Five of the case studies (9 percent) emphasized that effective working groups, teamwork and communication skills are essential for success, no matter the scale or type of heritage. In extreme cases, poor communication leads to 'wrong' decisions. Alternatively, lack of consensus could lead to deadlock and no decision.

Four of the case studies (7 percent) noted the influence of the legal context, sometimes a support for conservation, but sometimes a constraint despite its intention to protect heritage.

Four of the case studies (7 percent) addressed the need for conservation standards, some for emerging specialties, such as the conservation of contemporary art, others for countries that are isolated from global developments in our field.

Two of the case studies (4 percent) examined the application of conservation principles and ethics to complex decisions. It should be noted that this does not imply that principles and ethics were absent in other case studies, but rather that they were an implicit rather than explicit part of the participant's examination.

Missing topics

Based on the feedback received from both the participants and the core teaching team of the 2008 course, several topics were identified as missing, or which could be strengthened. Almost all the suggestions from the participants were incorporated into future courses by the teaching team, indicating a strong consensus about the profession's further needs. These included:

Further develop the complexities of engaging stakeholders – Who has the mandate of representing a group or a community? How can we (as professionals) listen and take in their views? How can we integrate the institutional interest we represent with the interest of the stakeholders? How can we deal with conflicting views within the community?

Further develop the theme of communication skills, especially with policy-makers – How to initiate bottom-up communication and also, how to get these higher-level actors involved in the process? Specialized skills that were mentioned included persuasion techniques, the psychology of team building and group dynamics, and improved listening.

Develop more examples from the 'real world'– For example, how can shared conservation decisions take place in cases of budgetary constraints? Who is responsible for initiating the process in the first place? Can we learn more about this from the experience of large-scale projects that have succeeded in efficiently achieving sustainable decisions? How useful are legal frameworks? Do they address the responsibilities or accountability for conservation? How can communities be involved if they have no legal pathway?