

# UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE FACTSHEET

## UNESCO

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) was founded in 1945 and is part of the United Nations. UNESCO's purpose is to achieve peace and security for all people of the world. To achieve this, they cooperate with 193 Member States in the fields of education, science, culture and communication.

## CULTUUR

The C of UNESCO stands for Culture and is the best-known part of UNESCO. Through conventions, UNESCO is committed to protecting culture and promoting cultural diversity. Conventions include the World Heritage Convention, intangible cultural heritage, and protecting cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict.

## WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

The World Heritage Convention of 1972 is UNESCO's best-known convention. It was signed by all UNESCO member states. The convention is intended to preserve a heritage site (area and/or building) that is of outstanding universal value for humanity and thus for future generations. Under this convention, the member states have agreed to protect, conserve, identify and provide access to their World Heritage Sites. Our Kingdom, with the Netherlands as a member state, signed the World Heritage Convention in 1992. More information on the treaty: [whc.unesco.org](http://whc.unesco.org).

## WORLD HERITAGE LIST

The World Heritage List exists since 1978, when the first 12 sites received World Heritage status. Member States that have signed the World Heritage Convention may nominate heritage sites to the World Heritage List. The country must first draw up a tentative list of potential World Heritage sites on its territory.

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Not only do heritage sites receive protection through inclusion on the World Heritage List, but World Heritage status also promotes mutual understanding between cultures. Not every World Heritage Site is necessarily beautiful, but all are unique in some way, of great importance to humanity and irreplaceable in the world.



## WORLD HERITAGE 2021/2022

- 1.154 properties:
  - 218 natural sites
  - 897 cultural locaties
  - 39 mixed
- 52 in danger
- 167 states parties
- Three sites have been delisted since the list began.

[See all World Heritage Sites?](#)

[Click here: whc.unesco.org](http://whc.unesco.org)

## FROM HERITAGE TO WORLD HERITAGE

From heritage to World Heritage is a long procedure and can take up to 15 years. And the proceedings remain exciting until the very end. The following steps are taken:

1. A country signs the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. This country can then nominate a heritage site (building or area) for World Heritage.
2. Before starting a nomination, the new member first examines which heritage site may be eligible for the title of World Heritage Site.
3. The country prepares a list of potential World Heritage Sites, which is also called the tentative list. The tentative list for the Netherlands can be seen on [www.cultureelerfgoed.nl](http://www.cultureelerfgoed.nl).
4. Then, the new member starts to draw up a nomination dossier, explaining what makes this heritage site so unique in the world.
5. When the dossier is complete, the Minister takes it to UNESCO headquarters in Paris.
6. Special experts appointed by UNESCO will evaluate the dossier.
7. These experts visit the heritage site to check whether it meets the requirements.
8. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee discusses the nomination of the heritage site and the results of the evaluation at its annual meeting.
9. The outcome may be: inscribed on the World Heritage List, deferred (the dossier is not thorough enough and must be modified) or rejected.

## WORLD HERITAGE STATUS

To be included on the World Heritage List and receive World Heritage status, you must meet the following requirements. These points are set out in detail in the nomination dossier and later in the management plan.

## UNIQUE AND IRREPLACEABLE

The heritage is unique and irreplaceable in the world. Why it is so special is recorded as the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of World Heritage.

## CULTURAL, NATURAL OR MIXED

World Heritage can be natural, cultural or a mix of both. In the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Wadden Sea is a natural World Heritage site and the other World Heritage sites are cultural.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

To determine the outstanding universal value, 10 criteria are used. The 10 criteria are divided into six requirements for cultural World Heritage and four for natural World Heritage. The nominated heritage must meet at least one of the criteria.

For a cultural World Heritage:

1. Creative masterpiece
2. Important interchange of human values
3. Exceptional testimony to a disappeared or existing civilisation
4. Example of human history
5. Traditional settlement, land or sea use
6. Cultural landscapes

For a natural World Heritage Site:

1. Contain superlative natural phenomena or areas
2. Examples representing major stages of earth's history
3. Example of ecological/biological processes
4. Important for the conservation of biological diversity

In addition to the above criteria, the protection, management and authenticity of the heritage site and the integrity of the managers are important considerations. See page 4 of this fact sheet for the full description of the criteria.

## WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER

When a World Heritage Site is seriously threatened, possibly even disappearing (in part), it is put on the list of World Heritage in Danger. The World Heritage Site will be evaluated at the annual meeting of the World Heritage Committee and encourage the World Heritage Site to corrective action. If, despite the efforts, the conditions are still threaten the very characteristics for which a property was inscribed on the World Heritage List and there is no improvement, it will be removed from the World Heritage List. This has happened three times since the World Heritage List began in 1978. If there is an improvement and the unique value can be sufficiently protected, it will be removed from the list of World Heritage in Danger.

# WORLD HERITAGE ORGANIZATIONS

## OUR WORLD HERITAGE SITES

Our World Heritage Sites (within the Kingdom of the Netherlands) are:

- Schokland and surroundings
- Mill Network at Kinderdijk-Elshout
- D.F. Wouda Steam Pumping Station
- Willemstad, Curaçao
- Beemster Polder
- Rietveld Schröder House
- Wadden Sea
- Amsterdam Canal District
- Van Nelle factory
- Dutch Water Defence lines
- Colonies of Benevolence
- Lower German Limes

## DUTCH WORLD HERITAGE FOUNDATION (STICHTING WERELDERFGOED NEDERLAND)

The Dutch World Heritage Foundation supports our most important and unique heritage on a global scale and brings it to the attention of the general public. This is achieved by:

- Promoting our World Heritage
- Making documentaries and teaching packages for schools
- Working together on maintenance and management
- Encouraging World Heritage managers to share knowledge.

## WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

The 21-members meets annually at the session of the World Heritage Committee. At this meeting, they discuss and evaluate the existing World Heritage Sites and the World Heritage nominations. During the meeting, new heritage is added to the 'World Heritage List'. It is also possible that a World Heritage Site is added to the 'World Heritage in Danger' list. Or even removed from the 'World Heritage List'.

## DUTCH UNESCO COMMISSION

The Netherlands Commission for UNESCO increases UNESCO's visibility in the Netherlands and advises the Dutch government on matters such as World Heritage policy.

## NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

The government of the Netherlands is responsible for our World Heritage. For cultural World Heritage, this is the Minister of Education, Culture and Science and for natural World Heritage (Wadden Sea), the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

## NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE AGENCY

The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands implements World Heritage policy.

## HERITAGE EXPERTS (ICOMOS, IUCN AND ICCROM)

Heritage experts advise UNESCO World Heritage Committee on existing and future World Heritage through evaluations, reports and research. They also provide training and advice on heritage.

## YOU DON'T BECOME WORLD HERITAGE OVERNIGHT

Each World Heritage site in the Kingdom of the Netherlands tells the story of its outstanding, universal value.

It is unique and irreplaceable – not just in our Kingdom, but in the whole world.

Only UNESCO can designate an area and/or building as World Heritage.

# SELECTION CRITERIA WORLD HERITAGE

For a cultural World Heritage:

- 1** To represent a **masterpiece** of human **creative** genius;
- 2** To 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;
- 3** To bear a unique or at least **exceptional testimony** to a cultural tradition or to a **civilization which is living or which has disappeared**;
- 4** To be an outstanding **example** of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in **human history**;
- 5** To 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;  
  
To 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);
- 6**

For a natural World Heritage Site:

- 7** To contain **superlative natural phenomena or areas** of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- 8** To 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;
- 9** To 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;
- 10** To 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.