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Workshop proceedings for the second public workshop

PUBLIC

*This project has received funding from the European
Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme
under grant agreement No 870954*



EC Grant Agreement number	GA n°870954	Lead beneficiary of this deliverable	IA
Start date of Project	1 January 2020	Due date of deliverable:	30/10/2021
Duration:	24 months	Actual submission date:	24/11/2021
			Version # R0.2

Project funded by the Program of the European Union for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020		
Type		
R	Document, report excluding the periodic and final reports	X
DEM	Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs	
DEC	Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos etc.	
OTHER	Software, technical diagram, etc.	
Dissemination level		
PU	PUBLIC, fully open, e.g. web	X
CO	CONFIDENTIAL, restricted under conditions set out in Model Grant Agreement	
CI	CLASSIFIED information as referred to the Commission Decision 2001/844/EC	

Revision History

R#	Date	Description / Reason of change	Author
RO.1	08/11/2021	First draft	Interarts
RO.2	24/11/2021	Final draft	Roma Tre

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BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The **SoPHIA Stakeholders' Workshop: Towards Policy Recommendations for Holistic Heritage Impact Assessment (SW)** was held in Dublin on September 23rd and 24th, 2021. It gathered over 50 participants, 32 onsite and 20 online: members of the Consortium and of the Advisory Board as well as stakeholders from the SoPHIA Social Platform. The SW was a closed event by invitation only.

The SW provided for an in-depth exchange leading to the finalization of the SoPHIA holistic heritage impact assessment model, and to the guidelines for future policies and programmes in Europe on this issue. The SoPHIA project has worked towards understanding, from a holistic approach, what the goals sought for heritage projects, funded by the EU, its Members States and sub-national authorities, might be to design a framework for balanced evaluations. Instead of prioritizing formal accountability, SoPHIA has taken a wider perspective in evaluation, encompassing outputs, results and outcomes related to cultural interventions, to provide for a more profound analysis of the desired, expected and non-expected impact(s) of interventions in cultural heritage (CH), their sustainability and resilience.

It also provided for input to the drafting of two of SoPHIA's final outputs for the CH sector: the *Guidelines for an action plan on the EU future action regarding operational programmes and public policies*, and *A future needs and research agenda*. The discussions were served by the results of the previous project phases¹ dedicated to an in-depth literature review, the drafting of a first model for holistic heritage impact assessment and its testing against case studies, but also by the series of *SoPHIA Policy Briefs* on:

- Transformational strategies for cultural heritage: resilience, sustainability and green management.
- Cultural heritage and social inclusion: the importance of citizen's participation.
- The relevance of data in cultural heritage impact assessment.
- Cultural heritage and education: new skills for heritage professional.

To feed into the guidelines and research agenda, the SW's working sessions tackled the following questions:

- Are the main challenges identified sufficient?
- Are there innovative research streams other than those suggested?
- Are there policy recommendations others than those suggested?

The present document summarizes the content addressed at the SW.

¹ Public deliverables can be accessed through the SoPHIA [website](#) *Archive* section.

1. SoPHIA MODEL² OVERVIEW

The core concepts that have framed the SoPHIA project are **sustainability** and **resilience**. Indeed, impact assessment is closely related to **heritage sustainability and resilience** as well as to sustainable development, considering its four dimensions: cultural, social, economic and environmental; it is also a two-way process because it deals with the sustainability of heritage but also with the impact of heritage on sustainable development. Moreover, SoPHIA HIAM presents potential connections with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework that should be enhanced in future implementation tasks.

SoPHIA HIAM is based on a three-axes conceptual framework. These axes are considered essential elements to a holistic approach:



Figure 1: The three axes of the SoPHIA model.

- I. **DOMAINS:** an inter-dimensional view that considers the positive and negative externalities that occur within and between the four domains of sustainable development, namely the social, cultural, economic and environmental. The domains focus on relevant issues.
- II. **PEOPLE:** multi-stakeholder perspective, that includes both the actors who promote the assessment and the stakeholders engaged in the assessment process, with their different positions towards an intervention. The people's perspective focuses on different needs.
- III. **TIME:** a longitudinal perspective, which considers the *ex ante*, *in itinere*, and *ex post* impact assessment. In each key moment specific assessment's objectives are leading the process and different people are involved. The time axis focuses on the link between project design and the impacts of intervention.

The SoPHIA holistic impact assessment model is structured in **6 themes** and **28 sub-themes**, as shown in the figure below: these have been identified from the initial research and

² The SoPHIA holistic heritage impact assessment model is available in the [website](#) Archive section.

consultations³ and correspond to relevant and persisting areas of interest albeit not efficiently addressed, or to elements newly identified because corresponding to contemporary issues. The impact dimensions for each of the sub-themes were validated against a check list to support the logical links between the sub-themes, their indicators and to list the positive and/or negative effects generated.

For all its sub-themes the SoPHIA model includes the description, quantitative indicators, guiding questions about people's perspectives on the quality of an intervention, and cross-cutting issues and counter-effects.

Stakeholders participating at the SW commented on the sophistication of the model; pointing that it illustrates very well the existing overlapping issues, both cross-cutting or counter-effects, and must be read as a concrete tool to support CH professionals and networks.

³ See *D1.1 Review of Research Literature, Policy Programmes and (good and bad) Practices*; *D1.2 Concise Essay mapping existing Gaps, Issues and Problems*; *D4.3 The Athens Virtual Workshop: Towards a Holistic Heritage Impact Assessment Model. Proceedings*, available in the [website](#) Archive section.

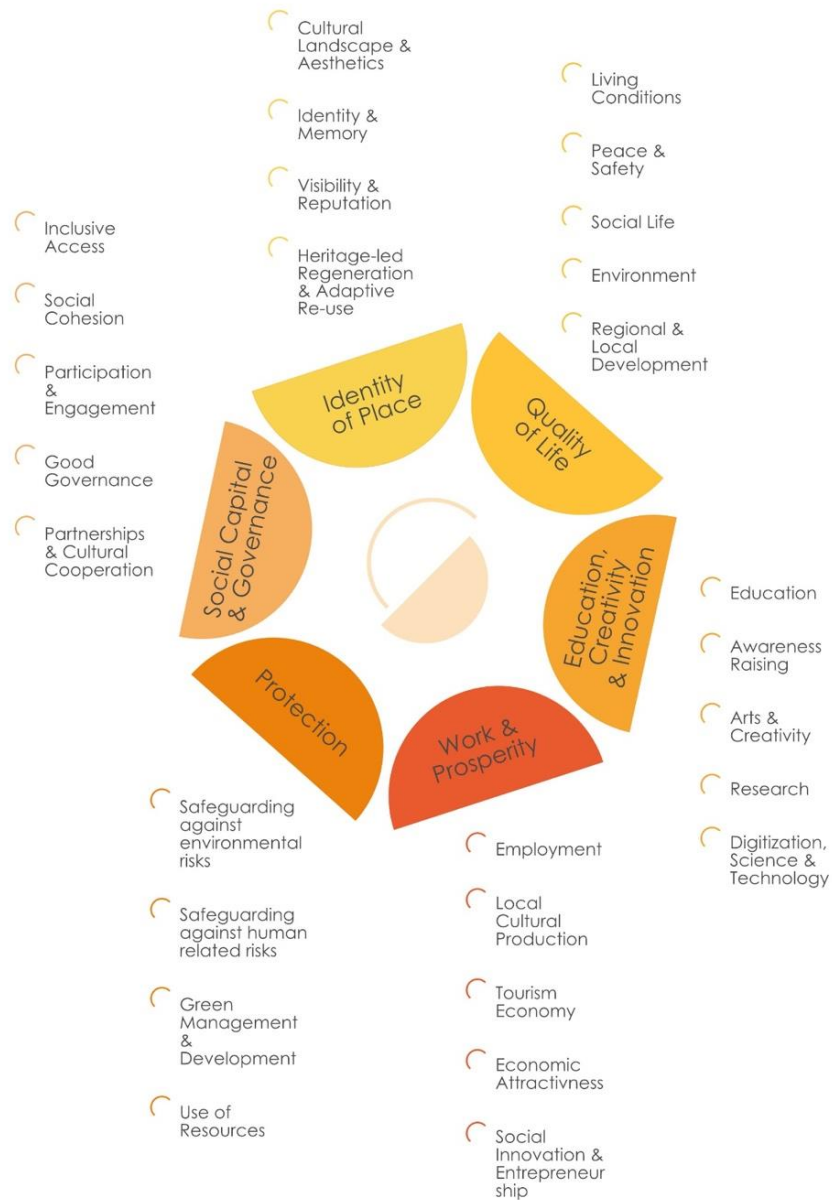


Figure 2: Themes and sub-themes of the SoPHIA multi-domain framework.

2. TOWARDS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Transformational Strategies for Cultural Heritage: Resilience, Sustainability and Green Management

The session explored **climate change** as an overall environmental issue that threatens civilization and, of course, CH as well. It is imperative that CH interventions consider strategies that incorporate sustainability, resilience and green management.

The 1972 *Stockholm Declaration and Action Plan*⁴ marks a turning point as they are the first international documents to express concerns about the impact of human activity on the environment. In the interest of future generations, the 1985 *Brundtland Report*⁵ emphasizes that *sustainable development* is the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Finally, the 2019 *European Green Deal*⁶ aims at achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 (55% by 2030), and an inclusive green transition where socio-economic impact is minimized.

The 1972 UNESCO *Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*⁷ put the focus on outstanding values as “work of humans and nature”, already creating the link between nature and CH for tangible heritage. The Council of Europe’s 2005 *Faro Convention*⁸ states the importance of participatory governance of CH, with the active involvement of citizens and civil society.

However, certain gaps have been detected:

- As regards environmental issues, **CH policies** are mostly limited to encouraging what might be defined as “symbolic” gestures. In this regard, it is of utmost importance that policy makers be made aware of the environmental implications of CH interventions and, conversely, of the impact that CH interventions might have on the environment.
- **CH and environment** must be considered, whenever possible, as closely interconnected. Indeed, fragmentation and narrow views undermine overall sustainability and resilience. Indeed, the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) model does not reflect broader environmental problems, and ignores critical non-quantitative issues, such as the sense of belonging, aesthetics and collective memory;

⁴ [The 1972 United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm](#) was the first world conference to make the environment a major issue.

⁵ *Our Common Future*, also known as the [Brundtland Report](#), was published in 1987 by the United Nations. The report sought to recapture the spirit of the Stockholm Conference and aimed to discuss the environment and development as one single issue.

⁶ The [European Green Deal](#) is a set of policy initiatives by the European Commission to overcome challenges derived from climate change and environmental degradation.

⁷ [UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972.](#)

⁸ Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, 2005, also known as the [Faro Convention](#).

consequently, it does not foster a sense of trust from local communities but even generates unintended, sometimes opposite results (e.g. loss of biodiversity, deforestation, negative effects on the replenishment of the water aquifers) nor does it enable for the design of new institutions and business models, in line with the approach of the New European Bauhaus⁹ which tackles heritage, industrial and environmental sustainability from a holistic perspective.

- **Lack of concrete CH targets** in environmental legislation does not enable for a holistic analysis. For instance, in the case of EU environmental legislation on air, water, and waste, the implementation success is being calculated in a quantitative manner.
- **CH issues are overshadowed by pressing environmental (or other local) issues**, with systematic climate/environmental red flags from pushing CH issues to a second level in particular at regional and local levels. Priority should be given to addressing the complexity of the situations from a policy perspective.
- **Unclear and fragmented responsibilities** lead to inconclusive results, with **lengthy processes** that render policies, and their targets, obsolete.

Against this background, the following key recommendations were debated:

- ✓ **Interrelation of CH and environment.** CH and the environment must be treated as elements of a single ecosystem, leading to more efficient, cost-saving and long-lasting policies that must approach both sectors.
- ✓ **Act locally: CH and environmental policies to hit home.** CH management must be improved by addressing strategies horizontally, while also leaving room for adaptation to the specific needs of each state/region. Local administrations should exercise their authority in drawing attention to endangered CH, acknowledging that environmental policies should be based on cultural commons, with communities being made aware of their responsibility.
- ✓ **Educate to safeguard.** Policies must aim at educating the wider public to understand the link between CH and climate change.
- ✓ **Track, monitor and evaluate.** Monitoring must be based on standardized and verifiable data, both qualitative and quantitative, to track progress made also in respect to existing policies. Approaches, such as the block chain approach, might be considered.
- ✓ **Recursive adjustment** of CH interventions by systematic revision of the assessment mechanisms to adjust them to specific environmental.
- ✓ **Allocate funding.** Dedicated funding must be allocated to ongoing environmental and CH research, policy making and implementation also through complementary ways, such as crowdfunding.

⁹ The [New European Bauhaus](#) is a creative and interdisciplinary initiative, convening a space of encounter to design future ways of living, situated at the crossroads between art, culture, social inclusion, science and technology. The initiative connects the European Green Deal to the living spaces of European citizens.

2.2 Cultural Heritage and Social Inclusion: the Importance of Citizens' Participation

This workshop addressed the need to place **citizens' participation** in CH as a tool to foster **social inclusion**. Citizens' participation is a controversial topic, closely related to issues of democratic public cultural policies, and directly related to concepts such as identity, access, diversity, cultural rights, environmental and social responsibility and **sustainable development**.

The debate emphasized the need to enhance citizen participation in decision-making processes regarding CH through a **bottom-up approach** and making use of **digital tools**. Research on inclusive CH practices must be carried out, identifying the hurdles that impede participation; this includes the need to make use of understandable and meaningful vocabulary, especially when addressing diverse social groups, with reference to cultural rights to address and include complex stories and legacies of heritage genesis.

Another core topic discussed related to the need for transversal policies with multi-stakeholder governance frameworks: CH is a shared and public resource; hence, all relevant actors should be involved in ensuring an overarching/holistic approach in the design of CH policies, through co-leadership but also peer-to-peer learning and exchange processes.

The following key recommendations were discussed:

- ✓ **Citizens' participation in decision-making processes on CH** must be ensured through targeted policy measures and guidelines that include **bottom-up initiatives**. These measures and guidelines must be designed also through participative processes.
- ✓ **Cultural rights to access CH**. Citizens and communities (particularly in suburban and rural parts of European countries) must be informed about their rights and participate in decision-making processes.
- ✓ **Meaningful and understandable vocabulary** must be used to ensure the active engagement of citizens and diverse social groups in CH management.
- ✓ **'In situ' learning programmes** must enable socio-cultural relationships and the expression of specific needs of local communities must be fostered and financially supported alongside **peer-to-peer learning** and **exchanges between heritage communities** promoting exchange of experiences of living in heritage-laden surroundings.
- ✓ **Transversal policy approaches**, including e.g. spatial planning and urban development, cultural policy, etc., must ensure the socio-cultural use of CH and **foster multi-stakeholder governance frameworks** that acknowledge **CH as a shared and public resource**.
- ✓ **Digital tools** must be used to ensure **wider access** to CH but also to **foster participatory governance practices** for all social groups.
- ✓ **Research in inclusive CH practices** through **innovative methodological frameworks** and on the impact of participatory approaches in CH must be ensured. Communities must

be involved in the generation of knowledge on socially, culturally, economically and environmentally responsible and responsive CH policies.

- ✓ **Evaluation and impact assessment of CH** must include the **social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions** of their context as well as specific data on CH, social inclusion and participation in cultural practices.

General comments pointed to the need to reflect on what should be changed and what should be protected: indeed, preserving CH is not always seen as necessary by society; in such cases, top-down approaches are necessary and need to involve both experts and citizens.

2.3 The Relevance of Data in Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment

This workshop addressed the scarcity of CH-related data. Two major problems must be addressed:

- At EU level, culture and specially CH statistics depend on **data collection mechanisms** that are not tailored to the needs.
- Culture and CH statistics produced by single EU Member States differ to a high degree and are **only partially comparable**.

A SWOT analysis served to understand the major problems identified:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and commitment of the EUROSTAT working group on culture statistics, and their network. • Ability to optimise the sources, crucial for advancing the data analysis in the field. • Investments in CH under the label of ERFD (European Recovery Development Fund) and other non-sectoral funding programmes. • The growing strategic link between urban renewal and recovery strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statistical perimeter of culture embraces a highly fragmented matter. • Shared definitions are difficult as a large part of the relevant phenomena are expression of cultural diversity. • Definitions and classifications have been last revised in 2009-2011.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery Plan for strengthening the links between CH interventions and a variety of policy goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-prioritisation of culture statistics, due to conflicting perceptions about the value and role of culture and CH among the Member States and the European Commission, and delicate balance between regional authorities and Member States. • Prevalence of economy-oriented approach. • Physical and political attacks to the tangible CH and cultural diversity.

The debate tackled the problem of data comparability and the interpretation of available data, underlining the need for an Open Data Watch mechanism also for the cultural sector to avoid misinterpretation and ensure correct explanations instead. The economic impact assessment of CH interventions is better understood and easier to measure than social and cultural results, that prioritize qualitative methods rather than quantitative. The fragmented nature of culture statistics makes it more difficult and more expensive to collect data, leading to a lack of interest by the Member States to provide funds for such efforts. It is essential to acknowledge that each dimension of sustainable development needs separate approaches and research projects.

The following key priorities were discussed:

- ✓ **EUROSTAT culture statistics** must be a priority area, with targeted data collection also as regards the **social, environmental, cultural, and economic impacts** of CH interventions, especially if funded by UE resources. To this end, the investigation of potential contribution of **surveys and databases** currently handled by EUROSTAT **and of experimental statistics** (e.g. Big Data) must be encouraged.
- ✓ **Administrative data on EU-funded projects addressing CH** must be collected and mainstreamed through a central Agency, possibly EUROSTAT, and include quality assessment.
- ✓ **2nd ESS-net on CH**. 10 years after the first ESS-net (European Statistical Systems net) Culture (2009-2011), a second round must be funded to establish the conceptual and methodological framework for investigating the social, cultural, environmental, and economic impacts of investments and projects addressing CH, possibly including intangible heritage.
- ✓ **A harmonized survey**, e.g. the Special Eurobarometer 466/2017, to assess the perception by EU residents on the impact of investments in CH must be carried out every 5 years.

- ✓ **Cooperation of CH data collection** among EU Member States must be encouraged and reinforced to ensure full exploitation of the potentialities of new sources, like administrative data and Big Data.
- ✓ **The EUROSTAT Statistical Training** Programme, but also other educational programmes, must offer courses in CH statistics, including impact assessment methods and techniques.

Although acknowledging that data is essential for CH impact assessment, SoPHIA should foster the need for complex narratives that, supported by data, can be used to convince policy makers.

2.4 Cultural Heritage and Education: New Skills for Heritage Professionals

This workshop tackled the issue of education and CH, stressing the fundamental role of culture and CH in education. It is not only about training CH professionals but also about raising the awareness of CH stakeholders as to educational potential of CH: democratic systems enable for CH-related goals but CH is also a tool for democracy.

The EU Treaty acknowledges the importance of CH also for educational purposes but, as regards culture, applies the principle of ‘subsidiarity’ with the EU playing a supporting role. Recently, the European Commission adopted the European Agenda for Culture, that prioritizes 1) culture for social cohesion and well-being, 2) culture-based creativity in education and innovation, and 3) international cultural relations. It has now launched the New European Bauhaus initiative that promotes the creation of living spaces by supporting 1) inclusive, accessible spaces that foster dialogue between diverse cultures, disciplines, genders and ages; and 2) sustainable solutions respecting the planet’s ecosystems. The European Skills Agenda aims at strengthening sustainable competitiveness, ensuring access for all to education, training and lifelong learning for everybody, and building resilience to react to crises making the most of green and digital skills.

To ensure that CH is included in education and training, a massive investment in skills such as networking, knowledge, guidance, and resources is needed to identify both core and transversal competencies, and to propose capacity building models and mechanisms for formal and non-formal education and training. Regarding formal and non-formal education in connection to culture, the *Porto Santo Charter*¹⁰ states that culture should be part of all curricula as well as cultural activities recognized as credit points in higher education.

¹⁰ The [Porto Santo Charter](#), ‘*From democratization to cultural democracy: rethinking institutions and practices*’, was launched in 2021 on the occasion of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Currently, there is also the need to reflect on the role of digital education and the 'phygital' concept, a combination of physical and digital, and to address the gap of terminology and vocabulary that does not allow for understanding across disciplines.

In conclusion, education should build cross-sectoral bridges and sustainable alliances but also, as in the Greek concept of '*paideia*' ('education'), function as an overarching concept which combines education, culture and civic responsibility to raise awareness on cultural issues and create spill-over effects.

The following key remarks were debated:

- ✓ **CH education and training** must be duly foreseen in policies as a structural element of the education of future **European citizens**.
- ✓ CH is related to **wellbeing** and human identity.
- ✓ CH is a **resource for sustainable development** and a rich but underrated and under-resourced social and economic good.
- ✓ CH is a tool for the construction of a **peaceful** and **democratic society**.
- ✓ New models of **bottom-up participation and democratic governance** must be encouraged.

3. TOWARDS GUIDELINES FOR AN EU ACTION PLAN AND A RESEARCH AGENDA

This session presented the framework for the final SoPHIA outputs: the *Guidelines for an action plan on the EU future action regarding operational programmes and public policies*, and *A future needs and research agenda*.

The *European Green Deal* (2021-2027) considers 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development' as elements of EU policymaking. In this context, CH evaluation must address from a holistic approach, the four dimensions of development, namely economic, environmental, social and cultural, considering the following:

- **Economic:** explain but also sustain the effects of investments after an intervention is over.
- **Environmental:** consider the environmental pressures on heritage derived from natural and social activities as well as the contribution of heritage to solving environmental problems.
- **Social:** support the idea that heritage is a unifying force to achieve greater levels of social inclusion and well-being.
- **Cultural:** emphasize the relevance of CH for identity, in its multiple variants as a European value.

How to ensure heritage sustainability and assess its impacts remains a difficult question to answer because universal indicators and all-encompassing model for heritage impact assessment are still not available. The SoPHIA guidelines for policies and programmes, and the SoPHIA research agenda should investigate how to improve public policies for CH that support

high quality interventions and look for **sustainable** results, through serious **planning** and with **long-lasting impact** both on heritage sustainability and on regional development.

On the basis of the above, the debate addressed the following questions:

1. Are the identified policy issues the most crucial ones for solving problems and enhancing opportunities for CH? Is there anything missing?;
2. Can they be part of EU policies and programmes?;
3. What quality standards should Europe take into account and require in future interventions?;
4. What innovative research needs related to heritage are detected and should be part of the EU agenda?.

The main general conclusion of the debate was that, although complex, the SoPHIA impact assessment model has a unique holistic approach , including the aspect of time. As regards participation and participatory processes to engage a representative spectrum of society in CH decisions, it was said that it is key to make people feel that they have a role to play as regards CH preservation and use and that they must understand the role that CH plays in sustainable development. In this respect, non-formal education can serve as an effective tool to involve the wider public and networking methods can serve to empower communities. The main recommendations put forward, for inclusion in the final SoPHIA outputs, are summarised in the table below:

OBSTACLES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Inability to see local benefit from achieving SDGs	Participatory approach
Other urgent priorities	Long-term planning
Related to political preference	De-politization of CH
No legal means for local communities to influence the SDGs	Participatory approach
Lack of funds	Financial support to programmes fostering CH sustainability and impact assessment
Low social capital	Support to capacity building
Low readiness among officials to implement effective participatory measures	Participatory approach as a must in public policies
Unconsolidated regulations/policies (heritage, spatial and environmental planning)	Integrated governance

The SoPHIA project enters its final leg, with the Dublin Workshop leading to the Final Conference where the final results of the project will be presented to the wider community of stakeholders with the aim of raising their awareness on the potential of the SoPHIA impact assessment model for CH interventions but also to present and discuss the proposals to put forward in terms of policy, operational and research recommendations for future work and action.

Annex I: Workshop Agenda



SoPHIA Stakeholder Workshop Towards Policy Recommendations for Holistic Heritage Impact Assessment

Dublin (hybrid event), September 23-24, 2021

- Workshop Agenda -

Thursday, September 23 rd 2021 Location: Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire	
9:00 – 9:15	Welcome & Introduction to the SoPHIA project
Open to virtual participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraic Mc Quaid, Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT) • Michela Marchiori, Coordinator of SoPHIA, Roma Tre University
09:15 – 10:15	Plenary Session - SoPHIA Model and discussion papers
Open to virtual participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SoPHIA Model overview, Aron Weigl and Angela Wieser, EDUCULT • Feedback from stakeholders on SoPHIA Model • Short Introduction to the purpose of the workshop, Aleksandra Uzelac, Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO) • Workshop format and organisational details, Paraic Mc Quaid, IADT
10:15 – 11:15	Workshop 1, Towards Policy Recommendations – Transformational Strategies for Cultural Heritage: resilience, sustainability and green management

Open to virtual participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated by Nicholas Anastasopoulos, National Technical University of Athens (NTUA)
11:15 – 11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 – 12:30	Workshop 2, Towards Policy Recommendations – Cultural Heritage and Social Inclusion: the importance of citizen’s participation
Open to virtual participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated by Ana Žuvela, IRMO
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:30	Workshop 3, Towards Policy Recommendations – The relevance of data in cultural heritage impact assessment
Open to virtual participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated by Lucia Marchegiani, Roma Tre University
14:30 – 14:45	Coffee Break
14:45 – 15:45	Workshop 4, Towards Policy Recommendations – Cultural Heritage and Education: new skills for heritage professionals
Open to virtual participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated by Elia Vlachou, European Museums Academy (EMA)
15:45 – 16:30	Closing session
Open to virtual participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notetakers from each workshop session will give a brief summary (10min) of the main findings for each workshop Open discussion Closing remarks
19:00	<i>Dinner in the Royal Yacht Club</i>
Friday, September 24th 2021 Location: Ins8tute of Art Design and Technology (IADT), Dun Laoghaire	
9:45 – 10:00	Welcome
Open to virtual participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paraic Mc Quaid, IADT Michela Marchiori, Roma Tre University Aleksandra Uzelac, IRMO
10:00 – 11:30	Brainstorming Session, Towards Guidelines for an action plan on the EU future action regarding operational programmes and public policies

Open to virtual participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated by Aleksandra Uzelac, IRMO
11:30 – 12:00	Closing session
Open to virtual participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paraic Mc Quaid, IADT Michela Marchiori, Roma Tre University Aleksandra Uzelac, IRMO
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 14:30	<i>Consortium Meeting</i>
14:30 – 15:00	<i>(Bus to City Centre from IADT/Hotel)</i>
15:30 – 17:00	<i>Temple Bar Walking Tour (bring an umbrella, and walking shoes)</i>
17:20	<i>Whiskey Distillery Tour</i>