

Policy for the implementation of the ICOMOS World Heritage mandate

The purpose of ICOMOS' involvement with the World Heritage Convention is provision of the highest available degree of professional expertise in the evaluation of World Heritage nominations and other aspects of implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

The purpose of this document is hence to ensure that the credibility of ICOMOS in performing these functions is above question and to this end it brings together a variety of practices and decisions that have been previously adopted.

Further to the above, ICOMOS understands that in dealing with this area, situations that have potential to create perceptions of conflict of interest are as damaging to the credibility of its work as those in which an actual conflict may exist. This policy is hence designed to avoid both situations where misperceptions may arise and those that raise real questions concerning the validity of its professional opinions.

Experts in the ICOMOS World Heritage system include all persons involved in the process of evaluation of nominations, state of conservation reports, reactive monitoring and other missions and programmes, including amongst other experts consulted by ICOMOS, its World Heritage Panel (i.e: the Panel appointed by the Executive Committee of ICOMOS to evaluate the work of the organisation in the area of World Heritage and the World Heritage Working Group "WHWG"), experts presenting nominations and the state of conservation reports to the Panel and World Heritage Committee, those conducting evaluation missions and other officers of the organisation.

In order to avoid possible conflicts of interest the following shall apply:

- 1 ICOMOS bases its evaluations and other opinions on research and peer review.
- 2 Whilst as a standard practice ICOMOS consults the national committees concerned with a property that is being evaluated, in all other steps of the process it draws only on experts from countries other than the State Parties concerned.
- 3 ICOMOS does not use in its evaluation of a property or for State of Conservation reports relating to it, or assessment of threats to it, experts who have been involved with the preparation of its nomination file, the development of the management system or plan or any other study, or with the preparation of a state of conservation report submitted by the State Party.
- 4 In regards to advancing the nomination of a property, experts involved in ICOMOS' World Heritage work are required to disclose to ICOMOS any direct advice given on particular nomination files along with the particular circumstances of the service provided. This applies to mission experts, desk reviewers, Advisors, members of the World Heritage Panel and members of the World Heritage Working Group. This is not intended to include academic commentaries of a general nature. National committees and International Scientific Committees shall be asked to disclose any involvement they have in World Heritage nominations, as well as identifying individual members involved in such work. World Heritage Panel and World Heritage Working Group members shall not participate in any discussions related to nominations, SOC Reports related to sites in their own countries.
- 5 All experts and members involved in the preparation of nominations files, that includes advising or providing recommendations or in any way furthering such a nomination but excluding any academic work not related to a specific nomination, shall not take part in any discussion of the nomination at the WH panel or the WHWG or undertake missions or desk evaluations for these nominations.
- 6 ICOMOS does not utilise in field evaluations experts who are currently serving as representatives of their countries on the World Heritage Committee.

- 7 Experts are all made aware of the ICOMOS Ethical Commitment Statement and are required to abide by its principles.
- 8 In order to ensure equitable handling of all nominations and state of conservation reports, ICOMOS does not entrust external missions to any of those whom it employs in its Secretariat or in any other capacity to process World Heritage nominations, nor does it involve those serving on its World Heritage Panel, WHWG or its International Executive Committee.
- 9 During discussion of a report or situation that concerns their own country, members of the WHWG as well as the World Heritage Panel must absent themselves from discussion and decision making processes.
- 10 The recommendations to the World Heritage Committee adopted by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel, or a working group mandated to evaluate additional information, are final and may not be changed or amended in any way other than by the Panel itself.
- 11 When new information concerning a nomination is submitted by a State Party before 28 February, a revised evaluation will be submitted to the World Heritage 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.
- 12 The recommendations and opinions of ICOMOS experts, the WHWG and the World Heritage Panel are confidential and individuals may not in their independent capacity 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. Furthermore, officials of ICOMOS and members of its WHWG and World Heritage Panel may not disclose the discussions that have taken place in the panel to any person or organisation that was not present in those discussions.
- 13 In the event that a member of the WHWG or World Heritage Panel or an expert used in ICOMOS World Heritage processes fails to implement any aspect of this policy, sanction/s shall be applied. These shall be determined by the Executive Committee of ICOMOS, or any sub-committee thereof to which such authority is delegated and shall be relative to the severity of the breach. However, in cases where it is believed to have compromised the credibility of ICOMOS as an objective and unbiased adviser to the World Heritage Committee and UNESCO, the individual concerned shall automatically be debarred from further participation in ICOMOS work associated with World Heritage matters and other areas of its work where it is important that the organisation project an image of impartiality.
- 14 In the event that there is evidence that an employee of the organisation has breached this policy, disciplinary action in accordance with prescribed processes shall be implemented.
- 15 Every person employed or otherwise paid by ICOMOS in its Secretariat, or other capacity to process World Heritage nominations, and all participants in the World Heritage Panel shall sign a copy of this statement and submit it to the Secretariat before taking up such duties.
- 16 A copy of this policy must be provided to every other individual formally involved with ICOMOS World Heritage work all of whom must indicate in advance that they understand and will abide by its terms.

**Approved for implementation
ICOMOS Executive Committee**

17 January 2006 and as amended in November 2007, in October 2010 and in October 2012

I (*full names*)
declare that I have read, understand and will abide by the above in all aspects of my involvement with the work of ICOMOS concerning World Heritage matters, and understand that my failure to do so may result in my removal from such areas of responsibility.

Date

Signature