

# Advancing a strategic approach to climate change within the World Heritage Convention

## Draft Terms of Reference - Consultant

### 1. Background

Climate change is the most significant and rapidly escalating threat to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of natural World Heritage properties. Despite increasing recognition of climate impacts within the World Heritage system and the development of the [Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage](#), endorsed by the World Heritage Committee, responses remain inconsistent across regions, between properties, and decision-making processes.

[State of Conservation reporting](#)<sup>1</sup> is not currently able to ensure effective and consistent consideration of climate change impacts between World Heritage properties. Disparity in site-based reporting have contributed to this, with a lack of guidance currently available to support consistent consideration and decision-making on climate change under the World Heritage Convention. In particular, there is a key question on the ability of the [List of World Heritage in Danger](#) to consider climate change affected properties, given the growing scale of sites which are facing both threats and impacts, and thus new strategies could be of value. Furthermore, whilst the World Heritage Committee has taken a range of positions related to climate action these have not been matched by attention to implementation options.

This project will contribute towards a more coherent, transparent, and strategic approach to climate change within the World Heritage Convention by reviewing existing policies and processes and proposing practical reform options aligned with the [UNESCO Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage](#) and its associated Guidance Document for implementation that is under development by UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies. The project is supported by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) from the Australian Government.

Led by [IUCN](#) and implemented in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the other Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS and ICCROM), the project will cross-examine policies and practices between the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, and the World Heritage Convention. This will include an analysis of the respective obligations that State Parties have under each of these processes and how they relate to each other. The **primary output will be a technical report informed by structured consultation**, offering evidence-based recommendations to strengthen consistency and effectiveness in climate-related consideration of World Heritage across the international policy landscape, and providing a context for more consistent, targeted and effective decision-taking and implementation through World Heritage.

### 2. Scope of work and expected outputs

The IUCN Consultant will undertake the following activities according to the indicated timeframes.

1. Participate in the project's Expert Working Group <sup>2</sup> virtual meetings, as relevant, to ensure expert knowledge is	Intermittently during April 2026 – July 2027
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<sup>1</sup> State of Conservation (SOC) reporting is the statutory monitoring process under the World Heritage Convention to assess threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage sites. The reports, drafted by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies (including IUCN) inform the World Heritage Committee of pressing conservation issues to adopt decisions on actions needed. See: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/>.

<sup>2</sup> An Expert Working Group comprised of IUCN Secretariat and Commission experts on World Heritage and climate change supports the project implementation in an advisory capacity.

sufficiently integrated into the technical report and prior analyses.	Estimated days: ca.8 x 1 hour meetings
2. Undertake a structured review of the current international climate policy landscape, focusing on the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, and of the World Heritage system and the respective obligations that State Parties have under each process in relation to climate ambition and action, drawing on both primary and secondary sources and relevant literature. While the IUCN secretariat will provide documentation on the World Heritage Convention, the consultant is expected to draw on additional sources where deemed necessary. The purpose of the review will be to explore and present current and potential linkages between the climate (UNFCCC/Paris Agreement) and World Heritage policies and their implications for the obligations of State Parties. While the IUCN Secretariat will provide relevant literature, the consultant is expected to draw on additional sources where deemed necessary.	Delivery by 1 July 2026  Estimated days: 2-4 days
3. Building on the information gathered in activity 2, the consultant will gather and analyse expert inputs on specific gaps and opportunities to support a more consistent and strategic consideration of climate change across World Heritage Convention mechanisms. The consultant is expected to consult with experts including, but not limited to representatives of the IUCN Secretariat, the <a href="#">WCPA World Heritage Specialist Group</a> , the <a href="#">WCPA Climate Change Specialist Group</a> , the <a href="#">IUCN Climate Action Commission</a> , the <a href="#">World Commission on Environmental Law</a> , the IUCN CEM Climate Change and Biodiversity Policy and Practice Thematic Group (tbc), the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.	Completed by 1 Dec 2026  Estimated days: 6 days
4. Building on the above review (activity 2), expert consultations (activity 3) and additional data gathered by the IUCN Secretariat on the IUCN World Heritage Outlook 4, World Heritage Convention policies, Operational Guidelines and State of Conservation reports (which will be provided to the consultant), the consultant will prepare an analytically rigorous draft technical report of around 20 pages, following an agreed format and guidance, that presents evidence-based, practical recommendations and reform options to improve operational processes and guidance under the World Heritage Convention, to support a more consistent and strategic consideration of climate change across its mechanisms.	Delivery of first draft report by 15 Jan 2027  Estimated days: 6 days
5. Consolidate feedback received (provided by the IUCN Secretariat) for the first draft technical report to prepare a second updated version to be shared with the IUCN Secretariat. Upon confirmation the consultant will provide a final report.	Delivery of second draft report by 30 May 2027, and final report by 15 June 2027.  Estimated days: 2 days

The IUCN Secretariat will convene the Expert Working Group meetings and coordinate the outreach for inputs on the first draft technical report.

The above activities of the Consultant fit into the overall project activities as follows:

Activity	Timeline
<b>1. Inception</b>	
1.1 Project inception meeting	
1.2 Expert Working Group formation	April - May 2026
1.3 Detailed project planning	
<b>2. Review and data gathering</b>	
2.1 Review international climate frameworks (UNFCCC/ Paris Agreement)	
2.2 Review and analyse climate change related data and information in the IUCN World Heritage Outlook and state of conservation reports	Apr - July 2026
2.3 Review WH Convention policies, processes, OG	
<b>3. Expert consultations</b>	
3.1 Consultations with IUCN Commission SGs and other experts	
3.2 Side event at 48COM (Korea, July 2026)	
3.3 Event at UNFCCC COP31 (Türkiye, November 2026)	July - Dec 2026
3.4 Consultation with WHC and ABs	
<b>4. Report drafting</b>	
4.1 First draft of report	
4.2 Consultation with expert Working Group and revision of draft	Jan - April 2027
4.3 Consultation with WHC and ABs on draft report (includes other AB honoraria)	
<b>5. Finalisation and dissemination</b>	
5.1 Update and finalise report	
5.2 Side event at 49COM (mid-2027)	May - July 2027
5.3 Final technical and financial reporting for donor	

The total number of estimated days required to complete the activities are indicated above. Additionally, a timeline for the delivery of work is provided above, however this will be monitored during the course of the project implementation by the consultant and IUCN and may be adapted subject to agreement by both parties.

### 3. Criteria for selection

- In-depth understanding of the international climate policy landscape, particularly related to UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, and its bodies and institutions.
- Sufficient institutional understanding of the World Heritage Convention process/system, IUCN, other key stakeholders (e.g. ICCROM, ICOMOS, UNESCO)

World Heritage Centre, IPCC/IPBES, governing bodies of the Conventions, Parties, etc.) and the project scope, including potential sensitivities, while maintaining independence throughout the project implementation.

- Knowledge of and experience in international law and policy, descriptive and prescriptive policy/legal analysis, particularly related to climate change.
- Excellent technical report writing skills.
- Capacity to conduct expert interviews in an efficient and respectful manner, while maintaining confidentiality.
- Able to attend meetings flexibly across different time zones.
- Full working proficiency in written and spoken English. Additional proficiency in another UN language is an asset, particularly for the consultation phase.

#### **4. Terms and conditions**

To be contracted by IUCN, the expert selected based on the criteria described in Section 3, must adhere to the following conditions:

- Agree to fill out and return the [IUCN Declaration of Undertaking for self-employed contractors](#);
- Adhere to the [terms and conditions outlined in the template consultancy](#) (self-employment) agreement.

#### **Process for applying**

To express your interest in contributing to the project as described above, please email Mizuki Murai ([mizuki.murai@iucn.org](mailto:mizuki.murai@iucn.org)) by **11 May end of day** and provide 1) an up-to-date Curriculum Vitae (in PDF format), and 2) a quote to complete the tasks according to the expected days listed above, and examples of recent similar types of work undertaken. (max 5 pages).