# The History of World Heritage and its Relevance to a Global Strategy for Future Inscriptions

**Machu Picchu, Peru**

**Petra, Jordan**

Douglas C. Comer, Ph.D., RPA
Co-President, ICAHM
dcomer@culturalsite.com

# What is World Heritage?

- In 1972, UNESCO adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

The Pyramids, Egypt

Borobudur, Indonesia

The Convention established a **World Heritage Committee** to create and maintain a **World Heritage List**
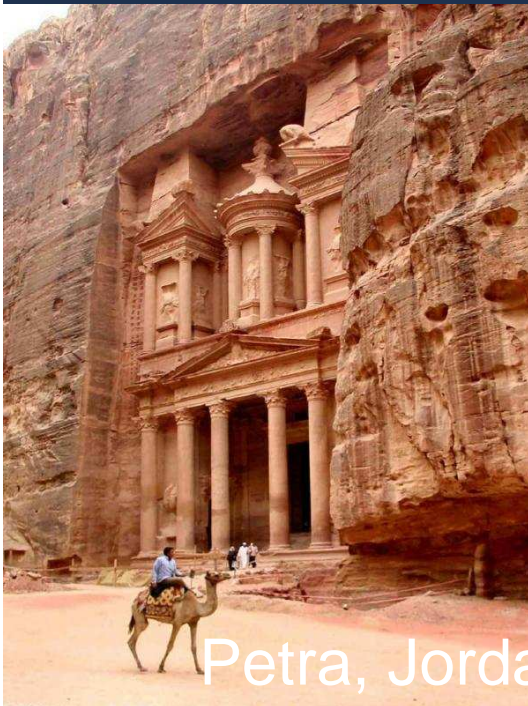
# 911 Properties

- 704 cultural
- 180 natural and
- 27 mixed properties
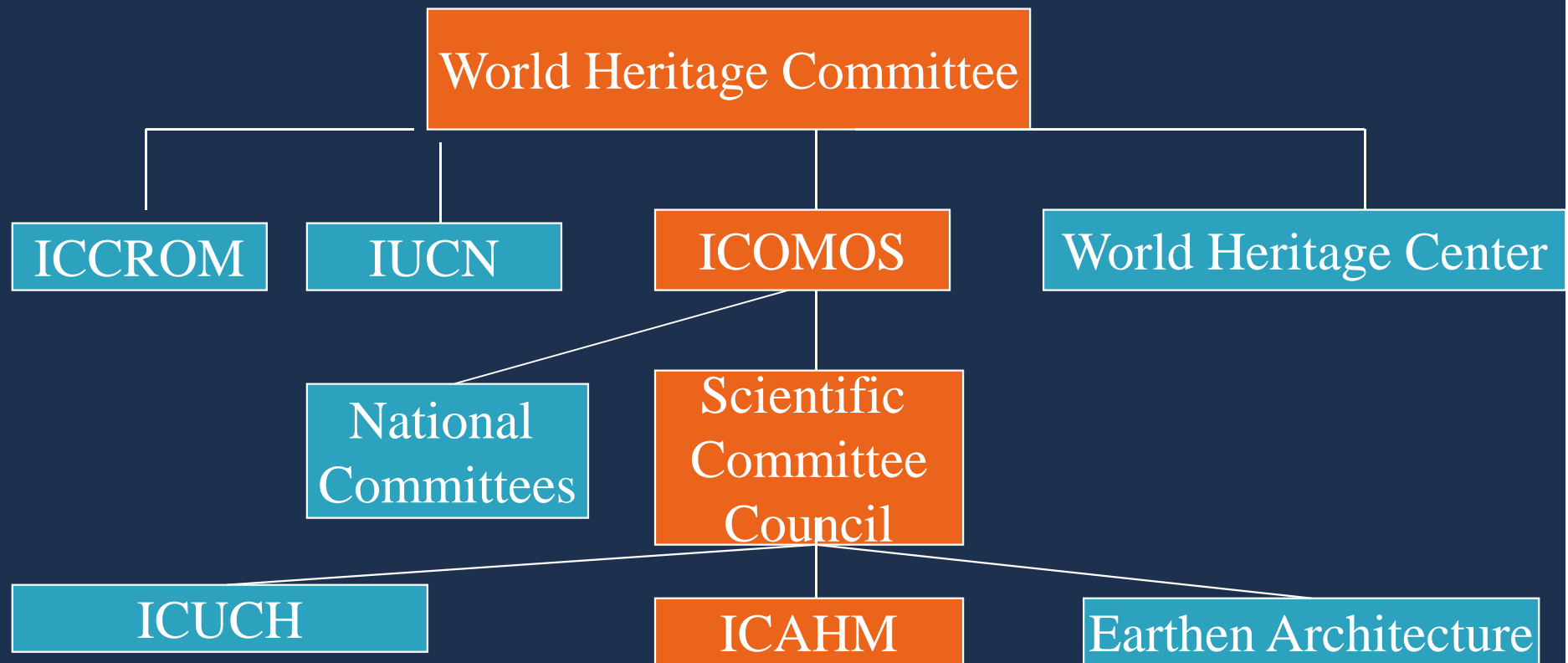- in 155 States Parties

Loire Valley, France

Tikal, Guatemala

Petra, Jordan

# World Heritage Organizational Structure

# Nomination Process



- **Advisory Bodies** provide evaluations to the World Heritage Committee:
  - Cultural Sites
    - ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)
  - Natural Sites
    - IUCN (the World Conservation Union)
- **Also: Expert Advice on Conservation of Sites**
  - (ICCROM) International Center for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property

# Nomination Process

▸ States Party Tentative List: inventory of sites that a states party might nominate in the next five to ten years

▸ A Nomination File is prepared with documentation and maps. The World Heritage Center sends the file to Advisory Bodies for Evaluation

# Nomination Process

- The World Heritage Committee makes final decision about inscriptions.
  - Meets once per year
  - Can defer decision, ask for additional information
- They apply the criteria for selection
  - "Outstanding Universal Value" and one more of 10 others

# 2007 to 2010

## Then 830, Now 911
### 10% increase in three years

- **Cultural:** Then **644**, Now **704** (9% increase)

- **Natural:** Then 162, Now **180** (11% increase)

- **Mixed properties**: Then 24, Now 27 (1% increase)

- **States Parties**: Then 138, Now **155** (12% increase)

# What are the changes about?

- In 2001, UNESCO adopted the Universal Declaration of Universal Cultural Diversity
  - Acting on concerns that a disproportionate number of World Heritage Sites were located in Europe and North America.

# Africa is underrepresented

**TABLE 3: Comparative analysis of the World Heritage List and the Tentative Lists by region**

|  | WHL | % | TL | % | Totals | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Africa | 27 | 5 % | 86 | 10 % | 113 | 8 % |
| Arab States | 49 | 9 % | 83 | 10 % | 132 | 9 % |
| Asia/Pacific | 104 | 18 % | 198 | 23 % | 302 | 21 % |
| Europe/North America | 325 | 56 % | 399 | 46 % | 724 | 50 % |
| Latin America/Caribbean | 72 | 13 % | 100 | 12 % | 172 | 12 % |
| Totals | 577 |  | 866 |  | 1443 |  |

**Why are there so few African properties on the World Heritage List?**

# ICAHM's Interest



- To assist in providing a representative WHL
- To increase appreciation for scientific and historical values
- To utilize archaeological research and scholarship in doing this
- To enhance public understanding of how cultures across the world are connected
- To widen the network of archaeologists engaged in these tasks

# ICAHM's Increased Participation

- Desk reviews of nominations
- Visits to nominated sites to evaluate especially, management
- Developing more effective site management
- Propagating archaeological and management expertise
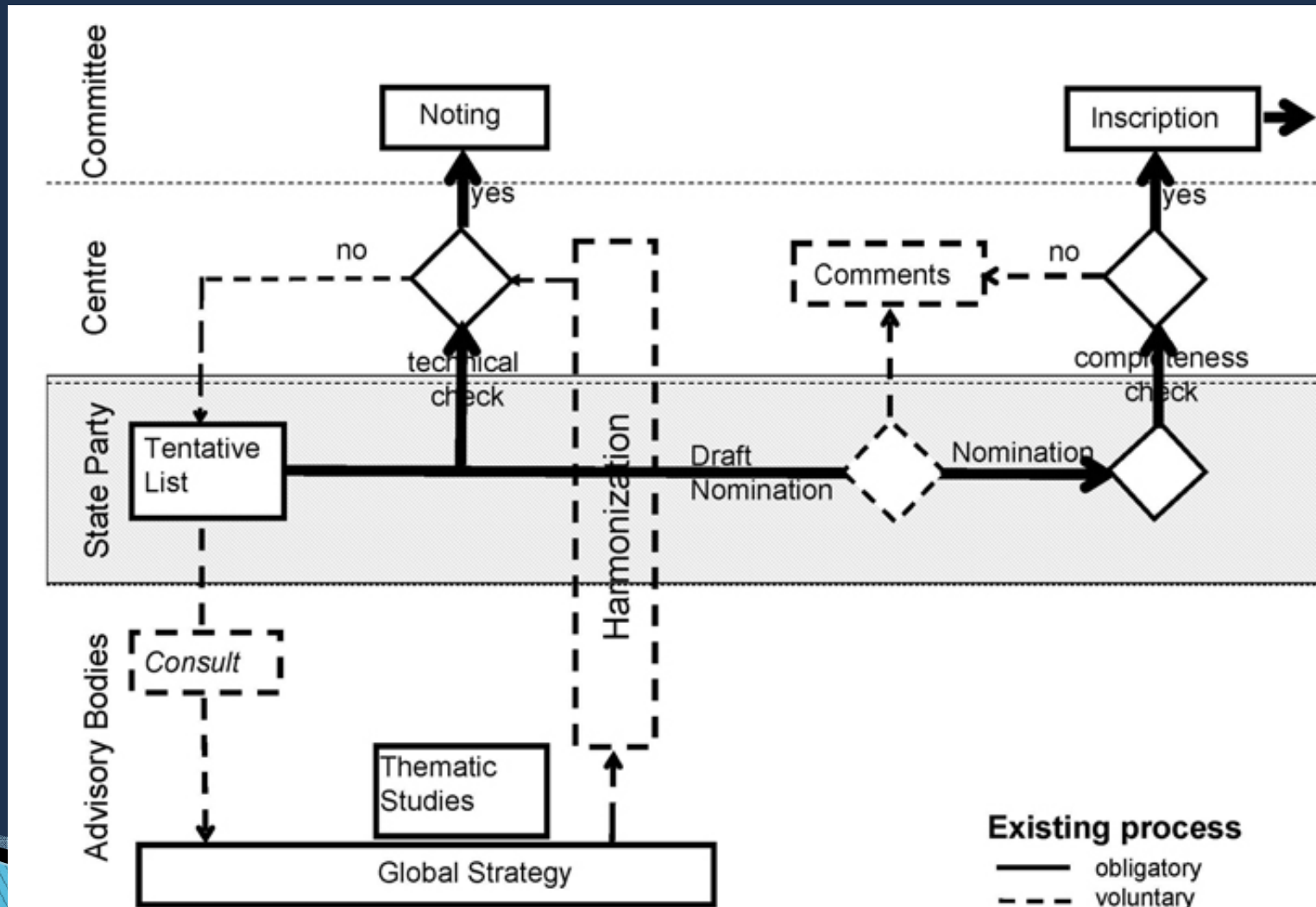- Assisting and advocating for the nomination of archaeological sites

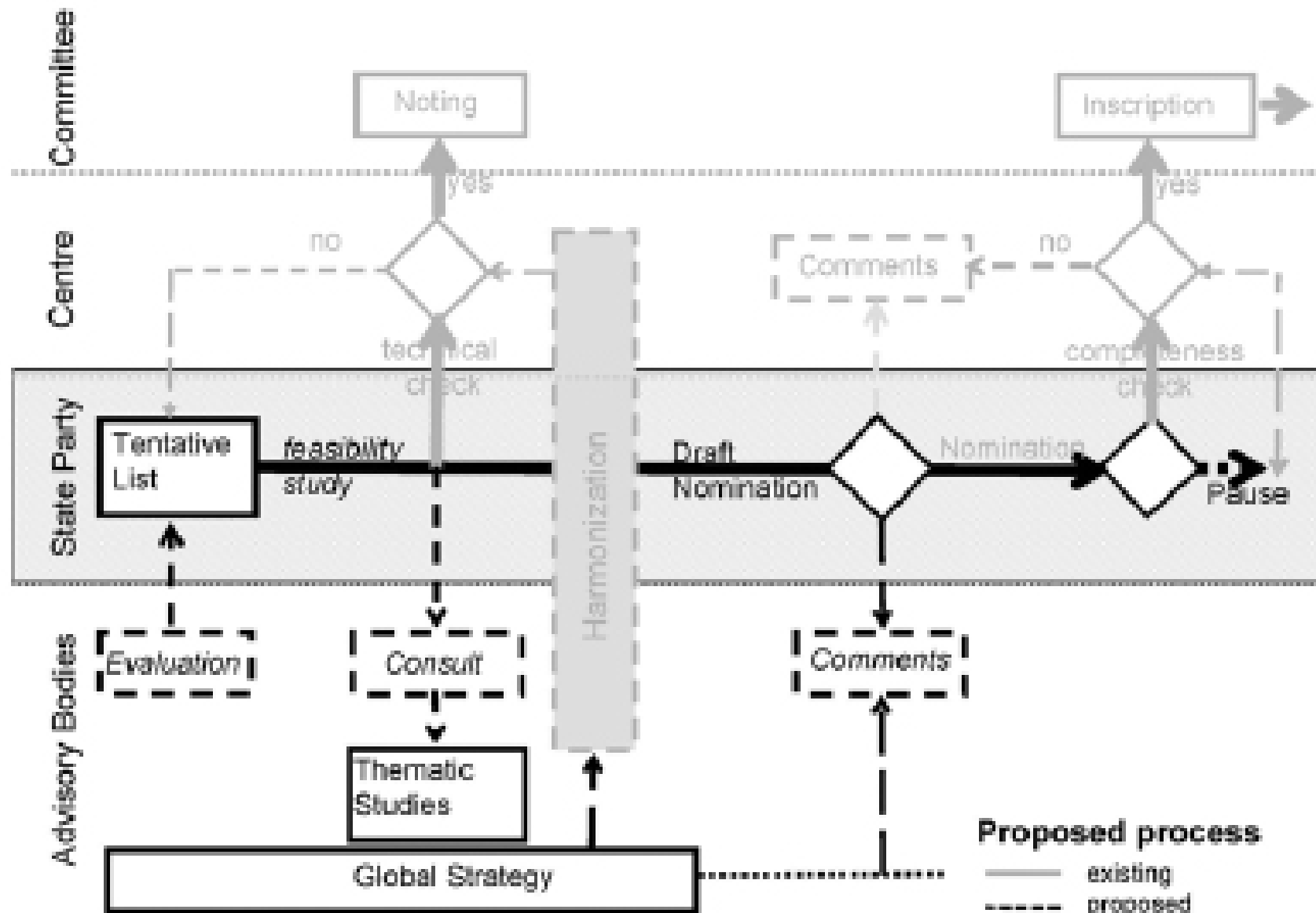# ICAHM's Strategic Involovement Suggested by Three Documents

▸ The World Heritage List :Filling the Gaps – an Action Plan for the Future, 2005 ICOMOS

▸ Final report of the Expert meeting on "Upstream Processes to Nominations:
Creative Approaches in the Nomination Process", 27-29 April 2010, Phuket,Thailand

▸ WHC-10/34.COM/12A , Paris, 18 June 2010 , Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda: Reflection on the future of the *World Heritage Convention.,* Brasilia. Brazil , 25 July - 3 August 2010

**Relevant documents will be posted on the ICAHM website**

# Working "Upstream" Now



UNESCO meeting report: "Upstream Processes to Nominations" 27-29 April 2010, Phuket, Thailand
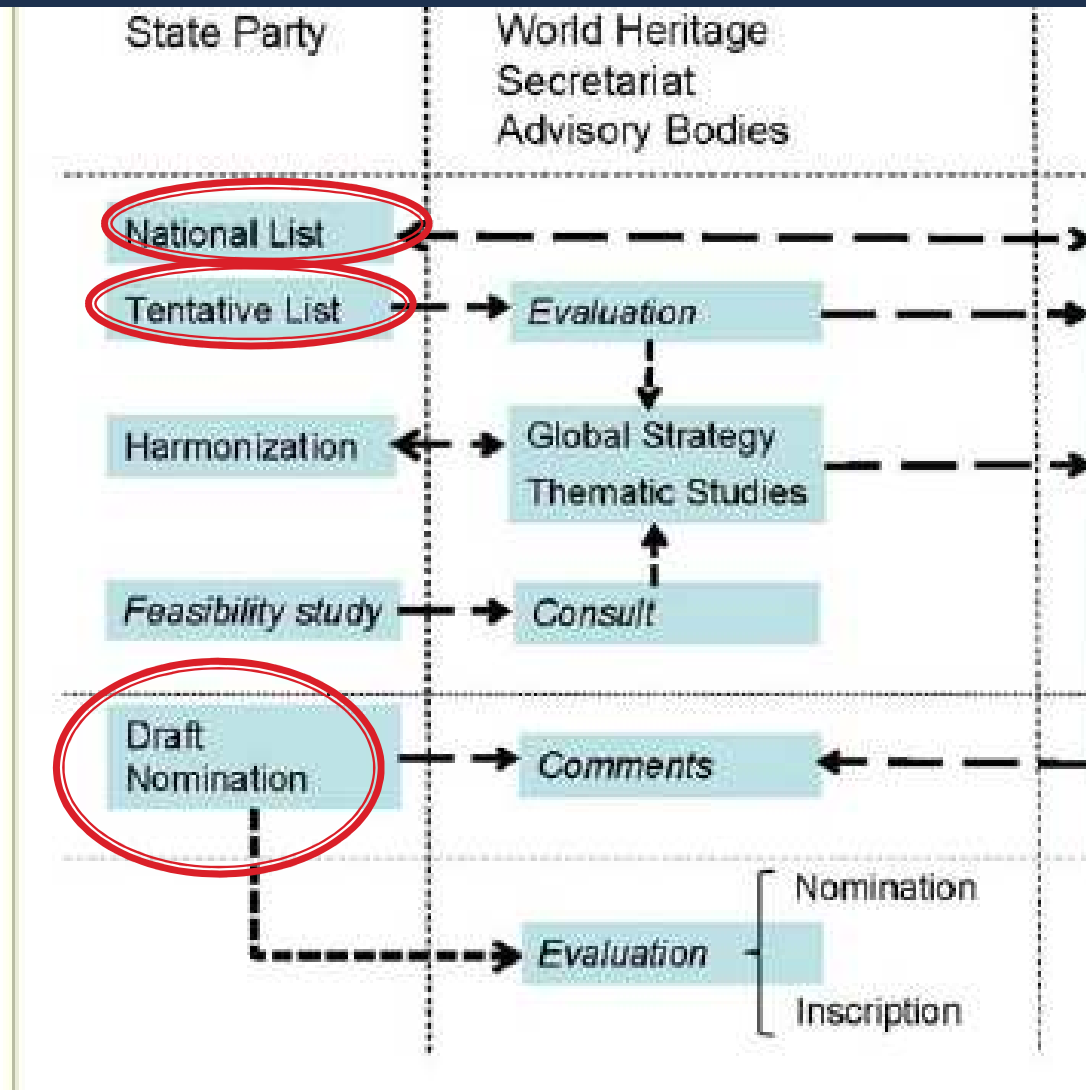
# Working "Upstream," as Proposed

**Comparative Analysis**

4      *Comparative analyses* – comparative analyses are one of the most common challenges facing States Parties in preparing nominations, and better guidance is needed.

| Challenges | Possible solutions | Who? | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 Comparative analyses are a common area of problem for all States Parties while preparing nominations | 4.1 Clearer guidance in a variety of languages on comparative analyses, with broad dissemination, such as through the Nominations Resource Manual under production | 4.1 ABs with WH Centre | 4.1 Moderate, manual in English and French is under production |
| (Para. 124 to 127 and Para. 132.3 of the *Operational Guidelines*) | 4.2 Greater help from ABs in advising the scope of CA before preparation of a nomination | 4.2 ABs | 4.2 Modest-Significant depending on number of requests and level of advice. |
| | 4.3 Highlight ability to search for other relevant comparative analyses through advanced search tool on WHC website | 4.4 WH Centre with ABs | 4.4 Moderate to significant. |
| | 4.4 Develop template for best practice comparative analyses | 4.5 ABs, withWH Centre | 4.5 Moderate to Significant |

# Other Options for Protection and Recognition of Heritage Values



All of these steps provide recognition of a sites importance , especially with the concurrence of advisory bodies.

The consultation process can be used to devise means of protection and develops arguments used in the nomination and in immediate interpretation

# Possible ICAHM Assistance

- Comparative Analyses
  - facilitated by our Nomination Assistance Committee
- Assistance in evaluating tentative lists
- Assist States Parties and regions in developing lists of important archaeological sites
  - These might or might not be included on Tentative Lists
- Collaborate in identifying
  - best management practices
  - economic and social benefit strategies

▶ Much of this could be done by making greater use of research done by universities and other scholarly organizations

# Possible ICAHM Assistance

- Other Upstream Processes being considered:
  - Assist States Parties and regions in developing lists of important archaeological sites
    - These might or might not be included on Tentative Lists
  - Collaborate in identifying best management practices
  - Collaborate in identifying economic and social benefit strategies