

GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION TOOLS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ALPINE FOOD HERITAGE AS AN ELEMENT OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE



LIVING ICH

Cross-border governance tools for safeguarding and enhancing the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

INTERREG V-A Italy-Switzerland Cooperation Programme 2014-2020

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1. Introduction

Valentina Lapicciarella Zingari

*"La relation des êtres humains à l'environnement naturel a jusqu'ici été vue principalement en termes biophysiques, mais il y a la reconnaissance croissante que les sociétés elles-mêmes créent et élaborent des procédures culturellement enracinées pour protéger et gérer leurs ressources. D'où la nécessité de repenser la relation entre culture et environnement "*¹

"The relationship between human beings and the natural environment has so far been seen primarily in biophysical terms, however, today we are witnessing a growing awareness that societies themselves create and elaborate processes rooted in culture and aiming at the protection and management of their resources. Hence the need to rethink the link between culture and the environment".

The project entitled *Living ICH - Cross-border governance tools for the preservation and enhancement of the Living Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)*² - Interreg V-A Italy-Switzerland Cooperation Programme (2014-2020) - stems from the long commitment of a cross-border working community that has been working in the heart of Alpine Europe since the 1990s to *open up national borders*, thus contributing to the creation of European and international regulations.

Before addressing the issue of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) governance processes, we need to reflect on the fact that the very notion of ICH is still poorly established within national systems of policies, regulations and institutions. If 2023 is the year in which the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage turns 20 years old, and if this may seem like a sufficiently long time to us, we must remember that another important UNESCO Convention, the 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage celebrated its 50th anniversary last year (2022). Its paradigm has become deeply rooted and consolidated in the institutional practice of governments around the world, which have made it a fundamental tool for managing cultural sites and landscapes in a long-term perspective³.

There is a memory of International Conventions, a history of sharing and cooperation marked by reflections, proposals, debates, negotiations and working groups in which different stakeholders from all countries of the world were able to express themselves and listen to each other, on an equal and democratic base.

¹ Nations Unies, 1996. Notre Diversité Créatrice. Rapport de la Commission Mondiale de la Culture et du Développement. CLT96/WS6, Nations Unies, Paris, p. 37.

https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000105586_fre

² <https://aess.regione.lombardia.it/portfolio/avvio-del-progetto-europeo-living-ich/>
<https://www.regione.lombardia.it/wps/portal/istituzionale/HP/DettaglioRedazionale/servizi-e-informazioni/cittadini/Cultura/Patrimonio-immateriale/living-ich/living-ich>

³ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

While the 1972 Convention recognised the *exceptional universal value* of places, sites and monuments, it took thirty years to integrate the extraordinary diversity of expressions of living cultures defined as intangible heritage into the material heritage. The 2003 Convention is therefore the result of a *patrimonial unease*, expressed by countries less rich in heritages carved in stone. Many countries claimed the cultural and social value of their living heritages, rooted in the life of communities and in their oral traditions and expressions, in their languages, arts, crafts, rituals and festivals, in the practices of nature, of the universe and of natural resources. The result was the highest number of ratifications compared to any other legally binding agreement in the world.

What has changed with the UNESCO Convention, now ratified by almost all countries of the world and whose fundamental texts are bringing about profound transformations in cultural policies, spreading participatory governance practices that recognise the fundamental role of '*communities, groups and individuals*' as bearers of cultural rights and responsible for the transmission of heritages on which the destiny of the planet's sustainable future largely depends?

How can sectors of institutional practice and government leaders at all levels respond to the challenges of the new, necessary and diverse governance systems that shelter the planet's natural and cultural diversity from the increasingly evident damage posed by globalisation processes that are out-of-control?

What has changed in European policies - and with Interreg projects in particular - over the last twenty years? And how are these changes reshaping the Alpine area, which has been for centuries a land that has experimented environmental practices and policies based on ancient systems of community management of common goods, and environmental and cultural resources of exceptional value? And finally, what are the challenges and questions that this project has sought to answer? What is the sense and purpose of this study?

1.1 UNESCO Convention 2003: what has changed and what is changing?

Starting from general considerations on the evolution of heritage paradigms, let us recall that UNESCO - an international agency and project of the United Nations whose ambition is to build a global process of cooperation between peoples, based on culture and the right to the expression of cultural diversity - is also a great laboratory of scientific, social and cultural policies, resulting from the exchange among nations, governments and the peoples they represent.

Attending the sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention was for many of us, anthropologists involved in the field of cultural policies, the beginning of a new awareness, linked to the understanding of the different responsibilities of scholars, researchers, professionals, politicians, administrators, institutions, communities and civil society associations. The work of the Convention is in fact a school of global *heritage governance*.

But let us come to the territorial level, where heritage practices are developed and where the impact of our shared responsibilities is most crucial.

Some regional governments, such as the Lombardy Region with the Archives of Ethnography and Social History (AESS)⁴ were pioneers in taking this new cultural policy tool very seriously. When the Convention was ratified by Italy (Law no. 167 of 27 September 2007), the Region of Lombardy, on the initiative of AESS, reinterpreted its mission as an "archive of ethnography" in a decidedly innovative and avant-garde vision compared to other contexts. In the 2000s AESS already considered itself as an active regional antenna for the preservation of living heritage, promoting the former regional law of 23 October 2008, no. 27 "Enhancement of intangible cultural heritage", later merged into the new Framework Law for Culture (Regional Law of 7 October 2016 no. 25. "Regional policies on cultural matters - Regulatory reorganisation", in particular in Articles 13 and 22).

The studies commissioned by the AESS of the Lombardy Region to Chiara Bortolotto on the subject of participation and inventories⁵ and the establishment of the "Registry of Intangible Heritage of Lombardy" R.E.I.L. ([www.intangiblesearch.eu/Sezione Lombardy](http://www.intangiblesearch.eu/Sezione_Lombardy)), later merged into an international platform that includes other Alpine regions, in a spirit of effective and concrete cooperation, are strong signs of a precise will to renew heritage paradigms⁶. In the 2000s, and already since the 1990s, Europe has been funding several Interreg projects⁷, opening up new concrete opportunities for Alpine administrations and communities to build a renewed climate of work and collaboration. The working group that produced the *Living ICH* project grew up within this climate, experimenting, planning, and taking on the challenges of ongoing change. It is in this climate that an innovative inventory tool was born, fostering work in two directions, the same ones that inspired the developments of the *Living ICH* project.

The identification and promotion, at a regional level, of the activities of many different *heritage communities*, as recognised by the UNESCO Convention and defined by the subsequent Faro Convention⁸ through the Regional Register instrument, which benefits from a call for projects funding and a web platform for sharing a wealth of documents accessible in digital format⁹.

⁴ <https://www.regione.lombardia.it/wps/portal/istituzionale/HP/DettaglioServizio/servizi-e-informazioni/Enti-e-Operatori/Cultura/Beni-culturali/ser-aess-enti-CULT/aess-operatori>

⁵ Bortolotto C. 2013. Participation, *anthropology and heritage*, in *La partecipazione nella salvaguardia del patrimonio culturale immateriale: aspetti etnografici, economici e tecnologici*, 2013, edited by Associazione per la Salvaguardia del Patrimonio Culturale Immateriale (ASPACI). Project E.CH.I. Italian-Swiss Ethnographies for the Enhancement of Intangible Heritage. Cross-border Cooperation Italy Switzerland 2007-2013. Published by Regione Lombardia/Archivio di Etnografia e Storia Sociale, Milan, Italy.

⁶ Lapicirella Zingari V. 2015. *The paradigm of the intangible cultural heritage* in: 'Italy and its Regions', Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Treccani, Rome, Italy.

⁷ https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/il-paradigma-dell-intangible-cultural-heritage_%28L%27Italia-e-le-sue-Regioni%29/

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/cooperation/european-territorial_en

⁹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention>

⁹ www.intangiblesearch.eu

The networking of the Alpine regions and their governments and territories through a permanent European design work and the participation in the work of the Alpine Macro-regional Strategy - EUSALP¹⁰. This constant cooperation effort represents the new cultural policy mission carried out by the Archives of Ethnography and Social History of the Lombardy Region.

I will close this introductory note on the changes - which we are directly experiencing in the field thanks to AESS - by recalling the conference in Milan organised by the Lombardy Region in 2013, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the "The Intangible Cultural Heritage between Civil Society, Research and Institutions" Convention¹¹, which laid the foundations for subsequent important developments of the Convention in Italy by fostering an understanding of the stakeholders' network who - each with their own role - must be involved in the heritage governance processes.

In those years, the network of Facilitators accredited by the Convention¹² was born as part of what is called a '*global capacity-building strategy*'. A strategy that addresses first and foremost governments (national, but also regional and local. The Convention reiterates that depending on the internal structures of each ratifying state, the strategy will have to be adapted) willing to change their policies in the name of a "*theory of change*" that must assume the consequences of the Convention's ratification, involving fundamental protagonists of heritage transmission such as *communities, groups and individuals*, stakeholders and bearers of living cultural heritage.

It will take until 2015 for the Convention's '*Twelve Principles of Ethics*'¹³ to be introduced into the Fundamental Texts¹⁴, thus strengthening the ethical perspective of this global normative instrument.

The network of facilitators progressively becomes responsible for a process of training, mediation and permanent updating, aimed at the concrete application of the Convention, and assuming the role of a council for policies and communities, based on the Convention instruments. Today, ten years after that meeting in 2013, we can now say that the Lombardy Region is to date the only Italian region to have directly involved ICH experts and facilitators in its cultural policy activities, confirming its role as a territory of experimentation of innovative cultural policies consistent with the Intangible Cultural Heritage paradigm.

1.2 The Alps, a system under pressure

"Les agroécosystèmes gérés par l'homme dans les zones montagneuses font partie du biome de la montagne depuis des siècles. Leurs conditions hétérogènes ont conduit à l'évolution d'une grande diversité de variétés agricoles adaptées à un vast éventail de conditions environnementales et de besoins humains. Les montagnes sont les lieux d'origine et de

¹⁰ <https://www.alpine-region.eu/>

¹¹ <http://www.simbdea.it/index.php/tutte-le-categorie-docman/simbdea-ich/323-milano-2013-programma/file>

¹² <https://ich.unesco.org/en/facilitator>

¹³ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866>

¹⁴ https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-2022_version-EN_.pdf

*diffusion des principales espèces alimentaires : maïs, pommes de terre, orge, sorgho, tomates, pommes, entre autres. Une grande partie des mammifères domestiques - moutons, chèvres, yaks domestiques, lamas et alpagas - proviennent également des régions de montagne. Au cours des siècles, la diversité génétique des plantes et des animaux de montagne domestiqués a été accrue, peut-être associée à la diversité culturelle et à la variation extrême des conditions environnementales locales*¹⁵.

"Human-managed agro-ecosystems in mountain areas have been part of the mountain biome for centuries. Their heterogeneous conditions have led to the evolution of a great diversity of agricultural varieties adapted to a wide range of environmental conditions and human needs. Mountains are the places of origin and distribution of the main food species: maize, potatoes, barley, sorghum, tomatoes, apples, among others. A large proportion of domestic mammals - sheep, goats, domestic yaks, llamas and alpacas - also originate from mountain regions. Over the centuries, the genetic diversity of domestic mountain plants and animals has increased, perhaps due to the cultural diversity and extreme variability of local environmental conditions'.

If the world's mountains and the Alps are an extraordinary capital of traditional knowledge, genetic heritage and biological and cultural diversity, back in the 1990s a small publication by the International Centre for Alpine Environment (ICALPE) rigorously identified the Alps as a 'system under pressure'. At the time, there was little awareness of the risk the entire planet was running by using the world's mountains - and among them the Alps, in the heart of Europe - without the necessary attention to their sustainable future, without respect for the communities, the environment and the local cultures. Since then, with the emergence of the sustainability paradigm, many European projects have contributed, on the one hand, to opening up the Alpine frontiers which, following the nationalisation of mountain territories and the wars of the 20th century had become places of conflict, separation and mourning, by putting *the Alps* back on the *move*¹⁶ and building new opportunities for cooperation. On the other hand, they have raised awareness of the deep ties that unite Alpine cultures with the natural resources of an environment profoundly shaped by human activities. Acknowledging the specificity of the Alpine environment and its great value, a 2011 initiative, which can be defined as bottom-up initiative because it arose from the will of local and regional governments in the Alps and was subsequently approved by the European Union, defined the aforementioned EUSALP Alpine Macro-Regional Strategy.

A 'macro-regional strategy' is an integrated framework endorsed by the European Council, which can be implemented, inter alia, through the European Structural and Investment Funds, to address common challenges in a geographical area of Member States and third countries

¹⁵ Briand F., Dubost M., Pitt D., 1992. Les Alpes: un système sous pression. Centre International pour l'Environnement Alpin. Le-Bourget-du-Lac, France, p. 131.

¹⁶ I refer to the work of Pier Paolo Viazzo and the fundamental studies on the different historical forms of Alpine mobility, which have opened up our imagination on Alpine villages from immobile rural boundaries in a peasant past to open worlds in constant movement linked to transhumance, seasonal trade and temporary emigration. In particular: Viazzo P.P., 2001. *Alpine communities. Ambiente, popolazione, struttura sociale nelle Alpi dal XVI secolo ad oggi*. Carocci ed. p. 416. Viazzo P.P., Cerri R. 2009. *From mountain to mountain. Mobilità e migrazioni interne nelle Alpi italiane (secoli XVII-XIX)*. Zeisciu Centro Studi ed. p. 191.

located in the same geographical area, thereby benefiting from collaborations aimed at achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

A specific Interreg Cooperation Programme is dedicated by Europe to the Alps: the Alpine Space Programme (<https://www.alpine-space.eu/>), which is in itself a model of transnational governance. In this renewed political context, the countries of the Alpine Arc are joining forces to build Alpine-wide cooperation projects and processes.

The *AlpFoodway* project, which started in 2015 and ended in 2019, was a major worksite for the candidacy process dedicated to Alpine food heritage. A project that promoted processes of exchange, awareness, sharing and recognition among the local communities of the participating countries, paving the way for long-term work. In the context I have quickly evoked, the project *Living ICH. Cross-border governance instruments for the safeguarding and valorisation of the Living Intangible Heritage*¹⁷, assumes the character of a fundamental experimentation, attempting to respond, in practice and in the context of some pilot territories between Italy and Switzerland, to the organisation of participatory governance processes involving the communities, through a precise assessment of needs and the elaboration of possible responses to these needs, conceived as "safeguarding measures" of the Alpine heritage.

1.3 What have we learnt from this project and from the processes in progress?

First of all, the project has made it possible to identify a number of production supply chains - that of the so-called minor cereals, small fruits, chestnuts and traditional horticulture - that represent the current development of an heritage of knowledge, skills, practices and values which constitute a sustainable and integrated food system, deeply rooted in the life and culture of Alpine communities.

Secondly, it has provided an insight into the extent to which the Alps are rich in experiences that can be considered '*good practices for safeguarding living heritage*', according to the criteria of the 2003 Convention¹⁸.

Thirdly, it has shown that it is possible to develop governance processes on a local scale, with the effective involvement of communities, politicians and administrations, creating the basis for long-term sustainability processes. Considering these three major achievements, we must now ask ourselves how a network of Alpine communities and institutions can work to strengthen and capitalise on these principles.

Tamara Nikolić Đerić's study, with its graph that visually interconnects the different regulatory instruments pertaining to the areas of civil society participation, environment, culture and sustainability, provides us with tools to build strongly interconnected processes, following the

¹⁷ <https://progetti.interreg-italiasvizzera.eu/it/b/78/strumentitransfrontalieridigovernanceperlasalvaguardiaelavalorizzazione>

¹⁸ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/register>

recommendations of international Conventions but, at the same time, allowing us to be surprised by the richness of the experiences of Alpine communities, while continuing to seek out and question these communities and their environment.

If it were not reductive, we could say that Alpine communities have developed - over a long period of time in their history - sustainable food systems and participatory social and political practices, which today inspire those new processes of safeguarding and governance that the *Living ICH* project has endeavoured to experiment. Involving cross-border communities in the Alpine area, *Living ICH* has dedicated itself to the research and development of governance tools, with the aim of contributing to the safeguarding of traditional food and the sustainable development of territories, working to open up prospects for the democratisation of decision-making processes, which closely connect Culture and Environment.

2. Key concepts

This report provides an overview of the development of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage and its links with a range of international, national and local instruments and initiatives starting from the ongoing evolution of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) governance.

The 2003 Convention has been, and continues to be, an inspiration and guide for the countless experiences, both realised and underway, at local, regional, national and international level, providing an innovative and concrete tool for developing collaborations among sectors, disciplines, actors, communities, groups and individuals for the preservation of living heritage, and thus contributing to sustainable development and its current goals¹⁹.

Art. 1 Purposes of the Convention

The purposes of this Convention are to:

- (a) to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;
- (b) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of communities, groups and individuals concerned;
- (c) to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;
- (d) to provide for international cooperation and assistance.

Art. 2 Definitions

For the purposes of this Convention,

¹⁹ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/sustainable-development-and-living-heritage>

1. The "intangible cultural heritage" means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - that communities, groups and, in some cases individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.
2. The 'intangible cultural heritage' as defined in paragraph 1 above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains:
 - (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle intangible cultural heritage;
 - (b) performing arts;
 - (c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
 - (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
 - (e) traditional craftsmanship.
3. "Safeguarding" means measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalisation of the various aspects of such cultural heritage.
4. "State Parties" means the States which are bound by this Convention and among which this Convention is in force.
5. This Convention applies mutatis mutandis to the territories referred to in Article 33 which become Parties to this Convention in accordance with the conditions set out in that Article. To that extent the expression " State Parties" also refers to such territories²⁰.

The Convention therefore explicitly attributes to "*communities, groups and (in some cases) individuals*", civil society players *from below*, the task of identifying and recognising the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, know-how, tools, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces that constitute their Intangible Cultural Heritage. Recognition of this central role entails different ways of participation in heritage preservation and management.

²⁰ Original text in English: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

Original text in French: <https://ich.unesco.org/fr/convention>

Official text translated into Italian:

<https://www.unesco.beniculturali.it/pdf/ConvenzionePatrimonioImmateriale2003-ITA.pdf>

Article 15 Participation of communities, groups and individuals

Within the framework of its safeguarding activities of the intangible cultural heritage, each State Party shall endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management.

Safeguarding and managing the Intangible Cultural Heritage therefore have as their starting and finishing points the active and widest possible participation of communities, groups and individuals. Experiences in different sectors, such as natural resource management, show that bottom-up participation is a necessary but not sufficient condition. For effective safeguarding, participation must be supported by a set of institutional, administrative, political, public and private decision-makers, researchers, technicians, among others and depending on the case, who complete the operational framework 'from above', where safeguarding can effectively take place in the long term. The intense debates that characterise and animate the work of the Intergovernmental Committee, established by the 2003 Convention, show that the different stakeholders' interpretations of the concepts of both participation and community are significantly different²¹. This is because each living and dynamic heritage element is situated in broader and more specific cultural, social, political, economic and environmental contexts. Hence the need to always consider the complexity of a real **relational ecosystem made of networks and interconnections of multiple actors and multi-level and multi-sectoral policies**. The diversity of contexts does not make it possible to establish fixed rules for generalised governance, but forces us to explore the heterogeneity of cultural expressions in order to identify appropriate and well-contextualised mechanisms.

Contextualisation of each activity is crucial. Each type of heritage and the community or group that transmits it has specific characteristics and needs. For instance, food heritage is closely interconnected with the environment and natural resources, whereas an oral practice transmitted for decades in an urban context does not have the same context and, consequently, cannot have the same governance structure.

This awareness implies that the governance of the ICH must not only be participatory, but also multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral. The main reference for the implementation of ICH safeguarding measures, and thus also governance systems, is the 2003 Convention. Each State Party follows the recommendations of this regulatory instrument and adapts them to its own context. In recent years, starting with the pandemic emergency, the Convention has devoted itself to promoting the ICH as a resilience instrument not only in the case of health emergencies, but also in armed conflicts, migration processes and climate change.

²¹ Bortolotto, C. 2013.

Below are the key concepts that outline the main purpose of the work, i.e., to identify and propose tools and examples of participatory management related to the traditional food system, particularly the Alpine one, as a living heritage.

In the second chapter, some key concepts are presented, focusing on the definitions of intangible heritage and Alpine food heritage.

The third chapter highlights the conceptual and organisational development of the Convention as a framework for the management of living heritage, and as a governance model, focusing on some key instruments, such as the Register of Good Practices and the 12 Principles of Ethics.

The fourth chapter highlights the ongoing changes and shifting heritage paradigms in the evolution towards an ever-closer relationship between the natural environment and human cultures.

The fifth chapter focuses on four fundamental areas of institutional and regulatory action and analyses some Alpine experiences in the light of the identification criteria for good governance practices. A selection of ongoing experiences in the *Living ICH* project territories highlights the characteristics and complexity of food heritage governance and the importance of taking into account international recommendations with reference to the interconnected thematic areas and sectors of public and regulatory actions, such as culture, the environment, participation and sustainability.

Finally, in the conclusions, a number of graphs visualise the intersections between concepts, sectors and regulatory instruments, which should be taken into account in innovative participatory governance processes focusing on the central role of living heritage in future policies.

2.1 Intangible Cultural Heritage

As is well known, the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) paradigm takes universal form and content with the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is the result of a complex joint effort between academic, political and institutional representatives who have turned their attention to the voices of the communities, groups and individuals that make up the social fabric of each country. Essentially, the ICH is the transmission of all those sets of knowledge, skills, practices and values that give life and vitality to the traditions of each country and is carried out by communities, groups and individuals from one generation to the next.

At the heart of the concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which integrates the Material Cultural Heritage of sites, places, monuments and landscapes inscribed on World Heritage Lists, is the notion of safeguarding. Operationally, safeguarding encompasses all the necessary measures for the vitality of the ICH through precise planning. Its definition in the Convention restores its exact meaning.

Article 2 Definitions

3. Safeguarding” means measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage.

The success of these definitions is confirmed by the number of State Parties that have ratified the Convention (in twenty years, almost every country in the world has acceded to the Convention) — thereby earning first place in terms of number of countries that have subscribed to it in less than two decades — and by the number of applications that are submitted each year (there are currently 708 registered members²²).

Article 2 of the Convention in the introductory section is dedicated to definitions.

2.2 Governance and Participation

UNESCO identifies governance in the cultural sphere as an inclusive practice of all sectors (regulatory, political, institutional, etc.) and players who have roles, rights and responsibilities in safeguarding the different aspects of culture (communities, groups, individuals, stakeholders in general), emphasising the need for the "*creation of institutional mechanisms for the participation of civil society in the decision-making process*". Consequently, the participation of different actors, including those of civil society, is an integral part not only of the concept, but of the practice of governance²³.

The concept of governance in its various dimensions includes decision-making processes in often complex systems of relationships and socio-cultural variables. Throughout history, societies and cultures have seen and experienced the emergence of different power and decision-making systems. The development of democracy in the modern sense has had decisive results, including various forms of citizen participation - and involvement - from the right to vote, to school education to pluralism and shared decision-making at the local level.

The following matrix proposes a comparative framework between the concepts of government and governance²⁴.

²² <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists>

²³ <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/development-indicators/dimensions/governance>

²⁴ European Union, 2018. *Participatory Governance of Cultural Heritage*. EU Publication Office, Luxembourg. p.108 <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b8837a15-437c-11e8-a9f4-01aa75ed71a1>

	Government	Governance
Main stakeholders	State	Different stakeholders: State, civil society, market
Types of interactions	Authority and control	Cooperation, negotiation, collaboration
Role of the State	Authority	Collaboration
Set of responsibilities	State	Decentralised
Planning, decisions, implementation, evaluation	State	Different actors

On an international level, the institutions support and foster the processes of defining and developing governance in different sectors, including at cross-sectoral level, (natural resources and the environment, common property, urban infrastructure, supply chain economies, etc.) through regulatory guidance for nation-states.

An example of this are the numerous elements registered on UNESCO Lists over the last twenty years, which demonstrate the strong participation of communities and groups - together with the relevant institutions - in the identification, documentation and candidature of heritage elements to UNESCO Lists and Registers.

The continuous development of governance and participation since the last post-war period is playing an essential role in reducing the diversity loss of local, popular or traditional cultural expressions. The same phenomenon is affecting biological diversity, as indicated by UNESCO²⁵.

The great transformations linked to the industrialisation and modernisation processes that started in the 19th century have in fact marginalised, if not completely excluded, the communities and groups that are the holders of that culture, defined by the World Commission on Culture as "*the total and distinct way of life that characterises a people or a society with its diversified and dynamic knowledge, both local and scientific, but also with its innumerable skills and practices as a way of maintaining, transmitting and developing that same knowledge handed down from generation to generation*"²⁶.

The role of these expressions and ways of culture, and of their broad and respected governance and participation, is today recognised as a condition for sustainability (at the economic, social, environmental and cultural level) and for achieving the goals set by countries in relation to sustainable development. The paradigm of Intangible Cultural Heritage accompanies and reinforces this process of re-appropriation of living cultural traditions by groups, communities and individuals, thus legitimising an increasingly widespread process of institutional recognition. One of the most important aspects of the

²⁵ <https://www.unesco.org/en/biodiversity/international-governance>

²⁶ World Commission on Culture and Development, 1995. *Our creative diversity*. United Nations, p. 302 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000101651>

2003 Convention is precisely the effort required of States Parties to ensure the widest possible participation of communities and groups in the preservation of the ICH, as set out in Article 15.

Art. 15 Participation of communities, groups and individuals

Within the framework of its safeguarding activities of the intangible cultural heritage, each State Party shall endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management.

Janet Blake²⁷ emphasises that despite the Convention's 'soft' language, Article 15 is a strong encouragement for States Parties to find appropriate ways to fully involve communities, groups and individuals in all stages of safeguarding.

Another key aspect is acknowledging the role of communities, groups and individuals in the definition of the ICH as legitimate creators and primary responsible for the transmission of their living heritage. Not only are they encouraged to participate in safeguarding or conservation endeavours, as in the case of the 1972 Convention, but they also represent the very essence of the heritage process: without communities and groups Intangible Cultural Heritage cannot exist!

Against a backdrop of profound environmental, social and economic changes, fundamental contributions such as those offered by Elinor Ostrom are valuable as they enable us to question our times and seek governance solutions adapted to the growing complexity of our societies, taking into account the need for what Ostrom defines as 'polycentric efforts'²⁸.

One of the fundamental aspects highlighted in her enlightening work, is the building of a climate of trust, which is crucial in order to create cooperative relationships, foster the *empowerment* of communities, cultivate motivation, recognise rights and responsibilities, build organisational models that allow them to control resources as they are directly involved in management. Elinor Ostrom has humanised the study of economics and politics. She has discovered what is possible, and the problems that can be solved when there is mutual trust. Her work inspires optimism for the future. On the other hand, Ostrom is also a realist and has delivered the results of decades of tireless work on the ground, which enabled her to become the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in economics, proving that motivation and the ability to cooperate and participate are among the pillars of good governance.

Following Ostrom's thoughts and creating a climate of trust takes us straight to the heart of the experimentation developed with the *Living ICH project*: within the project territories, the processes of transformation of relations between people, communities and institutions were activated, putting 'communities, groups and individuals', their needs and aspirations, at the

²⁷ Blake, J. 2020. *Participation in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage viewed as a Human Rights Imperative*. *Volkskunde* 3/2020 p. 324.

https://immaterieelerfgoed.be/nl/attachments/view/volkskunde_humanrightsimperative

²⁸ Ostrom, E. 1990. *Governing the commons. The evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge University Press (Italian translation *Governare i beni collettivi*. Marsilio publishers 2006).

centre. Some of the tools developed by the project, such as the 'community charters'²⁹ have created new spaces for speaking, thus making it possible to formulate needs and to highlight and share the good practices in progress, and imagine innovative solutions³⁰ aimed at solving common problems, favouring processes of transmission and constant cultural creation.

2.3 Communities, groups and individuals

"[...] recognising that communities, particularly indigenous communities, groups and in some cases individuals, play an important role in the preservation, maintenance and revitalisation of intangible cultural heritage, thereby contributing to the enrichment of cultural diversity and human creativity." (Convention 2003, Foreword)".

The text of the 2003 Convention refers numerous times (as many as 12) to '*communities, groups and individuals*' (CGI) identifying their different roles and responsibilities towards the ICH, as they

- Are ICH carriers ('*the intangible cultural heritage of CGI*');
- Acknowledge it ('*acknowledge it as part of their ICH*');
- Passed it on from generation to generation '*passed it on from generation to generation*';
- *Constantly recreate* it ('*constantly recreated*')
- Strengthen their sense of identity and continuity, thus their well-being in changing contexts ("*in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history*");
- Reinforce respect for human rights among CGIs and in connection with sustainability ('*compatible with existing human rights instruments and the requirements of mutual respect between communities, groups and individuals as well as sustainable development*');
- Protagonists in the identification of the ICH together with governments ('*the State party will identify and define the various ICH elements on its territory, with the participation of the relevant communities, groups and non-governmental organisations*');
- Recipients and actors of education, awareness-raising and capacity-building activities ("*Every State shall make every effort, using all appropriate means, towards specific education and training programmes, with the participation of the communities and groups concerned*");
- Protagonists and leaders in participatory processes ('*Each State Party will make every effort to ensure the widest participation of CGIs*').

All these references to CGIs demonstrate a deep connection between them and the ICH. The backbone of this Convention and the sustainability of the ICH are CGIs. Given the great

²⁹ It is an innovative tool, that resulted from territorial round tables organised with players of micro production chains, such as the chestnut chain in Valtellina, which allowed mediators and researchers to gather the specific needs of the producers' community, then trying to involve administrators and formulating concrete answers to these needs in a participative process, following the 'agenda of actions to be taken',.

³⁰ In this regard, the *Living ICH* project organised "territorial tables" and "knowledge cafés" animated by cultural mediators and facilitators, with the involvement of local administrations and institutions, and organised an "agenda of actions to be taken", which was shared during the "Cross-border Knowledge Days".

cultural diversity of states, the Convention leaves the definition of CGIs relatively open. At least two factors justify the lack of a unique definition of CGIs.

The first factor is related to the sovereignty of states and their institutional arrangements. Centralisation and decentralisation are among the first determining factors, followed by others that may or may not give CGIs recognised roles and responsibilities. The second is related to the diversity of contexts and situations: one type of CGI may be well-defined on the basis of competences relating to a practice, e.g. a family of puppeteers, another type has less precise contours, e.g. citizens celebrating a carnival or the audience at a festival.

In the context of the *Living ICH* project, taking into consideration the territory where the project took place, it is possible to distinguish people or groups of active players with specific knowledge and skills. Beekeepers in Valle d'Aosta, chestnut growers in Valtellina and Valposchiavo or small fruit growers in Vallese are examples. But other groups and communities contribute to the transmission of heritage without corresponding to a well-defined group, think for instance of people who take part in a ritual or a festivity, giving their support to the organisation of the event. What distinguishes and defines them both as bearers of a specific heritage is the sense of belonging and identification with a specific heritage element.

In the European context, two years after the 2003 UNESCO Convention, the Council of Europe proposed³¹ the *Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*, also known as the Faro Convention, named after the Portuguese city where it was adopted in 2005³². This Convention refers to cultural heritage (mentioned as many as 82 times in the text) as a '*collection of resources*', without reference to material or immaterial aspects. Above all, it is important to remember that, unlike the UNESCO Conventions, this is a Framework Convention, limited to the enlarged Europe (47 member states) and not legally binding. It should also be made clear that the Council of Europe is not an institution of the European Union and should not be confused, as often happens, with the European Council³³.

The text of this Convention proposes the term *heritage community* as "*a community made up of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and pass on to future generations*".

Article 2 Definitions

For the purposes of this Convention

- a. A heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time;

³¹ <https://www.coe.int/it/web/portal/home>

³² <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention>

³³ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/>

- b. A heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generation

It has been pointed out that, apart from a certain confusion related to modalities, objectives and content, such as '*the need to involve everyone in society*' (Preamble, paragraph 6), the Council of Europe Convention is only applicable in pluralistic and democratic contexts, posing a challenge for a number of States Parties³⁴.

While the debate, particularly among academics, remains open to various interpretations about what constitutes a community or a group, the variety and growing number of recognitions around the world pragmatically indicate that the ICH's key notions, including those of 'communities, groups and individuals', are internationally accepted.

2.4 Sustainable development

"Is culture an aspect or a means of development, the latter understood as material progress; or is culture the end and aim of development: the latter understood as the flourishing of human existence in its several forms and as a whole?"

Marshall Sahlins³⁵

The concept and practice of sustainable development have complex histories and the institutional and academic debate is still open after almost four decades. The term was first used in an environmental context with the following definition '*development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*', dated 1987, coined by the Brundtland Commission³⁶ and subsequently institutionalised by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Rio de Janeiro Summit.

Although today the term has entered our common language and international and national policies, it is necessary to highlight the reason for its complex history and especially its limited application. Some considerations are as follows:

- The notion of sustainable development gives priority to the environmental and economic context, thereby excluding culture (the three pillars of sustainability are identified in economy, society and the environment; culture has been proposed several times as the fourth pillar, but in reality it is its '*foundation*', as emphasised by the World Commission on Culture and Development (see footnote 36).
- The notion of development is not consistently defined³⁷.

³⁴ Blake, J. 2020. *Participation in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage viewed as a Human Rights Imperative*. *Volkskunde* 3/2020 p. 317.

https://immaterieelerfgoed.be/nl/attachments/view/volkskunde_humanrightsimperative

³⁵ United Nations, 1995. *Our Creative Diversity. Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development*, Paris. p. 20 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000101651>

³⁶ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>

³⁷ Berg C. 2020. *Sustainable action: overcoming the barriers*. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, UK. p. 318.

- The definition uses the term '*needs*' as implicitly equal for present and future generations, but it seems clear that there can be no correspondence between the needs expressed today and those of tomorrow.
- The dominant global economy continues to prevail over environmental, social and cultural issues.
- Sustainability' is at the heart of the objectives, but is used as an adjective of development, although it is the significant term of the pair, with a well-known and precise history³⁸³⁹.
- In 1995, three years after the Rio Summit, a group of anthropologists coordinated by Claude Levi-Strauss worked on the World Commission on Culture and Development's Report '*Our Creative Diversity*' which highlighted, among other things, cultural diversity as the '*ultimate goal of any development or sustainability policy or practice*' (see footnote 36).

Beyond the open debate and the number of unresolved problems in sustainable development at various levels, the definition continues to be promoted by the United Nations' Agenda 2030, which since 2015 has followed up on the eight Millennium Development Goals. The Goals represent a set of central issues in the world such as fighting poverty, eradicating hunger and combating climate change. The seventeen 'new' Goals promote greater responsibility in social, environmental and economic terms.

Culture is still missing explicitly, but it could be considered that, although not directly included in the Agenda as a dimension of sustainable development, it has been gradually introduced through the ongoing debate since 1986, as in the case of the recent *2022 Resolution A/RES/76/214 on Culture and Sustainable Development* that recognises "*culture as an essential component of human development which represents a source of identity, innovation and creativity for the individual and the community and is an important factor for social inclusion and poverty eradication, providing sustainable economic growth and ownership of development processes*"⁴⁰.

In 2021, UNESCO established a web platform on Culture and Sustainable Development with the aim of '*providing comprehensive support to Member States for the design, adaptation and implementation of their public policies, by developing mechanisms and tools to document and measure the impact of culture on sustainable development from an integrated and global perspective. Culture should not be considered as a policy domain in its own right, but rather as a **transversal dimension that can foster a paradigm shift to renew decision-making and move towards an inclusive, people-centred and context-relevant approach***'⁴¹.

³⁸ Hans Carl von Carlowitz and 'Sustainability'. *Environment and Society Portal*

<https://www.environmentandsociety.org/tools/keywords/hans-carl-von-carlowitz-and-sustainability>

³⁹ Gadgil M., Berkes F. 1991. Traditional Resource Management Systems. *Resource Management and Optimization*. 8: 127-141 <https://wgbis.ces.iisc.ernet.in/biodiversity/pubs/mg/pdfs/mg103.pdf>

⁴⁰ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3954974?ln=en>

⁴¹ <https://www.unesco.org/en/sustainable-development/culture>

Twenty-seven Operational Directives (Chapter VI - Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development at National Level, paragraphs 170-197) are dedicated to the relationship between ICH and sustainable development under different perspectives, thereby committing governments to

- facilitate cooperation with relevant experts, cultural intermediaries and mediators through a participatory approach (170);
- ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage,
- and involve them actively in elaboration and implementation of such plans, policies and programmes(171a);
- ensure that the communities, groups and individuals concerned are the main beneficiaries, both in moral and in material terms, of such plans, policies and programmes; (171b);
- adopt appropriate legal, technical, administrative and financial measures, in particular through the application of intellectual property rights, privacy rights and any other appropriate forms of legal protection, to ensure that the rights of the communities, groups and individuals that create, bear and transmit their intangible cultural heritage are duly protected when raising awareness about their heritage or engaging in commercial activities(173b);
- recognise that inclusive social development comprehends issues such as sustainable food security (177).

Chapter VI.1.1 refers specifically to Food Security, thereby committing governments to

- ensure the recognition of, respect for and enhancement of those farming, fishing, hunting, pastoral, food-gathering, food preparation and food preservation knowledge and practices, including their related rituals and beliefs, that contribute to food security and adequate nutrition and that are recognized by communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals as part of their intangible cultural heritage (178);
- foster scientific studies and research methodologies, including those conducted by the communities or groups themselves, aimed at understanding the diversity of those knowledge and practices, demonstrating their efficacy, identifying and promoting their contributions to maintaining agro-biodiversity, providing food security and strengthening their resilience to climate change (178a);
- adopt appropriate legal, technical, administrative and financial measures, including codes or other tools of ethics, to promote and/or regulate access to farming, fishing, hunting, pastoral and food gathering, food preparation and food preservation knowledge and practices, that are recognized by communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals as part of their intangible cultural heritage, as well as equitable sharing of the benefits they generate, and ensure the transmission of such knowledge and practices (178b);

- adopt appropriate legal, technical, administrative and financial measures to recognize and respect the customary rights of communities and groups to those land, sea and forest ecosystems necessary for their farming, fishing, pastoral and food-gathering knowledge and practices that are recognized by communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals as part of their intangible cultural heritage (178c).e.

Chapter VI.1.5 refers to Access to clean and safe water and its sustainable use, thereby committing governments to

- ensure the viability of water management systems that are recognized by communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals as part of their intangible cultural heritage and that promote equitable access to safe drinking water and sustainable water use, notably in agriculture and other subsistence activities;
- foster scientific studies and research methodologies, including those conducted by the communities and groups themselves, aimed at understanding the diversity of those water management systems that are recognized by communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals as part of their intangible cultural heritage and identifying their contributions to meeting environmental and water-related development needs, as well as how to strengthen their resilience in the face of climate change;
- adopt appropriate legal, technical, administrative and financial measures to identify, enhance and promote such systems in order to respond to water needs and climate change challenges at the local, national and international levels (182).

Chapter VI.2.1 refers to Income Generation and Sustainable Livelihoods, thereby committing governments to

- recognize, promote and enhance the contribution of intangible cultural heritage to generating income and sustaining livelihoods for communities, groups and individuals;
- foster scientific studies and research methodologies, including those conducted by the communities and groups themselves, aimed at identifying and assessing opportunities that intangible cultural heritage offers for generating income and sustaining livelihoods for communities, groups and individuals concerned, with particular attention to its role in supplementing other forms of income;
- adopt appropriate legal, technical, administrative and financial measures to promote opportunities for communities, groups and individuals to generate income and sustain their livelihoods so that the sustainable practice, transmission and preservation of their intangible cultural heritage can be ensured, and to ensure that the communities, groups and individuals concerned are the primary beneficiaries of the income generated as a result of their own intangible cultural heritage and that they are not dispossessed of it, in particular in order to generate income for others.

In the context of traditional and sustainable food practices, the environmental dimension and natural resources play a central and evident role both in the preservation of the ICH and in sustainable development at different levels. In this context, the Convention on Biological Diversity CBD⁴² of 1992 identified fundamental aspects **that link the culture of communities, groups and individuals with the preservation of biological, genetic and non-biological natural resources**. This Convention came into being as one of the legally binding outcomes of the aforementioned 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development, which, as mentioned previously, laid the conceptual foundations of sustainable development and its related goals.

A key supplementary agreement to the CBD is the Nagoya Protocol, adopted in 2010, on 'access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of their utilisation (ABS)' by local communities⁴³ .

Genetic resources are defined as all natural resources: plant, animal or microorganisms. Access means the use of these resources, the process of researching their beneficial properties and their use for traditional and scientific knowledge or to develop commercial products⁴⁴ .

The latter aspect relates to the Operational Guidelines of the ICH Convention on the commercial use of the products of local communities and groups. The Protocol essentially provides a transparent legal framework for the effective implementation of one of the three objectives of the CBD: the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The genetic resources-local communities binomial is linked to the traditional knowledge of the latter; this makes the **relationship between the contents of the CBD and the Convention for the protection of the ICH**⁴⁵ clear. Indeed, one of the objectives of the Protocol is to strengthen the ability of communities to benefit from the use of their knowledge, skills, innovations and practices in the context of natural resources.

2.5 Ecosystem Services

At the beginning of the 2000s, the concept of ecosystem services entered the scientific language and international agreements⁴⁶ , to then spread widely in national institutions. In short, it expresses all the benefits that nature provides to man through the diversity and richness of ecosystems.

⁴² <https://www.cbd.int/>

⁴³ <https://www.cbd.int/abs/doc/protocol/nagoya-protocol-en.pdf>

⁴⁴ <https://www.cbd.int/abs/infokit/revised/print/factsheet-uses-en.pdf>

⁴⁵ For a more comprehensive reading on the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity and intangible cultural heritage: Fredriksson M. 2021. *Dilemmas of protection: decolonising the regulation of genetic resources as cultural heritage*, International Journal of Heritage Studies, 27:7, 720-733.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13527258.2020.1852295>

⁴⁶ Brown T. C., Bergstrom J. C., Loomis J. B. 2007. *Defining, valuing and providing ecosystem goods and services*. Natural Resources Journal. 47 (2): 329-376.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279589825_Defining_valuing_and_providing_ecosystem_goods_and_services

With this meaning, biological diversity, combined with that of geological, water and non-biological resources, is no longer understood as the quantity available to humans, but rather as a quality, a value system and well-being to be managed in a sustainable and responsible manner. Considered in detail, ecosystem services also include goods, such as water, food, energy, wood and fibre. The importance of ecosystem services and their exact qualitative valuation is such that their recognition is an integral part of human rights, such as the right to water⁴⁷ and the right to food⁴⁸.

Agricultural ecosystems that are biologically diverse and in good condition can provide in a sustainable manner not only supply services such as food and materials, but also a range of essential regulating services such as pollination, soil formation and maintenance, natural pest control, climate regulation, nutrient and water cycle regulation, and carbon storage in soil and in biomass. They also provide the cultural services of traditional rural landscapes and habitats, values of belonging, sense of place and welcome for sustainable forms of tourism. The FAO, in its first Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture Report 2019⁴⁹ placed great emphasis on the ecosystem services generated by a sustainable food and agriculture system. The report was written collaboratively with local communities and groups from more than 90 countries around the world who detailed the benefits at the local scale.

For its part, the Convention on Biological Diversity in recent years has been placing great emphasis on ecosystem services in agriculture and food. *The introduction to the 2020 Framework for Action*⁵⁰ states that "*Biodiversity for food and agriculture (BFA), along with the ecosystem services it supports, is essential to sustainable agri-food systems. It enables production systems and livelihoods to cope with, and evolve under, changing social, economic and environmental conditions, and is a key resource in efforts to ensure food security and nutrition while limiting or reducing negative impacts on the environment and also contributing to environment protection and restoration and sustainable use*".

The European Union has been particularly active in recognising and disseminating a real culture of ecosystem services even in the face of increasing risks and consequences of human activities on ecosystems and biodiversity⁵¹. The Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services (MAES) programme has developed a set of tools to identify, assess and monitor ecosystem services at different scales.

⁴⁷ United Nations, 2010. *The human right to water and sanitation*. General Assembly Resolution A/RES/64/292 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/479/35/PDF/N0947935.pdf?OpenElement>

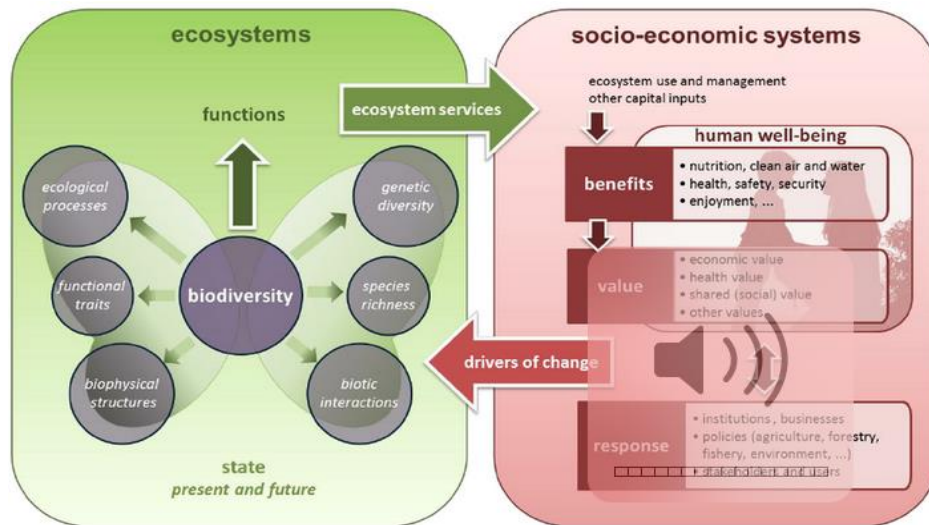
⁴⁸ United Nations, 2019. *The right to food*. Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/40/7 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/099/14/PDF/G1909914.pdf?OpenElement>

⁴⁹ FAO. 2019. *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*. J. Bélanger & D. Pilling (eds.). FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Assessments. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/3/ca3129en/CA3129EN.pdf>

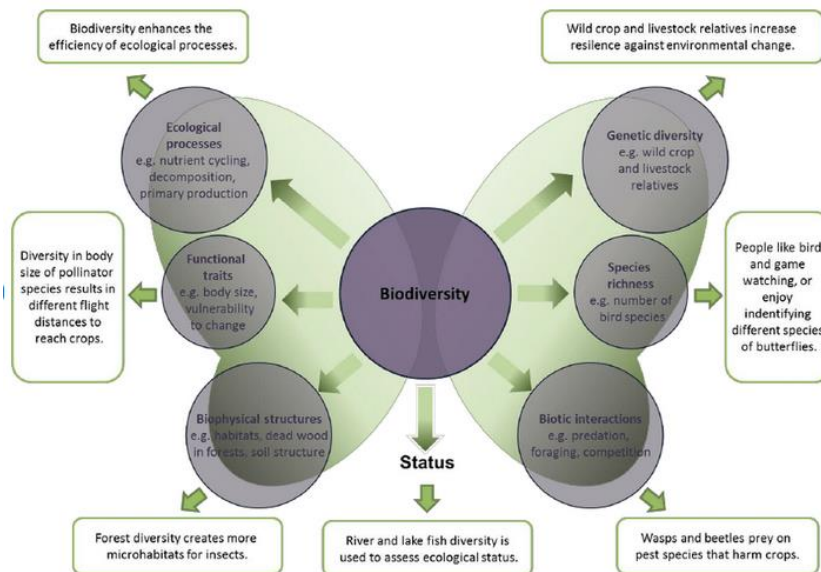
⁵⁰ CBD, 2020. *Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*. CBD/WG2020/3/INF/12 <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/cbe3/4575/055db9192047c86be632d449/wg2020-03-inf-12-en.pdf>

⁵¹ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity_en

The following infographics summarise the logical framework within which EU countries are required to operate through laws, strategies, programmes and concrete actions⁵².



Conceptual framework for ecosystem services in Europe



Representation of the multifaceted role of biodiversity in the provision of ecosystem services and in assessing the state of ecosystems

In mountainous areas, where agricultural intensification and industrial-type food production has limited possibilities due to the nature of the territory and logistical and transport conditions, agriculture has a marked agro-ecological character and a participatory character for local communities, and it is balanced in its cost/benefit ratio. Agro-ecological practices based on crop diversification, light soil tillage and the use of organic substances maintain and

⁵² European Commission, 2013. *Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services. An analytical framework. Discussion Paper.* p. 56. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c09a570b-e189-4a92-82ff-9897ab49a6b1/language-en>

enhance benefits in terms of ecosystem services⁵³ . Alpine food heritage responds to this framework of biological diversity respect and ecosystem goods and services production.

2.6 Food Heritage

Food Heritage (FH) is a fundamental expression of living heritage. Scientific research and the many disciplines involved identify the many aspects and problems of FH preservation and promotion. Below are some of the key features:

- environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability instrument;
- continuous and daily process of transmission and (re)creation;
- integration and participation of all sectors and players in an area;
- intervention of the different decision-making levels.

A recent article featuring a literature review, summarises the considerations on the recognition, preservation and promotion of the FH⁵⁴.

Various initiatives promote FH thinking and practices around the world. The Food Heritage Foundation (FHF), a non-profit organisation, supports local communities in their capacity as subjects of economic development in their sustainable production activities, and aims to revive traditional systems with methods, means and connections between rural and urban areas⁵⁵ .

For many years, both internationally and institutionally, the FAO has supported Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)⁵⁶ which it identifies as **agro-ecosystems of communities living in complex interaction with their land**. These resilient, evolving systems are characterised by significant agro-biodiversity, traditional knowledge, cultures and landscapes, sustainably managed by farmers, shepherds, fishermen and forest dwellers in ways that contribute to their livelihoods and food security. The overall objective of the GIAHS is to identify and safeguard agricultural heritage systems with their landscapes, biodiversity, knowledge systems and local cultures.

Humans and their livelihoods have continuously adapted to the potential and constraints of the environment and have shaped the landscape and biological environment to varying degrees. This has led to an accumulation of experiences over generations and an increasing variety and complexity of their knowledge systems and practices. The resilience of many GIAHS has been developed and adapted to cope with climate variability and change, natural hazards, new technologies and changing social and political situations, ensuring food security, livelihoods and risk reduction. The dynamic strategies and processes of the GIAHS enable

⁵³ Palomo-Campesino S., García-Llorente M., Hevia V., Boeraeve F., Dendoncker N., González J.A. 2022. *Le pratiche agroecologiche migliorano l'offerta di servizi ecosistemici? Un confronto tra aziende orticole agroecologiche e convenzionali*. Servizi ecosistemici, volume 57

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2212041622000705?via%3Dihub>

⁵⁴ Zocchi D.M., Fontefrancesco M.F., Corvo P., Pieroni A., 2021. *Recognising, Safeguarding, and Promoting Food Heritage: Challenges and Prospects for the Future of Sustainable Food Systems*. Sustainability 2021, 13(17), 9510; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13179510>

⁵⁵ <https://food-heritage.org/about/mission-and-vision/>

⁵⁶ <https://www.fao.org/giahs/background/en/>

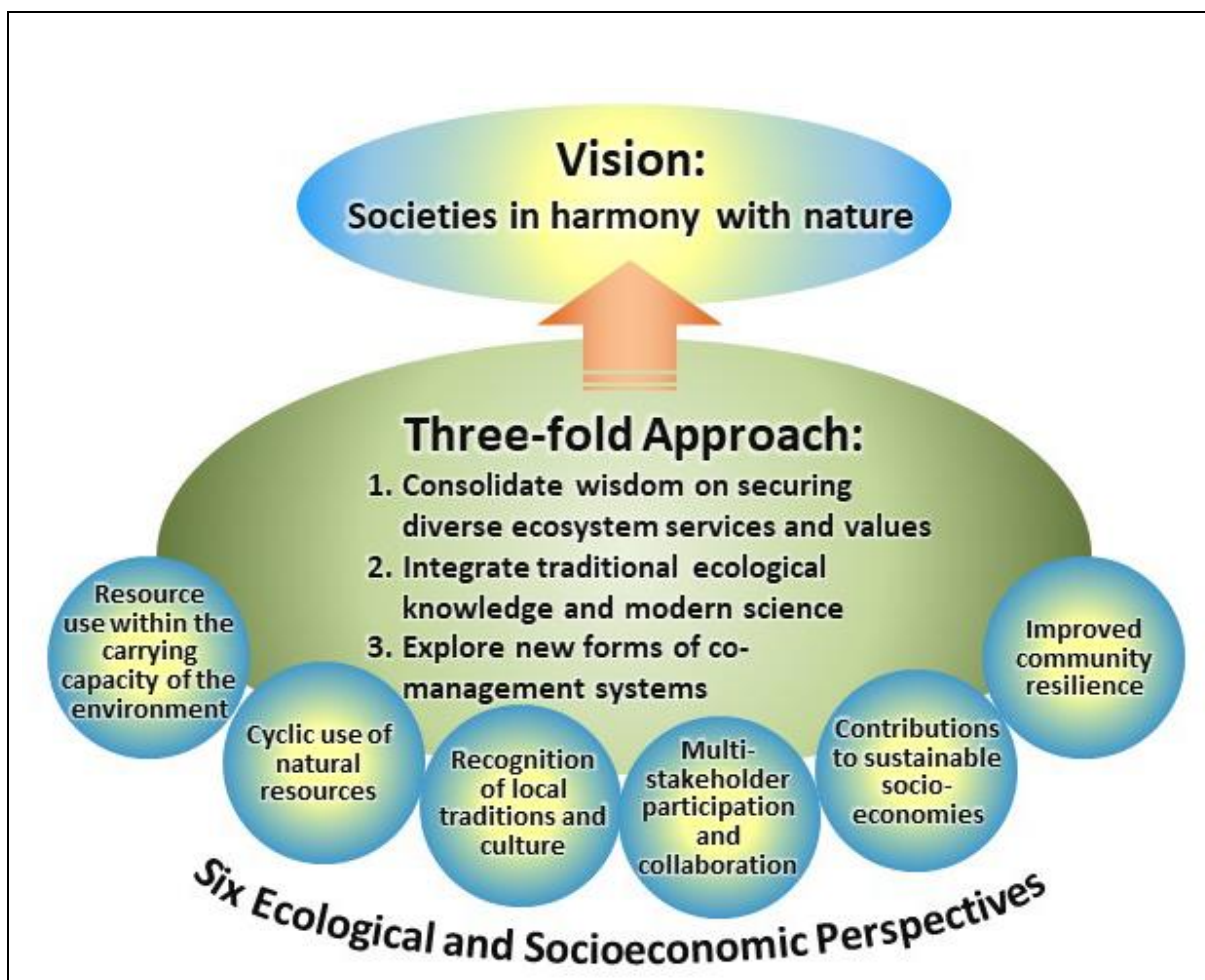
biodiversity and ecosystem services to be safeguarded through continuous innovation, transmission between generations and exchange with other communities and ecosystems.

The FH is an integral part of a global partnership linked to the United Nations and International Conventions: **the Satoyama initiative** (<https://satoyama-initiative.org/>) starts from the observation of increasingly uniform and large-scale food systems that cause environmental damage and loss of local cultures and traditions. In the face of this trend, the initiative supports locally accumulated heritages of knowledge and practices through long-term human-nature interactions, with production activities and management mechanisms of elaborate systems of local communities and groups producing food, fuel and other materials, nurturing traditions and culture, maintaining ecosystems and biodiversity.

The objective of Satoyama's initiative is threefold:

1. ensuring the ability to secure ecosystem goods, services and values;
2. **consolidate traditional knowledge, integrating it with modern science;**
3. exploring new forms of **co-management while respecting the common goods.**

The diagram below summarises the concept of the initiative⁵⁷.



⁵⁷ <https://satoyama-initiative.org/concept/satoyama-initiative/>

Three examples of good practice recognised within the Satoyama initiative

Ecological production and consumption of ancient wheat varieties in Tuscany, Italy (Associazione Grani Antichi Montespertoli, 2021)⁵⁸

The *Associazione Grani Antichi in Montespertoli*, Tuscany works for the transformational change of the local ancient wheat varieties supply chain and the possible replication of the project in other regions. The main objective is to restore and preserve ancient wheat varieties, to cultivate them sustainably while respecting biodiversity, and to include a form of payment to improve the income of farmers and members of the production chain. The preservation of social ties and local knowledge is a further achievement. The association form allows for fair governance and active participation of the different members and actors in the supply chain. The association recognises and protects farmers and processors (i.e. millers, bakers and pasta makers) with a patented trademark.

A specific logo is used to guarantee that the bread, pasta and flour are made according to the Association's guidelines. **A Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) was created for this purpose. Quality PGS focused on the territory and formalised with the adoption of guidelines for the cultivation and processing of wheat products.** It certifies wheat producers and processors based on the active participation of stakeholders (producers grow the grain, processors mill and process it by cooking or other means, and consumers eat it) and is built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange. In the case of the Association, an annual inspection of all members is conducted by a voluntary group of stakeholders. Food markets, fairs, conferences and awareness-raising activities in schools, universities and town halls take place frequently.

Recovery of chestnut groves for land management and transmission of traditions: two cases in Asturias (Northwest Spain, 2018)⁵⁹

The project illustrates the synergies between socio-economic development, multifunctional land use, transmission of traditional knowledge, improvement of ecosystem services and conservation of biodiversity. The recovery of chestnut groves in two public forests, Caranga Baxu and Villamorei, in Asturias was promoted by the regional administration (Principado de Asturias) to preserve *in situ* endangered *native cultivars* selected by local growers, protecting a set of landscape, ethnographic and cultural values. In many cases, the chestnut groves were in a state of abandonment and have required interventions to restore their ecological functionality. For this reason, traditional knowledge and modern techniques have been combined for plant selection, pruning, grafting, clearing and reconstruction of the traditional stone structures (*corros*) used to preserve chestnut groves. **The project involves communities and owners, as well as the**

⁵⁸ https://satoyama-initiative.org/case_studies/transformational-change-through-ecological-consumption-and-production-of-ancient-wheat-varieties-in-tuscany-italy-sitr6-6/

⁵⁹ https://satoyama-initiative.org/case_studies/the-contribution-of-chestnut-orchard-recovery-projects-for-effective-area-based-conservation-two-cases-in-asturias-north-west-spain/

local administration, in the specific decision-making and overall governance of the recovery process.

Governance-mix for resilient socio-ecological productive landscapes in Austria - an example from the Wachau terraced river landscape, 2016⁶⁰

Productive landscapes composed of mosaics of diverse ecosystems represent socio-ecological values that need to adapt to changing conditions and globalisation processes in agriculture, food and energy, demographic and climatic changes and changing consumer and visitor expectations. How can different governance approaches contribute to the resilience of these landscapes? One answer is provided by the Austrian Wachau case study, a famous terraced wine region rich in biological and cultural diversity along the Danube. **Different modes of governance on multiple scales contribute to the resilience of the system that requires land use driven by the market, civil society, local communities and groups, and centralised governance.** In contrast to Alpine agriculture, where farmers do not have strong bargaining power neither in marketing nor in markets for milk or beef raw materials, **the Wachau valley benefits from local (i.e. locally branded) food and tourism associated with well-recognised quality and origin labels, such as 'Wachau Wein' and the UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Landscape.**

Food Heritage should be distinguished from 'Food System', a term used by many institutions with a sectoral and mechanistic emphasis, without reference to the dimension of living heritage and cultural diversity. For FAO, *"A sustainable food system is one that provides food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases for generating food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised. This means that the system is profitable in all respects and by ensuring economic sustainability it offers broad social benefits, ensures social sustainability, and has a positive or neutral impact on the natural resource environment, while safeguarding the sustainability of the environment"*⁶¹.

Whereas the Food System corresponds to a structure of parts that provides products and economic and social benefits, the FH focuses on the active participation of identifiable actors, communities and groups that create, maintain and transmit functions and values linked to the territory, traditions and sense of belonging. Compared to the Food System, in the FH the **centrality of the cultural heritage element** comes into play with its real actors and its diversity of practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, values, tools, objects, artefacts and associated cultural spaces recognised by communities, groups and individuals, according to the definitions of the 2003 Convention.

⁶⁰ https://satoyama-initiative.org/case_studies/governance-mix-for-resilient-socio-ecological-production-landscapes-in-austria-an-example-of-the-terraced-riverine-landscape-wachau/

⁶¹ <https://www.fao.org/food-systems/en/>

Three often co-existing models of FH should finally be emphasised: **self-consumption, family farming and markets.**

Self-consumption in agriculture is the part of production that is not destined for the market. Being a farmer's and family's consumption, it can hardly be identified or linked to family farming statistics. In Italy, estimates have been rising steadily in the 2000s: in the ten years between 2003 and 2012, farms with self-consumption have been increasing. "With a percentage incidence of 36.4 per cent of the total, the tendency to reserve a part of the production for own consumption increased from 33.5 per cent in 2003 to 39 per cent from 2009 onwards"⁶².

Family farming encompasses all family agricultural activities as a way of managing agricultural, forestry, fishery and sheep farming by a family and predominantly dependent on family labour. The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, social and cultural functions.

Family farming is of enormous and often little-known importance. FAO declares it as "*the predominant form of food and agricultural production in both developed and developing countries, producing more than 80 per cent of the world's food by value. Given the multidimensional nature of family farming, farm and family, food production and home life, farm property and labour, traditional knowledge and innovative agricultural solutions, the past, present and future are all deeply interconnected*"⁶³. This is why the United Nations have declared the decade 2019-2028 the International Decade of Family Farming⁶⁴.

"*Even the European primary system is based on family farming and, out of a total of 11 million farms, 94 per cent are those where family labour is exclusively present. If we add to these numbers those farms where family labour is still present (but not 100% and not completely absent) then we cover 97% of the entire European production fabric. Only 3% of EU farms have no family labour*"⁶⁵.

Food markets represent the final stage of the chain or supply chain linking the product offered to consumer demand, through a variable number of stages and intermediaries. The short circuit or chain connects the producer directly to the consumer. The long circuit passes through one or more stages of processing, transformation, transport, marketing (market, wholesaler, specialised retailer or generalist), each of which affects the final price. At present, long circuits are dominant, often globalised and less diversified, while short circuits tend towards wide diversification (e.g. direct sales at the producer's premises, by mail order or via the Internet, sales to restaurants, local markets, fairs and promotional events).

⁶² Ascione A. 2015. *The spread of self-consumption in agricultural enterprises*. Journal of Agricultural Economics, Year LXX, No. 2, 2015: pp. 163-184.

⁶³ <https://www.fao.org/3/ca4672en/ca4672en.pdf>

⁶⁴ <https://www.fao.org/family-farming-decade/home/en/>

⁶⁵ <https://www.osservatorioagr.eu/approfondimenti/agricoltura-familiare-un-confronto-fra-italia-unione-europea/>

According to the spirit of the 2003 Convention, it is clear that the FH is more consistent with a short supply chain system, that is more suited to small producers, family producers, 'food artisans' and local markets such as the Earth Markets promoted by the SlowFood Foundation: *'the protagonists are the small producers and food artisans who sell what they produce and process and can guarantee and tell the quality of their products themselves. The products are local, fresh and seasonal; they respect the environment and the work of the producers; they are offered at fair prices, for those who buy and for those who sell. They are places of quality (rather than quantity), but also spaces to build a community, create exchange and promote education'*⁶⁶.

This foundation defines the short supply chain as *"an alternative strategy that gives producers an active role in the food system because it focuses on local production - territorial and decentralised food systems that minimise intermediaries in the food chain and the distances that food travels"*⁶⁷.

Within the *Living ICH* project, short supply chains are studied and perceived not only as economic or commercial processes, but also and above all as living and active social and cultural practices in close connection with the environment, territory and local communities.

2.7 The Alpine Food Heritage Case

In the context of the 2003 Convention, food heritage provides a summary of the key concepts described. In detail, we refer to the practical case of the Alpine Food Heritage and a safeguard programme to be submitted to the UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.

The Alpine Food Heritage (AFH) combines a whole of constantly evolving set of knowledge, skills, practices and values, which are deeply linked to ecosystems – and their limitations – the extraordinary diversity of natural resources, seasonal cycles and, last but not least, hydro-geological hazards, presently heightened by global climate change. A complex system of mountain environments in the heart of Europe, the Alps have been transformed by centuries of human activity into a harmonious set of productive landscapes that are the result of complex adaptive and creative solutions regarding both organisation, often community-based, as well as agricultural, pastoral and forestry management techniques.

"This heritage encompasses a vast and complex set of expressions that define the lifestyle, economy and diet of closely related Alpine communities: agro-pastoral practices, with seasonal transhumance and haymaking, family horticulture where food is processed and preserved for the winter season, harvesting and preservation of herbs, small fruits and mushrooms, terrace farming and management of high-altitude land, viticulture and fruit-growing, cultivation of mountain cereals and community bread-making practices, and all kitchen-related activities carried out throughout the year. The historical heritage of the Alps is at the heart of quality local production chains. Handing down such heritage and vitality is of paramount importance for the future of the Alps and for all of us."

⁶⁶ <https://www.fondazioneSlowFood.com/it/cosa-facciamo/mercati-della-terra-slow-food/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.fondazioneSlowFood.com/it/cosa-facciamo/mercati-della-terra-slow-food/produttori-e-co-produttori/la-filiera-corta/>

(Lapicciarella Zingari V., 2021. *Guidelines for Participatory Mapping, Inventory and Governance of Alpine Food Heritage as PCI*. Working Paper *Living ICH*, Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta).

The AFH is a binding element that links knowledge and nature practices, oral traditions and languages, social, ritual and festive events, and traditional craftsmanship, providing communities, groups and individuals with a “sense of identity and continuity” (as defined in Article 2 of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage - ICC).

The radical political, economic, social and environmental changes seen in the last two centuries of European history have caused Alpine communities to withstand pressures of various kinds, such as: conflicts arising from the progressive organisation of nation-states, political borders that have often disrupted the economic and social circuits established in previous centuries, industrialisation processes, migrations and massive urbanisation of mountain populations that have led to the depopulation of high-altitude villages, tourism, globalisation, and climate change challenges.

These pressures have proved costly for Alpine communities, historically characterised by strong adaptation capabilities, in terms of demographic losses, social and cultural crises of traditional models, and precariousness of local life prospects, leading at the same time to a commercial and tourist exploitation of Alpine resources, often disrespectful of the rights of local communities and their cultural identity.

The risks and threats facing the transmission of the AFH today call for a concerted and responsible effort on the part of the communities and institutions of the Alpine region, who have become increasingly aware of the value of this heritage and united in their desire to safeguard its vitality (as defined in Article 2.3 of the ICCPR) to transmit it to future generations.



The Elements of Alpine Food Heritage

The policies of the European Union, in collaboration with the Swiss Confederation through their strategies, programmes and projects, with special emphasis on the cross-border interregional programmes, have made it possible in recent decades to progressively strengthen the historical ties between territories and communities in the Alps, fostering cooperation processes, revitalising ancient circuits of economic and socio-cultural relations and breathing new life into and outlining new perspectives for the values of solidarity and exchange that historically characterise the Alpine landscape.

In this context, the European Parliament Resolution of 15 January 2020 on the Green Deal introduces the fundamental right to a clean and sustainable environment and a stable climate for all people living in Europe⁶⁸. There are significant cultural dimensions in every aspect of the European Green Deal, from circular economy to biodiversity, to “farm to fork” strategies⁶⁹. Food heritage, and Intangible Cultural Heritage in general, can unleash immense potential to support a rightful transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient future.

Agroecology and Alpine Food Heritage

In recent years, Europe and the FAO have highlighted the role of agroecology in mountain regions. *“Agroecology, through a set of practices, minimises the use of chemicals, improves and ensures ecosystem services, and takes into account the social values of communities”*. With this statement, the European Union emphasises and promotes traditional systems of sustainable agriculture in the face of intensification, the spread of monocultures and the environmental impact brought on by current industrial practices⁷⁰ FAO, for its part, states that: *“In mountains, the practice of agroecology and the conservation of agro-biodiversity result in more resilient agricultural and food systems”*. By relying on a number of good agri-food practices, FAO has identified some distinctive and common characteristics of mountain regions, such as:

- Diversity of species and practices that improves soil health and productivity while contributing positively to human health and product markets, ultimately providing environmental and economic resilience for communities;
- Co-creation and sharing of knowledge processes that integrate traditional and indigenous knowledge, the practical knowledge of producers and traders, as well as global scientific knowledge;
- Synergies that contribute to enhancing key functions of mountain food systems where ecosystems are fragile and harmony between agriculture and nature is crucial; practices such as innovative high-biodiversity cropping systems (including animal integration and high-value crops) also reinforce other principles such as efficiency, recycling and resilience;

⁶⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020IP0005>

⁶⁹ https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/farm-fork-strategy_en

⁷⁰ <https://visitors-centre.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/media/leaflets/advancing-knowledge-towards-zero-hunger-and-sustainable-food-systems>

- Human, social and cultural values, food traditions that help promote the preservation and sustainability of tourism, fostering a sense of belonging;
- Forms of responsible governance and circular and solidarity-based economy as strategies for economic improvement and for overcoming the obstacles set by the conditions of mountain areas⁷¹.

Communities, groups, individuals and institutions have expressed the desire to extend and increase the safeguarding measures in place, consolidating and extending the Alpine Food Heritage network through the submission of a multinational application project for inclusion in the UNESCO Register of Good Practices for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This application is an innovative tool to build a long-term programme designed to safeguard and share the benefits derived from this heritage, for the sake of future generations.

This application process is the result of a long-term strategy launched as part of the Alpine Space Cooperation Programme (2014-2020) with the *AlpFoodway project*. An *interdisciplinary, transnational and participatory approach to Alpine food heritage*⁷². It is a complex and collective process that brings together groups, communities and institutions across the Alpine arc, from France to Slovenia. Since the *AlpFoodway* project first started in 2015, the partnership has involved a number of Facilitators trained by UNESCO ICH to build an innovative and participatory approach to food-related practices in the Alps, building on the methods and tools of the 2003 UNESCO Convention.

3. Safeguarding intangible heritage and participatory governance: conceptual and organisational evolution

3.1 Conceptual evolution⁷³

The concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage reflects a set of ideas and policies defined at the academic and international professional level through UNESCO, with the aim of safeguarding the diversity of cultural expressions of the communities, groups and individuals (CGIs) who embody and represent them.

The ICH concept and its translation into policies that enable it to be implemented can be traced back to the 1990s, as mentioned in section 1.2.4. A first in-depth discussion, as mentioned earlier, was led by Claude Levi-Strauss with a group of anthropologists, including

⁷¹ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb5349en>

⁷² <https://www.alpfoodway.eu/home/italian>

⁷³ Part of the text in this section, with some changes, was taken from: Nikolić Đerić T. 2020. *Intersections: Bridging the Tangible and Intangible Cultural heritage Practices*. *Volkskunde* 3: pp. 405-414
https://immaterieelerfgoed.be/nl/attachments/view/volkskunde_intersections

Marshall Sahlins, Lourdes Arizpe Schlosser and Jack Goody, and is available in the World Commission on Culture and Development Report “*Our Creative Diversity*” of 1995 (see footnote 6).

The report laid the academic and conceptual foundations of an idea expressed by representatives of almost all countries of the world and shaped by some non-Western countries (notably Japan and Morocco), in the 2003 UNESCO Convention. However, its most significant input is to go beyond the idea of a visible, tangible and static heritage to reach convergence between what is viewed as an object by those, i.e. communities, groups and individuals – holders of knowledge, skills, practices and values.

As it was stated in 2004 at an ICOMOS conference (International Council on Monuments and Sites), academicians and institutional parties in some Western countries find it difficult to understand, for example, that in Africa “*the spirit of places comes before matter*”⁷⁴.

In view of the strong presence and position of CGIs, the 2003 Convention presents a counterpoint to the **1972 World Heritage Convention (hereafter referred to as the 1972 Convention)**, which is based on the concept of “*outstanding universal value and authenticity*”. Although the term heritage nowadays encompasses both tangible and intangible cultural heritage along with natural heritage, it is obvious that it was impossible to implement the same evaluation criteria and classify a living practice as reflecting authenticity (due to cultural and social dynamics) or give universal value to cultural practices that often have specific value only in the local context and whose evaluation is subjective and depends on the individual’s own point of view.

This inability, therefore, prevented Intangible Cultural Heritage from being addressed as part of the 1972 Convention discussions on heritage. Another possible reason for this exclusion could be reflected in the materialist approach of Western towards heritage studies, as it envisages the hierarchisation of cultural manifestations in this specific framework, as well as in the legal terms, which are making their way with the adoption of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Conflict⁷⁵, where the term cultural property, implying tangible goods, was first introduced. The evolution of the concept towards the term heritage (cultural heritage), which would also include intangible cultural values (still far from the idea of Intangible Cultural Heritage as we understand it today in the context of the 2003 Convention), spans several years⁷⁶. A third reason for exclusion was the cultural sector’s inability to democratise access to heritage management processes. This inability is, among other things, reflected in the authoritative representations of

⁷⁴ Munjeri D. 2004. *Tangible and Intangible Heritage: from difference to convergence*, in *Intangible heritage, Museum International*, 2004, no. 221-222, vol. 56, no. 1–2, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, UK, pp. 12-20 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000135853>.

⁷⁵ <https://www.unesco.beniculturali.it/english-convenzione-dellaja-1954/>

⁷⁶ UNESCO Recommendations on Safeguarding the Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites (1962 <https://www.unesco.beniculturali.it/la-convenzione-sul-patrimonio-mondiale/>). European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1969, revised 1992 <https://rm.coe.int/168007bd45>). UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970 <https://www.unesco.beniculturali.it/convenzione-sulla-circolazione-dei-beni/>). World Heritage Convention (1972 <https://www.unesco.beniculturali.it/la-convenzione-sul-patrimonio-mondiale/>).

anthropological, museum and archival practices prior to the transformation and evolution we are experiencing with the 2003 Convention.

The discussion on heritage reflected in the World Heritage Convention has been widely criticised, particularly with regard to its Eurocentric standards. This criticism has resulted in a progressive awareness of the importance of maintaining a multiple and diverse interpretation of heritage and of the difficulties encountered in the pursuit of a globally agreed concept of heritage.

At the same time, the World Heritage Convention stressed the importance of identifying heritage (tangible and natural) and raising awareness regarding its values and vulnerability. It has also shown its potential in empowering individuals and building resilient communities. In addition, the specific *modus operandi* of the 1972 Convention generated an active platform in favour of cultural heritage, together with a general need to democratise heritage.

The issue pertaining to enhancement and preservation of ICH from an international policy perspective was (finally and partially) overcome with the Programme of the *Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* before the 2003 Convention came into force. *“The Proclamation programme took an innovative approach by giving a leading role to local communities and custodians of tradition in safeguarding their intangible heritage.”*⁷⁷

The Convention moved swiftly forward with the aim of building governance to ensure the preservation and viability of ICH. As early as in 2006, at its first meeting, the Intergovernmental Committee (hereafter the “IGC”) adopted a Framework for Operational Guidelines and a decision on Advisory Assistance to the Committee. The following year, the rules for the admission of observers were established, a list of NGOs providing advisory assistance to the Committee was requested, and criteria and terms for accreditation of NGOs and criteria for Article 18 (Register of Good Practices) were established. At the second special meeting in Sofia (2008), draft Operational Guidelines concerning community involvement in the implementation of the Convention were approved. The fourth IGC meeting recommended increasing the number of accredited NGOs, which met on the occasion of the fifth IGC meeting in 2010 at the first NGO forum. The Evaluation Body was established in 2014 for the 2015 cycle.⁷⁸

One of the latest evolution trends the Convention has shown is the gradual use of the term “living heritage”, meaning intangible cultural heritage. As no formal data are available to rely upon, we can only assume that this is yet another attempt to bring the concept and relevant cultural policies closer to communities, groups and individuals and other stakeholders with the aim of making ICH key feature explicit, i.e. its being an expression of living practices, handed down by communities, groups and individuals.

⁷⁷ Proclamation of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (2001-2005).

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/proclamation-of-masterpieces-00103>

⁷⁸ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/evaluation-body-00802>

3.2 Organisational evolution

3.2.1 Governing Bodies of the 2003 Convention

Governing Bodies of the 2003 Convention

Since then, a constructive debate has been ongoing on how to more actively involve communities, as well as NGOs, in the implementation of the 2003 Convention while seeking a more geographically balanced approach. All these actions show that the concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and its safeguarding, is increasingly geared towards an inclusive and participatory heritage practice.

To understand a governance and management system, it is important to know all the stakeholders that steer it. The Convention is not (just) a set of words on paper but a living body that, like the heritage it aims to safeguard, changes and adapts to new challenges. Its Governing Bodies are composed of politicians, professionals and representatives of civil society and CGIs who make decisions based on extensive dialogue processes with various stakeholders, guiding safeguarding processes that tend to be as participatory as possible. The Convention is not a standalone isolated ecosystem, as it is connected to other legislative instruments, first and foremost the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1948) and other measures governing the cultural sector, such as the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 2005 Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Those sitting on the Governing Bodies follow the new trends to ensure that the Convention meets the needs for safeguarding and remains relevant, contributing to a sustainable future.

The General Assembly is the sovereign organ of the Convention. It meets in ordinary session every two years. It meets in extraordinary session if it so decides or at the request of either the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage or at least one-third of the States Parties.

3.2.2 The Intergovernmental Committee

It is the operational body that is composed of representatives of 24 States Parties appointed by the States Parties meeting in the General Assembly. Member States are elected to sit on the Committee for a four-year term based on the principles of fair geographical alternation and representation. The Member States of the Committee choose from among their representatives persons qualified in the various fields of Intangible Cultural Heritage with the task of:

- a) Promoting the objectives of the Convention and encouraging and monitoring the implementation thereof;
- b) Providing guidance on best practices and making recommendations on measures for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;
- c) Preparing and submitting to the General Assembly for approval a plan for the use of the resources of the Fund;
- d) Seeking means of increasing its resources, and taking the necessary measures to this end, in accordance with Article 25 of the International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;

- e) Preparing and submitting to the General Assembly for approval operational directives for the implementation of this Convention;
- f) Examining, in accordance with Article 29, the reports submitted by the States Parties and summarise them for the General Assembly;
- g) Examining requests submitted by States Parties and deciding thereon, in accordance with the objective selection criteria to be established by the Committee and approved by the General Assembly. Every two years, the General Assembly renews half of the Member States sitting on the Committee.

The Committee may establish, on a temporary basis, whatever ad hoc consultative bodies it deems necessary to carry out its task and may invite to its meetings any public or private bodies, as well as private persons, with recognised competence in the various fields of the Intangible Cultural Heritage to consult them on specific matters.

This possibility, together with the possibility for NGO to obtain accreditation, has paved the way, from both a declaratory and legal perspective, for innovative and participatory governance, even though in its practical implementation it faces difficulties mainly related to the different cultural and political contexts of the Convention's governing bodies.

Beginning in 2015, and in accordance with paragraph 27 of the Operational Guidelines, the Committee established an advisory body – the Evaluation Body-- to evaluate applications for the Lists (Representative and Urgent), proposals for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, and requests for International Assistance exceeding USD 100,000. The Evaluation Body consists of twelve members appointed by the Committee: six subject matter experts in the various fields of Intangible Cultural Heritage representing States Parties that are not members of the Committee, and six accredited non-governmental organisations, taking into account the fair geographical representation and different fields of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Its role is to make recommendations to the Committee for its final decisions.

3.2.3 The Secretariat

The Secretariat assists the Committee by preparing the documents of the General Assembly and the Committee as well as the draft agenda of their meetings and ensures the implementation of their decisions.

3.2.4 The role of accredited NGOs

The main role of communities, groups and individuals has been highlighted many times in this paper. Alongside CGIs, emphasis must be placed on the major role played by other stakeholders, especially NGOs who can act as liaisons between CGIs and public administration. The main purpose of accredited NGOs is to act in an advisory capacity for the Committee. However, over time NGOs have also shown to carry out other functions, such as the facilitation of community engagement in the implementation of the Convention and the various activities resulting therefrom. Thanks to their organisational flexibility and presence across the territory, often NGOs have direct, daily and effective communications

with CGIs, which help to inform them about their rights and the possibilities offered by the Convention.

In accordance with Article 11(b) of the Convention, States Parties are called upon to involve relevant non-governmental organisations in the implementation of the Convention, including in the identification and definition of Intangible Cultural Heritage and other appropriate safeguarding measures, in cooperation and coordination with other stakeholders involved in such implementation process.

Criteria for the accreditation of non-governmental organisations include (OD 91-99):

- a) Expertise and experience in the safeguarding (as defined in Article 2.3 of the Convention) of Intangible Cultural Heritage belonging, inter alia, to one or more specific domains;
- b) Local, national, regional or international reach, as appropriate;
- c) Goals consistent the spirit of the Convention and, preferably, articles of association or regulations reflecting such goals;
- d) Cooperation in a spirit of mutual respect with communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals who create, engage in and convey Intangible Cultural Heritage;
- e) Operational capabilities, including regular active membership, forming a community bound by the will to pursue the goals for which it was established; an established domicile and a recognised legal personality compatible with domestic law.

(OD 96) Accredited non-governmental organisations that, in accordance with Article 9.1 of the Convention, perform consultative functions in their dealings with the Committee, may be invited by the Committee to provide, inter alia, evaluation reports for the Committee's perusal:

- a) Nomination record for the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage requiring urgent safeguarding;
- b) The programmes, projects and activities referred to in Article 18 of the Convention;
- c) Requests for international assistance;
- d) The effects of plans to safeguard items on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage requiring urgent safeguarding.

Representatives of six accredited NGOs (representing the six global regions) and six individual experts are elected to the Evaluation Body on a four-year term. The candidates are selected by the Electoral Groups and nominated by the Committee.

3.2.5 The NGO Forum

The NGO Forum is the communication, networking, exchange and cooperation platform for NGOs accredited by UNESCO to provide advisory services to the Intergovernmental Committee within the framework of the 2003 UNESCO Convention. Participating at first as observers, accredited NGOs began to meet from 2009 to 2011, developing an NGO

Declaration and shaping the Forum. Since 2012, the Forum has organised the General Assembly and an annual Symposium during the Intergovernmental Committee, and in 2016 the Forum (11.COM) was registered as an NGO. The Rules of Procedure were adopted in the same year, and the Statute Articles of Association and Code of Conduct in 2019 (14.COM) with some amendments in 2022 (17.COM).

NGOs are a pillar for the safeguarding of the world's living heritage, together with the holders of these traditions and the States Parties. Following the development of the Convention and the needs of the communities with which it actively interacts, the Forum, together with international partners, develops research, capacity building and practical tools on several priority topics for the Convention's endeavours, such as ICH and sustainable tourism, ICH and museums, ICH and climate change, to name a few⁷⁹.

Often CGIs are organised as NGOs or some researchers and representatives of scientific institutions are part of the CGI as holders of practices. Therefore, having a unified and limited understanding of the various stakeholders is difficult and counterproductive. In the spirit of the Convention, participation should be inclusive, based on mutual respect with the sole aim of passing on heritage in a meaningful way for all those who identify with it and are dedicated to its safeguarding.

3.3 Governance Experience of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Register of Good Safeguarding Practices

On the basis of proposals submitted by States Parties and in accordance with criteria defined by the Committee and approved by the General Assembly, the Committee shall periodically select and promote national, sub-regional and regional projects, programmes and activities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage that in its view best reflect the principles and objectives of this Convention, taking into account the particular needs of developing countries.

Article 18, together with Articles 16 and 17, make up the Convention's "System of Lists", which were established with the aim of recognising and safeguarding the "heritage of humanity" at the international level. Although less well known than the Representative List, the States Parties and other stakeholders, most notably experts, have – right from the outset – stressed the importance of this instrument, i.e. the "Register of Good Practices", in supporting the safeguarding of ICH. The Register highlights successful safeguarding experiences and allows States Parties, communities and other stakeholders to **share**

⁷⁹ One of the most recent initiatives is the toolkit on ICH and sustainable tourism <https://www.ichngoforum.org/web-dossier-on-intangible-cultural-heritage-and-sustainable-tourism/>

successful experiences in addressing the challenges of passing on their heritage. Since 2009, 15 good safeguarding practices have been included in the Register (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/register>).

The 8 criteria for registration provide guidance for the good governance of projects and programmes related to the safeguarding of ICH. From among the programmes, projects and activities submitted to the Committee by States Parties, only those that best meet the following criteria are selected.

Criterion 1 - The programme, project or activity involves safeguarding as defined in Article 2.3 of the Convention;

Criterion 2 - The programme, project or activity promotes the coordination of efforts to safeguard Intangible Cultural Heritage at regional, sub-regional and/or international levels;

Criterion 3 - The programme, project or activity reflects the principles and objectives of the Convention;

Criterion 4 - If already concluded, the programme, project or activity must demonstrate the effectiveness of the contribution to the vitality of the Intangible Cultural Heritage concerned. If the programme, project or activity is still ongoing or planned, it is reasonable to expect that it will contribute significantly to the vitality of the Intangible Cultural Heritage concerned;

Criterion 5 - The programme, project or activity has been or will be implemented with the participation of the community, group and, if possible, individuals concerned and with their prior, free, informed consent;

Criterion 6 - The programme, project or activity may serve as the case may be, as a model for safeguarding activities at sub-regional, regional or international level;;

Criterion 7 - The proposing State(s), the implementing body(ies), and the community, group or, if possible, individuals concerned are willing to co-operate in the dissemination of best practices if their programme, project or activity is selected;

Criterion 8 - The programme, project or activity has aspects that permit an evaluation of its results.

Some current experiences highlight the governance features promoted by the Register.

The four selected examples emphasise cases of sites already engaged in natural resource preservation processes – as in the case of Montseny in Spain (example 1.) – or examples of participatory museography as in the Batana Eco-museum in Croatia (example 2.). The case of Kenya shows the relevance of the intangible heritage inventory approach for the effective safeguarding of cultural and biological diversity as expressed by traditional food practices (example 3.). Finally, the example of Austria reminds us that traditional craftsmanship (well identified by the 2003 Convention in the definition of ICH) has always been linked on the one hand to natural resources and products (wood, pigments, plants, fibres) and, on the other hand, to a set of players working with and in support of craft communities.

1. Method for taking stock of Intangible Cultural Heritage in biosphere reserves: the experience of Montseny, Spain⁸⁰

Launched by the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia, the project focuses on the identification of Intangible Cultural Heritage in a Biosphere Reserve (MAB) and the drawing up of inventories. The project was implemented in an area covering the **Biosphere Reserve and Montseny National Park in the Autonomous Community of Catalonia, in collaboration with local stakeholders and institutions** working in the fields of traditional and popular Catalan ethnology and culture. Its main objectives were threefold, namely to (i) design a method for preparing inventories, (ii) draw up an inventory, and (iii) prepare a document on the contributions of Intangible Cultural Heritage to sustainable development. Through the participation plan and fieldwork, the project encouraged the involvement of the local population in the identification of their Intangible Cultural Heritage. The document called *Contribution of Intangible cultural heritage to Sustainable development* prepared by UNESCO Catalunya in collaboration with *Fundacion Biodiversidad, Museu Etnològic del Montseny and Centre de Promoció Cultura Popular i Tradicional Catalana* reports on the contributions of Intangible Cultural Heritage to sustainable development as experienced hands-on through the inventory project. Examples include all the areas defined by the Convention and the connection with the three dimensions of sustainable development. The specificity of the area in which the Montseny inventory is developed is fundamental not only for the safeguarding of the ICH of the area in question, but also as evidence of the contribution of ICH inventories on knowledge about nature and the universe for the protection of biodiversity.

The Committee commended the State Party for proposing a programme that sheds light on the key role of Intangible Cultural Heritage for sustainable development and environmental protection in the context of biosphere sites (MAB) and nature reserves.

2. Community project for the safeguarding of Rovinj's living culture: Batana Ecomuseum, Croatia (Community project of safeguarding the living culture of Rovinj/Rovigno: the Batana Ecomuseum No. 01098⁸¹)

The batana is a type of traditional fishing boat used in Rovinj, Croatia. While it played a major role in the past for the local economy, because of both its construction and its reliance on artisanal methods handed down by families, its practice has been marginalised by the increasing spread of industrial models until 2004, when a few local enthusiasts created an association to sustain construction knowledge along with associated practices (including an ancient dialect and a traditional song ensemble). Under the patronage of the municipality – the Rovinj Heritage Museum, the Rovinj History Research Centre, the Italian Community of Rovinj and an expert in eco-museology – they created the Batana Ecomuseum known as the “House of Batana” to raise public

⁸⁰ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/BSP/methodology-for-inventorying-intangible-cultural-heritage-in-biosphere-reserves-the-experience-of-montseny-00648>

⁸¹ , <https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/11.COM/10.C.4>

awareness. The Ecomuseum has a permanent exhibition that explains how the batana is built and showcases fishing equipment and the range of fishing activities carried out. It (i) runs workshops on boat building, which are also extended to shipyards; (ii) publishes documentation material; (iii) hosts regattas, encouraging the involvement of young people; (iv) has a boatyard for boat building and repair, which is now also used for guided tours; (v) collaborates on a national and international level by taking part in festivals, regattas and round tables to highlight the role of the batana in traditional shipbuilding communities and to contribute to the safeguarding of maritime heritage. Inclusion in the Register of Good Practices has improved the various processes of safeguarding the living heritage of the Rovinj community, while fostering international cooperation processes.

Due to the lack of legal regulations for the registration of ecomuseums in the Republic of Croatia, the Batana Ecomuseum was registered in 2007 as a non-profit citizens' association "House of Batana" with more than 60 active members. These members play an active role in knowledge demonstration programmes – singing, preparing traditional dinners, rowing, or building and repairing batana – and are paid in this way, showing that sustainable tourism and a public cultural and educational programme recognised by the wider community can be economically viable and foster fair remuneration for practitioners.

Since 2020, in the pursuit of a more stable management and further in the light of the new laws that did not allow NGOs to be funded directly and on the long term, **the Association in partnership with the City of Rovinj created the "House of Batana"**, thereby ensuring basic funding. This partnership is an example of public-private management that in recent years, also in the context of the COVID emergency, has demonstrated the benefits of partnerships in culture management.

3. Success story of promoting traditional foods and safeguarding traditional foodways in Kenya no. 01409⁸²

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/16.COM/8.C.3>)

In Kenya, traditional eating habits were threatened due to historical factors and the pressure of modern lifestyles. Local foods were despised and associated with poverty and backwardness. Realising that a decline in food diversity and knowledge would have serious repercussions on health and food and nutrition uncertainty, Kenya committed to safeguarding related practices and expressions in 2007. Two main initiatives were launched, in collaboration with scientists and community groups. The first concerned the inventory of traditional foods, with a focus on traditional vegetables. About 850 native plants with local names have been registered. This was followed by the detailed documentation of indigenous usage and knowledge (including recipes) and practices (such as ceremonies). Extensive food promotion was also organised. As to the second initiative, **UNESCO in collaboration with the Department of Culture and the International and National Museum of Kenya, and in consultation with community leaders, launched a pilot**

⁸² <https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/16.COM/8.C.3>

project to identify and take stock of traditional foods in collaboration with primary school children to raise awareness of the threats to traditional eating habits. Since then, both initiatives have led to other related activities carried out independently by local institutions, and several similar initiatives have been launched in other communities in Kenya, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso.

4. Regional Centres for Craftsmanship: a strategy for safeguarding the cultural heritage of traditional handicraft No. 0169 Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee: 11.COM 10.C.2)

The Werkraum Bregenzerwald, the Hand.Werk.Haus Salzkammergut and the Textiles Zentrum Haslach are three centres in Austria run by local and traditional craftsmen who over the past fifteen years have collaborated with international artists, educational institutions, craft businesses and other entities to help safeguard their practices. These centres have engaged in a whole range of public activities to help pass on three types of handicrafts – wood, painting and textile practices – that are important for the communities' sense of identity and continuity. **Managed by associations in cooperation with craft businesses as well as educational and scientific institutions**, they provide training in traditional techniques, such as courses for primary school students, summer schools, apprenticeship programmes and post-graduate courses. Local and international experts contribute to the lessons through expert knowledge associated with the various practices. Craft centres also host exhibitions and competitions on traditional crafts, involving local and international designers and artists. They also act as a bridge between art and industry, providing platforms for sharing ideas and experiences on traditional craft practice and the development of cooperative networks. Finally, partnerships are created between cultural, educational and economic sectors, further strengthening safeguarding efforts.

3.4 Guide to the Governance of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Ethical Principles

The limits of participatory governance are widely debated. It has been imposed as a global standard for years, while critics point out that it could become, or perhaps already is, an imperative to which civil society is obliged to conform. In this context, in 2015 the Convention adopted a set of Ethical Principles. **The Ethical Principles are one of the Convention's practical tools to ensure that ICH stakeholders can rely on an ethical and inclusive governance system.** The 12 Principles are also designed as a blueprint for developing Codes of Conduct and other practical tools for participatory management of living heritage.

1. Communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals should have the primary role in safeguarding their own intangible cultural heritage.

2. The right of communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals to continue the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills necessary to ensure the viability of the intangible cultural heritage should be recognised and respected.
3. Mutual respect as well as a respect for and mutual appreciation of intangible cultural heritage, should prevail in interactions between States and between communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals.
4. All interactions with the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals who create, safeguard, maintain and transmit intangible cultural heritage should be characterized by transparent collaboration, dialogue, negotiation and consultation, and contingent upon their free, prior, sustained and informed consent.
5. Access of communities, groups and individuals to the instruments, objects, artefacts, cultural and natural spaces and places of memory whose existence is necessary for expressing the intangible cultural heritage should be ensured, including in situations of armed conflict. Customary practices governing access to intangible cultural heritage should be fully respected, even where these may limit broader public access.
6. Each community, group or individual should assess the value of its own intangible cultural heritage and this intangible cultural heritage should not be subject to external judgements of value or worth.
7. The communities, groups and individuals who create intangible cultural heritage should benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from such heritage, and particularly from its use, research, documentation, promotion or adaptation by members of the communities or others.
8. The dynamic and living nature of intangible cultural heritage should be continuously respected. Authenticity and exclusivity should not constitute concerns and obstacles in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
9. Communities, groups, local, national and transnational organizations and individuals should carefully assess the direct and indirect, short-term and long-term, potential and definitive impact of any action that may affect the viability of intangible cultural heritage or the communities who practise it.
10. Communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals should play a significant role in determining what constitutes threats to their intangible cultural heritage including the decontextualization, commodification and misrepresentation of it and in deciding how to prevent and mitigate such threats.
11. Cultural diversity and the identities of communities, groups and individuals should be fully respected. In the respect of values recognized by communities, groups and individuals and sensitivity to cultural norms, specific attention to gender equality, youth involvement and respect for ethnic identities should be included in the design and implementation of safeguarding measures.

12. The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is of general interest to humanity and should therefore be undertaken through cooperation among bilateral, sub regional, regional and international parties; nevertheless, communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals should never be alienated from their own intangible cultural heritage.

3.5 National instruments

In 2007, **Italy** ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention. Since then, as a State Party to the Convention, it has followed its obligations and suggestions, and also established a competent body for the safeguarding of intangible heritage at a national level: the Central Institute for Intangible Heritage (ICPI) established by Presidential Decree No. 233 of 26 November 2007, followed by Ministerial Decree No. 233 of 7 October 2008, and currently governed by Ministerial Decree No. 2022 of 3 February 2022. 46.

International cooperation is governed by the UNESCO National Commission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while the technical management of nominations for UNESCO Lists is coordinated by the UNESCO Office established at the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Culture (MiC). The inventory of intangible heritage geared towards UNESCO nominations is managed directly by the Ministry of Culture (MiC) through the MEPI module (module for the inventory of intangible cultural heritage elements according to the 2003 UNESCO Convention) which includes thematic fields corresponding to cataloguing codes developed in collaboration with the ICCD – *Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione*, consistent with the SIGECweb system used by the MiC.

With the support of a scientific council and technical staff, the ICPI engages in the protection, safeguarding, enhancement and promotion of intangible heritage by conducting studies and research, organising conferences, exhibitions as well as through publications. The Institute also provides scientific and technical advice and assistance to the Ministry's local departments, other State bodies, cultural organisations and institutes and public bodies in general. At the same time, it keeps relations with heritage communities, Italian and international research organisations, and public and private, national and international bodies specialising in the subject and interested in the protection and enhancement of intangible assets. Alongside research, consultancy and networking among the various stakeholders, the Institute has a strong focus on audiovisual documentation and cataloguing programmes, establishing the relevant methods and informing the heritage communities as well as the local authorities concerned.

Considering the professional and diverse programmes dedicated to the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage promoted by the Institute, it should be stressed that a territory as vast as Italy requires broad stakeholder networks to reach all CGIs interested in safeguarding processes. Consequently, regional and local policy-makers play a key role in developing country-wide policies and facilitating communication between stakeholders and the state.

Switzerland ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage in 2008. At the federal level, the body responsible for implementing the Convention is established within the Culture and Society Section of the Federal Office for Culture (FOC). Working groups have

been established within the FCO covering different aspects of safeguarding, with a special focus on the implementation of a balanced collaboration between experts, policy-makers, holders of practices and civil society. The FOC works closely with the Swiss National Commission for UNESCO.

What is striking about the governance of Swiss heritage is the autonomy of each canton in the management of its preservation system, as it is coordinated in an inclusive and accessible manner at the federal level. The FCO has created the “Living Traditions” inventory, which is available on its website in five languages. The idea is not only to represent the cultural diversity and different CGIs in Switzerland, but also to stress the importance of Intangible Cultural Heritage among different stakeholders. Inventories, like other safeguarding measures, therefore operate at a national and regional level. At the regional level, six cantons have their own inventories.⁸³

Within the framework of the Message for the Encouragement of Culture 2021-2024, a revision of the *Act on the Promotion of Culture* made it possible in 2020 to explicitly mention Intangible Cultural Heritage among the promotion objectives. The inclusion of this ICH declaration in more general federal cultural policies rests on legal bases that allow safeguarding projects to benefit from direct financial support. At the same time, some cantons have created legal bases and instruments to encourage ICH.

As a result of these developments, a 2021-2024 ICH Action Plan was developed within the FCO whereby the guidelines for the 2021-2024 funding period were established, setting its priorities on ICH safeguarding and contribution to sustainable development.

Mountain Communities in Italy

A unique institution in the international landscape was the Mountain Community in terms of continuity of cooperation practices, sharing of tasks and solidarity of functions regarding populations faced with particularly difficult climatic and environmental conditions. Unfortunately, their institutional history that began in 1971 is marked by a series of policy changes, disruptions and resumptions that have undermined or eliminated their functions and ability to support areas and populations that provide key services to downstream areas. This has resulted, among other things, in depopulation and consequent increase in hydrogeological hazards for a prevailing portion of the entire Italian territory, almost two thirds of which lies in the mountains. It should be emphasised that the Italian Constitution is one of the few that dedicates an article (Article 44) to mountains, the only area specifically addressed, entitled: “The law sets out measures to support mountain areas”. Mountains are also the only territory mentioned in the Italian Constitutional Charter.

3.6 International and transnational instruments

Article 19 of the 2003 Convention is dedicated to Co-operation as one of the basic tools, alongside the participation of communities, groups and individuals, for the effective safeguarding of the ICH:

⁸³ <https://www.lebendige-traditionen.ch/tradition/it/home.html>

191. For the purposes of the 2003 Convention, international cooperation includes, *inter alia*, the exchange of information and experience, joint initiatives and the establishment of a mechanism of assistance to States Parties in their efforts to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage.

192. Without prejudice to the provisions of their national legislation and customary law and practices, the States Parties recognise that the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is of general interest to humanity and, to that end, undertake to cooperate at bilateral, subregional, regional and international levels.

The Convention encourages States Parties to engage in international collaboration schemes, including transnational collaboration in border areas, emphasising that culture has no political or administrative borders.

Intangible Cultural Heritage is often shared by communities across the territory spanning more than one State and multinational registration of such common heritage in the Lists is an important mechanism to foster international cooperation. At its seventh session, in 2012, the Committee established an online tool (Mechanism for Sharing Information to Encourage Multinational Files⁸⁴) through which States Parties can communicate their nomination intentions to other States Parties, promoting opportunities for cooperation.

In 2019, the Council of Europe passed Resolution 2269 *Safeguarding and enhancing ICH in Europe*⁸⁵, which contains practical recommendations for the implementation of the 2003 UNESCO Convention at the international level.

Below are two meaningful examples of international partnerships.

Mountain Partnership as a tool for support and cooperation between communities and groups and mountain food systems

This international and inclusive alliance involves key people from mountain regions around the world in a range of activities to support those who live and work in the mountains, especially the smallholder farmers, herders, foresters, fishermen who manage and ensure the stability of family-run farming, labour and production systems intended for family consumption and local markets⁸⁶.

A paper was recently published describing mountain food systems in some common areas⁸⁷.

- Mountain food systems are unique, complex and linked to different cultures. They support biodiversity and shape landscapes and food security around the world.
- All stakeholders (farmers, foresters, cattle farmers, distributors and consumers) have responsibilities in managing and sharing the benefits of food chains in a framework of collaboration and solidarity.

⁸⁴ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/mechanism-to-encourage-multinational-files-00560>

⁸⁵ <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=26468>

⁸⁶ <https://www.fao.org/mountain-partnership/en/>

⁸⁷ <https://www.fao.org/mountain-partnership/publications/publication-detail/en/c/1606556/>

- Mountain areas are home to a rich variety of ecological systems and genetic diversity. Of the 20 plant species that provide 80% of the world's food, 6 (apples, barley, maize, potatoes, sorghum and tomatoes) are native to mountains. Furthermore, most domestic mammals (sheep, goats, yaks, llamas and alpacas) originated or diversified in the mountains.
- Mountain communities have developed valuable knowledge and traditional practices of cultivation, livestock breeding, water and hydrogeological risk management, and silviculture that are adapted to natural ecosystems and biological and climatic cycles.
- Most mountain crops are less exposed to pesticides than lowland crops. However, they are often neglected and underused species. Most of these crops, such as buckwheat, barley, millet, amaranth, among many others, are rich in nutrients and resilient to climatic stresses.
- A significant proportion of mountain crops are classified as "Future Smart Foods" and 'Neglected and Underutilised Species" with a key role in food and production diversity. Currently, agriculture relies too heavily on a handful of major staple crops with only 103 of the nearly 30,000 edible plant species worldwide providing up to 90% of the calories in the human diet. Food security and nutrition in mountains can contribute positively to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, albeit, ironically, they are often ignored⁸⁸.
- In the mountains, farmers adopt agro-ecological practices that contribute positively to the conservation of water and soil, biodiversity, wildlife and a healthy ecology, and a living environment for producers in cleaner and safer working conditions.
- Paradoxically, acknowledgment of the obvious positive links between culture and territory in the mountains, as added value, with forms of labelling is still limited and should be encouraged.
- The links between the food system in the mountains and different forms of sustainable tourism (agrotourism, ecotourism, community-based tourism) are equally evident.

The paper ends with a number of examples of good practice in mountain regions around the world that highlight common challenges and possible solutions.

Euromontana, the association for European mountains

For three decades, this association has been working to support the activities of Europe's mountain people. Among many significant initiatives, Euromontana proposed and obtained recognition of mountain products from the European Union. European Parliament Regulation 1151 of 2012 on "*quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs*" and Commission Regulation 665 of 2014 detail specific products and practices that can be recognised in marketing⁸⁹.

An international agreement linking nine countries and regions of the Alpine arc from France to Slovenia is the 1988 Alpine Convention⁹⁰, promoted by the **International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA)**, an environmental NGO. Its main objective is "the long-

⁸⁸ <https://www.fao.org/3/I9136EN/i9136en.pdf>

⁸⁹ www.euromontana.org

⁹⁰ <https://www.alpconv.org/it/home/>

term protection of the natural ecosystem of the Alps and sustainable development, as well as the protection of the economic interests of residents. The guiding principles of the Convention are prevention, “polluter pays” and transboundary cooperation.⁹¹

The European Union has stepped in by financing specific and inter-regional territorial cooperation programmes since the first Interreg Programmes in 1989-1993^{92 93}.

More recently, since 2015, the Regional Policies of the European Union have integrated the Alpine Convention within the framework of the **Macro-Regional Strategies**⁹⁴.

On the initiative of local governments and Alpine regions, the EUSALP Alpine Strategy was defined in 2011⁹⁵ and later adopted in 2013 by the European Union. It sets out to “*Enhance attractiveness and competitiveness of the Alpine Region as well as reducing social and territorial disparities for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the region. It aims at ensuring mutually beneficial interaction between the mountain regions at its core and the surrounding lowlands and urban areas, flexibly taking into account the functional relationships existing between these areas. It promotes the Alpine Region in its function as an EU laboratory for effective cross-sectorial and multi-level governance, strengthening cohesion within the Union, deepening the cross-border cooperation of institutions and actors in this environmentally sensitive key European area at the crossroads of cultures and traditions.*”⁹⁶

⁹¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/HTML/?uri=LEGISSUM:l28161&from=IT>

⁹² <https://interreg.eu/>

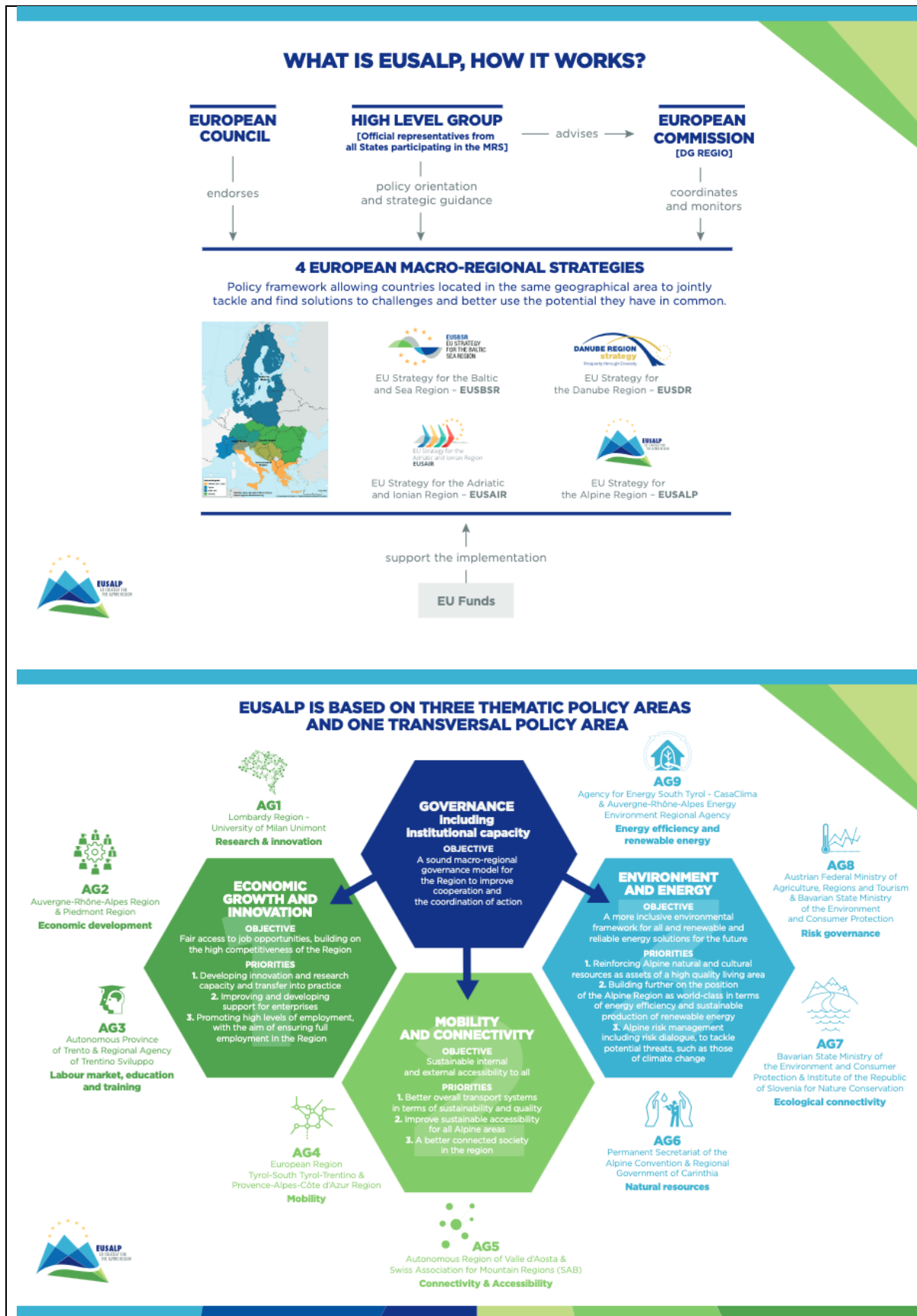
⁹³ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/cross-border_en

⁹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/alpine_en

⁹⁵ <https://www.alpine-region.eu/>

⁹⁶ <https://www.alpine-region.eu/mission-statement>

The following chart provides an overview of the structure and components of the EUSALP strategy.



3.7 AlpFoodway, a project geared towards Alpine Food Heritage

The *AlpFoodway* Project is part of a framework of international heritage-related initiatives, first and foremost the 2003 Convention on the ICH, and of a European cooperation dynamic between local stakeholders, regional institutions and the European Union in a process of identification, recognition and safeguarding of Alpine Food Heritage. In three years of endeavours, *AlpFoodway* has achieved a number of results that can be summarised as follows:

1. Identification of the Alpine Food Heritage as one of the main drivers for sustainable local development for interconnected mountain regions:
 - a) knowledge and practices of natural resource management;
 - b) social sharing through participatory governance;
 - c) economic feasibility on the basis of diversified, high-quality supply chains.
2. Raising awareness among all local heritage stakeholders regarding the deployment of a permanent network of communities, groups and individuals promoting Alpine heritage.
3. Vision Charter and Alpine Food Heritage Charter. The Alpine Food Heritage Charter encourages to safeguard Alpine Food Heritage and support its nomination for inclusion in the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The Charter is a participatory and shared document encouraging every citizen, association, business, institution and authority to take responsibility for ensuring the safeguarding of the Alpine Food Heritage and supporting its nomination for inclusion in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity⁹⁷.
4. Multilevel Community Network. The project built its network based on a quadruple helix approach. ICH can only exist with the participation of local people in specific communities who, together with experts from heritage institutions, businesses and decision-making bodies, allow cultural, social, living and creative values to be bestowed on elements from the past. It also includes a map of multilevel stakeholders interested in being part of the network supporting the nomination of the Alpine food heritage for inclusion in the UNESCO representative list⁹⁸.
5. Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Traditional Alpine Food. This tool allows an overview of the entire Alpine foodways to be gained and makes it possible to identify the means of protection, which are broken down into 5 categories⁹⁹.

⁹⁷ <https://www.alpine-space.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/6-5-Vision%20Paper%20and%20Alpine%20Food%20Heritage%20Charter-alpfoodway-output.pdf>

⁹⁸ <https://www.alpine-space.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/6-4-alpfoodway-multilevel-output.pdf>

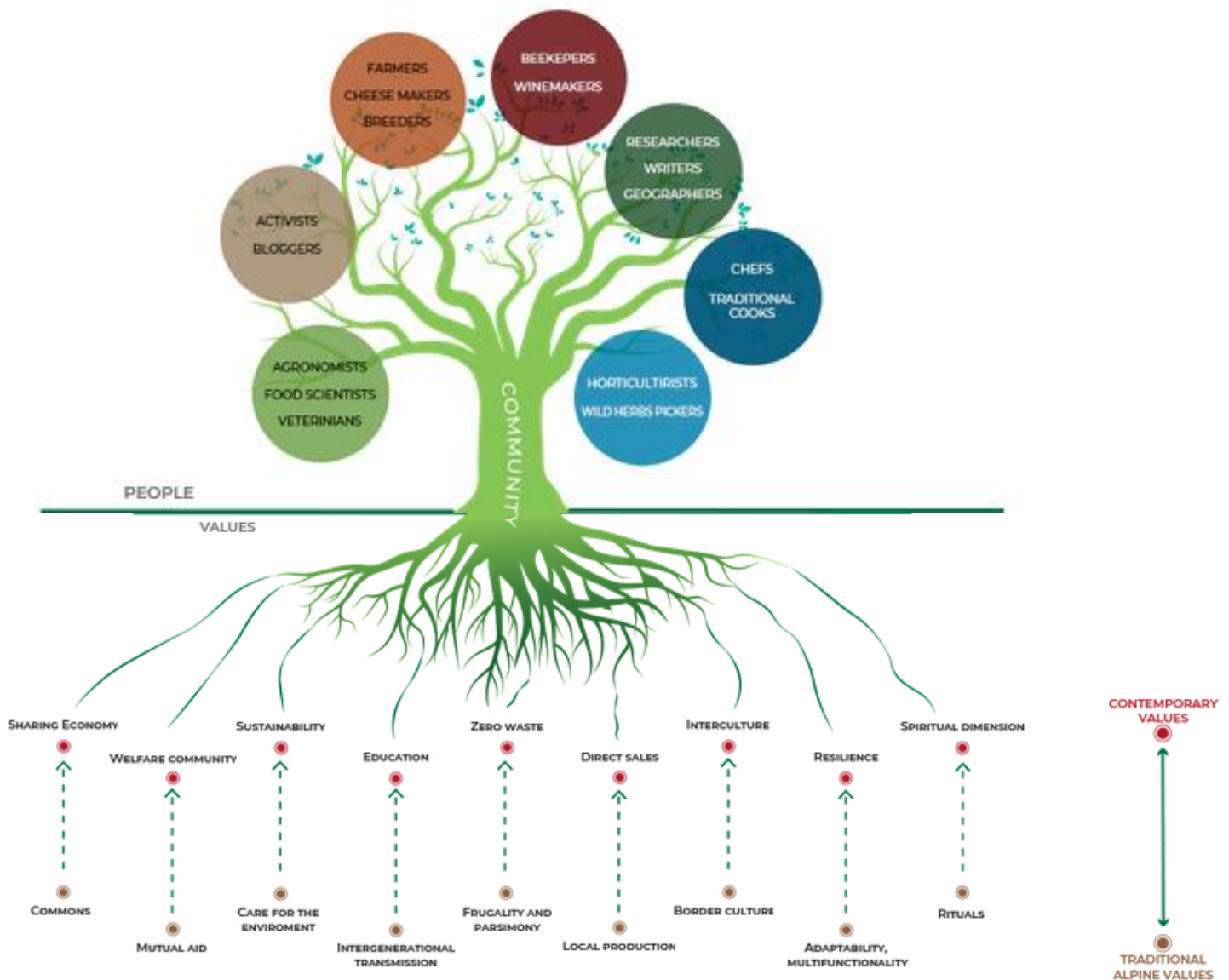
⁹⁹ https://www.intangiblesearch.eu/search/search_by_free_key.php?db_name=intangible_search&lingua=inglese&new_query=true&free_key=Food

6. Guidelines for Community Rights and ICH Intellectual Property. The intellectual property rights associated with ICH are measures to protect the knowledge, practices and products of communities and groups that drive and facilitate the sustainability of local development.¹⁰⁰
7. Guidance document on the effective commercial enhancement of Alpine food heritage. This document sets out to support heritage stakeholders at all levels as they engage in collective initiatives to transform Alpine cultural food heritage into marketable offerings. These are operational guidelines for food heritage stakeholders, educational institutions and policy makers on how to enhance Alpine food heritage¹⁰¹.
8. Guidelines for the development of integrated food supply chains. This document links and complements the documentation on case study activities with the findings of pilot actions. The report was prepared on the basis of 10 documented pilot activities within the Alpine Space. The aim is to develop innovative ways of revitalising traditional practices and safeguarding productive landscapes¹⁰².

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.alpine-space.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/6-1-alpfoodway-Guidelines%20for%20Community%20rights%20and%20ICH%20intellectual%20property-output.pdf>

¹⁰¹ https://www.alpine-space.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/6-2-alpfoodway_Guidance%20Paper%20on%20the%20Successful%20Valorisation%20of%20the%20Alpine%20Food%20Heritage-output.pdf

¹⁰² <https://www.alpine-space.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/6-3-alpfoodway-Guidance%20for%20the%20successful%20development%20of%20integrated%20food%20value%20chains-output.pdf>



Traditional and contemporary values of the Alpine food value chains. AlpFoodway Communities¹⁰³

¹⁰³ <https://intangiblesearch.eu/alpfoodway-webdoc/#HOME>

4. Changing paradigms: towards an integrated capital participatory governance-oriented approach as a tool for social innovation

With the new millennium, we are witnessing two fundamental changes in cultural heritage conception and management. The first of such changes lies in the progressive realisation that the tangible and monumental forms of heritage, which have been a reflection of the modern nation-state since the 9th century, come together with a broad set of expressions, knowledge, skills, practices and values of human life with which communities, groups and individuals identify and which provide continuity to their endeavours. This was expressed by non-Western countries, academicians, practitioners and, ultimately, international policy makers. Consequently, this new awareness has led to an open debate, and the second fundamental change, on who are the responsible parties, the custodians, the holders of heritage rights. It is a fact that an evolution is underway and that the 2003 Convention is a decisive turning point.

Today, cultural heritage policies, internationally and at all other levels, tend – at least ideally – to reflect an integrated and cross-sectoral vision, with new policies being defined and applied where communities and groups are recognised and placed at the centre of heritage enhancement processes. It is important to note that these changes are not only reflected in the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage as a standalone process, but are implemented in other policies, such as environmental policies.

As awareness of the interconnections between cultural and natural heritage, or between objects and practices, progressively increases, while policies integrate communities and civil society more broadly into safeguarding processes, the question arises as to how to bring all these stakeholders together. What new possibilities open up with these synergies? How can we work together? In an attempt to answer these questions, the following pages provide an overview of current trends in heritage policies.

4.1 Culture and nature, heritage and biological diversity

On the subject of change, emphasis should be placed on the increasing convergence of policy instruments, scientific disciplines and in-field practices with respect to culture and nature.

Some of the aspects linking the 2003 Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity have already been mentioned. The latter recognises the safeguarding of Traditional Knowledge held by local communities as a key driver for managing biological resources. *“Traditional knowledge refers to the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples around the world. Developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted*

to the local culture and environment, traditional knowledge is often transmitted orally from generation to generation. It tends to be collectively owned and can be expressed in stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local language and agricultural practices. Indigenous peoples follow oral traditions, with dances, paintings, carvings and other artistic expressions, that are practiced and passed down through millennia. Traditional knowledge is mainly of a practical nature, particularly in such fields as agriculture, fisheries, health, horticulture, forestry and environmental management in general.”¹⁰⁴ The topics of the World Forum on Intangible Cultural Heritage, organised annually by UNESCO in Korea, bear out the institutional importance of the links between culture and nature: 2022 “Traditional Knowledge, Thoughts and Practices Concerning Nature and Humanity”; 2020 “Human, Nature, and Intangible Cultural Heritage”; 2019 “Intangible Cultural Heritage and Civic Life”¹⁰⁵.

In a difficult challenge to overcome disciplinary boundaries, scientific research is adopting a interdisciplinary approach that links cultural and natural heritage in a more organic and integrated perspective. Science today recognises that:

“On the one hand, humans are the main driving force of biodiversity loss. On the other hand, many human activities dealing with natural resources have been constructive throughout history and have maintained and enhanced biodiversity, supported by a great diversity of cultural features, values, patterns and processes. Consequently, we may say that cultural capital is made up of the many and diverse ways we deal with natural capital”¹⁰⁶.

A meaningful example of heritage practice and process that helps gain an insight into the context of culture-nature interrelationships is transhumance.

Transhumance, the seasonal migration of livestock along rural areas from the plains to the mountains in the Mediterranean and the Alps.

Entered in 2019 (14.COM) in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, transhumance is a millenary form of migratory pastoralism. Every year, in spring and autumn, thousands of animals are led by shepherds together with their dogs and horses along regular routes between two geographical and climatic regions. In many cases, herders’ families also travel with livestock.

Transhumance shapes relationships between people, animals and ecosystems. It involves shared rituals and social practices, caring for and breeding animals, managing land, forests and water resources, and dealing with natural hazards. Transhumant herders have an in-depth knowledge of the environment, ecological balance and climate change, using one of the most sustainable and efficient farming methods. They also possess special skills related to all kinds of handicrafts and food production. The spring and autumn festivals mark the

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.cbd.int/traditional/intro.shtml>

¹⁰⁵ <https://ichworldforum.org/>

¹⁰⁶ European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Paracchini, M., Zingari, P.C., Blasi, C. (Eds.) 2,018. *Reconnecting natural and cultural capital: contributions from science and policy*, European Commission Publications Office, 2,018 <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6a0efd09-0d4d-11e8-966a-01aa75ed71a1>

beginning and end of transhumance, when herders share food, rituals and stories and pass on the experience to younger generations¹⁰⁷.

Today, we recognise that the traditional knowledge of nature of communities and human groups and the most diverse subsistence strategies have built and maintained extraordinary heritages of biodiversity throughout history. We also know that the impact of industry, the pressures of globalisation and the warming of the atmosphere due to greenhouse gases pose severe threats to this heritage and, as a result, to our planet. We know that there is no nature without culture, and vice versa.

5. Alpine food heritage practices: multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral perspectives

In the light of the foregoing, some guiding principles of governance – useful for and applicable to the safeguarding of the Alpine food heritage – can be identified by cross-referencing different sources. To this end, we compared common traits contained in the texts of international conventions, international programmes and projects, the findings of specific project experiences such as *Living ICH* and research, taking into account the scientific literature. Taking as reference framework the Alpine food heritage, as defined, four broad dimensions connect to one another:

1. **Culture**
2. **Environment**
3. **Sustainability**
4. **Participation**

5.1 Culture

Although culture in all the diversity and wealth of its expressions plays a key role in the creativity and vitality of all other dimensions, intersectionality and interdisciplinarity tools and methods made available by international cooperation players and scholars from all over the world are rather limited. Culture, environment, economy and society are still considered separately in most cases. Moreover, from a conceptual point of view, these last three areas continue to be regarded as the pillars of sustainability, excluding in fact culture. For example, a review of the keywords of the 64 Interreg projects of the Alpine Space Cooperation Programme – in the 2014-2020 programming period – shows that culture does not appear at all, while sustainability is mentioned 33 times, governance 26, environmental

¹⁰⁷ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/transhumance-the-seasonal-droving-of-livestock-along-migratory-routes-in-the-mediterranean-and-in-the-alps-01470>

protection/conservation 19, food 5, and agriculture only once!¹⁰⁸

The AFH is an example of cultural diversity and richness, of creativity and vitality, of interaction with the environment and resources; it gives shape and improves the local economy, shaping social life with continuous adaptation and transformation. The AFH highlights the value of culture as a fundamental link for the cohesion and development of a territory. The set of instruments provided by the 2003 Convention, together with some others that are linked to it, contributes to the safeguarding of the AFH and to the prospect of concrete intersectoriality and interdisciplinarity (i.e., the Operational Directives of the 2003 Convention, the Ethical Principles of the 2003 Convention, the Resolution on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Europe, the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the World Cultural Heritage Management Handbook, the Report Towards an Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe).

Food is Culture: a Creative Europe Project

Co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union, with the contribution of *Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Cuneo* (Cuneo Savings Bank Foundation), this 2018 project aims to raise European citizens' awareness of their food heritage as an expression of their belonging to Europe and to better understand the richness and uniqueness of its cultural diversity.

“The intangible cultural heritage in Europe is an enormous yet underestimated resource; it is largely used to promote tourism but hardly ever treated as a resource that can reinforce social integration, a sense of belonging to a common European space and identity. Public awareness of the origins and history of traditional foods, traditional processing and farming techniques, of religious rites and festivals is key to narrating our common European roots as well as the influences of centuries of migration.” Food heritage is highlighted in its various dimensions.

- Biodiversity and climate change: food and agriculture are an important part of global environmental challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss and soil, air and water pollution. In the last 60 years, due to the continuous industrialisation of agriculture, thousands of species, breeds and varieties selected by man have disappeared, indicating that food production is less and less influenced by local cultural heritage. Food heritage can unleash strong potential to drive climate action, influence consumption patterns and support a just balance and inclusive transition of communities towards a healthier, greener and more equitable society and resilience of the economy to climate challenges.
- Local sustainability: food heritage contributes to the quality of life, providing character, atmosphere and making places attractive in everyday life, work and tourism. It supports public and private investment, increasing the competitiveness of regions, rural areas

¹⁰⁸ Interreg Alpine Space Programme, 2019. *Alpine cooperation stories: 64 Projects for the Alps*. Joint Secretariat - Interreg Alpine Space Programme. Munich, Germany.
https://www.alpine-space.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/20191127_asp_cooperation-stories-1.pdf

while combating depopulation. It creates and maintains jobs and opportunities for farmers, at a time when farms are disappearing at an alarming rate¹⁰⁹.

5.2 Environment

The link between AFH and the environment is particularly strong and vital, on the one hand because it is closely intertwined with agricultural, silvicultural and pastoral activities and, on the other, because of the need for continuous adaptation to climate, soil, topography and hydrogeology conditions. AFH definition fully matches the definition of ICH under the 2003 Convention: *“This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity”* (Article 2).

As mentioned previously, most international instruments dedicated to the environment and natural resources are connected and apply to AFH. First and foremost, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation.

Food production in the Alps is also closely linked to hydrogeological risk prevention through various forms of agricultural management. The inherent vulnerability of mountain areas, which are subject to hazards such as landslides, mudslides, erosion, avalanches, and variable river flows, is exacerbated today by climate variability and change.

Avalanche risk management Entered in 2018 (13.COM) in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Switzerland and Austria

Avalanche risk management has shaped the identity of Alpine populations, as every winter they face the threat posed by avalanches to inhabitants, tourists, means of communication and other vital infrastructure. Since the Alps are densely populated, avalanches are a primary concern as well as a collective responsibility of communities. For centuries, inhabitants and mountain dwellers have developed local empirical knowledge, risk management and prevention strategies, and cultural practices to protect themselves from the danger of avalanches. Nowadays, modern tools such as measuring instruments and risk mapping complement traditional knowledge, which continues to be field-developed and field-adapted by knowledge holders. This aspect is deeply rooted in the everyday culture of the communities concerned and underlines the importance of solidarity in crisis situations. Avalanche risk assessment requires a sound knowledge of nature, with special emphasis on terrain, snow, weather conditions and past avalanches. While that knowledge used to be transmitted orally, today it is the result of a dynamic process combining

¹⁰⁹ <https://multimediark.slowfood.com/about/>

empirical knowledge and practical experience: knowledge is transferred from science to practice and from the field to research.¹¹⁰

The aspect of risk prevention as related to climate was addressed by UNESCO with the 2017 Declaration on Ethical Principles in Relation to Climate Change. The text identifies harm prevention as one of the most important ethical principles in relation to climate change. *Considering that climate change not only erodes the sustainability of Earth's ecosystems and the services they provide, but also threatens the future well-being of people and their livelihoods, local communities, and individuals through harmful and negative consequences, some of which are potentially irreversible.*¹¹¹

5.3 Sustainability

As mentioned earlier, the term sustainability expresses first and foremost a value, as well as a concept and a practice, beyond the paradigm of sustainable development. UNESCO draws attention to the fact that *"sustainability is the" goal to be achieved for any action that integrates environment, economy, society and culture, by different methods and means, including development, education, science, norms, individual and collective behaviour, and not least food. "Ultimately, sustainability will depend on changes in behaviour and lifestyles, changes which will need to be motivated by a shift in values and rooted in the cultural and moral precepts upon which behaviour is based.* Without change of this kind, even the most enlightened legislation, the cleanest technology, the most sophisticated research will not succeed in steering society towards the long-term goal of sustainability.¹¹²

In 1999, the first biodiversity report of the Convention on Biological Diversity featuring significant title and contents – *"Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity"* – gathered a collection of evidence from around the world on sustainability. Although not quite widespread as a term or theoretical concept, sustainability is viewed by a large number of local communities as the *"guiding principle"* of knowledge, skills, practices and values in the safeguarding of biodiversity¹¹³.

Food and sustainability are ultimately an integral part of human rights, as stated for example in the 2001 UN report on the right to food: *"The right to food is a human right... corresponding*

¹¹⁰ <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/avalanche-risk-management-01380>

¹¹¹ <https://en.unesco.org/themes/ethics-science-and-technology/ethical-principles>

¹¹² UNESCO, 2002. *Education for sustainability: from Rio to Johannesburg, lessons learnt from a decade of commitment*. Report, p. 46.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000127100?posInSet=1&queryId=5d087964-9e69-4d56-b71c-5e109afe7e74>

¹¹³ United Nations Environment Programme UNEP, 1999. *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity. A Complementary Contribution to the Global Biodiversity Assessment*. Intermediate Technology Publications. Posey D.A. (Ed.) London, United Kingdom. 731 pp. <https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/cultural-and-spiritual-values-biodiversity>

to the cultural traditions of the people... which ensure a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free of fear.”¹¹⁴.

What is food sovereignty?

The idea of food sovereignty was first introduced in 1996 at the World Food Summit and immediately became a global grassroots movement adopted by the most diverse social groups including urban poverty and local markets, environmental protection, consumers, women’s associations, small farmers, fishermen, shepherds, etc., with a role being also being played by an NGO supporting food heritage and present on every continent: Via Campesina. Now recognised by various institutions and governments, food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through sustainable methods and defined by local food and farming systems. The production model is sustainable, small-scale, for the benefit and initiative of communities and their specific environment. Food sovereignty brings together the aspirations, values, needs and livelihoods of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the centre of local food systems and policies rather than in the global market or large corporations. It also ensures that the rights of use and management of land, territories, water, seeds, species, varieties and biodiversity remain with those who produce the food and not with the various intermediaries.

Via Campesina¹¹⁵.

5.4 Participation

As emphasised in the key concepts, the engagement of communities, groups and individuals is the starting and finishing point of safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage, but only if properly acted upon institutional, administrative, political, scientific, technical and any other decision-makers. It is indeed the engagement of clearly identifiable individuals that separates a local food heritage from any food system.

It has also been said that the safeguarding of traditional food heritage requires both participation and governance, even though they are two different aspects. This is why it is appropriate to speak of participatory governance. In the case of Alpine FH in particular, we are confronted with a type of participation involving players with a set of related roles. Those who contribute to the creation of AFH carry out the activities, make use of the products and services provided, share the rights, responsibilities and benefits, make decisions, and are holders of knowledge, skills, practices and values. The roles covered by the players involved are also combined with more general yet fundamental objectives, such as the safeguarding of biodiversity, healthy, diversified and safe food, a sense of identity and belonging,

¹¹⁴ United Nations Human Rights. The right to food.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-food/about-right-food-and-human-rights>

¹¹⁵ <https://viacampesina.org/en/>

transmission from generation to generation, a sustainable economy, social cohesion and values of solidarity.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is among the most active organisations at the international level in defining participatory governance mechanisms and processes concerning the management and safeguarding of intangible heritage. The **Innovative Citizen Participation** Programme “explores innovative ways that governments can effectively engage with citizens and stakeholders to source ideas, co-create solutions and tackle complex policy problems. It focuses on new research in the area of deliberative, collaborative, and participatory decision making that are evolving across the globe. The use of deliberative processes for public decision making is a key part of OECD’s work on open government, which examines the trends of declining trust in government, citizen demands for more openness, transparency, accountability, integrity, and stakeholder engagement.”¹¹⁶

5.5 Participatory governance of heritage as a tool for social innovation. Examples of inspiration in the Alps

As a preface to this chapter, we must ask ourselves: What features have historically characterised the experience of Alpine communities?

Firstly, as mentioned in the introduction, the ability to adapt to demanding and difficult environmental conditions due to declivity, exposure and seasonal cycles – characterised by long winters and short summers – which generated complex and sophisticated agricultural, forest and pastoral practices and seasonal mobility systems driven by a deep respect for the environment, on which the subsistence of each community and the survival of their generations depended. Secondly, their outstanding skills in negotiating with the outside world – the plains and urban centres in modern times – which have given rise to forms of multiple activities linked to original combinations of trades and resources, making the Alps an open and interconnected system. Finally, a historical ability to manage community affairs and a great sense of collective responsibility and belonging to communities, whose life has for centuries been closely linked to the participation of all community members in collective life. While some of the knowledge and skills of Alpine communities that have been the subject of 20th century anthropology have been lost in the violent changes that define the history of the contemporary Alps, ongoing projects prove how strong the adaptive and resilient capacities of Alpine communities are, how this extraordinary heritage can trigger revitalisation processes that will allow us – as we did in *Living ICH* with experts in participatory processes – to draw a map of sustainable communities and production chains fighting for the Alps of the future. These communities, the researchers, the institutions that have committed themselves to supporting and promoting this project are the beating heart of the ongoing processes.

As part of the project, four researchers worked in the areas involved – Naima Comotti for Valtellina, Anna Bertolino for Valais, Virginie Deguillaume for Val d’Aosta and Ricarda Schmidt for Val Venosta.

¹¹⁶ <https://www.oecd.org/governance/innovative-citizen-participation/>

The research work produced different outcomes and results, on the basis of which the researchers identified some good practices, based on five criteria.

- 1. Multilevel and multistakeholder governance processes are underway.**
- 2. Beneficiaries are aware of the meaning of ICH and the relationships between practices of agriculture, food, nature and culture.**
- 3. Practice integrates relationships with the environment and more generally between environment and culture.**
- 4. Practice contributes to the social innovation and economic sustainability of communities.**
- 5. There is potential for transregional or transnational exchanges or collaborations.**

The good practices identified play a role in understanding the ongoing processes of consensus and governance, and new organisational models. Below is a description of these good practices, structured on the basis of the five criteria mentioned above.

Regional development project “100% (bio) Valposchiavo” - Canton of Graubünden, Switzerland – (Naima Comotti)

Valposchiavo is connected by the Rhaetian Railway, which, together with the Albula line, was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2008. In Valposchiavo, more than 90% of the farming land is managed by certified organic farms, a percentage that is very rarely seen nationally and worldwide.

⇒ Value for the environment

Local agriculture has long since converted to organic production. The products are mainly processed in the valley. There are several firms in the area that process milk, meat, cereals, (medicinal) plants and fruit, and the finished products can be purchased in various hotels, restaurants and shops. Valposchiavo is also known for its culinary tradition (e.g. pizzoccheri or *Brasciadela*, a rye bread flavoured with aniseed, in the shape of a doughnut).

⇒ Multilevel and multistakeholder governance

The farmers’ associations, the Union of Arts and Crafts of Valposchiavo and the local tourism organisation have joined forces by launching the regional development project known as “100% (bio) Valposchiavo”, started in 2020. In the southern region of the valley, efforts are aimed at improving fruit and berry production. A new drying plant is planned for an herb producer. Cereal production, which had practically disappeared from the valley in the last forty years, is also being revived through a cereal collection centre. Already today, the cultivation of rye, spelt, barley, oats and buckwheat has resumed on an area spanning 10 hectares. As of 2019, it is again possible to buy *Brasciadela*, a typical product of the valley made from local rye. Thanks to the collection centre, the cultivated area can be increased to over 20 hectares. **The involvement of all supply chain players in a broad consensus and commitment is of paramount importance**¹¹⁷.

⇒ Social innovation, intellectual property rights and economic sustainability

The Regional Development Project (RDP) known as “100% (bio) Valposchiavo” allows local producers to have their product recognised with a special label. The aim of the project is to enhance poschiavina agricultural production and to enable farmers to sell their products on a zero-food-mile basis. With a view to expressing the intention to create a sustainability-oriented virtuous circle, the official regulations read as follows in their initial section:

The “100% Valposchiavo” project aims to enhance the local economy of Valposchiavo. Aware of their responsibility for the **territory, the population and the cultural heritage of Valposchiavo**, the companies promoting the project base their business decisions taking into account the economic, social and environmental impact of their actions.

This practice has an impact from both an economic perspective, inasmuch as firms producing according to the expected standards are eligible for subsidies, as well as a symbolic and cultural viewpoint. Indeed, 100% Valposchiavo produce is spread and supported by the *Polo Poschiavo* and *Valposchiavo Turismo*, with many restaurateurs

¹¹⁷ <https://2020.agrarbericht.ch/it/politica/miglioramenti-strutturali-e-misure-sociali-collaterali/progetto-di-sviluppo-regionale-100-bio-valposchiavo>

displaying it on their menus and making an effort into explaining it to their customers, with a view to enhancing and promoting local produce. At present, the label is applied to many items sold in the valley and offered by the restaurant industry. Field cultivation has benefitted greatly from the project. 100% Valposchiavo produce include all flours produced by local farmers: rye flour, buckwheat flour, maize flour, pearl barley flour, white and semi-white wheat flour. Specifically, these flours are from the *Società cooperativa campicoltura Valposchiavo*, which was founded as a network of local farmers and is responsible for channelling the harvests of several farms and processing them. Brand awareness in the valley is supported by shops, such as grocery shops, convenience stores and dairies, restaurants and hotels, where it is displayed on menus to explain the local origin of the raw material (in this case the cereals used to make the flour). As part of the same project, Valposchiavo also created a second label, "*Fait sü in Valposchiavo*", covering locally processed products whose raw material is not necessarily of local origin. According to the regulations, "A product can bear the *Fait sü in Valposchiavo* logo if it is manufactured in Valposchiavo and if at least 75% of the added value is generated in the valley. Products of this brand include the flours of *Molino e pastificio SA* in Poschiavo, which also collaborates with the farmers' cooperative for the processing of local cereals, while producing flours using non-organic cereals from Italy and other parts of Switzerland.

The practice of the 100% Valposchiavo brand qualifies as multilevel and multistakeholder in that it is promoted by public and private players, combines the primary production sector (including the network of local producers) with the tertiary sector of tourism and cultural enhancement. Indeed, agriculture is not only promoted by purchasing flours in the valley's shops, but is also related to the tourism sector, which in recent years has made efforts to promote local flours, which are offered to hotel and restaurant guests, with the idea of telling the story behind the raw material. To this end, a group of 10 hoteliers in the valley has signed a *Charta* where each of them undertakes to use raw materials grown and processed exclusively in the area in at least three recipes, proposed on the menu. To allow the firms to be competitive, the supply chain is extended and the added value of organic products is increased directly in the valley.

⇒ **Cross-border potential**

There is clear potential and strong cross-border synergy with the new Valtellina "identity card" of local ecotypes.

Consorzio Orto VDA – Valle d'Aosta – (Virginie Deguillaume)

As part of the *Living ICH* project, the Consortium for the enhancement and protection of fruit and vegetables in Valle d'Aosta was considered a good practice of social and economic innovation. The Consortium embodies the values of safeguarding traditional food and the

environment, responding to the social needs of “*decent work*” (as defined under SDG goal 8), inspired by “**traditional family horticulture in the Aosta Valley**”. Handed down tradition, supply chain innovation, territory and seasonality are some of the cornerstones upon which the consortium relies.

⇒ **Cultural value and ICH awareness**

Growing vegetable gardens for family consumption traditionally existed in Valle d'Aosta at the family level: each family used to cultivate what they needed for their subsistence, providing produce throughout the year, including what could be consumed fresh and what had to be stored for the winter. Only in the last ten years or so in Valle d'Aosta has horticulture gone from being a “domestic” crop to a truly organised supply chain. Businesses are generally very small and family-run, allowing an income for one or two people. Knowledge, handed down through the family, is supplemented by technical and vocational courses¹¹⁸.

⇒ **Value for the environment**

Being horticulture, there is a profound interaction between the farmer and the environment, and consequently with the Intangible Cultural Heritage (e.g. choosing to sow local varieties, using techniques handed down by the elders). During the *Living ICH* project, reflections and issues related to climate change, particularly with regard to warm winters and spring frosts, or heavy rain or wind events, came up very often. The regulations of the Orto VdA Consortium place emphasis on respect for the environment, with certain constraints such as: soil cultivation, fertilisation using organic fertilisers, or multi-cropping and rotations. These are requirements for obtaining consortium membership as they signify healthy, seasonal, natural and quality food.

⇒ **Multilevel and multistakeholder governance**

The story behind the Orto VdA Consortium, established in 2021, related to young *campagnards*, i.e. young mountain vegetable and fruit growers. **Small entrepreneurs organised in a network of 14 farms** who have chosen to do quality agriculture in their region, supported by qualified technicians, proposing new productions while respecting tradition, territory, seasonality and people. **Its regulations govern the supply chain and protects end consumers (soil cultivation, fertilisation using organic fertilisers, multi-cropping)**. The recent creation of the consortium reflects the evolution of this heritage practice and represents an example of local area governance for the management of this sector, which has very strong potential.

⇒ **Social innovation and economic sustainability**

Horticulture is a fast-growing industry with strong consumer demand. Joining together in a consortium allows farmers to network, extend the production season, offer their products even in supermarkets that require certain continuity and quantity flows. The consortium gives strength to individual producers, ensures support from technicians, and allows the quality of the products offered to be disseminated on a regional scale. This helps young farmers, with very small businesses, to make a living from working in this segment.

¹¹⁸ <https://www.ortovda.it/>

⇒ **Cross-border potential**

As the name “Orto VdA” suggests, the consortium was founded as a Valdostan entity, with the aim of promoting local products grown in the region. One of the objectives is precisely to make locally grown vegetables accessible and to include them in the local distribution network through supermarkets. The consortium’s experience can serve as an example for other Alpine entities: as part of the *Living ICH* project, the consortium was considered a virtuous example, as a measure of empowerment and good governance, in the context of a workshop organised with Swiss partners from the Canton of Valais.

ConserVa Project - Valtellina, Italy - (Naima Comotti)

⇒ **Value for the environment**

The ConserVa Project, entailing conservation, management and sustainable use of buckwheat and rye genetic resources in Valtellina, launched between 2019 and 2022, aims to enhance and preserve ancient buckwheat and rye ecotypes to help turnaround the agricultural and food sector. The varieties have been registered and deposited at the germplasm bank in Lecco. The oldest variety of rye was identified by Gennara Arrondini, an old farmer and guardian of local seeds.

⇒ **Multilevel and multistakeholder governance**

The project, financed by the Lombardy Region, benefitted from a **broad partnership** (Bicocca University, the Teglio Municipality, the Fojanini Foundation - Centre for Studies of the Province of Sondrio, the Centre of Autochthonous Flora of Monte Barro, four local companies, and the Association for the Cultivation of Buckwheat from Teglio and Traditional Alpine Cereals). **Local farmers, families and elderly “guardians” of local seeds** took part in the genetic analysis, and led to the genetic and agronomic characterisation of local seeds.

⇒ **Social innovation and economic sustainability**

The results of the genetic analysis process will make it possible to build an “identity card” of local grains to tell their origin, promote their preservation and enhancement also at a commercial level, and raise awareness regarding their peculiar nutraceutical properties. It has indeed emerged that some of the oldest varieties have components or active ingredients with positive effects on health, to a greater extent than the more common varieties of rye and buckwheat.

An important and strategic aspect is related to the value of these cereals as an essential component of **traditional food and dishes**, such as the *pizzoccheri* of Valtellina. Appropriate storytelling can contribute to their enhancement, contributing to the social innovation and economic sustainability of local businesses.

⇒ **Cross-border potential**

As part of the *Living ICH* project, a clear potential and strong synergy of cooperation was identified. This is linked on the one hand to cross-border communities working on the

ancient grain chain and, on the other hand, to practical experiences of proximity, such as the 100% Valposchiavo brand. This aspect emerged strongly in the Participatory Workgroups and during the project's Knowledge Café meetings.

100% Grand Entremont and “Pain du Grand Entremont” Cereals and Flour - Canton Valais, Switzerland – (Anna Bertolino)

The association for the promotion of agriculture in Grand Entremont shares, through farmers and bakers in the region, the production of locally grown cereals (wheat and rye) and the use of flours for the production of a regional bread. The community is working on the creation of a local zero-food-mile production circuit, reclaiming land, enhancing local cultures and minor cereals. There is also an exchange of cultivation practices, cultivated varieties, and enhancement of community kilns and mills with the neighbouring Valle d'Aosta region.

⇒ Cultural value and ICH awareness

The beneficiaries, gathered in an association for the promotion of agriculture in Grand Entremont, are aware of the heritage value of their farming practices, which are renewed through current knowledge and technology, driven by the desire to distinguish themselves from industrial production.

⇒ Multilevel and multistakeholder governance

Through the ¹¹⁹ Grand Entremont PDR and shared design endeavours, farmers and bakers from the region met to test different locally grown cereal flours (wheat and rye) to find the right recipe for the production of a bread from the Entremont region, made with a local flour labelled “Grand Entremont - Le goût des cimes”. Tests have been underway since September 2021. The focus was on making bread with sourdough starter and a good percentage of wholemeal flour.

⇒ Social innovation and economic sustainability

One of the first issues concerns the creation of a local supply chain, which consumers as well as farmers and artisans increasingly prefer over industrial supply chains. This practice is creating value, including economic value, for the community through the cultivation of cereals locally and the sale of “Grand Entremont - Le goût des cimes” flour and bread.

⇒ Value for the environment

This practice integrates reflections on the relationship between the environment and ICH: the community is proactively working to create a local zero-food-mile production circuit, reclaiming land, enhancing local knowledge and minor cereals.

¹¹⁹ PDR is a regional development project that allows several agricultural projects to be implemented in the same region under the umbrella of a collective strategic measure. The Grand Entremont is a regional entity comprising the Bagnes, Ferret and Entremont valleys and the municipality of Bovernier in Valais (Switzerland). The farmers of Grand Entremont are gathered in an association for the promotion of agriculture in Grand Entremont (APAGE).

⇒ **Cross-border potential**

There is a potential exchange with the neighbouring region of Valle d'Aosta due to the strong relations existing in terms of cultivation practices and cultivated varieties, as well as for the enhancement of community ovens and mills.

Cultivation and processing of the Pala Pear - Vinschgau Valley, Italy - (Ricarda Schmidt)

The cultivation and processing of the Pala Pear is a cultural element of the Vinschgau Valley. The resulting bread is a USP from the Upper Vinschgau. The *Living ICH* project helped to restore the heritage value of local pear cultivation and processing, thanks to both the many events staged as part of the project and the participation of a large number of private individuals who have a tree of this variety in their own gardens and orchards. The Glorenza Pera Pala Committee organises the annual Pala Pear Days, while the Upper Vinschgau Community Cooperative organises the relevant harvest. The Upper Vinschgau Community Cooperative engages in the marketing of fresh fruit and packaged products. Cross-border exchanges with Switzerland on old varieties were also promoted.

⇒ **Cultural value and ICH awareness**

The cultivation and processing of the Pala Pear is a strong element of the Vinschgau Valley's culture and local identity. The large Pala Pear trees characterise the gardens of the valley and the fruits were used in food and traditional medicine. Pala Pear bread is an important traditional product of the Upper Vinschgau, but has recently experienced a sharp decline. The *Living ICH* project has increased awareness of the value of fruit cultivation and processing, thanks to the many events organised as part of the project on the occasion of the Pala Pear Days in 2021 and 2022.

⇒ **Multilevel and multistakeholder governance**

In the Vinschgau Valley, a large number of people are very passionate about the Pala Pear. They are private individuals who have a pear tree at home, some farmers and a baker who try to cultivate, process and market the pear tree professionally. The two major stakeholders are Glorenza Pera Pala Committee, who organises the annual Pala Pear Days, and the Upper Vinschgau Community Cooperative (BGO) who organises the relevant harvest.

⇒ **Social innovation and economic sustainability**

The Upper Vinschgau Community Cooperative (BGO) has started processing and marketing the pear. Bakers often produce and sell pear bread with fruit from Turkey: the relocation potential of this supply chain is very strong.

⇒ **Value for the environment**

Traditional orchards are the richest habitats in Central Europe (with more than 5000 species), cultural biotopes resulting from a harmonious relationship between man and nature. The project helped to raise awareness of the ecological value of traditional orchards and centuries-old pear trees. Therefore, the Glorenza municipal council decided to create a new traditional orchard on an area spanning 1,200 square metres.

⇒ **Cross-border potential**

As part of the project, a number of study trips were organised to Canton Graubünden to visit the local association LOVTRIN, which engages in the preservation of the cultural landscape through traditional orchards. This meaningful exchange was very important for the Glorenza Pala Pear Committee, as it highlighted common challenges. Another meeting was organised with members of the Fundaziun Pro Terra Engiadina. Cross-border exchanges are valuable for the progressive development of cross-border governance.

In addition to those already mentioned, there are numerous examples in the Alps where the dimensions of culture, environment, sustainability and participation are combined and interlinked.

Working with concrete examples provides a better understanding of living heritage values and of the role of communities in multilevel and multistakeholder governance processes. These aspects ensure synergy between **innovation and social sustainability, environmental protection and economic sustainability**. An interesting Alpine case is to be found in the large construction site for the management of World Heritage sites. In this respect, the developments that the 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage is undergoing with regard to its implementation deserve specific attention. Article 5(a) of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention requires each State Party *“to adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes.”*¹²⁰

One of the recent objectives of the World Heritage Convention, also known as the “5 Cs” (Credibility, Conservation, Capacity Building, Communication and Community) introduces the participation of citizens in the protection of their own cultural and natural heritage. The fifth C is a reflection of a paradigm shift in heritage processes, undoubtedly inspired by the ongoing conceptual evolution driven by the values of civil society participation in decision-making processes.

Historically, the establishment and management of protected areas was based on the responsibility of the government and experts, emphasising the “authenticity and exceptional universal value” of these areas. The Nara Document on Authenticity of 1994¹²¹, incorporated into the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention¹²² in 2005, encouraged a broader definition of authenticity, more responsive to cultural context.

This paradigm shift is leading to:

- A greater focus on ethical, social, cultural and economic values;
- The urgency of free informed consent;

¹²⁰ <https://www.patrimionellascuola.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Convenzione-Patrimonio-Mondiale-italiano.pdf>

¹²¹ [The NARA document on authenticity \(1994\) - International Council on Monuments and Sites](#)

¹²² [The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention](#)

- An opening to different governance models in protected areas, including multistakeholder and multilevel management.

Today, we are witnessing the establishment of a variety of protected areas and a diversity of experiences in terms of management and governance. Some of these experiences contribute to a better understanding of ongoing governance processes, giving visibility to the intersection between natural resource management policies, inheritance systems, land tenure and use, and forms of social and cultural organisation.¹²³

This opens up new possibilities for raising the awareness of different players regarding the processes of safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage as a valuable tool in the management of World Heritage sites.

One example of participatory management concerns the Jungfrau-Aletsch Swiss Alps. The *site provides an outstanding example of the formation of the High Alps*. Its imposing landscape has played an important role in art, literature and mountaineering, an element entered in the 2019 Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The registration documentation states that *the property is managed with a strategy and management plan developed through an exemplary participatory process. Key management issues include the potential impact of climate change, tourism management and the need to ensure effective coordination of management responsibility between federal, cantonal and municipal levels of government*.¹²⁴

Two more examples are given below, one taken from the transnational inventory www.intangiblesearch.eu¹²⁵, the other very closely related to the experience of managing the common assets of Alpine communities, which we mentioned in the introduction to this chapter.

Heroic viticulture in Valtellina, Italy

Heroic viticulture is defined by the difficulties of poor, sloping terrain that farmers have dealt with over the centuries by relying on technical solutions that demonstrate knowledge, skills and practices perfectly adapted to these territories.

Many techniques require the shared and solidarity-based work of Alpine communities, such as terrace cultivation, which is today its main distinguishing feature, a material legacy of refined knowledge that man has created by designing the landscape to produce resources. Today, the ability to maintain terrace cultivation is closely linked to vine cultivation: the morphology of the terrain implies a great deal of preparation work during the course of the year.

¹²³ *Managing Natural World Heritage*, World Heritage Resource Material, pages 28-29.

¹²⁴ [Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch - UNESCO World Heritage Centre](http://www.unesco.org/whc/central/central.php?lang=en&id=116)

¹²⁵ www.intangiblesearch.eu

The drywall construction technique is used for terracing, i.e. without using cement. The maintenance of the tiny plots is very laborious: once the soil has been turned over, it has to be laid from one terrace to the next all the way to the top. It should be stressed that in 2018 the 2003 Convention recognised the Art of drywalling as an element of ICH shared by several countries in the Mediterranean basin.

The example of the Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme, Trento, Italy

With a millennium of history (the first written documents date back to around 1100), the Magnifica Comunità di Fiemme (MCF) is often cited as one of the most concrete examples of sustainable environmental, economic, social and cultural management in the Alpine area. The diverse mountain environment of forests, pastures and high-altitude grasslands on a territory of 20,000 hectares and 23,000 inhabitants (called “vicini” = “neighbours”) of 11 municipalities (called “regole” = “rules”) is kept alive and productive by a system of participation and governance that has defied centuries and the most dramatic events.

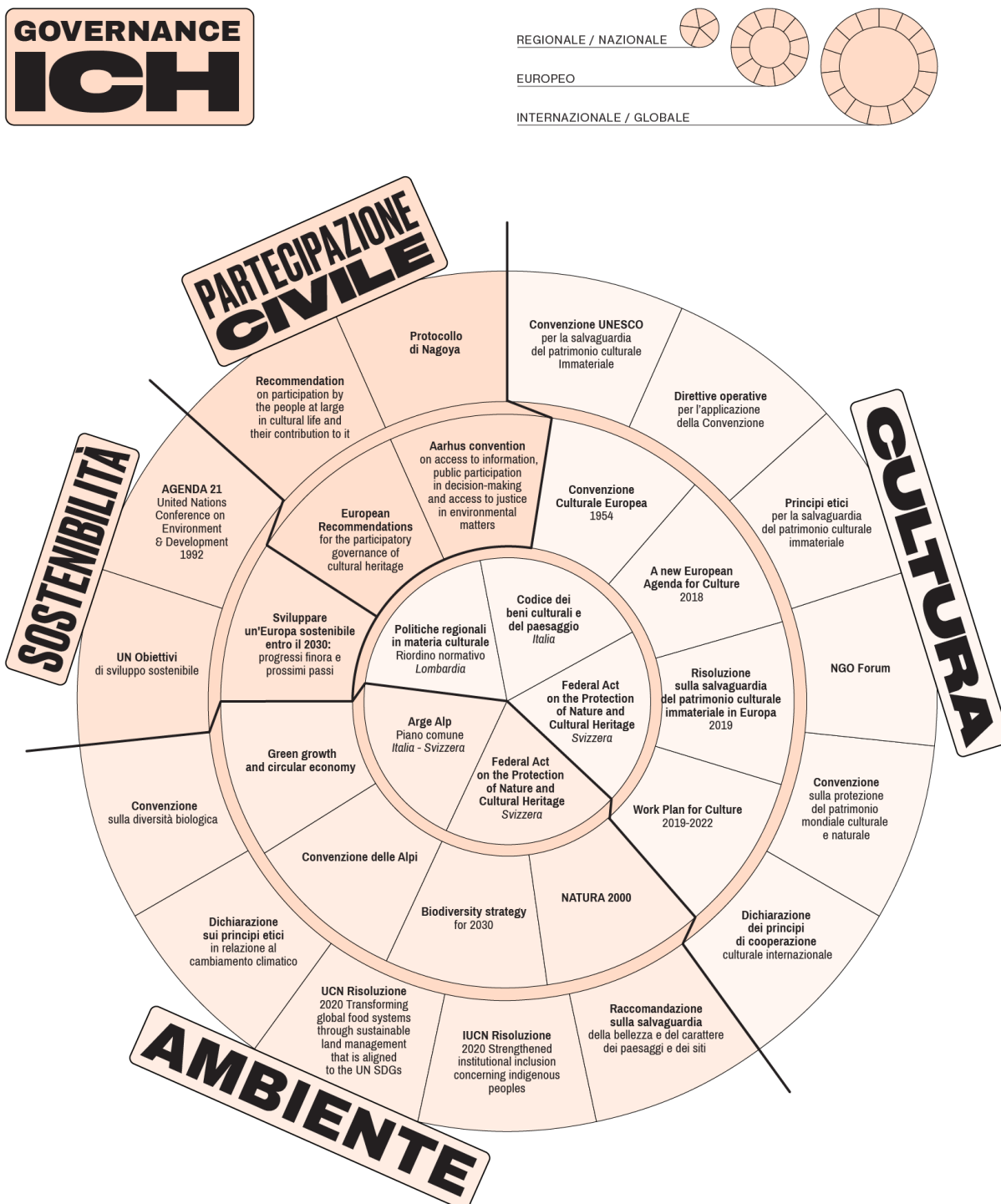
The MCF is **legally a “neighbourhood”, i.e. a community sharing its own assets, interests, rights, responsibilities and rules for the management of its resources.** Profits come from goods and services based on centuries-old careful, moderate and continuous management. Profits are invested in social (e.g. the purchase of grain for the population in times of famine), infrastructural (e.g. the construction of a hospital and old people’s homes), cultural and economic initiatives with the overarching goal of ensuring residents’ welfare and protection of resources.

Today, despite the difficulties of ongoing changes and increasingly invasive tourism, the MCF remains an example of an active community that shares intergenerational solidarity, creativity, entrepreneurship and resilience, all being aspects included in the 2003 Convention’s definition of ICH (practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, values, tools, objects and cultural spaces)¹²⁶.

¹²⁶ <http://www.mcfiemme.eu/>

6. Conclusions and outlook. A chart in the form of wrap-up. See connections

By providing a chart linking – like in a large map – the main regulatory instruments mentioned in this report, we would like to give concrete significance and a solid base to an integrated vision, which holds environment and culture together, revealing the uniting and distinguishing factors.



<https://app.mural.co/t/kulturburo5938/m/kulturburo5938/1616491298924/428d4d72d5d99af26b11daca03a931ba6f80b87?sender=u87fb36006883c0ba91025914>

Based on the instruments, initiatives, programmes and projects presented and discussed in this report, it is possible to highlight the contents and principles underpinning an AFH governance system that includes culture, the environment, sustainability, participation and their interrelationships. It has been emphasised that any form of governance must be based on organised dialogues between the representatives of communities, groups and individuals, the key players of transmission of living heritage in all its expressions, and the representatives of public institutions at all levels, which support the continuity of heritage, policies and the private sector.

Building on the results of the *Living ICH* project, which included field research, mapping of good practices, participatory tables, guidelines on governance tools and experiences, we recommend in conclusion to focus on some common features, principles of governance in the different sectors identified.

In view of all the documents mentioned in the preceding pages, with special reference to the 12 Principles of Ethics of the Convention, management characteristics must be based on the values of cooperation and coordination, accessibility and benefit-sharing, transparency, in a fair and open international information system. Let us briefly review some relevant regulatory instruments, focusing on the **governance characteristics** that emerge from them, highlighting a few keywords.

Following the 2003 Convention, the *Resolution on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Europe* was adopted in 2019.¹²⁷ This suggests participatory governance and a framework of public support to ensure respect for the **autonomy** of CGIs, an appropriate approach to the development of equitable and feasible community participation, the **integration** between different instruments, with reference to heritage digitisation. The Resolution provides **practical methods** for developing integrated governance within the European framework, suggesting for example the integration of the ICH into the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme.¹²⁸

The aforementioned *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*¹²⁹ published a Handbook called “Managing World Cultural Heritage”, which recommends *reviewing existing heritage management systems in the light of the demands that the World Heritage system and modern-day needs place upon them, while also stressing the need for participatory approaches*.¹³⁰ One of the key aspects highlighted by this guide is the multiple management objectives, *implying the need to assess a wide range of institutional and organisational contexts (and obstacles), social perspectives, forms of knowledge, values (both for present and future generations, often in conflict) and other factors*.¹³¹ For this

¹²⁷ [Safeguarding and enhancing intangible cultural heritage in Europe](#)

¹²⁸ cf. [Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme](#)

¹²⁹ [Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage](#)

¹³⁰ Preface. [MANAGING CULTURAL WORLD HERITAGE](#) p. 4

¹³¹ Cit. page 14.

reason, the authors recommend an **integrated (cross-agency), cross-sectoral and coordinated participatory approach** that requires changes in three key management areas: legislative aspects, the institutional framework and the use of resources.¹³²

Shortly after the publication of the Handbook, the *Report Towards an Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe* was adopted at a European level, committing Member States to ensure the development of legal instruments allowing for alternative models of funding and administration, encouraging community involvement, civil society participation and public-private **partnerships**, with a view to implementing actions related to cultural heritage (conservation, restoration, preservation, development and promotion) and starting a dialogue at a European level between policy makers at all levels, as well as with cultural and creative industries, tourism operator networks, partnerships between private and public players and NGOs, with the aim of striking a balance between sustainable preservation and the development of the economic and social potential of cultural heritage. The characteristics that emerge are based on **civil, public and private partnership, multilevel** (inter- and cross-sectoral) **dialogue, quality control**, the balance between heritage conservation and **economic development**.¹³³

The *Convention on Biological Diversity*¹³⁴ sets out a fundamental requirement for the protection of biological diversity, i.e. the **in situ conservation of ecosystems** and natural habitats, the maintenance and recovery of viable populations in their ecosystem. This also applies to **agricultural crops**, which, thanks to human activities, have been contributing to biological diversity for thousands of years. Aware of the close link between humans and the environment, the drafters of the Convention urge all the parties concerned to respect, preserve and maintain the knowledge, innovations and practices of **indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles** relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. They also call for their widest application, with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices, encouraging an equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of such knowledge, innovations and practices. The governance characteristics that emerge call for **respect of contexts, communities of practice**, the principle of **benefit sharing, inclusion**, intersectorality and partnership.

The aforementioned *Nagoya Protocol*¹³⁵ is closely related to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is an excellent example of **guidelines for ensuring the participation of civil society in natural resource management and conservation processes**. The specific objective of the Protocol is to ensure a fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. States Parties are urged to ensure that traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources is only accessible with the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous and local communities, being the holders of such knowledge. (Article 7). Subject to their national legislation, States Parties are encouraged to take into consideration **customary laws**

¹³² Cit. page 17.

¹³³ [Approved texts - Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe - Tuesday, 8 September 2015](#)

¹³⁴ [Text of the Convention](#)

¹³⁵ [nagoya-protocol-en.pdf \(cbd.int\)](#)

of indigenous and local communities, any community protocols and procedures with respect to TK associated with genetic resources, and **establish mechanisms to inform potential users of TK** associated with genetic resources of their obligations, with the effective participation of affected indigenous and local communities (Article 12), proposing to support¹³⁶ the development of community protocols (Article 20) on access to TK associated with genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of such knowledge.

In view of the growing threat of climate change to the future of the planet and following the *Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)*¹³⁷, the *Kyoto Protocol*¹³⁸, signed in 1997 as an implementation document for the planned measures and replaced in 2016 by the *Paris Agreement*¹³⁹, in 2017 the *UNESCO Declaration of Ethical Principles in Relation to Climate Change* was adopted.¹⁴⁰ The new Declaration argues that “prevention of harm” is one of the most important ethical principles in relation to climate change. To respect this, people should aim to “anticipate, avoid or minimise harm wherever it may arise”. Besides the values and concepts already mentioned in previous documents, the *Declaration of Ethical Principles in Relation to Climate Change* strongly calls for the development of evaluation mechanisms that would support the **environmental and social responsibility** of all relevant actors, **including corporations and companies**.

The IUCN Resolution of 2020 *Transforming global food systems through sustainable land management aligned with the UN SDGs*¹⁴¹, refers directly to **food and agriculture in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals**, prioritising the transition of the agri-food sector as an integral part of sustainable environmental management, which includes the responsibilities of farms and production chains. Against this background, it can be seen that environmental and agricultural issues are strongly connected in an integrated vision, within which ICH inventories, related to food and knowledge about nature and the universe in general, can be a tool for **innovation in the agri-food sector, linked to traditional practices**.

At the European level, reference is made to *The note on the definition of conservation measures for NATURA 2000 sites*¹⁴² and *The Biodiversity Strategy 2030*. Measures for the conservation of NATURA 2000 sites offer a balance between more general concepts and values, integrating global environmental strategies into their mission and suggestions on how to manage natural sites, taking into account the social and economic dynamics that put pressure on the environment. These measures suggest forming an information base on existing conditions at the site and identifying all stakeholders who should be involved in the

¹³⁶ As part of the [EU BENELEX](#) project, a toolkit was developed to support decision-makers in building partnerships for the identification and distribution of economic, socio-cultural and environmental benefits between state and non-state actors. The project explores different ways in which fair and equitable benefit-sharing is viewed and put into practice in various contexts.

¹³⁷ [UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE](#)

¹³⁸ [Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#)

¹³⁹ [Paris Agreement text English](#)

¹⁴⁰ [Declaration on Ethical Principles in Relation to Climate Change: Questions and Answers](#)

¹⁴¹ [WCC-2020-Res-003-EN Transforming global food systems through sustainable land management that is aligned to the UN SDGs RECOGNIS](#)

¹⁴² [Establishing conservation measures for Natura 2000 Sites](#)

planning process. The overarching objective, when preparing conservation measures, should be to achieve **integrated site management**, which means taking into account the interests of different stakeholders, trying to integrate them as much as possible into the conservation plan without threatening the conservation of the site or the implementation of realistic, quantified and manageable measures. Current good practice in many EU Member States is to ensure the active contribution of all stakeholders, e.g. through the **creation of steering groups** or committees to develop conservation management. **These steering committees** must involve local authorities and representatives of landowners and major operators of the Natura 2000 site. Deploying effective **public consultation** requires process organisation, the **collaboration of different political levels** as well as sufficient staff and budget and reliance on effective **communication tools and media**. To ensure that the various stakeholders, particularly those not directly involved in environmental management, are engaged, it may also be necessary to provide targeted training and information opportunities and effective methods of **conflict resolution**. One of the relevant measures, including with respect to the issue of possible conflicts, is the **language used in the description of measures**, which should be as clear as possible in order to make the measures understandable to a wide network of stakeholders. The governance characteristics that emerge provide for extensive counselling, guided by detailed measures that can answer the questions WHO? WHAT? HOW?

The *European Biodiversity Strategy for 2030*¹⁴³ promoted by the European Union **places farmers at the centre of biodiversity conservation** (paragraph 2.2.2. *Bringing nature back to farmland*) affirming their key role in conservation and protection processes. An important point, reflecting the idea of integrated governance, is the connection of the *Strategy* with sustainable development goals. The strategy maintains that biodiversity enables farmers to provide us with safe, sustainable, nutritious and affordable food (SDG 2) while providing them with the income they need to thrive and develop (SDG 8), committing to proposing a **new governance framework** that would ensure the **co-responsibility and co-ownership of all stakeholders in meeting the EU's biodiversity commitments**. Therefore, the focus is on supporting administrative capacity building, transparency, stakeholder dialogue and participatory governance at different levels. **Progress will be assessed in 2023** to determine whether a legally binding approach to governance is needed.

The *Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society - known as the Faro Convention (2005)*¹⁴⁴ of the Council of Europe promotes an **integrated approach** to policies taking into account cultural, biological, geological and landscape diversity, fostering a sense of **shared responsibility** towards the places where people live and their cultural traditions, in a broad vision of heritage that considers the latter as a key driver for social cohesion, including through the definition of multilevel and multistakeholder “communities of heritage”. In 2014, the *Council of Europe Conclusions for the participatory governance of cultural heritage*¹⁴⁵ placed emphasis on a **locally rooted and people-centred approach to heritage**, stressing the importance of developing multilevel and multistakeholder governance frameworks that recognise heritage as a shared resource, strengthening the links between local, regional,

¹⁴³ [52020DC0380 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

¹⁴⁴ [CETS 199 - Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society](#)

¹⁴⁵ [Council Conclusions on Participatory Governance of Cultural Heritage](#)

national, European and international levels of governance, and recognising the need to strengthen collaboration with UNESCO.

*The report on the implementation of the SDGs in Europe, published in 2019,*¹⁴⁶ and specifically chapter 3.3., emphasises the key role of civil society in the implementation and achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals** and the importance of civil society involvement¹⁴⁷ in EU strategies related to the 2030 Agenda. In the same chapter, examples of good practices¹⁴⁸ and participation mechanisms in decision-making processes are given. Luxembourg, for example, within the renewed Interdepartmental Commission for Sustainable Development, has set up a working group composed of representatives of the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Development Cooperation, NGOs, the Council for Sustainable Development and the private sector, which is developing a co-design process for the revision of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development. **Co-design processes**, by their nature, represent an evolution of stakeholder participation mechanisms (based on consultation or advice) ensuring participation in the entire decision-making process.¹⁴⁹

As we reach the conclusion of this broad reference framework, the following highlights are provided:

- AFH results from **interactions between local cultures and the environment**, which manifest themselves in processes of constant adaptation, creativity, tradition and innovation;
- Participatory governance of AFH must take into account regulatory instruments in the areas of institutional and political action related to Culture, Environment, Sustainability and Participation in an **integrated and cross-sectoral vision**;
- The different areas of political and institutional action and their regulatory instruments must be interrelated, placing the Alpine communities' knowledge, skills, practices and values and their participation at the centre, through **contextualised, transformative and adaptive, and constantly evolving** multilevel organisational models.

The case of the *Living ICH* project deserves a final consideration. Indeed, the project made it possible to test an original multilevel and participative governance model, demonstrating the fundamental synergy between different actors involved, each in their own role, as part of a dialogue system that includes:

- The central role of communities and producers engaging in a process of awareness and identification of needs, for which a permanent working group needs to be established in each territory.
- The role of “competent bodies” at a regional and cantonal level, a fundamental community of inter-institutional cooperation and work.

¹⁴⁶ [Europe's approach to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: Good practices and the way forward \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁴⁷ Cit. page 38

¹⁴⁸ Cit. pages 43-44

¹⁴⁹ Cit.

- The key role of research in heritage preservation, including scientific and academic research (as in the case of research on cereal and buckwheat varieties in Valtellina) as well as “action-research” linked to participatory documentation of heritage, according to the ICH participatory inventory model. This should be systematically linked to governance processes for the drafting of safeguard measures – agenda of actions to be undertaken.
- The role of UNESCO ICH facilitators to guide, train, advise, structure and update, bringing tools, ideas and expertise from the Convention’s international construction site.
- The role of professionals, mediators and facilitators in participatory processes is fundamental to create listening and speaking opportunities, coordinate dialogues, build working groups that can drive cooperation in safeguarding processes aimed at building solid perspectives.
- The role of artists in translating the concepts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage into the universal languages of art.
- The role of local politicians and administrators, as every effort would be in vain without their participation and drive to “*support communities in their safeguarding endeavours*”.



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