

# **World Heritage Institute of Training & Research for the Asia & the Pacific Region**

## **Report for the 37<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Heritage Committee**

**(February 8, 2013)**

### **Background and mandate:**

The World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region (WHITRAP) was established in 2007 and is located in China. It provides services to States Parties to the 1972 World Heritage Convention in the Asia-Pacific region. WHITRAP's mandate is to strengthen the implementation of the World Heritage Convention through capacity building, training, research, communication and dissemination of information, and the establishment of a regional network.

### **Institutional and operational structure of the Centre (Governing Board, Staffing, Operational funding and premises):**

The Governing Board consists of the representatives from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (WHC), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Chinese State Administration of Culture Heritage (SACH), the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Department in China, the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, Peking University in Beijing, Tongji University in Shanghai and the Municipality of Suzhou.

The secretariat is based in Shanghai, China. WHITRAP operates through three branches or centres – in Beijing, Shanghai and Suzhou –, with the coordination of the secretariat in Shanghai. Annual basic funding is provided by the individual centres and the secretariat is funded by Shanghai Centre. There are 20 permanent staff and 4 interns at WHITRAP.

The Shanghai Centre at Tongji University focuses on the conservation of cultural heritage, including the sustainable development of ancient towns and villages, architectural sites/complexes, and cultural landscapes.

The Beijing Centre at Peking University is responsible for the protection of natural heritage, archaeological sites, and the management of cultural landscapes.

The Suzhou Centre, run by the Suzhou Municipal Government, provides training and research on traditional architectural restoration.

## **Programmes and activities implemented since June 2012 and plans for the current year:**

**To improve Capacity Building:** WHITRAP has organized training programmes on Chinese Conservation and Development of Historic Cities and Towns (in Shanghai, April 2012), Restoration of Historic Buildings (in Suzhou, May 2012), and the Sino-France Course for Decision-Makers in Historic Cities and Towns (in France, October 2012). In 2012, WHITRAP also co-organized two additional workshops in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, being the Regional World Heritage Workshop for Asia (in Shanghai and Suzhou, September 2012) and the Workshop on Heritage Impact Assessment (in Lijiang, October 2012).

**To enhance Research:** Aiming to meet UNESCO's priorities in the region, WHITRAP has focused on the following studies and projects in recent years: a Community-based Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection and Development Project in Guizhou Province (2010-2014); the Asia-Pacific Regional Capacity Building Strategy and Associated Programmes (2012-2017); Implementation of the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (2012-2017); and the organization of a Capacity Building Workshop for Myanmar to Revise its Tentative List (2013).

**To strengthen the Cooperation Network:** WHITRAP contributes to the strengthening and consolidation of the cooperation network, including renewing the Memorandum of Understanding with ICCROM, working with the French Ministry of Culture, the C2 Nordic World Heritage Foundation in Norway, and the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) in Japan through exchange programmes and the organization of joint seminars. In addition, WHITRAP has extended the regional network through regular communication with the the World Bank, UNESCO Beijing Office and the UNESCO Bangkok Office. Moreover, the Observer Project started in 2010 to promote the activities held by WHITRAP and enhance the cooperation network in the region. Five members from five countries (Pakistan, India, Mongolia, Yemen, Sri Lanka) are Acting Focal Points in the region and the network is still extending.

**To promote the Awareness of heritage protection:** Every two months, WHITRAP organizes a Heritage Conservation Forum in Shanghai, which encourages topic-based discussion and interactive commentary and carries out systematic research on World Heritage teaching methods. To cultivate the interest in heritage among teenagers, WHITRAP held several promotional activities, for example the 9<sup>th</sup> Youth Summer Camp (in Suzhou, July 2012), a Movie Competition related to Heritage Stories (in Suzhou, 2012), an annual World Heritage Youth Education Joint Conference (in Xi'an, 2012), 12 presentations related to Heritage target to universities and communities (in Shanghai, 2012). To broaden the information and knowledge of heritage, WHITRAP has opened special columns on the subject in two influential magazines among Chinese teenagers, being Children's Epoch and Youth Pioneers' Activities.

## **Website of the Centre:**

[www.whitr-ap.org](http://www.whitr-ap.org)

## **Designated Focal Point:**

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