



IUCN
Rue Mauverney 28
1196 Gland
Switzerland

Tel. +41 22 999 0000
Fax +41 22 999 0002
www.iucn.org

Her Highness Princess Haifa Al Mogrin
Ambassador Permanent Delegate
Permanent Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to
UNESCO
Maison de l'UNESCO Bureau B12.32 - B12.36 1
Rue Miollis 75732 PARIS Cedex 15
France

25 January 2023

IUCN Evaluation of 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid – Interim Report and request for supplementary information

Your Highness,

I have the honour to refer to the above nomination to the World Heritage List to provide you with information on progress with the IUCN evaluation. As noted in previous correspondence, IUCN seeks to develop and maintain a dialogue with States Parties during the evaluation process of all nominations.

The IUCN World Heritage technical evaluation mission to 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid was undertaken by Mr Maher Mahjoub from 22-27 October 2022. The evaluator greatly appreciated the excellent support, organisation and co-operation provided by your authorities in the preparation and implementation of the mission, and the kind welcome throughout the missions. Please convey our sincere thanks to all of the officials, scientists and contributors that assisted the missions.

Following the field evaluation missions, the IUCN World Heritage Panel is in the course of examining World Heritage nominations for natural and mixed properties, and cultural landscapes. This process will conclude in March/April 2023, following which the IUCN evaluation report will be issued to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The IUCN Panel examined in detail above-mentioned nomination, including reports of field evaluators and desktop reviews of external reviewers, as well as other references regarding the nominated properties.

The Panel greatly appreciated the State Party's efforts in relation to this nomination, and will be discussing the nomination again at its second meeting, to be held in March 2023. The Panel would be very grateful to your authorities for further information as set out below:

1. Regarding criterion (vii), the Panel has noted the presence of zibars, which appear to be particularly well developed as a geomorphological feature in the nominated property. The Panel would be grateful if the State Party could please provide further information on the zibars found in the nominated property.
2. The Panel noted that the photographic record in the dossier regarding criterion (vii) could be strengthened, and would be grateful if the State Party could please provide a representative set of photographic documentation of the features and landscapes regarded as meeting criterion (vii).
3. Regarding criterion (ix), the Panel considers the case for this criterion could be strengthened by focusing on the ongoing ecological processes in the hyper-arid environment of the nominated property. We would be grateful if the State Party could provide a strengthened statement on the key ecological processes that are of significance in the nominated property, together with clarity on their integrity. This could both include the degree to which the ecosystems are evolving under substantially natural processes, and confirmation that these processes are free from threats.
4. Regarding criterion (x), the Panel would be grateful if the State Party could please further expand the justification for criterion (x) in line with point 2 above and provide one consolidated species list detailing all species recorded in the nominated property, including plant species and invertebrates. This list should indicate:
 - a. the currently valid species name (following the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>),
 - b. the global conservation status of each species (Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near-threatened, Least Concern) according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, when available,
 - c. information on distribution (endemic to nominated property, endemic to State Party, endemic to region), size of the population or percentage of the global population, if this data is available.

The attached table may be used to provide this information, if your authorities wish.

We would appreciate your response to the above points as soon as possible, in order to facilitate the evaluation process, but **no later than 28 February 2023**, as per paragraph 148 of the *Operational Guidelines*. Please note that any information submitted after this date will not be considered by IUCN in its evaluation for the World Heritage Committee. It should be noted, however, that while IUCN will carefully consider any supplementary information submitted, it cannot properly evaluate a completely revised nomination or large amounts of new information submitted at the last minute. Therefore, we kindly ask your authorities to keep their response concise and respond only to the above requests.

Supplementary information should also be submitted officially in two copies to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in order for it to be registered as part of the nomination. An electronic copy of all completed and submitted supplementary information to both the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Mr Alessandro Balsamo (a.balsamo@unesco.org) and IUCN Headquarters, Mr Clemens Küpper (clemens.kupper@iucn.org) would also be greatly appreciated.

Taking into account your response, IUCN will formulate its final recommendation to the World Heritage Committee. In the interest of ensuring full transparency and dialogue regarding the IUCN evaluation process, we are happy to respond to any questions you may wish to raise regarding IUCN's work on the World Heritage Convention, including the above points. We would be pleased to organise a meeting via conference call.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mr Clemens Küpper, Evaluations & Operations Officer (clemens.kupper@iucn.org) if you have any questions regarding this request, or if you would wish to arrange a conference call to discuss this request.

Please allow me to reiterate our thanks for your support and for the conduct of IUCN's recent mission. We thank you for your cooperation in providing this very important information, which will facilitate the Panel in making its recommendations.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your kind cooperation in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and I remain,

Yours sincerely,



Tim Badman
Head, Heritage and Culture

Enc.

cc. Saudi National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, Mr Ahmed Alblihed, Secretary-General
UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Ms May Shaer, Mr Guy Debonnet and Mr Alessandro Balsamo
IUCN Regional Office for West Asia, Mr Hany El Shaer, Regional Director

Annex – Template for species list

Scientific Species Name (according to IUCN)	Common Name (English or French)	IUCN Red List Status (Global) (if known)	% of population within nominated property (estimate)	Source of population estimate	Component parts of the nominated property (if relevant)	endemic to property	endemic to State Party/Parties	endemic to region

Please follow the instructions below when filling the species list in the table above:	
Scientific Species Name	Please use the currently accepted scientific species name according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (or other accepted classifications if the species is not included in the IUCN Red List).
Common Name	Please enter the common name, in English or French, as provided by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (if existent).
IUCN Red List Status (if known)	Please enter the current global Red List category according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (please list only global status, and please do not list status as per regional assessments).
% of population within nominated property	Enter the estimated percentage of the global population of the species located within the nominated property boundaries (or for migratory species, which visit the nominated property), if known.
Source of population estimate	Please note the source used to undertake the population estimate provided, and, if known, the basis for making this estimate (e.g. number of mature individuals; area of occupancy; extent of suitable habitat; range; number of localities; distinct genetic diversity)
Component parts of the nominated property (if relevant)	In case the nominated property consists of several component parts, please specify in which component parts the species is found
Endemic to a) nominated property b) State Party/Parties c) region?	Specify by indicating <i>yes</i> or <i>no</i> in each relevant column in the table, whether the species is endemic to the nominated property, to the nominating State Party (or Parties if this is a transnational nomination) or to a wider region