EVALUATION OF IUCN'S WORK IN WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATIONS

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of its scientific advice; the final decision on Outstanding Universal Value belongs to the World Heritage Committee.

It has been a privilege to work with the dedicated IUCN team wh

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) indicate that IUCN is asking for advice on how to improve its performance related to the evaluation of World Heritage nominations for natural and mixed sites as well as for cultural landscapes. The review focuses on the processes used by IUCN in preparing and presenting the evaluations to the World Heritage Committee.

The review encompasses the working arrangement between IUCN and the World Heritage Centre, the interaction between IUCN and States Parties during the evaluation process, the selection and role of the field evaluators and reviewers, the operations of the IUCN World Heritage Advisory Panel, the application of the Global Strategy and other thematic studies, the interpretation of Outstanding Universal Value and the conditions of integrity, the treatment of supplementary information provided by States Parties and the presentations to the Committee.

Methodology

The evaluation was carried ou

Protected Areas and others, including the rest of IUCN, the World Heritage Centre, and other participants in the process.

Universal Value is at the heart of the nomination process, although not specifically defined in the Convention. A definition is proposed in the 2005 Operational Guidelines and is given meaning through the Committee's application of assessment criteria. [2] In examining the implementation of the Convention over its first thirty years, it would appear that the interpretation of Outstanding Universal Value has evolved. This has been noted by the outcomes of the Special Expert Meeting on the concept of Outstanding Universal Value (Kazan, Russian Federation, 2005).

In the early years, there was a strong tendency to list iconic sites that are unique and widely known. These properties clearly met the benchmark of "best of the best" and their evaluation did not require much by way of comparative context and analysis. The recommendations of IUCN were for the most part positive, given that the universal values of the proposals were quite evident. The World Heritage Committee was able to reach a comfortable consensus on their Outstanding Universal Value without the need for comparative studies.

Over time, there has been a shift towards properties that are more "representative of the best". By the mid-1980s the Committee expressed concerns about the meaning of Outstanding Universal Value and began to hesitate over the values of certain properties, deferring them until comparative studies put them in context and calling for rigorous application of the criteria. While the shift towards representative examples manifested itself earlier in the cultural field, it also occurrbia   M ˚ M   h d ˝ ˝ esent˝

discourse, IUCN has been periodically directed to maintain rigorous, objective and consistent evaluation procedures.

At the same time, the Committee has been concerned about imbalances on the World Heritage List, expressing the view that the List needs to be representative to be credible. In 1994, the Committee approved a Global Strategy for World Heritage, a dynamic thematic framework that was meant to encourage nominations from cultures, regions and typologies not well represented on the List.

Taking its cue from the Global Strategy, IUCN has developed and applied various scientific tools: the Udvardy classification system, the data sheets from the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, global studies on themes like wetlands, mountains and boreal forests, and regional studies such as the one prepared for Central Asia. In encouraging thematic studies, the World Heritage Committee's Global Strategy has in a sense hard-wired the concept of "representative of the best" into the system. The question remains, however, whether representative sites of regional significance meet the test of Outstanding Universal Value. The fundamental principle remains clear: one can only speak of "representativity" in the context of sites that have Outstanding Universal Value. This is a significant challenge that faces IUCN today as it evaluates properties proposed for inscription using World Heritage criteria.

REPORT OF FINDINGS

A. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

IUCN is highly respected by those involved in the World Heritage Convention. During the interview process, general observations were framed with adjectives that speak well of the organization and the quality of its performance related to nominations: excellent, professional, consistent, rigorous, solid, credible, admirable, satisfactory, straight-forward and principled.

With regard to cultural landscapes, there is a generally held view that IUCN did not fully embrace the concept at its inception and is not yet as deeply involved as it could or should be. Some hold the view that, by stepping back to allow ICOMOS to take the leadership role in this area, IUCN has contributed to an under-valuing of the natural dimensions of cultural landscapes. A draft strategy is currently under preparation to increase IUCN involvement in assessing cultural landscapes. IUCN is encouraged to complete this strategy as quickly as possible, in consultation with ICOMOS.

Another aspect of the review dealt with the relationship between IUCN and the World Heritage Centre. There have been disagreements and friction between the two organizations over the evaluation of nominations. The respective roles of the two organizations are drawn from article 14 of the World Heritage Convention. The Centre serves as the UNESCO secretariat to the Convention, and as such, has a clear role in managing the nomination process with States Parties. However, the Centre does not have a role in giving formal advice on whether or not nominations meet the threshold of Outstanding Universal Value. That role is the responsibility of the advisory bodies, ICOMOS and IUCN. There have been occasions when staff members from the World Heritage Centre have inappropriately taken a position on the Outstanding Universal Value of proposed sites. It would reduce tensions if senior management from the two

studies are available in English only and have not been translated into other working languages, and the fact that IUCN has not promoted this work through a targeted communications strategy. It should be noted that the scientific program of framework/thematic studies has not been the focus of a discussion and endorsement by the World Heritage Committee. IUCN could be vulnerable to the criticism that it has inadvertently usurped the authority of the Committee. It would be prudent to encourage a Committee discussion of IUCN's scientific program to ensure an alignment of Committee priorities with the work program.

Additional guidance could be provided to States Parties through an in-depth analysis of the history of application of World Heritage criteria. With more than thirty years of implementation, the World Heritage Convention has matured sufficiently to support a case law approach to an analysis of criteria. By looking back over the history of Committee decisions – nominations that succeeded as well as those that did not – IUCN could undertake to document the threshold for Outstanding Universal Value through the lens of each natural criterion. By providing greater understanding and clarity on the application of criteria related to natural sites, IUCN could help States Parties early in the process to assess the potential Outstanding Universal Value of individual sites. This case law approach could also improve consistency in the decision-making of the World Heritage Committee by documenting the interpretations of earlier Committees.

The World Heritage section of the WCPA website is well-organized and provides a good starting point for displaying and disseminating the additional information, guidance and studies called for in this review.

Recommendation 3: As resources permit, IUCN should expand its preparation of framework/thematic studies in areas of priority to the Committee (the Sahara, micro-climates, marine environments etc.).

Recommendation 4: IUCN should translate its framework/thematic studies into other languages as appropriate, to render them more accessible.

Recommendation 5: IUCN should develop and implement a communications strategy to heighten awareness and promote the use of the World Heritage framework/thematic studies.

Recommendation 6: IUCN should present to the World Heritage Committee for discussion and endorsement the scientific program used in the evaluation of individual sites.

Recommendation 7: IUCN should document, disseminate and take into consideration the history of the Committee's application of natural criteria in the assessment of

prepare nominations would be a conflict of interest, given IUCN responsibility for evaluating nominations. This is a fair point. Nonetheless, IUCN could work more closely with States Parties to provide general guidance about sources of information and expertise. In addition, there are two specific areas where IUCN could provide technical guidance. They correspond to two requirements in the justification section: the choice of criteria and the comparative analysis.

When States Parties propose a property for inscription, they are required to indicate which criteria appear to apply to the site, together with a clear argument for the use of each criterion. States Parties would be better able to make these arguments if they had a better understanding of the ways in which the criteria have been interpreted by the Committee in the past. IUCN could provide technical guidance on the application of criteria by making available, as discussed above, an in-depth analysis of the application over time of natural heritage criteria and the scientific evidence required. Recommendation 7 applies.

As part of the justification for inscription, States Parties are also required to provide a comparative analysis of the property, explaining its importance in relation to similar properties both at the national and international levels. IUCN's scientific work clearly contributes to the comparative analysis of sites in an international context and in fact sometimes serves as the basis for the evaluation. To ensure consistency and to help States Parties prepare this section, IUCN should consider producing a specific guideline on the basic requirements and available resource materials for preparing a comparative analysis for natural World Heritage Sites.

Recommendation 8: IUCN should produce a specific guideline on the basic requirements and available resource materials for preparing a comparative analysis for natural World Heritage Sites.

stronger on issues of integrity, boundaries and management practices, and weaker on criteria and Outstanding Universal Value. The recent initiative to provide small honoraria to reviewers has apparently improved the quality of the reviews. If it intends to continue with this review stage, IUCN should revise its selection process to increase participation from different regions and to access the broader scientific community beyond the WCPA and SSC.

Recommendation 10: IUCN should revise its selection process for reviewers to increase participation from different regions and to access the broader scientific community beyond WCPA and SSC.

D.ii.b Evaluators

Following the review process, IUCN evaluators carry out site visits to the nominated properties. Evaluators are either staff members of the Programme for Protected Areas or are chosen by them. The evaluation process is one of the weak areas and a matter that affects the credibility of IUCN. Issues that need to be addressed include the selection process, competence, and further clarification of the roles to be carried out by field evaluators.

The selection process for evaluators is not well documented. The roster of evaluators appears to lack regional and gender balance. In the period 2001-2004, of the 34 evaluators used to carry out 72 evaluations, 33 were male and 25 were from English-speaking developed countries. It is hard to avoid the impression that evaluators belong to an exclusive club. It would appear that IUCN has not invested sufficiently in building up a network of qualified evaluators. Several interviewees noted that the evaluator role should be distributed broadly, not always the same persons or groups. Concerns about competence and concerns about possible regional bias were raised in those cases where the expert evaluators might come from the same region as the nominated property. Without losing its focus on professional competence, IUCN has an opportunity

to improve relationships with S t

recommendation on Outstanding Universal Value. At best, this formulation can only be considered a preliminary one, since site inspection is only one element in an overall judgement. Other factors include the reports from reviewers, WCMC data, specific scientific expertise and the Panel's collective knowledge. Evaluators should not be

scientific expertise and the Panel's collective knowledge ad experience. IUCN is uniquely positioned to prepare an institutional assessment without individual bias of Outstanding Universal Value and the other conditions related to integrity and management practices. According to its participants, the Panel discussions are thorough, lively and rooted in science. The Panel recommendations are advisory; final approval of the recommendations is the responsibility of IUCN staff.

Four issues have been identified in the course of this review: the composition of Panel, the choice of Chairperson, the assessment process, and the level of final approval.

The Panel is composed of a small group of people with deep experience in evaluation and a solid grasp of World Heritage. There are permanent members and rotational members. From an external perspective, the Panel appears to be exclusive and little known. It does not have terms of reference and a list of its members is not generally available. Membership is predominantly male, English-speaking and drawn from developed countries. The Panel needs to be larger, more representative and draw on a broader range of scientific organizations. The challenge facing IUCN, from both a technical and budgetary perspective, is to expand membership of the Panel to better reflect regions and the global heritage community while maintaining its scientific rigour. Some interviewees suggested that IUCN should add Panel members from international NGOs with large projects on the ground, in order to make better use of global knowledge and experience.

The Chair of the World Heritage Advisory Panel is the Director of the Programme on Protected Areas. He is also responsible for agenda preparation and the Secretariat functions of managing the contract with the World Heritage Centre, engaging and coordinating reviewers and evaluators, and preparing documentation for the World Heritage Advisory Panel. Based on the principle of separating the secretariat function from the governance function, it would appear inappropriate to have a staff officer preside over the Panel. The separation of the two roles has obvious benefits, especially

in that political as well as technical factors can more obviously be considered and accountability would expand to the larger IUCN organization. There are several options for selecting a Chair, including an internal candidate (the Director General or his representative) or an external candidate from the broader volunteer constituency (recognized expert or member of the World Commission on Protected Areas). Given that IUCN's Director General lends institutional support to the Panel recommendations when he gives final approval, an external choice might be more suitable.

In terms of process, two issues have been raised: the increasing workload for Panel members and an appearance of possible bias in a system where evaluators participate as Panel members. In terms of workload, it appears that Panel members are being required to supplement the research documents by preparing additional comparative analyses and other material. This additional workload is apparently the result of poor quality nomination dossiers, especially in the comparative analyses. Recommendation 8 is particularly pertinent to this issue.

On the second issue, it is recognized that Panel members need to have experience in carrying out field evaluations so that they fully understand the evaluation process. To counter any appearance of bias, if costs were not an issue and if many experienced Panel members were available, an ideal process would be to separate evaluators and Panel members in any given year. Evaluators would present their findings to the Panel and then depart. They would not be part of the Panel in a year in which they presented evaluations. At the present time, evaluators are requested to leave the room during discussion of nominations that they have evaluated. They then rejoin to Panel. This process gives an appearance of undue influence through the collegiality of the group. As an interim measure, IUCN should formalize its procedural rules on process. In the long run, the organization should move as quickly as is feasible to a system that separates evaluators in a given year from Panel membership.

Current practice to approve the Panel recommendations is somewhat informal. Accountability clearly rests with IUCN. Normally, the Director of the Programme on Protected Areas advises the Director, Global Programme, who then approves the recommendations. Given the political nature of the World Heritage Convention and its importance as a UNESCO flagship program, IUCN should consider whether the final approval of the recommendations fr

consistent and clearly presented to focus on the criteria for Outstanding Universal Value as well as the conditions of integrity, boundaries and management practices. In the interests of objectivity, one interviewee suggested that it would be preferable not to have the IUCN person who evaluated a specific site present it to the Committee. Others stressed that all aspects of the evaluation, both positive and negative, should be presented clearly, noting that IUCN often does just that. The IUCN presenters are strongly advised to state that the conclusion is not individual, but corporate, and that the presenters are not in a position to change the recommendation.

It is important to recall that the primary audience for these presentations is the World Heritage Committee. Given the rotational nature of Committee membership and the relatively low number of natural heritage experts present on State Party delegations, IUCN could enhance its communications by using plain, less scientific language and by explaining in more detail earlier applications of criteria by previous Committees in similar situations (case law approach). Clear explanations are particularly important when IUCN is recommending against inscription.

An issue that has emerged is that of similar sites. When IUCN states that a site is similar to one already inscribed on the World Heritage List, IUCN recommends against inscription; by contrast, some interviewees believe that if a site is similar, that this similarity is the justification for adding it to the List.

An element that undermines the credibility of IUCN is consideration of new information by IUCN staff subsequent to the Panel's work. The decision to eliminate Bureau consideration of nominations has had an impact on the evaluation process because there is no longer an opportunity to deal with additional information during the evaluation year. The situation is especially uncomfortable when IUCN changes the published Panel recommendations as a result of new information or lobbying efforts, without the Panel's endorsement. To some degree this diminishes the role of the Panel. Several interviewees expressed the strong view that IUCN presenters should resist

political pressure, "stick to their guns" and not change the Panel position during the meeting. In theory, the situation should no longer arise, since the 2005 Operational Guidelines ask IUCN not to take into account or include any information submitted by the State Party after March 31[5].

Recommendation 20: IUCN presenters should state that their conclusions are not individual, but corporate. They should not change IUCN recommendations without seeking endorsement from the Panel.

Recommendation 21: IUCN presenters should communicate the recommendations in plain language and explain in detail earlier applications of criteria by previous Committees in similar situations (case law approach).

E. CORPORATE IUCN

In the course of conducting interviews, a number of elements have arisen that touch on IUCN's administration and organization. Important issues include the structure of the Programme for Protected Areas, the relationship with WCPA, involvement of other IUCN programmes, capacity building and communications.

Some interviewees regret the loss of a senior program officer as a focal point for World Heritage at IUCN. The current structure of the Programme for Protected Areas no longer has such a position. However, World Heritage work is very demanding and would benefit from a single focal point within the Programme. IUCN should give some consideration to re-instating a senior program officer position in the Programme for Protected Areas with exclusive responsibility for World Heritage.

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[5] Operational Guidelines, 2005, art. 148 (h).

Several interviewees were confused about the role of WCPA in the World Heritage process. It would be useful to clarify the roles between the WCPA (Chair of Panel? Source of reviewers?) and the Programme for Protected Areas (management of evaluation process, Secretariat to the Panel, liaison with States Parties, etc.). They called for a greater involvement of the WCPA in order to enlarge conservation efforts on behalf of World Heritage. While many reviewers are drawn from WCPA, the current lack of focal point for World Heritage (usually the Vice-Chair) within the WCPA is regrettable, given WCPA's capacity to reinforce relationships between States Parties and IUCN. The role of the Vice-Chair, World Heritage in WCPA provides leadership for promoting and advancing World Heritage interests, especially through communications, publications, delivery of training modules and mobilization of regional networks. IUCN is encouraged to fill this gap as quickly as possible.

During the interviews, several IUCN staff expressed strong support for World Heritage. Nonetheless, there remains a perception that IUCN has failed to engage its other programmes in World Heritage issues. IUCN clearly has more science within its organization than is accessed by World Heritage. There is a need and desire to tap into the larger scientific community (e.g. Species Survival Commission and geological science group). Science itself is not the problem. The ability to marshal it may be.

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Recommendation 23: IUCN is encouraged to fill the position of Vice-Chair, World Heritage at the WCPA as quickly as possible.

Recommendation 24: IUCN should engage its country and regional offices in World Heritage matters.

Recommendation 25: IUCN should examine ways and means to build skills and capacity in order to broaden involvement in all stages of the nomination process.

Recommendation 26: IUCN should develop a communications strategy to promote IUCN's technical role in World Heritage matters, to demonstrate the importance of the Convention to the corporate goals of IUCN, and to present information about the quality of IUCN's scientific research as applied to World Heritage sites.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. IUCN is encouraged to complete its strategy for assessing cultural landscapes as quickly as possible, in consultation with ICOMOS.

2. Senior management from IUCN and the World Heritage Centre should clarify their respective roles in evaluating nominations and communicate the results to their staff.

3. IUCN should expand its preparation of framework/thematic studies in areas of priority to the Committee (the Sahara, micro-climates, marine environments etc.)

4. As resources permit, IUCN should translate its framework/thematic studies into other languages as appropriate, to render them more accessible.

5. IUCN should develop and implement a communications strategy to heighten awareness and promote the use of the World Heritage framework/thematic studies.

6. IUCN should present to the World Heritage Committee for discussion and endorsement the scientific program used in the evaluation of individual sites.

7. IUCN should document, disseminate and take into consideration the history of the Committee's application of natural criteria in the assessment of Outstanding Universal Value.

8. IUCN should produce a specific guideline on the basic requirements and available resource materials for preparing a comparative analysis for natural World Heritage Sites.

9. IUCN should make available the names and credentials of all specialists involved in evaluating the natural heritage values of nominations.

10. IUCN should revise its selection process for reviewers to increase participation from different regions and to access the broader scientific community beyond WCPA and SSC.

11. IUCN should increase global participation in conservation by broadening the selection process for evaluators.

12. IUCN should initiate a strategy to develop a cadre of evaluators from all regions and major linguistic groups.

13. IUCN should consider the feasibility of sending two or more field evaluators to investigate a site, thereby offering opportunities for mentoring and for combining regional and non-regional participation.

14. IUCN evaluators should take part in feedback sessions with States Parties at the end of their site visit in order to share their general observations, raise questions

17. The function of Chairperson to the World Heritage Advisory Panel should be separate from the secretariat function.

18. As an interim measure, IUCN should formalize its procedural rules on the participation of evaluators as Panel members. The organization should move as quickly as is feasible to a system that separates evaluators in a given year from Panel membership.

19. Given the political nature of the World Heritage Convention and its importance as a UNESCO flagship program, IUCN should consider whether the final approval of Panel recommendations would not more appropriately reside with the Director General of IUCN.

20. IUCN presenters should state that their conclusions are not individual, but corporate. They should not change IUCN recommendations without seeking endorsement from the Panel.

21. IUCN presenters should communicate the recommendations in plain, less scientific language and explain in more detail earlier applications of criteria by previous Committees in similar situations (case law approach).

22. IUCN should give some consideration to re-instating a senior program officer position in the Programme for Protected Areas with exclusive responsibility for World Heritage.

23. IUCN is encouraged to fill the position of Vice-Chair, World Heritage at the WCPA as quickly as possible.

24. IUCN should engage its country and regional offices in World Heritage matters.

25. IUCN should examine ways and means to build skills and capacity in order to broaden involvement in all stages of the nomination process.

26. IUCN should develop a communications strategy to promote IUCN's technical role in World Heritage matters, to demonstrate the importance of the Convention to the corporate goals of IUCN, and to present information about the quality of IUCN's scientific research as applied to World Heritage sites.

NOTE:

In recognition of the fact that this is an extensive list of recommendations that will take time, energy and money to implement, priority should be given to those recommendations that improve the decision-making process (16, 17, 18), those that contribute to expanding the network (10, 11, 12, 24) and those that provide guidance to States Parties (1, 4, 7).

Appendix 1
Terms of Reference

Review of IUCN's work in the evaluation of World Heritage (WH) nominations

Draft of 29 October 2004

Objective

To review and advise on how to improve IUCN's performance related to the evaluation of WH nominations for natural and mixed sites as well as cultural landscapes (hereafter referred to as WH nominations)

Work Description

Taking into account the responsibilities of IUCN under the WH Convention, review IUCN's work related to the evaluation of WH nominations and develop recommendations to the Director of IUCN's Global Programme and the Head of IUCN's Programme on Protected Areas.

The review to include the proce

viii) the treatment of supplementary information provided by States Parties; and

ix) the presentations, both verbal and written, to the WH Committee.

Key Outcomes

The key outcomes will be recommendations to improve the way in which IUCN undertakes its advisory role in relation to evaluation of WH nominations.

Implementation of this Review

(a) This Review will be undertaken by Mrs Christina Cameron in consultation with relevant persons from IUCN and other relevant organisations

(b) the Clients for this Review are the Director of the IUCN Global Programme (Bill Jackson) and the Head of IUCN's Programme on Protected Areas (David Sheppard)

(c) The final report should be an internal report of no more than 10 pages to the Clients by May 31, 2005

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Appendix 2

List of Persons Interviewed

IUCN

Achim Steiner, Director General

Bill Jackson, Director, Global Programme

Jean-Yves Pirot, Senior Co-ordinator, Global Programme

Programme for Protected Areas

David Sheppard, Head

Pedro Rosabal, Senior Programme Officer

Georgina Peard, Project Officer

World Heritage Panel

Tim Badman, Dorset and East Devon Coast, UK

Stuart Chape, UNEP-WCMC

Adrian Phillips, former Vice-Chair, World Heritage, WCPA

Harald Placter, former Vice-Chair, World Heritage, WCPA

Jim Thorsell, World Heritage Senior Advisor, IUCN

World Commission on Protected Areas

Nikita Lopoukhine, Chair

World Heritage Centre

Francesco Bandarin, Director

Kishore Rao, Deputy Director

Mechtild Rossler, Chief, Europe and North America

M. A Touri (Morroco)

Vera Lacoeuilhe (Saint Lucia)

Adul Wichiencharoen (Thailand)