

FOUNDATIONS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (ICH)

Preserving culture through
responsible and mindful travel



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define ICH and distinguish it from tangible heritage.
- Identify major ICH expressions and their typical strengths/risks.
- Explain how ST principles align with ICH safeguarding and authenticity.
- Map stakeholders and describe their responsibilities in ICH–tourism systems.





Foundations of ICH and Sustainable Tourism



What is Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)?



Definition and Components

ICH includes traditions, oral histories, rituals, craftsmanship, ecological knowledge, and performing arts passed through generations.

Dynamic and Evolving Heritage

Unlike tangible heritage, ICH is living, performed, and evolves with communities, reflecting cultural identity and diversity.

Importance for Sustainable Tourism

Respecting and preserving ICH supports community socio-economic benefits and fosters genuine visitor-local interactions.

Community Involvement and Education

Community participation in tourism planning and educational efforts ensures cultural practices are preserved and valued.

Expressions of ICH: Potentials and Vulnerabilities



Oral Traditions and Rituals

Oral traditions preserve community memories but are vulnerable without active practice; rituals build social identity but risk commercialization.

Craftsmanship and Ecological Knowledge

Traditional craftsmanship supports creativity and livelihoods but may decline with industrialization; ecological knowledge promotes sustainability but can lose relevance.

Performing Arts and Local Customs

Performing arts engage audiences and preserve narratives but require resources; local customs foster community bonds but face erosion from modernization.

Sustainable Tourism and Community Role

Sustainable tourism supports ICH preservation while avoiding commodification; community involvement ensures authentic heritage representation.

A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, composed of various colored geometric shapes including triangles, squares, and rectangles in shades of blue, pink, yellow, and orange.

Sustainable Tourism Principles and Community Involvement

Sustainable Tourism Principles Applied to ICH



Pico Vineyards – UNESCO heritage

Authenticity Preservation

Present cultural practices in their true form, respecting original meanings and contexts for genuine heritage experience.

Community Leadership

Empower local communities to design and manage tourism ensuring accurate and respectful heritage representation.

Fair Benefit Sharing

Distribute tourism economic gains equitably among community members to support livelihoods and preservation efforts.

Environmental Integration

Promote sustainable practices linking cultural heritage to natural landscapes for ecological and cultural protection.

Stakeholder Mapping and Responsibilities



Key Stakeholders Overview

Local communities, tourists, governments, NGOs, and businesses play vital roles in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

Roles and Responsibilities

Each stakeholder group holds unique responsibilities from decision-making to ethical marketing and heritage preservation.

Theoretical Frameworks

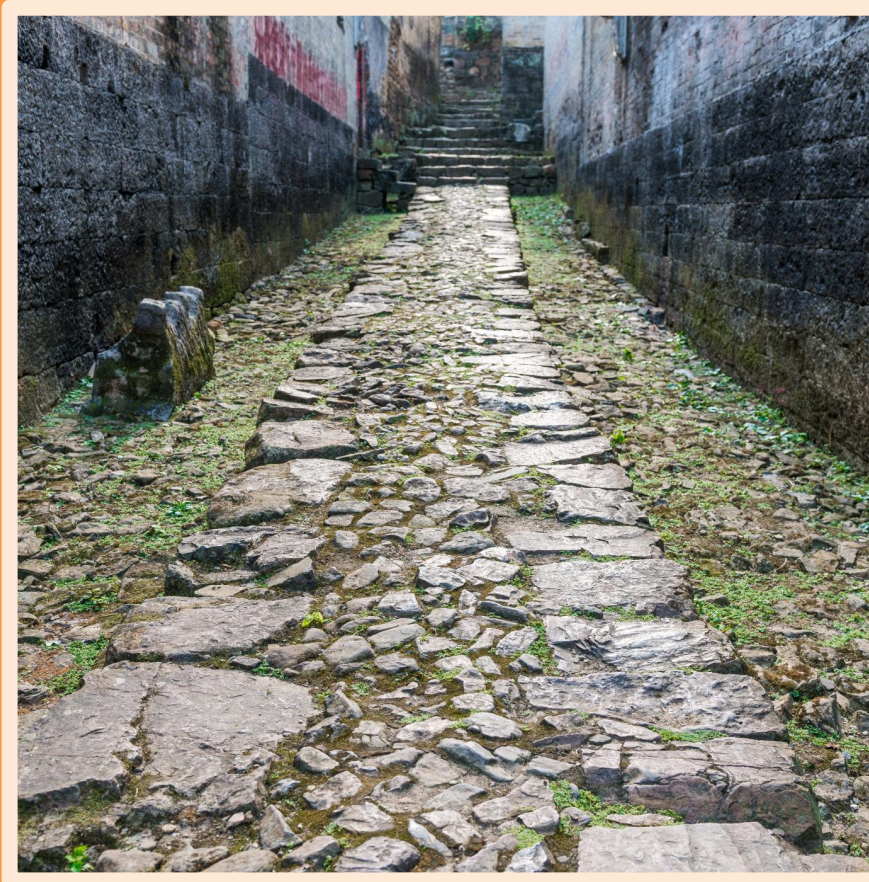
Theories like empowerment, social exchange, stakeholder, collaborative governance, and social capital help guide effective engagement.

Sustainable Tourism Systems

Mapping stakeholders and their responsibilities enables inclusive tourism that respects cultural heritage and supports communities.

Challenges and Case Studies

Challenges in ICH and Tourism



Over-tourism and Authenticity Loss

Over-tourism pressures communities to commodify cultural practices, risking staged performances and authenticity loss.

Commercialization Risks

Commercializing cultural expressions can distort meanings, creating pseudo-traditions and reducing cultural value.

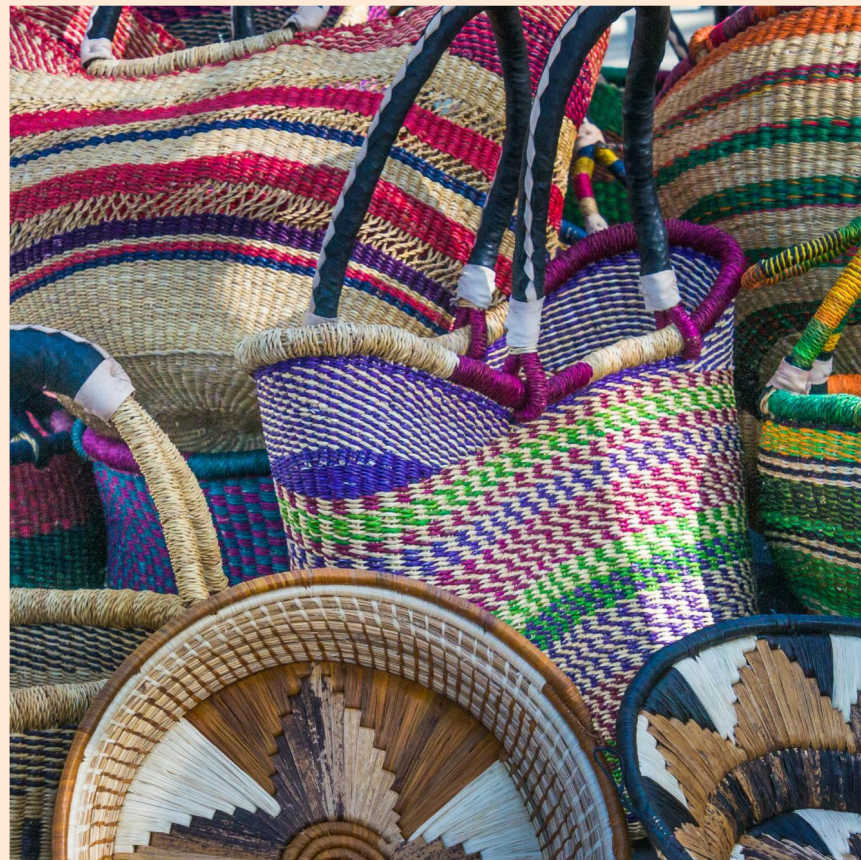
Community Agency Challenges

External control marginalizes local voices, limiting community influence in tourism and heritage representation.

Environmental Concerns

Unsustainable tourism harms ecosystems, strains resources, and threatens heritage sites amid climate change risks.

Case Studies and Best Practices



Supporting Traditional Arts

Bhutan uses tourism revenue to fund traditional arts, ensuring preservation and economic benefit for local artisans.

Community Eco-Tourism

Kenya's Maasai collaborate with eco-tourism operators to create cultural experiences supporting heritage and artisan training.

Language Heritage Preservation

Mirandela, Portugal, preserves local language through tourism experiences celebrating linguistic heritage.

Transforming Traditions

Azores transformed whale hunting into whale-watching tourism, preserving cultural narratives through storytelling and exhibits.



Recommendations and Reflection



Recommendations for Sustainable ICH Tourism



Community Capacity Building

Training programs empower communities with skills in cultural documentation, heritage management, and tourism practices.

Participatory Tourism Planning

Engaging local communities ensures tourism strategies reflect their values and priorities for sustainable development.

Digital Tools for ICH Promotion

Virtual tours and multimedia storytelling enhance the visibility and appreciation of intangible cultural heritage.

Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement

Partnerships among governments, NGOs, and private sectors create shared visions for tourism development.

Key Questions for Reflection



Understanding Intangible Cultural Heritage

ICH is non-physical heritage crucial for designing respectful and authentic tourism experiences.

Three Pillars of Sustainability

Environmental, sociocultural, and economic pillars guide effective safeguarding of ICH in tourism.

Key Stakeholders and Roles

Identifying stakeholders fosters inclusive, collaborative tourism systems that protect ICH.

Measuring Co-created Value

Community involvement, authenticity, and fair benefits indicate genuine value creation for ICH bearers.