

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION – IUCN COMMENTS TO ICOMOS

GREAT BURKHAN KHALDUN MOUNTAIN AND ITS SURROUNDING SACRED LANDSCAPE (MONGOLIA)

IUCN considered this cultural landscape nomination based on 2 desk reviews, and also joined the ICOMOS field evaluation mission in view of the significance of the natural values noted in the nomination document.

The below comments are made on the original submitted nomination, and do not take into account any revisions that may be discussed between the State Party and ICOMOS, noting that in this case IUCN understands that there may be changes proposed to the boundaries of the property following the advice of ICOMOS.

The property is nominated under criteria (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi). IUCN notes that ICOMOS will assess the global significance of that interaction in relation to the cultural criteria under which the property is nominated.

The nomination (subject to any amendments that may be made after the ICOMOS First Panel Meeting) proposes a serial site of three components, each with a buffer zone. The total size of the nominated area is 504,833 ha and the buffer zones (which are all contiguous) total 450,384 ha.

The IUCN field evaluator confirms significant natural values are present in all three components, and that these are all related to cultural use. The extent and nature of those natural values is different in each component, but each component does contain notable natural values, which appear significant at national, and possibly regional, levels. The cultural use appears to be sustainable.

The IUCN field evaluator also indicates that there are evident sacred natural sites in all components that appear to be authentic. The mission expert did not note any significant community or rights concerns.

Concerns identified from IUCN's consideration of the nomination include potential risks from tourism (low intensity at the moment, so low risk if well managed), mining (which would be addressed only provided extant mining regulations are enacted), and the involvement and impacts of the nomination relative to local people and nomadic peoples, including the explicit need to define and monitor intended outcomes for local communities.

IUCN questions the suggested configuration in relation to the boundaries of Khan Kentee Strict Protected Area (KKSPA), and other protected areas. Based on an analysis of the dossier, IUCN notes that:

- a) The largest component of the nominated property and its buffer zone are partly inside KKSPA, but partly only included in its buffer zone;

- b) The Bereeven Monastery and its buffer zone appear to be inside only the buffer zone of KKSPA. Part of this component is covered by the Khangal Nuur category III Protected Area, according to the IUCN/UNEP-WCMC World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), this protection is not mentioned in the nomination;

- c) Sacred Binder Mountain is not protected according to the nomination (the nomination suggests it may in future be included in the buffer zone of KKSPA), though according to the WDPA it is partly covered by a category III Protected Area (Binderya Khan Mountain).

Thus the boundaries proposed appear to not be logically defined, adding complexity to management within the existing protected areas.

It is stated that there is additional protective legislation in addition to the SPA but the details are not provided in the dossier. Thus protection as set out in the nomination does not appear to be in place.

Management in areas outside of KKSPA is not documented for one component (Binder Mountain). In the parts of the site covered by the buffer zone of KKSPA the management plan extracts listed in Annex V of the nomination appear to be (a) very short and not specific, (b) not indicating significant protection and conservation measures and (c) encouraging of economic uses without any clear identification of limits to such activities. Management therefore also appears to be inadequate in most of the nominated area.

Recommendations to ICOMOS

IUCN recommends that ICOMOS consider the following issues with the State Party:

- a) Boundaries: ICOMOS should request SP to ensure the adequate alignment of the application of the various legislative provisions on the property in its World Heritage context, to ensure that all areas that might be inscribed are adequately protected.
- b) Management: There is a need to ensure that adequate management is present throughout all of the area of property that might be inscribed. Some areas at present do not appear to be within any effective management regime.

- c) Mining: Potential threats from mining, which are not prevented in most of the property outside of the area in KKSPA. ICOMOS should confirm that no mining or extractive industry will be permitted within the nominated property.
- d) Tourism: Potential threats from tourism, which is encouraged without indicated limits in much of the nominated areas, according to the management plan excerpts for the KKSPA buffer zone. ICOMOS should confirm that current and proposed tourism activities will not impact negatively on sacred sites, natural values or the livelihoods of local people and nomadic people. ICOMOS should be satisfied that planning and capacity is in place and will be sustained to

develop tourism in a way that is appropriate to both the conservation of the property, and the impacts (positive and negative) on local people and nomadic people.

- e) Definition of outcomes and monitoring of impact for local people and nomadic people: IUCN recommends that ICOMOS should seek information regarding the impacts of the nomination relative to local people and nomadic peoples, including the explicit need to define and monitor intended outcomes for local communities.

IUCN would be willing to participate with ICOMOS in further discussions with the State Party on the nomination.