

## Québec Roadmap: Towards a New Urban Project (2022-2024)

**COLLABORATIVE NETWORK (priority thematic 6):** Intangible heritage as a resource for urban rehabilitation

**Pilot City: Brugge (Belgium)**

### Action Plan

#### Introduction

The Collaborative Networks, as "communities of practice", aim to create a space for free and creative reflection and discussion that organizes and enables constructive dialogue. It is within this privileged framework that OWHC member cities will be able to learn from each other and create a common, shared culture.

The work they produce will form the basic material for the Cordoba Symposium (September 2024).

#### Concept and objectives

The *Priority Thematic* brought by Brugge, highlights the fundamental aspect of the Beguinage as part of its heritage. With the aim of rehabilitating the compound as well as strengthening its identity and the sense of belonging to the inhabitants, the city of Brugge intends to develop a Master plan to preserve the built structures through the development of a unique urban approach, capitalizing on the intangible heritage values of the Beguinage.

Looking ahead to the 17<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the OWHC, to be held in Cordoba in September 2024, the Collaborative Network has the following objectives:

- Inventorying and interpretation of the intangible values
- Capitalizing on intangible heritage for the rehabilitation and revitalization of religious or spiritual places
- Preserving the intangible qualities of the property by strengthening the local identity and its specificities.

The aim of the Collaborative Network is to evaluate and interpret the intangible heritage values associated with the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, in order to ensure a better understanding and preservation of the integrity and authenticity of the site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, while promoting its continued use and adaptation to the modern sustainability and functionality requirements. This integrated tangible and intangible heritage approach aims to provide a thorough overview of the property's qualities and potential for the elaboration of a more comprehensive Master plan and revitalization project.

#### Presentation of the issues at stake of the thematic

The case of Brugge's Beguinage raises different elements, highlighting the needs of the Pilot City for expertise in the fields of tourism, religious sites, intangible heritage, heritage interpretation, and others, which may assist in finding strategies to address the following challenges:

- Contradictions of use and purpose currently impacting the Beguinage:
  - o Haven of peace against mass tourism.
  - o Women-only housing against the norm of contemporary living, which makes it unfeasible to limit access to housing on this basis.

- Interest of Brugge in having public consultation in order to gather information about the current meaning of the place for the population of Brugge, the spirit of the place:
  - o The need to choose from the different aspects of the place that the city of Brugge wants to highlight to orient the citizen participation.
  - o Assess, define the intangible heritage values of the property linked to its OUV.

To address the different elements raised by the Thematic, Brugge hopes to benefit from the shared experiences of member cities within a Collaborative Network treating the following subjects:

- Awareness and management of the intangible dimension of world heritage
- Application of a master plan for the world heritage site which resulted from participatory processes
- Implementation of projects that highlight and critically examine heritage sites' identity
- Application of the Quebec Declaration on the Preservation of the Spirit of Place (2008)
- Assessment of the approach adopted by Brugge and suggestions for improvement.

The Collaborative Network will be the ideal place to determine how to organise, through a participatory process, the identification of the intangible heritage values of the Beguinage, the development of strategies for the evaluation of these values, and the integration of these intangible values in the Master plan of the site.

### Schedule and calendar

An international workshop will launch the Collaborative Network, the date is still to be determined. It will be the occasion to share experiences about immaterial heritage care in the frame of world cultural heritage, and to adopt a critical vision of the working method suggested by Brugge and presented during the workshop.

- Day 1
  - o Morning: Plenary presentation of the situation and contextualization of the Priority Thematic, followed by a site visit.
  - o Afternoon: Workshop with open discussion, and presentation of experiences by the participating cities and invited international experts.
- Day 2
  - o Morning: Workshop with open discussion for the identification of the problematic and potential ways these could be addressed.
  - o Afternoon: Wrap-up session and writing of conclusions, recommendations, composition and organizational structure of the Collaborative Network, as well as the drafting of a provisional planning for the following meetings.

Following meetings will be held virtually according to the provisional planning schedule agreed upon and adjusted as needed.

- December 2023
  - o Presentation of the first results of the project: the identification of the sites' values.
  - o Discussion about the strategy to integrate these values in the Master plan.
- April 2024
  - o Participation of the architect who will make the Master plan.
  - o Assessment of the strategy to integrate the intangible values in the Master plan.
- June 2024
  - o Presentation of the draft Master plan and preparation of the Congress to be held in Cordoba.
- September 2024
  - o Sharing of the results at the Congress in Cordoba.