

GLAM MONS HANDBOOK

For the GLAMS of the Commons



Funded by
the European Union



GLAMMONS



GLAMMONS Handbook For the GLAMs of the Commons

is one of the results of the “Resilient, Sustainable and Participatory Practices: Towards the GLAMs of the Commons – GLAMMONS” project. The Handbook is developed by Nova Iskra Creative Hub.

Author:

Iva Čukić

Acknowledgement:

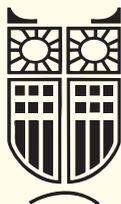
This publication benefited of the valuable feedback by Mina Dragouni (Panteion University), Lyudmila Petrova (Create), Marilena Vecco (BSB), Katarina Živanović (Nova Iskra) and Ivan Manojlović (Nova Iskra).

Graphic Design:

Katarina Popović

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. The document must be referenced if used in a publication.

GLAMMONS involves 8 European partners



Greece

Panteion University, lead of the project, is a high-profile research-led academic institution committed to the creation, advancement, and dissemination of knowledge, producing outstanding graduates and scholars specialising in cultural policy and the creative and cultural industries. It is an active participant in EU schemes, such as the Jean Monnet, ERASMUS, and Leonardo da Vinci programmes. It has coordinated and been involved in a considerable number of EU-funded projects under the 5th, 6th, and, 7th Framework Programmes for research and technological development, Horizon 2020 frameworks, and Marie Curie ITN actions, completing more than 300 funded projects.



The Netherlands

CREARE Social is an independent Dutch research center that develops research and evaluation that can support decision-making in the cultural sector. The objectives of the organisation are twofold: supporting the cultural sector by strengthening its role based on a balanced relationship between cultural, economic, and social values and collecting and providing scientific knowledge about the cultural and creative sectors. The organisation builds its research capacities by working with outstanding international scholars and practitioners across Europe.

Germany

Inpolis Urbanism GmbH is an international Berlin-based consultancy that offers services in urban and regional development. The focus of its work lies in community-based development and citizen participation in urban governance. Additionally, Inpolis Urbanism GmbH focuses on the cultural and creative economy. Over the past 20 years of its existence, the company has developed projects worldwide, in several European countries (Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy, and Luxembourg), but also around the world, in Australia, Colombia, and South Africa. In 2015, it developed the Berlin economic framework for the Cultural and Creative Industries. More recently Inpolis Urbanism GmbH has created a series of policy frameworks for citizen participation in different fields such as tourism management, social services, and urban development.

Germany

Technische Universität Berlin-TUB looks back over a long and distinguished tradition of teaching and research and is one of the largest technical universities in Germany. The TUB has a professional EC Funding Support Service that has long-standing experience in the administration of EC grants. The TUB provides an excellent research infrastructure with the necessary administrative and intellectual support to carry out international collaborative multi and transdisciplinary research projects (EU TUB office). The TUB has established different platforms to strengthen transdisciplinary research formats that engage stakeholders within the research process (e.g. the New Urban Agenda of the TUB or Labor K at the Institute of Urban and Regional Planning).

France

Founded in 1899, **ESC Dijon Bourgogne - Burgundy School of Business-BSB** is an international leading teaching and research school, belonging to the Top 1% of Business Schools in the world with its triple accreditation: AACSB, EQUIS, and AMBA. BSB offers high-level programmes in management, from undergraduate to postgraduate level with a wide range of specializations. Since 2003, CEREN (EA7477), BSB's Corporate Research Center, brings together the school's research activities and French and international professors/researchers around six Research Axes related to Management Sciences and Economics: Arts and Cultural Management, Decisions and Behavior, Digital Leadership, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Finance-Governance-CSR, and Wine & Spirits.

Greece

European Creative Hubs Network-ECHN is a peer-led network with more than 200 hubs around Europe. Its mission is to enhance the creative, economic, and social impact of creative hubs around Europe and neighboring countries. As focal points for cultural and creative professionals and businesses, hubs play a key role at the intersection of culture, economy, society, education, and technology, and offer the most effective way to support the growth and development of cultural and creative industries. ECHN has also extensive experience in formulating policy recommendations and working on skills development in the Cultural and Creative Industries, through several European Commission-funded projects (e.g. CENTRINNO, Coral-ITN, Chlaydoscope, Cyanotypes, EIT Culture & Creativity, Future DiverCities, GLAMMONS, Crowdfunding4Culture, S4Fashion, MakersXchange, Creative FLIP).

MAZOMOS

LANDSCAPE | HERITAGE | CONSULTANTS

Belgium

Mazomos Landscape & Heritage Consultants BV is a research-driven consultancy specialising in cultural heritage, landscape management, and community-centred approaches to the commons. Based in Belgium and active across Europe and beyond, Mazomos BV integrates academic expertise with innovative digital tools to support landscape characterisation & documentation, participatory heritage practices, and sustainable management strategies. Its work spans EU-funded projects, applied research, policy development, and digital engagement, including mobile-based participatory mapping, open data platforms, and heritage interpretation frameworks. With a strong focus on European rural landscapes, the Aegean and the Mediterranean, Mazomos BV collaborates with universities, museums, NGOs, and local communities to co-produce knowledge, strengthen heritage governance, and promote inclusive, resilient cultural ecosystems.

Nova Iskra

Serbia

NOVA ISKRA Creative Hub initiates collaborations and designs education programs for innovators, entrepreneurs, researchers, activists, students, professionals, organizations, and companies who are interested in taking an active role in shaping the way we will live, learn, and work in the future. Education programs developed by NOVA ISKRA Creative Hub offer a variety of learning experiences. Mentoring programs, webinars, intensive courses, study programs, creative campuses, workshops, multidisciplinary working groups, and peer-to-peer exchanges – they all aim to provide young professionals with the skill sets necessary in an increasingly fluid and shifting job market, as well as challenging economic and social circumstances, not only on the local but on the global level.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

9	INTRODUCTION
11	HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK
12	UNDERSTANDING THE COMMONS
17	THE ROLE OF GLAMS IN THE COMMONS
20	STRUCTURE OF THE HANDBOOK
23	MODULE 1: PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE
	M1: TOOLS AND RESOURCES
25	DECISION-MAKING TEMPLATES
27	FACILITATION GUIDES
31	MODULE 2: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
	M2: TOOLS AND RESOURCES
34	BUDGETING TEMPLATES
35	FUNDING STRATEGY GUIDES
36	CONTRIBUTION TRACKER AND VALUATION
39	MODULE 3: COLLABORATIVE CULTURAL PRODUCTION
	M3: TOOLS AND RESOURCES
41	PROJECT DESIGN TEMPLATES
41	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAYBOOK
42	TRAINING MODULES ON INCLUSIVE CURATION
47	MODULE 4: DIGITAL SKILLS FOR COMMONS-BASED INSTITUTIONS
	M4: TOOLS AND RESOURCES
49	RECOMMENDED DIGITAL PLATFORMS

54	MODULE 5: MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT
	M5: TOOLS AND RESOURCES
56	IMPACT EVALUATION TEMPLATES
65	CONCLUSION
66	REFERENCES
69	ANNEX 1: SKILL CHECK QUESTIONNAIRE
72	ANNEX 2: PARTICIPATORY EXERCISES
74	ANNEX 3: ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION
77	ANNEX 4: TRANSLATING PRACTICE INTO POLICY
81	ANNEX 5: PARTICIPATORY MEETING AGENDA TEMPLATE
83	ANNEX 6: CONSENSUS-BASED VOTING TEMPLATE
85	ANNEX 7: GLAMMONS GOVERNANCE POLICY TEMPLATE
88	ANNEX 8: STRUCTURED DIALOGUE MANUAL



INTRODUCTION

The GLAMMONS Handbook For the GLAMs of the Commons serves as an inspiration and a flexible framework rather than a rigid set of rules. It is designed to help institutions and cultural practitioners explore and develop their own commons-based models according to their specific contexts, needs, and resources. The handbook provides guidance, tools, and methodologies that can be adapted and expanded upon to foster participatory governance, financial sustainability, inclusive cultural production, digital collaboration, and impact assessment.

Commons-based practices are inherently diverse and dynamic. Their implementation depends on multiple factors, including legal frameworks, institutional constraints, funding structures, and, most importantly, the personal engagement and willingness of cultural professionals and communities to experiment with new governance and operational models. This document acknowledges that each institution and organization operate within a unique environment and encourages practitioners to adapt these frameworks in ways that align with their specific realities.

The handbook is designed to be useful across all sectors—whether public, private, or independent. It recognizes that commons-based approaches are not limited to a particular type of institution but can be implemented and tested in a variety of settings, from state-funded museums and community-led cultural spaces to artist-run initiatives and hybrid models of cultural governance.

Rather than prescribing a one-size-fits-all solution, this document offers a set of guiding principles, participatory methods, and practical tools to support institutions and

practitioners in shaping their own paths toward more inclusive, sustainable, and community-driven cultural practices. The success of these approaches depends on the commitment to openness, collaboration, and experimentation, allowing each organization to define its own model of commoning in alignment with its mission, stakeholders, and operational realities.

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is structured as a flexible guide that institutions and cultural practitioners can adapt based on their needs. Here's how to make the most of it:

IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS - Begin by assessing which areas require improvement in your institution. Are you looking to implement participatory decision-making? Improve financial sustainability? Engage communities in cultural production?

NAVIGATE THE MODULES - Each module addresses a key aspect of commons-based governance and provides tools, templates, and real-world examples.

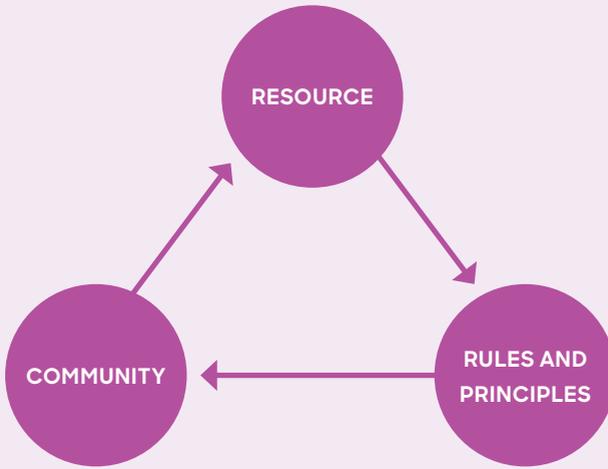
USE THE TOOLS - Apply the provided decision-making frameworks, budgeting templates, and evaluation tools to build capacity within your institution or organization.

ADAPT AND EXPERIMENT - Commons-based approaches are not one-size-fits-all. Modify the methodologies to fit your local legal frameworks, institutional structures, and community needs.

EVALUATE AND ITERATE - Regularly assess the impact of your commons-based practices and refine them based on feedback and changing circumstances.

UNDERSTANDING THE COMMONS

The commons refer to shared resources that are collectively managed by a community under agreed-upon rules and principles. Namely, commons are composed of three interconnected elements: 1. resource, 2. community, and 3. institutions (Dellenbaugh et al., 2015, 13). The resource is the first element of the commons and can be anything that holds value or utility to humans, which expands the idea of commons beyond natural common-pool resources, as originally described by Ostrom (1990). The resource itself is the object of governance within the commons or a “common good”. The second element, community, has three meanings: first, a pre-modern association based on kinship or affinity; second, a group of people who live in geographic proximity, often called local communities; and third, a group united by shared values, norms, and needs. Critical theory emphasizes the third meaning, where the common need for a resource brings people together to govern it. The community of users collectively manages the commons, with individuals contributing as “commoners.” The third element is institutions, which are the most complex aspect of the commons. Institutions are understood as recurring social practices established by users to manage a resource governed as a commons. They consist of “rules” that guide user behaviour and “organizations” created to achieve collective goals. Communities design and implement these institutions to ensure that resources are used in a way that benefits all users and prevents overuse, underuse, or abuse. Institutions are the backbone of commons governance, and the act of governing commons through these institutions is known as “commoning.”



Three elements in a mutual relationship.

ELELENTS OF COMMONS	GOVERNANCES	TERMINOLOGY OF COMMONS
RESOURCE	OBJECT	COMMON GOOD
COMMUNITY	SUBJECT	COMMONER
INSTITUTIONS	REGIME	COMMONING

Elements and terminology of the commons

While many social practices might fulfil these criteria, not all of them would be considered progressive from a critical theory perspective. To address this, Silke Helfrich introduced three normative criteria for commons, which vary depending on the context of each social practice. These criteria are: 1) fair access, 2) collective control, and 3) sustainable use (Hopkins, 2012). Each of these principles corresponds to progressive values such as social justice, democracy, and sustainability. This highlights that commons are not only analysed in terms of their context and normative standards, but also that they are inherently political. Ugo Mattei (2012) builds on this idea, suggesting that the commons represent a political act - an act of claiming resources collectively in opposition to state elites and the economic oligarchy.

NORMATIVE CRITERIA	ELEMENTS OF COMMONS	PROGRESSIVE VALUE
SUSTAINABLE USE	RESOURCE	MATERIAL, FINANCIAL & ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY
FAIR ACCESS	COMMUNITY	SOCIAL JUSTICE
COLLECTIVE CONTROL	INSTITUTIONS	DEMOCRACY

Normative criteria for commons

Sustainable use relates to how the resource is governed to ensure its long-term viability, including material sustainability (e.g., maintaining infrastructure), financial sustainability (e.g., covering operating costs), and ecological sustainability (e.g., preventing overuse and pollution). *Fair access* focuses on who belongs to the community governing the resource, ensuring it is fair rather than open access, such as limiting use to prevent overconsumption while guaranteeing access for

all community members as a basic right. *Collective control* involves the community's ability to participate in decision-making, ensuring that all users can contribute to the design of rules and institutions that govern the resource. These three criteria are directly related to three most important progressive values. *Sustainability* is related to sustainable use of a resource, *social justice* is related to fair access for a community of users who are authorised to exploit a resource, and *democracy* is related to institutions which ensure collective control of all the users (Tomašević, 2018, 51). Additionally, feminist scholar Silvia Federici highlights the importance of gender relations in the normative theory of the commons. She emphasizes that true progressive commons require transforming reproduction and daily life, beginning with the communalization of care work and its equal division between men and women. Therefore, a gender perspective is essential when evaluating commons, particularly in terms of fair access to resources and genuine collective control over governance institutions (Federici, 2012).

Finally, commons appear across various spheres of life, reflecting the diverse ways people come together to share and care for resources, *commons* include elements of the environment such as forests, fisheries, water systems, and the atmosphere - resources that are essential for life and require careful stewardship. *Digital commons* are online environments and tools governed by principles of open access and collaboration, such as open-source software, community-maintained platforms, and digital archives. *Urban commons* refer to shared spaces and resources in cities - community gardens, social and cultural centres, or co-housing projects - managed collectively by their users. *Cultural commons*, including shared traditions, languages, knowledge systems, and creative practices like storytelling, festivals, and collaborative arts, play a key role in preserving community identity and collective memory. Together, these diverse commons illustrate the ways in which individuals and groups work together to steward resources, fostering a culture of mutual responsibility and shared ownership.

Furthermore, in envisioning a society that moves beyond the constraints of capitalist exploitation, it is essential to rethink the systems of production, consumption, and governance. The traditional market-driven logic, which prioritizes individual rights, profit, and endless economic growth, has repeatedly shown its inability to address the growing social and environmental crises. To build an alternative, a new way of organizing life must emerge - one that is grounded in shared resources, cooperation, and collective well-being. This framework is driven by a fundamentally different logic, one that contrasts with the market's emphasis on competition and accumulation. Instead of focusing on individual ownership and the pursuit of unlimited growth, the focus shifts to collective stewardship and shared decision-making (Čukić & Timotijević, 2020).

In this vision, the commons provide an opportunity to build a political discourse that unites various struggles for social justice, ecological sustainability, and economic fairness. These struggles are not isolated but are connected by their common goal of creating a more just, equitable and sustainable world. The commons, therefore, must emerge from our collective struggles, representing a fundamental shift away from profit-driven motives toward a system that prioritizes equity, sustainability, and communal responsibility. Only through such a transformation can we begin to address the deep-seated inequalities and environmental crises that threaten our future.

THE ROLE OF GLAMS IN THE COMMONS

Cultural commons play a transformative role in how communities engage with culture. They preserve intangible heritage such as languages, rituals, oral histories, and collective knowledge. These commons foster participatory art and collaborative creativity, enabling people to co-create rather than passively consume culture. They also serve as important platforms for community storytelling and intergenerational learning, bridging past and future through shared expression. Crucially, cultural commons resist the commodification of culture, they protect it as a public good, ensuring that cultural life remains accessible, inclusive, and rooted in community participation rather than market logic.

Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums occupy a vital position within the ecosystem of the cultural commons. These institutions are not only repositories of cultural memory and heritage but also potential infrastructures for participatory knowledge production, collective stewardship, and democratic cultural expression. When viewed through the lens of the commons, GLAMs are no longer merely custodians acting on behalf of the public - they are reimagined as shared spaces where diverse communities co-create meaning, shape narratives, and manage resources collaboratively.

Traditionally, GLAMs have operated under hierarchical models of governance and curatorship. Institutional experts have often been responsible for selecting, interpreting, and managing collections, with limited input from the public. While this model has contributed to the professionalization and preservation of cultural heritage, it has also led to exclusivity, limited access, and the underrepresentation of marginalized voices. A commons-based approach to GLAMs disrupts this paradigm by proposing a shift toward shared governance, distributed agency, and open access. In this model, cultural heritage is not the sole domain of institutional authority but is understood as a living, evolving

commons shaped by the contributions of diverse stakeholders - including artists, researchers, local communities, activists, and the general public.

Building on the conceptual framework outlined earlier, commons-oriented GLAMs are defined by several key principles and practices (Avdikos et al. 2024):

- **Participatory governance:** These institutions develop mechanisms for the public to participate in decision-making processes related to collections, exhibitions, programming, and institutional priorities. This can take the form of community advisory boards, open calls for curation, or collaborative programming initiatives.
- **Knowledge sharing and Open access:** GLAMs committed to the commons embrace open-access policies, digitize and freely share their collections, and support community-led documentation and research. They challenge restrictive copyright regimes and enable broader engagement with cultural materials through accessible platforms and tools.
- **Cultural equity and inclusion:** Commons-based GLAMs actively work to dismantle exclusionary practices in heritage institutions by centring underrepresented voices, decolonizing collections, and engaging in reparative work. They recognize that cultural commons are not neutral but historically shaped by dynamics of power and inequality.
- **Cooperative economic models:** Instead of relying solely on traditional funding structures, commons-oriented GLAMs explore collaborative and community-driven financial models. These may include participatory budgeting, cooperative ownership, sliding-scale memberships, or partnerships with community organizations that redistribute resources more equitably.
- **Digital commons infrastructure:** In the digital era, GLAMs play a central role in building and maintaining the infrastructure of digital cultural commons. They curate digital archives, enable metadata interoperability, and create inclusive platforms that allow users to contribute, remix, and reinterpret cultural content.

- By transitioning towards commons-based models, GLAMs can become more inclusive, responsive, and sustainable institutions that serve **not just as repositories of culture, but as dynamic spaces for co-creation and civic engagement.**

GLAMs can contribute not only to the democratization of culture but also to the strengthening of democratic society. Thus, they become arenas for negotiating meaning, contesting dominant narratives, and building solidarities across differences - core functions of a robust cultural commons. This reorientation is not without challenges, but it opens a powerful path forward especially for rethinking public institutions in the 21st century.

STRUCTURE OF THE HANDBOOK

This **handbook is structured around five thematic modules**, each addressing a key dimension of commons-based cultural practice. The modules combine foundational knowledge with practical resources such as tools, templates, and adaptable methodologies, to support institutions and cultural practitioners in designing and implementing participatory, sustainable, and inclusive practices:

- 1. Participatory governance** - Introduces frameworks and practices for shared decision-making, collective leadership, and inclusive institutional structures. This module explores how to co-create internal policies, governance charters, and participatory mechanisms that reflect the values and diversity of the communities involved.
- 2. Financial management** - Focuses on alternative and sustainable financial models, including participatory budgeting, cooperative funding approaches, and strategies for reducing dependency on hierarchical or market-driven funding streams. It supports institutions and organizations in building financial resilience through community engagement.
- 3. Collaborative cultural production** - Provides strategies and methodologies for co-creation, ethical storytelling, and community-led programming. This module centres the role of cultural institutions as facilitators of shared cultural expression and explores ways to ensure equitable representation and narrative agency.
- 4. Digital skills for commons-based institutions** - Offers tools and practices for digital collaboration, open-access publishing, online engagement, and accessibility. It addresses both the technical and ethical dimensions of building and sustaining digital commons, with a focus on interoperability, transparency, and community control.

5. Monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessment - Equips institutions and cultural practitioners with participatory and commons-aligned approaches to assessing their work. It includes methods for tracking progress, gathering community feedback, measuring social and cultural impact, and adapting strategies through reflective learning and iterative development.

Each module is designed to be flexible and adaptable, allowing institutions to modify and build upon the provided resources according to their unique needs, contexts, and capacities. Rather than prescribing a one-size-fits-all model, the handbook encourages institutions and cultural practitioners to use this framework as a foundation from which to shape their own pathways toward commons-based governance and cultural practice.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

All tools should be **used iteratively**, with results feeding back into organisational learning and strategy refinement. While there is **no rigid order** in which the modules must be applied, institutions may find it useful to follow a cyclical sequence: starting with participatory governance, building supportive financial frameworks, enabling collaborative cultural production, extending into digital practices, and using monitoring and evaluation to generate insights that inform the next cycle of governance and planning.

Evaluation is participatory: community voices are central, and feedback loops strengthen institutional-community ties. Proxies and indicators are examples; organisations are encouraged to adapt them to context while maintaining alignment with commons values.



MODULE 1: PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE



Participatory governance ensures that decision-making processes in cultural institutions are democratic, inclusive, and community-driven. Unlike hierarchical structures, participatory governance models allow for shared leadership, transparency, and co-creation of policies and initiatives.

For institutions practicing commons-based governance, adopting a co-created Code of Conduct can help ensure respectful collaboration, define shared responsibilities, and provide mechanisms for conflict resolution.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- **Consensus-building and conflict resolution:**
 - Practical strategies for resolving disputes collaboratively, ensuring inclusive participation in decision-making processes.
 - Mediation techniques such as active listening, reframing issues, and neutral facilitation to guide constructive dialogue.
 - Consensus-building frameworks, including the “Gradients of Agreement” scale, which helps participants express levels of support beyond a simple yes/no response.
 - Role-playing exercises and scenario-based learning to practice handling disagreements in participatory settings.

- **Inclusive governance structures:**
 - Training on cooperative governance models, including rotating leadership, shared decision-making boards, and decentralized governance structures (such as one person, one vote).
 - Frameworks for structuring advisory committees with community representation, ensuring diverse voices contribute to policy and program development.
 - Guidelines for implementing transparent, accessible decision-making processes that incorporate community consultations and deliberative democracy approaches.

- **Stakeholder engagement:**
 - Methods to effectively include diverse community voices in governance, ensuring equitable participation across demographic and social groups.
 - Best practices for organizing community consultations, including structured dialogue, focus groups, and participatory workshops.
 - Tools for online participation, such as digital platforms, public surveys, and crowdsourced decision-making platforms.
 - Strategies for maintaining long-term engagement through feedback loops, participatory budgeting, and shared leadership roles.

M1: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

DECISION-MAKING TEMPLATES

The participatory meeting agenda template offers a structured framework for organizing meetings that promote transparency, inclusivity, and clear outcomes. It includes sections for defining the meeting title and date, articulating key objectives, and listing participants along with their roles, such as facilitator, timekeeper, or note-taker. Discussion points are arranged in a clear format with designated time slots, while a consensus-building section allows for the documentation of both agreements and dissenting opinions. The template also outlines follow-up responsibilities and action items to ensure continuity after the meeting.

The consensus-based voting template supports groups in documenting discussions and gauging levels of agreement in a participatory decision-making process. It begins with a clear articulation of the issue or proposal under discussion, followed by a summary of the conversation, which includes diverse viewpoints. A consensus level check—using a scale from full agreement to blocking objections—helps indicate the group’s alignment. The final section is used to record the decision made and to outline a corresponding action plan.

The governance policy template provides cultural institutions and organizations with a structured approach to defining and formalizing participatory governance. It starts with a mission and values statement that reflects the organization’s commitment to shared decision-making. The policy then outlines the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes within the institution. A stakeholder engagement plan suggests strategies for consistent community involvement, while sections on accountability and transparency explain how decisions, financial records, and institutional policies are made accessible. Finally, a conflict resolution framework describes how disagreements are addressed in a democratic and constructive way.

FACILITATION GUIDES

The structured dialogue manual serves as a guide for leading discussions that encourage active listening, mutual understanding, and collaborative problem-solving. It includes a checklist for preparing dialogue sessions by setting clear objectives, defining discussion topics, and ensuring diverse participation. The manual describes facilitation techniques that foster balanced contributions, such as using round-robin formats or rotating speaking opportunities. It also outlines strategies for conflict mitigation to help navigate disagreements in a respectful and constructive manner. Lastly, it offers guidance on how to document discussions and translate them into actionable next steps.

The community mediation handbook equips facilitators with practical techniques for resolving conflicts in participatory governance environments. It offers insights into recognizing different types of conflict and understanding their potential impact on group dynamics. The handbook presents neutral mediation strategies that help de-escalate tension and foster mutual understanding among stakeholders. It introduces facilitated problem-solving models that guide participants toward identifying common ground and developing mutually beneficial solutions. To illustrate these methods, the handbook includes real-world case studies drawn from cultural commons projects.

The inclusive decision-making handbook provides strategies to ensure that all community members—including those from underrepresented or marginalized groups—can meaningfully participate in governance processes. It explores ways to identify participation barriers, especially those rooted in systemic exclusion. The handbook proposes inclusive facilitation techniques, such as adapting language, modifying meeting formats, and using accessible digital tools. It also addresses how equity can be embedded into decision-making structures through policies that prioritize representation and fairness. It

concludes with methods for regularly assessing and refining inclusivity practices based on community feedback and evolving needs.

EXAMPLE 1: L'Asilo¹, located in Naples, Italy, is a former municipal building - the Asilo Filangieri - that has been transformed into a self-managed cultural center by a diverse community of artists, cultural workers, and activists. Since 2012, this space has operated outside of traditional institutional frameworks, becoming a dynamic hub for theater, music, cinema, visual arts, political debate, and experimentation. What makes L'Asilo exceptional is not only the vibrancy of its programming, but the radically democratic and commons-oriented model through which it is governed and sustained.

At the core of L'Asilo's model is the notion of urban commons, which reimagines public space as collectively shared and stewarded by a community rather than owned or managed by private entities or hierarchical institutions. In the case of L'Asilo, the community took over the disused building through an open and inclusive process, setting up a participatory assembly as its primary decision-making body. Through this assembly, decisions are made collectively on how the space is used, what activities are hosted, how resources are distributed, and how conflicts are addressed. This model ensures that no individual or organization can monopolize control or extract profit from the space - it remains a non-exclusive, non-commercial resource serving the broader public interest.

The most groundbreaking aspect of L'Asilo's governance is the "Declaration of Urban Civic and Collective Use" (ita. Dichiarazione d'uso civico e collettivo urbano), which was formally recognized by the Naples City Council in 2015. This declaration is the result of extensive grassroots legal and political work done by the community in collaboration with critical legal scholars and supportive public officials. It represents a legal recognition of a commons, acknowledging the community's right to manage the building collectively

1 More at: <https://www.lasilo.org/>

and autonomously, while placing duties on the municipality to support and not interfere with this form of governance. The Declaration also introduces accountability mechanisms and outlines the principles guiding the space's use: inclusivity, accessibility, sustainability, and collective care.

What sets this model apart is its legal innovation. Rather than transferring ownership to a private association or public-private partnership, the declaration creates a new legal category: public property under civic use. This means the property remains publicly owned, but its governance is delegated to a non-hierarchical, open community based on principles of self-management and care for the common good. In practice, this framework protects the space from privatization or political exploitation, while formalizing the legitimacy of community-led cultural production.

L'Asilo is not just a physical space, it is a living experiment in democratic cultural infrastructure. Its calendar is open and self-organized, allowing individuals and groups to propose activities, share knowledge, co-create events, and use the space without rental fees or bureaucratic barriers. The management of everyday tasks, from technical support to cleaning, is organized through voluntary participation and mutual agreements rather than rigid hierarchies. The community maintains a horizontal structure, where roles are fluid and decisions are made in plenary assemblies based on consensus or supermajority.

Financial sustainability is addressed through a patchwork of resources: small donations, public grants (when aligned with the commons ethos), in-kind support, and volunteer labor. However, L'Asilo explicitly refuses to function as a traditional NGO or to compete in market-driven funding ecosystems that prioritize measurable outputs over relational value. Instead, it invests in social infrastructure, such as relations of trust, mutual aid, and long-term collaboration, which has allowed it to remain active and resilient for over a decade.

EXAMPLE 2: Pogon – Zagreb Center for Independent Culture and Youth², established in 2008 through a strategic partnership between the City of Zagreb and the civil organization Alliance Operation City, is a landmark institution that exemplifies a new model of collaborative cultural production rooted in the commons. This public-civic hybrid institution functions as an open, accessible platform where independent cultural practitioners, youth organizations, informal collectives, and grassroots initiatives can come together to create, share, and sustain culture collectively. By blending institutional support with community-led governance, Pogon moves beyond traditional top-down cultural programming and fosters a living ecosystem of shared creativity.

At the heart of Pogon’s collaborative cultural production is its innovative open calendar model, which democratically allocates access to its physical spaces and resources. Rather than curating the venue’s schedule through a centralized artistic director or committee, Pogon enables organizations and individuals to propose, plan, and execute their own events with minimal gatekeeping or aesthetic restrictions. This open-access system functions as a cultural commons, where the venue is collectively stewarded by the many stakeholders who use it, fostering a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. The calendar is a transparent and flexible tool that facilitates cooperation by allowing groups to coordinate timing, share resources, and avoid conflicts, therefore enabling a more efficient and inclusive use of the space.

This model encourages collaborative governance: programming decisions are made through dialogue, negotiation, and consensus among the diverse cultural actors involved. By empowering these actors to directly influence what kind of cultural production takes place, Pogon nurtures a participatory environment where creativity is co-developed rather than imposed. Independent artists and youth organizations frequently collaborate on multidisciplinary projects, workshops, and performances, pooling their skills and perspectives to

2 More at: <https://pogon.hr/en/>

produce innovative work that reflects the local community's diversity and interests. Such collaboration fosters knowledge exchange and capacity building, strengthening the cultural sector as a whole.

Moreover, the open calendar supports financial and operational sustainability within this commons-based framework. By lowering barriers to access, such as costly rental fees or exclusive programming, Pogon ensures that a wide variety of voices can participate, especially those from marginalized or less commercially viable sectors. The shared use of space and resources also enables cost-sharing and mutual support, which help smaller groups survive and thrive. The institution's transparency in scheduling and resource allocation builds trust among participants, reinforcing a culture of accountability and mutual respect.

Beyond providing a venue, Pogon acts as a catalyst for community empowerment and cultural resilience. Its collaborative cultural production model fosters networks of solidarity, encouraging collective responses to social and cultural challenges. The open calendar facilitates continuous interaction and cross-pollination between different groups, creating opportunities for new partnerships and innovative artistic expressions. This ongoing process helps maintain a dynamic and responsive cultural ecosystem that is rooted in collective care and stewardship.

MODULE 2: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT



Financial sustainability in commons-based GLAMs requires a mix of revenue streams, collective financial planning, and transparency.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- **Participatory budgeting**
 - Techniques for enabling communities to have a say in how resources are allocated, ensuring transparency and equitable distribution.
 - Methods for setting financial priorities based on community needs and institutional goals.
 - Strategies for conducting budgetary votes, either in-person or through digital platforms, to reflect collective decision-making.
 - Best practices for reporting budget outcomes to maintain accountability and trust.
- **Diverse funding strategies**
 - Insights into cooperative financing models, including shared ownership and collaborative funding pools.
 - Membership-based funding structures, where individuals or organizations contribute periodically to sustain cultural activities.

- Practical guidance on grant writing, identifying relevant funding sources, and structuring proposals effectively.
 - Approaches to securing sponsorships from ethical corporate partners and philanthropic organizations.
 - Community-driven fundraising techniques such as crowdfunding campaigns and donation-based models.
- **Sustainable resource allocation**
 - Best practices for maintaining financial sustainability in cultural institutions through cost-sharing models and in-kind resource exchanges.
 - Integration of circular economy principles to maximize efficiency and reduce financial waste.
 - Long-term planning strategies to balance revenue generation with accessibility and affordability of cultural activities.
 - Methods for financial forecasting to ensure resilience against economic fluctuations.
- **In kind resource tracking**
 - Tools for documenting non-financial support such as volunteer hours, donated goods, free use of space, or pro bono services.
 - Guidelines for categorizing contributions based on type, source, and frequency.
 - Suggestions for incorporating in-kind contributions into budgeting and planning processes.
 - Methods for visualizing the scope and diversity of support received from the community.
- **Valuation methods for in-kind support**
 - Approaches for assigning fair financial value to voluntary and non-monetary contributions using reference metrics (e.g. average local wage, market price, rental value).
 - Recommendations for adapting valuation models to different legal and institutional contexts.
 - Templates for calculating equivalent monetary value to include in funding applications and financial reports.

- Ethical considerations in acknowledging contributions without exploiting unpaid labor or masking structural funding gaps.
- **Volunteer engagement and care**
 - Role definition tools to ensure volunteers have clear tasks, time commitments, and support mechanisms.
 - Recruitment and onboarding strategies to cultivate inclusive and diverse participation.
 - Practices for recognition and feedback, including public acknowledgements, reference letters, and learning opportunities.
 - Long-term planning approaches to integrate voluntary work without over-dependence or burnout.

M2: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

BUDGETING TEMPLATES

The participatory budgeting framework provides a structured format through which institutions and cultural practitioners allocate financial resources in a transparent and collaborative way. It includes a budget overview that summarizes available resources, outlines anticipated expenses, and defines overarching financial goals. A section for community input allows stakeholders to propose and prioritize spending areas, while a voting and consensus process supports the collective evaluation and selection of budget items. The final section presents a clear allocation of approved expenditures, assigning accountability mechanisms to each.

The financial transparency report template ensures accountability by providing a consistent structure for documenting financial activities and sharing them with relevant stakeholders. It features a detailed breakdown of income sources, listing revenue streams such as grants, memberships, donations, and sponsorships. Expenses are organized by categories such as operational costs, program funding, and administrative outlays. A dedicated section evaluates how the allocated funds contribute to broader institutional or community goals, and the template also suggests accessible formats for making this financial information publicly available and easy to interpret.

The funding application template supports the preparation of grant proposals and sponsorship requests through a structured approach. It begins with a clear and concise summary of the cultural initiative seeking funding, followed by a section on objectives and expected impact, outlining anticipated social and cultural benefits. The budget breakdown justifies the requested amount and explains how the funds will be used. The template concludes with a sustainability plan describing the initiative's long-term financial strategy beyond the initial funding period.

FUNDING STRATEGY GUIDES

The Cooperative Funding Handbook guides cultural institutions and practitioners in establishing cooperative financial structures. It begins by introducing cooperative models and explaining shared ownership structures in the context of cultural funding. The handbook outlines the steps for setting up a cooperative fund, including organizing collective contributions and establishing governance mechanisms. It addresses key legal and financial considerations, such as tax benefits, regulatory compliance, and reporting requirements specific to cooperatives. It also includes case studies that highlight successful cooperative funding initiatives within the cultural sector.

The Crowdfunding Success Guide provides a comprehensive roadmap for planning and running effective crowdfunding campaigns. It offers a comparative overview of platforms like Kickstarter, GoFundMe, and Patreon, helping practitioners select the most suitable option. A detailed planning checklist walks users through defining campaign goals, crafting compelling narratives, and designing reward structures. The guide also outlines strategies for marketing and community engagement, emphasizing storytelling, social media outreach, and partnerships. Post-campaign guidance includes tips on fulfilling commitments, retaining supporter engagement, and using the funds to support long-term initiatives.

The Ethical Sponsorship Guide supports institutions and practitioners in identifying and working with corporate partners whose values align with their own. It helps identify culturally compatible sponsors and offers negotiation strategies that preserve institutional autonomy and uphold ethical standards. The guide recommends transparency and accountability measures, including public disclosure policies and conflict resolution procedures. Case studies provide real-world examples of successful ethical sponsorships in the cultural sector.

CONTRIBUTION TRACKER AND VALUATION

In commons-based cultural institutions, contributions frequently extend beyond monetary transactions. Voluntary labor, donated materials, and in-kind support often play a critical role in daily operations and reinforce community ownership. Implementing a systematic approach to tracking and valuing these contributions enhances transparency, acknowledges the full scope of engagement, and strengthens reporting for funders and stakeholders.

The In-kind Contribution Tracker provides a structured tool for documenting and evaluating non-monetary contributions such as volunteer time, donated goods, or use of space. It includes a contribution log for recording the type, source, and date of each contribution—whether hours volunteered, equipment provided, or facilities offered. A valuation column allows institutions to assign approximate financial value using local wage rates, service costs, or market benchmarks. Another section notes how each contribution supports specific programs or operations, and an optional recognition log can track acknowledgments or reciprocal gestures.

The In-kind Valuation Handbook helps institutions create consistent and equitable methods for assessing the value of non-monetary contributions. It begins with a clear explanation of valuation principles and the importance of recognizing in-kind support. The handbook describes various valuation methods, including wage-based calculations and market price assessments. It also provides guidance on tailoring these practices to reflect local labor conditions and legal frameworks. Finally, it illustrates how in-kind valuations can be integrated into grant proposals, financial audits, and institutional transparency reports.

EXAMPLE 1: Clubture³ is a Croatian network of independent cultural organizations that has, over more than two decades, developed a powerful model of cooperation rooted in the idea

3 More at: <https://www.clubture.org/info/about-us?!=en>

of the commons. Instead of operating through isolated efforts or competing for limited resources, Clubture enables its members to propose and realize collaborative projects through a shared funding mechanism. What makes this initiative particularly compelling is its radically participatory structure: member organizations across the country jointly decide how funds are distributed, which projects are prioritized, and how partnerships are formed. This model not only decentralizes cultural production but also democratizes financial access, empowering small and local initiatives that would otherwise be marginalized. The financial structure of Clubture is a living example of commons-based resource governance. Public funds – often perceived as scarce and hierarchically allocated – are transformed into collectively managed cultural capital. This is done through transparent, horizontal decision-making processes that resemble participatory budgeting, where each voice has equal weight. The model shows that financial commons in culture are not only possible but productive: they foster solidarity over competition, long-term relationships over short-term projects, and cultural equity over centralized control. For policymakers, funders, and practitioners, Clubture provides a scalable reference for rethinking how culture is financed, shifting the focus from institutional gatekeeping to shared stewardship.

EXAMPLE 2: Participatory budgeting in Trogir, Croatia⁴, exemplifies how civic engagement can be integrated into the management and preservation of cultural heritage. Since 2018, the city has implemented an annual participatory budgeting model that empowers residents to decide on the allocation of a portion of the municipal budget. This initiative covers all eight neighborhoods, including Trogir’s historic center, a UNESCO World Heritage site inscribed in 1997. The budget allocated ranges from approximately 1.35 million Croatian kuna (about €180,000) citywide, with individual neighborhoods receiving between 145,000 and 300,000 kuna (€20,000–€40,000). The participatory process begins with an annual call for proposals, inviting citizens to submit ideas for small-scale communal projects through various channels such as email,

4 More at: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/canopy/trogir-budgeting/>

online forms, postal mail, or in-person submissions. After evaluating the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of the proposals, the city organizes public voting sessions, allowing residents to prioritize projects for their neighborhoods. Notably, projects within the historic center are developed in close collaboration with the Croatian Ministry of Culture's Conservation Department to ensure alignment with heritage preservation standards.

This model has led to the successful implementation of around 100 projects, including infrastructure upgrades, the construction of playgrounds, and the enhancement of public spaces. By involving citizens directly in decision-making, the initiative fosters a sense of ownership and trust between the community and local authorities. Moreover, it contributes to the sustainable management of cultural heritage by ensuring that development projects respect the historical and cultural significance of the area.

Trogir's participatory budgeting aligns with UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape approach, which advocates for inclusive and sustainable urban development. It also supports Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), by promoting inclusive decision-making and safeguarding cultural heritage through community engagement.

MODULE 3: COLLABORATIVE CULTURAL PRODUCTION



Cultural production in commons-based institutions is about involving communities in shaping artistic and cultural outputs. This approach ensures that culture is not just consumed but actively created and sustained by those it represents.

A Code of Conduct should be established to define expectations for behavior, respect, and inclusivity, ensuring that all collaborators—especially marginalized groups—are treated fairly and with dignity throughout the co-creation process.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- **Co-creation with communities**
 - Methods for integrating local voices into cultural projects, ensuring representation and relevance.
 - Strategies for conducting participatory workshops and creative labs where the public can contribute ideas, stories, and artistic content.
 - Best practices for power-sharing in creative processes to prevent tokenism and foster genuine collaboration.
- **Inclusive curation and programming**
 - Techniques for designing exhibitions, events, and performances that reflect diverse social, cultural, and economic perspectives.

- Approaches to curatorial frameworks that challenge traditional hierarchies and promote collective authorship.
- Strategies for ensuring accessibility, including language inclusion, sensory-friendly programming, and affordability.
- **Ethical storytelling and representation**
 - Guidelines for crafting narratives that avoid cultural appropriation and misrepresentation.
 - Frameworks for ethical engagement with marginalized and historically underrepresented communities.
 - Tools for ensuring informed consent and community ownership over cultural narratives.

M3: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

PROJECT DESIGN TEMPLATES

The Participatory Cultural Project Planning Template provides a structured framework for designing cultural projects that incorporate community input from the earliest stages through to implementation. It includes sections for defining the project's name and objectives and outlines the intended cultural and social impact. A stakeholder involvement plan helps identify key participants, collaborators, and decision-makers. The template also proposes a co-creation methodology that outlines steps for engaging communities in idea generation and artistic production. It sets a timeline with clear milestones for each development phase, from initial outreach to the final presentation. An evaluation and feedback mechanism is included to offer practical ways to measure outcomes and incorporate community reflections.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAYBOOK⁵

The Guide to Building Cultural Partnerships supports cultural institutions and organizations in forming meaningful and lasting relationships with local communities and grassroots groups. It begins by presenting methods for identifying community needs and interests using tools such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The guide introduces models of reciprocal engagement that prioritize mutual benefit over extractive practices. It also outlines strategies for maintaining long-term partnerships that extend beyond one-off initiatives. To inspire implementation, the playbook includes case studies of successful cultural programs that are deeply rooted in community collaboration. All community engagement activities should be conducted in alignment with a clear Code of Conduct, ensuring equitable relationships and mutual respect.

5 Inspirational material to look at: <https://participatorymuseum.org/>

TRAINING MODULES ON INCLUSIVE CURATION

The Framework for Decolonizing Curation equips curators with the knowledge and tools needed to critically examine and dismantle systemic power imbalances in cultural representation. It encourages a rethinking of institutional narratives by helping identify biases that are embedded in traditional curatorial practices. The module presents techniques for amplifying underrepresented voices and supporting broader participation in exhibition planning and cultural programming. Practical guidance helps users apply these methods in their own work. As curators engage with the framework, they must adhere to the Code of Conduct, ensuring that decolonization and inclusivity are central to their practices and interactions.

EXAMPLE 1: The Tucson Museum of Art (TMA), located in downtown Tucson, Arizona, has developed a pioneering initiative called Expanding Narratives, which embodies a community-based curation approach designed to foster inclusivity and collaboration in museum practices. Supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, this initiative seeks to integrate diverse community perspectives into the museum's curatorial processes, ensuring that exhibitions reflect the authentic voices and histories of the local population.

At the heart of Expanding Narratives is a shift from traditional, top-down curation to a participatory model that actively involves community members as co-curators. TMA works closely with local heritage communities - particularly those whose cultures and histories are reflected in the museum's collections - to collaboratively select themes, interpret artworks, and design exhibitions. This approach dismantles hierarchical curatorial structures and promotes the production of multifaceted, inclusive cultural narratives that resonate with a wide range of audiences.

The museum has developed a comprehensive Community-Based Curation Toolkit to guide institutions and practitioners

through this collaborative process. This toolkit emphasizes several key principles: fostering authentic partnerships, ensuring transparent and respectful communication, and maintaining ethical engagement practices grounded in a clear Code of Conduct. It outlines best practices for involving community members at every stage, from project planning to evaluation, highlighting the importance of equitable power-sharing and shared decision-making to prevent tokenism.

The toolkit also provides practical strategies for co-creating exhibitions and programs that are culturally responsive and accessible. It encourages museums to use multiple methods for community engagement, including surveys, interviews, and participatory workshops, to gather diverse perspectives and build meaningful dialogue. The emphasis on cultural humility and respect ensures that narratives are not appropriated or misrepresented but instead reflect the community's own stories and values.

Furthermore, TMA prioritizes capacity-building for sustained dialogue and long-term partnerships, moving beyond one-off consultations. The museum promotes continuous feedback loops and adaptive learning to refine practices and deepen trust between the institution and its communities. By integrating these processes into gallery instruction and programming, TMA ensures that exhibitions are relevant and welcoming to all audiences, including those traditionally marginalized.

Through the Expanding Narratives initiative and its toolkit, the Tucson Museum of Art demonstrates how cultural institutions can transform curation into a truly collaborative and inclusive process. By empowering communities as co-creators and honoring their cultural heritage, TMA not only enriches its collections but also serves as a vibrant platform for social connection, empowerment, and shared cultural ownership. This initiative stands as a valuable model for museums and cultural organizations aiming to foster equity, participation, and lasting community engagement in the arts.

EXAMPLE 2: Double Edge Theatre⁶ is an artist-run ensemble based in Ashfield, Massachusetts, on a 105-acre farm that serves as their creative home and cultural hub. Founded in 1982, they are known for their innovative and immersive theatrical productions that deeply engage with both the natural environment and the local community. Their work is rooted in collective creation and shared stewardship, making them a compelling example of commons-based cultural practice.

At the core of Double Edge Theatre's approach is a commitment to collective ownership and governance, where all members, including actors, directors, technicians, and community collaborators, share responsibility and authority over artistic, operational, and financial decisions. Unlike traditional theatre companies led by a single director or executive team, Double Edge empowers its ensemble and staff to participate equally in shaping the organization's vision and managing its resources. This decentralized structure fosters an environment of mutual respect, trust, and accountability, creating a truly democratic space where decisions reflect the collective will.

Decision-making at Double Edge often relies on consensus or extensive consultation rather than simple majority rule or top-down mandates. This encourages open dialogue, ensures diverse perspectives are included, and builds group cohesion. The ensemble holds regular collaborative meetings that function not only as administrative check-ins but also as creative incubators where ideas and concerns can be voiced openly, reinforcing transparency and trust. To prevent burnout and avoid hierarchy, roles such as facilitation, financial oversight, and project leadership may rotate among members, spreading knowledge and responsibility throughout the community. Financial transparency is also a priority, with budget discussions and reports shared openly among members to foster collective fiscal responsibility and innovative resource management. Beyond the ensemble, Double Edge

6 More at: <https://doubleedgetheatre.org/>

includes local community members in workshops, training, and feedback sessions, expanding the cultural commons and integrating external stakeholders into the decision-making ecosystem.

This collective ownership and governance model offers several important benefits. It enhances resilience by distributing risks and responsibilities so that the organization remains stable even if individual members change. Empowerment grows as people who have genuine influence over their creative environment become more invested, motivated, and loyal. Ethically, this governance structure challenges traditional power imbalances, making space for marginalized voices and reflecting the democratic spirit of cultural commons. Furthermore, by building broad engagement and shared accountability, Double Edge fosters long-term sustainability, adapting to changing cultural and economic conditions while responsibly managing resources.

In practice, when planning new performances or community programs, Double Edge holds planning sessions open to ensemble members and sometimes community representatives. Budget allocations are discussed collectively, balancing artistic goals with financial realities. Volunteer labor, in-kind donations, and shared resources are tracked and managed collaboratively, ensuring that resources serve the collective interest and reflect shared priorities rather than individual agendas. This model of collective ownership and governance exemplifies how cultural institutions can operate as living commons - spaces where power, resources, and creativity are shared to support sustainable, inclusive, and democratic cultural practices.

EXAMPLE 3: The SPICE⁷ (Social Cohesion, Participation, and Inclusion through Cultural Engagement) project was an EU-funded Horizon 2020 initiative that ran from May 2020 to April 2023. Its central aim was to promote greater social inclusion and participation in the cultural heritage sector through a

7 More at: <https://spice-h2020.eu/>

process called citizen curation. This approach empowers individuals and communities – particularly those who are often underrepresented in cultural institutions – to actively participate in the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage. Rather than simply consuming culture, participants are encouraged to co-create and share personal narratives and viewpoints around heritage objects.

To support this participatory model, SPICE developed a range of digital tools and methods that enable users to annotate, interpret, and share cultural content. These tools are designed to be inclusive, considering the diverse cultural backgrounds and accessibility needs of users. A key component of the project is its underlying Linked Data infrastructure, which allows museums and institutions to manage their collections alongside user-generated interpretations in a way that is ethical and respects privacy.

SPICE implemented its model through five case studies across Europe and Israel, each engaging specific communities in participatory cultural experiences. In Finland, the Design Museum Helsinki worked with elderly citizens and remote families to explore Finnish design heritage. In Ireland, the Irish Museum of Modern Art involved asylum seekers and children with limited physical access to the museum. In Spain, the National Museum of Natural Sciences collaborated with children from low-income backgrounds to engage them with science through art. Italy's Gallery of Modern Art created platforms for deaf visitors and others to express their views through storytelling and digital media. Finally, in Israel, the Hecht Museum facilitated dialogue between religious and secular communities through shared curatorial experiences.

Through these diverse and deeply contextualized initiatives, the SPICE project demonstrated how cultural institutions can foster empathy, reflection, and understanding by opening up curatorial processes to the public. By valuing multiple perspectives, SPICE created new pathways for civic engagement and social cohesion in the cultural heritage sector.

MODULE 4: DIGITAL SKILLS FOR COMMONS-BASED INSTITUTIONS



Digital commons enable cultural institutions to share resources, collaborate, and engage audiences in innovative ways. Mastering digital tools and ethical data practices is essential for fostering participation, ensuring accessibility, and managing cultural resources effectively.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- **Digital collaboration tools**
 - Training on using digital platforms such as Miro, Padlet, Nextcloud, Loomio and TeamUp (Open calendar) for collective knowledge-sharing and co-creation.
 - Best practices for remote collaboration, including workflow management and digital meeting facilitation.
 - Strategies for integrating digital commons tools into hybrid physical-digital cultural programs.
- **Data ethics and digital accessibility**
 - Understanding ethical data management principles, including open-access policies and GDPR compliance.
 - Ensuring digital content is accessible to people with disabilities through inclusive design practices.
 - Implementing transparency mechanisms in data collection and usage to maintain public trust.

- **Online community building**
 - Strategies for fostering engagement in digital spaces through interactive content and participatory platforms.
 - Best practices for encouraging user-generated content and co-curation of online exhibitions or cultural archives.
 - Long-term strategies for maintaining and growing online communities while balancing moderation and openness.
- **Open knowledge and licencing:**
 - Utilizing Creative Commons licensing, open access repositories, and digital commons infrastructure to promote knowledge sharing and collaborative cultural production.
 - Training in copyright alternatives that support cultural commons, including fair use principles and open data policies.

For institutions interested in further developing their digital strategies, the GLAMMONS Blueprint offers a practical, step-by-step guide (see *Blueprint: Digital Strategies for GLAMs* under Commons of the Glammons project). Structured around four main areas - access, co-creation, governance, and intercommoning - it focuses on digital tools relevant to each area, such as Creative Commons licensing for access or collaborative platforms for governance. The Blueprint can be used as a complementary resource to explore additional digital tools and approaches that support participation, transparency, and collaborative cultural production.

M4: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Miro - Visual Collaboration Platform

Miro supports brainstorming, mapping, and co-creation among distributed teams working on cultural projects. It provides interactive whiteboards for digital planning and content organization. Teams collaborate in real time with remote stakeholders, and the platform offers templates specifically designed for visual storytelling and exhibition planning.

Padlet - Interactive Community Board

Padlet enables community-led cultural engagement and collaborative content creation. Its user-friendly interface allows individuals to post, comment, and share multimedia with ease. It serves as an ideal tool for crowdsourced storytelling, idea generation, and cultural documentation, and functions smoothly across devices with multilingual support.

Nextcloud - Open-Source Cloud Storage for Cultural Institutions

Nextcloud offers secure, community-controlled data storage and sharing tailored to cultural commons projects. It meets GDPR standards, supports collaborative editing and digital archiving, and allows for self-hosting—giving institutions greater control and independence from commercial cloud services.

Loomio - Cooperative Decision-Making Tool

Loomio helps cultural institutions conduct transparent, consensus-based decision-making. It features structured discussion threads, voting tools, and integrations with other collaborative platforms. These features support participatory governance and ensure that decision-making remains inclusive and equitable.

Open Online Calendar - Shared Digital Space Management

An open online calendar provides an accessible and transparent scheduling tool for managing shared cultural resources.

Community members can view and contribute to the scheduling of events, meetings, and room bookings. This tool integrates with other digital commons platforms, enabling seamless coordination.

EXAMPLE 1: Magacin Cultural Centre⁸, based in Belgrade, Serbia, is a dynamic grassroots cultural hub known for its innovative open calendar model, which deeply embodies the principles of the cultural commons. Founded as an independent, community-driven space, Magacin serves as a vital platform for artistic and cultural expression, emphasizing inclusivity, collaboration, and shared ownership. Its open calendar system is a key feature that allows it to operate as a commons-based institution, where access to space and programming is managed collectively rather than imposed by hierarchical control.

The open calendar model at Magacin functions as an egalitarian scheduling system that enables artists, collectives, cultural initiatives, and community groups to freely propose, book, and run events without the interference of rigid gatekeeping or top-down programming decisions. This means that rather than a single curator or management team deciding what happens and when, the calendar is open for any member of the community to engage with and contribute to. This openness ensures a pluralistic cultural ecosystem, where diverse voices especially those from marginalized or experimental scenes can find room to create and share their work. It challenges traditional institutional models by emphasizing accessibility and community autonomy over commercial or institutional priorities.

In practice, the open calendar is maintained transparently and collaboratively. Interested parties submit their event proposals or time requests, which are then coordinated openly to avoid conflicts and maximize shared use of the space. The system encourages communication and negotiation among users, cultivating a culture of mutual respect and cooperation. This collaborative approach helps foster stronger networks between artists and groups, creating a fertile ground for joint projects,

8 More at: <https://kcmagacin.org/en/mkm-naslovna-english/>

interdisciplinary collaborations, and knowledge exchange. The fluidity of the calendar encourages spontaneity and experimentation, key ingredients for vibrant cultural production. The open calendar also helps Magacin maintain transparency around resource allocation, reinforcing trust and accountability among participants.

It is important to mention that the model is more than a scheduling tool; it is a governance mechanism that distributes power and responsibility across the cultural community. It exemplifies a commons-based cultural practice where decision-making is participatory and shared, reflecting the needs and aspirations of those who use the space. By democratizing access and fostering collaboration, Magacin's open calendar nurtures a sustainable, inclusive cultural commons that empowers local creators and contributes to the broader cultural ecosystem in Belgrade and beyond. It highlights the potential for cultural institutions to support decentralized, community-led cultural production that is both resilient and deeply connected to its social context.

EXAMPLE 2: Decidim⁹ (from the Catalan word for “we decide”) was launched in 2016 as a project of the Barcelona City Council, under the progressive municipal government of Ada Colau and the citizen platform Barcelona en Comú. The platform was developed as a response to both the democratic deficit in traditional political systems and the need for open, transparent, and citizen-controlled tools that allow people to directly participate in the shaping of policies and public life.

At its core, Decidim is a free and open-source digital infrastructure designed to enable participatory processes such as citizen proposals, debates, collaborative policy drafting, participatory budgeting, and assemblies. It is based on a modular and customizable architecture, which allows public institutions, civil society organizations, and even grassroots collectives to tailor the platform to their specific needs and democratic practices.

9 More at: <https://decidim.org/>

In Barcelona, Decidim has been integrated into the city's official democratic infrastructure through the platform Decidim. Barcelona. It has been used for various forms of engagement:

- Participatory budgeting, where residents could propose and vote on projects funded by the city.
- Urban planning and development processes, such as neighborhood plans or specific interventions in public space.
- Policy co-creation, involving citizens in drafting regulations and municipal plans.
- Monitoring of public commitments, allowing residents to track the implementation of decisions made through participatory channels.

During its initial rollout, the platform attracted tens of thousands of citizens and became a landmark in digital democratic innovation across Europe. What makes Decidim especially commons-oriented is that it is co-designed by citizens, technologists, social movements, and public institutions, not by private companies. It is governed by a social contract that guarantees openness, accountability, public code, and collective governance.

Beyond Barcelona, Decidim has been adopted by dozens of cities and regions in Spain, including Madrid, Pamplona, Seville, and Valencia. These municipalities use the platform to enable participatory democracy at local and regional levels. Some use it primarily for participatory budgeting, while others integrate it more deeply into policy-making cycles or to manage public consultations.

In Madrid, for example, the city launched Decide Madrid, a parallel initiative based on similar principles (though technically developed before Decidim), which eventually informed and complemented the wider Decidim ecosystem. The spread of Decidim reflects a broader trend in Spain toward networked municipalism, where cities reclaim governance capacities from central governments and experiment with collaborative, transparent, and inclusive models.

Key commons-based features:

- **Public code & Open governance:** Decidim's code is open source (hosted on GitHub), and development is guided by a democratic governance model. The Decidim Association, which brings together users, developers, academics, and public officials, ensures that the platform evolves according to collective needs and ethical principles.
- **Distributed use:** While it originated in a city government, Decidim is used by grassroots collectives, cooperatives, universities, and transnational networks, embodying the principles of shared ownership and modular re-use of digital infrastructure.
- **Transparency & Traceability:** Every proposal, comment, and decision is logged and publicly accessible, reinforcing transparency and preventing manipulation.
- **Accessibility & Inclusion:** The platform emphasizes inclusive participation, with multilingual support and design considerations that aim to reduce digital divides.

MODULE 5: MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Assessment is a crucial component of commons-oriented practices, ensuring accountability, reflexivity, and long-term sustainability. Within GLAMMONS, monitoring and evaluation have been grounded in the Value-Based Approach (VBA/ QE+), a methodology designed to assess the extent to which organisations and initiatives fulfil their purposes as participatory, culture-driven, and commons-oriented practices (see A Policy report on the design of place-based policies for supporting commons-oriented GLAMs and other cultural organisations of the Glammons project). This framework moves beyond narrow performance indicators by integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, participatory processes, and proxies that capture cultural, social, and democratic value creation. It provides guidance not only for organisations themselves, but also for funders and policymakers to design supportive evaluation strategies (see An evaluation framework for the GLAMs of the commons of the Glammons project).

Unlike traditional performance-focused evaluations, VBA integrates qualitative and quantitative methods, participatory processes, and proxies to capture cultural, social, and democratic value creation. It provides guidance not only for organisations themselves but also for funders and policymakers seeking to design supportive evaluation strategies. Evaluation

is treated as an embedded practice of commoning—a process of co-learning, feedback, and adaptation that strengthens institutional-community relationships. Iterative reflection, community participation, and continuous negotiation of value(s) are central principles of the VBA.

KEY DIMENSIONS OF EVALUATION WITHIN THE VBA

The VBA structures evaluation around six core dimensions, serving as a backbone for assessment and guiding the selection of proxies, indicators, and participatory methods:

- **Legal/organisational alignment:** assessing how ownership and governance structures enable or constrain commons-oriented practices.
- **Decision-making:** tracking the inclusiveness, horizontality, and diversity of governance arrangements.
- **Accessibility and engagement:** measuring how resources and infrastructures are made available and inclusive.
- **Labour and finance:** evaluating sustainability and solidarity-based economic models, while preventing enclosure dynamics.
- **Content and knowledge practices:** analysing co-creation processes, open access, and the circulation of knowledge as commons.
- **Relations and communication with external actors:** examining collaborations, networks, and institutional legitimacy in fostering commoning, including strategies for outreach, dialogue, and information exchange.

These dimensions ensure that evaluation focuses on purpose, values, and outcomes rather than narrowly predefined outputs.

M5: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

While the VBA provides the overarching methodology, practical instruments support its implementation in organisations. These templates and frameworks are designed to capture proxies, organise feedback, and operationalise participatory evaluation.

1. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Purpose: Document the social, cultural, and participatory value of commons-based initiatives.

Structure:

- **Project overview:** Title, duration, partners, communities involved.
- **Objectives:** What commons-oriented values (e.g. participation, equity, openness) did the initiative aim to realise?
- **Key evaluation areas:**
 - Diversity of participants (age, background, marginalised groups)
 - Accessibility (free entry, language inclusivity, digital reach)
 - Participation depth (advisory boards, co-curation, shared decision-making)
 - Cultural equity (representation of underrepresented voices, decolonial practices)
 - Spillover effects (social cohesion, skills, networks created)
- **Methods:** Surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations.
- **Findings:** Narrative + quantitative results.
- **Reflections & Next steps:** Lessons learned, recommendations for future cycles.

OPERATIONAL INDICATORS TABLE (EXAMPLE):

Indicator	Proxy / VBA Alignment	Data Collection Method	Frequency	Target Value	Comments
Diversity of participants	Accessibility & Engagement	Surveys, attendance lists	After each event	30% from marginalized groups	Track year-on-year
Participation in decision-making	Decision-Making	Interviews, focus groups	Annual	At least 50% of advisory board roles include diverse participants	Include qualitative reflections
Community perception of inclusion	Accessibility & Engagement	Interviews, focus groups	Annual	Positive feedback from 70%	Include experiences of being heard
Access to resources/ content	Content & Knowledge Practices	Digital analytics, feedback forms, observation	Quarterly	90% accessibility	Include physical and digital formats
Co-creation in programming	Content & Knowledge Practices	Surveys, participant logs	Each project cycle	Evidence of collaborative events	Document advisory/ collaborative contributions
Spillover effects	Accessibility & Engagement	Surveys, interviews	Annual	Participants report increased social cohesion / networks	Track skills, networks, cultural participation

2. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Purpose: Assess the resilience and solidarity orientation of financial models.

Structure:

- **Revenue streams review:** Public funding, donations, cooperative funding, participatory budgeting, earned income.
- **Key evaluation areas:**
 - Diversity of funding sources (avoiding dependency on a single donor/market)
 - Commons-alignment of sources (solidarity economy, community-driven contributions vs extractive sponsorships)
 - Alignment with broader social responsibility agendas (e.g. CSR partnerships that reinforce inclusion, education, and sustainability)
 - Stability & predictability over time
 - Flexibility to adapt to crises/economic shifts
- **Expenditure analysis:** Cost structures, allocation of resources to community programs, fair wages.
- **Resilience assessment:** How do financial arrangements protect commons orientation (e.g. prevent enclosure, commodification)?
- **Sustainability plan:** Strategies to strengthen long-term financial autonomy and solidarity-based practices

OPERATIONAL INDICATORS TABLE (EXAMPLE):

Financial Indicator	Proxy* / VBA Alignment	Data Source	Target	Current Status	Recommendations
Diversity of funding sources	Labour & Finance	Budget report	≥ 3 different sources	2	Apply for more diverse grants
Community-contributed income	Labour & Finance	Membership, crowdfunding	≥ 20% of total budget	12%	Enhance local donor campaigns
Alignment with commons principles	Accessibility & Labour & Finance / Legal Alignment Engagement	Funding agreements, sponsorship analysis	≥ 80% aligned	60%	Replace extractive sponsors with solidarity-based contributors
CSR Alignment	Relations with External Actors / Labour & Finance	Sponsorship contracts, CSR reports, stakeholder feedback	≥ 70% of sponsorships explicitly linked to CSR goals	TBD	Strengthen CSR partnerships that support inclusion, education, and sustainability
Stability & predictability of revenue	Labour & Finance	Financial records	100% operational costs covered	88%	Review cost efficiency, create contingency plans

* Proxies are indirect indicators used in the VBA to capture commons-based values that are otherwise difficult to measure directly.

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY TEMPLATE

Purpose: To collect feedback from participants and measure the depth and quality of engagement.

Sections:

- **Demographics:** Age, location, community affiliation (to track diversity).
- **Engagement experience:**
 - How often do you engage with this institution/project?
 - In what ways (visitor, volunteer, co-creator, board member)?
 - Do you feel your voice is heard in decisions? (Yes/No/Partially → Why?)
- **Perceived impact:**
 - Has participation influenced your cultural knowledge/skills?
 - Has it strengthened your sense of belonging/community?
 - Has it given you new opportunities to collaborate or express yourself?
- **Open-ended reflections:**
 - What worked best for you?
 - What should change or improve?
 - What does “commons-oriented culture” mean to you in practice?

Output: Survey results analysed both quantitatively and thematically, fed back into participatory evaluation cycles.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY TEMPLATE:

Question	Proxy / VBA Alignment	Response Type
How often do you participate in our programs?	Accessibility & Engagement	Multiple choice / frequency scale
Do you feel represented in the events or exhibitions?	Decision-Making	Likert scale + open-ended
How inclusive and accessible do you find our space or platform?	Accessibility & Engagement	Likert scale + open-ended
Have you contributed to co-curation or decision-making?	Decision-Making / Content & Knowledge Practices	Yes / No / Partially + description
Has participation increased your cultural knowledge, skills, or networks?	Spillover effects	Open-ended / rating
What would you like to see more of in programming?	Content & Knowledge Practices	Open-ended
Any suggestions for improvement?	All dimensions	Open-ended

4. INSTITUTIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT SCORECARD

Purpose: To support reflexivity and continuous improvement by measuring alignment with commons-oriented principles.

Dimensions & Example proxies
(scored 1-5¹⁰, with space for notes):

- Participatory governance: General assemblies/open boards; diverse stakeholder representation.
- Accessibility & inclusion: Free/affordable entry; barrier-free access (physical, linguistic, digital).
- Cultural impact: Representation of underrepresented communities; reparative/decolonial initiatives.
- Digital commons: Collections digitised and openly shared; metadata interoperability.
- Economic models: Use of cooperative/solidarity funding; avoidance of extractive sponsorships.
- Relations with external actors: Active partnerships with civic groups, SSE, local governments; contribution to broader commons networks.

¹⁰ Scoring explanation: 1 = Very low alignment with commons-oriented principles; 2 = Low alignment; 3 = Moderate alignment; 4 = High alignment; 5 = Excellent alignment / best practice.

OPERATIONAL TABLE (EXAMPLE):

Assessment Area	Proxy / VBA Alignment Score (1-5)	Notes / Examples
Participatory Governance	Decision-Making	Are general assemblies or open boards in place? Are diverse stakeholders represented?
Financial Diversity & Solidarity	Labour & Finance	Are income streams varied and aligned with commons principles? Are participatory budgeting/cooperative funding models used?
Programmatic Inclusivity	Accessibility & Engagement	Are programs accessible, inclusive, and representative of marginalized communities?
Transparency & Accountability	Legal / Organisational Alignment	Are processes and finances publicly accessible? Is participation documented?
Digital Engagement & Knowledge Practices	Content & Knowledge Practices	Is your digital presence accessible, open, and interoperable? Are resources co-created or openly shared?
External Relations	Relations with External Actors	Does the institution actively collaborate with civic groups, social economy actors, or commons networks?

Important: The scorecard is not meant to prioritise but to prompt reflection, collective discussion, and identification of next steps.



CONCLUSION

This document is not a manual of fixed solutions, but an invitation to learn, experiment, and rethink the role of cultural institutions in contemporary society. The proposed tools, methodologies, and skills are designed to be adaptable to diverse contexts, encouraging institutions and practitioners to engage with commoning practices in ways that are relevant, meaningful, and sustainable.

Rather than offering a single model, this framework aims to support locally grounded, participatory, and evolving approaches. It recognizes that the implementation of commons-based models depends on institutional openness, available resources, legal frameworks, and—above all—the willingness of individuals and communities to imagine and build together.

We hope that this handbook serves as a point of departure: a flexible structure that can inspire others to develop their own practices, tools, and methods. We also invite feedback, dialogue, and further experimentation as part of a collective process of learning and transformation.

REFERENCES

Code of Conduct
Čukić, I & Timotijević, J. (Eds.)
(2020) Spaces of Commoning:
Urban Commons in the exYu
region. Belgrade: Ministarstvo
prostora.

Dellenbaugh, M. et al. (eds.)
(2015) Urban Commons: Moving
Beyond State and Markets.
Berlin: De Gruyter.

De Tulio, M. F. (2020)
Commons as ecosystems for
culture. Available at: [https://
instituteofradicalimagination.
org/wp-content/
uploads/2020/07/Commons-
as-Ecosystems-for-Culture-
Ready-for-the-website.pdf](https://instituteofradicalimagination.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Commons-as-Ecosystems-for-Culture-Ready-for-the-website.pdf)

Federici, S. (2012) Feminism and
the politics of the commons.
In Bollier, David and Silke
Helfrich (eds.) The Wealth of
the Commons: A World Beyond
Market and State. Levellers
Press, Amherst, 45–54.

Gielen, P. (2017). Creative or
common city? Civic or civil
society? [Lecture] Available
at: [http://http://http://www.
cca-glasgow.com/blog/pascal-
gielen-blog](http://http://http://www.cca-glasgow.com/blog/pascal-gielen-blog)

Gielen, P. (2024) Trust: Building on Cultural Commons. Amsterdam: Valiz.

Hopkins, R. (2012) Transition Culture Website – An interview with Silke Helfrich: We have to reformulate the role of the state as enabler of the commons. Available at: <https://www.transitionculture.org/2012/10/02/an-interview-with-silke-helfrich-we-have-to-reformulate-the-role-of-the-state-as-enabler-of-the-commons/>.

Mattei, U. (2012) First Thoughts for a Phenomenology of the Commons In: Bollier, D., Helfrich, S. (eds.) The Wealth of the Commons: A World Beyond Market and State. Levellers Press, Amherst, 37–44.

Ostrom E. (1990) Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Patt, D. & Polyak, L. (2017) Funding Cooperative City: Community Finance and the Economy of Civic Spaces. Vienna: Cooperative City Books.

Tomašević, Tomislav, Vedran Horvat, Alma Midžić, Ivana Dragšić and Miodrag Dakić, eds. 2018. Commons in South East Europe: Case of Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Macedonia. Zagreb: Institute for Political Ecology.

Tucson Museum of Art. (2024) COMMUNITY- BASED CURATION: A Toolkit for Expanding Narratives and Changing Practices. Available at: https://www.tucsonmuseumofart.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/TMA_CommunityBasedCuration_Toolkit_FINAL_web.pdf

ANNEX 1:

SKILL CHECK QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to help individuals assess their proficiency in the key skill areas covered in this handbook. Answer each question honestly to determine your strengths and areas for improvement. Use this questionnaire as a self-reflection tool to guide your learning and professional development in cultural commons practices.

MODULE 1: PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

- Do you have experience facilitating discussions where all participants have an equal say? (Yes / No / Somewhat)
- Can you identify different governance models and explain their advantages and disadvantages? (Yes / No / Somewhat)
- How comfortable are you with consensus-based decision-making? (Very comfortable / Somewhat comfortable / Not comfortable)
- Have you ever mediated a conflict in a participatory setting? (Yes / No)
- Can you develop and implement governance policies that promote inclusivity? (Yes / No / Somewhat)

MODULE 2: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Are you familiar with participatory budgeting processes? (Yes / No / Somewhat)
- Have you successfully applied for funding from grants, sponsorships, or crowdfunding? (Yes / No / Somewhat)
- Can you create and manage a transparent financial plan for a cultural institution? (Yes / No / Somewhat)
- How well do you understand cooperative funding and revenue-sharing models? (Very well / Somewhat / Not at all)
- Have you ever conducted a financial sustainability assessment for an organization? (Yes / No)

MODULE 3: COLLABORATIVE CULTURAL PRODUCTION

- Do you have experience co-creating cultural projects with community members? (Yes / No / Somewhat)
- Can you design an inclusive cultural program that reflects diverse perspectives? (Yes / No / Somewhat)
- How confident are you in engaging underrepresented groups in cultural production? (Very confident / Somewhat confident / Not confident)
- Have you led or participated in a participatory curation process? (Yes / No)
- Can you identify ethical storytelling practices in cultural production? (Yes / No / Somewhat)

MODULE 4: DIGITAL SKILLS FOR COMMONS-BASED INSTITUTIONS

- Are you proficient in using digital collaboration tools such as Miro, Notion, or Nextcloud? (Yes / No / Somewhat)
- Do you understand data ethics principles, including GDPR compliance? (Yes / No / Somewhat)
- Can you create and manage open-access digital resources for a cultural project? (Yes / No / Somewhat)
- Have you successfully engaged audiences through digital platforms in a cultural initiative? (Yes / No)
- How well do you understand online community management for participatory projects? (Very well / Somewhat / Not at all)

MODULE 5: MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Can you define key performance indicators (KPIs) for a cultural commons project? (Yes / No / Somewhat)
 - Community engagement KPIs: Number of active participants, diversity of stakeholders involved, percentage of returning participants.
 - Governance KPIs: Number of participatory decisions made, transparency score, stakeholder satisfaction with governance models.

- Financial sustainability KPIs: Percentage of budget allocated through participatory processes, number of diverse funding sources, revenue vs. operating cost ratio.
- Cultural production KPIs: Number of co-created cultural projects, inclusivity in programming, audience reach and participation rates.
- Digital and knowledge sharing KPIs: Number of open-access resources created, engagement in digital platforms, compliance with data ethics standards.
- Have you implemented a self-assessment tool to measure an organization's impact? (Yes / No)
- How comfortable are you with conducting stakeholder feedback surveys? (Very comfortable / Somewhat comfortable / Not comfortable)
- Have you analyzed qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate a cultural project? (Yes / No)
- Can you adapt strategies based on evaluation results to improve project outcomes? (Yes / No / Somewhat)

Scoring and interpretation

- Mostly 'Yes' answers: You have strong skills in this area and are well-prepared to implement commons-based practices.
- Mostly 'Somewhat' answers: You have some foundational knowledge but may need additional training or experience.
- Mostly 'No' answers: This is an area for development, and you may benefit from further learning and hands-on practice.

ANNEX 2:

PARTICIPATORY EXERCISES

Engaging in participatory exercises helps institutions implement commons-based models in practical, inclusive, and impactful ways. These exercises facilitate collaboration, encourage shared decision-making, and provide structured methods for mapping, planning, and problem-solving.

1. Community mapping

Objective: Identify local cultural assets, key stakeholders, and support networks to strengthen community-driven cultural initiatives.

Steps:

- **Define the scope** - Determine whether the mapping will focus on physical spaces, community skills, historical narratives, or digital cultural commons.
- **Engage the community** - Organize participatory mapping sessions where residents, cultural workers, and other stakeholders identify important sites and relationships.
- **Data collection** - Gather input through surveys, interviews, or interactive mapping tools (such as Miro, Open Street Maps or paper maps for in-person workshops).
- **Visualize the network** - Create a shared map highlighting cultural hubs, collaboration opportunities, and underutilized community resources.
- **Action plan** - Use the insights from mapping to develop partnerships, support advocacy efforts, and co-design future projects.

2. Co-creation workshops

Objective: Facilitate collaborative sessions where cultural practitioners and community members shape projects, exhibitions, and artistic initiatives together.

Steps:

- **Preparation** - Define the goals of the workshop (e.g., exhibition planning, event programming, storytelling initiatives).
- **Inclusion strategy** - Ensure participation from diverse community groups and underrepresented voices.
- **Interactive sessions** - Use participatory methodologies like world cafés, brainstorming rounds, and role-playing exercises.
- **Prototyping and testing** - Allow participants to create mock-ups, storyboards, or concept models of their ideas.
- **Implementation and follow-up** - Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and next steps to bring co-created projects to life.

3. Scenario planning

Objective: Help institutions and communities anticipate potential challenges and opportunities when transitioning to commons-based models.

Steps:

- **Identify key variables** - List social, economic, and political factors that may impact the institution's transition to a commons model.
- **Develop scenarios** - Create different future scenarios based on varying levels of community engagement, funding availability, and institutional support.
- **Impact analysis** - Evaluate how each scenario would affect governance, financial sustainability, and program development.
- **Strategic response planning** - Develop flexible strategies to adapt to potential challenges while maximizing opportunities.
- **Iterative review** - Regularly revisit scenarios and update strategies based on new developments and stakeholder feedback.

ANNEX 3:

ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A structured and detailed roadmap is essential for institutions and organizations looking to transition to a commons-based approach. The following step-by-step guidelines provide a clear path to implementation:

Step 1: Assess readiness and define objectives

- Conduct an internal audit to evaluate the institution's alignment with commons-based practices.
- Identify the key stakeholders, including staff, community members, funders, and policymakers.
- Define clear objectives for adopting commons-based models (e.g., increasing participation, diversifying funding sources, implementing democratic governance).
- Analyze existing resources, infrastructure, and potential gaps that need to be addressed.
- Engage in benchmarking by researching similar institutions and organizations that have successfully transitioned to commons-based governance.

Step 2: Engage stakeholders and build partnerships

- Organize initial meetings with internal teams to introduce the commons-based approach.
- Conduct outreach to external stakeholders, including local communities, cultural practitioners, and advocacy groups.
- Establish advisory committees or working groups to guide the transition process.
- Facilitate participatory workshops to ensure all voices are included in planning and decision-making.

- Develop collaboration agreements with partners who can provide support, expertise, or funding.

Step 3: Develop and implement pilot initiatives

- Design small-scale pilot projects to test commons-based practices before full implementation.
- Select key areas for experimentation, such as participatory budgeting, community-led programming, or open-access digital resources.
- Assign roles and responsibilities within the team and among stakeholders.
- Set clear KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) to measure the success of the pilot initiatives.
- Regularly collect feedback from participants and adjust the approach as needed.
- Document the process and results to build a case for broader implementation.

Step 4: Institutionalize commons-based practices

- Draft policies and guidelines that formalize participatory governance structures.
- Create transparent decision-making frameworks that encourage ongoing community involvement.
- Establish financial models that support commons-based management, such as cooperative funding structures or shared ownership models.
- Train staff and stakeholders on new governance and operational procedures.
- Develop digital infrastructures that facilitate resource-sharing and open-access collaboration.

Step 5: Evaluate, adjust, and scale up

- Conduct structured evaluations using qualitative and quantitative methods.
- Use surveys, interviews, and focus groups to gather insights from community members and stakeholders.
- Compare results against the KPIs set in Step 3 and assess progress toward defined objectives.
- Identify challenges and develop solutions for scaling up successful initiatives.

- Share findings and best practices with other cultural institutions and networks to encourage broader adoption of commons-based models.
- Advocate for policy changes at local, national, and EU levels to support commons-oriented cultural institutions.

Step 6: Ensure long-term sustainability

- Build long-term financial sustainability through diversified funding sources, including grants, cooperative ownership, and revenue-generating activities.
- Maintain an ongoing dialogue with communities to adapt and evolve commons-based governance structures.
- Develop mentorship and peer-learning programs to transfer knowledge to new cultural practitioners.
- Create a culture of continuous learning, encouraging innovation and adaptation in response to emerging challenges.
- Participate in national and international networks to remain connected to broader commons-based cultural movements.

ANNEX 4:

TRANSLATING PRACTICE INTO POLICY

While this handbook is designed primarily for practitioners, cultural workers, and institutions, it also offers insights relevant to policymakers at local, national, and international levels. The experiences, tools, and frameworks presented here reveal the transformative potential of commons-based cultural practices - particularly in how they support democratic participation, social equity, and sustainable development.

To bridge practice and policy, it is important to recognize cultural commons not as isolated experiments, but as emerging models of governance that require structural support. Policy frameworks can learn from these practices in the following ways:

- **Recognizing cultural institutions as civic spaces**

Encouraging policy shifts that support GLAMs not only as heritage custodians but also as platforms for collective learning, social innovation, and democratic experimentation. Cultural institutions have long been understood primarily as custodians of heritage and holders of collections. Yet, in practice, many GLAMs (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums) are increasingly taking on civic functions - hosting community assemblies, supporting social movements, and acting as safe spaces for dialogue and participation.

Policy implication

Cultural policy should actively support this shift by redefining GLAMs as civic infrastructure. This can include:

- Broadening institutional mandates to include democratic learning, collective care, and community engagement.
- Adapting funding criteria to reward institutions that

foster social inclusion, critical reflection, and civic empowerment.

- Encouraging intersectoral partnerships (with education, urban development, health, etc.) that reflect the multifunctional role of cultural spaces.

● **Supporting participatory governance**

The handbook highlights a variety of tools and practices—such as participatory budgeting, rotating leadership models, and community-led decision-making—that can deepen institutional democracy and accountability. However, these approaches often remain marginal due to structural and policy constraints.

Policy implication:

Policy frameworks can integrate participatory governance mechanisms into the way cultural institutions are funded and evaluated. This can include:

- Requiring or rewarding participatory processes in the design, implementation, and evaluation of publicly funded programs.
- Including community governance indicators in institutional assessments.
- Supporting the creation of Advisory boards composed of users, community members, and cultural workers.

● **Valuing in-kind and volunteer contributions**

Voluntary labor, shared resources, and mutual aid are foundational to many commons-based initiatives. Despite their real economic value, these contributions are rarely captured or acknowledged within formal institutional reporting or funding systems. Creating legal and financial mechanisms that acknowledge non-monetary forms of support in institutional reporting, grant schemes, and sustainability assessments.

Policy implication:

Policy mechanisms can be designed to account for and support these contributions as legitimate forms of cultural labor and resource allocation. This includes:

- Allowing in-kind contributions to be counted as part of matching funds in grant applications.
- Requiring public institutions to report and recognize volunteer hours in their sustainability metrics.
- Providing training, legal protections, and recognition frameworks for voluntary cultural engagement.

● **Embedding commons-based approaches in funding programs**

Current funding structures often favor short-term, quantifiable outputs and predefined outcomes, leaving little room for the open-ended, process-based nature of commons work. Commons-based models are rooted in long-term relationships, iterative development, and shared stewardship. Designing cultural policies and calls that explicitly support long-term, collaborative models, rather than one-off project logic.

Policy implication:

Cultural funding should evolve to support long-duration, cooperative, and care-based practices. This might include:

- Creating dedicated funding streams for commons-based or cooperative initiatives.
- Designing open calls that prioritize long-term impact, capacity-building, and knowledge sharing over visibility or novelty.
- Supporting institutional transformation processes, not just programmatic delivery.

● **Enabling legal experimentation**

Innovative governance and resource-sharing practices often exist in legal grey zones. Commons-based institutions frequently find themselves constrained by rigid frameworks around ownership, labor, and accountability. Facilitating pilot programs and adaptive regulations that allow institutions to test new forms of ownership, governance, and resource sharing.

Policy implication:

Policymakers can create spaces for experimentation and legal innovation by:

- Establishing cultural “sandbox” programs - experimental policy environments that allow institutions to temporarily test new governance and ownership models (such as collective management, shared resources, or co-ownership) without
- being restricted by existing regulations. These spaces provide legal flexibility while enabling policymakers to observe and learn from real-world experimentation.
- Supporting legal aid and advisory services for cultural institutions exploring alternative structures (e.g. associations, cooperatives, commons trusts).
- Updating regulations to accommodate hybrid forms of management, co-ownership, and community control.

Commons-based cultural practices demonstrate that institutions can be more than caretakers of the past—they can be living platforms for collective agency, experimentation, and care. However, for these practices to thrive, they require more than isolated efforts or exceptional individuals. They need enabling environments.

Policy frameworks that respond to and evolve with these grassroots innovations can play a critical role in scaling impact, ensuring sustainability, and embedding equity in cultural systems. By formally recognizing civic functions, supporting participatory governance, valuing non-monetary contributions, funding long-term collaborative processes, and allowing room for legal experimentation, cultural policy can align more closely with the realities and aspirations of commons-based work.

This is not a call for top-down intervention, but for a reciprocal relationship: one in which institutions and policymakers learn from lived practice, and provide the structures that allow those practices to deepen, expand, and endure. The commons is not only a practice, it is a framework for reimagining how we organize, govern, and sustain culture. For that potential to be realized, policy must walk alongside it.

ANNEX 5:

PARTICIPATORY MEETING

AGENDA TEMPLATE

Meeting title:

Date & time:

Location / platform:

Facilitator(s):

Participants:

1. Welcome and introductions

- Brief introductions of all participants (Check ins)
- Overview of the meeting purpose and objectives

2. Review of agenda

- Presentation of the agenda
- Opportunity for participants to suggest additions or changes

3. Background / Context

- Brief presentation of the topic or issue to be addressed
- Overview of previous activities or relevant data

4. Open Discussion / Brainstorming

- Presentation of key questions for discussion
- Active involvement of all participants
- Use of participatory techniques (e.g., small group discussions, round robin, idea mapping on a board or flipchart)

5. Prioritization / Decision-Making

- Group assessment and ranking of ideas or proposals
- Reaching collective conclusions or decisions

6. Action planning

- Defining concrete next steps and tasks
- Agreement on deadlines and responsible persons

7. Feedback and closing

- Brief reflection on the meeting: what went well, what could improve
- Agreement on next steps and scheduling the next meeting
- Thanking all participants

Notes / Additional comments:

(Important information, assignments, and any open questions can be recorded here)

ANNEX 6

CONSENSUS-BASED VOTING

TEMPLATE

Issue / Proposal:

(Briefly state the topic or proposal being discussed)

1. Summary of discussion

- Key points raised
- Diverse viewpoints and concerns expressed
- Areas of agreement and disagreement

2. Consensus level check

Please indicate the group's level of agreement on the proposal using the scale below:

Level	Description
Full Agreement	Everyone supports the proposal without reservations
General Agreement	Most support it; minor concerns exist but can be addressed
Reservations	Some concerns that need further discussion or modification
Standing Aside	Members do not fully agree but will not block the decision
Blocking Objections	Members oppose the proposal and block consensus

Group's Consensus Level:

3. Decision outcome

- Was the proposal accepted, modified, deferred, or rejected?
- Summary of the agreed decision

4. Action plan

- Next steps to implement the decision
- Assigned responsibilities
- Deadlines and follow-up mechanisms

5. Additional Notes

(Any further remarks or observations)

ANNEX 7

GLAMMONS GOVERNANCE POLICY TEMPLATE

Purpose:

To provide a framework for designing governance structures in commons-oriented cultural institutions (GLAMMONS) that are participatory, transparent, inclusive, and aligned with collective cultural and social value creation.

1. Core governance principles

- **Participation:** Decision-making involves staff, volunteers, community members, and other stakeholders.
- **Transparency:** Policies, budgets, and decisions are documented and publicly accessible.
- **Inclusivity & Accessibility:** All governance processes accommodate diverse communities, marginalized groups, and multiple forms of knowledge.
- **Commons Orientation:** Policies protect resources from enclosure, ensure open access, and promote collaborative stewardship.
- **Accountability & Reflexivity:** Governance structures are evaluated regularly for fairness, effectiveness, and alignment with institutional values.

2. Governance structure

Element	Description	Proxy / VBA Alignment Score (1-5)	Notes / Examples
Decision-Making Bodies	Boards, assemblies, councils	Participatory Governance; Decision-Making	Include staff, community representatives, volunteers; rotate roles to ensure diversity
Policy Development	Procedures for creating and updating institutional policies	Legal/ Organisational Alignment	Policies developed collaboratively, with community feedback cycles
Budget & Resource Allocation	How financial and material resources are distributed	Labour & Finance; Solidarity Economy	Participatory budgeting mechanisms, transparency on income sources and expenditures
Program Oversight	Monitoring program development and alignment with commons values	Content & Knowledge Practices; Accessibility & Engagement	Advisory boards co-create programs; community evaluation feeds into planning
Conflict Resolution	Mechanisms for addressing disputes	Participatory Governance; Relations with External Actors	Mediated by peer councils, community representatives, or rotating committees
External Relations	Partnerships with other institutions, networks, or civic actors	Relations with External Actors	Collaboration agreements, co-produced initiatives, open-access networks

3. Governance procedures

- **Community consultation:** Policies and strategic decisions must be reviewed by stakeholder groups before final approval.
- **Open meetings:** Key governance meetings are documented and accessible to the public (online or in person).
- **Rotation & diversity:** Ensure equitable representation of age, gender, socio-economic background, and cultural knowledge in governance roles.
- **Evaluation & reflection:** Governance structures are reviewed annually against VBA dimensions, using proxies like participation rates, inclusivity metrics, and feedback quality.
- **Adaptation & iteration:** Governance policies are updated based on community feedback, evaluation outcomes, and evolving institutional values.

4. Implementation notes

- Use reflexive tools (scorecards, surveys) to track governance effectiveness.
- Align decision-making processes with financial, social, and cultural proxies from VBA.
- Embed participatory evaluation cycles into routine governance to maintain alignment with commons-oriented practices.

ANNEX 8

1. INTRODUCTION

Structured dialogue is a facilitation approach designed to foster active listening, mutual understanding, and collaborative problem-solving among diverse participants. This manual provides guidance to prepare, facilitate, and document dialogue sessions that empower participants to share perspectives respectfully, work toward common goals, and translate insights into actionable outcomes. Structured dialogue is particularly useful for addressing complex issues, encouraging inclusive participation, and aligning diverse perspectives toward collective action.

Note: The steps, techniques, and examples provided in this manual are illustrative and intended as a practical guide. Facilitators should adapt them to the specific needs, context, and dynamics of their group. Not every step or technique will be necessary or appropriate in all situations.

2. PREPARING FOR A DIALOGUE SESSION

Setting clear objectives

- Define the purpose of the dialogue clearly (e.g., gather community input, resolve conflicts, co-create solutions).
- Set specific, achievable goals for the session.
- Example note: Objectives may evolve during the session; be open to adjusting them as the discussion unfolds.
- Defining discussion topics

- Select topics relevant and meaningful to participants.
- Frame topics to encourage open exploration rather than debate.

Example note: Topics may be adjusted in response to participants' initial contributions.

Ensuring diverse participation

- Identify key stakeholder groups and ensure invitations reflect this diversity.
- Consider accessibility needs (language, timing, location, format).
- Encourage participation from quieter or marginalized voices.

Example note: Diversity can include lived experience, professional roles, or community representation.

3. STRUCTURED DIALOGUE STEPS

The structured dialogue process unfolds in eight steps, guiding participants from problem identification to actionable solutions. These steps are illustrative and can be adapted to your context.

Step 1: Activate

- Begin with an open-ended question designed to elicit relevant comments and clarify the issue.
- Capture and clarify all responses for meaning.

Example: "What are implicit and overt issues that need to be addressed to create truly inclusive co-creation?"

Step 2: Cluster

- Examine responses to identify relationships.
- Group related responses into affinity clusters (e.g., "Professional Skills," "Resources").

Example note: Clustering is flexible; clusters can change as discussion evolves.

Step 3: Prioritize (Issues)

- Participants vote on the most important clusters.
- Top clusters move forward for deeper exploration.

Example: Each participant uses colored dots to indicate priority clusters.

Step 4: Leverage (Issues)

- Identify items with leveraging potential: which issues, if addressed, will resolve others?
- Consolidate redundant items and set aside less influential ones.

Step 5: Generate

- Ask a new question to explore solutions: “What options will contribute significantly to our shared vision?”
- Capture and display all proposed solutions.

Step 6: Compare

- Examine alternatives against criteria such as cost, time, and long-term impact.
- Break into small groups to allow all voices to contribute; summarize findings for the larger group.

Step 7: Prioritize (Solutions)

- Use weighted voting to identify preferred solutions based on impact and feasibility.

Step 8: Leverage (Solutions)

- Decide which solutions are leverage points for immediate action.
- Connect decisions to core values, assumptions, and beliefs to strengthen ownership and alignment.

Example note: Steps can be repeated, skipped, or combined depending on group size, time constraints, and objectives.

4. FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

Creating safe and respectful spaces

- Establish and communicate ground rules (e.g., respect, no interruptions, confidentiality).
- Model respectful behavior as facilitator.
- Balanced Participation Methods
- Round-Robin: Give each participant a chance to speak in turn.
- Rotating speaking opportunities: Change speaking order to avoid dominance.
- Small Groups / Breakouts: Allow deeper discussions in smaller settings.

Example note: Choose methods that best fit your group dynamics.

Active listening practices

- Encourage paraphrasing to confirm understanding.
- Use reflective questions and summarizing to validate contributions.

5. CONFLICT MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Recognizing signs of tension

- Monitor body language, tone changes, or repeated interruptions.

Techniques for de-escalation

- Pause the discussion if needed.
- Acknowledge emotions without judgment.

Encouraging respectful disagreement

- Emphasize the value of different opinions.
- Encourage “I” statements to reduce defensiveness.

Facilitator intervention

- Step in neutrally to mediate conflicts.
- Redirect conversation toward shared interests.

Example note: Interventions should be subtle and context-sensitive.

6. DOCUMENTING THE DIALOGUE

Note-taking and recording

- Assign a note-taker or use recording tools with consent.
- Capture key points, agreements, and unresolved issues.
- Templates for summaries
- Use structured forms to organize notes (e.g., topic, input, action items).
- Share summaries promptly with participants.

Example note: Documentation can be adapted for digital or physical formats.

7. TRANSLATING DIALOGUE INTO ACTION

Defining next steps

- Identify concrete actions emerging from the dialogue.
- Assign responsibilities and deadlines.
- Communicating outcomes
- Inform participants about decisions and progress.
- Maintain transparency to build trust.

Example note: Even partial actions or pilot projects can build momentum.

8. FACILITATOR'S CHECKLIST

- Confirm session objectives and agenda
- Ensure venue or online platform is set up

- Prepare materials (flipcharts, markers, digital tools)
- Confirm diverse participant list and send reminders
- Review facilitation techniques and conflict mitigation strategies
- Arrange for note-taking or recording
- Set ground rules at the start of the session

Example note: The checklist is a guideline; facilitators may add or remove items as needed.

*** You can also check this example: Search for Common Ground. (2016). Community Dialogue Design Manual. MENA Common Ground Institute (CGI). Retrieved from https://documents.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CGI-Anglais-manual_final.pdf



GLAMMONS