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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Forty-third session

**Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan
30 June – 10 July 2019**

**Item 11 of the Provisional Agenda: Operational Guidelines and Policy
Compendium**

11B. Policy Compendium

SUMMARY

This document is presented pursuant to Decision **42 COM 11** and contains information on the work of the Policy Compendium Working Group, the *Policy Compendium* and the new online tool.

Draft Decision: *43 COM 11B*, **see point IV**

I. BACKGROUND

1. Further to a sequence of decisions of the World Heritage Committee since 2011 (Decision **35 COM 12B**, Decision **37 COM 13**, Decision **40 COM 12**), the development of a consolidated source of World Heritage policies was undertaken. The initial denomination (title) of this tool was proposed as "Policy Guidelines", which was later changed to "Policy Compendium", in order to avoid confusion between the new tool and the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

2. The development of the *Policy Compendium* was made possible thanks to the financial support of the Australian government. The work started with a scoping study the outcomes of which were presented to the Committee at its 40th session. Following the recommendations of the study, the Committee decided, with decision **40 COM 12**, to apply a two-phase approach to the development of the *Compendium*. A gender- and geographically-balanced working group of natural and cultural heritage experts was established to provide guidance and advice for the development of the tool.

3. The extensive research work done by the World Heritage Centre during the first phase, with the help of a consultant, the in-depth discussions of the Expert Group and the inclusive consultation survey with States Parties and other stakeholders of the *Convention* led to the development of the first draft *Policy Compendium* which was presented for examination to the World Heritage Committee during its 42nd session.

4. With Decision **42 COM 11**, the Committee welcomed the draft *Compendium* and requested to continue the work of Phase 2. Noting the recommendation of the Expert group for the development of an online tool, which was endorsed by an overwhelming majority of respondents to the consultation survey, the Committee requested the World Heritage Centre to continue to explore the feasibility of this option and called upon States Parties to provide extra-budgetary funds to finance this initiative.

5. Further to Decision **42 COM 11**, the World Heritage Centre proceeded to implement Phase 2, focusing on the refinement and finalisation of the *Policy Compendium*, and on the creation of a new online tool for the presentation of this document, including through resource mobilisation for this purpose.

II. PART 1. FINALISATION OF THE POLICY COMPENDIUM

6. After the approval of the draft *Policy Compendium* by the World Heritage Committee (Decision **42 COM 11**), the World Heritage Centre proceeded with Phase 2, starting with identification and revision of different aspects of the document, to prepare it for further review by the Expert Working Group.

7. The refining work on the *Policy Compendium* comprised a full review of the document for consistency and coherence. It focused on ensuring the homogeneity of the different chapters, identifying more adequate locations for some paragraphs, relocating and restructuring some subcategories and avoiding repetitive information. The review also included a detailed work to avoid references to specific properties and operational information, and to ensure references to general policies.

8. During the consistency review, some gaps were identified and some additions were incorporated to the document. Among these were the inclusion of a specific subchapter on the role of the World Heritage Committee, the integration of newly adopted policies and the enhancement of some parts, such as synergies with other Conventions, national level policies, threats to heritage, civil society, among others. A further research on case law was also made. As a result, some policies concerning

nomination of properties to the World Heritage List, management and monitoring were included in the *Compendium*.

9. A specific effort was made to ensure links between the *Policy Compendium* and the already existing *World Heritage Convention* tools and processes were made, taking special care of the possible bridges and related information between the policies on factors affecting the properties in the *Compendium*, the Periodic Reporting exercise and the State of Conservation database.

10. In accordance with the specific request made by the Committee to make the document easily understandable for a broad target audience through adding introductory paragraphs to each major topic (Decision **42 COM 11)**, opening presentations were also drafted.

11. The Third Meeting of the Experts Working Group took place in Paris from 11 to 13 December 2018 and focused on detailed review of the *Compendium*, including the refining work which had been done in advance by the Centre. The collaborative spirit and the brainstorming sessions allowed to clarify and agree on a number of key questions, including the methodological approach and other aspects, despite the limited time frame of the meeting. In addition, a chapter-by-chapter review of the *Compendium* content was undertaken and revisions to the introductory texts were also proposed.

12. Following the request of the Committee to explore possible gaps where policy may need to be developed or refined (Decision **42 COM 11**), the experts discussed and identified some areas where further development of policies may be desirable. The identified areas include policies around tourism, youth, gender, reconstruction and recovery, regional cooperation and communication.

13. The Working Group discussed also the need of future additions of newly adopted policies, without prejudice to other considerations in the coming years. The Group reaffirmed that the *Compendium* must be understood as a living document. In this sense, it should be periodically updated to incorporate new policy-related Committee decisions or other relevant documents and sources, such as the Climate Change Policy which is in the process of being updated and will be examined by the Committee at one of its next sessions. It is important to note as well that even after the very extensive analysis and research done by the experts, there may still be other relevant decisions that may have been omitted inadvertently and that could be identified in the future. Finally, there are also some limitations of the methodology, especially the one applied to case law which, except for very specific cases, requires three similar decisions to be able to consider it as a policy. This implies that some issues could not be integrated in the current stage of the work but may need to be done in the following years, if relevant decisions have been meanwhile adopted by the Committee.

14. The Expert Group also agreed that related policy documents of UNESCO, the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and agencies, should be annexed to the *Policy Compendium*, as related sources of information.

15. The draft *Policy Compendium* was finalized by the end of March 2019, after a final online review by the experts. The next step was its integration into the online tool, explained in the part 2.

II. PART 2. CREATION OF THE ONLINE TOOL

Draft outline of the online tool

16. The development of an online tool, largely supported by all stakeholders, was a task as equally challenging as the development of the *Policy Compendium* itself. On the one side, the challenges included the nature of work, and on the other side, ensuring the necessary extra-budgetary funds needed to contract a professional web/data-base developer.

17. The World Heritage Centre carried out an extensive research on similar tools and put together a full feasibility study, including information about the requirements for this specific tool.

18. While actively looking for a donor who could contribute funds for the full implementation of the Committee decision, in the autumn of 2018, the World Heritage Centre used some seed money to contract a web developer company with experience in the field, to propose a draft outline structure for review and discussion by the Expert Working Group.

19. During the Expert Working Group meeting in December 2018, the experts provided useful inputs and formulated requirements that were to be taken into account in the further development of the tool. These focused on the usability and functions, with a focus on the search function. A brainstorming on possible keywords and related terms was also done, in order to identify possible fields of interest to be searched by future users.
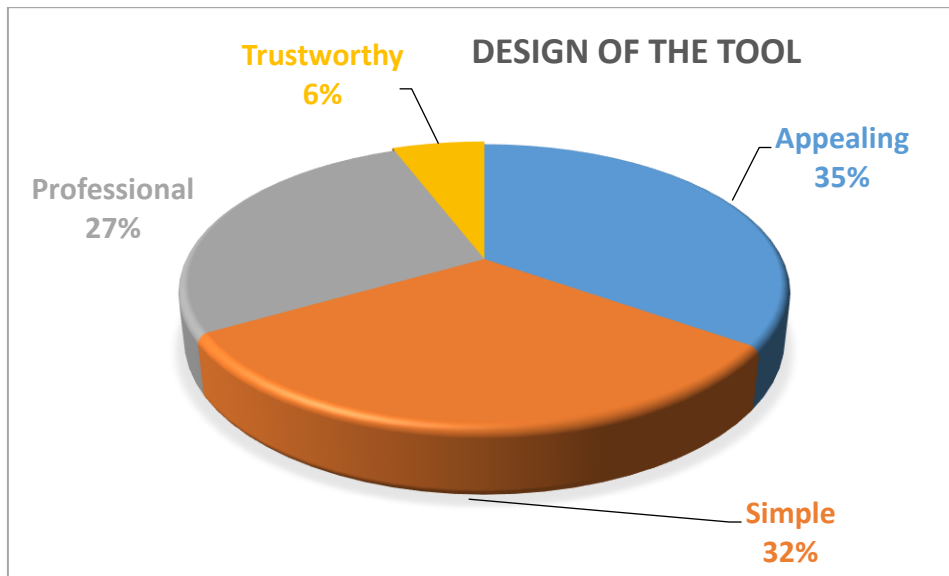
Policy Compendium Online Tool

20. Thanks to the timely financial support of the Government of the Republic of Korea, the World Heritage Centre managed to continue the work on the development of the online tool. The Centre developed an adequate wireframe for the online tool, incorporating all the recommendations and requests from the Experts Working Group and worked in very close collaboration with the web developer company which had worked on the first outline.

21. Currently, the *World Heritage Policy Compendium Online Tool* is operational and accessible at the following link within the World Heritage Centre website, http://whc.unesco.org/en/compendium/.

22. The *Policy Compendium Online Tool* is composed of a Homepage, which gives access to the different parts of the site, divided into Themes, Policy Sources, Related Documents and About.

23. The Homepage focuses on presenting the structure of the *Policy Compendium*, through a simple visual identification by colors, together with the possibility to navigate through the Search Bar.

24. The online tool provides all the information contained in the *Compendium* through different search mechanisms. The *Compendium* can be downloaded in its entirety (Full Compendium), can be consulted by topics (General Policies and 5 C's) and by doing specific searches through its search engine. An advanced search allowing to find results based on threats, themes and keywords, among others, has been set up.

25. The results are prioritised according to the logic of the *Policy Compendium* structure, including the hierarchy of policy sources endorsed by the Committee through the document approved with Decision **42 COM 11**. The specific results of a search can be also downloaded from the website, in order to provide the users with a clear set of policies on the item of their interest.

User tests and inclusive online consultations

26. Following Decision **42 COM 11**, which had requested that an inclusive consultation be undertaken, the World Heritage Centre organised in April and May 2019 online consultations with a wide range of stakeholders as well as guided users tests. These allowed the World Heritage Centre to get feedback from the main target audiences of the tool with regard to functions, practicality, user-friendliness, etc., and to introduce changes to the tool, where such a need was identified.

27. The guided tests in Paris saw 16 participants; staff members of the World Heritage Centre and of other Culture Conventions. For all of them, that was the first time they could see and navigate through the *Policy Compendium Online Tool*. During the session, they followed a series of different guided exercises and reacted to these with their feedback through a written questionnaire and by sharing their ideas in the room with colleagues.

28. The realisation of these assisted tests was very useful to identifying the way in which users browse through the online tool, where they found the greatest difficulties or what kind of tools they preferred in carrying out their searches. The behaviour of the users in their navigation, as well as the debates and comments that took place during the session in Paris, were a useful asset both for the web developers in charge of the development of the web, and for the World Heritage Centre, with a view to identify the successes of the online tool and also its areas of improvement.

29. In parallel, online tests were opened for different groups of stakeholders, including: the members of the Expert Working Group, the Advisory Bodies, volunteer representatives of States Parties; volunteer civil society organizations; and volunteer Category 2 Centres in the field of World Heritage. The online tests were launched in two separate sessions during May, in order to allow more people to participate.

30. 17 States Parties volunteered to participate in the remote testing phase. All the regions were represented in the testing phase, with at least one country per region participating. Category 2 Centres and civil society associations also participated, together with the experts in the Working Group, including participants from the Advisory Bodies. 24 completely filled surveys have been received, and 6 experts from the provided comments.
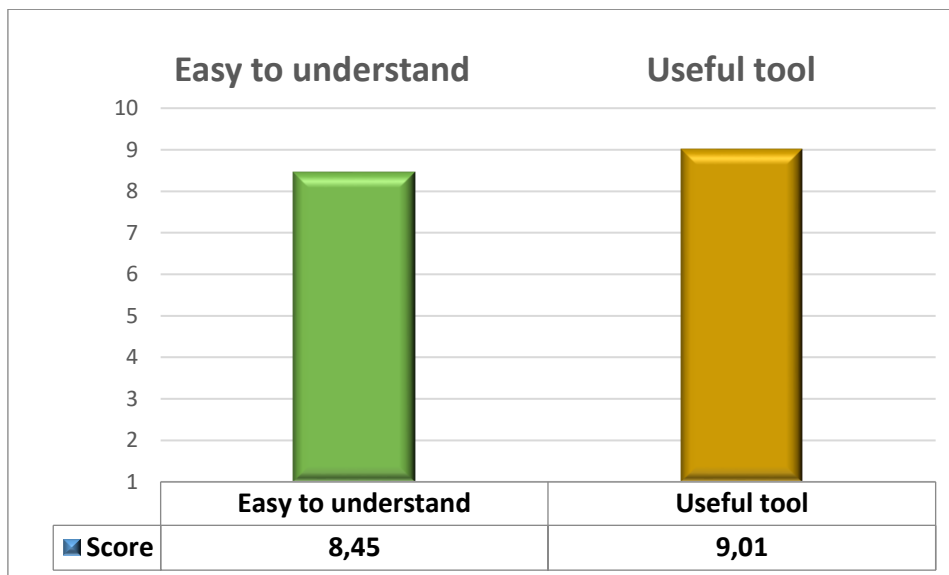
Feedback from stakeholders

31. The majority of the participants expressed a positive reaction to the design of the tool. It was mainly considered as simple, appealing and professional:

DESIGN OF THE TOOL

Trustworthy 6%
Professional 27%
Appealing 35%
Simple 32%

Appreciation of the design of the online tool (in percentage)

32. The participants considered that the tool was easy to understand and useful and gave high ratings to the online *Policy Compendium*:

	Easy to understand	Useful tool
Score	8,45	9,01

Rating given by participants on a level between 1 (Do not agree) and 10 (Completely agree)

33. In the transition periods between the two testing sessions, the recommendations of the participants were compiled and some changes and improvements were made, resulting in an increased number of positive comments and ratings given by the participants of the last session.

34. The feedback from the participants through comments in the questionnaires shows that the online tool is intuitive and easy to navigate. Some recommendations were also provided by participants in order to improve the functions. The suggested improvements were mainly oriented toward making the search tools more visible and improve their functionality and to have a clearer identification of the general themes and the structure of the *Compendium* throughout the navigation process. Some other reflections concerned the design and consistency with the World Heritage Centre website, links to other *World Heritage Convention* tools, as well as the readability of some parts.

35. Ultimately, the World Heritage Centre received a very positive reaction from the participants in the online consultation and the guided test on the design and clarity of the tool, while identifying some areas for improvement. The ratings given by participants show that all of them considered the online tool as very useful for their work.

III. MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE STEPS

36. The *Policy Compendium*, presented to the Committee in two formats - a Word document and an online tool, is the final result of the work of the Secretariat and the Expert Working Group through the two phases of the elaboration of the *Policy Compendium*. Nonetheless, as discussed by the Expert Working Group and explained previously in the Compendium, the document should continue to exist as a "living document" as it will need to be completed with new policies that may be adopted in the future through relevant decisions by the Committee, resolutions of the General Assembly, etc. The updating of this information on World Heritage policies will therefore be necessary.

37. The task of integrating new policies and policy-related information (such as sources, related topics, etc.) into the *Policy Compendium* and the online tool, further to respective decisions and resolutions, could be entrusted to the World Heritage Centre, as is the case e.g. with regard to the updating of the current database of World Heritage properties further to relevant decisions related to changing names and boundaries of properties.

38. Concerning the *Policy Compendium Online Tool*, the results of the inclusive consultations show that it is considered a useful tool by the stakeholders, with an appealing, simple and professional design. In general, participants consider that it is user-friendly and easy to navigate.

39. The World Heritage Centre, together with web developers, will continue to work on the issues identified and the recommendations to make it more intuitive and clear, as well as to improve the search tools and engines. The links with other *World Heritage Convention* tools will be also improved. Undoubtedly, some refinement of the features and functionalities of the online tool will still be needed and it could be done gradually, based on users' feedback, especially during the initial period of use.

IV. DRAFT DECISION

***Draft Decision**: 43 COM 11B*

The World Heritage Committee,

1.   *Having examined Document WHC/19/43.COM/11B,*

2.   *Recalling Decisions **35 COM 12B**, **37 COM 13**, **39 COM 12**, **40 COM 12** and **42 COM 11** adopted at its 35th (UNESCO, 2011), 37th (Phnom Penh, 2013), 39th (Bonn, 2015), 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) and 42nd (Manama, 2018) sessions respectively;*

3.   *Thanks the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Korea for their commitment and financial contribution in view of the development of the World Heritage Policy Compendium funded by Australia and the Policy Compendium Online Tool, funded by the Republic of Korea;*

4.   *Commends the Expert Working Group and the World Heritage Centre for their commitment and efforts in improving the first draft and finalizing the World Heritage Policy Compendium;*

5.   *Also commends the World Heritage Centre for successfully developing a user-friendly and easy accessible World Heritage Policy Compendium Online Tool and for successfully carrying out inclusive consultations with World Heritage stakeholders and welcomes the constructive positive feedback received;*

6.   *Endorses the World Heritage Policy Compendium and requests the World Heritage Centre to keep it regularly updated.*