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# Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies (Republic of Korea) No 1498

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**Official name as proposed by the State Party**  
Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies

## Location

Youngju City, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province  
Hamyang County, Gyeongsangnam-do Province  
Gyeongju City, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province  
Andong City, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province  
Jangseong County, Jeollanam-do Province  
Dalseong County, Daegu Metropolitan City  
Andong City, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province  
Jeongeup City, Jeollabuk-do Province  
Nonsan City, Chungcheongnam-do Province  
Republic of Korea

## Brief description

This serial property comprises nine seowon representing a type of Neo-Confucian academy of the Joseon Dynasty (15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries CE). The components are Sosu-seowon, Namgye-seowon, Oksan-seowon, Dosan-seowon, Piram-seowon, Dodong-seowon, Byeongsan-seowon, Museong-seowon and Donam-seowon, and these are located across the central and southern parts of South Korea. Located near mountains and water as part of appreciating nature and cultivating the mind and body, their essential functions are learning, veneration and interaction with their environment. While based on common architectural forms, the components have been creatively developed with individual characteristics to maximize links to the surrounding environment and understanding of Neo-Confucian ideals.

## Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of 9 *groups of buildings*.

## 1 Basic data

**Included in the Tentative List**  
9 December 2011

The name of the property included in the Tentative List is *Seowon, Confucian Academies of Korea*.

## Background

This is a new nomination. A previous nomination was submitted in 2015 but was withdrawn before consideration by the World Heritage Committee.

At the request of the State Party, an ICOMOS Advisory process was conducted on October 2016 – March 2017. Based on the recommendations of the ICOMOS advisory report, the State Party has submitted a revised nomination dossier.

## Consultations and Technical Evaluation Mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property on 2 to 8 September 2018.

## Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 10 October 2018 requesting further information about mapping, comparative analysis, integrity, authenticity and management. Additional information was received on 6 November 2018 from State Party, and has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 21 December 2018 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the justification of criterion (iv), the protection of the landscape and distant views, overall integrated management, and enhanced interpretation of the overall property.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 27 February 2019 and has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

**Date of ICOMOS approval of this report**  
13 March 2019

## 2 Description of the property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report only provides a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

### Description and history

The nominated property comprises nine seowon which demonstrate how this type of Neo-Confucian academy developed and flourished in Korea and reflecting the crystallisation of the function and architectural type of the seowon.

Following the withdrawal of the previous nomination dossier, an Advisory process was undertaken between ICOMOS and the State Party, assisted by an Advisory mission, which concluded in March 2017. Expert advice has been provided in relation to the comparative analysis, framing of the rationale of the selection, identification and justification of features/attributes, and boundaries.

The components are Sosu-seowon, Namgye-seowon, Oksan-seowon, Dosan-seowon, Piram-seowon, Dodong-seowon, Byeongsan-seowon, Museong-seowon and Donam-seowon, and these are located across the central and southern parts of South Korea.

Learning, veneration and interaction are the essential functions of seowon which are closely reflected in their design. The seowon are organised around two main factors, which are the veneration of scholars, and the landscape, both of them linked to the interpretation of the universe. They are located near mountains and water as part of appreciating nature and cultivating the mind and body.

The use of pavilions as the form of building created a new way to interpret the surrounding landscape and facilitate connections to it within the architecture of the seowon. Oksan-seowon adopted a two-story pavilion to allow a better appreciation of nature, becoming an early version of a seowon pavilion. The standard planning layout of most components is evident in their division into veneration, learning and interaction areas arranged along a central axis, and in a descending vertical order down the slope of a hill. Sosu-seowon, the first to be built, is an exception and does not display a central axis in its planning.

The seowon were also designed in response to the local topography. Dodong-seowon is a typical example of a layout on mountainous land in which the seowon is gradually elevated from the entrance to the back of the complex. Piram-seowon is a model for a seowon located on flat land.

The layout of the components is an adaptation of the yeje principle of propriety. The property specifically translates this theory into an architectural type for educational institutes. The original prototype for seowon architecture was established by Namgye-seowon in its veneration, learning and interaction areas creatively arranged in an organic hierarchical order. Developed out of the fundamental arrangement of Namgye-seowon, subsequent seowon experimented with variations on the central axis, such as twisting the linear arrangement to emphasize the reverence towards the shrine.

The interaction area features a pavilion in the typical architectural form for the seowon. Elements known as hamabi dismounting stele and hongsalmun red spiked gate mark the entrance area of the seowon. Commemorative steles are erected inside and outside of the academy. Other facilities at the seowon include a caretaker's house and modern educational facilities.

The veneration area is a place for the veneration of distinguished figures, and is the most important part in the seowon. As a result, this area is placed at the innermost of the central axis. Buildings in this area are composed of a shrine, veneration preparatory chamber, and storage room for utensils and vessels used for rites. Spiritual tablets or portraits of venerated scholars and an observance altar are found inside the shrine. The learning area generally

includes a lecture hall, dormitory, library and repository for woodblocks.

While based on common architectural forms, the components have been creatively developed with individual characteristics to maximize links to the surrounding environment and understanding of Neo-Confucian idealism.

All the buildings are generally wooden structures. The nominated property includes traditional Korean architectural techniques such as ondol, an under-floor heating system, and maru, an open wooden floor, reflecting the national floor culture.

The nominated property includes a wide range of documents, such as regulations on lectures, curricula, and lecture formalities, as well as printing woodblocks, providing a glimpse into the education at each academy.

The nominated property of private Neo-Confucian educational academies or seowon were established in the period from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century CE through to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century CE. This period saw the creation of the first seowon and their development with experiments in architectural layouts and techniques, through to a standardisation of architectural types featuring veneration, learning and interaction areas.

The education at the academies was designed to cultivate Neo-Confucian values among future scholars, rather than producing public servants or preparing people for the state examination. This orientation arose because the practical operations and educational activities were led by sarim or the class of local intellectuals. The seowon developed and flourished as centres for the interests of the sarim.

The founding dates for the components are: Sosu-seowon – 1542 CE, Namgye-seowon – 1552 CE, Oksan-seowon – 1572 CE, Dosan-seowon – 1574 CE, Piram-seowon – 1590 CE, Dodong-seowon – 1605 CE, Byeongsan-seowon – 1613 CE, Museong-seowon – 1615 CE and Donam-seowon – 1634 CE. Many of the seowon were developed over a long period of time. For example, Museong-seowon was expanded with a dormitory in 1887 and a pavilion in 1891.

Sosu-seowon was the first to be built in Korea and adopted the concept of veneration, learning and library functions from China's Bailudong-shuyuan (White Deer Cave Academy). While basic ideas were borrowed from shuyuan (private Confucian institutes in China), Sosu-seowon was created as a re-interpretation of architectural functions where the shrine was dedicated to a local scholar rather than to the great Chinese philosopher, Confucius. The veneration area became the central element of the academy in terms of both building arrangement and function.

Namgye-seowon was the first seowon to be established and operated solely by the efforts of the sarim, and it established the architectural standards for the academies that followed.

Out of Dosan-seowon came suggested guidelines for the educational values seowon must pursue, which was to learn Neo-Confucianism on an individual basis in order to envision the creation of an ideal world. Dosan-seowon also gave birth to the profound study of yehak, or propriety.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the nominated property is that its role was not limited to education and veneration but expanded to include social participation, which made seowon comprehensive political and social institutions. Seowon became intellectual leaders in society and developed scholastic lineages, which started in the property.

The nominated property is also a birthplace of the sarim's cultural activities. For example, they held regular or special lectures, and poetry writings to promote intellectual exchanges. Literary works and documents created by the sarim were preserved in libraries or they were published for wider distribution.

Each seowon was deeply involved in the milestones of Korean history. The nominated property took a role in collecting public opinions for delivery to the king, symbolizing the sarim's intellectual activities. Byeongsan-seowon was the hub for local opinion in Gyeongsangbuk-do Province since the 17<sup>th</sup> century CE, while Dosan-seowon and Oksan-seowon took the lead in establishing maninso, or a ten thousand-signature petition in the 19<sup>th</sup> century CE. Piram-seowon and Namgye-seowon initiated the mobilisation of militia to combat the Japanese invasions of Korea in 1592 CE, and Museong-seowon collected militia troops to oppose the Japanese colonisation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century CE.

After Sosu-seowon and Namgye-seowon, the composition and layout of seowon buildings became standardised. None the less, later seowon reflected a continuing degree of experimentation.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century CE when the general typology had been standardised for seowon, other architectural modifications were introduced in an attempt to improve certain functions. Byeongsan-seowon, for example, erected a large pavilion from which to better appreciate nature. This variation evolved out of the original plan for the pavilion at Oksan-seowon, which was the first seowon to adopt the use of a pavilion as an integral part of architecture. Donam-seowon established the Eungdodang lecture hall, which is the largest in Korea and is well-known for reflecting the architectural theory of propriety. This spacious lecture hall reflects the commitment to the teachings of Neo-Confucianism and related discussions.

Another conspicuous change was to consider accessibility and the participants in seowon, when selecting a location for an academy. Museong-seowon is a prime example

where the academy was established in the heart of a village, suggesting the expansion of Neo-Confucianism from upper-class sarim to local villagers.

Structures within the property have been added to or expanded since the 17<sup>th</sup> century CE. In some cases, a new library was added to accommodate the increasing number of books and woodblocks. Parts of the architecture have had to be restored due to the impacts of natural disasters or wars in the case of some seowon. There have also been attempts to erect new buildings, as in the case of Namgye-seowon and its new pavilions from 1779 CE and 1849 CE.

Piram-seowon was relocated to its current site in 1672 CE. Donam-seowon followed a strict principle of maintaining authenticity when it was relocated to its current site in 1881 CE because of flooding. However, it was not until 1971 CE that the Eungdodang lecture hall from the original Donam-seowon was moved to the current location.

Through the various architectural changes, traditional architectural techniques have been upgraded and passed down to new generations.

Seowon generally faced difficulties maintaining their traditional way of teaching due to the influx of western values in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century CE. The King had also ordered the demolition of seowon in the 19<sup>th</sup> century CE, leading to losses. However, the nominated property has preserved its values through the efforts of the sarim. The nominated property continues to disseminate Neo-Confucian values by offering classes and conducting veneration services.

### **Boundaries**

The area of the 9 components totals 102.49 ha, with buffer zones totalling 796.74 ha.

In ICOMOS' view, the nominated property boundary incorporates all features of potential Outstanding Universal Value, such as the building complexes, immediate settings and visual catchments. The boundary is also practical, featuring the use of legal protection to the farthest extent possible. The boundary uses the natural topography, administration boundaries, landmarks such as roads and rivers, and land plot boundaries. In many instances, the state-designated heritage area actually exceeds the proposed property boundary and/or buffer zone. These areas were designated many years ago for purposes not directly related to protection, and the excess areas make no contribution to potential Outstanding Universal Value or its protection.

ICOMOS requested further information about the identification and protection of links to distant landscape elements, beyond the buffer zones, in its interim report. The State Party provided satisfactory information in February 2019 about the elements related to each component, and the legislation which protects the links to the elements.

### State of conservation

Through their long history and before the modern conservation era, the seowon have been repaired and restored at various times.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, Sosu-seowon underwent a series of repairs. Gyeongryeomjeong pavilion was rebuilt in 1657 CE and an extensive restoration of the structures, including the shrine and lecture hall, was undertaken in 1677 CE. The lecture hall and Jeonsacheong veneration preparatory chamber were restored in 1730 CE, and Jiraekjae was rebuilt in 1799 CE. There were many cycles of restoration, including of the dormitories and shrine in 1805 CE, and the veneration preparatory chamber and wall fence in 1813 CE. The library was rebuilt in 1819 CE.

Namgye-seowon was burned in 1592 CE but recovered in 1605 CE. At some stage pavilions had been converted to dormitories, and then returned to a state more faithful to their original purpose. The library was reconstructed in 1922 CE.

The lecture hall at Oksan-seowon was destroyed by fire in 1839 CE and rebuilt in the following year. The pavilion was extensively restored in 1843 CE, and the lecture hall and shrine underwent minor restoration in 1905 CE.

Dosan-seowon was apparently not affected by major damage or former repairs.

Piram-seowon was severely damaged in 1592 CE but re-established in 1624 CE. It was relocated to its current site in 1672 CE. A shrine was rebuilt in 1886 CE, the lecture hall, two dormitory buildings and a pavilion were repaired in 1887 CE, the shrine reconstructed in 1941 CE, and the pavilion, two dormitory buildings and the caretakers' house were restored after 1945 CE.

Dodong-seowon was renovated and expanded in the historic era.

Byeongsan-seowon was damaged in 1592 CE and restored in 1605 CE. The lecture hall was repaired in 1921 CE and the shrine in 1937 CE.

Museong-seowon was frequently repaired in the historic era and a major restoration was organised in 1828 CE. Repairs were also undertaken in 1904 CE and 1917 CE.

Donam-seowon was relocated to its current location in 1881 CE because of flooding. The lecture hall was repaired in 1927 CE.

In the modern era, after 1963 when Sosu-seowon was designated a Historic Site, Gyeongryeomjeong pavilion underwent restoration in 2009, and the roof of the lecture hall was repaired in 2015. At Namgye-seowon, Pungyeongru pavilion was restored in 2011 and the Gojiksa caretaker's house was renovated in 2016. In the case of Oksan-seowon, the pavilion, lecture hall, and two dormitories underwent restoration in 1991, the printing

blocks repository and stele were refurbished in 1998. The main gate was also restored and a relic exhibition hall was constructed.

During the 1990s, the triple inner gate, two dormitories, lecture hall and pavilion were restored at Piram-seowon. Suwollu pavilion at Dodong-seowon was destroyed by fire in 1888 and was finally reconstructed in 1973. The pavilion and west dormitory at Byeongsan-seowon were repaired in 1971, and a systematic restoration of the entire compound took place from 1978 until 1981. Museong-seowon underwent continuous repair works after the 1980s, especially the dormitory, stele, shrine, lecture hall and pavilion. At Donam-seowon the Eungdodang lecture hall was moved from the original seowon location to the current location in 1971.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is good. The comprehensive archives on conservation activities support the view on the current state of conservation of the buildings, layouts and settings. Interventions have been carried out following internationally accepted principles.

### Factors affecting the property

ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the property are development pressures, insect damage to trees and buildings, fire, earthquake and visitor pressures.

Given most of the seowon are located in rural areas, development pressure is considered to be minor. In the case of Museong-seowon, surrounded by a village, there is the possibility of development pressure having an impact. However, village development has been well controlled by legal and planning measures. In addition, the local community has a long tradition of considering itself to be the responsible custodian of the seowon.

Pine trees are a major feature in the areas related to the seowon. These trees are threatened by a nematode, and this threat is being closely monitored. Termites have also been found in the past at Donam-seowon, and active measures have been taken to prevent damage to the wooden structures.

Natural fires and arson are a threat to the property, and these are a high priority issue for site managers. All seowon are equipped with fire monitoring systems and firefighting facilities. Fire drills are also regularly performed, and close relations are maintained with local fire stations. The monitoring system can send alerts to the nearest fire station in the event fire is detected.

Earthquakes were detected in the vicinity of Oksan-seowon in 2016 and 2017, but these caused no damage to the seowon. The situation is closely monitored.

The number of visitors to the seowon has been well below the carrying-capacity for the property, even at peak times such as during a veneration ceremony. While the

possibility of a surge in visitors is expected should the property be inscribed, measures have been prepared to avoid or minimise impacts.

In summary, ICOMOS considers that factors affecting the property are well understood and managed.

### 3 Proposed justification for inscription

#### Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- It is outstanding testimony to the prevalence of Neo-Confucianism in educational and social practices in the Joseon Dynasty of Korea. Local intellectuals, sarim, created an educational system and tangible structures conducive to Neo-Confucian learning. The sarim chose their own figures to be venerated at the shrine, rather than the great Chinese philosopher, Confucius. They also created a strong academic lineage through continued veneration. As a result, the seowon or academies promoted principles of Neo-Confucianism through various social and political activities at the property.
- It is also outstanding testimony to the architectural prototype of Neo-Confucian academies and each stage of their development. The development of the typology of the architectural layout progressed rapidly during the early establishment stage of the seowon movement, and this was shared by subsequent academies. The property is conducive to the practices of learning, veneration and interaction with corresponding buildings of the lecture hall, shrine and pavilion. A hierarchy is displayed by the layout of buildings, use of the natural topography, outdoor space, stylobates, wall fences and gates.

#### Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis is presented in three parts: it begins with a consideration of the values relevant to the analysis; a comparison with similar properties in other countries; and consideration of similar properties in Korea. Comparisons with World Heritage and Tentative List properties and those in other areas throughout the world with a comparable combination of proposed Outstanding Universal Value and attributes are integrated within these parts.

The analysis considers the broader scope of Confucian properties, especially across East Asia. Several Confucian properties have been inscribed on the World Heritage List, mostly in China, Korea, Japan and Viet Nam, and the analysis identifies 21 properties which are considered in terms of the qualities of veneration towards heaven, veneration, governance, education or otherwise.

For example, the Temple of Heaven: an Imperial Sacrificial Altar in Beijing (China) and Esplanade of Sacrifice to the Heaven and Earth in the Complex of Hue

Monuments (Viet Nam) are World Heritage properties portraying imperial veneration towards heaven. Other properties are governing facilities based on Confucianism (eg. Changdeokgung Palace Complex, Republic of Korea, and Tu Cam Thanh (Forbidden Purple City), in the Complex of Hue Monuments, Viet Nam). Jongmyo Shrine (Republic of Korea) is a Confucian ritual property. Other Confucian educational institutes of veneration in East Asia have mostly been included as component parts of listed properties. Examples include Byeongsan-seowon and Oksan-seowon (Republic of Korea), Sungyang-seowon (Sungyang Sowon) (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), Songyang-shuyuan (Songyang Academy of Classical Learning) and Bailudong-shuyuan (White Deer Cave Academy) (China), and Shokasonjuku (Japan). However, the analysis notes that none of these examples independently recognise the values of the Confucian educational institutes.

In addition to two existing World Heritage properties in the Republic of Korea noted above, the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty relates to veneration, and the Historic Villages of Korea: Hahoe and Yangdong include residences that demonstrate the everyday practice of Confucianism. The analysis considers the spatial characteristics of architecture related to Confucianism, and the role of properties in veneration and education. A distinction is made between the role of Confucian education institutes founded by government, and those which are private academies.

A range of Confucian education properties on the World Heritage List has been considered, including the Bailudong-shuyuan (China), Shokasonjuku academy (Japan), Sungyang-seowon (DPRK) and the Historic Villages of Korea: Hahoe and Yangdong (Republic of Korea) which includes two of the nominated components, Oksan-seowon and Byeongsan-seowon.

The analysis considers in further detail private Confucian institutes in China, shuyuan, and in Japan, shijuku. In the case of shijuku for example, the analysis notes that the architecture and curricula do not display any typical patterns or principles. It also notes that the seowon honour venerated figures based on an association with the seowon, instead of venerating ancient sages such as Confucius.

The seowon developed a shared architectural typology, and were influenced by the Chinese shuyuan in their functions of learning and veneration, but in terms of their architectural typology, seowon differ from shuyuan.

The analysis concludes that the seowon developed distinctive attributes compared to similar venerational or educational institutes in East Asia, within the context of the broader theme of Confucianism.

As regards the internal selection of the components, the selected components are presented as playing a critical role in development of seowon as blossoming educational

institutes, and they exhibit a wide range of characteristic aspects of seowon overall.

Within Korea, the analysis considers Neo-Confucian educational institutes established by government to prepare civil servants – seonggyungwan and hyanggyo. The analysis also considers other seowon within Korea not included within the nominated property. The criteria for selection include an association with the early stages of seowon development continuing through to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century CE, authenticity, integrity, the presence of attributes to enable a comprehensive understanding of seowon, and the inclusion of each element (component) of the architectural type. The analysis presented by the State Party argues that the nine components of the nominated property satisfy all four criteria for selection of the components.

The analysis argues the nominated components collectively represent the blossoming of Neo-Confucianism and the development of seowon since the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century CE. Sosu-seowon is the first example in Korea; Namgye-seowon is the first to be established purely through the support of sarim; Oksan-seowon is a demonstration of seowon curricula and housing literary works and documents, as well as the introduction of seowon institutions; Dosan-seowon has been developed as the centre of a scholastic genealogy; Piram-seowon is providing reference to financial aspects of seowon; Dodong-seowon is a demonstration of the systemization of education through its detailed regulations; Byeongsan-seowon is the birthplace of sarim's public opinion outreach; Museong-seowon is a centre for the edification of the local community; and Donam-seowon is an illustration of how seowon expanded from political and social aspects into a major research centre for Neo-Confucianism by dedication to yehak, or the study of propriety.

The significance of the Korean seowon is that they were localized versions of an institution that can be found in different variations all over East Asia. As the concept of the Confucian academy came to Korea, it was contextualised according to needs of the local intellectuals and the local conditions, and it therefore reflects Korean thought and culture. This is the important characteristic of seowon.

ICOMOS requested consideration of a greater number of Chinese shuyuan, and a consolidated and more detailed analysis of them in relation to seowon. The State Party provided in February 2019 substantial additional information about shuyuan, including a wider range, and about their historical, functional, planning and architectural characteristics. The State Party notes the influence of and some similarities between shuyuan and seowon, but it also convincingly argues that the seowon were a substantial transformation and local adaptation of a type of Confucian academy in functional, planning and architectural terms. It is also noted that shuyuan displayed considerable planning and architectural variation throughout China.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

### Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (iv).

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

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property is outstanding testimony to the prevalence of Neo-Confucianism in educational and social practices in the Joseon Dynasty of Korea. Local intellectuals, sarim, created an educational system and tangible structures conducive to Neo-Confucian learning. The sarim chose their own figures to be venerated at the shrine, rather than the Chinese philosopher, Confucius. They also created a strong academic lineage through continued veneration. As a result, the seowon or academies promoted principles of Neo-Confucianism through various social and political activities at the property.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is exceptional testimony to cultural traditions associated with Neo-Confucianism in Korea, in the form of educational and social practices, many of which continue. It also exhibits outstanding testimony of the localisation of Neo-Confucian concepts – the seowon illustrate an historical process in which Neo-Confucianism from China was tailored to Korean local conditions resulting in academies which are exceptional testimony of this transformative and localising process.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (iii) has been met.

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the nominated property is an outstanding testimony to the architectural prototype of Neo-Confucian academies and each stage of their development. The development of the typology of the architectural layout progressed rapidly during the early establishment stage of the seowon movement, and this was shared by subsequent academies. The nominated property is conducive to the practices of learning, veneration and interaction with corresponding buildings of the lecture hall, shrine and pavilion. A hierarchy is displayed by the layout of buildings, use of the natural topography, outdoor space, stylobates, wall fences and gates.

ICOMOS considers that the State Party does not justify the nominated property as representing an outstanding example in a World Heritage context of a Neo-Confucian educational ensemble. ICOMOS notes the influence from China, and the transformative and localising process, but does not consider the justification demonstrates the exceptional qualities required by this criterion.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (iv) has not been met.

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ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iii) but that it does not meet criterion (iv).

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### **Integrity and authenticity**

#### **Integrity**

According to the nomination dossier, the integrity of the nominated property is based on the evidence related to Neo-Confucianism expressed through the form of the seowon. The nominated serial property contains all the features necessary to convey the potential Outstanding Universal Value. This includes the immediate landscape attributes of the seowon being within the property boundaries. The nominated property is also represented as intact, and the major pressures are managed.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property retains all features that reflect the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

The features of the nominated property are generally in excellent condition.

The major pressures on the nominated property, development, insect damage, fire, earthquakes and visitors, are being adequately managed. However, they should continue to be monitored.

#### **Authenticity**

According to the nomination dossier, the authenticity of the nominated property is based on its features of potential Outstanding Universal Value, which include the form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions, location and setting, intangible heritage, and spirit and feeling.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets the requirements of authenticity. The form and design, and materials and substance are basically intact. The use and function of the seowon, and their traditions, are largely as they were through history, although noting that the educational role has been largely diminished. The location and setting of the seowon have been generally retained, although it is noted that two components have been relocated in the historical past. These relocations are not considered an issue because of the lengthy period since they were undertaken. The intangible heritage, and the spirit and feeling of the seowon have been generally retained.

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ICOMOS considers that the requirements of integrity and authenticity have been met.

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### **Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription**

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this nominated property for the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iii) but that it does not meet criterion (iv), and that the requirements of integrity and authenticity have been met.

#### **Attributes**

The attributes of the nominated property are related to the central theme present in the potential Outstanding Universal Value – cultural traditions associated with Neo-Confucianism in Korea.

The location, topography and the built elements largely define the overall composition of the nominated property. In many cases, this includes a sloping site for the seowon. The careful layout, form and details of the buildings are all important attributes. Other built elements include wall fences, gates, paths, stairs and stele. The seowon have an important connection to the surrounding landscape, especially because of views from pavilions, and the landscape with trees and other plants is an attribute.

The intangible attributes include the learning, veneration, interaction and other sarim activities. Neo-Confucian values are still disseminated through classes and veneration ceremonies.

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ICOMOS considers that the identified attributes contribute to the justification for inscription.

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## **4 Conservation measures and monitoring**

### **Conservation measures**

Current active conservation measures are only related to monitoring and environmental improvement, as all of the buildings are in very good condition. Environmental improvements are currently being carried at some seowon, in some cases to correct past mistakes, and in other cases to improve visitor facilities. An example of a previous environmental improvement was the removal of electricity poles at Museong-seowon in 2015.

A Manual on the Conservation and Management of Seowon has been established in 2011 for the conservation of the nominated property, as well as the Design Guidelines for Landscape Management for Seowon and Hyanggyo, dated of 2012. The manual contains the guidelines for the management, conservation procedures, and the other one details the characteristics of seowon.

Specific “Guidelines for seowon preservation and management” are under preparation.

Each seowon has established a comprehensive maintenance plan. Because the seowon are in constant use for veneration and daily activities, the nominated property receives attentive maintenance from caretakers for Namgye-seowon, Oksan-seowon, Piram-seowon and Dodong-seowon, and for the others, there is a day and night rotation by the managing staff living outside.

Conservation interventions undertaken have followed internationally accepted principles, and have been completed to a high standard.

Sufficient funding for conservation interventions is provided by the central and local governments.

### Monitoring

Monitoring is undertaken by seowon caretakers on a daily basis, by the Seowon Foundation on a quarterly basis, and by the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage every 3 to 5 years.

Monitoring indicators are divided into three categories: general, core and special indicators. General indicators relate to daily management of the property and daily monitoring. Core indicators address factors that could pose a threat to the nominated property such as fire and natural disasters. Special indicators relate to diverse areas of expertise such as earthquake impacts and structural engineering.

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ICOMOS considers that conservation measures are generally adequate, and the monitoring approach is satisfactory.

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## 5 Protection and management

### Documentation

A comprehensive archive is maintained for each seowon. This includes survey documentation, a detailed inventory, comprehensive maintenance plan, and records on conservation proposals and implementation. The seowon have a very good tradition of recording in detail any major projects, including building reconstruction or large-scale repair.

### Legal protection

The primary protection of the nominated property is provided by the *Cultural Heritage Protection Act*, with additional protection offered by other heritage laws enacted by the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea. These other laws are the *Act on Cultural Heritage Maintenance, Etc.* and the *Act on the Safeguarding and Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage*. The laws are supported by Presidential decrees and ministerial orders.

The nine components are all state-designated heritage.

These legal instruments play a major role in ensuring the systematic conservation of the nominated property in terms of carrying out repairs and safeguarding venerations.

In addition, there are other legal instruments that impact the conservation of the nominated property – the *National Land Planning and Utilization Act* and the *Framework Act on the Management of Disasters and Safety*.

ICOMOS requested further information about the protection of links to distant landscape elements, beyond the buffer zones, in its interim report. The State Party provided information in February 2019 about the legislation which protects the links to the elements – the *Mountainous Districts Management Act*, *River Act*, *Farmland Act* and related City Urban Planning Ordinances, as well as providing assurances these offer sufficient protection.

The relevant provinces have also prepared heritage protection ordinances based on the *Cultural Heritage Protection Act*. These ordinances also offer a basis for the establishment and operation of an organisation for the integrated management of the nominated property.

### Management system

The management system comprises the Seowon Foundation, seowon steering committees, and central and local (provincial and municipal) governments. The *Cultural Heritage Protection Act* requires the nominated property to be managed by the relevant local government or seowon community. The Seowon Foundation is in charge of integrated management of the nominated property. The components are managed on a daily basis by government and seowon personnel, with the seowon steering committee responsible for operations and management.

The Seowon Foundation is a coordinating body, it also has a role in undertaking research on the nominated property and it conducts regular monitoring.

The central government Cultural Heritage Administration provides support and supervision. Local governments also provide support to the Foundation. Conservation expertise is available from the Cultural Heritage Administration as well as the relevant local governments.

Sufficient funding is provided for conservation, landscape improvement, facilities such as museums and educational centres, management, monitoring, car parking and tourism infrastructure. This funding is provided by the central and local governments.

Previously there were difficulties with funding for the conduct of veneration ceremonies at some seowon. However, these difficulties have been overcome, and adequate funding is now available.

Each seowon has its respective management plan, and relevant plans also exist for their repair and landscape management. In addition, there is a *Manual on the Conservation and Management of Seowon*, as well as *Guidelines for Conservation and Management of Seowon* and *Guidelines for Establishment and Implementation of Historic Site's Comprehensive Maintenance Plan*.

However, there is currently no cohesive plan or equivalent document for managing the seowon as a single property. ICOMOS requested information about the timeframe for completion of an overarching management document for the property. The State Party provided details about the staging of the integrated management document, with integrated management to be fully implemented from July 2020.

Some risk preparedness plans exist for the nominated property, such as in the case of the threat of fire. Relevant local governments are drawing up additional disaster and risk preparedness plans, and establishing a disaster prevention system for each seowon.

#### **Visitor management**

There is no current serious tourism pressure at the seowon. The main visitation is by organised group tours of students. Current visitor management arrangements are designed to cope with this visitation, and estimated future visitation is far below the carrying capacity of components.

Visitor facilities at seowon generally include an information centre and car parking, and in some cases an exhibition centre. Most seowon have their own trained guides and interpretive materials are available. Improvements to visitor interpretation are planned, including a better integrated presentation of the nine components as a single nominated property.

#### **Community involvement**

Local communities are strongly involved in the traditional management of the nominated property. This includes veneration ceremonies, interpretation programs, visitor, financial and property management.

Each component has a local seowon community and they have been strong supporters of the World Heritage nomination.

#### **Evaluation of the effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property**

There is good documentation for the nominated property including a detailed inventory for each component. Legal protection of the nominated property under national and other laws is satisfactory, with all components being state-designated heritage.

The management system is generally satisfactory with the Seowon Foundation responsible for integrated management of the nominated property. A cohesive plan or equivalent document for managing the seowon as a single nominated property is planned to be put in place in the short future.

Visitor management is adequate and an integrated presentation of the nine components as a single nominated property and is planned.

The property has strong local community involvement and support.

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ICOMOS considers that the requirements for protection and management are generally adequate. Nonetheless, ICOMOS recommends that an overarching management plan be put in place. In addition, integrated presentation of the nine components as a single nominated property should be better developed, as currently planned.

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## **6 Conclusion**

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis for the Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iii) but that it does not meet criterion (iv), and that the requirements of integrity and authenticity have been met.

ICOMOS considers that the requirements for protection and management are generally adequate. Nonetheless, an overarching management document should be prepared. In addition, integrated presentation of the nine components as a single property should be better developed.

The proposed boundaries and buffer zones are adequate, and the protection of links to distant landscape elements is adequate.

The property displays a good state of conservation, and the monitoring approach is satisfactory.

The main factors affecting the nominated property include fire, development pressures and insect damage, however, all factors are well understood and managed.

## **7 Recommendations**

#### **Recommendations with respect to inscription**

ICOMOS recommends that the Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies, Republic of Korea, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criterion (iii)**.

#### **Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value**

##### **Brief synthesis**

The Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies is a serial property which comprises nine seowon representing a type of Neo-Confucian academy of the Joseon Dynasty (15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries CE). It is an exceptional testimony to cultural traditions associated with Neo-Confucianism in Korea.

The components are Sosu-seowon, Namgye-seowon, Oksan-seowon, Dosan-seowon, Piram-seowon, Dodong-seowon, Byeongsan-seowon, Museong-seowon and Donam-seowon, and these are located across the central and southern parts of the Republic of Korea.

The property exhibits an outstanding testimony to thriving Neo-Confucian academies that promoted learning of Neo-Confucianism, which was introduced from China and became fundamental to every aspect of Korea.

The local literati at seowon created educational system and tangible structures conducive to fully commit themselves to learning. Learning, veneration and interaction were the essential functions of the seowon which are closely reflected in their design. The seowon were led by sarim or the class of local intellectuals. The seowon developed and flourished as centres for the interests of the sarim.

The primary factor in siting the seowon was the association with venerated scholars. The second factor was the landscape, and seowon are located near mountains and water as part of appreciating nature and cultivating the mind and body. Pavilion style buildings in the seowon facilitated connections to the landscape.

The scholars studied Neo-Confucian classics and literary works and endeavoured in understanding the universe and becoming ideal person. They venerated late contemporary Neo-Confucian figures, and formed strong academic lineage spearheaded by venerated scholars. Furthermore, local literati made significant contribution to disseminating principles of Neo-Confucianism through various social and political activities based on the property.

**Criterion (iii):** The Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies are exceptional testimony to cultural traditions associated with Neo-Confucianism in Korea, in the form of educational and social practices, many of which continue. The seowon illustrate an historical process in which Neo-Confucianism from China was tailored to Korean local conditions resulting in academies which are exceptional testimony of this transformative and localising process in terms of function, planning and architecture.

#### Integrity

The property retains all attributes that reflect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. These are the buildings and constructions constituting the seowon, ancillary buildings, entrance gate, dismounting stele, commemorative stele, immediate environments including hills, streams, roads, plantings and visual catchments. The attributes of the property are generally in excellent condition.

The major pressures on the property, development, insect damage, fire, earthquakes and visitors, are being adequately managed. However, they should continue to be monitored.

#### Authenticity

The property meets the requirements of authenticity. The form and design, and materials and substance are basically intact. The use and function of the seowon, and their traditions, are largely as they were through history,

although noting that the educational role has been largely diminished. The location and setting of the seowon have been generally retained, although it is noted that two components have been relocated in the historical past. The intangible heritage, and the spirit and feeling of the seowon have been generally retained.

#### Management and protection requirements

The primary protection of the property is provided by the *Cultural Heritage Protection Act*, with additional protection offered by other heritage laws enacted by the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea. These other laws are the *Act on Cultural Heritage Maintenance, Etc.* and the *Act on the Safeguarding and Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage*. The laws are supported by Presidential decrees and ministerial orders.

The nine components are all state-designated heritage.

These legal instruments play a major role in ensuring the systematic conservation of the property in terms of carrying out repairs and safeguarding venerations.

The relevant provinces have also prepared heritage protection ordinances based on the *Cultural Heritage Protection Act*. These ordinances also offer a basis for the establishment and operation of an organisation for the integrated management of the property.

The management system comprises the Seowon Foundation, seowon steering committees, and central and local (provincial and municipal) governments. The *Cultural Heritage Protection Act* requires the property to be managed by the relevant local government or seowon community. The Seowon Foundation is in charge of integrated management of the property. The components are managed on a daily basis by government and seowon personnel, with the seowon steering committee responsible for operations and management.

The central government Cultural Heritage Administration provides support and supervision. Local governments also provide support to the Foundation. Conservation expertise is available from the Cultural Heritage Administration as well as the relevant local governments.

Each seowon has a comprehensive maintenance plan which is equivalent to a management plan. In addition, there are a range of key conservation and management manuals and guidelines. An integrated management document is being developed.

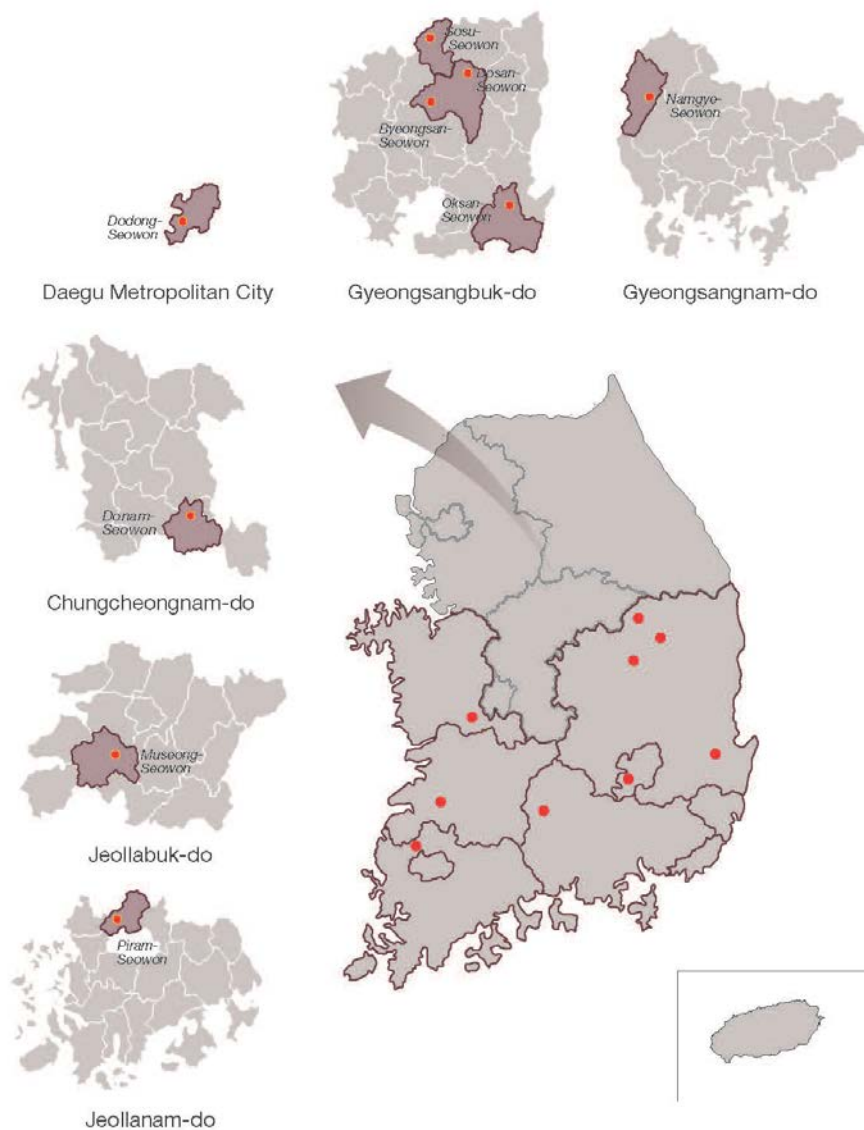
Some risk preparedness exists, and additional planning and systems are being developed.

Current visitor management arrangements are satisfactory although a better integrated presentation of the nine components as a single property is needed.

**Additional recommendations**

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Completing the development of an overarching management document for the seowon Academies,
- b) Further developing an integrated presentation of the nine components as a single property;



Map showing the location of the nominated components



Aerial View of Byeongsan-seowon



Eungdodang Lecture hall at Donam-seowon



Learning area of Dosan-seowon



Veneration area of Dodong-seowon