

**REPORT ON THE JOINT WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE/ICOMOS/IUCN
REACTIVE MONITORING MISSION TO THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE
PROPERTY “TRANG AN LANDSCAPE COMPLEX”
IN VIET NAM (C/N 1438bis)**



© UNESCO/N. Hayashi, 2019

28 September – 3 October 2019

Table of contents

Acknowledgements	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS	5
Background	5
<u>Recommendations</u>	7
1 BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION	14
1.1 Inscription History	14
1.2 Issues raised in the ICOMOS and IUCN Evaluation of the Inscription	16
1.3 Examination of the state of conservation by the World Heritage Committee and background of the current Reactive Monitoring mission	17
1.4 Justification of the mission	19
2 LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY	20
2.1 Protected Area Legislation	20
2.1.1 Laws	20
2.1.2 National Decrees and Decisions on Heritage	20
Major Decrees and Decisions are listed under Annex 1.	20
2.2 Institutional Framework.....	20
2.2.1 Division of areas	22
2.2.2 Internal Management Zoning	24
2.3 Management structure	25
2.4 Management tools	26
3 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES/THREATS	27
3.1 General.....	27
3.2 Governance.....	28
3.2.1 Site management tools and their implementation.....	28
3.2.2 Mission statement, organization chart and staff	35
3.2.3 Process for prioritization of interventions.....	35
3.2.4 Protocol and decision-making process considering aspects relating to tourism, heritage management and nature conservation as a whole	36
3.3 Staff and capacities	37
3.3.1 Financial allocation and staff	37
3.3.2 Staff training and capacity building.....	37
3.3.3 Skills in archaeological heritage management	38
3.3.4 Resources relating to systematic environmental monitoring.....	39
3.4 Management of tourism	40
3.5 Potential or ascertained factors of threats to OUV and analysis for improvement	41
3.5.1 Cultural values	41
3.5.2 Natural Values	42
3.6 Other issues	44
3.6.1 Interpretation of Outstanding Universal Value and other values relating to the property	44
3.6.2 Moveable heritage management.....	45
3.6.3 Living Heritage.....	46

4	ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY	48
4.1	Conservation of cultural values (Criterion v).....	48
4.1.1	General observations.....	48
4.1.2	The archaeological attributes of OUV.....	48
4.1.3	Presenting the cultural attributes of the property's OUV.....	49
4.1.4	Buffer Zone within the inscribed area.....	49
4.1.5	Historic Buildings and Monuments.....	49
4.2	Conservation of natural values.....	52
4.2.1.	Urban development	53
4.2.2.	Goats.....	54
5	CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS.....	56
	<u>Recommendations</u>	58
	ANNEXES.....	64
	Annex 1: National Decisions and Decrees on Heritage.....	64
	Annex 2: Terms of Reference for the mission.....	67
	Annex 3: Decision: 42 COM 7B.62 (2018)	70
	Annex 4: Programme of the Joint WHC/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission.....	72
	Annex 5: List of persons met	76
	Annex 6: Map of the property boundary (as received by the mission in September 2019).....	78
	Annex 7: Organisation Chart of the management structure	79

Acknowledgements

The mission is grateful to the numerous officials and experts of Viet Nam for their hospitality, support, availability and assistance. The mission team would especially like to convey their gratitude to the Ninh Binh People's Committee, represented by Mr Tong Quang Thin, Vice-Chairman, and Mr Bui Thanh Dong, Director of the Tourism Department. The mission further thanks Mr Bui Van Manh, Vice-Director of the Tourism Department, and Mr Phạm Sinh Khánh, Vice-Director of Trang An Management Board, for their extensive support in the preparation and implementation of the Reactive Monitoring mission.

Special thanks must be extended to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Viet Nam, especially to H.E. Ms Trịnh Thị Thủy, Deputy Minister, and the representatives of the various departments of the Ministry, notably Dr Nguyen The Hung, Director of the Department of Cultural Heritage, Ms Nguyen Phuong Hoa, Director-General of the Department of International Cooperation, and Mr Nguyen Viet Cuong, Head of the Relics and Monuments Management Division, who met the mission after the field survey and introduced the situation of the property. The mission also wishes to thank Ms Vu Ha Ngan, Vice-Head of the Division of Relics and Monuments Management of the Ministry of Culture, and Mr Vuong Viet Anh from the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Vietnamese National Commission for UNESCO, who accompanied the mission throughout its visit.

H.E. Mr Le Hoai Trung, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the representatives of the National Commission of Viet Nam to UNESCO, in particular its President H.E. Mr Le Hoai Trung and Secretary-General H.E. Mr Mai Phan Dung, should also be thanked.

While it is not possible to name all the officials, experts, consultants and stakeholders who supported the mission, we would like to highlight our appreciation for all technical staff of the Management Board of the property and encourage them to continue their work, which has already yielded visible results.

Finally, the mission would like to thank the Permanent Delegation of Viet Nam to UNESCO, especially H.E. Ms Tran Thi Hoang Mai, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate, and Mr Knahn Nguyen Tuan, Deputy Permanent Delegate, for their constant cooperation and support. Mr Michael Croft, Head of the UNESCO Office in Hanoi, and Ms Huong Pham Thi Thanh, National Programme Officer for Culture, Ms Regina Durighello and Ms Rebecca Currie of ICOMOS International, and Ms Elena Osipova and Ms Mizuki Murai of IUCN should also be thanked for their support.

Mission Representatives

Nao Hayashi (World Heritage Centre), Brian Clark (IUCN), Andrew Sneddon (ICOMOS)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Background

Trang An Landscape Complex was inscribed on the World Heritage List under Criteria (v) (vii) (viii) at the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2014 (Doha, Qatar)¹. Situated near the southern margin of the Red River Delta, the Trang An Landscape Complex World Heritage property is a spectacular landscape of limestone karst peaks permeated with valleys, many of them partly submerged and surrounded by steep, almost vertical cliffs. The exploration of caves at different altitudes has revealed archaeological traces of human activity over a continuous period of more than 30,000 years. They illustrate the occupation of these mountains by seasonal hunter-gatherers and how they adapted to major climatic and environmental changes, especially the repeated inundation of the landscape by the sea after the last ice age. The story of human occupation continues through the Neolithic and Bronze Ages to the historical era. Hoa Lu, the ancient capital of Viet Nam, was strategically established here in the 10th and 11th centuries AD. The property also contains temples, pagodas, paddy-fields and small villages.

Since its inscription, successive recommendations of the World Heritage Committee judged that enhanced and immediate management efforts are imperative to ensure a balanced approach in proactively managing the property in view of expected increases in the number of visitors in this relatively small property, especially because of its living heritage values. Construction of illegal or out-of-context infrastructure within the property was reported, which was perceived as a deficiency in governance and reporting protocol.

The revision of the Management Plan, strongly synergising tourism management and valorisation of heritage values is a principal consideration.

At its 42nd session (Manama, 2018), the Committee requested that the State Party of Viet Nam invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property in order to address concerns related to governance and management capacity, visitor control and management of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and to provide advice for the implementation and revision of the property's Management Plan, which also requires the review of the state of implementation of all previous Decisions (**42 COM 7B.62**).

Key findings:

In fulfilling the Terms of Reference the Mission has found:

Investment and preservation efforts of the Provincial People's Committee of Ninh Binh and the Management Board of Trang An Landscape Complex in recent years have significantly contributed to the improved general condition of the property and to the generation of financial benefits and local job opportunities through the increased number of visitors.

There has been progress in response to some of the Committee's previous Decisions concerning the revision of the Management Plan and the elaboration of the action plans for visitation management and archaeological heritage management. The authorities also responded positively to two specific concerns raised by the Committee; the touristic use of a scenic island located in one of the waterways of the property, including a film set (other than a remnant iron ship structure), and the removal of an illegal installation of a walkway at Cai Ha Mountain.

Overall, the physical conservation of the property seems to be satisfactory. The major part of the property is inaccessible and therefore protected from potentially damaging visitor activities. Most tourism opportunities on offer can be characterised as 'passive', being limited to sightseeing by

¹Decision **38 COM 8B.14**

boat trips on waterways, except for the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital, which attracts visitors to its many temples of historical and spiritual significance. Besides the touristic attractions, the property houses important locations, such as pagodas and temples, that are visited by local and national pilgrims throughout the year, making the property a living heritage place with an impressive landscape combining rice culture, aquaculture and gardening. The property benefits from regular maintenance work at its cultural sites, attendance of staff in key tourism areas and cleaning of litter in waterways and urban and residential areas. Maintenance of infrastructure and facilities, such as roads, parking areas, and public sanitary places, seems appropriately conducted.

The State Party should be commended for engaging in active international cooperation and collaboration with national experts in the field of archaeological research, observing international standards of non-destructive techniques and in situ conservation. Places of archaeological interest, such as caves, are generally not overly disturbed, and restrictions have been effective to control access to sites of scientific importance, except for academic research and maintenance.

The establishment of an *ad hoc* Management and Scientific Advisory Committee for the property is beneficial and is expected to contribute to the quality of property management by improving decision-making processes and involving multiple stakeholders.

However, the mission has identified a number of matters for consideration by the State Party to enhance governance and management in order to guarantee the safeguarding of the property's OUV, along with continued and structured interventions towards its physical conservation and valorisation.

The main points are summarized below.

- The State Party has demonstrated that it is capable of providing reactive responses to important issues. It would be advisable for the Board to adopt a more proactive management approach by defining strategic objectives in an overall framework, so as to identify adaptive or mitigating measures against potential threats.
- Fields of expertise could be reinforced to improve balance to integrate concerns on nature conservation, cultural heritage preservation and sustainable tourism into an effective and holistic management process.
- The mission was advised that the Management Board seeks to address the World Heritage Committee's concerns, and the Board should be commended for initiating the research proposal to determine the property's carrying capacity, bearing in mind that a separate carrying capacity must be defined for each key area and activity.
- Noting that the karst landscape and natural aesthetic values are fundamental attributes which underpin the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List, the integration of biodiversity conservation and further investment in research and valorisation of these values, combined with activities concerning cultural heritage, can reinforce the values of the property as a mixed heritage site.
- While the preservation of World Heritage properties in Viet Nam is regulated through a solid legal framework and a number of management tools at the national, provincial and district levels (see Annex 1), efforts towards ensuring consistency and defining a hierarchy among these frameworks and tools would avoid contradictory rules and misalignment regarding key priorities.
- The revision of the Management Plan for the property remains to be finalised with performance indicators as a key management tool. The revised plan should demonstrate clearly how the State Party intends to guarantee the preservation of the property's OUV by interlinking individual actions to strategic objectives and by integrating all staff and stakeholders in

management processes.

- Specific management aspects to develop further include the reinforcement of systematic monitoring of natural and cultural values; a regular review of priorities to determine budget and human allocation; the establishment and regular updating of a documentation system for the built heritage; and a documentation and storage process for moveable heritage.
- The development and implementation of an overall interpretation plan and public outreach strategy are recommended, as they are fundamental for involving stakeholders in a joint, lasting and meaningful endeavour for the preservation of the property. The same applies to the preservation and valorisation of built and moveable heritage according to international standards.
- Continued international cooperation should contribute to the strengthening of national resources and capacities, and fill any knowledge gap where national resources are lacking. This includes a survey on the natural landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity, activities relating to archaeological elements of later historical periods, moveable heritage and interpretation.
- The integration of the local community in certain aspects of site management could help articulate a long-term vision to preserve the living heritage site, with the well-being and spiritual fulfilment of diverse stakeholders at its core. Combined with expert guidance, actions to contribute to the local community's living conditions could be pursued, in line with the *Policy on the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention* adopted by the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention.

These matters are detailed in the body of the report and are the foundation for the formulation of the recommendations as follows.

Recommendations

The mission recommends that the State Party:

General

1. Enhance the Management Board's institutional, financial and human capacities by:
 - a. strengthening its Mission Statement by stating the primary mission as preserving the OUV of the property and ensuring a balanced approach to conservation, development and economic growth through sustainable tourism;
 - b. ensuring that the financial and human resources necessary to implement the priorities detailed in the Management Plan are provided ;
 - c. providing continued support to increase the staff's technical expertise and management capacities;
 - d. ensuring that the Management Board's institutional structure is supported by expertise in heritage management, nature conservation and sustainable tourism at an equal hierarchical level so that decision-making processes are balanced and take all aspects into consideration;

Governance and Management

2. review and ensure consistency among the legally binding tools and related policies concerning all World Heritage properties in Viet Nam in order to avoid contradictions and ambiguities concerning decision-making hierarchies;
3. ensure that the 2020 revision of the Management Plan for the property clearly prioritises the protection of its OUV;
4. undertake a biennial review of short-term objectives, budget allocation and implementation, considering the importance of prioritisation among objectives;
5. include the following elements in the revised Management Plan:
 - a) a policy about private-public partnerships, which applies to the distinctive tourist zones. It should be guided by a genuine spirit of partnership sustaining the OUV of the property and increasing the economic and spiritual well-being of stakeholders;
 - b) a procedure for any person or corporation seeking to implement a project which may have an impact on the OUV of the property to be considered by the Management Board, and that such procedure be displayed publicly, both physically and online;
 - c) a provision to periodically review the recently initiated carrying capacity study, and a subsequent review of the tourism-related activities in order to ensure tourism planning on the basis of preserving the OUV in the pursuit of economic growth and benefit-sharing with all stakeholders, as well as to identify and provide any necessary mitigating measures;
 - d) a policy on Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for development proposals within the property, its buffer zone and wider vicinity which may have potential impacts on the property's OUV. They should be undertaken in conformity with the *ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties* and the *IUCN World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment*, respectively; where new development proposals are approved or denied, the justification for the decision should be informed, recorded, and publicly transparent;
 - e) a clear statement concerning urban development aspects, informing residents in the inscribed area about rules and regulations for the repair of existing structures and for the design or construction of new structures within the property;
 - f) a description of the key performance indicators which will be used to evaluate progress against baseline information by specific, qualitative and quantitative, measurable, achievable, realistic outcomes, including clear timeframes;
 - g) a specific conservation and visitor management approach to the protection of distinctive heritage values (e.g. water routes, temple zones), based upon a carrying capacity analysis of the potential impacts of visitors on those values and the visitor experience, noting the uses of different areas and the existing zoning, along with the variety of visitors' profiles and activities;
 - h) an assessment and description of the present 'character' of the property and buffer zone in terms of uses and vernacular and traditional architecture. The objective should be to ensure that the buffer zone facilitates an appropriate 'transition' from areas outside the buffer zone into the property. This should include a study of significant views and vistas into the property from within the buffer zone, to ensure that inappropriate development does not obscure such views and vistas in the future.

6. integrate the revised Archaeological Heritage Management Action Plan by:
- a) identifying places with archaeological potential, ranked according to assessed significance (scientific and historic significance especially, but also social and spiritual significance). These predictive models should be consulted whenever a new development that may cause significant ground disturbance is proposed;
 - b) including the research questions that the property's archaeological resources might be used to address, as well as appropriate methodologies for their investigation. These may relate to the property's OUV or to research questions of local, regional or national importance, and should integrate opportunities for heritage interpretation. These research questions should become a tool to prioritise future archaeological investigations;
 - c) addressing, as a matter of urgency, the need for a database of sites across the property to be used as a management tool under the responsibility of the Management Board. At a minimum, the database should include a detailed description of all sites identified by excavation or survey within the property, identified by a unique inventory number, and with their location recorded using GPS;
 - d) addressing the need for a database of significant artefacts recovered through excavation to track their storage or display location, including a unique identifier, a physical description, a photograph, a record of their condition, provenance and conservation needs;
 - e) including a procedure for the reporting and management of unexpected archaeological finds (chance discovery), including clear lines of responsibility for their reporting and subsequent management. Consideration should be given to ways of encouraging landowners to report finds to the Management Board so that archaeological relics are not disturbed;
 - f) integrating the revised Archaeological Heritage Management Action Plan with the proposed Trang An Landscape Complex Interpretation Plan (see below 13 'Interpretation') so that, where appropriate, archaeological finds are used to justify, sustain and demonstrate the attributes of OUV.
 - g) stating that public access to the archaeological cave sites should be restricted in general, but giving consideration, in conjunction with the Interpretation Plan, to ways of making some of these sites accessible to the public upon completion of the SUNDASIA projects;
 - h) providing for the backfilling of excavated trenches at the close of each season of excavation, unless excellent grounds for a different approach are provided by the excavation director. Any trenches that presently remain open should be back-filled in accordance with permit conditions, after consultation with the excavation director, unless reasons can be given by them for an alternative methodology. These reasons must be assessed by qualified personnel on the Management and Scientific Advisory Committee. In those extraordinary circumstances where back-filling is not required appropriate steps must be taken to ensure that the excavation area is safe for visitation.
 - i) developing a database to keep track of all monitoring activities carried out at excavated archaeological sites, with a photographic record allowing to track incremental change at the sites in order to ensure that the sites are not subject to damage through human agency or natural events.

7. ensure a clear internal process by which the World Heritage Centre is informed of any proposal to undertake major restorations or new constructions which may affect the OUV of the property. Such notice should be given as soon as possible and, most importantly, before any decision is made that would be difficult to reverse (see Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*).

Conservation of natural and cultural values

Natural heritage conservation

8. enhance conservation of natural values by ensuring that the new Management Plan details requirements to:
 - a) establish a systematic monitoring and reporting programme of the natural environment to determine the ongoing state of conservation of the property and implement appropriate management responses where required.
 - b) carry out a baseline study for all caves used for tourism purposes to understand the presence of cave-dependent fauna and flora, recording population density to monitor population trends and, if populations are threatened by such use, take appropriate remedial strategic measures;
 - c) carry out an annual survey of the Protected Natural Zone to determine the presence of goats, their impact on the property, that they are not becoming established, and to implement any required management responses;
 - d) monitor the waterways to determine the state of conservation including trends in the alien snail population, decide whether any intervention is required, and take action as required;
 - e) inspect all caves with artificial lighting to detect the presence of lampenflora and implement an action plan, based on available internationally accepted studies, for management of lampenflora.

Preservation of cultural values

9. prepare, over the course of the next 5 years, conservation management guidelines to assist with the management of individual historic sites that make a contribution to the heritage values of the property. This task is to be carried out by qualified architects or other suitably qualified heritage practitioners (e.g. specialists in fabric conservation, landscape architecture, town planning), in close collaboration with members of the Management Board and local experts. This includes the temples at the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital and pagodas and other historic structures in scenic areas. Consideration should be given to whether this would be best achieved by preparing guidelines on a site-by-site basis or on some other basis e.g. lighting and wiring guidelines, guidelines on the repair and maintenance of timber structures, disabled access guidelines etc. A photographic archival record using digital image capture, catalogued images and plans showing all camera angles should be made of all such structures so that a baseline exists against which change can be measured. This archival record should be maintained and updated whenever a change is made to the structures.

Tourism and visitor management

10. Noting that growing tourism is a clear and urgent threat to the property and one of the main threats to World Heritage properties worldwide,

- a) as per Decision **42 COM 7B.62** (paragraph 11), carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess the cumulative impacts of developments inside the property and its buffer zones to encourage comprehensive planning beyond a project-level assessment;
- b) adopt a proactive, strategic, long-term approach to the planning, monitoring and management of visitation especially by urgently completing the planned carrying capacity study and implementing the acceptable limits as soon as possible, and ensuring that the study:
 - i) adopts an effective counting method (the number of visits or number of visitors) to evaluate the actual impact of tourism on the property's OUV, including a specific focus or analysis on entry points and tourist hot spots;
 - ii) provides a detailed analysis of the range (types) and scale (size and number) of visitor services and visitor facilities required to meet the needs of the projected number of visits in order to maintain the property's OUV;
 - iii) is based on a systematic process which aims to ensure that environmental and other sustainability aspects are appropriately considered.

Living heritage values

- 11. include requirements for maintaining the property's living heritage values in the Management Plan, (e.g. monitoring and control of potentially intrusive visitor behaviour at locations where traditional worship and other practices are carried out).

Landscape

- 12. encourage the maintenance of the landscape in a natural state, as far as possible, and permit continued traditional subsistence use of natural resources within the property,(e.g. agricultural activities, aquaculture and gardening) provided that they do not impact the authenticity and integrity of the property;

Interpretation

- 13. elaborate an overarching plan for the presentation and interpretation of the property's OUV and other values (e.g. recent history, biodiversity and geodiversity such as caves), and in particular:
 - a) prepares individual site interpretation plans for each of the six principal gateways into the property;
 - b) includes provisions for both on-site and online opportunities for people to learn about the property's significance and possible examples of values showcasing its 'mixed' nature (e.g. landscape, historical adaptation to climate change, use of caves);
 - c) considers the 2015 UNESCO recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections as a reference in this endeavour;
 - d) includes research planning with existing documentation of artefacts, planning for upgrading the existing facilities and/or creating new ones at other locations;
 - e) investigates and develops any synergies that might exist with the Ninh Binh provincial museum (e.g. as part of a heritage trail) leading visitors from the main city to the heritage place;
- 14. provide appropriate levels of information about all artefacts currently displayed to visitors;

15. review the proposal to develop an interpretation facility on the island from which the artificial film set was recently removed. If it is not justifiably determined that this location is the most appropriate for such a facility the proposal should be abandoned and all remnants of the film set (toilets, pathways, grass huts, iron ship - cum - bridge) removed and the island should be replanted with native vegetation to restore the aesthetic values of this area.
16. implement the plan using a stage-by-stage approach, so that basic actions can be implemented immediately and new elements added slowly as resources and the acquired expertise in the field of site interpretation allow;

Moveable heritage

17. establish an overall strategy for the management of moveable artefacts, in line with the UNESCO guidelines relating to documentation, storage, physical conservation and presentation of such artefacts under the supervision of the appropriate national authorities.
18. enforce, as a condition for the granting of archaeological research permits, compliance with the rules concerning the following elements,:
 - a) property rights,
 - b) application of standardized documentation systems which, at a minimum, include a detailed description of all sites recovered by excavation or survey in the property, identified by a unique inventory number, their location (using GPS) and the location of storage or display,
 - c) provision of all necessary conservation work prior to any artefacts being placed into the care of the national authorities,
 - d) collaboration to ensure a sound storage environment;
19. enhance the security and sustainable storage of artefacts by relocating those stored at the Trang An Visitor Centre to a more secure location with a controlled environment equipped with appropriate storage cabinets.

Human resources

20. increase the available human resources to establish a systematic monitoring programme to detect changes to the environment, including the proliferation of alien species, water quality, the proliferation of lampenflora in caves and the impact of tourism on wildlife, such as bat and bird populations exposed to human activities.
21. enhance the planning capacity of the Management Board by including one or more persons with qualifications and experience in urban planning and design, to provide input into master planning and the assessment of development proposals;
22. train existing staff or recruit experts in museum management, exhibition design, and artefact conservation to fill any possible knowledge gap;
23. enhance the Management Board's capacity to design, use and maintain a GIS database system which is used by stakeholders operating within the property;

Local Communities

24. establish a formal consultation system between the Management Board and the local communities to ensure participatory decision making processes. This includes to address social issues such as housing, economic opportunities, threats and lifestyle change arising from the property's inscription on the World Heritage List, and ensure appropriate reporting

to the relevant authorities.

1 BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

1.1 Inscription History

The property, Trang An Landscape Complex (1438bis) was inscribed on the World Heritage List as a mixed property on the basis of criteria (v) (vii) and (viii) at the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee (Doha, 2014).

The property went through a minor boundary modification in 2016 on the basis of the recommendation of the World Heritage Committee by its Decision **38 COM 8B** in order to better reflect the areas and attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and ensure an appropriate surrounding buffer zone. In principle, the focus of boundary revision has, therefore, been to ensure the property encompasses all values and attributes upon which the property's World Heritage status is based. This modification included the extension of the north-western sector of the property to include Dinh Mountain, which is the natural setting for an ancient pagoda. This complements the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital already included in the property, and also adds more natural karst mountain terrain to the property. It also extended the southern boundary of the property to include a substantial mountain area, part of which was reserved earlier for utilization in stone handicraft production. This area is now closed to future quarrying and stone will be sourced from outside the province. Opportunities have also been provided for stone workers and their families to gain new skills and find alternative employment. The World Heritage Committee approved the minor boundary modification for this property in 2016.

Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The following Statement of OUV was adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session (2016).

Brief synthesis

Located within Ninh Binh Province of North Vietnam near the southern margin of the Red River Delta, the Trang An Landscape Complex (Trang An) is a mixed cultural and natural property contained mostly within three protected areas; the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital, the Trang An-Tam Coc-Bich Dong Scenic Landscape, and the Hoa Lu Special-Use Forest. The property covers 6,226 hectares within the Trang An limestone massif, and is surrounded by a buffer zone of 6,026 hectares, mostly rural land with rice paddy fields. There are about 14,000 residents, the majority of whom are families involved in subsistence agriculture, but much of the property is uninhabited and in a natural state.

Trang An is of global significance as an outstanding humid tropical tower-karst landscape in the final stages of geomorphic evolution. It is composed of a variety of classical karst cones and towers and a network of enclosed depressions connected by an intricate system of subterranean waterways, some of which are navigable by small boats. The area is unique in having been invaded by the sea several times in the recent geological past but is now emergent on land. The blend of towering mountains draped in natural rain forest, with large internal basins and narrow cave passages containing quietly flowing waters, creates an extraordinarily beautiful and tranquil landscape.

Archaeological deposits in caves reveal a regionally significant, continuous sequence of human occupation and utilization spanning more than 30,000 years. There is convincing evidence showing how early human groups adapted to changing landscapes in the massif, including some of the most extreme climatic and environmental changes in the planet's recent history.

Criterion (v): Trang An is an outstanding locale within Southeast Asia, for demonstrating the way early humans interacted with the natural landscape and adapted to major changes in climatic, geographical and environmental conditions over a period of more than 30,000 years. The long cultural history is closely associated with geological evolution of the Trang An limestone massif in late Pleistocene and early Holocene times, when the inhabitants endured some of the most turbulent climatic and environmental changes in Earth history, including repeated submergence of the landscape due to oscillating sea levels. Within the one compact landscape there are many sites covering multiple periods and functions, comprising early human settlement systems.

Criterion (vii): The exceptionally beautiful tower-karst landscape of Trang An is dominated by a spectacular array of forest-mantled limestone rock towers up to 200m high, which are linked in places by sharp ridges enclosing deep depressions filled by waterways that are inter-connected by a myriad of subterranean cave passages. These features all contribute to a multi-sensory visitor experience that is heightened by contrasting and ever-changing colours - the deep green tropical rainforests, grey limestone rocks and cliffs, blue-green waters and the brilliant blue of the sky, and areas of human use including the green and yellow rice paddies. Visitors, conveyed in traditional sampans rowed by local guides, experience an intimate connection with the natural environment and a relaxing sense of serenity and security. The dramatic mountains, secretive caves and sacred places in Trang An have inspired people through countless generations.

Criterion (viii): Trang An is a superb geological property that displays, in a globally exceptional way, the final stages of tower-karst landscape evolution in a humid tropical environment. Deep dissection of an uplifted limestone massif over a period of five million years has produced a series of classical karst landforms, including cones, towers, enclosed depressions (cockpits), interior-draining valleys (poljes), foot-caves and subterranean cave passages decorated with speleothems. The presence of transitional forms between 'fengcong' karst with ridges connecting towers, and 'fenglin' karst where towers stand isolated on alluvial plains, is an extremely significant feature of the property. Trang An is an unusual autogenic karst system, being rain-fed only and hydrologically isolated from rivers in the surrounding terrain. Former inundation by the sea transformed the massif into an archipelago for some periods, though it is fully emergent on land today. Fluctuations of sea level are evidenced by an altitudinal series of erosion notches in cliffs, with associated caves, wave-cut platforms, beach deposits and marine shell layers.

Integrity

The property is of sufficient size and scope to encompass almost the entire limestone massif, with a full range of classic tower-karst landforms and associated geomorphic processes. All caves and other sites known to be of archaeological significance are included. The very rugged topography has generally isolated the property from intensive occupation and utilization, and much of its interior remains in a natural state. Within the extensive natural areas of the property there are no structures that obstruct the scenery or detract from the aesthetic appeal. Occupied areas are mainly small traditional villages and associated gardens and rice paddy fields tended by subsistence farmers. The greater part of the property is enclosed within three officially designated protected areas, and contains a number of other sites protected by Government Decree. A large buffer zone surrounds the property and is designed to protect it from external impacts. It contains many small villages together with gardens, farms and rice paddies, and also the recently reconstructed Bai Dinh Pagoda complex.

Trang An is a relatively small property that supports a resident population and is host to a large and growing number of tourist visitors. Close monitoring, strict regulation and careful management will be required in the long term to avoid pressures and threats from urban expansion, resource

use, village growth and excessive tourist infrastructure and use, and service development. These are among the key issues given priority attention in the property management plan.

Authenticity

Knowledge of the ancient inhabitants of Trang An, their culture and relationship to the landscape comes primarily from archaeological investigation and excavation in caves within the massif, which are still largely in their original condition – a rarity in Southeast Asia. The rich archaeological resources are predominantly midden accumulations containing shells, animal bones, stone tools, hearths, corded-ware pottery and occasionally human remains. The sites are yielding vivid palaeo-environmental records from analysis of pollen, seeds and plant tissue, from fauna, and from geomorphic evidence of ancient shorelines. These studies are supported by sophisticated modern techniques such as geo-chemical analysis of plant carbon isotopes and lipids, and shell oxygen isotopes, and the pioneering use in Southeast Asia of LiDAR (Light Distancing and Ranging) to create millimetre-accurate images of cave sites. All materials are professionally plotted, collected, catalogued, stored and analysed. The results of studies have been communicated through an impressive portfolio of published scientific papers, and are also reported in a definitive monograph on human adaptation in the Asian Palaeolithic, the author of which has conducted research in Trang An for almost a decade.

Protection and management requirements

Trang An is State-owned and is controlled by the Ninh Binh Provincial People’s Committee. Most of the property is secured within three statutory protected areas: the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital, the Trang An-Tam Coc-Bich Dong Scenic Landscape and the Hoa Lu Special-Use Forest. Six primary national laws and a series of Government decrees provide measures for: administration and management of the property; protection of cultural heritage, monuments, relics and archaeological sites and resources; biodiversity conservation; environmental protection; eco-tourism and other commercial activities; and sustainable socio-economic development. The property is managed by the Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board, an independent agency with extensive decision-making powers, responsibilities and resources, and with close functional links to Government ministries, research institutes, and commercial and community stakeholders.

Management is guided by a comprehensive, Government-approved and legally binding management plan, prepared in consultation with the public and key stakeholders. The plan adopts a zoning system that allows for management prescriptions to be more effectively aligned to the varying protection and use requirements in different parts of the property. A long-term lease gives delegated authority to a private company for some aspects of conservation and tourism management in the Trang An-Tam Coc-Bich Dong Scenic Landscape area. There are four small private tourist resort operations within the property. Ongoing management priorities include: extended monitoring and control of tourist operations; development of better visitor centres and services; ongoing research together with improved archaeological site conservation, database development, and collection, storage and display of artefacts; expansion of training, education, awareness-raising and promotion programmes; and support for social and economic development of local communities through employment opportunities, and more effective sustainable use and conservation of natural resources.

1.2 Issues raised in the ICOMOS and IUCN Evaluation of the Inscription

At the time of the inscription, the ICOMOS Evaluation noted that “the management system for the property does not appear to be robust enough to meet the challenges affecting it in terms of tourism development”. The IUCN Evaluation noted that “protection of the nominated property must have primacy in considering any permissible activities and developments”.

The 2014 Evaluation reports concluded that: “the greatest threat to the nominated property is from inadequately planned and managed tourism along with its associated infrastructure support and service provision developments” (IUCN), and that one of the main threats to the property was the “lack of adequate regulation for development of facilities for tourism” (ICOMOS).

1.3 Examination of the state of conservation by the World Heritage Committee and background of the current Reactive Monitoring mission

The World Heritage Committee, when it inscribed the property on the World Heritage List at its 38th session (Doha, 2014), requested the State Party to submit a revised management plan and zoning plan to the World Heritage Centre, including a tourism management plan; provisions of continued support for ongoing archaeological research and publication; to update the archaeological management plan as new information becomes available; to ensure the effective implementation of the tourism section of the management plan, including its measures for preventing overcrowding and environmental impacts; to revise the property’s management plan to incorporate the archaeological and tourism sections and update it as necessary; and to submit a boundary modification to better reflect the areas and attributes of OUV and ensure an appropriate surrounding buffer zone.

In September 2015, Ninh Binh Provincial People’s Committee hosted an international workshop on the revised management plan of the property, which was attended by representatives from ICOMOS and IUCN.

In response to the Committee’s recommendations, the State Party provided support for archaeological research by establishing a cooperative agreement (June 2015) with two United Kingdom-based universities for a comprehensive 5-year programme (2015-2020) of archaeological and paleo-environmental research. The Management Plan submitted at the time of the inscription was revised by providing systematic zoning of the property and included a comprehensive Tourism Management Plan which addressed overcrowding and proposed some measures to ensure that the environmental, social and management carrying capacities are not exceeded, however noting that carrying capacity is not clearly defined.

At its 40th session (Istanbul/Paris, 2016), the Committee approved a minor boundary modification, and 54 hectares formerly located in the buffer zone were incorporated into the property in order to better reflect its OUV. The outer boundary of the buffer zone remains unchanged.

In the same year, the Committee raised concerns relating to visitation management. The overcrowding on some days is already a concern, and an increase from one million visits to two million by 2020 was projected. While the Management Board expressed confidence that it can manage a cited peak of around 25,000 visits² per day without undesirable environmental and social impacts, the property was already experiencing this level of visitation. If visits double by 2020, then 50,000 visits in a single day are being forecast. The Committee was notably concerned that, while the plan prescribes surveys to identify impacts of overcrowding and imposes controls “as required”, it does not identify potential problems and did not elaborate a strategy to prevent or mitigate effects of overcrowding. The Committee therefore recommended that the State Party ensure measures are in place to limit overcrowding and its impacts, such as a clearly justified maximum daily quota on visitor numbers, and an assessment of the facilities required to adequately service the anticipated increase in visitation.

The Management Plan referred to a new urban university area in Bai Dinh, which would result in population growth of 20,000 people in the buffer zone by 2030. The Committee therefore

² Bearing in mind that visits differ from the actual number of visitors – see tourism management section below on Page 34.

requested the State Party to provide further information on these plans, and to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for development of the buffer zone, taking into account potential impacts on the OUV of the property in line with IUCN's and ICOMOS' guidance documents.

Noting that archaeological sites will become better-known among the public, and as tourist numbers increase, the Committee recommended that the Management Plan include sections concerning the archaeological heritage, which clearly detail the actions to be undertaken, in terms of staff training, conservation/restoration methods, and long-term planning, development of the skills of the management body to successfully plan the management of the archaeological heritage at the property. The Committee also recommended the establishment of a system for the cataloguing, condition-surveying, monitoring and protection of archaeological heritage through conservation measures, in order to adequately conserve archaeological artefacts.

The management authority of the property was placed under the provincial Tourism Department in 2017. This fact appeared to confirm that tourism is a primary management objective for the property.

At its 42nd session (Manama, 2018), the Committee's main concern was related to the measures suggested to address overcrowding and the property's carrying capacity, which appeared to be an attempt to accommodate growing visitation only, rather than enhancing understanding of impacts and necessary enforcement of acceptable limits to carrying capacity (for example the substantial increase in the number of boats to 3,865 by 2020 beyond the cap of 3,000 determined in the Management Plan). The State Party report makes no reference to criteria, methodological approaches, let alone measurements of impacts beyond visual observations and visitor feedback. The Committee therefore requested the State Party to continue the necessary studies to enable a better understanding of impacts on the property's OUV from high and rapidly increasing visitation, and to establish and enforce a strict limit to visitation to ensure it does not exceed the carrying capacity of the property, in order to conserve its OUV, as well as its biodiversity setting as a key part of its aesthetic value.

The Committee also requested the removal of the temporary replica film set within the property and for the State Party to ensure that any heritage promotion and marketing undertaken within the property is consistent with the interpretation of its OUV. The illegal construction of a concrete staircase emphasizes the Advisory Bodies' concerns, noted in their 2014 Evaluation reports that "the greatest threat to the nominated property is from inadequately planned and managed tourism along with its associated infrastructure support and service provision developments" (IUCN), and that one of the main threats to the property was the "lack of adequate regulation for development of facilities for tourism" (ICOMOS). These cases highlighted the need for an appropriate mechanism of consultation within the Management Board and among all stakeholders to consider multiple needs for the sound preservation and promotion of the property. The analysis contained in the 2018 State of Conservation report notes that the enforcement of the protocol concerning any new and major developments, stronger regulation and control of tourism developments should be realised while wider understanding of heritage value by stakeholders and enhanced tourism management is needed.

By anticipating significant impact caused by the rapid increase of already-high tourism numbers on the property's rural and social setting, the State Party should ensure a proactive and adequate management approach to address the impacts in terms of traffic, parking infrastructure, disturbance, sewage and waste management.

While the State Party did not perceive a current need for an SEA, the Committee reiterated its recommendation for an SEA and an HIA for any major developments within the property and the buffer zone, as a timely and appropriate method of assessing, before any development takes

place, both the individual and cumulative impacts of current and planned developments on this small and fragile property, taking into account potential impacts on its OUV. Furthermore, it appears that there is no clear mechanism in place to address the need for impact studies within the property and its buffer zone before the construction of new buildings and amenities. A number of developments such as the visitor centre at Tam Coc wharf, private tourism facilities, the car park and the small temple, were reported by the State Party, while leaving it unclear whether measures are in place to ascertain that these developments are carried out after proper study of potential heritage loss and their impact on OUV. Therefore, a clear process needs to be elaborated for Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessments (EIAs and HIAs) to be carried out prior to any developments within the property and its buffer zone.

Overall, the Committee underlined the need to enhance governance by ascertaining that a balanced approach be made considering aspects relating to tourism, heritage management and nature conservation as a whole, and by applying a clearer reporting protocol and decision-making mechanism concerning any new and major developments within the property and ensure the necessary prior consultation of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

1.4 Justification of the mission

In light of the abovementioned concerns related to governance and management capacity on tourism, visitor control and management of the OUV, notably in relation to rapid tourism development, Decision **42 COM 7B.62** (Manama, 2018) formally requested the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, in order to assess its current state of conservation, and to provide further technical advice on these issues, notably on the revision of the Management Plan.

The Terms of Reference for the Mission are provided in Annex 3.

2 LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

2.1 Protected Area Legislation

At the national level, the property 'Trang An Landscape Complex' is protected under the comprehensive legal system of Vietnam, notably:

2.1.1 Laws

- Law on Cultural Heritage 2001 (amended 2009);
- Law on Forest Protection and Development 2004;
- Law on Environmental Protection 2005 (replaced 2014);
- Law on Tourism 2005

2.1.2 National Decrees and Decisions on Heritage

Major Decrees and Decisions are listed under Annex 1.

The buffer zone regulation is explained in Part VIII of the current Management Plan. Different categories of heritage in the buffer zone have been inventoried and classified in the nomination dossier and play an important role in supporting the OUV and protecting the integrity of the property.

The heritage sites in the buffer zone can be categorized into key groups as follows:

- Natural landscapes e.g. isolated karst towers, rivers/streams/canals/lakes and natural forests: the Sao Khe River, Ngo Dong River, Ben Dang River (the part that flows through the buffer zone), valleys, fields, caves etc.
- Agricultural landscapes e.g. rice fields, vegetable planting areas, fruit gardens etc.
- Archaeological sites, excavated areas and other high potential archaeological sites.
- Traditional architectural monuments.
- Traditional villages and intangible cultural heritage values.

2.2 Institutional Framework³

The World Heritage property is owned by the Government of Viet Nam and has been placed under the custody of the Ninh Binh Province's People's Committee. The Trang An Landscape Management Board, established by the Provincial People's Committee in March 2012, is in charge of the management of the property under the supervision of the People's Committee while policy and technical guidance are provided by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

The Management Board has been placed under the direct authority of the Tourism Department of the People's Committee since 2017.

Besides its day-to-day management role, the Board is responsible for monitoring the state of conservation of the property, surveillance and mitigation of threats, management of tourism activities and services, and promotion of the property.

There are 6 principal visitor gateways into the property. One, the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital (300ha) comes under the direct management of the Department of Culture and Sport, and 5 are subject to management by licensed concessionaires. Their mandate is only dealing with tourism activities

³ Provided by THE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR TRANG AN LANDSCAPE COMPLEX, NINH BINH PROVINCE, VIET NAM (For the period 2016-2020, vision 2030), promulgated with Decision No. 1261/QĐ-UBND dated November 16th 2015 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee

and related infrastructure development. They are allowed to operate and construct any facilities which are permitted in their license (or approved project). For any new development, they are obliged to submit a proposal to the Provincial authority and the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism through the Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board.

These companies are also responsible for protecting and conserving their project areas under the supervision of the Management Board. The details of their concession is as follows:

1. **Xuan Truong Construction Enterprise** (Mr Nguyen Van Truong, Director General) holds a 70-year license for the 200-hectares **Trang An – Tam Coc – Bich Dong** Scenic Area.
2. **Bich Dong Tourism and Service Company** (Mr Bui Van Hoa, Director) holds a 49-year license for the 35-hectares **Bich Dong Sunshine Valley** area.
3. The **Doanh Sinh Trading and Joint Stock Company** holds a 49-year license for the 34 hectare **Bird Valley** (also known as Nham Valley) Ecotourism Area.
4. **Ngôi Sao Company (Star)** holds a 49-year license for the 25 hectare **Galaxy Grotto** area.

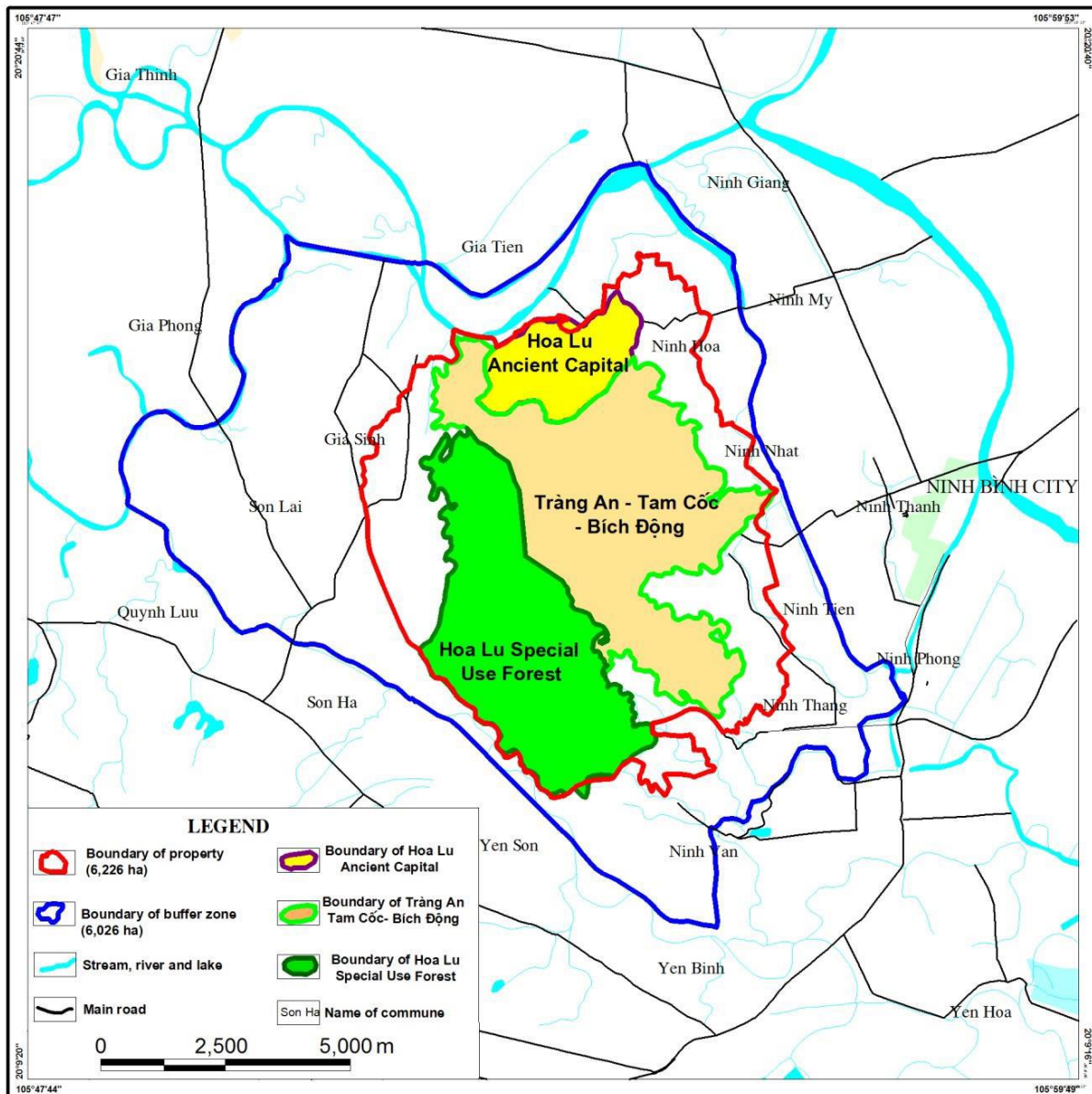
The concession agreements and budget of the private enterprises running tourism business at 6 gateways in the property were included in the total budget allocated to the Management Board.

These enterprises have to pay 10% of the entrance fee and 10% income tax directly to the state budget of the province. The Provincial People's Committee will allocate budget for the Board based on the proposed annual plan and the necessity of other activities or works.

The companies operating within the property are requested to strictly follow all the provisions of the Law on Cultural Heritage, Decree 109/NĐ-CP dated 21 September 2017 by Prime Minister on protection and management of world cultural and natural heritage sites in Vietnam, Laws on Tourism, Environmental Protection, Forestry, regulations of Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee on the management, conservation and promotion of values of World Cultural and Natural Heritage of Trang An Landscape Complex and other related provisions.

All the tourism activities, infrastructure development, houses constructed in the areas of 6 main tourist zones (gateways) within the property or in the buffer zone are under the direct supervision of the Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board in cooperation with local district authorities (5 districts and 20 communes) and other related departments.

2.2.1 Division of areas



Map showing the division of protected areas (Source: State Party)

The property includes three protected areas, two of which are declared as Special National Heritage - the Historic and Architectural Monument of the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital, and the Trang An-Tam Coc-Bich Dong Scenic Landscape. The third is the Hoa Lu Special-Use Forest.

The Hoa Lu Ancient Capital

Established as a National Monument by the Prime Minister of Viet Nam by Decision 82/2003/QĐ-TTg on 29 April 2003. Subsequently, the site was declared to be Special National Heritage according to Decision No.548/QĐ-TTg on 10 May 2012. This Decision was in compliance with Article 29, Items 3a and 3b, of the Law on Cultural Heritage.

The site of 314.95 hectares was placed under the Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board in 2012. Under the Board, the Centre for Conservation of the Historic and Architectural Monument Hoa Lu Ancient Capital is in charge of its daily management. The management rights and responsibilities, including supervising investment projects, undertaking research, and managing tourist activities and services are detailed in Part VII of the management plan.

Trang An-Tam Coc-Bich Dong Scenic Landscape

The area, combining two national heritage areas - the Tam Coc-Bich Dong Scenic Landscape and the Trang An Scenic Landscape - covers a total of 2,299.4 ha. It was classified as a Special National Heritage according to Decision No.548/QĐ-TTg, on 10 May 2012, by the Prime Minister of Viet Nam, based upon its recognition under Article 29 of the Law on Cultural Heritage.

The control of this area was handed over from the Ninh Binh Provincial Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism to the Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board in 2012. The Xuan Truong Enterprise, a private business based in Ninh Binh, has been assigned to manage heritage conservation, tourism and promotion operations in the Trang An area for a period of 70 years, under supervision from the Board and in accordance with management plan provisions. The company has a range of well-qualified administrative, professional and service operations staff, including a business team, ticket office staff, security guards, rangers and boat operators. It also cooperates with national and international agencies and research institutes.

The area has many cultural and historic monuments, including Dot Pagoda (or Trinh Temple), Tran Temple and Khong Temple. Other archaeological relics include sites at Boi Cave, Trong Cave, Cho Stone Roof, and Ong Hay Stone Roof.

Trang An-Tam Coc-Bich Dong Scenic Landscape links the Trang An cave assemblage and the Bich Dong Pagoda cave system and monuments, which are situated with the districts of Hoa Lu, Gia Vien, Nho Quan and Ninh Binh City of Ninh Binh Province.

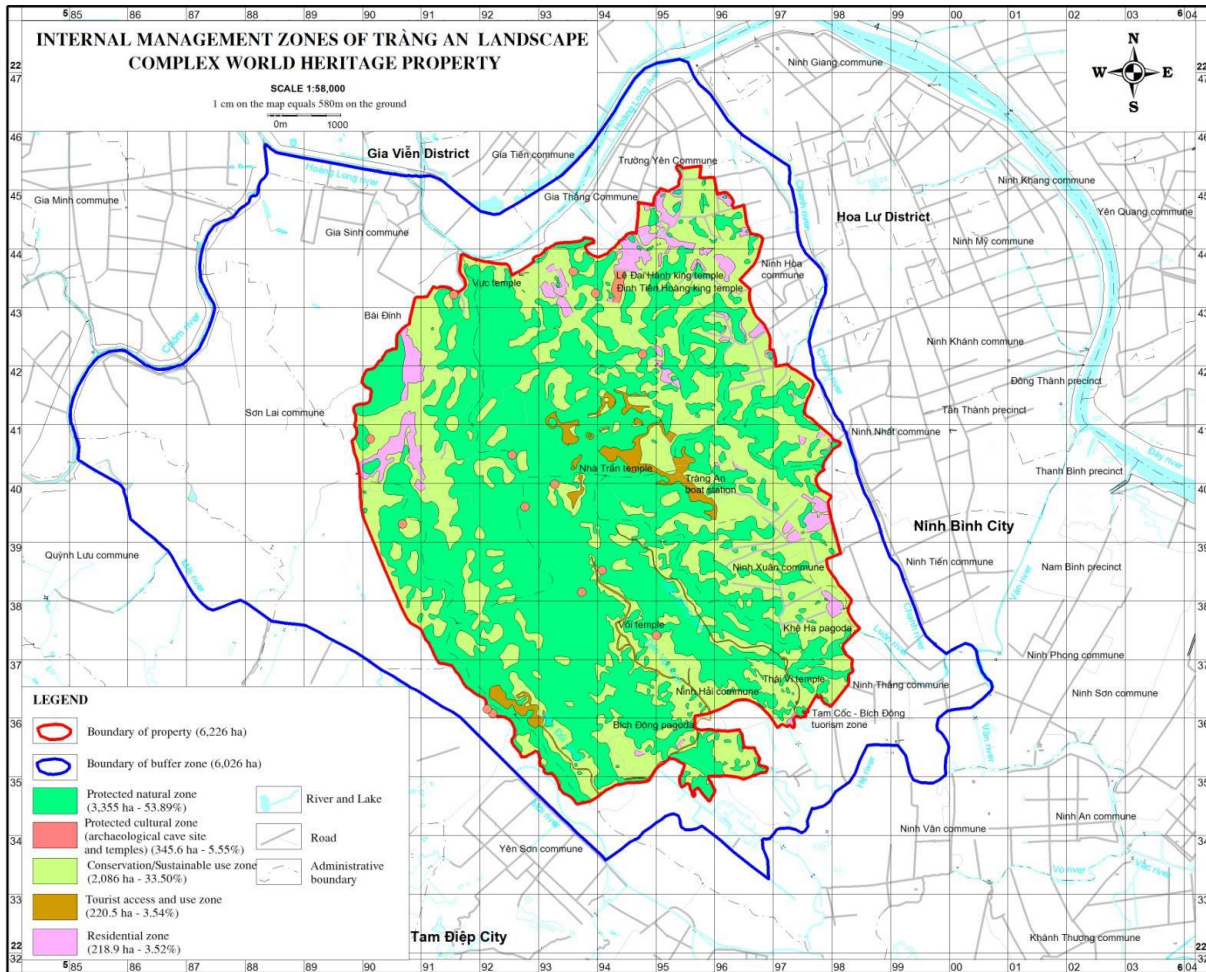
Hoa Lu Special-Use Forest

This area of 1,500 ha is located on the western half of the Trang An Limestone Massif. The area is composed of natural forest and scrub cover on the uplands, as well as rice paddy fields in the lower wetlands and features karst cones and ramparts, implying an earlier stage of geomorphologic evolution. The Hoa Lu Special-Use Forest was set up to help protect the natural and biodiversity values of the area, supporting at the same time the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital and the Trang An-Tam Coc-Bich Dong Scenic Landscape.

The responsibility of the management of the area was handed over from a Forest Management Board to the Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board. Management prescriptions applying to the area are included in Part VII of the management plan.

A multiple-purpose protected area, it is divided into three sub-zones: strictly protected zone; ecological restoration zone; and service/administrative zone. The area is protected under the National Law on Forest Protection and Management 2004 prohibiting acts such as deforestation and illegal exploitation; illegal hunting, captive breeding and slaughtering of wild animals; the illegal collection of animal and plant specimens; destroying forest resources and ecosystems; violations of regulations on fires; and illegal environmental activities.

2.2.2 Internal Management Zoning



Internal management zones of Trang An Landscape Complex World Heritage property (Source: State Party 2019)

The property is divided into five management zones established according to different types of use and varying approaches to protection appropriate to those uses, and allows the Management Board to set priorities for management intervention.

These zones include:

Zone 1: Protected natural zone

This zone includes the central part of the massif and including much of the Hoa Lu Special-Use Forest protected area. The zone is physically inaccessible as it is composed of mostly limestone ridges, ramparts with sharp, steep scarps, densely covered with primary forest. Thus it is strictly protected from visitor access (with limited permission for research) and facilities development is prohibited. No exploitation or extraction of resources is permitted. Management intervention is generally limited to surveillance, monitoring, survey, experimentation and research, fire prevention and control, control of alien species, weeds and pests, and ecological restoration. The zone covers 3,355 ha or 53.90% of the property.

Zone 2: Protected cultural zone

Covering 345.6 ha or 5.55% of the property, this area including Hoa Lu Ancient Capital and other historic monuments and Archaeological cave sites.

Zone 3: Conservation/sustainable use zone

This area includes the land and waterway areas (mostly paddy rice field and wetlands). Protection is the principal conservation objective, but limited visitor use and facilities development are allowed, provided that there is no adverse impact on the natural and cultural values. Traditional subsistence use of natural resources such as paddy rice cultivation, aquaculture and gardening may continue here. The zone also includes some unassessed areas, which may later be more appropriately assigned to one of the other zones. The paddy rice field and wetland covers 2,086 ha or 33.50% of the property, while water bodies account for 318.80 ha or 5.12% of the property.

Zone 4: Tourist access and use zone

Managed primarily for visitor access and use, it includes car parks (with souvenir and food stalls and toilets), gateways and visitor centres, boat wharves, waterways and cave passages for boat use, constructed paths, and facilities such as toilets, shelters, and stalls selling food, drink, handicrafts and souvenirs. Also included in this zone are privately operated eco-tourism resorts and the roads or waterways giving access to them. This zone covers 220.50 ha or 3.54 % of the property.

Zone 5: Residential zone

This zone includes villages and other residential areas, together with closely associated gardens, and orchards, roads transecting the property and internal rural roads and canals. Appropriate uses and developments here include private residences, outer farm buildings, small hotels and guest houses, shops and other small businesses. Transport infrastructure and services such as embankments, bridges, tunnels, amenity and landscape plantings and parking lots are evident. The delimitation of this zone is agreed with the Ministry of Construction. This zone covers 218.90 ha or 3.52% of the property.

2.3 Management structure

The Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board (see Annex 7 below) is placed under the direct supervision of the Ninh Binh Provincial Committee's Department of Tourism.

The Management Board is a single, dedicated and independent agency with full decision-making authority under delegation from the Government and Provincial authorities. It is mandated to exercise its authority within the property, regulated under several national laws. The Board includes representatives of key agencies and stakeholders and has resources and responsibilities for policy development, management planning and implementation, supervision of tourist and other business operations, public relations, promotion and advocacy, research and monitoring, education and training and collaboration with local communities and residents. The Board has close functional links with national ministries and provincial departments, with relevant research institutes, commercial and business organisations, and with local community leaders and representatives.

The Board has established agreements with private enterprises which are dealing with ticket sales and other tourism activities under the Board's guidance (see section 2.2 above). It is perceived as a private-public partnership for the Board to entrust the daily management of the property, while their structure is rather small (42 staff, as of August 2019).

2.4 Management tools

The property's **Management Plan** was drafted at the time of the inscription of the World Heritage property in 2014 and revised in 2015 by taking account of the advice from an international workshop with the participation of ICOMOS and IUCN. This revised version, providing the overall management framework and vision until 2020 was reviewed by the World Heritage Committee in 2016. This management plan is legally binding in accordance with provisions of the national Law on Cultural Heritage and the Decision No.150 QD-UBND (5 March 2012) of the Ninh Binh Province People's Committee, which established the Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board. No part of the plan can be revoked or substantially changed without Governmental approval.

It is intended that provisions within the property's management plan must be consistent with those of several national and provincial master plans, as follows:

- **Master Plan for Socio-economic Development of Ninh Binh Province (2010-2020)**, prepared by the Department of Planning and Investment, provides a general outline and directions for the development of the economy, environment, society and culture; for increasing living standards of people; and for promoting environment-friendly business activities.
- **Master Plan for Tourism Development of Ninh Binh Province (2010-2020)** prepared by the Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism, and under Resolution No.15-NQ/TU (July 13th 2009) of the Ninh Binh Province Communist Party on Tourism Development to 2020 (vision 2030), this plan is intended to develop the tourism sector of Ninh Binh in a sustainable manner focussed on protection of natural resources and environment, and preserving and promoting cultural traditions. It includes guidelines for the conservation of natural and cultural resources and development of local community-based tourism within the province and in Trang An in its Annex 2.
- **Master Plan for Socio-economic Development of Hoa Lu District (2010-2015, vision to 2020)** referring to the development of communes in the heritage core zone with a focus on eco-tourism and cultural tourism; strengthening the economic basis of local industries, tourism and services; and promoting appropriate tourism development and services.
- Within the framework of the abovementioned socio-economic master plans, Land Use and Development Master Plans are prepared for smaller areas (e.g. districts or communes) within each province, dealing with land and resource development and land use arrangements. The Ministry of Construction is usually in charge of such assignments. The final approval of these tools is by the Prime Minister.
- **The Master Plan for the Trang An Landscape Complex**, developed by the Ministry of Construction, is aimed for conservation and promotion of the Trang An Landscape Complex. It has both a short-term (10-year) and long-term (20-year) vision and is required to be consistent with the overall development strategy of the country and the province, must take account of related plans such as property management plans, and should be linked to appropriate education policies and scientific research programmes.
- **Master Plan for the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital (2000-2015)** was approved by the Prime Minister of Viet Nam in 2003 and includes the main projects concerning the investment for construction of major entrance gates, security of the area, restoration and maintenance of historic/cultural relics, creation of spaces at the Dinh and Le King Temples festivals and cultural activities, construction of surrounding canals to enhance preservation and restoration of relics through improved drainage; and dredging of major bordering waterways for increased protection of the landscape and environment.

3 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES/THREATS

3.1 General

In terms of the implementation of the Committee's Decisions, the State Party's progress has been welcomed, including the continuous revision of the Management Plan and the submission of the minor boundary modification (requested by 38COM) in 2016, establishing multi-year international cooperation for archaeological research, a cataloguing system and moveable heritage preservation (requested by 40COM).

The action plans provided by the Management Board on the revision of the archaeological heritage management and the visitor management prior to the Reactive Monitoring mission only make reference to data up to 2016 and no update is provided in response to the Committee's repeated requests to establish a strict visitation limit to ensure it does not exceed the carrying capacity of the property (40COM 7B.67, para 8b and 42COM 7B.62 para 4). The Committee's Decision underlines the importance of conserving the OUV of the property including its biodiversity as a key part of its aesthetic value. The implementation of a detailed carrying capacity study, reflecting management objectives, could serve to establish limits of acceptable changes and thus guide the planning of mitigation measures, if such measures are deemed necessary. Although the mission recognizes that the nature of the tourism activities on site can mostly be qualified as passive (sight-seeing by boat tours) in natural areas, Hoa Lu Ancient Capital for instance, is a traditional and living heritage area, which does not require boats for access while other sites which do require boats for access specifically include bird-watching activities and cave tours as well as passive sightseeing to appreciate the overall landscape aesthetics. Each of these areas require differentiated analyses of potential impacts of an ever-increasing number of visitors on scenic beauty, landscape appreciation, biodiversity values and visitor experience.

In particular, in light of the more recent data provided by the Management Board (up to July 2019), the Mission was concerned with relative scarcity of direct responses from the State Party to address the significant increase in visitor numbers. This is of particular importance as the revised forecast of 3.5 million visitors per annum by 2020 far exceeds the 2 million that was originally reported in the 2015 Management Plan. In 2018, the property received 2,923,798 visitors in total. The increase in visitor numbers is particularly visible in February, March and April of each year, with an average of around 35,000 visitors (Hoa Lu), 265,000 visitors (Trang An Wharf), 47,350 visitors (Tam Coc) recorded per month in 2019. The average increase in the number of domestic visitors is 9.3% and 12.3% for international visitors for the period 2015-2018.

During the mission, it was clarified that the high visitation is not perceived negatively by the property's Management Board, in particular since domestic visitors outnumber international visitors. The property, with its temples and historic monuments, represents an important legacy of the nation's independence in the 10th century CE, while its scenic beauty provides a source of well-being and sense of unity during the festive season of spring. The importance of the property as a resource of job opportunities was also stressed.

Nevertheless, the mission underlined the importance of addressing foreseeable threats with preparedness and detailed planning. The mission was perceived as an opportunity to review the proactive management planning capacity of the State Party in this regard. The mission was informed of a carrying capacity study which has been initiated. The project will investigate current and predicted visitor growth in the property to determine the optimum management regime necessary for ensuring the maintenance of desirable environmental and social conditions.

The study will involve measuring the expectations and satisfaction of key stakeholders and interest groups; examining the visitor management objectives for the property; determining the acceptable standards and indicators of visitor use and impacts; establishing carrying capacity levels;

identifying the necessary infrastructure and services required for implementation by the management authorities.

The recent experience with the touristic use of an inauthentic village related to the film 'Skull Island' demonstrates that what constitutes appropriate use and development within the inscribed area with regard to its OUV needs to be properly understood by all stakeholders. This is a matter that future iterations of the Management Plan will need to be responsive to, including the development of clear policies concerning appropriate future uses and the form of new physical development within the inscribed area. As part of the review of the Management Plan, consideration should be given as to whether 'Skull Island' is an appropriate place to valorise and interpret the property's OUV and, if so, a new Action Plan specific to 'Skull Island' would be desirable, which considers the ways in which this location might be best used for tourism and to educate visitors.

Further, the 'Skull island' experience and the unauthorised construction of the walkway at Cai Ha raises questions about the existing HIA and decision-making processes. The same may be true of the introduction of visually intrusive phone towers atop prominent karst features. New development with potential impacts on the property's OUV (whether a single major development like the 'skull island' village or minor but incremental changes like the phone towers) should always be subject to comprehensive impact assessment that conforms to ICOMOS and IUCN guidelines on HIA and EIA, respectively, and which forms part of any application for development consent. Where consent or refusal of new development is given by a relevant agency, the reasons for the decision should be informed, recorded, and publicly transparent. Policies in relation to appropriate HIA processes should be included in the revised Management Plan and subsequently reflected in relevant statutes and Master Plans.

3.2 Governance

3.2.1 Site management tools and their implementation

Master Plan, Management Plan, Regulatory Plan and Action Plans

In response to the Decision of the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee, the Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee and the Management Board of the property conducted a review of the Management Plan, which is presented in two separate reports:

- The Tràng An Landscape Complex Archaeological Heritage Management/Action Plan.
- The Tràng An Landscape Complex Visitor Management: Action Plan.

Further to these two reports, the Mission was presented with a document outlining the focus and the process to be followed to produce a new Management Plan for the period 2021-2026. It is noted that the major focus of this plan will be on protection of the OUV, authenticity and integrity of the property, and that its preparation includes a comprehensive consultation process.

Zoning and consistency with other management tools

As summarized in section 2.2 above, the property is divided into different areas and sub-zones, each endowed with specific objectives and regulations. The distinction between areas reflects different types of conservation needs, and zoning is determined by the types and limitations of use.

The Mission was however concerned with the multiplicity of tools governing the property's management, designed and implemented by different governmental authorities, thus potentially leading to misalignment of priorities and confusion in the hierarchy. By becoming a State Party to the World Heritage Convention, the State Party of Viet Nam is invited to comply with the provisions

of the Convention and its rules as specified in the *Operational Guidelines* for the management of the World Heritage property. Management needs are therefore governed by the imperatives of safeguarding the OUV of the property, while at the same time, recognising the legitimacy of developmental and societal requirements. It would therefore be important to ensure consistency in elaborating a nation-wide approach to World Heritage properties so that different management tools and legal corpus do not contradict each other in terms of priority and conform to the primary objective of the property's OUV including its integrity and authenticity. A clarification is required that indicates the importance of the heritage Management Plan relative to, for example, decrees emanating from the national government, relevant provincial statutes, and the master plans relating to works within the property, and in and around the buffer zone. This will provide clarity with respect to decision-making, particularly for new developments in the property and its buffer zones.

Baseline indicators to evaluate performance

Although the current Management Plan includes overarching policies and a range of management objectives, the key baseline performance indicators lack specificity. Therefore, it is difficult to measure success or lack of success against stated goals. In the revised iteration of the Management Plan, the stated objectives should be accompanied by specific 'key performance indicators' that follow SMART principles and are specific, qualitative and quantifiable, measurable, achievable, realistic and expressed in terms of precise timeframes.

Historic sites and monuments

The Management Plan correctly observes that the historical sites and monuments at Trang An did not form part of the archaeological case for the property's inscription (Section VII.1.2). Nevertheless, as the Management Plan also notes, the 'Supplementary Report to the Nomination' identified the historical sites and monuments as 'an essential expression of the unbroken cultural legacy of this property'.

The mission agrees with the Management Plan where it states that these sites and monuments are an important element of the Management Board's cultural management responsibilities, notwithstanding that they do not form part of Trang An's OUV. However, this is at odds with the statement in the Management Plan that in fact (at least in 2015) 'maintenance and conservation [of the historic sites and monuments] are generally undertaken by the local community, and no method of central control, recording or monitoring has been developed to date'.

This is reflected in the content of the Management Plan where the historical sites and monuments receive significantly less attention than the prehistoric sites. They have fewer and less detailed 'actions' against them and a brief list of evaluation criteria. Future iterations of the Management Plan should augment and improve the existing text on the historical sites and monuments. This might draw on the Master Plan for the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital – 2000-2015 (approved 2003), where appropriate.

Although the built heritage places at Trang An were generally in good condition, the mission observed individual activities that posed a risk to their heritage values. For example, the temples in Hoa Lu Ancient Capital display a range of lighting techniques, possibly dangerous wiring, ad hoc repairs and mixed interpretative signage. This detracts from the visitor experience and may result in unintended damage to the significant cultural value. The revised Management Plan should include recommendations for the preparation of site-specific Action Plans (or 'conservation management guidelines') for such places. These Action Plans must provide more specific direction in the management of the historic sites and monuments, including an inventory of significant items and cultural values, and methodologies for the appropriate conservation of significant cultural heritage.

The mission was advised that steps have been taken to prepare a 'central digital archive' of the historical sites and monuments (as required by Section VII.1.2 of the Management Plan, Action 5). It was also advised that this has included photographic recording with some 3D scanning. The mission did not view this archive. The revised Management Plan must provide clear recommendations for this work to continue so that a baseline exists against which all future change can be measured.

The Trang An Landscape Complex Archaeological Heritage Management/Action Plan

The World Heritage Committee recommended that the Management Plan for the Trang An Landscape Complex include sections concerning the archaeological heritage. Those sections were to clearly detail the actions to be undertaken, in terms of:

- staff training
- conservation/restoration methods, and
- long-term planning, including the development of the skills within the management body to successfully plan the management of the archaeological heritage at the property (including the establishment of a system for the cataloguing, condition-surveying, monitoring and protection of archaeological heritage).

The current management plan provides 15 'actions' (at section VII.1.1) in relation to the place's archaeological heritage. Each of the 15 actions is discussed below, including observations made by the mission.

The archaeological heritage is subject to the protection afforded by Vietnamese law – Vietnamese permit requirements for archaeological excavations appear to be being observed. It was acknowledged by some people consulted by the mission that there is little incentive for a local landowner to report an unexpected archaeological find on their land. In fact, this might even result in some or all of their land becoming unusable if the archaeology proves to be significant enough to require conservation *in situ*. This is a problem that is not confined to Trang An or Viet Nam. However, it is a matter that requires monitoring and future iterations of the archaeological management plan should provide a 'chance finds' procedure that encourages local landowners to report such finds.

Standardised systems will be established to assemble reference collections, including the creation of databases and recording of excavations.

The mission was advised that the SUNDASIA excavations - a multi-disciplinary research project specifically of this World Heritage property - have developed a comprehensive recording system that the Management Board will use as a template for future excavations by others. The mission considers this to be acceptable. However, the SUNDASIA research relates solely to specific archaeological site types in the property and to prehistory (Pleistocene and Holocene deposits). The archaeologists consulted by the mission, (who advise the Management Board), were aware that future excavations at other site types will require their own artefact and site recording systems, but as new excavation permits are issued, the Scientific Advisory Committee will need to monitor the systems employed by permit-holders and enforce this requirement.

The mission was informed that a database is also in preparation for the recording of sites and artefacts more broadly across the inscribed area. This database is envisaged as a management tool for the Scientific Advisory Committee and Management Board. The database's development has been ongoing for some time, and the mission was informed that it is principally being driven by one of their international collaborative institutions. There have been some challenges to the Management Board finalising and utilising this database because it is a GIS-based database and

there are no people skilled in its use and maintenance within the Management Board. In any case, the GIS software licence is prohibitively expensive for the Management Board, in the absence of practitioners skilled in its use. This is a matter discussed further in Section 3.2.2 below and in this report's recommendations.

Management of the archaeological heritage will involve monitoring of the status of existing sites and will include implementing measures to maintain and enhance site integrity - The archaeologists from the Scientific Advisory Committee who were consulted by the mission reported no known examples of vandalism or looting of those archaeological sites investigated by the SUNDASIA project, or more generally. On inspection, those sites proved to be free of litter, graffiti or damage that might suggest poor management. Generally, and appropriately, trenches are back-filled at the end of each excavation season. However, some deeper trenches were still open at the time that the mission visited. The baulks appeared fairly stable but it was not clear why backfilling had not taken place at the end of the 2018 season. Also, the deep trenches may pose a safety risk (although they are in a little known and inaccessible cave, reducing the risk of personal injury to tourists). Some monitoring of these sites for damage by human or natural agency appears to be undertaken from time to time but it is not clear whether or not a register/database (including digital photographs to record incremental change) is being kept of monitoring visits to these sites by delegates of the Management Board. Appropriately, this is a requirement of the Management Plan.

The scientific investigation of sites will continue to emphasise non-destructive techniques and in situ conservation of sites. The SUNDASIA project involved disturbance of archaeological deposits as a necessary part of the investigative process, this 'damage' being mitigated by data collection and scholarly publication. Otherwise, there has also been an emphasis on non-invasive investigative techniques including the production of a Digital Elevation Model that will assist to analyse the landscape's evolution through climatic changes. The PALEOKARST project (scheduled to begin in November 2019) will also adopt a range of non-invasive investigative techniques.

Long-term conservation and curation of all artefactual and documentary records will be handled in a central facility, including appropriate cataloguing, packaging and storage - Artefacts recovered through archaeological excavation are presently stored partly in the Management Board's office in Ninh Binh, and otherwise in storage cabinets in the Visitor Centre's premises. It is possible that different catalogue systems/numbers have been used for artefacts from different excavations and it is not certain that they have all been captured by a single central database. Further, artefacts vulnerable to deterioration (including bone) are presently stored in uncontrolled environmental conditions, especially in the Visitors' Centre. This location is not ideal for storage for this reason, in addition to the risk of theft or vandalism that this storage location poses. The mission observed that the conditions of storing the objects in the cabinets in the Visitor Centre could be reconsidered, to avoid overcrowding of objects in small drawers. Although the mission was advised that the SUNDASIA excavations maintain their own artefact databases, it was not clear if those databases were in the possession of the Management Board and were being used to track the storage and display locations of individual pieces.

Information about the place's archaeological heritage will be conveyed to the general public and others - Artefacts that have been recovered through archaeological excavation are presently on display adjacent to the main ticket office and entrance in the Visitors' Centre, and at the museum near the temples at Hoa Lu. While some of the displays are of high quality, engaging and informative, many of the artefacts lack labels and some of the displays would benefit from upgrades.

Artefacts from Trang An and elsewhere in the province are also displayed in the Ninh Binh provincial museum. However, it is possible that the opportunities for cross-promotion of the museum and the landscape complex are not being fully realised.

The cave sites being excavated by the SUNDASIA project are generally difficult to access and are difficult for non-specialists to interpret. In any case, the Management Plan appropriately states that public access to these sites should be restricted. The present approach of communicating the archaeological data from these sites to a specialist audience through scholarly publications is appropriate, but consideration should also be given to making the information available to a wider audience in a layperson's language, in other ways e.g. through online publication of images and text.

The Management Plan (Section VII.1.1) also provides five 'evaluation measures' for assessing success or failure in the implementation of the actions discussed above. They are provided below with the mission's assessment of performance against the evaluation criteria:

1. Compiled records demonstrating systematic cataloguing and clear monitoring of all cultural (and geo-culturally) sensitive locales within the property's boundaries.

Although appropriate database catalogues for the SUNDASIA archaeological excavations appear to be in place, a database that captures the entire inscribed area, incorporating both sites and finds, designed for management purposes, is still in preparation. This is partly a result of a skills shortage within the Management Board (especially in terms of GIS use) and partly due to resourcing shortfalls (especially in terms of purchasing GIS software). The mission did not sight a catalogue of those artefacts on display and in storage at the Visitor Centre and Management Board's offices, and the impression was that one has not been completed. Without such a record there is a significant risk of critical information about stored artefacts being lost (e.g. provenance, conservation measures undertaken, conservation measures required, dimensions and description, photograph, measured drawings, storage location, display location).

2. The level of interest generated by static displays and presentations on archaeological (and related ecological etc) heritage

This will be determined e.g. through visitor numbers and through feedback mechanisms such as website hits. There are few opportunities for interested visitors to engage with the place's archaeology through static displays, with the exception of those artefacts on display in the Visitors Centre and at the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital. Some of those displays are informative and engaging, but there is no general information panel on the property's OUV itself and many pieces lacked labels or interpretative signage. They would benefit from ongoing improvement. Those in the museum at the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital were generally better displayed and this would be an appropriate location for expanded facilities. Representatives of the Management Board advised that they are investigating locations for the construction of additional static displays in the future. However, the upgrade of existing facilities may be more desirable in the short term (a matter that the next iteration of the Management Plan should consider). Representatives of the Management Board also expressed an interest in using the former 'skull island' as a place for displaying archaeological materials. This may be an appropriate venue for such use but would require careful consideration.

The Management Board should consider making better use of online media for communicating the archaeological attributes of the inscribed area. This might include 3D scanning of artefacts and a virtual museum (a less costly alternative to new construction).

Partly as a result of the above issues, visitors to the Trang An Landscape Complex appear to be interested primarily in its natural values, and only secondarily in its cultural values. This is

reflected in the comments posted online (e.g. on Trip Advisor) which focus almost exclusively on the natural beauty of the property. This should be addressed through more efficient communication of the archaeological values at the place.

3. Evidence of research applications to the Management Board by national researchers (and international scholars) during the next five years

There have been 6 post-doctoral positions and 2 post-graduate positions funded within the framework of the SUNDASIA project. 2 full-time, 2 short-term/part-time post-doctoral positions are solely funded through the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), 1 full-time position is funded jointly by AHRC & Xuan Truong, and 1 part time position funded entirely by Xuan Truong. There have been 2 full-time MPhil/PhD positions have been funded, one at the University of Cambridge and another at Queen's University Belfast).

The SUNDASIA project is ongoing, with further publications anticipated, and will serve as an excellent template for future international collaborations. The proposed multi-year PALEOKARST project is scheduled to commence in November 2019.

4. Demonstrable recognition of Trang An's archaeological heritage management and research strategy first at the national level (e.g. through numbers of television and newspaper reports/interviews, as well as scholarly outputs), then internationally

The archaeological research to date has understandably been driven by available international resources (principally UK universities), which has resulted in a focus on Pleistocene and early Holocene archaeology, possibly at the expense of the archaeology from later periods (e.g. the 'medieval' archaeology at Hoa Lu Ancient Capital). This reflects the attributes of the property's OUV, but it is possible that important research questions and interpretation opportunities from these later periods may be missed.

Although the prehistoric materials are of outstanding research value, they tend to generate data that is of interest to a specialist audience. By comparison, at the time of the mission's visit, the museum at the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital was well-attended by interested and engaged visitors of all ages and nationalities. The archaeology of this site and period is likely to be a valuable tool for raising interest in, and awareness of, the property's cultural values generally, and of the Pleistocene and Holocene archaeology as well. Further, the research questions that these later sites may be used to address are not necessarily irrelevant to the place's OUV. For example, it is evident that in recent centuries the inhabitants of the property (like their prehistoric forebears) also adapted to the changing landscapes in the massif, through the siting and design of built elements and through agricultural practices and other activities.

The existing practice of involving local people in archaeological excavations is commendable and should continue.

The Trang An Landscape Complex Visitor Management: Action Plan

The property has six principal tourist sites: the **Hoa Lu Ancient Capital** provides an introduction to Vietnamese history in the 10th century, the **Trang An and Tam Coc boat routes** provide a tranquil experience for visitors to appreciate the spectacular karst landscape with its associated spiritual values, dating from the 10th century to the present day. As tourism products, they differ in so far as Trang An is a natural setting, while Tam Coc is dominated by ongoing agricultural use.

Bich Dong-Sunshine Valley provides a similar but more low key scenic and cultural experience while the **Bird Valley** experience is focussed on wildlife viewing (and, apparently, a walk-through show-cave experience although the mission was unable to observe and assess this).

The **Galaxy Grotto** was reported to be a very low key boat route through a rice paddy with the karst scenery back-drop. However, since the mission, it has come to the attention of the mission team that this boat tour includes a visit to a fully developed show cave. It is regrettable that the mission did not have an opportunity to visit and assess the impact of the privately operated cave tourism on the cave and its associated biodiversity values.

The purpose of the Visitor Management Action Plan is clearly stated to be a response to the World Heritage Committees request for the State Party to ensure that measures are in place to limit overcrowding, to establish a clearly justified maximum daily quota and to undertake an assessment of the facilities and services required to service the anticipated increase in visitation.

While the action plan is a well-structured, comprehensive document providing the Board with an important management tool, it does not achieve the desired outcomes.

It does not establish a clearly justified maximum daily quota of visitors and it does not provide an assessment of the facilities and services required to address that quota.

However, as has been noted, the Board has initiated a research proposal to investigate current and projected growth in visitation and to determine an optimum management regime needed to maintain the desired environmental and social conditions of the property. It will endeavour to establish an acceptable carrying capacity for the property.

Phase 1 of the proposal is a 12 month period of data collection and analysis commencing in August 2019.

Analysis of visitor numbers and challenges

The plan is comprehensive and details the many issues affecting the management of visitors to the property and provides a series of actions proposed to address such issues. (These are discussed in detail in section **3.4 Management of tourism**).

It includes a detailed review of visits to the various attractions within the property over the past 2 years and notes that while the 2015 Management Plan forecast of an increase from 1 to 2 million visitors by 2020 this was surpassed in 2016 (2.4 million people) and that a revised forecast projects as many as 3.5 million visitors in 2020. These extreme variances are explained to be the result of under-reporting of numbers in 2014 and to a marked increase in promotion and popularity of the property as a tourist destination since it became World Heritage and states that the projected increase is of no particular concern as no significant environmental or social impact occurs at present and none is anticipated beyond the capacity of management to control it.

During the mission, it was revealed that the annual visitor numbers reported in the documents are in fact the number of visits to the property, not the number of actual visitors. If a person was to visit the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital site in the morning, the Tam Coc route in the afternoon and spend a night in a hotel or guesthouse in the buffer zone before visiting the Sunshine Valley the next day, they would be counted as three visitors.

The action plan acknowledges that while overcrowding is the most likely social impact it is of little concern and only occurs at the Trang An wharf and boat route during some days in the peak season. It does, however, provide a number of useful actions to address the problem on these days.

The plan's simplistic solution to the overcrowding issue is to increase the number of boats from 2,650 to 3,865 by 2020 and then to an anticipated 4,000 or more by 2030 and asserts that it is

possible to increase the volume of boat traffic without causing environmental damage. It notes the need to provide additional infrastructure and services to avoid undesirable social impact from crowding but provides no detail in regard to the range and scope of these.

Overall the action plan comprehensively addresses the management of visitor satisfaction and safety, provides strategies to disburse visitors over time and space, describes the collaboration with other attractions in the province and the oversight of services and facilities provided for visitors.

However, the significant difficulty faced by management in providing visitor satisfaction and enjoyment of the property is found both in the rapid growth of visits, by both national and international visitors, and the disparity in visitor expectations of the property.

The vast majority of visits are religious and ceremonial by nature and involve the participation of groups, often very large, during a short period of the year. They have a single focus and have no interest in the property's OUV.

The smaller groups of visitors attracted to the property by the same attributes which have elevated it to the World Heritage List are generally susceptible to engaging with site presentation efforts, but are likely to be discouraged from appreciating the property's OUV because of the overcrowding issue. The perception that increasing visits can be simply absorbed by adding more boats with no threat to the environment is flawed: additional boats may not impact negatively on the physical attributes of the property with which visitors interact (the temples, water-ways and limestone caves), but the intangible values of serenity and sense of security are severely threatened by overcrowding and will destroy important aspects of what it is that attracts some visitors in the first place.

While the actual number of present day visitors was not determined during the mission, this issue highlighted the need to focus on the **actual impact of visits** to each of the six principal tourist sites as well as any minor tourist attractions within the property and the buffer zone.

3.2.2 Mission statement, organization chart and staff

The current mission statement of the Management Board is extracted from Decision No. 223/QD-SDL dated 2 October 2017 and includes a number of administrative and daily management duties.

Besides these obligations, it could also include the fundamental mission statement for sharing the objectives of the Board's overarching activities, those of preserving the values and attributes of the World Heritage property and their transmission to the future generations. As a forerunner of the public outreach activities and heritage education with the general public, the Board's important mission is to communicate these values and sensitize the people's perception and will in ensuring the sound preservation of the property.

3.2.3 Process for prioritization of interventions

The current Management Plan (2015-2020) and the action plans for its revision do not suggest a clear procedure to prioritize core issues while the budget and human resources are limited and how to harmonize actions in case of conflict of interests (e.g. preservation vs development). In order to allocate the budget and to guide international and national cooperation offers in light of strategically determined fields of actions, it may be useful to review the most important and urgent elements for the preservation and management every two years and plan the distribution of budget and human resources accordingly.

3.2.4 Protocol and decision-making process considering aspects relating to tourism, heritage management and nature conservation as a whole

One of the tasks of the mission was to review the dismantling of illegally constructed elements, such as the unauthorised construction which took place in Cai Ha Mountain. This suggested a dysfunction in decision-making and implementation processes between the Board and private entities which have been entrusted to manage distinct zones of the property under concession agreements (see section 2.2 above). The Mission raised this issue during the visit and recommends that a clear and written procedure for assessing new development be included in the Management Plan. A standard procedure for public notification should also be provided, including a standard procedure of applying for any new projects be clearly displayed in a public space and on the Board's website, so that stakeholders could easily understand and duly respect the procedures to be followed.

An underlining issue is how to make these concession agreements into more genuine partnerships pursuing the goals of preserving the OUV of the property while allowing it to generate economic benefit for local populations. In general, the heritage authorities in Viet Nam could strengthen the sensitization of private operators and development agencies in World Heritage, and make them true allies in realizing the long-term goal of conserving of OUV.

Tourism in the Province is guided by a Tourism Master Plan which provides a long-term vision and strategic objectives for tourism development. This plan must be compatible with the Trang An Management Plan and is the State Party acknowledged that both should comply with World Heritage standards and requirements. Within the property, the Management Plan has precedence over the Master Plan.

Although it is clear that a primary function of the property's Management Board, which reports to the Tourism Department of the Provincial government, is to develop economic growth of the Province through the tourism attraction of the property, the need to provide a balance between tourism, heritage management and nature conservation is acknowledged in the outline provided for the development of the new management plan for the period 2021-2026. Its major focus will be on protection of the OUV, authenticity and integrity of the property taking into account new information from research pertaining to archaeological values; visitor management; biodiversity conservation and environmental monitoring.

Finding such balance in the short term is addressed in the document provided by the State Party for the mission entitled 'the Action Plan for Visitor Management' stating the steps forward in revising visitor-related policies and actions. This requires collaboration between the Board and regional stakeholders to promote a regional tourism strategy that eases the visitor pressure on the property.

Locating the Management Board within the Department of Tourism has certainly strengthened the Board which retains independence but is now founded within the provincial Government framework and reports directly to the head of a principal Government Department in the province, and through that office to the Provincial People's Committee.

The links between tourism and conservation of the property have been strengthened and harmonized and the province has issued a resolution and specific regulations requiring the development of sustainable tourism to support the protection of the property and to benefit the local community.

While these developments bode well for the achievement of a balanced approach to the management of the property, little evidence of a clear reporting protocol to ensure the necessary

prior consultation of the World Heritage Centre concerning any new and major developments within the property can be found within the available documents.

Dialogue with local populations

Concerning the decision making process and protocol, the mission noted that residents within the inscribed area and buffer zone have expressed concern that the World Heritage inscription is impacting their ability to maintain and upgrade their homes without onerous consent processes. This may increase local resentment towards the World Heritage Listing. This needs to be addressed and will require ongoing and transparent consultation with relevant national authorities and community stakeholders. The concern with multi-layered decision tools and regulations referred to in the above section also applies here.

3.3 Staff and capacities

3.3.1 Financial allocation and staff

According to the document provided by the Management Board, the annual revenue by ticket sales amounted to 17,190,292 USD in 2017 and 19,450,179 USD in 2018. According to Annex 9 of the on-going Management Plan, the budget disbursement for the whole operation provided to the Management Board is marked 4,700,000 USD for 2019 and this amount is less than the one allocated in 2017 (5,859,090 USD) while the tourism revenue has been constantly increasing. In another document showing the Board's annual budget ('Mission Statement and Human & Financial resources'), the total amount of 5,849,643 USD is marked as Financial resources including salaries, operational funds and research from Ninh Binh Government. The infrastructure improvement budget decreased from 2017 to 2019, all other items including cultural, natural conservation and training benefit from an increased budget. While the disbursement of budget among different priorities is to be determined by a clear set of management objectives, given the increase in sales revenue and in visitor's number, a steady annual increase in budget allocation seems vital to ensure sound management in light of forecasted growth of pressures.

3.3.2 Staff training and capacity building

The document provided by the Management Board entitled "Training programs with the participation of staff of Trang An Management Board and other related agencies" shows efforts undertaken by the Board to provide a variety of training opportunities to its staff and wider audience, from 2017 and 2019. During 2019, 24 training topics were already carried out. Board's staff was systematically involved in the major international programme with British academic institutions, for instance, with an amount of funding of 914,400 USD from the UK and 440,000 USD from Xuan Truong Enterprise for the SUNDASIA project (2016-2020). Between 2019 and 2020 more than 3,200,000 USD in grants have been applied for in the UK for SUNDASIA-related public engagement activities and for PALAEOKARST research (the outcome of these applications is in most cases still pending), with a further 329,000 USD from Xuan Truong Enterprise for the PALAEOKARST project (2019-2021).'

The staff of the Management Board boast a wide variety of qualifications and areas of expertise. The Management Board advises that it currently comprises 42 people, with twelve of them graduating in 'culture' studies and six in 'tourism' studies. It is not clear exactly in which subjects and to a degree of skills these eighteen people have trained. In light of the analysis of the current mission, some of the main challenges that will face the property in the future will relate to documentation, museum management, exhibition design and artefact curation. Town planning and urban design matters (both within the property and in the buffer zone) will also be significant challenges. At present, these skills appear to be provided by a separate government department.

The issue of urban planning will have particular relevance to the management of new development within the buffer zone, as well as the maintenance of elements in the inscribed area where consistency of protocol in design, repair and building is required. For example, the present inscription documentation observes that the buffer zone is 'mostly rural land'. This defined character will face enormous challenges as development pressures within the buffer zone increase.

The Management Plan also states in relation to the historical sites and monuments that 'maintenance and conservation are generally undertaken by the local community' (Section VII.1.2). Although this is often an appropriate approach, especially in communities where western concepts of 'authenticity' may not apply, the physical conservation of cultural values is a highly specialised activity requiring tertiary qualifications and considerable practical experience. It is desirable that the Scientific Advisory Committee includes at least one practitioner with skills in cultural heritage conservation to advise on the management of the historic sites and monuments.

The State Party foresees the integration of capacity-building activities into the new archaeological heritage Management Plan and tourism Master Plan. In particular, the revision of the Tourism Master Plan foresees under Item VII.5.2 enhanced training in cultural heritage preservation. For example, representatives of the Management Board expressed a desire to facilitate a multi-day workshop of heritage professionals from both Viet Nam and abroad in 2020, based on the highly successful workshop facilitated by the Management Board during the mission's visit. The workshop participants would discuss heritage management at World Heritage places with a focus on the different approaches to the preparation and content of Management Plans worldwide. The Management Board is encouraged to pursue this aim.

The stated aims of the action plan for the revision of the Management Plan indicates a positive attitude to upskilling, and a balanced approach to tourism planning and preservation activities. The Mission's suggestion is to ensure that staff specialized in heritage conservation could have strategic posts in ensuring decision-making processes and prioritization of management responses are effective.

During the mission, the Management Board facilitated a workshop of some 150 government officers, heritage managers, archaeologists and other professionals from across Viet Nam to discuss the issues faced by the managers of heritage places. This proved to be an excellent way of sharing experiences and received widespread coverage in the local and national television media and online. It was an indication of how effectively the local media could be used to valorise the property's OUV. Information about the Trang An Landscape Complex was conveyed to a wide audience, including members of the public who were invited.

3.3.3 Skills in archaeological heritage management

The Management Board has established regular collaboration with a number of highly experienced and senior members of the Viet Nam archaeological profession. Those archaeologists provide the Management Board with management advice on both a proactive and a reactive basis, through a Scientific Advisory Committee. Given the importance of the place's archaeology to its OUV, the role and number of archaeologists on the Scientific Advisory Committee should be regularly monitored. It is also a matter that should be considered as part of the revision of the Management Plan in 2020.

At the international level, the SUNDASIA project has yielded considerable results with excellent archaeological research undertaken within the property, which has resulted in scholarly and lay publications and increased awareness of the scientific, archaeological and historical values of the property. The work has also resulted in at least one Vietnamese archaeologist attaining a PhD, with opportunities for participation in publications. In particular, this collaborative project has

inspired a follow-up project by the same team (PALEOKARST project). It should also function as a model for future international collaborations at Trang An. Importantly, the SUNDASIA project has involved both international and Vietnamese personnel, with the result that skills and knowledge are being shared between the collaborators.

As stated in the section above concerning the revision of the Archaeological Management Plan, the ongoing development of the following skills should be reinforced: archaeological research planning, cataloguing, comprehensive database management (including GIS), archaeological investigation of sites and monuments of different periods, and site and artefacts interpretation and outreach.

3.3.4 Resources relating to systematic environmental monitoring

The Visitor Management Action Plan notes that environmental monitoring and reporting are fundamental aspects of the Management Plan and that staff of the Environment and Landscape Management division of the Board undertake field monitoring and reporting of the state of the environment. This is supported by the document provided to the mission regarding Environmental Monitoring and Management in the property which notes this Division's role to regularly patrol to identify any problems or violations of the regulations to ensure that the natural environment and landscape of the property are conserved as required. It notes specifically that the system of caves, karst mountains, and special-use forests are fully protected, and any actions such as cutting for firewood, hunting of wild animals, exploiting rocks or removing construction materials are completely prohibited.

Subsequent to the visit to the property the mission has noted that an uncertain number of caves within the property have been equipped with artificial lighting systems and walkways and that the populations of bats occupying those caves are routinely disturbed by visitation.

It is further noted that a document regarding biodiversity conservation within the property details the research being undertaken to determine some baseline data concerning biodiversity values and their threats. It cites the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services which was recently published by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) which states that safeguarding protected areas entails enhancing monitoring and enforcement systems. The document concludes with the statement that biodiversity monitoring should be more directly incorporated alongside routine monitoring of the property's natural and archaeological values.

The Board's Environment and Landscape Management division has 15 staff and is responsible for:

- Oversight of all the tourism activities, services and project investment,
- house construction and development of infrastructure (road, bridges, parking) and facilities (hotel, restaurant) within the property and the buffer zone.

The staff have a range of qualifications in the fields of:

- Culture management (3);
- Forest, Landscape and Environment Management (4);
- Project management (1);
- Tourism (3);
- Project management (4)

Considering the existing responsibilities of this division and the acknowledged need to enhance systematic monitoring of the property's environment, the 4 persons assigned to Forest, Landscape and Environment may be insufficient in number. It is further noted that the scope of this division's responsibilities suggests that the energies of this part of the Division would be at risk of being focused more on the built environment than the natural environment.

The mission noted with satisfaction the Management Board's proactive action of initiating some baseline surveys to identify biodiversity values as well as the study proposed to assess the impacts of tourism on the natural environment. It is noted that the study will establish baseline data on large mammal and avifaunal species but makes no mention of any plan to document cave dependent fauna despite such fauna being at risk of disturbance by tourism.

Participation by the Management Board staff in the SUNDASIA Project is noted.

3.4 Management of tourism

The mission noted that the planning and monitoring of visitation have been more reactive rather than proactive owing to the rapid increase of visitation being experienced in the property, but many sound strategies are being applied. These include deploying staff to observe the numbers and behaviour of visitors at the most populated sites and CCTV used to monitor overcrowding on the routes operating at the Trang An wharf in order that remedial action, such as cessation of ticket sales or diversion of visitors to alternative sites, can be put in place quickly as problems arise.

Security staff are stationed at key areas to monitor and react to emergencies and behavioural problems in a timely manner.

The proactive measures being initiated include deflecting visitors away from the busiest sites to the less used sites, using pricing incentives to move people from the busiest months to the more quiet months.

Despite these initiatives, forward planning for managing visitation is simply seen as a matter of increasing the number of boats available to carry visitors and increasing the infrastructure to support the increasing number of people.

The Visitor Management Action Plan notes that many improvements have been made over the past three years including better roads and parking areas, cleaner public toilets; better potable water and electric power supply and recognizes the need for more improvement of rubbish collection and disposal, and sewage/wastewater treatment in the local villages.

The Management Board is commended for the reactive strategies which have been implemented to cope with the rapid increase in visitation since the property's inscription on the World Heritage List and is encouraged to pursue the proactive measures under consideration to disburse visitors more evenly throughout the year and to the less crowded sites of the property, in considering, as already discussed above, the implementation of a carrying capacity study.

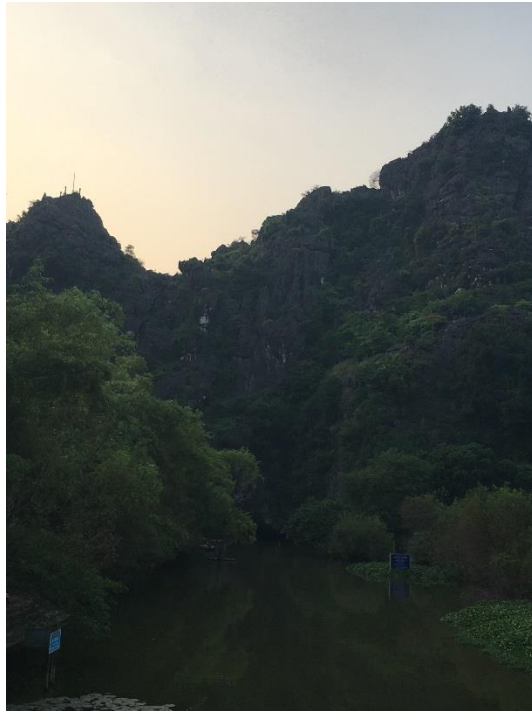
The Board is also commended for the facility improvements it has achieved over the past three years and is encouraged to continue its collaboration with local authorities to improve the waste management capacity of the local villages in and around the property.

However, no documentation has been made available to the mission with regard to the range and scope of additional facilities required for the increased visitor numbers. A review of supporting facilities should, at a minimum, include an assessment of:

- the access to and within the property (roads, cycle tracks, car and coach parking);
- the range and scope of accommodation to be provided;

- requirements for visitor orientation and awareness upon arrival (directional, informative and regulatory signs);
- general waste management needs (collection and disposal);
- human waste management needs including the number and location of toilets required and the size and location of waste treatment systems.

The illegally constructed walkway in the Cai Ha Mountain has been removed.



©Nao Hayashi/UNESCO, 2019 – Current view of the Cai Ha Mountain

The mission visited the site of the film set and confirmed that the main structures (large grass huts) were removed from the island, but toilets, pathways, small grass huts, iron ship - cum – bridge remains in the adjacent area. The Management Board presented its intention of developing an interpretation facility on the site.

3.5 Potential or ascertained factors of threats to OUV and analysis for improvement

3.5.1 Cultural values

The principal threats to the archaeological attributes of the property's OUV relate to the post-excavation management of sites and artefacts: their physical conservation, secure storage in an environmentally controlled location, and an effective database to catalogue and track finds. There are also opportunities for the enhanced valorisation of the archaeological attributes of the property which is presently valued by visitors mainly for its natural values and aesthetic appeal, often without any regard to its cultural values.

During the mission, manifestations of continuing living cultural heritage were observed within the property, including functioning temples and pagodas, family burial plots, rudimentary living places (huts and rock shelters) and evidence of traditional rice production, aquaculture and gardening.

These physical features are embedded within the natural landscape and clearly respond to it, and might be interpreted as additional examples of the attributes of the Trang An Landscape Complex which are relevant to the values expressed under criterion (v). They remain an important dimension of the place's heritage values, some of them at a local level and others at a national level of significance. The ongoing management of the place's OUV will need to be responsive to these matters. In the meantime, the ways in which increased tourist numbers impact these traditional activities will need to be carefully monitored and managed.

3.5.2 Natural Values

The natural values for which the property has been inscribed include the exceptionally beautiful tower-karst landscape, which represents the final stages of tower-karst landscape evolution in a humid tropical environment. An important feature of this karst landscape is its many caves in which many of the cultural values are found and which support a variety of cave dependent faunal species. While they are not part of the property's OUV they do contribute its biodiversity and may be threatened by the use of the caves for tourism.

The Management Plan for the property provides for a system of management zones such that 3,355 ha or around 54% of the property is zoned as Protected Natural area and another 2,400 ha about 39% of the property is zoned as a Conservation/Sustainable Use area.

The former is composed of mostly limestone ridges densely covered with primary forest and is almost totally inaccessible for visitor access. Exploitation or extraction of resources is prohibited. The management objectives are to protect the environment in its natural state.

The latter comprises mostly paddy rice field and wetlands. Protection is the principal objective, but limited visitor use and facility development are allowed provided there is no adverse impact on the natural and cultural values. Traditional subsistence use of natural resources such as paddy rice cultivation, aquaculture and gardening are permitted. Management objectives are to protect the landscape in a natural state as far as possible and to permit traditional subsistence use of natural resources. Visitor use is allowed but restricted.

Alien species known to occur within the property include:

- yellow snails which at the time of writing the management plan (2015) were not considered to have reached problem levels. During the mission, there were numerous snail egg-masses noted along the waterways which are believed to belong to this species, *Pomacea canaliculata*, regarded as one of the world's most invasive species. While it poses a significant threat to rice production and is known as a carrier of human parasites and disease-causing organisms there is no known threat to wildlife.
- buffalo are released to graze in harvested rice paddies and on riverbanks and are of no concern to the natural vegetation.
- domestic goats which roam freely on lower slopes of mountains eating a wide range of plants. They are thought to be few in number and localized in distribution but as much of the protected natural is almost inaccessible it is difficult to assess whether any feral goat population has become established there and if so, what impact it is having.

The rugged nature of the landscape protects much of the property from any sort of disturbance and despite the presence of a few alien species, they do not pose a threat to the OUV of the property at present. Despite this, it is thought prudent to monitor the trend in the snail population and to monitor the Protected Natural area to ensure that a feral population of goats does not become established there.

As some of the caves in the Conservation/Sustainable Use Zone are used for tourism purposes they should be monitored to determine that such use does not pose any threat to the caves' values.

Important considerations include the type and placement of artificial lighting to minimise the growth of lampenflora, the remedial action to be taken when lampenflora does become established and most importantly whether the breeding and important roosting sites of bat or bird populations found in the caves are protected from unsustainable disturbance.

The Management Plan for the property notes significance and requirement for compliance with:

- the Law on Environmental Protection which provides the policies for the conservation and rational use of natural resources including protection of biodiversity and natural landscapes.
- the Law on Tourism which stresses the need to develop sustainable tourism consistent and ensuring harmony between socio-economic development and environmental protection.

The plan notes that as the property is a convergence of many eco-systems and species it supports a particularly rich biodiversity, typical of the karst ecosystems of Viet Nam, and acknowledges that biodiversity is a significant component of the outstanding landscape values of the property.

In part VI.1. 'State Of Conservation Of The Property', the plan notes that natural landscape and resources (geodiversity and biodiversity) to be one of three different types of heritage values requiring conservation along with archaeological sites and historic structures and relics.

While it notes that archaeological sites are primarily located in caves there is no acknowledgement that those same caves most probably also contain some important biodiversity and geodiversity values which are yet to be documented.

In Part VII. 'Management Objectives, Policies And Actions' for 2016-2020 period the plan deals comprehensively with the issues of protecting both cultural and natural heritage and provides for:

- Monitoring and assessment of the impact of development activities and natural processes upon the environment and biodiversity.
- Inventory and assessment of biodiversity values (species, varieties, eco-systems etc.); external species, feral animals and their impact on the environment and biodiversity values.

The 2017 State of Conservation Report and the more recent documentation concerning Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Monitoring in the property note that while comprehensive biological surveys have yet to be conducted there is anecdotal evidence of increasing numbers of birds and monkeys which is taken to be an indicator that the habitats and ecosystems of the property are in good and improving condition. They also provide details of the collaborative SUNDASIA Project which while being primarily focused on the archaeological values of the property includes initiatives to provide a more detailed and objective measurement of the property's natural communities.

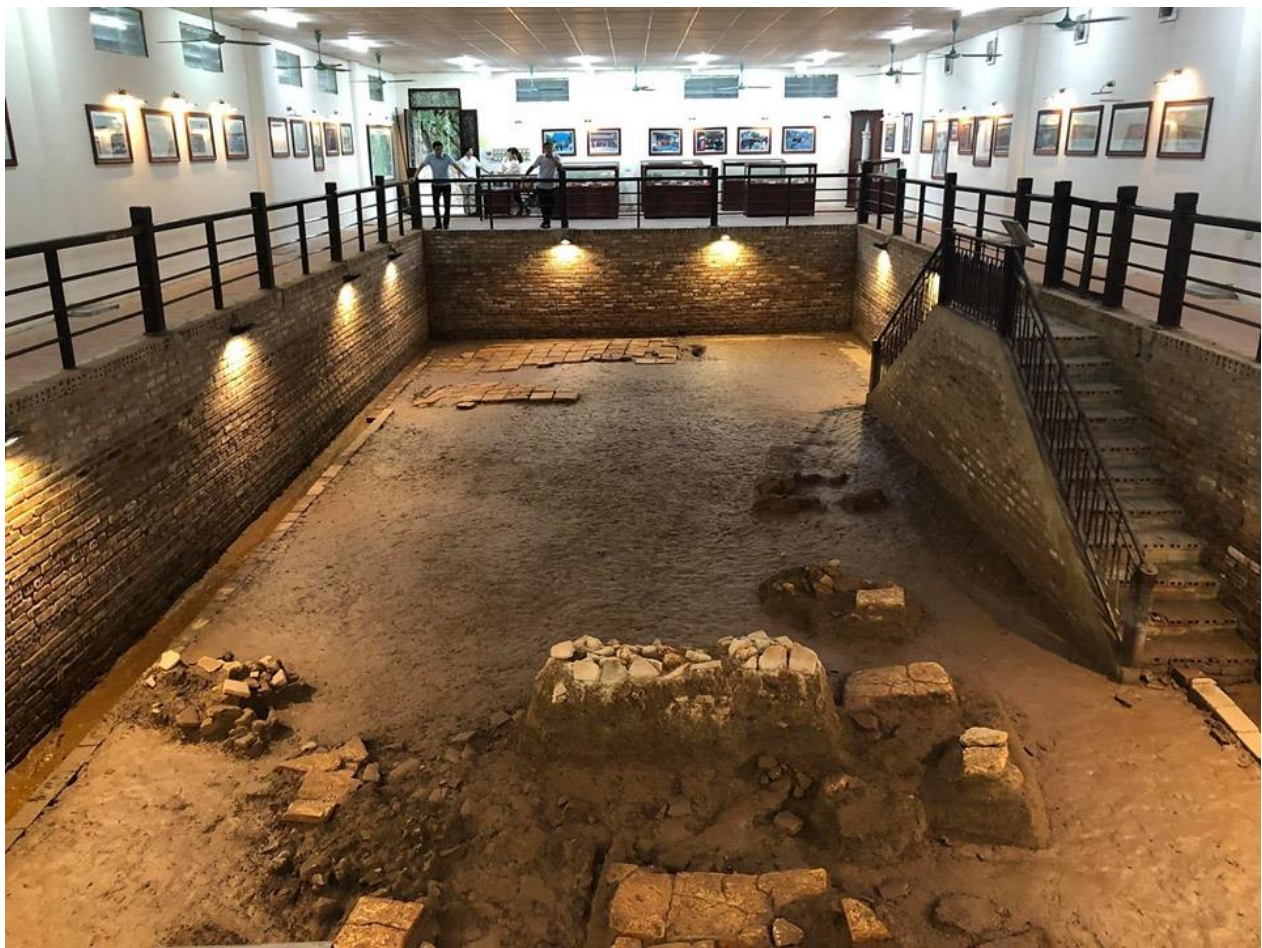
Despite the minor exceptions noted above, it is clear that management planning does strive to integrate biodiversity conservation with the overall management of the property.

3.6 Other issues

3.6.1 *Interpretation of Outstanding Universal Value and other values relating to the property*

Deepening public understanding of the values of heritage and raising the stakeholders' awareness of shared responsibility are key to guarantee sustainable use and enjoyment of the World Heritage properties.

The Mission noted the lack of information to convey to visitors the property's general significance and values at either the gateways to or sites within the property and further notes with concern that although the Management Plan and Visitor Management Action Plan acknowledge the importance of site interpretation the action plan does not adequately provide for implementing the critical role of site interpretation to provide visitors with an understanding of the property's significance.



©Nao Hayashi/UNESCO2019 – Museum in Hoa Lu Ancient Capital

While some attempt has been made to inform visitors of the property's World Heritage significance at the Trang An Visitor Centre and to a minor degree at the Tam Coc Wharf, there was no indication of any sort at any other entry points visited that these site were even part of the Trang An Landscape Complex World Heritage Property.

While site interpretation is acknowledged in the action plan as an important adjunct to visitor management and the management plan provides for on-going development of a thematic interpretation plan, much of the effort is to be focused on visitor centres with a secondary emphasis on the progressive development of signage and information panels.

3.6.2 Moveable heritage management

Some artefacts that have been recovered through archaeological excavation are presently on display adjacent to the main ticket office and the Trang An Wharf, and at the museum near the temples at Hoa Lu. While some of the displays are of good quality, engaging and informative, some of the artefacts lack labels and show signs of inexpert repairs, and some of the displays would benefit from upgrades.



©Andrew Sneddon, 2019: Glue smears on an inexpertly repaired vessel on display at the Visitor Centre at Trang An

The majority of artefacts are presently stored in the Management Board's office, and partly in storage cabinets in the Visitor Centre's premises. Further, artefacts vulnerable to deterioration (including bone) are presently stored in uncontrolled environmental conditions. The mission observed that the conditions of storing the objects in the cabinets in the Visitor Centre could be reconsidered, to avoid overcrowding of objects in small drawers.



© UNESCO/Nao Hayashi, 2019: Label on the artefact and over-crowded drawer in the cabinets at the Visitor Centre at Trang An, including bone stored in environmentally uncontrolled conditions

3.6.3 Living Heritage

The proposed revision of the Management Plan must provide policy guidance in relation to the management of coexisting cultural heritage values at the property; specifically, the management of OUV at a place that also embodies values at the local, regional and national level.

For example, the joint mission heard anecdotally that local farmers are becoming less engaged in the traditional production of rice and other foodstuffs within the property. The rice paddies and cottage gardens within the property are an integral part of the complex landscape and of significance at the local, regional and national level. If rice farming and traditional food production were to diminish or cease this might constitute an adverse impact on the ways in which visitors engage with the property's OUV.

Other aspects of the living traditions within the Trang An Landscape Complex, especially religious practices (e.g. temple-based worship and actively used cemeteries), are a focus of visitor interest resulting in the potentially intrusive use of photography, inappropriate attire, and offensive behaviour. This may result in these traditional activities, which enhance a visitor's experience of the place's OUV, being relocated by local people away from the place.

The Trang An Landscape Complex is a complex site containing numerous structures and other features that make a contribution to its heritage values, although not themselves part of the property's OUV. There is a risk that their conservation needs will be over-looked if the revised management plan does not include clear guidance on the management of these heritage values that coexist with the OUV. Given their number, wide distribution across the landscape and specific conservation requirements there is the risk that these structures and other features may deteriorate over a prolonged period, without the change being noticed, or be otherwise modified inappropriately. Although some steps have been taken to create an archival record of some of

these places (including 3D scanning and photographic recording of some historic structures), such that a baseline exists against which change can be measured, further work in this regard is required.

4 ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

4.1 Conservation of cultural values (Criterion v)

4.1.1 General observations

The mission notes the State Party's progress in management of the property including the revision of management planning documents and the implementation of on-the-ground measures to monitor and conserve the property's OUV. Targeted training and recruitment have resulted in highly qualified, engaged and dedicated staff. Insofar as there are any areas for improvement, these commonly reflect understandable resourcing challenges, competing priorities in a complex site, and the evolving skills of relevant personnel.

4.1.2 The archaeological attributes of OUV

The known and potential archaeological resource within the inscribed area is being generally well-managed. Valuable international relationships have been forged which will serve as a model for future collaborations. They have resulted in the upskilling of local practitioners and have generated important research data and scholarly publications. Although the backfilling of trenches between excavation seasons is not being consistently enforced, the sites that were visited by the mission were generally in good condition. Nevertheless, this will need to be continuously monitored, with any changes in their condition through human agency or natural events recorded appropriately.



© Andrew Sneddon, 2019 – The trench has not been backfilled, although it is supported with timber beams and appears in good condition.

The present private-public partnerships have proved a boon to archaeological research in the inscribed area. Private funding, together with assistance from the Management Board, has generated funding for doctoral and post-doctoral research opportunities.

A non-intrusive survey, mapping and modelling are ongoing and promise to yield valuable research data directly relevant to the property's OUV.

The most recent archaeological investigations (SUNDASIA, and the proposed PALEOKARST project) reflect the OUV of the property in that they focus on the Pleistocene and Holocene archaeology. A site and artefact management catalogue is still in preparation and should be completed as a matter of priority.

4.1.3 Presenting the cultural attributes of the property's OUV

Most visitors to Trang An Landscape Complex leave with an enhanced appreciation of its remarkable natural values. However, the cultural attributes of its OUV, especially the prehistoric archaeology, do not appear to engage visitors to the same degree. Opportunities for enhancing visitor experiences with the property's cultural values will need to be continuously explored. It is possible that the property's more recent archaeology and its colourful living heritage could be used to assist (although neither of these things is directly relevant to the property's OUV). This is a matter that the proposed Interpretation Plan and 2020 revision of the Management Plan should address.

4.1.4 Buffer Zone within the inscribed area

The buffer zone is presently functioning adequately to protect the inscribed area's OUV. However, as development pressures increase, new developments in the buffer zone will need to be carefully regulated and monitored to ensure that significant views and vistas from the buffer zone to the inscribed area are not impacted by inappropriate development. Similarly, care will need to be taken to ensure that the buffer zone acts as an effective transition from the developed areas of Ninh Binh to the inscribed area. The role and function of the buffer zone should be clearly expressed in the proposed revision of the Management Plan.

4.1.5 Historic Buildings and Monuments

The historic buildings and monuments are not directly relevant to the OUV of the property. However, they are of local, regional and (in the case of the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital) national significance. They also require careful heritage management. Some of those structures show signs of ad hoc repair, intrusive wiring, mixed and sometimes unattractive lighting, and wear and tear. This detracts from the visitor experience and in some cases may result in damage to significant fabric. This is a matter that may require increased training, international collaboration or staff recruitment.



© Andrew Sneddon, 2019 – Intrusive lighting at the temples at the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital



© Andrew Sneddon, 2019 – Intrusive electrical devices within the temple at the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital



© Andrew Sneddon, 2019 – Intrusive wiring and electrical hardware (possibly a fire risk) at the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital temples



© Andrew Sneddon, 2019 – Intrusive light towers at the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital

4.2 Conservation of natural values

The property is inscribed on the World Heritage List for two of the four criteria for natural sites.



© UNESCO/Brian Clark, 2019

An important attribute is that the vast majority of the property is generally inaccessible, and visitor access to accessible parts is limited mostly to small, human-powered boats. These are the key elements preventing any significant disturbance to its OUV.



© UNESCO/Brian Clark, 2019

While the acknowledged natural values of the property are robust and unlikely to be substantially diminished by the major perceived threat to the property, a rapid and dramatic increase in visitation, there are concerns regarding threats to these acknowledged values as well as threats to natural values which do not form part of the property's OUV.

4.2.1. Urban development

Concerns have been raised by the World Heritage Committee in regard to the threat to the property's exceptional natural beauty posed by plans to urbanise parts of the buffer zone as the Master Plan for the Province includes a proposal to establish a university with a population of around 20,000.

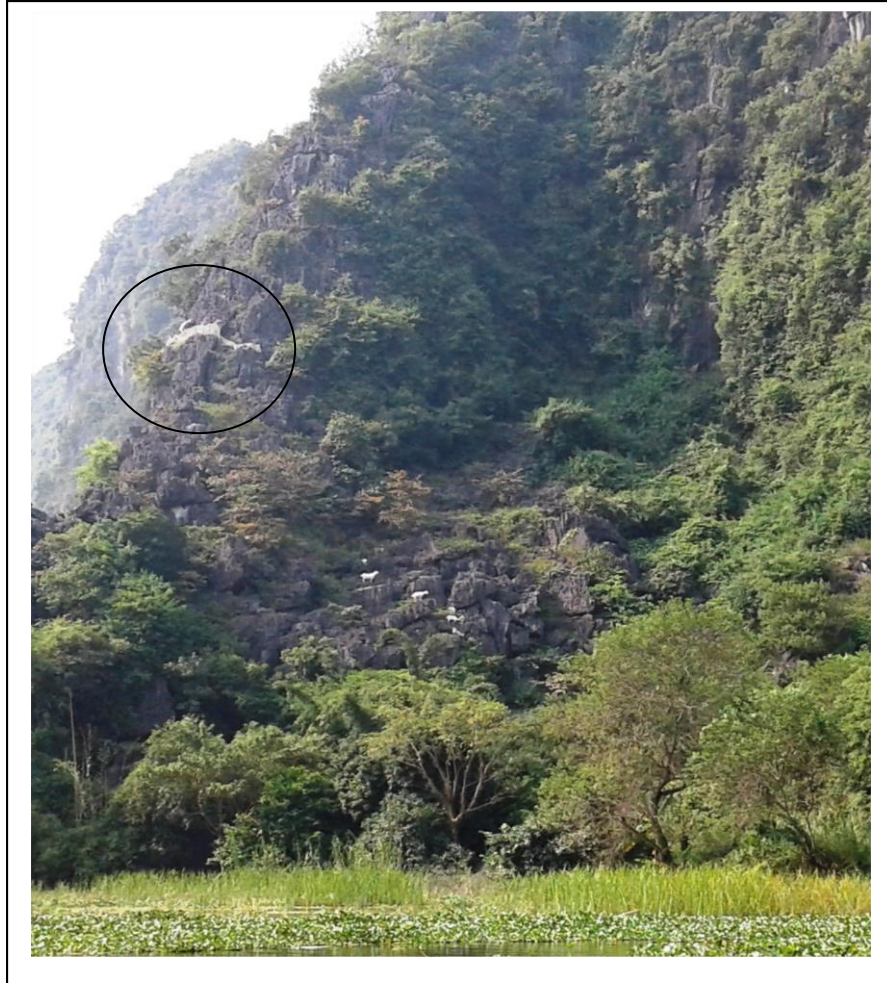
In its November 2017 response to the World Heritage Committee the State Party noted the Master Plan is intended to be a general guide to the development of the tourism sector in the province and that the property Management Plan makes no direct reference to development of a university area in the buffer zone and does not contain any provision for such a development.

It further notes that if any significant development were to be proposed in the buffer zone it would be subject to rigorous environmental impact assessment prior to being approved. That assessment would take account of any potential impact on the OUV of the property and would be made available to the World Heritage Centre in accordance with procedures in the *Operational Guidelines*.

4.2.2. Goats

One potential threat which requires ongoing monitoring is the presence of goats in and around the property.

The feature seen circled on the photo below is a goat fence erected to prevent them from escaping up the mountain, clear evidence of the potential for goats to escape into the Protected Natural Zone of the property. Should this happen and a population of feral goats becomes established they will be very difficult to eradicate and will severely damage the natural forest cover along with its associated biodiversity and diminish the exceptional scenic beauty of the property.



© UNESCO/Brian Clark, 2019 – Goats seen along the Tam Coc boat route

4.2.3. Other natural values

While biodiversity values are not part of the property's OUV they are an important adjunct to those values and contribute to visitors' appreciation of the property's significance and the mission notes the proactive measures being implemented by the Board to assess and mitigate any threats to the property's OUV and associated biodiversity values posed by the increasing visitation.

The vulnerability of cave biodiversity from artificial lighting

Caves are important karst features and are key elements of both cultural and natural values. Some caves within the property have been equipped with artificial lights to facilitate navigation by boat rowers and significant growth of lampenflora was observed in several caves on the Trang An and Tam Coc boat routes. Lampenflora—the growth of algae, moss and ferns resulting from the introduction of artificial light—was noted to be a problem in earlier reports. Prior recommendations for treatment have not been implemented and if left untreated it will cause damage to speleothems and potentially alter fragile cave ecosystems.

Other caves, which the mission did not have the opportunity to visit, have been equipped with lights and pathways in order to display the karst features of the caves to tourists. Third party⁴ observations of intense coloured lighting, indicate that these caves are highly vulnerable to severe lampenflora impact. Furthermore, numerous images and associated text found in various online travel blogs note that the thousands of bats found in the caves are regularly disturbed by visitors to the caves.

In conclusion, despite the dramatic increase in visitation and the potential threat of goats becoming feral pests in the Protected Natural Zone and the impact of visitors on cave associated biodiversity values, the state of conservation of the property's OUV is very good.

⁴ see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVM3-oCzypI>, <https://vietnamdiscovery.com/blog/ninh-binh-tour-to-discover-galaxy-grotto-d157>

5 CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Trang An Landscape Complex is a rich example of a mixed World Heritage property combining natural heritage values, scenic beauty, and cultural heritage imbued with archaeological and historical significance. It embodies important social and spiritual values for contemporary Vietnamese people. The property offers a variety of visitation points and experiences for local, national and international visitors, particularly in festive seasons.

In response to emerging issues, the State Party has sought to refine its management framework, in particular by revising its written management tools, implementing various research, actively participating in international academic cooperation and establishing public-private partnerships.

While the mission identified some threats to the natural and cultural values of the property with potential to impact its OUV, the State Party is aware of those issues and is seeking to address them. The Mission wishes to emphasise some important matters that remain to be addressed in terms of natural and cultural preservation. They principally relate to the careful management of urban development in the buffer zone, monitoring the condition of the prehistoric caves having regard to their use for academic research and touristic purposes, artificial lighting in various cave complexes, and the conservation of biodiversity. More specifically, this report makes recommendations in relation to individual activities in the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital, management of archaeologically excavated sites, and improved curation and storage of associated moveable property.

The mission's primary concerns focused on governance and practical implementation of management tools. The review of the Management Plan and the elaboration of Action Plans for visitation management and archaeological heritage management have steadily progressed, but the on-going proper carrying capacity study should be finalised to establish appropriate policies for maintaining desirable environmental and social conditions for visitation. The successful review and implementation of the revised Management Plan will depend on such things as: alignment of legally binding statutory instruments and policy tools at national and provincial levels, and clear guidance on the monitoring and ongoing implementation of some existing procedures (the public-private partnerships, project proposal and assessment processes, a carrying capacity study, the necessity of applying HIA, EIA and SEA principles for major initiatives).

Integrating a balanced vision for the property (having regard to its OUV as well as its potential for economic development in the province), and setting achievable objectives and clear performance indicators, will be key to producing the revised Management Plan.

The Mission encourages continued efforts in enhancing the pool of financial and human resources. It recommends that decision-makers have the appropriate levels of expertise and that they balance the conservation needs of the property's natural and cultural values, while seeking to facilitate appropriate tourism. Strategies and activities for valorising the property through interpretation facilities and materials are recommended.

Coping proactively with changes and impact brought about by an ever-increasing tourism expansion remains a challenge, and a long-term management strategy should be built on the results of the recommended carrying capacity study. Tailored approaches to the management of specific visitation points may be required to identify acceptable levels of change.

The film set of 'Skull Island' was removed and the site might be investigated for its potential as a location suited to valorising the OUV of the property, given its advantageous location. The illegally constructed walkway at Cai Ha Mountain has also been removed. However, the sites demonstrate that a clear procedure for the assessment of proposed tourism facilities and new development is needed to avoid any future dysfunction of decision-making. This procedure will need to include protocols concerning communication between the management authority, implementing partners and potential developers.

In view of its observations, the mission recommends that the State Party take the following actions:

Recommendations

The mission recommends that the State Party:

General

1. Enhance the Management Board's institutional, financial and human capacities by:
 - a. strengthening its Mission Statement by stating the primary mission as preserving the OUV of the property and ensuring a balanced approach to conservation, development and economic growth through sustainable tourism;
 - b. ensuring that the financial and human resources necessary to implement the priorities detailed in the Management Plan are provided ;
 - c. providing continued support to increase the staff's technical expertise and management capacities;
 - d. ensuring that the Management Board's institutional structure is supported by expertise in heritage management, nature conservation and sustainable tourism at an equal hierarchical level so that decision-making processes are balanced and take all aspects into consideration;

Governance and Management

2. review and ensure consistency among the legally binding tools and related policies concerning all World Heritage properties in Viet Nam in order to avoid contradictions and ambiguities concerning decision-making hierarchies;
3. ensure that the 2020 revision of the Management Plan for the property clearly prioritises the protection of its OUV;
4. undertake a biennial review of short-term objectives, budget allocation and implementation, considering the importance of prioritisation among objectives;
5. include the following elements in the revised Management Plan:
 - a) a policy about private-public partnerships, which applies to the distinctive tourist zones. It should be guided by a genuine spirit of partnership sustaining the OUV of the property and increasing the economic and spiritual well-being of stakeholders;
 - b) a procedure for any person or corporation seeking to implement a project which may have an impact on the OUV of the property to be considered by the Management Board, and that such procedure be displayed publicly, both physically and online;
 - c) a provision to periodically review the recently initiated carrying capacity study, and a subsequent review of the tourism-related activities in order to ensure tourism planning on the basis of preserving the OUV in the pursuit of economic growth and benefit-sharing with all stakeholders, as well as to identify and provide any necessary mitigating measures;
 - d) a policy on Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for development proposals within the property, its buffer zone and wider vicinity which may have potential impacts on the property's OUV. They should be undertaken in conformity with the *ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties* and the *IUCN World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment*, respectively; where new development

proposals are approved or denied, the justification for the decision should be informed, recorded, and publicly transparent;

- e) a clear statement concerning urban development aspects, informing residents in the inscribed area about rules and regulations for the repair of existing structures and for the design or construction of new structures within the property;
- f) a description of the key performance indicators which will be used to evaluate progress against baseline information by specific, qualitative and quantitative, measurable, achievable, realistic outcomes, including clear timeframes;
- g) a specific conservation and visitor management approach to the protection of distinctive heritage values (e.g. water routes, temple zones), based upon a carrying capacity analysis of the potential impacts of visitors on those values and the visitor experience, noting the uses of different areas and the existing zoning, along with the variety of visitors' profiles and activities;
- h) an assessment and description of the present 'character' of the property and buffer zone in terms of uses and vernacular and traditional architecture. The objective should be to ensure that the buffer zone facilitates an appropriate 'transition' from areas outside the buffer zone into the property. This should include a study of significant views and vistas into the property from within the buffer zone, to ensure that inappropriate development does not obscure such views and vistas in the future.

6. integrate the revised Archaeological Heritage Management Action Plan by:

- a) identifying places with archaeological potential, ranked according to assessed significance (scientific and historic significance especially, but also social and spiritual significance). These predictive models should be consulted whenever a new development that may cause significant ground disturbance is proposed;
- b) including the research questions that the property's archaeological resources might be used to address, as well as appropriate methodologies for their investigation. These may relate to the property's OUV or to research questions of local, regional or national importance, and should integrate opportunities for heritage interpretation. These research questions should become a tool to prioritise future archaeological investigations;
- c) addressing, as a matter of urgency, the need for a database of sites across the property to be used as a management tool under the responsibility of the Management Board. At a minimum, the database should include a detailed description of all sites identified by excavation or survey within the property, identified by a unique inventory number, and with their location recorded using GPS;
- d) addressing the need for a database of significant artefacts recovered through excavation to track their storage or display location, including a unique identifier, a physical description, a photograph, a record of their condition, provenance and conservation needs;
- e) including a procedure for the reporting and management of unexpected archaeological finds (chance discovery), including clear lines of responsibility for their reporting and subsequent management. Consideration should be given to ways of encouraging landowners to report finds to the Management Board so that archaeological relics are not disturbed;
- f) integrating the revised Archaeological Heritage Management Action Plan with the proposed Trang An Landscape Complex Interpretation Plan (see below 13

'Interpretation') so that, where appropriate, archaeological finds are used to justify, sustain and demonstrate the attributes of OUV.

- g) stating that public access to the archaeological cave sites should be restricted in general, but giving consideration, in conjunction with the Interpretation Plan, to ways of making some of these sites accessible to the public upon completion of the SUNDASIA projects;
 - h) providing for the backfilling of excavated trenches at the close of each season of excavation, unless excellent grounds for a different approach are provided by the excavation director. Any trenches that presently remain open should be back-filled in accordance with permit conditions, after consultation with the excavation director, unless reasons can be given by them for an alternative methodology. These reasons must be assessed by qualified personnel on the Management and Scientific Advisory Committee. In those extraordinary circumstances where back-filling is not required appropriate steps must be taken to ensure that the excavation area is safe for visitation.
 - i) developing a database to keep track of all monitoring activities carried out at excavated archaeological sites, with a photographic record allowing to track incremental change at the sites in order to ensure that the sites are not subject to damage through human agency or natural events.
7. ensure a clear internal process by which the World Heritage Centre is informed of any proposal to undertake major restorations or new constructions which may affect the OUV of the property. Such notice should be given as soon as possible and, most importantly, before any decision is made that would be difficult to reverse (see Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*).

Conservation of natural and cultural values

Natural heritage conservation

8. enhance conservation of natural values by ensuring that the new Management Plan details requirements to:
- a) establish a systematic monitoring and reporting programme of the natural environment to determine the ongoing state of conservation of the property and implement appropriate management responses where required.
 - b) carry out a baseline study for all caves used for tourism purposes to understand the presence of cave-dependent fauna and flora, recording population density to monitor population trends and, if populations are threatened by such use, take appropriate remedial strategic measures;
 - c) carry out an annual survey of the Protected Natural Zone to determine the presence of goats, their impact on the property, that they are not becoming established, and to implement any required management responses;
 - d) monitor the waterways to determine the state of conservation including trends in the alien snail population, decide whether any intervention is required, and take action as required;

- e) inspect all caves with artificial lighting to detect the presence of lampenflora and implement an action plan, based on available internationally accepted studies, for management of lampenflora.

Preservation of cultural values

- 9. prepare, over the course of the next 5 years, conservation management guidelines to assist with the management of individual historic sites that make a contribution to the heritage values of the property. This task is to be carried out by qualified architects or other suitably qualified heritage practitioners (e.g. specialists in fabric conservation, landscape architecture, town planning), in close collaboration with members of the Management Board and local experts. This includes the temples at the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital and pagodas and other historic structures in scenic areas. Consideration should be given to whether this would be best achieved by preparing guidelines on a site-by-site basis or on some other basis e.g. lighting and wiring guidelines, guidelines on the repair and maintenance of timber structures, disabled access guidelines etc. A photographic archival record using digital image capture, catalogued images and plans showing all camera angles should be made of all such structures so that a baseline exists against which change can be measured. This archival record should be maintained and updated whenever a change is made to the structures.

Tourism and visitor management

- 10. Noting that growing tourism is a clear and urgent threat to the property and one of the main threats to World Heritage properties worldwide,
 - a) carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess the cumulative impacts of developments inside the property and its buffer zones to encourage comprehensive planning beyond a project-level assessment;
 - b) adopt a proactive, strategic, long-term approach to the planning, monitoring and management of visitation especially by urgently completing the planned carrying capacity study and implementing the acceptable limits as soon as possible, and ensuring that the study:
 - i) adopts an effective counting method (the number of visits or number of visitors) to evaluate the actual impact of tourism on the property's OUV, including a specific focus or analysis on entry points and tourist hot spots;
 - ii) provides a detailed analysis of the range (types) and scale (size and number) of visitor services and visitor facilities required to meet the needs of the projected number of visits in order to maintain the property's OUV;
 - iii) is based on a systematic process which aims to ensure that environmental and other sustainability aspects are appropriately considered.

Living heritage values

- 11. include requirements for maintaining the property's living heritage values in the Management Plan, (e.g. monitoring and control of potentially intrusive visitor behaviour at locations where traditional worship and other practices are carried out).

Landscape

- 12. encourage the maintenance of the landscape in a natural state, as far as possible, and permit continued traditional subsistence use of natural resources within the property,(e.g.

agricultural activities, aquaculture and gardening) provided that they do not impact the authenticity and integrity of the property;

Interpretation

13. elaborate an overarching plan for the presentation and interpretation of the property's OUV and other values (e.g. recent history, biodiversity and geodiversity such as caves), and in particular:
 - a) prepares individual site interpretation plans for each of the six principal gateways into the property;
 - b) includes provisions for both on-site and online opportunities for people to learn about the property's significance and possible examples of values showcasing its 'mixed' nature (e.g. landscape, historical adaptation to climate change, use of caves);
 - c) considers the 2015 UNESCO recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections as a reference in this endeavour;
 - d) includes research planning with existing documentation of artefacts, planning for upgrading the existing facilities and/or creating new ones at other locations;
 - e) investigates and develops any synergies that might exist with the Ninh Binh provincial museum (e.g. as part of a heritage trail) leading visitors from the main city to the heritage place;
14. provide appropriate levels of information about all artefacts currently displayed to visitors;
15. review the proposal to develop an interpretation facility on the island from which the artificial film set was recently removed. If it is not justifiably determined that this location is the most appropriate for such a facility the proposal should be abandoned and all remnants of the film set (toilets, pathways, grass huts, iron ship - cum - bridge) removed and the island should be replanted with native vegetation to restore the aesthetic values of this area.
16. implement the plan using a stage-by-stage approach, so that basic actions can be implemented immediately and new elements added slowly as resources and the acquired expertise in the field of site interpretation allow;

Moveable heritage

17. establish an overall strategy for the management of moveable artefacts, in line with the UNESCO guidelines relating to documentation, storage, physical conservation and presentation of such artefacts under the supervision of the appropriate national authorities.
18. enforce, as a condition for the granting of archaeological research permits, compliance with the rules concerning the following elements,:
 - a) property rights,
 - b) application of standardized documentation systems which, at a minimum, include a detailed description of all sites recovered by excavation or survey in the property, identified by a unique inventory number, their location (using GPS) and the location of storage or display,
 - c) provision of all necessary conservation work prior to any artefacts being placed into the care of the national authorities,
 - d) collaboration to ensure a sound storage environment;

19. enhance the security and sustainable storage of artefacts by relocating those stored at the Trang An Visitor Centre to a more secure location with a controlled environment equipped with appropriate storage cabinets.

Human resources

20. increase the available human resources to establish a systematic monitoring programme to detect changes to the environment, including the proliferation of alien species, water quality, the proliferation of lampenflora in caves and the impact of tourism on wildlife, such as bat and bird populations exposed to human activities.
21. enhance the planning capacity of the Management Board by including one or more persons with qualifications and experience in urban planning and design, to provide input into master planning and the assessment of development proposals;
22. train existing staff or recruit experts in museum management, exhibition design, and artefact conservation to fill any possible knowledge gap;
23. enhance the Management Board's capacity to design, use and maintain a GIS database system which is used by stakeholders operating within the property;

Local Communities

24. establish a formal consultation system between the Management Board and the local communities to ensure participatory decision making processes. This includes to address social issues such as housing, economic opportunities, threats and lifestyle change arising from the property's inscription on the World Heritage List, and ensure appropriate reporting to the relevant authorities.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: National Decisions and Decrees on Heritage

- Decree No.98/2010/NĐ-CP of the Government dated September 21st 2010 on detailing the implementation of several articles of the Law on Cultural Heritage and the amended Law on Cultural Heritage;
- Decree No.06/2008/NĐ-CP of the Government dated January 16th 2008 on sanctioning administrative violations in commercial activities;
- Decree No.107/2007/NĐ-CP of the Government dated June 25th 2007 on detailing and guiding the implementation of several articles of the Law on Housing;
- Decree No.149/2007/NĐ-CP of the Government dated October 9th 2007 on sanctioning administrative violations in tourism;
- Decree No.15/2012/NĐ-CP of the Government dated March 9th 2012 on detailing several articles of the Law on Minerals;
- Decree No.150/2005/NĐ-CP of the Government dated December 12th 2005 on sanctioning administrative violations in social security;
- Decree No.23/2006/NĐ-CP of the Government dated March 3rd 2006 on the implementation of the Law on Forest Protection and Development;
- Decree No.80/2006/NĐ-CP of the Government dated August 9th 2006 on detailing and guiding the implementation of several articles of the Law on Environment protection;
- Decree No.81/2006/NĐ-CP of the Government dated August 9th 2006 on sanctioning violations in environment protection;
- Decision No.82/2003/QĐ-TTg dated April 29th 2003 by the Prime Minister approving the master plan on Conservation, restoration and promotion of the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital Historic and Architectural Monument for the 2000-2015 period;
- Decision No.1183/QĐ-TTg dated August 30th 2012 by the Prime Minister approving the National strategy on coping with climate change in the 2012-2015 period;
- Decision No.105/QĐ-TTg dated July 21st 2008 by the Prime Minister approving the Master plan on investigation, exploration and use of minerals for cement production in Vietnam by 2020;
- Decision No.108/2005/QĐ-TTg dated May 16th 2005 by the Prime Minister approving the master zoning of cement industry by 2010, with a vision by 2020;
- Decision No.186/2006/QĐ-TTg dated August 14th 2006 by the Prime Minister promulgating the Regulations on forest management;
- Decision No.1706/2001/QĐ-BVHTT dated July 24th 2001 by the Ministry of Culture and Information (currently Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism) approving the master plan on Conservation and promotion of historic-cultural relics and scenic landscapes by 2020;
- Decision No.05/2003/QĐ-BVHTT dated February 06th 2003 by the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism promulgating Regulations on Conservation and restoration of historic-cultural heritages and scenic landscapes;
- Decision No.02/2003/QĐ-BTNMT dated July 29th 2003 by the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment promulgating Regulations on environment protection in tourism;

- Decision No.313-VH/VP dated April 28th 1962 by the now Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism recognizing the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital historic-cultural relics as national heritage;
- Decision No.321-QĐ/BT dated December 12th 1994 by the now Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism recognizing the Tam Cốc-Bích Động Scenic Landscape as national heritage;
- Decision No.3531/QĐ-BVHTTDL dated November 1st 2011 by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism recognizing the Trang An ecological zone as national heritage;
- Decision No.38/2005/QĐ-BNN dated July 6th 2005 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development promulgating technical and economic norms for planting and restoring forests and forest protection;
- Decision No.548/QĐ-TTg dated May 10th 2012 by the Prime Minister recognizing the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital Historic and Architectural Monument and the Trang An-Tam Coc-Bich Dong Scenic Landscape as special national monuments.
- Instruction No.18/CT-BVHTTDL dated February 6th 2012 by the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism on implementing “Vietnam’s Tourism Development Strategy by 2020 and vision by 2030”.

1.1.1 Provincial Decrees and Decisions

- Decision No.150/QĐ-UBND dated March 5th 2012 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People’s Committee on the establishment of the Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board under the direct supervision by the Ninh Binh Provincial People’s Committee;
- Decision No.06/2012/QĐ-UBND dated April 10th 2012 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People’s Committee promulgating Regulations on functions, responsibilities, authority, organizational structure and staffing of the Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board;
- Decision No.2063/QĐ-UBND dated September 04th 2007 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People’s Committee approving changes in the Trang An Scenic Landscape investment project by Xuan Truong Corporation;
- Decision No.728/QĐ-UBND dated April 09th 2008 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People’s Committee authorizing Xuan Truong Corporation the management, protection and promotion of the Trang An Scenic Landscape;
- Decision No.350/QĐ-UBND dated May 18th 2012 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People’s Committee authorizing Xuan Truong Corporation the management and promotion of the Tam Coc-Bich Dong Scenic Landscape;
- Decision No.432/QĐ-UBND dated March 29th 1996 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People’s Committee on setting up the Management Board of the Hoa Lu Special-use Primary forest;
- Decision No.2556/2005/QĐ-UBND dated November 18th 2005 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People’s Committee promulgating regulations on management, protection and exploitation of special-use primary forests;
- Decision No.2267/QĐ-UB dated November 06th 2001 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People’s Committee approving Master plan on transportation development of Ninh Binh by 2010 and with vision by 2020;
- Resolution No.15-NQ/TU dated July 13th 2009 by the Ninh Binh Province’s Communist Party Committee on tourism development by 2020 and with vision by 2030;

- Resolution No.15/NQ-HDND dated August 12th 2011 by the Ninh Binh Province's Communist Party Committee approving the Master Plan for socio-economic development of Ninh Binh province up to 2020;
- Instruction No.20-CT/UBND dated September 3rd 1994 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee on protecting wild birds, beast and forest;
- Instruction No.07/2011-CT/UBND dated September 30th 2011 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee on strengthening state management of mineral exploitation in Ninh Binh province;
- Decision No.2908/QĐ-UBND dated December 26th 2007 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee on planning raw material areas for mining industry in Ninh Binh province.

1.1.2 Decisions specific on Heritage Site (issued by the Ninh Binh provincial authority)

- Decision No.2115/QĐ-UBND dated September 3rd 2004 and No.577/QĐ-UBND dated June 8th 2009 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee approving the detailed Plan of protection, restoration and promotion of the Hoa Lu Ancient Capital's important protected areas;
- Official Letter No.522/UBND-VP4 dated June 21st 2007 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee on strengthening management of the Trang An Landscape Complex;
- Archive No.213/UBND-VP9 dated October 30th 2012 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee on zoning of the protected areas of the Trang An Landscape Complex.
- Decision No.83/QĐ-UBND dated January 21st 2015 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee promulgating temporary regulation on construction management within the Trang An Landscape Complex;
- Decision No.26/2015/QĐ-UBND dated August 24th 2015 by the Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee promulgating rules on collaboration in resource management and environment protection within the Trang An Landscape Complex World Cultural and Natural Heritage.
- Regulation for Archaeological Excavation No. 86/2008/QĐ-BVHTTDL (30 December 2008, Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism) applies specifically to the archaeological remains (Clauses 5, 15 and 19)

Annex 2: Terms of Reference for the mission

Joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS / IUCN Reactive Monitoring Mission Trang An Landscape Complex (Viet Nam)

28 September – 3 October 2019

At its 42nd session, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party of Viet Nam to invite a reactive monitoring mission to Trang An Landscape Complex World Heritage property, to be conducted jointly by the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and IUCN (Decision **42 COM 7B.62**, Annex 1). The objectives of the mission are to assess the state of conservation of the property, to evaluate progress with implementation of Committee Decisions, and to provide advice for the implementation and revision of the property Management Plan.

In particular, the mission should undertake the following:

General

1. Assess the overall state of conservation of the property, in relation to all criteria for which the property was inscribed;
2. Examine what actions have been taken by the State Party to implement previous Decisions of the Committee; in particular Decisions 38 COM 8B.14, 40 COM 7B.67 and 42 COM 7B.62;
3. Provide advice to the State Party in order to support the improvement of governance, monitoring the status and trends of the property's key natural and cultural values;

Governance and management

4. Review management planning, including the review of the Management Plan and the elaboration and Action Plans for visitation management and archaeological heritage management, in considering the importance of their balance with biodiversity conservation;
5. Review the progress achieved with the establishment of an appropriate consultation mechanism within the Management Board and among all stakeholders of the property, in order to:
 - a. Ascertain that a balanced approach be made considering aspects relating to tourism, heritage management and nature conservation as a whole,
 - b. Apply a clearer reporting protocol concerning any new and major developments within the property and ensure the necessary prior consultation of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*,

Human resources and financial measures

6. Review human resources and financial capacity, having particular regard to:
 - a. Staff training and capacity building
 - b. Skills in archaeological heritage management;

- c. Resources available for systematic environmental monitoring

Tourism management

7. Review the current visitation planning and monitoring in light of the visitor number and carrying capacity of the property;

Visitor facilities and services

8. Review the dismantling of illegally constructed element as specified in the Decision 42 COM 7B.62;
9. Review the removal of the film set recommended by the Committee in Decision 42 COM 7B.62;
10. Review any other initiatives from the management authorities to promote the values of and education on the property, including interpretation programmes and facilities;

Natural resources conservation

11. Review the integration of biodiversity conservation into management and decision-making and its harmonization with the conservation of cultural values.

Others

12. In line with paragraph 173 of the *Operational Guidelines*, assess any other relevant conservation issues that may negatively impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including the conditions of integrity and protection and management.

The State Party is requested to facilitate necessary consultation with stakeholders and field visits to key locations within the property previously mentioned by the Committee's decisions and concerned by the above elements.

In order to enable preparation for the mission, the following items should be provided to the World Heritage Centre (copied to ICOMOS and IUCN) as soon as possible and preferably no later than 1 month prior to the mission (**26 August 2019**):

- a) All relevant management and planning documents for the property, notably the Management Plan, including confirmation of the status of its review process, and related Action Plans for visitation management and archaeological heritage management, as well as biodiversity conservation;
- b) All available information about the Management Board including its organization chart, mission statement, details on human and financial resources;
- c) All available information about the possible on-going and future major projects (conservation, research, tourism related projects) within the property and in its buffer zone which may have impact on the OUV of the property, such as project designs, locations, and impact assessments where available;
- d) All available information about visitor facilities and services, such as interpretation, educational, and outreach activities (nationals, internationals and locals);

- e) Reports of the monitoring and surveillance of the property, including time series figures (2017-2019) on:
- i. Environmental monitoring;
 - ii. Visitor numbers by month, tourism facility statistics (e.g. Boats), tour operators statistics;
 - iii. Cases of submitted proposals concerning constructions/facilities studied by the Management Board;
 - iv. Seizures of illegal constructions/initiatives (any type)

The mission should consult with the Vietnamese authorities at national, provincial and municipal levels, in particular the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism Ministry and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. In addition, the mission should consult with a range of relevant stakeholders, including i) tour operators; ii) NGOs; iii) the UNESCO and IUCN Offices in Ha Noi; and iv) representatives of local and indigenous communities.

Based on the results of the above-mentioned assessments and discussions with the State Party representatives and stakeholders, the mission will develop recommendations to the Government of Viet Nam and the World Heritage Committee with the objective of providing guidance to the State Party for actions to be taken to address identified threats to the property, and to improve the conservation of its Outstanding Universal Value.

Recommendations will be provided within the mission report (see below), and not during the mission implementation.

The mission will prepare a concise report on the findings and recommendations within six weeks following the site visit, following the World Heritage Centre reactive monitoring mission report format.

Annex 3: Decision: 42 COM 7B.62 (2018)

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/18/42.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decisions **38 COM 8B.14** and **40 COM 7B.67**, adopted at its 38th (Doha 2014) and 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) sessions respectively,
3. Welcomes the progress made by the State Party in following up on earlier Committee concerns about management planning, including the review of the Management Plan and the elaboration and submission of Action Plans for visitation management and archaeological heritage management;
4. Notes that current visitation has already increased beyond the previously anticipated two million visitors per annum and is further anticipated to increase to 3.5 million visitors per annum by 2020, and urges the State Party to continue the necessary studies to enable a better understanding of impacts on the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) from high and rapidly increasing visitation, and to establish and enforce a strict limit to visitation to ensure it does not exceed the carrying capacity of the property, in order to conserve its OUV, as well as its biodiversity as a key part of its aesthetic value;
5. Also welcomes that the dismantling of the illegally built concrete walkway at Cai Ha Mountain has been completed;
6. Requests the State Party to:
 - a) Further strengthen the regulations for tourism facilities,
 - b) Ensure the establishment of an appropriate consultation mechanism within the Management Board and among all stakeholders of the property, in order to:
 - i) Ascertain that a balanced approach be made considering aspects relating to tourism, heritage management and nature conservation as a whole,
 - ii) Apply a clearer reporting protocol concerning any new and major developments within the property and ensure the necessary prior consultation of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*,
 - c) Ensure that current measures remain in place to limit overcrowding, including the maximum daily quota for peak and normal visitation days,
 - d) Undertake further assessment of the facilities and services required to adequately service current and future visitation, taking into account the substantial current numbers and the revised future estimates, including the extrapolated festival-day peaks of up to 50,000 visitors,
 - e) Further develop the sections within the Management Plan concerning archaeological heritage, in particular staff training and capacity building, so that the national human resources are continuously provided to ensure a long term and successful management of the archaeological heritage of the property;

7. Also requests the State Party to continue to provide adequate financial and human resources for systematic environmental monitoring, as an integral part of management planning and operations;
8. Notes that the temporary replica film set will be removed and further requests the State Party to ensure that any heritage promotion and marketing undertaken within the property is consistent with interpretation of its OUV;
9. Requests furthermore the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to provide advice for the implementation and revision of the property Management Plan;
10. Noting that the State Party has no intention to construct a new university in the Bai Dinh area, nevertheless reiterates 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, including new parking infrastructure;
11. Also urges the State Party to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for any major developments within the property and the buffer zone as a timely and appropriate method of assessing both individual and cumulative impacts of current and planned developments on this small and fragile property, taking into account potential impacts on the OUV of the property in line with the IUCN and ICOMOS guidelines on impact assessments for the proposed projects, prior to allowing any such developments to take place;
12. Encourages the State Party to continue to work with the Advisory Bodies on further refining its efforts, including the integration of biodiversity conservation into management and decision making;
13. Requests moreover 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.

Annex 4: Programme of the Joint WHC/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission

Time	Activities	Location	Participants
27-28/09/2019	Arrival of mission team to Ha Noi	The Chi Boutique Hotel	
28/9/2019	Internal meeting of UNESCO and Advisory Bodies	The Chi Boutique Hotel	Reactive Monitoring Mission members
29/9/2019	Move and working in Ninh Binh		
AM	Transfer from Ha Noi to Ninh Binh		
14:00-18:00	Survey 3 areas: Galaxy visitor center, Hoa Lu Ancient Capital and Cai Ha Mountain	Galaxy grottoe, Hoa Lu Ancient Capital and Cai Ha Moutain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat of Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO, - UNESCO office in Hà Nội - Cultural Heritage Department; - Ninh Binh 's Tourism Department, Trang An Management Board
30/9/2019	Field Work in Ninh Binh		
8:00 - 12:00	Meeting between Reactive Monitoring Mission and Ninh Binh Department of Tourism, Trang An Management Board and related agency to discuss field trips (detail program is attached)	Ninh Binh Tourism Department Office, No 06, Trang An road, Ninh Binh city	<p>Representatives of Department: , Department of Tourism, Department of Culture and Sports, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development , Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Department of Planning and Investment, Department of Construction; People's Committees of districts and cities, Trang An Management Board, Secretariat of Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO, Department of Cultural Heritage, UNESCO Office in Ha Noi</p> <p>- Xuan Truong enterprise.</p>

14:00 – 16:30	Field trip to Tam Coc Bich Dong (Three Cave), Bich Dong Pagoda and homestays in the property.	Tam Cốc – Bích Động	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat of Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO, - UNESCO office in Hà Nội - Cultural Heritage Department, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism - Ninh Bình 's Tourism Department, Trang An Management Board
01/10/2019	Field trip to Trang An Scenic eco tourism (2 routes)		Representatives of Tourism Department, Trang An Management Board, Cultural Heritage Department, Secretariat of Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO; UNESCO Office in Ha Noi
08:00 – 12:00	Survey Route 1 – The Old Tran Temple		Representatives of Tourism Department, Trang An Management Board, Cultural Heritage Department, Secretariat of Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO; UNESCO Office in Ha Noi
12:00-13:00	Lunch	Guest house in Suoi Tien Temple	As above
13:30-15:00	Route 2 (Royal Step - over Place of Vu Lam, Kong Skull Island)		As above
15:30-17:00	Visit display space in visitor centre of Trang An		As above
02/10/2019	National Seminar on heritage management and continued field work		

8:00-12:00	Seminar in experience in heritage management and conservation and implementation of recommendations from the World Heritage Committee (detail program is attached)	Bai Dinh Hotel	Leaders of Department of Cultural Heritage, Secretariat of Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO Office in Ha Noi, World Heritage Sites in Vietnam, People's Committee of districts and commune in the property, boat rower, local community...
13:30 – 14:30	Survey in Thung Binh Archeological Site	Thung Binh Cave	Delegates
15:30	Visit Tam Chuc Pagoda.		Delegates
20:30	Moving back to Hanoi	Lan Vien Hotel	
03/10/2019	Debriefing in Ha Noi		
8:30-11:30	Meeting with Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism	Office of Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism 51,53, Ngo Quyen, Hanoi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Trịnh Thị Thủy; Deputy Minister of Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism - Representatives of Department of Cultural Heritage - Secretariat of Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO, - Department of Tourism, Trang An Management Board - UNESCO Office in Hanoi
Evening	Departure of the mission members		

Annex 5: List of persons met

Delegates attending the first meeting on 30th September 2019

1. Mr Trần Quốc Khánh- Deputy Director of Department of Cultural Diplomacy and UNESCO affair;
2. Mr Vương Việt Anh – Member of Secretariat of Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO;
3. Mrs. Phạm Thị Thanh Hương – Head of Culture Division – UNESCO office in Ha Noi;
4. Mrs. Vũ Hà Ngân – Cultural Heritage Department, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism;
5. Mrs. Lê Thị Liên – Expert from Việt Nam Institute of Archaeology;
6. Mrs. Nguyễn Thị Mai Hương – Expert from Việt Nam Institute of Archaeology;
7. Mr. Bùi Thành Đông, Director of Tourism Department;
8. Mr. Bùi Văn Mạnh, Vice Director of Tourism Department, in charge of Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board;
9. Mr. Nguyễn Cao Tấn, Vice Director of Culture and Sports Department;
10. Mr Đinh Đức Hữu – Vice Director of Construction Department;
11. Mr. Lê Hùng Thắng – Vice Director of Agriculture and Rural Development Department;
12. Mr. Ngô Hùng Khánh – Vice Director of Natural Resources and Environment Department;
13. Mrs. Nguyễn Thị Cúc – Vice Chairwoman of People’s Committee of Hoa Lu district;
14. Mr. Bùi Việt Thắng – Vice Director of Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board;
15. Mr. Bùi Quang Ninh – Vice Director of Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board;
16. Mr. Phạm Sinh Khánh - Vice Director of Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board;
17. Reporters of Ninh Binh television and Newspapers.

Participants to the Seminar/workshop 02nd October 2019 (about 140 people).

1. Mr. Bùi Thành Đông, Director of Tourism Department, Member of Ninh Binh provincial People Committee;
2. Mr. Bùi Văn Mạnh, Vice Director of Tourism Department, in charge of Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board
3. Mr Vương Việt Anh – Member of Secretariat of Vietnam National Commission for UNESCO;
4. Mrs. Phạm Thị Thanh Hương – Head of Culture Division – UNESCO office in Ha Noi
5. Bà Vũ Hà Ngân – Cục Di sản Văn hóa, Bộ Văn hóa, Thể thao và Du lịch;
6. Mr. Trần Tân Văn – Director of Việt Nam Institute of Geosciences and Mineral Resources;
7. Mr. Nguyễn Gia Đồi – Director of Viet Nam Institute of Archaeology;
8. Mrs. Lê Thị Liên – Expert from Việt Nam Institute of Archaeology
9. Mrs. Nguyễn Thị Mai Hương – Expert from Việt Nam Institute of Archaeology;
10. Mr. Đặng Văn Bài – Vice Chairman of Viet Nam National Council for Cultural Heritage
11. Mr. Phạm Trương Hoàng – Professor from Hanoi National Economics University, representative of the experts team help the Board to do the research on visitor carrying capacity for Trang An Landscape Complex.
12. Mr. Nguyễn Thanh Quang – Vice Director of Conservation Centre of Imperial Citadel of Thang Long, Ha Noi
13. Mr. Phạm Đình Huỳnh, Vice Director of Ha Long Bay Management Board, Quảng Ninh
14. Mr. Nguyễn Bá Linh Vice Director of Conservation Center for Ho Citadel, Thanh Hóa;
15. Mr. Bùi Việt Thắng – Vice Director of Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board;
16. Mr. Bùi Quang Ninh – Vice Director of Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board;
17. Mr. Phạm Sinh Khánh - Vice Director of Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board;
18. Mr. Nguyễn Cao Tấn, Vice Director of Culture and Sports Department;
19. Mr Đinh Đức Hữu – Vice Director of Construction Department;
20. Mr. Lê Hùng Thắng – Vice Director of Agriculture and Rural Development Department;
1. Leaders of People’s Committees of districts, cities and communes in the property

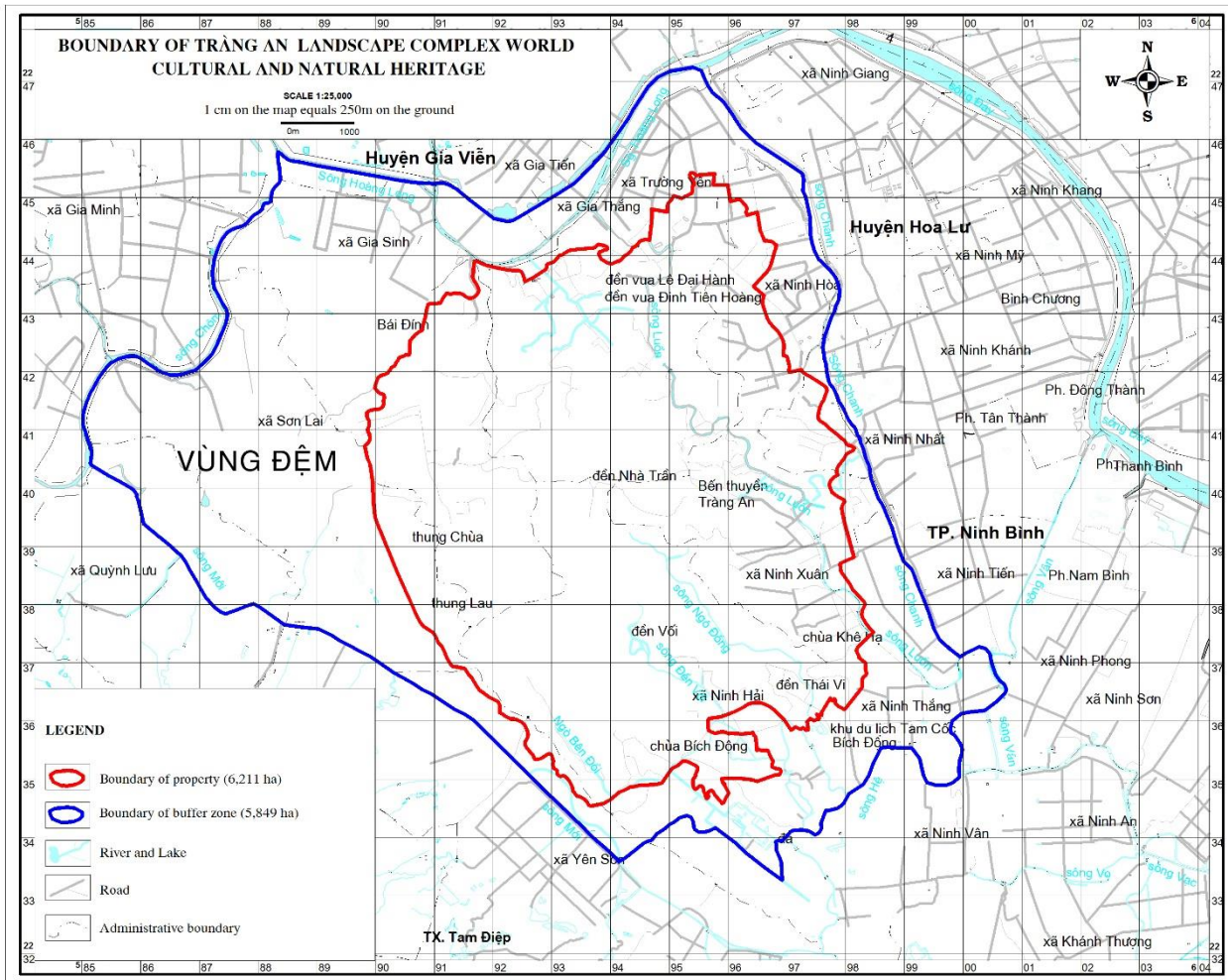
(5 districts, cities and 20 communities)

21. Tourism Companies in the property (representatives for the companies which operates tourist activities in the following areas: Galaxy grottoe, Sunshine valley, Bird valley, Trang An Ecotourism, Hoa Lu Ancientcapital)
22. About 60 representatives of boat rowers and local residents in the property
23. Staff of Tourism Department and Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board (30)
24. Representatives of Press: Viet Nam News Agency, VTV1, Viet Nam People Newspapers, Dantri.vn, Ninh Binh television; Ninh Binh newspaper.

Participants to the meeting in Ha Noi on 3rd of October (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism)

1. Ms Trinh Thi Thuy - Deputy Minister of Ministry Culture, Sports and Tourism
2. Mr Jake Brunner - Head of IUCN Office in Ha Noi
3. Mr Tran Quoc Khanh - National Commission for UNESCO - Ministry of Foreign Affair
4. Mr Bui Van Manh - Deputy Director of Ninh Binh Department of Tourism;
5. Mr Nguyen Cao Tan - Deputy Director of Ninh Binh Department of Culture and Sports;
6. Mr Bui Viet Thang - Deputy Director of Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board;
7. Mr Pham Sinh Khanh - Deputy Director of Trang An Landscape Complex Management Board;
8. Mr Nguyen Viet Cuong - Chief of the relics and Monument Management Divisions, Department of Culture Heritage- Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism;
9. Ms Nguyen Phuong Hoa - Head of International Cooperation Department - Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism;
10. Nguyen Thi Van - Trang An Management Board
11. Ms Phan Thi Thanh Huong – National Programme Officer, UNESCO Ha Noi

Annex 6: Map of the property boundary (as received by the mission in September 2019)



Annex 7: Organisation Chart of the management structure

