

ICOMOS TECHNICAL REVIEW

Property	Portovenere, Cinque Terre, and the Islands (Palmaria, Tino and Tinetto)		
State Party	Italy	Property ID	826
(ii)(iv)(v)		Date of inscription	1997
Project	"Management Plan for the UNESCO site Porto Venere, Cinque Terre and the Islands (Palmaria, Tino and Tinetto), revision 2020"		
		Criteria	

On 5 January 2021, ICOMOS received the following two documents, submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre:

- the "Management Plan for the UNESCO site Porto Venere, Cinque Terre and the Islands (Palmaria, Tino and Tinetto), revision 2020" (MiBACT|MIBACT_SG_SERV II|29/12/2020|0018026-P - Allegato Utente 1 (A01))
- the Annexes to the above-mentioned 2020 Management Plan (MiBACT|MIBACT_SG_SERV II-|29/12/2020|0018026-P - Allegato Utente 2 (A02))

The Advisory Body provides its analysis of the Management Plan and its annexes below.

Management Plan

The revised Management Plan was submitted by the State Party in accordance with the World Heritage Committee Decisions 37 COM 7B.78 and 39 COM 8B.45, which recommended the following, respectively:

5. *Requests* the State Party to implement the recommendations of the mission and more particularly:
 - a) Review the management system for the entire property, involving all the stakeholders, including local communities and focusing on the necessity to face the increasing socioeconomic pressure, with a living landscape approach that recognizes and promotes the knowledge of traditional land uses in the property,
 - b) Revise the Management Plan and incorporate within it a sustainable tourism strategy for the property, and an integrated risk management strategy,
 - c) Define a buffer zone for the appropriate protection of the wider landscape and officially submit the proposal to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2015, in accordance with Paragraphs 163-165 of the Operational Guidelines

and

2. *Refers* the examination of the proposed minor modification to the boundary of the buffer zone of **Portovenere, Cinque Terre, and the Islands (Palmaria, Tino and Tinetto), Italy**, back to the State Party in order to allow it to:
 - a) Consider the possibility to extend the boundaries of the marine areas in the South-eastern part of the buffer zone to increase the protection around the Islands of Palmaria, Tino and Tinetto;

- b) *Explain in detail how the management system function in practice and clarify the implementation and management of the buffer zone in terms of the responsible agents and in relation to the inscribed property;*
- c) *Provide a timetable for the official approval and implementation of the Regional Territorial Plan;*
- d) *Finalize the management plan.*

The 2020 version of the Management Plan should therefore satisfy these requests.

From its analysis of the plan, ICOMOS considers that these requests have been satisfied to a certain extent: knowledge of the property's characteristics and values is solid, the framework within which the property will be managed has been delineated, and tools have been established. On the other hand, while the Management Plan indicates the fundamental guidelines for future actions, the strategy to be followed is not well-explained and the objectives to be pursued seem vague.

A new system of governance makes it possible to have cooperation among public administration and the participation of stakeholders in decision-making. This system was effective in the preparation of the Management Plan; it should be tested in the further production of consistent conservation policies and in the elaboration and adoption of ordinary plans at different levels (municipal, regional) compliant with the aim of the property's preservation.

Conditions of risk have been analysed and programmes for reducing risk and enhancing safety are taking place. Projects for repairing the damage of the exceptional 2011 flood have been laid out, and some have been completed. The Management Plan contains detailed descriptions of the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and its attributes, and an analysis of the major problems that threaten them. Special concern is given to agriculture and tourism; some projects are explicitly dedicated to supporting these activities and making them compatible with conservation. Nevertheless, it is not evident which strategies and actions are to be undertaken in order to counteract two paramount issues faced by the property: the abandonment of agricultural lands, which triggers the collapse of the terraced soils and the disappearance of the historic landscape; and the pressure of mass tourism that provokes negative effects on both material and immaterial heritage. These problems cannot find a definitive solution in the Management Plan; but they need to be tackled more directly.

Chapter 5, dedicated to strategy and goals, sounds like a list of desires rather than a programme; most projects described are on schedule but are not in progress and do not clearly define a strategy of redevelopment, that is to say, a coherent set of actions for reacting to present decline of agriculture and to redirect tourism towards sustainability.

In conclusion, the Management Plan is a valid document, but it would be advisable that the State Party demonstrates as soon as possible the effectiveness of the governance system in terms of programmes approved, expected results, and indicators to assess achievements.

In the following sections, the present situation is summarised and a few comments are dedicated to the major items of other chapters of the Management Plan and to the Annexes, where some subjects are more extensively exposed.

Current situation

Many elements and large portions of the property are protected by national and regional regulations on landscape, heritage and natural environment, due to the presence of recognized cultural values and sites belonging to the Natura 2000 Network. Furthermore, two parks exist that are approximately combined to form the property: the National Park of Cinque Terre was established in 1999, with a Parks' Plan adopted in 2002 and definitively approved in 2010; the Regional Park of Portovenere and the Islands was established in 2001, with a Park's Plan approved in 2007.

In 2013, the World Heritage Committee recommended the State Party to revise the Management Plan, define a buffer zone for the appropriate protection of the landscape, and carry out a Heritage Impact Assessment of the project to upgrade public spaces in the Municipality of Vernazza.

The first version of the World Heritage property's Management Plan was submitted to the World Heritage Centre in 2017 and reviewed by ICOMOS in its May 2017 Technical Review. The Technical Review recommended some changes to the plan, including a general synthesis of the text to facilitate its use. The updated Management Plan, now under evaluation, was presented in 2020; it considers a cycle of 5 years.

Major changes in the Management Plan consist of:

- an overview of OUV and the related attributes;
- a revision of the system of governance;
- analysis of risks and pressures;
- a revision of the objectives;
- projects for enhancing monitoring and instruments for conservation.

The revision of the Management Plan offered the opportunity to include the participation of the community within the process of planning and managing the property.

Chapter 2 (chapter 1 is dedicated to the introduction of the Plan) contains a study of the OUV and its attributes, based on a study by the University of Genoa, commissioned by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism in 2015. The attributes consist of physical elements that characterize the typical geomorphology of the property, and manmade elements (buildings and cultivations) that are an expression of its particular culture and history. The description of the attributes is an attempt to pass from the definition of the OUV, which expresses the overall qualities of the property, to an integrated system of natural and cultural elements that can be identified, both as a whole and individually, listed, and consequently protected. Therefore, the permanency of each attribute is a guarantee of the permanency of the OUV, and its level of integrity is an indicator of the results obtained through the implementation of conservation measures. Complementary and intangible values complete the definition of the components that contribute towards the preservation of the OUV. It is noted that intangible values (such as the dialect or religious events) are particularly threatened because of social changes and the shifting of the economy towards mass tourism. Chapter 2 demonstrates that the values of the property have been largely and deeply studied and are well known in their current complexity; it constitutes a solid base for policies.

Chapter 3 considers the governance of the property. Here, the traditional two-level system, where municipalities act separately and the region expresses guidelines and coordinates interventions, is made more complicated because the state is presently in a double role: by means of the Ministry of Culture, which is directly involved in managing the property, and the National Park administration, which comes under the Ministry of Environment. In order to coordinate all the stakeholders, an agreement has been established (Accordo di Programma as regulated by the comprehensive law on local administration, D. lgs. 18/08/2000, n. 267, article 34). According to the national law, this

agreement aims to obtain a specific result: to plan and complete a work task, to implement a programme, or to change simultaneously the plans of every level to make them coherent with the planned work itself. It is not conceived to operate as a permanent framework for discussion and decision.

In the case of Cinque Terre, first of all, the agreement has a fundamental symbolic and political function (“By signing the Agreement, all the signatories, within the scope of their competences and functions, have undertaken to preserve, respect and promote the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Site”, page 24); later on, it can be expected that new agreements will be necessary for making local plans compliant with the Management Plan or special projects. In the meantime, in order to give continuity to coordinated actions, the agreement has established a series of permanent bodies and offices: a Coordination Committee with representatives of all the administrations, the Community of Municipalities of the buffer zone, a working group with the task of implementing the Management Plan, a UNESCO site office, and an Advisory Committee with consultative functions that answers to the Coordination Committee.

The system of governance outlined by the Accordo di Programma is conceived with the intention to promote collaboration between public administrations; citizens are practically absent and public debates and stakeholder participation are not compulsory in the decision-making process, which can lead to later conflict. In the current system established in Cinque Terre, there is a relevant difference: “As part of the ordinary management linked to UNESCO and its projects, the establishment of the UNESCO office has facilitated a continuous and fruitful dialogue with the individual administrations and the main stakeholders” (page 26). It is a promising sign that national, regional and local authorities are experimenting with new forms of dialogue to address the need of the World Heritage property to have an articulated system of governance. On some occasions, public discussions have also been held. This would indicate that citizens are progressively becoming more involved in the decision-making process, though their participation is not yet routine.

Taking into account that the villages are small and their municipalities have limited human and infrastructural resources, it would be very important for local authorities to establish agreements for strengthening cooperation, uniting services and carrying out joint activities, for instance by establishing an association of communes, a practice that has been spreading in several countries, following administrative reforms of local authorities. In this way, a more robust basis for coherent policies and planning could be achieved, local technical administrative capacities could be harnessed more efficiently, and participatory and collaboration platforms with local actors could be established and implemented, thereby increasing and supporting citizens’ participation in decision-making.

Annexes

Disaster Risk Management Plan

Like most of the Ligurian coast, the area of the property is exposed to violent floods. Sudden and intense autumn storms, typical of the Mediterranean, can provoke disasters due to diverse causes:

- i. natural morphological reasons: short and steep valleys channel great amounts of water from the mountains towards the coast in a very short amount of time;
- ii. consequences of long-term, structural phenomena: the abandonment of agricultural land leaves the traditional drainage systems unattended and makes the soil instable;
- iii. human hazard: that is to say, inappropriate (sometimes illegal) human interventions.

On 25 October 2011, a devastating flood caused millions of Euros worth of damage and killed 13 people. Most of the mud that filled the Port of Vernazza on that occasion came from an old dump that was used as a car park (see above, iii). After that, the 2016 Management Plan included measures to limit the risk of flood. In 2017, ICOMOS invited the State Party to lay out a specific Disaster Risk Management Plan, which has now been presented.

The Disaster Risk Management Plan contains:

- an introduction on the concept of risk and the methodologies of risk management;
- a report, including various thematic analyses, on the values of the World Heritage property (natural, cultural, immaterial);
- a description of the factors of pressure that generate risk;
- documentation of several disastrous events that occurred in the property and major threats;
- an evaluation of the risk factors, containing scenarios of risk;
- a description of the regulations in force and the measures provided in order to prevent and manage emergencies;
- a list of the actions and the projects aimed to protect the soil, the environment and the heritage, and to increase safety.

The Disaster Risk Management Plan is well-structured and based on rich documentation. It contains an ample, overall description of the values at risk and the existing vulnerabilities, but deals very rapidly with serious risks, particularly the excessive tourist pressure, is elusive about the way to react to the risk deriving from the abandonment of the agricultural land, and does not consider the damage (and the risks) deriving from illegal or informal building activities; it considers the general problem of the abandonment of the villages but does not focus on a particular issue in Cinque Terre – people transforming their homes into short-term rental properties (e.g. Airbnb) and going to live in the nearby city.

The plan lists and describes the national and regional regulations and measures to prevent or reduce risks, and the system of alerts that is presently in force in the entire Ligurian region (a system that broadly aims to limit or stop activities and inform people when there is an immediate risk of floods); that is to say, the property is protected like any other part of the regional territory, but some projects aim to give the property an extra protection. Little information is given about the local planning system, which appears to be obsolete: municipal land use plans are old and have been proven to be largely ineffective, while the Landscape Regional Plan was issued in 1990 and is not compliant with national legislation in force.

Several actions and projects for the reduction of risk are described, but scarce indication is provided about their implementation (the way they will be monitored, the assessment of the results, etc.).

A more robust integration of the Disaster Risk Management plan with the overall Management Plan, particularly through its strategies, objectives and actions, would be needed and useful, and would also reduce a certain vagueness of the Management Plan in this regard.

Heritage Impact Assessment of the project for the restoration of public spaces in Vernazza On 7 October 2013, the Vernazza Municipality approved a masterplan for the restoration of public spaces after the storm occurred in 2011; works were completed on 25 May 2015.

In October 2012, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission visited the property to assess its conditions; consequently, in 2013, the State Party was requested to carry out a Heritage Impact

Assessment of the recovery projects, including those to take place in Vernazza. The projects and the HIA concentrate on Piazza Marconi, the open public space between the village and the port. The methodology adopted for the HIA is based on the 2011 ICOMOS "Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties".

The HIA began in 2018 and was completed in 2020; it concluded that no negative impact was found, detected some positive results in terms of job creation and better functionality, and recommended to continue the actions being undertaken including other public spaces.

A large portion of the HIA (chapter 5 and part of chapter 4) is dedicated to describing the property and its OUV, as already reported in the Management Plan and in the Disaster Risk Management Plan. Part of chapter 4 is dedicated to describing the flood and the disasters it caused. Chapter 6 describes the restoration project and its results.

The project concerns the main axis of the village that stretches from the car park to the port and passes by the railway station; it consists basically of the renovation of stone paving and street equipment, such as benches, new lighting and trees. As of February 2020, the first phase (out of three) of the project was completed (the annex does not report on further improvements), consisting of the renovation of Piazza Marconi. While an executive project for the car parking area existed, apart from cleaning and provisional repairs, the renovation of the other portion (the village main street) was only laid out in a masterplan.

As reported, Piazza Marconi was repaved with sandstone slabs typical of the local building tradition; equipped with benches (some made of stone, others made of steel and wood) and new energy saving lighting; and new trees were planted (tamarisks), smaller and more resistant to sea winds and salt air than those planted formerly (holly oaks). These interventions appear congruous with the place and its use.

The next phase of the project expected to be undertaken is the renovation of the area of Fontanavecchia, at the other end of the axis.

In this area, the row of ornamental trees (*Catalpa Bignonioides*) intended to be planted in a small square where two old plane trees already exist seems incongruous with the place and the urban environment, and is maybe inspired by a desire to provide tourists with some shade. The proposal to plant catalpa and magnolia trees along the main street and in the squares is also in contradiction with the statement of the HIA (chapter 7) that, when discussing vegetation in the populated centres, affirms the "Need to assess compatibility with the traditional image of the village" (page 162), and recommends "Use of native species compatible with the traditional image" (page 163).

The HIA refers mainly to "flooring, vegetation, lighting, urban furniture" and also considers impact on social and economic contexts. It concludes that "no negative impact on the OUV emerged," therefore mitigation measures are not required. In general, and considering the type, quality and extent of the renovation works, this conclusion is agreeable. Nevertheless, conditions of use, safety and accessibility of the public spaces are not clearly described and considerations about the relation of renovated areas with the village as a whole are missing.

Completed projects

Annex 3 contains a list and a short description of the projects drawn up in 2016 that have come to completion (within 2020):

- a definition of the buffer zone, submitted as a minor boundary modification to the World Heritage Centre;
- the creation of a website containing information about the property and its Management Plan (<https://www.portovenerecinqueterreisole.com>); the website has texts in Italian, English and French;
- a study on vulnerability to landslides, containing a survey and census and information on the monitoring of the vulnerability to landslides with indications as to how to make the territory safer;
- a project for training and informing citizens and tourists about the correct procedures to be used in case of hazards, setting up an alert system to inform people, providing advice on correct behaviour.

The communication strategy of values

The State Party approved in 2018, and implemented in 2020, a project called "Identification of a strategy for the promotion and communication of intangible assets" (of the property). This strategy consists of:

- a virtual tour, i.e. a multimedia product to make the property virtually "visitable" by everyone;
- a webinar, held in November 2020, to disseminate among the students of the intermediate school a better knowledge of the property and awareness of its OUV,
- a web session, held on 24 November 2020, in order to communicate the results obtained in the participation meetings carried out on the occasion of the revision of the values implemented in 2020,
- a booklet for tourists, of which 1000 copies were printed in November 2020 and distributed for free.

Conclusions

On the basis of the analysis provided above, ICOMOS provides the following conclusions for the consideration of the State Party:

- The Management Plan is a valid document, but it would be advisable that the State Party demonstrates as soon as possible the effectiveness of the governance system in terms of programmes approved, expected results, and indicators to assess achievements. It is also advised that the dialogue established by the UNESCO office continues in order to involve citizens routinely in the decision-making process;
- The Disaster Risk Management Plan would need to be further revised to consider serious risks, particularly the excessive tourist pressure; approaches to react to the risk deriving from the abandonment of the agricultural land; and damage (and risks) deriving from illegal or informal building activities, and from the transformation of homes into short-term rental properties. Further indications should be provided regarding the implementation of the actions and projects mentioned in the plan (the way they will be monitored, the assessment of the results, etc.).
- Stronger integration between the general Management Plan and the Disaster Risk Management Plan, particularly at the level of strategies, objectives and actions to be pursued and implemented, would strengthen the management framework;
- The State Party should consider establishing additional/complementary agreements between the municipalities of the World Heritage property to unite forces and services and

provide a stable platform for participation and cooperation with local actors, including professional associations, action groups and civil society;

- Regarding the project for the restoration of public spaces in Vernazza, it is advised that the State Party consider replacing the proposed planting of ornamental trees with local trees traditionally planted in urban places (planes, hackberries, oaks, elms, limes, etc.) and to take into consideration the conditions of use, safety and accessibility of the public spaces and the relationship between the renovated areas and the village as a whole.

ICOMOS remains at the disposal of the State Party for further clarification on the above or assistance as required.

ICOMOS, Charenton-le-Pont
May 2021