

REPORT ON THE STATUS OF AN ELEMENT INSCRIBED ON THE LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN NEED OF URGENT SAFEGUARDING

DEADLINE – 15 DECEMBER 2013
FOR EXAMINATION IN 2014

Instructions for completing the report are available at:
www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/forms.

A. COVER SHEET
A.1. State Party
Latvia
A.2. Date of deposit of the instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession <i>This information is available online at www.unesco.org/culture/ich.</i>
14.01.2005.
A.3. Element inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List that is the subject of this report <i>For multinational elements, please indicate the other States concerned.</i>
Name of element: Suiti cultural space
Inscribed in: 2009
A.4. Reporting period covered by this report <i>Please, indicate the period covered by this report.</i>
Beginning date: 01.10.2009. Ending date: 01.10.2013.
A.5. Other elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, if any <i>Please list all other elements from your country inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, together with the year of inscription; for multinational elements, please indicate the other States concerned.</i>
Not applicable.
A.6. Executive summary of the report <i>Please provide an executive summary of the report that will allow general readers to understand the current status of the element, any positive or negative impacts of inscription, and the implementation of safeguarding measures during the reporting period.</i>
<i>Between 400 to 600 words</i>
<p>Suiti cultural space is an aggregate of cultural traditions, which are of significance to Suiti and practiced in an area populated by the Suiti community. Alongside to the traditional drone singing, folk songs and melodies and Suiti dialect they also cover annual festivities, cooking, wedding rituals, tradition of wearing national costumes, and also the Catholic faith. The international recognition of safeguarding the Suiti cultural space has served as the basis for evergrowing self-confidence and activity of the community to safeguard and develop its cultural traditions.</p> <p>The number of Suiti has remained relatively the same as a community consisting of approximately 2000 people, located in the areas of three municipalities – Alsunga municipality, Gudenieki rural territory (or parish) in Kuldīga municipality and Jūrkalne rural territory in Ventspils municipality, however, the number of inhabitants of the Suiti land has a tendency of decreasing, which may be explained by the socio-economic situation, and it affects the inheriting of traditions.</p> <p>The growing activity of the community, and its own ability and interest to explore its cultural heritage, is confirmed by the creation of new non-governmental organisations, which alongside to general preoccupation with preservation of the Suiti cultural space, implemented by the Ethnic Cultural Centre (ECC) “<i>Suiti</i>” and the association “<i>Suitu novads</i>”, promote the involving of the</p>

community, for example, in education and contemporary art processes, researching the wearing of Suiti national costume and inheriting the skills of making it, as well as the acquisition of the Suiti dialect for children of pre-school age.

Children and youth have participated in inheriting the Suiti traditions in different levels and types of education, involving of pupils in researching their cultural traditions. The contribution and initiative of the youth has significantly increased, also the older generation of the community takes more active part in cultural processes, sharing the experience and knowledge they have accumulated. Ethnographic ensembles and folklore groups have a special significance in strengthening the link between generations.

All generations participate in inheriting traditions during annual festivities – Festivity of Saint John the Baptist in Gudenieki, Saint Anne's Day in Basi, Herb Day (*Zāļu diena*) in Jūrkalne and especially every autumn Saint Michael's Festivity in Alsunga. The link that has historically emerged in Suiti culture between pre-Christian traditions and the Catholic faith has become stronger during the last years. It is obvious in religious practices and revitalisation of traditions, for example, promoting May chants in honour of Saint Mary at crosses in farmsteads or at cross-roads, also wearing of traditional national costumes during services and festivities.

The openness of Suiti has promoted the possibility of getting acquainted with their heritage at exhibitions and festivities organised by cultural centres, as well as in digital information resources, for example, www.suitunovads.lv. Several books dedicated to the Suiti culture have been published, and well received by readers and allow becoming acquainted with the life stories of Suiti, their music-playing skills and cooking skills.

During the preceding years the experience of Suiti to determine and protect their interests has grown. A continuous dialogue between the community, local governments and State authorities has been established, and the efficiency achieved under the conditions of limited availability of resources is commendable. The efforts to preserve the cultural space have stimulated the development of new co-operation initiatives of national and international scale, which alongside to mutual getting acquainted with cultures gives an opportunity to exchange experience regarding current issues, challenges and solutions in relation to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH).

A.7. Contact person for correspondence

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

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B. STATUS OF ELEMENT INSCRIBED ON THE URGENT SAFEGUARDING LIST

This report is normally submitted to the Secretariat by 15 December of the fourth year following the year of inscription, and each fourth year thereafter. At the time of inscription, the Committee may have established a specific timetable for reporting that takes precedence over the normal four-year cycle. Refer therefore to the nomination file as basis for reporting on the current status of the element and report only on relevant changes since the date of inscription on the List or since the last previous report. Nomination files, specific timetables and earlier reports, if any, are available at www.unesco.org/culture/ich or request from the Secretariat.

The State Party shall endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals concerned during the process of preparation of each report, and is asked to describe how it was done so in point B.6 below.

B.1. Social and cultural functions

Please explain the social and cultural functions and meanings of the element today, within and for its community, the characteristics of the bearers and practitioners, and any specific roles or categories of persons with special responsibilities towards the element, among others. Attention should be given to any relevant changes related to inscription criterion U.1 ('the element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention').

Between 200 and 500 words

Inheriting of the Suiti traditions strengthens the link between generations, the sense of belonging and personal co-responsibility for safeguarding of the heritage. It promotes involving of the older generation in active social activities by appreciating their experience and proficiency, as well as socialisation of children and youth, promoting the sense of stability and trust in a lifestyle rooted in culture. People of middle and younger generations have significant role in activities related to safeguarding of traditions, by taking active participation in activities of non-governmental organisations (see Section B.3c).

The significance of intangible cultural heritage for the Suiti community is confirmed by initiatives, which may be observed in everyday life, in operation of folklore groups and ethnographic ensembles, activities of non-governmental organisations. Similarly educational institutions and the Roman Catholic Church provide a continuous and significant contribution to the safeguarding and inheriting of cultural traditions. The Suiti cultural heritage witnesses that cultural roots of pre-Christian traditions and the Catholic faith have close and significant interconnection for the community.

The sense of a joint Suiti cultural identity promotes the unity, self-confidence and determination of the community to explore and safeguard its cultural heritage and to develop the local cultural environment. Cultural heritage in the Suiti community is increasingly perceived as a resource for the development, including social equality and economic growth, thus considering the significance of culture for the sustainability of the community.

B.2. Assessment of its viability and current risks

Please 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 and practitioners and audiences and its sustainability. Please also identify and describe the threats, if any, to the element's continued transmission and enactment and describe the severity and immediacy of such threats, giving particular attention to any strengthening or weakening of the element's viability subsequent to inscription.

Between 200 and 500 words

The intangible cultural heritage of Suiti is inherited, however, endangered because of socio-

economic factors. According to the assessment provided by Suiti, several threats to the current existence of the cultural space, to the cultural identity, as well as to the development and welfare of the community have been identified.

1. Reduction in the number of inhabitants is observed, including outflow of the new generation regional centres for the purposes of studies and work. Although they maintain awareness of the Suiti identity, it affects the circle of those actively practicing traditions and endangers their safeguarding in long-term.

2. Inheriting of cultural traditions in family is less characteristic as the living of three generations under the same roof does not serve as the basic model anymore. In turn, education and more active role of schools are emphasised. It stimulates reflections on the formal education content, activities of non-formal and interest education.

3. It is important to promote the availability of information within and also outside the community regarding heritage safeguarding activities, namely through both local newspapers and Internet resources. The use of the newest information technologies is particularly important for attracting the interest of the younger generation.

4. Land selling and newcomers have an influence of two kinds on the Suiti cultural environment. Such inhabitants arrive who do not relate themselves to the Suiti culture and do not establish cultural belonging; in turn, a part of newcomers recognise the special meaning of the Suiti culture and become its active supporters and promoters.

5. For a part of inhabitants safeguarding of culture is not a priority. Accordingly this results in different positions within the community, which manifest as changes in the local political power, its attitude towards the safeguarding of traditions.

6. Support to the economic development of the area is a significant priority of local governments, and, *inter alia*, inhabitants with low income and difficulties of supporting themselves and their family reside in the populated areas. Accordingly it urges the local governments to direct a part of their funding for the social assistance.

7. Economic development of the community is related to the State regional policy where promotion of population density is felt to a large extent, neglecting more distant rural areas, which do not cluster around large regional centres. Similarly such priorities are determined for regional support, not always favourable to Suiti areas.

8. Taking into account the meaning of schools in inheriting cultural traditions, the Suiti cultural space also depends on the State policy of education to a large extent – the provision of operation of such schools in which the number of pupils is small, motivation of teachers, including in terms of financial assistance.

9. Financial support, including State financing, for the safeguarding activities is unreliable and insufficient and granted according to tendering procedures. This motivates the community to justify their ideas, however, it causes unpredictability and insecurity regarding the funding granted and the future safeguarding activities.

B.3. Implementation of safeguarding measures

Please report on the safeguarding measures that were described in the nomination file. Describe how they have been implemented and how they have contributed substantially to the safeguarding of the element during the reporting period, taking note of external or internal constraints such as limited resources. Include, in particular, information on the measures taken aiming to ensure the viability of the element by enabling the community to continue its practice and transmission. Include the following detailed information concerning the implementation of the set of safeguarding measures or safeguarding plan:

B.3a. Objectives and results

Indicate what primary objective(s) were addressed and what concrete results were attained during the reporting period.

Between 200 and 500 words

Primary objectives and activities for safeguarding of the Suiti cultural space were stated in the nomination, and results have been achieved in relation to each of them.

1. To enhance and ensure preservation of the Suiti ICH and its transfer at the levels of pre-school, general, interest and vocational education, as well as through lifelong learning. Pre-school children are introduced to traditional Suiti music, and local cultural studies are established as optional in general education. Pupils are involved in the cultural research work, and Suiti traditions are introduced in music and visual art studies. The camp “*Suitu tradīciju skoliņa*” [The Little School of Suiti Traditions], organised each summer for children and youth, has attracted increasing interest. Meanwhile, folklore groups, ethnographic ensembles and dance groups contribute significantly for bringing different generations together.

2. To ensure urgent safeguarding measures for protection, restoration and popularisation of the endangered elements of the Suiti ICH. The significance of wearing a traditional costume, *inter alia*, for services, has become stronger, and the number of those acquiring the skills of making costumes has increased significantly. Certain traditional forms of music have been revitalised, and Suiti ethnographic ensembles have introduced the use of drone singing in religious chants.

3. To facilitate research and publicity about the Suiti ICH. Owing to the initiative of the community, a massive accumulation of testimonies of the Suiti cultural heritage, including ancient elements of the traditional costume, handiworks, has been commenced, surveying the testimonies kept at Suiti homes, stocks of archives and museums. “*Suitu mantojuma krātuve*” [Suiti Heritage Repository] has been opened in premises of the ECC “*Suiti*”, offering tangible testimonies of the Suiti culture for public display. In 2010 the third international drone singing festival took place.

4. To ensure recovery and restoration of buildings representing historic and cultural value necessary for activities of preservation and popularisation of the Suiti ICH. During the reporting period the renovation of the Alsunga Livonian Order Castle was commenced and the castle is open to visitors, Basi and Jūrkalne cultural centres have been completely renovated, and renovation of the interior of Alsunga cultural centre has been performed, thus restoring significant centres of Suiti cultural life for the acquisition, practising and promotion of Suiti ICH expressions.

5. To ensure long-term sustainability of the Suiti cultural space. During the preceding four years activities in relation to long-term safeguarding of the Suiti cultural space, under the conditions of limited financial resources, were mainly implemented in the field of putting in order of the cultural environment and protection of sacred heritage. Restoration of Suiti churches as buildings of cultural and historical significance and the cultural values therein were supported, and several cultural objects existing in the Suiti cultural space were recognised as cultural monuments.

B.3b Safeguarding activities

List the key activities that were carried out during this reporting period in order to achieve these expected results. Please describe the activities in detail and make note of their effectiveness or any problems encountered in implementing them.

Between 500 and 1000 words

Safeguarding activities of the Suiti cultural space during the reporting period were directed towards achieving the primary objectives as stated (see Section B.3a).

(1)

Pre-school children have opportunity to acquire *kokle*-playing (since 2012), mostly based upon contribution of a local tradition bearer. Alsunga Secondary School joined the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (2009–2011) focusing on safeguarding of ICH – pupils and teachers participated in seminars and expeditions. Suiti local cultural studies were introduced in school curriculum, every year being acquired by on average 40 pupils. Methodical materials and textbooks are currently being drawn up. Suiti culture is integrated in several subjects – the Latvian language and literature, history of Latvia, geography, culturology, housekeeping and technologies, visual art, music, social sciences, as well as class meetings. However, it is difficult to find appropriate time in curricula for getting acquainted with Suiti cultural elements. Playing of ethnographic *kokle* was introduced in Alsunga Music School in 2010 in co-operation with Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, and 8 instruments – *kokles* – were ensured. In turn, the course “Traditional Culture” was integrated in visual art studies, applying innovative methodology.

Each year summer camp for children and youth “*Suitu tradīciju skoliņa*” [The Little School of Suiti Traditions] is organised, and on average 30 children and young persons mainly from amongst Suiti participate therein. The school offers to acquire Suiti traditions and history by going to museums and having practical lessons. The camp has boosted the interest of children and youth, as well as parents.

Involvement of children and youth in folklore and dance groups is active – they are participating in festivities, concerts and competitions. Suiti ethnographic ensembles and dance groups have vast performance experience in local annual and religious festivities and international folklore festivals. Suiti ethnographic ensembles are very recognisable in Latvia. The performance of liturgical chants in drone singing introduced by Suiti has become popular and performed by the ensemble “*Suitu sievas*” in various places in Latvia. New participants joined “*Suitu sievas*”, in turn, the number of participants of ensembles “*Gudenieku suiti*” and “*Maģie suiti*” has reduced, due to the change of generations, and decrease of the number of local residents.

(2)

The summer solstice traditions and festive gatherings, services and concerts have been jointly organised in Alsunga, Jūrkalne, Gudenieki as well as Basi. Country band “*Suitu muzikanti*” was created in Alsunga in 2010, restoring the traditional forms of playing music in annual and town festivities. In turn, traditional ensemble “*Basu suiti*” commenced activities in Basi in 2011. Due to insufficient human and financial resources tradition of playing bagpipes has not been restored, however, certain self-instruction training has been commenced.

Suiti wedding traditions are mainly practised in the activities of ethnographic ensembles. Interest regarding Suiti wedding traditions is observed also outside the community, however, it is less consistent in the community itself, and weddings based on Suiti traditions is rather rare within the scope of the Suiti cultural space.

Creative workshop “*Austuve*” in Alsunga increased the number of looms, traditional costumes are made, including for local dance groups of children and youth, as well as middle generation. Association “*Suitu amatnieki*” has organised Suiti traditional costume workshops – sowing of bonnets (*aube*), knitting of socks, making of beaded collars and wristbands (*dūrgali*). Permanent exposition of Suiti costumes in Alsunga Museum, and several exhibitions dedicated to Suiti handiwork were organised.

(3)

“*Suitu mantojuma krātuve*” [Suiti Heritage Repository] established by the ECC “Suiti” includes the elements of Suiti traditional costume, and on that basis a detailed publication regarding its wearing practice will be issued. Educating seminars and exhibitions of works of Suiti artisans have been organised, including in community festivities. As for singing traditions, the third international drone singing festival took place in 2010. Comparatively small funding was

available for organising it, and it would be preferable to attract wider attendance. The next festival is planned in 2014.

During the last four years, several publications on the Sūiti culture have been issued, namely on *kokle* playing traditions, pupils' participation in field work on Sūiti culture, Sūiti culinary heritage and language dialect use. A catalogue of Sūiti traditional costumes is being prepared, and several videos regarding Sūiti annual and religious festivity – Saint Michael's Day – have been taken and shown on the Latvian Television. List of publications see at: http://www.suitunovads.lv/lv/gramatas_un_publicacijas/.

As for periodicals, a column "*Suiteņu stāsti*" is published in Sūiti dialect in the monthly issue "*Alsungas ziņas*", available to the inhabitants of Alsunga municipality. Cultural events of Jūrkalne and Gudenieki are reflected in newspapers of the relevant municipalities once a month. The idea regarding a single monthly issue for the Sūiti cultural space has not been carried out. However, it depends on the level of interest, co-operation and financial investment of relevant local governments.

(4)

The research and renovation of Alsunga Livonian Order Castle was commenced in 2010, and the castle offers informative excursions. Due to the limited financial resources the progress of rescue operations of the castle is slow, and the premises may become dangerous. In 2010 Basi Cultural Centre was renovated, and in 2011 – Jūrkalne Cultural Centre, in turn the internal renovation of Alsunga Cultural Centre was completed in 2012. Additional funding would be necessary for complete renovation of Alsunga Cultural Centre and to landscape its surrounding territory.

(5)

The intended State programme for safeguarding and long-term development of the Sūiti cultural space was not established, however the development of roads of local significance is planned for the upcoming years. In 2013 an initiative has been expressed to the State Culture Capital Foundation to establish a programme for supporting the Sūiti culture. As regards developing cultural environment of the Sūiti community, restoration of Sūiti churches – Saint Michael's Catholic Church in Alsunga, Saint John's Roman Catholic Church in Gudenieki and Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Jūrkalne – was continued. Community participated in landscaping of the church territories. The cultural values of churches – including altarpieces, chapels, organs, wood carvings, chandeliers – were gradually restored.

B.3c. Participation of communities, groups or individuals in the safeguarding activities

Describe how communities, groups or, if appropriate, individuals have effectively participated in the safeguarding measures. Describe the role of the implementing organization or body (name, background, etc.) and the human resources that were available for implementing the project.

Between 200 and 500 words

In long-term ethnographic ensembles and folklore groups have had large influence on the Sūiti cultural space. Also interest groups of the safeguarding of Sūiti craft skills should be mentioned. In Alsunga – ethnographic ensemble "*Suitu sievas*" (founded in 1955, 17 participants), middle generation dance group "*Suiti*" (1982, 18), children's and youth folklore group "*Suitiņi*" (1985, 8), three children's and youth folk dance groups, country band "*Suitu muzikanti*" (2010, 8) and creative workshop "*Austuve*" (6 participants). In Jūrkalne – ethnographic ensemble "*Maģie suiti*" (1959, 13). In Gudenieki – ethnographic ensemble "*Gudenieku suiti*" (1965, 16), tradition ensemble "*Basu suiti*" (2011, 9), children's and youth folklore group "*Krētainie suiti*" (2002, 15).

Non-governmental organisations have emerged in the Sūiti community, and they take active part in inheriting Sūiti traditions in their own profile of safeguarding activities. The ethnic cultural centre "*Suiti*", founded in 2001 with the objective to promote the Sūiti as ethnic community and the safeguarding, protection and balanced development of Sūiti cultural and historical heritage.

The centre implements a series of activities, and is the main representative of the community in communication with State authorities. Local governments, the area of which covers the Suiti cultural space, are also members of the centre, and in total the centre has 52 members.

The association “*Suitu novads*”, founded in 2007 with the objective to achieve the creation of a united Suiti municipality. Its membership includes 30 community members, and one of its activities is research on the Suiti cultural space. The association is the main creator and maintainer of the informative site of the Suiti community www.suitunovads.lv.

The association “*Suitu amatnieki*” was founded by 13 artisans in 2011. It was created with the objective to promote craft in Suiti cultural space, Latvia and around the world, and to safeguard the Suiti cultural heritage. Since the creation thereof the association has implemented several activities in the acquisition of crafts, and they have been well received by the Suiti community.

The association “Cultural Education Centre “*Riekstīnplava*”” was founded in 2012 with the objective to promote the cultural education processes in Latvia by organising educating activities both for children and youth and for adults and seniors. One of the tasks of the association is to promote sustainability of Suiti heritage. The association is currently working on digital textbook on Suiti culture.

The association “*Spārni Alšvangā*” was founded in 2013 with the objective to develop initiatives for pre-school educational institutions, as well as to promote adult lifelong education. Upon initiative of the association a book for children of pre-school age “*Suitu Miķeliša mazā ābece*” was issued for the acquisition of Suiti dialect.

Significant contribution to safeguarding of the Suiti cultural heritage has been made by parishes of the Roman Catholic Church – parish of Saint Michael's Alsunga Catholic Church, parish of Saint Joseph's Jūrkalne Catholic Church and parish of Saint John the Baptist Gudenieki Catholic Church which contribute to the cultural identity of the community and the restoration of material cultural heritage of churches.

B.3d. Timetable and budget

Indicate in a timetable when each activity was implemented and the funds that were used for its implementation, identifying the source of funding for each (governmental sources, in-kind community inputs, etc.).

Between 200 and 500 words

Timetable and budget are indicated in conformity to the safeguarding plan included in the nomination (2009) for the implementation of intended objectives and activities respectively.

Nr.	Activities	Timetable	Budget EUR ^{1, 2}
1.	Objective: to enhance and ensure preservation of the Suiti intangible cultural heritage and its transfer at the levels of preschool, general, interest and vocational education, as well as through lifelong learning.		
1.1.	To ensure that children are taught to play the <i>kokle</i> at the preschool level.	Since 2012	Community contribution ³
1.2.	Participation of Alsunga Secondary School in the UNESCO Associated School Project.	2009–2011	Community contribution, budget of Alsunga municipality and Alsunga Secondary School, 1 729 – LNC for UNESCO
1.3.	To launch a new curriculum designed for playing traditional musical instruments at Alsunga Music School.	Starting from 2009/2010 study year	Budget of Alsunga municipality, 590 – SCCF
1.4.	To develop and introduce a special curriculum focusing on local life and intangible cultural heritage at Suiti community schools.	Starting from 2010/2011 study year	Community contribution, 5 711 – Alsunga municipality, 211 – association „Spārni Alšvangā”, 1 969 – State budget of the Republic of Latvia, 3 660 – State earmarked grant, 569 – LNC for UNESCO, 33 478 – ERDF.
1.5.	To integrate elements of Suiti culture into subjects of the existing curricula (history, music, etc.) at Suiti community	Starting from 2010/2011 study year	Budget of Alsunga Secondary School

¹ Abbreviations used: LNC for UNESCO – Latvian National Commission for UNESCO, SCCF – State Culture Capital Fund, ERDF – European Regional Development Fund, ECC „Suiti” – Ethnic Culture Centre “Suiti”, SIHP – State Inspection for Heritage Protection, EU – European Union (funds).

² The budget is indicated by recalculating LVL to EUR (currency exchange rate EUR, 0.702804) rounding up to full EUR and displaying the total amount for a reporting period. In expenditure positions where it was not possible to indicate precise amount of financing (for example, the integration of Suiti traditions in the activity of educational institutions), the provider of financial contribution is specified.

³ Involvement of the community not financially compensated is indicated in such manner hereinafter. Upon proposal by the community such contribution of work is not converted in terms of money because it cannot be entirely measurable, besides the meaning of the contribution is not material, but personal participation of particular persons.

B.3e. Overall effectiveness of the safeguarding activities

Provide an overall assessment of the effectiveness of the activities taken to achieve the expected result and of the efficiency of use of funds for implementing the activities. Please indicate how the activities contributed better to achieving the results and whether other activities could have contributed better to achieving the same results. Also indicate whether the same results could have been achieved with less funding, whether the human resources available were appropriate and whether communities, groups and individuals could have been better involved.

Between 200 and 600 words

After the nomination was inscribed in the UNESCO Urgent Safeguarding List, the safeguarding activities have significantly complemented each other, and mutual stimulation for new initiatives was observed – non-governmental organisations have become more active, home production develops, etc. Suiti have strived to put their knowledge and skills to use, for example, in the field of education and research, in making of traditional costumes, playing instruments, etc. Also the skills in project development and attraction of investments have improved, as well as ability of the community to determine priorities, ideas and to attract funding for implementation.

During the preceding years Suiti have established co-operation with other communities in Latvia (for example, with Rucava women in acquisition of traditional handiwork) and outside Latvia (particularly with Kihnu cultural space and Seto community in Estonia). Such co-operation has become a valuable gain for getting-to-know of cultures, exchange of experience and strengthening of the community, as well as attracting international funding.

Although the funding attracted during the reporting period did not reach the planned amount, the contribution of the implemented activities for safeguarding of the Suiti cultural space should be recognised. Taking into account the limitedness of the financial resources available and the general competition for attracting funding for cultural projects, the utilisation of the funding was as efficient as possible, and majority of activities was based on self-investment by community members, and the same results could not have been achieved utilising smaller amount of resources. The results of safeguarding activities were influenced by several challenges.

Human resources of the community are limited, and contribution of each person is significant. Therefore, the inability of any person to continue work is a loss for the process of inheriting. People outside the community were engaged in implementation of individual activities (for example, teaching of *kokle*-playing in Alsunga Music School, seminars with participation of experts regarding traditional costumes, etc.), however, the motivation for their contribution is less enduring, and accordingly the community chose to sustain its own human resources and also to involve them, for example, in educational initiatives (*kokle*-playing in Alsunga pre-school education).

In order to safeguard the Suiti cultural space it is particularly important to involve children and youth in inheriting traditions where the role of the family is gradually taken over by the education. It is necessary to attract and hold the interest of children and youth according to their age, taking into consideration new methods of education, and also the possibilities offered by new information technologies. It is planned to activate the ECC "*Suiti*" Internet site and to create a joint electronically available activity plan for safeguarding of the Suiti cultural space.

It is necessary to ensure succession for the planned activities. If an activity commenced is not continued due to financial or other considerations, it cannot achieve the anticipated result. Thus, for example, in case of Suiti municipality studies the initial financial support for the development of a curriculum is still pending for continuation in the form of publishing a textbook, therefore, activities do not have immediate efficient yield and their implementation process is lengthy and gradual.

The heritage safeguarding activities implemented by the community are mainly based on specific and short-term activities' projects, with an accordingly focused financial investment. It

allows carrying out of individual initiatives, however, a more stable and financially more extensive support programme would be preferable for purposeful long-term safeguarding of the Suiti cultural space, which would promote significance of safeguarding the cultural space and provide the community with an opportunity of planning its development in a more far-reaching way.

B.4. Community participation

Please describe the participation of communities, groups and individuals in safeguarding the element and their commitment to its further safeguarding.

Between 200 and 500 words

Safeguarding of the Suiti cultural space is based on the initiative and contribution of the community. Although not whole community is active in safeguarding cultural identity and traditions, the community has interest in the implemented initiatives – celebration of traditional festivities and religious festivities, traditional music concerts, handiwork workshops, exhibitions, etc. New non-governmental organisations, for example, the association “*Suitu amatnieki*”, the association “Cultural Education Centre “*Riekstīņplava*”” and the association “*Spārni Alšvangā*”, interest groups, as well as the creative workshop “*Austuve*” and country band were founded. Their activity includes joint playing music, improvement of craft skills, particularly making of the Suiti traditional costume. Linking of traditions and contemporary cultural processes is also the result of active work of non-governmental organisations in developing the cultural environment. The investment of non-governmental organisations may be observed in research development, and the community has become the most significant explorer of its culture. For particular commitment to the safeguarding of the Suiti cultural space, in 2011 Grigorijs Rozentāls, leader of the association “*Suitu novads*”, and previously – recognised tradition bearers of the community Ilga Leimane in 2009 and Lidija Jansone in 2008 – received the Order of Three Stars of the Republic of Latvia.

The Roman Catholic Church and particularly the dean of Alsunga, Jūrkalne and Gudenieki parishes Andris Vasiļevskis is important for the cultural identity and cultural environment of the community, promoting the involvement of the community in nurturing traditions and the environment (May chants at crosses, restoration of the old crosses and making and erecting of new crosses, involving of youth in putting in order of the surroundings of a church, personal professional advice in textile arts and improvement of weaving skills, promotion of wearing the national costume, etc.). In 2013 the dean received the Annual Cultural Heritage Award of Latvia in nomination “*Labākais saimnieks*” [Best Host]. The support of the Roman Catholic Church has stimulated firmer incorporation of Suiti cultural traditions in religious practices of the community. i.e., the drone singing practised by Suiti has become an essential part in catholic services in the Suiti community and the traditional chant is used as the basis for chanting religious texts. Suiti have also performed in churches and services elsewhere in Latvia, and in autumn 2013 such practice was highly appreciated by the archbishop-metropolitan of the Roman Catholic Church in Latvia Zbignevs Stankevičs who visited the Suiti community for the first time in Saint Michael's festivity and encouraged to appreciate the link between traditions and creativity.

The Suiti are persistently determined to safeguard their cultural space. ECC “*Suiti*” initiated community discussions on further safeguarding priorities, and a community plan for subsequent years was drawn up. Concurrently to remaining safeguarding priorities (activities of ethnographic ensembles, interest groups, drone singing festival, etc.), several additional activities are intended (acquisition and development of playing bagpipes, publishing of Suiti cultural space textbook, creation of an open-air museum, development of the infrastructure, etc.), as well as entirely new initiatives (for example, development of Suiti craft product brand).

B.5. Institutional context

Please report on the institutional context for the element inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, including:

- a. the competent body(ies) involved in its management and/or safeguarding;
b. the organization(s) of the community or group concerned with the element and its safeguarding.

The institutional context of safeguarding the Suiti cultural space should be viewed in two basic levels – State and community, including local government, level, and institutions with the relevant functions and competences are involved in each of them.

Responsible State administrative institutions

UNESCO Convention for the safeguarding of the ICH, including preoccupation with elements included in international lists, is within the competence of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia (www.km.gov.lv). The Latvian National Centre for Culture (www.lnkc.gov.lv) is subordinated to the Minister for Culture, and one of directions of its operation is to implement the State policy in the field of ICH, and it supervises cultural education issues. In turn, implementation of the Convention and safeguarding of ICH is promoted by the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO (www.unesco.lv), providing support to policy-making, activities related to safeguarding the heritage thereof. The work of educational institutions is of great importance to safeguarding of the Suiti cultural space, thus co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia (www.izm.gov.lv) and the National Centre for Education (www.visc.gov.lv) subordinated thereto was established.

The main instrument of State financial support available for safeguarding activities of ICH is the State Culture Capital Foundation (www.kkf.lv), which has a separate traditional culture sector that examines projects dedicated to safeguarding of ICH. Support is also provided through regional programmes of project competitions, which are directed directly towards local cultural activities in regions of Latvia. Taking into account the link between intangible and tangible cultural heritage in safeguarding the Suiti cultural space, including preoccupation with cultural environment and safeguarding of cultural monuments, the State Inspection for Heritage Protection (www.mantojums.lv) should also be mentioned, and its task is to implement the State policy in the field of material cultural heritage and accordingly preoccupation with activities related to heritage protection.

Also such State administrative institutions should be mentioned in addition to State authorities competent in the field of culture, which are of significance to regional development and directly influence the areas of the Suiti cultural space, i.e., the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (www.varam.gov.lv), which develops the State policy in regional development issues, the Ministry of Transport (www.sam.gov.lv), the competence of which includes policy-making and resulting decisions in road infrastructure issues, as well as the Ministry of Agriculture (www.zm.gov.lv) and the Rural Support Service (www.lad.gov.lv) subordinated thereto.

Institutions of significance within the community

Several groups of institutions provide significant contribution to safeguarding the Suiti cultural space within the community, confirming the significance of non-governmental organisations and interest groups, local governments and religious organisations accordingly.

Currently several non-governmental organisations are actively involved in safeguarding of ICH of the Suiti cultural space, and particularly the contribution of the ethnic culture centre “*Suiti*” and the association “*Suitu novads*” (www.suitunovads.lv) should be mentioned in implementing the measures for safeguarding and development of the cultural space and in protecting Suiti interests in State and local scale policy-making. During the preceding years new Suiti non-governmental organisations have been created in addition to the referred-to organisations, and they purposefully enrich the range of activities of Suiti culture (see Section B.3c of the report).

The Suiti cultural space is located in the territories of three local governments: in Alsunga

municipality (www.alsunga.lv), Jūrkalne rural territory (or parish) of Ventspils municipality and Gudenieki rural territory (or parish) of Kuldīga municipality, and the contribution of each referred-to local government is the provision of activities of educational institutions, support to interest education and culture events, as well as contribution to municipality infrastructure.

It is important to mention the contribution of Roman Catholic Church in Latvia (www.catholic.lv) and particularly of the dean of Alsunga, Jūrkalne and Gudenieki parishes in safeguarding the Suiti cultural space and strengthening the cultural identity of the community. Residents view the support of the church with great appreciation and gratitude.

After inscribing the Suiti cultural space in the international List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, in January 2010 several stakeholders involved signed the letter of intent on co-operation in safeguarding of the Suiti cultural space, and it was the ethnic cultural centre “*Suiti*”, Alsunga Municipality Council, Kuldīga Municipality Council, Ventspils Municipality Council, the Ministry of Culture and the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO. It is intended to supplement the letter of intent by involving several partners, including the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development and the Ministry of Transport.

B.6. Participation of communities in preparing this report

Describe the measures taken to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals concerned during the process of preparation of this report.

Between 150 and 250 words

The Suiti community was involved in drawing up of this report from the beginning and continuously during revision thereof. The report is based on information provided in the report prepared by the ECC “*Suiti*” on activities, which were implemented for safeguarding of the Suiti cultural space during the time period from 2009 until 2013, on partners involved, funding and evaluation of results.

Report discussions gathered Suiti community (representatives of non-governmental organisations and active community members), Roman Catholic Church dean, local governments (Alsunga, Ventspils and Kuldīga municipalities) and representatives of State authorities (the Ministry of Culture, the Latvian National Centre for Culture, the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO, and the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development). In 2013 meetings took place on 7 February 2013, 23 April 2013, 18 June 2013, and 27 September 2013. The meeting in Alsunga on 23 April 2013 was as a visiting meeting of the Education, Culture and Science Commission of the parliament *Saeima* of the Republic of Latvia. In turn on 21 May 2013 meeting with the referred-to commission took place in Riga.

Prior to signing, the report was accessible in the Latvian language to the Suiti community for exchange of opinions. In order to discuss its first revision, meetings of the Suiti community were organised in Alsunga, Jūrkalne and Gudenieki on 17 and 18 October 2013. The opinion and proposals of the community were taken into account in drawing up the final revision of the report.

C. SIGNATURE ON BEHALF OF THE STATE PARTY

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

Name: Dace Melbārde

Title: Minister for Culture of the Republic of Latvia

Date: 14.12.2013.

Signature: