

Mid-cycle Review Meeting
for National Focal Points of the Europe and North America Region

**Second Cycle of the Periodic Reporting Exercise
on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention**

22 November 2013, 9h30 – 13h00

UNESCO Headquarters, Room IX

REPORT

Focus of the meeting: Presentation of current status and exchange session among Focal Points on the preliminary results and the analytical framework of the Periodic Reporting exercise

Welcome

Mechtild Rössler, Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre, opened the meeting highlighting the importance of the Second Cycle of the Periodic Reporting (PR) exercise for the everyday conservation of our heritage, and Europe and North America regions' crucial role in the future reflection concerning the forthcoming cycles of Periodic reporting. She underlined that the PR exercise should become increasingly a State-Party driven process, and that the Mid-Cycle Review Meeting was an important step in taking an early stock of the outcomes of the exercise. Funding from States Parties is crucial to ensure the proper implementation of the current and future of the Periodic Reporting cycles.

Current Status of the Second Cycle

Petya Totcharova, Chief of the Europe and North America Unit of the World Heritage Centre, then gave an overview of the current status of the Second Cycle and highlighted the following key steps.

In view of the large number of World Heritage properties, the Europe and North America region has been divided into two groups – Group A includes the sub-regions of North America, Western and Nordic and Baltic Europe who have already submitted the questionnaires on 31 July 2013, while Group B including Mediterranean as well as Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe are currently working on the questionnaires towards the submission deadline on 31 July 2014.

The North American report to the World Heritage Committee will be prepared by the States Parties of Canada and United States of America themselves and shall be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for consultation with the Advisory Bodies for 1 February 2014 in view of its presentation to the World Heritage Committee at its 38th session in Dohar, Qatar.

The PR report for the whole Europe region will be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session in Germany in 2015. The Committee report will follow the standard format that has been used for the other regions to allow for comparison across the regions, it shall include a regional and where appropriate sub-regional analysis. Mrs Totcharova highlighted that the sub-regions shall be identical to those of the First Cycle of PR to facilitate the comparison with the analysis of the First Cycle from 2001-2006.

The PR report to the Committee shall be accompanied by an Outcomes publication which will include main conclusions, trends, lessons learnt and future opportunities. The publication shall be aimed at State Party representatives and site managers in particular; and shall be more accessible and user-friendly than World Heritage Committee report.

In addition to the above, an Action Plan shall be elaborated based on the preliminary analysis of the PR data as well as feedback from States Parties which is expected prior to and during the 2014 Luxembourg meeting. Therefore States Parties are encouraged to discuss Action Plan points at national and regional meetings, as appropriate.

Mrs Totcharova further discussed the regional and national approaches to the PR exercise, explaining that while the Committee report will focus on regional and sub-regional data, the

PR exercise also provides the States Parties with data that they are encouraged to use at the national level as soon as available.

Mrs Totcharova concluded by outlining the upcoming PR meetings during the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee in Doha, Qatar and the final PR meeting scheduled to take place in Luxemburg at the end of 2014. She further outlined the various statutory processes that may take place as a follow-up to the PR exercise including changing the name of the World Heritage property, minor boundary modifications, and possible changes of criteria and major boundary modifications (i.e. renominations).

Experience

Bolette Lehn Petersen, National Focal Point for Denmark and **Birgitta Ringbeck**, National Focal Point for Germany, presented their experience with the implementation of the PR exercise on a national level. They highlighted the utility of the exercise, explaining that it obliges States Parties to update their data, helps to raise awareness, encourages Site Managers to think about their World Heritage property in new ways, and the States Parties to consider World Heritage in a broader (inter)national context. The two Focal Points also underlined some problems encountered with the questionnaire, which, for the most part, were the same for both countries. These included the lack of space for comments, issues with understanding certain questions (due to linguistic difficulties, issues with interpretation, complicated/new concepts, etc.), problems accessing the questionnaire. They further highlighted the impression that the answers often lacked a “scientific basis” due to the nature of the questions posed (given that answers do not include factual/numerical data but depend on appreciations and observations which quite often can be subjective.) Both Focal Points provided details how they aim to use the PR exercise on a national level, while the Focal Point of Denmark is currently undertaking a national analysis and establishing a national action plan for the conservation of the World Heritage properties in Denmark, the Focal Point of Germany is using the national outcomes of the PR as a basis to formulate clear messages to the governmental level to continue the funding scheme currently under way.

North American Periodic Reporting

Rebecca Kennedy, National Focal Point for Canada spoke on behalf of the States Parties of Canada and United States of America and reported on the ongoing work with the preparation of the North American report to the World Heritage Committee at its 38th session in 2014. She explained that the report will focus on the progress since the First Cycle of PR, taking the First Cycle report as the baseline for the work. Mrs Kennedy further emphasized the need to make the PR exercise more useful to Site Managers. It was clarified that a short presentation to the World Heritage Committee of the findings of the North America report will be required at the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee.

Data from Group A, Europe

Ole S e Eriksen, Deputy Director of the Nordic World Heritage Foundation, presented the descriptive statistics thus far elaborated for the preliminary analysis for the European sub-regions of Group A (Western, Nordic and Baltic Europe), in which he illustrated the richness of the data collected and demonstrated how this data can be analysed. He explained that although we are only part way through the PR exercise, we can already discern certain trends and differences, as well as sub-regional capacity-building needs. Amongst others, he highlighted the major factors affecting both natural and cultural World Heritage properties, namely, Impacts of tourism/ visitor/recreation, effects arising from use of transportation infrastructure and ground transport infrastructure, while for the natural properties illegal activities was the leading factor affecting the properties. Mr Eriksen further explained that the data clearly indicated across the two sub-regions a need to better integrate local communities and landowners into certain processes. Mr Eriksen underlined that the PR exercise has value at the site level, as it brings Site Managers closer to the *World Heritage Convention* and the *Operational Guidelines*, and provides a wealth of data which Site Managers and the National Focal Points can use as the basis for their management systems.

Also see Annex I with an overview of the preliminary statistical analysis of the Group A results.

Preliminary analysis of Section I and Section II

Christopher Young presented the preliminary findings based on the quantitative summary of Section I (concerning the implementation of the World Heritage Convention at national level), while calling the audience to bear in mind that, on one hand, the experts' team did not have much time to examine the large statistical data compiled by Mr Eriksen, and, on the other hand, his initial work focused on Section I questionnaires from 17 countries (two sub-regions) only.

At further stages, when analyzing the questionnaires from the entire region, the experts would examine the trends which are common to the entire region, and those specific to the sub-regions, as well as their evolution since the First Cycle.

From the initial focus on two sub-regions, several common features were identified. One of them is the fact that most States Parties are well advanced with inventories, legal frameworks etc. A significant progress is also observed since the First Cycle as regards the retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value, as well as boundary clarifications. However, certain questions related to boundaries still have to be solved, in particular buffer zones. Another common factor is the concern as regards resources.

In terms of future improvements, two areas are emerging, such as giving to the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of communities, as well as increasing the cooperation between various governmental agencies, not only those responsible for heritage, at different levels.

The preliminary findings also include differences between the West sub-region and the Nordic/Baltic sub-region. This concerns, firstly, the perceived ability to enforce legal

frameworks and give heritage a function in the life of communities, and secondly, the integration of conservation into comprehensive spatial planning program.

Mr Young further recalled that two facts need to be borne in mind: the fact that Periodic Reporting is a self-assessment exercise, and the fact that in a sample as small as a sub-region, a high rate concerning one country can result in a high rate concerning the entire sub-region.

Katri Lisitzin explained that her preliminary comments mainly concern the identification of trends on the basis of the Section II questionnaires, as well as changes since the First cycle of Periodic Reporting.

Concerning the analysis, it is important to bear in mind who had been answering the questions, for example those concerning how benefits of inscription are assessed.

One of the common points is the fact that finance, as well as human resources, merit special attention. Another common point is the fact that a considerable work remains to be done in terms of monitoring and effectiveness, especially in light of the evolution of the Operational Guidelines, manuals etc. Monitoring is a cross cutting issue in all submitted PR questionnaire. Finally, community involvement and benefit sharing are also a common issue.

In terms of capacity-building, very few countries have developed national strategies. Periodic Reporting could be a basis for identifying priorities and developing capacity building.

Pierre Galland noted that answers to the Second Cycle questionnaire include a low appreciation of the results of the previous First cycle of Periodic Reporting. In this regard, he highlighted that whereas in the beginning of First Cycle, most of properties did not have a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUVs) or clear maps, a significant progress had been made since then, and with many retrospective SOUVs having been approved or being in the process of approval, and many boundaries clarified in the framework of retrospective inventory. Moreover, one of the positive results is that the very fact of undergoing Periodic Reporting raises awareness about monitoring.

Mr Galland pointed out that in the cluster concerned by the preliminary analysis, there are only 16 natural sites, out of which at least 4 or 5 are located overseas.

The analysis shall be based on trends, and not hard statistics. One example of careful reading of the statistics is the data pertaining to the number of visitors: a stable average might mean that certain sites have a significant decrease, while others have a significant increase.

Among the main factors affecting the property, as highlighted by Mr Erikson, are three common one for cultural and natural World Heritage: Impacts of tourism/ visitor/recreation, effects arising from use of transportation infrastructure and ground transport infrastructure. In addition, natural properties are reported to be affected mainly by illegal activities, solid waste and erosion.

The statistical data provides the number of times a factor is mentioned to have an impact, but there is no assessment of the extent of the impact, i.e. minor or major.

Mr Galland further addressed the recurrent comments from States Parties that there are too many questions, and that there is not enough space for comments. He explained that if the length of comments were not limited, it would have been impossible to process them for the analysis part, especially for the large number of cultural properties.

Questions and Answers

Several countries indicated that they needed “comments” boxes, in order for the National Focal Points to understand the logic of the replies provided by site managers. These countries created complementary documents/tables, at the national level, in order to collect comments and harmonize approaches within the country.

Several countries indicated that despite several attempts, the submission rate remained around 98% and it was not possible to reach 100%, even by clicking “n/a” for any not applicable question. Among them, only Germany was aware of the solution, the overview navigation pane, and considered it easy to apply.

Mrs Totcharova (WHC) assured that 98% was considered as a good rate.

Mr Galland highlighted the challenge for the statistical analysis to differentiate between “zero” and “n/a” answers.

Several countries indicated that they translated the Questionnaires into the national language, and thereafter translated the replies. One country mentioned that a translation is helpful as a first step, but may cause wording problems. One country considered translations important for raising awareness of all stakeholders about the Periodic Reporting process.

Mr Galland recommended that for widespread communication, it is better to use a selection of tables and graphs and explain them well, rather than use the entire amount of data available. It is also important to use plain language.

Several countries highlighted that Periodic Reporting questionnaire does not only ask to report only on negative impacts, but also gives the possibility to indicate positive impacts of factors, which however is not taken up in the Summary Tables of the questionnaire (chapter 5) and it might be an interesting aspect to explore in the future, in order to provide more positive arguments for World Heritage.

Mrs Totcharova thanked the participants for the positive feedback, and indicated that based on the expectations of States Parties as expressed in the follow up of First Cycle, WHC is targeting to provide to the countries very quickly the national datasets and other relevant information and data, soon after the submission of the Questionnaires.

National Data Sets

Alexandra Fiebig explained that short summaries of the answers from Section I and II are already available to the countries which had submitted the Questionnaires in July 2013. Following the feedback provided by the Focal Points, it is now possible to export these summaries in Word as well as Pdf, for cleaner exports and easier sharing with the Site

Managers concerned. The transmission of the Short Summaries from the Focal Points to the Site Managers is highly recommended.

National Data sets in the format of Excel were prepared by the Nordic World Heritage Foundation for each country of Group A which contain the relevant national raw data extracted from questionnaire responses. These National Data sets would be sent by email to the National Focal Points shortly after the meeting.

With both the short summaries and the national data sets the WHC aims to provide to the States Parties as early as possible with national data derived from the PR exercise that, for example, may serve on a site level as a basis for updating Management Plans.

Ms Fiebig also indicated that the national reports of the First Cycle, both Section I and II, were available to public. The national reports of the Second Cycle shall also be made available to the public, unless the country concerned expresses objection, which needs to be notified to WHC **by 13 December 2013** at the latest.

Mr Eriksen explained that the national datasets in excel have been compiled in a manner that they can easily be imported into a national databases. He presented examples on the screen, in particular the use of the filter function. Users shall be provided with a “code book” listing the different values as they appear in the Questionnaires.

Each country shall be provided with a complete dataset, to facilitate the national analysis. The excel file contains the following four tabs

- a) Data from the Section I
- b) Data from Section II per each World Heritage property
- c) Data from Section II concerning the factors identified
- d) Pivot table created on the basis of the previous tab on the identified factors from Section II.

Mr Eriksen would be available by email, to provide some technical explanations or clarifications, in the framework of the efforts which shall be made by the countries to adapt the use of datasets to their needs.

Discussion on the Analytical Framework for the EUR Periodic Report

Christopher Young explained that the approach which he was going to present concerning the analytical framework for presenting the results of the Second Cycle of PR in Europe was very preliminary, as further inputs from the Focal Points are required. Moreover, experts needed more time to examine the data, including comments.

He presented a table summarizing the types, targeted audience, authors, contents and lengths of the six reports expected to be produced in the framework of Periodic Reporting: the Summary Report Section I, the Summary Report Section II, the National Datasets, the Quantitative Summary of Results, the Report to the World Heritage Committee, and the Outcomes Publication.

He thereafter presented twelve topics proposed for the Outcomes Publication, as follows:

1. Effectiveness of definition of Outstanding Universal Value, including integrity and/ or authenticity, and property boundaries and buffer zones;
2. Factors affecting sites and commonalities across the region and sub-regions – what are the main threats?
3. Effectiveness of protection
4. Effectiveness of management
5. Monitoring
6. Sources of funding
7. Examples of best practice
8. Sub-regional differences and similarities
9. Natural/ cultural differences and similarities
10. Urban/ rural differences and similarities
11. Serial properties
12. Transnational/ transboundary properties

Mr Young called for feedback from the Focal Points, to be provided to the WHC **by 13 December 2013**.

During the discussion, several States Parties made comments of general nature:

One of the important roles of Periodic Reporting is to provide arguments for fund-raising. Periodic Reporting should also be used as a tool to spread knowledge among site managers about good practices, use of indicators, management systems.

Some cases require special attention, such as cultural properties which have natural elements, or are affected by natural factors. For example, landscapes.

Moreover, States Parties made suggestions for the publication/reports:

Interest was expressed concerning the following approaches: cultural vs natural, urban vs rural, and especially the typological approach (cultural landscapes, historic urban landscapes, various types of natural sites, etc). It was suggested to avoid using exclusively the regional or sub-regional approach, and one country questioned whether the grouping of countries by sub-regions could be modified at the current stage.

Several countries suggested to include as specific topics community and stakeholders involvement, capacity building and training needs, as well as international cooperation.

With regard to Topic 1, one country proposed to treat SOUVs separately from boundaries and buffer zones.

Overall, it was suggested to include positive aspects, not only negative ones. Concerning the audience and the objective of the publication, it was suggested to aim at demonstrating to decision makers, site managers and other stakeholders the relevance of World Heritage to the society, call attention to the threats, and demonstrate the crucial role of heritage for development and the life of communities.

Remarks by Mr Young

Mr Young took note of the proposals made by several Focal Points including the audience of the report which could include decision makers and agreed that the publication and the reports should include capacity building. Concerning the typological approach, Mr Young noted that it could be challenging to adopt it, due to the absence of such data in the PR Questionnaires and in the database, and due to the fact that many cultural sites would belong to several typologies.

Remarks by Mr Galland

Concerning the typological approach, Mr Galland noted that not only cultural sites, but also many natural ones would belong to several types.

An issue in Periodic Reporting is how to take into consideration the values which are recognized at national or other levels, but do not belong to the Outstanding Universal Value.

Site managers are currently dealing with various reporting systems; therefore there is a need to reflect on how to harmonize such systems.

For the conclusions of the Europe analysis it will be important to also note positive aspects, such as the fact that replies to the Questionnaire demonstrate that for a large majority of the properties values have been maintained.

Closing remarks of the meeting by Mrs Totcharova

In response to a question raised regarding inclusion of an Action Plan in the Outcomes publication, **Mrs Totcharova** clarified that the actual report to the WH Committee shall include all the issues, results, regional and sub-regional approaches, main factors and threats as well as the Action Plan that will be developed, as much as possible, at the meeting in Luxembourg. The Outcomes Publication, which shall be written in a user friendly language, may or may not include action points, depending on the feedback which WHC shall received from States Parties.

With regard to the presentations concerning the preliminary analysis of the European sub-regions in Group B held at the current meeting, it should be noted that this is work currently in progress, none of the results are final. The World Heritage Centre shall continue providing desk support to States Parties, despite the limited human resources. WHC aims at providing user-friendly, fresh data, to facilitate the States Parties taking the ownership of the results of Periodic Reporting. It is foreseeable that the Third Cycle shall not follow the same pattern as Second Cycle. It shall be more States-Parties-driven, with some support from WHC.

In conclusion, Mrs Totcharova expressed thanks to the States Parties, Nordic World Heritage Foundation, experts, and the small Europe and North America team of the World Heritage Centre, including interns who provide invaluable support.

ANNEX I – AGENDA

ANNEX II – PARTICIPANTS LIST

ANNEX III – SECTION I AND SECTION II GROUP A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

ANNEX I – Agenda of the Periodic Reporting Mid-cycle Review Meeting in Europe and North America Region

22 November 2013, 9h30 – 13h00

UNESCO Headquarters, Room IX

- **Welcome**

Mechtild Rössler, Deputy Director of the WHC

- **Current Status of the Second Cycle**

Current status and process for the preparation of regional PR reports, publication, Action Plan

Petya Totcharova, Chief of the Europe and North America Unit, WHC

- **Experience**

Experiences and practical advice from Group A – challenges & benefits

Bolette Lehn Petersen, National Focal Point of Denmark

Birgitta Ringbeck, National Focal Point of Germany

- **North American Periodic Reporting**

Rebecca Kennedy, National Focal Point of Canada

- **Data from Group A / Preliminary Analysis**

Descriptive summary of the Periodic Reporting data of Group A

Ole Søren Eriksen, Nordic World Heritage Foundation

Preliminary analysis of Section I and Section II

Christopher Young, Katri Lisitzin, Pierre Galland

- **National Data Sets**

Transparency / availability of data

Alexandra Fiebig, Europe and North America Unit, WHC

Data sets per country – process and use

Ole Søren Eriksen, Nordic World Heritage Foundation

- **Discussion on the Analytical Framework for the EUR Periodic Report**

Analytical framework for presenting the results of the Second Cycle in Europe

Focus of the PR Publication and Action Plan, special topics

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