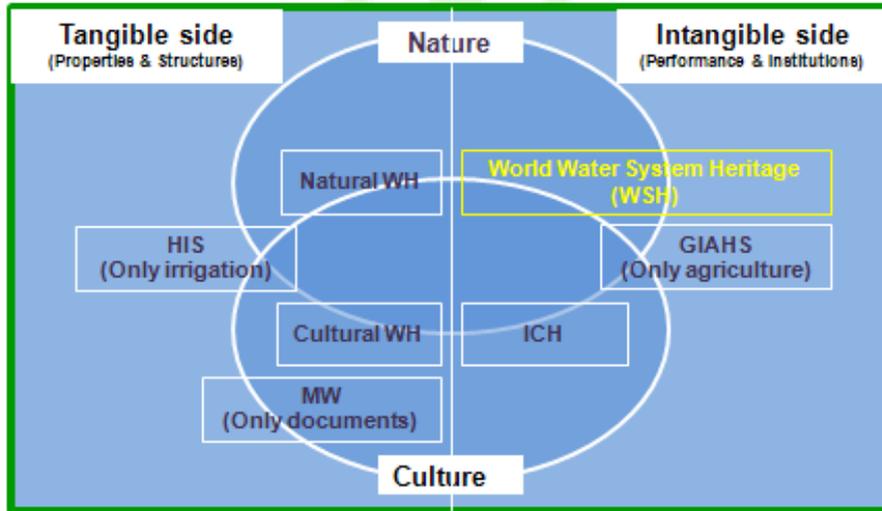
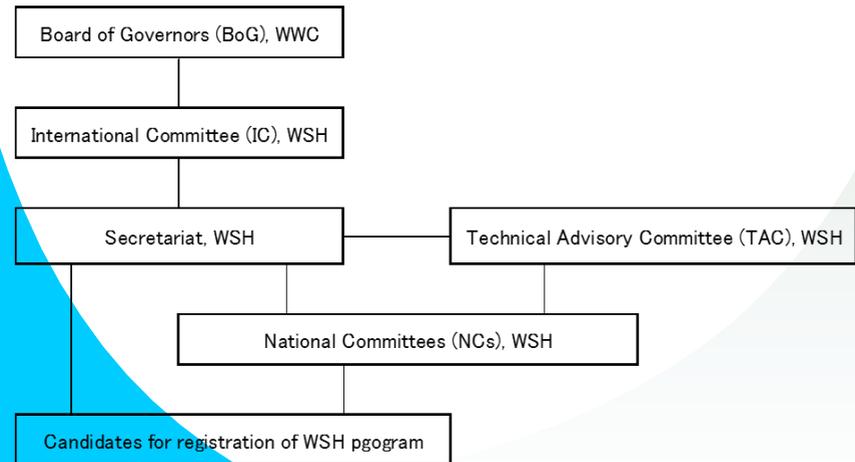


Tangible and Intangible Initiatives



Institutional Design



World Water Systems Heritage Program



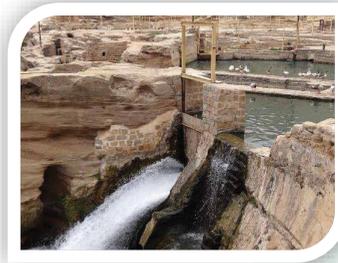
World Water Systems Heritage Program

Background

The study of the past history contributes to our sense of who we are today and helps determine our future aspirations. Heritage not only includes man-made structures, places and objects, but also the spiritual beliefs, social values and management practices like traditions and customs. Socio-economic development of human societies has been intricately linked with various forms of water sharing and use.

People-centred institutions and practices have managed water systems for many generations. These management practices have served the mankind in amicably distributing the benefits of water systems among various users and they represent our heritage. These water systems have the potential to open up new horizon of solutions towards better management, conservation, conveyance and utilization of water resources.

Due to the global changes such as climate change, the exponential growth in technology and pressure on natural resources, the relevance of ancient knowledge may appear to diminish, but they continue to provide crystals of wisdom. The need is to ease and be able to identify these crystals and adapt them to the present challenges. The World Water Systems Heritage (WSH) program, a joint global initiative of International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) and the World Water Council, addresses this need and attempts to provide multi-disciplinary insights in the heritage wisdom from public policy perspectives.



World Water Systems Heritage Program

Objectives of World Water Systems Heritage program

The World Water Systems Heritage (WSH) program aims at identifying, giving recognition and preserving the people-centred water management systems, organizations, regimes and rules as intangible water heritage considered to be of outstanding value to humanity that creates coexistent social system for humanity and sound environment.

The program is expected to create a database – a register of World Water Systems Heritage - that includes data on characteristics of the system within physical, financial and social context; activities undertaken through the system; its historical development; and the wisdom nuggets offered by them. It will also encompass an evaluation of the success of the registered system and may guide in developing better management practices.

Scope of the program

WSH targets systems which many stakeholders created together and have developed through collective activities for over generations that have managed water resources by utilizing functions of natural and artificial physical facilities.

The scope of WSH program encompasses institutions managing water for drinking, agriculture, industries, electricity generation, navigation, preserving ecosystems and fisheries; dealing with flood management; measures of defence from storm surge; and institutions controlling waste water from drainage and sanitation, will be eligible for inclusion in the register of WSH.

The program fills a void in the existing global programs that address different concepts of heritage, namely the World Heritage Site¹, the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) site², the Memory of the World site³, the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems⁴ and Heritage Irrigation Structures⁵. People-centred institutions and practices, having sustainably carried out sensible and successful water management practices for over generations contain in themselves crystals of wisdom that are worth protecting and preserving as heritage. Therefore, this program serving as soft components of sustainable water management systems is being established to make the wisdom available for study, analysis and adaptation under the present challenging development scenarios.

1 UNESCO (2014) World Heritage Site, <http://whc.unesco.org/pg.cfm?cid=31&mode=table>

2 UNESCO (2014) Intangible Heritage Site, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/>

3 UNESCO (2014) Memory of the World Site, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-projectactivities/memory-of-the-world/homepage/>

4 FAO (2014) GIAHS Site, <http://www.fao.org/giahs/giahs-sites/en/>

5 ICID (2014) HIS Site, http://www.icid.org/icid_his1.php

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ICID-CIID