



World Heritage – an honour and an obligation

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Some caveats about the speaker



SCOPE OF TALK

- **An introduction to World Heritage**
- **What's involved in getting a site on the WH list, and managing it?**
- **The benefits of WH**
- **Threats to WH sites**

Reality check:

Three important things to take away from the seminar

1. making a successful nomination is tough
2. the standards are very high - success is not guaranteed
3. if a site is inscribed, it comes with important obligations – inscription is only the start



















The idea of World Heritage

- *Some places are so important to humanity that we think of them as being for everyone forever*
- *“World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located” (UNESCO WH Web site)*
- Such sites have ***Outstanding Universal Value***



History of the convention



- 1950s and 1960s – emergence of global heritage and global nature conservation movements
- 1972 – Stockholm UN Conference on Human Environment
- 1972 – UNESCO’s “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage” (*World Heritage Convention*) signed
- 1972-2013 - 190 State Parties (SP) sign WHC and have inscribed 981 sites



Cultural sites

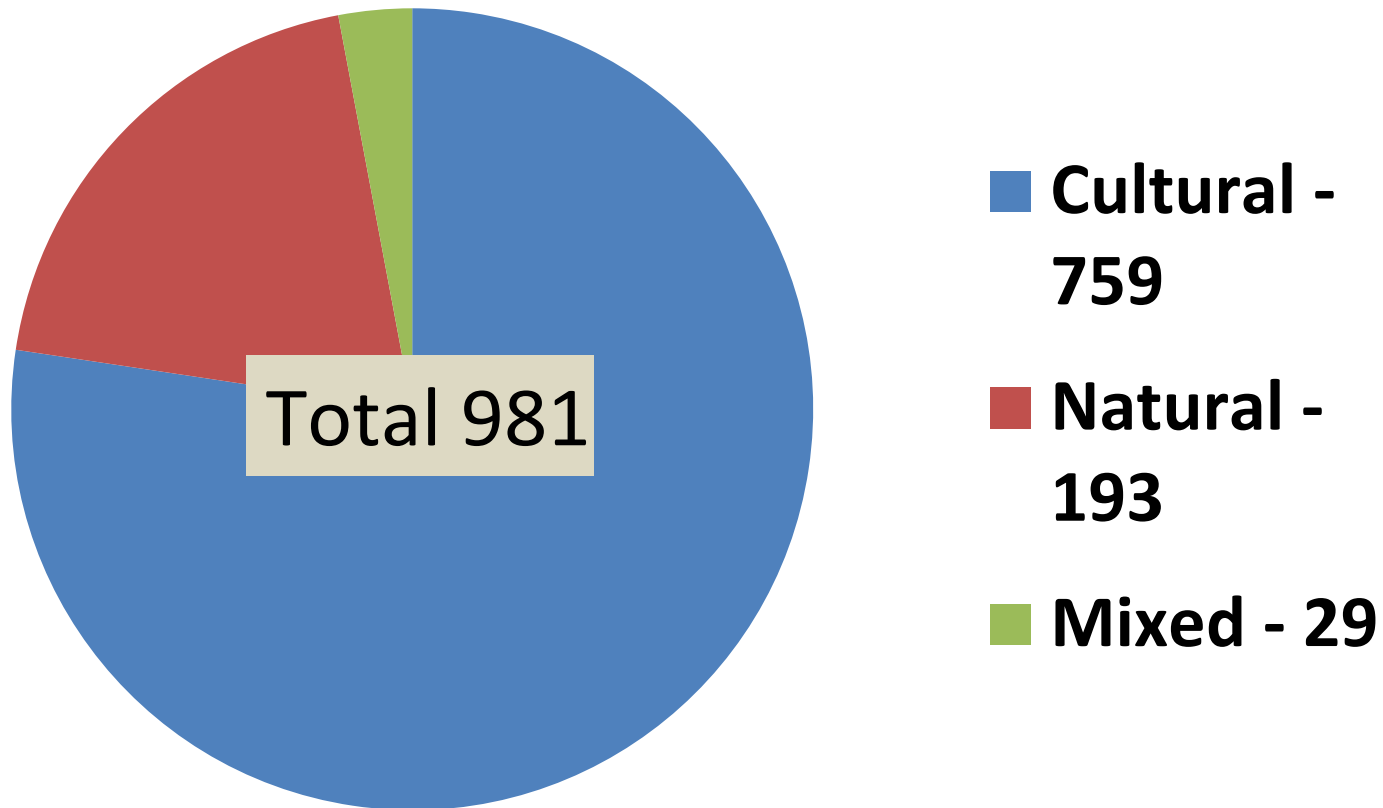
Natural sites



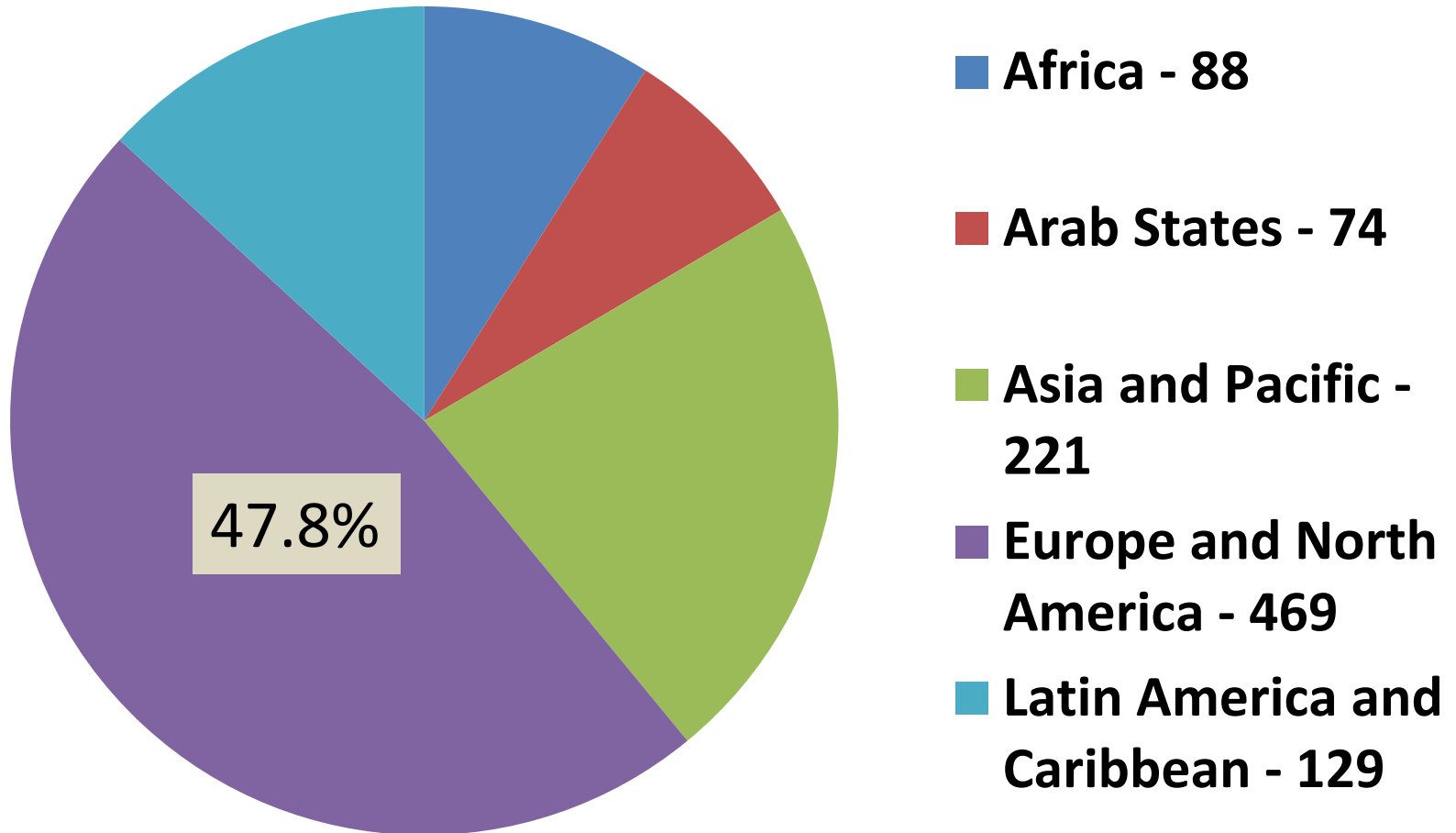


'Mixed' sites

Number of World Heritage properties (2013)



Distribution of World Heritage Properties by World Regions (2013)



Some achievements of the WHC



- Nearly every country belongs
- Most members have sites on the List
- The Convention has:
 - Achieved a high profile
 - Raised status of natural and cultural heritage
 - Brings natural and cultural heritage together
 - Helped build capacity in heritage management
 - Mobilised international assistance
 - Saved sites from threats, restored others

But there are some difficult questions

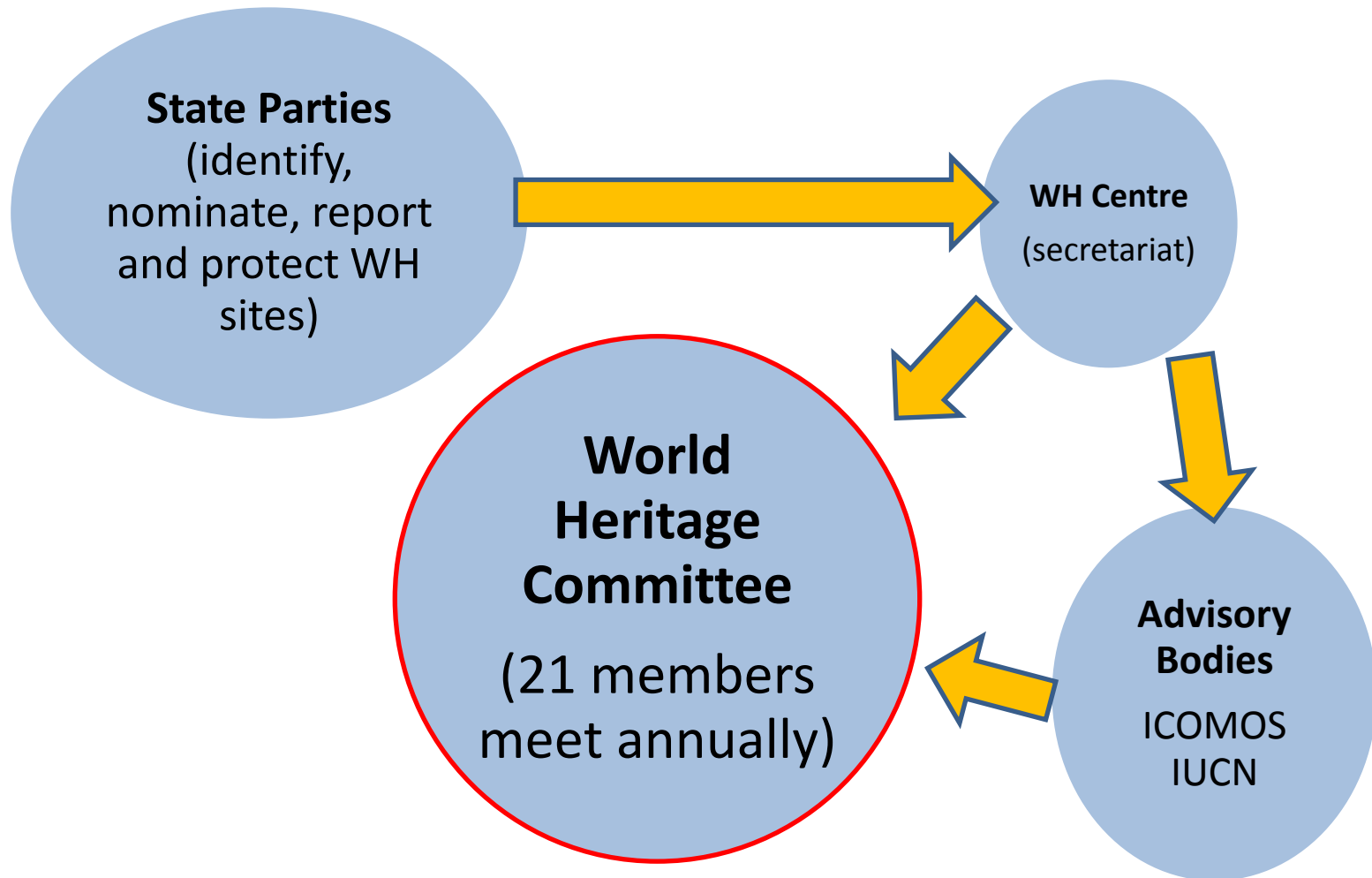
- How good is the coverage? Is it balanced?
- What is 'enough'? Is the WH “brand” being devalued?
- How well are WH sites protected?
- Do countries fulfil their responsibilities?
- Does the focus on nomination overshadow needs of management?



What's involved in getting a site on the WH list ?



The main actors in the nomination process



The process for getting on to the WH List – 'inscription'

Tentative list



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graph TD; A[Tentative list] --> B[Nomination file]; B --> C[Advisory Body evaluation (ICOMOS, IUCN)]; C --> D[World Heritage Committee decision];
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The diagram illustrates the four-step process for getting on to the World Heritage List. It consists of four blue rectangular boxes with white text, arranged in a descending staircase pattern from top-left to bottom-right. Each box is connected to the next by a large, light-blue downward-pointing arrow. The background is a solid yellow color.

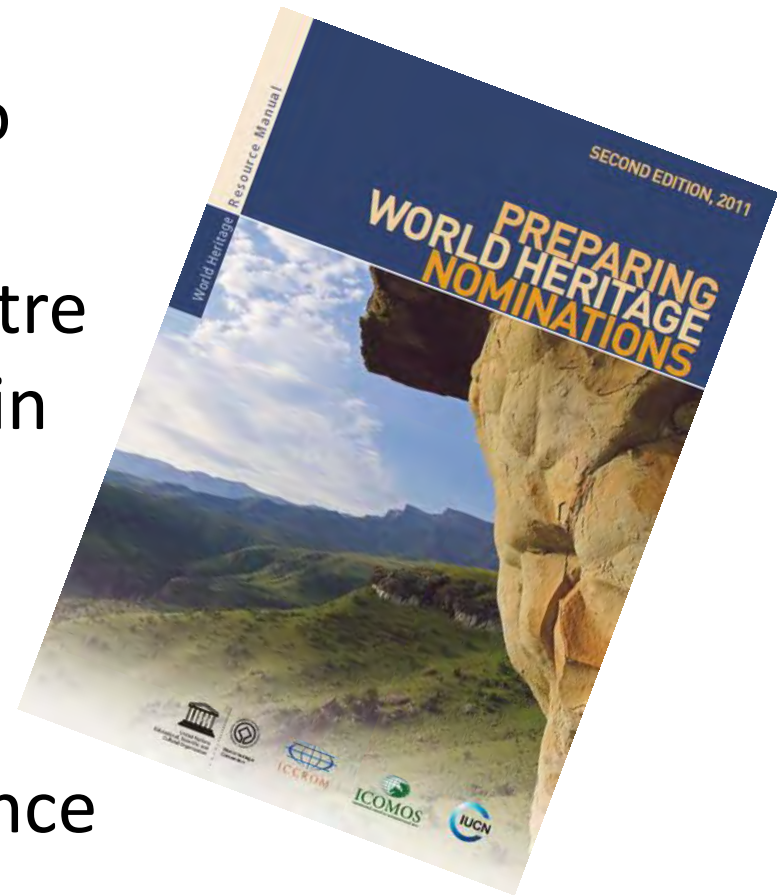
Nomination file

Advisory Body evaluation
(ICOMOS, IUCN)

World Heritage Committee
decision

NB – ask UNESCO and Advisory Bodies for advice in preparing nominations

- “States Parties are invited to contact the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre **at the earliest opportunity** in considering nominations to seek information and guidance”
- There’s lots of on-line guidance



Nomination file

- Identification and description
- Justification
 - statement of OUV
 - 10 criteria (6 cultural, 4 natural)
 - comparative analysis (national and international)
 - authenticity/integrity
- State of conservation and threats
- Protection and management
- Monitoring (indicators etc.)

NB: Estimated cost of Nominations in UK: up to €500,000

The core concept: Outstanding Universal Value

- “Cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity”



The key tests of OUV: 10 criteria used for nomination and evaluation (from Operational Guidelines)

- (i) Masterpiece of human creative genius*
- (ii) Important interchange of human values in respect of architecture, technology etc.*
- (iii) Unique or exceptional testimony to cultural tradition or civilization*
- (iv) Outstanding building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape*
- (v) Outstanding example of traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use*
- (vi) Associated with outstanding events, living traditions, ideas or beliefs*
- (vii) Superlative natural phenomena or exceptional natural beauty*
- (viii) Outstanding example of earth's history, record of life, landform processes and features*
- (ix) Significant ongoing ecological and biological processes*
- (x) Significant natural habitats for conservation of biological diversity*

Other key tests of OUV

- “To be deemed of Outstanding Universal Value, a property must also meet the conditions of **integrity** and/or **authenticity** and must have an **adequate protection** and **management** system to ensure its safeguarding”

The process for getting on to the WH List – 'inscription'

Tentative list

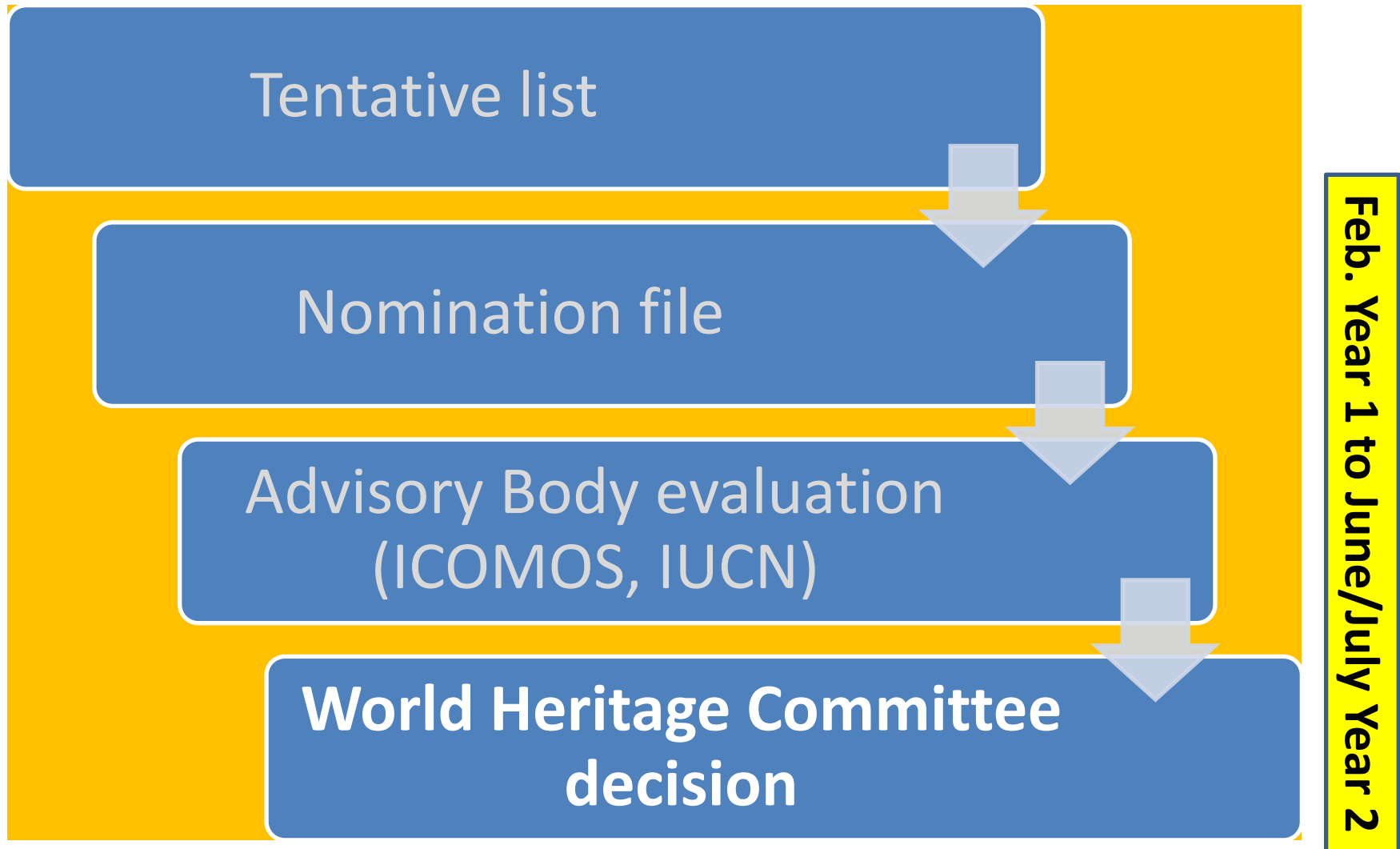
Nomination file

**Advisory Body evaluation
(ICOMOS, IUCN)**

**World Heritage Committee
decision**



The process for getting on to the WH List – 'inscription'

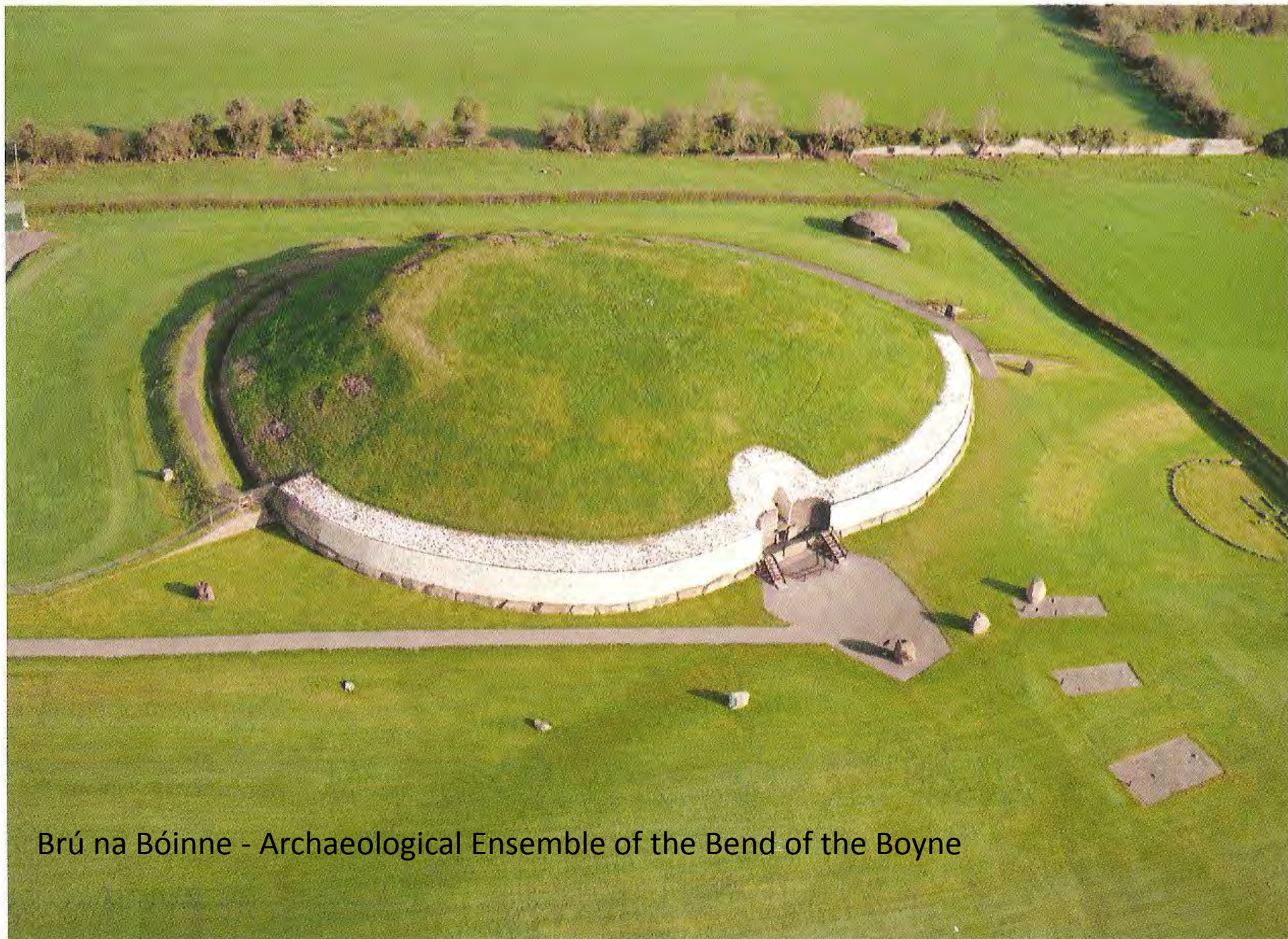


Management of WH sites

- Each State Party will: *“ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage will do all it can to this end, to the utmost of its own resources ...”*
- The aim: maintain qualities for which site was inscribed – its OUV
- Often inscription comes with recommendations
- WH Committee monitors ‘State of Conservation’
- SP accountable for management, with international oversight
- WH Centre and Advisory Bodies can assist



NB there is much advice on line



Brú na Bóinne - Archaeological Ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne

Sceilg Mhichíl/Skelig Michael



What are the benefits of World Heritage status?



The UNESCO view of benefits

- Better protection
- Greater prestige for sites and institutions
- Higher tourist profile
- Easier to get funding
- More associated economic activity
- Better monitoring and inspection



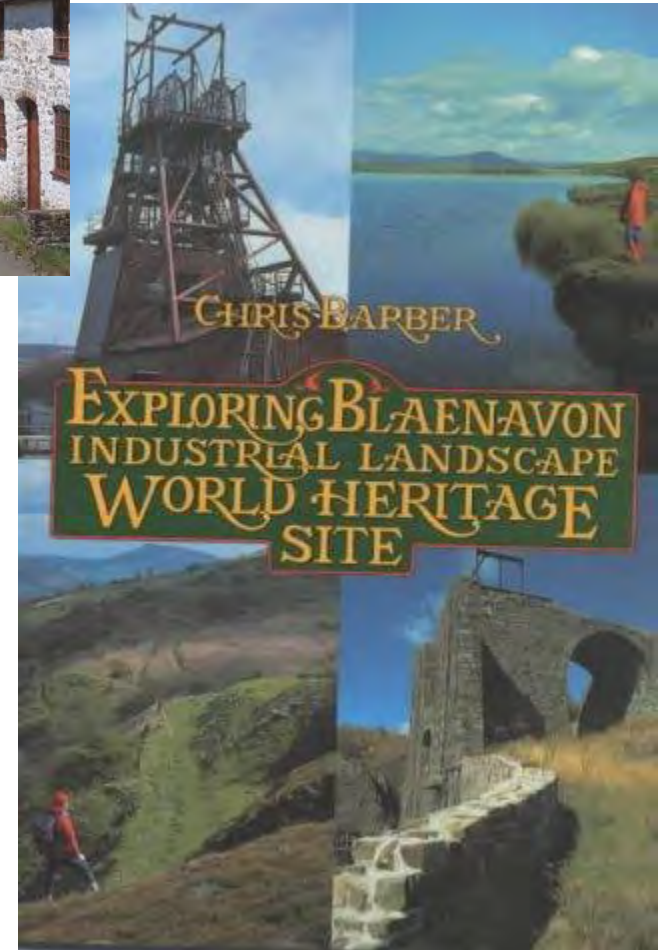
The benefits don't come automatically

- PricewaterhouseCoopers examined 6 UK WH sites (2007)
- *“Our research shows that the impact WHS status makes on visitor motivations is usually very marginal ... there is little evidence that becoming a WHS automatically generates additional visitors”*
- Rebanks consulting (2009): *“World Heritage status achieves little automatically... But some (sites)... that have tried to achieve benefits appear to have used World Heritage designation with value”*

Case study 1: Blaenavon, South Wales (2000)









BLAENAVON WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE

CANOLFAN TREFTADAETH Y BYD BLAENAFON

What has happened since WH designation?

- £30.8m regeneration grant
- Property prices up 300% in 5 years
- 100% rise in visitor levels over 5 years
- 100 new jobs p.a. in construction; 65 FTE in tourism
- New businesses created
- Much dereliction removed
- Big Pit museum = generates £4.93m p.a.
- Growth of community pride

The image shows a wide expanse of the English coast. In the foreground, a steep, rocky cliff with sparse vegetation slopes down towards the water. The sea is a deep blue, with gentle ripples on its surface. In the middle ground, a long, low headland stretches across the frame, featuring prominent white cliffs that contrast with the green fields on top. The background shows more rolling hills under a clear, light blue sky.

Case Study 2

The Dorset and East Devon Coast (2001)

185 million years of the earth's history

150 kms

2 counties





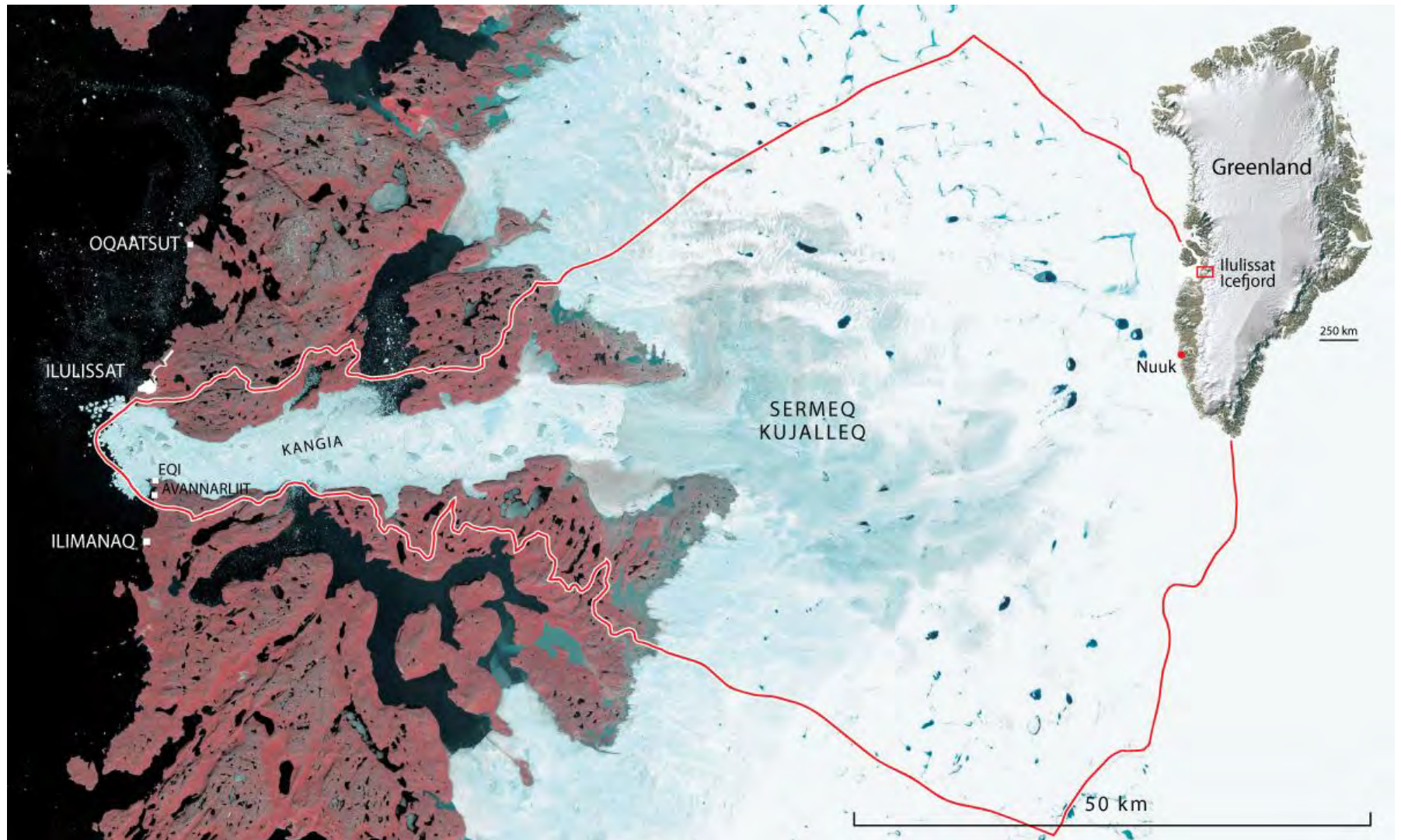






What has happened since WH designation?

- **New tourist businesses**
- **LA bus service runs along coast**
- **Sea cruises to look at cliffs (40-50,000 visits p.a.)**
- **Much new tourist literature**
- **Major expansion of education in earth sciences**
- **82% local residents and businesses say it has a positive effect**
- **The Jurassic Coast has national recognition**



Case Study 3: Ilulissat Icefjord, Greenland (2004)





What has happened since WH designation?

- **Rising pressures from tourism**
- **Problems of erosion, crowding, waste disposal**
- **Encouraged by UNESCO, Management Plan prepared with public input covering:
commercial hunting, motorized vehicles,
navigation, recreational activities, research and
information**
- **Improvements have followed**
- **But climate change a far bigger issue**

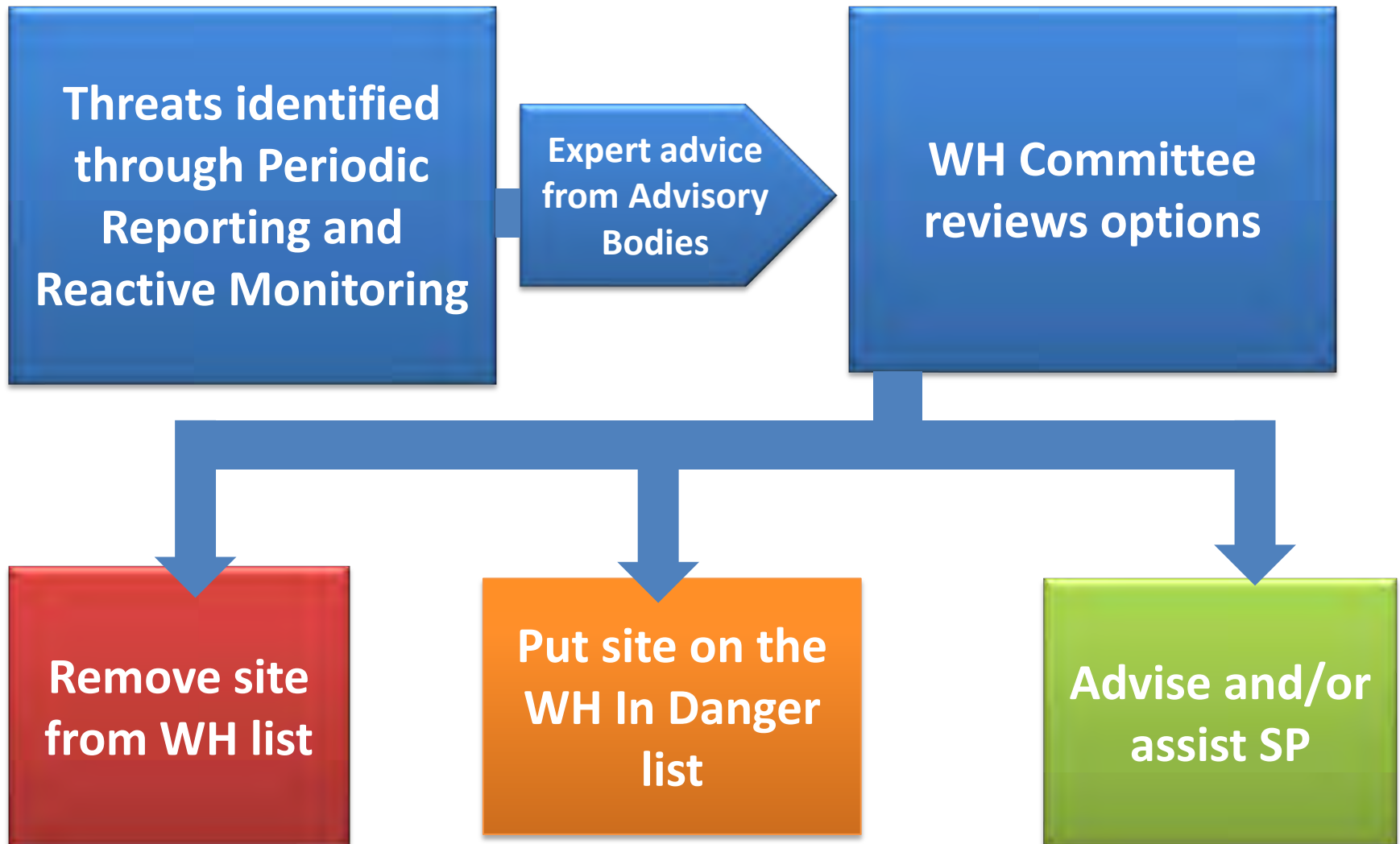
Threats to World Heritage



The threats to World Heritage are many

- Armed conflict and war
- Earthquakes (C) and other natural disasters
- Pollution
- Poaching (N)
- Invasive species (N)
- Climate change and sea level rise
- Mining
- Uncontrolled urbanization and infrastructure
- Unchecked tourist development
- Neglect
- Lack of public and political support
- And more

Dealing with threats to WH sites



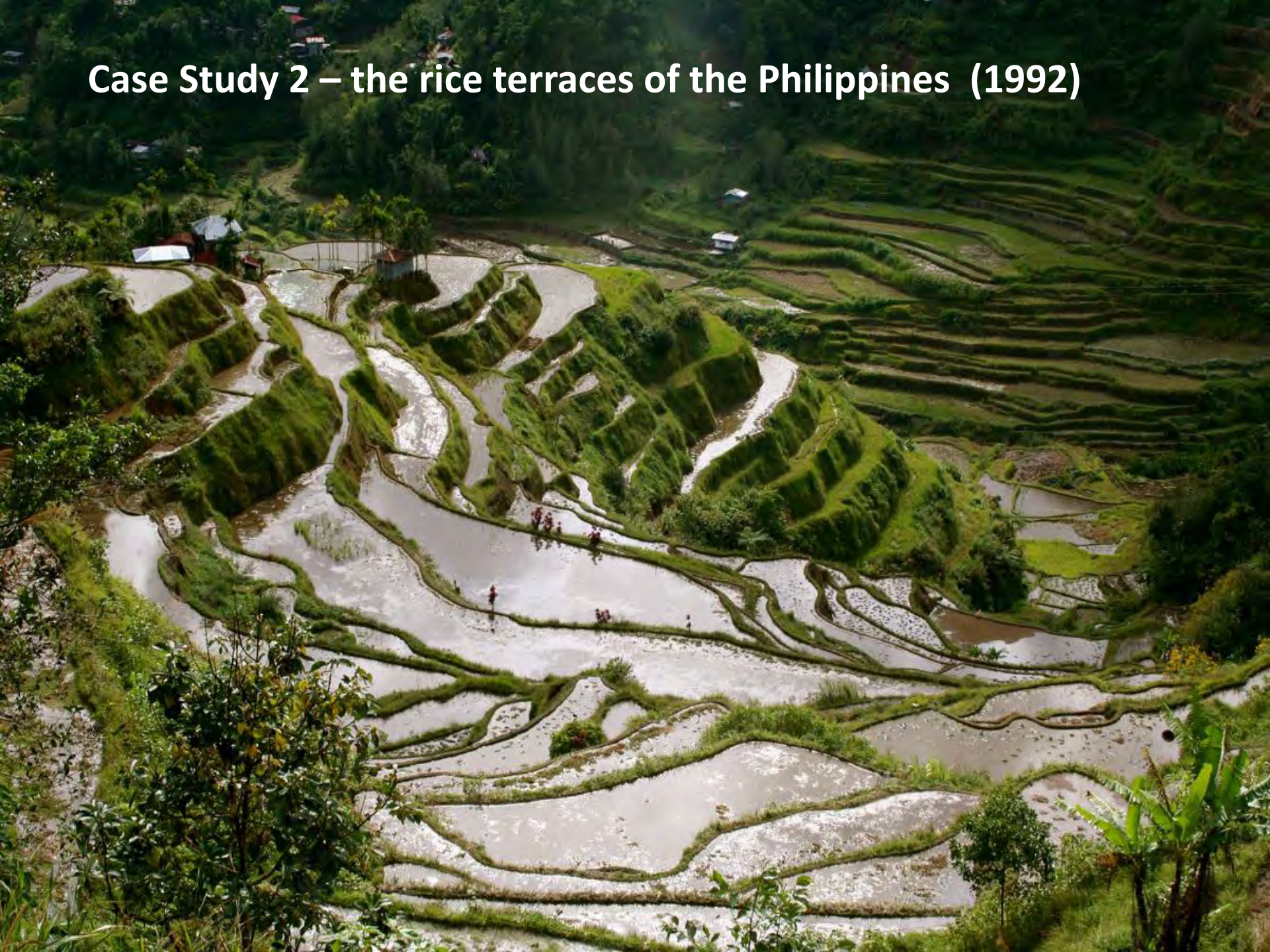
Case Study 1: The Arabian Oryx Sanctuary, Oman



Short history

- Successful reintroduction of Arabian oryx in 1980s
- Inscribed 1994 (450 pairs oryx)
- By 1997: oryx number 65 (4 breeding pairs)
- Poaching rife, no protection, reserve reduced by 90%, oil exploration allowed
- 2007: WH Committee “*expressed regret that the SP ... failed to fulfil its obligations as defined by the World Heritage Convention*”
- And removed site from the WH list (the first delisting)

Case Study 2 – the rice terraces of the Philippines (1992)

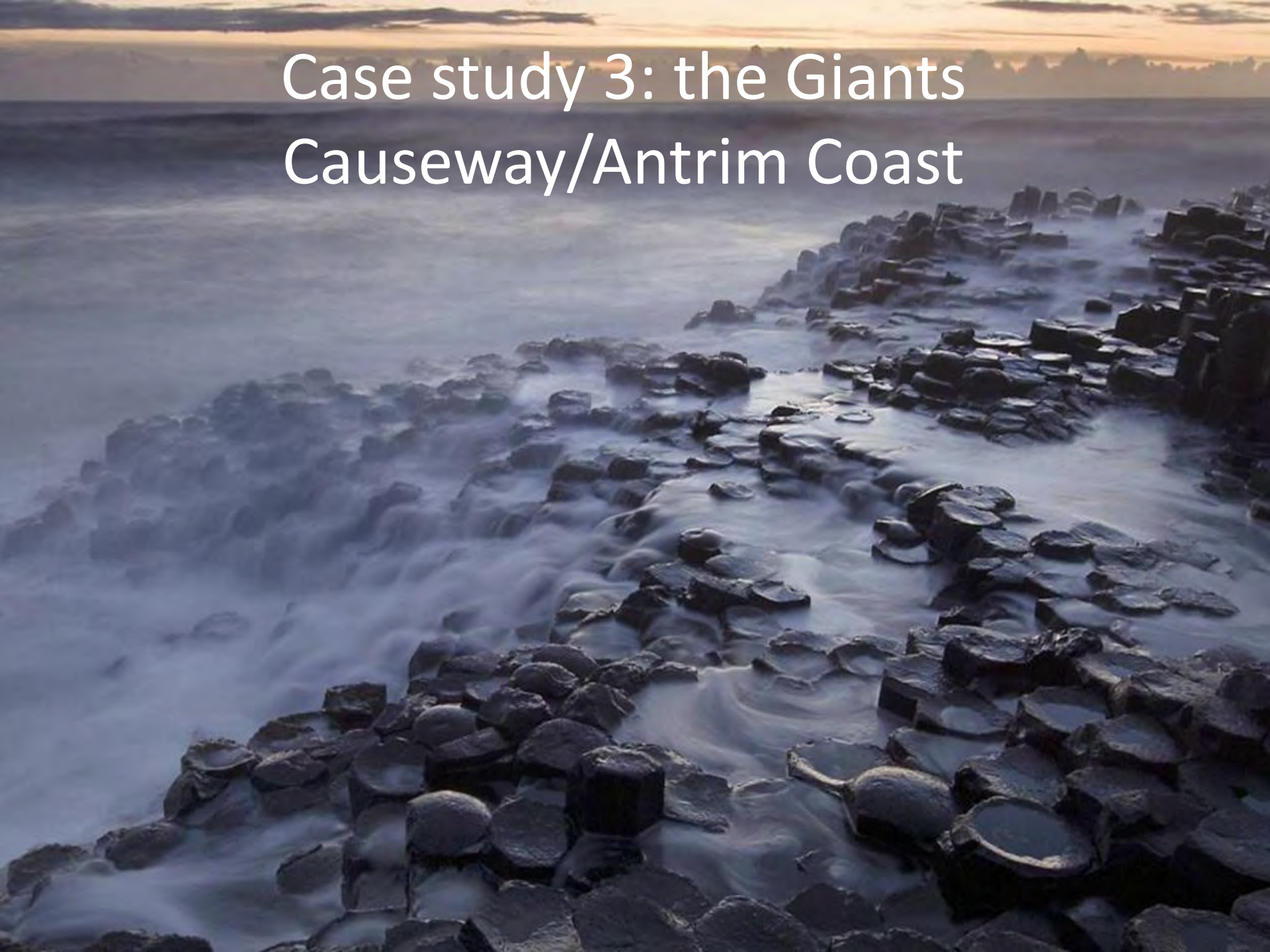




What has happened since designation?

- Loss of traditional skills etc.**
- Neglect and erosion of terraces**
- Put on World Heritage in Danger List (2001)**
- National and international assistance provided**
- Removed from In Danger list in 2013**

Case study 3: the Giants Causeway/Antrim Coast



Short history

- Inscribed in 1986
- 2002: WH Committee concerned re piecemeal tourism development
- 2003: UNESCO/IUCN mission recommends unified management and buffer zone
- NI government, local authority, private developers and NT struggle to find solution
- By 2008: NT gets control of key parts of site
- 2013: new visitor centre opened



CAUSEWAY HOTEL

The Runkerry Golf Resort threat

- Lies SW of G.C.
- Approved March 2012
- NT sought Judicial Review
... (it) would have a significant landscape and visual impact.... compromising the setting for the WHS
- March 2013: IUCN mission:
“the impactson the OUV of the WHS appear sufficiently significant that the development of the golf course should not be permitted...”
- June 2013: WHC urges UK to: *“halt the proposed golf resort development project until its potential impact on the OUV of the property has been thoroughly assessed”*



**What lessons do we
draw for those on the
Irish Tentative List?**

Glendalough





Hill of Tara



The Burren

Some downbeat conclusions

- **Securing WH status is not easy – it needs time, effort, money (+ local support)**
- **Success is not guaranteed: not every TL site gets to nomination, and nominations sometimes fail**
- **Inscription comes with big obligations – it's the start, not the finish!**

Some upbeat conclusions

- **WH status is indeed an honour**
- **It can be used to:**
 - **strengthen site protection**
 - **help generate green tourism and other sustainable forms development**
 - **help raise the status of heritage protection generally**
 - **strengthen education, training etc.**
 - **engage more with the local community**
- **You become part of global family**

A landscape photograph featuring a large, flat-topped mountain with distinct horizontal geological strata. The mountain is reflected in a calm body of water in the middle ground. The foreground is filled with tall, dry grass and a few large, dark rocks. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The text "Good luck!" is written in a white, 3D-style font, tilted diagonally across the center of the image, partially overlapping the water and the mountain's reflection.

Good luck!