


# CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN NATURA 2000 SITES: TOWARDS A NEW POLICY FOR THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Summary of the Working Paper



**In recent years there is increasing recognition, both internationally and nationally, of the need to manage landscapes as composites of both natural and cultural heritage.**

## In the context of the European Union:

The International Conference “Heritage First”, organized by the Ministry of Culture in the framework of the Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union, recognized the importance of cultural landscapes for heritage protection.

At the same time, the Italian Presidency, examines the topic “Culture and Nature”, with special attention to safeguarding the links and introduce them into regional development policies.

In July 2014, the European Commission published the communication “Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe”.



# The landscape view



**The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of UNESCO** divides the sites into ‘cultural heritage’ or ‘natural heritage’.

The reasons for the interest of a site classified as ‘natural’, may be the fact **that a cultural value is also acknowledged** (Articles 1 and 2).

In fact, the same applies to the definition of the categories of sites set up by ICOMOS.



**The European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe states that “...Landscape is defined as a zone or area as perceived by local people or visitors, whose visual features and character are the result of the action of natural and/or cultural (i.e. human) factors.”**




**The Mediterranean Landscape Charter** states that “...the landscape is a basic factor in matters relating to the environment, national and regional/spatial planning and the protection or management of the cultural and natural heritage”.

**The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** speaks about (category V of protected areas) “**Protected areas where the interaction of people and nature over time** has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value; and where **safeguarding the integrity of this interaction** is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values”.





# Cultural landscapes



**Cultural landscapes** have come to be recognized as the interface between culture and nature. They reflect an interdependence of people, social structures, cultural patterns, the landscape and the associated ecological systems.

**For example, the management of a natural environment may be difficult unless a clear understanding is reached in terms of the human culture that shaped it. At the same time, understanding the natural environment is critical to comprehend how it reshapes this culture through feedback processes.**




# Cultural landscapes – a selection of definitions

The World Heritage Committee of UNESCO defines cultural landscapes as geographical areas *'representing the combined work of nature and man'*.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in its *Declaration on Heritage Landscapes* focuses on cultural landscapes in terms of the 'interaction of people and nature **over time**'.

Cultural landscapes are living landscapes, changing as the culture, climate and natural surroundings change within and around them. **The culture itself is the shaping force.**




The International Centre for Mediterranean Cultural Landscapes points out that the interaction between man and nature has produced some of the world's richest cultural heritage with a diverse and ancient lineage and supports the view that cultural landscapes are the product of this complex interaction.

***“Cultural landscapes are not museum pieces, they are lived-in, living landscapes”.***

The Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies - Harvard University, refers to a cultural landscape is “Any landscape that people have created, used, modified or protected. Cultural landscape is a way of seeing landscapes that emphasizes the interaction between human beings and nature over time.”

# Point for consideration 1

*How can we define cultural landscapes?*




Taking into consideration the above, a working definition for a cultural landscape at the European context is suggested:

***A cultural landscape is a physical area with natural features and elements created and/or modified by human activity, with tangible or intangible cultural and historical patterns of evidence layered in the landscape and reflecting human relationships and interactions with that landscape.***



From a natural landscape to a  
cultural one





Although there is a consensus in the characterization of a landscape as cultural when there is tangible or intangible evidence of human interaction, often the delimitation between one and the other is difficult to define.

This is why a cultural landscape is considered a dynamic system which is shaped through two different, yet interlinked, processes:

**1/ a natural process of growth and change in all landscape elements and**

**2/ a social and historic process imposed on the landscape in various ways.**

## Points for consideration 2 - 3

*How to define the boundaries between a cultural and a natural landscape, and  
When does a natural landscape become a cultural one too?*



# Assessing a cultural landscape



The assessment of a cultural landscape needs to address the following questions:

- (a) What is a cultural landscape in the perception of the people?*
- (b) Which are the **values** of the cultural landscape?*
- (c) Which are the **transformation processes** of the cultural landscape?*
- (d) Which are the **driving forces** of the transformation process at local, regional, national and international/European levels?*
- (e) What **risks** exist for the cultural landscape and which **pressures** are met or anticipated?*
- (f) How do nature and culture interact and which are the **feedback** processes?*



# Significance, values and qualities of cultural landscapes

# Significance

A cultural landscape may be considered as significant according to one or more of the following **criteria for evaluation**:

- (a) is associated with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the history of the nation, state, region or community or associated with the lives of persons significant in our past,
- (b) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that possess high artistic and cultural values,
- (c) has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history,
- (d) has strong connotations of both cultural and natural heritage,
- (e) reflects a close and shaping interaction between nature/environment and culture.

# Values

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In terms of the values to be reflected in a cultural landscape, these are:

- (a) The aesthetic value**
- (b) The historic value**
- (c) The scientific value**
- (d) The social value**

# Natural qualities



- (a) Outstanding natural beauty and aesthetic values.
- (b) Evidence of a significant past relationship between humanity and nature.
- (c) Important biodiversity resources (wild species of fauna and flora).



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# Why cultural landscapes in Natura 2000 sites?

# Some clarifications



Cultural landscapes may be also met in sites not in the Natura 2000 network.

Yet, the examination of cultural landscapes in Natura 2000 takes advantage of a well established (and operating) pan-european network of **nature** protected areas.



**Cultural landscapes in Natura 2000 sites\***  
reflect the dynamic interplay between cultural  
and natural heritage at the landscape level.

*\* in resemblance to the bio-cultural landscapes of  
the UNESCO SCBD Programme; see Florence  
Declaration on the links between biological and  
cultural diversity, 2014)*

## Points for consideration 4, 5 and 6


*How can the dynamic interplay between cultural and natural heritage be described?*

*How can biodiversity benefit from cultural landscape conservation?*

*How can we promote the inclusion of cultural heritage into the criteria for the selection of the Natura 2000 sites?*

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# Management plans for cultural landscapes in Natura 2000 sites



**The key management objective is to sustain cultural landscapes while allowing both continuing use to local communities who are dependent on them and natural ecosystems to be protected and continue to evolve.**



**Management criteria need to refer to both the natural and cultural heritage.**

The concept of a single integrated set of criteria is endorsed by the three Advisory organizations of the World Heritage Committee, namely IUCN, ICOMOS and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM).

## Point for consideration 7

***Can cultural landscape management work hand in hand with maintaining and restoring habitats and species (especially priority species) to a favourable conservation status as required under Directive 92/43EC (article 6)?***



# Points for consideration 8 and 9

*Is there a need for separate management plans for the cultural landscape and for the natural and semi-natural habitats and landscapes of a Natura 2000 site?*

*or*

*Should we consider the cultural landscape as a critical and indispensable element of the Natura 2000 site, and thus orient our efforts to a common, integrated, set of criteria and management plan, with potential differentiations per zone?*



# Policy

# Findings

Limited linkages between environmental and cultural policy.

Cultural heritage not a strong point in regional/spatial planning.

Limited awareness on the interplay between cultural and natural heritage.

Restricted involvement of stakeholders (public, NGOs, owners, central/regional/local administrations, scientific community) regarding the preservation of the links between natural and cultural heritage is observed.

Trans-disciplinary research on the links between natural and cultural heritage is limited. A separation is observed between science and humanities in the study and management of natural and cultural heritage.

# Point for consideration 10

*Which modifications are needed in existing EU policies\* and funding mechanisms so as to support the joint management of natural and cultural heritage in general and specifically in cultural landscapes in Natura 2000 sites?*

*\* research, environmental, cultural, regional planning, etc.*