

# Cultural Heritage as Habitat

## A Nordic collaboration on biodiversity-enhancing practices in UNESCO World Heritage Sites

*This project offers a unique opportunity for Nordic UNESCO World Heritage sites to act as living laboratories for biodiversity-enhancing practices. By sharing knowledge, developing models, and fostering collaboration, the project aims to create practical and transferable solutions that contribute meaningfully to global biodiversity goals and sustainable development.*

*The project has two distinct perspectives:*

- 1. To give UNESCO World Heritage sites in the Nordic countries a stronger role and clearer tools to address biodiversity issues in a tangible way.*
- 2. To provide guidance for strategic perspectives on advancing the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Framework and the World Heritage Convention at a state level as well as through Nordic cooperation.*

### Project Aims

The project seeks to identify and promote synergies between cultural heritage and biodiversity management across Nordic UNESCO World Heritage sites. Its overarching aim is to demonstrate how cultural heritage can serve as a habitat for people, animals, and plants, supporting biodiversity within cultural heritage environments.

The project builds on Nordic cooperation and knowledge sharing among 45 sites in Denmark, Greenland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Iceland, organized under the Nordic World Heritage Association.

### Specific aims include:

- Increasing biodiversity in and around UNESCO World Heritage sites through integrated heritage and biodiversity management practices.
- Strengthening collaboration among Nordic UNESCO World Heritage sites and other heritage actors to advance biodiversity-enhancing practices.
- Operationalizing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) within cultural heritage contexts and supporting the use of World Heritage mechanisms in its implementation.
- Supporting The Nordic Council of Ministers *Nordic Vision 2030* through sustainable development, cross-sector collaboration, and nature-positive cultural practices.
- Influencing policy frameworks by demonstrating the value of heritage-based biodiversity action.
- Embedding biodiversity objectives into cultural heritage governance structures for lasting institutional change.
- Contributing Nordic experiences to national and international biodiversity contexts.
- Communicating and sharing knowledge and recommendations from the project.

## Expected Results

### Main results:

- A translation of the GBF to catalyze the integration of biodiversity objectives into cultural heritage conservation practice.
- Strengthened collaboration among Nordic UNESCO World Heritage sites and others engaged in World Heritage work, enabling more coordinated biodiversity-enhancing approaches.
- A digital Nordic case collection of biodiversity-enhancing practices in World Heritage sites.
- An understanding of drivers and barriers for aligned management.
- A practical framework with concrete recommendations and models.
- Strengthened competence and capacity among Nordic UNESCO World Heritage sites for integrated management.
- A model enabling non-World Heritage sites to adopt aligned practices.
- A Nordic contribution to GBF and international biodiversity processes from a cultural heritage perspective through World Heritage mechanisms.

### Short-term effects:

- Increased awareness and capacity among heritage professionals to integrate biodiversity in site management.
- Increased interaction and knowledge exchange among Nordic World Heritage actors, fostering early-stage networks for continued collaboration.
- Strengthened collaboration between cultural and environmental authorities.
- Greater visibility of Nordic efforts in international biodiversity and heritage arenas.

### Long-term impacts:

- Improved biodiversity in and around Nordic UNESCO World Heritage sites and non-World Heritage sites.
- Structural integration of biodiversity goals into cultural heritage policies and practices.
- Transfer of Nordic practices to international contexts.
- Sustained and expanded collaboration among Nordic UNESCO World Heritage sites and other heritage actors, supporting continued joint initiatives and paving the way for future cross-Nordic projects.

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This project is an initiative developed by the **Nordic World Heritage Association** and funded by the **Nordic Nature Programme, a part of the Nordic Council of Ministers**.

Contact: Tove Damholt (project lead), [tovedamholt@gmail.com](mailto:tovedamholt@gmail.com)  
Mads Randbøll Wolff, [mrwolff@hotmail.com](mailto:mrwolff@hotmail.com)  
Nikolaj Sveistrup, [nikolaj@urbanagenda.dk](mailto:nikolaj@urbanagenda.dk)



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## Key Questions for discussion with individual UNESCO World Heritage sites

- 1. How relevant is the connection between biodiversity and cultural heritage management at your site?**  
*(Is it something you actively work with? If not, is it an area you would like to explore further?)*
- 2. What factors at your site have helped you successfully connect cultural heritage management with biodiversity efforts?**  
*(Consider local traditions, governance structures, stakeholder engagement, or specific practices that have supported this integration.)*
- 3. What are the main barriers or challenges you face when trying to align cultural heritage and biodiversity goals?**  
*(This could include regulatory, administrative, resource-related, or cultural obstacles.)*
- 4. How do local community values, knowledge, and participation influence your ability to align heritage and biodiversity management?**  
*(Consider the role of local stakeholders, traditional knowledge, and public engagement.)*
- 5. What additional support, knowledge, or policy changes would help you strengthen the connection between cultural heritage and biodiversity at your site?**  
*(Consider needs related to capacity building, new partnerships, funding, or policy frameworks.)*