



State of Palestine

**State of Conservation Report (2017) for  
Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines– Cultural Landscape of  
Southern Jerusalem, Battir–  
Palestine (1492)**



**Bethlehem, Palestine  
January, 2018**

The State of Conservation Report (SOC) for the World Heritage Property (WHP) **Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines: Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir (1492)** was prepared by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in close cooperation with Battir Municipality.

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	3
1. Executive Summary.....	4
2. Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee (WHcom) decisions.....	6
2.1 Response to the State of Conservation.....	6
2.1.1 Status of Dismissing Plans to Build a “Wall” Along the Property, or within its Surroundings .....	7
2.2 Desired State of Conservation and Corrective Measures Developed for the Property	7
2.2.1 Desired State of Conservation .....	7
2.2.2 Corrective Measures .....	7
2.2.3 Timeframe for Implementation of the Corrective Measures .....	8
3. Implemented and Future Actions to Secure the Conservation of the Property .....	9
3.1 The Geo-political Situation and the Case Against the “Wall” at the Israeli High Court of Justice .....	9
3.2 Conservation interventions of the Cultural Landscape .....	10
3.3 Enhancing the Physical Situation in and around the WHP .....	12
3.3.1 List of 2017 efforts towards enhancing the physical situation of the WHP.....	12
3.4 Conservation and Management of the Property.....	14
3.4.1 Preparation of the Management and Conservation Plan (MCP) .....	14
3.4.2 A sustainable study for the Battir Old Core .....	14
3.4.3 The Battir Municipality Strategic Plan (2018-2021) .....	14
4. Future Issues Identified by the State Party .....	15
5. Efforts of the UNESCO Ramallah Office .....	16
6. Conclusion .....	17
7. Figures .....	18

## 1. Executive Summary

Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines- Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, Palestine (Ref. 1492) was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2014 following an emergency nomination, in accordance with criteria (iv) and (v), and immediately on the List of World Heritage in Danger, after it was acknowledged that the landscape was threatened by emerging and intensifying socio-cultural and geo-political transformations with the potential to cause irreversible damage to the site's authenticity and integrity—citing specifically the start of construction of an Israeli “Wall” that may isolate local farmers from fields they have cultivated for centuries.

The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value adopted by the World Heritage Committee (WHCom), (Decision 39 COM 8B.52) underscored the negative impact of the planned separation “wall” on the authenticity of the cultural landscape. The property and its features would be severely altered by the construction of such a barrier, along with the accompanying service roads on each of its sides, as they would visually obstruct and physically disfigure much of the site's historic landscape and terrace system.

This report presents the Desired State of Conservation (DSOCR) and the key Corrective Measures adopted by the World Heritage Committee (Decision 39 COM 7A.29) as necessary for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. It also highlights the progress of implementation of key corrective measures by all relevant stakeholders. It outlines main activities and projects undertaken throughout 2017 towards conserving the WHP's OUV and achieving the DSOCR and Corrective Measures. The primary corrective measures focus on eliminating or significantly ameliorating the imminent threat posed by an Israeli plan to construct a Wall adjacent to the property, which, if implemented, would cause irreversible damage to the site's authenticity and integrity. Following the inscription of the property on World Heritage List during the 38<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee, the Israeli High Court of Justice on 4 January 2015 decided to freeze construction of the Wall. However the court stated that the decision was largely based on budgetary considerations and the state maintains the right to build the Wall in the future.

Although these developments are considered positive steps towards achieving permanent protection of the property, other factors are still threatening the quality of the landscape at a visual, ecological, socio-economic, and cultural level. Palestine is committed to implementing the corrective measures adopted by the WHCom, especially those aiming to conserve the cultural landscape in line with international standards, prevent abandonment and forestation of existing agricultural terraces, engage the local community with the World Heritage Property (WHP), and preserve the commitment of the WHCom with respect to human and financial resources.

Realizing that a holistic Management and Conservation Plan (MCP) is key to ensuring adequate respect and effective safeguarding of the property and its inherent Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), MoTA proceed with preparation of the site's MCP based on the adopted corrective measures, and the guidelines prepared in the nomination file, a request to the World Heritage Centre by the State of Palestine for international assistance in preparing the MCP, UNESCO allocated a budget of 30,000 USD to fund the task. MoTA began preparation for the MCP in November of 2016, in cooperation with the Battir Municipality (BM), UNESCO

Ramallah Office, and other related stakeholders, who will approve, implement, and update the MCP's objectives, strategies and actions. The **draft MCP** is attached with this report and the final document will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre by the end of April 2018.

In light of the above, and in spite of the positive developments achieved since the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List, ***Palestine wishes to retain the property "Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines: Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir" on the World Heritage List in Danger.***

## 2. Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee (WHCom) decisions

### 2.1 Response to the State of Conservation

The proposed plans for achieving the Desired State of Conservation and the Corrective Measures for the removal of the WHP from the List of World Heritage in Danger was adopted by the WHCom (Decision 39COM7A.29), also the timeframe for the implementation of these measures was adopted by the WHCom (Decision 41COM7A.43). The desired state of conservation responds to the presence of jeopardizing elements that justified the initial inscription of the site on the World Heritage in Danger list, and the factors that are affecting the property outlined in the nomination document.

The property is threatened by various external and internal circumstances that are actively damaging the quality of the landscape and threatening its long-term viability at various visual, ecological, socio-economic, and cultural levels. Palestine is committed to promote and implement the corrective measures adopted for this property, especially those aiming to conserve and manage the property in line with international standards.

The state of conservation of the property is affected by several factors, including internal and external factors, which have contributed to the deterioration of the physical situation throughout the WHP. This deterioration, which is mainly related to the lack of sewage and appropriate water network in the village of Battir, is negatively affecting the agricultural terraces adjacent to the village.

Although the Israeli occupying authorities are currently applying several restrictions and constrains that prevent farmers from restoring the terraces and the agricultural watchtowers in border areas, committed stakeholders and local community working together on the preparation of a comprehensive management and conservation plan (MCP) based on previous joint efforts involving Battir Municipality, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) and other key stakeholders that have responsibilities for planning and management in the WHP, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment Authority.

To restore an appropriate state of conservation for the cultural landscape, and in conformity with the request of the WHCom (Decision 41COM7A.43, art.5) that *the State Party shall put in place an effective management system until the MCP is established and operational*, a holistic MCP for the World Heritage Property (WHP) is being prepared. It includes an operational management system developed to effectively manage the entire WHP and ensure its sustainability. Further details of this can be found in Annex 1. The MCP has been prepared in close cooperation with the local community and other key stakeholders who manage parts of the Site, or who have statutory responsibilities within it. It sets out the main management and conservation objectives, strategies and actions needed for successful conservation and protection of the WHP, as well as identifies the specific measures and programs that should be implemented. Several conservation interventions were also implemented, or are planned, to achieve the corrective measures briefly presented in this report. As scheduled, the draft MCP was submitted to UNESCO Ramallah Office on January 24, 2018 (Annex2), and the final document will be submitted by the end of April 2018.

It is worth noting that enhancing of the physical situation of the property and achieving an appropriate state of conservation is not only based on internal socio-cultural factors, but also on external geo-political factors.

### **2.1.1 Status of Dismissing Plans to Build a “Wall” Along the Property, or within its Surroundings**

In 2015, the High Court of Israel adopted a binding decision stipulating that no “Wall” shall be constructed in, or around the Battir site. While this decision essentially froze construction of the separation barrier in this area, the court also left open the opportunity to renew its efforts to erect a wall in Battir in the future, ordering the state to notify villagers if plans to resume building are initiated. The decision thus fails to adequately secure the long-term protection of the site and its surroundings.

On 9 July 2004, the International Court of Justice, in an advisory opinion, stated that, “the construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated régime, are contrary to international law,” and is therefore considered illegal; adding that the “Wall” may refer to any barrier whether it is a physical wall or a fence.

A clearly-defined, binding decision in accordance with Article 6, Section 3, of the World Heritage Convention (1972), which states, “*Each State Party to this Convention under takes not to take any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 situated on the territory of other States Parties to this Convention*” is still required at this time.

## **2.2 Desired State of Conservation and Corrective Measures Developed for the Property**

### **2.2.1 Desired State of Conservation**

In order for the desired state of conservation to be achieved, the following criterion must first be met:

1. Dismissal of plans to build a “Wall” along the property, or within its surroundings,
2. Adequate conservation of the agricultural terraces and their associated components, including watchtowers and dry-stone walls throughout the property,
3. Adequate restoration of the irrigation system and the development of a sufficient sewage system to protect water quality on the property,
4. Protection methods in place for the property and its buffer zone,
5. Adoption of a management plan and monitoring system, and a sustainable management structure in place.

### **2.2.2 Corrective Measures**

In order for the WHP to be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger, the following corrective measures must first be achieved:

1. Agreement to dismiss plans to build a “Wall” along the property, or within its surroundings,
2. Implementation of projects to restore an appropriate state of conservation for the agricultural terraces and their components, including the watchtowers and dry stone walls throughout the property,
3. Implementation of a project to restore traditional irrigation systems,

4. Implementation of a project to put in place an adequate sewage system to protect water quality on the property,
5. Preparation, approval, and implementation of a Conservation and a Management Plan for the property,
6. Development and implementation of an active system of management that involves local communities and stakeholders,
7. Preparation of a set of indicators for monitoring the property and implementation of a monitoring system,
8. Development of protection methods for the property and its buffer zone.

### 2.2.3 Timeframe for Implementation of the Corrective Measures

The State of Palestine prepared the timeframe for the implementation of the corrective measures, which was adopted by the World Heritage Committee (Decision 41COM7A.43). Article 3 of this decision *encourages the State of Palestine to review this timeframe in order to accelerate pace for any of the key corrective measures if possible*. After reviewing the Timeframe, the key stakeholders of the WHP recommended in favor of keeping it as it was previously set out due to lack of appropriate funds and resources allocated for the property. It is worth noting that the timeframe is adequately integrated within the MCP's objectives, strategies and action plan.

In spite of the fact that the Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) and related corrective measures are planned to be achieved within a period of 10 years, the first DSOCR, "Dismissal of plans to build a 'Wall' along the property, or within its surroundings," is not defined within the known timeframe, as it is largely dependent on actions and decisions by the Israeli occupation authorities, which do not fall under the jurisdiction of the state of Palestine, and is therefore undeterminable at this time.



### 3. Implemented and Future Actions to Secure the Conservation of the Property

The Desired State of Conservation was prepared based on the geo-political and socio-cultural factors that negatively impact the property, as presented in the nomination document and as acknowledged in the evaluation report prepared by the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee. The various stakeholders are committed to safeguarding the cultural landscape, and realize that it is their responsibility to develop the means to achieve that aim.

Since inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, progress towards achieving the Desired State of Conservation has been sought by various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Battir Municipality and its Landscape Eco-museum, Ministry of Agriculture, Environment Quality Authority, and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation (CCHP). Furthermore, the local community at large has been aware of threats to the landscape and has been actively executing strategies to mitigate these threats since well before the WHP's inscription date.

In addition to the projects and activities mentioned in the previous SOC reports, the actions highlighted in subsequent sections of this report were taken place in 2017. They are divided into four categories:(1) the geo-political situation and the case at the Israeli High Court of Justice against construction of the “Wall;”(2) conservation interventions of the cultural landscape; (3) the enhancement of the physical situation in and around the property; and(4) general conservation and management of the property.

#### 3.1 The Geo-political Situation and the Case Against the “Wall” at the Israeli High Court of Justice

As noted in previous SOC reports, the geo-political context in which the property lies—namely, the direct and indirect effects of illegal building of settlements on surrounding hills and the proposed illegal construction of the “Wall”—is considered the most significant threat to the authenticity and integrity of the property.

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2015, the Israeli High Court of Justice froze plans for the construction of the “Wall” adjacent to the property. This concluded a three-year legal battle in response to petitions submitted by the village of Battir and supported by the State of Palestine, in cooperation with Friends of the Earth Middle East. The decision came after the Israeli government chose not to re-authorize a 2006 plan to erect a three kilometer stretch of the “Wall,” and subsequently revealed that the plan was not a high security or budgetary priority.

The decision of the Israeli High Court of Justice was taken after the site was inscribed on the World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger during the 38<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee. Although this is a positive move towards protecting the site and its authenticity and integrity, threats resulting from the construction of a “Wall” along the property remain valid until a binding decision is adopted by Israel stipulating that no “Wall” shall ever be constructed in or around the site. The decision must secure the long-term protection of the site and its settings.

Moreover, illegal construction of settlements on surrounding hills is negatively affecting the visual and ecological quality of the landscape. To a significant degree, these factors are related to direct acts by the Israeli occupation authorities, and should be also dismissed upon a binding decision ensuring the protection of the property. Such acts are progressively subjugating and effectively annexing both the territorial area and the inhabitants of Battir, and thus severely

threaten the integrity of the WHP's landscape and the sustainability of its ecological and environmental equilibrium, in addition to preventing the local community from maintaining their agricultural lands in the areas that are close to the settlements.

### 3.2 Conservation interventions of the Cultural Landscape

The stakeholders realize their role in achieving an appropriate state of conservation of the various components of the property, and have been working tirelessly on implementing several projects related to this goal. In 2017, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and other key stakeholders have implemented three main projects in the WHP towards achieving the corrective measures set to the property as the following :-

- 1. Rehabilitation of the Agricultural Dry-stone Walls and Irrigation Canals in the al-Jinan Zone.** The aim of this project is to rehabilitate, repair and clean 2660 m<sup>2</sup> of dry-stone walls in the al-Jinan zone located above the Roman Pool, in addition to rehabilitate 580 M.L of traditional canals, and clean circa 650 M.L of the existing ones. The project started in September 2017 and will finish in February 2018. It is funded by USAID through Compete Project/ DAI, and designed and supervised by the CCHP with a total budget of US\$176320.
- 2. Rehabilitation of Agricultural Dry-stone Walls and Reclamation and Repair of agricultural land in the Wadi al- Makrou.** The aim of this project is to rehabilitate circa 2250 m<sup>2</sup> of dry-stone walls in the Wadi al- Makrou, as well as to repair and reclaim circa 80 Dounms (19.8 Acres) of abandoned agricultural lands for the benefits of 27 farmers. This project started in March 2017 and will finish in March 2018. It is funded by the Government of Aragon in Spain through Caritas Spain, and implemented by Caritas Jerusalem with a total budget of US\$140000.
- 3. Cultural and Natural Heritage: a Tool for Socio-Economic Development in BATTIR.** The aim of this project is to enhance the socio-economic situation of the local community in the WHP, in addition to enhance the state of conservation of the Ein al-Balad Spring and the al-Medan Square. It included tiling 1200m<sup>2</sup> of the al-Medan Square and its adjacent alleys, cleaning and pointing the facades of the Ein al Balad, installing protection handrails and lightning works. It also involved organizing a series of public awareness workshops and lectures on the cultural and natural values of the WHP for Battir schools. Subsequently, a traditional market for two days (19-20<sup>th</sup> November) was held in the rehabilitated al-Medan Square to promote local products. This project started in June 2017 and finished last October. It was funded by British Council, and implemented by the CCHP with a total budget of 94820 British Pounds.

In the same context, the local community of Battir continues its efforts to conserve and develop the WHP through the "Battir 2020 initiative". It is a creative initiative established in 2016 by a volunteer group to implement cultural and tourist activities in the WHP. Its main aim is to increase number of visitors to the village by the year 2020 and develop high quality tourist services and infrastructure to accommodate visitors, as well as raise awareness of the WHP's values.

**List of other efforts and activities implemented in 2017 towards conserving and enhancing the Cultural Landscape**

<b>Projects and Activities</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
<b>Rehabilitation of a historical building to be reused as a restaurant</b>	February 2017	Al Khirbeh Restaurant is located in Kirbet Battir overlooking the agricultural terraces. It is a historical building rehabilitated to be reused as a restaurant serving traditional food. <i>Funded by its Owner</i>
<b>Rehabilitation of two shops</b>	March 2017	This project includes rehabilitation of two abandoned shops located on the main street of Battir to be reused as a small restaurant and a bike rental store. <i>Funded by their owners</i>
<b>Cleaning up the irrigation canals and agricultural terraces</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2017	This activity aimed to clean up the agricultural terraces (e.g. removing stones, dirt, and solid waste, clean irrigation canals in the WHP). It was undertaken by 100 local and international volunteers from the Reporters Without Borders and European Union.
<b>Expanding the existing Handcrafts store</b>	December 2017	Under the Battir 2020 Initiative, the existing handicrafts store is expanded to meet the increasing demand for local handicrafts, including the Battir stone articles, and handmade recycled materials produced by the local community of Battir.
<b>Raising up public awareness</b>	October 2017	Under the project of “Cultural and Natural Heritage: a Tool for Socio-Economic Development in BATTIR”, several raising awareness workshops and lectures were held by the CCHP for the Battir’s schools to raise the public awareness about the OUV of the WHP.

<b>Maintenance and enhancement of traditional path ways in the Wadi Halas</b>	May- July 2017	This project aimed to maintain and enhance traditional path ways that lead to number of agricultural fields in the Wadi Halas area. <i>Funded by the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee with a total budget of US\$20000.</i>
<b>Building a wooden guardrail along the railway track</b>	April 2017	A wooden guardrail was constructed along the Railway track by Battir Municipality to improve the safety measures of the property and prevent visitors from crossing the railway. <i>Funded by the Battir Municipality.</i>

### 3.3 Enhancing the Physical Situation in and around the WHP

Negative impacts resulted from the village's weak infrastructure are recognized by all stakeholders. Since the inscription of the site on the World Heritage List, various stakeholders have sought to enhance this situation through multiple reversible interventions, including rehabilitation of abandoned traditional buildings inside the historic center of Battir to be reused as community or tourist facilities, improve the socio-economic status of the local community, and improve the infrastructure, especially roads networks, water supply networks, and management of solid waste.

#### 3.3.1 List of 2017 efforts towards enhancing the physical situation of the WHP

<b>Projects and Activities</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
<b>Rehabilitation of Ein Jam'a road within the WHP</b>	April- June 2017	This project rehabilitated the street that connect Battir main street with Ein -Jam'a area in the WHP. <i>Funded by Arab Monetary Fund through the Islamic Development Bank Jeddah with a total budget of US\$ 116000.</i>
<b>Rehabilitation of several internal roads in the WHP</b>	January – March 2017	This project contributed to rehabilitate internal roads that connect Battir main street with the village residential quarters. <i>Funded by the Ministry of Local Government with a total budget of US\$310000.</i>

<b>Improvement of Water Supply networks</b>	July 2017- July 2018	The aim of this project is to improve the water supply network in the Battir village and to sever wide areas in the WHP. <i>It is implemented by Battir Municipality in cooperation with the Joint Service Council of Bethlehem West Rural Area, and the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (WSSA) with a total budget of US\$ 1143000.</i>
<b>Building the al - Mahttah Tent</b>	March 2017	This project used reversible materials (steel structure) to construct a Tent near the railway track. The Tent is used as a rest place for visitors. Its aim is to encourage farmers cultivating their lands in this area, enhance visitor experience, keep the area clean, and to improve the socio-economic status of the local community through serving traditional food to visitors. <i>Funded and supervised by the 2020 Initiative.</i>
<b>Guest house renovation</b>	March 2017	This project renovated the guest house of Battir. It replaced old leaking Water tank with new ones, repainting its rooms, and repairing its pergola in front of the dining room. <i>Funded by Felcos Umbria Cooperation in Italy with a total budget of US\$ 7500.</i>
<b>Improving the Battiri Eggplants cultivation</b>	August 2017	Battir Municipality encouraged farmers to plant more than 10000 eggplants during the last season (spring-summer). It bought improved seedlings and sold them to farmers at half- price. Subsequently, most of the crops were sold to the WHP's visitors. <i>Funded by Battir Municipality</i>
<b>Organizing the first traditional market in Battir</b>	November 2017	Under the Project of "Cultural and Natural Heritage: a Tool for Socio-Economic Development in BATTIR", the CCHP in cooperation with Battir Municipality organized a traditional market for local food and agricultural crops in the al-Medan Square for two days. Several cultural activities were also held for children, youth, and women. The aim of this activity was to enhance the socio-economic situation of farmers and local inhabitants, and encourage visitors to explore the site and experience the local food and culture.

### **3.4 Conservation and Management of the Property**

For centuries, the task of conserving and managing the WHP's physical and cultural landscape was undertaken by the villagers of Battir, who carefully maintained and utilized the landscape as their resource. However today, conservation of historical property requires highly specialized tools and expertise. Such is needed to enable the State of Palestine and the related local authorities to safeguard this outstanding site for present and future generations.

Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) and Battir Municipality are the two primary institutions managing the WHP. In addition, there is a set of public and semi-governmental institutions associated with the management and conservation of the cultural landscape of Battir, including the Ministry of Local Government, the Environmental Quality Authority, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem.

#### **3.4.1 Preparation of the Management and Conservation Plan (MCP)**

In reference to the World Heritage Committee decisions (Decision 39 COM 7A.28 ,40 COM 7A.15, and 41COM 7A.43 ), and within the framework of the International Assistance Request (No IA2016-2807) for preparing a “Management and Conservation Plan for the World Heritage Property”, which was approved by the IA Panel of the World Heritage Centre, the UNESCO Ramallah Office contracted the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to prepare the above mentioned MCP based on the principles of effectiveness, coherence, functionality and realism, and taking in due consideration the comments and recommendations provided by the International Assistance.

MoTA started preparing the MCP in November 2016 in cooperation with key stakeholders. On January 25, 2018, the draft of the MCP was submitted to the UNESCO Ramallah Office for revision and feedback (Annex2). While, the final MCP is scheduled to be submitted by the end of April 2018. In this regard, a series of successful workshops, and technical meetings of the MCP's Steering Committee and local community were held to set out the MCP's objectives, strategies, and actions taking into account the Desired State of Conservation and Corrective Measures set for the property.

#### **3.4.2 A sustainable study for the Battir Old Core**

The International Peace and Cooperation Centre (IPCC) in cooperation with Battir Municipality prepared a sustainable study for the Battir village old core. It includes assessment of the state of conservation of the historic buildings and 24 watchtowers inside the urban boundaries of the village. Consequently, it proposed a set of development actions to sustain the village's old core. In July 2017, MoTA signed a memorandum of understanding with IPCC to integrate its study within the preparation of the MCP.

#### **3.4.3 The Battir Municipality Strategic Plan (2018-2021)**

Currently, Battir Municipality, in cooperation with the Ministry of Local Government and the Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF), is preparing its Annual Strategic Plan for 2018-2021. This plan is being prepared in close collaboration with MoTA to ensure its consistency with the MCP of the WHP. It will include a list of proposed projects and actions to meet the needs of the local community, improve the Battir's physical infrastructure, develop agricultural products, and enhance educational and tourist facilities.

#### 4. Future Issues Identified by the State Party

Future actions address a set of proposed projects that will assure implementation of the Corrective Measures as follows:

Projects and Activities	Date	Brief Description
<b>Rehabilitation of destroyed agricultural terraces</b>	2018	<p>This project aims to rehabilitate 2000 m<sup>2</sup> of dry-stone agricultural terraces in the Wadi al-Makhrouf area which will significantly contribute to preserve the cultural landscape of the WHP.</p> <p><i>It is committed and funded by the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee.</i></p>
<b>Develop organic agriculture in the Wadi al-Makrouf</b>	2018	<p>This project is funded by the Government of Aragon in Spain through Caritas Spain. It will be implemented by Caritas Jerusalem. Its aim is to encourage farmers to use new environmental agriculture methods and techniques. The project will support farmers with needed funds, knowledge, and field training.</p> <p><i>It is committed and funded by the Government of Aragon in Spain through Caritas Spain</i></p>
<b>Establishment of a sewage network</b>	<i>Pending funding</i>	<p>This proposed project aims to establish a sewage network for the Battir village.</p>
<b>Wastewater treatment plant for Battir and Hossan</b>	<i>Pending advice of the World Heritage Committee and funding</i>	<p>This plan aims to construct a wastewater treatment plant to treat the sewage discharged from the villages of Battir and Hossan and to promote the re-use of treated wastewater in the area. It will be established in the buffer zone of the WHP. The treatment plant will contribute to resolving underground water pollution, which is causing severe damage to the springs and irrigated crops.</p> <p>A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) shall be undertaken and subsequently submitted to the World Heritage Centre before implementation of the project.</p>

<b>Rehabilitation and pavement of internal roads</b>	2018	This project aims to rehabilitate Khallet Battir road and Khirbet Al-Bader road. <i>Committed and funded by the MDLF with a total budget of US\$21000.</i>
<b>Rehabilitation of Battir main street</b>	2018	This project aims to rehabilitate the main street of Battir. <i>Committed and funded by the MDLF with a total budget of 750000 Euro.</i>
<b>Rehabilitation of Dewan Abu Ni'ma (Bazaar Battir)</b>	2018	The proposed project aims to rehabilitate a historical building, the Dewan Abu Ni'ma (70 m <sup>2</sup> ), to be reused as a bazaar for Battir's handicrafts and traditional products. <i>Committed and funded by Sant Breue region in France.</i>
<b>Rehabilitation of the hiking trail</b>	2018	This proposed project aims to rehabilitate the hiking trail and add wooden benches, waste baskets along the trail, and establish rest areas. <i>Committed by Ma'an Center for Developmental Actions and funded by the Government of Poland.</i>

##### 5. Efforts of the UNESCO Ramallah Office

The UNESCO Ramallah office through its Culture Unit continued to be actively involved in the conservation, management and promotion of the property through constant technical and, when possible, financial support for the safeguarding of the WHP.

In fact, through the International Assistance from World Heritage Fund, UNESCO Ramallah office is supporting the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and other relevant stakeholders in the preparation of Conservation and Management plans for two Palestinian World Heritage Sites in Danger; Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines - Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir and the Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem. They participated in the regular meetings and workshops held in the WHP, contributed to help the planning team with their technical expertise, to review the draft documents and to provide guidelines for the development of the Conservation and Management plans.

Several visits to the property and meetings with national and local stakeholders and potential donors were initiated and took place. These collaborative meetings aimed at assessing the SOC of the property and reviewing the identified conservation and management challenges as well as at proposing solutions. UNESCO Ramallah office continues its effort in advocating for



streamlining of all individual efforts and projects that advocate for the sustainable safeguarding, rehabilitation and promotion of the property.

## 6. Conclusion

The State of Palestine conducted several projects and activities during 2017 to conserve and sustainably develop the WHP and its OUV with the aim of achieving the desired state of conservation and corrective measures set for the site to be removed from the List of World Heritage in danger, including rehabilitation parts of the agricultural terraces, the traditional irrigation system, rehabilitation of some abandoned buildings, enhancing community engagement in the Conservation and Management of the WHP.

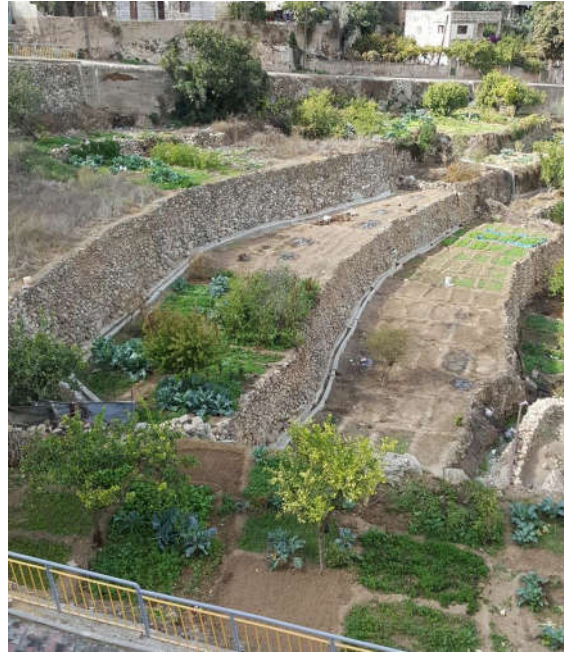
The MCP for the WHP has been prepared in cooperation with Battir Municipality, UNESCO Ramallah Office, and other related stakeholders. Its primary draft was submitted to the Ramallah UNESCO Office on January 24, 2018 for review and feedback. While, the final MCP will be submitted by the end of April 2018.

Unfortunately, protection of water quality, through the establishment of an environmental sewage system, is still proposed without funding, however we are committed to solve this problem when needed fund is secured.

The threats resulting from the construction of a “Wall” by Israel along the property remain valid until a binding decision, in conformity with Article 6, section 3 of the WH Convention (1972), is adopted by concerned Israeli authorities stipulating that no “Wall” can ever be constructed in or around the site. It is critical to the long-term stability of this WHP, its integrity and authenticity, that this threat is disabled through binding action.

In spite of considerable achievements and the positive efforts of various stakeholders in enhancing the state of conservation of the property and its surroundings as well as the dismissal of some of threats to the WHP, **Palestine wishes to retain the property “Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir” on the World Heritage List in Danger.**

## 7. Figures



*7.1: Rehabilitation of the Agricultural Dry-stone Walls and Irrigation Canals in Al-Jinan Zone*





*7.2: AL-Medan Square Tiling Works*



*7.3 : Rehabilitation of the Agricultural Dry-stone Walls in the Wadi al- Makrou .*





7.4: Al Khirbeh Restaurant





7.5: Renovation of two Shops.



7.6: Cleaning up the irrigation canals and the agricultural terraces





7.7: Workshops for students towards safeguarding cultural heritage



7.8: First Traditional Market in the WHP





*7.9: al- Mahttah Tent rest place*



*7.10: Renovation of the Guest House*





*7.1.1: Battir Visitor Groups in 2017*





7.12: Battiri Egg plants Seedlings



7.13: Workshops for preparation of the MCP



*7.14: Workshops for Preparation of the Battir Strategic Plan*



*7.15: Workshops For preparation of the sustainable study of the Battir's Old Core*