

# ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES  
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/EG/1688/IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 19 December 2023

H. E. Mr Mr Rinat Alyautdinov  
Ambassador, Permanent Delegate  
Permanent Delegation of the Russian  
Federation to UNESCO  
8, rue de Prony  
75017 Paris

## World Heritage List 2024

### Testament of Kenozero Lake (Russian Federation) – Interim report and additional information request

Dear Ambassador,

As prescribed by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and its Annex 6, the Advisory Bodies are requested to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2024. We are therefore pleased to provide you with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation procedure.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to the “Testament of Kenozero Lake” was carried out by Ms. Natalia Turekulova (Kazakhstan) in August 2023. The mission expert highly appreciated the availabilities and support provided by the experts in your country for the organisation and implementation of the mission.

On 4 October 2023, an additional information letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information regarding the attributes of the proposed justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity, the comparative analysis, the communal management system, boundaries, factors affecting the nominated property, and legal protection. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 9 November 2023 and for their continued cooperation in this process. ICOMOS notes that part of the requested information is still being prepared but would be pleased if the State Party could focus on the questions raised below by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

At the end of November 2023, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2024. The additional information provided by the State Party, together with mission and desk review reports were carefully examined by the Panel members. This process will conclude in March 2024.

We thank you and your Delegation for your availability and your participation in the meeting held on 24 November 2023 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. The exchanges during this meeting were of great help for the third part of the ICOMOS Panel meeting.

While the ICOMOS Panel considered that the “Testament of Kenozero Lake” might have the potential to meet the requirements for Outstanding Universal Value, this has not yet been demonstrated.

The nominated property includes a valuable collection of timber buildings set in a managed landscape, which would benefit from more detailed description and documentation, highlighting the specific construction techniques characteristic for the wooden churches, churchyards and traditional dwellings of the Kenozero cultural landscape, as well as the chronology and typology of conservation, restoration and reconstruction works. Such a corpus of work would be indispensable for enhancing the understanding of the authenticity and integrity of these buildings and highlighting their values in the context of the comparative analysis.

More specifically, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points:

### **Wooden architecture**

The nomination dossier states that the wooden buildings of the Kenozero cultural landscape are “*the embodiment of beauty, grandeur, and exceptional originality of the traditional architecture of the Russian North*” (p.105) and that the “*wooden churches of Kenozero present the main directions and stages of development of wooden church architecture in the Russian North*” (p.34). ICOMOS would appreciate receiving a more detailed description of characteristics of the traditional timber architecture of the Russian North, both religious and domestic, as well as information on the number and location of such historic timber buildings that survive to this day.

Furthermore, ICOMOS would be pleased to receive a more detailed explanation of the architectural significance of churches and chapels that are included in the nominated property, in relation to the broader historical evolution of church architecture in the Russian North, supported by relevant academic references. It would be helpful as well to receive some clarification on how the architecture of the wooden churches located in the Kenozero cultural landscape reflects the characteristics of church architecture of the Russian North, including the distinctive roof structures that are considered to be specific to this area. The plans and measured drawings for each church would further assist in illustrating these characteristics.

Similar descriptions, plans and construction details would also be required to highlight the specific characteristics of the wooden chapels preserved in the Kenozero Lake cultural landscape.

ICOMOS acknowledges the information provided on the evolution of the traditional timber house types; however, it would be helpful if these descriptions were accompanied by respective plans and drawings for each of these types and with details on how the typical building forms of houses preserved in the Kenozero Lake cultural landscape relate to the domestic timber architecture of the Russian North, together with details on how many buildings for each type survive, including those which have not yet been restored.

The bathhouses, watermills, forges and wooden crosses mentioned in the nomination dossier would also benefit from more detailed information on how many of these survive, in which state of conservation and where they are located. Therefore, ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could provide such information.

### **Settlements**

The nomination dossier states that the planning structure and spatial composition of settlements in the Kenozero Lake cultural landscape are typical of the rural settlements of the Russian North. The five key traditional planning types are illustrated by the schematic plans of five selected villages. ICOMOS considers that it would be helpful to receive further clarification on how these types are related to all villages located in the nominated property and what survives in comparison to what existed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This information would help to understand how many historic villages retain traditional planning structures and spatial composition, and how many traditional houses and structures remain within each village.

### **Conservation**

The nomination dossier makes clear that a considerable effort has been made to conserve the wooden buildings of the Kenozero Lake cultural landscape over the last twenty-five years. ICOMOS would appreciate receiving further details on the scope of the work and documentation that has been gathered for the conserved buildings in relation to the interventions carried out, as well as on the justification for the conservation interventions in terms of research and analysis. ICOMOS would be pleased to receive a sample of the documentation available for one building. Further clarification would also be needed to understand whether conservation works have been limited to protected monuments and, if so, what plans are in place or envisaged for conserving the timber buildings, mainly domestic, that are not listed monuments.

### **Protection**

The nomination dossier lists forty-four structures under state protection such as chapels, churches, churchyards and watermills: forty-two are designated as historical monuments of regional significance and two as historical monuments of federal significance. The traditional domestic buildings do not appear to benefit from formal heritage protection. ICOMOS would be pleased to receive clarification on how and through which legal provisions the non-designated traditional buildings are protected.

### **Documentation**

The Russian North attracted the interest of ethnographers and photographers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. ICOMOS considers that it would be helpful to have a better understanding of what archival material exists on the structures located within the Kenozero Lake cultural landscape and to receive samples of some of the most relevant archival illustrations.

We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation procedure.

We would be grateful if you could provide **ICOMOS** and the **World Heritage Centre** with the above-requested information by **28 February 2024 at the latest**, the deadline set out in paragraph 148 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* concerning additional information on nominations to be received. Please note that any information submitted after this statutory deadline will not be considered by ICOMOS in its evaluation for the World Heritage Committee. It should be noted, however, that while ICOMOS will carefully consider any additional information submitted within the statutory deadline, it will not be possible to properly evaluate a completely revised nomination or a large amount of new information submitted at the last minute. ICOMOS would, therefore, be grateful if the State Party could keep its response concise and respond only to the above requests.

We thank you for your support of the World Heritage Convention and the evaluation procedure.

Yours faithfully,



Gwenaëlle Bourdin  
Director  
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Copy to            Department for World Heritage and  
                         International Communications of the Russian Scientific Research Institute of Cultural  
                         and Natural Heritage named after D.S. Likhachev  
                         Kenozero National Park Federal State Budgetary Institution  
                         UNESCO World Heritage Centre