Capacity-Building Workshop in Europe

Safeguarding Living Heritage in Urban Contexts

12-13 October | Antwerp, Belgium

HANDOUT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Application of methodological tools for the safeguarding of ICH elements

The methodological tools presented below are part of a set of 7 tools developed by UNESCO's Living Heritage Entity in 2025. They are intended to illustrate ways in which urban planning can contribute to safeguarding living heritage in urban contexts. Moreover, they are meant to help experts, planners and decision makers identify viable ways to include living heritage safeguarding measures in urban plans.

When applying them, one should consider the observations and lessons learned during the field visit to the ICH element.

- Tool 1. Analysis of the correspondence of living heritage elements to urban planning structures.
- Tool 2. Mapping of threats for the safeguarding of the ICH element.
- Tool 3. Identification of safeguarding measures for the ICH element

TOOL 1: ANALYSIS OF THE CORRESPONDENCE OF ICH ELEMENT TO URBAN PLANNING STRUCTURES

The analysis of the relationship between an ICH element and the urban planning structures (ecological, functional, socioeconomic and historical and built heritage) can help identify all the components of the urban structures that positively or negatively influence the practice of the ICH element, which can then help identify urban planning measures that may contribute to safeguarding it. The following steps are intended to help guide this process:

- **Step 1**: Identify the ecological components that are related to the ICH element and that need to be taken into account in urban planning. These can be biological (flora and fauna) or physical, including the sun, water, soil or climate. In the table below, each component can be marked as “Yes”, if they are related to the ICH element, or “No” if they are not. It is recommended that, for every component related to the ICH element, the rationale regarding how the component influences the practice of the element is explained.

- **Step 2:** Identify the functional components that are related to the ICH element, from the following categories: mobility, including rail, road motorized (e.g., private vehicle, bus), road non-motorized (e.g., cycling, walking), water (e.g., canoes, gondolas), air transport or other relevant categories; public space, such as streets or sidewalks, parks or green areas, plazas or squares or others; public utilities, including electricity, gas, water and sanitation, and communications (e.g., internet, CCTV); and urban facilities linked to daily needs related to education (e.g., schools), health (e.g., hospitals, clinics, older adult services), culture (e.g., museums, theatres, libraries) and recreation. As described previously, in the table below, each component can be marked as ‘yes’ or ‘no’, depending on whether it is related to the element, and an explanation of the rationale of every relationship is recommended.

- **Step 3:** Identify the socioeconomic components related to the ICH element which can be demographic, such as age, if the element is related to an age group; gender, if it is predominantly related to females or males; ethnicity, if it is closely associated with a specific ethnic group and if data is readily available or can be collected; and migration, if the element relates to inward or outward migratory dynamics. Similarly, the socioeconomic components can have an economic dimension, especially if the element relates to a specific income group, is a form of employment or allows for income generation. Any relationships between the ICH element and creative economies can also be identified. As with the previous urban structures, all relevant components can be marked and explained in the table below.

- **Step 4:** Identify whether the element is related to a historical site or a built heritage component, for instance, if it is held or practised in relation to a protected site or area such as a monument, building, block, street, square, neighbourhood or district. It is also important to identify whether the historical site or the built heritage element has a protection or management plan and, if so, whether it contains specific ICH safeguarding provisions.

In the table below, indicate whether the ICH element is related to the urban planning structures and describe the relationship.

Table 1. Analysis of the correspondence of living heritage element to urban planning structures

Ecological structure		Yes/No	Description
Biological	Flora		
	Fauna		
Physical	Soil		
	Water		
	Land		
	Weather		
Functional structure		**Yes/No**	**Description**
Mobility	Railroad		
	Motorized		
	Pedestrian		
	Water		
	Air		
	Other		
Public space	Street/sidewalk		
	Park/green area		
	Square		
	Other		
Public services	Electricity		
	Gas		
	Water and sanitation		
	Waste management		
	Communications		
	Other		
Urban amenities	Education		
	Health		
	Culture		
	Sports and recreation		
	Other		
Socioeconomic structure		**Yes/No**	**Description**
Demographic	Age		
	Gender		

	Ethnicity		
	Migration		
	Rural-urban linkages		
	Others		
Economic	Specific income group		
	Employment		
	Income generation		
	Creative economies		
Built heritage structure		**Yes/No**	**Description**
Scale	Monument / building		
	Block, square or street		
	District or neighborhood		
	Region		

TOOL 2: MAPPING OF THREATS

Mapping the threats to the viability of the ICH element can help inform actions that could be taken to ensure its continuity. The term ‘threats’ refers to any type of process or change in an urban area that may disrupt the viability of the element concerned and that may need to be anticipated and addressed for safeguarding purposes.

The following steps are intended to guide and facilitate this process.

- **Step 1:** Review the list of threats provided in the corresponding table below and assess which threats currently affect or may affect the viability of the ICH element concerned if no measures are taken to reduce their impact or the probability of occurrence. The type of threats provided in the table below are not exhaustive and others may be identified.

- **Step 2:** Identify which threats apply to the element concerned, considering both those that may be present at the time of conducting the exercise and those that may arise in the future if nothing is done to prevent them. Each threat can be marked as ‘yes’ if it affects or may affect the element, or ‘no’ if it does not apply. It is recommended to explain why or how each applicable threat affects the viability of the ICH element. It is also suggested that an explanation should be given as to how each applicable threat relates to the urban structures (i.e., ecological, functional, socioeconomic, historical and built heritage), which can help identify the planning domains in which it may be necessary to intervene in order to address the threats identified.

Table 2. Threats and benefits of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage

Threats	Yes/No	Description
Changes in land use		
Destruction of spaces		
Rapid urbanization alters lifestyles		
Migration (inward or outward)		
Pressure on infrastructure		
Inadequate housing		
Unemployment or low income		
Industrialization		
Lack of public spaces		
New technology		
Land grabbing		
Climate change and natural disasters		
Food shortage or unaffordability		
Armed conflict and displacement		
Other (specify)		

TOOL 3: IDENTIFICATION OF SAFEGUARDING MEASURES FOR THE ICH ELEMENT

This tool refers to the process of identifying strategic actions or measures, from an urban planning perspective, that may contribute towards safeguarding the ICH element by addressing the threats to its viability. This tool is thus intended to help find practical ways to incorporate ICH into urban planning. The following types of strategic actions provide a high-level framework for ICH experts and urban planners to identify ways in which planning can contribute towards safeguarding the element.

Table 3. Type of actions for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage

Type of action	Description
Provide	Refers to an action intended to deliver an urban component, as it relates to the urban structures, that does not exist at the present time and is required to help address a threat or maximize a benefit of an ICH element. For example, providing new public spaces, new walkable areas or new cultural facilities; providing financial support or incentives for the practice of an element or creating a new regulatory instrument for safeguarding ICH.

Preserve	Denotes an action meant to secure an urban component that exists and works well in terms of safeguarding an ICH element but that may be threatened if no measures are taken. For instance, preserving a river or lake where an element is practised; preserving ethnic factors that allow an element to thrive; preserving rural-urban linkages and local economies that contribute towards safeguarding ICH; or preserving built heritage through preservation zoning and land-use controls.
Improve	Indicates an action intended to improve or strengthen an urban component that exists to better contribute towards safeguarding an ICH element. For example, enhancing the emergence of creative economies in a historic district through incentive zoning; enhancing a cultural district through land-use controls or financial support; or improving an existing public space to facilitate festive events.
Adjust	Refers to an action meant to change certain characteristics of an urban component that exists but does not work well in terms of safeguarding an ICH element. In other words, that adjustments are required to mitigate a potential threat and maximize the benefits of an ICH element. For instance, pedestrianizing a street, repurposing an existing building or updating current permitted land uses in a given area.

The strategic actions should help address the threats identified previously and relate to a particular component of the urban structures. The identification of the most appropriate actions can be informed through the implementation of cultural heritage impact assessments beforehand, which can also serve to inform urban plans.

The following process is recommended for identifying planning actions:

- **Step 1:** Specify the most pressing threats to the viability of the ICH element.

- **Step 2:** Specify the urban structures that more closely relate to each threat. This should help inform the type of actions that could be taken to mitigate a particular threat (e.g., actions related to the ecological structure of a city).

- **Step 3:** Describe all the strategic actions required to mitigate the threats to the ICH element concerned (multiple actions per threat may be required). Start by specifying the type of strategic action from the four categories described earlier (i.e., provide, preserve, enhance or adjust) and describe what each action consists of, including any relevant spatial, regulatory, institutional or financial aspects.

In the table below, propose at least 3 strategic actions to address the main threats identified for the ICH element.

Table 4. Strategic actions for safeguarding the ICH element

Strategic actions for safeguarding the ICH element			
Threat	**Urban planning structure**	**Type of action**	**Description**