

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Wadi Rum Protected Area

Date of Inscription: 2011

Criteria: (iii)(v)(vii)

Property: 74,180 ha

Buffer zone: 59,177 ha

The State of Conservation Report

Prepared by:

Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority

January 2016

1. Executive Summary

The State of Conservation of the Wadi Rum Protected Area (WRPA) remains satisfactory. This report responds to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee decision which was taken in 2014 and called upon the Jordanian government to report on the state of conservation of the site by December 1, 2015. The Jordanian State Party regrets that the preparation of the report is slightly delayed, due to technical and institutional coordination constraints caused by the tremendous challenges faced by the country as a result of the regional political instability, economic difficulties, and social changes.

Since its inscription in 2011, the WRPA has gone through major structural and technical changes to ensure the protection and maintenance of the OUV for both the cultural and natural components of the Property, as well as its integrity and authenticity. Based on the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee and its advisory bodies (IUCN and ICOMOS), the WRPA has achieved significant progress on many of the issues and concerns presented in the various reports of the Committee.

The WRPA management authority has initiated a restructuring program for the institutional coordination mechanisms, particularly in regard to the cultural heritage. This includes the development and signing of a long-term MOU between the management authority (the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority/ASEZA) and the Department of Antiquities (DoA) with the aim to enhance the management of the cultural components of the site through granting technical authority to DoA on-site to include development of a comprehensive database for all rock art and archaeological sites in the Property and its buffer zone, recruit and train specialized cultural personnel in the field, design and implement a proper monitoring system linked to an adequate interpretation program, and the development of the cultural components of the integrated management plan for the Property.

Further, the WRPA has launched a comprehensive program for the revision of the 2014 integrated management plan to ensure the enhancement of the cultural and natural components of the plan in light of the OUV statement adopted by UNESCO in 2013, build the capacity of the site team in both disciplines to ensure that the site is managed effectively, is well presented to local stakeholders and visitors, and carefully monitored against present and potential factors influencing its integrity and authenticity. The MP revision also includes a major initiative to re-design and develop the Property buffer zone, including the revision and update of baseline data, the stakeholders mapping, the analysis of existing and planned land uses, and as a result, the development of a unified agreed upon vision translated into a set of management scenarios and clear guidelines for land use management, thus creating the anticipated functional buffer zone, effectively contributing to the protection of the Property OUV.

On the other hand, the WRPA remains in need of undertaking several other actions and initiatives to address more thoroughly the recommendations of the WHC. This includes

the implementation of a comprehensive EIA/HIA for the tourism activities in and around the Property, the development and enforcement of the conservation guidelines for cultural sites, and the full and permanent resolution of the issue of illegal tourist camps within the Property, although, some significant progress has been made on addressing this latter threat.

The government of Jordan, represented by the management authority of the WRPA and its national and international partners, remain fully committed to the long-term conservation of the OUV of the Property, and will take all possible measures to address any factors influencing the site OUV integrity and authenticity, through strong protective measures and effective long-term planning and management while maintaining coordination and cooperation with the WHC and its advisory bodies. The government of Jordan calls upon the WHC to provide all possible technical support to achieve the common objective for Wadi Rum.