

# Netherlands Funds-in-Trust

2025



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Ministry of Education, Culture and  
Science of the Netherlands



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## About the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust

The Netherlands Funds-in-Trust (NFiT) was established in 2001 by the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences with the aim of reinforcing the implementation of the UNESCO 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

### 2023-2026 priorities

The ability to flexibly respond to needs is considered as a strength of the NFiT. Therefore, the current priorities are to:

- **Support** the World Heritage Convention broadly, including cultural, natural, and mixed heritage and also including all regions
- **Provide** smaller 'seed funding' for projects. The NFiT is a useful means of supporting projects and reaching beneficiaries, enabling them to carry out the initial work necessary to secure further funding
- **Support** projects focusing on a specific World Heritage site and/or theme in relation to key challenges facing World Heritage over the coming years (climate change, biodiversity, Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), and sustainable development)
- **Support** State Parties' efforts to implement the World Heritage Committee decisions to improve the state of conservation of World Heritage properties
- **Support** actions or activities identified during the Periodic Reporting cycles and in World Heritage Regional Action Plans

### How does it work?

The five Strategic Objectives (5C's: Credibility, Conservation, Capacity Building, Communication and Community, adopted in 2002 and 2007) respond to the increasing demands for a sustainable, comprehensive and inclusive implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Together with the Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention (2015) for the UN 2030 Agenda, it will continue to serve as a general framework for the selection of projects and allocation of funding. The 'Our World Heritage Goals 2012-2022', UNESCO's Global Priorities (Africa and Gender Equality) and Priority Groups (Youth and SIDS) will be also taken into account.

## NFiT in numbers

Years of  
cooperation **25**

Million USD invested  
in the NFiT **10+**

Projects implemented  
worldwide **220+**

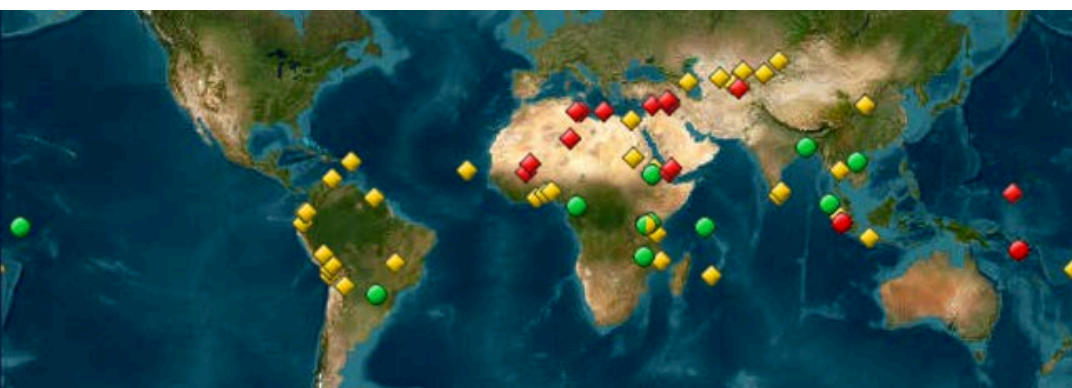
State Parties to the  
World Heritage  
Convention involved **70**

World Heritage  
properties supported **74**

World Heritage  
properties in Danger  
supported **13**

State of conservation  
reports examined **53**

Annual budget  
EUR 375,000





# Projects





# PROJECT

## Empowering Community-Driven Climate Data Collection and Capacity in the Rwenzori Mountains National Park

### Project summary

**Project sites** Rwenzori Mountains National Park (Uganda)

**Duration** 12 months

**Approved in** 2025

**Key partners** Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)

**Beneficiaries**

- Local communities, the Bakonzo people
- Uganda Wildlife Authority
- Visitors to the Rwenzori Mountains National Park

The Rwenzori Mountains National Park in Uganda, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is known for its spectacular glaciers and biodiversity. But climate change is rapidly transforming this unique landscape. Glaciers that once covered 7.5 km<sup>2</sup> in 1906 have shrunk to just 1.5 km<sup>2</sup> by 2005 — and could disappear entirely by the 2040s.

This dramatic melt is not only changing the mountain environment but also increasing the risk of flooding and extreme weather in nearby communities. In 2020, floods in the Nyamwamba River basin affected over 170,000 people and destroyed thousands of homes.

To protect the park and its people, this project supports the implementation of a Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management Plan. It will help local communities collect and understand climate data, especially around glacier changes, rainfall, and extreme weather. In line with the 2025 International Year of Glacier Preservation, the project will also raise awareness of the global importance of glaciers.

### Objectives

- To build the skills of local communities and park staff in collecting, monitoring, and analyzing climate data — particularly related to glacier loss
- To strengthen local capacity for using climate information in planning, risk reduction, and adaptation to protect both the park and surrounding communities

## Impact

This project will help protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the Rwenzori Mountains while preparing local communities for climate-related challenges. It will improve data collection on glacier retreat and climate shifts, and support informed, community-driven responses to floods and other risks.

## Expected results

- Training of at least 30 local community members and site staff in climate monitoring and data use
- Establishment or improvement of systems to monitor key climate indicators
- Creation of a shared climate data platform for access and sharing
- Development of outreach materials to raise awareness and support local planning
- Improvement of the local knowledge base to strengthen climate resilience and disaster preparedness

## Our World Heritage Goals 2012-2022

- ☒ **Goal 1**  
The Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage sites is maintained
- ☐ **Goal 2**  
The World Heritage List is a credible selection of the world's most outstanding cultural and natural heritage
- ☒ **Goal 3**  
Heritage protection and conservation considers present and future environmental, societal and economic needs
- ☐ **Goal 4**  
World Heritage maintains or enhances its brand quality
- ☒ **Goal 5**  
The Committee can address policy and strategic issues
- ☐ **Goal 6**  
Decisions of statutory meetings are informed and effectively implemented

## Sustainable Development Goals





# PROJECT

## Rehabilitation of the Majestic Cinema Theatre in Stone Town

### Project summary

**Project sites** Stone Town of Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania)

**Duration** 18 months

**Approved in** 2024

**Key partners**

- Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority
- Hifadhi Zanzibar
- Department of Urban and Rural Planning
- Zanzibar Urban Municipal
- Zanzibar International Film Festival
- ICCROM
- ICOMOS

**Beneficiaries**

- The local communities of the Island of Zanzibar and in particular youth, women, and girls
- Local and international artists and musicians and schools
- Visitors of the Stone Town of Zanzibar
- Zanzibar Tourism Investment (ZATI)

The Stone Town, located in Zanzibar and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000, is an outstanding example of a Swahili trading town. Known for its mix of African, Arab, Indian, and European influences, its historic buildings and cultural traditions make it one of East Africa's most iconic heritage sites.

Within this historic town lies the Majestic Cinema, built in the mid-20th century and once a key space for community life and entertainment. It is the last original cinema in the Stone Town that has not been converted to another use. Since its closure in the 1980s, the building has suffered major deterioration, putting it at risk of being lost forever.

This project aims to restore and reopen the Majestic Cinema, turning it into a vibrant cultural hub. The goal is not only to preserve the historic structure but also to bring it back to life as a space for creativity, education, and cultural exchange. Once restored, it will reconnect with local communities and become a unique destination for residents and visitors alike.

### Objectives

- To renovate and strengthen the damaged parts of the Majestic Cinema's concrete structure, ensuring the building's safety while respecting its original character
- To prepare a bilingual (Kiswahili and English) publication during the restoration, promoting the project's approach and sharing the story of the cinema's transformation into a cultural hub

## Impact

This project will restore a key cultural landmark in the Stone Town, turning the Majestic Cinema into a vibrant space for arts, community, and tourism. It will create jobs, support local skills in conservation, and promote heritage-led development.

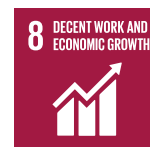
## Expected results

- Repair of the damaged parts of the Majestic Cinema's concrete structure
- Promotion of publication on the role of conservation, local economy, and the best practices on rehabilitation process and of approach to adaptive re-use of historic buildings without threatening its heritage values and attribute of the World Heritage property

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# PROJECT

## Reconstruction of Historic Houses in the Old Walled City of Shibam, Yemen

### Project summary

**Project sites** Old Walled City of Shibam (Yemen)

**Duration** 12 months

**Approved in** 2025

**Key partners**

- General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen (GOPHCY)
- Implementing Partner (Potentially Social Fund for Development (SFD) or another qualified local company)

**Beneficiaries**

- Shibam's community
- General Organization for the Preservation of Historic Cities in Yemen (GOPHCY)
- The families who will reclaim the reconstructed houses
- Adjacent property owners

The Old Walled City of Shibam, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1982, is famous for its towering mudbrick buildings — some up to 11 stories high. Known as the “Manhattan of the Desert,” Shibam is one of the earliest examples of vertical urban planning, with homes built close together to protect residents from external threats.

But today, climate change and heavy rains are threatening this historic city. Torrential downpours are causing erosion and collapse of the ancient mudbrick buildings. As a result, Shibam has been placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

This project focuses on reconstructing three collapsed historic houses (A79, A40, and A41) using traditional mudbrick techniques. These houses are essential not only for their own heritage value but also because they help support the buildings around them. The work will use salvaged materials where possible and will involve local artisans and youth, creating jobs and preserving valuable building knowledge.

### Objectives

- To reconstruct three collapsed historic houses (A79, A40, A41) using traditional mudbrick techniques to maintain architectural authenticity
- To stabilize nearby structures and preserve the integrity of the city's unique urban fabric
- To enhance the resilience of reconstructed buildings to climate-related risks
- To create job opportunities and transfer traditional construction skills to local youth
- To promote community involvement and strengthen local capacities in cultural heritage conservation



## Impact

This project will help preserve the Outstanding Universal Value of Shibam by rebuilding key parts of its historic core and protecting neighboring structures from collapse. It will make the city safer for residents and visitors, reduce the risk of further damage, and support the resilience of this fragile urban landscape.

Beyond the buildings themselves, the project will empower the community by creating jobs, especially for young people trained in traditional construction techniques. It will also promote gender inclusion by involving women in documentation and supervisory roles, contributing to more equitable participation in cultural heritage work.

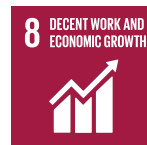
## Expected results

- Reconstruction of House A79 and stabilization of adjacent buildings A78 and A80
- Reconstruction of House A40, including the first floor needed to support neighboring House A39
- Reconstruction of House A41 with improved safety and habitability
- Employment and training opportunities created for local youth in traditional mudbrick construction
- Strengthened resilience of the Old Walled City of Shibam to climate impacts and future disasters

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## Sustainable Development Goals



# PROJECT

## Leveraging Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development in the Maldives

© National Centre for Cultural Heritage, Republic of Maldives

### Project summary

**Project sites** Coral Stone Mosques (Maldives)

**Duration** 12 months

**Approved in** 2025

**Key partners**

- National Center for Cultural Heritage
- Ministry of Dhivehi Language, Culture and Heritage

**Beneficiaries**

- Ministry of Dhivehi Language, Culture and Heritage
- Malé City Council
- Maldives National Commission for UNESCO

The Maldives is home to a unique set of Coral Stone Mosques that represent centuries of cultural, religious, and architectural traditions. Six of these mosques have been on UNESCO's Tentative List since 2013, but the country has yet to secure its first official World Heritage site.

This project aims to help the government of the Maldives complete the nomination process by finalizing the required documentation and addressing key conservation and management challenges. It also responds to climate-related threats such as rising sea levels and coastal erosion, which put the mosques at serious risk.

In addition to preserving the physical structures, the project will safeguard the living traditions connected to the mosques — such as rituals, oral history, and traditional building techniques — ensuring that both the tangible and intangible heritage are passed on to future generations.

### Objectives

- To assist the government of the Maldives in identifying and analyzing the key gaps and challenges in finalizing the World Heritage nomination dossier
- To support the government in addressing these challenges by developing a step-by-step action plan
- To propose a model management system for the Coral Mosques based on international best practices and local knowledge
- To expedite the preparation and submission of a complete nomination dossier for the Coral Stone Mosques



## Impact

This project will help the Maldives move closer to its first World Heritage listing by completing the nomination dossier for the Coral Stone Mosques. It will raise awareness of their cultural value, support sustainable tourism, and strengthen national identity.

The project will also build local skills in heritage conservation and management, safeguard traditional practices linked to the Mosques, and promote resilient strategies to address climate change risks.

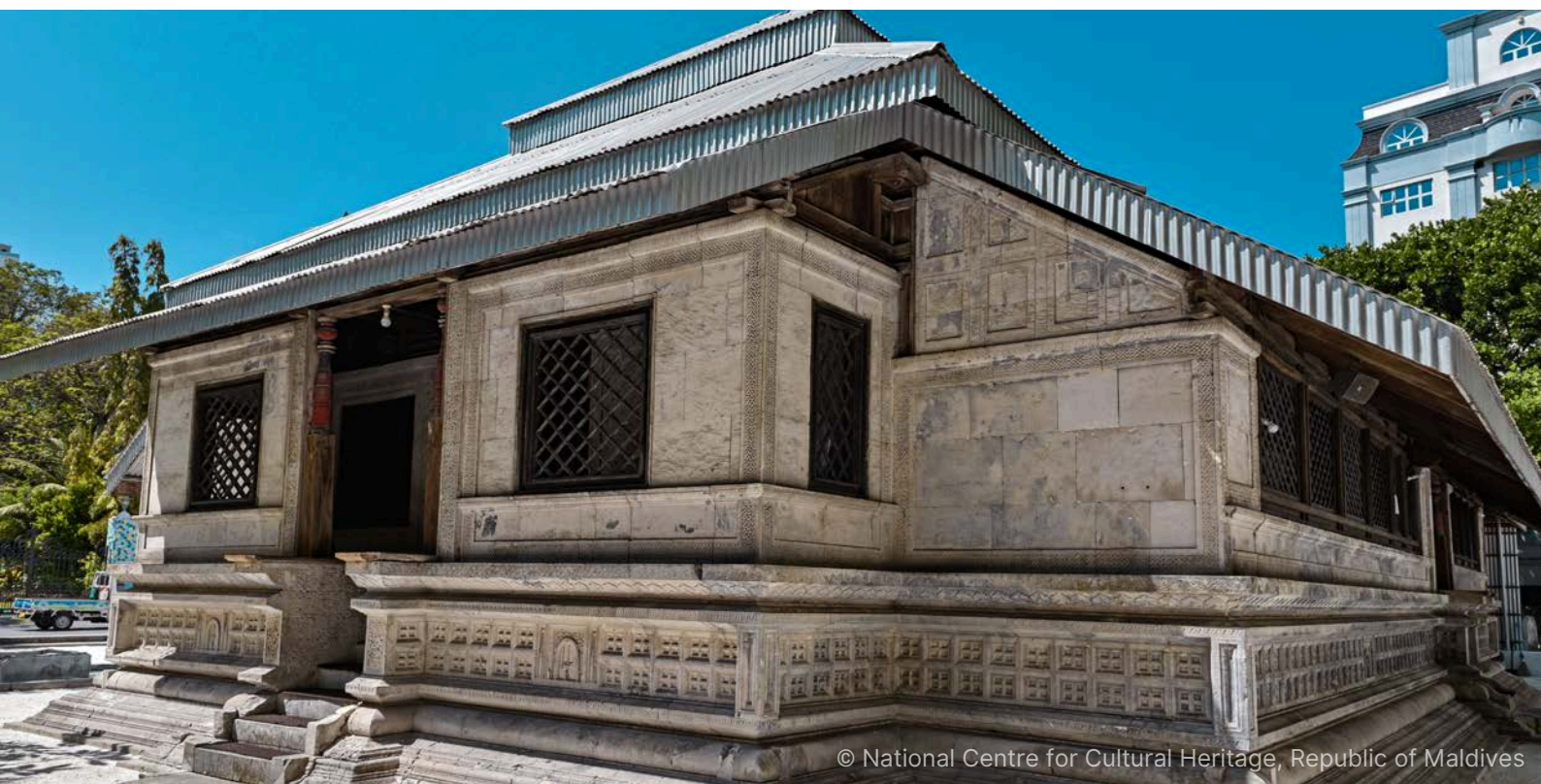
## Expected results

- Finalization of the nomination dossier for the six Coral Stone Mosques for submission to UNESCO
- Development of a model management system to guide long-term conservation efforts
- Strengthening of national and local capacities in heritage documentation and management
- Safeguarding of traditional knowledge and cultural practices linked to the Coral Mosques

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# PROJECT

## Developing a Tentative List of Timor-Leste

© Gil Paulino dos Santos de Oliveira

### Project summary

**Project sites** Timor-Leste

**Duration** 12 months

**Approved in** 2025

**Key partners**

- Timor Leste National Commission for UNESCO (TLNCU)
- Secretariat for Arts and Culture (SEAC)

**Beneficiaries**

- TLNCU
- SEAC
- Local authorities
- Universities and NGOs in Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste became the 193rd State Party to the World Heritage Convention in January 2017, signaling its commitment to safeguarding cultural and natural heritage for future generations.

However, since its ratification, the country has yet to develop a national strategy for the identification, management, and protection of its heritage sites. A Tentative List, which is the essential first step toward nominating sites for the World Heritage List, has also not been established. Awareness of the Convention and its procedures remains limited among many government bodies and academic institutions.

Since 2024, UNESCO Jakarta has supported the Timorese authorities in understanding the fundamentals of the Convention and in initiating the Tentative Listing process. This project will focus on building national capacity, identifying key heritage sites, and developing Timor-Leste's first Tentative List.

### Objectives

- To support the Government of Timor-Leste in developing a unified and prioritized list of heritage sites that can be used consistently across relevant ministries
- To identify and prepare at least one site for inclusion in Timor-Leste's Tentative List by the end of 2026



## Impact

Creating a Tentative List will help Timor-Leste better protect and manage its cultural and natural sites. It will provide a clear overview of important sites, prioritize conservation efforts, and balance heritage protection with tourism. This process will also attract international support and funding for future conservation projects.

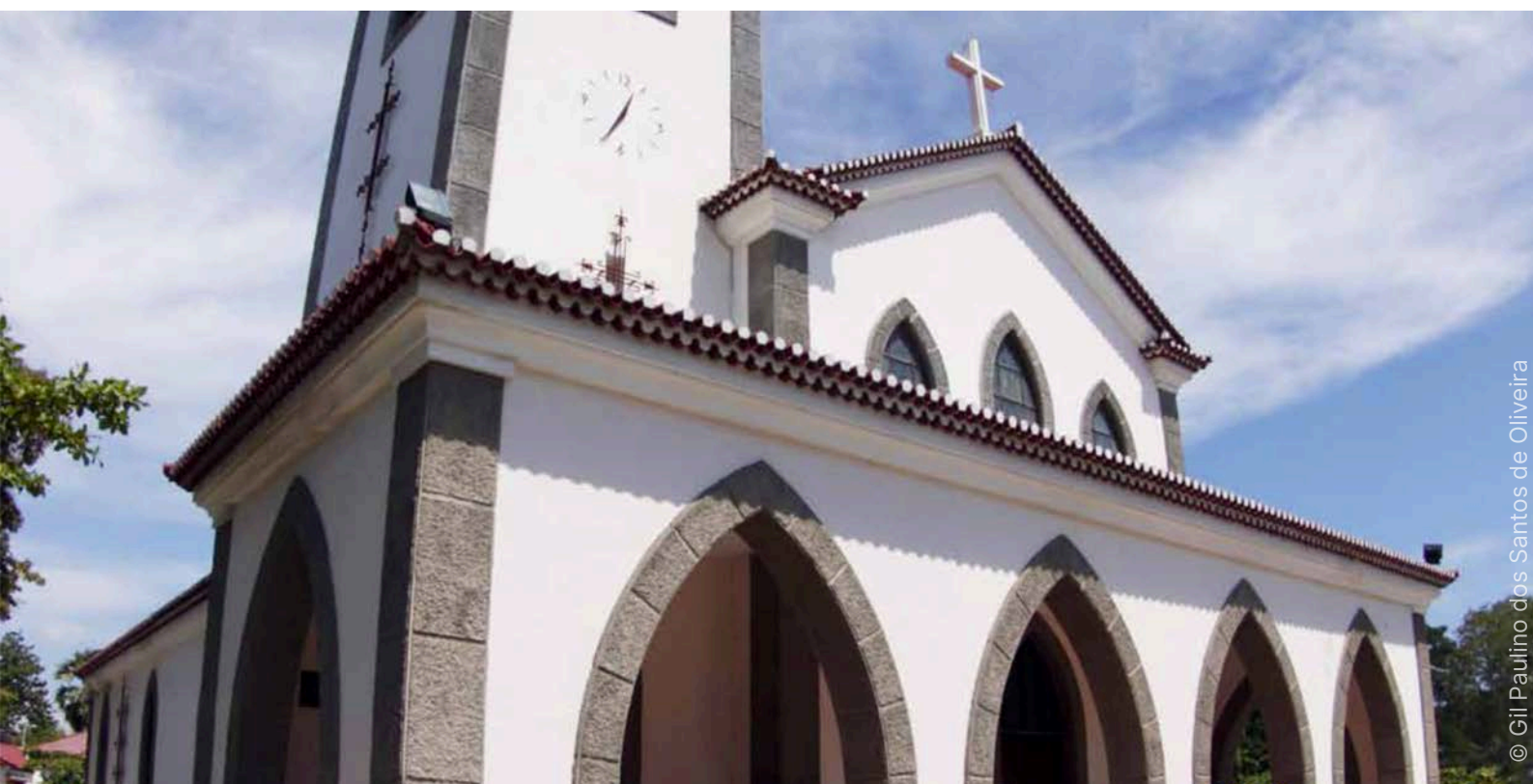
## Expected results

- A credible and well-balanced Tentative List of potential World Heritage sites in Timor-Leste
- Establishment of a national working group to draft and review the Tentative List
- Completion of comparative studies and stakeholder consultations for selected cultural properties
- Submission of the finalized Tentative List form to the World Heritage Centre by December 2026

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## Sustainable Development Goals



# PROJECT

## Preparation of an Integrated Management Plan for the World Heritage Site Forte de Samaipata

### Project summary

**Project sites** Forte de Samaipata (Plurinational State of Bolivia)

**Duration** 12 months

**Approved in** 2025

**Key partners**

- Center for Archaeological Research of Samaipata - Autonomous Municipal Government of Samaipata
- Tourism operators and local businesses
- Local population and Indigenous communities
- Ministry of Cultures, Decolonization and Depatriarchalization

**Beneficiaries**

- Managers, administrators and staff of the World Heritage site Forte de Samaipata
- Local and national authorities, local population and businesses, visitors to the site

Forte de Samaipata, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1998, is located in Bolivia's Santa Cruz province. The site consists of a ceremonial hill with carvings and a residential-administrative area, showcasing pre-Columbian culture in the Andes-Amazon region.

While the Center for Archaeological Research of Samaipata (CIAS) has managed conservation and tourism since 1974, an integrated management plan is needed to link conservation, governance, tourism, education, climate adaptation, and research.

Challenges include environmental damage, weathering of the rock carvings, and the recent impact of fires and droughts. The updated management plan will address these issues, including disaster preparedness and climate change mitigation, while fostering better coordination across Bolivia's World Heritage sites.

### Objective

- To develop a management plan through: collection of data on archaeological, architectural, socio-cultural, territorial, and tourism aspects through fieldworks, organization of capacity-building workshops for site managers, staff, and local communities, and preparation of detailed reports



## Impact

This project will improve the management and conservation of Forte de Samaipata, safeguard its universal value, raise local awareness, and enhance visitor experiences. It will foster collaboration between authorities, stakeholders, and communities, providing a model for other World Heritage sites.

## Expected results

- Development and adoption of a comprehensive Integrated Management Plan for Forte de Samaipata
- Creation of thematic technical reports covering key aspects of the site, such as conservation, management, tourism, and climate change impacts
- Strengthened coordination between local and national authorities, improving conservation efforts

## Our World Heritage Goals 2012-2022

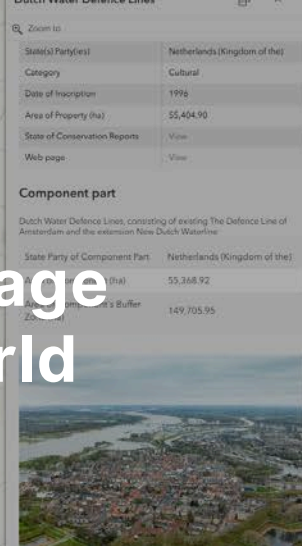
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## PROJECT

# Geospatial Technologies for Heritage Protection: Strengthening the World Heritage Online Map Platform



## Project summary

**Project sites** N/A

**Duration** 12 months

**Approved in** 2025

**Key partners**

- States Parties to the World Heritage Convention
- African Site Manager Network
- African World Heritage Fund (AWHF)
- Advisory Bodies
- Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Government of Flanders (Belgium)

**Beneficiaries**

- States Parties
- Site managers (especially in Africa)
- National/regional/local authorities
- Heritage stakeholders
- Universities and researchers

Heritage around the world is increasingly threatened by climate change, urban development, natural hazards, and armed conflict. To help monitor these irreplaceable sites, UNESCO launched the World Heritage Online Map Platform (WHOMP) in 2023, with support from the Government of Flanders (Belgium). WHOMP is a cutting-edge digital tool that leverages satellite data to monitor risks and support informed decision-making.

Via this tool, UNESCO is for the first time systematically applying Earth observation and remote sensing technologies to safeguard cultural and natural heritage. The platform enables States Parties, experts, and local communities to detect early warning signs, such as wildfires, floods, coastal erosion, and land use changes, and to respond proactively.

The present project will further enhance the platform by improving data quality, expanding the coverage of UNESCO-designated sites (further integrating World Heritage sites in Africa, Biosphere Reserves and Geoparks), and strengthening its monitoring and early warning capacities. The ultimate goal is to strengthen this accessible resource by streamlining live satellite data and enhancing geoprocessing capabilities.

## Objectives

- To strengthen the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage sites by improving the monitoring of slow-onset risks (like erosion and land change) and urgent threats (like fires and floods) using satellite data
- To provide better information on climate change impacts by adding climate-related datasets and analysis tools to the platform
- To help developers and decision-makers understand World Heritage site boundaries, supporting better project planning and reducing risks to heritage areas



## Impact

This project will improve how World Heritage sites are monitored and protected, using cutting-edge technology to deliver faster, more accurate information. It will help governments, communities, and experts make better decisions and safeguard cultural and natural heritage for future generations.

## Expected results

- Expansion of the WHOMP platform by incorporating georeferenced data of World Heritage sites, with special focus on Africa
- Integration of datasets of other UNESCO designated sites (Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Geoparks) to better understand Multi-Internationally Designated Areas (MIDAs)
- Development of new technical capabilities, including early-warning alerts on hazards based on near real-time data and improved analysis tools, based on user needs
- Strengthening of knowledge management systems to support the long-term protection of World Heritage properties

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## CONTACT

### **UNESCO World Heritage Centre**

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