

**Joint Reactive Monitoring Mission to the  
Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements  
within the Champasak Cultural Landscape  
World Heritage Property  
Lao People's Democratic Republic**

**17-21 February 2015**

**MISSION REPORT**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape was inscribed as property 481 on the World Heritage List in 2001 under cultural criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi). The property is located on the west bank of the Mekong River in the Champasak Province of southern Lao PDR, 500km south-east of the capital, Vientiane. The total inscribed area covers 39,000 ha.

The inscription recognized the property for its temples and cultural landscape. The Vat Phou temple complex is a major example of both early and classic Khmer architecture from the 7th–12th centuries AD. The complex is the focal point of a sophisticated cultural landscape centred on the Champasak Plain, taking in the Phou Kao (mountain) to the west, and the banks of the Mekong River to the east. Between them are temples, shrines, water tanks, water channels, quarries, historic field systems, ancient roads and settlement sites, including one of the earliest known urban settlements in Southeast Asia, Shrestrapura.

At its 38th session (June 2014), the World Heritage Committee examined the most pressing conservation issues affecting the integrity and authenticity of the property. These include the suspended road construction of Route 14A, the lack of a coordinated management and planning mechanisms as well as other new development projects at the property.

The World Heritage Committee acknowledged the efforts made by the State Party towards implementing the previous Committee decisions. However, the Committee expressed serious concern that, in spite of the extensive dialogue and assistance provided, there is still no clear vision as to how the road construction and its related development should be planned and implemented in order to avoid potentially serious threats to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. In this context, the Committee recommended a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM reactive monitoring mission to the property.

At the invitation of the State Party of Lao PDR, and in accordance with **Decision 38 COM 7B.17**, a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM reactive monitoring mission visited the property from 17 to 21 February 2015. The mission was conducted by Mr Feng Jing, Chief of the Asia and the Pacific Unit of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (Paris), Mr William Logan, Professor Emeritus of Deakin University (Australia) representing ICOMOS, and, since due to technical reasons, the ICCROM representative could not join the field trip, as planned, Mrs Montira Horayangura Unakul, Programme Specialist for Culture at the UNESCO Office in Bangkok.

The main objectives of the mission were to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the state of conservation of the property as a whole, including some key issues identified as having potential to impact negatively on the OUV of the property. These include the construction of route 14A, the progress on the development and implementation of the Master Plan and local land use plans, new construction within the property and the management effectiveness and adequacy.

The mission met with representatives from a wide range of government agencies and institutions, as well as representatives from the villages close to road construction, and made site visits to several component parts of the property.

### **Mission recommendations**

A principal conclusion reached by the mission is that the level of threats to the property does not currently warrant the property being placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Nevertheless a number of serious issues exist and they need to be studied and solutions urgently found in order to protect the OUV effectively without disadvantaging the local community and in order to avoid the possibility of In Danger listing. To this end, and on the basis of discussions, site visits and the information before us, the mission makes the following recommendations for action by the Lao PDR authorities:

#### ***Recommendation 1:***

An effective and efficient road system should be formulated and fully implemented before the unmade section of Route 14A is completed and opened to traffic, such that:

- Route 14A will be for light vehicles only and limited to visitors to Zone 4 and local residents
- Route 14B will be the international connection for heavy vehicles between southern Lao PDR, Cambodia and Thailand
- Tourist coaches will park in designated areas at the northern and southern perimeter of the property
- The district road through Champasak town and the Ancient City will be strictly limited to light traffic generated by the villagers themselves
- The need for the proposed additional local roads will be analysed and justified before construction.

#### ***Recommendation 2:***

The development control system for enforcing planning laws, regulations and Management Plan controls should be strengthened and made fully operational before Route 14A is completed and opened to traffic in order to prevent further ribbon development along the road. In particular, no new construction of any kind should be permitted along the section from Km 29 to Km 34 which is adjacent to the Ancient City and has high archaeological sensitivity. Consideration should be given to removing any constructions that have occurred along Route 14A since 2010, in order to reinforce the authority of the control system.

#### ***Recommendation 3:***

On the basis of the information provided to the mission, and contingent upon the implementation of Recommendations 1 and 2, Route 14A should be completed according to the original alignment 24 metres from the north-west corner of the fourth enclosure wall of the Ancient City, rather than according to the proposed realignment 100 metres from the corner.

#### ***Recommendation 4:***

A detailed statement of the Master Plan's overall vision should be prepared, especially incorporating respect for the cultural landscape as a whole and its buried

archaeology, which forms an essential part of the property's Outstanding Universal Value, and making clear how the various planning maps relate to each other.

***Recommendation 5:***

The State Party should review the physical attributes of the property which justify World Heritage listing, particularly with regard to the contribution of Champasak town to the property's OUV, explore the options for modifying the northern boundary of the property and reconsider building/development control measures for Champasak town accordingly. Such consideration should involve meaningful consultation with the local community and ensure that Champasak town continues to have adequate planning constraints in light of its sensitive location.

***Recommendation 6:***

To enhance the implementation of the 1998 Management Plan, it should be reviewed, updated and streamlined, particularly to reflect the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (RSOUV) and the current situation and to render it more practical and operational by including, among other things, an improved monitoring framework.

***Recommendation 7:***

Further enhancement and strengthening of inter-agency cooperation, including between provincial and national level authorities, should be put in place in order to continue to address the conservation and management issues at the property by the Lao PDR National Committee for World Heritage. In particular, the various committees concerned with the World Heritage property should be convened regularly and their decision-making processes reinforced through provision of greater technical support and in line with the Operational Guidelines for Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

***Recommendation 8:***

A twinning arrangement with the Town of Luang Prabang World Heritage property should be considered as a way of developing heritage management expertise at the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Management Office, particularly in relation to site monitoring.

***Recommendation 9:***

Consultative meetings involving meaningful dialogue with the villagers living within the property should be held on a regular basis.

***Recommendation 10:***

A Vat Phou Expert Working Group should be created in order to avoid ad hoc decision-making, with such group coordinating and overseeing the technical quality of the conservation work by the various national and international partners and stakeholders at the property and having its Secretariat provided by the Site Management Office.

***Recommendation 11:***

A centralized system of documentation or deposition of the documents and findings from the archaeological surveys and monumental conservation should be established.

***Recommendation 12:***

An improved strategy for promoting tourism at the site should be developed, not only to boost visitor numbers, but also to boost tourism income for the site as well as for local community members, such as through more effective tourism revenue capture.

***Recommendation 13:***

For any new constructions on or in the visible setting of the property, Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for Implementing the World Heritage Convention should be followed and Heritage Impact Assessments conducted.

***Recommendation 14:***

To guide future construction and development at the Vat Phou monumental complex in an orderly manner, a detailed site zoning plan should be developed that indicates the permissible location and character of any proposed new installations. This zoning plan should be included in the Master Plan and updated Management Plan.

## 1. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

### 1.1 Inscription history

Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2001 as property C481. The property is located on the west bank of the Mekong River in the Champasak Province of southern Lao PDR, 500km south-east of the capital, Vientiane. The total inscribed area covers 39,000 ha.

### 1.2 Inscription criteria and Outstanding Universal Value

The Vat Phou property was inscribed under criterion **(iii)**, **(iv)** and **(vi)**.

**Criterion iii:** The temple complex of Vat Phou bears exceptional testimony to the cultures of south-east Asia, and in particular to the Khmer Empire which dominated the region in the 9-14th centuries.

**Criterion iv:** The Vat Phou complex is an outstanding example of the integration of a symbolic landscape of great spiritual significance to its natural surroundings.

**Criterion vi:** Contrived to express the Hindu version of the relationship between nature and humanity, Vat Phou exhibits a remarkable complex of monuments and other structures over an extensive area between river and mountain, some of outstanding architecture, many containing great works of art, and all expressing intense religious conviction and commitment.

The Vat Phou temple complex is a major example of both early and classic Khmer architecture from the 7th–12th centuries CE. The complex is the focal point of a sophisticated cultural landscape centred on the Champasak Plain, taking in the Phou Kao (mountain) to the west, and the banks of the Mekong River to the east. Between them are temples, shrines, water tanks, water channels, quarries, historic field systems, ancient roads and settlement sites, including one of the earliest known urban settlements in Southeast Asia.

The Champasak Cultural Landscape, including the Vat Phou temple complex, is one of the most important sites of the greater Khmer Empire. The Ancient City (Shrestrapura) exhibits some of the earliest known evidence of urbanism in Southeast Asia. The remarkably well-preserved planned landscape reflects more than a thousand years of development, from the 3rd century CE, where many civil works and artefacts had been planned. Using an East-West axis from the riverbank to mountaintop to set out a geometric pattern of temples, the temples were contrived to express the Hindu version of the cosmological relationship between nature and humanity.

The outstanding significance of the Champasak Cultural Landscape lies in the broad scientific perspective of the powerful Khmer culture. The temple complex represents

a masterpiece of human creative genius due to the high quality of its artistic work, and the integration of its symbolic plan with the natural landscape to create a physical manifestation of a Hindu concept of the perfect universe. The resulting expression of these ideas, on the ground and in its architecture and art, is a unique fusion of indigenous natural symbols, religious inspiration, and technical prowess.

### **1.3 Integrity/authenticity issues raised in the ICOMOS evaluation report at the time of inscription**

In the evaluation report at time of inscription, ICOMOS noted that the evaluation of the property's authenticity involved five elements, as follows:

- The landscape setting of the whole site
- The association of the various elements and the evidence for deliberate planning
- Buried archaeological sites
- Archaeological sites surviving as visible earthworks
- Standing structures.

ICOMOS noted that overall authenticity and integrity of the property is remarkably high. Nevertheless ICOMOS also took note of the great need for conservation of the major structures within the Vat Phou Temple Complex, which were in danger of imminent collapse.

The integrity of the property is related to the whole cultural landscape property and its wider setting, the evidence of deliberate planning and the association of various elements including standing structures, buried archaeological remains and surviving sites as visible earthworks. All of these elements are considered integral to an expression of the property's Outstanding Universal Value. As all are original and with their in situ historical and archaeological contexts remaining undisturbed, it is relatively easy to see how the various elements relate to one another. Furthermore, the landscape setting, at the foothills of the mountain, consisting of shallow rice paddy fields and small agricultural settlements, had at the time of inscription largely preserved its natural topographic elements and traditional appearance. However, the ICOMOS evaluation of the property's integrity in 2001 noted that the property was vulnerable to urban and infrastructure development as well as tourism pressures.

The World Heritage property includes four zones that had been established by the Provincial Decree on the Regulations for the Preservation of the Historical site of Vat Phou and the areas related to Vat Phou, No. 38/88 (Oct 1988).

- Zone 1. Champasak Heritage and Cultural Landscape Protection Zone.
- This large zone contains within it three smaller component parts:
- Zone 2. Sacred Environment Conservation Zone (the Phou Kao mountain)
- Zone 3. Archaeological Conservation Zone (Ancient City and other sites)
- Zone 4. Monument Management Zone (Vat Phou temple and its compound).

As Zone 1 already incorporated a large-scale landscape in which all the main features can be viewed in context, the State Party did not propose a buffer zone at the time of inscription. Note that Zone 4 has increased levels of protection and direct management of the known concentrations of archaeological sites and monuments

and for the conservation of other significant values. The ICOMOS Evaluation of 2001 observed that while there were no residents living in Zones 2 and 4, the resident population of Zones 1 and 3 already amounted to 28,000.

#### **1.4 Examination of the State of Conservation by the World Heritage Committee and its Bureau**

The core issue with regards to the Vat Phou property has been the construction of Route 14A, which runs through Zone 1 and close to Zone 3 (Ancient City). The World Heritage Committee was first notified of plans for this road in 2002, and subsequently at its 27th session (Paris, 2003) urged the State Party to '*submit a detailed survey plan for the new north-south road to mitigate any negative impact this road could have on Zones 1, 2, 3, or 4, detailing the protective measures being undertaken or planned*' (**Decision 27 COM 7B.51**).

In April 2010, after a long period of inactivity concerning the road construction, UNESCO received reports that the construction of Route 14A had commenced and would pass through Zone 1 and Zone 3 of the property. The State Party was duly notified by the World Heritage Centre that potential damage from the construction works was not in compliance with existing legislation and management provisions and could lead to threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, thus providing grounds for inclusion of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

To assess the emergency situation at the property, a UNESCO fact-finding mission was undertaken in 2010 at the request of the Ministry of Information and Culture, Lao PDR. According to the mission report, road construction plans provided by the State Party showed that out of a total length of approximately 60 km, an 18-km section of Route 14A would be situated in Zone 1 of the property (Champasak Cultural Heritage and Cultural Landscape Protection Zone), running from Km 25 at Ban Phaphin to Km 41 at Ban Dontalat village.

Work on the road started in early 2010. After rapid construction in 2010, the road works had substantially progressed, with various sections in the property advanced to various degrees of construction by January 2011. At the request of the State Party, a rapid impact assessment was undertaken by an expert mission fielded by UNESCO Bangkok in January-February 2011. The results of the assessment concluded that the construction and planned operation of the Route 14A based on its current design would have an '*unacceptable impact*' on the property's Outstanding Universal Value (Cameron 2011: 54). The road would impact on the cultural landscape and the buried archaeology and standing earthworks. The road alignment cuts through the cultural landscape and creates adverse visual and cultural impacts.

At its 35th session in 2011, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party '*to immediately suspend all construction works from Km 25 to 34 to allow time for detailed assessment of the impact of the road construction project on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property*'. In addition, the Committee requested the State Party to invite a reactive monitoring mission 'in order to consider alternative options for the proposed road construction'. This reactive monitoring mission was

undertaken in February 2012. Its recommendations include emphasizing the importance of creating a viable alternative route (Route 14B) to the west of the property, the possible inclusion of speed bumps on Route 14A, the cancellation of the bypass around Ban Tang Kob, and the minimizing of visual impact by refraining from planting trees around the road.

In its State of Conservation report submitted in January 2014, the State Party noted some progress: the Ministry of Public Works and Transport had approved the new design, which limited the width of certain sectors; it had cancelled the Ban Tang Khob bypass; and it had identified a new alignment that takes the road 100m away from the north-west corner of the Ancient City. Other measures were also being considered, such as a requirement to conduct archaeological explorations before additional work commenced, colour treatment of railings, and a ban on trees along the edge of the road. The report also mentioned that priority had been given to the upgrade of Route 14B as an alternative route in the long-term.

### **1.5 Justification of the reactive monitoring mission**

At its 38th session (Doha, 2014), the World Heritage Committee acknowledged efforts made by the State Party towards implementing the previous Committee decisions. It was not clear, however, if work has been halted on the Route 14A, as requested by the Committee. With regard to the new aligned route 14A, there was a commitment to limiting the impact of the road through revising its layout and width, but only large-scale plans of the proposed new layout were provided and these did not give sufficient detail. These plans seemed to indicate at least four new entry points from the road to the site without any detailed explanation, this indicating that access planning is still unclear.

The World Heritage Committee noted the work undertaken at the local level in collaboration with local communities to start defining zones where new construction would be barred. The definition of such zones is needed as a crucial planning tool to control development. The Master Plan, in its current form as a series of maps, was not the strategic planning tool that is needed to contain potential development pressures related to the new road, potential challenges of new service infrastructure, new construction associated with tourism development, and how proposed regulations will be enforced. Such an expanded Master Plan is urgently needed to provide the necessary strategic planning tool for decision-making at the property.

The Committee considered, however, that the information provided did not show how the development of these plans had been related to an understanding of the attributes of the OUV for the overall cultural landscape, or to the Management Plan of the property. The Champasak cultural landscape, including the Vat Phou Temple complex, is inscribed for its remarkably well-preserved planned landscape that was shaped over a period of a thousand years to express the Hindu vision of the relationship between nature and humanity through a geometric pattern of temples, shrines and waterworks extending over a broad landscape. Clearly this remarkable vision should provide the basis of a Master Plan, which should be the overall development plan for the property and define how the attributes that carry that OUV will be protected and sustained.

The World Heritage Committee at its 38<sup>th</sup> session in June 2014 also expressed its regret that a number of construction projects had been proposed or undertaken without the Committee being notified, in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. Although the Committee acknowledged the many conservation and development initiatives funded by international co-operation, there was concern at the apparent lack of adequate co-ordination.

At the time of its 38<sup>th</sup> session, the Committee noted that it had not yet approved a Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (RSOUV) for the property. One was submitted by the Lao Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism in September 2014, however, and is being processed for consideration by the World Heritage Committee at its 39<sup>th</sup> session in Bonn, Germany, in June 2015.

The Committee therefore expressed serious concern at its 38<sup>th</sup> session in June 2014 that, in spite of the extensive dialogue and assistance provided, there was still no clear vision as to how the road construction and its related developments should be planned and implemented in order to avoid potentially serious threats to the OUV of the property. The Committee therefore requested the State Party to invite a reactive monitoring mission to the property to consider short, medium and long-term solutions to the problems outlined above.

In **Decision 38COM7B.17**, the World Heritage Committee put forward a number of concerns that remain regarding the planned construction, such as the inadequate detail of the road plans and the lack of archaeological surveys and Heritage Impact Assessments. While a Master Plan was submitted by the State Party in January 2014 the Committee expressed concern that this plan lacks sufficient detail and scope to act as a strategic planning framework. Thus the State Party was urged to suspend all ongoing work until an expanded Master Plan can be developed.

The Committee further specified that this plan ought to be developed based on a landscape approach, taking into account the nature of the property as a cultural landscape, and its attributes of OUV. 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-ordination with emerging wider territorial plans.

The joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM reactive monitoring mission was carried out to the property from 17 to 21 February 2015. The mission was conducted by Mr Feng Jing, Chief of the Asia and the Pacific Unit of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (Paris), Mr William Logan, Professor Emeritus of Deakin University (Australia) representing ICOMOS, and, since due to technical reasons, the ICCROM representative could not join the field trip, as planned, Mrs Montira Horayangura Unakul, Programme Specialist for Culture at the UNESCO Office in Bangkok. The main objectives of the mission were to undertake a comprehensive assessment on the state of conservation of the property as a whole, including some key issues identified as having potential to impact on the OUV of the property. These include the construction of route 14A, the progress on the development and implementation of the Master Plan and local land use plans, new construction within the property and management effectiveness and adequacy.

In order to address these key issues, the reactive monitoring mission undertook the following actions:

1. Assess the state of conservation of the property and factors affecting its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), authenticity and integrity, with particular attention to Route 14A to:
  - (a) verify whether the State Party has suspended construction works of the new North-South road, as requested by the World Heritage Committee;
  - (b) review the plan of the proposed amended road alignment at a larger scale, as requested by the World Heritage Committee, to clarify precisely the proposed details in line with the commitment to limit the impact of the road through revising its layout and width, and, if appropriate, assess alternate options for realigning and downgrading the road within the property and its setting;
  - (c) verify whether the State Party has undertaken archaeological surveys to assess the significance of buried archaeology along the proposed new aligned route 14A as a tool for designing the route;
  - (d) review the status of heritage impact assessments, if undertaken by the State Party, to consider the impact on the property of the proposed road construction and the appropriateness of mitigation measures, particularly connected with visual impact.
2. Review progress with creating an appropriate and detailed Master Plan that can act as a strategic planning tool for the overall development of the property, based on its OUV and the way the remarkably well-preserved planned landscape expresses the Hindu vision of the relationship between nature and humanity, through a geometric pattern of temples, shrines and waterworks;
  - 2.1 Review progress with the Local Land Use Plans, including Zoning Plans that should relate to the Master Plan and to an understanding of the attributes of OUV for the overall cultural landscape;
  - 2.2 Assist the relevant authorities in framing the way this work should be approached.
3. In line with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, review planned and potential future developments that could impact OUV, especially the construction of a new site management office next to the site museum and water tanks, and assist the State Party to develop a long-term approach to development as part of the Master Plan to meet the World Heritage Committee's requirements;
4. Assess the effectiveness and adequacy of the management system for the property, in particular institutional arrangements and the functioning of key management bodies, such as the National Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee;

5. Hold consultations with the Lao authorities and relevant stakeholders in examining the issues and concerns expressed by the World Heritage Committee in its previous decisions and the progress made in the implementation of the decisions.

## **2. NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY**

### **2.1 National legislation**

The Decree of the President on the Preservation of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage No. 03/PR was adopted in June 1997 by the Government of the Lao PDR to provide a national legal framework for heritage preservation. Responsibility for enforcing the Decree lies with the Ministry of Information and Culture, its Provincial and District manifestations, and the village administrative authorities (Article 9).

The national legal framework for heritage preservation was reinforced by the Law Concerning National Heritage adopted by the National Assembly in 2005.

The property is protected by the Provincial Decree on the Regulations for the Preservation of the Historical site of Vat Phou and the areas related to Vat Phou, No. 38/88 (October 1988). This decree defines a large protection zone including not just the temple ruins but also the ancient city. Within the protection zone are three conservation areas covering the Vat Phou temple complex itself.

Within the protection zone, exploration and looting are forbidden, as is building on earthworks and the removal of trees from the forest on Phou Kao Mountain. Special permission is required for irrigation projects affecting earthworks. Within the preservation areas, regulation is stricter with prohibition on all building activity, robbing, damage and introduction of stock.

The Champasak Heritage Management Plan was officially adopted by the Government of Lao PDR on 28 September 1998 to operationalize the 1997 Presidential Decree. The Management Plan defines the boundaries of the Champasak Heritage and Cultural Landscape Protection Zone and three zones within it. The Management Plan contains regulations for the management of the entire nominated property and provides actions and policies for the conservation and archaeological work. In addition, actions plans to identify priority management measures are developed every five years.

### **2.2 Institutional framework**

The Lao Government divides the management of cultural heritage into four main levels: (1) the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism at the central level; (2) the Department of Information, Culture and Tourism at the provincial level; (3) Information, Culture and Tourism Office at the district level; and (4) village authorities.

Management of cultural heritage registered as world or regional heritage is overseen by the National World Heritage Committee, the Champasak Province World Heritage Committee, the Champasak District World Heritage Committee and the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Management Office. These bodies have separate structures and different regulations.

For Vat Phou, the Government had previously established a National Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee for the Protection of Vat Phou to coordinate the activities of the various government departments at national, provincial and district levels in relation to the property. The National Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee was replaced in 2008 by the current Lao PDR National World Heritage Committee, chaired by the Vice Prime-Minister.

The Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Management Office was upgraded in 2010, and now has an administrative status equal to the Provincial Department of Information, Culture and Tourism. This is the same structure used in Luang Prabang, allowing the office to more effectively liaise with other provincial departments.

## **2.3 Management structure**

### **2.3.1 Overall framework and Management structure**

Day to day management of the property is ensured by the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Management Office. As noted, the Office has the status of a provincial department and collaborates with other national and provincial authorities. A Village Liaison Committee was originally established to develop close links with the local communities, but this no longer exists. The Site Management Office has staff trained in archaeology, architecture and urban planning, and cooperates closely with various international teams of experts.

Management is undertaken in accordance with the Champasak Heritage Management Plan that was officially adopted by the Government of Lao PDR in September 1998 to implement the Presidential Decree on the Preservation of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage (1997). The Plan defines the boundaries of the property and the limits of four zones comprising the site. It contains regulations for the management of the entire World Heritage property, including archaeological work, conservation, and development control. In addition, action plans to identify priority management measures are developed every five years.

Other plans that have a direct bearing on the status and management of the site include the National Master Plan for Tourism for Champasak Province and the Provincial Development Plan for Transportation, Post and Construction which are also updated every five years.

### **2.3.2 Specific long-term expectations**

Long-term challenges for the management of the property principally concern the control of urban and infrastructure development within the large historic cultural landscape that functions (Zone 1) as buffer zone to the sacred mountain area (Zone 2), the archaeological structures in Zone 3 and the monumental heritage in Zone 4. In addition, other challenges arise from environmental pressures (mainly flooding, run-off, and erosion), visitor/tourism pressures (including that of the annual February festival) and a growing resident population within the protected zone that has increasing lifestyle expectations.

The continuing integrity of the property relies on the importance of adhering to the government approved Management Plan in order to conserve the heritage values of all four protected zones through inter-department co-ordination and on-property management. Without this cohesive approach, and access to appropriate professional knowledge, the property is vulnerable to visitor and other infrastructure developments, environmental pressures and, particularly during the wet monsoon season, soil erosion.

### **3 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES/THREATS**

This section of the report considers the nature and extent of threats to the property, taking into consideration the OUV for which the property was inscribed and specific issues outlined by the World Heritage Committee. Positive or negative developments in the conservation of the property since the last report to the World Heritage Committee are noted. Information is provided on specific threats and damage to or loss of the Outstanding Universal Value and integrity and/or authenticity for which the property was inscribed.

#### **3.1. Assess the state of conservation of the property and factors affecting its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), authenticity and integrity.**

##### **3.1.1 Verify whether the State party has suspended construction works of the new North-South road, as requested by the World Heritage Committee.**

The mission confirmed that the State Party had suspended construction of Route 14A (section between Km 29 and Km 34), as requested by the World Heritage Committee (SOC 2003, 2011, 2014).

##### **3.1.2 Review the plan of the proposed amended road alignment at a larger scale, as requested by the World Heritage Committee, to clarify precisely the proposed details in line with the commitment to limit the impact of the road through revising its layout and width, and, if appropriate, assess alternate options for realigning and downgrading the road within the property and its setting.**

Route 14A links the provincial capital Pakse, which is on the other side of the Mekong River from the World Heritage property, to the village of Ban Soukouma south of the property. In the initial feasibility study for upgrading transport infrastructure in southern Lao PDR, undertaken by JICA in 2002, this road was designated to continue further south to the Cambodia border where it could potentially connect to Siem Riep as a transnational route. However, as currently constructed, it serves as a local road providing essential visitor access to the Vat Phou temple site (Zone 4: Monument Management Zone) and local access for residents of over 50 villages on the western bank of the Mekong. In the northern section of Route 14A, from Pakse down to Km 29, the road has been completed and is operational as a toll road (Figure 2). Similarly, the southern portion of the road from Km 34 south to Ban Soukouma has been completed and is in use.

Route 14A passes through Zone 1 of the property from km 25 (at Ban Phaphin at the property's northern edge) to km 41 (at Ban Dontalat at the southern edge). The most sensitive section is from Km 25 to Km 34, where the road cuts through agricultural land and a large wetland, both of which have direct visual and landscape connections with the sacred mountain range. Flagged in the previous 2012 Reactive Monitoring Mission as a major concern, ribbon development is now occurring along the new road. At Ban Phaphin, this includes a new petrol station, a new parking lot (currently being graded), shops and private houses (both pre-existing and new). The buildings

include both traditional style structures in light materials raised above ground as well as concrete structures on slab foundations.

The new developments from Km 34 to Km 41, south of the access road to the Vat Phou monumental complex (Zone 4), are more intensive and include new restaurants, houses, and commercial premises such as a truck dealership. While this section is less sensitive compared with the entry sequence to Zone 4 from the north, it is still in Zone 1 of the site and the rural character of the landscape has largely been lost in the areas flanking the upgraded road. Furthermore, the character of new developments here also gives a sense of the type of urban densification that may occur in the future along the other stretches of road and points to the current inability on the part of the authorities to control such urban development.

Following the adoption of **Decision 35 COM 7B.72** (Paris, 2011), the State Party suspended further construction of Route 14A from Km 29 to Km 34, the section which passes to the west of the Ancient City. However, it should be noted that, with the exception of surfacing, much of the construction on this section had already been accomplished prior to suspension, including site formation, grading and construction of the supporting pillars of the three bridges (Figure 3). Following suspension of construction activity, parts of the dirt road bed have eroded badly. Because of the suspension, traffic is diverted through the existing local road that passes through Champasak town and over the remains of the Ancient City (Figure 4). That said, it should be noted that some traffic continues to pass over the suspended portion, as evidenced by tyre tracks. Finally, it is regrettable to note that, in contradiction with the recommendations from the rapid Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment undertaken in January-February 2011, the section of Route 14A which connects to the entrance of the monumental complex (Zone 4) has been enlarged, with a 9m carriageway and pavements on both sides, totalling 12m in width (Figure 5).

### **3.1.3 Verify whether the State Party has undertaken archaeological surveys to assess the significance of buried archaeology along the proposed new aligned route 14A as a tool for designing the route;**

An Initial Environmental Examination was conducted in 2002 as part of the JICA study, seven archaeological trenches were excavated in October and November 2010, during which the road construction work was halted temporarily, and a rapid impact assessment was carried out by Ellen Cameron in 2011. No further Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) have been conducted by the State Party.

Route 14A was planned to run 24 metres from the north-west corner of the fourth enclosure wall of the Ancient City (Figure 6). With a view to mitigating archaeological impact, the authorities have proposed a new alignment 100m away from the corner. This new alignment has only been proposed in a diagrammatic manner at a large scale and without any detailed road construction designs. No additional archaeological assessment or other heritage assessment has been conducted to explain how and why this distance of 100m was chosen or what impact on buried archaeological remains the new alignment might have.

It is possible that building the road on the new alignment might create new dangers without remediating whatever damage has already been done by maintaining the original alignment. The authorities have noted, however, that three of the four test pits excavated in 2010 in this suspended section did not reveal any archaeological finds, while the fourth pit revealed brick and potsherds. This fourth pit was located near km 34, approximately 100m from a sacred mound which is thought to have possible archaeological importance (eg. Cameron 2011). The authorities also state that no chance finds have been reported in this area over the past twenty years. Documentation in the Nomination Dossier based on non-invasive archaeological surveys of the Ancient City does indeed show that the concentration of archaeological finds was within the footprint of the Ancient City proper, with few finds recorded, at that time, beyond the fourth enclosure wall. Given these negative results the authorities are currently reluctant to allocate scarce funds to further archaeological investigations along the proposed new alignment.

### **3.1.4 Review the status of heritage impact assessments, if undertaken by the State Party, to consider the impact on the property of the proposed road construction and the appropriateness of mitigation measures, particularly connected with visual impact;**

Because the affected swathe of landscape connects directly between the Ancient City and the Vat Phou monumental complex, and includes the course of the Houay Prabang stream which channels sacred waters from the mountain to the river, the standard of proof for demonstrating archaeological impact (or lack thereof) needs to be high. This standard of proof has not yet been met and one conclusion might be that further investigations are necessary to determine the best way to reduce archaeological impacts in the suspended section of Route 14A.

At ground level, the road creates a visual disruption of the landscape, which up until 2010, ten years after inscription, had still largely maintained the integrity of its rural/agricultural character and the connection between mountain and river. The three bridges in the suspended section, while half-constructed, are designed to be quite tall, and the concrete drainage channels are also visible. However, as noted in the first reactive monitoring mission report (2010), the new road is not visible from the Vat Phou monument complex proper. While the impacts of the bridges and the drainage channels on the drainage regime of the site have not yet been studied, the most worrying concern in terms of changes in the character of the landscape is from the potential ribbon development of new buildings along the road if and when it is completed. Such development can already be seen around Ban Phaphin and on the section of road running south to Ban Dontalat, clearly indicating that there is as yet no viable enforcement controlling such new building activity.

Against this, it is of course essential to provide visitor access to Vat Phou (Zone 4). Currently there is a car park at the entrance to the monumental precinct and electric buggies (golf carts) take visitors from the car park to the temple site. In principle, larger vehicles such as coaches are required to park at designated areas north and south of Zone 4 (see Cameron report, 2011, Figure 7, p. 92). According to this plan, visitors would then be taken by light motor vehicles to the entrance to the temple site by way of the Route 14A alternative road through Champasak. In current practice,

however, all visitor vehicles drive into the monumental precinct and park in the large parking lot adjacent to the ticketing facilities. At the time of the mission, the northern parking lot was in the process of being graded, but there were yet no details on operationalizing the whole system (ie, restricting access for larger vehicles and off-loading from large vehicles to small vehicles).

The future possibilities for Route 14A are dependent on understanding the larger traffic patterns and transportation linkages surrounding the site. The first Reactive Monitoring Mission considered that the alignment of Route 14A to by-pass the Ancient City was preferable to allowing traffic to pass along the existing district road that runs directly on top of the Ancient City. Traffic on the district road impacts on the archaeological remains as well as spurring uncontrolled construction of new houses in the two villages located on top of the Ancient City. Moreover, the first reactive monitoring mission also raised the possibility of diverting heavy traffic to Route 14B, which runs to the west of the mountain complex. This been picked up in subsequent reports, including the Cameron impact assessment report (2011). Some minor mitigation actions have been made by the authorities such as the installation of speed bumps, cancelling the planned tree planting along the road, which would have made its presence more visible.

Route 14B is an unsurfaced, two-lane dirt road built originally for logging trucks which connects to the Thai border and is now in poor condition. The authorities have explained that upgrading Route 14B has recently been included in the next national Five-Year Plan (2016-2020). Subject to actual funding, this may be able to serve as an alternative route for heavy and through-traffic in the future. However, as the distance on Route 14B to Pakse is 54 km, compared with 30 km along Route 14A, traffic control measures would be needed to segregate heavy vehicles from light vehicles. It was explained that this would be possible since Route 14A is a toll road with entry barriers and weigh stations. For now, however, most north-south traffic still runs along Route 14A and the district road through Champasak town. According to the private concession which operates the toll road, an average of 1,400-1,600 vehicles use the road each day, with light vehicles accounting for 90 percent of the traffic.

In addition to Route 14A, the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Office has prepared a local transportation plan (Figure 4) which proposes an augmented local road network providing access to the main monumental complex and opening up new circuits to nearby secondary structures such as Hong Nang Sida. This includes two new east-west roads providing access directly to the entry fence of the monument complex, a north-south road connecting to Hong Nang Sida, as well as an access road up the mountain along the northern perimeter of the sacred monument complex to facilitate maintenance of the monuments. The necessity of building these additional roads is not yet well understood or explained but clearly they would create further pressure on the archaeological landscape, in addition to the potential impacts from Route 14A.

To summarize, on the one hand the concerns about the impacts of Route 14A on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and its associated attributes are as follows:

- Potential direct impacts on archaeological remains from the construction of the road no matter whether the original or the revised alignment is used and from ribbon development of new buildings;
- Potential indirect and cumulative impacts on the continuity of the cultural landscape (visual integrity, disruption of cosmological planning, disruption of environmental connectivity and function) from the road, new bridges and drainage channels, and new buildings;
- Cumulative impacts from uncontrolled traffic, especially heavy vehicles, moving along the road.

On the other hand, it has to be conceded that visitors must have road access to the Vat Phou temple complex. A road exists close to the temple, already directly impacting on the Zone 3 and on the landscape more generally. This road takes vehicles through Champasak town (Figure 7) and the Ancient City (Figure 8) producing vibrations that may be damaging buried archaeological remains, causing visual, noise and air pollution, and creating dangerous conditions for pedestrians and cyclists living in the area. The presence of this road also spurs the construction of new buildings, which further impacts on the archaeological features. Completion of Route 14A would greatly reduce these negative impacts.

Completion of Route 14A would also give the residents of the 50-plus local villages greater access to their properties, a point made strongly by a village headman who addressed the mission in one of its consultative meetings. The World Heritage Convention calls on States Parties to give heritage a function in the life of the community and the Operational Guidelines endeavour to ensure that the local community voice is heard and incorporated in decision-making about heritage site identification and management. Bearing in mind that World Heritage inscription should contribute to the sustainable development of the property and local communities, due consideration needs to be given to uplifting the quality of life of local residents in a way that does not impact negatively on the property's OUV.

Moreover, since the realigned road would probably be as potentially damaging to buried relics at the north-west corner of the Ancient City, there seems on the basis of the information before this mission to be insufficient reason to insist on the realignment. Before Route 14A is completed, however several critical conditions must be met in relation to traffic and enforcement systems.

Firstly, an effective and efficient road system must be formulated and fully implemented such that:

- Route 14B will be the international connection for heavy vehicles between southern Lao PDR, Cambodia and Thailand (Note that its completion is in the 5-year plan for 2016-20; if funds were allocated in 2016, Route 14B could be completed by 2019)
- Use of Route 14A will be for light vehicles only and limited to visitors to Zone 4 and local residents (Class 1 Resident Road), and the height and width of the portion of Route 14A from Km 29 to Km 34 will be strictly controlled to minimize topographical disruption of the landscape.
- Tourist coaches will park in designated areas at the northern and southern perimeter of the property

- The district road through Champasak town and Ancient City will be strictly limited to light traffic generated by the villagers themselves
- The need for the proposed additional local roads will be analysed and justified before construction
- All proposals, plans and designed for road works impacting on the OUV of the property will be forwarded to the World Heritage Centre in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

Secondly, the development control system for enforcing the planning laws, regulations and Management Plan controls must be strengthened and made fully operational in order to prevent further ribbon development along Route 14A. In particular, no new construction of any kind should be permitted along the section from Km 29 to Km 34 which is adjacent to the Ancient City and has high archaeological sensitivity. Consideration should be given to removing any constructions that have occurred along Route 14A since 2010 in order to reinforce the authority of the control system.

These systems must be made effective and put in place before Route 14A is completed. Failure to meet these conditions will not only undermine the property's OUV but will revive the likelihood of the property being placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger list and possible grounds for removal of Vat Phou from the World Heritage List.

## **3.2. Master Plans and Local Land Use Plans**

### **3.2.1 Review progress with creating an appropriate and detailed Master Plan that can act as a strategic planning tool for the overall development of the property, based on its OUV and the way the remarkably well-preserved planned landscape expresses the Hindu vision of the relationship between nature and humanity, through a geometric pattern of temples, shrines and waterworks;**

The Master Plan and local land use plans were finalised in 2012 and approved by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport in November 2014. Presidential approval has yet to be given. The State Party's State of Conservation Report for 2014-2015, which the mission received shortly after it had left Lao PDR, notes that all districts in Champasak province, 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 supported by an Asian Development Bank-backed international working group.

The Vat Phou-Champasak Master Plan is intended to provide an overall strategic framework within which the Management Plan, the individual Zoning Plans, the Land Use Plan and any other strategic plans operate. The Lao authorities claim that the Master Plan meets World Heritage Committee's requirements as an appropriate and detailed Master Plan that can act as a strategic planning tool for the overall development of the property based on its OUV and in particular the way the

landscape expresses the Hindu vision of the relationship between nature and humanity through a geometric pattern of temples, shrines and waterworks.

The SOC Report 2015 affirms that '*development of the 2012 Master Plan was launched primarily following the examination of the protection of the cultural landscape.*' Indeed, the SOC Report claims that '*this is the aspect which was most taken into account, with the help of a number of scientific and academic partners*' and helped inform the preparation of the RSOUV in 2014. This confirms the discussions had by the mission with the Site Management Office.

The SOC Report explains the methodology used as combining integrity analysis, localization of potential threats and study of large-scale view cones and the more intimate views of pedestrians along alleyways. The report also notes that areas beyond the boundaries of the property had been included in the investigation so to ensure that the vision, plans and projects for Vat Phou-Champasak overlap onto neighbouring areas, strengthen coordination across jurisdictions and set the Master Plan within a strategic framework for territorial development of the province as a whole. In this way, the SOC Report asserts, the project covers three times the area of the property and allows a complete vision of relationships with neighbouring territories.

Inclusion of the property's cultural landscape elements in the Master Plan was discussed at the Korean National University for Cultural Heritage in Seoul in 2014, in the presence of international experts, and a workshop was conducted on the subject in late 2014 with the collaboration of Silpakorn University, Bangkok, and with assistance from the French and Japanese governments. Further consideration of the planning approach to protecting the landscape elements of the OUV, and possible amendment, is scheduled for 2015 in collaboration with the National School of Landscape, Versailles, and ICOMOS.

### **3.2.2 Review progress with the Local Land Use Plans, including Zoning Plans that should relate to the Master Plan and to an understanding of the attributes of OUV for the overall cultural landscape**

According to the SOC Report 2015, the local land use zoning plans were developed concurrently with and in accordance with the Master Plan, using the same GIS database. Again, without a written vision and explanatory document to accompany these maps it remains unclear how the development of these plans relates to an understanding of the attributes of the OUV for the overall cultural landscape or to the Master Plan and the Management Plan of the property.

Various aspects of the Master Plan are still under in-depth study within the framework of an Interdepartmental Project Steering Committee, including approaches to socio-economic, transport and urban development issues. New urban planning documents intended to allow the implementation of an '*initial emergency regulatory framework for heritage protection*' have been developed and given initial approval in 2014 by the Government of the Province of Champasak and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

### **3.2.3 Assist the relevant authorities in framing the way this work should be approached.**

The Vat Phou management authorities have prepared a Master Plan and associated land use plans and building codes. While this represents very considerable excellent work on the part of the planners within the Site Management Office and contains a wealth of details, a major deficiency noted by the mission is that the Master Plan, at least as it was presented, entails a series of maps that lack a statement of the Master Plan's overall vision, especially in relation to the cultural landscape, and how the various maps relate to each other. The mission concluded that such a statement, if indeed it does not already exist, should be prepared as a matter of urgency.

Much of the Master Plan work has been focused on the area of Champasak town proper. Flagged as the gateway to the World Heritage property, Champasak town is apparently subject to the heaviest urbanization pressure within the World Heritage property. That said, unlike in Luang Prabang, Champasak is clearly not yet the target of major tourism-driven investment or development. Ironically, the construction of Route 14A, which allows improved access to Pakse, facilitates day trips by visitors to the site and decreases incentives to invest in additional tourism facilities in Champasak town. Accordingly, it seems unlikely that the tourism market will drive the adaptive reuse of the town's remaining historic buildings or other urban investments.

The mission's attention was drawn to the status of Champasak town within the Master Plan, local zoning plans and the new urban planning document. It was mentioned that the Champasak District building code had been revised in 2014. According to the Master Plan, two large parcels of land abutting Champasak town have been re-designated as urban extension areas. These are (1) enlargement of the urban node north of Ban Phapin, just beyond the northern perimeter of the World Heritage site, and (2) transformation of paddy land along Route 14A within the perimeter of the town proper. The former area is a logical location for future growth, while the latter area seems to signal the further erosion of the cultivated landscape and the visual and functional connections with the sacred mountain and its associated hydrological regime. This Master Plan has already been endorsed by the local authorities and approved by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, and has a five-year timeframe. At the end of the five-year period, the Master Plan will be reviewed and adjusted if necessary, which opens up the possibility of continued urban expansion of Champasak town into the existing green areas of Zone 1. On the one hand, the authorities cite immediate urbanization pressure as the impetus to create urban expansion zones, on the other hand, they also communicate that such urbanization pressures are not so great as to trigger further change after the initial five-year expansion period.

If these urban extensions proceed, new constructions can certainly be expected, further changing the green landscape character of this sensitive area. The mission was told, however, that landowners in the town do not want their property rights curtailed because of the World Heritage inscription. The permissible location and impact of urban expansion of Champasak town should be planned within the context of reviewing the town's overall contribution to the property's OUV, and subsequent modification of building/development control measures, as per Recommendation 5. The mission notes, however, that urban expansion in the node north of Phapin

outside the property will have less impact than converting the agricultural parcels within Champasak town.

The mission conducted a site visit of the town and found that it resembled Luang Prabang far less than was suggested in the *Mission d'enquête. Site classé de Vat Phou* (Laos) (Dauge et al, 2011). The Cameron report (also 2011) gives a picture of Champasak that better foreshadows the condition of the town today. The buildings range from traditional stilt houses and vats, to colonial era shophouses and residences, and modern concrete houses and public buildings. The traditional and colonial-style buildings are few in number and of no great age, the two large colonial buildings dating from 1926 and 1952 (Figures 9 and 10), and, on the basis of the admittedly scant information provided, appear to be of limited historic importance. As Cameron pointed out (p. 26), the historic buildings are mostly in a state of disrepair, not having undergone recent conservation. Some were in poor structural condition in 2011 (p. 32) and remain so today. They are all close to the road edge and suffer from traffic vibration, noise and air pollution. Speaking with the owner of one of the few nineteenth-century buildings in the town — a colonial-style building in very poor condition (Figure 11) — the mission formed the clear impression that there was no interest in restoring or adaptively re-using the building.

The mission noted, too, that the relatively recent set of structures that make up Champasak town bore little connection to the World Heritage property's OUV, which is focused on pre-Khmer and Khmer structures, both standing and buried, and the cultural landscape representing the Hindu expression of the relationship between nature and humanity using a geometric pattern of temples, shrines and waterworks. There is little reference to Champasak town in the nomination document and ICOMOS evaluation and none in the RSOUV: the modern town does not enhance the OUV's landscape component and there is no evidence of pre-Khmer or Khmer archaeological remains, with the exception of the pockets already designated as Zone 3 (ie, Vat Sisumang and Vat Sang-O). Moreover, no justification has been located for the straight-line northern boundary of the property.

Given the desire of the local community to develop the town and the lack of connection between the present-day town and the property's OUV, a number of options for Champasak might be considered. The first of these is to reinforce the town's role within the property, cancelling the urban extensions areas located within the footprint of the town as designated within the Master Plan and concentrate new urban extensions exclusively north of Phaphin, constraining new development, both in terms of building height, plot ratios and set-backs, and enhancing those functions that are connected either to the visitor experience of the property (interpretation centre, hotels and guesthouses, boat transport to/from Pakse, etc) or capacity-building for Site Management Office staff (training centre, residential accommodation, etc).

At the other end of the spectrum of options, consideration might be given to removing that part of Champasak town located in Zone 1 from the World Heritage property, following the appropriate procedure outlined in the Section III.1 of Operational Guidelines. (Advice would need to be sought from the World Heritage Centre and/or ICOMOS as to whether such a change would be classed as a minor or a significant boundary modification.) When raised at the debriefing session with national,

provincial, Site Management Office and village representatives, a variety of opinions was given. On the one hand the mission was advised that such a modification 'would certainly help the local people' but that expert advice would be needed to assist in defining a new northern boundary for the World Heritage property. On the other hand, another representative thought that modification might create unintended consequences or future problems for management of the site (for instance, through the construction of high buildings that obstruct views or mar the landscape). Yet another suggestion, from a provincial representative who supported modification of the boundaries around Champasak town, was that the town could be made part of a new buffer zone created around the property.

In any case, given the sensitive location of Champasak town, it will be critically important to limit the height of new constructions in Champasak town to two storeys and to keep open spaces in order to maintain the low density character of the town and to maintain visual and functional connections of the landscape from the mountain down to the river.

It is also essential to engage the local community in meaningful consultation and to adopt measures to improve the local community's standard of living. The mission supports the view put by Ellen Cameron in her 2011 report (p. 54) that the national goals of economic development, poverty reduction and environmental protection must be taken into account. Lao PDR is one of the world's Least Developed Countries<sup>1</sup> and the World Heritage property is an important economic asset. Measures should be taken to safeguard significant tangible and intangible heritage in the town, consolidate the town's role as a visitor attraction, and encourage the participation of town residents in tourism activities, associated handicraft and souvenir production and marketing, and in the improvement of their properties.

### **3.3. New Construction**

**In line with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, review planned and potential future developments that could impact OUV, especially the construction of a new site management office next to the site museum and water tanks, and assist the State Party to develop a long-term approach to development as part of the Master Plan to meet the World Heritage Committee's requirements.**

#### **3.3.1 Buildings in Zones 3 and 4**

The 1998 Management Plan stipulates that 'no construction should be allowed in Zone 4 except that needed for the conservation and maintenance of the zone and for security, provision of public access, interpretation and staff and visitor facilities.' New constructions (SOC 2014) in Zone 4 are temporary in character, being related to the conservation works that are currently in progress. These are the field offices of the Archaeological Survey of India team at Vat Phou and the Korean team at Hong Nang Sida (constructed in 2014).

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<sup>1</sup> See: <http://unctad.org/en/UN-list-of-Least-Developed-Countries.aspx>. A total of 48 countries are listed as of 2014.

Constructions in the main temple precinct but in Zone 3 rather than Zone 4 are more numerous and permanent. These include the new Vat Phou World Heritage Site Office (constructed in 2011; SOC 2011), the Vat Phou museum and artefact building (SOC 2003), the visitor pavilion with cafeteria (constructed 2003), a new reception *sala* (pavilion) (reconstructed in 2014 to replace an earlier structure), and public toilet, rest pavilions and parking area constructed by the private tourism concession firm from 2011 onwards. The 2003 visitor pavilion was destroyed by fire in early February 2015 (Figure 12). A replacement visitor pavilion at Vat Phou Monumental Zone, with new restaurant, ticketing area and car parking, is being planned by the private concessionaire.

While the Management Plan stipulates that no construction should be undertaken in Zone 3 except wooden buildings built in the traditional style on wooden posts and forbids concrete floors on grade or brick/concrete walls, the Vat Phou museum and office buildings themselves, as well as the new reception *sala*, are built in concrete (Figure 13).

The main issue with the new constructions in the main administrative/tourist services precinct is that they have been undertaken in an incremental manner without overall site planning and sympathetic architectural design. As such they have contributed to a haphazard densification around the main monument complex and detract from the legibility of the ancient planned landscape. As noted in previous Committee decisions dating back to 2003, construction along the main monumental axis of Vat Phou must be avoided, as this impacts directly on the cosmological layout of the site. Above all the Vat Phou Monument Complex (Zones 3 and 4) requires a clearer vision and more comprehensive long-term planning over, for example, the period 2010-2025. To guide future construction in an orderly manner, a detailed site plan for the Vat Phou monumental complex should be developed which indicates the permissible location of any proposed new installations. This zoning plan should be included in the Master Plan and updated Management Plan.

It should also be noted that many of the new constructions have been carried out without the process stipulated in Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines. It is important to remind the State Party that it is required to send major new development proposals to the World Heritage Centre with sufficient time for advice from the Centre and Advisory Bodies to be fed into the proposals before plans are signed off by the relevant Lao authorities and construction begins. It is also important to remind the State Party that Heritage Impact Assessments should be carried out and the results taken into account in final decision-making about major new development proposals.

### **3.3.2 Other infrastructure: water supply (SOC 2011), telecommunications, etc**

Clean water supply has been identified by the local and provincial authorities as a priority for the local residents, who are currently dependent on groundwater wells and pumped water from the Mekong River. In 2010, the Asian Development Bank proposed a water supply project for Champasak town involving the construction of 25-plus metre high water towers. When concerns about potential heritage impacts were raised, this project was shifted to the south of the site, about 300m outside the

World Heritage property at Ban Dotalat. The project is now currently under construction, with two water towers. One tower is located near the intake point along the Mekong River bank (350 cubic metre capacity) and connects to a holding tank and second water tower (500 cubic metre capacity) at Ban Dotalat from which the water is distributed through a network of pipes. An office building and access roads have been constructed as part of this water supply complex. As the project has been relocated outside of the property, the impacts on the OUV are now negligible.

Because this current project only has the capacity to serve a limited population towards the south of the World Heritage property, a second water supply project is being planned for the north of the property. A similar arrangement is proposed, with water towers to be located outside the property boundary. The exact location of the water towers and network of distribution pipes has not yet been designated, and should be subject to similar scrutiny for visual and archaeological impacts.

In addition, the Vat Phou authorities explained that a telecommunication tower has been erected in the vicinity of Champasak town; following negotiations with the heritage authorities, the location will be shifted to a less prominent site by the end of 2015.

In line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, further plans and designs for these new structures should be sent to the World Heritage Centre prior to project approval and construction.

### **3.4. Management System Effectiveness**

**Assess the efficacy and adequacy of the management system for the property, in particular institutional arrangements and the functioning of key management bodies, such as the National Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee**

#### **3.4.1. Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOC 2014)**

As noted above, a RSOUV of the property was approved by the Lao Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism on 24 October 2014 and is scheduled to be considered by the World Heritage Committee at its 39<sup>th</sup> session in Bonn, Germany, in June 2015. If adopted, the RSOUV should help to inform a vision for the development of the property, provide a detailed framework for the Master Plan that could ensure that individual zoning plans respect the attributes of the overall cultural landscape, and guide the Management Plan.

The OUV as described in the inscription dossier and the draft RSOUV revolves around the Khmer architecture and landscape planning. It should be noted that the justification of inscription does not refer explicitly to other heritage features, such as the colonial built heritage, which could be construed as giving a certain leeway in managing Champasak town, as discussed in 3.2 above.

Regarding management arrangements, as noted above, the National Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee has been replaced by the National World Heritage Committee, chaired by the Vice-Prime Minister.

### **3.4.2 Management plan, action plans and lack of a monitoring framework (SOC 2012)**

The Management Plan was drafted and adopted in 1998. In order to operationalize the Management Plan in accordance with current priorities, five-year action plans were foreseen at the time of inscription. Accordingly, action plans were prepared for 2005-2010 by Christopher Young and for 2011-2015 by the Vat Phou site management authorities with inputs from Masao Nishimura.

At the moment, with the exception of long-serving staff in the Vat Phou site management office, very few people seem to be aware of the provisions of the current Management Plan. Although it nominally has statutory status having been adopted by the Government of Lao PDR, under the aegis of the Presidential Decree on heritage protection, as noted above in various sections, it is apparent that many of the provisions of the Management Plan such as the regulations governing activities in each of the four zones are not put into action. This is due in part to problems with the management mechanism, particularly the function of various committees (see 3.4.3 below), limitations in the capacity of the site management authorities and lack of funds and resources to implement priority actions (see 4.1.2).

To enhance the implementation of the 1998 Management Plan, it is necessary to review, update and streamline the Plan, particularly to reflect the SOUV and the current situation and with a view to render it more practical and operational. To maximize ownership of the Management Plan, the local authorities should be encouraged to take the lead in reviewing and updating it. Re-validation of the updated Plan's statutory status by the relevant authorities will also remind various agencies of the centrality of the Management Plan. In addition, the objectives and synergies between the Management Plan and the Master Plan being prepared for the property also need to be considered in order to avoid duplication or contradiction. At the very least, the updated Management Plan and its associated Action Plans should be (1) understood by all stakeholders, (2) have clear assignment of responsibilities, (3) provide the basis for identifying priorities and coordinated activities on site, including other agencies and bilateral partners, and (4) provide the basis for mobilizing and assigning resources for priority management actions. At the moment, this is not happening.

The World Heritage Committee has also noted the lack of an effective monitoring framework (SOC 2012). If effective, the action plans could actually form the basis for tracking management actions and identify problems and necessary follow up actions. In terms of monitoring the state of conservation of the site itself, the monitoring process is now reactive (ie. in response to external triggers or incidents). The 2005-2010 Action Plan already recommended a schedule of regular site inspection and maintenance on a seasonal and annual basis, mostly for the archaeological aspects and this could be revisited and updated as part of the process of updating the Management Plan.

With regards to monitoring the major threats to the site, such as the impacts of development and infrastructure, the site authorities are already beginning to use satellite-imagery based mapping. They have in fact revived the use of GIS since the original GIS system seems to have become non-functional after the time of inscription. This process is to be encouraged and old data from previous archaeological missions (including the data from non-invasive surveys of sub-surface archaeological features) should be incorporated. Deepening the understanding of the various dimensions of the heritage site and building up an effective system to manage this information will help form the basis for better heritage impact assessments and decision making on future development. As at Angkor, obtaining LiDAR imagery, while costly, may be useful to establish with greater certainty the extent and nature of the ancient irrigation works and other landscape-scale features.

### **3.4.3 Lack of coordinated management mechanism, especially at national level (SOC 2003, 2004, 2011)**

As noted above, the National Inter-ministerial Coordinating Committee originally set up to coordinate the management of the property effectively has been long defunct. Its functions have, however, been absorbed into the National World Heritage Committee which is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and should provide an effective platform for coordination of the various ministries and departments involved. Similarly, at lower levels there is a Provincial World Heritage Committee, chaired by the Deputy Governor, and a District World Heritage Committee, chaired by the Champasak District Vice Governor. As the Village Liaison Group no longer exists, consultative meetings are held with the public on an ad hoc basis at the district level. The mission is strongly of the view that such consultative meetings should be held on a regular basis and should involve meaningful dialogue with the villagers.

It was reported to the mission that the Committees in general do not convene regularly, in part, due to funding restrictions. Since the Management Plan as it currently stands calls for the various Committees to authorize various actions on the site, including new construction activities, regular and effective committee meetings are essential. It is unclear whether these Committees have access to technical recommendations, either from the site management authorities or expert advisory institutions or individuals, that can help inform this decision-making process. The authorization of Route 14A through the existing mechanism, for instance, points to a need to reinforce this decision-making process through deeper technical support, including the application of Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines where appropriate.

### **3.4.4 Lack of coordination with international missions (SOC 2012, 2014)**

As noted above, there are a number of international teams operating on the property. The teams operate autonomously under the scope of bilateral MOUs, with the selection of the projects driven largely by donor interest rather than the priorities identified by the site management authorities for conservation and capacity building. The Site Management Office assigns staff to cooperate with the teams, allowing for

bilateral knowledge transfer. However, most of the conservation decision-making (conservation methodology, selection of materials and techniques, etc) is governed by each team. There is no harmonized set of conservation guidelines in place. Nor is there a mechanism for monitoring the work of the teams.

In order to avoid ad hoc decision-making, the mission concluded on the basis of its discussions with authorities at local, provincial and national levels that a Vat Phou Expert Working Group should be created. It should be lighter than the International Coordinating Committee at Angkor Wat, which has different history of international assistance, and should be guided jointly by UNESCO and Government of Lao PDR.) The Expert Working Group would comprise national and international experts. It should oversee and coordinate the conservation work by the various national and international partners and stakeholders at the property. The Secretariat could be provided by the Vat Phou Champasak Site Management Office. Funds would need to be identified to convene this Group on a regular basis, possibly from donor funds, as is the practice at some other World Heritage properties.

There is also no centralized system of documentation or deposition of the documents and findings from the archaeological surveys and monumental conservation. As has been seen from early archaeological and conservation campaigns at the site, much of this knowledge has not been retained on an institutional basis at the Management Office, and thus has been lost or at best retained on an individual basis with the Lao officials who had been assigned to cooperate in respective activities and who are in some cases now nearing retirement.

## **4 ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY**

### **4.1 Review whether the OUV, on the basis of which the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List, and the conditions of integrity are being maintained**

#### **4.1.1 Monument Protection Zone (Zone 4): condition/quality of restoration of monuments**

The restoration of the monuments at Vat Phou has been dependent on bilateral cooperation support since the time of inscription, which has accelerated significantly in the past five years. There are now on-going projects supported by France, India and Republic of Korea, along with a suspended project to restore the Nandin Hall initiated by Italy.

The Vat Phou sanctuary complex is the main destination for visitors. The main ceremonial road leading up to the sanctuary complex has been restored with Italian support; the marker stones have been re-erected but the actual path surface and terraces would benefit from further consolidation (Figure 14). The authorities report that control of the water flow from the mountainside continues to be an issue, resulting in erosion and de-stabilization of some of the standing structures.

The North and South Quadrangles are currently under restoration by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The work on the North Quadrangle is largely concluded, following a major exercise in anastylosis (Figure 15). Some of the restoration decision-making is not clear, for instance, the decision to prop up the eastern gallery with timber frames, although the walls were completely dismantled and reassembled and should have been stabilized. The quality of workmanship should be improved, particularly in the finishing (ie, the profile of the mouldings at the base of the laterite walls and repair of cracks/voids in stone masonry). For the South Quadrangle, following a pilot restoration of the northern porch through French-Lao cooperation, work is now underway under the aegis of ASI. Similar concerns arise from the speed of the restoration work (dismantling and partial reassembly of the eastern gallery in a three-month span), the use of materials, conservation techniques and workmanship.

Hong Nang Sida is the subject of a Korean-funded project aimed at reassembling the monument, which is partially collapsed (Figure 16). Preliminary documentation of the site has been conducted and archaeological excavations are underway. Given the current progress of work, and the limited size of the working team, it seems ambitious to achieve the full restoration of the monument within the stated six year span of the project (2014-2019).

Tomo Temple, on the other side of the Mekong, has not yet received any major funding for restoration (Figure 17). The site remains in a ruined state and isolated, with sparse visitation. The Vat Phou World Heritage Site Office has recently appointed a sentry to watch over the site, but the site remains vulnerable to theft, particularly as there are a number of scattered carved stones which remain in situ.

Overall, the issues identified with the major monuments are as follows:

- The selection of priorities for conservation is focused mainly on restoration of major monuments, which is attractive to donors, but which may not necessarily answer to the management priorities of the site officials, including less-visible issues such as hydrological problems.
- Coordination of internationally funded projects should be undertaken by the Vat Phou Expert Group proposed in Section 3.4.4 and Recommendation 10 of this report.
- There is no harmonized set of guidelines for the restoration work, resulting in, for instance, selection of different coloured stones and techniques of restoration on the property, sometimes in close juxtaposition to each other. More fundamentally, the property has become a test bed for various philosophies of conservation, as implemented at various individual monuments, which also creates a disjunction in the site's overall aesthetic, authenticity and integrity.
- Since much of the monument restoration is undertaken by various autonomous teams, there is a need to ensure that documentation (condition records, conservation plans, etc) are retained in the central records of the Vat Phou World Heritage Site office so that they form a consultable record for future reference and to inform future conservation decision making. At the moment, this is not yet undertaken in a systematic manner, which will create difficulties in future restoration efforts.
- There has been good progress made in securing the artefacts, with a functional repository space and on-going inventory as well as training. This should be further enhanced, with improved interpretation of the exhibited items.
- Constructions in main temple precinct: parking lot and visitor centre (SOC 2003), new Site Management Office building (SOC 2011), other constructions (SOC 2014)

#### **4.1.2 Management of the wider landscape**

##### **a. Buried archaeology (Zone 3)**

There have been a variety of impacts across the Archaeological Research Zone (Zone 3). Of greatest concern is the area around the Ancient City, where there is a proliferation of existing buildings and new buildings under construction in an unplanned manner and without enforcement of the Zone 3 building design guidelines called for in the Management Plan (as noted above). Many of the new buildings are built in concrete with concrete floors at grade, which irreparably damages buried archaeology underneath and also obstructs access for future archaeological studies. There are an estimated 200-300 residents living in the footprint of the Ancient City. The authorities noted that there are plans to re-locate one house, which is built on an ancient mound, but there does not appear to be any other policies or control mechanisms for regulating other activities or construction. Furthermore, the use of the local district road that passes through the Ancient City for north-south traffic also creates additional impacts, including incentives to continue to the pattern of roadside-development. Finally, there is no way at the moment to understand the presence, the extent or heritage significance of the Ancient City, either by visitors or by local residents. This lack of understanding no doubt compounds development control and

protection issues at this ancient settlement site, a site that is central to the OUV of the property.

To the north of the Ancient City are three more pockets located in that part of Champasak town demarcated Zone 3, which includes Vat Sisumang and Vat Sang O. While known already at the time of inscription, recent archaeological excavations have pointed to new discoveries, possibly pre-dating the Ancient City. Furthermore, the discoveries seem to infer that the extent of these ancient sites could be larger than known at the time of inscription. While of likely high archaeological significance, there is no visible protection mechanism for these sites and loose artefacts, which are openly accessible or located in private property, and are thus vulnerable.

The area around Vat Phou temple and Hong Nang Sida is under the direct control of the site management authorities and the overall landscape remains relatively intact. The main concern is impact on the archaeological remains as well as visual impacts from new constructions (as explained above). For instance, during construction of the new Vat Phou site office, reports were received by UNESCO of archaeological remains uncovered during the construction process. While minor mitigation measures recommended by the first Reactive Monitoring Mission have been complied with (such as repainting the office buildings and fences), and future construction in this zone should be strictly regulated.

The area around Tomo Temple remains highly intact, largely due to the general lack of activity at the site. Further archaeological surveys, particularly using non-invasive techniques, should be encouraged to better understand the extent of the site and its component sub-surface heritage attributes. As noted above, better security for the site, an inventory of the artefacts, and possible removal to the Vat Phou museum would ensure the safety of the associated artefacts which are now scattered about the site. The pro-active involvement of the nearby Ban Tomo village in caring for the site could be a means to enhance the site's protection as well as improve local livelihoods.

To summarize, the key issues which threaten the integrity of the buried archaeology are:

- Lack of understanding of the extent and significance of the buried archaeology and non-monumental archaeological features (ancient bunds, irrigation features, etc), on the part of both residents and visitors
- Uncontrolled and unplanned development, particularly construction of new buildings, without following the building regulations for Zone 3
- Lack of means to secure and protect vulnerable remains, particularly associated artefacts and objects

**b. Overall cultural landscape (Zone 1) (SOC 2014), increase in building activity in the urban zone (SOC 2011), Master Plan and land use planning (SOC 2014)**

The boundary of the World Heritage property coincides with the limits of Zone 1 (the Champasak Heritage and Cultural Landscape Protection Zone) which comprises 39,000 hectares. This zone includes the remains of the ancient symbolic and

cultivated landscape and modern-day irrigated fields and villages, along with the river banks and a twenty-plus km stretch of the Mekong River, all attributes which support the site's OUV as one of the earliest remaining planned landscapes in Southeast Asia.

It was noted at the time of inscription that 'as Zone 1 incorporates a large landscape, in which all of the main features can be viewed in context, no additional buffer zones are proposed.' In practice, that part of Zone 1 not included in Zones 2, 3 and 4 has a limited level of protection and tends to function as a sort of buffer zone for the monumental and sacred mountain zones that lie within it. As seen at Zone 3 with the buried archaeology, the general understanding of the heritage significance of the World Heritage property – among residents, visitors and non-heritage authorities alike – is largely focused on the monumental features. In operational terms for site management, the cultural landscape features of the property and the wider setting are largely overlooked and this is clearly highly undesirable in terms of protecting the property's OUV.

From an inspection of the property, it seems unlikely that the provisions contained in the Management Plan aimed at maintaining Zone 1 (ie, consent is required for 'any enlargement of fields for cultivation, construction of any new building, undertaking any schemes of irrigation, road construction, electrification, .... any excavation to a depth greater than 0.5 m...') are actually widely known or enforced. Similarly, to date, the heritage authorities are not yet able to implement on a routine basis the provision calling for rescue archaeology in advance of any construction activity, although they are to be commended for current efforts to set up a preventative archaeology rapid intervention brigade.

While the management authorities have been able to control controversial new infrastructure projects such as the water towers that threatened to impact on the site's heritage significance, it is unclear the extent to which other forms of development are regulated. The mission observed the construction of numerous new buildings in the village areas and along the roads, including Route 14A, Route 14B as well as local village roads. The authorities also mentioned the construction of new irrigation channels, and UNESCO has previously received reports of other land use changes, such as the conversion of paddy land to palm plantations. In addition, it is unclear the extent to which the authorities are able to manage other threats such as erosion, annual flooding, run-off which also affect the landscape.

As the World Heritage property is home to more than 50 villages, clearly the upgrade of local standards of living should be foreseen and indeed facilitated. However, the current lack of functional system for planning and regulation, which essentially amounts to *laissez faire*, has resulted in incremental changes over the past 15 years since inscription. Some of these individual changes may well not have any impact on the site's OUV, while others clearly have. The provisions in the Management Plan governing Zone 1 are aimed mainly at controlling archaeological impact of new development activities. However, while Zone 1 is vast and contains great variation in terms of its physical components, these provisions are meant to be applied in a uniform manner throughout the Zone 1. Furthermore, provided these provisions are applied at all, this regulatory process is dependent on piece-meal decision making on a project-by-project basis. The Master Plan and Management Plan and their

implementation need to be further strengthened to ensure that, beyond just the protection of the monumental zones, there is also a strategic framework for protecting the larger heritage site and its overall cultural landscape setting, while at the same time anticipating and integrating the development needs of the property.

In terms of the integrity of the property as a whole, therefore, the cumulative effect of the multitude of individual changes is beginning to transform the character of the rural cultural landscape. At the time of inscription, the ancient pre-Angkorean landscape and planning were still essentially intact and legible (from aerial photographs as well as from the ground). The challenge for Vat Phou's sustainable development is how to maintain these essential qualities of Vat Phou (the attributes of OUV) while accommodating future growth that allows for a higher degree of modification for less- or non-significant elements of the site, possibly including Champasak town (as discussed in section 3.2.3).

While it is commendable that the authorities have taken the initiative to prepare the Master Plan through a process of consultations with local stakeholders and authorities, it would be necessary to continue to augment and improve the Master Plan, particularly to ensure that it effectively guides the management of the World Heritage property as a whole and as a cultural landscape. Beyond Champasak town, new construction is also occurring and there is pressure for improved infrastructure and access to the other villages dispersed throughout the property. In terms of managing the overall cultural landscape, it would be important to identify in detail the attributes of OUV that relate to the pre-Angkorean landscape, to the essential views and visually linked areas, and to other areas of high vulnerability, so that these areas would be given priority for conservation and not be subjected to collateral damage from unplanned piece-meal development. A longer-term planning horizon is needed, along with a future vision that gives a greater cultural landscape approach to the Master Plan and an informed projection of growth, access and development for the property as a whole. To ensure an integrated approach to planning, the transport planning study recommended above and other components should be incorporated into this Master Plan improvement process.

To summarize, the key issues related to the management of the overall cultural landscape are:

- Lack of understanding of the significance of the landscape heritage features, and in particular the attributes of OUV, on the part of residents, non-heritage authorities and visitors
- Lack of functioning coordination and enforcement mechanism for regulating urban growth, leading to uncontrolled and unplanned development, particularly construction of new buildings and new infrastructure, without following the building regulations for Zone 1
- Need to address other long-term planning issues in the Master Plan, including managed transformation of the cultural landscape as a whole, beyond regulation of urban growth in Champasak town proper

### 4.1.3 Management system and capacity

Issues concerning the development of a RSOUV (SOC 2014), Management Plan, Master Plan and local zoning plans have been discussed in Section 3 above, and the lack of a monitoring framework (SOC 2012), a coordinated management mechanism, especially at national level (SOC 2003, 2004, 2011), and coordination with International missions (SOC 2012, 2014) have been noted. An ongoing concern is the capacity of the Site Management Office to deal with these and other problems. While the mission congratulates the Office on its dedication and sheer hard work aimed at protecting the property and its OUV, it remains seriously constrained by the shortage of funds and therefore professional staff (SOC 2003), as well as capacity-building opportunities.

As noted above, the management authorities operate out of a site management office and a museum/artefact repository, both located in the main Vat Phou temple precinct. The Office has recently undertaken a major overhaul of its organizational staffing structure. As of December 2014, it has 47 staff organized into four major units: archaeological prevention and restoration unit, urban environment and landscape unit, public relations and museum unit, and administration unit. Numerous staff have benefited from specialized training activities and courses in Lao PDR and abroad, including exchange activities with Angkor. Unlike at Luang Prabang, with the exception of a handful of long-time senior staff there is a limited cadre of mid-level staff who have a deep set of technical skills. The development of a twinning arrangement with Luang Prabang might be considered as a way of building the capacity of the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Management Office, for instance in site monitoring.

As proposed in the Management Plan, the Office has secured partial funding to renovate a building in Champasak town to serve as a training centre in the area of conservation and also heritage tourism and targeting participants both from Lao PDR and neighbouring countries. It is unclear how this centre would operate, but once functional, it could serve as the platform to train up additional staff resources and allied personnel such as heritage guides, particularly drawing from the local population.

In recent years, the Vat Phou authorities have benefited from decentralized French funding under the Fonds de Solidarité Prioritaire Patrimoine Sud Laos (FSP) to strengthen the Site Management Office. This has supplemented the meagre regular funds allocated from the national and provincial budget to support the office. The bulk of the site management office's regular budget is devoted to staff salaries, with less than USD 15,000 in 2014 earmarked for operational expenses.

This operational budget is clearly inadequate to service even the most basic routine needs of the almost 400 square kilometre property, such as monitoring and maintenance. In this regard, it is of utmost importance to generate other funds to meet the management needs of the site. Other potential sources should be investigated:

- International donors, but with greater control over the target activities in order to ensure alignment with management priorities;
- Increased tourism revenue capture (see 4.1.3).

### 4.1.3 Tourism and other local development potential

In 1999, before inscription, according to statistics provided by the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Management Office, Vat Phou had a total of 14,000 visitors, almost evenly split between Lao and foreign visitors. Following inscription, this increased to 24,000 visitors with 11,000 Lao and 13,000 foreign visitors. In 2009, this rose to 49,000 visitors, split into 18,000 Lao and 31,000 foreign visitors. In 2010, following the granting of a private tourism concession, there was a significant increase to 80,000, split into 43,000 Lao and 37,000 foreigners. By 2014, the total number of visitors reached 103,000 total, with 37,000 Lao and 66,000 foreigners. These visitor statistics do not include visitors to the annual Vat Phou merit-making festival in February, which attracted an estimated 100,000 persons in 2015.

The current ticket rates are 20,000 kip (approx. USD 2.5) for Lao visitors and 50,000 kip (approx. USD 6) for foreigners. The adjusted ticket rate during the Vat Phou merit-making festival is 10,000 kip for Lao visitors and 35,000 kip for foreign visitors.

According to the terms of the contract under which the private concession company, Yingchokchai, is operating during the period 2010-2025, a fixed annual sum from ticket receipts should be provided to the provincial government: 1.4 billion Kip (approximately USD170,300). Any revenue above this amount is retained by the private concession company. Of the amount turned over to the provincial government, 10 percent (equivalent to USD 17,000) is supposed to be allocated to the Vat Phou World Heritage Fund. However, to date, no funding has yet been allocated to the Fund, although the mission was told that the first payment is being made soon.

The private tourism concession company is required to provide visitor services at the site (electric buggies, toilets, food and beverage outlets), basic cleaning and landscaping of the site. It is also tasked with developing secondary visitor destinations around the main temple precinct, but has no plans yet for the Ancient City, Champasak town or Tomo temple. The physical investment in the site so far is fairly minimal, in the form of a small fleet of electric buggies, bamboo huts and temporary parking structures (Figure 18). It has hired some 50 workers from the nearby villages.

By rough calculation from the visitor statistics, tourism income at the site has the potential to generate over USD 500,000 in gross revenue per annum. As at many World Heritage properties, including in the region, an effective tourism revenue capture scheme could become an important means of ensuring adequate resources for managing and conserving the World Heritage property. The amount from tourism receipts allocated to Vat Phou for conservation and management activities must be augmented to ensure the sustainability of the property.

In addition to the current visitor base, Vat Phou still has major potential to expand its tourism activities. To give a sense of comparison, in 2013, Luang Prabang hosted 468,000 tourists, with 125,000 Lao and 342,000 foreigners, which is over four times the visitation rate at Vat Phou. Even in Champasak province itself, visitor arrivals totalled almost 500,000 per annum in 2012, meaning that only one in five visitors to the province visits Vat Phou, despite it being a World Heritage site.

Visitor management was not obvious at the property. There is a site museum/visitor centre at the entrance to the Vat Phou temple. It appears to be little visited, however, perhaps due to inadequate signage directing visitors to the centre and the static character of the exhibition. Given the museum/visitor centre being in an ideal location for educating visitors (and their guides), a more attractive approach to exhibition design might entice visitors to hear and see the story of the property and its protection before they travel into the temple compound.

At the moment, there are very basic facilities for visitor education and management at the property. Although there is a site museum/visitor centre at the entrance to the Vat Phou temple, this is not fully utilized to educate all visitors by giving them an overview of the property and its protection, before traveling into the temple compound proper. Throughout the site as a whole (including the temple complex, the Ancient City, Tomo and other locations) there are very few interpretive panels or other interpretive materials. Better signage should also encourage visitors to respect the World Heritage property. Activities such as local cultural festivals could also provide another means to better understand the site and connect to the local populations. Site interpretation should be invested in, particularly by local partners such as the private concession company.

An improved strategy for promoting tourism at the property is needed, not only in terms of boosting visitor numbers, but also boosting tourism income for the property as well as for local community members. Promoting secondary tourism destinations beyond the main temple precinct could lengthen the stay of visitors, even by encouraging visitors to stay overnight at the site instead of just taking day trips. Encouraging locally-operated tourism and other related businesses, such as local transportation and handicrafts, could help to distribute tourism income into local pockets. Closer cooperation between the Vat Phou authorities and concerned agencies such as the Tourism Development Department (now within the same Ministry) is needed, as the latter has the funds and mandate, and is already planning to address the need to upgrade site interpretation and directional signage. Further training on visitor management and planning for community-based cultural tourism is needed.

#### **4.1.4 Awareness raising and community engagement**

As flagged by the first Reactive Monitoring Mission and previous Committee decisions, engagement with local residents has been limited, and this has hampered the effective protection of the property. In response, the Vat Phou Site Management Office has embarked on an outreach programme in 2014 to raise awareness about the World Heritage property among the 50-plus local communities (villages) as well as six high schools in the area. This outreach programme has provided the platform not only to share information about the World Heritage property, but also to elicit information about associated local heritage as well as to undertake consultations as part of the Master Plan preparation process. This process has also included consultations with local authorities such as the district office, which has strengthened the basis for cooperation and collaboration on a working level. This process needs to be continued further, since the basic understanding of the attributes of OUV is still mainly focused on monumental heritage, overlooking other crucial dimensions of the

cultural landscape. Given the vastness of the property, and the distribution of settlements and residents throughout the property, enhancing the cooperation from local communities will form an invaluable basis for future sustainable protection and development efforts.

**4.2 Review any follow-up measures to previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of the property and measures which the State Party plans to take to protect the outstanding universal value of the property**

<b>State of Conservation issues in WHC decisions</b>	<b>Measures undertaken by State Party (from SOC reports provided by State Party and information received on the RMM)</b>
Route 14A (SOC 2003, 2011, 2014)	<p>Work on the road (from km 29 to km 34) was suspended in April 2011.</p> <p>The Minister of Public Works and Transport has adopted on 27 December 2013 an order that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• restricts width of the carriageway to 7 meters between km 29 to km 34</li> <li>• shifts the alignment around the north-western corner of the Ancient City to a distance of 100 m from the ancient city wall</li> <li>• cancels the Ban Tang Khob bypass</li> <li>• implements speed controls from km 25 to km 40 with signage at property entry points</li> <li>• forbids planting linear screen of trees</li> <li>• treats railings of three bridges from km 29 to km 34 with a color matching the natural landscape</li> <li>• conduct archaeological exploration prior to any road construction in the World Heritage property</li> <li>• give priority to upgrade Route 14B in the future</li> </ul> <p>With the exception of the cancellation of the Ban Tang Khob bypass, the other items have not actually yet been implemented on the ground, as the road construction is still suspended from km 29 to km 34.</p> <p>A new archaeological survey is planned prior to development of detailed plans for the proposed realignment.</p>
Water supply (SOC 2011)	<p>The water tanks funded by the Asian Development Bank project have been shifted outside to the south of the World Heritage property at Ban Dontalat.</p> <p>A new water supply project is planned to serve the northern part of the World Heritage property. Locations for water tanks are now being identified, which will be outside the footprint of the World Heritage property. Further studies with alternative funding are envisioned to carry out visual</p>

	<p>impact assessments before implementing the system.</p>
<p>Monument Protection Zone (Zone 4) and constructions in main temple precinct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parking lot and visitor centre (SOC 2003)</li> <li>• new site management office (SOC 2011, 2012) and entrance gate (SOC 2012)</li> <li>• other constructions (SOC 2014)</li> </ul>	<p>The original visitor pavilion has burnt down in February 2015. The design and location of a new replacement is now being planned.</p> <p>As per recommendations of the 2012 RMM, the new site management office, museum building, entrance gate and restrooms have been repainted in grey and trees planted, in an effort to minimize their visual impact.</p> <p>The other constructions in Zone 4 noted in SOC 2014 include the reconstruction of the reception pavilion next to the southern baray, to replace an older pavilion that was about to collapse, in the same place and at the same height. The Korean temporary field project office and visitor bathrooms have also been built.</p> <p>A development plan for the monument zone was submitted in 2014, designating in detail the areas of expanded visitor facilities at the entry to the zone.</p>
<p>Comprehensive land use plan (SOC 2012), expanded Master Plan based on a landscape approach (SOC 2014)</p>	<p>The process to improve the Master Plan and land use plan for Vat Phou Champasak protected area was initiated in 2012 under the coordination of the Provincial Department of Public Works and Transport, in conformity with the national urban planning system.</p> <p>Following inter-ministerial and local consultations, this process has resulted in an initial set of plans: 1:40,000 scale Master Plan and 1:5,000 scale land use plans (9 sections in total covering the whole World Heritage property and extending into neighboring areas, with a view to guiding territorial development at a larger scale). These plans have been approved by the Provincial government and the Minister of Public Works and Transport in 2014.</p> <p>The 2012 Master Plan includes examination of the cultural landscape, including visual connections and integrity analysis, with inputs from Laotian and foreign scientific and academic partners.</p> <p>Other aspects of the Master Plan, including associated regulations for urban development control, socio-economic and transportation issues, are still in process.</p>
<p>Retrospective SOUV (SOC 2014)</p>	<p>The RSOUV was submitted to UNESCO in February 2015.</p>
<p>Lack of coordinated management mechanism, especially at national level (SOC 2003, 2004, 2011)</p>	<p>The National Inter-ministerial Coordinating Committee (NIMCC) which was set up to coordinate the management of Vat Phou Champasak no longer exists. Its function has now been taken over by the National World Heritage Committee, which was set up in 2008 and is chaired by the Vice Prime Minister.</p>

	<p>At the provincial and district levels, similar committees exist to coordinate monitoring and decision-making concerning the World Heritage property, chaired by the Champasak Province Vice Governor and the District Vice Governor, respectively.</p>
<p>Lack of coordination with foreign missions (SOC 2012, 2014)</p>	<p>An inaugural coordination meeting was conducted with international project actors in 2013 and a second one conducted in 2014.</p> <p>The scope of international cooperation activities covers priority items noted in the property's action plans dating back to 2005-2010, which includes both monument restoration as well as training activities.</p> <p>The site management office has set up a development plan to coordinate actions between foreign cooperation actors and the private concession firm.</p>
<p>Capacity of management office: lack of professional staff (SOC 2003), lack of monitoring framework (SOC 2012)</p>	<p>The Vat Phou Champasak Site Management Office was re-organized and upgraded to an equal status as a provincial department in 2010. The number of staff was expanded and re-organized, with 47 persons total as of December 2014. The staff have benefited from various training opportunities, both on-site through practical cooperation activities and through workshops/courses in Lao PDR and abroad.</p>
<p>Need for interpretation and awareness raising about all component parts that make the property significant, including community engagement programme (SOC 2012)</p>	<p>English/French guidebook of the property has been published to give an understanding of the entire World Heritage property. A Lao version is planned.</p> <p>The website maintained by the site management office has been translated into Lao PDR, including updated information on management provisions, including Master Plan.</p> <p>Meetings have been conducted with the local population starting in 2012 to sensitize them to the property's significance.</p> <p>Educational materials are now being developed. A nomadic outreach programme is being conducted with all the villages in the property regarding the site's heritage significance, and to strengthen collaboration and compliance in protecting the property.</p>

## 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The principal conclusion reached by the mission is that the level of threats to the property does not currently warrant the property being placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Nevertheless a number of serious issues exist and they need to be studied and solutions urgently found that will protect the OUV effectively without disadvantaging the local community and avoid the possibility of In Danger listing. To this end, the mission concludes its report pursuant to World Heritage Committee **Decision 38 COM 7B.17** by making the following recommendations for action by the Lao PDR authorities.

### ***Recommendation 1:***

An effective and efficient road system should be formulated and fully implemented before the unmade section of Route 14A is completed and opened to traffic, such that:

- Route 14A will be for light vehicles only and limited to visitors to Zone 4 and local residents
- Route 14B will be the international connection for heavy vehicles between southern Lao PDR, Cambodia and Thailand
- Tourist coaches will park in designated areas at the northern and southern perimeter of the property
- The district road through Champasak town and the Ancient City will be strictly limited to light traffic generated by the villagers themselves
- The need for the proposed additional local roads will be analysed and justified before construction.

### ***Recommendation 2:***

The development control system for enforcing planning laws, regulations and Management Plan controls should be strengthened and made fully operational before Route 14A is completed and opened to traffic in order to prevent further ribbon development along the road. In particular, no new construction of any kind should be permitted along the section from Km 29 to Km 34 which is adjacent to the Ancient City and has high archaeological sensitivity. Consideration should be given to removing any constructions that have occurred along Route 14A since 2010, in order to reinforce the authority of the control system.

### ***Recommendation 3:***

On the basis of the information provided to the mission, and contingent upon the implementation of Recommendations 1 and 2, Route 14A should be completed according to the original alignment 24 metres from the north-west corner of the fourth enclosure wall of the Ancient City, rather than according to the proposed realignment 100 metres from the corner.

### ***Recommendation 4:***

A detailed statement of the Master Plan's overall vision should be prepared, especially incorporating respect for the cultural landscape as a whole and its buried archaeology, which forms an essential part of the property's Outstanding Universal Value, and making clear how the various planning maps relate to each other.

**Recommendation 5:**

The State Party should review the physical attributes of the property which justify World Heritage listing, particularly with regard to the contribution of Champasak town to the property's OUV, explore the options for modifying the northern boundary of the property and reconsider building/development control measures for Champasak town accordingly. Such consideration should involve meaningful consultation with the local community and ensure that Champasak town continues to have adequate planning constraints in light of its sensitive location.

**Recommendation 6:**

To enhance the implementation of the 1998 Management Plan, it should be reviewed, updated and streamlined, particularly to reflect the Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (RSOUV) and the current situation and to render it more practical and operational by including, among other things, an improved monitoring framework.

**Recommendation 7:**

Further enhancement and strengthening of inter-agency cooperation, including between provincial and national level authorities, should be put in place in order to continue to address the conservation and management issues at the property by the Lao PDR National Committee for World Heritage. In particular, the various committees concerned with the World Heritage property should be convened regularly and their decision-making processes reinforced through provision of greater technical support and in line with the Operational Guidelines for Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

**Recommendation 8:**

A twinning arrangement with the Town of Luang Prabang World Heritage property should be considered as a way of developing heritage management expertise at the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Management Office, particularly in relation to site monitoring.

**Recommendation 9:**

Consultative meetings involving meaningful dialogue with the villagers living within the property should be held on a regular basis.

**Recommendation 10:**

A Vat Phou Expert Working Group should be created in order to avoid ad hoc decision-making, with such group coordinating and overseeing the technical quality of the conservation work by the various national and international partners and stakeholders at the property and having its Secretariat provided by the Site Management Office.

**Recommendation 11:**

A centralized system of documentation or deposition of the documents and findings from the archaeological surveys and monumental conservation should be established.

***Recommendation 12:***

An improved strategy for promoting tourism at the site should be developed, not only to boost visitor numbers, but also to boost tourism income for the site as well as for local community members, such as through more effective tourism revenue capture.

***Recommendation 13:***

For any new constructions on or in the visible setting of the property, Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for Implementing the World Heritage Convention should be followed and Heritage Impact Assessments conducted.

***Recommendation 14:***

To guide future construction and development at the Vat Phou monumental complex in an orderly manner, a detailed site zoning plan should be developed that indicates the permissible location and character of any proposed new installations. This zoning plan should be included in the Master Plan and updated Management Plan.

## 6 ANNEXES

### Annex 1. Terms of References

#### Terms of Reference

for a Joint UNESCO-WHC/ ICOMOS/ ICCROM Reactive Monitoring Mission

to the Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (C 481)

17-22 February 2015

The objective of the reactive monitoring mission is to assess progress by the State Party following Decision 38 COM 7B. 17 (Annex I) of the World Heritage Committee, adopted at its 38<sup>th</sup> session (Doha, 2014) and in particular any activities that may be impacting on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property.

The joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM reactive monitoring mission team will be composed of Feng Jing, Chief of Asia and the Pacific Unit of the World Heritage Centre, Professor William Logan, ICOMOS Expert, and Gamini Wijesuriya, Deputy Director of Sites Unit, ICCROM.

The mission should address the following key issues in close consultation with the Laotian authorities and other stakeholders of the World Heritage property:

I. To undertake a comprehensive assessment and make conclusions on the state of conservation of the property as a whole, including key issues identified as having potential to impact the on Outstanding Universal Value, in particular:

#### **1. Route 14A**

1.1 Verify whether the State party has suspended construction works of the new North-South road, as requested by the World Heritage Committee.

1.2 Review the plan of the proposed amended road alignment at a larger scale, as requested by the World Heritage Committee, to clarify precisely the proposed details in line with the commitment to limit the impact of the road through revising its layout and width, and, if appropriate, assess alternate options for realigning and downgrading the road within the property and its setting.

1.2 Verify whether the State Party has undertaken archaeological surveys to assess the significance of buried archaeology along the proposed new aligned route 14A as a tool for designing the route;

1.3 Review the status of heritage impact assessments, if undertaken by the State Party, to consider the impact on the property of the proposed road construction and the appropriateness of mitigation measures, particularly connected with visual impact;

## **2. Master Plans and Local Land Use Plans**

2.1 Review progress with creating an appropriate and detailed Master Plan that can act as a strategic planning tool for the overall development of the property, based on its OUV and the way the remarkably well-preserved planned landscape expresses the Hindu vision of the relationship between nature and humanity, through a geometric pattern of temples, shrines and waterworks;

2.2 Review progress with the Local Land Use Plans, including Zoning Plans that should relate to the Master Plan and to an understanding of the attributes of OUV for the overall cultural landscape;

2.3 Assist the relevant authorities in framing the way this work should be approached.

## **3. New Construction**

In line with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, review planned and potential future developments that could impact OUV, especially the construction of a new site management office next to the site museum and water tanks, and assist the State Party to develop a long-term approach to development as part of the Master Plan to meet the World Heritage Committee's requirements;

## **4. Management System.**

Assess the efficacy and adequacy of the management system for the property, in particular institutional arrangements and the functioning of key management bodies, such as the National Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee;

III. Hold consultations with the Laotian authorities and relevant stakeholders in examining the issues and concerns expressed by the World Heritage Committee in its previous decisions and the progress made in the implementation of the decisions;

IV. Based on the results of the above-mentioned assessments and discussions with the State Party representatives and stakeholders, the mission will develop recommendations to the Government of Lao PDR and the World Heritage Committee with the objective of providing guidance to the State Party for the development of an integrated conservation and management strategy that will ensure an overall landscape approach to protect the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). It should be noted that recommendations will be provided within the mission report (see Format in Annex II), and not during the mission.

The joint reactive monitoring will prepare a concise report on the findings and recommendations within 6 weeks following the site visit, in line with the World Heritage Centre reactive monitoring mission report Format.

## Annex 2. Decision 38 COM 7B.17

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-14/38.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling decisions **35COM 7B.72** and **36 COM 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 archaeology along the proposed route, and Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs), 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-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.

### **Annex 3 Composition of the Mission Team**

The mission was conducted by

Mr Feng Jing, Chief of the Asia and the Pacific Unit of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (Paris),

Mr William Logan, Professor Emeritus of Deakin University (Melbourne, Australia) representing ICOMOS International, and

Mrs Montira Horayangura Unakul, Programme Specialist for Culture at the UNESCO Office in Bangkok.

#### Annex 4. Itinerary and Mission Programme

Date and time	Activity	Location
Tuesday, 17 February 2015	The mission team arrives	Champasak Town
Wednesday, 18 February 2015		
09:00 a.m-13:00 pm	Meeting with Vice-Governor of Champasak Province/ President of the Provincial Heritage Committee	Provincial Administration Office, Pakse
14:00 p.m-18:30 pm	Briefing to the mission team by the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Office on the state of conservation of the property	Vat Phou World Heritage Office
Thursday, 19 February 2015		
8:00 a.m-	Site visits: Vat Phou temple; Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation project at Hong Nang Sida temple; Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) Project at Vat Phou Temple; Vat Phou Temple	Vat Phou Temple
14:00 p.m-20:00pm	Site visits: Route 14A construction site suspended and new alignment sections; proposed Route 14B; water tower project; Tomo temple	Route 14A, Route 14B, Water Tower, Tomo Temple
Friday, 20 February 2015		
8:00 a.m-	Site visits: Champasak town; Sisumang Temple; Ancient City, especially NW corner affected by Route 14A	Champasak town; Sisumang Temple; Ancient City Vat Phou World Heritage Site Office
11:00 a.m.	Meeting with Vat Phou WH group	Provincial Government Office, Pakse
14:00 p.m.	Meeting with Vice Prime Minister H.E. Phankham Viphavanh	Provincial Government Office, Pakse
16:00 p.m-19:00 pm	Continuation of debriefing meeting with the larger group, including officials from different departments of Champasak Province	
Saturday, 21 February 2015		

10:00 a.m.	Site visit with Mr Bounlap Keokanya to Pakse town, Provincial Museum	Pakse
12:00 noon	Mrs Montira Horayangura Unakul departs	
Sunday, 22 February 2015		
12:00 noon	Mr Feng Jing and Mr William Logan depart	

## **Annex 5 List and contact details of people met**

### **National authorities**

HE Phankham Viphavanh  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Minister of Education and Sports  
Chairman of the Lao National World Heritage Committee

Mr Viengkeo Souksavatdy  
Deputy Director-General  
Department of Heritage  
Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism

Assoc. Professor Dr. Aphisayadeth Insisiengmay  
Director of Urban Planning Division, Department of Housing and Urban Planning  
Ministry of Public Works and Transport

Ms Thongdeng Somchanmavone  
Deputy Secretary General  
Lao National Commission for UNESCO

Ms Khammany Xayaheueng  
Lao National Commission for UNESCO

### **Champasak authorities**

Mr Somsanit Buttivong  
Deputy Governor, Champasak Province

Mr Syphang Duangsa  
Director, Champasak Governor's Office

Mr Onkeo Phetphoumi  
Deputy Director, Champasak Governor's Office

Mr Khamphouang Sengaloun  
Department of Public Works and Transport, Champasak

Mr Salongxay Douangbopha  
Department of Public Works and Transport, Champasak

Mr Bounnao Fongkhamdeng  
Department of Public Works and Transport, Champasak

Mr Thongkhoun Boriboune  
Deputy Director  
Vat Phou World Heritage Site Office

Mr Bounlap Keokanya  
Deputy Director  
Vat Phou World Heritage Site Office

Mr Amphon Sengphachan  
Head of the Archaeological Prevention and Restoration Unit  
Vat Phou World Heritage Site Office

Mr Khamseng Vongsy  
Head, Urban Environment and Landscape Unit  
Vat Phou World Heritage Site Office

Mr Youthana Phethany  
Staff, Vat Phou World Heritage Site Office

Mr Vilasack Phongsavat  
Staff, Vat Phou World Heritage Site Office

### **Champasak stakeholders**

Mr Bounleuang Ieminthavong  
Representative, Group I (local village groups)

Mr Soukitta Inthachak  
Representative, Group II (local village groups)

Mr Oudom Senthavysouk  
Headman, Ban Nongsa village

Mr Bounsy Kenkham  
Deputy headman, Ban Houaysahoua village

Mr Nouchan  
Deputy headman, Ban Thangkob village

Mr Thongsot  
Deputy headman

Mr Bounlap Singrat  
DDC

Mrs Somleth Phosalath  
Yingchokchai Company (tourism concessionaire)

Mr Bounlap Singlathsomboun  
Manager  
Duangdi Company (Route 14A construction company)

Mr Oudon Kekang  
Duangdi Company (Route 14A construction company)

Mr Boualoy Sengaloun  
Road 14A

Mr Someamphay Pholasa  
Road 14A

**Bilateral advisors**

Mr Kyunghwan Baek  
Architect  
Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation

Ms Sandrine Bonnefoy  
Consultant  
Vat Phou World Heritage Site Office

Mr Jean-Charles Castel  
Advisor, French Priority Solidarity Fund Project (FSP)  
Vat Phou World Heritage Site Office

Mr G Elan Chezian  
Conservation engineer  
Archaeological Survey of India

## Annex 6 Figures

1. Cover photo: Vat Phou Monumental Area (Zone 4) (source: W. Logan).



2. Sign on the Route 14A toll road indicating charges for Trucks, buses and smaller vehicles (source: M. H. Unakul)



3. Work ceased on Route 14A between Km 29 and Km 34 after preparation of road and construction of supporting pillars of the three bridges (source: M. H. Unakul)

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Road Network of the Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site

Revised Updated 25.10.2013



4. Master Plan Map showing Route 14A and district road through Champasak town and Ancient City (source: Vat Phou Champasak World Heritage Site Management Office)



5. The road connecting Route 14A with the entrance of the Vat Phou monumental complex (Zone 4), now enlarged to a 9m carriageway with pavements on both sides, totalling 12m in width (source: W. Logan).



6. Route 14A was planned to run 24 metres from this north-western corner of the fourth enclosure wall of the Ancient City (source: W. Logan).



7. The busy district road through Champasak town (source: W. Logan).



8. Traffic diversion through the Ancient City produces vibrations that may be damaging buried archaeological remains and causing visual, noise and air pollution (source: W. Logan).



9. Modern addition to a prominent colonial building built in 1926 in Champasak town (source: W. Logan).



10. Large late-colonial building dating from 1952 in Champasak town (source: W. Logan).



11. One of Champasak town's last remaining colonial-style buildings in derelict condition (source: W. Logan).



12. Location of the 2003 visitor pavilion destroyed by fire in early February 2015 (source: W. Logan).



13. The concrete-floored Vat Phou museum laboratory and storage room (source: W. Logan).



14. The central Vat Phou path surface, stairs and terraces would benefit from further consolidation (source: W. Logan).



15. Restoration of the North Quadrangle by the India-Laos Cooperation Project is now largely completed (source: W. Logan).



16. Hong Nang Sida is being reassembled in a Korean-funded project (source: W. Logan).



17. Tomo Temple, on the east side of the Mekong, has yet to receive major funding for restoration (source: W. Logan)



18. Tourist cars and coaches in the current parking areas at the entrance to the Vat Phou Monumental Zone 4 (source: W. Logan).