

# Historic England Priorities for International Work 2017 - 2020

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Historic England set out its approach to engaging with heritage at the international level in June 2015. The intention was that the strategy and principal activities established then <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/planning/international-strategy.pdf> would next be reviewed in 2018. However the publication by the Department for Culture Media and Sport of the Culture White Paper in March 2016 and the decision that the UK will withdraw from the European Union require a change of priorities, hence the earlier than planned review of our international work.

1.2 The work that is set out here is mostly specific to England, but there are some areas of activity, for example advice to government on international heritage conventions, which are UK wide. In these cases Historic England will work collaboratively with the heritage agencies and departments in the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Historic England will continue to convene and provide the secretariat for the Home Countries Heritage Agencies Chief Executives meetings.

1.3 The priorities for international work that Historic England has identified have been brigaded under two headings: the 2016 Culture White Paper and withdrawal from the European Union. Many of the activities that were defined in the International Strategy for 2015 to 2018 have been retained within this new structure, although others have been superseded.

1.4 Historic England recognises that it has a key leadership role and is in a position to help the wider sector to create opportunities secure international influence, income and opportunities. This is work in which we have an interest and the Culture White Paper provides welcome support for what we wish to achieve in promoting our sector's outstanding heritage skills on the international stage and building strong relationships with other countries to mutual benefit.

1.5 The Culture White Paper recognised that “the power of culture can increase our international standing” and sets an agenda for “our national culture to enhance our global reputation further” A number of priorities specific to heritage are identified where Historic England can assist in the delivery of this agenda.

1.6 The European Union treats the historic environment as an area where responsibilities are delegated to member states. It is the Council of Europe that takes the lead on collaborative actions to research, manage, protect and communicate the values of Europe's heritage. The UK will remain a member of the Council of Europe and Historic

England will continue to provide the Secretariat for the European Heritage Heads Forum. Nevertheless significant levels of funding for heritage are derived from the EU; environmental regulations and directives that affect heritage are currently enshrined in UK secondary legislation; and new controls on the movement of labour and materials may affect several parts of the heritage sector.

## **2. Delivering White Paper Commitments**

2.1 The Culture White Paper sets out a number of policies and objectives where Historic England has a role in delivery. These are set out in italic text below:

### **Commercial work**

*“We will ask Historic England to work with other heritage organisations to develop the heritage sector’s international commercial offer”*

2.2 Historic England has established an informal sector network (the Wellington Arch Group) which draws together sector leaders with experience in international work. By drawing on the experience of leading practitioners and sharing information within and beyond the network we aim to promote opportunities for others. We also aim to develop a stronger relationship with the British Council and its offices around the world to identify where there may be opportunities where the heritage skills we have in the UK fit well with what is required in overseas countries.

**2.3 Historic England will focus its activities on countries that are eligible for Official Development Assistance (ODA) as set out by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with a particular emphasis on Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.**

2.4 In addition **Historic England will organise an international conference on heritage skills in 2018 to promote the exchange of knowledge and skills and to identify potential partnership opportunities.**

### **Culture Diary**

2.5 **Historic England will contribute to and engage with the Culture Diary**, referred to in the Culture White Paper as *“a master list for culture, an international calendar for every art form, and a place to interact with government, enabling cultural organisations of all sizes and from all the cultural sectors to extend their international reach. By connecting cultural institutions with each other, with the GREAT campaign and with the government’s global network of embassies and high commissions, it allows UK cultural organisations to realise the benefits of working internationally and meet the demand for British culture and heritage overseas.* [www.theculturediary.com](http://www.theculturediary.com)

### **Revenue Generation**

2.6 In addition to White Paper commitments DCMS requires Historic England to generate revenue itself from international work. In so doing it is important that we do not compete with commercial organisations and focus on those areas where we have particular skills and knowledge which are less widely available elsewhere and which reflect our responsibilities as an expert advisor to government. **As there is a significant level of interest from overseas government departments and heritage agencies in sharing information about respective systems of heritage protection and management this will be a particular focus of Historic England’s International Advisory Service, with the potential to offer bespoke events through the Historic England Learning Programme.** The way in which Historic England undertakes and commissions research to inform management and protection is another area of interest where there is potential to exchange good practice with overseas colleagues.

### **World Heritage Sites**

*“We want to set a global standard in the stewardship of World Heritage Sites. By working with the World Heritage Centre, the governing bodies for World Heritage Sites, Historic England and others, we will promote sustainable development while ensuring our sites are protected.”*

2.7 The stewardship of the majority of World Heritage Sites (WHS) in England is undertaken to a high standard, but some properties, particularly urban ones, face challenges in striking a sustainable balance between conservation and development. **Historic England will work with DCMS and WHS managers in seeking to promote sustainable development**, which, by definition, means that heritage values are retained for future generations. Partnership working with the United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO, World Heritage UK and ICOMOS UK, together with Historic England’s sister agencies and departments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will be important in meeting these challenges. **With these partners Historic England will promote a wider understanding and appreciation of the responsibilities and benefits that come with WHS status. In so doing we will help to realise the economic and social benefits that can be derived from WHS status**

2.8 **Historic England will continue to advise partners on UK WHS nominations and to develop mutually beneficial relationships with European partners in the development of transnational WHSs, such as the Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Europe) and the Great Spas of Europe.**

2.9 **Historic England will also seek to strengthen its relationships with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee** particularly in relation to the implementation of the principles of the Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation and improving standards of Heritage Impact Assessment.

## **The Hague Convention**

*“Subject to legislation we will ratify the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols. This convention sets out a series of measures designed to ensure that cultural property is protected from the consequences of armed conflicts.”*

**2.10 Historic England will continue to support DCMS in the implementation of the 2017 Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act** particularly in relation to the identification of cultural property within England that should have general protection. **Historic England will work in partnership with key organisations such as the UK National Committee of the Blue Shield, the Ministry of Defence and sister heritage agencies in the devolved administrations in helping to ensure that the UK fully meets the terms of the Convention.**

## **Cultural Protection Fund**

*“We will extend international aid support to the protection of cultural heritage and antiquities and help countries to recover from acts of cultural destruction through a new £30 million cultural protection fund..... we will share our expertise in cultural development and protection with our partners around the world, particularly those in developing countries and countries experiencing or emerging from conflict.”*

**2.11 Historic England will provide advice and support as appropriate to DCMS, the British Council and other key partners in the delivery of the Cultural Protection Fund. Historic England will also continue to support the British Museum’s Iraq Emergency Heritage Management Programme.**

## Other International Conventions

*“We will review our position on ratifying other international conventions designed to protect cultural heritage and property, including the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.”*

**2.12 Historic England will continue to provide advice to DCMS on the potential applicability of other international heritage conventions to England, and, in consultation with sister heritage agencies and departments in the devolved administrations, and to the UK, with a particular emphasis on underwater cultural heritage.**

## **3. The Historic Environment after Withdrawal from the EU**

**3.1 Making the case for new arrangements for the historic environment to offset potentially harmful impacts of withdrawal from the EU and maximise the opportunities that arise will be a core part of Historic England's work over the next three years. We will do this in partnership with the historic environment sector, particularly the Heritage Alliance, and with sister agencies and departments in the devolved administrations**

3.2 Over the last 10 years funding for heritage in England from the European Union has totalled at least £450m. Much of this has been invested in agri-environment schemes that have significantly reduced the levels of heritage at risk and improved the condition of large numbers of archaeological sites, including scheduled monuments. In addition transnational research funded through Horizon 2020 has benefitted English research institutions. Other sources of EU funding have provided matching funding for heritage regeneration projects particularly in urban and former industrial areas with high levels of deprivation.

**3.3 Historic England will work with DCMS and across government to build the case for funding for heritage after we have withdrawn from the EU and for efficient and effective means of delivery. In so doing we will work closely with our partners in the heritage sector to promote a joined up approach to these issues so far as possible**

**3.4 Historic England will also work to promote an integrated approach to two other key areas in which withdrawal from the EU could have a significant heritage impact: environmental regulation and the movement of labour and materials.**

3.5 Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment provisions are built into UK secondary legislation and we believe that much of this should be retained. There is potential for improvements in effectiveness.

3.6 Many heritage sector organisations derive benefit from the employment of non UK EU citizens and likewise many UK heritage people work in other EU countries – both to mutual advantage. **Historic England will assess the impact of withdrawal on these areas and where necessary advocate for exemptions from new measures which may be introduced to control immigration and emigration.**

3.7 Some materials used in conservation and repairs are imported from EU countries and higher tariffs could result in increased conservation and repair costs. **This is an area that Historic England will monitor carefully, and we will also explore the potential to equalise the rates of VAT on works of repair and new construction to remove the inequitable situation that favours new build.**