Introduction

The World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region (WHITR-AP) is a Category II Institute under the auspices of UNESCO. It was the first international organization in the field of world heritage to be established in a developing country. Mandated by the State Parties of the World Heritage Convention and other State Parties of UNESCO, the institute was founded to promote the conservation and development of World Heritage in the Asia and Pacific Region.

WHITR-AP has three branches: one in Beijing, another in Shanghai, and the third in Suzhou.

The Shanghai Centre at Tongji University focuses on the conservation of cultural heritage, such as the sustainable development of ancient towns and villages, architectural sites, architectural complexes, and cultural landscapes.

The Beijing Centre at Peking University is in charge of natural heritage conservation, archaeological excavation, and management of the sites' cultural landscape.

The Suzhou Centre, hosted by Suzhou Municipal Government, provides technical training and researches on management methods and restoration techniques.
Mission

To further the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the Asia and the Pacific region through training, research, efficient dissemination of information through a network, increase ability of all those professionals and bodies involved with World Heritage site application, conservation, and management in the Asia and the Pacific region.

Objectives

- to help achieve a more balanced geographical distribution of training and research institutions and activities in the field of World Heritage conservation in the Asia and the Pacific region;
- to advocate a balanced representation and distribution of Asia-Pacific properties on the World Heritage List;
- to promote better protection and management of World Heritage properties in the Asia and the Pacific region;
- to raise awareness on World Heritage conservation among the general public and promote a free flow of information to enhance the reputation of World Heritage;
- to foster international collaboration with UNESCO as well as international and national bodies in other regions by implementing cooperative projects on World Heritage in the Asia and the Pacific region.

Functions

Training: to execute short-term and long-term education and training activities regarding the conservation of both cultural and natural heritages, including those directed at the preparation of World Heritage nomination files, the conservation and management approaches for World Heritage properties, the monitoring, assessment and reporting of the state of conservation of World Heritage properties;

Research: to conduct research on important regional and global World Heritage issues as well as investigations on particular heritage resources in cooperation with relevant conservation training and research centres across the Asia and the Pacific region, and to hold global academic seminars;

Cooperation and Communication: to promote collaborative programmes on World Heritage conservation in the region and the exchange of conservation practitioners at the regional level;

Data Collection: to collect comprehensive conservation resources and knowledge on heritage conservation in Asia-Pacific countries and establish an advanced archive;

Dissemination: to disseminate relevant knowledge and information, such as the results of research and training activities through the Internet, the publications, and exhibitions;

Related Construction: to facilitate the introduction of disciplines related to World Heritage conservation and other academic research activities in universities, colleges, and research institutes throughout China and the Asia and the Pacific region.
Members of the First Governing Board

The Governing Board of WHITR-AP is chaired by H.E. Mr. Zhang Xinsheng, Vice Minister of Education of China, and Chairman of Chinese National Commission for UNESCO.

The Other Members of the Board are (following by the alphabetic order of the last name):

F. Bandarin  Director of the World Heritage Centre, UNESCO

M. Bouchenaki  Director-General of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICOMOS)

Choi Jong Deok  Director of International Affairs Division, Cultural Heritage Administration, Government Complex, Korea

FANG Maotian  Secretary-General of Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

GU Yucai  Director-General of Cultural Heritage Conservation Department, State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China

HU Dongchong  Vice President of Tsinghua University

LIN Jianhua  Vice President of Beijing University

M. Osborne  Professor and former President of La Trobe University, Australia

M. Petzet  President of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

P. G. Rowe  Professor at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, former Dean of the Faculty of Design

D. Sheppard  Head of Programme on Protected Areas, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)

WANG Fengwu  Inspector of the Ministry of Housing and Rural-Urban Development of China

ZHOU Zuoji  Vice President of Tongji University

ZHU Jiansheng  Vice Mayor of Suzhou Municipality, Jiangsu Province, China
Sponsor

UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Organizations in cooperation with the Shanghai Centre

International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)

In May 2007, the Shanghai Centre signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ICCROM, agreeing to develop long-term international training activities in the Asia and the Pacific Region. The first international training course, on the topic “Management Planning of Cultural Heritage”, was held from Dec. 24 to Nov. 6, 2008.

French Ministry of Culture and Communication

In Dec. 2007, Shanghai Centre signed a MoU with the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, agreeing on joint efforts in cultural heritage training and research from 2008 to 2010.

Other International Partners

International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
UNESCO Bangkok Office
Ecole de Chaillot, France
The Getty Conservation Institute, U.S.A
Parks Canada
US National Park Service
The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
The Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)

The Shanghai Centre is also working in solid cooperation with many World Heritage sites in China. On its agenda are several related training and research programs.
UNESCO World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region, Shanghai Centre (WHITR-AP, Shanghai)

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