

# Case Study

## The economic gain from World Heritage Site designation

Client: Lake District World Heritage Site Project



### Outcomes and value



Working in partnership with Rebanks Consulting, TBR undertook a detailed assessment of the potential economic gain that could accrue to the Lake District from achieving WHS inscription.

The study reviewed models of best practice from across the UK and the world, in the delivery of sustainable economic regeneration through the implementation of World Heritage Site (WHS) inscription (or similar international designations). It also presented an analysis of the economic value that is likely to be generated from this prestigious award.

TBR's specific challenge was to investigate the likely economic impacts of WHS inscription (such as tourism revenue) and to investigate 'transferable' benefits of similar designations. This challenge was compounded by the unique situation that the challenge for the Lake District is not to increase its number of visitors, but rather to manage the type of visitors it receives.

#### The report is enabling our client to:

1. Articulate a clear case for the economic benefit of WHS inscription to partners and stakeholders
2. Provide robust statistical evidence of the potential benefits of achieving inscription
3. Present a highly comprehensive, and ultimately successful case for inclusion on the UK's tentative list
4. Hugely increase the profile of both the Lake District and its WHS bid amongst the international community, not least UNESCO itself
5. Increase the goodwill towards the WHS project from local people and businesses through the message of 'benefit for all'

#### Andrew Graves, TBR project manager said;

*"This was a really interesting project to be involved in, where we were able to apply our skills and experience in assessing economic impact but in a very particular, and special set of circumstances. The political challenges around this project also made it unique. The Lake District has one key industry – tourism – and any initiative that might impact this industry always generates very strong and diametrically opposed views. And to have the study described as 'paradigm changing' by UNESCO is a career highlight."*

### Our solution

TBR carried out research through three different strands in order to meet LDWHSP's requirements. The first strand was an assessment of existing tourism and visiting characteristics based on existing reports. This served to quantify the potential economic gain that might result from a redistribution of visitors towards those more likely to be attracted by WHS status (and their associated spend profiles).

The second strand was a review of reports assessing the social, cultural and economic impacts of other cultural or heritage designations, such as European Capital of Culture.

The third strand was an unprecedented economic analysis of several existing UK World Heritage Sites aimed at determining whether or not their tourism-related businesses had benefitted from higher growth since inscription award. The sites included the Jurassic Coast (2001), Derwent Valley Mills (2001) and Blaenavon Industrial Landscape (2000). The work differentiated between tourism-related businesses and those that were not tourism-related within local areas and wider Local Authority Districts. The analysis was made possible through Trends Central Resource (TCR), our comprehensive in-house database of UK firms.



Our worked dovetailed with that of Rebanks Consulting, who delivered a comprehensive assessment of the extent to which WHS sites included an objective of delivering sustainable economic advantage through the inscription, and their approach to delivering this objective. This was the first time that such an assessment had been made.

This study also demonstrated the power of detailed case studies, focusing in on specific aspects of economic development and regeneration through WHS inscription. One case study chosen was the Volkingen Ironworks in Germany, pictured above.

TBR's contribution to this work added a crucial 'statistical' economic perspective to quantify the potential economic benefits of WHS status in the Lake District.

The Lake District World Heritage Site Project's nomination to the UK Government and UNESCO was successful in 2011 in being included on the UK tentative list.

tbr knows... **economics, creative, skills, environment**

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