

2 Context: managing cultural heritage

cultural heritage management system(s) exist(s) in every country. These management systems are diverse; some have existed unchanged for centuries whilst others have evolved a great deal in recent times. Some operate at a national level, others at provincial, local and property levels. There are informal, conservation decision-making mechanisms for heritage in some parts of the world that might not correspond with the mainstream heritage sector view of a management system but they are systems all the same.

A **'management system for cultural heritage'** helps to conserve and manage a given property or group of properties in a way that protects heritage values, in particular the OUV if it is a World Heritage property, and, where possible, enhances wider social, economic and environmental benefits beyond the confines of each property. This wider engagement deters practices detrimental to the cultural heritage but also facilitates the identification and promotion of a property's heritage values. Moreover, it delivers a constructive role for cultural heritage in enhancing human development which in the long-term will bring a return, augmenting the sustainability of the cultural heritage itself (see Part 2.3).

The future success of heritage management systems, in particular for World Heritage, depends greatly on their ability, amongst other things, to:

- employ a values-led approach (see Part 2.5),
- deliver approaches that anticipate and manage change,
- invest in the relationship between heritage and society, constantly examining why and how cultural heritage should be conserved and for whom and with whom.

2.5 Approaches to heritage conservation and management

Whatever management system, be it informal or well documented, is in use or developed, it is necessary to have an agreed basis for managing heritage. In recent decades there have been two main approaches: one is what we call here the 'conventional' approach, and the other the 'values-led' approach, which is increasingly predominant, being, perhaps, the more adaptable. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive. Many management systems contain elements of both approaches. Here we compare and contrast the two approaches and attempt to explain why the values-led approach is the more appropriate one for conserving and managing World Heritage properties.

The 'conventional' approach

The 'conventional' approach refers to the methodology adopted by the conservation professionals with the birth of the modern conservation movement in the Western world. The main focus was placed on the conservation of the materials or the fabric of the past, which was identified as monuments and sites to be preserved for the sake of future generations. Conservation experts themselves began to identify and define what needed to be protected (which was later supported by legislation established for the purpose by individual countries). Examining the existing condition of the fabric led to various interventions for prolonging the life of the materials. In the middle of the 20th century, this approach received global recognition through doctrines such as the Venice Charter and the work of organizations such as ICOMOS.