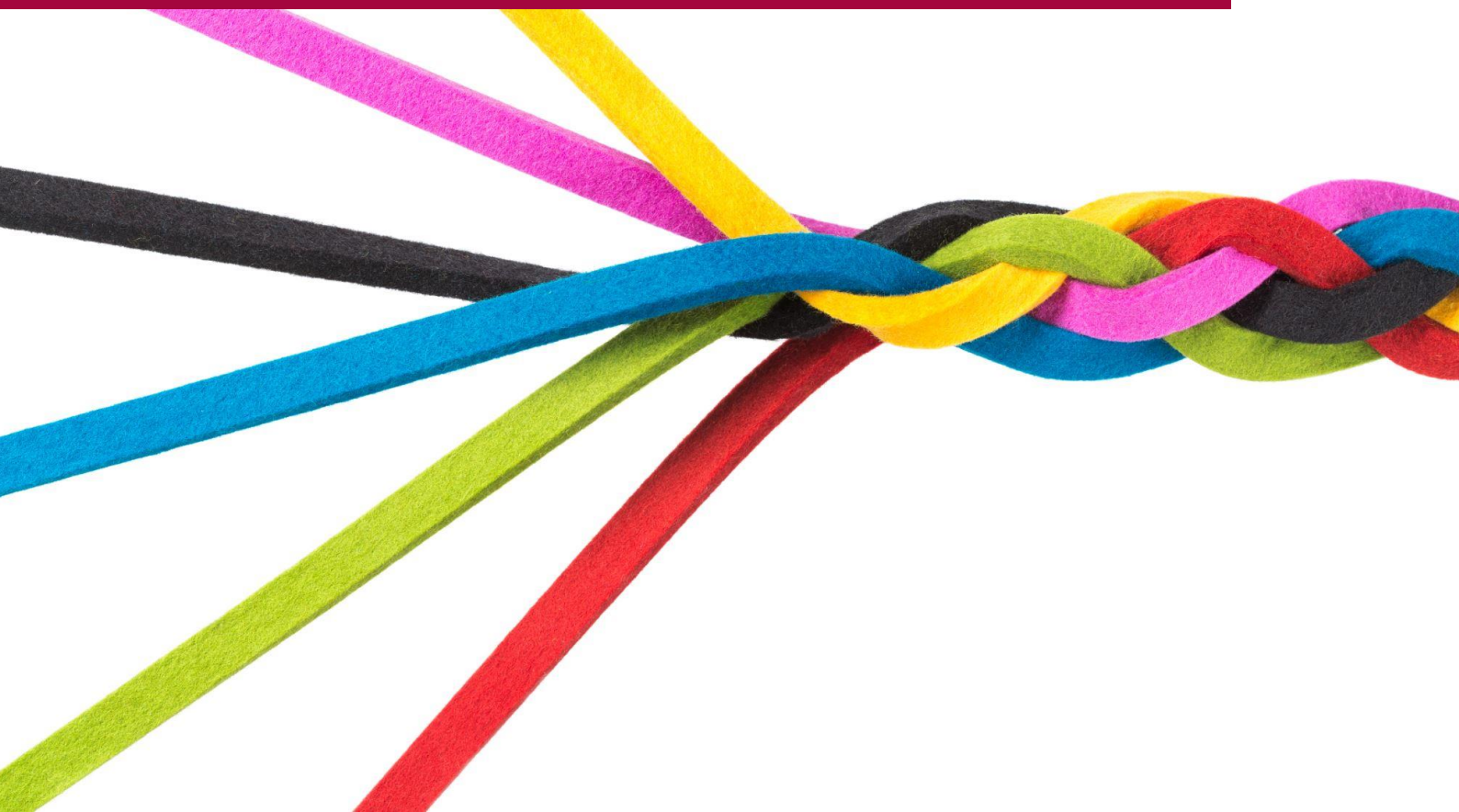


“L.I.N.K.E.D.”

Guiding principles for an
integrated approach to
culture, nature and landscape
management



Our planet has entered the Anthropocene Epoch, with human activity as the main cause of the substantial changes in living conditions on Earth. Human activity has led to accelerating changes in climate, loss of biodiversity and extinction of species as well as growing inequalities. These adverse developments affect the very life on Earth and have a profound global impact on the enjoyment of human rights, as well as on democracy, economy, health and well-being.

Human activity is mainly driven by economic and societal factors. It is also largely shaped by existing natural resources and prevailing cultural values. Throughout the twentieth century, nature and biodiversity have to a large extent been understood as objects with apparent values for human utilisation. The intrinsic limits of natural resources are appearing more and more clearly, as effectively illustrated by definitive biodiversity losses and irreversible nature degradation. However, the role of cultural values (such as aesthetic, social, symbolic, spiritual and educational) in the way nature and landscape is perceived and valued by society is crucial, showing that the prevailing dualism between culture and nature has in fact detrimental effects.

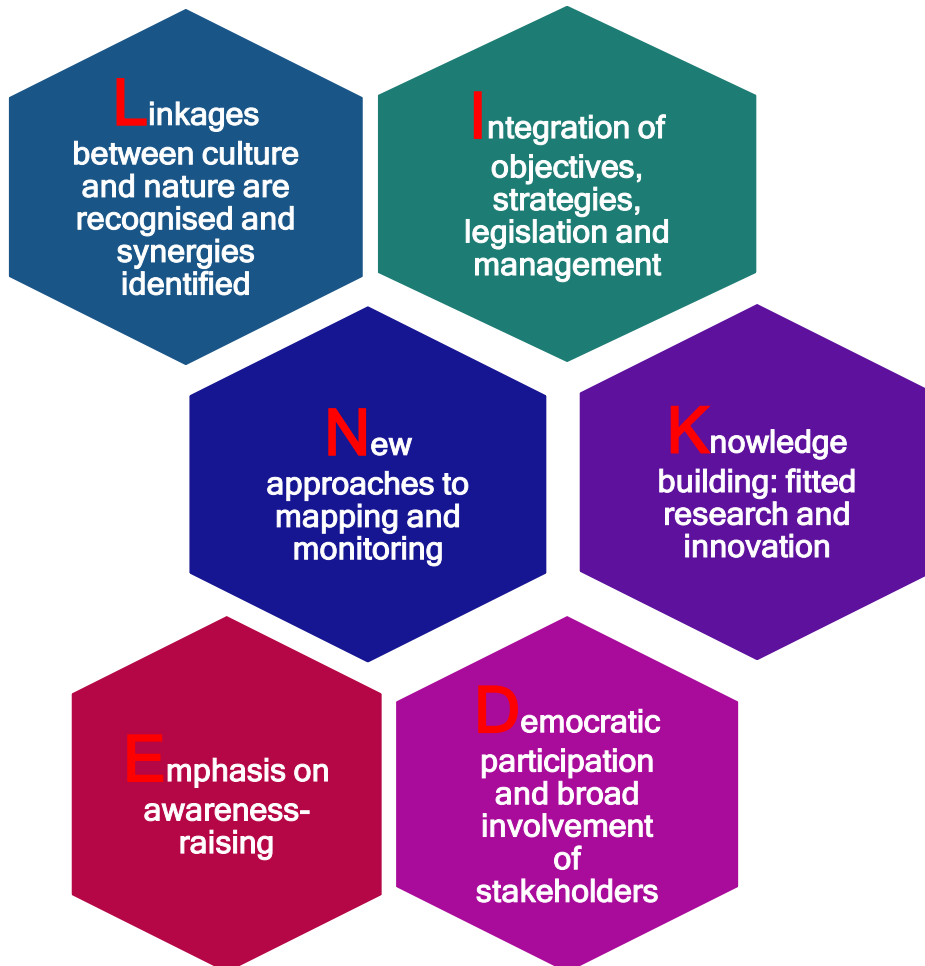
During the last few decades there has been a growing understanding of the inseparable links between culture and nature and how these linkages play a crucial role in sustainable development and ultimately to human well-being. The Council of Europe Landscape Convention is an example of this conception, addressing major challenges in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, with a view to fostering sustainable development.

New and more effectively coordinated approaches encompassing both culture and nature, defined as physical assets and intangible culture, are urgently required. This includes the need for a profound culture change to trigger the transformation towards more sustainable lifestyles. Derived from the Council of Europe's human rights and participatory approach, its various Conventions¹ as well as relevant visions, strategies, reflections and recommendations², the "L.I.N.K.E.D" - Guiding principles for an integrated approach to culture, nature and landscape management aims to offer member States pointers for a holistic approach in policymaking, management, research and practice with an emphasis on integrating environmental awareness and justice.

¹ European Cultural Convention (Paris, 19.12.1954); Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 19.9.1979); Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 3.10.1985); European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta 16.1.1992); Council of Europe Landscape Convention (Florence, 20.10.2000); Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro, 27.10.2005); Council of Europe Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property (Nicosia, 19.5.2017).

² The Declaration on cultural diversity (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 December 2000 at the 733rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies); Vision for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030; Landscape dimensions - Reflections and proposals for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention; European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century; Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2021\)9](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States for the implementation of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention - Landscape and responsibility of stakeholders for sustainable and harmonious development; Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)15](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the role of culture, cultural heritage and landscape in helping to address global challenges.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Linkages between culture and nature are recognised and synergies identified

- ✚ Policy domains, notably culture and nature, have traditionally been established separately, which can lead to adverse fragmentation and the possibilities of synergies being missed.
- ✚ Instead of this long-standing culture-nature division, there is a need for a more holistic view of the relationship between cultural phenomena and the natural environment in order to create new ways of combining measures to better protect and expand cultural, natural and landscape diversity, which is so vital for sustainable development and well-being.

Integration of objectives, strategies, legislation and management

- ✚ Objectives, strategies and legislation concerning culture, cultural and natural resources and landscape have generally been established separately.
- ✚ An integrated culture, nature and landscape management model will benefit from better co-ordination and synergetic effects for the benefit and quality of life of all citizens.

New approaches to mapping and monitoring

- ✚ Cultural and natural resources have usually been mapped and monitored separately. Data have also been kept in separate inventories.
- ✚ Technological advancement paves the way for new and more efficient ways of mapping and monitoring with a holistic approach as well as the co-ordination of separate inventories and data sets.

Knowledge building: fitted research and innovation

- ✚ Research and innovation have traditionally been organised within the different domains according to sector-specific needs.
- ✚ Interdisciplinary and cross-cutting research and innovation are key to pursuing new perspectives, identifying challenges and bottlenecks and to pointing out new and innovative integrated solutions.

Emphasis on awareness-raising

- ✚ The global challenges require new sustainable solutions for a just transition and a change of mindset and action, where the interlinkages and interdependencies between people, culture and nature are brought into the spotlight.
- ✚ Culture has the transformative power to incite reflective change in all domains.

Democratic participation and broad involvement of stakeholders

- ✚ Citizen participation is part of the democratic process and enables people to enjoy culture, cultural and natural heritage and landscape while acknowledging their individual and collective responsibility for them.
- ✚ Cross-cutting dialogue, co-operation and participatory processes give citizens the possibility to take part in decision-making and to incite change.

SOME HINTS ON HOW TO PROCEED ...

The following proposals suggest possible ways to align existing practices with the previously defined more integrative approach, taking into account both the diverse specific national contexts and the non-binding character of the guidelines.

Linkages between culture and nature are recognised and synergies identified

- ✦ Emphasise the connections between the cultural, natural and landscape resources to justify an interdisciplinary approach to decisions reconciling cultural, societal and environmental objectives at the landscape scale.
- ✦ Before any decision-taking in one domain, consider the importance of its potential spill over effects (either positive or negative) on the other domains that will influence the resulting ecosystems for society.
- ✦ Identify and take into account natural diversity, cultural heritage and landscape quality whenever considering the spatial planning of a given area.

Integration of objectives, strategies, legislation and management

- ✦ Establish integrated goals and objectives for culture, nature and landscape in strategies and policy documents, and develop integrated management plans through a co-ordination mechanism.
- ✦ Amend existing legislation on cultural and natural heritage and landscape to establish measures that foster an integrated approach or even establish new integrated legislation.
- ✦ Emphasise the role of culture, nature and landscape interlinkages in green growth and circular economy perspectives, by including them in climate adaptation and action plans.

New approaches to mapping and monitoring

- ✦ Map and assess land cover and land use in an integrated, long-term perspective, with special regard for cultural and natural heritage and landscape.
- ✦ Include both cultural and natural heritage and landscape when designing land monitoring programmes.
- ✦ Establish data systems or infrastructures that make relevant data and knowledge about cultural and natural heritage and landscape from separate inventories easily accessible in an integrated manner.

Knowledge building: fitted research and innovation

- ✦ Encourage research that generates new knowledge and data on the interdependencies and interactions between people, culture, nature and landscape, as well as new management strategies.
- ✦ Promote the innovative use of emerging technologies for an integrated approach (e.g., AI, environmental science, CCI, use of satellite surveillance (Copernicus), networking analysis, social media analysis).
- ✦ Support citizen science initiatives, lifelong learning and encourage a holistic approach.

Emphasis on awareness raising

- ✦ Encourage initiatives that raise awareness of the role of all the elements of the environment, and their interdependencies, for sustainable development.
- ✦ Promote and include the use of traditional and indigenous knowledge to explore and exploit the potential of a holistic and integrated approach.
- ✦ Encourage all stakeholders involved (decision makers, experts, the general public, etc.) to think beyond the conservation of individual species, objects, places and practices, and to pay more attention to the values that arise from the connections and interdependencies between them to improve perception, conservation and management practices.

Democratic participation and broad involvement of stakeholders

- ✦ Establish an arena for co-operation and dialogue between all public authorities and all other relevant parties involved in the management of the environment and develop integrated approaches for democratic participation.
- ✦ Develop incentives to initiate cross-cutting dialogue and to build partnerships between the public sector and relevant NGOs, cross-cutting cooperation between NGOs and broadening citizen participation.
- ✦ Establish co-operation around practical work: (such as restoration, clearing of invasive species, haying of species-rich meadows, and other tasks) where landowners, public authorities from relevant sectors, NGOs and private initiatives can meet and be hands-on.

DEFINITIONS RETAINED

For these guidelines, the following shall be considered as the definitions of key terms:

Culture

[Definition taken from the UNESCO Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, World Conference on Cultural Policies, Mexico City, 1982]

In its widest sense, culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

Landscape

[Definition taken from the Council of Europe Landscape Convention (Florence, 20.10.2000) Article 1 (a)]

An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

Environment

[Definition taken from the Council of Europe Convention on Civil Liability for Damage resulting from Activities Dangerous to the Environment (Lugano, 21.6.1993), Article 2 (10)]

It includes:

- natural resources both abiotic and biotic, such as air, water, soil, fauna and flora and the interaction between the same factors;
- property which forms part of the cultural heritage; and
- the characteristic aspects of the landscape.

Natural heritage

[Definition taken from the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 16 November 1972) Article 2]

Refers to natural features, geological and physiographical formations and delineated areas that constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants and natural sites of value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

Cultural heritage

[Definition taken from the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro, 27.10.2005), Article 2 (a)]

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.

Nature

Apparently, no commonly accepted definition appears in any international treaty. For the sake of completeness and as suggested in a factsheet of the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat³, we propose the following definition:

Nature: all life on Earth (i.e. biodiversity), together with the geology, water, climate and all other inanimate components that comprise our planet.

³ [difference-biodiversity-nature.pdf \(cbd.int\)](https://www.cbd.int/difference-biodiversity-nature.pdf)



Afterword:
 AN ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE*
 Rodney Harrison (Professor of Heritage
 Studies, University College London)

To many, the idea that nature and culture are distinct from one another and could be managed and sustained without reference to the interconnections between them would be a strange one. Indeed, such a perspective is now generally perceived to be an artefact of a world view based on notions of human exceptionalism to justify exploitative and extractive relations between humans and their environments and frequently resulted in hierarchical, unequal and exploitative relations between different groups of people, who were perceived to be culturally and racially different from one another. Throughout the twentieth century, such views led to an increasingly siloed set of professional fields developed to manage a range of natural and cultural 'resources' - understood very much through the lens of their apparent values for human utilisation - and in doing so, in many cases have exacerbated processes of environmental and cultural degradation.

Today, we live with the legacies of these developments, which in practice mean a fragmented system of international and national policies, laws and professional practices in which attempts to preserve one specific form of heritage may in fact hinder or at best trouble attempts to preserve another. In light of the significant global and regional challenges affecting the environment and the driving forces affecting both cultural and natural heritage, including climate change, land use, urbanisation, and demographic changes, new and more effectively coordinated policies to manage and conserve landscapes - understood holistically as encompassing both nature and culture and the inter-relations between them - are urgently required.

The problems arising from a fragmented approach to the conservation and management of culture and nature are familiar to many of the global majority, including many of the world's Indigenous peoples, who have long called into question such practices. For example, questions of the intersection of cultural heritage with environmental health are more keenly felt, when one perceives the land itself to be a part of one's identity, and the plants, animals and natural forces to be one's kin. Similarly, we know that climate change impacts the world's most disadvantaged peoples most disproportionately, highlighting the important connections between environmental and social justice.

A number of international non-governmental organisations have also recently drawn attention to these problems. For example, parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) noted in 2009 the need for closer integration of work on biological and cultural diversity conservation, leading to the development of a UNESCO - CBD Joint Programme between biological and cultural diversity, which culminated in their 2014 Florence Declaration on the links between biological and cultural diversity. Also, the World Heritage Leadership (WHL) programme is a partnership between ICCROM, IUCN, and the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and the Environment, in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, which aims to draw attention to the links between nature and culture and help to improve conservation and management practices for both.

Despite this, the precise mechanisms by which the interdependencies and interactions between people, culture and nature might be effectively protected and managed have not been well articulated. The inter-relationship between human rights and the environment have been particularly highlighted as a strategic priority for the Council of Europe. Loss of biodiversity, climate change, extinction of species, pollution and the overall degradation of the Earth's ecosystems have a profound global impact on the enjoyment of human rights and require the widest possible cooperation efforts, world-wide.

As Europe's leading human rights organisation, the Council of Europe is uniquely placed to provide guidance on these issues. It is only through taking an integrated/holistic and cross-sectoral approach based on an understanding of natural diversity, cultural environment and climate as inter-related and understood in context that we will be able to address the crises which equally threaten the cultural and natural environment.

It is now widely acknowledged and understood that humans have modified the climate and environment to such a significant extent that it is no longer possible to assume that the geology, ecology and climate of the planet will remain in a stable state, even over the scale of individual human lifetimes. This suggests that we must accept some degree of environmental and physical change as inevitable - including the loss of some cultural and natural resources. Heritage management has conventionally pitched itself against such changes through active processes of conservation, but a focus on landscapes and integrated understandings of cultural and natural values holds much potential for refocussing heritage management efforts towards working productively with, rather than against, inevitable change. New management concepts such as 'adaptive release', defined as 'reflecting an active decision to accommodate and interpret the dynamic transformation of a heritage asset and its associated values and significance, with reference to wider landscape settings' (DeSilvey et al 2021)¹ and drawing on the work of the Heritage Futures research programme (Harrison et al 2020)² are particularly relevant here. Equally, such approaches suggest the need to think beyond the conservation of individual species, objects, places and practices, to focus instead on the values that arise from the connections and interdependencies between them.

Based on the Council of Europe's human rights and participatory approach, and its Conventions in the field of culture, nature and landscape, the "L.I.N.K.E.D." document introduces a number of relevant actions and tools that can be used at national, regional or local level, as appropriate, to strengthen the inseparable links between people, culture and nature. These suggest a holistic approach in policymaking, management, research and practice with an emphasis on integrating environmental awareness and justice and addressing social and economic inequalities. In light of the fact that the cultural and natural environment are to a large extent managed by the same measures and instruments, the aim of the guidelines is to highlight new ways of combining and/or integrating these measures to better protect and expand cultural, natural and landscape diversity, which is vital for sustainable development and the well-being of our planet.

* The opinions expressed in this Afterword are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

¹ Caitlin DeSilvey, Harald Fredheim, Hannah Fluck, Rosemary Hails, Rodney Harrison, Ingrid Samuel & Amber Blundell (2021) *When Loss is More: From Managed Decline to Adaptive Release, The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice*, 12:3-4, 418-433, DOI: 10.1080/17567505.2021.1957263

² Rodney Harrison, Caitlin DeSilvey, Cornelius Holtorf, Sharon Macdonald, Nadia Bartolini, Esther Breithoff, Harald Fredheim, Antony Lyons, Sarah May, Jennie Morgan, and Sefryn Penrose (2020) *Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices*. London: UCL Press