



policy guidelines

DEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORLD HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM*

➤ The tourism sector

The global tourism sector is large and rapidly growing, is diverse and dynamic in its business models and structures.

Tourists/visitors are diverse in terms of cultural background, interests, behaviour, economy, impact, awareness and expectations of World Heritage.

There is no one single way for the World Heritage Convention, or World Heritage properties, to engage with the tourism sector or with tourists/visitors.

➤ The relationship between World Heritage and tourism

The relationship between World Heritage and tourism is two-way:

- World Heritage offers tourists/visitors and the tourism sector destinations,
- Tourism offers World Heritage the ability to meet the requirement in the Convention to 'present' World Heritage properties, and also a means to realize community and economic benefits through sustainable use.

Tourism is critical for World Heritage:

- For States Parties and their individual properties:
 - to meet the requirement in the Convention to 'present' World Heritage,
 - to realise community and economic benefits,
- For the *World Heritage Convention* as a whole, as the means by which World Heritage properties are experienced by visitors travelling nationally and internationally,
- As a major means by which the performance of World Heritage properties, and therefore the standing of the Convention, is judged:
 - many World Heritage properties do not identify themselves as such, or do not adequately present their Outstanding Universal Value (OUV),
 - it would be beneficial to develop indicators of the quality of presentation, and the representation of the World Heritage brand,
- As a credibility issue in relation to:
 - the potential for tourism infrastructure to damage Outstanding Universal Value,
 - the threat that World Heritage properties may be unsustainably managed in relation to their adjoining communities,
 - sustaining the conservation objectives of the Convention whilst engaging with economic development,
 - realistic aspirations that World Heritage can attract tourism.

World Heritage is a major resource for the tourism sector:

- Almost all individual World Heritage properties are significant tourism destinations,
- The World Heritage brand can attract tourists/visitors:
 - the World Heritage brand has more impact upon tourism to lesser known properties than to iconic properties.

Tourism, if managed well, offers benefits to World Heritage properties:

- to meet the requirement in Article 4 of the Convention to present World Heritage to current and future generations:
 - to realize economic benefits.

Tourism, if not managed well, poses threats to World Heritage properties.

➤ The responses of World Heritage to tourism

The impact of tourism, and the management response, is different for each World Heritage property: World Heritage properties have many options to manage the impacts of tourism.

The management responses of World Heritage properties need to:

- work closely with the tourism sector,
- be informed by the experiences of tourists/visitors to the visitation of the property,
- include local communities in the planning and management of all aspects of properties, including tourism.



While there are many excellent examples of World Heritage properties successfully managing their relationship to tourism, it is also clear that many properties could improve:

- the prevention and management of tourism threats and impacts,
- their relationship to the tourism sector inside and outside the property,
- their interaction with local communities inside and outside the property,
- their presentation of OUV and focus upon the experience of tourists/visitors.

The management responses of World Heritage properties need to:

- be based on the protection and conservation of the OUV of the property, and its effective and authentic presentation,
- work closely with the tourism sector,
- be informed by the experiences of tourists/visitors to the visitation of the property,
- their presentation of Outstanding Universal Value and focus upon the experience of tourists/visitors.

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⇒ Responsibilities of different actors in relation to World Heritage and tourism

The World Heritage Convention (World Heritage Committee, World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies):

- set frameworks and policy approaches,
- confirm that properties have adequate mechanisms to address tourism before they are inscribed on the World Heritage List:
 - develop guidance on the expectations to be include in management plans,
- monitor the impact upon OUV of tourism activities at inscribed sites, including through indicators for state of conservation reporting,
- cooperate with other international organizations to enable:
 - other international organizations to integrate World Heritage considerations in their programs,
 - all parties involved in World Heritage to learn from the activities of other international organizations,
- assist State Parties and sites to access support and advice on good practices,
- reward best practice examples of World Heritage properties and businesses within the tourist/visitor sector,
- develop guidance on the use of the World Heritage emblem as part of site branding.



Individual States Parties:

- develop national policies for protection,
- develop national policies for promotion,
- engage with their sites to provide and enable support, and to ensure that the promotion and the tourism objectives respect the OUV and are appropriate and sustainable,
- ensure that individual World Heritage properties within their territory do not have their OUV negatively affected by tourism.

Individual property managers:

- manage the impact of tourism upon the OUV of properties,
- common tools at properties include fees, charges, schedules of opening and restrictions on access,
- lead onsite presentation and provide meaningful visitor experiences,
- work with the tourist/visitor sector, and be aware of the needs and experiences of tourists/visitors, to best protect the property:
 - the best point of engagement between the World Heritage Convention and the tourism sector as a whole is at the direct site level, or within countries,
- engage with communities and business on conservation and development.

Tourism sector:

- work with World Heritage property managers to help protect OUV,
- recognize and engage in shared responsibility to sustain World Heritage properties as tourism resources,
- work on authentic presentation and quality experiences.

Individual tourists/visitors with the assistance of World Heritage property managers and the tourism sector can be helped to appreciate and protect the OUV of World Heritage properties.

- * Based on the report of the international workshop on Advancing Sustainable Tourism at Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites (Mogao, China, September 2009), the World Heritage Committee at its 34th session (2010, Brasilia) adopted the policy orientation which defines the relationship between World Heritage and sustainable tourism (Decision 34 COM 5F.2).

