



UNESCO Regional Capacity Building Programme: “Safeguarding the Underwater Cultural Heritage of the Caribbean”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This program is part of the Project “Capacity building, implementation actions and increase ratification schemes for the 2001 Convention for the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage in Latin America and the Caribbean” financed by the Spanish government with a final implementation date of 31 December 2012.

The project aims to protect the underwater cultural heritage in the Caribbean by building regional capacities to properly manage and preserve underwater archaeological sites through the establishment of a regional Training Programme in Jamaica. This project was formulated in response to the recommendation of delegates and experts during the UNESCO Caribbean meeting on the protection of the underwater cultural heritage held in Port Royal, Jamaica, from 10 to 11 May 2011 (See Annex 1).

The envisaged regional training program shall facilitate and enable the training of underwater archaeological site managers and conservation professions from the Caribbean. It shall provide a system of embedding this training into the national development planning of participating Member States, particularly the national strategy for capacity-building and human resource development. It will focus on the integrated approaches towards the conservation and management of underwater archaeological sites that are participatory and inclusive, and foster social cohesion and peace by promoting intercultural dialogue through the animation of shared heritage.

BACKGROUND

It is estimated that around 3 million underwater archaeological sites (shipwrecks, sunken cities and marine infrastructures) are spread across the ocean floors worldwide. These sites were protected by their location under the water and the inaccessibility. Today, highly specialized technology for detecting the presence of foreign objects under the seabed, previously only available to the military and the oil exploration industry, is relatively accessible to anyone who can afford it. The mass production of scuba diving equipment, remotely operated underwater vehicles, manned submersibles and special retrieval equipments, has opened a new page in history by allowing the exploration of ocean, rive and lakes, one of humanity’s most persistent dreams. However this has also rendered underwater archaeological sites vulnerable to pillaging by treasure-hunters and other commercial exploitation, and unwitting damage and negligence of those using the water for other purposes, such as

fishing, exploitation of sea-bed resources and major shoreline and off-shore constructions.

The threats of treasure hunting, weak or inexistent legal and academic frameworks were part of the reasons why UNESCO engaged to take legal and practical action to assure better protection for the underwater archaeological sites, which led to the adoption of the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO's General Assembly in 2001. More importantly, every Member State agreed that the Annex to the Convention, which sets out very specific rules concerning activities directed at underwater cultural heritage, should be accepted and applied as the reference document for interventions directed at underwater cultural heritage.

Professional capacity-building has been identified as the key to successfully safeguard the underwater cultural heritage. Without a concerted and sustained effort to build the region's capacity to manage it, it is not possible for underwater cultural heritage to be protected in the long term.

In spite of its vast underwater cultural heritage due to its maritime history the majority of Caribbean countries lack experts and national systems for its safeguarding. Due to the increase of the diving industry and the technical developments mentioned above, this heritage that was for centuries protected by its own environment is now easily accessible to sport divers, fishermen and treasure hunting companies. This heritage runs the risk of disappearing due to irresponsible exploitation, lack of legal protective systems and of human resource capacitated in this particular field of archaeology, conservation and management. The lack of resources available in the countries concerned, the failure to implement efficient cultural policies due to limited capacities has led to the proposal of this project that aims at strengthening safeguarding capacities.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The development goals towards which the project contributes are: (a) the effective protection of underwater cultural heritage; and (b) creating capacities of the proper management of underwater cultural heritage sites (c) the protection of underwater cultural heritage also has an important economic aspect, considering that tourism may develop around underwater sites if properly managed and interpreted in on-site museums which may be established. (d) the project also aims at fostering peace and social cohesion among participating Member States by placing the grounds for international cooperation and networking to enhance sharing of knowledge and best practices.

Through the establishment of a Regional Field Training Program in Underwater Cultural Heritage the project aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To build regional capacity in the protection and management of underwater cultural heritage through professional training in field techniques on underwater archaeological site inventory and mapping, non-invasive techniques of site identification, inventory and investigation, museology, conservation site monitoring and protection according to international professional standards. The application of the provisions of the Annex to the Convention shall be particularly stressed through the use of the recently published UNESCO Manual.
2. The project shall provide effective networking among partner Member States by encouraging close collaboration and dissemination of best practices, thereby

promoting regional cooperation through exchange of information on the conservation and management of a shared heritage.

3. Provide the grounds for cooperation with international research and training institution linked to underwater archaeology for further training and research programs.

3. To prepare Member States in the ratification and implementation of the 2001 Convention and its Annex.

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Maarten, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

JAMAICA AS HOST TO THE REGIONAL FIELD TRAINING CENTRE

During the May, 2011 regional meeting, the Government of Jamaica offered to host the regional training within the precincts of Port Royal.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

UNESCO shall have overall project supervision, and shall be responsible for coordinating and liaising with the donors, implementing partners, participating Member States and other concerned parties. The Jamaican National Heritage Trust will be the implementing partner in Jamaica with assistance from the Jamaica National Commission and the UNESCO Kingston and Havana offices.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

To realize the project objectives, a regional training programme to build capacities and to promote policies and best practices in underwater archaeology is being organized in the form of a **Foundation Course**. The first foundation course is planned for November 2012 and aims to bring regional trainees of different academic backgrounds to a common level of understanding on the multi-disciplinary nature of underwater archaeology and management of underwater cultural sites. Through a four-week intensive training programme, participants are trained on the basics of underwater archaeology and cultural heritage management through lectures and field work.

Considering the multi-disciplinary nature of underwater archaeology, trainees who successfully complete the requirements of the Foundation Course shall be encouraged to pursue further studies and/or training in underwater archaeology in established academic institutions offering underwater archaeology, scientific diving expeditions and further training for certification by the Nautical Archaeology Society of England (NAS), among others. To ensure the sustainability of the Programme and future availability of funds, "Advanced Courses" will be planned aiming at training heads of maritime archaeology units and senior underwater cultural heritage managers on specialized topics using state-of-the-art technologies and latest developments. The set up of a Project Steering Committee upon recommendation by the ICOMOS-International Committee on Underwater Cultural Heritage (ICUCH) will be useful for these future actions.

Certificates shall be issued to those who successfully pass the requirements of the Foundation Course.

SELECTED FIELD TRAINING SITE IN JAMAICA

For the practicum, the Port Royal site has already been the object of studies for survey activities and research in the past. Port Royal is preparing its nomination files to be presented as a world heritage site. The Foundation course can contribute to further research of the site and awareness raising on its existence and potential.

Trainers shall be top-notch experts with proven expertise coming from ICOMOS International Committee on Underwater Cultural Heritage (ICUCH), the Nautical Archaeology Society (UK), NOAA and UNESCO.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING MEMBER STATES

To derive maximum and sustained benefit from this regional initiative, Member States which do not have existing expertise and institutional capacity to implement their maritime archaeology programmes are encouraged to establish their national underwater archaeology units to conserve and manage their heritage found underwater, by seeking cooperation and financial/technical assistance from countries with expertise on maritime archaeology. They are encouraged to nominate their expert(s) to take part in the Foundation Course, particularly those whom they have selected to set up their national underwater archaeology units, or those who occupy senior position(s) in their existing underwater archaeology units. They must ensure that those who are trained at the Sub-Regional Field Training will pass on their knowledge and expertise to their national corps of experts.

Considering the multi-disciplinary nature of maritime archaeology, participating Member States should be committed to sustain over the long-term their national expert(s) trained under this project, to support for their continuing education and training in established universities offering maritime archaeology, to enable them participate in scientific diving expeditions and seek training and further certification in universities and institutions with underwater archaeology program and to further study the positive benefits in the ratification of the UNESCO 2001 Convention for the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF TRAINEES

Considering the important roles that trainees shall assume after completing the requirements of the Foundation Course, nominees from participating Member States should submit their detailed CV (including job experience) together with their nomination forms, and must have the following qualifications:

- A college degree from a reputable university;
- Be an archaeologist in a scientific institution/agency, a site manager or a conservator in underwater cultural heritage;
- Prove interest in the conservation and management of underwater cultural heritage, and understand and agree to the principles of the 2001 Convention and its Annex;
- A diving certificate and have logged a minimum of 25 dives, and 5 dives undertaken deeper than 25 meters (applicants are required to submit their dive logs before they can be considered for the Foundation Course);

- Be medically certified to be fit for diving (applicants are required to submit their medical certification before they can be considered);
- Secure their diving insurance in their own countries prior to formal acceptance to the Foundation Course;
- Have good comprehension, writing and communication skills in English (applicants are required to submit proof of their English skills before they can be considered).

EXPERT TRAINERS AND RESOURCE PERSONS

Expert trainers and resource persons from Jamaica, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain, the United States and UNESCO will share their expertise with the regional trainees during the first Foundation Course. The identities of expert trainers and resource persons shall be provided to the selected trainees before the start of the Foundation Course.

CURRICULUM OF THE FOUNDATION COURSE

Adapted to the regional context, the curriculum of the Foundation Course shall include the following topics, among others: 2001 Convention and its Annex, introduction to underwater archaeology, underwater archaeological resource protection and management, site significance assessment, protective legislation, survey and registration techniques for inventory, *in situ* protection and preservation, 3D site survey, shipbuilding techniques and terminology, ceramics, conservation and finds handling, ethnographic boat recording, geographical information systems (GIS) in underwater archaeology, data management, museology, risk mitigation, amongst other. The curriculum was developed by expert trainers taking as reference the UNESCO Annex Manual and the most relevant training tools available (bibliography that will be distributed to trainees).

Please refer to the attached preliminary brief description the timetable of the training course. The curriculum and timetable may undergo slight revisions, according to the availability of identified expert trainers.

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The Jamaican Heritage Trust is encouraged to organize a 'network activity focus group' on maritime archaeology among institutional members who are specialized in underwater cultural heritage. The focus group shall endeavor to adopt the location as their long-term 'laboratory' for continuing training and research for their programme. Member institutions shall share their expertise and resources, and collaborate on identifying their maritime archaeology focal point, and eventually shall develop their own training curricula and modules, and a common policy on accreditation system among their advanced students who take part in training and research activities of the centre.

ANNEX I: PORT ROYAL DECLARATION OF 2011

UNESCO CARIBBEAN MEETING ON THE PROTECTION OF THE UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

Port Royal, Jamaica from 10 to 11 May, 2011

The participants from the twelve (12) Caribbean countries gathered for the UNESCO Sub-Regional Caribbean Meeting on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage held in Port Royal from 10 to 11 May 2011,

Bearing in mind the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the protection of the underwater cultural heritage;

Having endorsed:

- The Declaration of the UNESCO Kingston Conference on the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage in the Caribbean, Latin and North American Regions, Kingston, 17-20, 2002
- The Recommendations from the UNESCO sponsored sub-regional conference on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, Saint Lucia November 1-2, 2003
- The Position Paper resulting from UNESCO Regional Meeting for the 2001 Convention held in Quito, Ecuador on November, 2007
- The results of the UNESCO Eastern Caribbean States meeting on the 2001 Convention held in Gros Islet, Saint Lucia, 27-28 March, 2008
- Declaration from the Sub-Regional meeting “Desafios tecnicos y legales del Patrimonio Subacuatico en América Central, Mexico y el Caribe” held in Cozumel, March 1-3 2011;

Have adopted the following recommendations:

Legal Aspects

1. States should undertake an assessment of the impact of the Convention on its existing domestic legislation concerning maritime and coastal activities, such as mining, fishing, coastal development, tourism; as well as penal matters in order to include the underwater archaeological variable.
2. States should consider a precautionary approach to the protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage and to impose an archaeological impact assessment of maritime and coastal activities. Consequently, States may consider establishing preserved marine areas for the protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage.
3. States should exclude the application of salvage law to UCH. States should recognize the contribution of casual finders who report and do not remove any finding.
4. States should adopt or reinforce domestic legislation to ensure that vessels flying their flag do not engage in any activity directed at UCH in a manner not consistent with the Convention, including its Annex.

5. States should adopt enforcement provisions in their legislation and administrative and penal targeted sanctions, including educative measures.

6. States should strongly consider the designation of the competent authority for the management and protection of the underwater cultural heritage.

Raising Public Awareness

1. Encourage competent authorities to support the production of promotional material including slogans carrying strong message such as “Underwater Cultural Heritage is Our Story”.

2. Create awareness among young people through school programs using existing mechanisms such as the UNESCO Associate School Schemes.

3. Include the principles of the protection of underwater cultural heritage in the curriculum of naval academies and other training institutions.

4. Propose public awareness activities in the fishing and diving communities and organizations for the promotion and protection of the underwater cultural heritage including responsible and controlled in-situ access as well as encourage the creation of programs such as the “adopt a wreck” and the publication of promotional leaflets.

5. Attract mass media interest through the collaboration of well-known and reputed journalists and communication specialists.

Capacity Building

1. Encourage the creation of a Regional Training Center for the Caribbean to build capacity of qualified personnel such as archeologists, conservators, technicians and other relevant personnel.

2. Promote the transfer of technology and encourage international and regional scientific cooperation.

3. Encourage States to host training programs similar to existing professional programs such as the UNESCO Asia Pacific training program and consider Jamaica as an option

4. Reiterate the need to seek academic collaboration with specialized institutions and universities, including exchange programs and scholarships.

5. Advise the States of the region to carry out inventories on the training needs and abilities, as well as infrastructure.

6. Request UNESCO to guide and organize these capacity building activities and promote funding.

7. Encourage States to identify key persons for the capacity building programs to ensure long term sustainability for the management and protection of the underwater culture heritage.

The participants express their sincere gratitude to UNESCO and the Jamaican authorities for hosting this meeting and encourage UNESCO to continue to support regional cooperation and development.