

# Cordoba Path

## Pilot Project: Heritage Narratives

Concept Note



OVPM . OWHC . OCPM

## INTRODUCTION

The 'Heritage Narratives' initiative is a pilot project that forms part of the Cordoba Path. It builds on the results of the Cordoba CityLab on 'Heritage Narratives and Urban Regeneration' (June 9-10, 2025) to continue the collective reflection on the engagement of society in urban transformation processes through heritage.

Indeed, it is the diversity of communities and their narratives, values, knowledge, and expertise in identifying, studying, interpreting, protecting, conserving, and promoting heritage that provides a unique expertise that can be integrated into urban processes. The emergence of new inspiring and mobilizing 'narratives' strengthens and diversifies the collective imagination, allowing for new alternatives and urban approaches to be considered. In this sense, 'Heritage Narratives' will enrich the OWHC's New Urban Project.

The 'Heritage Narratives' pilot project will explore ways to reveal the imagination and human, narrative, symbolic, and material resources of local communities to contribute to the transformation of historic centers.

Participating cities will have the privilege of working on the development of the tool and contributing directly to ongoing or desired citizen participation initiatives in their cities.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the pilot project are as follows:

Main objective: To create a tool for member cities to mobilize local actors and identify various heritage narratives, both official and unrecognized. The tool will promote initiatives already in place in cities, develop their potential, and strengthen the conditions for implementing community-focused actions.

Specific objective: To present the results of the action and how the tool works in an exhibition/workshop-debate during the Marrakech Congress.

## WORKING HYPOTHESES

The strategies that will be implemented as part of the OWHC's New Urban Project involve considering a diversity of 'Narratives' legitimized by 'Heritage Communities' that are recognized and integrated into urban dynamics. Strengthening cities' capacity to open up to new imaginaries while effectively mobilizing their local populations around issues of habitability requires promoting the rich heritage that characterizes historic cities. This entails four essential resources: the communities that inhabit them, the narratives they produce, the heritage to which they are attached, and the contemporary social values of heritage.

The pilot project will help define the meaning of 'Heritage Communities', what constitutes them, how they can produce 'narratives', and under what conditions these narratives can be promoted and integrated into urban policies.

## DELIVERABLES

A working group made up of representatives from pilot cities (see Conditions of Participation below) will co-produce, for the Marrakech Congress, the tool (see Objectives) consisting of the following elements:

- A detailed concept providing definitions and methodology for applying the tool;
- An assessment grid for initiatives currently underway or completed in favor of communities/narratives. This grid should enable self-assessment by OWHC member cities and be used for peer-to-peer 'cross-visits';
- An appendix answering 'FAQ' and providing a 'Glossary' as well as examples, testimonials, and best practices.

The working group will also produce content for an exhibition/presentation to be held in the Marrakesh Congress.

### CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

Four to six pilot cities will be selected following a call for application. Candidate cities must justify their current initiatives or their intentions to develop/identify participatory practices for community-based local development. At least one coordinator-correspondent must be assigned for the duration of the project — from October 1, 2025, to June 1, 2026 — for the implementation of the following methodology:

- a. Coordinators-correspondents will participate in at least four 90-minute virtual workshops (with simultaneous interpretation in French, English, and Spanish), plus the time needed to prepare for their participation (reading working documents, gathering information, etc.).
- b. Two or three pilot cities (to be selected) will be invited to host (organization, logistics, etc.) an assessment workshop (two participants, two days).
- c. All pilot cities will participate in an 'assessment workshop' (in pairs).
- d. The coordinators/correspondents will participate in the presentation of the results of the action at the Marrakech Congress (2 days).

### WORKING METHOD/PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT/SCHEDULE

Following the call for application, the pilot cities will be confirmed by September 30 at the latest. An initial workshop will be organized as soon as possible (October) to detail the methodological elements, discuss the working documents, and determine the schedule of activities.

- The coordinators-correspondents will participate in a co-production process.
- Before each virtual workshop, the coordinator-correspondents will receive a working document prepared by the OWHC, enabling them to prepare for the meetings.
- The results of the virtual workshops will be compiled by the OWHC and circulated for validation by the group at the next workshop (iterative process).
- Schedule :

October 2025

- Workshop 1: development of the assessment grid (choice of criteria) + version 1 of the appendices (keywords, FAQ, references, applications);
- Following the workshop, each pilot city will carry out a self-assessment using version 1 of the grid and will submit its results (questions, comments, etc.).

#### November 2025

- Workshop 2: presentation of version 2 (produced by the OWHC based on the results of the self-assessment) + development of the form and content of cross-visits (arguments, issues, expectations, schedule); enriched version of the appendices; call for volunteers for cross-visits;
- Selection of the pilot city that will trial the first peer-to-peer cross-visit (with the participation of the OWHC);
- Selection of the two pilot cities (pair) participating in the first assessment visit;
- First assessment visit.

#### December 2025

- Workshop 3: review of the first assessment visit. Report by the pilot city and adjustments to working documents by the OWHC. Enhanced version of the appendices ;
- Selection of the second/third pilot city(ies) for the next assessment visit(s) and selection of the pair(s);
- Program.

#### January-February 2026

- Appraisal visit(s) and report(s). Online support from the OWHC.

#### March 2026

- Workshop 4: review of cross-visits, validation of methodology, and preparation of procedures for promoting the results at the Marrakesh Congress.

#### April 2026

- Finalization of content with OWHC: toolkit, self-assessment process, cross-visit and methods for promoting results: exhibition, publication, presentation.

#### Fall 2026

- Presentation at the Marrakesh Congress.