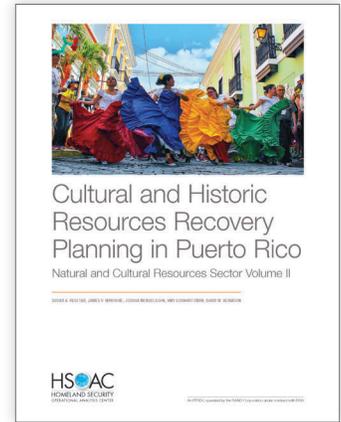


Cultural and Historical Resources Recovery Planning in Puerto Rico: Natural and Cultural Resources Sector Volume II



SUSAN A. RESETAR, JAMES V. MARRONE, JOSHUA MENDELSON, AMY SCHWARTZMAN, DAVID M. ADAMSON

www.rand.org/t/RR2859

Puerto Rico's cultural resources are integral to its sense of place, to community well-being, to tourism, and to the economy. Many of those resources were devastated in Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The authors present an overview of Puerto Rico's cultural resources, storm-damage assessment findings, and recovery actions proposed in Puerto Rico's recovery plan.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the significance of Puerto Rico's cultural, historical, and artistic resources in terms of how they affect society, the government, and the economy?
- What are the best methods for rapidly assessing storm-related damage to these assets, considering both the variety of assets and the damage they sustained?
- What damage did these assets sustain?
- What does poststorm recovery mean for these assets, considering the competing priorities?
- What are the likely sources of funding for recovery efforts (e.g., government agencies, insurance, nonprofit organizations)?
- What courses of action (COAs) are proposed for poststorm recovery of cultural resources, and what are the projected costs?

KEY FINDINGS

- **Puerto Rico's cultural resources are stitched into the fabric of society in tangible and intangible ways.** Cultural resources are repositories of collective memory and identity and are key for community well-being and resilience after disasters. Archival records libraries, museums, and historical properties are integral to the

educational system and to the continuity of government. Cultural resources have important links to the economy through entrepreneurship and tourism, making up about 8 percent of Puerto Rico's gross domestic product (GDP).

- **Following a natural disaster, recovery of cultural resources addresses short-, medium-, and long-term priorities.** Recovery entails repairing historical structures, landscapes, and their collections and, for artists, repairing work spaces and recovering economic losses. Resuming business and reopening cultural institutions to the public is important for economic recovery. In the longer term, full recovery requires increasing preparedness and the resilience of all cultural resources.
- **There are primary challenges for understanding hurricane damage to Puerto Rico's cultural assets.** Limited prehurricane information is available for comparison. Gaps remain in understanding hurricanes' full effects on properties, collections, and artisans. Comprehensive cost estimates are necessarily rough approximations because no standard method exists for out-of-sample extrapolation for such assets.
- **Sustained and well-coordinated action by a broad range of entities is necessary for successful recovery of cultural resources following disasters.** Posthurricane, both public and private entities have mobilized to identify and address the cultural community's needs. Enhancing existing federal recovery frameworks will better equip cultural institutions, arts organizations, artists, and historical properties to effectively address disasters before, during, and after their occurrence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Hire additional staff at the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Institute for Puerto Rican Culture (Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, or ICP) to handle mandatory federal reviews of construction projects affecting historical buildings.
- Restore physical resources, including historical buildings, cultural landscapes, and museum collections; upgrade building structures to mitigate future damage; and support the development of executable emergency management plans through staff training.
- Aid artists, artisans, and arts organizations with recovery funding; support the development of emergency management plans and skills in preservation or restoration; and strengthen the connection between the arts and their communities to support community well-being and holistic recovery.
- Repair and upgrade the General Archive to support its statutory mission to preserve Puerto Rico's historical records, restore damaged records, and ensure their longevity through digitization.
- Develop a cultural heritage recovery center that will provide expertise in emergency management, collections care, preservation, and conservation, as well as offer conservation services, expert consultation, and emergency storage facilities.
- Develop a geographically focused destination strategy that leverages existing natural and cultural resources to create a sustainable alternative tourism industry that increases visitor spending while preserving the integrity of these resources.
- Create legal and administrative systems to ensure that protected natural areas and lands are managed sustainably and aligned with community interests while promoting tourism; develop financial mechanisms to ensure that alternative tourism attractions remain financially sustainable.
- Support micro, small, and medium enterprises in the alternative tourism industry through business incubation and market visioning, exchange programs, loan and grant programs, and strategic planning support.