

A report on the State of Conservation in 2019
Cultural Landscape and Archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley
(2003, in Danger)
ID Number: Ref: C208rev

1. Response from Afghanistan to the World Heritage Committee's Decision 44 COM 7A.

a) **Corrective measures taken by Afghanistan in reply to the World Heritage Committee's Decision(s)**

Overall Management issues for the safeguarding of the Bamiyan World Heritage site:

Several meetings and discussions were organized throughout 2019 with local stakeholders of Kabul, Bamiyan, and concerning proper management for the Bamiyan site. The meetings provided a unique opportunity for Afghan Government officials from relevant ministries and institutions to share their interventions and future plans for the protection of the world heritage site in Bamiyan. These coordination meetings are part of the structure of the management system in place to ensure the protection of the Bamiyan World Heritage site.

Cultural Master Plan:

The Bamiyan Cultural Master Plan was developed by the Ministry of Information and Culture and Ministry of Urban Development and Housing in consultation with UNESCO and implementing partners in 2007, and has continued to provide strong guidance for urban development planning and protection of the Bamiyan World Heritage site. Within the framework of the Japanese FIT project, the Government of Afghanistan a series of community consultation meetings in Bamiyan in 2019 concerning the Bamiyan Cultural Master Plan. local community members attended these meetings to raise awareness of heritage management in Bamiyan and to assess levels of integration between the Cultural Master Plan and the Government's City Master Plan.

Due to the increased number of returnees from the neighboring countries to Afghanistan, expansion of house areas in the vicinity of heritage properties was reported to the Ministry of Information and Culture. Hence, further monitoring, coordination, joint planning, and interference by the central and local authorities implemented to prevent development at the historical sites.

Site Guards:

The Ministry of Interior Affairs employed a team of police officers from the specialized unit (012) for the protection of cultural properties to monitor and safeguard the World Heritage properties within the Bamiyan Valley. This was aimed to control illegal or unauthorized access to the sites.

Education and Public Awareness:

In 2019, the Government of Afghanistan and UNESCO had organized a series of meetings in Kabul to discuss the future plans for the World Heritage Property participated authorities of the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Ministry of Urban Development, the Governor of Bamiyan to provided local communities with an opportunity to jointly engage with Government representatives about heritage management and urban development.

Follow-up actions for the stabilization of the Western Buddha niche

The rehabilitation of the Western Buddha niche is urgent. This work could be completed within the next three to four years) during the entire frost-free season in Bamiyan (spring and summer). This long timeframe would have the advantage to hire and keep local workers already trained in these particular activities and to perform the tasks in a more efficient way. However, due to the lack of the national budget, the Government of Afghanistan requires a significant amount of the budget from international community and any other donors to complete this important task.

b) Progress towards the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger**Eastern Buddha Niche:**

At its 40th Session the World Heritage Committee reiterated its request that any proposals to reconstruct the Eastern Buddha statue are appraised in relation to the OUV of the property and an overall approach to conservation and presentation of the property, and that any proposals are reviewed by the Advisory Bodies, for consideration by the World Heritage Committee, before technical and financial feasibility studies are undertaken.

Acknowledging this request, the Government of Afghanistan and UNESCO organized the Tokyo Symposium, from 27 to 29 September 2017, in order to discuss the future treatment of the Eastern Buddha niche in Bamiyan. The meeting provided an opportunity for technical experts to present proposals for revitalizing the Eastern Buddha statue and for the Afghan government to discuss how to retain the OUV of the Bamiyan World Heritage site while exploring any intervention of the treatment of the Eastern Buddha niche/statue. Proposals were invited for physical and non-physical reconstruction to ensure a balanced range of options. To follow the meeting, the Government of Afghanistan has formed a working group in the country to review the presented proposals. In order to ensure compliance with the recommendation of the 40th Session of the WHC, the selected proposal(s) by the Afghan government is attached to the WHC for their review, prior to implementation phase of a possible project.

DRAFT-ACTION PLAN CONCERNING THE FUTURE TREATMENT OF THE BUDDHA NICHES AND THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS OF THE BAMIIYAN VALLEY, WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

I. Objectives of the Action Plan¹

This Action Plan, prepared by the Technical Working Committee, has the following objectives:

1. Deciding on the future treatment of the Bamiyan Buddha niches;
2. Safeguarding the *Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley* World Heritage property as a whole;
3. Removing the site from the World Heritage List in Danger.

II. Background

1. The Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2003 and simultaneously placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.
2. At its 31st session in New Zealand, in 2007, the World Heritage Committee defined a series of benchmarks to achieve a “Desired State of Conservation”, which would enable the removal of Bamiyan from the List of World Heritage in Danger. These included:
 - a) Acceptable levels of site security;
 - b) Addressing issues concerning the structural stability of the two standing Giant Buddha niches;
 - c) Achieving an adequate state of conservation of both the archaeological remains and surviving mural paintings;
 - d) The finishing and implementation of an effective and workable Management and Cultural Master Plan.
3. Since 2003, the Government of Afghanistan, in close collaboration with UNESCO and technical experts, and with financial support from the Governments of Japan, Italy, Germany and Swiss, have conducted a series of conservation works and implemented a series of technical measures to safeguard the Bamiyan World Heritage site.

¹ Once the Action Plan is finalized, the MoIC will send it to the President’s Office, for endorsement. Once it is approved and endorsed by the President, Government will submit it to the World Heritage Centre, who will share it with its Advisory Bodies for their review. The World Heritage Centre will finally send the result of the review back to the Afghan government and will also discuss it during the forthcoming World Heritage Committee meeting.

4. In its latest decision (Decision: 41 COM 7A.54, from 2017), the World Heritage Committee decided to retain the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Annex 1).
5. Between September 27-29, 2017, an International Technical Meeting was organized in Tokyo to discuss technical considerations and potential effects on Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value of the Bamiyan World Heritage property, if one or more of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues were to be treated or reconstructed. Four technical proposals were presented and discussed in this meeting (from Japan, Italy and Germany), which also recommended the establishment of the Technical Working Committee to review those proposals (Annex 2).

III. Decisions on the Committee

The main decisions of the Committee, include:

- a) The Committee considers that all four proposals presented at the Tokyo meeting present opportunities and challenges, and thus recommends a study to investigate similar cases in World Heritage properties around the world;
- b) In the spirit of national interest and international standards in terms of heritage reconstruction ethics, the Committee wishes to invite further proposals;
- c) The Committee recommends further investigation on the potential effects on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Bamiyan World Heritage property, if one or more of the Bamiyan Buddha statues were to be reconstructed, and a detailed assessment of the heritage conservation ethics associated to the reconstruction of cultural heritage;
- d) The Committee strongly suggests that a priority be given to remove Bamiyan from the World Heritage List in Danger, defined by the World Heritage Committee in 2007, and that a detailed Action Plan with a time frame be conducted.

Bamiyan draft-Action Plan & Timeline

				Three-months period (over a total of 36 months)											
	Programs	Indicators/ Actions	Means of verification	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-21	22-24	25-27	28-30	31-33	34-36
Assessment of the four technical proposals presented during the 2017 Tokyo Meeting	Regular meetings of the Technical Working Committee	The Technical Working Committee develops a Plan of Action regarding the four proposals presented at the Tokyo meeting; The MoIC is to create a mechanism to invite further proposals for the future treatment of the Bamiyan Buddha	The Plan of Action is endorsed by the Government of Afghanistan and a decision is made and approved by the WH Centre, regarding the future treatment of the Buddha statues/niches	December 2018											
	Desktop study on WH properties that were affected by war or conflict and were the target of reconstruction or rehabilitation measures	The desktop study is developed and presented to the Technical Working Committee	The desktop study is used by the Technical Working Committee to make an informed decision regarding the technical proposals presented to treat the Buddha	December 2019											

			statues/niches	
	International seminar concerning the Future Treatment of the Buddha Niches & Statues	The MoIC and UNESCO organize this international event to present and discuss all existing information	The decisions of the Seminar will be presented to the President of Afghanistan, who will endorse them	From January to December 2020

				Three-months period (over a total of 36 months)											
	Programs	Indicators	Means of verification	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-21	22-24	25-27	28-30	31-33	34-36
WHC Benchmark 1: Structural stability of the two Buddha niches	Stabilization of the West Buddha niche	Complete scaffolding	Report of finalization of scaffolding and its physical completion												
		Physical conservation works	Report of physical conservation of the West Buddha niche, and its physical conservation completion												
		Scientific studies, including assessment of the remaining percentage of the demolished Buddha statue	International and national experts hired, studies developed, and reports delivered												

Stabilization of the East Buddha niche	Periodic monitoring of stabilization	Monitoring system acquired, installed in the West Buddha niche and in use													
	Research and monitoring of landslides and rockfalls, and mitigation measures	Research conducted, monitoring system acquired, installed along the West Buddha cliff and in use, and mitigation measures implemented, if required													
	Physical conservation works	finished in 2011	Completed												
	Scientific studies, including assessment of the remaining percentage of the demolished Buddha statue	International and national experts hired, studies developed, and reports delivered													
	Periodic monitoring of stabilization	Monitoring system acquired, installed in the East Buddha niche and in use													
	Research and monitoring of landslides and rockfalls, and mitigation measures	Research conducted, monitoring system acquired, installed along the East Buddha cliff and in use, and mitigation measures implemented, if required													

				Three-months period (over a total of 36 months)											
	Programs	Indicators	Means of verification	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-21	22-24	25-27	28-30	31-33	34-36
WHC Benchmark 2: Achieving an adequate state of conservation of the archaeological remains and surviving mural paintings	Preservation of archeological remains within Bamiyan	Archaeological excavations and conservation at serial sites classified within Bamiyan	Archaeological and conservation reports, MoIC website												
		Archaeological field assessment within the wider Bamiyan Valley	Archaeological and conservation reports, MoIC website												
		Development and implementation of a Heritage Impact Assessment mechanism	Heritage/environment impact assessment												
		Development of a Bamiyan archaeological museum in the valley	An archaeological museum plan												
	Preservation of mural paintings within	Conservation of selected murals	Conservation reports												

	Bamiyan	Conducting a full inventory of mural paintings within the property	Filled-out Inventory form and heritage database												
		Based on previous conservation assessments, develop a strategy for conservation	A strategic report and conservation intervention plan with a time frame												
		Conduct selected conservation of most significant and endangered mural paintings	Physical conservation intervention and conservation report												

				Three-months period (over a total of 36 months)											
	Programs	Indicators	Means of verification	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-21	22-24	25-27	28-30	31-33	34-36
WHC Benchmark 3: Attaining	Providing security to WH property through formal security arrangements	Develop WH security guidelines and principles	Guidelines and principles document												

acceptable levels of site security		Hiring and training permanent Bamiyan WH guards (including police and heritage guards/rangers), using national budget	Allocation of national budget and selection/deployment of national guards	Ongoing											
		Mine clearance	A series of mining actions and mine clearance reports												
	Providing security to WH property through community-based initiatives	Create and train WH community-based security forces	A report of a series of workshop/community consultation gathering												
		Conduct awareness raising initiatives	A report of a series of workshop/community consultation gathering												
		Develop promotional materials	Publications and videos produced, MoIC's website												

				Three-months period (over a total of 36 months)											
	Programs	Indicators	Means of verification	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-21	22-24	25-27	28-30	31-33	34-36

	Developing standardized procedures for visitors	Procedures developed and signage boards in-situ													
	Prepare selected sites within WH property for visitors	Establishment of a tourism facility / information centre													
	Develop promotional materials for tourists	Publications produced in various languages													
	Officially adopt the Tourism Plan and integrate in within other national and regional development plans	PR materials produced and distributed													

Shari Gholgholah

Consolidation of some parts of Shahr-i-Gholghola at the south side such as walls and domical chambers was implemented in 2017 by the Department of Conservation of Historical Monuments of MoIC, and international experts from UNESCO, with the financial assistance of the Government of Italy.

In order to re start the consolidation work in the Shari Gholgholah, a joint mission UNESCO expert and national expert from Department of Archeology MoIC was organised by the Ministry of Information and Culture in 2019.

Ministry of Information and Culture hopes for the continuation of the consolidation in the year 2020 onwards with support from the UNESCO and other international community

Shah-I Zuhak

No work has been conducted in 2019.

Kakrak Valley

No work has been conducted in 2019.

Qoul-I Akram Caves in the Foladi Valley

No work has been conducted in 2019.

Kala-I Ghami

No work has been conducted in 2019.

Qalla-I Kaphari A

No work has been conducted in 2019.

Qalla-I Kaphari B

No work has been conducted in 2019.

c) Difficulties in implementing corrective measures.

The Government of Afghanistan unfortunately does not have enough financial resources to implement conservation activities on each of the historic sites and requires the continued assistance from UNESCO and other international community to address the aforementioned issues.

Best Regards,

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