

## Submission Form

At its 35th session (UNESCO Paris, 2011), the World Heritage Committee (Decision 35COM12D.7) “requested the World Heritage Centre, with the support of the Advisory Bodies, **to develop, for further consideration the proposal** contained in Document WHC-11/35.COM/12D [...] and to further **explore ways of recognising and rewarding best practice through a one-off initiative** at the closing event of the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention (November 2012, Japan)...”.

States Parties to the World Heritage Convention are invited to participate in this initiative by proposing World Heritage properties in their country that they regard as an example of successful management and sustainable development.

In order to be eligible the site has to apply with the following criteria:

- The suggested site must be a property inscribed on the World Heritage List;
- Successful management and sustainable development has to be clearly demonstrated;
- Best practices are considered those that are tried, tested and applied in different situations and in a wider context;
- An overall good performance on all headings mentioned in the submission form, with an exemplary performance in at least one of the areas;
- An outstanding example of innovative management in dealing with one or more management challenges / issues that could offer lessons to other sites.

Each State Party may propose a maximum of two properties, preferably relating to one cultural and one natural site.

This form contains 9 topics for demonstrating best management practice – it is not necessary to comply with all of them but it would be appreciated if you could provide a comprehensive response to as many topics as possible. In your responses to the question, please provide all facts and figures to substantiate the answers, and describe the before and after situation of implementing the best practice intervention. The objective is to illustrate clearly why the example can qualify as a best practice and can be used as a source of inspiration for other World Heritage properties.

The topics are based on questions dealt with in the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

## **Recognizing and rewarding best practice in management of World Heritage properties**

State Party: GREECE

Title proposed World Heritage property: Acropolis, Athens

Brief description of the property: [you may use the Brief description provided through <http://whc.unesco.org>]

The Acropolis of Athens is the most striking and complete ancient Greek monumental complex still existing in our times. It is situated on a medium high hill (height 156m) that rises in the basin of Athens. Its overall dimensions are approximately 170X350m. The hill is rocky and sheer on all sides except for the west, and has an extensive -nearly- flat top. Strong fortification walls have surrounded the summit of the Acropolis for more than 3.300 years. The first fortification wall was built during the 13th century BC, comprising the residence of the local Mycenaean ruler. In the 8th century BC, the Acropolis gradually acquired a religious character with the establishment of the cult of Athena, the city's patron goddess. The sanctuary reached its peak in the archaic period (mid 6th century-early 5th century BC). In the 5th century BC, the Athenians empowered from their victory over the Persians, carried out an ambitious building programme under the leadership of the great statesman Perikles, comprising a large number of monuments including the Parthenon, the Erechtheion, the Propylaia and the temple of Athena Nike. The programme was realised with the participation of an exceptional group of architects (such as Iktinos, Kallikrates, Mnesikles) and sculptors (such as Pheidias, Alkamenes, Agorakritos). Thereby, the rocky hill was transformed into a unique complex, which proclaimed the ascendancy of classical Greek thought and art. On its outskirts Democracy, Philosophy, the Theatre, freedom of expression and speech were born; that is the intellectual and spiritual attainments that still today continue to provide the foundation for the values of the contemporary world. The Acropolis' monuments, having survived for almost twenty-five centuries through wars, explosions, bombardments, fires, earthquakes, sackings and interventions as well as alterations connected with different usage, embrace the civilizations, the myths and the religions that flourished in Greece through time.

**Please answer the questions below demonstrating the successful management and sustainable development of the World Heritage property and why it is an example of a best practice.**

<b>Topics for demonstrating best management practice:</b>	<b>Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practice in relation to the topic:</b>
<p><b>1. Conservation:</b></p> <p><i>What innovative management practices or strategies are being applied in order to ensure the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property (e.g. better resource management, restoration and rehabilitation, addressing various man-made or natural threats and challenges, etc.)?</i></p>	<p>For the restoration, conservation, protection and monitoring of the property, a multidisciplinary advisory body, the Committee for the Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments (ESMA), was founded in 1975, responsible for planning, directing and supervising the interventions. In the year 1999, the establishment of the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA) permitted the increase of academic and technical personnel and made possible the immense development of the restoration works, under the supervision of the aforementioned Committee and in cooperation with the 1<sup>st</sup> Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, the Regional Service of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The interventions on the Acropolis are imbued with the spirit of the “Charter of Venice” and with additional principles established by the ESMA for the monuments of ancient Greek architecture (dry masonry): principle of reversibility, respect for the original material, respect for the ancient structural system, retention of the original structural function, restriction of the interventions to the absolutely necessary, full transparency and scholastic documentation during the works and presentation of the works in every way to the scholarly world and to the general public. The main characteristic of the works is the continuous research that accompanies them from the very beginning through all phases of the works and the special studies made prior to each intervention. The most advanced technology is applied to the initial studies for the interventions, the organisation of the worksites, the performing of the works and to their systematic documentation. Traditional techniques and materials are utilised together with contemporary methods and materials that are compatible with those of the original monuments. Furthermore, scientific studies for the protection of the site, such as monitoring of earthquake activity, are carried out. The extensive research programme and the methodology implemented are innovative in this field and provided other relevant restoration projects with a reference tool. Characteristic examples of the innovative methods implemented after the conduction of laboratory tests and experiments is the use of titanium components in order to replace the rusted iron joints and the conservation and cleaning of the surface of sculptured architectural members (e.g. the Parthenon Frieze, the ceiling of the Porch of the Caryatids) with laser in an entirely original application, using</p>

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		simultaneously two wave lengths, ultrared and ultraviolet. With the latter system, soot deposits and carbon and all types of black crust were safely removed without affecting the underlying layer of marble and coloured layers preserved on the surface. The systematic documentation is incorporated in a vanguard data base.
2.	<b>Local People:</b>  <i>What exemplary practices are you using in order to effectively address the needs of local stakeholders within the management system for the property, and enable their full and active participation?</i>	<p>The Association of Friends of the Acropolis (EFA) is a non-profit organization that was established in 1988. It is the link between the local community and the administrative authorities managing the property. The EFA supports in every way possible the efforts made by the management authorities. The Director of the site's managing authority is an ex officio member of the EFA's Directory Board. Moreover EFA organizes monthly lectures and guided tours related to the property and its surroundings, publishes yearly a periodical named "Anthemion" and special editions dealing with the issues concerning the property.</p>
3.	<b>Legal framework:</b>  <i>What special measures have you taken to ensure that the legal framework for the World Heritage site is effective in maintaining the OUV of the property?</i>	<p>The Acropolis has been operating as an archaeological site since 1833, shortly after the establishment of the modern Greek State. Nowadays, the property is strongly protected under the provisions of Law No 3028/2002 on the "Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in general". Moreover, the Acropolis and its surroundings, which constitute monuments per se, are protected by legislative decrees (Ministerial Decrees F01/12970/503/25.2.82 concerning the designation of its buffer zone and F43/7027/425/29.1.2004 concerning the designation of the peripheral zone of the city of Athens and imposing obligatory control before issuing any building or development permit within its boundaries). Special protection is provided by the Presidential Decree No 24/2007, which declares the Acropolis area a no-fly zone.</p>

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<p><b>4. Boundaries:</b></p> <p><i>What innovative ways of dealing with the boundaries of the property, including for management of the buffer zone do you have in place, to effectively to manage the site and protect its OUV?</i></p>	<p>The property is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, through the 1<sup>st</sup> Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, its competent Regional Service, who is responsible for the site's security and protection, as well as the implementation of an efficient site and visitors' management system. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism implements the aforementioned legislative decrees, concerning the safeguarding of the property and its peripheral zone (which corresponds to the boundaries of the classical city of Athens and its surroundings). The on-going project "Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens," carried out inside the buffer and the peripheral zone of the property enhances the protection of the property's OUV. Moreover within the buffer zone of the property operates the New Acropolis Museum (inaugurated in 2009), in which most of the original sculptural architectural members of the monuments are hosted.</p>
<p><b>5. Sustainable finance:</b></p> <p><i>What effective strategies have you developed and implemented to assure adequate and sustainable financial resources for implementing the management measures required to maintain the site's OUV?</i></p>	<p>The co-funding of the works by the Greek State and the European Union -firstly by the Second European Community Support Framework (1999-2000), the Third European Community Support Framework (2000-2006) and thereafter by the National Strategic Reference Framework (2007-2013)- ensures uninterrupted funding.</p>
<p><b>6. Staffing training and development:</b></p> <p><i>What approaches and strategies have you developed and implemented to assure that the human resources are adequate to manage the World Heritage property?</i></p>	<p>For the scientific staff and the experienced marble cutters working on the site, special qualifications (education, experience) are required. The staff is recruited after a national competition held when needed, under the supervision of the Supreme Council for Personnel Selection (ASEP), an independent commission, which is tasked with the selection of personnel for work in the Greek public sector. Moreover during the course of work, when a new project, method or technology is being implemented, the scientific personnel attend specialized seminars and training. The YSMA also accepts voluntary work of students or young scientists.</p>
<p><b>7. Sustainable development:</b></p>	<p>Apart from utility networks there are no other installations for resource use in and around the</p>

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	<i>What are the effective mechanisms in place to ensure that resource use permitted in and around the World Heritage site is sustainable and does not impact negatively on OUV?</i>	Acropolis archaeological site. Furthermore, the provisions made for the accessibility of the site helped reduce the atmospheric pollution of the area. Vehicle circulation is not permitted in and around the site. A network of pedestrian roots linking up the main archaeological sites of Athens, with the Acropolis in the core, is provided by the project “Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens”. The site is accessible through subterranean public transport (metro). The metro stations themselves, exhibiting the archaeological findings revealed during the stations’ construction works, “prepare” the visitor upon his arrival for the history of the area.
8.	<b>Education and interpretation programmes:</b>  <i>How do the education, interpretation and awareness programmes you have developed and implemented significantly enhance the understanding of OUV of the site among stakeholders?</i>	ESMA in collaboration with the 1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities launched educational programs as early as 1987. Today the Department of Information and Education of the YSMA provides information about the Acropolis, its monuments and the works carried out on the hill. More specifically, the department organizes educational programs, conducts seminars and guided tours for teachers and students, produces educational resources, organizes special symposia, designs exhibitions, and creates units of lessons about the Acropolis and the restoration of its monuments through the Internet (E-Learning). The activities of the Department significantly enhance the understanding of OUV of the site. At the same time, in order to inform the scholarly world and the general public there are symposia, conferences, lectures, exhibitions, documentary films, a variety of scholarly publications , informative booklets and a newsletter, in addition to a website.
9.	<b>Tourism and interpretation:</b>  <i>What innovative plans have you designed and successfully implemented to ensure that visitor management does not negatively impact on the maintenance of the property’s OUV?</i>	Special attention has been given to the accessibility of the site, to pathways and to visitors’ facilities, especially for disabled people. The installation of a lift, in 2004, on the north slope of Acropolis hill, allowed, for the first time, access to people with disabilities up to the hill. Furthermore, emergency plans for visitors’ security and scientific studies for the protection of the site, such as monitoring of earthquake activity, are carried out. Moreover, a new Acropolis Museum was built outside the strict borders of the property, replacing the old one that was on the Acropolis hill. The operation of the new Museum reduces the visitor’s crowding on the hill and the waiting time needed. The visitors, having visual contact with the property, can now enjoy the permanent and temporary exhibitions as

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	well as the facilities of a modern museum (including a virtual reality theater) in their own time and at their own pace.
<b>Additional comments:</b>	
<b>Brief description/ summary of the best practice, including a statement on how it can be useful for other sites (max.600 words)</b>	
<p>The intervention in the ancient buildings of the Acropolis, which commenced in the 1970s, headed by the interdisciplinary Committee ESMA, was to a certain extent one of necessity. As the rescue works progressed, new and unexpected problems of stability appeared. Numerous architectural members, intact or fragmentary originating from the monuments required conservation and protection. Concurrently, the intervention provided the opportunity for upgrading the value of the monuments themselves, with supplementary restorations. The salvaging character of the original project evolved to include restoration projects that increased both the stability and the legibility of the edifices. The establishment in 1999 of YSMA, a new special service, provided a radical overhaul and permitted the recruitment of highly qualified technical and scientific personnel. Thus, not only a major technical project is being carried out on the Acropolis, but also an extensive research programme, that satisfies international demands concerning the conservation and restoration of the site. This research has not simply enriched the knowledge and the relevant bibliography about the Acropolis monuments, but also helped to make the appropriate decisions in each case of intervention. Research in the sector of technology has produced solutions to the choice of materials and methods, placing the Acropolis restoration works in the vanguard of the restoration of ancient monuments for its high quality, its methodology, its close connection with research and its technologically advanced applications. The ESMA method functions as a model also for interventions in other classical monuments in Greece and abroad, while the YSMA's scientific personnel has contributed and continues to contribute with its experience and expertise to organizing and executing relevant works.</p>	

**Finally, please provide us, if possible, with up to ten images of the concerned World Heritage property that can be used free of rights in UNESCO publications (commercial and/or non-commercial), and on the UNESCO website. Please provide the name of the photographer and the caption along with the images (he/she will be credited for any use of the images).**