

**REPORT ON THE CONSERVATION
OF WORLD NATURAL HERITAGE PHONG NHA – KE BANG
NATIONAL PARK**

To: Word Heritage Center - UNESCO

Property name: Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park

Member State: Vietnam

Category of site: N951bis

1. Executive Summary of the report

The 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee in Azerbaijan, from June 30 to July 10, 2019 adopted Decision 43 COM 7B.12, which gave recommendations to take for the sustainable management and protection of World Natural Heritage Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park. Quang Binh Provincial People's Committee has directed the Management Board of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park that has implemented seriously and responsibly recommendations of the World Heritage Committee in the field of conservation Outstanding Universal Values, minimize the negative impact on natural resources. In addition, Quang Binh Provincial People's Committee has also issued the Directive No.39/CT-TU dated January 7, 2020 on conservation and promotion of the World Heritage values of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, requesting all levels of authorities and branches in the province to implement to make a stronger change in the conservation and promotion of the Heritage values.

In 2020, in the context of many difficulties due to Covid-19 epidemic, the socio-economic life has been effected seriously. In particular, the large-scale rainfall occurred in Quang Binh province from October 16th – 20th 2020, caused flooding in many places, affected activities of the whole society and impacted negatively the ecosystem and biodiversity. 25% area of Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park region was flooded, landslides have occurred in many places, causing the geological, biodiversity and the Global Outstanding Values of the Heritage to be affected.

In 2020, tourism activities were reduced significantly, people in the buffer zone have a lack of jobs, which increases pressure on forest management and protection in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park. In that context, with high determination, Management Board of the PNKB NP has implemented actively the instructions of the Provincial Party Committee and Provincial People's Committee, proactively deploying appropriate response solutions... thus, that achieved quite positive results on all working aspects.

The forest management and protection have many positive changes; Scientific research and biodiversity conservation in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park have been implemented effectively. Community awareness campaigns on the forest protection and livelihoods of the buffer-zone have been paid attention to; some models of livelihoods have been more and more promoted effectively so as to contribute to the improvement of the community's livelihood in the buffer zone of

the National Park. Environmental impact assessments and periodic environmental reports are focused on implementation; completed and accepted the plans as recommended by the World Heritage Committee in Decision 41 COM 7B.33 (41st Session): *“Test plan to eradicate the invasive species of Merremia boissiana in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park”*, *“The status assessment survey on some important large mammal species in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park”*. Many positive results have been recorded, contribute to identifying threats to develop appropriate plans to preserve and promote the Outstanding Values of World Natural Heritage Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park.

2. The state of management and conservation of World Natural Heritage Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, from 2019 to September 2020

2.1. Forest management and protection

Quang Binh Provincial People's Committee has directed the Management Board of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park on strengthening of patrolling activities in the National Park, high-risk areas, to control and minimize infringing activities on forest resources of the property. The Forest Protection Unit has established and maintained groups in important places; testing and applying the advanced equipment such as Drone, GPS and SMART software in patrolling forest, monitoring biodiversity and changes in forest resources; developing a plan for management and protection of *Calocedrus rupestris* species in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park and a plan for checking and tracing forest products on No.20 route and the western branch of Ho Chi Minh highway at barie ranger stations in the Park to avoid the risk of harming forest resources.

Quang Binh PPC has also directed forest owners to further patrols and forest protection, inspect the operation of forest owners in adjacent forest areas; guide promptly forest owners in improving the efficiency of forest management and protection; propagandize and mobilize forest owners to abide strictly by the provisions of law on forest protection and management in the assigned areas, create a safety belt for the core zone of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park. In addition, Quang Binh PPC has issued a Decision on approving outline, tasks and cost estimates to develop a sustainable forest management plan for Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park in the period of 2021-2030 to manage and use sustainably forest resources, biodiversity conservation, forest ecosystem, improve the quality and value of forest, ensure harmony and balance between conservation and exploiting values of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park in a sustainable direction, contribute to economic growth, create jobs, eradicate hunger and alleviate poverty, ensure security and defense and maintain the title of World Natural Heritage.

With the cooperation and active support of local authorities, well mobilize religious people to actively participate in forest protection, thereby obeying the law on forest protection and biodiversity conservation of the National Park. Phong Nha - Ke Bang continues to be strengthened, contributing to significantly reducing the negative impacts of people on flora and fauna in the National Park.

From 2019 to September 2020, the Forest Protection Department of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park organized 3,671 turns of forest patrol, eliminating 35 tents, 3,746 traps, preventing 312 people from entering the park illegally; make minutes and issue decisions to handle 40 violations in the forestry sector (with 57 subjects, 17 cases have not yet identified violators); 01 case transferred the file to the People's Protection Institute of Bo Trach district, transfer the file of 03 cases with criminal signs to the investigation police . The total amount of fines for administrative violations is over 181 million VND

2.2. Conservation of biodiversity, geological, geomorphological

In order to contribute to the conservation and sustainable development of biodiversity resources, maintain and develop ecosystem services, environment, biodiversity landscape in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, the PPC has issued a decision on approvment of the Biodiversity Conservation Plan of Quang Binh province to 2025 and vision to 2040. According that, biodiversity conservation in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park has been concerned and forcused by Quang Binh PPC: Strengthen the protection and prevention of activities that degrade forests and Primates species habitas in the Park; apply SMART software in monitoring key species (mainly focus on primates); at the same time, propagate and disseminate regularly, raising awareness and responsibility of the community and local authorities in participating in wildlife protection.

Up to October 2020, implementing the propagation of precious and rare endemic tree species of high conservation and economic value, wildlife care and rescue and biodiversity monitoring integrated with the implementation of the Action Plan for the Conservation of Primate Species in the Park have been implemented effectively¹. Many scientific research projects on biodiversity have been carried out, such as: “*Eco-study and distribution of Calocedrus rupestris in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park*”, “*Study and investigate the impact of invasive species in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park and propose preventive measures*”, “*Test plan to eradicate the*

¹ Receiving and rescuing 89 wildlife individuals; 69 individuals were released back to the natural environment, 48 individuals are currently rescued and 85 individuals are preserved; receiving 194.6 kg of Phong Lan; produced 8,335 seedlings of 11 species; rescue and re-release into the natural environment at the 80kg botanical garden of Thuy Tien Huong orchid; planting and conserving 20 rare and precious indigenous forest trees of 2 species.

invasive species of Merremia boissiana in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park”, “*The status assessment survey on some important large mammal species in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park*”... In the long-term, the implementation of research programs on ecological characteristics and biodiversity in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park is not only aimed at against the invasive species but also contribute to the protection of the forest ecosystem, the preservation of integrity of Outstanding Universal Values of the property.

In addition, the Management Board of the Park has cooperated with domestic and international Institute, Universities and organizations, such as: Institute of Geological Science, Institute of Chemistry, William Paterson University (USA) and International center for tropical forest research of Bidoup-Nui Ba National Park... in researching in geology and factors of cave environment to support the conservation and tourism development; coordinated with the British Caving Association, Hanoi University of Natural Sciences on surveying caves and update cave data; implementing the topic “*Research and evaluate of outstanding geoheritages values of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park*”; diving plan to survey Son Doong cave; signed a cooperation agreement with the Animal Asia Foundation (AAF) in improving and enhancing the effectiveness of wildlife rescue in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park; coordinated with Vietnam Nature Conservation Organization to carry out a survey program on the conservation status of the Siki White-cheeked in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park funded by the Arcus Foundation.

Up to now, Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park has built and updated database and list of fauna and flora with 2.952 species of plants and 1.395 species of animals; 404 caves have been detected and surveyed. Information on culture and history of Phong Nha - Ke Bang region has also updated. Thematic layers of map such as flora and fauna, hydrology, culture - society, endangered species, invasive species, heat and rain, geology, topography have been completed. There are also tools to look up species and monitor resources.

2.3. Promotion of Heritage values

At the beginning of 2020, Quang Binh Provincial Party Committee also issued the Directive No.39/CT-TU dated January 7th, 2020 on conservation and promotion of the World Heritage values of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park. On that basis, Quang Binh Provincial People’s Committee has concretized through the development of the Plan No.1061/KH-UBND dated June 19th, 2020 on the conservation and promotion of heritage values in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park to contribute to creating a stronger change in the fields of preserving and promoting the values of the

Heritage and at the same time, it shows the acknowledgment and serious implementation of the People's Committee of Quang Binh province for the UNESCO's recommendations. In recent years, tourism products and services in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park continue to be focused towards sustainability with community participation to create livelihoods, reduce pressures on Heritage resources. In 2020, tourists in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park decreased sharply due to the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic. Tourism activities have been affected greatly. However, with great effort, determination and initiative of the units and businesses, the quality of tourism services continued to be maintained and improved, tourist routes and sites have been restored gradually to normal operation right after getting the Government's policy.

From 2019 to the end of October 2020, the total number of visitor to Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park is more than 1.2 million arrivals (of which domestic visitors are more than 1.1 million; foreign visitors are over 193 thousand visitors). Total revenue of tourist sites have reached more than 376 billion VND.

Quang Binh PPC always prioritizes the implementation of the best conservation solutions to minimize the impact on the Outstanding Values of Heritage; implement strictly the protection of forests, heritage resources; tourism activities are deployed towards eco-tourism, in compliance with the provisions of the law; monitor regularly the impacts for timely intervention; Tourism projects are planned and implemented for environmental impact assessments. Therefore, heritage resources are preserved, no negative impact on the Heritage.

2.4. International cooperation

From 2019 up to now, the Management Board of PNKB National Park has implemented international cooperation activities to contribute to preserving and promoting the values of the Heritage, specifically: Coordinating with the research team of Columbia University, Lamont Earth Observatory - Doherty and Bidoup - Nui Ba National Park to carry out research program on pale-climate in the area Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park. In early 2020, the Management Board has collaborated with the research team of William Paterson University and the University of California, Irvine (USA) in the study of project *"Paleo-Proxy Cros - Calibration in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park"* to collect samples and analyze the stable isotopes of oxygen and hydrogen measured in rainwater, caves and forests, as well as stalactites of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park to study the paleoclimate that took place in the past in this area; coordinated with Vietnam Nature Conservation Organization to carry out a survey program on the conservation status of the Siki White-cheeked in Phong Nha -

Ke Bang National Park funded by the Arcus Foundation and develop a plan to organize the international workshop. In cooperation with the experts of the British Caving Association, Hanoi University of Natural Sciences, the Management Board has conducted a preliminary survey of caves inside the National Park and the surrounding areas (until now, 404 caves were surveyed with more than 231 km). In addition, through the signing of a cooperation agreement with Animals Asia (AAF) in December 2019, the National Park received 01 expert and 01 volunteer to work in the wildlife rescue.

Based on the annual MoAs between Quang Binh province (Vietnam) and Kham Muon province (Lao PDR), the Park Management Board has strengthened transboundary cooperation activities, shared experiences, updated relevant information of two sides in preserving and promoting the biodiversity values of the World Natural Heritage Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park (Vietnam) and Hin Nam No National Park (Lao PDR); developed and proposed a cooperation program of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park Management Board with agencies and organizations of Lao PDR, in the period 2020-2030, with the content: Supporting and cooperating with Hin Nam No National Reserve, Kham Muon province, Lao PDR in the development and submission of World Natural Heritage and share experiences on cooperation in biodiversity conservation transboundary in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, Vietnam and Hin Nam No National Reserve, Kham Muon Province, Lao PDR.

Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park also gets regularly the support and advice of IUCN and UNESCO's experts in Heritage management, through consultation of experts' feedback to develop an appropriate research program for the conservation and promotion of the outstanding values of the World Heritage Site of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, contributed to the serious implementation of the International Convention 1972 on the Protection of World Heritage and the adoption of the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee.

3. Response to the recommendations in Decision 43 COM 7B.12 of World Heritage Committee

3.1. For cable car construction projects and infrastructure projects within Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park

Until now, Quang Binh PPC has not considered any cable construction projects nor mentioned this issue anymore. With the view of focusing on heritage preservation, environmental protection, heritage promotion and strictly implementing the provisions of Vietnamese law and the 1972 International Convention on Natural and Cultural Heritage Protection that Vietnam has signed, Quang Binh Provincial People's

Committee has directed the Management Board of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park to implement seriously the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee in Decision WHC/17/41.COM/7B (41st session of WHC, Krakow, 2017); added comments to complete the report of the joint WHC/IUCN Reactive Monitoring Mission to the World Heritage Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park in 2018 and providing information to authenticate the construction of the sliding cable system in Nuoc Mooc - Chay river area under the Note CLT/WHC/APA/FJ/NH/20/021 in 2020 of the World Heritage Center.

Quang Binh Provincial People's Committee pays great attention to the integrity of the Heritage. Up to now, there are not any cable car construction project which has been implemented inside the property. In addition, The Quang Binh PPC has been directing relevant agencies and departments to monitor and comply with the provisions of the law on heritage management, protection and promotion. In the another hand, the PPC has also directed the suspension of project implementation activities to supplement and complete the documents and procedures and report to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, and UNESCO in accordance with regulations. Projects will only continue to be implemented when fully implementing the regulations and approved by the competent authority.

3.2. Strengthening the activities of law enforcement and wildlife monitoring to prevent a significant decline in the population of large mammals and predators in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park

From 2019 up to now, the main threats that cause the decline of animal populations in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park have been identified. Quang Binh PPC has been directing agencies and relevant units to seriously implement the recommendations on the state of conservation of natural heritage World National Park Phong Nha - Ke Bang in Decision 41COM/7B.17 of the World Heritage Committee; Thereby completing the plan *"The status assessment survey on some important large mammal species in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park"*.

Law enforcement on forest protection and biodiversity conservation in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park has been significantly strengthened in recent years. The ranger force of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park has enhanced patrolling, protecting forests, promptly detecting, dismantling and destroying a large number of traps, illegal camps, chasing hundreds of turns of people who were illegally entering the forest (*See the following table for detailed data*).

Year	No. of	Results
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	patrolling	No. of trap lines	No. of camps	No. of violators
2019	2.332	2.708	17	225
To October 2020	1.900	2.064	23	133
Total	4.232	4.772	40	358

***Results of forest patrol trips by PNKB NP forest rangers
during 2019 to the end of October 2020***

During 2019 to the end of October 2020, 44 violations were discovered and handled, of which there are 11 cases in 2020 (decrease 25% compared to the same period in 2019). The violations have been handled strictly thus the negative human impacts on biodiversity values in the National Park have been reduced significantly.

The Management Board of National Park has implemented the Plan No.1146/KH-UBND dated June 28, 2017 of Quang Binh PPC on the urgent action of primate species in Vietnam. Accordingly, the statistical results of biodiversity monitoring at Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park from 2019 to September 2020 have recorded a large number of wildlife (71 groups with 389 individuals), in which 3 key species are primate are recorded and monitored, including: 10 herds with 29 Siki gibbon individuals; 42 herds with 204 individuals of Ha Tinh langur; 19 herds with 156 individuals with brown-shanked douc langur.

The above data have proven effective in forest management and protection in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, contributing to maintaining the stability of the ecological environment and making favorable conditions for of primates species in particular and populations of fauna in general in the National Park area.

3.3. Monitoring and strengthening of eradication measures for the invasion of alien species in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park

The Management Board of PNKB National Park had completed “*Test plan to eradicate the invasive species of Merremia boissiana in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park*” after 12 months of implementation (from October 2018 to November 2019). The test plan was implemented in an area of 100 hectares at plot 10, subdivision 615 in the service-administrative subdivision. The implemetation includes investigating and assessing the current natural resources and environment in the processing area for each different site type; dividing into lots to evaluate each specific indicator; implementing the eradication, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the eradication and chemical residues in the soil and water; developing an eradication process for replication.

In addition, in 2020, the People's Committee of Quang Binh province has submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment the proposal of support for the research project *"Investigating the distribution, assessing the level of the invasive species of Merremia boissiana in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park"*.

Implementation of plans and projects to eradicate the invasive species of *Merremia boissiana* in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park not only demonstrate the acceptance of Quang Binh PPC to the recommendations of World Heritage Committee and the provisions of the 1972 International Heritage Convention on the Protection of World Heritage but also help to identify threats to propose appropriate measures and plan to conserve and promote the outstanding values of the World Heritage Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park.

3.4. Implementation of other recommendations by the joint WHC/IUCN Reactive Monitoring Mission in 2018

In recent years, Quang Binh province has directed all levels of the Party committees, authorities, relevant agencies and units in the province to implement and grasp thoroughly the Party's guidelines, policies and laws of the State, relevant international conventions and recommendations of UNESCO, especially implement effectively the Directive No.39-CT/TU of the Standing Committee of the Provincial Party Committee and Plan No.1061/KH-UBND of the Provincial People's Committee on the conservation and promote the value of World Natural Heritage Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park.

Currently, Quang Binh PPC is actively directing the Park Management Board to research and develop a specific plan to manage and preserve the heritage values, especially ecosystems and species of endangered animals and plants in the National Park; while continuing to implement some recommendations of the joint WHC/IUCN Reactive Monitoring Mission in 2018, as follows:

a) Enhance governance with an integrated and updated management tool and through the possible empowerment of human and financial resources of the Management Board in a variety of fields concerned

It is necessary to integrate the contents of management, conservation and promotion of heritage value into the overall development and management plan (IDMP) of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, period 2020-2040 as recommended by Report of the the joint WHC/IUCN Reactive Monitoring Mission in 2018. Quang Binh PPC perceived recommendations in RMM's report, review and unify the work of protection and management of heritage in accordance with UNESCO's regulations in the Implementation Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention and Decree

No.109/2017/ND-CP dated on 21st September 2017 of the Government regulations on protection and management of world cultural and natural heritage.

Curently, tourism development in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park is being implemented on the basis of plans, including:

- + Sustainable Tourism Development Plan 2010-2020 (Decision No.2822/QĐ-UBND dated November 1st 2010 of Quang Binh Prb ovincial People's Committee on approval for Sustainable Tourism Development Plan 2010-2020 in Phong Nha – Ke Bang area);

- + General Plan for Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park to 2030 (on Decision No.209/QĐ-TTg dated February 08th, 2015 of The Prime Minister on approval for general plan for Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park to 2030);

- + The master plan for developing National Tourist Area of Phong Nha – Ke Bang until 2030 (Decision No.2128/QĐ-TTg dated December 29th, 2017 of the Prime Minister on approval for master plan for d eveloping National Tourist Area of Phong Nha – Ke Bang untill 2030);

- + The Phong Nha Urban Area Planning was approved by the Provincial People's Committee in Decision No.2608/QĐ-UBND dated July 24th 2017 and many other important tourism development plans.

The PPC has directed the Management Board of the Park to coordinate with relevant departments, agencies and units to research and advise the overall planning mission of the World Heritage Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, in the period of 2021-2030, a vision to 2050 that send to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism to submit to the Prime Minister. However, up to now, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism has not had any opinion on the overall planning mission of the World Heritage Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park. In addition, the PPC also directs the relevant agencies to research and develop a sustainable forest protection plan and an ecotourism scheme for the entire national park area to submit to competent authorities for approval in accordance with the Law on Forestry and Decree No.156/2018/ND-CP of the Government.

The successful construction of the above Plan and Scheme will integrate and show the basic content and requirements of documents related to the management and conservation of World Heritage Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, ensure compliance with current laws and practices of management and conservation in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park.

Regarding the financial mechanism, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development together with other Vietnamese government agencies is currently studying to develop policies to empower and move towards financial autonomy

mechanism for business units-public. Accordingly, Management Board of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park is also rearranging in the direction of step-by-step autonomy. The mechanism will be officially applied when the Government promulgates this policy.

b) Clarify the functional zoning of the property

According to the provisions of Vietnamese law, in "Operational Management Plan 2013-2020 for Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park", Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park is divided into 03 functional subdivisions with different management mechanisms, including: administrative service subdivision, ecological restoration subdivision and strictly protected subdivision. This division has geographical significance to ensure effective management and protection, there is no difference in objectives and management requirements. The delineation is in accordance with the regulations on the protection and management of world cultural and natural heritage in Vietnam in Decree No.109/2017/ND-CP dated September 21st, 2017 of the Government on regulating the protection and management of world cultural and natural heritage in Vietnam.

In report of the the joint WHC/IUCN Reactive Monitoring Mission in 2018, World Heritage Center requested the explanation of difference(s) between the Management objectives, management requirements and/or desired outcomes for the four sub-areas of the Strictly Protected Area as defined in the Operational Management Plan. Accordingly, the People's Committee of Quang Binh Province has responded and commented in writing to complete the RMM's report and has provided information on this content to the World Heritage Center on functional zoning for World Natural Heritage Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park since 2019.

c) Adapt management of caves according to their specific vulnerability and requiremnets

Regarding this recommendation, Quang Binh PPC has directed the Management Board of PNKB NP to coordinate with relevant departments, agencies, units and localities to develop a plan to survey and assess tourism capacity of caves in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park for orienting tourism development in parallel with preserving the values of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park. Accordingly the Management Board has advised the Provincial People's Committee to implement the proposed scientific project "*Research and assessment of tourism capacity of caves that are being exploited for tourism and potential for tourism in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, Quang Binh province*" and it is currently under consideration.

To ensure the integrity of the property, based on the provisions of Decree No.40/2019/ND-CP dated May 13, 2019 on amendments to Decree on guidelines for

the law on environment protection; Circular No.25/2019/TT-BTNMT dated December 31, 2019 of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment detailing the implementation of a number of articles of the Government's Decree No.40/2019/ND-CP of May 13, 2019, amending and supplementing a number of articles of the Decrees detailing and guiding the implementation of the Law on Environmental Protection, and providing the management of environmental monitoring services, Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park Management Board has implemented environmental impact assessments at tourist sites such as Paradise cave, Phong Nha – Tien Son cave, Dark cave – Chay river, Mooc spring Eco-trail... and had the periodic environmental reports; monitoring air, temperature, humidity, dust, SO₂, NO₂, CO; monitoring the water environment according to the following indicators: pH, dissolved oxygen, suspended solids, COD, BOD₅, Ammonium... The results showed that the monitoring indicators were within the permitted limits of Vietnamese standards.

In the coming time, besides the implementation of environmental impact assessment under the provisions of the Law on Environmental Protection, the People's Committee of Quang Binh province will review and direct the implementation process of the step environmental assessment (SEA) and heritage impact assessment (HIA) and the provisions of Decree No.166/2018/ND-CP dated December 25, 2018 of the Government (on prescribing the competence, order and procedures for formulation, appraisal and approval of master plans and projects on conservation, renovation and restoration of historical-cultural relics and sightseeing spots) and Decree No.109/2017/ND-CP dated September 21, 2017 of the Government (regulating the protection and management of world cultural and natural heritage in Vietnam) for investment projects in the Phong Nha - Ke Bang if the investment projects which risk affecting global outstanding value of heritage.

The impact assessment of tourism activities on the ecosystem, landscape and environment of the caves is not only shown Quang Binh's serious adoption of the RMM's recommendations in 2018 but also contributes to promoting effectiveness for conservation management and promotion of the World Heritage values.

d) Enhance further education and outreach activities for both staff, local populations and tourists on the values of the property

Identifying the dissemination and propagation of biodiversity-related content is one of the important and sustainable measures in the system of biodiversity conservation solutions, the Park's Management Board has actively directed the planning and implementation of propaganda programs in many forms such as: Integrating with village activities; maintain local conservation clubs; installation of advertising panels,

document distribution, communication publications; responding to the International Day of Biodiversity; organizing extracurricular activities at schools in the buffer zone; training biodiversity conservation communication skills for commune collaborators and teachers of buffer zone high schools; organize conferences at all levels to propagate about the management, protection of forests, protection of wild animals... Thereby, awareness of the conservation of natural ecosystems of the people in the buffer zone has been raised, some local people have become more aware and responsible in handing over individuals of wildlife (Pig-tailed Macaque, Rhesus Macaque, Stump-Tailed Macaque, Pygmy Loris, Impressed Tortoise, Ha Tinh Langur...) to Center for Rescue, Conservation and Creature Development of PNKB NP to rescue and contribute to the conservation of wildlife of the National Park. In addition, the Park Management Board has received the support and cooperation from the resources in prioritizing to training and fostering professional skills in each field for the Park's staffs, employees, such as cooperating with Indo-Myanmar Conservation to organize a training course to improve wildlife protection capacity for law enforcement forces in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park and Quang Binh province; sending staff to participate in the training course "Mitigate natural disaster risks with cultural heritage"; participate in the training class "Fostering and improving professional skills and expertise in relic management".

e) Consider the establishment of a mechanism to engage a wider range of stakeholders in the management and valorization of the property

From 2007 up to now, Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park is operating a management regulation based on the Law on Forest Protection and Development in 2004 and relevant guiding documents, law provisions. However, at present, a number of legal provisions have expired and have been replaced by new legal documents such as the Law on Forestry in 2017; Decree No.109/2017/ ND-CP dated September 21, 2017 of the Government on regulating the protection and management of world cultural and natural heritage in Vietnam

Based on the actual situation, Quang Binh PPC has directed the Management Board of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park to study and apply the new regulation in accordance with current law provisions. This not only contributes to improving the effectiveness of the management, conservation and promotion of the heritage values but also shows Quang Binh's serious adoption of the RMM's recommendations in 2018 on the conservation of the World Natural Heritage Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park. Currently, the Park Management Board has developed a plan, established a drafting board and assigned specific tasks for members to study the content and issue new regulations.

f) Continue its cooperation with Lao People's Democratic Republic for strengthened preservation of biodiversity notably in transboundary protected area, and for the future nomination of Hin Nam No national protected area jointly with the property in Vietnam.

On the basis of implementing the socio-economic development plan for the period 2016 - 2020, Action plan for international integration in the period of 2019 – 2023 and Annual plan of foreign activities of the province, Quang Binh province continues to consolidate and strengthen the cooperative relationship with Khammuone province as well as with the authorities of Lao PDR in biodiversity conservation in the bordering area between Phong Nha National Park - Ke Bang and Hin Nam No National Park; At the same time, actively support the nomination of Hin Nam No National Park, Lao PDR to become an transboundary heritage in the future.

Pursuant to the content of the Memorandum of Understanding signed on January 10, 2018 between the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of the Lao PDR and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and Minutes of the Annual Meeting between the High-Level Delegation of Quang Binh Province and the High-Level Delegation of Kham Muon Province, The Provincial People's Committee has directed the Management Board to put into the Park's core work program to coordinate with relevant agencies in implementing cooperation contents with Hin Nam No National Park, Kham Muon province, Lao PDR. The Park Management Board has proposed 02 staff to participate in technical assistance to assist in completing the dossier proposing Hin Nam No National Park as a World Heritage Site.

In recent years, the contact points of the two sides have regularly exchanged experiences and provided technical information support in building nomination dossiers; update the situation of forest protection, supervision and management of natural resources in the adjacent areas in the border of the two national parks; sharing information about biodiversity, geomorphology, cultural studies, and the performance of international organizations in order to promptly propose specific cooperation proposals to build appropriate management solutions between the two National Parks. In 2019 and 2020, the Park Management Board co-publishes publications with Hin Nam No National Park, including: desk calendars, notebooks, hats, clothes, document bags and waterproof bag for jungle work ...

The above activities not only contribute to strengthening the cooperation between the two sides but also contribute to improving the effectiveness of conservation and promoting the values of Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park (Vietnam) and Hin Nam No National Park (Laos).

4. Other issues in conservation

In 2020, the global outbreak of Covid-19, along with the heavy rain and flood occurring on a large scale in Quang Binh province (from October 16th – 20th 2020) have affected all activities of social life in Quang Binh province in general and negative impacts on the Park's ecosystems and biodiversity in particular.

According to UNITAR (The United Nations Institute for Training and Research), Quang Binh is severely affected by floods, with an area of 422 square kilometers inundated and about 160,000 people affected. The rainfall reaches from 92mm to 240mm/day, the water level on the rivers is from 264mm to 488mm. Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park is located in the high land of Quang Binh province but up to 25% of the area in National Park is flooded. The Global Outstanding Values of the World Heritage Site is affected due to flooded and landslides.

Due to the impact of the Covid epidemic, along with the damage caused by floods to the infrastructure system serving the management, conservation and tourism services in Phong Nha - Ke Bang, tourism activities have been reduced sharply, revenue from the National Park's services has declined, people in the buffer zone are lack of work. Many tourism operators fall into a difficult situation leading to some employees, workers have their jobs cut, their living income is severely affected. This will increase pressure on forest management and protection in the coming time.

In addition, Quang Binh PPC is currently directing to review and organize an efficient the management apparatus for the heritage in a streamlined and effective manner in accordance with the newly issued Forest Law replacing of the 2004 Forest Development and Protection Law. The Quang Binh PPC is also directing the promulgation of new regulations on the management and protection of the Heritage in accordance with the current regulations.

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

There are no buildings and new constructions in the core zone, buffer zone, ecological corridors that impacted on the integrity of the property.

6. Public access to the state of conservation report

Vietnam agrees to share this report for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of conservation Information System.

7. Proposals and recommendations

Quang Binh province respectfully requests the consideration and approvement of the World Heritage Center for international emergency assistance to Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park to promptly overcome damages caused by floods and disasters, as well as supporting equipment for rescue, monitoring and warning of

natural disasters so as to contribute to preserving the values of World Natural Heritage Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park./.

cc:

- Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism;
- Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO;
- Chairman, Vice Chairmans of QBPPC;
- Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park;
- QBPPC Office;
- Archival: VT, TH, KT, KGVX.

**VICE CHAIRMAN OF QUANG BINH
PROVINCIAL PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE**



Ho An Phong