



# The World Heritage Tourism Programme



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## Why is this programme important?

- Tourism is one of the largest industries on earth, and cultural and natural heritage tourism is the most rapidly growing international sector of this industry. World Heritage sites are prime attractors of tourists. The over-riding importance of tourism to World Heritage, both as an opportunity and, if poorly managed as a threat, was recognized by the World Heritage Committee when it authorized the Centre, in 2001, to develop a World Heritage Tourism Programme. As tourism's importance to economies and employment generation continues to grow, sustainability of tourism dollars and conservation benefits have risen to the top of the global environmental and growth agendas. Heritage, a concept that assumes the transmission of values and properties from the past to future is closely linked to ideas driving the global quest for sustainability. World Heritage serves as an international rallying point for the identification and protection of sites throughout the world and the transmission of outstanding universal values for the benefit of current and future generations.
- The 754 World Heritage sites, currently distributed across more than 128 countries provide ideal locations for experiments in heritage conservation-tourism interactions that can mutually benefit both. The tourism industry enables the people of the world to visit these places and appreciate their values and significance as common heritage of humankind and hence is, or should be, an important ally of heritage conservationists and managers.



## Biodiversity PARTNERSHIPS



### Basic Info:

**Location:** To be applied in several World heritage site

**Amount:** US\$100,000 (UNESCO World Heritage Fund)

**Partners:** Mundo Maya Organization, Ecotourism Australia, The National Geographic Society, the UNEP-UNESCO-WTO Tour Operators Initiative

**Duration:** 2002 to present



## ---Highlights---

### Programme Activities

- Australian Ecotourism Conference - To convene with the Asia Pacific Focal Point (APFP) for World Heritage (Canberra, Australia) a series of forums under the World Heritage theme.
- Special session at the International Travel Bourse (ITB) in Berlin, Germany – to generate new ideas, approaches and interest in future collaboration with the tourism industry through a panel discussion with major tourism industry leaders and decision-makers.

- World Heritage partnership with the Mundo Maya Alliance – to provide technical advice and input to the Mundo Maya Organization and to promote World Heritage values within the Mundo Maya network throughout Mexico and Central America.
- Engagements with the tourism industry – to facilitate pilot projects and in-kind service delivery at sites and in local communities to enhance site protection.
- The UNF project “Linking Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage sites” – To develop a replicable methodology for addressing tourism at natural and mixed sites.

### Future initiatives

- Site-destination networking workshop for regional tourism development and awareness raising as part of the Mundo Maya Alliance partnership.
- Training session on tourism management for Chinese site managers using the new World Heritage tourism manual.
- Presentation of World Heritage at the ITB 2004 Berlin and London Travel Fairs
- Co-operative Programme between UNESCO and the National Geographic Society, USA to support sustainable tourism projects and initiatives.



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## Programme Objectives:



- **Facilitate** destination networking between cultural and natural heritage sites
- **Explore** the role of "World Heritage anchors" in national, regional and local tourism development planning
- **Support** the use of scientific information and knowledge in heritage interpretation programmes
- **Promote** guide training and high-quality presentation of World Heritage sites
- **Develop and disseminate** information and lessons on the importance of "heritage" in national development tourism planning
- **Set up** mechanisms, for demonstrating the positive role tourism can play in World Heritage conservation

Bi  iversity PARTNERSHIPS

