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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Forty-seventh session UNESCO, Paris 6 – 16 July 2025

Item 7B of the Provisional Agenda: State of conservation of properties inscribed on the of World Heritage List

Summary

This document contains information on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. The World Heritage Committee is requested to review the reports on the state of conservation of properties contained in this document. The full reports of Reactive Monitoring missions requested by the World Heritage Committee are available at the following Web address in their original language: http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/47COM/documents

All previous state of conservation reports will be available through the World Heritage State of conservation Information System at the following Web address: http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc

<u>Decision required</u>: The World Heritage Committee may wish to adopt the draft Decision presented at the end of each state of conservation report.

Note: For each section, the reports are presented in the English alphabetical order of States Parties.

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I. STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS

NATURAL PROPERTIES

ASIA AND PACIFIC

8. Western Tien-Shan (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

15. Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex (Thailand)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

16. Ha Long Bay - Cat Ba Archipelago (Viet Nam)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1994

Criteria (vii)(viii)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/672/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 6 (from 1996-2018) Total amount approved: USD 163,145

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/672/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: USD 100,000 under the Youth Volunteers for Cultural Heritage Preservation project (2003-2006); USD 519,000 for Cua Van Floating Cultural Centre, a component of the Ha Long Eco-museum (funded by the Government of Norway, for the period of 2003-2006).

Previous monitoring missions

January 2003, December 2006: World Heritage Centre mission; November 2013: IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; July 2018: IUCN Advisory mission; March 2025: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community (Population growth)
- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation
- Housing
- Industrial areas
- Financial and human resources

- Management systems / management plan
- Water pollution

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/672/

Current conservation issues

On 24 January 2025, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/672/documents, after the requested deadline. However, due to a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission scheduled in March 2025, the information provided in the State Party report was exceptionally taken into consideration for the benefit of this mission. The State Party reported the following:

- A joint coordination body is yet to be established; however efforts have been made to develop
 effective coordination between Quang Ninh Province (responsible for Ha Long Bay) and Hai
 Phong City (responsible for Cat Ba Archipelago) to ensure an integrated management approach
 for the property. Regulations for effective inter-provincial cooperation are being prepared to
 further strengthen coordination in 2025-2026;
- The carrying capacity study is still to be expanded to the Cat Ba Archipelago. The Sustainable
 Tourism Development Strategy and Integrated Visitor Management System in Ha Long Bay are
 in progress and expected to be finalized in 2026. Planned measures include centralized visitor
 management systems (e.g., ticketing), mapping of attractions, and a tourism code of conduct;
- Tourism infrastructure development along the coastline of Ha Long city strictly follows national and regional government regulations. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) are carried out especially for large projects (Ha Long Ocean Park; projects in high-risk zones). Although there is no regulation for managing the buffer zone, regulations to monitor and address negative environmental impacts of projects are implemented. According to periodic monitoring, the projects have a low impact and do not cause risks to the integrity and do not affect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess the cumulative impacts on the OUV of the property from tourism and industrial developments in the property, its buffer zone and wider setting has not been undertaken since it is not foreseen under Vietnamese law;
- The Master Plan for Ha Long Bay has been adjusted to 2021-30 to align with Quang Ninh provincial planning. The Master Plan for Cat Ba Archipelago is expected to be finalised by end of 2025. The Ha Long Bay Management Plan (MP) 2021-2025 is ending and a new MP 2026-2030 (with a vision to 2045) is expected to be finalised by end of 2025. The MP for Cat Ba Archipelago is being updated. Steps have been initiated to develop the Ha Long Bay-Cat Ba Archipelago World Heritage MP. Joint implementation of the MPs is expected to improve coordinated management for the property;
- Various measures to address pollution and improve environmental conditions are continued including in relation to coal mining, wastewater treatment, and others;
- A detailed zoning map of Ha Long Bay was recently prepared (annexed), with plans to expand this to include the Cat Ba Archipelago and submit to World Heritage Centre by end of 2025;
- An appended list of planned, ongoing and completed development projects in the buffer zone and wider setting includes various infrastructure (e.g., luxury resorts, high-rise residential areas, urban areas, offices, Ha Long Ocean Park, boat wharf, seawall).

In a letter dated 4 October 2024, the World Heritage Centre transmitted third party concerns regarding landfilling along the coastline of the Cat Ba area of the property, notably 'Cat Ba Central Bay Tourism, Service, and Commercial Area Project'. On 8 November 2024, the State Party provided further details of the project. In a letter dated 14 November 2024, the World Heritage Centre transmitted to the State Party further third-party information raising concerns that, according to maps provided, landfilling was progressing in the proximity of the buffer zone of the property and would negatively impact its OUV. In the same letter, the World Heritage Centre requested the State Party to submit impact assessments of the project further to the State Party's response received on 8 November, while advising to halt the ongoing operation until the impact assessments are submitted and reviewed by IUCN. On 8 March 2025, the State Party provided further details of the project.

On 10-16 March 2025, a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission visited the property. The mission report will be available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/672/documents and its findings and recommendations will be presented to the Committee at its 48th session.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

It is unfortunate that the State Party did not submit the State Party report by the requested deadline. The State Party's commitment to report on the property as a whole following the 2023 Cat Ba Archipelago Significant Boundary Modification, is noted. The report of inter-provincial efforts to develop coordination between the various authorities responsible for managing different parts of the property, including the planned establishment of new regulations in 2025/2026, is positive, and it is recommended that the establishment of a joint coordination body be finalised as soon as possible to further strengthen a coordinated planning and management approach for the entire property, as recommended at the time of the extension.

Regarding sustainable tourism management, it is appreciated that the Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy and Integrated Visitor Management System in Ha Long Bay are expected to be finalized in 2026. However, it is of utmost concern that the significant expansion of tourism infrastructure in the buffer zone and wider setting of the property is continuing in the absence of such strategic documents having been finalised. Specifically, it is regrettable that the carrying capacity analysis for HaLong Bay is yet to be extended to include the Cat Ba Archipelago (i.e., the whole property), whilst significant tourism development has continued in the buffer zone along the Ha Long Bay coastline and on Cat Ba in the vicinity of the property. The finalisation of these processes should therefore be urgently expedited before further tourism expansion continues.

The July 2024 approval and ongoing construction of the major tourism infrastructure 'Cat Ba Central Bay Tourism, Service, and Commercial Area Project' located just 1.2 km from the buffer zone and 1.5 km from the property, continues to be of significant concern. The information provided in the State Party letters is noted, specifically that the project is located outside the buffer zone, not include land reclamation, and that an EIA with specific reference to World Heritage has been completed and measures identified to prevent and mitigate potential risks and impacts. However, without the full EIA/HIA having been received, requested by the World Heritage Centre (November 2024), the summary provided by the State Party (March 2025), which described that the project is planned 'with the idea of turning Cat Ba into a "mini Maldives of Asia" with large-scale, high-quality and classy entertainment space', raises serious concerns that the potential impact of the project on the OUV of the property has not been fully assessed in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, particularly given its scale and close proximity to the property. For example, direct impacts from infrastructure construction on the aesthetic values under criterion (vii) (e.g., 25-storey buildings) and the potentially significant broader impacts of increased tourism pressure on the OUV (3 million visitors reported in 2023 and 3.6 million in 2024). This is particularly noted in the context that the carrying capacity study for Cat Ba Archipelago remains to be completed. It is therefore recommended that further construction of this project be halted until a comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts, in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, is submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, as already advised in the World Heritage Centre's letter of November 2024, noting that continuation of this project may lead to the property facing potential danger from major threats, which could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics, in accordance with Paragraph 180(b) of the Operational Guidelines. Further recommendations will be provided in the mission report.

Whilst noting that an SEA is not required by law, in light of the continuing expansion of infrastructure development, and the likely related increase in visitor numbers to the property, there is a clear need for a strategic level assessment of the cumulative impacts of tourism and industrial developments in the property, its buffer zone and wider setting on the OUV of the property, in accordance with Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines.

Recalling that the Committee, at the time of the Significant Boundary Modification, requested the State Party to revise and complete the MP to address key threats to the property and strengthen law enforcement, as well as other points (Decision **45 COM 8B.3**), it is positive that progress is underway to update the various Master Plans and individual MPs, and that steps have been initiated to develop the MP for the whole property. It is important that these documents are finalised jointly and with all relevant authorities and fully address the 2023 IUCN Evaluation recommendations to ensure an integrated management approach for the property. The submission of a detailed zoning map for Ha Long

Bay is appreciated, and it is recommended that the map for the whole property be submitted once it is completed.

The various measures being implemented to address pollution and improve environmental conditions, such as solid waste treatment, are noted positively and should be continued.

Given the aforementioned concerns, it will be important that the State Party implement the findings of the Reactive Monitoring mission, the report of which remains in finalisation at the time of drafting and will be presented to the Committee at its 48th session.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.16

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **45 COM 7B.89**, **45 COM 8B.3**, **45 COM 8D** and **46 COM 7B.67**, adopted at its extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Regrets</u> that the State Party did not submit a report on the state of conservation of the property in a timely manner,
- 4. <u>Takes note</u> of the reported efforts to strengthen inter-provincial coordination between Quang Ninh Province and Hai Phong City, and <u>requests</u> the State Party to expedite the establishment of an integrated management body for the property and effective coordination mechanism between the Quang Ninh Province and Hai Phong City to support an integrated management approach for the property;
- 5. Also takes note that the Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy and Integrated Visitor Management System for Ha Long Bay are being finalised, however also regrets that the carrying capacity analysis for Ha Long Bay has not yet been expanded to the entire property, and urges the State Party to expedite this process and ensure that tourism management for the property is based on a clear assessment of the carrying capacity of the property as a whole, prior to proceeding with further infrastructure expansion;
- 6. Notes with utmost concern that tourism and infrastructure development along the coastline of Ha Long Bay (in the buffer zone) and on Cat Ba island (in the wider setting of the property), is continuing without a strategic assessment of cumulative impacts, and reiterates its request to the State Party to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess the cumulative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property from the tourism and industrial development projects that are located within the property, its buffer zone and in the wider setting to inform effective management planning and strategic decision making;
- 7. Also requests the State Party to ensure that any proposed developments within the property, its buffer zone and in the wider setting that have the potential to impact the OUV of the property are assessed for their potential impacts in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and to keep the World Heritage Centre informed of any projects that may impact the OUV of the property, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
- 8. <u>Takes note</u> of the State Party responses regarding the 'Cat Ba Central Bay Tourism, Service, and Commercial Area Project' in the wider setting of the property, however <u>notes</u>

with utmost concern the potential significant impact of the project given its scale and proximity to the property, and further requests the State Party not to proceed further with the project until its potential impact on the OUV of the property has been fully assessed in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, including on the aesthetic values and broader impacts of increased tourism pressure, and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, noting that continuation of the project may lead to the property facing potential danger from major threats which could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics, in accordance with Paragraph 180(b) of the Operational Guidelines;

- 9. <u>Notes with appreciation</u> that the Master Plans and Management Plans for Ha Long Bay and the Cat Ba Archipelago are being updated, and that the development of an integrated Management Plan for the entire property has been initiated, and <u>requests furthermore</u> that the finalisation of these documents is coordinated and completed in consultation with all relevant authorities, addressing the 2023 IUCN Evaluation of the extension and Decision **45 COM 8B.3**:
- 10. <u>Also takes note</u> of the zoning map for Ha Long Bay, and <u>requests moreover</u> the State Party to submit the requested detailed zoning map of the entire Ha Long Bay Cat Ba Archipelago property, showing the land use and management regime within its inscribed area, buffer zone and wider setting, to the World Heritage Centre, once completed;
- 11. <u>Also notes with appreciation</u> the implementation of various measures to address waste and other forms of environmental pollution, and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to continue addressing this issue;
- 12. <u>Further notes with appreciation</u> that the joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission visited the property in March 2025 and that its findings will be presented to the Committee at its 48th session;
- 13. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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 48th session.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

18. Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

19. Białowieża Forest (Belarus, Poland)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

21. Wood Buffalo National Park (Canada)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1983

Criteria (vii)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/256/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/256/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

September/October 2016: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; August 2022: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Road construction (issue resolved)
- Renewable energy facilities (existing and planned hydroelectric dams, including Site C and Amisk)
- Oil and gas (Alberta oil sands mining)
- Climate change
- Lack of adequate and comprehensive environmental monitoring
- Governance (lack of effective engagement with First Nations and Métis in monitoring activities and insufficient consideration of local and indigenous knowledge)
- Groundwater, surface water and air pollution
- Management systems/management plan
- Mining

 Cumulative impacts (insufficiently understood cumulative impacts of multiple development pressures)

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/256/

Current conservation issues

On 30 November 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/256/documents and reports the following:

- Implementation of the Action Plan continues, with 83% of 137 measures completed or underway, 3% delayed, and 14% not yet due;
- A national Indigenous Stewardship Policy has been developed, alongside measures under Canada's 5-year Action Plan to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Additional policy tools are under discussion with Indigenous partners;
- The 'Integrated Research and Monitoring Program' (IRMP), co-developed with Indigenous partners, is being implemented to assess cumulative effects on the Peace-Athabasca Delta (PAD) and inform land-use decisions. Reporting using both scientific and Indigenous knowledge indicators is expected by 2026;
- Hydrological research includes a 2D hydraulic model, updated digital elevation model, and Bayesian Belief Network to support water management;
- The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has committed to considering the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property in federal reviews. The Amisk project remains halted;
- A Memorandum of Understanding is under development to enable strategic flow releases for spring ice jam flooding in the PAD, pending agreement with Indigenous and jurisdictional partners. Technical studies, including a flood report, are ongoing;
- Feasibility studies and policy work are underway for mitigation measures related to the W.A.C.
 Bennett Dam. Two proposed control structures (Dog Camp and Big Egg Lake) have completed impact assessments;
- Funding was provided for an Indigenous-led risk assessment of the tailings ponds; however, the assessment was not implemented, and the funds were returned. To date, no independent risk assessment has been undertaken;
- The Oil Sands Monitoring (OSM) Program, co-led by Alberta and Canada, launched independent science integrity and governance reviews in 2024;
- Federal regulations currently do not authorise the release of treated oil sands effluent. A Crown-Indigenous Working Group is exploring regulatory options. Alberta has completed six scientific assessments and created a Steering Committee; findings were expected by the end of 2024;
- The State Party affirms that both federal and provincial impact assessment processes consider the PAD, but not all major development projects are systematically assessed;
- Robust conservation and protection programmes for the whooping crane are in place and its population continues to recover. Conservation activities and long-term monitoring for wood bisons are advancing through the use of modern technologies;
- There has been significant expansion of protected areas outside the property's boundary in recent years, establishing a *de facto* buffer zone;
- The Management Plan will be revised following completion of the shared governance model and Indigenous Stewardship Plan, anticipated after 2026;
- The State Party indicates its continued commitment to implementing and adapting the existing plan in collaboration with partners and in light of the 2022 mission recommendations. A Reactive Monitoring mission is proposed for 2027, rather than 2026, to allow for an assessment of the Action Plan's effectiveness and in view of the urgent recovery needs following the 2024 wildfires in Jasper National Park.

In a letter dated 31 January 2024, the State Party responded to Decision **45 COM 7B.22**, reaffirming that the existing Action Plan aligns with the 2022 mission recommendations and highlighting ongoing

initiatives. However, it did not submit a revised Action Plan to fully implement the 2022 mission recommendations, as previously requested in earlier Committee Decisions. Following a letter from the World Heritage Centre dated 17 May 2024, which reiterated the Committee's request to submit an updated Action Plan for review by IUCN, the State Party, in its response of 17 July 2024, acknowledged concerns regarding the effectiveness of the current Plan. It emphasised, however, that any updates would require extensive consultation with Indigenous and governmental partners and could not be completed before 1 December 2024, as previously stated.

Further to a meeting with the State Party on 22 October 2024, the World Heritage Centre, in a letter dated 23 October 2024, acknowledged the complexities involved in updating the Action Plan and requested a comprehensive overview of the steps taken to revise the Plan, as well as the reasons for any delays, to be included in the forthcoming state of conservation report. In addition, third-party information raising concerns regarding the conservation of the property's OUV was transmitted under Paragraph 174 of the Operational Guidelines.

On 9 December 2024, the State Party submitted a report to the World Heritage Centre including comments from the Athabasca Chipewyan and Mikisew Cree First Nations. On 1 February 2025, the Mikisew Cree First Nation submitted a response to the State Party's report, followed by a companion report from the Indigenous Governments of Wood Buffalo National Park, which was submitted by the State Party on 3 February 2025.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The State Party has reported continued efforts to implement under the Action Plan, including significant investments of time and resources, with progress noted in areas such as hydrological modelling, species monitoring, and the co-development of the IRMP. While this progress is acknowledged, the core issues identified by the Committee in Decision **45 COM 7B.22**, as well as the recommendations of the joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission of 2022, remain only partially addressed. Decision-making on key restoration actions is still pending, and clear timelines for their implementation are required.

In addition, no progress has been made in implementing an independent risk assessment of the tailings ponds, despite this action having been identified as a priority as early as the 2016 Reactive Monitoring mission, with its urgency subsequently reiterated by the 2022 mission and in multiple Committee Decisions. It is of utmost concern that, nearly a decade after the initial monitoring mission, this assessment has still not been undertaken, particularly given that the tailings ponds represent a significant potential risk to the OUV of the property. The World Heritage Centre and IUCN continue to stress the critical importance of ensuring that this assessment is carried out by independent experts, in consultation with all rightsholders and stakeholders. While noting the six assessments related to the potential release of treated oil sands process-affected water (OSPW) – including a human and ecological risk assessment – and the establishment of an independent Steering Committee to explore safe management options, the ongoing consideration of discharging OSPW into the Athabasca River remains a major concern. Such a release poses substantial risks to the ecological integrity of the Peace-Athabasca Delta (PAD), and thus to the OUV of the property. Indigenous rightsholders continue to express concern regarding the absence of a formal risk assessment, particularly in the context of ongoing discussions about potential OSPW discharge.

There appears to be a disconnect between technical progress – such as the development of modelling tools and policy frameworks – and the establishment of an effective mechanism for decision-making on ecological flow releases. Although the Action Plan remains operational and funded through to 2026, it has not been updated in line with the 2022 mission recommendations, as previously requested by the Committee. Nor has any progress towards this update been outlined. Its implementation requires strengthened strategic cohesion, as well as clear reporting on its impacts. Securing long-term funding and establishing a framework to assess ecological recovery in relation to the 2018 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the criteria for OUV remain critical to the effective conservation and management of the property.

The State Party's commitment to integrating the OUV of the property into federal impact assessments is welcomed. However, it should be emphasised that any project potentially affecting the OUV must undergo rigorous impact assessment in accordance with the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context* before any approval decisions are made.

Monitoring of flagship species continues; however, its integration within broader management strategies has yet to be evaluated, as the IRMP is not yet available for decision-making. Additionally, Indigenous

rightsholders have expressed concerns that traditional knowledge has not been fully incorporated into current monitoring efforts.

Given the ongoing range of issues and the need for significant progress in key areas, as well as to maintain dialogue on developments concerning the property, it is recommended that the Reactive Monitoring mission proceed in 2026 as originally planned, rather than be postponed to 2027 as requested by the State Party. The mission should focus on assessing whether previously observed negative trends in the OUV of the property have been reversed and updating the assessment on whether the property continues to face threats that could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines.

While the State Party reports Indigenous engagement efforts as constructive, Indigenous rightsholders express disagreement with both the process and substance of these efforts. The anticipated revision of the management plan, last updated in 2010, presents a significant opportunity to align future strategic planning with emerging co-governance frameworks and the priorities of Indigenous partners. It is encouraged that future State Party reports incorporate the perspectives of Indigenous partners, as presented in the February 2022 state of conservation report, to include a broader range of viewpoints and knowledge systems necessary for assessing conservation outcomes on the ground.

While the World Heritage Centre and IUCN fully recognise the important efforts made by the State Party in creating additional provincial protected areas around the property, and the buffering role these areas provide, it remains important to formally establish a buffer zone under the Convention.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.21

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. Recalling Decisions 39 COM 7B.18, 41 COM 7B.2, 43 COM 7B.1, 44 COM 7B.190 and 45 COM 7B.22, adopted at its 39th (Bonn, 2015), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 43rd (Baku, 2019), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Notes with appreciation</u> the continued implementation of the Action Plan and the recommendations of the joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission of 2022 for the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, as well as the technical progress reported in areas such as hydrological modelling, species monitoring, and the development of the 'Integrated Research and Monitoring Program' (IRMP);
- 4. Expresses its concern about the lack of sufficient progress in addressing the cumulative impacts of industrial developments around the property, including the continued expansion of existing oil sands projects without full consideration of potential impacts on the OUV, as well as the ongoing consideration of proposals to allow the release of treated oil sands process-affected water (OSPW) into the Athabasca River, which may pose significant risks to the ecological integrity of the Peace-Athabasca Delta (PAD) and thus to the OUV of the property;
- 5. <u>Notes with concern</u> the lack of progress in implementing an independent risk assessment of the large tailings ponds upstream of the property; and <u>underlines</u> the importance of completing this assessment without further delay, in full consultation with all rights-holders and stakeholders, particularly in light of the concerns raised by Indigenous rights-holders in the context of ongoing discussions regarding OSPW discharge;
- 6. <u>Further notes with concern</u> that many of the recommendations of the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission remain only partially addressed, including the update of the Action

Plan to incorporate the 2022 mission recommendations following extensive consultation with Indigenous and governmental partners, and <u>urges</u> the State Party to accelerate the full implementation of these recommendations without further delay and to provide an update on their progress to the World Heritage Centre;

- 7. <u>Welcomes</u> the commitment to integrating the OUV of the property into federal impact assessments, and <u>also urges</u> the State Party to systematically assess the impacts of any project on the property's OUV in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;
- 8. <u>Expresses concern</u> about the lack of measurable improvement in the ecological integrity of the PAD and the absence of a clear mechanism to monitor recovery against the impacts identified in the 2018 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA);
- 9. <u>Requests</u> the State Party to ensure a legally supported, multi-year funding framework is in place to sustain conservation efforts and governance arrangements beyond 2026, developed with the participation of Indigenous rights-holders;
- 10. <u>Further requests</u> the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property in 2026, to assess progress in the implementation of the Action Plan and to update the assessment of whether the property faces threats which could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics, in line with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines; and <u>also requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, an interim report on the implementation of the above, to support the preparation of the said mission;
- 11. <u>Takes note with concern</u> of the reports from First Nations and Métis regarding ongoing challenges in the involvement of Indigenous rightsholders and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to align future strategic planning with emerging co-governance frameworks and the priorities of Indigenous partners during revisions of the property's management plan, and to incorporate the perspectives of Indigenous rightsholders and governance bodies in its future state of conservation reports:
- 12. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.
- 22. Wadden Sea (Denmark, Germany, Kingdom of the Netherlands)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

24. Durmitor National Park (Montenegro)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1980

Criteria (vii)(viii)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/100/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 4 (from 1981-1988) Total amount approved: USD 117,000

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/100/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: USD 65,000 by UNESCO Venice Office; USD 50,000 under the Participation Programme

Previous monitoring missions

1996 and 2005: Joint UNESCO/IUCN missions; November 2018: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Advisory mission; October/November 2019: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Water infrastructure (Proposed dam development on the Tara River)
- Illegal logging and hunting (issue resolved)
- Tourism infrastructure (Ski development in the Zabljak area)
- · Boundary issues

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/100/

Current conservation issues

On 12 December 2024, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation of the property, available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/100/documents, providing the following information:

- The Spatial Plan for Special Purpose for Durmitor National Park is being updated. The updated plan will include a sustainable tourism management strategy and is based on the Revised Protection Study, which had been reviewed by IUCN and is currently undergoing public consultation;
- The Protection Study proposes that the national park boundaries prior to 2013 be reinstated. In addition, a new National Park Law is currently being drafted, which will propose an expansion of Durmitor National Park by 1,519.96 ha, with a boundary modification of the property planned;
- Regarding the Buk Bijela Hydroelectric Power Plant, the State Party confirms it will act in accordance with Committee Decision 45 COM 7B.93, and that it will not agree to the construction of the power plant without a prior Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Following procedures under the Espoo Convention, the State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina has initiated a new EIA process and has provided the accompanying documentation to the State Party of Montenegro;
- Local communities have submitted a petition proposing a route further from settlements for the Lastva Grbaljska–Pljevlja transmission line;
- Monitoring of impacts of the Bar-Boljare highway construction continued and confirmed, inter alia, the presence of the Danube Salmon (Hucho hucho) in new locations;
- The State Party notes current threats to the property include unplanned construction within the park boundaries; high visitor numbers; and the use of drones, quads, and snowmobiles disturbing wildlife;
- The implementation of the proposed Brskovo zinc and lead mining project has been suspended;

 The expansion of ski infrastructure development within the property remains suspended, and the State Party will prohibit the construction of new tourism infrastructure within the property. Further steps regarding the property will be considered following adoption of the updated Spatial Plan for Special Purpose for Durmitor National Park.

However, on 27 February 2025, third-party information was transmitted to the State Party regarding the installation of an artificial snowmaking system in a section of the Savin Kuk ski resort and the establishment of a campsite in Katun Lokvice, located within the property, which may impact the ecosystems and habitats of the site. Additionally, the presence of two telecommunication towers within the property since 2008 was noted; these towers were recently acquired by a company operating in South Eastern Europe. At the time of writing this report, a response had not yet been received.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

It is encouraging that the State Party continues its efforts to reinstate the boundaries of Durmitor National Park as they existed prior to 2013, thereby ensuring consistency between the boundaries of the World Heritage property and the national park, as well as establishing a buffer zone. The intention to further extend the national park by more than 1,500 ha. is also positive. However, any areas added to the national park that lie beyond the property's inscribed boundaries should be formally submitted as a minor boundary modification proposal for examination by the Committee.

The ongoing monitoring of downstream impacts from the Smokovac–Mateševo section of the Bar-Boljare motorway is likewise welcome, and further updates on this matter are encouraged. The suspension of the proposed Brskovo zinc and lead mining project is a welcome development. In accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, the World Heritage Centre should be promptly notified should this project be revived.

Regarding the Buk Bijela Hydroelectric Power Plant, it is noted that the State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina has provided documentation on a new EIA process to the State Party of Montenegro. Nevertheless, there is currently no indication that this EIA will be conducted in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, which requires a detailed evaluation of potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. It is recommended that such information be submitted in the next state of conservation report and prior to any decisions being made.

The proposal by local communities for an alternative route for the Lastva Grbaljska–Pljevlja power transmission line is noted. Should any route modifications be considered, alternative options must be assessed through an EIA consistent with the aforementioned Guidance, focusing on their potential impacts on the property's OUV, to ensure informed decision-making.

Given the current threats to the property and in light of previous Committee decisions, it is of utmost concern that reports have emerged of the installation of artificial snowmaking systems. This appears to contradict the State Party's assurance that ski infrastructure expansion remains suspended, as well as Committee Decision **45 COM 7B.93**. Considering that further ski infrastructure development within the property would constitute an ascertained danger to the OUV, in line with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines, it is recommended that the State Party be urged to verify the situation and provide clarification and relevant documentation to the World Heritage Centre as soon as possible.

Finally, the absence of updates regarding the proposed Komarnica Hydropower Project and its associated EIA process is noted. The Committee may wish to reiterate its request in Decision **45 COM 7B.93**, emphasising the importance of assessing potential impacts in accordance with the Guidance, and ensuring that updated information and documentation are communicated to the World Heritage Centre in a timely manner for review by IUCN.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.24

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. Recalling Decision 45 COM 7B.93 adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),

- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the State Party's continued work to reinstate the boundaries of Durmitor National Park in alignment with the boundaries of the World Heritage property as they existed prior to 2013;
- 4. <u>Also welcomes</u> the State Party's intention to add further areas to the national park, and <u>recommends</u> that the State Party submit a proposal for a Minor Boundary Modification to extend the property and establish a buffer zone once the national park expansion is finalised:
- 5. <u>Further welcomes</u> the continued monitoring of downstream impacts from the Smokovac–Mateševo section of the Bar-Boljare motorway and the suspension of the proposed Brskovo zinc and lead mining project, and <u>requests</u> the State Party to continue monitoring any downstream impacts and the status of key species that are attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and to notify the World Heritage Centre should any new impacts from the motorway project be detected or if any mining project is reconsidered, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;
- 6. <u>Also requests</u> an update on the proposed Komarnica Hydropower Project and its respective Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, notes that the State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina has initiated a new EIA process for the potential Buk Bijela Hydroelectric Power Plant and has provided documentation to the State Party of Montenegro and reiterates its request that this EIA be conducted in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, ensuring any potential impacts on the OUV are thoroughly assessed and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review prior to any irreversible decisions;
- 7. Also notes that the alignment of the Lastva Grbaljska–Pljevlja power transmission line remains under discussion and further requests that the State Party ensure an EIA, in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, is undertaken to assess potential impacts of alternative alignments on the OUV, to inform decision-making and to submit the results to the World Heritage Centre for review:
- 8. Recalls that an expansion of ski infrastructure developments inside the property would constitute an ascertained danger to the OUV of the property, in line with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines, notes with utmost concern third-party reports regarding the installation of artificial snowmaking systems at a ski resort within the property and urges the State Party to verify the situation and provide clarification and documentation to the World Heritage Centre as soon as possible, and no later than by 1 December 2025:
- Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by
 1 December 2026, 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
 49th session.

26. Lake Baikal (Russian Federation)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1996

Criteria (vii)(viii)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/754/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 2 (from 1990-2000) Total amount approved: USD 33,200

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/754/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

July 1997: World Heritage Centre mission; 1998: World Heritage Centre monitoring mission; September 2001, October 2005 and December 2023: joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring missions; November 2003 and July 2011: joint UNESCO/IUCN high-level missions; April 2015: IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Gas and oil pipeline project across the World Heritage property in 2006 (issue resolved)
- Management Systems/Management Plan (lack of adequate management system)
- Legal framework (uncertain legal protection)
- Surface water pollution (pollution from paper mill and domestic and industrial wastewater)
- Land use and use of natural resources (timber harvesting, construction on the lake shore, sale of land)
- Impacts of tourism/visitor/recreation (large scale tourism development)
- Fire and impacts of climate change (wildfires in the Baikal region in 2015)
- Water infrastructure (planned and existing dam infrastructure in the Russian Federation and Mongolia affecting Lake Baikal water regime)
- Illegal activities
- Land conservation

<u>Illustrative material</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/754/

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2025, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/754/documents/ and which reports the following:

- Temporary regulation 'On maximum and minimum values of the water level in Lake Baikal in 2025-2027' is being prepared to continue managing the water level with a variation of 2.3 m; work on the permanent regulation will be resumed in 2027 after IUCN's review of the scientific study to assess the environmental and socio-economic impacts of changes in the water level of Lake Baikal;
- Measures for protection and strengthened monitoring are described, coordinated by the Government Commission on the Protection of Lake Baikal, and the State Report 'On the State of Lake Baikal and Measures for its Protection in 2023' is published on the Lake Baikal ecological portal (https://baikalake.ru/en/security/info/reports/report2023/);
- No drastic changes are reported in long-term water quality, and the above 2023 report confirms the presence of filamentous algae (Spirogyra), which is not typical for Lake Baikal, and the poor quality of the lake's tributaries, including the Selenga River;
- The federal project 'Preservation of Lake Baikal', aimed at the ecological recovery of the lake, was completed in 2024 and achieved important results, such as the creation of the Lake Baikal

Ecological Portal, the clean-up of unauthorised landfills, halting of the decline of the omul population through fish farming, and the start of work at the former Baikalsk Pulp and Paper Mill (BPPM); the national project 'Ecological Wellbeing' will continue to support the property in 2025-2030;

- Construction of tourism and infrastructure facilities continues in the two Special Economic Zones (SEZ) within the property, with all individual projects subject to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and State Environmental Expertise;
- A new tourism initiative 'Magic Baikal', developed as part of the federal project 'Five Seas and Lake Baikal', and 'Baikal Sloboda', as well as the master plan for the development of Lake Baikal, are mentioned, and an increase in the number of registered tourists in specially protected areas within the property is reported;
- Work to eliminate accumulated environmental damage caused by the BPPM has continued at two of the three industrial waste storage sites and is expected to be completed by 2027, while research is underway to identify technical solutions for the third site;
- Selected data on wildlife and activities including environmental education in the specially protected areas located within the property are presented;
- In September 2024, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation
 and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Mongolia signed the Memorandum of
 Understanding on Cooperation in Preserving Lake Baikal, which includes an Action Plan and the
 establishment of an Expert Group to assess the potential impacts of the Egiin-Gol Hydropower
 Plant project on Lake Baikal and the Selenga River;
- Reporting on the implementation of the recommendations of the 2023 Reactive Monitoring
 mission is provided, including plans to complete the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding
 Universal Value (OUV) for the property and to clarify its boundaries as part of the Retrospective
 Inventory.

In a letter to the World Heritage Centre dated 6 September 2024, the State Party transmitted the French translation of Volume 1 of Phase 3 of the Study on the assessment of the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the water level regime of Lake Baikal. In a letter dated 26 December 2024, the State Party provided a response to the World Heritage Centre's letter of 4 October 2024 concerning information from third parties on proposed legislative amendments affecting the protection of the property and tourism development projects in the SEZ 'Baikal Harbor'.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN

The State Party is implementing measures to reverse the environmental degradation of the property, including increased monitoring and a proposal for integrated indicators. However, water quality in Lake Baikal has deteriorated over the long-term leading to negative impacts on the property's OUV, including through an increase in anthropogenic pressures from land use, exacerbated by an uncertain and weakened regulatory regime, which poses a growing threat to the property.

It is positive that the State Party has reaffirmed its financial commitment towards the protection of the property, which should help to complete the work to eliminate accumulated environmental damage caused by the former BPPM. Measures should also be targeted to address the growing impacts of the tourism sector and to reduce pollution, in particular to eliminate all direct wastewater discharges into Lake Baikal, with a particular focus on the major sources, upgrade outdated treatment facilities to meet international standards, and provide a comprehensive, annually updated inventory of pollution sources, with progress metrics publicly available via the Lake Baikal geoportal.

The renewal of the temporary regulation, 'On maximum and minimum values of the water level in Lake Baikal in 2025-2027', reported via official Decree on the government's website, is worrying and in contradiction with the Committee's Decision **46 COM 7B.52** as it continues to authorise increased water level variation that may cause negative impact on the property and its OUV. The justification given to wait until 2027 for the development of proposals for permanent regulations for the management of the water level and the Irkutsk hydropower dam is not valid given that the submitted scientific study was expected to provide the basis for establishing regulations that are fully compatible with the protection of the property's OUV. The State Party should therefore ensure that the following IUCN review of the study on the environmental and socio-economic impacts of the water level regime is taken into consideration (as well as a more comprehensive review that will be transmitted separately), and to develop and submit,

by the end of 2025, revised legal and regulatory proposals for water level management that prioritize the conservation of the property's OUV, before adopting any new water level regulations. Specifically, the study is an important step towards improving the regulatory framework for water use and management, particularly regarding artificial regulation of the lake level through hydroelectric facilities located in the catchments connected to the lake. The analyses carried out to date are welcomed, however the administrative process should be accelerated, and the scope of the biological and ecological constraints analysed in the study should be broadened in relation to plant species and their communities including aquatic and semi-aquatic ecosystems adjacent to the lake (e.g., wetlands and floodplains); recommendations should be proposed that effectively ensure compatibility between socioeconomic water resource use and the protection of the OUV of the property; and the recommendations formalised with more precise legal and regulatory proposals.

The Committee has identified the uncertain and weakened legal protection of the property as a major risk that may justify its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Decisions **44 COM 7B.107**, **45 COM 7B.24** and **46 COM 7B.52**). While the State Party has committed to sharing with the World Heritage Centre the proposed amendments to the Federal Law 'On the Protection of Lake Baikal', it is regrettable that limited information has been provided on the status of these, and other legislative amendments that have already been adopted, such as the extension, until 2033, of clear-cutting of forests in the property for the expansion of the Baikal-Amur and Trans-Siberian railway lines. The State Party should halt any legislative changes that may reduce the level of protection for Lake Baikal and to submit all proposed amendments, including draft laws and regulatory changes, in one of the working languages of the Convention, to the World Heritage Centre for review prior to their adoption, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

The World Heritage Centre and IUCN reiterate that the study of legislative changes submitted by the State Party to the 2023 mission is incomplete and should be completed in view of the gaps identified by the mission and evolving legislation. Finalising the assessment ahead of the 2026 mission to the property is essential for the mission to adequately evaluate the legal protection of the property.

It is concerning that tourism and infrastructure development in the SEZs is accelerating with new initiatives reported in addition to existing plans without first addressing the concerns of the Committee, nor the recommendations of the 2023 mission. The Committee has repeatedly urged the State Party to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for each of the SEZs to assess the cumulative impact of the projects on the property and its OUV, the need for which is evident and urgent. The approach of conducting the SEAs through a research and development (R&D) programme could help overcome the gaps in national legislation and prepare a comprehensive Environmental Management Plan for the SEZs. It is also unclear how the individual EIAs and State Environmental Expertise consider the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, as these documents have not been provided.

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by the respective ministries of the Russian Federation and Mongolia is an important step in strengthening transboundary cooperation on the conservation of the property and will also support bilateral discussions on plans to build the Egiin Gol hydropower plant in the Selenga River basin in Mongolia. The Selenga River is the largest tributary to Lake Baikal, and ensuring its ecological functions against the impact of development initiatives and improving its poor water quality is a priority.

The property requires an integrated management plan that clarifies the complex legal and regulatory framework and the conservation and management objectives for the property, as recommended by the 2023 mission and requested by the Committee. With a view to the development of a management plan, plans to complete the Retrospective Statement of OUV for the property and to clarify its boundaries as part of the Retrospective Inventory are welcome.

Recalling that the 2023 mission did not have the possibility to discuss the issue of the proposed Power of Siberia-2 gas pipeline in relation to its proposed location and corresponding potential impacts on the property's OUV, the State Party should provide detailed information on the current proposals, including any EIAs undertaken, to ensure that the 2026 mission to the property can consider this issue in full.

Finally, it is recommended that the Committee reiterate its request to the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, with sufficient time to ensure that it can take place in the summer of 2026.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.26

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **44 COM 7B.107, 45 COM 7B.24** and **46 COM 7B.52**, adopted at its extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021), extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) and its 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions, respectively,
- 3. <u>Acknowledges</u> that the State Party is taking remedial actions to reverse the environmental deterioration of the property, but <u>notes with deep concern</u> that the property continues facing significant ascertained and potential threats due to the long-term degradation of the water quality of Lake Baikal, persistent and increasing anthropogenic pressures, in particular related to pollution and tourism infrastructure development, as well as uncertain legal protection and lack of integrated management;
- 4. <u>Requests</u> the State Party to take urgent action to eliminate all direct wastewater discharges into Lake Baikal, upgrade outdated treatment facilities to meet international standards, and provide a comprehensive, annually updated inventory of pollution sources, with progress metrics publicly available via the Lake Baikal geoportal;
- 5. Reiterates its concern at the weakening of the legal protection of the property at a time when its ecological condition continues to deteriorate, which may place the property in potential danger in accordance with Paragraph 180(b) i) and iv) of the Operational Guidelines, and urges the State Party to secure and stabilise the legal status of the property to protect its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), to assess the impact of any proposed legislative changes on the property and its OUV and submit these proposals to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN prior to their approval, as well as to avoid any legislative changes that may result in adverse impacts:
- 6. <u>Welcomes</u> the submission and public availability of the study on the environmental and socio-economic impacts of the water level regime of Lake Baikal, <u>also urges</u> the State Party to take into consideration IUCN's review of the study, and <u>reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to also submit the proposals on the water level regulation of Lake Baikal by end of 2025, to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN;
- 7. Notes with serious concern the renewal of the temporary legislation on the water level regime of Lake Baikal continuing to allow increased water level variation, and reminds the State Party that any existing or proposed water level regulations should be compatible with the protection of the property's OUV and should not allow the water level variation to exceed one metre, as this may have a negative impact on the property and its OUV, until the legislative proposals and management regulations have been reviewed by IUCN and the requirements for the property's protection have been determined;
- 8. <u>Notes</u> the ongoing work to eliminate the accumulated environmental damage of the former Baikalsk Pulp and Paper Mill, which is expected to be completed at two of the three industrial waste storage sites by 2027, and <u>also requests</u> the State Party to continue reporting on the progress and implementation of the environmental safeguards:
- 9. Also reiterates its request to the State Party to provide details of all major development initiatives within the property, including the 'Magic Baikal' and 'Baikal Sloboda' and the tourism master plan for Lake Baikal, to ensure that Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are prepared in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and to conduct a Strategic Environmental

Assessment (SEA) in each Special Economic Zone (SEZ), which could be undertaken as a 'research and development' programme, to assess and mitigate the cumulative impacts of the existing and proposed projects on the property's OUV, and to develop an environmental management plan for the SEZs, before taking any decision that would be difficult to reverse:

- 10. Welcomes the State Party's continued investment to support the conservation of the property; however, <u>further reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to continue implementing the urgent remedial measures and the recommendations of the 2023 Reactive Monitoring mission, and to develop an integrated management plan for the property, and <u>considers</u> that if the overall ongoing degradation of the property's OUV is not halted and reversed and the legal protection of the property is not secured, the property's urgent conservation needs may require a broad mobilisation to preserve its OUV, including the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger;
- 11. <u>Welcomes</u> the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the States Parties of the Russian Federation and Mongolia to strengthen cooperation for the protection of Lake Baikal, and <u>further requests</u> the States Parties to report on the outcomes of this cooperation to improve the ecological condition of the Selenga River and its basin, and on the plans for the Egiin Gol hydropower plant, including an assessment of the potential impacts of the project prepared in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;
- 12. <u>Requests furthermore</u> the State Party to submit detailed information on the current proposals for the Power of Siberia-2 gas pipeline, including any EIAs that have been undertaken, to the World Heritage Centre for consideration by the 2026 mission to the property;
- 13. Reiterates its request to the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, to take place during the summer season of 2026, to assess the progress made in reversing the degradation of the OUV of the property and in addressing the threats affecting its state of conservation, in particular those related to legal protection, tourism infrastructure development, pollution, land use pressures and management, including forest management, and to assess whether the property is faced with major threats which could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines;
- 14. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, a progress report by **1 February 2026** and an updated report on the state of conservation of the property by **1 December 2026**, reflecting progress in the implementation of the above, including the recommendations of the 2023 Reactive Monitoring mission, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 49th session.

30. Western Caucasus (Russian Federation)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

31.	Doñana National Park (Spain)
See	Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

ARAB STATES

53. Socotra Archipelago (Yemen)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

MIXED PROPERTIES

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

54. Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid region (Albania, North Macedonia)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1979

Criteria (i)(iii)(iv)(vii)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 3 (from 1986-2021) Total amount approved: USD 86,720

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

'Towards strengthened governance of the shared transboundary natural and cultural heritage of the Lake Ohrid region', funded by the European Union (EU) of an amount of US\$ 1,394,037 (2014-2018) and co-financed by the Republic of Albania through a UNESCO Funds-in-Trust project (2015-2018) of an amount of US\$ 239,887.

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice: USD 20 000 in 2016. Since 2023, US\$ 142,601 from Italy for supporting North Macedonia for the improved protection of the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region.

Previous monitoring missions

September 1998: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN mission; December 2013: Joint ICOMOS/UNESCO Advisory mission; April 2017: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; December 2019: Joint ICOMOS/IUCN Advisory mission; January 2020: Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2022: ICOMOS Advisory mission; March 2024: Joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management systems / management plan
- · Buildings and development
- Ground transport infrastructure
- Major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure (proposed Galičica Ski Centre)
- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation

<u>Illustrative material</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2025, the States Parties submitted a joint state of conservation report, available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/99/documents/, which reported the following:

- In September 2024, the State Party of North Macedonia adopted urgent measures to implement the Strategic Recovery Plan (SRP). A new Commission for Managing the Ohrid Region was appointed in December 2024, with its inaugural session held in January 2025;
- The State Party of Albania has strengthened institutional coordination through regular meetings of the Management Committee and Regional Tourism Development Committee;

- A high-level virtual meeting was held on January 2025 involving representatives from central and local institutions of North Macedonia and Albania. A high-level bilateral meeting between the States Parties was scheduled for March 2025 to define strategic cooperation;
- A Geographic Information System (GIS) database for the immovable cultural heritage and archaeological sites of the Ohrid region, funded through International Assistance, was completed in December 2024;
- The Municipality of Ohrid is reportedly implementing urban planning procedures in line with the Law on Spatial and Urban Planning. Planning documents (e.g., General and Detailed Urban Plans) are being aligned with heritage management frameworks. A decision on the implementation of existing plans, adoption of new ones, procedures for determining the legal status of illegally built structures, and a Development Programme for urban planning in Ohrid for 2024–2026 has been prepared and submitted as annexes;
- The Municipality of Ohrid has begun gradually removing illegal constructions following final decisions by the competent authorities. Between 2020 and 2024, 27 structures were demolished. However, enforcement remains challenging due to a shortage of inspectors and limited financial resources;
- Restoration of the wastewater collector system and treatment infrastructure is ongoing;
- Water quality monitoring has been expanded in parts of Lake Ohrid's littoral zone and the city's coastal area, focusing on nutrient levels linked to eutrophication and green algae blooms. This has revealed hotspots of organic and faecal pollution, particularly in Grashnica and Radozda. Despite collector systems in some areas, significant human impacts persist along the lake's northwestern shore, from Struga to Radozda;
- Research on the health of fish in Lake Ohrid has indicated numerous biotopes where parasites develop, with water quality remaining generally high. Additional related projects are planned;
- A Standard Operating Procedure for the Sateska River diversion is under development and expected in the first half of 2025, including a management and maintenance plan for the controlled riverbeds and detailed guidance for relevant institutions and stakeholders to ensure legal compliance;
- Galičica National Park has ceased all timber extraction activities, permitting only limited firewood collection by local forest owners, with 116 m³ felled in 2023 due to forest fire damage;
- A review of the Galicica National Park Management Plan (2021-2030) is planned for 2025 to achieve the target of 75% natural zone coverage;
- Control of off-road vehicle activity is enforced through designated routes, ranger monitoring, and an online registration system;
- A Tourism Development Strategy (2025–2030) is under preparation by the Municipality of Ohrid, with visual unification guidelines in historic areas having been implemented in 2022;
- The State Party of Albania has enhanced tourism management in Pogradec, including the development of a visitor centre in Drilon and community awareness events. Both States Parties are piloting sustainable tourism initiatives (e.g., electric bicycles, clean-up campaigns);
- A pre-feasibility study for an alternative route for Railway Corridor VIII (Struga–Albania section) is expected in 2026. No new developments in sensitive areas have been approved until the completion of relevant assessments. For the Corridor VIII Highway section, the Public Enterprise for State Roads will conduct additional detailed studies and assessments to explore routing options that ensure the protection of the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). Documentation will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review;
- Revitalisation of the walls of Pogradec Castle was completed in 2024, without the initially planned museum. Additional details were provided;
- Project documentation for conservation interventions on the archaeological remains of the Lin triconch paleo-Christian church and the promenade between Struga and Kalishta, approved by Struga Municipality in 2019, is under preparation for submission to the World Heritage Centre. A brief description of proposed interventions at the Early Christian Church in Lin, along with

accompanying documentation (in Albanian), was transmitted to the World Heritage Centre in February 2025;

- The underwater archaeological zone 'A' of the pile dwelling settlement in Lin Village was officially designated as cultural property, supporting its conservation and sustainable management. The Council of Ministers' decision was provided;
- Conservation efforts on monuments, particularly churches in North Macedonia, continued throughout 2024;
- Several promotional and awareness-raising events were implemented in 2024.

On 19 July 2024, the State Party of Albania informed the World Heritage Centre of an ongoing review of the protection regime for the Pogradec Terrestrial/Aquatic Protected Landscape. On 18 December 2024, the State Party of Albania submitted documentation for a proposed construction project in Pogradec titled 'New Construction – Hotel Structure of 5 Storeys and Reconstruction, with Extension of One Storey to the Existing Building'. The project conflicts with the protection of the property's OUV; its mass and height overwhelm the character, scale, and skyline of Tushemisht village, the architectural style is inconsistent with local traditional or historically consolidated architecture, and the materials and siting appear inappropriate. If approved, the project would negatively affect the property's integrity and authenticity, representing a type of development that should not occur along the lake coast.

On 12 March 2025, the State Party of North Macedonia submitted to the World Heritage Centre the draft Terms of Reference for a pre-feasibility study on Railway Corridor VIII, covering the section between Struga and the Albanian railway network. On 10 April 2025, the World Heritage Centre provided consolidated comments, including ICOMOS input, to ensure the project aligns with World Heritage Convention procedures and that potential impacts on the property's OUV are properly addressed.

On 21 March 2025, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office submitted to the State Party of North Macedonia the finalised Feasibility Study for planning the coastal zone of Lake Ohrid within the Republic of North Macedonia. This independent document was commissioned by UNESCO, in partnership with UNDP and UNEP, at the request of the national authorities.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies

The prolonged deterioration of the attributes supporting the property's OUV – driven by sustained development pressures, inadequate spatial planning and regulatory enforcement, and limited implementation of conservation actions – continues to leave the property in a highly vulnerable state. The 2024 Reactive Monitoring mission confirmed this severe extreme vulnerability. It reiterated the urgent need for full implementation of the SRP, along with the outstanding recommendations from the 2017 and 2020 missions. While certain improvements have been noted, particularly in the State Party of North Macedonia, such as the adoption of urgent measures to implement the SRP and the ceasing of timber extraction activities from the Galičica National Park, critical gaps remain that can lead to irreversible degradation of both the natural and cultural attributes conveying the property's OUV.

In the State Party of North Macedonia, measures to enhance governance of the SRP are recognised, and some restoration works on protected monuments have continued, alongside occasional action against illegal construction. However, major urban planning issues persist, particularly in areas such as Studenčišča Marsh and Gorica North. Despite the Committee's request to suspend development activities in these zones pending a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and project-level impact assessments, there has been no reported compliance. Furthermore, in the absence of the requested SEA to assess the cumulative and individual effects of existing and forthcoming developments, planning regulations are being revised without a clear understanding of the scope or severity of the impacts requiring mitigation. No significant progress has been made on the development of the long-awaited detailed urban plans for the 19 designated urban complexes in Ohrid. Additional concerns, such as the removal of platforms encroaching on the lakeshore, also remain unresolved.

The 2024 mission concluded that, currently, the regulatory framework and proposed zoning for Studenčišča Marsh remain inadequate to safeguard the key attributes underpinning the property's OUV. The proposed amendments to the draft legislation require further strengthening to ensure effective protection. While recent conservation initiatives within Galičica National Park to enhance the property's resilience are welcomed, ongoing challenges persist. These include illegal construction, unregulated visitor access, and a widespread, poorly controlled road network, all of which continue to pose a serious threat to the Park's ecosystems. The State Party of North Macedonia should therefore address existing gaps in protection under the current zoning arrangement, develop and implement a comprehensive

visitor management plan, enhance the ranger authority, and strengthen enforcement mechanisms, in particular in relation to off-road vehicle activity, which undermines effective conservation.

In the State Party of Albania, the decision to cancel the planned museum at Pogradec Castle, due to its excessive scale and unsuitable architectural language, is welcomed. However, it remains concerning that the status of SRP has not yet been upgraded, as previously requested by the Committee. Institutional accountability also remains limited, highlighting the need to reinforce interagency coordination mechanisms. Urban development pressures persist, notably the construction of a five-storey complex in Tushemisht, proposed development zones between Tushemisht and the Drilon Springs area, as well as on the Lin Peninsula, despite earlier Committee decisions and mission recommendations to the contrary. The lack of strategic and project-specific impact assessments in implemented projects and planning provisions threatens the property's OUV. The Committee should therefore urge Albania to revise and downscale development potential in Tushemisht, update the Progradec General Local Plan (PGLP) to exclude ecologically and visually sensitive areas from urban development, scale back development possibilities in other PGLP zones, as previously requested by the Committee and recommended by previous missions, and should strictly enforce zoning regulations aligned with conservation goals.

The Railway Corridor VIII and A2 road projects lack the required Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessments in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context. It is noted that a pre-feasibility study for an alternative route for Railway Corridor VIII is reportedly planned for 2026 and will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

While the removal of fish farms in Drilon is a positive step, major threats persist from large-scale tourism infrastructure and road development. The proposed Drilon—Tushemisht Waterscape project includes elements previously identified as incompatible with the property's OUV, and no significant redesign is presented. Similarly, the Pogradec bypass near Drilon Springs has not undergone a revised impact assessment. The Committee should therefore urge the State Party of Albania to halt progress on these projects until all necessary impact assessments, including cumulative impacts, have been completed and reviewed, in accordance with recommendations of the 2024 and earlier missions.

Progress in wastewater management, including infrastructure upgrades and expanded monitoring, is welcomed; however, it remains insufficient given the urgency of the ongoing water quality challenges. Pollution hotspots persist at Grashnica and Radozda (North Macedonia). The 2024 mission reported declines in endemic fish and bird populations due to eutrophication and inadequate management, directly affecting the attributes under criterion (vii). The information regarding a proposed new landfill in Novaci, with several transfer stations and the planned closure of the Bukovo site, is noted. The State Party of North Macedonia should inform the World Heritage Centre prior to making a final decision on the location of the Ohrid Region transfer station.

It is also noted that the redirection of the Sateska River is nearing completion, with Standard Operating Procedures currently under development. The Committee should urge the State Party to ensure full compliance with UNDP's Social and Environmental commitments, consistent with the mission's findings.

Overall, the property remains extremely vulnerable, with ongoing degradation of both natural and cultural attributes. The 2024 Mission reaffirmed previous findings of the 2017 and 2020 missions, noting that cumulative threats persist while new challenges continue to emerge. The mission concluded that inappropriate interventions, the negative impacts of ongoing urban development and inadequate spatial planning, eutrophication of the lake, and large-scale infrastructure, amongst other threats, are causing irreversible damage unless prompt and decisive action is taken. It further highlighted the lack of a coherent approach by high-level decision-makers to address the critical state of conservation of the property. Unsustainable development practices, including construction, soil artificialisation and encroachment, continue to override strategies compatible with the property's World Heritage status. Many previous Committee requests remain unimplemented, particularly those related to halting inappropriate development, reinforcing transboundary governance frameworks, and aligning planning and regulation with conservation objectives and the safeguarding of the attributes underpinning the property's OUV. Given the cumulative and ongoing impacts, the mission concluded that the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, as set out in paragraphs 179 and 180 of the Operational Guidelines, are met. The limited progress documented in the latest state of conservation report indicates that efforts to reduce and remediate adverse impacts remain slow with the urgent need to address the extreme vulnerability of the property's OUV.

Since 2021, the Committee has raised the possibility of inscribing the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, if the potential and ascertained dangers to the property's OUV are confirmed and the urgent conservation needs demand prompt broad mobilisation. It is therefore recommended that the Committee inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger to catalyse more decisive action and ensure that the degradation of the attributes conveying the property's OUV is halted and reversed. The SRP, whose revision was welcomed by the Committee in previous decisions, provides a foundation for the joint development by the two States Parties of the Desired state of conservation required for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), along with a set of corrective measures.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.54

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **40 COM 7B.68**, **41 COM 7B.34**, **43 COM 7B.36**, **44 COM 7B.77**, **45 COM 7B.104** and **46 COM 7B.44** adopted at its 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 43rd (Baku, 2019), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021), extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Notes with utmost concern</u> the ongoing degradation of attributes conveying the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, as reaffirmed by the 2024 Reactive Monitoring mission, and <u>urges</u> the States Parties to implement the mission's recommendations, as well as outstanding recommendations from the 2017 and 2020 missions;
- 4. <u>Urges</u> the States Parties to continuously reinforce transboundary dialogue, at both high institutional and operational levels, to ensure effective and sustainable management;
- 5. Regrets the lack of reported progress in preparing a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to define the cumulative impacts on the property's OUV, and also reiterates its request to the States Parties to urgently prepare a SEA that comprehensively assesses the cumulative impacts of all infrastructure and development plans, and other major projects on the property's OUV and to submit it to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
- 6. <u>Reiterates its request</u> to the State Party of Albania to upgrade the status of the Strategic Recovery Plan (SRP), including through clear and reinforced governance, and to promptly implement urgent measures to address existing threats to the OUV and improve the overall state of conservation of the property;
- 7. <u>Deeply regrets</u> the construction of a five-storey complex in Tushemisht and the retention of development zones near Tushemisht, Drilon Springs, and Lin Peninsula without appropriate impact assessments, and <u>reiterates its request</u> to the State Party of Albania to:
 - a) Revise and downscale the Tushemisht development in accordance with the OUV conservation requirements,
 - b) Amend the Pogradec General Local Plan to exclude urbanisation possibilities in ecologically sensitive areas, including those between Tushemisht and Drilon Springs and on Lin Peninsula,
 - c) Strictly enforce regulatory measures protecting the property's OUV;

- 8. Requests moreover the State Party of Albania to halt further development on the Drilon—Tushemisht Waterscape project and the Pogradec bypass road until the revised impact assessments, in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, including cumulative impacts, are completed and submitted for review, in line with the 2024 mission's recommendations:
- 9. <u>Further reiterates its request</u> to the State Party of North Macedonia that:
 - a) Amendments to Detailed Urban Plans and approval of Local Development Plans outside settlements be suspended until the SEA is carried out and demonstrates no adverse effects on the attributes underlying the property's OUV,
 - b) The General Urban Plans for Ohrid and Struga as well as the spatial planning instruments for non-built-up areas, be elaborated as a matter of urgency and fully respect the attributes underlying the property's OUV,
 - c) A systematic assessment, based on clear criteria, of the negative impacts of illegal buildings be conducted, with decisions taken to eliminate or mitigate adverse effects, including removal of illegal constructions or parts thereof,
 - d) The feasibility study for planning of the coastal zone of Lake Ohrid located in the Republic of North Macedonia, part of the mixed transboundary World Heritage property 'Natural and cultural heritage of the Ohrid Region' be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
- 10. Requests furthermore the State Party of North Macedonia to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, the pre-feasibility for the alternative route of the Railway Corridor VIII, the detailed studies and assessments for the Corridor VIII Highway routing options, and associated impact assessments for individual projects, prior to any irreversible decisions, and to suspend any development activities within the project areas until such assessments are completed and reviewed;
- 11. <u>Also urges</u> the State Party of North Macedonia to improve conservation of Studenčišča Marsh, and <u>reiterates its request</u> to:
 - a) Immediately halt construction activities near Studenčišča Marsh and the Gorica 3 complex until the above-mentioned SEA and project-specific impact assessments are completed.
 - b) Revise the proposed draft law for the proclamation of the nature park to ensure alignment with the conservation of the property's OUV, consistent with relevant IUCN standards and mission findings;
- 12. <u>Appreciates</u> positive conservation actions in Galičica National Park, including reduced extractive use and enhanced stakeholder cooperation and <u>requests</u> the State Party of North Macedonia to:
 - a) Complete the revision of zoning policies to achieve the objective of allowing natural processes to occur across 75% of the Park,
 - b) Finalise and implement a visitor management plan,
 - c) Enhance ranger authority and enforcement capacity,
 - d) Implement strict regulations and enforcement to prevent illegal off-road vehicle use, and gradually phase out such activities in the Park;
- 13. <u>Acknowledges</u> the near completion of the Sateska River redirection, and <u>further urges</u> the State Party of North Macedonia to ensure full compliance with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards, as recommended by the 2024 mission;

- 14. <u>Notes with appreciation</u> ongoing wastewater infrastructure upgrades and expanded monitoring efforts by both States Parties, but <u>expresses concern</u> over the slow pace of implementation, and <u>requests furthermore</u> urgent, coordinated action to address pollution hotspots, notably at Grashnica and Radozda in North Macedonia;
- 15. <u>Takes note</u> of the proposed new landfill in Novaci and the planned closure of the Bukovo site, and <u>requests moreover</u> the State Party of North Macedonia to inform the World Heritage Centre prior to final decisions concerning waste transfer stations in the Ohrid Region;
- 16. Also notes with utmost concern that the 2024 mission confirms previous missions' findings, concluding that cumulative and ongoing impacts including urban development, spatial planning deficiencies, inappropriate interventions, eutrophication of the lake, large-scale infrastructure, and other projects have caused serious deterioration of the key attributes conveying the property's OUV, resulting in irreversible degradation unless decisive action is taken, and considers that the conditions for the property's inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger are met, in accordance with paragraphs 179-180 of the Operational Guidelines;
- 17. <u>Decides</u> to inscribe the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid Region (Albania, North Macedonia) on the List of World Heritage in Danger;
- 18. <u>Also requests</u> the States Parties, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to develop a proposal for the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger and a set of corrective measures, including a timeframe for their implementation, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session in 2026, based on the recommendations of the 2020 and 2024 missions and the Strategic Recovery Plan;
- 19. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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 48th session.

55. Laponian Area (Sweden)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

56. Ancient Maya City and Protected Tropical Forests of Calakmul, Campeche (Mexico)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2002

Criteria (i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(ix)(x)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1061/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1061/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Governance (need to strengthen the coordinating mechanism)
- Legal framework (need to assure that the buffer zone is configured in a way designed to protect the property)
- Management systems/ management plan (lack of an integrated Protection and Management Plan) (issue resolved)
- Weak monitoring system for the Cultural and Natural values
- Impact of Tren Maya project

llustrative material, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1061/

Current conservation issues

On 6 December 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1061/documents/, jointly prepared by the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) and reports as follows:

- The PROMEZA programme (Programa de Mejoramiento de Zonas Arqueológicas) was established to implement research, conservation, infrastructure and museography in 28 archaeological sites located along the route of the Tren Maya. It included the construction of Visitor Service Centres, interpretation trails and museum spaces, in anticipation of the expected increase in the number of visitors as a result of the start of the train services. In 2024, INAH undertook restoration and conservation works at the pre-Hispanic structures located in the core zone, including at the Great Acropolis and structures around the Central Plaza. The programme also provided funding for research, documentation and conservation of the stucco reliefs and mural paintings at the Chi'k Naahb complex. New signage panels were installed and trails received extensive maintenance;
- Research has continued on the mural paintings in the substructure IIC. A new map of the property
 is being produced based on LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data collected over past years.
 Investigation of LiDAR data outside of the property and its buffer zone, but within the Calakmul
 Biosphere Reserve, revealed thousands of structures but field reconnaissance is required to
 complement the information;

- INAH concluded the archaeological work related to the construction of the Tren Maya. The study and analysis of the findings will now be undertaken. The highest concentration of findings was along section 7, which is closest to the property. In response to the Committee's recommendations to extend the property to include archaeological resources within the biosphere reserve, research activities are continuing through LiDAR images and in collaboration with foreign universities:
- The management program of the property is being updated to regulate tourism-related spaces and permitted activities;
- The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for "Tramo 7" of the Tren Maya project considers international treaties and cumulative impacts. It concludes with no direct impact on the property but identifies a 3.7 km impact in the buffer zone, proposing mitigation and compensation measures;
- The State Party lacks legal tools and institutional capacity to conduct a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as requested but is exploring its feasibility;
- A new Visitor Services Centre and the Calakmul Site Museum opened in 2024. Visitation increased 252% from 2012 to 2023, with further growth expected due to the Tren Maya. Studies on carrying capacity are being updated;
- A hotel is planned within the property, covering 3.13 hectares, including infrastructure and utilities. An EIA is under review by the given authorities since August 2024;
- Zoning of the natural protected area was harmonized with the property, and communities within
 its limits now exercise their historical rights following a consultation process with indigenous and
 local communities:
- There has been no damage or deterioration to the cultural heritage from the Tren Maya project, reporting that "the archaeological site is currently in better condition than in previous years and is prepared to receive a greater number of visitors".

On 15 February 2025, the State Party presented information on other World Heritage properties along the route of the Tren Maya project, where INAH implemented conservation works and improved facilities for visitors: the 'Pre-Hispanic City and National Park of Palenque', the 'Pre-Hispanic City of Chichen Itza' and the 'Pre-Hispanic Town of Uxmal'. Although Uxmal is relatively far from the Tren Maya, the actual number of 300.000 visitors per year is expected to multiply by five. A Visitor Services Centre was built in the buffer zone, and new signage and interpretation panels installed. Outside the buffer zone, a new hotel was built. INAH observed that an unauthorized portion of a new road, related to the hotel, crosses the World Heritage property over a length of 335 meters. INAH did not observe any damange to the property but is concerned about this precedent.

On 27 February 2025, the State Party sent a letter to the World Heritage Centre to formally invite a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, as requested in Decision **46 COM 7B.46**. The mission remains in planning at the time of drafting.

Analysis and Conclusion of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies

It is noted with appreciation that the state of conservation report was prepared by a joint working team of INAH and CONANP. The implementation of the PROMEZA project is noted in relation to the broader impact of the Tren Maya project, particularly the conservation and documentation work at the core area of the archaeological zone as well as the new signage and improved trails to facilitate interpretation and controlled access to the ruins. The data collected through LiDAR imagery will improve knowledge of the archaeological area and guide conservation actions.

It is highly regrettable that the State Party has not carried out the SEA requested by the Committee for the Tren Maya project since 2023, noting that the official Tren Maya project announced Tramo 7 and the route already be operational since December 2024 (www.trenmaya.gob.mx/comunicado161224.php), and several new infrastructure components have been developed without a proper EIA on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and its buffer zone, as repeatedly requested. The State Party should be reminded to conduct impact assessments for proposed interventions and to effectively manage not only the property and its buffer zone, but also the wider setting (paragraphs 110, 112 and 118bis of the Operational Guidelines). This SEA should also inform the management programme and the carrying capacity of the property, both of which should be reviewed by the World Heritage Center and the Advisory Bodies. Given that the

infrastructure projects are already operational without a proper impact assessment, the State Party should be requested to urgently undertake and submit an action plan for the implementation of mitigation measures for each of the projects.

Tourism has significantly increased and is expected to grow further with the Tren Maya. The cumulative impacts of all associated projects must be carefully assessed to ensure the conservation of the property. The Committee has noted that the existing EIA for the Tramo 7 of the Tren Maya project does not allow a comprehensive evaluation of impacts on the OUV and has requested an updated EIA that includes all values and attributes of the property, assesses impacts beyond the physical footprint, and considers connectivity across the entire area. However, the State Party has not addressed these requests. Therefore, it is not currently possible to confirm that the Tren Maya and related developments do not or will not impact the property's OUV.

The planned development of a hotel within the property raises serious concerns, especially given water scarcity. An EIA must be conducted in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, assessing cumulative impacts with other existing projects.

Positively, the boundaries of the natural protected area have been aligned with the World Heritage property, and a consultation process with local and Indigenous communities has taken place.

It is welcomed that the State Party has invited a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, as requested by the World Heritage Committee in Decision **46 COM 7B.46**. The Terms of Reference of the mission should reflect the aforementioned concerns and the ICOMOS and IUCN Technical Review recommendations as well as assessing the status of the various infrastructural works, including the planned hotel.

The additional information on works related to the Tren Maya project in Palenque, Chichén Itzá, Uxmal and the city of Campeche is appreciated and will be considered in the context of their respective state of conservation. The contribution of the PROMEZA programme to research, conservation and improved visitor facilities at these properties should be valued. However, it is regrettable and of serious concern that main infrastructural works such as the Visitor Services Centres, museums and hotels were planned and constructed without the Committee or the Advisory Bodies having been able to provide advice before the actual construction took place.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.56

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **44 COM 7B.78**, **45COM7B.99** and **46COM7B.46** adopted at its extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021), extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Takes note</u> of the submission of a state of conservation report jointly prepared by the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) and the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP);
- 4. <u>Takes note</u> of the actions taken by INAH in the framework of the Programme for the Improvement of Archaeological Areas (PROMEZA) to conserve the archeological heritage and to prepare the property for increased numbers of visitors as a result of the Tren Maya project;
- 5. <u>Notes with utmost concern</u> that major infrastructural works, such as the Tren Maya Tramo 7, Calakmul train station, the Calakmul Site Museum and a new Visitor Services Centre (CATVI), have been completed, <u>deeply regrets</u> that the State Party did not submit the corresponding impact assessments of these projects to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies and that it remains unclear whether any potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property was adequately

considered and avoided, and therefore <u>requests</u> the State Party to urgently undertake and submit an action plan for the implementation of mitigation measures for each of the projects;

- 6. <u>Also regrets</u> that the State Party has not undertaken the requested Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to evaluate the strategic alignment and cumulative impacts of the Tren Maya project and other related developments, whilst multiple development projects are advancing, and <u>urges</u> the State Party to prioritize undertaking the SEA in line with the principles of the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and to submit it to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
- 7. <u>Also notes with appreciation</u> that the boundaries of the protected areas are now harmonized with those of the property, following a consultation process with local and indigenous communities;
- 8. <u>Further notes with concern</u> that visitation to the property has significantly increased and is expected to further increase, without the necessary prior studies to assess all cumulative impacts, and therefore <u>also requests</u> the State Party to submit the updated management programme and carrying capacity proposals to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, before any final decisions are made;
- 9. <u>Notes furthermore with concern</u> that a major new hotel is being planned to be located within the boundaries of the World Heritage property and <u>further requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, an Environmental Impact Assessment of this project, and not to give final approval for the hotel construction before this review process is completed;
- 10. <u>Welcomes</u> the invitation by the State Party for a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, as requested in its Decision **46 COM 7B.46**, and requests that the Terms of Reference of the mission reflect the abovementioned concerns, the ICOMOS and IUCN Technical Review recommendations, and an assessment of the status of the various infrastructural works that concern the OUV of the property;
- 11. <u>Appreciates</u> the reports on the implementation of the PROMEZA programme at the World Heritage properties of Pre-Hispanic City and National Park of Palenque, Pre-Hispanic City of Chichen-Itza, Pre-Hispanic Town of Uxmal and Historic Fortified Town of Campeche, and <u>regrets</u> that the Committee was not requested to provide advice on this programme before its implementation;
- 12. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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 48th session.

AFRICA

60.	Ngorongoro	Conservation Area	(United Re	public of Tanzania	a)
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See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

ARAB STATES

61.	The Ahwar of Southern Iraq: Refuge of Biodiversity and the Relict Landscape of
	the Mesopotamian Cities (Iraq)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

CULTURAL PROPERTIES

ASIA AND PACIFIC

65. Historic Centre of Macao (China)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

84. Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore (Pakistan)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1981

Criteria (i)(ii)(iii)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 2000-2012

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/171/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 5 (from 1981-2000) Total amount approved: USD 121,000

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/171/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount provided to the property: USD 975,000 from the UNESCO/Norway Funds-in-Trust, the UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust, the Getty Foundation, and the Embassy of the United States of America in Pakistan

Previous monitoring missions

October 2000: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2001 and June 2003: UNESCO Advisory missions; November 2005: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; February 2009: joint UNESCO Tehran Office/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; April/May 2012: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; April 2018: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; December 2024: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Housing; Land conversion (Encroachments and urban pressure)
- Management systems/management plan (Inadequate management mechanisms; lack of definition of boundaries of the Lahore Fort and Shalamar Gardens)
- Legal framework (Incomplete legislation)
- Financial resources (Lack of sufficient financial resources to implement management mechanisms)
- Underground transport infrastructure
- Ground transport infrastructure (Development of the Orange Line Metro aerial portion of the line)
- Non-compliance with paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines
- Lack of progress with implementation of the recommendations of the 2018 Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission.

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/171/

Current conservation issues

On 14 November 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report. An executive summary of this report is available at: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/171/documents/. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in this report, as follows:

- The State Party remains committed to ongoing engagement with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, undertaking Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) for major projects and compliance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, and has made progress with implementing the recommendations of the 2018 Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission:
- Following the previous "Inception Report' and eight feasibility studies, a 'Comprehensive Report' with a detailed programme was submitted to the World Heritage Centre in January 2024;
- Administrative responsibility for Shalamar Gardens has been transferred to the Walled City of Lahore Authority;
- The Lahore Fort Site Management Plan is under preparation, and summary information focused on policies for the proper management, use, and development of the Fort have been provided.
- Conservation efforts have continued at the Fort, including restoration of the Sheesh Mahal, Athdara Pavilion/Sikh Hammam, Summer Palace, Akbari Gate, Khilwat Khana, Curator's House, northwestern end of the Royal Kitchen/Loh Temple, Sikh Era Temple, Imperial Zenana Mosque and Kharak Singh Haveli. A prototype for conservation of the western section of the Picture Wall was peer reviewed prior to implementation, and conservation of the northern segment is expected to be completed during 2025. The Akbari Mahal, which was previously used as a library, is being adapted to become a state-of-the-art public library;
- At Shalamar Gardens, an effective administrative system has been established for project operations, security and surveillance systems have been upgraded, fountains have been rehabilitated, and visitor facilities upgraded and improved. A structured system has been introduced for visitor management, to enhance experience and protect the site. As part of the emergency stabilisation efforts, the restoration of the garden's outer walls has been completed. Other work-in-progress includes Naqarkhana Gate, the King's Chamber, the Queen's Chamber, and the Aiwan (White Baradari);
- A decision has been made to not extend the boundary of the Lahore Fort component of the
 property, noting that the 'Master Conservation and Redevelopment Plan for the Walled City of
 Lahore' provides for a conjoined buffer area for the Lahore Fort and Badshahi Mosque ensemble.
 The 'Buffer Zone Management Study for Shalamar Gardens' forms part of the Comprehensive
 Report programme.

At the invitation of the State Party, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission took place in December 2024. The mission report is available at: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/171/documents/.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The commitment of the State Party to the conservation of the property, compliance with the processes of the Operational Guidelines, and engagement with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies is welcome. However, it is noted that some projects have proceeded within the property without prior submission of documentation in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. Nevertheless, the 2024 Reactive Monitoring mission (2024 mission) concluded that the property retains its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), authenticity, and integrity. However, the mission also observed that the overall state of conservation of the property remains under threat.

The 2024 mission acknowledged that a number of restoration programmes at the property are progressing appropriately and to high standards, particularly at the Lahore Fort with respect to the preservation of the Sheesh Mahal ceiling. However, the 2024 mission also reported concern with works at the Shalamar Gardens, particularly the undue haste with which restoration of the garden walls was carried out, and that this work should be subject to ongoing monitoring. The 2024 mission advised that the State Party should submit details of the restoration of the hydraulic system and the landscapes at the Shalamar Gardens to the World Heritage Centre for technical review. The 2024 mission also

expressed strong concern about the potential impact of inappropriate commercial activities on the authenticity, integrity, and OUV of the property, urging caution in the implementation of adaptive re-use projects, which need be approached with thorough and meticulous studies which assess carrying capacity. The 2024 mission also endorsed the findings of the 2018 mission regarding governance, supported more co-operative processes between levels of government, and expressed concern that advisory committees for the Walled City of Lahore Authority need to be more inclusive of the local community and local organisations.

The 2024 mission considered the Final Comprehensive Report, observing that it addresses the recommendations of the 2018 mission holistically through examining underlying issues and outlining implementation programmes. The 2024 mission supported operationalisation of the Comprehensive Report, detailed building-specific dilapidation studies, material surveys, and restoration programmes regarding alignment of the GT Road and related landscaping. It also supported careful consideration of landscaping in the Shalamar Gardens three terraces as well as a study and HIA for a potential new entrance to the Fort. Notwithstanding the findings and recommendations of the 2024 mission, it would nevertheless be beneficial for the Comprehensive Report to be subject to a technical review and for the State Party to be encouraged to collaborate with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS as the forthcoming extensive programme is progressively implemented.

The Lahore Fort Site Management Plan is welcome, and the State Party should be invited to submit it for technical review prior to finalisation. The February 2023 ICOMOS Technical Review of the 'Lahore Fort Precincts and Buffer Zone Master Plan' recommended changes prior to finalisation and implementation, and that the State Party be invited to submit proposals for property and buffer zone boundary modification. It is noted with regret that the State Party does not intend to pursue, at this stage, the proposed boundary modification for inclusion of Badshahi Masjid, the Hazoori Bagh, and the Sikh Funerary complex within the property boundaries of the Lahore Fort component part. The 2024 mission recommended that the boundaries of the buffer zones for both components of the property should be adjusted to follow physical features to assist with management, and supported the extension of the buffer zone around the Shalamar Gardens component part of the property. The Committee may wish to request again that a separate study should be prepared and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, with any resulting proposal for a boundary modification to follow the processes outlined in paragraphs 163 to 165 of the Operational Guidelines.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.84

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. Recalling Decision 45 COM 7B.47, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),
- 3. <u>Reiterates its previous request</u> to the State Party to continue working in close cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS to continue supporting the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
- 4. <u>Takes note</u> of the report provided by the State Party, including a wide range of conservation projects and the ongoing efforts to address the Committee's previous requests as well as the recommendations of the 2018 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission, including the 'Comprehensive Report' dated August 2023, and encourages the State Party to actively engage with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS as proposed programmes are progressively implemented;
- 5. <u>Also notes</u> the conclusions of the December 2024 Reactive Monitoring mission, <u>welcomes</u> the reported high standard of work at the Lahore Fort and <u>requests</u> the State Party to implement the mission's recommendations, and in particular to:
 - a) Establish a monitoring programme for the walls of Shalamar Gardens,

- b) Approach proposed adaptive re-use projects within the property with caution, based on thorough and meticulous studies which assess carrying capacity,
- c) Foster co-operative processes regarding the conservation and management of the property between levels of government,
- d) Ensure that the advisory committees for the Walled City of Lahore Authority are more inclusive of the local community and local organizations,
- e) Undertake detailed building-specific dilapidation studies, material surveys, and restoration programmes,
- f) Re-align the GT Road and undertake related landscaping works;
- 6. <u>Also requests</u> that the 'Comprehensive Report' dated August 2023 be subject to a further technical review by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS;
- 7. <u>Further requests</u> the State Party to submit details, including Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) following the methodology of the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context, to the World Heritage Centre in conformity with paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines, for technical review prior to any irreversible decisions for the:
 - a) Adaptation of the Akbari Mahal to become a public library,
 - b) Restoration of the hydraulic system and the landscapes at the Shalamar Gardens,
 - c) Landscaping in the Shalamar Gardens three terraces,
 - d) The potential new entrance to the Fort;
- 8. Requests furthermore the State Party to submit the 'Lahore Fort Precincts and Buffer Zone Master Plan', revised in accordance with the ICOMOS Technical Review, and the 'Lahore Fort Site Management Plan, to the World Heritage Centre for technical review by ICOMOS prior to their finalisation and implementation;
- 9. Also reiterates its request to the State Party to prepare and submit to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, a separate study related to the possible boundary modification to include Badshahi Masjid, the Hazoori Bagh, and the Sikh Funerary complex within the inscribed property, and a visual analysis and consideration of potential adjustments to the buffer zone of the Shalamar Gardens component part, having regard to the recommendations of the 2024 Reactive Monitoring mission, and further reiterates its request to the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre a proposal for a boundary modification based on the outcomes of the aforementioned study, prepared in accordance with paragraphs 163 to 165 of the Operational Guidelines and including the revision of the buffer zones of either or both components of the property, after having considered all appropriate social measures, especially if any action would involve the displacement of people residing in the neighbouring areas of the property;
- 10. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.

86. Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty (Republic of Korea)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2009

Criteria (iii)(iv)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1319/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1319/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

March 2023: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission; March 2025: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management systems/ management plan (Development of a sustainable tourism management plan)
- Commercial development; Housing (High-rise developments in the vicinity of the component parts)

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1319/

Current conservation issues

On 1 February 2025, the State Party provided a progress report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the Committee's previous decisions for this serial World Heritage property comprising 40 tombs across 18 clusters, a summary of which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1319/documents/. The report provides the following information:

- The State Party reports the completion of all court proceedings related to the apartment complex constructed near the Jangneung (W6) cluster. Despite legal action taken by the Korea Heritage Service (KHS), the courts ruled in favour of the developers, and all appeals were dismissed;
- Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) are ongoing for the public housing developments near the Seooreung (W1) and Taereung (M3) clusters, in line with the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS Technical Reviews. These HIAs are currently under nationallevel finalisation and subject to review by the Cultural Heritage Committee (CHC);
- In response to development threats, the State Party has implemented the amended *Special Act on Conservation, Management, and Utilization of World Heritage*, which mandates HIAs for relevant projects and introduces legal mechanisms to better manage impacts on World Heritage properties;
- The KHS has reorganised its internal structure to strengthen heritage protection, replacing the former task force with a permanent Historic and Cultural Environment Team responsible for monitoring and coordination across affected sites:
- The Standing Advisory Committee, established to facilitate consultation between KHS and other national and local stakeholders, continues to operate as a platform for policy guidance and coordination on development issues;
- Restoration work has begun at Uireung (M5) following the partial demolition of the Korea National University of Arts site, with remaining structures scheduled for phased removal as relocation plans proceed;

- At Taereung (M3), the Korean Sport & Olympic Committee has begun preparations for a master plan and demolition schedule for retained structures within the former training centre, which will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre once finalised;
- The KHS has initiated a national-level review of the buffer zones and historic and cultural environment conservation areas associated with each cluster, acknowledging mismatches in current zoning and the need for alignment with World Heritage protection standards;
- A preliminary drone survey and digital mapping of conservation areas have been conducted to assess development risks and support future landscape management strategies;
- Public engagement and awareness-raising efforts are ongoing, including capacity-building initiatives for local government officials and improved public access to regulatory information.

As requested by the Committee in Decisions **45 COM 7B.48** and **46 COM 7B.40**, the State Party invited a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission to the property on 4–11 March 2025, the report of which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1319/documents/.

The mission assessed the state of conservation of the property, with a particular focus on the cumulative impacts of development in the buffer zones and wider setting of the component parts. Thirteen of the 18 clusters were visited, including the most severely affected component parts, such as Jangneung (W6), Taereung (M3), and Seooreung (W1), along with a well-preserved reference site at Gwangneung (E4). The mission team met with national and local authorities and consulted stakeholders such as the Korean Sport & Olympic Committee, the Korea National University of the Arts, civil society representatives, and community members.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party has made tangible progress in responding to Decision **46 COM 7B.40**, particularly in institutionalising measures to address development pressures affecting the setting of the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty. The implementation of the *Special Act on Conservation, Management, and Utilization of World Heritage*, effective since November 2024, establishes a new legal framework mandating HIAs for developments that may have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of World Heritage properties. This represents a significant improvement in aligning national heritage protection with international standards.

It is noted that HIAs remain underway for major public housing developments near the Seooreung (W1) and Taereung (W3) clusters. These assessments should follow the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context and be presented for review to the CHC of KHS before being submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review. It is welcome that consultations have already led to design modifications aimed at reducing the visual impact of proposed developments on key sightlines.

In response to past development challenges, particularly at the Gimpo Jangneung (W6) cluster, the KHS has taken steps to enhance governance and improve stakeholder coordination. The restructured Historic and Cultural Environment Team (formerly the KHS Task Force) and the Standing Advisory Committee should facilitate technical consultation and interagency engagement. Nevertheless, the absence of key development actors such as the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT) and the Korea Land and Housing Corporation during the 2025 mission highlights persistent coordination challenges. The mission noted that KHS made significant efforts to secure their participation, but greater commitment of all parties is required to ensure a whole-of-government approach to heritage protection.

The March 2025 Reactive Monitoring mission emphasised that the setting of the tombs—essential to both their historical design and ongoing ritual use—is a critical component of the property's integrity. Worryingly, the mission confirmed that high-rise developments within and beyond the buffer zones of numerous clusters have the potential to compromise the property's sacred landscape and geomantic relationships, particularly those articulated through *pungsu* principles that support the property's OUV. While the latter currently remains intact, it is essential that the State Party carefully consider the capacity of the serial property as a whole to continue demonstrating all attributes of OUV across its different component parts.

The mission also found that the current buffer zones, defined at the time of inscription, are insufficient to safeguard the wider landscape and should be revised based on a thorough analysis of key attributes of OUV and key sightlines. An update of the Management Plan, which is now nearly 20 years old, is also recommended once the attributes conveying the OUV are more precisely identified. The State

Party's commitment to engaging with the Advisory Bodies on these matters, including the operationalisation of the Special Act through a forthcoming Presidential Ordinance, is welcomed.

The mission made eight key recommendations, prioritising the definition and protection of the wider setting, expansion and harmonisation of buffer zones, and full operationalisation of HIAs. It urged the State Party to revise its planning instruments to align with heritage-sensitive zoning, enhance stakeholder coordination, particularly with development and infrastructure agencies, and update the 2009 Management Plan, for example by conducting a management effectiveness assessment utilising the Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0. Specific actions were also recommended to address ongoing incompatibilities at Taereung (W3) and Uireung (M5) with an updated plan of action, continue ecological restoration and stone conservation, and integrate climate adaptation into heritage management. The mission warned that ongoing, cumulative pressures could have deleterious effects on the inherent characteristics of the property, in conformity with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines if they are not addressed promptly through a systemic approach.

Living heritage practices, particularly ancestral rites, were observed to be vibrant and represent a remarkable continuity of use and practice since the 15th century. The mission highlighted their importance and recommended that they be fully considered in management and conservation strategies moving forward, which should include coordination with relevant key stakeholders.

Finally, the mission recommended that the Committee consider recognising that the issues faced by this property represent a precedent-setting case for the impacts of development in the wider setting of World Heritage properties and demonstrates the urgent need for clearer global guidance on the protection and regulation of the wider setting of properties beyond their buffer zones. The Committee may wish to request the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop guidance in this regard, if sufficient funding can be made available.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.86

- 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **45 COM 7B.48** and **46 COM 7B.40**, adopted at its extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) and 46th (New Delhi, 2024) sessions, respectively,
- Welcomes the entry into force of the Special Act on Conservation, Management, and Utilization of World Heritage and the establishment of a dedicated Historic and Cultural Environment Team and Standing Advisory Committee to support heritage conservation and inter-agency coordination;
- Acknowledges the State Party's invitation of a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission in March 2025, takes note of the findings of the mission and requests the State Party to implement fully the recommendations presented in its report;
- 5. Notes with satisfaction the mission's finding that the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is not currently considered to be threatened, but expresses concern about the cumulative impacts of existing and planned high-rise developments in the buffer zones and wider settings of multiple component parts, particularly at Jangneung (W6), Taereung (M3), and Seooreung (W1), and considers that continued cumulative degradation of the property's wider setting may, in the future, have deleterious effects on the inherent characteristics of the property, in conformity with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines if key visual, spatial, and ritual attributes of the property's Outstanding Universal Value are further compromised;

- 6. Urges the State Party to:
 - a) Finalise the Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) for the Taereung and Changneung public housing developments, along with any other outstanding HIA, in conformity with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and submit them to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Centre and the Advisory Bodies, as soon as possible and well ahead of the Committee's next review of this property,
 - b) Ensure meaningful consultation between heritage authorities and development actors, including the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, the Korea Land and Housing Corporation, and the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sports during all stages of planning and implementation of development projects,
 - c) Operationalise the revised Special Act on Conservation, Management, and Utilization of World Heritage through the adoption of a Presidential Ordinance, to be finalised in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies,
 - d) Consider expanding the buffer zones of component parts in urban areas to reflect key visual, geomantic and ritual attributes, using terminology and zoning instruments that are clearly understandable to urban planners, developers, and non-heritage professionals alike, based on a refined analysis of the attributes of OUV and key sightlines for each Royal Tomb;
- 7. <u>Encourages</u> the State Party to make use of the Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0 to identify key gaps and opportunities as well as areas for improvement and strengthening in the existing management system, and <u>requests</u> that it undertake a comprehensive revision of the property's Management Plan to reflect current challenges, recent legal changes, and incorporate the protection of living heritage practices and the sacred landscape values, and that it submit a draft to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Centre and the Advisory Bodies, as soon as possible and well ahead of the Committee's next review of this property;
- 8. Recognises that the case of the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty represents a precedent-setting case for the impacts on World Heritage properties of activities located in their wider setting beyond their buffer zones, and that it demonstrates the urgent need for more explicit global guidance on the protection and regulation of the wider setting of World Heritage properties; encourages the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to develop guidance on this topic; and calls upon the States Parties to provide dedicated support for this activity;
- 9. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.

91. Samarkand – Crossroad of Cultures (Uzbekistan)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2001

Criteria (i)(ii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/603/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 2 (from 1999 to 2018) Total amount approved: USD 44,800

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/603/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

Total amount granted: USD 50,000 from the UNESCO/Spain Funds-in-Trust; 2016: USD 30,670 from the UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust project for the Application of the UNESCO Recommendation on Historic Urban landscape (HUL, 2011) at the World Heritage properties of the Historic Centre of Bukhara and Samarkand; 2019: USD 43,115 UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust project for Building capacity in managing WH properties, interconnection of development and heritage preservation in Uzbekistan

Previous monitoring missions

April 2005: UNESCO Tashkent Office/ICOMOS expert mission; March 2006: UNESCO Tashkent Office/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; October 2006: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission; December 2007: Word Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; March 2009: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; January 2020: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission; November 2024: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Housing (Traditional housing and proposed demolition of mahalla residential areas)
- Management deficiency (Impact of urban landscaping programme on the authenticity and integrity of the property)
- Management Systems/Management Plan (Lack of strategic approach to urban conservation; Lack of implementation of the management plan and need to integrate with the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) Recommendation)
- Human resources (lack of institutional capacity and insufficient number of trained professionals and technical staff for the effective protection, conservation, and management of World Heritage properties)
- Others (Conservation of urban fabric)

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/603/

Current conservation issues

On 30 November 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report. An executive summary of this report is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/603/documents/. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in this report, as follows:

- The legal framework supporting heritage conservation continues to be updated;
- The International Advisory Committee (IAC) on World Heritage in Uzbekistan held its third meeting in November 2024 and inspected monuments and mahallas:
- Recommendations from the 2020 Reactive Monitoring mission have been incorporated into the
 property's draft Management Plan, which the IAC will review before it is submitted to the World
 Heritage Centre. Advice is also being provided by the Scientific-Expert Council of the Agency for
 Cultural Heritage;

- Guidelines for conservation and new development have been presented to community representatives and mahalla leaders and promoted through media. Sixteen seminars were organised through the project "Increasing the potential of tourism resources in Samarkand and developing a laboratory at the Samarkand Institute of Archaeology", implemented jointly with the Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation;
- Other initiatives include installation of video surveillance, provision of accessible visitor information, the commitment not to expand major transport routes, and provision of additional visitor footpaths;
- In conjunction with the Aga Khan Foundation, a restoration project will be developed for the Bibi Khanoum Ensemble and Mosque, informed by a comprehensive study of archival data, and documentation of physical conditions;
- A revised Samarkand Hotel project is being prepared in response to the ICOMOS Technical review;
- A comprehensive architectural concept, known as 'Third Renaissance' project, has been
 developed for the City of Samarkand, including Chorsu, Koshkhovuz, Shah-i-Zinda, Gur-Emir,
 Registan, Sherdor, Tillakori and Ulugh Beg's Observatory. Information is provided on the state of
 conservation of the Shakhi-Zinda Ensemble, Bibi Khanum, Registan, Rukhabat Mausoleum and
 Gur-Emir, Ulugh Bek's Observatory, the City Garden, Ishratkhona Cultural Heritage Site,
 Koshkhovuz Street Mosque, and the mahallas;
- The illegal Imari building is being addressed through consultation with apartment owners, mindful of the rights of Uzbek citizens;
- The Hilton Hotel, located 8 km from the historical centre within the Eternal Samarkand complex, has no impact on heritage.

At the invitation of the State Party, a joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission took place in November 2024 and the mission report is available at: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/603/documents.

In April 2025, the World Heritage Centre was informed of a project to expand the Imam Maturidi Memorial Complex, which may have significant and potentially irreversible impacts on the property. On 17 April 2025, the World Heritage Centre sent a letter to the State Party to verify the third-party information on the expansion project.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

Ongoing improvements to the legal framework and support provided by the expert advisory committees and the IAC are welcome, as are practical initiatives such as the development of conservation and development guidelines, tourism facilities, and resources. The State Party is yet to submit the revised Master Plan integrating the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach and the new Urban Design Guidelines, as requested by the Committee in Decision **44 COM 7B.40**. The moratorium on demolition and new development should remain until the new Urban Design Guidelines, integrated Master Plan and further revised Management Plan are finalised and submitted to the World Heritage Centre and reviewed positively by the Advisory Bodies. The long-term educational programmes for building and developing the national capacities in management and conservation of the built and World Heritage and the training seminars are also welcome, but further capacity building on the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the HUL is needed for those directly involved in the management of the property. The IAC held its fourth meeting in May 2025, providing a platform for reviewing ongoing conservation challenges and fostering collaborative approaches among national stakeholders and international experts. On this occasion, a workshop was held on World Heritage sites and the HUL Recommendation.

The 2024 Advisory mission concluded that the tangible and intangible attributes that collectively contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property remain largely intact. While the mission recognised the necessity of a comprehensive museum facility in Samarkand, it concluded that the site proposed for the construction of the new Silk Road Museum, in the vicinity of the Bibi Khanoum Mosque and Mausoleum should be reconsidered, as it would be located within the Mahallas and contains archaeological remains that are likely to be both extensive and highly significant. It further observed that the proposed 'Third Renaissance' project proposes significant changes to major monuments such as Shah-i-Zinda, Gur-Emir, Ulugh Beg Observatory and Registan, and that if not sensitively managed and based on rigorous analysis of evidence, has the potential to result in major impacts. The mission therefore recommended a cautious approach including preparation of

conservation plans for monuments, as well as Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) undertaken in conformity with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context. The mission has provided recommendations regarding interpretation strategies, mahallas, governance, the IAC, the proposed minor boundary modification, and capacity building.

Significant projects within the property should have HIAs and be referred to the World Heritage Centre in conformity with paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines, and previous Decisions of the Committee. The information in the State Party report does not include the documentation requested by the Committee in Decision **45 COM 7B.50**. However, on 30 mai 2025, the World Heritage Centre received the requested documentation concerning the proposed works at Shah-i-Zinda, Gur-Emir, and Registan. Physical conservation of the Bibi Khanoum Ensemble and Mosque remains pressing but should be guided by expert advice, with urgent stabilisation works prioritised. The Committee should remind the State Party to submit detailed documentation of the remaining proposed works to the World Heritage Centre. The Hilton Hotel is within an area that may form part of the proposed buffer zone; it is understood that the project may already be completed, and therefore it is not proposed to pursue further implementation of the recommendation of the 2020 Reactive Monitoring mission in relation to this development. The proposed Minor Boundary Modification to adjust the buffer zone so that it aligns with mahalla boundaries should reflect the recommendations of the 2020 Reactive Monitoring mission, have regard to the advice of the IAC, and be prepared and submitted in accordance with Paragraph 164 and Annex 11 of the Operational Guidelines.

The Committee may wish to request a definitive schedule of actions already underway and the strategy for implementing further actions necessary to implement the recommendations of both the 2020 Reactive Monitoring mission and the 2024 Advisory mission. The State Party should be reminded of the previous request by the Committee to develop a three-year comprehensive national capacity-building programme in World Heritage site management, HIAs, and technical projects for historic monuments.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.91

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3.
- 2. Recalling Decision **45 COM 7B.50**, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> continuing efforts to support the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property through improvements to the legal framework, advice from the International Advisory Committee on World Heritage in Uzbekistan (IAC), training seminars, conservation and development guidelines, tourism facilities and resources, and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to support and implement the recommendations of the IAC as well as previous Committee Decisions and mission recommendations, particularly in relation to development and/or conservation projects within the property and its buffer zone:
- 4. Notes the conclusions of the 2024 joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission in particular regarding the location of the new Silk Road Museum and the proposed 'Third Renaissance' project, requests the State Party to implement the mission recommendations, and to prepare and submit to the World Heritage Centre a schedule of actions already completed and the proposed strategy and programme for the further actions necessary to fully implement the recommendations of both the 2020 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission and the 2024 Advisory mission;
- 5. <u>Also requests</u> the State Party to update the Master Plan and Management Plan in accordance with the findings of the 2024 Advisory mission, including integration of the principles of the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL);

- 6. <u>Further requests</u> the State Party to continue the moratorium on development and new work within the property and its buffer zone until the new Urban Design Guidelines, the integrated Master Plan for Samarkand and the Management Plan for the property have been finalised, submitted to the World Heritage Centre and reviewed positively by the Advisory Bodies;
- 7. <u>Reiterates its previous request</u> to the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, for review by the Advisory Bodies, and in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines:
 - a) A revised detailed project documentation for works proposed to Chorsu Trade Dome, Koshhovuz, Shah-i-Zinda, Gur-Emir, Registan, Samarqand Sherdor, Tillaqori and the Ulugbek Observatory complex, including as part of the 'Third Renaissance' project,
 - b) Details of proposed works to remove or modify the Imari building,
 - c) Detailed documentation of the proposed conservation programme for the Bibi Khanoum Ensemble and Mosque,
 - d) Revised Samarkand Hotel Concept Design, which address the recommendations of the 2023 ICOMOS Technical Review;
- 8. <u>Also notes</u> the State Party's advice that it will submit a proposal for a Minor Boundary Modification to adjust the buffer zone, in accordance with Paragraph 164 and Annex 11 of the Operational Guidelines, and <u>requests furthermore</u> that the proposal follows the recommendations of the 2020 Reactive Monitoring mission and advice from the IAC, and aligns the buffer zone with the mahalla boundaries;
- 9. Requests moreover for the State Party to continue to prepare Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) for all major conservation or development projects, and to adopt the methodology of the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, and to continue submitting detailed project documentation to the World Heritage Centre for review, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, and further requests the State Party to provide clarification regarding the third party concerns on the expansion project of the Imam Maturidi Memorial Complex;
- 10. <u>Reminds</u> the State Party of its previous request to develop a three-year comprehensive national capacity-building programme in World Heritage site management, HIA, and technical projects for historic monuments, including further capacity building on the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the HUL for those directly involved in the management of the property;
- 11. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.

92. Central Sector of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long - Hanoi (Viet Nam)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2010

Criteria (ii)(iii)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1328/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 1 (2007)

Total amount approved: USD 29,700

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1328/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

UNESCO/Japanese Funds-in-Trust project 'Exploring World Heritage sites in Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam" (2011-2015)

Previous monitoring missions

July 2023: UNESCO/ICOMOS Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Archaeological Excavation
- Management systems / Management plan
- Management activities
- · Legal framework

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1328/

Current conservation issues

On 26 January 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, an executive summary of which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1328/documents/. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented, as follows:

- In 2024, the entire area of the property, including the Vietnam Military History Museum and the Flag Tower relic, were transferred to the Hanoi People Committee for Management Thang Long Hanoi Conservation Centre:
- The property management continued to work on the operational plans for dismantling the Artillery and War Operation Department Buildings:
- The proposed Vision 2034 for the property, which was presented in 2024, has been supplemented with some additional details:
- The Archaeological Strategy has been articulated into five phases, some of which overlap with each other, with a brief description of the focus of each phase;
- The four additional buildings for which the State Party has presented a request for removal in 2024 have been surveyed. Brief written reports, geometrical drawings, photographic documentation of their state of conservation and a basis for the monitoring of the dismantling process have been prepared and annexed to the state of conservation report;
- A report for the adjustment of the Ministry of Construction's decisions 975/2015 and 1481/2015 was prepared and submitted to the relevant Vietnamese authorities in late 2024;
- Interdisciplinary research to refine the understanding of the architectural configuration of the Kinh
 Thien Palace has been developed and preliminary outcomes are presented in the annexes to the
 report.

Additional information on the conditions of the four buildings planned for dismantling (CT20, CT21, CT24, CT25) on the content of the Decision to adjust the detailed plan for conservation, restoration and

promotion of the Hanoi Citadel Relic and on the methodology and phasing of dismantling was provided on 4 June 2025.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party's proactive response to the Committee's recommendations needs to be acknowledged. The activities implemented by the State Party show progress, particularly on the documentation of buildings CT24 and CT25 planned for removal, the development of inter-disciplinary research to understand the Kinh Thien Palace's architectural configuration, and further clarification of the phases of the archaeological excavation and research. However, some aspects need additional work and detailing before further proceeding with implementing the Vision 2034 and the plans for enhancing the property's conditions and presentation.

The Overarching Vision for the Central Sector of Thang Long Imperial Citadel (dated April 2024), which was agreed in principle by the Committee last year (and for which only a shortened version was provided in this year's report), has been supplemented with a text on agreed demolitions and interpretation. It needs to be acknowledged that the Vision, as currently drafted, reflects current knowledge regarding archaeological layers. It will need to be updated and supplemented to reflect new evidence from archaeological work and further iterative advice, including ICOMOS' advice provided in April 2024, with the suggested level of detail to convey the aims to be achieved, the justification for the proposed intervention, and the principles to be respected. It also needs to be complemented by a phased Road Map that sets out, in broad terms, how the Vision will be implemented, particularly in response to the emerging results of surveys and excavations, so that the Vision sustains the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and enhances its understanding.

Equally, although now presented in phases, the revised Archaeological Strategy still needs to address some aspects and questions recommended for further expansion in the April 2024 ICOMOS Technical Review. Further explanations on the planned research on Can Chanh and Chi Kinh palaces would also be needed, and the Committee may also wish to request them.

It is recommended that both the Vision and the Archaeological Strategy, as well as the Conservation and Presentation Strategy, be prepared as standalone documents, feeding into each other but individually recognisable in terms of content and articulation, to give them appropriate status and be more easily referred to in other documents and implementation plans and programmes. It is recommended that, once reviewed by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, these three documents be given an appropriate status for governance and management purposes. Any updates to them should be communicated to and discussed with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. It is strongly advisable that both Vision 2034 and the related Archaeological Strategy, Conservation and Presentation Strategy be equipped with legible cartographic documentation that provides a clear indication of phases, locations, and types of interventions envisaged. Appointing Thang Long – Hanoi Conservation Centre as the unit responsible for adjusting the Detailed Plan approved in 2015 with Decision 975/QD-BXD as indicated in Decision 1500/QD-UBND, shall facilitate integrating the above advice into the revision of such Plan.

The State Party has carried out the requested survey and documentation of buildings CT20, CT21, CT24, and CT25. Additional photographic documentation showing the conditions of the four buildings, was provided in June 2025. For buildings CT20 and CT21, a preliminary ICOMOS review reveals that some discrepancies exist in various architectural details between the graphic restitution of the survey and the photographs of these buildings, suggesting the need for the careful review and update of the geometric survey by the State Party's technical staff, to complete the documentation of buildings scheduled for dismantling. It is advised that updated drawings be transmitted, at a larger scale and a higher resolution, for review by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. A further detailing of the plan for dismantling the buildings was provided with clear principles for implementation, complemented by preliminary tests on the building components to gather information about their construction techniques, materials, and history. This is an essential complement to the previous description of the dismantling process. It is suggested to gather all the principles, technical instructions, and phasing of the dismantling in a single document, which can be progressively enriched with information gathered during the dismantling process.

The State Party has provided a synthetic description of the project intentions for the Vaxuco Building and 18 Hoang Dieu archaeological site but has not transmitted the requested project documentation. The Committee may wish to reiterate its request for the project documentation of these large-scale projects, one of which, in the Vaxuco Building, is already under implementation.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.92

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. Recalling Decision 46 COM 7B.43, adopted at its 46th session (New Delhi, 2024),
- Acknowledges the State Party's proactive attitude in promptly addressing the Committee's and the 2023 World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission's recommendations to enhance the property and ensure that the Master Plan for the Central Sector of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long is implemented based on good practice for World Heritage;
- 4. <u>Takes note with satisfaction</u> of the preliminary outcomes of the scientific research developed to establish with adequate confidence the architectural configuration of the Kinh Thien Palace and its construction components, and <u>encourages</u> the State Party to continue this work by clarifying the levels of reliability of the hypotheses put forward concerning the configuration of the sections of the Palace;
- 5. <u>Requests</u> the State Party to review and update the geometric survey of two of the additional four buildings, CT20 and CT21, for which the State Party submitted a request for removal to facilitate archaeological investigations before these are removed, and share this updated documentation with the World Heritage Centre at a larger scale and higher resolution;
- 6. <u>Also requests</u> the State Party to provide the World Heritage Centre with interim detailed written and photographic documentation of the dismantling process and of the structures of the buildings planned for removal, especially those planned to be dismantled in 2025;
- 7. <u>Further requests</u> the State Party to submit the amendments proposed to Decision 975/2015 and Decision 1481/2015 as these decisions contained principles, objectives, and interventions to orient the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of the property;
- 8. <u>Reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to promptly submit the project documentation for the interventions being carried out at Vaxuco Building and those planned at 18 Hoang Dieu, and <u>requests</u> that no works begin at 18 Hoang Dieu until ICOMOS reviews the project documentation;
- 9. <u>Takes notes</u> of the supplementary text proposed for Vision 2034 for the future of the Central Axis of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long that it agreed upon in principle at its previous session, and encourages the State Party to:
 - a) Augment this Vision as a standalone document in line with ICOMOS' advice provided in April 2024, to convey more clearly the aims to be achieved, the justification for the proposed interventions, the principles to be respected, and how it sustains the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and enhances its understanding,
 - Complement the Vision with a phased Road Map that sets out in broad terms how the Vision will be implemented, particularly in response to the emerging results of surveys and excavations and submit it for review by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS;

- 10. <u>Strongly encourages</u> the State Party to refine and finalise the Archaeological Strategy as a standalone document, following the advice provided in the April 2024 ICOMOS Technical Review and submit it for review by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS;
- 11. <u>Recommends</u> that the Vision, Archaeological Strategy and Conservation and Presentation Strategy be given appropriate status for governance and management purposes and, for clear communication of the State Party's pursued intentions, they will need to be equipped with legible cartographic documentation indicating the phases, locations, and types of interventions envisaged;
- 12. <u>Advises</u> the State Party to implement the World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission's recommendations fully;
- 13. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

93. Butrint (Albania)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1992

Criteria (iii)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger 1997-2005

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/570/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 2 (from 1996-1997) Total amount approved: USD 106,000

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/570/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

1999: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/Butrint Foundation mission; 2001: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission; 2003: World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS mission; 2005: World Heritage Centre /ICOMOS/ICCROM mission; 2007: World Heritage/ICOMOS/ICCROM joint mission; 2022 joint World Heritage/ICOMOS Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Insufficient management mechanisms
- Illegal constructions
- Slow progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the joint missions (issue resolved)
- Tourism development

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/570/

Current conservation issues

On 31 January 2025, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/570/documents/. Progress on a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at previous sessions is presented in those reports, as follows:

- Implementation of the Integrated Management Plan (IMF), including:
 - Operationalisation of the Butrint Management Foundation (BMF), which assumed responsibility for the operation of the property from the State. In December 2022, a lawsuit filed at the Constitutional Court of Albania seeking to annul, as unconstitutional, Law No. 50/2022 'On the Approval of the Agreement for the Administration of the Sub-Areas of Cultural Heritage and Cultural Landscape, Part of the Butrint National Park, between the Ministry of Culture and the Foundation for the Management of Butrint' was rejected by majority vote on 24 April 2024,
 - Development of the Community Engagement Development Plan, Hydrological & Ecological Plan, and Strategies for Health & Safety, Disaster Management, and Site Security, all of which are currently under final review,
 - The Archaeological Conservation and Development Plan (ACDP), which includes a strategy for conservation interventions based on risk levels, following an assessment of the state of conservation of the monuments within the property, and a five-year action and investment plan,

- The Traffic, Transport and Visitor Management Study (TTVMS), which outlines a strategy and proposes environmentally friendly transport solutions that address the needs of both visitors and the local community,
- The prioritisation of monument conservation, as well as routine maintenance of the site;
- Appointment of a Community Engagement Officer, who will deliver capacity-building training for the local community on archaeological conservation, sustainable tourism, hospitality, and artisanal production, and will act as a catalyst for funding local entrepreneurial initiatives;
- Amendments to Law No. 81/2017 'On Protected Areas', intended to balance conservation with the needs of communities and local authorities for permissible activities within protected areas, are on hold pending a lawsuit challenging Law No. 21/2024 'On Additions and Amendments to Law No. 81/2017 "On Protected Areas":
- Following the recommendations of the ICOMOS Technical Reviews of the Heritage Impact
 Assessment (HIA) for the proposed Visitor Centre, archaeological trial trenches have revealed
 Roman and medieval remains at the proposed 'Archaeological Gate' and identified negative
 impacts; architectural revisions are therefore being prepared and will be submitted to the World
 Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
- The boundaries of Butrint National Park have been reduced from 9,424.4 ha to 8,622.2 ha, and four new zones have been delineated, each with complementary protective regimes. The Heritage and Cultural Landscape Zone, which includes the property, is managed by the BMF, while the three remaining zones are managed by the Regional Administration of Protected Areas. The Park, designated as the property's buffer zone in 2007 (**Decision 31 COM 8B.60**), covers 8,591 ha;
- Efforts are underway to institutionalise HIAs within the legal framework; all new development or land-use changes in the buffer zone are now subject to stricter scrutiny;
- A proposal for a Ksamil by-pass within the buffer zone was approved in January 2025, and a further segment of the road within the property is being redesigned and will be submitted for review;
- The State Party's report provides an overview of actions implemented under the Butrint National Park Integrated Management Plan 2020–2030 and a detailed action plan addressing the recommendations of the 2022 mission.

In accordance with Committee **Decisions 23 COM VIII.C.2** (1999) and **31 COM 8B.60** (2007), and within the framework of the Retrospective Inventory, several meetings and exchanges have taken place between the State Party and the World Heritage Centre since the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee. These have provided analysis and clarifications regarding the geographic boundaries of the property and its buffer zone. The boundaries of the buffer zone have now been fully clarified. In a communication dated 2 May 2025, the State Party confirmed that, while efforts to clarify the boundaries of the property are ongoing, additional time is required due to the involvement of a wide range of institutions and stakeholders at both national and local levels. Furthermore, current legislation limited the possibility of advancing certain procedures in light of the national elections scheduled for 11 May 2025.

On 12 August 2024, an ICOMOS Technical Review was transmitted to the State Party concerning the project designs for a viewpoint near Xarrë, located within the property. On 11 June 2024, the Minister of Economy, Culture and Innovation submitted a letter containing information and documentation on the state of conservation of the property, including details on the precautions taken prior to the implementation of the Visitor Centre project, the preparations for a detailed archaeological assessment, and the ongoing revision of the Heritage and Environmental Impact Assessments (HIAs/EIAs). On 27 June 2024, the Minister met with the Director of the World Heritage Centre and reiterated the Ministry's commitment to supporting national World Heritage monitoring mechanisms for the property with both human and financial resources.

On 20 September and 30 December 2024, the World Heritage Centre transmitted third-party information to the State Party regarding the potential impact of the (at the time) proposed Visitor Centre project on the historic layers and visual harmony of the landscape. Concerns were also raised about the apparent lack of consultation with local communities and experts on the project, as well as other infrastructure developments within the property, its buffer zone, and wider setting, including one in

Alinura Bay. The communication also referred to the decision of Albania's Constitutional Court concerning the Agreement between the Government of Albania and the BMF. At the time of writing, the State Party has not responded to these communications. In its state of conservation report, the State Party noted that its national authorities had rejected a proposed development of a tourist resort in Alinura Bay, although it did not specify whether this was the same development referenced in the third-party information received by the Centre.

On 25 February 2025, the State Party submitted a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and technical documentation concerning a proposed tourist development located within the buffer zone of Butrint. The project is currently under review by ICOMOS.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

Progress made in the initial implementation of the IMF to strengthen management and conservation efforts and to improve the scrutiny of development proposals is welcomed. This is being achieved through the activation of the BMF, with plans and strategies having been drafted for a Community Engagement Development Plan, an Archaeological Conservation Management Plan, a Hydrological & Ecological Plan, Strategies for Health & Safety, Disaster Management, and Site Security, a Traffic Transport and Visitor Management Study, and revisions to the zones of the National Park. Together, these provide a more robust structure from which informed decisions can be made.

The appointment by the BMF of a Community Engagement Officer is also welcomed, as a measure to empower the local community and foster their engagement in management.

It is noted that adjustments made to the boundaries of the National Park have resulted in a reduction of 802.2 ha. The submission of a map clarifying the delineation of the buffer zone, provided by the State Party as part of the Retrospective Inventory, is appreciated. However, the Committee should reiterate its request to the State Party to submit, as a matter of priority, a clear map delineating the boundaries of both the property and the buffer zone as inscribed on the World Heritage List, in accordance with Decision 23 COM VIII.C.2 (1999), the related 1999 ICOMOS Evaluation and Decision 31 COM 8B.60 (2007).

The new zoning arrangement for the National Park places the property solely within the Heritage and Cultural Landscape zone, which is the only zone managed by the BMF. However, this remains subject to confirmation of the property boundaries, which have yet to be clarified. Within this zone, scientific research is permitted with the necessary authorisations, alongside regulated ecotourism activities in natural settings, while conservation and excavation work must adhere to state-of-the-art methods and standards. The World Heritage Committee should request that the State Party precisely define what is meant by 'regulated ecotourism in nature', specify where such activities may be permitted, and clarify the conditions under which approval is granted, including the processes by which necessary impact assessments are conducted. Further clarity is also required regarding the protection afforded to the other three zones—Central Forest and Bush, Traditional Use and Sustainable Development, and Recreation—which, together with the Heritage and Cultural Landscape zone, constitute the buffer zone and contribute to the safeguarding of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property.

The State Party's consideration of the recommendations provided by the ICOMOS Technical Reviews of September 2023 and April 2024, its acknowledgment of the need to protect the identified underground Roman and medieval remains, and its commitment to update both the HIA and the EIA, accompanied by a revised timeline for the proposed new Visitor Centre, are noted and appreciated. The Committee should request the State Party to submit these updated documents to the World Heritage Centre for review, together with an analysis of the identified adverse impacts related to the "Archaeological Gate," for which architectural modifications are to be proposed.

Information has been provided regarding the approval of the Ksamil by-pass, a new road located within the buffer zone, for which details were not submitted in advance, contrary to the requirements of Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. It is indicated that a further section of the road will pass within the property, with plans currently under revision. The State Party should be reminded that detailed information on this proposed road must be submitted prior to any planning or contractual commitments, accompanied by an HIA covering the entire new road construction.

The efforts to institutionalise the HIA process are noted; however, these need to be finalised as a matter of urgency before any new permits or approvals are granted, either within the property or its buffer zone, which encompasses the wider National Park.

The Committee may wish to remind the State Party of the need to adhere to the processes that support the effective management of World Heritage properties, as outlined in the Operational Guidelines, and to implement them consistently – particularly paragraphs 118bis and 172 – for all new constructions, infrastructure projects, and major restorations that may affect the OUV of the property. This should be done prior to any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, thereby enabling the Committee, through the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to assist in seeking appropriate solutions to ensure that the OUV of the property is fully preserved through effective dialogue, consultation, and review.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.93

- 1. <u>Having examined</u> Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. Recalling Decision 46 COM 7B.1, adopted at its 46th session (New Delhi, 2024),
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the detailed state of conservation report submitted by the State Party, and notes its overall aim to strengthen management and conservation and to improve the scrutiny of development proposals;
- 4. Also notes that the Butrint Management Foundation (BMF) is now functioning as manager of the property and that a Community Engagement Development Plan, an Archaeological Conservation Management Plan, a Hydrological & Ecological Plan, Strategies for Health & Safety, Disaster Management, and Site Security, and a Traffic Transport and Visitor Management Study have been drafted and are now under review; and requests the State Party to submit these documents to the World Heritage Centre for review prior to their formal adoption;
- 5. <u>Further notes</u> that the BMF has appointed a Community Engagement Officer to foster the engagement of local communities in management and tourism development;
- 6. <u>Notes furthermore</u> that the management and protection zones for the National Park have been revised and approved, and that the property, which is managed by the BMF, permits 'regulated ecotourism in nature'; and <u>requests</u> the State Party to clarify what this activity encompasses, where it is envisaged to be allowed, and under what conditions approval may be granted;
- 7. <u>Takes note</u> the other three remaining zones of the National Park, which combine to form the buffer zone, have their own protection arrangements for safeguarding assets within their boundaries, and <u>also requests</u> the State Party to clarify how these zones are to be protected in terms of supporting the OUV of the property;
- 8. Also takes note of the adjustments made to the National Park boundaries, resulting in a reduction of its area by 802.2 ha, appreciates the clarification provided on the delineation of the buffer zone within the framework of the Retrospective Inventory, and reiterates its request to the State Party to provide, as a matter of priority and no later than 15 December 2025, a clear map delineating the boundaries of both the property and its buffer zone as inscribed, in compliance with Decision 23 COM VIII.C.2 (1999), the related 1999 ICOMOS Evaluation, and Decision 31 COM 8B.60 (2007).
- 9. <u>Further requests</u> the State Party to submit the updated Heritage and Environmental Impact Assessments (HIAs/EIAs), accompanied by a renewed timeline for the proposed new Visitor Centre, to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies,

together with an analysis of the identified adverse impacts of the "Archaeological Gate," for which architectural changes are to be proposed;

- 10. Acknowledges the information regarding the approval of the Ksamil by-pass, a new road in the buffer zone, for which details were not submitted in advance in compliance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, and notes that a further section of the road is planned within the property, for which details are currently being revised; further requests the State Party to submit details of this proposed road, together with an HIA for the entirety of the project, to the World Heritage Centre for review before any planning or contractual commitments are made:
- 11. <u>Also welcomes</u> the State Party's efforts to institutionalise the HIA process but <u>urges</u> the State Party to finalise this as soon as possible before any new permits or approvals are granted either within the property or its buffer zone, the wider National Park;
- 12. <u>Encourages</u> the State Party to consistently implement the Operational Guidelines, in particular paragraphs 118bis and 172, for all new constructions, infrastructure projects and major restorations that may affect the OUV of the property, and to do so before making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, so that the Committee, through the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, may assist in seeking appropriate solutions through dialogue, consultation and review;
- 13. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2026**, 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 48th session.
- 94. Historic Centres of Berat and Gjirokastra (Albania)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

95. The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement (Argentina, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Japan, Switzerland)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2016

Criteria (i)(ii)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

<u>Previous Committee Decisions</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1321/documents/

International Assistance
Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1321/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Management systems/management plan (need to introduce Heritage Impact Assessment procedures for proposed development at all component sites; lack of monitoring indicators for all component sites and of agreed overall conservation approaches and procedures for the series) (issue resolved)
- Governance (need to refine the power of the International Standing Conference to allow full understanding by all States Parties of major development proposals in all component sites, in relation to their potential impact on the overall series) (issue resolved)
- Legal framework (unclear protection of the buffer zone for Maison Guiette; unclear implications of the new Heritage Law in France) (issue resolved)
- Buildings and development (including interpretation and visitation facilities)

<u>Illustrative material</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1321/

Current conservation issues

On 29 November 2024, the States Parties submitted a joint state of conservation report, available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1321/documents/, which presents an overall report as well as individual short reports for each component of the property and outlines progress on the conservation issues identified by the Committee in its Decision 45 COM 7B.175, as follows:

- Meetings of the International Standing Conference (ISC) of States Parties and concerned organisations continue to facilitate coordination of efforts to protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
- Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) are being conducted for the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Ancillary Structures project, the Multilevel Basement Car Park, and the Holistic Development of the Punjab and Haryana High Court Project within the Capitol Complex of Chandigarh (India). Receipt of the ICOMOS Technical Review of previous submissions is confirmed;
- Negotiations are underway regarding the purchase of the House of Doctor Curutchet component (Argentina) by the Colegio de Arquitectos de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, the institution responsible for its operation since 1991;
- Two projects planned within the buffer zone of the Stuttgart Houses component (Germany) comprise the renovation of the Brenzkirche and the construction of a visitor information centre;
- The state of conservation of the 17 components is generally satisfactory, partly owing to adopted and implemented legislative provisions;
- Restoration works were carried out at Maison Guiette (Belgium), Petite Villa Corseaux (Switzerland), and the Chapel of Notre-Dame-du-Haut (France). In relation to the latter, measures are planned to strengthen the protective function of the buffer zone, and a wind energy development proposal in the wider setting has been rejected;
- Restoration continues at Maison La Roche and is planned at the Immeuble locatif à la Porte Molitor and Maison de la Culture in Firminy (France):
- At Couvent Sainte-Marie-de-la-Tourette (France) and Cité Frugès (France), ongoing and planned restoration efforts are accompanied by intentions to harmonise protection regimes. At Villa Savoye (France), the broader restoration project remains on hold pending further investigation into the causes of concrete pathologies at the lodge. The planned renovation of the adjacent Le Corbusier school complex, scheduled for implementation in 2025–2027, will be revised in response to feedback from the Île-de-France Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs;
- Continuing restoration work at the Manufacture in Saint-Dié (France) includes repair of the roof, sun breakers, and damaged ceilings. A project, financially supported by the Grand Est regional council, to create viewpoints onto the courtyard façade and establish an interpretation centre for the factory has received a favourable opinion from the architect of the Buildings of France. This project has been subject to an HIA and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by

ICOMOS. Additional information was provided upon request, and the project is currently being revised to reduce costs:

- A protective site plan was adopted for the surroundings of the Immeuble Clarté (Switzerland), safeguarding views, site topography, and the cultural heritage qualities of its built environment;
- A Subcommittee on the Museum Surrounding Environment was established under the Committee for the Preservation, Management and Utilisation of the World Cultural Heritage for the National Museum of Western Art (Japan);
- Annexes relating to the Capitol Complex of Chandigarh (India) include an update on the state of
 conservation of the component, utilising indicators originally included in the nomination dossier to
 monitor its state of conservation, photographs documenting interior restoration of the Court
 House, information on approval decisions regarding the completion of the Martyrs Memorial, and
 details of outreach projects;
- A report of a round table meeting concerning development in the buffer zone of the Stuttgart Houses component (Germany) is appended.

The proposed visitor centre at the Manufacture in Saint-Dié was subject to an ICOMOS Technical Review in October 2024, which was transmitted to the State Party of France in November 2024.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The ongoing conservation and restoration work across many component parts of the property represents a continuation of previous efforts to improve the overall state of conservation of this transnational serial property. Actions aimed at enhancing the protection of individual components – particularly through the strengthening of buffer zone provisions – are significant, and the Committee may wish to encourage the States Parties to continue reinforcing the protection of these components.

The States Parties' report also confirms that coordination among them remains active. The 10th meeting of the ISC in 2024 signals the continued commitment of the States Parties to a coordinated approach in managing and conserving the property.

However, the transnational coordination of development control requires further refinement. In their 2017 report, the States Parties indicated that the ISC adopts a proactive approach to considering the potential impacts of development proposals across the entire series. The Committee, in Decisions **42 COM 7B.18** and **44 COM 7B.152**, encouraged the States Parties to ensure that HIAs consider not only the impact on individual components, but also on the series as a whole. Nevertheless, the decision-making processes and HIAs undertaken for the project proposals at the Capitol Complex of Chandigarh and the Manufacture in Saint-Dié suggest that the coordinating role of the ISC should be further developed, particularly with regard to ensuring that HIAs conform with these Committee decisions.

The ICOMOS Technical Review (September 2020) of the HIA for the proposed visitor centre at the Manufacture in Saint-Dié identified significant shortcomings and called for additional information. Nevertheless, demolition permits were issued based on the outcomes of that HIA for parts of the complex not designed by Le Corbusier, and the project has subsequently advanced. The second ICOMOS Technical Review (October 2024) concluded that the current design does not adequately mitigate potential conflicts with this component's contribution to the property's OUV. It strongly recommended that the State Party suspend further approval or implementation of the project until an HIA, prepared in line with the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, confirms that there will be no negative impact on the OUV, in accordance with Decision **45 COM 7B.175**. ICOMOS further advised that the State Party submit the Scoping Report for the revised HIA to the World Heritage Centre for review.

The States Parties' report indicates that the HIA for three proposed projects at the Capitol Complex of Chandigarh is being undertaken by the Indian Institute of Technology (Roorkee). The Committee may wish to reiterate its recommendation that these projects remain suspended until alternatives are developed that do not impact the OUV of the property, and until the revised proposals and their HIA have been reviewed by the Advisory Bodies. Photographs and reporting also indicate ongoing interior renovation of the High Court building, including installation or renewal of HVAC systems, and replacement of flooring, ceilings and lighting. Further technical information on this project would support the State Party in refining ongoing restoration and renovation activities, if needed.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.95

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. Recalling Decisions **42 COM 7B.18**, **44 COM 7B.152** and **45 COM 7B.175**, adopted at its 42nd (Manama, 2018), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021), and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the continued operation of the International Standing Conference (ISC) for the property, the conservation works completed and underway at various components of the property, and the efforts to strengthen the protective function of buffer zones for some components;
- 4. Recalls both the intended proactive role of the ISC in evaluating the potential impacts of development proposals across the entire property, and the Committee's previous requests to ensure that Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) for new projects within the property and its buffer zones, prepared in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, assess impacts on the property as a whole and not solely on individual components, and requests that future submissions of project proposals and associated HIAs to the World Heritage Centre include the ISC's evaluation:
- 5. <u>Takes note</u> of the new HIA being prepared for the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Ancillary Structures project, the Multilevel Basement Car Park, and the Holistic Development of Punjab and Haryana High Court project within the Capitol Complex of Chandigarh, and <u>recalls its request</u> that the State Party of India submit the revised project proposals, together with the new HIA, to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to any further decision on implementation;
- 6. <u>Regrets</u> that demolition permits have been issued for building elements of the Manufacture in Saint-Dié (France), and <u>further requests</u> that:
 - a) The demolition of these elements not be implemented,
 - b) The current visitor centre project, reviewed by ICOMOS in 2024, not be further approved or implemented, and that the recommendations of the ICOMOS Technical Review be fully addressed.
 - c) A revised and iterative HIA be undertaken for the proposed visitor centre, with the aim of developing a project design that does not negatively impact the contribution of this component to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property,
 - d) The Scoping Report for the updated HIA process be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
- 7. <u>Finally requests</u> the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, an updated joint report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 49th session.

98. Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and "Köç Yolu" Transhumance Route (Azerbaijan)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

99. Historic Centre of Sheki with the Khan's Palace (Azerbaijan)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2019

Criteria (ii)(v)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1549/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1549/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Legal framework
- Management systems / management plan
- Need to define guidelines for residential house restoration
- Need to monitor all processes of urban rehabilitation

<u>Illustrative material</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1549/

Current conservation issues

On 29 November 2024, the State Party submitted a submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1549/documents/. The report provides updates on actions undertaken since December 2022, particularly concerning the inventory of the property and the establishment of an appropriate protection regime for the overall historic urban landscape. Progress on these matters is summarised as follows:

- A comprehensive inventory for the entire "Yukhari Bash" State Historical and Architectural Reserve, encompassing both the property and its buffer zone, is nearing completion. This inventory includes a detailed Geographic Information System (GIS) database, documenting approximately 1,850 monuments and buildings within the property and 208 additional structures within the buffer zone. Samples of the inventory have been provided;
- Progress has been made towards establishing a Special Protection Regime for the property, with a draft submitted alongside the report. However, further time is required to ensure full coordination with other relevant legislative instruments;
- The report details conservation, restoration, and archaeological works conducted on the main monuments of the property in recent years, including their documentation, as well as outlining planned restoration projects;
- New cultural tourism initiatives are presented, alongside actions aimed at strengthening heritage awareness and community engagement. These include involvement of the local community and

support for artisans to preserve traditional craftsmanship. As part of these efforts, a handbook entitled World Heritage and Architectural Values of Sheki has been developed.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

Progress on the detailed inventory of urban forms, building types, traditional materials, architectural details, and gardens within the property, its buffer zone, and the surrounding forest in the wider setting is welcomed. This comprehensive inventory aims to document the historic landscape's current conditions, monitor changes over time, and thereby support informed preservation and management efforts. The Committee may encourage the State Party to continue and complete this inventory process, including the detailed preparation of conservation passports for registered monuments, to provide a robust evidence base for ongoing monitoring and management of the property and its buffer zone

The development of the inventory reflects extensive research on heritage elements, encompassing approximately 1,850 monuments and buildings within the property and an additional 208 structures – including historic houses and monumental buildings – in the buffer zone. This dataset has been integrated into a sophisticated GIS database, augmented by high-resolution drone imagery and results from instrumental surveying, all supported by an orthophoto plan covering the entire Reserve. Moreover, a 3D model of 500 historical buildings within the property has been created to underpin restoration, rehabilitation, and regeneration initiatives at an urban scale.

Notably, the inventory of privately owned sections is nearing completion. Detailed documentation ("passports") for registered monuments is underway, with 37 out of 83 completed. These passports are envisaged as state-mandated Conservation Plans for each monument, compiling comprehensive information on historical context, photographic and drawing records, past restoration interventions, legislative frameworks, current use, physical descriptions, management regimes, and cultural significance. The State Party should prioritise the completion of these passports to strengthen the management framework of the property.

A draft Special Protection Regime (SPR) has been prepared and submitted for review by the Advisory Bodies. The SPR seeks to regulate the protection, use, and development of the property and its buffer zone through legally binding rules governing construction, economic activities, and cultural events. The Technical Review by ICOMOS acknowledges that, if adopted, the SPR would enhance protection of the urban landscape by empowering the Reserve Administration and State Tourism Agency to oversee, manage, and approve modifications within the property and buffer zone.

However, critical issues remain. The draft SPR lacks an explicit Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and does not identify the attributes that convey this OUV, thereby weakening the regulatory foundation necessary to justify and guide protection measures. The Committee may therefore request the State Party to ensure that the final SPR explicitly incorporates the adopted Statement of OUV and clearly identifies the attributes conveying that OUV, providing a solid regulatory basis for protection and management measures.

Furthermore, implementation mechanisms require clarification, particularly given reported discrepancies between the SPR and the existing Land Code, which governs private land ownership within the property and buffer zone. The State Party has indicated ongoing consultations with relevant authorities to resolve these conflicts, with outcomes to be reported in due course. The Committee may therefore seek clarification on how the SPR will be effectively implemented, especially in terms of its coherence with existing legislation such as the Land Code, and encourage the State Party to resolve any legislative conflicts to guarantee enforceability.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.99

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decision **45 COM 7B.178**, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023).

- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the progress made by the State Party in developing a detailed inventory of urban forms, building types, traditional building materials, architectural details, and gardens within the property, its buffer zone, and the surrounding forest in the wider setting, all integrated into a Geographic Information System (GIS) database accompanied by an orthophoto plan;
- 4. <u>Notes</u> that that the inventory of privately owned sections of the property is nearing completion, while the preparation of detailed documentation 'passports' for registered monuments, intended to serve as state-mandated Conservation Plans, is underway;
- 5. <u>Invites</u> the State Party to continue and complete this inventory process, including the detailed preparation of conservation passports for registered monuments, to provide a robust evidence base for ongoing monitoring and management of the property and its buffer zone, and to submit the complete draft inventory to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to its finalisation;
- 6. <u>Also welcomes</u> the draft Special Protection Regulations (SPR) prepared for the property and its buffer zone, recognising that, if adopted, they will strengthen urban landscape protection by granting the Reserve Administration and the State Tourism Agency legal authority to monitor, manage, and approve alterations to urban entities within the property and its buffer zone:
- 7. <u>Notes</u>, however, that ICOMOS, in its Technical Review of the SPR, has identified the need for the regulations to be explicitly grounded in the attributes conveying the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, which should be clearly distinguished from other national and local values;
- 8. <u>Further notes</u> the identified legal discrepancy between the SPR and the existing Land Code provisions concerning private land ownership within the property and buffer zone, and stresses that this issue needs to be resolved;
- 9. Requests the State Party to:
 - a) Undertake further refinement of the SPR text to explicitly link rules, regulations, restrictions, and limitations to clearly defined attributes of the OUV, based on the adopted Statement of OUV,
 - b) Continue consultations with relevant authorities to resolve legal inconsistencies between the SPR and the Land Code and ensure coherent and effective implementation, over the whole property including private land:
 - c) Submit a revised draft of the SPR to the World Heritage Centre for further review by the Advisory Bodies before finalisation;
- 10. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.

101. Ancient City of Nessebar (Bulgaria)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

102. Old City of Dubrovnik (Croatia)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

103. Venetian Works of Defence between the 16th and 17th Centuries: Stato da Terra – Western Stato da Mar (Croatia, Italy, Montenegro)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2017

Criteria (iii) (iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1533/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1533/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Impacts of tourism / visitor / recreation (Lack of Tourism Carrying Capacity study and visitor management plans for the components)
- Management systems / management plan (Lack of coordinated management system, lack of management plans for each component, lack of a transnational values-based conservation strategy, need to revise the buffer zones)
- Buildings and development (Lack of a framework for Heritage Impact Assessment for development proposals, intrusive and redundant elements within the serial components)

<u>Illustrative material</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1533/

Current conservation issues

On 29 November 2024, the States Parties submitted a joint state of conservation report for this serial transnational property, which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1533/documents. Progress on a number of conservation issues identified by the Committee in its previous decisions is presented as follows:

- Tourism-related carrying capacity studies have largely been completed for most components.
 Visitor Management Plans have been prepared for some components, while the majority of others are expected to be completed by 2026;
- A comprehensive report with maps is provided for the planned extensions of the buffer zone of Peschiera del Garda, to include the 19th-century fortifications of Forte Papa and Polveriera Ronchi. A Minor Boundary Modification is anticipated to be submitted by January 2026. Outline maps of an internal proposal for a buffer zone extension for Kotor are provided. For Zadar, a new Conservation Plan is in progress, which includes assessments of areas outside the current buffer zone and, when completed by the end of 2025, will inform any proposed buffer zone extension;
- A common template for local conservation plans for each component has been developed, and its draft has been submitted with the report;
- Local Management Plans have been developed for the Fortified City of Bergamo, St Nicholas' Fortress in Šibenik, and the Defensive System of Zadar, and were submitted with the report. Plans

for Palmanova and Peschiera del Garda are in preparation and scheduled for approval in the first half of 2026. For the Kotor component, a plan for the entire 'Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor' property is awaiting completion;

- A values-based, transnational conservation, promotion, and interpretation strategy for the entire
 property is discussed at meetings of the International Coordination Group (ICG), which meets
 online at least every other month. Upon completion of the local management plans, the joint
 Management Plan for the property is expected to be revised to incorporate this strategy, as well
 as a joint monitoring approach;
- The ICG continues to develop a common sensitivity towards major restorations or new construction projects that may impact the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, alongside a shared approach and framework for Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA), taking into account the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;
- A HIA has been commissioned for the renewal of the Citadela Bastion in Zadar despite ongoing acknowledged technical difficulties in realising the project. A separate proposal for the 'Reconstruction and extension of the workshop part of the Old Technical School' Citadela Nova, within the buffer zone of the Zadar component and immediately adjacent to the boundary of the serial component including drawings and documentation (in Croatian) and a HIA (in English), was submitted to the World Heritage Centre in October 2024;
- A Conservation Plan addressing the Ravnice Urban Plan/Gates of Zadar (Zadar buffer zone) is under review by the relevant ministry and is expected to be completed by the end of 2025;
- Detailed project information is provided about the Visitor Centre at Minerska Bay (Šibenik), which opened in 2023;
- A HIA for the restoration and enhancement of the Piezometric Tower in Palmanova was reported to be completed by the end of 2024 and is planned to be submitted for review by the Advisory Bodies in the first half of 2025;
- A HIA for the Fara parking project in Bergamo is still in progress. A Sustainable Mobility Urban Plan (PUMS) was published in 2023, and the measures being implemented are currently being monitored. The plan, along with monitoring data, is planned to be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for assessment.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The continued joint efforts to manage the serial, transnational property through the International Coordination Group (ICG) are to be commended. The completion of three local management plans is a welcome step; however, the management approach across the property still requires greater coherence, and the adoption of a unified structure would be beneficial. The existing plans should be further developed to include more detailed information on each component, such as the attributes that convey the OUV, key indicators for assessing their state of conservation, and the methodology proposed for monitoring these indicators. In addition, a values-based framework should underpin future decision-making processes. Visitor management plans and strategies across the components also require harmonisation, with a stronger emphasis on sustainability and the protection of OUV. The States Parties should be encouraged to prioritise the completion of these strategies, alongside the outstanding local management plans, and to supplement the existing ones accordingly. This is particularly important in view of the planned revision of the property's overarching Management Plan, which is expected to incorporate a joint monitoring approach for the state of conservation and management of the serial property as a whole, as well as the development of a values-based, transnational strategy for conservation, promotion, and interpretation.

The template for local conservation management plans for each component is also welcome; however, it should be further developed to place greater emphasis on the OUV and its underlying attributes – both tangible and intangible – that require conservation and against which the potential impact of proposed future developments can be assessed.

The proposed extension to the buffer zone of Peschiera del Garda are welcome. With regard to the Zadar component, the new Conservation Plan for the City of Zadar, which is expected to inform the revision of the buffer zone boundary, is noted and should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. The proposal for the extension of the buffer zone of Kotor – which encompasses virtually the entire Bay of Kotor but omits the land-based fortifications, as recommended in the ICOMOS evaluation – requires further justification, as a clear rationale has not been provided.

Regarding the Citadela Bastion renovation project in Zadar, it is recommended that the HIA, along with all supporting documentation, be submitted in one of the two working languages of the World Heritage

Committee (French or English) for Technical Review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to any irreversible decisions being taken.

With regard to the planned reconstruction project for the Old Technical School, the 2025 ICOMOS Technical Review recommends that the State Party incorporate, in the final version of the project, quantitative thresholds for environmental impacts (including noise, vibration, and light), alongside a comprehensive biodiversity and vegetation monitoring plan. It further advises the undertaking of a detailed Visual Impact Assessment to fully evaluate the project's effect on the property's skyline and silhouette. A comprehensive restoration methodology for the façades of the historic structures is also recommended, together with a cumulative impact assessment that takes into account other developments within the buffer zone, in order to ensure a holistic approach to preserving the component's visual and functional integrity.

Regarding the Ravnice Urban Plan/Gates of Zadar, the State Party of Croatia should be encouraged to submit the Conservation Plan for the Ravnice area, including detailed project documentation and an HIA focusing on the property's OUV, in either English or French, for review by the Advisory Bodies before the planning process is finalised.

It is noted with concern that the Visitor Centre facilities at Minerska Bay (Šibenik) were completed in 2023 without the prior submission of any documentation – including an HIA – to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, as required under Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, and despite the Committee's Decision **45 COM 7B.181**, which specifically recommended the submission of an HIA focused on the property's OUV and its underpinning attributes.

Information regarding the urban redevelopment and rehabilitation project and the HIA currently underway for the restoration and enhancement of the piezometric tower in Palmanova should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS as soon as it is completed and before any irreversible decisions are made.

The updated information on the Sustainable Mobility Urban Plan and the pending HIA for the planned car park project in Bergamo is noted. In preparing this HIA, the State Party is encouraged to take into account the guidance previously provided in the ICOMOS Technical Reviews of 2019 and 2024.

Each of these cases underscores the urgent need for the States Parties to establish and implement appropriate measures to ensure that HIAs are undertaken for all planned interventions and developments with potential impact on the attributes and OUV of the property. Full adherence to the procedures set out in Paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines is imperative.

Draft Decision 47 COM 7B.103

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **41 COM 8B.21, 44 COM 7B.43** and **45 COM 7B.181**, adopted at its 41st (Krakow, 2017), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively,
- Commends the States Parties for their continued support to the International Coordinating Group (ICG) and its ongoing efforts to establish coordinated approaches to management, change management, and development, as well as transnational strategies for research, conservation and interpretation, and encourages the States Parties to continue enhancing the harmonised protection and management of the property;
- 4. <u>Notes</u> the progress made in the preparation of local management plans, and <u>requests</u> that the remaining plans be finalised as a matter of priority, and that the ICG review both the completed and draft plans to ensure they include comprehensive information on the respective component, including the identified attributes that underpin the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), key indicators for assessing their state of conservation, and the

- proposed methodology for monitoring, along with a values-based framework to guide future decision-making, and further, to improve consistency, completeness and integration across the plans;
- 5. <u>Welcomes</u> the submission of the template for the preparation of local conservation management plans, and <u>recommends</u> that the ICG further develop this template to ensure a clear focus on the OUV and the attributes contributed by each component, which must be conserved and against which future impacts can be assessed:
- 6. <u>Notes with concern</u> that the Visitor Centre at Minerska Bay (Šibenik) was completed without the prior submission to the World Heritage Centre of any documentation or Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), despite the Committee's previous request, and that inadequate information on the completed project has been provided;
- 7. Also requests that the respective States Parties submit to the World Heritage Centre, in one of the two working languages of the World Heritage Committee (English or French), full documentation, including HIAs focused on the OUV of the property and the attributes that support it, for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to the implementation of the following projects:
 - a) The renewal of the Citadela Bastion project (Zadar),
 - b) The Ravnice Urban Plan project/Gates of Zadar,
 - c) The urban redevelopment and rehabilitation project in Palmanova, including the proposal for the restoration and reuse of the piezometric tower;
- 8. <u>Further requests</u> that the State Party of Croatia review the "Citadela Nova" project on the site of the Old Technical School in Zadar, taking into account the recommendations of the 2025 ICOMOS Technical Review:
- 9. Also notes the updated information concerning the Fara parking project within the Bergamo component and the prepared Sustainable Mobility Urban Plan, encourages the State Party of Italy to take into consideration the guidance provided in the ICOMOS Technical Reviews of 2019 and 2024 when finalising the HIA, and requests furthermore the State Party to submit the final project plans, the HIA and associated parking data to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS prior to any irreversible decisions being taken:
- 10. <u>Requests moreover</u> that the States Parties, individually and through the ICG, continue to pursue as an urgent priority the completion of pending actions requested by the Committee, including:
 - a) The finalisation of local conservation management plans for each component, based on a revised common template as recommended above,
 - b) The development of visitor management plans for all components in a harmonised manner, based on the completed carrying capacity studies, and focused on sustainable tourism and the protection of the property's OUV,
 - c) The revision of the joint Management Plan of the property to incorporate a joint monitoring approach for the state of conservation and management of the serial property as a whole, and the values-based, transnational strategy for conservation, promotion and interpretation.
 - d) The revision of the buffer zones, as follows:

- (i) Zadar: following the completion of the new Conservation Plan, which assesses areas outside the existing buffer zone and should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies,
- (ii) Kotor: following the proposal for extension to include the Bay of Kotor, which must be supported by a clear rationale, particularly in light of the proposed exclusion of the land-based fortifications, contrary to ICOMOS recommendation.
- (iii) Peschiera del Garda: based on the provided report and maps,
- and the submission of these proposals, once finalised, as minor boundary modifications in accordance with Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines,
- e) The development and application of a coordinated and harmonised approach to HIAs for all planned changes and developments that may affect the OUV and its attributes based on the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context;
- 11. Reminds the States Parties of their obligation to inform the World Heritage Centre, in due course, of any major restoration or development project that may affect the OUV of the property, before any irreversible decisions are taken, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, and to carry out systematic HIA procedures in accordance with Paragraph 118bis;
- 12. <u>Finally requests</u> the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, a joint 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 49th session.

104. Historic Centre of Prague (Czechia)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1992

Criteria (ii)(iv)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/616/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 2 (from 2003-2014) Total amount approved: USD 115,000

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/616/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

March 2008, January 2010 and March 2019: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring missions; December 2024: joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Housing
- Development of high-rise constructions on the Pankrác Plain
- Lack of effectiveness of existing planning, management, and conservation measures for the property, particularly lack of specific regulations for high-rise developments

- Lack of Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for proposed projects which may affect the OUV
 of the property
- Management systems / management plan

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/616/

Current conservation issues

On 28 November 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/616/documents/. Progress on a number of conservation issues raised by the Committee in its Decision **45 COM 7B.183** is presented as follows:

- The Building Act (No. 283/2021 Coll.) was fundamentally amended and came fully into effect on 1 July 2024. However, the system of building offices and heritage authorities remains unchanged;
- On 23 May 2024, following four years of consultation on the draft text, Update No. 5 to the Principles of Territorial Development was approved by the Prague City Assembly. This update incorporates the UNESCO 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) and has been finalised in accordance with the new Building Act;
- The Territorial Study of the Prague Heritage Reservation, completed in 2024, serves as a conceptual framework and strategic document forming the basis for more detailed territorial planning documents and spatial planning materials, which will gradually lead to uniform regulation for the entire territory (i.e., Prague centre component);
- The Metropolitan Plan, which sets out height restrictions for various areas, is still under consultation, but all prior agreements on major projects are being respected;
- A commitment is expressed to undertaking Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) using the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context once a Czech translation of the Manual, currently underway in collaboration with ICCROM, is completed;
- A detailed architectural study has been produced following the competition for a new Vltava Philharmonic Hall and will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre once completed. The request for an HIA is being evaluated based on the benefits it would provide given the advanced stage of the project;
- An urban study for the approved three tall buildings of the Kavčí Hory Residence Park has been completed. The proposal requires a change to the spatial plan; an amendment has been drafted, and an assessment of impact on the territory's sustainable development is currently being prepared for consultation;
- The Podbaba-Troja-Bohnice cable car project was rejected following an EIA process that identified its incompatibility with the landscape character of the Troja Basin and the ecological functions of the landscape;
- The Prague Heritage Reservation Study (PHRS) continues to assess the cumulative impacts of all projects executed since the property's inscription within the property, its buffer zone, and wider setting.

The report also includes details of the new Inbound Tourism Concept 'Prague's Interests First' and the new City of Prague Inbound Tourism Strategy for 2024–2027, entitled 'With Respect for Prague'.

Following an invitation from the State Party, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission visited the property in December 2024 to review proposals for the Vyšehrad Railway Bridge. The mission report is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/616/documents. The mission concluded that maintaining, restoring, and augmenting the existing railway bridge with a new rail line alongside, rather than replacing it, was both desirable and feasible. On 13 March 2025, the State Party submitted a letter from the Railway Administration (Správa železnic) offering comments on the Advisory mission report.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The inclusion of the HUL Principles in the approved Update No. 5 of the City of Prague Principles of Territorial Development, and its publication in an accessible A4 booklet, is to be welcomed. Also welcome is the aim of the Territorial Study of the Prague Heritage Reservation, completed in 2024, to provide a basis for more detailed territorial planning documents and spatial planning materials for 34 areas, which will gradually lead to uniform regulation across the whole property. The City Council has

approved the drafting of these further documents for three pilot areas: Karlov, Wenceslas Square, and Petrská. The proposal to test options for possible high-rise structures across the entire city is a concern from a heritage preservation perspective, unless undertaken within the context of HIA processes.

The State Party's commitment to undertake HIAs in accordance with the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, once a Czech translation is in place, is also to be welcomed.

The Metropolitan Plan, which is still under consultation, includes proposed height restrictions that have not yet been assessed for their impact on Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). It is acknowledged that the impact of the three approved tall buildings of the Kavčí Hory Residence Park will exacerbate the cumulative impacts on the Pankrác view horizon. As these buildings extend beyond the Pankrác Pentagon – the area of the Pankrác Plain reserved for high-rise buildings – an amendment to the spatial plan is required. High-rise construction is also being prepared in the rear part of the Pankrác Plain and on the southeastern view horizon beyond the boundaries of the protection zone. The State Party states its commitment to respecting all prior agreements on major projects. However, given the Committee's repeated concerns over the past decade, particularly regarding the Pankrác view horizon, there remains an urgent need to approve appropriate height restrictions. The restrictions drafted in the Metropolitan Plan should be assessed through HIA Guidance as part of the consultative processes.

The new Building Act 2023 simplifies the building permit processes; however, the State Party affirms that the protection of cultural heritage will not be negatively affected, as the Act contains sufficient flexibility to accommodate the need for adequate documentation. What remains unclear, however, is how the new provisions will accommodate HIA processes in terms of necessary timescales and documentation.

The Vyšehrad Railway Bridge has been the subject of extensive and constructive dialogue with the State Party. Following a competition for a new rail bridge to replace the 19th-century structure, an ICOMOS Technical Review in March 2023 advised that the existing bridge should be maintained, as it forms an important part of the celebrated river panorama that contributes to the OUV. Subsequently, substantial documentation was provided to the World Heritage Centre justifying the new bridge in relation to overall strategic rail developments, including a proposal to relocate the historic bridge. Invited by the State Party, the December 2024 Advisory mission concluded that it is feasible for the existing bridge to be maintained, restored, and augmented with a new line alongside. It is therefore recommended that the Committee request the State Party to preserve and restore the Vyšehrad Bridge in its current location due to its contribution to the OUV of the property, and to invite the State Party to consider the other recommendations of the mission regarding the bridge and its surroundings.

Although the Committee has requested that an HIA be undertaken for the final design of the proposed VItava Philharmonic Hall, the State Party reports that the benefits of carrying out such an assessment are still being considered. While an ICOMOS Technical Review did not foresee major adverse impacts from the draft project, it nevertheless concluded that an HIA is needed to guide the development of the final architectural details to ensure potential adverse impacts are mitigated. The Committee may therefore wish to reiterate its request that the State Party submit an HIA for the final design.

The ongoing PHRS continues to assess the cumulative impact of all projects executed within the property, its buffer zone, and the wider setting since the property's inscription. Through extensive analysis, the study has revealed that the building fund has successfully saved and stabilised structures following years of neglect, while a construction boom has led to an intensification of built-up areas, particularly in the New Town. This has resulted in threats to low-rise buildings not protected as monuments, adversely impacting urban forms and raising building heights, with new high-rise structures exerting cumulative impacts on the skyline. On a positive note, the report shows that restoration work continues to be carried out in accordance with strict standards, alongside successful new buildings. The study is not yet complete, as discussions on the methodology are ongoing to define and evaluate both cumulative and synergistic impacts on attributes of the OUV and on the city as a whole.

Overall, significant progress is being made in introducing new legislative and planning instruments and updating others, with the ultimate aim of establishing uniform legislation for the property. The extensive and innovative PHRS is beginning to provide a much-needed analysis of the cumulative impacts of all projects executed since inscription, as well as identifying areas where regulation is inadequate. Meanwhile, the extreme vulnerability of the horizons remains, as no agreed height restrictions are yet in place. The draft Metropolitan Plan includes height restrictions, but their potential impact clearly needs to be assessed in accordance with the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context* as a matter of urgency, to inform the ongoing consultation processes before the Plan is approved.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.104

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decision **45 COM 7B.183**, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),
- 3. <u>Commends</u> the work being undertaken on the extensive and innovative Prague Heritage Reservation Study to assess the cumulative impacts of all projects executed within the property, its buffer zone, and the wider setting since its inscription on the World Heritage List, and <u>notes</u> that the detailed preliminary findings indicate an intensification of built-up areas, particularly in the New Town, with irreplaceable local losses, disruption to the urban structure and facadism, while the raising of building heights and new high-rise structures have had cumulative impacts on the skyline;
- 4. <u>Encourages</u> the State Party to complete this study as soon as possible and present a final report that sets out the impact of different developments on the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and the city as a whole, as well as the lessons learned to help frame more targeted legislative and planning tools;
- 5. <u>Welcomes</u> the continuing work to draft and approve new legislation and improve planning instruments with the aim of putting in place uniform legislation for the protection of the property, and particularly the approval of Update No. 5 of the City of Prague Principles of Territorial Development, which includes Historic Urban Landscape Principles, the Territorial Study of the Prague Heritage Reservation, and the new Building Act 2023;
- 6. <u>Also welcomes</u> the commitment of the State Party to undertake Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context once a Czech translation of the manual has been completed, and <u>requests</u> the State Party to clarify how the new Building Act, which aims to streamline planning applications, will accommodate the necessary timeframes and documentation requirements of the HIA process;
- 7. <u>Notes</u> that the Territorial Study of the Prague Heritage Reservation will provide a basis for more detailed territorial planning documents and spatial planning materials for 34 areas, and that the City Council has approved the drafting of these further documents for three pilot studies in the Karlov, Wenceslas Square, and Petrská areas;
- 8. <u>Also notes</u> that the updated Principles include a proposal to test options for possible high-rise structures within the whole city, with regard to heritage preservation, and <u>also requests</u> the State Party to ensure that this is undertaken within the context of HIA processes;
- 9. <u>Acknowledges</u> that the State Party is committed to all prior agreements on major projects being respected, but <u>notes with concern</u> the acknowledgement that the three approved tall buildings of the Kavčí Hory Residence Park will worsen the cumulative impacts on the Pankrác view horizon, and that further high-rise construction is being prepared to the rear of the Pankrác Plain and in the southeastern view horizon:
- 10. <u>Further notes</u> that the draft Metropolitan Plan, which is still under consultation, includes proposed height restrictions and <u>further requests</u> the State Party to undertake an assessment of the impact of these proposals on OUV using the Guidance and Toolkit for

Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context as part of the consultation process and before any approval is given;

- 11. <u>Further acknowledges</u> the extensive dialogue initiated by the State Party with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies over the past two years in relation to the Vyšehrad Railway Bridge, including an Advisory mission to Prague, <u>notes</u> that the mission concluded that it was feasible for the existing bridge to be maintained, restored and augmented with a new rail line constructed alongside, <u>requests furthermore</u> the State Party to preserve and restore the Vyšehrad Railway Bridge in its current location due to its contribution to the OUV of the property, and <u>invites</u> the State Party to consider the other recommendations of the mission regarding the bridge and its surroundings;
- 12. <u>Notes furthermore</u> that a detailed architectural study of the new Vltava Philharmonic Hall is now available and <u>reiterates its request</u> to the State Party to prepare an HIA of the project and submit it together with the finalised plans to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before any final decisions are made;
- 13. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.

105. Paris, Banks of the Seine (France)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

111. Budapest, including the Banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter and Andrássy Avenue (Hungary)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

114. City of Valletta (Malta)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1980

Criteria (i)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

<u>Previous Committee Decisions</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/131/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 2 (from 1981-1999) Total amount approved: USD 21,625

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/131/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

October 2015, January 2017: ICOMOS Advisory missions

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Lack of definition of a buffer zone
- Changes in building heights might alter the city's skyline
- Major potential development of the new City Gate and the Opera house
- Development, visitor/tourism pressures
- Change of use of resident houses for business

<u>Illustrative material</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/131/ and https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/4523/

Current conservation issues

On 21 November 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/131/documents/. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in this report, as follows

- Following public consultation, the Management Plan has been approved. The Plan responds to
 the factors affecting the property through an Action Plan for medium- to long-term measures on
 establishing the property's tourism carrying capacity, transport policies and use or disuse of
 historic buildings, among others;
- The Views and Vistas Analysis (VVA) with characterisation studies has been completed. The Management Plan's Action Plan contains a commitment to periodically update the analysis and review the VVA;
- The Superintendence for Cultural Heritage has issued a requirement for a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for the Evans Building. No application has been received for the building's reuse. The Superintendence is also monitoring the ongoing renovations of Strickland House and has reviewed the proposals for Mattia Preti House and Palazzo Perellos with the National World Heritage Technical Committee, which has resulted in reduced projects aligned with the maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
- A proposal to install an elevator to link the Marsamxett ferry dock to the city avoids external construction along the fortifications;
- A fast ferry quay project at Quarry Wharf is under consideration by the Planning Authority;
- HIAs are being reviewed by the Superintendence for Cultural Heritage for dredging and construction of a new breakwater off St. Elmo Point, extension of the Grand Hotel Excelsior, and the Manoel Island redevelopment;
- The State Party annexed to its report the VVA, the Management Plan and a draft proposal for the
 delineation of the buffer zone for the property. All these documents were subject to ICOMOS
 Technical Reviews and were transmitted to the State Party in December 2024;
- In October 2024, ICOMOS presented a five-day course on Impact Assessment in a World Heritage context in Valletta on invitation of the State Party.

On 18 September 2024, the State Party submitted a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), dated September 2024, for the redevelopment of Manoel Island, located in the future buffer zone of the property. An ICOMOS Technical Review dated November 2024 was subsequently transmitted to the State Party. In February 2024, the World Heritage Centre submitted to the State Party an ICOMOS Technical Review of the Conservation Management Plan for the Evans Building.

On 27 February 2025, the State Party submitted additional information as part of its state of conservation report, including a letter providing follow-up details on the ICOMOS Technical Reviews of the Views and Vistas Analysis (VVA), the Valletta Management Plan, and the Manoel Island HIA; an Addendum to the VVA (September 2023); proposed amendments to the Cultural Heritage Act; a budget expenditure estimate for 2025; clarification of scope for an additional high-level HIA for the 2021 Masterplan for Manoel Island; a separate addendum for the existing HIA on the redevelopment of a portion of Manoel

Island; and another copy of the finalised HIA for the PA/1053/23 project on the redevelopment of Manoel Island, dated October 2024. This information will be assessed by ICOMOS through Technical Reviews.

In March and April 2025, the State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre HIAs and relevant documentation for the dredging and construction of a new breakwater arm beneath St. Elmo Point, the extension of the Grand Hotel Excelsior, and an additional HIA and addendum on the 2021 Masterplan for Manoel Island for review by the Advisory Bodies. These reviews are currently ongoing.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

Urban development within the setting of the property remains a cause for concern. It has been identified as a factor affecting the property since 2009, when the Committee, through **Decision 33 COM 7B.113**, requested the State Party to delineate a buffer zone with height controls around the property to protect the skyline configuration of the city. The Committee also called for the preparation of a VVA from strategic points both within and outside the property, and the implementation of clear height control policies.

The need to control urban development in the setting of the property is acknowledged in the Retrospective Statement of OUV, under the Protection and Management requirements, adopted by the Committee in **Decision 38 COM 8E**. The 2017 Advisory Mission noted that the Malta Environment and Planning Authority had begun to address this issue through the 2014 Planning Policy Guide on the Use and Applicability of the Floor Area Ratio. However, while this document represents a step forward, it also identifies locations and design criteria for tall buildings within the property's setting, some of which are visible from the property when looking northwards across Marsamxett Harbour.

The completion of the VVA, the draft Management Plan, and a proposal for the delineation of a buffer zone are welcome recent steps towards strengthening the protection and management framework for the property and its setting. ICOMOS' review of the VVA recommends that the 2006 North Harbour Local Plan, the 2014 Planning Policy Guide on the Use and Applicability of the Floor Area Ratio, and the 2022 Grand Harbour Local Plan be revised to incorporate defined height controls both within and around the property, and that these revisions be harmonised with the proposed buffer zone. ICOMOS further advises that the buffer zone proposal requires additional refinement, particularly through further analysis of the delineation of its northern boundary beyond Marsamxett Harbour—an area identified as having high development potential. The Committee should therefore request that the State Party revises the VVA, the 2006 North Harbour Local Plan, the 2014 Planning Policy Guide on the Use and Applicability of the Floor Area Ratio, and the 2022 Grand Harbour Local Plan. This revision should define height controls within and around the property, and further develop the proposal for the buffer zone. Particular attention should be given to the further assessment of the delineation of the proposed northern buffer zone boundary towards the north of the property.

The draft Management Plan's Action Plan includes the ambition to promote the beneficial permanent inhabitation of housing within the property. The Committee may wish to encourage the State Party to prioritise the provision of essential services and the improvement of housing quality within the property. The inclusion of a tourism assessment study in the Action Plan is a significant step towards establishing a tourism carrying capacity for the site. ICOMOS' analysis of the draft Management Plan concluded that its completion represents an important step in reinforcing the property's overall management system. It also offered recommendations to strengthen implementation mechanisms, including the need to prioritise actions in the Plan according to short-, medium- and long-term timeframes. The Management Plan should be revised in light of the November 2024 review and resubmitted to the World Heritage Centre for further assessment. The Committee may wish to request the State Party to develop a prioritised Action Plan, structured around short-, medium- and long-term objectives, to facilitate the implementation of the Management Plan. Priority should be given to the provision of essential services, the improvement of residents' living conditions, and the monitoring and management of tourism.

The State Party's application of impact assessments to evaluate the potential effects of development proposals on the OUV of World Heritage properties, and the submission of these assessments to the World Heritage Centre, is welcomed. The ICOMOS review of the Manoel Island project notes that the assessed intervention is part of a broader, master-planned development. It recommends that the entire 2021 Master Plan for the island be subject to a comprehensive Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), with a particular focus on the role of the setting of the World Heritage property 'City of Valletta' in contributing to its OUV. This assessment should be undertaken prior to any decisions being made regarding project implementation or the commencement of works. Details of any future projects should also be submitted to the World Heritage Centre in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. Furthermore, the ICOMOS review of the Conservation Management Plan for the Evans Building recommends that the Plan be supplemented to more explicitly define the acceptable limits of change for

development proposals in terms of their potential impact on the OUV. It should also more clearly articulate the building's relationship to the historic urban context, the property's OUV, and its significance at both national and local levels.

In conclusion, while the State Party has made significant progress in addressing the factors affecting the property, including measures to strengthen its protection and management system, further improvements are needed. These should focus on managing development within the property's setting—particularly through the establishment of an appropriate buffer zone, the amendment of relevant planning policies and frameworks, the effective management of tourism pressures, and the enhancement of the property's liveability to support long-term, permanent inhabitation.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.114

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **33 COM 7B.113**, **38 COM 8E** and **45 COM 7B.190**, adopted at its 33rd (Seville, 2009), 38th (Doha, 2014) and extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023) respectively,
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the submission of the draft Management Plan, the Views and Vistas Analysis (VVA), and a proposal for a buffer zone for the property, as well as the implementation of, and submission to the World Heritage Centre of, impact assessments for projects that may affect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
- 4. <u>Notes with concern</u> that the current planning policies and regulations do not sufficiently safeguard the setting of the property, and <u>requests</u> the State Party to revise the VVA, the 2006 North Harbour Local Plan, the 2014 Planning Policy Guide on the Use and Applicability of the Floor Area Ratio, and the 2022 Grand Harbour Local Plan to establish effective height controls within and around the property;
- 5. <u>Also requests</u> that the draft proposal for the buffer zone be further developed, with particular attention to a more detailed assessment of the delineation of its northern boundary, especially in the area north of the property across Marsamxett Harbour, which has been identified as having high development potential;
- 6. <u>Encourages</u> the State Party to develop an Action Plan with short-, medium- and long-term objectives to implement the actions outlined in the Management Plan, with particular priority given to the provision of essential services, improvement of living conditions for residents within the property, and the monitoring and management of tourism; and <u>further requests</u> the State Party to submit the updated Management Plan, including a detailed Action Plan, to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS;
- 7. Welcomes the preparation of Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) for several large-scale development proposals, and also encourages the State Party to continue strengthening the HIA process by fully considering indirect and cumulative impacts of ongoing and future projects, both individual building adaptive re-use and larger-scale developments, within the property and its proposed buffer zone, in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context; and to submit detailed information on all such projects, along with their respective HIAs, to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to any planning approvals, including for the entire 2021 Master Plan for Manoel Island and the proposed repurposing of the Evans Building, as well as to supplement the Conservation Management Plan for the Evans Building accordingly;

8. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.

115. Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor (Montenegro)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

116. Dutch Water Defence Lines (Kingdom of the Netherlands)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 1996

Criteria (ii)(iv)(v)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/759/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/759/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Buildings and development
- Transportation infrastructure round transport infrastructure
- Services infrastructure renewable energy infrastructure
- Management and institutional factors legal framework (new or revised legislation framework), management systems/management plan (protection of the landscape dimension to be strengthened)

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/759/

Current conservation issues

On 18 November 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/759/documents/, which provides information on measures implemented in response to previous decisions of the Committee. Progress in a number of conservation issues is presented in this report, as follows:

- To identify and describe the core qualities of the property, a document was developed including sixteen area analyses. This provides a basis for the management of the spatial contexts for the attributes underlying the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), as well as development strategies;
- The new Environment and Planning Act entered into force at the beginning of 2024 and is aligned with the new Decree on the Quality of the Living Environment (BKL) and the Activities Living

Environment Decree (BAL), both enhancing the safeguarding of World Heritage in the Netherlands;

- An assessment framework based on Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) methodology has been completed for potential wind and solar energy project installations within and around the property, based on hypothetical scenarios in twelve different zones;
- A 'Spatial Perspective for the Dutch Water Defence Lines' is being developed, aiming for a joint, comprehensive, solution-led approach to future spatial planning choices, respecting the OUV in the context of major spatial challenges;
- The projects in Woudrichem (along Hoge Maasdijk) and at Fort Kudelstaart have been cancelled.
 Options are being investigated to relocate the existing buildings at Hoge Maasdijk, and essential maintenance work is being implemented at Fort Kudelstaart;
- An exploratory Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) was conducted in 2022 regarding construction
 plans for a new visitor centre for Loevestein Castle, which found that the design and choice of
 site require further research and supporting evidence. A Master Plan was developed for the Castle
 and surrounding Munnikenland in 2024, for which the local authority has requested further
 deliberations;
- The plans for housing and a business park in Werkendam are now confirmed for an area northeast
 of the city, located almost entirely within the property. A related vision is being developed by the
 municipality, which will be informed by the specific 'Area Analysis' document;
- An HIA has been utilised to assess various scenarios for the development in the Voordorpse Veld.
 It has shown that the area is suitable for recreational amenities and solar energy production under certain conditions;
- A Restoration Plan has been developed to redress the loss of authenticity that occurred due to illegal activities at Fort bij Velsen. The illegally removed embankment will be reconstructed, and other accompanying works are planned;
- A dyke reinforcement project at Gorinchem-Waardenburg is being utilised to comply with established safety standards. Works will include the recovery of water management attributes;
- Following in-depth research and assessment of various alternatives regarding the A8-A9 connection, the Golf-course alternative is still regarded as the best solution. A Landscape Plan has been drafted that includes mitigation and enhancement measures for the OUV of the property and funding is being sought for its implementation;

On 30 June 2025, three ICOMOS Technical Reviews were transmitted to the State Party, concerning the 'Area Analyses' document, the decision-making framework for renewable energy projects, and the rehabilitation project for Fort bij Velsen.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party reports significant progress in developing an integrated approach to conservation, spatial planning, and development control at the property. The completion of the 'Area Analyses' represents an important milestone, offering a well-considered analysis of the property across various scale levels and identifying attributes related to built structures, spatial arrangements, and landscape. These analyses are likely to serve as a valuable foundation for the development of the 'Spatial Perspective for the Dutch Water Defence Lines', which should prioritise the maintenance of the OUV. Nevertheless, the specific purpose of the 'Spatial Perspective' remains unclear from the State Party's report, as does its alignment with the relevant provisions of the BAL and the BKL. The Committee may therefore wish to request the State Party to clarify these aspects through the timely submission of draft documentation to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

The reinforced legal provisions for the protection and management system are demonstrated by the cancellation of the proposed projects in Woudrichem and at Fort Kudelstaart, as well as the plans for the recovery of lost elements as part of dyke strengthening operations at Gorinchem-Waardenburg. While the Master Plan and related HIA are welcome preparations regarding the plans at Loevestein Castle and Munnikenland, the proposed interventions seem to include reconstruction proposals that require careful consideration. In this context, the Committee may wish to recall the provisions of Paragraph 86 of the *Operational Guidelines* concerning the exceptional circumstances in which reconstruction is justifiable. The 2024 Master Plan should be reviewed to ensure alignment of the

proposals with the maintenance of the OUV, and, in case reconstruction plans are retained, the proposals should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. The proposal for the urban expansion northeast of Werkendam and in the Voordorpse Veld should also be submitted for review, along with their associated HIAs.

The development of a recovery strategy at Fort bij Velsen further illustrates the State Party's commitment to enhancing the OUV of the property. Nevertheless, the related ICOMOS Technical Review of June 2025 highlights certain issues, including the choice of materials and proposed tree planting, which should be addressed prior to project implementation.

In **Decision 45 COM 7B.192**, the Committee requested that the State Party investigate alternatives to the 'Golf Course' and 'Heemskerk' variants for the A8-A9 connection, including other modes of transport to improve regional connectivity, and provide details of timelines and designs for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies before any planning decisions are made. While the decision to proceed with the A8-A9 'Golf Course' variant is noted, it remains essential to ensure that any selected project is compatible with the protection of the property's OUV. The planned mitigation and enhancement measures should be optimised and integrated into the 2021 Landscape Plan. Furthermore, the relevant documentation should be submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS.

The approach and methodology of the decision-making framework for wind and solar energy projects are well-reasoned and justified. It identifies levels of risk for three assessed zones. The document is recommended to be further refined in line with the recommendations made in the relevant ICOMOS Technical Review of June 2025. In addition, individual impact assessments should be undertaken for each proposal, in accordance with the *Guidance and Toolkit on Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, including the evaluation of cumulative impacts.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.116

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **44 COM 8B.23** and **45 COM 7B.192**, adopted at its extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions, respectively;
- 3. <u>Commends</u> the State Party for further enhancing the legal protection of the property and for developing the 'Area Analyses' document, as well as the 'decision-making framework for the renewable energy transition', and encourages the State Party to:
 - a) Further refine these tools in line with the recommendations of the relevant ICOMOS Technical Reviews of June 2025;
 - b) Carry out individual impact assessment procedures in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit on Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context for each specific project proposal, including the assessment of cumulative impacts;
- 4. <u>Considers</u> the development of a 'Spatial Perspective for the Dutch Water Defence Lines' an appropriate ambition in light of the development pressures faced by the property and its wider setting, and <u>also encourages</u> the State Party to provide further information on the aims and outcomes of this process through timely submission of material to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
- 5. <u>Welcomes</u> the cancellation of the projects in Woudrichem and at Fort Kudelstraat, as well as the plans for recovery work at Gorinchem-Waardenburg, and <u>requests</u> the State Party to keep the World Heritage Centre informed of any new plans and proposals affecting components of the property;

- 6. <u>Acknowledges</u> the appropriate action by the State Party in response to illegal activities at Fort bij Velsen, and <u>also requests</u> that the State Party follow the advice provided by ICOMOS in its relevant 2025 Technical Review before implementing the project;
- 7. Takes note of the development of a Master Plan and a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for planned projects at Munnikenland and Loevestein Castle, recalls the provisions of Paragraph 86 of the Operational Guidelines which states that 'in relation to authenticity, the reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances and is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture', and further requests the State Party to:
 - a) Review the 2024 Master Plan to ensure alignment of the proposals with the maintenance of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property,
 - b) Submit the proposals to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies should reconstruction plans be retained;
- 8. <u>Also takes note</u> of the proposed urban expansion northeast of Werkendam and the planned developments in Voordorpse Veld, all located within the boundaries of the property, and <u>requests furthermore</u> the State Party to submit these, along with their associated HIAs, to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
- 9. <u>Also considers</u> that the preferred 'Golf Course' variant of the A8-A9 connection is likely to have adverse impacts on the property's OUV, and <u>requests moreover</u> the State Party to:
 - a) Ensure that any selected project is consistent with the conservation of the property's OUV,
 - b) Maximise the planned mitigation and enhancement measures, and incorporate them into the 2021 Landscape Plan,
 - c) Submit details of the project timeline and design to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
- 10. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.

119. Tarnowskie Góry Lead-Silver-Zinc Mine and its Underground Water Management System (Poland)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2017

Criteria (i)(ii)(iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

<u>Previous Committee Decisions</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1539/documents/

International Assistance
Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1539/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Legal framework (lack of legal protection at the national level of all the structures above ground within the boundaries of the property)
- Change of ownership of the pumping station at Adolph Shaft which may alter in the mediumto long-term the quality and regularity of the extraction of the water necessary to conserve the underground chambers (issue resolved)
- Water (rain / water table)

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1539/

Current conservation issues

On 21 November 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1539/documents/, which outlines progress on several conservation issues, as follows:

- A number of relevant stakeholders contributed to the report;
- Monitoring of the underground section of the Staszic Shaft continues. Research confirms that resuming water intake in this shaft will not adversely affect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
- Inclusion of the water tower adjacent to the Kaehler Shaft in the property is complicated by the
 fact that it forms part of a building complex currently used by the Water Supply and Sewerage
 Company Veolia. Defining boundaries to protect the tower was considered in 2019. The Silesian
 Regional Monuments Inspector will take appropriate action should the Committee maintain its
 request that the tower be included in the property;
- Connecting area A5 to area A4 would require incorporating private land with no remnants of mining activity, buildings of recent construction, and a section of public road. The State Party considers the current boundaries adequate and proposes that the request be withdrawn, partly because implementation would necessitate purchasing the land or compensating owners for changes in the planning regime;
- An overview of the state of conservation of above-ground attributes is provided, most of which are reported to be in good condition. Some are planned for future protection through inclusion in the Register of Monuments, while others require conservation work, some of which is currently underway. The Tarnowskie Góry Land Lovers' Association will assume responsibility for the Staszic Water Supply Station:
- A Multidisciplinary Scientific Committee for Research on UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Tarnowskie Góry was established in 2024 at the University of Silesia in Katowice. An application to establish a Centre for Research on UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Tarnowskie Góry has been submitted to this committee. The Centre will implement the scientific research programme;
- 3D scanning of the underground areas of the property accessible to tourists, and of the Staszic Waterworks, was undertaken at the initiative of the Tarnowskie Góry Land Lovers' Association. Other mine sections are inaccessible, and extending scanning to these areas is unfeasible.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party's report, which includes a brief assessment of the state of conservation of the above-ground attributes of the property, ongoing conservation efforts, progress in strengthening legal protection for built attributes, the completion of 3D scanning, and the establishment of the Scientific Committee, indicates steady progress in enhancing the state of conservation, protection, and management of the property.

Notably, reported actions at the shaft-top of Adit Shaft No. 5 and the Maszynowy Shaft, as well as the transfer of care of the Staszic Shaft, may represent significant achievements. However, the details

provided remain insufficient to support a comprehensive analysis of the current state of conservation of the property. It therefore remains a priority for the State Party to urgently establish the proposed research and inventory programme and to submit to the World Heritage Centre, as soon as possible, an illustrated inventory of all above-ground attributes under protection. This inventory should include a detailed assessment of their state of conservation. The need for such documentation has been repeatedly highlighted by the Committee since the property's inscription in 2017 (Decision 41 COM 8B.25). Furthermore, the report does not provide an update on the Committee's request to further develop the GIS multi-layer map system to incorporate data from existing inventories (Decision 45 COM 7B.195).

Progress on the registration of attributes conveying the property's OUV in the national Register of Monuments is welcomed. However, the report indicates that only two registrations are currently in progress, while six remain unaddressed. Given the imperative of ensuring that all attributes contributing to the property's OUV are afforded the highest level of national protection, the Committee may wish to reiterate its long-standing request that the State Party expedite this process – a matter repeatedly underscored since the time of inscription.

At the time of inscription, the Committee also recommended that the State Party consider the addition of the historic water tower immediately adjacent to the Kaehler Shaft to the property, and the extension of area A5 to adjoin area A4. In Decisions 44 COM 7B.53 and 45 COM 7B.195, the Committee specifically requested the State Party to finalise and submit to the World Heritage Centre all necessary documentation for the inclusion of the water tower and to conclude a feasibility analysis regarding the extension of area A5. The State Party's assertion that such an extension would necessitate either the purchase of private land or compensation to owners is not supported by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. There is no requirement for World Heritage properties to be in public ownership, nor is it necessary, in this instance, to alter the spatial planning regime. It would therefore be helpful for the State Party to share the feasibility study related to the area A5 extension and the studies concerning the Kaehler water tower with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, to enable advisory input and technical support on these matters.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.119

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **41 COM 8B.25**, **44 COM 7B.53** and **45 COM 7B.195**, adopted at its 41st (Kraków, 2017), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021), and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Regrets</u> the limited detail provided by the State Party in its report on the state of conservation of the property, and <u>urges</u> the State Party to include a more comprehensive update on the implementation of the Committee's decisions in its next report;
- 4. <u>Welcomes</u> the continued engagement of the various stakeholders involved in the protection and management of the property, and <u>encourages</u> their sustained involvement, as well as the ongoing conservation of its above-ground components;
- 5. <u>Notes</u> the completion of 3D scanning of the accessible underground areas of the property, commissioned by the Tarnowskie Góry Land Lovers' Association, <u>further encourages</u> the State Party to ensure that this information is used to augment the GIS multi-layered mapping system for the property, and <u>reiterates its request</u> that the GIS system be further developed to include information from existing inventories:
- 6. <u>Also welcomes</u> the establishment of the Multidisciplinary Scientific Committee for the Research on UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Tarnowskie Góry with institutional support, <u>notes</u> that the previously requested research and inventory programme on the property's attributes is planned, <u>invites</u> the State Party to accelerate its preparation, and

<u>reiterates its request</u> that the State Party submit to the World Heritage Centre, as soon as possible, a comprehensive inventory of all above-ground attributes, including photographic documentation and an assessment of their state of conservation;

- 7. <u>Further notes</u> the progress made in initiating the registration of two additional above-ground attributes in the national Register of Monuments, while noting that six others remain pending, and <u>further requests</u> the State Party to expedite the process of registering all above-ground attributes that contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property;
- 8. Recalls its request that the State Party conclude the feasibility analysis concerning the extension of area A5 to join area A4 and to finalise and submit all necessary documentation for the addition to the property of the historic water tower adjacent to the Kaehler Shaft, and also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, without delay, the above-mentioned feasibility analysis and information on the options investigated for including the historic water tower, to enable analysis by the Advisory Bodies and the provision of appropriate advisory support;
- 9. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.

120. Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone (Portugal)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2001, extension in 2023

Criteria (ii) (iii) (iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1031/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1031/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Maintaining urban character in residential areas
- Problems of social cohesion among economically disadvantaged residents
- Impacts of increasing tourism and gentrification of housing stock
- Water management and the impacts of storms and flooding on buildings

<u>Illustrative material</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1031/

Current conservation issues

On 28 November 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1031/documents. The report presents progress on a number of

recommendations made by the Committee at the time of its approval of the significant boundary modification (Decision 45 COM 8B.48), as follows:

- The property was designated as a National Monument through an announcement in the Official Gazette on 20 March 2024:
- The expanded buffer zone was also announced in the Official Gazette on the same date. The National Monument designation requires that most proposed developments within the buffer zone undergo assessment by regional or national bodies, in addition to local municipal review. A planned revision of the Municipal Master Plan (PDM) also takes into account the wider setting. A draft of a new local regulation for the entire historic centre, incorporating conservation planning restrictions, is currently being prepared;
- A draft Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) guide, dated November 2024, has been provided. It is
 based on the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context and
 identifies the values and attributes of the extended property. It also establishes a consistent
 methodology for future HIAs, including a property-specific checklist;
- The revised PDM integrates the attributes underpinning the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) as elements requiring protection, and includes provisions for controls in the wider setting;
- A draft *Inventory of Sightlines*, dated November 2024, has been submitted. It includes sightlines within the wider setting and panoramas, sightlines within the buffer zone, and intervisibility cores. It is accompanied by a draft sample *Sightline Management Guidance* document for buffer zone sightline B10, which is intended to serve as one of 31 proposed appendices to the Inventory of Sightlines;
- A draft Landscape Legibility Plan, dated November 2024, has been provided;
- Data collection is underway on the number of hotels, inns, and local accommodation within the World Heritage property and its buffer zone, as well as on the privatisation of public space, to enable improved visualisation and updating of the current situation;
- A new Management Plan is scheduled to be prepared during the period 2025–2026, covering the timeframe up to 2030. It will reflect the revised boundaries of the property, lessons learned from implementation of the current plan, and recent legislative changes;
- A draft Water-related Infrastructure Survey, dated November 2024, has been submitted. It identifies existing and lost infrastructure and includes recommendations for conservation and future water management;
- Draft Rehabilitation Strategies for the Couros Tanneries, dated November 2024, have been provided:
- A number of examples have been shared of projects involving engagement with the local community.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party has made notable progress in implementing the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee, particularly with regard to the designation of the extended property and buffer zone as a National Monument, as announced in the Official Gazette. The existing version of the regulation on building restrictions within the historic centre, currently under review by the State Party, appears to provide a sound framework for guiding future development. However, when the regulation is revised, the section concerning the property would benefit from the inclusion of the eleven attributes identified in the State Party's report. These attributes are expressed slightly differently as "values and attributes" in the draft HIA guide, and the Committee may recommend consistent terminology across all State Party documentation.

While the draft HIA guide has been provided, no individual HIAs have been submitted for the development projects previously outlined to ICOMOS by the State Party. Moreover, the cumulative HIA requested by the Committee at the time of inscription in 2023, to assess the overall impact of these proposals, has not been provided. The Committee may wish to stress the importance of preparing these assessments at an early stage to ensure that any potential adverse impacts on the OUV of the property are identified before proposals are finalised.

Several documents submitted in response to the Committee's recommendations—including the Inventory of Sightlines, Landscape Legibility Plan, Water-related Infrastructure Survey, and Rehabilitation Strategies for the Couros Tanneries—remain in draft formAdditionally, some documents are incomplete; for example, the Rehabilitation Strategies for the Couros Tanneries lack text in the sections on the Rehabilitation Framework and Recommendations. Nevertheless, the suite of six documents, including the HIA guide and the document on good practices and their appendices, when completed, appear to represent a robust and well-researched basis for the management of the property, its buffer zone and, where applicable, its wider setting.

While the State Party has provided initial data on development pressures and gentrification linked to tourism, it acknowledges that monitoring in this context has not yet been developed into a dedicated study, document or report. This work is expected to be integrated into a new or revised Management Plan, although no timeline has been indicated. The Committee may wish to invite the State Party to develop a monitoring framework with key indicators addressing tourism-related pressures on the integrity and authenticity of the property, and to submit a draft to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

The State Party also notes the difficulty of regulating development in the wider setting of the property, particularly in the context of recent legislative changes aimed at streamlining administrative procedures and accelerating project approvals. However, the inventory and management of sightlines will reportedly carry legal weight under the forthcoming revision of the PDM, and the list of attributes identified for the extended property will support the assessment of heritage impacts from future development proposals. The Committee may wish to encourage the State Party to address the lack of adequate legal provisions for the protection of the wider setting.

Finally, the State Party has alleged that the factual errors it identified in the draft Statement of OUV were not reflected in the Committee's final decision. However, a comparison between the identified errors and the adopted Statement indicates that all corrections submitted by the State Party have in fact been incorporated.

Draft Decision 47 COM 7B.120

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3.
- 2. Recalling Decision 45 COM 8B.48, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the listing of the Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone as a National Monument, along with the formal designation of the expanded buffer zone;
- 4. <u>Commends</u> the State Party for the progress made in preparing the Inventory of Sightlines, Landscape Legibility Plan, Water-Related Infrastructure Survey, Rehabilitation Strategies for the Couros Tanneries, and associated guidance documents, and <u>requests</u> that all these documents be finalised and adopted as soon as possible;
- 5. <u>Also requests</u> that information and documentation (in one of the working languages of the World Heritage Committee) concerning the following planned development projects, which may have potential impacts on the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), be submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre, together with Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) prepared in accordance with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context, for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to any implementation of:
 - a) The Fábrica do Arquinho project, located in the southern part of the buffer zone,
 - b) The proposed urbanisation of the former Caes de Pedra factory site, situated south of the buffer zone,

- c) The planned new hotel development in the eastern part of the buffer zone;
- 6. <u>Further requests</u> the State Party to develop a monitoring plan incorporating key indicators to assess tourism-related pressures on the integrity and authenticity of the property, and to submit the draft plan to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;
- 7. <u>Strongly encourages</u> the State Party to address the current lack of adequate legislative protection for the wider setting of the property;
- 8. <u>Reminds</u> the State Party of its obligation to inform the World Heritage Centre, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, of any major development project that may negatively affect the OUV of the property, before any irreversible decisions are taken:
- 9. <u>Also requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.

121. Royal Building of *Mafra* – Palace, Basilica, Convent, *Cerco* Garden and Hunting Park (*Tapada*) (Portugal)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2019

Criteria (iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1573/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1573/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

 Management and institutional factors (need to strengthen the research activities, management activities, the management system/management plan)

<u>Illustrative material</u> see page <u>https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1573/</u>

Current conservation issues

On 26 November 2024, the State Party submitted a report on the state of conservation, an executive summary of which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1573/documents/. The report outlines measures implemented by the State Party in response to Decision 45 COM 7B.196 as follows:

 A Global Maintenance Plan has been developed for the National Palace of Mafra, along with specific plans for the six historic organs, the bells and carillons. A Strategic Plan for Research, Innovation and Scientific Culture in the National Tapada of Mafra has also been prepared, including an action plan and targets to be monitored until 2030 (with a mid-term evaluation in 2027). These documents are annexed to the report;

- The existing different Management Plans reflect the distinct characteristics of the various institutions managing the Royal Building of Mafra and are designed to complement each other. A unified Plan is under development;
- Renovation of the North Wing of the National Palace of Mafra is ongoing, converting areas in the basement, ground and main floors to visitor use, museum reserves, and restoration workshops.
 The Campo Santo corridor has been restored; the rehabilitated areas will house national music museum collections;
- The Memorandum of Understanding between the School of Arms and Mafra City Council has been extended to 2026, with automatic renewal. A landscape architectural report for the Military Parade Square is currently being drafted under this framework;
- Several mid-20th-century buildings in the Military Parade Square have been demolished; the State Party report includes photographic records and inspection reports. Additional structures are scheduled for demolition;
- A new tactical vehicle storage facility is proposed to replace existing infrastructure east of the Palace Convent. The Descriptive and Justificatory Memorandum for the architectural solution is annexed;
- Construction and adaptation projects in the Cerco Garden remain in the study phase, with development planned for 2025. Related documentation will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre;
- The Cooperation Unit continues to meet regularly to define strategies and priorities. The Advisory
 Unit has not yet been established, as not all external invitations were accepted. Informal contact
 between the two units is ongoing. A revised list of members for formal establishment of the
 Advisory Unit will be prepared in 2025;
- Archaeological surveys, in collaboration with the University of Lisbon's Archaeology Centre, are
 ongoing. The interdisciplinary project integrates landscape and human activity and will continue
 through 2027;
- Under the EU's Recovery and Resilience Plan, three major renovation projects are planned through 2026: the renovation of the North Wing (in progress), restoration of the Basilica and Library, and the refurbishment of the Palace and Convent's perimeter. Any planned restoration of the Palace interiors from 2026 onwards will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre in due course.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies acknowledge the progress made by the State Party in strengthening management instruments to safeguard the OUV of the property since inscription. The maintenance plans submitted demonstrate a clear and structured course of action for the specific elements under their respective mandates. The Strategic Plan is also welcome for its well-defined structure, built around four key pillars, and for its integration of an action plan that clearly identifies objectives, lines of action, potential partners, sources of funding, expected outcomes, and beneficiaries. However, considering the involvement of multiple institutions with distinct mandates related to the property, the development of an Integrated Management Plan remains essential to ensure coherence across all existing instruments and to foster an integrated approach to conserving the property's OUV, as well as meeting the conditions of authenticity and integrity, in line with previous Committee requests.

An integrated management framework would respect the individual responsibilities and planning tools of each institution, while facilitating the identification of synergies and areas of overlap. This would support better coordination, optimise resource use, and strengthen collaboration among all parties involved.

In light of the establishment in 2023 of the Museums and Monuments of Portugal and Public Institute for Cultural Heritage, both of which have mandates relevant to the property, the need for a coherent and integrated management structure has become even more pressing. Furthermore, the effective functioning of the Cooperation and Advisory Units is crucial to ensure inclusive governance and to reflect the full range of stakeholders engaged in the conservation and management of the property. The

Committee may therefore wish to recommend that the State Party prioritise the establishment of this integrated framework and ensure the full operationalisation of both Units.

With regard to the interventions undertaken, works at the National Palace have followed internationally recognised conservation principles and standards. The proposed adaptive reuse of spaces is considered compatible with the character of the property. The Committee may wish to emphasise that restoration proposals for the Basilica and the Library, as well as the planned renovation of the surrounding area of the Palace and Convent planned for implementation by 2026, should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, as well as any future proposals for the refurbishment of the Palace's interiors. Similarly, once developed, construction and adaptation projects within the Cerco Garden should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies.

Regarding the parking shed for tactical vehicles, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies consider that the intervention, as outlined in the annexed documentation may proceed as the project is not expected to compromise the property's authenticity or integrity and includes appropriate measures to minimise impact. Overall, it is anticipated to enhance the area by reducing visual intrusion and ensuring better integration with the surrounding environment.

With regard to the Military Parade Square, the demolition of certain buildings has been deemed justified based on the documentation provided. However, proposals for the rehabilitation or reuse of these areas, including landscape design plans, remain pending. The Committee may wish to invite the State Party to submit these proposals to the World Heritage Centre for review prior to implementation, to ensure that any future interventions do not compromise the integrity and authenticity of the property.

The Committee may also wish to welcome the ongoing archaeological and environmental research, as well as the documentation and cartographic inventory of the Tapada landscape and its historic features. These efforts contribute to a deeper understanding of the property's values and are instrumental in strengthening future management and conservation proposals for the wider territory and its components.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.121

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. Recalling Decisions 43 COM 8B.30, 44 COM 7B.54 and 45 COM 7B.196, adopted at the 43rd (Baku, 2019), extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the progress made by the State Party in strengthening management tools, particularly the development of the Global Maintenance Plan for the National Palace of Mafra and the Strategic Plan for Research, Innovation and Scientific Culture for the National Tapada of Mafra, as well as the ongoing archaeological and environmental research, documentation, and cartographic inventory of the Tapada landscape and historic features:
- 4. <u>Reiterates its request</u> to develop an Integrated Management Plan to provide an overarching and cohesive framework for the conservation and management of the property, and <u>recommends</u> that the Plan should include the following elements:
 - a) Overarching policies for the conservation and sustainable management of the property, its buffer zone and wider setting,
 - b) A mapping of intersections and complementarities among existing management tools to identify potential clearly defined governance arrangements, including operational guidelines and the composition of the Cooperation and Advisory Units to ensure inclusive and representative decision-making,

- c) Integrated and costed short-, medium- and long-term action plans with identified responsibilities for implementation,
- d) A time-based monitoring and reporting framework with indicators to assess the effectiveness of the management approach;
- 5. <u>Notes</u> the information on planned projects at the property and <u>further requests</u> the State Party to submit detailed documentation to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, prior to implementation and upon completion of study phases, for the following projects:
 - a) Restoration proposals for the Basilica and the Library, and renovation plans for the surrounding area of the Palace and Convent,
 - b) Refurbishment proposals for the interior of the Palace,
 - c) New construction and adaptation projects at Cerco Garden,
 - d) Landscape and/or Rehabilitation Plans for the Military Parade Square;
- 6. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.

122. Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Monte in Braga (Portugal)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

123. Cultural and Historic Ensemble of the Solovetsky Islands (Russian Federation)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

128. Arslantepe Mound (Türkiye)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

130. Göbekli Tepe (Türkiye)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

135. Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey including Saint Margaret's Church (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

See Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.4

136. The English Lake District (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2017

Criteria (ii)(v)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

Previous Committee Decisions see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/422/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/422/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

N/A

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- quarrying activities
- energy transportation
- · viability of the shepherding tradition
- · risk preparedness
- depopulation
- excessive tourism pressures
- inappropriate tourism facilities and activities
- identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community
- non-renewable energy facilities
- motorised traffic on green lanes and unsealed roads

Illustrative material see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/422/

Current conservation issues

On 29 November 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/422/documents/. Progress on several conservation issues previously addressed by the Committee is presented as follows:

- The Partnership Management Plan has been extended until 2026, with an Action Review initiated in autumn 2024, in response to Decision **45 COM 7B.63**; the revised plan is expected to be adopted in 2026;
- The Honister Zip-wire project started within the original permit's validity; however, a new, revised planning application is currently under consideration by the local authority, with ICOMOS' initial advice still regarded relevant;
- Efforts to support traditional farming include the updated Agricultural Transition Plan, Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS), and the Farming in Protected Landscape

- programme (FiPL) which provides funds to targeted farmers' initiatives, including farming transition, with 5.4 million GBP delivered between 2021 and 2024:
- The Lake District National Park Partnership (LDNPP) has recognised that the 'hefting system' has been compromised and is monitoring the traditional agropastoral system to develop a Lake District Shepherds' Guide; Global issues such as climate change, financial viability of small farm businesses and globalisation need to be further recognised and managed;
- The State Party noted efforts in aligning environmental sustainability with cultural heritage through a range of integrated strategies, including the promotion of Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) to ensure that nature recovery, the viability of hefting patterns, and other aspects of agro-pastoral practice are embedded in land-use planning;
- Affordable housing remains a priority, with small-scale delivery facilitated by Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) and LDNPP, based on community needs. The government introduced tax regime changes addressing second-home ownership, including a national registration scheme and reclassification of land use for furnished holiday lets;
- The State Party's report included a 'concerns and actions' document detailing ongoing conservation monitoring by the LDNPP through collaborative conservation and community projects, and by strengthening international links; these initiatives include nature recovery, nutrient neutrality, nature-based finance, climate action, community wellbeing, inclusion and diversity, and improved visitor management and access;
- Public transport initiatives are promoted, including multimodal ticketing, enhanced connectivity, co-designed integrated traffic management with local communities, and a government-level bus fare cap;
- A nine-year monitoring plan has been developed to assess the impact of traffic on nine unsealed roads affecting Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) attributes. Traffic regulation orders and other mitigation measures may be considered if unequivocal harm is proven;
- The Cumbria Local Flood Risk Management Strategy will take the World Heritage designation into account once relevant projects are identified. Cumberland Council maintains its current local Strategy, while Westmorland and Furness Council will revise theirs in 2025 to incorporate the designation. A guidance document to protect OUV during flood management planning is under preparation;
- An Interpretation Strategy has been developed and is being refined following reviews by Historic England and ICOMOS; adoption was planned for early 2025, with integration into the new Management Plan and an associated action plan under development;
- A revised proposal for a tourist attraction at Elterwater Quarry was approved in May 2024; however, judicial review requested by the Friends of the Lake District is underway;
- Sewage system improvements have reduced nutrient flow into Windermere Lake by 30% since 2020, enhancing water quality. Significant investments and multi-stakeholder initiatives, including the Love Windermere Partnership Plan, continue to be deployed.

Following concerns raised by the Lake District Green Lanes Alliance (LDGLA) regarding recreational vehicle use on unsealed roads within the property, additional information was provided by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre on 28 February 2025, in accordance with Paragraph 174 of the Operational Guidelines.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre. ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party has made considerable efforts to address the Committee's recommendations through several interconnected programmes, many incorporated into the reviewed Action Plan of the Lake District National Park Partnership Plan. Notably, the multi-stakeholder initiative for the Windermere Lake aims to improve the water quality and support its long-term management. Moreover, measures to promote public transport as a means to reduce private vehicular traffic are positive and should be upheld.

The development of an Interpretation Strategy is welcomed. Once finalised and approved, it should be formally integrated into the overall management framework, serving as a guiding reference for relevant plans such as the Destination Management Plan or the LDNPA's Lake District Historic Environment

Strategy. Efforts to provide affordable housing are acknowledged. While recognising the financial returns sought by private investors, new housing should prioritise local residents and avoid further increases in short-term lets. The revised tax policies aimed at limiting second homes and promoting residential use are positive, and their effectiveness should be monitored to assess changes in ownership and usage patterns.

It is noted that Westmorland and Furness Council will revise its local flood risk management strategy to include the World Heritage designation, and Cumberland Council should be encouraged to do likewise. The preparation of a Natural Flood Management guidance document to protect OUV is welcomed.

Despite these efforts, concerns remain regarding the prior approvals of the Honister Zip-wire and Elterwater Quarry projects. While the Elterwater Quarry development is subject to judicial review, the Committee's request to 'pursue all possible ways to resolve this issue and to avoid the construction' of the Honister Zip-wire (Decision 45 COM 7B.63) appears to have been disregarded. The project commenced under its original permits, and a slightly revised application, submitted without prior review by the World Heritage Centre, has been approved in March 2025 (information publicly available on the official website of the local planning authority). This creates an absence of clear, OUV-led vision to determine which forms of visitor engagement align with sustaining the property's OUV and which may negatively impact its attributes. While visitors need to be universally welcomed in a World Heritage property, not all uses and leisure experiences are appropriate. The Committee may wish to remind the State Party that the Interpretation Strategy should serve not only as a tool for public communication but also to guide the assessment and decision-making process regarding the suitability of tourism projects, based on their compatibility with the property's OUV.

The issue of motorised vehicular access to unsealed roads in sensitive valleys remains insufficiently addressed. While the development of a monitoring framework is noted, the proposed timeframe of nearly a decade is unreasonably long and delays necessary action. The State Party should be invited to increase monitoring frequency to annual assessments of all affected roads, with a review of results within three years. In the interim, experimental restrictions may be introduced on particularly pressured green lanes. The Road Traffic Regulation Act (RTRA84) already provides a legal basis for timely and precautionary action under paragraphs (d), (e) and (f) concerning traffic regulation orders outside Greater London.

The traditional agropastoral system, a key attribute that has shaped this cultural landscape over centuries and remains central to its OUV, faces significant challenges, which the State Party acknowledges. Despite efforts to address these challenges through initiatives such as agricultural transition, nature recovery, and climate change research, further measures are required to more directly support the traditional hefting-based agropastoral system and the farmers who sustain it. These measures should align with nature conservation parameters, a stance supported by the majority of farmers but requiring adequate resources to implement. The socio-economic viability of this now fragile system depends on maintaining healthy sheep numbers and flocks, and preserving the consistency of traditional agricultural practices. However, current funding and resources are inadequate for meeting the required level of support to the agropastoral system, having been reduced from previous levels and compared to the scale of the need, and are spread thinly across multiple priorities.

As set out in the Statement of OUV, it is also important to recall that the property played a significant role in the development of the landscape conservation movement. Maintaining the scenic, harmonious beauty of its cultural landscape and supporting traditional agropastoral farming are key to sustaining the property's OUV over the long term. Accordingly, all attributes conveying the property's OUV must be afforded consistent attention from all responsible bodies and stakeholders. In pursuit of this aim, consideration should be given to safeguarding environmental quality and enhancing climate change resilience.

The Committee may therefore wish to reiterate its request to the State Party to address the threats facing the property's hefting-based traditional agropastoral system by developing and adequately funding a targeted, coherent, long-term strategy. This strategy should be integrated into the forthcoming Partnership Plan, with the aim of halting the decline of the hefting-based agropastoral system and reversing current worrying trends. Efforts should align with the principles of the 2015 Policy Document on integrating sustainable development into the World Heritage Convention, which emphasises responsible environmental stewardship in cultural landscapes to avoid resource degradation, ensure long-term environmental quality, and strengthen resilience to disasters and climate change, whilst respecting cultural rights, particularly of the communities who have shaped this landscape over several centuries.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.136

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **41 COM 8B.30** and **45 COM 7B.63**, adopted at its 41st (Krakow, 2017) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions respectively,
- 3. <u>Acknowledges</u> the State Party's continued progress in addressing private vehicular traffic in the property, integrating Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) concerns into the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, and in monitoring water quality in Lake Windermere, and encourages the State Party to uphold its efforts;
- 4. <u>Welcomes</u> the development of an Interpretation Strategy and <u>recommends</u> its formal integration into the management system to guide the approach and priorities of the Partnership Management Plan, the Lake District National Park Authority's (LDNPA), the Lake District Historic Environment Strategy and the Destination Management Plan, and the assessment of leisure facilities and projects to ensure that public enjoyment supports OUV;
- 5. <u>Recognises</u> efforts to provide affordable housing and <u>recommends</u> limiting new construction to meet residents' needs, thereby reducing the proportion of holiday homes to avoid further erosion of the rural landscape and character, and <u>further welcomes</u> the revisions to the property-tax policies aimed at limiting second homes;
- Regrets that the Elterwater Quarry project was approved in 2024 contrary to the Committee's recommendation to suspend it pending the development and approval of an OUV-based Interpretation Strategy, notes that it is currently under judicial review, and requests the State Party to keep the World Heritage Centre informed of any final decisions;
- 7. <u>Strongly regrets</u> that the Honister Zip-wire project commenced under the original permit despite prior Committee requests to halt works, <u>notes with concern</u> that the local authority approved a revised application in March 2025 without prior review by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS and <u>recalls its request</u> that the State Party pursue all possible avenues to resolve this issue, including avoiding construction of this infrastructure or developing mitigation measures to counteract any negative impacts on the property's OUV;
- 8. <u>Expresses concern</u> that a clear OUV-led vision to guide prioritisation of forms of enjoyment that sustain the property's OUV remains to be established and <u>underlines</u> that while visitors may be welcomed, not all uses and leisure activities may be appropriate to support the property's OUV and its appreciation;
- 9. <u>Takes note</u> of the planned monitoring programme for recreational vehicle use on unsealed roads but <u>considers</u> the nine-year timeframe excessive, <u>requests</u> intensified monitoring with annual assessments on selected roads and a review within three years, and, in the interim, <u>further requests</u> experimental restrictions on the most sensitive and traffic-prone green lanes among those located in the most emblematic valleys using existing legal provisions;
- 10. <u>Expresses its utmost concern</u> that the hefting system for sheep flocks, a pivotal attribute of the OUV of the property, which has shaped this pastoral landscape and contributed to its scenic and harmonious beauty, is reported as compromised;

- 11. <u>Urges again</u> the State Party to devise, fund, and implement a targeted, coherent, long-term strategy, developed through broad consultation with key local actors, to halt and reverse the decline of the traditional agropastoral system, <u>further requests</u> that this strategy be integrated into the forthcoming Partnership Plan, in line with integrated and sustainable approaches to cultural landscape stewardship that support the socio-economic viability of long-standing farming practices, safeguard long-term environmental quality, and enhance resilience to climate change, and <u>also requests</u> the State Party to submit this strategy to the World Heritage Centre for review by Advisory Bodies;
- 12. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.

ARAB STATES

170. Baptism Site "Bethany Beyond the Jordan" (Al-Maghtas) (Jordan)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List 2015

Criteria (iii)(vi)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger N/A

<u>Previous Committee Decisions</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1446/documents/

International Assistance

Requests approved: 0

Total amount approved: USD 0

For details, see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1446/assistance/

UNESCO Extra-budgetary Funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

May 2025: ICOMOS Advisory mission

Factors affecting the property identified in previous reports

- Buildings and Development: Lack of design and construction guidelines for the Churches to be constructed in the buffer zone (Issue resolved). Adopted guidelines should be applied consistently.
- Management systems/ management plan: Lack of integration of the management procedures on maintenance, visitor management and disaster response in the management system (Issue resolved)
- Need to ensure the protection of the western banks of the Jordan River to preserve important vistas and sightlines of the property

<u>Illustrative material</u> see page https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1446/

Current conservation issues

On 28 November 2024, the State Party submitted a state of conservation report, a summary of which is available at https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1446/documents/. Progress in a number of conservation issues addressed by the Committee at its previous sessions is presented in those reports, as follows:

- The Management Plan has been augmented with the integration of disaster response plans for earthquakes and flash floods, as well as action plans and monitoring policies, including for visitor safety, and public awareness;
- Conservation measures include targeted geotechnical works implemented to deal with flash floods and ongoing maintenance and restoration of the archaeological sites;
- The revision of the 2018 Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), addressing the completed and new churches resulted in a revision of the design guidelines for new churches to prioritise architectural harmony with the natural and cultural landscape;
- The State Party is working with partners to complete, through a phased approach, the Master Plan for the area of the buffer zone dedicated to the construction of new churches, after which drafting the Master Plan for the remaining areas of the buffer zone will be undertaken;
- A research centre has been established to support conservation activities. A digital registration system has been introduced, and drone documentation has been implemented to augment data collection;

- The Baptism Site Commission contributed to a regional project titled *Mitigating the Risks of Conflict and Climate Change through Digital Heritage, Capacity Building, and Unification*;
- Noting the Committee's reiteration of the need to ensure the preservation of important vistas and views by all concerned parties, the State Party notes that it has diligently monitored developments on the western bank of the Jordan River, but that developments on the western bank fall outside its mandate:
- The State Party submitted, as annexes to the report:
 - A proposal with location map and evaluation for a cemetery for 120 persons (1,500m²) proposed for the buffer zone of the property,
 - An Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the New Full Master Plan of the Baptism Site Development Zone (BDZ) in the buffer zone of the property,
 - The revised Management Plan for the property.

On 11 February 2025, the State Party submitted an architectural proposal for the construction of a new 'Church of Saint John the Baptist'. On 8 April 2025 the State Party forwarded a letter to the World Heritage Centre in which it extended an invitation for an ICOMOS Advisory mission to visit the property. This mission took place between 17 and 20 May 2025. The mission report considers the BDZ, the Management Plan and the proposals for churches in the buffer zone of the property.

Analysis and Conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM

The State Party's exemplary progress in addressing the conservation and management needs of the property is noteworthy, as is its close communication with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies through the timely submission of requested documents, studies and requests for assistance.

ICOMOS' Technical Reviews of the revised Management Plan and the 2023 revision of the 2018 Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for the completed and new churches in the buffer zone with updated design guidelines, concluded that these were appropriate to maintain the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and recommending their implementation. Technical reviews of the submission of proposals for the amended design of the project for a new Maronite Church and the new Ethiopian Church highlighted that these would need to be revised to conform to the design guidelines.

The submission of a Zoning Master Plan for the property and development of a Master Plan for the area dedicated to the construction of new churches is welcome. It would be important that this action is followed by completing the Master Plan for the whole buffer zone, which should provide an integrated vision for the development of the buffer zone. The development of the Master Plan for the church zone should be accompanied by an iterative HIA which aligns the plan with the maintenance of the OUV of the property.

The fabric conservation actions and preventative geotechnical works to mitigate flash floods are welcome. The proposal for a 120-person cemetery in the buffer zone is located in an area designated as a proposed nature reserve, but the scale and nature of the proposal does not adversely affect the OUV of the property. The development of a road system to the cemetery will require sensitive planning to maintain the wilderness quality of the property.

The Scoping Report and the ESIA for BDZ in the buffer zone of the property were reviewed by ICOMOS. ICOMOS concluded that the ESIA convincingly shows that the BDZ Master Plan requires reconsideration in its main planning aspects, particularly the location and size of built components of the Plan. ICOMOS recommended that the Master Plan be revised and an updated ESIA, with annexes and details of the updated Master Plan be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before continuing with further developing designs of the individual zones. ICOMOS also highlighted the need to provide further information on the visitor carrying capacity of the property, both with and without the development of the BDZ Master Plan.

The 2025 Advisory mission gained further insight into the property and how the buffer zone contributed to the protection of the property. In its report, the mission concludes that the OUV of the Baptism Site "Bethany Beyond the Jordan" (Al-Maghtas) remains intact, supported by strong on-site stewardship and preserved wilderness and hydrological attributes. In its current design, the BDZ project poses potentially irreversible risks to the property's OUV. Therefore, the mission report provides guidance to the State Party to reduce risks and potential negative impacts of the proposed development, and establish contingency plans, should the State Party decide to proceed with an amended project

The State Party's diligence in monitoring the developments across the Jordan River is noted, and it is acknowledged that controlling these developments fall outside its mandate.

Draft Decision: 47 COM 7B.170

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/25/47.COM/7B.Add.3,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decision **45 COM 7B.140**, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),
- 3. <u>Welcomes</u> the State Party's continued engagement with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, including through the timely submission of material review of management tools, impact assessments and project proposals;
- 4. <u>Notes with appreciation</u> that the 2025 ICOMOS Advisory mission reports that the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property remains intact, supported by strong on-site stewardship and preserved wilderness and hydrological attributes;
- 5. <u>Also welcomes</u> the updated Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and updated development guidelines for new churches in the buffer zone areas dedicated to churches, the revision of the Management Plan for the property to include flash flood and earthquake preparedness and emergency response, and the conservation actions and preventative geotechnical works to mitigate flash floods that have been completed by the State Party;
- 6. <u>Encourages</u> the State Party to implement the guidelines for new churches in the buffer zone areas dedicated for churches and the revised Management Plan, and to undertake future periodic review of these tools in a timely manner, with a view to possible revisions to increase their efficacy;
- 7. <u>Also notes</u> the State Party's proposal to develop a cemetery with limited capacity in the buffer zone of the property, and <u>requests</u> that the State Party ensure that infrastructure development to reach the location is undertaken in a manner which is in keeping with the wilderness character of the property;
- 8. <u>Further notes</u> that the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) of the Master Plan of the Baptism Site Development Zone (BDZ) concludes that the project requires mitigation, including amendment in location and scale of some of its constituent components, that these conclusions are confirmed by ICOMOS through a Technical Review, and <u>further requests</u> that the State Party:
 - a) Align any amended BDZ project proposals with the recommendations of the conclusions of the ESIA, the ICOMOS Technical Review and the 2025 mission,
 - b) Ensure that any amended proposals are reassessed through an iterative ESIA and with consideration of visitor carrying capacity of the property,
 - c) Submit any amended proposal and updated ESIA to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before any further decision on the implementation of the plan constituent parts are made;
- 9. <u>Notes furthermore</u> the proposal to develop a Master Plan for buffer zone area designated for the construction of churches as a phased project, requests furthermore that this

- process be accompanied with an iterative HIA to ensure alignment with the maintenance of the OUV of the property;
- 10. <u>Reiterates its request</u> that the State Party submit the Master Plan for the whole buffer zone when completed, to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies and <u>also encourages</u> the State Party to ensure that the various plans, including that being developed for the Baptism Site Development Zone are aligned;
- 11. <u>Acknowledges</u> that the State Party has been monitoring the development along the western bank of the Jordan River, and <u>reiterates</u> the need to ensure the preservation of important vistas and views by all concerned States Parties;
- 12. <u>Finally requests</u> the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2026**, 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 49th session.