



United Nations
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World Heritage
Convention



The World Heritage Institute of Training and
Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region
under the auspices of UNESCO

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WHITRAP Mid-Term Strategy (2014-2019)

WHITRAP Secretariat

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1. Mission Statement

The World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and Pacific Region (WHITRAP) was established in 2008 and is located in China. The institute's mission is to strengthen the implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention in the Asia and Pacific region by building the capacity of all those professionals, administrators, practitioners and craftsmen involved in World Heritage site inscription, protection, conservation and management through training, research, dissemination of information and network building.

2. Overarching Objectives

The following overarching objectives are set up to facilitate the achievement of WHITRAP's mission:

- i. contributing to a more balanced geographical distribution of training and research institutions and activities in the field of World Heritage conservation in the Asia and Pacific region;
- ii. enhancing the balanced representation and distribution of Asia-Pacific properties on the World Heritage List;
- iii. promoting a better protection and management of the World Heritage properties in the Asia and Pacific region;
- iv. raising awareness of the World Heritage conservation among the general public and promoting the free flow of information to improve the visibility of World Heritage;
- v. fostering international collaboration with UNESCO and international and national bodies in other regions, by implementing cooperative projects in favour of World Heritage in the Asia and Pacific region.

3. Background

3.1 Agreements

- i. Referring to the 177 EX/Decision 21, the General Conference approved the establishment of the World Heritage training and research institute for the Asia and Pacific region, as a category 2 institute under the auspices of UNESCO, on 12 October 2007
- ii. *Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the UNESCO regarding the Establishment in China of a World Heritage Training and*

Research Institute in China for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (Category 2), 2008

- iii. WHITRAP's mandate and obligations as a UNESCO Category 2 centre defined in Document 35C/22 *Implementation of the Guidelines and Criteria for Category 2 Institutes and Centres*.

3.2 WHITRAP strategy, work plans and budgets

- i. WHITRAP Strategy 2008-2013, adopted on 22 July 2008
- ii. Biannual Plan 2011-2012, adopted by the Governing Board on 11 June 2010
- iii. Biannual Plan 2013-2014, adopted by the Governing Board on 29 May 2012

3.3 Guiding strategies and programmes by the World Heritage Committee and the General Assembly

- i. The *World Heritage Convention* (1972)
- ii. The *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*
- iii. The World Heritage Committee's Strategic Objectives (Credibility, Conservation, Capacity-building, Communication, and Communities), adopted in Budapest (2002) and Christchurch (2007) respectively
- iv. The World Heritage Capacity Building Programme
- v. The World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Programme
- vi. The World Heritage Education Programme
- vii. The World Heritage Cities Programme, including the 2011 *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape*
- viii. The World Heritage Programme for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

3.4 Governing Bodies, financial and human resources

WHITRAP is an autonomous and non-profit organization with UNESCO Category 2 status. The institute operates under Chinese law.

The WHITRAP Governing Board consists of the representatives from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (WHC), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Chinese State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH), the Ministry of

Housing and Urban-Rural Development in China, the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, Peking University in Beijing, Tongji University in Shanghai and the Municipality of Suzhou.

The rotating secretariat of WHITRAP is based in Shanghai, China. WHITRAP operates through three branches – in Beijing, Shanghai and Suzhou –, with the coordination of the secretariat in Shanghai. Annual basic funding is provided by the individual centres and the secretariat is funded by the rotating Centre. There are 15 permanent staff and 4 interns at WHITRAP.

4. Challenges and Opportunities for Asia and the Pacific

Through the second cycle of the Periodic Reporting submitted to the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in 2012, four key issues or challenges for the region have been highlighted, which are management plans/systems, sustainable funding mechanism, community involvement and benefit sharing, and regional cooperation.

Management plans/systems

For the Outstanding Universal Value of a property to be sustained over time, the property must meet the required standards of protection and management and have an adequate management system or plan. All the States Parties in Asia and the Pacific unanimously agreed on the importance of the development or improvement of management plans/systems.

Management requires trained people to carry out the required processes which include research, awareness-raising, monitoring, implementing and enforcement. Capacity-building of those who are involved in the conservation and management of cultural and natural heritage is essential. Across the region, conservation, education, visitor management and risk preparedness are generally perceived as top priorities for capacity building. However, some sub-regional differences are observed, hence how best to address these different needs for capacity-building may also be pertinent to look into. It should be further noted that there is much room for improvement in developing capacity-building methods and educational programmes at the regional level.

Sustainable funding mechanism

Adequate financial and human resources are one of the basic factors for ensuring the management and protection of properties. The establishment of a more sustainable funding mechanism for properties is urgently needed, and available funding needs to be effectively allocated to priority needs. A strengthened partnership with the private sector

and the effective use of financial returns from tourism can be further explored in the region.

Tourism provides a source of income and develops the visibility and prestige of the site. Visitor charges can be more widely introduced and better used for the conservation and management of properties. However, tourism does have a great impact on heritage, ranging from physical and/or environmental damage to a loss of significance of the property. Efforts are required to improve the quality of tourism to minimize impact.

Community involvement and benefit sharing

It is of utmost importance that communities are fully involved in the management of the World Heritage properties. The current situation in the region is that there is a need for considerable improvement in particular in the involvement of indigenous peoples, where present, in the decision-making process. It has been observed that Asia-Pacific's heritage is foremost living and in the hands of its creators and users (not in the hands of absent caretakers).

In order to encourage communities to be engaged in the conservation and management of properties, an appropriate mechanism for community involvement should be developed. Awareness-raising, education and capacity-building are essential in order to give adequate knowledge and skills to communities, and to engage them in various activities. However, setting up training programmes for local communities remains a challenge in the region and there is a need for an effective method of transferring management expertise to the local community, including benefit sharing, which would enhance the sense of ownership and encourages stewardship in communities.

Regional cooperation

International or regional cooperation benefits State Parties and their cultural and natural World Heritage properties. Not only does it provide State Parties and site managers with an opportunity to exchange information and experiences, but it will also allow them to jointly tackle issues that are commonly shared and to find solutions together.

Throughout the region, it has been observed that different factors have impacts on World Heritage properties. Cultural properties seem to be affected negatively mostly by the local climatic and environmental conditions and by tourism. In the case of natural and mixed properties, the trends are somewhat similar with negative impacts mainly from tourism, with varying negative impacts shown for pollution, invasive/alien species and the exploitation of biological resources. Exchange of information, experiences and

research is useful in addressing the factors that affect properties and find measures against common threats.

5. WHITRAP's Priorities

Keeping in mind the World Heritage Committee's 5 Strategic Objectives (Credibility, Conservation, Capacity-building, Communication, and Communities), WHITRAP will prioritize projects which are a response to the challenges and opportunities mentioned in the *Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting 2010-2012*. Existing and future cooperative relationships will be fostered and established through programmes related to training, research, dissemination of information and network building. In accordance with the World Heritage Committee's priority areas and programmes, WHITRAP will focus on:

- i. Sustainable Development and Conservation of Cities, including the implementation of the 2011 *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape*
- ii. Capacity Building Strategy and Associated Programmes for Asia and the Pacific Region
- iii. Improving Conservation and Management Practices through the World Heritage Convention
- iv. Awareness-raising and Education for World Heritage

6. Strategic Programme Objectives and Expected Outcomes

6.1 Sustainable Development and Conservation of Cities, including the Implementation of the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape

Guiding Documents:

Operational Guidelines – Paragraph 119

World Heritage Properties may support a variety of ongoing and proposed uses that are ecologically and culturally sustainable- and which may contribute to the quality of life of communities concerned. The State Party and its partners must ensure that such sustainable use or any other change does not impact adversely on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. For some properties, human use would not be appropriate. Legislations, policies and strategies affecting World Heritage properties should ensure the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value, support the wider conservation of natural and cultural heritage, and promote and encourage the active participation of the communities and stakeholders concerned with the property as

necessary conditions to its sustainable protection, conservation, management and presentation.

Methodology:

In line with UNESCO's World Heritage Cities Programme, which aims to assist States Parties in the challenges of protecting and managing their urban heritage, as well as UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, which aims to celebrate and maintain cultural diversity and promote local traditions and creative industries, WHITRAP will continue its programming on the Conservation and Sustainable Development of Historic Cities. To this end it will provide advisory services and information as regards these UNESCO programmes, as well as research and training with interdisciplinary topics related to sustainable development, effective management, disaster prevention, tourism and community involvement. WHITRAP's research and training programme will integrate theoretical lectures and field trips, and focus on best practices in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, where relevant.

Moreover, the development and promotion of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach in the Asia-Pacific region is to be considered a priority for WHITRAP in this Mid-term Strategy. Three key issues will guide research and training activities on HUL, being:

1. The definition of Historic Urban Landscape, and its integration into Asia-Pacific traditions of urban planning and conservation;
2. The three-fold objectives of the Historic Urban Landscape approach:
 - The management of change;
 - The improvement of living conditions for local populations, and
 - The creation of a virtuous cycle in urban conservation;
3. Development of the Toolkit for implementation.

The research will be executed by Tongji University's Advanced Research Institute for Architecture and Urban-Rural Planning, with institutional assistance of WHITRAP, while collaborative partnerships will be established to conduct joint research and share experiences.

In the coming years this approach will be implemented in several pilot cities in China, the outcomes of which will become part of an advisory report to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) in Beijing on the merits and benefits of historic urban

landscape management. Next to this, also a group of pilot cities will be selected outside China in the wider Asia-Pacific region to provide for regional comparisons and broader insights into the process.

Expected Outcomes:

- 1) The Historic Urban Landscape approach in the Asia and Pacific context developed, implemented and diffused among cities and regions
- 2) Capacity of urban managers, planners and professionals in the region enhanced and strengthened and the planning and design of cities put into a more sustainable direction
- 3) Partnerships with and between the public, private and civic sectors established and nurtured

6.2 Developing Capacity Building Strategy and Associated Programmes for Asia and the Pacific Region (CBSAP-AP)

Guiding Documents:

The World Heritage Strategy for Capacity Building (WHC-11/35.COM/9B), page 18:

“The World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy foresees each UNESCO region developing a regional capacity building strategy and associated programmes for strengthening capacities at the regional level. This strategy will be different for each region in order to respond to the specific needs and situation in each of the regions.”

Final report on the results of the second cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise for Asia and the Pacific (WHC-12/36.COM/10A) highlighted priorities for the region in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention at national level and examined factors affecting the properties and management needs at site level. In Decision 36 COM 10A paragraph 11:

“Also encourages WHITRAP, the UNESCO Category 2 Centre, to take a lead in developing a regional capacity-building strategy and associated programmes”

Methodology:

The CBSAP-AP is based on consultation and consensus building. It is a process of collecting, exchanging and disseminating information to understand demands, define

strategic objectives, and design and implement relevant programmes. A questionnaire was employed to review current status of capacity building, and to identify potential audience, themes and proper forms of future capacity building programmes in the region. Broad consultation was conducted in defining strategic objectives and associated programmes, so that initiatives and potential interests were integrated in the design of the programmes.

In line with the mandates from UNESCO, WHITRAP will actively engage with the Advisory Bodies (ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN) to facilitate the development of regional cooperation and the establishment of accredited programmes in order to synergize regional resources and strengthen the institutional capacities in the region. WHITRAP will also be the focal point to monitor the implementation of the capacity building programmes and to improve on the effectiveness of capacity building activities through joint endeavours.

Expected results:

- 1) the current capacity building situation and gaps in the region addressed through cooperative schemes involving the Advisory Bodies and other partners ;
- 2) regional networks of capacity building strengthened through progress in implementing the Capacity Building Strategy and Associated Programmes for Asia and the Pacific Region, and effective communication among capacity building providers developed;

6.3 Improving Conservation and Management Practices through the World Heritage Convention

Guiding Documents:

Operational Guidelines-Paragraph 108

Each nominated property should have an appropriate management plan or other documented management system which must specify how the Outstanding Universal Value of a property should be preserved, preferably through participatory means.

Methodology:

In line with the needs indicated in *the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting 2010-2012*, WHITRAP aims to provide professional advice and assistance as regards the establishment of a management system or the preparation of a management plan, with

particular focus on protective measures, visitor management, and community involvement. Through established cooperative mechanisms, WHITRAP will facilitate and integrate the application of science and technology in practice of conservation. Where possible, technical assistance will be offered in the preparation of Tentative Lists and the nomination process for States Parties to improve the balance of World Heritage properties in the Asia-Pacific region. Furthermore, WHITRAP will use and integrate available resources from its partner network in this process in order to widely share and disseminate the experiences and best practices.

Expected outcomes

- 1) Thematic training on the establishment of a management system or the preparation of a management plan, with particular focus on protective measures, visitor management, and community involvement developed.
- 2) A database of heritage conservation information established in the Asia-Pacific region
- 3) Scientific knowledge and technological applications integrated in the conservation process and extensively distributed
- 4) Impacts of community involvement on local heritage preservation and management and the introduction of external, new cultural practices assessed

6.4 Awareness-raising and Education for World Heritage

Guiding Documents:

World Heritage Convention-Article 27

1. The States Parties to this Convention shall endeavor by all appropriate means and in particular by educational and information programmes, to strengthen appreciation and respect by their peoples of the cultural and natural heritage defined in Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention.

2. They shall undertake to keep the public broadly informed of the dangers threatening this heritage and of the activities carried on in pursuance of this Convention.

Methodology:

Taking into account Article 27 as well as the World Heritage Education Programme (WHE), WHITRAP will provide up-to-date knowledge about World Heritage conservation and encourage the involvement of in particular young people and local communities in the promotion of World Heritage.

In line with the WHE Programme, WHITRAP has generated, and will continue to do so, promotion activities and educational projects with the specific target of young people. WHITRAP will contribute to the distribution of '*World Heritage in Young Hands*' as an education resource kit for secondary school teachers. In addition, the Youth summer camps will be organized regularly to enable young people to learn about World Heritage conservation through games and interactive lectures, among others. WHITRAP will ensure the coordination of the Joint Association of World Heritage Youth Education and aims to make full use of the existing resources in the region, including those of the World Heritage Centre, UNESCO Associated Schools, UNESCO Beijing Office, and UNESCO Bangkok Office.

Further to this, presentations and lectures on a variety of World Heritage topics will be delivered quarterly to a general public audience, including college students, and junior practitioners who are involved in heritage conservation work. Moreover, the WHITRAP Forum will continue to be organized as a means of effective communication and dialogue among relevant stakeholders.

Last but not least, to ensure all stakeholders have access to updated World Heritage information, WHITRAP will make the outcomes of all these activities available on its website, and through its Newsletters and related proceedings.

Expected outcomes

- 1) Continued and enhanced efforts to mobilize young people to participate actively in the promotion of World Heritage.
- 2) New members encouraged to the Joint Association of World Heritage Youth Education.
- 3) Wide dissemination, through both printed and electronic media, of outcomes of all relevant activities undertaken in the context of the *World Heritage Convention* and its implementation.