

leading or participating in conservation decisions. In particular, they will be better able to:

- Identify and engage the various actors and stakeholders, recognizing their respective roles and influence in the decisions;
- Ensure that cultural heritage values are at the core of any conservation decisions;
- Explore the cultural, social, legal, institutional and physical contexts of cultural heritage, and consider their implications in the decision-making process;
- Identify tools, mechanisms and strategies within and beyond the cultural heritage field, and make use of them to ensure an inclusive, informed and effective decision-making process;
- Facilitate effective communication during the process and when sharing the resulting decisions”(excerpt from the Course Information Document, ICCROM, 2008).

Trends in the participants’ case studies

The case studies brought by participants in 2004, 2006 and 2008 totalled 56 projects from 40 countries. Common themes emerged, amongst which one can find precisely the topics that were part of the course content from the beginning, or which gained emphasis as the course evolved.

Fourteen of the case studies (25 percent) concerned the balance between heritage values and competing values, such as urban development, dam construction, the use of archival materials, the display and loan of objects, institutional and budget constraints, and even cases of removal of previous restorations. All illustrated the fact that conservators have been facing situations that call for compromise and innovative solutions.

Thirteen of the case studies (23 percent) involved the opening up of the decision dialogue to stakeholders (individuals, groups or communities) outside the immediate heritage profession. Several examples concerned the marked influence of such stakeholders on the final decisions.

Nine of the case studies (16 percent) illustrated the influence of scientific input, usually in terms of material analysis that provided information on the best treatments for objects, such as gilt leather, a paper map and an historic building.

Eight of the case studies (14 percent) explored what happens once the decisions are made: how can we ensure that those decisions are sustainable? And whose responsibility is it? These case studies show that without functioning maintenance programmes or management plans, for example, conservation decisions cannot be effective over the long term, nor can the full potential of the heritage itself be realized.