



ICOMOS

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## GENERAL GUIDANCE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR HISTORIC CITIES IN “IBEROAMERICA” (Latin American countries, Portugal and Spain)<sup>1</sup>

### 0. Preamble

Management plans for historic cities are the main city-planning tool promoting and coordinating the different actions aimed at the protection, preservation and proper use of urban heritage properties. They guarantee the authenticity and integrity of the outstanding universal value expressed in the dossiers for their inclusion on the World Heritage List and, at the same time, they facilitate the improvement of the quality of life for the cities' inhabitants and the harmonious evolution of the location while ensuring the enjoyment and revaluation of their legacy for present generations and their transmission in optimal condition for future generations.

These guidelines have been particularly drafted for Iberian and Latin-American cities included on the said UNESCO list, although this model may also be useful for other historic cities, whether declared world heritage sites or not, and even for those attributes of WH cities not considered in the recognition of their Outstanding Universal Values but imbued with other values of importance for the city.

### 1. Character of a management plan

- 1.1 to bear in mind that the contents and the actions foreseen in the Management Plan must be not only legal and compliant with regulations, but also, and above all, morally acceptable.
- 1.2 to remember the institutional commitments and recognitions undertaken for the preservation of the city's values; from those related to the UNESCO's World Heritage Convention, if any, to the formal declarations of national, regional or local cultural assets. In any case, the provisions related to the application of the Convention must prevail over those of any other legal or regulatory texts.
- 1.3 to be participatory, reached by consensus, inter-disciplinary and co-ordinated among all the political, technical and social players involved (public administrations, corporate institutions and citizen groups) in order to ensure their continuity and sustainable development.
- 1.4 to be an open, flexible, non-linear instrument, without closed goals and rigid methods, but a formula for adaptability to the city's process of evolution, but without renouncing the basic principle of their *raison d'être* namely to protect and maintain the tangible and intangible heritage values through the oversight of the urban processes that may alter them.
- 1.5 to understand the city as a whole in order to establish the role of the old town in the rest of the city and to define the short-, medium- and long-term goals, as well as the strategies and resources necessary for the preservation, safekeeping and enjoyment of protected heritage values.

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines have been drawn up following, among other documents, the Practical Guidelines for the application of the World Heritage Convention and the philosophy in *The La Valetta principles* (ICOMOS, 2011).

- 1.6 to consider the city's authenticity not only in terms of tangible but also intangible aspects; particularly with regard to lifestyles (festivities, traditions, ...), dealing not only with testimonial aspects but also ethical and social considerations.
- 1.7 in the case of cities in the Latin-American region, to bear in mind the specific characteristics of the cities and other urban groupings derived from the varying geographic and climatic context, as well as their historical evolution, expressed as differences in type, function and scale, therefore with repercussions on the general approaches in the specific management strategies.

## **2. Goals of a management plan**

- 2.1 to recognize clearly the tangible and intangible heritage values to be safeguarded as well as all the tools necessary for their comprehensive protection.
- 2.2 to adapt the aspects contained in the different policies being co-ordinated (for example: legislation, development, tourism, culture, environment) to the philosophy of the plan itself, identifying and correcting any potential contradictions for the better preservation of the property.
- 2.3 to establish a *management body* to facilitate the channels for institutional co-operation and administrative and technical co-ordination, as well as the performance of all actions necessary to carry out the aims of the Management Plan with a scientific approach, rigour, diligence and efficacy.
- 2.4 to procure the development and sustainable use of the old town so as to guarantee its preservation and the quality of life of its inhabitants, contribute to the city's economic success, to its ecology and its social and cultural vitality.
- 2.5 to ensure the social variety of the residents in the old town, attracting and incorporating at a gradual pace new populations of different social and economic levels so as to ensure the future continuity of the city's social wealth.
- 2.6 to identify the possible threats or risks of both natural origin and also provoked dangers that may negatively impact the protected property and to define the strategies and resources for the preventive surveillance, monitoring, oversight and correction of the different agents and actions that may arise.
- 2.7 to identify, oversee and correct those other threats that, albeit less impactful as any individual moment than the foregoing, are those most habitually altering the city's character and other values (voluntary or compulsory displacement of the original population, over-occupancy, the pressure of tourism, property speculation, etc.). All these threats must have specific plans in place for moments of crisis and real impacts.
- 2.8 to guarantee the suitability and quality of the architectural and development interventions and to ensure that these and any permitted uses are compatible with the preservation of the values, among others, for which the property was declared part of world heritage, as well as the promotion of the quality of life of the residents and users of the old town.
- 2.9 to monitor that the public spaces and amenities are treated as fundamental elements of the city; for this purpose, special attention will be paid to the drivers of urban balance, social inter-relations and the improvement of the scenarios; and also as a driver for private initiatives facilitating social inclusion.
- 2.10 to guarantee and improve the city's capacity to welcome tourists, making this activity sustainable and compatible with the preservation of its heritage values. To this end, it is essential to establish the thresholds for this capacity.
- 2.11 to promote awareness-building, information, education and training among the different players as a means of understanding, exploiting and enjoying the heritage values and instruments encouraging appreciation of the city and self-esteem among the population, the qualified and conscious actions of politicians and technical experts and the promotion of the city. The participation of the

citizenry must also be encouraged through the creation of discussion fora and other channels for collaboration and the permanent exchange of information.

### **3. Criteria and methodology for a Management Plan**

- 3.1 to consider the old town as a whole, with a dynamic vision not confined to the protection of heritage values, striving to make sure its architecture, both bequeathed by the past and designed in the contemporary period, is founded on the urban fabric and landscape and that these are rooted in the natural setting, forming a harmonious whole with absolute respect for the preservation of the tangibles and intangible heritage values in all their authenticity and integrity. This global vision must contemplate: the old town and its protected surroundings; its urban development and growth in connection with the rest of the city and its territorial scope, including new infrastructures and adaptability to new technologies.
- 3.2 to establish which elements constitute the city's tangible and intangible values and their presence in real estate and open spaces; which elements define its uniqueness and character; which properties define the city and which of these, if lost, would represent a decline in its cultural and historic value. A morphological analysis along with a historical, social and cultural study of the city, the idiosyncrasy of the society that produced it and also its aesthetic parameters will help define those elements of the urban, territorial and landscape space marking the character of the city, forming part of its memory and the personal and collective identity of its inhabitants.
- 3.3 to contemplate, from a scientific, harmonious, sensitive and creative perspective, the vision of the city in all its physical, economic and social integrity comprised within its territory. This must provide growth models or specific interventions that can prevent disruptions in scale, destruction of the urban fabric, plot distribution, volumes, structures and construction systems, building types, colour, textures, etc.
- 3.4 to ensure that the city's urban development has a positive impact on the protected property and its surroundings. Limits will be established on certain urban growth models when the protection of the property, the city as a whole, its historical landscape or that of certain places threatened by the execution of construction works, large infrastructures or speculation significantly affecting the city's image and character.
- 3.5 to revise the Management Plan, in an obligatory, regular manner, as a nimble and flexible means for improving the preservation of the property and coping with the problems arising out of catastrophes, risks or contemporary pressures. These reviews will not be able to imply any reduction in the level of protection and must be conducted by a multi-disciplinary team of independent technical experts competent in the subject matter, without ignoring the obligatory supervised consultation with and participation by its inhabitants in the entire execution of the review process.

### **4. Specific aspects related to urban architecture and landscape**

- 4.1 The urban landscape is not a petrified, immutable element in our heritage but rather a living and dynamic element. If we wish to preserve it, it is necessary to establish which elements constitute its uniqueness and which properties, if lost, would represent a decline in its collective cultural value.
- 4.2 The preservation of the heritage nature of the urban landscape: its perspectives, urban façades, roofline, skylines and visual horizons (from the city and also looking towards the city), urban scenarios (streets, squares, parks, ...) means conserving the collective memory, the spirit of the place and that of the different times during which the city has been created.

This way of acting teaches us to think on the city scale and within the limits necessary to be able to preserve its essence, character, identity and image. And this leads us to understand the image of the old towns, their urban landscapes, their façades and urban perspectives, the surrounding countryside and the relations between the centre and the periphery as a whole sitting in its territorial and environmental context.

- 4.3 to integrate contemporary architecture and engineering, including the new forms of habitat, in a harmonious, subtle and creative way and in line with pre-existing techniques with absolute respect for the environment, the character and the historical and cultural context, so as to enable the maintenance of the spirit of the place, its essence and the protected tangible and intangible values. This will help to control the city's adaptation to the new needs of contemporary life.
- 4.4 within a territorial development or organizational plan, to deal specifically with the confines of the old town and its relations with the surrounding territory, either for its urban growth or in connection with the territory and landscape in which it is inserted.
- 4.5 in the rehabilitation of buildings, to ensure the defence and preservation of heritage values prevail over the regulations applicable to new building works. To strive for the reform and adaptation of existing rules if these do not take into account the protection and conservation of protected heritage values.