During a recent tour through Myanmar, representatives from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) identified seven sites that they have shortlisted as additions to the World Heritage List. They announced the nominations during the launch of UNESCO’s “Safeguarding Natural Heritage in Myanmar within the World Heritage Framework” project that took place in Naypyidaw from 21-22 November.

This project aims to introduce the World Heritage List framework to Myanmar as a means to enhance the protection of the country’s natural legacy. A signatory of the World Heritage Convention since 1994, Myanmar has yet to have any sites added to the List.

The seven locations that were identified as possible additions include the Hukaung Valley Tiger Reserve, the Ayeyawaddy (Irrawaddy) River Corridor, the Myeik Archipelago, and the NatmaTaung National Park.

At a meeting organized by the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF) and UNESCO, MarteBriseid, First Secretary of the Royal Norwegian Embassy, spoke on the importance of international cooperation in protecting Myanmar’s natural and cultural heritages and how UNESCO’s project will help fulfill these initiatives.

In a statement from UNESCO, the organization declared, “There is tremendous potential in [Myanmar] as it is rich in marine and terrestrial biodiversity, contains important ecosystems, and has sites reflecting great aesthetic qualities, natural phenomena and geological processes.”

The “Safeguarding Natural Heritage” project is backed by the government of Norway through the Nordic World Heritage Foundation and is the first step to support the Myanmar government in strengthening management for future natural World Heritage sites around the country.