



Dissonant Heritage and War
Conservation and Communication
of a Difficult Legacy

Co.Co.War Handbook

Managing Dissonant Heritage



Finanziato
dall'Unione europea
NextGenerationEU



Ministero
dell'Università
e della Ricerca



Italiadomani
PIANO NAZIONALE
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ
DI BOLOGNA



UNIVERSITÀ
POLITECNICA
DELLE MARCHE



Politecnico
di Torino

Dipartimento
di Architettura e Design



Co.Co.War Handbook

Managing Dissonant Heritage



Finanziato
dall'Unione europea
NextGenerationEU



Italiadomani
PIANO NAZIONALE
DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA



**Ministero
dell'Università
e della Ricerca**



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
**UNIVERSITÀ
DI BOLOGNA**



UNIVERSITÀ
POLITECNICA
DELLE MARCHE



**Politecnico
di Torino**
Dipartimento
di Architettura e Design





Dissonant Heritage and War
Conservation and Communication
of a Difficult Legacy

Co.Co.War - Handbook

Managing Dissonant Heritage

Authoring research unit:

Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna
Dipartimento di Architettura - DA

Leila Signorelli
Alessia Zampini
Valentina Gili
Maurizio Villata

First Edition: February 2026

DOI <https://doi.org/10.6092/unibo/amsacta/8912>

Project website: <https://cocowar.com>

This open-access volume is an outcome of the PRIN project “Co.Co.War - Dissonant Heritage and War. Conservation and Communication of a Difficult Legacy” (MUR 2022YHNX9M_001 - CUP J53D23013690006), funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research and coordinated by Prof. Leila Signorelli. Other project outcomes include: “Co.Co.War - Atlas. Mapping Dissonant Heritage”; “Co.Co.War - Glossary. Dissonant Heritage concepts and terms”; “Co.Co.War - Community Toolkit. Understanding the (Dis)Value”.



This volume is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

“Co.Co.War — Dissonant Heritage and War. Conservation and Communication of a Difficult Legacy” is a National Research Program (Progetto di Rilevante Interesse Nazionale — PRIN) funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research. The project is carried out by an interdisciplinary network involving three Italian universities: Alma Mater Studiorum — Università di Bologna, Università Politecnica delle Marche, and Politecnico di Torino. The project investigates the phenomenon of dissonant heritage in contexts shaped by war, conflict, and contested pasts, focusing on architectural and cultural assets whose meanings are unstable, conflictual, or socially disputed, and whose interpretation, conservation, and communication are often exposed to ethical, political, and social tensions. Co.Co.War aims to develop innovative, value-based, and critically grounded approaches to the study and management of this complex heritage by integrating conservation practices with interpretative and communicative strategies. Rather than seeking to resolve dissonance or to stabilize heritage meanings, the project acknowledges conflict, ambiguity, and plurality as structural conditions of these sites. Through comparative analysis, methodological experimentation, and interdisciplinary collaboration, Co.Co.War explores how dissonant heritage can be responsibly investigated, preserved, and communicated, while addressing emerging risks such as interpretative conflicts, polarized narratives, and the instrumentalization of memory.

This publication forms part of an interconnected set of research outputs produced within the Co.Co.War project. It is intended to be considered together with: “Co.Co.War - Atlas. Mapping Dissonant Heritage” (<https://doi.org/10.6092/unibo/amsacta/8909>); “Co.Co.War - Glossary. Dissonant Heritage Concepts and Terms” (<https://doi.org/10.6092/unibo/amsacta/8910>); “Co.Co.War - Community Toolkit. Understanding the (Dis) Value” (<https://doi.org/10.6092/unibo/amsacta/8911>).

Co.Co.War - Handbook

Preface

The Handbook Managing Dissonant Heritage is a practical and conceptual guide developed within the Co.Co.War project to support the understanding and management of dissonant heritage. It offers guidelines that focus on conservation and communication processes related to built heritage and sites. Attention is given to cases involving architecture, landscapes, and built environments that carry a sense of friction between the values of today's democratic society and their former historical meanings.

Referring to how the concept has evolved in the literature through milestone contributions¹, the term "Dissonant Heritage", (see also Contested/Contentious/Difficult Heritage) refers to forms of heritage that, although recognised as meaningful in the present, are marked by tension and contestation due to their association with conflicting memories, narratives, and representations of the past or, in some case, might represent the tangible traces of painful or shameful episodes in a community's past.

Such heritage can embody tensions between diverse groups and interpretative frameworks or provoke pain when representing the memory of cruelty and tragedy. The presence of 'disvalues', can undermine processes of reconciliation, reopen historical fractures, unsettle hegemonic narratives, generate social discomfort, disrupt the present, and not least influence the desire to preserve the cultural asset².

The Co.Co.War project build on the idea that managing Dissonant Heritage in a careful, aware and respectful way, without the impossible and unrealistic pretension of resolving heritage dissonance, but rather of understanding and framing it, can help a process of negotiation with the past, set a liminal space for building a real dialogue, easing relations among divided and divergent communities, and paving the ground for a long term reconciliation. All this actions aim at addressing aware and effective conservation project.

The research underlying this output focused on analysing a significant

sample of cases³ involving forms of dissonance due to real and/or interpretative conflicts, with the aim of identifying patterns of manifestation, lessons, practices and visions capable of guiding interventions on heritage whose perception is burdened by difficult memories. Consultation of these sources, combined with an extensive literature review⁴ on risk management, conflict, preventive and planned conservation of cultural heritage, and manipulated communication, has enabled the identification of a work process intended to provide a roadmap and concrete support for a deeper understanding of the dynamics underlying the cultural processes that lead to the recognition of this heritage, with the aim of defining Conservation and Management Plans capable of developing strategies and actions to guide interventions on a wide range of assets characterized by conflicting, divisive, and painful meanings.

The originality of this work lies mainly in the choice to focus the analysis on the phases of investigation, recognition and operation relating to dissonance.

The elements proposed for integration into the process normally used for the recognition of the value of cultural assets⁵ and their conservation and enhancement are shaped by the specific needs and characteristics of dissonant sites.

Namely: the parts dedicated to understanding the conflictual context and how the root causes unfold; the analysis of the direct and indirect consequences that the perception of dissonance causes on the building itself; an assessment of the “values” and “disvalues”, the latter being perceived and their possible transformation into opportunities; the recognition of specific strategies previously implemented to deal with these effects and the planning and implementation of those that would be desirable to implement in the future, depending on the stability of the context and the human, economic and time resources/allocation available.

GLOSSARY — To ensure a consistent focus on content and meanings, a Glossary⁶ has been developed. Each **green bold word** in this document refers to its definition in the Glossary.

[1] See Tunbridge & Asworth 1996; Macdonald 2009; Lähdesmäki et al. 2019; Logan & Reeves 2019.

[2] See the Dissonant Heritage Action Group (DHAG), an international network of experts engaged in the study and management of dissonant heritage (<https://dissonant-heritage.info/>).

[3] <https://cocowar.com/geoapp>; Chiara Mariotti, Giorgio Danesi, Alessandro Ceppetelli, *Co.Co.War - Atlas. Mapping Dissonant Heritage*, Alma Mater Studiorum — Università di Bologna, Bologna 2026 (DOI: <https://amsacta.unibo.it/id/eprint/8909/>).

[4] Literature from which sets of questions have been derived, the references for which will be indicated throughout the text.

[5] Burra Charter, *Unesco Managing Cultural Heritage*.

[6] Chiara Mariotti, Giorgio Danesi, Alessandro Ceppetelli, *Co.Co.War - Glossary. Dissonant Heritage concepts and terms*, Alma Mater Studiorum — Università di Bologna, Bologna 2026 (DOI: <https://amsacta.unibo.it/id/eprint/8910/>).

/INTRODUCTION

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Why the Handbook? | 12-13 |
| 2. How can this Handbook help you manage DH? | 14-19 |

/I

IDENTIFY

20-21

/II

UNDERSTAND

II A - INVESTIGATING THE PLACE

22-23

1. Contextualizing the object

24-31

2. Enquiring the Dissonance

2.1 - Dissonance: Understanding a stratified and complex hazard

32-34

- The geopolitical context

34-40

- Historical analysis

- Intensity assessment

41-53

2.2 - Assessing the site vulnerabilities

- Controversial attributes

- Conflicting perceptions

- Manipulated communication

- Antifragility

II B - ASSESSING VALUES / DISVALUES

54-57

3. The exposure to risk

54-57

- Values / Disvalues

INDEX

/III

ENVISION

- Vision and Guiding Principles	62-64
- Strategic Objectives and Priorities	64-65
- Strategies and Actions	65-87
- Stakeholders and Roles	88
- Resources	88-89
- Risks and Constraints	89-91
- Monitoring and Evaluation	92-93
- Communication Plan	94-95

/IV

EVOLVE

4. Implementing the Plan	97
5. Monitoring the results	98
6. Reviewing the Process	99

/REFERENCES

/1

WHY AN HANDBOOK?

When faced with cultural **heritage** that is the subject of **conflict** (real and/or interpretative), politically sensitive, ideologically contested or symbolic of a painful past/event whose **impact** still affects one or more parts of the **community**, it is crucial to calibrate every approach to what exists in a respectful, forward-thinking and informed manner. This Handbook is intended as a tool to facilitate the process that takes place whenever a manager (whether a public or private entity, including associations) decides to develop a project proposal for a site considered “difficult” with the help of an accredited designer.

This issue is one of the main challenges of our time. **War** contexts are multiplying, with the Global Peace Index revealing that in December 2025 there were more than 56 armed conflicts active around the world — the highest number since the Second World War — with as many potential scenarios for intervention, to which are added legacies linked to past conflicts, making the issue a shared challenge not only at European level but also globally. We are, and increasingly will be, faced with the legacy of historical eras in which expectations and aspirations have now radically changed or become outdated.

Compared to those eras, the values system has changed — *Kustwollen*¹ has changed, and keeps on changing —, and in the contemporary world, these values are often reversed to the point of becoming their direct opposite, or disvalues.

On the other hand, the contemporary context surrounding this type of heritage is often affected by misinformation (such as the circulation of fake news and partial and/or incomplete news with a polarising effect) or manipulated information, in which deliberate intervention is used to guide the dissemination of information in contexts of war or interpretative conflict. It is therefore essential to understand what tools are available to communicate correctly both our intentions for the site and the site itself, while at the same time developing forms of resistance to such **communication** mechanisms that distort the interpretative plan.

The ways in which forms of communication are structured, mediated and experienced have, as is well known, profound repercussions on

Introduction

democracy, public opinion and social interactions. The deterioration in the quality of public debate is an issue that can be perceived in every sphere and, in particular, concerns architecture, which tends to be most easily used as a tool within power dynamics.

A weakening of democratic principles once considered well established, such as pluralism and inclusiveness, is currently being witnessed. These principles are being progressively eroded by the dynamics of 'fringe democracy', which initially gave voice to marginalised communities by bringing new ideas and opinions into public debate, but which now provides a fertile environment for the emergence and dissemination of anti-democratic ideas that exploit cultural heritage communication to gain consensus or to censor and erase pluralistic interpretations of reality. Intentionally manipulative communication induces or amplifies the dissonance of a place and conditions its perceived value, to the extent that it influences the desire to preserve it, a concept that can be expressed by *Kriegswollen*².

Therefore, in addition to the themes of heritage **preservation** and **conservation**, recovery, peacebuilding and working with communities, there are two thematic chapters dedicated to public communication. It becomes a matter of collective responsibility to try to address the problem of dissonance by contributing to the creation and strengthening of the values of democracy, cooperation, respect for human dignity and freedom. More and more examples (i.e. ATRIUM Cultural Route, Dissonant Heritage Action Group DHAG) are showing that reflecting and acting on the basis of these values can transform a space of dissonance into common ground for dialogue, as well as a tool to heal from past griefs and build peace.

[1] Kunstwollen, theorised by Alois Riegl ('will of art') shapes the perception of the 'cultural need' in a given historical context and consequently the perception of the cultural heritage, in particular selecting from the legacy of the past the artworks which deserve care and conservation.

Cfr. A. Riegl, *Der moderne Denkmalkultus: sein Wesen und seine Entstehung*, Braumüller 1903; S. Scarrocchia (a cura di), *Alois Riegl. Il culto moderno dei monumenti. Il suo carattere e i suoi inizi*, Abscondita, Milan 2017.

[2] In the premises of the proposal of the CoCoWar project (version submitted in 2022) appears the word Kriegwollen, a first tentative of conceptualisation of the conflictual opposite of the Kunstwollen theorised by Riegl. Kriegwollen, the "will of war", which activates unconcern and disregard up to the intention to remove or eradicate a cultural asset. Cfr.: C. Mariotti, L. Signorelli, *Dissonant heritage and war. La conservazione del patrimonio dissonante tra Kunstwollen e Kriegwollen*, «CITTÀ IN CONTROLUCE», 2024, 43-44, pp. 191 - 211 [Scientific article]; L. Signorelli, A. Zampini, *Dissonant Heritage. Questioning values and identity in time of war*, Springer, 2026 (to be published).

Introduction

/2

HOW CAN THIS HANDBOOK HELP YOU MANAGE THE DH?

/ Who is this manual intended for?

This manual is intended to be a tool for designers or managers whose purpose is to structure a **conservation** and enhancement project for a specific dissonant site. Managing this type of process requires analysis and design skills that must be compiled by a professional in the field of cultural **heritage**.

DISCLAIMER — *If you are not a professional in the field of tangible heritage conservation, it is recommended to form an interdisciplinary team of professionals who can help enhance the heritage asset of interest.*

/ For which sites is this handbook intended?

This handbook is suitable for enhancement and conservation projects involving built heritage on various scales: cultural landscapes, complex and articulated sites, individual buildings or artifacts, and works of art located in public contexts that characterize the urban space in which they are located, whose conservation is threatened by some form of **dissonance**.

/ How to use the Handbook?

Before beginning, it is important to be aware that the process of developing a conservation plan for a dissonant site is inherently slow and interdisciplinary. From the very earliest stages, it is necessary to initiate cultural and social processes around the intervention on the built environment, which must first and foremost find common ground for discussion and dialogue. These processes cannot be forced, but rather accompanied. While architectural conservation processes generally require a long time, in the case of dissonant architecture, these timescales are further extended, as they involve particularly sensitive issues that require adequate time for reflection, re-elaboration and progressive collective symbolic integration.

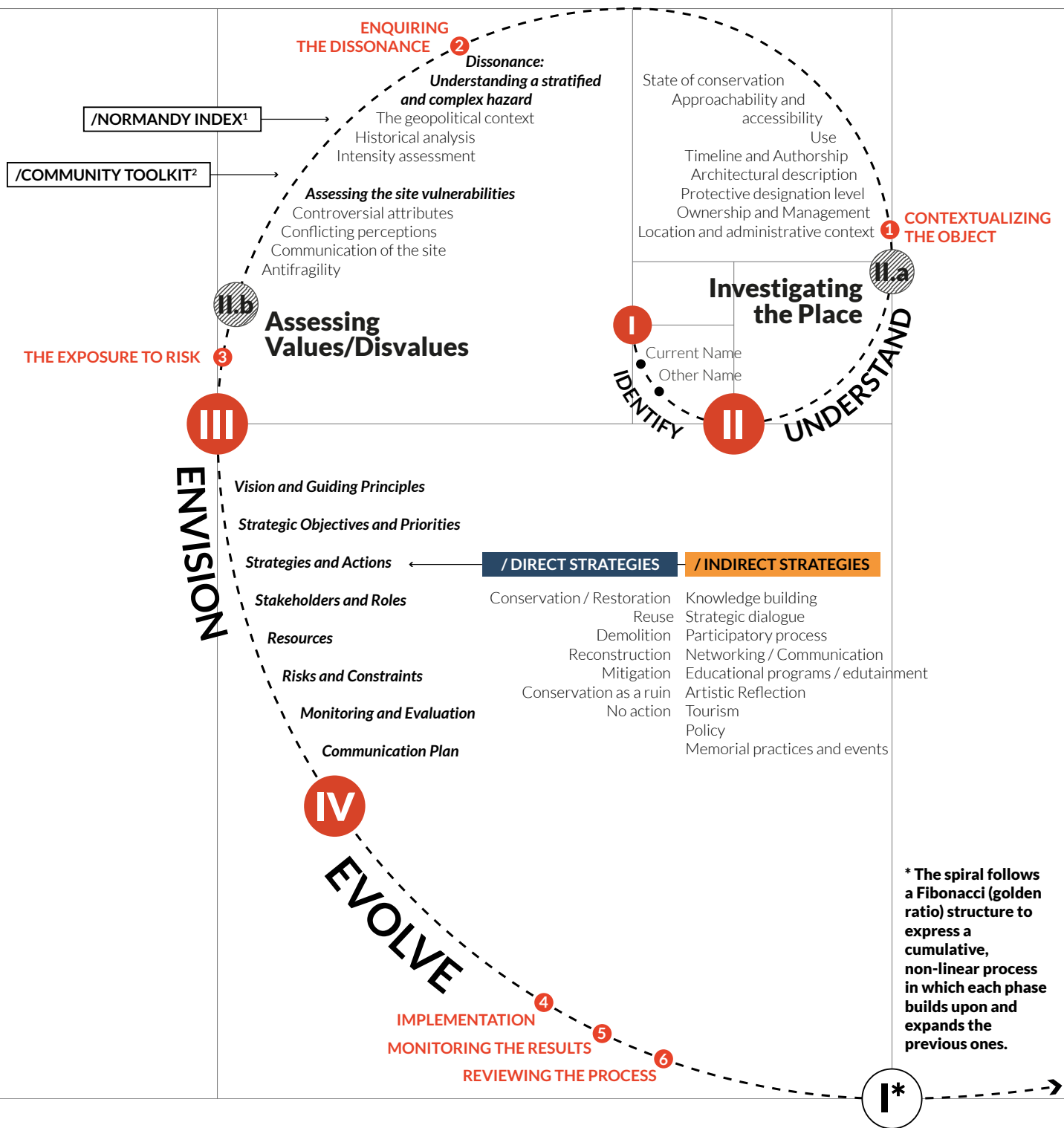
Furthermore, what emerges from comparative analyses is that, despite the recognised specificity, singularity and uniqueness of the various contexts of dissonance, the process through which it forms and manifests itself presents recurring dynamics, such as to allow comparative analyses and the identification of similarities and trends that cut across local scales worldwide. For this reason, it has been possible to extract a sequence of steps that can be adapted to a wide range of buildings despite their different geographical locations and dissonant characteristics.

The theorised procedure is an open, continuous process, conceived not as a sequence of prescriptive guidelines, but rather as a working method that can be flexibly adapted to different contexts of action in order to better respond to necessary case-by-case assessments. This process consists of four macro-phases:

Introduction

- / **IDENTIFY**, the identification of the landscape/site/asset on which intervention is desired;
- / **UNDERSTAND**, gaining a deep understanding of the asset, its characteristics, attributes, values and disvalues;
- / **ENVISION**, the subsequent formulation of a management, conservation and development plan based on what has been progressively learned in the previous phases, in order to develop a shared vision and objectives to be pursued through possible strategies to be applied in the short, medium and long term. This plan must be feasible, sustainable and consistent with the architectural vocation of the place, but also attempt to heal the wounds caused by the trauma or at least not exacerbate the existing dissonance.
- / **EVOLVE**, the implementation phase of the plan and its individual actions shall include a monitoring stage — to be carried out through performance indicators — and a potential revision phase, both aimed at ensuring the transmission of the asset to future generations within a framework of positive co-evolution between the asset and its surrounding context.

Due to the rapidity and constant changeability of the context and the intrinsic fragility of dissonance, which tends to re-emerge or present itself in new forms, the process cannot be considered complete at this point. On the contrary,



¹ The Normandy Index: Mapping Threats to Peace and Democracy, European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), 2024. It is a global index that categorizes states according to their level of risk based on indicators measuring threats and vulnerabilities to peace, security, and democratic stability.

² The Community Toolkit is developed within the framework of the Co.Co.War project.

it is necessary to move forward and deepen the process, systematically retracing all its phases and embracing the results obtained with further openness. Incorporate subsequent changes relating to identifying data, such as changes in nomenclature or geographical boundaries; focus on elements capable of modifying the perception of the asset that have occurred since the implementation of the first actions; constantly verifying the alignment of the objectives of the intervention with external conditions and adopting new corrective strategies to prevent the actions taken from triggering further conflicts will give rise to a continuous cycle capable of ensuring flexibility, responsiveness and dissonance sensitivity.

From this perspective, the process described seems to recall some of the main characteristics of fractal development, hence the logarithmic spiral (shell) graph, which does not cancel out the previous process by starting from scratch, but analytically retraces it, embracing and moving it forward. Each spiral of this graphic symbol contains the previous phases, but with a progressive expansion of the radius of action. Furthermore, as in a fractal structure, the proposed process can be considered at different scales of analysis and degrees of detail. While the pathway presented here provides a defined methodological framework, further investigations may always be developed where necessary. Different disciplinary approaches can thus be integrated according to the specific context, allowing the process to be refined and expanded while preserving its overall coherence.

Finally, the multiple levels of complexity characteristic of fractal structures provide an effective analogy for the complexity of dissonance itself. Dissonance often emerges from an interplay of narratives operating at different scales: local micro-histories are embedded within broader accounts of ethnic or social conflict, which in turn are shaped by questions of **identity**, national dynamics, and wider geopolitical processes.

The chapters of the manual are therefore structured according to the four macro-phases. Each chapter offers insights into the sections to be completed, providing explanations, suggestions and reflections on the data to be researched and taken into consideration for each phase of the process, and, last but not least, a series of questions that constitute the analytical and decision-making support tool.

This handbook is also complemented by a set of key project publications that provide additional theoretical, methodological, and operational insights.

The **Atlas** is conceived as a systematic knowledge base of dissonant and contested heritage cases. Through approximately 130 case studies, it documents and analyses different forms of heritage dissonance, supporting comparative research, awareness-raising, and the development of context-sensitive management approaches. [Download the Atlas here.](#)

The **Glossary** is intended to establish a common conceptual framework and shared vocabulary for the project. Drawing on major international heritage documents and key contributions to Dissonant Heritage studies, it traces the evolution of relevant concepts and presents the terminology adopted throughout the project. [Download the Glossary here.](#)

The **Community Toolkit** provides a methodological and operational framework for engaging with communities in contexts of dissonant, contested, or traumatic heritage. Rather than prescribing fixed solutions, it offers a flexible repertoire of tools to support dialogue, observation, mapping, and community interaction, while addressing the ethical and relational challenges inherent in difficult heritage contexts. [Download the Community Toolkit here.](#)



IDENTIFY

Current name

Other names

The first step is to identify the object on which you intend to intervene. The initial phase of the process involves identifying the site and recognising its names, both current and historical.

Identifying the name or names by which the site is known may seem a simple task; however, it is worth considering how alternative names, previous names and toponymic variants adopted in other periods or contexts can also be significant indicators of the processes of dissonance that have occurred over time . Different nomenclatures may, for example, testify to the desire of conflicting factions to culturally appropriate a site, or reflect variations in the value systems of reference.

IDENTIFICATION

/ What is the current name of the site?

/ Is the site, or was it in the past, known by other names?



UNDERSTAND

/II.A

INVESTIGATING THE PLACE

1

CONTEXTUALIZING THE OBJECT

Location and administrative context
Ownership and Management
Protective designation level
Architectural description
Timeline and Authorship
Use
Approachability and accessibility
State of conservation

2

ENQUIRING THE DISSONANCE

The geopolitical context
Historical analysis
Intensity assessment

Controversial attributes
Conflicting perceptions
Manipulated communication
Antifragility

/II.A

INVESTIGATING THE PLACE

Cultural heritage assets that have been recognized and designated as symbols of past or present conflicts are exposed to specific risks in comparison to the **conservation** processes affecting architectural heritage as a whole. Such risks are directly linked to the ideologies or rationales that motivated the people in their construction, as well as to the subsequent historical phases that have redefined their role and meaning within the conflicts themselves. As a result, any operational interest concerning these sites must engage with a necessary and in-depth phase of knowledge acquisition and understanding, capable of providing a framework that is as inclusive as possible of the asset's complexity and multi-layered character. Investigating the history of an architectural work and its problematic meanings enables learning from history in order to propose more sensitive and effective **protection** and to foster a more informed and inclusive democratic dialogue.

The UNDERSTANDING phase therefore involves the collection and analysis of both “objective” data and more “interpretative” data related to the **dissonance** of the place. This systematization of information makes it possible to comprehend, as a whole, the site's morphological, historical, perceptual, social, political, and other transformations.

TIP: Before beginning the completion of this research and knowledge-consolidation section, it is essential to verify whether the building has ever been included in a census or cataloguing of cultural heritage assets. Where available, the catalogue record—also referred to in some contexts as the monument passport—can provide valuable data to support the completion of the required information fields.

Furthermore, it is advisable to consult and collect the following materials: Documentation concerning the building held by the competent authorities (such as heritage designation reports, project reports, administrative documents, etc.).

A significant number of images representing the asset (current photographs, maps, historical photographs and representations, surveys, aerial photographs, paintings, and design drawings), which are necessary to identify it visually and to situate it within its historical and urban context.

1

CONTEXTUALIZING THE OBJECT

This phase aims to frame the object of investigation from the point of view of its basic information, collecting geographical, dimensional, typological and regulatory data that are therefore unambiguously understood and not subject to multiple interpretations. Please note that in the next phase, Enquiring the dissonance, the compiler will be asked to return to these points with a critical eye. Many of the aspects investigated here can in fact constitute both a value and a disvalue (consider, for example, how the issue of authorship is important in this phase in order to describe objectively).

LOCATION

- / In which country/state/administrative region/province is it located?
- / In which city/municipality is it located?
- / At which latitude and longitude is it located?

OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- / Who owns the site today?
- / Is the heritage public or privately owned?
- / Who manage the site today?
- / Is it a public trust, a government-run body, a private institution, or some other entity?

PROTECTION DESIGNATION LEVEL

- / Is the site protected according to any international agreement, national law or local regulation?

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

- / What is the scale of the site?
- / What is its typology?
- / What are its architectural configuration and design features?
- / Are there any relevant artistic details, materials, or other noteworthy elements?
- / What are the constitutive materials and constructive techniques?

Understand

TIMELINE AND AUTHORSHIP

- / Who commissioned the site?
- / Who were the author(s) that designed the site (if applicable) and the main figures in charge/responsible of main transformations?
- / What was their background?
- / Which have been the main transformations of the site?
- / How have they been influenced by historical events?
- / Outline the main historical events that affected the site, through a specific and referenced timeline

USE

- / Is the site in use/partially in use?
- / If it is in use, what are the current functions?
- / What were the past functions?

APPROACHABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

- / Is the site easily approachable?
- / Can you get close to the site?
- / Is access to the surrounding area open?
- / Are there any physical barriers that prevent approaching the site?
- / Is the path to the site safe and accessible?
- / Is the access route well signposted?
- / Is the area around the site restricted or monitored?
- / Can you enter the site?
- / Is the entrance open to the public?
- / Are visitors allowed inside?
- / Is entrance prohibited for certain groups?
- / Is access restricted due to conservation reasons?
- / Is a permit required to enter the site?
- / Are there specific visiting hours or days?

STATE OF CONSERVATION

- / What is the state of conservation of the site?
- / Provide a description of the present state of conservation of the site.

LOCATION

LOCATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

- / In which country/state/administrative region/province is it located?
- / In which city/municipality is it located?
- / At which latitude and longitude is it located?

Start by reporting the state, region, city, and GPS coordinates to identify the location of the site. In the case of contested areas or border areas.

Start by reporting the state, region, city, and GPS coordinates to identify the location of the site. In the case of contested areas or border areas currently in **conflict**, it is recommended to limit yourself to reporting the official position updated at the time of compilation. Issues related to these aspects of dissonance will be considered in the next phase (chapter Enquiring the Dissonance).

Understand

OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- / Who owns the site today?
- / Is the heritage public or privately owned?
- / Who manage the site today?
- / Is it a public trust, a government-run body, a private institution, or some other entity?

Please note that the owner and manager may be the same entity or not. In either case, it is advisable to reconstruct the transfers of ownership that have taken place.

PROTECTION DESIGNATION LEVEL

- / Is the site protected according to any international agreement, national law or local regulation?

Knowing the protective designation levels according to local, national and international measures — if the site is part of it is designated according

to protection laws — allows to understand the degree of recognition of the value of the asset and the limits of the interventions that can be implemented.

Furthermore, although the **protection** of heritage during armed conflict remains the responsibility of the State in which the asset is located, identifying whether the site benefits from international protection or recognition, such as inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List or protection under the Blue Shield framework, may be an important consideration in reducing the risk of damage or destruction.

If the building in question has not yet been granted any form of legal protection, check whether the name of the building appears in any census, catalogue, file or advocacy activity that aims to draw public attention to it and its conservation.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

- / **What is the scale of the site?** (e.i. Landscape and territorial scale, urban centre/district, architectural complex of building, work of art in public space)
- / **What is its typology?** (e.i. Barrack, Bridge, Bunker and military facility, Cemetery, Church, Cinema, Concentration camp, Cultural Landscape, Detention Center, District, Fortress, Government Building, Library, Military Accademy, Monastery, Monument, Mosque, Museum, Office Building, Palace, Prison, Prisoner camp, Regime headquarter, Residencial/house, Archeological site, School, Seaside Holiday Camp, Square, Temple, Theatre, Thermal complex, Village, ...)
- / **What are its architectural configuration and design features?**
- / **Are there any relevant artistic details, materials, or other noteworthy elements?**
- / **What are the constitutive materials and constructive techniques?**

These questions are intended to guide the collection of data necessary for an analysis of the intrinsic characteristics of the site, starting from its scale of reference and the architectural typology that determined its original

morphological layout. If the building is currently in a state of ruin, the original typology of the building (school, cinema, church, etc.) must still be identified.

At this point, an analysis is required of the characteristics that distinguish and constitute the site from an architectural, aesthetic, artistic, technological, and constructional point of view, considering attributes of form, design, materials and substance, and techniques already developed by UNESCO. An architectural description is to be provided, aimed at identifying the general forms and articulations of the structure, its style, and its affiliation with a specific artistic-architectural tradition or movement. In this section, the presence of valuable materials, decorations, sculptures, etc. can also be noted.

Next, it is important to go into more technical details to gain a better understanding of the construction of the site and to identify any innovative aspects, if present, with respect to the design culture of the period in which it was built (e.g. technological experiments), or evidence, in the solutions used, of a design approach that reflects the design practices of that historical moment.

Understand

TIMELINE AND AUTHORSHIP

- / **Who commissioned the site?**
- / **Who were the author(s) that designed the site (if applicable) and the main figures in charge/responsible of main transformations?**
- / **What was their background?**
- / **Which have been the main transformations of the site?**
- / **How have they been influenced by historical events?**
- / **Outline the main historical events that affected the site, through a specific and referenced timeline**

In this section, it is important to try to reconstruct in detail the phases that have characterised the life of the site, from its construction to the present day, seeking to understand whether the main transformative events can be related to the socio-political and cultural context that generated the dissonance, and in what way.

For this reason, a comparative timeline is proposed that relates, on the one hand, international, national, or local events, as well as changes in **perception** linked to the manifestation of dissonance, and, on the other hand, the main transformative events of the site.

In this section, it is important to try to reconstruct in detail the phases that have characterised the life of the site, from its construction to the present day, seeking to understand whether the main transformative events can be related to the socio-political and cultural context that generated the dissonance, and in what way.

For this reason, a comparative timeline is suggested that relates, on the one hand, international, national, or local events, as well as changes in perception linked to the manifestation of dissonance, and, on the other hand, the main transformative events of the site.

At the same time, the importance of gathering information about the client/commissioning body and authorship (if applicable) is emphasised. This information, collected in short biographies, allows a focus on attributes that may contribute to the reinforcement of values or appear highly controversial and therefore capable of fuelling dissonance.

USE

- / **Is the site in use/partially in use?**
- / **If it is in use, what are the current functions?**
- / **What were the past functions?**

Even in this case the information required are crucial to properly understand the general framework. The past and present uses of the building are essential to grasp the evolving meanings and values attributed to the site over time. The succession of uses, reuses, and periods of disuse reflects broader social, political, and cultural transformations, often revealing shifts in power structures, collective **memory**, and patterns of inclusion or exclusion. In the context of dissonant heritage, changes in use may either reinforce, neutralize, or contest the original symbolic **significance** of the building. Investigating these dynamics allows for a more nuanced **interpretation** of the site and provides critical insights for assessing its current role, vulnerabilities, and potential future trajectories.

APPROACHABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

- / Is the site easily approachable?
- / Can you get close to the site?
- / Is access to the surrounding area open?
- / Are there any physical barriers that prevent approaching the site?
- / Is the path to the site safe and accessible?
- / Is the access route well signposted?
- / Is the area around the site restricted or monitored?
- / Can you enter the site?
- / Is the entrance open to the public?
- / Are visitors allowed inside?
- / Is entrance prohibited for certain groups (e.g., minors, non-residents)?
- / Is access restricted due to conservation reasons?
- / Is a permit required to enter the site?
- / Are there specific visiting hours or days?

Understand

It is important to consider not only the individual heritage asset but also its relationships with the surrounding environment, in order to understand its degree of usability through an analysis of the broader context. With regard to the varying levels of approachability and physical accessibility of the site—understood as the set of conditions related both to reaching the site and to gaining access to it—it is appropriate to carefully examine the following aspects. It is evident that interventions on a heritage asset located in the historic centre of a large city require different considerations and strategies compared to those applied to an asset situated in a peripheral rural context. This characteristic may significantly affect patterns of use, either through processes of voluntary exclusion or detachment from main flows, or, conversely, through highly polarized forms of attendance. Equally evident is the need for the approach to take into account whether access to the building is possible. For this reason, the analysis should address, for example, whether the building is currently open to the public, whether authorisations are required to visit it, whether safety issues prevent or limit access, or whether the possibility of approaching or entering the site is entirely excluded. It is therefore recommended to outline these aspects

in this section, as such analyses may provide a significant contribution to the project-oriented work developed in the “Envision” phase. This condition may influence the **perception** of the site not only in terms of ease of use, but also with regard to the level of awareness and knowledge that the local population can develop in relation to it. This factor may play a relevant role in the definition of an Action Plan, as it implies the integration of specific measures aimed at improving accessibility and, consequently, the attractiveness of the site.

STATE OF CONSERVATION

- / **What is the state of conservation of the site? (Excellent, good, mediocre, in ruin, imminent danger)**
- / **Provide a description of the present state of conservation of the site.**

In this section, both a detailed and synthetic assessment of the state of **conservation** of the site is required. The synthetic evaluation is meant to give an overall perspective, as explained in the glossary, is to the Italian catalographic system ICCD nomenclature. Together with traditional mapping and analysis of the material state of conservation a specific focus on the consequences of the dynamics connected to the **dissonance** is required description, focus on the consequences of the dissonance.

It will be essential to collect information that can be used for the conservation project, including, if possible, through site visits, and to identify or hypothesise the cause of any form of deterioration found on site. As with any conservation project, it will be essential to draw up tables on an appropriate scale and technical reports.

If the building is currently in ruins, having lost all function and unable to take on new ones due to the extent of the material and structural damage that has occurred, please indicate this in this section.

In complex context where accessibility to the site is forbidden or too risky, the assessment of the state of conservation often can be done using emergency method. In these context also the use of satellite imagery might be very useful. In specific, see: [ASOR Cultural Heritage Initiatives](#) and [Forensic Architecture](#).



UNDERSTAND

/II.A

INVESTIGATING THE PLACE

1

CONTEXTUALIZING THE OBJECT

Location and administrative context
Ownership and Management
Protective designation level
Architectural description
Timeline and Authorship
Use
Approachability and accessibility
State of conservation

2

ENQUIRING THE DISSONANCE

The geopolitical context
Historical analysis
Intensity assessment

Controversial attributes
Conflicting perceptions
Manipulated communication
Antifragility

2

ENQUIRING THE DISSONANCE

Once the phase of contextualizing the object has been completed, the focus shifts to investigating the risks associated with dissonance—i.e., those that could be defined as the potential (economic, cultural, social, and environmental) harmful consequences resulting from dissonance for a specific site over a given timeframe.

According to Ashworth and Turnbridge, **dissonance** is an implicit attribute of heritage itself. Building on this concept, it can be observed that under specific conditions, dissonance generates the coexistence of contradictory or opposing beliefs, values, or attitudes, which may:

- / Threaten democracy and peace in a given area (heritage as a weapon);
- / Exacerbate divisions and conflicts among the **communities** (and institutions) connected to the heritage site;
- / Lead to the deliberate damage or destruction of the heritage site and/or its context.

Indeed, in conflictual contexts, heritage can be used as a weapon: it may be instrumentalized, damaged, or destroyed, representing not only a material loss but also a powerful tool capable of leveraging various cultural, social, political, and economic factors to perpetuate and intensify the **conflict**.

How to assess risks associated with dissonance?

Risk is conventionally defined as the combination of **Hazard**, **Vulnerability**, and **Exposure**, according to the formula $R = H * V * E$. In the following sections and paragraphs, an initial framework for interpreting these three parameters will be provided. Reducing dissonance to mere numerical values or strictly measurable parameters should be regarded as an extreme simplification that does not allow for a genuine understanding of what is occurring. But the objective is not to produce a numerical index, but rather to achieve a deep understanding and awareness of the dissonance related to the site. This requires thorough knowledge of the place underlying dynamics, extensive research, consistent engagement with the various communities involved, and a keen sensitivity to the context.

DISCLAIMER — *The ability to produce a synthetic risk assessment is crucial in situations where intervention priorities must be established. However, in this case—focusing on a single site—understanding the level of risk may prove essential for defining intervention timelines and for engaging potential stakeholders in support of the project*

2.1 **DISSONANCE: UNDERSTANDING A STRATIFIED AND COMPLEX HAZARD**

In this **risk** assessment process, the first concept to be investigated is **hazard**, which can be defined as the probability that a threat will occur with a certain intensity, in a specific area, and within a specific period of time. However, when applying this principle to the concept of **dissonance**, it should be acknowledged that, unlike events such as earthquakes, for which it is essential to consider the return period and thus the likelihood of recurrence, in the case of dissonant heritage, dissonance is already present and recognised as an existing condition. For this reason, it seemed appropriate, at this stage of the handbook, to omit the calculation of probability, leaving room for tools and parameters useful for assessing the nature and intensity with which it is manifesting itself, seeking to evaluate how deeply rooted and divisive it is.

So, what are the conditions helpful for understand the complexity, stratification and intensity of this dissonance?

Understand

THE GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT

MEASURING THREATS TO PEACE AND DEMOCRACY: NORMANDY INDEX

/ **What is the level of threat to peace and democracy in the county in which the site is located?**

One of the first points to consider concerns the context in which action is required. Among the various indices developed by military analysts, the Normandy Index is of fundamental importance. This index measures threats

to peace and democracy in a country, taking into account eleven different parameters (Climate Change, Cybersecurity, Economic Crises, Energy Insecurity, Fragile States, Terrorism, Violent Conflicts, Disinformation, Trans-border Crime, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), and Hybrid Threats). Monitoring this index allows us to understand the extent to which issues such as cybersecurity, economic crisis, disinformation, terrorism, and violent **conflict** (to name but a few) are widespread within the country, creating a climate of insecurity and instability that can influence the effects of dissonance, its **perception**, but also, in the longer term, the effectiveness of future projects.

DISCLAIMER — *This index does not aim to provide an expert-level evaluation of dissonance parameters, nor does it replace the nuanced judgment of heritage specialists. Dissonance is inherently connected to the collective and personal identity of people, and as such cannot be fully captured by standardized metrics. The parameters proposed here are intended as a tool to raise general awareness and facilitate a broad, accessible understanding of heritage dissonance — drawing on EU-developed frameworks — in a sensitive and informed manner.*

DISCLAIMER — *Please note that the aim of this set of questions is to gain a thorough understanding of the dynamics of the process that has taken place in the area and that has involved, currently involves or could involve the property in question, so that this can be taken into account in the design phase. This does not require a detailed military analysis of the situation, but rather the acquisition of “Good Enough” knowledge and skills in order to develop conflict/dissonance-sensitive awareness.*

THE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

HISTORICAL CONTEXT, ROOT CAUSES AND NATURE OF DISSONANCE

/ **Think about the conflict that generated the dissonance connected to the site. What are the root causes?**

/ Cultural/ethnic (ethnicity, religion, language, ...);

- / Political;
- / Social (class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, minority/majority unbalance...);
- / Environmental;

- / **What is the scale of the conflict? Is it on a local, national, or regional scale? How is the root conflict visible in society?** (Large-scale warfare, Rioting, Terrorism, Organized or violent crime, Discrimination against minority groups, Contestation over **identity**, Intentional destruction of heritage, Internal displacement, Major human rights violations, Others)
- / **What is the history of conflict/dissonance in the area? When did the conflict take place in the first place? What was the trigger? Did it exacerbate? Did it re-emerge? If yes, When and how? Did the conflict escalate in violent and armed actions, or did it stay on an interpretative level?**

It might be useful to list the main events and factors that escalate tensions in the area, on a timeline.

- / **Who are the main actors driving this conflict? Which were the factions in the past? Which are the factions in the present? Which are the main points of friction/clash?**

This phase requires a specific in-depth investigation of dissonance in order to understand its causes, nature, and intensity. Investigating the phenomenon of dissonance essentially means first examining the **conflict** that generated it, through a careful analysis of the historical, geographical, social, and political context to which the still-unresolved wound within the **communities** inhabiting the site can be traced. Recognizing the causes of the conflict, reconstructing its developments and persistent tensions, as well as identifying all conflicting positions, are crucial steps in defining the contours of dissonance. Furthermore, it should be noted that conflicts do not always manifest visibly through violent protests or armed confrontations; situations of interpretive tension (i.e., generating uncivil debate, censorship, divisions) or latent **conflict** (unexpressed, taking the form of taboos for the time being) can be equally risky for people and heritage alike.

With the aid of the proposed questions, it is possible to build a comprehensive understanding of the broader context that gave rise to the

Understand

phenomenon, which may potentially apply to multiple buildings associated with the same historical period and located within the same area.

Mapping a Timeline of the conflict in close relation to the Timeline of the building may also help visualize the cause-effect relationships between historical, political, and cultural events and their direct consequences on the transformation of the site.

This analysis represents one of the most complex aspects to investigate, as it requires the interpolation of data acquired through reliable and multi-perspective indirect sources (such as historical, documentary, and iconographic research) alongside data and knowledge obtained through direct and substantial engagement with the communities, institutions, and experts connected to the site in various capacities.

This latter component is not optional; it is considered central for acquiring awareness of microhistory and local dynamics that generated and sustained the dissonance, for thoroughly understanding the diverse positions, and for identifying potential perspectives excluded from the Authorized Heritage Discourse. Such understanding is crucial for developing a project that is conscious, context-sensitive, and perceived as appropriate, rather than imposed from above by external experts.

For this reason, reference is made to the Community Toolkit developed alongside this Handbook, a fundamental instrument for deepening the identification of **stakeholders** and the processes and methods for acquiring, validating, and interpreting data derived from engagement with the communities.

When deciding to intervene on a heritage asset involved in a conflictual situation, it becomes a priority to maintain a vigilant perspective on the issue, capable of recording past and recent developments of dissonance—from its origins, through specific trends and dynamics, to any potential escalation of tensions.

DISCLAIMER — *It is of primary importance to determine whether the geographical area can be defined as an “open crater” or an “extinct crater”. If the conflict is armed (real) and still active, the dynamics that generate dissonance are still evolving and will most likely make it difficult to analyse the*

situation objectively, given the limited access to information and the site. In the case of an “open crater”, it is advisable to consult periodically with an Observatory that is active on the situation. An “extinct crater” area, on the other hand, means that the critical moment of armed conflict or violent confrontation has passed, but the conflict may remain latent or continue to generate dissonance (especially if the trauma has not yet been processed through personal and collective re-elaboration practices).

INTENSITY ASSESSMENT

INTENSITY OF DISSONANCE, ANTIFRAGILITY OF THE SITE

- / How did these events affect directly or indirectly the site?
- / What were the material and immaterial consequences of the dissonance on the site?

Understand

To support a further level of understanding, it is now necessary to assess the intensity with which dissonance is manifesting, by investigating the effects and harms produced on the area, the building, and the **communities** connected to this heritage asset, precisely due to its polarizing, divisive, or traumatic condition.

It will therefore be important to recognise which forms of decay, damage, or conditions related to the state of **conservation** previously analysed can be directly attributed to the active dissonance of the site. A synchronic reading of the two timelines—that dedicated to the conflict and that dedicated to the building—will be of great help in relating historical events to transformations of the site. Once again, engagement with the **community** can shed further light on these often complex causal relationships, which are frequently difficult to determine through indirect sources alone.

Tracking both the material and immaterial consequences of dissonance is thus made possible through a careful study of the history, the transformations of the building, and the motivations that have led communities and decision-makers to adopt specific choices and strategies—or to omit them—over time. The phase of site inspection, the analysis of historical

photographs, the data and documents collected in earlier stages, and the activities described in the Community Toolkit should provide the material needed for this analysis, which aims to reconstitute the **impact** of dissonance on the asset.

In order to support the construction of an informed framework on this topic, a list of possible effects that are generally observable in dissonant places—often overlapping in nature—is proposed below:

MATERIAL CONSEQUENCES OF DISSONANCE ON THE SITE

- / Abandonment
- / Vandalism
- / Symbol removal
- / Destruction (bottom-up)
- / Demolition / Reconstruction
- / Misuse
- / Superimposition (Destruction or imposition of a different culture following a top-down process)

IMMATERIAL CONSEQUENCES OF DISSONANCE ON THE SITE

- / Overwriting (name, significance, stories)
- / Taboo / Damnatio memoriae
- / Conflict of interest
- / Lack of financial means
- / Disconnection from the community/no sense of belonging

/ Thinking specific to the site, since the dissonance manifested, which strategies have been implemented to deal with it? With what consequences?

/ In the past, have strategies been implemented to deal with the consequences of dissonance? If so, what were they?

/ What consequences did they have?

/ Were they successful and why?

If the analysis of material and immaterial consequences can provide important insight into the intensity of dissonance, in the same way understanding how the site has responded situates the researcher within the dimension

of the site's vulnerability analysis, anticipating the subsequent section. With respect to the consequences illuminated through the previous set of questions, it is suggested at this point to take note of any strategies already adopted in the past to balance or counteract these effects and to evaluate their outcomes.

- / Has the perception of the site changed as a result of the action?
- / Ultimately, has the action or series of actions implemented led to an effective reuse?
- / Has the site been reintegrated into a dynamic cycle?
- / Has cultural return been achieved and/or has the action generated added value?
- / Can such past action be considered sustainable from an economic, environmental, and—above all—cultural perspective?
- / Did it contribute to creating awareness of the dissonant aspect without exacerbating it?

Understand

This scenario helps define the intensity of dissonance and at the same time begins to shape an understanding of the site's **vulnerability** and fragility/antifragility, the latter being a concept that is important to introduce here.

ANTIFRAGILITY

If **resilience** is the ability to withstand, absorb, and recover from shocks or stress, returning to a previous state, Antifragility goes beyond it, describing systems that strengthen, grow, or improve when exposed to volatility, stressors, and disorder. While resilient systems stay the same, antifragile systems improve. Remaining static in the contested condition, in the case of dissonant assets, often translates into a source of criticality. The antifragility of these delicate systems, on the other hand, demonstrates their ability to evolve and adapt to change, and can provide guidance for the design and implementation of future interventions that can both preserve the site and create a liminal space for dialogue.

Having an understanding of the past processes may help in focusing on positive aspects that led to the past resilience of the site and secondary points of reference for future interventions.

2.2

ASSESSING THE SITE VULNERABILITIES

While the analyses conducted to date have provided a comprehensive understanding of the site, particularly from a historical perspective, it is now necessary to adopt a more critical and forward-looking approach. This involves assessing the site's current vulnerabilities in relation to contemporary risks associated with dissonant heritage. To this end, attention should be directed towards identifying the intrinsic factors that may increase its **vulnerability**, as well as examining how the site is perceived, interpreted, and communicated by different **stakeholders**.

CONTROVERSIAL ATTRIBUTES

ANALYSE THE SITE/BUILDING

- / Is geographical proximity to the conflict/contested area an element to monitor and critical?
- / Is current ownership or management controversial? (Biased, politically exposed, ...)
- / Is the legal and protective framework lacking, ineffective or inadequate?
- / Are there some specific architectural features considered controversial? such as symbols, or decorations for example
- / Is the architect, the artists, the clientele, or the bodies and institutions connected with the site or subsequent transformation controversial? Are they politically contested? Exposed to contestation? Considered oppressors ...
- / Is a poor or bad state of conservation a problem for the conservation of the site?
- / Is the dissonance connected to the present or past uses?

This section is closely connected to the "Investigating the Place" section. It revisits the same questions and lines of inquiry, but with the aim of assessing whether these aspects constitute a controversial issue or contribute to dissonance. It is not sufficient to merely register the consequences; it is essential to understand which attributes of the site may be contentious, evoke uncomfortable memories, and thereby intensify dissonance.

Are the owners, clients, artists, or workers involved controversial, politically exposed, or otherwise contested? Or are certain material or structural elements—such as the presence of symbols—problematic? Or is it perhaps the function of the building itself that generates controversy?

This analysis should be carried out only after a thorough investigation of the nature of the conflict. Firstly, this ensures a more attentive and informed perspective; secondly, it deepens the initial “Investigating the Place” phase, which should be conducted as objectively as possible, or at least with an open interpretative stance not exclusively oriented toward its problematic dimensions.

PERCEPTION OF THE SITE

Understand

CONFLICTING PERSPECTIONS

- / **Thinking specific to the site: What are the international, national, and local perspectives on the site?**
- / **Which are the different clashing perceptions?**
- / **Which site-related aspects are perceived by communities as the most controversial or hazardous?**
- / **What fears are associated with the site?**
- / **Do communities perceive a sense of connection to it, or rather a condition of detachment?**
- / **Do they feel that they have been deprived of it?**

Since **dissonance** is closely tied to the **perceptions** of **communities** and the various **stakeholders** involved, this phase is pivotal. By using the tools and processes described in the Community Toolkit, it will be possible here to note which of the aspects outlined in the previous paragraphs are most salient for different communities, also recording those vulnerabilities that do not depend on objective or quantifiable data. Dissonant heritage can generate dynamics and perspectives that are so layered and complex that they cannot easily be captured by numerical indicators or fixed parameters. Rather, they involve perceptions often linked to emotional states that change rapidly, encompass multiple facets and pluralities of

thought, and that may, for example, carry completely different meanings or degrees of **significance** for different generations or social groups and may change over time.

In this section, the aim should therefore be to disentangle the complexity that typical data inventories might overlook, through direct engagement with the community.

COMMUNICATION OF THE SITE

- / **How is the site communicated on different media?**
- / **Is it part of an Authorized Heritage Discourse which strengthens dissonance?**
- / **Is there any instrumentalization or bias?**
- / **Is official communication excluding specific perspectives? Is there a fair and inclusive debate?**
- / **Is it possible to detect manipulated communication?**

Among the points of attention that can be identified in the case of a dissonant building, the asset's intrinsic susceptibility to the consequences of intentionally manipulated information concerning it deserves particular in-depth consideration.

Disinformation and information manipulation involve the deliberate creation and spread of false or misleading content intended to deceive or achieve political or economic objectives, which can undermine social cohesion and democratic processes. This may involve historical, political, social, or religious information disseminated via the press or social media, which—through deliberate acts of omission, inversion, removal, or denial—can decisively **impact** perceptions of a heritage site at a specific moment in its history (or over the course of its entire history). What is certain is that manipulated **communication** raises numerous ethical issues and is deeply intertwined with broader decisions, including those that affect the **conservation** of the site.

If the “health” of the relationship between politics, media, and public debate is judged by the quality of information circulating within a country, it follows that the “health” of public perception of a cultural asset can be assessed in

a similar way by monitoring the communication surrounding it and how it ultimately defines the asset in the public eye.

Actions of this nature often aim at the instrumentalisation of cultural heritage by exploiting the darker aspects of its history. Initiatives such as EUvsDisinfo, a flagship project of the European External Action Service (EEAS), work to identify, analyse, and raise awareness of disinformation in its various forms, including narratives that exploit cultural symbols and historical narratives to further geopolitical objectives. EUvsDisinfo compiles a large public database of disinformation cases and provides resources to build **resilience** against manipulated information environments.

Manipulating information related to cultural heritage can therefore be aimed at instigating instability: from efforts to justify the presence of a particular population in a given geographic area, to attempts to erase specific historical layers or to support the narratives of one or more factions involved in a conflict; from attempts to consolidate political support, to the creation of increasingly extreme social sub-groups. The interest of this project, and thus of the Handbook, lies in understanding how these phenomena may pose a danger to the conservation of the asset and to the integrity of its **significance**.

The considerable influence that media have on everyday life at a global level is characterised in this century by a hybrid information environment, where traditional media increasingly interact with online spaces of production and dissemination of informational content that may be created or used from the outset with the intention to distort or polarise public debate. This makes it necessary, for those working with cultural heritage, to monitor these media channels in order to understand whether the communication produced about the asset has, or is currently, fanning the flames of dissonance.

It is therefore necessary to keep under observation not only what happens through various media channels, but also what is disseminated through them, which must be hierarchized according to source reliability.

Examples of more credible sources include:

- / Official press outlets
- / Official websites of government agencies and institutes (where

Understand

they exist within democratic systems)

In contrast, the following are generally more fragile in terms of informational reliability:

- / Independent blogs
- / Tourism websites
- / Social networks
- / Open edit information sites (e.g., Wikipedia)

The broad participation in public debate by anyone with internet access—voices not limited to experts—sometimes enables the spread of content lacking historical or scientific foundation. In marginal corners of the web, narratives do not simply position themselves in opposition to mainstream discourse; they also influence it and are influenced in return, generating a circuit of mutual legitimization. Closed groups on channels and platforms, through uncontrolled dissemination, can bring fringe narratives into mainstream attention.

While some marginalized actors may propose heterodox narratives driven by democratic values, fringe democracy function as a form of pseudo democracy from the margins, exploiting democratic participation mechanisms to undermine core democratic principles.

In a media environment where traditional media and digital platforms are deeply interconnected, strategies for defending cultural heritage cannot rely solely on the existence of authoritative sources. Instead, it becomes necessary to pay careful attention to the reception and **interpretation** of information about sites of interest. A lack of awareness of these issues is one of the main factors that enables the proliferation of manipulated information. In this paragraph, through a series of annotated boxes, sources are suggested from which general definitions of the phenomenon of disinformation and updated notes/recommendations on the relationship between communication and heritage conservation, as discussed in the literature, can be drawn. This is especially relevant given the ongoing challenges in establishing effective regulatory processes and accountability mechanisms in the information environment.

DISCLAIMER — *Please note that in any country involved in a war, the type of information released may be partial, filtered or, in some cases, manipulated.*

Forces operating in the territory are instructed on what to reveal to the public in official communications, for example. However, it should be noted that these dynamics do not only occur in situations of armed conflict.

A specific list of questions relating to authoritative documents has been selected and implemented, useful for detecting the emergence of polarised sources—for example, whether divisive debates on social media concern elements that make up the site, whether the history of the building has ever been used as a tool, or whether “comprehensive” narratives coexist in the public discourse, bringing together a plurality of viewpoints or at least paving the way for non-confrontational dialogue on the issues at the heart of dissonance.

It is important to pay close attention to the language used to refer to the site, for example when the **conflict** or the context that generated it has led the media to adopt strong terms expressing indignation or incivility. Particular attention should be given to how the news was framed and received within the public debate, especially if recovery or recontextualisation strategies have been implemented in the past. This section should also include the adjectives used by the media to describe the site’s implicit dissonance (e.g. Is the site described as “contested heritage”, “tabooed”, “difficult”, or through other terms?). Which semantic nuance is most frequently adopted? What kind of sentiment is the language intended to evoke?

Understand

How to recognize manipulated or polarized communication

/ Polarization framed as inevitable

Pay attention to how concepts are articulated. For example, assess whether a piece of news is consistently framed in a way that reinforces polarization, or whether it implicitly forces the reader to position themselves “in” or “out” of a group, without allowing for intermediate positions, neutrality, or the possibility of reconciliation between different viewpoints.

/ Oversimplification

Observe whether communication relies on stereotyping ideas in order to provide immediate gratification by excluding complexity. In the case of architecture within dissonant contexts, issues are always characterized by multiple layers of complexity and interpretation. For this reason, excessive simplification should be avoided if the genuine aim is to promote knowledge of and preserve the asset while taking into account all its dimensions, both those perceived as positive and those perceived as negative.

/ Information disorder and information overload

Verify whether active strategies are in place that deliberately foster “information disorder” in order to generate disorientation and indignation among citizens. Such strategies produce cognitive fatigue, which reduces individuals’ capacity for critical evaluation and encourages adherence to simplified or stereotyped narratives. This, in turn, may lead to emotional alignment with rhetorical positions.

/ Use of emotional and/or uncivil language, which tends to trigger equally intense emotional responses (such as fear, outrage, or resentment).

/ Use of advanced synthetic technologies (deepfakes, artificially generated texts and images), which amplifies these effects by increasing the epistemic opacity of the information environment. This includes

the circulation of images, memes, and AI-generated photomontages, which often intensifies in correspondence with political elections, attacks, or major events affecting the city or the country.

DISCLAIMER — *It is important to reiterate: if, during your analysis, you observe that such dynamics are occurring, continuously monitor social media, information pages, and the other sources mentioned at the beginning of this chapter in order to track developments and, above all, to understand whether an escalation is underway that specifically targets certain assets or buildings. Monitoring can be a valuable activity for implementing preventive measures.*

Understand

What forms of resistance and strategies can be adopted to counter manipulated communication around difficult heritage?

It is increasingly evident that there is a need for tools of inquiry and reflection to address this new form of risk, in which the circulation of distorted information is today largely uncontrolled and, at times, absorbed uncritically. A preliminary interpretative key that enables a critical reading of such information lies in training critical thinking—both one's own and that of others.

First and foremost, it is important to equip oneself with multiple knowledge tools and, above all, to include in the discourse individuals who possess in-depth knowledge of the history of the place and of the specific site. It is therefore essential to provide **communities** with tools that enable them to develop a basic yet acute ability to recognize the **conflict** dynamics involving the site. What is required is the promotion of a democratic ecology of **communication**, understood as a system in which pluralism, conflict, and technological innovation are balanced by practices of epistemic responsibility (Boccia Artieri, 2025).

In general terms, a first group of responses concerns epistemic and educational strategies. A primary line of intervention thus focuses on the development of advanced critical skills:

- / wider dissemination of information and digital literacy;
- / knowledge of the cognitive mechanisms underlying manipulation;
- / emotional education for participation in public discourse.

These strategies aim to strengthen individuals' **capacity** to make reflective judgments in contexts of informational uncertainty—not only to prepare them to intervene directly with alternative or de-escalating voices, but also to educate them to limit the circulation of information that is clearly biased or tendentious (e.g. media campaigns such as “Think Before Sharing”, promoted by UNESCO to foster peace and dialogue).

A second group of responses, operating at a higher level than the previous one, may paradoxically derive from technological strategies. The same artificial intelligence technologies can be employed as tools for risk mitigation through:

- / systems for detecting content modifications (even basic tools such as the “track changes” function used in Wikipedia can help identify patterns of editing associated with conflict escalation; see, for example, cases related to the Armenian—Azerbaijani and Russian—Ukrainian conflicts);
- / classification of attack typologies (e.g. technical frameworks such as those developed within the NIST Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) and the NIST Risk Management Framework (RMF));
- / tools for automated verification and content/source traceability.

A third line of action, which still struggles to achieve solid implementation, concerns system-level strategies, such as policy-based, multi-level interventions (national and supranational regulation, European policies with a containment function, and the legal accountability of digital platforms). See the orange “/2” box on the next page.

Understand

/1 To gauge the level of disinformation in the location where the heritage asset under study is situated, it can be useful to consult the **Normandy Index: Mapping Peace and Democracy**, which classifies countries according to the EU Global Strategy. This strategy identifies TI threats as the main current challenges to peace and security, including DISINFORMATION, highlighting the impact of disinformation on both security and democracy.

/2 To provide an overview of concepts related to disinformation, the following are recommended:

- / EUvsDisinfo (section “Learn”)
- / Notion on Disinformation and Related Concepts, ERGA — European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services, 2020.

[This report by ERGA](#) examines how disinformation and related terms are defined, interpreted, and regulated across EU Member States.

/3 An interesting toolkit that connects **communication** and difficult heritage is the [Heritage Contact Zone \(HCZ\) Toolkit](#) (Project Heritage Contact Zone, 2020).

The HCZ Toolkit is a practice-oriented guide for working with contested and difficult heritage through participatory, dialogic, and conflict-sensitive methods. It explains how to design “heritage contact zones” where parallel, often marginalized narratives can gain legitimacy and interact with dominant histories in safe but productive tension.

/14 On communicating contested heritage or atrocities:

/ The toolkit’s extensive section on “conflict-sensitive journalism” provides methodological principles directly applicable to communicating about contested heritage. It addresses how to report on divisive issues without inflaming tensions, balance competing narratives, and avoid manipulation by stakeholders.

Chappuis, Fairlie. Toolkit for Security Sector Reporting. Media, Journalism and Security Sector Reform. Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2022.

/ During ongoing conflicts, especially when atrocities are occurring, this report provides frameworks for understanding conflict dynamics, recognizing warning signs of escalating violence and atrocities, and employing constructive reporting strategies across different conflict phases. Toit, Peter du. Reporting Atrocities. A Toolbox for Journalists Covering Violent Conflict and Atrocities. Internews, 2014.

/15 Trithart, Albert. Disinformation Against UN Peacekeeping Operations, 2022.

This policy paper examines coordinated disinformation campaigns targeting UN peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic, Mali, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 2018 and 2022. Its theoretical contribution lies in demonstrating how misinformation gains traction by exploiting genuine institutional failures and spreading through interpersonal trust networks, offering applicable methodologies for rumor-tracking, verification protocols, prebunking strategies, and community-based fact-checking partnerships.

DISCLAIMER — *The resources presented so far should be considered procedural guidelines rather than exhaustive references. This is due both to the rapid evolution of information dissemination methods and to the multitude of factors that should be considered in any given case study. The principle suggested remains: adopt a “good enough approach to acquire conflict-sensitive awareness”.*

DISCLAIMER — *All these considerations regarding communication should be integrated into the project during the Envision phase. Knowing how it has been managed previously can lead to hypothesising solutions and practices to bring communication back to a more objective path that makes civil and proactive dialogue possible. Furthermore, the presence of intentional manipulation greatly influences the set of strategic choices that can be implemented in that case or in that city or geographical area, as it can influence, change and even hinder the recognition of these assets as shared heritage. How can this analysis of communication qualify and improve the future conservation project?*

Understand



UNDERSTAND

/II.B

ASSESSING VALUES / DISVALUES

3

THE EXPOSURE TO THE RISK

Values / Disvalues

/II.B

ASSESSING VALUES / DISVALUES

3

THE EXPOSURE TO THE RISK

According to risk management and preparedness, the third component that has to be taken in consideration is the concept of **exposure** to risk, which is defined as the people, property, systems, or other elements present in hazard zones that are thereby subject to potential losses . When applying this concept to dissonant heritage, it is therefore important not only to assess the percentage and type of use of the site already established in the initial analysis, but also to try to define how important this site is, for how many and which **communities**, and, last but not least, for what reasons.

VALUES / DISVALUES

- / Which are the values that make this site worth being preserved and transmitted to the future?
- / Which values can guide the project of conservation?
- / Which are the disvalues that might stop or prevent this process, and that should be addressed to turn the site into a space for dialogue and reconciliation?

An analysis of **values and disvalues** aims to identify what makes a heritage site significant and meaningful (values), and which aspects generate negative **perceptions**, tensions, or potential conflict(disvalues). In heritage practice, “values” refer to the diverse reasons why a place is considered important (historical, aesthetic, social, symbolic, economic, or cultural) often differing across **stakeholder** groups and over time. Determining these values is central for informed decision-making in planning and management, as values shape both **conservation** priorities and strategies for future use.

A first step is to define categories of values and disvalues relevant to the case, drawing on the contextual analysis conducted earlier. UNESCO identifies the following:

- / Cultural Value
- / Relative artistic and technical value
- / Rarity value
- / Economic value
- / Functional value
- / Educational value
- / Social value
- / Political value

The same framework can be used to assess the site's disvalues. However, because **dissonance** is complex, disvalues rarely fit into fixed categories, but it may be built on controversial attributes, contested perception degradation, or **communication** patterns that obstruct shared understanding.

Collecting multiple perspectives through engagement with a broad range of stakeholders — **community** members, experts, institutions, users, and other actors connected to the site — is crucial in this phase.

Use structured interviews, surveys, participatory workshops or focus groups to gather diverse perceptions about what is valued or disvalued. This multi-stakeholder input helps capture both widely shared and contested meanings. Once data are gathered, conduct a qualitative analysis and synthesis by organizing values and disvalues into a matrix or mapping framework. For each item, describe its nature, source, relative importance to different groups, and potential implications for **conservation** and management.

This process highlights areas of agreement or **conflict** and informs priorities and trade-offs in the subsequent planning stages. The Community Toolkit will help in structuring the process, understanding the complexity and analyzing data.

The values and disvalues identified in this phase will indicate the **significance** of the site and the **impact** of its potential loss—both in terms of prioritizing interventions within a complex area and for the development of a conservation project. They serve as reference points for conservation actions and as guiding elements for future decisions. Maintaining this

Understand

combined perspective of values and disvalues allows for an open and balanced view, ensuring that the positive aspects of a site are recognized, even when it is often perceived primarily as a source of disvalues.



ENVISION

Vision and Guiding Principles
Strategic Objectives and Priorities
Strategies and Actions
Stakeholders and Roles
Resources
Risks and Constraints
Monitoring and Evaluation
Communication Plan

The Envisioning phase is a critical step in heritage planning, establishing a long-term perspective that guides decision-making, aligns actions with core values, and provides a framework for both strategic objectives and practical implementation.

The ultimate outcome of this phase is the Conservation and Management Plan.

A Conservation and Management Plan serves as the overarching strategic and operational framework through which a dissonant heritage site is protected, managed, and activated over time. It is grounded in a shared vision, alongside specific objectives and priorities identified for the site, which provide the reference framework for all subsequent decisions and actions.

It translates the theoretical framework into practice by identifying strategies that can realistically be implemented in the given context, based on research, contextual analysis, and **stakeholder** engagement. Its purpose is to coordinate individual actions into coherent strategies that support the **conservation**, enhancement, or re-evaluation of the heritage asset.

An integrated Conservation and Management Plan combines knowledge of the building (Analysing the Object) and the associated **conflict** or dissonance (Enquiring the Dissonance) with concrete opportunities for its future. The plan not only aims to preserve the site but also to contribute to broader processes such as peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and shared **memory** building. It encompasses both **conservation** actions and **communication** strategies, reducing the risk of misinterpretation, instrumentalization, or the escalation of existing tensions.

Implementation occurs through a sequence of interconnected steps, structured along a clear operational roadmap and closely aligned with current site conditions. From the design phase onward, it is essential to include tools for monitoring and managing dissonance, as well as mechanisms to address potential negative impacts.

Finally, the management component ensures long-term sustainability and a continuous sensitivity and adaptation to delicate contexts ensuring the possibility of reviewing the whole plan. In this integrated approach, conservation, action, communication, and **management** are conceived as interdependent elements of a single, coherent framework.

The following questions serve as the backbone of the process, guiding its design, implementation, and evaluation, providing a structured framework for decision-making throughout the process.

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- / What is the long-term vision for the site?
- / What values are to be preserved or enhanced?
- / How does the plan align with broader social, cultural, and political objectives?

Envision

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

- / What are the key strategic objectives of the plan?
- / Which objectives should be prioritized first?
- / How do these objectives respond to both values and disvalues identified?

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- / What practical strategies can be implemented to achieve objectives?
- / Are there opportunities for phased or incremental implementation?
- / What risks are associated with each strategy, and how can they be mitigated?

STAKEHOLDERS AND ROLES

- / Who are the key stakeholders involved in the project?
 - Financial contributors / funders
 - Advocacy or interest groups
 - Local community and users connected to the site
 - Regulatory authorities and policy makers
 - Experts, consultants, or heritage professionals

- / Are the timing and stakeholders ready for the planned actions?
- / What are the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder?
- / How can stakeholder engagement be maintained throughout the project?

RESOURCES

- / What are the needed resources?
- / What resources are available for implementation?
 - Financial / budgetary resources
 - Human resources (staff, volunteers, experts)
- / Time and project timeline
- / Are there additional resources that can be mobilized if needed?

RISKS AND CONSTRAINTS

- / What are the potential risks or challenges (social, political, environmental) that could affect the plan?
- / How can these risks be mitigated or managed?

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- / How will the plan's implementation be monitored?
- / What indicators or benchmarks will be used to evaluate and keep on track the process?
- / How will feedback and lesson learned inform adjustments to the plan?

COMMUNICATION PLAN

- / What are the objectives of the new Communication Plan?
- / Based on the existing strategies, which ones can be continued, improved, or avoided?
- / What are the key messages of the Communication Plan?
- / What are the main target groups?
- / How can such messages be properly conveyed?

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- / **What is the long-term vision for the site?**
- / **What values are to be preserved or enhanced?**
- / **How does the plan align with broader social, cultural, and political objectives?**

Starting from the statements of values assessment and disvalue understanding, it is now necessary to develop a project vision.

Values and disvalues (identified in the previous working phase) should be understood in this phase as actual “project material.” Reflections and shifts in meaning can, and indeed should, be incorporated into the project and the overarching vision. Ignoring or burying the negative aspects (those defined in the previous chapter as disvalues) instead of integrating them into the reinterpretation process exposes the project to the risk of losing historical, material, and social **memory**, depriving future generations of an element of understanding the past that could help make sense of the future.

To support the definition process, tools such as PESTEL analysis can be employed to investigate the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal dimensions framing the action. Similarly, a SWOT analysis can be useful to evaluate Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats—some of which may have already emerged during previous analyses but are worth developing here in concise visual charts.

It is therefore necessary for the designer to perform a visionary shift: to become aware of each disvalue and negative aspect and make the effort to interpret it differently, exploring how it can be reintegrated into contemporary contexts. What may initially appear as criticalities, weaknesses, socially repressed elements, threats, or points of contention—i.e., aspects perceived by the **community** as disvalues—can instead be read as elements to work with and as potential future opportunities for dialogue and reconstruction, not only of the **tangible** heritage but also of **intangible** aspects. Disvalues are thus like values in *chiaroscuro*: each of them can reveal the areas in which intervention can initiate the aspired changes.

Envision

With that said, developing a vision means attempting to visualize the building in a new future: projecting **stakeholders'** expectations forward, defining a different imaginary that can be shared (or even co-created) with communities, and that can inspire and guide the entire process from a long-term perspective.

DISCLAIMER — *Once again, the process defined in the Community Toolkit will enable the creation of a sense of belonging and shared ownership of the project, allowing the construction of a vision that is likely to be collectively endorsed, robust, and enduring.*

A SEMANTIC PURPOSE

At this stage, theoretical reflection is also required. Since the critical issue in dissonance is linked to the conflicting meanings attributed to the site by different communities, any project should first address this aspect.

According to the preconditions analyzed and deeply understood, and making references to case study different semantic purposes emerges

/ Suspension; in this case the decision about what to do is suspended and corresponds to a deliberate inaction. It emerges as the most suitable option when times and circumstances are not mature. Here the meanings, even expressed through disvalues, are kept as they are waiting for a future change or a better understanding;

/ Keeping the *status quo*; it represents the deliberate choice of not changing the current meaning but contextualize it in a liminal space of debate, as to say a heritage contact zone where the past and controversial issues are accepted and investigated thanks to the project;

/ De-sematization: the site or its contested parts are deprived of its meaning and left unaddressed.

/ Re-semantization: corresponds to the will of deliberately changing the meanings attributed to the site. Both desematization and resematization demonstrate the shift in the system of belief or moral references, but in this case a new interpretation is encouraged;

/ Annihilation; in this case, meanings are erased, canceled and most of the time this corresponds to physical actions on the site. It might

correspond to *damnatio memoriae*, taboo intended as exclusion from all memorial processes, and lastly destruction.

The deepening of several case studies has demonstrated that under these general semantic categories, several different strategies can be implemented, and any of them can find its legitimacy in different contexts. However, what emerged is also that annihilation most of the time represents a lost opportunity of dialogue and understanding of the past. Removing the traces of a difficult past, even if comprehensible in certain circumstances such as the overthrow of a totalitarian or oppressive regime, in the long-time perspective, results in re-emerging unresolved traumas.

In this theoretical frame it will be possible to define the specific vision of the project, which should be wisely informed and sensitive to peculiar conditions of the investigated site.

Envision

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

- / **What are the key strategic objectives of the plan?**
- / **Which objectives should be prioritized first?**
- / **How do these objectives respond to both values and disvalues identified?**

After the phase of envision, it becomes necessary to structure the concrete steps required to make the vision a reality, and to decide with whom, how, within which timeframe, and using which available resources the work will be carried out.

One of the key elements for a successful plan is to establish, from the very beginning, realistic and measurable objectives that take into account the actual priorities of the **community** inhabiting the place as well as the **preservation** of the building itself. These objectives should be strategic, meaning they are linked to specific areas of action from which long-lasting results can be expected, consistent with the initial vision.

Hands-on reality: once the strategic objectives to be achieved have been defined, it is time to prioritize certain issues over others, based on the

urgencies of the specific situation and the needs of those living and working in the area. This prioritization should not be based on aprioristic assumptions but rather on findings emerging from investigations and fieldwork.

The set of these objectives and priorities, structured in a program that establishes the planned phases and the timing for addressing them, together with the network of people to be involved, will constitute the initial Roadmap.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

The study of the various case studies available in the Co.Co.War GeoApp has made it possible to identify some general principles to be taken into account:

- / Do not generate further harm
- / Do not exacerbate the root causes or divisions,
- / Do not create further tension
- / Respect values and manage disvalues, keeping in mind the complexity
- / Ensure space for multiple perspectives, avoiding privileging a single vision, polarizing existing perspectives, or fostering nostalgic interpretations that could promote a non-democratic context
- / Promote integrated approaches across different strategies and remember that, where broad strategies are not feasible, even small direct or indirect actions can help maintain **memory** and attention on the site.

Based on these general indications, which are not intended to be exhaustive, and guided by a future-oriented vision, it will be important for the specific site to define strategic objectives and intervention priorities, in order to subsequently select the most appropriate strategies.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- / **What practical strategies can be implemented to achieve objectives?**
- / **Are there opportunities for phased or incremental implementation?**
- / **What risks are associated with each strategy, and how can they be mitigated?**

SET OF POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

Here is a set of strategies commonly applied when dealing with dissonant sites. It is not an exhaustive list but rather what emerged from the study of several case studies. For each strategy, definitions are provided with references to international charters and documents, along with a section outlining the potential risks and benefits associated with implementation.

During the planning phase, it is necessary to evaluate which strategies are feasible, to what extent, and in which manner, while also identifying measures to mitigate potential critical points. It should be noted that interventions undertaken without consideration of the full preceding analysis may not contribute to resolving **dissonance** and may instead amplify it or generate new conflicts.

Envision

DISCLAIMER — *The aim of this collection of strategies is to describe interventions that have been implemented in contexts of this kind, as documented in case studies from around the world, and to highlight their associated risks, rather than to pass judgment on their implementation. For example, it also includes instances in which communities deemed actions such as demolition to be appropriate. As noted above, this list outlines the main potential risks and benefits associated with each of these approaches; however, many variables must be taken into account, such as the specific context, the individual practitioner, and the communication accompanying each of the cited actions.*

DIRECT STRATEGIES

- / Conservation / Restoration
- / Reuse
- / Demolition
- / Reconstruction
- / Mitigation
- / Conservation as a ruin
- / No action

INDIRECT STRATEGIES

- / Knowledge building
- / Strategic dialogue
- / Participatory process
- / Networking / Communication
- / Educational programs / edutainment
- / Artistic Reflection
- / Tourism
- / Policy
- / Memorial practices and events

CONSERVATION / RESTORATION

Actions aimed at safeguarding the physical integrity and cultural significance of a site, using minimal and reversible interventions where possible.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: this approach helps preserve contested material evidence but may perpetuate unresolved tensions if narratives remain unaddressed.

RISKS

- / Significant efforts and resources allocated to controversial sites could lead to negative reactions from surrounding communities, especially if actions are not accompanied by adequate communication explaining purposes.
- / Misunderstanding of the restoration's goals, potentially labeling the project as apologetic or as adherence to the ideology that caused the dissonance.
- / Overly invasive interventions may distort original features or remove/alter the reading of past stratifications.
- / Loss of testimonial value if the building is repurposed without strategies for memory preservation.
- / Erasure of memory if the project removes, hides, or ignores parts of the history instead of addressing and critically reworking them.
- / Specialists lack adequate training to address dissonant heritage sensitively.

BENEFITS

- / Allows rehabilitation of a structure while preserving its intrinsic characteristics and values.
- / Ensures transmission of the building and its historical testimony to future generations.
- / Provides opportunities to reinterpret the building in contemporary and future society.
- / Enables interpretations that keeps complexity alive, balancing between the values and disvalues that make the site worth being preserved while allowing a decodification of the dissonant content.

Envision

APPLIED CASES

/ Example case #1:

Casa Poporului, Palace of Parliament (Romania, Bucarest)

/ Example case #2:

Belchite village (Spain)

/ Example case #3:

Berlin Flaktürme (Germany, Berlin)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

REUSE

Reintroducing a new and compatible function to an existing structure, ensuring long-term viability while retaining heritage values.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: it can foster reconciliation or reinterpretation, though functional adaptation may obscure or neutralize challenging historical narratives.

RISKS

- / Improper or inadequate use that may lead to future abandonment, devaluation, damages and/or further decay.
- / Overly invasive interventions that distort significant features while trying to balance current technical, regulatory, and conservation requirements.
- / Overestimation of the new use potential, leading to insufficient long-term sustainability despite economic investment.

BENEFITS

- / New life and meaning to the building within its context.
- / Possibility of “compensatory function”, countering the dissonant ideas for which it was originally built.
- / Proper choices and continuity of use ensure constant maintenance preventing decay.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
Tränenpalast, Palace of Tears (Germany, Berlin)
- / Example case #2:
Mamula Island Fortress (Montenegro, Mamula)

For further exploration of additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

Envision

DEMOLITION

Intentional destruction, dismantling, removal of a heritage site/architecture or of part of it, implying irreversible loss of material fabric and values.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: often regarded as a mechanism for suppressing the memory of a traumatic event, it erases physical traces of contested histories, risking cultural amnesia and marginalization of affected communities.

RISKS

- / Irreversibility: destruction of a non-reproducible asset.
- / Definitive loss of material, aesthetic, and testimonial value.
- / Changes in urban morphology.
- / Without documentation, permanent memory loss of the site.
- / If combined with demolition of other contemporaneous buildings or related sites, risk of collective memory loss regarding the overall event.
- / Missed opportunity to repurpose existing structures.

BENEFITS

- / Sometimes used to address unprocessed collective trauma.
- / Potential for creating urban voids that encourage reflection and commemoration.
- / Removal of dangerous parts may make the rest of the building usable and safe.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
Aschrottbrunnen fountain (Germany, Kassel)
- / Example case #2:
National September 11 Memorial & Museum (USA, New York)

For further exploration of additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp:

<https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

Envision

GUIDANCE

- / Listen to all community perspectives.
- / Take time before acting.
- / Highlight values and potential of the heritage asset, not just perceived disvalues.
- / Discuss long-term impacts on memory and documentation.
- / Ensure archival and material documentation for future research.
- / It may happen that one of the invoked solutions to the issue of dissonance involves the removal of a specific stratigraphic layer or even the entire building, thereby advocating demolition. Although eliminating a testimony can have harmful effects on society and does not necessarily resolve the dissonance, the community may still desire to pursue this course of action. In this case a strategic dialogue is necessary.

RECONSTRUCTION

Reproducing or evoking a physical state, often linked to symbolic, identity or memorial functions.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: it may enable commemoration and identity assertion, but risks oversimplifying or selectively representing complex or conflicting histories.

RISKS

- / Complete erasure of past traces, losing authentic material evidence.
- / Loss of testimonial value of original structure.
- / Risk of creating historical “fakes” or deceptive mimicry for future visitors.
- / Lack of documentary or material resources that can guide the interventions.

BENEFITS

- / Psychological relief after trauma.
- / Rewoven of the thread of tangible and intangible continuity (spatial, material, visual, psychological, memorial, identitarian...).
- / Physical and symbolical reappropriation of the place.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
Vijećnica, National University Library of Sarajevo (Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- / Example case #2:
Natzweiler-Struthof Concentration Camp (Natzwiller, France)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

MITIGATION

Interventions to reduce emotional, visual, or functional impact without altering the material fabric, in an attempt to reduce the dissonant charge that a space, a building, or parts of it may carry.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: mitigation can reduce the emotional or sensory burden of sites while allowing critical engagement with difficult memories.

RISKS

- / May partially censor architectural narrative.
- / Reduce recognizability of site elements.
- / Obstruct readability of building or stratigraphy.

BENEFITS

- / Reduces emotional weight and improves visitor experience.
- / Offers space for reflection on difficult memories.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
Haus der Kunst (Germany, Munich)
- / Example case #2:
Le Grand Pavois Monument (Algeria, Algiers)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

Envision

CONSERVATION AS A RUIN

Preserving the site as a stabilized ruin without reconstructing missing parts, acknowledging its documentary, aesthetic, and memorial qualities. Impact on Dissonant Heritage: this approach preserves traces of trauma and contested history, highlighting historical disruptions and memory gaps, while enabling critical engagement with the past and tempering overly monumental or rhetorical interpretations.

RISKS

- / Possible negative reactions from communities, perceiving the site as an open wound.

BENEFITS

- / Freezes temporal situation; prevents degradation.
- / Preserves intrinsic characteristics and historical testimony.
- / Potential tourism value.
- / Allows the perception of the site as visible scar.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
Genbaku Dome, Peace Memorial Park (Hiroshima, Japan)
- / Example case 2:
Adem Jasheri Memorial Complex (Prekaz, Kosovo)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

DISCLAIMER — *It should be considered that this choice implies a fruition mainly addressed to tourism and memorial practices.*

NO ACTION

Deliberate choice to refrain from physical intervention for technical, ethical or financial reasons, or to defer intervention until conditions are deemed opportune; may be temporary or long-term.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: this approach retains authenticity and preserves evidence of conflict or trauma, though risks deterioration and community frustration over perceived neglect.

RISKS

- / Accelerated decay.
- / Vandalism.
- / Lack of maintenance.
- / Community frustration.

BENEFITS

- / Avoids destructive interventions.
- / Maintains architectural integrity until conditions improve.
- / Allows processes to unfold at an appropriate pace.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
Buffer Zone (Cyprus)
- / Example case #2:
Linnahall V.I. Lenin Palace of Culture and Sport (Tallinn, Estonia)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

DISCLAIMER — *At times, the decision to refrain from any action affecting the material fabric of the heritage asset can be a deliberate strategy to avoid worsening the situation, particularly when the conflict remains unsolved and any physical intervention on the building could be inappropriate or harmful. Alternatively, it can serve to wait for more favorable conditions—whether economic, social, or otherwise—before proceeding.*

Envision

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

Systematic, multidisciplinary process of acquiring, managing, and sharing detailed information about cultural heritage to support its conservation, protection, and interpretation. It includes research and dissemination activities, as well as data collection ranging from technical methods (e.g., laser scanning and surveying) to historical approaches (e.g., interviews and archival research), carried out by experts as well as local historians and heritage enthusiasts.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: it enables contested narratives to surface and be documented, fostering critical understanding and inclusive memory-making.

RISKS

- / Lack of sources and/or scarce accessibility to them.
- / Difficult or exclusive access limiting community engagement.

BENEFITS

- / Achievable with limited funds.
- / Raises community awareness and engagement.
- / Systematizes and disseminates testimonies, fostering sense of belonging and understanding of plural perspectives.
- / Provides data for future studies.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
Druso Barracks (Silandro, Italy)
- / Example case #2:
Elmina Slave Castle (Elmina, Ghana)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

Negotiation and coordination among institutional and community actors to increase awareness and understanding, build shared visions, priorities, and decision-making frameworks for heritage.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: it supports conflict-sensitive management and inclusive interpretation but may require compromises that dilute contentious elements.

RISKS

- / Underepresentation of minority groups.
- / Power asymmetries.
- / Instrumentalization or *tokenism*.
- / Potential legitimization of conflicting agendas.

BENEFITS

- / Achievable with limited funds.
- / Builds trust and mutual understanding, raises community awareness and engagement.
- / Supports understanding of plural perspectives and aware decision-making.
- / Facilitates cooperation and improves the sustainability and legitimacy of outcomes.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
Buzludzha Monument (Kazanlak, Bulgaria)
- / Example case #2:
Former House of the Fascist Party in Predappio (Predappio, Italy)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

Envision

PARTECIPATORY PROCESS

Active involvement of communities in heritage identification, interpretation, and management, enhancing legitimacy and stewardship. These are bottom-up processes that can emerge directly from people who live in and actively engage with the place.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: This approach can amplify marginalized voices and facilitate reconciliation, though divergent perspectives can prolong negotiation and decision-making.

RISKS

- / Possible negative reactions from surrounding communities.
- / Non-constructive debates due to latent dissonances.
- / Underrepresentation of minority groups and *tokenism*.

BENEFITS

- / Direct engagement of local population.
- / Establishment of new ties, mitigating dissonant memories and creating new shared ones.
- / Understanding of conflicts to support the decision-making.

APPLIED CASES

/ Example case #1:

El Chalet Hospital Posadas, Former Clandestine Detention and Torture Center (Buenos Aires, Argentina)

/ Example case #2:

Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, S-21 interrogation and detention center (Phnom Penh Municipality, Cambodia)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

NETWORKING /

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Building coalitions and communication channels to mobilize awareness, visibility, and support through institutional networks and the media; developing communication plans and strategies for the dissemination of information, activities, and the history related to buildings, in order to manage and not exacerbate existing dissonance.

RISKS

- / Miscommunication.
- / Raising of counter-dissemination of polarizing or misleading interpretations.

BENEFITS

- / Connects institutions, groups, and citizens for heritage preservation.
- / Increases site visibility and public interest.
- / Facilitates collaborations, funding opportunities, and support programs. Encourages dialogue and community engagement.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
House of Slaves (Dakar, Senegal)
- / Example case #2:
Galla Placidia Line (Emilia-Romagna and Marche, Italy)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

Envision

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS / EDUTAINMENT

Use of heritage as an educational resource through formal learning and experiential or entertainment formats to broaden access. It can include both educational programs and edutainment for all age groups.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: this approach can foster empathy and critical reflection, yet it risks trivializing traumatic or sensitive aspects of contested histories.

RISKS

- / Oversimplification.
- / Possible perception of entertaining activities as disrespectful and inappropriate.

BENEFITS

- / Creates a more historically aware society.
- / Engagement of a wider community, especially younger generations.
- / Trains professionals to handle dissonant heritage responsibly.
- / Light-touch yet meaningful engagement.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
The Three Cultures Square (Mexico city, Mexico)
- / Example case #2:
Modelo Prison (Barcelona, Spain)
- / Example case 3:
Auschwitz Concentration Camp (Oświęcim, Poland)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

ARTISTIC REFLECTION

Artistic practices (e.g. temporary and permanent installations, performance, photographic campaign/exhibition) that critically reinterpret heritage, memory, trauma or contested narratives.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: those practices encourage reinterpretation and dialogue, providing alternative ways to engage with difficult pasts while challenging dominant narratives.

RISKS

- / Artworks insensitive to dissonance, generating contradictions or lack of empathy.
- / Public misunderstanding or negative reaction from communities.
- / Over-prioritization of artistic goals over heritage conservation and safety.

BENEFITS

- / Stimulates reflection for individuals and communities.
- / Initiates processes of reinterpretation or reconciliation.
- / Provides new life, meaning, and value to heritage sites.
- / Can attract international attention to contested sites.
- / Can challenge official narratives.
- / Adds contemporary layers to historical narratives.
- / Avoids patronising the core issue.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
House of the Fascist Party (Bolzano, Italy)
- / Example case #2:
Jasenovac Concentration Camp Memorial (Jasenovac, Croatia)
- / Example case #3:
Royal Museum for Central Africa (Tervuren, Belgium)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

Envision

TOURISM

Activation of heritage as an economic and cultural resource through visitation, interpretation, and experience.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: it generates awareness and economic support, but commodification may oversimplify or exploit contested histories, resulting in amplifying the conflict.

RISKS

- / Dark tourism may prevent critical engagement.
- / Lack of critical management can affect the conservation of the site and/or leave space to overtourism and vandalism.
- / Difficulty in attracting visitors if sites are remote or poorly connected.

BENEFITS

- / Helps interpreting heritage consciously and positively.
- / Encourages new activities and economic development.
- / Fosters exchange, knowledge, and transmission of national/local history.
- / Creates integrated tourist paths connecting heritage sites with surrounding landscapes.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
Rivesaltes Camp Memorial (Salses-le-Château, France)
- / Example case #2:
Soratte Bunkers (Sant'Oreste, Italy)
- / Example case #3:
Hôtel Métropole (Hanoi, Vietnam)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

POLICY

Regulatory, planning, and governance frameworks defining rules, standards, responsibilities, and incentives for heritage protection and use. Examples include UNESCO designation, national or local legal protection, and inclusion in lists or inventories of architectural assets worthy of attention.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: policies provide structural protection and formal recognition, though rigid regulations may fail to capture local contestation or evolving memory practices.

RISKS

- / Legal protection may be seen as limiting interventions or reducing flexibility/use.
- / Listing during conflicts may make sites targets for opposing groups.
- / Poorly designed constraints can lead to site stagnation.

BENEFITS

- / Offers structural protection and institutional recognition.
- / Supports long-term preservation and management strategies.
- / Provides clear guidance, enhances transparency and supports a consistent decision-making.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
Stari Most (Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- / Example case #2:
Casa Mariani Teruggi (La Plata, Argentina)
- / Example case #3:
Suomenlinna fortress (Helsinki, Finland)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

Envision

MEMORIAL PRACTICES AND EVENTS

Commemorations, rituals, anniversaries and public ceremonies, as well as the placement of inscriptions and commemorative plaques, that sustain symbolic and memorial values, transmits historical memory and shape collective identity.

Impact on Dissonant Heritage: reinforces collective memory and identity, but may privilege certain narratives over others, exacerbating tensions among different groups.

RISKS

- / Possible non-reconciling reactions from groups not acknowledging multiple perspectives.
- / Vandalism.

BENEFITS

- / Ranging from a low-cost to higher budget events.
- / Direct and clear memory transmission to future generations.
- / Initiates processes of reflection or reconciliation with traumatic pasts, also through the creation of new shared memories.

APPLIED CASES

- / Example case #1:
Bellavista Religious Complex (Bojayà, Colombia)
- / Example case #2:
Tepelenë Internment Camp (Tepelenë, Albania)
- / Example case #3:
Rubble Hill, Monte Scherbelino (Stuttgart, Germany)

For further exploration of these and additional case studies, please refer to the GeoApp: <https://cocowar.com/dissonant-heritage-geoapp/>

MAKING A THOUGHTFUL CHOICE OF STRATEGIES

It should be noted that not all paths are always feasible and it is impossible to have certainty, *a priori*, that the same combination of actions will yield identical results in cases with different characteristics. Crucial is rooting the choice in the Understanding phase and strategic foresight can make the difference. At this stage, what can make a decisive difference is strategic foresight—that is, anticipating what might go differently from what was expected, and envisioning, from the very design phase, potential corrective measures for controlling, managing, or mitigating possible risks (see previous chapter).

Some selected actions may be incorporated into the Plan as preparatory measures for actions expected to be implemented later, thereby laying the groundwork for future developments.

DISCLAIMER — *The Co.Co.War GeoApp might be a good food for thought to see which strategies have been implemented in other contexts with similar characteristics. The fact that a strategy appears to be applied more frequently does not necessarily mean that it is more effective, just as a less common strategy is not necessarily less valuable due to inefficiency. The preferred approach is always case-by-case and success is strongly influenced by a wide range of contextual factors.*

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Having previously analyzed implemented strategies, the first step involves reflecting on which strategies proved effective and why, as well as identifying those that did not achieve the intended outcomes and the factors contributing to those results. This reflection provides guidance for the subsequent selection in relation to the defined objectives and priorities, considering that the most effective plan tend to combine various strategies.

At this stage, it is of central importance to verify the actual feasibility of each strategy assessing the following points:

- / Objectives and priorities
- / Timing
- / Resources

Envision

- / Stakeholders involved
- / Possibility that the action may exacerbate dissonance
- / Inclusiveness regarding the plurality of local perspectives
- / Contribution to peace building or peacekeeping actions
- / Alignment with the vocation of the place
- / Modalities of communication
- / Success indicators

DISCLAIMER — *This process must be approached with the awareness that, despite all efforts, dissonance may continue to exist or re-emerge with a fractal pattern. These are complex situations, and it is therefore important to recognize for which actions both the timing and society are genuinely ready. In any case, if conditions are not yet fully mature, it is always possible to initiate “minimal actions”—consistent with available economic, time, and human resources—that ensure basic conservation or lay the groundwork for when direct intervention on the site becomes feasible. This allows the Plan to be structured in steps and implemented gradually. Sometimes, simply, the moment is not yet right: when obstructive forces arise or circumstances make intervention impossible, one may opt for indirect actions and/or limit oneself to monitoring and documenting the situation.*

STAKEHOLDERS AND ROLES

- / **Who are the key stakeholders involved in the project?**
 - Financial contributors / funders
 - Advocacy or interest groups
 - Local community and users connected to the site
 - Regulatory authorities and policy makers
 - Experts, consultants, or heritage professionals
- / **Are the timing and stakeholders ready for the planned actions?**
- / **What are the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder?**
- / **How can stakeholder engagement be maintained throughout the project?**

In this phase, it is necessary to analyze the **stakeholders** that might be important to be integrated in the project phases. [Community toolkit](#) still is the primary methodological reference, but it is important to underline that some of the stakeholders identified in the understanding phase might be different from the one involved in this operational phase, more should be involved here or with a different role and relevance.

Useful can be a list of contact and, for their prioritization, a Stakeholder Analysis Matrix combining power and interest.

RESOURCES

- / **What are the needed resources?**
- / **What resources are available for implementation?**
 - Financial / budgetary resources
 - Human resources (staff, volunteers, experts)
- / **Time and project timeline**
- / **Are there additional resources that can be mobilized if needed?**

The analysis of resources represents a crucial step in assessing the feasibility and sustainability of the Plan. At this stage, it is essential to identify and critically evaluate the resources currently available for implementation, in order to align strategic ambitions with realistic operational capacities.

Envision

This assessment should include financial and budgetary resources, considering both secured funding and potential financial constraints, as well as human resources, such as staff members, volunteers, technical experts, and external consultants, whose skills and availability may significantly influence the scope and quality of the intervention. Equally important is the evaluation of time-related resources, including the overall project timeline, key milestones, and possible delays linked to administrative procedures, **stakeholder** engagement, or contextual sensitivities.

Beyond existing assets, it is also necessary to reflect the possibility of mobilizing additional resources if required. This may involve identifying potential funding opportunities, institutional partnerships, **community** support, or phased implementation strategies that allow actions to be adjusted over time.

A thorough resource analysis not only helps prevent over-commitment or unrealistic planning, but also supports the definition of adaptive strategies, enabling the Plan to remain flexible and responsive to changing conditions while ensuring its long-term viability.

RISKS AND CONSTRAINTS

- / What are the potential risks or challenges (social, political, environmental) that could affect the plan?**
- / How can these risks be mitigated or managed?**

The analysis of risks and constraints is a fundamental component of the planning process, particularly in contexts characterized by **dissonance**, where interventions may generate unintended consequences. This phase aims to identify the potential risks and challenges that could affect the implementation and outcomes of the plan, including social, political, institutional, environmental, and cultural factors.

Social risks may relate to community resistance, polarization, or the exclusion of certain groups, while political or institutional constraints can involve changes in governance, lack of policy support, or conflicting agendas among stakeholders. Environmental and material risks may

concern the physical condition of the site, exposure to natural hazards, or the impact of proposed actions on the surrounding context.

Once these risks have been identified, it is essential to assess their likelihood and potential impact, in order to develop appropriate mitigation and **management** measures. Such measures may include adaptive phasing of actions, targeted **communication** strategies, inclusive participatory processes, contingency planning, or the adoption of reversible and low-impact interventions.

Addressing risks and constraints at this stage does not aim to eliminate uncertainty, but rather to enhance awareness and preparedness. By integrating risk management into the Conservation and Management Plan, the project can remain flexible and resilient, reducing the possibility of exacerbating existing dissonance and increasing the **capacity** to respond constructively to evolving conditions.

Envision

RISK CATEGORY	IDENTIFIED RISK	POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE SITE / PROCESS	MITIGATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES
Social	Community opposition or polarization	Escalation of conflict, rejection of interventions, loss of trust	Early stakeholder engagement, inclusive dialogue, mediation tools, phased or reversible actions
Social / Cultural	Exclusion of minority or vulnerable groups	Reinforcement of existing dissonance, lack of legitimacy	Participatory processes, representation of diverse narratives, community-led activities
Political / Institutional	Change in political priorities or governance	Interruption of funding, lack of institutional support	Flexible planning, diversification of partners, formal agreements
Political	Instrumentalization of the site or its narrative	Misinterpretation, ideological use, increased tensions	Clear communication strategy, transparency, independent advisory bodies
Economic / Financial	Insufficient or unstable funding	Delays, reduction in scope, incomplete implementation	Phased implementation, fundraising strategies, alternative financing
Human Resources	Lack of skilled personnel or staff turnover	Reduced quality of implementation, loss of continuity	Capacity building, involvement of external experts, documentation of processes
Environmental	Natural hazards or environmental degradation	Physical damage to the site, increased maintenance needs	Risk prevention measures, monitoring systems, adaptive conservation strategies
Technical / Material	Poor state of conservation or unexpected structural issues	Increased costs, safety concerns	Preliminary assessments, contingency budgets, reversible interventions
Temporal	Inadequate timing or societal unreadiness	Rejection of actions, limited impact	Minimal or indirect actions, monitoring and documentation, waiting for more favorable conditions

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- / **How will the plan's implementation be monitored?**
- / **What indicators or benchmarks will be used to evaluate and keep on track the process?**
- / **How will feedback and lesson learned inform adjustments to the plan?**

The Monitoring and Evaluation phase is intended to ensure continuous oversight of the plan's implementation and to assess its effectiveness over time. Monitoring should be conceived as an ongoing process that accompanies the execution of actions, allowing for the systematic observation of progress, impacts, and unintended effects.

This phase involves defining how the implementation will be tracked, which indicators or benchmarks will be used to evaluate success, and how both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected. Indicators may relate to the physical condition of the site, the achievement of strategic objectives, social dynamics, or changes in **perception** and levels of dialogue. Equally important is the integration of feedback mechanisms: lessons learned during implementation should inform adjustments to strategies, timelines, or actions, enabling the plan to remain responsive to evolving conditions. In this sense, monitoring and evaluation are not conceived as a final assessment, but as a reflexive and adaptive process that supports informed decision-making and long-term sustainability.

Envision

MONITORING DIMENSION	KEY QUESTIONS	INDICATORS / BENCHMARKS	METHODS AND TOOLS	USE OF FEEDBACK
Implementation Progress	How is the plan being implemented over time?	Completion of planned actions; adherence to timeline	Progress reports, work schedules, site inspections	Adjust sequencing of actions; reschedule activities
Impact on the Site	How have the actions affected the heritage asset?	Physical condition indicators; conservation status	Condition assessments, technical surveys, photographic documentation	Refine conservation strategies; address emerging vulnerabilities
Social Impact	Has the social context changed during or after implementation?	Levels of community engagement; participation rates; public feedback	Surveys, interviews, public meetings	Improve inclusiveness; recalibrate engagement strategies
Dissonance Management	Have existing dissonances been reduced or transformed?	Changes in perceptions; emergence of new dissonances	Stakeholder consultations, media analysis, qualitative evaluations	Adapt narratives; introduce corrective or mediating actions
Dialogue and Communication	Have the actions facilitated dialogue?	Quality of public debate; diversity of voices represented	Communication monitoring, content analysis	Adjust communication tools and messages
Risks and Side Effects	Have any actions generated new risks or vulnerabilities?	Quality of public debate; diversity of voices represented	Communication monitoring, content analysis	Adjust communication tools and messages
Learning and Adaptation	What lessons have been learned from implementation?	Documentation of successes and failures	Internal reviews, reflective workshops	Feed insights back into the plan; update objectives

COMMUNICATION PLAN

- / What are the objectives of the new Communication Plan?
- / Based on the existing strategies, which ones can be continued, improved, or avoided?
- / What are the key messages of the Communication Plan?
- / What are the main target groups?
- / How can such messages be properly conveyed?

Having observed how inappropriate **communication** can lead to risky consequences for the **protection** and **conservation** of cultural heritage, it follows that it is of fundamental importance to develop an effective, respectful, and non-polarizing communication strategy, addressing both the history of the building and the re-signification project that is intended to be implemented.

Establishing a healthy and open channel of communication with **communities** can provide a key to success, or at least a better understanding of the activities aimed at reintegrating the asset into the life cycle. This is particularly important because, if the project is not understood by the inhabitants or **stakeholders** involved, its effects could fade within a few years. It is essential that all viewpoints are included in this space, which could thus become a setting for constructive citizen dialogue for keeping **memory** and reflection alive.

The Communication Plan aims to enhance the visibility, understanding, and impact of the project's activities by broadening public engagement. Building on existing communication strategies, the Plan seeks to consolidate those approaches that have proven successful in demonstrating being dissonance sensitive improve tools and channels that offer opportunities for greater accessibility and participation, and avoid communication practices that are fragmented, insufficiently inclusive, or poorly aligned with the project's objectives. The key messages should emphasize the project's relevance, the value of its outcomes, its contribution to society, and the opportunities it creates for stakeholder involvement.

At this point, defining the main target groups guarantees a wider and more effective outreach, while a tailored approach ensure to convey effectively the message.

Envision

In this regard ATRIUM Route has pointed out 4 key communication pillars for Dissonant heritage:

- / using non-celebrative language
- / making dissonance explicit
- / emphasizing reuse in the present
- / conveying dissonance through contrast



/IV

EVOLVE

- 4** — **IMPLEMENTATION**
- 5** — **MONITORING THE RESULTS**
- 6** — **REVIEWING THE PROCESS**

Evolve, refine, adapt: the final phase involves the crucial implementation of the plan and its essential review, since, particularly when dealing with dissonant contexts, it is crucial to reassess their effects over the medium and long term. This phase is meant to make the site evolve and strengthen its characteristics of antifragility, turning it into a space for democracy, debate, inclusion, and **negotiation** with the past

4 IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation phase translates the strategies defined in the Conservation and Management Plan into concrete actions on the ground. This stage involves coordinating resources, engaging **stakeholders**, and sequencing interventions according to the operational roadmap established during the planning process. Each action should be carefully monitored to ensure that it aligns with the overarching objectives, respects the heritage values, and mitigates potential risks identified during the planning phase. Flexibility is essential, as unforeseen challenges or emerging dissonances may require adjustments. Successful execution relies on clear **communication**, ongoing documentation, and the collaboration of multidisciplinary teams, ensuring that each step contributes to the long-term sustainability, functional viability, and social acceptance of the site.

5

MONITORING THE RESULTS

Once actions of the Conservation and Management Plan have been implemented, it is essential to return to success Indicators and reflective questions. This evaluation phase ensures that the objectives and priorities are being met and provides a foundation for continuous learning and adjustment. Key questions to guide this evaluation include:

- / Were the initial premises and objectives achieved?
- / How did my actions influence the key pillars of the project?
- / Has the perception of the site changed as a result of these actions?
- / What impact did my actions have on the dissonant heritage site?
- / Has the social context changed in the meantime or by the end of the project?
- / Have new dissonances emerged that require attention?
- / Were the actions significant in terms of impact?
- / Did the actions facilitate dialogue among stakeholders?
- / Were any actions perceived as divisive or contentious?

Moreover, in addition to these general questions, in this phase it is crucial to verify all the indicators of success that every project should have established in the previous stages, in order to have the chance to activate the corrective measures, if needed.

DISCLAIMER — *Progresses in sensitive contexts, such as those affected by dissonance, are often slow. Emotional, social, and conflict-related dynamics can lengthen the process, and immediate results should not be expected. Patience, observation, and careful evaluation are therefore crucial.*

Evolve

6

REVIEWING THE PROCESS

This procedure is designed to recalibrate actions once their effectiveness has been assessed, or, conversely, when new forms of dissonance emerge. Should any critical issues arise, it may be necessary to review the entire process, revisiting all phases starting from Identification, to evaluate how to respond to evolving scenarios with an increasingly informed perspective, reflecting the fractal vision of the shell depicted in the diagram. This tool can be applied repeatedly to guide the process whenever dissonance manifests, whether in previously identified forms or in new ones, or whenever a new strategy is to be implemented on the site.

/REFERENCES

[“Conflict Sensitivity Toolkit. A Resource for Trócaire Staff”](#), Trócaire, 2011.

[“How to Guide to Conflict Sensitivity”](#), The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012.

Lambert, S., and C. Rockwell, *Protecting Cultural Heritage in Times of Conflict*, ICCROM, 2012.

[“A Guide for Professional Journalism in Conflict Zones”](#), Search for Common Ground, Jerusalem Office, 2014.

Du Toit, Peter, [Reporting Atrocities. A Toolbox for Journalists Covering Violent Conflict and Atrocities. Internews](#), 2014.

Nauert, Sandra, *ATRIUM — Towards Dissonant Heritage Communication Strategies*, Working Paper, Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna, Bologna 2015.

Kisić, Višnja, *Governing Heritage Dissonance: Promises and Realities of Selected Cultural Policies*, European Cultural Foundation, 2016.

O’Keefe, Roger, Camille Péron, Tofiq Musayev, and Gianluca Ferrari. *Protection of Cultural Property Military Manual*, UNESCO, Paris 2016.

Safety Guide for Journalists. A Handbook for Reporters in High-Risk Environments, Reporters Sans Frontières, 2017.

Nauert, Sandra, “The Linguistic and Cultural Interpretation of Dissonant Heritage: the ATRIUM Cultural Route”, *Almatourism. Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development*, no. 15, 2017.

Stargardt, Andreas, Simon Englebert, and Alessandra Flamini, [Defence Handbook for Journalists and Bloggers. On Freedom of Expression and](#)

[Freedom of Information Principles in International Law](#), Reporters Sans Frontières, 2017.

[First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis. 1: Handbook](#), ICCROM, 2018.

Ireton, Cherilyn, and Julie Posetti, eds. *Journalism, “Fake News” & Disinformation: Handbook for Journalism Education and Training*, UNESCO Series on Journalism Education, UNESCO, Paris 2018.
[Heritage Contact Zone: Toolkit](#), Project Heritage Contact Zone, 2020.

“*Notion on Disinformation and Related Concepts*”, European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA), 2020.

Kappler, Stefanie, and Johanna Mannergren Selimovic, “*Working with the Cultural Heritage of Conflict for Peacebuilding: Lessons Learned from the Western Balkans*”, Civil Society Dialogue Network Discussion Paper, no. 16 (2021).

“*Concept on Cultural Heritage in Conflicts and Crises. A Component for Peace and Security in European Union’s External Action*”, European External Action Service, 2021.

Pamment, James. [RESIST 2 Counter-Disinformation Toolkit](#), Government Communication Service, 2021.

Tandon, Aparna, ed., [PATH: Peacebuilding Assessment Tool for Heritage Recovery and Rehabilitation. Toolkit on Heritage for Peace and Resilience 1](#). ICCROM, 2021.

Chappuis, Fairlie, [Toolkit for Security Sector Reporting. Media, Journalism and Security Sector Reform](#), Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2022.

Scheffler, Nils, and Petra Potz, *Integrated Approaches to Dissonant Heritage of the 20th Century with a Focus on Smaller Towns and Remote Areas in Europe*, 2022.

References

Trithart, Albert. *Disinformation Against UN Peacekeeping Operations*, 2022.

ICOMOS-ICCROM Guidance on Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Recovery and Reconstruction for Heritage Places of Cultural Significance and World Heritage Cultural Properties, ICCROM and ICOMOS, 2023.

Lacroix, Jean-Pierre, *Information Integrity in Peacekeeping Settings*, 2024.

Brandford, Abigail, Andreas Holtberget, Benny Christensen, et al., *Monument(al) Challenges*, Edited by Ann-Laure Lieval and Marie-Louise Jansen, 2024/2025.

“*Training Guide for Post Conflict Recovery of Cultural Heritage Based on ICCROM—UNESCO Capacity Building Project in Mosul, Iraq*”, UNESCO and ICCROM, 2024.

Branislav Stanicek, *Mapping Threats to Peace and Democracy Worldwide. Normandy Index 2025*, 2025.

Russo, Alessandra, ed., *The Protection of Cultural Heritage in Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings: Challenges and Opportunities for Cooperation in EU Neighbouring Countries*. 2025.

[“Contested Histories ONSITE Toolkit — How to Give a Tour about Contested Histories?”](#) n.d.





ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
**UNIVERSITÀ
DI BOLOGNA**



**UNIVERSITÀ
POLITECNICA
DELLE MARCHE**



**Politecnico
di Torino**

Dipartimento
di Architettura e Design



