scientific advisor (landscape and governance) for the Nomination of the Dolomites to UNESCO WHL

AN INTER-REGIONAL CO-OPERATION TO ACHIEVE THE INSCRIPTION ON THE UNESCO HERITAGE WORLD LIST.

THE DOLOMITES AS CASE-STUDY OF INTEGRATED STRATEGIES.

from global to local
On the basis of an international treaty called the *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, adopted by UNESCO in 1972. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application.

World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located.
The World Heritage List includes 911 properties in 151 States Parties:
- 704 cultural,
- 180 natural
- 27 mixed

As of June 2010, 187 States Parties have ratified the World Heritage Convention.
To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of selection criteria.

The selection criteria are **10: 6** for the **cultural sites** and **4** for the **natural sites**.

The protection, management, authenticity and integrity of properties are also important considerations.
In the Alps there are only 4 natural sites: Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch, Swiss Tectonic Sardona Arena (Switzerland), Monte San Giorgio (Switzerland-Italy) and the Dolomites (Italy).

Italy, with 45 properties, is the country with the greater number of World Heritage sites. Currently only three of these are inscribed to the List as natural property, the Aeolian Islands, the Dolomites and Monte S.Giorgio, while all the others are inscribed as cultural properties.
At that time of the Pangea supercontinent in a great oceanic gulf called the Tethys, approximately correspondent at the Mediterranean region, an archipelago of islands was formed creating atolls and lagoons, separated from one other by deep stretches of sea up to than a thousand meters deep.

The life of these islands, resulting from the incessant work of small organisms capable of fixing mineral salts in their skeletons - or stabilising the sediment - is recounted in these extraordinary mountains, which now represent a unique fossil archipelago.

2. The Dolomites

THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA 250 MLN YEARS AGO
The red lines show the faults, fractures generated when the continents Africa and Europe collided. These broke up the Dolomite region into many sectors, raising or lowering them, thus allowing us to appreciate all the rocks involved.

In the Dolomites the tectonic deformation, which was very intense elsewhere, was milder and the original relationships between the sedimentary units have been preserved.
The nine component parts that make up the Dolomites property, include all areas that are essential for maintaining the beauty of the property and all or most of the key interrelated and interdependent earth science elements in their natural relationships.
criterion VII: to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance

criterion VIII: to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features
WHC Decision: 33 COM 8B.6, Seville (E) 26.06.2009.

www.dolomiti-unesco.org
www.whc.unesco.org

2. The Dolomites

DOLOMITES (2008)
1st Nomination
2005, Jan – Inscription on the tentative list of natural properties
2006, Feb – Nomination Document on the basis of all criteria of natural properties (vii, viii, ix, x)
2006, Sep – IUCN field visit and first evaluation of the nomination
2007, Jul – World Heritage Committee decision to defer the nomination on the basis of criteria vii (natural beauty and aesthetic importance) and viii (Earth Science importance)

2nd Nomination
2007, Sep – Full revision of the nomination document on the basis of criteria vii and viii; revision of the components boundaries and number in compliance with the IUCN and UNESCO requests
2008, Feb – Submission of the renewed Nomination Document
2008, Sep – IUCN field visit
2009, Feb – Sending of the supplementary informations requested
2009, Jun – Final decision of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (Sevilla, 22-30/06/2009)
Considering the complexity of the administrative framework, the nomination project was agreed in a **Programme Agreement** underwritten by the five Provinces to coordinate the policies of conservation and management of the proposed areas.
3. nomination process  

**UNESCO 4D FOUNDATION**

The UNESCO “Dolomiti-Dolomiten-Dolomites-Dolomitis” Foundation, established by the five Provinces and the two Regions involved in the recognition, has the objective of ensuring coordinated management of the property, in an area with a range of different institutions of various levels.
This strategy was based on the activation of proactive networks between institutions, corporations and various authorities present in the region, in order to finalise the conservation, enhancement and promotion of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Therefore the intention was not to create a new organism to administer the property but rather to construct a network between the existing corporations and others already involved.

At a local level, stakeholders and representatives from groups with interests or activities based in specific areas were involved.

3. nomination process

This strategy interpreted the institutional complexity as a resource rather than an obstacle, to be used to enhance all the constituent parts of the property while respecting their autonomy and specificity. In fact a management strategy was developed as a mechanism for the improvement and implementation of the resources already present.
The first axis deals with conservation of the property and the values for which it is universally recognised and therefore concerns landscape and geology.

1.01. conservation of the landscape heritage
1.02. conservation of the geological heritage

1.03. management of tourist flows

Regarding management, importance was placed on the aspects of tourism, which provides the main threat to the integrity of the property, as pointed out by UNESCO in its final recommendations.

1.03.01 guidelines to examine recreational tourist activities and the census and analysis of visitor movement
1.03.02 guidelines for the upkeep of footpaths
1.03.03 development of instruments of control and measurement of the carrying capacity of each CS
1.03.04 survey of the footpath network within the WHS
1.03.05 organisation of the monitoring of access and use of the footpath network
1.03.06 organisation of the monitoring of accommodation facilities (mountain refuges and camps) within the WHS
1.03.07 definition of the visitor code of conduct (vade-mecum of responsible mountain tourism)
The second axis deals with internal and external communications and their implementation, with the objective of increasing knowledge of the universal value in a global context amongst the local population as well as providing information on the Dolomites for tourists.

2.01. communication instruments
2.02. information
2.03. training

2.03.01 definition of the guided divulgation strategies (internal and external to the WHS)
2.03.02 definition of the code of conduct for tourist operators (vade-mecum)
2.03.03 organisation of workshops for permanent training
2.03.04 organisation of training campaigns with provincial tourist operators (awareness of the UNESCO WHS)
2.03.05 training of local operators (refuge managers, etc)
2.03.06 training of staff for accompaniment and management of the property (Alpine guides, environmental guides etc.)
2.03.07 elaboration of educational modules and projects for schools of all levels, on the universal merits of the WHS
2.03.08 organisation of thematic seminars and conferences on an international level
The **third axis** deals with **promotion** as an instrument to consolidate international recognition and as a stimulus for local administrations to consider mountain topics (cultural specificity, landscape and geological heritage, sustainable development and tourism) according to a perspective of accessibility and comparison.

**3.01. sustainable development**

3.02. research

3.03. business plan

3.01.01 definition of the strategies for sustainable tourism within the Dolomites WHS
3.01.02 advancement of research to determine the potential conflicts of interest with the traditional ways of managing the primary resources
3.01.03 organisation of a public transport system to link the CS of the Dolomites WHS
3.01.04 evaluation of the feasibility of environmental certification of the accommodation structures (ecolabel, ISO 14001)
3.01.05 organisation of theme trails (geology, landscape etc.) in each CS
3.01.06 organisation of visitor trails for the whole WHS (based on: mountaineering difficulty, season, level of preparation, interests, criteria, etc.)
3.01.07 organisation of promotion of local products (gastronomy, wood carving etc.)
The strategy aims to create a **network of cooperation** between local communities and institutions already in charge of the administration of the Dolomites, in order to ensure the effectiveness and adequacy of protection measures for the Dolomites, for their aesthetic, landscape and geological-geomorphological values to be passed on to future generations.
The main principle of the strategy - from a social-cultural point of view - is therefore to negotiate, that is to find points of agreement between two different systems of values:

- **tourism** as a product of global culture
- **landscape diversity** as a product of the interaction between nature and local culture

The overall strategy of the Dolomites World Heritage Site does not simply correspond to the sum of all the different forms of management, but works – according to an holistic point of view - like a multiplication factor that is capable of enhancing all these specific management forms.
• Harmonization of set of rules regarding infrastructure, settlements, and buildings within the WHS
• Guidelines for surveying tourism and recreational activities including estimating and analysing visitor flows
• Elaboration of tools for measuring and monitoring the carrying capacity of each component site
• Definition of a code of conduct for visitors (aware hiking vademecum)
• Definition of the DOLOMITES WHS brand and logo
• Determination of the ongoing good practice of sustainable tourism within the DOLOMITES WHS
• Launching of international co-operation efforts with other WH Sites in the Alps
• Promotion of partnership with the alpine transboundaries organizations
• Cataloguing of unique landscape features (natural phaenomena, natural beauty, aesthetic importance) and monitoring of landscape diversity
• Cataloguing of unique geological and geo-morphological features
• Promotion of research for the identification of possible conflicts of interest with resource management methods
• Co-operation with the network of museums and natural parks
• Identification of assets/services/projects produced by WHL and individualization of their economic potential
• Definition of information strategies (inside WHS, outside WHS)
• Prepare of DOLOMITES WHS information points in hotspot areas
• Definition of a code of conduct for operators (operators vademecum)
• Organization of thematic workshops for permanent training
• Elaboration of modules and didactic projects on the WHS, differentiated for schools of primary, secondary and advanced level, in order to the geologic and landscape outstanding values
• Prepare of DOLOMITES WHS magazine

6. five questions HOW TO BUILD ON LOCAL STRENGTHS TO VALORISE A LOCALITY AND HOW TO ENGAGE LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THIS PROCESS?
6. five questions

WHICH MECHANISMS COULD BE DEVELOPED IN ORDER TO ENSURE VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL CO-OPERATION AMONG ALL STAKEHOLDERS?

• Promotion of research for the identification of possible conflicts of interest with resource management methods
• Elaboration of a communication strategy concept (local, provincial-regional, national, and international levels)
• Guidelines for managing the footpath network
• Promotion of research projects involving geoparks, natural parks, natural science museums and local cultural institutes
• Training of economic and tourism operators with reference to the management plan (awareness DOLOMITES WHS)
• Training of local operators (refuge managers, .....)
• Training of staff in charge of guiding and environmental management (alpine guides, environmental guides, etc.)
In the character of the magnificent scenery of the Dolomites mountains ..., may be discovered the type of the landscapes and backgrounds of many of Titian’s pictures.”

(John Murray, A Handbook for Travellers in Southern Germany, 1837)