

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State Party

The Republic of South Africa

State, province or region

Northern Cape Province, ZF Mgcawu District

Name of property

ǀKhomani Cultural Landscape

Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

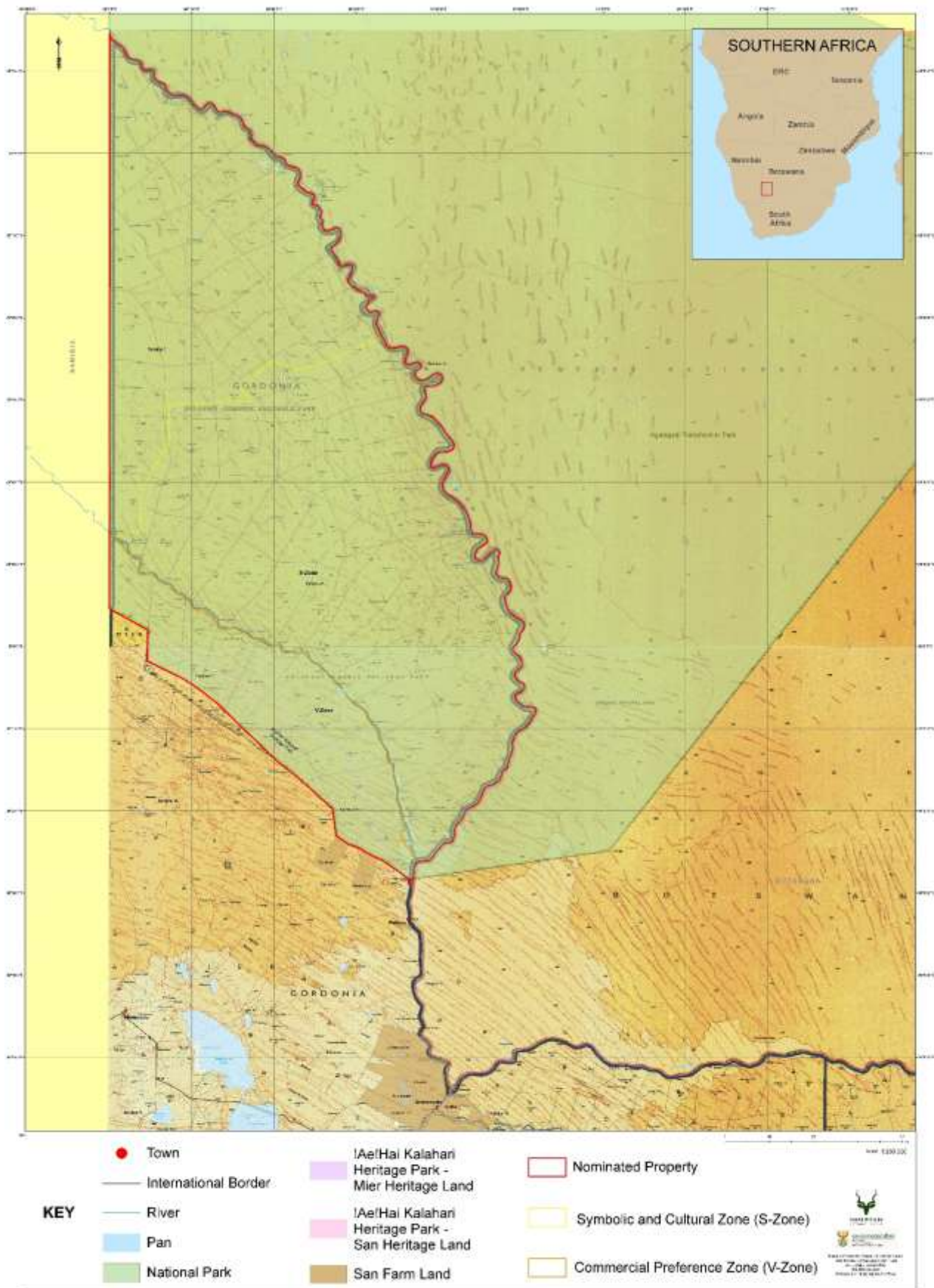
The ǀKhomani Cultural Landscape Nominated Property centroid is situated at 25° 41' 15.48" S 20° 22' 28.513" E.

Textual description of the boundaries of the nominated property

The nominated property is the ǀKhomani Cultural Landscape, which lies in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. It is a component of the broader ǀXam and ǀKhomani cultural landscapes. As an associated landscape, the Nominated Property is the entire surface area of the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park (KGNP) which forms part of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (KTP). It is bordered in the west by the international boundary with Namibia. The eastern and northern border runs along the Nossob River which is also the international border with Botswana. In the south the border is the limit of the KGNP.

As far as buffering mechanisms go, there are statutory regulatory frameworks in place that guide development such as the local and district municipality Integrated Development Plans (IDP), the Spatial Development Framework (SDF) and Environmental Management Framework (EMF). This exists for the areas in which the Nominated Property falls, namely the Mier Local Municipality and the ZF Mgcawu District Municipality.

A4 (or "letter") size map of the nominated property, showing boundaries



Criteria under which property is nominated

iii, iv, v, vi

Draft statement of Outstanding Universal Value

a) Brief synthesis

The ǀKhomani and related San people are unique in that they descend directly from an ancient population that existed in the southern African region some 150,000 years ago, the ancestors of the entire human race. The red dunes of the ǀKhomani Cultural Landscape are strongly associated with this unique culture stretching from the Stone Age to the present, a landscape that has changed little from a time long ago when all humans were hunter gatherers.

The remarkable in situ biological, if not broad cultural continuity, renders the ǀKhomani Cultural Landscape a unique and outstanding associative cultural landscape. The ǀKhomani are a living example of the unique technology and way of life that the San have developed to survive in this desert landscape. The ǀKhomani did not make rock art because there are no suitable rock formations in their territory, yet their culture represents a living link to the magnificent artistic legacy of the San in southern Africa.

The expulsion of the ǀKhomani in 1931, from what became the KGNP, their diaspora, and life on commercial farms, led to large-scale language and other cultural losses. Yet, the success of their land claims have enabled them to return and to take steps to preserve what remains of their language and living culture. Of enormous significance is the survival of the last speakers of the !Ui-Taa languages in the ǀKhomani community. The ǀKhomani are actively reclaiming cultural knowledge, practices and traditions, bringing to life a rich associative landscape. The ethos of living softly on the land and seeing themselves as part of nature, in a landscape where there is a respectful relationship between humans, plants and animals, links them to this land in a unique way that epitomises sustainability.

b) Justification for criteria

The property is nominated under criteria iii, iv, v and vi.

(iii) Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared

ǀKhomani cultural traditions are strongly founded in rituals and artistic associations between people and particular places. This is reflected by the values attached to specific trees between the dunes, and beliefs about a potent spirit world that could be accessed to heal sickness and create harmony. Equally important is the persistence of a hunter-gatherer lifestyle of deep antiquity in a desert setting.

(iv) Be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history

The ꞤKhomani Cultural Landscape achieves international significance in light of the persistent ethnobotanical and veld knowledge of the ꞤKhomani, the persistence of the N/u-language and the link with the magnificent Lloyd and Bleek archives are significant heritage items. The bush craft of the ꞤKhomani, their knowledge of the veld and ability to make use of its resources remain exceptional up to this day.

(v) Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change

The ꞤKhomani Cultural Landscape is uniquely expressive of the hunting and gathering way of life practised by the ancestors of all modern human beings; so are the simple, yet highly sophisticated technologies which they used to exploit scarce resources such as water, find plant foods in an extremely hostile environment, and deal with natural phenomena such as drought and predators.

(vi) Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance

Of enormous significance is the survival of the last speakers of the !Ui-Taa languages in the ꞤKhomani community. Their ethnobotanical knowledge and memories of a virtually extinct way of life and beliefs can be linked directly with the vast archival records of the closely related |Xam further to the south, and the even vaster southern African treasure house of Bushman rock art.

c) Statement of integrity

As an associated landscape, the Nominated Property comprising the ꞤKhomani Cultural Landscape is a vast area on the South African side of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (KTP), which is large enough to accommodate a reasonably complete representation of the landscape values, features and processes which convey the special way in which the people were linked with the land. It is also sufficiently large to accommodate the tangible elements of landscape and culture, such as the wide and open dunes, examples of Bushman architecture and the 'lightness' of being in the desert.

The archaeological sites in the dunes remain largely intact and the names of important places have been recorded and mapped. More vulnerable are the languages spoken by the ꞤKhomani, which are being promoted through joint activities between the community and supportive Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO). In the areas outside the Nominated Property there are a number of settlements and sites that play a role in the cultural memory of the ꞤKhomani and its diaspora.

Residential development, commercial farming and the state-run National Park have changed the cultural landscape over the past century, resulting in severe disruptions of the living traditions of the ꞤKhomani San and related families. However, links to the landscape persist and are being re-established since the land claim success. The South African San Institute (SASI) and other institutions have been working with the ꞤKhomani to record knowledge systems, language, and oral history through stories.

The Imbewu bush camp is situated deep in the dunes of the !Ae!Hai Kalahari Heritage Park which lies in the southern part of the KGNP and belongs to the ꞤKhomani and Mier communities. Here the tradition of 'veldskool' (meaning 'field or bush school') is regularly practised, affording young people from the community the opportunity to learn from the elders about the plants, animals, and ecological interrelationships as well as the spiritual world.

The nominated property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is enhanced through its association with the wider territory over which the ꞤKhomani families migrated on a seasonal basis, and shared with the !Kung in the south of Botswana.

d) Statement of authenticity

A core group of ꞤKhomani San who consider themselves "traditionalists" have retained strong cultural links with their land, which they are now transferring to the younger generation. The persistence and simultaneous vulnerability of ꞤKhomani culture is also reflected by the persistence of linguistic memory, supported now by NGOs and academics who are documenting language and culture in accessible ways.

The proposed Nominated Property of the ꞤKhomani Cultural Landscape is wholly protected within a National Park. The ꞤKhomani have regained symbolic and cultural rights to that land, including resource use and traditional hunting rights in a large part of the park. This helps to ensure the authenticity of the ꞤKhomani's cultural renaissance and ensures that it would not become a "museum culture". An important element of this is the wider ecological and ultimately even social connectivity made possible by the KTP, including the revival of old social networks to communities in Botswana.

However, while some feel that ꞤKhomani identity, knowledge and practices have been "thoroughly hybridised" (Robins 1999; Robins 2001; Sharp 1996) and ꞤKhomani identity cannot be described as archetypally "ancient", local community members contend that 'even though I do not wear skins and carry a bow and arrows, does not mean that I am not 'boesman' (bushman). The ꞤKhomani will not revert to a "genuine" transhumant hunter-gatherer existence. Yet, the continued existence of Bush craft and tracking skills, the persistence of cultural practices like dancing, healing, singing and storytelling, cannot be denied, neither can the indefinable spirit of "Boesman wees" ('being a Bushman'), a very particular perspective on the world and one's place in it.

Authenticity is further enhanced through the wider context of the ǀKhomani Cultural Landscape as part of the broader ǀXam and ǀKhomani Heartland Cultural Landscape. This links the ǀKhomani Cultural Landscape with the undeniably authentic archaeological and written records of the ǀXam.

Note: Evidentiary data and elaboration of the basis for OUV, the Justification for Criteria, the Statement of Integrity, and the Statement of Authenticity are presented in Appendices 2 – 6.

e) Requirements for protection and management

The ǀKhomani Cultural Landscape falls wholly inside the KGNP of which it forms the overriding cultural component, the Kalahari being a place that has almost become synonymous with the San. The overarching management framework of the Park provides a well-entrenched set of legal mechanisms relating to heritage, conservation and environmental protection that applies to all National Parks in South Africa, and which is currently being strengthened by a new initiative under the auspices of the Department of Environmental Affairs. The KGNP Management Plan is currently under review and the provisions there-in for cultural heritage will be in compliance with the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage to which South Africa is a signatory. The protection of cultural heritage is further dealt with in the Integrated Development Plan of the KTP and the !Ae!Hai Kalahari Heritage Park management plans (hereafter simply referred as the 'Heritage Park'), which falls wholly inside the KGNP.

The KGNP, acting in collaboration with the Joint Management Board of the Heritage Park and a number of NGOs, provides the necessary institutional capacity needed for the protection of the WHS. A government initiative, in which NGOs are also participating, is underway to strengthen the ǀKhomani San Communal Property Association (CPA). Another pre-requisite which relates to the Johannesburg Declaration on World Heritage in Africa and Sustainable Development of 2002, and the UNESCO Action Plan 2012-2017 for the Africa Region, is the improvement of the social and economic development of the ǀKhomani as a community that should benefit directly from the World Heritage Site (WHS).

Socio-economic development is a slow process, but a start has already been made and there have been many improvements in the welfare of the local community over the last two decades. Improved conditions will also make it easier for its members to focus energies on the protection and promotion of intangible heritage elements that contribute to the OUV of the WHS. The !Xaus community game lodge operations already generates moderate resources for investment in community development projects (or further businesses) and this will undoubtedly be supported by inscription of the proposed area as a WHS. The growing benefits

to the local communities in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, a WHS in South Africa, are well-known¹.

The Nominated Property management is guided by various management plans (Appendix 8). The management plans of the Heritage Park and the KGNP will guide appropriate tourism development within the Nominated Property. On the Botswana side, the WHS is flanked entirely by the Gemsbok National Park, which also forms the Botswana component of the KTP. Beyond the borders of the KGNP on the South African side there is communal land of the Mier community and private farms. It is envisaged that any development there would require consultation to ensure that no negative impact on the OUV.

However, a variety of development frameworks can be used to ensure that principles compatible with World Heritage Sites guide development in the region. These frameworks typically include the municipal (local and district level) IDP, the EMF and the SDF that are government requirements under different sets of legislation (Appendix 9). The Nominated Property will not have a separate management plan from the KGNP; instead, it is believed that the management plan of the KGNP makes adequate provision for the protection of the OUV and the integrity and authenticity of the Nominated Property.

Through the use of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes, as well as stringent Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) criteria, under South African law, the development of tourism related facilities and amenities within, and adjacent to, the nominated property, will not have negative impacts on the OUVs of the proposed WHS. The management plan of the KGNP should further prevent any potential impacts by tourists.

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¹ See: <http://www.wwf.org.za/?14601/LPA-2015>