



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

# World Heritage

# 39 COM

**WHC-15/39.COM/9A**

Paris, 15 May 2015

Original: English

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC  
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF  
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

**WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

**Thirty-ninth session**

**Bonn, Germany  
28 June – 8 July 2015**

**Item 9 of the Provisional Agenda: Global Strategy for a representative,  
balanced and credible World Heritage List**

**9A. Progress report on the Upstream Processes**

## **SUMMARY**

At its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), the World Heritage Committee launched a process of reflection on the future of the *World Heritage Convention*.

In this framework, the Committee, aware of the challenges that exist in the process for nominating a property to the World Heritage List, proposed an initiative entitled Upstream Process. The aim was to find options for improving and strengthening the current nomination process. In 2011, the Committee, through Decision **35 COM 12C**, took note of the selection of 10 pilot projects to explore creative approaches and new forms of guidance that might be provided to States Parties in considering nominations before their preparation.

Further to Decision **38 COM 9A**, this document presents general issues related to the Upstream Process as well the progress made on each of the pilot projects since the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee.

**Draft Decision: 39 COM 9A**, see Point IV.

## I. BACKGROUND

1. At its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010), the World Heritage Committee, in part III of Decision **34 COM 13**, encouraged the World Heritage Centre to “follow up on the approaches and recommendations of the Phuket expert meeting” on ‘Upstream Processes for Nominations’. In particular, the Committee requested the World Heritage Centre “in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies and other relevant organizations, to invite one or two States Parties from each of the UNESCO regional groups to undertake, on an experimental basis, voluntary pilot projects related to identifying options and preparing dossiers for nomination”. UNESCO Regional Groups subsequently selected two pilot projects per region, except for Electoral Group I- Western Europe and North America - which refrained from making any proposal.
2. At its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011), the World Heritage Committee, as part of Decision **35 COM 12C**, welcomed “all the actions undertaken to improve the processes and practices prior to consideration by the World Heritage Committee of a nomination (the ‘Upstream Processes’)” and took note “of the pilot projects that have been chosen to implement this experimental approach”. In order to implement the first phase of the pilot projects, each State Party concerned was asked to select a focal point for the project and to identify options to cover the costs to undertake the necessary actions. These costs could be met through a variety of ways: the State Party itself could bear the whole or part of the costs; it could raise the required funds from donors or funding agencies; or it could put forward a Preparatory Assistance request under the World Heritage Fund. This document details project by project the progress made since the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee.
3. It is important to emphasize that the inclusion of a project in this experimental approach does not imply that the sites concerned would ultimately be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The main aim of the experimental Upstream Process is to reduce the number of properties that experience significant problems during the nomination process. Therefore, the objective of the selection of pilot projects is to explore creative approaches and new forms of guidance that might be provided to States Parties in considering nominations before their preparation, as well as in relation to the nomination process.

## II. PROGRESS MADE ON THE SELECTED PILOT PROJECTS

4. Pilot project on the **South Namib Erg**, Namibia  
This project was successfully terminated as Namib Sand Sea was inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee.
5. Pilot project on **Ancient Kano City Walls and Associated Sites**, Nigeria  
In April 2015, a report highlighting the State Party’s efforts in conservation and rehabilitation of the Kano City gates was sent to the World Heritage Centre. The report indicates that the Kansakali gate was reconstructed in March 2011 by local builders using traditional methods. Several other gates, such as Kofar Na Isa, Kofar Nasarawa, Kofar Dan’Agundi, Sabuwar Kofa and Gadon Kaya, that had to be widened for vehicular traffic purposes, have also been reconstructed between 2012 and 2015. They retained their authentic location and outlook while other gates were preserved as alternative pathways for pedestrians and cyclists. In order for a positive dialogue with the State Party to be pursued, it was suggested by ICOMOS and WHC that it would be desirable for details to

be provided by the State Party to show to what extent the scope of the proposed nomination has been changed since its inclusion on the Tentative List. Additionally, the State Party will submit sketch plans presenting the boundaries of the proposed nomination for ICOMOS to review the submission and a further consultation would be arranged to discuss how to progress. Unfortunately, given the current security situation in Northern Nigeria, the organisation of an Advisory mission for Kano might not be possible at this stage. This situation made the organisation of an international conference on Kano's historic urban landscape, planned to take place in 2014, not possible.

6. Pilot project on **Gadara (Modern Um Qeis or Qays)**, Jordan  
In March 2014, the State Party informed the Centre of its decision to follow ICOMOS's advice and selected Gadara (Modern Um Qeis or Qays) instead of Pella as a pilot project within the Upstream Process. Ever since, no progress was registered concerning this pilot project.
7. Pilot project on the **Rock Drawings in the Hail region**, Saudi Arabia  
The nomination file was submitted in January 2014. The State Party was requested by ICOMOS to provide additional information in the framework of the evaluation of the nomination dossier, which will be examined by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session. The evaluation and the related draft decision of this nomination are to be found in Documents WHC-15/39.COM/INF.8B1 and WHC-15/39.COM/8B.
8. Pilot Project on the **Batanes Protected Landscapes and Seascapes**, Philippines  
An advisory mission with two experts from IUCN and ICOMOS was carried out from 11 to 20 December 2014. The mission concluded that the State Party would need to conduct further research on the property as well as having to consider how the various laws and regulations could be harmonized to strengthen a revised nomination. Parallel to it, the consolidation of research on Batanes and the compilation of maps, legislation, and other documents on the management of Batanes was undertaken by the State Party. The State Party has expressed its wish to refrain from submitting a nomination dossier for examination by the World Heritage Committee until its current term of office, as a member of the Committee, is over.
9. Pilot project on **Coral Stones Mosques of Maldives**, Maldives  
Thanks to the extra-budgetary funding from the Korean Funds-in-Trust in providing assistance to the Maldives in the preparation of the pilot project, direct dialogue between the State Party, ICOMOS and the Centre has been improved since Summer 2014. An ICOMOS Advisory Mission to Maldives was carried out in August 2014. Although the site was included on the Tentative List under criteria (ii)(iii)(iv) and (vi), the ICOMOS Advisory Mission found that criteria (ii) and (vi) had not been adequately justified and would not be easily justifiable in the future. It would appear that the biggest obstacle currently is the commitment and capacity of the Maldivian Government to find funds for additional staff and for implementing the above ICOMOS Advisory Mission recommendations. In November 2014, the Maldives submitted a new International Assistance request, currently pending approval for the second phase of the nomination process. During the second phase, the aim would be to implement the recommendations of the ICOMOS Advisory Mission. In particular, it would focus on establishing the potential outstanding universal value of the proposed serial nomination and justifying the choice of its component parts in order to prepare the nomination.
10. Pilot project on the **Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region**, Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  
The three-year EU funded project "Towards strengthened governance of the shared transboundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region" (for a total amount of Euros 1.7 million) was launched in July 2014. It marks the beginning of the second

phase of the Pilot Project. The project is composed of transboundary cooperation, profiling of the transboundary area, capacity-building for integrated management, technical assistance for the preparation of the extension file and pilot actions on the waste-awareness campaign. The inception workshop for the project took place on 15-16 September 2014. A series of five workshops on management planning are scheduled to take place in the Lake Ohrid region from spring to autumn 2015. The Ministry of Environment of Albania has confirmed national co-financing of 10% to the pilot project in the framework of a Funds-in-Trust.

11. Pilot project on the **Dinaric Karst Serial Nomination**, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia

Despite a good start of the project, there has been no indication of progress reported from States Parties regarding the Dinaric Karst Serial Nomination since the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee. Despite a reminder by the World Heritage Centre about the progress needed, to date no further feedback has been received. Therefore the World Heritage Centre proposes the phasing out of the Dinaric Karst Serial Nomination as part of the original package of ten selected Pilot Upstream projects in 2011, and it will no longer be followed as such by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. The States Parties involved will have the possibility to continue the nomination project of their own accord.

12. Pilot project on the **Grenadines Islands Group**, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Following the first phase of the pilot project, a feasibility study is under preparation whose aim is to refine the selection of potential criteria as well as the typology of site to be considered and possible options for boundaries. This action is developed in close cooperation between the concerned States Parties, the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre. The strong commitment expressed by the States Parties in this process should be acknowledged, as well as the active involvement of IUCN and ICOMOS in providing technical assistance.

13. Pilot project on the **Cultural and Industrial Landscape of Fray Bentos**, Uruguay

The World Heritage Committee will examine this nomination at its 39th session. On 27 February 2015, the State Party provided ICOMOS with requested additional information regarding the enhanced legal protection of the buffer zone and the inclusion of a risk preparedness plan into the management plan of the property. The Upstream Process in Uruguay has proven to be an effective and successful mechanism that can be replicated in other countries of the LAC Region.

The active support of ICOMOS in this upstream project, as well as, the strong commitment of the State Party throughout the process, were instrumental in the success of this process. The evaluation and the related draft decision for this nomination are to be found in Documents WHC-15/39.COM/INF.8B1 and WHC-15/39.COM/8B.

### III. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

14. It must be noted that while the selected pilot projects are good examples of advisory support and intervention, in order to be really effective, the upstream support, as originally foreseen, should ideally intervene at an earlier stage in the process, more precisely at the moment of the revision or preparation of the States Parties Tentative Lists.

15. Furthermore, besides the official pilot projects, the upstream support in the preparation of nominations, prior to their official submission and the subsequent full evaluation is by now

widely recognized and is increasingly applied throughout the World Heritage System. Assistance and advice in the preparation of nominations by the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre are provided in an increasing number of cases. The Advisory Bodies suggested an upstream support in some of their recommendations for deferral or referral of nominations over the last three sessions. A number of States Parties, which have secured the necessary funding, have already invited such missions. Considering the financial implications of advisory missions and advisory services and of the need to improve the access of all States Parties to the services of the Advisory Bodies, the issue of funding of advisory missions has been addressed by Decision **38 COM 12**, with regard to advisory missions both on nominations and on state of conservation issues. A relevant decision is proposed, addressing also the need for a thorough review and definition of the nature, role and funding of advisory missions in the context of the revision of the *Operational Guidelines* (see Document WHC-15/39.COM/11).

16. Besides the official pilot projects, one case of upstream support is the Silk Roads serial transnational nomination. The World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS have played a key role since 2003 in the coordination of the serial transnational nomination of the Silk Roads, initiated by five Central Asian countries and China. The Silk Roads nomination process now includes twelve countries (Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, the Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) which are members of the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) and has leveraged significant international funding. The Silk Roads serial transnational nomination does not formally constitute an 'Upstream Process' but the combination of capacity-building efforts, through training in scientific writing and nomination preparation, followed by sub-regional cooperation, provide a good example for the implementation of the Upstream Process and represents an innovative approach for nominating complex heritage routes. The Qhapaq Ñan nomination (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) also experienced an intense level of upstream support.
17. The integration in the *Operational Guidelines* of provisions to incorporate the Upstream Process into the nomination process such that it is uniformly applicable to all countries requiring such assistance is included in the Revision of the *Operational Guidelines* document to be examined by the 39th session of the Committee (Document WHC-15/39.COM/11).

#### IV. DRAFT DECISION

##### **Draft Decision: 39 COM 9A**

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. Having examined Document WHC-15/39.COM/9A,
2. Recalling Decision **34 COM 13.III** adopted at its 34th session (Brasilia, 2010), Decision **35 COM 12C** at its 35th session (UNESCO, 2011), Decision **36 COM 12C** at its 36th session (Saint-Petersburg, 2012) and Decision **37 COM 9** at its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013),
3. Welcomes all the actions undertaken to improve the processes and practices prior to consideration by the World Heritage Committee of a nomination (the 'Upstream Processes') and commends the States Parties, the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre for the pilot projects in which progress was made ;

4. *Acknowledges that outside of the referenced pilot projects, in order to be effective, the upstream support should ideally intervene at an early stage, more precisely at the moment of the revision or preparation of States Parties Tentative Lists ;*
5. *Also commends Saudi Arabia and Uruguay for submission of their nominations, the Rock Drawings in the Hail region and the Cultural and Industrial Landscape of Fray Bentos respectively ;*
6. *Urges the States Parties concerned that have not yet done so, to fully collaborate providing technical and financial support to implement the required actions to make progress with the pilot projects, and encourages them to seek assistance, if necessary, from the World Heritage Centre to identify opportunities to secure resources to advance on the project ;*
7. *Calls upon the international community to provide technical and financial support to assist the States Parties concerned in the implementation of their pilot projects, which were not able to identify and secure adequate resources ;*
8. *Requests the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre to report on the progress in implementing the pilot projects for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in 2016.*