



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Intangible  
Cultural  
Heritage

Urgent Safeguarding

0089600005

ICH-01 – Form

Reçu CLT / CIH / ITH

Le

25 AVR. 2012

N°

0437

## LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN NEED OF URGENT SAFEGUARDING

**DEADLINE 31 MARCH 2012  
FOR A POSSIBLE INSCRIPTION IN 2013**

Instructions for completing the nomination form are available at:  
<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/forms>

### A. State(s) Party(ies)

*For multi-national nominations, States Parties should be listed in the order on which they have mutually agreed.*

Republic of Armenia

### B. Name of the element

#### B.1. Name of the element in English or French

*This is the official name of the element that will appear in published material.*

*Not to exceed 200 characters*

Ashoogh Love Romance: Performance, Music and Text of the Armenian Bard Tradition

#### B.2. Name of the element in the language and script of the community concerned, if applicable

*This is the official name of the element in the vernacular language, corresponding to its official name in English or French (point B.1).*

*Not to exceed 200 characters*

Աշուղական սիրավեպ (Հայ աշուղական արվեստ. կատարողական ավանդույթ, տեքստ և երաժշտություն)

#### B.3. Other name(s) of the element, if any

*In addition to the official name(s) of the element (point B.1), mention alternate name(s), if any, by which the element is known.*

Ashoogh Love Dastan, Bard Romance, Minstrel Tale

### C. Name of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned

Identify clearly one or several communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned with the nominated element.

Not to exceed 150 words

The ashoogh love romances are highly appreciated by all walks of life as cultural values with a strong sense of national identity to provide continuity from times immemorial to present.

Ordinary people and the intelligentsia, professionals and amateurs equally are fond of ashoogh art, widespread nearly in all provinces of Armenia and Armenian communities in the Diaspora. They recognized Armenian ashoogh love romance tradition as an indispensable part of their cultural heritage.

Many contemporary ashoogs belong to the ashoogh dynasties keeping alive family bard traditions. Other well known ashooghs such as Benik from Abovian town, Razmar and Gusan Igit from Gyumri region, female ashooghs Leili, Kaghni, Astghanush from Yerevan, etc are actively involved in urban ashoogh guilds' activities. Under the patronage of the Union of Armenian ashooghs and the Ashoogh School after Jivani they are participating in regional festivals and concerts with special programs including different ashoogh love stories.

### D. Geographical location and range of the element

Provide information on the distribution of the element, indicating if possible the location(s) in which it is centred. If related elements are practised in neighbouring areas, please so indicate.

Not to exceed 150 words

Ashoogh love romance is practiced in all regions of Armenia as well as in Armenian communities of Diaspora. The love romance genre is also present in the neighbouring countries: Iran, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and different Middle Eastern countries.

### E. Domain(s) represented by the element

Tick one or more boxes to identify the domain(s) of intangible cultural heritage manifested by the element, which might include one or more of the domains identified in Article 2.2 of the Convention. If you tick 'others', specify the domain(s) in brackets.

- oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage
- performing arts
- social practices, rituals and festive events
- knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- traditional craftsmanship
- other(s) ( )

### F. Contact person for correspondence

Provide the name, address and other contact information of the person responsible for correspondence concerning the nomination. If an e-mail address cannot be provided, indicate a fax number.

For multi-national nominations provide complete contact information for one person designated by the States Parties as the main contact person for all correspondence relating to the nomination and for one person in each State Party involved.

Title (Ms/Mr, etc.): Ms

Family name: Yernjakyan

Given name: Lilit

Institution/position: Leading Researcher, Dr. Prof. of the Institute of Art of the National Academy of Sciences

Address: 24c, Marshall Baghramian Avenue, 0019 Yerevan, Republic of Armenia

Telephone number: (37410) 522417, (37491) 573237 (cell)

Fax number:

E-mail address: lilituk@yahoo.com

Other relevant information:

## 1. Identification and definition of the element

*For Criterion U.1, the States shall demonstrate that 'the element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention'.*

*This section should address all the significant features of the element as it exists at present, and should include:*

- a. *an explanation of its social and cultural functions and meanings today, within and for its community,*
- b. *the characteristics of the bearers and practitioners of the element,*
- c. *any specific roles or categories of persons with special responsibilities towards the element,*
- d. *the current modes of transmission of the knowledge and skills related to the element.*

*The Committee should receive sufficient information to determine:*

- a. *that the element is among the 'practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills — as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith —';*
- b. *'that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize [it] as part of their cultural heritage';*
- c. *that it is being 'transmitted from generation to generation, [and] is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history';*
- d. *that it provides communities and groups involved with 'a sense of identity and continuity'; and*
- e. *that it is not incompatible with 'existing international human rights instruments as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development'.*

*Overly technical descriptions should be avoided and submitting States should keep in mind that this section must explain the element to readers who have no prior knowledge or direct experience of it. Nomination files need not address in detail the history of the element, or its origin or antiquity.*

*Not to exceed 1,000 words*

Historically Armenian ashooghs had sustainable contacts with the ashooghs of neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, in the cultural context of the Middle and Near East, Armenian ashooghs preserved the musical-linguistic roots of the national art. The songs and love stories of Armenian ashooghs have an Armenian reverberation, they reflect the Armenian nation's life, and religious believes. Ashoogh love romance is a syncretic genre which unites different artistic spheres such as poetry, storytelling, vocal and instrumental music.

Reflecting the cultural values and perceptions of certain social layers of the population, the bard romances stand out in its peculiar figurative and imagery thinking, as well as in a special choice of expression techniques. To perform this specific genre folk-professional musicians need systemized traditional knowledge, ability of improvisation depending on the venue, audience and situation. Traditionally the main function of this genre was the bestowment ritual and the people believe in the sacred origin of the ashoogh's God-given artistic gift. The themes of ashoogh

romances are based on love, supernatural powers, legendary and true stories.

The social function of Armenian ashoogh music can be defined for its long, rich history, which holds a very significant, yet varying cultural meaning. It is also recreational and very popular in contemporary cultural life of Armenian people, although its societal impact varies from group to group and region to region.

Armenian ashooghs have been significant players in the evolution of culture since they contribute both to cultural continuity and, through innovations in forms and techniques, to cultural change. They have been equally appreciated also in regions with mixed ethnic population (Armenians, Kurds, Yezidis, Assyrians, etc), because the essence of ashoogh love romances do not contain any racial, ethnic or religious prejudices.

The heritage of Armenian ashooghs preserved and passed on from generation to generation in oral transmission. Naturally, transformations occurring in the span of centuries cause not only fundamental changes in the traditional forms and in the way of their interpretation, but also partial damages to the tradition of storytelling. As a consequence the contemporary ashooghs prefer to perform epic and love stories in a laconic way: if in the past any performance lasted few days, now it takes a couple of hours. This could be explained by the partial loss of traditional knowledge in oral improvised art and modern tendencies in performing art.

The bearers and guardians of ashoogh music are professional and non-professional poet-musicians, story-tellers and performer-improvisers. The characteristic instruments used by ashooghs are: saz (long necked, pear-shaped stringed instrument played with a plectrum), kamancha (bowed string instrument), tar (long-necked, waisted instrument played with a plectrum), kemani (bowed instrument), kanon (string instrument with trapezoidal soundboard). Numerous collections of Armenian ashoogh poetry are kept in different museums of Armenia and in cultural and scientific centres of Armenian Diaspora.

Among cultural figures of bard tradition an important position occupies the genius ashoogh of XVIII century, virtuoso kamancha player Sayat-Nova ("King of Songs" in Persian), who wrote and performed his songs and poems in Armenian, Turkish, and Georgian. The further development of ashoogh art (XVIII-XX centuries) was greatly enhanced by Jivani, Shirin, Virani from Ani, Zulali, Sazayi, Seyhuni and others, who are truthfully regarded as the founders of contemporary bard song-art. Due to their efforts the genre of ashoogh romance one more time exhibited its viability and development abilities. The compositions created by famous ashooghs Sazai, Jamali, Shahen and many-many others during XX century, deeply rooted in the lives of Armenian people, continue to survive, have newly born interpretations and various manifestations, by the demand of the time, alongside with its traditional forms.

Their works are noteworthy in terms of viewing the development of romantic love theme in the Armenian literature. The different examples of ashoogh romances include wedding songs, funeral songs, lullabies, or the nostalgic songs of the emigrants of the Armenian Diaspora. These songs are an organic part of the repertoire of folk-professional artists, and sound in different social festive events. Up to XX century the art of Armenian ashooghs still contain religious-ideological motives and plots. But from the beginning of the XX it became mainly artistic and aesthetic. The broad audience of ashooghs includes villagers, citizens, and representatives of different social categories, professionals and music lovers.

The Armenian ashoogh art developed its own professional institutions and schools. In urban ashoogh guilds, as well as in rural areas among non-professional ashooghs the tradition of transmitting the skills and knowledge from master to student is still preserved. In the present conditions special courses of teaching ashoogh art are included in the state musical education system. In some departments of Yerevan State Conservatoire, in musical colleges of many regional centres of Armenia (Gyumri, Vanadzor, Kapan, etc) students have opportunities to obtain deep and extensive professional knowledge.

Along with other traditional genres of Armenian art music, the ashoogh love romances are manifestations of Armenian national heritage and cultural values with a strong sense of national identity. One of the masterpieces of Armenian bard tradition, "Ashoogh Gharib" is so dear and close to Armenians, that even in the reality of gradual degradation of ashoogh art and ashooghs themselves in Soviet times got its modern embodiment in the movie of famous Armenian film director Sergey Parajanov "Ashik Kerib". In the book of musicologist Dr. Prof. L. Yernjakyan dedicated to different socio-cultural aspects of ashoogh art important elements of genre coding

and mytho-poetic roots of this phenomenon are analyzed. With the help of fables, riddles, questions-answers, songs and music, secret language and many other means, ashooghs used to compete with each other in public contests. As a reliable source of professional knowledge, musical-poetic heritage of Armenian ashooghs needs to be preserved urgently. At present ashoogh art is in the centre of attention of specialists and different governmental and public institutions support this field of traditional Armenian music, reinforcing the maintenance of ashoogh love romance art.

## 2. Need for urgent safeguarding

*For Criterion U.2, the States shall demonstrate that 'the element is in urgent need of safeguarding because its viability is at risk despite the efforts of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals and State(s) Party(ies) concerned'.*

*Describe the current level of viability of the element, particularly the frequency and extent of its practice, the strength of traditional modes of transmission, the demographics of practitioners and audiences and its sustainability.*

*Identify and describe the threats to the element's continued transmission and enactment and describe the severity and immediacy of those threats. The threats described here should be specific to the element concerned, but not a generic cause that would be applicable to any intangible heritage.*

*Not to exceed 1,000 words*

The heritage of the Armenian ashooghs, the beauty and richness of their musical-poetic language preserved up to present is due to the popularity of this branch of Armenian music. For centuries the large compositions of ashoogh love romances were performed in public places such as parks, bazaars, nightclubs, restaurants, as well as in private gatherings. Almost in every town and village of Armenia ashoogh art still maintains its artistic and performing traditions. At the beginning of the XX century a lot of new works were created by Armenian famous ashooghs. Most talented of them became famous not only in Armenia, but also in Caucasus, Turkey and Iran. In this oriental dominant cultural context Armenian ashooghs preserved the musical-linguistic roots of national art and reveal the melodic richness of Armenian music to the world.

However, the XX century brought its inevitable changes in the traditional ashoogh art. Particularly, in the Soviet period ashoogh love lyrics in Armenia was branded as "temporary" anachronism by the authorities' ideological policies and practices and at times could be found on the list of alienated genres. Under the pressure of "Soviet art" practices the traditional Armenian formats were swept off. The popularity of many centuries old ashoogh music began to fade, the city's centres of ashoogh's guilds and entertainment shifted or closed down. Social status of ashooghs and the attitude towards their profession changed greatly as well.

In the new historical period the stagnation trend in the genre's development, diminution of bard institution's functions and role reached the threatening dimensions.

Another reason for the gradual decrease in the activity sphere of the genre might have been the weakening of religious-aesthetic beliefs and ritualistic perceptions, as well as the policy of its forced eradication.

It was a period of rapid transformation and its effects were becoming widespread. The young generation became more and more alienated from local cultural traditions, which resulted in the identity loss, reevaluation of the social role of ashoogh art and many other society values.

Alternative activities emerged as cities became modernized. Although the middle and upper classes appeared to prefer going to cinemas, theatres, bars and cafes still the ashoogh love romance was not excluded from their artistic and pastime preferences.

In the course of this dramatic transition the canonized tradition of narrating ashoogh love stories found itself under the threat of disappearance. Many traditional ashoogh schools lost their historical significance. As a result many works of Armenian ashooghs, that were highly popular in Transcaucasia and Turkey, survived in their distorted forms and under other names.

Certainly the love stories of Armenian ashooghs, as a significant contribution to the Near eastern ashoogh culture, needs to be safeguarded.

It is worth mentioning that during early 1990s, after collapse of the Soviet Union, ashoogh art

together with other branches of traditional Armenian culture became part of the widespread cultural uplift. In 1995 "Sayat-Nova" cultural union was established, in 1997 - the Ashoogh school after famous Armenian ashoogh Jivani and later the "Union of Armenian Ashooghs" were founded. Some devotees, in an attempt to preserve the traditional performance environment of epical sagas, opened special cafes where only ashoogh music, specifically musical-poetic excerpts of love romances, is performing. Both the performers and the visitors of these coffeehouses pointed out that this traditional genre is still a source of inspiration for arts and music. This is just one of the starting points for creation of an environment for maintenance and viability of this genre.

The Republic of Armenia has included "Ashoogh Love Romance" in its list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, taking certain measures to protect damaged and partially faded tradition. The initial strategy of the State was mainly directed towards organizing special events, concerts and festivals in Yerevan as well as in some regional centres.

These kinds of steps greatly contribute to the protection of the tradition in the new social culture, but definitely are not sufficient to create dynamic and creative atmosphere to revive the whole.

In the current stage of ashoogh art development the traditional forms of its existence are more endangered, particularly ashoogh public performances, the long-lasting tradition of narrating love stories as well as the ceremony of ashoogh contests. The problem comes to refer to the transformations that occurred in the second half of the 20th century and are still damaging the structure of ashoogh romances. Currently more often only short versions and musical-poetic episodes of ashoogh love stories sound in different concert halls, on TV and radio programs. These newly emerged performing tradition of separate excerpts and songs around them could cause enormous harm to this syncretic multi-layer genre. There is a serious threat that the core of the tradition could disappear if sufficient efforts are not undertaken. The mentioned factors and considerations are closely related to a partial loss of traditional knowledge. First of all they concern to masterful possession of complicated forms of ashoogh poetry and technique of creating this syncretic genre, particularly the rules of holding ashoogh contest. The spiritual-ritualistic layer of ashoogh love stories, formulaic expressions that used to shape the mythical-poetic structure were removed and substituted by new structural elements of folk songs. All this modifications hinder and lessen the understanding of the symbolic essence of the genre and threaten the preservation of the performing tradition. At present there are few well-known elderly ashooghs who are familiar with the whole range of specific knowledge and techniques of storytelling art, including the spiritual, sacred and ceremonial characteristics of the genre. One of the main goals of our project is to collect disperse parts and episodes of ashoogh love stories and to reconstruct ashoogh contest scenes in the overall structure of the genre as the most ancient and reliable source of the traditional knowledge. Another objective of this project is to find and carefully record the bearers of that specific knowledge as transferred orally over a period of centuries. Above mentioned approaches to revitalize the ashoogh love romance tradition require purposefully and systematically directed activities.

### **3. Safeguarding measures**

*For Criterion U.3, the States shall demonstrate that 'safeguarding measures are elaborated that may enable the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned to continue the practice and transmission of the element'.*

#### **3.a. Past and current efforts to safeguard the element**

*The feasibility of safeguarding depends in large part on the aspirations and commitment of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned. Describe past and current efforts of the concerned communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals to ensure the viability of the element.*

*Describe also past and current efforts of the concerned State(s) Party(ies) to safeguard the element, taking note of external or internal constraints, such as limited resources.*

*Not to exceed 500 words*

With the establishment of independence we can see an increased interest towards national and traditional culture, including ashoogh love romances. Different social levels of the Armenian population, ashoogh art devotees, scientists, artists consider the genre of ashoogh love romances as an important cultural phenomenon. During last 15-20 years due to the efforts of

different organizations, such as the Institute of Arts of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory, Union of Armenian Ashooghs, different regional cultural centres, especially in Gyumri and Vanadzor, the ashoogh music is getting more attention among professional musicians. In Komitas Conservatory and its Gyumri branch there are Departments of National Musical Instruments and National Song Art where the students become familiar with the repertoire of love romances. On the other hand, the Union of Armenian Ashooghs as well as Ashoogh Music School promotes appropriate way of teacher-disciple relationships, preserving traditional transmission from master to apprentice.

The works of famous Armenian ashooghs Sayat-Nova, Jivani, Sazayi whose songs were highly popular in Caucasus and Turkey, are included in the program curriculum of the Conservatory. They are in the standard repertory of every Armenian musician, and are widely known in every Armenian community. All above mentioned testifies the high status and popularity of Armenian ashoogh music, specifically love romance tradition from late medieval ages to the present. Its protection will contribute to a greater understanding of its value in Armenian society and will raise awareness of the importance of intangible cultural heritage.

In order to stimulate the interest towards the Armenian ashoogh art, its values and social-cultural functions following important activities were done:

1. In 2005 Ministry of Culture and the Institute of Arts of NAS of Armenia organized first conference dedicated to the ashoogh art. The materials of the conference were published in the conference proceedings "Armenian Ashoogh Studies and Contemporary Issues", Yerevan, 2005 (author, organizer of the conference and editor in chief - musicologist Dr. Prof. Lilit Yernjakyan).
2. The Union of Armenian ashooghs organizes annual festivals with participation of young generation of ashooghs and released few CDs.
3. The ashoogh ensemble "Saya-Nova" was reestablished in late 1990th. Its repertoire consists of more than 300 songs of the Armenian minstrels from the past and the present. The ensemble has performed numerous concerts throughout Armenia and the Diaspora-Russia, Georgia, Iran, Great Britain, United States, etc.
4. The book of scholar N. Tahmizyan dedicated to Sayat-Nova and Armenian goosan-ashoogh song art was published in Pasadena, USA (1995).
5. The book of musicologist L. Yernjakyan entitled "Ashoogh Love Romance in the Context of Neareastern Musical Interrelations" was published in Yerevan, RA, (2009).
6. In 2008-2009 in Yerevan and Kotayk region fieldwork was conducted by a group of ethnomusicologists. During the trips series of love romances were collected, which needs to be deciphered and systemized. The informants were representatives of different age groups and were very interested in preservation of their knowledge. Further research and publication of materials is scheduled.

### 3.b. Safeguarding measures proposed

*This section should identify and describe a coherent set of safeguarding measures that, within a time-frame of approximately four years, could respond the need for urgent safeguarding and substantially enhance the viability of the element, if implemented, and provide detailed information as follows:*

- a. *What primary **objective(s)** will be addressed and what concrete **results** will be expected?*
- b. *What are the key **activities** to be carried out in order to achieve these expected results? Describe the activities in detail and in their best sequence, addressing their feasibility.*
- c. *Describe the mechanisms for the full participation of communities, groups or, if appropriate, individuals in the proposed safeguarding measures. Provide as detailed as possible information about the communities, in particular, practitioners and their roles in implementing safeguarding measures. The description should cover not only the participation of the communities as beneficiaries of technical and financial support, but also their active participation in the planning and implementation of all of the activities.*
- d. *Describe the competent body with responsibility for the local management and safeguarding of the element, and its human resources available for implementing the project. (Contact information is to be provided in point 3.c below.)*
- e. *Provide evidence that the State(s) Party(ies) concerned has the commitment to support the safeguarding effort by creating favourable conditions for its implementation.*
- f. *Provide a timetable for the proposed activities and estimate the funds required for their implementation (if possible, in US dollars), identifying any available resources (governmental sources, in-kind community inputs, etc.).*

*Not to exceed 2,000 words*

During last decades, due to common efforts of the National Academy of Sciences and Yerevan State Conservatory certain scientific and field works projects were done. Unfortunately social-political circumstances conditioned by the collapse of Soviet Union were not favourable for the complete realization of those projects. Nowadays the heritage of Armenian ashooghs along with other forms of intangible cultural heritage got its legal support from the state, public organizations as well as from the community and individuals of Armenian Diaspora. Nevertheless these efforts are not sufficient to guarantee its sustained development. The support of UNESCO will raise historical- cultural significance of Armenian ashoogh - minstrels and will pave a way for the evaluation and appraisal of its role in the cultural diversity of the all Eastern bard tradition.

The main purpose of our project is to raise awareness and get support from various governmental and non- governmental organizations, groups and individuals for this traditional cultural phenomenon and to contribute to the protection of its future development in the new social culture.

A set of measures proposed in our project includes organization of different events and activities in performing and scientific spheres, as well as field work. The implementation of proposed activities of the project will require at least two years of intensive work.

For the solution and realization of the primary objectives, the following measures will be implemented:

1. Opening ashoogh music record centres in Yerevan and in Gyumri where few existing recordings of well known masters or talented amateurs will be available for students of Conservatory and non-professional musicians. The continuous playing of recordings, trainings and the application of audio-video means would facilitate the process of perceiving and understanding the spirit of old Armenian traditional bard music. Such a centre will play an important role in preservation and popularization of ashoogh art. The responsible body is the Union of Armenian ashooghs.

2. Creating a website of Armenian ashooghs, where the information about famous Armenian ashooghs and their music will be available. This project will be implemented by the specialists from the Institute of Art of the National Academy of Sciences.

3. Conducting fieldwork (Principal Investigator Lilit Yernjakyan, Arusyak Petrosyan, and Margarit Sargsyan) in different regions of Armenia where the old generation still maintain national cultural relicts. As a result of this type of field trip we will carry out a comparative study on the genre and on Armenian ashoogh institution generally which will greatly enlarge the boundaries of Eastern

ethnomusicology. We will attempt to reveal this phenomenon's genetic connection with the musical-epic art of the neighbouring nations in Iran and Turkey, where the love dastans have a cultural symbolic significance.

4. Creation of focus groups composed of five to seven people, to have the opportunity to share insights, to provide diversity of perceptions. Representatives of different social layers, students from Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory, regional musical centres of Armenia will be involved. The responsible bodies are the Union of Armenian ashooghs and Union of Armenian composers and musicologists.

5. In order to maintain the oral improvised musical tradition, such as the genre of ashoogh love romance, we are going to organize festivals and concerts devoted to ashoogh music. The head of the Union of Armenian ashooghs Tovmas Poghosyan (bearer and skilful performer of ashoogh love romances) and his students from Ashoogh School after Jivani actively will participate in these festivals and concerts. The responsible bodies are the Union of Armenian ashooghs and Ministry of Culture of Armenia. The project will be conducted by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Diaspora.

6. Organizing national and regional ashoogh contests with special programs including different types of ashoogh song art, canonized melodies, special metrical structures and instrumental improvisations. The winners will get certificates and prizes. The results will be broadcasted by special channel of Armenian TV. The project will be conducted by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Diaspora.

7. A collection of new songs of Armenian ashooghs will be recorded by sound recording companies under the support of Hamazkayin, Armenian Educational and Cultural Society, a major cultural organization of the Armenian Diaspora.

8. Organize ashoogh music concerts in small towns and villages with participation of local music teachers and students of Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory. In this matter we will collaborate with the Departments of Folk Instruments and Armenian Folklore Studies. The project will be implemented by common efforts of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education.

9. Organize master classes for young generation of ashoogs and instrumentalists in order to establish new level of performing technique. The responsible body is Yerevan State Conservatory.

10. Organize conferences, seminars and workshops. Main topic and the objectives proposed by our group are:

- a) The origins and performing traditions of bard music in the cross-cultural context of Near and Middle East in their overlapping and yet peculiar reality domains.
- b) Revelation of Armenian ashoogh art's genetic connections with the musical-poetic traditions of neighbouring nations in Iran and Turkey.

We expect to involve the minorities (kurds and assyrians) from Armenia and neighbouring countries. The Institute of Art of the National Academy of Sciences and Ministry of Culture will support us in such kind of activities.

11. Translation, publication and distribution of informative materials (books, booklets, etc) .

All the proposed measures and suggestions will help to maintain the viability of this important national art component and will contribute to its continuity and transmission from generation to generation. The inscription of Ashoogh Love Romance nomination in the list of Intangible Heritage of Humanity will also help to promote mutual respect among the bearers of this traditional syncretic art and increase interrelations as well as interaction among the representatives of different ethnic-cultural societies and individuals.

The Title of Organization - "Ayg" Community Development Foundation

The Title of Project - Ashoogh Love Romance: Performance, Music and Text of the Armenian Bard Tradition

Proposed Budget (30 months)

	UNESCO Contribution	State contribution
1. Opening ashoogh music record centres in Yerevan and in Gyumri (Salary 6 persons x \$250/each x 20 months=30.000 Rental 20months x \$300 x 2 = 12000 Equipment - 3000)	\$45.000	
2. Creating a website of Armenian ashooghs, (-Web-site creation - \$5000 -translation of materials-2000 -equipment procurement-3000 -software provision and installation – 3000 -web-site maintenance - 2000)	\$13.000	\$2000
3. Conducting fieldwork (Lilit Yernjakyan, Arusyak Petrosyan, and Margarit Sargsyan) in different regions of Armenia (3 research fellowsx20daysx\$50per/dayx10months)	\$ 26.000	\$4000
4. Creation of focus groups composed of five to seven people (8 months x 3 trainers/500per month)	\$ 12.000	
5. Organization of festivals, concerts contests devoted to ashoogh music (10 ashooghs x 1000 each x 2 marzes = 20000 3 award nomination x 2000 = 6000 Organization of festivals and concerts = 20000)	\$39.000	\$7000
6. A collection of new songs of Armenian ashooghs and their record by sound recording companies (1 CD album x 1000 replicates x \$ 8 = 18000)		\$18000
7. Organize ashoogh music concerts in small towns and		

villages with participation of local music teachers and students of Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory (concert hall x honorarium for 10 ashooghs x 1000 each)	\$6000	
9. Organize master classes for young generation of ashoogs and instrumentalists in order to establish new level of performing technique (3 trainers x 1500 each x )	\$4500	
10. Organization of workshops. (2 workshop x 8000 each)	\$16000	
11. Translation, publication and distribution of informative materials (books, booklets, etc) .	\$5000	
Total	\$166500	\$ 31000

### 3.c. Competent body(ies) involved in safeguarding

*Provide the name, address and other contact information of the competent body(ies), and if applicable, the name and title of the contact person(s), with responsibility for the local management and safeguarding of the element.*

Name of the body: Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia
Name and title of the contact person: Mrs. Arev Samuelyan, Vice Minister of Culture RA
Address: 3 Government building, Yerevan, 0010 Armenia
Telephone number: (37410) 521225
Fax number:
E-mail address: arevsam@gmail.com
Other relevant information:

#### 4. Community participation and consent in the nomination process

*For Criterion U.4, the States shall demonstrate that 'the element has been nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent'.*

##### 4.a. Participation of communities, groups and individuals concerned in the nomination process

*Describe how the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned have participated actively in preparing and elaborating the nomination at all stages.*

*States Parties are encouraged to prepare nominations with the participation of a wide variety of all concerned parties, including where appropriate local and regional governments, communities, NGOs, research institutes, centres of expertise and others.*

*Not to exceed 500 words*

Representatives of the Ministry of Culture, competent specialists from the Institute of Art of NAS RA and Yerevan State Conservatory participated actively in preparing the nomination file. Important information and materials (videos, CDs) were provided by the Union of Armenian ashooghs and individual practitioners, bearers of ashoogh love romance.

With the support of the Union of Composers and musicologists of Armenia, round tables and seminars have been organized on the current state of ashoogh art and its transmission to further generations. One of the important topics of those debates was the newly born tradition of ashoogh initiation, which "Union of Armenian Ashooghs" started to practice recently. Costumes and instrumental ensembles accompanying the ashoogh music, were discussed also.

Professor of Conservatory, Doctor of Arts, musicologist Lilit Yernjakyán provided extensive and valuable information on the social functions of ashoogh art, specifically love romance performing tradition in the past and present.

Regional musical institutions, first of all Gyumri branch of Conservatory, participated in round tables and provided information on current state of ashoogh music in Shirak, Aragatsotn and other regions.

The Institute of Art, Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory and many other state and public institutions, communities and individuals concerned have provided letters of support for the nomination (see attached letters).

"Ayg" Community Development Foundation will coordinate the project management.

The Armenian Diaspora communities from California (USA), Iran, Lebanon and Syria are highly interested and greatly supported the present project.

Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia ensured awareness of Armenian communities about the nomination process.

Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia is the body with primary responsibility for preparing this nomination and coordinate the work of different stakeholders.

##### 4.b. Free, prior and informed consent to the nomination

*The free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of the element from the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned may be demonstrated through written or recorded concurrence, or through other means, according to the legal regimen of the State Party and the infinite variety of communities and groups concerned. The Committee will welcome a broad range of demonstrations or attestations of community consent in preference to standard or uniform declarations. They should be provided in their original language as well as in English or French, if needed.*

*Attach to the nomination form information showing such consent and indicate below what documents you are providing and what form they take.*

*Not to exceed 250 words*

Many institutions, communities and individuals from Armenia and Armenian Diaspora have

provided formal support to the nomination.

See attached letters from:

The Institute of Art of National Academy of Sciences of RA

Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory

The Union of Armenian ashooghs

The Union of Armenian composers and musicologists

Armenian community in Romania

Armenian community in Gerogia

Armenian community in Lebanon

Lark Musical Society, Pasadena, CA (Vache Barsoumian, music director)

Famous specialist in ashoogh poetry, doctor of philology Shavigh Grigorya

We have agreements with managers of several restaurants and entertainment centres to support young ashooghs in their activities.

The Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ministry of Culture provides finances to fund the Project of craftsmanship of making traditional musical instruments.

#### **4.c. Respect for customary practices governing access to the element**

*Access to certain specific aspects of intangible cultural heritage or to information about it is sometimes restricted by customary practices enacted and conducted by the communities in order, for example, to maintain the secrecy of certain knowledge. Indicate whether or not such practices exist, and if they do, demonstrate that inscription of the element and implementation of the safeguarding measures would fully respect such customary practices governing access to specific aspects of such heritage (cf. Article 13 of the Convention). Describe any specific measures that might need to be taken to ensure such respect. If no such practices exist, please provide a clear statement on it.*

*Not to exceed 250 words*

The ashoogh music performance and ashoogh love romance tradition, being by definition a secular art, have no specific restrictions. All safeguarding measures taken by State and the very essence of proposed project are based on the principles of respect for customary practice of Armenian ashoogh art, preservation of traditional forms of access to it. We would like to emphasize the fact that ashoogh culture does not maintain the secrecy of certain knowledge neither have any political, religious or national barriers. The best example is Armenian ashoogh Sayat-Nova, who wrote in four languages (Armenian, Turkish, Georgian and Persian). The 300th birth anniversary of Sayat-Nova is included UNESCO's anniversary list for 2012.

All proposed measures, activities and research approaches and programs have been coordinated with competent bodies (Ministry of Culture of RA and NGO "Ayg" Community Development Foundation) for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.

#### 4.d. Concerned community organization(s) or representative(s)

Provide the name, address and other contact information of community organizations or representatives, or other non-governmental organizations, that are concerned with the element such as associations, organizations, clubs, guilds, steering committees, etc.

Organization/ "Ayg" Community Development Foundation, RA State Register Agency of  
Community: Juridical Persons N 222.160.00711 (9 April 2007)

Name and title of Ara Gulyan, Director  
the contact person:

Address: Aram Str. 92/7, Yerevan, 0002, Armenia

Telephone number: (37491) 668130

Fax number:

E-mail address: ara.gulyan@yahoo.com

Other relevant  
information:

#### 5. Inclusion of the element in an inventory

For **Criterion U.5**, the States shall demonstrate that 'the element is included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies) as defined in Articles 11 and 12 of the Convention'.

Identify the inventory in which the element has been included and the office, agency, organization or body responsible for maintaining that inventory. Demonstrate that the inventory has been drawn up in conformity with the Convention, in particular Article 11 (b) that stipulates that intangible cultural heritage shall be identified and defined 'with the participation of communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organizations' and Article 12 requiring that inventories be regularly updated.

The nominated element's inclusion in an inventory should not in any way imply or require that the inventory(ies) should have been completed prior to nomination. Rather, a submitting State Party may be in the process of completing or updating one or more inventories, but has already duly included the nominated element on an inventory-in-progress.

Attach to the nomination form documents showing the inclusion of the element in an inventory or refer to a website presenting that inventory.

Not to exceed 200 words

The process of the inventorying intangible cultural heritage of Armenia was launched in 2009, and contains so far a limited number of elements. Ministry of Culture is responsible for maintaining the national inventory on intangible heritage of Armenia. "Ashoogh Love Romance: Performance, Music and Text of the Armenian Bard Tradition" is included in the state inventory list. It has been identified and defined with the participation of the following organizations and individuals:

- Institute of Art of the National Academy of Sciences, which provided information on sound recordings in archival depositories.
- Union of Armenian ashooghs, which provided the list and data (audio and video materials) on the practitioners.
  - Department of folk music of Yerevan State Conservatory after Komitas and Institute of Art of the National Academy of Sciences conducted expeditions to different regions of Armenia to investigate on the level of preservation of ashoogh storytelling tradition and scheduled further research and publications of materials.
  - Dr. Shavigh Grigoryan has provided information on activities and legacy Turkish speaking Armenian ashooghs (more than 600) of the XV-XXth centuries, whose contribution was essential

in the development of ashough art in Near and Middle Eastern cultural heritage.

## 6. Documentation

### 6.a. Appended documentation

*The documentation listed below is mandatory and will be used in the process of examining and evaluating the nomination. It will also be helpful for visibility activities if the element is inscribed. Tick the following boxes to confirm that related items are included with the nomination and that they follow the instructions. Additional materials other than those specified below cannot be accepted and will not be returned.*

- 10 recent photographs in high definition
- cession(s) of rights corresponding to the photos (Form ICH-07-photo)
- edited video (up to 10 minutes)
- cession(s) of rights corresponding to the video recording (Form ICH-07-video)

### 6.b. Principal published references

*Submitting States may wish to list, using a standard bibliographic format, principal published references providing supplementary information on the element, such as books, articles, audiovisual materials or websites. Such published works should not be sent along with the nomination.*

*Not to exceed one standard page.*

Intangible Cultural Heritage Website of the Ministry of Culture of Armenia

<http://www.icha.mincult.am/ashugh.php?lang=eng>

1. Akhverdyan G., "Sayat-Nova: Collection of Armenian Songs", Moscow, 1852
2. Armenian Ashough-Studies and Contemporary Issues, Collection of Conference Articles, Yerevan, 2005
3. Atayan R., "Goussan Havasi", Yerevan, 1963
4. Brutyan A., "Peasant Whispers", Yerevan, 2002
5. Brutyan M., "From the History of Performing Arts of the Armenian Urban National Music", Yerevan, 2001
6. Caucasian International Festival of Ashough Art Dedicated to Great Sayat-Nova, Materials of the Conference, Yerevan, 2005
7. Collection of Materials of the Conference dedicated to the 150th Anniversary of Jivani, Yerevan, 1996
8. Durgaryan K., "The Armenian Ashoughs of Shirak", Yerevan, 1986
9. Goussan Sheram, "Songs", NAS bulletin No.3, 1962
10. Jan J. Ginkel, Hendrika Lena Murre-van den Berg, Theo Maarten van Lint (eds.), "Redefining Christian identity: cultural interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam", Peeters, Leuven/Louvain, 2005
11. Jivani, "Collection of Songs", Yerevan 1955
12. Kocharyan A., "Armenian Goussan Songs", Yerevan, 1976
13. Komitas, "Articles and Research", Yerevan, 1944
14. Kushnarev Chr., "Issues on the History and Theory of Armenian Monodic Music", Leningrad, 1958
15. La musique des goussanes contemporains, Revue Roumaine, D'Histoire de l'art Bucarest

, X, 1973

16. Levonyan G., "Armenian Ashughs and Their Art", Yerevan, 1944
17. Manukyan M., "The Goussans of Armenia", Moscow, 1977
18. Music of Armenia, The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Vol. 6, New-York, London, 2002
19. Sayat-Nova, "Song Collection", Yerevan, 1963
20. Tahmizyan N., "Sayat-Nova and Armenian Goussan-Ashough Songs and Music", California, 1995
21. Yernjakyan L., "The Social Cultural Context of the Oriental Love Romance", "East-West: Dialogues in Armenia", Second International Musicological Symposium, Abstracts, Dedicated to the 1700-th Anniversary of Proclamation of Christianity in Armenia as the State Religion, Yerevan, 2001
22. Yernjakyan L., "The Real and the Mythical in Ashoogh Love Romance", "Lraber" social sciences journal, Yerevan, 2003, N2
23. Yernjakyan L., "Ashoogh Love Romance in the Near East", ICANAS 38, Ankara, Turkey, 2007
24. Yernjakyan L., "Ashoogh Love Romance in the Context of Neareastern Musical Interrelations", Yerevan, 2009 (257 pages)

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

*The nomination should conclude with the original signature of the official empowered to sign it on behalf of the State Party, together with his or her name, title and the date of submission.*

*In the case of multi-national nominations, the document should contain the name, title and signature of an official of each State Party submitting the nomination.*

Name: Hasmik Poghosyan

Title: Minister of Culture of Armenia

Date: 29 March 2012

Signature:

