

Guidance on the preparation of retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for World Heritage Properties

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ICOMOS



World Heritage Convention

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Introduction

Many properties inscribed on the World Heritage List do not have an agreed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) – an essential tool that was included for the first time in the 2005 Operational Guidelines and has become operational since 2007.

The 2nd cycle of Periodic Reporting, which started in the Arab States region in 2008, has provided the motivation for all properties without complete Statements of OUV to prepare them retrospectively. Such retrospective Statements of OUV will provide a clear, shared, understanding of the reasons for inscription and of what needs managing in order to sustain OUV for the long-term. These Statements need to be approved by the World Heritage Committee as a way of articulating the OUV that was identified at the time of inscription.

This guidance sets out the suggested procedures for compiling retrospective Statements of OUV and for submitting them for approval by the World Heritage Committee. It aims to show that the process should be manageable for most properties using the materials available at the time of inscription, and that the outcome is of great benefit to all those involved in the protection, management and promotion of World Heritage properties, and to the World Heritage Committee and the Advisory Bodies.

Based on this Guidance, the Advisory Bodies and World Heritage Centre aim to provide support and advice to States Parties on preparing retrospective Statements of OUV, when requested.

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1. What is OUV?

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention, (Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage), which came into being in 1972, recognises properties of 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV). The World Heritage Convention recognises in its preamble that :

“parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole”. It also defines in Article 11 of the Convention that the World Heritage Committee: “shall establish, keep up to date and publish, under the title of "World Heritage List," a list of properties forming part of the cultural heritage and natural heritage [...], which it considers as having outstanding universal value in terms of such criteria as it shall have established. An updated list shall be distributed at least every two years.” The Convention also states that the World Heritage Committee will define the criteria for inclusion of a property on the World Heritage List.

States Parties who ratify the World Heritage Convention agree to conserve properties on their territories that are acknowledged as being of OUV, and thus contribute towards protecting the shared heritage of humanity. World Heritage properties are recognised through inscription on the World Heritage List by the World Heritage Committee (Representatives from 21 States Parties).

The concept of OUV underpins the whole World Heritage Convention and all activities associated with properties inscribed on the List. The definition of OUV, as set out in the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, states that:

“Outstanding Universal Value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity”.

This is the first definition of the concept of OUV to be included in the Operational Guidelines to the Convention, and was first introduced in their 2005 edition. However, the definition of OUV has been subject to much reflection, almost since the start of the Convention. In 1976 (before the World Heritage Committee was established), an expert meeting hosted by UNESCO with the Advisory Bodies (IUCN, ICOMOS and ICCROM) considered what was understood by OUV and produced a first version of criteria to be satisfied in order to demonstrate OUV. In 1998, a Global Strategy meeting in Amsterdam proposed the following definition of OUV: An outstanding response to issues of universal nature common to or shared by all cultures. In 2005, a UNESCO Special Expert Meeting in Kazan on the Concept of OUV affirmed that “the definition and application of OUV are made by people and will be subject to evolution over time”.

The nomination of World Heritage properties has taken place as the definitions of heritage have been changing. Whilst the basis for the inscription of natural properties has been relatively consistent, the definition of cultural heritage has broadened over time. This means that over the years since the first inscriptions, properties from a widening range of types of heritage have been nominated, and in many cases inscribed, on the World Heritage List.

However, what is fixed, for both natural and cultural properties, is what the World Heritage Committee accepted as a justification of OUV when the property was accepted for inscription on the World Heritage List. OUV is thus defined by the thinking of the World Heritage Committee, supported by the Advisory Bodies who considered the nomination, at the time of inscription of the property on the World Heritage List.

2. What is a Statement of OUV?

A Statement of OUV is the official statement adopted by the World Heritage Committee at the time of inscription of a property on the World Heritage List. Since 2007, when the World Heritage Committee agrees to inscribe a property on the World Heritage list, it also agrees a Statement of OUV that encapsulates why the property is considered to be of OUV, how it satisfies the relevant criteria, the conditions of integrity and (for cultural properties) authenticity, and how it meets the requirements for protection and management in order to sustain OUV in the long-term.

A Statement of OUV is thus of great benefit to the State Party and to all stakeholders involved in the conservation and management of property. It allows not only a clear understanding of the property when it was inscribed on the World Heritage List, and why it is considered to have OUV, but it can also give direction to management through indicating what attributes of the property need to be maintained in order to sustain OUV.

For the World Heritage Committee and the Advisory Bodies, the Statement of OUV has become an essential reference point for monitoring, including Periodic Reporting and potential reactive monitoring, boundary modifications, changes to the name of a property, and possible inclusion on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The Statement of OUV would ultimately also be the reference for any consideration of possible deletion of a property from the World Heritage List.

Statements of OUV should be concise and are set out in a standard format, whether written at the time of inscription or retrospectively. They should help to raise awareness regarding the value of the property, guide the assessment of its state of conservation and inform protection and management. Once adopted by the Committee, the Statement of OUV is displayed on the UNESCO World Heritage Centre's website.

The main sections of a Statement of OUV are the following:

- a. Brief synthesis
- b. Justification for criteria
- c. Statement of integrity (for all properties)
- d. Statement of authenticity (for properties nominated under criteria i to vi)
- e. Requirements for protection and management.

3. What is a retrospective Statement of OUV and why is it important?

For many properties that were inscribed up to 2005, there is no Statement of OUV that has been agreed by the World Heritage Committee and in some cases no agreed statement of justification for the criteria. This does not mean that properties without a Statement of OUV have not had OUV recognised: rather it means that the OUV that was agreed by the Committee at the time of inscription has not been articulated in an agreed format.

A retrospective Statement of OUV is a Statement of OUV created for properties that were inscribed on the World Heritage List before the requirement for a Statement of OUV was introduced into the Operational Guidelines in 2005. These statements should reflect, the OUV of the property at the date on which it was inscribed on the World Heritage List, based on the decision of the World Heritage Committee at that time, supported by the evaluation undertaken by the Advisory Body and the nomination prepared by the State Party. These retrospective Statements of OUV are adopted by the World Heritage Committee.

As Statements of OUV underpin the Periodic Reporting process, and several questions within the revised Periodic Reporting questionnaire need to be answered by referring to a Statement of OUV, it is essential to fill the gaps and work towards all inscribed properties having a Statement of OUV approved by the World Heritage Committee. This aim is stated in the Operational Guidelines and was reiterated by the World Heritage Committee in 2007 (decision 31COM 11D.1): if a Statement of OUV is not available or incomplete, it will be necessary in the first periodic report for the State Party to propose such a statement.

4. Attributes:

An important concept for every Statement of OUV.

An important concept in the preparation of a Statement of OUV is the recognition of attributes. Properties convey their OUV through certain attributes. Attributes include the physical elements of the property, and may include the relationships between physical elements, essence, meaning, and at times related processes, that need to be protected and managed in order to sustain OUV. The links between OUV and attributes are discussed further below under authenticity, integrity and management sections. Attributes are referred to in paragraphs 82, 83, 85, 88, 100 and 104, and annexes 4 and 5 of the Operational Guidelines. The Statement of OUV needs to make reference to the attributes of the property that are important in conveying OUV.

5. Who is responsible for preparing, reviewing and approving a retrospective Statement of OUV?

There are a number of different responsibilities for preparing a retrospective Statement of OUV. The principal responsibilities are as follows:

- a. Where a property does not have a Statement of OUV, the initial draft should be prepared by the relevant State Party (ideally with advice or assistance from the Advisory Body(ies) and the World Heritage Centre). The second Periodic Reporting cycle provides an opportunity to do this.
- b. When the draft is ready, it is sent to the World Heritage Centre (WHC) for a completeness check. If complete, it will be passed for review to the Advisory Body(ies): IUCN (for natural properties) and ICOMOS (for cultural properties). Draft Statements of OUV for mixed properties are passed to both IUCN and ICOMOS. Completeness check requirements are set out in Annex 1.
- c. The Advisory Body(ies) will review the draft Statements of OUV and, if in their opinion necessary changes are needed, suggest these to the State Party, via the World Heritage Centre. Once wording has been agreed by the Advisory Bodies and the State Party, Statements of OUV will be transmitted to the World Heritage Committee through the World Heritage Centre.
- d. The agreed Statement of OUV is presented to the World Heritage Committee in a draft decision prepared by the World Heritage Centre based on the recommendations of IUCN and/or ICOMOS.
- e. The Statement of OUV, as approved by the World Heritage Committee, is then recorded in the official records of the Committee and in other relevant documents.

This process is set out in Annex 2.

6. What process is recommended to State Parties for the preparation of a draft retrospective Statement of OUV?

The following process is recommended:

6.1. The State Party assembles the following documents from the time of inscription:

- The original World Heritage Committee's decision;
- The original Advisory Body evaluation of the property;
- The original nomination document and any supplementary information submitted during the nomination process.

In case the State Party does not have access to this information, the World Heritage Centre can assist in making it available.

6.2. The State Party drafts the retrospective Statement of OUV, initially, based on the information included in these documents and according to the following principles:

- a) The retrospective Statement of OUV should document the OUV, including the justification for the criteria that was agreed by the Committee at the time of inscription. This will in some cases differ from what the State Party nominated as OUV, including the justification for the criteria that they proposed in the nomination document.
- b) The conditions for integrity and authenticity should be documented at the time of inscription if such assessments were undertaken and if they are still relevant today. Where neither was specifically assessed at the time of inscription (and this will be the case for the integrity of cultural properties inscribed before 2005) or where vulnerabilities associated with integrity and/or authenticity are now known (such as through State of Conservation Reports or the World Heritage Committee), then the conditions should be assessed as of the date of the draft Statement.
- c) The requirements for protection and management should be documented as relevant to the present day, but taking into account relevant key points raised since the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List.
- d) The retrospective Statement of OUV should be based as far as possible on the Committee decision, and Advisory Body evaluation. Information included in the nomination document should be used to augment the above if the information in the Advisory Body evaluation and Committee decision is insufficient to prepare the required statement. In some limited circumstances additional, credible, contemporary published sources may be needed which should conform to the guidance set out in point 3 below.
- e) It should be possible to attribute each key point in a retrospective Statement of OUV to a source in the Committee decision, the Advisory Body evaluation, the nomination document, or, exceptionally, for natural properties, a further named reference.

- f) The retrospective Statement of OUV should note the date of the inscription of the property and the date on which the retrospective Statement of OUV, or various sections of it were submitted by the State Party. The eventual date of the adoption of the Statement of OUV by the World Heritage Committee will also be noted, on its adoption.

6.3. For a small number of cases the official documents (Committee decision, evaluation by the Advisory Bodies, original nomination) may be insufficient to prepare the Statement of OUV. In such circumstances, it may therefore be necessary to use appropriate supplementary information to draft the Statement of OUV.

In order to set out a sufficiently detailed understanding of what the property is, its OUV and particularly the attributes that reflect its OUV, it may be necessary to augment the Committee and Advisory Body material with relevant information from the Description and Justification for Inscription sections of the nomination document. In a few cases where the nomination document is particularly thin, it might be necessary to complete the text on the basis of knowledge provided by national authorities or through additional published sources. Where supplementary information is used to create a Statement of OUV, this should be from credible sources that are able to provide an assessment that is contemporary with the time of inscription. For natural properties it is recommended that peer reviewed scientific publications are used where available.

Mission reports by UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies from the time of inscription could be used if publicly available. Material sourced from other official records of the World Heritage Committee (such as subsequent mission reports, State of Conservation reports) may be particularly useful for the sections on protection and management, and for identifying vulnerabilities relevant to integrity and authenticity. If information other than the official documents is used, references should be included in a footnote and a copy of the original reference used should be submitted with the draft Statement of OUV.

7. Guidance on the different sections of a retrospective Statement of OUV

The following guidance on compiling retrospective Statements of OUV considers each of the main sections in turn:

7.1 Brief synthesis

The brief synthesis should be a statement that can be used to describe the property where a short explanation is needed, such as for the UNESCO World Heritage web-site, and should set out (a) a summary of factual information that includes its location, scale and what type of property it is and (b) why it has been inscribed on the World Heritage List. This is thus the overall statement for the property that encapsulates what it is, why it has OUV, and the main attributes that reflect OUV.

The brief synthesis should try and evoke the property for those who do not know it and set out powerfully its meaning, and the 'stories' associated with it, in order to convey the essence of why it is considered to have OUV and thus why has been included on the World Heritage List. The text of the brief synthesis should be clear, memorable and, ideally, inspirational. It should enable anyone unfamiliar with the property, as well as those who know it well, to understand immediately its scope, its significance and what has to be protected. It should be equally relevant to politicians, to academics and to the general public.

7.2 Justification for criteria

The Statement of OUV should provide a section that sets out the justification for why the property meets each of the criteria under which it has been inscribed on the World Heritage List. The statement for each criterion should be made in the context of the overall OUV of the property, noting the relevant attributes in each case.

Where the Committee has agreed the justification for the accepted criteria, the wording that was adopted must be respected. In some exceptional cases the text that was adopted by the Committee may not be enough to convey fully why the property is considered to have met the relevant criteria. In such circumstances it is important that no text from the Committee decision on criteria may be deleted, but this text may be added to, for clarification. However any additions should be based clearly on the conclusions of the Advisory Body evaluation and should only be added in relation to the criteria that were agreed by the Committee.

New criteria may not be added in a retrospective Statement of OUV. If new criteria are to be proposed, this can only be done through a new nomination document.

Where no justification for the criteria was agreed by the Committee, then a justification should be proposed related to the evaluation of the property at the time of inscription. The text should make reference not only to how the property satisfies each of the relevant criterion, but also to the specific attributes that convey those ideas. Care should be taken to demonstrate how the property as a whole addresses each criterion and through which attributes.

As the wording of criteria have changed several times since they were first defined, care must be taken to use the wording in use at the time of inscription, as set out in the

appropriate version of the Operational Guidelines. A chart of the existing and various previous wording is provided in Annex 3.

If, since inscription, very significant additional discoveries have been made at the property that reinforce the OUV acknowledged at the time of inscription, () then these may be referred to in the draft Statement of OUV, provided that they relate to the existing justification for inscription. If however the discoveries are unrelated to the existing justification for inscription, then normally it will not be appropriate to refer to them in the draft Statement of OUV There are three possible scenarios which should be dealt with as follows:

- a. Significant additional discoveries have been made of attributes that relate to the already agreed justification for inscription. In these cases these attributes can be referred to in the Statement of OUV. (For example, the discovery of additional significant archaeological material in a cultural property, or the discovery of additional rare species in a natural property inscribed for its biodiversity values).
- b. Significant additional discoveries of additional attributes that may be relevant to the criteria already agreed, but are broader than the current justification for inscription. These situations should be agreed with the Advisory Body, and might need to be subject to a re-nomination and further evaluation mission. (An example could be the discovery of a new layer of a historic site from a previously unrepresented period).
- c. Significant additional discoveries that relate to different criteria for inscription from those currently inscribed. In these situations a re-nomination would be required to consider if these discoveries provide the basis to extend the recognition of Outstanding Universal Value, in relation to new criteria. (An example would be a major biological discovery in a site listed only for its geological values).

If the property has been re-nominated under additional criteria, extended, or been subject to a minor or major boundary modification then these changes should be taken into account and may make the drafting of the Statement of OUV more complicated (see below).

7.3 Statement of integrity

Integrity for cultural and natural properties

Integrity applies to both natural and cultural properties, but has only been considered for cultural properties since 2005. Integrity is related to the completeness/intactness of the attributes needed to express OUV. The Operational Guidelines (para 88) state that:

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes. Examining the conditions of integrity therefore requires assessment of the extent to which the property:

- a) includes all elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value*
- b) is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance*
- c) [does not] suffer from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.*

For cultural properties, an assessment of integrity should consider the following points, as suggested in paragraph 89 of the Operational Guidelines:

- Wholeness = whether a significant proportion of all the attributes that express OUV are within the property, rather than beyond the boundaries
- Intactness = whether a significant proportion of all the attributes are still present, none are eroded*, and dynamic functions between them are maintained. [** in the case of ruins, this means that they should still be capable of expressing OUV.*]
- Degree of threats = the degree to which the attributes are threatened by development or neglect

As integrity was only introduced for cultural properties in 2005, this will not have been considered explicitly for many properties at the time of inscription. The statement will thus normally need to be written as of today, although it may include implicit recognition of issues related to integrity (such as the condition of attributes) in the contemporary documentation from the time of inscription.

For natural properties, an assessment of integrity should consider the definitions provided in the Operational Guidelines in paragraph 90 of the Operational Guidelines and for each natural criteria, in paragraphs 91-94, as relevant to the criteria for inscription. For natural properties, integrity should wherever possible be considered as of the time of inscription.

A section on integrity thus should be written by following the guidance of the Operational Guidelines. Where there are vulnerabilities, these should be mentioned. If there have been changes in integrity since inscription that are known, these should be indicated. If these are negative, it may be necessary under management to set out how the situation might be mitigated.

7.4 Statement of authenticity (for cultural properties only)

Authenticity relates to the ability of the attributes of a property to express adequately its OUV, truthfully and credibly. Authenticity is only considered for cultural and mixed properties, that have been inscribed under criteria (i) to (vi), and does not apply to natural properties (inscribed only under criteria (vii) to (x)).

Relevant references to authenticity are provided in paragraphs 79 to 86 and also in the annex 4 of the Operational Guidelines. It is important to note that according to paragraph 82 of the Operational Guidelines 'depending on the type of cultural heritage, and its cultural context, properties may thus be understood to meet the conditions of authenticity if their cultural values (as recognized in the nomination criteria proposed) are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes, including:

- Form and design
- Materials and substance
- Use and function
- Traditions, techniques and management systems
- Location and setting
- Language and other forms of intangible heritage
- Spirit and feeling
- Other internal and external factors.'

However not all these attributes will be relevant for all properties, and in some properties others will be relevant. The attributes considered should be those that have been identified as conveying OUV.

A short statement of authenticity needs to state briefly how the attributes that carry OUV express their message credibly and truthfully. Where there are vulnerabilities these should be mentioned. If there have been changes in authenticity since inscription that are known, then they should be acknowledged. If these are negative, it may be necessary under management to set out how the situation might be mitigated.

7.5 Protection and management requirements

This section should set out how the requirements for protection and management are being met, in order to ensure that the OUV of the property is maintained over time. It should include both details of an overall framework for protection and management, and the identification of specific long term expectations for the protection of the property.

This section should always be written to be relevant to the property at the present date, and also for its future management. Material sourced from official records of the World Heritage Committee (such as subsequent mission reports, State of Conservation reports) should be considered, to ensure that any requirements that have been noted by the World Heritage Committee are acknowledged.

The text in this section should first outline the framework for protection and management. This should include the necessary protection mechanisms, management systems and/or management plans (whether currently in place or in need of establishment) that will protect and conserve the attributes that carry OUV, and address the threats to and vulnerabilities of the property. These could include the presence of strong and effective legal protection, a clearly documented management system, including relationships with key stakeholder or user groups, adequate staff and financial resources, key requirements for presentation (where relevant), and effective and responsive monitoring.

Secondly this section needs to acknowledge any long-term challenges for the protection and management of the property and state how addressing these will be a long-term strategy. It will be relevant to refer to the most significant threats to the property, and to vulnerabilities and negative changes in authenticity and/or integrity that have been highlighted, and to set out how protection and management will address these vulnerabilities and threats and mitigate any adverse changes.

As an official statement, recognised by the World Heritage Committee, this section of the Statement of OUV should convey the most important commitments that the State Party is making for the long-term protection and management of the property.

8. How should a retrospective Statement of OUV be prepared for a serial property?

For serial properties, the serial property as a whole should have a single Statement of OUV covering all component parts that make up the serial property. The statement will thus need to be compiled on the basis of relevant documentation for all the individual component parts of the property. For some serial properties that have been inscribed sequentially, this will mean considering all of the relevant Committee decisions, which may have been taken at different sessions.

These requirements apply to all serial properties, whether national or transnational.

9. What happens if the property has been extended or has been re-nominated under additional criteria?

If a property has been extended, the Statement of OUV should take into account the documents of the original inscription and those of the extension, where for a major modification, a new nomination dossier will have been put forward and evaluated by IUCN and/or ICOMOS before a Committee decision.

If a property has been re-nominated under additional criteria, the Statement of OUV should take account of the most recent decision of the Committee and evaluation by IUCN and/or ICOMOS in relation to each of the relevant criteria assessed. It is possible that the evaluation of the criteria may have been carried out at different times.

In these relatively unusual and possibly complex situations, it is useful for State Parties to seek advice from the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies before compiling the first draft Statement of OUV.

ANNEX 1:

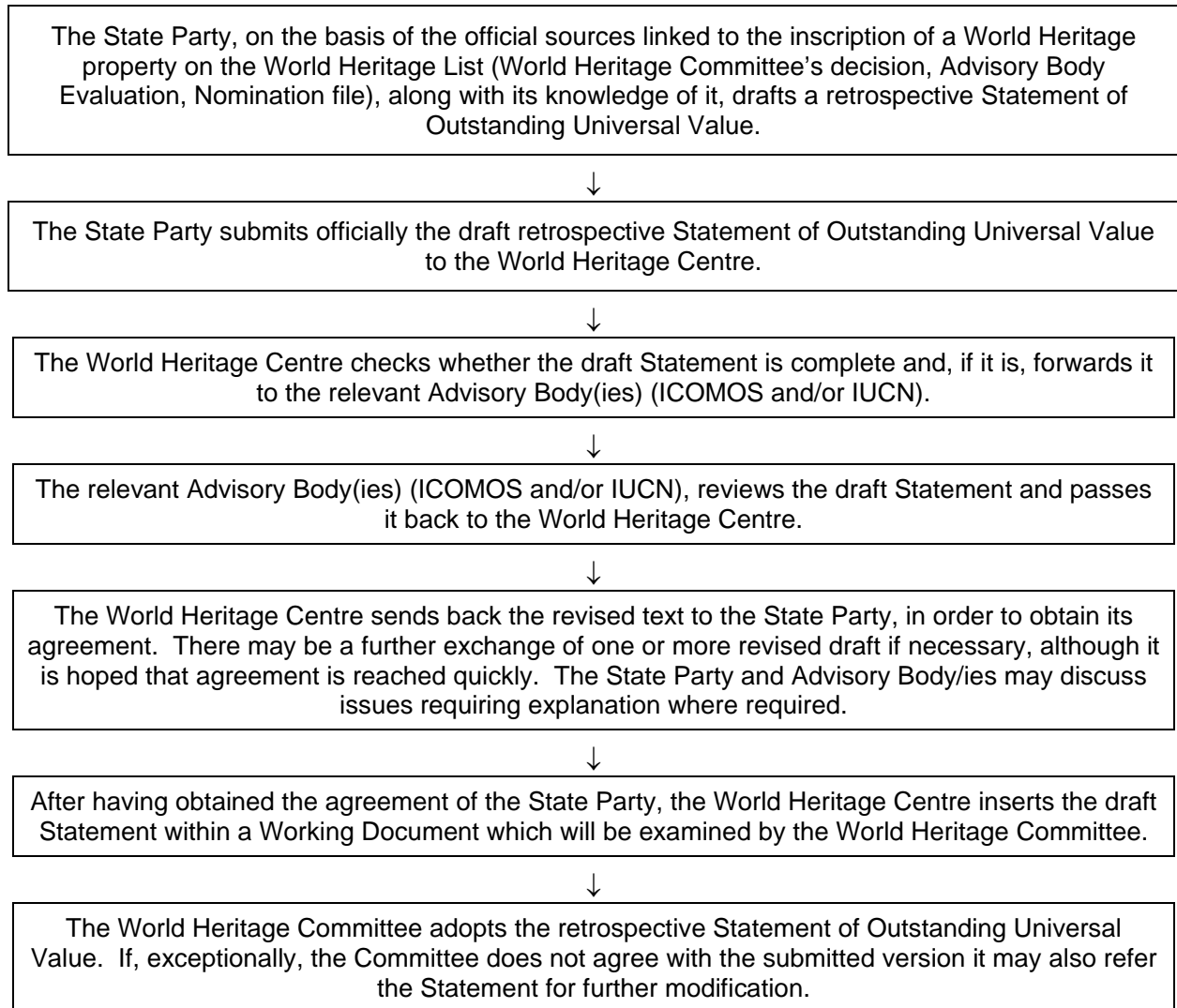
COMPLETENESS-CHECK OF A DRAFT RETROSPECTIVE STATEMENT OF OUV

The completeness check is carried out by the World Heritage Centre. The completeness check for a draft retrospective Statement of OUV is a verification aimed at ensuring that all necessary sections of the Statement are present and that inappropriate additions have not been made. Only complete Statements are forwarded to the Advisory Bodies for evaluation: if a Statement is incomplete, there will be a need to contact the State Party concerned, with a request to complete it.

The completeness-check is based on eight verifications of the draft Retrospective Statement of OUV:

- 1) The draft Statement has been submitted officially. “**Officially**” means by a national authority, no matter whether by letter or by e-mail. Submissions by e-mail are allowed (with the exception of transboundary and transnational properties). Draft Statements submitted directly by consultants, professors or researchers cannot be accepted.
- 2) The draft Statement has been submitted in **English or French**, the working languages of the World Heritage Convention.
- 3) The draft Statement has been submitted in an electronic version, and in a format that can be read by Microsoft Word (.txt, .rtf, .doc or .docx are preferred). A printed version is of course welcome, but an electronic version is **necessary**. It is necessary that it is in version readable by Word, in order to facilitate the assessment by ICOMOS and IUCN. Files in pdf format should be requested to be resubmitted in a version readable in Word.
- 4) The **length** of the draft Statement is appropriate. The length requested from States Parties is 1 or 2 A4 pages, but a good degree of flexibility is accepted on this issue. A draft Statement of 3 or 4 pages is usually acceptable for review, especially if the property is complex, but a draft Statement of half a page (too short) or ten pages (too long) is likely to be passed back to the State Party for revision.
- 5) The **name** of the property as provided in the draft Statement is the same as the name of the property as inscribed. If the name is not exactly the same (for example “Site of ...” rather than “Archaeological Site of...”), it has to be corrected. In this case WHC staff will make the correction directly, without contacting the State Party, and inform the relevant Advisory Body/ies. The correction will be noted in the revised draft following the Advisory Body review.
- 6) If the **area in hectares** of the property is provided in the draft Statement, it corresponds to the area of the property as inscribed (available on the WHC website). If this is not the case, it should be corrected. In this case, WHC staff will make the correction directly, without contacting the State Party, and inform the relevant Advisory Body/ies. The correction will be noted in the revised draft following the Advisory Body review.
- 7) **All the necessary sections** of a Statement of OUV are included in the draft.
- 8) The criteria presented in the draft Statement are the **same** as those adopted by the World Heritage Committee at the time of the inscription and **no new criteria** have been added.

ANNEX 2: PROCESS FOR PREPARING, REVIEWING AND APPROVING RETROSPECTIVE STATEMENTS OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE



ANNEX 3: CHANGES TO WORLD HERITAGE CRITERIA IN DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES (OG)

CHANGES TO THE CULTURAL CRITERIA (Criteria (i)-(vi))

	OG 1977	OG 1980	OG 1983	OG 1984
Crit (i)	Represent a unique artistic or aesthetic achievement, a masterpiece of human creative genius	Represent a unique artistic or aesthetic achievement, a masterpiece of human creative genius	Represent a unique artistic achievement, a masterpiece of human creative genius	Represent a unique artistic achievement, a masterpiece of human creative genius
Crit (ii)	Have exerted considerable influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on subsequent developments in architecture, monumental sculpture, garden and landscape design, related arts, or human settlements	Have exerted great influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, monumental arts, or town planning and landscaping	Have exerted great influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, monumental arts, or town planning and landscaping	Have exerted great influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, monumental arts, or town planning and landscaping
Crit (iii)	Be unique, extremely rare, or of great antiquity	Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a civilization which has disappeared	Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a civilization which has disappeared	Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a civilization which has disappeared
Crit (iv)	Be among the most characteristic examples of a type of structure, the type representing an important cultural, social, artistic, scientific, technological or industrial development	Be an outstanding example of a type of structure which illustrates a significant stage in history	Be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in history	Be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in history
Crit (v)	Be a characteristic example of a significant, traditional style of architecture, method of construction, or human settlement, that is fragile by nature or has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible socio-cultural or economic change	Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement which is representative of a culture and which has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change	Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement which is representative of a culture and which has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change	Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement which is representative of a culture and which has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change
Crit (vi)	Be most importantly associated with ideas or beliefs, with events or with persons, of outstanding historical importance or significance	Be directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considered that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria)	Be directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considered that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria)	Be directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considered that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria)

	OG 1988	OG 1992	OG 1994
Crit (i)	Represent a unique artistic achievement, a masterpiece of human creative genius	Represent a unique artistic achievement, a masterpiece of human creative genius	Represent a unique artistic achievement, a masterpiece of human creative genius
Crit (ii)	Have exerted great influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, monumental arts, or town planning and landscaping	Have exerted great influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, monumental arts, or town planning and landscaping	Have exerted great influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, monumental arts, or town planning and landscape design
Crit (iii)	Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a civilization which has disappeared	Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a civilization which has disappeared	Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a civilization or cultural tradition which has disappeared
Crit (iv)	Be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in history	Be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in history	Be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history
Crit (v)	Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement which is representative of a culture and which has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change	Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement which is representative of a culture and which has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change	Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change
Crit (vi)	Be directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considered that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria)	Be directly or tangibly associated with events or with ideas or beliefs of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considered that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria)	Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considered that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria)

	OG 1996	OG 1997/1999	OG 2005	2008
Crit (i)	Represent a masterpiece of human creative genius	Represent a masterpiece of human creative genius	Represent a masterpiece of human creative genius	Represent a masterpiece of human creative genius
Crit (ii)	Exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design	Exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design	Exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design	Exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design
Crit (iii)	Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared	Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared	Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared	Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared
Crit (iv)	Be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history	Be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history	Be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history	Be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history
Crit (v)	Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change	Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change	Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change	Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change
Crit (vi)	Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considered that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances or in conjunction with other criteria cultural or natural)	Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considered that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances and in conjunction with other criteria cultural or natural)	Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria)	Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria)

CHANGES TO THE NATURAL CRITERIA (Criteria (vii)-(x))

Note 1: Until 2005 the natural criteria were number N (i) to N (iv). When the numbers were reassigned their order was also changed, so that N(i) became (viii), N(ii) became (ix), N(iii) became vii, and N(iv) became (x). The numbers are shown in the table below in correct relations to the current criteria.

Note 2: Changes to the criteria wording made between 1992 and 1994 have been taken account of by reassigning properties to the correct criteria.

Note 3: Text that is removed from criterion in the next version adopted is marked in *italic*. Text added to criterion is marked in **bold**.

Definition of Natural criteria, October 1977	Definition of Natural criteria, October 1980	Definition of Natural criteria, November 1983	Definition of Natural criteria, March 1992	Definition of Natural criteria, February 1994	Definition of Natural criteria, February 2005
(i) be outstanding examples representing the major stages of the earth's evolutionary history. This category would include sites which represent the major "eras" of geological history such as "the age of reptiles" where the development of the planet's natural diversity can well be demonstrated and such as the "ice age" where early man and his environment underwent major changes; or	(i) be outstanding examples representing the major stages of the earth's evolutionary history ;	(i) be outstanding examples representing the major stages of the earth's evolutionary history ;	(a) (i) be outstanding examples representing the major stages of the earth's evolutionary history; or	(a) (i) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant geological processes in the development of land forms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features; or	(viii) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
(ii) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment. As distinct from the periods of the earth's development, this focuses upon ongoing processes in the development of communities of plants and animals, landforms and marine and fresh water bodies. This category would include for example (a) as geological processes, glaciation and volcanism, (b) as biological evolution, examples of biomes such as tropical rainforests, deserts and tundra (c) as interaction between man and his natural environment, terraced agricultural landscapes; or	(ii) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment ; as distinct from the periods of the earth's development, this focuses upon ongoing processes in the development of communities of plants and animals, landforms and marine and fresh water bodies; or	(ii) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment ; as distinct from the periods of the earth's development, this focuses upon ongoing processes in the development of communities of plants and animals, landforms and marine and fresh water bodies; or	(ii) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals; or	(ii) be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;	(ix) be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

<p><u>Definition of Natural criteria, October 1977</u></p> <p>(ii) contain <u>unique, rare or superlative natural phenomena, formations or features or areas of exceptional natural beauty</u>, such as superlative examples of the most important ecosystems to man, natural features, (for instance, rivers, mountains, waterfalls), spectacles presented by great concentrations of animals, sweeping vistas covered by natural vegetation and exceptional combinations</p>	<p><u>Definition of Natural criteria, October 1980</u></p> <p>(ii) contain superlative natural phenomena, formations or features or areas of exceptional natural beauty, such as superlative examples of the most important ecosystems to man, natural features, spectacles presented by great concentrations of animals, sweeping vistas covered by natural vegetation and exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements; or</p>	<p><u>Definition of Natural criteria, November 1983</u></p> <p>(iii) contain superlative natural phenomena, formations or features; for instance, outstanding examples of the most important ecosystems, areas of exceptional natural beauty or exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements; or</p>	<p><u>Definition of Natural criteria, March 1992</u></p> <p>(ii) contain superlative natural phenomena, formations or features for instance, outstanding examples of the most important ecosystems, areas of exceptional natural beauty or exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements; or</p>	<p><u>Definition of Natural criteria, February 1994</u></p> <p>(iii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance; or</p>	<p><u>Definition of Natural criteria, February 2005</u></p> <p>(vii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;</p>
<p>(iv) <u>be habitats where populations of rare or endangered species of plants and animals still survive</u>. This category would include those ecosystems in which concentrations of plants and animals of universal interest and significance are found.</p>	<p>(iv) contain the most important and significant natural habitats where threatened species of animals or plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of sciences or conservation still survive.</p>	<p>(iv) contain the most important and significant natural habitats where threatened species of animals or plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of sciences or conservation still survive.</p>	<p>(iv) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;</p>	<p>(iv) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;</p>	<p>(x) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.</p>

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