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World Heritage Convention

48 COM

AMENDMENT/PROPOSAL

Agenda Item	8B
Draft Decision	48 COM 8B.30
Submitted by the Delegation of:	PERU
Co-author(s) (if any)	TANZANIA, UKRAINE
Date of submission	25/07/2026

TEXT

DRAFT AMENDMENT TO DRAFT DECISION 48 COM 8B.30

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/26/48.COM/8B and WHC/26/48.COM/INF.8B1,
2. ~~Decides not to~~ Decides to inscribe the Ribeira sacra Waterscape, Spain, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (v);
3. Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

Brief synthesis

Located in Galicia, in north-western Spain, Ribeira Sacra Waterscape is a large organically evolved continuing cultural landscape formed around the spectacular canyons and valleys of the Miño and Sil rivers. For more than fifteen centuries, communities have adapted to steep terrain and a river-dominated environment through an intricate system of terraces (*socalcos*), micro-plots (*cavaduras*), settlements, hydraulic structures and agricultural practices that continue to shape the territory.

The property encompasses seventy-two parishes and preserves a highly distinctive territorial organisation based on watercourses and fragmented landholding systems. Monastic and eremitic communities established from the fifth century onwards played a fundamental role in structuring the

landscape and transmitting knowledge associated with water management and agricultural practices. The property contains an extensive ensemble of monasteries, churches, cave sanctuaries, water mills, paths, crossings and other hydraulic elements that reflect the long interaction between people and the environment.

The landscape is characterised by the continuity of traditional land uses and by the persistence of intangible expressions associated with the “water culture”, including local knowledge, customs, toponymy, myths and collective practices. The property is also notable for the interdependence between cultural and natural values, which contribute to its scenic character and ecological significance.

Criterion (v): Ribeira Sacra Waterscape is an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement and land-use system representing the long interaction between communities and a rugged river environment. Over more than 1,500 years, human groups have developed highly adapted forms of occupation and resource management expressed through terraced cultivation systems, micro-parcels, parish-based territorial organisation and hydraulic infrastructure. These systems demonstrate the capacity of communities to adapt to environmental constraints while maintaining cultural continuity and preserving traditional knowledge. The landscape constitutes an exceptional testimony to a living cultural tradition that remains vulnerable to demographic changes, climate change and the abandonment of traditional practices.

Integrity

The property includes all the elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value and is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the processes and relationships that characterize the cultural landscape. Its boundaries follow the upper contours of the valleys and encompass the spatial and visual coherence of the river landscape, while the buffer zone contributes to preserving its setting and viewsheds.

The state of conservation of the property is generally good. The key pressures affecting the property, including demographic changes, biodiversity loss, climate change and the abandonment of agricultural terraces, have been identified and are addressed through management measures and monitoring mechanisms. Tourism pressures remain moderate and are managed through sustainability policies.

Authenticity

The authenticity of Ribeira Sacra Waterscape is reflected in the continuity of its settlement patterns, parish structure, traditional agricultural systems and hydraulic heritage. Historical sources, cartographic documentation and inventories support the understanding of the evolution of the landscape.

The continuity of agricultural practices, local traditions and intangible heritage associated with water culture contributes significantly to the authenticity of the property. Monastic ensembles, villages, terraces and vernacular structures retain a high degree of authenticity in terms of form, materials, functions and location.

Protection and management requirements

The property enjoys a high degree of legal protection through its designation as a Bien de Interés Cultural (BIC), complemented by national, regional and European legislation. The property overlaps with Natura 2000 protected areas and is included within the Ribeira Sacra and Serras do Oribio e Courel Biosphere Reserve.

The management system, coordinated by the Xunta de Galicia through the Directorate General of Cultural Heritage and the Interdepartmental Commission of Ribeira Sacra, ensures the participation of public institutions, local communities, parishes, religious authorities and other stakeholders. The Management Plan provides an integrated framework for conservation, sustainable development, tourism management, research and community participation.

The long-term protection of the property requires the continued support of traditional land uses, the strengthening of climate change adaptation measures, the reinforcement of biodiversity conservation actions and the consolidation of mechanisms for impact assessment and monitoring.

4. Recommends that the State Party consider the following:

- a) Completing the documentation and inventory of hydraulic structures, vernacular elements and intangible heritage associated with water culture;
- b) Enhancing coordination between the management framework of the property and that of the Ribeira Sacra and Serras do Oribio e Courel Biosphere Reserve;
- c) Continuing the implementation of measures to address biodiversity loss, invasive alien species, water scarcity and climate change impacts;
- d) Developing additional actions aimed at supporting demographic revitalization and the continuity of traditional agricultural practices;
- e) Continuing the implementation of sustainable tourism policies, including visitor flow monitoring and carrying-capacity approaches;
- f) Pursuing community engagement initiatives and ensuring that diverse local perspectives are integrated into the management process;

5. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2028**, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 52nd session.