UNESCO Sub-regional Symposium for the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Cultural Heritage in Southeast Asia
19-21 November 2014, Bangkok, Thailand.

Country Report
LAOS

Viengkeo SOUKSAVATDY
Deputy Director General, Heritage Department
1. Information on the implementation of the UNESCO Convention of 1970

Laos is a signatory of the three most essential UNESCO Conventions, but still not become party of the 1970 Convention yet.
- In May 2008 with this regard a first National Workshop was jointly organized in Vientiane by MoICT and MoFA under the patronage of the UNDP International Law Project entitled “Cultural Heritage Protection and the International Cultural Heritage Conventions relevant to the Lao PDR”.
2. Implementation in the national legal system and in the organization of services

2(a). However the country always aware of the importance for the protection measures at the national and local levels by adopting a series of legislations some among them are as following:

• National Constitution (1991), article 19
• Ministerial decree (1994)
• Presidential Decree concerning protection of National Cultural, Historic and Natural Heritage (1997)
• Law on National Heritage (2005)
• Law on Penal (2001), article 112
• Law on ownership (2001), articles 32 and 41
15% reward for those who report the chance finds to the state authority.
5 kg of gold and 17 kg silver items were acquire to the state hand. Over 150,000 USD was rewarded to the family and those who deal with this significant discovery.
2(b). Definition of Cultural Property

Article 2 of the National Heritage Law:

“National Heritage produced by mankind or formed by nature that have outstanding cultural, historical or natural value, thereby becoming precious assets and property of the Lao national community, some of which are adopted as regional and world heritage. National heritage consists of cultural, historical and natural heritage existing in the form of tangible objects, intangible items, moveable or immovable property, and living or non-living organisms, reflecting the history of the Lao nation and the Lao people in each different era.”
2(c). Specialized Units

• Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism is the focal national institution for protection of all cultural properties.

• Department of Heritage
  – Section of Historic Monuments
  – Section of Museums
  – Section of Antiquities
  – Section of ICH
  – Division of Archaeology
2(d). Administrative coordination
2(d). Working Meetings

- customs
- justice
- Police
- interpol
- ICT
3. Inventories and identification

3(a) due to the practical manner the first attempt to document the movable artifacts is focused on the temples as depository of the valuable Buddhist arts, in particularly Buddha statues, palm leaf manuscript...

3(b) national treasure: still not yet in the sense of common understanding

3(c) the object ID is covered the basic data of the object (photo, measurement, brief description...) 

3(d) the classic measures to secure the cultural properties is the physical protection by firmly lock, electronic and human surveillance. The risk preparedness workshop was also organized for the institutions responsible for this matter.
4. Archaeological excavations

4(a) Article 4. State Policy on National Heritage: “Socio-economic development shall proceed side by side with protection and conservation of the national heritage. The State promotes and creates the conditions for individuals, [and] organisations within the country and abroad to participate in the protection, conservation, restoration and rehabilitation of the national heritage in a sustainable manner.

The State promotes research, innovation and advancement regarding national heritage...”
• Law on Environment
• Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)
• Develop Chance Finds Procedure for the mining, dam, and other infrastructures development
• Rescue archaeology
Bronze objects
Stone objects, found by villagers. They were preciously preserved as family heirloom.
4(b) The illegal digging. The treasure hunter still exist, but without success, the violated hunter will be punished by law.

5. Export and import
The control of import export on the cultural assets become harder and harder in the current situation of our country. Though we are responsible for the expertise of the ancient artifacts and issue import-export license of the replica, insufficient number of specialized personnel still be a gap for illegal actions.

Please Visit website Azibaza
SUKHOTHAI THAI BUDDHA

AYUTTHAYA THAI BUDDHA

LANNA THAI BUDDHA

RATANAKOSIN THAI BUDDHA

OTHER THAI BUDDHA

LAO BUDDHA

SHAN BURMESE BUDDHA

MANDALAY BURMESE BUDDHA

OTHER BUDDHA

ANTIQUE BUDDHA'S HEADS AND HANDS
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**Add To Wish List**
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6. System for trade-in, acquisition, ownership and transfer of cultural property

6(a). The phenomena of trading on the cultural good in the country was born from the foreign investor who has knowledge on the arts and hidden behind the art gallery or souvenir shop or handicraft shop. The local market like night market where people tried to sale the handicraft product, but sometime they also sale any old or unusual objects which belong to their family or provided by the third person who is looking for small amount of money for feeding day by day.
6 (b) though we identified the problem, the control should be act jointly with concern parties, in all level and systematically. We do not have inventory of the significant item private owned. 

6 (d) the cultural heritage items can be owned, succeeded and transferred by private, but should inform the nearest relevant authority, the said items can not be traded or exported.
7. Bilateral agreements

No specific bilateral agreement has been done right now.

7(b) we do not allow to export the ancient object, in case of replica upon expertise the real item then we give the certificate and export license.
7(c) Yes in the practice we do have some fascinating cases and efficient cooperation with the neighbors e.g. with Thailand (collection of golden Buddha statues), Vietnam (bronze drum), Japan (stone Buddha head)...
8. Code of ethics, awareness raising and education

8(a) due to the language barrier and publication in local language, the access to the UNESCO international code of ethics and that of ICOM still be limited for the small professional community.

8(b) “One hundred missing objects” series has included 2 stolen Buddha statues from Laos, but is still need more dissemination for wider public.
9. Cooperation with other international and regional agencies

*Police*

9(a) What is the state of national cooperation with INTERPOL? What specialized police services can heritage officials call on for inquires on legal proceedings and punitive measures?
9(b) If a cultural object is stolen, is the INTERPOL database on stolen objects checked? Is information on the persons implicated in the theft of cultural property transmitted to INTERPOL?
Not systematically, in many cases due to the lack of inventory.

9(c) Do members of police services follow a specific training programme? Not really.

9(d) Do criminal law provision allow for the punishment of fraud and theft related to cultural property? Are judges specialized in this field? No, in many cases only collect fine in form of money without serious punishment.

9(e) Does cooperation exist with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)? No
Customs

9(f) What is the status of cooperation with the World Customs Organisation and which specialized customs services can assist heritage officials in preventing the illicit export of cultural property?

Low

9(g) Do members of the customs administration follow a specific training programme?

No

9(h) Is the UNESCO-WCO Model Export Certificate for Cultural Objects used?

No
10. Other legislative, legal and administrative measures taken by the State.

The accession to the 1995 UNIDROIT convention is under process of studying at the Department of Law and Treaties, MoFA