

MONITORING FOR WORLD HERITAGE

Key considerations

Monitoring is at the heart of the World Heritage system. From the process of nomination onwards, States Parties are required to address monitoring (OG para 132.6). Monitoring mechanisms in World Heritage procedures include:

- The identification of monitoring indicators in the nomination format (section 6 of the format),
- Reactive Monitoring and the State of Conservation process,
- Periodic Reporting (OG Chapter V).

Furthermore, a general monitoring plan will address the effectiveness of the management system and will acknowledge and integrate a series of specific monitoring requirements aimed at protecting the OUV, including authenticity and integrity.

Indicators

The ultimate aim of monitoring for a World Heritage property is to check that the OUV is being effectively protected. Consequently, the indicators, which should be identified already in the planning stage, need to relate to the attributes that convey OUV and also authenticity and integrity (see Part 3).

Indicators should also be developed to measure and assess the state of conservation of the property, the factors affecting it, conservation measures at the property, the periodicity of their examination, and the identity of the responsible authorities (OG para 132.6).

Indicators that help to anticipate whether a World Heritage cultural property and its management system are potentially threatened should also be considered.

Indicators may be quantitative or qualitative. The following general considerations in selecting them are particularly pertinent to monitoring the state of a property, its surroundings and the relationship with stakeholders and identifying any changes. Indicators should ideally:

- Be limited in number.
- Be sensitive to change and thus able to illustrate whether management actions are having effect.
- Have a clear and measurable relationship to the trend being monitored (e.g. if the climatic stability of an environment in a heritage site is being measured, indicators should include the presence or not of active decay of the fabric as well as climatic tendencies; if the economic stability of the local community is of interest, indicators should monitor, for example, employment levels and average earnings).
- Reflect long-term changes rather than short-term or local variations (e.g. if monitoring a particular form of decay, choose indicators that are likely to show long-term changes and not, for example, seasonal changes). At the same time, avoid mapping trends that have such a long cycle (e.g. mentality shifts from one generation to another) that it is improbable that they will feed in information useful to the management system in a realistic timeframe.
- Address diverse areas subject to change and known pressures that can have direct implications for the property's management, including social, cultural, economic, environmental and political trends.
- Detect new pressures. For instance, evidence of the longer-term impact of climate change may not yet be discernible but monitoring may ensure that it is identified as soon as it is.
- Require monitoring procedures which are as simple and cost-effective as possible both in terms of approaches to information collection, information analysis, interpretation and management and in terms of ease of access for data collection, and as far as possible using data that are already being collected. If the process requires elaborate equipment, custom-made software, expertise or authorizations, it is more vulnerable to being suspended when resources are scarce or to knowledge being lost through staff changes.