
TOWARDS THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT FOR THE REFLECTION

This document has been prepared in view of the discussion concerning the Reflection on Periodic Reporting with the Focal Points of the Europe region during the Final PR meeting of the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting (Suomenlinna Fortress, 1-3 December 2014).

It presents a) an overview of the work involved in the implementation of the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting in Europe; and compiles the feedback received so far from the Focal Points of the Europe region, PR consultants, as well as selected feedback from other regions derived from the Periodic Reports, individual interviews with Programme Specialists, as well as Periodic Reporting meetings on b) general considerations concerning the PR process and c) considerations concerning specific chapters of the current Section I and II questionnaire.

The elements for discussion below are by no means an exhaustive list, but aim to provide a basis for the Reflection Period. **No statement made in this document is final, nor does it necessarily reflect the position of UNESCO or the World Heritage Centre.**

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING IN THE EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA REGION

1. The Second Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise in the Europe and North America region was launched in 2012; and 50 out of 51 States Parties in the Europe and North America region took part in the two year exercise, covering some 470 World Heritage properties.
2. To support the smooth running of the PR exercise, the World Heritage Centre:
 - Manually pre-filled of all 470 Section II questionnaires with the available statutory information, prior to releasing those questionnaires to the Focal Points and Site Managers for validation and/or update.
 - Prepared Training materials before and during the PR Cycle II: video tutorials, a Handbook for Site Managers, Guidelines and a Frequently Asked Questions Document for Group B Focal Points.
 - Established a Support Desk for all Focal Points and Site Managers throughout the exercise, providing advice and support on ~150 technical issues and questions of content.
 - Co-organised with host countries 9 workshops dedicated to PR and organised 4 information side-events during statutory meetings; PR Meetings were also an opportunity to address WH matters beyond strict PR exercise;
 - Shared National Data Sets with States Parties and,
 - Published Short Summary reports published on the web where authorised by Focal Points;
 - Hired external expertise to support the analysis of the over 520 PR questionnaires.

3. The Centre also plans to produce, alongside the Periodic Report for Europe, a Publication that will include main conclusions, trends, lessons learnt and future opportunities. The publication will be aimed at State Party representatives, Site Managers and heritage professionals, and will present the Periodic Reporting exercise in an accessible and illustrative manner.
4. The 'post-filling', processing the responses collected during Cycle II and following up on various statutory processes launched (or soon to be launched) by the States Parties as a follow-up to PR, will constitute a substantial amount of work for the Centre.
5. A few technical difficulties were encountered during the exercise, including temporary unavailability of the questionnaires, saving issues, and indications of completeness of the questionnaire and correct displays of responses in particular regarding Section II questions 4.9/5.2.
6. The WHC IT Manager constantly improved the questionnaire thanks to the extensive and useful feedback collected from the Focal Points of the Europe and North America region. It is estimated that about 3 months of IT support (pre-filling, improvement of questionnaire and data export function, PR Platform) have been put into the exercise for the Europe and North America region.
7. Lessons learnt from the above:
 - The workload associated with Periodic Reporting at the Centre is considerable. A full-time member of the Unit has always been tasked with the follow-up of the Periodic Reporting exercise, and required the assistance of part-time consultants and other temporary staff.
 - PR capacity-building represents a substantial investment in human and financial resources, but is essential to the preparation and follow-up of Periodic Reporting.
8. Each State Party organised the PR exercise in their own manner. Based on the feedback received it involved the following:
 - Designation of Focal Point and Site Manager responsible for filling in the questionnaire;
 - Organisation of national teleconferences or meetings to train the site managers on the PR questionnaire;
 - Filling in the questionnaires (ranging from 1 to 50 questionnaires depending on the State Party);
 - Replying to questions raised by Site Managers directly or liaising with the World Heritage Centre;
 - Providing feedback to the WHC on the technical aspects of the questionnaire (Europe and North America was champion on this according to our IT master).
 - Organising the follow-up on a national basis, which could comprise the one or a combination of the following:
 - i. National Action Plan;
 - ii. Use of PR results to communicate with governmental entities or others on funding;
 - iii. Enhance own monitoring mechanisms.
9. Lesson learnt from the above:
 - The PR exercise can be resource- and time-consuming for the Focal Points and Site Managers; adequate resourcing is important.
 - It is useful to set a clear objective on the use of the PR data on a national level from the start of the exercise.
10. The evaluation chapter of the Second Cycle questionnaire (Questions 6.4-6.9) showed that :
 - 3 in 4 Site Managers found that the Periodic Reporting questionnaire was easy to use and clearly understandable;
 - The Site Managers rated the level of support received during the completion of the Periodic Report questionnaires as fair to good for UNESCO, good for the States Parties Representatives, and poor to fair for the Advisory Bodies.

- Almost 90% of the Site Managers indicated that the information needed to complete the questionnaire was easily accessible to them.
- 75% of the Site Managers indicated that the questionnaire helped them better understand the importance of managing the property to maintain the Outstanding Universal Value.
- ~85% of the Site Managers indicated that it helped them better understand the importance of monitoring and reporting.
- ~70% of the Site Managers indicated that the questionnaire improved their understanding of management effectiveness.

11. During the PR meetings, Focal Points also stated that the PR exercise encouraged:

- States Parties to update their baseline data about the World Heritage properties,
- Site Managers to think about their World Heritage property in new ways;
- States Parties to consider World Heritage in a broader (inter)national context;
- National Site Managers networks to be established or reinforced;
- Strengthen communication between national and site management level.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING THE PR PROCESS BASED ON FEEDBACK

ISSUE 1: PERIODICITY AND NATURE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

12. Is the **periodicity of the Periodic Reporting exercise** still appropriate?

Note: Revision of paragraphs 199-210 and Annex 7 of the *Operational Guidelines*, all concerning PR, will be necessary. (A number of paragraphs as well as Annex 7 still pertain to First Cycle.)

13. **The questionnaire as a self-assessment tool:**

- How can the reliability and validity of the answers be improved?
- How can the self-assessment questionnaire as a whole be improved?
- Should other options be explored? Example: IUCN Outlook Assessment.

14. How can the States Parties **follow Recommendation 1** made in the Evaluation of UNESCO's Standard-Setting Work of the Culture Sector (see Decision **38 COM 5F.2**):

“Strengthen the existing results reporting framework, which includes the Periodic Reports, through the development of indicators and benchmarks to improve follow up on progress made by State Parties with the implementation of both the 1972 Convention and the 1972 Recommendation.”

- In the framework of the follow-up to the Evaluation, the World Heritage Committee noted that the current Periodic Reporting mechanism already includes a number of indicators and considered that Recommendation 1 should be addressed in the framework of the reflection period after the end of the PR Cycle II.
- The aim of this reflection should be to build on existing mechanisms, avoid overlap of reporting mechanisms and ensure greater efficiency.

15. What **other indicators** could be considered for addition?

16. Are there ways to streamline the **reporting exercises for the different Culture Conventions** of UNESCO, in particular with regards to Section I?

17. Some Focal Points have found the questionnaires too generic (Section I), and not focused enough on the state of conservation of properties (Section II).

- **How to ensure the relevance of the questionnaire questions?** Should there be a focus on select, high-relevance questions only?

18. Should **questions be removed that do not show any significant difference either between sub-regions or across the cycles**, in an effort to focus on relevant data.

19. The Periodic Reporting exercise is currently the only all-encompassing **tool to confirm or to update statutory information through follow-up statutory processes**. It is important that this aspect is not discarded for the upcoming cycles without appropriate mechanisms to replace it.

20. How to ensure efficient statutory follow-up processes without overloading State Party, Centre or Advisory Bodies.

ISSUE 2: RELIABILITY OF THE DATA

21. **How can we ensure the reliability and consistency of the answers provided**, bearing in mind that they have a direct impact on the validity of the data as a whole?
- While the Periodic Reporting questionnaire is certainly a subjective exercise, the information and data obtained must be usable in a way that is both credible and result-oriented. As soon as the reliability, consistency and validity of the results are put into question, any analysis, conclusion or recommendation derived from them loses credibility.
 - **How to reduce the amount of ambiguity and interpretation?**
 - How to ensure that the questions are formulated so as to ensure that the right data is being collected? (Pilot study groups with all regions?)

ISSUE 3: COMPARABILITY

22. How to **maintain the comparability of the questionnaire across the cycles**, in order to establish trends over time?

OPTIONS FOR THE QUESTIONNAIRE

23. **Focal Point Proposal 1**: keep the questions as they are, but **rephrase them** in an unequivocal manner, **improve their clarity** in order to **reduce the need for subjective interpretation** by the Focal Points and Site Managers.
- It is important to ensure that non-native speakers of English/French can fill out the questionnaire without major difficulties.
24. **Focal Point Proposal 2**
- A) **shorten the questionnaire** and make it more **focused on 'key indicators'** in relation to the attributes of OUV to evaluate the state of conservation, in order to improve reliability and validity of the answers.
 - See also Annex I for Dutch proposal.
 - B) in addition to the Periodic Reporting exercise, **create parallel, more regular periodic assessments** specifically dedicated to those topics most relevant for a given type of properties and/or sub-region. Feasibility? Involve WH Thematic programmes (Cities, Tourism, etc)?
 - Working on a solution offering **both global comparability and (sub-)regional usability** may help ensuring that the questionnaire is used by national and local authorities alike as a positive tool to monitor and improve the state of conservation.
25. Should more space be provided to **list other positive factors**, which were often listed in the comments section of the Second Cycle questionnaire?
26. Should the questionnaire also become a tool to report on good practice examples and success stories?
- In the present format of the questionnaire this does not seem feasible. What could be the options?

ISSUE 4: ANALYSIS & USE OF THE DATA

27. How can the **follow-up of the Second Cycle** of Periodic Reporting be best carried out?
- Region, State Party as well as Site-level: It has been **difficult to monitor** the follow-up of the First Cycle of Periodic Reporting. No specific question is currently included in the Questionnaire.
28. How can **the appropriation of the results** by Focal Points, Site Managers, and other relevant stakeholders be encouraged?
- **Data and analyses** from Periodic Reporting Cycles must be easily useable at sub-regional, national and/or regional level.
 - Note: in some cases, States Parties consider the data collected about a property and its individual analysis as more important than the region-wide results.
29. Should the analyses of the data and the future questionnaires focus on the **differences between properties and States Parties rather than similarities**?
- Examining specific cases and their unique sets of issues and solutions, rather than overall resemblances, may allow gaining clear insights into the state of conservation in the region(s).
30. How best to **cross-reference data across platforms** on World Heritage (notably the WHC SOC database).
- Note that the SOC Platform uses the same list of factors as PR, calling them “threats”, but no direct link is currently available.
31. How can the questionnaire be used as an opportunity for Focal Points and Site Managers to **share their experiences** with managing World Heritage properties?
32. How can the outputs of the PR exercise be improved – Short Summary Reports, Export function of the PR questionnaires, Regional Reports?

ISSUE 5: COORDINATION AND FUNDING OF THE THIRD CYCLE

- 33. How should the coordination of the Third Cycle be organised?**
- How can Periodic Reporting become a more States Parties-led process?
- 34. How to ensure funding of the Third Cycle**, bearing in mind the financial situation of the Organisation and the various requirements of a Periodic Reporting cycle?

CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING SPECIFIC CHAPTERS OF THE CURRENT PR QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION I

35. The Periodic Reporting questionnaire does not seem an **appropriate tool to collect information on details** for national WH contacts (TL, governmental institution responsible, site manager etc). Should relevant questions be removed?
36. The **national legal framework** (question 5.1 in the Cycle II Questionnaire) is derived from the UNESCO Natlaws Database, which lists the existing national legislation of all Member States with regard to culture and heritage protection. Is this a useful approach for State Party and/or Centre?
37. **Research** is an important activity for all World Heritage properties, but to what extent should and can it be measured as part of the questionnaire?
38. Can **(potential) areas of international cooperation** be identified within the questionnaire, along with the modalities of their implementation?
39. How can the various **media for education and awareness-raising** around heritage, and notably the 'new' media, be listed in the questionnaire and their effectiveness **measured**?
 - Should question 11.1 of the Cycle II Questionnaire be revised, taking into account new forms of media that appeared since the creation of this questionnaire?
 - How to revise the phrasing of questions in order to obtain useable data, rather than an overview of existing forms of communication?

SECTION II

40. Should the Third Cycle / PR offer an opportunity to **review the Protection and Management Requirements section of existing Statements of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUVs)**? The OG's would have to be revised accordingly.
41. Should **existing factors affecting the property** currently missing from the list be added to the Questionnaire?
 - A number of additional factors were added in the additional comments boxes such as: changes in traditional lifestyle, gentrification and urban densification, visual impacts, threats outside site management authority, pollution, disaster risk management, land-use and ownership changes. Some of which have to do with different interpretations/terminology used or language difficulties. Factor list could be reviewed in terms of ease of comprehension and comprehensiveness.
 - Perceived imbalance of factors related to nature (v. detailed) and related to human activities (rather vague including on "management activities" (see 3.13);
42. How can the **management responses to the identified current negative factors** be better shown within the questionnaire / captured in the analysis reports?
43. How to improve the questionnaire with regard to the specific issues of **transboundary** and **serial transnational properties**?

ANNEX I:

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING: THE DUTCH PERSPECTIVE

By René Wokke & Dré van Marrewijk

IMMEDIATE CAUSE FOR THIS MEMO

The Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting in Europe and North-America is nearing its finalization. The process has been long and not always satisfactory. Long questionnaires with – as it seems – less relevant and sometimes superfluous questions were not always stimulating for site managers and national focal points to complete. This led us to the question: can it be done in a different, more efficient and more effective way, without losing its significance: monitoring the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the State of Conservation of World Heritage properties? This memo tries to give a start to that discussion, with a focus on the evaluation of the state of conservation of properties.

THE GOAL OF THE SECOND CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING, SECTION II

The goal of the PR Section II is, by means of a questionnaire – a self-report, to gather insight in the State of Conservation (SOC) of the property and changes in the SOC. Ultimately, it is important to know whether the OUV, the authenticity and integrity of property is intact. There is a direct relation between the State of Conservation of the property and the qualities that make up OUV, authenticity and integrity. When aiming for a concise and relevant questionnaire, the questions should focus on the above mentioned aspects. Questions that are less relevant in relation to OUV, authenticity, integrity and SOC should be reconsidered. Less relevant are questions that are ambiguous in the interpretation to the OUV, authenticity, integrity and SOC of the property. For example a question about the percentage of full- and part-timers employed by the site has no direct relation to the above mentioned aspect. A questionnaire with more meaningful questions will strengthen the involvement of the site manager which will probably lead to more reliable and valid answering of the questionnaire

SINGULAR QUESTIONING AND CONCISENESS

CONNECTING CHAPTER 3 AND 4.

The negative factors mentioned in chapter 3 and the management needs mentioned in chapter 4 are in most cases related. In the questionnaire no link is made between the answers of chapter 3 and the answers of chapter 4. For example a negative factor “humidity” (chapter 3) can have a relation with a lack of money (chapter 4), or ‘graffiti’ that is related to a poor availability of ‘enforcement’. In the PR Section II an (action) plan has to be written for each negative factor. Also here there is a relation between this (action) plan and management needs in Chapter 4 but in the questionnaire they are not connected. If the PR Section II were to connect management needs and negative factors this would provide more meaningful information which is a better basis to make action plans. It could lead to a more concise questionnaire.

MAKE EXPLICIT THE CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATION

The questionnaire should make a distinction between direct causes and underlying causes.

An example: in chapter 3 a property mentions ‘commercial development’ as a negative factor and in chapter 4 it mentions: 1) ‘deficiencies in the management plan’, 2) ‘lack of coordination’ and 3) ‘lack of money’. All these management deficiencies could have a relation to ‘commercial development’ but we want of course to know if

and how they are related. There could be a direct relation between the lack of coordination and commercial development. But the lack of coordination can be caused by the lack of a management plan. And the fact that there is no management plan can have a relation with a lack of money. When we know the exact relation between causes and effects (negative factors) the results of the questionnaire can be more easily and more validated and interpreted.

TRENDS AND SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS.

With the outcomes of the subsequent PR cycles we want to decipher trends, changes over time. With objective measurable topics it is possible to make a reliable conclusion about trends. It is more difficult to decipher a trend on subjective topics (and the PR Section II has many of these topics). There are 2 reasons for this:

1. There will be a change in the people who fill in the subsequent questionnaires. Different people will have different opinions and will answer the questionnaire differently even when the site hasn't changed at all. When comparing the results between one PR cycle and the other there will be different answers on the same questions even when the site has not changed. This could lead to false conclusions.
2. Due to new insights on heritage management, new technologies, a changing world and other factors, the opinions of people will change through the years. So even when the same people answer the subsequent PR's with no change in the SOC of the property, one will give different answers to the same questions.

Due to both factors it is hard to compare outcomes of subsequent PR cycles and decipher a trend in the SOC of the site. This can be, partly, helped by asking in the PR an assessment of the situation of the site during the last PR cycle and one could even ask for a forecast about the SOC of the site at the time of the next PR cycle. This technique is successfully used in designing tests, for example, to measure the effectiveness of psychological therapies. The above mentioned effects will have no influence and a possible trend in the SOC of the site will be more reliable with this technique.

EFFECTIVE PROTECTIVE MEASURES THAT HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED

We believe that the outcomes of the PR Section II could have a more practical use if sites can learn from others, if the PR gives information about the 'Best Practices' of the sites. In the questionnaire there is a lot of attention on negative factors. By contrast, previously successfully implemented methods to counter any negative factors play no role in the questionnaire. We realize it might be hard to extract 'best practices' in a questionnaire in a simple way, but it should be worth the effort.

PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

A straightforward and concise PR Section II will cost less money and time. Involvement of the site holders will be strengthened and will enhance a more serious and thorough response of the questionnaire.

A high quality questionnaire will have a long life cycle, so results between the various PR cycles can be better compared because the questions in the questionnaire will be the same over time.

Based on points made in this memo:

- Focus on relevant questions;
- More focus on SOC, OUV and its authenticity and integrity;
- Relate cause and effects;
- Increase the reliability of finding trends;
- Use best practices to learn from others;

we believe that it should be possible to design a more effective and efficient PR cycle with more reliable and usable results.

