

ANNEX No. 2

Procedure for registering elements of intangible cultural heritage in the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage and updating it TECHNICAL DATA SHEET

for the registration/updating of data on the element “Găteala Tivurilor” Techniques for embellishing the hems of traditional clothing (with needle and crochet hook)

In the List of living elements that make up the intangible cultural heritage existing on the territory of Romania

A. Field(s) (in accordance with the 2003 UNESCO Convention, so that the item must fit within the definitions of the 2003 UNESCO Convention Art. 2: techniques related to traditional crafts

B. Standard name: “Găteala Tivurilor” Techniques for embellishing the hems of traditional clothing (with needle and crochet hook)

C. Local/regional names: Creating: “bibiluri”, “mofturi” (whims), “țacuri”, “cheițe” (little keys), “ajururi” (open work, seam work), “colțișori cu acul” (little fangs with the needle), “zăfșori”, “mărunțele” (little ones), “zimți” (teeth), “horbotă”, “zărfurele”, “bagadele” (trifle), “păianjeni” (spiders), “rețe”, in various specific combinations, the term used in the Turkish-Tatar community is “Oya”.

D. Area of occurrence:

The geographical area where this element of intangible cultural heritage is practiced covers a vast territory of Romania, highlighting a remarkable regional diversity of techniques and ornamentation, as well as styles specific to several areas. In the east and south of the country, the practice is found on “old-fashioned” shirts, both men's and women's, with a tunic-like cut, decorated with elaborate, richly ornamented with needle-lace on the hems and between hems. In the west, in the counties of Arad, Bihor, and Sălaj, the “spăcele” shirts are notable for their specific, wide “keys”, connections worked with a needle. In central and northern Transylvania, along with areas in Neamț, western Oltenia, Banat, and Ținutul Pădurenilor, richly ornamented embellishments on the sleeves' hems are common, made with the needle or crochet or mixed techniques, sometimes polychrome. In southern Transylvania, Vrancea, and northern Muntenia (Muscel), there are embellishments for connections, with knots arranged along the sleeve, as well as “umreaja” (Valea Hârtibaciului), made with a needle using combined techniques. In Dobrogea, the Turkish-Tatar ethnic communities use the term “oya” to refer to a delicate ornament made with a needle, crochet hook, or “firkete” (hair pins), with specific shapes and structures. The preparation and finishing of hems is also practiced on shirts with altiță, in all areas where the element has

been inventoried, but the intensity and complexity of the execution varies depending on the richness of the embroidery and the investment of time and effort specific to each region.

1. General information about the element (maximum 1000 words) (brief history, performance context, social functions, connection with elements of tangible cultural heritage, contribution of the element to sustainable development):

The item proposed for inventorying falls within the categories provided for in the National Repertory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (vol. I, Bucharest, CIMEC – Institute of Cultural Memory, 2008, coord. Virgil Nițulescu), in the chapter "Folk Costume," as follows: in the section Women's Costumes (p. 100) – Head Coverings and Women's Shirts, with techniques consisting of needlework, crochet, and ornamental structures made with a needle or crochet hook; and in the section on Men's Costumes (p. 106) – Men's Shirts and Trousers, with techniques based on sewing with a needle or crochet hook and decorative ornamental structures arranged at the hems.

Thus, the traditional textiles that receive these embellishments are mainly pieces of cloth intended for the head, shirts (women's and men's), petticoats, but also aprons. The practice is inclusive in terms of gender, with men's shirts being even more extensively decorated in certain regions. In the case of the Turkish-Tatar community in Dobrogea, the decoration on the rolled hem is finer, without openwork, applied mainly to headwear, or various shawls, which are light and not subject to high mechanical stress; on Tatar shirts, the ornamentation is pragmatic and discreet.

The element analyzed thus represents a coherent set of functional and symbolic practices applied to the edges of traditional clothing textiles. The decoration of hems is an ancient craft practice attested in Romania and integrated into a wider cultural area encompassing the Eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans, the Carpathians, and the Pontic region, as revealed by historical and geographical research conducted in the context of this inventory process.

Technically, the element consists of a family of techniques developed from the festoon stitch, applied to the edge of the rolled hem (old style) or folded hem (more recent variant), executed with a needle and, at a later stage, with a crochet hook. Cotton, linen, silk, or wool thread is used, chosen according to its stability and friction behavior (silk being more slippery, linen more stable). The basic principle consists of twisting the thread to provide stability through friction, creating loops and knots. The thread can be twisted around the needle, surrounding the needle, in a double pass festoon or doubled with fastening. The rhythm of these stitches fixes the rolled hem, preventing it from unraveling and strengthening the protection of the fabric against fraying.

From an anthropological perspective, this technique expresses the traditional belief that space must be delimited and its edges protected against negative influences. Thus, while on a material level, protection aims to prevent disintegration and wear through friction or tension, on a symbolic level, it responds to beliefs related to envy, the evil eye, and negative

energies. The edge thus becomes an active space, invested with an apotropaic function, marking the "mouth" of the garment (the mouth of the shirt, the mouth of the sleeve) - a transitional area considered vulnerable in the traditional symbolic imagination.

Once the pragmatic function of reinforcing the hems has been solved, practitioners develop ornamental structures by rhythmically amplifying the basic stitches. The oldest forms are triangular (corners), resulting naturally from the vertical growth of the stitches. The "little fangs", made of white thread or in the shade of the fabric, oriented downward, create visual rhythm and mark the edge. Their symbolic meaning is associated with "wolf's teeth," a protective motif also present in other types of border ornaments. The edge of the corners can be accentuated with red or black thread (the ornament is not entirely red; black is specific, for example, to the Mărginimea Sibiului area), and sometimes sequins (silver or gold - solar and lunar symbols) or blue beads are added, with an apotropaic role. Floral shapes, petals, or other decorative developments can evolve from the basic structure.

A distinctive feature of Romanian textile embroidery is the combination of "air" ornamentation along the hem with embroidery on the fabric itself or openwork. After rolling the hem, fine threads are removed from the fabric, and the remaining threads are rewoven with thicker thread, strengthening the structure. Although seemingly fragile, the openwork increases the strength of the area. They differ in height and composition: the short variants include "spider" or flower motifs, while the tall ones are denser, with a geometric character. In areas where linen cloth and wool or silk embroidery are still used, the structural principle is also preserved: openwork before rolled hem, with the embellishment being made separately and applied later on the hems.

The element can be defined by the following criteria:

- position: at the hems (sleeves, neck - where it can also serve as a gathering) and at the junction of two pieces of fabric (seams);
- function: structural protection, durable finishing, ornamentation with added value and personalization;
- context: traditional practice passed down through the community, with cultural influences in certain historical periods, adapted to regional specifics;
- morphology: old forms, predominantly abstract-geometric; newer forms, with floral developments.

The old forms' simplicity does not indicate a lack of creativity, but rather symbolic concentration and technical refinement. The hemstitching is a conscious expression of the craftsmen's ability to create an active, durable, and meaningful edge for clothing items. This element is directly connected to the production of traditional textiles and partly correlated with the element "The art of the embroidered shirt, an element of cultural identity in Romania," as well as indirectly with the symbolism of the Mărțișor, through the use of thread, knots, and the colors red and black associated with white.

In terms of sustainable development, the element contributes to supporting rural communities and artisans by recognizing skills and providing opportunities to earn fair incomes commensurate with the high level of technical difficulty. The practice encourages quality education through intergenerational knowledge transfer, supports local economic development and creative industries, including through contemporary adaptations (small-scale production, online marketing, integration into the slow fashion concept). The majority involvement of women, alongside men, supports gender equality, and the multi-ethnic character of the practice—Romanian and Turkish-Tatar—contributes to social cohesion and intercultural dialogue. Through its ability to adapt and migrate to new types of clothing, the element demonstrates viability and sustainability, constituting a relevant resource for long-term safeguarding measures.

2.a. Description of the keepers/bearers/creators of the element: (age, profession, ethnic group) (Representative keepers/bearers, recognized as such in the community, will be named, with contact details obtained with the consent of those concerned and with their support for the inventorying of the element and public communication of the information):

In Romania, the communities involved in these practices are diverse.

At their core are the source communities, predominantly women, but also men, who have learned the techniques within the family, through organic intergenerational transmission, as part of a broader system of knowledge and skills related to the production of traditional textiles. Hem embellishment occupies an essential place in this continuum: although it represents the final stage in the cycle of making a garment, it requires a high degree of precision and skill. Practitioners also use these techniques to repair and preserve old garments, including those in museum collections. These women have sometimes extended the use of these techniques beyond traditional costumes, creating independent decorative compositions for home decoration or even jewelry, thus broadening the expressive potential of the craft.

A second category is heritage communities—represented by urban groups and associations dedicated to promoting heritage, which approach these techniques through research, documentation, and dialogue with practitioners in the source communities. Ethnographers, museographers, and cultural mediators invest time and effort to understand the technical and symbolic complexity of these ornaments, either to identify and date historical pieces in museum collections or to practice the craft themselves as a form of personal involvement in the world of traditional costume. Numerous NGOs are actively involved in this process, creating spaces for learning, encouragement, and practice. These groups often bring together practitioners, enthusiasts, artisans, and supporters in collaborative contexts, where knowledge circulates reciprocally, strengthening both the transmission and contemporary relevance of the practice.

The practitioners belong to two ethnic groups in Romania: Romanian and Turkish-Tatar.

2.b. Contribution of institutions and non-governmental organizations to the inventory of the element (Please provide the full name of the institutions, address, and contact details of a representative):

Semne Cusute Association: initiator and coordinator of the research and documentation process, through national research in specialized museums (National Museum of the Romanian Peasant, Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania, Museum of Folk Art in Constanța, Botoșani County Museum). The research focused on the direct analysis of heritage items (women's and men's shirts, headwear, old fragments of textiles, samplers), documenting hems embellishments and needlework techniques, identifying regional variations, and correlating them with current practices.

The association conducted international comparative research at the Benaki Museum (Athens), Palazzo Mocenigo (Venice), and the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford). The comparative analysis focused on medieval and pre-modern textile samples (10th-17th centuries), highlighting technical continuities regarding rolled hems, scalloped edges, openwork, and the protective function of edges in Southeast Europe and the Mediterranean region. Online research and documentation were also carried out: investigating digital archives, virtual collections, and international museum databases, facilitating the correlation of historical data with contemporary practice. Private collections were also researched: the Eugen Vaida Collection (Valea Hârtibaciului), the Sebastian Paic Collection (Lăpuș, Ținutul Pădurenilor), and the Ioana Corduneanu Collection (national coverage).

This research has enabled the study of well-preserved pieces with documented provenance, as well as the analysis of local variations in functional corners, eyelets, and keys.

The National Museum of the Romanian Peasant: ensuring access to the textile heritage it holds and exhibits, facilitating technical research on items in its collections, organizing traditional fairs where old textiles are sold, indirectly contributing to maintaining the circulation of knowledge about hem finishing and promoting public appreciation of this element.

Constanța Museum of Folk Art: selecting and making available, upon request, items relevant to research, institutional partnership in documentation projects, providing the necessary framework for the comparative analysis of items from Dobrogea, especially those belonging to the Turkish-Tatar community.

The NGO Mândra Chic (Contemporary Dowry): community and field contribution, local research in Țara Făgărașului, especially in the community of Mândra (Brașov County), documentation of living practices regarding hems embellishment, integration of the element into clothing reinterpretation projects, demonstrating the viability and sustainability of the practice.

ART Association - Prut Crafts: identification of female artisans who are members of the association and practice this element, identification of intergenerational transmission mechanisms (learning in the family, in the community, through direct practice), identification of the active and local character of the element in the Moldova and Bucovina regions. The ART Association collaborated and communicated on this topic with an association in Turkey that supports this element in variants specific to that country.

Thus, the collaboration between associations, museums, and local communities has enabled the creation of a relevant inventory, based both on the corresponding preserved material heritage and on active practice, demonstrating the living and sustainable nature of the element.

3.a. Current status of the element and identification of any risks of disappearance or significant change to the element (Specify the relationship between the information available in previous sources of information and documentation and that recently obtained through this initiative):

The practice of hems embellishment is currently maintained mainly for its pragmatic function, protecting the edges of the fabric from fraying and, in some cases, joining two pieces of fabric together (cheițe). The technique is still used in individual workshops, in rural communities, and in the production of contemporary traditional clothing. However, continuity is often partial and fragmented.

Examples of good practice, involving the appropriate choice of technique according to the material (linen, cotton, silk, wool), the correct use of openwork before rolled hemming, the diversity of stitches worked with the needle, and creative expressiveness based on the traditional background, are relatively rare. In many situations, the gesture of applying some embellishment to the hems is maintained more formally than consciously.

The practice continues, largely: out of inertia ("something is needed at the hem"), without understanding its structural and symbolic function; out of mimicry (replacing traditional techniques with industrial lace strips, mass-produced items purchased from haberdashery shops), through excessive decorative application and the addition of lace in areas where it did not traditionally exist (e.g., hems hidden under the skirt), especially for stage appearances; through unfounded interventions on old pieces (replacing worn embellishments, widening the neckline of the shirt or lengthening the sleeves, sometimes with correct results, sometimes without technical or aesthetic discernment); by abandoning "in the air" needlework techniques (including those on unstable structures - openwork), considered difficult and time-consuming; by preferring crochet to older needle techniques, which are much more varied and subtle; by using thicker yarn in production for sale, to increase productivity, which leads to oversized pieces and the simplification or loss of ornamental complexity; by a lack of innovation in the old repertoire, without exploring possible combinations and variations within the traditional repertoire.

Problems of recognition and understanding have been identified:

- The technical effort and time invested in making fine garments are not adequately recognized and appreciated by the general public.
- Regional specificity is not always understood or respected.
- A vicious circle is created: the reduced production of old-style shirts (T-type, men's, with "ciupag", with "platcă") - garments where embroidery abounds - leads to a decline in the practice of complex techniques; these, in turn, are perceived as inaccessible, which discourages the revival of old styles.

Major risks identified:

- Excessive simplification and standardization: reducing technical diversity to quick, easy-to-execute formulas.
- Loss of complexity and creativity in using traditional needle lace techniques
- Lack of practice and mentoring can lead to the permanent abandonment of essential structural processes
- Cultural decontextualization: uncritical importation of models from non-European regions (Arab, Pakistan, Indian), popularized through platforms such as YouTube or TikTok, without knowledge and acceptance of the local background.
- Absence of systematic documentation: there are currently no structured tutorials for old Romanian variants; comparative technical diagrams; regionally organised photographic databases; integrated presentations of the entire structure of the hem (lace/embroidery - rolled hem - marginal ornament/bibil).
- Discontinuity of specialized intergenerational transmission: although there is interest, the lack of systematic training reduces the ability to achieve the technical level of historical pieces.

In conclusion, the element is not in danger of immediate extinction, but it is in a state of qualitative vulnerability. The practice persists, but the level of technical refinement, variety, and symbolic understanding are declining. Without documentation, training, and public promotion, there is a risk that the hem stitching will be reduced to a simple standardized decorative addition, losing its structural, symbolic, and identity-related character.

At the same time, contemporary interest in traditional dress, slow fashion, and cultural identity represents a major opportunity for revitalization, provided that coherent tools are developed for the transmission and conscious adoption of the traditional technical repertoire.

3.b. Plan for safeguarding the element through specific actions (The main types of safeguarding measures recommended by the international mechanism for implementing the 2003 UNESCO Convention will be followed: documentation, transmission through formal, non-formal, and informal education, dissemination of information about the element in different contexts and through different means):

The preservation activities will be coordinated by the Semne Cusute Association, which acts as a bridge for active and applied communication between the most important actors in this ecosystem. The Semne Cusute Association will continue to function as a trusted intermediary between practitioners, heritage NGOs, institutions, museums, textile manufacturers, and the general public, striking a balance between identified needs and possible responses. Applying the concept of design thinking will involve the correct and direct identification of problems, the proposal of concrete solutions, implementation, communication, and valorisation. The association will expand its network of relationships to offer and receive valuable experience and models.

The Semne Cusute Association will continue to collaborate with museums that have supported efforts to inventory the element of "the art of embroidered shirts," namely the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant, the ASTRA Museum in Sibiu, the Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania, the Ethnographic Museum of Piatra Neamț, the Botoșani County Museum; collaboration will continue in particular with the Constanța Museum of Folk Art on this subject (the first event took place on March 6, 2025) and with the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant (the first dedicated exhibition and the Conference in Șosea will be organized in October 2026).

In the context of the partnership framework signed with UDTR - the Democratic Union of Turks in Romania, joint activities will be carried out in support of the Turkish-Tatar community, as a sign of mutual care and support for our common heritage. Workshops and comparative courses will be organized to deepen and analyze the similarities and differences between working methods and characteristic expressions.

The preservation activities will focus on the following actions:

1) DOCUMENTATION - an essential activity for understanding the history, models, and development of these practices, as well as their links to other cultures.

2) RECOVERY - at the request of the Turkish community, this will focus on putting into practice the patterns saved from Ada Kaleh Island, preserved in museums or private collections.

3) ARCHIVING - essential for understanding the tens of thousands of possible combinations, encouraging the creation of replicas based on old patterns, and stimulating creativity.

For documentation and archiving, the Semne Cusute Association will continue its partnerships with museums and will archive on its online platforms: blog (over 5 million visits), Google Arts & Culture platform, its own website: semnecusute.com, photographs of other old Romanian pieces and those of ethnic minorities in Romania, as well as pieces from other cultures with which we are connected through similar practices.

4) EDUCATION

- online: Semne Cusute Association will continue to produce step-by-step video tutorials explaining basic techniques for beginners (initiation). These tutorials are archived on the Semne Cusute YouTube channel and will be updated regularly. They also have the opportunity to share information and explanations live on the Facebook group Semne Cusute în acțiune, which had over 61,000 members at the time of completing this form. Information will also be shared through practical workshops, which we will organize in partnership with the museums mentioned above. This need has been brought to our attention by practitioners from all over the country.
- Indirect: by proposing the creation of shirt types that involve modest embroidery but excel in the finishing of the hems (fodori, cheițe, neck ruffles). More specifically, Semne Cusute Association will promote other types of shirts, which will also be more inclusive: men's shirts, shirts from the Danube + Prut floodplains
- informal/non-formal: Semne Cusute Association will pay special attention to reaching young audiences through dedicated workshops on upcycling and sustainable textile practices, in partnership with: Mândra Chic (Țara Făgărașului), REDU (an NGO in Iași active in this field) - this is possible because crocheting and beading are already attractive to this age group.

5) PROMOTION: Semne Cusute Association will collaborate with partner museums to disseminate information about events (exhibitions, workshops). They will also seek collaborations with Romanian and foreign influencers in the field of responsible fashion online. They will participate in international exhibitions and workshops in the diaspora. Semne Cusute Association plans to print a bilingual album with high-quality photos, presenting the narrative and working techniques. The element will also benefit from dissemination within the European Tracks4Crafts project, under which systematic research on the element began; a project coordinated by the University of Antwerp, Belgium.

6) ESTABLISHING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS: Semne Cusute Association will collaborate with NGOs in Turkey dedicated to this subject (Oya - Traditional Needlework Embellishment) for events and exchanges of experience and working materials. Semne Cusute Association will invite them to exhibitions in Romania so that the public can compare and understand the common principle but different personalities.

7) ANNUAL REPORTING for updating the inventory file: The Semne Cusute Association will prepare and publish an activity report for the previous year by March 31 each year. The reports will be public, being dedicated to the supporters, donors, the community, and specialists.

4. Bibliography and online sources of information on the element:

Ecaterina D. Tomida, *Cusăturile și broderiile costumului popular din România*

Emilia Pavel, *Portul Popular din zona Iași*

Angelica Paveliuc-Olariu, *Arta Populară din zona Botoșanilor. Portul popular*

Elena Secoșan & Steluța Pârâu, *Portul Popular Românesc din județul Tulcea*

Tatiana Ioannou-Yannara, *Greek Threadwork Lace*

Sheila Paine, *Amulets: Sacred Charms of Power and Protection*

Maria Magiru, *Dobrogea, studiu etnografic, 2008*

Mehmet Naci Onal, *Din folclorul turcilor dobrogeni*, 1997
Kenan Ozbel, *El Sanatlari (Meșteșuguri)*, 1945
Taciser Onuk, *Oya Culture Since the Ottomans*

Open source, in on-line and social media:

Semne Cusute Youtube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/@Semne_Cusute

INSTAGRAM dedicated channel: https://www.instagram.com/needlework_chronicles/

The History of Hem Embellishments: <https://semnecusute.com/descopera-istoria/>

Discover Bibiluri: <https://semnecusute.com/descopera-bibiluri/>

Discover Cheițe: <https://semnecusute.com/descopera-cheite/>

Discover Renaissance shirts: <https://semnecusute.com/descopera-renasterea/>

Online community for support and continuous learning:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/semnecusute>

5.a. Item inventory coordination team:

Asociația Semne Cusute: Ioana Corduneanu, Gabriela Matei, Aura Bostan

5.b. Responsible for monitoring and updating data about the element:

Semne Cusute Association: Ioana Corduneanu, Gabriela Matei

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Semne Cusute Association: Aura Bostan (pentru relația cu comunitatea turco-tătară)

Mândra Chic: Alina Zară (for Țara Făgărașului area)

Asociația ART - Meșteșugurile Prutului: Silvia Cozmîncă (for areas in north Moldova and Bucovina)

6. Date of completion of the inventory form:

February 27, 2026

Recently recorded photo/video/audio materials demonstrating the viability of the element and its relevance to local cultural identity shall be attached (the recording of video materials in which community members describe the element and explain its importance from a personal perspective is encouraged).