

THE INVENTORY AND HERITAGE COMPONENT OF THE OAS CARIBBEAN HERITAGE PROJECT

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The Inventory and Register initiative is one of the five components of a Project of the Organization of American States (OAS) for 13 Caribbean member states. It is funded by a generous contribution the United States Mission to the OAS and will have a duration of two years starting with its official launching on 15 January 2015.

The objective of this component is to work with the St Christopher National Trust (SCNT) in St Kitts to establish a register of culturally significant places by working in the test area of the St Ann and St Thomas Parishes, and eventually expanding to the entire country. More importantly however, the process and the product will serve as a regional model that will assist participating member states that have not instituted official registers of places and sites of cultural significance in creating them, and for those that do have such programs, to improve and enhance them according to their needs. To fuel that objective, representatives from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and from the National Trusts of Grenada, Saint Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines will be invited to be the regional advisors on the project and to attend the project workshops and monitoring missions in St Kitts.

In addition, two important institutions with valuable experience in cultural heritage registers will serve as advisors during the life of the project. One of them is the National Register of Historic Places (USNR) of the United States, and the other is the Antiquities, Monuments and Museums Corporation (AMMC) of the Bahamas. The project also counts with the technical and systems advice and support on databases of the pan-Caribbean archaeological survey being conducted by the University of Leiden with funding from the European Union. In addition, two internationally recognized experts with broad experience on establishing and managing registers and securing community participation in them have been secured in senior project positions: Carol Shull and Ray Luce. Finally, the OAS has secured an experienced cultural heritage professional from the Caribbean region to manage the project.

There are several stages to the work, as described directly below.

PREPARATORY STAGE

The project will begin with an assessment in situ during the month of April of the existing inventory of The Bahamas, which was established by adjusting the model of the USNR to its national needs and heritage characteristics. The Bahamas Register is under the legal responsibility of the AMMC.

In agreement with USNR, AMMC and the SCNT, the model to be developed relies on the involvement of local communities in the identification, evaluation and nomination of culturally significant places to the

register. Since this has been a major challenge in the development of the Bahamas Register, a model workshop will be conducted in situ in the Bahamas during April or May 2015 in cooperation with AMMC and attendance from a representative from the SCT to build capacity in one local community to be chosen by AMMC. The results of this workshop will then be analyzed for adaptation to a similar workshop to be staged later with local community groups in St Kitts.

INITIATION OF THE MODEL REGISTER IN ST KITTS AT THE ST CHRISTOPHER NATIONAL TRUST

Since the St Kitts Register will be established from scratch, a week-long workshop will be held during the month of July 2015 in St Kitts to formulate the structure and procedures for the process. COHERIT staff, supported by the advice of USNR, AMMC and the OAS technical staff will develop the background documents for the workshop along with its structure, agenda and content. The participation of these two advisory organizations will help inform decisions on how to adapt the experience to the characteristics and needs of St Kitts while avoiding any past pitfalls and enhancing the success of the former two. An adviser from the separate legislation component of this project will participate in the workshop in order to make recommendations on the legal aspects of the register and its inclusion in the St Kitts heritage act. Representatives from Nevis and the regional advisors Representatives from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines will be invited to participate.

During the workshop and afterwards, the University of Leiden will also assist in developing the technical aspects of the database to be adopted for the St Kitts Register, and made available to the other countries that are part of the project.

In accordance with the decisions and results of the workshop, the following four months will be devoted to build the register unit and staff in the St Christopher National Trust. These include the following activities:

- Identify the range of information and vocabularies to be supported by the database management system
- Adapt the software database system to reflect workshop decisions and data specification
- Write and distribute a staff manual for the operation of the database system
- Test system with sample data and key users; receive comments and make appropriate corrections
- Write a guide for public users
- Advertise availability of the database to the network
- Based on the experience of the Bahamas workshop and the establishment of the St Kitts Register, draft and develop draft structure, agenda and content for a community workshop in St Kitts; consult workshop proposal with the regional network
- Develop an implementation guide for other countries as a road map for community participation in the register

LAUNCHING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE TEST AREAS OF ST KITTS

Based on experiences elsewhere and adapted to the local characteristics, a 3-day capacity- building workshop will be staged in St Kitts in November 2015 to train local community groups of the Parishes of St Ann and St Thomas in identifying, evaluating and nominating culturally significant places of the region to the Register. The Workshop will be prepared and guided by staff from St Christopher National Trust, COHERIT staff, and advisers from USNR, AMMC and the OAS technical staff. Once again, the workshop will count with the participations of representatives from Nevis, and the regional advisors from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

MONITORING THE PROGRESS AND PROVIDING ADVICE

The implementation and management of the St Kitts Register, as well as the participation by local communities will be monitored periodically in order to provide pertinent advice and overcome any obstacles that are met. Three such missions are programmed, and will be conducted by staff of COHERIT, USNR and AMMC. In order to share the experience of the entire process at the regional level, representatives from Nevis, and the regional advisors from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines will take part in these monitoring missions.

The first monitoring mission will coincide with the St Kitts community workshop in November, 2015. The other two missions will take place February and August 2016.