

Why are they important and which benefits do they bring?

Contributing to human well-being and climate stability the Natural World Heritage sites provide crucial habitats to many iconic species, as well as protect rare ecological processes and stunning landscapes.

Two-thirds of natural sites listed in the World Heritage list are crucial sources of water, and about half help prevent natural disasters such as floods or landslides. Over 90% of Natural World Heritage sites create jobs and provide income from tourism and recreation.

Natural World Heritage sites have high international visibility and provide insight into conservation successes and challenges. Through the World Heritage Convention, they have the power to mobilize action where it is most needed, and often pioneer management solutions that contribute to sustainable development.



What is the World Heritage Convention?

The convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, also known as the World Heritage Convention is an international treaty, adopted on 16 November 1972 by the UNESCO member states. To date, **more than 190 countries have ratified the Convention**.

The goal of the World Heritage Convention is to **preserve cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value** as part of the World Heritage of mankind for future generations.

What are the Natural World Heritage Sites?

The Natural World Heritage Sites are the most exceptional natural places in the world, characterized by their outstanding biodiversity, ecosystems, geology or superb natural phenomena.

For the purposes of the Convention, the following shall be considered as "natural heritage":

- **natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations,**
- which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view
- **geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas** which constitute
- the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science or conservation natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

On behalf of

БАЙГЛЬ ОРЧИН АЙЛАГТ ХУРЧИЛДЫН ЯМ

Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

of the Federal Republic of Germany

MONGOLIAN BIRD CONSERVATION CENTER

Deutsche Stiftung Weltkulturerbe

INN

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ITG INTERNATIONAL TAKHI-GROUP

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Potential World Heritage site

MONGOLIAN GOBI

Mongolian Gobi – potential World Heritage site

The Gobi is home to very unique and rare umbrella species which are of high symbolic and spiritual importance for Mongolia: the Gobi bear, the wild camel, the Przewalski's horse, and the khulan. The Mongolian Gobi is outstanding at a global scale due to the combination of extent, diversity and pristiness. The Mongolian Great and Small Gobi protected areas host an extraordinary representation of critical populations of rare animal and plant species as well as an enormous range of intact and beautiful desert landscapes and features. The government of Mongolia submitted the "Desert Landscapes of the Mongolian Gobi" to the tentative list of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention already in 2014. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia requested the support for the elaboration of a sophisticated nomination dossier to the UNESCO.

The nomination of the Mongolian Great and Small Gobi protected areas shall close one of the few major gaps in the world heritage convention. Simultaneously it shall encourage national decision-making bodies to invest and further improve management and protection of these outstanding landscapes and ecosystems. Moreover, it can support the allocation of further and additional funding to maintain the conservation regime.

Recognizing the Outstanding Universal Value of the Gobi, the Mongolian Government included **3 protected areas – Great Gobi A, Great Gobi B and Small Gobi B** protected areas to the Tentative List for potential nomination for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

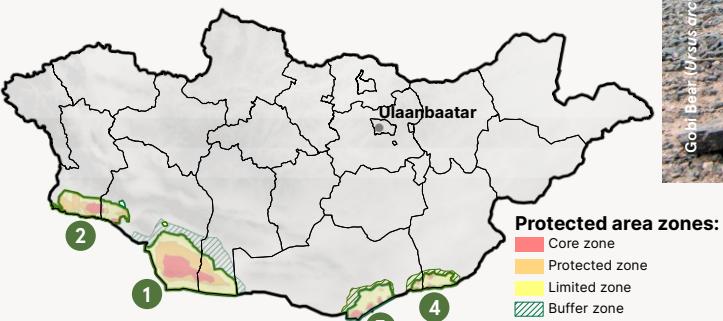


Based on long term German-Mongolian cooperation in nature conservation the Michael Succow Foundation is supporting Mongolia's nomination process, working closely with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia and their protected area administrations Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO. The aim is the elaboration of the nomination dossier under the criteria viii (outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history), ix (outstanding examples of ongoing ecological and biological processes) and x (outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation) of the World Heritage Convention. The nomination process should be done in a participatory way and should be used also as a mechanism to raise awareness, mobilize attention of different stakeholders to address relevant threats to the area and ensure protection of the unique values of the Gobi.

Proposed component parts of the Mongolian Gobi

Proposed components of the Tentative List:

- 1 Great Gobi Strictly Protected Area (SPA)**
Part A 4.600.000 ha
Eej khairkhan
Natural Monument 22.475 ha
- 2 Great Gobi Strictly Protected Area (SPA)**
Part B 1.800.000 ha
Alag khairchen 36.700 ha
- 3 Small Gobi Strictly Protected Area (SPA)**
Part A 1.150.000 ha
- 4 Small Gobi Strictly Protected Area (SPA)**
Part B 680.000 ha



Towards the World Heritage Nomination of the Mongolian Gobi

In June 2023 the Michael Succow Foundation in partnership with the International Takhi Group, the Mongolian Bird Conservation Center, and the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, launched the project for the World Heritage nomination of the Mongolian Gobi. The main goal of this project is to prepare the nomination with the involvement of partners and a wide range of stakeholders in order to conserve and maintain the natural and cultural heritage of the Gobi desert for future generations.

Field visits to the target area, workshops and stakeholder meetings are planned within the framework of the project, to also address challenges and threats to the territory and find joint solutions.

Without collaboration and support from stakeholders, we cannot succeed. We hope you will join us to support nature and people together!