

Reçu CLT / CIH / ITH


Le 24 SEP. 2019



N° 0480





**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS & CULTURE**  
**DIRECTORATE: NATIONAL HERITAGE AND CULTURE PROGRAMMES: KHOMAS**  
**FRANS INDONGO GARDEN, P/Bag 13391, Windhoek, NAMIBIA**

**Namibia Tentative National Inventory of ICH**



ICH: NO	Name used by community concerned	English Equivalent	Short description of element	Concerned Community	Location	Photo
001	Senbahe or/nambah e !Gameb	Damara traditional wedding	Senbahe is an indigenous wedding ceremony of the Damara Community. It involves lengthy consultations between parents of the couple and follows specific rituals.	≠Aodaman ( A clan of Damara communities)	Khorixas, Kunene Region	



002	So-/oai	Traditional medicine	<p>The Swartboois community still makes use of their traditional healers and elders who have knowledge in herbal medicine. They treat different kinds of ailments. The medicine is not collected randomly and is done according to specific rituals. Some of the herbs can only be collected in a crawling position and others in silence.</p>	Swartboois	Fransfontein, Kunene Region	
003	Ozombanda zotjihimba zombazu	Himba traditional clothing	<p>Ozombanda zotjihimba is traditional clothing of the Ovahimba people. Processing of the animal skin to make clothing involves tanning and softening the hide of a sheep or a calf by hands. During the softening of the skin, which normally takes two days one ensures that the skin is laid in the way it can form desirable patterns. The softening of the skin is man's job, but women also help. These leather clothing is worn by both men and women.</p>	Himba	Opuwo, Kunene Region	


004	Oshituthi shomagongo	Marula festival	<p>The "Oshituthi shomagongo", literary meaning beverage festival, is a celebration that unites different communities through consumption of "Omagongo" alcoholic beverage. It is a 2-3 day festival that celebrates a new cycle of crop production. Omagongo is the local name of beverage made out of Marula fruits (<i>Sclerocarya birrhea</i>).</p>	Aawambo people	Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto Regions	
043	Oshipe	Oshipe Rituals among Aawambo people	<p>Oshipe is a ritual ceremony that is performed to celebrate crop yielded during the production season and give appreciations to the Super Natural through the ancestors for providing such abundant crop production. During the ritual performance, ceremony is held to enable the rituals to take place and to celebrate, prove taste new crop production yielded that year. These rituals are performed by Aawambo people within their respective communities. On the ceremonial day, women and girls prepare a range of traditional food and traditional brew. Once the meal prepared, a portion from the prepared food</p>	Aawambo people	Oshikoto, Oshana, Ohangwena, Omusati Regions	

			and brew are taken to the living area (palisade) in front of the wife's sleeping hut where the rituals are performed by the head of the house.			
044	!Hau-oms	Damara traditional house	In short !hau-oms is the traditional mud house of the Daure Daman. They usually build a house with sticks, plastering it with cattle dung and sand mixture. These houses are cool during hot seasons and warm when it is cold. They are however, becoming a rare site due accessibility of some durability in comparison to modern structures.	Daman	Bakanpos, Erongo Region	
045	!Narares tsi sai/gaugu	Harvesting and preparing !Nara fruits	!Nara is a leafless, thorny melon-bearing bush that grows in the Namib desert. It is a valuable and natural used by !Aonin commonly known as Topnaars that lives in the lower Kuiseb valley in the Namib Desert, northwest Namibia. The fruits are collected and processed for food while seeds extracted are eaten and sold as a source of income. The fruits are harvested in the months of August and December, a period that sometimes extends up to May the following year.	Topnaars (!Aonin)	Aramstraat, Erongo Region	

046	Aixan /gana /ob #ans tsi //khasigu	Ancestral musical sound knowledge and skills/  Namastap music 1960's	The AIXAN /GANA /OB #ANS TSI //KHASIGU (Ancestral Musical Sound, Knowledge and Skills) embraces multiple domains of intangible cultural heritage describe the specific traditional music of the Nama people in Namibia. The term ancestral in this context denotes the coming of age of the music and not necessarily the association of the music with the departed. The music is however, complemented by the dances commonly referred to as 'Nama-stap' which literally means the dancing steps of the Nama people. The AIXAN /GANA /OB #ANS TSI //KHASIGU is about the usage of traditional musical instruments: the khab (musical bow) and !guitsib (traditional guitar) which are usually played by either men or women; and the vlies (harmonica) usually played by women which is accompanied by singing, humming and ululating. This element represents cultural practices, traditions and defines the daily life of the Nama communities, one of Namibia's tribal minority groups.	Nama Community	Gibeon, Hardap Region	 
-----	------------------------------------	--	--	----------------	-----------------------	--

047	Sa-i	Traditional Powdered perfume	<p>The Traditional Perfume known as (Sa-i) is a practice that derives from the Nama communities. The perfume is made from !uru and #gae plants as well as urubaba sticks. Stones and concrete blocks are used for grinding and crushing the plants. Making the perfumed powder requires the knowledge and choosing the different plants to make the perfect combination. The powder is used as a deodorizer for beddings and helps babies to sleep peacefully among others.</p>	Nama community	Hoachanas, Hardap Region	
048	Okuruuo	Holy fire	<p>The value and practices of Ovaherero and Ovambanderu communities are centered around Okuruuo (Holy fire) . Okuruuo is placed between the main house and the kraal. It is believed to be where ancestors (ovati) and the creator (omuute) reside. The elder of the house hold called "Ondangere" rekindle the Holy fire every day. This done by the wife in his absence. The holy fire is used for various purposes such as treating the ailments, naming of newly born babies and many more.</p>	Ovaherero and Ovambanderu	Omaheke, Otjozondjupa , Kunene Regions	

049	Kalafo ya kulumwano ha	Treatment for snake bites	People in north east Namibia make use of indigenous knowledge and skills in treating snake bites. A successful treatment requires knowledge of various herbs and behaviors as well as marks left from a bite.	Subia, Few, Yeyi	Isuma Lyabainga, Malundu, Lupara Sangwali, Choi  Zambezi Region	
051	Litembu	Passage rite for girls	Litembu is practiced on the day the girl gets her first menstrual period. The aim of the ritual is for the girl to cross the passage of girlhood to womanhood. This marks the time her mother or grandmother begin to guide her on how to become a responsible woman in the family.	vaManyo, vaMbukushu, vaKwangali and vaMbunza	Hoha village, Kavango East Region	

052	Tama-!xun	Wild melon dance game	Wild melon dance game is a traditional game performed by women and girls. It is performed using a round shaped object "ball" curved by men from a tuber plant known as the wild melon. Women and girls stand in a semi-circle. One woman who holds the ball leads in singing and throws the wild melon to the next person from her right hand side. At the same time they are dancing to the song. The wild melon is thrown in a sequential order, while the man tries to catch the ball. The game stops when a man catches the 'ball'	Jul'hoansi community	Dou-pos, Otjozondjupa Region	
-----	-----------	-----------------------	--	----------------------	------------------------------	---

*Veno Kauaria*

.....  
**Mrs. Veno Kauaria**  
**Deputy Executive Director/Culture Commissioner**

**Date:** 18 - 9 - 2019



## NATIONAL OUTLINE FOR ICH INVENTORYING – NAMIBIA

Reçu CLT / CIM / ITH

Le 24 SEP. 2019

N° 0480

### THE AIXAN /GÂNA/ŌB #ANS TSÎ //KHASIGU

#### Name of the element as used by the community, groups or individuals concerned:

- Aixan /gâna/ōb #ans tsî //khasigu – Ancestral musical sound knowledge and skills (Nama Traditional Music)

#### Short Informative Title:

- Typical Aixan /gâna/ōb #ans tsî //khasigu /Nama music has been played by our ancestors among the Nama community in an exceptional way using traditional instruments mostly by men. The element embraces multiple domains such as Oral traditions and expressions, including language, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and universe and traditional craftsmanship.

#### Community (ies) concerned:

- The element is practiced by the Nama communities of Namibia living in, but not limited to the following regions: Hardap, //Kharas and Erongo. The element is mostly practiced in the //Karas and Hardap regions, where the majority of the Nama people live.

#### Physical Location (s) of elements:

- Hardap region is located to the south-central of Namibia with a population of 79,000. //Karas in the southern Namibia with a population of 76,000, and Erongo to the southwest with a population of 150,400.

#### Short Description of the element:

Aixan /gâna/ōb #ans tsî //khasigu translates to 'ancestral musical sound, knowledge and skills. It describe the specific traditional music of the Nama people living in Namibia. As one of the tribal minorities, the Nama people have their own cultural practices and tradition that define their daily life. The Nama traditional music accompanied by ritualistic dances is played at ceremonies and communal occasions. It is often used for entertainment during communal celebrations, traditional festivals, ritualistic and social

## NATIONAL OUTLINE FOR ICH INVENTORING – NAMIBIA

---

events such as weddings, rain-dances, birthdays and the girl's passage right, but more importantly, it serves the purpose of educating and instructing members of the community for instance, by creating awareness about the environment.

The Aixan /gâna/ōb #ans tsî //khasigu is based on the usage of traditional instruments: the khab which is a musical bow; the !guitsib –which is a traditional guitar; and the vries –a harmonica. However, due to modern development, traditional instruments are slowly but surely being replaced by modern sound devices, electronic keyboards, accordions, harmonica and guitars, which have similar sound texture or timbre.

The Nama ancestral music has a specific sound, texture and rhythm, consisting of a leading melody and rhythm by either a musical bow, an accordion or a guitar, accompanied by a systematic harmonies produced by other instruments such as the vlies, drummers, keyboards and pianos which also requires high skills in creativity and improvisation. Nevertheless, it is not just the skill of playing an instrument - musicians also require knowledge in tuning, maintaining and fixing these instruments. Being able to identify rhythms and harmonies is essential for a traditional Nama musician, as well as the ability to respond harmoniously to other rhythms in order to create a balanced performance.

The music is however, complemented by the dances commonly referred to as 'Nama-stap' which literally means the dancing steps of the Nama people. Dancers play a prominent role during traditional celebrations, allowing both women and men to express specific values through dance moves. Women and men dance in different ways, females dance softly and swiftly stamping their feet, swerving their upper bodies from side to side, thereby calmly expressing their feeling of contentment and excitement; while male dancers dance more actively, stamping their feet energetically while expressing respect and desire for protection towards women.

Representing values and customs, the music and dance also celebrate life and symbolise different areas of life and nature for example the male dancers may illustrate their

## NATIONAL OUTLINE FOR ICH INVENTORING – NAMIBIA

---

engagement with the environment such as the way an ostrich protects its chicks, when they are dancing surrounding the women and the women may demonstrate the harvest of the !nara fruits when at time dancing with !nara fruits in hand and passing it to the next person.

Based on observations, the musicians demonstrates how they harmonise and tune their instruments before they start their performances. The musical bow player plays a tune and the mouth harmonica player plays descending melody several times in order for the musical bow player to identify a desired note. The musical bow player will then start playing melodies and create rhythms meanwhile the mouth harmonica player and the (!guntsib) traditional guitar player will systematically accompany the musical bow (khab). To be a musician required more than just playing instruments or performing. One should have the skill of fixing the instrument, tuning and playing it. It requires a high skill of creativity, identification of the rhythms and harmonisation with other traditional instruments that accompanied it.

Observation of Magdalena Lambert and Magretha Rooinasie played a chord progression of tonic, subdominant and dominant which are similar to the Western music. The music is played according to the middle C range. The mouth harmonica plays the melody and improvisation, while the musical bow (khab) plays the bass and the rhythm. However according to Lambert the (!guntsib) traditional guitar was useful for rhythm and accompaniment. Music consists of horizontal organisation which is played by the harmonica and vertical organisation played by the musical bow (khab).

Ms. Lambert uses her chin to produce the dominant and subdominant notes. Meanwhile the tonic is on open string. The sound of the melody depends on the movement and the position of the elderly woman's chin on the string of the musical bow (khab). She uses her Left hand fingers for plucking the string and a stick on her right hand that she uses to play the string that produce rhythm and sound. Meanwhile the lower part of the

musical bow is positioned on the empty 5 litre tin. The musical bow once plucked, transfers the sound to the tin that is used as an amplifier.

The Nama ancestral music is not static and it has been changing; adapting to the present. However, as indicated initially, due to the recreation of the element by the community in response to environmental changes, the traditional musical instruments are slowly but surely being replaced by sound devices such as electronic keyboards and guitars, accordions as well as harmonicas.

The AIXAN /GANA /OB #ANS TSI //KHASIGU is not formally transmitted to future generations through. The responsibility for upholding the tradition and transmitting skills to the youth lies in the hands of individual community elders who possess the skills. The youth acquire the skills of making the traditional instruments as well as tuning, fixing and performing the music by observing and mimicking the elders as they perform during rituals or community events. At rituals such as the girl's passage, elderly women of the community are responsible for introducing young girls to traditional practices of womanhood which is expressed through the combination of praise poems, music, songs and dance movement. Male members of the family - both the adult and young men use the music and dance moves to provide support to the women during such occasions. Rituals such as those associated with the passage of right are limited to family circles and skills transmission may also be within family boundaries.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELEMENT**

#### **Associated Tangible Elements (if any):**

- !Guitsip                      Traditional Guitar
- †Nau-ai dob                5 litre disused engine oil tin
- †Nau –am haib            Stick

## **NATIONAL OUTLINE FOR ICH INVENTORING – NAMIBIA**

---

- Dobara //khae /Uis Stone
- Khas musical bow
- Vlies mouth harmonica

### **Associated Intangible Elements (if any):**

- Singing
- Skilful playing of the instrument
- Knowledge of arranging and positioning the instruments
- Tuning the Musical bow
- Skill of identifying notes and of harmonizing the notes of the instruments

### **Language (s), register (s), speech levels involved:**

- Khoe-Khoe Gowab

### **Perceived origin:**

- Hardap Region

## **PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED WITH THE ELEMENTS**

### **Practitioners, Performers:**

- Names: Magdalena Magus Lamberth
- Ages: 86

Gender: Female

Social Status: Pensioner

Professional Category: Traditional expert in Performing Arts and Craftmanship.

- Names: Magrieta Rooinasie

Age: 82

Gender: Female

Social Status: Pensioner

Professional Category: Traditional Expert in Performing Arts and Craftmanship.

### **Other Participants:**

Nama people and other musicians from other communities

### **Customary practices governing access to the elements or to aspects of it:**

- No customary practices governing access, thus this practice was open to everyone regardless of gender or age.
- It was not played for commercial purposes.

### **Modes of Transmission:**

- The method of transmission was through observation and imitating the elders while they were performing.
- However due to the lack of interest from the younger generation and lack of traditional instruments, the mode of transmission is on higher risk.

### **Concerned Organisations:**

Witbooi Traditional Authority

### **STATE OF THE ELEMENT**

#### **Threats to the element:**

- People prefer modern instruments with better accessories and that are user-friendly
- Most of the instruments are modified nowadays and use output and input ports therefore these instruments can be amplified whereas traditional instruments cannot be amplified.
- Most of these instruments have been replaced with electro keyboard sophisticated sound devices which has a similar sound texture or timbre as traditional instruments.
- Community prefers to listen to contemporary music during social occasions.
- During the cultural festivals participants mainly use backtracks, cd's, USB's, and a few participants are using Western instruments which makes the traditional instruments less vulnerable in terms of sound quality. This might discourage the musicians to discontinue playing these traditional instruments.
- These two traditional musicians Ms. Magdalena Lambert and Ms. Magrietha Roonasie are very old and have already started to experience health problems, meanwhile most of the fellow traditional musicians have already passed on.
- Hence, there is an urgent need to inscribe the Ancestral music on the urgent safeguarding list of UNESCO, Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) convention 2003.

### **Threats to transmission:**

- Lack of interest from young people and community at large
- Ignorance of younger generation to get involved in learning how to play the music especially traditional instruments
- Lack of traditional instruments
- Remaining Custodians cannot maintain and tune the existing instruments due to old age

### **Availability of associated tangible elements and resources:**

- Most of the resources are available, however it is difficult to get that particular tree branches (dadel tree) palm tree, to make the musical bow.

### **Viability of associated tangible and intangible elements:**

- Log stick of Musical bow (dadel) (Palm Tree) – Can be obtained from any palm tree.
- Stick for strumming (#Aro / #Au)(Ziziphus Mucranata / Grewia Flava Tree)
- String – can be taken from the car tyre.
- Tin - Available from shops
- Harmonica - Available from shops

### **SAFE GUARDING MEASURES**

- Awareness – raising - This music is played at Cultural Festivals and community
- Hosting of traditional cultural festivals.



- Preservation - Woman gather and rehearse
- Workshops as skill transfer method

### **DATA GATHERING AND INVENTORYING**

#### **Involvement of the Community / Groups in, and consent for data gathering and inventorying:**

The following individuals, community representatives and traditional authorities consented to the safeguarding of the element:

- Witbooi Traditional Authorities
- Bondelswarts Traditional Authority
- Mr. Simon Anton, Daweb Combined School, Maltahohe
- Ms. Clotelde Somses, Senior Counselor - ǀAa Daman Traditional Authority
- Chief Petrus Simon Kooper of the Kai-ǁKhaun Traditional Authority
- Chief Dawid Hanse of the Simon Kooper Traditional Authority
- Mr. Johannes Isaack of the ǀHai ǀKhaun Traditional Authority
- Seth Kooitjie, Chief of the Topnaar Traditional Authority

#### **Restrictive, if any, on use of inventoried data:**

No restrictions to the performance of the music

#### **Date and Place of data gathering:**

28 September 2016, Gibeon, Hardap Region

06 March 2018, Gibeon Constituency, Hardap Region

09 March 2018, Karasberg Constituency, Karas Region

## NATIONAL OUTLINE FOR ICH INVENTORING – NAMIBIA

---

12 March 2018, Grootfontein and Otavi, Otjozondjupa Region

13 March 2018, Otjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region

15 March 2018, Amperbo, Hardap Region

16 March 2018, Hoachanas Hardap Region

27 March 2018, Utuseb, Erongo Region

### **Date of entering data into an inventory:**

29 September 2016

### **The inventoring entry compiled by:**

Brumilda Gertze,

Coernelius Engelbrecht,

Simon. J. Jantze

Alfred Gomaseb

Ismael Sam

Erastus Kautondokwa

### **Reference to the literature, and visual material archives:**

Not available now

.....

**Date:** .....

**Mrs. Veno Kauaria**

**Executive Director/Culture Commissioner**