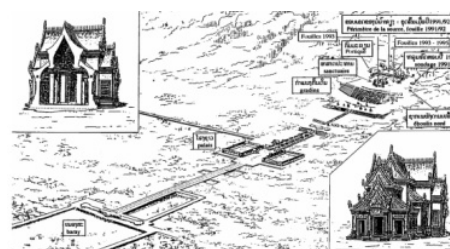




Report on the State of Conservation of the World Heritage Property of Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape

Response of the LAO State Party to the World Heritage Committee's decision 38COM7B

2015, February 24th



LAO PDR Report on the State of Conservation of the World Heritage Property of Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape

- 2015, February 24th-

This report has been realised by the World Heritage Office of Vat Phou Champasak for the National Commission for UNESCO to establish the response of the LAO State Party to the World Heritage Committee's decision 38COM7B, adopted at its 38th session (UNESCO, 2014).

Having considered and examined the above decision, the LAO State Party, would like to clarify each item as follows:

Decision WHC Doha 38COM7B, 2014 June

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-14/38.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling decisions **35COM 7B.72** and **36COM 7B.64**, adopted at its 35th (UNESCO, 2011) and 36th (Saint Petersburg, 2012) sessions respectively;
3. Takes note of the actions undertaken by the State Party towards addressing some of the requests made at previous sessions; in particular work to progress the redesign of the road, to formulate a Master Plan, and to define local land use zones;
4. Notes that inadequately detailed plans have been provided for the proposed road alignment and urges the State Party to develop plans of the amended road alignment at a larger scale in order to clarify precisely the proposed details; and requests it to undertake archaeological surveys to assess the significance of buried

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4. This plan, dated January 06, 2014, which was transmitted in the previous report on the state of property conservation (listed in Annex 1, page 6), is an explanatory schema that comes to support the decision of the Minister of Public Works and Transportation dated December 27, 2013 (attached as Annex 2, page 7), showing that the decisions proposed by the Lao Government are in conformity with the recommendations made in the UNESCO evaluations (Cameron - April 2011, WHC/ICOMOS/ICCROM - June 2012).

archaeology along the proposed route, and Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA), to assess the impact of the new road alignment and the development of appropriate mitigation measures, and to submit to the World Heritage Centre for assessment by the Advisory Bodies copies of the road plans and HIAs;

5. Also urges the State Party to suspend any work that may be ongoing on the new road until work on the expanded Master Plan, which includes a landscape approach to formulate a clear guidance for development requested below, is elaborated;
6. Also notes the submission of a Master Plan and local land use plans by the State Party, but expresses concern that the Master Plan does not have sufficient detail and scope to act as the strategic planning framework to protect the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, or to address the large number of major planned projects and potential development threats;
7. Further urges the State Party to develop an expanded Master Plan based on a landscape approach, taking into account the nature of the property as a cultural landscape, and its attributes of OUV, and to ensure that local land use zoning plans conform to the Master Plan; this Master Plan should provide an overall strategic landscape protection and development framework within which the Management Plan, the individual zoning plans, and any other strategic plans operate, and should ensure co-

The initial positioning of route 14A, in a critical area that passes near the Old City ramparts, was the subject of an initial archaeological survey in 2010.

The proposed alignment amendment will also be the subject of a new archaeological survey prior to the development of detailed plans as requested by UNESCO. A list will be made to compare the pros and cons of this change, in terms of risks and potential gains for the preservation of cultural heritage.

5. Work was suspended following the first UNESCO expertise in April 2011 and the 35COM7B decision made by the 2011 World Heritage Committee.

6. The development of the 2012 Master Plan was launched primarily following the examination of the protection of the cultural landscape. So far, this is the aspect which was most taken into account, with the help of a number of scientific and academic partners. This takes into account the large landscape scale beyond the perimeter of the site, all the way to studying view cones and alleyways in detail from the point of view of pedestrians. This was the subject of a special workshop at the end of 2014 conducted in collaboration with Silpakorn Bangkok University, and with help from the French and Japanese Governments. Amendments are scheduled in 2015 in collaboration with the National School of Landscape in Versailles and the ICOMOS expert.

This work is an extension of the OUV and has even contributed to the revision of the OUV in 2014. It includes the integrity level analysis of various parts of the site as well as localizing potential threats to heritage sites.

Inclusion of the cultural landscape in the Master Plan was presented and debated at the Korean National University for Cultural Heritage in Seoul in 2014, in the presence of international experts.

7. All districts, as well as the city of Pakse, have Master Plans. The Provincial Department of the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation is responsible for the coordination of these various Master Plans. A special meeting was held in 2014 at the Ministry of Transportation in Vientiane, in order to ensure coordination with the Pakse Master Plan, which is the subject of an ADB-backed international working group.

The delimitation of the Master Plan for Vat Phou Champasak and its surrounding areas was defined so as to ensure that the perimeter of this Master Plan is not within strictly defined borders, but rather overlaps onto neighboring projects so as to strengthen coordination and include the Master Plan in a strategic vision for territorial development. In this way the project covers three times the area of the site and allows a complete vision of relationships with neighboring territories.

The zoning plans were developed exactly in accordance with the Master Plan. This was easily done as they

ordination with emerging wider territorial plans; and to submit copies to the World Heritage Centre for assessment by the Advisory Bodies before final approval;

8. Regrets that a number of construction projects are being proposed or undertaken without notifying the Committee and urges furthermore the State Party to provide detailed information on these projects to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines* ;
9. Also requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM reactive monitoring mission to the property to consider the implementation of the above and in order to develop ways of mitigating potential threats to the OUV of the property;
10. Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2015**, an updated report, including a 1-page executive summary, on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th session in 2015.

were drafted at the same time and from the same GIS database.

An initial approval of new urban planning documents was signed in 2014 by the Government of the Province of Champasak and the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation, to implement an initial emergency regulatory framework for heritage protection.

Other aspects of the Master Plan are still under in-depth study in the framework of the Interdepartmental Project Steering Committee, including notably approaches to socio-economic and transportation issues.

8. The development plan of the monument zone was sent to UNESCO last year, in the report on the State of Property Conservation file: see general plan (Annex 19, page 31) and detailed plan (Annex 20, page 32).

No new construction project was completed in the monument zone since the previous State of Property Conservation report. Only the official gallery, which threatened to collapse, was reconstructed exactly in the same place and at the same height. This reconstruction was planned and indicated in the plan submitted last year.

9. The invitation was sent by the National Commission for UNESCO on 19 January 2015.