

EUROPE / NORTH AMERICA

PITONS, CIRQUES AND REMPARTS OF REUNION ISLAND

FRANCE



WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION - IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

PITONS, CIRQUES AND REMPARTS OF REUNION ISLAND (FRANCE) - ID N° 1317

Background note: This nomination was submitted in 2008 for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at its 33rd Session in 2009. Accordingly, IUCN initiated the evaluation of this nomination in 2008/9 and this included the evaluation mission to La Réunion. In March 2009, the decision was taken by the government of France to postpone the assessment of the nomination by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee until its 34th Session in 2010. This decision was required due to the fact that three nominations from France were proposed for consideration by the 33rd Session of the World Heritage Committee. The State Party of France had been requested by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to identify two nominations in line with the limits on annual numbers of nominations set in the Operational Guidelines. As the evaluation process was already initiated by IUCN, a dialogue was maintained with the State Party to clarify a number of issues and address recommendations resulting from the evaluation mission, and discussions from the 2008 session of the IUCN/World Heritage Panel. This evaluation report is therefore based on the original nomination plus the additional information provided by the State Party.

1. DOCUMENTATION

- i) **Date nomination received by IUCN:** 31st January 2008
- ii) **Additional information officially requested from and provided by the State Party:** additional information was requested by IUCN in December 2008. Additional information from the State Party was provided in February 2009 and November 2009.
- iii) **UNEP-WCMC Data Sheet:** 8 references
- iv) **Additional Literature Consulted:** Gillet, H., R. Bishop, A. Smith and S. Blyth (1998). **A Global Overview of Protected Area on the World Heritage List of Particular Importance for Biodiversity. A contribution to the Global Theme Study of World Heritage Natural Sites.** WCMC, Cambridge, UK. Green, E., Harrison, J., Baltran, J., Conway, L., Martins, S. & Spalding, M. (2001). **A Global Overview of Tropical Marine, Coastal and Small Island Ecosystems and the World Heritage List.** Discussion Paper. UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK. Thorsell, J., R.F. Levy and T. Sigaty (1997). **A Global Overview of Wetland and Marine Protected Areas on the World Heritage List. A contribution to the Global Theme Study of World Heritage Natural Sites.** IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. WWF and IUCN (1994-1995). **Centres of Plant Diversity. A Guide and Strategy for their Conservation. Volume II (Asia, Australasia and the Pacific).** IUCN Publications Unit, Cambridge, UK. Chris Wood. **World Heritage Volcanoes.** Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 70pp.
- v) **Consultations:** 10 external reviewers consulted. The mission team met with the authorities and experts from the park, local government authorities, representatives and members of local communities, and scientists.
- vi) **Field Visit:** Wendy Strahm and Tim Badman. 17-24 October 2008.
- vii) **Date of IUCN approval of this report:** 22nd April 2010

2. SUMMARY OF NATURAL VALUES

The nominated property, Pitons, cirques and remparts of Reunion Island, is located in the Island of La Réunion, in the Mascarene Island group in the south-western Indian Ocean. La Réunion lies 750 km east of Madagascar and 200 km southwest of Mauritius (see Map 1). The island is made up of two volcanic massifs, the Piton des Neiges in

the northwest, a dormant volcano, and the Piton de la Fournaise, an active volcano in the southeast. The nominated property has an area of 105,838 ha which corresponds to the core area of La Réunion National Park and represents 42% of the total area of the island. The nominated property is surrounded by a buffer zone of 11,729 ha which includes the lower part of the volcanic cirques.

The volcanic island of La Réunion rises to 3,071 m in altitude, and is the youngest of the three Mascarene Islands, with an age of 2.1 million years. The climate is oceanic and subtropical, and the side of the island facing the southeast tradewinds and storms is very wet, with an annual total of up to 12 meters of rainfall. On the western half of the island in the rain shadow of the mountains, precipitation is between 1-2 m. The varied topography of the property creates many microclimates and a variety of ecological conditions.

The nominated property includes the middle and upper slopes and peaks of the two volcanoes and a linking section between them. The volcanic and erosional topography of the property is striking. Long linear and curvilinear escarpments known as “remparts” rise to 1,000m in places, surrounding erosional “cirques” in the flanks of the volcanoes, or adjoining the radiating streams. The peak of the Piton des Neiges lies at the centre of three such scarp-rimmed “cirques” of Salazie, Mafate, Cilaos and the infilled “palaeocirque” of Bébou. The Piton de la Fournaise rises to 2,632 m and is one of the world’s most continuously active volcanoes: it has erupted over 100 times since 1640. The summit crater of La Fournaise is encircled by the barren 8 km caldera of l’Enclos Fouqué, which has produced recent lava flows to the sea to the east over a forested and periodically renewed nine-kilometre apron of lava called the Grand Brulé. The Plaine des Sables, a large area of fine volcanic ejecta provides a dramatic barren volcanic landscape towards the top of the volcano. Volcanic features of the property include numerous dykes and sills, pit craters, cinder cones, solfataras, lava flows and basaltic sea cliffs.

Like all oceanic islands, its biodiversity is relatively low compared to comparable continental areas, but is typified by a high level of endemism. The steep altitudinal variation of the property supports a series of different habitats ranging from subtropical rainforest moving up into Pandanus thickets, cloud forest and heath on the windward side of the island, and through dry subtropical forest and steppes (the most threatened habitat types on La Réunion) on the leeward side.

La Réunion is considered a global Centre of Plant Diversity, where a third of the vegetation is forest, and it conserves the most extensive and best remnants of the natural vegetation of the Mascarene Islands. Its variety is due to topographic complexity, climatic variation, the abrupt altitudinal gradient and to the island’s oceanic isolation. There are 1,712 species of vascular plants, whilst of the 840 indigenous species, 389 (46.3%) are endemic, 236 being locally and 153 regionally endemic. 8 genera are endemic to Réunion, and 5 more endemic to the Mascarenes. There are also 754 species of bryophyte, 86 being endemic. Although altered by

human use, the levels of impact of human activity on the ecosystems of La Réunion are lower than elsewhere in the Mascarenes.

As for most remote islands, the vertebrate fauna is poor having less than 50 indigenous species. A significant number of these species are known to have become extinct since human settlement began in 1650, including a giant tortoise. However, the bird population has survived better than on other islands, since monkeys and mongoose were never introduced. Out of the 78 birds, 7 are endemic of La Réunion. Amongst recorded insects, 40% of the beetles and 25% of the 500 spiders are endemic. There are 500 species of butterfly including the endemic meadow swallowtail butterfly. Out of the existing 54 molluscs, 20 are endemic to La Réunion, and 24 more to the Mascarenes. There are also 21 freshwater fish, 9 freshwater crustaceans and 20 freshwater molluscs all of which are endemic. The property protects the areas that are important in sustaining these levels of biodiversity.

3. COMPARISONS WITH OTHER AREAS

The property has been nominated under all four natural criteria. The nominated property compares favourably with other volcanic properties that have been inscribed on the World Heritage List under Criterion (vii), such as Brazilian Atlantic Islands, Brazil; Cocos Islands National Park, Costa Rica; Galapagos Islands, Ecuador; and Komodo National Park, Indonesia. IUCN notes that external reviewers highlighted the striking landscapes of La Réunion as of key significant value of this nomination. The erosional landforms are dramatic with the scale of the remparts and the rapidity of processes clearly illustrated. The two peaks, with their great variety of rugged terrain of differing heights and aspects, and the visual impact of the escarpments, forested gorges and basins are of high aesthetic value.

In relation to criterion (viii) IUCN notes the large number of volcanic properties already included on the World Heritage List. Whilst the Piton de la Fournaise is notable for the frequency of its eruptions, IUCN considers that there are other more significant World Heritage properties exhibiting a much wider and significant variety of volcanic landforms or that are representative of volcanic processes such as the Isole Eolie (Italy) which has provided the scientific basis to understand two types of volcanic eruptions. The Kamchatka Volcanoes are one of the most extensive volcanic regions in the world, with both a high density of active volcanoes, and a variety of types and a high diversity of related volcanic features (geysers, mud pools, hot springs, and calderas). Hawaii Volcanoes National Park similarly provides a much more extensive example of volcanism, related to a hot spot, whilst the property does not display exceptional features such as the decorated lava tubes of Jeju Volcanic

Island and Lava Tubes, Republic of Korea. Whilst all volcanoes are “unique”, IUCN does not find a strongly distinctive basis for recognising the geological values of the nominated property as of Outstanding Universal Value.

In relation to ecosystem processes, IUCN notes that the vast tract of mostly intact forest stretching from sea level at Mare Longue to the summit of the Piton de la Fournaise is an exceptional survival within tropical islands in the Indian Ocean. There are a large number of distinct habitat types, plant succession has been studied in detail, and there are good examples of adaptive radiation and ongoing speciation. However the extreme pressure from invasive alien species, has completely disrupted ecological processes in many areas, and when natural vegetation disappears due to landslips, lava flows, or other factors, it is mostly replaced by more aggressive exotic species. The level of integrity impacts due to invasive species and past species extinctions argue against the application of this criterion. Aldabra, Seychelles, is, in contrast, a substantially intact example of such phenomena. IUCN further notes that other island ecosystems inscribed on the World Heritage List provide greater and more extensive examples of the process of island endemism, notably in Galápagos. Due to the proximity of Madagascar to the Mascarenes, the level of endemism is less than that of much more isolated island ecosystems, such as those of Hawaii.

IUCN considers that the case is stronger for the application of criterion (x) to the nominated property. The distinctive flora and fauna of the Mascarene Islands provides the basis of the establishment of Outstanding Universal Value, and the nominated property contains the most significant and important natural habitats for this biota. It can be argued that Mauritius, being an older island, has a somewhat richer flora and higher number of endemic species (plant and animal). However, what remains on Mauritius often numbers just a handful of individuals, whereas most of La Réunion endemics still have substantial populations. In addition a large number of species endemic to Mauritius and La Réunion are almost extinct on Mauritius yet are still common on La Réunion. The nominated property has a higher altitudinal range (over 3,000m compared to 828m in Mauritius), giving it additional habitat types that are largely intact. Given the high number of threatened species on the Mascarene Islands, the remaining natural habitats, which are included in the nominated property, are the most significant remaining for this unique flora and associated fauna.

In relation to inscribed World Heritage properties the values of the flora of the property are similar to those found on Socotra, Yemen, although the latter is larger and comprises four islands. Per unit

area, La Réunion is richer in plant species than the Hawaiian Islands and the Galapagos Islands, whilst protecting a different flora and fauna. The Seychelles properties of Vallée de Mai and Aldabra, are not comparable, being lowland, granitic islands, and much less rich in diversity and endemism than La Réunion.

4. INTEGRITY, PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

4.1. Protection

The nominated property coincides with that of La Réunion National Park, which was established in 2007, soon after the adoption by France of a new law (Law No. 2006-436) on national parks of 14 April 2006. Most of the National Park (c. 90%) is state owned, while the majority of the remainder is under various other forms of communal and public ownership. The property includes a small extension of private land (1.7%). The National Park contains two small strict nature reserves: the Saint Philippe-Mare Longue Reserve set up in 1981, covering 68 ha; and the Roche Ecrite Planèze Reserve, covering 3,643 ha, aimed at conserving the Critically Endangered Réunion Cuckoo-shrike.

Whilst the National Park is of recent creation, it is the result of a long process as conservation of nature started in 1958 with the establishment of the nature reserves. Conservation was further enhanced in 1977 with the implementation of a forest regime that promoted forest conservation activities, and also in 1982 through a process that lead to the assessment of all natural areas of particular interest in terms of ecology, fauna and flora. Through this process the conservation and management activities were better coordinated including with key local stakeholders.

The day-to-day management of the National Park is under the responsibility of an Administrative Council, drawing on comprehensive consultation with local, regional and state stakeholders, collectives and mayors. Management of the Park is supported by two Advisory Councils bringing together key managing bodies and stakeholder groups.

IUCN considers that the protection status of the property meets the requirements set out in the Operational Guidelines.

4.2 Boundaries

Following the evaluation mission and the assessment of this nomination during the IUCN World Heritage Panel (December 2008) a number of recommendations were proposed to the State Party for reviewing the boundaries of the nominated property both for enhancing the representation of its key values as well as for strengthening its integrity.

These recommendations were fully considered and implemented by the State Party. As a result the new boundaries of the nominated property were redefined to align them with the boundaries of the core area of La Réunion National Park. The revised boundaries include the key natural features that support the case of Outstanding Universal Value and comprise 96% of all remaining natural areas of La Réunion. The revised boundaries exclude major settlements, so as to avoid potential impacts associated to urban development plans. The buffer zone comprises the bottom of the cirques of Salazie, Cilaos and the Plaine des Palmistes which are settled areas, where agricultural and other uses are located. The new boundaries also includes provision for a transition zone which includes a number of natural areas that could be considered to further extend the boundaries of the National Park and for which there will be management provisions in the management plan of the National Park. IUCN considers that a number of small extensions would be desirable to ensure protection of some areas of relict vegetation in the middle and lower levels of La Réunion, as proposed by the State Party.

IUCN considers that the revised boundaries of the nominated property meet the requirements set out in the Operational Guidelines.

4.3 Management

The new law on national parks of 2006 requires that the management of each park is guided by a management plan combining conservation goals with local policies, and requires that such management plan is developed through a full participatory and consultative process with all key stakeholders. The time required for the preparation of the management plan may vary depending on local complexities. At present all new National Parks established under this law, including La Réunion, are in the process of preparing the management plan.

The Administrative Council of La Réunion National Park initiated the preparation of the management plan in May 2008 and a comprehensive consultative process started soon after in June 2008. The development of the management plan is the key priority of the Administrative Council and it is expected to be finalized by June 2010 and legally approved by a national decree by mid 2011. Once this decree is adopted, the management plan will have a validity of 10 years and, according to the provisions under the new law on national parks, the government will allocate the necessary human and financial resources to ensure its effective implementation. A draft of the management plan as well as key recommendations arising from the consultation process was included in the additional information provided by the State Party in November 2009. IUCN notes that the plan fully

considers the protection of the key natural features of the park, including those that support the case for Outstanding Universal Value as well as the required conditions of integrity. The management plan is also giving due consideration to issues of participatory management by local communities as well as how to balance nature conservation with traditional management practices of local people. Provisions within the draft management plan are already under implementation.

The draft management plan is also complemented by measures implemented through the Regional Land Development Plan, the Local Zoning Plan and the Forest Management Regime. All these plans have provisions for the conservation and management of the natural areas within the National Park, and there are coordination mechanisms between them including through the Administrative Council of the Park. Thus the draft management plan, supported by other legally binding regulations, effectively guides the management of the nominated property until the legal adoption of the management plan by mid 2011.

The implementation of management activities is supported by adequate financial and human resources: in 2009 the budget was Euro 8,09m; an increase of 25% over 2008. In 2009 85 permanent staff were in place within the National Park service. Other public sector actors also provide significant staffing for activities within the property, including through local government and the Forest Service. In addition a number of local NGOs and civil society groups provide support to conservation and management activities, and reflect a strong commitment from local communities towards this property.

IUCN notes that paragraph 115 of the Operational Guidelines recognise it is acceptable for a property to be inscribed whilst its management plan is being completed, provided a clear timetable for this is in place for this process. In the case of the property IUCN notes that there is already a process in place for finalizing the plan, and also a clear deadline (mid 2011) for its legal adoption.

IUCN considers the management of the nominated property meets the requirements set out in the Operational Guidelines, noting that the management plan should be completed and adopted by mid-2011.

4.4 Threats

Invasive alien species

The greatest threat to the values of the property is the large number of invasive alien species, both animals and plants that needs to be controlled and/or eradicated. They are most intrusive in the semi-arid, lowland and mid-level forests, and the invasive

plants include some of the most problematic and pervasive known invasive species. Eight alien mammals areas are also present including deer, rats, dogs and cats.

IUCN requested the State Party to provide additional information on this issue and in particular on the need to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to control and eradicate invasive alien species (IAS). In response the State Party informed IUCN that a technical workshop on IAS was implemented in November 2008 which identified the key elements to consider in a comprehensive strategy to control and eradicate invasive alien species. The recommendations from this workshop have been validated with different institutions and local stakeholders and have resulted in an Action Plan to address IAS. This Action Plan proposes the priority activities that the National Park and other institutions, such as those dealing with forest management, should implement. In order to coordinate the implementation of this plan, a permanent technical position to deal with IAS has been established in October 2009 under the Regional Directorate for the Environment (DIREN).

A number of institutions are working on IAS issues and the financial resources allocated to this work is in the order of Euro 8m per year. In addition the regional government has invested EURO 950,000 to the development of a number of technical studies on how to deal with different invasive alien species. Furthermore the regional government requested a new credit within the framework of Biodiversity Strategy of France to enhance the work on IAS. This request has been approved and from 2009 onwards an additional Euro 220,000 will be granted for this work. A number of actions have been already successfully implemented such as the eradication of cats and rats in the Nature Reserve of la Roche Ecrite affecting nesting areas of La Réunion Cuckoo-shrike, a forest bird endemic of the island. Since 2009 a plan to eradicate cats and rats affecting the Barau's petrel and the Bourbon's black petrel have also been under implementation.

IUCN considers this is a strong response, but notes that long term continuing commitments will be required at this, and possibly greater levels to fully manage the threat of IAS to the nominated property.

Urban development and population pressures

The island is heavily populated and population pressure is increasing rapidly, especially in the coastal plain. Aside from the cirque areas, most of the interior of the island is not settled. The effective implementation of existing development plans, including policies to protect the property from development, and the conservation and management of the National Park management

plan, coupled with the implementation of environmental awareness programmes provide effective responses to this threat, and should be continued and provided with ongoing adequate resources.

Tourism management

Tourism is provided for by a wide variety of activities: hang-gliding, paragliding, riding, rafting, whitewater kayaking, mountaineering, rock climbing, trekking, camping and picnicking. In 2005 the estimated number of tourists to La Réunion numbered 603,000; many visiting the beaches which are not within the nominated property. Sightseeing and trekking within the property is growing in popularity and there is a road access to viewpoints on the Piton de la Fournaise, which is a prominent feature across the Plaine des Sables. There are a number of hostels in and around the property, which are also served by vehicle tracks. There are a number of regulations in place to control the impacts resulting from tourism which is supported by environmental awareness programmes with tourism operators and local communities. Environmental education is also a central feature in the work of the existing visitors' centre at la Grande Chaloupe at the northernmost end of the National Park near the coast and the capital, St.Denis. In addition, as part of the process for preparing the management plan for the park, a new tourism development strategy will be developed and implemented which considers the heritage values of the nominated property. IUCN considers that the provision for tourism management within the property is good, with positive plans for improvements. Amongst these, IUCN recommends that the State Party examine options to reduce the visual impact of the road across the Plaine des Sables, including through regulations on traffic.

Geothermal energy

The nominated property includes areas that are considered to have potential for the production of geothermal energy. A project to develop a geothermal energy facility on the Plaine des Sables, which could have had a major impact in terms of the natural values and visual qualities of the property was reviewed during the IUCN mission. However IUCN has received written confirmation from the State Party that this project has been abandoned, taking account of the priority for conservation of the heritage values of the nominated property.

In summary, IUCN considers the nominated property meets the conditions of integrity set out in the Operational Guidelines.

5. OTHER COMMENTS

5.1 Comments from ICOMOS on cultural values

ICOMOS provided comments to IUCN on associated cultural values of the nominated property. ICOMOS noted that the property has a history of plantations and of the use of slaves and particularly of maroons, sheltering in remote areas. Thus, the property has similarities with the inscribed property of Le Morne Cultural Landscape, Mauritius. However, ICOMOS does not consider that the association of the property with maroons is sufficiently significant to justify consideration of cultural criteria. Nevertheless, ICOMOS encourages the State Party to continue to respect the human histories of the park area, including the cultural value of the cirques, in the management of the property and to support activities such as the Écomusée-Salazie and the Maison du Peuplement des Hauts in Cilaos that valorize Creole heritage.

6. APPLICATION OF CRITERIA

The Pitons, cirques and remparts of Reunion Island has been nominated under all four natural criteria.

Criterion (vii): Superlative natural phenomena or natural beauty and aesthetic importance

The combination of volcanism, tectonic landslide events, heavy rainfall and stream erosion have formed a rugged and dramatic landscape of striking beauty, dominated by two towering volcanoes, the dormant Piton de Neiges and the highly active Piton de la Fournaise. Other major landscape features include “remparts” - steep rock walls of varying geological age and character, and so-called “cirques”, which can be described as massive natural amphitheatres with an imposing height and verticality. There are deep, partly forested gorges and escarpments, with subtropical rainforests, cloud forests and heaths creating a remarkable and visually appealing mosaic of ecosystems and landscape features.

IUCN considers that the nominated property meets this criterion.

Criterion (viii): Earth's history and geological features

The nominated property includes two contrasting volcanic landforms, displaying a range of different volcanic features, and their excision through rapid erosion display both their internal structure, and a range of erosional processes and landforms. However the scale of the property is greatly exceeded by other inscribed volcanic landscapes, and nor does the property display evidence of the level of global scientific contribution identified in other World Heritage properties. The property is

not one of the significant remaining gaps identified in IUCN's theme study on volcanoes and the World Heritage List. Although the volcanic nature of the island, and its varied geomorphology are intrinsic underlying elements of its scenic qualities and biodiversity values, they are not sufficiently distinctive or significant to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value.

IUCN considers that the nominated property does not meet this criterion.

Criterion (ix): Ecological processes

Whilst there are some exceptional survivals of ecosystems within tropical islands in the Indian Ocean and a large number of distinct habitat types, the extreme pressure from invasive alien species, has completely disrupted ecological processes in many areas of the property, and is ongoing. The level of integrity impacts due to invasive species and past species extinctions argue against the application of this criterion. Existing island ecosystems inscribed on the World heritage List are variously more intact, more extensive and display more clearly the processes of island endemism. These features are certainly of international importance, but not at the level to be recognised as being of Outstanding Universal Value.

IUCN considers that the nominated property does not meet this criterion.

Criterion (x): Biodiversity and threatened species

The property is a global centre of plant diversity with a high degree of endemism. It contains the most significant remaining natural habitats for the conservation of the terrestrial biodiversity of the Mascarene Islands, including a range of rare forest types. Given the major and partly irreversible human impacts on the environment in the Mascarene archipelago, the property serves as the last refuge for the survival of a large number of endemic, threatened and endangered species.

IUCN considers that the nominated property meets this criterion.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

IUCN recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopt the following decision:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents **WHC-10/34.COM/8B** and **WHC-10/34.COM/INF 8B2**

2. Inscribes the **Pitons, cirques and remparts of Reunion Island, France** on the World Heritage List under natural criteria (vii) and (x);
3. Adopts the following Statement of **Outstanding Universal Value**:

Brief synthesis

The Pitons, cirques and remparts of Reunion Island coincides with the core zone of La Réunion National Park. The property covers more than 100,000 ha or 40 % of La Réunion, an island comprised of two adjoining volcanic massifs located in the south-west of the Indian Ocean. Dominated by two towering volcanic peaks, massive walls and three cliff-rimmed cirques, the property includes a great variety of rugged terrain and impressive escarpments, forested gorges and basins creating a visually striking landscape. The property harbours the most valuable natural habitats and the species assemblages they support remaining on the Mascarene Island group. It protects key parts of a recognized global centre of plant diversity and features a remarkably high level of endemism across many taxa. Thereby, the property is the most significant and important contribution to the conservation of the terrestrial biodiversity of the Mascarene Islands.

Criteria

Criterion (vii): *The combination of volcanism, tectonic landslide events, heavy rainfall and stream erosion have formed a rugged and dramatic landscape of striking beauty, dominated by two towering volcanoes, the dormant Piton de Neiges and the highly active Piton de la Fournaise. Other major landscape features include “remparts” - steep rock walls of varying geological age and character, and so-called “cirques”, which can be described as massive natural amphitheatres with an imposing height and verticality. There are deep, partly forested gorges and escarpments, with subtropical rainforests, cloud forests and heaths creating a remarkable and visually appealing mosaic of ecosystems and landscape features.*

Criterion (x): *The property is a global centre of plant diversity with a high degree of endemism. It contains the most significant remaining natural habitats for the conservation of the terrestrial biodiversity of the Mascarene Islands, including a range of rare forest types. Given the major and partly irreversible human impacts on the environment in the Mascarene archipelago, the property serves as the last refuge for the survival of a large number of endemic,*

threatened and endangered species.

Integrity

Building upon earlier forest and nature conservation efforts, La Réunion National Park was established in 2007. This status provides an adequate legal framework to ensure the protection of the property, whose boundaries coincide with that of the national park. The boundaries of the property encompass the exceptional features of the natural landscape, as well as almost the entire remaining natural or close-to natural ecosystems remaining on La Réunion and thus the key biodiversity values.

The integrity of the property is subject to a range of threats. Despite ongoing management efforts, invasive alien species are a permanent management challenge posing a very real threat to the biodiversity values of the property. Evidence of past losses of many native species on La Réunion and on other islands of the Mascarene archipelago underlines the severity of this threat.

Management and protection requirements

The property benefits from effective legal protection through its designation as a National Park. Ensuring the Outstanding Universal Value of the property requires an effective and adaptive implementation of the evolving management plan for La Réunion National Park, and adequate long-term staffing and financial resources. The management of the national park draws on comprehensive consultation with governmental and civil society stakeholders and benefits from structured on science, research, socio-economics and cultural issues. Meaningful and effective consultation with all of the concerned stakeholders, including communities who live within its buffer zones and surrounding areas, is indispensable.

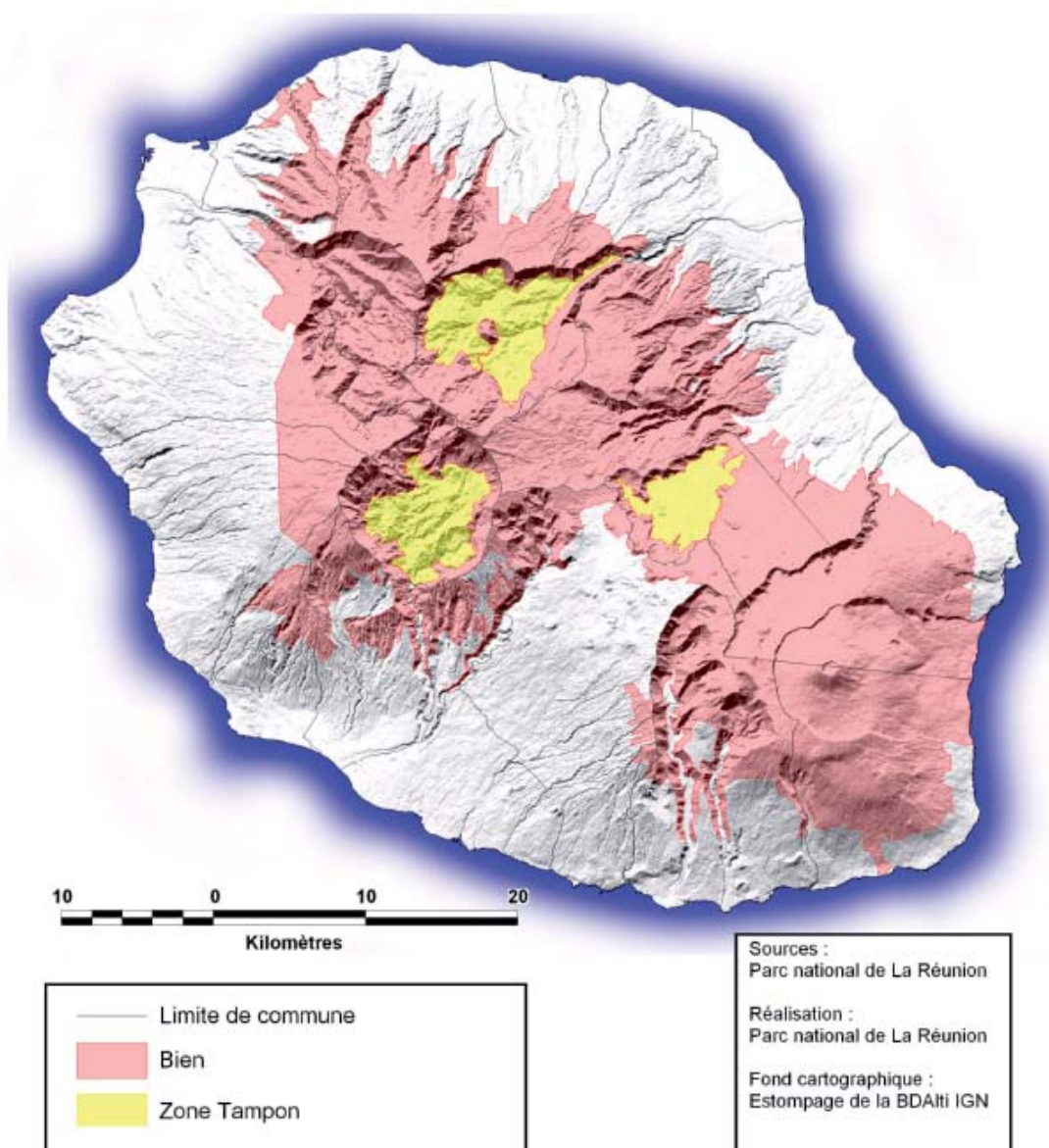
Actions are required in response to a number of specific threats, to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of the Outstanding Universal Value. Efforts to reduce invasions, permanent monitoring, and the implementation of a comprehensive strategy to control and eradicate invasive alien species are indispensable and will require long-term and continuing efforts and significant ongoing funding. While the rugged terrain provides a degree of natural protection against encroachment and human economic activities, such as agriculture, forestry, energy production and tourism; must be managed both in the property and

its buffer zone in a way that is not in conflict with the integrity of the property.

The development and effective implementation of a comprehensive tourism development strategy addressing the strong demand is also necessary. There is fine balance between positive economic and educational effects and destructive impacts from excessive numbers of tourists and inappropriate activities, and thus tourism strategies will clearly need to prioritise the protection of the values of the property, alongside economic goals.

4. Commends the State Party for the decision to abandon the project on geothermal energy, considering the need to maintain the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;
5. Also commends the State Party for the consultative process that has been put in place for preparing the management plan for the property and takes note, that although the property does not currently have a completed management plan in place, that the State Party will legally adopt the management plan for the property in 2011;
6. Requests the State Party to ensure that the future management plan addresses all of the integrity, protection and management requirements necessary to ensure the long-term conservation and enhancement of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and further requests that a copy of the management plan is provided to the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, when finalized and entered into force;

7. Further requests the State Party to ensure the effective implementation of the Action Plan for the Control and Eradication of invasive alien species, in full integration with the management plan for the property, considering the critical nature of this threat to the Outstanding Universal Value and also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by **1 February 2013**, a report on the state of conservation of the property, for examination by the Committee at its 37th session;
8. Also requests the State Party to ensure that sufficient human and financial resources continue to be provided for the effective implementation of the management plan for the property as well as for the implementation of actions for the control and eradication of invasive alien species;
9. Recommends the State Party to share lessons learned on eradication and management of alien species with other relevant States Parties, World Heritage properties and island protected areas facing similar challenges;

Map 1: Boundaries of the nominated Property and Buffer Zone**Figure 2** Carte définitive du Bien proposé et de sa zone tampon (fév. 09)