

LAO PDR

1.1 Introduction

Year of ratification 1987

Organization submitting the report

- Ministry of Information & Culture
Vientiane, P.O. Box 122,
Lao People's Democratic Republic

1.2 Identification of cultural and natural heritage properties

The status of national inventories

- A Prime Ministerial 'National Heritage' List was completed in 1993.
- A local inventory including survey, documentation & research work is currently being prepared.

The preparation of a Tentative List

- 4 sites submitted in 1987, revised in 1992, and still under revision.

Nominations and the nomination process

- 1987 * 3 nominations (inscribed)
 - (a) That Luang, Vientiane
 - (b) Menhirs of Samken
 - (c) The Plain of Jars
- 1988 * 2 nominations (deferred)
 - (a) Vat Sisaket
 - (b) That in Hang
- 1995 1 nomination (inscribed)
 - (a) * The Town of Luang Prabhang
- 2001 1 nomination (inscribed)
 - (a) * Vat Phu & Associated Ancient Settlements in the Champasak Cultural Landscape
- The Dept. of Museums & Archaeology (DMA) is empowered by the Minister of Information & Culture to co-ordinate a joint team of national and local staff to oversee WH consultation and survey activities.
- Final nomination dossiers are endorsed by the Prime Minister's Office.

1.3 Protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage

Integration of heritage and planning

- Cultural Heritage policy is included in 5-year governmental plans, adopted from 1980 until present.
- A 'National Committee for the Preservation of Historical, Cultural & Natural Heritage' (along with local branch committees) was created by Prime

Ministerial decree in 1993 as a consultative forum between government ministries.

- The National Inter-Ministerial Co-ordination Committee (NIMCC) was subsequently set up in 1996.
- 19 other laws, penal codes, ordinances, government & prime ministerial decrees are listed.

Participation of local communities

- Consultation meetings with community headmen, villagers, monks, elderly people, craftsmen and mass organisations (i.e. 'National Front' and Clergy) have been carried out. Proceedings are available in Lao.
- Construction materials and advice is provided free of charge to private property owners in Luang Prabang concerning methods for repairing protected houses.

Tourism Development

- Collection of tourism taxes (i.e. for hotel beds) to sustain the Luang Prabang 'Maison du Patrimoine'.

Financial measures and budget allowance

- Alongside the regular government budget, US\$1.5 million was allocated as a 10% contribution to a Japanese JICA grant to Vat Phou.
- The establishment of a 'Vat Phou Conservation Fund' is planned to retain 50% of total entrance ticket sales, receive donations, and carry out other fund-raising activities.
- Government donations to temples contribute to the maintenance & repair of religious buildings.

Professional

- 15 national level staff, 10 of which have studied at university level.
- "Expertise from local craftsmen" is considered to be "as important as that from abroad."
- Various training needs are identified; for architect-restorers, engineers, surveyors, draughtsmen, curators, conservators and ecology specialists.
- Partners include institutions in Bangkok, Hong Kong, Australia, India, Japan, Cambodia, the USA and France.

New and improved services

- 'La Maison du Patrimoine' was created with WH Centre support in 1995 with the mission of implementing the conservation programme of the WH Town of Luang Prabang.
- The creation of a Bachelors of Arts in 'Archaeology, Art History & Fine Arts' is planned at the National University.

Issues to be addressed

- Areas for improvement include the: (i) creation of a national conservation laboratory; (ii) introduction of cultural studies courses in the National University; (iii) decentralisation; (iv) local community, individual

& private entrepreneurial activities; (v) revitalisation of traditional crafts and knowledge; and (vi) creation of a National Fund for heritage conservation.

- It is proposed to develop the use of GIS and other computerised mapping techniques.

1.4 International co-operation and fund raising

National and International Fund Raising

- * International Assistance from the WHF as follows:

1991	\$6,540	Preparatory, Cultural sites nomination
1994	\$15,000	Preparatory, Luang Prabang nomination
1996	\$7,342	Preparatory, LP Manual
	\$39,900	Technical, LP Conservation of houses
1997	\$25,000	Training, LP Training programme
	\$25,000	Training, LP Workshop materials
1998	\$5,000	Promotional, LP Convention
1999	\$13,000	Preparatory, Vat Phu nomination
	\$15,000	Preparatory, Plain of Jars nomination
	\$9,265	Technical, IUCN
	\$5,000	Training, Natural heritage sites
	\$30,000	Training, Archaeological surveying
2000	\$5,000	Promotional, Convention
2003	\$60,000	Emergency, Plain of Jars inventory
- * Extra-budgetary funds mobilised by the UNESCO Division of Cultural Heritage & the Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia include:

1996-03	US\$525,593	Capacity-building, management and training: Vat Phou & associated ancient settlements within Champasak Cultural Landscape (Italy).
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1.5 Education, information and awareness-building

Information and awareness measures

- Recent seminars have been organised by the DMA with respect to the Champasak WH nomination and UNESCO Associated Schools programme.

1.6 Conclusions and recommended actions

Conclusions and proposed actions

- Provincial and national inventory lists need to be completed in order to finalise the WH Tentative List.
- Dialogue with the Ministries of Agriculture, Forests, Science & Technology (as well as IUCN Laos) is underway. It aims to determine the selection of natural sites to be included in the revised Tentative List.
- Implementation of 8 corrective measures for Luang Prabang, and application of the hotel tax system for the Maison du Patrimoine.
- "Conservation could create jobs such as guards, clerks, guides, wood or stone carvers and bricklayers. The local community could revive arts and rituals or boost production of handicraft products that could be connected with the tourism industry."
- "We should never isolate ourselves and never underestimate our own potential."