Governance in the cultural heritage sector

'Governance' has become a mainstream concern in the heritage sector as public heritage authorities and heritage NGOs examine their own policies and practices in an attempt to prevent the calamities that have plagued the private sector, in which the collapse of several important corporations has been attributed to poor governance.

Good governance refers to the relationship between governing bodies, citizens and democratic processes, and the ability to deliver effective, functioning forms of government.

Research[59] suggests that principles identified by the OECD for democratic public institutions are applicable to non-governmental and public sector governance for the cultural heritage sector and particularly for citizens who live on or near heritage properties):
• respect for the rule of law;
• openness, transparency and accountability of democratic institutions;
• fairness and equity in dealings with citizens, including mechanisms for consultation and participation;
• efficient, effective services;
• clear, transparent and applicable laws and regulations;
• consistency and coherence in policy formation; and
• high standards of ethical behaviour.[60]

Priority areas that the OECD identified are also important for the heritage sector: e-government, regulatory reform, public sector budgeting and management, citizen participation in policy-making, and fighting corruption.

For the UNDP, good or democratic governance entails 'meaningful and inclusive political partici-pation – basically people having more of a say in all of the decisions which shape their lives:'[61] Enhancing governance will always depend on local input and commitment. International guidance is subject to country-specific circumstances and institutional features, so that global findings cannot be applied directly. Only local data can make a convincing case for change and it is only through local capacity that relevant issues can be identified and political opportunities for legal and regulatory reform seized.

Drawing on a definition from the corporate sector,[62] we could propose a definition for governance in the cultural heritage sector as follows:
In its broadest sense, governance is concerned with holding the balance between economic and social goals and between individual and communal goals. The governance framework is there to encourage the efficient use of resources and equally to require accountability for the stewardship of those resources. The aim is to align as nearly as possible the interests of individuals, of cultural heritage, and of society.

59. Principles of good governance from several international heritage-related agencies, trusts and organizations are used to develop a set of principles for the cultural heritage sector in: Shipley, R. and Kovacs, J.F. 'Good governance principles for the cultural heritage sector: lessons from international experience', in: *Corporate Governance, Vol. 8 Iss: 2*, 2008, pp. 214–228. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
60. http://www.oecd.org/about/0,3347,en_2649_37405_1_1_1_1_37405,00.html
61. http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourperspective/ourperspectivearticles/2011/05/20/why-good-governance-makes-for-better-development.html
62. Claessens, S. 2003. *Corporate Governance and Development. Global Corporate Governance Forum, Focus I.* Washington, DC, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/Bank.