

## What can you do?

We already count on the support of the **Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ICOMOS-IFLA International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes**, while **ICCROM and UNESCO** have shown their willingness to back the Convention proposal, in addition to local partners across the Mediterranean and the Middle East. However, the Landscape Convention **requires the involvement of more institutions** in order to push it forward and raise greater political impetus. Your support in any of the countries included is very welcome: Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. For sure, we would be also glad to hear from you for any potential cooperation that addresses the goals of Med-O-Med.



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## Proposal for a Landscape Convention of the Mediterranean and the Middle East



## About us

The Islamic Culture Foundation (FUNCI) is a Spanish non-profit, cultural and scientific organisation, based in Madrid and Rabat, with over 30 years of experience fostering intercultural dialogue between the Muslim and European countries and recognising in their proper context the contributions of the Islamic civilisation to the Western cultural heritage. In 2009 FUNCI launched an international programme entitled 'Med-O-Med, cultural landscapes of the Mediterranean and the Middle East', aimed at making up for the shortage of funds available for conserving biodiversity and natural and cultural heritage in 22 countries in the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East. The distinguishing feature of this programme is the importance attached to cultural aspects, local voices and traditional knowledge as cornerstones for achieving sustainability. Med-O-Med comprises the following action areas: **Landscape, Education and awareness, Research, Networking and compilation of inventories**. Different projects in several countries (Morocco, Algeria, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria), as well as a substantial number of transnational actions, have consolidated Med-O-Med as one of the reference networks in its area of work.

## Background and idea

Societies are gradually more aware of the importance of **landscape or cultural landscape**, understood as the interaction between people and place. Landscapes are a key concept for the understanding of human evolution and action, people's identities and heritage. They have a strong impact on life's quality, underpin our economies and offer a common ground for dialogue and rapprochement of cultures. The Med-O-Med region, which practically coincides with the Middle-Eastern and North-African countries, is birthplace of civilisations that created landscape and exemplified the management of natural resources. Yet it is also a region that faces enormous **sustainability challenges** such as overexploitation of resources, rural exodus, demographic pressures, environmental degradation and political instability. Territory and landscape are not only cross-border and cross-cutting elements for regional and international cooperation, but also key management instruments for alignment between social needs, culture, economy and environment.

## Objectives

- Open up a new setting for collaboration, dialogue, exchange and affinity and encourage all kinds of institutions to take action on landscape.
- Promote the protection and conservation of heritage and the sharing of best-practices.
- Preserve the values and features of the Middle-Eastern and North-African relevant landscapes in all its forms and cultures through legislation, planning and management .
- Raise awareness about the importance and benefits provided by quality landscapes that are culturally sensitive and environmentally friendly.
- Encourage an integral vision of territory through landscape in order to achieve coherent economic and social development.
- Acknowledge the role of traditional practices as guarantors of biodiversity and cultural diversity, as well as benefit from the traditional knowledge to adopt innovative solutions .



**A landscape convention of the Mediterranean and the Middle East, much like the European Landscape Convention signed in 2000, would establish a framework of international cooperation for the safeguarding, knowledge, management and enhancement of landscapes.**

## Expected Results

- Consolidate a common scene for cooperation on landscape strategies and link the values of landscape to other socially esteemed values.
- Add value to landscape as a resource through touristic promotion and the marketing of local products.
- Encourage the development of national legislations on landscape, independent of the environmental, urban planning or land use policies.
- Increase the multidisciplinary research on landscape, as well as its understanding and appreciation.
- Foster the compilation of landscape inventories and the execution of management plans that protect landscapes and implement quality measures.
- Involve the local population in decision-making processes, incorporate their experience and know-how.
- Empower local development plans and stimulate traditional practices through studies, exchange of experiences, training courses, grants, prizes, etc.