The Silk Roads

Implications & opportunities of the World Heritage Serial Nomination project
UNESCO: The Silk Roads as routes of integration, exchange and dialogue

- Kyrgyzstan
- Myanmar
- China
- Afghanistan
The Silk Roads: An ICOMOS Thematic Study

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on behalf of ICOMOS
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http://www.icomos.org
OR
http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1356660/
Red: 35,000 km major routes
Orange: 16,000 km substantial routes
Area: 16,000,000 km²

And more ....

ICOMOS thematic study
The whole is more than the sum of its constituent parts
The types of monuments, sites and cultural landscapes found along the Silk Roads have been categorized under:

1. **Infrastructure** (facilitating trade and transportation);
2. **Production** (of trading goods); and
3. **Outcomes** (the results of contact and exchange)
Protecting a representative selection of smaller sites – not just the most beautiful.
1. identifying major **nodes** (large cities) along the Silk Roads;
2. identifying **segments** of routes between these;
3. and then broadening these out to represent the **corridors** of ‘movement and impact’ that took place between the nodes
Approach

• Compartmentalising the Silk Roads into a number of World Heritage properties, linked by an overall framework concept

• More manageable serial nominations

• Progress at differing paces

• BUT, still maintaining the concept of trans-national cooperation that lies at the core of this endeavour
Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang’an – Tian-shan Corridor

China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan
World Heritage Nomination

Silk Roads: Penjikent-Samarkand-Poykent Corridor

Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Uzbekistan

SILK ROADS:
Initial Section of the Silk Roads, the Routes Network of Tian-shan Corridor

State Administration of Cultural Heritage of the People’s Republic of China
Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Kyrgyz Republic
Ways forward: key challenges
Fig 9: Track of the Dissemination of Buddhism
Sustainable Tourism

• The need for tourism plans is acknowledged in each of the three countries
• In China these are developed and are being implemented
• A plan has been approved for the Chuy Valley
• There is an urgent need to tourism plans to be put in place for the remaining sites and implemented to ensure they are well prepared for an increase in visitors, who do not become the agents of their destruction
• Cross-border issues: visas, etc.
Key challenges

• Need to proactively plan carrying capacities for sustainable management

• Inevitable that large, accessible and 'display quality' sites offer more of a destination (USP)

• But by definition Silk Roads tourism lends itself to attracting travellers – along integrated routes/corridors
Niche tourism

• Potential for niche tourism
  • remote locations, more adventurous travellers, more 'authentic' or distinctive experiences, etc.
Heritage & tourism management

- Always has a local dimension
  - Specific places
  - Local partnerships & stakeholders
- Management planning needs to deliver holistic planning, with well integrated stakeholder participation and long-term sustainability
Trans-national strengths: sharing skills, expertise & knowledge

• Share common understanding of approaches:
  • to conservation, to education, to interpretation, to research development, to sustainable tourism

• Building beneficial partnerships
Working with 26 State Parties
Vrang, Tajikistan
Southern Turkmenistan
Mustang, Nepal
Mogao, China
Vrang, Tajikistan
Building sustainable communities
Ways forward

• How can we protect, sustain and use such a diverse range of cultural heritage?
  • Avoiding duplication
  • Building on strengths
  • Implementing coordinated frameworks
• Building capacity
• Building communication: much of the challenge comes from a lack of cooperation, or opportunities for cooperation, between countries – how do we bring you together?