

Republic of Yemen
Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism - The General Authority for the
Preservation of Historic Cities, Shibam Hadramout Branch
A report on the state of the governorate of Shibam, Hadramout, Yemen
2020-2021

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Introduction:

The city of Shibam Hadramout is one of the Yemeni cities registered in the World Heritage List (UNESCO) since 1982, and it is a model for the mud cities in the Hadhramaut Valley. The city was founded before Islam and its current buildings were built more than 500 years ago. Gophcy-shibam is the body responsible for implementing the conservation policy and the implementation of international conventions for the preservation of the city's buildings. It is the body responsible for implementing conservation and restoration projects and communicating with international organizations concerned with preserving and safeguarding the tangible cultural heritage.

- Challenges and risks:

The city of Shibam, Hadramout is still exposed to several dangers and problems that threaten the survival of the city, the most prominent of which are:

1. The danger of floods and torrential rains and the damage they cause to the mud buildings in Shibam.
2. Continuing political conflicts and war in Yemen.
3. The cessation of government financial support, which negatively affected the implementation of the conservation policy by the commission's office in Shibam
4. The city of Shibam remains on the list of cities at risk since it was included in the year 2015.

- Administrative Procedures: Communication and Coordination:

1. The Commission's branch in Shibam Hadramout is still trying to continue communicating with international organizations to support conservation programs for the city of Shibam: (UNESCO Office-Doha) Prince Claus Fund for Cultural Development Holland, Regional Center for Preserving and Preserving Cultural Heritage (ICROM Sharjah), Social Fund for Development - Yemen SFD. Opening new channels of communication such as the Arab Regional Center for Cultural Heritage - Bahrain, ICOMOS Organization to provide technical and financial support to the city of Shibam
2. Continuing to direct the local community to participate in preserving their city, as they are the true owners of this legacy.
3. Involving civil society organizations in the city of Shibam and the local authority in Shibam with the need to contribute to preserving the city of Shibam to a minimum and to prevent any irregularities and architectural distortions.

Activities and projects implemented during the years 2020-2021

Despite the continuing crisis and war in Yemen, the office of the commission in Shibam is working vigorously and actively in order to preserve the city of Shibam and prevent any distortions or architectural irregularities that may harm the city, and despite the financial difficulties that stopped the commission's office in Shibam, the city of Shibam has maintained its architectural style and this success. The tangible and clear came as a result of the close relationship between the Authority's office in Shibam with the various civil society organizations operating in the city, as well as the relationship with the local community and local authorities in Shibam.

During the reporting period, a number of activities and restoration projects were implemented, most notably the cash-for-work project funded by the European Union through UNESCO, the Social Fund for Development and the General Authority for the Preservation of Historic Cities.

- **First: Cash for Work Project: Improving Livelihood Opportunities for Youth in Yemen:**

This project is considered one of the pioneering projects in Yemen, which is funded by the European Union through UNESCO, Doha-Qatar office in partnership with the Social Fund for Development and the General Authority for the Preservation of Historic Cities, Shibam Hadhramaut office. The main themes of this project are which only the first phase is so far implemented:

1. Restoring the buildings of the city of Shibam, Hadramout
2. Restoring the city wall of Shibam.
3. Complete the paving of the city's streets and unpaved parts.
4. Remove Shibam trees around the city of Shibam.
5. Infrastructure restoration for the city of Shibam.
6. Training and awareness programs targeting craftsmen, youth, workers in the field of cultural heritage and students, schools and universities (not implemented as of the date of the report).

The beginning of the implementation of the first phase projects: June 20, 2020

The works of the first phase of these projects began on June 20, 2020, despite the difficulties and problems that accompanied the implementation of the works since its inception due to the complex work mechanism that did not take into account the specificity of each city in the implementation of projects. However, the six projects in the first phase achieved a successful total completion rate of 66%.

We are waiting for funding for the second phase to complete the first phase of the project.

- **Second: The emergency project to restore the buildings of the city of Shibam, Hadramaut:**

Financed by the: Arab Yemen Cement Company Ltd. Mukalla, Hadhramout Governorate.
Executed by: The General Authority for the Preservation of Historic Cities, Shibam Hadramout Branch.

This project came after submitting a temporary financing project to the Yemeni Arab Company for Cement Ltd. in Mukalla, Hadramout Governorate. This project is considered a contribution from the commercial and investment sector and a contribution from them to provide aid and assistance due to the difficult living conditions of the owners of Shibam houses and because of the cessation of government and international funding, the Authority's office in Shibam submitted an emergency intervention project to restore a number of city buildings.

The project work started in November 2020 and ended in June 2021. The percentage of financial and technical achievement is 100%. Results from the project:

1. Restoration of 35 mud buildings in the city of Shibam. (Severe, medium and light damages)
2. Finding job opportunities for traditional labor in the city of Shibam.
3. Involving some young people to continue the craft of building with mud and woodwork.
4. Increasing the percentage of traditional labor in the city of Shibam.
5. The contribution of businessmen and money to preserving the cultural heritage and the city of Shibam in particular.
6. Reducing the environmental impact and the risks that threaten the buildings of the city of Shibam.

- **Third: Documentation projects for monuments and buildings at risk 2021-2020:**

1. A project to document historical monuments at risk in Wadi Hadhramaut 3D funded by ALIPH and supervision by an organization Iconem in Paris and implemented by gophcy-shibam October 2020 - August 2021
2. Project Documenting Islamic Landmarks Under Danger Hadramout Funded by ALIPH and Monumenta Orientalia 2021 via the the Social Fund for Development (SFD) and implemented by gophcy-shibam 2021.

- **Fourth: courses and workshops:**

Due to the Corona pandemic, the general activity of the Cultural Heritage Department and the site managers of registered cities have been affected, as tourism programs and activities in the registered cities in Yemen have stopped. In order to carry out the work, some organizations have resorted to holding workshops and virtual courses through the Zoom application. The authority in Shibam has participated in a number of training courses and workshops, most notably:

1. A workshop for preparing the national registry in Yemen February 22-23, 2021 Implementation of the Arab Regional Center for World Heritage Manama - Bahrain
2. The cycle of sustainable management of tangible heritage and the nomination process 17-20, 23-26 May 2021 Doha Qatar office
3. Workshop on Integrating World Heritage into the United Nations Sustainable Development Plan 2030, implemented by the Arab Regional Center for World Heritage, Bahrain. May 31 - June 10

- **Fifth: Answering the inquiries of the report of the 43rd session in Baku - Azerbaijan:**

1) Oasis project - Shibam:

The Yemeni-German project is one of the pioneering projects in the city of Shibam, and it is a joint project between the International Organization for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the office of the General Authority for the Preservation of Historic Cities, Shibam Hadramout branch with several experts (Ursula Eagle, Abdulaziz Al-Hallaj, then Dr. Ahmed Abdullah, then Mr. Bernd Multhaup) and the project passed through four stages, each stage in which a project memorandum was signed between the GIZ and the General Authority's office in Shibam. The project has progressed at a successful and pioneering pace, as the project won an international award, the Aga Khan Award for Islamic Architecture in 2007.

Though at the last stage of the project, which started in 2010 and was under the management of Mr. Bernd Multhaup (GTZ Historic Cities Project), some changes occurred in the project management and began to deviate from its real framework in terms of defining tasks and responsibilities between the General Authority in Shibam and the GIZ office, and Mr. Bernd began working on reducing the responsibilities of the Commission in Shibam and not recognizing the responsibilities of the Commission towards the city of Shibam as a city under its authority.

In April 2010, the Food Security Unit in the GIZ Office obtained an amount of \$1,500,000 to implement the Oasis Project in Shibam. The Food Security Unit managed by Mr. Henning Baur (Program Director Food Security) was supposed to implement a new project agreement contract with the authority's office in Shibam, but Mr. Bernd Multhaup implemented the oases project in agreement directly with an association from the city of Shibam without the General Authority in Shibam having any role under international agreements and the law of preserving the city of Shibam, who is directly responsible for the implementation of any projects within the city of Shibam.

We lodged a protest that this project could not be implemented in the way that Mr. Bernd intended and also that the project could not be implemented within a period of ten months (from March to December 2010).

Unfortunately, Mr. Bernd implemented his project, and the exorbitant sums of 1,500,000 dollars were spent without completing all the main components of the project, and the project did not achieve its objectives. We did not see the oases project on the ground as planned in the project studies.

Bernd Multhaup's presence was the worst phase in the relationship between the Commission in Shibam and GIZ, who did not respect and take into account the agreements of cooperation and partnership projects in the field of cultural heritage between Yemen and Germany and the relationship that has been built since the establishment of the project in Shibam between the authority's office and the GIZ organization.

We hope that the oasis project will be completed in a way that obliges the funders to coordinate with the General Authority's office in Shibam and be under its supervision and control until we see that the project has achieved the desired goals, and coordination will be with all the targeted civil associations and institutions that will benefit from this project.

2) The Governmental Complex Project - Shibam:

This project was built on modern buildings consisting of a small government complex and shops, and after they were completely demolished, studies of the new project were prepared from plans, specifications and tables of quantities with the support and supervision of the GIZ project during its work in Shibam. The studies were approved by the GIZ and the authority's office in Shibam and work began since 2007 with government funding, and the first floor was built according to traditional methods and local materials, but the project was stopped due to the suspension of funding. We in the authority's office in Shibam presented the project a second time to complete its construction and equipping it with the same previous designs, with funding from the local authority in Hadramout. Traditional building materials and local labor were used from the features of the city of Shibam, and it is compatible with the traditional building controls in the city of Shibam building component.

It has three floors and was taken into account to preserve the visual view of the city from the south side.

3) Seiyun Palace restoration project:

Based on what was stated in the UNESCO report in its forty-third session on the Seiyun Palace, this palace is located in the city of Seiyun, which is about 19 km from the city of Shibam to the west. Currently, the palace is designated as the headquarters of the authority General of Antiquities and Museums in Hadramaut. With the beginning of the year 2019 AD, maintenance and restoration works were carried out. The work focused on restoring the entire rooftops of the palace, as well as the four facades of the palace. The project was implemented under the supervision of the General Authority's office in Shibam, as well as the Office of the Antiquities Authority in Seiyun. All works were completed by the end of 2019. This is for clarification only on what was stated in the UNESCO report at the Baku session in Azerbaijan.