GLAMMONS

QUALITY EVALUATOR (QE): GUIDANCE TO VALUE-BASED EVALUATION

QUALITY EVALUATOR + (QE+):

GUIDANCE TO A VALUE-BASED EVALUATION

is one of the results of the "Resilient, Sustainable and Participatory Practices: Towards the GLAMs of the Commons – GLAMMONS" project. The Guidance is developed by CREARE Social.

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1. Introduction

In order to support commons-oriented GLAMs in sustaining their cultural, social and societal missions/purposes, the GLAMMONS project has developed a Guide for a **Quality Evaluator+.**

Following Belfiore's (2010) argument, this report goes beyond "one-size-fits-all" approaches, and aims to make "a genuine understanding of the nature and potential effects of artistic engagement" (p.121), rather than pursuing sole advocacy purposes through impact evaluation. Following value-based approach perspectives, it is designed to be **holistic, participatory and reflective to do justice to the cultural and social dynamics** of commons-based practices. It adopts the participatory principles as suggested by the "Centre for Cultural Value", such as – *be connected* (transparent, connected, shared), *be beneficial* (committed to learning, ethical and applicable), *be people-centred* (empathetic, many-voiced, socially-engaged) and *be robust* (rigorous, open-minded and proportionate). It enables **Organisations** to reflect on and improve their governance, **Funders** to evaluate and assess the realised values of a project, and **Policy makers** to understand and appreciate projects that further important practices, add desired values and it enables them to realise a value-based governance.

This report builds directly on the **Value-Based Approach (VBA)** and **Quality Evaluator (QE)** conceptualisation, applications to case studies, methods and findings closely discussed GLAMMONS Project. It offers a **simple, adaptable framework** that can be used by cultural commons initiatives of all kinds, as well as being able to achieve more supportive funding and governance models at policy level.

The toolkit consists of:

⬦ Outline of the **QE+ application stages**;
⬦ A **glossary of value clusters and proxies** to illustrate the fundamentals of commons-orientated practices and how they can be translated within different context;
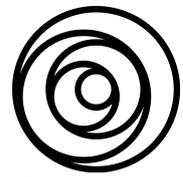
◊ **Templates** that reflect the stages that **organisations** can use for internal reflection and external reporting;

◊ A **guideline for communities, organisations, funders and policymakers** explaining the benefits and application of value-based evaluation.

1.1. Objectives and benefits

A **Quality Evaluator+ (QE+)** aims to help organisations, funders and policymakers to **assess** how well cultural commons-related organisations and initiatives **align their practices, governance and financing with their core values** - cultural, social and societal - beyond and next to standard economic and financial metrics.

This practical guide aims to support commons-orientated organisations and initiatives to:

◊ Deepen the understanding of the cultural embeddedness of commons practices;

◊ Design more supportive and adaptive funding and governance models;

◊ Reflect and report by commons-oriented GLAMs;

◊ Provide constructive feedback on the effectiveness of interventions and projects.

The QE+ aims to encourage GLAMMONS organisations, partners and stakeholders to adopt and share this guide to help **strengthen values-driven cultural commons** across Europe and beyond. It also can support **value co-creation** and the **evaluation of changes** for commons-orientated organisations/initiatives, their supporters and funders, as well as policy makers dealing with these types of initiatives (Figure 1).
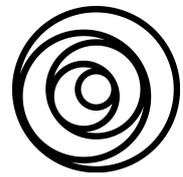
Figure 1. QE+ dimensions
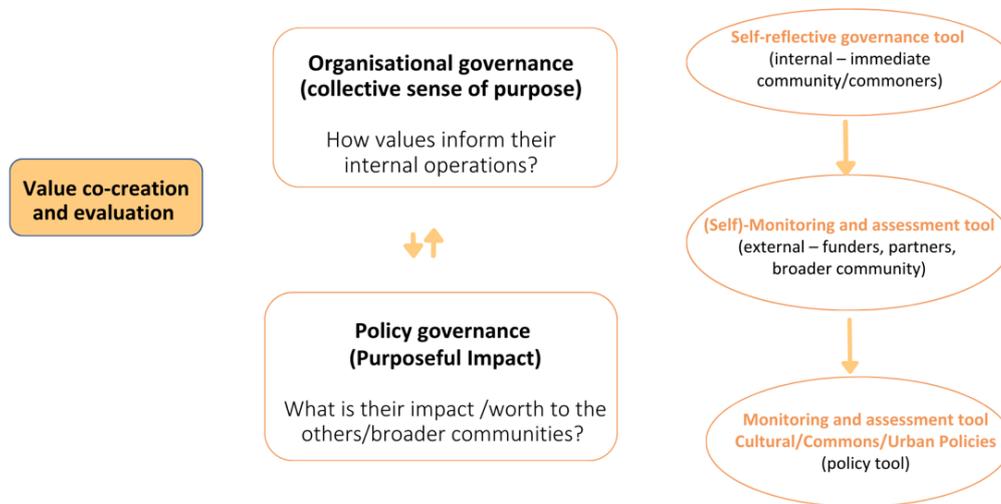
Expected contributions for the commons-related organisations/initiatives

◊ Building a **collective sense of purpose** among community members;

◊ Building **collaborative partnerships** with external stakeholders based on shared values;

◊ Identifying **differences in values** between different stakeholders' groups - e.g. identifying gaps and challenges;

◊ Reflecting on **organisations' dynamics**, and **monitoring and assessing changes**;

◊ Obtaining **constructive feedback** on the effectiveness and appropriateness of interventions/projects in the search for best practices.

Expected contributions for Funders and Policymakers

◊ Helps to **avoid policy instrumentalisation** of commons-related practices by identifying the fundamentals of the commons-related practices;

◊ Offers **a framework to inform funding and governance models** that reinforce foundational values;

◊ Provides a **broader framework** for monitoring and assessing impact **of value-driven cultural commons.**

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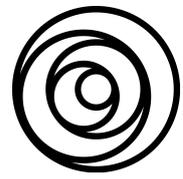
2. The VBA Framework

2.1. VBA rationales in a nutshell

Current impact assessments often prioritise quantifiable metrics, yet fail to capture the qualitative and subjective dimensions of cultural and social value. This trend towards numerical data and efficiency overlooks the lived experiences and diverse valuations of individuals and communities, which are central to understanding the true impact of cultural activities.

The Value-Based Approach (VBA) critiques the overemphasis on market efficiency and quantifiable results, and demonstrates how to articulate, valorise and evaluate social and cultural values, as well as the changes in those values due to interventions and projects.

The VBA proposes a shift towards recognising and valorising values on the grounds that a more accurate understanding of what people consider important personally and collectively improves their well-being. Values answer the question: **what is important** to you in a specific good, a practice or behaviour[1]?

The QE aims to compensate for the limitations of current measurement frameworks by providing a lens through which **cultural and social values** can be better understood, thus allowing for a more nuanced and accurate assessment of cultural impact. It compels the protagonists to clarify the values at stake, and the values that they would like to see generated in the goods, practices and behaviours as a result of their action. It is designed to not only capture the values realised, but also a change in values, as that is often the objective of an intervention. For example, people may value the interaction of art and science, yet because of the project that is to be evaluated they may value such an interaction more. A desired change in values is the intended impact that the quality evaluator will capture, contrary to other impact measurements.

To capture the multifaceted nature of values, the VBA employs **a five-spheres model**: market, government, social, domestic (oikos) and cultural, each driven by distinct

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[1] When behaviour is at stake, values are also called virtues. When they are attributed to goods and practices they could also be called qualities.

institutional logics and practices (Figure 2). This framework highlights the **dynamic and context-dependent nature of value**, recognising that it varies across individuals and situations, and that the practices within, and interactions between, these spheres are crucial for understanding how values are created and realised. The VBA offers a holistic framework to understand and assess **the creation, affirmation and change of shared values and practices**.

Figure 2. Five spheres model
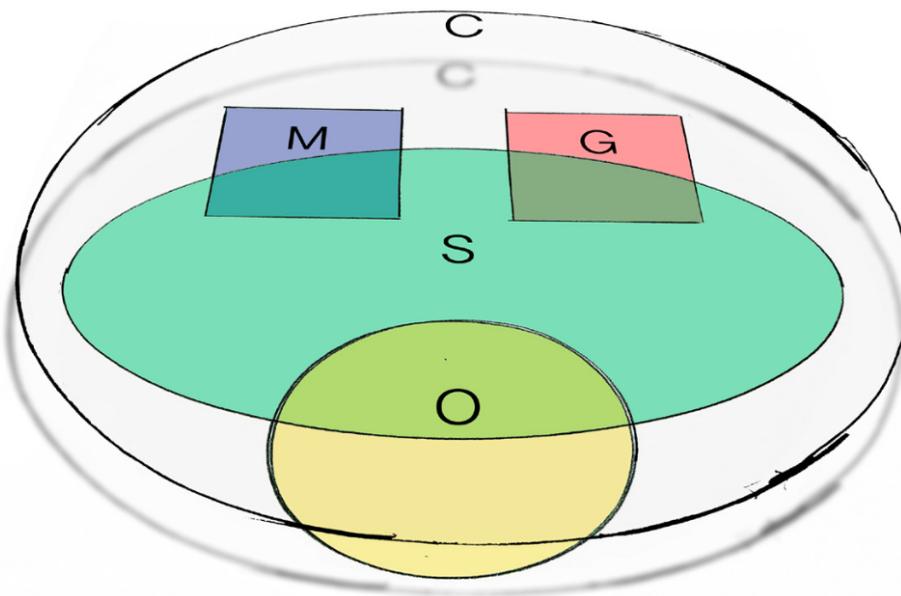
Source: (Klamer, 2017).

The emphasis in the GLAMMONS project is on cultural and social values, goods and practices.

Cultural goods, shared values and practices: Cultural goods are characterized by their capacity to yield a combination of economic (financial), social, societal and cultural values, but their most important quality is their role in sense-making practices, e.g. cultural practices.

VBA stresses the evolving nature of values; people have values, but such values only become meaningful when they get valorised in practices. These practices are often shared or common. Friendship is one example: a person may value friendship, and that person will realise that value only when the friendship comes about in a practice

shared with another person, i.e. the friend. The value of a certain piece of knowledge comes about by participating in the common practice of that knowledge.

Cultural commons and the VBA: The shift towards a constructivist perspective on commons, which emphasises 'commoning' as a dynamic and socially-embedded process, has opened up new ways of conceptualising cultural commons. Unlike natural commons, cultural commons are not simply material resources that are collectively owned and managed; cultural commons are practices, indeed common practices that exist by virtue of the participation in, and contributions of, a variety of people. Cultural common practices bring about social and cultural values. Their governance will vary, as will will their mode of financing.

Evaluation and Valorisation: The common idea is that valuation is a process through which people ascribe values to goods and practices. We adopt here the differences between valuation as valorisation and evaluation. **Valorisation** refers to the process of how values become real. When people value adventure and curiosity, they valorise those values by doing adventurous things and being curious as to what happens. An **evaluation** is a way to ascribe a worth to a thing based on well-established criteria. Was the activity as adventurous as we intended? How curious were we really?

A **crucial distinction** in the VBA is between **purposes and instrumental goals**. Confusing these leads to inaccurate evaluation. For instance, the number of productions a cultural organisation presents in a year does not constitute its core purpose; it is, in fact, oftentimes an imposition of funding bodies. The evaluation approach under the VBA will be defined artistically by the Artistic Director of the organisation. A more commercially-driven organisation will normally present a lower number of productions, thus benefitting from economies of scale, while a more experimental one will present a higher number of productions, allowing for the exposition of more diverse and differentiated works.
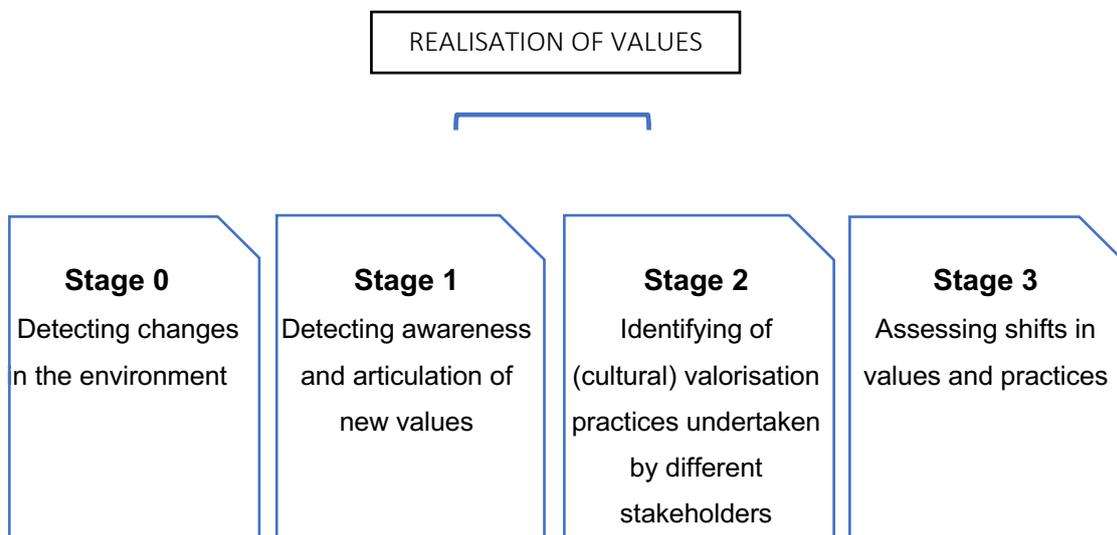
3. The Quality Evaluator (QE) step by step

To assess and understand the **cultural embeddedness, i.e.shared values and practices** that shape different commons and commons-related organisations within GLAMs, we have designed the Quality Evaluator + (QE+), a VBA-based methodology used to (Figure 3):

1. Identify Core Value Clusters (Purposes).
2. Identify Shared Practices & Stakeholders.
3. Assess value change over time.

Figure 3. QE+ stage

REALISATION OF VALUES

| Stage 0	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Detecting changes n the environment	Detecting awareness and articulation of new values	Identifying of (cultural) valorisation practices undertaken by different stakeholders	Assessing shifts in values and practices

3.1. Stages for Application

Stage 1: Identify Core Value Clusters (Purposes)

VBA concept of Value

Values are determined by both **biological and social factors** (Scharfbillig et al. 2021).

The VBA emphases the **evolving nature of values** - values are not constructed in isolation, but through social interactions (cf. Scharfbillig et al. 2021).
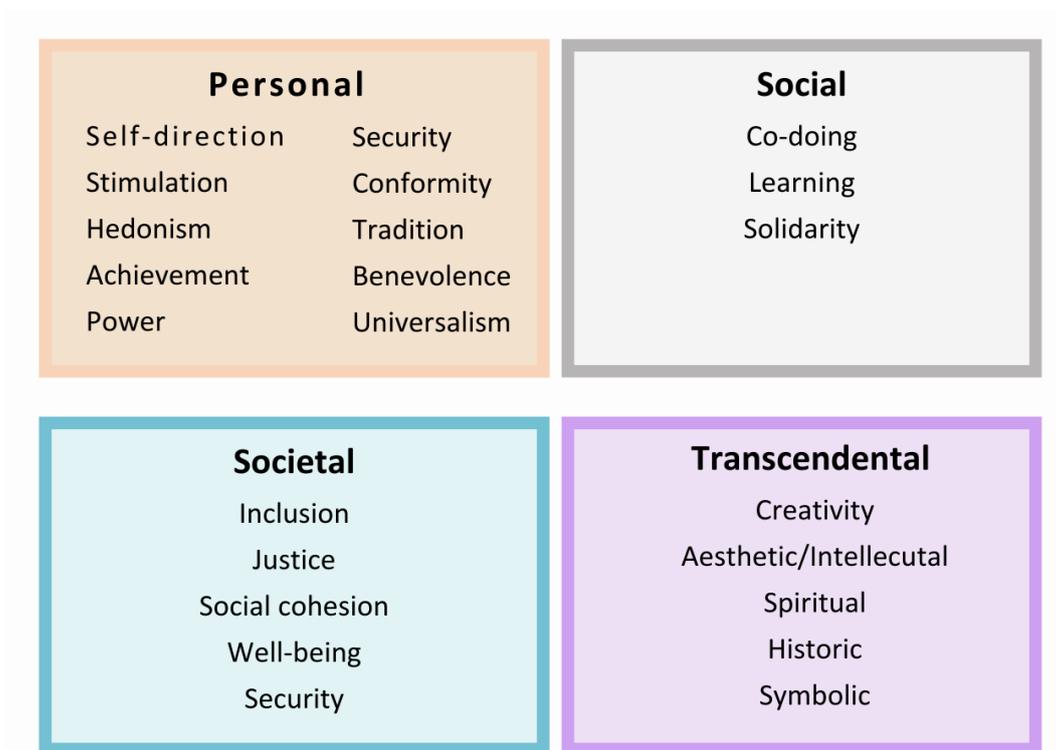
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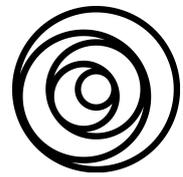
Individuals are considered as **aspirational human beings** whose choices are shaped by creative imagination, expressive reasoning and moral reflection (Wincewicz-Price 2025).

VBA clusters of values

VBA considers four types of values: personal, social, societal, transcendental (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Clusters of values

PERSONAL VALUES: value as a driver for individual behaviour (e.g. creativity, autonomy, craftmanship).

Values drive behaviour when they are both **relevant in a given context** and **personally significant.** On a personal level, they are defined as goals or motivation (Schwartz 1992). The key factor in shaping attitudes or guiding behaviour is **the level of importance (worth)** or priority given to a value. This is specifically relevant when individuals experience multiple values during a specific action, meaning they have to balance competing values when forming attitudes and making choices.
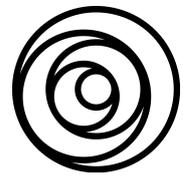
Schwartz assigns different characteristics to values, including their **connection to emotions**, their **capacity to inspire action** and **their function as benchmark for decision-making**. For example, personal values can be associated with characteristics as illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Personal values

Each value is described by different proxy, representing different goals (Table 1).

Table 1. Basic human values and their defining goals

Value	Defining goal
Self-Direction	Independent thought and action, expressed in choosing, creating and exploring
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty and challenge in life
Hedonism	Pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards
Power	Control or dominance over people and resources
Security	Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships and of self
Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms
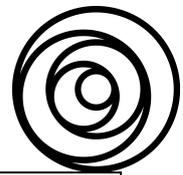
Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides

Source: Scharfbillig et al. 2021

Examples in GLAMMONS: Table 2 summarizes a few illustrations for each value based on the different case studies. An extended list with commons-relevant values and their proxies can be found [here](#).

Table 2. Examples of personal value proxies relevant to commons-oriented initiatives/organisations

Value	Case studies	Explanation
Flourishing	OHG[2], SciArt[3], HHSH[4]	OHG – joy and positive emotions from storytelling; SciArt – rediscovery of imagination through collaboration; HHSH – healing and intrinsic motivation through heritage.
Artistic Freedom / Autonomy	LC[5], SM[6], FP[7], AB[8], SciArt	LC – commitment to producing "good art;" SM – bodily autonomy and freedom of expression; FP and AB – uninterrupted artistic freedom; SciArt – free imagination, unconstrained by disciplines.
Integrity	OHG, LC, FP, SciArt, HHSH	OHG – honesty and trustworthiness in storytelling; LC – credibility and accountability; FP – authenticity in alternative art practices; SciArt – honesty and authenticity in collaboration; HHSH – rigor and trust in heritage work.

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[2] OHG: The Oral History Group
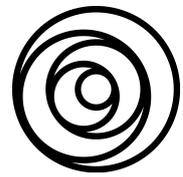[3] SciArt: Joint Research Centre SciArt Project
[4] The Heritage House of South Holland
[5] Le Consortium
[6] The Schwules Museum
[7] The Free Palace
[8] The Associazione Bastione

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SOCIAL VALUES (e.g. collaboration, belonging) and **SOCIETAL VALUES** (e.g. justice, democracy, sustainability).

Value formation is not purely individualistic. It is **formed in relation to others, engagement, reflection and social context** (cf Scharfbillig et al. 2021).

The concept of Adam Smith '**impartial spectator'** is relevant here (Wincewicz-Price 2025). People do not form values in isolation, but reflect on how their actions align with societal expectations, which shapes their understanding of the good.

Social values are group-related values, and are shared among more or less familiar people (teams, colleagues, family, friends, communities) (Figure 6).

Societal values are related to broader society, and characterise actions of people with people who are often unknown to us (citizens, broader communities) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Social and Societal values

Societal	Social
Inclusion	Co-doing
Justice	Learning
Social cohesion	Solidarity
Well-being	
Security	
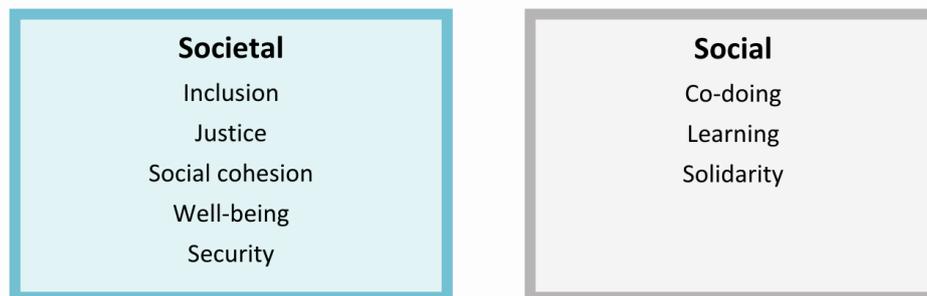
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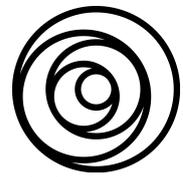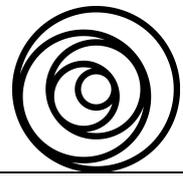
Value	Case studies	Explanation
Mutual Collaboration	OHG, LC, SM, FP, AB, SciArt, HHSH	OHG – reciprocity in learning and sharing; LC – collaboration to achieve goals; SM – mutual support within LGTB+ community; FP – supporting emerging artists; AB – cooperation among artists; SciArt – cross-fertilisation between disciplines; HHSH – co-curation with citizens.
Sense of Belonging / Community	OHG, SM, FP, AB, SciArt, HHSH	OHG – empathy and shared purpose; SM – care and love within the LGTB+ communities; FP – a "home" for alternative artists; AB – the invisible thread holding the collective together; SciArt – belonging through collaborative learning; HHSH – storytelling and community dinners.
Sustainable / Innovative Governance	OHG, LC, FP, AB, SciArt, HHSH	OHG – coping with volunteer limits; LC – balancing organisational independence with constraints; FP – continuity in operation while non-commercial; AB – financial stability vs autonomy; SciArt – governance to endure uncertainty; HHSH – support for small museums.
Societal Relevance	OHG, LC, SM, FP, AB, SciArt, HHSH	OHG – contributing to historical discourse; LC – role in cultural and social development;

Value	Case studies	Explanation
		SM – LGTB+ justice and advocacy; FP – enriching the city; AB – modelling independent cultural production; SciArt – addressing global issues through art-science; HHSH – archaeology linked to migration.

TRANSCENDENTAL/CULTURAL VALUES (e.g. beauty, truth, history, etc.)

Transcendental values are values that go beyond individual preferences or societal norms, and are often associated with **universal, timeless and higher-order principles**.

They are considered **fundamental to human existence, morality and spiritual understanding**, often inspiring individuals toward a deeper sense of meaning and purpose, and providing a deeper connection to human experience. One can think of transcendental values such as beauty, truth, aesthetic experience, faith, historical relevance, freedom and love.

To certain extent, some cultural values can be considered as transcendental, particularly those tied to universal truths, beauty, harmony, morality and spiritual elevation (Figure 7). Many of them are contextual and socially constructed. Whether art and culture are transcendental depends on their purpose, impact and depth of meaning.
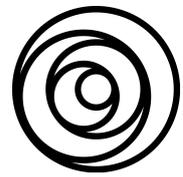
Figure 7. Transcendental/Cultural values
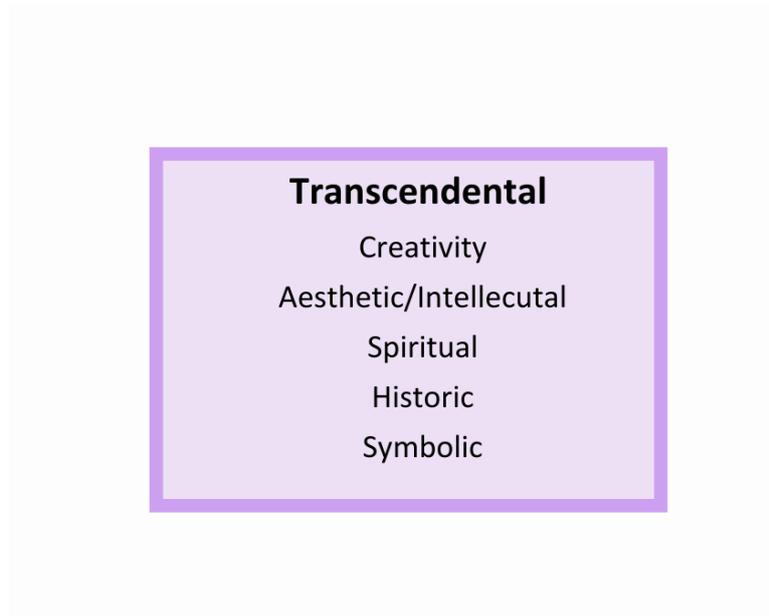
Examples in GLAMMONS: Table 4 summarizes a few illustrations for each value based on the different case studies.

Table 4. Examples of transcendental/cultural value proxies relevant to commons-orientated initiatives/organisations

Value	Case studies	Explanation
Knowledge	OHG, SM, SciArt, HHSH	OHG – preserving oral traditions and histories; SM – archiving LGTB+ histories; SciArt – transdisciplinary knowledge; HHSH – archaeological "multivocality."
Artistic Experimentation	LC, SM, FP, AB, SciArt, HHSH	LC – bricolage and invention; SM – provoking openness to change; FP – experimenting with alternative forms; AB – experimentation central to mission; SciArt – freedom to fail in art-science experiment HHSH – participatory formats such as "archaeological dinners."

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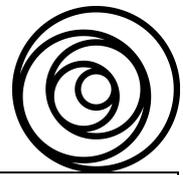
Value	Case studies	Explanation
Artistic Autonomy	LC, SM, FP, AB, SciArt	LC – producing "good art" independently; SM – free expression; FP – uninterrupted artistic expression outside the mainstream; AB – independence from institutional/market pressures; SciArt – imagination beyond disciplinary constraints.
Innovation	LC, SM, FP, AB, SciArt, HHSH	LC – organisational invention; SM – openness to change; FP – experimental artistic diversity; AB – innovation linked to artistic practice; SciArt – novel approaches at the art-science interface; HHSH – openness to new engagement methods.

Value Map:

Mapping the current value clusters of each commons within GLAMs supports the development of a Value map which combines all types of values and identifies how markedly different values are prioritised, as illustrated in the following example (Figure 8).

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Figure 8. Example of a value map
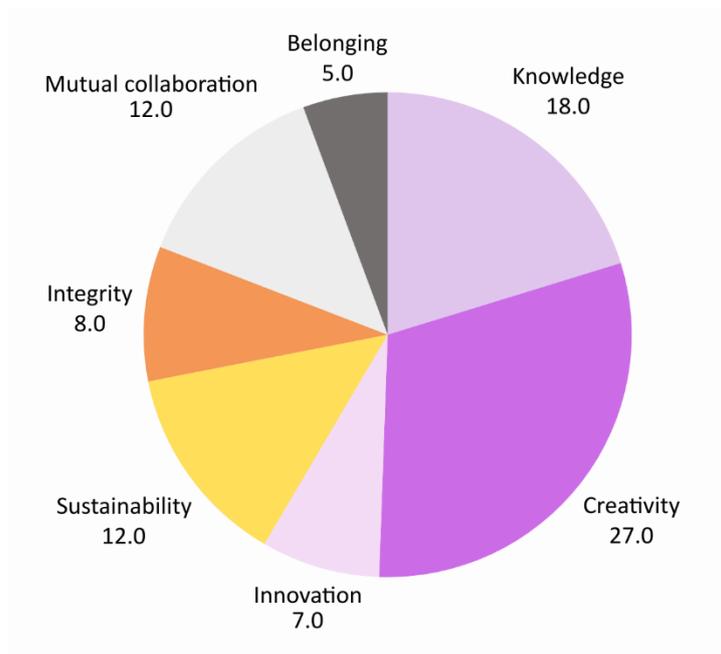
Stage 2: Identify Shared Practices & Stakeholders

VBA understanding of stakeholders and shared practices

From the commons perspective, the practice is defined as (Euler 2018, Macey 2010):

◊ **Paths of interactions** between agent, structure and context are at the core of the commons;

◊ **Shared values** shape shared expectations, which results in **construction and evolution of meanings**;

◊ **Specific functions** of each type of stakeholder;

◊ **Systemic evaluation**

From the VBA perspective, cultural practices are a shared good (Klamer 2017) defined by:

◊ Process of **constructing value** (Vatin 2013)

◊ **Quality** of the practice/experience goods (Dewey 1934, Crossick and Kaszynska 2017);

◊ **Dynamic relations** of stakeholders.
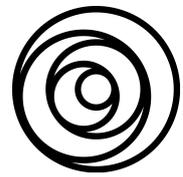
VBA types of stakeholders

Organisations identify the people who benefit from or value their work, i.e. stakeholders. These include internal groups such as employees and volunteers, as well as external ones, such as visitors, community members, partners, local leaders and the media.

Values and Stakeholder Map

After defining shared values, participants identify the stakeholders involved and the practices used to achieve those values. They also consider which values each stakeholder can assess - for instance, casual visitors to a cultural event may share emotional reactions but lack the expertise to judge performance quality, which requires feedback from experts or regular attendees. At this stage of the QE, stakeholders' expectations are assessed, often through surveys or panels. They may also be asked to rank the importance of different values. Once the event takes place, various stakeholders - organizers, volunteers, performers, supporters, funders and the local community - contribute, participate or observe.

Values, Stakeholders and Shared practices Map

The next step is to determine which shared practices, and with which partners, the organisation will use to enact these values into action. Values are shaped through interaction with others, as cultural practices develop through social exchange, negotiation and reinterpretation. This results in a Map that integrates the various values and their characteristics (proxies), different groups of stakeholders and shared practices. The shared practices can be distinguished between those which relate to governance, knowledge/culture production and have social and/or societal relevance. For example, Figure 9 illustrates the mapping for one of the commons-related case studies of GLAMMONS.

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Figure 9. Values, stakeholders and shared practices (GLAMMONS example)

Stage 3: Assess Value Changes Over Time

The third step in the VBA process is to assess whether the values defined at the start remain stable, change or come into conflict over time. The evaluation looks at the previously identified values and qualities to see how they are influenced by the project's implementation. Any impact is reflected in shifts in values toward the intended direction. It also examines the alignment or gap between what stakeholders value and what they actually experience, since impact is essentially about value change. Additionally, the organisation reviews how its decisions - such as governance, funding and partnerships - affect these values and whether shifts occur.

3.2. Evaluation Methods and Principles

3.2.1. QE methods

The QE uses a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data.

Qualitative methods include **interviews** and **focus groups** with key stakeholders such as artists, cultural managers, community members, funders, etc.

- o Participants are invited by email, with interviews lasting 45–90 minutes and focus groups 2–4 hours.
- o Interviews follow a question guide but allow for open discussion, while focus groups encourage interaction, shared perspectives and collective insights.

These sessions explore values, motivations and cultural practices, helping to identify each organisation's "value map" (see Stage 1).

- o Participants are asked to describe (they also can draw) their vision for achieving specific goals;
- o Then they are asked to highlight the key qualities - or value attributes - that define this vision.

The process is collaborative - researchers and participants work together to refine and articulate core values.

- o This co-creation ensures that stakeholders align on the principles guiding the organisation's activities and future development.

Quantitative methods: Following the interviews and focus groups, each organisation receives an online survey. The survey has two main purposes: (1) **to confirm the values** identified during the focus groups, and (2) **to assess their relative importance** using a quantifiable scale.

Two types of questions are designed for this.

The first type of questions presents respondents with a list of core values identified in Stage 1 of QE (e.g. knowledge, creativity, collaboration). Each value is explained with short descriptions and attributes to clarify its meaning in the specific organisational context. For example, in the template on various values relevant to the commons-

orientated initiatives'/organisation's "creativity" is described through inspiration, imagination and openness, making it more tangible.

Respondents are then asked to allocate 100 points across the listed values, based on how significant each is within their organisation. The more points assigned, the more important the value. This approach compels participants to prioritise, and the aggregated results are used to build the organisation's collective value map (Figure 8).

Second type of question: For each core value, five to six related value attributes (called proxies) are developed. Respondents rate the importance of these proxies on a Likert-type scale. For example, the participants in one of the commons-related case studies define the value *Sense of Belonging* through proxies such as togetherness, security, lasting relationships, care, empathy, shared identity, and shared purpose.

Data analysis of all interviews and focus groups is conducted with relevant software (e.g. Atlas.ti), which allows thematic analysis, which then enables the identification and interpretation of key patterns within qualitative data.

3.2.2. Evaluation specificities

The preparation of the surveys requires that some crucial questions be asked, namely:

◊ What is **the core issue** we are trying to address?

For each instance of application, there will always be a crucial question, a problem that must be solved, an aspect that requires clarification. This is a question that has to do with the kind of project, program or political measure under scrutiny. It requires a deep understanding of the project, clarity on the why and what the project is good for, as well as research, including the study of the organisation that is behind the project.

The evaluator often needs to explore the why question with the main protagonists to determine the purpose. When they say that the objective is to raise revenues, the evaluator needs to know what more revenue is good for. If they say that they can do more, the evaluator repeats the question: what is that good for? It might be that they articulate the qualities of artistic practices that

they are engaged in, or they may indicate that social or societal practices are their purpose. If the ambition is to contribute to artistic practices, then the questioning will be different from the questioning in the case of a social or societal ambition.

In this initial stage, the evaluator also needs clarity about the relevant stakeholders. Who is best able to judge various aspects of the project, and how relevant are they? The identification of stakeholders determines the samples that we take.

◊ How do we construct **specific questions** that do indeed address the issue identified earlier? The connection between each specific question and the objective of the survey has to be unquestionable and clear.

◊ What **kind of survey** best addresses the issue we want to tackle? The VBA method treats large amounts of information in numerical form, so questions are usually closed, using multiple choice questions, Likert-scales or a rating scale. The main concerns in the formulation of the questions are that the language is clear and simple, the questions are specific and that each question addresses one sole issue.

◊ Which **survey mode** best fits the VBA? Online surveys are often the ones that best fit the VBA method because they are cost-effective, and they ensure a wide reach, quick data collection and easy data analysis.

Regarding the focus groups, the aim is to gather qualitative data from small groups of people that are guided by a moderator, who should be a trained and well-prepared researcher. Similar to the surveys, the **core issue** to be tackled must be defined **rigorously** and give rise to a discussion guide, composed of several questions that will maintain the focus of the conversation. In the case of the focus groups, greater leeway should be given, so that more qualitative information can be elicited. This is the main reason why the person conducting the focus groups should be prepared and able to accommodate the twists and turns in the themes that are discussed by the

participants. However, the researcher should also be able to redirect the conversation towards the issues that are relevant to the project and its evaluation.
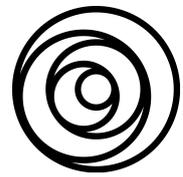
4. How-to Guides

4.1. How-to Guide: for Communities and Leaders

Leaders of projects and activists in communities will benefit from a value-based evaluation in at least two ways:

(1) In the initial phase they will be encouraged **to pose the why question**: why are they doing what they are doing? What is all they do good for? They will also be asked to identify the stakeholders.

(2) Because the evaluation starts with their own assessment of the relevant purpose and important values, they **keep ownership of the project**. This evaluation is not imposed by an external party: they are in control. The outcomes are such that they provide critical feedback on how they are performing. Are they doing the right things? What could they do better? Is the project that they evaluate doing what it is supposed to do? Are the values of the relevant stakeholders changing in the desired direction?

The QE+ will support the leadership by requiring a clearly articulated mission statement, including relevant values and important practices. In our experience, this phase may be confrontational at first. One may have formulated an inspiring mission ("we are touching the world," "we are changing the world, we are adventurous") to discover that such a mission cannot be evaluated. Whom can one ask whether their world has changed? Is the change for the better? In what way? To enable an evaluation the mission needs to be more specific and the relevant stakeholders need to be clearly defined. It often takes several sessions to obtain the clarity required for the evaluation.

Once they understand the procedures, the protagonists will see how they can benefit from a good evaluation. Conducting the evaluation calls for some courage. The evaluation may expose the ineffectiveness of a project, or expose the inaccuracy of the claims that they are used to making. ("We had a few wonderful exhibitions with great artists, but the evaluation showed that the relevant stakeholders hardly took notice, and were certainly not affected as we had hoped.")

The value-based evaluation is always constructive and supportive when conducted in an extensive and scientifically robust way.

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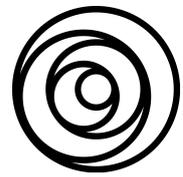
Inform Governance and Financing Strategies: in a nutshell

Present Value/Stakeholders/Shared Practices Maps and qualitative insights to:

◊ Boards of organisations.

◊ Funders (as part of reporting frameworks).

◊ Policymakers (to support evidence-based cultural and commons policies).

Use insights to inform:

◊ How governance models align with core values.

◊ How funding mechanisms can support (rather than distort) the realisation of values.

◊ How to avoid value "crowding out" (e.g. through inappropriate commercialisation).

4.2. How-to Guide: for Funders & Policymakers

Funders and policymakers deal with the intricate relation between goals and resources, so it is crucial that a rigorous definition of the objectives of the intended cultural policy is achieved, as well as an effective evaluation of its results. In terms of either private or public intervention in the cultural sector, the establishment of a policy is an obligatory first step. Policymakers are, therefore, compelled to consider where they want to be by the end of the program they will implement. Not missing the target should, at this stage, be the main concern.

The VBA can assist in the design and the implementation of cultural policies under two perspectives:

◊ As a **method for establishing policy objectives** and subsequently writing adequate calls for proposals.

◊ As a **method for guiding** the beneficiaries of these policies in the direction of achieving the defined policy objectives, and subsequently evaluating results.

The VBA allows for policymakers to decide on their own value map, defining which values are most relevant for them and, therefore, which values they would like to see realised after the policy is implemented.

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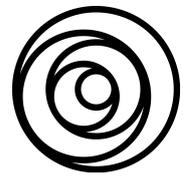
The writing of a call for proposals is a crucial moment in the process of implementing a policy, because it defines the guiding lines to which applicants will respond. It is not enough to have a well-defined, well-thought through policy if you are, subsequently, unable to elicit relevant projects. Policymakers using the VBA can use their value map as the basis for what they will ask of the applicants. In this case, the policymaker will attract the kinds of projects that will realise their values.

After the selection process is completed, or as part of the selection process, funders can ask successful applicants to draw their initial value map and immediately check that against the value map of the funder. Thus, course corrections may be made even before the project enters the implementation stage. Then, during and after the implementation of the funded project, for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation, the value map of the project can be updated and checked against not only the value map of the funder, but also the initial value map of the project. The whole process allows for clear and constant monitoring of the realisation of values, thus promoting an alignment of the project with the goals defined by the policymakers.

Regarding the cultural commons in particular, they usually occupy a space of interaction with funders and policymakers who tend to be more independent and flexible than other cultural organisations. The VBA allows for projects to self-monitor the realisation of their values, providing space for the commons to self-manage value priorities. In this case, the construction of value maps for both the commons and for the funders can gain even greater importance, because it may be the sole mediation mechanism between the two parties.

Inform Funders and Policymaking: In a nutshell

In Calls for Proposals

- ◊ Provide an initial Value Map
- ◊ Describe how governance and financing models are designed to protect/enhance values
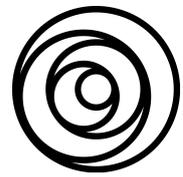
In Monitoring/Evaluation

◊   Updated Value Map

◊   Narrative on evolution of values and governance adaptations

In Policy Design: support funding schemes that:

◊   Allow flexibility to enable cultural commons to self-manage value priorities

◊   Reward initiatives that demonstrate strong alignment between values and governance

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