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**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION
OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

**Extended forty-fifth session
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
10-25 September 2023**

**Item 7B of the Provisional Agenda:
State of conservation of properties inscribed
on the of World Heritage List**

Summary

This document contains information on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. The World Heritage Committee is requested to review the reports on the state of conservation of properties contained in this document. The full reports of Reactive Monitoring missions requested by the World Heritage Committee are available at the following Web address in their original language: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/45COM/documents>

All previous state of conservation reports will be available through the World Heritage State of conservation Information System at the following Web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>

Decision required: The World Heritage Committee may wish to adopt the draft Decision presented at the end of each state of conservation report.

Note: For each section, the reports are presented in the English alphabetical order of States Parties

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I. REPORTS ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST INITIALLY FORESEEN TO BE EXAMINED BY THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE IN 2022

NATURAL PROPERTIES

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

2. El Pinacate and Gran Desierto de Altar Biosphere Reserve (Mexico) (N 1410)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2013

Criteria (vii)(viii)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1410/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1410/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation (tourism activities, off-road vehicles as well as potential problems derived from tourism-related water consumption)
- Invasive/alien terrestrial species
- Ground transport infrastructure (proposed roads)
- Necessity to save the Sonoran Pronghorn from possible extinction
- Environmental concerns in security efforts along the international border

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1410/>

Current conservation issues

On 9 February 2022, the State Party of Mexico submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1410/documents/> and provides the following information:

- Construction of a border wall between the USA and Mexico along the property boundary (carried out by the USA in its territory) including a solid metal wall, another parallel mesh wall, barbed wire and service and surveillance roads;
- It is stated that the border wall will inevitably have effects on the biodiversity and the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property due to habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, reduced access to resources, isolation and fragmentation of wildlife populations such as the Sonoran Pronghorn, increased human activity, among other aspects such as depletion of water resources. Monitoring programs are in place with respect to these issues;

- The National Commission for Protected Areas (CONANP) of the State Party of Mexico, and the National Park Service (NPS) of the State Party of the USA are establishing a programme of collaboration to restore connectivity between the north-western Sonora and south-western Arizona regions and identify potential actions to reduce the impacts to the property as a result of the border wall;
- The Sonoran Pronghorn recovery plan has been prepared and comprises a number of activities including a captive breeding program, water supply and forage improvement project, pronghorn translocation program, census and aerial monitoring.

On 24 March 2022, the World Heritage Centre received a letter from the State Party of the USA confirming that the border wall construction at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (OPCNM) and Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge (CPNWR), along the international border with Mexico and adjacent to the property, has concluded though there may be additional activities related to remediation and completion of stabilization of existing infrastructure. It is stated that discussions have begun between both States Parties on potential collaboration to assess and mitigate impacts from construction works on shared resources and ecological connectivity.

On 20 and 21 April 2022, additional details were received from the State Party of Mexico and the State Party of the USA respectively. Of the 140 km of the USA/Mexico border adjacent to the property, a border wall has been erected on 109 km according to the letter from the State Party of the USA, and along approximately 128.7 km according to the letter from the State Party of Mexico, with the only gaps remaining in mountainous areas, where the construction of the border fence is more difficult. There are small wildlife openings in the base of the barrier at various locations along OPCNM.

On 19 October 2022, the State Party of Mexico submitted a summary of environmental-regional impact assessment for the transmission network associated with the photovoltaic power plant Puerto Peñasco. IUCN provided a technical review of this assessment, which was transmitted to the State Party on 22 December 2022.

On 29 March 2023, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party of the USA conveying additional third-party information regarding the above-mentioned border wall. The letter requested updates on mitigating measures that may have been taken to restore connectivity between these areas and the property.

On 23 June 2023, the State Party of the USA replied that after consultations with CONANP of Mexico, the NPS recently commissioned a study to evaluate the impacts of the US-Mexico border wall on mammal communities of the Sonoran Desert, focused on the protected area complex consisting of the property and CPNWR and OPCNM. Initial results of this study will be available by 2025, with a final report in early 2026.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

It is concerning that the construction of the border wall adjoining the property has been completed, in spite of the request of the Committee to halt any further works and without submitting an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of this project to the World Heritage Centre, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. The border wall has been constructed along almost the entire boundary between the property and adjoining areas of OPCNM and most of the CPNWR, with the exception of two mountainous areas. While it is noted that some small openings to allow passage of some wildlife are foreseen along the border with OPCNM, it is unclear how effective these will be to facilitate wildlife movement. The border wall will therefore constitute an almost impenetrable physical barrier for wildlife between the property and adjoining important wildlife dispersal areas, which are vital for the survival of species such as the Sonoran Pronghorn, that represent a key attribute of the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The presence of this barrier will almost block the movements of wildlife populations and result in direct further negative impacts to the integrity of the property as well as on wider ecological connectivity. I

The recent information received in June 2023 from the State Party of the USA, that a study to evaluate the impacts of the US-Mexico border wall on mammal communities of the Sonoran Desert is noted. However, given that initial results of this study will only be available by 2025, with a final report in early 2026, and considering the urgency to ensure the ecological connectivity of the property with adjacent wildlife dispersal areas, it is recommended that the State Party of the USA, in line with Article 6.3 of the Convention develop, resource and implement, in cooperation with the State Party of Mexico, an urgent action plan to assess and mitigate impacts of the border wall to the property and restore its ecological

connectivity, through consultation with the IUCN Species Survival Commission/ World Commission on Protected Areas, as appropriate, and submit the action plan as soon as possible to the World Heritage Centre. This should build on any preliminary results available of the aforementioned study and on other existing initiatives between the CONANP, and NPS of the State Party of the USA to restore connectivity and include a fast track implementation of the Sonoran Pronghorn recovery plan and measures that avoid further depletion of scarce water resources. Given the threat to the OUV, these efforts need to be accelerated and implemented as soon as possible. If ecological connectivity is not guaranteed or restored, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN consider that the property may meet the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in line with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines. The States Parties should also be requested to provide detailed information on the exact composition of the wall structures along each section of the property's boundary and mitigation measures which have been taken to allow passage of wildlife along the border with the OPCNM boundary, noting this is a critical element of plans to mitigate impacts on wildlife and ecological processes. Given the threat the border wall is posing to the OUV of the property, it is recommended that the State Party of Mexico, in coordination with the State Party of the USA, invite a Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to assess the impacts of the border wall on the OUV of the property and the measures taken to guarantee the connectivity of the property with the adjacent wildlife dispersal areas.

Recalling the significance of the property for the presence of several endemic and range-restricted species, the importance of monitoring the impact of the border wall on key species is indeed very important. Noting that data on the Sonoran Pronghorn population has only been made available up until 2020 and that the impacts of the physical barrier on wildlife populations may not be immediately evident, it will be important to closely and continuously monitor the key species, and take an adaptive management approach in response to any significant changes in size and the health of these populations.

Noting the conclusions of the summary of regional impact assessment for the transmission network associated with the photovoltaic power plant Puerto Peñasco, the State Party of Mexico should be requested to take into full consideration the findings of IUCN's technical review in the determination of the project. The State Party should be requested to implement effective and sustained mitigation measures throughout the construction and operational phases of the project, if approved. These measures should be aligned with the management of the property, and adhere to the highest environmental standards, in addition to considerations for the wider landscape scale impacts of the project to ensure the conservation of the important biodiversity in the wider landscape, which also supports the OUV of the property.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.2

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.114**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Regrets the construction of the border wall in the United States of America (USA) in spite of the request of the Committee in its Decision **44 COM 7B.14** to halt any further works and without prior submission to the World Heritage Centre of an assessment of the potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and expresses its concern that the border wall now extends along almost the entire boundary between the property and adjoining areas of Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (OPCNM) and most of the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge (CPNWR), with the exception of two mountainous areas;*
4. *Reiterates its view that the physical presence of the wall has clear negative impacts on the integrity of the property and wider ecological connectivity thereby blocking the movement of critical wildlife populations, such as the Sonoran Pronghorn, which constitute important attributes of the OUV of the property;*

5. *Further requests the States Parties of Mexico and the USA to provide clarification, including detailed maps, with regards to the exact composition of the wall structure along each section of the property's boundary and details on the mitigation measures taken to guarantee or restore connectivity;*
6. *While encouraging the ongoing transboundary collaboration between the States Parties of Mexico and the USA, in assessing and mitigating the impacts that the construction works and the border wall have already had on the OUV of the property and the commissioned study to evaluate the impacts of the border wall on mammal communities of the Sonoran Desert, requests the State Party of the USA, in line with Article 6.3 of the Convention, to develop, resource and implement in cooperation with the State Party of Mexico an urgent action plan to assess and mitigate impacts of the border wall to the property and restore the connectivity, through consultation with the IUCN Species Survival Commission/World Commission on Protected Areas, as appropriate, and to submit this as soon as possible and no later than **1 February 2024** to the World Heritage Centre;*
7. *Also requests the States Parties of Mexico and the USA to fast track implementation of the Sonoran Pronghorn recovery plan and measures that avoid further depletion of scarce water resources;*
8. *Considers that if ecological connectivity is not restored to safeguard the viability of key populations, the property may meet the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in line with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines;*
9. *Requests furthermore the States Parties of Mexico and the USA to continue closely monitoring the key species and use the findings to inform species' recovery plans and active management strategies to mitigate impacts;*
10. *Requests the State Party of Mexico, in coordination with the State Party of the USA, to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to assess the impacts of the border wall on the OUV of the property and the measures taken to guarantee the connectivity of the property with the adjacent wildlife dispersal areas;*
11. *Requests the State Party of Mexico to implement effective and sustained mitigation measures for the photovoltaic project, if approved, throughout the construction and operational phases of the project, which align with the management of the property, and adhere to the highest environmental standards, including measures to ensure the conservation of the important biodiversity in the wider landscape, which also supports the OUV of the property;*
12. *Requests moreover the State Party of Mexico, in cooperation with the State Party of the USA, to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, a report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session, **considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilization to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value, including the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

AFRICA

3. W-Arly-Pendjari Complex (Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger) (N 749bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1996

Criteria (ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/749/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 5 (from 1997-2012)

Total amount approved: USD 135,440

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/749/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 40,000 from the Rapid Response Facility (RRF) in 2022;

USD 247,870 from the Government of Norway in 2020-2023

Previous monitoring missions

UNESCO/RAMSAR mission, 8-22 May 2004; World Heritage Centre reactive monitoring mission, 17-22 January 2022.

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Phosphate mining project (issue resolved)
- Dam project (issue resolved)
- Lack of monitoring of the implementation of the Management Plan
- Gold mining
- Pollution
- Transhumance
- Insecurity
- Illegal activities (Poaching)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/749/>

Current conservation issues

On 28 January 2022, the States Parties of Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger submitted a joint report on the state of conservation of the property, and on 30 March 2023, they provided additional information available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/749/documents>, which provides the following information:

- The property's surveillance system has been strengthened by increasing the number of brigades, creating a Special Water and Forestry Unit in Burkina Faso, training ecoguards and local communities and acquiring equipment (microlights, helicopters, drones, vehicles);
- Mixed cross-border surveillance patrols with defense and security forces have been strengthened to ensure the protection of the property in a worrying security context;
- In response to the deteriorating security situation, several major measures have been adopted, including: the implementation of the management delegation to Benin, the training of 32 Water and Forest agents and five National Armed Forces soldiers as part of the Priority Intervention Plan in Niger, the completion of a feasibility study for securing and developing the Burkinabe part of the property, and the signing of a military cooperation agreement between Benin and Niger;
- Within the framework of cross-border cooperation, the first Council of Ministers of the three countries was held in Niger on 13 April 2022, and the Executive Secretariat of the W-Arly-Pendjari

Complex (SE-WAP) and the Scientific Council were created by decree in 2022 as part of the implementation of the 2019 Tripartite Agreement;

- A number of initiatives to benefit local communities are being implemented with the support of various technical and financial partners, notably through the RBT-WAP/GIC-WAP programme;
- In the Beninese component of the property, major developments and constructions are planned (hotel, fencing, airstrip, access roads, rehabilitation of infrastructures), as well as the translocation of species. Environmental and Social Impact Studies have been carried out, and the implementation of identified mitigation measures is underway;
- A Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP) for the W-Arly-Pendjari Complex was adopted in November 2021;
- Significant progress has also been made towards sustainable financing of the property, with Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger joining the West African Savannah Foundation (WASF), which mobilizes endowment funds for the various country initiatives and regional activities;
- A roadmap was drawn up to finalize the buffer zone boundary map on a scale of 1/50,000 for submission at 1 December 2022;
- An agreed buffer zone has been defined for the W National Park in Niger, and the new map will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre;
- Aerial censuses carried out in 2019 and 2021 show that wildlife populations remain present in the property, but with different population trends depending on the species. While elephant and buffalo populations show a stable trend, a downward trend has been noted in all other large mammal populations (damalisque, bushbuck, hartebeest and antelope). However, the available data does not allow conclusions on trends to be drawn with any certainty.

A World Heritage Centre reactive monitoring mission was despatched to the property from 17 to 22 January 2022. The report of this mission is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/749/documents>. It should be noted that, while the reactive monitoring mission had been planned as a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN mission in accordance with World Heritage Committee Decision **44 COM 7B.79**, the IUCN expert was unable to physically participate due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the mission was unable to visit the components of the property located in Burkina Faso and Niger for security reasons.

In February 2022, two deadly explosive device attacks were carried out against teams of rangers on patrol in the W National Park in Benin, resulting in the deaths of four rangers, two drivers, an instructor and a soldier, as well as 12 other people hospitalised with serious injuries. More information on these attacks is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2404/> and <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2420/>.

On 23 June 2023, the second Council of Ministers of the three countries was held in Benin at the WASF headquarters.

Analysis and conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The main conservation challenge remains the presence of armed groups in the area of the property, a consequence of the dramatic deterioration of the security situation in the Sahel region. The World Heritage Centre's reactive monitoring mission carried out in 2022 notes that the number of violent acts committed by armed groups has increased considerably since 2017. The presence of these armed groups, and the threat it represents, has forced management staff in Burkina Faso and Niger to abandon their positions in the property and retreat to localities and bases outside the property. The result is a lack of management on the ground in these areas of the property. The mission thus concluded that the property is facing serious threats which could have harmful effects on its essential characteristics and that the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property is subject to potential danger in accordance with paragraphs 180b) iii) and 180b)iv) of the *Operational Guidelines*.

However, the Benin component of the property is still actively managed, but staff are under constant threat and there is a clear risk that insecurity will spread and affect management in this component as well, as illustrated by the two fatal attacks in the W National Park in Benin in February 2022. Similarly, other significant threats were noted by the mission, namely the expansion of the agricultural front, transhumance and the impact of climate change. However, while the presence of armed groups presents a considerable risk for the intensification of illegal activities such as poaching and gold panning, the extent of the negative impact of these activities on the OUV of the property and wildlife populations

remains unclear. The findings of aerial censuses carried out in 2019 and 2021 show that wildlife populations remain ecologically viable, but the available data does not allow conclusions on trends to be drawn with certainty. It is recommended that the Committee requests the States Parties to carry out aerial censuses on a regular basis using the same methodology allowing comparison of results and consequently identification of trends.

In response to the security situation, the States Parties have deployed considerable resources at political, technical and field levels in an attempt to dislodge armed groups and restore order and security to the property and its area of influence. The various actions undertaken include strengthening the operational capacity of personnel, acquiring equipment, collecting and analyzing security information, stepping up surveillance patrols and joint operations with defense and security forces, supporting local communities and drawing up strategic framework and operational planning documents such as Priority Intervention Plans (PIP).

In addition, since the 2022 mission, the States Parties have announced additional efforts aimed at restoring security to the property and resuming management activities, including anti-poaching. It remains to be seen whether these measures will be effective in the short term. At the same time, the holding of the second Council of Ministers of the three countries on 23 June 2023 in Benin in support of joint efforts to secure and preserve the Transboundary Complex is noted, and it is recommended that the Committee encourage the States Parties to pursue their efforts with technical and financial partners involved with the property and appeal to the international community to support these efforts in order to ensure sustainable financing of the property, notably through the consolidation of the West African Savannah Foundation (WASF).

It should be noted that the mission faced a number of constraints, including the fact that IUCN was unable to participate physically due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that it was not possible to visit the Burkina Faso and Niger components of the property due to the security situation on the ground. Although the mission confirms that the elements justifying the OUV remain present in the Benin component, the information and documentation available in the Burkina Faso and Niger components do not allow us to assess at this stage the extent of the impact of the presence of armed groups and illegal activities on the elements justifying the OUV in these components, including on the wildlife populations. In this regard, it is recommended that the World Heritage Committee request the States Parties to invite a new joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN reactive monitoring mission to address the gaps identified by the January 2022 mission, to assess the measures undertaken by the States Parties to restore security in the property and resume their management, and to determine whether the OUV is still subject to potential danger.

In addition, it is recommended that the Committee urge the States Parties to strengthen dialogue and communication with all stakeholders and to implement the recommendations of the 2022 reactive monitoring mission. These actions could be supported through an Emergency International Assistance request to the World Heritage Fund and the "Initiative to Support the Sustainable Management of the W-Arly-Pendjari Complex" financed by the Government of Norway, the first national technical consultation of which was held in Niger from 30 May to 1 June 2023 in preparation for the national technical consultations in Burkina Faso and Benin, as well as the round table of financial and technical partners of the property.

The progress made in implementing the provisions of the Tripartite Agreement signed in 2019 for the harmonized management of the protected areas comprising the property illustrates a strengthening of transboundary cooperation for its effective management. It is recommended that the Committee encourage the three States Parties to continue their efforts to implement the provisions of the Agreement, in particular the provision of sufficient technical and financial resources for the proper functioning of the Executive Secretariat and the other governance bodies provided for therein.

The adoption of the CCAP for the property is a remarkable step forward. It is recommended that the Committee congratulate the States Parties on this major decision and encourage them to integrate the adaptation measures provided for therein into the various strategic framework and operational planning documents for the property's protected areas. Various infrastructure projects are underway or planned in the Benin component of the property. Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) have been carried out or are underway for these projects, but the vast majority have not addressed potential negative impacts on the property's OUV. It is therefore recommended that the Committee reiterate that all new projects should be subject to an ESIA, including a specific assessment of the potential negative impacts on the OUV of the property in accordance with the new "Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context", before approval. In addition, the project to translocate

species in the Pendjari National Park continued despite the reservations of the IUCN. It is important that future translocations strictly adhere to international standards, in line with the IUCN 2013 Guidelines on Conservation Translocations, to ensure their success.

Significant efforts have been made to finalize and submit the 1/50,000 buffer zone boundary map of the property, in response to Decisions **41 COM 8B.3** and **44 COM 7B.79**, and initiatives are underway to modify the boundaries of the property to strengthen its protection.

In view of these conclusions, it is recommended that the Committee request the States Parties to submit an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations and other points, for examination by the Committee at its 46th session, in order to consider, in the absence of significant progress in meeting the above-mentioned conditions, the possible inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. To support the efforts of the three States Parties, their engagement in a dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN on the state of the property, developments in the security situation and the international support needed to resolve the significant challenges facing the protection of the OUV of the property will be essential.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.3

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision 44 COM 7B.79, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Deplores the new murderous attacks committed by armed groups in the property, and expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to all the staff of the national administrations in charge of the management of the property;*
4. *Recognizing that the increase in the number of violent incidents linked to the presence of armed groups in the area of the property is a direct consequence of the dramatic deterioration in the security situation in the Sahel region, expresses its deepest concern that the increase in the number of attacks committed by armed groups in the area of the property has led to the evacuation of staff and the absence of field management in the Burkinabe and Nigerien components;*
5. *Expresses its utmost concern regarding the findings of the January 2022 reactive monitoring mission that the property is facing serious threats which could have detrimental effects on its essential characteristics, and that the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property is subject to potential danger in accordance with paragraphs 180 b)iii) and 180 b)iv) of the Operational Guidelines;*
6. *Notes also that the mission confirms that the elements justifying the OUV of the property remain present in the Benin component, but that the information and documentation available in the Burkinabe and Niger components do not allow an assessment at this stage of the extent of the impact of the presence of armed groups and illegal activities on the elements justifying the OUV in these components, and requests the States Parties to carry out aerial censuses on a regular basis using the same methodology allowing comparison of results and consequently the identification of wildlife population trends;*
7. *Urges the States Parties, in collaboration with technical and financial partners, to implement the recommendations established by the 2022 reactive monitoring mission in order to strengthen the management and protection of the components of the OUV of the property and to reinforce dialogue and communication with all stakeholders in the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations;*

8. *Welcomes the efforts of the States Parties to address the security situation by strengthening the operational capacities of personnel, acquiring equipment, collecting and analyzing security information, reinforcing surveillance patrols and joint operations with the defense and security forces, and drawing up strategic framework and operational planning documents such as Priority Intervention Plans (PIPs) for the various components of the property, and urges the States Parties to pursue and strengthen these efforts, in particular through the implementation of PIPs and the recommendations of the second Council of Ministers of the three countries of 23 June 2023 in Benin in favour of joint efforts to secure and preserve the Transboundary Complex, with the support of the technical and financial partners involved;*
9. *Thanks the technical and financial partners who support the conservation of the property, notably through funding from the Government of Germany, the Adaptation Fund, the European Union and the Government of Norway, and appeals to the international community to further support the efforts of States Parties to ensure sustainable financing of the property, notably through the consolidation of the West African Savannah Foundation (WASF);*
10. *Further notes the progress made in implementing the provisions of the Tripartite Agreement on the Harmonized Management of Protected Areas of the W-Arly-Pendjari Transboundary Complex, and further encourages the States Parties to make available sufficient technical and financial resources for the proper functioning of the Executive Secretariat and the other governance bodies provided for therein;*
11. *Commends the States Parties for the adoption of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP) for the W-Arly-Pendjari Complex and further encourages them to integrate the adaptation measures foreseen therein into the various strategic framework and operational planning documents of the property's protected areas, and to establish a multi-hazard early warning system for the property;*
12. *Notes the commitment of the State Party of Benin to carry out Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) for the various infrastructure projects carried out and planned in the Beninese component of the property, and reiterates that all new projects must be subject to an ESIA prior to approval, including a specific assessment of potential negative impacts on the OUV of the property, in accordance with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;*
13. *Takes note of the map of the boundaries of the buffer zone of the property at a scale of 1/50,000 submitted in response to Decisions **41 COM 8B.3** and **44 COM 7B.79**, welcomes the initiatives undertaken by the States Parties of Benin and Niger to modify the boundaries of the buffer zone of the property in order to strengthen its protection, and further requests the States Parties to submit a request for minor modifications to the boundaries to reflect these modifications by **1 February 2024** for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session;*
14. *Further urges the States Parties to strengthen dialogue and communication with all stakeholders in the implementation of the above recommendations, which could be supported through an emergency international assistance request to the World Heritage Fund and the "Initiative to Support the Sustainable Management of the W-Arly-Pendjari Complex" project funded by the Government of Norway, the first national technical consultation of which was held in Niger from 30 May to 1 June 2023, in preparation for national technical consultations in Burkina Faso and Benin, as well as the round table of technical and financial partners of the property;*

15. Requests furthermore the States Parties to invite a new joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN reactive monitoring mission to address the shortcomings identified by the January 2022 mission, to assess the measures undertaken by the States Parties to restore security in the property and resume their management, and to determine whether the OUV is still subject to potential danger;
16. Further requests the States Parties to submit, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and on the steps taken to implement the above-mentioned recommendations, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session, **considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilization to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value, including a possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

ASIA AND PACIFIC

14. The Sundarbans (Bangladesh) (N 798)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1997

Criteria (ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/798/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (2008)

Total amount approved: USD 75,000

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/798/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 32,590 from Switzerland following a Special Appeal by the Sector for External Relations of UNESCO; 2017: USD 32,527 from the UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust for technical support to the Sundarbans World Heritage property

Previous monitoring missions

December 2007: World Heritage Centre mission; March 2016: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; December 2019: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Pollution of marine waters
- Changes to oceanic waters (High level of salinity; Sea level rise)
- Water infrastructure (Reduction in freshwater inflows; Dredging of the Pashur River)
- Management systems/management plan (Overall governance and management of the property)
- Storms (Loss of monitoring capacity due to cyclone damage)
- Illegal activities (Tiger poaching)
- Forestry/wood production (Unsustainable harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products)
- Non-renewable energy facilities (Thermal Power Plant project such as the Rampal power plant development project)
- Others: Need for an assessment of cumulative impacts on the property via a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/798/>

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2022, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, which is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/798/documents/> and reports the following:

- The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the south-west region of Bangladesh and its corresponding Strategic Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) were finalized in January 2022, following a national-level stakeholder meeting in October 2021, and are undergoing Government endorsement. No decision on any large-scale industrial and/or infrastructure developments in the vicinity of the property has meanwhile been made;
- The construction of Maitree Super Thermal Power Project (STPP, formerly Rampal power plant) is ongoing and is being monitored against the Environmental Management Plan (EMP);
- Funding allocation for the implementation of the National Oil Spill and Chemical Contingency Plan (NOSCOP) and the preparation of a localized contingency plan are underway;

- The Mongla Port Authority is implementing a Vessel Traffic Management Information System and the Standard Operational Procedures for disaster management for the port;
- The second India-Bangladesh Joint Working Group (JWG), postponed since 2020, is scheduled for February/March 2022. Upstream freshwater flow is being negotiated through the India-Bangladesh Joint River Commission (JRC);
- Traffic through the Shela River has been reduced as the navigability of an alternative route of Mongla-Ghosiakhali channel (outside the Sundarbans) has been increased;
- Conservation measures in the property are being strengthened further through Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tools (SMART) patrols, which are leading to a decline in wildlife-related offences. A drone-based monitoring system is in place since March 2021, and the moratorium on commercial logging in the property was extended until 2022;
- In October 2021, an action plan, a management plan and a fund management guideline for dolphin conservation were approved. Several other activities for the conservation of dolphins in the Sundarbans have also been implemented, and the State Party will conduct dolphin surveys in relation to the proposed Barisal (Taltoli) and Payra Thermal (Kolapara) power plants;
- In 2021, the Wildlife Victims Compensation Rules were enacted to address human-wildlife conflict in and around the Sundarbans;
- A new 2021–2030 Integrated Management Plan for the Sundarbans is in development, which will emphasize local community involvement and participation in the management and explore alternative income generation activities;
- The recommendations of the 2019 World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission are being implemented.

The World Heritage Centre requested the State Party to officially submit the SEA and its SEMP, in accordance with Decision **44 COM 7B.91**, on 2 February, 22 February and 25 April 2022, which were submitted by the State Party on 15 February 2023.

On 10 May 2023, the World Heritage Centre sent a further letter to the State Party conveying third party concerns over the assessment of industrial development and large infrastructure activities to which the State Party responded to with a report submitted on 3 July 2023, which could not be reviewed for inclusion in the present report.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The State Party has continued to make positive efforts towards enhancing the protection of the property and has made progress in implementing the 2019 mission recommendations. In particular, the reported positive results from SMART patrols and the actions related to dolphin conservation are welcomed. The reported plans to strengthen community involvement in the management of the site and address alternative income options are also encouraging, and the State Party should ensure adequate consultations with communities take place in developing these plans.

Recalling that the SEA has been requested by the Committee since 2014 (Decision **38 COM 7B.64**), the completion of the SEA and SEMP in 2021 is appreciated, although they were only submitted to the World Heritage Centre in 2023. While it is positive that the scope of the SEA includes the wider southwest region of Bangladesh, the Committee requested the SEA to specifically assess potential impacts in relation to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and it is noted that there is no distinction between the impacts identified under the different development scenarios for the wider region and specific impacts on the OUV of the property. Conclusions and mitigation measures appear to be based on assumptions (e.g. the tiger population will experience “healthy growth” under a “high-growth” development scenario if there is a “considerable reduction of anthropogenic pressure and improved management practice, suitable habitat improves [...] and poaching is brought to a minimum”), and therefore their justifications and feasibility are unclear. The SEA also reports that the scale of the potential impact on the OUV is unknown and requires further research, and that there is a clear risk of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts from developments in the study area over the next 20 years if appropriate and adequate mitigation measures are not taken, and that there remains a need to analyse potential risks and impacts in more detail. Factors such as climate change, freshwater availability, land conversion, or socio-economic benefits to local communities are not fully considered.

Noting therefore that further research is required to more explicitly determine the potential impacts on the OUV of the property, including the scale, it is recommended that the Committee urge the State Party to undertake further studies to specifically assess the potential risks and impacts of different scenarios on the OUV, which also consider factors such as climate change and freshwater flow, and that the findings of further studies inform future decision making to ensure the long-term protection of the OUV and avoid adverse impacts from large-scale industrial development in the vicinity of the property. The State Party should also be requested to keep the World Heritage Centre informed of any proposals for major projects that may impact on the OUV in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, including further development of the Mongla Port and any other development that might further increase traffic on the Pashur River, and to ensure the appropriate assessment of impacts in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context.

Effective transboundary cooperation through the JWG and JRC is vital to address water flow to the property, and the States Parties of Bangladesh and India should be requested to continue strengthening this coordinated effort, including in relation to the Sundarbans National Park in India.

Recalling that the NOSCOP was approved in February 2020, it is concerning that funding for its implementation has still not been secured, and it is vital that implementation can start as soon as possible. The development of a localized contingency plan, as requested by the Committee in Decision **44 COM 7B.91**, should also be accelerated to ensure immediate and coordinated actions to mitigate impacts in case of emergency.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.14

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **38 COM 7B.64**, **41 COM 7B.25**, **43 COM 7B.3** and **44 COM 7B.91**, adopted at its 38th (Doha, 2014), 41st (Kraków, 2017), 43rd (Baku, 2019) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,*
3. *Welcomes the State Party's continued efforts towards enhancing the protection of the property and the progress in implementing the recommendations of the 2019 joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission, and requests the State Party to fully implement all mission recommendations and previous Committee decisions;*
4. *Notes the completion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Strategic Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) for the South-West region of Bangladesh in 2021 and submission to the World Heritage Centre in 2023, notes with concern that the scale of potential degradation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property through proposed development scenarios remains unknown and requires further research, and that there is a risk of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts from developments in the South-West region over the next 20 years if adequate mitigation measures are not implemented through the SEMP, and also requests the State Party to:*
 - a) *undertake further studies to specifically assess the potential risks and impacts of development scenarios on the OUV of the property, including assessment of alternative options and considering factors such as climate change and freshwater flow,*
 - b) *submit the further studies to the World Heritage Centre for review as soon as they are completed and ensure the findings are incorporated into adaptive management measures and in the implementation of the SEMP,*
 - c) *ensure that decision making regarding large-scale industrial development in the vicinity of the property, including further development of the Mongla Port and any other development that might further increase traffic on the Pashur River, is based*

on a specific assessment of impacts on the OUV conducted in line with the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, that it does not negatively impact OUV, and that it ensures the long-term protection of the OUV,

- d) *keep the World Heritage Centre informed of any major project that may impact on the OUV in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;*
5. *Also notes with concern the delay in starting the implementation of the National Oil and Chemical Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCOP), and therefore further requests the State Party to implement the NOSCOP as soon as possible and expedite the development of a localized contingency plan to ensure immediate and coordinated actions to mitigate impacts in case of emergency;*
6. *Noting that the India-Bangladesh Joint Working Group and the India-Bangladesh Joint River Commission are important bilateral mechanisms to address trans-national matters, reiterates its request to the States Parties of Bangladesh and India to strengthen cooperative action for the eco-hydrology of the property and the adjoining Sundarbans National Park in India;*
7. *Requests furthermore the State Party to ensure that consultations with communities take place throughout the development of the new 2021-2030 Integrated Management Plan for the Sundarbans;*
8. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the Committee at its 46th session.*

15. Komodo National Park (Indonesia) (N 609)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1991

Criteria (vii)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/609/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 3 (from 1993-1995)

Total amount approved: USD 119,500

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/609/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

September 2000: joint UNESCO/IUCN mission; January – February 2002: joint UNESCO-UNEP-RARE Center for Tropical Conservation mission; March 2022: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation
- Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure
- Illegal fishing

- Others (Anchoring in coral reefs)
- Management system / management plan (lack of enforcement)
- Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community
- Fire (wildfires) (issue resolved)
- Illegal activity (Deer poaching) (issue resolved)
- Coral blasting, use of illegal dynamite and cyanide fishing (issues resolved)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/609/>

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report and an update on 16 March 2023, which are available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/609/documents> and report the following:

- A draft of the *Integrated Tourism Master Plan for Komodo National Park (KNP) and Labuan Bajo Flores* (ITMP) to “guide [a] sustainable future for tourism” had been expected in July 2022. It aims to attain the target of 500,000 foreign and 1.5 million domestic tourists within a 4-year period (2016-2019), whilst ensuring that neither tourism nor development in the property will have a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). It is reported to include a robust tourism management plan that is based on a 2018 carrying capacity study by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MOEF) and ensures the distribution of tourists across more than 100 sites outside the property including Flores island (in the wider setting of the property). The intention is to shift away from mass tourism and focus on sustainable “high-end” tourism and improved infrastructure to boost the local economy and stimulate community development. The State Party will collaborate with IUCN experts to ensure that no actions will have a negative impact on the OUV;
- Following finalization of the ITMP, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be undertaken to ensure that any development proposed under the ITMP will not negatively impact the OUV. A tourism carrying capacity policy is implemented;
- There is no intention to relocate local people from Komodo Village. A community-based ecotourism programme is being developed, highlighting local community involvement and based on the traditions and cultures of Komodo Island;
- The revision of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Loh Buaya tourism infrastructure project on Rinca Island to align with the IUCN World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment, and the development of an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) was completed and appended to the report. The project is a renovation and expansion of existing park infrastructure required to sustainably accommodate growing tourism numbers and manage human-wildlife interactions, estimated to accommodate approximately 1,000 visitors per day. The EIA concludes no or negligible impacts on the OUV;
- Since August 2021, an online registration platform has been developed to better manage growing tourism at two sites (Gili Lawa Resort and Padar Selatan Resort) and quota limits are being considered in line with carrying capacity;
- The Komodo dragon population in KNP has remained relatively stable over the last 5 years. Long term monitoring and research continues through mark-recapture, camera traps and tagging in collaboration with the Komodo Survival Programme (KSP);
- Protection and surveillance efforts for the marine environment continue in collaboration with national and regional law enforcement agencies. The rate of infringements, specifically poaching and illegal fishing, has significantly decreased compared to previous years. Various coral transplantation and reef check activities were undertaken between 2019-2021. The 2020 *Outline for the Future Marine Management of the Komodo National Park World Heritage Site* provides recommendations for marine management;
- Five concessions have been issued to three private tourism companies within the utilisation zones in KNP (2014, 2015 and 2020 respectively), each for a period of 55 years and requiring a 55-year management plan (RRPA), 5-year management plan (RKL) and 1-year management plan (RKT). Tourism facilities proposed across various locations include, for example, guest houses, a cafeteria, viewing deck, swimming pools, and staff accommodation.

On 9 August 2021, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party requesting to verify third party information regarding tourism infrastructure development on Rinca Island, recalling the Committee's request in Decision **44 COM 7B.93** to revise the related EIA in line with the IUCN World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment and to resubmit this to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN as a matter of urgency.

On 1 to 7 March 2022, a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission visited the property. The report is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/609/documents>.

On 23 February 2023, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party, conveying third-party information regarding a potential increase in the entry fees to KNP and requesting an update to the State Party on this matter. The State Party responded on 28 March 2023 confirming that there is no increase of the entrance fee.

On 24 March 2023, the State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre an updated map and cartographic information on the property, which are under review by the World Heritage Centre.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The prioritisation of KNP and the Labuan Bajo Flores region by the President of Indonesia as one of five high-priority tourism destinations in Indonesia provides an opportunity for the State Party to position the property as a leading sustainable tourism destination that is based on high-quality visitor experience which ensures the protection and management of the OUV. In this regard, the State Party's confirmation that it is moving away from mass tourism is noted. However, noting the projected significant increase in visitor numbers and the plans to expand tourism developments within KNP including through the five private concessions, it will be important for the State Party to ensure a strategic and precautionary approach to tourism development that focuses on sustainable high-quality visitor experience that ensures the protection of the OUV and avoids any negative impact on it.

The draft ITMP provides an overarching framework for tourism management for the property and its wider setting and it is recommended to finalise this in line with international best practice standards and the recommendations of the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission, focusing on the protection of the OUV.

In response to the third-party concerns transmitted by the World Heritage Centre to the State Party in 2021 regarding reported changes to the zoning system of the property in 2020 to reduce wilderness areas and facilitate development, the State Party informed the mission that no substantive changes were made to the zoning system in 2020. However, regarding the changes that took place in the 2012 decree which the World Heritage Centre was not informed of by the State Party, the transformation of wilderness zones into utilization zones is of concern, given that this change appears to have been implemented without a review of the potential impacts on the OUV. It is recommended that a study is implemented to review if the current zoning and resulting tourism development is adequate to ensure the protection status and the OUV of the property.

Specifically regarding tourism development projects within the property, it is important that any proposed developments are first assessed for their potential impact on the OUV of the property, prior to any approvals being issued. In this regard, the 2020 Ministerial decree which exempts tourism infrastructure within KNP from EIA requirements is a particular concern, especially given that several private tourism concessions have been issued with plans for future development, and that KNP and Labuan Bajo are prioritised more broadly for tourism development. It is therefore positive that the authorities confirmed during the mission that EIAs will be required going forward and that an SEA will be undertaken following completion of the ITMP. An SEA allows the State Party to take an informed strategic decision regarding tourism development beyond individual projects and in the specific context of the World Heritage values. It is recommended that an SEA is completed prior to the approval of individual projects, and that proposals for projects located within the property or its wider setting are assessed for their potential impact on the OUV in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, which replaced the IUCN Advice Note in 2022, prior to considering any approval of individual projects including private tourism concessions. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies are available to provide training on the new Guidance.

Recalling third party concerns that the Loh Buaya project on Rinca Island was presented as a mass tourism project, it is noted that it is an upgrade and extension of an existing ranger post and ecotourism facility publicly managed by the KNP Authority, which aims to address increasing tourism pressure on the OUV. This was expected to open in mid-2022. Noting that construction of the project continued during the revision of the EIA that was requested by the Committee, it is important to recall that impact assessments must be undertaken prior to any approval or construction processes in order to effectively

inform decision making, and not retrospectively. The State Party's efforts to revise the initial EIA are noted, which concluded that there would be no significant impact on the OUV. It is recommended that the State Party ensure sufficient monitoring and management measures are in place, including through implementation of the EMP, to effectively protect and manage the OUV and avoid any potential future negative impacts that may result from increasing visitation, such as increased tourism pressure.

Recalling that in 2021 the status of the Komodo dragon moved from Vulnerable to Endangered on the IUCN Red List due to impact of climate change and habitat loss from ongoing human activities, it is positive that monitoring and research indicates a stable population trend for the KNP subpopulation and its associated prey over the last 5 years. It is recommended that monitoring and management is continued in collaboration with the KSP and researchers. It will be important that the planned tourism expansion in the property and wider region fundamentally ensures the protection and management of, and does not negatively impact on, the species including its natural behaviour and ecosystem.

The State Party's confirmation that there will be no relocation of local communities from any protected area, and the intention to develop community-based ecotourism, is positive. Considering the various third-party concerns received by the World Heritage Centre and IUCN in recent years regarding local livelihoods in the context of tourism development (e.g., the removal of local communities or the potential increase in entry fees on Komodo Island for exclusive access), it is important that the State Party ensures the appropriate engagement of local communities in decision-making processes in line with international best-practice policies. Tourism development should be focused on high-quality experience tourism that includes providing opportunities and benefits for the local communities.

Recalling the importance of the marine ecosystem, the reported significant reduction in poaching and illegal fishing due to ongoing surveillance efforts is positive, although details were not provided. Whilst individual marine monitoring activities, e.g., coral transplantation and Reef Check surveys, have been undertaken in recent years, the capacity for the KNP Authority to implement a consolidated marine monitoring and management programme for the property appears to be limited and require further capacity. It is recommended the State Party further strengthen marine monitoring and management capacity, taking into consideration the mission recommendations and the previous 2020 UNESCO report *Outline for the Future Marine Management of the Komodo National Park World Heritage Site*.

The submission of a new map and cartographic information of the property by the State Party for boundary clarification is welcomed, and it is recommended that the State Party continue engaging with the World Heritage Centre to clarify the boundaries of the property, as also recommended by the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.15

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision 44 COM 7B.93, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Considers that the identification of Komodo National Park (KNP) as one of five high-priority tourism destinations in Indonesia, the State Party's intention to shift away from mass tourism, and the development of an Integrated Tourism Master Plan for Komodo National Park and Labuan Bajo Flores (ITMP), present a positive opportunity to position the property as a leading sustainable tourism destination that ensures the protection and management of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV);*
4. *Noting however the planned expansion of tourism in KNP and the wider Labuan Bajo region, including a projected significant increase in visitor numbers and allocation of private concessions within the property, and noting with concern the 2020 Ministerial decree exempting tourism infrastructure within KNP from Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements, notes with appreciation the State Party's confirmation*

that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and EIAs for individual projects will be undertaken, and also requests the State Party to:

- a) *Take a strategic and precautionary management approach to tourism development that is focused on sustainable high-quality visitor experience, as opposed to exclusivity,*
 - b) *Conduct an SEA of tourism development within the property and its wider setting prior to the approval of individual projects, including private tourism concessions, in line with the 2022 mission recommendation,*
 - c) *Ensure that all proposed development projects are appropriately assessed for their potential impact on the OUV in line with the Guidance and Toolkit on Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, prior to making any decision that would be difficult to reverse, including undertaking consultations with relevant rightsholders and stakeholders prior to the approval and construction of a project,*
 - d) *Ensure that no concessions or development projects are approved without an appropriate assessment and that no approval is issued for projects that would have a negative impact on the OUV;*
5. Takes note of the revision of the EIA for the Loh Buaya Resort (Rinca Island) and requests furthermore the State Party to ensure proactive monitoring and management measures are in place, including through implementation of the Environmental Management Plan (EMP), to effectively protect and manage the OUV and avoid any potential future negative impacts that may result from increasing visitation, such as increased tourism pressure, especially on the Komodo dragon population;
6. Expresses concern about the changes to the zoning plan of the property that took place in 2012, which the World Heritage Centre was not informed of by the State Party and which resulted in the transformation of wilderness zones into utilization zones that allow for tourism development, and requests the State Party to review whether the current zoning and resulting tourism development is adequate to ensure the protection status and the OUV of the property and submit the results to the World Heritage Centre;
7. Recalling that in 2021 the status of the Komodo dragon moved from Vulnerable to Endangered on the IUCN Red List due to the impact of climate change and habitat loss from ongoing human activities, notes with appreciation that monitoring activities report a stable population trend in KNP, and requests moreover the State Party to continue regular population monitoring and implement management measures that ensure the long-term protection of the species, especially in the context of tourism expansion;
8. Noting with appreciation the reported significant reduction in poaching and illegal fishing, reiterates its concern regarding the lack of operational equipment and technical capacity to manage the property's marine area, and reiterates its request for the State Party to urgently strengthen marine management and law enforcement capacities in the property, with a specific emphasis on controlling illegal fishing activities and boat anchoring, and to allocate a sufficient budget for marine research, monitoring, education and compliance with marine regulations;
9. Requests furthermore the State Party to implement the recommendations of the 2022 joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission, including to:
- a) *Provide training and capacity building to key stakeholders on impact assessment processes to support planning and decision-making for the protection and management of the property,*

- b) *Ensure a proactive and strategic management approach to tourism development under the ITMP which includes an assessment of the carrying capacity for the property, prior to approving any major tourism developments,*
 - c) *Ensure the engagement of local communities in decision-making processes in line with international best-practice policies, including tourism development,*
 - d) *Finalize the ITMP to enable the State Party to provide best practice guidance to stakeholders for future tourism development that ensures the protection of OUV, support local livelihoods, and provide business and economic opportunities from conservation and includes actions to combat climate change,*
 - e) *Implement the necessary management and monitoring measures to ensure the long-term protection of the Komodo dragon, its prey species, and important habitats, including to effectively plan, monitor and manage key pressures, such as poaching and the projected increase in tourism, including through the ITMP,*
 - f) *Strengthen marine monitoring and management measures for the property, including ensuring the effective regulation of the liveaboard (LOB) and cruise tourism industry, establishing a systematic and transparent revenue capture mechanism to return income to the property, and incorporate a marine monitoring programme into the core management of the property,*
 - g) *Explore the potential for utilizing the multi-stakeholder Komodo Biosphere Reserve Coordinating Forum as a mechanism to support the management of the World Heritage property,*
 - h) *Clarify the boundaries of the property, and specifically the status of the three reserves (Wae Wuul Nature Reserve, the Mburak Forest, and the Mbeliling and Nggorang Protected Forests) located on Flores island, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre;*
10. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

19. Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex (Thailand) (N 590rev)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2005

Criteria (x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/590/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/590/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

February-March 2012: Joint UNESCO/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; January 2014: IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; December 2016: IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Illegal activities (Poaching and illegal logging)
- Ground transport infrastructure (Road expansion, in particular regarding Highway 304)
- Land conversion (Encroachment)
- Management systems/management plan
- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation
- Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure
- Water infrastructure (Dams)
- Livestock farming/grazing of domesticated animals (Cattle grazing) (issue resolved)
- Other threats: Forest fragmentation (connectivity and the need for ecological corridors)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/590/>

Current conservation issues

On 1 February 2022, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, an executive summary of which is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/590/documents/>, and reports the following:

- International cooperation meetings with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the prevention and suppression of illegal logging and trade of Siamese Rosewood have been hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the State Party commits to strengthening the cooperation when the circumstances allow;
- Several activities to prevent illegal logging of Siamese rosewood and other precious wood species are being conducted in line with the 2020-2022 Action Plan on the Protection of Protected Forest Areas and Forest Fire Control. In 2021, Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) patrols covered 85% of the property, a North-eastern Aviation Center was established at Khao Yai National Park to support aerial patrols, camera traps were installed across the property under the Network Centric Anti-Poaching System (NCAPS) and capacity building was provided for rangers. These actions have led to a considerable decline in offenders and the volume of confiscated timber. The Action Plan includes quantitative and qualitative Key Performance Indicators for the protection of Siamese Rosewood and other precious wood species for 38 protected areas including the property. However, the annual budget for the fiscal year 2022 to implement activities at the property under the 2020-2022 Action Plan was reduced to less than one quarter of the previous year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Bilateral cooperation between Cambodia and Thailand on transboundary biodiversity conservation and law enforcement to address illegal logging along the border is continuing;
- The 2019 amendment of the National Park Act and Wildlife Protection and Reservation Act is stated to strike a balance between conservation and land use by communities in accordance with government policy and the conservation of forest resources and ecosystems;
- The implementation of mitigation measures and the monitoring of environmental impacts for Highway 304 and Huay Samong Dam are ongoing;
- The construction of all dams and reservoirs within and adjacent to the property is suspended, including the seven dam projects stressed by the Committee (Decision **44 COM 7B.97**), until a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the river basin is conducted and reviewed by the World Heritage Centre and IUCN;
- There has been no land encroachment or resort development inside the property since December 2014;
- Other updates include the application of new stricter tourism measures since reopening after the COVID-19 pandemic and a biodiversity survey across different taxa.

In a letter dated 18 November 2021, the State Party requested technical assistance from IUCN in undertaking an SEA. IUCN replied on 8 December 2021 and 17 January 2022 to propose a call between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to discuss the SEA. Whilst no response had been

received regarding the call at the time of writing this report, on 10 July 2023 the State Party contacted IUCN for guidance on the scope of the SEA, which was provided on 17 July 2023.

On 23 March 2023, the World Heritage Centre transmitted third party information to the State Party regarding a potential reduction of the boundary of the Thap Lan National Park, a component part of the property. On 21 June 2023 the State Party replied to confirm that the boundary of the Thap Lan National Park has not been modified and that the procedures are underway to “collectively reconsider and complete the unclear boundary demarcation” of the Thap Lan National Park, with possible exclusion of some areas from the National Park, in the context of the 2019 National Land Policy Board Act B.E. 2562 (2019) to set goals, policies and development approach to maximize the benefits from national land and soil utilization. The State Party also indicated that it would notify the World Heritage Centre, should it proceed with a boundary modification in accordance with the Operational Guidelines.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

In spite of international cooperation on illegal logging, trade of Siamese Rosewood and law enforcement were largely paused during 2020-2021; nonetheless, it is positive to see that the decline in offenders and the volume of confiscated timber have been sustained through this period. The State Party's strong commitment to addressing illegal rosewood logging is appreciated, and it is important to keep the momentum on the international collaboration to address illegal trade, along with appropriate law enforcement and prosecution to halt illegal logging within the property.

Progress is noted in the implementation of the new 2020-2022 Action Plan, which is applied nationally and appears to be a follow-up to the 2014-2019 Action Plan to Prevent and Suppress Illegal Logging and Trade of Siamese Rosewood in Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex. It is noted that this new Action Plan includes Key Performance Indicators, which are suggested to address the Committee's previous request to redefine the indicators, based on the 2016 Reactive Monitoring mission recommendation (Decision **44 COM 7B.97**). Recalling the mission's recommendation about the need for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) indicators, it is recommended that the State Party ensure the current and future Action Plan for the property address these concerns, and that a summary of the revised indicators, together with their means of verification, are provided in the next state of conservation report. However, it is of concern that the budget for activities to protect Siamese Rosewood and other valuable timber species within the property has been significantly reduced for the fiscal year 2022 as a result of the pandemic. It would be important that sufficient funds are allocated for the implementation of the 2020-2022 Action Plan to ensure the continued protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property.

The confirmation provided by the State Party in June 2023 that procedures are underway at the national level to reconsider and complete the unclear boundary demarcation of the Thap Lan National Park, with possible exclusion of some areas from the National Park, is of significant concern. It should be recalled that the requirement to have a sufficient level of legal protection is a critical pillar of the OUV of the property, and therefore the State Party should not exclude any area within the property from the National Park or approve the implementation of activities in these areas prior to developing and submitting a significant boundary modification to the World Heritage Centre, in line with the Operational Guidelines, and its subsequent approval by the World Heritage Committee. Doing so may constitute the basis for the inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in line with Paragraph 180(b) of the Operational Guidelines.

The State Party should also be requested to continue close consultations with local communities and critically monitor the effects of the legislation for the communities and the conservation of the property, in light of the 2019 amendment of the National Park Act and Wildlife Protection and Reservation Act, through which the State Party is seeking to accommodate local communities to pursue their livelihoods in a sustainable manner.

Whilst it is noted that the construction of all dams proposed within and adjacent to the property is suspended until an SEA is finalized, it is important to recall the position, as per Decision **40 COM 7**, reflected in the Committee's previous decisions that dams with reservoirs inside property boundaries are not compatible with World Heritage status and should not be permitted (Decisions **41 COM 7B.32** and **44 COM 7B.97**). The State Party's intention to seek early advice from IUCN before the SEA is started is welcomed, particularly as it can help ensure a shared understanding of the objectives of the SEA, and hence of the geographical and technical scope of the assessment, and that the process and methodology will follow international best practice and guidelines for SEAs. Once the SEA is completed, it should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, ensuring that no decision is

taken and no work started on any dam development near the property and in the river basin until this review is positively concluded.

The continued implementation of mitigation measures and monitoring of Highway 304 and Huay Samong Dam are appreciated, and it is considered that, unless the State Party encounters any issue or identifies any negative impact on the OUV of the property, further updates on this infrastructure are not required. It is also reassuring that no further land encroachment or resort development has occurred within the property.

No update is provided on the proposal to seek an alternative to expanding Highway 348 inside the property. Recalling that the State Party previously noted the passing of a Cabinet resolution to halt its expansion, in line with Committee Decision **41 COM 7B.32**, it is recommended that the State Party be requested to provide an update on progress.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.19

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **41 COM 7B.32** and **44 COM 7B.97**, adopted at its 41st (Krakow, 2017) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,*
3. *Appreciates the continued commitment of the State Party to lead international cooperation and carry out activities within the property to address illegal logging and trade of Siamese Rosewood and other precious wood species, and strongly encourages the State Party to further strengthen this cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and bilaterally with Cambodia, particularly to retain momentum despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic;*
4. *Also recalling that removal of the legal protection of part of the property would constitute a clear potential danger as foreseen under Paragraph 180(b) (i) of the Operational Guidelines, notes with utmost concern that the State Party is considering the possible exclusion of some areas of Thap Lan National Park by revising its boundaries, requests the State Party not to exclude any area within the property from the National Park, and reminds the State Party that a modification with the potential to have a significant impact on the extent of the property or affect its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) would require a significant boundary modification, in line with the Operational Guidelines;*
5. *Also notes the 2019 amendment of the National Park Act and Wildlife Protection and Reservation Act, through which the State Party will accommodate local communities pursuing their livelihoods in a sustainable manner, and requests the State Party to continue close consultations with the communities and critically monitor the effects of the legislation for communities and conservation;*
6. *Takes note that the construction of all dams proposed within and adjacent to the property is suspended pending completion of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the property and its river basin and, recalling its previously stated position that dams with large reservoirs within the boundaries of properties are not compatible with World Heritage status, also requests the State Party to:*
 - a) *Seek early technical inputs from IUCN on the SEA,*
 - b) *Cancel plans for any construction of dams with reservoirs inside the property's boundaries, independent of the results of the SEA,*

- c) *Ensure the suspension of dam proposals around the property remains in place until the final SEA has been reviewed by IUCN to assess any impact on the OUV;*
7. *Notes that the nationwide 2020-2022 Action Plan on the Protection of Protected Forest Areas and Forest Fire Control is being implemented at the property and includes Key Performance Indicators, and further requests the State Party to submit revised indicators that demonstrate adequate means of verification to objectively and accurately measure the effectiveness of its implementation, in line with the recommendations of the 2016 Reactive Monitoring mission;*
8. *Notes with concern that the budget for activities to protect Siamese Rosewood and other precious wood species within the property has been significantly reduced for the fiscal year 2022, requests furthermore the State Party to ensure that sufficient funds are allocated for the implementation of the 2020-2022 Action Plan for the continued protection of the property's OUV;*
9. *Requests moreover the State Party to provide an update on the resolution that was passed to halt the expansion of Highway 348 and on progress to seek an alternative to the expansion proposal;*
10. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

20. Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine) (N 1133quater)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2007

Criteria (ix)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1133/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1133/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

October 2014: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to Slovakia; October 2018: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Advisory mission to Slovakia; November 2019: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to Albania and Romania

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management system/Management Plan (lack of integrated Management Plan, lack of legal protection from logging, and inadequate management of logging in the Slovak part of the property)
- Inappropriate boundary configuration of some parts of the property
- Management and institutional factors (lack of transnational research and monitoring plans, need for capacity building)
- Forestry/wood production
- Commercial hunting

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1133/>

Current conservation issues

On 26 November 2021, the States Parties of Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain, and Ukraine submitted supplementary information on forestry operations that are currently permissible in the buffer zones of the property. On 28 January 2022, all States Parties submitted a joint report on the state of conservation of the property. The state of conservation report is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1133/documents/>. Both documents note the following:

- In Germany, Italy and Spain, different types of forestry interventions are possible in the component parts of Grumsin (Germany), Monte Raschio, Sasso Fratino (Italy), Hayedos de Ayllón and Hayedos de Navarra (Spain);
- The “Guidance document on buffer zone management and buffer zone zonation” of the property for all States Parties was further developed and submitted for review by IUCN;
- In Slovakia, following the modification of the boundaries adopted by the Committee in its Decision **44 COM 7B.99**, the protection regime is now fully aligned with the boundaries for component parts in that country;

- The Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for the component parts in Slovakia was expected to be finalised in 2022. Further updates on management and development of management plans were reported for component parts in Austria, Czechia, Croatia, North Macedonia, Romania and Switzerland;
- In Ukraine, the legislation for nature protection was updated with the intention of improving the conservation of primeval and old-growth forests;
- In Romania, the upgrade of the national road 66A has been temporarily put on hold, pending clarification of the steps to be followed. The non-intervention regime in Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park is planned to be expanded;
- In Italy, preliminary analysis of impacts from a forest fire east of the boundary of the Valle Infernale component indicates that only a small part of the component part has been affected and the majority of old-growth forest habitat in this component was not burned.
- In Belgium, several infrastructure developments are planned within the buffer zone of the five component parts in the Sonian forest. A green bridge is planned to improve the connectivity of the component parts Grippensdelle A and B, which are under consideration for a boundary modification. The two components in Wallonia (Ticton A and B) are in the process of being extended with a view to possible unification;
- Regarding boundary modifications, Austria and Croatia submitted a minor boundary modification for Dürrenstein and the two component parts in Paklenica National Park (see Document **WHC/23/45.COM/8B**). Belgium is considering the enlargement of the component parts in the Sonian Forest.
- Croatia is currently in the process of developing a new Management Plan for the next ten-year period, which includes monitoring and research activities on species and forest ecosystem.

By letter dated 18 February 2022, the State Party of Belgium sent information to the World Heritage Centre regarding a road improvement programme on the ring road around Brussels, including infrastructure projects within the buffer zone of the property.

On 28 April 2022, the IUCN review of the proposed “Guidance document on buffer zone management and buffer zone zonation” was transmitted to the States Parties.

On 18 May 2022, the World Heritage Centre transmitted third-party information to the State Party of Romania concerning legislative changes, in particular an approved amendment to the Protected Areas Law in Romania to facilitate hydropower projects which could affect the Romanian component parts located in the Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park. On 11 August 2022, the World Heritage Centre sent a second letter to the State Party of Romania regarding third-party concerns over forestry operations in the buffer zones of the property in Romania. The State Party of Romania provided a response to the above-mentioned letters on 29 November 2022, including information on the harmonization between the Forest Management and the Management Plan of the Domogled National Park; clarifications on the progressive logging in the buffer zone, including the intention to reduce the intensity of interventions in the future and to modify the type of logging that will be carried out; procedural clarifications on forestry management plans and environmental assessment procedures, such as provisions for UNESCO-designated areas within these processes, and assurances over concerns regarding conflict of interest and public consultation. Through this letter, the State Party of Romania confirmed that there were no proposals for hydropower projects to be carried out within the components of the property or its buffer zones following the amendment to the protected areas law.

On 16 March 2023, the State Party of Romania informed the World Heritage Centre of the initiation of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the Cerna-Belareca hydropower facility, stated to be partly located within the Romanian component of the property.

On 26 April 2023, an online workshop was held between the States Parties, the coordination office for the property, IUCN and the World Heritage Centre to discuss steps required for the finalisation of the “Guidance document on buffer zone management and buffer zone zonation” and the means by which concerns over forestry operations which are currently permissible in the buffer zones of the property can be addressed.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

As a result of the boundary modification of the Slovak component parts adopted by the Committee (Decision **44 COM 7B.99**), the protection regime of the Slovak component parts is now in line with the requirements of the Operational Guidelines. It is recommended that any pending recommendations from the 2014 and 2018 missions continue to be implemented.

Regarding buffer zone management of the transnational serial property, while significant progress has been made in further strengthening the Guidance document, the IUCN Technical Review notes that for the Guidance to be effective, a number of principles would need to be considered, including the minimization of interventions and maximization of areas of strict protection within the buffer zones as a matter of priority. The States Parties should therefore finalize the Guidance, based on the IUCN review, in particular by designing and implementing a mechanism to ensure continued strengthening of standards, recognising that the Guidance outlines minimum requirements for forestry operations in the buffer zones.

In this respect, it is very positive that recent legislative changes by the State Party of Ukraine ensure that no logging and sanitary cuts are permitted in the buffer zones of Ukrainian component parts. The plans of the State Party of Romania to expand areas with a non-intervention regime in Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park to 75% are likewise commendable, as this could significantly enhance the function of the buffer zone as an added layer of protection for three component parts. All States Parties should be encouraged to consider commitments to non-intervention of this ambition in terms of scale similar in size (total area) as those agreed in Domogled. It is also welcome that shelterwood cuts will no longer be possible under the new management plans for Groșii Țibleșului and Strâmbu Băiuț (Romania). At the same time, the concerns regarding current intervention levels and the possibility of shelterwood cuts, which are currently allowed in Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park, Cheile Nerei-Beușnița and Cozia (Romania), remain. It is recommended the State Party of Romania provide more details on the timeline to reach the 75% target and areas that shall benefit from the non-intervention regime in the future. Secondly, the 2019 Joint Reactive Monitoring mission recommendation to support undisturbed natural processes in all component parts and their buffer zones through natural regeneration, pro-forestation, aging of forest stands beyond conventional rotation ages needs to be implemented, ensuring that no impactful interventions take place in proximity of the respective component parts.

Regarding the supplementary information on forestry operations currently permissible in the buffer zones, similar concerns apply to component parts where shelterwood cuts, clear-cuts, thinning and/or sanitary and salvation cuts can be conducted. While the objective of interventions in Hayedos de Ayllón and Hayedos de Navarra in Spain and Monte Raschio and Sasso Fratino in Italy is to transform the affected areas into natural beech stands, these interventions may similarly impact temperature and wind regimes (with implications for fire risks) and may impact soil integrity, among other things. Furthermore, it is of serious concern that areas of possible logging intervention directly border the component part of Grumsin (Germany). Timber use in this buffer zone is only prohibited on 65 ha out of 274 ha and clear-cuts smaller than 0.3 ha are permitted on special areas in the remaining parts of the buffer zone. It is recommended the States Parties of Italy and Spain consider adapting intervention regimes to favour the natural transition towards more resilient natural beech forests, and the State Party of Germany significantly expand the area of non-intervention and implement an immediate ban on any clear-cuts in the buffer zone of Grumsin.

Regarding infrastructure projects, recalling that the Committee urged the State Party of Romania to abandon plans to upgrade the National Road 66A inside and/or near the property (Decision **44 COM 7B.99**) due to the potential impact on the property's integrity and Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), it is welcome that these plans have temporarily been put on hold. Noting that the State Party of Romania is trying to identify the best option to safeguard the OUV of the component part, it is important to consider an appropriate alternative route. The information that no proposals for hydropower plant projects are to be permitted within the property or its buffer zones following the amendment to the protected areas law in Romania is acknowledged. However, noting the information that an EIA is underway for the Cerna-Belareca hydropower facility, the State Party should be requested to provide details of the project to the World Heritage Centre and to undertake the EIA in accordance with the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, recalling that the 2019 mission considered that the extension of existing facilities in the Domogled-Valea Cernei component could pose severe threats to the property's OUV. The established position of the Committee that the construction of dams with large reservoirs within the boundaries of World Heritage properties is incompatible with World Heritage status should also be recalled.

Information on the road upgrade programme within the buffer zone of the Belgian components is noted, including that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will be undertaken, in addition to individual EIAs for the different junctions, which will consider all possible impacts on the OUV. The State Party should be requested to ensure that these assessments are undertaken in accordance with the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context* and are submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review and comments by IUCN.

Noting that the preliminary analysis of the forest fire in the Valle Infernale component part in Italy indicates limited impact, it is recommended that the State Party of Italy clarify the cause of the fire, the exact amount of old-growth forest affected, if any, and provide a map of the affected area.

The efforts by Belgium to increase the size of its component parts by seeking to enlarge and merge these are appreciated. Nevertheless, while the proposed green bridge may improve the connectivity between the Grippensdelle component parts, the ecoduct remains an artificial structure that cannot meet the integrity requirements of the Operational Guidelines.

It should be noted that the Ukrainian component parts of the property have not, at the time of preparing the report, suffered any direct impact from the ongoing war.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.20

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling decisions 37 COM 7B.26, 38 COM 7B.75, 39 COM 7B.19, 41 COM 7B.4, 41 COM 8B.7, 42 COM 7B.71, 43 COM 7B.13, 44 COM 7B.99 and 44 COM 8B.32, adopted at its 37th (Phnom Penh, 2013), 38th (Doha, 2014), 39th (Bonn, 2015), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 42nd (Manama, 2018), 43rd (Baku, 2019) and 44th extended (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,
3. Notes with satisfaction that, further to relevant decisions, the joint Reactive Monitoring mission in 2014, the joint Advisory mission in 2018, and the modification of the boundaries of the component parts in Slovakia approved at its 44th extended session, the protection regime of the Slovak component parts is now in line with the requirements of the Operational Guidelines, thanks the State Party of Slovakia for its continuous work and cooperation to address these issues and requests the State Party of Slovakia to continue implementing any pending recommendations from the 2014 and 2018 missions, and to report on any new developments in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
4. Notes with serious concern that, in several buffer zones, it remains possible to conduct impactful forestry interventions such as shelterwood cuts and clear-cuts, and requests furthermore the States Parties of Italy and Spain to consider adapting intervention regimes to favour a natural transition towards more resilient natural beech forests, and the State Party of Germany to consider immediately banning any clear-cuts and significantly expanding the area of non-intervention in the buffer zone of the Grumsin component;
5. Welcomes the significant progress made by all States Parties in developing the “Guidance document on buffer zone management and buffer zone zonation” of the transnational property, and also requests the States Parties to finalise the document in line with the recommendations of the IUCN review, in order to ensure its effectiveness, in particular by developing a specific mechanism to ensure that areas of strict protection are significantly increased and that the use of interventions within the buffer zones is minimised beyond the minimum standard outlined in the Guidance document;

6. Commends the State Party of Ukraine for legislative changes ensuring that no logging and sanitary cuts are permitted in the buffer zones of the Ukrainian component parts, also commends the State Party of Romania for its plan to significantly expand to 75% the area subject to a non-intervention regime in Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park and further requests the State Party of Romania to provide more details on the timeline to reach this target and the areas that shall benefit from the non-intervention regime in the future whilst ensuring that no impactful interventions take place in proximity of the respective component parts;
7. Welcomes that the potential widening and paving of a forest track crossing the property and its buffer zone (National Road 66A) in Romania has been temporarily put on hold, also notes that the State Party of Romania is working to identify the best option in order to safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and urges it to consider an appropriate alternative route to avoid any negative impacts on the OUV of the property;
8. Recalls its clear position that the construction of dams with large reservoirs within the boundaries of World Heritage properties is incompatible with their World Heritage status, and requests moreover the State Party of Romania to provide the World Heritage Centre with detailed information on the Cerna-Belareca hydropower facility and to submit the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), undertaken in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, once available, to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, as required by Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines;
9. Further notes that a forest fire affected a part of the Valle Infernale component in Italy, and requests moreover the State Party of Italy to detail the cause of the fire, the exact amount of old-growth forest affected, if any, and provide a map of the affected area;
10. Takes note of the plans of the State Party of Belgium to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment and individual EIAs for the road upgrade programme located in the buffer zone of the property, and requests moreover the State Party of Belgium to ensure that these impact assessments are undertaken in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, before final decisions on the project are taken that would be difficult to reverse;
11. Notes furthermore the efforts of the State Party of Belgium to expand and consolidate the protected areas that comprise component parts of the property and encourages the State Party to pursue options towards a boundary modification that would enhance the OUV of the property consistent with the integrity requirements of the Operational Guidelines;
12. Finally requests the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, a joint updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, including a response to the Committee's requests in Decision **44 COM 8B.32** to all States Parties concerned with this transnational serial property, and an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the 2019 joint Reactive Monitoring mission, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

21. Białowieża Forest (Belarus, Poland) (N 33ter)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1979

Criteria (ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/33/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/33/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

March 2004: Joint UNESCO/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; October 2008: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; June 2016: IUCN Advisory mission; September/October 2018: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Forestry/wood production and illegal activities (logging in the partially protected zones and removal of deadwood)
- Alterations of the hydrological regime
- Border fence impeding mammal movements
- Ambiguity regarding the boundaries of the property (*issue resolved*)
- Management system/Management Plan (lack of an integrated planning and management of the property and of a Transboundary Steering Committee with adequate human and financial resources)
- Financial resources
- Invasive/alien terrestrial species

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/33/>

Current conservation issues

The States Parties of Belarus and Poland submitted separate reports on the state of conservation of the property on 10 February and 22 February 2022 respectively, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/33/documents/>. On 7 March 2023, Poland submitted additional information on its report. The States Parties report the following:

Belarus:

- The draft Management Plan (MP) 2022-2031 for the Belarusian area of the property is currently undergoing public consultation and will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre;
- The new MP includes actions to strengthen the protection status of wolves inside the property and a proposal to extend the legal ban on wolf hunting to more areas of the property is being considered;
- Tree felling remains restricted to limited sanitary and fire safety cuttings or conservation measures. Dead wood has only been removed in the active forest management zone;
- Plans have been developed for the restoration of the natural flow of the Narewka river and the rehabilitation of several wetlands;
- An inventory of invasive species was carried out. Eradication works are underway in 260 ha to remove Canadian goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*).

Poland:

- An agreement was signed with several research institutes to develop the MP for the Polish area of the property in accordance with UNESCO requirements. Although work on the preparation of the MP intensified in 2022, some delays have occurred and it is now expected to be completed and made available for public consultation in 2023;
- Following the expiry of the 2016 Forest Management Plans (FMPs), updated annexes were approved in 2021 for two forest districts and implemented to a small extent, with limited timber harvesting, only in the Active Forest Management zone. No logging has occurred since November 2021. As the FMPs have expired, certain forest areas have to be closed periodically for safety reasons, causing tensions with local residents. New FMPs have been prepared for the forest districts that overlap with the property to allow for protection measures in line with Natura 2000 guidelines and safety cuttings. The proposed FMPs are currently under evaluation by competent nature conservation authorities;
- Proposals are being developed to amend the zoning plan for the forest areas within the property and managed by the State Forest Service and have been discussed with key stakeholders as part of the ongoing consultations for the MP;
- A plan for Fire Protection and Forest Fire Suppression has been updated based on public consultations held in 2022. The plan will be integrated into the MP and submitted to UNESCO once translated;
- While the 2022 report noted no significant increase in traffic on the Narewowska road, the update provided in 2023 reports that tourist use of the road is increasing and that a 30km/h speed limit is maintained;
- A border barrier in the form of a fence along the Belarus-Poland border and an adjacent technical road were completed by February 2022. An electronic barrier is also being erected. No impact on bird mortality has been observed. From 2023, it is planned to monitor and eradicate invasive alien plants along the border barrier.

On 16 November 2021, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the States Parties of Belarus and Poland, requesting information on third party reports concerning the planned building of a border barrier, which could negatively impact the movement of animals across the transboundary property. On 30 November 2021, the State Party of Belarus responded expressing concern over this project and its impacts on the movement of animals across the property.

On 10 January 2022, the World Heritage Centre received a letter from the State Party of Poland, confirming plans to construct a barrier along its border with Belarus to prevent illegal immigration into Poland. On 14 February 2022, the World Heritage Centre sent a follow-up letter, recalling the need to carry out an impact assessment as foreseen in the Operational Guidelines and requesting Poland to provide more detailed information on the planned border barrier. Noting third party reports that indicate that works within the property had already started, Poland was also requested to suspend construction works within the property until an impact assessment was submitted and reviewed. Further reminders from the World Heritage Centre requesting Poland for a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the border barrier and its location in relation to the property, as well as any other relevant technical and visual details, were sent on 20 May, 29 July and 15 November 2022.

On 18 March 2022, and then on 8 June 2022, the World Heritage Centre received letters from the State Party of Belarus expressing further concerns about the legislation adopted by Poland exempting the construction of the border barrier from an EIA, the lack of transboundary consultations on the project and its potential impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property.

On 22 April 2022, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party of Poland transmitting information received from third party sources on changes in vehicle traffic and wildlife mortality resulting from the upgrade of the Narewowska road.

On 7 June 2022, the World Heritage Centre received a letter from the State Party of Poland, reiterating its position that the border barrier was required to address the crisis generated by the passage of illegal migrants. It further noted that the General Director for Environment Protection was part of the team established for the preparation and construction of the border barrier to ensure environmental supervision and protection. To reduce the impact of the border barrier, 20 passages for large animals and 70,000 passages for small mammals, amphibians and reptiles were foreseen. No physical barriers

had been constructed along the watercourses. The letter concludes that the border barrier will not have a significant negative impact on protected habitats and species in the Białowieża Forest area.

The World Heritage Centre also received a request from the State Party of Belarus to organise a joint UNESCO/IUCN Advisory mission to the property to provide advice on how to address the impacts of the border barrier. The State Party of Belarus was informed by the World Heritage Centre that the transboundary nature of this World Heritage property and the specific issue of the border barrier on which Belarus wished the mission to focus, meant that an Advisory mission only to the Belarusian part of the property would not be able, on its own, to fully and effectively assess the state of conservation of the property nor the impact of this development on its OUV.

On 20 October 2022, the State Party of Belarus submitted a detailed analytical note prepared by the Belarus Academy of Sciences with an assessment and forecast of the impact of the border barrier on the biodiversity and natural ecosystems of the property. In addition, the World Heritage Centre received on 26 October 2022, a report prepared by a coalition of international and Polish NGOs, detailing the impacts of the erected border barrier. The World Heritage Centre transmitted both documents to the Polish authorities. A response to these letters was received from Poland on 2 May 2023.

On 2 November 2022, the State Party of Poland transmitted the outline of the MP to the World Heritage Centre, which was transmitted to IUCN for review.

On 31 March 2023, information was received from the State Party of Poland on the technical specifications of the border barrier, composed of 5 m steel poles with a 0.5 m foundation, topped with a 0.5 m wire coil and including 24 passages measuring 5 m wide and 4.5 m high for wildlife access. The width of the infrastructure, including the border barrier and service road is 8 m wide. The letter also refers to research showing that the existing barrier on the Belarus side, the so-called 'sistema', was already hampering connectivity in the property.

On 10 May 2023, the State Party of Poland submitted a document entitled 'Analysis of the impact of the construction of the barrier on the subjects of protection of the Natura 2000 site Białowieża Forest together with the Białowieża National Park Area'. It states that border rivers, canals and lakes were excluded from fencing, and that a number of safeguards and devices allowing free flow of water were installed in areas dependent on groundwater. An Environmental Protection Programme (EPP) for the construction phase of the border barrier was also drawn up by an independent external company. It contains basic procedures, rules and courses of action for complying with environmental protection requirements.

On 22 June 2023, the State Party of Poland submitted the Forest Fire Prevention and Suppression Plan for the Polish part of the property, including an extract from the full EIA of the Plan on the OUV of the property.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The construction of a border barrier is of serious concern due to its potential impact on the OUV of the property. The border barrier extends the entire 55.9 km length of the Belarusian-Polish border through the property, effectively dividing it into two parts. It is of utmost concern that no EIA has been provided to the World Heritage Centre by Poland, in spite of requests and as required by the Operational Guidelines. Furthermore, it is of concern that the reported legislative changes would have excluded this project from existing environmental regulations. The analysis of impact provided on 10 May 2023 fails to consider the property as a whole, including important attributes of its OUV and integrity, such as connectivity and habitat fragmentation, and only considers direct impacts on the Natura 2000 sites included in the Polish part of the property. It cannot therefore be considered as an EIA in line with the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*.

According to the specifications provided by the Polish State Party, most of the border barrier consists of 5 m steel posts with a 0.5 m foundation, topped with a 0.5 m wire coil and therefore, would be impenetrable for any large terrestrial animals, including those which represent important attributes of OUV. In addition, while the information provided by Poland stated that rivers would not be fenced, the main Narewka River is reportedly covered by the border barrier and other water courses seem to have a concertina wire border barrier installed. Concerns have been expressed that wildlife passages were not installed on the main animal routes and that the technical specifications do not meet the functional connectivity requirements for the effective conservation of the property's OUV. It is also unclear whether, at what frequency and for how long these passages will be opened to allow animals to pass, noting that in the information submitted by Poland on 2 May 2023, it is mentioned that the biology of species concerned, including their mating season, would be considered, without however providing any clear

commitments. It remains unclear to what extent the border barrier construction works have already had an impact on the OUV of the property, including in some of the best preserved and most sensitive areas located in the Białowieża National Park and across the property as a whole. Third parties have also reported tree logging and degradation due to the use of heavy equipment and pollution, although the State Party of Poland maintains the impacts have been minimal.

The World Heritage Centre and IUCN note that the barrier will further impede connectivity and inevitably result in forest fragmentation and changes in the hydrological regime, and the disturbance from construction may facilitate the spread of invasive species and the degradation of important habitats. Furthermore, it will isolate faunal communities on both sides of the border. The connectivity in the property was already affected by the existing barrier in Belarus ('sistema'), which prevented the passage of bison, but allowed limited passage of other species, including lynx and wolves. It is recalled that the Committee and the 2018 joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission raised the importance of ensuring ecological connectivity within the property. Based on the information available, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN are concerned that insufficient mitigation measures are in place to ensure connectivity across the border and that the barrier could pose a potential threat to the integrity of the property and the ecological function supporting viable populations of large mammals and carnivores, and that it will halt, or severely affect, wildlife movement that constitute important attributes of the OUV. As such, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN consider that the property may meet the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in line with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines, should the measures put in place be insufficient to guarantee connectivity across the border and should the other impacts outlined above remain unaddressed.

It is therefore recommended that the States Parties of Belarus and Poland be requested to urgently invite a Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to examine the potential threat of the border barriers to the OUV. The mission should assess the impact of the border barriers on the integrity and ecological function of the property, which contains extensive undisturbed areas, and in particular determine whether adequate mitigation measures have been put in place to ensure connectivity and maintain the OUV of the property, in particular with regards to wildlife movement and population viability. The mission should also examine the impacts of the border barriers on forest fragmentation, changes in the hydrological regime, increased spread of invasive species and degradation of important habitats. The mission should furthermore assess progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the 2018 Reactive Monitoring mission and previous Committee Decisions.

Progress in updating the MP of the Belarusian area is welcome, especially to strengthen the protection status of its wolf population. It is recommended that the State Party of Belarus be requested to submit a draft MP to the World Heritage Centre prior to its final approval. The State Party of Belarus is also encouraged to adopt a legal ban on wolf hunting throughout the property and to ensure that the relevant wildlife and FMPs are updated, based on the updated MP.

The ongoing efforts to develop the overall MP for the Polish area are also welcome, and its finalisation should be expedited while ensuring the full participation of all stakeholders and rightsholders, drawing on international expertise, as needed. However, it is of great concern that the draft revised zoning plan could result in a significant reduction of partially protected zones and an increase in the area foreseen for active forest management. It is crucial that both the MP and the revised zoning plan ensure the protection of the property's OUV as its central objective. It is also recalled that the 2018 mission recommended that any zoning revision should not decrease the area excluded from active forest management in order to establish a more natural forest composition. Similarly, the Forest Fire Prevention and Suppression Plan (which is currently reviewed by IUCN) should be guided by the same central objective of conserving undisturbed ecological processes in the property. The timely finalisation of the MP for the Polish area is crucial, as it will form the basis for new FMPs, and the State Party of Poland should take into account the findings of IUCN's technical review of the outline of the MP and submit a draft of the MP to the World Heritage Centre, for review by IUCN, prior to its final approval. It is recommended that the Committee reiterate the importance for the new FMPs to comply with the management prescriptions included in Decision **43 COM 7B.14**, in line with the forestry management regime foreseen at the time of the property's extension in 2014 and subsequent recommendations of the 2018 Reactive Monitoring mission, and that it also encourage the State Party of Poland to seek further advice from IUCN on the development of the new FMPs to ensure that these requirements are met, prior to their approval.

Concerns remain about the increase in traffic on the Narewowska road and the reported widespread non-observance of the speed limit, resulting in an increase in the number of wildlife road kills. It is

recommended that the State Party of Poland provide more detailed information on current traffic conditions and road kills, as well as on measures taken to minimise and manage impacts.

Efforts to restore the hydrological regime of the Narewka River are welcome and plans for a restoration of the natural flow of the river and the rehabilitation of wetlands are strongly encouraged, including in light of the potential impacts of climate change on the property.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.21

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decisions **43 COM 7B.14** and **44 COM 7B.100**, adopted at its 43rd (Baku, 2019) and 44th extended (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,
3. Expresses its utmost concern regarding the construction by the State Party of Poland, without prior submission to the World Heritage Centre of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), of a border barrier between the Belarusian and Polish parts of the transboundary property, crossing some of the best preserved and most sensitive areas of the property, which will further affect the ecological connectivity and inevitably result in forest fragmentation, changes in the hydrological regime, increased spread of invasive species through the construction phase and degradation of important biotopes, and will severely affect animal movement across the property;
4. Urges the States Parties of Belarus and Poland to take adequate measures to address the impacts listed above and guarantee ecological connectivity across the border that allows wildlife movement and considers that, if such measures are not taken urgently, the property may meet the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in line with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines;
5. Requests the States Parties of Belarus and Poland to invite, as a matter of urgency, a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property in order to:
 - a) Assess the impacts of the border barrier on the OUV of the property, including its integrity, ecological function and wildlife movement, which are vital to the viability of populations of key species,
 - b) Assess whether the animal crossings and breaks across watercourses put in place represent sufficient mitigation measures to maintain the OUV of the property, with regards to the movement of key species,
 - c) Review progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the 2018 Reactive Monitoring mission and previous Committee Decisions, including the various management documents recently developed, or under development, to establish their alignment with the conservation of the property's OUV;
6. Notes furthermore with concern that the reports submitted by the States Parties did not provide any details on the ongoing efforts to develop a Transboundary Integrated Management Plan, and encourages a transboundary cooperation for the conservation of the property;
7. Welcomes the progress in updating the Management Plan (MP) of the Belarus area of the property, also urges the State Party of Belarus to adopt a legal ban on wolf hunting

in the Belarusian area of the property, and to ensure that the relevant wildlife and forest management plans are updated, based on the updated MP and requests that the draft MP be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, before its final approval;

8. *Also requests the State Party of Poland to finalise the overall MP for the Polish area of the property, taking into account IUCN's technical review of its outline and the recommendations of the 2018 Reactive Monitoring mission, ensuring the full participation of all stakeholders and rightsholders, drawing on international expertise as necessary, and reinforcing the protection of the OUV of the property as the central management objective, and to submit the draft MP to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN and prior to its final approval, and reiterates that the MP should guide the development of other management documents, including the new Forest Management Plans (FMP), to ensure that all plans are aligned with the protection of the OUV of the property;*
9. *Notes also with concern that the draft revised zoning plan by the State Party of Poland would result in a significant reduction in the partially protected zones and a consequent increase in the area foreseen for active forest management, and thus further urges the State Party of Poland to avoid decreasing the area excluded from active forest management, in line with the recommendation of the 2018 mission;*
10. *Reiterates the importance for the new FMPs to comply with the management prescriptions included in Decision **43 COM 7B.14**, in line with the forestry management regime outlined at the time of the property's extension in 2014 and the subsequent recommendations of the 2018 mission, and encourages again the State Party of Poland to seek further advice from IUCN on the development of the new FMPs to ensure that these requirements are met, prior to their approval;*
11. *Further requests the State Party of Poland to provide information on current traffic conditions on the Narewowska road and reaffirm measures taken to minimize and manage any impacts resulting from traffic;*
12. *Also welcomes the efforts to restore the hydrological regime of the Narewka River and encourages the two States Parties to jointly implement plans to restore the natural flow of the river and to continue the rehabilitation of wetlands;*
13. *Requests furthermore the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated joint report on the state of conservation of the property, on the implementation of the above and the recommendations of the 2018 mission, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session, **considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilization to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value, including the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

23. Wadden Sea (Denmark, Germany, Netherlands) (N 1314ter)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2009

Criteria (viii)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1314/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (from 1991-1991)

Total amount approved: USD 5,000

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1314/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

Key factors identified at the time of inscription of the property needing ongoing attention include:

- Fishing/collecting aquatic resources
- Services/infrastructure/water infrastructure (harbours, industrial facilities)
- Transportation infrastructure/Marine transport infrastructure (maritime traffic)
- Buildings and development/Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure (residential and tourism development)
- Climate change and severe weather events/Changes to oceanic waters

Newly identified threats:

- Physical resource extraction/Mining (salt mining below the property)/Oil and gas (new gas development below the property)
- Services/infrastructure/renewable energy facilities (digging and dredging operations through the property to lay cables to connect offshore windfarms)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1314/>

Current conservation issues

Since 2019, the World Heritage Centre continues to receive information from third parties regarding developments in the Netherlands, which could impact the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the transboundary property, as follows:

- A proposal for a new gas development located in the vicinity of the property which would extend extractive activity below the property at Ternaard;
- Additional salt mining below the property;
- Planned digging and dredging operations through the property to lay cables to connect off-shore windfarms in the North Sea to on-land electricity infrastructure.

Consequently, several letters were sent to the State Party of the Netherlands transmitting the third-party information and requesting further information, including relevant impact assessment documents. Replies were received on 8 October 2019, 18 June 2020, 2 December 2020, and 20 January 2022, providing the following information:

- Salt and natural gas extraction is permitted in the property under strict conditions. These mining activities result in seabed subsidence which is compensated by natural sediment accretion;
- A new 'Coalition Agreement' concluded by the government that took office in the Netherlands on 10 January 2022 stipulated that no new gas extraction permits would be issued in the Wadden Sea;

- Regarding the proposed Ternaard gas development, the permit procedure will be assessed according to the policy in force prior to the implementation of the 'Coalition Agreement'. Production installations would be located outside the property and gas would be drilled at an angle extending below the property. In October 2019, the State Party advised that the project was in the initial phase of the permitting process. In January 2022, following third party concerns relayed by the World Heritage Centre, the State Party expressed regret that, contrary to Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, the World Heritage Centre had not been informed that the draft decisions concerning the project had been made available for inspection by residents, public authorities and civil society organisations on 27 August 2021 for a period of six weeks and therefore had not had the opportunity to provide comments. A four-page memorandum on the potential impacts of the Ternaard gas mining proposal on the OUV of the property, based on the previously completed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), was also provided;
- A permit was issued in September 2020 for additional extraction of 32 million tonnes of salt;
- A monitoring programme of salt and gas extraction is in place according to the 'hand on tap' principle so that extraction can be limited or halted before any negative effect occurs. The Independent Scientific Advisory Body (ISAB) established by the State Party of the Netherlands concluded that seabed subsidence resulting from gas extraction would not contribute to submergence of tidal flats, but that this was less clear for salt mining in the western Wadden Sea, where there was a reasonable chance that sediment accretion would be insufficient to offset sea level rise. The State Party will commission further studies on future subsidence capacity, but considers there is no need to limit or halt salt extraction in the short term;
- In January 2021, a preferred route was identified to connect an offshore windfarm in the North Sea to the mainland which would cross the property. In December 2021, a decision was taken to carry out an additional study to determine how the offshore wind power could be transported to shore without causing damage to the property. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) with specific reference to the World Heritage status of the area was reported to be undertaken;
- The 'Agenda for the Wadden Sea Region 2050' was adopted in February 2021. It is a voluntary framework for the Dutch Government, local and regional authorities, water authorities, the private sector and civil society organizations, providing an integrated vision for the future development of the Wadden Sea region. The 'Agenda' aims to invest in robust and resilient ecosystems so that the natural environment can accommodate the effects of climate change. Further work is foreseen to examine the cumulative impacts of human activities on the natural environment.

On 30 March 2022, the World Heritage Centre transmitted to the States Parties of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, a Technical Review by IUCN on the salt and natural gas extraction and the planned development of digging and dredging operations related to an offshore windfarm. In the same letter, the States Parties were informed that the state of conservation of the property would be examined by the Committee at its 45th session. A preliminary response was received from the State Party of the Netherlands on 20 May 2022, followed by the submission of additional documentation on 21 July 2022, including relevant extracts from the EIA for the Ternaard gas extraction project.

On 6 July 2022, a letter was sent to the States Parties of Germany and the Netherlands transmitting the third-party information concerning plans to develop a gas reserve called 'GEMS - Gateway to the Ems', located in the Dutch-German coastal waters and the application of the oil and gas company Wintershall Dea's for new oil drilling in the Wadden Sea National Park to extend oil production until 2069. In the response of 7 February 2023 from the State Party of Germany, prepared jointly with the Netherlands, it stated that the gas project is located outside but in the vicinity of the property. At this stage, permission to explore for and extract hydrocarbons has been granted, but the procedure requires the preparation of an EIA, in which all environmental and safety aspects will be thoroughly examined and evaluated. The letter further stated that the Wintershall Dea's application for oil production in the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park is still under review.

On 11 August 2022, the World Heritage Centre transmitted to the three States Parties a Technical Review by IUCN of the 'Single Integrated Management Plan' (SIMP) of the Wadden Sea World Heritage property (Draft version 0.8), dated 11 March 2022. On 21 April 2023, the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat submitted to the World Heritage Centre the finalised SIMP, developed by the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC), for formal adoption by the three States Parties in May 2023.

By letters dated 2 November 2022 and 13 April 2023, the State Party of the Netherlands provided updated information to the World Heritage Centre on the plans to connect offshore windfarms with the

onshore electricity grid by crossing the property. The Eemshaven Offshore Grid Connection Programme (PAWOZ-Eemshaven) aims to identify cable routes and techniques that have the least impact on the OUV of the property. The State Party also reported that it was investigating the option of producing hydrogen in the North Sea, north of the property, and delivering it to the mainland via pipelines investigated within the PAWOZ-Eemshaven. The State Party indicated that an EIA and an Integral Effect Analysis would be carried out and that permit for the installation of the cables and pipelines would only be approved if the possible impact was permitted under Dutch law.

On 20 December 2022, the World Heritage Centre transmitted to the State Party of the Netherlands third-party information related to a trilateral governmental agreement called 'Wilhelmshaven Declaration', for which a reply is still pending.

In addition, the World Heritage Centre has also been informed by the States Parties of Denmark and Germany, and by third parties, of several projects within and around the property, including the proposal for new windfarms and extension of existing windfarms (Germany), the deepening of the Elbe river shipping channel (Germany), the deepening of the Grådyb fairway from the North Sea into Esbjerg Harbor (Denmark), the extension of the Esbjerg port (Denmark), the installation of heating plants near Esbjerg (Denmark), new wind turbines in Tjæreborg Enge (Denmark), the construction of a new pier Romo harbour (Denmark), a planned Power-to-X facility in Esbjerg (Denmark), a planned hotel development in Rindby, Fanø (Denmark), a wind turbine test centre (Denmark), and the planned construction of floating LNG terminals in Wilhelmshaven (Germany). IUCN reviews were provided for several of these projects and for others, the World Heritage Centre is still awaiting comments from States Parties in accordance with Paragraph 174 of the Operational Guidelines.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

In recent years numerous infrastructure developments have been planned or established within and in the vicinity of the property, including extractive activities (oil, salt and gas), port and shipping, and energy infrastructure.

Regarding extractive activities, the announcement by the State Party of the Netherlands that no new gas extraction permits will be issued in the Wadden Sea presents a clear commitment towards the conservation of the OUV of the property, taking into account the increasing cumulative pressures on the property from development activities, climate change and sea level rise. However, the potential approval of the proposed Ternaard gas project would appear to be at odds with this broader policy level commitment. Also noting the approval in 2020 of additional salt extraction activities in the Netherlands, it should be stressed that whilst these projects may be located or planned outside the boundaries of the property, the associated extractive activities extend to the gas field and salt deposits directly below the property. Furthermore, the proposed Wintershall Dea's oil drilling, currently being considered in Germany, appears to be situated inside the property. The GEMS gas development in Germany, for its part, is located outside the property, but within close proximity to its boundaries.

With regard to these, the Committee may wish to recall its established position on the incompatibility between extractive activities and World Heritage status. In addition, any extractive activities close to the property should be comprehensively assessed in accordance with the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, and only authorised if such assessments demonstrate that they will not have adverse impacts on the OUV of the property.

The State Party of the Netherlands reports that the main impact resulting from extractive activities below the property is seabed subsidence. As the scale of tidal flats is one of the main attributes of the property's OUV that directly supports the associated natural, undisturbed biological processes and exceptional biodiversity, it is essential that any potential impacts of the Ternaard gas extraction project are fully assessed in relation to the property's OUV. In this respect, it is noted with concern that the EIA documentation submitted by the State Party on 21 July 2022 has no comprehensive consideration for the property's OUV.

It is recalled that the property is inscribed under Criterion (viii) regarding the highly dynamic and uninterrupted natural processes of coastal deposition, and Criterion (ix), based on the fact that the property includes some of the last remaining natural large-scale intertidal ecosystems where natural processes continue to function largely undisturbed. During the evaluation of its nomination, it was understood that subsidence of tidal flats due to existing gas extraction was fully compensated by natural sedimentation. It is therefore of concern that the further subsidence of the deep subsurface due to gas extraction for the Ternaard project would lead to additional sedimentation of sand and silt in the property, requiring additional artificial sand replenishment of coastal zones from elsewhere. Consequently, the

proposed Ternaard project seems to have direct and additional negative impacts on the attributes of the OUV and would not appear to comply with the 'No-go' policy for extractive industries in World Heritage properties.

Concerning salt mining, the conclusion by ISAB that there is a reasonable probability that, in the long term, sediment accretion will be insufficient to offset sea level rise, as well as the risk of prolonged seabed subsidence once the mining operation is completed, is a matter of serious concern. Appropriate measures should be taken to address this, including a decision not to approve further salt extraction projects or other projects that may further contribute to seabed subsidence, in line with the precautionary principle, and limiting or halting existing salt extraction activities.

It is noted that the 'hand on tap' monitoring mechanism was in place at the time of the property's inscription. However, as noted by ISAB, it should be determined whether this methodology remains valid in light of long-term uncertainties, including sea level rise as a result of climate change and the rate of natural sediment accretion. It is therefore recommended that the Committee request the States Parties to adopt a precautionary and strategic approach to the management of the property, clarifying longer-term projections based on the latest scientific data on climate change for the Wadden Sea, and request the State Party of the Netherlands to ensure any necessary adaptation of the 'hand on tap' monitoring mechanism to account for these uncertainties.

Regarding offshore wind power, including the connection to the onshore grid and a potential hydrogen production north of the Wadden Sea and the associated construction of pipelines to bring it on land in the Netherlands, it is positive that an EIA and an Integral Effect Analysis will be undertaken to assess the potential impacts of the planned activities on the specific attributes, and to ensure that these do not pose a potential threat to the property's OUV. In this regard the States Parties should be encouraged to use the online *Guidance for Wind Energy Projects in a World Heritage Context*, when planning and assessing the impacts of these projects.

Considering the numerous existing and proposed extraction and infrastructure developments within and around the property in the three countries, it is recommended that the States Parties be requested to provide the World Heritage Centre and IUCN with an overview of all existing and planned extractive activities within and around the property with appropriate maps. It is also recommended that they undertake a joint SEA to assess the cumulative impacts of these multiple developments on the OUV prior to continuing to permit individual projects on a case-by-case basis. The SEA should be in line with the key principles contained within the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context* and be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN. Furthermore, in this regard, it is important that the States Parties adopt a strategic, proactive and forward-looking management approach to inform decision-making, reporting on and managing the potential cumulative impacts of these developments in order to safeguard the property and its OUV.

Acknowledging the adoption of the 'Agenda for the Wadden Sea Region 2050' in 2021 and the new SIMP for the property in 2023, it is timely for the States Parties to ensure a strengthened integrated and coordinated management approach for the property in the aforementioned manner to avoid any negative impacts on the property's OUV.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.23

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decisions **33 COM 8B.4** and **38 COM 8B.13**, adopted at its 33rd (Sevilla, 2009) and 38th (Doha, 2014) sessions respectively,
3. Welcomes the development of the 'Agenda for the Wadden Sea Region 2050' in 2021 and the adoption of the 'Single Integrated Management Plan' (SIMP) for the transboundary property in 2023 and strongly encourages the States Parties of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands to adopt a precautionary and strategic approach to the management of the property, including to clarify longer-term projections based on the latest scientific climate change data for the Wadden Sea;

4. *Reiterates its position that extractive activities are incompatible with World Heritage status, and considers that natural resource extraction below the property has the potential to adversely impact its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV);*
5. *Also welcomes the confirmation by the State Party of the Netherlands that no new gas extraction permits will be issued in the Wadden Sea, but notes with serious concern the approval of a new salt extraction project and the ongoing consideration of a proposed gas development at Ternaard, in the vicinity of the property, which would extend extractive activities below the property;*
6. *Notes with further concern that, in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, the State Party of the Netherlands has not undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed Ternaard gas extraction project on the OUV of the property when, based on information available, it would appear that the project has direct negative impacts on the OUV of the property, and therefore urges the State Party not to approve the project;*
7. *Requests the State Party of the Netherlands not to approve further extractive projects, in line with the precautionary principle, to assess whether adaptation of the 'hand on tap' monitoring mechanism is required to account for uncertainties linked to climate change, and to consider limiting or halting existing salt extraction activities, as required, to effectively maintain and protect the OUV;*
8. *Also notes with serious concern the Wintershall Dea's oil development, which is currently being considered by the State Party of Germany, and appears to be located inside the property, as well as the GEMS gas development located close to the boundary of the property;*
9. *Also urges the State Party of Germany not to proceed with any proposed oil exploration inside the property and to conduct a detailed EIA, including an assessment of potential impacts on the OUV of the property, for any oil or gas extraction project that may negatively impact the property, in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;*
10. *Further notes with serious concern the scientific advice from the Independent Scientific Advisory Body (ISAB) established by the State Party of the Netherlands that, as a result of salt mining, there is a reasonable probability that future sediment accretion will be insufficient to offset sea level rise and that the potential for subsidence of the seabed will be prolonged once the mining operation is stopped, and also considers that subsidence of the seabed, especially in the light of projected sea level rise as a result of climate change, could reduce the extent of the tidal flats, which are one of the main attributes of the property's OUV, and therefore directly result in a significant negative impact on the property's OUV;*
11. *Further welcomes the decision by the State Party of the Netherlands to carry out additional studies on the proposed routing to connect the planned offshore wind power installation to the mainland, through impact assessments specifically focused on the property's OUV and including an assessment of the impacts of the potential hydrogen production north of the Wadden Sea and the pipelines to be constructed for delivering the substance to the mainland, and also requests the State Party to submit these assessments to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN prior to a final decision on the projects;*
12. *Notes the numerous existing and proposed wind energy projects in the vicinity of the property and encourages the States Parties to use the online Guidance for Wind Energy*

Projects in a World Heritage Context when planning and assessing their impacts and taking proactive measures for the protection and preservation of the property's OUV;

13. *Further notes the multiple existing and/or proposed extraction and infrastructure developments within and around the property, and further requests the three States Parties to:*
 - a) *Provide to the World Heritage Centre and IUCN an overview of all existing and planned extractive activities within and around the property, with appropriate maps,*
 - b) *Conduct a joint Strategic Environmental Assessment to assess the cumulative impacts of these developments on the OUV of the property, in line with the key principles of the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, prior to continuing to permit individual projects on a case-by-case basis,*
 - c) *Authorise project proposals only if adequate assessments demonstrate that they will not have an adverse impact on the OUV of the property;*
14. *Finally requests the States Parties of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated joint report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.*

24. Lake Baikal (Russian Federation) (N 754)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1996

Criteria (vii)(viii)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/754/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 2 (from 1990-2000)

Total amount approved: USD 33,200

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/754/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

1997: World Heritage Centre mission; 1998: World Heritage Centre monitoring mission; 2001 and 2005: joint UNESCO/IUCN Reactive Monitoring missions; 2003: UNESCO/IUCN high-level mission; 2011: joint UNESCO/IUCN Mission; 2015: IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Gas and oil pipeline project across the World Heritage property in 2006 (*issue resolved*)
- Management System/Management Plan (lack of adequate management system)
- Legal framework (uncertain legal protection)
- Pollution from paper mill and domestic wastewater/Surface pollution
- Illegal activities (timber harvesting, construction on the lake shore, sale of land)
- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation (tourism development)
- Fire (wildfires in the Baikal region in 2015)
- Upstream and downstream planned and existing dam infrastructure in the Russian Federation and Mongolia/Water infrastructure
- Mining

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/754/>

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2022, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/754/documents>. Additional information was shared by the State Party on 30 December 2021, 28 January 2022, 24 February 2022 and 27 June 2022 in view of the Reactive Monitoring mission, which was planned for February 2022. An updated report on the state of conservation of the property was submitted on 27 January 2023 and is also available at the above-mentioned link. The State Party reports the following:

- Renewed regulations issued in 2022 continue to permit the increased range of water level in Lake Baikal between 455.54 m and 457.85 m above sea level (a 2.31 m variation) for the period until the end of 2023 to enable hydropower dam regulation, temporary legislation in place since 2016. Scientific research will study the environmental and socio-economic impact of changes in the water level of Lake Baikal, with a completion date set for 2023;
- The federal regulatory authorities together with the Governments of the Republic of Buryatia and the Irkutsk Region are taking joint measures to identify and demolish illegal buildings, as well as prevent unauthorized building development;
- Following a preliminary assessment of the proposed options to eliminate accumulated environmental damage on the territory of the former Baikalsk Pulp and Paper Mill (BPPM), an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was stated to be due in 2022. Appropriate technologies to dispose of the industrial waste accumulated at the BPPM and potential contractors to implement the clean-up were selected in 2022, following a competitive selection process. Works will begin in 2023;
- A strategic master plan for the integrated development of the Baikalsk Municipality, including the territory of BPPM, was approved, and a specific concept for the development of the former territory of BPPM elaborated. A draft federal order to approve the Programme for Social and Economic Development of the Baikalsk Municipality has been submitted for approval, and measures taken to harmonise the processes of the BPPM remediation and the development of the site;
- A report was commissioned to analyse the impact of legislative changes that may weaken the existing regulatory framework and entail a potential threat to the property. The completion date was extended from February 2022 to the end of 2023, while amendments to legislation on EIAs were made, and the list of prohibited activities and standards for allowable impacts were issued in 2020 and 2021;
- Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are a set of legal provisions providing investors special tax, customs and other preferential conditions for development, and are not required to undergo EIAs, as they are not development projects in and of themselves. However, specific individual projects, including those within the SEZs, are subject to environmental assessments in accordance with the procedures established by law;
- Whilst the area affected by large fires has decreased, including as a result of improved detection and suppression of fires, they remain a significant threat to forests in the property. Investments have been made in reforestation and fire management, and an assessment of the impact of fires on the forest and lake ecosystems is underway;
- Substantial effort is underway to improve waste and tourism management within the property, with a comprehensive plan for wastewater treatment plants and landfill management, alongside federal investments to strengthen ecological monitoring, research, conservation and sustainable development of the property;
- Through the joint Russian-Mongolian working group, the two States Parties have agreed to collaborate on the assessment of the impacts of all planned energy and dam projects in Mongolia and their impact on the Selenga River, its tributaries and Lake Baikal, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

On 10 November 2021, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party of Mongolia requesting additional information on the transboundary Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the proposed Shuren and Orkhon hydropower projects, and on the impact study of the Egiin Gol hydropower plant

project (EGHPP). On 31 January 2023, the State Party of Mongolia sent the additional study on biodiversity impacts of the planned EGHPP to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, followed by the 2014 detailed EIA amendment and the 2017 summary report on the EIA of the EGHPP, both received on 17 February 2023.

On 4 April 2022, the World Heritage Centre transmitted third-party information to the State Party of the Russian Federation, requesting verifications regarding a proposed coal mining project and associated road construction in the vicinity of the property, water level regulations, illegal constructions, remediation processes for the BPPM, legislative framework for the protection of the property, developments and impact assessments in SEZs, wildfires and planned hydropower projects in Mongolia. At the time of writing this report, no response has been received from the State Party.

On 14 February 2023, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party conveying third-party concerns over the levels of harmful substances and their regulation in the wastewater entering Lake Baikal. No response has been received from the State Party at the time of writing this report.

On 30 March 2023, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party requesting further information in response to third-party concerns over legislative amendments to weaken environmental regulations in order to facilitate clearcut logging and further development of infrastructure projects, including tourism projects and transport infrastructure; pollution from the remediation of the BPPM; and threats from hydropower development in the Russian Federation and Mongolia. No response has been received from the State Party at the time of writing.

The joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission scheduled to take place from 28 February to 5 March 2022 had to be postponed due to logistical constraints. Following World Heritage Centre's letter to the State Party of 25 July 2023 indicating its readiness to undertake the mission together with IUCN in August, the State Party replied on 18 August with a proposal to conduct the mission at any time starting from 25 November 2023.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

Lake Baikal continues to be negatively affected by numerous factors that significantly impact the property's ecological condition. The legislation issued in 2022 for the 2022-2023 period continues to allow an extended range of 2.31 m water level variation of Lake Baikal for hydropower dam regulation. This temporary legislation, renewed for the fourth time, contradicts the Committee's request since 2016 (Decision **40 COM 7B.97**) not to allow such changes before their impact on the property are assessed. Higher water level variation can negatively affect the property, notably the nearshore areas that underpin the lake biodiversity, therefore having the potential to directly impact on its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The State Party should no longer extend the use of increased limits beyond the established 1 m water level range until the impacts of all existing water use and management regulations on the OUV of the property are fully assessed and the requirements for its protection are set. The ongoing impact study due in 2023 should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN.

It is regrettable that the State Party has not yet finalised the study on the impact of the numerous proposed and approved legal amendments, including those already issued on requirements for EIA, the list of prohibited activities, and the standards for allowable impacts on the Lake Baikal ecosystem along with levels of pollutants. It is recalled that the Committee has previously considered that 'the scale of this weakening of the regulatory provisions, at the time when the property's ecological conditions continue to deteriorate, is such that, if all proposed changes proceed, the property would face potential danger in line with Paragraph 180(b) i) and iv) of the Operational Guidelines'. Therefore, the State Party should be reminded not to approve any changes that weaken the protection regime of the property and expedite the above-mentioned study and submit it to the World Heritage Centre upon completion in 2023, for review by IUCN. It is recommended that the State Party critically reviews the findings of the study and strengthens the Law on the Protection of Lake Baikal and its effective implementation. Upon resumption, the postponed Reactive Monitoring mission should consider whether the existing regulatory framework and management system adequately address the threats to the OUV, and whether the conditions for including the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger are met.

The reported investment of significant federal funding to support research, conservation and sustainable development of the property is welcome, as are the measures taken by the State Party to identify and demolish illegal buildings, prevent illegal construction in the property and improve waste and tourism management. However, the land use pressure in the property remains high based on the number of illegal constructions and the proposals to relax legislative restrictions. The State Party should develop the Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for the property, as requested by the Committee, as well as a

detailed land use plan. Building on the experiences of past strategic action plans and ongoing federal funding programmes, the IMP should include management objectives, an implementation strategy and a monitoring plan with clear performance and environmental indicators, focused notably on the nearshore areas most at risk.

Also in view of the multiple existing and proposed development projects in the SEZs, within the property and its wider setting, the State Party should clarify the third-party information formally submitted to it relating to these developments, provide a comprehensive list of all projects and ensure that they are subject to rigorous EIAs, in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context. A comprehensive assessment of the potential cumulative impacts of such projects across the property should be undertaken and inform the development of the above-mentioned IMP. While acknowledging the specificities of national legislation, it is recalled that impact assessments are a requirement under the World Heritage Convention and the Operational Guidelines for its implementation.

It is regrettable that the EIA requested to ensure an assessment of both the impacts of the remediation of the former BPPM and the possible options and impacts for future uses of the site was not submitted to the World Heritage Centre prior to the reported selection of contractors and commencement of implementation in 2023. The State Party should be requested to urgently submit the EIA and Master Plan for the Baikalsk Municipality to the World Heritage Centre and to suspend further implementation of activities that may have a negative impact on the OUV until the mission has provided recommendations in relation to the project.

The improvements over the past five years in fire detection and suppression, as well as the plans to undertake the proposed assessments on the impact of fires on forest and lake ecosystems, as previously requested by the Committee, are welcomed.

The submission of the additional study on the impacts of the EGHPP on the biodiversity of the property, as well as the documents linked to the EIA, are noted with appreciation, and the IUCN review of the documents will be communicated separately. However, considering the multiple proposed and existing hydropower projects in Mongolia and the Russian Federation, it is essential that the cumulative impacts of individual projects to the property's OUV are assessed in this context. It is therefore regrettable that no updated information has been provided on the progress towards the transboundary SEA for the existing and planned hydropower and water management projects, nor the Regional Environmental Assessment (REA) for the Shuren and Orkhon hydropower projects. The Committee should request the State Party of Mongolia to clarify the status of the REA process and undertake the study as a matter of priority, in order to inform an assessment of the potential cumulative impacts of such projects on the OUV of the property, to be undertaken jointly by the States Parties of Mongolia and the Russian Federation prior to approving any further individual hydropower projects which may have the potential for negative impacts on the OUV of the property.

The joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property could not yet take place at the time of writing the report; its organization is being discussed with the State Party.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.24

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **40 COM 7B.97** and **44 COM 7B.107**, adopted at its 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,*
3. *Urges again the State Party to refrain from renewing legislative amendments which allow extending the water level variation beyond one metre due to potential negative impact on the property and its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), until the impacts of all existing water use and management regulations on the OUV are fully assessed and the requirements for its protection are set, and reiterates its request to the State Party to*

submit the ongoing impact study, which should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN;

4. Notes with utmost concern the numerous proposed and approved legal amendments, including those that would weaken the requirements for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and standards for allowable impacts on the Lake Baikal ecosystem along with levels of pollutants, and which would relax permissible activities, and recalls that it considers that the scale of the weakening of the regulatory provisions, at a time when the property's ecological conditions continue to deteriorate, is such that, if all the proposed changes proceed, the property would face potential danger in line with Paragraph 180(b) i) and iv) of the Operational Guidelines;
5. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, no later than end of 2023, the overdue study to analyse and review the impact of legislative changes on the property, and use the findings of the study to strengthen the Law on the Protection of Lake Baikal, and again urges the State Party not to approve any changes that weaken the protection regime of the property;
6. Welcomes the reported significant federal funding for research, conservation and sustainable development of the property as well as the measures to identify and demolish illegal buildings, prevent further illegal construction and improve waste and tourism management, and encourages the State Party to continue these efforts to strengthen the protection of the property;
7. Also reiterates its request to the State Party to develop an Integrated Management Plan involving all Government entities and other stakeholders involved in the property, with a detailed land-use plan for the property, including management objectives, an implementation strategy and a monitoring plan with clear performance and environmental indicators;
8. Also requests the State Party to provide a complete list and details of all existing and planned development projects within Special Economic Zones (SEZs), within the property and its wider setting, and to ensure they are subject to rigorous EIAs in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the potential cumulative impacts of such multiple projects on the OUV of the property, including within the SEZs;
9. Urges the State Party to submit the EIA for the remediation of the former Baikalsk Pulp and Paper Mill (BPPM), along with the Master Plan for Baikalsk Municipality and the concept for the development of the former territory of BPPM to the World Heritage Centre, suspending implementation until the mission has provided recommendations to the State Party with regards to the project;
10. Also welcomes the reported improvements over the past five years in fire management and encourages the State Party to increase the efficacy and efficiency of such measures, accounting for the future impacts of climate change, and furthermore to expedite the proposed assessments of the impact of fires on forest and lake ecosystems;
11. Requests furthermore the State Party of Mongolia to clarify the status of the Regional Environmental Assessment (REA) process and to undertake this assessment as a matter of priority and requests moreover the States Parties of Mongolia and the Russian Federation to jointly develop, based on the findings of the REA, an assessment of the cumulative impacts of all existing and planned hydropower and water management projects on the OUV of the property, prior to approving any further individual projects and to guide the subsequent elaboration of EIAs for all such projects;

12. *Takes note of the State Party's proposal to organize the postponed joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property after 25 November 2023, with the objective of reviewing the threat posed to the property by various legislative changes, the existing and proposed developments in the SEZs and the property, and the remediation plans for the former BPPM, as well as assessing the conditions of the property which may warrant its inclusion on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and requests the State Party to ensure that the mission programme includes an opportunity for meetings with the States Parties of the Russian Federation and Mongolia to allow the mission team to assess the full range of transboundary issues potentially affecting the hydrological and ecological conditions of the property;*
13. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session, **considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilization to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value, including the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

MIXED PROPERTIES

AFRICA

29. Cliff of Bandiagara (Land of the Dogons) (Mali) (C/N 516)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1989

Criteria (v)(vii)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/516/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 9 (from 1988-2018)

Total amount approved: USD 124,444

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/516/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: in 2020, US\$ 984,818 by the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH) for the "Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of the Built Heritage of Bandiagara"

Previous monitoring missions

July 2019: Needs assessment mission on the built and intangible cultural heritage as well as objects and practices associated with the Cliffs of Bandiagara (joint Mali-UNESCO mission), conducted in the framework of the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund.

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Insufficient site management means
- Illicit trafficking of cultural property
- Instable security situation
- Intercommunity conflict between the Dogons and the Fulani

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/516/>

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2022, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/516/documents>, providing the following information:

- Intra- and inter-community tensions and armed conflicts drive people to abandon villages and seek refuge in more secure urban centres;
- There is a slight improvement in the security situation and a gradual but very precarious return to peace;
- The socio-sanitary and economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis have impacted the conservation and management of the property;
- Activities aimed at reconciliation and social cohesion of communities were carried out with the support of various partners, including MINUSMA;
- A multidisciplinary working group is being set up to develop an emergency action plan as recommended by the 2019 mission. It will function once the project for the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH) becomes operational;

- The State Party plans to submit requests to fund projects for the safeguarding of heritage under the other UNESCO Cultural Conventions;
- Funding from the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP/USA) was granted for the safeguarding of textiles in central Mali;
- The Association Dogon Initiative (ADI) and other organizations have taken action for:
 - Rehabilitation and reconstruction of heritage in the communes of Sangha and Wadouba, in particular on the ancient sites of the Koundou-Guina village,
 - Information and awareness-raising on heritage among young schoolchildren and the general public,
 - Capacity building for women,
 - The development of income-generating activities (IGA),
 - Support for victims and displaced persons following armed attacks on villages;
- The government programme for the reconstruction of the built heritage, accompanied by the construction of infrastructures in support of the populations, has begun in the communes of Bankass and Sangha;
- Preparations for the “Sigui”, the most important ritual ceremony taking place every sixty years and lasting for seven years, are initiated. Significant infrastructure needs have been identified, such as boreholes with a water supply system and the rehabilitation of degraded village camps following the cessation of tourism;
- The State Party acknowledges that the integrity and authenticity of the property have been affected while emphasizing that the cultural and natural values are still preserved;
- The lack of human and financial resources continues to weigh negatively on the effective management of the property, limiting the intervention capacities of the Cultural Mission, and the appeal to the international community for support in the safeguarding of the heritage of the property is reiterated.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies

The State Party report on the property reconfirms a still very unstable security situation due to intra- and inter-community tensions and armed conflicts, driving the local populations to abandon the villages, to which is added the COVID-19 health crisis and its socio-sanitary and economic consequences affecting the conservation and management of the property. Noting the assertion by the State Party that the cultural and natural values are still preserved, the finding that the integrity and authenticity of the property have been affected is of great concern. This could affect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, as integrity and authenticity are integral parts of the OUV, if no remedial action is undertaken. It seems that a return to peace and security is a condition to avoid a continued deterioration of the OUV. In this respect, the confirmation by the State Party of a slight improvement in the security situation and the gradual return to peace is encouraging.

However, a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission could not take place due to the security situation.

The activities carried out to promote reconciliation and social cohesion of communities with the support of MINUSMA and other partners are commendable but must be strengthened and better coordinated. The intention to establish a multidisciplinary working group to coordinate and orient all the conservation and promotion actions of the community and the government, proposed by the Emergency Action Plan as recommended by the 2019 mission is appreciated. The decision for the creation of this group should have been taken as soon as the ALIPH project for the “Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of the Built Heritage of Bandiagara” became operational, but it was finally launched in August 2022. However, it should be noted that by June 2023 this group had still not been set up. The request should therefore be repeated to the State Party to create this group.

It should also be noted with appreciation that between August 2022 and May 2023, the ALIPH project made it possible to carry out (i) three awareness-raising missions on culture and peace in relation to heritage conservation; (ii) the inventory and evaluation of 370 houses, 83 of which are to be rebuilt, 230 male granaries, 144 of which are to be rebuilt, and 139 female granaries, 54 of which are to be rebuilt, in three villages; (iii) the inventory of 28 movable cultural objects; (iv) the final reconstruction of 16

houses, 25 male granaries and 24 female granaries in three of the four beneficiary villages. Work is currently being completed on 76 houses, 70 male granaries and 44 female granaries, as well as a Toguna.

It is furthermore reassuring to note the various community actions making it possible to support and mobilize local communities, in particular those of the ADI aimed at heritage restoration, awareness-raising, capacity building for women, IGAs and also support for victims and displaced persons. It is crucial that these initiatives continue to be supported and encouraged. In respect of the launch of the government programme for the reconstruction of the built heritage with the construction of infrastructures, and the various projects which have mobilized funds, the report of the State Party unfortunately does not provide concrete details allowing them to be assessed and analysed. The State Party should be requested to provide more information on these projects as soon as possible and to provide an update on the achievements in its future reports on the state of conservation of the property.

Recalling that this is a mixed property, it is recommended that the State Party provide information on the natural values in the next report to allow a better analysis of the impact of the current situation on the natural values of the property.

It is appreciated that the State Party addresses the ritual ceremony of “Sigui” and the initiation of preparations for its celebration in 2027. This is the most important ceremony for the Dogons which takes place every 60 years, to last seven years, in order to allow the involvement of all the villages along the cliff. These preparations themselves include a set of traditional practices, and infrastructure needs (boreholes with water supply system, rehabilitation of village camps, etc.) have been identified. The current security situation therefore addresses a central element of the heritage of the Dogon communities, alerting to the urgency of its safeguarding but also to the opportunity that the “Sigui” represents to strengthen the identity of the communities within the property.

In addition, the State Party recognizes the importance of safeguarding the cultural and natural values that constitute the OUV of the property, which makes the limits of the intervention capacities of the Cultural Mission and the inadequacy of the human and financial resources of all the more worrying. There is an urgent need to coordinate activities through a multidisciplinary action plan which should also serve as the basis for justifying an increase in financial and personnel support for the cultural mission so that it can strengthen social practices, traditional techniques and economics that underpin the existence of this extensive and extremely fragile cultural landscape, all of which are now significantly under threat.

Finally, noting that the management and conservation plan for the property expires in 2022 and will need to be updated, the State Party should be requested to submit the updated draft management plan to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.29

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B,Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.72**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Notes with satisfaction the various measures taken by the State Party for the conservation of the heritage and the reconciliation and social cohesion of communities with the support of MINUSMA and other partners, and requests it to strengthen these measures;*
4. *Reiterates its great concern about the continuing very unstable security situation due to intra- and inter-community tensions and armed conflicts which are driving local populations to abandon villages and take refuge in more secure towns in the country, which affects conservation and management of the property, exacerbated by the COVID-*

- 19 health crisis, and welcomes the confirmation by the State Party of the slight improvement in the security situation and the gradual but very precarious return to peace;
5. Taking note of the State Party's claim that the cultural and natural values are still preserved, expresses its great concern that the integrity and authenticity of the property have been affected and considers that a return to peace and security is a necessary condition to avoid continued degradation of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV);
 6. Notes with appreciation the intention to establish a multidisciplinary working group for the development of an emergency action plan as recommended by the 2019 mission, and requests the State Party to set it up as soon as possible in order to coordinate all community and government initiatives and to strengthen the traditional social, technical and economic practices that underpin the existence of this extensive and very fragile cultural landscape, and which are today under considerable threat;
 7. Notes with satisfaction the operational launch of the "Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of the Built Heritage of Bandiagara" project, financed by the Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH) that has already carried out the inventory and evaluation of the buildings and movable heritage objects affected in three villages, and has rehabilitated a large number of houses and granaries;
 8. Also notes with satisfaction the various community actions that support and mobilize local communities in safeguarding their heritage, in particular those of the Association Dogon Initiative (ADI), and encourages the State Party to continue to support and back these initiatives financially;
 9. Welcomes the launch of the Government programme for the reconstruction of built heritage, which also provides for infrastructure projects, as well as efforts to mobilize additional funds to intervene in various aspects of the heritage, tangible and intangible, and requests the State Party to provide more information on these different interventions as soon as possible and to take stock of the achievements in its future reports on the state of conservation of the property;
 10. Welcomes the efforts of the State Party to organize the ritual ceremony of "Sigui" which only takes place every 60 years, and to initiate preparations for its celebration in 2027, including the identification of infrastructure needs, such as boreholes with a water supply system and the rehabilitation of degraded village camps; recognizing the great importance of this ceremony for the Dogon communities and the opportunity that the "Sigui" represents to strengthen and renew the identity of the communities within the property, strongly encourages the State Party to provide all measures favouring the safeguarding of this heritage, including in particular under the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;
 11. Expresses its concern as regards the limits of the intervention capacities of the Cultural Mission and the insufficiency of human and financial resources which continue to weigh negatively on the effective management of the property, and reiterates its request to the State Party to increase its efforts to further support the Cultural Mission;
 12. Notes that the management and conservation plan for the property expires in 2022, and requests the State Party to submit the updated draft management plan to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
 13. Requests the State Party to provide information regarding the state of the natural values of the property in order to allow a better analysis of the impact of the current situation on these values;

14. *Reiterates its request to the State Party to invite, as soon as circumstances allow, a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN reactive monitoring mission to the property to examine the state of conservation of the cultural and natural heritage and the overall management of the property in the context of the current security crisis;*
15. *Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2024, a progress report, and by 1 December 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

30. Ngorongoro Conservation Area (United Republic of Tanzania) (C/N 39bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1979

Criteria (iv)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1984-1989

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/39/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 16 (from 1979-2014)

Total amount approved: USD 290,386

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/39/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: USD 50,000 from Switzerland, USD 35,000 from the Netherlands, USD 20,000 from the United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP) and USD 8,000 self-benefitting funds from the United Republic of Tanzania for community consultative process in 2013-2014; USD 50,000 from the Flanders Funds-in-Trust for sustainable tourism strategy in 2014-2015

Previous monitoring missions

April 1986: IUCN mission; April-May 2007 and December 2008: World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring missions; February 2011: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2012: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; August 2017: ICOMOS/IUCN Advisory mission; March 2019: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Geothermal energy development project (issue resolved)
- Buildings and Development (potential impact of a lodge development project on the crater rim, proposed museum building at Laetoli)
- Transportation infrastructure (impact of the project for upgrading Lodoare Gate to Golini Main Road, construction of the southern bypass road and access road to Olduvai museum)
- Biological resource use/modification (poaching, grazing pressure)
- Social/cultural uses of heritage (relevance of Maasai traditional knowledge to the management of the area, increased human population, tourism pressure, challenges facing community livelihoods)
- Invasive/alien species (spread of invasive species)
- Management System/Management Plan (including governance of the property and community involvement/collaboration, condition and conservation of the Laetoli hominid footprints)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/39/>

Current conservation issues

In 2021 and 2022, the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies received numerous letters, reports and petitions from civil society organizations calling upon the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) and UNESCO to stop the forced eviction of the Maasai from the property and the Loliondo Division of Ngorongoro District, which lies outside the World Heritage property. On 9 February 2022, the Government of Tanzania, UNESCO, ICOMOS and IUCN received letters from the UN Special Procedures Branch of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), raising concerns including:

- The Tanzanian Government's plans for resettlement, forced evictions, home demolitions and additional restrictions which by 2027 are due to affect some 82,000 people, the vast majority being indigenous Maasai pastoralists whose traditional lands lie in the property;
- Such plans have allegedly not been consulted with the Maasai people in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC);
- The plans failed to address tourism, which is the root cause of the current threats to the healthy environment of the area;
- The plans were allegedly put in place following a joint report of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee.

On 3 March and 8 April 2022, the World Heritage Centre transmitted these documents to the State Party for comment. The responses from the State Party, the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and ICOMOS to the UN Special Procedures Branch are available online at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/>.

On 13 April 2022, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies held an online meeting with the UN Special Rapporteurs to discuss the matters in their letter of 9 February 2022.

On 18 May 2022, the World Heritage Centre requested the State Party to submit a state of conservation report for the property for examination by the Committee at its 45th session.

Following several attempts to convene a meeting (letters dated 7 and 24 June, which were postponed at the request of the State Party, a meeting between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies was held on 13 July 2022, through which the State Party provided the following information:

- The challenges of reconciling conservation and management of the property with the increase in human settlements and economic activities, human-wildlife conflicts, and increasing livestock numbers;
- The challenges facing the General Management Plan (GMP) and the unsuitability of the Multiple Land Use Model (MLUM) as a measure to address these issues;
- The Government Voluntary Relocation Plan, its process and mechanism, including a categorical statement on no forced relocation;
- The Government plan to safeguard the Greater Serengeti-Mara ecosystem and the inherent link between the property, Serengeti National Park World Heritage property and the Loliondo Game Controlled Area (LGCA);
- The constitutional and national legal framework governing land tenure (traditional, tribal, ancestral) in Tanzania.

The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies noted that although specific responses to the matters raised by the UN Special Rapporteurs were tabled at the meeting, no official written response had been submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre on this nor regarding the alleged human rights violations and specifics on the voluntary relocation to Msomera village.

In a letter dated 28 December 2022, the State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre a written response to the issues raised by the UN Special Rapporteurs, as recommended in the 13 July 2022 meeting, through a report titled *Local community issues in the Ngorongoro Administrative District*, which reports the following:

- Chapters cover protected and conserved areas in Tanzania, the Ngorongoro District, arrival and settlement of people in Ngorongoro, LGCA issues, Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) issues, the land legislation system in Tanzania, Indigenous and minority groups in the Tanzanian legal system, and the State Party response to issues raised by the Special Rapporteurs.
- The MLUM is unsustainable, noting challenges of increased human-wildlife conflict, disease, and the need to balance conservation and socio-economic needs of communities. The State Party, therefore, advocates the relocation of Maasai from the property to Msomera village. The Voluntary Relocation Plan includes compensation packages (e.g., housing, services, and opportunity for land ownership).

On 13 March 2023, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/39/documents>, which reports the following:

- The State Party continues to facilitate the voluntary relocation of local residents from the NCA. By January 2023, 551 households, 3,010 people and 15,321 livestock had voluntarily relocated to Msomera village;
- In January 2023, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) conducted a mission to seek information on and assess the human rights situation of indigenous populations and communities in Tanzania, including LGCA and voluntary resettlement in NCA. The press statement at the conclusion of the mission was appended (Appendix 9 of the State Party report);
- Droughts killed wildlife and livestock in the property, resulting in increased human-wildlife conflict, disease transmission from wildlife to humans, and increased poverty of local residents;
- Implementation of the 2017 and 2019 mission recommendations continued. The remaining recommendations are rescheduled for when the financial situation improves pending tourism recovery from COVID-19 (matrix of implementation in Appendix 1);
- Stakeholder awareness meetings on the effects of agricultural activities on conservation and the spread of invasive species were held, the management authority (NCAA) cleared around 1,705 ha of targeted invasive plant species, drones were used for aerial surveillance, and no agricultural activities were observed;
- The State Party reiterates it was informed of the completion of feasibility studies for the southern bypass road conducted by TANROADS, that the road provides an alternative route for commercial vehicles that may otherwise cross the property, and that authorities do not have the power to request the studies since the road is outside the property;
- Regarding the suspension of the Lodoare Gate to Golini main road upgrade through the property, baseline ecological studies and environmental data were conducted (2019 report in Appendix 3), and archaeological investigations are scheduled before initiating work;
- Progress on providing a clearer conservation approach for the footprint site and overall archaeological landscape is outlined (Appendix 4). Due to the unnoticed deterioration of the footprints and lack of monitoring, the entire footprints trail at site G will be opened for periodic monitoring from June to September 2023;
- Various management related documents were appended or referenced: Management Zone Plan (2021-2025) (MZP) as an interim document to GMP (Appendix 5), draft cultural Heritage Conservation Strategy (Appendix 6), Interpretation Strategy for the property (Appendix 7), Report of the Multiple Land Use Review Model, voluntary resettlement scheme and its progress (Appendix 8, not appended), Cultural Heritage Conservation Strategies (Appendix 11);
- A department of cultural heritage has been included in the property's organizational structure and service plans, which has facilitated the allocation of resources to cultural heritage, and the development of integrated strategies, policies and plans for the governance of natural and cultural heritage. Monitoring and enforcement is in place to ensure compliance with conclusions and mitigation measures of impact assessment studies, MZP and all other activities;
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will begin once finances are stable following COVID-19-related tourism recovery. All future development will be subject to ESAs.

On 15 March 2023, the World Heritage Centre transmitted to the State Party a letter outlining third-party concerns regarding the possible introduction of white rhinos to the property and a letter requesting the

invitation of the recommended joint Advisory mission to the property. On 1 June 2023, the State Party sent a letter to the World Heritage Centre inviting the Advisory mission. At the time of drafting, no response had been received regarding the white rhino.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies

The reported allegations of human rights abuses in and around the property by the UN Special Procedures Branch of the Office of the UNHCHR are deeply concerning. The World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies consider any violence against or forced eviction of indigenous peoples and local communities to be entirely unacceptable, and that these constitute gross violations of human rights. It is important to stress that neither the Committee, the World Heritage Centre, nor the Advisory Bodies have at any time endorsed or requested the forced displacement of Maasai and other communities living in the property.

The State Party's assurances in the 13 July 2022 meeting and December 2022 report that no forced relocations will be undertaken, that communities are voluntarily encouraged to relocate, as well as the opportunity for open dialogue between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies on human rights matters under the Convention, are therefore welcome. It is noted that the State Party considers the MLUM to be unsustainable in achieving a balance between conservation and socio-economic development of local communities and that the voluntary relocation of communities is considered as a solution to address this issue and improve livelihoods. However, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies stress that the strategy to address the different challenges facing the property should be subject to the full consultation and participation of all stakeholders and rightsholders, including indigenous peoples. In this regard, it is regrettable that the Report of the MLUM Review that was mentioned in the State Party report was not appended. Furthermore, while noting that the Voluntary Relocation Plan (as outlined in the December 2022 report and listed as Appendix 8 but not submitted) provides compensation measures (e.g., housing and social services in Msomera village), it should be emphasized that compensation is only one of the essential conditions for the relocation of communities and that international good practices and applicable norms and standards must be fully applied.

Nevertheless, many concerns highlighted by the January 2023 ACHPR mission remain to be clarified, including the reported inadequate consultation regarding the relocation programme; the potential conflict between relocated and existing communities in Msomera and alleged practices of forced relocation. For communities wishing to remain in the NCA, there are concerns that budgetary allocations to health and education services have been stopped.

Currently, there is a lack of response by the State Party to these points and a lack of clarity as to how relocation is being implemented only on a voluntary basis. It is therefore recommended that the Committee, while welcoming the State Party's assurances that relocation is only voluntary, requests the State Party to provide details on the allegations of human rights violations within the property, and demonstrate how a fair, just and equitably governed consultative process to progress long-term solutions consistent with international norms and policies of the Convention, including the principles of seeking the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples has been set up and implemented and how the recommendations of the ACHPR mission report that are specific to the property will be considered, once the final report is available.

If the MLUM model is considered to no longer meet the needs of the property, then clarity is also needed on what alternatives are being considered. It is noted that the 2021-2025 MZP was developed as an interim plan to guide NCA management since the development of the new GMP (required under national legislation) remains hindered by the ongoing review of the MLUM. Given that it is a temporary measure, the State Party is encouraged to finalize the review of the MLUM and share details of its outcomes before completing the development of the GMP.

The continued implementation of the 2017 and 2019 mission recommendations is noted with appreciation and it is recommended to complete the remaining outstanding actions as soon as possible.

The reported clearing of 1,705 ha of invasive species, related stakeholder awareness activities, and confirmation that no agricultural activities were observed in the property are positive. Actions to manage and control invasive species should be continued.

Noting the statement that the southern bypass route will limit commercial vehicles passing through the property and the feasibility study cannot be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies (as urged in Decisions **43 COM 7B.39** and **44 COM 7B.141**) for reasons that the road is outside the jurisdiction of the property authorities, recalling the requirement to ensure that projects in the wider setting of the property do not negatively impact its OUV, this request should be reiterated.

Regarding the Lodoare-Golini road through the property, it is important to reiterate the need to implement all 2017 Advisory mission recommendations, including the development of an action plan to manage road use, and the submission of the results of archaeological investigations and baseline ecological and environmental data before starting any construction.

The State Party's confirmation that an SEA will be undertaken once funding is stable is noted and recalling the importance of this process to informing management decisions, it should be completed as soon as possible.

Whilst it is positive that the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group (AfrRSG) was consulted on the proposed introduction of southern white rhinos into the property, the proposal raises several significant concerns. Since Tanzania is not part of the species' contemporary range and there are no white rhinos in Tanzania (with no ecological equivalent for at least 3,000 years), the consequences of a non-native species for this ecosystem are not clear. Further consideration of long-term approaches to managing the species and the risks that may associate with a non-native species, such as disease and veterinary considerations, ecological, social and tourism impacts as well as provision of rhino security, is required. Recalling also the existing pressures of tourism on the property, it is unclear how the introduction of white rhinos may enhance tourism experiences and revenue. It is also noted that CITES recently defined suitable and appropriate destinations for exports of rhinos, and the introduction of species from their natural range in one country to another beyond their contemporary natural range is not permissible. It is therefore recommended that the Committee urge the State Party not to proceed with the introduction without addressing the aforementioned concerns.

It is noted that the State Party invited the Advisory mission, as recommended by the Committee (Decision **44 COM 7B.171**) on 6 June 2023.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.30

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.171** adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Expresses its deep concern over the alleged human rights violations in and around the property as set out in the letters from the UN Special Procedures Branch of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of any forced evictions, and strongly requests the State Party to continue to investigate and address all such allegations in relation to the property and its surroundings;*
4. *Appreciates the dialogue between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies to clarify the provisions in the Operational Guidelines and to recall the decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee regarding human rights-based approaches that embody the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders and rights-holders, including indigenous peoples and other interested parties and partners in the identification, nomination, management and protection processes of World Heritage properties;*
5. *Welcomes the State Party's confirmation that no forced relocations will be undertaken and that the State Party is implementing a Voluntary Relocation Plan including compensation measures for local communities, however, notes with concern that there is a lack of adequate response by the State Party to the UN letters and a lack of clarity as to how relocation is only being implemented on a voluntary basis and in ways that fully respect the participation and rights of communities, and also noting the 2023 African*

Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) mission concerns regarding community reports on this process, urges the State Party to provide details that:

- a) *Demonstrate that any voluntary relocation process is consistent with international good practices and applicable norms and standards, including the policies of the Convention and the principles of free, prior and informed consent,*
 - b) *Ensure a fair, just and equitably governed consultative process to find long-term, sustainable, interdisciplinary solutions to the competing requirements for conservation and other uses of the property,*
 - c) *Rebut the allegations of human rights violations within the property,*
 - d) *Set out how it will respond to the recommendations of the ACHPR mission that relate to the property, once the final report is available;*
6. *Notes that the State Party considers that the Multiple Land Use Model (MLUM) no longer meets the needs of the property and has been reviewed, urges the State Party to submit the outcomes of this review to the World Heritage Centre together with details of what model options are now being considered and to consult with, and seek the advice of, the Advisory Bodies on options for potential emerging solutions to ensure they are based on the full consultation and participation of all stakeholders and rightsholders, including indigenous peoples, consistent with applicable norms and stands;*
7. *Notes with appreciation the ongoing measures to address invasive species and the confirmation that no agricultural activities were observed in the property, and requests the State Party to continue to manage and control invasive species within the property;*
8. *Notes the current suspension of the upgrading of the Lodoare Gate to Golini main road through the property and also reiterates its request to the State Party to fully implement the 2017 mission recommendations concerning the road and submit to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, the action plan to manage road use, and the results of archaeological investigations and baseline ecological and environmental data before starting the upgrading works;*
9. *Noting the State Party's confirmation to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in due time, also requests the State Party to ensure the timely delivery of the SEA in order to evaluate the current and future impacts of developments across all sectors in the region, including the property and the wider Serengeti ecosystem so that the findings can inform management, and submit the SEA to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
10. *Further reiterates its request to the State Party to:*
- a) *Provide an update on the implementation of all recommendations from the 2017 and 2019 missions and previous Committee decisions based on a revised work plan,*
 - b) *Provide an update on the development of Integrated policies and guidelines on tourism carrying capacity and monitoring framework,*
 - c) *Submit to the World Heritage Centre the feasibility study for the southern bypass route, including maps of the considered route options,*
 - d) *Fully implement the 2017 mission recommendations concerning the upgrading of the Lodoare Gate to Golini main road through the property and submit to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies the action plan to manage road use and the results of archaeological investigations and baseline ecological and environmental data before starting the upgrading works,*

- e) *Define clearer conservation approaches for the Laetoli footprint site and for the overall archaeological landscape before any decisions are made on the presentation of the footprints or a museum building, and provide an update on progress made;*
11. *Further notes that the State Party invited the Advisory mission by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to the property to provide advice on the strategy to address the pressing conservation issues faced by the property while fully respecting human rights and relevant international norms;*
12. *Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.*

ARAB STATES

31. The Ahwar of Southern Iraq: Refuge of Biodiversity and the Relict Landscape of the Mesopotamian Cities (Iraq) (C/N 1481)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2016

Criteria (iii)(v)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1481/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1481/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

2017: Heritage Emergency Fund – support to Iraqi World Heritage properties: USD 100,000

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Legal Framework
- Need to conduct further studies regarding minimum water flows, to confirm the biodiversity within the property and its surrounding landscapes
- Incomplete designation of all the components of the property as legally protected areas
- Need to regulate oil and gas concessions, and other potentially impacting activities in the buffer zones of the property
- Highly unstable conservation conditions of the archaeological sites
- Need for a detailed master plan/road map that ensures the conservation of the property on a sustainable basis
- Management system/management plan; need for an effective implementation of the consolidated management plan

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1481/>

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1481/documents/> and reports the following progress:

- Surveying and maintenance work has resumed at Ur and Uruk, along with training for national staff; similar plans are being developed for Eridu;
- In 2020 and 2021, minimum water requirements of the natural components were met by allocating water stored in reservoir dams and lakes in 2019. An update of the Strategy for Water and Land Resources in Iraq, which determines water resource management including water allocated to the natural components to ensure the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), will include a comprehensive hydrological environmental study of the marshes that addresses minimum water flow requirements, drought and climate change;
- In 2022, capacity-building, training and surveys were undertaken with the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) to update data to establish a threshold limit and basic indicators for the minimum water limit needed to ensure natural ecological flows to sustain OUV in the natural components, as part of long-term monitoring by the Center for Restoration of Iraqi Marshes and Wetlands (CRIMW);

- Cooperation and bilateral discussions on joint technical transboundary water management continued between the States Parties of Iraq, Türkiye, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding ratification of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (Iraq/Türkiye), establishing the joint Iraqi-Turkish research centre for water, and water management concerns related to the Cizre and Ilisu dams in Turkey; water cooperation and activation of joint technical committees (Iraq/Syria); and water management including preparation of a technical meeting (Iraq/Iran);
- The State Party expresses concerns that dam and irrigation developments in upstream countries impact water and food security in Iraq, including the marshes. A detailed report regarding Iraq will be provided separately;
- The State Party will seek to implement a basin-wide Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) through international cooperation mechanisms. International cooperation included the first Baghdad International Water Conference, engagement with the World Bank, and new agreement between CRIMW and ARC-WH;
- The State Party confirms World Heritage designation provides legal protection to the natural components as protected areas within the national framework. Amendments to the Wildlife Protection Law to ensure broader protection of the property are underway;
- Monitoring and enforcement activities to control illegal activities include monitoring and regulation of fishing and hunting activities, legal enforcement and public awareness;
- The preparation of an updated Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for the property and Management Plans for individual components was accelerated through the establishment of a sub-committee and with ARC-WH technical support;
- Tourism management measures include small vehicles for transporting visitors, lighting, walkways and low scale rest stations, signage, audio-guides and surveillance cameras at the cultural component 'Ur', and establishing signage and roadmaps for natural components. Progress towards developing a comprehensive tourism plan includes preparation of guidance for regulating ecotourism in the property;
- The State Party confirms its commitment to ensure that no oil activities are carried out adjacent to the natural components without government approval and reconfirms the obligation for oil companies to ensure that such activities would not cause damage to the property, nor "prejudice" its boundaries. Monitoring of existing oil projects near the property is underway and measures are being implemented to address issues such as pollution.

On 24 February 2022, the State Party submitted information on a Tourist Village development proposal at Chebayesh in the Central Marshes, including an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (in English) and letters indicating the approval of the project based on the EIA recommendation (in Arabic).

The joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission has been on hold due to logistical, security and COVID-19 related conditions and will be undertaken as soon as possible.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies

It is positive to see the State Party resume survey and maintenance work at Ur and Uruk. It is a concern that no activities have resumed at Eridu and yet new excavations are planned there despite the 2021 Committee's request not to do so until conservation conditions are stable. Archaeological missions should ensure that they do not create new archaeological areas requiring conservation, given the current challenges to maintain the existing archaeological features. It is recommended that the State Party be requested to provide information on the conservation plans for the cultural components.

The proactive steps taken to improve water management and ensure minimum water levels to the natural components during drought conditions in 2020 and 2021 are welcome, as are strengthening transboundary cooperation with bordering States Parties that influence water flow to the property; strengthening scientific capacity; and establishing a joint Iraqi-Turkish research centre. However, noting the reported concern that drought conditions may continue due to climate change, and that minimum water levels were able to be met in the past two years because sufficient water was stored in 2019, the planned comprehensive scientific hydrological study and basin-wide SEA will be important to establish a comprehensive scientific basis for long term water management. The State Party's reported concern regarding potential impacts of upstream dams and irrigation projects in neighbouring countries on ensuring adequate water quantity and quality to the marshes is worrying. It is essential that all States

Parties concerned ensure that activities upstream of the property have no negative impact on its OUV. Given the significant influence of upstream water management on the property, continued constructive technical cooperation with neighbouring States Parties is essential to ensure water management that maintains the OUV in the long term.

The State Party's commitment to ensuring the legal protection of the natural components, and confirmation these are designated as protected areas at the national level, is positive. It is recommended that details of this protection status and the strengthening of the Wildlife Protection Law currently underway are provided when available. The various monitoring and enforcement activities to control illegal activities should be continued. The accelerated finalisation of the updated IMP and individual Management Plans for each component is positive, and the establishment of a new sub-committee and technical support through ARC-WH should facilitate their prompt finalisation, which should be completed as a matter of priority.

The preparation of directions to regulate ecotourism in the property, signage and public awareness are noted, although individual components would benefit from a more structured approach to interpretation planning and the installation of even minor visitor infrastructure. Further actions are required to develop and implement an overall tourism plan for the whole property to regulate visitation, and to ensure visitor safety and sustainable tourism practices, infrastructure and facilities. The EIA for the proposed Tourist Village development in the natural components lists various infrastructure developments including a 4-storey hotel, chalets, restaurants, cafés, and staff accommodation. The EIA however lacks important information including a clear assessment of the potential impacts on the OUV and, taking note of its conclusion to approve the project, the State Party should revise the EIA, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, to ensure it is in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, prior to proceeding further.

Recalling the significant concerns raised about the continued vulnerability of the property to oil and gas developments, the State Party's commitment to ensuring that oil activities outside the property must be undertaken in coordination with the authorities and must not cause damage to the property, or encroach on its boundaries, is positive. In this regard, it is recommended that the State Party ensure that all proposed extractive projects are fully assessed for their potential impacts on the OUV, in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, prior to any decisions to proceed, and to guarantee that negative impacts are avoided. The reported monitoring of existing oil activities adjacent to the property should be continued and any negative impacts immediately addressed. Notwithstanding that actions are being implemented to address pollution resulting from oil activities, it remains difficult to verify whether the existing projects are impacting the OUV; it is therefore recommended that the pending Reactive Monitoring mission also considers this issue. The request to extend the State Party's commitment to a permanent ban on all extractive industries within the property, including gas, should be reiterated.

The engagement of local communities in management processes, educational and awareness raising activities related to the protection of natural and cultural heritage is welcomed.

Finally, it is recommended that the pending joint Reactive Monitoring mission be undertaken as soon as possible.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.31

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision 44 COM 7B.73, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Welcomes the resumption of survey and maintenance work at Ur and Uruk, and requests the completion and subsequent implementation of conservation plans for all three of the cultural components before further excavations are undertaken and before tourism is encouraged;*

4. *Recalling that significant fluctuations in water flows may pose a major threat to the property and non-fulfilment of minimum water requirements could represent a potential danger to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines, also welcomes the various water management measures taken to ensure the minimum water requirements of the natural components were met in 2020 and 2021, and also requests the State Party to urgently continue implementing management measures that demonstrate adequate flows to the property are ensured in the short and long-term as a matter of utmost priority;*
5. *Encourages the continued implementation of technical and scientific studies that inform the effective management of the property including the planned comprehensive hydrological environmental study of the marshes, ongoing monitoring and research collaborations, and the preparation of a basin-wide Strategic Environmental Assessment in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;*
6. *Further welcomes the ongoing joint technical transboundary cooperation between the States Parties of Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye for long-term sustainable transboundary water management measures, and also requests that transboundary cooperation remains a matter of utmost priority to ensure effective water management that is informed by science and that can guarantee minimum water supplies to sustain the OUV of the property in the long term;*
7. *Noting the concerns raised by the State Party regarding impacts, or potential impacts, of dam and irrigation projects upstream of the property that could further exacerbate water scarcity and negatively impact the OUV of the property, further requests States Parties located upstream of the property to inform the World Heritage Centre, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, of any existing and planned water-related developments that could impact on the OUV, in order to:*
 - a) *Ensure that such projects are assessed in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, before any decision is taken to proceed,*
 - b) *Undertake mitigation measures where negative impacts are identified, including through transboundary cooperation as required,*
 - c) *Not to proceed with any development that would negatively impact the OUV of the property;*
8. *Requests furthermore the State Party to provide specific details of the protection status of the natural components designated as protected areas within the national framework, and of the amendments to the Wildlife Protection Law, to confirm that these ensure effective protection in line with the Operational Guidelines;*
9. *Further welcomes the actions taken to address illegal activities within the property, and requests moreover the State Party, as part of an integrated management approach, to continue strengthening its monitoring, legal protection, enforcement and management capacity to control illegal activities such as bird hunting and overfishing;*
10. *Reiterates its request to the State Party to finalise, as a matter of priority, the preparation of an updated Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for the entire property and updated Management Plans for each component, and to submit drafts of the Management Plans to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
11. *Recognising initial steps to regulate ecotourism in the property, also reiterates its request to the State Party to develop and implement an overall tourism plan for the*

whole property to regulate visitation, and to ensure visitor safety and sustainable tourism practices, infrastructure and facilities, and requests moreover the State Party to revise the Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed tourist village project in the natural components in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, prior to proceeding with the proposed project;

12. Further recalling its significant concern over the continued vulnerability of the natural components of the property to oil and gas developments, acknowledges the State Party's continued commitment to ensure that oil activities outside the property do not cause harm to the property and do not encroach on its boundaries, as well as the reported monitoring of existing activities and remediation actions, and requests moreover the State Party to:
 - a) Ensure that any proposed extractive activities that may impact on the OUV are assessed for their potential impacts in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, prior to taking any decisions to approve such projects, and not to approve any project that would have an adverse impact on the OUV,
 - b) Continue monitoring existing extractive activities in the vicinity of the property, report on any potential or actual impacts on OUV as previously requested, and immediately address any negative impacts and undertake remediation activities as required,
 - c) Provide an overview of oil and gas developments within or in the vicinity of the property, including the assessment of potential impacts on the OUV of the property in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context,
 - d) Extend its commitment to a permanent ban on all extractive industries, including oil and gas, within the property and ensuring no negative impacts on the OUV;
13. Further encourages the State Party to continue to meaningfully engage with local communities on a range of management issues, including matters concerning hunting and fishing, water usage, rights-based approaches to management and for the application of traditional ecological knowledge to any planned new constructions;
14. Also reiterates its request for the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to be undertaken as soon as possible;
15. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

CULTURAL PROPERTIES

AFRICA

36. Island of Mozambique (Mozambique) (C 599)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1991

Criteria (iv)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/599/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 8 (from 1994-2022)

Total amount approved: USD 308,140

For details, see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/599/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: For the rehabilitation of the Saint Sebastian Fortress: USD 1,108,078 by Japan Funds in Trust; USD 526,015 by UCCLA; USD 397,122 by Portugal/IPAD; USD 270,000 by Flanders Funds in Trust; USD 779,729 by the Netherlands Funds in Trust. For other conservation and management projects: USD 50,000 by World Heritage Cities Programme (Netherlands); USD 89,000 by IPAD; USD 23,175 by Africa 2009; USD 13,450 by the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF); USD 42,000 by One UN Fund in 2017-2018; USD 65,225 by UNESCO's Heritage Emergency Fund.

Previous monitoring missions

2005, 2006, 2007, 2008: World Heritage Centre missions; February 2007: ICOMOS mission; February 2009: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2010: ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; March 2018: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission.

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Conservation and Management Plan not yet published
- Growing number of collapsed or seriously dilapidated buildings
- Threats to authenticity through inappropriate repairs
- Lack of development control
- Lack of adequate sewage and water systems
- Lack of adequate financial and human resources
- Accelerated building deterioration due to rising risks (e.g. 2019 and 2022 Cyclones)
- Climate Change and severe weather events

Illustrative material see page <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/599/>

Current conservation issues

On 17 March 2022, the State Party submitted a report on the damages caused by cyclone Gombe, which hit the Island of Mozambique on 11 March 2022, based on an assessment conducted by the Conservation Office of the Island of Mozambique (GACIM) in March 2022 of the cyclone's impacts on the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). On 1 December 2022, the State Party submitted an updated state of the conservation report, available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/599/documents/>, providing information on the progress achieved with the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Committee at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/Online, 2021). The documents inform on the following:

- In the Stone and Lime Town, seven of the main protected monuments were totally or partially destroyed by cyclone Gombe. In Macuti Town, 241 Swahili traditional buildings were totally or partially destroyed, together with numerous houses of other types of architecture. The historical and urban landscape of the site was also affected;
- The Conservation and Management Plan of the Island of Mozambique was recently updated and extended to 2022-2027;
- Support through the UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust allowed to develop a local management and development plan of and an illustrative brochure on the rules and guidelines for the conservation of the built heritage of the property, and to provide youth training on good conservation practices for the conservation of the Island, as well as on the promotion of sustainable tourism and entrepreneurship targeting local communities and relevant associations;
- A new buffer zone delimitation proposal was developed and will be submitted to the procedure for a Minor Boundary Modification;
- A new Director of GACIM was appointed and its staff increased from seven to 16, which helped improve inspections and speed up technical project evaluations. A proposal to update GACIM has been submitted to the national authorities for approval;
- Conservation measures undertaken by the State Party to preserve the OUV of the property include:
 - Works on the hospital complex, severely affected by the Cyclone Gombe, are in progress,
 - Services of some long-term vacant public buildings were relocated to the mainland for safety reasons, and some state institutions aim to establish public-private partnerships to guarantee the recovery of degraded buildings, which can imply their change of use,
 - The island's Court building was also impacted by the cyclone. Its restoration is being prepared and funding looked after, for urgent interventions on the roof,
 - The appliance of the conservation guidelines by public institutions, private entities and civil society, to steer renovation and restoration projects, improved submitted projects. However, coordination between GACIM and the Municipality, especially regarding the standardization of action procedures, needs improvement,
 - The need to update the 2016 inventory of structures of the Stone and Lime town, and include their current use in the inventory,
 - Heritage education and awareness-raising actions were developed targeting sensitize building owners to adopting measures for the preventive conservation of the houses,
 - The 2021 project "Heritage Education and participatory construction in the city of Macuti" funded by the German Commission for UNESCO under the #SOSAfricanHeritage Programme allowed to train 20 local artisans in climate change resilience techniques and to restore seven Macuti houses which did not suffer the effects of the cyclone, indicating the effectiveness of the applied techniques,
 - Training was provided through the 2022 project "Heritage and environmental education: Strengthening citizenship and social participation on the Island of Mozambique", financed by the European Union, and the Camões Portuguese Institute, to raise heritage and environment conservation awareness among local communities;
- Funding is sought for a specialized consultancy study in view of incorporating a strategy for sea defense infrastructure, including Visual and Heritage Impact Assessments, into the Disaster Risk Management Plan, to reinforce measures provided in the Local Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change prepared in 2017;
- The rehabilitation of the Nossa Senhora do Baluarte Chapel in the São Sebastião Fortress, that suffered impacts due to weather events, started in 2022 with funding by the Portuguese Cooperation and consists of reinforcing the coastal protection barrier and restoring the chapel's collapsed roof;

- The Urban Structure Plan of the property was finalized and approved by the Municipal Assembly and submitted to the State authorities for ratification. However, a more detailed plan is considered necessary for an effective application of the Urban Structure Plan within the property;
- The "Specific Rules for the Conservation of the Built Heritage of the Macuti Town" were accepted with the recommendations provided by ICOMOS, but must still undergo a community consultation and subsequently be approved by the Municipal Assembly;
- GACIM recognises that the demographic pressure in the property, especially in Macuti town, could undermine the authenticity and integrity of the property. Actions to decongest the Island and the development of an urban mobility plan are needed;
- In 2022, GACIM acquired a house, the "Casa dos Contos" (House of Tales), in Macuti town, in the framework of the "Islands and Enchantments" project, funded by the European Union, and co-funded by Camões Portuguese Institute, to contribute to the appreciation of the neighbourhood, and good heritage conservation practices for local communities;
- The proposal for the construction of a tourist complex on the Island of Goa is under analysis by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. However, it is acknowledged that this project could be limited considering that the Islands of Goa and Sena are within the proposed new delimitation of the buffer zone. If considered favourably, it will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, and its Advisory Bodies, for evaluation;
- No progress has been made on the Sports Complex, and the "Fortim de São Lourenço", in terms of concrete proposals for the use of space

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party's response to the impacts of Cyclone Gombe in March 2022 is to be commended, in particular by organising a prompt assessment of the damages caused by the cyclone and by mobilizing UNESCO's support through both Emergency International Assistance and Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF) mechanisms. While the International Assistance was approved to conduct pilot rehabilitation of 14 traditional Swahili houses accompanied by on-site trainings of local communities for further rehabilitation of partially and slightly destroyed houses and the development of medium and long-term safeguarding measures, the HEF support aims to provide training on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) for cultural heritage for local stakeholders, to develop emergency preparedness and risk mitigation protocols for the property at the local level, including also training and awareness-raising. Both projects are favourably noted, but at the time of drafting this report, only one DRM training has been delivered. All concerned stakeholders should therefore be encouraged to expedite implementation of these projects to avoid further delay.

The interventions for the rehabilitation of the hospital complex and on the island's courthouse are noted and progress should be reported upon to the World Heritage Centre in due course, and the technical assistance can be given by the Advisory bodies in view of the possible adaptive reuse of degraded buildings by state institutions and under possible public-private partnerships, in particular if this implies interventions on the edifices.

The updating of the Conservation and Management Plan 2022-2027 also comes at a timely moment and should be finalized once the recommendations provided by ICOMOS in its technical review are incorporated. The targeted increase of GACIM's staff members will be much beneficial for its implementation, as well as the availability of conservation guidelines, the developed heritage education and awareness-raising actions that are important to ensure increased community involvement. The attention given here to Macuti town is essential, as illustrated also by the acquisition by GACIM of the "Casa dos Contos" as a community-based project, and it is hoped that the "Specific Rules for the Conservation of the Built Heritage of the Macuti Town", already commented on by ICOMOS, as well as the Urban Structure Plan of the property will soon complete the approval and ratification processes. It is also important to ensure full community consultation for the development of an urban mobility plan with a view to decongesting the island and reduce the demographic pressure.

It is noted that in response to the previous request to submit the inventory of structures of the Stone and Lime town area of the property, including their current use, the State Party refers to Decree no. 54/2016 of 28 November 2016 (Regulation on the Classification and Management of the Built and Landscape Heritage of the Island of Mozambique) that provides a general survey of all the stone and lime buildings in the city, including an assessment of each building's state of conservation. While it is indicated that

the current uses of these buildings are residential, commercial, religious and tourist in nature, more detailed information should be provided. This consistent approach regarding the Stone and Lime town inventory, should be also considered on the Macuti town, as both are equally part of the property.

It is furthermore appreciated that the delimitation of the new buffer zone is ongoing and that this is already being taken into consideration in the evaluation of the proposal to construct a tourist complex on the Island of Goa, about 5 km east of the property, which would, if approved, be submitted to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory bodies for evaluation.

The plan to address impacts of climate change through the development of a strategy for sea defence infrastructure in view of incorporating it into the Disaster Risk Management Plan, reinforcing measures provided in the 2017 Local Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change is favourably noted. Regarding the Visual and Heritage Impact Assessments, the State Party should be reminded to use the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and should submit the Disaster Risk Management Plan with the incorporated strategy to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory bodies.

The State Party should also be reminded and encouraged to continue undertaking measures to preserve the site and its Outstanding Universal Value and to improve the community's living conditions as stated in Decision **44 COM 7B.8** of the World Heritage Committee (Fuzhou/Online, 2021),

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.36

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.4**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Commends the State Party for its response to the impacts of Cyclone Gombe in March 2022, in particular by organising a prompt assessment of the damages caused by the cyclone and by mobilizing support through both Emergency International Assistance and the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF) to undertake rehabilitation of traditional Swahili houses with on-site trainings of local communities and on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) for cultural heritage for local stakeholders, and to develop emergency preparedness and risk mitigation protocols for the property, but urges all stakeholders concerned to expedite implementation of these projects to avoid further delay;*
4. *Further commends the State Party to conduct rehabilitation of the hospital complex and the island's courthouse, also affected by the cyclone, and requests the State Party to report to the World Heritage Centre in due course on the progress made;*
5. *Takes note of the relocation of services of some long-term vacant public buildings to the mainland for safety reasons, as well as of the efforts of some state institutions to establish public-private partnerships to ensure recovery of degraded buildings, and encourages the State Party to seek technical assistance from the Advisory bodies in view of the possible adaptive reuse of these buildings, should major interventions on them be foreseen;*
6. *Thanks the State Party for having submitted the updating of the Conservation and Management Plan 2022-2027 that should be finalized once the recommendations provided by ICOMOS are incorporated, and takes note with satisfaction of the efforts to increase the staff and capacities of the Island of Mozambique Conservation Office (GACIM) to ensure effective implementation of the Plan;*
7. *Encourages the State Party to pursue its efforts to strengthen GACIM's authority and technical capacities, notably by approving the proposed amendment of GACIM's*

statutes, and by reinforcing the cooperation between GACIM and the Municipality, on issues and activities related to the management and conservation of the property, and commends the State Party for the engaged efforts to recruit new staff;

8. Welcomes the development of various tools to support the management and conservation of the property, and their availability to the local communities, building owners and stakeholders, notably the Conservation guidelines and the "Specific Rules for the Conservation of the Built Heritage of the Macuti Town", and requests that the Urban Structure Plan of the property be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, to fully completing the approval and ratification process;
9. Notes that a general survey of all the buildings in the Stone and Lime town includes an assessment of each building's state of conservation and establishes the current uses of these buildings which are residential, commercial, religious and tourist in nature, requests the State Party to provide more detailed information on this survey, and to extent the inventory to Macuti town, covering all the property;
10. Further thanks the State Party for the particular attention given to the involvement of the local communities, including through heritage education and awareness-raising actions, and encourages the State Party to ensure increased community involvement and consultation in particular in view of the development of an urban mobility plan aimed to decongest the island and reduce the demographic pressure;
11. Further notes that the State Party undertook the new buffer zone delimitation, and requests that it be submitted as a proposal for a Minor Boundary Modification to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, following the procedure set in Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines;
12. Also notes the proposal to construct a "Tourist complex in Goa Island", is still under examination, and reminds the State Party to ensure, should the project be approved, that no works be carried out, until information has been submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, pursuant to Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
13. Further commends the State Party on its actions in addressing threats from climate change induced storm surges, also noting the potential spatial and visual impacts of these structures, further requests the State Party to develop a long-term strategy for sea defense infrastructure, and to assess this through Visual and Heritage Impact Assessments, and submit these to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
14. Welcomes further the State Party's plan to address impacts of climate change through the development of a strategy for sea defence infrastructure in view of incorporating it into the Disaster Risk Management Plan, reinforcing measures provided in the 2017 Local Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change is favourable, and reminds it to use the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context in view of ensuring the conduction regarding the Visual and Heritage Impact Assessments, and requests the State Party to submit the Disaster Risk Management Plan with the incorporated strategy to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory bodies.
15. Also encourages the State Party to continue to mobilize funds (e.g., through International Assistance) to address the community living conditions and the sanitation in Macuti town, following the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;
16. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

ASIA AND PACIFIC

44. Bagan (Myanmar) (C 1588)

See Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B

.Add.3

49. Itchan Kala (Uzbekistan) (C 543)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1990

Criteria (iii)(iv)(v)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/543/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/543/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: 2019: USD43,115 UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust project for Building capacity in managing World Heritage properties, interconnection of development and heritage preservation in Uzbekistan

Previous monitoring missions

1998: ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2018: ICOMOS Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management activities
- Restoration works conducted using non-traditional building material
- Demolition in mahallas
- Lack of buffer zone

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/543/>

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/543/documents/> and sets out progress with several issues highlighted by the Committee at its previous sessions, as follows:

- The Master Plan and the overarching Project of Detailed Planning of Historical Centre of Khiva (PDP) are reported to be implemented within the framework of the 'Programme for integrated development of tourism potential of Khiva and Khoesm region', and its associated Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is underway and will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review;
- Amendments to the Management Plan to include measures that encompass the historic urban environment for both the property and its proposed buffer zone are under review and will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre;

- The moratorium on demolition and reconstruction in Dishan Kala is still in place;
- The conservation of distinctive traditional architecture will be addressed by measures in the PDP, the Master Plan and the Management Plan, while proposals for the rehabilitation of destroyed mahallas in Dishan Kala will be reflected in the Master Plan and PDP;
- Several initiatives supported by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) are outlined, such as an Integrated Cultural Heritage Framework (ICHF) to diversify tourist routes and activities. This includes 'transformative project proposals' for the central area of the property such as the Itchan Kala public space upgrade, *Mahalla* upgrade, and a detailed masterplan for mixed use development to diversify the tourist routes and activities in Khiva and in Khorezm Region;
- The inaugural meeting of the International Advisory Committee (IAC) took place in 2021;
- Conservation challenges are highlighted, such as addressing termite damage to structural timbers in old structures, including the Khan's palace, and deterioration of ceramic tiles as a result of salinity in walls.

In April 2021, the State Party submitted a consultant's report on the proposed way forward for the revision of the PDP. Attached to this were a presentation on the historical development of Khiva, an analysis of its buildings and urban form, and proposed plans for new residential developments within certain areas of the property and its buffer zone. ICOMOS' February 2022 Technical Review of the report has been presented to the State Party..

In October 2022, the State Party submitted revised documentation for the Mevaston Hotel project and in April 2023 an additional design document, both in response to an ICOMOS Technical Review of 2021, following which ICOMOS submitted a second Technical Review in June 2023.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party's confirmation that the moratorium on demolition and reconstruction within Dishan Kala, the outer city beyond the boundaries, shall remain in place until the PDP and the Master Plan have been reviewed and approved by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies and the proposed buffer zone has been approved by the World Heritage Committee, in line with Decision **40 COM 8B.42**, is welcome.

The State Party reports that work is progressing on the revision of the PDP, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee, but the final draft revised PDP has yet to be submitted, despite the fact that the consultant's draft report of April 2021 presented a detailed way forward for parts of this revision. The presentation annexed to the State Party's report contains information on the history and analysis of the property and its proposed buffer zone to cover Dishan Kala as well as proposed plans for redevelopment, which appear to be proposing complete redevelopment of certain neighbourhoods. However, as this presentation did not include any descriptive text or explanation, it is not possible to understand the status of these proposals.

Dialogue has not yet been initiated by the State Party in relation to the request for a phased dialogue with the Advisory Bodies to support the development of a revised PDP. Instead, reference is made to the IAC, which had its inaugural meeting in September 2021 and the first technical session took place in July 2022. The role of the IAC is clarified by its Mission Statement, adopted by the session of July 2022. The Committee may wish to welcome the launch of the IAC in September 2021 for the World Heritage properties in Uzbekistan and the organisation of its first technical session in July 2022, for which the contribution of the late leading expert Dr Michael Jansen, should be deeply thanked. The Committee may also emphasize that this mechanism should continue advising the national authorities on the conservation of cultural heritage properties and the implementation of Committee decisions and previous mission recommendations, with a reviewed membership.

In relation to tourism development, no reference is made to the development of a Tourism Destination Management Plan, though the State Party refers to the "Programme for integrated development of tourism potential of Khiva and Khoresm region" and indicates that the high-speed rail link to Bukhara and Samarkand was constructed, but not yet launched due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The transformative project proposals for the central area of Khiva included in the ICHF includes a mahalla upgrade, which is said to relate to two mahallas, one of which is in Dishan Kala, where the houses have been totally demolished. It would be helpful to understand how these projects' relevance and

appropriateness are being evaluated, especially in view of the current moratorium on demolition and reconstruction.

The ICHF also includes a concept plan for infrastructure improvements in the city of Khiva and a project to assess links between infrastructure development and tourism growth. All these development projects highlight the urgent need to complete and gain approval for the PDP, so that it may act as a regulative framework for these extensive and important projects.

Although it is reported that the draft Management Plan is being reviewed, might be considered during the next IAC meeting, and will subsequently be submitted for consideration to the World Heritage Centre, no update is provided on the establishment of a Property Management Unit or the appointment of a Property Manager. The Committee may wish to welcome the launch of the International Advisory Committee (IAC) in September 2021 for the World Heritage properties in Uzbekistan and emphasize that this mechanism should advise the national authorities on the conservation of cultural heritage properties and the implementation of Committee decisions and previous missions' recommendations. Its recommendations on Khiva, concerning the buffer zone boundaries, PDP preparation, land management in mahalla areas and moratorium on the demolition and modification to the townscape should be considered.

To reinforce the management of the property in the context of its urban environment, it is recommended that the Committee urge the State Party to submit the proposed buffer zone for review by the Advisory Bodies and subsequent approval by the Committee, in line with Decision **40 COM 8B.42**.

The State Party highlights the ongoing problem of termite attacks on wooden beams, notably in the Friday Mosque and the Khan's Palace, and of the negative consequences of salinity in the walls of monuments. If termites are widespread within the property, and since they have been the stated reason for the demolition of some vernacular structures, there is an urgent need to develop an overall conservation approach to set out how damage might be prevented and controlled before new projects are being developed. The same applies to salinity issues and their impact on ceramic tiles. In conclusion, it is reassuring to note that progress is being made with the revision of both the PDP and the Management Plan, although no timeframe has been presented and no dialogue initiated so far to accompany these processes. The context within which this work is being undertaken is clearly dynamic and fast moving, as illustrated by the range of projects on tourism and infrastructure that are being supported by the EBRD. Therefore, it is urgent to make progress with these planning documents, that should align with the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL), in order not to hold up other initiatives. Meanwhile, it is essential to strictly maintain the moratorium on demolition and reconstruction, put in place a Management Unit for the property, and appoint a Property Manager to strengthen management structures and support the approval of a buffer zone. Until these overall structures are in place, the property remains extremely vulnerable.

Construction of phase I of the Mevaston Hotel in Dishan Kala on areas of demolished mahallas had started before the moratorium was in place and documentation had been submitted. The revised plans for phases I and II have been reviewed by ICOMOS. These address the recommendations of the first ICOMOS Technical Review and overall can be considered acceptable, subject to certain detailed conditions. But support in principle for this project should not be seen as justifying the destruction of a historic neighborhood to make way for a hotel complex.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.49

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.39**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Welcomes the fact that the moratorium on demolition and rebuilding in Dishan Kala remains in place;*
4. *Notes that the Project of Detailed Planning of Historical Centre of Khiva (PDP) is being revised to take its recommendations into account, but that the requested phased*

dialogue with the Advisory Bodies has not yet taken place, and urges the State Party to initiate such a dialogue as soon as possible;

5. Also welcomes the creation of the International Advisory Committee (IAC) for cultural World Heritage properties in Uzbekistan and the organisation of its first technical session in July 2022, and emphasizes that such a mechanism should continue, with the support of its experts, advising the national authorities on the conservation of cultural heritage properties and implementation of Committee decisions and previous missions' recommendations, as well as the recommendations of the July session of the IAC on Khiva;
6. Takes note of the details provided on projects supported by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), including the Integrated Cultural Heritage Framework (ICHF) to diversify tourist routes and activities, develop concept plans for infrastructure improvements in the city of Khiva, and assess links between infrastructure development and tourism growth, but expresses concern that these projects are being taken forward before the revised PDP is reviewed and approved by the Committee, and requests the State Party to ensure that full details of projects relating to the property or its immediate setting are submitted together with a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before any commitments are made;
7. Further notes that the Management Plan is being revised and will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, also expresses concern that, in the absence of an approved PDP and Management Plan, and without a functioning Property Management Unit and Property Manager, the property remains highly vulnerable in the context of the dynamic and fast-moving tourism and infrastructure projects supported by the EBRD, and also urges the State Party to:
 - a) Make progress with the PDP and Management Plans as soon as possible to set a framework for the development of EBRD-supported projects, so that they respect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and align with the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL),
 - b) Strengthen the management of the property by appointing a Property Manager and creating a Property Management Unit,
 - c) Submit the buffer zone for review by the Advisory Bodies and subsequent approval by the Committee, in line with Decision **40 COM 8B.42**;
8. Also takes notes of conservation problems relating to termite attacks on wooden beams, notably in the Friday Mosque and the Khan's Palace, and of the adverse impact of salinity in walls on ceramic tiles, and also requests the State Party to develop, on the basis of expert advice, overall conservation approaches for both these issues that include preventative and reactive measures, before specific projects are defined and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
9. Reiterates its regret that the development of phase I of the Mevaston Hotel occurred before proposals and plans were approved and considers that the revised plans for phases I and II are acceptable provided certain detailed conditions are fulfilled, but maintains its view that this project cannot be taken as a model for development in areas of demolished mahallas;
10. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

51. Historic Centres of Berat and Gjirokastra (Albania) (C 569bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2005

Criteria (iii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/569/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 4 (from 2002-2018)

Total amount approved: USD 80,416

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/569/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 1,367,014 is provided by the Albanian Government within the framework of the project 933 ALB 4000 "Safeguarding and restoration of selected monuments within the World Heritage site of the Old City of Gjirokastra – Albania"

Previous monitoring missions

November 2012: ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2016: ICOMOS Advisory mission;

December 2021: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Ground transport infrastructure (planned by-pass road project and conversion of the bazaar into a pedestrian area in Gjirokastra)
- Housing
- Illegal activities (illegal construction dating from the late 1990s and later on)
- High impact research/monitoring activities (lack of specific monitoring indicators)
- Governance (lack of detailed tourism development plan and lack of programme of archaeological excavations)
- Management activities (e.g. restoration work at the Berat Castle)
- Management System/Management Plan
- Other factors (lack of adequate firefighting arrangements in the historic urban zones)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/569/>

Current conservation issues

A joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission to the property took place in December 2021. On 3 February 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report including several annexes, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/569/documents/>. Progress on a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented, as follows:

- Steps have been taken to further develop the legislative protection and management system created by Law no. 27/2018, 'Cultural Heritage and Museums' through the drafting and adoption of fourteen by-laws. The process continued in 2022;
- The draft Integrated Management Plan (IMP) was due to be finalised by December 2022. Aspects already completed include the composition and submission of a preliminary programme and baseline documentation for submission to the World Heritage Centre, as well as the development of a plan for stakeholder information gathering and a preliminary stakeholder workshop plan;

- As a consequence of the IMP and as required under the newly adopted Law no. 27/2018, the regulations for administration of both components will be updated and an integrated urban conservation and development tool will be developed;
- The monitoring indicators developed in 2017-18 are being implemented by the Regional Directorates of Cultural Heritage of both Berat and Gjirokastra, which report to the National Institute for Cultural Heritage and the Ministry of Culture. A report on the indicators (Annex 1 of the State Party report) shows a large number of financial subsidies extended to private property owners, an increase in visitor numbers and an extension of fire-fighting infrastructure, but also a slight increase in reported illegal constructions during 2020-21;
- Restorative maintenance has been undertaken on the built fabric of the property, with a photo-annex provided (Annex 2 of the State Party report);
- Annexes submitted in the State Party report, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines detailing the following project proposals under the *Project for Integrated Urban and Tourism Development* (PIUTD) in Berat include:
 - Restoration of Urban Landscape Gorica,
 - Rehabilitation of Gorica Castle Trail,
 - Creation of a car parking near Gorica Bridge,
 - Restoration of the historic urban landscape of the Mangalem Quarter,
 - Relanscaping Selamlleku Square,
 - Urban upgrading Iljaz Vrioni Square;
- The Gjirokastra Castle stabilization, restoration and upgrading of the museum infrastructure is nearing completion;
- The Çerçiz Topulli Square underground parking project is ongoing with archaeological monitoring by the National Institute for Cultural Heritage;
- The Gjirokastra bypass road, approved by the State Party on 15 January 2021, is continuing;
- Noting the report of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission of December 2021, the State Party recorded its commitment to take into account the comments and recommendations included in the report regarding the PIUTD projects.

On 7 September 2022, the State Party submitted updated technical drawings for the Gjirokastra Bypass and a restoration project for the three historic footbridges over the Zerzebili river. Unfortunately, the information submitted was not in one of the Committee's working languages. The submitted documentation includes approvals for an amendment to the Gjirokastra bypass road dated 1 July 2022.

Since the submission of its last state of conservation report in February 2022, the State Party has not shared with the World Heritage Centre any updates by the deadline of 1 March 2023, either on any significant changes in the state of conservation of the property, or on the measures taken to address the recommendations of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party had continued to progress in improving both the state of conservation and the protection and management system for the property, as was reported by the 2021 mission. However, it should be noted with regret that, after mid-February 2023, the State Party stopped communicating about progress in the implementation of international assistance and the further development and finalisation of the IMP it was to support, which remains unfinished. This is despite the fact that the contractual arrangements with the World Heritage Centre for international assistance expired on 1 June 2023. At this stage, the commitment demonstrated by the State Party in 2021 and 2022, following repeated Committee requests (Decisions **39 COM 7B.75**, **41 COM 7B.40**, **43 COM 7B.79** and **44 COM 7B.151** adopted in 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021, respectively) to complete the development of the IMP, with the active involvement of stakeholders at national, regional and local level, seems compromised. The Committee should therefore urge the State Party to finalise the IMP as a matter of urgency, taking into account the comments and recommendations made by the Advisory Bodies in the context of the international assistance.

The roll-out of the PIUTD, financed by the World Bank, is progressing and the 2021 mission concluded that the project development, design and implementation is of high quality and standard, bringing a range of benefits to the citizens and visitors of Berat and Gjirokastra. This project has far-reaching beneficial, however, potentially also detrimental, consequences for the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. The PIUTD focusses on tourism development and the State Party has been requested by the Committee (Decision **44 COM 7B.151**) to diversify its development plans, to stimulate a broad resilient economic basis for the future of the property (Decision **44 COM 7B.151**), which needs to be taken into account in the development of a long-term vision for the entire property and in the finalisation of the Integrated Management Plan. Considering the high number of ongoing and planned projects under the PIUTD and other development projects located within the property and/or its setting, the mission recommends that the State Party strategically assess the cumulative impact of all these projects on the OUV of the property.

The documentation submitted for some of the PIUTD components as an annex to the State Party report include preliminary studies and assessments (such as Environmental and Social Impact Assessments), in accordance with the high-quality standards required to qualify for World Bank financing. However, these impact assessments do not focus on the potential impact on the OUV of the property. For instance, no heritage impact assessment on the OUV of the property was conducted on the large-scale project of the Çerçiz Topulli Square before it was approved. The mission has recommended to the State Party that Heritage Impact Assessments should be a legal prerequisite for development projects and directly linked into the provisions of the regulations of both Berat and Gjirokastra. The PIUTD projects submitted as annexes to the State Party's report all received approval before being submitted as annexes to the State Party's report, and their potential individual and cumulative impacts on the OUV of the property has not been formally and fully assessed. The Committee may therefore wish to recall the provisions of Paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

It is unfortunate that the Gjirokastra bypass road project was resumed before the findings of the Reactive Monitoring mission of December 2021 (requested in Decision **44 COM 7B.151**) were made available to the State Party in July 2022. It should also be noted that in the case of the bypass road, no Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) had been conducted either prior to its approval, or prior to the 1 July 2022 amendment. The 2021 mission noted that the bypass has an impact on the OUV of the property, both negative and positive, current and potential, but which must be properly assessed. Negative impacts should be avoided or, where no longer possible, mitigated. Therefore, the Committee may wish to request that a full independent HIA be completed as a matter of urgency and in conformity with the *Guidance for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context*, and before the construction of the bypass road reaches a point where no significant mitigation would be possible. The State Party should ensure that the identified mitigation measures are implemented and that any necessary modifications to the road are developed during the subsequent construction phase, where appropriate, to minimise the impact on the OUV of the property.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.51

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **39 COM 7B.75**, **41 COM 7B.40**, **43 COM 7B.79** and **44 COM 7B.151**, adopted at its 39th (Bonn, 2015), 41th (Krakow, 2017), 43th (Baku, 2019) and its extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,*
3. *Commends the State Party for the progress made in improving the state of conservation of the property, as well as for providing financial stimulus to private owners to undertake conservation and maintenance work;*
4. *Welcomes the State Party's commitment to upgrading urban regulations for both Berat and Gjirokastra and its commitment to developing an integrated urban conservation and development tool, and reiterates its request to the State Party to diversify its development plans for the property to stimulate a broad resilient economic basis for its future;*

5. *Notes with regret the failure of the State Party to fully implement the international assistance granted for the development of the Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for the property, in collaboration with governmental and civic sectors, despite Committee's previous decisions, urges the State Party to finalise the IMP as a matter of urgency, taking into account the comments and recommendations already made by the Advisory Bodies in the context of the international assistance project and requests the State Party to submit a pre-final draft to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
6. *Further notes with regret the resumption of the construction of the Gjirokastra bypass road before the conclusions of the Reactive Monitoring mission of December 2021 were available and could be taken into account, and therefore also requests the State Party to urgently complete a full independent Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the Gjirokastra bypass road before its construction reaches a point where no significant mitigation would be possible, to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, and to ensure the implementation of the identified mitigation measures and the development of any necessary modifications to the road during the subsequent construction phase, where appropriate, to minimise impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;*
7. *Further notes that the Gjirokastra bypass road is one of many development projects within/or in the setting of the property and neither the cumulative nor the individual impacts of all these development projects including of the Project for Integrated Urban and Tourism Development (PIUTD) on the OUV have been comprehensively assessed;*
8. *Notes the conclusions and recommendations of the 2021 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission, and further requests the State Party to implement these in full, and in particular the following key recommendations:*
 - a) *HIA should be a legal prerequisite for development projects and directly linked into the provisions of the regulations of both Berat and Gjirokastra,*
 - b) *The IMP must have proper legal status allowing for its effective implementation,*
 - c) *A comprehensive long-term development strategy for the property, including tourism management should be developed, with a focus on enhancing synergies of the World Heritage property with the intangible and natural heritage of its wider setting, and linked to the IMP,*
 - d) *A HIA of the cumulative impacts of the PIUTD and other development projects on the OUV of the entire property and its setting should be conducted,*
 - e) *The bypass road in Gjirokastra should be fully reflected in the mobility plan for Gjirokastra currently under development to ensure the impacts on the OUV are taken into account,*
 - f) *A landscape study of the valley (Gjirokastra), including the historic evolution and its use over time as well as its relationship with the town morphology, should be conducted as part of the HIA of the bypass road or separately;*
9. *Also notes the submission of details for the restoration of the three footbridges over the Zerzebili River, requests furthermore the State Party, for all development projects that may affect the OUV of the property, to submit project details to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to any irreversible approval or decision, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, and to commission, in accordance with Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines, HIAs focusing on the property's OUV, to be carried out in conformity with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and recalls that these documents, or at least*

their executive summaries, should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre in one of the working languages of the Committee;

10. *Requests moreover the State Party to continue its efforts to limit the occurrence of illegal construction activities in the property;*
11. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.*

54. Gelati Monastery (Georgia) (C 710bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1994

Criteria (iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2010-2017

Irreversible interventions as part of major reconstruction of the structure of Bagrati Cathedral

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/710/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/710/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

November 2003, June 2008, March 2010, April 2012: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring missions; October 2014: ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to Gelati Monastery; January 2015: ICOMOS Advisory mission; November-December 2022: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- General need for interior and exterior conservation work on the monuments
- Construction of the visitor centre outside the Gelati Monastery
- Major reconstruction of the structure of Bagrati Cathedral (*completed*)
- Insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities (*issue resolved*)
- Lack of co-ordinated Management System
- Water (rain and groundwater)
- Interpretative and visitation facilities

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/710/>

Current conservation issues

On 28 February 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/710/documents/>. A joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission visited the property in November-December 2022 (mission report available at the above-mentioned web address). In its report, the State Party addresses a number of issues highlighted by the Committee at its previous sessions, as follows:

- The State Party has taken urgent wide-ranging steps to investigate and address the failure of the roofs of the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin and St George's Church installed in 2015-2018.

The failure of the roofs has led to moisture ingress and associated decay of the historic murals inside these churches. Several extensive specialist reports were appended to the State Party's report, outlining the following:

- Five international expert missions visited the property between June and November 2021. Two of the mission reports were reviewed by ICOMOS, which concluded that the approaches were sound,
 - In-depth destructive investigations and laboratory studies have been undertaken. The expert studies conclude that caution is required in developing, testing and implementing conservation activities,
 - A microclimate study highlights that slow natural drying would be the most beneficial to the conservation of the murals inside the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin,
 - The murals will be continuously monitored. Conservation work has stabilized and secured the pictorial cycle in the western arm of the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin,
 - A technical design for a new roofing system, which will consider historical and architectural aspects, is progressing for both churches. It will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before implementation;
- Micro-climate monitoring is continuing and the existing system has been augmented;
 - Periodic three-dimensional structural monitoring is being undertaken;
 - The World Heritage Protection Council was reconstituted in February 2022;
 - The State Party acknowledges the need to update the Management Plan but does not report any progress in this regard.

On 3 March 2022, the World Heritage Centre transmitted to the State Party third-party information raising concerns regarding insufficient involvement of heritage professionals in decision-making processes, insufficient availability of information for professionals and the civil society as well as poor management and problematic conservation activities regarding the murals. These issues were subsequently assessed by the Advisory mission.

The November-December 2022 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission to the property recommended that immediate actions should focus solely on emergency treatments of the affected mural paintings, which should be kept to the necessary minimum and undertaken using materials compatible with the original, while limiting the addition of water. Further conservation work on the murals should be delayed until emergency interventions have been completed, the wall paintings have reached a stable condition and a longer-term conservation plan for the murals has been developed and be guided by an updated Conservation Master Plan.

On 31 March 2023, the State Party informed the World Heritage Centre that the Patriarchate of Georgia had accepted the State's offer to lead the works related to the wall paintings and roof of the churches of Gelati, as well as the stone conservation and other interventions needed to improve the state of conservation of the property.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party has taken welcome and quick action in addressing the deficiencies regarding the roofs installed in 2015-2018, which led to moisture ingress and associated decay of the historic murals inside the Main Church. Its commitment of resources and expertise and engagement of international experts are commendable. This commitment has resulted in valuable conclusions regarding the causes of accelerated decay, which provide a solid basis for further interventions. Restoring the roofs, conserving the murals inside the churches and addressing other conservation issues that also affect the murals, such as rising damp, will call for large financial resources over a long period.

It is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to continue the programme to redress the conservation challenges at the property following the recommendations of the Advisory mission and to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, documentation on further emergency interventions and longer-term conservation strategy and measures, as well as relevant technical material, prior to implementation.

Constant monitoring of the condition of the wall paintings – those that are yet to be treated as well as those on which emergency interventions have taken place – is important to remedy the decay caused

by moisture ingress on the murals. Monitoring should be accompanied by detailed mapping of the existing state of conservation and the pathology of all the wall paintings and mosaics. All future conservation works should be continuously documented.

Two temporary installations are fundamental to the programme of redressing the conservation challenges of the Main Church: extending a secure scaffolding structure to all areas of the church and placing a protective cover over the entire monument to provide optimum conditions for further necessary interventions on the roofs and masonry of the building.

Physical conservation research and measures have taken preference over the updating of the Management Plan. Yet a longer-term holistic conservation programme, with Conservation Master Plan and road map for the property, and an updated Management Plan are of utmost importance in ensuring that all further interventions, including conservation of the wall paintings, are guided by a well-informed and comprehensive vision for the property's future.

While the assistance of foreign experts has been beneficial to the State Party's efforts in the emergency response phase, it is recommended that more Georgian experts be involved in further conservation efforts at Gelati.

The state of conservation of this property has dramatically altered since the last Reactive Monitoring mission to this property (2012), including the near-complete failure of the previous restoration project, with substantial negative consequences. In view of the conservation challenges faced, including the fragility of the murals in the churches, and the difficulties encountered in the overall management of the property, it is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to invite a Reactive Monitoring mission to the property during 2024 to assess the appropriateness of the conservation efforts undertaken, the development and implementation of the holistic conservation programme, the updating of the Management Plan, the steps undertaken to improve the Management System, and the overall state of conservation of this property.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.54

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.47**, adopted at its 44th extended session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Commends the State Party on the efficiency with which it has attempted to address the deficiencies concerning the roofs installed in 2015-2018 in the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin and St George's Church and to prevent further decay of the historic murals, in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies and through engagement of international experts, as well as on the timely organization and facilitation of a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission to provide recommendations on the way forward to address those deficiencies and other issues pertaining to the state of conservation of the property;*
4. *Endorses the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission to the property and requests the State Party to follow them in its pursuit of the programme to redress the conservation challenges at the property and to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, documentation on further emergency interventions and longer-term conservation strategy and measures, as well as relevant technical material, prior to implementation;*
5. *Takes note that redressing the conservation challenges at the property will require large financial resources over a long period, and reiterates its call for an increased mobilization of the international community to provide more financial and technical support to the State Party, including to enhance the capacity of Georgian experts whose increased involvement in the longer-term conservation efforts at Gelati is important for the sustainable conservation and management of the property;*

6. Notes the submission of detailed expert reports to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, and the need to document all new interventions in detail, and further requests the State Party to:
 - a) *Submit the holistic conservation programme, with plan and road map, and the updated Conservation Master Plan to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies,*
 - b) *Submit designs and details of all new temporary and permanent roofing proposals to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies,*
 - c) *Continue engaging with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, either directly or through the submission of technical material for review,*
 - d) *Initiate a documentation programme that records the technical and process details of all interventions to the built fabric of the property;*
7. Reiterates its request to the State Party to review and update the Management Plan for the property and to continue its efforts to develop indicators to monitor the state of conservation of the attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and further requests the State Party to submit the above to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
8. Encourages the State Party to pursue a closer dialogue with different stakeholders about the protection measures taken at the property, including through the World Heritage Protection Council of Georgia at the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia;
9. Requests furthermore the State Party to invite during 2024 a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to assess the conservation measures taken, the development and implementation of the holistic conservation programme, including Conservation Master Plan and roadmap, the updating of the Management Plan, the steps undertaken to improve the management system and its effectiveness, and the overall state of conservation of the property;
10. Requests moreover the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

57. Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape (Türkiye) (C 1488)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2015

Criteria (iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1488/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1488/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

November-December 2022: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Concern about the prevailing situation in Diyarbakir (*problem solved*)
- Rehabilitation and reconstruction works and development, urban design and landscape projects
- Ground transport infrastructure
- Water infrastructure
- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation
- Management System/Management and Conservation Plan modified
- Land Conversion

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1488/>

Current conservation issues

On 2 February 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report. Its executive summary is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1488/documents/>. The report addresses the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee as follows:

- Works carried out to the Diyarbakir City Walls are considered by the State Party to have no negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. All bastions and fortifications walls were evaluated and documented, identifying structural problems and emergency response requirements. Restoration works were or are being done in numerous bastions and some City Wall sections as well as a landscape project in front of bastion 52;
- In the inner buffer zone (Suriçi District), four urban design projects were realized, aiming to transform the area into a healthy and safe urban living space, also taking into account the contemporary urbanism principles and disaster risk. The State Party reports that for all works in the Buffer Zone (Suriçi), the historical texture of the site was taken into consideration and the implementations that would adversely affect the visual integrity were avoided by limiting the construction to two floors. An Urban Design Guide was prepared to ensure a traditional character for newly built buildings. Urban rehabilitation projects were conducted with limited height and a view to tackle illegal housing (mentioned in the Nomination file). Reconciliation negotiations have been conducted for citizens who have lost their residences. Street rehabilitation work, a vehicle road around Suriçi, a touristic tour route and several landscape projects have been completed to meet the needs for green space and social facilities;
- The 2016 amendment to the 2012 Conservation Plan responds to the need to redefine the organisation of the deteriorated physical space following the incidents in 2015, the expansion of the traditional street fabric and the establishment of government agency areas. It is therefore impossible to halt its implementation;
- In 2021, all four main Gates of the Fortress were documented and restored;
- Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) of seven projects that may have an impact on the OUV will be finalised and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review;
- The HIA of a Tram Line project was submitted as an annex to the State Party's report;
- In 2020 and 2021, excavations at the Citadel continued in a systematic way.

The joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission requested by Decision **41 COM 7B.50** (Krakow, 2017) and reiterated in subsequent Committee Decisions, was invited twice by the State Party and took place from 28 November to 3 December 2022. The mission assessed the overall management of the property as well as its state of conservation, in particular with regard to changes since its inscription on the World Heritage List, and reviewed projects already implemented and planned in the property, its buffer zone and wider setting in relation to their potential impact on the OUV of the property.

In January 2023, following the mission, the State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre an HIA dated April 2022 for seven projects, of which five had been completed by that date and two were still being implemented and nearing completion. All seven projects were implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanism and Climate Change. The HIA was reviewed by ICOMOS, and the Technical Review was transmitted to the State Party on 9 August 2023.

Following the devastating earthquakes that struck the provinces of Adiyaman, Diyarbakir, Şanlıurfa and Malatya in February 2023, the State Party of Türkiye informed the World Heritage Centre on 7 and 23 February 2023 that only minor damage had been observed in St. George's Church and that some stone spills occurred in bastion 22 at Urfa Gate, which previously had stability issues. UNESCO contributed as part of the UN Country Team in Türkiye, to the culture sector chapter of the Türkiye Earthquake Recovery and Reconstruction Assessment (TERRA), which estimates the damage to the cultural assets and museums under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism at approximately USD 53 million. A publication of UNDP *Offer and Proposed Projects for Recovery and Reconstruction* features the restoration of cultural heritage as a main pillar and envisages a large-scale recovery programme.

At meetings held on 27 April and 26 July 2023 between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Permanent Delegation of Türkiye to UNESCO and UNESCO, it was confirmed that emergency recovery and damage assessment tasks were well advanced, if not nearly complete. At the time of writing this report, no official request for technical and/or financial assistance has been submitted to UNESCO.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre ICOMOS and ICCROM

In accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the Committee (Decisions **41 COM 7B.50** and **44 COM 7B.56**), the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission to the property reports that the property, its buffer zone and setting have undergone significant change since inscription on the World Heritage List in 2015. Most of these changes are directly due to projects implemented by the State Party.

The State Party reports ongoing and completed work to the City Walls and bastions, evaluated by the mission as being of international standard. The archaeological investigations undertaken at the İçkale Artuqid Palace (Amida Mound) are of a high standard and the landscape works at Bastion 52 have involved some archaeological investigations. However, the absence of archaeologists during other works, such as the adaptive reuse of the upper rooms of the towers, resulted in the loss of important fabric which could have contributed to the knowledge of the property. An 'illegal' neighbourhood and other legal infrastructure in the Citadel were demolished to create a public park, without any impact assessment study or investigation, such as to relocate the Roman amphitheatre previously reported in this vicinity, having been undertaken. Likewise, the demolition of poor-quality constructions from the 1930s at the Hz. Suleyman Mosque (İçkale) to develop a landscaped area was undertaken without archaeological surveys being undertaken.

Other projects since inscription have significantly eroded the OUV of the property, including numerous construction, landscaping and infrastructural projects, some reportedly illegal, in the setting of the Ten-Eyed Bridge, resulting in the loss of its OUV. The Tigris Valley Rehabilitation Project, which aimed at canalising the river, was partially implemented before being halted pending the outcomes of a HIA. The State Party has recently implemented other impact assessment processes, such as for the Tram Line project before implementing the project. ICOMOS, in its review of the impact assessment of seven projects (five of which had already been constructed prior to submission) concluded that, whilst the approach taken by the HIA was quite generalist, its conclusions are correct and merit consideration. Planned changes at the Anzele Spring may negatively impact the property's OUV and, as with all projects that may affect the OUV of the property, they should be subject to a thorough assessment and details of the proposals and their associated impact assessments should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to any decision on their implementation which may be difficult to reverse.

The mission reports that the consolidation of land parcels of the Hevsel Gardens and the restructuring of the historic city inside the City Walls, with the consequent social impact, has resulted in the severing of the connection between the Gardens and the city they once nurtured, seriously damaging the OUV of the property. The mission cautions that other planned changes, such as the ongoing restructuring of the field patterns facilitating a change in the types of crops grown, will further threaten this key attribute, that urgent action must be taken to prevent further harm and that the relationship between the Hevsel Gardens, the City and its inhabitants should be reinstated.

Implementation of the 2016 Conservation Plan has continued despite the Committee's repeated requests to the State Party to revert to the 2012 version of the Plan and to halt all projects that may affect the OUV of the property until the recommendations of the requested Reactive Monitoring mission are known and adopted by the Committee (Decisions **43 COM 7B.90** and **44 COM 7B.56**).

The mission reports that approximately 40% of Suriçi, the buffer zone component located inside the City Walls, has been demolished since inscription, resulting in further severe erosion of the property's OUV. This erosion, through the implementation of untested projects, including the occasional invasive restoration of historic monuments, has taken place despite the Committee's repeated concerns and in the absence of appropriate OUV-focused impact assessment procedures. The assumption that the (Suriçi) buffer zone serves only as morphological setting to protect the visual integrity of the property, and that therefore reconfiguration of the urban fabric, which has evolved over centuries, has no impact on the OUV of the property as long as it retains some semblance of its scale and appearance, is misconstrued. Such an assumption erroneously reduces the OUV of the property to the mere manifestation of the City Walls surrounded by agricultural production areas. Yet, the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) does mention Suriçi as part of 'the fortified city and its associated landscape that were an important centre and regional capital during the Hellenistic, Roman, Sassanid and Byzantine periods, through the Islamic and Ottoman periods to the present'. The contribution of Suriçi to the OUV of the property should be understood within its urban and landscape settings as such it is stated in the SOUV that: 'the ability to view the walls within their urban and landscape settings is considered to be contributory, as are the hydrological and natural resources that support the functional and visual qualities of the property'. Consequently, Suriçi, the inner buffer zone, plays a crucial role in fully supporting the integrity of the Diyarbakir City Walls and, hence, the property's OUV. The recently constructed Vehicle Road and Touristic Tour Route has further disrupted the relationship of Suriçi and the City Wall.

The Reactive Monitoring mission concludes that the management system for the property is no longer effective and needs to be reviewed and re-established. It recommends the 2012 Urban Conservation Plan should be reinstated, as repeatedly requested by the Committee.

The mission concludes that the property is faced with imminent danger due to a significant loss of integrity, cultural significance and supporting historic urban fabric. The OUV of the property remains in danger from lawfully designed developments permitted under existing planning controls. The property faces a specific and ascertained imminent danger, including a serious deterioration of architectural and town-planning coherence and of the urban and rural space. The property is also faced with threats, such as the lack of functioning conservation policy and the threatening effects of town planning, which could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics. The vulnerability of the integrity of the property has also been further exacerbated by the earthquake. All these factors combined lead the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to maintain their view that the property continues to face ascertained and potential danger as defined in Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines, and therefore, recommend its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.57

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **39 COM 8B.32**, **41 COM 7B.50**, **43 COM 7B.90** and **44 COM 7B.56**, adopted at its extended 39th (Bonn, 2015), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 43rd (Baku, 2019) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/Online, 2021) sessions respectively,*
3. *Expresses its solidarity with the State Party of Türkiye and its people for the devastating effects of the earthquakes that took place in February 2023, assures the State Party of the availability of the Convention assistance mechanism to support affected World Heritage properties and invites the State Party to call upon them;*

4. Welcomes the facilitation by the State Party of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, as requested in its previous decisions, notes and endorses the conclusions and recommendations contained in its report, and requests the State Party to fully implement them;
5. Expresses its appreciation to the State Party for the exemplary research and restoration approach to the works on the City Walls in recent years;
6. Expresses its deep concern that the State Party has not halted all projects that could affect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and has not reverted to the 2012 Conservation Plan, as repeatedly requested by the Committee, and also reiterates its request to the State Party to:
 - a) Halt all projects that could affect the OUV of the property, including further demolitions and developments in its buffer zone,
 - b) Halt the continued implementation of the 2016 Conservation Plan and to revert to the 2012 Conservation Plan;
7. Also expresses its deep concern about the changes brought about by the implementation of projects in the property and its buffer zone since its inscription, which have severely eroded its OUV, in particular:
 - a) In the functioning and morphology of the Hevsel Gardens, an integral part of the property and an essential attribute underpinning the property's OUV,
 - b) The implementation of construction, landscaping and infrastructural projects in immediate setting of the Ten-Eyed Bridge and the Tigris riverbanks, both within the property and its buffer zone,
 - c) The large-scale demolition and reconstruction or conversion of urban neighbourhoods in the property and its buffer zone, which has also led to a virtual destruction of the social relationship of the traditional local communities with the Hevsel Gardens and despite this being a fundamental relationship that contributed to the OUV at the time of inscription,
 - d) The construction of the Vehicle Road and Touristic Tour Route around the inner periphery of the City Walls,
 - e) The occasional inappropriate and invasive restoration on the monuments;
8. Further reiterates its request to the State Party to:
 - a) Carry out independent Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) for urban design, landscape and infrastructural projects, as well as construction and restoration projects which may have an impact on the OUV of the property and its setting, in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage context,
 - b) Ensure that all projects are guided by suitable professional archaeological and conservation oversight, which should be fully integrated into all works to ensure good practice and effective outcomes,
 - c) Submit details of such projects and the associated HIAs to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to any decision on their implementation which may be difficult to reverse;
9. Notes with great concern that the Management Plan for the property is still not fully implemented and has resulted in a range of disparate projects, some of which have and continue to undermine the OUV of the property and urges the State Party to:

- a) Fully review the management system of the property,
 - b) Examine whether current legislation and management regulations can effectively protect the property and its buffer zone,
 - c) Revise the Management Plan and increase the role of the site manager beyond the coordination level while ensuring the participation of local authorities, organisations and communities, including scientists and agricultural groups, in the management and decision-making processes,
 - d) Submit the revised Management Plan to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to its adoption;
10. *Considers* that the property faces significant cumulative ascertained and potential threats, in particular due to a significant loss of integrity and cultural significance as well as a severe loss of the supporting historic urban fabric and a management system which has failed to maintain the attributes that convey its OUV;
11. ***Decides to inscribe the Diyarbakir Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape (Türkiye) on the List of World Heritage in Danger;***
12. *Requests moreover* the State Party, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to develop a proposal for the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) as well as a set of corrective measures, informed by the 2022 mission, including a timetable for implementation, to reverse the interventions on the property and its buffer zone and help mitigate the negative impacts that have resulted from development projects implemented since inscription, for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session;
13. *Finally requests* the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.

62. Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) (C 373bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1986

Criteria (i)(ii)(iii)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/373/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/373/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

2003 and 2006: World Heritage Centre missions; 2015, 2017, 2018: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory missions; 2022: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Need for information on the management (*issue resolved*)
- Site Museum project (*issue resolved*)
- Risks of collapse of Silbury Hill (*issue resolved*)
- Lack of visitor management (*issue resolved*)
- Upgrading of the A303 trunk road project, including proposals for sections of dual carriageway and tunnel portals within the property
- Infrastructure development pressure

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/373/>

Current conservation issues

On 1 February 2022, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property and on 1 March 2023, issued an update. Both reports are available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/373/documents/>. Progress on a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in these reports as follows:

There has been significant progress with current reviews of governance of the property and its 2015 Management Plan. The Trust Transition Project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is targeting a long-term funding solution for the Coordination Unit and World Heritage Site Partnership. Transport issues at Avebury are being addressed with guidance from the Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) Transport Strategy 2015. At Stonehenge, traffic and parking on 'Byways Open to All Traffic' continue to affect the landscape setting of monuments and visitor amenity, but this issue may be addressed through the proposed A303 road improvement scheme. Wiltshire Council has commissioned the 'Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Setting Study' for development as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Setting Study will assist in providing an appropriate mechanism to protect the property and its setting. The potential for boundary modification will be reviewed following completion of the SPD. A 'Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Setting Supplementary Planning Document' is also in preparation and will take into account the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context. Wiltshire Council and Historic England are also actively engaged in reviewing the Local Plan. Operations at the property were adversely affected by the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Agri-environment and grassland reversion schemes remain an effective response to protecting sensitive archaeological remains from damage through cultivation. The National Trust has brought additional land under its direct care. New interpretation panels have been installed at the guardianship sites of West Kennet Long Barrow, Silbury Hill, The Sanctuary and Windmill Hill. Physical conservation works have occurred on the Stonehenge Lintels, documentation for which was submitted to the World Heritage Centre and reviewed by ICOMOS. A new temporary education centre was constructed as an extension to the ancillary building adjacent to the Stonehenge coach park. A proposal for a new education centre and associated structures is in preparation. The 'World Heritage Site Condition Survey' should be completed in 2023.

In March 2020, £1.7 billion (approx. USD 2.1 billion) was allocated by the UK Government towards implementing the A303 road improvement scheme (hereafter 'Scheme'). This Scheme, developed in close collaboration with UK heritage bodies, proposes a 3.3 km bored tunnel that would remove from view most of the A303 road within the Stonehenge component of the property and offer significant aural and visual improvements. Following a lengthy development programme, including three joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory missions (2015, 2017, 2018), and a series of changes made in response to the Committee's decisions, the proponent, National Highways, proposed the Scheme which underwent formal examination in 2019 and was recommended for refusal by the Examining Authority in January 2020. The Scheme was initially approved by the Secretary of State for Transport in November 2020. However, the decision to grant the Development Consent Order (DCO) was quashed by the UK High Court in 2021. At the instigation of the State Party, a new joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission visited the property in April 2022 to provide further advice in the context of the DCO re-determination.

On 17 July 2023, the State Party transmitted to the World Heritage Centre the decision of the Secretary of State for Transport of 14 July 2023 to grant a DCO for the A303 road improvement scheme. The decision letter of the Secretary of State, which provides the reasons for granting the DCO, refers to the Committee's decisions and the 2022 Advisory mission's recommendations. It refers to them mainly to explain that the Scheme has not been modified in accordance with the Committee's previous decisions and that the 2022 mission key recommendations have not been accepted. In a letter dated 18 July 2023, the World Heritage Centre invited the State Party to provide detailed and precise information on the possibility of introducing changes to the design of the Scheme within the scope of the DCO to respond to the Committee's Decision **44 COM 7B.61** and the 2022 Advisory mission recommendations. In its reply of 25 July 2023, the State Party stated that the DCO is subject to a six-week period allowing the public to lodge judicial review challenges and that 'once there is a conclusion to any legal challenge process that may come forward, there will continue to be opportunity for engagement, consultation and collaboration in regard to the scheme and its impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The State Party considers that approval of the Scheme would not pose a threat to the OUV of the property and states that there is potential for design refinements and modifications to be considered as part of the detailed design of the Scheme. According to the decision letter, the assessment of the Secretary of State is that *'[...] the impacts of the Proposed Development on the historic environment and any harm caused to the WHS when considered as a whole and to any heritage asset would be less than substantial and therefore the adverse impacts of the Proposed Development should be balanced against its public benefits.'*

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

Progress continues to be made with arrangements for management and governance of the property, improving transport at Avebury, initiating the Setting Study, preparation of related planning instruments and guidelines, production of resources for local landowners and addressing long term resourcing through the Trust Transition Project. The conservation works to the Stonehenge lintels are welcome as are the interpretation installations at West Kennet Long Barrow, Silbury Hill, the Sanctuary and Windmill Hill. The temporary education centre is a much-needed facility which has been well designed and implemented in a way that does not affect attributes which support the OUV of the property. A proposal for new education facilities has been subject to a Technical Review by ICOMOS. The forthcoming World Heritage Site Condition Survey should also be submitted for review.

The proposed A303 road improvement scheme, for which a DCO was first issued in 2020, contrary to the request of the Committee and the State Party's own Examining Authority, and which was later quashed by the UK High Court in 2021, remains a threat to the OUV of the property. The grounds for the Court's decision included matters relating to impacts on heritage assets and the need for consideration of schemes which the Committee has previously requested to be considered, namely further covering of the proposed cutting and/or extending the proposed bored tunnel so that portals are located outside the western boundary of the Stonehenge component of the property, or alternatively re-routing the A303 completely around the property to enable complete removal of surface through traffic from within the Stonehenge component thus minimising negative impacts and enhancing positive benefits for the OUV of the property. The current Scheme is for upgrading the A303 with dual carriageway passing through the property, largely within a tunnel but with significant cuts and open areas of dual carriageway at both ends of the property.

The Committee has made a number of decisions (**41 COM 7B.56**, **42 COM 7B.32**, **43 COM 7B.95** and **44 COM 7B.61**) relating to the proposed Scheme and the State Party has made some changes in response. The 2022 Advisory mission reassessed the Scheme in the light of these changes and the High Court Decision, and provided clear findings and recommendations, consistent with the previous decisions of the Committee. The Committee and the 2018 and 2022 Advisory missions have acknowledged that the proposed eastern portal had been positioned in the least impactful location available, which is sufficiently close to the property boundary, taking into account the constraints imposed by the attributes of the property, other significant sites in the vicinity and local topographic and environmental conditions. However, the Committee further recognised that the currently proposed western portal and associated dual carriageway within a cutting would have significant and inappropriate adverse impacts on the physical and visual integrity of the property. This position is consistent with the findings of the 2022 Advisory mission.

Extending the proposed tunnel to the west, beyond the boundary of the property, would enable greater reconnection between the southern and northern sections of the Stonehenge component, an improved setting for the Winterbourne Stoke Group and reduce impacts on the archaeological resources within the property and on its integrity. However, it is recognised that a longer tunnel may be challenging in

view of topographic considerations and design options. If the approved Scheme proceeds, the minimum change required would be an extension of the underground section of the western approach (tunnel and/or cut-and-cover) to at least the western boundary of the property. The western portal should be re-located as far to the west as reasonably practical, thereby reducing the length of the cut-and-cover section and minimising the extent of archaeological resources which must be removed. There should also be a comprehensive archaeological salvage and mitigation programme, consistent with best practice standards and approaches. The approved Scheme, if implemented without these changes, will miss a unique and significant opportunity to remove an existing impact and improve some of the attributes that underpin the OUV of the property.

It is therefore profoundly regrettable that the State Party has re-issued a DCO for the A303 road improvement scheme without introducing changes consistent with previous Committee decisions and the advice of the 2022 Advisory mission, requested by the State Party precisely to advise on how to respond to those decisions. It is particularly relevant to note that in Decision **44 COM 7B.61** the Committee found that '[...] *the approved A303 improvement scheme is a potential threat to the property, which – if implemented – could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics, notably to its integrity*'; and noted that '[...] *in the event that DCO consent was confirmed by the High Court, the property warrants the inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger*'. Over the years, the Committee and the Advisory Bodies have been clear and consistent that the proposed A303 improvement scheme should not proceed in its current form. It is moreover regrettable that although the Secretary of State considered alternatives to the proposed Scheme, and National Highways has considered the two longer tunnel options, namely a cut-and-cover section at the west of the proposed bored tunnel which would extend the tunnel outside the WHS boundary, and an extension of the bored tunnel to the west so that its portals would be located outside the WHS boundary, the Secretary of State considered that the alternatives would present additional disadvantages, including significant extra costs and delay to the delivery of the proposed development, which would not justify the reduction of harm to heritage assets.

While noting that national and local heritage bodies may continue to provide advice as part of the detailed design process following Scheme's approval, the scope of their advice, the legal and financial basis for its consideration and the extent of the Committee's concerns that could still be addressed remain unclear at this stage. At the present time, the A303 road improvement scheme, as approved by the DCO, without the modifications requested consistently by the Committee in its decisions as well as the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission, constitutes a potential threat to the OUV of the property, in conformity with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines. Hence, the Committee may wish to decide to place the property in the List of World Heritage in Danger immediately. However, taking into account the expected judicial review challenges that might be lodged and the subsequent potential judicial review period, and the possibility that the proposed scheme may be modified, it is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to provide to the World Heritage Centre a comprehensive information package on the proposed modifications to the Scheme conforming to the requests by the Committee in its decisions as well as in line with the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission. Failing this, it is strongly recommended that the Committee should inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger at its 46th session. It is furthermore recommended that the State Party engage further with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, with a view to preparing a related set of corrective measures, which should include modifying the Scheme, consistent with the Committee's decisions and informed by the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission, to deliver the best available outcome for the OUV of the property for examination by the Committee at its 46th session.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.62

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions 41 COM 7B.56, 42 COM 7B.32, 43 COM 7B.95, and 44 COM.7B.61, adopted at its 42nd (Manama, 2018), 43rd (Baku, 2019) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,*

3. Notes further progress with the revised management and governance arrangements, the Trust Transition Project, the implementation of the Avebury 2015 Transport Strategy, the forthcoming setting study and proposed Supplementary Planning Documents and future boundary review of the property, and the World Heritage Site Condition Survey, and requests the State Party to submit the draft setting study and the World Heritage Site Condition Survey to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
4. Welcomes the conservation works on the Stonehenge lintels and interpretation installations at West Kennet Long Barrow, Silbury Hill, the Sanctuary and Windmill Hill, also notes that the temporary education centre at Stonehenge does not affect attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, but that a proposal for new educational facilities has been subject to a Technical Review by ICOMOS, and requests the State Party to take into account the resulting recommendations and to advise the World Heritage Centre of the response to the Technical Review findings;
5. Commends the State Party for inviting the 2022 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission to provide advice in the context of the redetermination of the Development Consent Order (DCO) of the proposed A303 road improvement scheme (Scheme) within the Stonehenge component of the property;
6. Notes and endorses the conclusions and recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission, and urges the State Party to fully implement the mission's recommendations;
7. Expresses profound regret that the Scheme has been granted a DCO without having been modified in accordance with previous Committee decisions and the recommendations of the 2022 mission;
8. Reiterates its previous request that the State Party not proceed with the implementation of the Scheme for the section between Amesbury and Berwick Down in its current form, and considers that the minimum change required must include an extension of the underground section of the western approach (in tunnel and/or cut-and-cover) to at least the western boundary of the property, with the western portal relocated as far west as reasonably practical, thereby reducing the length of the cut-and-cover section and minimising the extent of archaeological resources which must be removed, and the implementation of a comprehensive archaeological salvage and mitigation programme, consistent with best practice standards and approaches;
9. Further notes that the approved A303 road improvement scheme within the Stonehenge component of the property retains substantial dual carriageway sections exposed in cuttings, particularly those at the western end of the Stonehenge component of the property and that, at the present time, the A303 road improvement scheme, as approved by the DCO, constitutes a potential threat to the property, in conformity with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines, which, if implemented, would have deleterious impacts on the OUV of the property including its integrity, warranting inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger;
10. Taking note of the judicial review process following the DCO and the expected legal challenges, as well as the possibility that the proposed Scheme may be modified, requests the State Party to prepare a comprehensive information package on the proposed modifications to the Scheme conforming to the requests by the Committee in its decisions as well as in line with the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission, and to submit it to the World Heritage Centre for review by **1 February 2024**, and urges furthermore the State Party to consult with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to ensure consistency in this regard and that all further decisions or actions to implement the Scheme in its current approved state are halted until the Committee has

reviewed the comprehensive information package of proposed modifications at its 46th session;

11. *Requests furthermore the State Party to prepare, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, a related set of corrective measures, which should include modifying the Scheme, consistent with the Committee's decisions and informed by the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission, to deliver the best available outcome for the OUV of the property, for examination by the Committee at its 46th session;*
12. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session, **considering that the absence of significant progress in modifying the Scheme consistent with the Committee's decisions and in accordance with the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission, would require a broad mobilization to preserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including the inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

II. REPORTS ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST INITIALLY FORESEEN TO BE EXAMINED BY THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE IN 2023

NATURAL PROPERTIES

AFRICA

75. Rwenzori Mountains National Park (Uganda) (N 684)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1994

Criteria (vii)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1999-2004

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/684/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 6 (from 1995-2022)

Total amount approved: USD 221,739

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/684/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

January 2003 and December 2019: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring missions

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Mining (Kilembe mine)
- Staffing and budgetary deficiencies (issue resolved)
- Degradation of buffer zone (issue resolved)
- Climate change
- Management systems/ management plan
- Impacts of tourism (cable car)
- Fires

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/684/>

Current conservation issues

On 1 December 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/684/documents>, which reports the following:

- The establishment of a wildlife migratory corridor between the property and other Ugandan National Parks is not tenable since the area is heavily settled by communities established for more than 100 years. Relocation would be inappropriate and costly;
- Small-scale hydropower (HEP) projects are located outside the property, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and mitigation measures have been implemented, and monitoring activity reports have not reported any detrimental activities. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is therefore not required;

- The Kilembe Mines have not been operational since the 1970s. In 2021, water assessments confirmed no significant difference between the water quality of the three rivers flowing out of the property, all recording low mineral content;
- The State Party considers the recommendation to abandon the proposed cable car project as premature since only a pre-feasibility study has been undertaken to date and the project has so far not been recommended for approval;
- A wildlife monitoring plan and review of the Tourism Strategy to focus on low-impact tourism activities remain to be completed due to COVID-19 related financial constraints;
- Biodiversity monitoring continues with drones, Spatial Monitoring And Reporting Tool (SMART), Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and remote sensing. In 2021, an animal census of key species was undertaken (line transects, camera traps). A report was appended;
- Implementation of the 2016-2026 General Management Plan (GMP) *has been continued and will be renewed when it expires*;
- Transboundary collaboration through the Transboundary Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration Secretariat (GVTCS) continued, including coordinated patrols along the boundary with Virunga National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Insecurity in the DRC limited the extent of patrol coverage by DRC rangers. Patrols were resumed in 2022 following COVID-19 suspension;
- Through International Assistance funding, a Climate Change, Disaster Risk Management Plan for the property was developed as a framework for disaster risk management planning and guidance for site managers, and infrastructure destroyed by floods was reconstructed.
- A project with WWF-Uganda addressed protecting the property against climate change and human induced activities like encroachment and poaching, focused on sustaining biodiversity, maintaining connectivity between habitats and the functioning of ecosystems in the Greater Virunga Landscape for the benefit of biodiversity and surrounding communities.

The State party submitted an International Assistance request for the project entitled: “Chimpanzee census and other mammal species in Rwenzori World Heritage site” for an amount of USD 30.000, which was approved on 25 September 2022. The project is currently under implementation in close collaboration with the World Heritage Centre.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The continued implementation of the 2016-2026 GMP is welcomed. Recalling that the 2019 mission recommended the GMP be revised to fully integrate all attributes that underpin the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and noting that the current GMP expires in 2026, it is recommended that the State Party ensure the attributes are fully reflected in the next GMP.

It is noted that the State Party considers the establishment of a wildlife migratory corridor between the property and neighbouring National Parks in Uganda, as recommended by the mission, to not be feasible due to the presence of local communities in these areas. It is fully noted that any relocation of local communities would not be appropriate and therefore it is recommended to encourage the State Party to explore potential options to improve the connectivity between the property and the overall Greater Virunga ecosystem to ensure the OUV is maintained, in particular the viability of the remaining elephant population within the property, including by further strengthening the transboundary cooperation with Virunga National Park in DRC.

The reported ecological monitoring activities, including a 2021 animal census on the property using camera traps and line transects, are noted with appreciation. It is of concern however that the census indicates only seven elephants to now be present within the property, which is a further decline on the 2019 census, further highlighting the need to strengthen ecological connectivity and to urgently develop an action plan for its conservation as requested by the Committee. The estimated chimpanzee population of 576 would point to an increase since the last line transect census in 2010 was undertaken which reported 384 individuals. In this regard, the State Party's International Assistance request to undertake the chimpanzee census, following previous committee requests, especially the consideration of the use of the standard line transect methodology using nest counts, is appreciated. It is recommended that monitoring is continued and that the requested wildlife monitoring plan, and the review of the Tourism Strategy to focus on low impact tourism activities, both of which could not be completed due to COVID-19 related financial constraints, are completed as soon as possible.

It is recalled that the 2019 mission considered that the proposed cable car project would impact both the scenic value of the property, as well as its fragile ecosystems and biodiversity, and if approved, would constitute a clear case of ascertained danger to the OUV. The confirmation by the State Party that so far the project has not been recommended for approval is therefore appreciated and it is recommended that the State Party not proceed with this project.

The State Party's confirmation that HEP projects have undergone EIAs, mitigation measures are implemented, and monitoring has reported no detrimental activities is appreciated. However, it is useful to recall that an SEA is a tool that allows for strategic level planning and provides means to assess cumulative effects at an early stage, and guide decision making for the Rwenzori catchment. An SEA is therefore separate to an EIA and will help inform decisions on future projects that would still be subject to project-level EIAs. The State Party should therefore be requested again to undertake an SEA guide strategic level planning and to understand the cumulative effects in the catchment.

It is appreciated that the Kilembe mine remains closed and 2021 water assessments recorded low mineral content in all three rivers flowing out of the property. In line with the mission recommendation, the State Party should be requested to also report on the water quality of the groundwater.

The reconstruction of important infrastructure (trails/bridges) following flash flooding and landslides in 2020 through the Emergency Assistance is appreciated. In this regard, the new Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management Plan for the property will provide an important framework to inform future disaster risk planning and management decisions and should be welcomed.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.75

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision 44 COM 7B.85, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Welcomes the continued implementation of the 2016-2026 General Management Plan (GMP) for the property, and requests the State Party to ensure that the attributes that constitute the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property are fully reflected in the next GMP;*
4. *Notes with concern the results of the 2021 animal census for elephants which indicate only seven individuals as now remaining in the property, and urges again the State Party to assess the viability of the remaining elephant population within the property and to develop an action plan for its conservation, and also encourages the State Party to explore potential options to improve the connectivity between the property and the overall Greater Virunga ecosystem, including by further strengthening the transboundary cooperation with Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo ;*
5. *Welcomes the confirmation by the State Party that no plans to proceed with the proposed cable car project are reported and, also recalling that the 2019 Reactive Monitoring mission considered this project would impact both the scenic value of the property, as well as its fragile ecosystems and biodiversity, and if approved, would constitute a clear case of ascertained danger to the OUV, in line with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines, requests again the State Party not to further pursue this project;*
6. *Notes with appreciation the confirmation that hydropower projects in the vicinity of the property have undergone an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), mitigation measures are implemented, and no detrimental activities are reported, however recalls the increasing number of hydropower projects in the vicinity of the property, and reiterates its request for the State Party to undertake a Strategic Environmental*

Assessment (SEA) for the Rwenzori water catchment, including the property, to guide strategic level planning and to assess the indirect and cumulative impacts on the OUV arising from the existing and planned small scale run-of-river hydropower infrastructures and to ensure that EIAs for any future small scale hydropower development proposed in the catchment of the property, fully assess the potential impacts in relation to the OUV in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit on Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;

7. *Takes note that the Kilembe mine remains closed since the 1970s and that 2021 water samples confirm low mineral levels in all three rivers flowing out of the property and requests the State Party to also report on the water quality of the groundwater;*
8. *Further requests the State Party to continue to implement the recommendations of the 2019 mission, in particular to:*
 - a) *Revise the Tourism Strategy for the property to ensure that it fully considers the protection of its OUV and prioritize low impact tourism activities that utilize existing infrastructures and facilities,*
 - b) *Develop and implement a wildlife monitoring plan to ensure the regular monitoring of key wildlife species as recognized in the Statement of OUV for the property;*
9. *Notes with appreciation the reconstruction of infrastructure following floods and landslides in 2020 and the finalisation of a Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management Plan for the property and requests furthermore the State Party to implement the Plan to inform future disaster risk response, planning and management measures;*
10. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

ASIA AND PACIFIC

85. Western Tien-Shan (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan) (N 1490)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2016

Criteria (x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1490/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (2008)

Total amount approved: USD 30,000

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1490/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management systems / Management Plan (Need to finalize the transboundary management framework for the property; Need to further develop collaboration between the States Parties in the framework of a tripartite Memorandum for management of the property; Need to review and rationalize the boundaries of the components of the property and their buffer zones to ensure that they fully correspond to Criterion (x))
- Human resources (Lack of capacity on transnational management)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1490/>

Current conservation issues

On 4 August 2023, the States Parties submitted a joint report on the state of conservation of the property, a summary of which is available here: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1490/documents/>, and which reports the following:

- Following the signing of the previously reported Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the three States Parties, the Regional Committee for the management of the property has been formed, including representatives of responsible state bodies, protected natural areas and relevant international organizations from each State Party. Two Regional Committee meetings were held in Kazakhstan (July 2021) and in Kyrgyzstan (May 2022) respectively, and the third meeting is planned to be held in Uzbekistan;
- A Work Plan (2021-2025) has been agreed and is under implementation. The development of a regional Management Plan has been also discussed by the Regional Committee;
- The States Parties are collaborating through joint projects and workshops, including with IUCN, to build capacity toward the transboundary management of the property.

Kazakhstan:

- Information is reported on the area, governance and administrative arrangements as well as the flora and fauna present in each of the protected areas in which the Kazakh components of the property are located;
- There are 23 tourist routes and trails in the Kazakh components, with development of campsites, viewing platforms, ethno village, and tent camps along the trails. In 2021, more than 36,000 people

visited the property in Kazakhstan. Visitor centres to provide information are planned, including catering facilities, souvenir shops, medical stations, and tourist equipment rental points;

- Research activities are underway, focused on monitoring of natural processes and preserving biological diversity.

Kyrgyzstan:

- Information is reported on the area, governance and administrative arrangements as well as the flora and fauna present in each component of the property in Kyrgyzstan;
- A national level management plan (2023-2027) for the Kyrgyz components has been developed, based on the individual component management plans. The management plan includes a brief description of the relevant protected areas, an assessment of their activities, joint interaction and a plan of joint activities for a five-year period, and will be approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic;

Uzbekistan:

- At the time of inscription, both Uzbek components of Bashkyzylsay and Maidantal were included in the Chatkal State Biosphere Nature Reserve. In 2019, the Bashkyzylsay component of the property was re-designated as the nuclear zone of the Ugam-Chatkal State Biosphere Reserve under the jurisdiction of the National Railway Company, JSC "Uzbekiston Temir Yullari", with a strict protection regime, and is surrounded by a 1 km wide buffer zone;
- Funds have been provided by the JSC "Uzbekiston Temir Yullari", in addition to state funding, allocated for the management of the Bashkyzylsay component;
- The development of a new buffer zone is under consideration. The preliminary boundaries and size of the proposed buffer zone have been determined, which forms an ecological corridor to connect two components of the property.

On 6 July 2023, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic presented transnational cooperation for the conservation of the Western Tien-Shan, including a report on three meetings of the Regional Committee held in 2021, 2022 and 2023 respectively, during an online workshop for the project 'Heritage for Peace: Enhancing Transboundary and Regional Cooperation for Natural and Mixed World Heritage Sites in Asia', organised by the World Heritage Centre in the framework of the UNESCO/Republic of Korea Funds-in-Trust.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The establishment of the Regional Committee is welcomed. The transboundary collaboration, including in cooperation with IUCN, on regional projects and workshops aimed at building capacity of the States Parties towards effective transboundary management of the property is also welcomed, and should be encouraged further, in particular with a view to developing the transboundary integrated management plan for the property.

Recalling the utmost concern expressed by the Committee in its Decision **44 COM 7B.95** at the excision of a substantial part of Sayram-Ugam National Nature Park in Kazakhstan from the property (more than 60,000 hectares from the property (i.e. ca. 35% of this component) for inclusion in the buffer zone), it is regrettable that there is no further information provided in this regard. It has therefore not been possible to establish whether there may have been any negative impacts to the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) as a result, but it is likely that part of the property is now without an adequate protection status, and it should be recalled that the removal of the legal protection of a property may constitute potential danger to the property in line with Paragraph 180(b) (i) of the Operational Guidelines. It should also be reiterated again that any proposal for a boundary modification must be submitted formally to the World Heritage Centre by the States Parties, in accordance with Paragraphs 163-165 of the Operational Guidelines, and that such a modification would only come into effect if and when it is approved by the Committee. It is therefore urgent that the State Party of Kazakhstan provides further information on this boundary change, including detailed information on the legal protection status of the part which was moved to the buffer zone.

Whilst the report provides some information on the protection regime and management system of Uzbek components of the property, the governance arrangements and corresponding management regime of the component remain unclear, in particular the role of the "Uzbekiston Temir Yullari" National Railway Company in the management of the Ugam-Chatkal State Biosphere Reserve. The State Party should be requested to provide detailed information on the protection regime of the component, including any

changes from the time of inscription and how the governance arrangements, and corresponding management measures, will ensure the effective protection of the OUV.

It is notable that there is no updated information on the previously reported plan to develop a joint proposal for a significant boundary modification. It is recommended therefore that the Committee reiterate its request to the States Parties to develop, as a matter of priority, a joint proposal for a significant boundary modification, to fully correspond to criterion (x), following ecological principles and addressing connectivity, and exclude areas originally included for their paleontological values; and consider the potential to also meet criterion (ix), in accordance with Paragraph 165 of the Operational Guidelines.

Recalling the request of the Committee to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the issues noted above, it is regrettable that the States Parties have yet to invite the mission. The States Parties should be urged to invite the mission as soon as possible to review the changes in the management regime in the Uzbek components and the changes in the zoning regime of the Sayram-Ugam National Nature Park, and to verify whether any new threats to the components in Kyrgyzstan have emerged since inscription.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.85

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions 42 COM 7B.69 and 44 COM 7B.95, adopted at its 42nd (Manama, 2018) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,*
3. *Welcomes the establishment of the joint Regional Committee for the management of the property, and requests the States Parties to continue collaboration towards the joint management of the property, in particular to develop the transboundary integrated management plan for the property;*
4. *Expresses again its utmost concern at the excision of a substantial part of Sayram-Ugam National Nature Park in Kazakhstan from the property and its subsequent inclusion in the buffer zone, as these significant changes introduced to the zoning and protection regime of this protected area could affect the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), including its conditions of integrity, and recalling that the removal of the legal protection of a property may constitute potential danger to the property in line with Paragraph 180(b) (i) of the Operational Guidelines, also requests the State Party of Kazakhstan to provide further information on this boundary change at the national level, including detailed information on the legal protection status of the part which was moved to the buffer zone;*
5. *Further requests the State Party of Uzbekistan to provide detailed information on the protection regime of the Bashkyzylsay and Maidantal components, including any changes from the time of inscription and how the governance arrangements, and corresponding management measures, ensure the effective protection of the OUV;*
6. *Reiterates its request to the States Parties to review and rationalize the boundaries of the components of the property and their buffer zones to ensure that they fully correspond to criterion (x), follow ecological principles and address connectivity, exclude areas originally included for their paleontological values while also considering the potential to meet criterion (ix), and to develop, as a matter of priority, a joint proposal for a significant boundary modification, in accordance with Paragraph 165 of the Operational Guidelines;*

7. *Also reiterates its requests to the States Parties to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the changes in the management regime of the above-mentioned components of the property in the Chatkal State Biosphere Reserve and Ugam-Chatkal State Biosphere Reserve in Uzbekistan and the Sayram-Ugam National Nature Park in Kazakhstan, to evaluate whether these changes represent a potential danger to the property's OUV and integrity and to verify whether any new threats to the components in Kyrgyzstan have emerged since inscription;*
8. *Finally requests the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated joint report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

92. Gulf of Porto: Calanche of Piana, Gulf of Girolata, Scandola Reserve (France) (N 258)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1983

Criteria (vii)(viii)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/258/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/258/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Non-renewable energy facilities
- Oil and gas
- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation
- Management system/Management Plan

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/258/>

Current conservation issues

At its 37th session in 2013, the World Heritage Committee noted with concern the increase in tourism pressure and its possible impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property (Decision **37 COM 7B.19**). Since this Decision, the World Heritage Centre has continued to receive concerns from third parties about the impacts of over-tourism on the property, which have been transmitted to the State Party. In response, the State Party sent a report in 2020, in which it acknowledged, amongst other issues, that tourism pressure had increased significantly since the inscription and announced that tourism frequentation and its impacts would be monitored and appropriate measures taken, along with other protective measures.

With the aim of reviewing the progress of measures reported in 2020 as planned or to be started in that year, and while continuing to receive information from third parties concerning in particular over-tourism, the World Heritage Centre invited the State Party on 23 February 2023 to provide a report on the state of conservation of the property, including an assessment of the impacts and management of tourism and fishing activities. On 7 April 2023, the State Party submitted the report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/258/documents/> and outlines the following:

- Since October 2019, the Environmental Office of Corsica (OEC) is the designated manager of the property. The OEC coordinates the activities of the site in cooperation with the Regional Nature Park of Corsica (PNRC), in charge of the management of the Scandola Nature Reserve (SNR), a significant part of the property in expressing its OUV under Criterion (x);
- The OEC has recruited two staff in 2020 in charge of surveillance of the property, and the PNRC staffing levels in charge of the SNR have increased from three in 2019 to six in 2022;

- The property still has no Management Plan, but management guidelines were adopted in 2015. The Management Plan for the SNR was adopted in 2017;
- A workshop in 2018 identified tourism as a major management challenge;
- Monitoring of the osprey population has shown that while the number of nesting couples in the property remains stable, reproduction numbers are very low, especially in the SNR;
- A comprehensive study on visitation is planned and since 2021, the number of vessels in the property is monitored during the tourist season. The maximum number of visitors to the property in 2021 was between 3,000 and 3,500 per day at the peak of the season. Numbers were lower than normal in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions, without improving osprey reproduction numbers;
- Fishing in the SNR is regulated with a defined number of fishermen for each period. The OEC collects data on coastal fishing, including data for the property. Data collection in the property will be strengthened, but preliminary results show that fishing in the SNR remains limited compared to the rest of Corsica. An evaluation of compliance with the Natura 2000 regulations is planned and will result in further permitting requirements on fishing activities;
- A project for the construction of a hiking trail to access the fort in Girolata was approved and is expected to help manage visitors to the overcrowded village;
- 250 m wide 'quiet zones' have been set up by prefectural decree around eight osprey nesting sites during the breeding season in 2021 and 2022, and this measure has been maintained in 2023. For 2023, a new decree will forbid the mooring of vessels larger than 24 m in the seagrass areas;
- A 'Natura 2000 charter' has so far been signed by a large number of operators, including 31 tourist boat operators and five boat rental companies. The charter provides for a number of voluntary commitments, including respecting the 'quiet zones' and the restriction of boat anchoring to sandy areas;
- A process was initiated to create a nature reserve in the north-western marine zone, but public consultations were delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- A revision of the decree for the SNR was launched in 2022 to address increasing pressure from tourism.
- In the SNR, the impacts of climate change have already been observed (notably, the appearance of invasive alien species and the mortality of invertebrates) and the SNR's Management Plan provides for this site to become a zone of increased surveillance ('benchmark'), to monitor the response of marine and terrestrial life and habitats to global changes.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The increasing pressure from over-tourism and its impacts on the property have been widely documented. In particular, the increase in visitation of the SNR on its maritime front by yachts, recreational boats and tourist ships is having a growing impact on its biodiversity. The disturbance caused by motor vessels during the peak tourist season is linked to the poor nesting success of the resident population of ospreys, one of the flagship species of the property. Moreover, the mooring and anchoring of recreation vessels is degrading the *Posidonia* seagrass beds, coralligenous reefs and the corbels of *Lithophyllum* algae, which represent attributes of the property's OUV.

As part of the process of renewing the Bern Convention's European Diploma for the SNR, the Council of Europe's 2018 on-site-appraisal mission recommended urgent measures to address tourism pressure and, in particular, to complete the proposed extension of the SNR in the maritime zone and the resulting restrictive measures by January 2020 (report available at <https://rm.coe.int/report-of-the-on-the-spot-expert-appraisal-of-the-scandola-nature-reserve/168090e97d>). As this condition was not met, the Council of Europe decided in April 2020 not to renew the Diploma due to the lack of progress made.

It needs to be recalled that concern over the expansion of tourism and its potential impacts on the property had already been raised at the time of its inscription in 1983. In 2013, the Committee, in its Decision **37 COM 7B.19**, requested the State Party to include a sustainable tourism strategy in the Management Plan (MP) of the property and to take measures to address tourism pressure. Unfortunately, although the State party has since acknowledged the problem in its various reports and

correspondence with the World Heritage Centre, few measures seem to be in place to date to address it. While the problem has been underlined for more than a decade, the State Party's report focuses on the need for more data collection on visitation, rather than taking concrete and urgent measures to address tourism pressure, as requested by the Committee, for example by limiting the number of vessels accessing the area. A clear strategy for sustainable tourism is still not available. The initiative to create 250 m 'quiet zones' around eight nesting areas in 2020 and 2021 is noted, but third-party sources have pointed out that not all breeding sites have been included, that the 250 m zone is too limited and is not off-limits for professional fishermen, and that the Reserve has limited means to enforce these measures due to lack of staff and patrolling vessels. The initiative of a voluntary Charter is also noted, but the commitments it includes seem to be limited to the application of legal provisions and it could be strengthened to enhance the benefits of the Charter to the property's OUV.

The lack of progress in developing an overall management for the property, which was requested in Decision **37 COM B.17**, now ten years ago, is of concern and it is recommended that the Committee reiterates this request.

Reported impacts of climate change are noted. Invertebrates such as the red gorgonian and red coral are important attributes of the OUV of the property. The State Party should therefore be requested to provide more information on reported invertebrate mortality and introduction of invasive alien species, and to implement monitoring and adaptation measures, as outlined in the draft MP, as a matter of urgency.

The favourable opinion issued by the National Council for Nature Conservation in January 2023 to revise the decree relating to the SNR, which dates back to its creation in 1975 (when visitation of the Reserve was limited), in order to ensure that its regulation can respond to tourist pressure, is promising. It will be crucial to ensure that this revision is science-based and ensures the conservation of the property's OUV in the long term, including in response to the growing threat of tourism in the property. The revision should also prioritise the expansion of the SNR to include a larger marine component. While the ongoing efforts to create a regional marine nature reserve in the north-western maritime zone of the island are commendable and complementary, it would be important to ensure that the marine zone of Scandola is included in the National Reserve and in an extended World Heritage property, to achieve its highest protection status and also consistency in management. In addition, there is concern that both the revision of the SNR Decree and the creation of the marine nature reserve will be a lengthy process and when solutions to the problem of over-tourism are urgently needed. It is therefore recommended that the Committee request the State Party to take urgent measures to regulate mooring and the number of vessels permitted in the area and to reduce significantly the disturbance and impacts from mooring.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.92

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **37 COM 7B.19**, adopted at its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013),*
3. *Notes with concern that over-tourism is having an increasingly negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, in particular on its biodiversity, due to the disturbance by motor vessels on the maritime front of the Scandola Nature Reserve (SNR) during the peak tourist season, resulting in poor nesting success of the resident population of ospreys, and to the serious impact of mooring of recreational boats on the Posidonia seagrass beds, the coralligenous reefs and the corbels of Lithophyllum algae, which represent attributes of the property's OUV;*
4. *Also notes with concern that, despite having acknowledged the threat of over-tourism, the State Party has still not addressed the issue and that a comprehensive Management Plan for the entire property, as requested in its previous Decision **37 COM 7B.19** has yet to be developed, and reiterates its request to the State Party to finalise the Management Plan as soon as possible, including a sustainable tourism strategy and a set of measures*

to address tourism pressure, and to submit the Plan for review by the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, prior to its adoption;

5. *Noting the reported impacts of climate change on the property, requests the State Party to urgently implement the climate change monitoring and adaptation measures foreseen in the draft Management Plan, and to provide an updated and more detailed assessment of the impacts of climate change on the OUV;*
6. *Welcomes the recent initiative to revise the 1975 Decree for the SNR and urges the State Party to base this revision on the best available scientific data, and to ensure that it includes adequate measures to address tourism pressure and limit visitation, and provides for the expansion of the National Reserve to include a larger marine component;*
7. *Also welcomes the State Party's ongoing efforts to create a regional marine nature reserve in the north-western maritime zone of the island, considers this should be complementary to the extension of the marine zone of the SNR and encourages the State Party to extend the property, to include the extension of the Reserve, through a boundary modification in line with the Operational Guidelines;*
8. *Also requests the State Party to take immediate and urgent measures in the meantime to regulate mooring and the number of vessels permitted in the maritime part of the SNR in order to reduce significantly the disturbance and impacts of mooring;*
9. *Requests furthermore the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

93. Durmitor National Park (Montenegro) (N 100bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1980

Criteria (vii)(viii)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/100/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 4 (from 1981-1988)

Total amount approved: USD 117,000

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/100/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: USD 40,000 by UNESCO Venice Office; USD 50,000 under the Participation Programme

Previous monitoring missions

1996 and 2005: Joint UNESCO/IUCN missions; November 2018: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Advisory mission; October/November 2019: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Water infrastructure (Proposed dam development on the Tara River)
- Illegal logging and hunting (*issue resolved*)
- Tourism infrastructure (Ski development in the Zabljak area)

- Boundary issues

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/100/>

Current conservation issues

On 28 December 2022, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/100/documents>, providing the following information:

- In 2020, the State Party terminated the process of expansion of ski infrastructure development in the property, shifting the focus towards reconstruction or adaptation of existing ski infrastructure;
- The possibility of amendments to the Special Purpose Spatial Plan (SPSP) regarding tourism infrastructure development will be considered after the adoption of the Revised Protection Study (RPS) for the property;
- The RPS will propose to reinstate the property's boundaries as they were prior to their 2013 modification, including revised zonation, a buffer zone and a description of the spatial distribution of important habitats and species;
- The construction works for the Smokovac-Mateševo section of the Bar-Boljare motorway were completed in July 2022 and the road is open. Subsequent downstream monitoring activities have observed Danube salmon in two of the six survey sites including within the property;
- The State Party of Montenegro has received no information from the State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding the updated Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Buk Bijela hydroelectric power plant (HPP) project;
- The construction of the 400kV Lastva Grbaljska-Pljevlja transmission line, which would cross the property, will replace the existing line in the same location;
- The proposed Komarnica HPP, which would inundate the area noted by the 2018 Advisory mission as potentially suitable for an extension of the property, is currently undergoing evaluation through an EIA process. In its report, the commission has elaborated on several objections that will have to be addressed before the EIA can be accepted.

Two letters dated 21 May and 28 May 2021 were sent to the States Parties of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of Serbia, respectively, by the World Heritage Centre requesting verification and comment on third party information regarding the Buk Bijela HPP. On 7 September and 23 July 2021, responses were received from the States Parties of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia respectively. The State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina provided the English translation of the EIA dated January 2013 and details of the EIA process. The State Party of Serbia provided details of the EIA process and legislation relating to the project and noted that this was the first of three power plants planned on the upper course of the Drina River.

On 11 August 2021, the State Party of Montenegro sent a letter to the World Heritage Centre transmitting information regarding the development of a lead and zinc mine in the vicinity of the property. On 25 August 2021, the World Heritage Centre acknowledged receipt, noting the requirement for impact assessment for development projects within or around a World Heritage property.

On 4 November 2021, UNESCO sent a letter to the State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina, recalling the Committee's concern regarding the revival of the Buk Bijela HPP, the request to jointly assess with the State Party of Montenegro any potential impact of the project on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and the comments of IUCN previously transmitted to the State Party in a letter of the World Heritage Centre dated 9 March 2021. In the same correspondence, the States Parties' obligations under the World Heritage Convention were recalled, in particular Article 6, paragraph 3, which indicates that States Parties are obliged not to '*take any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage [...] situated on the territory of other States Parties to this Convention*'. The State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina was invited to update the EIA, including a detailed assessment of any potential impacts on the OUV of the property, and to provide it to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN.

A letter dated 15 July 2022 was sent by the World Heritage Centre to the State Party of Montenegro conveying concerns about the potential impacts of the proposed Komarnica HPP on the Dragišnica and Komarnica Nature Park, which the 2018 joint Advisory mission noted could be an appropriate addition to the property to enhance its integrity. On 1 December 2022, the State Party of Montenegro responded

that the evaluation of the EIA for the HPP was still underway and noted that the concessionaire would need to conduct the impact assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Convention before beginning construction. IUCN's analysis of the information received at this stage is included in the following section.

On 14 March 2023, the State Party submitted the RPS, along with maps of Durmitor National Park, to the World Heritage Centre, for review by IUCN.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

It is welcomed that the State Party has terminated the process of expanding ski infrastructure development in the property. Noting that the focus will now shift towards reconstruction and adaptation of existing ski infrastructure, the Committee should recall the findings of the 2019 joint Advisory mission and request again that any modernisation of existing ski infrastructure should remain within exactly the same limited area closely following the existing routes, not allowing for any expansion or extension, and that the ski lifts should be operated within the limits of the current capacity of the existing ski runs.

It should also be recalled that in light of warming climatic conditions and in order to ensure the effective conservation of the property, the State Party should consider completely phasing out the use of the Savin Kuk slopes for skiing in the long-term, and prioritise less impactful forms of tourism within the property. It is therefore recommended that the Committee reiterate its request not to pursue the construction of tourism infrastructure inside the property, and encourage the State Party to develop a sustainable tourism management strategy for the property, which should also be reflected in the updated SPSP following the finalization of the RPS.

The submission of the RPS, including the information that the boundaries of the National Park will be returned to the configuration prior to their 2013 modification, zonation revised, and a buffer zone established in line with the recommendations of the 2018 joint Advisory mission to the property, is welcomed. The RPS will be reviewed by IUCN and the State Party should be requested to fully consider the findings of the review and consult with the World Heritage Centre prior to adopting any legal change to the boundaries of the National Park or the protection status of any area of the property.

Recalling the concern expressed by the Committee in its Decision **44 COM 7B.104** regarding the revival of the proposed Buk Bijela HPP project, it is regrettable that the State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina has not provided the requested update on the 2013 EIA nor provided any additional details on the revised project in follow up to the IUCN review of March 2021. It is recalled that this review recommended that the EIA be updated to ensure that the most recent data is taken into account and that a detailed assessment of potential impacts on the OUV is included, which factors in the rich fish fauna of Tara River, including the migratory Danube Salmon (*Hucho hucho*) threatened by dam constructions and endangered according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, as an attribute of the OUV of the property.

It is therefore recommended that the Committee request the State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina to provide more information on the status as well as accurate technical details on the planned project and reiterate its request to update, jointly with the State Party of Montenegro, the 2013 EIA, including a detailed assessment of any potential impacts on the OUV of the property, through an EIA updated in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context.

The information provided by the State Party of Serbia, stating that the project is the first of three planned HPP projects on the upper Drina catchment downstream of the property, adds to the concern, considering the importance of uninterrupted river flow for the conservation of migratory fish species, such as the endangered Danube Salmon. The Committee may therefore wish to request the States Parties of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia to ensure that these projects are similarly assessed for their impacts on the OUV of the property, including cumulative impacts, through a Strategic Environmental Assessment, undertaken in collaboration with the State Party of Montenegro.

Noting that an EIA for the proposed Komarnica HPP is currently under evaluation by the national authorities, it is recommended the State Party ensure that the potential impacts on the OUV of the property have been fully assessed, and not approve the project if impacts to OUV have not been considered in the impact assessment, or if it is found that the project would result in negative impacts on the OUV. Furthermore, noting that the dam would inundate the Dragišnica and Komarnica Nature Park, it is recalled that the 2018 joint Advisory mission considered that this area presented a similar diversity of geological and biological values to the property, and could therefore be an appropriate addition to the property to enhance its integrity. The determination of the project should therefore take into account its potential impact on the current integrity of the property, as well as the future

implementation of such an extension, recalling also that the 2018 mission concluded that the area would only qualify for inclusion into the property if it met the same high-level protection standards of the property.

Noting the confirmed presence of Danube Salmon following the completion of the Smokovac-Mateševo section of the Bar-Boljare motorway, the State Party should be requested to continue monitoring downstream impacts inside the property, and the status of key species that are attributes of the OUV in particular the Danube Salmon. Regarding the upgrade of the Lastva Grbaljska-Pljevlja transmission line, the State Party should be encouraged to apply strict environmental safeguard standards to carefully monitor, reduce and mitigate any potential impacts during construction and maintenance works. The potential impacts of the proposed lead and zinc mine should also be assessed prior to taking any decision that is difficult to reverse.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.93

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.104**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Welcomes the State Party's decision to terminate the process of expanding ski infrastructure development in the property;*
4. *Recalls that an expansion of ski infrastructure developments inside the property would constitute an ascertained danger to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, in line with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines and requests the State Party to provide information confirming that existing ski infrastructure will remain within exactly the same limited area closely following the existing routes, not allowing for any expansion or extension, and that the ski lifts should be operated within the limits of the current capacity of the existing ski runs;*
5. *Reiterates its request not to pursue the construction of tourism infrastructure inside the property, and to develop a sustainable tourism management strategy for the property, which should be reflected in the updated Special Purpose Spatial Plan (SPSP);*
6. *Notes with appreciation the submission of the Revised Protection Study (RPS) as well as the process of establishing a buffer zone for the property, and also requests the State Party to fully consider the findings of the IUCN's review of the RPS and consult with the World Heritage Centre prior to adopting any legal change to the boundaries of the National Park or protection status of any area of the property;*
7. *Notes the multiple proposed hydroelectric power plant (HPP) projects downstream of the property and further requests the States Parties of Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia to ensure the integrity of the property by maintaining the continuity of the river ecosystem and the continued presence of the Danube Salmon through an unimpeded river flow, and requests furthermore the States Parties to ensure that the potential impacts of proposed projects on the OUV of the property are assessed in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, prior to taking any decision that would be difficult to reverse, as follows:*
 - a) *the State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina to confirm the status of the Buk Bijela HPP project and to ensure that potential impacts of the project on the OUV are assessed through an updated Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), in close consultation with the State Party of Montenegro,*

- b) *the States Parties of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia to ensure that the potential impacts of all planned HPP projects in the upper Drina catchment on the OUV are assessed, including cumulative impacts, through a Strategic Environmental Assessment, in collaboration with the State Party of Montenegro,*
 - c) *the State Party of Montenegro to ensure that potential impacts of the Komarnica HPP on the OUV are assessed during the evaluation of the EIA, with specific considerations for the implications of this project on the potential future extension of the property into the Dragišnica and Komarnica Nature Park, and not to approve the project if it would result in negative impacts on the OUV,*
 - d) *the States Parties of Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia to communicate updated information and documentation on the above to the World Heritage Centre, for review by IUCN;*
8. *Requests moreover the State Party to continue to monitor any downstream impacts inside the property following the completion of the Smokovac-Mateševo section of the Bar-Boljare motorway, as well as the status of key species that are attributes of the OUV, in particular the Danube Salmon;*
 9. *Requests moreover the State Party to apply strict environmental safeguard standards in order to carefully monitor, minimise and mitigate any potential impacts during construction and maintenance works of the Lastva Grbaljska-Pljevlja transmission line;*
 10. *Requests moreover the State Party to assess the potential impacts of the proposed lead and zinc mine on the OUV of the property, in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;*
 11. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

97. Doñana National Park (Spain) (N 685bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1994

Criteria (vii)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/685/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/685/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

1998: World Heritage Centre Advisory mission; 1999, 2001, 2004: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN/Ramsar missions (Doñana 2005 expert meetings on Hydrological Restoration of Wetlands); January 2011: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission and Ramsar

Advisory mission; January 2015: IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; February 2020: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN/Ramsar Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Oil and gas (Potential impacts from infrastructure projects in the vicinity of the property, including gas storage)
- Mining (Proposed re-opening of Aznalcóllar mine upstream of the property)
- Water infrastructure (Proposed upgrading of a dam upstream of the property)
- Water (extraction) (Unsustainable use of water with impacts on the Doñana aquifer)
- Water infrastructure (Dredging of the Guadalquivir River)
- Climate change (extreme weather, exceptional droughts and change of hydrological balance)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/685/>

Current conservation issues

On 2 December 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, with extensive annexes provided in Spanish only, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/685/documents/> and reports the following:

- The Special Management Plan of the Irrigation Zones located to the North of the Forest Crown of Doñana (PEOCFD), other water measures and annual Extraction Plans continue to be implemented:
 - 319 wells have been closed (bringing the total to 765),
 - Three of the five water bodies in the Doñana aquifer remain “at risk”, which has triggered Article 56 of the Water Act and its available legal provisions (creation of water user communities, replacement of groundwater by surface water, protective perimeters around groundwater bodies),
 - The relocation of the two most easterly wells near Matalascañas is scheduled for implementation in 2023,
 - The Guadalquivir hydrological plan was due to be approved at the end of 2022, including a 60% increase of resources for the Guadalquivir Hydrographical Confederation (CHG) compared to the previous planning cycle, up to a total amount of 3,827 million EUR;
- The long drought has continued, and the 2021/2022 hydrological cycle was the driest since the 2004/2005 cycle. The number of counted wintering waterfowl birds in 2022 reached the lowest point in the last 22 years. Numbers of several iconic birds have significantly reduced, including the Glossy ibis, Eurasian spoonbill, Greater flamingo, Grey heron, Great egret, Greylag goose, Spanish imperial eagle, and Red kite. As a result of climate change, wintering populations of Greylag goose are already starting to winter in wetlands further north of the property;
- The State Party reports that the property still meets all three criteria (vii, ix and x) that form the basis of its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), but the ongoing major drought could alter criterion (vii), while the climatic situation in the area is undoubtedly having an impact on its current ecological condition;
- A comprehensive model capable of predicting the impacts of Doñana’s wider eco-hydrological dynamics and the potential future risks of climate change is not yet available;
- Preparations for a strategic document that forecasts the impact of climate change on OUV and sets out management guidelines may be advanced in 2023, building on existing initiatives;
- The project to reopen the Aznalcóllar mine has not undergone any significant changes since the last report was issued and the environmental assessment procedure is still ongoing. No impact of the four gas projects on the OUV has been detected. The State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre an addendum document (in Spanish), to the initial project in November 2022;
- Of the 39 Habitats of Community Interest (HCI) under the Habitats Directive of the European Commission, the 2020 evaluation indicates that 27 have an excellent or good conservation, while nine have an intermediate or poor conservation. The Doñana lynx population has stabilized at around 90 individuals;

- The Retrospective Statement of OUV has been finalised and is being submitted for adoption by the World Heritage Committee;
- A proposal for a buffer zone (74,282.25 hectares) is being developed and the State Party will initiate a minor boundary modification for examination by the Committee.

On 25 January 2022, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party conveying third party concerns regarding a draft law entitled “Improvement of the Management of Irrigation Areas in the County of Huelva, in the Municipalities of Almonte, Bonares, Lucena del Puerto, Moguer and Rociana del Condado (Huelva)”, which was presented to the Parliament of Andalusia. In a letter dated 24 November 2022, the State Party responded that the Parliament of Andalusia had been dissolved, and that, therefore, the legislation had not been passed.

In a letter dated 23 September 2022, the World Heritage Centre transmitted third party information to the State Party on the drought and drying out of the Santa Olalla lagoon within the property. In a letter dated 24 November 2022, the State Party confirmed that all lagoons, including the Santa Olalla lagoon, had dried up by August 2022.

On 2 February 2023, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party requesting confirmation of the approval of the new hydrological plan for the Guadalquivir basin (2021-2027); information on the annual recording of the surface area and duration of flooding of the marshes; the implementation of a systematic follow-up of the assessments Rincon-2 and Marismas-3 on hydrology and OUV and the Aznalcóllar mine, including the status of the systematic risk preparedness and emergency action plans.

On 10 May 2023, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party noting concerns regarding a new bill by the Parliament of Andalusia, dated 13 March 2023, to amend the PEOCFD to legalise illegal water wells used for agricultural purposes. On 24 May 2023, UNESCO released a statement expressing concerns over the proposed bill.

On 13 June 2023, the State Party sent a letter to the World Heritage Centre including information that the bill had been taken into consideration by the Parliament of Andalusia but had, however, not yet been formally adopted and may be subject to further revision. Assurances were provided that, irrespective of the outcome of the bill, there is no possibility in the future of conceding additional water rights from the aquifer. The letter also included figures for ongoing well closures and the approval of a Priority Action Framework for Doñana.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The State Party’s reported efforts to reduce groundwater usage from the Doñana aquifer (i.e., the Almonte-Marismas detritic aquifer), including through continued inspections, closures of illegal wells and illegally irrigated farmlands, are appreciated. The substantial increase in resources for the CHG including the confirmed relocation of the most eastern wells near Matalascañas, are particularly welcomed. However, despite these efforts, the fact that three underground water bodies have remained overexploited since 2020 remains a reason for concern, especially considering the still unresolved scientific uncertainty regarding the extent to which groundwater abstraction impacts the property’s OUV. Despite the assurance provided by the State Party in the letter received on 13 June 2023 that no additional water rights would be conceded from the aquifer in the future, the legislative change proposed by the Parliament of Andalusia to legalise existing illegal wells is of significant concern, as this is contrary to the recommendations of the 2020 Reactive Monitoring mission and the State Party’s commitments and efforts to implement the PEOCFD and close illegal wells, which is crucial for preserving the OUV of the property.

Noting that the Hydrological Plan for the Guadalquivir basin (2021-2027) was expected to be finalised by the end of 2022, it is recommended for the State Party to confirm whether this Plan has been approved, and whether it was informed by the Strategic Environmental Assessment requested by the Committee in its Decision **41 COM 7B.9**, including an assessment of the cumulative impacts of water use, and agricultural, industrial and commercial development occurring at present on the Guadalquivir River Basin to the property.

The potential impacts of the ongoing major drought on the OUV of the property that are compounded by the above challenges are of serious concern. Two of the five major habitats (marshes and lagoons) have almost disappeared in 2022, affecting also the Santa Olalla lagoon, which is the only permanent peridunal lagoon in the property. The dramatic decline in certain key species that represent attributes of the OUV is of serious concern, noting that many of these species have not been documented to have reproduced in the property and wintering waterfowl were recorded at the lowest numbers in the last

22 years with a 54% decrease compared to the 500,000 birds reported by the State Party in 2005. It is of further concern that wintering patterns of greylag geese are shifting, reportedly due to climate change-related impacts, which will require close monitoring. Although fluctuations in ecosystem productivity are expected given the typical seasonal and annual variations in rainfall patterns, the current situation is unprecedented since monitoring began and is likely a consequence of climate change and the weakening of the property's resilience. Prolonged droughts also reduce the recharge of the aquifers, causing additional negative impacts and a concerning long-term outlook.

Therefore, the property could face not only the potential danger of groundwater over-extraction, as noted by the Committee in Decision **38 COM 7B.79**, but also an ascertained danger if drought becomes a more permanent condition, including as a result of climate change. This emphasizes the need to continue to urgently implement the recommendations of the 2020 mission and reduce groundwater usage, increase the resilience of the property and address scientific uncertainties. Should these actions to strengthen the resilience of the property and reduce pressures on the OUV, including the threat of climate change, not be implemented, the property could be at greater risk of further deteriorating impacts on its OUV, and face both ascertained and potential danger, in line with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines.

Noting the shifting migratory patterns of a number of bird species that contribute to the property's OUV, including greylag geese and, several threatened birds observed predominantly outside of the property, in areas such as Veta La Palma, it is appreciated that a proposal is under development to create a buffer zone for the property and the State Party should be encouraged to complete this process through a minor boundary modification, in line with Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines.

Noting that the environmental assessment procedure for the reopening of the Aznalcóllar mine is ongoing, it is recommended that the Committee reiterate its previous decisions and requests that the State Party prepare a clear risk preparedness plan and establish rapid emergency response capacities.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.97

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **37 COM 7B.27**, **38 COM 7B.79**, **39 COM 7B.26**, **41 COM 7B.9**, **43 COM 7B.20** and **44 COM 7B.191** adopted at its 37th (Phnom Penh, 2013), 38th (Doha, 2014), 39th (Bonn, 2015), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 43rd (Baku, 2019) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,*
3. *Welcomes the efforts of the State Party to finalise, with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, as well as to start identifying monitoring indicators, and reiterates its request to report on the indicators in future state of conservation reports;*
4. *Appreciates the State Party's continued efforts to reduce groundwater usage from the Doñana aquifer (Almonte-Marismas detritic aquifer), including through the implementation of various recommendations of the 2020 Reactive Monitoring mission, but reiterates its utmost concern about the overexploitation of three of the water bodies despite such efforts, and therefore requests the State Party to fully implement all recommendations of the 2020 mission as a matter of urgency;*
5. *Also requests the State Party to confirm whether the Hydrological Plan for the Guadalquivir basin (2021-2027) has been approved, including details of the process of its development, recalling the Committee's previous request to present an updated Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Guadalquivir River Basin to ensure that it includes a specific chapter on the OUV of the property;*

6. *Also recalling the need to clarify the relationship between the hydrology and ecology of the area and defining the water requirements of the property to maintain its OUV, urges the State Party to expedite the development of an eco-hydrological model for the property, in line with the 2020 mission recommendations, in order to inform adaptive management of the property and actions to increase its resilience under climate change;*
7. *Further requests the State Party to develop a strategic plan that defines likely climate change-related impacts to the property, as well as adaptation and mitigation measures to address these impacts, including the extent to which a reduction in water consumption is required to conserve and protect the OUV of the property, in line with the 2020 mission recommendations;*
8. *Noting that fluctuations in ecosystem productivity are expected given the seasonal and annual variations in rainfall patterns, nevertheless, expresses its utmost concern about the decline in the number of waterbirds wintering in the property, which are important attributes of the property's OUV, and the fact that some key species are currently not breeding or being observed in the property due to prolonged drought and lack of surface water;*
9. *Expresses its utmost concern at the legislative changes proposed by the Parliament of Andalusia to legalise existing illegal wells and urges the State Party to fully implement the Special Management Plan of the Irrigation Zones located to the North of the Forest Crown of Doñana (PEOCFD) in its current form and to urgently close illegal wells, in accordance with its previous commitments;*
10. *Considers that a continued decline of the Doñana aquifer (Almonte-Marismas detritic aquifer), if not reversed through rapid and effective implementation of actions, including the recommendations of the 2020 Reactive Monitoring mission, to strengthen the resilience of the property and reduce the pressures on the OUV from the threat of climate change, could lead to adverse impact on the OUV of the property and create the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines;*
11. *Recalling the need for great caution concerning the reopening of the former Aznalcóllar mine, further urges the State Party to ensure that systematic risk preparedness and emergency action plans take into account the protection and management needs of the property, and to submit these documents in one of the working languages of the Convention (English or French) to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, as soon as they become available and before final or irreversible decisions are taken regarding the reopening of the mine;*
12. *Notes with appreciation the plan to establish a buffer zone for the property, and requests the State Party to submit a proposal for a minor boundary modification to formalise a buffer zone for the property;*
13. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

MIXED PROPERTIES

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

104. Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid region (Albania, North Macedonia) (C/N 99quater)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1979

Criteria (i)(iii)(iv)(vii)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 3 (from 1986-2021)

Total amount approved: USD 86,720

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 20 000 (UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice)

Previous monitoring missions

September 1998: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN mission; December 2013: Joint ICOMOS/UNESCO Advisory mission; April 2017, January 2020: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring missions; December 2019: Joint ICOMOS/IUCN Advisory mission; April 2022: ICOMOS Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management system/Management Plan
- Buildings and development
- Ground transport infrastructure
- Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure (proposed Galičica Ski Centre)
- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/>

Current conservation issues

On 1 February 2022 and 17 February 2022 respectively, Albania and North Macedonia submitted separate state of conservation progress reports. On 6 February 2023, the States Parties jointly submitted their two state of conservation reports. All three documents are available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/documents/>. On 3 March 2023 and 31 March 2023, North Macedonia and Albania respectively replied to the World Heritage Centre's request for additional information. Progress on a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in these documents, as follows:

Transboundary collaboration

- The reactivation of the Transboundary Watershed Management of the Ohrid Region was agreed and the Transboundary Watershed Management Committee now includes high-level representation in (i.e., Mayors and Ministers);
- The draft Strategic Recovery Plan for the Rehabilitation of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region was prepared;

- The European Commission declared railway Corridor VIII eligible for European funding, with a request for a feasibility study on an alternative route for the Struga–Albanian border section;
- Cross-border cooperation on water quality between the PSI Hydrobiological Institute Ohrid and a twin institution in Albania has not been possible but exchanges between counterparts are continuing.

North Macedonia

- The feasibility study for the Urban Plan for areas and buildings of State importance in the coastal belt of the Ohrid region, prepared in 2021, has been awarded and its completion is expected in 2023;
- Between 2020 and 2021, the removal of 15 buildings and the partial removal of eight buildings is reported. Figures for 2022 are not presented; Galichica National Park has inventoried illegal structures in the Park, with a priority list for removal that has been shared with Ohrid Municipality and the relevant Ministry;
- The Management Plan for Galichica National Park 2021-2030 has been adopted;
- In 2021 and 2022, pending the revision of the existing city Masterplan, the Ohrid Municipality adopted decisions recognising the provisions of the World Heritage Management Plan (2021-2029) as prevailing over existing spatial plans, except for infrastructure of State and local significance; it also halted the reconstruction and enlargement of Quay Macedonia;
- Studies to define the buffer zone had begun and were expected to be completed in June 2022;
- The 2023 Draft Annual Programme includes the preparation of detailed plans for 19 urban complexes and a report on the valorisation of the cultural heritage of Ohrid Region is being prepared and a draft management plan for Lake Ohrid Monument of Nature has been submitted to the World Heritage Centre together with the state of conservation report on 6 February 2023;
- A Draft Tourism Development Strategy 2020-2025 was prepared and underwent a Strategic Environment Assessment. The Strategy will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre once completed;
- The design and construction of the Trebenishta–Struga–Qafasan A2 highway was awarded, and the company provided with the Committee’s recommendations. For the A2 Kichevo-Ohrid section, under construction, the Commission approved five infrastructure-related projects;
- The 2022 ICOMOS Advisory mission to the property assessed the potential impacts of the proposed refurbishment and extension of the Hotel Palace; in line with the mission’s recommendations, no activity is underway on this site;
- Studenčišča Marsh was granted temporary protection as part of the ongoing proclamation as a Nature Park. The marina proposal at Studenčišča Marsh has been abandoned;
- The re-proclamation of Lake Ohrid as a Monument of Nature was initiated, and a Draft Law was planned to be submitted to Parliament by July 2022;
- The project for the redirection of the Sateska River to its former course continued;
- The water treatment plant in Lozhani was upgraded and reached 90% of its capacity, with improved water collection functionality;
- Measures to stabilise the water level of Lake Ohrid were adopted;
- A study on fisheries and aquaculture was initiated to inform fish stocking in the Lake and was expected to be published shortly;
- Funds were allocated to a regional waste management system, which provides for the closure of the Bukovo landfill;
- Funding for mini water-treatment plants on the Macedonian part of Lake Ohrid was secured;
- The PSI Hydrobiological Institute in Ohrid carried out analyses of the waters from Crn Drim River, resulting in proposals to eliminate/minimise adverse effects of detected pollutants;

- A Special Management Plan to reduce anthropogenic pressures on the Saint Naum springs is currently being prepared.

Albania

- Removal of illegal buildings began and almost all fish farms were removed from the Drilon Springs Area (2021);
- The Drilon-Tushemisht Waterscape Park Project was approved in December 2020. It includes the rehabilitation of Drilon Park, a visitor centre, a water museum on top of a karstic hill, new tourism facilities, residential buildings and parking lots;
- Removal of the Memelishte and Alarup dumpsites began in 2022, but more time will be required for the former due to active mining licences;
- Upon completion of the upgraded Lin-Pogradec Road, the lakeshore was rehabilitated and landscaping completed;
- The inspection of protected monuments continued in 2021 and 2022, and maintenance work at Lin Paleo-Christian Church and the monitoring of natural attributes were carried out;
- As part of the '100 Tourist Villages programme', projects in Lin and Gurras are under preparation to upgrade infrastructure, rehabilitate buildings and demolish illegal buildings, for which exclusion from the legalisation procedure was requested;
- Other major projects include:
 - a tourist complex with wooden cabins in Bucimas, already completed,
 - a water supply and sewerage system in Bucimas and Pogradec, now completed, and further afield in Guras, Geshtenjas, Verdove, Remenj,
 - drinking water supplies in Lin, Memelisht and Udenisht;
- The restoration/requalification of the historic centre of Pogradec includes the revitalisation of public spaces through urban design and lighting;
- Promotional and awareness-raising activities, such as community-based garbage cleaning, activation of the Pogradec-St Naum–Ohrid ferryboat line and bicycle lanes were implemented;
- The Pogradec General Local Plan, which incorporates the Committee's previous decisions is awaiting approval by the Prime Minister.

On 22 April 2022, the World Heritage Centre transmitted third-party information to the States Parties containing an analysis on the content of the draft Law on the Proclamation of Studenčišča Marsh as a Nature Park and alerting that the draft Law would fail to protect the values and needs of this wetland, which is deteriorating due to agriculture, tourism and incremental construction. On 15 August 2022, the State Party of North Macedonia replied, explaining the procedure for declaring an area a protected area and the future steps and recommendations. Following the adoption of the Law, the Municipality of Ohrid, as the entity responsible of the management of the protected area, would need to develop and adopt a Management Plan including a set of measures and activities to ensure the protection and management of the marsh.

On 20 December 2022, the World Heritage Centre transmitted to the States Parties third-party information expressing deep concern about the rediverting of the River Sateska to its original path, which, although necessary, had allegedly been carried out without a full and high-quality Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). On 3 March 2023, the State Party of North Macedonia responded in relation to this project, which is being implemented through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning, that several measures were being implemented and that the project should be completed by the end of March 2023. It added that the EIA had been carried out in accordance with the guidelines and stages laid down by the Ministry of the Environment and Physical Planning.

Both in correspondence dated 20 December 2022 and again in a letter dated 26 January 2023, information from third parties was transmitted to the States Parties on the possible sale of an archaeological site located within the World Heritage property. On 3 March 2023, the State Party of North Macedonia responded that there were no archaeological sites listed on the plots of land proposed for sale. However, noting that several archaeological sites had been discovered in the vicinity of the site

in question, the presence of an archaeologist had been requested during the execution of the works to ensure archaeological supervision and to take the necessary measures.

As part of an open file under the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural habitats (Bern Convention) on the 'alleged negative impacts to Lake Ohrid and Galichica National Park candidate Emerald Sites due to infrastructure development', including a ski centre and resort, European Corridor VIII railway, A2 Highway, a marina and several touristic development zones, an on-the-spot appraisal mission took place from 25 to 27 April 2023 to Lake Ohrid and Galichica National Park in North Macedonia. The UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the Secretariat of the RAMSAR Convention participated as observers.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies

The preparation of a draft joint Strategic Recovery Plan through collaboration between both States Parties is to be welcomed.

The Strategic Recovery Plan recognises the extreme vulnerability of the property, the underlying causes of such vulnerability, in particular the inadequacy of regulations, the lack of implementation of existing programmes and projects, as well as the presence of active threats. It sets out strategic objectives and an action plan covering 167 actions that reflect the Committee's repeated requests and the recommendations of the Reactive Monitoring missions. The Strategic Recovery Plan provides a sound basis for initiating the recovery of the property; however, it needs to be strengthened, in particular to further prioritise actions according to transboundary goals and priorities, clarify mechanisms for implementation and integration into national and local policies and plans, and further specify timelines for completion of actions.

Successful implementation of the Plan will thus require improved transboundary cooperation, the allocation of adequate resources, a clear mandate for the transboundary working group and the national Strategic Recovery Plan task forces with qualified staff and sufficient resources, as well as long-term political and technical commitment at the national and local level, and strengthening collaboration between State and local administrations. Only in this way can the Strategic Recovery Plan become the transboundary and inter-agency basis for specific and proactive measures for the recovery of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and the operational arm of the vision established in each country's respective Management Plans. As all these conditions have not yet been met, there is an urgent need to further develop the Strategic Recovery Plan and consolidate concerted long-term efforts to implement it. At the same time, and parallel to the efforts to improve the Strategic Recovery Plan, the continuing active and emerging threats need to be addressed immediately, such as the development of inappropriate residential and tourism projects that continue to be proposed and carried out.

In addition to the development of the draft Strategic Recovery Plan, the States Parties' reports show that some key issues are starting to be addressed, including transboundary cooperation through the resumption of the Transboundary Watershed Management, and the suspension of the Kichevo-Lin section of Rail Corridor VIII, which represented a major threat. It is noted that a feasibility study for a different rail route had been commissioned: once completed, the study should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

Despite these positive developments, progress appears to be limited in relation to many of the mission recommendations and Committee's repeated requests.

A number of developments that are proposed or have been carried out without prior notification to the World Heritage Centre highlight the continuing lack of a shared vision for the future of the property and the ambition for development options and scales that are incompatible with World Heritage status. The proclamation of the Studencišča Marsh and Lake Ohrid as protected areas has not yet been achieved. Furthermore, the demolition of illegal buildings, the development of urban plans for 19 complexes in Ohrid, and the resolution of several serious issues, namely mining dumpsites along Lake Ohrid in Albania, or the definition of a buffer zone have not progressed significantly; no information is provided on energy infrastructure projects and the free economic zone in North Macedonia.

The State Party of North Macedonia should be invited to suspend the adoption of Local Development Plans and amendments to the Detailed Urban Plans until a Heritage Impact Assessment has been carried out at strategic level to assess the impacts of these plans. The commissioning of the 'Feasibility Study for an Urban Plan for Areas and Structures of State Significance for the protected coastal zone in the Ohrid Region', as a prerequisite for urban plans of State significance in North Macedonia, in accordance with the 2020 Law on Urban Planning, is welcome. The preparation of this independent technical document, which is expected to improve the understanding of the integrity and authenticity of

the World Heritage property and to help to identify and analyse the attributes which convey its OUV, is financially supported by different UN agencies and programmes, including UNESCO, but should nevertheless be the subject of a Technical Review by the Advisory Bodies.

The conservation plan for the protected sections of the historic centre of Pogradec (buffer zone) is a first step towards improving its condition, but no clear implementation mechanism or dedicated resources are mentioned. The lighting project does not enhance the architectural or urban quality of the historic area and is not encouraged. The approved Pogradec General Local Plan should be sent to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

It should also be recalled that the 2020 Reactive Monitoring mission found that the proposed Drilon-Tushemisht Water Park at Drilon Springs was inappropriate as proposed, in terms of construction volumes and potential negative impacts on the springs. The project has subsequently been approved, seemingly with few changes, based on an EIA that failed to take into account the cultural dimensions of the OUV. Implementation of the Drilon-Tushemisht Water Park project must therefore be halted and all documentation of the approved project sent promptly to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

Both States Parties should be urged to strengthen their coordination and cooperation to address the serious threats to the property and to ensure the systematic implementation of impact assessments, as requested by the Operational Guidelines and in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in World Heritage Context, and by exchanging information on plans and projects with potential impacts on the property's OUV. This is particularly urgent for the revised route of railway Corridor VIII and the re-routing of the Sateska River project. Detailed documentation of approved projects for the A2 Kichevo - Ohrid section of the highway should be shared with the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre for analysis on whether there may be significant impacts on the OUV of the property.

While it is considered that the Strategic Recovery Plan lays the foundations for counteracting the ascertained and potential threats, as defined in Paragraphs 179 and 180 of the Operational Guidelines, the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilisation to preserve its OUV and the implementation of emergency measures that bring together all the stakeholders concerned. These measures must be taken immediately, in parallel with the finalisation of the Strategic Recovery Plan, which must be submitted to the World Heritage Centre before it is approved and comes into force. It is therefore recommended to request the States Parties to urgently invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to examine the effective implementation of the emergency measures, the level of mobilisation and coordination of all the stakeholders involved as well as the implementation of the recommendations of the 2020 mission and the repeated requests of the Committee, and to assess the overall state of conservation of the property.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.104

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision 44 COM 7B.7, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Welcomes the joint efforts of the States Parties to develop a Strategic Recovery Plan for the property but calls on the States Parties to ensure the following:*
 - a) *The inclusion of an implementation timeframe, budget and prioritisation for each action in the Strategic Recovery Plan,*
 - b) *The extension to Albania of the implementation of actions envisaged only in North Macedonia but relevant to both States Parties,*
 - c) *Adequately staffed, resourced and mandated national teams to liaise and coordinate with all relevant institutions to guarantee the integration of the actions*

of the Strategic Recovery Plan into national policies and plans, as well as an inter-institutional effort to halt and reverse the threats and achieve the goals set out in the Strategic Recovery Plan;

4. *Urges the States Parties to put in place immediate emergency measures to bring together all relevant actors to stop new threats and reverse existing threats before the Strategic Recovery Plan has been finalised, approved and begun to take effect;*
5. *Notes with serious concern the assessment made in Chapter 4 of the Strategic Recovery Plan regarding the vulnerability of the property and the negative factors affecting it and urgently requests that:*
 - a) *Amendments to Detailed Urban Plans and approval of Local Development Plans outside settlements be suspended until a Heritage Impact Assessment at the strategic level is carried out and demonstrates that the attributes underlying the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) are not adversely affected by these plans,*
 - b) *the General Urban Plans for Ohrid and Struga and the spatial planning instruments for non-built-up areas be elaborated as a matter of urgency and in full respect of the attributes underlying the OUV of the property;*
6. *Requests to the State Party of North Macedonia to submit to the World Heritage Centre, upon completion, the feasibility study for the Urban Plan for areas and buildings of State importance in the coastal belt of the Ohrid region for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
7. *Urges the State Party of North Macedonia to finalise the proclamation of Studencišča Marsh as a nature park and Lake Ohrid as a Monument of Nature, and to ensure that management measures conserve the key ecological processes and features which contribute to the property's OUV;*
8. *Expresses its deepest concern about the approval of the Drilon-Tushemisht Water Park project without the corresponding recommendations of the 2020 Reactive Monitoring mission having been implemented and requests the State Party of Albania to halt further implementation of the project and transmit to the World Heritage Centre the detailed documentation of the approved project, for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
9. *Requests the State Party of North Macedonia to provide to the World Heritage Centre detailed documentation of approved projects for the A2 Kichevo-Ohrid section of the highway for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
10. *Also requests the States Parties to continue addressing the issue of illegal buildings and structures and to ensure that those already removed are not reinstated and that new illegal structures do not occur;*
11. *Further requests the States Parties to ensure systematic assessment of impacts of plans and projects, including but not limited to the project for the re-routing of the Sateska River and the plan for revised route for the railway Corridor VIII in its section between the North Macedonian and Albanian borders, on the attributes of OUV of the property according to the Guidance and Toolkit on Impact Assessments in World Heritage Context;*
12. *Regrets that, despite initial efforts by the States Parties to redress threats to the property, tangible outcomes are yet to be achieved and risk being undermined by ever-emerging threats and lack of a coherent vision shared by all actors to conserve the property's OUV and strongly urges the States Parties to implement immediate emergency measures to*

address existing threats and prevent emerging threats from negatively impacting the OUV of the property;

13. *Further requests the States Parties to strengthen their transboundary coordination and cooperation in addressing the threats to the property by:*
 - a) *Enhancing reciprocal communication and coordination about plans and projects that may impact the attributes underlying the property's OUV,*
 - b) *Continuing improvements to the resourcing of the transboundary working group established for the preparation of the Strategic Recovery Plan with the mandate to support the operational implementation of the plan;*
14. *Requests the States Parties to invite, as a matter of urgency, a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property in order to examine the effective implementation of the immediate emergency measures, the level of mobilisation and coordination of all the stakeholders involved as well as the implementation of the recommendations of the 2020 mission and the repeated requests of the Committee, and to assess the overall state of conservation of the property;*
15. *Requests the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, a revised draft of the Strategic Recovery Plan and a joint updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session, **considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilisation to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value, including the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

CULTURAL PROPERTIES

AFRICA

123. Aksum (Ethiopia) (C 15)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1980

Criteria (i)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/15/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (from 1996-1996)

Total amount approved: USD 2,000

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/15/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided: USD 5.07 million by the Italian Funds-in-Trust for the “Aksum Archaeological Site Improvement Project: Preparatory studies for the reinstallation of the Obelisk and capacity building for archaeological conservation - Phase 1”, “Reinstallation of the Obelisk - Phase 2” and “Consolidation of Stele III”

Previous monitoring missions

November 1998: ICCROM reappraisal mission for the World Bank; 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009: missions of the World Heritage Centre and experts for the implementation of the Obelisk project; February 2010 and January 2013: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring missions; February 2016: ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Insufficient delimitation of this serial property
- Lack of conservation and management plans
- Lack of appropriate urban planning and building regulations
- Urban encroachment and inappropriate new developments
- Rising water level / seepage
- Structural instability of Stele III and Mausoleum
- Lack of progress on Church Museum construction
- Housing
- Interpretative and visitation facilities
- Impact of the recent conflict on cultural heritage in the Tigray region

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/15/>

Current conservation issues

The State Party did not submit either the progress report on the assessment of the impact of the recent conflict on cultural heritage in the Tigray region nor an updated state of conservation report on the property, which was requested by the World Heritage Committee at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021). The last state of conservation report received from the State Party was submitted on 31 January 2019 and is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/15/documents/>.

In the second half of 2020, an armed conflict began in Ethiopia, which predominantly focused on the Tigray province in which the Aksum property is located. Various reports of violent incidents have led to major disruptions in the city of Aksum.

Media reports the looting of manuscripts from Tigrayan churches and monasteries, as well as the damage at the Church of Saint Mary of Zion, Aksum within the property in November 2020.

On 5 March 2021, ICOMOS issued a statement on the situation in Tigray (Ethiopia), which is available at

https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Secretariat/2021/Statements/ICOMOS_StatementTigray_EN_final20210304.pdf.

Media reports indicate that a peace accord between the State Party and rebel forces was signed on 2 November 2022.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

It is impossible to accurately assess the efficacy of protection and management or the state of conservation of the property due to a lack of verified information. However, the reports of civilian deaths and damage to the property are of very high concern.

It can be assumed that since the last state of conservation report, the State Party has been unable to progress the implementation of past Committee requests, which included:

- A functioning Advisory Committee for the management of the property and the planning of capacity building activities;
- Progress in consolidation of the Stele III, the structural stabilization of the Mausoleum and Tomb of the Brick Arches, and in addressing the ground water problem in the Tomb of the Brick Arches;
- Progress in redefining the boundaries of the property and its buffer zone and submitting a minor boundary modification and detailed maps indicating the proposed property and buffer zone boundaries;
- Improvements in the management of the property and the impact of development projects in its wider setting through redressing the 2016 Structure Plan and completing impact assessments on the 2010 Thematic Master Plan and 2016 Structure Plan;
- The completion of the Church Museum, including the minor façade modification design, submission of the archaeological report on the archaeological features uncovered during the excavation, construction of the Church Museum and, details on the conservation of the Church Museum collection;
- Completion of an Action Plan with timelines for the implementation of the recommendations of the 2013 and 2016 missions and previous decisions of the Committee.

In light of the armed conflict in the region, the Committee requested that the State Party, in close cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and the Secretariats of all relevant UNESCO Culture Conventions, assess the impact of the conflict on the cultural heritage of the region. This assessment should particularly focus on the conservation and management of the property in an effort to ensure that the safeguarding of the property with both protective and emergency response measures is implemented through targeted actions, including the creation of a full inventory of cultural heritage goods of the property and their state of conservation.

It is strongly recommended that the State Party undertake a thorough assessment of the damage to or loss of both, moveable and immovable cultural artefacts in the property and submit a report to the World Heritage Centre. The Committee may also reiterate its requests that the State Party:

- Assess in detail, and in close cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and the Secretariats of all relevant UNESCO Culture Conventions, the impact of the conflict on the cultural heritage of the Tigray region, and in particular on the conservation and management of the property;
- Ensure the safeguarding of the property through protective measures;
- Engage, where necessary, in undertaking an emergency response through targeted actions, including by creating a full inventory of cultural heritage goods of the property and their state of conservation.

It is recommended that Committee request the State Party to invite, as soon as the security conditions permit, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission in order to assess the state of conservation of the property and develop, in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, an action plan for the property.

In the context of the lack of information on the protection and management of the OUV of the property, combined with reports of damage and threats to the state of conservation of the property, it raises considerable concerns that the conditions for the maintenance of authenticity or integrity may not be met at present and therefore could potentially be in danger.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.123

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.4**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Expresses its deep concern over reports of violence against civilians, looting of cultural artefacts and goods, as well as damage to structures in the property;*
4. *Also notes with relief that the conflict was formally declared ended in November 2022;*
5. *Calls on all parties who were party to the conflict, as well as the international community, to ensure the safeguarding of the property, assist in the return of cultural artefacts and goods to the property and protect its archaeological and built attributes;*
6. *Requests again, in light of various accounts of reports on looting, destruction and damage in the Tigray region, that the State Party:*
 - a) *Assesses in detail, and in close cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and the Secretariats of all relevant UNESCO Culture Conventions, the impact of the conflict on the cultural heritage of the region, and in particular on the conservation and management of the property,*
 - b) *Ensures the safeguarding of the property through protective measures,*
 - c) *Engages, where necessary, in undertaking an emergency response through targeted actions, including by creating a full inventory of cultural artefacts and goods of the property and their state of conservation;*
7. *Also requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the state of conservation of the property and identify measures needed to ensure the conservation management and protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, as soon as the security situation allows;*
8. *Calls for an increased mobilization of the international community to provide financial and technical support to the State Party, including through International Assistance, to implement the short- and medium-term measures to improve the state of conservation of the property;*
9. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, a report on the state of conservation of the property, including - as requested in Decision **44 COM 7B.4** - a state of conservation and damage assessment of the archaeological and built attributes of the property, an assessment of the damage to or loss of cultural artefacts and goods at the property, an update on progress on the implementation of past requests and on the steps taken to implement the recommendations above mentioned, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.*

134. Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and Ruins of Songo Mnara (United Republic of Tanzania) (C 144)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1981

Criteria (iii)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2004-2014

Threats for which the property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

Deterioration and decay leading to the collapse of the historical and archaeological structures for which the property was inscribed

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/144/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 7 (from 1983-2021)

Total amount approved: USD 131,632

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/144/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 201,390 from the Norwegian Funds-in-Trust for UNESCO rehabilitation project

Previous monitoring missions

February 2004: ICOMOS mission; June 2008, March 2009, and December 2013: Joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring missions

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Lack of approved boundaries for the property and buffer zones linked to the land-use plans and appropriate protection
- Deterioration of the architectural heritage fabric
- Sea wave erosion
- Theft of stone from ruins for use as a building material
- Lack of functioning local consultative committee
- Lack of implementation of the conservation and management plans
- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation (lack of tourism development plan)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/144/>

Current conservation issues

On 1 December 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/144/documents/> and responds to previous Committee decisions as follows:

- Recommendations for the property from the 2013 joint UNESCO/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission have been included in the Integrated Management Plan (IMP, 2016-2019), which is ongoing revision;
- Due to insufficient funds to implement the IMP, the completion of the overall land use and the establishment of boundaries of the property and a buffer zone have not been fully implemented;
- The State Party has mobilized funds to review and update the IMP for the property to accommodate the current Site Management Systems in the year 2023/2024. The review was scheduled to start in January 2023. The State Party commits to submitting an updated work plan to the World Heritage Centre;
- In updating the IMP, the State Party will consider previous Committee Decisions, enhance the governance of the property to better engage communities, stakeholders and partners in

implementation processes, continue conservation works at the Gereza Fort, Malindi Seafront, Husuni Kubwa, and Makutani and extend the buffer zone of the property to cover Sanje ya Kati Island and Kilwa Kivinje;

- The State Party will comply with Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines when developing projects to enhance tourism to the property and submit the proposal to the World Heritage Centre for review by Advisory Bodies.

Additionally, on 18 August 2022, the State Party submitted a report on the implementation of a project, supported through International Assistance, to rehabilitate the stairs at the Husuni Kubwa Palace: “Elimination of waves and tides scouring action, restoration of stairs at Husuni Kubwa Palace and community awareness educational programme”. The project also included planting mangrove trees to reduce sea wave impacts, which were damaging the monument. Similar works related to climate change impact were implemented in the property to strengthen the coastal sea wall of the Oman Tower and the gabion wall of Gereza Fort in 2018. Finally, the State Party reports that the management of the property has been transferred from the Antiquities Division to Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

As a continued response to the threats the property faces related to the deterioration of the architectural fabric, the impact of climate change, notably from sea wave erosion, as well as the weak management system, the State Party is implementing some conservation projects, and climate mitigation actions as a response to the Committee decisions following the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2014.

With the support of UNESCO International Assistance, conservation and rehabilitation works were undertaken to consolidate the outside stairs of the Husuni Kubwa Palace and to plant mangrove trees to reduce and mitigate the impact of sea erosion in 2022. The action to mitigate the impact of climate change follows other important conservation work supported by the World Heritage Fund to restore the tower at Songo Mnara and the gabion wall of Gereza Fort. Sea wave action leading to coastal erosion remains a perennial threat to the property and the Committee may wish to request that the State Party provide an update on the effect of past mangrove planting and an assessment of the level of threat remaining.

The efforts of the State Party to allocate funds for the review of the Integrated Management Plan (IMP) of the property, as well as for having mobilized International Assistance for “The Review and the Update of the Integrated Management Plan for the Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and Ruins of Songo Mnara to accommodate the Current Site Management Systems” are welcome.

While it is noted that the State Party agrees to the request of the Committee (Decision **44 COM.11**) to consider and integrate several aspects in the new IMP, including but not limited to: the implementation of unimplemented targets and activities of the current IMP as previously requested by the Committee – notably for the better engagement of the communities, partners and stakeholders for good governance; and extension of the boundaries of the property and definition of an appropriate buffer zone – it is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to expedite the implementation of the International Assistance Request to review the Integrated Management Plan, including the definition of the time frame of the IMP, finalize the detailed Land Use Plan, formulate a Sustainable Tourism Development Plan, and clarify the boundaries and the establishment of a buffer zone, and submit it to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. These actions are all urgent in the light of the ambitions of the State Party to further develop tourism at the property.

It is further noted that the State Party commits to complying with the requirement of Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines to ensure that the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) with a strong archaeological focus are carried out before the development of tourism activities in the property for review by the Advisory Bodies.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.134

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*

2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.11**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),
3. Commends the State Party for the continuing effort to implement conservation works, notably the restoration of the stairs at Husuni Palace, as a continuous response to the challenges of the property following its removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger;
4. Takes note with appreciation that the World Heritage Centre, through the World Heritage Fund, and with the Advisory Bodies, supported the State Party in taking concrete actions to counter the impacts of climate change;
5. Reiterates the importance that the State Party integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation actions plans in risk preparedness policies and action plans in order to protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and requests the State Party, with the support of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to continue monitoring the situation of the property and develop activities to consolidate the ongoing initiatives to mitigate the effect of climate change in the property;
6. Further commends the State Party for mobilising funds to review the Integrated Management Plan (IMP) and further requests the State Party to expedite the process to finalise the revision of the IMP, addressing all aspects as previously noted by the Committee, including but not limited to a detailed Land Use Plan and Tourism Development Plan, the establishment of boundaries and a buffer zone, and to submit the revised IMP to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
7. Further notes with appreciation the commitment of the State Party to ensure that the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA), including a strong focus on archaeological attributes, be carried out with appropriate and detailed documentation and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before any large conservation projects and/or any commitments are made, consistent with the requirements of Paragraphs 172 and 118bis of the Operational Guidelines;
8. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

ARAB STATES

138. Saint Catherine Area (Egypt) (C 954)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2002

Criteria (i)(iii)(iv)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/954/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (from 1999-1999)

Total amount approved: USD 19,500

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/954/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 45,871 from the Netherlands Funds in Trust for strengthening national capacities for the implementation of World Heritage impact assessments; EUR 150,000 from the Government of France for Enhancing Capacities for the Protection of World Heritage Properties in Egypt (2020).

Previous monitoring missions

UNESCO advisory mission to Egypt in 2021

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation
- Management System/Management Plan

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/954/>

Current conservation issues

On 9 February 2023, the World Heritage Centre informed the State Party that the property would be subject to a report on its state of conservation to be presented at the extended 45th session of the Committee, in order to better understand and evaluate the overall state of conservation of the property, and subsequent to third party reports concerning a large-scale development project at the property. On 31 March 2023, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, an executive summary of which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/954/documents/>, providing the following information:

- Conservation and restoration projects have been carried out at the Monastery, which are assessed prior to implementation by the Permanent Committee for Islamic, Coptic and Jewish Antiquities at the Supreme Council of Antiquities. Archaeological investigations were undertaken during 2021/2022 at the Residences of Abbas Pasha area;
- Many conservation measures identified at the time of inscription, such as replacement of the corrugated iron roofing of the Katholikon, conservation and protection of the original wooden elements, and some measures against rising damp, were implemented;
- The Saint Catherine City Development Initiative entitled 'Great Revelation Initiative – the Land of Peace', has been launched. This project, which forms part of the National Sustainable Development Strategy aims to: preserve, rehabilitate, and prevent the deterioration of the urban fabric of Saint Catherine, establish a management structure, and develop a strategy for the preservation and urban regeneration of the Saint Catherine Area;
- Annexes to the report provide details of the activities undertaken as part of the Great Revelation Initiative, including the construction of a mountain tourist resort, an eco-lodge, a visitor centre and the Peace Square in the town of Saint Catherine; urban landscape interventions; administrative,

security, civic and tourism facilities and infrastructure; renovation of Bedouin housing; and flood control measures, among others.

The State Party appended a Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (RSOUV) to its state of conservation report (see Document WHC/23/45.COM/8E) and submitted a draft International Assistance request that it intends to submit during the next cycle.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

Saint Catherine Area is 60,100 ha large and includes the Saint Catherine Monastery and town, various other small settlements, and Mount Horeb. The conservation and research work undertaken by the State Party including with the collaboration of the Saint Catherine Monastery Administration, are welcome.

The 2021 UNESCO Advisory mission to Egypt could not visit the property. Based on the discussions with the State Party, it recommended advance notice in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for any major projects, including transportation or tourism facility infrastructures.

The Committee has previously requested the development of a Visitor Management Plan (Decision **28 COM 15B.51**) and encouraged the State Party to resubmit the nomination as a cultural landscape (Decision **27 COM 8C.16**). Seeing the State Party's expressed intention to further develop the property as a place of pilgrimage, the development of a Management Plan which includes a Visitor Management Plan is urgent. In this regard, the State Party has expressed its intention to submit an International Assistance request for the preparation of a management/conservation plan for the property by 31 October 2023.

The State Party notes that "...accelerated development of hotels and tourist villages and their activities without regulation that governs them will have serious effects on the cultural and natural heritage, which will negatively affect tourism activity". Hence, it identifies the need for a strategic plan for the city of Saint Catherine.

The Saint Catherine City Development Initiative 'Great Revelation Initiative – the Land of Peace', seems to have replaced the 1998 Sustainable Development Plan (SDP), but the status of the latter, which the Committee requested be implemented (Decision **28 COM 15B.51**), is not reported on. Several large-scale projects relating to tourism, security infrastructure and civic provisions, have already been or are in the process of being implemented within the boundaries of the property as part of this initiative. The State Party report does not provide consistent details, for instance stating that the visual integrity of the property, specifically views from the Saint Catherine Monastery, are assured, while also noting that tourism developments were planned in a way to provide views toward the Monastery. The impacts of the various projects on the integrity of the property, which have not been subject to impact assessment, need to be assessed in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context.

The full details of the City Development Initiative, comprising complete detailed plans and related studies, have not been submitted, but the State Party report states that no further developments are planned that would justify reporting to the World Heritage Centre under the invitation extended by the Committee in Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

The limited overview of the City Development Initiative provided, and the lack of a Management Plan with a Visitor Management Plan component are all cause for concern, especially in the light of the various development projects already implemented. It is recommended that the State Party be requested to halt the implementation of any further development projects, assess the Saint Catherine City Development Initiative through an impact assessment in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, submit the details of both to the World Heritage Centre for review, urgently assess the conservation needs of the property, develop a Conservation Plan and a Management Plan with a Visitor Management Plan component and apply impact assessment procedures for all future developments that may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. It is also deemed advisable to request the State Party to ensure the consolidation of the recently excavated archaeological remains and to invite, with urgency, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to assess its state of conservation and the potential impacts of the projects already undertaken.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.138

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decisions **27 COM 8C.16** and **28 COM 15B.51**, adopted at its 27th (UNESCO, 2003) and 28th (Suzhou, 2004) sessions respectively,
3. Notes with appreciation the conservation and research work undertaken by the State Party, specifically the archaeological research undertaken and requests that the State Party ensure these excavations are adequately consolidated;
4. Also notes that large scale developments have been implemented as part of the Saint Catherine City Development Initiative entitled 'Great Revelation Initiative – the Land Peace' which may have superseded the 1998 Sustainable Development Plan (SDP), and due to the envisaged further tourism development at the property and the lack of a Management Plan with a tourism management component, also requests that:
 - a) Further developments included in the Saint Catherine City Development 'Great Revelation Initiative – the Land Peace' be halted until a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is undertaken, in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and the HIA report and details of the Saint Catherine City Development have been reviewed by the Advisory Bodies,
 - b) The State Party initiate and complete an inventory of urgent conservation needs and develop a Conservation Plan for the property,
 - c) Develop a Management Plan with a tourism management component that also makes provision for the implementation of the Conservation Plan for the property and submit these to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
5. Further requests the State Party to assess all future development projects that may affect the integrity or authenticity of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property through impact assessments in conformity with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, developed in collaboration between the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre;
6. Reminds the State Party to inform the World Heritage Centre in due course about any major development project that may negatively impact the OUV of a property, before any irreversible decisions are made, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
7. Requests furthermore the State Party to invite urgently a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to assess the state of conservation of the property, the already executed components of the 'Great Revelation Initiative – the Land of Peace' project, and the efficacy of the protection and management system of the property;
8. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

140. Baptism Site “Bethany Beyond the Jordan” (Al-Maghtas) (Jordan) (C 1446)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2015

Criteria (iii) (vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1446/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1446/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Buildings and Development: Lack of design and construction guidelines for the churches to be constructed in the buffer zone (issue resolved). Adopted guidelines not being applied consistently.
- Management System/Management Plan: Lack of adopted updated management plan or master plan, hence no integration of the management procedures on maintenance, visitor management and disaster response in the management system
- Control of setting: Need to ensure the protection of the western banks of the Jordan River to preserve important vistas and sightlines of the property (issue beyond control of the State Party)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1446/>

Current conservation issues

On 29 November 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, an executive summary of which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1446/documents/>. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented, as follows:

- An Updated Earthquake Response Preparation Plan and a Guidance of Flash Flood Response Plan have been developed. The actions and policies stemming from these documents will be integrated into the Management Plan that is currently being revised to reflect the protection of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and take into account the evolving management of the site;
- The Baptism Site Commission (BSC) and key stakeholders are working on the Master Plan for the Baptism Site and buffer zone, a draft of which will be shared with the World Heritage Centre once finalized. As part of this process a new not-for-profit body, the *Institution for Development of Lands Adjacent to the Baptism Site*, was created in 2021 to develop a newly defined ‘Baptism Development Zone’ east of the property and within the buffer zone, for pilgrim, visitor, administration and agricultural purposes. This is separate from the church’s development area;
- The Convention Centre located in the buffer zone, about which the Committee has made previous requests for information in relation to its design and location, was completed in 2012 prior to inscription. Relocation is not feasible;
- The BSC in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, are working on defining new boundaries for the Baptism Site Nature Reserve at the national level, in accordance with Environmental Protection Law No. 6 of 2017 to enhance the legal protection of the boundaries of the Baptism Site. This will take at least two years;
- A revision is being carried out for the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) to address completed and new building development in the buffer zone, as requested by the Committee, as well as for the design and construction guidelines for new churches in the buffer zone, in cooperation with

the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH). The HIA will be aligned to the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context developed by UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies, and will be shared upon completion;

- The BSC is following up with all church denominations seeking the construction of new churches to ensure compliance with the construction guidelines and take into consideration the comments of the World Heritage Committee and Advisory Bodies. The BSC gives assurances that any proposal will fulfil the requirements of the guidelines, present a HIA, and take account of World Heritage Committee and Advisory Body comments before approval is given;
- Brief information is provided on the conservation of a range of attributes, rehabilitation of visitor facilities, development of documents concerning management and tour guides, and capacity building.

In September 2021, the State Party submitted an amended design for the Saint Maroun Maronite Church, previously commented on in a Technical Review by ICOMOS in March 2021, to the World Heritage Centre for review. The Technical Review of January 2022 concluded that, in the absence of the various documents referred to above (namely the Management Plan, the Master Plan, the HIA, and visual landscape assessment work, the proposal's potential impact on OUV could not be assessed at this stage.

On 16 May 2023, the World Heritage Centre received information from the State Party, expressing concerns regarding "heavy structures being built opposite the property, that cause negative visual impact on the site".

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The submission of an Updated Earthquake Response Preparation Plan and a Guidance of Flash Flood Response Plan is noted, as is the ongoing revision of the Management Plan to reflect the adopted Statement of OUV and other matters that have changed since the plan was first developed, all of which address the Committee's requests. It would be important to integrate the updated Earthquake Response Preparation Plan, and Guidance of Flash Flood Response Plan in the updated Management Plan, and submit its draft to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

The Design and Construction Guidelines for New Churches is currently under revision by the State Party, and in this respect, it is recommended to consider their strengthening in establishing measurable standards for new design and sensitive integration into the 'wilderness' environment of the site, and to submit the revised guidelines to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

The work to define the boundaries for the Baptism Site Nature Reserve is welcomed. It is recommended that the Committee seek further insight into whether this process will include visual landscape analysis to assess potential impacts of the development areas on the nature reserve, as previously requested by the Committee, which would contribute to the integration of the 'wilderness' environment in the revision of the Design and Construction Guidelines for New Churches.

While the review of the Master plan has also been initiated, it is not yet clear how the planning of the new 'Baptism Development Zone' (BDZ) relates to the development of the overall Master Plan for property and buffer zone. Annex 3 of the State Party's report proposes substantial development that would appear to pre-empt the systematic development and review of the Master Plan for the buffer zone. It is noted that the location and scale of the pilgrimage village has moved closer to the property boundary, and the village and agricultural land area has substantially expanded compared to the plans provided in the 2018 state of conservation report.

It is recommended that the Committee seek clarification of the master planning process in relation to the BDZ, request counsel as to how its objectives, in particular the establishment of a substantial village complex adjacent to the property boundary, satisfy the purpose of the buffer zone in protecting the OUV of the property, and why this major development is planned within the buffer zone and not beyond. The submission of the finalised draft Master Plan to the World Heritage Centre for consideration by Advisory Bodies is requested.

The development of the revised HIA to address completed and new building development in the buffer zone, requested by the Committee, is welcomed, and its modelling in conformity with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context is noted. The application of the HIA to the proposed development within the BDZ is a critical step before further development of the BDZ planning by the State Party. Similarly, the State Party has indicated that the HIA will guide further

proposals for developments in the modern churches zone. The submission of the draft revised HIA, as requested by the Committee, is keenly anticipated.

The State Party's efforts to continue reporting on developments across the Jordan River, beyond the property boundaries are acknowledged. Moreover, the information provided by the State Party on the conservation of a range of attributes, rehabilitation of visitor facilities, development of management documentation, and capacity building demonstrates ongoing improvement in the protection of OUV and the management of the property.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.140

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **39 COM 8B.10, 40 COM 8B.50, 41 COM 7B.79, 43 COM 7B.46, 44 COM 7B.128** adopted at its 39th (Bonn, 2015), 40th (Istanbul, 2016), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 43rd (Baku, 2019), and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,*
3. *Commends the State Party on the development of the updated Earthquake Response Preparation Plan, and Guidance of Flash Flood Response Plan;*
4. *Welcomes the State Party's efforts to update the Management Plan to reflect the adopted Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), as well as other matters that have changed since the plan was first developed, and awaits submission of the revised draft, integrating the updated Earthquake Response Preparation Plan, and Guidance of Flash Flood Response Plan;*
5. *Takes notes of the ongoing revision of the Design and Construction Guidelines for New Churches in the Buffer Zone, and requests the State Party to consider strengthening measurable standards for new design and sensitive integration into the 'wilderness' environment of the property, and to submit the revised guidelines to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
6. *Also welcomes the State Party's efforts to define the boundaries for the Baptism Site Nature Reserve, however, reiterates the need to consider undertaking a visual landscape analysis of the potential impacts on the Jordan River landscape area (the nature reserve) of various development options for the new churches, and accordingly to clarify the integration of the 'wilderness' environment in the revision of the Design and Construction Guidelines for New Churches;*
7. *Also takes note of the ongoing revision of the Master Plan, and also requests the State Party to submit the Master Plan for the whole buffer zone when completed, to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
8. *Further requests the State Party to clarify how the master planning process will relate to the planning of the Baptism Development Zone (BDZ), including the establishment of a pilgrimage village complex adjacent to the property boundary and within the buffer zone, and how the objectives of the BDZ satisfy the purpose of the buffer zone in protecting the OUV of the property;*
9. *Further welcomes the State Party's efforts to progress in the development of the revised Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for completed and new buildings in the buffer zone, in line with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage*

Context, and urges the State Party to apply the revised HIA to the planning and proposed developments within the BDZ, and to submit the HIA to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, as a critical step before any development proceeds;

- 10. Welcomes furthermore the State Party's action on the conservation of a range of attributes, rehabilitation of visitor facilities, development of documentation concerning management and tour guides, and capacity building, demonstrating ongoing improvement in the protection of OUV and the management of the property;*
- 11. Welcomes again the State Party's efforts to report on developments across the Jordan River, beyond the property boundaries, and reiterates the need to ensure the preservation of important vistas and views by all concerned parties;*
- 12. Requests furthermore the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

ASIA AND PACIFIC

152. Angkor (Cambodia) (C 668)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1992

Criteria (i)(ii)(iii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1992-2004

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/668/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 4 (from 1992 to 2023)

Total amount approved: USD 113,595

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/668/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: Approximately USD 600 million through various international partners (1992-present)

Previous monitoring missions

September 2005: Technical Advisory Mission concerning the protection of Zones 1 and 2 of Angkor; in addition, the ad hoc experts of the International Coordinating Committee (ICC-Angkor) carry out monitoring of the property and of ongoing projects twice a year, on the occasion of the ICC technical and plenary sessions.

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management systems/ management plan (Lack of an appropriate management system; Lack of capacity of management agency) (issue resolved)
- Housing (Lack of clarity regarding property rights, ownership and building codes)
- Legal framework (Poor law enforcement)
- Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure (Development of major tourism facility) (issue resolved)
- Tourism Development Plan and sustainable tourism

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/668/>

Current conservation issues

On 24 November 2022, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/668/documents/> and presents information about conservation projects and various issues as follows:

- In 2022, 21 conservation projects are ongoing in the Angkor archaeological park (15 by the national management authority: Bakong, Bayon, Preah Kô, Lolei, Trapeang Phong, Tonlé Sgnuot, Sras Srang, Banteay Kdei (Portail Ouest), Kravan, Kauk Chok, Bay Kaek, Batchum, Pré Rup, Banteay Samré, Banteay Srei, Prohm Kel, Porte de Dei Chhnang; and 6 by international teams or joint projects: Angkor Wat, Bayon, Ta Prohm, West Mebon, Preah Pithu);
- New and important archaeological discovery at Ta Kav (Angkor Thom);
- Safeguarding of the hydraulic network;
- Tree plantation programme, notably in the surroundings of Angkor Wat;
- The updated Tourism Development Plan, building on the basis of the previous 2012 Tourism Management Plan, and present the proposed tourism planning for 2020-2030;

- Renewal of the tourism infrastructure at numerous landmarks within the Angkor archaeological park and several roads and the planning of tourism-related projects, such as alternative itineraries, harmonizing signages, tourist behaviour analysis, and an interpretation facility near the ticket office;
- Cancellation of the previously discussed project of 'The Lake of Wonder', following the recommendations of the International Coordination Committee for Angkor (ICC-Angkor) and UNESCO;
- Preparation, with the co-presidents of the ICC (France and Japan) and UNESCO, of the fourth Intergovernmental Conference in November 2023, at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, to celebrate the start of the fourth decade of international cooperation for Angkor.

Since late 2022, the World Heritage Centre has received correspondences from third parties, including international media, concerning disturbance to the wildlife (primates) caused by social media content producers as well as a massive relocation programme for local communities illegally settled on the site.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

There has been steady progress with monument preservation, environmental conservation and tourism management. The fourth Intergovernmental Conference on Angkor, foreseen in November 2023, will inaugurate the fourth decade of international cooperation under the aegis of the ICC-Angkor, provides an opportunity to share the achievements for this emblematic site and set renewed objectives for partnership and cooperation for the next 10 years.

Despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, national and international institutions have been active in various preservation initiatives and promoted operations that enhanced national capacity in the field of conservation and sustainable development. The report lists 27 recent archaeological and historical surveys and interventions. Along with monument conservation, archaeological research, rehabilitation of the ancient hydraulic system and vegetation management across the archaeological park have been implemented to retain the integrity and authenticity of the property in its environmental setting.

The Tourism Development Plan was subject to technical review by ICOMOS, which concluded that it is well-researched and informed in terms of best-practice approaches to sustainable tourism management, but that some key initiatives from the 2012 Tourism Management Plan (TMP) need to be addressed and that an assessment of carrying capacity (as proposed in the 2021 TMP) is essential. The technical review recommends that the Tourism Development Plan be revised, clarifying its relationship with the 2012 TMP and addressing other critical concerns, such as the integration of guidelines for future tourism projects in line with the 2015 Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention, that could guide the scale, scope and nature of future tourism projects and avoid potential impact on Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

In response to the concerns raised by third parties concerning social media producers disturbing primates, a clear policy has been implemented to prohibit mistreatment. Wildlife within the perimeters of the archaeological monuments could also jeopardize the monuments' state of conservation and visitor safety. The State Party might be encouraged to consider how best to control these issues.

The encroachment of illegal settlements within the property is being addressed by relocation of illegal occupants, which has been reported by third party, including a letter from Amnesty International, as a violation of human rights. This issue has been raised several times since the property's inscription on the World Heritage List, and an expert mission and report were specifically dedicated to this question in 2005. Decision **32 COM 7B.65** recommended the application of regulations in zones 1 and 2 to avoid uncontrolled urban expansion, by enforcing "existing laws regarding illegal occupation, unauthorised construction and development". The State Party's most recent report provides a specific section on this issue (Annex 1). The zoning regulations and the applicable laws clearly define the use of the different zones within the property. Although the local communities and inhabitants already present before the inscription (across 113 villages) are not the subject of current programme of resident relocation, recent uncontrolled illegal settlements and illegal constructions are regarded by the State Party and conservation experts as incompatible with the required visual, sanitary, safety and environmental standards to maintain the integrity and authenticity of the property. The new settlements may also physically affect archaeological remains and landscape attributes.

Demographic pressure within the archaeological park, and environmental and land use requirements have supported a decision to relocate illegal settlers, rather than forcing their eviction. To date, 9,000 families from zones 1 and 2 have moved on to two nearby resettlement areas with improved

facilities (Run Ta Ek and Peak Snèng). This situation was reported as disturbing social cohesion and causing inequity. The settlements were inspected by the *ad hoc* experts of the ICC-Angkor in December 2022. Having regard to the recommendations of the ICC-Angkor, the Committee may wish to recommend that the State Party continue its efforts to maintain the OUV of the property, ensure decent living conditions for all inhabitants and communities, and note measures taken for resettlement of illegal occupants. The Committee may also request the State Party to reinforce its outreach to all local populations to raise awareness about the importance of zoning regulations for the preservation of the property, and to avoid major social destabilization arising from unlawful settling.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.152

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.139**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),
3. Commends the State Party for making steady progress implementing various activities in the field of conservation, research, environmental conservation and management for the attributes of Angkor, with a growing ownership ensured by the national authorities, benefitting from the expertise of the International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Sustainable Development of Angkor (ICC-Angkor) and strong support of a number of international partners;
4. Recalling paragraph 6 of Decision **44 COM 7B.139**, welcomes the updated Tourism Development Plan and requests that it be further revised in accordance with the findings of the ICOMOS technical review, including by clarifying its relationship with the 2012 Tourism Management Plan (TMP), the integration of guidelines for future tourism projects in line with the 2015 Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention in order to guide the scale, scope and nature of future tourism projects and avoid potential impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and also requests the State Party to instigate a carrying capacity assessment for the property, as provided for in the 2012 TMP, as a matter of priority, and to revise the 2012 TMP accordingly to ensure its alignment with the Tourism Development Plan;
5. Notes with satisfaction that the State Party has addressed the issue of disturbances to the wildlife caused by social media content producers, and further requests the State Party to keep monitoring the situation and applying lawful measures, as well as to consider means to avoid impacts from wildlife on the security and safety of the property's attributes and of visitors;
6. Takes note that the State Party has been acting to enforce zoning regulations and has relocated families who settled illegally in the property, taking into account the threats that may be posed to the integrity and authenticity of the property and its OUV, and therefore requests the State Party, taking into consideration the living conditions and the rights of local communities and inhabitants affected by these relocations and those already living lawfully within the property boundaries prior to inscription, to continue implementing appropriate measures for the management of the World Heritage property and its OUV, as well as to reinforce awareness of zoning regulations for all local populations;
7. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the

implementation of the above, for review by the Advisory Bodies and examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

153. Ancient Building Complex in the Wudang Mountains (China) (C 705)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1994

Criteria (i)(ii)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/705/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/705/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

March 2014: Joint World Heritage Center/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management activities (Project to raise up the Yuzhen Palace at the property)
- Management systems / Management Plan (Requirement for a living heritage management approach)
- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation (Tourism development has begun to reach a critical mass)
- Others (Lack of clarity regarding components and buffer zone of the property)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/705/>

Current conservation issues

On 7 March 2023, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, an executive summary of which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/705/documents/> and provides information on the following issues:

- Strengthening of the regulatory and administrative procedures to promote a stronger legal basis for protection of the property;
- Enhancement of capacity of personnel involved with the management of the property;
- Setting up of a fire brigade and fire equipment to enhance protection from fire hazards;
- Establishment of a team of voluntary guardians from surrounding areas to strengthen management;
- Conservation and repair of a number of the structures at component parts of the property.

The State Party also reiterated its previous request to organise a symposium with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to discuss issues around the boundaries and buffer zone of the property. The State Party, furthermore, has annexed a detailed report of implementation for the project for the uplift of the Yuzhen Palace, which has been completed. A Plan for Conservation and Management of the Ancient Building Complex in the Wudang Mountains (2019-2035) and an Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Master Plan for the Wudang Mountains Scenic Area (2012-2025) have also been submitted, as has a report on the study of visitor carrying capacity of the property.

On 14 March 2023, the World Heritage Centre wrote to the State Party in response to the boundary clarification request submitted by the State Party in April 2021 in the framework of the Retrospective Inventory to request additional information.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The steps taken by the State Party to strengthen the management of the property are noted with appreciation, particularly the work on fire protection, which is crucial given the heritage typology and the difficult topography of the property.

Regarding the uplift project of the Yuzhen Palace, the report by the State Party is noted, as is the complexity of the work undertaken. The report outlines the work carried out in the background of the uplift project, the steps carried out to ensure authenticity and integrity, as well as detailed descriptions of some of the principles for the conservation of the individual elements of the palace complex. The report would be strengthened, however, with the addition of significantly more visual materials, including before and after photographs of the work that has been carried out. Given that the work has been completed, the World Heritage Committee may wish to encourage the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICCROM/ICOMOS Advisory mission to assess the outcomes of this complex project and possible impacts on the property and its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and, if appropriate, to advise on mitigation of any identified impacts.

Regarding the property's carrying capacity, the State Party's report provides information on the maximum number of visitors that have been determined for the site as a whole and for individual elements. However, while the carrying capacity for the entire site was initially estimated at 25,000 in 2021, that number has now risen to 45,000. Clarification should be sought from the State Party about this very substantial increase and its potential impacts on the attributes which support the OUV of the property. The carrying capacity of the most sensitive areas, such as the golden peak, remains high, at 8,000 visitors per day. While the State Party's report indicates that this number is considered acceptable, more detailed information should be sought about how this assessment was made.

Regarding the management plan, and particularly the clarification of the numbers of component parts that form the property, its boundaries and the buffer zone, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies acknowledge the submission of a boundary clarification in 2021. The determination of the number of component parts has been well explained, but the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies maintain, consistent with previous technical advice and Decision **44 COM 7B.19**, that the buffer zone should incorporate the entirety of the Wudang Mountains Scenic Area. This would provide the necessary protection of the important but complex mountain cultural landscape that provides the setting for the component parts of the property. It would be recommended that the Advisory mission to be encouraged by the Committee also provide further advice on delineation of the boundaries and buffer zone so that these matters may be resolved in a manner that is consistent with Committee Decisions and which conserves the attributes which support and convey the OUV of the property.

Until the question of the delineation of the boundaries and buffer zone is clarified, it may not be possible to fully finalize the management plan for the property. This means that this work, although important to the conservation and management of the property, must remain outstanding until it is completed.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.153

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.19**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),
3. Welcomes the efforts made by the State Party to strengthen the management of the property, and particularly the work for improved fire protection;
4. Takes note of the completion of the uplift project of the Yuzhen Palace and the report provided by the State Party after completion of the project, as requested in its previous decisions, and encourages the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre a comprehensive set of visual materials, including before and after photographs of the work carried out, for review by the Advisory Bodies, in order to allow for a full assessment of the project;

5. *Notes with concern the information provided regarding the carrying capacity of the property and the substantial increase in visitor numbers at the property by comparison with the initially estimated carrying capacity, and requests that more detailed information be provided to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, on the rationale for this change and its potential impacts on the property and attributes which support its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), especially the most sensitive areas, such as the Golden Peak;*
6. *Welcomes the clarification provided by the State Party concerning the number of component parts of the property, the boundaries and the buffer zone, but recalls its previous request that the buffer zone should incorporate the entirety of the Wudang Mountains Scenic Area, and therefore urges the State Party to submit up-to-date maps of the property as inscribed and the buffer zone, including detailed maps of each component part, to the World Heritage Centre;*
7. *Encourages the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission to the property to assess the overall state of conservation of the property, the outcomes of the uplift project of the Yuzhen Palace, and any resulting impacts on the property and its OUV and resulting mitigative measures, and to provide guidance to and engage with the State Party in its efforts to address the issues surrounding the component parts of the property, the delineation of the buffer zone, as well as the property's carrying capacity and commensurate, sustainable visitor management strategies;*
8. *Requests the State Party to finalise the management plan for the property as soon as possible following the adoption of the boundary clarification, taking into account the revised delineation of the boundaries and buffer zone;*
9. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

167. Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining (Japan) (C 1484)

See Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.3

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

175. The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement (Argentina, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Japan, Switzerland) (C 1321rev)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2016

Criteria (i)(ii)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1321/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1321/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management System/Management Plan (need to introduce Heritage Impact Assessment procedures for proposed development at all component sites; lack of monitoring indicators for all component sites and of agreed overall conservation approaches and procedures for the series (*issue resolved*); need to complete the Management and Conservation Plans for Chandigarh)
- Governance (need to refine the power of the Standing Conference to allow full understanding by all States Parties of major development proposals in all component sites, in relation to their potential impact on the overall series) (*issue resolved*)
- Legal framework (unclear protection of the buffer zone for *Maison Guiette*; unclear implications of the new Heritage Law in France) (*issue resolved*)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1321/>

Current conservation issues

On 28 November 2022, the States Parties submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/197454>, which presents an overall report for each component of the property and outlines progress on the conservation issues identified by the Committee at its last session, as follows:

- Reinforced coordination through the International Standing Conference and enhanced control for works undertaken at each component of the serial property, including its buffer zones;
- Confirmation that the seven State Parties are informed of the imperative to notify the World Heritage Centre of any planned works that may have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and to undertake Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) for these projects accordingly. Furthermore, State Parties have committed to consult with relevant stakeholders on proposed projects;
- Advances in new digital tools, allowing for videoconferences and virtual visits, have been incorporated into mediation activities, particularly in Argentina, France, Germany, Japan and Switzerland;

- The activities undertaken by the national steering committee, established for the ten French components of the property, are progressing in order to enhance coordination among themselves and with national organisations and the *Fondation Le Corbusier*, and to provide a coordinated response to the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS International for each component, including monitoring indicators and impact assessment studies;
- Regarding the component *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseille (France), the information requested on the potential views' impairment will be provided during the preparation of the specifications for the 'Michelet development and programming guidelines', currently underway, is expected to be approved before the end of 2024 following a public inquiry in October 2023. For the Manufacture in Saint-Dié des Vosges (France), an impact study was sent to the World Heritage Centre in June 2020, and additional information related on the proposed visitor centre and car park project should shortly be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS;
- HIA reports have been submitted for the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) ancillary structures project, for the multilevel basement car park project, located in the south-eastern part of the property, and the Holistic Development of Punjab and Haryana High Court Project in the Capitol Complex of Chandigarh (India). All HIA reports conclude that the proposed projects would have negative impacts on the OUV of the property and make recommendations, in particular the HIA for the multilevel basement car park concludes that impacts would be significant, long-term and irreversible, hence the project should not proceed at the proposed location, and offers additional recommendations. With regard to the Holistic Development of Punjab and Haryana High Court Project, the HIA suggests as a preferable option an alternative project that decongests the High Court by decentralising its activities. An integration of all HIA reports is reportedly still in preparation. Work has begun on internal restoration works of buildings, including flooring, lighting, HVAC, firefighting and the preservation of tapestries and furniture;
- Concerning the specific protection measures for the buffer zone, the State Party of Belgium reports that the same protection measures used for all components of the property also apply to the buffer zone of the *Maison Guiette*. The legal provisions currently in force are sufficient to ensure that irreversible decisions are not taken without the necessary consultation with the Flanders Heritage Agency. The State Party is currently considering the possibility of strengthening the protection of the buffer zone by establishing a 'transition zone of a protected property';
- In Switzerland, the cantonal authorities are currently working to strengthen the protection of the buffer zone of the Clarté building by creating a site plan aimed at safeguarding or improving the maintenance of existing buildings, conditions relating to constructions and installations, public accessibility, view angles and alignment on the edges of woods, forests or watercourses;
- Restoration works are planned or ongoing at several components of the property, including *Maison Guiette* (Belgium), *Maisons La Roche et Jeanneret* (France), Rental Building at the Molitor Gate (France), in the buffer zone of the Villa Savoye and the gardener's lodge (France), House of Culture in Firminy (France), Chapel of Notre-Dame-du-Haut (France), *Cité Frugès* (France) and Houses in the Weissenhof Estate (Germany);
- Renovation of the forecourt of the National Museum of Western Art (Japan) was completed on schedule in March 2022.

On 30 May 2023, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party of India transmitting the ICOMOS Technical Review for each of the above-mentioned three proposed projects relating to the Capital Complex of Chandigarh, a component of the property located in India, including clear recommendations.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The enhanced coordination between the States Parties for better management and conservation of the components of the property, through regular meetings of the International Standing Conference, is welcome. It is further noted that the state of conservation of the 17 components of the serial transnational property is generally satisfactory, thanks to national protection measures which ensure that no intervention is carried out without the authorisation of the competent national authorities.

Regarding the components of the property in France, and in particular the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseille, it is noted that the State Party has undertaken the preparation of the specifications for the new study for the 'Michelet development and programming guidelines', which should be adopted before the end of 2024. This document, including additional information requested by the World Heritage Centre in

October 2020 concerning works in the buffer zone of the component, is awaited by the World Heritage Centre for analysis by the Advisory Bodies before any development is undertaken. It is further noted that the State Party will shortly be submitting to the World Heritage Centre additional documents on the impact study carried out for the construction of an interpretation area at the Manufacture in Saint-Dié des Vosges, for analysis by the Advisory Bodies. Finally, concerning all the restoration works mentioned above, the State Party is encouraged to consistently notify the World Heritage Centre, to authorise only those works for which HIAs do not reveal negative impacts on the OUV of the property, and to carry out such assessments for project proposals in accordance with the Operational Guidelines and the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*.

The HIA reports undertaken by the State Party for the projects in the Capitol Complex of Chandigarh are welcome. Regarding the HVAC Ancillary Structures Project, it meets legitimate needs, but its proposed location could negatively impact the OUV of the property. The HIA report identifies two proposed HVAC structures, including an underground air-conditioning plant and an aboveground cooling tower. Annex 3 of the States Parties state of conservation report, however, mentions two additional structures that were not mentioned in the HIA itself (one above-ground cooling tower near the Assembly Hall and an underground electrical sub-station near the air-conditioning plant). The HIA does not mention either impacts on the interior of the components. It is therefore recommended that the project be suspended and that the additional information requested in the ICOMOS Technical Review, including graphic representations (plans, sections and photographs), be submitted to the World Heritage Centre to fully assess the impact of the overall project.

While the reduction of surface parking in the multi-storey basement car park would be positive, the impact of the proposed development would be negative, as it would have a significant impact on the landscape and a negative impact on the property's OUV. It is therefore recommended that the scheme is suspended, and alternative locations are analysed and evaluated.

An HIA has reviewed the Holistic Development of Punjab and Haryana High Court Project in Capitol Complex of Chandigarh, which arises from an increased need for workspace resulting from rising judicial demand. The project proposal includes two new structures, sitting on a three-level basement car parking, and the expansion of two existing structures. The scheme also calls for the demolition of the one-storey Tonga Block building, considered part of Le Corbusier's original layout. It is therefore recommended that, in searching for legitimate needs for additional workspace, the current multilevel underground parking project should not be implemented in the proposed location; areas where the proposed structures could be built should be reassessed. The proposed demolition of the Tonga Block should also not be implemented as it would be considered a major negative impact.

The World Heritage Committee might wish to request the State Party of India that the recommendations contained in the ICOMOS Technical Review of each of the above-mentioned three proposed projects relating to the Capital Complex of Chandigarh be implemented prior to commencement of any construction.

Regarding the protective measures for the buffer zone of *Maison Guiette* (Belgium), it should be acknowledged that the relevant heritage authorities are consulted in the decision-making processes concerning proposals for changes. The Committee could encourage the State Party of Belgium to seek other legal tools that would enhance the protection of the buffer zone of this component.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.175

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.152**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),
3. Welcomes the enhanced cooperation between States Parties for the conservation of the property, in particular through regular meetings of the International Standing Conference;

4. Acknowledges the efforts made by the States Parties to undertake Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) for proposed works in the different components of the property, also welcomes the submission of three HIA reports for proposed works at the Capitol Complex of Chandigarh (India), and requests the States Parties to consistently notify the World Heritage Centre of new projects within the property and its buffer zone that may have a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and to approve only those project proposals for which HIAs, conducted in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, do not identify a negative impact;
5. Recommends that the projects for the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning ancillary structures project, for the Multilevel basement car park project and for the Holistic Development of Punjab and Haryana High Court Project in the Capitol Complex of Chandigarh be suspended, in view of the negative impacts resulting from the HIA reports, and that alternative locations and solutions be sought, which do not impact on the OUV of the property, and also requests the State Party to submit the new proposals to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
6. Further requests the State Party of India that the recommendations contained in the ICOMOS Technical Review of the three proposed projects for the Capital Complex of Chandigarh, a component of the property located in India, be implemented prior to the commencement of any construction;
7. Finally requests the State Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated joint report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

176. Historic Centre of the City of Salzburg (Austria) (C 784)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1996

Criteria (ii) (iv) (vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/784/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/784/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

January 2009: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2013:

ICOMOS Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Water infrastructure (hydroelectric power station Salzburg-Lehen) (*issue resolved*)
- Ground transport infrastructure (train station project outside the buffer zone) (*issue resolved*)
- Housing (urban development pressure, high-rise projects)

- Management System/Management Plan (integrated approach towards management; apparent lack of legislative and planning mechanisms)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/784/>

Current conservation issues

On 12 December 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/784/documents/> and reports on the following:

- The final design of the residential building 'Schwarzstraße 45/Ernest-Thun-Straße 2/2A' comprised a changed design of the roof-construction and of the colour of the material utilised in order to integrate the project more harmoniously into the buffer zone;
- The realisation of the 'Nelböck Viaduct Rainerstraße/Bahnhofsvorplatz' project followed the recommendation of the 2013 ICOMOS Advisory mission by keeping the height of the building two storeys below the neighbouring Hotel Europa;
- The southern façade of the 'Paracelsus indoor swimming pool', which faces the property including the park of the Mirabell Castle, has been finished with a curtain wall ceramic façade with smaller windows instead of the originally planned glass wall. Next to the swimming pool, on the former 'Kurhaus' plot, a new building is planned for the University of Salzburg, with a height lower than that of the swimming pool building;
- The final design plans, photographic documentation of the current state and its visibility from certain viewpoints have been included in the report for the development of the 'Dr Franz-Rehrl Platz Residential Area (Residential Buildings City Life Rehrlplatz)', which has already been implemented;
- The final planning documentation and photos of the implemented modification of the Mozarteum Foundation were also included in the report. The new Grand Foyer was opened in September 2022;
- A design concept has been included for the planned Salzburg Festival Building. The final design plans are still subject to modification; however, it has already been decided that the planned golden wall coating shall not be implemented;
- The original Priesterhausgarten housing project has not been pursued. The owner intends to develop a new project that will take into account the recommendations of the 2019 Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA);
- Brief updates were provided on the zoning and development plans currently in force for the property. The report highlights the close cooperation between the City of Salzburg and ICOMOS Austria in relation to building projects, as well as the expert advisory mechanism for the assessment of the impact of planned building projects on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property.

A draft Management Plan submitted by the State Party as an annex to its state of conservation report in February 2020 was subject to a Technical Review by ICOMOS whose final report was transmitted to the State Party on 10 March 2023.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The efforts of the State Party to mitigate the negative impact of the following projects: 'Schwarzstrasse 45/Ernest-Thun-Strasse', the 'Nelböck Viaduct Rainerstrasse Bahnhofsvorplatz', the 'Paracelsus indoor swimming pool', and the 'Dr Franz-Rehrl Platz Residential Area (Residential Buildings City Life Rehrlplatz)' on the OUV of the property, and the attributes that convey it, during their implementation phase, should be acknowledged.

However, it is regrettable that the impacts of these projects on the OUV of the property were not systematically assessed and a dialogue on these project plans with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies was not conducted early in the planning or design phase, which limited the possibilities to mitigate their recognised adverse impacts. While these projects individually do not impose a serious loss or cause a serious deterioration of the authenticity and integrity of the property and its OUV, their cumulative impact has negative effects on its inherent characteristics. The Committee should therefore reiterate its request to the State Party to carry out impact assessments (including visual impact

assessments) for projects which may have a negative impact on the OUV of the property. The submission of the design concept for the planned Salzburg Festival Building is to be acknowledged as well, and the abandonment of the envisaged golden wall coating is a welcome decision. The information that the original Priesterhausgarten housing project has been abandoned is also a welcome update, as is the fact that a new planned projects will consider the outcomes and recommendation of the 2019 HIA. The State Party should be requested to submit the final design plans for both projects to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before building rights are granted or implementation is undertaken, and to approve only those project proposals for which HIAs, conducted in line with the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, do not identify a negative impact on the OUV of the property.

Information on the status of the zoning and development plans that form the basis for planning decisions is noted, as well as the advisory framework developed to assess the potential impact of projects on the OUV of the property.

Concerning the draft Management Plan for the property, ICOMOS, in its Technical Review of March 2023, noted that it has significant gaps in the management system and needed to be better aligned with the Operational Guidelines. ICOMOS therefore advised the State Party to define the attributes that convey the OUV of the property and to identify actionable activities, in particular to implement previous Committee decisions. The State Party should therefore be urged to implement both the Committee's previous requests for the development of a comprehensive Urban Land Use Plan to further strengthen the protection of the setting of the property, and the recommendations of the ICOMOS Technical Review on the revised Management Plan. The Management Plan should serve as a comprehensive tool to support the planning framework for planned and proposed projects within the property, its buffer zone and wider setting, and should ensure that adequate management mechanisms are in place to protect and preserve the OUV of the property and its attributes in line with the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.176

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.41**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),
3. Acknowledges the efforts of the State Party to mitigate the negative impact of the 'Schwarzstrasse 45/Ernest-Thun-Strasse', the 'Nelböck Viaduct Rainerstrasse/Bahnhofsvorplatz', the 'Paracelsus indoor swimming pool', and the 'Dr Franz-Rehrl Platz Residential Area (Residential Buildings City Life Rehrlplatz)' projects on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and its attributes during their implementation phase, but regrets that the impacts of these projects on the OUV of the property were not systematically assessed and a dialogue on the plans for these projects with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies was not conducted early in the planning or concept phase, and that the possibility of mitigating their recognised adverse impacts was therefore limited;
4. Also acknowledges the submission of the design concept for the planned Salzburg Festival Building, welcomes the revised design of the project, which has abandoned the envisaged golden wall coating, and requests the State Party to submit its final design plans to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before building rights are granted or implementation is undertaken;
5. Also welcomes the information that the original Priesterhausgarten housing project has been abandoned and that new planned projects will consider the outcomes and recommendation of the 2019 Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), and also requests the

State Party to submit the final design plans of the project to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before building rights are granted, and only approve a project proposal for which HIAs, conducted in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, do not identify a negative impact on the OUV of the property;

6. *Notes the information on the status of the zoning and development plans, as well as the advisory framework developed to assess the potential impact of projects on the OUV of the property, and urges the State Party to implement its previous requests for the development of a comprehensive Urban Land Use Plan to further strengthen the protection of the setting of the property;*
7. *Further requests the State party to further revise the Management Plan to ensure that:*
 - a) *The Management Plan becomes a comprehensive tool to support the planning framework for planned and proposed projects within the property, its buffer zone and its wider setting,*
 - b) *Adequate management mechanisms are in place to protect and preserve the OUV of the property and its attributes, in line with the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, including mechanisms to carry out impact assessments (including visual impact assessments and cumulative impact assessments) in conformity with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage context, developed in collaboration between the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre, for changes and projects that may have a negative impact on the OUV of the property;*
8. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

177. The Great Spa Towns of Europe (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) (C 1613)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2021

Criteria (ii) (iii)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1613/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1613/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

Factors identified at the time of inscription of the property:

- Need to submit a minor boundary modification to adjust the delimitations of Baden bei Wien (Austria) and Montecatini Terme (Italy) and to extend the buffer zones of Karlovy Vary (Czechia) and Vichy (France);
- Extend the protective designations of Baden bei Wien and Montecatini Terme to include the total area of these component parts;
- Confirm that Bad Ems (Germany) and Bad Kissingen (Germany) are legally protected in their entirety as urban conservation areas;
- Extend the urban conservation area (*ZPU – zone protégée en matière d'urbanisme*) in Spa (Belgium) to cover the entirety of this component part;
- Formally approve and implement the Local Management Plans for the three Czech component parts and ensure their articulation with existing planning documents;
- Implement the Local Management Plans at Vichy (France) and Bad Ems (Germany);
- Review the management plan of the City of Bath (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) to consider its dual inscription on the World Heritage List;
- Appoint site managers for all component parts and ensure that their role is clear and adapted to the needs of managing a World Heritage property;
- Improve the monitoring programme for the property as a whole;
- Introduce Heritage Impact Assessment procedures into the management system of each component part to address the potential impacts of development projects;
- Consider how to strengthen the role of the Great Spas Management Board to assess the potential impacts of major development proposals in the component parts, as well as the cumulative impacts of different proposals on the property as a whole.

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1613/>

Current conservation issues

On 30 November 2022, the seven States Parties submitted a joint state of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1613/documents/>. Progress on a number of conservation issues raised by the Committee at the time of inscription is presented in this report, as follows:

- The boundaries of Baden bei Wien (Austria) and Montecatini Terme (Italy) have been adjusted and approved by the relevant authorities;
- The buffer zone of Karlovy Vary (Czechia) has been extended. The extension of the buffer zone of Vichy (France) is ongoing;
- The municipal council of Bad Kissingen (Germany) approved a “municipal heritage concept” aimed at strengthening the protection of the component part. However, more time is required to complete the consultative processes and the requirements of new legislation;
- The State Party of Belgium has taken measures to extend the ZPU in Spa to include the areas of the component part most suitable to be protected under this type of designation and identified further actions related to villa-type buildings or to non-urbanised areas to be included in the Local Management Plan;
- The Local Management Plans for Františkovy Lázně (Czechia), Karlovy Vary (Czechia), Mariánské Lázně (Czechia), Vichy (France) and Bad Ems (Germany) have all been approved;
- The State Party of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is developing a Combined Management Plan for Bath, which incorporates elements of the City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan (2016-2022) and the Local Management Plan for Bath as a Spa, with a view to completing the Combined Management Plan (2022-2028) in the summer of 2023;
- Site managers for all component parts have been appointed;
- Improvements to the monitoring programme for the property as a whole remain to be addressed;
- A workshop on Impact Assessments was organised on 22-23 November 2022;
- The States Parties contacted the World Heritage Centre regarding doubts about the scope of the Committee’s recommendation related to the role of the Great Spas Management Board in assessing the potential cumulative impacts of developments projects in the component parts on the property as a whole.

On 13 February 2023, the State Party of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland informed the World Heritage Centre, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, about the redevelopment of the site of the former Gasworks at the Bath component. The World Heritage Centre transmitted the corresponding ICOMOS Technical Review on 28 April 2023 and in line with Paragraph 174 of the Operational Guidelines transmitted third party information on the planned redevelopment of the Rugby Stadium located in the Bath component to which the State Party replied on 5 May 2023 informing that the proposal will be referred to the World Heritage Centre for technical review by ICOMOS once the relevant project documents are available.

On 31 March 2023, the State Party of Belgium informed the World Heritage Centre about a planned mobility enhancement project in the city centre of Spa, including cycle-pedestrian facilities, the redevelopment of municipal roads and adjacent public spaces.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The States Parties have made progress in addressing the recommendations made by the World Heritage Committee, albeit to varying degrees. The delimitations of the component parts of Baden bei Wien and Montecatini Terme have been modified in accordance with the request of the Committee, and new maps have been provided. The extension of the buffer zone of Karlovy Vary was also completed. The State Party of France has launched a process to extend the buffer zone of Vichy. This process and validation of the new perimeter of the buffer zone are expected to be concluded by September 2023. The States Parties inform that a request for a minor boundary modification will only be submitted once all the requested revisions have been achieved.

The information provided in relation to the Committee's recommendations to extend or confirm the legal protective mechanisms in Baden bei Wien, Montecatini Terme, Spa, Bad Ems and Bad Kissingen is considered insufficient and cannot be verified as no maps were provided in this regard. The purpose of these recommendations was to ensure that existing legal protective designations at the national level recognise each of those component parts as a single conservation area. Therefore, it is recommended that the respective States Parties continue their efforts to strengthen the legal protection of those component parts. Detailed maps showing the extent of the legal designations in place should be requested.

The development of a Combined Management Plan for Bath is seen by the State Party concerned as an opportunity to reconcile inconsistencies between the provisions of the separate existing management plans and is welcomed. This plan has been conceived in two parts. A rough draft of the first part, which mainly sets out factual information about the property, is included in the State Party's state of conservation report. The second part, which is said to identify issues, actions and matters of governance, was not included. Completion of the plan is expected in the summer of 2023.

The ICOMOS Technical Review (April 2023) of the proposed redevelopment of the site of the former Gasworks in Bath, which is part of Bath Western Riverside project, found that current plans would have a highly negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and should not be approved and a revised regeneration project be elaborated.

The appointment of site managers in all the component parts is also welcomed, as are the efforts made to raise their capacities, via a series of workshops. The States Parties informed that these workshops were fundamental to create a shared understanding of the transnational property. In addition, the workshops discussed elements linked to the implementation of the Committee's recommendations. Although the importance of these workshops is recognized as a means to set the foundations for the future implementation of those recommendations, no significant progress has been made so far.

The States Parties report that the implementation of the Committee's recommendations regarding the monitoring programme, Impact Assessment procedures, and the role of the Great Spas Management Board in the assessment of cumulative impacts of development projects, requires more time. These topics are interrelated and therefore need a combined approach that is also in line with the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. A workshop on impact assessments, held in November 2022, provided a basis to start comparing the methodologies and legal frameworks applied across the different States Parties. Another workshop was expected to take place in May 2023, to be followed by a conference concerning measuring the impacts of urban developments on components. It is recommended that the States Parties use this next workshop to define a clear roadmap for the implementation of all the Committee's recommendations.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.177

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision 44 COM 8B.16, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online 2021),
3. Takes note of the progress made by the States Parties to revise the boundaries of Baden bei Wien and Montecatini Terme and to extend the buffer zones of Karlovy Vary and Vichy, and requests the States Parties to submit a minor modification to the boundaries of the property, in accordance with Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines, as soon as all legal procedures to extend the buffer zone of Vichy are completed;
4. Also requests the States Parties to continue their efforts to strengthen the legal protection of Baden bei Wien, Montecatini Terme, Spa, Bad Ems and Bad Kissingen and to submit detailed maps showing the extent of the legal designations in place;
5. Reiterates its recommendation to extend and further detail the monitoring programme for the property as a whole;
6. Encourages the States Parties to continue their efforts to integrate impact assessment procedures into the management systems of all component parts, and to define the role and responsibilities of the Great Spas Management Board in these procedures as well as in the assessment of potential cumulative impacts arising from development projects in the component parts that is also consistent with 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape;
7. Further requests the State Party of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to implement the recommendations contained in the ICOMOS Technical Review of April 2023 on the redevelopment of the former Gasworks at the Bath component and to submit project plans for the redevelopment of the Rugby Stadium to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS;
8. Requests the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated joint report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

178. Historic Centre of Sheki with the Khan's Palace (Azerbaijan) (C 1549rev)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2019

Criteria (ii)(v)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1549/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1549/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management System/Management Plan
- Need to define guidelines for residential house restoration
- Need to monitor all processes of urban rehabilitation
- Legal framework

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1549/>

Current conservation issues

On 1 December 2022, the State Party submitted a State of Conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1549/documents/>. Progress on a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in that report, as follows:

- The Urban Regeneration Plan for the property has been updated. The urban protection zones have been reassessed and reframed to provide a clearer explanation of what is protected across the city and how the protection zones relate to the property boundary. A revised copy of the plan has been presented;
- The State Party has commenced close collaboration with the Development Forest Service, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to be implemented in 2023. The aim of this MoU is to improve monitoring processes and seek ways to address encroachment of buildings in the protected forest areas on the southern and eastern boundaries of the buffer zone which is currently affecting approximately 13 hectares;
- Gradual degradation of the urban landscape and architectural details of the garden city is an issue that is being addressed through regular monitoring carried out by the Yukhari-Bash Reserve Office. Heritage supervisors are in place for each neighbourhood, and this arrangement makes it possible to authorise and monitor development projects in line with the Restoration Manual;
- The Restoration Manual is being updated to include more precise recommendations on how the structural details of local buildings might be maintained and particular building materials should be treated. The Manual will be augmented by practical details based on case studies. Material in the Manual that relates to new construction will be removed and used to update the Infill Design Manual;
- The State Party has initiated the establishment of a Special Protection Regime for the property. Under the Law on the protection of cultural monuments, designated reserves have the right to create such regimes. The property is part of the Yukhari-Bash State Historical and Architectural Reserve, and the Reserve Management Centre is driving this initiative. The Special Protection Regime will include rules and regulations for each of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) based on detailed inventories. The Restoration Manual and Infill Design Manual will become annexes. Approval of this measure by the Cabinet of Ministers is expected by the end of 2023.
- Recent archaeological excavations in Sheki Khan Mosque and its gardens have been carried out;
- Improvements to the Sheki Art Gallery Exhibition area have been made.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The Committee's requests reflected the need to strengthen the protection and conservation of the overall historic urban landscape of the property, aspects relating to the planned productive 'garden city', and local building traditions, such as distinctive roof constructions and architectural features that reflect oriental characteristics. The State Party's response reflects the multi-dimensional nature of the task and also recognises the gaps that need to be filled.

Progress has been made in the following areas: the updated Urban Regeneration Plan will strengthen communication through clearer plans and diagrams that set out precisely what is protected; the Yukhari-Bash Reserve Office now has heritage supervisors for each neighbourhood to control development projects; and monitoring of the forestry areas in the buffer zone has been strengthened through a new liaison with the Forestry Service to control encroachment of buildings into the protected forestry areas.

These activities have highlighted areas where further work or tools are required. Firstly, it is clear that the Yukhari-Bash Reserve Office has limited powers over a sizeable part of the property (around 75%), as these areas are privately owned. Owners do not have to obtain authorization for alterations to either their buildings or gardens. This results in the green garden areas being built upon and, as the State Party acknowledges, given the sizeable areas covered by the gardens, this poses a threat to OUV of the property. Secondly, there is no detailed inventory of the elements of the historic urban landscape that need to be monitored. And thirdly, there is currently a lack of clarity as to how certain building elements should be conserved.

The State Party has begun to address these issues. More precise recommendations are being developed to address the conservation of traditional building forms and materials and the Restoration Manual will be augmented to include illustrated diagrams and case studies. An inventorying process for the attributes of OUV has commenced for the whole property. A GIS database will encompass urban form, building types using traditional buildings materials, architectural details and gardens.

The commencement of the process of designating the property as a Special Protection Regime and the guarantees that this new Special Protection Regime will include rules and regulations for each of the attributes of the property's OUV, based on detailed inventories, are all to be welcomed. There is, though, concern that two of the ensuing measures, namely the development of inventories and the drafting of rules and regulations, are highly complex and need to be grounded in considerable detail, which will take time. While the urgency of establishing improved protection is appreciated, the proposed timeframe for approval by the Cabinet of Ministers by the end of 2023 seems too constrained. It is suggested that the State Party consider a longer timeframe to ensure that these measures are as effective as possible.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.178

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.153**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Welcomes the progress made to strengthen protection and conservation of the overall historic urban landscape of the property, particularly the planned productive 'garden city', the distinctive local architectural traditions and the forested setting of the property;*
4. *Notes the updated Urban Regeneration Plan, the new liaison with the Forestry Service to improve monitoring, the on-going monitoring of development projects by the Yukhari-Bash Reserve Office, and the proposed improvements to the Restoration and Infill Manuals;*
5. *Also notes that the State Party acknowledges the current weaknesses related to the absence of a detailed inventory of the elements of the historic urban landscape that need to be monitored, and the limited power of the Yukhari-Bash Reserve Office over a sizeable part of the property (approximately 75%) that is privately owned, as owners do not have to obtain authorization for alterations to either their buildings or garden areas, and expresses concern over that green garden areas are being built upon which, as the State Party acknowledges, poses a threat to Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;*
6. *Also welcomes the commencement of an inventorying process for the attributes of the OUV and the development of a GIS database to encompass urban form, building types, traditional buildings materials, architectural details and gardens;*
7. *Further welcomes the initiation of the process of designating the property as a Special Protection Regime of the Yukhari-Bash State Historical and Architectural Reserve, which will define rules and regulations for each of the attributes of the property's OUV based on detailed inventories, and formally recognise the Restoration and Infill Manuals;*

8. *Further notes* the proposed timeframe for the completion of the inventories, and rules and regulation necessary for the finalisation of the Special Protection Regime and its intended approval by the Cabinet of Ministers by the end of 2023, but *considers* that this timeframe is too tight to allow these to be defined in ways that ensure that the measures are as effective as possible, and *requests* the State Party to consider extending this timeframe;
9. *Recommends* that the State Party submit drafts of the inventory and of the rules and regulations for the proposed Special Protection Regime to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, in advance of either being finalized;
10. *Requests* the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

179. Ancient City of Nessebar (Bulgaria) (C 217)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1983

Criteria (iii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/217/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 3 (from 1991-1995)

Total amount approved: USD 21,290

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/217/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

November 2010, October 2018 and January 2023: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring missions; November 2012: ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; November 2017: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/UNESCO Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB - 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage) Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Urban development pressure
- Lack of an urban master plan and master plan for the conservation of monuments and archaeological sites
- Illegal constructions
- Housing
- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation
- Management System/Management plan (lack of a management plan)
- Marine transport infrastructure

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/217/>

Current conservation issues

On 30 November 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/fr/list/217/documents/>. Progress on a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at previous sessions is presented in that report, as follows:

- In March 2022, the Council of Ministers established a permanent high-level Inter-Institutional Commission, assisted by a working group, which met in October 2022;
- Following underwater archaeological investigations, research necessary to request a Minor Boundary Modification has been completed;
- The 'General Plan for the Organisation of the Traffic' was adopted in January 2022;
- In September 2022, the Municipality of Nessebar commissioned the preparation of a 'Strategy for Cultural Heritage in the Municipality';
- The terms of reference for the development of the Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) were prepared and approved. The National Institute for Immovable Cultural Heritage (NIICH) along with external experts will prepare the plan;
- The draft General Development Master Plan (GDMP) requires thorough revision or re-procurement, as it was referred by the Ministry of Environment in October 2021 for the third time following the outcomes of the Impact Assessment Report;
- As per national legislation on spatial planning, no Detailed Development Plan (DDP) can be prepared until a GDMP is in force. Therefore, the DDP for the Ancient City of Nessebar and its buffer zone is delayed;
- The Integrated Development Plan for Nessebar Municipality 2021-2027 was adopted in August 2021, and a municipal tourism programme was added as per national legal requirements;
- Urban design guidelines are provided in the Prescriptions for Preservation of the Regimes, approved in 2015 and supplemented by a Municipal resolution in 2019 and an ordinance in 2021;
- Monitoring has been carried out in Nessebar as part of a regional programme. Aerial surveys were conducted in 2021-2022 and the outcomes are currently being compiled;
- An inventory of the building permits issued by Nessebar Municipality between March 2011 and October 2022 for all projects within the property or its vicinity has been compiled;
- Funding has been secured for underwater archaeology, rescue archaeology, conservation of a windmill and exhibitions on the natural and cultural heritage of the property;
- Conservation works were carried out on immovable and movable heritage objects;
- A report entitled 'Heritage Impact Assessment for Investment Intent for a New Development in the Territorial Scope of the Ancient Necropolis of Mesambria, in the Security Area of the World Cultural Heritage Ancient City of Nessebar' was sent to the World Heritage Centre in October 2022, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

A joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property took place from 16 to 20 January 2023. Its main purpose was to ascertain the progress made by the State Party in implementing the Committee's Decision **44 COM 7B.154** and the recommendations of the 2018 joint WHC/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, as well as to assess the overall state of conservation of the property and whether it met the criteria for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines. The report of the mission is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/217/documents>.

Following the mission, the State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre, on 31 January 2023, a Minor Boundary Modification request to include all the underwater archaeological remains of the ancient town, for consideration by the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee. The State Party also shared with the World Heritage Centre the final draft of the Cultural Heritage Strategy of Nessebar Municipality.

On 5 June 2023, the State Party provided to the World Heritage Centre its comments in response to its request for notification of factual errors in the Reactive Monitoring mission report. In this correspondence, the State Party also provided additional updates on the state of conservation of the property and on the implementation of the Committee Decision **44 COM 7B.154**, concerning in particular: (i) the imminent launch of a procedure to draft an ordinance to assist the residents of the Ancient city of Nessebar in preserving immovable cultural properties; (ii) urgent measures taken by the NIICH to increase its administrative capacity by creating a new department with 17 full-time staff; (iii) the completion in 2023 of the largest project in Bulgaria to digitise the Ancient City of Nessebar, carried

out by the teams from the NIICH and the company Vekom Geo Bulgaria, creating a 3D copy of the Ancient City with 120 digitised single immovable cultural properties; (iv) a meeting of the high-level Inter-Institutional Commission and its expert working group on 5 June 2023 to discuss the report of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party has made some progress in addressing previous Committee's recommendations. However, the most important requests (notably, to submit to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, the Conservation Management Plan, the DDP and the GDMP for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session), remain unfulfilled and no clear timeframe for progress has been provided.

The high-level Inter-Institutional Commission was established in March 2022 and held two meetings in 2022 and one meeting in 2023.

The proposal for a Minor Boundary Modification to include underwater archaeology within the boundaries of the property was submitted for examination by the Committee at the present session. Progress on underwater archaeological investigations, inventory of cultural heritage and building permits, prevention of new development, traffic regulation, and conservation of the churches is acknowledged.

The Integrated Development Strategy for Nessebar 2021-2027 was approved in August 2021. However, it should be noted that its vision for Nessebar's future revolves entirely around tourism, with the property identified as the key attraction for a more visitors and a longer tourist season. Excessive focus on tourism, combined with a lack of adequate spatial planning tools including on visitors' management, will only exacerbate the threats already identified in previous missions and state of conservation reports.

The draft 'Strategy for Cultural Heritage of Nessebar Municipality' is a positive step towards improving the positioning of cultural heritage in the development of Nessebar but requires considerable revision and further work to become the requested strategy based on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property for the future of Nessebar. An ICOMOS Technical Review of the draft Strategy was transmitted to the State Party on 17 August 2023. The Review observes that the Strategy covers the entirety of the Nessebar Municipality and there is no clear distinction in the vision established for the municipality of what is needed for the World Heritage property. The identification of the attributes underlying the OUV needs to be strengthened, the threats in the SWOT analysis will need to be revised and better understood – i.e., the potential inscription of the property in the List of World Heritage in Danger cannot be considered as a threat, but rather all activities and transformations that have jeopardised the attributes of OUV should be enumerated – and a clarification of the links between specific objectives and the sustenance of Nessebar's OUV and of implementing actors would be needed. An action plan, with priorities based on the gravity and urgency of issues to be tackled, with timeframes, actors and responsibilities for implementation, a budget to support the implementation of actions and an adequate monitoring system will have to be elaborated.

Key management and planning instruments, such as the property's CMP, requested by the Committee since 2010, the GDMP for Nessebar municipality and the DDP, have not been completed and it remains unclear when they will be developed and enforced. Their finalisation, entry into force and implementation are of the utmost urgency, as noted in previous Committee's decisions.

Meanwhile, the state of conservation has not improved. The January 2023 Reactive Monitoring mission confirmed the findings of the 2018 Reactive Monitoring mission, that the property is impacted by several negative factors and its integrity and authenticity are extremely vulnerable. In particular, the attributes that conveyed the OUV of the property at the time of inscription have deteriorated and some are eroded beyond recovery. The vernacular architecture has been severely undermined, and the urban fabric has lost its coherence and authenticity. The tangible traces of numerous civilisations are barely discernible, superseded by inappropriate, out-of-scale development and suffering from a lack of care for the archaeological vestiges. The relationship between the homogenous ensemble that harmoniously fits the property into its natural setting has suffered from the progressive erosion of its link with the outstanding configuration of the rocky peninsular. The dominance of the medieval churches over the vernacular urban ensemble is no longer distinguishable, and the vibrant urban organism has been severely affected by a tourism-based mono-economy that has turned the ancient city into a crowded tourist attraction in summer and an almost empty place in winter. These factors represent both ascertained and potential dangers to the OUV of the property, according to Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines, due to a serious deterioration of the main attributes (notably vernacular architecture, archaeological vestiges,

and surrounding sea coastline), and the lack of coherence of the town planning and the urban space, a significant loss of historic authenticity and of cultural significance, the lack of a conservation policy and the threatening effects of town planning to the extent that the property meets the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

It is to be noted that several threats had been identified and reported to the Committee in previous years, leading to Decisions **41 COM 7B.43**, **43 COM 7B.81** and **44 7B.154**, all of which foreshadowed that the Committee would examine the state of conservation of the property, with a view to considering, in the absence of substantial progress, its possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Although the State Party has made some progress, it is insufficient and too slow to redress the ongoing deterioration of the OUV of the property. A vision for the future of Nessebar has been proposed in the draft Strategy, but it remains rather general and not tied to the OUV of the property. The analysis on which it is based does not reflect the extreme vulnerability of the property and the emphasis on 'balanced' development remains focused on tourism, which has been the major cause of the erosion of the property's attributes, even though diversification of the tourist audience is mentioned. Therefore, since there has not been substantial progress, and the property continues to face ascertained and potential dangers to its OUV, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies recommend its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.179

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.154**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Takes note of the limited progress made by the State Party in addressing the Committee's previous decisions and the mission's recommendations, but notes with concern that key urgent issues continue to remain unresolved;*
4. *Notes with utmost concern that the 2023 Reactive Monitoring mission confirmed the findings of the 2018 Reactive Monitoring mission that the attributes underlying the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property have deteriorated and, in some respects eroded beyond recovery;*
5. *Also notes with great concern that important and long overdue actions to establish a spatial planning and management framework and instruments, essential for adequate protection and management of the property, are far from being implemented and that no timeframe for the finalisation of the key instruments, including the Conservation and Management Plan (CMP), has been set;*
6. *Further notes with great concern that the Integrated Development Plan for Nessebar Municipality 2021-2027, adopted in August 2021, proposes a vision for the future of Nessebar revolving around the tourism mono-economy, with actions that may locally improve spatial qualities of the property but have greater potential to exacerbate current threats and further erode the attributes of OUV, and urges the State Party to revise the Plan in the light of an OUV-based vision and strategy for the future of Nessebar that does not focus only on tourism;*
7. *Regrets that the State Party has not complied with all Committee's requests contained in Decision **44 COM 7B.154**, and, taking into account also previous Committee's decisions **41 COM 7B.43** and **43 COM 7B.81**, considers that the property is faced with*

both ascertained and potential threats in accordance with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines;

8. **Decides to inscribe the Ancient City of Nessebar (Bulgaria) on the List of World Heritage in Danger;**
9. **Strongly reiterates its urgent requests to the State Party to:**
 - a) *Devise a vision for the future of the “Ancient City of Nessebar” based on its OUV, which pursues sustainable, compatible and equitable development of the property within the larger municipal territory and is not solely focused on tourism,*
 - b) *Develop, approve and implement the CMP for the property, with the ultimate goal of ensuring the safeguarding and recovery of the attributes of OUV, while harnessing the participation of the local community and civil society and building on the principles of the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (2011) and the ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism (2022); establish mechanisms to guarantee that the CMP objectives, strategies and actions are taken into due account in all other spatial or development plans under preparation or already adopted,*
 - c) *Develop, approve and enforce the General Development Master Plan for Nessebar Municipality and the Detailed Development Plan for the Ancient City of Nessebar, with all necessary support from the national authorities and incorporating all relevant Committee’s and missions’ recommendations,*
 - d) *Guarantee that the protection regimes for the property are known and respected by all stakeholders;*
10. **Further requests the State Party to implement fully the recommendations of the 2023 Reactive Monitoring mission as well as previous recommendations of the 2018 Reactive Monitoring mission that remain unfulfilled;**
11. **Also requests the State Party to prepare, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, a proposal for the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and a set of corrective measures along with a timeframe for their implementation, for examination by the Committee at its 46th session;**
12. **Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.**

180. Old City of Dubrovnik (Croatia) (C 95ter)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1979

Criteria (i)(iii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1991-1998

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/95/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 8 (from 1985-2003)

Total amount approved: USD 142,053

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/95/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total Amount of the postwar major restoration programme coordinated by UNESCO: USD 80,000,000

Previous monitoring missions

November 1996: fact-finding mission; November 2015: joint UNESCO/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Armed conflict (*issue resolved*)
- Earthquake in September 1996 (*issue resolved*)
- Need to extend the buffer zone (*issue resolved*)
- Large project in the vicinity of the property
- Cruise ship tourism
- Carrying capacity of the property
- Planned Sport and recreation centre with golf course and tourist settlement (*issue resolved*)
- Conservation Plan for the Historic Core of Dubrovnik
- Need for updated disaster risk management plan
- Proposed sewer repair works

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/95/>

Current conservation issues

On 28 November 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report. An executive summary of this report is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/95/documents>. Progress on a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in this report, as follows:

- The Conservation Plan for the property comprises two parts: the Historic Core and the buffer zone. The buffer zone part of the Conservation Plan has been the priority and was submitted to the World Heritage Centre in January 2022;
- The Historic Core part of the Conservation Plan has commenced and will be available to owners, experts, designers, conservators and city administrators involved in the protection and management of the property;
- The Management Plan was adopted in March 2021, with an English version submitted to the World Heritage Centre early 2022. The Management Plan is the key document for sustainable development and use of the property and buffer zone. The Institute for the Restoration of Dubrovnik is responsible for implementation of the Management Plan and has organised seven capacity building workshops;
- Risk management priorities include preparing a new disaster risk management plan, monitoring the implementation of the 2018 Risk Assessment, strengthening earthquake capacity and responding to the effects of climate change;

- The 'Study of Sustainable Tourism Development and Carrying Capacity of the City of Dubrovnik' addresses Dubrovnik's carrying capacity as a tourist destination, and concludes that the maximum number of visitors in the city core should be 8,000, with some exceptions allowing for 10,000;
- Other sustainable tourism measures include: traffic regulation, a 'Smart City' programme, green tourism initiatives, a communication plan and specific projects, such as 'Marking the Protected Objects in the City of Dubrovnik';
- A new 'World Heritage Centre' is planned, as a network of spaces enabling functions such as interpretation, education, capacity building, and communal space;
- Efforts are continuing for the physical conservation of Orlando's Column with advice provided by national and international experts following ICCROM's initial guidance on the development of the conservation plan. After three years of monitoring, future interventions will focus on *in situ* conservation and restoration;
- New Conservation guidelines apply to repair and upgrade of the sewer system, with the main streets of Stradun and Prijeko being priorities. Details have been provided about proposed procedures, materials, techniques and documentation of these works;
- Expansion of the village of Bosanka on the slopes of the Mount Srđ is on hold owing to changes in planning approach arising from the Conservation Plan for the Buffer Zone. Potentially acceptable new buildings should protect the landscape and a landscape study should be prepared and new proposals should be subject to a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA);
- Action has been taken pursuant to the Cooperation Agreement for protection of cultural heritage through responsible tourism management between the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and the City of Dubrovnik. The Berthing Policy was determined and CLIA sponsored a destination assessment implemented by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party has progressed with some of the Committee's previous Decisions. The Technical Review of the Conservation Plan for the Buffer Zone of the Old City of Dubrovnik by ICOMOS concluded that it is thorough and well-argued, and addresses many of the concerns expressed by the 2015 joint UNESCO/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission. The Conservation Plan for the Historic Core of Dubrovnik is awaited and should be similarly submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. The ICOMOS Technical Review of the Management Plan for the property noted that it is comprehensive, thorough and ambitious, but concluded that if resources are constrained, the Carrying Capacity Plan and the Risk Preparedness and Management Plan should be prioritised. The completion of the 'Study of Sustainable Tourism Development and Carrying Capacity of the City of Dubrovnik' is therefore welcome and, in view of its importance to sustainable tourism, it should be translated into one of the working languages of the Committee and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. The proposed Disaster Risk Management Plan is an urgent priority, which the Committee has already requested to be finalised and submitted for review by the Advisory Bodies.

Initiatives such as the 'Marking the Protected Objects in the City of Dubrovnik' project and the proposed 'World Heritage Centre' will enhance visitor experience but would be better guided by an over-arching Interpretation Strategy, as previously requested by the Committee. Regarding the proposed 'World Heritage Centre', the State Party should be strongly encouraged to opt for another name that does not lead to any confusion with the Secretariat which, within UNESCO, has been assisting the Committee since 1992. It would be appropriate for the Committee to acknowledge the suite of sustainable tourism measures being implemented at the property, the thorough and ongoing programme for the conservation of Orlando's Column, which is evidenced by an extensive set of submitted documentation, the current suspension of the proposed expansion of the village of Bosanka and the ongoing collaboration between the City of Dubrovnik, the CLIA and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

The Committee had previously noted that the restoration of the historic sewage system had the potential to affect significant engineering structures and archaeological features, and had requested that information on this project be provided to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to the commencement of the works. Substantial information has now been provided by the State Party, albeit not in one of the Committee's working languages. It is positive that the works are reported to be in line with conservation guidelines, but the HIAs requested by Decision **44 COM 7B.42** have not yet been submitted.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.180

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.42** adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),
3. Welcomes progress achieved with the successful completion of the development of the Buffer Zone part of the Conservation Plan for the Old City of Dubrovnik and the Management Plan for the property;
4. Requests the State Party to finalise and submit, at the earliest opportunity, in one of the Committee's working languages, for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, the following documents (or their translations):
 - a) The Conservation Plan for the Historic Core of Dubrovnik,
 - b) The Study of Sustainable Tourism Development and Carrying Capacity of the City of Dubrovnik,
 - c) Disaster Risk Management Plan,
 - d) Interpretation Strategy;
5. Reiterates its previous requests to the State Party to submit, in one of the working languages of the Committee, comprehensive project details of the repair works undertaken on the sewer system and for the on-hold Bosanka project (if and when it will proceed), including related Heritage Impact Assessments prepared in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, in conformity with Paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
6. Takes note of the sustainable tourism and interpretation measures and projects reported by the State Party, including: traffic regulation, the 'Smart City' programme, green tourism initiatives, the communication plan the 'Marking the Protected Objects in the City of Dubrovnik', and the proposed new so-called 'World Heritage Centre', also requests the State Party to ensure that these initiatives are guided by an over-arching Interpretation Strategy, as already requested by the Committee, and strongly encourages the State Party to opt for a different name for the new network of spaces for interpretation, education and research, that does not lead to any confusion with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre;
7. Also takes note of the State Party's report on actions arising from the Memoranda of Understanding between the City of Dubrovnik, the Cruise Lines International Association and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council;
8. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

181. Venetian Works of Defence between 15th and 17th centuries: *Stato da Terra* – western *Stato da Mar* (Croatia, Italy, Montenegro) (C 1533)

See Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.3

184. Le Havre, the City Rebuilt by Auguste Perret (France) (C 1181)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2005

Criteria (ii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1181/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1181/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

May-June 2023: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

Factors identified at the time of inscription of the property: N/A

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1181/>

Current conservation issues

Following exchanges between the World Heritage Centre and the State Party since 2019 regarding a high-rise building project within the World Heritage property, a report on its state of conservation was requested in November 2022 by 1 February 2023 and an Advisory mission encouraged by the end of 2022. No report was received from the State Party, but additional information previously requested on the Tour Alta project was made available in January. A summary of the issue is presented below based on the documents received from the State Party since 2019.

In June 2019, the World Heritage Centre received information from third parties regarding a proposed high-rise building project to be built inside the boundaries of the property. In September 2019, the State Party sent to the World Heritage Centre a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), which had been prepared in October 2018, for a so-called 'Tour Videcoq', 55 m high, to be built next to the Bassin du Roy, in a central part of Perret's composition. The tower was lower than the St Joseph Church belltower and the Town Hall, but much higher than Perret's tallest residential blocks (40 m). The building permit for the project had been issued in December 2018. The project was not mentioned in the Management Plan for the property, which dates from June 2018.

ICOMOS reviewed the HIA in early 2020, raised concerns about the high-rise building project's impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and indicated, amongst others, that the tower needed to be reduced in height. It also requested additional information on height regulations, views of the project, a landscape analysis and a moratorium on the building permit issued. The State Party replied in February 2021 by informing of the change of name of the project – now Tour Alta – but without providing the additional information requested, nor putting in place a moratorium, with the result that implementation of the project continued. In its review of August 2021, ICOMOS reiterated its concerns about the impact of the tower on the property's OUV, again requested a moratorium and advised that the State Party be requested to reduce the height of the tower and rework the project. On 20 September

2021, representatives of the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS held a meeting in Le Havre with the city authorities and representatives of the State Party to receive information on the ongoing project.

In February 2022 the State Party sent a report including explanations of the rationale for the selection and approval of the Tour Alta project and some visuals of the project in its urban context. In response to this report, the World Heritage Centre suggested a meeting with the State Party and ICOMOS, which could only take place in November 2022 in the presence of the Mayor of Le Havre. Following this meeting, the State Party provided additional information in January 2023 on the project and the decision-making process leading to its approval, which was the subject of a Technical Review by ICOMOS in March 2023. The documentation submitted in January 2023 revealed that the height of the tower had been increased throughout the process, from 55 m to 63.18 m. Eventually, on 4 April 2023, the State Party invited an Advisory mission to the property, which took place on 31 May and 1 June 2023, to study the impacts of the Tour Alta on the attributes of the property's OUV, the level of modification of their sensitivity to change and the treatment of public spaces around the Tour Alta as well as to discuss with the responsible authorities the decision-making process that had led to this project, the protection and management measures in place for the property and their possible improvements.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The design process for the high-rise building project – initially named Tour Videcoq, then changed to Tour Alta – started at least as early as 2017, with a design competition awarded to the design studio Hamonic + Masson & Associates. However, the World Heritage Centre did not receive an HIA for the project until September 2019, several months after the building permit for the project was granted. The ICOMOS Technical Review of the HIA revealed that the proposed height of the Tour Alta seemed too high, based on the OUV of Le Havre and the conditions of its integrity and authenticity, and should be significantly reduced. Alternatively, the project was to be transferred to another location. In particular, the Statement of OUV notes that “Le Havre is exceptional for its unity and integrity” and “The inscribed property [...] represents a homogenous architectural and urban ensemble”; it also notes that “Perret’s project reflects his ideal: to create a homogenous ensemble where all the details are designed to the same pattern, thus creating a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk* on the urban scale”. It is clear that the architectural language, dynamic mass, dimensions, height and treatment of materials mark the distance of the new tower from Perret’s language.

The additional information requested was partly shared by the State Party at a very advanced stage of the project’s implementation, in January 2023. Examination of this additional information confirmed the negative impacts of the Tour Alta on the OUV of the property. It was also found that the proposed changes to the project were of a local/palliative nature and did not affect the nature of its architecture, location and height, nor its negative impacts on the OUV of the property. These modifications cannot be considered compensatory measures for the negative impacts caused by the tower. The design and construction of the now fully built high-rise Tour Alta within the World Heritage property occurred without prior notification to the World Heritage Centre, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, although the process began prior to 2017, when the design competition to select a project proposal for the urban plot was completed and the project option was selected. Exchanges between the World Heritage Centre and the State Party did not begin until 2019, following a communication from a third party, when the project had already been approved.

However, the State Party could have seized the opportunity to apply Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines at different stages of this process: before launching the design competition – in this way, technical advice could have been obtained to develop the Terms of References for the competition in a way that would ensure that the attributes underlying the property’s OUV, integrity and authenticity are respected at the design stage of the project; after the competition, to seek views on the selected project and advice on the HIA process; or after the HIA report was prepared to seek comments from the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS on the assessment methods and on the impacts of the project on the OUV the property, particularly in terms of integrity and authenticity.

It is thus regrettable that the State Party did not comply with the provisions of the Operational Guidelines and engage in dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS earlier in the process of developing the project and that it did not take advantage of the advisory opportunities provided for in Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines to seek, while it was still possible to do so, appropriate solutions to ensure that the OUV of the property was fully preserved.

The Tour Alta has meanwhile been built, and the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission in June 2023 confirmed the desk assessment of the impacts of the Tour Alta, notably that its presence

in the heart of the World Heritage property, its height and its architecture (a twisted tower) had a tangible impact on the visual qualities of the OUV of the property and on the overall perception of the city rebuilt by Auguste Perret; its high density carries risks for the urban balance, which is an attribute of the property's OUV. These two factors combined have an impact on the integrity of the property, which may no longer be guaranteed. The mission recommended that the State Party take urgent measures, with the support of the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, to reduce as far as possible the Tour Alta's visual and landscape impacts by, for example, lightening the shades of its facade cladding as much as possible and avoiding any night lighting, and to control its urban impact by ensuring a better interface with the public spaces at the foot of the tower and the urban fabric – Quai Videcoq and Rue de Paris and in relation to the Saint-François district – based on an *ad hoc* urban planning study. The mission considered it essential to reinforce the structural continuity of the public spaces. The mission also underlined that a major effort is needed to take account of the property's OUV in all municipal regulations. The mission also provided a set of detailed recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the protection and management measures in place including the implementation of the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape as a tool for integrating heritage conservation with urban development plans and processes with a view to the city's future development.

Based on the mission's recommendations, it is recommended that the Committee request that a Reactive Monitoring mission be deployed to the property in 2024 in order to examine the overall state of conservation of the property, follow up on the recommendations of *the Advisory mission of 2023*, and provide the corresponding recommendations to the Committee, in particular on actions to improve the management and control tools for construction or restoration projects to avoid that such a situation may occur again.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.175

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision **29 COM 8B.38**, adopted at its 29th session (Durban, 2005), through which 'Le Havre, the City Rebuilt by Auguste Perret' was inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv),
3. Notes with utmost concern that the State Party did not comply with the requirements of Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines and did not provide timely information to the Committee on a large-scale project, did not share with the World Heritage Centre the Heritage Impact Assessment of the project until after the building permit had been issued, and failed to take into account the findings of the related ICOMOS Technical Reviews clearly outlining the negative impact of the project on the attributes underlying the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
4. Regrets that the State Party did not better seize the opportunities to reduce the negative impacts of the Project on the property's OUV during the planning stage;
5. Further expresses concern that the planning and management systems in place at the property have allowed this development to take place, and recommends that these systems be strengthened and made consistent with the aim of maintaining the OUV of the property;
6. Further notes with concern the findings of the 2023 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission to the property, which found that its integrity may be no longer guaranteed, and requests the State Party to urgently reduce the negative impacts of the Tour Alta on the integrity of the property according to the recommendations provided by the mission, namely:
 - a) Lightening as much as possible the shades of the Tour's facade cladding,

- b) *Avoiding any night-time lighting,*
 - c) *Ensuring a better interface with the public spaces at the foot of the tower and the urban fabric between Quai Videcoq and Rue de Paris and in relation to the Saint-François district through an ad hoc urban planning study to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS;*
7. *Further requests the State Party to take prompt action to ensure that the property's OUV is duly taken into account in all municipal regulations and to proactively implement all recommendations provided by the Advisory mission to reduce the impacts of the Tour Alta on the property's OUV and to improve the effectiveness of protection and management mechanisms taking into consideration the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL);*
 8. *Requests furthermore the State Party to invite a Reactive Monitoring mission to be carried out in 2024 to examine the overall state of conservation of the property, to follow up on the recommendations of the Advisory mission of 2023, and to make recommendations to the Committee, in particular on how the management system of the property can be strengthened and more effective planning controls put in place to prevent a recurrence;*
 9. *Requests finally the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.*

185. Nice, Winter Resort Town of the Riviera (France) (C 1635)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2021

Criteria (ii)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1635/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1635/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

Factors identified at the time of inscription of the property:

- Need to revise the boundaries
- Need to complete the inventory of buildings
- Need to reinforce monitoring programmes particularly in relation to gradual changes
- Ensure coordination among managers

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1635/>

Current conservation issues

On 29 November 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1635/documents/>. Progress on a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at the time of inscription is presented in this report, as follows:

- The State Party informs that due to the large number of buildings included in the property, the inventory of built heritage will take several years to complete. Of the 900 buildings dating from 1860 to 1975, 583 entries have been completed;
- Since 2021, 19 buildings have been identified as “*construction remarquable*” (notable construction) in the Local Urban Plan;
- Regarding the documentation of the interior of the buildings, of the 900 buildings studied so far, 174 present well-conserved interior decorations and features;
- State of conservation reports will be published every two to five years based on the frequency assigned to the monitoring indicators identified. Additionally, the list of requests for building permits within the property and the buffer zone is assessed on a weekly basis in order to detect any proposals that could have a negative impact;
- The Local World Heritage Commission, which brings together representatives from different institutions, was legally established in October 2022;
- A mid-term review of the management plan to assess its effectiveness is expected to take place in 2025.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party has made substantial progress towards implementing most of the recommendations made by the World Heritage Committee. The detailed inventory of the approximately 5,000 buildings included within the property will only be achieved in the medium-term as this work involves bibliographical and archival research as well as an assessment of their current state of conservation. The report includes examples of the detailed entries used for each building and a map summarizing progress made for the different neighbourhoods of the city. Likewise, the documentation and protection of the interior of the buildings is a long-term objective as it requires the listing of the buildings on an individual basis. Between 2020 and 2022, eight buildings were listed as ‘historic monuments’ for the significance of their interiors.

Regarding the monitoring programme, no substantial new information is included in the report submitted by the State Party, apart from the indication that reports on the assessment of the state of conservation of the property will be published every two to five years, and that applications for building permits will also be monitored to identify projects that could have negative impacts.

The list of indicators included in the report is the same as those included in the nomination dossier. However, ICOMOS evaluation noted that some types of attributes needed to be more closely monitored than others to detect changes over time. Therefore, it is still considered that the monitoring programme could be improved, and the indicators refined, based on a clear understanding of the attributes of the property. The publication of state of conservation reports at regular intervals, as intended by the State Party, offers an opportunity to assess change over time against a well-defined baseline and to identify necessary management responses.

The legal recognition of the Local World Heritage Commission by Prefectural Decree on 5 August 2022, confirming its role and responsibilities in the management of the property and buffer zone, is welcomed. Since this Commission brings together representatives of different institutions, it can act as an important platform for collaboration.

A revised map indicating the boundaries of the property has been submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS. A response has been provided regarding the adequateness of the delimitation of the property.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.185

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision 44 COM 8B.38, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online 2021),
3. Takes note with satisfaction of the progress made by the State Party in implementing most of the recommendations made by the Committee at the time of inscription;
4. Also notes that the boundaries of the property as indicated in the revised map submitted by the State Party are considered adequate;
5. Encourages the State Party to continue its efforts to complete the inventory of built heritage as well as the documentation of the interiors of the buildings with a view to protecting them;
6. Also encourages the State Party to strengthen the monitoring programme for the state of conservation of the property based on clear, easy to measure indicators to track changes in the condition of the attributes over time, and against a well-defined baseline;
7. Further encourages the State Party to undertake a mid-term review of the management plan by 2025;
8. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

186. Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) (C 708bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1994

Criteria (iii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2009-2016

- Lack of a management mechanism
- Privatisation of surrounding land
- Loss of authenticity of some components due to restoration works conducted using unacceptable methods

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/708/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 4 (from 1997-2010)

Total amount approved: USD 96,160

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/708/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided: Funds-in-Trust. Georgia/UNESCO Agreement: Cultural heritage advisory service to the NACHP (National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia) to be implemented under the Third Regional Development Project (RDP III). Total budget: USD 250,000

Previous monitoring missions

August 1993: World Heritage Centre mission; May-June 1994: ICOMOS Evaluation mission; 1999: World Heritage Centre mission; May 2001: Heritage and Tourism Master Plan mission; October 2001: International Expert Team "Heritage and Tourism Master Plan" mission; September 2001: Mission on the UNDP-SPPD Project; 2001: International Expert Team mission; November 2003, June 2008 and April 2012: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring missions; March 2010 and February 2018: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring missions; November 2014: joint ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission and joint World Heritage Centre/World Bank mission; November 2015, February 2016, December 2016, and July-October 2017: World Heritage Centre technical assistance missions; December 2018: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission; February 2020: ICOMOS Advisory mission.

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Lack of a management mechanism (*issue resolved*)
- Lack of definition of the unified buffer zone (*issue resolved*)
- Lack of Urban Master Plan of the City of Mtskheta
- Insufficient coordination between the Georgian Church and the national authorities
- Privatization of surrounding land
- Natural erosion of stone
- Loss of authenticity during previous works carried out by the Church
- Inappropriate urban development within a sensitive historical environment (*issue resolved*)
- Erosion and siltation/deposition
- Land conversion
- Management activities
- Management System/Management Plan

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/708/>

Current conservation issues

On 5 December 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/708/documents/> outlining the following:

- Tangible progress has been made in the elaboration of the Mtskheta Urban Land Use Master Plan (ULUMP), yet its finalisation has been hampered by divergent views between stakeholders;
- The Moratorium ("Enactment of Special Regime of Regulation of Urban Development and Land Privatization in the Cultural Heritage Protection Zones of Mtskheta Municipality") remains in place until a full set of town planning documentation is approved;
- Urgent conservation issues are being addressed as follows: at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral Church, stone conservation works are underway, greening and dendrological rehabilitation works have been undertaken in the church's yard; at Jvari Monastery Complex, the stone conservation project is planned to be implemented in 2023; at Samtavro Monastery, research had preceded the plans for a project that includes stone conservation works, management of the water system and tile roofing replacements, to be implemented in 2023;
- In accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, the State Party continues to submit information on proposed development projects within the buffer zone and the wider setting of the property, namely for individual living houses and small commercial buildings in the buffer zone as well as one major development project to install wind turbines in the wider setting of the property, for which project documentation, including a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), was submitted to the World Heritage Centre prior to any decision being taken.

At the time of writing, the State Party has not responded to third-party concerns regarding the planned Tbilisi Wind Power Plant transmitted by the World Heritage Centre on 17 May 2021.

On 28 January 2022, the State Party informed the World Heritage Centre about the progress made in the development of ULUMP and stated that the draft concept had been prepared. Stakeholder meetings and the public hearing procedure in accordance with Georgian legislation were held in spring 2021.

Documentation submitted by the State Party in April 2023 on new projects for the conservation of the plinth stone of the Samtavro Monastery, the rehabilitation of the drainage system of the St. Nino Church, and the interior scaffolding of the Major Jvari Church has undergone technical review by ICOMOS.

Between March and April 2023, the State Party notified the World Heritage Centre of the construction and reconstruction of individual living houses in the buffer zone of the property, which has also been subject to technical review by ICOMOS.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party continues to make progress in addressing factors affecting the property, such as 'Land conversion', 'Management activities' and 'Management System/Management Plan', through the further development of the ULUMP, which is underway as part of the 'Management Documentation for Spatial Territorial Development of Mtskheta'. The dissemination of the ULUMP concept among stakeholders is an important step and it is recommended that the Committee encourage the State Party to intensify its efforts to develop the management documentation, including the ULUMP, and reiterate its request for the submission of the drafts of the main components of the ULUMP to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

The extension of the Moratorium until the adoption of the above-mentioned management documentation is welcome.

In line with the recommendations of the 2018 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission, the State Party continues to address the existing urgent conservation issues at the property through conservation projects at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral Church, Jvari Monastery Complex and Samtavro Monastery. The recommendations of the mission should continue to guide the State Party in improving the state of conservation of the property.

In February 2021, ICOMOS provided a technical review of the conservation and rehabilitation project of Svetitskhoveli Monasterial Complex, which was considered adequate provided that further research and analysis be conducted. Similarly, an ICOMOS technical review in October 2021 on the pre-conservation study of Major Jvari Church endorsed the project and provided further recommendations. The conservation work undertaken at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral Church is to be welcomed, as is the implementation of the conservation interventions planned at this church and at Samtavro Monastery.

Moreover, in December 2021 and February 2023, ICOMOS reviewed project documentation for a number of individual living houses and small commercial buildings in the buffer zone of the property, some of which were assessed generally positively, while upgraded green areas around the houses and natural coloured fire clay tiles roofs were recommended. For other projects in the city centre, which involved the reconstruction of small old buildings in poor conditions on a larger scale or with an extended footprint over empty plots and intended for a new use, the provisions of the Moratorium impose a refusal of these projects pending the adoption of the ULUMP and until control and monitoring are fully in place, in line with the Committee Decision **42 COM 7B.24**.

The major development project planned in the wider setting of the property – the Tbilisi Wind Power Plant project – was evaluated by ICOMOS in October 2021 as damaging to the attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property by degrading the visual relationship between the World Heritage monuments and their wider natural environment. The State Party has not since provided an update on this proposed development in its state of conservation report, nor did it respond to the third-party concerns shared by the World Heritage Centre on 17 May 2021. The State Party should be invited to submit an update on the planned development of Tbilisi Wind Power Plant following the ICOMOS technical review of the project. More generally, the recently launched Guidance for Wind Energy Projects in a World Heritage Context (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/wind-energy/>) could be a useful tool to assist the State Party in the decision-making process regarding wind energy projects to ensure the protection of the property's OUV.

The State Party should also be encouraged, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, to continue to submit detailed project documentation, including HIA based on the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to any decisions being taken that could be difficult to reverse.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.186

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*

2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.48**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),
3. Acknowledges the State Party's continued efforts to advance the development of the 'Management Documentation for Spatial Territorial Development of Mtskheta', including Mtskheta Urban Land Use Master Plan (ULUMP), and reiterates its request that the drafts of the main components of ULUMP be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, no later than **1 February 2024**;
4. Commends the State Party for its decision to maintain the 'Enactment of Special Regime of Regulation of Urban Development and Land Privatization in the Cultural Heritage Protection Zones of Mtskheta Municipality' (the Moratorium) until the 'Management Documentation for Spatial Territorial Development of Mtskheta' has been adopted, and until all the necessary control and monitoring systems have been put in place, and encourages the State Party to strictly implement the Moratorium in the meantime;
5. Welcomes the ongoing and planned conservation works at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral Church, Jvari Monastery Complex and Samtavro Monastery taking into account ICOMOS recommendations on these projects in order to complete the procedures or considering additional aspects for their documentation, analysis, conservation and protection measures;
6. Invites the State Party to continue to implement the recommendations of the 2018 Advisory mission as well as to take into account the recommendations included in relevant ICOMOS Technical Reviews to ensure that actions with negative impacts on the World Heritage property are avoided;
7. Encourages the State Party to continue to submit, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, detailed information on all proposed development within the property, its buffer zone and its wider setting, for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies prior to any decisions being taken that could be difficult to reverse;
8. Takes note that no major development project other than the Tbilisi Wind Power Plant project is currently planned in the setting of the World Heritage property, requests that an update of its status be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, and invites the State Party to continue to ensure that Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) for development projects are undertaken, assessing the multiple and cumulative impacts of current and planned developments and taking into account potential impacts on the OUV of the property, in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;
9. Requests furthermore the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

190. City of Valletta (Malta) (C 131)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1980

Criteria (i)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/131/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 2 (from 1981-1999)

Total amount approved: USD 21,625

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/131/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

October 2015, January 2017: ICOMOS Advisory missions

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Lack of definition of a buffer zone
- Changes in building heights might alter the city's skyline
- Major potential development of the new City Gate and the Opera house
- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation
- Change of use of resident houses for business

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/131/>

Current conservation issues

A state of conservation report was provided by the State Party on 23 March 2023 in response to a request from the World Heritage Centre to enable it to assess the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the 2015 and 2017 ICOMOS Advisory missions and to obtain a comprehensive overview of the potential and cumulative impacts on the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of a number of ongoing or planned projects, following growing concerns expressed by Maltese individuals and civil society. The state of conservation report is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/131/documents/>. Information presented in this report is as follows:

- A site manager was appointed in January 2023;
- Numerous projects to restore state-owned cultural properties and churches in Valletta are underway;
- An update on large-scale developments in Valletta reported in 2010 includes:
 - The hotel project for Lower Fort St Elmo has been halted,
 - The excavation of an inter-Harbour Sea Link underneath Valletta has not yet been implemented,
 - The rehabilitation of Valletta's waterfront moat and Triton Square, the establishment of the MUZA National Museum of Fine Arts within Auberge d'Italie and the proposed interventions and modifications to parts of the Mediterranean Conference Centre (former Sacra Infermeria of the Knights of Malta) have been completed and the St John's Co-Cathedral Museum project is being implemented under supervision of the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, all following the advice of the 2017 ICOMOS Advisory mission and subsequent Technical Reviews;
- The regeneration project at Manoel Island is still at the design stage;

- A call for expressions of interest has been launched for the redevelopment of the Evans building into a high-quality tourist accommodation facility. It includes maintaining the building's facades and carrying out archaeological excavations;
- Heritage and/or Environmental Impact Assessments have been requested for the extension of the Grand Hotel Excelsior, the New Breakwater arm off St Elmo point and the redevelopment of Mattia Preti House, and will be undertaken for the Fast Ferry Quay Project. Only the Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) that comply with to the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context* are considered by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage;
- The final draft of the Management Plan was commissioned by the Maltese Government based on a mandate issued by the Superintendent for Cultural Heritage and was due to be finalised in May 2023 for approval by the Cabinet of Ministers and submission to the World Heritage Centre by the end of June 2023. It will include an in-depth analysis of views and vistas, which should assist in the delineation of a buffer zone for the property;
- The solutions envisaged for mass tourism involve spreading the concentration of visitors, promoting Malta as a year-round destination and improving accessibility by introducing ferry services linking the City of Valletta to other areas;
- The State Party undertakes to ensure that the economic and social benefits derived from the tourism industry are integrated into a holistic strategy of historic conservation, social cohesion and environmental sustainability;
- To minimise the negative environmental impact of tourism in Valletta, access points and routes are being diversified to spread the concentration of visitors coming ashore from cruise ships. A ship-to-shore power connection will be established to allow cruise ships to turn off their onboard engines when docked. Measures to reduce vehicular traffic in Valletta include free public transport, access to the city by sea and out-of-town parking. These measures have resulted in the requalification of three of the city's parking areas in the city as pedestrian piazzas.

A 2017 study on wave disturbance in Valletta harbours is annexed to the report, providing inter alia information on the baseline situation as well as modelling situations and proposals to improve wave disturbance through the construction of a berm and revetment.

From August to December 2022, the World Heritage Centre received and shared with the State Party information from third parties concerning certain projects that may have an impact on the property's OUV, including the above-mentioned extension of the Grand Hotel Excelsior in the vicinity of the property, the degradation of the roofscape of the property and the construction of a new six-storey concrete façade on the shoreline of the property (Mattia Preti House). On 7 December 2022, the State Party responded by informing that the developers of the Grand Hotel Excelsior would be requested to submit a HIA before any further deliberation on the project, that the application of rooftop additions in Valletta was in the consultation phase to assess its impacts on the property's OUV; and that the concerns of the World Heritage National Technical Committee regarding the negative impact on the OUV would be taken into account in the Mattia Preti House project. Most recently, on 12 July 2023, the Centre provided third party information to the State Party on two issues, namely the increased commercial development in Valletta's strategic view corridors and works for the new Museum of St John's Co-Cathedral, which would impact on the entry of natural light into the Oratory by permanently blocking the window closest to the altar. At the time of writing, no response had yet been received by the World Heritage Centre.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The appointment of a new site manager for the property is welcome, as is restoration work of many state-owned cultural properties and churches, which should help to maintain the OUV of the property.

The brief overview of the status of implementation of large-scale developments in Valletta since 2010, as well as projects within and outside the buffer zone as envisaged in 2010 are noted. It is positive that the State Party has adopted the advice on large-scale projects provided through the two ICOMOS Advisory missions and the various ICOMOS Technical Reviews. ICOMOS concluded that the St John's Co-Cathedral Museum, as designed at that time, was coherent in its programme and distribution and that the significant improvement it made to the existing museum had advantages that far outweighed its disadvantages.

The 2017 Advisory mission recommendations advised the State Party to complete the property management plan and the 'Views and Vistas analysis' to address the issue of tall buildings in the property and its wider setting as a matter of urgency, to conduct HIAs for all future major restorations or new construction within the property and to urgently re-appoint a site manager. The first two recommendations have not yet been completed, while the appointment of a site manager was completed with considerable delay only in 2023. The 2017 Advisory mission also recommended that the State Party should continue to promote high quality new, sympathetic design within the property, rather than permitting façadism and pseudo-historicism.

With particular reference to the proposed regeneration of the Evans Building site, an ICOMOS Technical Review dated August 2022 concluded that there was a strong case for the preservation, conservation and repurposing of the Evans Building, and provided a number of recommendations in this regard. The 2023 state of conservation report submitted by the State Party does not provide information on the follow-up to these recommendations. It is regrettable that the tender for the redevelopment of the Evans Building appears to recognise only the value of the facades and potential archaeological remains and that, according to the website for the proposed redevelopment of Manoel Island in the immediate vicinity of the property, the masterplan was approved before the completion of the 'Views and Vistas analysis'. Noting that the regeneration project is still in the design phase, the Committee may wish to request the State Party to ensure that the 'Views and Vistas analysis' is finalised before the masterplan is approved.

The State Party has carried out HIAs, particularly for projects that were the subject of mission recommendations, although a more systematic and holistic approach would be welcome, particularly for projects within the property. It is also noted that the State Party has requested that Heritage and/or Environmental Impact Assessments be undertaken for some other projects that are under consideration. It is proposed that the Committee recommend that the State Party commission Impact Assessments for all projects that may have an impact on the OUV of the property, paying particular attention to the indirect and cumulative impacts of the many projects proposed in the property and its buffer zone and using the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*.

Furthermore, it is noted that the State Party makes no reference to height increases in projects within and in the vicinity of the World Heritage property that could have an impact on its skyline. It is therefore recommended that the Committee request the State Party to finalise the 'Views and Vistas analysis' from strategic viewpoints to address the issue of height controls inside and outside the property, in accordance with Decision **33 COM 7B.113**. It is of concern that limited progress has been made on the establishment of a buffer zone, requested in that same decision in 2009. The Committee may therefore request the State Party to proceed with the finalisation of an adequate buffer zone delineation, based also on the outcomes of the 'Views and Vistas analysis', in accordance with the requirements detailed in paragraphs 104 and 105 of the Operational Guidelines, and to submit it to the World Heritage Centre for review in accordance with paragraph 107 of the Operational Guidelines. The final draft of the Management Plan for the property needs to be completed, in line with the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape and include managing of the future buffer zone and the outcomes of the 'Views and Vista's analysis' and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to its formal adoption.

The State Party's efforts to address mass tourism issues, through tourism management, minimising environmental negative impacts and ensuring that benefits from the tourism industry accrue to the restoration, preservation and sustainability of the property, are welcome and seem to be moving in the right direction. However, considering the negative pressures that mass tourism can exert on the property, it is recommended that the State Party develop a tourism management plan which forms part of the overall management system of the site.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.190

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision **33 COM 7B.113**, adopted at its 33rd session (Sevilla, 2009),

3. *Notes the efforts of the State Party with regard the restoration of state-owned monuments and churches in the property;*
4. *Requests the State Party to submit the following documents to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, in a timely manner and prior to their formal adoption:*
 - a) *The ‘Views and Vistas analysis’ from strategic viewpoints to address the issue of height controls inside and outside the property,*
 - b) *The delineation of an adequate buffer zone, which should also be responsive to the conclusions of the ‘Views and Vistas analysis’, in accordance with paragraphs 103 to 105 of the Operational Guidelines,*
 - c) *The final draft of the Management Plan for the property, in line with the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, including a tourism management plan and provisions for the management of the buffer zone, once adopted by the Committee, and the maintenance of important views and vistas in the setting of the property, so that it becomes a fully operational instrument for the efficient management of the property and its future;*
5. *Welcomes the preparation of Heritage and/or Environmental Impact Assessments for several large-scale development projects, and encourages the State Party to continue to improve the Heritage Impact Assessments process by paying due attention to the indirect and cumulative impacts of the many projects under preparation, including for individual adaptive re-use of buildings and large-scale developments both within the property and its setting, such as the Evans Building and Manoel Island projects, based on a finalised ‘View and Vista’s analysis’ and using the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and to submit details of these projects with their accompanying impact assessments to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before any decisions are made that may be difficult to reverse;*
6. *Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

192. Dutch Water Defence Lines (Netherlands) (C 759bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1996, extension in 2021

Criteria (ii)(iv)(v)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/759/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/759/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

Factors identified at the time of significant boundary modification:

- Ground transport infrastructure and housing (planned projects, including the final option for the A8-A9 junction and the project of the housing development near Woudrichem)
- Management and institutional factors (need to strengthen the protection mechanisms of the property, including the protection of its landscape dimension)
- Social/cultural uses of heritage (need to strengthen the visibility and interpretation of the property)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/759/>

Current conservation issues

On 29 November 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/759/documents/>. On 15 March 2023, the State Party provided an update to the World Heritage Centre on the new planning act, which had been approved by the Dutch decision-making bodies. Progress on several conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in this report, as follows:

- Planning provisions are in place on a national and provincial level to protect and manage the World Heritage property and its buffer zone;
- The Environment and Planning Act will come into force on 1 January 2024. This act provides for the protection of World Heritage and gives a meaningful role to buffer zones in Dutch spatial planning;
- The legislative system provides for recourse to objection and appeal procedures against official decisions if they do not respect the interests of World Heritage;
- The landscape dimensions of the World Heritage property are embedded in area development plans established under the Spatial Planning (General Rules) Decree (Barro), some of which are being implemented. Green landscape structures are positioned as drivers for spatial quality, including in the plan for Laagraven (awaiting implementation);
- An assessment framework for solar and wind energy development is applied in spatial planning;
- There are no timelines for decision making or implementation of the A8-A9 project, which has entered a new design development phase. The State Party commits to keeping the World Heritage Centre informed of any new developments;
- Progress has been made in sensitive area analysis, based on the definition of the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) at both area and component level. A successful pilot project was extended to all components of the property. The outcomes of many of these studies are now embedded in provincial policies, including in the province of Utrecht;
- Projects are being implemented to increase awareness of the property and its OUV;
- The six reduction areas have been added to the property's buffer zone and now form an integral part of the management procedures. They will be managed in future under the new Environment and Planning Act.

The State Party in its report provided an update on projects and developments that may affect the World Heritage property. The list includes the Zeilfort Kudelstaart project, for which a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) was undertaken and was subject to a Technical Review by ICOMOS, transmitted to the State Party in August 2022, as well as the Woudrichem housing development, for which the planning permission was annulled following an objection procedure by the Council of State. A new project that takes the OUV into account is currently being developed here.

Through press articles, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies learned about illegal landscape works at Fort bij Velsen that took place in 2021. The information was sent to the State Party on 17 July 2023, which replied on 27 July 2023 that at the time of inscription, the fort was only partially intact, but that a study was currently underway to determine how to improve the quality of the fort by repairing not only recent damage, but also that dating back to the 1980s. The State Party further stated that an integrated plan for the fort is currently being developed and should enable the fort to be re-established through careful planning and restoration.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party reports encouraging progress in strengthening the protection and management of the property. The pending implementation of the Environment and Planning Act will bring an integrated approach to the management and protection of the OUV of World Heritage properties in the Netherlands. The progress made in the analysis of sensitive areas by defining the attributes both within the property and its spatial environment is highly welcome. The State Party should be commended for its efforts in this direction and for embedding the protection of these attributes into its planning systems and procedures. It would be advisable for these studies to be provided to the World Heritage Centre. The State Party's commitment to implementing impact assessments as a planning tool is equally commendable.

Nevertheless, many conflicting planning challenges remain for this property. In 2017, ICOMOS advised the State Party to seek alternative options to the Golf Course and Heemskerk variants for the A8-A9 extension. A developed design and HIA for the A8-A9 project were reviewed by ICOMOS in 2022 and the resulting technical review was transmitted to the State Party in December 2022. The new proposal was based on the so-called Golf Course variant, planned in an open subterranean road. The project included several mitigation measures to strengthen the OUV of the property. However, ICOMOS concluded that the project would still have an unacceptable adverse impact on the OUV. Likewise, in its review of Fort bij Kudelstaart, ICOMOS, while noting that a continued use of the fort will support its conservation in future, considered that the proposed project would have a significant negative impact on this component and, consequently, on the OUV of the property. The project is currently being reassessed and the State Party is to be requested to send revised plans to the World Heritage Centre.

The negative recommendation of the Gooise Meeren Municipality regarding the Muiden Marina is indicative of a functioning conservation management system. The halting and annulling of the zoning plan for the Woudrichem housing project and the commitment to developing a project aligned with maintaining the attributes of the OUV are welcome.

The State Party has not reported on any renewable energy projects that may affect this property but has developed an assessment framework for incorporating solar and wind energy in spatial planning. Further details of this framework and possible projects should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. Similarly, the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies note that illegal landscape works, involving demolition of the embankments at Fort bij Velsen at the end of 2021 have been halted and that a study of possibilities for reconstruction and enhancement of the site is underway. The Committee may nevertheless wish to request that the integrated plan for the fort be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for possible review by the Advisory Bodies. Details of other projects such as, but not limited to, the new visitor centre at Loevestein Castle, the development in the area of Voordorpse Veld, housing development in the inundation zone of Werkendam and intervention plans for the reuse of built infrastructure, would be welcome as well.

The new Environment and Planning Act calls for a restructuring of the planning system in the Netherlands. A report on its implementation and effectiveness should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre along with the State Party's next state of conservation report.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.192

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decision **44 COM 8B.23**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),
3. Commends the State Party for the progress made in implementing the Committee's previous decisions, particularly the work carried out to define the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) within the property and its larger spatial context, and encourages the State Party to submit these inventories to the World Heritage Centre with its next state of conservation report;

4. Notes the forthcoming implementation of the new Environment and Planning Act and requests the State Party to provide details of its implementation and effectiveness also in its next state of conservation report;
5. Also notes the cancellation of the zoning plan for the housing development at Woudrichem, the ongoing reassessment of the Zeilfort Kudelstaart development and that the timeline for decision-making on the A8-A9 connection has not yet been set, and also requests the State Party to:
 - a) provide details of the modified plans for the Woudrichem site and Zeilfort Kudelstaart to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before any planning decisions are made,
 - b) investigate alternatives to the Golf Course and Heemskerk variants for the A8-A9 connection, including other modes of transport to improve connectivity in the region, and to provide details of timelines and designs for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies before any planning decisions are made;
6. Further notes the overview provided by the State Party of projects that may affect the property, and further requests the State Party provide information on the new visitor centre at Loevestein Castle, the housing development in the inundation zone of Werkendam, the planned development at Voordorpse Veld, the rehabilitation process of Fort bij Velsen, and other intervention projects for the reuse of the built heritage within the property before any planning decisions are made;
7. Notes furthermore the assessment framework for incorporating solar and wind energy into spatial planning and requests furthermore that details of the assessment framework and of planned wind and solar projects which may affect the OUV of the property be provided to the World Heritage Centre;
8. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

194. Centennial Hall in Wrocław (Pöland) (C 1165)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2006

Criteria (i)(ii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1165/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1165/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

November 2011: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Eastern Bridge Road (–now Great Island Avenue) proposal
- Lack of an overall development plan for the property and its buffer zone
- Ground transport infrastructure
- Management activities
- Other threats: impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property of the rebuilt Pavilion

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1165/>

Current conservation issues

Since the 2011 Reactive Monitoring mission, monitoring has been underway for redevelopment projects within the property, protection issues of Szczytnicki Park and the construction of a new road in the wider setting, partly touching the buffer zone (Eastern Bridge and Great Island Avenue). Following Decision **36 COM 7B.80**, state of conservation reports were submitted by the State Party in 2014 and 2015 and examined by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. The State Party received the related technical recommendations.

Since then the World Heritage Centre received and shared with the State Party third-party information in 2018, 2020 and 2022 on the construction of Great Island Avenue and its role in the reorganization of Wrocław's vehicular mobility, including reference to a new Study on Local Conditions for Spatial Planning and Mobility Strategy (2018 Study) undertaken by the Municipality of Wrocław, and indication of the need to clear the outer area of Szczytnicki Park to allow the construction of the Avenue.

The State Party replied in 2018, 2019 and 2022 indicating that the new bridge and road are necessary to relieve the traffic from Grunwaldski Square and Zwierzyniecki Bridge and to provide alternative access to the Great Island. The State Party further pointed out that the construction of the Eastern Bridge was already in Max Berg's plan since 1919 and would therefore be in line with Berg's design for the Great Island. The State Party also underlined that the 2018 Study confirmed the downgrading of Great Island Avenue (Grand Island Alley) from an arterial to a collector road for local traffic.

In 2022, the State Party submitted detailed project drawings of the proposed section of Great Island Avenue near Szczytnicki Park. However, those drawings did not allow for a clear assessment of whether the historic part of the park was encroached upon and how many trees would be felled. Consequently, ICOMOS advised that the drawings should be presented overlaid with historic cartography and aerophotogrammetric maps of the area for a better understanding of the situation on the ground in terms of trees to be felled.

The State Party also reported that in the years from 2012 to 2020, annual investment in Szczytnicki Park maintenance amounted to over 1 million PLN (approx. 220,000 EUR today) and would exceed 2 million PLN in 2020.

The State Party also informed in April 2022 that the Management Plan was finalized in 2016 and was about to be updated. A Steering Committee was set up and a Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Wrocław appointed for the management of the property.

In 2021, a Team for Monitoring the Preparation of Management Plans for World Heritage Properties in Poland was established and tasked with the review and evaluation of management plans and systems for World Heritage properties in Poland. The team will support the update of the Management Plan of the property.

The State Party has not replied to the World Heritage Centre's invitation of 18 May 2022 to submit comprehensive and detailed documentation on the Great Island Avenue project, nor to the invitation to submit, by 1 February 2023, a state of conservation report on the property. By letter of 24 May 2023, the State Party informed the World Heritage Centre that it needed more time to finalise the state of conservation report, to which it was informed that the deadline had been exceeded and the Centre would no longer be able to take it into account.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

Since the 2011 Reactive Monitoring mission to the property and the 2012 World Heritage Committee Decision (**36 COM 7B.80**), several projects have been implemented at the property. These include the restoration and adaptation of the Four Dome Pavilion, the construction of an underground car park close to the Centennial Hall, the Afrykarium in the zoo precinct, the revitalization of the WUWA Project and the finalisation of Phase II of the renovation of Centennial Hall (2019-2020). Documents concerning

these projects were shared at a very late stage once all decisions had already been made, or when work had already begun. Technical recommendations were provided to the State Party by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, but they were not considered. For Phase II of the Centennial Hall renovation, documents were not shared. Almost all projects have now been completed, except for the Great Island Avenue, which is in an advanced stage of implementation. The World Heritage Committee has therefore not had the opportunity to examine the potential impacts of these projects on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and to provide recommendations to ensure that they can be avoided or mitigated.

The cartographic support of the Wrocław Municipality's 2018 Study indicates that Great Island Avenue and Olympic Avenue are aligned. Once built, they will allow the connection between the Inner-City Ring Road and Jana III Sobieskiego Avenue, which is an important access road to Wrocław from the east making them 'de facto' an eastern section of the Inner-City Ring Road, regardless of their classification in planning. Therefore, an assessment of the potential indirect and induced impacts of these roads on the property and its historic setting will be required and mitigation measures established.

The appointment of a Team for Monitoring the Preparation of Management Plans for World Heritage is to be noted. The State Party may be requested to provide updates on the progress made in fulfilling the agreed tasks.

The State Party has yet to submit the overall Development Plan that was requested by the Committee in 2012. The Committee may wish to reiterate its request and ask for such plan to be integrated into the updated Management Plan.

Furthermore, no Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of the Eastern Bridge and Great Island Avenue has been submitted by the State Party to assess their potential impacts on the property and its historic landscape. The State Party has submitted additional impacts assessment considerations, but these cannot be considered as an adequate replacement for a HIA.

In conclusion, regrettably, between 2011 and 2023 several large-scale projects have been carried out at the property without timely communication about them to the World Heritage Committee prior to final decisions, as required by Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines and without an adequate assessment of their impacts on the OUV, based on the *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties* (ICOMOS, 2011) methodology, applicable until 2022. Therefore, the World Heritage Committee may wish to request the State Party to invite a Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to assess the extent of the impacts of completed and ongoing projects in the property, its buffer zone and wider setting, to provide recommendations on any mitigation measures that may be required, to examine potential new planned projects and to assess the overall state of conservation of the property.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.194

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **36 COM 7B.80**, adopted at its 36th session (Saint Petersburg, 2012),*
3. *Takes note of the establishment of the Team for Monitoring the Preparation of Management Plans for World Heritage properties in Poland and requests the State Party to provide information on the progress made in updating the 2016 Management Plan for the property;*
4. *Notes with concern that the State Party did not comply with the requirements of paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines and has not provided to the World Heritage Centre timely information about large-scale projects which have now been completed or are in an advanced stage of development that may have the potential to negatively impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;*

5. *Regrets that the State Party did not harness the opportunity for a constructive dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS over the years to improve planned projects and reduce or mitigate potential impacts when there was still room for improvement;*
6. *Reiterates its request to the State Party to provide an overall Development Plan for the property and its buffer zone that provides an understanding of how all implemented and planned projects support the OUV of the property, and further requests that this plan be integrated into the updated Management Plan;*
7. *Further requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the impacts of all completed and ongoing projects in the property, its buffer zone and wider setting on the attributes of its OUV, examine planned projects that may have an impact on the property and assess its overall state of conservation;*
8. *Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.*

195. Tarnowskie Góry Lead-Silver-Zinc Mine and its Underground Water Management System (Poland) (C 1539)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2017

Criteria (i)(ii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1539/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1539/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Lack of legal protection at the national level of all the structures above ground within the boundaries of the property
- Change of ownership of the pumping station at Adolph Shaft which may alter in the medium- to long-term the quality and regularity of the extraction of the water necessary to conserve the underground chambers (*issue resolved*)
- Legal framework
- Water (rain/water table)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1539/>

Current conservation issues

On 9 December 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1539/documents/>. Progress on a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in this report, as follows:

- Inventories of the underground areas which are managed by the Tarnowskie Góry Land Lovers' Association (TGLLA), the Coal Mining Museum in Zabrze and the Veolia Water Supply and Sewerage Company in Tarnowskie Góry, have been undertaken. The areas owned by the State Treasury extend across an area of approximately 100km and it is difficult to determine a timeframe for completion of an inventory for these areas;
- The finalisation of legal protection at national level for all aboveground structures within the boundaries of the property and its buffer zone, which support the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), is ongoing. Structures at outlets of major shafts have been entered onto the national register. Other areas have been granted local protection, but this process is hampered by private ownership and a process to purchase these areas is ongoing;
- The Staszic Water Supply Station (Adolph Shaft) remains under the control of the Upper Silesian Water Supply Company. Since 2005, the company has been legally obligated to maintain the water discharge from well No. 3 of the Staszic intake to Fryderyk Adit, and to monitor the quantity and quality of the outflow during periods of water extraction. No negative impact on the environment or the state of the underground was observed and none is expected should extraction recommence;
- Above- and below-ground archaeological investigations have been carried out in phase one and will be extended to phase two depending on resources, accessibility, and ownership. These investigations, undertaken with the Institute of Earth Sciences of the University of Silesia, include the identification of archaeological remains and laboratory analysis studies. Onsite research of the ruins at Adit Shaft No. 22 will be carried out to allow for its future restoration;
- The modification of the property boundaries is under discussion with stakeholders. A proposal will be forwarded to the World Heritage Centre after consensus has been reached locally;
- The organizational framework of the property is being improved. A local tourism organization was established in 2022. Collaboration with selected universities will lead to the establishment of a scientific committee.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party continues to make progress on the implementation of the Committee's requests, and its continuous engagement with stakeholders is welcomed.

The completion of the inventories for the areas under the control of the TGLLA, the Coal Mining Museum in Zabrze and the Veolia Water Supply and Sewerage Company in Tarnowskie Góry, is also welcomed. It remains important to finish the investigations to complete an inventory of the underground elements of the property. The extensive on-site and laboratory research and analysis undertaken by the TGLLA in collaboration with the Institute of Earth Sciences of the University of Silesia, is commendable. The development of a multi-layer map system based on GIS technologies is especially important for the future management of the property. This should be further developed to also include layers indicating archaeological attributes for the entire property and to date the various phases of development of the mining and water system.

However, limited progress is reported on several other issues, including the request to submit a proposal to modify the boundaries of the property to connect the aboveground areas A4 and A5, and include the historic water tower adjacent to Kaehler Shaft. The State Party has not provided timeframes for any of these activities.

The process of establishing legal protection for aboveground structures, which contribute to the OUV of the property, is ongoing. It would be useful if, in its next state of conservation report, the State Party could provide an updated inventory of aboveground structures subject to protection, specifying their level of protection, as well as an assessment of their state of conservation at that time.

The State Party reports that past monitoring of water extraction from the Adolph Shaft showed that this did not reduce the overflow from the Staszic intake to Fryderyk Adit. The Committee may wish to request

the State Party to continue its current monitoring and commit to increased monitoring and reporting should water extraction commence in the future.

The establishment of a tourism organization is welcomed, but it does not address the identified need to strengthen the coordination required to maintain the OUV of the property. The current scientific research, which is spearheaded by the TGLLA, remains dependent on resource availability, facilities and obtaining the necessary permits. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the organizational framework of the property includes the establishment of the multidisciplinary scientific committee. The extensive length of the underground system requires the development of a plan and timeline to ensure the completion of this inventory and to establish a collaboration between the multidisciplinary scientific committee and the State Treasury. A research programme, with goals and timelines, should be developed, and a formal support system put in place, including administrative support, to ensure the sustainability of longer-term research in support of protection and management.

In summary, several requests made by the Committee remain outstanding. The establishment of timeframes for activities remains important to ensure progress in enhancing the understanding of the OUV of the property to improve its protection and management. It is thus recommended that the Committee encourage the State Party to focus on their completion and implementation as soon as possible, and to keep the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies informed of the progress made in its next state of conservation report.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.195

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.53**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Notes the continued progress made by the State Party in implementing its past recommendations;*
4. *Welcomes the completion of the inventories for the areas under the control of the Tarnowskie Góry Land Lovers' Association (TGLLA), the Coal Mining Museum in Zabrze and the Veolia Water Supply and Sewerage Company in Tarnowskie Góry, the scientific research undertaken by the TGLLA and its partners, as well as the development of a GIS platform for the property;*
5. *Also notes the progress made in providing protection to the aboveground attributes underpinning the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and requests the State Party to provide an inventory of all aboveground attributes that have been protected, including an assessment of their state of conservation as an annex to its next state of conservation report;*
6. *Further notes that past monitoring has indicated that the extraction of water from the Adolph Shaft does not negatively influence the water system and water quality of the property, and also requests the State Party to commit to a programme of close monitoring and reporting should pumping commence at the Adolph Shaft in future;*
7. *Reiterates its request to the State Party to expeditiously finalise and submit to the World Heritage Centre all necessary documentation for the addition to the property of the historic water tower immediately adjacent to Kaehler Shaft, and to conclude the feasibility analysis which is considering the extension of area A5 to join area A4;*

8. *Considers that the establishment of a research and inventory programme, with goals and timelines, and the institutional support for such a programme are essential to support the protection of the OUV of the property and its management, and further requests that the State Party to:*
- a) *Establish the multidisciplinary scientific committee as a matter of urgency,*
 - b) *Develop and implement a research and inventory programme to complete the inventory of the entire property,*
 - c) *Ensure the sustainability of the research and inventory programme through institutional support,*
 - d) *Further develop the GIS multi-layer map system to include the information from extant inventories,*
 - e) *Provide the research and inventory programme, including timeframes for its implementation, information on its institutional support and progress on its implementation with its next state of conservation report;*
9. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

196. Royal Building of Mafra – Palace, Basilica, Convent, Cerco Garden and Hunting Park (Tapada) (Portugal) (C 1573)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2019

Criteria (iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1573/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1573/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management and institutional factors (need to strengthen the research activities, Management activities, the Management System/Management Plan)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1573/>

Current conservation issues

On 14 November 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report. An executive summary of this report is available at: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1573/documents/>. Progress on a number of

conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in this report, as follows:

- The Committee's previous recommendations regarding the Advisory and the Cooperation Units have been implemented and Rules of Procedure have been adopted. Prospective members have been invited to join the Advisory Unit and most have accepted the invitation. The Advisory Unit will first meet in 2023 and then annually. The Cooperation Unit will meet biannually;
- The National Tapada de Mafra has continued to develop its Strategic and Management plans which include a research, innovation and scientific programme for the Hunting Park. The Strategic Plan, which includes a communications plan, was due to be completed by mid-2023. A funded project, titled 'Ancient Landscapes of the Tapada de Mafra: Archaeological Chart and Paleoenvironmental Characterization 2022-2030' has commenced and includes LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) and on-site paleontological and archaeological investigations;
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the School of Arms and the Mafra City Council is being implemented to develop a project to enhance Portuguese equestrian tradition and to upgrade and rehabilitate the Military Parade Square. The project includes the demolition of derelict buildings dating from the mid-20th century, the relocation of storage for tactical vehicles, archaeological research and the return of areas to equestrian use;
- A 'preliminary study' for the Management Plan for the Cerco Garden was appended to the State Party report (also referred to as the "Cerco Garden Conservation Plan"). It reports on general issues, preliminary studies to be undertaken, roles and responsibilities, action principles and a management structure. It also includes an extensive implementation programme for the period 2021-2030. The Management Plan for the Cerco Garden will be presented in 2025;
- The project to install the National Museum of Music in the north wing of the Mafra palace has been the subject of a Technical Review by ICOMOS.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party has continued to address previous Committee Decisions with alacrity, making notable progress on the research programme for the Hunting Park. The multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional paleontological characterisation and archaeological mapping research programme entitled 'Ancient Landscapes of the Tapada de Mafra', is welcome. The progress in setting up the Advisory and the Cooperation Units, and implementation of the Committee's request that these bodies not be chaired by the same person for the sake of independence, is noted. The State Party also provided timely information on the planned relocation of the National Museum of Music to the Mafra Palace. This allowed for a beneficial process of exchanges which resulted in the conclusion of the ICOMOS Technical Review that the proposal was to be welcomed as an overall improvement to the property's authenticity. ICOMOS noted, however, that the Cooperation Unit and the management system in general would need to be amended to give the National Museum of Music a place in the management and the development of an Integrated Management Plan for the property.

The development of the various plans such as the Strategic Plan and the Management Plan for the Hunting Park, the Management Plan (alternatively referred to as the 'Conservation Plan', as per Decision **44 COM 7B.54**) for the Cerco Garden, and the Integrated Management Plan for the entire property, is welcome. Integrated management of the property is necessary for the successful operation of the Cooperation Unit. It is therefore essential that the constituent plans and the Integrated Management Plan be developed rapidly. It is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to expedite the development of these plans and to request their review by the Advisory Bodies.

The MOU between the School of Arms and the Mafra City Council was due to lapse in July 2023. As much of what it proposes has not yet been executed, the Committee may wish to request it to be prorogued. This is provided for in the MOU. Before completing the demolition of the identified buildings from the mid-20th century, they should be carefully documented as part of the historic development of the property. It would also be welcome if the State Party would provide a report from the landscape architect who assisted in the land usage review, as requested by the Committee at the time of inscription. This report would then be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. The MOU also foresees the construction of a new storage building for tactical vehicles within the property. The implementation plan included in the 'preliminary study' for the Management Plan for the Cerco Garden outlines a notable number of construction projects to be implemented in the medium-term in the Cerco Garden. Projects include a new aviary and enlargement of the Winter Greenhouse,

the Administrative Office and the visitor's shop. The State Party should be requested to ensure the timely provision of design details and plans for the construction projects for the School of Arms and the Cerco Garden to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies to ensure their appropriateness for the maintenance of the property's Outstanding Universal Value. It would be useful to receive an update on the functioning of the Advisory and the Cooperation Units in the State Party's next state of conservation report.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.196

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **43 COM 8B.30** and **44 COM 7B.54**, adopted at its 43rd (Baku, 2019) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions, respectively,*
3. *Notes with appreciation the State Party's implementation of the requests made by the Committee with regards the constituting and functioning of the Cooperation Unit and the Advisory Unit and the continued development of various management tools for the property, including the Strategic and Management Plan for the Hunting Park and the 'preliminary study' for the Management Plan for the Cerco Garden;*
4. *Requests that the State Party accelerate the development of the various management plans so as to allow for the completion of the Integrated Management Plan for the property and the proper functioning of the Cooperation Unit, and submit these to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;*
5. *Also notes with appreciation the State Party's timely notification of its intent to renovate a portion of the Mafra Palace to house the National Museum of Music;*
6. *Further notes that the Memorandum of Understanding between the School of Arms and the Mafra City Council, which includes the implementation of demolitions and new construction, was due to lapse in July 2023 and that the 'preliminary study' for the Management Plan for the Cerco Garden outlines a notable number of construction projects to be implemented in the medium term, and therefore also requests the State Party to:*
 - a) *Extend the Memorandum of Understanding between the School of Arms and the Mafra City to allow for the completion of the requalification and rehabilitation of the Military Parade Square,*
 - b) *Submit a landscape architectural report for the Military Parade Square on improving the setting of the convent whilst meeting the functional needs,*
 - c) *Ensure appropriate documentation of the buildings dating from the mid-20th century identified for removal before their demolition,*
 - d) *Provide details of the design of the new storage building for tactical vehicles to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before implementation of this component of the project,*
 - e) *Provide details of the design of the Cerco Garden new construction and adaptation projects, which include a new aviary and enlargement of the Winter Greenhouse, the Administrative Office and the visitor's shop, to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, as soon as they are ready;*

7. *Further requests the State Party to submit an update on the functioning of the Advisory Unit and the Cooperation Unit in relation to its role in the conservation and management of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;*
8. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

198. Kizhi Pogost (Russian Federation) (C 544)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1990

Criteria (i)(iv)(v)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/544/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 2 (from 1992-2001)

Total amount approved: USD 38,540

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/544/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

1992, 1993, 1994, 2011: ICOMOS missions; 2002: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM joint mission and on-site workshop; 2007, 2010 and 2013: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring missions; July 2014, October 2015 and March 2018: ICOMOS Advisory missions

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Structural integrity issues at the Church of the Transfiguration
- Interpretative and visitation facilities
- Housing
- Land conversion
- Management activities
- Management System/Management Plan (lack of an integrated management plan addressing the overall management of the property)
- Marine transport infrastructure
- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation (tourism development pressures including development of infrastructures)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/544/>

Current conservation issues

On 16 November 2022, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, a summary of which is available at: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/544/documents/>. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in this report, as follows:

Regarding ongoing conservation of the property:

- The long-term restoration of the Church of the Transfiguration, including restoration of its interior, has been completed. Monitoring of the structure and its historic artefacts is ongoing. A design project for fire extinguishing and safety systems commenced in 2022. An interdisciplinary study of the ceiling painting of the church was undertaken to support its restoration;

- Three variants for the restoration of the Church of the Intercession were developed. The preferred variant, which will result in the maintenance of the highest percentage of authentic material, is now subject to a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) process. The HIA and details of the project will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review before implementation;
- The buildings have been assessed as being structurally stable, and comprehensive monitoring is ongoing.

Regarding planning and development of the buffer zone:

- Two plans have been completed. The first is a Master Plan titled the 'Plan for conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site "Kizhi Pogost" and development of the Kizhi Island territory'. The second plan is titled 'The Sustainable Development Plan for the Buffer Zone of the WHS "Kizhi Pogost" (2022-2032)'. Priority was given to local community participation during the compilation process;
- Various projects have been initiated through funding from the State Party to stimulate cooperation with local communities, including work to revive traditional local self-government in the buffer zone.

The ICOMOS Advisory mission to the property that the State Party invited in 2020 in response to Decision **43 COM 7B.89** had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2022, the State Party shared with the World Heritage Centre draft terms of reference for the mission, indicating the second quarter of 2023 as the optimal period for the mission. Following consultation with ICOMOS, the World Heritage Centre has confirmed to the State Party the availability of ICOMOS experts to undertake the mission in the second half of September 2023.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party continues to make good progress in improving the state of conservation and the monitoring, conservation and management of the property and its buffer zone. The continued planning for the restoration of the Church of the Intercession is noted. The State Party's commitment to present the completed HIA and details of the restoration project to the World Heritage Centre prior to the commencement of works, is also noted. Due to the fragility of this structure, the Committee may wish to again request the State Party to await the review of both the proposal and the impact assessment by the Advisory Bodies, before taking any final decision on the approach or technical details of the restoration.

The finalisation of the 'Plan for conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site "Kizhi Pogost" and development of the Kizhi Island territory' and 'The Sustainable Development Plan for the Buffer Zone of the WHS "Kizhi Pogost" (2022-2032)', are milestones in the sustainable conservation of the property. These plans are detailed, complete and generally appropriate. The former includes goals to preserve the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and to create conditions for the sustainable development of the territory. The plan proposes the reconstruction of the historic 'Worship Cross' at the eastern side of the property. Recalling that reconstruction is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances and acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture (in accordance with Paragraph 86 of the Operational Guidelines), the Committee may wish to request further information on this proposal.

The plan also allows for the formation of new farmstead complexes in the buffer zone. It specifically proposes new dwellings and household structures, historically grounded small architectural forms, fields and vegetable gardens on the territory of the historic villages of Yamka and Vasilievo but does not provide spatial limitations on these developments. It also proposes the demolition of 20th century buildings. The Committee may thus wish to request the State Party to take a cautious approach to the removal of 20th century structures in the buffer zone, in order to avoid erasing historical layers in the development of the property's setting. The plan notes that construction of new buildings at the entrance of Zone A (close to the property) will not proceed until agreement has been reached on its details with the World Heritage Centre.

The 'Sustainable Development Plan for the Buffer Zone of the WHS "Kizhi Pogost" (2022-2032)' is based on a thorough analysis of the historical, economic and social structure of Kizhi Island. It provides an extensive list of detailed actions to be undertaken and includes a list of target indicators for evaluating the implementation of the plan.

The State Party's commitment to organise an ICOMOS Advisory mission to the property, as requested by the Committee at its 43rd session, is welcomed. At the time of the finalisation of this report, preparations for the mission are underway. The terms of reference for the mission include assessment of the various restoration, intervention and monitoring projects as well as the conservation plan for the property and the Sustainable Development Plan for the buffer zone, which includes tourism development.

Draft Decision: 45 COM 7B.198

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B.Add.2,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 7B.160**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Welcomes the completion of the the 'Plan for conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site "Kizhi Pogost" and development of the Kizhi Island territory' and 'The Sustainable Development Plan for the Buffer Zone of the WHS "Kizhi Pogost" (2022-2032)';*
4. *Notes the continuous monitoring of the structural stability of the built structures of the Kizhi Pogost and the continuous research undertaken at the property and its buffer zone;*
5. *Also notes the selection of a preferred design project for the restoration of the Church of the Intercession, the Heritage Impact Assessment of this project and the State Party's commitment to submit these to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before its implementation;*
6. *Requests that the State Party provide details on the project for fire extinguishing and safety systems for the Church of the Transfiguration and on the project to reconstruct the 'Worship Cross' at the eastern side of the property to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before implementation;*
7. *Further notes the commitment of the State Party to submit details of any proposals for development of the entrance of Zone A to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before its implementation, as outlined in the 'Plan for conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site "Kizhi Pogost" and development of the Kizhi Island territory';*
8. *Recommends that the State Party give consideration to defining spatial limits for new construction and land uses within the buffer zone;*
9. *Also recommends that the State Party reconsider globally the proposed removal of twentieth century structures in the buffer zone so as to avoid erasing historical layers in the development of the property's setting;*
10. *Acknowledges again the invitation from the State Party for an ICOMOS Advisory mission to the property and welcomes the preparations that are underway to finalise the planning for the mission;*
11. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2024**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the*

implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.