

Reçu CLT/LHE

Le 17 AVR. 2024

N°.....

023/000018

REQUEST FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND

For amounts up to US\$100,000 and Emergency requests regardless of the amount:
submit at any time for possible approval by the Bureau of the Committee

Instructions for completing the request form are available at: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms>

Decisions on granting assistance will be based on an overall appreciation of the request on the following criteria, in conformity with paragraph 12 of the Operational Directives.

A.1 The community, group and/or individuals concerned participated in the preparation of the request and will be involved in the implementation of the proposed activities, and in their evaluation and follow-up as broadly as possible.

A.2 The amount of assistance requested is appropriate.

A.3 The proposed activities are well conceived and feasible.

A.4 The project may have lasting results.

A.5 The beneficiary State Party shares the cost of the activities for which international assistance is provided, within the limits of its resources.

A.6 The assistance aims at building up or reinforcing capacities in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

A.7 The beneficiary State Party has implemented previously financed activities, if any, in line with all regulations and any conditions applied thereto.

In line with paragraph 10 of the Operational Directives, the Committee or its Bureau may also take into account whether: (a) the request implies cooperation at the bilateral, regional or international levels; and/or (b) the assistance may have a multiplier effect and may stimulate financial and technical contributions from other sources.

1. State(s) Party(ies)

For multinational requests, States Parties should be listed in the order on which they have mutually agreed.

Republic of Albania

7. Summary of the project

Provide a brief description of the project for which assistance is requested, including its overall objectives and main modalities of action.

Not fewer than 200 or more than 300 words

This project proposes coordinated activities to safeguard the endangered playing, singing with, and making of the Albanian lahuta, a single-stringed instrument, by communities concentrated in north and north western Albania. The project will be undertaken over 36 months for a total cost of 187,892.60USD. The main implementing agency is the Albanian Ministry of Economics, Culture and Innovation (MECI), which will have oversight of all activities, in partnership with the Fondazione Arte, an NGO experienced in running community-based operational projects in the fields of music, education and living heritage in Albania. Key collaborators will also include Albanian heritage organisations the Shoqata Logu i Bjeshkëve Association, based in the municipality of Malësi e Madhe and focused on private lahuta lessons, the National Centre for Traditional Activities, the National Institute for Registering Cultural Heritage, and the Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage in Shkodër.

The project was developed through collaboration from 2019-2023 between communities, national heritage bodies, as well as researchers and cultural anthropologists engaged with support from the Albanian American Development Foundation to prepare a corresponding USL nomination file.

Overall objectives:

- Develop a sustainable organizational structure through which community members and other stakeholders cooperate to safeguard the lahuta.
- Develop community-based documentation, inventorying and cultural mapping
- Produce teaching tools for practitioners.
- Create sustainable income-generating opportunities for practitioners.
- Establish hands-on educational programmes for youth.
- Raise awareness of the element within the communities, wider Albania and among the diaspora.
- Develop community capacities in conceiving, coordinating and administering safeguarding activities.

Main modalities:

- Community-based inventorying and cultural mapping.
- Production of practical handbooks to teach the lahuta, and guidelines for instrument making.
- Intensive summer school training for youth.
- Awareness-raising of lahuta playing and song through public performances, a dedicated website and social media platforms.

8. Purpose of request

Tick one box to identify the purpose for which International Assistance is requested. This form is not to be used for requesting preparatory assistance. States Parties wishing to request preparatory international assistance for the preparation of nominations for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List should use Form ICH-05, and States Parties wishing to request preparatory international assistance for the preparation of proposals for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices should use Form ICH-06.

- safeguarding heritage inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List
- preparation of inventories
- implementation of programmes, projects and activities for safeguarding
- awareness raising activities
- other purposes ()

9. Scope of the project

Tick only one box.

- local (sub-national)
- national
- sub-regional/regional (more than one country)
- international (including geographically non-contiguous areas)

10. Location of the project

Identify and characterize the geographical area(s) in which the project will be carried out.

Not to exceed 100 words

The majority of project activities will take place in rural communities in north and northwestern Albania, located in the municipalities of Lezhë, Malësia e Madhe, Shkodër, and Tropojë. These areas are characterized by low-income demographics, a progressive youth outmigration, and usually smaller scale farming. The project coordination will be based in Tirana, from which travel to the regions is more time and cost efficient, and to facilitate the involvement of the key national heritage bodies.

11. Previous financial assistance from UNESCO for similar or related activities

SECTION TO BE FILLED IN BY THE SECRETARIAT

Has the State Party ever received any International Assistance under the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund of the 2003 Convention to implement related activities in the field of intangible cultural heritage?

- No
- Yes

International Assistance for the project 'Inventory of Albanian folk iso-polyphony', US\$24,500, assistance approved by the 5.COM 2.BUR (Decision 3), contract March 2011 – March 2012

Preparatory Assistance (Register of Good Safeguarding Practices) for the project 'National Folk Festival of Gjirokastra (NFFoGj), 50 years of best practice in safeguarding Albanian intangible heritage', US\$9,800, assistance approved by 13.COM 2.BUR (Decision 6), contract November 2018 – April 2019

International Assistance for the project 'Community based Inventory of ICH in Albania with a view to safeguarding and transmitting to future generations', US\$213,260, assistance approved by the 13.COM (Decision 10.d) and the 14.COM 2.BUR (Decision 4), contract February 2020 – July 2022

International Assistance for the project, 'Xhubleta, skills, craftsmanship and forms of usage,' US\$91,092 approved by 17.COM.7.a. (Decision 4), contract December 2023 – December 2025

12. Background and objectives

Provide a brief description of the current situation and the need that the proposed assistance would address. For emergency assistance requests, describe the nature and severity of the emergency.

1. *For the safeguarding of a particular element, provide a description of the element, its social and cultural functions, its viability in terms of its practice and transmission and why safeguarding measures are required at this time.*

2. *For programmes or activities not focused on a particular element (e.g., the preparation of inventories, strengthening of capacities, awareness raising, visibility), describe why these programmes or activities are necessary and what gaps exist in other, related programmes and activities.*

3. *Identify, in terms that are as clear and measurable as possible: (i) what medium-term effects would be achieved by the implementation of the project (objectives) and (ii) what kind of positive impacts and concrete accomplishments would be seen after implementing the proposed project (expected results). Both need to be spelled out in detail and linked to the information included under section 13 below (Activities).*

Not fewer than 850 or more than 1300 words

The project concerns the playing, singing with, and making of the lahuta, a single-stringed wooden instrument comprising a sound box covered in leather and a neck carved with motifs (animals, historical figures, etc.). Players sit cross-legged or on a chair, with the sound box between the thighs, the neck against one shoulder, and the bow moving across the string with one hand. The other hand changes cords with the middle of the fingers. The lahuta is usually made of maple, alder or walnut wood sourced locally, with the string traditionally made of horsehair (now often with nylon). It is performed in family and community groups, at informal gatherings and special occasions such as weddings, and in more formal public performances. Lahuta is a socially unifying tradition for which the music and lyrics evoke profound collective emotions, reinforce cultural values and preserve historical memory within communities.

The lahuta's cultural meanings are rooted in communities' social and historical memory through its epic lyrics. The Great Epic Cycle – Kreshnik (warrior heroes) songs, for example, depict important legends. Practitioners increasingly re-appropriate the element as a creative community-based expression, adapting songs and playing techniques that connect the past and present, reflecting more recent events, and evolving social environments and preoccupations.

The lahuta is taught through informal observation and practice within family and community environments, and the few private lessons available take place mainly in urban areas with little access to practitioners. Local performances and larger festivals remain vital for demonstration and awareness-raising, such as Logo i Beshkeve, held in northern Albania annually and supported by the National Centre for Traditional Activities and municipalities of Lezhë, Malësi e Madhe and, Shkodër and Tropojë.

Today, transmission of the knowledge, skills and techniques for playing, singing with and making quality instruments is severely threatened. A few dozen practitioners (exact number unknown) are actively playing and singing. Fewer are making the instrument. They lack opportunities and means

to coordinate safeguarding efforts. Most are pensioners with minimal incomes (around 90 Euros per month), which limits their ability to initiate activities outside small family gatherings, which are in decline as youth migrate for work opportunities, and lose interest in the tradition.

Practitioners are also geographically dispersed and often lack the financial resources to meet in person with other practitioners and develop networks within their communities and with other stakeholders including municipal offices cultural programmes. Their advanced age adds urgency to safeguarding their skills and knowledge, and ensuring transmission to younger generations. The communist period ban on religious celebrations compromised the lahuta's role in reinforcing cultural values, collective memory and artistry, and imposed de-contextualized performances within nationalist agendas. This nationalization of folklore from 1945 to 1991 continues to impact community understanding of the lahuta's social and cultural functions.

The safeguarding needs are numerous. Community members lack a participatory support structure to connect them with each another and other stakeholders, and to facilitate efforts to transmit their cultural practice. Also lacking is Capacity-building in formats adapted to their preference for discursive forums which can develop their involvement in the management of safeguarding measures independently beyond this project.

Modest State-funded efforts to document lahuta practices are ongoing through the National Centre of Traditional Activities, but more community-based documentation is essential to safeguard skills and knowledge (notably the lahuta's social functions and cultural meanings) in relation to the musicianship and associated oral traditions, and to inform teaching strategies and tools that support transmission to youth. For example, playing methods and songs increasingly reflect personal experiences. While largely positive, this can undermine appreciation of the traditional practice and meanings if not balanced with a fuller understanding of the element's heritage. The same applies to the need to protect the artistry and knowledge in relation to making the instrument. Today, low-quality instruments targeting tourists (and for decoration) threaten the demand for quality instruments. There is a need to develop guidelines in relation to the instrument making practices, all of which involve knowledge of natural resources, the meaning of motifs that ornate the instruments, and learned skills.

Project objectives and medium term effects (MTEs):

1/ Objective:

- Creation of the Steering Committee for the Lahuta (SCL) and a Centre of Lahuta (COL) to support and develop sustainable community capacities for safeguarding the lahuta during and beyond the project (Activity 1).

MTE: Establishment of a participatory support structure to coordinate communities and stakeholders' efforts to safeguard the element while building community capacities in these areas.

2/ Objective:

- Develop community-based documentation, mapping and inventorying capacities.

MTE: Endangered knowledge about the element documented and organized in accessible ways for safeguarding purposes.

3/ Objectives:

- Develop community capacities to prepare learning tools to reinforce transmission.
- Reinforce transmission to youth primarily but also adults through the learning tools.

MTE: Accessible resources available to communities, particularly youth (handbook and guidelines) on playing/singing with, and making the lahuta (Activities 4 and 5).

4/ Objectives:

- Establish sustainable, immersive teaching programmes for youth, with income-generating teaching opportunities for practitioners.

MTE: The transmission of knowledge/skills to play, sing with and make the lahuta to youth through targeted learning platforms: i) integration of the element in an existing Ministry of Education (MOE) programme in northern and northwestern Albania secondary schools; ii) summer workshops; ii) generation of income for lahuta practitioners, predominantly low-income pensioners (Activities 6 and 7).

5/ Objective:

- Raise awareness of the element and share information on safeguarding within communities, wider Albania and among diaspora.

MTE: Development of a website and social media platforms for sharing knowledge and capacity-building, organizing performances and raising awareness within and beyond practitioner communities (Activity 8).

Expected results (positive impacts and concrete accomplishments)

1/ Positive Impacts: The establishment of a coordinated support structure (COL), involving the participation of community members, to safeguard the lahuta.

Expected results (ER): Development of the COL to provide an efficient framework for collaboration during the project, and in order that community members:

- Have a leading voice in the project implementation;
- Develop capacities for the long-term continuation and development of safeguarding actions during and beyond the project (Activity 1).

2/ Positive Impacts: Development of an electronic database to hold information collected with communities through cultural mapping and inventorying: practitioners, oral traditions, etc.

ER:

- An accessible structure housed in the COL and shared with the National Institute for Inventorying Cultural Heritage, with community and stakeholder participation strengthened (Activity 2).

3/ Positive Impacts: The handbooks on singing and playing the element, along with guidelines on making it, will provide practical, hands-on instructions and document the skills and knowledge, and the cultural meaning and social functions of the lahuta and its crafting to safeguard its transmission to future generations(Activities 3 and 4).

ER:

- Accessible publications that provide step-by-step instruction and guidance with engaging visuals and texts, used in print and online, for the widest possible audience and distribution.

4/ Positive impacts: The integration of the element in existing school programmes and intensive workshops in three municipalities over three years, reinforcing intergenerational transmission through a combination of formal and less formal teaching to secondary school youth, while supporting income generating teaching programmes.

ER:

- Youth from the regions taught the playing, singing and making of the lahuta;
- Experience in teaching and income gained by practitioners involved in preparing the handbooks and teaching in the educational programmes (Activities 4, 5, 6, 7).

5/ Positive Impacts: Dedicated website/social media accounts providing communities with affordable and accessible platforms for communicating among themselves, and raising awareness of the element and performances, and for participating in safeguarding measures. Given community

dispersion over large geographic areas, these platforms will play a major role in sustaining communications among community and stakeholders during and beyond the project.

ER:

- Digital connectivity ensured within and among communities, and stakeholders, and awareness of the project and the lahuta more generally raised in Albania and beyond.

13. Activities

What are the key activities to be carried out? Activities need to be described in a logical sequence, explained in a detailed and narrative manner and their feasibility demonstrated. The information included in this section should be consistent with that provided under section 14 (Timetable of the project), section 5 (Budget) and the Form ICH-04 Timetable and Budget. It should include enough details demonstrating that the budget amounts and descriptions included in Form ICH-04 Timetable and Budget are appropriate.

Not fewer than 300 or more than 1000 words

Activity 1:

1.1 MECI to sub-contract the FA to (Year 1):

- Establish the COL.
- Engage a full-time Project Coordinator and one part-time trainee from the communities.
- Purchase equipment for the COL and develop a detailed programme for the project activities.
- Establish the Steering Committee for the Lahuta (SCL) comprising 11 members – six from communities - and five from national cultural institutions under the MECI and the Academy of Sciences of Albania.

1.2 FA to sub-contract the COL to work with the SCL and:

- Organize 2 x 1-day meetings (Years: 1,2,3) each (6 in total) in the regions (locations to be decided) :
 - Meeting 1 (Year 1): Launch the project and present SCL members, the detailed work programme/ hold a forum for communities and stakeholders: a refresher on the 2003 Convention.
 - Meeting 2 (Year 1): Project progress/a capacity-building forum
 - Meetings 3-4 (Year 2): Project monitoring/capacity-building forum
 - Meetings 5-6 (Year 3): Project monitoring (1st meeting) and evaluation meeting (2nd meeting).

Note: COL will be based in the FA Offices in Tirana, facilitating:

- More direct access to municipalities from Tirana (rather than crossing northern regions);
- Proximity to MECI, NCTA, NRICH offices.

Activity 2: Documentation / cultural mapping (Years 1,2,3).

COL to:

- Contract one expert to accompany community-based cultural mapping of lahuta practitioners and their know-how, working with communities in Lezhë, Malësi e Madhe, Shkodër, Tropojë: 2 trips p/a over 3 years.
- Field-based inventorying;
- Developing the electronic database (for inventorying/cultural mapping materials) to be housed at the FA, and managed by the COL; and,

iv. Share documentation and inventory with the NCTA and NRICH.

NCTA to provide support with organizing materials.

Note: All consultations will take place in the communities with their full participation and consent.

Activity 3: Documentation of oral traditions (Year 1)

COL to organize:

- i. Two one-day workshops in Lezhë and Tropojë documenting oral traditions co-organized by COL, in collaboration with communities of Lezhë, Malësi e Madhe, Tropojë and Shkodër, the Academy of Sciences and the RDCHS. These workshops will focus on the evolving cultural meanings and social functions associated with the singing, and how to best safeguard this aspect of the element.

Activity 4: Produce one handbook on each, i) playing, and ii) singing with the lahuta.

(Year 1)

- i. COL to contract 10 practitioners, one academic expert, one illustrator and one graphic designer, to work on drafting the texts, drawings and formatting for the handbook, to be used in the school programme, 'Education Through Culture' (Activity 6).

Activity 5: Develop guidelines for the production and distribution of quality instruments and produce 30 quality instruments. (Year 1)

The COL will:

- i. Contract three practitioners, one expert, one illustrator and one graphic designer to work jointly on drafting the texts and drawings for printed and digital guidelines on the crafting of quality lahutas, sharing contextual information on the instrument's heritage and the natural resources involved, aimed at predominantly 'older youth,' and adults.
- ii. Contract two practitioners to produce 30 instruments over four months, with informal instruction given to those interested in observing, and the process documented by the NCTA.

Note: The handbook and guidelines will be the first of their kind in Albania. Support will be provided by the NCTA for editing drafts, printing and disseminating.

Activity 6: Integrating the lahuta into the Ministry of Education (MOE) Programme, 'Education through Culture' (Years 2, 3).

The COL, under the FA's guidance, will work with RDCHS (the agency responsible for the programme) in the municipalities, and:

- i. Contract seven practitioners to provide 18 days of instruction p/year over two years on playing and singing with the element, guiding them to prepare teaching content for integration, drawing on the handbook and guidelines produced in Activities 4 and 5.

Activity 7: Annual summer school workshops (Year 2, 3)

The COL under FA's guidance will be contracted to prepare:

- i. Three five-day hands-on workshops to be held annually over 2 years during the summer holidays in Lezhë, Tropojë and Shkodër (Malësi e Madhe participants to join in Shkodër) respectively, with 15 students per workshop and parents invited to attend. Topic will be playing, singing and making the lahuta.

Activity 8: Develop COL Website/ social media platforms, organize public performances (Years 1,2,3)

The FA will contract the COL to:

- i. Develop and manage a free Wordpress Website, including social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, X, Spotify, LinkedIn, Youtube) to share knowledge, build capacities, organize events and raise awareness within and beyond practitioner communities, with a portal for community members to give feedback and communicate about the project activities.
- ii. Engage one graphic designer and one IT engineer to support the Website set up.

The Website and digital platforms will provide ongoing guidance throughout the project and:

- Identify opportunities for performances, whether informal ones in communities or public performances during events, to create opportunities for transmission and awareness raising.
- Facilitate community engagement with the organizers of the biannual *Folk Festival Festivali i rapsodëve*, held in Lezhë (included in the corresponding USL nomination and funded by the State) to support the practitioners' involvement and promote the event.

Activity 9: Festival *Folk Festival Festivali i rapsodëve* in Lezhë (Year 3)

i. COL to support practitioners (including youth trained in the project activities), in performing during the festival, with the National Centre of Traditional Activities, the event organizer, arranging the audio-visual documentation of the event and performances with community participation, to contribute to the electronic database, COL website and other future awareness-raising publications.

Activity 10: 6-monthly Monitoring and Evaluations with two external experts: narrative and financial reporting (Years 1 – 3)

MECI to engage:

i. One external expert to conduct six-monthly monitoring missions to the regions and Tirana to meet with practitioners, community members, the FA, COL and national organisations and other stakeholders, including participating schools, parents and children, and to prepare/update narrative reports submitted to MECI and UNESCO.

ii. Concurrently, a financial expert will prepare corresponding financial evaluations for submission to UNESCO.

FA will support and provide information as required for each expert's reports.

14. Timetable of the project

Attach a month-by-month timetable for the proposed activities, using the timetable included in the Form **ICH04 Timetable and Budget**.

The information provided should be coherent with the detailed activities and their sequences as included under section 13 (Activities). Please note that the activities can only begin approximately three months after approval of the request, at the earliest.

The information provided should also be in conformity with the budget overview in section 5. Please note that assistance and service from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund can only cover a period of up to thirty-six months.

timetable attached

15. Community involvement

Identify clearly the community(ies), group(s) or, if appropriate, individuals concerned with the proposed project, including the role of gender. Describe the mechanisms for fully involving them in the preparation of the request as well as in the implementation of all the proposed activities and in their evaluation and follow-up. This section should describe not only the participation of the communities as beneficiaries of the project, but also their active participation in the project design; their perspectives and aspirations should be fully reflected in the proposed project.

Not fewer than 300 or more than 500 words

The lahuta practitioners and communities reside primarily in north and northwestern Albania in the municipalities of Lezhë, Shkodër, Tropojë, and Malësi e Madhe, as well as in the towns of Milot, Koplik, and Bajram Curr. A smaller numbers of practitioners live in Tirana and elsewhere in Albania. Others are among the diaspora. Prominent singers and musicians, male and female, predominantly elderly and middle-aged, include among others Jonuz Delaj, Pretash Nilaj, Lumturije Nonaj, Dila Vaca, Shpresa Gjerka, Pjetër Matusha, Lulash Pllumi, Shaban Zenelaj, Ramë Dollapi, and Idriz Zhuja. Additionally, there are others who engage in music privately within family or social settings. Recognized luthiers such as Marash Bala and Luigj Gjerka, who both sing and play the instrument, craft instruments primarily from home-based workshops.

Other individuals concerned with the project are the team of Albanian researchers from the Academy of Sciences, notably Professors Tole and Sinani and cultural anthropologists Dr Armanda Hysa and Dr Rigels Halili. This team, supported by funding from the Albanian American Development Foundation and the MECI, conducted numerous field trips to the communities from 2019-2023, in response to their requests for support in preparing this project. It was initiated by lahuta practitioners and concerned communities through support requests made over several years. Initially ad hoc, these requests gained momentum gradually through various channels, including discussions with local authorities and the use of diverse platforms such as festivals, radio, and televised performances.

The field trips, carried out with the support of experts, facilitated focus groups and informal gatherings with community members. More precisely, community-based inventorying took place when the COVID-19 restrictions eased in various municipalities throughout July, August, and September in 2021. Subsequent trips were made to Shkodër in November 2021 and March 2023 for final input gathering on the safeguarding plan and project proposal activities. Final field trips were conducted in August 2023 to ensure all consents were collected in Shkodër, Koplik, Lezhë, and Malësi e Madhe.

During these consultations, community members input shaped the safeguarding activities, emphasizing the need for support in coordinating activities. Limited transportation options and digital capacities were highlighted as significant challenges, along with financial constraints. Therefore, the project's initial activities involve establishing the SCL and the COL, which will receive operational guidance from the Fondazione Arte.

The main mechanisms for community involvement in implementation will be:

- The SCL: the majority of members will be from the communities, giving voice to practitioners and other community members at all stages of the project implementation.
- The COL will be contracting community members to carry out activities and working closely with them on their implementation.
- Project monitoring will be conducted with the SCL involved in all meetings and with community members invited to participate. All outcomes will be distributed to communities through the online portal.

16. Capacity building

Describe how the project may contribute to building up capacities or strengthening existing resources in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Special emphasis should be placed on the capacities of the communities described in section 15 to safeguard their intangible cultural heritage. It may also be relevant to describe the impact on the capacities of the implementing organization or partner agency.

Not fewer than 100 or more than 300 words

Capacity-building is at the core of all project activities, which prioritize hands-on approaches whereby community members learn by doing, rather than through more formal training formats less adapted to the community members preferences as expressed during focal group meetings. Most of the students involved will be from the communities concerned, and the activities are also designed to focus on practical instructions that better engage youth and build skills.

Preparing the handbooks on playing and singing the lahuta, the guidebook on making the instrument and teaching these topics will build practitioners' capacities in developing such tools and teaching, just as capacities of youth participating in the programmes, most from communities concerned, will be built in practicing the element.

The cultural mapping practices and documentation of oral traditions associated with the lahuta, along with the creation of the electronic database, will further expose the community members and practitioners to inventorying approaches, and to relevant national institutions such as the National Centre of Traditional Activities and the National Centre for Inventorying Cultural Heritage.

Within the regions, institutional capacities for safeguarding are also limited. The Shoqata Logu i Bjeshkëve Association based in Malësi e Madh is run by one practitioner, Pretash Nilaj, to provide lessons for youth, but lacks human resources and administrative skills. Involvement in the project will reinforce its capacities and provide teaching skills and tools such as the handbooks.

While the Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage in Shkodër (RDCHS) has a mandate to protect cultural heritage throughout the participating regions, their staff lack experience in running projects on the ground with community participation. This project, and notably the FA staff and the COL Project Coordinator will share extensive experience through the project activities in running cultural projects with the RDCHS, which has the mandate beyond the project to support the COL.

17a. Name of the implementing agency (if financial assistance is requested)

In the case of a financial assistance request, indicate the name of the agency, institution or organization responsible for implementing the project to be financed and contracted by UNESCO. Indicate also the name and title of the contact person and other relevant contact information.

Name of the agency, institution or organization: The Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation

Name and title of the contact person: Mrs Lira Pipa, Deputy Minister of Economy, Culture and Innovation

Address: Rruga "Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit", Tiranë

Telephone number: +355695633423

Email address: Lira.Pipa@meki.gov.al

Other relevant information: ICH Focal Point for
Albania

Other agencies (for multinational files only)

Provide below complete contact information for one implementing agency in each submitting State, other than the agency identified above.

17b. Name of the proposed partner agency (if a service from UNESCO is requested)

In the case of a service from UNESCO request, indicate the name of the proposed partner agency that will implement the project in cooperation with UNESCO. Indicate also the name and title of the contact person and other relevant contact information.

Name of the partner agency:

Name and title of the contact person:

Address:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Other relevant information:

Other agencies (for multinational files only)

Provide below complete contact information for one proposed partner agency in each submitting State, other than the agency identified above.

UNESCO Field Office

Please indicate which UNESCO Field Office has agreed to implement the project and has agreed with the proposed budget.

18. Strategy of implementing agency and/or partner agency

1. Describe the background, structure, mission and relevant experience, etc. of the implementing organization, the body that will be responsible for carrying out the project or the proposed partner agency. Identify the human resources available for implementing the project or supporting its implementation and indicate their division of tasks.
2. Describe how the implementing agency or the proposed partner agency will manage or support the project implementation.
3. Describe, if applicable, the coordination arrangements with any other partners and their responsibilities in the implementation of the project. Identify the human resources available in each of the entities involved.

Not fewer than 150 or more than 1000 words

The main implementing agency will be MECI, as the sole national institution mandated to design programs and develop national policy on culture (tangible and intangible) in accordance with the government's programme, and to monitor the use of public and other funds for cultural development and cultural platforms. Within this mandate, MECI oversees the work of the country's national cultural institutions, including those involved in the present project, notably the National Centre for Traditional Activities (NCTA), the National Registry for Inventorying Cultural Heritage (NRICH), and the Regional Directorate for Cultural Heritage in Shkodër (RDCHS).

In terms of relevant experience, the MECI has collaborated with the UNESCO Category 2 Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South Eastern Europe on two capacity-building workshops in Albania 'The implementation of the 2003 Convention' in September 2015 and 'Safeguarding of ICH and Community-based ICH Inventorying' in June 2019. Additionally, MECI has coordinated and played a central role in supporting the preparation of three nominations to the UNESCO 2003 Convention listing mechanisms:

- Albanian folk iso-polyphony, Representative List 2008
- Xhubleta, skills, craftsmanship and forms of usage (Urgent Safeguarding List: inscribed 2022)
- Transhumance, the seasonal droving of livestock (Representative List: inscribed 2023)
- K'cimi dancing of Tropojë (Representative List: under evaluation 2024 cycle)

The MECI also prepared the Periodic Report for Albania submitted in 2022.

For the project, MECI will assign a dedicated project officer to manage the contract with its main partner, the Fondazione Arte (FA), an NGO founded by musicians in 2017 and headquartered in Tirana. It should be noted that FA was identified rather than an Association based in the regions as no national or civil organization in the northern regions of Albania presently has the required competence in running operational projects with high levels of community participation in the area of living heritage, nor in establishing a community centre, such as the COL. Operating throughout Albania, its mission is to support the practice, know-how, and wider awareness of living musical traditions. Its relevant experience includes projects concerning Albanian music, culture, and education, including the coordination of the ongoing UNESCO International Assistance project in Albania for 'Xhubleta, skills, craftsmanship, and forms of usage', which was approved for funding in 2022. FA is associated with JMI International, a global network of NGOs providing opportunities for young people and children to develop through music across all boundaries.

FA will work closely with MECI's project officer to establish the SCL and COL in accordance with national regulations. The FA will establish the COL within its premises, and engage:

- One full-time Tirana-based project coordinator competent in project management; and,

- One part-time intern from the communities, and based in the regions.

Together they will administer and organize activities with the communities, collaborating government agencies and other partners, including experts and consultants.

The SCL will represent both communities and national institutions, ensuring that community voices are always taken into account. This is crucial, especially considering the geographic dispersion of practitioners and community members, many of whom are not familiar with participating in safeguarding activities.

In order to assure the implementation of the project, the MECI will monitor the activities and partner organizations in their roles as follows:

National organizations under MECI:

Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage in Shkodër (RDCHS): The Directorate is tasked with overseeing cultural heritage programs in the entire northern region of Albania, including the participating municipalities in the north and northwestern regions where the core communities reside: Lezhë, Malësi e Madhe, Shkodër, and Tropojë. To date, its focus has been primarily on built heritage and sites. Therefore, the project provides an opportunity to expand its capacities to support the safeguarding of living heritage. The RDCHS's cultural officer will play a crucial role in supporting project activities, including arranging venues for training sessions and providing logistical assistance to the COL in its communication with community members. Additionally, as the agency designated to host ongoing COL activities after the project concludes, RDCHS will prepare a dedicated space for community gatherings in the final months of the project. This space will also house the electronic database and website.

National Centre of Traditional Activities: The Centre is mandated to support activities for the protection of living heritage, including documentation and inventorying within communities. It will designate two staff - an ethnomusicologist and photo specialist – to support the community-based cultural mapping and documentation, along with the development of the electronic database housed in the COL.

National Registry of Inventorying Cultural Heritage: The Registry will provide support as requested by the COL in any technical aspects of structuring the electronic database, as well as in updating the database in ways consistent with both the requirements of the National Registry and inventorying updates under the 2003 Convention.

Other partners:

Academy of Sciences (ACA): The ACA is the main academic body responsible for in-depth research into cultural heritage and notably historic studies, in Albania. While the present project focuses on the element's living heritage, two academics specializing in traditional instruments and notably the lahuta will be contribute to understanding the historical dimensions that continue to inform the cultural meanings and heritage of the lahuta today.

Shoqata Logu i Bjeshkëve Association (LBA): While this association consists only of a practitioner and an administrator, it represents a significant effort on their part to formalize efforts to arrange individual classes for students wishing to learn to sing and play the lahuta. To date, the activities are limited to individual lessons due to the limited financial and administrative capacity of the founder to expand his efforts to transmit the element more widely. The COL will collaborate closely with the LBA to encourage the Association to build its capacities during the project, with a view to continuing involvement in teaching programmes and other activities such as contributing to the website management and inventorying.

19. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Describe how the implementing organization or the proposed partner agency indicated under section 17 and described under section 18 plans to carry out the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the project and how the communities will be involved in this mechanism. For larger or more complex projects, external monitoring and evaluation are preferable.

Not fewer than 50 or more than 250 words

The MECI, as the implementing agency overseeing the project, will be responsible for monitoring the work of the FA, COL, and all other government cultural heritage agencies involved. This will involve regular meetings between the MECI project officer designated to support the project and the FA, COL, the National Centre for Traditional Activities, and the National Centre for Inventorying Cultural Heritage. The MECI project officer will also attend project activities regularly, with expenses covered by MECI.

The FA, as the partner agency responsible for supporting the COL in running activities on the ground and within communities, will submit quarterly reports to the MECI on the progress of activities and expenditure. These reports will highlight any issues requiring further support from the MECI, suggest improvements to implementation, and provide updates on expenditure.

Community input into the quarterly reports will be collected through various channels:

- The SCL will meet twice annually to gather and present community views and feedback on the project.
- The project's website portal, social media channels, and telephone calls to the COL will be available for those less familiar with digital platforms.
- Informal discussions with practitioners and community members during project activities will facilitate open and informative feedback, complementing formal approaches.

A mid-term evaluation will be conducted at the end of year two during the SCL meeting, and the final evaluation will be led by the MECI. An independent expert will be engaged to assess outcomes and provide recommendations.

20. Sustainability after the assistance ends

Describe how the results and benefits of the project are expected to last beyond the end of the project. If the mechanisms established by the project will continue to function after the implementation of the project, describe how and which responsible body would be in charge.

Not fewer than 50 or more than 250 words

This project constitutes the first set of coordinated activities aimed at safeguarding the living heritage of the lahuta. The skills acquired by community members and the networks developed for the element will have a lasting impact beyond the project's duration, while needing ongoing support. Practitioners and community members will be encouraged to continue teaching, drawing on their networks and experiences gained from participating in and coordinating activities.

In terms of formalized mechanisms established by the project for its longer-term impacts:

- i. The COL will be progressively moved in the last months of the project to the Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage of Shkodër (RDCHS), which in under its mandate for the entire northern region of Albania, will take a leading role in supporting the COL, providing a space to house the Centre, its electronic database and website (hosted in Wordpress without costs). The RDCHS staff will take over the coordination of ongoing activities requested by the community and assume and advisory and advocacy roles for the COL.

- i. Communities will be encouraged to continue working together, voluntarily, through the COL and RDCHS in areas of documentation and awareness raising, using the website and digital platforms established for the project.
- i. The lahuta will remain part of the MOE programme 'Education through Culture', with MECI encouraging continued youth participation and the handbook, guidebook and instruments produced serving as long-term training tools.
- i. The SCL will remain in place, with annual meetings to be arranged, supported by fundraising efforts from the COL.

21. Multiplier effects

Describe how this assistance may stimulate financial and technical contributions from other sources or stimulate similar efforts elsewhere.

Not fewer than 50 or more than 250 words

If financed, this project is highly likely to stimulate ongoing financial and technical contributions from other sources, due to the popularity of the lahuta and the reliable precedent that this project would offer for other funding activities. Until now, the element has received very little support, despite its widespread popularity in Albania, as a cherished tradition that embodies cultural values and a shared identity. Acceptance of the project for funding by UNESCO would provide a more visible platform – notably through the COL - for the element within the northern and north Albania and beyond, and offer reassurance to donors that there are existing structures and practitioners that can support ongoing activities.

The focus on transmission to youth through educational programmes could also be important for attracting additional contributions, given its integration into an already successful State run 'Culture for Education Programme' and the possibilities for expansion to other regions, and the priority given by many funding sources when it comes to education as a priority.

Moreover, by developing an engaging website and social media presence, the project aims to reach a wider audience, fostering interest and understanding of the element. This is crucial for attracting greater interest from potential donors or collaborators.

Lastly, the pragmatic, modest, and achievable scale of the project activities will hopefully serve as a model for other communities and states with limited resources, encouraging broader adoption of similar initiatives.

22. Contact person for correspondence

22.a. Designated contact person

Provide the name, address and other contact information of a single person responsible for all correspondence concerning the request.

For multinational requests, provide complete contact information for one person designated by the States Parties as the main contact person for all correspondence relating to the request.

Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Mrs

Family name: Pipa

Given name: Lira

Institution/position: Deputy Minister of Economy, Culture and Innovation

Address: Rruga "Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit", Tiranë

Telephone number: +355695633423

Email address: Lira.Pipa@meki.gov.al ; Lirapipa@gmail.com

Other relevant information: ICH Focal Point for Albania

22.b. Other contact persons (for multinational files only)

Provide below complete contact information for one person in each submitting State, other than the primary contact person identified above.

23. Signature(s) on behalf of the State Party(ies)

The request should be signed by an official empowered to do so on behalf of the State Party, and should include his or her name, title and the date of submission.

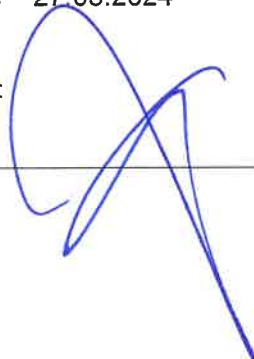
In the case of multinational requests, the document should contain the name, title and signature of an official of each State Party submitting the request.

Name: Blendi Gonxhja

Title: Minister of Economy, Culture and Innovation

Date: 27.03.2024

Signature:



Name(s), title(s) and signature(s) of other official(s) (for multinational requests only).

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