

ASIA / PACIFIC

TRANG AN LANDSCAPE COMPLEX

VIET NAM

WORLD HERITAGE MINOR BOUNDARY MODIFICATION PROPOSAL – IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

TRANG AN LANDSCAPE COMPLEX (VIET NAM) – ID No. 1438 Bis

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In its decision to inscribe Trang An Landscape Complex on the World Heritage List, Decision 38 COM 8B.14, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party of Viet Nam to modify the boundary of the property to better reflect the areas and attributes of Outstanding Universal Value and ensure an appropriate surrounding buffer zone. This responded to issues raised about the adequacy of the boundaries in the evaluation of the nomination by IUCN and ICOMOS.

2. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BOUNDARY MODIFICATION

The amendments encompass the following (further details are provided in the State Party's documentation in each case):

- a) Extension of the north-western sector of the property to include Dinh Mountain, which is the natural setting for an ancient pagoda;
- b) Extension of the southern boundary of the property to include a substantial mountain area, part of which was reserved earlier for utilization in stone handicraft production;
- c) Small expansion of the north-eastern sector of the property to encompass more of the isolated towers emerging from the surrounding corrosion plain;
- d) Reduction of the property at the north margin to exclude an old rock quarry close to the Hoang Long River;
- e) Reduction of the property around the Tam Coc boat wharf to exclude private homes, hotels and commercial businesses (shops and restaurants etc.), and a hotel site in Bich-Dong.

In addition, but not referred to by the State Party, a number of minor realignments are made on the eastern boundary of the property, which appear to be a way to clarify precisely the boundary, but make little difference to the actual property.

The overall changes increase slightly (c.1%) the area of the property from 6,172 ha to 6,226 ha Area, with a corresponding decrease of the buffer zone from 6,080 ha to 6,026 ha. The outer boundary of the buffer zone is unchanged.

3. IMPACT ON OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

The State Party's documentation provides the rationale for the amendments as based on a thorough examination of the full length of the boundary, using the following principles for delimiting the property,

including in relation to the addition of some additional attributes of cultural and natural value, the use of natural features (or if not available human-made features) to ensure clarity of the boundary and the exclusion of some inappropriate developed areas.

The State Party submission confirms that there is no change to the overall administration, management or protection arrangements for the World Heritage property. The entire proposed property is endorsed by the Provincial authorities, and will be managed according to provisions in the approved property management plan.

IUCN notes that the proposed modifications are minor in extent, and do not modify significantly the basis of the inclusion of the property on the World Heritage List. Thus they conform to the main requirements for acceptance through the procedure for minor boundary modification.

In terms of detail, the documentation prepared by the State Party is clear and the rationale for the revisions appears to be sound. The documentation does not explain the amendments to the eastern boundary, but the changes in that instance are of a minor nature. It is understood that the former quarry that is excluded will not be reactivated as a result of its exclusion, and the exclusion is appropriate.

4. OTHER COMMENTS

IUCN also notes with appreciation that alongside the work on the boundary, that the State Party has completed the revision of the property management plan, including a consultative workshop which included representatives of the advisory bodies. The IUCN World Heritage Programme also visited the property at the invitation of the site managers in 2015, and was able to witness the significant efforts being made to protect and effectively manage Trang An Landscape Complex.

IUCN notes that in principle these types of changes should be agreed upon before inscription, since the modification of boundaries as a condition of inscription is not consistent with the Operational Guidelines. In future such cases, IUCN considers such amendments should require a referral back of a nomination.

Since the property is inscribed as a mixed site, it will be necessary for IUCN's recommendation to be harmonised with that of ICOMOS, and to be acceptable the boundary modification will need to be appropriate in relation to both the cultural and natural values that are the basis of its inscription on the World Heritage List. Thus IUCN may modify the below

recommendation depending on the view of the ICOMOS Panel, which was not known at the time of finalisation of this report.

5. RECOMMENDATION

IUCN recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopts the following draft decision:

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC-16/40.COM/8B.ADD and WHC-16/40.COM/INF.8B2.ADD;

2. Recalling Decision 38 COM 8B.14;

3. Approves the minor boundary modification of **Trang An Landscape Complex (Viet Nam)**;

4. Requests the State Party to ensure that any developments in the property, its buffer zone, or in any adjacent areas that might threaten the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, are subject to early notice to the World Heritage Centre, as per the requirements of the Convention's Operational Guidelines, and in line with the newly adopted Sustainable Development Policy for the World Heritage Convention;

5. Notes with appreciation the progress in enhancing the management of the property, including the further work to complete the management plan, and encourages the State Party, and its property managers to continue this work, in close partnership with the local communities.

Map 1: World Heritage property and proposed minor boundary modification

