



# Executive Summary

## Northern hemisphere



### State Party

Denmark

### State, Province or Region

Greenland, Qeqqata Municipality

### Name of Property

Aasivissuit – Nipisat. Inuit Hunting Ground between Ice and Sea

### Geographical Coordinates to the Nearest Second

Coordinates of the central point:  
N 67° 3' 50.15" W 51° 25' 59.54"

### Textual description of the boundaries of the nominated property

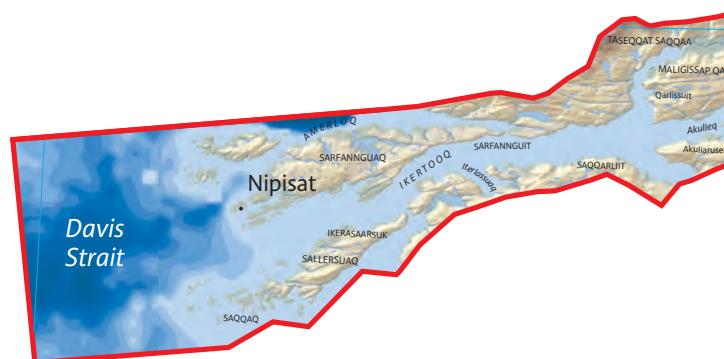
The nominated property covers 417,800 ha and is situated just north of the Arctic Circle in the central part of West Greenland. The c. 235 km long and up to 20 km wide area extends from the sea in the west to the dynamic ice sheet in the east.

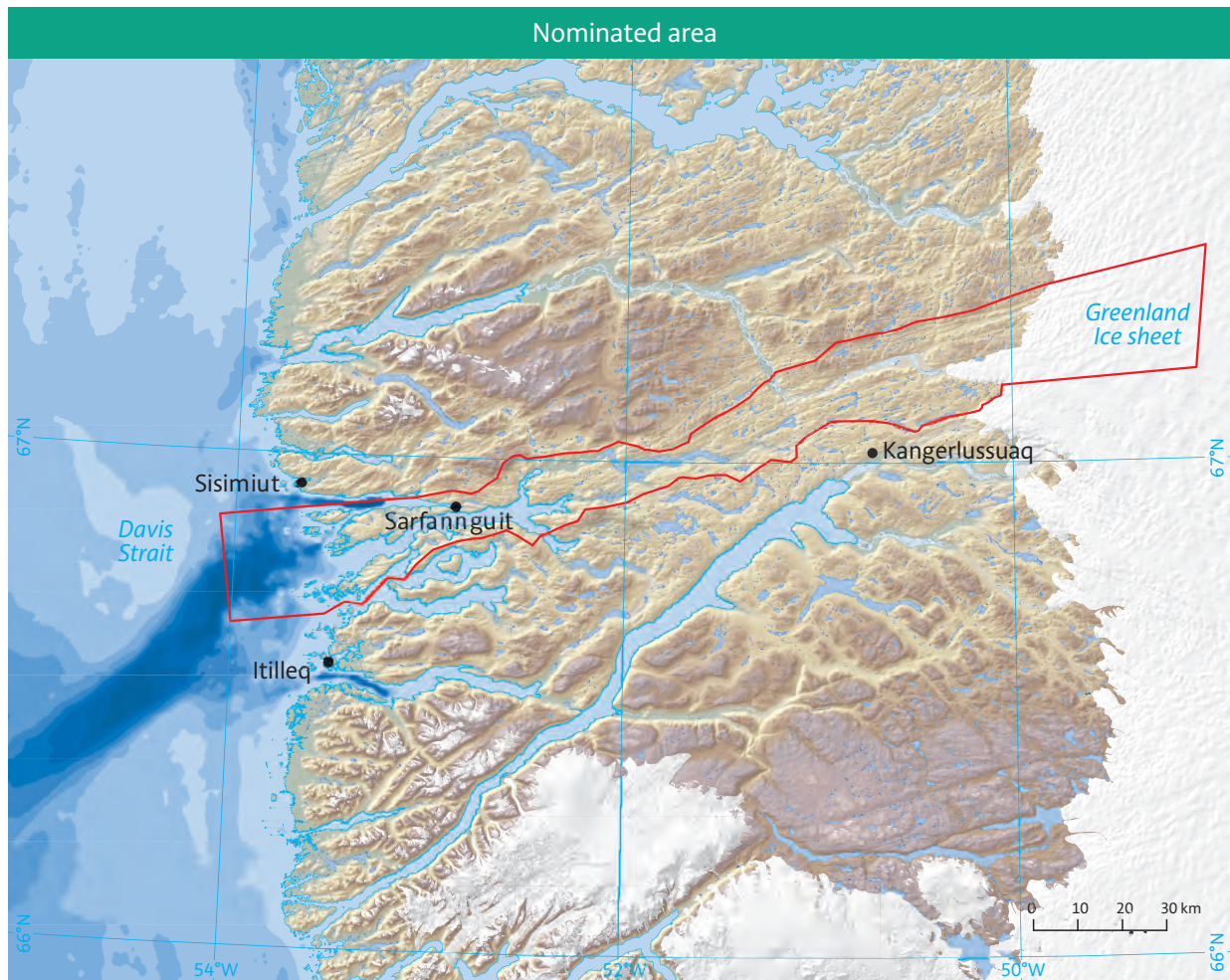
For easy recognition, the borders of the nominated property follow the natural lines of the landscape,

## Greenland



Location of the property within the State Party.





*Location of the property within the region.*

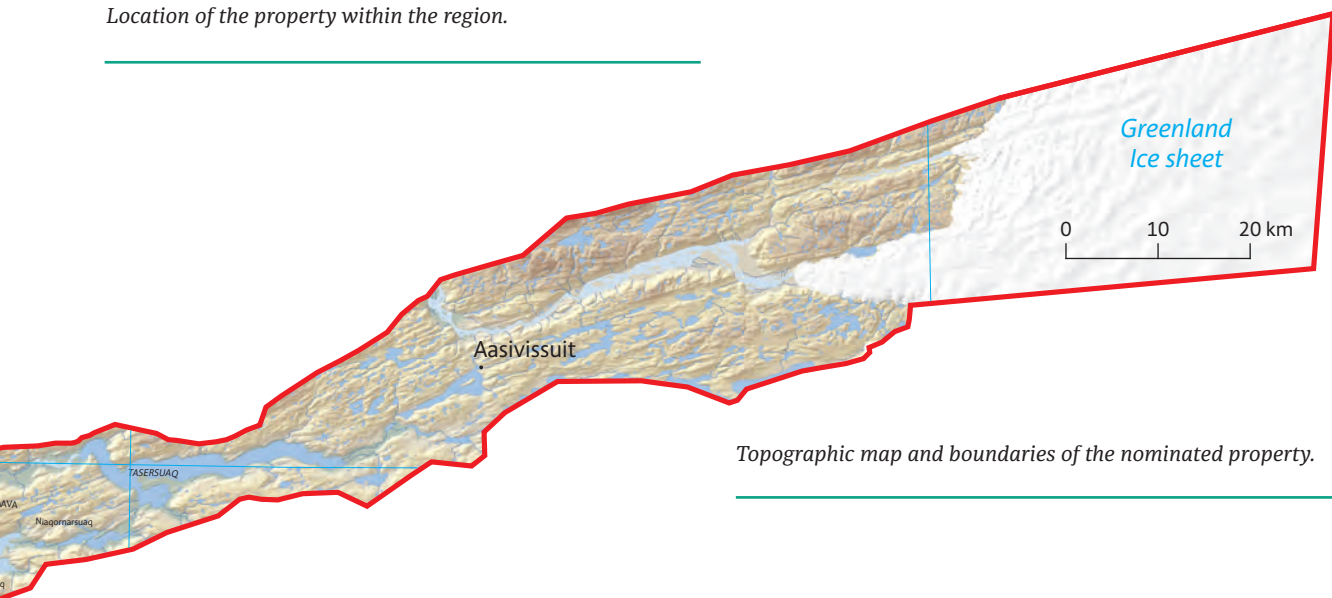




Table 0.1 - Geographical coordinates defining the boundary

Punkt	long	lat	Punkt	long	lat
UNESCO001	54° 4' 53.351" W	66° 52' 6.648" N	UNESCO059	48° 58' 4.414" W	67° 25' 49.165" N
UNESCO002	53° 10' 35.613" W	66° 54' 47.268" N	UNESCO060	49° 2' 14.871" W	67° 10' 57.352" N
UNESCO003	53° 4' 54.064" W	66° 55' 3.389" N	UNESCO061	50° 2' 58.124" W	67° 9' 23.425" N
UNESCO004	52° 53' 59.642" W	66° 55' 58.266" N	UNESCO062	50° 3' 18.708" W	67° 8' 32.454" N
UNESCO005	52° 52' 32.550" W	66° 56' 1.054" N	UNESCO063	50° 3' 31.983" W	67° 8' 6.564" N
UNESCO006	52° 47' 41.976" W	66° 55' 44.892" N	UNESCO064	50° 5' 29.800" W	67° 7' 50.308" N
UNESCO007	52° 45' 33.124" W	66° 56' 2.667" N	UNESCO065	50° 7' 20.509" W	67° 7' 15.126" N
UNESCO008	52° 42' 42.486" W	66° 56' 55.195" N	UNESCO066	50° 9' 20.499" W	67° 6' 55.696" N
UNESCO009	52° 39' 42.681" W	66° 57' 42.267" N	UNESCO067	50° 9' 18.077" W	67° 6' 40.453" N
UNESCO010	52° 38' 4.713" W	66° 59' 27.948" N	UNESCO068	50° 10' 11.501" W	67° 6' 17.124" N
UNESCO011	52° 34' 48.124" W	67° 0' 26.680" N	UNESCO069	50° 12' 50.689" W	67° 6' 1.787" N
UNESCO012	52° 32' 49.177" W	67° 0' 34.345" N	UNESCO070	50° 16' 33.294" W	67° 5' 47.321" N
UNESCO013	52° 30' 38.724" W	67° 0' 6.866" N	UNESCO071	50° 19' 27.194" W	67° 5' 37.866" N
UNESCO014	52° 28' 28.033" W	67° 0' 18.168" N	UNESCO072	50° 27' 48.343" W	67° 4' 35.492" N
UNESCO015	52° 25' 17.828" W	67° 0' 24.397" N	UNESCO073	50° 29' 11.310" W	67° 3' 56.133" N
UNESCO016	52° 20' 45.887" W	67° 0' 45.409" N	UNESCO074	50° 30' 23.356" W	67° 3' 47.385" N
UNESCO017	52° 18' 58.591" W	67° 0' 54.368" N	UNESCO075	50° 36' 39.433" W	67° 4' 44.446" N
UNESCO018	52° 13' 52.885" W	67° 1' 3.024" N	UNESCO076	50° 43' 38.022" W	67° 5' 7.753" N
UNESCO019	52° 11' 11.958" W	67° 1' 13.436" N	UNESCO077	50° 56' 7.363" W	67° 5' 5.027" N
UNESCO020	52° 8' 52.257" W	67° 1' 15.050" N	UNESCO078	51° 4' 0.830" W	67° 3' 15.381" N
UNESCO021	52° 8' 21.635" W	67° 1' 17.400" N	UNESCO079	51° 7' 8.379" W	67° 2' 9.542" N
UNESCO022	52° 7' 50.035" W	67° 1' 23.528" N	UNESCO080	51° 7' 4.843" W	67° 0' 45.662" N
UNESCO023	52° 7' 16.538" W	67° 1' 35.514" N	UNESCO081	51° 8' 56.785" W	67° 0' 8.255" N
UNESCO024	52° 6' 14.344" W	67° 1' 43.584" N	UNESCO082	51° 14' 59.406" W	67° 0' 23.699" N
UNESCO025	52° 5' 28.436" W	67° 1' 52.513" N	UNESCO083	51° 18' 6.563" W	66° 59' 35.117" N
UNESCO026	52° 3' 57.492" W	67° 2' 8.887" N	UNESCO084	51° 24' 31.900" W	66° 57' 46.296" N
UNESCO027	52° 2' 21.074" W	67° 2' 24.022" N	UNESCO085	51° 28' 57.518" W	66° 58' 34.043" N
UNESCO028	51° 56' 7.494" W	67° 1' 52.773" N	UNESCO086	51° 34' 11.730" W	66° 58' 27.818" N
UNESCO029	51° 54' 20.235" W	67° 1' 31.610" N	UNESCO087	51° 37' 55.585" W	66° 58' 6.341" N
UNESCO030	51° 53' 9.563" W	67° 1' 30.084" N	UNESCO088	51° 40' 26.051" W	66° 58' 7.774" N
UNESCO031	51° 49' 49.093" W	67° 1' 19.457" N	UNESCO089	51° 42' 15.465" W	66° 58' 14.923" N
UNESCO032	51° 47' 14.951" W	67° 1' 28.731" N	UNESCO090	51° 43' 36.354" W	66° 58' 6.848" N
UNESCO033	51° 45' 40.413" W	67° 1' 35.757" N	UNESCO091	51° 46' 44.036" W	66° 57' 7.632" N
UNESCO034	51° 44' 24.037" W	67° 1' 48.451" N	UNESCO092	51° 54' 23.403" W	66° 56' 6.983" N
UNESCO035	51° 42' 43.504" W	67° 2' 9.946" N	UNESCO093	51° 59' 21.527" W	66° 55' 6.971" N
UNESCO036	51° 40' 44.115" W	67° 2' 27.812" N	UNESCO094	52° 6' 20.621" W	66° 54' 28.126" N
UNESCO037	51° 39' 51.165" W	67° 3' 30.296" N	UNESCO095	52° 12' 20.205" W	66° 54' 7.716" N
UNESCO038	51° 37' 32.787" W	67° 4' 9.224" N	UNESCO096	52° 14' 35.191" W	66° 52' 44.418" N
UNESCO039	51° 32' 9.811" W	67° 5' 34.178" N	UNESCO097	52° 17' 22.617" W	66° 52' 19.823" N
UNESCO040	51° 28' 49.066" W	67° 6' 15.344" N	UNESCO098	52° 20' 21.846" W	66° 51' 50.720" N
UNESCO041	51° 26' 0.713" W	67° 6' 51.990" N	UNESCO099	52° 23' 54.915" W	66° 51' 9.909" N
UNESCO042	51° 21' 46.269" W	67° 7' 57.256" N	UNESCO100	52° 25' 38.547" W	66° 50' 57.807" N
UNESCO043	51° 19' 33.544" W	67° 9' 0.819" N	UNESCO101	52° 28' 15.817" W	66° 49' 39.397" N
UNESCO044	51° 17' 5.823" W	67° 9' 48.976" N	UNESCO102	52° 33' 12.824" W	66° 50' 48.720" N
UNESCO045	51° 15' 42.450" W	67° 10' 4.238" N	UNESCO103	52° 36' 28.624" W	66° 51' 23.679" N
UNESCO046	51° 13' 45.942" W	67° 11' 1.293" N	UNESCO104	52° 38' 43.934" W	66° 51' 4.975" N
UNESCO047	51° 11' 32.133" W	67° 11' 18.298" N	UNESCO105	52° 44' 7.290" W	66° 50' 21.159" N
UNESCO048	51° 5' 26.134" W	67° 12' 0.321" N	UNESCO106	52° 46' 43.116" W	66° 50' 16.428" N
UNESCO049	51° 1' 21.416" W	67° 12' 27.633" N	UNESCO107	52° 51' 26.225" W	66° 49' 53.677" N
UNESCO050	50° 54' 48.234" W	67° 14' 39.693" N	UNESCO108	52° 55' 47.361" W	66° 49' 15.166" N
UNESCO051	50° 50' 17.324" W	67° 14' 56.494" N	UNESCO109	52° 58' 55.656" W	66° 48' 48.460" N
UNESCO052	50° 45' 28.089" W	67° 15' 27.133" N	UNESCO110	53° 3' 51.744" W	66° 46' 57.910" N
UNESCO053	50° 35' 55.240" W	67° 16' 9.329" N	UNESCO111	53° 7' 17.184" W	66° 45' 10.257" N
UNESCO054	50° 29' 40.478" W	67° 17' 7.215" N	UNESCO112	53° 12' 17.494" W	66° 45' 19.413" N
UNESCO055	50° 20' 58.384" W	67° 17' 41.512" N	UNESCO113	53° 19' 54.577" W	66° 41' 57.822" N
UNESCO056	50° 11' 53.521" W	67° 18' 26.910" N	UNESCO114	53° 25' 11.729" W	66° 42' 10.383" N
UNESCO057	49° 59' 26.951" W	67° 20' 6.859" N	UNESCO115	53° 31' 34.118" W	66° 40' 34.495" N
UNESCO058	49° 49' 6.975" W	67° 21' 23.106" N			

such as fjords, lakes, hilltops, waterways or water-sheds. In fjords, lakes, sounds and sea passages, the boundary is set midway between the nearest land on either side, and towards the open sea it lies at the territorial baseline. To the east, the boundary is on the ice sheet, at a distance of c. 40 km from the present ice edge. This corresponds to the approximate position of

the ice edge when the first people arrived in the area. The exact location of the boundary is defined by a list of coordinates connected by straight lines (Table 0.1).

The 417,800 ha property is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes that convey its significance, and it does not



Photo: Jens Fog Jensen.

*The western part of the nominated area comprises a fjord and archipelago environment with numerous ancient settlements along the shores.*

suffer from the adverse effects of development or neglect. Together with the fact that there is just one landowner (Government of Greenland), these factors have been crucial to nominating the property without a buffer zone. The borders are, furthermore, defined such that a strong visual impression of the cultural landscape is ensured.

### Criteria under which the property is nominated

(iii) Archaeological traces of the traditional, nomadic Inuit hunting culture are visible throughout the arctic landscape of Aasivissuit – Nipisat, between the coast of the Davis Strait and the ice sheet. The property contains a complete suite of ruin sites, representing all epochs and all principal seasonal activities, from the 4200-year-old site of Nipisat, to hundreds of visible ruins from the Thule culture (AD 1250-1700), with Aasivissuit and its impressive caribou drives, and the

historical period (AD 1700-1900). At the settlement of Sarfannguit, the active fishing and hunting culture links present land use to the old, traditional, sustainable hunting cultures. Aasivissuit – Nipisat is a 'continuing landscape' with significant material evidence of its evolution over time.

(v) The traditional seasonal migrations and variation in hunting practices since the first people arrived c. 2400 BC have left ancient camp sites in all parts of the landscape. The route from the winter settlements to the summer camps can be followed as a time-worn trail from the west to the east. Along this ancient trail, summer camps with dwelling ruins, inussuit (cairns), graves and caches tell a story of resource abundance. Ruins of all major prehistoric features are present in Aasivissuit – Nipisat, and all of these ancient monuments remain in their original locations, making them a first-class record of the history of hunter-gatherer resilience in an arctic environment.



## Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

### Brief synthesis

The nominated cultural landscape lies at the heart of the largest ice-free area in Greenland which, in combination with the transitional coastal zone between the ‘open water area’ and the high-arctic area of land-fast winter ice, has made it exceptional as a hunting ground for people through millennia. This long history is visible in the landscape in the form of the many ruins and traces left by the Arctic people, including winter settlements with ruins of turf houses along the coast, inussuk (cairns) and trails leading from the coast to the caribou hunting camps and remarkable caribou drive systems in the interior. The area provides the most complete and best-preserved testimony of arctic hunting traditions from 2500 BC onwards, providing evidence of sustainable land use, based on seasonal migrations between coast and interior. Colonial ruins on the coast reflect the arrival of Europeans in the 18th century and their interaction with Inuit.

Today, hunters with families continue their seasonal travels, staying and hunting in the same places as

their predecessors and thereby forging creating a link between past and present.

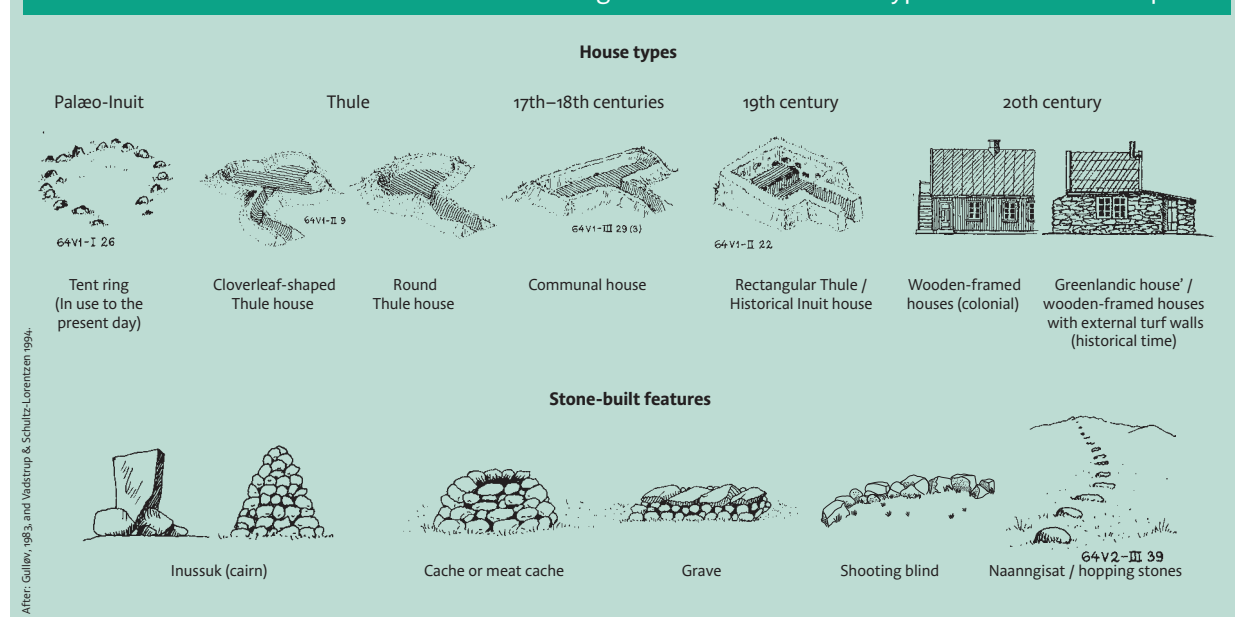
### Justification for Criteria

*Criterion (iii): To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared.*

For millennia, peoples in Aasivissuit – Nipisat have exploited the locally available resources and have adapted their lifestyles and homes to the seasonal rhythm. Due to its geography and climatic conditions this specific area offers several options for ‘the good life’. Today, the area remains virtually unchanged. The long tradition of locally sustainable land use can be read more easily in landscape and culture than in many other places. The landscape, the camp sites and archaeological remains therefore have outstanding universal value.

The area has the well-documented Paleo-Inuit site of Nipisat and hundreds of visible ruins from the Thule culture (c. AD 1250-1700) and the historical period (c. AD 1700-1900). Seven of the best preserved and most accessible of these localities have been selected as key sites

### Box 1 - Common stone- and turf-built archaeological features and house types in Aasivissuit – Nipisat





for interpretation of the traditional housing and life in West Greenland. The settlement of Sarfannguit is an active community, where the fishing and hunting culture links the present sea and land use to the traditional sustainable nomadic hunting societies of the Thule, Dorset and Saqqaq cultures. Aasivissuit – Nipisat is therefore a ‘continuing landscape’ with significant material evidence of its evolution over time (Mitchell 2009).

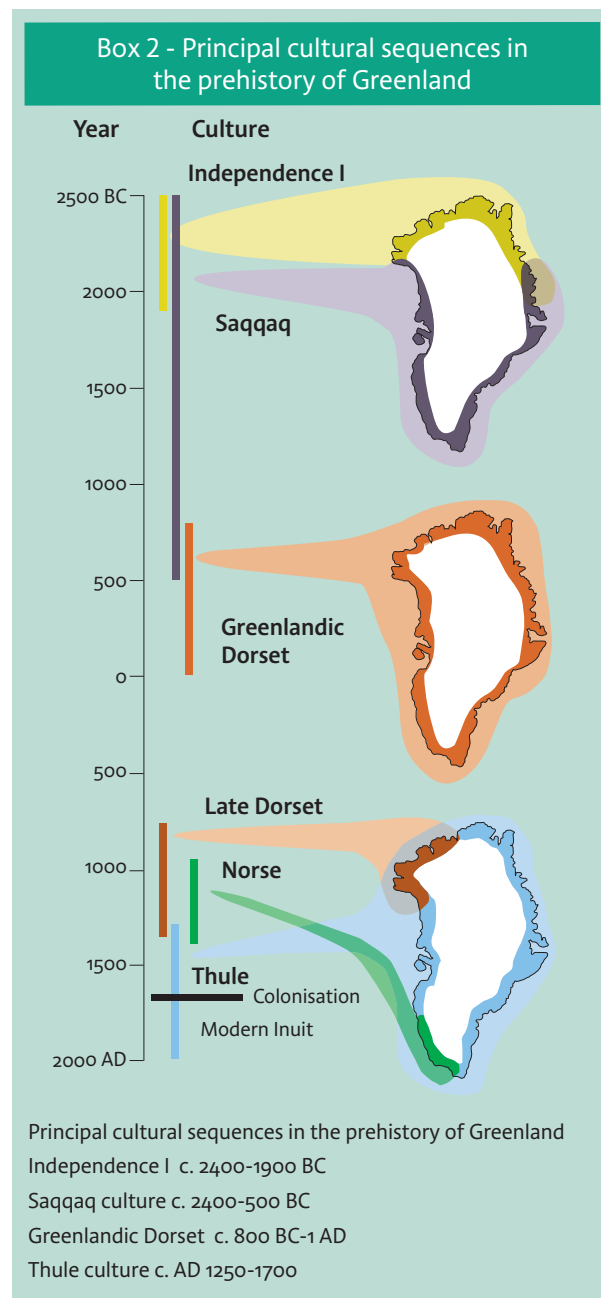
The seven sites are focal points for humans living off the land and the sea. The landscape settings, in combination with impressive archaeological remains, testify to the traditional land use in time and space throughout the nominated area, between the inland ice sheet and the open sea.

*Criterion (v): To be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.*

Ruins of dwellings, graves and hunting features are preserved in their original settings, where they testify to the traditional seasonal migrations and variation in hunting practices throughout the year, as has been the case since the arrival of the first people in c. 2500 BC. Winter settlements focusing on the hunting of seals are situated on the outer coast, spring settlements with fishing for capelin and char are situated in the fjords, and summer camps where migrating caribou could be intercepted in extensive drive systems are situated in the interior. The route from the winter settlements to the summer camps can be followed as an old well-trodden trail running eastwards from the head of Maligiaq Fjord. Along this ancient trail are summer camps with dwelling ruins as well as numerous inussuit (way-marker cairns), graves and caches conveying the story of abundance. Ruins of all the different house types are present in Aasivissuit – Nipisat, and the situation of these ancient monuments in their original settings makes them first class scenes for conveying the history of hunter gatherer resilience in an arctic environment.

### Statement of Integrity

The property contains all the elements necessary to express the outstanding universal value of the Inuit hunting landscape, including an exceptionally large number of ruin sites in the form of winter dwellings, graves, caches and the great summer camp of Aasivissuit, which in addition to dwelling structures hosts the largest communal hunting system known from Greenland, as well as temporary dwellings, hunting





systems and inussuit. All the principal epochs, from the Saqqaq culture of 2400 BC, to Greenlandic Dorset, Thule, historical Inuit and colonial settlers are represented within the nominated area.

The property has an area of 417,800 ha and is therefore of an adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes that testify to its significance, and it does not suffer from the adverse effects of development or neglect. Together with the fact that there is just one landowner (Government of Greenland) and that any future industrial development in the area has been explicitly rejected, these factors have been crucial to nominating the property without a buffer zone.

### Statement of Authenticity

Aasivissuit – Nipisat is situated in the part of Greenland where the post-glacial rebound is greatest (as explained in chapter 2.a.i). Consequently, more ruin sites here than anywhere else in Greenland and in many other parts of the Arctic can be anticipated to have avoided destruction by coastal erosion. This positive effect of the post-glacial rebound is particularly relevant for the earliest sites, dating from the Saqqaq (2400-500 BC) and Dorset (800 BC - AD 1) cultures, since these ancient camp sites have often become eroded or submerged in other parts of Greenland where coastal lands have been subject to a process of depression during the last 2000 years.

Since the prey species have remained the same for thousands of years, so have the locations of the settlements. There may have been local changes with respect to which part of an island was preferred for settlement, but in general there has been reuse of good locations through millennia. Reuse is part of life in the Arctic and this is also evident on sites that span hundreds of years: Suitable stones from one structure may have been removed from their contexts to be reused in later structures at the same locality.

### Requirements for protection and management

The nominated area is owned by Naalakkersuisut (Government of Greenland) and administered by Qeqqata Municipality. The nominated area, and all

surrounding landscapes, are consequently administered by the same authorities. Currently an area in the easternmost part of the nominated area is protected as the southern part of the larger Ramsar area no. 386, Eqalummiut Nunaat and Nassuttuup Nunaa, extending northwards along the margin of the ice sheet beyond the area nominated as the Aasivissuit – Nipisat World Heritage Site.

The Greenland National Museum and Archives is the administrative authority for protected monuments, and the Ministry of Mineral Resources – which issues raw material licences – has agreed not to issue prospecting licences within the nominated World Heritage Site. Local stewardship for monitoring key localities and general status will be encouraged in the settlements of Sarfannguit and Kangerlussuaq.

The legislative basis and organisation of the site management will ensure that developmental or economic challenges will not affect the property in any significant manner.

### Specific long-term expectations

Natural, long-term threats to the archaeological sites are very limited. The impact of increased tourism may, on the other hand, have an effect if visitor numbers increase significantly. Increased traffic may result in degradation of vegetation and thereby erosion. Monitoring and infrastructure measures, such as repeat photography, visual inspection, marked paths and no-go-zones, described in the management plan, will ensure that such processes remain under the full control of the authorities.

The continuing use of the land has the potential to degrade ruins and sites on a local scale, but monitoring and management will be implemented to reduce damage to historical resources in the vicinity of the camps used today. On a larger geographic scale, sustainable continuing land use by the citizens of Sarfannguit, Sisimiut and Kangerlussuaq keeps local knowledge alive and underpins the protection of the site against conflicting development.

### Name and contact information of official local institution/agency

#### **Qeqqata Municipality**

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Photo: Visit Greenland.

*Cutter entering Ikertooq Fjord from the narrows by the settlement of Sarfannguit.*

*View to the west over the lake district in the easternmost inland region of Aasivissuit–Nipisat. Photo: Visit Greenland.*



Photo: Mads Phil, Visit Greenland