

RESILIENT CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Applying Japanese lessons of integrating disaster risk management with cultural heritage preservation

AT A GLANCE

Region: Global

Risks: Fires, Earthquakes, Hurricanes, Typhoons, Landslides, Volcanoes, Floods

Areas of Engagement: Promoting resilient infrastructure, Enabling resilient recovery

Supporting countries to strengthen and safeguard the irreplaceable by minimizing the risks of disasters.



Photo: Barbara Minguéz García.

Demonstration of firefighting system at the Ninna-ji Temple in Kyoto, Japan.

Earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, landslides, and fires threaten treasured heritage worldwide. Cultural heritage (CH) is not just about monuments or traditions, but also about the people whose identity is inextricably linked with this heritage. While protecting CH is a priority in many countries, a knowledge gap exists regarding the systemic integration of disaster risk management (DRM) within the cultural heritage and tourism (CHT) sectors.

With a \$700,000 grant, the Japan-World Bank Program for Mainstreaming DRM in Developing Countries aimed to close this gap by developing substantive technical and operational guidance for countries—specifically Myanmar, Bhutan, Uzbekistan, Central American countries and the Dominican Republic—and World Bank technical teams alike to integrate risk identification, reduction, preparedness and response, and resilient recovery into their CHT sectors, drawing from Japanese expertise and efforts to preserve their treasures from the past.

Japan's CH is among the richest in the world, but the country is faced with some of the most difficult challenges in its exposure to hazards, forcing them to develop a culture of continuous improvement in the face of hazard events—a quality that is particularly notable in its management of its CH. The two extreme disasters of recent times—The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 and the Great East Japan Earthquake (GEJE) in 2011—presented opportunities for stakeholders to engage in post-disaster recovery phases at a scale rarely experienced before. After GEJE struck, followed by the

tsunami, a total of 744 nationally designated and registered cultural assets were affected, much more than in 1995. The DRM measures and operations carried out in the aftermath of GEJE were based on valuable lessons already learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake.

A key first step for this grant was to systemically gather Japanese lessons and good practices that would be relevant, applicable, and adaptable to both DRM and CH practitioners worldwide.

This knowledge was then consolidated into a guidance note—[Resilient Cultural Heritage: Learning from the Japanese Experience](#)—highlighting ten key considerations that inform the development of relevant legal, institutional and policy frameworks, as well as operational guidance for designing and implementing resilient CHT solutions.

Informed by this guidance note, Central American countries and the Dominican Republic developed a geographic information system (GIS) map for heritage assets and established a virtual platform on DRM-CH that is hosted on the Coordination Center for Disaster Prevention in Central American and the Dominican Republic (CEPRENAC) website. In addition, they also created a roadmap for a multi-sectoral Community of Practice made up of professionals from each country.

With the goal of sharing Japanese expertise on resilient CH, the grant supported several knowledge exchanges including a [Technical Deep Dive \(TDD\) on Resilient Cultural Heritage](#)



Participants at WB TDD on Resilient CHT learn about the integrated DRM measures, including slope stabilization at the Kiyomizu-dera Temple in Kyoto

[and Tourism](#) in Tokyo and Kyoto in April 2017. Organized in collaboration with UNESCO, this TDD brought together officials from nine developing countries and represented US\$700 million in World Bank-supported projects. Participating Japanese experts included those from the Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan International Cooperation Agency, The National Institute for Cultural Heritage, and The Institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban CH at Ritsumeikan University.

Country-specific operational support from Japanese experts and technical teams was provided to several countries including Bhutan and Myanmar, aimed at establishing improved communication and sharing of disaster risk information among the key stakeholders.

After collaborating with Japanese experts, the Bhutanese Government recognized collaboration between agencies was critical. For example, the Department of Disaster Management, the Fire Service Division from the Royal Bhutan Police, Dzongkhag Disaster Management Committee, etc. are now more effectively sharing risk information and developing site specific management plans for CHT sites across the country.

In Bagan, Myanmar, after suffering a major earthquake in 2016, government officials prioritized safeguarding their unique heritage. Japanese and international experts supported the Government of Myanmar (GOM) and the Department of Archeology and National Museums to develop the [Bagan DRM Plan](#). The DRM Plan presents a comprehensive approach to understanding risks to Bagan, and includes an Action Plan for strengthening and implementing measures to better address these risks. Specifically, the DRM plan has prompted the GOM to support a seismic micro-zonation study and additional DRM/CH investments in the Bagan area, further protecting valuable cultural heritage from seismic risks and other natural hazards.

RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS

- **Synthesizing Japanese CH knowledge to inform resilience-building on the ground.** Using the Japanese experience as guide, Central American countries and the Dominican Republic developed a geographic information system (GIS) map for heritage assets and established a shared virtual platform on DRM-CH.
- **Improved resilience of CH in developing countries.** For example, after attending a workshop with Japanese experts in Bhutan, Bhutanese officials realized collaboration between agencies is critical to strengthening CH resilience and are now better able to understand and identify risks as well as each other's roles during emergencies thus paving the way for design and implementation of culturally informed measures to reduce and manage these risks.

GRANT-SUPPORTED KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS:

- [Resilient Cultural Heritage and Tourism Brief](#)
- [TDD Resilient Cultural Heritage and Tourism Summary Report](#)
- [Resilient Cultural Heritage: Learning from the Japanese Experience](#)
- [Resilient Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Development Uzbekistan](#)
- [Bagan Disaster Risk Management Plan](#)
- [Bhutan Guidelines for Improving Resilience of Cultural Heritage in Bhutan: Principles and Practices](#)
- [Guidance Note - World Reconstruction Conference 4: Fostering Social Inclusion Through Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery](#)