



WORLD HERITAGE CAPACITY-BUILDING STRATEGY 2025-2035

Adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session (UNESCO, 2025)

The World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy 2025–2035 builds upon more than a decade of implementation experience of the original 2011 Strategy, as well as a comprehensive evaluation undertaken in 2023, which highlighted both its achievements and persistent gaps.

The WHCBS 2025-2035 was developed through a global, inclusive, and evidence-based revision process. It incorporates inputs from all regions through extensive consultation and data gathered from the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting and Regional Framework Action Plans. Developed collaboratively by the World Heritage Centre and ICCROM, in cooperation with ICOMOS and IUCN, it involved a wide network of World Heritage actors—including Category 2 Centres, UNESCO Chairs, national Focal Points, site managers, and civil society—to respond to evolving global challenges.

The Strategy is also the reflection of the inputs of all those who provided feedback on its successive drafts, in particular the Category 2 Centres and States Parties, and notably the Members of the World Heritage Committee and of the Evaluation Reference Group, whose engagement ensured regional relevance and ownership.

SUMMARY

The World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy (WHCBS) for 2025–2035 sets out a structured and results-oriented approach to addressing the persistent and emerging capacity needs of those engaged in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Informed by the 2023 independent evaluation of the 2011 WHCBS and a wide-ranging consultation process, the Strategy identifies and responds to systemic challenges that have limited the impact of previous efforts—such as the lack of dedicated funding, limited global coordination, and the uneven availability of tailored, accessible resource materials.

The WHCBS 2025-2035 introduces six interconnected strategic pillars: strengthened coordination and governance; targeted thematic and regional capacity-building; development and dissemination of accessible resources; inclusive, people-centred approaches; sustainable financing; and robust monitoring and evaluation. These pillars are designed to work across all levels of the World Heritage system and are anchored in a comprehensive Theory of Change that outlines how coordinated actions will lead to better-managed and more resilient World Heritage properties.

A key operational innovation is the establishment of a global Coordination Hub for capacity building, composed of a new Coordination Team based at the World Heritage Centre and of linked teams across the Advisory Bodies, working closely with the Category 2 Centres and Institutes under the auspices of UNESCO. This global mechanism will oversee the development and implementation of biennial Implementation Plans, reviewed by the World Heritage Committee, that identify priority actions, mobilise resources, and monitor delivery. These Implementation Plans will be informed by data from Periodic Reporting and Reactive Monitoring, ensuring alignment with field-based realities and global strategic priorities, including climate action and sustainable development.

The Strategy also emphasises the development of official resource materials—such as manuals, toolkits, and digital courses—designed for adaptation and use by a wide range of actors. These resources will be complemented by training-of-trainers programmes and targeted outreach to strengthen regional delivery and foster professional networks. In doing so, the Strategy promotes a more consistent, inclusive, and scalable model for capacity-building that empowers States Parties, site managers, institutions, decision-makers and communities to meet their obligations under the Convention and respond effectively to complex conservation challenges.

Through this comprehensive framework, the WHCBS 2025–2035 aims to ensure that capacity-building activities are better coordinated, more responsive to regional and thematic needs, and embedded within the broader operational mechanisms of the Convention.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
A. BACKGROUND	3
B. OVERVIEW OF THE CAPACITY-BUILDING ECOSYSTEM.....	5
C. IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF CAPACITY-BUILDING (2025-2035)	8
D. TARGETING IDENTIFIED CAPACITY NEEDS AND THEMES	12
E. THEORY OF CHANGE	16
F. BIENNIAL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS	26
G. SUSTAINABLE FUNDING AS A KEY TO EFFECTIVE CAPACITY-BUILDING	27
H. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING MECHANISMS	29
I. HOW TO BECOME AN ACTOR FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING.....	30
ANNEX I: LIST OF AVAILABLE RESOURCE MATERIALS	35
ANNEX II: EXCERPTS FROM THE REGIONAL ACTION PLANS RESULTING FROM THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING	37

A. BACKGROUND

1. The aspirational vision of the 1972 World Heritage Convention can only be achieved in an increasingly challenging world if capacities continue to be developed and strengthened around the world. Indeed, this has been a concern since the Convention was first drawn up. The most recent approach to this issue was the [2011 World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy](#) (WHCBS) where an important conceptual shift was made from training to a broader understanding of capacity-building. It also made the case for creating joint capacity-building opportunities for both cultural and natural heritage together. In addition, the WHCBS identified three broad groups of actors where capacity-building efforts need to focus: practitioners; institutions; and communities and networks (Decision **35 COM 9B**, approved at the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee).
2. After a decade of implementation through the work of the World Heritage Centre, with ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN (the Advisory Bodies), Category 2 Centres and Institutes under the auspices of UNESCO (C2Cs) and other partners, the WHCBS was [evaluated](#) in 2023 on request of the World Heritage Committee (Decision **43 COM 6** – Baku, 2019). This evaluation aimed to understand the WHCBS's strengths and weaknesses based on the results produced, to provide recommendations on elaborating a new strategy. In Decision **45 COM 6**, the Committee requested 'the World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with ICCROM, IUCN and ICOMOS, to develop a new World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy for the decade 2025-2035, including clear priorities, strategic objectives, expected outputs and outcomes, relying on the outcomes of the independent evaluation of the WHCBS and the guidelines developed by the Evaluators for this purpose, and taking into account the results of the Periodic Reporting process'.
3. This present document proposes a revised WHCBS for 2025-2035, based on the evaluation's recommendations and it directly addresses the challenges to fully implementing the 2011 WHCBS as it had been conceived. Where positive results were identified, these have been built upon, for example, targeted regional programmes such as the UNESCO [Mentorship Programme for African World Heritage Professionals](#) and the ICCROM [Youth.Heritage.Africa programme](#). In particular, the global collaboration that launched and has implemented the [World Heritage Leadership programme](#) has been used as a model, particularly in light of the ambition to scale it up as part of [IUCN's World Heritage Strategy](#). The results of the regional programmes of the C2Cs have also been incorporated into the revision.
4. In addition, other relevant information has been analysed to understand the current state of conservation of World Heritage properties and areas requiring capacity-building, as seen in data from the Periodic Reporting exercise and Reactive Monitoring. The need to provide a response to intensifying global challenges, such as climate change, the loss of biological and cultural diversity, the need to contribute to peace and prosperity for people and secure a healthy planet through the Agenda 2030's Sustainable Development Goals and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, have also been taken into consideration.
5. The Strategy recognises that more actors need to be involved in capacity-building in order to serve our target of practitioners, institutions, and communities and networks. The present document therefore focuses on the need for effective coordination and implementation of capacity-building efforts, so that they can support the improved implementation of the World Heritage Convention, to achieve the result where World Heritage properties are better managed and conserved for the future. In this way States Parties and all relevant actors of the Convention will be even better prepared to fulfil their 'duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage' (Article 4 of the *Convention*).

6. This Strategy especially emphasises the key role of C2Cs across the globe, which was also highlighted very positively during the Evaluation of the 2011 WHCBS in 2023. At the time of drafting the present document, the C2Cs dealing with World Heritage are the following:

Name	Country	Established
African World Heritage Fund (AWHF)	South Africa	2007
World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region (WHITR-AP)	China	2007
Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH)	Bahrain	2009
Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas (RWHIZ)	Mexico	2009
Lucio Costa Heritage Management Regional Training Centre (IPHAN)	Brazil	2009
International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage (HIST)	China	2011
International Centre for Rock Art and the World Heritage Convention (ICRAWHC)	Spain	2011
Wildlife Institute of India – Category 2 Centre (WII-C2C) for World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region	India	2014
Regional Centre for Human Evolution, Adaptations and Dispersals in Southeast Asia (CHEADSEA)	Indonesia	2017
International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites (WHIPIC)	Republic of Korea	2018

Category 2 Centres play a pivotal role in delivering regionally and thematically tailored capacity building under the World Heritage Convention. Recognised as essential partners already in the 2011 Strategy, their key role was highlighted again in the 2023 Evaluation and is reflected in the present Strategy. C2Cs serve as regional hubs for knowledge exchange, training, and technical support, helping to translate global strategies into context-specific actions. Additionally, they serve as global thematic hubs for their specific area of contribution to the World Heritage system (e.g. human evolution heritage, heritage interpretation). They contribute to the development and dissemination of capacity-building resources, support the implementation of regional priorities identified through Periodic Reporting, and foster networks among heritage professionals, institutions, and communities. Their longstanding engagement and expertise, rooted in local realities, make C2Cs indispensable for strengthening national and regional capacities and enhancing the representativity, management, and conservation of World Heritage properties worldwide.

7. This Strategy document was drafted by ICCROM and the World Heritage Centre and revised following a structured consultation programme with the other Advisory Bodies and staff at the World Heritage Centre (28 January 2025), the Category 2 Centres (14 February 2025) and the Reference Group for the Revision of the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy on behalf of the World Heritage Committee (27 March 2025).
8. The Strategy will be operationalised through collaboratively-drafted Implementation Plans, prepared by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, in collaboration

with the C2Cs and other key partners, and which will be reported to the World Heritage Committee at least every two years. The Strategy will provide the overarching vision and objectives for capacity-building under the World Heritage Convention, and the Implementation Plans will provide an operational mechanism to support effective implementation and coordination. The Strategy outlines the long-term goals and priorities to address global and regional capacity-building needs that stem from the site-based, national datasets collected from Periodic Reporting and Reactive Monitoring (see Figure 2: Current challenges facing World Heritage properties & identified focus areas for the revised WHCBS). In turn, the actionable Implementation Plans will translate this into biennial activities, resources, and monitoring mechanisms required for their realisation and evaluation. Capacity-building resource materials created in this context will be made publicly available for their use and adaptation by any other actors aiming to address national and local capacity-building needs in any context. Together, with the support of the collaborative approach of different partners, they will enable a coordinated, dynamic, and adaptable approach to empowering World Heritage actors to carry out capacity-building activities and improving the conservation and management at all World Heritage properties.

B. OVERVIEW OF THE CAPACITY-BUILDING ECOSYSTEM

9. The WHCBS 2025–2035 outlines a robust and interconnected ecosystem designed to empower a wide range of stakeholders—from local communities to international organisations—in strengthening the conservation and management of World Heritage properties.
10. At the core of this ecosystem lies the newly established Coordination Hub, comprising dedicated teams at the World Heritage Centre, ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN, working closely with the network of C2Cs. This Hub functions as a central mechanism for strategic oversight, ensuring that capacity-building efforts are globally consistent, regionally responsive, and thematically aligned with evolving priorities such as climate action and sustainable development. It facilitates the development and implementation of biennial Implementation Plans, consolidates information from Periodic Reporting and Reactive Monitoring, and ensures quality control through shared resource materials and integrated monitoring systems.
11. Surrounding the Hub is a constellation of actors who operationalise capacity building at various levels:
 - a) Category 2 Centres play a critical role as regional knowledge and training hubs, adapting global tools to local contexts and promoting professional networks;
 - b) UNESCO Chairs and academic institutions contribute through research, curriculum development, and training-of-trainers programmes;
 - c) States Parties—particularly through their National Focal Points and Site Managers—play a pivotal role in identifying needs, shaping priorities, and driving implementation at the national and site levels. National Focal Points act as key connectors between global frameworks and local realities, coordinating national action plans, facilitating multi-stakeholder engagement, and ensuring alignment with the Strategic Objectives of the Convention. They are instrumental in translating regional and thematic capacity-building opportunities into tangible outcomes by mobilising national institutions and networks. Site Managers, meanwhile, serve as frontline implementers, using capacity-building resources to improve site governance, engage communities, and integrate cross-sectoral approaches into heritage conservation and management. Both actors are empowered through tailored training, access to translated tools and manuals, and

inclusion in regional and global networks—ensuring that capacity-building is grounded in field-based realities and responsive to diverse and evolving challenges;

- d) Indigenous Peoples, youth, and local communities contribute their on-the-ground knowledge and are essential contributors to co-creating inclusive and rights-based approaches;
 - e) The private sector, NGOs, and other civil society organizations also serve as vital partners, bringing in thematic expertise and additional resources;
 - f) Finally, decision makers—both within and beyond the heritage sector—must be engaged to help embed heritage values into broader policy frameworks and securing the cross-sectoral support needed for effective conservation. Their involvement ensures that capacity-building efforts translate into sustained political commitment, integrated planning, and resource allocation aligned with national and international development goals.
12. Together, these actors form a dynamic ecosystem where responsibilities are clearly delineated, but collaboration and mutual reinforcement are fundamental, creating an enabling environment in which World Heritage properties are not only protected, but serve as living laboratories for global learning and innovation.

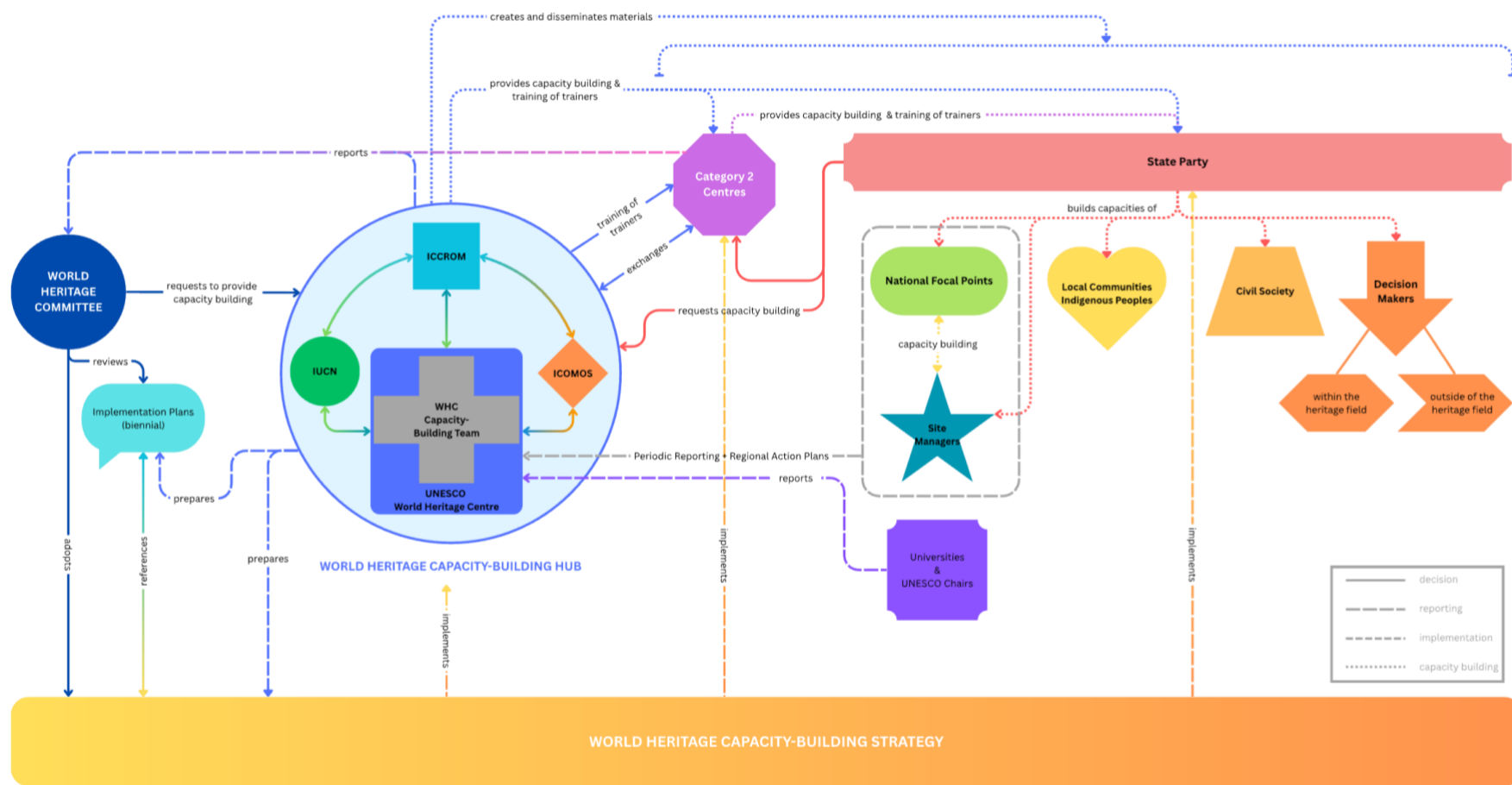


Figure 1: Graphical representation of the capacity-building ecosystem in the framework of the WHCBS 2025-2035

(Full-resolution image: <https://bit.ly/whcbs-ecosystem>)

C. IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF CAPACITY-BUILDING (2025-2035)

13. The 2023 Evaluation of the WHCBS identified several systemic challenges that have hindered the effectiveness of capacity-building efforts under the Convention. These included the absence of a dedicated budget and coordinated funding framework, limited global coordination and reporting mechanisms, and the lack of widely accessible standard-setting resource materials that directly address priority issues at World Heritage properties. Furthermore, the Evaluation highlighted the need to scale up the dissemination of such resources and to strengthen collaborative networks that link heritage actors with other sectors.
14. In response, the revised WHCBS outlines targeted solutions:
- a) establishing sustainable funding for coordination;
 - b) creating a global capacity-building coordination mechanism;
 - c) developing and widely distributing official resource materials;
 - d) increasing tailored capacity-building opportunities across languages and regions; and
 - e) mobilising networks to create an enabling environment for improved heritage management and policy implementation.

Challenges	Solutions
Lack of dedicated budget for capacity-building and coordination of existing budget to pool available resources	Provide sustainable funding for capacity-building coordination
Lack of coordination and reporting at a global level	Coordinate capacity-building activities to collect results at a global level
Need for more specific, standard-setting and official resource materials – and more awareness of the existence of resource materials – that specifically address the priority issues being faced at World Heritage properties	Develop accessible capacity-building resource materials to improve World Heritage relevant policymaking
Need for these official resource materials to be disseminated more widely via greater numbers of capacity-building initiatives	Provide increased opportunities for capacity-building of key actors in different contexts and languages
Need for networks to be mobilised around World Heritage properties, that also connect to other sectors, so that capacity-building can lead to improvements in frameworks, arrangements and processes	Develop capacity-building networks to create an enabling environment

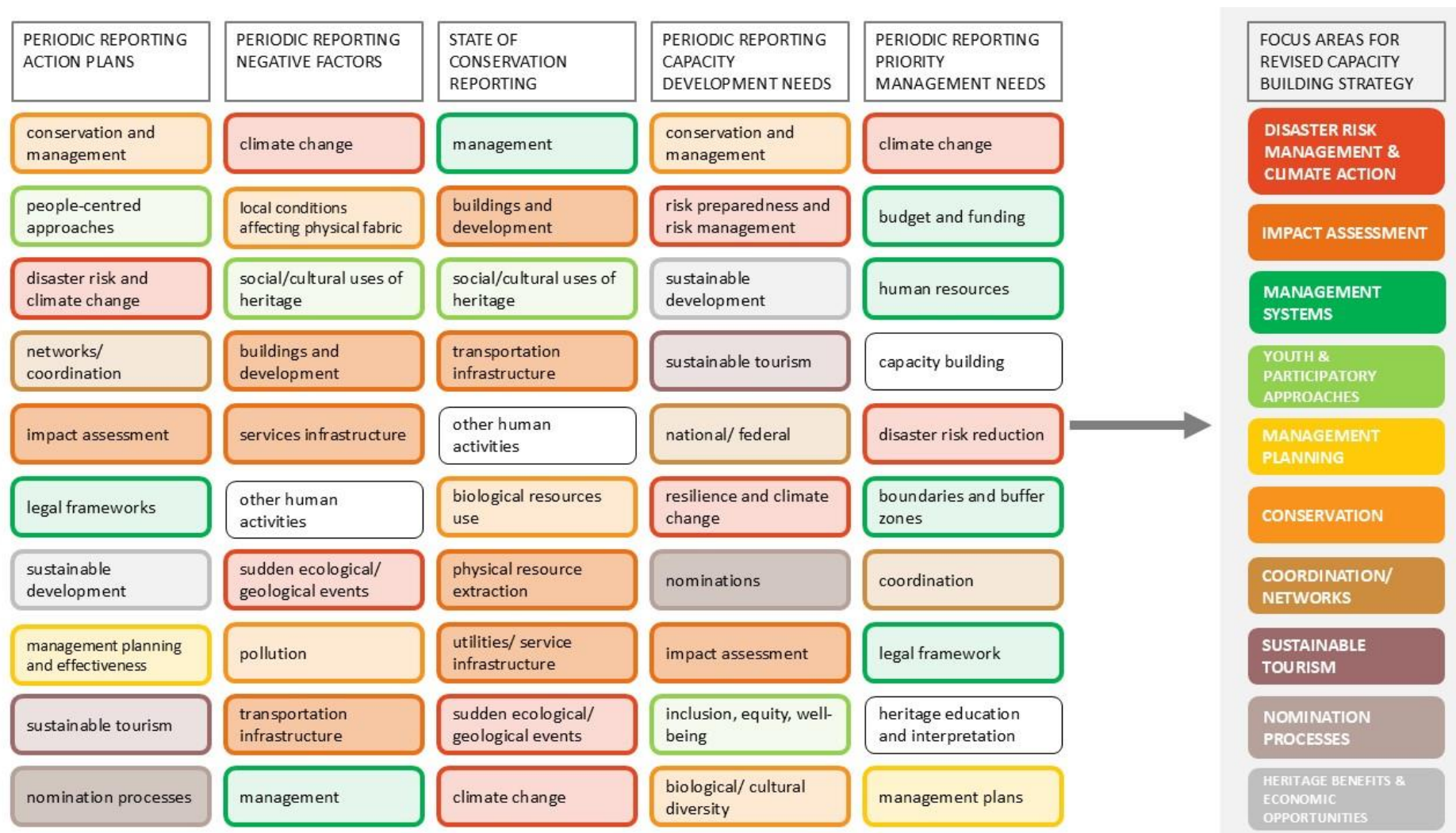


Figure 2: Current challenges facing World Heritage properties & identified focus areas for the revised WHCBS

15. Based on the outcomes of the 2023 Evaluation, the following priorities have been identified. They are rooted in the needs identified by World Heritage actors, including National Focal Points and site managers, through their Regional Framework Action Plans.
16. **Strengthening Coordination and Governance of Capacity-Building:** To ensure the effective, coherent, and sustainable delivery of the WHCBS, the establishment of a dedicated and collaborative coordination structure is essential. This will be achieved through two interlinked components: a dedicated Coordination Team at the World Heritage Centre, and a broader multi-institutional Coordination Hub.
 - a) ***Establishment of a Coordination Team at the World Heritage Centre:*** A dedicated Capacity-Building Team will be created within the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to serve as the operational engine of the WHCBS. This team will be responsible for the day-to-day planning, delivery, monitoring, and reporting of capacity-building activities. It will lead the preparation of biennial Implementation Plans, coordinate with stakeholders, and report progress and results to the World Heritage Committee. The WHC Coordination Team will work in close cooperation with dedicated capacity-building focal points or teams in each of the three Advisory Bodies—ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN—each of which brings complementary expertise. Together, these entities will form the core of the operational coordination system.
 - b) ***Establishment of the World Heritage Capacity-Building Coordination Hub:*** The Coordination Hub refers to the structured collaboration between the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, working in close collaboration with the C2Cs and other key partners. Functioning as the central mechanism for strategic oversight and partnership-based implementation, the Coordination Hub facilitates information sharing, planning alignment, and quality control across the system. As illustrated in the attached diagramme (see Figure 3: Graphical representation of the Coordination Hub and its internal coordination), the Coordination Hub connects directly with States Parties, who identify needs and through Periodic Reporting and Regional Action Plans and submit capacity-building requests, while also benefiting from training-of-trainers modalities.
 - c) ***Integrated Reporting and Monitoring:*** The Coordination Hub develops improved, structured reporting systems for capacity-building initiatives to ensure consistency across regions and accountability across actors. It ensures that all actors—whether inside or outside the heritage sector—are working from shared objectives, using aligned materials, and contributing to an integrated monitoring system (see below the dedicated section I.H: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING MECHANISMS).
 - d) ***Enhanced coordination and delivery across actors:*** The Coordination Hub integrates feedback and contributions from universities, UNESCO Chairs, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, ensuring that diverse actors and knowledge systems are reflected in capacity-building delivery. Category 2 Centres play a key operational role in supporting training and dissemination, both regionally and thematically.

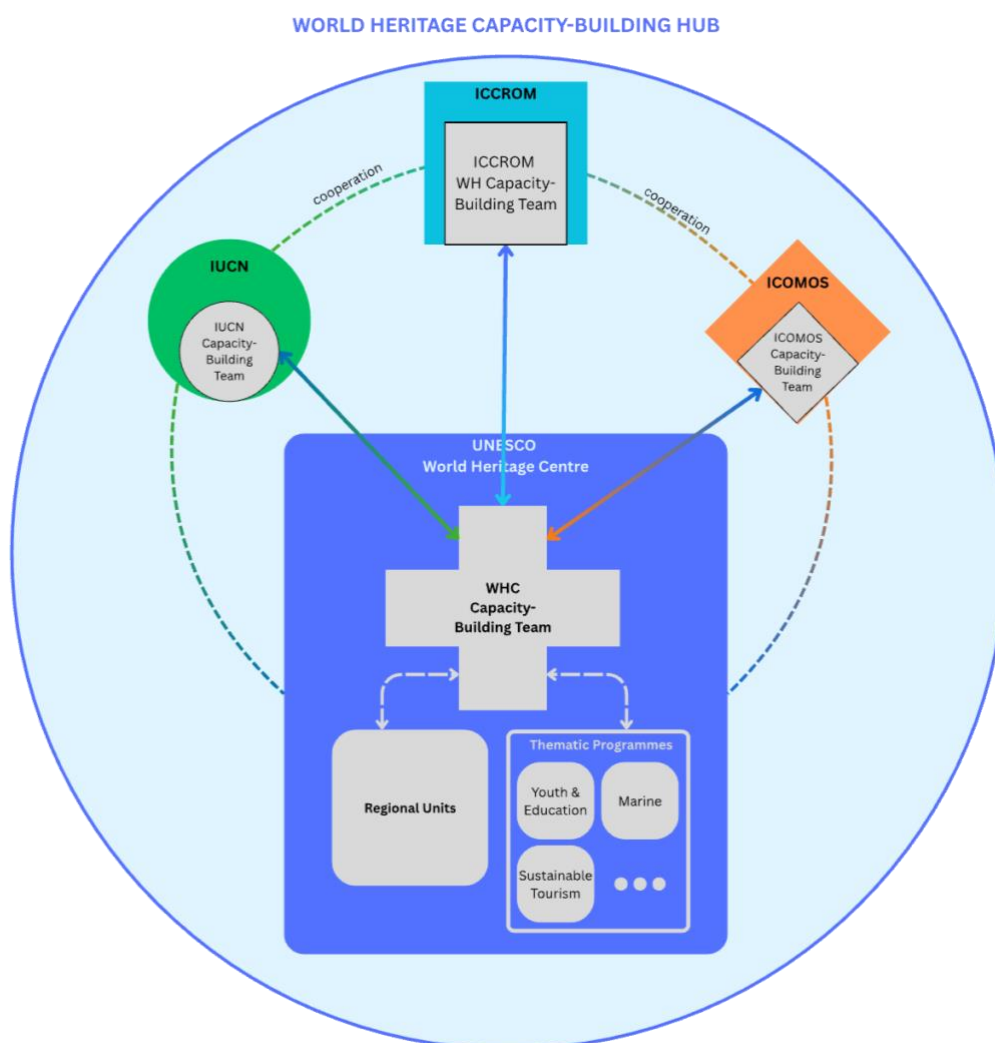


Figure 3: Graphical representation of the Coordination Hub and its internal coordination

17. Enhancing Financial Sustainability:

- a) **Dedicated Funding Models:** Developing long-term equitable and partnership-based financial mechanisms supported by States Parties, donors, and other actors, to ensure sustainable resources for global capacity-building.
- b) **Integration into Broader Financing Streams:** Leveraging international development funds and thematic funding opportunities to align capacity building with global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and disaster risk reduction.

D. TARGETING IDENTIFIED CAPACITY NEEDS AND THEMES

18. To effectively support World Heritage properties in a rapidly evolving global context, the WHCBS 2025–2035 identifies a set of priority capacity-building needs and themes. These were drawn from a comprehensive evidence base, including the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, Regional Action Plans, the State of Conservation Information System, and extensive stakeholder consultations. While these priorities are not exhaustive, they represent the most urgent and widely shared challenges currently facing World Heritage actors across regions and heritage types.
19. The identified themes address both longstanding issues—such as gaps in governance and management effectiveness—and emerging global pressures, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and the need for greater inclusion and rights-based approaches. Together, they reflect a balanced response that aims to strengthen the capacity of practitioners, institutions, and communities while ensuring alignment with the Strategic Objectives of the World Heritage Committee.
20. Crucially, the Strategy also acknowledges the importance of remaining adaptable. As global conditions shift and new challenges arise, the WHCBS provides a framework that allows for the periodic review and adjustment of thematic priorities through its biennial Implementation Plans. The sections that follow outline each of these core capacity-building themes in more detail, forming the basis for coordinated action over the next decade.

1. Improving Protection and Management of World Heritage Properties

21. World Heritage properties face diverse factors and challenges, as identified during the Periodic Reporting exercise and its subsequent Regional Action Plans, as well as Reactive Monitoring. While there are various themes that need addressing in each region, globally capacity-building needs relate to:
 - a) **Management, Governance and Cross-sectoral Integration:** Capacity-building to strengthen legal frameworks, governance mechanisms, and management at national and property levels, and specifically cross-sectoral integration. Site managers identified management systems, planning and effectiveness as priorities. The new resource manual *Managing World Heritage* and the *Enhancing Our Heritage 2.0 Toolkit* (EOH 2.0) prepared through the World Heritage Leadership Programme provide a framework for this focus, and there is an established and linked course offer to sustain and build on.
 - b) **Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Action:** Building capacity for disaster preparedness and management, resilience planning, and climate action as critical areas identified in the Periodic Reporting and Regional Action Plans. The updated resource manual on Disaster Risk Management, and the new Climate Action Toolkit being developed through the World Heritage Leadership Programme provides a framework for this focus, and to sustain and build an existing course offer.
 - c) **Impact Assessment Skills:** Training in Environmental Impact Assessments, Heritage Impact Assessments, and Strategic Environmental Assessments for better-informed decision-making. The resource manual on *Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context* prepared through the World Heritage Leadership Programme provides a framework for this focus and is already the basis of a growing offer through the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies and C2Cs.
 - d) **Conservation and protection:** Ensuring that technical expertise and specialist knowledge, including relevant Traditional Knowledge Systems, related to the conservation of cultural and natural properties is increased and reinforced.

Enhance the understanding and transmission of management, conservation and protection traditions in different cultural contexts.

2. Improved Nominations for a Balanced and Credible World Heritage List

22. These capacity-building efforts will include activities to enhance the quality of nomination dossiers through targeted training, in addition to the support already provided via the upstream process and the new Preliminary Assessment mechanism.
23. The new Preliminary Assessment process should be a priority to provide support to States Parties on how to leverage Preliminary Assessments for successful nominations (e.g. through a new manual/guidance document; capacity-building workshops). The pilot workshops developed by ICOMOS with IUCN and C2Cs should be used as a basis for further development.
24. Capacity building on the development of Tentative List will be crucial as Tentative Lists serve as an important planning tool for States Parties. The Guidance for Developing and Revising Tentative Lists will be applied and the Tentative List Toolkit developed by ICOMOS and IUCN provides the foundation for an effective set of resources to support implementation.
25. These initiatives will support States Parties in aligning nominations with the Operational Guidelines, reinforcing key World Heritage concepts in different cultural and language contexts, addressing gaps in the World Heritage List, and ensuring its representativity and credibility. Workshops, mentorship programmes, collaborative reviews and support from regional C2Cs will strengthen States Parties' understanding of Outstanding Universal Value and ensure a balanced and inclusive approach to heritage representation. Activities such as the 'World Heritage Nomination Support Programme' coordinated by AWHF, in cooperation with École du patrimoine africain, Centre for Heritage Development in Africa and the World Heritage Centre, provide another example of successful capacity-building within a region that focuses on increasing representativity in the World Heritage List. Category 2 Centres such as AWHF, ARC-WH, WHITR-AP, IPHAN, IRPMZ have provided curricula and processes to support representatives of States Parties in the preparation of nomination dossiers and updating of Tentative Lists.
26. There will be important linkages to the review of the Global Gap Studies by IUCN and ICOMOS requested by the Committee, as well as the plan to update the Resource Manual on World Heritage Nominations prepared by ICOMOS and IUCN, in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and ICCROM. There will be support for nominations of complex and special types of heritage, such as cultural landscapes, cultural routes and serial transnational properties.

3. Developing and Disseminating Resource Materials

27. ***Coordinated development of thematic resources:*** Continued development of thematic resource materials to ensure the wider engagement of UNESCO, Advisory Bodies, and C2Cs to contribute to the production of manuals and toolkits for continued capacity-building.
28. ***Increasing access through online and digital sources:*** Continue to provide online resource materials and offer online courses to increase the number and range of actors who can directly access capacity-building resources.
29. ***Localised Tools and Guidance:*** In cooperation with the network of UNESCO Offices, National Commissions, Category 2 Centres, and UNESCO Chairs, translating and adapting manuals, toolkits, and learning materials to serve regional and local needs while supporting practitioners globally.

30. **Training-of-Trainers Programmes:** Expanding outreach through trainers from all regions familiar with new resources to ensure the broad application of updated policies and strategies and building on existing initiatives.
31. **Tiered approach for diverse competence:** In recognition of the broad range of actors who engage with World Heritage and participate in diverse ways in its management and conservation, different levels of knowledge and capacity are required: a) all those who are new to World Heritage will be provided with an introductory overview, b) those who have capacity-building needs will be provided with more in-depth opportunities to better understand approaches to management and conservation, and c) those who are involved in specific challenges related to World Heritage will be provided with technical support on specific themes (see Figure 4: Tiered approach to capacity building).

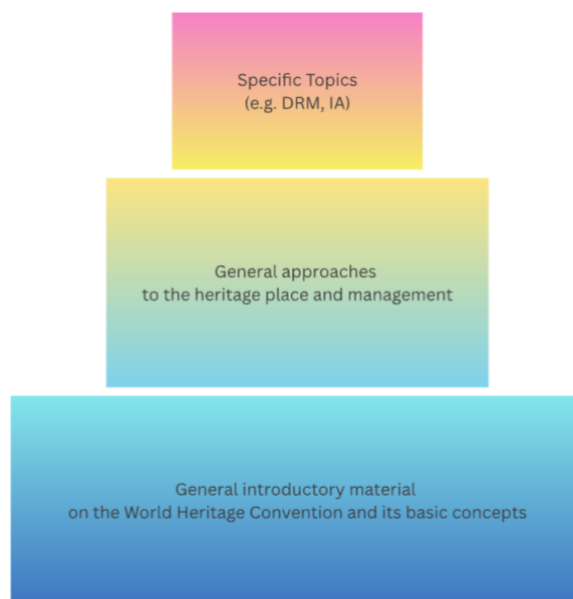


Figure 4: Tiered approach to capacity building

4. Fostering People-Centred Approaches

32. **Adopting partnerships for World Heritage:** Promoting the full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, in particular youth and women, in heritage management and capacity-building programmes.
33. **Respecting the commitment to a rights-based approach:** To adopt a rights-based approach, which promotes World Heritage properties as exemplary places for the application of the highest standards for the respect and realisation of human rights by developing, through equitable participation of concerned people, relevant standards and safeguards, guidance tools and operational mechanisms for assessment, nomination, management, evaluation and reporting processes compatible with an effective rights-based approach that can be promoted through capacity-building.

5. Enhancing World Heritage Education and Youth Engagement

34. **Heritage Education:** Enhancing World Heritage properties as learning places for sustainable development, global citizenship, and cultural and natural diversity. Developing lifelong and inclusive learning opportunities in and across formal, non-formal and informal education, through the integration of heritage into curricula, and digital and on-site learning.

35. **Youth engagement:** Empowering youth to participate, advocate, collaborate and get involved in heritage management, education and promotion, and capacity-building activities.
36. **Cooperation for life-long learning:** Fostering effective cooperation among formal and non-formal educational actors, especially schools, universities and TVET institutions, to raise awareness and provide learning opportunities on heritage.

6. Strengthening Heritage Networks and Expanding beyond the Sector

37. **Regional and Global Networks:** Strengthening networks such as Focal Points within a region, site managers' associations, Category 2 Centres, UNESCO Chairs, young professionals, etc. to facilitate knowledge exchange and coordinated action on capacity building.
38. **Thematic networks:** International cooperation will be encouraged between World Heritage properties of similar heritage typologies (e.g. World Heritage Cities, wetlands, etc.) or facing similar challenges (e.g., seismic risk, protection of migratory species) in order to establish ongoing dialogue and the sharing of experiences.
39. **Collaborative Platforms:** Establishing platforms for cross-sectoral collaboration among heritage and non-heritage practitioners and decision-makers to address complex challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, urban planning and sustainable tourism.
40. **Expanding partnerships:** Encouraging more support from additional partners, including State Party institutions, NGOs, and private sector specialists, who can provide specialist input into capacity-building activities, as well as facilitating intersectoral participation in capacity-building activities.
41. **Synergies with other international designations and programmes:** Joint capacity-building efforts with national, regional and international designations for culture and nature conservation, such as the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Biosphere Reserves, Global Geoparks, Ramsar sites and other biodiversity- and/or culture-related conventions and programmes.

7. Integrating a Sustainable Development perspective into World Heritage processes

42. **Positioning Heritage within Evolving Global Sustainable Development Frameworks:** Capacity-building efforts will ensure that heritage conservation continues to be recognised as a critical enabler of global sustainable development goals, in response to the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals and adapting to future international frameworks that succeed them. This includes emphasising the interconnected roles of heritage in fostering social wellbeing, economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and cultural identity, ensuring the ongoing alignment of heritage management with broader sustainable development agendas.
43. **Sustainability:** Developing capacity for sustainable approaches to a range of sectors, including strengthened recognition of benefits deriving from World Heritage status for larger sustainable processes, sustainable tourism (visitor management and revenue generation strategies that support conservation and benefit local communities), agriculture and other sustainable strategies for planetary and human well-being.
44. **Enhancing synergies with intangible cultural heritage:** Promoting the protection and inclusion in management processes of intangible attributes such as cultural traditions and practices related to specific World Heritage properties and their related communities.

E. THEORY OF CHANGE

45. The theory of change for the WHCBS has been designed to contribute to the World Heritage Committee's Strategic Objectives (Credibility, Conservation, Capacity Building, Communication, Communities) and key policies, such as the 2015 [*Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention*](#). In addition, it is intended to support priority strategies, such as Priority Africa and Gender Equality, as well as UNESCO priority groups, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and youth.
46. The following summary and graph outline the newly developed theory of change, demonstrating how the Strategy will accompany all capacity-building actors and beneficiaries from the current situation to its goals by 2035.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION?

The 2011 WHCBS provided a strong foundation for developing the capacities of all World Heritage actors within a generally shared understanding of World Heritage and using some jointly prepared resources.

However, the open framework for capacity-building promoted by the 2011 WHCBS allowed unrelated and sometimes competing activities. It does not make the most of the informal network of partners, and the lack of monitoring makes it difficult to identify successful results or build on them effectively.

WHAT CHANGE DO WE WANT TO SEE?

World Heritage properties are learning hubs and drivers of actions that address policy priorities and shared global challenges. Together World Heritage actors deliver effective, sustainable and inclusive capacity building to improve the conservation and management of World Heritage properties, provide greater benefits to communities and strengthen the credibility of the World Heritage Convention.

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Coordinate effective implementation of capacity-building, enhancing its role as one of the Strategic Objectives of the World Heritage Committee, which can create an enabling environment for achieving the other Strategic Objectives towards an improved implementation of the World Heritage Convention

- ↳ Capacity-building becomes sustainably funded and coordinated by a dedicated Coordination Hub, ensuring the global consistency of quality capacity-building efforts.
- ↳ This coordination ensures consistent capacity-building approaches and implementation by the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies, and C2Cs who develop and update action plans, policies and resource materials that serve the priority needs of the World Heritage system.
- ↳ These resource materials are for free use and adaptation by empowered capacity-building providers in all regions as the basis for bottom-up initiatives to enhance capacities in decision makers, practitioners, institutions, networks and communities at national, regional and international levels.
- ↳ Together, this all creates an enabling environment with enhanced capacities for the World Heritage Convention, whereby World Heritage properties are better managed and conserved for the future.

Theory of Change for the World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy

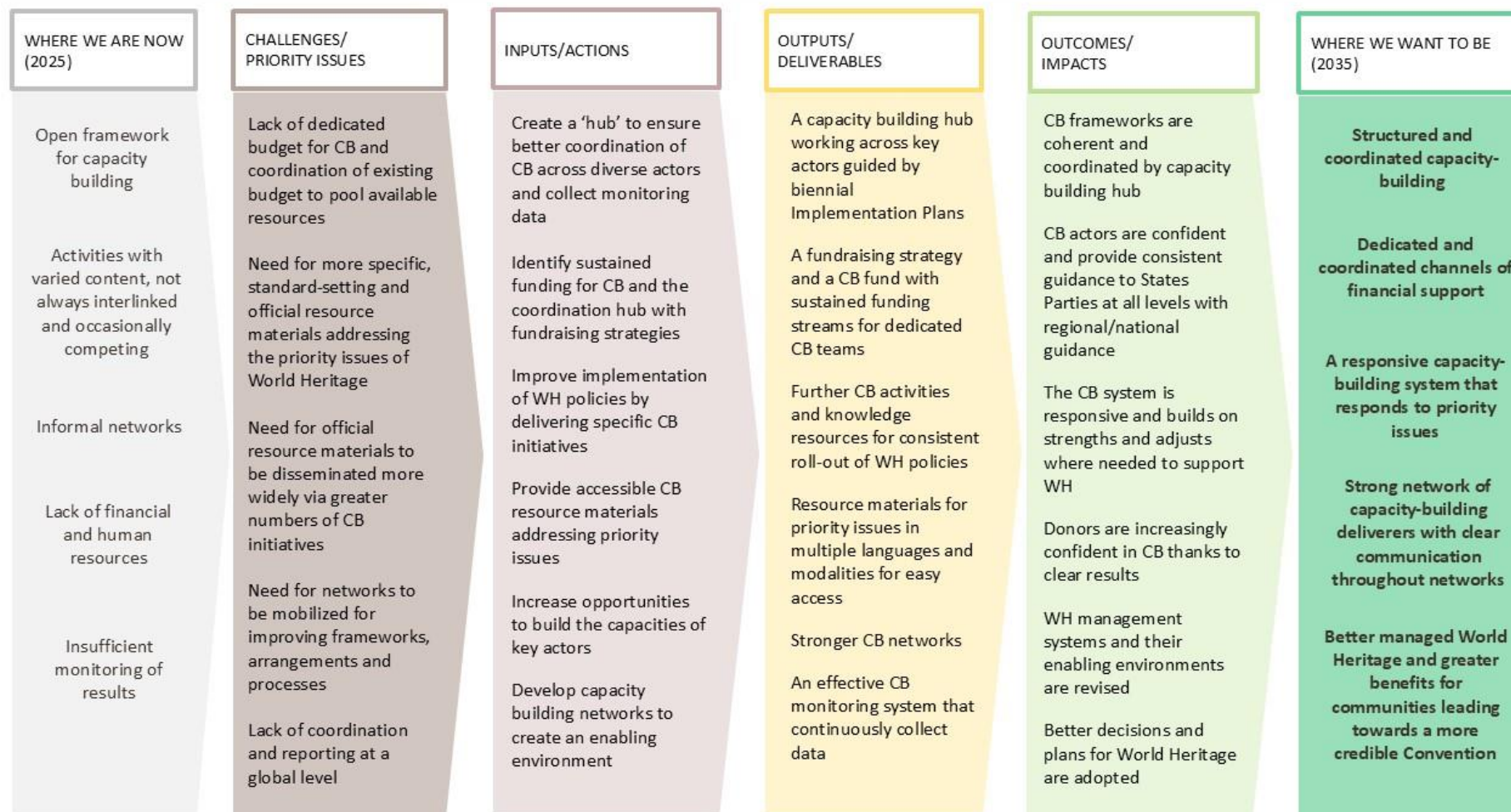


Figure 5: Theory of Change developed to illustrate the steps needed to achieve the aim of the WHCBS 2025-2035

F. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

47. The Strategic Framework below (see Table 1: Overview of the Strategic Framework for the WHCBS 2025-2035 on page 22) was drawn up to translate the Theory of Change into a structure that can be clearly understood and actioned by all partners. Its contents are explained in the following paragraphs.

1. WHAT do we need to do?

48. Each of the capacity-building solutions identified can be achieved through the implementation of a series of concrete actions:
- a) **Identify and ensure sustainable funding for capacity-building:** One of the key factors that limited the success of the 2011 WHCBS was the lack of dedicated funding that could be coordinated across different actors. Therefore, an essential action is to establish a funding framework within which to make efficient and effective use of limited existing resources and mobilising new resources. This will allow the WHCBS to be planned and implemented collaboratively, aligning different funding sources, both existing and new, to common goals. In order to obtain sustainable and realistic funding for capacity-building in the long-term, it will be necessary to produce and then implement a dedicated fundraising strategy as a priority (see section G on sustainable funding below).
 - b) **Ensure a dedicated coordination of WHCBS activities:** Another limitation on the previous WHCBS was that no specific group of people was identified and mandated to ensure that capacity-building takes place. For this reason, a global capacity-building Coordination Hub is needed that brings together all partners and promoting collaborative approaches. An identified capacity-building coordination team within the World Heritage Centre is needed to enable this work, and ensure alignment with capacity-building teams working in ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN, and the Category 2 Centres, who will all be represented in the proposed Coordination Hub. The Coordination Hub, and its supporting teams, will have the responsibility to collaboratively draft the biennial Implementation Plans, coordinate and (co-)publish capacity-building resources, convene regular meetings and working groups to ensure that the quality and content of capacity-building activities are maintained and aligned; establish a capacity-building monitoring system; and submit regular reports to the World Heritage Committee on global trends and the impact of the WHCBS.
 - c) **Contribute to improving policy implementation:** Policies adopted by the World Heritage Committee can only be implemented effectively if they are consistently understood at all levels, with specific capacity-building initiatives that translate them into action. Technical support will then be provided to States Parties for reviewing national and site-level actions and aligning them with the WHCBS and the Regional Framework Action Plans resulting from the Periodic Reporting exercise. At the same time, capacity-building actions will continuously allow for mutual fertilisation of policies where the international policies are informed by the specific content of national or local systems that contribute to enrich the World Heritage system. In addition, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies will ensure that the policies adopted by the Committee are mainstreamed, with consistent approaches made clear through user-friendly summaries of key policies and tools adopted by all actors and consistent reference made to official resource materials.
 - d) **Make capacity-building resource materials accessible:** Following the experience of the World Heritage Leadership programme, priority issues will be addressed through the collaborative development of specific resource materials that reflect decisions, policies and strategies of the World Heritage Committee,

which will be made publicly available online and translated. These will include manuals, toolkits, guidelines, policy summaries, videos, digital resources, and other learning materials. For each new resource, ‘training of trainers’ will be organised so that regional specialists and all relevant partners are familiar with these resources and equipped to use them in their own capacity-building activities. In addition, foundational resource materials will be developed for newly appointed practitioners working on World Heritage.

- e) ***Increase activities to build the capacities of key actors:*** On the basis of available resource materials, capacity-building initiatives will be organised by partners to increase the dissemination of the resource materials developed and respond to priority needs in their regional and national contexts. This will include, for example, thematic workshops, mentoring, and networking opportunities on identified priority issues. On request, ad-hoc, needs-based capacity-building activities will be provided by appropriate capacity-building providers for all World Heritage actors who request them, subject to sufficient funding. In addition, specific capacity-building outreach will be organised for decision makers, both within and outside the field of heritage.
- f) ***Develop capacity-building networks to create an enabling environment:*** Networks of site managers and other World Heritage actors will be encouraged to carry out specific capacity-building initiatives that respond to national and local needs, so that there is an improved enabling environment for heritage management. In addition, self-assessments of management effectiveness will be encouraged to identify areas for improvement, as well as regular assessments of existing and required competencies, e.g. through the Periodic Reporting exercise.

2. WHO will make this happen?

49. The present Strategy requires collaborative action by all World Heritage actors to ensure its success. It will be most successful with proactive contributions from capacity-building providers at all levels, from the property level up. However, leadership and well organised collaboration mechanisms from specific actors who hold key roles and responsibilities will be needed for effective coordination.

WHO	ACTIONS
All World Heritage actors	Contribute to ensuring that there is sustainable, pooled financial support to guarantee the long-term implementation of the WHCBS Give proactive support to developing networks and networking activities, thereby reinforcing connections within their management frameworks.
World Heritage Centre Advisory Bodies of the World Heritage Committee	Take forward the establishment of the Coordination Hub, and teams and focal points in each institution, including a new capacity-building team in the World Heritage Centre. ICCROM has an important role in hosting an established team working on behalf of the World Heritage Leadership programme to effectively deploy and implement capacity-building activities.

	ICOMOS and IUCN have leading roles in capacity-building programmes and activities related to nominations.
Capacity-Building Hub	Serve States Parties by supporting global coordination efforts through: i) the coherent dissemination of policies and decisions, ii) the incorporation of official, shared principles into all resource materials.
Capacity-building partners, including: UNESCO Chairs Category 2 Centres State Party institutions etc.	Ensure that the resource materials are fit for purpose and designed with end users in mind. Roll-out capacity-building initiatives, with structured content based on and adapted from the available resource materials, so that they can be delivered at international, regional, national and local levels in a range of languages.

In order to help World Heritage actors to identify more specific areas through which they can contribute to the implementation of the WHCBS, see below, Section I: HOW TO BECOME AN ACTOR FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING.

3. WHO will directly benefit from this?

50. The present Strategy encourages actors to provide more frequent and visible opportunities for the wider World Heritage community to build greater capacities. It also provides enough flexibility to recognise the agency of World Heritage actors who often actively seek specific capacity-building, allowing them to make requests and be supported with appropriate resource materials and initiatives. Priority beneficiaries of these efforts will be identified and served by regional and national capacity-building providers so that specific needs are met at properties around the world.
- a) **The entire World Heritage community** benefits from the global coordination of capacity-building and the dedicated, sustainable funding provided for the implementation of the WHCBS;
 - b) **Capacity-building providers** can build their programmes directly based on official World Heritage policies and guidance and training materials;
 - c) **Site managers** will have access to a set of foundational resource materials ready to support them as they transition into the role, wish to reinforce their capacities, or seek to address identified priority needs;
 - d) **Practitioners, institutions, communities and networks** can freely access resource materials and will also find more capacity-building activities on specific aspects relevant to heritage organised by a wider range of providers. Mutually supportive networks will lead to greater capacity among practitioners, institutions and communities, creating an enabling environment for better heritage management integrated into wider global agendas;

- e) ***Young heritage professionals*** as future caretakers can consolidate their knowledge and reinforce their competences for effective heritage management.

4. WHEN do we need to act?

- 51. The present Strategy is structured around five biennial Implementation Plans, allowing for the initial focus to be placed on obtaining the financial and human resources necessary to deliver the rest of the strategy. After this essential foundation is in place, there will be a ramping up of efforts.
 - a) Capacity-building initiatives can already be implemented on the basis of existing resource materials prepared within the framework of the World Heritage Leadership programme and earlier manuals by the World Heritage Centre. This will ensure that there is no need for a delay in implementation once financial and human resources are in place.
 - b) The Strategic Framework table below lists the solutions and actions in order of priority, from high- to medium- and long-term. This also provides an opportunity for all actors to reflect on the essential next steps following the adoption of the WHCBS 2025-2035, while keeping an eye on those goals that need to be achieved by the end of this decade.

5. WHAT are the expected outcomes and impacts?

- 52. The present Strategy aims to contribute to a long-term outcome where World Heritage properties are more effectively managed, resilient to global and local challenges, and integrated into sustainable development agendas. Through improved coordination, increased access to quality resource materials, and broader engagement, the WHCBS seeks to enhance the capacities of practitioners, institutions, and communities across all regions. Expected impacts include more consistent implementation of World Heritage policies and standards, improved state of conservation of World Heritage properties, strengthened regional and thematic networks, and increased participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and in particular youth, in heritage decision-making. These outcomes will be monitored through a dedicated results framework embedded in the biennial Implementation Plans, ensuring the WHCBS remains responsive, measurable, and adaptive over time.

6. HOW will we know that we are achieving our goals?

- 53. To understand if and how the WHCBS is achieving the positive change that it was designed to effect, it needs to be monitored and evaluated both in terms of activity outputs but ultimately by gauging the improvement on management of World Heritage properties with further revisions made if necessary to make it fit for purpose. Collecting appropriate data to monitor implementation and evaluating this will be one of the key responsibilities of the capacity-building coordination Hub. As a key to ensuring that meaningful evaluation can take place, links with the Periodic Reporting exercise and Reactive Monitoring mechanisms need to be reinforced. For more, see below, Section H: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING MECHANISMS.

Table 1: Overview of the Strategic Framework for the WHCBS 2025-2035

WHAT CHANGE DO WE WANT TO SEE?

Coordinate effective implementation of capacity-building, enhancing its role as one of the strategic objectives of the World Heritage Committee, which can create an enabling environment for achieving the other strategic objectives towards an improved implementation of the World Heritage Convention

- ↳ Capacity-building becomes sustainably funded and coordinated by a dedicated Coordination Hub, ensuring the global consistency of quality capacity-building efforts.
- ↳ This coordination ensures consistent capacity-building approaches and implementation by the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies, and Category 2 Centres who develop and update action plans, policies and resource materials that serve the priority needs of the World Heritage system.
- ↳ These resource materials are then free for use and adaptation by empowered capacity-building providers in all regions as the basis for bottom-up initiatives to enhance capacities in decision makers, practitioners, institutions, networks and communities at national, regional and international levels.
- ↳ Together, this all creates an enabling environment with enhanced capacities for the World Heritage Convention, whereby World Heritage properties are better managed and conserved for the future

WHAT SOLUTIONS DO WE WANT TO IMPLEMENT?	WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?	WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?	WHAT DATA WILL WE COLLECT TO ANALYSE OUR RESULTS?
1. Provide sustainable funding for capacity-building high priority	Establish a WHCBS fund with multi-level contributors within the World Heritage Fund Produce and implement a dedicated fundraising strategy both internal and external funding streams Identify and provide/obtain sustainable and realistic funding for capacity-building	States Parties Public Donors Private Donors Governing Bodies of the Convention UNESCO ICCROM ICOMOS IUCN	Amount of funds raised biennially for coordination staff and coordination activities <i>Baseline: ca. USD 187,000 (World Heritage Fund, CB Budget Line)</i> Amount of funds raised biennially for capacity-building activities Number of Donors, especially multi-year Donors <i>Baseline: 0</i> Percentage of proposed/requested activities funded <i>Baseline: 0</i>

2. Coordinate WHCBS activities high priority	Establish a collaborative Coordination Hub for the global capacity-building strategy Establish a global capacity-building team at World Heritage Centre Strengthen the World Heritage capacity-building team, coordination function and relevant programmes in ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN. Convene regular meetings of global and regional task forces and working groups to ensure that capacity-building activities are aligned with the WHCBS Establish biennial capacity-building Implementation Plans related to global/regional priorities Establish a capacity-building monitoring system Submit regular reports to the World Heritage Committee on global trends and the impact of WHCBS	UNESCO Advisory Bodies (general capacity-building lead: ICCROM, nominations leads: ICOMOS and IUCN)	Establishment of Collaborative Coordination Hub <i>Baseline: 0 (noting existing work of World Heritage Leadership Programme based in ICCROM)</i> Establishment of the Global Coordination Team in WHC <i>Baseline: 0</i> Sufficient dedicated staffing of the Coordination Team in WHC <i>Baseline: 0</i> Sufficient dedicated staffing in the Advisory Bodies <i>Baseline: 1.5</i> Number of coordination meetings organised <i>Baseline: 0</i> Content of workplans and reports submitted to the World Heritage Committee <i>Baseline: Workplan 0, Report 0</i>
3. Improve policy implementation medium-term goal	Provide briefing notes and other activities related to World Heritage policies and tools to ensure consistent roll-out by all World Heritage actors Support provided to States Parties for reviewing national and site-level policies	WHC ICCROM ICOMOS IUCN	Number of capacity-building requests from States Parties to review national-/site-level policies Amount of technical assistance provided to States Parties to review policies requested through statutory processes (such as Reactive Monitoring processes and International Assistance mechanisms) Process established for the Coordination Hub to respond to requests from States Parties and direct them to appropriate capacity-building providers

			Number of capacity-building materials developed and disseminated on major World Heritage policies (climate change, sustainable development, tourism) Number of State of Conservation reports referring the relevant resource materials for aligned policy implementation
4. Develop accessible capacity-building resource materials medium-term goal	Develop and update resource materials related to priority issues Make resource materials readily available in multiple languages Develop training resource materials for newly appointed professionals working on World Heritage Organise 'training of trainers' for the new resource materials	WHC ICCROM ICOMOS IUCN States Parties Category 2 Centres	Number of sites using manuals/guidance <i>Baseline: references in State of Conservation, number of resource materials access and downloaded, Periodic Reporting questionnaire</i> Number of resource materials created and translated <i>Baseline: data for existing manuals</i> Feedback from users Training provided on new available tools and resources ('training of trainers')
5. Provide increased opportunities for capacity-building of practitioners, institutions, and communities and networks long-term goal	Organise thematic workshops, mentoring, and networking opportunities on priority issues Provide ad-hoc, needs-based capacity-building activities for all World Heritage actors who request them, subject to sufficient funding Organise specific capacity-building outreach for decision makers, both within and outside the field of heritage	WHC Advisory Bodies Category 2 Centres UNESCO Offices National Commissions Universities and UNESCO Chairs National Focal Points & site managers	Number of workshops held Number of training of trainer activities held Number of ad-hoc requests received, funded and answered Number of languages used in capacity-building Number of partners delivering capacity-building Post-activity participant evaluations Participant demographics (overall number of participants; number of new and returning participants)
6. Develop capacity-building networks to create an enabling	Leverage existing networks of site managers and other World Heritage actors for capacity-building	World Heritage Centre Advisory Bodies Category 2 Centres	Number of networks active Number of annual meetings of site managers Regional spread of site managers' meetings

environment for World Heritage long-term goal	Encourage national/local self-assessments of management effectiveness e.g. using the Enhancing our Heritage Toolkit and the UNESCO Competency Framework Establish networks that allow appropriate sharing of local and traditional knowledge related to heritage between Indigenous, local and connected communities with site management teams Proactively support the full and effective participation of communities, including young people and women, in capacity-building initiatives	States Parties Focal Points Site managers Professional networks (e.g., We Are Site Managers, African Site Managers' Network, Nordic World Heritage Association, Young Professionals)	Number of national self-assessments
--	--	--	--

F. BIENNIAL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

54. Upon adoption of the present Strategy by the World Heritage Committee, **a first collaborative comprehensive and dynamic Implementation Plan will be developed** for presentation at the subsequent Committee meeting. This biennial work plan, including budgetary estimates, will structure the specific actions, activities, and priorities essential for achieving the Strategy's goals over the next two years, with subsequent biennial Implementation Plans to follow. They will be designed to align closely with the Committee's Strategic Objectives and will provide an operational roadmap for capacity-building initiatives globally. In practice, this means that the Implementation Plans will see how best to create new resource materials related to these focus areas where necessary (e.g., manuals, guidance documents, policy summaries, learning materials, videos, etc.), and how to promote capacity-building initiatives related to new and existing resource materials (e.g., communication, translation, events, courses, mentoring programmes, workshops, etc.).
55. **Integration into the Working Mechanisms of the World Heritage Committee:** To ensure seamless integration, the Implementation Plans will be rooted in the Committee's processes, enabling it to respond directly to priority issues identified through Periodic Reporting and Reactive Monitoring. By doing so, it will ensure that capacity-building activities remain evidence-based, adaptable, and focused on addressing the priority needs of World Heritage properties and actors. The Implementation Plan will be presented and updated biennially at the Committee's ordinary sessions; this will facilitate regular feedback, ensure ownership and endorsement, and guarantee its alignment with the Committee's strategic goals.
56. The **Core Components of the Implementation Plan** should be as follows:
- a) ***Capacity-Building Coordination and Operational Framework:***
 - i) A collaborative global capacity-building Coordination Hub, working across the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, and supported by a new team in the World Heritage Centre and new/strengthened teams in the Advisory Bodies, will oversee the development and implementation of the plan. This Coordination Hub will ensure the alignment of capacity-building initiatives with Committee decisions and strategies.
 - ii) Clear responsibilities and processes will define the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, including the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies, C2Cs, and other partners, ensuring a coordinated and collaborative approach to capacity-building.
 - b) ***Responsive Planning Based on Evidence:***
 - i) The Implementation Plan will leverage data from Periodic Reporting and Reactive Monitoring mechanisms to address global and regional challenges systematically. Specific focus areas, identified through these mechanisms and detailed in Figure 2: Current challenges facing World Heritage properties & identified focus areas for the revised WHCBS, will guide the development of targeted capacity-building initiatives, as well as the possibility to interlink similar activities to be implemented in different regions and properties.
 - ii) Priority issues such as climate change action, disaster risk management, sustainable development, and management of heritage under threat will be addressed through innovative policy responses and management tools.
 - c) ***Resource Development and Dissemination:***
 - i) The plan will prioritise the update, creation and dissemination of resource materials, including manuals, guidance documents, and learning tools, and digital courses. These materials will be developed collaboratively with inputs from Advisory Bodies, C2Cs and regional partners to ensure their relevance and usability.

- ii) Translating resources and adapting them to national/local contexts will be integral to enhancing accessibility and ensuring cultural appropriateness for diverse stakeholders.

d) ***Capacity-Building Initiatives and Outreach:***

- i) A robust programme of activities will promote the application of resource materials. These initiatives will include workshops, training-of-trainers programmes, mentoring schemes, and networking events, designed to build capacity at all levels—from site managers to policymakers.
- ii) The plan will also include thematic capacity-building initiatives targeting critical issues such as disaster risk reduction, tourism management, and nature-culture linkages.
- iii) In addition, all actors will still have the freedom to develop their own capacity-building activities in support of specific priorities.

e) ***Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement:***

Monitoring and evaluation indicators will be developed to track progress and measure the impact of capacity-building efforts. Data will be gathered through the Convention's monitoring frameworks and through the new global coordination mechanisms for capacity-building to ensure accountability and enable adjustments as needed.

f) ***Sustainable Funding and Partnerships:***

The plan will further define needs, goals and strategies for securing sustainable funding, integrating capacity-building into broader conservation and development financing, and leveraging partnerships with public, private, and philanthropic sectors.

57. **Biennial Review and Adaptation:** The biennial nature of the Implementation Plans ensures they remain adaptable to emerging needs and challenges. They will be presented regularly at the World Heritage Committee's ordinary sessions and its biennial review will provide opportunities for the Coordination Hub to take on board inputs, refine objectives, incorporate lessons learned, and foster collaboration among actors.

By embedding the Implementation Plan into the core mechanisms of the World Heritage Committee, it will ensure a coordinated, transparent, and impactful approach to capacity-building. This will not only enhance the management and conservation of World Heritage properties but also reinforce the credibility and effectiveness of the World Heritage Convention itself.

G. SUSTAINABLE FUNDING AS A KEY TO EFFECTIVE CAPACITY-BUILDING

58. Identifying and implementing sustainable funding mechanisms that will ensure the implementation of this capacity-building strategy under the World Heritage Convention involves a multi-pronged approach that integrates diverse funding streams, partnerships, and financial management strategies. These mechanisms must ensure long-term, stable resources while also being adaptable to emerging needs and priorities.

59. **Establishment of dedicated funding for the implementation of the WHCBS and the functioning of a Coordination Hub:** A dedicated Capacity-Building budget line has been established under the World Heritage Fund. This budget line could support all activities linked with the global coordination and implementation of the WHCBS. In particular, it could:

- a) Be tiered to allow for core funding (for global coordination) and programme-specific funding (targeted initiatives at regional and site levels);
- b) Make use of UNESCO's reporting mechanisms to build donor confidence and attract sustained investment based on transparency;

- c) Ensure the allocation and distribution of the capacity-building budget line to be decided through a coordinated mechanism with the delivery organisations.
60. **Mainstreaming capacity building into other funding streams:** Coordinated capacity-building activities can be integrated into broader conservation and development funding, such as:
- a) *Funds-in-Trust or other extra-budgetary support:* Promoting extra-budgetary contributions to support and help sustain the WHCBS and its activities;
 - b) *International development funds:* Partnering with international organisations (e.g., the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund, or bilateral development agencies) to align capacity-building initiatives with global challenges such as climate change and sustainable development;
 - c) *Thematic funding:* Securing programme-based funding for thematic initiatives, e.g. disaster risk reduction, tourism management, urban planning, or nature-culture linkages;
 - d) *UNESCO partnerships and institutional partnerships of Advisory Bodies:* Further aligning capacity-building goals with UNESCO's broader intersectoral initiatives and budget priorities as well as the institutional partnerships established by ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN.
61. **Private sector and philanthropic engagement:** Collaborations with the private sector and philanthropic organisations can generate significant resources:
- a) *Corporate social responsibility:* Encourage private sector actors with heritage-related interests (e.g., tourism, conservation technologies) to fund capacity-building programmes as part of their corporate social responsibility commitments;
 - b) *Philanthropic foundations:* Seek to develop partnerships with foundations that support education, culture, and sustainable development.
62. **Innovative financing mechanisms:** Innovative approaches can diversify funding sources and increase financial sustainability:
- a) Establishing regional or site-specific funds to ensure long-term financial independence for capacity-building programmes;
 - b) *Crowdfunding and microdonations:* Leveraging online platforms to engage a broader audience in supporting heritage capacity-building efforts, especially at the level of the properties.
63. **Leveraging existing resources and partnerships:** Utilising the existing networks and partnerships of UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies can optimise the use of available resources:
- a) *Category 2 Centres:* Strengthen the mandate of C2Cs to serve as regional knowledge hubs, accessing resources for capacity-building programmes in their respective areas;
 - b) *Universities and research institutions/ UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN network:* Encourage higher education institutions to co-fund and deliver capacity-building programmes as part of collaborative projects or research grants, especially in the case of UNESCO Chairs.
64. **Transparent budgeting and demonstrated impact:** To build and sustain donor confidence, provide adequate and regular updates on the following:
- a) *Detailed costing and allocation plans:* Provide precise budgets for activities outlined in the Implementation Plans, including through the existing mechanisms of the World Heritage Fund;
 - b) *Monitoring and evaluation:* Regularly assess and report on the outcomes of capacity-building efforts, showcasing their effectiveness and impact on World Heritage conservation;

- c) *Scalable and replicable models*: Demonstrate how investments in one region or initiative can be scaled or adapted for broader application.
65. **Advocacy and awareness campaigns**: Engaging stakeholders and raising awareness about the value of capacity building for World Heritage can attract funding:
- a) *Media and public campaigns*: Highlight success stories and showcase the role of capacity building in preserving heritage through the outreach networks of each participating institution;
 - b) *Heritage and capacity-building ambassadors*: Leverage influential figures or institutions to advocate for funding and support.
66. By implementing these sustainable funding mechanisms, UNESCO and its partners can ensure a consistent and robust financial foundation for capacity building, empowering stakeholders at all levels to effectively manage and conserve World Heritage properties for future generations.

H. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING MECHANISMS

67. One of the key responsibilities of the capacity-building coordination team at the World Heritage Centre will be to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the WHCBS to ensure that it serves its purpose and supports the World Heritage Convention. They will also have the role of reporting to the World Heritage Committee more effectively. Their work will be to develop a full suite of both monitoring and evaluation indicators for which they will also need to gather baseline data against which to demonstrate change.
68. **Monitoring indicators**: these focus on process. The indicators will include aspects on inputs, as well as outputs and provide information about the scope and quality of activities implemented. This will involve monitoring the implementation of the WHCBS itself, looking at the budget invested in the Strategy, the partners involved, the resource materials produced, the activities carried out, etc. The coordination team at the World Heritage Centre will be able to monitor budget, partnerships and resource materials produced. Partners for delivering the WHCBS (i.e., Category 2 Centres, UNESCO Offices, Focal Points, universities, etc.) will be requested to report on the activities that they implement. This will allow improved reporting to the World Heritage Committee so that they receive analysis of a consistent data set.
69. There are some high-level monitoring indicators included within the Strategic Framework for which data can already start to be gathered, including through the Periodic Reporting mechanism. Other monitoring indicators linked to specific activities will need to be identified once the Implementation Plan is drawn up and as part of future Periodic Reporting cycles.
70. **Evaluation indicators**: these focus on performance. They are commonly used to measure changes/progress towards results; for example, it would be important to look at the state of conservation of World Heritage in order to demonstrate where and to what extent the WHCBS is effective. Evaluation indicators require greater efforts in terms of data collection, something that many States Parties and managers would find difficult. It is therefore recommended that evaluation is based on existing datasets whenever possible, for example, the Periodic Reporting and Reactive Monitoring mechanisms. Evaluation of the WHCBS is an important task that the coordination team will need to establish periodically once they are in place.

I. HOW TO BECOME AN ACTOR FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING

71. To facilitate the effective implementation of the Strategy, the reference table below is designed to **guide actors in identifying their roles and possible contributions**. This table clearly outlines the key actions that each category of capacity-building actor—ranging from National Focal Points and site managers to decision-makers and educators—can take to build capacities for World Heritage at all levels. By providing targeted, actionable recommendations, the table empowers stakeholders to align their efforts with the Strategy's goals, fostering a globally coordinated approach to strengthening heritage conservation and management.

I AM A...	WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING CAPACITY FOR WORLD HERITAGE, I CAN...
State Party National Focal Point	→ Seek capacity-building opportunities and further professional development for themselves and others: actively seek news of opportunities provided internationally by, for example, the Advisory Bodies, Category 2 Centres and others, as well as national opportunities. → Facilitate national capacity-building plans: Develop and implement national action plans aligned with World Heritage priorities and policies, ensuring they address the needs of World Heritage properties and site management staff needs and support the World Heritage Committee's Strategy Objectives and global policy priorities, while also reinforcing national and local management and conservation approaches. → Coordinate multi-stakeholder engagement: Act as a bridge between the UNESCO, Advisory Bodies, national agencies, local authorities, and site managers to ensure unified capacity-building efforts, including proactively communicating international opportunities to relevant national actors, and encouraging the creation of national networks. → Monitor and report on capacity needs: Regularly assess and report on capacity-building needs at national and property levels, providing feedback to the Coordination Hub. → Advocate for cross-sectoral integration: Promote heritage considerations in broader national policies, such as climate action and urban planning, to safeguard World Heritage properties, initiating networking opportunities between heritage and non-heritage practitioners and institutions. → Participate in the capacity-building activities organised by UNESCO, the Advisory Bodies and/or Category 2 Centres at the international level, and when they are organised in your country, and identify and request capacity-building on important topics that could benefit your staff and/or the site managers in your country. → When relevant, promote capacity-building activities by and for Indigenous Peoples to address their specific role as rights-holders.
Site Manager	→ Seek capacity-building opportunities and further professional development: actively seek news of opportunities provided internationally by, for example, the Advisory Bodies, Category 2 Centres and others, as well as national opportunities. → Develop and implement property-specific plans: Create detailed capacity-building plans and needs assessments to address specific management challenges (e.g. conservation, disaster risk reduction, tourism management). → Engage with and facilitate capacity-building for local communities: Conduct regular workshops to involve local communities, raising awareness of the 'property's value and building capacity for site monitoring and conservation. Promote links between tangible and intangible heritage associated with the

I AM A...	WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING CAPACITY FOR WORLD HERITAGE, I CAN...
	property. Identify heritage-related capacities that already reside in the community, for example, traditional management and conservation practices, and reinforce these. → Establish relationships with practitioners in other sectors: connect with other practitioners in other institutions and networks in order to exchange and discuss collaborative solutions to management challenges (e.g., territorial planning, development, tourism management, etc.) → Leverage World Heritage resources and networks: Use World Heritage manuals, guidelines, toolkits, and best practices as well as connections with Category 2 Centres, site managers' networks and other partners to enhance site management skills. → Participate in the Site Managers Forum organised in connection with the World Heritage Committee sessions. → Create opportunities for young people/professionals to foster intergenerational exchanges and build on each other → When relevant, promote capacity-building activities by and for Indigenous Peoples to address their specific role as rights-holders.
National Commission for UNESCO	→ Align national, regional strategies to global World Heritage strategies: Facilitate that national cultural and natural heritage policies align with the objectives and priorities of the World Heritage Convention, especially with regard to capacity-building. → Coordinate national capacity-building programmes: Support capacity-building initiatives within the country, coordinating with relevant ministries, the World Heritage Centre, and international organizations. → Promote funding and partnerships: Advocate for national and international funding for heritage projects, and foster partnerships that support capacity-building efforts. → Facilitate national heritage awareness campaigns: Implement campaigns that highlight the value of World Heritage, engaging diverse communities and sectors. → Support capacity-building for and by schools and universities
Category 2 Centre	→ Regional capacity-building programmes: Develop and deliver regional training programmes on World Heritage management and conservation (including regional traditions and relevant Traditional Knowledge Systems), targeting recurring needs such as conservation, risk management, and climate action that are within the expert scope of the Centre. → Serve as a resource Hub: Provide resource materials, technical assistance, and expertise to National Focal Points, site managers, and local governments within the region and beyond. → Foster cross-Border collaboration: Initiate and support transboundary/transnational heritage projects, enabling shared learning and conservation efforts among countries. → Monitor regional needs and trends: Collect and analyse data on emerging capacity-building needs across the region and report findings to the Coordination Hub. → Facilitate cooperation with other regional capacity-building organisations, including those which support other UNESCO conventions and designations, as well as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

I AM A...	WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING CAPACITY FOR WORLD HERITAGE, I CAN...
Teacher / Professor	<u>Primary/Secondary</u> → Empower students as global citizens and future stewards of our (World) Heritage: Promote intercultural understanding, encourage critical thinking and responsibility, and inspire action for heritage protection, preservation and promotion, including World Heritage. → Incorporate Heritage into Curricula: Develop and deliver lessons that raise students' awareness of heritage places and their heritage significance, including World Heritage, and their contribution to sustainable development in addressing local and global challenges. → Foster site visits and hands-on learning: Organize field trips to local heritage sites, enabling students to engage directly with heritage conservation efforts. → Organize and promote heritage projects: Encourage students to participate in heritage-themed projects, campaigns, competitions, etc. → Build cooperation for (World) Heritage Education: Work and partner with local heritage places, museums, heritage institutions, and other schools to engage students in meaningful learning experiences and environments in and outside of school. <u>Technical and Vocational and Educational Training (TVET)</u> Integrate (World) heritage themes into TVET Curriculum: Embed discussions of heritage and its significance into the curriculum for relevant fields, such as e.g. tourism management, information technology, construction, agriculture, environmental management, restauration, conservation, and heritage crafts. Hands-on workshops: Organize practical workshops that focus on skills related to the preservation and conservation of heritage, such as stone masonry, traditional craftsmanship, or restoration techniques. Field trips to heritage sites: Arrange excursions to World Heritage properties, allowing students to witness conservation efforts firsthand and understand the practical challenges faced in heritage management. Collaboration with heritage professionals: Partner with professionals from heritage sites and organizations to provide expert lectures, mentorship, and insights into real-world practices in heritage conservation. <u>Higher Education (incl. UNESCO Chairs)</u> → Develop heritage-focused courses and research: Integrate heritage topics into curricula, emphasizing conservation, heritage policy, and sustainable development within students' academic training. → Promote interdisciplinary research projects: Encourage students to research heritage issues, using interdisciplinary approaches that combine history, conservation science, tourism, and public policy. → Foster partnerships with World Heritage properties and organisations: Build collaborative research partnerships with World Heritage properties, Category 2 Centres, and UNESCO, focusing on applied research that addresses heritage management challenges. → Mentor the next generation of heritage professionals: Guide students in career paths related to heritage conservation, linking them with opportunities for internships, traineeships, training, employment and fieldwork at World Heritage properties. → Leverage UNESCO Chairs to support capacity-building activities.

I AM A...	WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING CAPACITY FOR WORLD HERITAGE, I CAN...
Decision Maker in the Field of Heritage	→ Integrate (World) Heritage into policy and planning: Ensure that heritage conservation is embedded within national development and environmental policies. → Support funding for capacity building: Secure and allocate funding for World Heritage capacity-building programmes, facilitating resource allocation for site preservation and management training. → Promote heritage in public awareness campaigns: Advocate for heritage-focused campaigns to enhance public engagement and recognition of the value of World Heritage sites. → Oversee national compliance with World Heritage standards: Regularly assess national heritage management practices to ensure compliance with World Heritage guidelines and standards, and provide training opportunities to facilitate compliance and fill any knowledge or skills gaps.
Decision Maker Outside the Field of Heritage	→ Consider heritage impacts in sector policies: Integrate heritage conservation needs into broader sectors, e.g. urban planning, transportation, and environmental policies. Provide staff with relevant training opportunities for on-the-job training on heritage aspects in your specific sector. → Support cross-sector collaboration: Facilitate joint initiatives with heritage stakeholders (e.g. National Commission, ministries, Focal Points, local communities), especially when planning large-scale projects near World Heritage properties. → Allocate funding for heritage as a component of the Sustainable Development Goals: Recognise the essential role of heritage for sustainable development, including climate action and tackling biodiversity loss, and provide funding to support its protection within national SDG strategies and post-SDG agendas. → Participate in impact assessments: Engage in impact assessments for projects affecting World Heritage properties, ensuring the protection of heritage values within development plans.
Young Person	→ <i>Engage and create</i> • Organize awareness-raising and heritage youth lead projects; public outreach campaigns; events; conferences; and workshops to engage a broader audience about World Heritage and encourage youth participation. • Develop creative projects (using arts, music, etc.) as well as awareness raising materials and tools on World Heritage. → <i>Participate and volunteer</i> • Participate in training, workshops, targeted capacity-building programmes, global campaigns, mentorship programmes and internship opportunities. • Engage as volunteer at World Heritage properties. • Conduct research and documentation on World Heritage. • Participate actively in World Heritage Education provided in formal and non-formal settings. → <i>Advocate and promote</i> • Advocate for the integration of youth voices in decision-making processes related to World Heritage policies.

I AM A...	WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING CAPACITY FOR WORLD HERITAGE, I CAN...
	• Become Heritage caretakers/guardians: Advocate for the protection of World Heritage sites within local communities, promoting awareness and youth engagement in conservation. • Use technology and innovation (social media, digital tools, etc..) to promote World Heritage sites, to share heritage stories, to highlight challenges and sustainable solutions and to contribute to research on innovative conservation methods. • Promote Dialogue by facilitating conversations between youth, government bodies, and international organizations to align actions and strategies for the preservation of World Heritage. • Practice and promote sustainable behaviors that reduce human impact on World Heritage sites. → <i>Collaborate and network</i> • Find out opportunities to work and collaborate with heritage specialists, site managers and professionals, such as archaeologists, conservators, and historians to gain valuable skills and contribute to the preservation of heritage. • Build networks of youth across the globe within the World Heritage system to foster the exchange of ideas, tools, and joint actions towards World Heritage. • Collaborate and create synergies with youth organizations, local communities, NGOs, schools, and universities outside the field of heritage.
NGO Community Group or other Civil Society Organisation	→ <i>Collaborate and network:</i> • Make contact with the National Focal Point and/or a World Heritage site management team and find opportunities to gain greater understanding about World Heritage . • Find out opportunities to collaborate with heritage specialists, site managers and professionals, such as archaeologists, conservators, and historians to gain valuable skills and contribute to the preservation of heritage. • Participate in activities, workshops, targeted capacity-building programmes, global campaigns, mentorship programmes and internship opportunities. → <i>Advocate for cross-sectoral integration</i> • Promote heritage considerations in broader national and local policies, such as climate action and urban planning, to safeguard World Heritage properties, initiating networking opportunities between heritage and non-heritage practitioners and institutions.

ANNEX I: LIST OF AVAILABLE RESOURCE MATERIALS

Note: The following list is not exhaustive and represents some of the key available resource materials at the time of drafting the WHCBS 2025-2035. These resources and those which will be developed within the framework of the WHCBS provide a shared set of freely available, standard-setting materials that can be translated and disseminated globally. This encourages a bottom-up approach to capacity-building by empowering actors to select and adapt the resource materials that most meet local and regional needs.

The following sign indicates resources that are in the process of being updated at the time of drafting: *

For the most up-to-date resources, please refer to the following pages on the UNESCO World Heritage Centre's website: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/Publications> and <https://whc.unesco.org/en/capacity-building/>.



Key Texts

- [Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage](#) (1972)
- [Recommendation concerning the Protection at National Level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage](#) (1972) — in the spirit of the World Heritage Convention, this Recommendation encourages States to adopt comprehensive legal, scientific, administrative, and financial measures to identify, protect, conserve, and transmit their cultural and natural heritage within national borders for present and future generations.
- [Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention](#)
- [UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape](#) (2011) — an additional tool to integrate policies and practices of conservation of the built environment into the wider goals of urban development in respect of the inherited values and traditions of different cultural contexts. Used by the World Heritage Committee to promote a holistic approach to managing historic urban areas.
- [Declaration of principles to promote international solidarity and cooperation to preserve World Heritage](#) (2021) — this Declaration reaffirms the shared responsibility of all States to safeguard World Heritage through enhanced international cooperation, solidarity, and peacebuilding, especially in times of conflict, crisis, or global challenge.
- [Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage](#) (2023) and * [Climate Action Toolkit](#)



Resource Manuals

- * [Managing Disaster Risks for World Heritage](#) — Methodologies to assess, plan for, and mitigate disaster risks at heritage sites.
- [Preparing World Heritage Nominations](#) (2nd ed. 2011) — Instructions and advice for preparing high-quality nominations for the World Heritage List.
- * [Managing Natural World Heritage](#) — Good practices and frameworks for conserving natural and mixed World Heritage sites.
- * [Managing Cultural World Heritage](#) — Operational guidance for conserving cultural heritage in compliance with the Convention.
- [Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context](#) — A step-by-step guide to assess development-related impacts on World Heritage properties.
- [Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0](#) (2nd ed. 2023) — A self-assessment tool to help site managers evaluate management effectiveness.



Other Materials

- [Wind Energy Guidance for Wind Energy Projects in a World Heritage Context](#) — Guidance and case studies on siting wind energy near heritage sites; i
- [World Heritage and Wind Energy Planning](#) — Insights into balancing wind power development with visual heritage conservation.

- [Empowering Youth for Heritage: 10 Years of the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative](#) — A retrospective of the first decade of volunteer engagement in heritage conservation.
- [World Heritage Marine Sites – Best Practice Guide](#) — Operational guidance for managing marine and coastal World Heritage sites.

Platforms

- [World Heritage Online Map Platform](#) — The Geographic Information System (GIS) for World Heritage properties that functions as a monitoring platform that displays the georeferenced and verified boundaries of World Heritage properties and their buffer zones (if any) on different basemaps as required.
- [World Heritage Policy Compendium](#) — A database of World Heritage policies, organised around the 5 Strategic Objectives of the Convention, together with General Policies.
- [World Heritage Canopy: Heritage Solutions for Sustainable Futures](#) — A living platform of innovative strategies and practices that integrate heritage conservation with sustainable development, documented through case studies and practical examples.
- [PANORAMA Nature-Culture](#) — A case studies platform that highlights the importance of integrated heritage protection and management for sustainable development looking at inspiring approaches to heritage management and conservation which include the use of local and Indigenous knowledge and the engagement of local communities.
- [UNESCO Urban Heritage Atlas](#) — An atlas and an archive that documents and explains, visually, narratively, and with analytical maps, the diversity and uniqueness of the world's historic cities and settlements.

Brochures & Info Kits

- [New Life for Historic Cities: Historic Urban Landscape Approach Explained](#) — Explains the concept and application of the Historic Urban Landscape approach.
- * [The KIT: World Heritage in Young Hands](#) (1998) — An education resource for secondary schools.
- [World Heritage, Today and Tomorrow, With Young People](#) — Brochure on youth engagement and lifelong heritage learning.

World Heritage Series

A comprehensive Series focuses on thematic expert papers. See the latest updates on the dedicated **World Heritage Series** page: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/series>

Some examples of publications from this series that can be helpful for capacity building include:

- n°45 – [The Future of the World Heritage Convention for Marine Conservation. Celebrating 10 years of the World Heritage Marine Programme](#) (2016) — Reviews a decade of the Marine Programme, offering strategies and lessons to support marine site management and foster technical and institutional capacities.
- n°44 – [World Heritage in the High Seas: An Idea Whose Time Has Come](#) (2016) — Explores governance frameworks and capacity needs to extend protection to marine areas beyond national jurisdictions—crucial for international cooperation.
- n°40 – [Engaging Local Communities in Stewardship of World Heritage](#) (2014) — Offers practical guidance and tools for community engagement (COMPACT initiative), designed to scale participatory management across regions.
- n°36 – [Earthen Architecture in Today's World](#) (2013) — Highlights specialised capacity for conserving heritage built with traditional earthen techniques globally.
- **Periodic Reporting outcome papers** for Cycles I and II, for each region.

ANNEX II: EXCERPTS FROM THE REGIONAL ACTION PLANS RESULTING FROM THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING

See the compiled and annotated Regional Framework Action Plans here:

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/221355/>