

ASIA / PACIFIC

MOUNT HUANGSHAN

CHINA

WORLD HERITAGE MINOR BOUNDARY MODIFICATION PROPOSAL – IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

MOUNT HUANGSHAN (CHINA) – ID No. 547

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mount Huangshan is a mixed property of 15,400 hectares which was inscribed on the World Heritage List under criteria (ii), (vii) and (x), in 1990. The property has previously been considered at the 20th and 22nd Sessions of the World Heritage Committee.

2. BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

The proposal of the State Party is to note the correct area of the property and to extend its existing buffer zone, to ensure conformity of the boundaries of the property with national protection legislation. Information submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre sets out a clear proposal for this as a minor boundary modification, and may be summarized as follows.

The State Party notes that Mount Huangshan World Heritage property is also a National Park of China. 'The Master Plan of Huangshan National Park', approved by China's State Council in 2007, registers 16,060 ha as the core area of Huangshan National Park and 49,000 ha as the buffer zone.

In the proposal the boundary of the property remains unchanged; however, the area data of the property is now updated from 15,400 ha to 16,060 ha as a result of different measurement methods. There is therefore no proposal to modify the extent of the property, only to note its corrected size, which is larger than previously recorded.

The current buffer zone of the Mount Huangshan property is 14,200 ha. The proposed buffer zone of the property of 49,000 ha will add five more towns and a tree farm adjacent to the property, namely, Tangkou Town, Tanjiaqiao Town, Sankou Town, Gengcheng Town, Jiaocun Town and Yanghu Tree Farm. The buffer zone will follow the existing administrative boundaries of these areas.

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

The State Party notes the present buffer zone of the property is comparatively small and was planned mainly for the protection of visual landscape and environment, and without equivalent considerations regarding ecological integrity, facilities coordination and the feasibility of management. The proposed buffer zone

addresses these concerns, covering a 4 km isolation zone for the efficient prevention of the *pine wood nematode disease*. It also notes that a more efficient ecological compensation fund will be implemented among the neighbouring communities, and notes that establishing consistent buffer boundaries and administrative boundaries will help clarify the responsibilities for buffer zone management, and enhance the feasibility of management measures, such as the protection of resources and environment, tourism development and the coordinated development in support of local communities.

The State Party further notes that negative impacts will be reduced markedly in the property through improved protection of water, air and geological resources, the establishment of the monitoring systems and fire control facilities, enhanced control of tourism and other management measures in the buffer zone. The extended buffer zone will ensure the good protection of the authenticity and integrity of the property, and maintain the outstanding universal value of the property.

Appropriate legal measures appear to be in place for the buffer zone. Institutionally, Huangshan Municipal Government is in charge of coordination of the property and the buffer zone, and will also ensure personnel for the coordination with the buffer zone. A special section of 'The Master Plan of Huangshan National Park' is dedicated to provide guidance for the operation and management coordination within the buffer zone. The local government of Huangshan District is also preparing 'The Special Plan for Huangshan Buffer Zone' to coordinate resource protection, tourism service facilities, traffic and other aspects of the buffer zone, which will help avoid the conflicts and duplication. The State Party also reports that funds will be allocated for improved management of the buffer zone, and other assistance will be provided.

IUCN considers the submission by the State Party is very clear, provides evidence of positive benefits to the protection of Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and consideration on the legal and institutional requirements to implement the proposal, if approved. IUCN also considers that in principle it is good practice to align, where possible, the boundaries of World Heritage properties with the relevant national instruments that provide for their effective definition, protection and management. IUCN has received information via its network that draws attention to the effective management of Mount Huangshan and the progress achieved by the State Party, local site managers, the associated local government and other

organizations since inscription on the World Heritage List. The revision also may provide increased opportunities to improve local community engagement and benefit sharing.

IUCN considers the modification is appropriate to be considered through the minor boundary modification provisions of the Operational Guidelines as it does not impact the size of the property, and it enhances the effectiveness of the protection and management of the property's established Outstanding Universal Value. There are clear and logical proposed boundaries, and the benefits in terms of enhanced protection and management have also been clearly explained. IUCN notes that in the latest approved version of the Operational Guidelines, a revision to Paragraph 107 specifically encourages the creation of buffer zones via the minor boundary modification process.

IUCN considers that the proposal to extend the existing buffer zone of Mount Huangshan meets the requirements for approval as a minor boundary modification of the existing property.

The correction of the area of the actual property is an administrative matter and not a modification of the property, and thus has no impact on Outstanding Universal Value. This correction should be noted and updated by the World Heritage Centre in the official records of the World Heritage Convention. The retrospective inventory is foreseen as the appropriate mechanism for such corrections, and IUCN therefore draws this matter to the attention of the World Heritage

Centre for their consideration, and to determine whether such a matter should be recommended as a specific part of the decision of the World Heritage Committee.

4. OTHER COMMENTS

As a mixed site, ICOMOS will evaluate the proposal in relation to the listed cultural criteria, and the Committee is advised to adopt a decision having considered the joint advice of IUCN and ICOMOS.

IUCN notes that this is a high quality submission of a minor boundary modification and can be regarded as a model for other States Parties to follow in submitting such modifications, notably in cases where buffer zones are proposed for creation or extension.

5. RECOMMENDATION

IUCN recommends the World Heritage Committee adopt the following draft decision:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-12/36.COM/8B and WHC-12/36.COM/INF.8B2;
2. Approves the minor modification of **Mount Huangshan (China)** to extend the buffer zone to the property, in line with the proposals of the State Party.

Map 1: Proposed buffer zone extension

