

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT, IRELAND**

**Tentative List Independent Expert Advisory Group**

**Research Document**

**“Tentative List and World Heritage Status”**

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Comhshaol, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil  
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## Tentative List and World Heritage Status

### **Introduction and Background:**

The *World Heritage Convention* (The Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage) was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 16 November 1972. Ireland ratified the convention in 1991 and submitted a Tentative List of ten cultural and natural properties in 1992. Two of these properties have subsequently been inscribed on the World Heritage List; the Archaeological Ensemble of the Bend of the Boyne in 1993 and Skellig Michael in 1996.

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Mr. John Gormley T.D., recently announced a new programme in relation to Ireland's participation in the UNESCO *World Heritage Convention*. The objective of the new programme is to identify and to nominate for inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List those Irish cultural and natural heritage sites deemed to be of 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV). Outstanding Universal Value is defined in the UNESCO *Operational Guidelines*<sup>1</sup> as '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 World Heritage Convention is a unique legal instrument, based on the idea that some cultural and natural heritage sites are of such outstanding and universal importance that they need to 'be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole' (World Heritage Convention, 1972). It is the only international legal instrument for the protection of both cultural and natural sites encouraging cooperation among nations for the safeguarding of their heritage. As such, only the very superlative examples of cultural and natural heritage are considered for inscription on the World Heritage List and must clearly demonstrate the Outstanding Universal Value for which it is being nominated. UNESCO also demands high levels of protection for nominated sites and

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, Paragraph 49 – most recent edition published in 2008. (<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide08-en.pdf>)

requires a structured management plan or a documented management system for each site before it will be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List. The Tentative List is the first step in the process of identifying sites for nomination to the World Heritage List and is the right stage for filtering out sites which do not possess the potential to go forward, as well as highlighting the limited number of sites that do.

### **Outstanding Universal Value:**

Article 1 of the *World Heritage Convention*, defines “cultural heritage” as:

- monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

Article 2 of the Convention defines "natural heritage" as:

- natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;
- geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science or conservation;
- natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

With these definitions in mind, any cultural, natural, or “mixed” heritage property that is deemed by the government of the nation (the “States Party”) to be of ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ can be put forward for nomination to the World Heritage List. The concept of OUV is assessed by ten criteria devised by the World Heritage Committee for

this purpose;<sup>2</sup> there are six criteria for cultural and four for natural properties. 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 (Operational Guidelines paragraph 78).

In essence, the nominated site has to be accepted by the World Heritage Committee as being the **most outstanding from an international viewpoint**. In its assessment of each site, the World Heritage Committee relies on a technical report by either (or both) of two international non-governmental scientific unions, known as the Advisory Bodies:

- The World Conservation Union (IUCN) for natural sites, and
- The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for cultural sites.

Mixed sites are assessed jointly by IUCN and ICOMOS. In the case of cultural landscapes the nomination will be evaluated mainly by ICOMOS with input by IUCN. IUCN's role is to ensure that the important natural values found in many cultural landscapes are properly identified and managed.

There is a third Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee; the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). The specific role of ICCROM in relation to the *Convention* includes: being the priority partner in training for cultural heritage, monitoring the state of conservation of World Heritage cultural properties, reviewing requests for International Assistance submitted by States Parties, and providing input and support for capacity-building activities.

The World Heritage List currently has 878 properties: 679 of which are cultural, 174 natural and 25 mixed in 145 States Parties. More than 60 of the sites on the World Heritage List are officially listed as cultural landscapes; this is a new category in terms of World Heritage sites and was introduced in the early 1990s to broaden the scope of World Heritage and in order to better reflect the “combined works of nature and man”. There are more than one hundred sites currently inscribed on the World Heritage List that would have been suitable for the category of cultural landscape but were not nominated

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<sup>2</sup> *Operational Guidelines* paragraph 77 – See Appendix 1

as such, either because they were nominated before the category was introduced or were nominated as cultural or mixed sites instead. Mixed sites and cultural landscape sites are entirely different concepts however, as cultural landscapes are only nominated under cultural criteria and focus on the interactions between humankind and nature, while mixed sites are made up of both cultural and natural values of ‘Outstanding Universal Value’. Precedents have been set by Tongariro, New Zealand, and Uluru, Australia, previously inscribed as ‘mixed’ World Heritage sites and re-nominated and re-inscribed as cultural landscapes in the 1990s. These sites were re-nominated as cultural landscapes in recognition of the deep spiritual relationship which the respective local Indigenous people have with the landscape at the two sites. As of yet, Ireland has no cultural landscapes inscribed on the World Heritage list.

### **Ireland’s Tentative List:**

One of the key strategies of the new programme concerning Ireland’s participation in the *World Heritage Convention* is that a review of the current Tentative List be carried out and that a revised list, with an agreed programme of applications to UNESCO, should be finalised by the end of this year. A Tentative List is an inventory of those properties which each State Party intends to consider for nomination to the World Heritage List in the next five to ten years. A Tentative List is a list of properties which the State Party considers to fulfill the requirement of ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ (OUV), assessed by ten criteria as outlined in Appendix 1. Furthermore, to be deemed to be of Outstanding Universal Value cultural properties must fulfill the condition of Authenticity,<sup>3</sup> while both cultural and natural heritage are subject to the condition of Integrity,<sup>4</sup> a measure of the wholeness or completeness of a property. Only sites on the Tentative List can go forward for nomination and such sites will only be successfully inscribed on the World Heritage List if they are shown to be formally protected by the State Party in question, either in the form of a structured management plan or, as is often the case in non-European cultures, a documented management system.<sup>5</sup> UNESCO recommends that a State Party’s Tentative

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<sup>3</sup> *Operational Guidelines* paragraphs 79 – 86. See Appendix 1

<sup>4</sup> *Operational Guidelines* paragraphs 87 -95. See Appendix 1

<sup>5</sup> *Operational Guidelines* paragraph 78. See Appendix 1

List be updated every ten years, and as Ireland's current Tentative List dates back to 1992, a review is long overdue.

The remaining sites on Ireland's current Tentative List are made up of a combination of cultural, natural and mixed sites and feature a small sample of some of the most well-known and striking heritage sites around the country, ranging from rich historical and ecclesiastical properties to important Neolithic and Bronze Age sites as well as areas of outstanding beauty, karst landscapes and extensive boglands. These sites are namely:

- Western Stone Forts (Cultural)
- Cashel (Cultural)
- Killarney National Park (Natural)
- North West Mayo Boglands (Natural)
- Clara Bog (Natural)
- Clonmacnoise (Mixed)
- Burren (Mixed)
- Ceide Fields (Mixed)<sup>6</sup>

After the successful inscription of Bru Na Boinne and Skellig Michael, no further attempts were made to put forward for nomination any of the remaining sites on the Tentative List, despite their apparent cultural and natural heritage significance. This approach has resulted in Ireland being under-represented on the World Heritage List in relation to some other European countries, a position which is in direct contrast with Ireland's international reputation of being a land of great culture and full of places of outstanding cultural and natural significance. This period is sometimes considered to be a missed opportunity for Ireland to have its vast heritage recognised on a global level, something which the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is now seeking to rectify through his newly announced UNESCO World Heritage Programme.

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 2 for a full description of each site on the Tentative List

### **Tentative List compilation:**

Much has changed since the drawing up of the Tentative List for Ireland, in terms of how the concept of World Heritage has evolved to include newly recognised categories of heritage, such as industrial and modern heritage sites as well as cultural landscapes, but also in terms of the process of nominating sites to the World Heritage Committee. More stringent constraints are now required by UNESCO on the part of States Parties than before, and these may become even more stringent in years to come. At the time of submission of Ireland's Tentative List in the early 1990s, the development of Tentative Lists was purely a matter for States Parties with very little control being exercised by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Consequently a number of the sites nominated at that time would no longer be considered suitable or in line with the strict conditions of Authenticity and Integrity now in place for nominations. Management plans were also not a formal requirement at the time and in fact, management plans for many of the sites nominated in the early days are only now being submitted. Due to these practices over time, the World Heritage List has become somewhat unbalanced with a high representation of certain types of cultural properties as well as a higher amount of nominations and inscriptions in developed countries, and in Europe in particular. The World Heritage Centre has been concerned about imbalances on the List since the beginning of the *World Heritage Convention*, which it cites as a result of the relatively long time it has taken some countries to ratify the Convention and the predominance of an essentially Western concept of heritage, focused on monuments. Natural sites are also considered to be under-represented on the List, with certain categories of natural heritage such as tropical grasslands, lake systems, tundra and polar deserts not well represented on the List, as well as sites of importance for palaeontology and evolution.

Nowadays, the submission of a Tentative List is a formal requirement for States Parties in order to be able to nominate a site for inclusion on the World Heritage List. A Tentative List is not a definitive or exhaustive account of heritage in a State Party's jurisdiction that would be suitable for inclusion on the World Heritage List (hence the name "Tentative"), but rather they should be seen as work in progress, with new cultural properties being added as more evidence emerges. There is also a need for Tentative Lists to be updated

on a fairly regular basis to ensure that they reflect the evolving nature of the World Heritage process. States Parties should submit Tentative Lists preferably at least one year prior to the submission of any nomination and then these should be re-examined and re-submitted at least every ten years. States Parties are also encouraged to provide a description of the process of preparation and revision of the Tentative List, e.g. has (have) any particular institution(s) been assigned the responsibility for identifying and delineating World Heritage properties, have local authorities and local population been involved in its preparation? If so, exact details should be provided. Being on the Tentative List only means that a site appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the World Heritage List and that it may be nominated – it does not guarantee that a site will be nominated or listed. Only the State Party has the authority to submit sites for nomination and the World Heritage Committee is then responsible for making the final decisions on which sites are to be designated World Heritage Sites.

### **The Global Strategy for a Balanced, Representative and Credible WH List:**

Tentative List compilation has now become a highly structured process with an emphasis on the importance of comparative analyses and harmonization of Tentative Lists at regional levels. Discussions have been taking place in the World Heritage Committee regarding the need to use Tentative Lists as planning tools at a global level, in order to ensure that a representative sample of properties are being put forward for nomination by States Parties, as well as filling any further ‘gaps’ in the List. Used in this way, Tentative Lists allow the World Heritage Committee and the Advisory Bodies to compare nominated sites with similar ones that might be nominated in future so that they can select only those of Outstanding Universal Value, as well as helping States Parties to identify those sites suitable for nomination. This strategy has gathered great momentum as best practice in the process of nominating sites to the World Heritage List since the adoption of the Global Strategy.<sup>7</sup> The Global Strategy is an action programme which highlights the need to address imbalances on the World Heritage List in terms of

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<sup>7</sup> *The Global Strategy for a Balanced, Representative and Credible World Heritage List* adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 1994; this is an action programme designed to identify and rectify the major imbalances on the World Heritage List between regions of the world, types of monuments and periods, and to favour a more anthropological and global conception of heritage.  
(<http://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy>)

chronological-regional (across time and space), thematic and typological representativity.

The Global Strategy advocated two initiatives to be undertaken concurrently:

- the rectification of the imbalances on the List between regions of the world, types of monuments, and periods,
- and at the same time, a move away from a purely architectural view of the cultural heritage of humanity towards one what was more anthropological, multi-functional and universal.

With the move away from the monumental conception of World Heritage to a more anthropological conception, new heritage themes have been identified; for example, “Human Coexistence with the Land” and “Human Beings in Society” are two themes which have been highlighted by the World Heritage Committee as being under-represented.

As part of the Global Strategy, States Parties are encouraged to consult the analyses of both the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists prepared at the request of the Committee by ICOMOS and IUCN to identify the gaps in the World Heritage List. These analyses enable States Parties to compare themes, regions, geo-cultural groupings and bio-geographic provinces for prospective World Heritage properties.<sup>8</sup> In addition, States Parties are encouraged to also harmonize their Tentative Lists at regional and thematic levels. Harmonization of Tentative Lists is the process whereby States Parties, with the formal assistance of the Advisory Bodies, collectively assess their respective Tentative List to review gaps and identify common themes.<sup>9</sup> The outcome of harmonization can result in improved Tentative Lists, new nominations from States Parties and co-operation amongst groups of States Parties in the preparation of nominations. Such co-operation in the harmonization of Tentative Lists has taken place between the Nordic Countries (1996), the Caucasian countries (2002), the Baltic Region (2003) and Central America (2004) to name only a few.<sup>10</sup>

States Parties are also encouraged to consult the specific thematic studies carried out by the Advisory Bodies. These studies are informed by a review of the Tentative Lists

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<sup>8</sup> *Operational Guidelines*, paragraph 71

<sup>9</sup> *Operational Guidelines*, paragraph 73

<sup>10</sup> Roessler, M (2005) World Heritage Convention and Outstanding Universal Value. (Document WHC-0529.COM/INF.9B, p.11)

submitted by States Parties and by reports of meetings on the harmonization of Tentative Lists, as well as by other technical studies performed by the Advisory Bodies and qualified organizations and individuals.<sup>11</sup> Studies by ICOMOS have encompassed a variety of themes including a study on the Modern Movement (1997), a study on railways as World Heritage sites (1999), one on Southern African rock art sites (2002) and one on Orthodox monasteries in the Balkans (2002)<sup>12</sup>.

As recommended by the 1994 report on the Global Strategy, regional thematic expert meetings have been organised in all the UNESCO regions. These have included, for instance, thirteen international meetings held on cultural landscapes, a category adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its sixteenth session in 1992, which demonstrates the nature–culture continuum. Themes have included cultural landscapes in Africa (Expert Meeting, Tiwi, Kenya, March 1999), cultural landscapes in the Andes (Arequipa and Chivay, Peru, May 1998), sacred mountains in the Asia–Pacific region (Wakayama City, Japan, September 2001) and vineyards cultural landscapes in Europe (Tokaj, Hungary, July 2001). Other regional expert meetings focused on identifying potential World Heritage properties in regions under-represented on the World Heritage List. Examples include the First Global Strategy Meeting in Africa (Harare, Zimbabwe, 11–13 October 1995) or the Second World Heritage Global Strategy Meeting for the Pacific (Port Vila, Vanuatu, 24–27 August 1999). Since 1998, Regional Action Plans have also been developed, based on specific objectives, targets and activities to help establish a more balanced and representative World Heritage List. As also recommended by the 1994 experts group on the Global Strategy, thematic and comparative studies have been initiated by ICOMOS. These studies evaluate proposed World Heritage properties in their regional, global or thematic context.

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<sup>11</sup> *Operational Guidelines*, paragraph 72. A list of those thematic studies already completed is available at the following Web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy>

<sup>12</sup> Some of these studies can be downloaded from <http://www.icomos.org/studies>; for a complete list and brief description of them consult ICOMOS (2003) *Analysis of the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists: Cultural and Mixed Properties. A study carried out by ICOMOS at the request of the World Heritage Committee*. Paris.

What is “under-represented” on the World Heritage List is then partially derived from thematic studies conducted by the Advisory Bodies and the harmonization of Tentative Lists, particularly within the same region

### **The Cairns Decisions**

The ‘Cairns Decisions’ are a number of resolutions adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its twenty-fourth session held in Cairns (Australia) in 2000. These decisions are aimed at improving the representativity, balance and credibility of the World Heritage List and managing the workload of the Committee, Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre.

One of the decisions adopted by the Committee in 2000 was to limit initially to thirty the number of new nominations it will review, exclusive of nominations deferred or referred at its previous sessions. At its twenty-eighth session in 2004, the Committee decided that, from 2006 onwards, the number of nominations it will annually review will be limited to forty-five, inclusive of nominations deferred and referred by previous sessions of the Committee, extensions, transboundary nominations, serial nominations and nominations submitted on an emergency basis. In 2000 it was also agreed that, in the event that the number of nominations received exceeds the maximum number set by the committee, the following priority system will be applied each year:

- (i) nominations of properties submitted by States Parties with no properties inscribed on the List
- (ii) nominations of properties from any State Party that illustrate un-represented or less represented categories of natural and cultural categories.
- (iii) other nominations.<sup>13</sup>

At its twenty-eighth session in 2004, the World Heritage Committee decided that the order of priorities for the examination of new nominations shall remain as decided at its twenty-fourth session in 2000. This measure will hopefully help to limit the number of nominations submitted by European States Parties and encourage those States Parties that

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<sup>13</sup> UNESCO. (2000) *Report of the 24th session of the World Heritage Committee*. (Cairns, Australia 27 November–2 December). WHC-2000/CONF.204/21, UNESCO, Paris.

do not yet have any sites inscribed on the World Heritage List to submit nomination dossiers. At the Cairns meeting, the World Heritage Committee also decided that, from 2002 onwards, it will only examine one nomination dossier per State Party at each of its sessions. In 2004, at its twenty-eighth session, the Committee decided that, from 2006 onwards, States Parties could submit up to two complete nominations, provided that at least one of such nominations concerns a natural property. It is hoped that this measure will help to reduce the numerical imbalance between natural and cultural heritage sites on the World Heritage List.

In 2007, the World Heritage Committee set the following priorities for the review of nomination dossiers, should the annual limit of 45 nominations be exceeded;

- i) nominations of properties submitted by States Parties with no properties inscribed on the List;
- ii) nominations of properties submitted by States Parties having up to 3 properties inscribed on the List,
- iii) nominations of properties that have been previously excluded due to the annual limit of 45 nominations and the application of these priorities,
- iv) nominations of properties for natural heritage,
- v) nominations of properties for mixed heritage,
- vi) nominations of transboundary/transnational properties,
- vii) nominations from States Parties in Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean,
- viii) nominations of properties submitted by States Parties having ratified the *World Heritage Convention* during the last ten years,
- ix) nominations of properties submitted by States Parties that have not submitted nominations for ten years or more

This updated order of priorities of assessing nomination dossiers is especially pertinent for Ireland, which has less than three World Heritage sites and has also not submitted a nomination within the last ten years.

### **New approaches to World Heritage site nomination:**

Due to the need to maintain the credibility of the World Heritage List by only inscribing the most superlative examples of heritage properties around the world, many countries are now exploring the possibilities of working with other countries in linking up themes or types of sites and putting forward ‘transnational’ nominations. A transnational nomination is any nomination involving properties on the territory of more than one State Party. The term was adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2005, after the former term ‘transboundary’ was found to be inadequate to designate properties that need not share any common boundary. Such nominations can be adjoining properties, straddling a common national boundary; or can consist of two or more physically unconnected areas (serial properties). Any form of transnational nomination requires cooperative management between the States Parties on whose territories the transnational nominations lie. The World Heritage Committee has provided an incentive to the preparation of transnational nominations by deciding to exempt them from the limit of one cultural and natural nomination per State Party per year, which means that each State Party participating in the transnational nomination is not limiting their own individual chances of nominating sites for that year.

Serial nominations can also occur within the territory of a single country as well as across two or more countries. It is an extremely popular form of nomination and attempts to link up similar sites into one listing in order to mitigate the over-representation of certain types of heritage on the List. It reduces the amount of competition between countries trying to nominate similar sites and instead is a way of fostering international co-operation. Serial nominations have a high rate of successful inscription as it is the series as a whole – and not necessarily the individual parts of it – which are of Outstanding Universal Value.<sup>14</sup> This position was under discussion at the 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the World Heritage Committee in Quebec in 2008, as some believe that it may damage the credibility of the World Heritage List to include on it properties which do not merit inscription by themselves. An upcoming expert working group meeting on this topic may lead to the revision of Paragraph 137 of the Operational Guidelines, as well as a closer

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<sup>14</sup> *Operational Guidelines*, paragraph 137

examination of the role of the World Heritage Centre in promoting and coordinating such nominations. Whether Paragraph 137 is revised or not, serial nominations are not easy options but pose great challenges both in the preparation of the nominations and in their on-going management.

An example of a serial listing is the Struve Geodetic Arc; this is a transnational World Heritage Site which has sites spread out across ten countries from Norway in the north, down to the Black Sea. The sites are points of a survey, carried out between 1816 and 1855 by the astronomer Friedrich Georg Wilhelm Struve, which represented the first accurate measuring of a long segment of a meridian. This helped to establish the exact size and shape of the planet and marked an important step in the development of earth sciences and topographic mapping. It is an extraordinary example of scientific collaboration among scientists from different countries, and of collaboration between monarchs for a scientific cause.

Discussions are underway in the World Heritage Committee regarding the serial listing of sites which are already separately inscribed on the List. France is currently considering this option to combine several of its cathedrals into a single serial nomination. By linking up individual World Heritage sites into one World Heritage serial listing, the European numerical bias of the List could be reduced by sinking the amount of World Heritage listings, while not reducing the actual number of protected sites under the *World Heritage Convention*. This measure would not reduce the cultural/natural significance of each individual site nor diminish the prestige value of the listings.

The nomination of cultural routes is another way of linking similar sites into one serial listing. This type of World Heritage site should be based on historical cultural routes such as the Route of Santiago de Compostela in Spain, inscribed on the list in 1993. Cultural routes also have great potential as transnational nominations. France has its own Routes of Santiago de Compostela World Heritage site, inscribed since 1998. Discussions are now progressing between the two States Parties to join up these two separate sites into one listing in the form of a transnational cultural route property. The linking of routes on a transnational level is also occurring between other States Parties;

discussions about potential routes such as The Great Silk Road linking China to the Mediterranean or the Slave and Salt Routes in Africa. As yet, no complete nomination of a transnational cultural route has been presented. Approximately twenty-three proposals for routes (or portions of routes) are currently on States Parties' Tentative Lists.

New approaches to World Heritage nominations are therefore based on new thematic frameworks and also the shared heritage of nations. These new approaches assist States Parties in preparing nominations by using a thematic framework for identifying relevant sites and a methodology for preparing appropriate transboundary and transnational cooperation mechanisms. Transnational nominations are increasingly being encouraged by the World Heritage Centre, especially in the case of countries whose heritage is under- or unrepresented on the List or who lack the resources or knowledge necessary to capably demonstrate the OUV of their properties. By linking up with more experienced States Parties, such unrepresented countries can build their capacity by drawing on past experiences in the process of nominating sites to the World Heritage Committee. This form of capacity building is one of the main thrusts of the Global Strategy as well as one of the five strategic objectives for promoting the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* (or the five 'C's) as outlined in the *Operational Guidelines* (paragraph 26). Four of the five strategic objectives were outlined in the *Budapest Declaration on World Heritage*, adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2002. A fifth 'C' of Community was added in 2007 to the already established 'C's of Credibility (of the World Heritage List), Conservation (of World Heritage Properties), Capacity-building and Communication (increased awareness-raising, involvement and support for World Heritage). New Zealand proposed the adoption of the fifth 'C' in order to place "humanity at the heart of conservation" and in the belief that each of the original four 'C's are all intrinsically linked to the idea of community (WHC 2007). These strategic objectives have importance for the compilation of Tentative Lists as they underline the evolution of the World Heritage List in recent years.

**Stakeholder and Local Community involvement:**

As can be seen from above, one of the most important strategies being emphasised at this time is the active involvement of local stakeholder interest groups and local communities and the need for State Parties to get their support in the nomination process, which includes the drawing up of Tentative Lists, and also in the management of World Heritage sites. Paragraph 123 of the 2008 *Operational Guidelines* indicates that ‘participation of local people in the nomination process is essential to enable them to have a shared responsibility with the State Party’. States Parties have long been encouraged by UNESCO to prepare their Tentative Lists with the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders, including site managers, local and regional governments, local communities, NGOs and other interested parties and partners; however this may soon change from being a recommendation to a requirement of nomination. More rigorous mechanisms for the compilation of Tentative Lists were discussed in Quebec at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the World Heritage Committee which will make drawing up of the Lists a much more scientific and analytical exercise, entailing a lot more pre-nomination documentation at the Tentative List level. These mechanisms will also necessitate greater involvement of local communities and other stakeholder interest groups than what has been required up until now. Buffer zones of World Heritage sites have also been highlighted as a means of involving local communities and stakeholders in World Heritage site management. The International Expert Meeting on World Heritage and Buffer Zones which took place in March 2008 expressed the importance of the use of buffer zones as a mechanism to share the benefits of World Heritage designation with local communities and stakeholders and to enhance the sustainable use of World Heritage sites.

**Authenticity and Integrity:**

Also discussed at the World Heritage Committee in Quebec was the evolving nature of the concept of Outstanding Universal Value and the need for State Parties to adequately justify each site’s Outstanding Universal Value in order for them to feature on a Tentative List. Furthermore, each site being submitted on a revised Tentative List must be able to satisfy the conditions of Authenticity (for cultural properties) and Integrity. These

conditions have evolved over the years in line with the List itself and also with the need to make them more applicable to more diverse cultural contexts. Originally the condition of Integrity, which is a measure of the completeness of wholeness of a property, only applied to natural properties but is now invoked when assessing both cultural and natural properties. Examining the conditions of Integrity requires assessing whether or not the property:

- includes all elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value;
- is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance;
- is free from the adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

The condition of Authenticity has also been expanded in both wording and scope. This was recommended to facilitate nominations and inclusions of less traditional categories of cultural heritage on the List. Up until 1994, the Operational Guidelines had recognized that Authenticity should be judged according to four attributes: design, materials, workmanship or setting. The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) was a defining moment in the life of the World Heritage List as it recognised that Authenticity should be judged within the cultural context to which it belongs and that it could be expressed through a multitude of attributes. A key determinant for Authenticity is that the significance of the property should be credibly expressed through a variety of attributes, for example, in relation to the site's original characteristics and the extent to which these may have been modified over time. Depending on the type of cultural heritage, and its cultural context, properties may be understood to meet the conditions of Authenticity if their cultural values (as recognized in the nomination criteria proposed) are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes including:

- form and design;
- materials and substance;
- use and function;
- traditions, techniques and management systems;
- location and setting;
- language, and other forms of intangible heritage;
- spirit and feeling; and
- other internal and external factors.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Operational Guidelines*, paragraph 82 – See Appendix 1

### **Tentative Lists as Planning Tools:**

When used in comparative analyses on a global level, well-developed Tentative Lists are not only the first step towards inscription, but can also help with the development of an overall understanding of cultural heritage significance within a country or region and thus have an impact far wider than on the identification of potential World Heritage. Often a Tentative List is revised only to include a particular property which States Parties wish to nominate in the immediate future. However, revisions of Tentative Lists by certain States Parties may be regarded as best practice. IUCN, for example, noted in 2004<sup>16</sup> that Madagascar and Canada have undertaken comprehensive reviews of their natural and mixed World Heritage properties (both inscribed and potential properties) as an input to the preparation of their Tentative Lists. The Tentative List prepared for Canada also proposes areas that may merit nomination as transboundary or transnational World Heritage properties. Other best practice examples of Tentative List revisions include the UK, Mexico and Uruguay.<sup>17</sup>

More recently in 2008, IUCN again highlighted Canada and also Norway and Japan as models of Tentative List preparation and recommended that these examples be followed by other States Parties. A key feature of these examples is a lengthy scientific based assessment of those most outstanding properties with the greatest potential to meet the criteria of OUV and the conditions of Integrity. In the case of Japan, for example, this process resulted in the nomination and inscription of Shiretoko in 2005; in the case of Norway, this process resulted in the nomination and inscription of the West Norwegian Fjords, also in 2005<sup>18</sup>. Both IUCN and ICOMOS concluded that more work is required to improve the quality of Tentative Lists before they can be effectively used as a tool to assist the further identification of potential cultural, natural and mixed World Heritage sites. The results of the Periodic Reporting exercises could lead to better Tentative Lists,

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<sup>16</sup> UNESCO, Document WHC-04/28.COM/INF.13B, p. 4

<sup>17</sup> Roessler, M (2005), p.11

<sup>18</sup> IUCN (2008) *Outstanding Universal Value: A Compendium on Standards for Inscriptions of Natural Properties on the World Heritage List*, p.23

increased harmonization, improved and focused nominations and therefore a more balanced World Heritage List.<sup>19</sup>

At this point it is useful to recall the recommendations concerning Tentative Lists of the Special Expert Meeting on “*The Concept of Outstanding Universal Value*”, Kazan, Russian Federation in April, 2005.<sup>20</sup>

The Experts recommended that:

- States Parties should each establish a coordination mechanism with an interdisciplinary composition to undertake and oversee effectively the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* and the preparation and review of Tentative Lists in particular;
- Tentative Lists should be seen as part of the effort of conservation of national heritage;
- Properties on Tentative Lists should have national and/or other appropriate recognition;
- Compilation of Tentative Lists should involve local communities and indigenous peoples and should include public consultation where appropriate;
- The compilation of Tentative Lists should take account of the Global Strategy, comparative studies and the Advisory Bodies gap analysis;
- The preparation of Tentative Lists should have due regard to other international conventions and programmes;
- In preparation of their Tentative Lists, States Parties should be rigorous in their local evaluation to ensure that expectations of inscription match reality;
- The size of a Tentative List should take into account the Cairns-Suzhou Decision and the 10 years cycle of the Tentative List recommended by the *Operational Guidelines*;<sup>21</sup>
- The comparative analysis should be developed by regions and themes;
- Regional meetings on harmonization of Tentative Lists should identify types of properties for nomination in a given region, and those for possible inclusion as transnational and transboundary properties;

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<sup>19</sup> Roessler, M (2005), p.12

<sup>20</sup> UNESCO, Document WHC-05/29.COM/9

<sup>21</sup> According to Paragraph 65 of the *Operational Guidelines*, States Parties shall submit Tentative Lists preferably at least one year prior to the submission of any nomination. States Parties are also encouraged to re-examine and re-submit their Tentative Lists at least every ten years.

- The Advisory Bodies should complete their thematic studies and initiate and facilitate appropriate regional and comparative studies as soon as possible and in a time scale to allow States Parties to identify categories and themes of heritage that are relevant for completion of all Tentative Lists in 2007 and the revision of existing Tentative Lists;
- States Parties with no Tentative Lists should be encouraged to request preparatory International Assistance if necessary for preparing Tentative List;
- The Advisory Bodies, within their available resources, should comment on the Tentative Lists of all States Parties upon request;
- The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies should provide a compilation of best practices and publish a number of training manuals;
- The World Heritage Centre should prepare a handbook to inform property owners and stakeholders about the process and requirements for inscription on the List of World Heritage, and to clarify expectations concerning the benefits and commitments that may result from being inscribed as a World Heritage property.

As of 15 April 2008, of the **185** States Parties which have ratified the *Convention*, **162** had submitted Tentative Lists in accordance with the requirements specified in the *Operational Guidelines*, while **23** States Parties had not submitted any Tentative List. Since the 31st session of the Committee in July 2007 up until 15 April 2008, **32** States Parties have submitted new Tentative Lists or modified existing Lists. The number of new properties added to Tentative Lists in this time was **227**.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Process of Compiling a Tentative List – Best Practice Models**

In order to establish a best practice methodology for the revision of the current Tentative List, it is fruitful to examine international examples deemed by the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee to be models of best practice, such as Canada. The driving force of the Canadian method was a lengthy scientific based assessment of those most outstanding properties within their territory with the greatest potential to meet the criteria of OUV and the conditions of Authenticity and Integrity, followed by an extensive national process of stakeholder consultation.

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<sup>22</sup> UNESCO, Document WHC-08/32.COM/8A

**Canadian approach:**

Firstly, two Canadian experts with international cultural and natural heritage experience were tasked with carrying out a study to identify changes in trends and policies in the identification of potential World Heritage sites as well as a preliminary assessment of possible Canadian sites in light of World Heritage criteria and the priorities outlined in the Global Strategy. Sites assessed include those suggested by Canadians during the past two decades, as well as other sites that appeared to meet OUV criteria. Following this initial phase, Parks Canada (acting as Canada's State representative to the Convention) consulted with provincial and territorial representatives, interested national organizations, Aboriginal groups and key stakeholders across Canada, using the two independent experts' research reports as a basis for discussion. Overall, one hundred and twenty-five proposals for new sites were received. A Minister's Advisory Committee met four times to review the two reports and the results of the consultations in order to identify the sites with the most potential for inscription on the World Heritage List. As recommended by UNESCO, stakeholder support was emphasised throughout the process: any site nominated as a potential World Heritage site had to have the support of those responsible for the site as well as the respective provincial/territorial governments, as well as Aboriginal groups. This support was to be based on an understanding of the implications of inscription. In some cases, more detailed consultations with the stakeholders of the sites recommended by the Minister's Advisory Committee were necessary to ensure their support for including these sites on the revised Tentative List. The result of this approach was a short revised Tentative List (11 sites) that was well researched and had broad public support.

**Analysis of Best Practice Approach to Tentative List Compilation**

On examination of international best practice models, the recommended approach for compiling or reviewing a Tentative List is one firmly grounded in a scientific and structured framework, using a research document as a point of departure.

## **Tentative List Review Methodology:**

### **(1) The Establishment of an Expert Advisory Group:**

The establishment of an Expert Advisory Group representative of both national and international experts in World Heritage to oversee and validate the review of the Tentative List.

### **(2) A Guidance Document on Tentative List and WH status:**

A draft guidance document entitled “Tentative List and World Heritage Status” will be circulated to the Expert Advisory Group by the end of September, 2008 for their consideration and on the basis of this guidance document they will be asked to identify a number of potentially suitable sites for nomination to the WHL. They will also be requested to take into account those sites remaining on the current tentative list, together with representations made for other sites since the current tentative list came into effect. Public Consultation on possible sites to begin with Press Release by the Minister and a press advertisement at the beginning of December, 2008 with ideas coming from the public received by the Department by 30 January, 2009. Letters will also issue to all local authorities, NGO’s and interested stakeholders and prescribed bodies also inviting proposals by 30 January 2009.

### **(3) Regional Information Seminars for Local Authorities:**

The next phase will commence with Regional Information Seminars for Local Authorities, NGO’s and interested stakeholder groups who will have a significant role to play in the effective planning policies and protection for those sites nominated for the new Tentative List. A presentation will be made on the Guidance Document and the role of the Expert Advisory Group. Local authorities will be asked to comment on the list of potential sites/properties identified by the Expert Advisory Group. This phase to be completed by the end of March 2009.

### **(4) Public Consultation:**

The discussion paper and the list of potential sites/properties may be placed on an Interactive Website similar to that being used for the Architectural Policy Review at the moment. This will enable wider public participation in the process. The comments from

this should also be received by end of March, 2009. The information and updates on the review process can also be placed on the Department's website, on the website of OPW and the Dept. of Arts, Sport and Tourism and comments invited. The documents might also be circulated to ICOMOS Ireland, Local Authorities and the Heritage Council. A media advertisement campaign will be undertaken indicating that the Tentative List is being compiled and providing information on the Advisory Expert Group representative of national and international experts. Public consultation will take place from December 2008 until end of March 2009.

Taking into account the feedback/output from the public consultation fora and interactive website, the Expert Advisory Group will identify the appropriate sites/properties/themes for inclusion on the new Tentative List. The new draft Tentative List will then be submitted to the Minister for his agreement by the middle of April 2009. The intention is to forward the list to the WH Centre in time for the World Heritage Committee 33<sup>rd</sup> Session in Seville in July 2009.

## Appendix 1 – Selected Paragraphs from *Operational Guidelines* (2008)

### **Criteria for the assessment of outstanding universal value**

77. The Committee considers a property as having outstanding universal value (see paragraphs 49- 53) if the property meets one or more of the following criteria. Nominated properties shall therefore :

- (i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- (iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- (iv) 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) 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) 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) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- (viii) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- (ix) 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) 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 science or conservation.
- 78.** 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.

### **Authenticity**

- 79.** Properties nominated under criteria (i) to (vi) must meet the conditions of authenticity. Annex 4 which includes the Nara Document on Authenticity, provides a practical basis for examining the authenticity of such properties and is summarized below.
- 80.** The ability to understand the value attributed to the heritage depends on the degree to which information sources about this value may be understood as credible or truthful. Knowledge and understanding of these sources of information, in relation to original and subsequent characteristics of the cultural heritage, and their meaning, are the requisite bases for assessing all aspects of authenticity.
- 81.** Judgments about value attributed to cultural heritage, as well as the credibility of related information sources, may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture. The respect due to all cultures requires that cultural heritage must be considered and judged primarily within the cultural contexts to which it belongs.
- 82.** Depending on the type of cultural heritage, and its cultural context, properties may be understood to meet the conditions of authenticity if their cultural values (as recognized in the nomination criteria proposed) are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes including:
- form and design;
  - materials and substance;
  - use and function;
  - traditions, techniques and management systems;
  - location and setting;
  - language, and other forms of intangible heritage;
  - spirit and feeling; and
  - other internal and external factors.
- 83.** Attributes such as spirit and feeling do not lend themselves easily to practical applications of the conditions of authenticity, but nevertheless are important

indicators of character and sense of place, for example, in communities maintaining tradition and cultural continuity.

84. The use of all these sources permits elaboration of the specific artistic, historic, social, and scientific dimensions of the cultural heritage being examined. "Information sources" are defined as all physical, written, oral, and figurative sources, which make it possible to know the nature
85. When the conditions of authenticity are considered in preparing a nomination for a property, the State Party should first identify all of the applicable significant attributes of authenticity. The statement of authenticity should assess the degree to which authenticity is present in, or expressed by, each of these significant attributes., specificities, meaning, and history of the cultural heritage.
86. In relation to authenticity, the reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances. Reconstruction is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture.

### **Integrity**

87. All properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List shall satisfy the conditions of integrity
88. Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes. Examining the conditions of integrity, therefore requires assessing the extent to which the property:
  - a) includes all elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value;
  - b) is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance;
  - c) suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

This should be presented in a statement of integrity.

89. For properties nominated under criteria (i) to (vi), the physical fabric of the property and/or its significant features should be in good condition, and the impact of deterioration processes controlled. A significant proportion of the elements necessary to convey the totality of the value conveyed by the property should be included. Relationships and dynamic functions present in cultural landscapes, historic towns or other living properties essential to their distinctive character should also be maintained.

- 90.** For all properties nominated under criteria (vii) - (x), bio-physical processes and landform features should be relatively intact. However, it is recognized that no area is totally pristine and that all natural areas are in a dynamic state, and to some extent involve contact with people. Human activities, including those of traditional societies and local communities, often occur in natural areas. These activities may be consistent with the outstanding universal value of the area where they are ecologically sustainable.
- 91.** In addition, for properties nominated under criteria (vii) to (x), a corresponding condition of integrity has been defined for each criterion
- 92.** Properties proposed under criterion (vii) should be of outstanding universal value and include areas that are essential for maintaining the beauty of the property. For example, a property whose scenic value depends on a waterfall, would meet the conditions of integrity if it includes adjacent catchment and downstream areas that are integrally linked to the maintenance of the aesthetic qualities of the property.
- 93.** Properties proposed under criterion (viii) should contain all or most of the key interrelated and interdependent elements in their natural relationships. For example, an "ice age" area would meet the conditions of integrity if it includes the snow field, the glacier itself and samples of cutting patterns, deposition and colonization (e.g. striations, moraines, pioneer stages of plant succession, etc.); in the case of volcanoes, the magmatic series should be complete and all or most of the varieties of effusive rocks and types of eruptions be represented.
- 94.** Properties proposed under criterion (ix) should have sufficient size and contain the necessary elements to demonstrate the key aspects of processes that are essential for the long term conservation of the ecosystems and the biological diversity they contain. For example, an area of tropical rain forest would meet the conditions of integrity if it includes a certain amount of variation in elevation above sea level, changes in topography and soil types, patch systems and naturally regenerating patches; similarly a coral reef should include, for example, seagrass, mangrove or other adjacent ecosystems that regulate nutrient and sediment inputs into the reef.

## Appendix 2 – Ireland’s Current Tentative List

### **Ireland’s Tentative Site List of Properties for possible future nomination to UNESCO’s World Heritage List**

The following tentative list for Ireland was compiled by an internal Departmental committee in light of an advertised public consultation process:

#### **Tentative List (1992)**

##### **Cultural**

- (I) Skellig Michael- inscribed in 1996
- (II) Western Stone Forts
- (III) Cashel

##### **Natural**

- (I) Killarney National Park
- (II) North West Mayo Boglands
- (III) Clara Bog

##### **Mixed- Cultural and Natural**

- (i) Clonmacnoise
- (ii) Burren
- (III) Ceide Fields

## Description and Justification of sites on the Tentative List

### Cultural Sites

#### (II) Western Stone Forts

There are up to forty large stone forts spread in various forms and location throughout the western counties of Ireland. These forts span a period from the Bronze Age through to the Medieval Period. One of the most magnificent and dramatic examples of a stone fort in Europe is Dun Aonghusa, perched on a cliff edge, in Inis Mor island, on the westernmost extremity of Europe.

These forts represent a style of construction that is different to stone forts from other parts of Europe, that of dry-stone construction, with massive walls of large quarried blocks of stone, a testimony to the master masons of Ireland. The forts vary from a single to triple enclosure with a variety of associated structures and field systems. The survival of such high numbers of these monuments provides a unique opportunity for archaeological investigation into a rich and vibrant society that counts among the finest in Europe.



### **(III) Cashel**

The Rock of Cashel is a complex of secular and religious structures of national and international importance and significant historical and religious events dramatically situated high above the surrounding plain.

The history of the complex spans from the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, when the Rock of Cashel was home to the Kings of Munster to the Confederate wars of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The buildings include a 12<sup>th</sup> century Romanesque chapel, St. Cormac's Chapel, and cathedral, a round tower, choral hall and castle and outside the castle, a carved cross. St. Cormac's chapel, built in 1127, highlights the significant influences that resulted from the tradition of travelling ecclesiastics throughout Europe and beyond. It incorporates German and English architectural influence in particular along with Scandinavian decorative influences.



## Natural Sites

### **(i) Killarney National Park**

Killarney national park covers an area of 10,129 hectares and is of international scientific importance including features such as oceanic woodlands of oak, unique yew woodland and varied wet floodlands. There are numerous species of flora and fauna including several plants with unusual discontinuous distributions in Western Europe. A herd of red deer inhabiting the park is the only indigenous wild herd of deer remaining in the country.

The park is an area of outstanding natural beauty and includes three large lakes, part of the highest mountain range in Ireland, woods, waterfalls and various archaeological monuments. The park is centred around Muckross House, dating back to 1843, and which is now used as a visitor centre and museum.

Occupation of the area dates back to the Bronze age, with copper mines surviving from this period. Another important era is the Early Christian period when the island of Inishfallen became home to the monks of St Fionan, who were responsible for the “Annals of Innisfallen”, a major source of information on the early history of Ireland.



## **(ii) North West Mayo Boglands**

The blanket boglands of North West Mayo comprise three main areas of bog i.e. Owenduff, Owenboy and Glenamoy and as a whole form an area of great scientific interest.

Owenduff bog, centred on the Owenduff River catchment, preserved the largest remaining river system in the country without human habitation at all but its lowest reaches. It is along with Glenamoy, which is an exposed maritime site, an excellent example of a peatland complex with extensive tracts of Atlantic bog vegetation with pool systems grading uninterrupted into wet heath and mountain blanket bog, with associated cliffs, lakes and streams. Glenamoy indeed was the Irish Study site of the International Biological programme.

North West Mayo boglands is an area of great wilderness and natural beauty and is one of the few remaining intact boglands in Europe to be preserved to such a degree.



**Ballycroy National Park, Co. Mayo**

### **(iii) Clara Bog**

Clara bog, which covers an area of 665 hectares, is the largest remaining true midland raised bog. An area of 465 hectares has been declared a Natural Heritage Reserve. The bog is bounded by glacial esker ridge to the North and to the south by a cut-away bog. The surface topography is undulating with the peat reaching depths of 10m in places. Extensive parts of the bog have vegetation typical of raised bogs with well developed complexes of hummocks and hollows and lawns of sphaga. A few dry, calluna-dominated ridges also occur. Much scientific research has been carried out in the area into aspects of the geology, hydrology and ecology of the bog.

Its most outstanding feature is the series of soaks which may be fed by springs seeping up through the peat with the esker ridge acting as a pressure head. These soak complexes are the best remaining examples in Ireland and is a now rare phenomenon throughout Northern Europe. The bog also contains many specimens of rare bog plants.

## Mixed-Cultural and Natural

### (I) Clonmacnoise

Clonmacnoise is an area of both natural and cultural significance which is located alongside the River Shannon, the largest river in Ireland and Britain.

The cultural remains consist of an ecclesiastic foundation. A monastery was founded in 548-9 by St. Ciaran. The remains of eight religious buildings survive representing various styles of architecture spanning the period from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Two highly decorated 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century stone crosses survive which represent an artistic achievement of universal significance and a tradition which is uniquely Irish. Fine examples of ornately carved grave slabs spanning 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries also survive.

The area of Clonmacnoise preserves a rich and varied natural environment. This includes a glacier landscape of eskers, semi-natural woodlands and large extracts of boglands and the river callows. These features all support a variety of plant and animal life, including many rare species

The River Shannon a major component of the property, is the last remaining undrained river in Europe and as such preserves and increasingly rare natural riverine environment. Mongan bog, a National Nature Reserve, remains virtually intact and is one of the few raised bogs left in Western Europe.



## (II) The Burren

The Burren is a unique area of universal significance in relation to both natural and cultural phenomena. The Burren is an area of limestone karstland characterised by terraced hills of bare limestone with a well developed underground system of caves. It is one of the few limestone regions on the European Atlantic coast with the unusual climatic conditions that this entails, and is the only karstland to be found on the extreme fringes of north-west Europe.

The environment supports a rich variety of rare plants and insects, with distinctive flora of widely differing habitats. A mixture of Mediterranean, Arctic and Alpine plants are to be found growing together in the Burren which is a phenomenon found nowhere else in the world.

A huge number of archaeological sites from the Mesolithic period on are preserved in this area. In particular, the wealth of monuments from the prehistoric and Early Christian periods is unsurpassed.



### **(iii) Céide Fields**

Céide Fields, situated on the North Coastal region of County Mayo, is a fossilized Neolithic landscape which has been preserved beneath an expanse of blanket bog.

This landscape consists of extensive tracts of land enclosed by stone walls, a landscape which was formally laid out on a predetermined and organised basis. Associated with these field systems is a wealth of megalithic tombs and farmsteads. The natural boglands and the rare geographical formations make this a unique cultural and natural landscape.

Preserved beneath this bogland is a unique cultural landscape, along with fossilized natural woodland. To date a continuous Neolithic landscape of over 2,500 acres has been mapped. This makes Céide Fields the most extensive Stone Age monument in the world.

