People often look at outputs for judging performance since they are easier to control and monitor than are outcomes. But activities tend to be assessed on what they achieve (outcome) rather than what they produce (output). A school pupil will find it easy to answer the question 'What did you learn today?', but not to answer a question about its outcome: 'How have you/How will you use what you learned today?'.

This is true of the heritage sector and the World Heritage system in particular: the ultimate outcomes for World Heritage properties are those of ensuring that OUV is protected (OG para 7 and paras 96-97) and that heritage is playing a role in the life of communities.

The aim of focusing on outcomes is to check whether the management system is achieving the objectives. Even a well-managed heritage property where all outputs are being achieved can sometimes continue to lose cultural values.

OUTCOMES IN GENERAL

Approaches and challenges vary extensively

Outcomes can relate directly to property management, for instance whether or not the property is maintaining its core values and, in the case of World Heritage, its OUV.

But outcomes often relate to broader issues beyond the confines of the heritage property. Promoting compatible local development, for example, could be an important outcome, one that in turn contributes to the sustainability of the heritage (more local support) and so coincides with multiple management objectives. Similarly, ensuring that heritage promotes cultural diversity in communities is an outcome that, by creating greater social cohesion, can promote and protect heritage values and a greater identification with the heritage and sense of local ownership, possibly thereby generating new forms of support. It is through outcomes that the mutually beneficial relationship between heritage and broader society can be improved, a goal vital to the future sustainability of cultural heritage (see 2.3).

Outcomes can be the most important but also the most difficult things to measure accurately. There are many common objectives in the heritage sector but how they are achieved will depend on the nature of the site and its social, environmental and economic setting.

Examples of heritage outcomes

The following table highlights some examples of the most common outcomes sought from a heritage management system for a property. It also highlights the overlap with other outcomes. For example, visitor satisfaction can also lead to new forms of support for the property's management. Effective engagement of the local community can ensure heritage values are promoted and protected. Similarly the effective protection of heritage values will increase visitor satisfaction and often contribute to local community well-being, as Table 10 shows. In order to achieve these outcomes, heritage processes (see Part 4.3) produce multiple outputs, often in a variety of timeframes.