



# 8TH WORLD HERITAGE SITE MANAGERS' FORUM

*organised in conjunction with the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee*

## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Republic of Korea, as Host Country of the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICCROM and IUCN through the World Heritage Leadership Programme, are pleased to announce that the 8th edition of the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum (WHSM26) will be organised in conjunction with the session of the World Heritage Committee. The Forum's theme is:

### **Connection and Communication: participatory approaches to managing World Heritage**

World Heritage site managers, as well as members of World Heritage site management teams from across the globe are eligible to apply for this year's Forum, which aims to create opportunities for the empowerment of site managers in expanding their networks as well as exchanging knowledge and experiences at an international level.

<b>Host:</b>	The Republic of Korea
<b>Organisers:</b>	Korea Heritage Service (KHS), National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (NRICH), UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICCROM and IUCN
<b>Venue:</b>	Busan, Republic of Korea
<b>Dates:</b>	16 – 23 July 2026 (excluding travel dates)
<b>Language:</b>	English (interpretation will be provided in Korean and French)
<b>Partner:</b>	ICOMOS

### **Theme and topics**

Connection and communication are fundamental for the effective management of World Heritage. States Parties to the World Heritage Convention are encouraged to adopt human-rights based and people-centred approaches to ensure the participation of a wide variety of actors in the identification, nomination, management and protection processes of World Heritage properties. To enable meaningful involvement of rights-holders and all stakeholders, establishing well-connected governance arrangements are essential. Connection and communication serve as a key to foster participation, raise awareness, while also ensuring inclusive engagement in decision-making. Together, integrated management systems and strategic communication support governance, collective responsibility, and sustainable outcomes. Through this edition of the Forum, participants will have the opportunity to learn about participatory approaches covering the following main topics:

- Sustainable management of World Heritage through inclusive people-centred approaches;
- Integrated governance of World Heritage properties;
- Decision-making based on research and data for public awareness in conservation and management;
- Coordinated risk management for heritage and people; and
- Communicating and nurturing heritage values for revitalizing local communities.

Additional topics will be explored based on the World Heritage properties of the selected participants.

## Objectives of the Forum

The key objectives of WHSMF26 are:

- **To promote international cooperation** of World Heritage site managers and coordinate worldwide actions in favour of the protection and conservation of humankind's cultural and natural heritage through activities and interventions aimed at raising awareness of States Parties to this heritage.
- **To reinforce and support the international network** of site managers that defines, improves and promotes conservation principles, standards, research, responsible practice, and innovation about the protection of World Heritage properties.
- To assist site managers through appropriate guidance **to harness the potential of World Heritage properties** and heritage in general.
- **To strengthen the enabling environment** by advocating policies, strategies, frameworks and tools that support sustainable development as an important vehicle for protecting and managing cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value.
- **To provide an opportunity** to the site managers **to observe the World Heritage Committee deliberations and issues discussed** on the state of conservation (SOC) reports.

## Who is eligible?

- Current World Heritage site managers as well as persons working within the site management from all natural, cultural and mixed World Heritage properties are eligible.
- Only **one (1) participant per World Heritage property** will be accepted. An exception will be made for transboundary or transnational properties, for which only one (1) person per State Party involved may be accepted.
- Priority will be given to participants from World Heritage properties that are currently under the Reactive Monitoring process, and especially to those inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.
- Site managers who have not yet had the opportunity to attend previous editions of the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum will be given preference.
- Selection will also be guided in view of **balancing regional, age and gender** distribution of participants as well as **typologies of World Heritage properties** represented.

## Conditions: travel, accommodation, living expenses, and attendance

- Selected participants will be responsible for their round-trip travel costs to and from Busan, the Republic of Korea, as well as their accommodation and living expenses during the entire Forum. Information on hotels near the venue of the WHSMF26 will be provided to the Forum participants for their individual reservations.
- Selected participants are strongly encouraged to seek financial support from their institutions and other sources such as governmental institutions, employers and other funding agencies.
- The Host Country has secured **limited travel grants to support the participation of some selected site managers to attend the Forum from Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), or States Parties in conflict/post-conflict situations**. Please be advised that this grant is not automatically awarded, and notification of grant status will be provided only upon communication of the selection results.
- The selected participants should commit to attending the entire duration of the Forum.
- The participants who confirm attendance will be communicated to the relevant State Party Delegation.

### **Application process**

Please note that the applications should be completed and submitted in English or French only. Applications in other languages will not be considered.

A professional curriculum vitae in PDF format (max. 2 pages) will be requested as part of the application.

**Site managers are invited to submit their applications through the online form of the 8th World Heritage Site Managers' Forum, which is available at:**

**[whc.unesco.org/en/whsmf26/](http://whc.unesco.org/en/whsmf26/)**

**The deadline to apply is 22 March 2026 at 23:59, CET.** Applicants will be informed directly of the selection process result from 27 April 2026.

For more information, please contact the Forum organisers by email at [wh-smf@unesco.org](mailto:wh-smf@unesco.org).