**CLIMATE VULNERABILITY INDEX**

**Climate change** is the fastest growing global threat to World Heritage (WH) properties, many of which – natural, cultural and mixed – are already being impacted. The severity of current climate impacts on individual WH properties varies, as do the rate at which they are occurring and the range of climate change drivers causing them. In most cases, the consequence of climate change is a decline in the values that collectively comprise the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) for most WH properties.

The **Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI):**
- Has been developed as a rapid assessment tool to assess climate impacts upon WH properties based on a risk assessment approach;
- Differs from other vulnerability assessments by assessing both the **OUV Vulnerability** and the **Community Vulnerability** and is applicable to all types of WH properties; and
- Considers impacts on key values of the OUV and on the economic, social and cultural characteristics of the community, and their adaptive capacities to cope with climate change.

The **foundation for the CVI process** is the Statement of OUV for a property, from which key WH values are summarised. A preliminary assessment of the current condition and trend in condition of the key values is undertaken.

The ICOMOS Climate Change and Heritage Working Group (CCHWG) has included the development of the CVI in its current workplan, as has the IUCN Protected Areas Climate Change Specialist Group; the UNESCO World Heritage Centre is also supportive of the CVI.

“...climate change has become one of the most significant and fastest growing threats to people and their heritage worldwide…”

Resolution 19th General Assembly of ICOMOS (2017)
The CVI process is conducted through a workshop of diverse participants using a customised worksheet to:

1. Conduct a high-level risk assessment (exposure and sensitivity) of OUV to the chosen three key climate change drivers within the agreed time frame, considering some important modifiers that may vary these assessments;
2. Identify the potential impacts of the three key climate change drivers on the key WH values;
3. Consider the adaptive capacity in relation to the three key climate drivers;
4. Determine the OUV Vulnerability to the three key climate drivers;
5. Assess the economic, social and cultural (ESC) dependencies on the WH property;
6. Derive the ESC potential impact on the community (local, domestic and international) associated with the WH property;
7. Evaluate the ESC adaptive capacity; and
8. Determine the Community Vulnerability.

OUV Vulnerability and Community Vulnerability are highly relevant for site managers, responsible management agencies, businesses that are dependent on the property, the local community and other stakeholders.

The CVI is (i) a rapid assessment tool consistently applicable to all types of WH properties (natural, cultural and mixed) that (ii) assesses both OUV Vulnerability (physical) and Community Vulnerability (economic, social and cultural) for individual WH properties. The CVI is (iii) a systematic and comprehensive approach that balances scientific robustness and credibility with a level of practicality, which enables it to be undertaken in a multi-day workshop of diverse stakeholders, and (iv) whose transparent process can be repeated to assess trends.

CVI applications have been highly successful at Shark Bay (a natural WH site in Western Australia) and the Heart of Neolithic Orkney (a cultural WH site in Scotland). The current testing phase will continue, with other WH properties (e.g., Ningaloo Coast, Wadden Sea, Willandra Lakes, Vega Archipelago, Gondwana Rainforests, Belize Barrier Reef and Sydney Opera House) part of a growing interest from across the globe in the CVI.

“For further information: cvi-heritage.org

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UNESCO, UNEP and UCS (2016)
‘World Heritage and Tourism in a Changing Climate’