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Review by ICCROM of C3E International Assistance Report (*“Evaluation of International Assistance in the Framework of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage”*–WHC2000/CONF.202/13) with a view to making recommendations to the World Heritage Committee to improve provisions for International Assistance

Review by ICCROM of C3E International Assistance Report (*“Evaluation of International Assistance in the Framework of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage”*–WHC2000/CONF.202/13) with a view to making recommendations to the World Heritage Committee to improve provisions for International Assistance

A. Introduction

In December 1999, the World Heritage Committee approved a sum of \$40,000 to be used to employ external consultants to carry out an evaluation of international assistance provided by the Committee, following a decision of the Committee in December 1998. This allocation responded to a 1997 external audit recommendation that the Centre should organise an external evaluation of the pertinence and impact of international assistance furnished by the Committee.

Following approval of funds by the Committee in December 1999 in Marrakech, the designated consultant, the Centre Européen d’Expertise en Evaluation (C3E) was introduced to the Committee. During the period of the Committee meetings in Marrakech, C3E scheduled a breakfast meeting with the Advisory Bodies, during which the terms of reference of the group, and the consultant’s approach were reviewed. This was the only contact with the Advisory Bodies prior to a presentation of preliminary findings at a meeting organised at UNESCO on 14 April 2000. The final version of the C3E report was provided to the Centre on 15 May 2000.

ICCROM reviewed the C3E report in the period between 30 May and 14 June 2000, and came to a number of conclusions concerning its utility, as well as additional thoughts about needed improvements in managing international assistance. ICCROM has had no opportunity to date to present these conclusions in detail to the Committee. However, as the C3E document has been included as a working document for the Special Session of the Bureau in Budapest from 2 – 4 October, ICCROM feels it now opportune to share these thoughts, in advance of the Special Session.

B. Comments on the C3E report

ICCROM believes that however plausible some of its conclusions and recommendations, the C3E report is not built upon research findings of sufficient depth to provide the Committee with an adequate basis for review and possible modification of its programmes of international assistance.

Critical shortcomings may be observed in a number of areas:

- **Methodological failings.** In not separating analysis of efficiency from analysis of effectiveness, in not verifying or citing sources for many of its conclusions, in not disclosing the limits of reliability of its findings, in basing conclusions on a statistically insignificant sample of case studies, etc. the C3E conclusions do not provide a meaningful basis for analysis.

- **Limited consultation.** The Advisory Body input to the study, in spite of the large involvement of Advisory Bodies with international assistance review, was negligible. ICCROM, in spite of its involvement in the evaluation of all training requests for cultural heritage, and its development of the Global Training Strategy for the Committee, was only consulted once, during the initial breakfast meeting in Morocco with the other Advisory Bodies.
- **Analytical focus.** Meaningful review of international assistance for World Heritage must of necessity give priority importance to examining the extent to which spending has had an impact, positive or negative, on the particular heritage values for which the site was inscribed on the World Heritage List. Such analysis does not form a part of this study.

ICCROM has provided a more detailed analysis of its views in these areas concerning the shortcomings of the C3E report in an annex to this paper.

C. Suggested improvements to Committee provisions for International Assistance

On the basis of its long experience with review of training assistance requests, its involvement with the analysis of training assistance mandated by the Committee in December 1999, and its involvement with other forms of international assistance, (having reviewed over 70 international assistance requests in the last two years), ICCROM has a number of suggestions to offer concerning improvements in the system of international assistance.

ICCROM has grouped recommendations as follows:

1. framework improvements (effectiveness in reaching goals);
2. procedural improvements (efficiency; value for money);
3. co-operation among Advisory Bodies, the World Heritage Centre, and States Parties (requisite for improving the system).

1. Framework improvements (effectiveness in reaching goals)

Observations

- Experience with the assessment process has been insufficient to develop evaluation mechanisms which balance concern for benefits flowing to individual sites with impacts on the Committee's effort to reach its strategic goals.
- The categories of international assistance defined in the Operational Guidelines do not necessarily serve the Committee well. The distinctions among categories are not clear. When it appears that funds in one category may be unavailable, requests are often re-packaged to fit another category to increase chances of receiving funding support. Maintaining the present high number of categories of international assistance (other international organisations generally maintain less categories of assistance, in order to increase flexibility), has lead to distortions in

the application and review process. At the same time, the present approach often leads to under-spending in some categories, while States Parties are being denied funds in other categories (e.g., training which is increasingly oversubscribed).

- The entire international assistance system is based on a reactive, passive approach to allocating funds. States Parties are expected to take the initiative in proposing requests which are then evaluated by the Centre and Advisory Bodies against criteria, sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit. This approach does not take into account the different nature of the requests that can be made – those that respond to specific physical needs on sites for example, and those that address improving conditions for conservation, for example, through training. The ability to respond to requests coming from States Parties will always be necessary for instances of urgent repair or emergency assistance. At the same time, as the demand for funds increases, movement toward a more proactive approach is necessary in areas such as training, to increase the effectiveness of spending of available funds and to increase synergies among available funds.
- Without undertaking a detailed analysis of requests, it can be noted that the average size of these has been growing in the last several years at a rate greater than the increase of overall budget. We have now seen project applications begin to exceed \$100,000. in a number of limited cases. Given the premise that the funds of the Committee are meant to be used in a catalytic fashion, it would seem that this trend if it were to continue would limit the number of projects and sites which the Committee can hope to assist in any one year.
- The ICCROM training assistance assessment report, prepared in the spring of 2000, demonstrates the degree to which project evaluation follow-up is not carried out in planning future projects. Now that over a thousand assistance projects have been undertaken, the lack of a systematic mechanism to capture lessons from assistance projects and to feed these lessons into Committee planning remains a serious liability.
- The ICCROM training assistance assessment report also noted difficulties in carrying out research into the treatment of requests for assistance prior to 1992 when the World Heritage Centre was created. Without giving priority to efforts to capture presently inaccessible data, our ability to analyse spending patterns and effectiveness on international assistance and its consequences will remain seriously impaired.
- No consistency of treatment of Advisory Body requests is provided for within the Committee's budget. All ICCROM requests – for project support, or for services and travel support - are debited to the Chapter Three budget for Technical Implementation of the Convention (including various forms of international assistance), while IUCN costs for managing training are included in Chapter Two (focussed on Establishment of the World Heritage List) . This distinction is more than a matter of tradition; by assigning its training costs to Chapter Two, IUCN is ensuring that all designated natural heritage training funds are available for projects, while the assignment of ICCROM projects and support to Chapter Three reduces the funding available to States Parties for their cultural heritage training projects.

Recommended improvements

ICCROM recommends that the Committee and the Centre encourage or undertake the following actions:

- Make efforts to integrate awarding of international assistance within a long term scheme of care for the site, including management provisions at the time of inscription, post-inscription monitoring and reporting, and clear follow-up to previous allocations of assistance funding.
- Make efforts to ensure that allocation of international assistance reflects strategic priorities of the Committee, for example, strengthening support for least developed countries etc. Strategic priorities change with time and it will be up to the Committee to determine their priorities today and make certain that these are reviewed and updated as necessary in the future; however, it would appear important to ensure that attention is paid to the process by which these priorities are established, and the process by which these priorities can be linked or translated into international assistance planning.
- Reduce the categories of available international assistance to three, as in most other international organisations:
 - *Technical Assistance*, responding to site-specific requests by States Parties;
 - *Training, Education and Promotion Assistance*, responding in part to States Parties requests for funds but also proactively encouraging and supporting proactive regional initiatives linked particularly to strategic priorities.
 - *Emergency Assistance*, available to States Parties on request.

It should be emphasised that under this revision, preparatory assistance would still be available for States Parties for the preparation of tentative lists and nominations within the first category of *Technical Assistance* responding to site-specific requests. It is recognised that preparatory assistance plays a vital role in helping less developed countries to take an active role in the Convention, and is hence a vital component of the Global Strategy. It is also often over-subscribed. By approaching the *Technical Assistance* category as being aimed at all phases of the life of a site, a better balance may be found between preparatory and post-inscription needs. It is also noted that preparatory assistance may become a first step within the other two categories mentioned above in order to create the necessary conditions for training or emergency assistance.

Once the categories have been streamlined, then conditions of eligibility, deadlines, criteria for judgement etc, should be developed to apply consistently across the categories of international assistance, to overcome the present confusing hodgepodge of conditions and requirements now in place. Creating these clear criteria for eligibility and evaluation, will also lead to greater transparency in decision-making and hence a more trusted and reliable system.

- Draw up guidelines limiting amounts of allocations in particular circumstances, and encouraging the greatest use of the available World Heritage funds to catalyse spending by others.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure adequate attention is given to project evaluation and follow-up and that available lessons are integrated within Committee planning and review processes, including the periodic reporting process.
- Support a rapid and comprehensive data capture project ensuring ready access to the results of all previous international assistance projects.
- Ensure commitment by all partners in the system to requirements established in the Operational Guidelines. This particularly applies to respect for deadlines for submission of requests.
- Attribute costs related to Advisory Body support services for training and other post-inscription activities within Chapter One (Implementation of the Convention) of the budget, or to a new chapter or sub-chapter designated to focus on post-inscription activities carried out by the Advisory Bodies in collaboration with the Centre, rather than to International Assistance.

2. *Procedural improvements (efficiency; value for investment)*

Observations

ICCROM drew the attention of the Task Force established by the Committee in December 1999 to the following problems concerning the management of requests for training assistance:

- There is no clear rationale for assignment by the World Heritage Centre of requests for international assistance to Advisory Bodies for review and comment. While the Dec. 1996 decision of the Committee establishes ICCROM as “priority partner in training” for cultural heritage, and directs that all requests for training assistance be sent to ICCROM for review, each year training requests are passed to the Committee without being passed to ICCROM. For the other categories of international assistance, the situation is less clear; while normally, requests are passed to one or more Advisory Bodies, no policy exists which suggests how assessment should be delegated or even that it should be assigned.
- The procedures and rationale used by the Centre to involve international experts to participate in missions or follow-up to assessments are not clear, or consistently applied. ICCROM feels that opportunities are often lost to ensure the use of the individual most suited to the task by not making adequate use of the expert networks available to ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN.
- No formally adopted standards exist for the treatment of requests by the Advisory Bodies. Informal criteria used in review by the Centre and Advisory Bodies have not been adopted by the Committee, and are not explicitly shared by all involved

in the process. As a result, the Centre has difficulty to treat requests in a consistent manner.

- Operational Guideline deadlines for requests for international assistance are routinely ignored by States Parties and the Centre, who pass all requests to Advisory Bodies for review irrespective of the deadlines established in the Operational Guidelines. In practical terms, late requests limit the ability of Advisory Bodies or the Centre to assist States Parties to improve the focus of requests, and force the Advisory Bodies to say “yes” or “no” without adequate reflection, or opportunity to clarify questions with State Parties.
- Operational Guidelines requirements for follow-up and evaluation of training assistance events or activities are ignored more often than not by States Parties. Again, there is a practical fall out: without post-activity evaluation, it is difficult to ensure that second generation and later events are actually able to build on lessons gained the first time round. As well, without a strong commitment to follow-up evaluation on the part of all involved, it is difficult to assess in the effectiveness of the activities supported.

Recommended improvements

- In March 1999, ICCROM developed a set of *Procedures for Reviewing Requests for International Assistance (for Cultural Heritage)*. These were developed through discussion with ICOMOS. These have been presented at Advisory Bodies / World Heritage Centre meetings but without agreement to forward them to the Committee for review. These procedures, intended to improve the situation for conservation of World Heritage sites through International Assistance, were included as an annex to the Global Training Strategy report presented by ICCROM during the July 2000 Bureau meeting. It is important at an early date to secure the assent of those involved in managing the system to adopting these or alternative provisions.
3. *Co-operation among Advisory Bodies, the World Heritage Centre, and States Parties (requisite for improving the system)*

Observations

There are a number of areas requiring close attention to improve co-operation among Advisory Bodies, the World Heritage Centre, and States Parties.

- ICCROM has observed that one of the difficulties in improving co-operation among Centre staff and Advisory Bodies are varying interpretations of roles and mandates. Some Centre staff interpret the Centre’s role as Secretariat to the Committee rather literally and restrict their actions to facilitation of decisions made by the Committee. Others are more proactive in encouraging States Parties to initiate activities which help fulfil the Committee’s strategic goals. Still others have a project orientation and work with States Parties and funding partners to develop World Heritage Centre projects. These different approaches make it

difficult for Advisory Bodies to define consistently coherent forms of co-operation with Centre staff.

- A second area of concern is the result of the changing dynamics in treating international assistance. As the Committee moves toward a more proactive approach to the formulation of international assistance, it is inevitable that the involvement of Centre staff and Advisory Bodies in the preparation of individual requests will increase. It is important to ensure the utmost transparency concerning such involvement if the Committee is to be able to properly evaluate requests made in relation to its strategic priorities, and to define new mechanisms of co-operation in managing requests to ensure that appropriate levels of transparency are achieved.
- ICCROM has observed that opportunities are often lost to fully profit from the expertise of the Advisory Bodies in assessing needs within various requests. ICCROM believes that the Committee profits greatly from the acquired experiences of the Advisory Bodies and their networks when consistent and regular use of their services, as called for in Article 14.2 of the Convention, is made.

Recommended improvements

- ICCROM believes that it would be useful to encourage the Centre to review its approaches in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, and to adopt explicitly clear guidelines covering roles, responsibilities and procedures for interaction with the Advisory Bodies in implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and to ensure that these are placed within the Operational Guidelines.
- It would also be useful to adopt mechanisms that would ensure full State Party “ownership” of proposals made in their name.

D. Recommendations for future evaluation of International Assistance.

ICCROM believes strongly, in line with Committee opinion to date, that the Committee should ensure periodic independent external evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of International Assistance. ICCROM believes that this is best accomplished by:

- Involving external consultants as facilitators of analysis (rather than analysts) on the part of those already involved within the system, to ensure that all relevant experiences and insights, in particular those of Centre staff and Advisory Bodies, are included in discussion..
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that evaluation includes efforts to measure the impact of International Assistance on the outstanding universal values for which sites were inscribed on the World Heritage List. |
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- Building this periodic review into the long term strategic planing process of the Committee, and integrating its conclusions with parallel initiatives such as the periodic reporting system.

Annex: ICCROM views concerning the shortcomings of the C3E report

ICCROM's views on the shortcomings of the report are based on a number of concerns:

- There were no substantive consultations with the Advisory Bodies who are involved so closely with assessment of all requests for international assistance. ICCROM had no contact with the consultants following the initial breakfast meeting in Morocco.
- Perhaps as a result of the lack of significant contact with the Advisory Bodies in the preparation of the report, it was not possible for the consultants to actually follow the trail of the request from its inception by the States Party, through the review by the Centre and the Advisory Bodies, the decision by the appropriate decision-making body, and the implementation and evaluation. Therefore, none of the operational difficulties or issues involved in the management of international assistance, such as information management, follow-up, criteria for review of requests etc. are reviewed. The consultants for example, appear unaware both of the criteria used by ICCROM in reviewing training requests, or the proposed procedures for better management of international assistance requests developed by ICCROM with ICOMOS.
- Again, without benefit of adequate consultation, unsubstantiated opinions (already the subject of detailed refutation by the Advisory bodies in years past), for example, concern about Advisory Bodies acting as “juge et parti” in the system, are here presented as fact.
- Again perhaps as a result of limited contact with Advisory Bodies, the report's final recommendations direct needed changes to the Centre and to the Committee, and only mention the Advisory Bodies in two minor places. At present, the Advisory Bodies play a major role in assessing requests and in guiding strategic analysis of the impact of spending. The minor role recognised in the Recommendations for Advisory Bodies implies a major change in current practice, without any rationale being presented for such a shift. .
- The analysis does not acknowledge the particular details of roles and relationships within the Committee's system as these have evolved over time. The distinct objectives and activities of the three Advisory Bodies are blurred in presentation. ICOMOS and ICCROM (and IUCN) are presented as if they have identical roles in many places.
- The report lacks a clear and unassailable research methodology.
- Generally, technical analysis of this sort requires consultants to clearly separate data-gathering from analysis and to ensure that opinions where offered are attributed or noted as opinions. In many points, hearsay is presented as fact, and nowhere are facts or opinions sourced or referenced within the text. While the report includes a bibliography and a list of sources, none of the key ICCROM documents relevant to this discussion are presented, including the Global Training

Strategy document provided to the Committee in Marrakech in December 1999, as an information document.

- As well, the limits of inquiry are not established up front. There are many implicit limits in place but these are not highlighted for the reader as limiting the scope of recommendations, e.g., the limiting of statistical analysis of spending to 1997-1999.
- The project sample of 8 projects is so small as to be insignificant, and statistically meaningless. The 8 projects examined in the report comprise 8 from among the more than one thousand examples of international assistance requested since 1978. No explanation for the rationale of choice is offered. While these are described as representative, the projects looked at for example do not include any of those treated by ICCROM in its training assistance reviews.
- The report does not distinguish between matters of “efficiency” (that is, value for investment) and “effectiveness”, concerned with achieving conservation goals (that is, impact of international assistance projects on the values for which sites have been inscribed on the World heritage List). Analysis of the case studies focuses on easily quantifiable factors such as numbers of activities supported and funds multiplied, but at no time does discussion touch fundamental conservation questions concerning impact of assistance on heritage values for which sites have been described. Some conclusions are also drawn without a full analysis of all of the factors involved. For example, in one case study, the location of a particular training activity is questioned without examining any of the reasons for why that particular location was chosen.
- The superficial nature of the research, the analysis, and the contacts has led the consultants to inevitably trite conclusions. Much weight for example, is given to characterising the system as one which rewards “first come, first served”. This distinction, in any event, only partly true, diverts analysis from a discussion of much greater consequence in trying to characterise the system: the difficulties of moving from a passive, reactive system, dependent on State Party initiative, to one capable of acting in a proactive, synergistic manner to support the interests of States Parties across regions.
- Equally, data presented are not well analysed for the lessons present within them. For example, the high percentage of successful demands for training assistance does not necessarily imply that requests for training are generally well formulated or that criteria are easy to meet, but rather the degree to which Advisory Bodies and the Centre work with States Parties to improve requests for training assistance rather than simply judge them.