

## 4 Defining, assessing and improving heritage management systems

The implementation stage is critical because the interconnection between cultural property, its management system and its context are subject to impact or change as the planned actions are carried out. 'Change' may be introducing improvements or managing the negative impact of unwanted change but it can cause damage if the cycle of processes is not working effectively.

### IMPLEMENTATION IN GENERAL

#### Approaches and challenges vary extensively

It is generally the staff of public institutions who have implemented planned activities, particularly for public-owned sites. For urban properties or cultural landscapes, private owners and non-governmental organizations play a larger role. In many countries, external specialists, contractors and NGOs commissioned by the state sector's institutions or the private owners are now increasingly involved.

Approaches to implementation vary from one institutional framework to another, in terms of how actions are implemented and in terms of the tasks deemed necessary during preparatory stages and after completion of actions.

They vary most with respect to working with others, either as forms of partnership or when procuring external services, supplies or works, i.e. outsourcing.

#### What implementation involves

The implementation phase of the management cycle will involve important coordination of tasks and priorities. It is characterized by two parallel operations:

- (i) Carrying out the actions that have been planned, and
- (ii) Constantly checking that there is congruity with the original aims.

These operations occasionally need to be joined by two more:

- (iii) Modifying approaches and activities, if required,
- (iv) Identifying and overcoming any oversights.

Implementation actions can be broadly divided into two categories:

##### *'Ordinary' routine actions*

These might include programmes of site maintenance, payment of salaries or external contractors, coordination of implementation, site interpretation and broader advocacy obligations,

##### *Specific one-time actions*

These might include in-depth conservation work or enhancement of a single area, building a visitor centre, research projects, improving facilities in the buffer zone, and new approaches to promotional activities and audience development. They might also entail managing new external opportunities or pressures that emerge as actions are taken forward, such as preventing other parties from taking damaging actions and managing the impact on other activities.

#### Key considerations for implementation

The implementation stage requires a particular readiness to respond to new pressures and opportunities. The delivery of programmed activities, together with the constant integration of corrective actions, favours an upward spiral of continuous improvement in heritage processes.

Mistakes made at the implementation stage are far more difficult to remedy than those made during planning or monitoring since the cultural property, the management system or wider relationships are being changed. Everything must be in place before action begins. See the considerations that follow.