

Project 5.4. Tracking Trends in Heritage Conservation

Brainstorm meeting 13-14 February 2018

CONCEPT NOTE

Tracking Trends is a new ICCROM project that aims to gather data on sector capacity, knowledge production, and emerging issues of concern to support data informed policies for heritage conservation and provide evidence of its capacity to contribute to sustainable development. This meeting is a first exploratory brainstorm on the topic of the strategic use of data for heritage conservation, to help design the scope and focus of a two-year pilot project (2018-19).

Background

This project aims to address the current lack of data overview concerning cultural heritage and its conservation, highlighted at the ICCROM XXX General Assembly in November 2017, in order to monitor key sector trends and provide evidence of the contribution made to society through conserving heritage.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development comprises 17 inherently interlinked economic, social and environmental development goals, with 169 targets and 232 indicators. Adopted by governments and the UN as the guiding framework for sustainable development in the world today, it sets out common humanitarian and ethical aspirations for well-being and planetary sustainability. As such all sectors, in particular those supported through public funds, have a responsibility to align with this framework. Within the Agenda 2030 framework, cultural heritage conservation receives specific mention within Goal 11 (*Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*), Target 11.4 (*Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage*).

The inclusion of cultural heritage conservation within the Agenda 2030 is an important step towards recognising the role heritage plays in promoting sustainable societies, but the justification for this needs strengthening. The supporting text to Goal 11 contains little reference to cultural heritage, and the current wording of target 11.4 ('strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage') is quite brief. Moreover, the associated indicator for the target is restricted to a consideration of total expenditure per capita.¹ Accordingly, it would be useful to further articulate target 11.4 to clarify its connection to Goal 11, and to construct a framework of parameters that are essential for its achievement as a basis for the development of additional indicators to help monitor and guide progress towards the target.

UNESCO has highlighted the contribution of cultural heritage to Goal 11 (and others) in its *Culture for Sustainable Urban Development Report*. However, the links between cultural heritage and well-being are complex and indirect, and evidencing these in ways that are measurable, reproducible and feasible is extremely difficult. In this regard, the UNESCO *Culture for Development Indicators* (CDIS) framework is a notable contribution within which cultural heritage is present as a sub-dimension. Nevertheless, the current lack of data and indicators for cultural heritage remains a challenge.

¹ The full text of the indicator 11.4.1 is as follows: *Total expenditure (public and private) per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by type of heritage (cultural, natural, mixed and World Heritage Centre designation), level of government (national, regional and local/municipal), type of expenditure (operating expenditure/investment) and type of private funding (donations in kind, private non-profit sector and sponsorship)*. See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11>

In addition to evidencing societal outcomes, data is also needed to underpin conservation decision making. At present, the heritage conservation sector is both data rich and data poor. The production of heritage data is substantial, but a consolidated data overview giving information regarding current needs, capacities and arising challenges is lacking. This presents an impediment to effective capacity building, and if such data were available, it could substantially facilitate conservation policy and planning. In this regard, the unprecedented changes witnessed in recent years in the availability of digital data and tools raise interesting questions regarding how the heritage sector could make better use of these new possibilities to answer some of these strategic questions.

Launched in 2018 as a two-year pilot, the Tracking Trends project is a preliminary step towards addressing this data gap, through targeted collection of a select number of key parameters. The project draws upon work undertaken by ICCROM over the past biennium to trace current trends in heritage research and training. If successful, a long-term goal is to provide baseline data and indicators for countries and regions, combined with in-depth analysis to identify trends and emerging issues to support data-informed conservation strategies for heritage throughout the world.

Objectives

- 1 Identify key areas of focus for the pilot study
- 2 Set priorities in terms of types of data to collect
- 3 Identify partnerships for the project
- 4 Identify fundraising opportunities

Topics

- 5 Strategic uses of data to inform cultural heritage conservation
- 6 Cultural heritage and sustainable development
- 7 Approaches to utilising diverse digital resources
- 8 Recent experiences from the field in the collection and use of cultural heritage data
- 9 Identification of priority parameters for focus
- 10 Recommendations

Participants

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