Submission Form

At its 35th session (UNESCO Paris, 2011). the World Heritage Committee (Decision 35COMI2D.7) "requested the World Heritage Centre, with the support of the Advisory Bodies, <u>to develop, for further consideration the proposal</u> contained in Document WHC - 11/35.COM/12D [...] and to further <u>explore ways of recognizing and reward best practice through a one off-initiative</u> at the closing event of the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention (November 2012, Japan)...".

States Parties to the World Heritage Convention are invited to participate in this initiative by proposing World Heritage properties in their country that they regard as an example of successful management and sustainable development.

In order to be eligible the site has to apply with the following criteria:

- The suggested site must be a property inscribed on the World Heritage list;
- Successful management and sustainable development has to be clearly demonstrated;
- Best practices are considered those that are tried, tested and applied in different situations and in a wider context;
- An overall good performance on all headings mentioned in the submission form, with an exemplary performance in at least one of the areas;
- An outstanding example of Innovative management in dealing with one or more management challenges / issues that could offer lessons to other sites.

Each State Party may propose a maximum of two properties, preferably relating to one cultural and one natural site.

This form contains 9 topics for demonstrating best management practice - it Is not necessary to comply with all of them but it would be appreciated if you could provide a comprehensive response to as many topics as possible. In your responses to the question, please provide all facts and figures to substantiate the answers, and describe the before and after situation of implementing the best practice intervention. The objective is to illustrate clearly why the example can qualify as a best practice and can be used as a source of inspiration for other World Heritage properties.

The topics are based on questions dealt with in the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

Recognizing and rewarding best practice in management of World Heritage properties

State Party: Sultanate of Oman

Title proposed World Heritage property: Land of Frankincense

Brief description of the property: The property was inscribed in 2000 with the criteria iii and iv under the title 'Frankincense Trail' but was re-named in 2005 in 'Land of Frankincense'. Being the 'gold' of Arabia, Frankincense was traded as a highly precious good since the stone age. The three Wise in the Christian mythology donated besides gold and myrrhe frankincense to little Jesus. The raisin of the boswellia sacra, the frankincense tree, was and still is harvested in a traditional way by the locals in the extremely dry and hot wadis of the Dhofar region, collected and then traded, in former days by camel and ships. The four sites of the property reflect these elements. In the Wadi Dauwka the boswellia scara is still growing and the raisin is still harvested in Summer. Shisr represents a station and a water supply along the ancient camel route towards north through the desert Rub al Khali and Al Baleed and Khor Rori represent ports at different times, from where the frankincense was shipped. Frankincense was till recent one of the major incomes for the local people. Today it has become a symbol for the young state of Oman

	Topics for demonstrating best management practice	Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practice in relation to the topic:
1.	Conservation: What innovative management practices or strategies are being applied in order to ensure the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property (e.g. better resource management, restoration and rehabilitation, addressing various man-made or natural threats and challenges, etc.)?	The protection of the rich cultural heritage of Oman is a predominant need for the future development of the country. Here the World Heritage Sites play a most important role. Accordingly, capacity building and the development of human resources was a primary must for the handling of the property. It was decided that archaeological parks should be developed and a network set up to connect the individual sites. Today the 'Land of Frankincense' can be considered as excellent example of individual archaeological parks, well integrated into the regional tourism management along with a good conservation strategy for the protection of the OUV. A further primary aim was to create job opportunities for young Omani academics and experts. There was a high rate of unemployment for young archaeologists. Today more than forty young people are employed within the programme. The income from

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	interregional kharif tourism (July till September) and from international tourism (November- April) is coming to a financial breakeven of the project with expected plus in the future. Tourism has become a major income source for the citizen of Dhofar.
	The archaeological park Al Baled was opened after only five years. It consists of a dynamic planning and started with an 'access path' on top of the archaeological remains and separated from them by a geo textile protection layer. The 'public' entrance area with a site museum and refreshment is separated by a Khor (lagoon), crossed by a bridge as controlled access. Excavations are carried out minimalisticlly to allow the visitor to understand the value of the site and to keep conservation work under control.
	Assisted by international experts, young Omanis are trained in maintaining the site in conservation and in site management.
	The 'Land of Frankincense' Project serves as model in Oman for other archaeological parks in planning. It clearly shows that cultural heritage can serve not only as a 'passive knowledge', but as an active part resulting in educating the people, in creating jobs for young academics and in further rising income for an area through a carefully controlled cultural tourism.
	Being the only archaeological parks on the Arabian Peninsula, they may serve as a model for others.
2. Local People: What exemplary practices are you using in order to effectively address the needs of local stakeholders within the management system for the property, and enable their full and active participation?	As mentioned above the model has been developed also to include the local stakeholders. Most of the young experts employed come from the neighborhood. Local merchants normally selling frankincense and incense in the bazar have permission to sell their goods in the public entrance area during times where many visitors are to be expected (arrival of tourist ships in the harbor of Salalah). Often the paths in the sites are used by locals for recreational walks, thus combining learning and enjoyment. The local people have developed an identity with the sites and also a pride for their past, of which they are more and more aware.

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3.	Legal framework: What special measures have you taken to ensure that the legal framework for the World Heritage site is effective in maintaining the OUV of the property?	The three archaeological sites are registered on the national cultural inventory and the Wadi Dawkah Frankincense Park is on the national natural inventory. The Land of Frankincense Sites are legally protected by a Royal Decree (16/2001) which legalized the buffer zones for the Four Sites. Moreover, the Office of the Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan for Cultural Affairs has its own Application Form for Archaeological Research in these four sites. A special security force has been employed watching the sites 24 hours. They are fully fenced and illuminated during the night when the sites are closed.
4.	Boundaries: What innovative ways of dealing with the boundaries of the property, including for management of the buffer zone do you have in place, to effectively to manage the site and protect its OUV?	The relevant regional and municipal authorities have been informed of the extent of the World Heritage sites and their buffer zones. They are consulting with the office of the Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan for Cultural Affairs on any projects that may impinge upon or adversely impact the sites before any action is taken. The boundary of Wadi Dawka (cultural landscape) is marked by low concrete poles in 50-meter distance. The other sites are fenced along with protective hedges and flowers.
5.	Sustainable finance: What effective strategies have you developed and implemented to assure adequate and sustainable financial resources for implementing the management measures required to maintain the site's OUV?	Besides the model of 'self-financing' through entrance fees and other facilities, the Government of the Sultanate of Oman provides the necessary budget for the conservation, maintenance, security for sites and facilities, training and the management for these sites according to its obligations. In addition, it takes the advantage of the development of the sites at both academic and social level, and adopts the financial control methods and regulations adopted in the country. The annual Government budget for the land of frankincense sites comes up to US$ 2,8. Million.
6.	Staffing training and development: What approaches and strategies have you developed and implemented to assure that the human resources are adequate to manage the World Heritage property?	In a first phase (1995-2000) the primary activities came from foreign universities (RWTH Aachen, Germany, later university of Pisa, Italy). Foreign experts trained young Omanis in 'learning by doing'. A cooperation with Sultan Qaboos University allowed excavation training for young Omani archaeologists. An international advisory board helped in setting the right aims. Today the local management is exclusively in local hands, monitored through the Office of the Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan for Cultural Affairs. Archaeological and conservation activities are still monitored by foreign experts. Regular at site training for the management and for the technical sector is carried out.

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7.	Sustainable development: What are the effective mechanisms in place to ensure that resource use permitted in and around the World Heritage site is sustainable and does not impact negatively on OUV?	The important approach is to further develop a model of self-financing, guaranteeing a long-term sustainable management and a positive impact on the OUV. This means at the same time to control tourism. In the parks, visitors are not allowed to leave the walkway, controlled by the security personnel. Along with the financial sustainability, continuous learning of local experts is part of the program. Further development of increased identity of the local population (also through income like selling of frankincense) with the sites guarantees appropriate protection. The long term vision is a well-protected OUV based on local human sources generating their income through a wise cultural management and based on a new identity with the cultural values of the frankincense.
8.	Education and interpretation programmes: How do the education, interpretation and awareness programmes you have developed and implemented significantly enhance the understanding of OUV of the site among stakeholders?	Education starts at school. For Oman, it is of greatest importance that the long and rich history is transmitted to the people. An archaeological park is the best means for the transmission of historic knowledge. Here different education tools have been developed: in Al Baleed and in Khor Rori there is a museum with a cross historic approach, in Al Baleed there is a marine museum exhibiting models of old Omani boats, there are lecture rooms, videos with a beamer room and there is a book shop. The sites themselves are well equipped with information boards in Arabic and English. It is planned to educate young Omani women for dealing with children in the Museum (painting, clay modeling etc.) Site guides still have to be trained.
9.	Tourism and interpretation: What innovative plans have you designed and successfully implemented to ensure that visitor management does not negatively impact on the maintenance of the property's OUV?	The Sultanate of Oman is distinguished diverse and unique tourism value due to its terrains and climate during the year. The Governorate of Dhofar is a key element in this diversity. The authorities have proceeded with a tourism development program for the Governorate and the Land of Frankincense Sites are a focal point for the tourism encouragement which requires a permanent maintenance and care for these sites. Information is available to visitors at the access points to the two main sites, Al-Baleed and Khor Rori. The Museum displays provide the introduction both to the Land of Frankincense World Heritage Sites and to the prehistory and history of Oman, as well the archaeological gallery in Khor Rori. And Information panels are installed in the sites for visitors and tourists. An attractive consistent image projected by

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	promotional and presentational material, such as pamphlets, brochures, booklets and guide books (such as Khor Rori Guide book); in terms of graphics, this creates a strong corporate image or 'family resemblance'. All new ventures associated with the sites must conform with this image.

Additional comments:
We are thankful to UNESCO to give us the opportunity to demonstrate the model behind our World Heritage Site 'Land of Frankincense'. We were able to combine different components such as capacity building, development of cultural tourism, improvement of technology in relation to heritage conservation and also improvement of income to locals along with a new awareness of history. Finally it was decided to form a national ICOMOS group in Oman to further professionalize cultural management for the benefit of Oman and its people.

Brief description/summery of the best practice, including a statement on how it can be useful for other sites (max.600 words)
The best practice for the communication of cultural heritage, and here especially an archaeological site, is an archaeological park. Parks have been established within the property and the amounts of more than 100.000 visitors per year prove the success of the model. In addition over 40 young people could be employed. The parks were dynamically developed which means that they will be never 'finished'. Careful excavation is part of the visitor's program, helping him to understand how such a park is developing and also how complicated archaeology (and conservation) can be. The parks combine a mixture of health walk landscape beauty, archaeology and cultural information according to the Latin saying 'docet et delectat' it teaches and enjoys. At the same time, young experts are educated and trained to run the projects. The 'archaeological park' is an optimum tool to control and guide tourism and to protect the OUV of a World Heritage Site. With the vision of several archaeological parks new job perspectives are given to those who study in the field of cultural management, archaeology and conservation. Therefore this model should be repeated not only in Oman but also in other areas of the world.

Finally, please provide us, if possible, with up to ten images of the concerned World Heritage property that can be used free of rights in UNESCO publications (commercial and/or non-commercial), and on the UNESCO website. Please provide the name of the photographer and the caption along with the images (he/she will be credited for any use of the images).