



EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF



PARTICIPATORY RISK ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN COASTAL AND MARITIME REGIONS

PERICLES emphasises the need for participation in the sustainable management, conservation and use of cultural heritage. PERICLES has developed a draft participatory risk assessment framework that is being applied and tested in demonstrations across the case regions. This policy brief provides recommendations for facilitating participatory risk assessment of coastal and maritime heritage, and thereby achieving optimal results from risk assessment.

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INTRODUCTION

PrEseRvIng and sustainably governing Cultural heritage and Landscapes in European coastal and maritime regionS (PERICLES) focuses on sustainable, participatory governance of cultural heritage in European coastal and maritime regions. The overall aim of PERICLES is to develop and demonstrate a comprehensive framework to understand, preserve and utilise coastal and maritime heritage for societal good. To do this, PERICLES has developed a participatory risk assessment framework. This framework can be deployed as a key tool for more effective analysis and response to risks. Its development has led to a number of policy implications and recommendations that are introduced in this policy brief.

EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

Coastal and Maritime Cultural Heritage (CMCH) faces many threats, both environmental and man-made that require assessing for potential mitigating action. Risk identification, conducted with expert and non-expert stakeholders in four PERICLES case regions in Portugal, France, Denmark and Estonia, showed environmental threats, particularly those relating to climate change (e.g. sea level rise, flooding and coastal erosion) and storm damage, were perceived to be the highest threats to CMCH in all areas. Human risks that were identified primarily related to poor governance, weak protection, and on-site visitor pressures. Our gap analysis showed minimal difference in the perception of risks between expert and non-expert stakeholders. Building on this, PERICLES developed a participatory risk assessment framework for sustainable management, conservation and use of coastal and maritime cultural heritage. The framework represents the PERICLES understanding that risk assessment as a social process, with two distinctive characteristics:

- 1) Explicit reference to the tangible and intangible which informs our understanding of risk;
- 2) Facilitation of participation of a broad range of actors.

To operationalise this approach, PERICLES has developed a participatory risk assessment framework shown below, with the first phase in blue boxes and second phase in green.

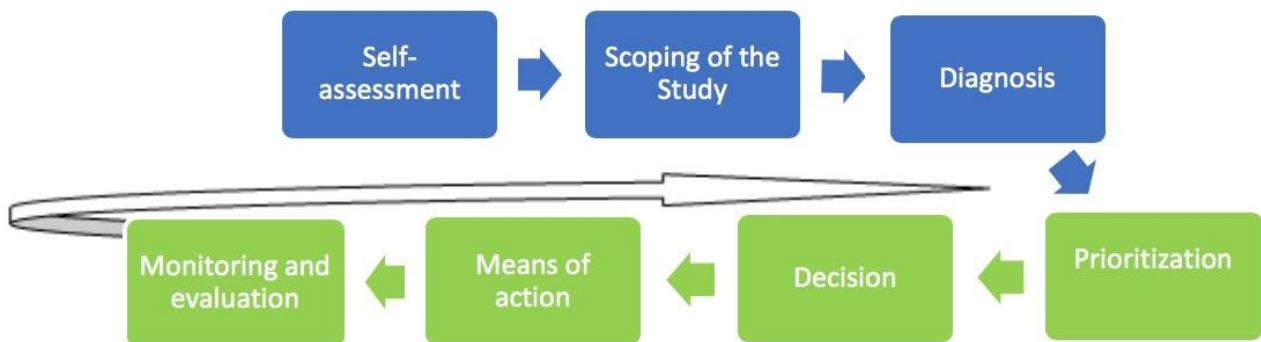


Figure 1: Flow chart of methodological steps for PERICLES participatory risk assessment framework.

The assessment consists of **self-assessment** to assess the level of knowledge of the assessor in the topic; **scoping of the study** to map the context and definition of risks, heritage at stake, actors and legal frameworks; **diagnosis** to evaluate risk, value and knowledge with stakeholders; **prioritisation** of actions to be implemented based on results of phase one and stakeholder discussions; **decision** on what risks are the most important to take action against; **means of action** to sustainably manage, conserve or use the heritage; and **monitoring and evaluation** to find out if the actions taken are contributing towards achieving the initial objectives set by actors.

PERICLES will continue to test and refine the participatory risk assessment framework across our case regions and through deliberation with key stakeholders to produce a final version. The final framework can then be applied Europe-wide by policy makers, heritage managers and members of communities of meaning and communities of participation.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PERICLES recommends an integrated participatory approach to risk assessment. The findings of the consortium’s work to date leads to the following implications and recommendations for participation in CMCH risk assessment:

- 1) Participation is a prerequisite to sustainable management, conservation and use of coastal and maritime cultural heritage;
- 2) Risk assessments must should include assessment of risks to intangible heritage and, therefore, need to be conducted through deep engagement with various communities;
- 3) Risk assessment should facilitate systematic involvement of the broad range of actors concerned with CMCH by anchoring participation in its framework;
- 4) It is recommended that participation is encouraged at every step of the risk assessment process, and is assessed through constant reflection on representativeness, transparency, accountability and power;
- 5) Communities (i.e. non-experts) should be able to and encouraged to make risk assessments of their own heritage.

PROJECT IDENTITY

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FURTHER READING	Ounanian et al. Conceptualizing Coastal and Maritime Cultural Heritage through Communities of Meaning and Participation (forthcoming paper) PERICLES Deliverable 4.2