

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

**Wildlife Institute of India -
Category 2 Centre (WII-C2C)
for World Natural Heritage
Management and Training
for Asia and the Pacific Region,
Under the auspices of UNESCO
Dehradun, India**



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



World
Heritage
Centre



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भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान
Wildlife Institute of India



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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report 2020-21 of the Wildlife Institute of India - Category 2 Centre for World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region (WII-C2C), under the auspices of UNESCO, Dehradun, India. The past year has been a difficult one with the COVID19 pandemic affecting our professional and personal lives. The Centre's work of capacity building, training, research, dissemination of information and network building, continued in these challenging circumstances emphasizing why protection of natural heritage is of primary importance.

In the process of nomination of new sites to the Tentative List and World Heritage List, the Centre had a particularly active year. Through a couple of years of documentation, the nomination dossier for the Garo Hills Conservation Area of Meghalaya, India is in its final stages of completion. Also in this report, is the outline of an extensive multi-disciplinary expedition conducted by WII-C2C in the Adi Kailash-Askot Sacred Landscape, the Indian part of the transnational Kailash landscape, to capture its deep religious and ecological significance. The State Government of Madhya Pradesh, India was also aided by WII-C2C's expertise in shortlisting two locations out of a larger list as most suitable for inclusion in India's Tentative List of potential World Heritage Sites.

Towards its aim of capacity building centred around the World Heritage Convention, the WII-C2C continued to make commendable progress organizing and participating in international conferences on the impact of the pandemic on World Heritage properties and planning on adaptation for climate change. As covered in this report, the Centre is a key player in the major once-in-6-years cycle UNESCO exercise of Periodic Reporting for World Heritage Sites of Asia and the Pacific Region, guiding officials of an extraordinarily diverse range of natural heritage properties in the region, while working closely with the World Heritage Centre. The inaugural Master's Course in Heritage Conservation and Management course, continued through its second year, adapting to an online mode of teaching and learning in the midst of the pandemic. Glimpsed in this report, through workshops for nature/tourist guides in Madhya Pradesh, analysis of Outstanding Universal Values at the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area and initiatives like the mainstreaming of natural heritage in active collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India, the Centre continues to establish itself as a premier location for capacity-building, outreach and collaboration.

I hope that this report provides a window into the multiple ways this unique Centre contributes to the exciting and nascent field of natural heritage conservation, and I look forward to receiving suggestions to help us improve further.

Dr. Dhananjai Mohan

BACKGROUND

The Agreement between Government of India and UNESCO for the establishment in Dehradun of a 'Centre for World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region' as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO was formally signed on 02 September, 2015 by the Director General of Forests, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India as counterpart to the signature by the Director General, UNESCO, Paris. The signing followed the approval of this Agreement by the Government of India's Cabinet of Ministers, chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi on 05 August, 2015.

The WII-C2C Governing Body Meeting was held on 20 May, 2020 through video conferencing. The GB had duly approved the Annual Progress Report (2019-20) and the Annual Work Plan (2020-21) of the Centre. The UNESCO World Heritage Centre as a member of the Governing Body, represented by Dr. Mechtild Rossler, Director and Dr. Feng Jing, Chief, Asia-Pacific Unit, recommended that the Centre's activities should also be extended to the South Asian sub-region as well as to the rest of Asia and Pacific Region.

The Centre has accomplished Annual Work Programmes for the years 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. This Annual Report outlines the activities undertaken by the Centre during the year 2020-21.

MISSION & OBJECTIVES

The Centre's mission is to strengthen implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Asia and the Pacific Region by building the capacity of all those professionals and bodies involved with Natural Heritage site inscription, protection, conservation and management in Asia and the Pacific region, through training, research, dissemination of information and network building. The overall objective is to focus on Natural Heritage conservation issues with the aim to:

- contribute to the strengthening of capacities in the management of Natural World Heritage in the region;
- contribute to achieving a more balanced representation of properties from Asia and the Pacific on the World Heritage List;
- raise awareness among the general public and the youth in particular of the importance of Natural World Heritage and the need to protect it; and
- foster international cooperation on Natural World Heritage initiatives.



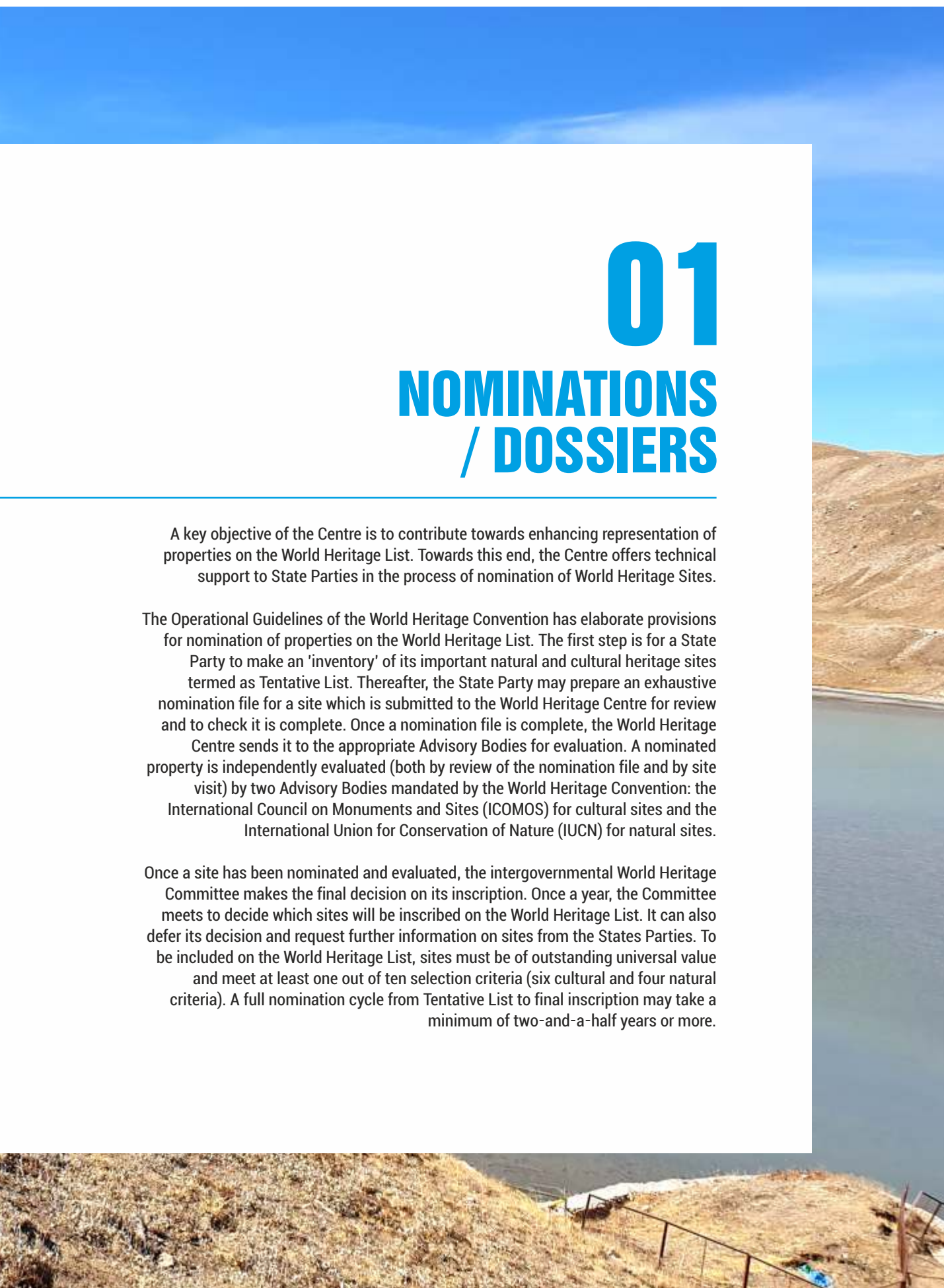
01

NOMINATIONS / DOSSIERS

A key objective of the Centre is to contribute towards enhancing representation of properties on the World Heritage List. Towards this end, the Centre offers technical support to State Parties in the process of nomination of World Heritage Sites.

The Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention has elaborate provisions for nomination of properties on the World Heritage List. The first step is for a State Party to make an 'inventory' of its important natural and cultural heritage sites termed as Tentative List. Thereafter, the State Party may prepare an exhaustive nomination file for a site which is submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review and to check it is complete. Once a nomination file is complete, the World Heritage Centre sends it to the appropriate Advisory Bodies for evaluation. A nominated property is independently evaluated (both by review of the nomination file and by site visit) by two Advisory Bodies mandated by the World Heritage Convention: the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for cultural sites and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for natural sites.

Once a site has been nominated and evaluated, the intergovernmental World Heritage Committee makes the final decision on its inscription. Once a year, the Committee meets to decide which sites will be inscribed on the World Heritage List. It can also defer its decision and request further information on sites from the States Parties. To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of ten selection criteria (six cultural and four natural criteria). A full nomination cycle from Tentative List to final inscription may take a minimum of two-and-a-half years or more.



01

NOMINATIONS/DOSSIERS

1.A. World Heritage Nomination Dossier Preparation for Garo Hills Conservation Area, Meghalaya, India

The proposed site of Garo Hills Conservation Area (GHCA), Meghalaya was formally placed on the Tentative List of India's World Heritage Sites in September, 2018. Subsequently, an agreement was signed between the Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of Meghalaya and the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun in December 2018 for preparation of detailed proposal for inscription of Garo Hills Conservation Area as a World Heritage Site. Towards this end, WII-C2C has undertaken various activities, both in terms of field tour and literature documentation for the proposed site, as well as meetings and consultations with relevant stakeholders.

A first draft of the nomination dossier, as per the nomination format viz. Annex 5 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, for inscription of Garo Hills Conservation Area, Meghalaya as a World Heritage Site was submitted to the Government of Meghalaya in October, 2020 for review and further finalisation. This was followed by a high-level meeting with the Hon'ble Minister and senior officials of the Department of Environment and Forest, Government of Meghalaya in January, 2021 to share the status of the nominations dossier and acquire necessary feedback. Currently, work is in progress to update the document for final submission.

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1.B. Proposal for nomination of Kailash Landscape within India on the Tentative List of World Heritage Sites in India

The WII-C2C has been associated with the process of documenting the Kailash Landscape in India to be placed on the Tentative List of Indian World Heritage Sites towards the purpose of a future nomination as proposed UNESCO World Heritage Site. Several consultations and workshops were held with a spectrum of stakeholders during the preceding years. A proposal for inclusion of the 'Sacred Mountain Landscape and Heritage Routes', encompassing the Pithoragarh District of Uttarakhand State, India, on the Tentative List of World Heritage Sites in India was forwarded to the World Heritage Centre in April, 2019. Following discussions at the World Heritage Session held in Baku, Azerbaijan in July, 2019, it was decided to temporarily withdraw the proposal from the Tentative List process for carrying out technical modifications with respect to the proposal. Efforts have since continued to strengthen the documentation on the site. WII-C2C has subsequently communicated with and received a certified map from Survey of India outlining the international boundary of India in the region where the Kailash landscape is located in Pithoragrah District of Uttarakhand, India.

A multi-agency expedition was undertaken to the Adi Kailash region in October, 2020 including WII, Uttarakhand Forest Department, Survey of India and Rung Kalyan Sanstha to assess its key sites of natural

and cultural importance. During the expedition, the team completed a kora (sacred circuit) of the Adi Kailash peak (5975 m) using the high altitude Sinla Pass (5500 m) to cross over from the Vyans to the Darma valley. The team travelled through several scenic and culturally relevant settlements including Tawaghat, Chhiyalek, Garbyang, Gunji and Kuti along with a slight detour for Kalapani, the origin of the river Kali and Om Parvat, a mountain slope where snowfall appears to take the shape of the holy word "Om". The team then staged at Jeolinkong, the base camp for Adi Kailash before trekking across Sinla Pass to the village of Daantu in the Darma Valley via stops at Beidang, Smriti Sthal at Kaljyakti, Goto and Go Bridge. The team also experienced the cultural richness of the main inhabitants of the region, the Rung community, whose traditional lifestyle is intricately linked with nature. The expedition team concluded that though the region was dotted with culturally significant natural sites, more rigorous work with regard to mapping to historical sources was needed. The potential for eco-tourism in the region was also found to be significant if appropriate training and models could be used to involve local communities thereby preserving both natural and cultural values of the region.

WII-C2C has also engaged with the Rung Kalyan Sanstha (RKS), a civil society organisation comprising of members from the local ethnic community, who have submitted a document on key cultural attributes of the proposed Kailash landscape.



1.C. Project on potential World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh, India

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has signed an agreement with WII-C2C for a project titled, 'Identification and prioritization of potential World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh State of India'. For this purpose, the Centre is undertaking various activities for documenting potential sites with Outstanding Universal Value in Madhya Pradesh that may be included in the Tentative List of World Heritage Sites of India. Inception meeting and consultation workshop have been conducted with key stakeholders in Madhya Pradesh for preliminary identification of potential sites in the State. Further, questionnaire surveys have also been initiated in select sites to acquire information and assess perceptions of the local inhabitants towards the World Heritage process.

WII-C2C conducted a capacity-building workshop in Orchha for 'Inventorisation and

Prioritisation of Potential World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh' for tourist guides in the State during November, 2020. This was followed by field visit to Bhedaghat, Jabalpur for documentation of its values. A sharing-cum-consultation workshop on the project was organised in January 2021 in Rishikesh with high-level Tourism and Forest officials of Government of Madhya Pradesh. A field visit was undertaken to some of the identified sites in Bhedaghat and Satpura, Madhya Pradesh for community interaction and PRA exercise in March, 2021. This was followed by another National-level consultation organised in Panchmarhi on 19-20 March, 2021 for WII-C2C formally submitted to the MPTB at the end of March, 2021 the final Tentative List documentation for two priority sites, namely, Satpura Tiger Reserve and the Bhedaghat landscape in Madhya Pradesh. This was subsequently submitted onwards to ASI and UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the two sites are now successfully included in the Tentative List of India.







02

CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING & WORKSHOPS

The Centre's mandate to contribute to the strengthening of capacities in the conservation and management of World Natural Heritage is derived from the "World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy" which is based on the World Heritage Committee's focus on capacity building as one of its five strategic objectives (the 5Cs: credibility, conservation, communication, capacity building and community). The purpose of this strategy is to provide a framework which favours the development of effective actions and programmes to strengthen or develop capacities of practitioners, institutions, communities and networks for the conservation and management of World Heritage.

The World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy also foresees UNESCO Category 2 Centres in the regions working on World Heritage issues as appropriate institutions to take the lead in developing a regional capacity building strategy and associated programmes for strengthening capacities at the regional level. In alignment with this strategy, among the core functions of the Centre is to conduct short and long term capacity-building activities, including workshops, courses and international conferences.

02

CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

2.A. Webinar on Disaster & World Heritage with focus on Pandemics (22 May, 2020)

COVID-19 has caused humanity to review its approach to pandemics with the unprecedented global disruption of political, social and economic life as experienced in the current scenario. As economic, political and natural systems interact with increasing complexity, international conventions represent the best opportunity to address problems of such global scale. UNESCO's World Heritage Convention (WHC) ratified by 193 States Parties is the largest collaboration among the countries of the world and has led the forward in matters of common concern among its members.

Pandemics can have serious repercussions for the heritage sites affecting their outstanding universal Values. These unique protected areas and cultural spaces are also a critical source of dependence, sustenance and coping mechanism for the associated society, communities, species and natural systems. The lockdown imposed by governments across the world have disrupted economic and social services for the people and restricted access to many areas including to the World

Heritage Sites. As of end-April 2020, UNESCO monitoring data indicated that 72% of all Heritage Sites were fully closed for access to public. In this context, WII-C2C, in partnership with national and international organisations, organized a webinar on the theme of "Disaster and World Heritage with focus on Pandemics" on the 22nd of May, 2020. This was streamed live on platforms like Zoom and YouTube, which was attended by over 400 participants, worldwide. The main objective was to understand the scale, impact, opportunities, responses and tools for conserving world heritage and mitigating threats in the time of the present danger. Key experts in natural and cultural heritage, disaster and geospatial technology representing WHC, UNOOSA, ICCROM, DRONAH, MAXAR, MoEFCC and WII presented their views as resource persons/speakers at the event. Major recommendations called for deepening collaborations at various scales, mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction approaches, strategies for enhancing management capacities and livelihood support around World Heritage Sites, and the need to study the critical links between pandemics and natural sites with respect to animal origin of infectious diseases, vulnerability of species and the underlying drivers of environmental stress.

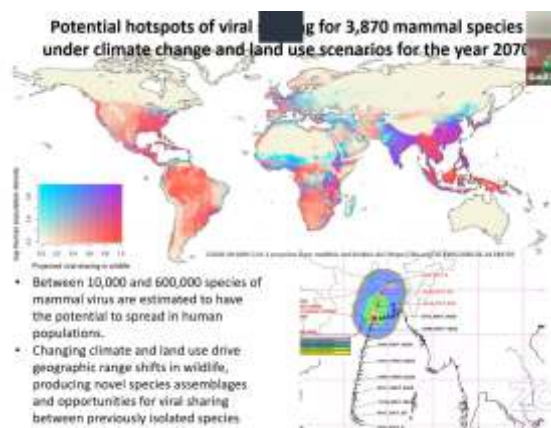
Pandemic Epicenter in Historic Cities



Jaipur, India



Shikha Jain



2.B. Webinar on India-EU Experience Sharing on Adaptation Planning and Implementation (30 June, 2020)

A webinar was organised between the Government of India, the Indian States and officials from the EU and EU Member States on the important issue of adaptation to climate change and experience sharing. This was held under the EU-Strategic Partnership for Implementation of the Paris Agreement (SPIPA) project, which contributes to cooperation

between the EU and India on climate action. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India, is the nodal partner ministry. The virtual meeting was structured as thematic discussions with a focus on exchanging best practices, lesson learnt as well as exchanges on opportunities and challenges. The first session of the webinar was open to general public and second session was a closed panel discussion among representatives from the States, WII and MoEFCC officials.

2.C. Periodic Reporting for World Heritage Sites of the Asia and Pacific Region



Periodic Reporting is one of the core conservation monitoring mechanisms of the World Heritage Convention. The Periodic Reporting process provides an assessment of the application of the World Heritage Convention by the States Parties, i.e., the legislative and administrative provisions which they have adopted and other action which they have taken for the application of this Convention in their territory. It also provides updated information about the sites to record possible changes in the state of conservation of sites. The process is undertaken through a specially formulated Questionnaire which has to be filled with information on World Heritage Sites of each country. UNESCO Category 2 Centres, under the ægis of the World Heritage Centre, play a

key role in the Periodic Reporting process on a regional scale.

In this context, WII-C2C has been integrally involved with the current Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting for Asia and the Pacific Region during 2020-2021. The Centre's specific responsibility is to provide technical support and capacity-building for thematic issues of natural sites. In addition, the Director, Wildlife Institute of India has been designated as National Focal Point for Natural/Mixed Sites in India. WII-C2C participated in all the bimonthly capacity-building sessions on this process conducted by the World Heritage Centre from September, 2020 through March, 2021. The Centre also made specific presentations during the WHC sessions for Asia-Pacific members on its role and activities related to Periodic Reporting (December, 2020) and on its experiences with

Management Planning and Management Effectiveness Evaluation of World Heritage Sites (March, 2021). The Centre has also conducted capacity-building sessions for Site Managers of Natural/Mixed World Heritage Sites in India, both in online and offline mode. Following several online sessions for technical support to the Site Managers, a workshop was held for representatives of all the Indian sites in Kaziranga National Park, Assam on 03-04 March, 2021. Opening remarks were made by Dr. Dhananjai Mohan, Director, Wildlife Institute of India and National Focal Point for Natural/Mixed Sites in India. Special address was provided by Mr. Amit Sahai, PCCF (Wildlife), Assam and Dr. V. K. Yadav, Chief Wildlife Warden, West Bengal. 15 participants included guests and Site Managers from six Natural World Heritage Sites viz. Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, Kaziranga National Park, Keoladeo National Park, Manas National Park, Sundarbans National Park and Western Ghats. The programme comprised of orientation on World Heritage, overview of reporting and monitoring obligations, hands-on session on filling-up the Periodic Reporting Online Questionnaire, followed by field visit to understand the Outstanding Universal Value of the Kaziranga National Park.



WII-C2C Participation in 3rd Cycle of Periodic Reporting for APA Schedule of Training Sessions conducted by UNESCO World Heritage Centre	
24 September 2020	Warm-Up & Information Session
8 October 2020	Access & Use of The Questionnaire - Refresher Session
15 October 2020	Questionnaire Walk-Through: Section I
22 October 2020	Questionnaire Walk-Through: Section II
29 October 2020	Action Plans: Suwon Action Plan for Asia
12 November 2020	Understanding Outstanding Universal Value & Attributes
19 November 2020	Synergies Between Conventions
3 December 2020	Factors Affecting the Properties (C, N, M)
17 December 2020	Reporting On Natural Heritage
14 January, 2021	Q&A Session: Section I
28 January 2021	Maps, Boundaries & The Retrospective Inventory
11 February 2021	Sustainable Development Goals & World Heritage
25 February, 2021	Management Plans & Impact Assessments
11 March, 2021	Q&A Session: Section II
WII-C2C Presentations for APA Region	
17 December 2020	WII-C2C Overview of Activities and Experience with Periodic Reporting
11 March, 2021	WII Role in Management Planning and Management Effectiveness Evaluation Framework
WII-C2C Presentations for National Focal Point & Site Managers India	
21 October, 2020	First Briefing Session for World Heritage Sites (Natural/Mixed), India (online)
13 November, 2020	Training Session for Site Managers (Natural/Mixed), India (online)
16 December, 2020	Training Session for Site Managers (Natural/Mixed), India (online)
03 March, 2021	Capacity-building Workshop on Periodic Reporting for World Heritage Site Managers (Natural/Mixed), India (on-site in Kaziranga National Park, Assam)



2.D. Capacity Building workshop for Nature/Tourist Guides at Orchha, Madhya Pradesh (08- 09 November, 2020)

WII-C2C conducted a capacity-building workshop in Orchha for 'Inventorisation and Prioritisation of Potential World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh' for tourist guides in the State during November, 2020. The workshop was attended by 30 participants. The participants were provided an introduction to World Heritage concepts and an overview on World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh. The focus of the workshop included sessions on World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Management, Tourism Policy and Strategy, Community-based Tourism Management, Cross-cultural sensitivity in World Heritage Sites. Specific sessions were also held on Role of Tour Guides in World Heritage Preservation. Dynamics of Tour Guiding, Communication and Interpretation, etc.



2.E. Capacity Building cum Consultation Workshop on Potential World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal conducted at Rishikesh, Uttarakhand (07-08 January, 2021)

WII-C2C conducted a Consultation Workshop on "Inventorization and Prioritization of Potential World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh State" in Rishikesh on 07 -08 January, 2021. This was organized as a part of the project funded by Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, Bhopal. The workshop was attended by senior officials of MP Tourism Board, MP Forest Department and Senior Professionals having sound knowledge and experience of Madhya Pradesh and its cultural and

natural heritage. Invited members suggested and presented unique values of their sites. 22 participants including Principal Secretary (Tourism) and MD MP Tourism Board (Madhya Pradesh), Principal Secretary, Forest(Madhya Pradesh), PCCF and CWLW Forest Deptt, Madhya Pradesh, Addition MD, MP Tourism Board, Director, Wildlife Institute of India, and Field Directors posted at various Tiger Reserves and National Parks of Madhya Pradesh state. Panel discussion was also held to recommend potential sites for Tentative Listing.



2.F. Capacity-building Workshop on Analysis of Outstanding Universal Value of GHNP, Himachal Pradesh (February, 2021)

A Capacity-building Workshop on Analysis of Outstanding Universal Values of GHNP was organised for frontline staff of the site in Sai Ropa Range Headquarters, Himachal Pradesh on 19 February, 2021. A total of 20 frontline staff of the site took part in the workshop which included sessions on World Heritage, Reporting and Monitoring and hands-on exercise on OUV breakdown analysis for GHNP. The workshop was followed by a field visit to assess the OUV status of the site on ground. The workshop helped to enhance the awareness of the frontline staff of the World Heritage attributes of the site and assess its current conservation status.





2.G. Mainstreaming Natural Heritage

Towards the purpose of mainstreaming and capacity building on natural heritage in policy and practice in India and the region, WII-C2C and ASI have agreed in principle to establish collaboration and strengthen their partnership in this sector. An MoU has been signed

between the two agencies in March, 2021 on Academic and Research Collaboration including undertaking joint research projects, capacity-building workshops/trainings, expedition to heritage sites and strengthening interdisciplinary courses in heritage conservation.

2.H. Internship

WII-C2C supports internship programme for students and young professionals to enhance their awareness on world heritage issues and contribute to their professional capacity building. Internship opportunities are offered to students from recognized institutions for undertaking activities within the mandate of the Centre and/or for completing their academic requirements. Several scholars undertook internship at our Centre during the preceding year:

- Ms. Parul Singh Umrao, a student of B.Tech in Biotechnology from Graphic Era University, Uttarakhand had worked as an Intern for supporting the documentation, including collating relevant information and analysing preliminary field data, in the project on Identification and Prioritisation of potential World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh.
- Ms. Kritika Trigunayat, a PhD scholar from Rajasthan University, has been engaged as a Technical Associate in the project on Identification and Prioritisation of potential World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh. Her role involves review of secondary literature, compile information, undertake field site assessments and support site-level workshop/surveys under the mandate of the project.
- Ms. Nirmala Sharma, a student of MSc. Remote Sensing and GIS at SSJ Campus, Kumaun University, Almora MSc. is working on the project "Assessment of Cultural and Sacred Natural Sites of Kailash Sacred Landscape", India, using Remote Sensing and GIS tools.
- Mr. Agnish Das, a student of MSc. Environment Science, FRI University, Dehradun had worked on the project, "Plausible alternative futures of Island mangroves in the Asia-Pacific", with reference to Andaman Island, India.
- Five interns were engaged by the Centre specifically for the purpose of World Heritage Periodic Reporting exercise. They include; Ms. Aditi Mishra, Ms. Umika Chanana, Ms. Anindita Debnath, Ms. Tapasya Thapa, Ms. Panchali Hazarika and Ms. Avantika Adhruj who are working on preparing background information on all the natural World Heritage Sites in the Asia-Pacific region.



03

ADVISORY SERVICES

The Centre offers advisory services and technical inputs on World Natural Heritage issues, including for conservation and management of World Heritage Sites, State of Conservation reports, State Party interventions at World Heritage Centre sessions among others to Central and State Governments of India, other countries on request, UNESCO Advisory Bodies and other relevant institutions.

3.A. State of Conservation Report 2020 for World Heritage Sites

As part of the advisory and technical support mandate of WII-C2C India, the Centre provided necessary inputs for preparation of the World Heritage State of Conservation (SoC) Report 2020 for World Heritage Sites of Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam, Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, Himachal Pradesh and Sundarbans National Park, West Bengal for submission to UNESCO World Heritage Centre by December, 2020.

3.B. Technical Advice to Central and State Governments of India

The Centre provided inputs on official response to the Government of India on several Parliamentary Questions related to natural World Heritage Sites in India. These included response to queries raised in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on varied topics, viz. number of World Heritage Sites, new proposals under consideration, actions for conservation of the sites, etc. The Centre also provided review and comments on proposals for Tentative Listing in India (Natural/Mixed Sites) to the Archaeological Survey of India, nodal agency for World Heritage in the country.

3.C. Inputs for IUCN World Heritage Outlook 2020

World Heritage Outlook, an initiative by IUCN, is a global assessment of all natural World Heritage Sites and the action needed to achieve excellence in their conservation. The assessment is undertaken in order to fill the current knowledge gap on such sites and provide a global overview of their state of conservation. Following the first two Outlook reports in 2014 and 2017, the current assessment is ongoing in 2020. WII-C2C has been associated with this process providing information on site managers and knowledge experts and verifying the site assessment reports. In this context, a meeting was held of the Regional Review Group for Asia comprising WCPA Asia members on 9th September, 2020 to discuss the overall results, including overall consistency of final ratings if considered across the region. WII-C2C provided feedback was provided related to assessments of Indian Natural World Heritage Sites. The final IUCN World Heritage Outlook 2020 was released in December, 2020 for all natural World Heritage Sites.





04

OUTREACH

A basic objective of the Centre is to raise awareness among the general public and youth in particular, of the importance of natural World Heritage and the need to protect it. This includes development of outreach and communication tools to explain the key concepts and processes of the World Heritage Convention and ensuring all stakeholders are able to make the most effective use of the Convention to support world heritage conservation. The World Heritage Committee also encourages raising awareness of the need to preserve World Heritage and supports the development of educational materials, activities and programmes towards this end.

4.A. Celebration of World Heritage Day, 18 April, 2020

Due to the global outbreak of Covid-19 and the containment measures, WII-C2C celebrated World Heritage Day (WHD) on April 18, 2020 by organizing drawing and essay writing competition through online system by following social distancing norms suggested by Government of India. To commemorate the occasion and spread awareness about natural heritage among students, children of officials and

staff of forestry institutions based in Dehradun, studying in 9 different schools, participated in the online competitions. Entries were evaluated by a 4-member committee. Criteria for evaluation included relevance to the subject, originality/perspective, composition and overall presentation. Prizes were awarded to top three candidates in both essay writing and drawing competition, including consolation prizes to encourage the participants.





05

RESEARCH & MONITORING

A function of the Centre is to undertake research on identified priority areas related to natural World Heritage protection and management, including focus on models of community participation. The World Heritage Committee also encourages State Parties to support research, since knowledge and understanding are fundamental to the identification, management and monitoring of World Heritage properties.

05

RESEARCH & MONITORING

5.A. Plausible alternative futures of Island mangroves in the Asia-Pacific: Scenario-based analysis and quantification of mangrove ecosystem services in coastal hazard mitigation and climate change adaptation in Andaman Island, India

A collaborative research study under a project funded by Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan is being carried out on the mangroves of Andaman Islands in India to combat the possible adverse impacts of climate change. Particularly, ecosystem services of mangroves remain at the centre of discussion considering their exceptional ability to survive in the fragile coastal environment, while providing tremendous services such as storm surge control, sediment retention, arresting carbon, etc. Yet, despite such services, mangroves are still among the fastest declining tropical forests, especially in Asia-

Pacific, owing to the large-scale alteration of their natural habitats. In the preliminary phase, extensive literature review was carried out to understand the Mangrove change patterns over the time. The study area is fairly well studied in the post-tsunami event of 2004. The Land Use Land Cover of Andaman Island is mapped using satellite images for three-time period (2005, 2010 and 2019) to understand the spatial extent of Mangrove and its relationship with other Land Cover type. In present study the Land Use Land Cover of Andaman is classified into following six classes at 1:50,000 scale. These six classes are Built-up, Cropland, Forest, Mangrove, Mangrove degraded and Waterbody. The satellite image was classified on the basis of visual interpretation key which takes into consideration the elements of visual interpretation like tone, texture, colour, shape, location, association.



5.B. Long-term Monitoring of Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) of Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area

Himachal Pradesh Forest Department and WII-C2C on Natural World Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region, Wildlife Institute of India Dehradun signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), to conduct the study on "Long-term Monitoring of Outstanding Universal Values of Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area". Present project activities scheduled to complete on annual basis i.e. from 2020-2022. A desktop review is being carried out to identify features of Outstanding Universal values within the identified study area and surrounding region. For this purpose project team members are engaged in reviewing of published literature, reports to collate the data related to

Outstanding Universal Values of potential sites. A range of additional sources of information including scientific reports produced by, and information on the websites of HP Forest Department, and relevant Institutes have also been reviewed. Due to the current pandemic situation field project activities initiated in the month of November, 2020. A team of WII visited GHNPCHA and met with the Director and DFO of GHNPCHA on 26th November, 2020 at Shamshi, Kullu and discussed regarding project work. This was followed by a planning workshop with the officials and staff of GHNPCHA on 18th February, 2021 to discuss the next steps of initiation of the project. In the current project, protocol for monitoring of Outstanding Universal Values (OUVs) of GHNPCHA will be developed. Selected staff will be trained and awareness/capacity building workshops will be organized to enhance the skills of staff of GHNPCHA.

5.C. New Proposals

- (i) A proposal was submitted to The Group on Earth Observations (GEO) for the proposed "Community Activity: Earth Observations for Climate Change Impacts on World Heritage Cities", with case-study of Jaipur City.
- (ii) Another proposal was submitted to the Space Climate Observatory (SCO) for a project on "Trends of Ecosystem Services for Mangrove Ecosystem - Sundarbans World Heritage Site".
- (iii) A project is planned in association with UNDP and Uttarakhand Forest Department for documentation of Gangotri National Park, Uttarakhand as a potential World Heritage Site.





06

MASTER'S DEGREE COURSE IN HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT (2019-21)

06

MASTER'S DEGREE COURSE IN HERITAGE CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT

6. Master's Degree Course in Heritage Conservation and Management (2019-21)

WII-C2C introduced a 2-year residential Master's Course in Heritage Conservation and Management since July, 2019, affiliated to Saurashtra University, Gujarat. Due to COVID-19, regular classes for the second semester of M.Sc. in Heritage Conservation and Management (MSc HCM) which had started in January, 2021 were suspended from 18th March 2020. However, lectures continued via the online mode during April-June, 2020 and July - December 2020. Semester exams were conducted through an Open-Book format, as per University Grants Commission (UGC) guideline and approved by Saurashtra University, from 5th - 15th August 2020. The exam was supplemented by online viva voce examination (from 20th - 26th August 2020). Online classes during the semesters continued simultaneously.

The third semester for the inaugural 2019-2021 batch of M.Sc. Heritage Conservation and Management (MSc HCM) was of three months duration (Oct-Dec, 2020) and run online with elective based modules. It comprised of 5 modules including 3 specialization courses. Specialization Course I and II were elective courses viz 1) Wildlife Science & Forest Ecology, 2) Natural Resource Management. 3) World Heritage Specialization. Other two modules were 4) Heritage Museums & Cultural Anthropology, and 5) Heritage Impact Assessment & Environment Impact Assessment. Approx. 70 hours of teaching was done with the help of about 25 faculties from external institutions as well as WII. Following govt. of Uttarakhand guidelines, the students returned to the campus in December, but the online mode of teaching continued. In the last weeks of the third semester, the students prepared their dissertation proposals (part of 4th Sem) which went through two stage review process. In stage one a committee reviewed the proposals and sent their feedback and in the second stage the students presented their proposals to a panel of internal and external experts on 30th December,



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2020. All the feedback from two stages will be incorporated by the students in their final proposal. The exam for the third semester was conducted at the campus on 2nd Jan. The semester ended with a 7-day, Natural and Cultural heritage tour to Rajasthan (4-10th Jan, 2021) with an aim to gain knowledge of current industry trends in interpretation, museum management and nomination, management, and Outstanding Universal Values of Cultural heritage sites.

The first batch of MSc in Heritage Conservation and Management have embarked on a critical part of their degree programme, a 6-month dissertation. The subjects of study and sites chosen reflect the width of knowledge under the ambit of heritage studies. Topics chosen touch upon aspects of cultural, natural and a mix of both requiring the students to touch upon many academic disciplines in the course of coming up with a study of value. Questions on the impact of consumption of frogs on amphibian populations; funding of museums in the future; genetic diversity of snow leopards across the Himalayan landscape; the functioning of a temple town's economy and the folklore of tribes in Uttarakhand, all find space in the student's journey towards becoming heritage conservation professionals. Site locations chosen are similarly diverse ranging the heart of Chennai City; Dampa Tiger Reserve at the borders of India which will make for an interesting and enlightening group of dissertations. The dissertation topics are given below:

S.N.	Name	Dissertation proposal topics
1	Ms. J. Bhaalasaraswathi	Transformation in funding and marketing practices in Indian museums: Pre, and Post COVID-19
2	Mr. Vishnuvardhan	Genetic diversity and population genetic structure of snow leopard within Ladakh region of Trans-Himalayas, India: Implications for conservation and management
3	Mr. Devashish Saurav	Storied Landscapes: A critical case study of the Bhotiya tribe of Uttarakhand
4	Ms. Varsha S	Local economy as a driver of functional continuity: The living religious heritage asset of Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, Srirangam.
5	Mr. Abhishek	Community resilience within and outside Protected Areas: A case study from Sariska Tiger Reserve
6	Mr. Malsawmdawngliana	Does consumption of frogs impact wild population of amphibians? A case study from Mizoram, India
7	Ms. Roshme Borgohain	Assessing the impacts of road network on wildlife corridors, and mitigation measures in Assam

7. Collaborations

- WII-C2C is collaborating with a range of sub-national, national and international institutions and organizations:
- Archaeological Survey of India
- Centre for Heritage Management, Ahmedabad University
- Himachal Pradesh Forest Department
- IUCN
- Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan
- MAXAR Technologies, USA
- Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, Bhopal
- Meghalaya Forest Department
- National Institute of Disaster Management
- Rung Kalyan Sanstha, Uttarakhand
- Saurashtra University
- Survey of India
- Uttarakhand Forest Department
- United Nations Office For Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), Austria
- World Heritage Centre, Paris

WII-C2C Team



Dr. Dhananjai Mohan, IFS
Director



Dr. Y.V. Jhala
Dean



Dr. Gautam Talukdar
Scientist-E Faculty Incharge,
WII-C2C



Dr. Malvika Onial
Scientist-D



Dr. Anju Baroth
Scientist-D

WII-C2C Team



Mr. Niraj Kakati
Technical Officer



Dr. Bhumes S Bhadouria
Technical Officer



Dr. Chitz Joshi
Asst. Technical Officer



Dr. Anukul Nath
Asst. Technical Officer



Mr. Vivek Sarkar
World Heritage Assistant



Mr. Anuranjan Roy
World Heritage Assistant



Pallabi Chakraborty
World Heritage Assistant



Shilpi Singh
World Heritage Assistant



Mr. Kehar Singh
Administrative Officer



Mr. Rajeev Thapa
IT Officer



Mr. Rajiv Gupta
Finance Officer



Ms. Poonam Sati
Administrative Assistant



Ms. Anindita Debnath
Administrative Assistant



*For further information,
please contact :*

Wildlife Institute of India - Category 2 Centre,
Chandrabani, Dehradun - 248001,
Uttarakhand, India

Tel.: +91-135 2646297/298/293

Fax: +91-135 2640117

Email: contactc2cindia@wii.gov.in

