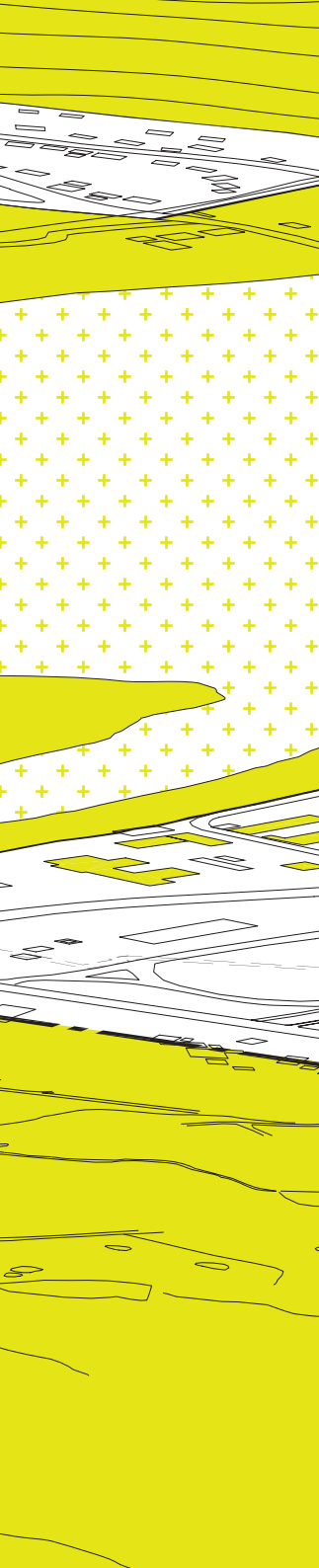




FRANCE-UNESCO CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT

**Putting French expertise
to work for the world's heritage**



Whether in the form of natural sites, geological features and wilderness preserves, historic monuments, archaeological sites, ensembles of urban or rural built heritage, roads or sites of historical significance, interest in the world's heritage is steadily increasing. At the same time, concern for the conservation of these sites has become more widespread and heritage-related issues have become more complex. Heritage can be used by a people to outline their identity and values, and therefore as a way to cope with today's rapid socio-economic changes. Far from resisting change, heritage based projects are a vector for sustainable development. But, whether heritage be cultural or natural, it is above all fragile and precious, and great attention needs to be paid in order to maintain its diversity.

The principles of the Agreement

Signed in 1997, the Co-operation Agreement between UNESCO and the French government for the protection and enhancement of the monumental, urban and natural heritage was established to enhance understanding of cultural and natural heritage, to encourage the integration of the preservation of heritage in urban and territorial development projects, and to ensure the inclusion of a social element to heritage conservation.

A working tool

The Agreement supports UNESCO's actions to protect and enhance cultural and natural heritage through technical and financial aid that draws on France's acknowledged expertise in heritage conservation. French know-how was developed over many years of experience and specialised educational and training programmes. Consequently France can put the skills of a wide variety of professionals and experts – including researchers, historians, archaeologists, architects, curators, urban planners, restoration professionals, legal experts and economists – at UNESCO's disposal, thus contributing to its fieldwork in the countries that request its assistance.

Over the last ten years approximately one hundred projects have been undertaken in more than fifty countries throughout the world.



Objectives

Contribute to the World Heritage Global Strategy to develop a more representative and balanced World Heritage List.

Develop long-term heritage projects that take account of both economic and social factors with a view to achieving sustainable development.

Serve as a leverage to the existing potential of developing countries that lack the financial and technical resources to undertake preservation projects on their own by participating in heritage protection efforts in those countries.

Promote decentralised co-operation for heritage protection involving regional or local French bodies, and help implement international aid and co-operation programmes that are more democratic and more participatory.

Provide impetus for the development of co-operation agreements and other projects financed through multilateral or bilateral mechanisms.

Explore new approaches and themes, such as the “Rivers and Heritage” and the “Heritage, Local Governance and Poverty Alleviation” initiatives, linked to UNESCO’s normative tools and the development objectives of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Activities

The Agreement activities follow the World Heritage Committee’s objectives and priorities.

Preparatory assistance

By providing preparatory assistance, UNESCO seeks to help countries identify their heritage properties, and those which might be nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List. UNESCO’s French partners contribute to the World Heritage Committee’s strategy through participation in seminars designed to raise public awareness and by organising field studies by experts to help countries prepare nomination proposals.

Building heritage skills

Another priority of UNESCO’s mission is to build heritage-related skills at the national and local levels. UNESCO’s French partners contribute by developing long-term experimental projects at sites following their inscription on the World Heritage List. These might include training for heritage professionals in the country concerned, or involvement in specific areas such as heritage inventories, cultural mapping, urban preservation, land-use management and landscape preservation, restoration, conservation and heritage enhancement. Other initiatives might aim at strengthening legal and administrative frameworks and helping improve management of cultural resources.

French Partners

Four different French ministries are affiliated with the Co-operation Agreement: the *Ministère des affaires étrangères* [Foreign Affairs], the *Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication* [Culture and Communication], the *Ministère du Transport, de l'Équipement, du Tourisme et de la Mer* [Transport, Planning, Tourism and Maritime affairs], the *Ministère de l'Écologie et du Développement durable* [Ecology and Sustainable Development].

Also associated in the activities of the Co-operation Agreement are the French Development Agency and a public financial institution, the *Caisse des dépôts et consignations*.

Local authorities at different levels are also involved: the regions of Centre and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, the cities of Angers, Arles, Chinon, Grenoble, Lyon, the urban district of Lille, and the *Mission Val de Loire* (World Heritage).

There are also partnerships with several architectural schools and universities, regional natural parks and associations concerned with the urban heritage or inter-city development: the *Association nationale des villes et pays d'art et d'histoire et des villes à secteur sauvegardé*, the *Cités Unies France*.

The secretariat of the France-UNESCO Co-operation Agreement is run jointly by the World Heritage Centre, UNESCO and the Department of Heritage and Architecture at the French Ministry of Culture and Communication.

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France-UNESCO
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