



## State of Conservation of the World Heritage Property Qal'at al-Bahrain – Ancient Harbour and Capital of Dilmun (Bahrain) No. 1192 (ter)

### 1. Executive summary of the report

In accordance with Decision 44 COM 7B.125, adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th Session in Fuzhou, China, the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) is pleased to provide an update to the Committee Members, Advisory Bodies, and the World Heritage Centre on recent developments regarding the protection and management of the Qal'at al-Bahrain – Ancient Harbour and Capital of Dilmun World Heritage property.

In the Kingdom of Bahrain, heritage-related zoning codes have been integrated into the national Zoning Regulations over the past three years. BACA collaborated with governmental bodies to establish protected zones in historical areas, including Qal'at al-Bahrain. The archaeological component of the sites was designated as ARC (Archaeological Site), and surrounding farms as HG (Heritage Gardens), both receiving primary protection to reflect their historical importance. The zoning codes were officially approved on September 28, 2023, with final guidelines and delimitation maps pending publication in the official gazette.

Memoranda of understanding with landowners in the extension area are no longer required. In May 2024, Bahrain's Subcommittee of Services advised BACA to purchase agricultural lands within the property boundaries, pending approval from the Cabinet of Ministers, allowing BACA to directly manage these lands.

A tunnel initially planned to connect Nurana to the mainland has been replaced by a bridge proposal, positioned at least 2 km offshore to minimize visual impact. BACA awaits design and construction method submissions, which will be sent to the World Heritage Centre along with a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) once available.

The unlawful land reclamation identified in 2020 has been fully removed. No other conservation issues are currently affecting the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), nor are there plans for restorations or new constructions that could impact the site's OUV, authenticity, or integrity.

### 2. Response of the State Party to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee No. 44 COM 7B.125

#### *a) Incorporation of heritage-related zoning codes in the Zoning Regulations of the Kingdom of Bahrain*

Over the past three years, BACA has collaborated with governmental authorities to secure approval for designated zones within historical areas, aiming to officially zone various sites including Qal'at al-Bahrain according to their historical value, protection level, and unique characteristics. Special classifications were created to reflect the significance of each site: the archaeological area of Qal'at al-Bahrain has been designated as ARC (Archaeological Site), while the surrounding farms are categorized as HG (Heritage Gardens), with both zones receiving primary protection, reflecting the highest level of safeguarding.





The zoning codes received official approval on September 28, 2023 when they were published in the official gazette of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The latest updates to the zoning code regulations were finalized by BACA in August 2024, with the official approval and publication process currently underway.

The forthcoming steps include final approval of the updated guidelines and the publication of delimitation maps in the official gazette, which BACA has already initiated, pending final authorization.

*b) Signed memoranda of understanding with the owners of lands located within the area designated for the extension of the property*

New developments have removed the need for a signed memorandum of understanding with the owners of the agricultural lands. In May 2024, Bahrain's Subcommittee of Services requested that BACA purchase the agricultural plots located within the property boundaries and buffer zone. This decision now awaits official approval from the Cabinet of Ministers. With BACA set to become the landowner, an MoU is no longer necessary, as BACA will assume sole responsibility for managing these lands.

*c) Final designs and details of construction methods for the tunnel*

The construction of a tunnel is no longer planned. However, a solution to connect Nurana to the mainland remains necessary. The current proposal under consideration is a bridge, positioned at a minimum distance of 2 km from the shore. The BACA is awaiting design and construction method proposals. Once these are available, BACA will submit them to the World Heritage Center along with an HIA also including a visual impact analysis. The option for a bridge at a minimum distance of 2 km from the shore was previously approved by the World Heritage Committee (37 COM 7B.47).

*d) Unlawful land reclamation*

The unlawful land reclamation, which was first spotted in 2020, has been completely removed.



Google Earth Image 9 Nov 2020.



Google Earth Image 9 Nov 2024.

### 3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value

There are no other issues that have an impact on the property's OUV.



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.

No alterations or constructions are planned that may affect the OUV of the property.

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

The State Party of Bahrain has no objection to uploading the report for public access.

6. Signature

On behalf of the State Party of Bahrain

  
Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa  
President  
Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities