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Nomination Procedures
prepared by the Advisory Bodies

1 *Introductory*

This paper has been prepared by ICOMOS and IUCN, following the meeting between the Advisory Bodies and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre held on 12 February 1996. It is intended as a contribution to the ongoing debate on the future of the Convention, and is posited on the special role assigned to the Advisory Bodies. The Advisory Bodies are required "to be as strict as possible in their evaluations" (*Operational Guidelines*, para 61 (a)). The comments that follow are designed to enable them to continue to provide a high-quality service to the Committee. The problems that are identified are mainly of an administrative nature, and so this paper concentrates on those aspects of the work of the Advisory Bodies.

Whilst this document relates only to the work of the Advisory Bodies in relation to the evaluation of nominations to the World Heritage List, they are also assigned advisory roles in relation to other activities, notably reporting on the state of conservation of World Heritage sites (*Operational Guidelines*, paras 71, 72, 74) and the provision of international assistance from the World Heritage Fund (*Operational Guidelines*, paras 102, 106, 112).

2 *Rate of new nominations*

The number of new nominations of cultural properties has risen sharply in 1996. Figures over the past five years are as follows:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
ICOMOS	25	31	26	29	42
IUCN	14	14	13	10	14

The 1996 ICOMOS total has only been exceeded on three previous occasion - in 1979 (59), 1980 (45), and 1987 (48). It should be borne in mind, however, that ICOMOS did not institute a systematic policy of sending

evaluation missions to nominated sites, with a consequent substantial increase in workload, until 1993.

The current policy of the World Heritage Committee of seeking to fill significant gaps in the World Heritage List, through the implementation of global strategies in both cultural and natural sectors (which has the full support of both Advisory Bodies), may be expected to result in this rate of new cultural nominations being maintained, and probably increased, and an overall increase in the numbers of natural nominations. Areas of expansion that may be anticipated are fossil sites, industrial heritage, 20th century architecture, and, above all, cultural landscapes.

The impact of this increased level of nominations has serious implications for the work of the Committee and the Secretariat as well as the Advisory Bodies. Given that the possibilities of increases in funding from any source are very limited, the Committee will doubtless be giving urgent attention to means of ensuring the present level and quality of its activities are maintained.

An analysis of the 350 cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List shows that 114 (ie 32.5%) are in thirteen of the fifteen countries of the European Union (Austria is making its first nomination in 1996 and Belgium has so far not ratified the Convention). Of these 93 (26.5%) are in six countries - France (20), Germany (16), Greece (13), Italy (13), Spain (19), and the United Kingdom (12). Of the 42 cultural nominations in 1996 26 are from European States Parties. Of these, five are from Italy, three from Germany, and two from Spain.

Paragraph 6(vii) of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (WHC/2/Revised January 1996) begins as follows: "In view of the difficulty in handling the large numbers of cultural nominations now being received ... the Committee invites States Parties to consider whether their cultural heritage is already well represented on the List and if so to slow down voluntarily their rate of submission of further nominations." Voluntary adherence to this principle by several States Parties would have a significant effect on the rate of submissions in the coming years.

The number of evaluations that can be handled by the Advisory Bodies each year with the present level of funding is dependent upon several factors - accessibility, extent, complexity, research requirement, etc. However, the 1996 figures (42 cultural, 14 natural) have stretched the resources of the two Advisory Bodies to the maximum and may be considered to represent absolute ceiling levels. The Committee may wish to give serious consideration to the possibility of imposing limits on the numbers of new nominations that can be accepted each year, with the consequent duty of laying down guidelines for the implementation of such a procedure.

It is also important that the closing date for receipt of nominations by the Secretariat should be strictly adhered to. Late acceptances, coupled with resubmissions of deferred nominations (of which there are two or three each of cultural and natural properties each year), can impose an unplanned and unresourced burden on the Advisory Bodies.

3 **Relations between the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre: scrutiny of nomination dossiers**

In general terms the relations between the Advisory Bodies and the Centre are excellent, at both the institutional and the personal levels. This area is one where even closer collaboration might be of mutual benefit.

The timetable for the processing of nominations (*Operational Guidelines*, para 65) implies that the examination and verification of nomination dossiers should proceed in two stages, the first by the Secretariat and the second by the Advisory Bodies. It is suggested that this process might become a collaborative and contemporaneous one, in the interests of saving time and in avoiding successive approaches to States Parties.

Any change in procedure will need the sanction of the Committee, since the timetable and actions are laid down in the *Operational Guidelines*.

4 **Contractual arrangements**

At the present time, a separate contract is negotiated between UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies each year. These negotiations do not begin until January each year and are protracted, usually until March at the earliest. As a result, the Advisory Bodies do not receive the first tranche of their grants (c. 35%) until April. This causes acute financial problems for the Advisory Bodies, since the first three months of each year are periods of heavy expenditure on their part, notably in sending evaluation missions so as to have evaluations and recommendations ready for the meeting of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee at the end of June.

This situation could be improved if some procedural changes were introduced:

- i The signing of general over-arching agreements between UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies, either open-ended or for longer periods (five or ten years), with suitable escape clauses.
- ii Negotiation of annual contracts confined to financial provisions, significant variations from the general agreements, etc.
- iii More precise specification by UNESCO of details required from the Advisory Bodies in the preparation of budgets.
- iv Introduction of a new timetable by means of which budgets could be negotiated and approved and annual contracts signed in advance of the end of each preceding financial year.
- v Provision for advances (33-50%), approved by the Committee and payable on 1 January each year.
- vi To assist the Advisory Bodies in their forward financial planning, full implementation of the procedure for rolling two-year budgets, approved by the Committee at its 17th

Session in December 1993, is essential. This would apply only to fixed costs (see below).

5 *Funding of Advisory Bodies*

At the present time the Advisory Bodies receive annual grants from the World Heritage Fund to carry out their contractual duties. Certain activities covered by these grants are static (salaries, honoraria, regular meeting expenses) but others relate to activities which incur variable costs (evaluation missions, preparation of documentation for World Heritage Committee and Bureau meetings). The level of overall funding to the Advisory Bodies has remained unchanged for three years, which means that the funds available for evaluation missions and documentation has not varied. Thus, the money available to ICOMOS for 26 evaluations in 1994 has to be stretched to cover 42 in 1996.

It is suggested that serious consideration be given by the Committee as a matter of urgency to a new system of budgeting, under the headings of *fixed* and *variable* costs.

With strict application of the new timetable for the receipt of nominations, introduced in 1996 for the 1997 nominations, it would be possible to produce relatively precise estimates for the variable costs, and as a result realistic budgets would be available for the Committee at its annual meeting in early December.

ICOMOS and IUCN, Paris and Gland
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