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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Forty-seventh session UNESCO, Paris 6-16 July 2025

Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda: Establishment of the World Heritage List and of the List of World Heritage in Danger

8. Nomination Process

SUMMARY

This document presents overall topics concerning the nomination process for inscription on the World Heritage List.

The document is divided into six parts:

- Part I Proposal for the revision and simplification of the nomination format
- Part II Streamlining of the nomination process: reducing the one-year period between Tentative List submission and Preliminary Assessment request
- Part III Cultural landscapes category
- Part IV Preliminary Assessment requests received by 18 October 2024

Part V Nominations not evaluated for the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee

Draft Decision: 47 COM 8, see part VI

I. PROPOSAL FOR THE REVISION AND SIMPLIFICATION OF THE NOMINATION FORMAT

- 1. At its 46th session (New Delhi, 2024), in Paragraph 9 of Decision **46 COM 11**, the Committee requested "the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, in consultation with Category 2 Centres, to present a proposal for the revision and simplification of the Nomination Format, and the corresponding revisions in the Operational Guidelines, also exploring options for developing an online platform for the submission of nomination dossiers, at its 47th session".
- 2. In follow up to this Decision, it is useful to look at how the latest revision of the nomination format was organised. A comprehensive revision and streamlining of the nomination format took place between the 43rd session (Baku, 2019) and the extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021) of the World Heritage Committee. That revision came in the context of the second phase of the overall nomination process reform, following endorsement of its principles and modalities, to focus on operationalization, being mindful of the need for careful alignment with existing processes and ensuring consistency. In this spirit, at its 43rd session, the Committee had requested the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, to organize the work of this operational phase, through necessary research and convening of a small expert drafting group, which would reflect regional balance, to discuss and propose concrete changes to be introduced into the Operational Guidelines.
- 3. In consultation with the Advisory Bodies, the World Heritage Centre convened a geographically and gender-balanced small expert drafting group. The Drafting Group represented the widest possible range of expertise, including former and current Committee members, States Parties representatives, site managers and heritage experts having in common an in-depth knowledge of the World Heritage nomination process and other related processes.
- 4. The Drafting Group held two meetings *in presentia* (7-8 November 2019 and 13-15 January 2020). On 17 February 2020, upon suggestion of the Drafting Group, an additional meeting was organized between the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to deal with issues relating to timeline and consistency with other existing processes. In between and following these face-to-face meetings, the Drafting Group continued its work through online exchanges throughout 2020 to further refine the reviews of the proposed concrete changes to the Operational Guidelines. The resulting proposed revision of the nomination format (Annex 5 of the Operational Guidelines) was presented to the Committee at its extended 44th session in 2021 and it was adopted in its entirety.
- 5. It is therefore concluded that a similar approach should be adopted in a further review; however, given the above methodology it is suggested that the necessary work could be achieved with a single *in presentia* meeting of a geographically and gender-balanced expert group to inform the process. Ahead of such meeting, a targeted consultation would be held with all the World Heritage-related Category 2 Centres to ensure their inputs.
- 6. While the final content of the process should be agreed with the expert group, provisionally it is suggested that this should focus on the following elements as a priority:
 - a) In-depth analysis of the nomination format, including observations gathered through a survey, to highlight the main elements that:
 - i) represent key information necessary for the evaluation process,
 - ii) represent key information necessary to consider a nomination complete,

- iii) result in the most frequent concerns regarding the completeness of nominations,
- iv) are not well developed/understood, and for which reasons,
- v) appear to create duplication within nomination dossiers,
- vi) are the most essential to document effective protection and management requirements,
- vii) may create significant additional work and cost,
- viii) create other concerns in the view of States Parties, stakeholders, Category 2 Centres, Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre;
- b) Evaluating practices regarding the preparation of more/less expensive printed and designed documentation;
- c) Reviewing the formats used for other UNESCO site-based Conventions and programmes, as well as other internationally agreed benchmarks, including the World Heritage Resource Manuals, to scope opportunities for improvements;
- d) Reviewing the results of this analysis to agree on a targeted set of improvements, tackling the points identified above;
- e) Further reviewing the current maximum word and page lengths to promote possibly shorter and less costly nomination dossiers;
- Reviewing the nomination format, relative to the format for Preliminary Assessments, to ensure the adoption of as much as possible consistent section headings and clear guidance on the levels of information required for both nominations and Preliminary Assessments;
- g) Presenting, based on the above, a proposed revised Annex 5 of the Operational Guidelines, comprising the amended format and explanatory notes.
- 7. It should always be borne in mind that any revision of the nomination format must not compromise the credibility of the process and must maintain the scientific level of documentation necessary to support the inscription of a property on the World Heritage List.
- 8. The above process is anticipated to require a provision of extra budgetary funds, estimated at USD 75,000.

II. STREAMLINING OF THE NOMINATION PROCESS: REDUCING THE ONE-YEAR PERIOD BETWEEN TENTATIVE LIST SUBMISSION AND PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT REQUEST

- 9. In the context of the Open-ended Working Group debate regarding Recommendation 7 on the Preliminary Assessment (see Document WHC/25/47.COM/11), it clearly emerged the consensual wish to reduce the waiting period within the nomination process, notably by removing the one-year waiting period between adding a site on the Tentative List and the related submission of a request for Preliminary Assessment. This possibility was previously evoked also by the World Heritage Centre at the 46th (New Delhi, 2024) session during the debate on Item 8 on the nomination process and was also welcomed by the Committee.
- 10. While Recommendation 7 requires further work and analysis, given the consensual character, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies suggest that this proposition be acted upon already at the current session. In this regard, the necessary amendments to the Operational Guidelines are indicated here below.

11. It is therefore suggested that the World Heritage Committee decides to reduce the waiting period between adding a site on the Tentative List and the related submission of a request for Preliminary Assessment by bringing it from "at least one year" to "at least two weeks". To this extent, it is proposed to amend accordingly the provision included in Paragraph 65 of the Operational Guidelines. Paragraph 3 of Draft Decision **47 COM 8** details the proposal.

III. CULTURAL LANDSCAPES CATEGORY

- 12. In light of recent years submission and evaluation of cultural landscapes nominations, the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, and IUCN have discussed approaches to this category together and wish to offer some guidance and a few points in terms of clarification of approach.
- ICOMOS notes some challenges and trends emerging in nominations regarding how the 13. cultural landscape category is applied. The category of cultural landscapes is considered by the Advisory Bodies as an opportunity to enhance the balance of the World Heritage List; however, how it is defined and translated into nomination strategies does not harness its potential at best. Often, the different types of cultural landscapes (designed, organically evolved, and associative) are not well understood or apprehended by the justification for inscription, the identification of the attributes, or the related management implications. One example is what is often called an 'evolving landscape' where the idea of an organically 'evolved landscape' is merged with that of a 'continuing landscape'. This merging leads to nominations for properties where it is suggested that more or less everything in the property could continue to evolve over time. While it is desirable that continuing cultural landscapes play an active role in contemporary society, for this to happen in a way that sustains Outstanding Universal Value, there needs to be a clear understanding of which parts of the evolutionary process may evolve, how, at which pace, and what aspects should be maintained as attributes reflecting the continuity between what is there now to the way the landscape has evolved over time.
- 14. ICOMOS also considers that some nominations are conceived as cultural landscapes with properties presenting combinations of multiple cultures/chronological periods, diverse types of sites and monuments and multiple, unrelated narratives, leading to proposals that lack clear and consistent argumentation to support the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the site. In other cases, the cultural landscape category is applied to sites whose realities and attributes differ significantly.
- 15. Sometimes, sufficient documentation about a site and its historical development is not available to understand the significance of the landscape dimension or how the territory was shaped by human intervention, which could justify an outstanding outcome under the cultural landscape category. In such situations, ICOMOS encourages using the landscape approach in the property's management, for instance, by taking into consideration the importance of the geomorphology and ecosystems of the territory and the reciprocal relation of its elements to the specific topographical, geographical, natural and human-made features and among each other, including, but not limited to, the visual relationships and functional interdependences among these elements. In this regard, it is important to distinguish the cultural landscapes as a category, defined by the Operational Guidelines, of properties recognised as of Outstanding Universal Value from the broader benefits of taking a landscape approach to conservation and management, which can apply in many sites.
- 16. Finally, ICOMOS and IUCN note that the potential of the cultural landscape category to maintain biodiversity and other natural values at sites and the interlinkages between cultural and natural heritage would be worth further exploration. In this regard, IUCN notes the need to review the current approach to providing nature conservation advice

within the nomination process of cultural landscapes, including the benefits of earlier inputs to ICOMOS, as well as the opportunities to standardize better the information provided on nature conservation values including geodiversity values, and species and ecosystem components of biodiversity, as well as the overlap with identified protected areas for nature and global biodiversity priorities to assist strengthening natural values conservation in cultural landscapes and properties.

17. Considering the issues mentioned above, ICOMOS and IUCN observe that some further reflection on how to enhance the functionality of the cultural landscape category to contribute to the representativity of the World Heritage List and the transmission to future generations of outstanding cultural landscapes would be needed. This reflection is already being supported by the more proactive consideration of cultural landscape proposals in the Preliminary Assessment process. It could take the form of more detailed guidance, linked formats, and capacity development opportunities.

IV. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT REQUESTS RECEIVED BY 18 OCTOBER 2024

- 18. In accordance with Paragraph 168 of the Operational Guidelines, the annual deadline for submitting Preliminary Assessment requests is 15 September. However, as this is a new process and has become mandatory for all nominations that the World Heritage Committee will examine from 2028 onwards, the deadline for 2024 was exceptionally extended to 18 October 2024.
- 19. By the extended deadline, a total of 45 Preliminary Assessment requests coming from all five regions were received. In compliance with Paragraph 60bis of the Operational Guidelines, States Parties that submitted multiple requests were required to prioritize one to enter the 2024 cycle. Moreover, some States Parties withdrew their requests prior to the check for completeness by the Secretariat. The list of the Preliminary Assessment requests received along with their status of completeness is presented in Annex 1 of this document.
- 20. Following the completeness check, along with withdrawals and prioritization by the submitting States Parties, a list of 34 Preliminary Assessment requests was established for the 2024 cycle. Of these, 26 requests pertain to cultural sites, five to mixed sites, and three to natural sites. The Advisory Bodies are presently reviewing these requests. The Preliminary Assessment reports prepared by the Advisory Bodies will be transmitted to the concerned States Parties on 1 October 2025. Each report will include an indication of whether the site has the potential to justify Outstanding Universal Value. If potential is identified, the reports will include specific recommendations and guidance to assist the States Parties in preparing the corresponding nomination dossiers.

V. NOMINATIONS NOT EVALUATED FOR THE 47TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

- 21. Due to security reasons, the Advisory Bodies were unable to evaluate the following two nominations submitted by States Parties in 2020 and 2024, which will thus not be examined by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session:
 - Lake Chad cultural landscape (Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria), submitted in 2020;
 - Hisham's Palace / Khirbet al-Mafjar (State of Palestine), submitted in 2024.
- 22. Should the security situation allow their evaluation, these nominations will be presented for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session, without impinging on national and overall quota of nominations to be examined (see Paragraph 61 of the

Operational Guidelines). Their evaluation process will be undertaken in accordance with the timeframe foreseen in Paragraph 168 of the Operational Guidelines.

VI. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 47 COM 8

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/8,

PROPOSAL FOR THE REVISION AND SIMPLIFICATION OF THE NOMINATION FORMAT

2. <u>Takes note</u> of the proposal to revise and simplify the nomination format, and <u>invites</u> the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, and in consultation with the Category 2 Centres, to implement, subject to the availability of resources, the process proposed in Section I of Document WHC/25/47.COM/8, and to present a proposal for a revised nomination format to the 49th session of the World Heritage Committee;

STREAMLINING OF THE NOMINATION PROCESS: REDUCING THE ONE-YEAR PERIOD BETWEEN TENTATIVE LIST SUBMISSION AND PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT REQUEST

- 3. <u>Decides</u> to reduce the waiting period between adding a site on the Tentative List and the related submission of a request for Preliminary Assessment by amending Paragraph 65 of the Operational Guidelines as follows:
 - 65. States Parties shall submit Tentative Lists to the Secretariat, at least one year two weeks prior to the submission of a Preliminary Assessment request to the Secretariat for review by the Advisory Bodies. States Parties are encouraged to re-examine and re-submit their Tentative List at least every ten years.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES CATEGORY

4. <u>Also takes note</u> of the issues on the use of the cultural landscape category and <u>encourages</u> the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to engage in further joint reflection on how to enhance the functionality of this category, including through more detailed guidance, linked reporting formats, and capacity development opportunities;

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT REQUESTS RECEIVED BY 18 OCTOBER 2024

5. <u>Further takes note</u> of the Preliminary Assessment requests received by 18 October 2024 presented in Annex 1 of Document WHC/25/47.COM/8;

NOMINATIONS NOT EVALUATED FOR THE 47TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

6. <u>Also decides</u> that nominations, which were submitted for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and 47th (UNESCO, 2025) sessions, but which could not be evaluated due to security reasons, be examined at the 48th session of the Committee, should security situation allow the technical evaluation mission to be undertaken, without impinging on national and overall quota of nominations (Paragraph 61 of the Operational Guidelines), in accordance with the timeframe foreseen in Paragraph 168 of the Operational Guidelines.

List of Preliminary Assessment requests received by 18 October 2024 (Presented by region and in alphabetical order by State Party)

Total number of Preliminary Assessment requests received by the annual deadline: **45** (Cultural 34, Natural 4, Mixed 7)

Total number of complete Preliminary Assessment requests <u>after withdrawals* and the Completeness Check</u>: **40**¹ (Cultural 30, Natural 4, Mixed 6)

*These withdrawals intervened prior to the Completeness Check.

STATE PARTY	POTENTIAL NOMINATED PROPERTY ²	Actual date received	Criteria	Cultural Landscape	Complete or Incomplete
	AFRICA (12/14) (Cultural	5/6, Natural 2	2/2, Mixed 5/6)		
Botswana	Gcwihaba Caves	18/10/2024	(vii)(viii)	NO	COMPLETE
Cabo Verde	Camp de concentration de Tarrafal	18/10/2024	(iii)(vi)	NO	COMPLETE
Djibouti	Les arts rupestres d'Abourma	13/09/2024	(i)(iii)(vi)	NO	WITHDRAWN
Djibouti	Le lac Assal	13/09/2024	(vi)(vii)(viii)(x)	NO	WITHDRAWN
Liberia	The Gola Rainforest National Park	18/10/2024	(ix)(x)	NO	COMPLETE
Mali	Sites historiques et paysages culturels du Manden : Kamabulon, Case sacrée de Kangaba, le site de Kurukan Fuga, le Kamablon, Case sacrée de Kéniéro et l'Arche de Kamandjan [See footnote 1]	12/09/2024	(ii)(iv)(x)	NO	COMPLETE
Mali	Fort de Médine	13/09/2024	(ii)(iv)	NO	COMPLETE
Malawi	Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve and Nyika National Park		(iii)(v)(viii)(ix)(x)	NO	COMPLETE
Mozambique	Quirimbas Archipelago	18/10/2024	(ii)(x)	NO	COMPLETE
Namibia	Brandberg National Monument Area		(iii)(v)(viii)(x)	NO	COMPLETE
Senegal	Architecture rurale de Basse-Casamance : Les cases à impluvium du royaume Bandial			YES	COMPLETE
Togo	Sites de la métallurgie ancienne du fer de Bassar	12/09/2024	(iv)(vi)	NO	COMPLETE
Zambia	Kalambo Falls National Monument		(iii)(iv)(vii)(viii)	NO	COMPLETE
Uganda	Bigo Bya Mugenyi (Archaeological Earthworks)	18/10/2024		NO	COMPLETE
Saudi Arabia	ARAB STATES (3/3) (Cultu Ancient Walled Oases of Northern Arabia			YES	COMPLETE
	(henceforth 'AWONA')				
Syrian Arab Republic	Maaloula	17/10/2024	(iii)(v)	NO	COMPLETE
Tunisia	Sfax : Ville historique portuaire de la rive sud de la Méditerranée			NO	COMPLETE
	ASIA-PACIFIC (10/12) (Cultura	al 8/10, Natu	ral 1/1, Mixed 1/1)		
Australia	Parramatta Female Factory and Institutions Precinct	11/09/2024	(iv)(vi)	YES	COMPLETE
China	Sanxingdui and Jinsha Sites	13/09/2024	(i)(ii)(iii)	NO	COMPLETE
India	Historic Ensemble of Orchha	15/10/2024		NO	COMPLETE
India	Geoglyphs of the Konkan Region of India [See footnote 1]	15/10/2024		NO	COMPLETE

¹ This total includes six Preliminary Assessment requests submitted by India and two Preliminary Assessment requests submitted by Mali. In compliance with paragraph 60bis of the Operational Guidelines, India has prioritized the Preliminary Assessment of the "Historic Ensemble of Orchha", and Mali the Preliminary Assessment of the "Fort de Médine", for the 2024 cycle.

² The names of sites are presented in the language in which they were submitted by the States Parties.

STATE PARTY	POTENTIAL NOMINATED PROPERTY ²	Actual date received	Criteria	Cultural Landscape	Complete or Incomplete
India	Group of Monuments at Mandu, Madhya Pradesh [See footnote 1]	15/10/2024	(ii)(iv)	NO	COMPLETE
India	Jingkieng Jr / Lyu Chrai Cultural Landscape [See footnote 1]	15/10/2024	(i)(iii)(v)	NO	COMPLETE
India	Thembang Fortified Village [See footnote 1]	15/10/2024	(ii)(iii)(∨)	NO	COMPLETE
India	Bhedaghat-Lametaghat in Narmada Valley, Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh), India [See footnote 1]	15/10/2024	(vii)(viii)	NO	COMPLETE
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Āsbāds (windmills) of Iran	13/09/2024	(i)(ii)(iii)(v)	NO	COMPLETE
Kazakhstan	Rocky Mosques of Mangyshlak Peninsula	16/10/2024	(iii)(v)(vi)	NO	WITHDRAWN
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	Silk Road: Fergana-Syr Darya corridor	16/10/2024		NO	WITHDRAWN
Philippines	The Historic Towns and Landscape of Taal Volcano and its Caldera Lake	12/09/2024	(ii)(v)(viii)(ix)(x)	YES	COMPLETE

EUROPE - NORTH AMERICA (12/13) (Cultural 12/13, Natural 0, Mixed 0)

Armenia	The Vishaps and the Cultural Landscape of Tirinkatar	13/09/2024	(ii)(iii)(vi)	YES	COMPLETE
Canada	Wanuskewin	05/09/2024	(iii)	NO	COMPLETE
Cyprus	Church of Panagia Aggeloktisti	13/09/2024	(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)	NO	COMPLETE
Denmark	Seaweed Houses and Sea-salt Huts, Laesoe Island (Denmark)	06/09/2024		YES	COMPLETE
France	Saint-Honorat, île monastique de l'archipel de Lérins à Cannes	12/09/2024	(v)(vi)	YES	COMPLETE
Germany	Francke Foundations Buildings	30/08/2024	(ii)(iii)(iv)	NO	COMPLETE
Italy	Le paysage du système des ville-fattoria du Chianti Classico	06/08/2024	(iii)(v)	YES	COMPLETE
Malta	The Old and Ancient Capitals of the Maltese archipelago	09/09/2024	(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)	NO	WITHDRAWN
Russian Federation	Denisova Cave	19/03/2024	(iii)(v)	NO	COMPLETE
Serbia	Smederevo Fortress	12/09/2024	(iv)(vi)	NO	COMPLETE
Türkiye	Archaeological Site of Kültepe-Kanesh	12/09/2024	(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)	NO	COMPLETE
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	City of York Historic Urban Core	13/09/2024	(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)	NO	COMPLETE
United States of America	Central Park	25/09/2024	(i)(ii)(iv)	YES	COMPLETE

LATIN AMERICA / CARIBBEAN (3/3) (Cultural 2/2, Natural 1/1, Mixed 0)

Argentina	La Payunia: Llancanelo and Payún Matrú volcanic fields	09/09/2024(vii)(viii)	NO	COMPLETE
Brazil	Oswaldo Cruz Foundation: Health, Science and Culture in Manguinhos	13/09/2024((ii)(vi)	NO	COMPLETE
Peru	Real Felipe Fortress of Callao	13/09/2024 ((iv)	NO	COMPLETE