

THE CULTURAL MAPPING PROJECT OF THE HERITAGE CITY OF VIGAN

TOWARDS BUILDING A FRAMEWORK FOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

By
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INTRODUCTION

The issue of heritage and development has been a constant bone of contention for developing economies like the Philippines. Often, the question "Heritage? Makakain ba 'yan? (Heritage? Will that feed us?)" is sarcastically asked to heritage conservationists. And they can only reply with a blank helpless stare. Until now, there is an unnerving tension between economics and culture, the peso and the patrimony, the stomach and the spirit.

In the Philippines, this issue came to the fore when, in October 2002, the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), the national pension fund institution, bought "Parisian Life," a painting by nineteenth century Filipino master Juan Luna, when it was auctioned at Christie's. This was controversial because amidst national concerns of poverty alleviation, housing and security, GSIS shelled out P46 million to buy the masterpiece (NCCA, Sanghaya, 2003). Previous to this event, other heritage contestations, such as the demolition of the Jai Alai Building in Manila (Silva, 2000) the best example of American colonial Steamline Modern architecture, and the destruction of Huluga archaeological site in Cagayan de Oro, a significant pre colonial trading post in Northern Mindanao, brought attention to the polarizing schism between heritage conservation and development.

Heritage is defined as anything of value from the past that provides identity to the present and inspires the future generation. Traditionally, it is classified as intangible or tangible, movable or immovable, natural or cultural, personal or communal. Usually, heritage is perceived as something without use or practical value and has no return of investment. Moreover, some view its preservation as something contrary to modernization, westernization or globalization, which are concepts equated with development.

Development has traditionally been defined as the cumulative effort that seeks to improve the economic well being and quality of life of the community by creating jobs and growing incomes. In economic formula, it is simplistically equated to the Gross National product (GNP) or the sum total of consumption plus investment plus government spending and the balance of export minus import ($GNP = C + I + G + (X - M)$). To generate a development process, resources of land, labor, capital, technology and entrepreneurship are utilized and combined to produce economic values like consumption, income, investment and trade (See Diagram of the General Concept of Development A1).

In the 1982 World Conference on Cultural Policies hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Mexico, "development" is defined as a "complex, comprehensive and multidimensional process which extends beyond mere economic growth, to incorporate all dimensions of life and all the energies of a community, all of those whose members are called upon to make a contribution and expect to share in the benefits" (Felice Sta. Maria, 2001 p.67).

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Heritage conservation is action taken to sustain the value, meaning and significance of cultural resources from the past, for the use of the present and inspiration of future generations. And all decisions of conservation are based on the significance and meaning, the core value of a heritage resource. There are various types of significance such as historical, architectural, aesthetic, spiritual or social. It is established through physical, oral and archival research and study and is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, a setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects (Australia ICOMOS, 1999). Heritage conservation is about protection and promotion of heritage significance or making heritage meaningful to the community.

Australia's Burra Charter conservation management plan process provides a systematic and logical approach to conservation. It begins with significance setting to establish the statement of significance. This is followed by a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis to contextualize the heritage resource. The statement of significance and the SWOT context would be the basis for the conservation policy. And the policy will be the philosophy behind the conservation management plan (See Diagram of Conservation Management Plan for Place or Object of Significance A2).

HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The models for economic development and conservation management planning can be integrated to evolve a new model wherein heritage serves as the core of development process. The process moves through four phases – awareness, appreciation, protection and utilization. The awareness phase can be established through a cultural mapping activity of the community. The appreciation phase can be implemented through community organizing which engenders community solidarity and through capacity building which instills technical empowerment. The protection phase can be realized with a heritage charter, bill, legislation or guidelines. And the utilization phase can be conducted through educational programming to produce education value or project feasibility study to produce economic value (See Diagram of Heritage and Development A3).

THE HERITAGE CITY OF VIGAN

Vigan is unique among the Philippines towns because it is the country's most extensive and only surviving historic city that dates back to the 15th century Spanish colonial period. The name Vigan comes from *bigaa*, the local plant term for *alcatraz*, a giant taro plant that grows in the banks of the Metizo River.

Vigan used to be an island bounded by three rivers-the Abra, the Mestizo, and the Govantes-and was the important coastal trading post in the pre-colonial time. Chinese seafaring merchants sailed from the South China Sea, to Isla de Bigan through the Mestizo River, bartering the exotic goods from the Asian kingdom in exchange for gold, beeswax, and other products that Cordillera natives brought down from the mountains. Many Chinese settled in Vigan and intermarried with the natives, thus starting the multi-cultural bloodline of the Bigueños.

Juan de Salcedo, Spanish conquistador, sailed from Manila and arrived in Vigan on June 12, 1572. He named it Villa Fernandina de Vigan, after the King's son, Prince Fernandina. From there, he also proceeded to pacify Camarines, Albay and Catanduanes. His services to the King was rewarded with an encomienda, a Spanish colonial landholding of the old province of Yloco, which was then composed of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Abra, La Union and some parts of the Mountain Province.

Vigan has since figured as the scene of major historical events in the Filipino's struggle for independence and self-determination. It is the birthplace of the heroes, heroines and illustrious Filipino personages who shaped regional and national destiny, such as Diego and Gabriel Silang, Fr. Jose P. Burgos, Leona Florentino, Isabelo de los Reyes and President Elpidio Quirino. (Vigan City Government, 2008)

Vigan City is significant for the following reasons:

1. Vigan was declared a world heritage site in 1999. It is the most intact 19th century district with the fusion of Asian and European architectural and artistic expressions.
2. It has a rich fabric of heritage resources- natural, built, intangible and movable, for Filipinos and the world.
3. The local government has developed a Vigan Master Plan and the Vigan Conservation Guidelines Municipal Ordinance No. 4.
4. The local government has already embarked on various community programs that protect and enliven the heritage precinct.
5. There is a need to harness the rich and colorful heritage fabric as the wellspring of development so that the resources can be utilized for the contemporary lives of the people and future generations.

HERITAGE AWARENESS

Development begins with the identification of resources. These resources are topographical, manpower, financial, technical and entrepreneurial. With heritage as basis for development, heritage resources should be identified, documented and studied to harness its potential use.

Heritage Mapping is the process of identifying natural and cultural heritage resources of a specific locality for purposes of conservation and development (Commonwealth Department of Communication and the Arts, 1995). The objectives of heritage mapping are as follows:

1. To identify distinct heritage resources of a community vis a vis another community.
2. To thoroughly understand and properly record a heritage resource for future reference.
3. To generate interest on heritage resources among users and non users of heritage.
4. To develop necessary heritage conservation charters, legislations, bills and guidelines.

The standard format for a heritage mapping activity is a matrix of heritage resources - natural, built, movable and intangible - against their intrinsic and associative attributes to capture their meaning. Natural heritage resources include landscapes, mountains, lakes, forests, rivers, valleys and other geological formations. These resources are documented based on name, other names, geological history, outstanding features, contents, settings, approach and statutory protections. Movable heritage resources include artworks, costumes, jewelry, documents, weaponry, machinery and other material with spatial transference. These resources are documented based on name, other names, owner, maker, dimensions, material, function, location. Intangible heritage resources include festivals, songs, prayers, myths, legends, language, dance, skills, and local technology. These resources are documented based on name, purpose, history, seasonality, process, documentation, materials used, music used, costumes used, language used and participants (See Heritage Mapping Survey Forms B Series). This databank of heritage resources serves as the reference source of activities that can be utilized by the community.

The "Cultural Mapping Project of the Heritage City of Vigan" was a pioneering endeavor for the World Heritage City of Vigan that aimed to conserve and utilize heritage resources for societal development. It was conceived accidentally when former Vigan Mayor Ferdinand Medina chanced upon me in an official gathering in Vigan and discussed the elusive concern of transforming their heritage resources into economic values. The six month training program was developed and involved consultants, faculty and students from the University of Santo Tomas and local government officials, architects, academe, homeowners and businessmen in the community. The

lecture-workshop modules included heritage and development, built heritage conservation, research and documentation, heritage and marketing. The output was a voluminous compendium of Vigan's heritage resources- three volumes on the natural heritage, two volumes on built heritage, six volumes on the intangible heritage and two volumes on the movable heritage (UST and Vigan City Government, 2007).

HERITAGE APPRECIATION

Development emphasizes public participation in cultural heritage activities to ensure sustainability. In the book "Asia's Built Heritage: An Integrated Management Approach, Framework for Community Participation," Herb Stovel outlined the valuable roles of the public and conservation professionals:

"Public participation enriches the understanding of heritage and associated meanings; promotes social cohesion and sustainability, and work towards a shared vision at a local level. Heritage belongs to the people not to governments. Community organizing like community consultations, leadership training, team building, heritage orientation, local history seminars is a basic activity in bonding together the community stakeholders towards a common sentiment, understanding and valuation of the heritage." (Stobl, Herb, 2002)

Heritage appreciation can be nurtured through community organizing and capacity building. Community organizing is a mass based activity that molds individual members into a solidarity working towards common vision, goal and interest. Capacity building is a focused group activity that instills new skills, technology and ideas to individual members to improve their technical performance in a given project.

Conservation professionals can initiate heritage appreciation by assuming various roles. They have the educational role to provide information. They have the bureaucratic role to provide consultation. They have the supporting role to encourage participation. They have the facilitating role to ensure involvement. These roles allow the professionals to conduct multi-disciplinary activities that would deepen and heighten the interest of the community. Typical activities include "How To Build Your Museum" Workshop, Fund Raising Seminar, Heritage and Cultural Tour, and Restoration Techniques Workshop.

Simultaneous to the Vigan cultural mapping project, various consultations and workshops were conducted that enforced heritage appreciation. Community organizing activities included the cultural tour to Museo Ilocos Norte and the Ilocos culinary tour. Capacity building activities included Vigan House Documentation Workshop, the Vigan Genealogy Workshop and Photodocumentation Workshop. Eventually these bonding activities led to the formation of new heritage organizations and strengthening of existing cultural groups like the TAWID, a non government organization on history and culture with a regular scholarly publication of Samtoy, the Vigan Historical Society, a quasi government organization on historical research, the DADAPILAN, a university based Ilocano Studies Center and the United Architects of the Philippines- Ciudad Fernandina Chapter.

HERITAGE PROTECTION

Sustainable development is ensured by resource identification, community participation, and value generation. It is institutionalized through statutory protection. For heritage protection, a conservation guideline is a set of technical standards for the place and its fabric developed by experts and legislators to be adopted by the community. While a heritage charter, on the other hand, is a generally agreed set of conservation concepts, policies and practices to be adopted by the community and conservation professionals.

Heritage protection is grounded on principles and policies that would preserve the significance of heritage and guide the community in its proper utilization. There are general principles and heritage specific principles in conservation. For a heritage legislation which is more of a guideline, the Vigan Municipal Ordinance No. 4, passed

in 2000 when Vigan was declared as World Heritage Site, is the best example. Although enacted as a municipal legislation, it is more of a compilation of material and technical standards applicable to 19th century Vigan houses. Thus, for restoration projects, the standards for roof, walls, beams, floors and other architectural details have been set.

After the cultural mapping project, a milestone output was the amendment and revision of the Vigan Conservation ordinance. Highlights of the revised ordinance included the setting of the statement of significance for all built heritage projects, the definition of conservation terms in the ordinance, the reconstitution of the Vigan Conservation Council and the allocation of annual heritage fund of the city.

HERITAGE UTILIZATION

Development is the transformation of goods and services to improve man's quality of life. The utilization of heritage to address contemporary needs is relevant to users because it provides value, either educational or economic. Educational value provides intellectual and spiritual enrichment over a long period of time, while economic value would provide return of investment over a short turnover period.

Heritage utilization is an all encompassing but poorly documented subject. Heritage and cultural tourism focuses on historic sites and colorful festivals as tourist destinations to generate income through tour fees and jobs generation. Heritage and human settlement refers to the restoration and development of dilapidated ancestral houses for transients, students and tourists. Heritage and health juxtaposes the contemporary use of traditional medicine and conventional health practices with modern clinical and hospital approaches. Heritage and interpretation highlights the educational and value formation function of museums and galleries in translating heritage in the daily context of the visitor. Heritage and culinary arts delves on the inclusion of traditional Filipino food in convenient stores and globalizing fastfood chains like *arroz caldo* in Jollibee, *halo halo* in Chowking, *tapsilog* in Mcdonalds.

Heritage utilization was best epitomized by the various projects undertaken by the Vigan cultural mappers. Projects were composed of the annotated ordinance of Vigan City's built heritage conservation guidelines, a compendium of case studies of abandoned spaces and structures for adaptive reuse, a modified set of elementary and high school curricula using heritage resources and an array of new marketable souvenir products inspired by new research on material, form and design.

The First Vigan Heritage Fair was staged this year highlighted by the Heritage Amazing Race. Vigan city's forthcoming projects that are heritage based is the launching of the homeowner's manual, the establishment of *Buridek*, the Vigan Children's Museum, the architects' assembly on definition of heritage terms, the conference on the business of heritage for small and medium scale entrepreneurs.

HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Heritage and Development framework is the foundation that begins the process from heritage awareness moving to heritage appreciation and then to heritage protection and finally to heritage utilization (See Matrix of Conceptual Framework Table A4). This movement transforms the user from basic affection to complex action. To ensure the sustainability of heritage conservation and development, the users must go through each of the steps of the process. Many heritage and development programs dwell on one phase and never move to the next. Other times, programs begin already on the material phase without establishing the lower phases, creating a shaky foundation.

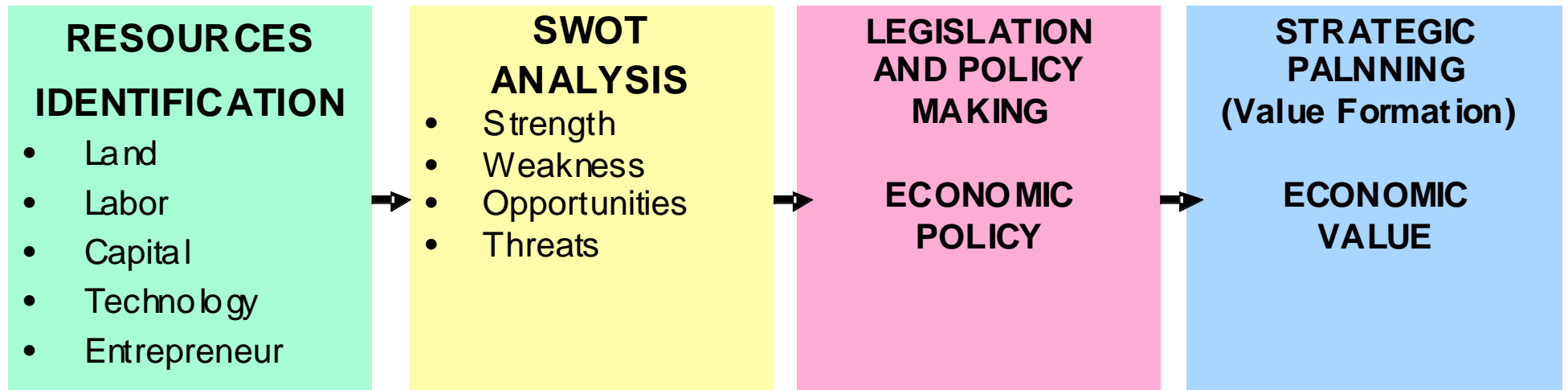
The heritage and development framework requires four phases. Each phase has set activities. Heritage awareness is established through the cultural mapping activity, broken down into physical, oral and archival investigations, establishing the significance of a heritage resource. Heritage appreciation is generated through community participation and professionals' capacity-building, equipping the community with values and skills to conserve a heritage resource. Heritage protection is policy making, realized through setting of guidelines, enactment of a bill or development of a charter to secure and protect heritage, its significance and its contemporary use as it addresses a need of the community. Heritage utilization is effected through project feasibility studies that would contextualize heritage and its significance and transform it into revenue or value added generating endeavors.

This heritage conservation and sustainable development framework is designed and deduced based on Philippine experiences. As the country's economic issues grow and global pressures impact, more heritage contestations may be anticipated in the future. And the operationalization of the framework will be a helpful reference tool for heritage decision makers.

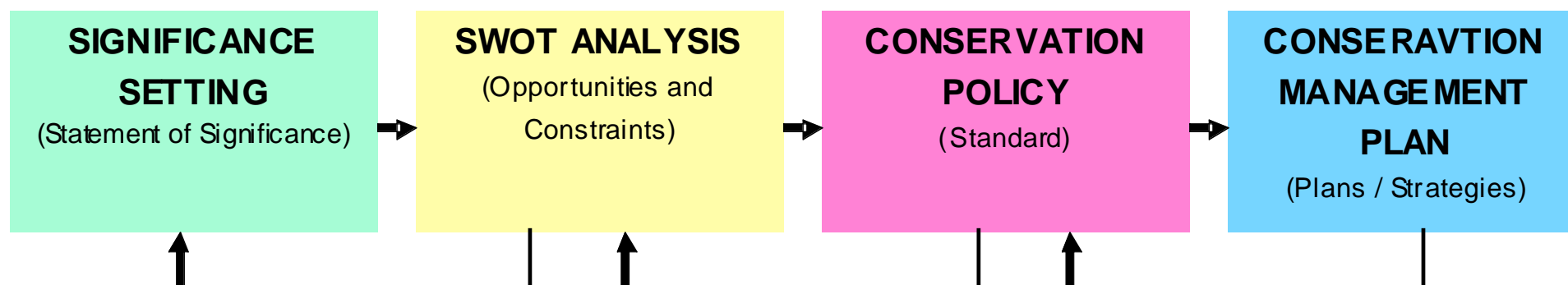
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General Concept of Development

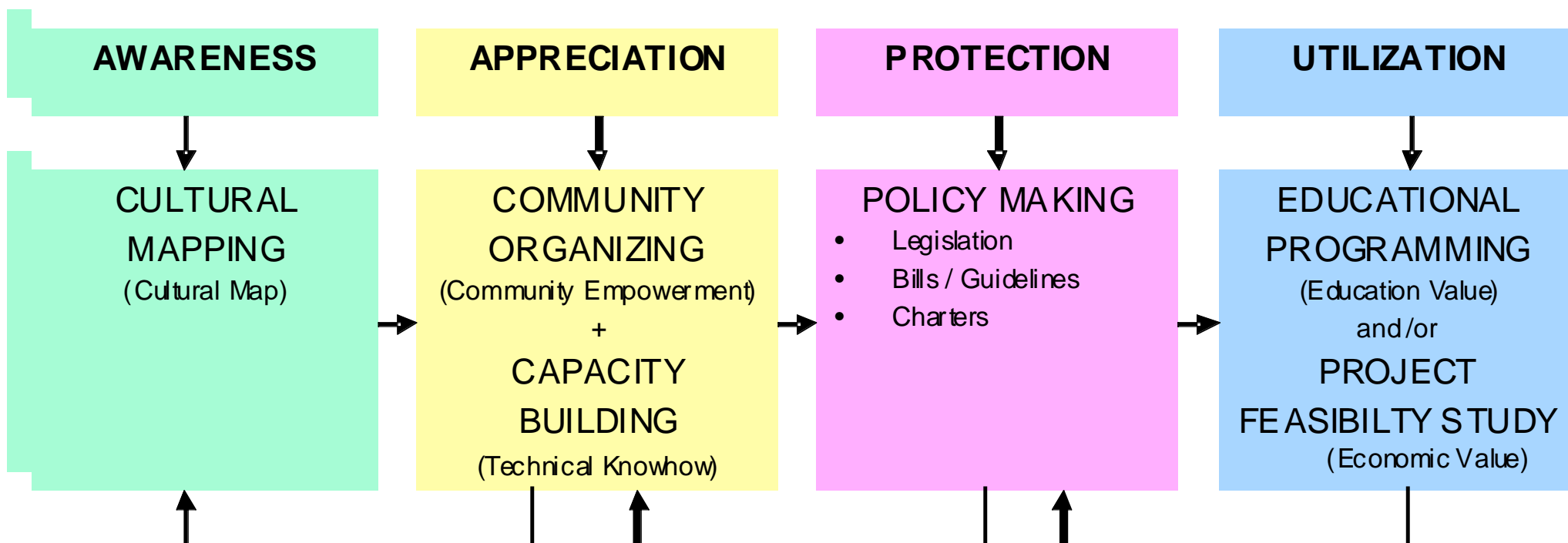


CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (CMP) FOR PLACE / OBJECT SIGNIFICANCE

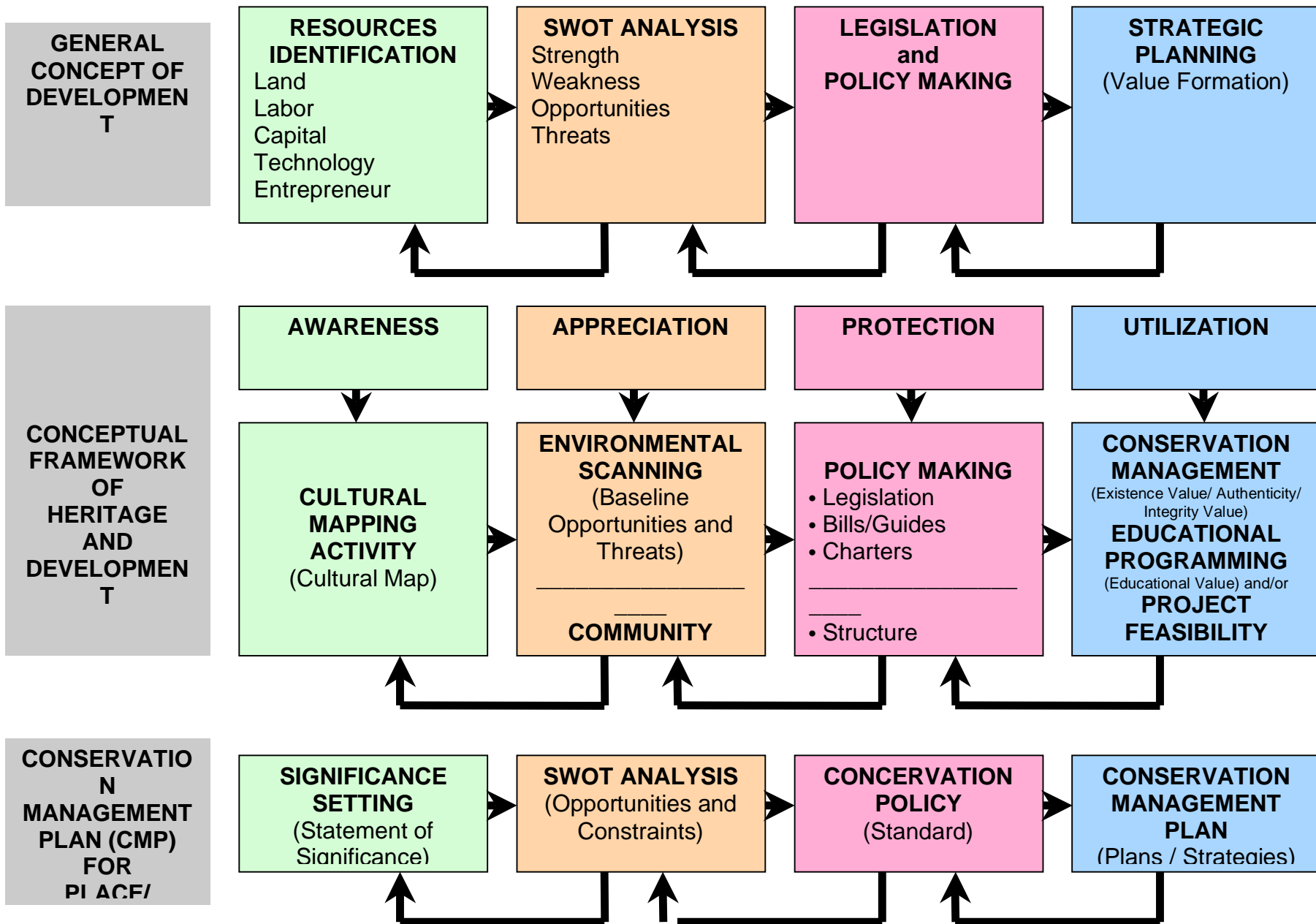


(BURRA CHARTER FLOW CHART)

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT



MATRIX OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Natural Heritage Mapping Templates For Plants And Animals			
Classification		Picture	Description
Common Name	Scientific Name		
Habitat	Conservation Status <input type="radio"/> Endangered <input type="radio"/> Not Endangered	Source	
Threat		Actual Picture in Site	Key Map
Visibility <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal National <input type="checkbox"/> Months <input type="checkbox"/> Perennial	Significance <input type="checkbox"/> World <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> Local		
Connectivity	Uses		
Oral Tradition	Related Literature		
Documentation: Name:		Actual Date / Time	
Affiliation:		Roll #	