



Book - Unit 3 - Implementation

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Site: UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION PORTAL ON MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

Course: Introductory Course to Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

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1. International Assistance

A further major function of the World Heritage Committee is to receive and study requests for international assistance formulated by parties to the World Heritage Convention for conservation presentation or rehabilitation of any part of the world cultural or natural heritage.

The Committee decides on action in response to the requests and determines an order of priorities for its operations, taking into account both the intrinsic value of the property, protection and the ability of the state concerned to safeguard such property by its own means.

The World Heritage Committee maintains a list of properties for which international assistance has been granted.



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Funding

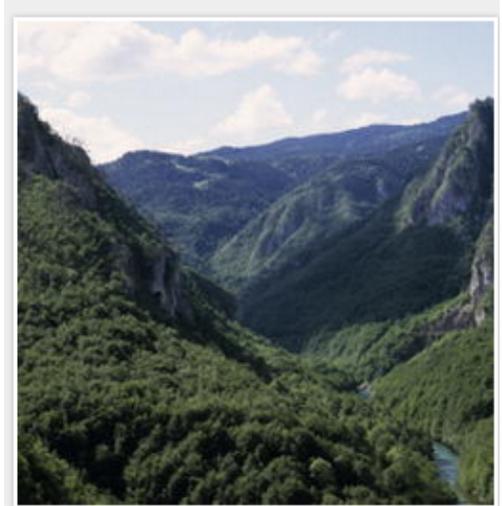
The financial means to carry out assistance is provided through an international trust fund for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage of Outstanding Universal Value, called the World Heritage Fund. This Fund is used, for example, to finance expert studies to determine and fight the causes of deterioration or to plan conservation measures, to finance training of local specialists in conservation or renovation techniques, to supply equipment for the protection of a natural park or to restore a cultural monument.

The World Heritage Fund is replenished from compulsory contributions from States Parties and voluntary contributions from states, donations from institutions or private individuals, or earnings from national or international promotional activities. The World Heritage Committee may use the contributions only for defined purposes or accept contributions limited to a particular programme or project, provided no political conditions are attached.

A state that seeks international assistance must submit a formal request together with relevant information, supported by experts' reports where possible. This serves to define the operation contemplated, the work necessary, the expected costs, the degree of urgency and the available resources of the state. Assistance can take various forms, including studies, provision of experts and technicians, training of staff, equipment and interest-free loans. However, the contribution by the state being assisted must be substantial.

A project or programme for which assistance is granted is defined in an agreement between the World Heritage Committee and the recipient state. This agreement also sets forth the conditions under which the project or programme operates.

Specific projects with defined goals and objective are supported by donations given by countries through Funds-in-Trust.



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2. Advisory bodies

The Convention includes three international organizations which advise the World Heritage Committee in making its decisions: for natural properties, it is IUCN-The World Conservation Union; for cultural properties, it is the International Council on Monuments and Sites; and for advice on restoration and training for cultural properties, it is the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property.

UNESCO provides the World Heritage Convention's Secretariat. In 1992, UNESCO established the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to carry out this function. The Centre liaises closely with the Advisory Bodies in order to administer the Convention and to advise the World Heritage Committee.



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3. Reporting

Article 29 provides for a measure of international supervision through the establishment of a state reporting system. Each state party submits reports to the General Conference of UNESCO containing information on the legislative and administrative provision that it has adopted and other action that it has taken to apply the World Heritage Convention. These reports are communicated to the World Heritage Committee. Furthermore, the possibility of de-listing from the World Heritage List is an incentive to comply with the Convention's requirements



4. National Implementation

While couched in mild language, the Convention contains detailed indications of what state parties should do to implement the Convention's obligations at a national level.

Article 5 provides that: "To ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory, each state party to the Convention shall endeavour, in so far as possible, and as appropriate for each country:

- to adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes;
- to set up within its territories, where such services do not exist, one or more services for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage with an appropriate staff and possessing the means to discharge their functions;
- to develop scientific and technical studies and research and to work out such operating methods as will make the State capable of counteracting the dangers that threaten its cultural or natural heritage;
- to take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage; and
- to foster the establishment or development of national or regional centres for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage and to encourage scientific research in this field."

Despite the terms of article 5(d) in relation to taking the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures, few state parties have actually adopted specific legislation to implement the obligations of the World Heritage Convention at national level. Most rely on existing legislation policies and administrative mechanisms.