

AAPRAVASI GHAT WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY

Executive Summary

MANAGEMENT PLAN

2020 - 2025



Aapravasi Ghat
inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006



Aapravasi Ghat, as the first site chosen by the British Government in 1834 for the 'great experiment' in the use of indentured, rather than slave labour, is strongly associated with memories of almost half a million indentured labourers moving from India to Mauritius to work on sugar cane plantations or to be transhipped to other parts of the World.

Decision 30 COM 8B.33

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

The concept of World Heritage was developed by UNESCO to define cultural and natural heritage that is irreplaceable, unique and authentic, not only for the nation to which it belongs, but also for humanity as a whole. It is considered that the loss of this heritage through deterioration or disappearance would generate an impoverishment of heritage for all people of the world. As such, the significance of such World Heritage is defined as being of Outstanding Universal Value¹ (OUV).

Outstanding Universal Value determines World Heritage Status and is defined by the *Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (1972) of UNESCO and by the *Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (2019).

Because the Aapravasi Ghat is of Outstanding Universal Value, it was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006. The Aapravasi Ghat is the symbol of the *Great Experiment* that made Mauritius the site of the first successful large-scale use of *indentured labour*. The *Great Experiment* was initiated by the British colonial government which sought to establish a system of “free” labour after the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1834.

Following UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention, a Buffer Zone² (BZ) was delimited around Aapravasi Ghat (AG) World Heritage Property (WHP) to allow the full expression of its outstanding significance. UNESCO explains that the Buffer Zone is important as it represents the context in which the World Heritage Property has evolved through time. As such, it supports the outstanding cultural significance at the national and international level. This is the reason why appropriate measures are enforced in the Buffer Zone to protect, preserve, enhance and promote the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Property. The ultimate objective is to create a suitable environment supporting the retention of the heritage in the BZ and to ensure its sustainable development.

The changes brought by the establishment of legal boundaries for the Buffer Zone led to the review of the Management Plan adopted in 2006. **The Management Plan is required by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention³ to ensure the preservation and sustainability of the**

¹ A definition is provided in the glossary.

² The concept of Buffer Zone is explained in the annex 13.

³ *Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, UNESCO, WHC.17/01, July 2017, state that “Each nominated property should have an appropriate management

Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property. The Management Plan describes the World Heritage Property, its Outstanding Universal Value and related significances, and analyses the issues affecting the conservation and management of the World Heritage Property.

The Management Plan has an essential role: it is a key document that guides all the stakeholders involved in the conservation, management and promotion of the World Heritage Property. It is directed by a Vision for the World Heritage Property and addresses key principles and objectives that will guide the implementation of this Vision.

2. Preparing the Management Plan

The present Management Plan is an updated version of the one submitted to the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO in 2006 and in 2013⁴. In 2019, the Management Plan was updated to be in line with the requirements following the development that took place between 2013 to 2019 at World Heritage Property.

The Management Plan 2020-2025 takes into consideration the principles and requirements stated in 1998 by ICCROM, ICOMOS and UNESCO as *Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites*. The Plan also takes into account the international guidelines provided by the ICOMOS charters. It also makes provision for the integration of the following:

1. the evolution of the World Heritage Convention framework
 - The Action Plan (2012-2017) for World Heritage in Africa devised as part of the Second Cycle of World Heritage Periodic Reporting (PR) in the Africa Region in 2011;
 - the requirements following the adoption of the World Heritage and Sustainable Development Policy (2015) guiding the processes of the World Heritage Convention⁵;
 - the integration of the 17 sustainable goals established by the United Nations “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”⁶ in the daily management and long term vision for the World Heritage Site; this includes at the regional level, the African Union’s 2015 “Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want”.
 - The integration of the principles stated in the Ngorongoro Declaration on Safeguarding African World Heritage as a Driver of Sustainable Development, adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2016.

plan or other documented management system which should specify how the outstanding universal value of a property should be preserved, preferably through participatory means” (Operational Guidelines, Ch.II.F /108, p.27).

⁴ The Present Management Plan was prepared by Dr. Forest, Head Technical Unit in collaboration with the Technical and Research Unit and the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage.

⁵ “Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention” (2015): see <https://whc.unesco.org/document/139747>

The Strategy for Reducing Risks from Disasters at World Heritage properties (2007) and Policy Document on Impacts of Climate Change and World Heritage (2007) are also considered.

⁶ The 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development includes the protection and safeguarding of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage as a specific target of one of its 17 « Sustainable Development Goals”, notably No 11 on inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements.

2. The evolution in the management and promotion of the World Heritage Property is as follows:⁷

- The opening of the Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre in 2014;
- The completion of the landscaping works at World Heritage Site in 2014;
- The adoption of the Outline Planning Scheme for Port Louis (2015);
- The completion of the Local Economic Development Plan for the Buffer Zone (2016);
- The completion of the integrated Research Plan (2016);
- The beginning of the Indentured Labour Route project (2017);
- The results of research on indenture in the last 5 years;
- The recommendations of the joint WHC/ICOMOS Advisory Mission to the Aapravasi Ghat (Mauritius, 14-18 May 2018)⁸;
- The adoption of the Action Area Plan for the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property (2019)⁹.

The Management Plan was prepared by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, a parastatal body under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage, entrusted to administer, manage and promote the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property, in consultation and collaboration with stakeholders.

The Management Plan was prepared in regular and comprehensive consultation with stakeholders to address key issues and to better identify the needs to allow for the effective management of the World Heritage Property.

⁷All the documents related to the status and monitoring of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property can be consulted at the following link: <https://whc.unesco.org/fr/list/1227/documents/>

⁸The WHC/ICOMOS report can be consulted online: <https://whc.unesco.org/document/171739>

⁹ The Action Area Plan for the AGWHP is available on http://housing.govmu.org/English/Documents/Quick%20Links/AAP1%20-%20Urban%20Heritage%20Area%20for%20the%20AGWHP.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1-2lhJrE9xuAICcHPQaEszOPK0vyfdMY6s_JWu_gN9LXym3Zu6k291zc

"A "management plan" may come in different legal and operational forms but is always a coherent instrument that takes into consideration the specific characteristics not only of a site but also of the area around it. The plan, bringing together all the players and instruments involved in a site and the surrounding area should serve as a development coordination tool; (..) in the long term it is meant to be a sustainable development tool integrated into the environment."

(UNESCO about WHP in Syria cited in the Presentation of Christophe Graz on Management of Heritage Sites and Artefacts, Euromed Heritage, Petra, Jordan, 17-19 May 2010)

3. The purpose of the Management Plan

The overarching aim of the Management Plan is:

To describe an approach to the management of Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property that will retain and strengthen the balance between conserving the historic environment, enhancing the local character and amenities of the World Heritage Property and surroundings, with the need to develop the area into a vibrant heritage area serving the vision for the revitalization of the capital city of Mauritius.

All stakeholders can use the Management Plan as a reference to manage the World Heritage Property and its buffer zone and to preserve and enhance its Outstanding Universal Value¹⁰.

4. Why is the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property significant?

Retrospective Outstanding Universal Value of the Aapravasi Ghat¹¹

Located on the bay of Trou Fanfaron, in the capital of Port-Louis, the Aapravasi Ghat is the remains of an immigration depot, the site from where modern indentured labour diaspora emerged. The Depot was built in 1849 to receive indentured labourers from India, Eastern Africa, Madagascar, China and Southeast Asia to work on the island's sugar cane estates as part of the 'Great Experiment'. This experiment was initiated by the British Government, after the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1834, to demonstrate the superiority of the 'free' over slave labour in its plantation colonies. The success of the 'Great Experiment' in Mauritius led to its adoption by other colonial powers from the 1840s, resulting in a world-wide migration of more than two million indentured labourers, of which Mauritius received almost half a million.

The buildings of Aapravasi Ghat are among the earliest explicit manifestations of what would become a global economic system. The Aapravasi Ghat site stands as a major historic testimony of indenture in the 19th century and is the sole surviving example of this unique modern Diaspora. It represents not only the development of the modern system of contractual labour, but also the memories, traditions and values that these men, women

¹⁰ The Outstanding Universal Value of the Aapravasi Ghat was defined in the Nomination Dossier submitted to UNESCO for its inscription on the World Heritage List in 2005.

¹¹ Adoption of retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value, Decision: 37 COM 8E, 37th session of the World Heritage Committee, Phnom Penh, 16 - 27 June 2013, WHC-13/37.COM/20, Paris, 5 July 2013.

and children carried with them when they left their countries of origin to work in foreign lands and subsequently bequeathed to their millions of descendants for whom the site holds great symbolic meaning.

5. Vision for the future

The Vision is firmly grounded in the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHP and was elaborated during a series of workshop in 2013. The Vision is a guiding light of what the WHP aspires to be. It is pursued through the implementation of the Management Plan.

In the Vision for Aapravasi Ghat, the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property will be protected and its authenticity and integrity maintained, while the site will be utilised in a sustainable manner to benefit the nation both spiritually and materially. This will require, *inter alia*, revitalization measures to enhance the unique character of the surroundings of the World Heritage Property located in the heart of the Capital City of Mauritius.

The Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property will be maintained and promoted for future generations.

Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property will be a cultural landmark fostering urban heritage management and conservation in close interaction with the local community to support national unity and identity.

The Management Plan is the main tool for the management and enhancement of the World Heritage Property. From the Vision flows a set of Strategic Objectives, that are linked to a set of actions. These actions collectively address all key issues pertaining to the management and sustainable use of the World Heritage Property.

6. Summary of strategic objectives and actions

Managing the World Heritage Property

Objective 1: Endorse the Management Plan as the overarching document to manage, administer and promote the World Heritage Property in an integrated manner

- 1.1 Adopt the Management Plan
- 1.2 Establish yearly planning with targets

Objective 2: Consolidate the existing management system of the World Heritage Property and its setting to ensure effective and integrated management

- 2.1. To establish AGTF office near AG WHP
- 2.2. Consolidate the managerial framework for the Interpretation Centre
 - 2.2.1. Recruitment of additional staff
 - 2.2.2. Create a policy and a framework for the generation of funds
 - 2.2.3. To set up and retain a technical committee for BRIC
- 2.3. Managing heritage in the Buffer Zone
 - 2.3.1. Consolidate the role of the Technical Committee of the CCPL
 - 2.3.2. Consolidate the role for the Buffer Zone Management Committee
 - 2.3.3. Formalize the technical assistance mechanism for stakeholders
 - 2.3.4. Develop and consolidate capacity in heritage management and conservation
 - 2.3.5. Encourage participative conservation, management and promotion.
 - 2.3.6. Provide a simplified documentation to foster integrated management

Conserving the World Heritage Property (WHP)

Objective 3: Monitor conservation and risk preparedness for the World Heritage Property and its surroundings, and the Interpretation Centre and its collections

- 3.1. Monitor and evaluate conservation at World Heritage Property
- 3.2. Update the Risk Preparedness Plan (RPP)
- 3.3. Continue training for AGTF staff in risk preparedness
- 3.4. Monitor and mitigate the impact of visitors at World Heritage Property
- 3.5. Maintain the Policies for AGTF collections

Conserving and enhancing the Outstanding Universal Value in the Buffer Zone

Objective 4: Consolidate the framework for the conservation of the heritage component in the Buffer Zone

- 4.1. Prepare a long-term Conservation policy and guidelines
 - Prepare a conservation policy for heritage in the Buffer Zone
 - Conservation guidelines for historic drains, pavements, facades and architectural elements.
- 4.2. Update, upgrade, and disseminate the heritage inventory
 - The formal adoption of the grading system;
 - The need to update the inventory on a regular basis;
 - The creation of an integrated database to share information among the CCPL, NHF and AGTF.

Objective 5: Establish a suitable environment for the conservation and enhancement of the Buffer Zone that encourages sustainable development and the transformation of the area into a vibrant regenerated heritage district

- 5.1. Implement the Local Economic Development (LED) plan
- 5.2. Implement the Action Area Plan for the buffer zone and its extended areas
- 5.3. Coordinate large scale development projects to implement an integrated vision and sustainable development
- 5.4. Provide assistance to property owners and users of the buffer zone
 - 5.4.1. Publish guidelines on heritage conservation and rehabilitation;
 - 5.4.2. Publish an improved user – friendly version on development in the buffer zone;
 - 5.4.3. Publish an informative document on heritage economics and existing business models;
 - 5.4.4. Conduct a survey and publish results on heritage rehabilitation in Mauritius.

Interpreting the World Heritage Property and managing visitors

Objective 6: Enhance visitor experience and maintain visitor satisfaction

- 6.1. Evaluate and develop further activities for visitors
- 6.2. Prepare and implement a yearly Public Programme
- 6.3. Conduct regular audience surveys

6.4. Review and update pedagogical and academic documentation on a regular basis

6.5. Implement BRIC (phase 2) Project

6.6. Consolidate and promote the heritage trails

- Heritage trails in Port Louis
- Heritage trails in Mauritius

Managing visitors at World Heritage Property

Objective 7: Consolidate the visitor management strategy and optimize visitor management

7.1. Update the Visitor Management plan

7.2. Improve visitor recording system

7.3. Foster collaboration with neighbouring institutions and agencies

Promoting the World Heritage Property and its surroundings

Objective 8: Ensure the implementation of a sustainable strategy for the promotion of the World Heritage Property

8.1. Review and implement the Tourism & Marketing Strategy

8.2. Approve and implement the pricing policy

8.3. Promote heritage in the buffer zone

Conducting research on the scope and extent of indenture

Objective 9: Continue and encourage multidisciplinary research on the scope and extent of indenture by establishing local, regional and international networks

9.1. Regular Review the integrated Research Plan (2016-2021)

9.2. Conduct an archaeological survey at *Parc à Boulets* and adjacent area

9.3. Implement the Indentured Labour Route project

9.4. Consolidate and develop a research strategy for Intangible Cultural Heritage

9.5. Prepare a strategy and policy for consolidating research capacity

9.6. Develop and consolidate networks to foster research on indenture

Objective 10: Improve the management of information and consolidate the documentation centre

10.1. Set up appropriate data management system

10.2. Prepare an ethics and access policy for research

7. Implementing the Plan

Approved by Government, the Management Plan is a document providing guidance and recommendations for the management and the promotion of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property.

The Management Plan is a partnership document that provides guidance to all stakeholders involved in the conservation, management and promotion of the World Heritage Property. The City Council of Port Louis (CCPL), the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF), the National Heritage Fund (NHF) and the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage (MACH) are the institutions involved in the implementation of the Management Plan on a daily basis.

This core group collaborates with the following governmental partners:

- The Ministry of Local Government, Disaster and Risk Management
- The Ministry of Tourism
- The Mauritius Ports Authority
- Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd
- The Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
- The Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives
- The Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology
- The Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
- The Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security
- The Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning
- The Mauritius Museums Council
- The Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority

The conservation, management and promotion of Aapravasi Ghat also require the full support of the local community and the public at large. It is the reason why the Management Plan also includes mechanisms that involve the public.

It is essential to adopt and implement a Management Plan that promotes holistic and integrated management so that it ensures its sustainable implementation.

8. Legal and Institutional framework

The Management Plan meets the requirements of the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of UNESCO and also the legislative framework existing in Mauritius, which includes:

1. The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act (2001 amended 2006 and 2011);
2. The National Heritage Fund Act (2003 amended 2017);
3. The Planning Policy Guidance – PPG 6: Urban Heritage Area – Buffer Zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage property (2011);
4. The Local Government Act (2003- amended 2011);
5. The Outline Planning Scheme for Port Louis (2015);
6. The Action Area Plan (AAP 01 – 2019).

The local legislation does not make provision specifically for World Heritage Sites but the principles of the *Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* were followed to cater for the specific aspects of heritage management and protection. This led to the amendment of the *Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act* in 2011 to include the delimitation of the buffer zone, which has a legal status. The amendment of the *Local Government Act* makes provision for the creation of a Technical Committee to examine applications for development in the buffer zone.

The legal framework related to the World Heritage Property was amended to address the need to preserve and promote the OUV of the WHP. It led to the inclusion of heritage principles and guidance in major planning documents in order to ensure the retention and enhancement of heritage within the capital city of Port Louis. The specific Planning Policy Guidance (PPG 6) was issued in 2011 to provide a framework for the buffer zone of Aapravasi Ghat and establish a vision that promotes the revitalization of the area as a heritage district. Concurrently, this vision was also included in the Outline Planning Scheme for Port Louis (2015). In 2019, the Action Area Plan for the AGWHP Buffer Zone (AAP 01) was issued to make provision for integrated development in the buffer zone while ensuring the retention and enhancement of the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHP.

The Management Plan also includes “Planning guidelines for the Buffer Zone”¹² and “Guidelines to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and Visual Impact Assessment (VIA)”¹³ as guiding tools associated with the PPG 6, the Outline Planning Scheme for Port Louis and the AAP 01. The Management Plan for the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property is a reference document for these planning documents and should be used concurrently.

¹² Annex 4.

¹³ Annex 5.

9. Who is responsible for the implementation of the Management Plan?

The implementation of the Management Plan (MP) is vested in a partnership where each stakeholder brings its part for the effective implementation of the plan. The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF) provides guidance and ultimately oversees the management of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property. The Board monitors the preparation and approves the Management Plan before it is examined by the Management Plan Committee chaired by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage.

The responsibility for the practical implementation of the plan rests with the Director of the AGTF who is supported by the Technical and Research Unit.

The retention, enhancement and promotion of the heritage in the Buffer Zone are the responsibility of the City Council of Port Louis (CCPL) who implements the Management Plan and the Planning Policy Guidance 6 in the area. The CCPL is assisted by the AGTF and the National Heritage Fund (NHF).

The Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage (MACH) is the representative of the State Party to UNESCO. As such, the MACH monitors the implementation of the MP through the Management Plan Committee and reports to UNESCO's World Heritage Centre.

The Management Plan Committee chaired by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage is also in charge of the implementation of the Action Area Plan for the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property Buffer Zone.

10. Monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the Management Plan will be monitored and evaluated to better address issues or shortcomings that may arise in the course of implementation. Systematic Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) therefore allow for adaptive management as circumstances and details of issues change through time.

To ensure the effective implementation of the MP and to support implementation of particular parts of the plan, committees are established. Each committee must prepare a working plan for the area under their jurisdiction that clearly states:

- Main actions to be undertaken
- Specific steps to be taken
- Deliverables
- Indicators
- Timelines
- Indication of tasks and the person responsible
- Potential obstacles and bottlenecks and possible ways of overcoming them

Work plans should be prepared, approved and adopted by the committees in order to ensure the smooth implementation of the Management Plan. The work plans of the various committees will be taken up into an overall Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system that serves as a systematic monitoring tool for the Management Plan Committee.

The Management Plan Committee, by using the M&E system, will not only *monitor* the step by step implementation and roll-out of the Management Plan itself but will also *evaluate* the actual impact of the plan on the World Heritage Property and its target beneficiaries. Thus both the level of implementation of the Management Plan and its efficacy are systematically monitored. The MACH, the CCPL, the AGTF and the NHF would be in a position to evaluate the Management Plan and adopt an approach of adaptive management allowing the review of proposed actions to better achieve the goals stated in the management plan.