

4 Defining, assessing and improving heritage management systems

PLANNING FOR WORLD HERITAGE

Key considerations

Given the uniqueness of each World Heritage property and setting, new planning approaches should be introduced only after careful consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing situation, including traditional practices, existing urban or regional planning instruments and other planning control mechanisms, both formal and informal.

The SOUV is the basis for planning for the management of World Heritage properties (see Part 2.5 and Appendix A). Consequently, attributes that embody OUV and reflect the correlation between value and decision-making must be clearly identified and respected, as must boundaries, buffer zones and wider areas of influence.

In the case of plans to undertake (or to authorize others to carry out) major changes to a property or new development in the vicinity of a property which may affect the OUV of the property, the State Party must inform the World Heritage Committee at the beginning of the planning process (OG para 172). Indeed, all planning at World Heritage properties must aim to protect the OUV. Heritage Impact Assessments for proposed interventions are essential.

Planning for World Heritage must also harness heritage benefits for society by integrating sustainable development considerations into the process (see Part 2.3). This depends on a thorough shared understanding of the property by all stakeholders. Indeed, the OG emphasize that 'effective management involves a cycle of long-term and day-to-day actions to protect, conserve and present the nominated property. An integrated approach to planning and management is essential to guide the evolution of properties over time and to ensure maintenance of all aspects of their OUV. This approach goes beyond the property to include any buffer zone(s) as well as the broader setting'.

Planning mechanisms for World Heritage properties must be flexible enough to:

- Accommodate changes in order to comply with the specific requirements of managing a World Heritage property.
- Allow plans to be revised in the event of an emergency, the results of a SOC decision or in the case of Danger Listing, all of which aim at maintaining the OUV (see Part 3.3).
- Anticipate new challenges which could emerge from World Heritage inscription, for example checking that visitor facilities correspond with changing levels and types of visitor.

It is for this reason that in the World Heritage context, 'management planning' has become an important tool for adjusting a management system, if necessary in its entirety, to respond to new needs, and for securing secondary support as necessary. The 'management plan' that results corresponds closely with the needs of the World Heritage nomination dossier (see Part 3.5) and demonstrates how the OUV of a property is going to be sustained in a process that depends on the participation of all stakeholders. Management planning is examined in Appendix A of this manual.