

Towards sustainable management of the World Heritage in Spain: from identification to monitoring of cultural values

Para uma gestão sustentável do património mundial em Espanha: da identificação à monitorização dos valores culturais

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Abstract

The management of World Heritage properties has reached a sufficient level of maturity accompanied by increasingly demanding monitoring processes focused on preserving their cultural values. This task is now being tackled, from a sustainable point of view, by involving the public. In the case of Spain, 50 properties have been declared since 1984, giving rise to an unequal situation regarding their management. Heterogeneity, the need to complete the declaration dossiers, concerning outstanding universal values and others, and the difficulty of implementing strategic and operational planning, are the origins of this situation. To address the sustainable management of this heritage and the monitoring of its cultural values, a diagnosis will be made, from the declaration to the implementation of the monitoring processes required by UNESCO, ending with a review of the implementation of management plans in Spain, understood as the tools that guarantee an integral vision of the property.

Resumo

A gestão dos bens do património mundial atingiu um nível de bastante maturidade, acompanhado de processos de acompanhamento cada vez mais exigentes, centrados na preservação dos seus valores culturais. Esta tarefa está agora a ser abordada, de um ponto de vista sustentável, através da participação do público. Em Espanha, foram declarados 50 bens desde 1984, dando origem a uma situação desigual no que respeita à sua gestão. A heterogeneidade, a necessidade de completar os dossiers de declaração, relativos aos valores universais excecionais e outros, e a dificuldade de realizar um planeamento estratégico e operacional estão na origem desta situação. Para abordar a gestão sustentável deste património e o acompanhamento dos seus valores culturais, será feito um diagnóstico, desde a declaração até à implementação dos processos de acompanhamento exigidos pela UNESCO, terminando com uma análise da implementação dos planos de gestão em Espanha, entendidos como as ferramentas que garantem uma visão integral do bem.

KEYWORDS

Outstanding Universal Value
Sustainable conservation
Management plan
Heritage impact assessment
Active protection
Conservation monitoring

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Valor Universal Excecional
Conservação sustentável
Plano de gestão
Avaliação do impacto no
património
Proteção ativa
Monitorização da
conservação

Introduction

The World Heritage (WH) List, created after the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* in 1972 [1], has evolved over the years following the development of the international discourse regarding the conceptualisation of heritage and its management. It originated as a tool for conservation, particularly in the aftermath of the World Wars and as a result of the first experiences of international cooperation, which have since been established to ensure the effective protection of heritage. A far cry from the current scenario, in which heritage is understood as a “source of resilience, humanity, and innovation” [2], a resource that contributes to improving people's quality of life.

The evolution of the heritage discourse applied to WH management [3] reflects an opening up of its conceptualisation, objectives and approach, pursuing: 1) opening up the limits of the consideration of heritage, going beyond the more objectual and monumental concept of the mid-twentieth century; 2) approaching preservation from a broad perspective that is not focused on conservation or protection, moving towards sustainable management or shared stewardship of heritage; 3) enriching the initially materially focused problem approach to give way to a value-based and ultimately people-centred approach.

The concept of sustainable management was generalised [4] once the World Heritage Committee – the international body updating the different Lists at its annual meetings, as well as following the state of conservation of the properties inscribed – declared heritage as an instrument for the sustainable development of society, starting with the Budapest Declaration [5]. The subsequent development of this premise has come hand in hand with the contribution of sustainable heritage to local development, both in economic and social terms and in environmental and cultural terms [6], considering heritage assets as facilities in their territorial and urban environments [7].

The Faro Convention [8] further established this paradigm shift in WH management, incorporating an awareness of the importance of citizenship in decision-making processes, primarily associated with intangible heritage [9] and the reformulation of the notion of management plans [10]. Specific people-centred methodologies have since been developed for specific domains, not necessarily in WH sites, such as archaeology [11] or cultural landscapes [12].

A value-based approach provides the foundation for current WH management, focusing on “sustained and enhanced significance, where significance is understood as the overall value of heritage, or the sum of its constituent heritage value” [13]. After the “social turn” it is now, in the first quarter of the twentieth first century, where we can situate the expansion of the “participatory heritage turn”, assuming its challenges, contradictions and contributions [14].

This approach is compatible with the methodology followed to compile the WH List, established in the 1972 Convention, which required a property to be considered of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) in order to be inscribed. This was justified by satisfying a set of selection criteria [1] which have been updated along with the evolution of the heritage discourse. The definition of OUV, the concept underpinning the Convention, has been the subject of continuous reflection, which has been reflected in the progressive diversification of the List. Since 1998, States Parties were asked to include a Statement of Significance in their nominations to the List, articulating the exceptional heritage values of each property to clarify its monitoring. However, it was not sufficiently specified how this statement should be defined, meaning that these values were usually not adequately developed or justified in relation to the criteria [15]. It is not until 2005 that the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) is introduced, articulating a consensual format for the justification of the selection criteria and fully incorporating the concepts of integrity and (for cultural properties) authenticity of attributes as key issues for the conformation of the OUV. This requirement was activated for registration procedures in 2007, while establishing a period of homogenisation

and retrospective drafting of the SOUV for previously registered properties, which is gradually being implemented [16].

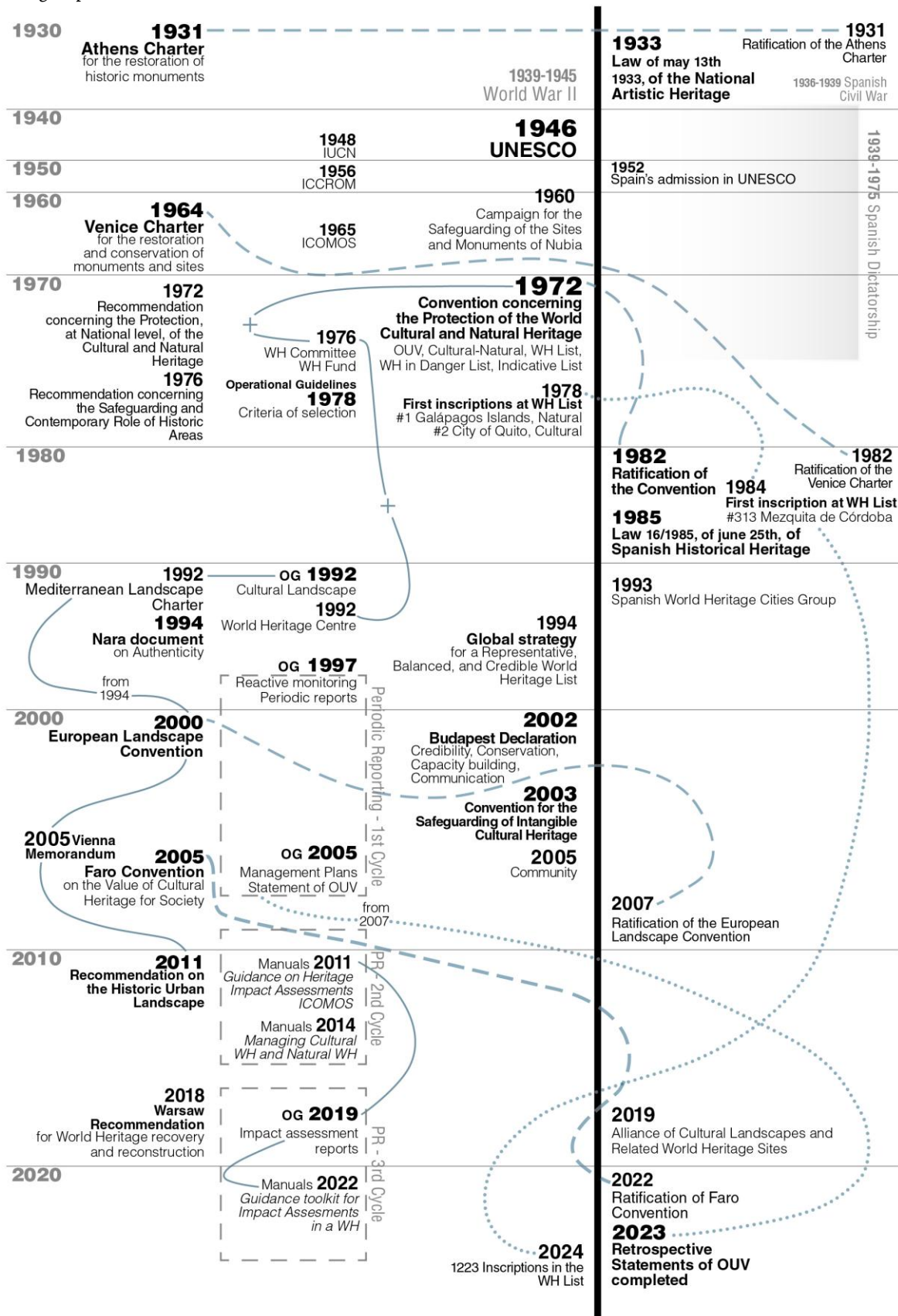


Figure 1. Genealogy (from top to bottom) of the evolution of World Heritage management on the international scene (on the left), listing international reference charters and texts (1st column) and the guidelines and tools developed within UNESCO (2nd and 3rd columns), in relation to what has happened in Spain (on the right).— relationship between processes derived from one another in the international scene, Spanish participation in issues related to the evolution of the World Heritage List; --- time frame for Spain's ratification of international texts.

Since its foundation in 1946, UNESCO has developed a set of normative documents, charters, declarations and international recommendations to safeguard heritage and assist member states in its protection, conservation and knowledge, thus generating a dense network of consensual tools with a common objective [17] (Figure 1). The development of international charters mirrors an evolution of heritage sensitivity in which UNESCO's own reflexive work has always played an active part, while emerging issues in the international scene are incorporated into UNESCO's body of guidelines, making use of the annual WH Operational Guidelines for their implementation from 1978 onwards [18].

Thus, Community is incorporated into the strategic objectives of the Budapest Declaration following the drafting of the Faro Convention on the value of cultural heritage in society, the WH Cities Programme is set in motion in 2001 to adapt the conservation and management of urban heritage sites towards dynamic processes of safeguarding cultural significance [19] and, anticipating the progressive evolution and recognition of the concept of landscape on the international scene, Cultural Landscapes would be incorporated to the List in 1992, as a category that recognised the development of society in its physical context over time [20]. That decade saw efforts to open up the List to new heritage concepts, promoting inscriptions related to industrial archaeology, modern heritage works, itineraries and cultural landscapes [18], culminating in the definition of a Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List.

Spain follows its own path in parallel to this evolution, strongly marked at the beginning by the international blockade of Franco's dictatorship. In the 1980s, the ratification of the convention coincided with the approval of a new Historical Heritage Law and the presentation of the first Spanish candidatures to the List. Spain became part of international cultural cooperation, albeit demonstrating varying degrees of proactivity in the ratification of international instruments [21]. The Historic Urban Landscape Initiative was launched by UNESCO in 2005 to develop cooperation with the World Heritage Centre (WHC) in protecting and managing living historic cities. However, in Spain this issue had previously attracted sufficient attention, as early as 1993, leading to the creation of the Spanish World Heritage Cities Group, aiming to carry out common projects and proposals and develop a network for shared experiences [22]. The Alliance of Cultural Landscapes and Related World Heritage Sites was created following a similar objective, joining sites in Spain, Portugal and Andorra after the international assimilation of the concept of Cultural Landscape.

Spain inscribed its first property in 1984, initially participating in the growth of the List considerably and slowing the pace of inscriptions at the turn of the century (Figure 2). With the last inscription, in 2023, Spain reached 50 properties on the List.

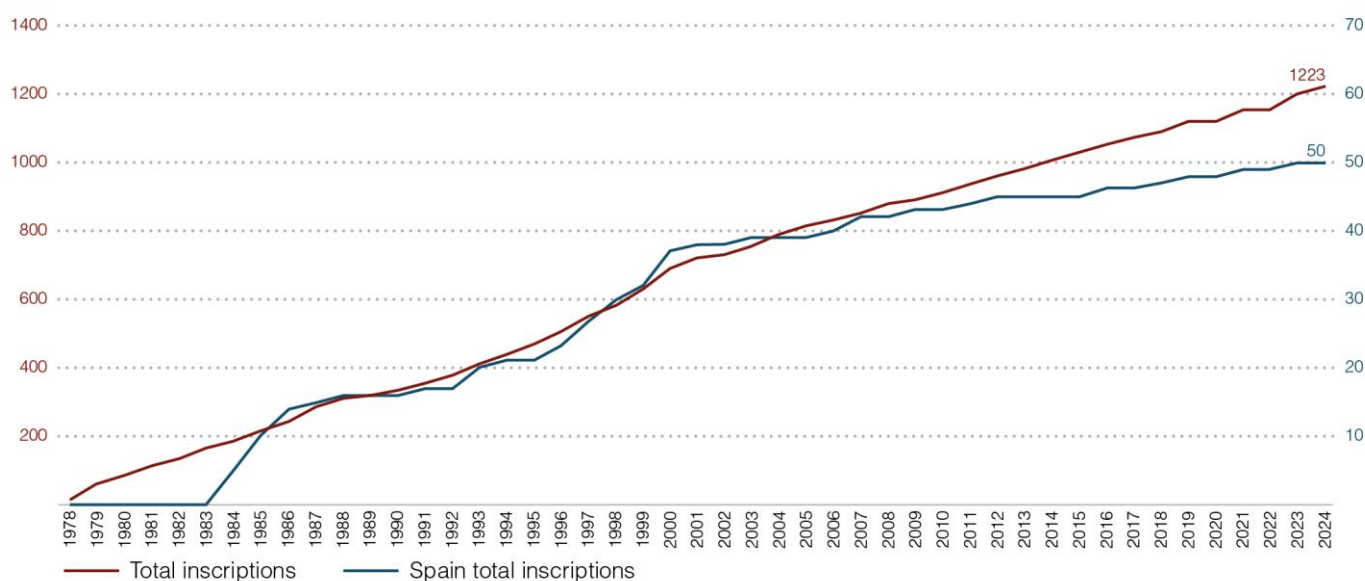


Figure 2. The WH List through time. Total inscriptions (red) vs. Inscriptions in Spain (blue).

In hindsight, the WH List has slowed its growth, moving away from the objective of heritage identification to an emerging critical need for guiding sustainable management [23]. Before assessing the heritage impact an intervention may produce on a WH property – a task for which Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) are carried out [24] – it is necessary to identify the cultural values, not only the OUV but also others identified and consented with the citizens. Beyond the authorised heritage discourse [25], the aim is to improve the planning and monitoring processes of cultural values in WH properties. This task is approached in awareness of the social shift that characterises the end of the twentieth century, giving way not only to the anthropological recognition of heritage but also to the importance of the “discursive” approach in confronting the predominance of materiality that had prevailed until then [26]. Sustainable conservation management is a relatively recent discipline whose challenges include focusing the debate on the cultural significance of heritage [27]. In the Spanish case, the management of the WH requires studies to evaluate management models, and to adapt planning to the new holistic paradigm promoted by UNESCO [28].

Based on the premises above, this article seeks to analyse the state of WH management in Spain in light of the evolution of international criteria. Information on the declaration processes will be collected, with emphasis on the temporal development of the recognised values as well as on the processes for their monitoring, being the ultimate objective of the analysis of the implementation of Management Plans (MP). These are understood as tools capable of reinforcing the integral vision that should characterise the consideration of the property, which must include reference to sources of a diverse nature for the recognition of values, the integration of immaterial and local issues [29], as well as ensuring the identification of the actors involved.

Methodology and data sources

The working methodology followed for the development of this research focuses, firstly, on the knowledge of the basic requirements that UNESCO has been dictating for the management of a WH property, as well as the proposed system for the drafting of monitoring reports, analysed from the perspective of the evolution in the conservation of heritage values. Their classification, the analysis of their scope and periodicity, will allow for a review of WH’s management, applied to the Spanish context.

To this end, a table is drawn up where the data related to the implementation of the management are compiled, classifying them in four blocks: 1) identification of the Spanish registered properties; 2) inscription on the WH List; 3) documents for management and planning; 4) monitoring carried out by UNESCO. Each of these sections breaks down the information relating to each of the properties studied, obtained from different sources of information: i) publications, reports and dissemination of the sites themselves; ii) freely accessible documents for UNESCO monitoring (periodic reports, state of conservation reports); iii) congresses and conferences.

The identification of the WH properties includes, where applicable and where known:

- Denomination: the exact name under which the property or group of properties is registered;
- Location: place and city in which the property or properties are located – in the case of Spain, the Autonomous Community in which the property is located will be decisive, since competences in the field of culture were progressively transferred to the autonomous communities from the State after the establishment of democracy (1975);
- Managing body: public institution responsible for the management of the property;

- Affiliation: to a specific group organised to share experiences. Such is the case in Spain of the Alliance of Cultural Landscapes and Related World Heritage Sites, Patrimonio Nacional or the group of World Heritage Cities.

The Inscription column focuses on the aspects covered by the declaration:

- Category: natural, cultural or mixed (as indicated in the 1972 convention);
- Type of asset, when it is officially stated: monument, world heritage city, site, cultural landscape;
- Date of inscription: year in which the declaration dossier is approved;
- Extension: when applicable, the date on which the property or area designated in the initial declaration is extended;
- SOUV: the year in which the SOUV is delivered. A colour code is applied to mark whether the SOUV was established together with the registration documentation of the property or retrospectively, to adapt the OUV to the indications provided by UNESCO in the 2005 guideline [30-31].

The management of the property is addressed by collecting data on planning documents, management plans, or master plans related to it. Reliable sources are prioritised for the location of these documents, preferably official media, open data and information provided in the reports. This means that for some properties it may not have been possible to find sufficient information, limiting the assumed scope of the research. A colour code is applied to the identified documents to differentiate between: 1) documents that meet international requirements for management; 2) documents under development or not approved; 3) documents that partially address the management of the property; 4) documents of partial effect under development or not approved. The type of document, the link to open access to its contents and the year in which it was approved are indicated.

Finally, the last column is devoted to compiling information related to the monitoring carried out to date by UNESCO through the different monitoring processes, indicating the information available on UNESCO's website related to state of conservation reports, monitoring reports and HIAs [32].

The synthesis of the information gathered will allow for analysis and diagnosis of heritage management applied to the Spanish case study. Based on the shortcomings detected, conclusions will be proposed to improve the management of these assets, with special emphasis on the sustainable perspective.

World Heritage monitoring processes: reactive and periodic reports

Following the enactment of the Convention, the issue of the conservation of inscribed properties gained prominence, leading to a series of initiatives for the evaluation of their state of conservation. In the 1990s, the Committee received reports drafted by the Advisory Bodies, developed on their own account and following different models and methodologies [15]. In 1997 the procedure was standardised, establishing a distinction between reporting in response to threat situations and a periodic and systematic reporting exercise that establishes an ongoing monitoring of the conservation of the property.

Reactive monitoring: state of conservation reports and heritage impact assessments

From the first ad hoc reports, the procedure evolves towards a reactive approach to monitoring, whereby States Parties are called upon to report whenever an external threat or planned activity likely to affect the conservation of the OUV of the property is detected. The Committee may then request the drafting of a "State of Conservation Report", which should address the follow-up to any previous decisions of the Committee – a common procedure for properties on the List of WH in Danger – information on threats identified by the State Party to the OUV of the

property concerned, as well as a description of the planned actions that may lead to alterations to the OUV, including its authenticity and integrity [33].

Since 2008, the Committee has expressed an interest in the potential of these reports as a source of experience to help map patterns of need and identify priorities in the conservation of these properties [34]. In 2011, the “State of Conservation Information System” was created, a computerised information system that contains the history of the WH's states of conservation and provides a tool for the detection of affecting factors and informed decision-making. On the associated web platform, the factors with the most associated reports to date are those related to management and institutional factors (3072), buildings and development (1699), conflict (1410) and social/cultural uses of heritage (1274) [35].

A fundamental tool for monitoring conservation are HIAs, developed and standardised after the documents generated by ICOMOS in 2011 [36] and UNESCO in 2022 [17]. These reports complement planning towards sustainable management of WH properties, constituting a prerequisite for activities affecting the attributes of the property or its surroundings and having continuity during and after the development of the specific action [37].

HIA is a preventive exercise, which makes it possible to identify positive or negative effects on the property in advance and to consider alternatives if deemed necessary [33], making it a tool for achieving sustainable development compatible with the protection and conservation of the WH. Assessing the ability of an action to achieve environmental, social and economic outcomes provides not only a means to protect the OUV, but also integrate those co-existing values that may not be recognised within the SOUV, but which underpin it, such as national and local heritage designations or values held by associated communities [17].

Planned monitoring: periodic reports

Periodic reporting constitutes the strategy for the continuous monitoring of the application of the Convention, where each property undertakes a self-assessment exercise of the work carried out for the conservation and protection of its values [33]. In 1998, the procedure was established in cycles of approximately six years, during which each region (Arab States, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America) must submit the reports on all their properties. A period of reflection is set between cycles for evaluating the results and revising the forms for the next cycle [38].

Reports are structured in two sections: 1) Section I, filled in by the national focal point, contains the legislative or administrative provisions adopted by the State Party for the implementation of the Convention in its territory; 2) Section II is addressed to the managers of each property, who respond on the SOUV, its integrity, management, factors of affection and monitoring arrangements [39]. The ultimate objective is to generate a system of regional cooperation, in which States Parties benefit from the exchange of information and experiences in the implementation of the Convention, drawing up regional Action Plans based on the reports at the end of each cycle [40].

Three cycles for reviewing and updating periodic monitoring

Since the establishment of periodic reporting, the duration of cycles has varied slightly (Figure 3). The first cycle took place between 1998 and 2006, with the participation of the properties inscribed up to 1997 [39]. Among the conclusions drawn from the results, it was noteworthy the creation of a Retrospective Inventory [41] with a view to harmonising and updating the files of the properties inscribed between 1978 and 1998 as well as the request for State Parties to finalise all missing SOUVs [42]. A general assessment of the process was carried out during the reflection period, looking for the adaptation of the form to suit complex properties such as cultural landscapes or serial properties.

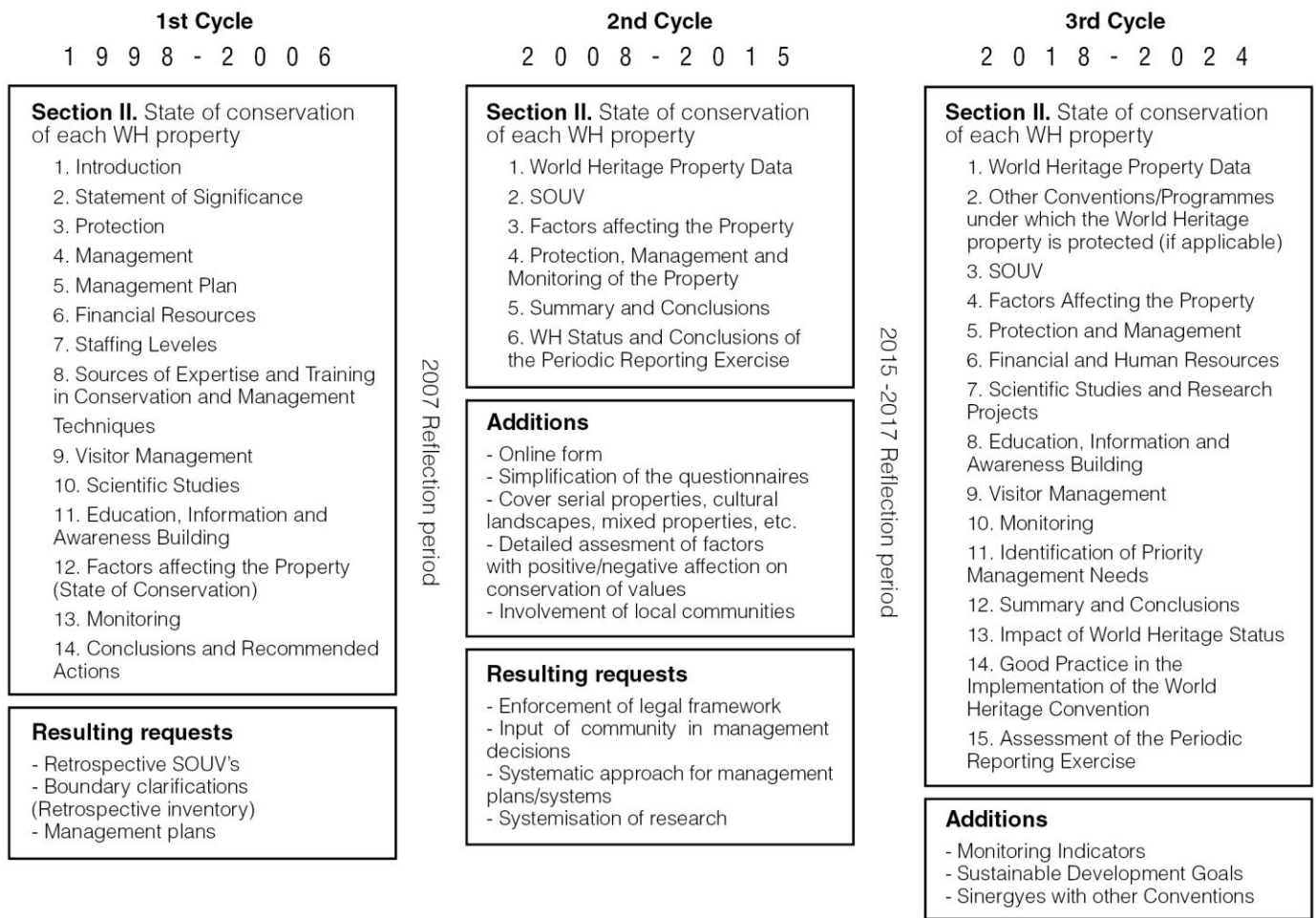


Figure 3. Section II of Periodic Reporting through the cycles. Structure, additions and resulting requests.

The second cycle (2008-2015) marked the effective transition to the online completion model, simplifying the content structure and incorporating scoring tables on conservation risks. Conclusions derived from this exercise were the adaptation of the legal framework towards conservation, and the need to implement management systems, integrating local communities and research in the management task [43].

From its inception, the reports have sought to obtain accurate information through a generic short-question model for the entire WH, a process in which it is now questioned that the specificities of each property may be blurred [44], that is why the revised questionnaire for the third cycle (2018-2024) incorporates a focus around the 2030 Agenda, relying on WH as a platform for sustainable development and considering synergies with other international conventions and developing a framework of monitoring indicators to assess trends by thematic areas [40]. By 2024, we are in the final stretch of the third cycle, with the last Action Plan -for Europe and North America- due to be presented in July.

A tool for planning conservation: Management Plans

Heritage management was merely suggested in the original text of the Convention, but after the first cycle the Operational Guidelines definitively incorporated the mandatory elaboration of MP for WH properties in 2005. The effective long-term management of a property is understood as the main tool for safeguarding the OUV, therefore the implementation of a management system joins the selection criteria, integrity and authenticity as defining pillars of the OUV [45].

Management plans are the main planning tool available to the agents involved in the management system of a property. Although designed to ensure the effective protection of the

OUV, it is important to consider that the MP will normally cover a much larger collection of values, underlying the value recognised as outstanding. With the development of society and the heritage discourse, these values may evolve without necessarily implying a modification of the OUV, resulting in a complex scenario in which MPs must be a tool capable of embracing this evolution, promoting the valuation of the property along the desired path [3].

In view of the great diversity of heritage cases included in the List and of the different management systems in each country, the definition of a single international model for the content of the MPs becomes a problematic task. This is why UNESCO only provides a definition of the competences and instrumental issues that each property must then individualise according to its national reality, legislation and local specificities [33].

A diagnosis of World Heritage management in Spain in the international context

Inscriptions on the List

Spain is the fifth country with the highest number of inscribed properties, behind Italy (60), China (59), Germany (54) and France (53). In its 50 properties, cultural heritage significantly outweighs the other categories, and, to a certain extent, the Spanish case can be interpreted as an approximate reflection of the international composition of the List (Figure 4). However, UNESCO's efforts to create a representative and balanced list after the turn of the century result in a continuous growth of less represented types, while in Spain the gradual diversification is less pronounced.



Figure 4. Inscription of properties in the World Heritage List vs. Inscriptions in Spain, by categories.



Figure 5. World Heritage inscriptions in Spain and Statements of Outstanding Universal Value.

The first inscriptions (1984) had an evident monumental component, even if some of them were later extended to incorporate the urban dimension (the Cordoba Mosque became the Historic Centre of Cordoba and the Alhambra and Generalife saw the Albayzín district added to their inscription). Natural heritage was recognised very early on, with the inclusion of the Garajonay National Park in 1986, and mixed heritage was inscribed for the first time in 1997, with the cross-border inscription of Monte Perdido, which is also the first Spanish site inscribed as Cultural Landscape.

Characterisation of WH properties as Cultural Landscapes does not exempt them from inscription according to the selection criteria within the categories of Cultural, Natural or Mixed Heritage, but adds another layer of information that expands the significance of their values. In Spain there are five properties registered as Cultural Landscape, all of them, except for Monte Perdido, added since the turn of the century. Examples like the industrial archaeology of Vizcaya Bridge (2006), Heritage of Mercury (2012) or the cultural itineraries of the Routes of Santiago de Compostela (1993) also reflect an international interest in opening the List to other types of heritage.

Retrospective SOUVs are developed in efforts discontinued over time so, taking into account that from 2007 onwards all new registrations already contain the consensual SOUV, it is not until 2023 that a rate of 100 % of properties with a SOUV is achieved (Figure 5).

Monitoring the Convention

From the implementation in 1997 of the monitoring mechanisms, Spain has submitted a total of 82 State of Conservation Reports to account for its work towards the implementation of the Convention (Figure 6). The number of reports a property or State Party needs to undertake reflects the complexity of its management and conservation, as well as the threats to which it may be exposed. Among cultural properties, most of them have never required such reports. This is why cases such as Salamanca stand out, having drafted ten reports since its inscription. On the other hand, natural properties tend to appear on the other side of the table, with Doñana as a paradigmatic case with 16 reports. The Teide National Park is the only natural property that has not drafted such reports since its inscription in 2002.

Regarding periodic monitoring, Spain participates in the three cycles developed so far, submitting its reports within the Europe and North America region (Figure 7). The 27 properties inscribed at the beginning of the first cycle participate by submitting the corresponding reports when the region's turn comes in 2007 (despite having already inscribed 40 properties by then). Something similar happens in the second cycle, in which the 42

properties inscribed at the beginning of the cycle (2008) participate, despite submitting their periodic reports in 2014 when Spain had 45 properties on the List. In the third and final cycle to date, however, the national focal point has submitted reports to the WHC for all 49 properties inscribed in the submission year, 2023, leaving out only Talayotic Menorca which is inscribed in the same year. This means that properties registered during the period of the third cycle started to prepare their reports as an immediate task after their inscription.

From the information available on the outcomes of these reports, we have looked at the resulting data on the declaration by property managers regarding the existence of an adequate Management Plan in use. Thus, while in the first cycle only approximately 7.4 % declared that they had a MP, in the second cycle 33.3 % did so, and in the third cycle 87.5 % of the assets declared positively.

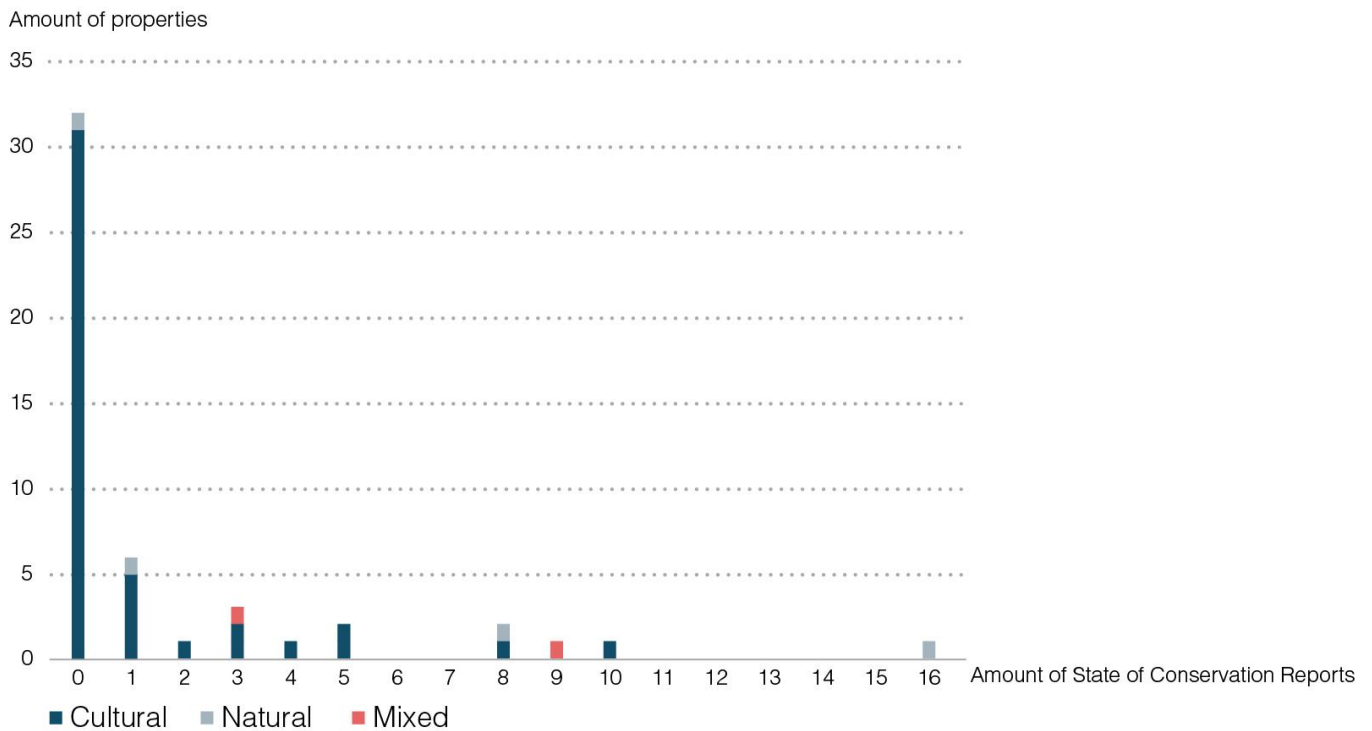


Figure 6. Amount of State of Conservation Reports by classification of World Heritage in Spain.

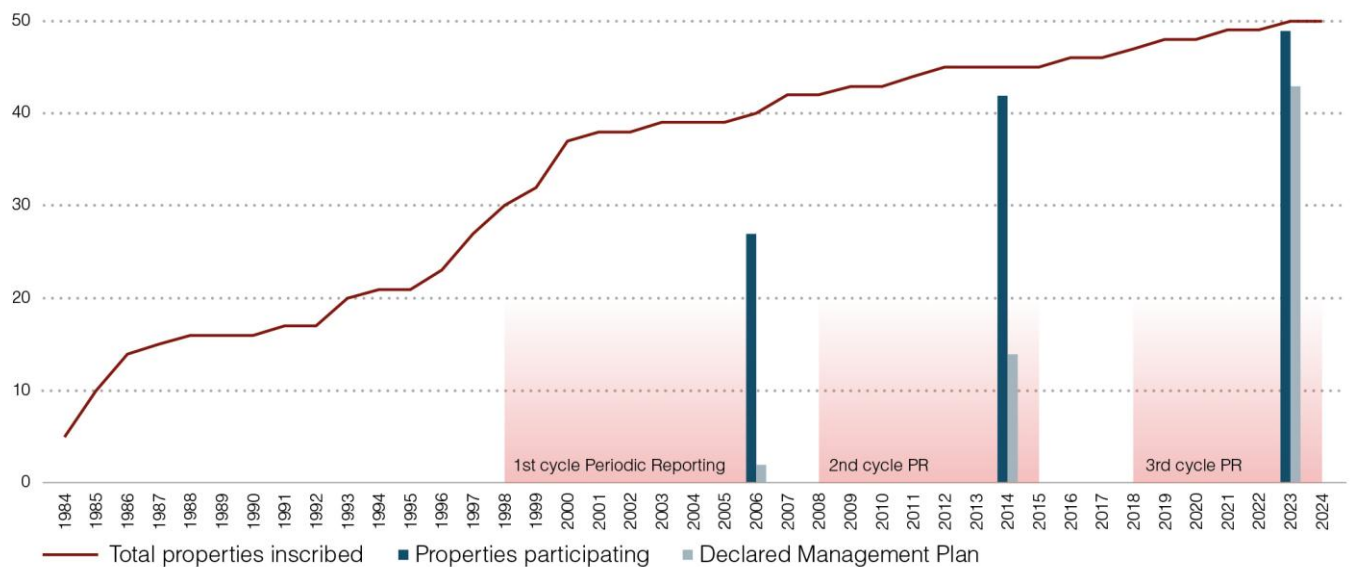


Figure 7. Percentage of properties declaring Management Documents in each Periodic Reporting Cycle in Spain.

Managing WH

The difficult relationship between international requirements for managing WH properties and adapting them to local resources and specificities produces a picture that varies according to the different national contexts.

In Italy, the responses to these requirements are usually centralised. The Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities began to prepare MPs for a large part of its WH properties in the 2000s, publishing a series of guidelines [46] which in 2006 were reinforced by the integration of this figure into national legislation [47]. Where previously the law only considered planning documents for natural parks, historical centres and monumental complexes now fall within its scope, notwithstanding the struggle to reconcile them with existing management tools [48].

However, one of the most influential actors in the international heritage scene, with the potential to overtake all others in number of inscriptions, paints a somewhat different picture. The geographical, historical and demographic particularities of China contribute to form a picture of great institutional complexity, marked by an administrative decentralisation in which operating responsibility lies with local administrations and a historical departmental structure in which responsibilities often overlap [49]. In the last decades, China's involvement in international heritage policies has resulted in a development boom, the result of a prevailing conception of heritage as a tool for local development through its tourist exploitation that has yet to efficiently integrate the interests of local communities [50].

Spain has accompanied these two countries at the forefront of the List for decades, applying a model closer to the Italian one, in which the Ministry of Culture issues grants and advice for projects for the management, protection and conservation of WH properties, and looking at already existing planning tools for its compatibilization with the new requirements.

When analysing the emergence of the various documents used by Spanish properties for their management and conservation, we can highlight two types of heritage which, because they have received specific attention from UNESCO in recent decades, enjoy a particular development apparent in the results of the research. We refer to Cultural Landscapes and World Heritage cities and Urban Heritage. These are not incompatible affiliations and in the Spanish case there are properties pertaining to both, just as they can be assigned to both Spanish specific groupings created for the joint work of these sites (Table 1).

The first documents to appear for the management of historic sites or with an urban component are urban planning tools, which, despite their legislative quality, leave numerous questions necessary for the planning and deployment of strategies for the protection, conservation and management of these properties to be addressed. However, in the case of historic areas, there is a direct relationship between the drafting of subsequent MPs and their membership of the Spanish World Heritage Cities Group, which has been trying over the last decade to draft the plans of all its member cities.

In the case of natural and mixed heritage, the Master Plan for Use and Management appears as the only management tool, as it is the document established by Spanish regulations for the planning and conservation of Natural and National Parks. Although it is a document with legal and binding capacity, the Management Plan (2018-2028) developed for Monte Perdido opens the door to the proposal of documents that better meet international criteria for heritage management.

From the data compiled within the context of this investigation, we have been able to draw up a fixed picture of the suitability of the management and conservation documents available to the Spanish WH to date (Figure 8). Thus, compared to 46 % who have tools considered adequate according to UNESCO's criteria, 34 % do not have any documents at all. It must be noted that the last group includes most of the so-called serial properties, which usually require the prior preparation of individualised management documents for each of the properties that

comprise them (or in cases that cover different territories, such as the Routes of Santiago de Compostela or the Rock Art of the Mediterranean Basin Peninsula, for each autonomous community). While the effort generated for the creation of many of the individual plans is acknowledged, progress for the joint documents has barely reached the drafting stage. Assets that have management documents in line with international consensus, but only cover partially the WH delimitation, have been considered separately.

Table 1. Spanish WH properties as Cultural landscapes (CL) and World Heritage Cities Program (WHP). Affiliation to national groups for shared management and experiences, Alliance of Cultural Landscapes and Related World Heritage Sites (Alliance of CL) and Spanish World Heritage Cities Group (WHCG).

Property	Category	CL	WHCP	Alliance of CL	WHCG
Alhambra, Generalife and Albayzín	Cultural		x	x	
Historic Centre of Cordoba			x		x
Old Town of Ávila with its Extra-Muros Churches			x		x
Old Town of Segovia and its Aqueduct			x		x
Santiago de Compostela (Old Town)			x		x
Historic City of Toledo			x		x
Old Town of Cáceres			x	x	
Cathedral, Alcázar and Archivo de Indias in Seville			x		
Old City of Salamanca			x		x
Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida			x		x
Historic Walled Town of Cuenca			x		x
University and Historic Precinct of Alcalá de Henares			x		x
San Cristóbal de La Laguna			x		x
Roman Walls of Lugo			x		
Aranjuez Cultural Landscape		x	x	x	x
Renaissance Monumental Ensembles of Úbeda and Baeza			x		x
Cultural Landscape of the Serra de Tramuntana		x		x	
Risco Caído and the Sacred Mountains of Gran Canaria Cultural Landscape		x		x	
Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro, a landscape of Arts and Sciences		x	x		
Pyrénées - Mont Perdu	Mixed	x			
Ibiza, Biodiversity and Culture			x	x	x

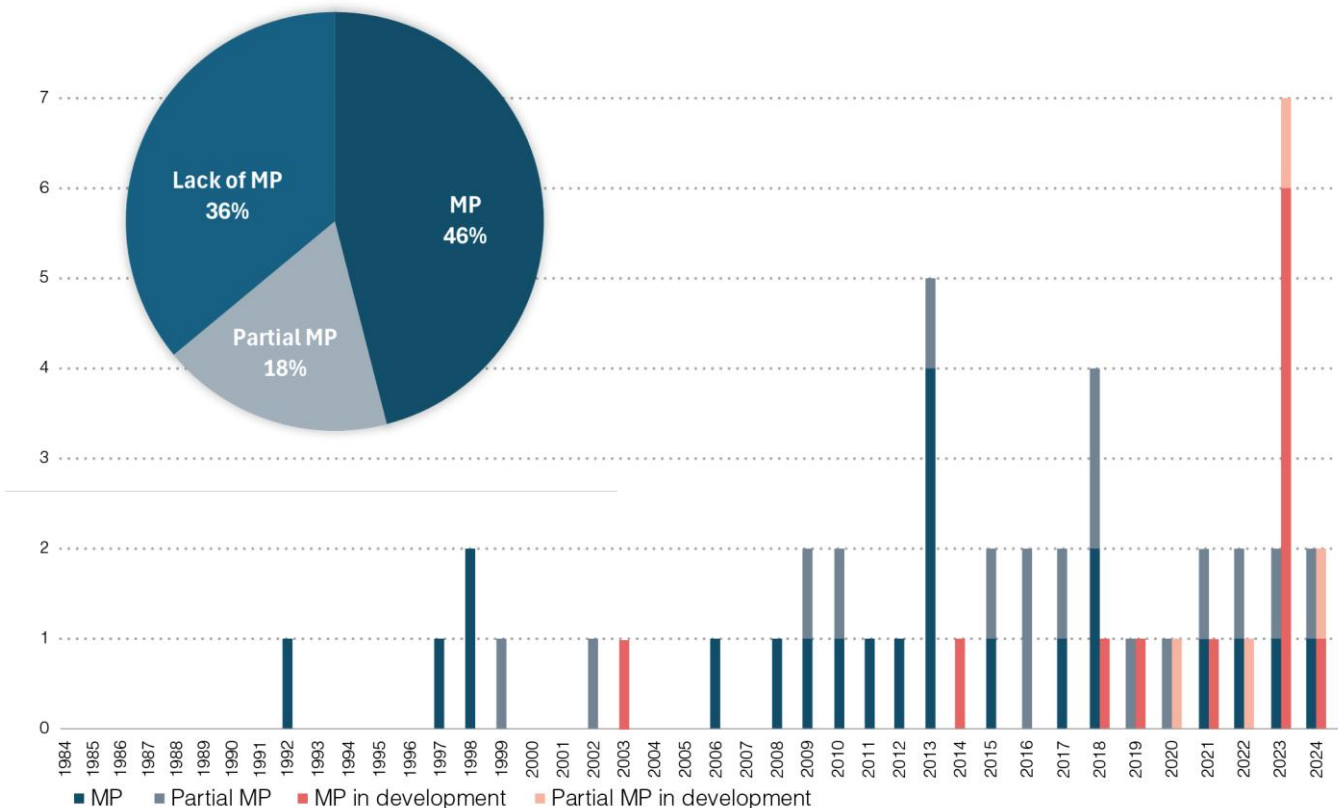
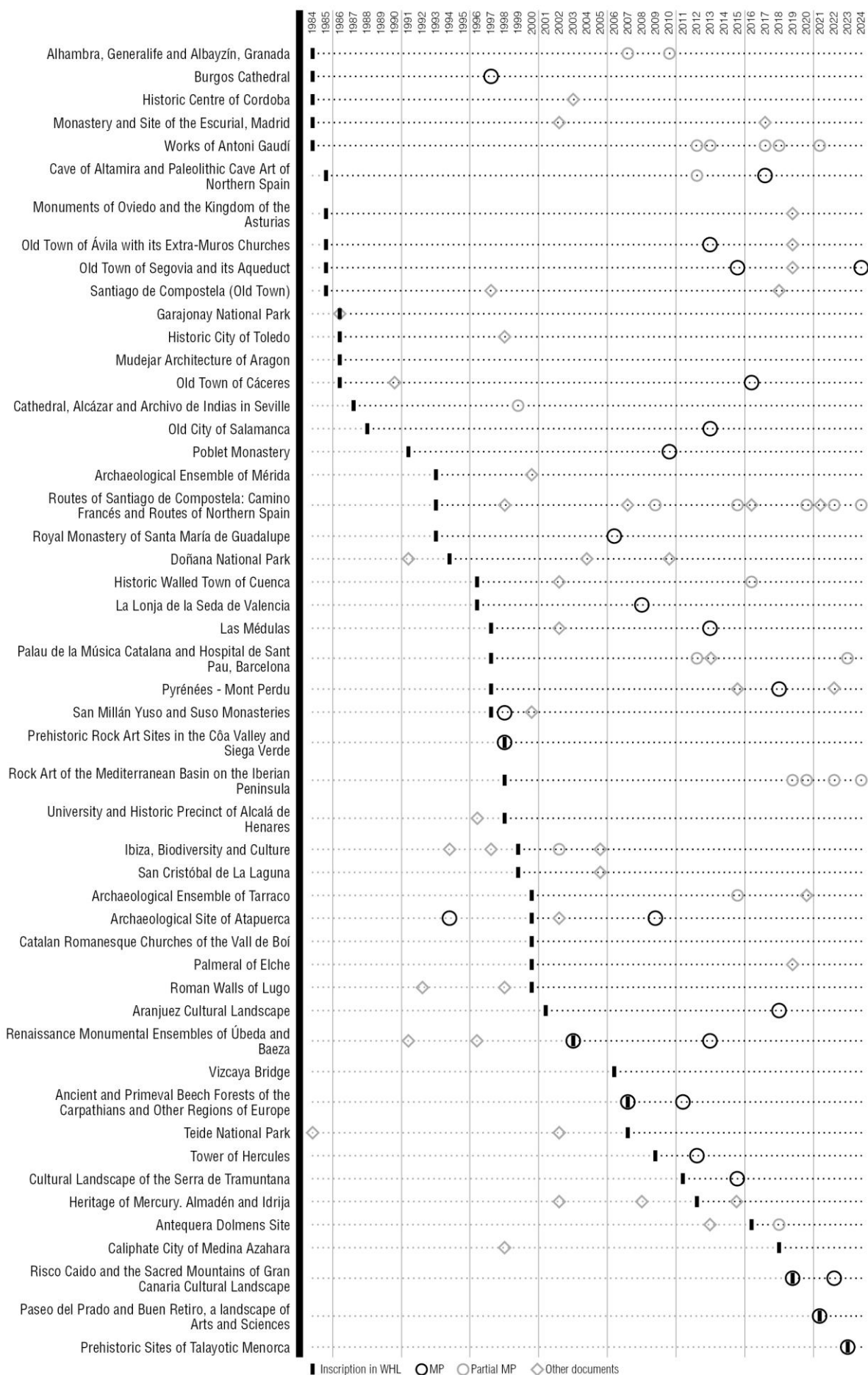


Figure 8. Percentage of properties presenting Management Documents, Partial Management Documents, and properties without an adequate Management Plan in Spain, 2024 (circle). Amount of Management Plans approved or in development (bars).



However, if we consider the drafting date of the management documents we have counted (Figure 8), over 60 % are older than the five-year implementation span recommended by UNESCO, some of them being elaborated in the 1990s. The oldest documents belong mostly to church properties that developed their MPs after the approval of the National Plan for Cathedrals (1990) and the National Plan for Abbeys, Monasteries and Convents (2004) developed by the Ministry of Culture.

The momentum experienced in the drafting of these documents from 2005 onwards is remarkable, when the need for their drafting was included in the WHOPs, the properties grouped in the Spanish World Heritage Cities Group were the first to respond to the request. If we also consider the MPs with partial affection, this effect is even more evident.

Moreover, if we consider those documents which at some point in time are reported to have begun drafting work (notwithstanding whether it has been possible to verify if this work has been abandoned at some point), their proliferation in recent decades is also notable. In 2023, a peak appears directly related to the most recent inscriptions, especially the Landscape of Arts and Sciences (2021) and Talayotic Menorca (2023) which not only incorporated a MP in their nomination documents but announced the beginning of the processes of revision and further development of new plans immediately after inscription.

Finally, a chronogram has been drawn up for the development of these various documents for each of the 50 Spanish properties (Figure 9), a summary of the research, and a graphic reflection of the progressive evolution from the first inscriptions that spent years without a MP to the latest inscriptions that incorporate the plan in the nomination document itself.

Discussion and conclusions

From the earliest charters, the discourse around heritage has evolved within the international community while UNESCO's programmatic development has set the tone for heritage conservation, generating a rich body of mechanisms and knowledge around WH that is no less applicable to other local heritages.

UNESCO's efforts to achieve a representative and balanced List have led to a progressive updating of the recognised categories, the reformulation of key questions in heritage conceptualisation and the generation of a vast network of knowledge to understand WH in an increasingly holistic and inclusive way. From updating the OUV to actively participating in monitoring processes, WH properties require constant work only to meet the ever-increasing complexity of international requirements.

In recent decades, important progress has been made in recognising the role of heritage in ensuring social cohesion, environmental sustainability and the sustainable cultural and economic development of communities, with the adoption of the World Heritage and Sustainable Development Policy in 2015 as a key milestone. This translates into the progressive adoption of a people-centred approach to conservation, where communities gain an important role in the governance of their heritage, instead of the more traditional exclusively experts-based management. It is an international challenge that each State Party must strive to adapt to its own operational context.

Spanish efforts to implement the international guidelines on the identification, definition and conservation of WH have been particularly noteworthy in the last two decades, but it is still necessary to persist on pressing issues such as implementing the tools for sustainable and comprehensive management, where there is a lack of unity in the models used. Having analysed the different sources available, and within the limitations of this study, we can conclude that while almost all properties have a sufficiently clarified and effective management system, the documents used for WH management in Spain are still insufficient in most cases, either because of their content, age, or because they cover only part of the property inscribed. The preference for solutions contained in the corpus of Spanish legislation, considered more

practical, is still notable, leaving the MP to act as a complement to other legally valid instruments, establishing a strategic basis for protection, but leaving the rest of the issues addressed by the plan without legal support.

The different financial and administrative models affecting each property generate a heterogeneous picture in which finding common criteria and searching for models that can provide legal capacity are of paramount importance. The impact of the efforts developed within the heritage alliances is proof that this is the right way forward.

Furthermore, the complexity of these properties often implies coordinating diverse administrations, owners or communities, making real-time management difficult. This is one of the current challenges facing heritage: the integration of participation in the drafting, approval, monitoring and sustainable management of heritage projects, achieving transversal and inclusive cooperation of all the actors involved. Efforts in this direction are increasingly visible in the policies developed internationally in recent decades, and it is the responsibility of State Parties and managers of WH properties to continue along this path, setting an example for the rest of the heritage community.

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