EVALUATION AND RENEWAL

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE FOR INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION (IRCI)

7 JULY 2015
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1-i Time Schedule

In accordance with Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the auspices of UNESCO - 37 C/Resolution 93 (November 2013), the DG will carry out a review of the activities of centres and their contribution, at least six months prior to the expiration of the agreement.

28 February 2015: review deadline

April 2015: 196/EX

29 August 2015: expiration of Agreement between UNESCO and Japanese Government
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**April 2014:** Beginning of preparation by IRCI

**August 2014:** Signature of letter of Additional Appropriation and transfer of funds to UNESCO

**September 2014:** Call for expression of interest by UNESCO

**October 2014:** Selection and contracting of evaluation team by UNESCO

**7-11 December 2014:** Evaluation mission in Japan

**January – February 2015:** Additional Online Survey

**12 March 2015:** Receipt of Draft report

**24 April 2015:** Feedback from IRCI, Japanese Govt. and UNESCO

**29 May 2015:** Receipt of Final report

Evaluation Report will be presented to 197/EX in October 2015, as part of DG’s report on renewal of Agreement on IRCI. In the meantime, negotiations between UNESCO and Japanese Govt. ongoing on extension of the existing agreement till 31 Dec 2015 or 31 Mar 2016.
1-ii Preparation

a. Preparation of documents

At the C2 meeting in Paris in 2014, it was instructed that the following documents be provided by the Centre.

1. Annual progress and financial reports
2. List of staff
3. List of key publications
4. List of donors and partners
5. Minutes, decisions and working documents of the Governing Board and Executive Committee meetings
6. Report of support provided to or received from Member States
7. Available audit and evaluation reports
8. Account of networking achievements linked with other thematically related category 2 centres and UNESCO’s programmes.
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IRCI prepared the following documents:

1. Long-term and Mid-term Programmes
   (a) 2012-2021 (old)
   (b) 2013-2021 (revised)

2. IRCI Progress Report (April 2012-March 2013)

3. IRCI Biannual Reports
   2nd half of FY 2013 and 1st half of FY 2014

4. PDM (Programme Design Matrix)
   FY 2013-2014 and FY 2015

5. Documents and minutes of IRCI Governing Board Meeting
   FY 2011, FY 2013 and FY 2014

6. NICH Rules concerning IRCI

7. IRCI leaflet (2014)

8. Outline of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage 2014 (Booklet)

9. Organizational chart of IRCI

10. Lists of current staff, Governing Board, Advisory Body

11. Management and Evaluation Structure

12. List of Publication

13. List of MoUs and Partner Organizations/Experts


15. Excerpts from the report of External Evaluation Board of NICH (2013)

b. Preparation for the field mission

- Arranging interviews with relevant stakeholders in Japan
  - Government (MEXT, MoFA, Agency for Cultural Affairs)
  - NICH
  - Sakai City
  - Some members of Governing Board and Advisory Body

- Logistic arrangement
  - Local travel, accommodation, secretarial support and office space
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1-iii. Field Mission in Japan

7 Dec 2015: Arrival of evaluator
8 Dec 2015: Interviews with IRCI staff
9 Dec 2015: Interviews with senior staff of National Museum of Ethnology and Mayor of Sakai City
10 Dec 2015: Interviews with key staff of Agency of Cultural Affairs, MoFA, the representative of Advisory Body
11 Dec 2015: Interviews with key staff of MEXT, NICH, a Governing Board member
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1-iv. Online Survey

After the field mission in Japan, an online survey with stakeholders, collaborators and beneficiaries was conducted by the evaluator.

- Stakeholders, participants in IRCI projects
- Researchers from member states
- National Commissions for UNESCO in the region
- Permanent delegations to UNESCO of member states in the region
- Relevant UNESCO regional offices

IRCI provided the evaluator with additional contact details.
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1-v. Draft and comments

1. Draft report was sent from UNESCO on 20 March 2015.
2. IRCI organized a meeting to coordinate preparation of the comments on the draft report from the Japanese Government, with Government departments and NICH.
3. Comments made by Sakai City, as well as by a member of the Board were incorporated into the comments of the government and sent back to the evaluator on 24 April.
4. Final Evaluation report to UNESCO was issued on 29 May.
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2. Renewal of IRCI

In the evaluation report, the renewal of the agreement on IRCI’s status is recommended, subject to the adoption of the following key recommendations:
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Recommendations 1 and 2

1. Preferably contingent on the appointment of a full-time Director-General with a background in ICH and/or substantial experience working in a research environment at a senior level and whose key performance measures include demonstrable improvements in the visibility and credibility of the IRCI both domestically and in the region, the establish of a robust research network, and sourcing of additional funding/partnership arrangements to promote ICH research projects through the Asia-Pacific region; 

Or

2. At the very least a part time Director-General is supported by the appointment of additional long term senior research staff with demonstrable experience in ICH.
Recommendation 3: Governing Board

3a. More effectively utilized and involved in the robust consideration of the centres program and resourcing.

3b. Board meetings are appropriately scheduled with time to discuss the agenda.

3c. Board meetings are appropriately scheduled with time to discuss the agenda and to review the documents.

3d. A practice of calling for, identifying real and or perceived conflicts of interest is adopted as standard for all GBM.

3e. Consideration is given to filling the remaining position on the Board using criteria that look at gender, regional coverage and ICH expertise.
Recommendation 4: Advisory Body

4a. is appropriately populated with a range of ICH experts from the Asia-Pacific region, and gender, member state and discipline diversity should be considered at the selection.

4b. should include experts from the broader region with a track record in Intangible Cultural Heritage Research and/or substantial practical experience in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage;

4c. is utilized to provide expertise to the IRCI and provide specialist advice via the use of electronic meetings formally incorporated into the annual meeting cycles of the IRCI and Governing Board.

4d. The new practice approved recently by the GB of assigning to a Board member the task of liaison between the Board and Advisory Body should be implemented immediately.
Recommendation 4: Advisory Body

4e. is available as a source of ICH expertise to IRCI staff to utilize in project development and execution.
4f. provided with an operational brief that clearly outlines its function and excludes it from Centre management functions.
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Other recommendations:

5. Commitment is made to realigning the work programme more close to the UNESCO MLA and Strategic Objectives and a RBM Framework is adopted.

6. The NICH develops a comprehensive strategy and timeframe for implementation to ensure the appropriate facilities for housing the IRCI. Ideally this would involve moving the IRCI to a location where it is hosted as an independent centre by a university or other research institution.

7. Progress on the implementation of the recommendations in this report (including 4.1-4.3) and the work of the IRCI is reviewed after 2 years.
Recommendations to the Centre for Improving its Operations

8. Improve the Effectiveness of its works programme and project outputs by:

   a. Adopting a Results Based Management Framework and, at the project development phase, design projects to be consistent with the Centre’s agreed functions so as to align to the MLA’s and strategic objectives of UNESCO.

   b. Establish and grow a cohort of researchers that are affiliated with the IRCI through adjunct appointments;

   c. Capture and report on the publications that are generated by the Adjunct Research Fellows (using this as one of the measures of 'fostering research');

   d. Address the public understanding of its role in order to effectively manage expectations of stakeholders including member states.
9. Build on the success of the Forums by holding them in conjunction with an open conference which focusses on themes relevant to the objectives of the IRCI. The following recommendations should be considered:

a. The conference should be structured so as to be self-funding in the long term based on income from sponsors and delegate fees;

b. Registration fees charged for general delegates can be used to offset costs for delegates from developing nations and to encourage early career and emergent researchers;

c. While the conference should rotate amongst member states as hosts, in order to build the support of the Japanese people for the IRC, consideration should be given to the first conference being held in Japan;

d. In order to secure funding for subsequent conferences a local conference organizing committee should be established for each conference which includes Centre staff and people identified by relevant member states;
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10. Develop communication and engagement processes that:

a. Enable member states and other stakeholders to stay connected to the centre and informed as to its activities and outputs. These could include an electronic newsletter and or the use of social media in addition to the IRCI’s website.

b. Enable timely response to requests from member states for engagement in Centre activities;

c. In light of the outcomes of the survey of stakeholders address as matter of priority the interest from Pacific and central Asian member states.

11. Appropriate and sustainable accommodation is needed to ensure the future of the Centre however in the short term the IRCI should immediately be outfitted with quality audio visual meeting facilities and should also be provided with free access to major electronic journals in a manner equivalent to the major research institutions.
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Thank you