

“Historic Cities in Development: Keys for Understanding and Action”. A *Compilation of Case Studies* on the Conservation and Management of Historic Cities.

Reconciling Heritage Conservation and Urban Development

The **Organization of World Heritage Cities** (OWHC) holds a specific responsibility for the promotion and implementation of the World Heritage Convention in its Member Cities.

Given this responsibility and based on the objectives set out in the Strategic Development Plan adopted in Kazan in 2007, the Board of Directors of the OWHC, at its Quebec City session in July 2008, initiated a project on the collection of case studies on conservation and management in historic cities called “**Historic Cities in Development: Keys for Understanding and Acting**”.

Each Member City has been invited to contribute by presenting one (or several) urban project(s) so as to understand in detail and describe in a hands-on manner the necessary processes and procedures and, by doing so, instigate a new shared understanding and respect with the respect for heritage, and in particular World Heritage, as part of urban development projects. **The project goes beyond the exchange of know-how in conservation – it aims at introducing a more heritage-centered urban development approach.**

Strong Partnerships to Carry out the Project

The project is headed by the OWHC and implemented by a Steering Committee coordinated by the City of Lyon (member of the OWHC) and the General Secretariat of the OWHC in collaboration with:

- UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre, as part of its financial and technical support through the Convention France-UNESCO and the Netherlands’ Funds-in-Trust,
- the Getty Conservation Institute,
- the Council of Europe,
- ICOMOS International.

These institutions, having recognized the complex challenges of urban heritage conservation and the need for a new understanding of the role of heritage in cities, have placed these concerns at the heart of their programmes.

The **OWHC** aims to create a dynamic within the network of its member cities, by collecting their experiences, capitalizing on know-how, consolidating heritage enhancement, constructing city-to-city partnerships, and thus contributing to the global debate on urban heritage management and sustainable development. The

long term goal is to facilitate the development of concrete and operational projects on the ground. This collection of case studies aims to enhance the awareness and understanding of decision-makers, elected officials and practitioners so that they include culture and heritage in all their urban development strategies.

As the initiator of this project, the **City of Lyon** benefitted from its active OWHC membership to mobilize a broad partnership. Its commitment is founded on its sense of responsibility and solidarity towards the international community to share its know-how of managing a historic city. The City of Lyon thus contributes to the world-wide debate about sustainable cities, today, where more than half of the world's inhabitants are living in urban environments.

UNESCO's World Heritage Centre supports this initiative as part of its mandate to respond to the World Heritage Committee's concerns regarding urban conservation. This collection of case studies is a valuable opportunity to identify the main questions and challenges facing site-managers and decision-makers today. The goal is therefore to develop a management tool that can be disseminated and shared among site-managers and decision-makers. Moreover, the project can feed into UNESCO's current debates on the links of culture and development.

The **Getty Conservation Institute** has recognized urban heritage conservation as one of today's most pressing challenges in cultural heritage conservation and has therefore made it one of its priority fields of action. A recent study helped determine, as one of the most urgent needs, the necessity to propose to local stakeholders viable models of how to reconcile heritage and development in practice. This collection of case studies provides an answer to this necessity. This compilation will point out that conservation and appropriate use of heritage are tools for managing change, for limiting its negative impacts on heritage values, and that urban development respecting these values represents a basis for sustainable development and helps to enhance them.

For many years, the **Council of Europe** has been engaged in a political and normative approach indissociably linking the economic and social dimensions of the rehabilitation process in historic city centres to its communities' heritage and cultural diversity, those dimensions making up the cities' human "fabric". This approach requires new practices respecting the shared values and ethical principles, which the Organization is dedicated to promote among its Member States. By joining the OWHC's initiative, the Council of Europe wishes to share a rich and manifold experience gathered in World Heritage cities. Based on this experience, diverse and innovative avenues can be explored through pilot projects and can stimulate the political debate about the role of heritage in society, given that heritage is now being recognized as an essential vector for improving quality of life, social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and a sustainable economic development.

ICOMOS International contributes to collect, evaluate and disseminate information concerning the principles, techniques and policies of safeguarding, conservation, protection, promotion, use and enhancement of the monuments and sites. It is particularly interested in this Case Studies project as it associates ICOMOS with its international partners and aims at fostering the exchange of experience and improving intervention practices in historical cities, in particular with regard to their management and their sustainable development.

The **Regional Secretariats of the OWHC** as well as the City of Regensburg (Germany) are also associated with this initiative.

Programme of Work

The results of a test phase were presented at the OWHC's World Congress in Quito (Ecuador) in September 2009.

A new call to contributions, launched in August 2010, will be in force until the end of March 2011. The members of the OWHC are invited to submit a case study and can be assisted by the Steering Committee and its technical support team.

Its results will be presented during the next OWHC World Congress to be held in Sintra (Portugal) in November 2011, with a view to making a contribution to the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in 2012 and ensuring a large-scale dissemination the details of which remain to be defined (internet, printed publication, workshop).

Concept Note

Steering Committee, October 2010