

Regional Workshop on World Heritage in Pacific Island Countries

Tanoa Hotel Nadi – Fiji, 1 - 3 November 2023



WORKSHOP OVERVIEW



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1. Workshop Report

A Regional Workshop on World Heritage in Pacific Island Countries was held at the Tanoa Hotel, Nadi, Fiji from the 1st to 3rd of November 2023.

Purpose and Objectives of the Workshop

The workshop was aligned with recommendations outlined in the Pacific Action Plan for World Heritage 2021-2025 and the Regional Action Plan that was endorsed at the Extended 45th Session of the World Heritage held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from the 10th to 25th September 2023.

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together representatives of all State Parties from the Pacific Island Countries to explore and develop comprehensive recommendations for World Heritage considerations in the Pacific. While emphasizing a national-led inventory of potential World Heritage Sites, the workshop intention was to enhance awareness and comprehension of the World Heritage Convention. At the same time, to have integrated topical discussions around relevant themes such as customary land and the involvement of indigenous communities in the World Heritage context.

The key objectives of the workshop were to;

- Expand the knowledge of State Parties about World Heritage processes, regional experiences and assistance options;
- Review PIC's specific needs and determine how they could realistically progress, short to mid-term actions at national level with a specific focus on reviewing existing and potential Tentative Lists;
- Encourage participants and invigorate their interest regarding the potential of World Heritage and appreciate that they are part of a positive momentum phase for World Heritage in the region.

Design and Management of Workshop Program

The UNESCO Office for the Pacific States engaged a small team of experts that had, in their majority, contributed to recent work on World Heritage in the Pacific. The Workshop Agenda and Program were designed by the Technical Expert Lead Tony O'Keeffe and the rest of the Expert group comprising of David Sheppard, Anita Smith and Jeffrey Noro, in consultation with the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States Programme Specialist at. In addition to the preparatory efforts, the expert team also facilitated the delivery of the workshop, and elaborated the post-workshop documentations, as well as facilitated the post-workshop webinar held a month after the workshop

The expertise provided to facilitate the workshop was diverse and represented a unique Pacific experience. Tony O'Keeffe and David Sheppard both had many years of expertise working in the Pacific heritage space through their engagement with the IUCN and SPREP. They both worked as consultants and provided reports that were referenced in the workshop documentations.

Associate Professor Anita Smith is an anthropologist who has worked in the Pacific for many years and is specialist in the World Heritage Listing nominations having worked on several

heritage sites getting nominated and listed on World Heritage. Jeffrey Noro is a Papua New Guinea who has worked in various capacities to develop community conservation and livelihood projects. Jeffrey was brought into the group to provide a grassroots perspective to the WH discussions.

The technical expert team were given about three weeks to put together the workshop agenda. During the week period, they held regular 1 and a half virtual meetings every Friday in the three weeks leading to the workshop. Tony O’Keeffe was instrumental in coordinating those meetings and communicating with the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States to ensure appropriate speakers were invited to give presentations and also made aware of the timing and audience of the workshop.

The workshop was arranged as a mixture of plenary sessions comprising of PowerPoint presentations followed by Question and Answer Sessions in the early part of the day. Workshop sessions followed on after the conclusions of the Plenary sessions. While the majority of speakers presented in person, the workshop had three online speakers in the program. The time allocation for each speaker in the Plenary Sessions was 20 minutes.

Given the cultural context of the Pacific, whereby storytelling, visual representations, oral communication and participative interactions form a large part of learning, the expert team in agreement with the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States designed the workshop to be interactive. The sharing of experiences using open and broad questions on the first day of the workshop was instrumental in setting the scene and creating an environment for representatives of the Pacific Island Countries to exchange and have conversations formally and informally.

During the design of program, the expert team also determined for most of the participating countries to be included and have a voice on the agenda. This meant that amount of time for discussions on the World Heritage Conventions and Procedures were cut back significantly in a shift away from monologue style of presentation and instead encourage dialogue and a participatory approach in line with Pacific cultural context where community learn effectively through storytelling and sharing of experiences. By learning from the experiences of others, the Pacific people are seen to apply knowledge impactfully. Therefore, the most recent experiences from the Cook Islands on elaborating their Tentative List and the processes they are following, was critical to the agenda.

Within the regional context, the inclusion of Mr. Denise Rose to represent the Guditj-Miring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, was valuable to the overall purpose and objective of the workshop. The experiences from a First Nations led World Heritage Listing was very informative, not just for the nomination processes, but most importantly on the challenges and barriers they had to overcome to inscribe the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape as a World Heritage Site. It took 30 years from nomination to inscription, and that was a great practical learning point for participants.

All in all, the design of the workshop agenda was well suited to the Pacific audience. It was culturally aligned and set the workshop environment to reflect the Pacific way of making connections, listening and a place to a dialogue.

Benefits of In-Person Workshop

In the Pacific context, a largely oral society, having this workshop in-person was crucial to developing a workable regional plan and determining consensual recommendations for the

benefit for natural and cultural heritage. Communication, team building and learning often happens through social interactions, non-verbal communication, and stories that are shared during coffee breaks and social events.

In this light, the workshop was successful in ensuring there was a collective Pacific voice in identifying the impending barriers to the management of World Heritage Sites and reaching consensual recommendations on what needs to be done to advance the preservation of these sites. The sharing of experiences and discussions on the nomination process were advanced beyond the workshop presentations during the tea and lunch breaks, hence increasing the value of the workshop.

Response from Workshop Participants

Feedback from the workshop participants was favorable and indicated that delivery of the workshop was satisfactory.

Mr. Alessandro Balsamo, Head of Nominations at the World Heritage Centre, gave an encouraging comment that the Pacific has given him a very different experience when it comes to workshops. He pointed out that in the Pacific workshop participants engaged and interacted with each other very openly and had a unified approach in the workshop activities.

APPENDIX 1: The Workshop

1. Official Opening

The workshop was blessed with a word of prayer by Mr. Tumutalei Foliga who attended the workshop as the Principle National Reserves and Protected Areas Officer with the Samoan Government.

Following the blessing, the Director for Culture, Heritage and Arts, Mr. Collin Sowani Yabaki welcomed all participants to Fiji and the workshop on behalf of the Fiji government. Mr. Yabaki acknowledged the work that UNESCO was undertaking in the Pacific to preserve Natural and Cultural heritage sites, and the values of these sites to the people and communities in the region. He made reference to the “Old Levuka Township” as a prime example. He further mentioned the role of the government (State Party) in enacting legislations to support cultural and natural heritage within the Pacific Region.

The next opening remarks were made by Ms. Shamila Nair-Bedouille, the Director for the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States. While speaking online, Ms. Nair-Bedouille reflected on the diversity and richness of both natural and cultural heritage and role of UNESCO in supporting State Parties’ efforts to preserve sites with Outstanding Universal Values.

The Australian Government, through its Deputy Secretary of the Department of Climate Change Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), Ms Rachel Parry congratulated UNESCO for organizing the workshop and for its role in the preservation of World Heritage Listed sites within the Pacific region. She affirmed the Australian government’s support for the work that UNESCO and the respective State Parties were doing in the region, further stating that the government was looking forward to more partnership into the future.

In concluding the workshop opening session Jeffrey Noro, who attended as the Expert Consultant in Pacific Policy and Planning, gave a Keynote address on importance of preserving cultural and natural heritage in the Pacific Region. He used the Kuk Early Agricultural Site as a case study to highlight the rich biodiversity, diverse cultures, and historical significance of the Pacific. The Kuk site, with its advanced agricultural practices dating back 7,000 to 10,000 years, services as an inspiration for cultural identity, strength, guidance, and prosperity. In concluding his keynote address, he urged participants to delve beneath the surface, acknowledging the intricate connections and meanings in the regions’ storis and conversations.

2. Day One Presentations and Workshop

The World Heritage Convention and its procedure - Alessandro Balsamo, UNESCO OH Program for SIDs, UNESCO WH Centre

Alessandro Balsamo gave an overview of the World Heritage Convention which was developed and published in 1972 in recognition of the way people interact with nature, and the fundamental need to preserve between the two. He further provided the four key procedures required for the implementation of the Convention.

Details of the Procedures are available online at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>

World Heritage Regional Framework Action Plan - Sachiko Haraguchi Coordinator, WH Programme for SIDs, UNESCO WH Centre

The Regional Framework Action Plan (“the Plan”) for Asia and the Pacific was adopted at the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 2023. The Plan has 5 Strategic Objectives for the successful implementation of the Convention in the Asia Pacific Region. The Plan is a performance monitoring tool on the implementation of the Convention by the respective State Parties.

Key Findings of the 3rd Cycle of the Periodic Reporting (Pacific) - Tony O’Keeffe

In his presentation, Tony discussed the global context of World Heritage (WH) properties, emphasizing the significance of the Asia-Pacific (AP) region, which holds a diverse array of 1,200 WH sites. Notably, one-third of recently inscribed sites worldwide in the last decade are within the AP region, with a concentration in the Asian part. Tony highlighted the efficacy of periodic reporting as a monitoring tool, presenting a questionnaire with two sections addressing state-level and site-level reporting.

Key findings from the presentation include

- common challenges across the Asia-Pacific region, such as climate change and natural disasters, the need for better representation of First Nations culture in WH processes,
- the importance of capacity building, the intersection of nature and culture with community involvement,
- challenges posed by multiple agencies lacking coordination, enhanced understanding of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV),
- funding constraints,
- and the complexity of interpreting and enforcing OUV.

Despite these challenges, Tony underscored the positive contributions of the WH system.

Discussions

During the discussion, it was revealed that several Pacific countries, including Samoa and Tonga (approximately five in total), have natural World Heritage Committees. In Papua New Guinea (PNG), Jim Onga highlighted the existence of various committees relevant to World Heritage, with established mechanisms for coordination. The Pacific Heritage Hub (PHH), initially based at the University of the South Pacific (USP), aimed to focus on natural and cultural heritage capacity building. However, USP, which won the bid following a call from a World Heritage meeting in the region, faced challenges due to a lack of self-generated funding, rendering it dormant. Participants, including Mere and Anita, emphasized the importance of supporting the PHH, particularly for training young people, but funding difficulties, especially for ongoing training, posed a significant obstacle to its functionality.

World Heritage site management perspective Rock Island Southern Lagoon Palau – Andrea Uchel, Chief Resilience Officer at Koror State Government, Palau

Andrea Uchel, Chief Resilience Officer at Koror State Government in Palau, discussed the management perspective of the Rock Island Southern Lagoon (RISL) from a World Heritage site standpoint. RISL is listed as a mixed site and Andrea’s role has been focused on working with the people and facilitating community interactions and collaboration to achieve objectives. With

11 years since its inscription and facing various challenges, RISL, serves as a platform for learning and sharing lessons. In 2021, Palau developed the RISL Resilience Strategy to ensure the integration of urban and natural environments and placing importance on capacity building for Reef Resilience. This strategy is part of a global World Heritage marine initiative involving sites in Belize, New Caledonia, and Ningaloo Reef, and facilitates shared experiences and engagement at all levels.

The strategy's development involved extensive consultations with local communities, NGOs, and other World Heritage marine sites, supported by literature reviews and research results on the RI reef. Resilience changes and strategies were formulated to address challenges hindering resilience. However, Andrea noted a constraint in the disconnect between communities' access to funding and the availability of funding itself. Threats to RISL, identified through a community survey, include:

pollution, sea level rise, and the complex relationship with tourism—a crucial aspect that can be both an opportunity and a challenge. The goal is to preserve the green brand and prevent tourism from impacting the natural values of the site. The management plan for RISL, developed with funding, prioritizes specific programs, and relies on extensive partnerships, with the entire process led locally, focusing on strong governance and an effective advisory group.

Challenges and Opportunities for World Heritage across the Pacific Region – David Shepperd and Tony O’Keeffe

Mr. Tony O’Keeffe presented on the World Heritage Plan (Weaving Nature with Culture) for the Pacific Region 2021 to 2025. Based on an extensive stakeholder consultative approach that identified challenges and opportunities, the World Heritage Plan aimed at (1) increase community, national, regional, and global awareness of the heritage in the Pacific; (2) strengthen the foundation of sustainable implementation of the WH Convention; and (3) build global recognition and support for the conservation of the unique heritage of the Pacific.

Mr. David Sheppard presented on his report of the Natural World Heritage in Oceania. In this report he pointed out the progress and prospects in relation to natural and missed heritage sites in the Oceania region, including the territories.

Both reports were shared with participants before the workshop.

Box 1: Workshop Session – Looking at World Heritage at the National Level
Groups share their experience

Workshop Session 1 – Looking at World Heritage at the National Level
Groups share their experience.

Summary: During the working group discussions on World Heritage (WH) at the national level, participants identified key roles, challenges, and opportunities:

Group 1

Roles: Identifying potential sites, establishing connections between cultural agencies, liaison with other agencies, ensuring effective implementation of conventions, and working with local communities.

Issues: Multiple ministries handling WH management, land ownership challenges, development impact, lack of expertise and legislation, and insufficient funding.

Opportunities: Sustainable tourism, expertise sharing, and financing opportunities.

Group 2

Issues: Lack of practical experience in site management, funding shortages, archiving challenges for cultural sites, natural disasters, political transitions, and lack of political will.

Opportunities: Community engagement, communication aligned with the Pacific Way, building connections with elders, and benefiting from their knowledge.

Group 3

Roles: Diverse roles and expertise, mainly on the cultural side.

Issues: Lack of clear policies/legislation in some countries, community awareness and involvement challenges, and unclear definitions of heritage.

Opportunities: More community engagement, increased staffing, better implementation, improved funding utilization, safeguarding heritage through tourism, cultural exchanges, joint management programs, and education.

Group 4

Discussion Points

- Issues with Chief Roy Mata site, requiring novel funding approaches.
- Palau faced challenges due to national/state-level split.
- Lessons learned from East Rennell regarding managing expectations.
- Challenges in Tonga with lengthy processes for proposed Tentative List sites.
- Flexibility of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) criteria discussed.
- Positive news from PNG regarding the Kuk Management Plan and community consensus.
- Acknowledgment of slow and burdensome WH processes for Pacific Island Countries (PICs).

3. Day Two Presentations and Workshop

Worked Heritage Nomination process – preliminary Assessment process phase - Alessandro Balsamo

Mr. Balsamo provided a summary of the WH nomination process highlighting the relationship between World Heritage Properties and other protected area types and systems. Of particular importance is the use of Outstanding Universal Value as the measure of qualification in the nominating which protected area should be on the WH Listing.

He also provided an overview of the step by step process involved in submitting a nomination.

WH Tentative Listing submission – Pacific experiences - Anita Smith, Associate Professor, Archaeology and Heritage, La Trobe University

Associate Professor Anita Smith has long history working in the Pacific on WH. Using her most recent experience in assisting the Cook Island to submit their nomination for WH Listing. Using the analogy for the cake, she emphasized that the nomination into the WH Listing was just an icing on the cake. The consultative processes in the communities and the State Parties form the base of the cake as the most foundational action.

First Nations led World Heritage nomination of Budj Bim Cultural Landscape WH site - Denis Rose Gunditj- Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (meeting virtually)

Mr. Denis Rose was introduced by Ms. Amy Donaldson, the Assistant Director for International Heritage, with DCCEEW. Denis has long history on cultural management largely through his involvement with the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site, the oldest and largest example of aquaculture in the world.

In his presentation, Denis, a traditional owner, shared insights into the lengthy process leading to the inscription of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape as a World Heritage Site. Collaborating closely with Anita Smith, the nomination involved navigating various stages, starting with the initial proposal in 1989, land acquisitions, development of a Budj Bim Sustainable Development Plan in 2002, extensive research and community consultation, and finally, inscription in 2019. The site's key feature is its 6,600-year-old traditional aquaculture systems, with ongoing discoveries of new sites. Challenges included addressing freehold properties, federal government scrutiny, and the need for a peer review of the nomination. Despite obstacles, the traditional owners' persistence, control of the process, and effective communication of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) were crucial in the successful inscription. Denis emphasized the importance of openness, experienced consultants, and the collaboration of partners and researchers throughout the challenging World Heritage nomination journey, highlighting that, in essence, it's about people and their connection to the land.

Discussions

In response to Tony's question about the side benefits of the lengthy World Heritage nomination process, Denis shared a personal insight. He recounted his childhood experiences of catching eels using various methods and his knowledge of preparing and cooking them. However, through the nomination process, Denis gained a deeper understanding of the biology of eels and learned more about their traditional and historical context, realizing that there was much more to discover. The process not only enhanced his knowledge of the site and its Outstanding Universal Values but also underscored the importance of integrating traditional knowledge with modern

scientific understanding. Denis highlighted the critical support received from various levels throughout the process as instrumental and vital to its success.

Legislative, regulatory and custodial arrangements, and community leadership and motivation for the preservation of heritage sites - Jeffrey Noro

In his presentation, Jeffrey discussed his experience working with local communities, particularly in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the Solomon Islands, emphasizing the importance of close collaboration. He highlighted his involvement with the PNG government's national protected area (PA) policy, initiated in 2014 and approved in 2018. The policy, aligned with World Heritage considerations, aimed to protect natural and cultural values through its five pillars, particularly focusing on managing the PA network. Jeffrey addressed challenges in coordinating large PAs, often exceeding 200,000 hectares, due to numerous community groups, rugged terrain, and infrastructure limitations. Traditional communal landownership posed difficulties in enforcing national policies, and benefit sharing was a complex issue. Jeffrey's work concentrated on Community Conserved Areas, involving projects to implement policies, language translation challenges, and efforts to link biodiversity conservation with sustainable agriculture. The project fostered research partnerships, leading to the discovery of new species, and implemented a research permit system serving as a model for Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Their Integrated Environment and Economic Strategy aimed to connect conservation with development, featuring a Melbourne shop selling products from the site, with future plans including coffee sales and improved market access. The success of the project was attributed to strong and effective partnerships with various collaborators.

World Heritage community engagement in East Rennell World Heritage site - Trevor Maeda

Trevor, affiliated with the Solomon Islands Environment and Conservation Division (ECD), discussed the challenges faced in working with East Rennell (ER) since its 1998 inscription on the World Heritage (WH) List. The difficulty lies in convincing national and provincial governments of the site's value amidst competing economic interests in forestry and mining. ER, a customary owned and managed WH site, is unique as one of the few where communities reside within the property, utilizing its natural resources for livelihoods. The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of ER is rooted in globally unique ecosystems and species diversity, emphasizing its role as a living natural laboratory. However, ER faced threats, leading to its inclusion in the World Heritage in Danger List in 2013 due to logging and mining. Challenges include internal issues with local committee management and the State Party's dissatisfaction with local-level management.

Post the 2013 Endangered Listing, the Solomon Islands government committed to fulfilling obligations, implementing six key actions outlined in a report. The major challenge lies in demonstrating tangible benefits to local communities, grappling with inadequate infrastructure, and seeking ways to engage stakeholders effectively. Despite these hurdles, various projects, such as those by UNDP, Global Environment Facility, Birdlife International, and NZ MFAT, have provided support, reflecting an increasing level of commitment from different parties. Despite challenges like the lack of support from the State Party, COVID-19, and inadequate cooperation between different government levels and agencies, a positive aspect is the commitment of the Solomon Islands government.

Discussions: Links between community and policy

During the Q&A session, Jim from PNG inquired about the link between Jeffrey's project and the relevant PNG Government agency. Jeffrey clarified that the project was aligned with the implementation of the national protected area policy, emphasizing the importance of engaging with the right government agencies/systems within Pacific Island countries. Jim, referencing the challenges faced by Trevor in East Rennell (ER), suggested exploring different sources of support, including technology like drones for monitoring natural resources, and highlighted the significance of having local staff for effective site management. Trevor agreed with Jim, acknowledging the challenges in securing resources to support local staff despite the recognized importance of such initiatives. The discussion underscored the need for better links between communities and governments in Pacific Island countries and the ongoing challenges in resource allocation for effective site management.

World Heritage Tentative Listing work in the Cook Islands. Outlining the work with the Maungaroa community and how the listing stages have occurred - Ngatuaine Maui Director of Identity, Ministry of Cultural Development, Cook Islands and Anita Smith, Consultant

Ngatuaine Maui, the Director of Identity at the Ministry of Cultural Development in the Cook Islands, provided insights into the challenges and progress related to World Heritage (WH) in the Cook Islands. With 15 islands covering vast ocean expanses, community consultation is challenging due to isolation, expensive travel, and limited internet connectivity in outer islands. The Cultural and Historic Places Act of 1994 and Cook Islands' ratification of the WH Convention in 2009, along with the recent adoption of a National Heritage Policy, form the legal framework for cultural heritage. The slow and steady progress in WH initiatives included ratification in 2009, a national consultation in 2012 identifying potential sites like the Maungaroa Cultural Landscape, and the initiation of the Cook Islands WH Project in 2023, covering scoping visits, capacity building, community consultation, and Tentative List review.

The consultation process involved translating WH concepts into the local language, highlighting challenges and opportunities. Despite language barriers, the local communities grasped the high standards set by the WH criteria, emphasizing that it is not an "easy ride." Key outcomes included finalizing the Tentative List and agreement on establishing a natural WH committee for the Cook Islands. Lessons from the process emphasized the need for increased awareness of WH, effective communication in the local language, government support, and targeted assistance to facilitate the WH process. The importance of translating and communicating concepts effectively, particularly in the context of Pacific Island Countries (PICs), was underscored.

The underwater Cultural Heritage of Chuuk Lagoon – Federated States of Micronesia

Misters Peter Alten and Ranger Walter gave a presentation on the current state of Chuuk Lagoon. The lagoon was occupied by the Japanese and was used as the base for the Imperial Japanese Navy at the end of World War I. In 1944, during the height of the World War II, the entire naval fleet was attacked and destroyed by the US Navy in 1944 and created what is today known as the world's largest "graveyard of ships and aircrafts." Among the over 60 ships and more than 200 aircrafts were 3 oil tankers that were sunk into the sea. There is now an increasing threat from oil leakage on the marine life on the lagoon and the impact can potentially reach New Zealand to the south. The Japanese government and most recently, Australia, have been working on removing the oil from the vessels. It is a task that will take years.

Whilst the Chuuk Lagoon is classified as a Heritage site under various conventions, the government of FSM is working to have it has a World Heritage Site.

Workshop Session 3 on World Heritage Tentative Listing and nomination processes

Participants were divided into four groups to have discussions on the WH Tentative Listing and nomination process, and then report back. The responses received from each group are provided in Box 2.

Box 2: Workshop Session on World Heritage Tentative Listing and nomination processes

Group 1

The working group underscored several key considerations for successful World Heritage (WH) engagement, particularly in the Pacific region. First and foremost, a clear understanding of a site's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is essential, emphasizing its importance and how it meets the threshold of OUV. Effective communication is highlighted as a crucial element, stressing the importance of knowing and respecting correct protocols when engaging with local communities. They emphasized that going through the appropriate protocols is essential for successful communication. It is important to communicate the implications of WH to the community, ensuring that expectations are realistic. Questions from community leaders, such as the benefits of WH for the community, what will be involved, and the overall implications, must be addressed. The group suggested that improvement in communication and community engagement is necessary for WH initiatives to succeed in the Pacific.

Group 2

The group emphasized the importance of effective communication in the context of engaging with local communities and individuals during the nomination process. Clear understanding and adherence to local protocols are crucial, along with involving the right individuals and consulting appropriate networks. It is vital for transparent and clear communication, highlighting the potential negative impact of poor communication, which can lead to suspicions. To ensure success, presentations should be clear, concise, and practical. Clear understanding of the attributes of the nominated place, emphasizing the importance of clarity in conveying the unique characteristics and values of the site under consideration are crucial.

Group 3

The group highlighted the principles for proposing and considering sites for World Heritage (WH) designation. It asserts that all proposed sites must possess significant value at the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) level, with a specific emphasis on cultural WH sites needing to have cultural significance and convey a narrative. Effective communication is highlighted as crucial, emphasizing the importance of informing people about the key aspects of a site, its importance, and inherent values. Managing expectations is deemed vital, requiring transparency about what WH involvement entails and what it does not. The group also stressed the importance of establishing clear and well-defined boundaries for nominated sites, emphasizing the engagement and involvement of landowners in this boundary development process.

Group 4

Need to document values, based on inputs from researchers and the community input. Need to have a clear case for OUV. This is often stimulated by, and supported from, a range of sources.

4. Day Three Presentations and Workshop

International assistance and technical support under the World Heritage Convention

Sachiko Haraguchi UNESCO

Sachiko presented on the World Heritage (WH) Fund, the primary financing mechanism under the WH Convention, comprising 1% of country contributions to UNESCO. All States Parties have access to this fund, with special provisions for sites in danger, prioritizing Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Africa, and sites on the Danger List. The fund covers technical cooperation, disaster response, and can be accessed by various entities, including national UNESCO commissions and government departments. Approval processes involve checks and evaluations, with different thresholds for the WH Centre Director, Chair of the WH Committee, and the Committee itself. In the Asia Pacific region, projects totaling approximately \$500K were approved last year, with cultural projects receiving the most significant allocation, notably in Sri Lanka. Over the past decade in the Pacific, 13 requests were made, 9 approved, totaling \$387,074, predominantly for cultural initiatives. UNESCO's Apia office and the WH Centre in Paris offer assistance, and online courses like FONDOSCULTURA support fundraising. Thematic programs, including those for marine sites, SIDS, and education, provide additional support, aligning with the SIDS UNESCO Action Plan relevant for the Pacific. The presentation also highlighted a "participation program" for Member States and the Forum for Young Professionals, fostering youth engagement in the Pacific.

Q & A Session

The participants in the discussion raised various points related to World Heritage (WH) funding and support for Pacific Island Countries (PICs). David highlighted the need for a larger share of funding for the Pacific, referencing the Pacific WH Action Plan. Anita suggested making grant writing online courses available for PIC staff, which Sachiko affirmed as a possibility. Mere discussed the original role of the Pacific Heritage Hub in coordinating grants, emphasizing the importance of active participation from countries. Ellen shared experiences from the Marshall Islands and Chuuk in preparing proposals, underscoring the value of international consultants. The discussion also covered the Regional Action Plan, concerns about Danger Listed WH sites, and the coordination between natural and cultural agencies. Sachiko and Ellen were identified as key contacts for proposal writing and accessing funds. The need for proper training, coordination between ministries, and the flexibility of the Regional WH Action Plan were highlighted. Australia offered support for capacity building, emphasizing the importance of reaching out for assistance. Tony summarized the national and regional actions outlined in his Action Plan, emphasizing its role as a guideline rather than a mandate. Overall, the discussion emphasized the collaborative and supportive efforts needed for successful WH initiatives in the Pacific.

Financial and technical assistance - Open session Moderated by Tony O'Keeffe

The discussion touched on several key points related to World Heritage (WH) in the Pacific. Palau's Andrea emphasized the importance of engaging with the local people to understand their priorities, acknowledging the regional variations in needs. David and Tony clarified that the Regional Action Plan serves as a guideline, allowing each country to tailor it to their national context. Palau's suggestion for a compendium of resources was supported by Ellen, who mentioned the availability of informative attachments and a resource mobilization guidebook.

Annette Kuehlem, a consultant, highlighted funding opportunities from the German Foreign Office for WH in the Pacific, encouraging exploration of various potential donors. Amy Donaldson from DCCEEW provided insights into Australia's UNESCO involvement, mentioning considerations for running for the Executive Board and expressing willingness to support Pacific Island Countries (PICs) on their WH efforts.

Pacific World Heritage sites and opportunities to develop sustainable tourism - Christina Leale Gale Sustainable Tourism Manager SPTO

The South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) highlighted its focus on sustainable tourism in the Pacific during a recent presentation. SPTO, with 22 member countries, collaborates closely with other CROP agencies, emphasizing research, marketing, and the promotion of sustainable tourism. The 2030 SPTO Vision aims for resilient, prosperous, and inclusive tourism that benefits communities and preserves cultural and environmental heritage.

SPTO and UNESCO collaborated on a review of tourism and World Heritage (WH) in the Pacific, marking the organization's first examination of Pacific WH sites. The review, initiated in 2018, sought sustainable development opportunities for tourism in the region. Three main objectives were outlined: prioritizing community involvement in tourism planning, leveraging the UNESCO WH brand for sustainable tourism assets, and developing a Pacific WH Destination Tourism Strategy.

The study included ten sites, with field visits to East Rennell and the Levuka Historical Port Town. The project team consulted with stakeholders, site managers, UNESCO focal points, and relevant ministries. The review identified key lessons, including challenges related to heritage perceptions, limited visitor experiences, insufficient infrastructure, and inadequate resources for site management. A lack of community benefits, coordination, and awareness about cultural tourism opportunities were also noted.

Based on the study's findings, eight recommendations were proposed, emphasizing the importance of community involvement in WH-based tourism. Recommendations include better links between WH and tourism sectors, developing pilot sites, ongoing capacity building, establishing a community of practice, raising awareness, leveraging the WH brand, building traveller awareness, and ensuring better leadership and coordination through the establishment of a Pacific WH Tourism Council and a Pacific WH Tourism Fund.

Discussions on Sustainable Tourism

During a discussion, participants from Fiji, Palau, Cook Islands, and the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) shared insights on the challenges and opportunities of World Heritage (WH) and tourism.

Fiji's Culture Ministry expressed gratitude for SPTO's advocacy but highlighted the local communities' limited perception of WH benefits despite community workshops. Better communication and clarification of WH benefits were deemed necessary, with calls for improved visibility and marketing, particularly in Levuka.

Palau presented a sustainable tourism model, encouraging conservation and community engagement. The Palau Visitor Authority's approach involves creating a brand to promote local tourism packages and diversifying income around the Rock Islands, supported by the Green Fund.

Cook Islands shared a collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and tourism, implementing a program to enhance visitor knowledge of historical sites. They conducted tour guide training during COVID-19, promoting stories of historical sites and utilizing networking with the Tourism Department.

SPTO appreciated the feedback, emphasizing the importance of better awareness and community involvement. The organization expressed its readiness to support agencies, highlighting that a significant portion of national tourism budgets is allocated to marketing, offering potential support.

Workshop Session 3: Resourcing, what are the critical Management Issues , Gaps and Opportunities?

In addressing critical management issues, gaps, and opportunities related to World Heritage (WH), participants were organised into three workshop groups to provide insights. See box 3 for the responses.

Workshop Session 4 – What are the next steps after this workshop?

Three workshop groups, each representing a sub region in the Pacific, addressed this question and reported back to plenary. Key points reported included the following. See box 4 for the responses.

Box 3: What are the critical management issues, gaps and opportunities?

GROUP 1 Management Issues and Gaps:

- Inadequate funding and staff.
- Need for better communication, especially with communities, and specific, tailored information.
- Lack of follow-through on projects at various levels by relevant agencies and communities.

Opportunities:

- Collaboration and education opportunities that need realization.
- Funding opportunities, emphasizing tailored applications for the Pacific and WH, exploring EU and SPC funds.
- Improved communication between UNESCO, governments, and communities. Suggested UNESCO Apia as the lead agency for WH in the region.
- Advocated for better policy coherence, shared learning among Pacific nations, and linking SPTO tourism and WH strategies at national levels.

GROUP 2 Management Issues and Gaps:

- Lack of coherent overarching policies related to WH.
- Communication challenges and the need for state-of-the-art ICT communications.
- Insufficient consultation with communities, internal conflicts, and coordination issues within and between government agencies.
- Funding shortages and a lack of government support for site-based management.

Opportunities:

- Platforms for investment and communication.
- Enhanced engagement with chiefs, raising awareness, and strengthening management plans.
- Opportunities for partnerships between tourism and WH.
- Emphasis on upskilling the workforce and developing a network of WH site managers.
- Advocacy for both bottom-up and top-down approaches, strengthening national and provincial level strategies.

GROUP 3 Management Issues and Gaps:

- Overlapping issues between nature and culture Ministries.
- Recognition of the effectiveness of Working Groups, particularly the Nature Culture Working Group as part of PIRT (Pacific Islands Round Table for Nature Conservation).
- Emphasis on better collaboration among agencies.

Opportunities:

- Building on established mechanisms like the Nature Culture Working Group.
- Acknowledgment of the PIRT's creative use of Working Groups.
- Advocacy for improved collaboration among agencies as a crucial requirement for advancing WH in the region.

The consensus emphasizes the need for improved funding, communication, and

Box 4: Next Steps

GROUP 1 MELANESIA: Next Steps:

Fiji:

- Progress with heritage legislation, anticipated to be passed by August 2024.
- Strengthening links with tourism and aligning with different laws.

Solomon Islands:

- Urgent review and finalization of the East Rennell (ER) Management Plan, in draft since 2014.
- Collaborative projects with development partners for community income generation.
- Exploration of options like engaging university students for research at ER.
- Proposal for UNESCO or Australia/New Zealand support for scholarships.
- Training for WH site managers and professionals; identify gaps in heritage training.
- Consideration of raising WH profile at the 2024 PI Forum and creating a FB Group for Melanesia.

GROUP 2 MICRONESIA: Next Steps:

Nauru:

- Ratification of the WH Convention through Foreign Affairs.

Kiribati:

- Review and prioritization of the Tentative List
- Priority on raising awareness of sites and developing a database.
- Increased funding for WH management.

RMI:

- Engagement of stakeholders beyond the UNESCO national commission.
- Improved sharing of information with stakeholders.

FSM:

- Inclusion of all FSM states in the WH workplan.
- Consideration of placing Chuuk Lagoon on the FSM Tentative List.
- Seeking support to address oil leaks from boats in Chuuk Lagoon.

Palau:

- Activation and expansion of the national commission for UNESCO.
- SWOT analysis for current and potential sites.
- Prioritization of next steps.

GROUP 3 POLYNESIA: Next Steps - General Across the Sub-region:

- Realistic, gradual steps for WH, emphasizing a strong foundation.
- Support for progressing heritage legislation.
- Establishment of inter-ministry groups and committees for better coordination.
- Continuation and strengthening of relationships with local communities.
- Increased attention to heritage inventory work.
- Priority on updating Tentative Lists across all PICs.
- Recognition of tourism as a significant opportunity, building on SPTO's work.
- Learning from regional WH experiences.

In summary, the outlined next steps include legal and legislative progress, collaboration with communities, updating inventory, and leveraging tourism opportunities across Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. The emphasis is on gradual and sustainable advancements in WH initiatives

Closing Panel Discussion

A closing Panel comprising Andrea, Mere, Alessandro, Trevor, Jeffrey, and Marthalina, provided closing remarks. The following issues were raised.

Question 1: How can we address capacity gaps in the region?

Participants discussed addressing capacity-related challenges in the Pacific region regarding World Heritage (WH). Key points raised included:

Pacific Heritage Hub (PHH):

- Desire to activate the PHH, emphasizing the need for funding, including scholarships for WH site managers and youth.
- Proposal for a forum to share WH experiences in the region, involving both experienced individuals and new experts.

Networking and Communication:

- Recognition of the importance of sharing expertise formally and informally.
- Emphasis on improved networking, especially regarding accessing funding opportunities.
- Suggestions to consider various communication options and maintain momentum from the workshop.

Follow-Up and Coordination:

- Proposal for an update call a few months post-workshop to assess progress, with the suggestion of a group Zoom meeting.
- Interest in smaller groups divided by WH categories for more focused discussions.
- Recognition of the need for a coordinator to manage social media platforms for effective communication.
- Proposal for the establishment of a website as a central hub for information sharing, including relevant documents.
- Emphasis on the importance of continuity in staffing, with the suggestion of having a designated WH Focal Point in each Pacific Island Country.

The overall focus is on creating effective channels for communication, networking, and ongoing collaboration to address capacity challenges in the Pacific region's WH initiatives.

Question 2 – Visibility. How to get WH on the minds of Government Ministers and Regional Leaders.

Participants discussed strategies to increase the visibility of World Heritage (WH) and garner attention from Ministers. Key points included:

Challenges:

- Difficulty in making WH a priority due to the multitude of other agenda items competing for attention.
- Limited personnel dedicated to WH matters, such as Trevor being the sole person in the Solomon Islands working on this.

Strategies:

- Trevor suggested expanding forums, like the Partnership Forum in the Solomon Islands, to raise the profile of WH.
- Jeffrey emphasized the importance of policy briefs to grab Ministerial attention and proposed raising WH issues in parliament.
- Marthalina recommended bringing Ministers to WH sites to create a personal connection and suggested holding cabinet meetings at the sites.

- Andrea proposed involving students to advocate for WH, finding champions to raise the profile of the issue.
- Alessandro emphasized the need to inform politicians about the importance of WH.

The discussion revolved around practical approaches, such as utilizing forums, creating policy briefs, involving students, and finding champions, to ensure WH becomes a priority for Ministers despite competing agenda items.

Q3 Benefits of WH – what are they?

Participants discussed the benefits of World Heritage (WH) sites, focusing on various aspects:

Jeffrey:

- Emphasized the importance of highlighting benefits to people, with a focus on nature conservation and its value to communities.

Mere:

- Stressed variable progress in the region, advocating for shared mechanisms, information sharing, and the involvement of diverse stakeholders in moving forward.

Marthalina:

- Underlined the significance of disseminating knowledge gained from research, fostering pride in sites, and sharing information to encourage a sense of ownership.

Andrea:

- Advocated for capturing culture and traditions, incorporating new innovations, and exploring opportunities within the framework of WH.

Trevor:

- Noted the slow process of local communities recognizing benefits, citing the lack of UNESCO support for East Rennell as an example. However, information sharing has led to increased government interest.

Alessandro:

- Stressed the importance of managing expectations, with benefits being proportional to actions implemented by each State. Highlighted the sense of belonging to a global family of 194 State Parties.

David:

- Pointed to upcoming opportunities, such as the WH and tourism agenda for the next year's forum and Australia's potential candidacy for the WH Committee in 2027. Encouraged the development of a long-term strategy for the Pacific, considering both top-down and bottom-up approaches.

Closing of Workshop

Ellen expressed gratitude for the productive 3-day workshop, emphasizing the valuable contributions of participants. She highlighted common priorities and the potential for broader regional collaboration, stressing the need for national support to effectively address World Heritage (WH) concerns. Ellen called for ongoing collective efforts to elevate the profile of WH and achieve shared objectives.

Alessandro extended thanks to UNESCO Pacific for the invitation, commending the positive workshop atmosphere. He acknowledged the diverse national expertise present, likening the Pacific to a federal state with many provinces, emphasizing the importance of a unified voice. Alessandro underscored the significance of being part of the WH committee for impactful

decisions and influence. He expressed appreciation for the workshop's information-sharing role in raising awareness about WH.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations of the workshop are provided in the Workshop Outcomes Report.