

MANTHAN SESSION

Opportunities and Challenges/ Silk Roads World Heritage Serial and Transnational Nominations

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Since 2003, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre has played a key role in the coordination of the serial transnational World Heritage nomination(s) of the Silk Roads, initiated by five Central Asian countries and China. The nomination process for the Silk Roads now includes fourteen countries (Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) that are members of the Silk Roads Serial Transnational World Heritage Nomination Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee, as well as Bhutan as an observer. During this complex nomination process, the governments of China, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway and the Republic of Korea generously provided financial contributions through the Funds-in-Trust cooperation mechanism with the World Heritage Centre. China and the five Central Asian countries provided in-kind contributions, and ICOMOS, the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO), Japanese institutions and the ICOMOS International Conservation Centre in Xi'an (IICC-X) provided technical assistance.

Along the lines of the 'Heritage Corridor' nomination approach outlined in the 2011 ICOMOS Silk Roads Thematic Study, two Silk Roads nomination dossiers were prepared by China and Central Asian countries. As a result, at the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee in June 2014 (Doha, Qatar), the World Heritage Committee inscribed *The Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an - Tian-shan Corridor* on the World Heritage List, following a nomination submitted by China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This inter-cultural project represents a valuable example for national capacity building and fosters the increased diversity and representativeness on the World Heritage List. It is currently being replicated in the *Penjikent-Samarkand-Poykent-MervZarafshan Heritage Corridor* (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), the *South Asian Silk Roads* (China, India, Nepal and Bhutan), the *Fergana-Syrdarya Silk Roads Heritage Corridor* (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), and in other ongoing initiatives such as the *Maritime Silk Roads* (initiated by China and the related participating countries) and *Mausam: Maritime Routes and Cultural Landscapes* (initiated by India and the participating countries).

To overcome the conservation challenges along the Silk Roads, it is desirable to work further with the UNESCO's Cultural Landscapes initiatives and reinforce linkages with the Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme through a landscape and/or eco-system approach, to protect the diverse types of monuments and sites. To promote the involvement of local communities and integrate a sustainable development perspective within the opportunities of the Silk Roads, UNESCO together with the UN Tourism Organisation (UNTWO) is developing a "Common Tourism Strategy for the Silk Roads Heritage Corridor" (Central Asia and China). Finally, this Serial Transnational World Heritage Nomination process contributes to the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, see the table below) to identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit the important of heritage along the Silk Roads Cultural Route to present and future generations.



2.4	6.6	8.9	11.4	12.2	13.1	
Ensure sustainable food production systems	Protect and restore water-related ecosystems	Promote sustainable tourism that create jobs and	Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's	Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of	Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to	S n a n c

World Heritage and Sustainable Development

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The 2030 UN Sustainable Development Agenda is a universal action plan developed for people, the planet and to enhance prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen peace outlined in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets. As relevant UN agencies, UNESCO and UN-Habitat especially promote culture for resilient, inclusive and competitive cities in relation to Goal 11.

UNESCO prioritizes SDGs and embraces them as an overarching theme in its four main areas of competence: education, culture, science and communication. The UNESCO Culture sector, with six international Conventions, mainstreams a sustainable development perspective in its work. The *World Heritage Convention* (1972) and its related Recommendations (1972 *Recommendation concerning the Protection, at National Level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 2011 *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape*) as well as the other Culture Conventions and the 2015 *Recommendation on the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections* provide policy support, capacity building and monitoring, measurement frameworks and elaborate technical guidance.

The World Heritage Convention contributes significantly to sustainable development and the wellbeing of people in the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of heritage to present and future generations.

The 2015 Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention (see whc.unesco.org) anchors this approach to World Heritage through environmental sustainability, inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, and by fostering peace and security. The contribution of World Heritage to Sustainable Development is evident in areas such as conservation of heritage, sustainable tourism, reconstruction/ rehabilitation/ recovery and integrated management, which contributes to the SDG Goals (4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 17). This policy underlines the need to achieve appropriate balance and integration between the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties and the pursuit of sustainable development objectives.

Other policies, such as the Policy Document on the Impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage Properties (2007), the Sustainable Tourism Programme (2012), or the UN Security Council Resolution on Protection of Cultural Heritage (2347) enhance the holistic approach to the promotion of culture for sustainable development.

The World Heritage Centre, through its capacity-building activities, raises awareness on seminal issues through workshops and their outputs, such as enhancing the role of local communities (World Heritage and Sustainable Development: The Role of Local Communities, November 2017, Pakistan) and impact studies (Heritage/ Environmental Impact Assessments for the Pacific Island States, Fiji, November 2017) or regional approached, such as African sustainable Development and World Heritage (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002612/261283m.pdf>).

The World Heritage Centre works with global expert and academic networks to promote culture for resilient, inclusive and competitive cities, especially mobilizing Category 2 Centres (C2C) and UNESCO Chairs. For example, the 2nd Coordination Meeting of C2Cs and UNESCO Chairs related to Culture (Paris, 2017) discussed the overarching theme of culture as an enabler of sustainable development.

Relevant issues of the *World Heritage Review* address specific matters related to Sustainable Development (i.e. Urban Heritage, Reconstruction and Recovery, African Heritage, Gender Equality, or Climate Change).

Finally, the future is in the hands of the younger generations: Youth programmes dedicated to World Heritage such as The World Heritage Young Professionals Forum (Krakow, 2017) or regional youth For a empower young professionals and younger generations in decision making processes so that they can learn to contribute to the preservation of heritage in a sustainable manner.