



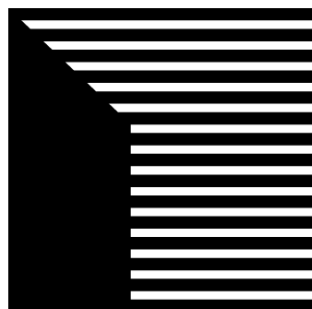
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CURBATHERI

**Curating sustainable urban transformations
through heritage**

**Guidelines to evaluate participatory
processes in projects**

DELIVERABLE D5.4.



DEEP CITIES

Curating sustainable urban transformations
through heritage



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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version	Status	Date
1.0.	First draft of deliverable	September 8, 2022
1.1.	Partner review and additional contributions	September 9, 2022
1.2.	Updated version	October 3, 2022
1.3.	Partner review and additional contributions	November 17, 2022



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1. Presentation

This report contains the *Guidelines to evaluate participatory processes in projects* corresponding to Deliverable D5.4. The introductory section contains a brief reflection on the need to understand the urban dynamics that condition heritage preservation processes when considering participatory processes to evaluate projects. It subsequently develops the content and steps proposed by the guidelines to evaluate participatory processes in projects. Finally, it concludes with a reflection on the challenge of moving towards participatory management in heritage preservation processes.

2. Introduction: the right to heritage as a required condition for sustainability

Following the theoretical framework of the Deep Cities project (Fouseki et al. 2019), when we speak of participatory processes, it is essential to recall the perspective of Critical Urban Theory, as this helps us understand the challenge of promoting participatory processes in the current context of neoliberal urbanism (Brenner et al. 2012).

Understanding the working of neoliberal urbanism is relevant because it also conditions urban transformations based on heritage. It is a mode of urban administration that has been in force from the end of the last century to the present day, in which the city and urbanism are understood as a business to increase profits. This model tends to exclusively preserve those heritage values that are profitable in economic terms. In contrast, the social values generated by people in their daily lives are usually excluded.

When we approach participatory processes from the perspective of critical urban theory, the debate on the right to the city, a classic debate in urban studies, is taken up again. This concept proposed by Lefebvre in 1968 in his classic book "The Right to the City" (Lefebvre, 1968) has been widely discussed and is sometimes mentioned completely out of the context of its original meaning. The right to the city raises the conflictive relationship between the city lived and experienced by people and the city conceived by urban planners. Thus, there is often a big gap between the utopias of urban planners and the experience of space in everyday life, as urbanism imposes spatial reforms that do not always correspond to the needs of everyday life.

In this vein, Curbatheri-Deep Cities is interested in recovering the original meaning of the *right to the city*, because Lefebvre proposed this right as the *right to urban life*. It means reversing the power relations that produce the city to achieve the right to the city that responds to the demands of urban life.

When we talk about participatory processes in urban heritage management, we face the same dilemma: Who has the right to use and profit from the outcomes that cultural heritage generates in the cities? Who decides what is to be preserved or listed as cultural heritage? and lastly, Who has the right to participate in decision-making processes?

Heritage-led regeneration is strategic in promoting sustainable urban development, but it can also exacerbate speculation and gentrification. Therefore, the objective of the guidelines to evaluate participatory processes is to monitor the development of any future urban project with the following question in mind: **What heritage to protect and how can we protect it without driving the local communities that inhabit it and give it meaning out of the area?** This responds to the need to propose



alternatives for heritage management. We argue that such alternatives have to incorporate the protection of people's lives and their living spaces as a required condition for sustainability (Horlings, 2016). Their application seeks to guarantee not only the community's participation in decision-making, but, above all, to protect their permanence in heritage areas.

Highlighting these social values of heritage is not an easy task. Political agents and urban planners usually find it difficult to identify them. For all these reasons, we believe that these guidelines would be useful for a wide variety of urban projects, as well as to policy makers interested in sustainable solutions for preserving the historical identity of a place.

3. Guidelines to evaluate participatory processes in projects

The guidelines for evaluating participatory processes in projects are designed to be a guide for urban planning practitioners and seek to transform the usual formats of urban heritage management. They aim to identify and include how people live and perceive heritage in the project evaluation process, as well as the points of view of the different stakeholders involved as promoters of the heritage conservation processes.

Heritage projects are shaped by expert stakeholders and the social inclusion strategies do not always consider local voices. The main aim of participatory evaluation involves all the stakeholders in heritage conservation projects. The project evaluation must follow its development from the first stage, when the proposal is drafted, to the final stage, when its conclusions and recommendations are made.

3.1. Steps in a participatory evaluation

These guidelines propose the steps to be followed for monitoring the project and ensuring that its development includes the stakeholders contributing to its understanding, as well as applying that understanding to the improvement of the task. The steps are as follows:

3.1.1. Phase I. To ascertain the socioeconomic dynamics of the urban area

To promote the participatory evaluation of a heritage preservation project, it is necessary to be aware of the socioeconomic dynamics of the area in which the building or heritage environment to be reformed for its conservation is located. As explained previously, it is necessary to recognise that heritage conservation processes are linked to urban dynamics. Therefore, in this first phase it is necessary to analyse the behaviour of the property market and its impact on the privatisation and gentrification processes that dismantle social cohesion¹. For this purpose, it could be helpful to document the previous neighbourhood claims that have taken place in the area related to cultural heritage. This approach to the territory must be carried out in the project conception phase, since it will facilitate the identification of the stakeholders to be contacted in the subsequent phases of the participatory evaluation.

¹ To analyse the behaviour of the property market and its impact on the privatisation and gentrification processes that dismantle social cohesion, see our tool of "The System Dynamics" in: <https://www.deepcities-toolbox.unifi.it/>



3.1.2. Phase II. Identify and contact the stakeholders

This second phase seeks to identify and contact the stakeholders who will be invited to participate in the project evaluation workshops². The selection of stakeholders is a fundamental task and involves getting to know in depth the people and entities involved directly or indirectly in the urban transformation of a heritage area. It is important to identify the community stakeholders (residents, small property owners, users, merchants, neighbourhood associations, other citizens' groups, etc.), as well as the stakeholders involved as promoters in the transformation of heritage areas (urban managers and planners, private project developers, large landowners, etc.), and specialists from the academic field who, from the perspective of various disciplines, have studied the historical evolution of the sector (historians, urban planning, architecture and archaeology professionals, postgraduate students, among other heritage experts). Having identified the stakeholders, it is necessary to include them as collaborators in all phases of the project, from the writing of the proposal to the development of the participatory evaluation activities.

3.1.3. Phase III. Schedule workshops and focus groups to obtain feedback from stakeholders

This third phase consists of implementing the activities to obtain feedback from the stakeholders on the progress of the project, using methods such as: focus groups, Circle, Open space (OST), Appreciative Inquiry, World café, ProAction Café, Dynamic Facilitation, Sokratic dialog (SD), Canvas modelling, Spectrum lines, Six thinking hats, SWOT Analysis, Collective mind mapping, Moving Motivators, Collective Story Harvest, Constellation Game. The objective of these workshops is to observe how the project does or does not meet the expectations of the stakeholders, as well to recognise and give visibility to their suggestions and recommendations. The topics to be discussed in the workshops and focus groups should be in keeping with the monitoring and evaluation of the products of each project³. It is recommended that at least two workshops be held, one in the intermediate phase of the study and another at the end of the project to include the stakeholders' observations. The project schedule should include the execution of the workshops and focus groups in the planning of its activities.

² To identify and contact the stakeholders, see our tool "Participatory Methods Online and Offline" in: <https://www.deepcities-toolbox.unifi.it/>

³ For the Deep Cities project, the workshops and focus groups were aimed at evaluating the development of the management toolbox, as it was the main product of this study. The workshop carried out in the intermediate phase of the project was held within the framework of the "Integrating society through evaluation processes: the Deep Cities project Barcelona workshop", held on September 8 and 9, 2022. The workshop was attended by members of the Deep Cities project team and various specialists and researchers from the academic and heritage management fields: Josep Maria Solias (L'Hospitalet History Museum), Antoni Nicolau (Kultura, Ideas and Strategies para el Patrimoni, S.L.), Marta Flórez (Kultura, Trinitat Uneix, Researcher attached to the Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica), Iolanda Marrasé (Can Fontanet); Selene Frascella (Universitat de Barcelona), Anna Villarroja (Centre for Culture in Information, Communication and Culture (CRICC)/Universitat de Barcelona); Ted Grevstad-Nordbrock (Iowa State University). The workshop began with a presentation of the structure and objectives of the management toolbox. The team was then divided into three focus groups and the following questions were provided for discussion in each group: 1) After listening the explanations about the Deep Cities project management toolbox do you think that its structure and objectives are clear? Are there any questions about how it works? Which ones? 2) The Deep Cities project aims to propose heritage-led sustainable strategies based on the social value of urban transformations. What are the main contributions of the management toolbox to fulfil this aim? 3) Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the functioning and scope of the management toolbox? Finally, each group presented their suggestions, comments and conclusions. These suggestions were incorporated into the final phase of the project to improve the operation of the management toolbox, with a view to achieving sustainable urban strategies through heritage preservation processes.



3.1.4. Phase IV: Incorporate recommendations into the project development

The conclusions and observations obtained in the focus groups should be systematised in reports to be incorporated into the development of the final phase of the project or the stage at which the study's recommendations are drawn up⁴.



Steps in a participatory evaluation

The four phases these guidelines propose to promote a participatory evaluation of our projects are not intended to be a rigid procedure. On the contrary, their objective is to serve as a guide to propose participatory methods that should be adapted to the stages of each study, to the research challenges of each project and, above all, to the profile and role of stakeholders in the heritage preservation process.

It is hoped that this will be seen as a framework that will help researchers, urban managers, specialists, academics and other groups of people within programmes and institutions to design participatory programme evaluations using some of these elements and modifying others.

3.2. Towards a participatory heritage management

We hope the guidelines to evaluate participatory processes in projects will contribute to a better understanding and, therefore, to a better management, of participatory heritage processes. We understand heritage as a dynamic category resulting from social appropriation and collective action. We recognise citizens and inhabitants as heritage producers, not only because of their role as political actors in participatory processes but, above all, because they are the bearers of memories and everyday stories that constitute the essence of heritage places that are not always democratically valued.

⁴ To identify evaluation criteria, see our tool "Evaluation and Recommendations" in: <https://www.deepcities-toolbox.unifi.it/>



The guidelines are intended to be useful for urban managers, specialists, academics and civil society organisations. They are meant to provide everybody with the clues to understand the heritage values that they, as stakeholders, and the local community in particular, would like to preserve. Unveiling these values is not an easy task and political agents and urban planners usually find it difficult to identify them. Having tools for their detection should facilitate the dialogue between stakeholders involved in the promotion of heritage conservation. The tools developed in the Deep Cities project should be useful for a wide variety of urban projects and policy makers interested in sustainable solutions for preserving the historical identity of a place.

4. Bibliography

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