



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



World  
Heritage  
Convention

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## The Criteria for Selection

To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of ten selection criteria.

These criteria are explained in the [Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention](#) which, besides the text of the Convention, is the main working tool on World Heritage. The criteria are regularly revised by the Committee to reflect the evolution of the World Heritage concept itself.

Until the end of 2004, World Heritage sites were selected on the basis of six cultural and four natural criteria. With the adoption of the revised Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, only one set of ten criteria exists.

### Selection criteria

(i)

to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

(ii)

to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of t

or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

(iii)

to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

(iv)

to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

(v)

to 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;

(vi)

to 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);

(vii)

to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;

(viii)

to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes, the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

(ix)

to 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;

(x)

to 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 scientific conservation.

Operational Guidelines (year)	Cultural criteria						Natural criteria		
2002	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
2005	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(viii)	(ix)	(vii)

The protection, management, authenticity and integrity of properties are also important considerations. Since 1992 significant interactions between people and the natural environment have been recognized as **cultural landscapes**.

#### Decisions (10)

- ▶ 32COM 8B.46 Changes to criteria of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List
- ▶ 30COM 8D.1 Revision of Criteria of Properties Inscribed on the World Heritage List according to the Operational Guidelines (2005)
- ▶ 30COM 8D.2 Revision of Criteria of Properties Inscribed on the World Heritage List according to the Operational Guidelines (2005)
- ▶ 07EXTCOM 4A Progress report on revised Operational Guidelines
- ▶ 06EXTCOM 5.4 New numbering system for the combined criteria (i) to (x)
- ▶ 21COM VIII.11 Invitation to the Consultative Body to Re-examine the Criteria Concerning the Inscription of Cultural Heritage
- ▶ 21COM VIII.11 Re-examine of the Criteria Concerning the Inscription of Cultural Heritage and Authenticity
- ▶ 17COM XVI.1-6 Examination of the Application of the Revised Cultural Criteria of the Operational Guidelines for the Inclusion of Cultural Landscapes on the World Heritage List
- ▶ 03COM XI.36 Amendments to the criteria for the inclusion of cultural

and natural properties in the World Heritage List and Guidelines for the evaluation of Nominations to the World Heritage List by ICOMOS and IUCN

▶ 03COM XI(b).37 Amendments to the criteria for the inclusion of natural properties in the World Heritage List and guidelines for the evaluation of nominations by IUCN