

Standard Operating Procedure for Safeguarding Heritage@Risk

Standard Operating Procedure - Safeguarding Heritage@Risk (SoPSH@R)

The National Committee of India encourages to promote a Safeguarding Heritage@Risk program which is aligned with the International Heritage Alert. The program envisages the possibility of addressing one of the key thematic areas, as stated in ICOMOS India Strategic Paper 2020-23 – ‘Safeguarding Heritage@Risk’ while streamlining the process followed for ICOMOS Heritage Alert. The idea is to have a platform that aims to enable Individuals/ groups/ institutions, keen on raising heritage alert for threatened heritage within the country. ICOMOS India believes that having a program such as this at the national level shall not only streamline the response taken towards threatened properties but also create more awareness at regional and national level to receive and identify more threatened cultural heritage. At the international level, this shall anticipate recognition in terms of ICOMOS India’s engagement with international working standards while addressing contextual cases of Heritage@Risk.

Hence, ICOMOS India hereby proposes ‘Safeguarding Heritage at Risk’ program.

The Heritage Alert of ICOMOS has been an essential guiding tool in the deliberation of the aforementioned program and thus the Standard Operating Procedure has been aligned with ICOMOS Heritage Alert.

I. Background of ICOMOS Heritage Alert

“The Heritage Alert” procedure uses the professional and public networks of ICOMOS to promote the conservation of cultural heritage, to draw attention to the threats hanging over it and to put forward good conservation solutions.” (ICOMOS.org)

The ICOMOS Heritage Alert was written on **15 November 2011**, keeping into account that the assessment of situations leading to a Heritage Alert, issued by ICOMOS, will be carried out with ethical rigor and precision.

ICOMOS realises that such issues require a high degree of responsibility and thus defining and making the issues public responsibly is important and the very key to the written procedure.

The formal process of ICOMOS Heritage Alert was established to confirm the heritage significance of a case at hand and that its threat is well understood before an ICOMOS Heritage Alert is issued.

- **Objectives as stated in the Heritage Alert**
 - *Make use of the expertise of the members of the International Scientific Committees and of the ICOMOS National Committees able to assess the value of a property marked as being at risk as well as the threats to which this property is confronted;*
 - *Factually confirm the threat and the heritage value of the property;*
 - *Alert the public to the importance and threat to the property using ICOMOS networks to publicize the situation;*
 - *Act selectively to support the conservation of the asset at risk;*
 - *Maintain a list of assets at risk and monitor the results of any conservation action for future analysis;*

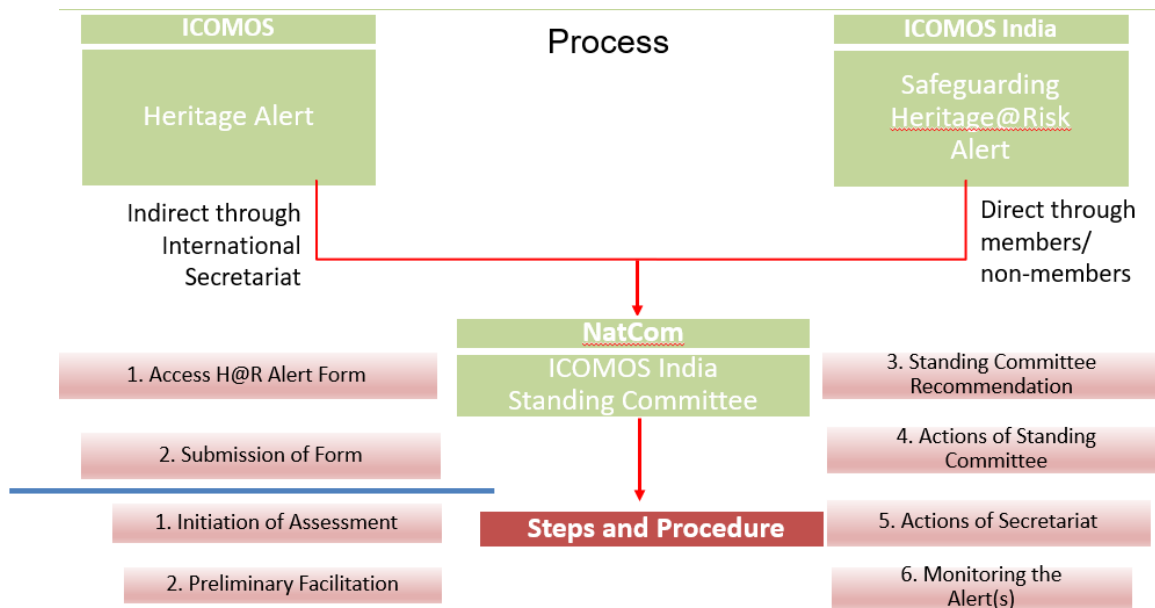
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- *Contribute to the ICOMOS Heritage at Risk Report.*
- **Role of National Committees and International Scientific Committees**

To deal with requests and actions arising from “Heritage Alert”, all ICOMOS National and International Scientific Committees are encouraged to establish small dedicated sub-committees (annual rotation of officials, renewable composition). These may for example consist of two members of the Committee, the Secretary General and the President (or his representative).

- Refer Annexure 1 for standard template of Heritage Alert

II. Scheme of Safeguarding Heritage@Risk



Note: Each step has been detailed out in Section VIII.

III. Aim

To create a response mechanism for cultural heritage sites of global, national and regional significance identified at risk.

IV. Objectives of Heritage@Risk

The following objectives for SoP-H@R have been formulated: -

- To align with the Heritage Alert program of ICOMOS and support its mandate of saving monuments and sites in danger.
- To streamline the process of addressing cultural properties marked as being @Risk.
- To create awareness of the significance of the cultural heritage at regional and national level by raising an alert.
- To engage with the concerned stakeholder(s) of the cultural property marked as being @Risk.

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- To promote proactive conservation measures around understanding and protecting Cultural Heritage@Risk.

V. Proposed Action

- To create Response Mechanism / procedures to be followed to address @Risk situations.
- To generate protocol for engagement, time and procedure towards risk situations.
- To create an advisory committee by the name of 'Safeguarding Heritage Standing Committee'.

VI. Proposed Composition and Role of the Standing Committee

The members of the Standing Committee shall be composed of: -

- 1) President/ Vice President - as Chair of the Committee for reasons of being the Head of the organization
- 2) Secretary - for initiation of the Process and for the overall functioning of the Committee
- 3) NSC Counsellor – overseeing the Process
- 4) Zonal Representative – as Member Secretary for facilitation at the Zonal Level (as per the case in question)
- 5) Steering Committee Advisory Member 01
- 6) Steering Committee Advisory Member 02
- 7) Relevant NSC Coordinator(s)
- 8) Expert Member 01 – ICOMOS India Member / Non-member (as per the case in question)

VII. Proposed Mandate of the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall be elected with the Executive Committee of ICOMOS India for a term of 3 years.

VIII. Proposed Procedure

In support of the mandate of ICOMOS Heritage Alert, a 'Heritage@Risk Alert' may be generated by any member(s) or a non-member(s) and who shall be termed as Proposer(s) in this context.

ICOMOS India, hereby, proposes Standard Operating Procedure, which includes extensive, albeit rapid, consultation by the relevant Standing Committee:

A. Procedure to be followed by the Proposer

- ❖ **Step 1: Access Heritage@Risk Alert Form** A member/non-member who wants to raise the alert can access the Form (Refer Annexure 2 for details of the Form¹) on either www.icomosindia.com or on the official website of ICOMOS India: www.icomosindia.com

¹ The Heritage@Risk Form is proposed to be same as the Heritage Alert Form for reasons of collating information and preparing an HA for ICOMOS International at a later stage, in case required.

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- ❖ **Step 2: Submission of Form** The Form will be submitted by the Proposer at icomosindia@gmail.com (ICOMOS India Member / Non-member).

B. Procedure to be followed by the Standing Committee

- ❖ **Step 1: Initiation of Assessment Process** When ICOMOS India Secretariat receives a proposed Heritage@Risk Alert, a preliminary assessment of the completed Form shall be done at the Secretariat level. Once approved, the Secretary shall forward the Alert to the relevant Zonal Representative.
- ❖ **Step 2: Preliminary Facilitation** The Zonal Representative, in the capacity of Member Secretary, shall facilitate the process at the Zonal level and within the Standing Committee, which shall simultaneously begin the process for preliminary scrutiny and to give initial confirmation that the case is of International, National and/or Regional importance.
- ❖ **Step 3: Standing Committee Recommendation** On confirmation of the case at hand, the Standing Committee shall aim to assess and produce a recommendation on the proposed Heritage@Risk Alert received via email, within 15 working days.
- ❖ **Step 4: Actions of the Standing Committee** The Member Secretary shall prepare all the necessary letters, Statements to Stakeholder groups and information documents for the attention of the media, in consultation with the Chair of the Standing Committee.
- ❖ **Step 5: Actions of the Secretariat** The ICOMOS India Secretariat shall facilitate the electronic transmission of the Heritage@Risk Alert to all ICOMOS India members through all its digital communication platforms. The letters of concern shall be disseminated by the ICOMOS India President. The Heritage@Risk Alert associated documentation will be uploaded on ICOMOS India official website and on all official digital platforms.
- ❖ **Step 6: Monitoring the Alert(s)** The Standing Committee shall be required to meet at least once every month, to discuss not only the Status of other cases at hand but to also monitor the actions of previous Alerts put out on public domain.

Annexure 1

ICOMOS Heritage Alert Template


	Heritage Alert Template ver. 2010/06/30
ICOMOS Heritage Alert Template	
*EXECUTIVE SUMMARY- 2-4 paragraphs outlining heritage significance and threats, (suitable for media statement) and four copyright free, high quality digital images	
1-0 Identity of Building/Artefact/Object/Place	
1-1 Current name and original name *	
1-2 Location Town, Country, Street	
1-3 Classification/ Type of place	
1-4 Current Heritage Protection Status	
2-0 Statement of Significance and History	
2-1 Statement of Significance	
2-2 History of place	
2-3 Date of project/ Date of construction/ Finishing of work	
2-4 Architect/Designers	
2-5 Architect/Designers still living? Residence, country of birth, contact details	
2-6 Original and current use of building/place	
2-7 Changes, additions	
2-8 Current condition and use	
2-9 Original design intent and use	
3-0 Description (history and technology)	
3-1 Physical description	
3-2 Construction system used	
3-3 Physical context/setting	
3-4 Social and cultural context and value	
3-5 Materials/fabric/form/function	
3-6 Aesthetic value	
4-0 Source of Alert	
4-1 Proposer(s) of Heritage Alert, contact details	
4-2 Groups supporting Heritage Alert and/or nomination, with contact details	
4-3 Groups potentially against Heritage Alert action	
4-4 Local, Regional, International significance citations about the place	
4-5 Letters of support for Heritage Alert action, newspaper articles, etc.	
4-6 Publications that describe the work/place, bibliography, etc.	
4-7 Time constraints for advocacy (immediate action/delayed action)	
5-0 Recommended action	
5-1 Heritage Alert: international/national distribution via ICOMOS?	
5-2 Letter (s) to? (Provide names and full contact details)	
5-3 ICOMOS National or Scientific Committee, or international Website upload ?	
5-4 Affiliated organisation distribution?	
5-5 Other actions recommended?	
6-0 Desired outcome	
6-1 Legal protection or improved legal protection	
6-2 Stopping of works that are/will alter the heritage	
6-3 Stopping of permits that would result in irretrievable loss of the heritage	
6-4 Imposing minimum maintenance to stop further decay pending conservation/restoration work	
6-5 Modifying the project so that it becomes respectful of the values for which the monument or site received legal protection,	
6-6 Stopping demolition	
6-7 Other, please specify	

Fig 1: Template for ICOMOS Heritage Alert to be referred for details required in Heritage@Risk Form