

**CANDIDATE FOR THE BOARD OF ICOMOS
CANDIDAT AU CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION DE L'ICOMOS**

SBERNA DIEGO

ARGENTINA - ARGENTINE



PLATFORM / PLATE-FORME / PLATAFORMA

I am seeking election to the ICOMOS Board at a time when the organisation faces important structural and conceptual challenges that require thoughtful governance and inclusive leadership. As an anthropologist and international consultant in integrated management and conservation of World Heritage sites, my professional trajectory has been shaped by working across institutional, cultural and territorial boundaries, with a particular focus on Latin America.

I currently serve as Site Manager of the Qhapaq Ñan – World Heritage in Salta, Argentina, a complex transboundary cultural landscape that requires continuous coordination between public authorities, Indigenous communities and local stakeholders. Alongside this role, I have contributed to advisory and evaluation processes within the framework of the World Heritage Convention, engaging with diverse heritage contexts and governance systems. These experiences have reinforced my understanding of heritage as both a technical and political field, where institutional responsibility, dialogue and long-term vision are essential.

A central dimension of my work has been the articulation between nature and culture within heritage governance. My doctoral research focuses on the presentation and management of mixed properties under the World Heritage Convention, particularly through the conceptual and operational framework of Cultural Landscapes. I believe that strengthening the integration between natural and cultural values is not only intellectually necessary but strategically urgent. Promoting coherent approaches to mixed nominations and reinforcing the cultural landscape perspective can help overcome artificial disciplinary divides and support more holistic and sustainable management models. In this regard, ICOMOS has a critical role in fostering dialogue with UNESCO siblings advisory bodies (IUCN and ICCROM) and in shaping forward-looking guidance for States Parties.

Through my engagement with World Heritage processes, I have become increasingly aware of structural asymmetries within international heritage governance. These include disparities in regional participation, uneven access to decision-making spaces, and persistent challenges in ensuring that Indigenous peoples and local communities are meaningfully involved rather than symbolically acknowledged. The Board has a responsibility to address these issues not only through discourse but through institutional practices that promote fairness, transparency and effectiveness.

If elected, I would seek to contribute to strengthening equitable participation within ICOMOS, particularly for members and experts from regions outside Europe. This requires critically examining how meetings are organised, how hybrid formats are implemented and how workloads are distributed, so that engagement does not systematically disadvantage certain regions. Improving internal work practices is both an ethical imperative and a condition for institutional sustainability.

I would also aim to support more structured and effective mechanisms for Indigenous engagement within ICOMOS and in World Heritage processes. My professional work has consistently involved Indigenous governance systems and rights-based approaches to heritage. I believe that advisory and working group structures addressing these issues must be properly supported and integrated into decision-making frameworks if they are to generate meaningful impact.

Climate change presents another area where ICOMOS must strengthen its strategic role. Beyond responding to damage, the organisation can contribute proactively to understanding how climate change affects Outstanding Universal Value and to developing coherent guidance that supports adaptation, resilience and responsible decision-making.

More broadly, I am motivated by the need to rebalance the narrative of heritage within our institutional work. While disaster risk and emergency response remain essential, heritage should also be framed as a catalyst for social cohesion, identity,

wellbeing and dialogue in increasingly fragmented societies. ICOMOS is uniquely positioned to articulate this broader vision, linking technical rigour with social meaning.

Finally, I see service on the Board as a responsibility that requires time, commitment and collegiality. I confirm my full willingness to serve if elected and to attend Board meetings, whether in person (when it is financially possible) or online, and to contribute actively and constructively to the collective work of the Board. I approach this candidacy not as a personal ambition, but as an opportunity to contribute to ICOMOS with seriousness, humility and a strong sense of institutional responsibility.

I believe my experience, regional perspective and commitment to collaborative governance would allow me to make a constructive contribution to the Board and to the future direction of ICOMOS.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Diego Sberna is an anthropologist and international consultant specialised in heritage management, cultural landscapes and territorial governance, with a strong focus on World Heritage processes and Indigenous participation. He currently serves as Site Manager of the Qhapaq Ñan - World Heritage in Salta, Argentina, coordinating conservation, management and governance across a complex cultural landscape involving multiple jurisdictions and communities.

His professional experience spans national and international contexts, combining field-based work with strategic and institutional engagement. He has worked extensively on issues related to community-based governance, rights-based approaches to heritage, and the articulation between cultural heritage, protected areas and sustainable development. His academic background includes advanced training in social sciences, and he is currently a PhD candidate focusing on heritage, landscape, territory and governance.

Within ICOMOS, Diego has actively contributed to advisory and evaluation processes linked to the World Heritage Convention, as well as to expert panels and technical discussions addressing nature-culture linkage, cultural landscapes, Indigenous heritage and evolving approaches to Outstanding Universal Value. His work reflects a strong commitment to strengthening regional diversity within ICOMOS and to fostering more equitable participation of professionals from the Global South.

Through his engagement, he seeks to contribute to ICOMOS as a space for constructive dialogue between technical expertise, social realities and institutional

governance, supporting the organisation's role in addressing contemporary challenges facing heritage worldwide.