

**World Heritage Committee
Extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023)**

Decision: 45 COM 7A.53

Nan Madol: Ceremonial Centre of Eastern Micronesia (Micronesia (Federated States of))

The World Heritage Committee,

Nan Madol: Ceremonial Centre of Eastern Micronesia (Micronesia (Federated States of)) (1503)

1. Executive Summary of the report

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

1.1. Despite disruption caused by the global pandemic, work to address the issues that caused Nan Madol to be placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger continued into October 2022, when the borders to Pohnpei opened without restrictions; however, the influx of development groups and increased stipends made other work more attractive for local residents and posed challenges to a timely start for vegetation removal. The work continues as of the date of this report.

Vegetation removal started in late 2022 and continued into mid 2023, funded by the Technical Assistance Program grant. The vegetation removal continues and is funded by US Department of Forestry.

Zoom meetings continued with CSRM until March 2023. Activities were carried out the Pohnpei State Government, and in coordination with the FSM Office of Archives (NACH), Culture and Historic Preservation.

Additional work that needs to be done includes removal of sludge and excess sediment in the canals. The removal of vegetation in some canals improves the flow of water but clearance in all canals would maximize the water flow and minimize the frequency and volume of vegetation clearance.

Currently there is not a formal legal framework; however, the Pohnpeian customs, traditions, and sociopolitical system continue to be respected at the site. While a management plan has been completed, it has not been adopted by the the Nan Madol “Trust”, a name which is continually a subject of discussion, i.e. about what to call this governing body and who is on it. There are concerns about the composition of it. This is the governing body which would select the official site manager; at the time of this report, there is a de facto site manager who is in the position of Administrative Officer until this position is realized.

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee [Note: The State(s) Party(ies) is/are requested to address the most recent Decision of the World Heritage Committee for this property, paragraph by paragraph.] If the property is inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger Please also provide detailed information on the following:

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7A,

1.1 No comment required.

2. Recalling Decision 44 COM 7A.30 adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021),

2.1 No comment required.

3. Notes that progress to establish an effective management and protection system for the property and address the urgent pressures and threats affecting its state of conservation has been delayed by border and travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and welcomes the State Party's assurances that these can soon be addressed;

3.1. Due to politics surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, phases 1 and 2 changed. Notably, the pandemic impacted the site and resulted in a completed visitor center but not on schedule; therefore a third phase was created to accommodate the last of the construction. For example, walkways. A tentative walkway plan developed by TCNI may create a walkway from center to Nan Dowas to expand the experience at Nan Madol. As this is tentative, there are limited details. The walkway will be only in the mangroves and not on the islets. The walkway would address some of the present maintenance issues they're having because they'll have access to the mangroves but but doesn't alleviate all maintenance issues.

4. Also welcomes the information that funds will be provided by the US Department of State through its Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation Large Grants Program to support a two-year implementation programme;

4.1. These funds have been obtained and fully expended.

5. Notes with concern however that, despite the efforts of the State Party and its partners, the processes affecting the state of conservation of the property have yet to be effectively addressed;

5.1 Pohnpei State Tourism Authority has implemented vegetation removal (with the assistance of FSM/Pohnpei State funds as well as TAP funds) based on Doug Comer/CSRM's assessment based on LiDAR work carried out in 2020. This work focused on the five islets (funded by the U.S. Office of Insular Affairs (Department of Interior) Technical Assistance Program (TAP) and Pohnpei State Tourism Authority) as canal is an important component to the stabilization of Nan Madol as well as visitor experience.

At the trailhead, Pein Kitel (half in land, half in the water, all the tombs and graves are located) has been cleared of relevant vegetation. The five islets identified in the TAP grant have been cleared of vegetation (to expose the walls); the team concentrated on the walls of the islets. The interior does not have much to see and has not been cleared. The team cleared out all the walls and tomb enclosures. The graveyards are clear, but some trees are still standing. The USFS arborist indicated some trees can be removed by the vegetation clearing team, but others not yet until the training for removing large trees from rock alignments can be conducted. The arborist was scheduled to return in September 2023 but due to the change in leadership (President) at the beginning of 2023 and confirmed in summer 2023, a plan was not confirmed. The new Director of Land and Natural Resources (where PTO is housed), may be confirmed in 2024 but until that time, a plan for removal of bigger trees cannot be carried out yet so as to not compromise integrity of the site.

Work that needs to be done is not only vegetation, but also removal of sludge and excess sediment in the canals. There is another canal on the back of Pan Kadira that needs clearance of this sludge. Doing the main canal washes away the sediment, but not all the sediment in all the canals so doing other canals would discourage the rapid vegetation growth in the canals experienced at Nan Madol. That way the current can freely move around and really wash away some of the sediment.

Currently, there are clusters of mangroves growing in the lagoon near Pahnwi Islet across from Joy Island. Visible from Panwi to see accumulation of sand and something else is changing—the front area all the way out to Nan Dowas. There is fast growing of seaweed grasses. It use to be clear sand to the edge of lagoon but now seaweed everywhere. There are patches of mangroves growing in between the boat channel and Para Nuii. It's separately growing. First noticed in January 2021. Someone cut the mangrove but not the roots so the mangroves were not removed. It is potentially anthropogenic. Right now there is construction of a meeting house/conference hall taking place on Para Nuii despite attempts to halt the construction.

The vegetation team indicate that the management plan mentions reconstruction of sites but respond that seems impossible and beyond PTO's capacity and would be better to leave it as-is due to the cultural context. It is a scared site that community members may feel uncomfortable to adjust in terms of rock alignments. This is likely due to the nature of how the rocks arrived in the first place. If the maintenance continues as it is now, it is possible to avoid the erosion caused by vegetation of the rock alignments. If the vegetation can be managed, then no need for reconstruction. Further, it is not in PTO mandate and would be better suited for Historic Preservation as would the vegetation removal.

6. Reiterates its request to the State Party to continue its work on previously identified matters of high priority, including:

a) Continuing the implementation of the urgent vegetation management actions and clearing mangroves from the main canals, following the virtual training programmes,

6.a.1. Per the previous SOC report, the vegetation removal project funded by the U.S. Office of Insular Affairs (Department of Interior) Technical Assistance Program (TAP) and Pohnpei State Tourism Office (PTO) was completed in June 2023. Since this time, vegetation maintenance takes place with limited funding.

As of the date of this SOC report, the situation is much improved, but not completed. Funding for continued vegetation management has been obtained through the US Forest Service for FY23 and FY24. We understand vegetation management can never stop, otherwise the site will be destroyed.

b) Appointing and establishing a long-term commitment to the post of 'Property Manager',

6.b.1. In the previous SOC Report, funding required for the Property Manager has been identified, but is not in any budget. Pohnpei State is waiting for revenue from foreign visitation that will begin after the Visitor Center is opened to the public and tours through the cleared canals begin. This person had not been identified yet. The Visitor Center, while completed, has not been opened to the public yet. This will take place after the Visitor Center is opened through traditional protocols.

Pohnpei Tourism Office (PTO) hired someone who is the Administrative Officer (AO) to the Visitor Center. This person (Jaylihse Orlando, former information officer to PTO) is a local to Madolenihwm and started at the end of 2023. Ms. Orlando is acting as the site manager until a second position can be funded to support her role; Site Manager would handle the admin work, site workers, tours, arrangement.

There is a pilot project for a site manager being carried out by Mr. William McGarry.

c) Finalising and approving legislation LB392 to provide legal protection to the property and establish the Nan Madol Trust,

6.c.1. Because of COVID, the workshop did not occur in 2022-2023. Funding for the workshop, which would include attendance by support groups from other organizations, notably the United States National Park Service, has been applied for. The funding could become available in 2024.

d) Finalising the Master Plan for the Sustainable Conservation of the Nan Madol World Heritage Site, the site Management Plan and the Sustainable Tourism Plan,

6.d.1. The Master Plan for the Sustainable Conservation of the Nan Madol World Heritage Site, the site Management Plan, and the Sustainable Tourism Plan have all been written. They need approval from the Committee which is the Trust but is renamed with each leader. This has been an ongoing challenge due to changes in leadership since each time there is a new governor or new Nahnmwarki (because they pass away), the situation changes.

e) Establishing processes for Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) as part of the management system,

6.e.1. This process is in development and being undertaken by FSM NACH.

f) Submitting a draft Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), a set of corrective measures and a timeframe for their completion, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;

6.f.1. The State Party understands there are four items which endanger Nan Madol. They are (1) Erosion and siltation/ deposition, (Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation, (3) legal framework, and (4) management systems/management plan. The State Party responds below:

1. Vegetation clearance has improved the flow of water in the canal. The vegetation clearance continues as of the date of this report.
2. Impacts of tourism/visitors/recreation appear to be minimal due to the low number of visitors; however, the site has been prepared for increased numbers.
3. While a legal framework does not exist, a local governing framework inherently protects the site. The legal framework is in discussion and progress is being made. It is not being taken lightly.
4. The management systems and management plan are evolving. The management plan has been completed but not yet accepted by the Nan Madol “trust” (name to be determined). There is a management system in place which is carried out in unison by the Administrative Officer of the Nan Madol Visitor Center, Pohnpei State Tourism Office, and where possible, the Pohnpei State Historic Preservation Office and the FSM Office of National Archives, Culture, and Historic Preservation.

We are hopeful that steps to be taken in 2022-2024 will result in the removal of the Nan Madol World Heritage Site from the List of World heritage in Danger.

7. Notes with satisfaction that work has commenced on the Nan Madol Visitor Centre with support from the Government of Japan, and in line with the findings of the ICOMOS Technical Review;

7.1. The Nan Madol Visitor Centre is completed with funding from Japan (~\$180,000), the Federated States of Micronesia Congress (\$490,000), and the Pohnpei Tourism Office (~100,000 per annum).



Figure 1: Visitor Center



Figure 2: Interior of the Gallery Room. This is what the 3 D model looks like,



Figure 3: Visitor Center Front

8. Expresses concern that the development of a proposed tourism resort on Nahnningi Island, within the buffer zone of the property has continued before an HIA was prepared, and that the issues raised in the 2019 ICOMOS Technical Review have yet to be addressed, and further reiterates its request that the State Party ensure that construction is halted and that an HIA is realised, in conformity with the new Guidance for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage context, developed in collaboration between the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre, and provided to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before work resumes;

8.1. The Landowners have been informed to cease building by the State of Pohnpei, however the construction has not ceased. The HIA is in the process of being written. The FSM NACH office is in the process of developing suggested measures for carrying out an HIA with this as the land is Pohnpei State and not in the jurisdiction of the National Government.

9. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, in accordance with Paragraphs 172 and 118bis of the Operational Guidelines, detailed information on any proposed and ongoing projects, including HIAs carried out according to the aforementioned Guidance, for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to the approval and/or implementation of any project;

9.1. The current HIA being carried out is for the construction on Nahnningi at Para Nuii. Despite being informed to halt construction until the completion of an HIA, the landowners have not ceased. Further, they have begun construction of a meeting house/conference center. The photos below were taken at the end of 2022. From Pahnwi, Paranuui can be seen; however, from no other point can it be seen, even on the boat route (due to mangrove coverage). From Pahnwi, the structure is visible but from far away, it is not noticeable if on the boat route counterclockwise or specifically pointed out. Photographs were taken from each of the red islets identified in Figure 8 (provided by UNESCO).



Figure 4: View from Nan Dowas toward Paranui



Figure 5: Boat Route



Figure 6: View of Paranui from Pahnwi



Figure 7: view of Parauui from Pahnwi

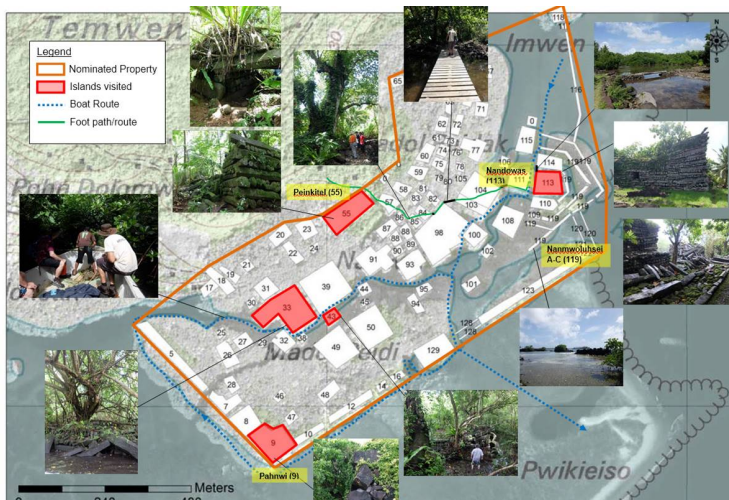


Figure 8: Photograph taking points suggested by UNESCO)

10. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2024, 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 46th session;

10.1. No comment required.

11. Decides to retain Nan Madol: Ceremonial Centre of Eastern Micronesia (Micronesia (Federated States of)) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

11.1. No comment required.

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

a) Progress achieved in implementing the corrective measures adopted by the World Heritage Committee [Note: please address each corrective measure individually, providing factual information, including exact dates, figures, etc.] If needed, please describe the success factors or difficulties in implementing each of the corrective measures identified.

The vegetation removal program has been successful thus far; however, due to politics surrounding Covid-19 pandemic, the vegetation removal plan warrants three phases. Currently, phase 1 and 2 are complete. The third phase depends on the arrival of an arborist to conduct training on how to remove large trees in addition to the creation of a walk way that would facilitate on the ground access to the site and facilitate vegetation removal.

b) Is the timeframe for implementing the corrective measures suitable? If not, please propose an alternative timeframe and an explanation why this alternative timeframe is required.

The timeframe needs to be extended to respect the complex traditional political system that is both part of the the OUV the site and central to the contemporary management of the site.

c) Progress achieved towards the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR)

Progress is being made, albeit at a slower than desired pace. The work has been put into motion by making relevant budget authorities aware of the financial needs for the site. All financial priorities for Nan Madol may not be granted in full as there are shared financial priorities across the FSM.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value [Note: this includes conservation issues which are not mentioned in the Decision of the World Heritage Committee or in any information request from the World Heritage Centre]

3.1. None to report.

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

4.1. None to report.

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

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

5.1. It is ok to publish this report.

6. Signature of the Authority

Augustine Kohler, Secretary-General,
FSM NATCom for UNESCO
Director, FSM Office of National Archives,
Culture, and Historic Preservation
National Historic Preservation Officer

14 February, 2024
Date