



World Heritage Leadership programme

Heritage Place Lab

We are looking for 6 World Heritage sites and their site managers to join the next edition of the Heritage Place Lab!

The ICCROM-IUCN World Heritage Leadership (WHL) programme is launching a second edition of the Heritage Place Lab (HPL), focused on strengthening networks across research and site management in the context of the World Heritage Convention.

We invite World Heritage sites managers who are seeking collaborations with researchers to improve their management processes and decision-making. The Heritage Place Lab 2024-2025 will consist of a series of online and in-person workshops to be held between September 2024 and April 2025. The expected outcome is to develop tools to facilitate the exchange between site managers and researchers, establishing working methodologies with researchers and research institutions on how to design research projects and strategies to support World Heritage site management. Through the Heritage Place Lab, site management institutions will be connected with universities and research institutes as knowledge providing institutions that could address the World Heritage property's research needs.

Heritage Place Lab as a Learning Network and the pilot phase

In its Article 5, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention calls on State Parties to develop and encourage research for the protection of their cultural and natural heritage, placing on science an important role on its implementation. Even though the World Heritage system provides such space for exchange and collaboration between researchers and practitioners, this has not been sufficiently and systematically explored. Strengthening the interlinkages between site managers and researchers can assist the conservation of natural and cultural heritage by building capacities on managers to understand how research can support their work and what type of research is needed to address management issues.

Between September 2021 and April 2022, WHL implemented a pilot edition of the Heritage Place Lab bringing together eight Research-Practice Teams in a series of six incubator online workshops focused on strengthening collaboration between site management teams and researchers to design joint Research Agendas for World Heritage properties.

The results of the pilot phase are published as PANORAMA Nature-Culture Solutions, in a Special Issue of the Journal on Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development, and in a forthcoming ICCROM publication presenting the report of the activity and the teams' research agendas.

Heritage Place Lab 2024-2025

For the Heritage Place Lab 2024-2025, we are looking for 6 World Heritage properties and their site managers, with a particular emphasis on, but not limited to involving World Heritage sites in the Arab States and Asia and the Pacific regions, which were under-represented in the pilot phase. The WHL will act as a knowledge broker, and will endeavour to match World Heritage site managers with a research institution that can respond to the specific knowledge and expertise needed, and initiate long-term research-practice cooperation.

A model for collaboration developed from the pilot phase will be consolidated through this new edition. The HPL 2024-2025 will then work on defining tools that can be used by World Heritage site managers to better address the World Heritage property research needs.

The HPL will have three work components to be implemented in a maximum of 9 months duration (September 2024-April 2025):

1. A 5-day inaugural workshop to be held in-person between 19 and 23 October 2024 in Beijing, China (excluding travel dates);
2. three 2-hour online mentoring sessions with individual World Heritage sites and two 3-hour online workshops with all World Heritage sites selected;
3. a 5-day closing workshop to be possibly held in-person or in hybrid modalities in April 2025.

Besides their participation in online and in-person workshops, site management teams should also take into consideration that additional meetings and coordination with the partner research institution will be required. During these time they will work together to strengthen their collaboration, carry out tasks assigned between workshops, and advance in the preparation of research agendas.

Incentives for participation

- Developing sound institutional relationships for long-term engagements between the WHL, research institutions and World Heritage properties.
- Promoting partnerships between site managing and research institutions in order to initiate and/or sustain a long-standing partnership, thereby building bridges between World Heritage properties and research institutions, among them universities.

- Promoting networking and professional growth among collaborating World Heritage places, institutions, researchers and practitioners.

What are the Heritage Place Lab priority issues?

In this edition, priority will be given to sites facing categories of issues that have been identified via the 3rd cycle of Periodic Reporting and the Heritage Place Lab.

- **Development pressures**
World Heritage places are facing development pressures which include, rapid urbanisation, tourism and renewable energy infrastructure development, among others. Means to protect heritage and proactively address development needs will be explored.
- **Climate change impacts**
Climate change and the more frequent extreme weather events and hazards related to it are recognised as one of the main threats to World Heritage properties. However site managers lack the tools to understand and confront the impacts of climate change-related factors at their heritage places. Developing climate action for World Heritage properties will be addressed.
- **Legal frameworks and boundaries**
Boundaries of World Heritage properties need to reflect adequate legal protection for all attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. Revision of boundaries and legal frameworks to respond to development and environmental pressures, as well as making them effective is a challenge that will be discussed.
- **Improvement on buffer zone(s)**
Development pressures and climate change impacts demonstrate the need for an added layer of protection to World Heritage properties. As many properties do not count with a buffer zone(s), designing, planning and implementing buffer zones to support World Heritage management require further research.
- **Governance: rightsholders and stakeholders involvement**
The timely and adequate involvement of rightsholders and other stakeholders into the management system of World Heritage properties, in particular, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, remains a challenge. Methods for balancing power between different managing organisations, for collaborating among different actors in the World Heritage place, and for understanding who needs to be involved will be explored.

- **Integrating Indigenous, traditional, and local knowledge into management**

The integration of diverse knowledge systems, in particular, traditional ways of managing heritage places, into current management planning is a recurrent need. Current challenges such as climate change are requiring other than scientific knowledge systems for developing adequate management measures. Methods for integrating these into the management system and management planning will be explored.

How to apply for the Heritage Place Lab

Applications should be submitted to the World Heritage Leadership per email at whl@iccrom.org by 30 May 2024.

The application process includes the submission of the following documents:

- Complete application form in English in pdf format
- A brief version of the curriculum vitae of all members of the site management team
- Official endorsements by site management institutions authority(ies).

Please note that incomplete applications will not be considered.

Pre-selected World Heritage properties and their site managers will be contacted via email and invited for an online interview with the World Heritage Leadership that will take place in June 2024, dates to be agreed with the site management team.

If you encounter any issues submitting your application or if you have any questions concerning the Heritage Place Lab, please email us at: whl@iccrom.org.

What are the selection criteria?

- Relevance to the priority issue to be addressed during the Heritage Place Lab, this should be presented succinctly, responding specifically to the issues proposed in the call;
- Present clearly why and what type of research is needed;
- Interest in partnering with a research institution;
- Time to work and commit to the Heritage Place Lab activities;
- Basic knowledge on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.