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# Management Planning for Natural World Heritage Properties

## A Resource Manual for Practitioners



IUCN Programme on Protected Areas

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IUCN builds on the strengths of its members, networks and partners to enhance their capacity and to support global alliances to safeguard natural resources at local, regional and global levels.

This study is produced as part of IUCN's role as Advisory Body to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee on natural heritage.

**IUCN**  
**Programme on Protected Areas**  
**Rue Mauverney 28**  
**CH-1196 Gland**  
**Switzerland**  
**[www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)**

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**[www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)**

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World Heritage Convention

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This resource manual provides guidance to States Parties and in particular to experts and agencies involved on the preparation of World Heritage Nominations for natural properties. The definitive information on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention is defined within the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. This resource manual was prepared in relation to the version of the *Operational Guidelines* approved in 2005 and updated in 2008. The *Operational Guidelines* are periodically revised to reflect the decisions of the World Heritage Committee. Please verify that you are using the latest version of the *Operational Guidelines* by checking the UNESCO World Heritage Centre web address indicated below. Please use this manual alongside the latest edition of the *Operational Guidelines*, and in the event of any inconsistency, the *Operational Guidelines* should be regarded as definitive. The guidance in this manual is without prejudice to the eventual success of any subsequent nomination for World Heritage status, including the view that IUCN takes in evaluating any nomination of natural and mixed properties in its role as Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee.

The *Operational Guidelines* (in English and French), the text of the *World Heritage Convention* (in five languages), and other documents and information concerning World Heritage are available from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre at the address below:

UNESCO World Heritage Centre  
7, Place de Fontenoy  
75352 Paris 07 SP  
France  
Tel: +33 (0)1 4568 1876  
Fax: +33 (0)1 4568 5570  
E-mail: [wh-info@unesco.org](mailto:wh-info@unesco.org)  
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# Management Planning for Natural World Heritage Properties

## A Resource Manual for Practitioners

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## Foreword

World Heritage properties are some of the most unique places on our planet because of the range of outstanding and unique natural or cultural features and values that they contain. Like anything precious these places need to be protected and cared for responsibly. Good planning linked with effective management can achieve this.

The purpose of this manual is to help those responsible for managing World Heritage properties with natural values by suggesting what they need to think about when producing a management plan for their property. What this manual does not recommend however is a single blueprint for the preparation of a World Heritage management plan, nor does it set out rules or provide solutions to individual management problems. What makes it different however is that it builds upon the guidance which already exists about preparing management plans and focuses on those specific issues which need be taken into account within World Heritage properties. The manual should therefore be used as tool kit to help answer the question: *“What makes a successful World Heritage management plan?”* and also serve as a directory to resources that will help achieve successful management planning.

This manual has been produced based on the experience in and knowledge of protected area management planning within IUCN and its World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA); including IUCN’s involvement in supporting the preparation of management plans for World Heritage properties. A draft of the manual was tested in a Training Workshop on World Heritage management planning held on the Isle of Vilm, Germany, in 2006, and has benefited from comments from a series of expert reviewers. It is seen as a first step towards a manual on the wider work of managing World Heritage properties.

In addition to producing this manual, IUCN remains committed, within its available resources, to supporting States Parties and other key stakeholders seeking additional information or advice about management plans for World Heritage properties through the network of World Heritage experts within the WCPA. This support can be more readily be made available however, if eligible States requiring assistance seek this through the mechanism of an International Assistance Request to the World Heritage Fund<sup>1</sup>, or raise funding from other such sources.

As the needs and demands placed on World Heritage properties change so must the process and advice for planning and managing them. This manual is issued as an interim version noting that a number of key products are currently being developed that could require its amendment before 2010. Best practice in management planning is an evolving process, so feedback on this manual is therefore welcomed so that its contents can be kept up to date.

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Gland, Switzerland  
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<sup>1</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/funding/>

# 1. Introduction

Protected areas cover more than 12% of the Earth's surface. These areas represent one of the principal means by which the world's biological diversity, its ecosystem services and its cultural heritage are conserved. A select number of these areas are of such global importance that they are recognised as being of Outstanding Universal Value under the World Heritage Convention. Around 8%, by surface area, of all the world's protected areas enjoy World Heritage status. Collectively these irreplaceable areas provide a means of passing on the world's unique natural and cultural heritage values to future generations.

Those responsible for World Heritage properties have a common responsibility to ensure that they are protected not just in law but through effective management. Management plans provide a valuable means of doing this, and such plans or other documented management systems are a requirement for all World Heritage properties. This resource manual has been produced to assist all those involved in managing natural World Heritage properties in the preparation of effective management plans.

The manual is organized in six sections:

- **Section 1** provides an **introduction** to the manual (this section).
- **Section 2** reviews the **context** for World Heritage management planning for natural World Heritage properties.
- **Section 3** suggests the **guiding principles** for the preparation of a management plan for a natural World Heritage property.
- **Section 4** reviews the **key stages** in producing a management plan.
- **Section 5** suggests the **contents** for a management plan.
- **Section 6** provides a list of **references** and further reading.

## Who will this manual help?

This manual is designed to help those responsible for preparing or training others to prepare, review and update management plans for natural World Heritage properties.

## Why is a management plan important?

A management plan is important because it can:

- Focus management thinking and effort on delivering the requirements of the World Heritage Convention.
- Provide a clear and concise statement of how and why the values and integrity of a property will be safeguarded, managed and improved.
- Set a framework for all the activities within the property for the next 5-10 years, in the context of a vision for the next 20-30 years.
- Explain the ambition and objectives for the property through the eyes of those responsible for maintaining its global importance and status.
- Provide consistency and continuity for the managing organisation, and direction and focus for management effort, and the use of resources and staff.
- Give credibility at a local, national and international level to the World Heritage concept and the importance of each inscribed property.
- Encourage cooperative decision making and enable everyone to understand the reasons for the work they are doing.
- Provide, through the process of its preparation, a means of engaging with stakeholders and securing their support and involvement where appropriate in the management and use of the property.
- Directly influence other plans and activities which might affect the World Heritage property.
- Focus attention on what information is needed to judge management progress and enable change be measured more objectively through monitoring and evaluation.
- Increase accountability and establishes a means of assessing management effectiveness.

A management plan therefore can be thought of as representing a 'public contract' between the management organisation and the stakeholders of a World Heritage property. It is also a tool for improving

communication, and monitoring and evaluating management activities. Most of all, a well produced and comprehensive management plan helps reduce and even overcome conflict, by enabling local people to understand and become more involved in the management of World Heritage areas. Management plans should form part of an iterative planning process that ensures the plan remains relevant and addressed to the current issues related to the property.

### **Who benefits from World Heritage management plans?**

World Heritage management plans provide a focus for the creation and strengthening of the partnerships needed to safeguard the values and integrity of World Heritage properties. They are therefore of interest not only to those responsible for the management of World Heritage properties but also those who influence or have an interest in their future. This includes:

- Politicians with influence or interest in conservation.
- Those who allocate resources and staff.
- Those who live in or use the property.
- Those responsible for monitoring and reporting environmental change.

## 2. A Framework for Management Planning of Natural World Heritage Properties

This section summarises the framework within which management planning in natural World Heritage properties operates. In the first place it is important to note that World Heritage properties are in most cases planned and managed in a way that should be little different to any well managed protected areas. Protected areas are defined by IUCN as:

*A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.*<sup>2</sup>

The world's network of protected areas plays an important role for global society in achieving the protection of nature, and by contributing to sustainable development through helping provide livelihoods and contribute to economies in ways that respect their fundamental conservation values. Instruments such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>3</sup> and the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (POWPA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)<sup>4</sup> set a broader framework for the role of protected areas.

Management of protected areas is a continuous and adaptive process. Planning is one of the critical phases of the process of effectively managing a protected area or World Heritage property (see Figure 1); however, management planning is involved in and contributes in some way in all the parts of the process. IUCN and WCPA already provide extensive guidance on management planning for protected areas within their series of best practice guidelines for protected areas. Key titles in this series and other relevant resources are listed in Section 6 of this manual and all the guidelines are available on the IUCN WCPA website<sup>5</sup>.

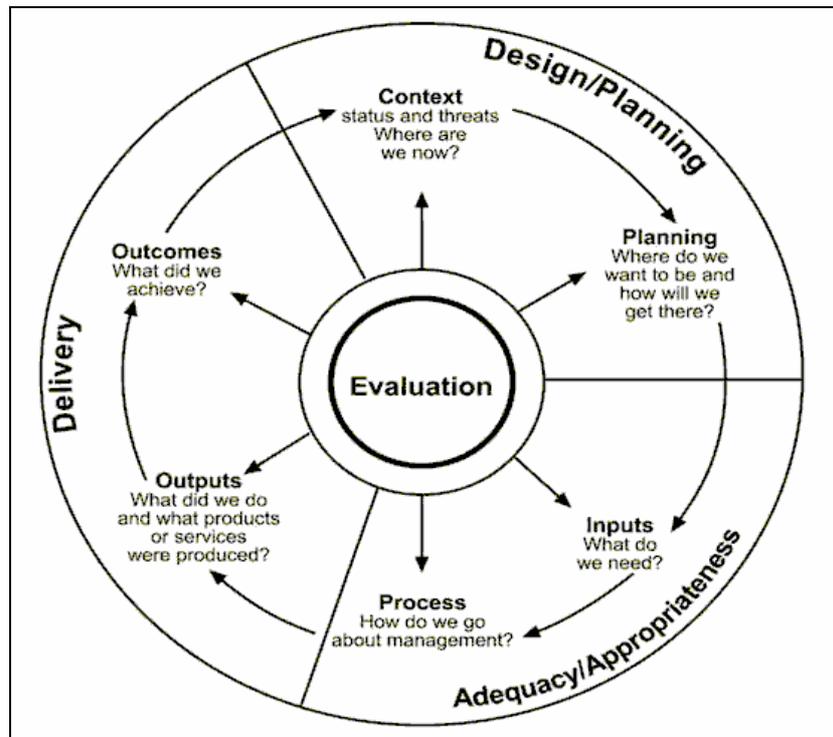


Figure 1: The WCPA Framework for Assessing Management Effectiveness of Protected Areas (Hockings et al. 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Dudley, N. (ed.) (2008): Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cbd.int/protected/>

<sup>5</sup> [http://cms.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa\\_resources/wcpa\\_bpg/index.cfm](http://cms.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_resources/wcpa_bpg/index.cfm)

In addition to the expectation of meeting best practice in protected area management, there are also a number of special issues to management planning for World Heritage properties. These requirements relate to the responsibilities set out in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*<sup>6</sup>. **Any World Heritage management planning should be carried out with reference to the Operational Guidelines.**

The obvious first requirement relates to the fact that World Heritage properties have been recognised as being of Outstanding Universal Value (see Box 1) and fulfilling the relevant conditions of integrity and protection and management. These high standards of the Convention have to continue to be satisfied, and a long term responsibility to safeguard the values and integrity of World Heritage properties rests with the guardians of these unique areas.

The Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage property is defined against a series of specific criteria (see Box 2). This means that certain values of the property are identified for special consideration within the World Heritage Convention because of their global significance. It is important to be clear about the specific values of a property that are the basis for its recognition as a World Heritage property and make special provision for their protection and management. There are also particular requirements for monitoring and reporting on these values to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. However, natural World Heritage properties will normally contain other values that are important at regional, national or local levels. Natural properties also normally demonstrate cultural values of at least local significance. Although Outstanding Universal Value has a particular emphasis in the management of a World Heritage property, it is therefore important to not manage the property only for its Outstanding Universal Value but to consider all of its values, whether the basis for World Heritage listing or not.

Adequate protection and effective management is also an expectation for all World Heritage properties, and it is a requirement for World Heritage properties to have a management plan or other documented management system (see Box 3)<sup>7</sup>. Natural World Heritage properties are also expected to fulfil relevant conditions of integrity, with integrity being understood as a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural heritage (see Box 4).

Because World Heritage properties are often the flagships of a nation's protected area system and a focus for international attention, it follows that there is an additional reason why their protection and management should have the highest level of commitment from the relevant State Party. The production of a comprehensive management plan demonstrates this commitment and the fulfilment of a wider responsibility to the international community.

### **Box 1: Outstanding Universal Value**

*“means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity”*

*(Operational Guidelines: paragraph 49)*

### **Box 2: World Heritage criteria**

*Natural World Heritage properties must meet one or more of the following World Heritage criteria:*

- *“(vii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;*
- *(viii) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;*
- *(ix) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;*
- *(x) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.”*

*(Operational Guidelines: paragraph 77)*

### **Box 3: Management requirements**

*“Each nominated property should have an appropriate management plan or other documented management system which should specify how the outstanding universal value of a property should be preserved, preferably through participatory means.”*

*(Operational Guidelines: paragraph 108)*

<sup>6</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>

<sup>7</sup> It is normally an expectation that a management plan will be provided but it is recognised that other documented management systems may also meet the requirements of the Convention.

**Box 4: Conditions on integrity for World Heritage properties (from Operational Guidelines)**

88. *Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes. Examining the conditions of integrity, therefore requires assessing the extent to which the property:*

- a) *includes all elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value;*
- b) *is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance;*
- c) *suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.*

90. *For all properties nominated under criteria (vii) - (x), biophysical processes and landform features should be relatively intact. However, it is recognized that no area is totally pristine and that all natural areas are in a dynamic state and to some extent involve contact with people. Human activities, including those of traditional societies and local communities, often occur in natural areas. These activities may be consistent with the outstanding universal value of the area where they are ecologically sustainable.*

91. *In addition, for properties nominated under criteria (vii) to (x), a corresponding condition of integrity*

A further point of emphasis is that World Heritage properties are often accompanied by an expectation of attracting visitors as part of the reason for nomination. The World Heritage Convention also carries with it a duty on States to not only conserve and protect their World Heritage properties but also to present them. This also implies engagement with visitor management, tourism, education and interpretation in ways that meet the public expectation of quality that should be provided to a visitor to a World Heritage property. The World Heritage Emblem provides a brand that should convey this quality.

Because of the differing political structures, social circumstances, institutional and legal procedures which exist around the world, not surprisingly a broad range of planning approaches, methods and models exist for the management of World Heritage properties. Despite this, to satisfy the requirements of the Convention, those responsible for World Heritage properties must be able to demonstrate:

- that long-term protection is in place to ensure that the property's Outstanding Universal Value and integrity is safeguarded.
- that adequate long-term legislative, regulatory and/or customary measures and an effective means of enforcing them, exist for the property.
- that the boundaries of the property adequately reflect the values of the property (for biodiversity World Heritage properties these should reflect the spatial requirements of the habitats, species or communities, and ecological processes that provide the basis of their significance and integrity).
- that where required, an adequate buffer zone exists around the property with complementary regulations which ensures that the values of the property are not adversely affected by external forces. If a buffer zone is not considered necessary, it should be demonstrated that alternative means to protect the values of the property from external factors are in place.
- that an effective management plan is in place which addresses the management response to all pressures and issues facing the property and defines ways to minimise or overcome them, and where appropriate to provide benefits to communities and visitors in ways that protect the important values of the property.

In summary, management plans for World Heritage properties are therefore both a tool to protect the property and also a useful instrument to help States Parties implement the World Heritage Convention.

### **3. Guiding Principles for World Heritage Management Plans**

Although there are special issues as noted in Section 2, preparing a management plan for a natural World Heritage properties is in principle little different to producing one for any other protected area. The context for a management plan will however vary, from some properties having a sophisticated and long established conservation tradition, to others where little management expertise or activity exists. If the area is populated, the emphasis of management will be different to wilderness areas. In certain instances a management plan may need to focus on the processes of mediation or conflict resolution whilst in others the science of habitat management may be the primary focus. Some sites may already have management plans, in others little may exist and a strategy document may be needed to justify the allocation of appropriate resources to manage the property.

The form and content of a management plan for a World Heritage property will therefore be determined by the nature, maturity and effectiveness of the management system which currently exists at the property.

No matter what the differences, there are always a series of issues which must be addressed and reflected in the core principles which underpin the plan: how the outstanding values of the property will be protected and its integrity safeguarded. No matter what the local circumstances, the production of any management plan, involves two complementary tasks; the process and its contents.

#### **The process of preparing the plan**

Preparing a management plan involves thinking about and developing ways of ensuring:

- Active participation by all key stakeholders and the wider community.
- That all stakeholders understand the characteristics, natural values, integrity and functioning of the property and its surroundings.
- Shared information on the information, agendas and expectations of all the different stakeholders as a basis for a shared vision and objectives, before actions are determined.
- Shared ownership and support exists for the approaches and actions required to safeguard the property.
- Delivery of the plan is shared as necessary between all the relevant authorities and stakeholders.
- Management effort and effectiveness is based on a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- That the plan becomes a means to an end and not an end in itself so that the required management action is achieved.
- That the plan achieves support within the protected area managing body as a whole, bringing together all of the staff and internal stakeholders into a common way of working and programme of activities.

#### **The contents of the plan**

If a World Heritage management plan is to be both credible and effective in relation to the requirements of the World Heritage Convention, its contents must:

- Include specific focus on the global status of the property whilst responding to management issues of local relevance.
- Protect the unique values of the property in an ambitious yet responsible and realistic way.
- Deliver outcomes which safeguard and enhance the integrity of the property's natural values.
- Demonstrate clear, comprehensive and integrated management between the different values and interests of the property.
- Demonstrate how international, national, regional and local policies and programmes can be combined and delivered in a way which is relevant to the property.
- Influence other plans and strategies to ensure that any activities arising from them which affect the property pay full regard to the area's global status.
- Look both forwards and backwards, learning from past trends and actions and using this knowledge to anticipate what is needed in the future.

- Be based on evidence and not only assumptions.
- Be in a form which enables its outputs to be monitored to show how its objectives are being achieved as well as allows for regular review and update, making effective cross references to supporting documentation.

### **Linking World Heritage management plans to other plans and strategies**

There are many national, regional and local plans and strategies which could affect a World Heritage property. Understanding the relationship between them and the relevant property is very important. National legislation and policies are a fundamental influence that should also be understood and taken into account.

Before starting the preparation of a management plan for a World Heritage property, it is therefore necessary to identify how the different demands and impacts of other development plans policies and land-uses may affect the property.

As the delivery of the management plan normally depends on working in partnerships, it follows that any other plan which affects the property should be well coordinated with the World Heritage management plan. In recognizing these relationships however it is important that the core objectives of World Heritage management plans are recognised consistently and fully reflected other regional and local plans. The World Heritage management plan in some cases may identify the need for changes to made in the policies of other plans that affect the property.

It is also equally important to agree the role and status of the management plan if no other planning or land use framework exists in the area. Where World Heritage areas exist in isolation, it may be necessary for the management plan to act as a form of substitute regional or local land use or development plan until one is developed. In these circumstances an appropriate form of political agreement and commitment will be required from the relevant authorities, for the plan to be used as an instrument to guide land use and development.

## 4. Key Stages in Preparing a Management Plan

Completing a comprehensive World Heritage management plan involves a number of different stages. Each of the suggested stages should be adapted to suit local circumstances and in most instances the outcomes of one should inform the next. The exception in this sequence is public engagement which is necessary throughout the process with the techniques used varying according to the stage of the process. The key stages in producing a management plan can be thought of as follows:

- **Stage 1:** Getting started and planning the work.
- **Stage 2:** Understanding the property's characteristics and its natural values.
- **Stage 3:** Deciding who should be involved and when.
- **Stage 4:** Agreeing a vision for the property and setting management objectives.
- **Stage 5:** Examining management options.
- **Stage 6:** Agreeing management policies.
- **Stage 7:** Agreeing management actions.
- **Stage 8:** Consulting on and approving the plan.
- **Stage 9:** Monitoring the plan.
- **Stage 10:** Reviewing the plan.

The following sections give guidance to implementation within each of these stages.

### Stage 1: Getting started and planning the work

#### ***Fail to prepare; prepare to fail***

How a management plan is prepared is as important as its contents. The pathway used to produce a plan therefore provides opportunities to clarify and understand the special values of a World Heritage property as well as identifying the specific needs and challenges facing that area. Information in IUCN's evaluation of the property at the time of its inscription on the World Heritage List can provide a valuable insight into these values<sup>8</sup>. The process of preparing a plan also enables support and commitment to be created for the necessary management action to safeguard the World Heritage property's outstanding values from the range of interested parties.

A management plan is not a fixed event or an end in itself, but an ongoing relationship between the World Heritage property, those who manage it and all its partners. Only when a plan functions like this, will everyone share the same sense of ownership of the property and for the management decisions and actions which affect it. Preparing an effective plan therefore requires continual collaboration between all the interested parties, with an emphasis on integrated thinking and partnership action.

Planning this work is essential before commencing. Once the decision has been taken to produce a management plan for a World Heritage property, it is important to decide how it will be done and who will be responsible for the work. Establishing a team to undertake and guide this task, under the leadership of someone with experience in coordinating the skills of different individuals is always a first step in the process.

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<sup>8</sup> IUCN's evaluations are all available on the World Heritage Centre's website: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/> within the page for each individual property.

Because every property is different, each will require specialists having different skills. The key competences which should ideally be brought together in a multidisciplinary team include those who collectively have:

- Detailed local knowledge of the property and its natural and cultural values.
- A scientific understanding of the ecosystem services in the area.
- An understanding of the social and economic issues which affect the property and its surrounding landscapes, and the property's ability to provide benefits to local communities.
- Abilities in business planning including preparing costed programmes of actions income budgeting.
- Skills in communicating effectively (both in writing and orally).
- Expertise in information management.
- Negotiating / advocacy and facilitation skills.
- Political sensitivities and an ability to build rapport and credibility with others.
- Flexibility / tolerance and a willingness to recognize and understand the needs of others.
- Project management skills.
- Vision and realism.
- Facilitation skills to engage stakeholders.

The initial task of those in a planning group should be to develop a brief for the plan which will:

- Define the scope of the plan's preparation and agree how this task will be done.
- Assess and assemble the skills needed.
- Agree a programme for the plan's preparation and match this with any time limitations and the skills and resources available.
- Produce a clear plan preparation statement which identifies key stages in the process, defines responsibilities and the resources required and sets out a realistic timetable for the work.
- Defining each of these elements, especially the last one, is beneficial as it allows the process to be explained to others, as well as providing a means of checking progress.

An important requirement is to carry out a costing and provide an adequate budget for the work. It should be noted that the World Heritage Fund offers a useful mechanism for eligible States Parties to request International Assistance (see Box 5) to support the work involved in preparing management plans. In general the World Heritage Fund provides the following types of assistance:

- a) Emergency assistance;
- b) Preparatory assistance; and
- c) Conservation and Management assistance (incorporating assistance for training and research, technical co-operation and promotion and education).

International Assistance is only available for certain groups of countries, so eligibility should be checked before making any application.

More information on the World Heritage Fund and International Assistance can be found in Section VII of the Operational Guidelines.

**Box 5: International Assistance**

*"The Convention provides International Assistance to States Parties for the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage located on their territories and inscribed, or potentially suitable for inscription on the World Heritage List. International Assistance should be seen as supplementary to national efforts for the conservation and management of World Heritage and Tentative List properties when adequate resources cannot be secured at the national level."*

*(Operational Guidelines: paragraph 233)*

**Stage 2: Understanding the property's characteristics and its natural values**

***"If you don't know where you are, you will never know where you are trying to go"***

Understanding the state of the property and in particular the condition of and trends in its natural values is a crucial management planning prerequisite and should be explained in the introductory section of the plan. There are various tools to assist this process, for instance it could be achieved through a scoping study or a simple SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis can be a useful technique.

All World Heritage properties should already have information about their specific characteristics, and a first requirement is to understand the documented basis of the properties inclusion on the World Heritage List. The Operational Guidelines expect this to be set out in a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, setting out the values in relation to the relevant World Heritage criteria, integrity (and authenticity for cultural properties), and commenting on the key aspects of protection and management. However, this requirement has only been in place since 2005, so the majority of World Heritage properties do not have such a statement. They may have a statement of significance, reflecting the values of the property, or in many cases may have no statement. The IUCN evaluation at the time of inscription and the accompanying Committee decision provides the key source of documentation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. More information on Statements of Outstanding Universal Value including guidance on how write one is provided in the companion volume to this manual: *Natural World Heritage Nominations: a Resource Manual for Practitioners* available on the IUCN WCPA website.<sup>9</sup>

Whatever statement is available needs to be reviewed to establish whether it:

- Meets the current expectations of the Operational Guidelines.
- Provides an accurate, easily understood yet evidence based representation of the property's overall condition.
- Indicates whether the natural values of the property are in a "favourable condition".
- Allows comparison to be made in the future.

It will almost always be the case that there are some information gaps in relation to any World Heritage property. It is advisable to build work on filling these gaps into the development and implementation of the management plan, rather than wait to fill them before planning begins. For instance the management plan should normally identify survey work within its policies and actions.

### **Stage 3: Deciding who should be involved and when**

Stakeholder participation throughout the preparation of any management plan is recognised as fundamental if effective management and long term support for the protection and conservation of a World Heritage property is to be achieved. Understanding why and deciding when engagement with partners and stakeholders is appropriate during the plan preparation is critical. How this is achieved will again depend on local circumstances and the arrangements which currently exist for engaging key partners and local community interests. Early identification of those who should be involved is advisable if plan preparation is to be successful. Understanding what is involved in preparing a plan and managing this process effectively is crucial to its success. This means:

- Identifying key stakeholders carefully in relation to the key dynamics of the property.
- Explaining clearly to others, the property's key natural and other values and why they need to be safeguarded.
- Agreeing in a transparent way, the limits within which issues can be discussed and negotiated.
- Recognising that issues other than nature conservation need to be addressed.
- Engaging with people's fears as well as their hopes.
- Recognising that early engagement with others is time consuming.
- Retaining flexibility.

A key factor in many World Heritage properties will be the involvement of indigenous people. For many managers, the issue that is often of greatest concern is how protected areas relate to local people – most importantly indigenous peoples and local and mobile communities. Volume 11 of the IUCN WCPA Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series<sup>10</sup> offers ideas and concrete advice on ways to enhance the equity of the relationship between site managers and communities, and to make it work better for conservation.

The involvement of stakeholders should include raising awareness and the continual sharing of information about the special needs of the World Heritage property under consideration. It will also involve the discussions of options and building consensus at local, national and international level.

<sup>9</sup> [http://cms.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa\\_resources/wcpa\\_publications/wcpa\\_whpub/index.cfm](http://cms.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_resources/wcpa_publications/wcpa_whpub/index.cfm)

<sup>10</sup> Borrini-Feyerabend, G.; Kothari, A. & G. Oviedo (2004): Indigenous and Local Communities and Protected Areas: Towards Equity and Enhanced Conservation. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 11. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.

Stakeholder involvement does not however mean that identifying objectives and priorities is entirely open and that anyone can insist on any outcome they please. All World Heritage properties are bound by the formal requirements of the World Heritage Convention, as set out in the *Operational Guidelines* and these must be taken fully into account by those ultimately determining the direction and outputs of the plan. At each stage of the plan-making process therefore those preparing the plan must have a thorough understanding of legal, policy and other constraints within which realistic options and decisions about the property can be made. In this way stakeholders will then be clear what is expected of them and the limits to which the integrity or values of the property can be negotiated. The successful management of a World Heritage property can certainly not be achieved through an approach that is based on trade-offs between different interests. It is much more likely to be secured through the identification and agreement of a series of common goals which secure the integrity of the property and deliver benefits through a well thought out series of policies and actions. If compromises need to be reached on difficult issues they should be based on negotiation within such a common framework, and respecting the Outstanding Universal Value and other values of the property.

Although most stakeholders will want to be involved in the preparation of a management plan from the start, care is needed to involve the most appropriate people at the right time. Certain stakeholders may be more critical, more knowledgeable or influential than others. Those with technical information and traditional knowledge of the property may need to be engaged in a different way and at a different time than those needed to develop management options. In some instances it may also be necessary to support groups or sectors who have valuable contributions to make but are less able to organise or express themselves. Empowerment of the input from all groups needs to be actively planned, and the use of an external facilitator in the process can be a useful way to ensure such engagement and convene discussions without being seen as representing a particular organization or perspective.

Similarly it is important to recognise that those who are opposed to the work of the management body, or concerned that the plan will lead to more restrictions to their interest should not be excluded. Engaging them to be involved rather than excluding them is vital, even though this may present specific communication problems which will need to be handled with sensitivity by those with the skills and experience of conflict resolution or negotiation techniques. This issue could be particularly important in transboundary properties or where local interest groups have little awareness of the purpose of World Heritage properties.

No matter what the ultimate mix, a strategy to identify and understand the role and input of each of key stakeholders and thereafter a process to cluster their interests into cohesive and representative groupings is needed. Key stakeholders other than the management authority and local communities are likely to include:

- National Government departments and agencies.
- Local government administration.
- Non Governmental organisations.
- Local community interest groups.
- Specialist or technical interest groups.
- The private sector including business and commercial interests.

Although an inclusive approach is important, ensuring that the process of engagement remains manageable means that numbers must not become so large as to make constructive discussion and agreement difficult and participants must also be aware of the legal and policy framework and resource levels that dictate what can and cannot be done.

The benefits of joint and inclusive work organised in an open manner should result in:

- Increased understanding and shared ownership of the aims of the management plan and the World Heritage property itself.
- A higher commitment to those actions which will protect and enhance the property's natural values and integrity.
- Shared responsibilities for the property.
- Improved communication and more sharing of information and responsibility about the issues facing the area.
- Working in this way however takes time and resources, if it is to be effective and this should be recognised in the initial project planning phase.

#### **Stage 4: Agreeing a vision for the property and setting management objectives**

A vision and objectives setting out the ambitions for the World Heritage property should be defined through a shared and transparent process involving all those within interests in the property. The challenge is to share and raise the ambitions for the management of the property, to maintain and develop higher and higher standards and to provide an idea of the future of the site that can be used to measure against when detailed discussions take place later in the process and compromises are raised. Agreeing a vision for the property requires the establishment of an environment that enables all of the key stakeholders to contribute to the establishment of the vision, in order to secure the maximum support for it.

The next stage of the management plan is to consider the different options for managing the property and to set the broad objectives and priorities for management within the plan period. Whilst the vision should focus on a 20-30 year timescale, the objectives should focus on what will be achieved within the 5-10 year life time of the management plan. More detail on vision and objectives are provided in Section 5 of this manual.

#### **Stage 5: Examining management options**

With so many external factors such as climate change, the implications of changing life styles, the decentralisation and/or privatisation of State functions to local government regimes, poverty alleviation, global travel and international tourism as well as local issues affecting World Heritage properties, how these affect the status of the property's natural values must be considered. To ignore them will be fail to recognise the responsibilities of maintaining the property's outstanding values and integrity.

Designation of a World Heritage property often changes its public image and socio-economic profile and therefore the demands placed on the area surrounding it. If World Heritage properties are to play a positive role in the global agenda for sustainable development, the process of considering management options as well considering the issues within the property itself must also have regard to the social and economic circumstances of the areas immediately surrounding them. Indeed the need for management action within a property can be triggered by pressures or change beyond its boundaries. Successful management plans will consider properties in the context of their surroundings and not allow them to become disconnected and function as independent environmental islands isolated from their setting.

Those responsible for the management plan and the planning process therefore also need to ensure a process of scenario development, discussing the different ways in which the property might change over the lifetime of the plan. Shared agreement is required to define the issues of greatest importance and the most appropriate ways of dealing with them. The refinement of preferred options must be achieved with partners taking decisions together. When this happens the final stages of consultation on the plan should lead to refinement and improvement rather than conflict and disagreement. A key issue in this process should be a discussion of priorities for a site: what is it most important to achieve?

#### **Stage 6: Agreeing management policies**

The policies of a World Heritage management plan should always reflect an integrated and coordinated approach to delivery. Policies should be developed in partnership having evolved after the consideration of options, as their delivery could ultimately depend on the support or action of these various stakeholders. The agreement of policies should only take place after the vision and objectives have been agreed and should take into account the legal and policy framework.

#### **Stage 7: Agreeing management actions**

The actions of a World Heritage management plan should also be agreed collectively but their implementation should be clearly assigned to a lead partner and set within a prioritised, coordinated, costed and timetabled programme. Whilst the overall vision and objectives should ideally be agreed by all stakeholders, it may be useful to work in smaller groups to define actions in some cases where not all stakeholders have a direct concern. The actions should clearly set out the interventions that will take place during the lifetime of the plan and should be prepared with reference to what is realistic and the likely budget scenarios for the property.

## Stage 8: Consulting on and approving the plan

A clear process explaining how the final plan will be adopted by the responsible agency or the State Party is advisable, so that consultees have an opportunity to formally respond to its contents. The most important aspects to consider are:

- Have an agreed process for the approval and adoption of the plan.
- Document and consider all the comments received.
- Allow sufficient time for people to respond and not feel rushed but not too much time that they lose interest.
- Inform individuals how their comments will be considered and incorporated into the plan.

The process of refining the plan, and thereafter its final approval, requires an open and accountable approach especially when deciding what changes to make. If the process of engagement and plan preparation has been undertaken effectively, the outcomes of any final consultations should be seen as a positive opportunity to make the plan better and speed up its final adoption. A useful form of practice is to issue a draft plan and then seek written comments on which final discussions and amendments can be based.

The adoption of an agreed management plan is particularly important for properties being submitted to the nominated process for inclusion on the World Heritage list as the *Operational Guidelines* require such sites to have an approved management plan to be included as a component part of the nomination dossier.

The *Operational Guidelines* (paragraph 115) note that in some circumstances, a management plan or other management system may not be in place at the time when a property is nominated for the consideration of the World Heritage Committee. In this situation the State Party concerned should then indicate when such a management plan or system would be put in place, and how it proposes to mobilize the resources required for the preparation and implementation of the new management plan or system. The State Party should also provide other document(s) (e.g. operational plans) which will guide the management of the property until such time when a management plan is finalized.

In the view of IUCN, in order to be acceptable, the timescale for delivery of a written plan which is not available at the time of submission should normally be less than one year. If a longer timescale is required to prepare a plan then the options of deferral or referral of a nomination are more likely to be recommended by IUCN.

## Stage 9: Monitoring the plan

The completion of the management plan is only a step in ensuring that a World Heritage property is managed effectively. Once a management plan is produced, the emphasis must shift to the delivery of the actions it proposes and thereafter to monitoring any outcomes achieved. Establishing the effectiveness of the plan's outcomes represents a crucial link between the programme of action and the plan's objectives. A complete and adequately resourced monitoring and evaluation programme should form an integral part of the management plan.

How this is done will vary from property to property but thought is required to ensure that an effective mechanism exists to do this. Further guidance on monitoring management effectiveness exists in various companion statements to this prepared by IUCN.

Evaluating the outcomes of the management plan is therefore not only important in its own right but also offers a means for a State Party or a site manager to fulfil the World Heritage Convention's requirements for monitoring the state of conservation of the property for the purposes of Periodic Reporting to the World Heritage Committee. Periodic Reporting is carried out at least once every six years and States Parties are requested to provide information on the state of conservation of their World Heritage properties, and their broader implementation of the World Heritage Convention. By linking the processes, monitoring becomes an integral and more meaningful aspect of the process of enhancing property management rather than being viewed as an independent exercise undertaken simply to satisfy the requirements of the Convention. More information on periodic reporting procedures is available on the UNESCO World Heritage Centre website.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/periodicreporting/>

A further area of current discussion is the potential to devise standard indicators of performance of World Heritage properties, and any such indicators recommended by the World Heritage Committee, IUCN or the other Advisory Bodies to the Convention should be incorporated in the monitoring framework.

### **Stage 10: Reviewing the plan**

Deciding whether the management activities arising from the plan have produced the desired effects, completes the planning process. Any assessment of these achievements is best judged if the initial plan includes realistic management targets and milestones.

It is therefore logical if the review cycle for a management plan corresponds with the period established by the World Heritage Committee for Periodic Reporting on the implementation of the Convention. The optimum period for a management plan cycle and hence its review should be no longer than 5-10 years after its initial publication; however, the process of review and adaptation of management should be a continuous one.

#### **PLANNING CHECKLIST FOR THE PREPARATION OF WORLD HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLANS**

- Do you have a strategy outlining the process for agreeing the scope, content, detail and timetable of the management plan?
- Is this statement in a form which others can see and share?
- Does your team have the correct combination of skills and adequate resources to do the job?
- Have you defined a lead officer responsible for managing the work?
- Have you decided which stakeholders should help prepare the plan and how and when they will be involved?
- Has the process for ratifying the plan been agreed by the relevant State and local authority/ies?
- Does everyone understand how they can participate in the process of planning and the delivery that will follow it?
- Do you have a plan and system to monitor the effectiveness of the outcomes of the management plan?
- How do you intend to keep IUCN and UNESCO informed about progress with the preparation of the management plan, its implementation and its review?

## 5. The Contents of the Plan

This section of the manual sets out guidance on the contents of a World Heritage management plan and provides more depth of discussion on some of the key points outlined in Section 4. It is suggested that a management plan for a World Heritage property should contain at least the following key statements:

- A commitment to implementing the plan to fulfil the obligations of the World Heritage Convention.
- An initial assessment and factual statement of the condition of the property's natural values, including its features of Outstanding Universal Value, and an indication of their relationship to its other characteristics.
- The issues and challenges facing the property.
- The long term ambition for the property, i.e. its vision and objectives.
- The means of delivering the ambition, i.e. the range of management policies and associated actions for the property, including the spatial expression of these policies through, for instance, zoning plans or spatial analysis of natural and cultural factors within and surrounding the property.

For every inscribed property and those still to be nominated, information for the first three of these as well as the legal status of the property and its legal framework governing its management and administration should already exist in the property's nomination dossier. The management plan needs to convert this information into a meaningful form which conveys the long term conservation and management ambitions for the property and the management strategy which will achieve them.

Completing a management plan takes time, resources and skills, and access to any one of which may be limited for an individual property. Likewise the ability of those responsible for the completion of a plan will therefore vary from region to region according to circumstances and experiences. There may be some stages where a two-stage approach may be necessary for with the development of an interim management plan first, followed by a comprehensive plan.

The minimum requirements for an interim management plan will be:

- A commitment to implementing the plan to fulfil the obligations of the World Heritage Convention.
- An initial assessment and factual statement of the condition of the property's natural values, including its features of Outstanding Universal Value, and an indication of their relationship to its other characteristics.
- A review of the issues and challenges associated with maintaining the property's values and integrity within its local geographic and socio-economic context.
- The long term ambition for the property, i.e. its vision and objectives.
- The legislative policies and measures provided or to be introduced, and the financial and human resources to be provided in order to prevent the property's integrity from being compromised prior to completion of the complete plan.

Further guidance on these minimum requirements is provided below. Within two (or a maximum of three) years of the production of the interim management plan, a comprehensive management plan should be completed and officially adopted. In addition to the points above, this should include:

- An action plan outlining how the range of management policies will be delivered.
- Information on how the effectiveness of the plan's outcomes will be assessed through a programme of monitoring and evaluation.
- A statement comparing the condition of the property to when the initial management planning process commenced. This needs to be based on the existence of reliable baseline data and subsequent monitoring in order to be meaningful.
- Provision of sustainable finance to support the implementation of the plan in the long term.

### **Commitment to implementing the plan**

Any management plan, whether interim or comprehensive, will only be effective if there is a real commitment to implement it. A management plan should contain a clear demonstration of real political and financial commitment to the property at the relevant level of decision taking. Where several layers of political

influence are important for the site, then each should be identified as being committed to the management plan. Commitment should also be able to be demonstrated from all of the key actors and stakeholders within the property. Verification of this commitment and the levels of resources that will be provided to support plan implementation is always a key element of any intervention by IUCN in relation to the evaluation and monitoring processes for World Heritage properties.

- A factual statement of the extent and condition of those unique natural values which justify the property fulfilling the World Heritage criteria of Outstanding Universal Value.
- An initial assessment of the condition of the property's natural values, including its features of Outstanding Universal Value and an indication of their relationship to its other characteristics.

### **Understanding the condition of the property's natural values**

Good research and intelligence is a critical basis of a good management plan and the value of sound baseline data cannot be overemphasised. A clear, factual statement in the management plan should explain not only the range of values and features (or attributes) which make the property of Outstanding Universal Value, but also the condition of these features - the state of conservation of the property.

For a World Heritage property there are particular considerations in relation to these values, and there is a particular need to distinguish those that are related to the Outstanding Universal Value that is the basis for the property's place on the World Heritage List, and those that relate to the other important values of the property (i.e. natural and cultural values that are not the basis of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property). The World Heritage criteria and the conditions of integrity that apply to each are the entry point to this analysis. The state of conservation of the features that convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the property should be explained and distinguished from the state of conservation of other values of the property. However it should be stressed that all important values of the property should be considered in assessing the state of conservation of the property.

Understanding the condition of the property also enables management issues and challenges affecting the property to be identified and can help simplify the process of deciding the consequences of the different policy options which may need to be considered later. The management plan should therefore aim to provide through this analysis:

- An authoritative profile of the condition of the key features that convey the values of the World Heritage property, and thereby an assessment of the integrity of the property.
- A means of helping identify the key pressures which maintain or threaten the property's values or integrity, and the means of addressing them.
- A system to inform the scope for potential management options.
- A basis for monitoring change and evaluating the effectiveness of management activities.

Although the nomination dossier will identify a property's natural values, it is less likely to provide a quantitative and qualitative assessment of their current condition or indeed of the overall condition of the whole property. Wherever possible, relevant and objective data, including trend data, should be collected to describe the extent, character, quality and condition of the features of the property. Only in this way will it be possible to judge whether the key features of the property (and thereby its values) are in favourable condition, and whether they are likely to remain so in the long term. Without this information decisions about what forms of management are required to safeguard the values of the property and its overall integrity will be difficult to decide.

Establishing the necessary quantity and quality standards is not easy and will rely on the extent and quality of existing data and local information and in particular the opinions of experts in the relevant fields. Part of the management plan process is to agree these standards because without them the benefits of any management actions arising from the plan will be difficult to judge.

In some World Heritage properties there may be little or no background information. Undertaking an initial structured baseline assessment of the state of conservation of the property therefore provides an important way of identifying gaps in knowledge and data. Obtaining correct data and information to fully understand the condition of the property may then become an objective of the initial management plan for a property. Identifying gaps can also trigger the need for more specific long term research and/or monitoring

programmes for the property and/or provide the justification for the greater coordinating of work already being undertaken by others.

Although the key natural values of a property are important, few natural World Heritage properties are completely unaffected by human influence. It is therefore also important to understand the significance of the cultural, economic and social characteristics of an area and understand how these relate to, contribute to or threaten the status of the natural values of the property.

### **The issues and challenges facing the property**

The issues, challenges and opportunities facing any World Heritage property are closely linked to its character and condition and an understanding of them is critical in developing the vision and objectives for the property. Indeed it is often the current trends and forces of change, either positive or negative, which the management plan needs to address and to respond to. The ways in which each of these affects the property will need to be considered.

Although circumstances vary from place to place, a series of recurring themes are relevant to most properties:

- The impact of other international, national or local strategies and/or proposed development/infrastructure programmes (e.g. mining, exploration for gas or oil, intensification of agriculture, road construction, or other major construction schemes) and how they support or conflict with the management principles of a World Heritage property.
- Issues associated with safeguarding the natural values of the property.
- Issues arising from stakeholder participation in the plan's production and its implementation.
- Issues reflecting the extent and shortcomings of current regimes of management and funding.
- The relationship between the resources of the property and the needs of those who rely on them for their well being or livelihood.
- The scope for change arising from the alteration to land uses or activities including tourism or visitor use.
- The promotion and marketing of the property.
- Disaster risk reduction planning.
- Invasive species.
- Climate change.

Once this scoping exercise has been completed, a clear picture should exist of the key management issues and challenges facing the property and the threats to its natural values over the next 5-10 years.

### **The long term ambition for the property: the vision and objectives**

A distinction needs to be made between the ambitions for the property which can take a long term view and the means of delivering them which need to be specified on a relatively shorter timescale. The vision and objectives set out the ambitions for the property in relation to two different timescales.

The **vision** should be a statement which:

- Creates a clear, inspirational but realistic picture of what it is hoped the property will be like in 20-30 years.
- Furthers local and national and international conservation principles and standards.
- Shows how the values and integrity of the property are to be safeguarded and improved.
- Fully respects the important values of the property and ensures their conservation.
- Functionally links the property to its surrounding landscapes or seascapes.
- Identifies how the property contributes to the improved welfare of local people, and resonates with the social, economic and environmental aspirations of the stakeholders the area, consistent with the overriding requirement for protection of its values.

For example, in general a vision could be worded as follows:

*Our World Heritage property will always be:*

- *a place where the unrivalled spectacle of wild nature is immediately obvious. The global importance of our unique combinations of ecosystems, habitats and species are respected and cared for by all who use and enjoy this unique area of outstanding universal importance.*
- *a treasured place, where everyone takes the opportunity to make it better.*
- *a place which is accessible to the widest range of people, in ways which do not spoil the things they come to see.*
- *a place where people and nature exist in harmony, where they take pride in ensuring that their heritage of traditions and land uses enhance the character of the area.*

However, it is important to also bring into the vision the specific things that make the property special and be specific. The general vision above could be written for anywhere: the challenge is to make the statements in the vision locally specific, and credible and able to be believed in by the managing authority and the stakeholders in the property.

The **objectives** of a World Heritage management plan must underpin, elaborate and convey the different aspects of the vision. They should target any issues and threats which have emerged from the scoping exercise and stakeholder engagement process, particularly those which jeopardise the achievement of the vision for the property. Objectives should be realistic, reflect available human and financial resources and be time limited. They should describe the desired outputs of management and be measurable. Including objectives in this form ensures that they have a clear focus and are challenging for both the authority responsible for the World Heritage property and its partners.

A key concept that is important in considering the vision and objectives is that there are **limits** imposed by the need to conserve the property. Two concepts are suggested as helpful in supporting the principle of conservation of the values of the World Heritage property when setting a vision and objectives, and developing the management plan as a whole: the **precautionary principle** and **limits of acceptable change**.

The precautionary principle states that: *where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.*

Natural World Heritage properties are unique and the composition and interactions of their resources and ecosystems is complex. Activities which change this balance could have a dramatic affect on the status of the property. Incorporating the precautionary principle into the conservation objectives of a management plan provides an important way of avoiding the consequences of unpredictable actions. Hence if there are reasonable scientific grounds for believing that a new process, product or action may not be safe, the objectives of the management plan should not encourage them until convincing evidence exists to prove that the risks are small and are outweighed by the benefits.

In addition, because of the special management obligations which prevail in World Heritage properties, a complementary principle should apply when developing objectives, i.e. to consider the concept of 'Limits of Acceptable Change' (LACs) (see Box 6). Limits of Acceptable Change are designed to identify the point at which changes in the resource brought about by another management objective have exceeded levels that can be tolerated. A LAC contains 'standards' that express minimum acceptable conditions. This approach is helpful because it identifies thresholds beyond which an activity or use is no longer sustainable or will compromise the integrity of the property.

#### **Box 6: Limits of Acceptable Change (LACs)**

*"...it works well in many recreational carrying capacity situations. For example, Objective 1 may be to allow access to a trail; Objective 2 may be to provide opportunities for quiet recreation. A threshold number of people on the trail has been identified as the maximum possible before quiet recreation becomes compromised (the LAC). In the case of this trail, the managers decide that Objective 2 should take precedence. If in achieving Objective 1, so many people come on to the trail that standards defining 'quiet recreation' are exceeded, Objective 2 is clearly being compromised. Since Objective 2 takes precedence, action should be taken to restrict access to the trail." (Thomas & Middleton 2003: p.37)*

A final concept useful in this discussion is that of **target-setting**. The vision and objectives may be difficult to measure. Objectives should be able to be broken down into operational goals or **targets** that can be monitored. These goals or targets should be ‘**SMART**’:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable (or Achievable)
- Relevant
- Trackable (or Time-bounded).

The plan should avoid having too many unachievable targets that bear little resemblance to reality and mean that the plan lacks credibility.

The following example explains further the difference between objectives and targets:

*In relation to the following statement in the example **vision** above:*

*“a place where the unrivalled spectacle of wild nature is immediately obvious. The global importance of our unique combinations of ecosystems, habitats and species are respected and cared for by all who use and enjoy this unique area of outstanding universal importance.”*

*An **objective** might (simplistically) be:*

*“to improve the conservation status of the key species within the property” OR  
“to eliminate the impacts of invasive plant species within the property”*

*A **target** or goal might (simplistically) be:*

*“to achieve an increase in the population of the <example species> by 5% by 2012” OR  
“to reduce by 50% the area of <example habitat> that contains invasive plant species by 2015”*

### **What considerations should the objectives reflect?**

If the status of a natural World Heritage property is to be safeguarded, then the following themes, reflecting the property’s characteristics and values, should be taken into account when formulating the objectives for a property:

- **Naturalness:** World Heritage properties designated because of their natural values by definition have to be as natural as possible and the impact of human activity minimised or at least contained to tolerable limits and zones. The level of concern regarding human activities within a natural World Heritage property will depend on its values, for instance heavy grazing in a palaeontological or geological property may not necessarily be an issue, but it could be a very serious concern in a site inscribed for its floristic diversity.
- **Distinctiveness:** An important and defining characteristic of a World Heritage property is the way in which it compares with other similar properties around the world. The management objectives of any natural property should recognise the distinctive aspects of its values.
- **Dependency and diversity:** Dependency and diversity are crucial for the survival of a species or an ecosystem and will therefore be a fundamental focus of the management outcomes of a plan to maintain any existing or characteristic relationships.
- **Beauty:** Natural beauty is a human perception and its significance is often a judgement of the relationship of features and processes in an area. The way in which these relationships are linked and hence their significance may vary from one culture to another. Objectives to maintain a property’s natural beauty must recognise the importance of these different perspectives and protect the property from the adverse affects of any activities which threaten its visual appearance and alternatively encourage those which enhance or strengthen those characteristics which create its natural beauty.

- **Integrity:** Maintaining the integrity of a World Heritage property is one of the key purposes of a management plan. Any deficiencies or weaknesses associated with the legal status of the property, conflicts between resource uses, encroachment problems or other issues which threatens to devalue the functional relationships of the property should be addressed.

The objectives should not be identified by the above themes but should be those derived from the planning process, including scoping and stakeholder processes. While these objectives can be grouped within individual themes, it is important to ensure that the objectives of one theme do not conflict with those of another. This emphasis on integration and thinking about the implications of one objective on others provides a means of checking that the integrity of the property is always being considered.

### **Provision of legal protection and adequate resources**

If an interim management plan is being prepared in advance of comprehensive plan, a key issue will be to ensure that there is the necessary protection and management in place to secure the values of the property until a comprehensive approach to its management has been developed. Thus an interim management plan should be able to demonstrate firstly how the site is being and will be protected in the short-medium term, including through the application of relevant legislation, and/or other protection policies and measures, and the provision of adequate financial and human resources to deploy these. A further key issue in relation to resources will be to demonstrate that there are adequate resources in place to prepare, complete and implement a comprehensive management plan for the property.

**The elements above set out in IUCN's opinion the minimum requirements of an interim management plan for a World Heritage property. The remainder of this manual considers key elements of a full and comprehensive management plan.**

### **Delivery of the ambition: policies and actions**

The policies and action plan set out how the vision and objectives (and any targets) for the property will be delivered. Policies should be relevant for the life cycle of the plan (5-10 years), while the action plan may only have a life of one or two years.

The purpose of the action plan is to achieve the agreed priorities for management activity and utilise the available human and financial resources efficiently, within a clear timetable, using agreed targets, outputs and milestones, against which actions can be measured. A lead organisation or champion should be identified and made responsible for pursuing each action within the action plan.

### **Key issues that a World Heritage management plan should address**

**The area that the plan should cover:** The geographical scope of a management plan normally coincides with the boundaries of the World Heritage property and where necessary includes and makes provision for the management of any buffer zone.

The area of the plan should therefore be that necessary to maintain the ecological integrity and continuity of the species and habitats of the World Heritage property and enable its ecosystems to function effectively (see Box 7).

Activities outside the boundaries of a property may influence the property and its conservation status. Whilst protecting the interests of the World Heritage property, a management plan should also connect a property to its surroundings so that it becomes an integral part of its regional setting and associated local planning and land-use systems. The policies in a management plan should try to ensure that the property does not become an environmental island but functions as a hub,

#### **Box 7: Boundaries for effective protection**

*"...boundaries should reflect the spatial requirements of habitats, species, processes or phenomena that provide the basis for their inscription on the World Heritage List. The boundaries should include sufficient areas immediately adjacent to the area of outstanding universal value in order to protect the property's heritage values from direct effect of human encroachments and impacts of resource use outside of the nominated area."*

*(Operational Guidelines: paragraph 101)*

interacting with the environmental and social circumstances that surround it and connecting to other protected areas through buffer zones, corridors and other landscape level conservation measures. The management plan should therefore identify how the property relates and adds value to its surroundings and how it can share its own environmental and social benefits beyond its boundaries. It may be appropriate to provide a plan which considers not only the management of the World Heritage property but also includes any buffer zone or other areas that are linked to it and critical for its management.

Extending the scope of the plan will however add to the stakeholders who need to be involved in its preparation. A sensible balance therefore needs to be struck between geographical scope and practicability.

**Integration with other designations:** Many World Heritage properties coincide with the coverage of other designations such as Biosphere Reserves, Ramsar sites, Natura 2000 sites etc. Each designation has its own set of regulations, policy constraints and opportunities all of which will need to be accounted for when the objectives and policies of the plan are developed. A key principle is to write one integrated plan for the property, taking account all of the factors relevant to its different designations and values.

**Zoning:** Management zoning provides a way of applying a variety of different management objectives or practices in an organised manner in the same area. Zoning also provides a practical means of establishing and applying the concept of the limits of acceptable change and can often be an important part of a World Heritage management plan. The preferred type of zoning plan is one that indicates specific conservation and use zones. The interrelationship of different zones in managing the property should be specified and it is also important to recognize that boundaries between zones will be permeable.

Internal management zones within a World Heritage property can be used to

- Protect critical or representative species, ecosystems and ecological process which give a property its outstanding universal values.
- Separate conflicting human activities.
- Protect the natural values of the property whilst allowing certain human use or qualified management activities.
- Direct or promote public use and certain land use activities.

Although internal zoning provides a way of managing the property, care is needed to ensure that management policies of each zone fit together in a manner that will maintain the overall integrity of the property. Many World Heritage properties have a defined buffer zone in addition to the inscribed property. The aim of the policies within this area should be to protect the property from activities which will threaten its status or integrity. When defining the policies to be adopted within any buffer and internal zones of the property it is therefore useful to decide whether they:

- Deliver the different management requirements of the separate zones and at the same time complement the overall management aims of the property.
- Acknowledge and reflect the needs of local stakeholders.
- Provide a good way of prioritising the use of resources.
- Protect vulnerable areas from harmful activities.
- Clarify the priorities for managing the natural values of the property.

### **Management plans for transboundary and serial properties**

A number of transboundary World Heritage properties share national boundaries, adjoin other protected areas across boundaries, or in the case of serial properties are made up of a number of separate areas which are geographically separated. Coordinated planning and management of these properties is crucial if their overall integrity is not to be lost.

Transboundary and serial natural properties therefore pose particular management challenges. In both, the planning approach must be a truly joint effort which ensures that a

#### **Box 8: Transboundary Properties**

*"It is highly recommended that the States Parties concerned establish a joint management committee or similar body to oversee the management of the whole of a transboundary property."*

*(Operational Guidelines: paragraph 135)*

framework for consistent and complementary management exists for the whole property, irrespective of whether its “parts” are in different countries or the different parts are in the same country (see Boxes 8 and 9).

When preparing management plans for transboundary properties, the aim should be to have one management plan for the whole natural World Heritage property. For serial properties the geographic relationship of the constituent parts will dictate whether it is better to have one overarching plan for all the individual areas or alternatively a high level (political/institutional) strategic framework for the whole area and a series of individual action-orientated plans for each of the individual parts of the property.

**Box 9: Serial Properties**

*“In the case of serial properties, a management system or mechanisms for ensuring the co-ordinated management of the separate components are essential ...”*

*(Operational Guidelines: paragraph 114)*

Whatever the circumstances, those factors which are crucial for the preparation of a sound plan include:

- Mechanisms to enable political negotiations and institutional coordination to take place easily.
- A single planning team for the composite area.
- A joint advisory group with clear terms of reference to advice decision and policy makers.
- Good coordination to enable the team members to share information, knowledge, experiences and resources.
- Good communication between the managers and the stakeholders of each part of the property.
- Agreed arrangements for approving the plan which recognise the differences between the legal and institutional regimes in each of the constituent territories / areas.
- A joint understanding of the common research needs.
- A common approach to the definition and use of zones and zonation including buffer zones.
- A timetable for the production of the plan which recognises the different capabilities of each area.
- Bilateral political protocols and collaborative management agreements which enable practical action to be taken quickly and effectively.

Where no such joint understanding and commitment to a common set of management objectives exist, there will be no direction for the management and no co ordination effort in each of the separate areas and it is less likely that the integrity and natural values of the property will be safeguarded in the long-term as required by the World Heritage Convention.

### Monitoring and evaluation

- ***If you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure.***
- ***If you have no measure of success, you can't learn from it.***
- ***If you can't recognise lack of success you can't correct it.***
- ***If you can't demonstrate success, it is more difficult to win public support.***

Monitoring is crucial in measuring the effective implementation of a World Heritage management plan and the means of updating and refining it. Each monitoring and evaluation cycle should examine and build on the successes or weaknesses of the outcomes of the previous plan. Monitoring the implementation of a World Heritage plan should also be linked to the different procedures of the World Heritage Committee and take account of any reactive monitoring reports that have been considered by the Committee, decisions taken by the Committee on the state of conservation of the property. Monitoring should also be designed to contribute to periodic reporting processes, as noted in the earlier discussion above.

Distinctions need to be made however between:

- Monitoring: The process of collecting data to describe the condition of the property and when collected over time, change.
- Indicators: Which are the elements of data that are collected as part of a monitoring programme to measure change.
- Evaluation: The consideration and use of the data to assess the effectiveness of the plan and how it had delivered its objectives.

A plan should include a range of indicators which when monitored regularly will show how the status of the property's natural values are changing. The process of evaluation will then highlight whether the property is improving or not, as a result of the implementation of the policies and activities proposed by the management plan.

To monitor the success of the plan for a World Heritage property, four questions need to be answered

- What aspects of the plan should be monitored?
- What types of indicators should be established?
- How many indicators should be monitored?
- How should they be monitored (the methodologies to be used)?

Monitoring should focus on the delivery of the action plan and the achievement of the objectives. In the case of an action plan, the emphasis should be on the measurement of **outputs or activities**, so that the extent to which the actions and targets set in the action plan have been achieved becomes clear. In the case of monitoring objectives, the emphasis should be on monitoring **outcomes – the results of the outputs and activities**. Monitoring however needs to be selective to avoid overload. Similarly indicators need to be selected with care. The emphasis should be on the use of reliable indicators which are specific to the values of the property and reflect their quality as well as their quantity.

In the context of the *Enhancing our Heritage* project, WCPA and UNESCO have undertaken a significant amount of work to consider how the effectiveness of the management of World Heritage properties should be evaluated, and the results of this work have been published as a toolkit within the UNESCO World Heritage Papers Series.<sup>12</sup> Guidance on monitoring and evaluating management effectiveness of protected areas is also provided in Volume 14 of the IUCN WCPA Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series<sup>13</sup>, which sets out a framework for evaluating management effectiveness of protected areas.

It should be noted that there are special procedures for monitoring in relation to World Heritage properties that are included on the List of World Heritage in Danger; however, these are not discussed in this manual.

### **Other important issues that a World Heritage management plan should address**

Specific guidance could be provided in a number of areas and further editions of this manual, or related titles, will expand on different areas. Three key areas are highlighted where the content of World Heritage management plan should pay particular attention:

- Financial and Business Planning;
- Planning for Visitors; and
- Disaster Risk Reduction.

### **Financial and business planning**

Lack of attention to financial and business planning can be a key weakness in protected area planning, and this is a particularly important consideration in World Heritage management plans. Guidance is available in Volume 13 of the IUCN WCPA Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series<sup>14</sup>, and in a recently published business planning toolkit prepared by UNESCO and the Shell Foundation.<sup>15</sup>

### **Planning for visitors**

As noted above, tourism and visitor management are a particularly important part of the work of managing World Heritage property, and tourism can be a particular aspiration and expectation of some stakeholders in the property, whilst for others it can represent a key threat. IUCN and the World Heritage Centre are working

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<sup>12</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/series/23/>

<sup>13</sup> Hockings, M.; Stolton, S. & N. Dudley (2006): Evaluating Effectiveness: A Framework for Assessing Management Effectiveness of Protected Areas. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 14. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.

<sup>14</sup> Emerton, L.; Bishop, J. & L. Thomas (2006): Sustainable Financing of Protected Areas: A Global Review of Challenges and Options. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 13. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.

<sup>15</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001599/159997e.pdf>

together on the development of principles and standards for the management of tourism at World Heritage properties which should be developed by 2010. In the meantime guidance on the management of tourism at World Heritage properties is provided in the first volume of the UNESCO World Heritage Papers Series.<sup>16</sup>

A particular issue where more attention is needed is how properties deliver a high quality of visitor experience and presentation and educational use of World Heritage properties, whilst ensuring the conservation and protection of the values of the property. This is also an area where further work is likely to be developed in the years following the publication of this manual. A specific task in a World Heritage management plan should be to consider the presentation of the property and all of the different aspects of the regulation and management of visitation, visitor use, access, education, interpretation and visitor services that should be provided within the property. A further key issue is the relationship between the property and tourism industry stakeholders who benefit from its World Heritage Status. The World Heritage Emblem is a key device that is available for use by World Heritage properties to support quality and more work is required to define how it can be used as a signal of quality within World Heritage properties. The use of the emblem is introduced on the UNESCO website<sup>17</sup> and property management plans should make provision to ensure that the logo is used in positive ways that reflect the rules and guidelines set for the deployment of the Emblem (see Box 10).

### Disaster risk reduction

Particular attention should be paid to the management of risk in World Heritage properties, and to devise strategies to foresee and plan for disasters, reduce the risk of them happening and plan responses in the event of there occurring. An example of importance to many natural World Heritage properties is the management of invasive species and advice on this is included in Box 11, both to give direct guidance on this issue but also illustrate some of the principles of preparedness that should be applied to other areas of risk for example: natural disasters, disease, fire, and accidents to visitors.

More detailed guidance on disaster risk reduction is under preparation separately in this series of resource manuals on and will be available from 2009 via the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

### Reviewing the plan

A clear statement should be included in the management plan to indicate how the plan will be reviewed and the fact that preparing it is an iterative and ongoing process rather than fixed and a one off exercise.

### What should the final plan look like?

The presentation, style and content of a management plan can have a significant influence on how it is received and understood by its users. Although there is no set format for its style, each plan should reflect its own particular need and circumstances. Plans do not need to be long complex document but as short as possible without losing their coherence, quality and usefulness.

#### Box 10: The World Heritage emblem



*The World Heritage emblem represents the interdependence of the world's natural and cultural diversity. It is used to identify properties protected by the World Heritage Convention and inscribed on the official World Heritage List, and represents the universal values for which the Convention stands.*

*Its use is strictly regulated and determined by the World Heritage Committee, with guidelines for its use defined in Annex 3 of the Operational Guidelines. It is protected under the international World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) act. Any other use is forbidden without express written permission on the part of the World Heritage Committee.*

See: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/emblem/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/series/1/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/emblem/>

**Box 11: Biological invasions in World Heritage properties**

*Biological Invasions are caused by invasive species which are organisms (animals, plants and micro-organisms) that have been introduced to a new ecosystem and then have spread causing damage to biodiversity and/or human development. Most World Heritage properties have introduced (alien or exotic) species in their ecosystems due to the accidental introduction of organisms through earthworks, road building, materials imported for infrastructure development, visitor movement and wind and water movement from areas outside the property. Sometimes there are deliberate introductions of species thought to enhance the property or to add to the diversity around visitor infrastructure or management offices and accommodation. Some of these introduced species may survive and establish breeding populations and a few of those may spread and become invasive. It is incumbent upon World Heritage property Managers to monitor for alien species introductions that may become invasive and to take action to eradicate or contain any that have started invasions – before serious damage to the integrity of a property takes place. If an invasion is already established, there are procedures available to reduce or manage both the area of invasion and the damage that it may have caused. In some cases it may be possible to restore affected ecosystems to their original condition or at least to a state that is acceptable to the objectives of the World Heritage property.*

*The most common alien invasions are by introduced plants that enter a World Heritage property unnoticed and then establish, spread and begin to invade. Such infestations can result in significant changes, usually deleterious alterations, to native vegetation and sometimes also to habitats, shelter, food and resting places of animals. Occasionally both invading plants and animals can bring their “own” parasites and pathogens with them that can affect native biodiversity by bringing disease in addition to the competition, predation and general destruction of biological invasions. Monitoring of alien organisms in a World Heritage property and then observation and knowledge of potentially invasive species or types can allow recognition of potential invasions. Active management options are then available to curtail or remove an invasion when it is new or to manage and reduce an invasion once established.*

*Websites with further information:*

*<http://www.gisp.org/>*

*<http://www.issg.org/>*

It may be helpful to divide the plan into two parts with the programme of work (action plan) separated out as a working document so that it can be easily reviewed and updated at agreed intervals. Likewise a glossy handbook summarising the vision for the World Heritage site along with the key management objectives and activities may be a useful way of promoting the messages of the plan and approach being adopted to manage the property.

For all properties, and particularly very large ones, transboundary or serial properties, care must be taken to ensure that the final format of the plan is;

- Clear, concise and easy to understand.
- Strategic and integrates all the relevant management themes.
- A complete entity.
- Focused and effective but retains flexibility.
- Quantifies the resources needed to ensure meaningful implementation and the realistic sources for them.
- Motivates people and is suitable for a wide range of readers.

Although many plans have traditionally been produced in a printed format, increasingly people expect to view them electronically as they offer greater flexibility, and better access by the public. Where stakeholders have web access, the internet can enable different sections of the plan to be viewed independently as well as providing a means of linking additional data to different parts of the text to add clarity or add further explanation where necessary. However non-web based access options should always be provided as well.

### **CHECKLIST FOR PREPARING WORLD HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLANS**

- Does the management plan cover the correct area?
- Is it clear who the plan is aimed at?
- Is it clear who should take part in its preparation and how?
- Does the information about the property exist that is required to understand the key issues?
- Does the plan focus on the key issues and conservation challenges and solve local problems?
- Has involvement of all stakeholders been achieved and proper consultation been carried out?
- Does the plan address all international, national and other legal obligations?
- Have you established a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the property?
- Does the plan seek to effectively protect the values for which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List?
- Does the plan speak to all of the relevant values of the property, whether the basis of World Heritage listing or not?
- Does the plan address the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines* and take account of decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee regarding the property?
- Does the plan consider the presentation of the property in line with best practice for visitor management and the use of the World Heritage Emblem?
- Does the plan link with the Periodic Reporting Process for World Heritage properties?
- Are the plan's principles recognised in other (legal) documents affecting the area?
- Does the plan contain all the elements to make good management decisions?
- Are the strategic and operational elements clearly distinguished?
- Is the reason for using different management zones clear?
- Is the process for formally approving the plan clear?
- Is the plan flexible enough to respond to change?
- Is the presentation of the plan appealing?
- Finally: Are you confident that the management plan will be accepted and implemented by all those concerned with the property?**

## 6. References

**Key sources of further advice on management of World Heritage properties and protected areas are:**

IUCN WCPA Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series:  
[http://cms.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa\\_resources/wcpa\\_bpg/index.cfm](http://cms.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_resources/wcpa_bpg/index.cfm)

UNESCO World Heritage Paper Series:  
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/series/>

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