



TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE IUCN WORLD HERITAGE PANEL
Approved by the IUCN Director General, November 2015

Purpose of the World Heritage Panel

The IUCN World Heritage Panel (hereafter called the Panel) is established by the Director General of IUCN to provide high quality technical and scientific advice to IUCN on its work as an Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee and strategic advice to IUCN's work on World Heritage throughout the IUCN Programme.

IUCN's formal role under the World Heritage Convention is to provide the highest quality of objective technical advice on natural heritage to the World Heritage Committee in relation to the evaluation of new nominations to the World Heritage List, and monitoring of the State of Conservation of World Heritage properties that have been inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Specific Tasks of the World Heritage Panel

- (1) Conduct a rigorous evaluation of all nominations of natural and mixed properties to the World Heritage List, leading to a panel recommendation on the IUCN position in relation to each new nomination¹, in line with the requirements established in the [Operational Guidelines](#) of the World Heritage Convention;
- (2) Provide comments where relevant to ICOMOS in relation to nominations of cultural landscapes to the World Heritage List;
- (3) Provide advice in support of IUCN's contribution to the annual cycle of State of Conservation Reports on inscribed World Heritage Sites, and on conservation issues related to World Heritage Sites;
- (4) Provide input to the development of IUCN's work on World Heritage within the IUCN Programme as a whole;
- (5) Promote IUCN's role in relation to World Heritage and encourage support for IUCN activities on World Heritage;
- (6) Provide other input to IUCN's work as required and agreed.

Membership of the World Heritage Panel

Membership of the Panel is at the invitation of the IUCN Director General (or Deputy Director General under delegated authority) through the Director of the World Heritage Programme. The members of the Panel comprise IUCN staff with responsibility for IUCN's World Heritage work, other relevant IUCN staff, Commission members and external experts selected for their high level of experience with the World Heritage Convention. The membership of the Panel comprises:

- The Chairperson is the Director, IUCN World Heritage Programme or a delegated senior member of the IUCN Secretariat, agreed by the Director General in consultation with the Global Director, Biodiversity Conservation Group. The Panel Chairperson convenes the Panel to ensure it undertakes its mandate to the required and agreed standards and processes, and is not entitled to vote in the decisions of the Panel.
- At least one and a maximum of two staff of the IUCN Global Protected Areas Programme
- One Senior Advisor appointed to advise the IUCN on World Heritage²
- The IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Vice Chair for World Heritage
- A representative of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) appointed on recommendation of the Chair, SSC.
- The Head of the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre Protected Areas Programme³
- Up to seven technical advisors, invited by IUCN and serving in a personal capacity, with recognised leading expertise and knowledge relevant to IUCN's work on World Heritage, including particular thematic and/or regional perspectives.
- As of 2016 one position for a specialist in geological heritage, appointed by IUCN following consultation with IUGS and the UNESCO Earth will be introduced.

¹ New nomination is taken to include extensions, renominations and proposed significant and minor boundary modifications. The role of the panel also extends to recommending requests for supplementary information from the State Party, or reviewers to complete the evaluation process.

² The position of Senior Advisor will be reviewed from 2017.

³ UNEP-WCMC who currently both provide technical advice to the Panel, and also have a seat upon it, should be invited from 2016 to attend the Panel, but should no longer be a voting member of it.

The Director General delegates a senior manager to provide oversight at senior level on World Heritage, including with the responsibility to ensure that the Panel functions within its TOR and mandate. This senior manager is not a member of the Panel, but is briefed during the Panel meeting on the Panel's conclusions. The Panel may also be attended by other IUCN staff, Commission members (including the WCPA Chair) and external experts for specific items at the invitation of the Chair.

Term for Panel Membership

A fixed term for Panel membership of four years, with the maximum term of panel membership being 2 terms (i.e. 8 years), is introduced for Panel members, except the appointed Chairperson, whose term is tied to their mandate in the Secretariat, with the approval of the Director General.

Replacement of Panel Members

When Panel members are replaced this would be via an open advert to the IUCN constituency (Members and Commissions), with appointments made via a transparent appointment process, under final approval of the Director General.

Process of working

The Panel's preparations and its meetings will be facilitated by the World Heritage Programme. A staff member will be appointed as the Executive Officer for the Panel by the Director, World Heritage Programme.

The Panel holds its main meeting for one week annually usually in late November/early December. A second annual meeting takes place (normally by conference call) in the following March/April as required, in order to finalize any outstanding recommendations for nominations, and to consider monitoring and World Heritage policy issues, as required.

Before the November/December Panel meeting, the Executive Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Panel, will:

- Identify a Panel member to be the lead panellist for each nomination;
- Provide online access for all Panel members to read the nomination documents that will be the subject of the Panel's discussions;
- Send all lead panellists a copy of the relevant field evaluator(s) report (this must be treated as a confidential document by evaluators and Panel members, and must not be distributed outside of the Panel);
- Seek and compile the desktop reviewers' comments on each nomination;
- Obtain such other information as may be required to assist the Panel in its work.

The following procedure will be adhered to as far as possible in relation to the evaluation of nominations:

- All Panel members will be given a file at the first Panel meeting containing the field evaluations and other information relating to the Panel's agenda.
- All Panel members will have access to a folder containing the nomination and supporting information provided by the State Party, (including any supplementary information provided by the State Party at the request of the evaluator and/or IUCN), reviewers' comments, correspondence relating to the evaluation, relevant UNEP-WCMC data sheets, comparative analyses and other supporting material.
- At the start of the Panel process, the Panel will receive a brief illustrated presentation coordinated by the Executive Officer on each nomination and will briefly discuss key issues.
- Each lead panellist will then be asked to review their assigned nomination evaluation report(s), and all other Panel members will be invited to provide him/her with their comments on the nomination. This review will involve an examination of the nomination dossier, reviewers' comments as well the field evaluation report and other relevant information as listed above.
- The lead panellist will produce a draft recommendation, which he/she will present to the Panel. After discussion, the Panel will arrive at its recommended advice regarding the IUCN position on each nomination. The recommendation at the December Panel may be tentative, and with a request for additional information to be sought from the State Party, field evaluator, reviewers or other sources as required.

- The decisions of the Panel are made on the basis of consensus wherever possible, and must always be in conformity with the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention. Where consensus is not able to be reached, the Panel decision is reached based on the majority opinion within the Panel. The Chair of the Panel does not vote in this process, except in the case of there being no majority within the Panel and then the Chair has a casting vote.
- After the Panel concludes its recommendation, the Executive Officer, working in close cooperation with the lead Panel member and other staff of the World Heritage Programme, will finalise each IUCN evaluation report in line with the Panel recommendation, including the recommended Draft Decision of the World Heritage Committee. When the evaluation report is deemed complete by the Director of the IUCN World Heritage Programme, it will be sent to the Deputy Director General of IUCN (or other senior officer as delegated by the Director General) for sign off and formal transmission to the World Heritage Centre.
- In order to ensure due process IUCN has established a Code of Conduct for its work on the World Heritage Convention which is attached at Annex 1. Adherence to this Code of Conduct is mandatory for all Panel members.

IUCN, 2015

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR IUCN's WORK IN RELATION TO PROVIDING ADVICE TO THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

This code of conduct sets out rules of procedure for all work undertaken by IUCN in relation to providing advice to the World Heritage Committee, it aims to ensure that conflicts of interest in the conduct of IUCN's advisory role within the World Heritage Convention are avoided.

In implementing its advisory role to the World Heritage Committee, IUCN will adhere to the following principles:

Decision taking

1. At all times IUCN will strive to provide objective and rigorous technical advice of the highest quality to the World Heritage Committee, in line with the requirements of IUCN established in the World Heritage Convention, and its *Operational Guidelines* and relevant Rules of Procedure.
2. In providing advice to the World Heritage Committee, IUCN will consult widely with relevant international, regional and local experts and specialists as appropriate, including scientists and managers involved and knowledgeable in natural heritage conservation, and with its Regional and Country Offices.
3. The recommendations to the World Heritage Committee that have been adopted by the IUCN World Heritage Panel (hereafter referred to as the Panel) are issued under the authority of the IUCN Director General, as provided for under the IUCN Statutes. The recommendations are final and may not be changed or amended in any way other than by the Panel itself.
4. Members of IUCN field missions will not comment, either in their technical or in their personal capacity, on whether a nominated property should be recommended for inscription on the World Heritage List, except to the Panel.
5. When new information concerning a nomination is submitted by a State Party before 28 February, a revised evaluation will be submitted to the Panel, or a working group convened for this purpose, in order that the recommendation to the World Heritage Committee may, if appropriate, be amended. New information received after 28 February will only be examined for submission to the following year's session of the World Heritage Committee.
6. The recommendations of IUCN field evaluators, reviewers and Panel members in relation to the evaluation of properties are confidential and may be discussed only within the Panel. Individuals may not engage the media, representatives of the State Party or any other individual or organisation that may or may not have an interest in the property concerned unless so authorized by the Chair of the Panel. Furthermore, members of the Panel and IUCN evaluators may not disclose the discussions that have taken place in the Panel nor may they circulate any Panel document (including draft evaluation and

monitoring reports, review comments and analysis, draft policy papers) to any person that was not present in those discussions.

Measures regarding conflict of interest

7. All persons involved in IUCN's work on World Heritage, including the members of the Panel are required to disclose to IUCN (via the Chair of the World Heritage Panel) any advice given or other work (scientific, professional, contractual or voluntary) done on advancing the nomination of any property including the particular circumstances of the service provided.
8. The Chair of the Panel is required to disclose to IUCN (via the Deputy Director General) any advice given or other work (scientific, professional, contractual or voluntary) done on advancing the nomination of any property including the particular circumstances of the service provided.
9. As far as practicable, members of the World Heritage Panel should not undertake evaluations of World Heritage properties during the period in which they are a Panel Member. Where, exceptionally, a member of the Panel has undertaken an evaluation of a natural or mixed site, or provided advice to the State Party during the preparation of a nomination, that person shall not participate in decision making in relation to the final IUCN recommendation in relation to that property.
10. IUCN will not use in its evaluations of nominated properties, persons who have contributed directly to the nomination file or who have a direct advisory or management responsibility for the property under consideration, regardless of the nationality of the experts concerned.
11. IUCN delegations to evaluate or monitor World Heritage Properties will not comprise persons from the concerned State Party. Members of the World Heritage Panel shall not take part in decision taking processes on reports that concern properties in their own country.
12. IUCN will not use experts in World Heritage evaluation missions who are currently serving as representatives of their countries on the World Heritage Committee or who support those countries in the World Heritage Committee.
13. In view of IUCN's Statutes, and in particular the role of IUCN Council in the overall governance of the Union, members of IUCN Council may not represent IUCN in field evaluation missions, nor serve as members of the Panel.
14. All gifts received during an evaluation or monitoring mission should be reported in the mission report submitted to IUCN. No member of an IUCN evaluation mission should accept gifts of money, or items which could be seen as an inducement, from any person or organization associated with the property being evaluated or monitored. Acceptance of gifts of token value in association with missions should be in accordance with existing IUCN policy, and any gift accepted that could be construed as an inducement to an IUCN representative may not be retained and should be notified to the IUCN Head of Oversight who will identify the appropriate means of disposal or return to the State Party⁴.

Activities of members and Commission members in support of States Parties

15. It is noted that member organizations of IUCN, and members of Commissions of IUCN, may at times provide input to States Parties nominations processes, or other activities directly related to the World Heritage Convention. In such cases it should be noted that they may not represent their input as being on behalf of IUCN, and they should take all reasonable steps to ensure that their role cannot be interpreted as advice of IUCN. Written statements of support provided in respect of a World Heritage nomination must not make any linkage to IUCN. States Parties should be requested to not refer to independent advisers as "IUCN experts/advisers", "WCPA experts/advisers" or similar.
16. In the unlikely event that any statement of personal support that a Member or Commission member makes is subsequently included in a nomination as a view attributed to IUCN, it is the responsibility of the member to seek correction of this by the State Party at the earliest opportunity. This should be done in

⁴ The IUCN Conditions of Service, January, 2006, state : "*the value of a gift that may be accepted by a staff member at Headquarters in the course of, or as a result of, his/her work, without seeking the approval of his/her line manager, will not exceed CHF 500*".

writing to the State Party with a copy sent to the Director, World Heritage Programme. IUCN will also seek to ensure any such instances are corrected.

17. Commission members working in an independent capacity on a nomination or potential nomination (including on tentative lists) should secure a clear written agreement with the State Party (or their representative) prior to commencing their work that includes a disclaimer along the following lines:

“XXXXX is a member of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (or other Commission as appropriate), but under this agreement is acting in an independent capacity. Any views expressed by XXXXX in the execution of this contract shall not be represented as the views of IUCN.”

Communication of code of conduct

18. Every person employed or otherwise paid by IUCN in its Secretariat, or other capacity to process World Heritage nominations, and all participants in the Panel shall sign a copy of this statement and submit it to the Secretariat before taking up such duties.
19. A copy of this code of conduct must be provided to every other individual formally involved with IUCN World Heritage work, who will be requested by the Chair of the World Heritage Panel, to indicate their agreement to abide by the conditions of the Code.