

Intangible heritage for local cultural vitality

A GUIDE FOR
MUNICIPAL ACTION



Table of contents

- 02 **What is intangible heritage?**
- 05 The arts of oral tradition
- 06 Knowledge and skills for traditional crafts
- 07 Customs, knowledge, and ways of life

- 08 **How to support the actors of intangible heritage**
- 10 Inventory and documentation
- 12 Cultural development agreements
- 12 Cultural and heritage policies
- 13 Legal status: identification

- 14 **Member organizations of the Conseil québécois du patrimoine vivant**

- 16 **For more information**

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Cover photo:

Guillaume Morin (fiddler seen from behind at the Chants de vieilles festival)
Simon Paradis (Les Tireux d'Roche in concert)
Martin Fiset (guided tour of the ecomuseum Le Fumoir d'antan)
Marie-Claude Simard (Paulusi Novalinga of the Nunavik Arctic Survival Training Center demonstrates how to build an igloo)

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The Conseil québécois du patrimoine vivant (CQPV) is the umbrella organization recognized and supported by the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications (MCC) for its actions in the field of intangible cultural heritage. It has more than 100 member organizations from across Quebec. The CQPV is also accredited by UNESCO to act in an advisory capacity to the Intergovernmental Committee of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The 2012 Quebec *Cultural Heritage Act* officially recognizes intangible heritage as a distinct component of Quebec's cultural heritage. The MCC encourages its municipal partners¹ to take steps to ensure that the various elements of this heritage retains their vitality, particularly by supporting projects that contribute to their continued development.

In this guide, the MCC and CQPV clarify the concept of intangible heritage and give examples of concrete actions to support the elements it is comprised of. Some guidelines are proposed so that efforts to develop traditional practices are as beneficial as possible.

Gathering to identify and extract birch burl ["chasse aux cups"] as part of the D'Autray RCM's "Pour la suite du geste... rassemblons-nous!" project, in collaboration with Philippe Jetté. This activity was part of a series of actions linked to the territory's intangible heritage. Photo credit: Guy Charpentier.

1. The 11 Indigenous nations of Quebec have expressed their desire to ensure the affirmation and recognition of their cultures. Respecting their wishes, the Conseil québécois du patrimoine vivant and the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications wish to accompany them in their efforts to identify, document, disseminate, transmit, promote and showcase the elements of their intangible heritage. Although Indigenous and northern communities are not administered in the same way as municipalities and regional county municipalities, the orientations in this document also apply to band councils and Inuit administrative authorities.



What is intangible heritage?

Intangible heritage is a term now used to designate all cultural practices that have been transmitted from generation to generation. They are traditions that still occur and can be observed, produced and experienced in the present. This contemporary existence explains why intangible heritage is also known as living heritage.

Intangible heritage has been defined through notions of folklore, folk arts and traditions. It encompasses a large diversity of elements, from playing the melodeon and fiddling, to traditions associated with maple syrup and blacksmithing, to artisanal textile production and knowledge of the medicinal value of indigenous plants. It covers a large range of traditional knowledge that comes from equally diverse domains: arts, crafts, construction, agriculture, health, sports and leisure. Their commonality is having been transmitted through time, primarily orally or through observation and imitation, and most often outside of educational institutions or established professional orders.

The guiding principle of this concept is to support the development of the diverse activities that constitute intangible heritage.

Marie-Desneiges Hamel at the Carrefour mondial de l'accordéon in Montmagny. Photo credit: Julien Simard



Intangible heritage is a concept that was established to recognize forms of cultural heritage other than buildings, sites and objects to be preserved. Above all, it refers to people and their living traditions, as well as collective cultural content such as traditional songs.



The elements of intangible heritage are subject to the dynamics of continuity. As living traditions, they have been adapted to their time and environment.



Skills workshop in Mandeville.
Photo credit: Guy Charpentier – D'AuRay RCM

Quebec's *Cultural Heritage Act* defines intangible heritage as "the skills, knowledge, expressions, practices and representations handed down from generation to generation and constantly recreated, in conjunction with any cultural objects or spaces associated with them, that a community or group recognizes as part of its cultural heritage, the knowledge, protection, transmission or enhancement of which is in the public interest."



Intangible heritage constitutes a response to the growing possibility of homogenization of the world's cultures.

Municipalities and regional county municipalities do not necessarily use the term "intangible heritage" when they support cultural practices of this nature. What's important is that they contribute to their vitality in cultural spaces, entertainment venues and schools, on the internet and elsewhere.

Making the distinction

It is important to distinguish between intangible heritage (current practice) and historical people, events or sites (of the past). Historical re-enactments and interpretation are thus generally considered commemoration and are often linked to built heritage. Similarly, an initiative that involves oral interviews does not necessarily qualify as an intangible heritage project. For example, a municipality that collects oral testimony about bygone practices or historical memories or sites is documenting a person, an event or a place, rather than an element of intangible heritage (living tradition).

The various cultural activities that are passed on from generation to generation contribute to the social and economic development of a region. This is the reason why intangible heritage is integrated into many public policies and programs. Supporting intangible heritage means participating in a broad international movement towards a world enriched through its diversity.



Intangible heritage encompasses sustainable and often alternative ways of expressing artistic talent, having fun, making useful objects, dressing, creating shelter, eating, healing or transporting oneself.

Intangible heritage can foster:

- ➔ a greater cultural offering;
- ➔ civic engagement, in particular by youth, and intergenerational activities;
- ➔ local economic benefits;
- ➔ the creation of a distinct cultural signature for municipalities;
- ➔ the recognition of exemplary tradition bearers;
- ➔ the apprenticing and transmitting of artisanal techniques and traditional skills;
- ➔ an increase in sales of a local specialty product;
- ➔ an improvement in the attractiveness of a municipality, both for tourists and new residents; and
- ➔ pride and a sense of belonging.



A *veillée de danse* [traditional dancing event] organized by the Centre de valorisation du patrimoine vivant during the 2nd États généraux du patrimoine immatériel au Québec [general meeting on intangible heritage]. Photo credit: Emmanuelle Roberge



Textile market at the Twist festival. Photo credit: Sébastien Lavallée



Living Heritage at UNESCO

Since 2003, UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has given a strong impetus to diverse cultural traditions throughout the world. It advocates a participatory approach and aims to support the means of transmission within concerned groups and communities. It contains important directives on sustainable development, twelve ethical principles, and a series of performance indicators. The Government of Canada has yet to ratify the multilateral convention, but the Government of Quebec's *Cultural Heritage Act* contains provisions that were strongly inspired by it.

Basketry workshop at the Centre du patrimoine vivant de Lanaudière. Photo credit: Véronic Massé

The arts of oral tradition

Playing traditional or folk music, singing traditional call-and-response songs or lullabies, performing the quadrille or other square dances, telling ancient tales and legends—all of these are part of Quebec's rich intangible heritage.



Step dancer Laurie Bourgeois of the Ensemble traditionnel La Foulée during an event organized by La R'voyure. Photo credit: Alexis St-Pierre



Throat singers Taquralik Patridge and Evie Mark with Kent Nagano and the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. Photo credit: Robert Fréchette – Avataq Cultural Institute



Singer Jean-Paul Guimond. Photo credit: Emmanuelle Roberge



Storyteller Simon Gauthier on tour in Belgium. Photo credit: John Sellekaers

Traditional skills and craftsmanship

Using techniques passed on from generation to generation to work with different materials by hand and make quality products is also living heritage.

Jean-Guy Tremblay, miller at the Moulin Banal des Éboulements. Photo credit: Mardjane Amin – Héritage canadien du Québec



Artisanal cooperage.



Artisanal crafts. Innu cultural transmission site, Mashteuiatsh. Photo credit: Mathieu Dupuis



Julie Biron operates a spinning wheel. Photo credit: Sébastien Lavallée

Customs, knowledge, and ways of life

Participating in other activities inherited from ancestors can also be part of the intangible heritage of Quebec or a municipality.



Eel fishing in the Saint Lawrence River.
Photo credit: Judith Douville



Plants used in traditional herbalism at the Ekuanitshit House of Innu Culture. Photo credit: Luc Leclerc – Quebec Aboriginal Tourism



Mi-Carême (Mid-Lent) on the Magdalen Islands. Image: La Fabrique culturelle



Peter Kiatainaq and his dogsled with Kangiqsujuaq in the background.
Photo credit: Robert Fréchette – Avataq Cultural Institute

How to support the actors of intangible heritage

Various resources, including financial ones, can be directed towards organizations or groups that bring local traditions to life. A call for project proposals is often used to determine how to distribute available resources. Setting aside funding specifically for supporting activities that promote intangible heritage is without a doubt one of the best ways to make an impact in this area.



The \$4,500 Avila-LeBlanc bursary for an exemplary initiative in living heritage is awarded to Jocelyne Landry by the Arrimage Corporation and the mayor of the Magdalen Islands for the "Aborder les côtes" project, which deals with naval construction.
Photo credit: Jean-Michel Duclos



Fiddler Inti Manzi teaches music to Quebec City students as part of the Conseil québécois du patrimoine vivant's "Du violon à l'oreille" project, which also includes short instructional videos (leviolondejos.wiki).
Photo credit : Christine Bricault

Municipal authorities are encouraged to prioritize supporting projects or regular activities that are carried out by tradition bearers (artists, artisans or knowledge holders), their associated representatives, or mediators of living heritage,² since they are the ones most directly concerned and capable of realizing them. Among these people, many professionals offer services (such as concerts or training) and goods (such as artisanal crafts) associated with intangible heritage.

Intangible heritage fits within a number of areas of municipal development, such as artistic production and dissemination (including within the digital space), cultural leisure activities, international exchanges, major events and cultural mediation. Storytelling and textile arts initiatives, for example, can be supported through funding reserved for areas other than heritage.

A municipality or regional county municipality can also develop initiatives with internal staff, such as organizing a festival or lending its offices to citizens engaged in promoting an element of intangible heritage. It can also promote activities through its channels of communication.

2. See the *Charte des compétences du médiateur du patrimoine vivant* [charter of living heritage mediator skills] created by Compétence Culture.



In the spirit of democratizing culture, the bearers of intangible heritage should benefit from equal access to public resources.



Festival Mémoire et Racines in Lanaudière. Photo credit: Guillaume Morin

A municipality or a regional county municipality could, for example, wish to:

- ➔ promote the practice of traditional music, improve its dissemination and facilitate regular classes;
- ➔ increase civic engagement at community events, such as *veillées de danse* [traditional dancing events];
- ➔ find new audiences for storytelling;
- ➔ invest in talented artisans who use traditional techniques and improve their market opportunities through non-profit organizations and local small businesses;
- ➔ promote activities demonstrating knowledge and skills passed on by associations, such as Les Cercles de Fermières du Québec;
- ➔ in schools, build awareness of the importance of local and traditional expressions;
- ➔ create activities linked to ancestral culinary traditions;
- ➔ grant a bursary or prize to tradition bearers or organizations devoted to living heritage;
- ➔ hire specialized artisans to restore old buildings; and
- ➔ support events linked to oral tradition, such as festivals.



Tradition bearers and the associations that support them must play a key role in all processes linked to intangible culture, with the assistance of their municipality.



Les Forges de Montréal during Nuit Blanche. Photo credit: Jean-Christophe Boureau

Visitors from both Quebec and elsewhere often seek out expressions of traditional culture because they appreciate the unique experiences they create. Tourism is encouraged when it is sustainable and engaging, such as when visitors participate alongside local citizens, for example during a *veillée de danse* [traditional dancing event].



Traditional musicians playing on a balcony get passers-by to dance. The concert's location was publicized through hints published online.
Photo credit: Guillaume Morin

Inventory and documentation

The *Cultural Heritage Act* recommends creating inventories as means of fostering knowledge about cultural heritage. Inventorying intangible heritage consists in identifying, cataloguing and describing traditional cultural practices within a given territory.

This procedure, which can take on several different forms, also increases the awareness of the people and groups involved, as well as development possibilities within their areas. Before starting, though, the expected goals must be determined:

- ➔ What needs will be addressed by inventorying elements of living heritage?
- ➔ What are the desired results for tradition bearers, the municipality, residents and visitors? How will the results be measured?



Finding local masters of the art of basketry could, for example, lead a municipality to encourage this form of artisanry with the goal of reducing the use of plastic bags.

- ➔ Should the results be disseminated to the public? If so, with what objective in mind? How should the information be communicated? Who, precisely, should it be addressed to?

The CQPV can help municipalities and regional county municipalities answer these questions and accompany them through the process. Its members are useful resources in this regard (see page 16). The MCC can also help its municipal and regional partners with the inventory process.³

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3. In addition to the financial aid that can be provided to municipalities and regional county municipalities for the inventory process, the MCC offers them access to its management system for built, moveable and intangible heritage (PIMIQ – Patrimoine immobilier, mobilier et immatériel du Québec), which allows them to document cultural heritage. The data within the management system is then disseminated to the Répertoire du patrimoine culturel du Québec.



Meeting certain quality standards is recommended when producing audio-visual material—photos and videos—given the importance placed on the image of the people who present their work or activity.

Taking inventory of the elements of intangible heritage is a distinct exercise from cataloguing and describing buildings and objects. Neither the goal nor the approach is the same. Heritage mediators have the skills necessary to properly execute the task.

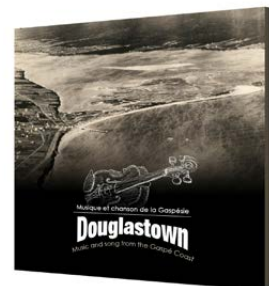


Ouafa Azam participates in a workshop to make ceintures fléchées (arrow sashes) as part of the "D'un écran à l'autre" project, which brings together people of diverse origins to create a cinematic production. The film *Tresser au présent*, produced as part of the project, explores themes of multiple identities. Photo credit: Laurence Messier-Moreau – Funambules Médias

The inventory process is not an end in itself; it serves as a tool for determining which actions to take with the concerned groups. These actions can even take place during the inventory process, depending on the method chosen.

Municipalities can also create or support similar projects to meet their goals without necessarily taking inventory: sector assessments, socio-economic reports, feasibility studies, video reports, ethnological studies, thematic websites, calls for projects, targeted promotional strategies, legal identification (see page 13), etc.

Archives can also play a role in the development of living heritage practices. They can act as a useful source of content for artists, artisans or individuals who wish to acquire or enrich a given repertoire or technique.



Musical compilation created from the digitizing and cataloguing of more than 70 hours of recordings of musicians and singers from Douglastown in the Gaspé Peninsula, with explanatory booklet.

Roger Brabant, sculptor of folk art. Photo credit: Émilie Léger



Singers can explore audio archives to find recordings of ballads from traditional repertoires. Individuals can search for documents containing detailed instructions for building a bread oven, recipes for traditional regional dishes, traditional healing methods, etc.



Ice canoe race on the Saint Lawrence River.
Photo credit: Mike Hitelman

Cultural development agreements

For nearly 40 years, the MCC has concluded cultural development agreements with municipalities and regional county municipalities in Quebec. The MCC believes that municipalities are best-suited to determine and address the needs of their residents. For this reason, they are designated as the primary structures in charge of cultural development and planning on their territory.

Cultural heritage represents a major area of activity for municipalities that implement that kind of agreement. A significant portion of the projects within municipal action plans has been financed by the Fonds du patrimoine culturel québécois since 2006. The MCC encourages municipalities to integrate intangible heritage projects into the action plan associated with their cultural development agreement.

As part of a cultural development agreement with a municipality, the MCC is particularly interested in projects that:

- ➔ support the active transmission of an element of intangible heritage or encourage its vitality through practice (e.g. participative workshops);
- ➔ are fully or partially led by tradition bearers or the associations representing them; and
- ➔ contribute to providing useful information on awareness and the development of elements of living heritage (ethnological studies, inventories, socio-economic analyses, strategic plans, etc.).

Furthermore, other ministries and government organizations may have funding programs available to municipalities or individuals and organizations present on their territory.

Cultural or heritage policies

A number of municipalities or regional county municipalities representing more than half of the Quebec population have included intangible heritage in their policies. The presence of intangible heritage in municipal policy, whether or not that exact term is used, represents a potential tool for the development of cultural practices passed on from generation to generation.

This action solidifies the commitment to supporting the actors of these practices. The success of the policy commitment can be measured through the impacts it has on production, dissemination, education, documentation and leisure.



The group Farafikeb creates compositions stemming from the musical traditions of Quebec and Africa and has received support from the Centre de valorisation du patrimoine vivant as part of the cultural development agreement between Quebec City and the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications. Photo credit: Danielle Giguère

Legal status: identification

To foster awareness and the preservation, showcasing and transmission of elements of intangible heritage in Quebec, the *Cultural Heritage Act* grants municipalities the power to give them a legal status: identification. A cultural element can be both identified by a municipality and officially designated by the Minister of Culture and Communications.

Designation by the minister and identification by a municipality are symbolic gestures that do not entail legal obligations but do attest to the importance of an element of intangible heritage and its public interest. When the heritage value of a practice or skill is officially recognized, it is important to ensure its continuance. An action plan for the development of the identified element can help determine the most effective actions to be undertaken in this regard.

Heritage and religion

A religion or an essentially religious practice cannot be granted a legal status as an element of intangible culture by a municipality because of the public administration's obligation to be neutral on questions of religion. Some current skills, knowledge, expressions, practices or representations that stem from religious practices can nonetheless be considered.

“The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, within the spectrum of sustainable development, should be able to rely on public policies which value cultural action.”

Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO



Main steps towards identification in accordance with the Cultural Heritage Act (Quebec):

- 1 The project to identify an element of intangible heritage is presented to the municipal council. It can consist of a proposal or initiative coming from an individual, the council or an elected official.
- 2 The municipal council adopts a notice of motion of the identification by-law. Among other things, the notice contains the description of the element in question and the motivation for its identification.
- 3 The local heritage council holds a session during which all those interested can voice their opinions about the identification project. An announcement is made prior to the session through a public notice.
- 4 The municipal council seeks the local heritage council's opinion.
- 5 The identification by-law can be adopted 30 days before the public notice but no more than 120 days after the notice of motion.
- 6 The by-law is transmitted to the cultural heritage registrar and the identified element is recorded in the Register of cultural heritage.

Tradition bearers or their representatives must give their free and informed consent prior to the adoption of any measures that concern them. They must also be the primary beneficiaries of the measures.

Guidance for municipal action

Through the diversity of its manifestations, speech and gestures, the appeal of living heritage is contagious. Whether learning how to make something or admiring the creativity of traditional artists or artisans, residents benefit from a diversified cultural offering. Henceforth, municipalities possess tools and strategies to make intangible heritage an important part of their cultural vitality.

Member organizations of the CQPV

Members are the lifeblood of the Conseil québécois du patrimoine vivant. Through their local, national and international actions, they contribute to the development of living traditions, here and elsewhere.

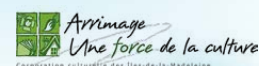
festival
de musique
TRAD
Val-d'Or

FCLAT



conseil québécois du
patrimoine *vivant*





MONTREAL AREA



LES DANSEUX



For more information

Conseil québécois du patrimoine vivant

- ➔ **Rapport final du Rassemblement patrimoine vivant 2018**
(report from a national event)
- ➔ **The collection “Les traditions culturelles du Québec en chiffres”**
(reports on different cultural sectors)
- ➔ **The “Trousse astucieuse utile pour les ethno-archives” toolkit** (Lataupe.net)

Ministère de la Culture et des Communications

- ➔ **À propos de la *Loi sur le patrimoine culturel***
(brochure) [about the *Cultural Heritage Act*]
- ➔ **Pour mieux connaître la *Loi sur le patrimoine culturel*** (online training)
[learn more about the *Cultural Heritage Act*]
- ➔ **Répertoire du patrimoine culturel québécois** (website)
[Quebec cultural heritage directory]

UNESCO – Intangible cultural heritage section

- ➔ **Information kit on the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage**
(brochures and other documentation available online)

Sources

Photos:

- P. 2 Cédric Landry at Marathon 20 ans, 20 conteurs [storytelling event, 20 years, 20 storytellers], during Trois-Pistoles's Rendez-vous des grandes gueules.
Photo credit: Michel Dompierre
Sage burning is an Indigenous ritual.
- P. 3 François Lavallée operates a wooden marionette.
Photo credit: Gabrielle Rousseau
Shan Robert and Shayne Papatie on the Six Seasons Trail in Lac Simon. Photo credit: Christophe Migeon
- P. 8 A tractor decorated with knitting, artwork by Natacha Sansoz during the Twist festival. Photo credit: Sébastien Lavallée
- P. 9 Members of the white team at an improvised singing battle during the Grande fête du chant traditionnel de Lanaudière.
Photo credit: Simon Rodrigue – Centre du patrimoine vivant de Lanaudière
- P. 10 Stephan Jerome, a Mi'kmaq artist from Gesgapegiag, demonstrates basketry. Photo credit: Estelle Marcoux – Festival La Virée
Filming of the documentary *Matawinie: la rencontre des eaux* with R. Lavoie, A. Gladu, P. Lavalette, and Denis Beaudry, trapper.
Photo credit: Annie Tétreault
- P. 13 The audience votes during the Grande fête du chant traditionnel de Lanaudière. Photo credit: Simon Rodrigue – Centre du patrimoine vivant de Lanaudière

Back cover:

Felting workshop during the Twist festival.

Photo credit: Sébastien Lavallée

The Montréal Centre for Contemporary Textiles.

Photo credit: Frédéric Bouchard

Blacksmith: Mathieu Collette. Photo credit: Jean-Christophe Boureau

Podorythmie. Photo credit: Guillaume Morin

Mushuau-nipi (Matimekosh). Photo credit: François Léger-Savard





Veillée de l'avant-veille [traditional dancing event] at Club Soda.
Photo credit: Guillaume Morin



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