

State Party: Philippines

The Historic Town of Vigan World Heritage Site

Brief description: Established in the 16th Century, Vigan is the best-preserved example of a planned Spanish colonial town in Asia. Its architecture reflects the coming together of cultural elements from elsewhere in the Philippines, from China and from Europe, resulting in a culture and townscape that have no parallel anywhere in East and South-East Asia.

Topics for demonstrating best management practise:		Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practise in relation to the topic:
1.	<p>Conservation:</p> <p>What innovative management practices or strategies are being applied in order to ensure the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property (e.g. better resource management, restoration and rehabilitation, addressing various manmade or natural threats and challenges, etc?)</p>	<p>In line with the City’s mission statement “to conserve our heritage and deliver effective services for an improved quality of life”, the City Government has implemented a program entitled “the Vigan Conservation Program as a Tool for Development”. The program has the following components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enactment of the following legislative measures to safeguard and preserve the historic city: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Ordinance No. 12, S.1997 delineating the boundaries of the historic core and buffer zones of the World Heritage Site; • City Ordinance No. 14, S.1997 defining the allowable uses in the core and buffer zones; • City Ordinance No. 7, S.2006 providing the Vigan Conservation Guidelines which provides guidelines for appropriate restoration works on historic structures, construction of new structures and development of open spaces within the protected zones. The Ordinance also created a multi-sectoral Vigan Conservation Council which formulates, recommends, evaluate and approve development plans, policies and programs relating to the conservation and development of the protected zones. A Technical Working Group implements the Conservation Guidelines and evaluate restoration/development plans for approval by the Vigan Conservation Council. • Traffic Code which effectively pedestrianized the main historic street of Crisologo St. and smoothen the flow of traffic within the protected zones 2. Cultural mapping project which has identified and documented cultural heritage resources, local arts and crafts, crafts persons and practitioners of intangible cultural

Topics for demonstrating best management practise:	Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practise in relation to the topic:
	<p>heritage.</p> <p>3. Establishment of a City Public Safety and Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office, as well as the adoption of fire safety measures such as preventing the use of fireworks within the protected zones.</p>
<p>2. Local People:</p> <p>What exemplary practices are you using in order to effectively address the needs of local stakeholders within the management system for the property, and enable their full and active participation?</p>	<p>Even before the site was inscribed as a World Heritage Site, public fora and multi-stakeholder workshops were organized to formulate a vision statement for the City and formulate cultural tourism strategies to uplift the economy and wellbeing of the City. Likewise, a series of public hearings were held to provide all stakeholders to voice their opinions regarding the enactment of each of the legislative measures to safeguard and conserve the built heritage of the City. This is quite an achievement, considering that the legislative measures have curtailed to a great extent the right of homeowners to develop of their private properties according to their wishes – a difficult task in the democratic country which human rights is respected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composed of owners of historic properties within the protected zones, the Save Vigan Ancestral Homeowners Association, Incorporated (SVAHAI) was organized to empower homeowners and enable their active participation in the conservation programme of the City Government. All matters pertaining to safeguarding and conservation of the protected zones are brought to the attention of SVAHAI members, whose President is a member of the Vigan Conservation Council. Published jointly by the City Government and UNESCO, a Heritage Homeowner’s Manual has been distributed to homeowners to empower them in the proper maintenance of their historic properties. The Manual is a practical and user-friendly management tools to guide the custodians in the maintenance, repair and adaptive re-use of their historic properties, thereby promoting responsible stewardship of their heritage. • The Vigan Tourism Council composed of various stakeholders from the academe (universities and colleges), craft industries, infrastructure sector (transportation and communication), business sector (association of souvenir shops, furniture makers, hotel and restaurant owners), religious and government sectors was established to help in the development of an appropriate tourism

Topics for demonstrating best management practise:	Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practise in relation to the topic:
	<p>industry in the City.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vigan Conservation Council that reviews and approves applications for construction, renovation, restoration and other works in the core and buffer zones of the heritage district is provided for by Ordinance No. 7 S 2006. It is composed of representatives from the local government, the academe, the SVAHAI, non government organizations and the Church.
<p>3. Legal Framework:</p> <p>What special measures have you taken to ensure that the legal framework for the World Heritage site is effective in maintaining the OUV of the property?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Ordinance No. 12, S. 1997 delineating the boundaries of the historic core and buffer zones of the World Heritage Site; • City Ordinance No. 14, S. 1997 defining the allowable uses in the core and buffer zones; • City Ordinance No. 7, S. 2006 providing the Vigan Conservation Guidelines which provides guidelines for appropriate restoration works on historic structures, construction of new structures and development of open spaces within the protected zones. The Ordinance also created a multi- sectoral Vigan Conservation Council which formulates, recommends, evaluate and approve development plans, policies and programs relating to the conservation and development of the protected zones. A Technical Working Group implements the Conservation Guidelines and evaluate restoration/ development plans for approval by the Vigan Conservation Council. • Traffic Code which effectively pedestrianized the main historic street of Crisologo St. and smoothen the flow of traffic within the protected zones Laws and ordinances institutionalize programs. Programs become more enduring beyond the terms of those who initiated the program. Enacting these laws shows the city government’s commitment to preserve our heritage and ensure that the same shall be enjoyed by generations to come.
<p>4. Boundaries:</p> <p>What innovative ways of dealing with the boundaries of the property, including for management of the buffer zone do you have in</p>	<p>The Vigan Heritage Management Office was established to ensure the strict implementation of the legislative ordinances listed in item 1. Personnel of the Vigan Heritage Management Office are constantly monitoring the site for the proper adherence to the protective measures by homeowners and the general public. Likewise,</p>

Topics for demonstrating best management practise:		Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practise in relation to the topic:
	place, to effectively manage the site and protect its OUV?	the site is constantly patrolled by police officers to maintain order and to provide assistance to visitors.
5.	<p>Sustainable Finance:</p> <p>What effective strategies have you developed and implemented to assure adequate and sustainable financial resources for implementing the management measures required to maintain the site's OUV?</p>	<p>The Vigan Heritage Conservation Program is well funded to ensure its effective implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic allocation of a portion of the Development Fund for heritage conservation • Ordinance allocating 1% of the Internal Revenue Allocation for tourism and culture fund. • Establishment of tourism and heritage-related economic enterprises like Vigan Heritage River Cruise, <i>Buridek</i> Children's Museum at the Fil-Hispanic Friendship Park at Mira Hills. <p>The ordained 1% allocation of the IRA for tourism and culture fund is a commitment on the part of the city government that the task of heritage conservation shall not be neglected by reason of lack of funds. The establishment of tourism and heritage-related economic enterprises accomplishes two-fold: earn income and promote the preservation of our heritage.</p>
6.	<p>Staffing training and Development:</p> <p>What approaches and strategies have you developed and implemented to assure that the <i>human resources are adequate to manage</i> the World Heritage property?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Government has established a Heritage Conservation Division manned by trained personnel and created within the City Engineer's Office to ensure that all physical interventions (repair and restoration works) within the protected zone are properly carried out, according to approved engineering and architectural plans. This is a task that requires political will as it may go against business interest. But this shows that the government is steadfast in its commitment. • The <i>Escuela Talyer</i>(School for Traditional Building Crafts) was established, in collaboration with academic institutions, to train a pool of building crafts persons to maintain, repair or restore historic buildings. <p>To date, the city has three scholars studying at Escuela Taller in Intramuros.</p>

	Topics for demonstrating best management practise:	Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practise in relation to the topic:
		<p>After graduation, they shall teach other Biguenbios the skills they have acquired. The city shall then have a pool of restorers to take care of its historic buildings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional and human capacity building is constantly built through the participation of concerned employees of the City Government in national and international training workshops such as the International Course on Disaster Risk Management for Heritage Sites in Kyoto, Japan. • The drivers of the traditional horse-drawn carriages have been trained by the Department of Tourism to act as unofficial tour guides for the multitude of visitors. <p>The kalesa rides make the visit to Vigan more fun, more exciting and more meaningful and memorable. It makes the Vigan tour a real travel in time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned government agencies are assisting local producers of handicrafts and service providers (hotel and restaurants) to improve their products and services to visitors. • Employees of the city government undergo records keeping and archives management trainings to enhance their capabilities to document historical records.
7.	<p>Sustainable Development:</p> <p>What are the effective mechanisms in place to ensure that resource use permitted in and around the World Heritage site is sustainable and does not impact negatively on OUV?</p>	<p>Several measures have been adopted by the City Government to promote sustainable development and use of local resources, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversion of the two-stroke cycle engine of the local tricycle (a popular mode of transportation) into a four-stroke engine, retrofitting and conversion to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) fueled vehicle. This measure has reduced to a great extent pollution within the protected zones. • River Rehabilitation Program which entailed the cleaning and dredging of the two rivers bounding the eastern and southern part of the World Heritage Property. The program aims to revive traditional river industries and to encourage cruising by locals and tourists through the river system.

	Topics for demonstrating best management practise:	Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practise in relation to the topic:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Solid Waste Management Program has resulted in an effective segregation of the waste at the household level and disposition of waste/garbage at the community level. • Adaptive re-use of historic buildings as office spaces, schools, accommodation facilities, restaurants and other appropriate uses.
8.	<p>Education and Interpretation Programmes:</p> <p>How do the education, interpretation and awareness programmes you have developed and implemented significantly enhance the understanding of OUV of the site among stakeholders?</p>	<p>To safeguard and revitalize the intangible cultural heritage of Vigan, festivals and cultural events are organized yearly, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vigan Town Fiesta during the third week of January to celebrate the birthday of St. Paul the Apostle, the patron saint of Vigan. Cultural events such as the <i>Longganisa</i> (local sausage) Festival are held to complement the religious aspect of the Fiesta. • The <i>Semana Santa</i> (Lenten Season) in April, during which religious rituals and processions are held; • Viva Vigan Binatbatan Festival of the Arts during the first week of May, during which parades, cultural events, exhibits of local products and performances of traditional performing arts are held; • The World Heritage Cities Solidarity Day featuring the <i>Repazzo de Vigan</i> (Vigan’s History on Parade) on September 8; • The Ranyag Festival (Halloween Festival) during the last week of October; • Christmas Season events such as the Lantern and Torch Parade in December • Local culture is presented in various ways, such as the staging of historic plays by students and the public. One of these is “Baba ng Vigan”, which depicts the love story of a Japanese military officer and a local lass, which saved Vigan from the destruction of World War II <p>Cultural awareness among the youth and residents are enhanced through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of traditional skills such as loomweaving and jar making into the curriculum of our three national high schools • Publication and use of cultural activity workbooks for elementary students. • Extensive use of media, such as the World Heritage Site having its own cable TV program, publication of a Vigan newsletter, distribution of CDs showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Vigan. • The conduct of the Vigan Leadership and Heritage Conservation Awareness

Topics for demonstrating best management practise:	Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practise in relation to the topic:
	<p>Training for Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council) chairpersons and student leaders in cooperation with the U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer and the UST Center for Conservation of Cultural Properties and Environment in the Tropics. This resulted to the formation of the Vigan Heritage Conservation Youth Council.</p> <p>Local heritage has been institutionalized through the establishment of the Buridek Children’s Museum, the Vigan Heritage River Cruise, and theme parks such as the Kakanin Village (showcasing local delicacies and cuisine), the Abel Village (traditional loom weaving) and the Damili Village (local clay industries).</p>
<p>9. Tourism and Interpretation:</p> <p>What innovative plans have you designed and successfully implemented to ensure that visitor management does not negatively impact on the maintenance of the property’s OUV?</p>	<p>With the increasing number of tourist arrivals and improved access to Vigan, the city has adopted several measures to minimize the impact of visitation on the property’s OUV through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No motorized vehicles are allowed along the main historic street (Crisologo Street) and some areas within the protected areas • Proper waste management within the protected sites among the local homeowners and users of the site; • Maintenance of the site, including regular inspection of electrical systems of historic buildings and organizing regular fire drills involving the residents and users of the historic buildings.
<p>Brief Description / summary of best practice, including a statement on how it can be useful for other sites:</p> <p>Vigan City, through the World Heritage Convention, was able to organize and empower the local community to become primary stakeholders and keepers of their tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The sustainability of Vigan’s conservation management lies in its ability to engage the local stakeholders – the owners of the heritage houses, teaching institutions, artists and craftsmen, and business owners to instill the value of their heritage, which stems from being the primary trading post in Northern Philippines during the Spanish era. Throughout the decades, the local government has maintained its focal position in engaging all stakeholders and leading development through heritage conservation-based policies. This strategy may be useful for other sites as Vigan has proven that empowering the community and the local stakeholders is key on ensuring that they are committed in conserving heritage as they are its primary guardians.</p> <p>Heritage appreciation is instilled early on with the incorporation of heritage education in the formal education system. Local organizations, such as the Homeowners Associations are engaged through capacity building measures which enable them to repair and restore their houses by means that are compliant with conservation standards and are cost-effective.</p>	

Topics for demonstrating best management practise:	Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practise in relation to the topic:
	<p>The development of heritage-based tourism and the empowerment of local artisans and craftsmen have been likewise key in ensuring a self-sustaining city, where revenue is both generated for the private individuals to fund the maintenance of historic buildings and for the city, to ensure that the machineries to monitor conservation and sustainably develop the site are in place.</p> <p>Vigan believes that development is only feasible if heritage is considered. Every step in improving the quality of life of the community must be based in heritage. Participative governance is one of the city’s strategic themes. <i>Biguenos</i> (Vigan locals) are empowered through their participation in the planning and implementation of programs and projects. This gives the people a sense of ownership that makes them committed in ensuring the successful implementation of the project. As primary stakeholders, they are more aware and more involved in the task of heritage preservation.</p> <p>Preserving heritage is a task that requires vigilance. Vigilance being one of its core values, the city government has put upon itself to see to it that its efforts towards preserving its heritage shall not be in vain. The efforts towards sustainable development ensure the protection not only of the old buildings but also the historic district. The festivals and cultural events, organized by the city government are ways of inculcating into the minds of the people a sense of belonging, a sense of ownership of their intangible heritage.</p> <p>To date, Vigan proves to be a primary destination in Northern Philippines, where visitors marvel at a glimpse of the Philippines’ past and enthuse on seeing that heritage conservation and progress are possible through sustainable development.</p>