

Guidance for developing a Case Study Description for the Sacred Natural Sites Initiative

- Feedback or comments on this format are welcome at casestudies@sacrednaturalsites.org -

How to develop a Case Study description?

This document explains you how to develop a description of the experience gained with protecting, conserving and revitalizing sacred natural sites. More importantly than describing the sacred natural site itself the description focuses on the joint process of conservation with all stakeholders and the role of the custodians herein.

What is the purpose of this Case Study description?

The case study description will be presented publically on the website of the Sacred Natural Sites Initiative (www.sacrednaturalsites.org/sites). By following the same format the case studies will be attractive as well as easy to read and compare by just about anyone. Their purpose is to facilitate the exchange of experience and peer learning from these conservation experiences. By building a body of case studies the SNSI will demonstrate to conservationists, scientists policy makers and other stakeholders the relevance of sacred lands to conservation and custodian led development.

How is the Case Study description built up?

This is a brief description of a maximum of 950 words and contains the following sections:

1. Title (20 words):
2. Site(s)Description (100 words)
3. Ecology & Biodiversity (75 Words)
4. Status (1 word)
5. Threats (100 words)
6. Custodians (175 words)
7. Vision (75 Words)
8. Coalition (75 words)
9. Action (75 words)
10. Conservation tools (100 words)
11. Policy and Law (100)
12. Results (100 Words)
13. Resources (Unlimited)
14. Contact information
15. Photos
16. Quotes

A helping hand

A Case Study Facilitator (casestudies@sacrednaturalsites.org) will be pointed to advise you and help you develop and finalise the case study description.

Guidance for developing a Case Study Description

Title (20 words):

The title should indicate the nature of the conservation experience and include the name of the site or sites and the name of the area which includes the site.

If for cultural or protective reasons the name and location of the site cannot be revealed it is advised to simply refer to the site as “sacred natural site” or “pilgrim route” and refer to the larger geographical area.

Overview (100 words)

This description of the site should include some brief information on the site’s geography, ecology & biodiversity (expanded on in the next section), ethnography its cultural, spiritual and religious significance.

Ecology and Biodiversity (75 words)

Description of habitat, biodiversity, important habitats with species of animal and plants.

Status (1 word)

Following the classification developed by the Sacred Land Film Project (<http://www.sacredland.org/>) we classify sacred natural sites by defining their current “status”. This helps us to follow their stories, seek patterns and support systematic analysis. Please select the appropriate level of threat from the following three and delete the other two:

- *Protected*; Guarded, kept safe from harm, successfully defended from imminent loss or injury within sovereign indigenous territories, government or faith protected areas.
- *Threatened*; Growing threat(s), may become endangered in the future, potential for significant loss exists.
- *Endangered*; Imminent danger on the verge of destruction or harm, related cultural and spiritual values may disappear or animal and plant species may go extinct.

Threats (100 words)

Mention the various threats to the site(s) and their custodians, if possible in order of importance. Where needed the briefly describe drivers behind the threats and contextualise the threat by its cultural, socio-economic and spiritual impacts.

Custodians (175 words)

Introduce the custodians of the sacred natural site and their role and that of the local population in maintaining the site. If there are multiple custodians describe how they interact.

Mention the custodians and their respective roles. These can be appointed village committees, individuals, shamans, healers or people holding religious agency etc. If possible they should be named, especially when they appear in any photographic material. Please follow the “SNSI image and Footage Policy” or seek advice from the Case Study Facilitator about this.

Describe the traditional role of the custodians in conserving the cultural, spiritual and natural values of the sacred natural sites. This may include the conduct of ceremony, enforcement of taboos and keeping of traditional law etc. Where desirable reference can be made to the ecology section.

Vision (75 Words)

Describe the vision or shared goals of the local stakeholders with respect to the protection, conservation and revitalisation of the sacred natural site. If no clear vision exists describe how their actions are guided and point out if there are plans to develop a vision and how this could aid the effectiveness of their actions.

Coalition (100 words)

Describe the stakeholders that are working together and mention the role of the local custodians in this collaboration.

Action (100 words)

Describe what actions have been undertaken that support the protection, conservation and revitalisation of sacred natural sites at the various levels of governance, local, regional, national and international. Explain how custodians and their communities help guide such actions.

Conservation tools (75 Words)

Mention the conservation tools or approaches that have been used or developed to support the work on the sacred natural sites. These can be tools or methods used for inventory or monitoring of plants and animals but also for developing community capacity and strengthening of cultural values of the site and its people. The use of planning tools and guidelines should also be mentioned, for example the IUCN UNESCO Sacred Natural Sites Guidelines for Protected Area Managers by Wild and McLeod (2008).

Policy and Law

Describe the most important policies and law that support or hinder the conservation of sacred natural sites and species. This can include policy and legal recommendations.

Results (100 Words)

Describe how the actions undertaken have affected changes in cultural, spiritual and natural values of the sacred natural sites and how those changes have affected their custodians, the local people and other stakeholders.

Resources (Unlimited)

Please provide (links to) additional materials that help people to get a deeper understanding of the conservation experience and the site. These can be publications such as custodian or community statements, technical reports such as management plans or scientific articles. Websites, videos, photographic and radio broadcasts are all very welcome multi media.

Ensure to only provide materials that are allowed to be published on our website and in case of doubt please get permission from the appropriate authority including -where this is additionally required- that of the custodians and communities which traditional knowledge and sacred natural sites might be discussed in the provided materials.

Contact information

Designate a contact person in relation to the Case Study presented. Where appropriate provide contact information on the local custodians, the communities as well as the organisations and institutions involved such as community based communities, NGOs, scientists etc.

Although we are currently not publishing any personal contact detail on the website, please indicate which of this information you would like to share on the web and which information should remain confidential.

Quote (80 words per quote):

Please provide one or two quotes of a local custodian or authority about protecting, conserving and revitalising the sacred natural sites and landscapes including the name and affiliation of the person who said it. Be sure to have the person's permission to publish the quote on the website.

For example: "Sacred natural sites are of vital importance to local communities, because they are used for spiritual celebrations and they are places where people find a spiritual connection to their ancestors, animals, minerals, plants and all of nature".- Felipe Gomez, Director of Oxlajuj Ajpop, National Confederation of Mayan Spiritual Leaders, Guatemala.

Photos:

Please send in any photos of the custodians, the site and the actions taken to protect, conserve and revitalise sacred natural sites. Please ensure that all images are provided in accordance with the "SNSI Image and Footage Policy".

The Sacred Natural Sites Initiative has developed a growing photo presentation of all the images contained on its website. The titles and captions of all these images are included in this presentation. The purpose of this presentation is to present all the correct photo credits and references in accordance with the ISE policy for publishing photos.