



## Historical Monuments of Mtskheta WHS, Georgia

### State of Conservation Report

2019

სამართვის კულტურული  
მემკვიდრეობის დაცვის  
ეროვნული სააგენტო



NATIONAL AGENCY FOR  
CULTURAL HERITAGE  
PRESERVATION OF GEORGIA



**FORMAT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF  
STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS  
BY THE STATES PARTIES**

**(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the *Operational Guidelines*)**

Name of World Heritage property (State(s) Party(ies)) (Identification number)

**Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia) (C 708bis)**

**Date of Inscription: 1994**

**Minor boundary modification inscribed year: 2017**

**Criteria: (iii) (iv)**

1. Executive Summary of the report

*[Note: each of the sections described below should be summarized. The maximum length of the executive summary is 1 page.]*

Following the valuable recommendations of the final Activity Report of the UNESCO Advisory Service to Georgia, developed within the Cooperation Agreement between Georgia, UNESCO and World Bank in 2015-2017, and to ensure the participatory process within the ULUMP elaboration process, the decision maker Special Steering Committee (SC) and the Inter-institutional Professional Committee were established, engaging all the stakeholders.

The process of the elaboration of ULUMP is ongoing under the auspice of the MRDI to ensure the delivery of the high quality documentation in accordance to the contemporary approaches to the WH Property Management Requirements of urban planning. The basis of the project is the ToR elaborated in 2017 within the above-mentioned tripartite Cooperation. The project is funded by the state budget and is being operated by the Municipal Development Fund of Georgia (MDF) under the MRDI.

In order to achieve the high quality of the document and to ensure the proper protection of the OUV, the State Party invited an international expert (urban planner), proposed by the World Heritage Centre as an external member of the Professional Committee. In addition, the State Party has applied to ICOMOS to engage within the process, ICOMOS has expressed its readiness to assist the State Party and the relevant negotiation on the arrangements is still ongoing.

In 2017-2018, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia, with the support of the World Heritage Centre, conducted research, which aimed at revision of the General Protection Zones of Cultural Heritage, to establish the relevant protection tools for the whole area of the extended buffer zone. The document has been delivered to the contractor for consideration within the elaboration of the ULUMP and for the final reviewing by all stakeholders and adoption.

In addition, in May 2019, the International Expert Meeting on the Living Religious and Sacred World Heritage in a Historic Urban Context was held, focusing on the conservation and sustainable use of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta World Heritage Property, according to the recommendations of the final report of above-mentioned tripartite agreement, Joint Reactive and Advisory missions. The aim of the meeting was to better

understand, integrate and harmonize within the ULUMP the interests of the religious community, strongly related to this particular WHS.

The Decree N411 of Georgian Government on “Enactment of Special Regime of Regulation of Urban Development in Cultural Heritage Protection Zones of Mtskheta Municipality” has been prolonged until 31 December, 2019 with the condition to elaborate and approve full set of town planning documentation.

The staged-on conservation and rehabilitation works on the components of the Mtskheta Historical Monuments are undergoing in order to ensure the physical protection of the monuments. It is important to note that the projects follows the methodology as elaborated jointly within previous courses on stone conservation and training project by ICCROM and the Ministry of Culture of Georgia.

Since 2018, the project of the “Adaptation of the Mtskheta old cinema building for establishment of the Mtskheta archaeological museum” is undergoing, according to the project elaborated by the State Party and approved by the WHC and Advisory Bodies, funded by the World Bank under the “Regional Development Project III” through the Regional Development Fund of Georgia.

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

*[Note: The State(s) Party(ies) is/are requested to address the most recent Decision of the World Heritage Committee for this property, paragraph by paragraph.]*

**Decision: 42 COM 7B.24**

*The World Heritage Committee,*

1. *Having examined Document WHC/18/42.COM/7B.Add,*
2. *Recalling Decision 41 COM 7B.44, adopted at its 41st session (Krakow, 2017),*
3. *Acknowledges the efforts made by the State Party to implement the recommendations made with regard to the Mtskheta Urban Land Use Master Plan (ULUMP), and encourages the State Party to further enhance the participatory process and involvement of the municipality and civil society in the development of the ULUMP, and to improve coordinated inter-ministerial and institutional decision-making processes regarding the protection of the World Heritage property;*

Following the recommendations of the final Activity Report of the UNESCO Advisory Service to Georgia, developed within the Cooperation Agreement between Georgia, UNESCO and World Bank in 2015-2017 and according to the Decree #1038 dated on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 by the Government of Georgia, the *Special Steering Committee (SC)* was established. The aim of this decision maker SC is to support and supervise the ULUMP elaboration process and brings together the representatives of the Patriarchate of Georgia, Mtskheta Municipality, and Majoritarian Member of Georgian Parliament from Mtskheta alongside with the representatives from the relevant ministries:

- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development;
- Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia;
- Ministry of Defence;
- Ministry of Internal Affairs;
- Ministry of Justice;
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure;

Following the aforementioned Decree and according to the Order #45/მ of April 11th, 2019 by the Minister of the Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, the Inter-institutional Professional Committee was formed to monitor and to ensure the professional consultancy through the whole process of the elaboration of the ULUMP. This Professional Committee is composed of the representatives from all stakeholders: relevant ministries and governmental agencies, Patriarchate of Georgia, Mtskheta Municipality, and independent architect, urban planner and archaeologist.

In order to achieve the high quality of the document and to ensure the proper protection of the OUV, the State Party invited an international expert (urban planner), proposed by the World Heritage Centre as an external member of the Professional Committee. In addition, the State Party has applied to ICOMOS to engage within the process, ICOMOS has expressed its readiness to assist the State Party and the relevant negotiation on the arrangements is still ongoing.

Furthermore, since 2019, to ensure the participatory process and according to the Order # 02/36 (20/05/2019) of the Director-General of the NACHPG, the representatives from all the stakeholders, inter alia relevant municipalities and the Georgian Patriarchate, alongside with the field experts participate to the Cultural Heritage Council of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

The Procurement Competition on the “*Elaboration of Management Documentation for Spatial-Territorial Development of Mtskheta*” (ULUMP) was announced by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia on May, 16, 2018. Due to the structural changes within the Government of Georgia, the tasks related to the spatial development of the country was transformed to the Ministry of the Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia (MRDI) and the earlier announced competition has been suspended. The Procurement Competition was re-announced in November 2018, which was won by the consortium/partnership “Akolis”, assembled by the several consulting companies. The Contract with “Akolis” was signed and development of the documentation has been commenced on March 5, 2019. The process of the elaboration of ULUMP is ongoing under the auspice of the MRDI to ensure the delivery of the high quality documentation in accordance to the contemporary approaches to the WH Property Management Requirements of urban planning. The basis of the project is the ToR elaborated in 2017 within the above-mentioned tripartite Cooperation. The project is funded by the state budget and is being operated by the Municipal Development Fund of Georgia (MDF) under the MRDI.

At present, the contractor has finalized relevant data gathering through literature review and specific pre-planning studies, necessary for development of the General Plan and the Concept of the General Plan and Historical Cultural Baseline Plan is under elaboration. The Inter-institutional Professional Committee reviews and discussed the submitted documentation by the contractor on each phase and sub-phases. The Relevant comments/recommendations are delivered to the contractor for consideration.

Based on the national legislation for the spatial planning, and to ensure the interaction with the local citizens throughout of the planning process, the communication campaign with local population through public meetings and discussions are arranged.

Furthermore, in 2017-2018 the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia, with the support of the World Heritage Centre, conducted research, which aimed at revision of the General Protection Zones of Cultural Heritage, to include the whole area of the extended buffer zone. Number of retrospective maps, analytical narrative and explanatory note were developed. As a result, the project On Correction of General Protection Zones of Mtskheta Cultural Heritage was elaborated. As the General Protection zones of Cultural Heritage is considered as the base documentation for developing further spatial-territorial planning, the document has been delivered to the contractor for consideration within the elaboration of the ULUMP and for the final reviewing by all stakeholders and adoption.

In addition, in May 2019, the International Expert Meeting on the Living Religious and Sacred World Heritage in a Historic Urban Context was held, focusing on the conservation and sustainable use of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta World Heritage Property, according to the recommendations of final report of above-mentioned tripartite agreement, the Joint Reactive and Advisory missions. One of the aim of the meeting was to better understand, integrate and harmonize within the ULUMP the interests of the religious community, strongly related to this particular WHS.

4. *Endorses the recommendations of the final Activity Report of the UNESCO Advisory service to Georgia developed within the framework of the agreement signed between the State Party and UNESCO, and financially supported by the World Bank (UNESCO/Georgia Agreement), as well as the recommendations of the 2018 Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, and invites the State Party to implement these recommendations, and in particular concerning the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, the Jvari Monastery, Samtavro Nunnery and Samtavro Valley;*

- According to the recommendations given by the Joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS / ICCROM Reactive Monitoring Mission implemented to Mtskheta WHS in 2018, to extensive project for maintenance and restoration of the building blocks of the walls (of Jvari monastery) and based on the conservation approach elaborated jointly within previous courses on stone conservation and training project by ICCROM and the Ministry of Culture of Georgia through the NACHPG, and approved by the WHC and Advisory Bodies, the conservation project, of Minor Church of Jvari monastery has been implemented in 2015-2018 led by Prof. Stefano Volta, international stone conservator (see annex 1).
- Considering the positive results of the above-mentioned interventions, in 2018 the project for the stone conservation of the Western Gate of Svetitskhoveli Cathedral Complex was elaborated with the same methodology. In 2019, the implementation of the project has been started and at this phase, the following conservation works were performed: Treatment of surfaces with biocide; consolidation of stones' structure with ethyl silicate; Consolidation of cracks and micro cracks; mechanical removal of unsuitable fillings and reconstruction of the missing parts of the wall with Lime mortar (see annex 2).
- In 2019, the NACHPG has implemented the minor rehabilitation works for the Samtavro Valley archaeological site, mainly concerning the renewal of the classroom-shelter for the Educational programme "Archaeology for kids". The programme at Samtavro Valley has been carried out for almost a decade, aiming at raising children's interest in history and cultural heritage of the country, archaeology and developing skills of creativity, discussion, investigation and analysis (see annex 3).
- In November 2019 the project proposal, prepared by the "G. Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Art History and Heritage Preservation" and supported by the NACHPG, received the Cultural Heritage Preservation Large Grant of US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation, with the amount of 100.000 \$. The Project aims at conservation and restoration of the building material of the main church of Jvari (The Holly Cross) Monastery. Project intends the elaboration of the conservation interventions project, through the interdisciplinary studies and would share the same methodology defined during 2011-2012 under the international consultant's leadership. (see annex 4)
- Since 2018, the project of the "Adaptation of the Mtskheta old cinema building for establishment of the Mtskheta archaeological museum" is undergoing, according to the project elaborated by the State Party and approved by the WHC and Advisory Bodies, funded by the World Bank under the "Regional Development Project III" through the

## *Annex 13 of the Operational Guidelines*

Regional Development Fund of Georgia. The project considers restoration of damaged walls, internal and external stairs, ramps and the pool, arrangement of the insulated, waterproof roofing; arrangement of the new parking areas. The Project envisages conservation of archaeological monument – fence wall and gate with towers located within cinema building boundaries (see annex 5).

- In 2019, the rehabilitation works of the fragment of the western defense wall of Svetitskhoveli complex, according the project submitted to WHS and reviewed by ICOMOS has started (see annex 6).

Finally, according to the recommendations of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies given to the State party in the framework of joint Reactive and Advisory Missions, for identifying the ways of strengthening sustainable management and protection of the World Heritage Property and its buffer zone and for discussing the inter-linkages between the World Heritage Convention and the heritage of religious interest and defining the associated spiritual values, the Government of Georgia and Patriarchate of Georgia, in coordination with World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies held the International Expert Meeting on the Living Religious and Sacred World Heritage in a Historic Urban Context, focusing on the conservation and sustainable use of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta World Heritage Property and its setting. The meeting provided fruitful recommendations on the development of an agreed and integrated approach to the conservation and sustainable use of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta World Heritage property and its buffer zone and broader setting. This experience as the first pilot-project on protection and management of Living Religious and Sacred World Heritage in a Historic Urban Context was shared by the State Party at the Side-Event of the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee (Baku), “Properties of Religious Interest Sharing best practices in World Heritage management”. (see annex 7)

5. *Requests the State Party to maintain the moratorium on Urban Development and Land Privatization in the Cultural Heritage Protection Zones of Mtskheta until the urban planning documentation has been adopted, and control and monitoring is fully in place;*

The joint WHC-ICOMOS advisory mission was invited (28.11.2018 – 2.12.2018) by the State Party to in-situ review the updated terms of reference for the elaboration of ULUMP and also, to discuss the possible amendments to the Decree N411 of Georgian Government on “Enactment of Special Regime of Regulation of Urban Development in Cultural Heritage Protection Zones of Mtskheta Municipality”. During the mission, various meetings and discussions were held on the above-mentioned topics, followed by the comprehensive mission report, introducing the relevant recommendations. Based on the careful analysis of the Advisory Mission Report the decision on the extension of the Moratorium, without amendments, by December 31, 2019 has been adopted by the Decree N670 of Government of Georgia, (issued on December 29, 2018).

6. *Recalls its request to the State Party to submit, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, detailed information on any proposed development projects within the property, its buffer zone and setting for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies prior to any decisions being taken that could be difficult to reverse;*

The State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for reviewing two projects within the WHS key components. The project developed by the national authorities within the property, aiming the improvement of the physical stability of the defence wall of Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and the development project of Samtavro Nunnery adjacent area developed by the Georgian Orthodox Patriarchate.

Furthermore, all the development projects within the buffer zone of Mtskheta Historical Monuments WHS are submitted for reviewing and approval to the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia through the municipal authority. The projects within the

Moratorium regime are referred back without reviewing, while the Cultural Heritage Council of the National Agency formally reviews the projects proposed outside the Moratorium regime but within the buffer zone. In case the projects are considered acceptable, the State Party according to decisions 41COM7B.44 and 42COM7B.24 of the World Heritage Committee and in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines* submits them to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for reviewing prior to any decisions being taken.

In 2018-2019, the State party has reviewed 133 project proposals, from which 22 were submitted to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for reviewing, prior to the final decision by the State Party.

7. *Strongly urges the State Party to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for developments within the property and its buffer zone as a timely and appropriate method of assessing the multiple and cumulative impacts of current and planned developments, taking into account potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, in conformity with the ICOMOS Guidelines on HIAs for Cultural World Heritage properties, prior to allowing any developments to take place and prior to the finalization and implementation of the ULUMP;*

Considering the active Moratorium regime and the elaboration of the ULUMP, during the reporting period mainly the project proposals for the individual living houses and the small commercial building outside the Moratorium regime and within the buffer zone. As for the Major development proposals/concepts, there have been few ideas proposed, which were referred back to the applicants with the recommendations to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) in conformity with the ICOMOS Guidelines on HIAs for Cultural World Heritage properties, but till now none of the mentioned applications with the relevant HIAs were submitted. Up to the present, there has been only one exceptional case for the HIA to be elaborated in Georgia – in 2017, within the Western Route Export Pipeline Sectional Replacement Project. The relevant Compliance Report on the implementation of the project is presented as an annex 8.

8. *Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2019, 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 44th session in 2020.*

If the property is inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger  
Please also provide detailed information on the following:

- a) Progress achieved in implementing the corrective measures adopted by the World Heritage Committee  
*[Note: please address each corrective measure individually, providing factual information, including exact dates, figures, etc.]*  
If needed, please describe the success factors or difficulties in implementing each of the corrective measures identified
  - b) Is the timeframe for implementing the corrective measures suitable? If not, please propose an alternative timeframe and an explanation why this alternative timeframe is required.
  - c) Progress achieved towards the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR)
3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value  
*[Note: this includes conservation issues which are not mentioned in the Decision of the World Heritage Committee or in any information request from the World Heritage Centre]*

*Annex 13 of the Operational Guidelines*

4. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

*[Note: this report will be uploaded for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of conservation Information System (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>). Should your State Party request that the full report should not be uploaded, only the 1-page executive summary provided in point (1.) above will be uploaded for public access].*

The State Party gives its consent to upload the present SoC Report for public access without annexes.

6. Signature of the Authority

**Nikoloz Antidze**  
Director-General



National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia