# RECOMMENDATIONS

FINAL VERSION

## Introduction

The participants of the workshop on Heritage Documentation, organised in Algiers, have based their work on Euromed Heritage workshop on Inventories in 2008 and in continuity with the work on development of conservation and restoration manuals of various projects, particularly Corpus, Rehabimed, Montada and Hammamed. All the documentation produced in the framework of Euromed Heritage is permanently stored and accessible in the virtual library www.e-corpus.com .

Participants were informed of ongoing developments in new information technologies that can improve data collection, management and updating.

Based on this information, participants made the following recommendations, which do not claim to be exhaustive but serve to outline the key points.

In general:

- They urge that the main goal of heritage documentation should be knowledge, which should be available for and serve research, management and awareness of different stakeholders;

- They also urge that the identification of cultural assets and awareness of their values should be conducted with the participation of the public;

- They finally urge that documentation should be accessible to all relevant stakeholders.

1. Territorial approach and associated databases

   - For an integrated approach of the diverse heritages and crossing of data, it is necessary to feed the information into a shared territorial and geo-referenced database that takes into account their intangible as well as their tangible dimensions.

   - Documentation, including inventories, should always build on the collection and analysis of existing data.

   - Databases should be adapted and adjusted to meet, on the one hand, some essential criteria - vocabulary, standards, typological or thematic grids- and on the other, different scales – geography, resources, and time. A scientific and technical logbook must precede and accompany data entry; it should be a prerequisite to the development of documentation and must be made available to users.

   - It is important to be attentive to and follow-up on all the possibilities that a Geographic Information System (GIS) offers in terms of logical processes and methods, which should allow for a gradual implementation, going from the general to the particular, and according to priorities. Metadata should always be included in the GIS, and risk mapping should be considered as one of the priorities in the information system.

   - Setting-up such a system involves an inter-disciplinary, collaborative and cumulative approach (Wiki model), and must cite sources and respect copyrights.

   - It is important to ensure that software packages are inter-operative and adaptable to standards and that they undergo regular back-up and up-date of data.

   - Relevant public authorities should pursue the establishment of a common heritage "identity card", taking into consideration local and regional specificities.

2. Tools and techniques for data collection

   - The continued development of tools and techniques for data collection is essential for improving existing documentation, in order to better understand heritage and to better serve its conservation, its restoration and its enhancement.

   - A careful use of these tools must take into account factors such as the required level of details, time available for the data collection and associated costs, adjusting them accordingly.

   - When circumstances allow it, particularly where series and clusters are concerned, special attention should be paid to the survey methods and inasmuch as possible, the use of simple tools and collaborative software that is available free of charge or at a modest price.

   - Training sessions should be offered to data collectors and managers in order to familiarise them in the use of these tools and techniques.

3. Technical manuals and management and maintenance tools

- Practical manuals and techniques for preventive conservation and rehabilitation of built heritage are most useful to guide and accompany interventions. Following the example of Algerian legislation, it is advisable that a manual be made available for any cluster subject to a rescue plan.

- These manuals must be adapted to each specific situation. They must address the different stakeholders: users, contractors, builders, associations specialised in maintenance and restoration, and decision-makers and elected officials.

- Rehabilitation sites and the analysis of dilapidated buildings should be put to use to document and better understand traditional techniques.

- Manuals are also valuable tools to guide participatory processes within communities, raise awareness within the school system and other such processes.

- Documentation resources and the various tools used for their exploitation should be used in the elaboration of preservation and management plans, which in turn become items for summary documentation.

- To protect the visual environment of heritage assets, particularly in urban contexts, it is important to define within the existing documentation and preservation recommendations some visual restrictions that respect the perspective from or towards these assets, not only within the protected area but also within the buffer zone or even beyond.

4. International and regional cooperation

- It is necessary to follow-up closely the work of international organisations and learn from them best practice in data collection and up-date (UNESCO, ICCROM, ALECSO, ICOMOS, CIPA, ICOM…)

- Regional or sub-regional cooperation are highly recommended, particularly in the collective development of computer methods for data acquisition and up-dating, such as on GIS, or to initiate specialised training sessions.

5. Workshop follow-up

- It is important for partner countries to organise national follow-up workshops, in order to deepen and apply the conclusions and recommendations of the Algiers workshop.

- Participants recommend that issues relative to documentation be included within the agenda of the next "focal points" meeting of UNESCO's World Heritage Centre for Arab countries, which will be held in December 2012.

- Participants wish that the issue of documentation be included as a priority area of cooperation during the Closing Conference of Euromed Heritage programme, next January 2013 in Fez.