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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**

**Forty-sixth session
New Delhi, India
21 – 31 July 2024**

**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/46COM/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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CULTURAL PROPERTIES

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

6. Le Havre, the City rebuilt by Auguste Perret (France) (C 1181)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

7. Paris, Banks of the Seine (France) (C 600)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1991

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/600/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/600/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

March 2022: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Project of new buildings within the historic setting (issue resolved)
- Fire at the Notre-Dame Cathedral of Paris on 15 April 2019

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/600/>

Current conservation issues

On 26 January 2024, in response to Decision **45 COM 7B.53** of the World Heritage Committee, the State Party submitted a State of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/600/documents/>. The report focuses on the restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral in view of its reopening and provides the following information:

- In 2023, the following progress has been recorded:
 - The completion of the spire's framework at the end of November 2023 with the installation of the needle,
 - The installation of the cross and, finally, the rooster, in December 2023,
 - The reconstruction of the nave and choir roof structure, with lead roofing work starting in early 2024;
- The report highlights the restoration work underway with a view to reopening the cathedral on 8 December 2024:

- The reconstruction and consolidation of the vaults, the restoration of the gable walls, the rampart walkway and the low walls, the restoration of the great attic and its oak frame, the restoration of the belfries,
- The reconstruction of the original Viollet-le-Duc spire and lead roofing,
- The decontamination and reinstallation of the great organ and the complete replacement of the choir organ instrument; an extension to the choir organ will be built to meet the needs of the liturgy;
- With regard to fire protection, a fire defence and safety project for the cathedral was developed in March 2022, receiving a favourable opinion from the National Commission for Heritage and Architecture (*Commission nationale du patrimoine et de l'architecture* – CNPA) in June 2022:
 - The fire safety systems have been completely overhauled, in particular to protect high-risk areas such as the great attic, the belfries and the great organs: 24-hour security control centre, installation of firebreaks in the attic, fire aspiration automatic detection system, automatic extinguishing by misting, improved flow rates available for the misting system and fire brigade interventions, etc.,
 - These systems have been designed to optimise their architectural integration and respect the heritage value of the site. The high-pressure misting system should have as little impact as possible on the building (thanks to a smaller diameter, more optimised network). Its water supply will be provided by an external network located on the east facade of the towers of the western massif, thus limiting the external impact of the installation. All the external networks will be painted in a stone tone for better architectural integration;
- In addition, only part of the cathedral's exterior will have been treated by the time it reopens. This work, the programme for which has yet to be specified, will notably concern the exterior elevations of the cathedral (apse, transept, sacristy, nave, great rose, etc.). A programme to redevelop the cathedral's forecourt and surroundings, as well as the new liturgical development project put forward by the clergy, were also presented to the CNPA, in February 2022 and July 2023 respectively; the files for these two projects, as well as the Commission's conclusions, are attached to the report. Finally, two future projects involving the building have been announced:
 - The creation of a "Cathedral Museum", to be housed in the Hôtel-Dieu: this project to bring together the collections relating to the cathedral in a museum was revived by new excavations in 2022. A final report was due to be submitted to the Ministry of Culture in April 2024,
 - The creation of contemporary stained glass windows, at the request of the Archbishop of Paris, to mark the period of the fire and the restoration. They would be installed in six chapels on the south aisle of the cathedral. The existing stained glass windows - created in the 19th century and listed as historic monuments - were not damaged by the fire. This project for new stained glass windows was strongly opposed by public opinion. Commissioned by the French Government, the project will be managed by its departments.

In the context of the 2024 Summer Olympic Games to be held in Île-de-France from 26 July to 11 August 2024, the World Heritage Centre requested the State Party on 18 December 2023 to provide a complete overview of the installations and developments planned for this occasion within the perimeter of the property, specifying, where appropriate, their duration and decommissioning measures, as well as the heritage impact assessments (HIAs) carried out. The State Party has submitted information which is currently being reviewed.

On 26 January 2024, the State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre a request for a minor boundary modification of the property for examination by the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee (see Document WHC/24/46.COM/8B.Add); as well as a document presenting the main lines of the future management plan for the property. A first meeting to launch the work of drawing up the management plan is scheduled for autumn 2024; this work should be completed by the end of 2026.

On 8 February 2024, the Paris City Council voted to launch a redevelopment project for the Place de la Concorde, an attribute underpinning the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). A call for tenders will be launched by the end of 2024 to appoint a team responsible for transforming the square. The Mayor of Paris has set up a multi-disciplinary commission of experts to draw up a guideline document for a project that reconciles heritage, environmental, architectural, tourism and everyday use issues. UNESCO is a member of this commission as an observer.

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

Work is continuing on the restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral, a component of the "Paris, Banks of the Seine" World Heritage property, with the aim of reopening it to worship and visitors in December 2024.

The arrangements for the cathedral's new fire defence and safety project appear to provide an adequate level of fire surveillance, detection and defence in the building.

With regard to the project to develop the area around the cathedral, which is currently being studied for implementation from 2025, it is noted that the State Party is committed to keeping the World Heritage Committee informed of the choices that will be made. The creation of the Cathedral Museum at the Hôtel-Dieu, together with the proposals for the archaeological museum, is a key element in the rehabilitation of the Notre-Dame area. The additional information provided on the project for the area around the cathedral covers the first part of the project development process. In particular, it presents initial proposals for the conceptual treatment of the link between the Hôtel-Dieu and the Cathedral forecourt. While the finalised project proposal does not differ significantly from the project documentation provided with the State of conservation report, the project under development appears to maintain the property's essential relationship with the river and the city. It is essential that documentation on the progress of the project is submitted to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies.

The liturgical arrangement project was unanimously approved by the CNPA, with recommendations concerning the details for the further specification of the project. A technical review of the project received will be prepared and sent to the State Party as soon as possible. It will be important that detailed documentation on the progress of the project is shared with the World Heritage Centre for possible comment by the Advisory Bodies. The initiative to create a museum dedicated to the cathedral, which would be housed in the Hôtel-Dieu, is to be welcomed and will help to highlight the collections relating to this important place of worship, art and history.

The project to create contemporary stained glass windows to mark the period of the fire and restoration, to be installed in six chapels on the south aisle of the cathedral in place of the existing 19th century stained glass windows, should be considered further. This project should be further discussed with all stakeholders in a spirit of openness and consensus-building, and be subject to an HIA based on the Guide and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context and informed by the principles and rationale of the Cathedral's reconstruction and restoration project, following the 2019 fire.

The development of the management plan for the property has begun, and its main lines have been shared with the World Heritage Centre. The State Party may wish to draw on the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape in this process. It is recommended that the State Party submit the integrated management plan for the property to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to its adoption. The recommendation of the World Heritage Committee in its Decision **45 COM 7B.53** to include the new risk prevention and management plan in the integrated management plan for the property should be reiterated.

Finally, it is recommended that the State Party pursue a more regular dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in the context of the restoration work of the cathedral and the development of its surroundings.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.7

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **45 COM 7B.53**, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),
3. Notes with satisfaction the progress made on the reconstruction and restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral with a view to its reopening in December 2024, including the new fire defence and fire safety project for the cathedral;

4. Welcomes the initiative to create a museum dedicated to the cathedral, to be housed in the Hôtel-Dieu, to showcase the collections relating to this important place of worship, art and history, and recommends that the State Party send documentation on the progress of the project to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies;
5. Takes note of the project to create contemporary stained glass windows to mark the period of the fire and restoration, to be installed in six chapels on the south aisle of the cathedral in place of the existing 19th century stained glass windows, and considers that such a project should be the subject of a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) based on the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, taking into account the logic adopted by the reconstruction/restoration intervention, and a consensus among the various stakeholders;
6. Recalls its Decision 38 COM 7 in which it encouraged the identification of potential impacts of future Olympic Games on World Heritage properties at an early stage of the Games award process, in order to ensure that such impacts can be avoided or adequately mitigated by the organizing country, and notes that information on installations and facilities planned for the Olympic Games within the property has recently been transmitted to the World Heritage Centre and is currently being reviewed by the Advisory Bodies;
7. Also notes that the project to develop the management plan for the property has begun, encourages the State Party to build on the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape in this process, requests the State Party to submit the integrated management plan for the property to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to its adoption, and reiterates its recommendation to include the new risk prevention and management plan;
8. Takes note of the setting up of a multidisciplinary committee to guide the project for the redevelopment of the Place de la Concorde and requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre detailed information on the project, as well as the related HIA, for review by the Advisory Bodies before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse;
9. Encourages the State Party to pursue a more regular dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in the context of the restoration work of the cathedral and the development of its surroundings;
10. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, including a full overview of the measures taken to dismantle the installations and facilities put in place on the occasion of the Olympic Games, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

13. Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Monte in Braga (Portugal) (C 1590)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

14. Arslantepe Mound (Türkiye) (C 1622)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2021

Criteria (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/1622/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1622/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management: preparation of a conservation strategy and plan, extension of the management plan, strengthening of local management capacity, monitoring and risk and disaster management processes, clarification of extent of archaeological features and buffer zone delineation
- Reconsidering the design of the proposed new roof shelter

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1622/>

Current conservation issues

On 1 February 2024, 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/1622/documents/>. Progress on a number of conservation issues raised by the Committee at the time of inscription of the property in 2021 (Decision **44 COM 8B.22**) and its subsequent decision in 2023 (**45 COM 7B.202**) is presented in this report as follows:

- A detailed Conservation Protocol was prepared by the excavation team in December 2022 and submitted to the World Heritage Centre on 14 November 2023;
- Pending the preparation of a Risk Preparedness Plan, several related actions have been undertaken such as the protection of excavation profiles, the control of roof water drainage systems, the excavation of areas to the east of the palatial complex, the restoration, consolidation and monitoring of all monumental areas, and the restoration and reinforcement of the dig-house;
- The current Management Plan will be revised to include a full Conservation Plan, a Risk Preparedness Plan and a tourism management programme;
- While the new roof project is under review, some maintenance and repair work has been carried out on the current permanent protective roof and temporary protective roof covers;
- The northern slope of the mound (buffer zone) was surveyed to determine the exact extent of the archaeological remains by surface sampling and geoelectrical survey. The findings strengthen the possibility of the existence of a 'lower settlement'. The geophysical survey started in 2022, continued in 2023 using electrical resistivity tomography, and archaeological and archaeometallurgical analysis were initiated;
- In excavated areas, all finds are covered with geotextiles and soil. A temporary roofing system protects the part of the palace complex discovered since 2011 and the Neo-Hittite fortification wall. The only unsheltered areas are those where excavations are underway;

- A Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) was submitted to the World Heritage Centre on 14 November 2023 for a visitor centre project planned 100 metres south of the property in the buffer zone. This project does not include any social facilities;
- Following the earthquakes on 7 and 23 February 2023, the damage to the palatial complex is limited and the most important and famous parts are in the same condition as before. A small part of the western wall of room A206 collapsed and requires conservation work, and a section of the wall along the palace corridor collapsed, exposing the original wall. The permanent protective roof successfully withstood the stress of the earthquakes, but revealed the need for minor repairs, and its movement had consequences for the water drainage system. The temporary roof was severely damaged without causing any damage to the archaeological fabric. Emergency interventions were carried out. Excavation profiles, the Neo-Hittite fortification wall and the excavation house were damaged and some parts have already been repaired;
- Restoration and conservation work began in August 2023 on the paintings and wall decorations, repairing and strengthening damaged walls and cleaning plastered walls. Restoration of the Neo-Hittite fortifications has begun and will continue throughout 2024.

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

Progress has been made on some of the recommendations made by the World Heritage Committee at the time of inscription and in its Decision **45 COM 7B.202**, in particular the submission of a revised project design for the extension and alteration of the new roof shelter and rainwater drainage project, the HIA of the proposed visitor centre, and the Conservation Protocol which addresses some of the Committee's requests. However, some of the Committee's recommendations have not yet been fully developed.

With regard to the Conservation Protocol, as it was prepared in December 2022, it does not address the Committee's requests in 2023 (Decision **45 COM 7B.202**). For example, it does not include "a *cautious strategy for anticipated research and excavations, that determines protocols, priorities and procedures for all forms of conservation, excavation and maintenance interventions needed in the property*", nor does it identify priority actions, a description of the scale of the problems encountered and the manpower and skills required to address conservation needs on an annual basis. Based on the recommendations of the ICOMOS Technical Review, it is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to revise the Conservation Protocol into a Conservation Plan to address all the requirements of the Committee Decision **45 COM 7B.202** by undertaking a risk assessment and developing a Risk Preparedness Plan, preparing a cautious strategy for anticipated research and excavations, defining the location and extent of archaeological deposits on the property, particularly to the north and west, and assessing the state of conservation of previously archaeologically excavated areas that remain unsheltered.

The current Management Plan is in need of revision as its 5-year term (2019-2024) has expired and its revision has not yet been initiated. The Committee may wish to recommend to the State Party to initiate the revision process in a timely manner, with specific reference to the Conservation Plan and strategy, the Risk Preparedness Plan and the Visitor Management Plan.

The extensive technical information provided by the State Party on the new roof shelter is welcomed and reviewed. The roof will extend and almost double the size of the permanent roof structure, with associated electrical and rainwater drainage installations. Notwithstanding the undoubtedly careful and detailed design of the structure, the choice of the location of each of the 25 columns and their foundation pads, and the experience gained in 2011 with the installation of the current permanent shelter, the Committee may wish to recommend to the State Party that a technical archaeological impact assessment report be prepared on the proposed interventions, providing details on all aspects of construction operations, including the working circulation of personnel and materials, and detailing the nature and location of rainwater gutters, pipes and surface water drains on the mound and how these will be linked to the new drainage channel.

In relation to the Cultural HIA of the Welcoming Centre submitted to the World Heritage Centre and reviewed by ICOMOS, it is welcomed that the building has been carefully designed and will serve its purpose while having a minimal impact on the property. However, the report does not discuss the relationship of this new Centre to the Malatya Museum and the management of the increasing numbers of visitors. It is therefore recommended that the Committee requests the State Party to prepare a Visitor Management Plan with respect to visitor access, circulation and management at the property, and to clarify the exact number and type of facilities, and to revise the Cultural HIA accordingly or provide an

additional one to address the additional aspects of future developments that may not be included at present.

The survey work to determine the exact extent of the archaeological remains has strengthened the possibility of a 'lower settlement' at Arslantepe and is welcomed. The Committee may wish to recommend that the State Party continue to undertake survey work to further detail and analyse the extent of the archaeological findings, in particular to the north and west of the property, and to submit a report on the results of such investigations to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

The detailed information provided by the State Party on the impact and damage of the earthquake of February 2023 on the property, as well as details of the repair work undertaken, is welcomed. The Committee may wish to reiterate its invitation to the State Party to avail itself of the Convention's assistance mechanisms to support further repair works to the property.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.14

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decision **45 COM 7B.202**, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyad, 2023),*
3. *Welcomes the work undertaken at the World Heritage property to repair the damage caused by the effects of the earthquakes of February 2023 and reiterates its invitation to the State Party to call upon the Convention's assistance mechanisms to support further repair work in the affected parts of the World Heritage property;*
4. *Further welcomes the survey work undertaken by the State Party to determine the exact extent of the archaeological remains and reiterates its request to the State Party to continue survey work to further detail and analyse the extent of archaeological remains, in particular to the north and west of the property, and to submit a report on the results of such surveys to the World Heritage Centre for review;*
5. *Notes that the five-year term of the Management Plan for the property has expired in 2024 and requests the State Party to initiate the revision process in a timely manner, with particular reference to the Conservation Plan and strategy, the Risk Preparedness Plan and the Visitor Management Plan, and to submit the draft Management Plan to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to its adoption;*
6. *Takes note of the progress reported by the State Party in the implementation of previous Committee decisions and requests the State Party to continue to address them, in particular by:*
 - a) *Revising the Conservation Protocol into a Conservation Plan, including conducting risk assessment, developing a Risk Preparedness Plan and preparing a cautious strategy for anticipated research and excavation, which is a key issue in developing a sustainable conservation strategy for the property, defining the location and extent of archaeological deposits on the property, particularly to the north and west, and assessing the state of conservation of previously excavated archaeological areas that may remain unsheltered,*
 - b) *Preparing, prior to the implementation of the new roof shelter project, a technical archaeological impact assessment report on the proposed interventions, detailing all aspects of the construction works, including the circulation of personnel and materials, and detailing the nature and location of the rainwater gutters, pipes and*

surface water drains on the mound and how these will be linked to the new drainage channel,

- c) *Preparing a Visitor Management Plan relating to visitor access, circulation and management on the property, as clarification of the exact number and type of facilities, and revising the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment accordingly or providing an additional one to address the additional aspects of anticipated future developments and further requests to submit the above to the World Heritage Centre for review;*

7. *Finally, requests the State Party to submit an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above to the World Heritage Centre by **1 February 2025** for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

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

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

16. Historic Areas of Istanbul (Türkiye) (C 356bis)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

17. Derwent Valley Mills (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) (C 1030)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

18 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
- Infrastructure development pressure
- Proposals for sections of dual carriageway and tunnel portals within the property
- Effects arising from use of transportation infrastructure
- Ground transport infrastructure
- Underground transport infrastructure

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

Current conservation issues

On 1 February 2024, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/373/documents/>, and which reports on the conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions, as follows:

- Partnerships between property owners, regulators, individuals and organisations continue to support the management of the property and its surroundings;
- There is a strong focus on the holistic stewardship of the landscape of the property through day-to-day management, as demonstrated through a wide range of initiatives such as exhibitions and events, links with other World Heritage properties and tertiary institutions, guided walks, improved walking path access, cross-farm approaches, chalk grassland reversion, agri-environment schemes, and a new Avebury community exhibition space;
- Work continues on a new partnership governance structure, which will be completed during 2024. The World Heritage Site (WHS) Coordination Unit is updating the Management Plan for the property which is expected by March 2026;
- The Trust Transition Project has progressed and the Board, which includes a representative from each organisation and key stakeholder group on the WHS Partnership Panel, has agreed to establish a charity to raise funds for projects arising from the Management Plan;
- Progress on the Setting Study has been delayed but it will resume during 2024 with the intention that it will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document that will become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in or affecting the property. It will therefore undergo public consultation and be submitted to the World Heritage Centre;
- Wessex Archaeology has been commissioned to undertake the Site Condition Survey and has completed a desk-based assessment to inform the fieldwork phase, which is due to be completed during 2024 and which will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre;
- The locations and designs for new education facilities to support the Stonehenge Visitor Centre have been revised following technical review by ICOMOS, with revised designs submitted to the World Heritage Centre in January 2024.

In relation to the A303 road Improvement Scheme (Scheme), which would include the construction of a tunnel section and an open four-lane motorway within the Stonehenge component of the property:

- A second Development Consent Order (DCO) was issued by the Secretary of State for Transport in July 2023 providing consent for the project and setting parameters for its implementation, (as already acknowledged by the Committee);
- In January 2024, the State Party provided a package of information to the World Heritage Centre, which identified the following design developments:

- The addition of 3.5 m-wide cantilevered sections along each side of the length of the proposed western cutting; and
- The addition of a second 150 m-wide green bridge across the proposed western cutting;
- The State Party considers that the above design developments, which would cost an additional £50 million (and sit within the parameters of the approved DCO), will help to reduce the visual impact;
- The information submitted by the State Party includes a 'Heritage Impact Assessment for Cantilevers and an Additional Green Bridge', identification of possible locations for the additional green bridge, and advice from the project's Heritage Monitoring Advisory Group;
- The information provided by the State Party indicates that a longer bored tunnel extending to the boundary of the property, or a cut-and-cover section of the same length, as requested by the Committee and recommended by the 2022 Advisory mission, would present various practical challenges and incur additional costs;
- The State Party also advised that a comprehensive programme of archaeological investigations would occur prior to the construction of cuttings on either side of the proposed tunnel, following a Detailed Archaeological Mitigation Strategy, which will meet the DCO requirements;
- The State Party considers that the consented Scheme provides the 'best available solution to remove the existing busy road from the surface of the property, delivering a positive heritage impact and the best available outcome for the OUV of the property';
- The State Party further states that, in its view, the consented Scheme does not meet any of the criteria of Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines, which would justify the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Following the Committee's request to the State Party to '*consult with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to ensure consistency in this regard [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]*', two meetings between the State Party, the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre were organised on 11 January and 11 April 2024.

At the meeting on 11 January 2024, the State Party presented the above design developments and informed that contracts for the construction of the Scheme had been awarded (subject to the necessary approvals), but that substantive construction would not commence until 2025.

In February 2024, the State Party notified the World Heritage Centre of the UK High Court's decision to dismiss a judicial review application brought by the Stonehenge Alliance challenging the legality of the Secretary of State's decision to grant the DCO, and of the Court of Appeal's dismissal of a related challenge to the Department for Transport's environmental assessment of the cumulative carbon impact of road schemes. On 11 April, the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport informed the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies that the A303 Scheme was awaiting a decision from the Court of Appeal by the end of April, following an appeal brought by the Stonehenge Alliance.

The World Heritage Centre became aware through a media article of a road closure outside the western boundary of the property and of works being undertaken by Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) on behalf of National Highways to lay high voltage electricity and fibre optic cables required for the A303 Stonehenge Project. The State Party states that such works are not covered by the DCO.

On 22 May 2024, the World Heritage Centre was informed that the Stonehenge Alliance had been granted permission to appeal against the High Court's decision of February 2024.

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

Progress continues on the revised management and governance of the property, including through collaboration and partnerships among interested individuals and organisations, and initiatives such as exhibitions and events. The commitment by the State Party to submit the draft Setting Study and Site Condition Survey to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies responds to previous Committee requests (Decisions **44 COM 7B.61** and **45 COM 7B.62**). The design of the proposed new educational facilities within the Stonehenge component of the property has addressed the findings of the Technical Review by ICOMOS.

The proposed A303 Scheme remains a threat to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. Notwithstanding the Committee's requests at its last session that the Scheme be redesigned to remove the 3.5 km of four-lane highway in cuttings within the property, the proposed design developments put forward by the State Party retain these cuttings. The proposed changes are for 3.5 m-wide cantilevered sections along each side of the length of the proposed western cutting, and a second 150 m-wide green bridge also across the proposed western cutting. Moreover, contracts for the construction of the DCO Scheme have been awarded (subject to necessary approvals) and preliminary works are taking place in 2024, with substantial construction to proceed in 2025. While the preliminary works are outside the property and not subject to the DCO, they do not comply with the request of the Committee in Decision **45 COM 7B.62** 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.'*

The reason why the Committee requested that the cuttings be removed from within the inscribed property was that they would have major negative impact on the overall prehistoric landscape. This impact is not only due to the adverse visual effect of the motorway cuttings. The excavations necessary to create the 3.5 km cuttings would require the removal of extensive archaeological deposits and features dating from the early Neolithic period, and in particular material dating to the Beaker/Early Bronze Age (c. 2450-1700 BC), which is generally contemporary with the later stages of construction of the main henge monument. This intervention would therefore also compromise the physical intactness of the highly significant ancient cultural landscape.

The name Stonehenge applies to both the main henge and to the wider landscape and this has at times led to confusion. What needs to be protected is not just the henge but the overall landscape of which the henge is a central focus. The main henge is a highly visible and well-known monument and the proposed tunnel would improve its immediate setting, but this monument has to be considered in its context, surrounded by and inextricably linked to a large number of prehistoric features, which together form an ancient landscape. It is the entirety of the inscribed landscape that constitutes the Stonehenge component of the property, not just the main henge monument. This interrelated ensemble of sites is regarded as a designed ritual landscape, with barrows and other features deliberately sited to be mutually visible. The proposed cuttings would sever some of those important connections and compromise the integrity of this prehistoric landscape.

Although the State Party considers that the consented Scheme provides 'best available outcome for the OUV of the property', that is within the limits that the State Party itself has set for this project. The Scheme has been the subject of four Advisory missions since 2015, and five Committee Decisions since 2017. An initial DCO was first issued in 2020, contrary to the requests of the Committee and the findings of the State Party's own Examining Authority but was later quashed by the UK High Court in 2021. The second DCO, issued by the Secretary of State for Transport in July 2023, granted consent for the project and set out implementation parameters, and was also the subject of an appeal to the High Court, which upheld the 2023 decision to grant the DCO on judicial review in February 2024.

The proposals for changes to the consented Scheme put forward by the State Party would have only very modest visual benefits. The two bridges would allow access across the four-lane highway, but would not minimise, or even reduce the impact on archaeological resources or the integrity of the landscape. The current main road through the landscape is undesirable, but the proposed cuttings represent a more serious and irreversible threat to the OUV of the property. Furthermore, these changes do not comply with the 'minimum' requirements previously determined by the Committee, nor do they align with the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission, and they do not offer what was sought in the request for corrective measures set out in Decision 45 COM 7B.62, which provided an explicit indication 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 noted 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”.

The package of information provided by the State Party includes a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for the proposed cantilevers and additional green bridge, an indication of possible locations for the additional green bridge, and advice from the project’s Heritage Monitoring Advisory Group. The State Party has strongly argued that the consented Scheme does not meet any of the criteria set out in Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines, citing in particular: *iv) serious deterioration of urban or rural space, or the natural environment; and v) significant loss of historical authenticity*; and therefore contends that: *there are no justifiable grounds for the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger*. However, this view is not consistent with the likely impact of the construction of the Scheme which, even as modified in January 2024, retains substantial dual carriageway sections exposed in cuttings, particularly at the western end of the Stonehenge component of the property.

It has been the clear and consistent view of the Committee, the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre for a number of years that the proposed intrusion of a portal and surface road on the eastern side of the property was accepted as the least impactful practical solution, but that the minimum requirement to the west comprises an extension of the underground section of the western approach (in tunnel and/or cut-and-cover) at least to the western boundary of the property.

The Scheme should not proceed with the cuttings as currently proposed, even with cantilevers and an additional green bridge, as the longer tunnel options are feasible. The State Party itself has provided costings for a longer bored tunnel or a longer cut-and-cover section but contends that such solutions are not ‘available’ because the funding has not been approved or cannot be justified by the State Party’s cost-benefit methodology. By ratifying the Convention, a State Party has committed to ‘do all it can to this end [‘ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 and situated on its territory’], to the *utmost* of its own resources’ (Article 4, emphasis added). World Heritage status therefore requires that the best available option be pursued, not the one that would be best within budgetary constraints. In view of the significant adverse impact on an inscribed World Heritage property, the State Party should not proceed with a project if the revisions required to meet World Heritage Convention obligations cannot be financed at a given time.

In its current form, including the modifications proposed in January 2024, the Scheme, if built, would result in ascertained danger to the OUV of the property, within the meaning of Paragraph 179(a) of the Operational Guidelines, in terms of the permanent irreversible loss of attributes underlying the property’s OUV, the loss of integrity of the overall integrated prehistoric landscape, and the negative impact on ritual associations within the landscape. The potential for these impacts to occur as a result of the Scheme now approved means that, in accordance with Paragraph 179(b) of the Operational Guidelines, the property is faced with threats which could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics, in particular through the threatening effects of the project (criterion b.iii).

In its approved form, the A303 Improvement Scheme constitutes a potential threat which, if implemented, would have ascertained negative impacts on the attributes, authenticity and integrity of the property, thereby adversely impacting its OUV in accordance with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines. It is therefore recommended that the property be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. It is further recommended that the State Party be invited to engage further with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies with a view to preparing a Desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and a related set of corrective measures, which must include either discontinuation of the Scheme, or the modification of the Scheme in accordance with the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission and World Heritage Committee decisions.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.18

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,

2. Recalling Decisions **41 COM 7B.56**, **42 COM 7B.32**, **43 COM 7B.95**, **44 COM 7B.61** and **45 COM 7B.62** adopted at its 41st (Krakow, 2017), 42nd (Manama, 2018), 43rd (Baku, 2019), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions, respectively,
3. Notes that collaboration and partnerships among interested individuals and organisations continue to support the conservation of the property, through initiatives such as exhibitions and events, and continued progress on revised management and governance arrangements, and welcomes the commitment by the State Party to submit the draft Setting Study and Site Condition Survey to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
4. Also welcomes the proposed new educational facilities within the Stonehenge component of the property and the manner in which the design process has considered the findings of the Technical Review by ICOMOS;
5. Also notes that the proposed A303 road Improvement Scheme (hereafter: Scheme) within the Stonehenge component of the property was granted a Development Consent Order (DCO) in July 2023 without modification requested by previous Committee decisions and the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission, and that in February 2024 the UK High Court upheld the decision to grant the DCO and that in May 2024 permission to appeal against that decision was granted;
6. Notes with concern that, contrary to its request in Decision **45 COM 7B.62** that all further decisions or actions to implement the Scheme in its (then) current approved state be halted until the Committee had reviewed the comprehensive information package of proposed modifications at its 46th session, the contract for the construction of the Scheme has been awarded, preparatory works in the vicinity of the property have commenced, and the State Party has not prepared, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, a set of corrective measures, which include modifying the Scheme to reflect the Committee's decisions and informed by the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission;
7. Acknowledges the State Party's stated intention to continue dialogue and consultation, that the State Party has provided the World Heritage Centre, as requested by the Committee, with an information package on the proposed design developments to the Scheme, and that the Scheme design has been updated to reduce the extent of the exposed highway cutting at the western end through cantilevered edges and the introduction of an additional 150 m-wide green bridge, and that the State Party has briefed the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies about these proposed design adjustments;
8. Expresses its profound regret that the proposed design developments do not modify the Scheme in accordance with the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission and its Decision **45 COM 7B.62**, which provided an explicit indication of the minimum changes necessary in particular, regarding the western end of the Stonehenge component of the property;
9. Reiterates its previous requests that the State Party should not proceed with the A303 route upgrade for the section between Amesbury and Berwick Down in its current further-modified form, and also reiterates its consistent previous advice that, the minimum change required must include an extension of the underground section of the western approach (in tunnel and/or cut-and-cover) at least to the western boundary of the property, with the western portal relocated 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;

10. *Further notes* that the current Scheme, as modified in January 2024, still retains substantial dual carriageway sections exposed in cuttings, particularly those at the western end of the Stonehenge component of the property, and that, in accordance with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines, the Scheme constitutes a potential threat to the property which, if implemented, would have negative impacts on the property's attributes, authenticity and integrity, thereby impacting adversely on its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV);
11. ***Decides*** therefore, in accordance with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines, to inscribe Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) on the List of World Heritage in Danger with a view to mobilizing international support;
12. *Requests furthermore* the State Party, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to prepare a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and related corrective measures, which must include either discontinuation of the Scheme, or modification of the Scheme to reflect the Committee's decisions and the recommendations of the 2022 Advisory mission, to deliver the best available outcome for the OUV of the property;
13. *Finally requests* the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, 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.

AFRICA

21. Aksum (Ethiopia) (C 15)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

23. Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove (Nigeria) (C 1118)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

24. Stone Town of Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania) (C 173rev)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

ASIA AND PACIFIC

31. 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 1998)

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

- Housing (Uncontrolled urban expansion; Lack of clarity regarding property rights, ownership and building codes)
- Management systems/Management plan (Lack of an appropriate management system; Poor law enforcement; Lack of capacity of management agency)

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

Current conservation issues

On 30 January 2024, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, in response to a letter from the World Heritage Centre of 13 November 2023 requesting such a report, in view of multiple third-party representations regarding the human rights implications of the ongoing population relocation programme to two relocation sites outside the property. The report is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/668/documents/> and provides information and explanation about the above-mentioned issue as follows:

- Chronology and legal basis for the voluntary population relocation programme;
- Follow-up to the decisions of the World Heritage Committee adopted between 2006 and 2014 regarding zoning regulations and illegal occupations (Decisions **30 COM 7B.61**, **32 COM 7B.65**, **34 COM 7B.65** and **38 COM 7B.8**);
- Provisions of the National Law on Heritage (1996) and Zoning and Environmental Management Plan (ZEMP) for the property;
- Distinction between local populations/lawful occupants, defined as the populations of 112 villages with residential rights inside the property at the time of inscription in 1992, and their descendants and/or beneficiaries (ca. 100,000 persons), and illegal occupants who have settled inside the inscribed zones with illicit constructions and encroachment;
- Explanation of recent measures concerning the zoning management:

- Control of illegal squatters between 2013 and 2017,
- Suppression of 900 illegal structures inside the inscribed zone in 2018 following a letter of the World Heritage Centre,
- Difficulties of control of land occupation during the COVID-19 pandemic,
- Creation of an Interministerial Task Force in 2022 under the authority of Deputy Prime Minister for Spatial Planning, Urban Planning and Construction,
- Investment of more than USD 100M to create two relocation sites, Run Ta Ek rural village (1.046 hectares) and Peak Snèng (1.410 hectares), each over 30 minutes' drive away from the property and in the process of being equipped with various infrastructure, including housing and services, currently in different stages of completion,
- Inspections by the Ad Hoc Experts of International Coordinating Committee (ICC) for Angkor, and their recommendation to create job opportunities;
- Government providing solutions for the unlawful occupants rather than just expulsion by enforcing the law without compensation.

The fourth Intergovernmental Conference for the Safeguarding and Development of Angkor was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 15 November 2023 to celebrate the start of the fourth decade of international cooperation for Angkor, with the co-presidents of the ICC (France and Japan), UNESCO and in the presence of His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni, King of Cambodia.

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

Since March 2023, concerns have been expressed by several third parties, regarding the ongoing population relocation programme within the inscribed property to two relocation sites, both within 30 minutes distance of the property. On 21 May 2024, Amnesty International met with UNESCO Secretariat to share their concerns on the State Party's report and their additional information on the on-going relocation programme.

The State Party's report provides a comprehensive account of 'the management of illegal occupants' since inscription, with background reference documents, including the Zoning and Environmental Management Plan (ZEMP) promulgated in 1994. It also illustrated the adverse impact of the illegal occupation on the property and the unsanitary conditions of these settlements.

Managing such a vast property with over 100 fragile monuments, which is under constant pressure of mass tourism requires rigorous application of the law and regulations, pro-active planning and efficient public communication. The Committee has long recognised that to protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and to ensure social cohesion and fairness under the law of all, further new settlements in the protected zones should be prohibited. In 2005, an expert mission and report addressed the challenges arising from illegal occupation. In 2008, Decision **32 COM 7B.65** recommended the application of regulations to avoid uncontrolled urban expansion, and enforcing existing laws regarding illegal occupation, unauthorised construction and development, and in 2014, Decision **38 COM 7B.8** noted the progress made by the State Party on this matter.

The State Party should be encouraged to continue deploying its efforts to ensure the accuracy and effectiveness as well as communication on the on-going zoning regulation and management measures and the related relocation programme, making a clear distinction between lawful inhabitants who should be involved in the management of the site and illegal occupants and take steps to prevent further illegal settlement inside the protected zones of the property. The Committee may wish to record that the rights of residents of 112 villages identified at the time of inscription in 1992 and their descendants and/or beneficiaries must be protected, in compliance with legal instruments, including Governmental Decision 70/SSR of September 2004 and that the relocation and the living conditions of the illegal occupants must comply with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The Angkor Heritage Management Plan (HMP) of 2013 recognises the rights of formal village residents within the property and sets out a system to support local communities through programmes that link tourism at Angkor, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The State Party should be encouraged to place the current relocation programme and associated support within a broader strategy that addresses demographic growth inside the property, which is now reported to about 100,000 people, and social and economic aspirations, as set out in the Angkor Heritage Management Plan of 2013.

Finally, the State Party should be requested to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, to assess the state of conservation of the property, including the areas from which populations were recently relocated, notably around the temple of Angkor Wat. The visit of the mission may serve as an opportunity to analyse the conditions of the relocated communities, enabling a reflection on appropriate measures to prevent ongoing illegal settlement and support local communities.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.31

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decision 45 COM 7B.152, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),*
3. *Expresses its concern about third-party reports concerning possible forced population displacements;*
4. *Acknowledges the State Party's report on the current population relocation programme, which also explains the historical context and legal basis for the zoning management scheme for the property, and presents management tools and laws, media materials and related documents in annexes;*
5. *Recognizes the complexity of managing this vast World Heritage property, with living resident communities and over 100 fragile temples and other ancient structures while also making substantial efforts to ensure the sustainable development of local communities;*
6. *Recommends that the State Party accurately and effectively communicate regarding the zoning regulations and the on-going relocation programme to both national and local communities, notably by outlining:*
 - a) *Clear means of identifying inhabitants having the rights to live within the property,*
 - b) *Its commitment to ensuring that the conditions of relocated populations comply in all respects with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human right normative instruments ratified by the State Party,*
 - c) *A strategy for mitigating the demographic evolution of the villages within the property;*
7. *Also recommends the review and implementation of the policies for sustainable development and poverty alleviation outlined in the Angkor Heritage Management Plan 2013 towards developing a strategy for the broader distribution of economic benefit from the Angkor World Heritage property and address inequality among populations despite the flourishing tourism industry;*
8. *Requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to assess the overall state of conservation of the property, including management issues related to the areas from which populations were relocated, reflecting on appropriate measures to prevent ongoing illegal settlements and analysing the conditions of the relocated communities;*
9. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the*

implementation of the above, as well as on the matters requested by Decision 45 COM 7B.152, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.

34. Town of Luang Prabang (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (C 479bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1995

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/479/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 7 (from 1994 to 2021)

Total amount approved: USD 154,442

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/479/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: USD 200,000 (France / UNESCO Cooperation Agreement)

Previous monitoring missions

September–October 2007: UNESCO/Region Centre/Ville de Chinon international co-operation project mission; November 2007: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; January 2009: UNESCO/Ville de Chinon/ADUC cooperation program mission; April 2022: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Lack of enforcement of the Luang Prabang Conservation Plan (PSMV), illegal constructions and long-term conservation and management of wooden structures
- Public works (proposed new town, airport extension, pedestrian bridge, Nam Khan riverbank protection project and Nam Khan bridge replacement)
- Luang Prabang Hydropower Project (LPHPP) which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value
- Condition of historic buildings requiring physical conservation works
- Need for urban design guidelines

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/479/>

Current conservation issues

On 1 February 2024, the State Party provided a report on the state of conservation of the property, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/479/documents> and indicates the following:

- The State Party continues its efforts to support conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and to support the wellbeing of associated communities;
- The World Heritage Office in Luang Prabang has become the World Heritage Management Division of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICT)'s provincial branch;
- An Urban Environment Improvement Investment Project, funded by the Asian Development Bank, will support sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban development to improve infrastructure and services, foster disaster resilience, and promote inclusive urban planning and women's leadership;
- A Luang Prabang Smart and Integrated Urban Strategy includes projects such as electronic ticketing, real-time monitoring, and support for sustainable infrastructure and management of tourist attractions;
- Condition assessments confirm that 142 mostly privately-owned buildings are not yet restored, with 110 in a moderate state of deterioration, and 32 severely deteriorated;

- Restoration work has occurred to seven ponds and wetlands within the inscribed area;
- The final design for the Nam Khan Bridge reconstruction will consider the ICOMOS Technical review and findings of the 2022 mission;
- Nam Khan River protection works will retain the vegetation and gardens along the riverbank;
- The State Party supports the establishment and application of Urban Design Guidelines for development projects;
- A comprehensive Tourism Management Plan has been initiated by the MICT and the World Heritage Centre will be advised of future developments for tourism management;
- National Law prevents the re-establishment of the Heritage Fund requested by the Committee;
- A report on the update of the Luang Prabang Conservation Plan (“Plan de sauvegarde et mise en valeur” - PSMV) is included as an annex to the State Party report, noting new GIS & CAD datasets that will support management and development planning;
- Anthropological investigations and engagement with local communities informed the revised Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for the Luang Prabang Hydroelectric Power Project, prepared in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit on Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context, which was submitted to the World Heritage Centre in January 2024;
- Information is provided about planned and potential development projects, including a new Mekong Bridge, the ‘Riverside Tourism Development Project’, the ‘Hillside Tourism Development’, the Mekong Footpath Project, and the Airport Upgrade;
- The Committee’s request to integrate the principles of the World Heritage Convention within the broader context of territorial and developmental planning for World Heritage properties in Lao PDR remains under consideration.

The State Party’s report is accompanied by extensive annexes providing information about new projects and studies.

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

The State Party expresses its commitment to conserving the OUV of the property, while supporting the social and economic well-being of people in the context of a major programme of proposed development projects.

Following the Committee’s decisions and the recommendations of the 2022 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission, the ongoing update of the monitoring mechanism by strengthening GIS and including policy guidelines within the PSMV is welcome, and it would be appropriate for this work to be formally reviewed by the Advisory Bodies.

The Committee may acknowledge the State Party’s efforts to strengthen data collection concerning the ecological attributes relating to the Mekong and Nam Khan Rivers, their riverbanks and environments, enabling long-term monitoring of the environmental setting of the property, in particular considering the numerous infrastructure constructions in the vicinity of the property.

Increased attention regarding intangible values, pond and wetland restoration, and the commitment to improving the protection of the Nam Khan Riverbank and the Park projects should be acknowledged, noting that both projects are subject to further recommendations arising from an ICOMOS Technical review. However, noting the methods used in the actual riverbank protection operation, the Committee may wish to request again that the State Party align the intervention modalities with ICOMOS’ recommendations. While the management department provided advice to the private owners of the traditional houses, it is regrettable that a sustainable financial mechanism has not been identified for their maintenance and repair and that the resumption of the Heritage Fund, which supported maintenance of traditional local architecture, is prevented by national law.

A number of the Committee’s decisions and of the recommendations from the 2022 mission are not yet implemented. The Committee may therefore wish to request the State Party’ specific response to its previous requests regarding the Infrastructure Development Plan, support for deteriorated buildings, design of the replacement Nam Khan River Bridge, preparation of Urban Design Guidelines, to be in line with the UNESCO 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL Recommendation), parameters for the tourism management plan, the roles of the National and

Provincial Committees, and the need to integrate the principles of the Convention within the broader context of territorial and development planning for World Heritage properties.

Major infrastructure and tourism projects continue to pose potential threats to the OUV of the property. The submission of a new HIA for the Luang Prabang Hydro Power Project (LPHPP) is welcome, but the HIA should be further reviewed to address issues concerning the potential impact on attributes that support the property's OUV, in accordance with the findings and recommendations of the most recent ICOMOS Technical Review and the comments of the World Heritage Centre. The Urban Environment Improvement Investment Project and the Luang Prabang Smart and Integrated Urban Strategy have potential to make significant contributions to the management of the property, but also to affect attributes that support its OUV; therefore, each should be formally submitted to the World Heritage Centre, in conformity with paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines, for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to finalisation and implementation. Moreover, the State Party has reported significant tourism and infrastructure projects, including a new Mekong Bridge, the 'Riverside Tourism Development Project', the 'Hillside Tourism Development', the Mekong Footpath Project and the Airport Upgrade, all of which also warrant referral in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

It would be appropriate for the Committee to remind the State Party that, documentation for all such projects, including HIAs prepared in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context, should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, in conformity with Paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines, before any decision is made that would be difficult to reverse.

A worrying and persistent issue relates to the functioning of what is now the World Heritage Management Division. Formerly autonomous and operational with 30 qualified staff, the Luang Prabang World Heritage Office has been incorporated within the provincial Department of the Ministry of Culture and Information and the number of personnel has been reduced from 30 to 14, with little functional and budgetary autonomy, despite the Committee's request, in Decision **45 COM 7B.43**, that it remain a unified technical entity overseeing the various aspects of the management of the property, equipped with the necessary human and financial resources. This critical situation sharply contrasts with the obvious need for enhanced management capacity for the property in view of the number, scale and complexity of the challenges that it is facing.

Considering all of the above, it would be appropriate for the Committee to request a new Reactive Monitoring mission that could consider the status and resourcing of the World Heritage Management Division, the suite of proposed projects, and assist the State Party in strengthening governance relating to the World Heritage management, ensuring that development projects be designed, evaluated and implemented in a manner that provides sustainable social and economic benefits while ensuring that the OUV of the property is conserved.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.34

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decision **45 COM 7B.43**, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),*
3. *Acknowledges the State Party's efforts to safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, notably the progress made with the update of the management framework of the Luang Prabang Conservation Plan ("Plan de sauvegarde et mise en valeur" - PSMV), including the use of GIS monitoring, research on ecological and intangible values, and the thematic policy development relating to its intangible values, sustainable development goals and historic urban landscape, and requests that the updated elements of the PSMV be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for Technical Review by the Advisory Bodies, in light of the specific requests made in Decision **45 COM 7B.43**;*

4. Notes that advice has been provided to private owners of traditional houses, but expresses concern that a sustainable financial mechanism has not been found for the preservation of the major attributes of traditional architecture, and that resumption of the previously promulgated Heritage Fund to provide assistance with repair and maintenance works for significant traditional architecture is prevented by national law;
5. Welcomes the State Party's increasing attention regarding scientific data collection concerning the Mekong and Nam Khan Rivers, their riverbanks and associated environmental parameters, which would enable the long-term monitoring of possible changes in environmental setting and values, in particular with regard to the dams and hydropower constructions upstream and downstream of the property, and requests that the State Party share the monitoring data with the World Heritage Centre periodically;
6. Notes the State Party's efforts relating to the preservation of intangible values, progress with restoration of ponds and wetlands, and the Nam Khan River park and riverfront protection projects, and requests the State Party to take into full consideration the points raised in the ICOMOS Technical Reviews as the Nam Khan Riverbank protection and park projects are implemented,
7. Also acknowledges the State Party's efforts to address its previous decisions and implement the recommendations of the 2022 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property and, in that context, reiterates its previous requests to the State Party to:
 - a) Submit the Infrastructure Development Plan for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to its final approval and implementation,
 - b) Continue to afford priority to the 142 deteriorated buildings, especially those entirely constructed of wood, and to ensure access to affordable materials for construction and repair, as well as traditional conservation skills to sustain the authenticity of the property,
 - c) Consider alternative approaches to the proposed replacement of the Nam Khan River Bridge in light of the ICOMOS Technical Review, and the option proposed by the Reactive Monitoring mission of a like-for-like replacement, and to submit the selected design to the World Heritage Centre prior to implementation,
 - d) Establish an Urban Design Guidelines document, to be in line with the UNESCO 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL Recommendation) to contribute to the preservation of streetscapes, and inform the appropriate built form, materials and colours to be used in future development projects within the property and its buffer zone;
 - e) Ensure that the comprehensive Tourism Management Plan is prepared in alignment with the World Heritage Sustainable Tourism guidelines and the ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism and other relevant guidelines, based on a carrying capacity study, to inform the measures to regulate tourism-related activities and infrastructure development, to prioritise the actions, including those to ensure safety and security of visitors, and that the draft tourism management plan is submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review prior to being finalised,
 - f) Strengthen the role of National and Provincial Committees for National Heritage to ensure the proactive and informed coordination for major development projects,
 - g) Integrate the World Heritage Convention's principles within the broader context of territorial and developmental planning for World Heritage properties in Lao PDR, including for the properties' buffer zones and wider settings;

8. *Welcomes the State Party's efforts to safeguard the property's OUV by preparing a new Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for the Luang Prabang Hydropower Project (LPHPP), but urges the State Party to revise the January 2024 HIA in accordance with the findings and recommendations of the ICOMOS Technical Review dated March 2024 and the comments of the World Heritage Centre;*
 9. *Takes note of the Urban Environment Improvement Investment Project and the Luang Prabang Smart and Integrated Urban Strategy, and further requests the State Party, in conformity with Paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines, to submit to the World Heritage Centre the full set of technical documentation on both initiatives, including HIAs, for review by ICOMOS prior to their finalisation and implementation;*
 10. *Notes the proposals for a range of significant tourism and infrastructure projects, including a new Mekong Bridge, the 'Riverside Tourism Development Project', the 'Hillside Tourism Development', the Mekong Footpath Project, and the Airport Upgrade, and reminds the State Party that, in conformity with the Operational Guidelines, documentation for all such projects should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre, including HIAs prepared in accordance with the methodology of the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context, for review before any decision is made that would be difficult to reverse;*
 11. *Reiterates its previous request that the World Heritage Management Division in Luang Prabang remain a unified technical entity overseeing the various aspects of the management of the property, provided with the necessary human and financial resources and operational autonomy;*
 12. *Requests the State Party to invite a new joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the state of conservation of the property, the status and resourcing of the World Heritage Management Division, evaluate progress with implementation of the Committee's previous decisions and the recommendations of the 2022 mission, consider the potential impact of current and proposed tourism, infrastructure and other development projects on attributes that support the property's OUV, and advise the State Party on appropriate heritage governance and processes to ensure that development projects are designed, evaluated and implemented in a manner that provides sustainable social and economic benefits, while ensuring that the property's OUV is conserved;*
 13. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, 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.*
- 35. Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (C 481)**

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

38. Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro (Pakistan) (C 138)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

43. Central Sector of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long – Hanoi (Viet Nam) (C 1328)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

MIXED PROPERTIES

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

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

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

45. Laponian Area (Sweden) (C/N 774)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

46. Ancient Maya City and Protected Tropical Forests of Calakmul, Campeche (Mexico) (C/N 1061bis)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2002

Criteria (i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(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/1061/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1061/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Governance (need to strengthen the coordinating mechanism)
- Legal framework (need to assure that the buffer zone is configured in a way designed to protect the property)
- Management systems/ management plan (lack of an integrated Protection and Management Plan)
- Weak monitoring system for the Cultural and Natural values
- Impact of Tren Maya project

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1061/>

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2024 and 28 March 2024, the State Party submitted state of conservation reports, which are available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1061/documents/>. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in these reports, as follows:

- Implementation of the Management Plan is strengthened with the appointment of conservation staff. A documentation protocol for research was established, which includes three-dimensional surveys and detailed recording of stelae, stone reliefs, stucco elements and mural painting in three monumental complexes. Priority conservation actions will be implemented in the first quarter of 2024;
- A conservation project has been initiated in virtually all pre-Hispanic buildings that have been explored since the start of the Calakmul Archaeological Project in 1993. The guidelines provided by the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) for archaeological interventions will be applied to ensure their integrity and authenticity;
- Further research on the demonstrated impact of climate change is being undertaken;
- The Laberinto Project continued research with LiDAR imagery. This evidenced the complexity of the urban area and the enormous knowledge of the environment that led the ancient Maya to transform the landscape;

- Vigilance by the National Guard, since 2022, at the access road and the public area has reduced vandalism and illegal extraction of wood. INAH has requested to expand the vigilance to other archaeological sites in the area;
- In the framework of the Tren Maya project, construction of the site museum is 7% complete. The new visitor centre is 8% complete, built along the access road at the border of the property. Its location is the abandoned Calakmul Museum of Nature and Archaeology, thus no new clearing is required. The centre will serve as the entry point to the site. The interpretation area will address the cultural and natural heritage of the “Great Calakmul” region and local communities will be able to sell regional products and serve food. In the medium-term, larger buses and cars are expected and visitors will be transported in lighter vehicles from this point;
- Coordination with CONANP is strengthened through participation of INAH in the CONANP Advisory Council;
- As part of the Tren Maya project, the INAH-report provides detailed information on the procedures and methodology of the archaeological research and approval of the construction works. The train and 100 to 250 meters of land on either side, will pass through an area of the buffer zone and Biosphere Reserve (BR) of Calakmul. It will not affect the property. In this area, 868 archaeological monuments were identified, requiring archaeological salvage action, 33 where technical measures for the protection and conservation of monuments are required and 6 with total restriction that require modification of the construction project. Measures are then taken to protect findings including modification of the path of the train and covering monuments under embankment with geogrid, viaducts, or bridges;
- The relevant authority recommended in 2021-2022 precautionary measures to minimize or avoid negative impacts on the natural values of the property from the Tren Maya project based on outcomes from the Environmental Impact ‘Statement’ (EIA). Mitigation measures to avoid any damage to species or populations as a result of the project are also intended to be carried out. The National Tourism Development Fund (FONATUR) is developing a comprehensive tourism planning instrument that defines strategies and actions for the sustainable growth of tourism in the municipality of Calakmul;
- The Calakmul BR decree has been modified to change the area of the biosphere reserve. From 2018 to 2023, 20 Areas Voluntarily Destined for Conservation (ADVCS) have been certified in the buffer zones of the property.

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

The State Party reports credible, extensive, and detailed information on the process that is applied in the research, documentation and conservation works at the property and in the preparation and execution of the Tren Maya project, including with regards to the sustainable growth of tourism. The use of advanced methodologies and techniques is very much welcomed, as is the attention that is being paid to monuments that have been explored and consolidated since the start of the Calakmul Archaeological Project in 1993.

Regarding the Tren Maya project, it is noted with regret that, while the construction of the train and accompanying works are proceeding rapidly, the State Party has not responded to the recommendations of the technical reviews by the Advisory Bodies. No update is provided on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that was requested by the Committee to assess cumulative impacts on the World Heritage properties along the proposed railway route, namely: (i) Pre-Hispanic City and National Park of Palenque; (ii) Sian Ka'an; (iii) Pre-Hispanic City of Chichen - Itza; (iv) Pre-Columbian City of Uxmal; (v) Historic Walled City of Campeche; and (vi) Ancient Maya City and Protected Tropical Forests of Calakmul, Campeche.

The recommendations issued through the ICOMOS-IUCN technical reviews relate to the whole of the Tren Maya project and apply to the property. The Tren Maya will transect the buffer zone of the property and cut the BR in two. The project includes a new museum, and a visitor centre component that will be constructed at the entrance to the property, and an increase of visitors and heavier means of transport are foreseen in the medium term. The potential impacts of these multiple components of interventions require an assessment at the strategic level to consider cumulative impacts through an SEA. Once the SEA has been completed, EIAs for each project component should be undertaken. In this regard, it is noted that the State Party provided a link to a Regional Modality Environmental Impact ‘Statement’ (EIA)

for the Tren Maya Tramo 7 project (one section of the railway project) in 2023. This report had several shortfalls:

- 1) The assessments of impacts on OUV focused largely on the general description of the criteria, not on the specific values and attributes contained within the Statement of OUV for the property;
- 2) The report concludes that the project will not impact on the property on the grounds that the project transects the buffer zone, not the property, and therefore does not adequately consider impacts beyond the project footprint;
- 3) The location of the proposed railway transects through the narrow section of the buffer zone, for which the Committee has requested a review of its configuration, yet these Committee decisions were not taken into consideration in the report, and the proposed alignment will therefore further disconnect the property and its surrounding buffer zone from its northern section.

Revision to the EIA is hence needed to assure the protection of OUV.

The information regarding the adopted decree to change the size and boundaries of the BR, alongside progress in developing ADVCS, is noted. However, no information is provided on the consultation on the changing of boundaries with the local communities in the areas concerned, and therefore the State Party should be requested to provide further information on this. This is particularly significant in the context of the property's inscription under criterion (ix) linked to the long-standing interaction between people and nature, insofar as the mature forests display a floristic composition and structure largely resulting from thousand-year old Maya agricultural and forestry practices, which intertwine processes of human selection and regeneration of natural systems, both considered traditional management practices among native communities still inhabiting the buffer zone and surrounding areas. It should also be recalled that the Committee, in its Decision **45 COM 7B.99**, urged the State Party to ensure that reconfiguration of the property's buffer zone follows a transparent, consultative process with full and effective participation of all relevant stakeholders and rightsholders.

Noting the rapid development of the Tren Maya project and its accompanying works and their potential negative impacts on the OUV of the property, it is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to invite a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.46

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **44 COM 7B.78** and **45 COM 7B.99** adopted at its extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively,*
3. *Commends the State Party for the actions undertaken by the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) for the implementation of the Management Plan of the property, as well as for the research and documentation collected through LiDAR imagery, that will help guide priority conservation actions;*
4. *Notes with appreciation the extensive research and documentation programme of INAH in the framework of the Tren Maya project and strongly urges the State Party to address previous Decisions and the recommendations in the technical reviews of the Advisory Bodies;*
5. *Appreciates the submission of the Environmental Impact 'Statement' (EIA) for the Tren Maya project, however notes with concern that it does not allow for a comprehensive assessment of impacts on the OUV of the property and requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre an updated EIA that assesses impacts on all the values and attributes of the property, including beyond the physical footprint of the project and assessing connectivity across the whole property and its buffer zone;*

6. *Reiterates its request to the State Party to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess the strategic alignment and cumulative impacts of the Tren Maya project on the six World Heritage properties located along the proposed route of the railway, and include an assessment of alternative options, in line with the principles of the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;*
7. *Considers it essential that any changes to the boundaries of the Biosphere Reserve, comprising the buffer zone of the property, are undertaken through a transparent consultative process with full and effective participation of local and indigenous communities and rightsholders which ensures free, prior and informed consent and is in line with international norms, and also requests the State Party to submit information on the consultations undertaken during the process of amending the boundaries of the Biosphere Reserve to the World Heritage Centre;*
8. *Urges again the State Party to consider previous recommendations from the Committee to include additional and relevant cultural sites within the boundaries of the property and its buffer zone;*
9. *Further requests the State Party to invite a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to assess the current status of the Tren Maya project and its accompanying developments in light of its rapid development and its potential to negatively impact on the OUV of the property;*
10. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, 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.*

AFRICA

47. Ennedi Massif: Natural and Cultural Landscape (Chad) (C/N 1475)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2016

Criteria (iii)(vii)(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/1475/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1475/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

USD 74,410 from the Government of Norway between 2023 and 2024

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Need to strengthen the legal protection status of the property and to extend the property to include all attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)
- Inadequate management plan and lack of management authority
- Need for a zonation which allows full protection of the key areas for biodiversity
- Need to guarantee the full participation of the local communities and of their traditional authorities in the management of the property

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1475/>

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1475/documents/>, and reports the following:

- The Ennedi Natural and Cultural Reserve was created by Decree No. 260/PR/PM/MCDT/2016 (2016). The responsibility for its management lies with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Historical Heritage, Tourism and Crafts through the National Inter-ministerial Committee of World Heritage Sites, the Directorate for Cultural Heritage, a Site Director and the Local Management Committee;
- The Administrative Council, the decision-making body, consists of representatives of African Parks, the Ministry of the Environment, and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Historical Heritage, Tourism and Crafts;
- Discussions have commenced to revise the Management Plan in 2024 through involvement of communities and the management team;
- Management and protection activities continued through vehicles and equipment acquisition, patrols by 39 eco-guards, awareness-raising sessions through social media and information panels, sanitation days and inspection visits;
- 15 red-necked ostriches were released into the property in 2020 through a translocation programme;

- An environmental anthropology study commenced In May 2021 to acquire a socio-ecological understanding of how pastoral populations who live within a 60 km radius of the Guelta d'Archeï use its waters;
- An archaeological study on the rock paintings of the property commenced in July 2021 to inform a plan for their protection and valorisation;
- Reports and manuals associated with the property were published including on bird species richness, plants, mammals, and on the rock art of the Ennedi Massif as well as their state of conservation. Several mammal species have been confirmed in the property, including Barbary sheep, Dorcas gazelle, striped hyaena, jackal, fennec fox and Patas monkey. In addition to red-necked ostriches, scimitar oryx and addax have been reintroduced;
- In response to the reported vandalism of rock art sites in the property, a State Party mission visited Fada in April 2017. It reported large damage at the entrance with an area of 2.68 m² and similarly in other areas. No further vandalism has been reported since.

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

Regrettably, the State Party's report again provides little new information on the state of conservation of the property or on the actions taken to implement the requests of the Committee at the time of inscription (Decision **40 COM 8B.15**), and subsequently (Decisions **42 COM 7B.64**, **44 COM 7B.71** and **45 COM 7B.28**). It is important to recall that the 2016 Advisory Bodies' evaluation of the nomination considered it premature for inscription because the property did not meet the protection and management requirements of the Operational Guidelines and the proposed boundaries were considered inadequate to protect all attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The 2016 legislation was considered not to meet the requirements of the Operational Guidelines at the time of inscription. No further details have been provided on the 2019 Decree (n°018/PR/2018 of 10 January 2019), and the State Party has not responded to the request by the Committee to undertake a comprehensive review of legislative arrangements. Developing an Action Plan to address past Committee requests and recommendations would provide a clear framework through which to address these issues.

The property, as currently inscribed, does not include the northern part of the massif, leaving out important rock art sites, including the emblematic site of Niola Doa. At the time of inscription, the Committee recommended an extension of the property, to protect important rock art sites in the north and north-western part of the Ennedi Massif. The State Party provides no information on progress on the requested extension of the property, or on the establishment of zonation.

Much of what is presented by the State Party was reported on previously, including the structure of the management system, employing of eco-guards, the release of red-necked ostriches, and the environmental anthropology study of pastoral life around the Guelta d'Archeï.

The property is currently managed through a partnership agreement between the State Party and African Parks, funded by the European Union and other partners. It is unclear what the timeframes for this partnership are.

Preliminary discussions for the revision of the Management Plan, as requested by the Committee at the time of inscription, are welcome, and this process should be expedited. The completion of several studies is also welcome as these could provide further documentation of the attributes under Criterion (ix) as requested, but the details provided are limited, and the State Party has not submitted the studies to the World Heritage Centre.

The State Party has provided some additional information on the damage that occurred due to vandalism events in 2017, but has not provided a detailed report of the extent of the damage and measures taken to rehabilitate the affected sites, as requested by the Committee.

While some information is provided on occurring wildlife species, no details are made available on population numbers. Other important issues like the genetic viability of the remnant crocodile population are also not discussed. The efforts to reintroduce flagship wildlife species namely oryx gazelle, red-necked ostriches and addax which had disappeared from the property as a result of poaching are appreciated and the State Party should be requested to provide more information on these efforts, including on the strategy to re-establish viable populations in the property.

Noting the repeated requests for more detailed information on the management system and effectiveness, zonation, and the 2017 vandalism incident, it is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to

visit the property. The mission should provide an assessment of the functioning of the management system, report on the damage due to vandalism of the rock art at Fada, review the progress made and advise on the updating of the management plan, review the strategy for botanical inventory and a zonation of use, and report on progress made on the implementation of the Committee's requests and recommendations made since inscription of the property in 2016.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.47

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decisions **40 COM 8B.15**, **42 COM 7B.64**, **44 COM 7B.71** and **45 COM 7B.28**, adopted at its 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), 42nd (Manama, 2018), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively,
3. Expresses its concern that the State Party has repeatedly provided limited information on the state of conservation of the property and on the actions taken to implement the requests of the Committee at the time of inscription and in subsequent decisions, including its recommendation to the State Party to extend the northern boundaries of the property to include all attributes bearing the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), including the rock art sites, and urges again the State Party to consult with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies before finalizing the proposal for the boundaries of the Natural and Cultural Reserve of Ennedi so as to guarantee that all important areas are included and that an appropriate buffer zone is foreseen, and to submit a request for boundary modification for examination by the World Heritage Committee;
4. Requests that the State Party urgently develop and submit an action plan with a road map for the implementation of past Committee requests and recommendations;
5. Notes that the property continues to be managed through a public-private partnership, and is monitored by a contingent of eco-guards and that stakeholder awareness activities have been undertaken, and encourages the State Party and its partner to continue their efforts, particularly by providing adequate technical and financial resources to ensure the preservation of the OUV of the property;
6. Welcomes that preliminary discussions for the revision of the Management Plan have been initiated, also requests that this process be expedited and reiterates its request that the revised Management Plan provide continuity of management and conservation for the whole property, which meets international standards and includes an operational implementation calendar for all steps needed to achieve this goal and, which clarifies how the responsibilities of the new management system will be integrated with the established traditional management systems; the Management Plan should clearly:
 - a) Detail the measures foreseen to address the main potential threats and spell out management operations to conserve World Heritage values,
 - b) Include zonation which supports strict protection of the key areas for biodiversity,
 - c) Specify the institutional, staffing and budget regime to ensure effective management of the property,
 - d) Guarantee the full participation of local communities and of their traditional authorities in the management of the property;

7. Also notes the reported completion of numerous reports, manuals and other studies which could contribute to further document attributes under Criterion (ix), and further requests the State Party to submit the completed studies to the World Heritage Centre, and also reiterates its request to:
 - a) Establish a detailed botanical inventory of the site, to identify all important refugia and areas for relict flora to further document the attributes of the property supporting Criterion (ix),
 - b) Present more details on the status of biodiversity, including flagship species such as the relic crocodile population, including its genetic viability;
8. Appreciates the efforts to reintroduce flagship wildlife species which had disappeared from the property as a result of poaching, and requests the State Party to provide more information on these efforts, including on the strategy to re-establish viable populations in the property;
9. Further notes that no other vandalism of rock art has been reported at the property since 2017;
10. Further requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the state of conservation of the property and progress made in the implementation of all Committee requests and recommendations since inscription in 2016, including functioning of the management system and update of the management plan, report on the damage due to vandalism of the rock art at Fada in 2017, the need to further document attributes under Criterion (ix), and establishing a zonation system which supports strict protection of the key areas for biodiversity ;
11. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2025**, 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 48th session.

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

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

ARAB STATES

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

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

NATURAL PROPERTIES

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

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

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

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

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

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

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

53. Volcanoes of Kamchatka (Russian Federation) (N 765bis)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

54. Western Caucasus (Russian Federation) (N 900)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1999

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/900/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/900/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

April 2008, May 2010 and September 2012: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring missions; May 2009: high-level visit by the Director of the World Heritage Centre and the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee; November 2016: IUCN Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management systems / management plan (lack of Management Plan)
- Legal framework (weakening of conservation controls and laws)
- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation (impacts of proposed tourism infrastructure development)
- Ground transport infrastructure (road construction)
- Illegal activities (deforestation)

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/900/>

Current conservation issues

On 19 February 2024, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/900/documents/>, providing the following information:

- The construction of the Lagonaki Mountain ski resort is still under consideration. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the impact of the proposed resort on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre. The decision to proceed with the construction will only be taken after approval by the World Heritage Committee;
- The possibility of building ski infrastructure on Mount Tabunnaya is not considered;
- Regarding the development of areas adjacent to the property, the State Party notes that the territories of the Sochi All-Republican State Nature Reserve and the Sochi National Park are not part of the property;
- The “Upper reaches of the Pshekha and Pshehashkha rivers” natural monument has been redesignated into the “Mountain Adygea” natural park. The “Upper Reach of the Tsitsa River” natural monument has been redesignated as the “Upper Reach of the Tsitsa River” natural park. Construction or major rehabilitation works in these areas of the property can only be considered if all the requirements of the Convention are met;
- The proposed bill that would have allowed for changes in the boundaries of protected natural areas of federal significance for the implementation of economic activities has been suspended;
- The road to Lunnaya Polyana is used for forestry and fire management purposes;
- In considering the possibility and feasibility of constructing a new highway and railway from the North Caucasus to the Black Sea, which will cross the property, the State Party will follow the spirit of the Convention;
- A scientifically based assessment of the recreational capacity of the territory of the Caucasus State Nature Reserve shall be conducted in response to a series of regulatory acts adopted in 2023.

On 31 January 2024, the World Heritage Centre transmitted to the State Party third party information reporting on:

- Further preparatory works for the ski resort in the Lagonaki area of the property and the creation of a biosphere polygon to allow this construction within the property;
- Plans for a second ski resort “Zikhiya” on the slopes of Mounts Guzeripl and Oshten within the property;
- Large scale road construction in the area included in the property in the Republic of Adygea;
- Plans for the transfer of lands in the property to the adjacent Sochi Wildlife Refuge;
- Road construction in the Sochi National Park close to the boundary of the property and road construction in the Mountain Adygea Nature Park within the property;

- Plans for the construction of a reservoir in the River Tsitsa Headwaters Nature Park within the property;
- Plans for construction of new mountain resorts in the Tabunnaya Mountain range within the property and the Grusheviy ridge in the Sochi National Park;
- Plans for the construction of a railway and highway between the proposed Lagonaki resort, the Arkhyz resort and Krasnaya Polyana passing through the property; and
- Plans for the construction of an airport in the Republic of Adygea.

On 2 April 2024, the World Heritage Centre received a response from the State Party confirming several statements made in its state of conservation report, as follows:

- The construction of the Lagonaki ski resort is not underway, but it is acknowledged that surveys are being carried out and that an EIA is being prepared. It is acknowledged that the approved 2021 Regulation for the Caucasus State Nature Reserve established a biosphere polygon in an area within the property in the part of the Lagonaki plateau, which allows for the development of educational tourism, physical culture and sports;
- The current strategic planning documents do not provide for the construction of the “Zikhiya” ski resort, and the construction of resorts on Mount Tabunnaya is not being considered;
- No areas are planned to be excluded from the property. The protected buffer zone area of 6,000 ha in Adygea, included in the property at its inscription in 1999, was abolished by a regional regulatory legal act in 1998, prior to the inscription of the property; therefore, it needs to be clarified whether it can be considered as part of the property;
- The reported roads within the property in Adygea have a firefighting purpose, with one of them also being used for drinking water facilities. The mentioned reservoir in the River Tsitsa Headwaters Nature Park is located outside the property;
- No information is available on the possible construction of an airport in Adygea.

On 7 May 2024, the State Party invited the joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to visit the property in October 2024.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

Whilst it is welcomed that the proposed Mount Tabunnaya ski resort is no longer under consideration, the confirmation that the construction of a ski resort in the Lagonaki area of the property is still under consideration remains of utmost concern. In this regard, it is worth recalling the position of the Committee that the construction of large-scale infrastructure within the property, including on the Lagonaki Plateau, would constitute a case for inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines. Therefore, the State Party should be urged not to proceed with plans for a ski resort within the property, to immediately cease all ongoing preparatory work at Lagonaki, and to identify alternative locations, in accordance with the request of the Committee in its Decision **45 COM 7B.27**. It should also be recalled that previous Reactive Monitoring missions and Committee decisions clearly established that the entire Lagonaki Plateau was included in the property at the time of inscription and that the IUCN evaluation considered the area as an integral part of the property’s OUV, in particular for its rich biodiversity, especially its high carabid species diversity, and the fact that the area contains two thirds of the vascular plant species of the property, including many endemics.

It is of further concern that the information provided by the State Party on 2 April 2024 indicates that the approved 2021 Regulation for the Caucasus State Nature Reserve established a biosphere polygon in a part of the Lagonaki Plateau, allowing for the development of educational tourism, physical culture and sports, whilst the State Party had confirmed in its 2022 report that the legal protection regime of the Lagonaki Plateau was determined by its ‘statutory protection regime’ and that economic development of the part of the Lagonaki Biosphere Polygon within the property was neither possible nor planned. Given that the Lagonaki ski resort is still under consideration, despite the very clear position of the Committee, as reflected in all its decisions on this property since 2011, that this is not in keeping with the World Heritage status, the organisation of the Reactive Monitoring mission to the property is pressing.

It is also of great concern that the State Party questions whether the 6,000 ha protected buffer zone area in Adygea is included in the property. It should be recalled that the State Party had assured the 2010 Reactive Monitoring mission to the property that authority over this area had been returned to the federal level and that the protected status of this area would be reinstated. To date, this issue remains unresolved and there are numerous reports of road development and other activities in the area which, if confirmed, would not be consistent with World Heritage status. It should also be recalled that the State Party should submit a boundary clarification based on the boundaries of the property as inscribed and in accordance with the technical clarifications provided by the World Heritage Centre in its letter of 5 April 2022.

The information on ongoing proposals for a new highway and railway connecting the North Caucasus to the Black Sea remains of utmost concern, as it would bisect the property. While noting the State Party's statement that the Operational Guidelines do not explicitly prohibit activities within World Heritage properties, it needs to be stressed that only activities that do not adversely impact on the property's OUV can be permitted. In addition, at the time of inscription, the State Party provided explicit assurances that linear infrastructure projects, such as highways, would not be implemented within the property. In line with this commitment, the State Party should be urged not to proceed with these developments. Further concerns are raised in relation to proposals for the development of a 13 km tunnel for the road between Arkhyz and Krasnaya Polyana, which is reported to fall partially within the property boundaries. In this regard, the State Party should provide further information on this proposal, indicating the exact location in relation to the property boundaries and explaining how this development is consistent with the protection requirements of the Operational Guidelines. Similarly to the highway, this tunnel proposal (i.e. a linear infrastructure project) should not proceed if it is inconsistent with the requirements to protect the OUV of the property, and if it may negatively impact the property's OUV.

It is noted that the Lunnaya Polyana road is used for forestry and fire management purposes. However, the importance of ensuring that all infrastructure facilities, even if deemed necessary for management and research purposes, does not have a negative impact on the property's OUV should be reiterated. The State Party should also be requested to provide information on whether the road provides access to the private ski resort / Biosphere Centre at Lunnaya Polyana, as alleged in previous third-party reports, noting that the State Party stated in its 2022 state of conservation report that work on the road had been discontinued.

Whilst acknowledging that the proposed developments in the Sochi Federal Wildlife Refuge and Sochi National Park are located outside the property, it is worth recalling the repeated requests of the Committee not to allow the construction of large-scale infrastructure in the Sochi Federal Wildlife Refuge and Sochi National Park immediately adjacent to the property, given the potential impacts on the OUV of the property, and also noting concerns about the potential and existing impacts of development in these areas on a number of key species within the property. Furthermore, recalling Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines, which states that States Parties shall ensure that Environmental Impact Assessments are carried out as a prerequisite for development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around a World Heritage property, the State Party should also be requested again to immediately halt the notified infrastructure projects until their potential impacts on the OUV have been assessed in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context and the assessment submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN.

Recalling the Committee's utmost concern about reports of a possible new draft law that would allow the boundaries of federally protected areas to be changed to accommodate economic activities, it is noted with appreciation that this bill has been suspended.

However, concerns remain about the legal protection status of the regional protected areas included in the property, including the above-mentioned protected buffer zone in Adygea, especially in light of reported infrastructure projects in some of these areas. The State Party should be urged once again to ensure that the legal regulations applying to all components of the property, in particular the Nature Parks managed by the Republic of Adygea, are brought into line with the protection requirements of the Operational Guidelines, and should therefore be requested to provide detailed information on the legal status of all components of the property in advance of the Reactive Monitoring mission.

The joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, proposed by the State Party to be held in October 2024, should assess a range of issues, including whether the legal protection of the property meets the requirements of the Operational Guidelines and whether the potential impacts of proposed infrastructure and road development projects pose a potential danger to the OUV of the property in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines, thereby

meeting the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The mission will also need to assess other possible threats to the property, including the extent of the impact of invasive alien species.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.54

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decisions **32 COM 7B.25**, **42 COM 7B.80**, **43 COM 7B.18**, **44 COM 7B.110** and **45 COM 7B.27**, adopted at its 32nd (Quebec City, 2008), 42nd (Manama, 2018), 43rd (Baku, 2019), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions, respectively,
3. Recalling that the Lagonaki Plateau is essential in expressing the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, in particular for its rich biodiversity, especially its high carabid species diversity, and the fact that the area contains two thirds of the vascular plant species of the property, including many endemics, expresses its utmost concern at the confirmation that the construction of a ski resort in the Lagonaki area of the property remains under consideration;
4. Reaffirms its position that the construction of large-scale infrastructure within the property, including on the Lagonaki Plateau, would constitute a case for inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines, and urges the State Party not to proceed with plans for a ski resort within the property, to immediately cease all ongoing preparatory work at Lagonaki and to identify alternative locations outside the property;
5. Reiterates its utmost concern about the plans for the construction of a new highway and railway connecting the North Caucasus to the Black Sea, including routes that would bisect the property, and urges again the State Party not to proceed with these developments, in accordance with the assurances provided at the time of inscription that no linear infrastructure projects such as highways or railways would be allowed within the property;
6. Requests the State Party to provide further information on the proposals to develop a 13 km tunnel, through the property, for the road between Arkhyz and Krasnaya Polyana, including its exact location, and further urges the State Party not to proceed if it is inconsistent with the protection requirements outlined in the Operational Guidelines, or if it may negatively impact the OUV of the property;
7. Noting the information that the Lunnaya Polyana road is used for forestry and fire management purposes, recalls the importance of ensuring that all infrastructure, even if deemed necessary for management and research purposes, does not have a negative impact on the OUV of the property, and further requests the State Party to clarify whether the road provides access to the private ski resort / Biosphere Centre at Lunnaya Polyana;
8. Reiterates its request to the State Party not to allow the construction of large-scale infrastructure in the Sochi Federal Wildlife Refuge and the Sochi National Park immediately adjacent to the property, given its potential impact on the OUV of the property, and also requests the State Party to immediately halt the notified infrastructure projects until their potential impacts have been adequately assessed in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context and the

resulting Environmental Impact Assessments submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN;

9. Also reiterates its request to the State Party to define a strategic approach to tourism development, including through the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) reported to be underway, by identifying suitable alternative locations for tourism infrastructure development outside the boundaries of the property, as well as appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that any tourism-related development in the vicinity of the property is consistent with the preservation of the OUV of the property;
10. Notes with appreciation that the draft law that would have allowed the boundaries of federally protected areas to be changed to accommodate economic activities has been suspended;
11. Expresses further concern about the protection status of different components of the property managed by the Republic of Adygea, and urges again the State Party to ensure that the legal regulations applying to all components of the property are brought into line with the protection requirements of the Operational Guidelines, and to provide detailed information on the legal status of all components of the property ahead of the Reactive Monitoring mission;
12. Notes the proposal by the State Party to hold the joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission in October 2024 and reiterates the need for the mission to assess the state of conservation of the property, in particular the status of planned infrastructure and road development projects within and in the vicinity of the property and their cumulative impacts, the status and adequacy of the legal protection of the property and whether the property meets the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines, and to assess other threats to the property, including the extent of the impact of invasive alien species;
13. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, 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, **considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilisation to preserve its OUV, including the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

55. 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 31 January 2024, 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:

- Of the 140 km of border between Mexico and the United States of America (USA) along the northern boundary of the property, the border wall extends 109 km (according to the USA figures) or 128.7 km (according to Mexican figures), with the only gaps remaining in the mountainous areas;
- The border wall consists of a solid metal wall, parallel barbed wire mesh fence, as well as parallel roads. There are small wildlife openings along the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument;
- The Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Plan has been prepared and includes a captive breeding programme, water and forage supply improvement project, pronghorn translocation programme, census and aerial monitoring;
- Pronghorn population estimates show stable to increasing trends since 2000, with a degree of variation. The 2022 survey observed the second highest number of pronghorns ever recorded (80 individuals) in the property;
- Six individual pronghorns (3 males and 3 females) were recently released in the property through the translocation programme;

- Research has been undertaken to assess the potential impacts of human development and environmental characteristics on pronghorn habitat to inform species management, including wildlife crossings and overpasses for wildlife and strategies to improve pronghorn movement;
- The Puerto Peñasco Photovoltaic Power Plant, located 7 km east of the property's buffer zone, commenced construction in 2022 with a substation located in the buffer zone;
- The transmission network will be built on the existing Puerto Peñasco-Golfo de Santa Clara state highway, which passes through 7.75 km of the property;
- Operational conditions were outlined including measures to minimise negative impacts of the project alongside a monitoring and enforcement programme to ensure that any potential negative impacts of the transmission line are identified and addressed;
- A collaboration agreement was signed between the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) to establish joint mechanisms for the compliance with the conditions of operation.

On 31 October 2023, the State Party of Mexico invited the Reactive Monitoring mission to the property. However, on 19 January 2024, the mission was postponed by the State Party due to a number of factors, including capacity constraints, environmental conditions and insecurity in the vicinity of the property, and is to be rescheduled in consultation with the USA authorities.

On 23 February 2024, in a letter to the World Heritage Centre, the State Party of the USA informed that a map of the border barrier will be shared with the World Heritage Centre in the near future with the necessary precautions due to its sensitivity. The letter further informed that the mission is envisioned for late 2024. Updates were provided on the Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Plan, which is being implemented as quickly and efficiently as possible, according to relevant experts within the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Park Service has initiated a study to be conducted by scientists from the US Geological Survey and the University of Arizona to assess the impacts of the US-Mexico border barrier on mammal communities in the Sonoran Desert, with initial results expected by 2025 and a final report in early 2026.

On 22 March 2024, a reply was sent to the State Parties of the USA and Mexico requesting a possible window of time when climatic conditions could be considered favourable for the mission, in order to ensure that its report is presented at the 47th session of the Committee in 2025. Further details on the implementation of the Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Plan and the study of mammal communities of the Sonoran Desert, including its Terms of Reference, were requested for review and comment by IUCN as appropriate.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

It is noted with concern that the border wall, which extends along almost the entire boundary between the property and the adjoining areas of the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, has disrupted the ecological connectivity of this transboundary landscape and has blocked the migratory routes of Sonoran Pronghorn, an attribute of the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), restricting their access to critical feeding and breeding areas, with likely consequences for genetic variability.

Mitigation measures are therefore urgently needed to restore the ecological connectivity across the transboundary landscape. Whilst recent surveys indicate that the herd population on the property may be stable or increasing, it is imperative that measures are undertaken to ensure that the negative impacts of the border wall, amongst other factors including climate change, do not result in a long-term decline in the pronghorn population. It remains important to closely and continuously monitor the key species and to take an adaptive management approach in response to any significant changes in the size and the health of these populations, in particular noting the level of variation observed in the herd's population. The development and implementation of the Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Plan is therefore noted with appreciation and it is essential that the activities outlined in the Plan are effectively implemented, including the captive breeding programme, water and forage supply improvement project, pronghorn translocation programme, census and aerial monitoring.

Recalling the request of the Committee, in its Decision **45 COM 7B.2**, to develop, resource and implement an urgent action plan to assess and mitigate the impacts of the border wall on the property and to restore ecological connectivity, and to submit it to the World Heritage Centre as soon as possible and no later than 1 February 2024, it is noted with concern that no information has been provided by the

States Parties of Mexico and the USA to indicate that the action plan has been developed. This should be urgently developed and implemented in parallel with the Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Plan and other measures to safeguard the property's OUV, including measures to avoid further depletion of scarce water resources.

The mitigation measures and operating conditions for the photovoltaic power plant throughout the construction and operational phases of the project are noted, and the State Party of Mexico should ensure that these conditions are consistent 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.

Noting that the Reactive Monitoring mission to the property has not yet taken place, it is essential that the State Party of Mexico, in close cooperation with the State Party of the USA, reschedule the mission as soon as possible. The mission should assess the impact of the border wall on the OUV of the property and the measures taken to guarantee the ecological connectivity of the property with adjacent wildlife dispersal areas, alongside other factors potentially affecting OUV, recalling the position of the Committee that the property may meet the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines, if ecological connectivity is not restored to safeguard the viability of key wildlife populations.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.55

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decision **45 COM 7B.2**, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),*
3. *Reiterates its concern about the border wall constructed in the United States of America (USA), which extends along the entire boundary between the property and adjoining areas of the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and most of the Cabeza Prieto National Wildlife Refuge, with the exception of two mountainous areas;*
4. *Reiterates again 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 Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;*
5. *Encourages further transboundary cooperation between the States Parties of Mexico and the USA to assess and mitigate the impacts of the border wall on the OUV of the property, including the completion of the commissioned study to evaluate the impacts of the border wall on mammal communities of the Sonoran Desert;*
6. *Notes with appreciation the measures taken through the Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Plan and also reiterates its request to the States Parties of Mexico and the USA to expedite the implementation of the Recovery Plan and measures to avoid further depletion of scarce water resources;*
7. *Notes with concern that no information has been provided on the development of an action plan to assess and mitigate the impacts of the border wall on the OUV of property and to restore ecological connectivity, as requested in its Decision **45 COM 7B.2**, and requests again the State Party of the USA, in accordance with Article 6.3 of the Convention, to develop, resource and implement this urgent action plan in cooperation with the State Party of Mexico, and to submit it to the World Heritage Centre as soon as possible and no later than **1 February 2025**;*

8. *Reiterates that if ecological connectivity is not restored to safeguard the viability of key wildlife populations, the property may meet the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines;*
9. *Notes the mitigation measures and operational conditions for the Puerto Peñasco photovoltaic project, including its associated transmission network, throughout the construction and operational phases of the project, and requests the State Party to ensure that these conditions are consistent with the management of the property and to closely monitor potential impacts and take an adaptive approach to ensure that any negative impacts on the OUV of the property are avoided and that the conservation of the important biodiversity in the wider landscape, which supports the OUV, is ensured;*
10. *Notes that the joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission has been postponed, and further requests the State Party of Mexico, in coordination with the State Party of the USA, to re-schedule the joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring Mission to the property as a matter of urgency to assess the impact of the border wall on the OUV of the property and the measures taken to guarantee ecological connectivity of the property with the adjacent wildlife dispersal areas, alongside other factors potentially affecting the OUV;*
11. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, 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, **considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilization to preserve its OUV, including the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

AFRICA

56. 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

USD 40,000 from the Rapid Response Facility (RRF) in 2022;

USD 247,870 from the Government of Norway in 2020-2024

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
- Transhumance
- Insecurity
- Poaching

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

Current conservation issues

On 29 January 2024, the States Parties of Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger submitted a joint report on the state of conservation of the property, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/749/documents>, providing the following information:

- The managers of the property in the three States Parties have undertaken a number of initiatives since 2022 to re-establish their control over the entire area;
- In addition to a biannual camera trap campaign to monitor cheetahs and leopards, pending completion of the biannual aerial inventory of the property, envisaged for 2023 but postponed to 2024 due to the sociopolitical situation in the region, drones and joint patrols with the Defence and Security Forces are continually collecting information on the state of the fauna;
- Significant progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission, notably including: the adoption of plans for securing, rehabilitating and developing the Arly and W national parks (Burkina Faso); the systematization of environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs) for infrastructure construction projects, inside and on the periphery of the property; the setting up of a special monitoring programme for damalisks, hartebeest and Defassa waterbucks in the Benin component of the property; the Multi-hazard Early Warning System, which is in the process of becoming operational; submission of the topographical map of the property and its buffer zone to the World Heritage Centre; and the marking out of transhumance corridors in Benin;

- Several initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen the sustainable financing mechanism for the property, including: development of the Resource Mobilization Strategy for the Climate Change Adaptation Plan (PACC-WAP), consolidation of the West African Savannah Foundation (WASF) and financial support from the German Development Bank (KFW) and the French Development Agency (AFD);
- Following the meeting of the Council of Ministers (June 2023), an annual allocation of 25 million CFA francs (approximately \$40,000) per country was agreed, as from 2024, for operation of the Executive Secretariat of the W-Arly-Pendjari Complex (SE-WAP), whose headquarters are hosted by Niger;
- An Adapt-WAP Green Credit Revolving Fund has been set up to diversify income-generating activities for communities living near the property;
- The State Party of Niger will resubmit a request for a minor modification to the boundaries of the property in the Niger component in January 2024. A request for a minor modification to the boundaries of the property in the Benin component will be submitted very shortly;
- A number of projects in and around the property, at various stages of completion, have been the subject of ESIA: the construction of an oil pipeline between Niger and Benin, improvements to and asphaltting of the Banikoara – Kérékou – Burkina Faso border road and rehabilitation of the Tapoa living accommodation in the W Park (Niger);
- In their correspondence of 21 November 2023 and 25 January 2024, the States Parties invited the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to carry out the joint Reactive Monitoring mission at the property in February 2024.

On 1 February 2024, the State Party of Niger submitted a proposal for a minor modification to the boundaries of the property to create a buffer zone, with the support of Burkina Faso and Benin.

On 2 February 2024, the World Heritage Centre contacted the United Nations security service in Burkina Faso to check the feasibility of the itineraries proposed by the States Parties and any security requirements for the effective organization of the mission. On 9 April 2024, the United Nations Security Officer in Burkina Faso informed the World Heritage Centre that, in view of the situation currently prevailing in the W Park, he would only be able to give a precise answer after contacting the military authorities.

Analysis and conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The security situation in the area known as the three borders, which straddles the property, remains very precarious due to the presence of armed groups. Added to this security challenge are other difficulties linked to the sociopolitical situation in the region and in Niger in particular.

Violent events persist both within and around the property, despite the fact that the States Parties have undertaken several initiatives at local, national and sub-regional level to re-establish effective control over the entire property and its area of influence. It is recommended that the Committee deplore the continuing insecurity in the region and encourage the States Parties to continue their efforts to restore security and provide accurate data on the coverage of surveillance of the property, as well as the effectiveness thereof.

The considerable efforts made by the States Parties and the significant progress made in implementing the recommendations of the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission are appreciated. Although it is too early to assess the impact of implementation of these recommendations, the Committee should welcome this progress and encourage the States Parties to maintain the momentum towards full implementation of the recommendations.

Although aerial surveys have continued, it is recommended that the request be reiterated to carry out regular aerial surveys of all components of the property using the same methodology, so that the results can be compared and wildlife population trends identified.

Recalling the observation of the 2022 mission that the antelope translocation project had been implemented despite the reservations of the Antelope Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), it is recommended that further information be sought concerning this project and the additional translocation project planned between the Pendjari and W National Parks in Benin reported by the 2022 mission and that all species translocation projects be carried out in accordance with international standards.

The significant progress made by the States Parties in operationalizing the SE-WAP is to be congratulated. It is recommended that governance bodies continue to be set up and that more technical and financial resources be made available to ensure that they operate optimally in the long term.

The preliminary ESIA report on the oil pipeline project crossing 38 km of the buffer zone of the Benin component of the property reveals a number of significant negative impacts on fauna and flora at all stages of the project and along its entire route. However, an assessment of the draft ESIA report by IUCN shows that there has been no specific analysis of the potential negative impacts of the project on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) attributes of the property. It is regrettable that the ESIA for this project was not submitted to the World Heritage Centre before the final decision was taken to implement it, in accordance with the Guidelines. Noting that the project has already been in the operational phase since November 2023, it is recommended that the States Parties provide detailed information on the route of the oil pipeline in relation to the property, as well as on the measures taken to avoid any potential negative impact and the measures taken in anticipation of possible accidents in order to avoid pollution damage and fires.

It is noted with concern that the project to asphalt the Banikoara – Kérérou – Burkina Faso border road passes through the W Park in Benin and that this existing route was chosen over an alternative further from the property for economic reasons. The IUCN notes that the environmental assessment report does not present alternative routes and concludes that the project presents potential significant adverse impacts on soil, vegetation, groundwater and air along the route of the project; also that the cumulative impacts of asphaltting the road on the characteristics of the OUV have not been sufficiently taken into account. These include collisions with wildlife, increased poaching, noise pollution and fragmentation of wildlife habitats, as well as potential impacts on the Burkina Faso component of the property, which is contiguous with the W Park in Benin. Noting that the project is already in the implementation phase, it is recommended that a halt to the work be requested and that the States Parties provide the World Heritage Centre with detailed information concerning the measures taken to avoid any negative impact on the property's OUV before any decision be taken to continue implementing the project.

It is noted that the request has been submitted for a minor modification to the boundaries of the property in the Niger component and that a similar initiative is under way to modify the boundaries of the property in the Benin component in order to strengthen its protection. It is positive that further progress has been made to strengthen the property's sustainable financing mechanism. It is recommended that ongoing technical and financial support from partners be welcomed and encouraged in order to ensure long-term sustainable funding for the property.

In its Decision **45 COM 7B.3**, the World Heritage Committee requested that the States Parties invite a new Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the measures undertaken by the States Parties to restore the security of the property, strengthen its management and determine whether OUV is still in any danger. It is appreciated that the States Parties, in their correspondence of 21 November 2023 and 25 January 2024, have invited the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to carry out the new joint monitoring mission. The response of the United Nations Security Officer in Burkina Faso, dated 9 April 2024, to the World Heritage Centre's correspondence of 2 February 2024 has been noted. It is recommended that the Committee invite the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to carry out the mission as soon as security conditions in the concerned countries permit.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.56

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decision **45 COM 7B.3**, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),*
3. *Deplores the continuing insecurity in the region of the property marked by the presence of armed groups, welcomes the efforts undertaken by the States Parties to re-establish effective control over the entire surface area of the property and its zone of influence and encourages them to continue their efforts to restore security within the area of the property;*

4. *Also welcomes the progress made by the States Parties and their technical and financial partners in collaboration with the local communities in implementing certain corrective measures identified by the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission, despite the difficult security context in the region, and calls upon the States Parties to maintain this momentum in order to fully implement these recommendations for effective protection and management of the property and to provide accurate data on the coverage of surveillance of the property, as well as the effectiveness thereof;*
5. *Thanks the technical and financial partners who are supporting conservation of the property as well as implementation of the recommendations of the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission and reiterates its appeal to the international community to further support the efforts of the States Parties to ensure sustainable financing for the property;*
6. *Takes note of the establishment of a special ecological monitoring programme for certain emblematic species in the Benin component of the property and reiterates its request to the States Parties to carry out regular aerial surveys of all components of the property using the same methodology, so that the results can be compared and wildlife population trends identified, as soon as the security situation permits, and to include this data in the reports submitted to the World Heritage Centre;*
7. *Notes with concern that the project to translocate antelopes between the Pendjari Park in Benin and the Chinko Nature Reserve in the Central African Republic was carried out despite the reservations of the Antelope Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (AfrASG SSC), is concerned that another translocation project was planned between the Pendjari National Park and the W National Park of Benin at the time of the 2022 mission and also asks the States Parties to provide the World Heritage Centre with a status report on these projects and to implement rigorous long-term management measures for any risks that may be associated with introducing the translocation of wildlife species onto the property;*
8. *Regrets that the environmental and social impact assessments (ESIA) for the Niger–Benin oil pipeline project and the Banikoara–Kérékou–Burkina Faso border road project were not transmitted to the World Heritage Centre prior to the commencement of operations, in accordance with paragraph 172 of the Guidelines and recalls that any major project within the boundaries of the property, its buffer zone and the wider setting should be subject to an ESIA, including a specific assessment of potential negative impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, following the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage context and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for evaluation by IUCN prior to approval;*
9. *Noting that the oil pipeline project has already been in the operational phase since November 2023, expresses its concern about the potential impacts of the project on the property’s OUV as indicated by the assessment of the ESIA report and further requests that the States Parties provide further detailed information on the measures planned to preserve the property’s OUV, as well as the measures taken in anticipation of possible accidents, in order to avoid pollution and fire damage;*
10. *Noting also that the road project is already in the process of being implemented, expresses its concern about potential significant negative impacts on the property OUV identified in the ESIA report, as well as the lack of information concerning the impacts of the project in its continuity through the W Park of Burkina Faso, furthermore requests that implementation of the project be suspended without delay and that the States Parties provide the World Heritage Centre with detailed information concerning the measures taken to avoid any negative impact on the property’s OUV, in both the Benin and Burkina Faso components, before any decision be taken to continue implementing the project;*

11. Takes note that the request has been submitted for a minor modification to the boundaries of the property in its Niger component for the creation of a buffer zone and also encourages the States Parties to submit the request for a minor modification to the boundaries of the property in its Benin component, in order to strengthen its protection, by **1 February 2025**, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session;
12. Further requests that the Reactive Monitoring mission requested by the Committee in its Decision **45 COM 7B.3**, to assess the measures undertaken by the States Parties to restore the security of the property, strengthen its management and determine whether OUV is still in any danger, be undertaken as soon as the security conditions permit in the countries concerned;
13. Finally requests that the States Parties submit an updated report to the World Heritage Centre on the state of conservation of the property and implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations, by **1 February 2025**, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session, **considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilization to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value, including possible inclusion on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

57. Ivindo National Park (Gabon) (N 1653)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2021

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/1653/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1653/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:

- concessions in the buffer zone of Ivindo National Park
- need to enhance the management, technical and financial capacity
- Need to update the management plan of the property

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1653/>

Current conservation issues

On 22 February 2024, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1653/documents/>, which provides the following information:

- Following the mobilization of funds, in particular through the Norwegian government's funds with UNESCO, the process of revising the Management Plan for the property, despite the delay caused by COVID-19 and the political and military crisis in Gabon in 2023, is now under way with the launch of the call for tenders in October 2023;
- At this date, no infrastructure or development project is under way within the area of the property, and any extension project, if feasible for the town of Makokou, will not be directed towards the property;
- The activities of the forestry concessions established in the buffer zone of the property are monitored by the park services, in collaboration with agents from the Ministry of Water and Forests, to ensure compliance with the recommendations and specifications;
- Of the five companies managing forestry concessions around the park, CEB and Rougier Gabon have Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification and the process is under way for KHLL and WCTS, while the concessions managed by ZING WANG, which nevertheless have a development, operation and processing plan, have not yet begun the FSC certification process;
- In addition to the appointment of a focal point responsible for monitoring all issues relating to its World Heritage Site status, a number of activities to be implemented in the context of updating the management plan, including renewal of the office of the Local Management Advisory Council (LMAC), training courses and an assessment using the IMET tool, will help to improve management, technical and financial capacities for effective conservation of the property;
- In addition to the activities carried out in collaboration with the Ipassa scientific research station, a wildlife inventory with teams from the Research Institute for Tropical Ecology (Institut de Recherche en Ecologie Tropicale (IRET) is under way and phenological monitoring based on tree fruiting and flowering will be launched in 2024.

Analysis and conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

It is recalled that at the time of inclusion of the property on the World Heritage List in 2021, the World Heritage Committee requested that the State Party update the General Management Plan for the property (the Management Plan 2016–2020) and ensure that this Plan take into account protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, notably through biodiversity inventories and a monitoring plan for the biodiversity of its freshwater and Caesalpinioideae forests. In addition, it had to be supported by secure, sufficient and sustainable funding for management of the property.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic and the political and military crisis in Gabon in 2023 have delayed the process, it is positive to note that funding has been mobilized, thanks to the support of UNESCO through funding from Norway, and that the process of updating the Management Plan, with several other activities planned, has now been launched and should be completed by the end of 2024. It is recommended that the Committee request that the State Party finalize this process as soon as possible and submit the updated Management Plan to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2025, for review by IUCN. In addition, the new Enhancing our Heritage Toolkit 2.0 also provides useful advice on effective World Heritage management.

The absence of any current infrastructure and development projects in the area of the property is noted. Nevertheless, the Committee should remind the State Party that any project planned within the property, its buffer zone or its wider setting should be subject to a specific assessment of the potential impacts on the property's OUV in accordance with the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage context, before decisions are taken that are difficult to reverse.

It should be noted that only two of the five companies managing the forest concessions around the property have FSC certification, thus complying with sustainable forest management procedures, and that the certification process is under way for two more. In view of the importance of sustainable forest management certification, the Committee should reiterate its recommendation to the State Party to ensure that all forest concessions in the buffer zone of the property are strictly controlled and managed without any significant impact on the property's OUV and certified (FSC) by 2025, as projected by the State Party.

The appointment of a focal point to monitor all issues relating to its status as a World Heritage site, as well as the activities to be implemented in the context of updating the management plan, illustrate the State Party's commitment to improving its managerial, technical and financial capacities for effective conservation of the property. It is recommended that the Committee encourage the State Party to

continue its efforts, in particular by providing sufficient technical and financial resources to ensure that the property's OUV is maintained.

As the property is included on the World Heritage List under criteria (ix) and (x), the wildlife inventory currently under way, as well as the phenological monitoring based on tree fruiting and flowering planned for 2024, are essential activities for monitoring the key attributes of the property's OUV. It is recommended that the Committee encourage the State Party to continue its efforts and ensure that these inventories follow the same methodology over the long term to facilitate analysis of fauna and flora population trends within the property.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.57

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decision **44 COM 8B.31**, adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),*
3. *Noting the cumulative delay in the process of updating the property's Management Plan due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the political and military crisis of 2023, welcomes the start of the process in 2023 and requests that the State Party finalize this process as soon as possible, submit the updated Management Plan to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN by **1 February 2025** and ensure that this Plan:*
 - a) *takes into account protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, including through biodiversity inventories and a monitoring plan for the biodiversity of its fresh water and Caesalpinioideae forests,*
 - b) *is developed through a fully participatory process, including consultations with local populations, both in the buffer zone and in the region adjacent to the property,*
 - c) *is supported by secure, sufficient and sustainable funding for management of the property;*
4. *Takes note of the absence of any infrastructure and development project in progress in the area of the property and reminds the State Party that any project planned within the property, its buffer zone or its wider setting should be subject to a specific assessment of the potential impacts on the property's OUV in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage context, before decisions are taken that are difficult to reverse;*
5. *Notes the cumulative delay in the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification process for the three other companies in charge of managing the forest concessions around the property and also requests that the State Party ensure that all forest concessions in the buffer zone of the property are strictly controlled, managed without any significant impact on the property's OUV and FSC certified, by 2025, as projected by the State Party;*
6. *Also notes the commitment of the State Party to improve managerial, technical and financial capacities for effective conservation of the property, notably through the appointment of a focal point and the forthcoming activities for renewal of the office of the Local Management Advisory Board, as well as IMET training and assessments, and encourages the State Party to continue its efforts, notably by making sufficient technical and financial resources available to ensure that the property's OUV is maintained;*

7. *Also recalls the importance of regular fauna and flora inventories for monitoring key attributes of the property's OUV, equally favourably welcomes the ongoing fauna inventory as well as the phenological monitoring based on tree fruiting and flowering planned for 2024 and also encourages the State Party to continue its efforts and to ensure that these inventories follow the same methodology over the long term in order to facilitate analysis of fauna and flora population trends within the property;*
8. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2025, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and implementation of the above-mentioned points.*

58. Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary (Senegal) (N 25)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1981

Criteria (vii)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1984-1988, 2000-2006

Previous Committee Decisions see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/25/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 8 (from 1980-2021)

Total amount approved: USD 332,493

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/25/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 300,000 from the Government of Norway for the period 2020-2024.

Previous monitoring missions

September 2000: UNESCO/IUCN/Ramsar mission; April 2004: UNESCO and IUCN participation in a multi-stakeholder workshop; May 2005: UNESCO/IUCN monitoring mission; 21-26 February 2022: UNESCO/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Invasive species;
- Integrated water management system not operational, water pollution and lack of hydrological monitoring;
- Soils salinity;
- Cattle grazing;
- Poaching and illegal fishing;
- Lack of management plan and sustained funding (issue resolved);
- Poor management capacity and constant changes in staff;
- Poor visitor management.

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/25/>

Current conservation issues

On 15 February 2024, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/25/documents/>, reporting the following:

- Numerous efforts have been made to contain and dissipate the threat posed by the advance of agriculture into the peripheral zone of the property; in particular the “eviction” of farmers living in the buffer zone. In addition, some agro-industries located on the periphery of the property have an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA);

- In 2023, monthly monitoring of waterbirds within the property identified a total of 2,205,916 individuals representing 105 species.
- The drainage water recovery channel in the flamingo sector was cleaned in July 2023;
- Physical and chemical parameters are now monitored monthly throughout the year to give an idea of water quality;
- Teams were deployed to clean certain bodies of water manually, as well as the Gainth sector colonized by the invasive species *Tamarix senegalensis*;
- A number of activities have been carried out by park staff to combat human pressure on the property, including patrols and environmental education and awareness-raising meetings, which have produced significant results. These include: arresting poachers and shepherds, seizing fishing equipment and products (fishing nets, longlines, canoes, fish bags and motorbikes); expelling herds of cattle from the park and raising awareness among the local population, particularly pupils, students and local development workers;
- A Land Use and Allocation Plan (POAS) is being implemented around the property with the contribution of the Park Conservator and local authorities;
- There were no outbreaks of avian influenza within the property in 2023. In addition, a regional One Health committee has been set up to support initiatives to take charge of response plans in the event of zoonoses and the State Party has undertaken to apply the guidelines resulting from the conclusions of the scientific working group on avian influenza.

A World Heritage Centre project monitoring mission visited the property in March 2024.

Analysis and conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The State Party's sustained efforts to contain and dissipate the threat posed by advancing agriculture in the peripheral zone of the property are noted, notably through the eviction of farmers from the buffer zone, demarcation of the property's boundaries and the completion of ESIA's by certain agro-industries located around the property. However, no information has been provided concerning concrete mitigation actions planned to avoid degradation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) by these industries.

With regard to the proliferation of invasive species within the property, the manual removal of *Tamarix senegalensis* and the cleaning of around 2 km of the drainage water recovery channel in the flamingo sector were also noted. However, recalling that the 2022 mission had already expressed concern about the ongoing colonization of *Ludwigia erecta*, the State Party has not provided any information on the specific invasive plant management plan or on finalization of construction of the drainage water recovery channel, as requested by the Committee. Similarly, a World Heritage Centre project monitoring mission visited the property in March 2024 and also noted the re-invasion of certain bodies of water by water lettuce and *Salvinia molesta*, preventing optimal use of natural areas by birds and also undermining preservation of the property's integrity. In addition, the mission was informed that the State Party was in discussions with the European Union, as part of a project submission to LIFE IP GrassBird Habitats for the installation of infrastructure to pump water out of the canal and into the Gorom backwater. It would therefore be significant if the State Party and its partners engaged in urgent discussions with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN on this crucial issue, and shared all available and useful documentation for better analysis of the situation on the ground.

The property OUV remains under significant threat due to a number of factors. In this respect, it is worth noting that park staff have carried out patrols and awareness-raising and environmental education meetings, although it is difficult to assess their effectiveness at this stage. These activities have led to the arrest of poachers and herders, the seizure of fishing equipment and products, the expulsion of herds of cattle from the park and awareness-raising among local people around the property.

Participation in the annual international count and monthly monitoring of waterbirds demonstrate the State Party's commitment to monitoring trends in the characteristic features of the property OUV through regular ecological monitoring. It is recommended that the Committee encourage the State Party to continue its ecological monitoring efforts, while standardizing the data collection method in order to obtain comparable data that can be used to determine long-term trends. The World Heritage Centre project monitoring mission also noted that the State Party has developed and is implementing a 2022–2026 development and management plan (DPM), as requested by the Committee, with the financial support of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The DPM submitted to the World Heritage Centre after the March 2024 project monitoring mission will be reviewed by IUCN to ensure that it addresses all of the

critical issues identified by the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission, such as water management, disaster risk management and invasive plants.

It is positive that no cases of avian influenza have been recorded on the property in 2023, given the importance of migratory waterbirds to the property OUV. Recalling the significant impact of avian influenza in other regions, it is recommended that the State Party continue to monitor the situation closely.

With regard to the ESIA and the Biodiversity Action Plan for the Rice Loop Road construction project and its potential negative impacts on the property OUV, the State Party has not provided any information in relation to its revision as requested by the Committee. This is all the more worrying as the road would cross the property for around 10 km and, according to the ESIA, would have a negative impact on the property OUV. In addition, the State Party does not provide any information in relation to several of the Committee's other requests, including the clean-up plan for the Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary (Parc National des Oiseaux du Djoudj – PNOD), the noise abatement plan and the strengthening of human resources.

As a follow-up to the 2022 mission, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN consider that, if the threats mentioned are not addressed urgently and rapidly, the property could soon meet the conditions for inclusion on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.58

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decisions **44 COM 7B.83** and **45 COM 7B.8**, adopted at its 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and 45th (Riyadh, 2023) extended sessions respectively,*
3. *Takes note of the sustained efforts of the State Party to contain and dissipate the threat posed by the advance of agriculture into the area around the property through appropriate measures taken to definitively resolve encroachments, demarcating the property boundaries and having environmental and social impact assessments (ESIA) carried out by certain agro-industries installed around the property; and requests that the State Party continue its efforts to ensure the integrity of the property in accordance with the recommendations of the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission;*
4. *Notes positively the progress made in combating the proliferation of invasive species through the manual removal of *Tamarix senegalensis* and the cleaning of the drainage water recovery channel in the flamingo sector; expresses its concern about the ongoing colonization of *Ludwigia erecta* within the property, as well as the invasion of some water bodies by water lettuce and *Salvinia molesta*, as noted by the World Heritage Centre project monitoring mission of March 2024, and reiterates its request to the State Party to develop and implement a specific urgent invasive plant management plan for the property;*
5. *Noting that discussions are underway with the European Union, in the context of a project proposal submission to LIFE IP GrassBirdHabitats, for the installation of infrastructure to pump and evacuate water from the channel into the Gorom backwater, as mentioned in the World Heritage Centre project monitoring mission of March 2024, also requests that the State Party and its partners engage in urgent discussions with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN on this crucial issue and share all available and useful documentation for better current analysis of the situation on the ground;*

6. Notes with appreciation the commitment of the State Party to monitor trends in the character-defining elements of the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) through regular ecological monitoring, including the annual international count and monthly monitoring of waterbirds within the property, and encourages the State Party to continue its ecological monitoring efforts while standardizing the data collection method;
7. Also notes that the State Party has developed and is implementing a 2022–2026 Development and Management Plan (DPM), as requested by the Committee, with the financial support of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and that this document will be reviewed by IUCN to ensure that it addresses all of the critical issues identified by the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission, such as water management, disaster risk management and invasive plants;
8. Expresses its deep concern about the potential negative impacts of the proposed construction of the "Rice Loop" road, which would cross the property for approximately 10 km and, according to the ESIA, have a negative impact on the property OUV, recalls that any planned project within the property, its buffer zone or its wider setting that could have an impact on the OUV should be assessed for its potential impacts in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage context, before decisions are taken that are difficult to reverse, and further requests that the State Party review the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and the Biodiversity Action Plan of this project and that this be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, prior to any approval of the project, and inform the World Heritage Centre of the progress of this project by **1 October 2024**;
9. Regrets that the State Party has not provided any information in relation to several of the Committee's requests and further reiterates its request that the State Party continue to implement the recommendations of the 2022 mission, as highlighted in the mission report and recalled in Decision **45 COM 7B.8**; in particular:
 - a) *Urgently take all necessary steps to complete construction of the drainage water removal channel by the end of 2024,*
 - b) *Work with UNESCO and IUCN as soon as possible to draw up a PNOD clean-up plan, an action plan to resolve problems linked to increasing salinization of the soil and progressive sedimentation and make the water quality monitoring system operational, including monitoring heavy metals,*
 - c) *Maintain vigilance with regard to land use around PNOD and carefully monitor the impact of bankruptcy of the largest agro-industrial unit located on the outskirts of PNOD in order to avoid uncontrolled resettlement in areas that could be left vacant by the closure of the Compagnie Agricole de Saint-Louis (CASL),*
 - d) *Ensure that no new rice paddies can be allocated within the buffer zone of the property and that a noise abatement plan can be drawn up and implemented as soon as possible to limit the impact of bird-scaring cannons on birds,*
 - e) *Undertake an analysis of the impact of avian influenza on the outstanding universal value of the property as soon as possible and implement the recommendations resulting from the study,*
 - f) *Retain in post for a reasonable period (at least three years) any Conservator appointed to be responsible for the property and appoint a director with the necessary qualifications to run the Biological Research Station, with this station reporting hierarchically to the PNOD Conservator, who is solely responsible for the state of conservation of the property,*
 - g) *Strengthen the management team with around ten additional trained and equipped staff and consider innovative mechanisms for sustainable financing of the property,*

- h) *Reactivate the Management Committee to make the property's buffer zone operational by issuing a regulatory text setting out its role, composition and operating procedures, as well as the budget required for its operation; this action should include revitalizing the inter-village committees (CIV) and their ancillary bodies (eco-guards and eco-guides);*
10. *Notes positively that no case of avian influenza has been recorded on the property and furthermore requests that the State Party maintain a high level of surveillance for avian influenza until the outbreak has been declared eradicated in a coordinated manner throughout the Senegal River Delta, including the Diawling Park in Mauritania, given the importance of migratory waterbirds for the property OUV;*
11. *Expresses its concern about the persistence of the various threats to the ecological integrity of the property and its OUV, in particular water pollution, the proliferation of invasive species induced by agro-industrial projects located in the buffer zone and the vulnerability of the communities bordering the property, as described by the 2022 mission, and also recalls that if these threats are not addressed urgently and rapidly, the property could soon meet the conditions for inclusion on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines;*
12. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, a progress report and, by **1 December 2025**, an updated report to the World Heritage Centre on the state of conservation of the property and implementation of the above points, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

59. Serengeti National Park (United Republic of Tanzania) (N 156)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

60. Mosi-oa-Tunya / Victoria Falls (Zambia, Zimbabwe) (N 509)

See Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add.2

ASIA AND PACIFIC

62. Great Barrier Reef (Australia) (N 154)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1981

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/154/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/154/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

March 2012: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; March 2022: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Changes to oceanic waters
- Ground water pollution
- Marine transport infrastructure (Coastal development, including development of ports, shipping lane impacts, grounding of ships)
- Non-renewable energy facilities (Liquefied Natural Gas facilities)
- Marine transport infrastructure (ports)
- Other climate change impacts
- Storms
- Surface water pollution
- Temperature change

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/154/>

Current conservation issues

On 30 January 2024, the State Party submitted a progress report, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/154/documents/>, providing the following information:

- Preliminary mapping of Reef catchments has been delivered to prioritise catchments for gully repairs, including associated funding. A joint Australian and Queensland government 'Streambank Remediation Program' is underway to further reduce sediment runoff from eroded streambanks and gullies in priority catchments, and will be complemented by the 'Landscape Repair Program';
- The Australian Government's AUD 1.2 billion Reef Protection and Restoration commitment includes funding to accelerate actions to meet water quality targets. Further investments will be made to support improved land management through voluntary practice change programmes, rehabilitating wetlands, building capacity and expanding successful pilot projects;
- Review of the Reef Scientific Consensus Statement (SCS) and Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) is underway and will be finalized in 2025;
- Protection of remnant and high value conservation areas has increased across Reef catchments, including the expansion of the protected area system, returning ownership and management of

identified lands to Traditional Owners, and pursuing engagement and incentives for sustainable native vegetation management;

- Recent reports indicate a 26% reduction in land clearing in Reef catchments between 2019 and 2021. The Queensland Government has developed a system to detect illegal land clearing, using remote sensing, allowing early intervention with landowners, which is complimented by the Statewide Land Cover and Trees Study (SLATS) to monitor and report on vegetation change;
- Activities to ensure compliance with Reef protection regulation standards across sugarcane and banana and beef cattle farming has increased across regulated Reef catchments, with the number of compliance officers more than doubling in 2023 compared to 2021, exceeding expectations;
- Industry participation in adopting best management practices (BMP) will be supported through the Reef Trust Water Quality Package 2022-23 to 2029-30, including AUD 10 million to support BMP programmes alongside a further AUD 25 million funding from the Queensland Government for practice improvement in key agricultural commodities;
- The Queensland Government is working to establish the voluntary Reef Credits Scheme and resultant market with an independent environmental markets administrator. A Nature Repair Market is being established to enable landholders to be issued with tradeable biodiversity certificates for repair and restoration projects in Reef catchments and the property, and will operate in parallel with the Carbon Credit Unit scheme;
- Regulations commenced to remove large gillnet licenses (N1; N2 & N) from the property. Limited 'NX' licenses will be available to allow for some gillnet fishing during the transition phase until these expire in 2027. NX licenses do not permit gillnetting in identified high value areas for threatened species and are subject to mandatory compliance enforcement measures;
- Commercial gillnets and small bait mesh nets have been banned from the northern third of the property and all dugong protection areas, with a limited number of exceptions, and hammerhead sharks were made no-take for commercial fisheries;
- Implementation of the Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027 has been accelerated, with 29 of 33 actions completed. Remaining actions, including finalisation of the Rocky Reef harvest strategy, are on track for delivery prior to the expiry of the Strategy;
- Legislation to mandate independent data validation on all commercial fishing vessels was initiated in December 2023, and will likely come into effect in the first quarter of 2024. Gillnet and trawl fisheries will be prioritised, with funding from Queensland and Australian governments, drawing on ecological risk assessments for each fishery;
- A climate change addendum to the Reef 2050 Plan has been developed, which reflects relevant commitments and legislation;
- Targets to reduce Australia's emissions by 43% below 2005 levels by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050 have been legislated. The Queensland Government has committed to reduce emission of 75% on 2005 levels by 2035;
- A Net Zero Plan and sectoral decarbonisation plans are being developed;
- The Australian Carbon Credit Union (ACCU) Scheme contributes to sediment reduction and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Scheme was independently reviewed to ensure integrity and alignment with best practice;
- The Reef Protection Package is funding adaptation research initiatives including the 'Crown-of-Thorns Starfish (COTS) Control Program', 'Reef Joint Field Management Program', and the Tourism Reef Protection Initiative;

The State Party considers in summary, that the report demonstrates a step-change in its approach to global climate action and marine management leadership. A letter of the State Party to UNESCO of 30 January 2024 also notes that Australia considers it appropriate to provide a state of conservation report in 2026 prior to any further consideration of adding the Reef on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This position is proposed given the time required to allow proper consideration of the efficacy of the investments and actions being taken.

On 23 February 2024, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN received information on progress about the management of the property from civil society, including WWF-Australia, the Australian Marine Conservation Society, and Earth Justice.

On 12 April 2024, the World Heritage Centre received additional information from the State Party, notably on prevalent shallow-water coral bleaching event affecting approximately 74% of the property according to aerial surveys undertaken in February and March 2024. The State Party also reported that in-water surveys are underway, which will enable them to assess the prevalence of bleaching among different species, habitats and depths in the coming months, while responding to the event by reducing cumulative pressures on the property and building resilience consistent with the adaptive management approach of the Reef 2050 Plan. Results of these assessments, including mortality rates, are anticipated to be available by the end of 2024.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

Implementation of the strong commitments made by the State Party in response to the 2022 joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission recommendations, including to reverse degraded water quality, halt all gillnet fishing, fully implement the fisheries management strategy and reduce CO₂ emissions in line with the Paris Agreement targets, has commenced and is on track as expected. The summer 2023-2024 mass bleaching event, which is the fifth mass bleaching event since 2016, is of utmost concern and is ongoing at the time of preparation of the present report. Mortality levels of the current bleaching are unclear at this stage. The State Party is urged to make mortality rates public as soon as possible. The current bleaching occurs as part of the fourth global mass bleaching, which is likely impacting at least 30% of the World Heritage-listed coral reef properties, and the implications across the World Heritage system will also need to be considered further.

The progress made to reduce sediment and nutrient loads into the property are welcomed, in particular the concerted action to focus on priority areas with the highest sediment runoff. The State Party should be urged to take a similar approach toward the reduction of dissolved inorganic nitrogen and announce its programme as a priority. Compliance with regulatory standards amongst sugarcane, banana and cattle farming is reported to be increasing, in part due to increased enforcement efforts, which are welcomed. Nevertheless, full compliance is required alongside accelerated adoption of best management practice, which go beyond the minimum regulatory standards, in line with the recommendations of the 2022 joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission.

Process to finalize the Scientific Consensus Statement and update of the Reef 2050 WQIP is welcomed. The State Party should be urged to ensure that the targets and programmes in the updated 2025-2030 WQIP are sufficiently ambitious to secure tangible results in reversing water quality. At this stage, it is uncertain whether the 2025 water quality targets will be achieved and efforts toward this end require the most diligent attention. Significant reductions in both sediment and dissolved inorganic nitrogen are essential for the future resilience of the property, in particular considering the rapidly changing climate conditions. Whilst progress is reported in reducing the rate of land clearing in Reef catchments, including through increased efforts in detection and enforcement of illegal clearing, it is of high concern that rates of native vegetation clearing remain significant. High levels of land clearing are incompatible with the objectives set out to reverse poor water quality. Native vegetation clauses under existing laws need strengthening to ensure that all remnant and high value growth areas are protected, including category X vegetation (under the Queensland Vegetation Management Act), in line with the recommendation of the 2022 joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, and alongside other high priority areas including riparian zones, lands vulnerable to degradation and areas contributing to sediment and nitrogen pollution. Programmes to repair and restore coastal wetland and riparian ecosystems alongside nutrient and pesticide pollution reduction must be implemented at the scale required to safeguard the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

Implementation of the commitments to phase out all destructive gillnet fishing across the property is on track and the decisive action of the State Party should be commended. It is essential that the property is fully gillnet free, without exception, by mid-2027 at the latest, in line with the State Party's commitments. It is also vital that new Net-Free Zones, in particular in key habitats that support the OUV of the property are being established and legislation is enforced, including the review and verification of catch amongst fisheries and publication of relevant data to ensure transparency.

Following the adoption of the Climate Change Act that legislated a 43% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions on 2005 levels by 2030, alongside the more ambitious targets set by the Queensland Government, the progress towards achieving the necessary emission reductions is noted. The State

Party should be urged to set more ambitious emission reduction targets consistent with limiting global temperature to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

The climate change addendum to the Reef 2050 Plan is noted with appreciation, and the State Party should ensure that the Plan is effectively implemented to limit the impacts of climate change on the property, including through enhanced adaptation measures for which the continued investment into their research and development is welcomed. The contribution of the Australian Carbon Credit Union (ACCU) Scheme towards sediment reduction and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as its independent review to ensure integrity and alignment with best practice, are noted. The State Party should be urged to ensure overall net benefits to the OUV of the property are delivered.

It is further important that programmes including the 'COTS Control Program' as well as the 'Reef Joint Field Management Program' are maintained, and that overall innovation in responding to threats faced by the property are scaled up and funded accordingly.

The World Heritage Centre and IUCN take note of the position of the State Party regarding the timelines for implementation. After submission of a state of conservation report by the State Party by 1 February 2026, the Committee could consider the inclusion of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger at its 48th session in 2026. Nevertheless it is clear that the property remains under serious threat, and urgent and sustained action is of utmost priority in order to improve the resilience of the property in a rapidly changing climate, in particular through implementation of all the recommendations of the March 2022 joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission and the commitments made by the Australian Government to the World Heritage Committee in 2023. Whilst there will be more complete information on the commitments to address the existing threat available to the World Heritage Committee in 2026 regarding the progress in implementation, following the five year review of the Reef 2050 Plan in 2025, the continuing and unprecedented sequence of bleaching events negatively affecting the property, including the reported ongoing significant event in summer 2023-24, make clear that there is a need for the Committee to also review the state of conservation of the property at the 47th session in 2025, notably in relation to the impacts of the latest bleaching event. Strengthening the resilience of the property as a whole is of utmost critical importance to give the property the chance to withstand repeated bleaching and extreme weather events.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.62

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decision 45 COM 7B.13, adopted at its extend 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),*
3. *Notes with utmost concern the continued threat to the property posed by climate change, and the negative impacts on its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) suffered through mass bleaching events, including the most recent and ongoing event in 2023-2024, and reiterates that securing the resilience of the property is of essential importance to give it the best chance to withstand the effects of climate change;*
4. *Welcomes the delivery of mapped priority areas for gully repairs, the commencement of a comprehensive programme to repair and restore gullies of the highest priority and the significant increases in compliance activity across sugarcane, banana and cattle farmers and urgently requests the State Party to maintain its efforts toward achieving the 2025 water quality targets, in particular for sediment and dissolved inorganic nitrogen, in line with the 2022 joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission recommendations and the commitments made by the State Party in 2023;*
5. *Notes with serious concern the remaining high rates of land clearing which are deemed inconsistent with the objectives set out to achieve the water quality targets, and requests the State Party to take urgent action to:*

- a) *Continue early detection and intervention to halt illegal land clearing,*
 - b) *Strengthen clauses under existing laws to ensure that all remnant and high value growth areas are protected, including category X vegetation (under the Queensland Vegetation Management Act), and other high priority areas including riparian zones, lands vulnerable to degradation and areas contributing to sediment and nitrogen pollution;*
6. *Welcomes the process to update the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) is on track for delivery in 2025, and urges the State Party to ensure that water quality targets, and actions implemented through the WQIP are sufficiently ambitious to ensure the OUV of the property is not further adversely impacted by low water quality;*
 7. *Commends the State Party on its decisive action to phase out gillnet fishing in the property, and requests the State Party to ensure that the property is fully gillnet free by mid-2027 at the latest, that new Net-Free Zones in key habitats for species that represent attributes of OUV are established, and that all aspects of the Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy are fully implemented;*
 8. *Notes with appreciation the climate change addendum to the Reef 2050 Plan, and requests the State Party to ensure the Plan is effectively implemented to limit the impacts of climate change on the property, and to set further ambitious targets to limit temperature increases to 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels and align its policies accordingly;*
 9. *Requests the State Party to maintain adaptation programmes, including the ‘Crown-of-Thorns Starfish Control Program’ and the ‘Reef Joint Field Management Program’, and increase funding for innovation and scaling up of priority solutions;*
 10. *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2025**, a report on progress achieved in the implementation of the above, and including the impacts of the 2023/24 bleaching event, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session, and an updated report on the state of conservation of the property by **1 February 2026**, for examination by the Committee at its 48th session.*

67. Ha Long Bay - Cat Ba Archipelago (Viet Nam) (N 672ter)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1994

Criteria (vii)(viii)

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/672/documents/>

International Assistance

Requests approved: 6 (from 1996-2018)

Total amount approved: USD 163,145

For details, see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/672/assistance/>

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: USD 100,000 under the Youth Volunteers for Cultural Heritage Preservation project (2003-2006); USD 519,000 for Cua Van Floating Cultural Centre, a component of the Ha Long Eco-museum (funded by the Government of Norway, for the period of 2003-2006).

Previous monitoring missions

January 2003, December 2006: World Heritage Centre mission; November 2013: IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; July 2018: IUCN Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community (Population growth)
- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation
- Housing
- Industrial areas
- Financial and human resources
- Management systems / management plan
- Water pollution

Illustrative material see page <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/672/>

Current conservation issues

On 1 February 2024, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/672/documents>, which reports the following:

- Ha Long Bay Management Department advised Quang Ninh Province (responsible for Ha Long Bay) and Hai Phong City (responsible for Cat Ba Archipelago) to extend the existing ecological carrying capacity analysis conducted for Ha Long Bay to the entire property, in view of finalizing the Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy. Priority solutions under this strategy include developing an Integrated Visitor Management System to enable coordination of visitor management, timed ticketing, issuing a code of conduct, and tourism revenue retention for heritage management. A 'plan for sustainable tourism development of Ha Long Bay' will be developed in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and submitted before 1 December 2024;
- Reported improvements to address pollution include waste and wastewater collection and treatment, that large projects are strictly controlled, there are no establishments causing serious environmental pollution, air pollution is more tightly controlled through an automated monitoring system, and water quality continues to be monitored periodically and remains within national allowable limits. An action programme was launched by the province in March 2023 to end industrial activities by 2030 including through closure of power plants, cement plants and mines in Ha Long, Cam Pha areas;
- The planning of Quang Ninh Province for 2021-2030 (Vision to 2025) approved by the Prime Minister in February 2023 in Decision No.80/QD-TTg applies environmental zoning to control industrial development;
- A new Master Plan for the property for 2025-2035 (Vision to 2050) is under development by Ha Long Bay Management Department and will be submitted for approval by the Prime Minister. It will integrate a variety of parameters, consistent with existing other legal and conservation policies;
- A map of the current boundaries of the property and its buffer zone, including details on the use and management regime within the buffer zone, has been completed. The State Party intends to submit a proposal for minor boundary modification of the buffer zone to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2025;
- Some project proposals to be implemented near the property were cancelled.

On 25 August 2023, the State Party submitted a report in response to the World Heritage Centre's letter dated 3 June 2022 regarding the construction of new infrastructure and tourist facilities along the coastline of Ha Long city. The State Party confirmed that eight projects related to tourism or urban development have been approved following Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), of which two projects have been completed and others are under construction. The State Party acknowledged that the World Heritage Centre had not been informed of these development projects in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. On 13 November 2023 and 13 March 2024, the World Heritage Centre sent letters to the State Party regarding third-party information on a large real estate project reportedly in the property's buffer zone, and on waste management and water pollution respectively. No replies have been received from the State Party on the two letters at the time of writing of this report.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

Recalling the extension of the property in 2023 to include Cat Ba Archipelago (Decision **45 COM 8B.3**), it is noted that the State Party report provides limited information on the state of conservation of this area. Whilst noting that the State Party has been requested to report on the implementation of the aforementioned Decision, it will be important that, moving forwards, the State Party reports on the state of conservation of the property as a whole. It is therefore recommended that the next State Party report address both the state of conservation of the property and progress in the implementation of the aforementioned decision. An effective coordination mechanism between the Quang Ninh Province and Hai Phong City is crucial to ensure integrated management of the property, including for monitoring and reporting.

Regarding tourism management, the planned expansion of the existing carrying capacity analysis to the entire property, as recommended by the Committee, is appreciated. Reiterating the importance of a strategic approach to tourism management for the property, it is recommended to complete the carrying capacity study as soon as possible and integrate the results into the finalization of the Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy and the Integrated Visitor Management System, while seeking guidance from the World Heritage Centre and IUCN as needed.

It is important to recall the previously raised concerns regarding development pressure on the property. While the State Party has reported that strict controls are in place for large projects, it is of significant concern that multiple development projects for new tourism and urban residential areas along the coastline in Ha Long City, which is located along and within the buffer zone of the property, have been approved without informing the World Heritage Centre in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines and without clear confirmation whether their potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property have been assessed. Specifically, in August 2023, the State Party's response states that the eight approved projects are in line with the Ha Long City Land-use Plan 2021-2030 and that EIAs have been completed, but it remains unclear whether the potential impacts on the OUV have been adequately assessed, including to consider alternatives, in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context and Paragraphs 172 and 118bis of the Operational Guidelines. The report that there is no regulation on management of the buffer zone yet is also of concern. Considering the significant growth plans for large-scale tourism and industrial developments, the State Party should be requested to submit as soon as possible an overview of ongoing and planned development projects in the vicinity of the property including the aforementioned eight projects to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN. Also considering that the further expansion of infrastructure developments in the coastal area has significant potential to impact the OUV (e.g. the scenic values under criterion (vii)), either individually or cumulatively, it is recommended that before proceeding with further developments, the State Party undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess the cumulative impacts of multiple development projects on the OUV of the property, to inform effective management planning and strategic decision making. It is important that the various plans for the property, including a new Master Plan for 2025-2035 (Vision to 2050) and an updated Management Plan, provide a solid legal basis and management framework to ensure impact assessment processes that are in accordance with the Operational Guidelines and the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, while addressing key threats to the property as requested by the Committee in its Decision **45 COM 8B.3**.

It is positive that various measures to address waste and pollution are implemented by Quang Ninh Province in order to maintain the air and water quality within allowable national limits. However, it remains of concern that the World Heritage Centre continues to receive third-party information on water pollution observed in the property area. The State Party's commitment to end industrial activities in the Ha Long area by 2030 is also appreciated, although it is unclear how this is implemented through the proposed environmental zoning.

While the clarification of the boundary of the Ha Long Bay property and its buffer zone has been noted by the Committee (Decision **45 COM 8D**), it is recalled that the State Party is still requested to submit a detailed zoning map of Ha Long Bay - Cat Ba Archipelago, showing the land use and management regime, within its inscribed area, buffer zone and wider setting, to the World Heritage Centre as requested by the Committee in its Decisions **44 COM 7B.98** and **45 COM 7B.89**.

It is recommended that the Committee request the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the overall state of conservation of the extended property, in particular, in relation to its governance, the effectiveness of the overall management framework to protect the OUV, the expansion of tourism and urban infrastructure development along the coastline, and to provide guidance on any outstanding boundary issues.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 7B.67

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decisions **44 COM 7B.98**, **45 COM 7B.89**, **45 COM 8B.3** and **45 COM 8D**, adopted at its extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively,
3. Also recalling the significant boundary modification of the Ha Long Bay property to include the Cat Ba Archipelago in 2023, notes that the State Party report provided limited information on the Cat Ba Archipelago area and on the overall state of conservation of the property, and requests the State Party to ensure the implementation of an integrated management approach for the property, including in its reporting on the state of conservation, and develop an effective coordination mechanism between the Quang Ninh Province and Hai Phong City to ensure integrated management of the property;
4. Welcomes the plans to expand the existing carrying capacity analysis to the entire property, also requests the State Party to complete the carrying capacity study as soon as possible in order to finalize the Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy and the Integrated Visitor Management System, and encourages the State Party to seek guidance from the World Heritage Centre and IUCN as needed;
5. Expresses concern that multiple development projects for new tourism and urban residential areas along the coastline in Ha Long City have been approved and implemented without clarification whether the potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property have been appropriately assessed in line with the Operational Guidelines, and further requests the State Party to:
 - a) *Inform the World Heritage Centre of any planned development projects within the property, its buffer zone or wider setting that may impact the OUV of the property, and ensure that their potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on the OUV are assessed through an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), including identification of development alternatives, in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, in accordance with Paragraphs 172 and 118bis of the Operational Guidelines,*
 - b) *Submit to the World Heritage Centre, for review by IUCN, an overview of ongoing and planned development projects in the vicinity of the property, including the eight projects mentioned in the State Party's report of August 2023 as soon as possible,*
 - c) *Undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess the cumulative impact on the OUV of the property from the tourism and industrial development projects that are located within the property, its buffer zone and in the wider setting to inform effective management planning and strategic decision making;*
 - d) *Ensure that the various plans for the property, including a new Master Plan for 2025-2035 (Vision to 2050) and the updated Management Plan, are coordinated and provide a solid legal basis and management framework to ensure impact assessment processes are in accordance with the Operational Guidelines;*
6. Notes with appreciation various measures to address waste and other forms of environmental pollution implemented by Quang Ninh Province in order to maintain the air and water quality within allowable national limits, but notes with concern that the World Heritage Centre continues to receive third-party information on water pollution;

7. *Reiterates its request to the State Party to submit a detailed zoning map of the Ha Long Bay - Cat Ba Archipelago property showing the land use and management regime within its inscribed area, buffer zone and wider setting, to the World Heritage Centre;*
8. *Requests furthermore the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to assess the overall state of conservation of the property, particularly in relation to its governance, the effectiveness of the overall management framework to protect the OUV, and the expansion of tourism and urban infrastructure development along the coastline, and to provide guidance on any outstanding boundary issues;*
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 both the above and the recommendations requested in Decision **45 COM 8B.3**, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*