

State of Conservation of the Pitons Management Area (PMA)(Saint Lucia) (N1161)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the 37th Session of the World Heritage Committee in June 2012, the State Party committed to the conduct of a Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) Study for the Pitons Management Area (PMA). The process for identifying consultants was finalized in March 2013 with assistance from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). A contract was awarded to The Landmark Practice (TLP), a reputable environmental consulting firm from the United Kingdom, at an overall cost of approximately XCD \$250,000.00.

TLP submitted an Inception Report in April 2013, which was reviewed and accepted by the State Party. Technical oversight for the independent study was provided by a LAC Technical Team. The PMA LAC Study Final Report was submitted on December 22, 2013. The most significant finding is that *“Since attaining World Heritage status, the features of the PMA that confer OUV have largely been preserved. The amount of development that has occurred between 2004 and 2013 has not been significant.”* This finding is based on the understanding that a crucial feature of the PMA World Heritage Site (WHS) inscription is its aesthetic quality, as presented by a series of **“Important Views”** of the site. The Report proposes that Limits of Acceptable Change be measured against these **Important Views**. Twenty (20) of these views are identified and presented in a Limits of Acceptable Change and Design Guide for the PMA World Heritage Site, which has been produced as part of the LAC Study. This is presented as the primary mechanism for protecting the OUV of the PMA (**Appendices 4.6-4.8** of the **Report** and accompanying documents). In addition to the LAC Study, the State Party implemented other activities geared towards maintaining the OUV of the PMA. They included:

1. A Refurbishment Project to improve the aesthetics of the PMA Inscription Monument site;
2. Dialogue geared towards addressing PMA management and technical capacity issues in preparation for implementing LAC Report Recommendations;
3. Addressing the issue of invasive plants on the Gros Piton Nature Trail; and
4. Engaging with stakeholders to increase the level of public awareness of the PMA.

The State Party also explored opportunities for producing geothermal energy in an effort to reduce Saint Lucia’s total dependence on fossil fuels. This process is being guided by the LAC Study Report, which considered the impact of these explorations and noted that *“further exploratory boreholes beyond the PMA are unlikely to have any effect on the PMA”*.

By Executive Order (Cabinet Conclusion No. 527 of 2013), the Government of Saint Lucia noted the LAC Study recommendations and appointed the Minister for Sustainable Development Energy, Science and Technology to act on government’s behalf on matters pertaining to the PMA. The State Party has also outlined the road map for implementation of the Report. Key milestones include:

1. Developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry with responsibility for the Environment and the Ministry responsible for Physical Development to facilitate implementation of the recommendations of the LAC Study Report;
2. Strengthening the capacity of the PMA Office for implementation of the LAC Study Report recommendations; and
3. Undertaking public education and awareness sessions on the LAC Study Report to encourage compliance.