

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Heritage Management Planning Systems: Challenges, Lessons Learned and Potential New Approaches

ICOMOS GA2026 Scientific Symposium  
17–24 October 2026 | Kuching, Malaysia & Online

Session Convened by: ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM: <https://icahm.icomos.org/>)

Theme: ENHANCE – Sharing research and experiences that fortify ways of safeguarding heritage

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### About the Session

Management plans for World Heritage sites serve as fundamental instruments for safeguarding Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) as required by UNESCO's World Heritage Convention. However, contemporary realities—including climate change, rapid urbanization, development pressures, tourism impacts, illicit trafficking, and evolving governance contexts—reveal persistent shortcomings in how heritage planning fails to effectively address such complex challenges facing cultural, natural, and mixed World Heritage sites globally.

This session examines the structural and systemic challenges confronting World Heritage management planning through an analytical framework organized around five critical heritage management dimensions: flexibility, strategy, governance, context, and capacity. *These dimensions provide a lens for understanding why management plans often fail to deliver effective heritage protection despite well-intentioned planning processes.*

Through two focused 1.5-hour sessions, international experts will present examples addressing more effective planning and management at World Heritage sites and significant archaeological properties not yet inscribed, recognizing that sound management principles strengthen heritage protection regardless of designation status. Presentations will address climate adaptation and site integrity, Indigenous knowledge systems and community-centered approaches, sustainable tourism and visitor management, risk preparedness and disaster response, technological applications for monitoring and interpretation, and governance models that build institutional capacity while empowering local stakeholders.

Rather than proposing a single prescriptive new management framework, this session will provide guidance to address management challenges systematically. By analyzing how flexibility, strategy, governance, context, and capacity issues interact to undermine heritage protection, this framework enables practitioners, site managers, national authorities, and heritage professionals to identify specific weaknesses in their planning systems and learn from successful innovations developed by others facing similar challenges. This more adaptable approach recognizes that effective solutions must be context-specific, culturally appropriate, and responsive to local conditions while upholding essential principles of heritage conservation embodied in international charters and conventions.

### Five-Dimensional Analytical Framework

This session examines management challenges through five critical dimensions that reveal why management plans and systems often fail despite well-intentioned processes:

- Flexibility: Plans demonstrate rigidity of management approaches, treating planning as static documentation rather than a responsive process capable of addressing changing conditions

- Strategy: Plans exhibit vague or ambiguous strategic objectives, with overly comprehensive documentation obscuring clear operational priorities and weakening effective implementation
- Governance: Governance fragmentation excludes Indigenous peoples, local communities, and key rightsholders from meaningful participation in heritage stewardship
- Context: Contextual isolation limits consideration of sites within broader landscape, cultural, and socio-ecological systems, ignoring cumulative impacts and nature-culture linkages
- Capacity: Implementation capacity gaps emerge from insufficient institutional resources, inadequate professional training, and poor integration with other relevant planning and management instruments

## Topics and Scope

**We welcome abstracts addressing innovative approaches, case studies, and lessons learned in:**

Flexibility Dimension: Adaptive management approaches, integrated nested planning systems, modular frameworks, climate-responsive planning

Strategy Dimension: Prioritized objectives, strategic vision-to-implementation linkage, effective work packages and action plans

Governance Dimension: Indigenous peoples and local community participation, multi-stakeholder collaboration, shared governance models, capacity building

Context Dimension: Landscape-scale heritage approaches, nature-culture interlinkages, cumulative impacts assessment, climate change integration

Capacity Dimension: Institutional resources and professional training, integration of planning instruments, legal frameworks, monitoring and evaluation

Heritage applications sought: World Heritage sites (cultural, natural, mixed), archaeological sites and landscapes, historic urban landscapes, living cultural traditions, protected landscapes, biosphere reserves, geoparks, sites at various stages of inscription

Submissions are not limited to experiences from World Heritage Sites: Also cases, models, etc. from a wide typology of heritage sites, including urban heritage, landscapes, archaeological sites, etc. are much welcome!

## Submission Requirements

### Abstract Format:

- Word limit: 300–500 words
- Font: Times New Roman, size 12, single spacing, justified alignment
- Structure: Background/aims, methodology/approach, results/outcomes, conclusions
- Language: English

**⚠ CRITICAL:** During submission, you MUST select this specific session from the dropdown menu. The session is already listed on the ICOMOS GA2026 submission system. Selecting the correct session ensures your abstract is reviewed by the appropriate committee.

Submit Online: <https://www.icomosqa2026.org.my/abstract/submission/form>

## Important Dates

Milestone	Date
Abstract Submission Opens	20 January 2026
Abstract Submission Deadline	30 April 2026
Notification of Acceptance	Early June 2026
ICOMOS GA2026 Symposium	17–24 October 2026

Note: Accepted presenters must register by the author registration deadline. Failure to register will result in withdrawal and exclusion from presenting.

#### Publication Opportunities

- All abstracts undergo peer review by the Scientific Symposium Committee
- Accepted abstracts will be included in the ICOMOS GA2026 Scientific Symposium Proceedings
- Selected papers may be considered for publication in academic journals

#### Links and Resources

Session Information: <https://www.icomosga2026.org.my/abstract/sessions>

Abstract Submission: <https://www.icomosga2026.org.my/abstract/submission/form>

GA2026 Website: <https://www.icomosga2026.org.my>

ICAHM: <https://icahm.icomos.org>

General Enquiries: [enquiries@icomosga2026.org.my](mailto:enquiries@icomosga2026.org.my)

#### Confirmed Speakers

Chair: Matthias Ripp (World Heritage Coordinator, Regensburg / OWHC / ICOMOS ICAHM & CIVVIH)  
Co-Chair: Dr. Matt Whincop (Secretary General, ICAHM)

#### Guest Speakers:

- Dr. Jon Day (James Cook University, Australia) – Adaptive management and nested planning systems
- Professor Aylin Orbasi (Oxford Brookes University, UK) – Urban heritage contexts
- MSc. Giorgia Cesaro (Heritage Commission, Ministry of Culture, Saudi Arabia) – Heritage landscapes and community engagement

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We look forward to receiving your contributions and to productive discussions in Kuching in October 2026!

ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM)

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