the project, the Ministry of Culture is committed to continue the inventory process to all the remaining regions of Albania by applying the methodology employed in this project. The ultimate goal is that by the end of 2025, a complete National Inventory will be fully registered and active.

In long-term, by establishing sustainable and viable communication channels and partnerships with all actors involved in both private and public sector, this project would contribute to foster intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. This includes strengthening of the processes of transmission of ICH knowledge; improving the capacities of professionals to safeguard ICH in Albania and increasing the visibility of ICH through raising awareness of policy makers and communities about the importance of ICH and its potential to contribute to sustainable development and social cohesion of Albanian society.

Lessons learnt

Describe what are the key lessons learnt regarding the following:

- Attainment of expected results
- Ownership of key stakeholders and community involvement
- Delivery of project outputs
- Project management and implementation
- Sustainability of the project after the assistance

Not fewer than 300 or more than 750 words

The key lessons learnt is how to anticipate the mitigation of risks (such as Covid-19 pandemic) in planning and implementing of project’s activities. Furthermore, the quality of the delivered project’s output shows the scale of the digital illiteracy among from the beneficiaries and the community which need to be addressed in the near future.
**Annexes**

List the annexes and documentation included in the report:
- publications, evaluation reports and other outputs, when applicable
- progress reports prepared during the contract period
- list of major equipment provided under the project and status after termination of contract period
- other (please specify)

Annex 1: Ministerial orders and other MoC documents
Annex 2: Signed contracts
Annex 3: Spending orders (financial report)
Annex 4: Others (Seminars and workshop programs, minutes, letters, illustration material: photos)

**Name and signature of the person having completed the report**

Name: Eda Gemi  
Title: Assoc. Prof. PhD  
Date: 30/03/2022  
Signature: [Signature]

ICH-04-Report – Form – 30/03/2022