

World Heritage Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (2023-2028)

Streamlining Sustainable Development into Heritage Conservation and Management: A Roadmap for Practitioners

1. Introduction

The **debate** on the relationship **between conservation and sustainable development** has taken centre stage within the heritage sector and notably in the context of the World Heritage Convention. In the face of growing global challenges and diminishing resources, and with the inscription of more than 1000 properties on the World Heritage List, the need to integrate sustainable development within the practice of the 1972 Convention has emerged strongly over the past decade. This led to the adoption in 2015 by the General Assembly of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention of a *Policy on the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention* (the 2015 Policy).

The overall goal of **the 2015 policy** is to assist States Parties, practitioners, institutions, communities, and networks, to harness the potential of World Heritage properties and heritage in general, to contribute to sustainable development and therefore increase the effectiveness and relevance of the Convention.

In addition, the UNESCO Thematic Indicators for Culture (Culture | 2030 Indicators) propose a conceptual framework to measure and monitor the progress of culture's enabling contribution to the SDGs.

In this respect, **four transversal thematic dimensions** are set:

- (i) Environment & Resilience,
- (ii) Prosperity & Livelihoods,
- (iii) Knowledge & Skills,
- (iv) Inclusion & Participation.

Despite this progress, significant challenges still exist in understanding the implications of integrating sustainability driven approaches in heritage management, in tailoring management and governance arrangements under such approaches and in maintaining responsiveness to multicultural diverse contexts.

In order to support the 2015 Policy and Culture 2030 Indicators, through the network of Heritage Practitioners in Asia and the Pacific (HeritAP), WHITRAP Shanghai has structured a six-year project that includes research, professional exchange meetings and field studies. The overarching aim of the project is to better illustrate the above-mentioned UNESCO documents, identify good practices in World Heritage properties and on the Tentative List, and create appropriate tools for site managers to streamline recommendations for the effective use of heritage as a driver for sustainable development.

2. Goals

The proposed HeritAP activities aims to achieve the following end-goals:

- **Facilitate the understanding of the 2015 *Policy document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention* and create appropriate tools** for site managers to streamline recommendations for their effective use of heritage as a driver for sustainable development.
- **Understand and demonstrate** the use of Culture | 2030 Indicators to improve the contribution of World Heritage to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Promote capacity development** and information exchange between site managers on good practices to streamline sustainable development in heritage conservation and management.
- **Disseminate experiences and lessons learned** from good practices in World Heritage contribution to SDGs.
- **Assure** that the potential of World Heritage to contribute to sustainable development is fully harnessed.
- **Ensure** that World Heritage conservation and management strategies and programmes are aligned with the broader goals of sustainable development.
- **Assist** practitioners, institutions, communities, and networks involved in World Heritage to harness the benefits that engagement in sustainable development can deliver to properties.

3. Activities

As aforementioned, in order to achieve the proposed goals, WHITRAP Shanghai will organize a series of meetings between 2023-2028. Each year, good practices from selected World Heritage properties or properties on the Tentative List, will illustrate one of the four thematic dimensions, including but not limited to, the Culture | 2030 Indicators.

In 2023, the HeritAP annual meeting will **interpret the Policies** and their **implementation** from global level to national level. In the meantime, experts are invited to **provide examples** of how to illustrate the good practices at site level focusing on Dimension One: Environment and Resilience.

Meetings from 2024-2028 will begin with **on-site information exchange to better understand** the host site and lessons learned from the good practice example. After on-site capacity development, meetings will include two sessions, with introductory keynote presentations for the particular dimension and related Culture | 2030 Indicators. The second session will include presentations and discussions of host and invited heritage practitioners to glean components to

promote good practice in the integration of sustainable development in heritage conservation and management.

The **templates** of the application for good practice and host sites under specific dimensions will be announced in 2023, with the call for applications from November of Year 1 to March of the following year. The Steering Group of HeritAP will select the cases and host site before mid of April. These cases will be shared during HeritAP Chats of Year 2. The **selected presenters** will be **invited** to participate in the HeritAP annual meeting in Year 2.

4. **Beneficiaries**

Because HeritAP meetings are open to the public, the outreach is significant. Some of the beneficiaries of these meetings will include:

- World Heritage site managers, particularly in Asia and the Pacific;
- Heritage practitioners;
- Young professionals;
- Interested civil society;
- Authorities and other decision-makers involved with World Heritage conservation and management.