Participatory Planning Methodology

for applicants calls for the allocation of additional funds for the implementation of projects in the Culture Programme

CLD01 Sustainable Restoration and Revitalization of Cultural Heritage – EEA FM 2021-2028.

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1. Introduction

Participatory planning is an approach to planning and decision-making in which all relevant actors – in particular residents, local communities, experts, municipalities, heritage managers, investors and other stakeholders – are actively involved from the initial stages of the process, not at the moment of approving the finished proposal.

It is a generally accepted standard of good practice that leads to better, more sustainable and socially accepted decisions. Experience from projects implemented through participatory planning, with an emphasis on transparency and inclusiveness, demonstrates a higher level of trust, project support and a reduction in conflicts between actors.

Participatory planning has traditionally been applied mainly in:

- spatial and urban planning,
- regional development;
- public policy-making;
- development and community projects,
- environmental and social planning.

In recent years, it has also been increasingly used **in the conservation and revival of publicly funded cultural sites.**[i1] For this reason, this methodology is offered as a practical guide for CLD01 applicants, especially in the pre-preparatory and preparatory phase of projects.

Participatory planning is an evaluated criterion for project quality within the call and is explicitly assessed as part of the assessment of relevance, design quality, project management and long-term sustainability.

The use of this methodology is not obligatory, the applicant may also use other methodological manuals or procedures, or use this methodology to the extent appropriate and appropriate to the specific project plan. For administrators of UNESCO World Heritage sites and for owners of a larger number of monuments (e.g. cities that are urban conservation areas, regions, churches), we recommend using a two-round system of participation, in which the selection of objects and priorities is selected in the first round (6.1) and in the second round (6.2) their functional use and sustainability. The reason for the two-round system is primarily to provide the necessary time allocation for the collection and study of the necessary documents (research, regulations, project documentation, spatial planning documentation, etc.) for a specific monument object, the selection of which is the result of the first round.

[1] We recommend that you be appropriately inspired by examples of good practice of participation in the conservation of monuments and public spaces of the City of Trnava and methodological materials of the Metropolitan Institute Bratislava ("Manual of Participatory Planning") or the civic association Punkt.

2.Benefits of participatory planning

The participatory approach brings mainly the following benefits, which are directly reflected in the evaluation criteria of the project:

- higher public acceptance of projects;
- reducing conflicts between actors;
- better taking into account local needs;
- increasing the transparency of decision-making;
- strengthening community ties;
- increasing the quality of the project design,
- supports the long-term sustainability of projects by linking to management plans, operational plans and maintenance plans.

3. Key principles of the participatory process

Transparency

The participatory process is carried out transparently so that all relevant actors have access to information, understand the decision-making process and have the opportunity to observe how their suggestions are incorporated into the project proposal.

Transparency objectives:

- ensure that all actors are informed;
- prevent misunderstandings and conflicts;
- strengthen the legitimacy of decisions;
- increase public confidence in the process.

Transparency measures:

(a) Availability of information:

- publication of all relevant documents (analyses, documents, outputs),
- access to information in an intelligible form (not just professional language);
- use of both "online" and "offline" channels.

b) Open communication:

- regular information on the progress of the process,
- a clear explanation of objectives, rules and expectations;
- communication also towards inactive groups.

(c) Statement of reasons for decisions:

- an explanation of how the complaints have been evaluated;
- an indication of the reasons for accepting or rejecting the proposals;
- linking the outputs of participation to final decisions.

Tools:

- project website / section on the city website,
- public presentations and reports,
- minutes of meetings,
- FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions).

Indicators:

- the number of published outputs,
- availability of information (online/offline);
- the level of understanding of the process by the participants (questionnaire);
- the number of feedback from the public.

The transparency of the process must be demonstrable through specific outputs (published documents, minutes, justifications of decisions) that are part of the project documentation. The process must be set up in such a way that it is auditable retrospectively (the so-called "audit trail"), i.e. that it is possible to clearly demonstrate how individual suggestions were taken into account in decision-making.

Inclusivity

Inclusivity means the active and targeted involvement of diverse groups of the population and relevant actors, including those who are not normally involved in public processes (the so-called "active outreach").[2]

Objectives of inclusivity:

- ensure the representativeness of inputs;
- engage different perspectives and experiences;
- prevent the dominance of narrow groups,

[2] We recommend that you be appropriately inspired by the materials of the Centre for Research of Ethnicity and Culture CVEK, e.g. Participation of vulnerable groups from the perspective of local governments and non-governmental organizations, How to do it? Engaging young people from diverse groups, CITY FOR YOUTH – Recommendations for the creation of strategies aimed at young people from diverse groups.

- promote social justice in decision-making.

Measures to ensure inclusiveness:

(a) Identification of target groups:

- active and demonstrable involvement of marginalised or less active groups (youth, women, minorities, vulnerable groups).[3]

b) Differentiated forms of connection:

- public meetings (open participation);
- focus groups,
- online tools (for a wider audience);
- individual interviews (specific groups).

(c) Removing barriers to participation:

- time availability (different dates and hybrid form),
- physical accessibility (barrier-free spaces),
- linguistic intelligibility (plain language);
- simple wiring formats.

(d) Balancing participation:

- facilitating discussion,
- control of the dominance of individuals,
- providing space for less active participants.

Tools:

- proportional representation of individual groups,
- Targeted invitations.

Indicators

- the number of groups involved;
- diversity of participants (age, profession, location);
- participation of vulnerable groups;
- equality of engagement in the discussion.

[3] If the monument is close to a marginalized community, the methodology should mention direct addressing through community workers, not just an invitation on the city's website.

Cyclicality

Cyclicality means that the participatory process is not a one-time activity, but a repetitive process that allows for continuous evaluation and improvement. The call emphasizes long-term management and a community approach. Cyclicality must be demonstrably linked to management plans, operational plans and maintenance plans, especially during the period of project implementation and its sustainability.

Cyclicality targets:

- ensure continuous improvement of the process,
- to respond to new findings;
- strengthen the involvement of actors over time;
- ensure the long-term sustainability of outputs.

Cycle phases:

1. Planning:

- defining goals,
- Process design
- preparation of tools.

2. Implementation:

- carrying out participatory activities,
- collection of suggestions,
- facilitating discussions.

3. Evaluation:

- analysis of outputs,
- identification of priorities;
- preparation of recommendations.

4. Feedback:

- communication of results to participants;
- explanation of decisions;
- collecting feedback on the process (e.g. questionnaire).

Measures to ensure cyclicality:

- regular evaluation of each phase;
- the possibility of process modifications during implementation,

- repeated involvement of participants;
- follow-up participatory activities (e.g. Round II).

4.Participatory process methodology

4.1 Planning

The planning phase is a key step in the participatory process, which creates a framework for its effective implementation. It aims to ensure a systematic, inclusive and transparent approach to the involvement of relevant actors.

Analysis of the territory and the problem

The applicant will perform a basic analysis of the area or object to be solved. The analysis must be linked to the project description in the project application. We recommend using all available relevant and trustworthy information sources.

The analysis includes:

- identification of the main problems and needs;
- evaluation of the current state (technical, functional, social),
- identification of development potential.

Output: an analytical basis that forms part of the project documentation and serves as a basis for assessing the relevance of the project[4].

Identification of relevant actors (stakeholder mapping):

- the choice between open and targeted participation;
- quotas (age, location, profession);
- the method of addressing (e.g. random selection, nominations).

The applicant shall identify all relevant groups of actors, in particular:

- residents and local communities;
- representatives of the local government,
- the professional public,

[4] In the case of SD UNESCO sites, it can be based on the Site Management Plan. Most of the monument areas have elaborated Principles for the Protection of the Monument Area, which can also provide some analytical information, information from various levels of the spatial planning documentation can be used to a reasonable extent.

- owners and managers of buildings,
- businesses and investors.

Includes:

- analysis of the impact and interest of individual actors;
- identification of key partners,
- a proposal for the method of their involvement.

Output: an overview of the actors, including their categorisation according to the degree of influence and interest, and a proposal for how to involve them in the participatory process. We recommend that this output be prepared in a structured form (e.g. a table or a matrix of influence and interest).

Participatory process design

Based on the analysis, the applicant proposes a specific participatory process that includes:

- selection of appropriate participation methods (e.g. workshop, public meeting, questionnaire);
- defining the goals of individual activities,
- Identifying target groups for each form of engagement.

The proposed participatory process must be explicitly and demonstrably linked to the individual parts of the project plan (selection of objects, functional use, operating model).

Preparation of tools and organization of the process

The applicant shall ensure:

- development of a timetable,
- preparation of a communication plan (channels, forms, frequency of communication),
- preparation of materials and tools (questionnaires, presentations, maps),
- identification and management of risks (e.g. low participation, conflicts between actors).

Output: a plan for the participatory process.

4.2 Implementation

The implementation phase represents the actual implementation of participatory activities. Its aim is to ensure quality collection of suggestions and active involvement of participants.

Organisation of participatory activities

The applicant implements activities according to the approved plan, in particular:

- public meetings;
- thematic workshops,
- focus groups,
- questionnaire surveys.

Each participatory activity should be documented to the extent that it can be retrospectively checked and verified as part of the project evaluation.

Facilitation and discussion

We recommend that activities be led by a qualified facilitator who:

- ensures a balanced course of discussion;
- encourages the involvement of all participants;
- keeps the discussion factual and constructive,
- it prevents the dominance of individuals or groups.

Participatory methods used

In particular, it is recommended to use:

- **focus groups** – for in-depth discussions with selected actors,
- **participatory mapping** – identification of problems and potential in the area,
- **"world café"** – facilitated discussions in smaller groups,
- **Public meetings** – open discussion with the community.

Data collection and processing

During the implementation, we systematically recommend:

- record the progress of discussions,
- collect suggestions (in writing, digitally, on maps),
- to carry out votes or prioritisation of proposals.

Conflict resolution

In the event of conflicts, it is necessary to:

- ensure neutral facilitation;
- create space for all parties to express themselves;
- steer the discussion towards consensus or compromise.

4.3 Evaluation

The evaluation phase ensures the processing of the outputs of the participatory process and their projection into decision-making.

Output processing

Applicant:

- analyses the suggestions obtained,
- sorts and categorizes proposals,
- identifies priorities and recurring topics and demonstrably links them to the solution proposal in the project.

Data collection must be carried out in a way that ensures their representativeness and adequate validity with regard to the nature of the project.

Ensuring transparency

It is necessary to ensure:

- public availability of outputs;
- a clear justification for the selection of proposals;
- Demonstrable and traceable link between the complaints and the final decisions, including the reasons for their adoption or non-acceptance.

Communication

Communication should take place at all stages of the process (before, during and after participatory activities) as systematic, planned and demonstrable.

We communicate the results of the participatory process:

- participants in the process,
- wider public.

The form of communication includes:

- public presentations;
- online publishing (city website, social networks..),
- reports and outputs (local media, physical bulletin boards...).

Digital tools:

- online questionnaire,
- interactive map,
- hybrid meetings.

Output documents

The output is mainly:

- **Final report of the participatory process**, which will help to evaluate selection criteria 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, which also includes a summary of proposals and recommendations and documentation of the course of activities.

Success indicators

The success of the process is evaluated according to, for example:

- the number of participants involved;
- the degree of representativeness;
- the satisfaction of the participants,
- the degree of incorporation of stimuli.

Risk management

Risk	Probability	Impact	Measure
low turnout	High	High	Strong communication, online/offline combination
Conflict of actors	Medium	High	Professional facilitator
Group dominance	Medium	Medium	Structured discussions

Risk management is an integral part of project management and must be adequately reflected in the project application.

5. Specificities for World Heritage Sites and Sites

Existence of management plans

World Heritage Sites have approved management plans that define a long-term vision for the protection, use and development of the area. These documents represent a binding strategic framework for all interventions, including the conservation and reuse of objects.

Impacts on the participatory process:

- participation cannot be "free", but must respect existing strategic objectives;
- the outcomes of participation must be **in accordance with the management plan**, not in conflict with it,
- The process must work with already existing data (analyses, regulations, priorities).

Practical measures:

- familiarization of participants with the content of the management plan (in a simplified form),
- inviting the responsible methodologist of the relevant regional monuments board,
- incorporating the objectives of the management plan into the facilitation of discussions,
- linking participation outputs to specific parts of the plan.

Link to the project:

The outcomes of participation serve as:

- updating or developing a management plan,
- entry into **the Management plan** required in the call.

The need to protect Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)

Each World Heritage Site is inscribed on the basis of the so-called Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), which must be preserved in all interventions.

Impacts on participation:

- not all proposals of the public are feasible in terms of the protection of monument values,
- we recommend facilitating participation with experts,
- Decision-making is limited by the protection of monument values.

Practical measures:

- explanation of the OUV to the participants (clearly, not in technical language),
- involvement of conservationists and experts in the process,
- Ongoing validation of designs for value protection.

Risk

- the conflict between the requirements of the community and the protection of the monument.

Link to the project

- ensures compliance with:
    - monument protection
    - financing conditions
- increases the credibility of the project in evaluation.

Collective decision-making

The management of World Heritage Sites is generally based on collective structures (e.g. boards of trustees, coordinating bodies, partnerships between institutions).

Impacts on participation:

- decisions are not in the hands of a single entity;
- participation must reflect multi-level governance,
- The outputs must be acceptable to multiple actors.

Practical measures:

- identification of decision-making bodies;
- the involvement of their representatives in the process;
- ongoing consultations on the outcomes of participation.

Link to the project:

- The outputs of participation are:
    - basis for decision-making;
    - approval processes.

It is important to clearly define who decides and what weight participation has.

Higher regulatory complexity

World Heritage Sites are subject to strict regulatory frameworks, which include:

- monument protection,
- land-use planning documentation,
- legislative requirements;
- international obligations.

Impacts on participation:

- proposals must be implementable within the framework of regulations;
- the process must be realistic (not just 'brainstorming');
- It is necessary to manage the expectations of participants.

Practical measures:

- communication of limits at the beginning of the process,
- involvement of experts (architect, conservationist, lawyer),
- Filtering proposals during participation.

Risk:

- frustration of the participants, if the proposals cannot be implemented , it is necessary to explain these reasons transparently.

Link to the project:

- increases the feasibility of the project,
- minimises the risk of rejection of the proposal in subsequent stages.

The participatory process must be set up in such a way that its outputs are in accordance with the requirements of the protection of monument values and at the same time usable in decision-making and approval processes. Failure to comply with the above specifics may lead to non-compliance of the project with the requirements of the protection of monument values and to a reduction in the evaluation of the project or its exclusion from further assessment.

6. Participatory process in two rounds

If the applicant is the administrator of a UNESCO World Heritage site or the owner of a larger number of monuments (e.g. a city – a conservation area), it is recommended to implement the participatory process in **two rounds**. The two-round participatory process represents the main mechanism for demonstrating participatory planning, co-design and involvement of actors within the project application.

Sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List (WHL):

- the existence of approved management plans,
- collective decision-making (site management board, coordination groups);
- increased demands to reconcile the protection of exceptional universal value with the development needs of the territory.

6.1 Round I of the Participatory Process – Selection of Objects and Priorities

The aim of the first round is to identify and prioritize objects suitable for support.

Output of the first round:

- a list of suitable sites, including national cultural monuments;
- A ranking of priorities
- A map of the problems.

1. Preparation (planning)

- Defining goals: identification of the needs of the area and preliminary selection of suitable monuments,
- Stakeholder mapping: identification of relevant groups. E.g.: residents (young people, seniors, families), local government, professionals (architects, conservationists), entrepreneurs, schools, cultural organisations, vulnerable groups (e.g. socially disadvantaged, minorities),
- Analysing the impact and interest of individual actors and, on this basis, adapting their degree and form of involvement,
- Choice of methods: choice of appropriate tools (public meetings, thematic workshops, focus groups, online tools).

2. Implementation

- Collection of information and suggestions through discussions and participatory meetings.
- Co-creation of proposals and formulation of priorities.

3. Evaluation

- Analysis of the obtained outputs, including documents for monuments and areas.
- Projection of results into the preparation of the project plan,

- Providing feedback to participants.

6.2 Round II of the participatory process – functional use and sustainability

The aim of the second round is to define the method of use of the selected objects and ensure their long-term sustainability. The proposal for functional use must be directly linked to the long-term sustainability of the building, including its operation, financing and program use.

Output of the second round:

- functional content of the monument (2-3 comparable realistic scenarios), a fixed amount can also be allocated to the participatory budget. This will serve as a mechanism for the regular involvement of local actors in the dramaturgy of the space (continuous participation).
- specification of the objectives of monument conservation,
- design of accompanying ("soft") activities,
- SWOT analysis,
- design of the operation of the building.

1. Preparation (planning)

- specification of the conservation goals, vision and identity of the monument.
- defining the site program and functions ensuring community use and sustainability,
- updating the circle of actors with regard to a specific object and project (we recommend the participation of the responsible methodologist of the Regional Monuments Board).

2. Implementation

- collection of relevant documents for selected objects (project documentation, monument and conservation research, decisions and binding opinions of the Regional Monuments Board, principles of monument area protection, spatial planning documentation),
- processing of SWOT analysis as a basis for the selection of the preferred scenario,
- a discussion on the balance between cultural, community and appropriate commercial activities;
- design of an integrated operating model, including personnel (project manager, technical administrator, program board).

When designing a functional use, it is recommended to discuss and take into account the following thematic areas (if relevant to the submitted project):

- technical and spatial limits of the building,

- the needs of local residents;
- compliance with spatial planning documentation,
- ecological principles (biodiversity, waste management, resource efficiency);
- transport and infrastructure connections,
- the degree of commercial use in accordance with the protection of monument values (limits and regulations by the Regional Monuments Board).

3. Evaluation

- summarizing and evaluating the outcomes of participation,
- incorporating the results into the final version of the project,
- preparation of a participatory project reflecting the needs of the city and its inhabitants,
- Feedback
- Documentation of the participatory process during the preparation, implementation and sustainability period.

7.Thematic areas in the design of functional use

Design of functional use

The design is created by co-design. Based on the participatory process, possible functions of objects are proposed, e.g.:

- cultural and community centres,
- educational spaces,
- tourist use,
- combined functions.

Usage scenarios

The applicant shall develop a number of use scenarios that take into account:

- the needs of the community,
- capacity possibilities of the building,

- feasibility.

Economic sustainability

The proposal includes a basic assessment of:

- operating costs;
- sources of funding;
- potential revenues.

Operating model

It is necessary to define:

- the method of managing the object,
- the involvement of the public, private or community sector;
- organizational provision of operation.

Community involvement

The community should be involved:

- in the proposal of use,
- in the implementation of activities,
- or to the operation of the building itself.

Output

The output is:

- design of the functional use of the building,
- the basic model of its operation and sustainability.

Link to decision-making:

- outputs are approved by: the city / board of directors or the project team,
- The applicant is obliged to demonstrably document the method of incorporating or not incorporating individual stimuli.

SMART indicators[5] (recommended):

- min. 60 participants,
- min. 4 groups of actors,
- satisfaction > 80%,
- min. 50% of designs incorporated.

The scope and selection of thematic areas must be proportionate to the nature of the project and must be justified in the project documentation.

8.Documentation of the participatory process

Recommended documentation of participation:

- attendance lists,
- photo documentation,
- outputs of workshops,
- questionnaires,
- minutes.

The documentation of the participatory process is a mandatory part of the project application and must be submitted to the extent that allows for verification of its quality and compliance with the requirements of the call.

9.Conclusion

Participation is not a complementary activity, but an integral and evaluated part of the project, the quality of which has a direct impact on the success of the project application.

A properly set up process leads to the efficient use of resources, an increase in the social value of projects and their long-term sustainability.

[5] These indicators are of a recommendatory nature and serve as an indicative framework for assessing the quality of the participatory process.

10.Evaluated outputs and indicators of participation

For the purposes of objective evaluation of the quality and success of the participatory process, the evaluator will focus mainly on the following indicators and indicators. These outputs are directly related to the selection criteria of the CLD01 call (in particular criterion 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d and 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d).

Category	**Indicator**	**Audit Trail**
Outreach	Number of participants involved (physical/online)	Attendance lists, logs from online voting
Inclusion	Number of representatives of vulnerable groups involved (e.g. youth, seniors, minorities)	Focus Group Enrollment / Inclusion Plan
Transparency	Public publication of outputs and suggestions	Link to the project website / City Archive
Impact	The degree of incorporation of relevant suggestions into the final proposal	Project documentation vs. Final report on participation
Co-decision	Amount allocated to the Participatory Budget (soft activities)	Project budget (item Cultural activities)
Sustainability	Establishment of a "Monument Council" with community representatives	Statute of the Council / Appointment decrees