



# CHAPTER 3

## Labels and Unesco Categories





## WHAT THE UNESCO CATEGORIES ARE

Cultural and natural heritage constitute invaluable and irreplaceable assets, not only for individual nations but for humanity in its entirety. The degradation or disappearance of any element of this heritage represents a profound loss, resulting in the impoverishment of the collective legacy of all peoples. Certain components of this heritage, by virtue of their exceptional characteristics, are recognized as possessing Outstanding Universal Value and, as such, warrant special measures of protection against the growing array of threats they face. To this end, specific criteria and conditions have been established for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List, serving as a framework for assessing their Outstanding Universal Value and guiding States Parties in their protection and management. The UNESCO World Heritage Convention constitutes a fundamental international instrument for the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage of global significance. Its principal objective is the identification, protection, conservation, and presentation of heritage sites deemed to be of Outstanding Universal Value. Adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972 and ratified by 195 Member States to date, the Convention sets forth the definitions of cultural and natural heritage, as well as the obligations incumbent upon Member States and the international community in ensuring the effective protection of these shared patrimonial assets. It provides a framework for international cooperation in preserving and protecting cultural treasures and natural areas throughout the world.

There are three types of sites:



-  CULTURAL
-  NATURAL
-  MIXED

## NATURAL HERITAGE

**Natural heritage sites are restricted to those natural areas that:**

- 1 – furnish outstanding examples of Earth's record of life or its geologic processes,
- 2 – provide excellent examples of ongoing ecological and biological evolutionary processes,
- 3 – contain natural phenomena that are rare, unique, superlative, or of outstanding beauty,
- 4 – furnish habitats for rare or endangered animals or plants or are sites of exceptional biodiversity.



Mount Etna. Photography on Pixabay

**The following shall be considered as “natural heritage” from the aesthetic or scientific point of view:**

- natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations;
- geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science or conservation;
- natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas.

## MIXED CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Mixed heritage sites contain elements of both natural and cultural significance. Properties shall be considered as “mixed cultural and natural heritage” if they satisfy a part or whole of the definitions of both cultural and natural heritage. Mixed cultural and natural heritage refers to locations where both cultural and natural elements are significant and interconnected. These sites demonstrate the close relationship between human societies and their environment, often featuring landscapes shaped by human activity or natural features imbued with cultural meaning. Examples include areas with both archaeological remains and unique ecosystems, or places where traditional practices are deeply intertwined with the natural world. Cultural landscapes inscribed on the World Heritage List are cultural properties and represent the “combined works of nature and of man”. They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic, and cultural forces, both external and internal. They should be selected on the basis both of their Outstanding Universal Value and of their representativity in terms of a clearly defined geo-cultural region. They should be selected also for their capacity to illustrate the essential and distinct cultural elements of such regions.



The term “cultural landscape” embraces a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and the natural environment. Cultural landscapes often reflect specific techniques of sustainable land use, considering the characteristics and limits of the natural environment they are established in, and may reflect a specific spiritual relationship to nature. The continued existence of traditional forms of land use supports biological diversity in many regions of the world. The protection of traditional cultural landscapes is therefore helpful in maintaining biological diversity.

## INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

The concept of cultural heritage has undergone a significant evolution in recent decades, influenced in part by the normative frameworks established by UNESCO. Cultural heritage is no longer understood solely as encompassing monuments and collections of tangible objects. It also embraces living traditions and expressions inherited from previous generations and transmitted to future ones. These include, but are not limited to, oral traditions, performing arts, social customs, rituals, festive events, traditional ecological knowledge, cosmological practices, and the artisanal skills associated with traditional craftsmanship. Despite its inherent fragility, intangible cultural heritage plays a vital role in safeguarding cultural diversity, particularly in an era marked by rapid globalization.

A deeper appreciation of the intangible heritage of diverse communities fosters intercultural dialogue and promotes mutual respect for differing worldviews and ways of life. The significance of intangible cultural heritage lies not merely in the cultural expressions themselves, but in the extensive body of knowledge and expertise they convey across generations. This transmission holds substantial social and economic value for both minority and majority populations within a State. Moreover, its relevance transcends levels of development, being equally critical to the cultural vitality of developing and developed countries alike.



The Busó festivities at Mohács, Hungary  
Photo by Anchumol Chacko from Pexels.com



Straw weaving art in Belarus  
Photography on Freepic.com

## Intangible cultural heritage is characterized by several key features:



Simultaneously traditional, contemporary, and living: It encompasses not only inherited traditions from the past but also current practices—both rural and urban—that continue to evolve. These expressions are actively maintained and adapted by diverse cultural communities around the world.



Inclusive in nature: Intangible cultural heritage includes expressions and practices that may be shared across different communities. Regardless of their origin, these elements are considered intangible heritage if they have been transmitted across generations, have adapted to changing contexts, and foster a sense of identity and continuity.



Representative: Its value lies not in rarity or uniqueness, but in its rootedness in community life. It depends on the knowledge, practices, and skills maintained and transmitted by community members, who ensure its continued relevance through intergenerational transmission and exchange with other communities.



Community-based: An element can only be considered intangible cultural heritage if it is recognized as such by the communities, groups, or individuals who practice and sustain it. This recognition is essential; external authorities cannot unilaterally determine what constitutes a community's heritage without their acknowledgement and consent.

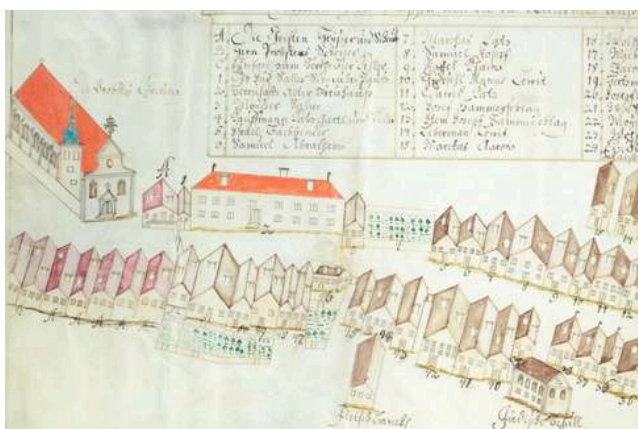
## THE MEMORY OF THE WORLD

The world's documentary heritage is a shared legacy that belongs to all humankind, transcending borders, cultures, and institutions. As such, it must be fully preserved and protected to ensure its survival for present and future generations. This responsibility requires global cooperation to safeguard historical documents, archives, and records from threats such as deterioration, conflict, neglect, and technological obsolescence. At the same time, universal access to this heritage must be promoted, with the understanding that cultural traditions, privacy considerations, and practical constraints must be respected. While recognizing these cultural mores and realities, efforts should aim to make documentary heritage permanently accessible to all people, without discrimination or undue hindrance. Initiatives like UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme and global digitization projects reflect this commitment, working to ensure that knowledge and memory are preserved and shared as a common good for the benefit of all.



## The Memory of the World Programme aims to:

- Facilitate preservation of the world's documentary heritage, particularly in areas affected by conflict and/or natural disaster
- Enable universal access to documentary heritage worldwide
- Enhance public awareness about the significance of documentary heritage among the wider public



Situation plans of towns and villages of Jewish settlement in the Habsburg Empire. ©National Archives of the Czech Republic



The Treaty of Perpetual Peace of Friborg (1516) ©Archives Nationales de France

## BASIC DATA TO WRITE

The basic information included in the museum labels that will accompany the digital museum exhibits are the following:

Erasmus+

**ARTEFACT TITLE/SITE NAME**

ORIGIN/LOCATION:

DESCRIPTION:

MEDIUMS/ TECHNIQUES:

CREATION DATE:

CREATOR/AUTHOR:

YEAR OF INSCRIPTION ON UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

MUSED

Model label that will accompany the digital museum exhibits

- Origin/Location
- Description
- Mediums/ Techniques
- Creation date
- Creator/Author of the label
- Year of inscription on UNESCO Heritage List
- Important information