

Assistance Program in case of Emergencies



OVPM . OWHC . OCPM



INTRODUCTION

The General Secretariat of the OWHC has drawn up the *Assistance Program in case of Emergencies* (hereinafter the *Program*) to help members facing crisis situations. The *Program* is realistic and applicable, given the specific nature and constraints of the OWHC. It complements the assistance tools already offered to members and provides concrete help to member cities, thus enhancing the assistance accorded by other international organizations which have more experience and are better equipped to respond in the field to the physical consequences of crisis situations.

OBJECTIVES

The *Program* offers a collective approach to sharing best practices, in order to help member cities identify the risks they face, put in place prevention and mitigation mechanisms, and, ultimately, equip themselves with risk management tools.

FEATURES

The *Program* is designed primarily to help the most vulnerable member cities and improve the overall preparedness of OWHC cities. The approach requires detailed knowledge of the local heritage, including what makes it up and what characterizes it, in order to fully understand its vulnerability to the disaster risks to which the city is exposed by virtue of its geographical, geological, political, and other conditions. The *Program* takes into account all the natural and anthropological risks that may be identified by OWHC member cities.

The *Program* cannot be used to obtain financing, whether for the purchase or rental of equipment to deal with the material consequences of disasters, or for post-disaster consolidation and reconstruction work.

The specificity of the *Program* is to offer guidelines that will help local authorities to take or improve relevant measures to counter risks and organize prevention. The *Program* also includes the mobilization of appropriate expertise identified within the OWHC network, by sending experts on site, organizing study visits, or disseminating experiences to help cities implement their strategies.

ACTIVITIES

1. The *OWHC Risk-Preparedness Checklist* (hereinafter the *Checklist*) is an open-access document that can be used to support a local initiative and trigger awareness and mobilization of the various stakeholders regarding the risks threatening the historic center. The *Checklist* is a guide to help organize reflection with a view to reinforcing the effectiveness and scope of existing regulatory documents, or to generate political decisions to adopt such documents. It is therefore not intended to replace any disaster risk management plans or protocols the city may already have in place, but is intended to focus specifically on the “World Heritage Site” component.

The *Checklist* can help less prepared cities by raising awareness of the importance of identifying risks, preventing them, and mitigating the effects of a crisis. Better-prepared cities can use the *Checklist* to identify specific areas where external expertise may be required. The *Checklist* is included herein.

2. *Diagnostic Reports* analyze the cities’ state of awareness and their commitment to taking appropriate measures to manage their risks. The accumulation of *Diagnostic Reports* will make it possible to measure the level of preparedness of member cities, and to pool experience in order to speed up the implementation of effective measures. In particular, they serve to track the development of thinking in each city and the results of measures



taken. Throughout the process, they also reveal how local expertise is being strengthened, and what needs for external expertise can be proposed as part of the *Program*.

Diagnostic Reports are established by the OWHC on the basis of information provided by cities during regional workshops.

3. *Technical Assistance* may be requested by cities within the framework of the *Program*. This assistance, established in accordance with the *Checklist*, focuses in particular on risk identification and prevention or response measures. Depending on specific situations, the *Program* may also respond to requests for assistance from cities facing emergency situations, as characterized within the framework of the *Program* and subject to available budgets (expert missions: travel, stays and, where applicable, fees).
4. A *Database* will be established to collect information and documents produced by member cities relating to the identification, prevention, and mitigation of risks in historic centers. The *Database* will also include the *Diagnostic Reports* and *Checklists* adopted as part of the *Program* and, progressively, useful references to international examples and programs in the field.



APPENDIX: THE OWHC RISK-PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

1. Brief details

- 1.1 City and Country: City location (maps) and representative photograph(s).
- 1.2 Name and responsibilities of the organization/department drafting the Checklist.
- 1.3 Contact name and details.
- 1.4 Short description of the city to present the general characteristics in the context of which the risk analysis has been developed (maximum 100 words).

2. Administrative information - Emergency contact details

- 2.1 Name, organization, address, and contact details of the World Heritage site manager. (This person may be the starting point for the creation of an “Emergency Task Force” if there is no existing organization in place, as described below.)
- 2.2 Contact details of other emergency service contacts relevant to the World Heritage site which can provide an immediate response and be consulted during the preparatory phases of a disaster, e.g. police and security services, fire department, civil protection department, and the like.
- 2.3 Description of the risk prevention management structure for the World Heritage site.
- 2.4 Provision of a list of organizations that can be consulted about the crisis management process. (This could include municipal authorities, cultural heritage departments and institutional bodies responsible for heritage, and volunteer organizations.)

3. Geographical information

A map of the World Heritage site (and buffer zone) will be provided at a scale that shows the individual buildings (identifying the listed/significant buildings) and boundaries of the WHC. (More than one map may be required depending on the size of the site.)

In some circumstances, the number of buildings may be too large. In this case, the maps need to be tailored to match the particular situation. This exercise will in itself identify any limitations there may be in the level of detailed information available to the emergency services and identify the potential for improving the knowledge available.

4. Property ownership

Describe the type(s) of building ownership within the World Heritage site and the approximate proportion of types (i.e., residential 40%, institutional 15%, etc.). Provide any readily available data regarding ownership of individual buildings.

5. Protection level

Describe in general terms how buildings within the World Heritage site are protected (e.g., individual listing, conservation zone, buffer zone, etc.). This will help identify the authorities who should be consulted to better identify buildings and sites that may have a special identity and be given priority for protection in the event of a disaster.



6. Type(s) of risk/hazard to which the city is exposed

Indicate the type(s) of risk and hazard to which the city is exposed and any previous events that may have occurred.

7. Existing information about the site

Describe or list any existing information on the history and development of the WHC. Include references to any existing conservation management plans, site and building inventories, and the like. (If these documents exist, they should be included as appendices to the Checklist.)

In addition, provide here a short description (maximum 300 words) of any information about the condition of the city in relation to specific social and infrastructure issues which could exacerbate the impact of a disaster. These might relate to public space and environment, housing, economic, communication, and/or services infrastructure.

8. Significance of the WHC

Summarize the significance of the WHC and its main components, important facts about its construction and typology, and references to the most important historical elements that should not be altered or compromised (maximum 300 words). Include further detailed information, including photographs, as an appendix to the Checklist.

9. Summary of buildings and urban fabric

Summarizing the condition of buildings involves identifying where there are particular or heightened risks in the event of a disaster and should therefore logically focus on buildings or sites in poor condition or most vulnerable to disaster risk. These may include timber buildings in poor condition or with limited access for rescue services, buildings in poor structural condition, or sites particularly vulnerable to flooding, among other sites or buildings at risk.

If studies on existing buildings exist, they should be referred and appended to the Checklist.

If there are surveys of existing buildings, these should be referred to and provided as appendices to the Checklist.

10. Existing risk assessment management/planning procedures

Describe existing management/response programs for managing risks associated with natural and human-induced disasters, and include any documentation as an appendix to the Checklist.

11. Training plans and information programs

Describe any training or information programs available to professional conservation authorities, crafts people, education authorities (higher education and schools), and community groups that are relevant to the management of the WHC and disaster risk.



12. Useful contacts

List of local, regional, and other experts who can be contacted to go on site in the event of a disaster to provide a first response alongside the emergency services.

List of qualified contractors who can be contacted for immediate repair/stabilization work.