**State of Palestine**

**Ministry of Local Government**

**Municipality of Battir**

**Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines**

**Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem - Battir**

**World Heritage site in Danger**

**Towards the**

**Conservation and Management Plan**

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**10 December 2017**

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Municipality of Battir

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**Executive Summary**

The Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) for the World Heritage site in Danger “Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines, Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir” refers to an area of circa 9,7 square kilometres located in the central West Bank (Bethlehem Governorate), seven kilometres south west of Jerusalem. It is composed of a system of valleys (*widian*) and ridges that stretch from Beit Jala, approximately 900 meters above sea level, to the Green Line, approximately 500 meters above sea level. The landscape includes water springs and caves, archaeological sites and features, vernacular architectures, while its buffer zone includes the historic core of Battir Village, as well as its urban expansion - the so-called “sprawl town.” All of these features are immersed in a dense texture of terraces that are cultivated with olives, vines, almonds, fruit trees, and, when irrigated, vegetables, including the famous Battiri aubergine. Dry-stone terrace walls in Battir, the predominant characterising feature within the whole area, amount to approximately 500,000 metres, whereas the terraces were classified into six main categories according to their typology:

1. Valley-bottom terraces,
2. Irrigated terraces,
3. Enclosed terraces,
4. Contour terraces,
5. Cross-channel terraces (*khallet*),
6. Relic terraces.

The latter type refers to abandoned areas where the lack of maintenance caused the progressive collapse of masonries and subsequent re-naturalisation of those portions of territory and their vegetation. This process has created interesting transitional situations. Olive groves can now be found intertwined with the pioneering species of the Eastern Mediterranean *maquis*, such as oak and carob trees, aromatic shrubs (e.g., *Salvia fruticosa*) and wild flowers (e.g., *Cistus incanus*).

Today this cultural landscape is threatened by a variety of factors, both endogenous and exogenous; Palestinian land management and the Israeli policies and measures unilaterally imposed within the occupied territory. The most threatening factors affecting the integrity of this living landscape are the abandonment of cultivated land and the lack of urban management tools, networks, and services including, waste management and plans to mitigate the urban sprawl encroaching on agricultural land. Further threats include the growing presence of landfills and garbage dumps in the valleys, pollution of the water sources, the Israeli settlement expansion, and the construction of the Separation Wall, which is completed around the village of Al-Walajeh. The increasing construction of housing units, infrastructures, roads, and other kinds of services for the exclusive use of settlers has resulted in the progressive “enclavisation” of both the territorial area and the inhabitants of Battir. This process is severely threatening the integrity of Battir’s landscape and the sustainability of its ecological and environmental equilibrium. It is causing progressive erosion of the traditional relationship between Battir’s rural population and its traditional spaces, as well as damaging socio-economic transformations.

The CMP is devised to address those threats and find the forms to mitigate them towards the holistic safeguarding of the cultural landscape.

**TOWARDS THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF SOUTHERN JERUSALEM - BATTIR, AND ITS BUFFER ZONE**



**Battir, the irrigated terraces in 1892. ©Palestine Exploration Fund**

**Geographical coordinates**

Exact location - Centre of the property:

31° 43' 37.40"N, 35° 8' 15.59"E

**Surface of the property and buffer zone**

Circa 9,7 square kilometers (972.71 ha.)

*The ship on which Theseus sailed with the youths and returned in safety, the thirty-oared galley, was preserved by the Athenians down to the time of Demetrius Phalereus. They took away the old timbers from time to time, and put new and sound ones in their places, so that the vessel became a standing illustration for the philosophers in the mooted question of growth, some declaring that it remained the same, others that it was not the same vessel.*

Plutarch, Parallel Lives, Life of Theseus, 23.1

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This Conservation and Management Plan for “Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines, Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir”, inscribed on the list of World Heritage sites in Danger in 2014, aims at providing the Municipality of Battir with a practical tool for the management of its WH property toward conservation. A Conservation and Management Plan (hereinafter abbreviated in CMP) has been requested by decisions of the World Heritage Committee 39 COM 7A.29. 40 COM 7A.15 and 41 COM 7A.43. The Municipality of Battir shall submit the CMP to the State of Palestine’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities for further use.

In order to provide assistance to the Municipality of Battir the Regione Toscana (Italy) has allocated a financial contribution to furnish the CMP, through Confservizi Cispel Toscana, a service provider for the same Regione Toscana, who hired Open Plan Consulting and Archi.Media Trust Onlus to deliver their specialized expertise in spatial planning, community participation, and World Heritage matters.

**1.1 Background information**

The history for the protection of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir dates back to December 2005, when the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the UNESCO Ramallah Office jointly started to work on the identification of West Bank’s cultural landscapes that could fit the World Heritage criteria. The valleys surrounding the village of Battir were identified in 2005 as the best example to portray the “outstanding universal value” of the “Land of olives and vines” [[1]](#footnote-1).

From 2006 to 2010[[2]](#footnote-2) the UNESCO Ramallah Office implemented a series of small-scale projects, funded by Norway and by the World Heritage Fund; the projects aimed at studying and safeguarding this cultural landscape of potential outstanding universal value. Key projects were the research on landscape perceptions and the participatory planning process addressing landscape protection, cultural heritage conservation and community development.

In 2007, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities prepared its first report on Palestinian cultural landscapes, choosing Battir as a case study. Based on the recommendations of this report, the UNESCO Ramallah Office commissioned a comparative study on the perception of landscape in the West Bank. The findings of the study were published in Cancellotti, Cirino and Harb (2008) “Research and Documentation of the Tangible and Intangible Elements of Olive Cultural Landscape in the Palestinian Highlands: The Villages of Battir and ‘Asira el-Shamaliya”.

In 2008, it was possible to establish and equip a field office in Battir for the direct surveying of the cultural landscape with the aim of documenting, monitoring, and planning for future protection of the area. Three young Palestinian architects, coordinated and guided by the UNESCO Programme Specialist for Culture, and assisted by consultants specialising in disciplines such as hydro-geology, botany, agronomy, sociology, anthropology, and landscape planning, were exposed to a tailored on-the-job training programme for over two years. Their work laid the foundations of the Conservation and Management Plan, including a set of maps and guidelines.

As a result of the various actions carried out in Battir for the preservation of its cultural landscape, the Battir Village Council was awarded a two-year commitment from the Italian Cooperation, within the framework of its Palestinian Municipalities Support Programme (PMSP). The project aimed at reinforcing the capacities of local authorities and stakeholders in the fields of natural and cultural landscape management. Crucial to this initiative was the development of a model of sustainable use of the territory, notably the establishment of a “Landscape Eco-museum” in Battir, which included the provision of tourist infrastructures in the village and light, sparse interventions in its territory - e.g., hiking trails.

In 2009, the issue of the Separation Barrier[[3]](#footnote-3) arose, and became a central topic of discussion during the planning process, which was being undertaken in the village, at institutional and community levels.

In 2010, the Village Council and the environmental organization “Eco-Peace/Friends of the Earth Middle East” submitted in parallel two affidavits[[4]](#footnote-4) to the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ), in order to object the construction of the Separation Barrier on the basis of environmental and cultural concerns. Key motivation of both affidavits was the “potential outstanding universal value” of the site, as defined in 2005. During the various hearings held in Jerusalem, it became clear that the judges of the HCJ would consider the case of “landscape and cultural heritage protection” valid only in the event of international recognition of the territory of Battir.

This is why, in absence of any other international instrument, in August 2010, in order to raise the awareness of the Israeli authorities, and produce an internationally recognized document about the values of its cultural landscape, Battir participated in the *Melina Mercouri International Prize for the safeguarding and management of cultural landscapes*, through a nomination file submitted by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS).

**1.2 The first international recognition: the Melina Mercouri Prize**

The *Melina Mercouri Prize*, jointly organized by UNESCO and Greece, and named after the former Greek actress and Minister of Culture Melina Mercouri who struggled to repatriate the marbles of the Parthenon to Athens, was designed to awarding best practices for the preservation of cultural landscapes. In January 2011, a five-member international jury, chaired by Mounir Bouchenaki, Director-General of ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property), awarded Battir the first prize *ex-aequo*, with the cultural landscape of Garni, in Armenia.

From the Jury statement:

*Coherence of the nomination with regard to the objectives of the Prize:*

*The nomination is thoroughly documented and fully in line with the objectives of the Prize in that it represents a comprehensive and state-of-the-art safeguarding and management approach in a geopolitical context that makes the efforts particularly innovative and challenging.*

The award-giving ceremony, headed by Ms. Irina Bokova, UNESCO’s Director-General, was held in Paris, on 29 May 2011. The outcome of the prize was submitted to the Israeli HCJ, but this resulted only in extending the final decision. The judges requested an official recognition, such as the inscription on the World Heritage List.

This window of opportunity occurred on 31 October 2011, when the UNESCO’s General Assembly voted to admit Palestine as a full member of the organization. This unexpected change in the institutional setup marked the beginning of the World Heritage nomination process, as illustrated in the paragraph below.

**1.3 History of the World Heritage nomination**

On 8 December 2011 Palestine – as a new Member State to UNESCO - ratified the World Heritage Convention, which would enter into force on 8 March 2012, after a three-month period.

Earlier in the same year 2011, the PA had submitted to UNESCO a preliminary World Heritage nomination dossier for the Nativity Church in Bethlehem. The submission was reiterated -as an emergency- in March 2012, after that the ratification of the World Heritage Convention by Palestine entered into force.

During the 36th session of the World Heritage Committee, held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, the Church of the Nativity was inscribed on the list of World Heritage in Danger (30 June 2012). The Palestinian Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his speech, announced the intention of Palestine to nominate Battir in the following year, as the second Palestinian World Heritage site, after Bethlehem.

As a result of these developments, the Israeli HCJ started considering the cultural and environmental concerns related to Battir valid, and started to request the Israeli Defense Forces (which was in charge of the Separation Barrier) to reconsider the route of the barrier.

On 12 December 2012, following the formal request of Palestine to UNESCO to provide technical assistance to prepare a nomination file for Battir, the Israeli HCJ gave ninety days to the Army to identify a different route for the Barrier in the concerned area. It was the first recognition by an Israeli State body of the importance of the cultural landscape of Battir.

As the judicial battle started, the issue was under the spotlight of local and international media. Civil society organizations activated a campaign to protect Battir and its cultural landscape.

In October 2013, in order to keep the international visibility on Battir under the spotlight, the “Ancient irrigated terraces of Battir” were listed on the World Monument Watch 2014[[5]](#footnote-5).

On 1 May 2013, the HCJ delivered a second sentence requesting the military to “re-think” the barrier so as not to damage the cultural landscape in the surroundings of Battir.

In July 2013, the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, passed without any reference to Battir.

Eventually, only on 28 January 2014, after more than two years from the ratification of the World Heritage Convention, the State Party of Palestine submitted a World Heritage nomination dossier, on an emergency basis, for the inscription of Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir. A petition signed by several personalities of the academic and professional world was delivered to the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee to support the inscription of Battir on the World Heritage list.

In June 2014, at the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Doha, Qatar, the property “Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines, Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir” was nominated on the list of World Heritage in Danger (see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1492)>.

The inscription took place in secret ballot, which resulted in a decisive majority in favour of inscription, despite the contrary opinion expressed by ICOMOS: “Recommendations with respect to inscription. ICOMOS does not consider that the present nomination of ‘Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines/Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, Palestine,’ is unquestionably of Outstanding Universal Value; and, while several threats have been identified for this property, ICOMOS has not found that it faces an emergency for which an immediate decision by the World Heritage Committee could ensure its safeguarding”[[6]](#footnote-6).

On 21 September 2014, the Israeli Cabinet of Ministers decided not to continue with the construction of the Separation Barrier in Battir. On 4 January 2015, the HCJ pronounced a sentence that forbids the Army to build the Barrier in Battir, considering that the site has been listed as a World Heritage in Danger.

**2. A WORLD HERITAGE SITE IN DANGER**

**2.1 Key information, including Corrective Measures**

Since the inscription on the World Heritage list in Danger in 2014, the site has been maintained in the same list of sites in Danger, due to the Israeli occupation, the subsequent volatility of the security situation, as well as the pending implementation of the Corrective Measures (CM), in order to achieve the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), adopted by WH Decision WHC-15/39.COM/19:

* Dismissal of plans to build a “Wall” along the property, or within its setting,
* Adequate conservation in place of the agricultural terraces and their associated components, including watchtowers and drystone walls throughout the property,
* Adequate restoration in place of the irrigation system and the development of an adequate sewage system to protect water quality in the property,
* Protection in place for the property and its buffer zone,
* Management plan and monitoring systems adopted and sustainable management system in place.

The eight Corrective Measures, among which CM (v) is key as it requires the preparation, approval and implementation of a Conservation and Management Plan, read as follows:

(i) Agreement to dismiss plans to build a “Wall” along the property, or within its setting,

(ii) Implementation of projects to retrieve an appropriate state of conservation of the agricultural terraces and their components, including the watchtowers and drystone walls throughout the property,

(iii) Implementation of a project to restore traditional irrigation systems,

(iv) Implementation of a project to put in place adequate sewage system to protect water quality in the property,

(v) Preparation, approval and implementation of a Conservation, and a Management Plan for the property,

(vi) Development and implementation of an active system of management that involves local communities and stakeholders,

(vii) Preparation of a set of indicators for monitoring the property and implementation of a monitoring system,

(viii) Development of protection for the property and its buffer zone.

The implementation of the eight CMs will ensure the protection of the property and will guarantee its sustainable development. The present report is meant to devise a strategy towards the formulation of a comprehensive Plan so as to address the issues raised by the CMs.

The last State of Conservation Report (SOC) for the property “Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines: Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir” was prepared by MoTA in close cooperation with the Battir Municipality, and submitted to the UNESCO WHC in January 2017. The SOC 2017 is attached as an Annex.

**2.1.1 Context**

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem - Battir is located in the central West Bank, circa 7 kilometers southwest of Jerusalem, west of the top of the ridge of the mountain range that runs north to south along the Mediterranean coast. It stretches from Beit Jala, west of Bethlehem (app. 900 m. above sea level) to the Armistice Line, or Green Line (app. 500 m. above sea level), which divides Israel from the West Bank.

Despite its relatively small size, the West Bank is characterized as having great variation in topography as well as ecological and climate diversity. All these factors contributed to the creation of a varied cultural landscape and high biodiversity, as reflected in four agro-ecological zones: Central Highlands, Semi-coastal zone, Eastern slopes, the Jordan Valley, in addition to the Coastal zone, which characterize the Gaza Strip.

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem - Battir is a key feature within the larger Palestinian Central Highlands cultural landscape, which characterizes the Central West Bank. The Central Highlands, with an area of nearly 3,500 square km stretching from Nablus in the north to Hebron in the south, is defined as one of the five Palestinian “agro-ecological zones” by its location, rainfall and altitude, as mentioned above. The zone is mountainous, rising up to 1,000 m above sea level. It is mostly hilly and rocky, and soils are often shallow. Average annual rainfall is about 400 mm. Out of the total cultivated area, 95% is rain-fed 60% under olives, grapes, almonds, and fruit trees, and 35% under field crops, mainly winter cereals and grain legumes. The remaining 5% of the cultivated land is irrigated and used mainly for vegetables.

It is worth to mention that, within the Bethlehem Governorate, another agro-ecological zone - the Eastern Slopes – is stretching at few kilometers east of the Battir area, creating a transitional zone between the Central Highlands and the desert areas of the Jordan Valley agro-ecological zone. The steep mountains with little rainfall that predominate in this region make it an almost semi-arid to desert zone. Agricultural production is of marginal importance and is limited to rain-fed cereals such as wheat and barley.

This makes the Battir area, together with the other Bethlehem Western Villages (Jaba’a, Wadi Fukin, Husan, Nahalin and Al-Walaja), particularly apt to agriculture, and subsequently makes it highly strategically important as the “green basket” of the Bethlehem Governorate.

**2.1.2 Historical background and geopolitical context**

Being situated at the centre of the Palestinian Central Highlands, the property benefitted of its strategic geographical location throughout the centuries. Palestine continues to be nowadays the platform for the interaction and an important route of migration and encounter between diverse cultures and civilizations, functioning as a bridge between Eastern and Western societies.

Palestine - the Holy Land, the land of many narratives, contrasts, layers and textures, has always been the object of rivalry: Canaanite, Assyrian, Egyptian, Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Byzantian, Islamic, Christian crusader, Mamluk, Ottoman, British and eventually Israeli colonization have left evidences of their presence across the area.

The history of Battir starts to be known during the Iron Age II period. The early settlements were built at *Khirbet El-Yahoud* and *Khirbet Abu Shawan*, and continue throughout the Roman period. After the siege and destruction of the city by the Romans, the settlement shifted to nearby places such as *Ein Jam’a*, *Husan* and *Khirbet Umm El-Shaqef*, located to the southeast of the original location. Here, mainly due to the abundance of water produced by natural sprigs, the inhabitants continue to live throughout the centuries. It is more likely that the settlement shifted toward the current place of the Battir village at the beginning of the Mamluk period, although archaeological fieldworks, mainly carried out by Israeli expeditions, did not shed light on the history of the changing landscape of the region prior to 1948. The case may be that those surveys and excavations were biased by historical accounts. However, on the basis of the existing bibliography, and confronting it with the landscape analysis undertaken within this planning exercise, it can be affirmed that several quarries, limekilns, tombs, *muntars* and terraces were not studied in a comprehensive manner.

Changes in the territorial orientation of the property and in the practices of its inhabitants occurred after 1948. Prior to 1948, Battir and its surrounding villages looked to Jerusalem –culturally, economically and from the point of view of spatial practices. The inhabitants of the area, particularly known for its cultivation of vegetables, used to sell their produce at the town markets. Significantly, in the past, these villages were known as “the vegetable basket of Jerusalem”. The system of irrigated terraces played an important role not only in the economic life of the area but also in determining the mobility of its inhabitants, who travelled daily to the markets in the district of Jerusalem.

After 1948 and the “temporary ejection” of its inhabitants, Battir founded itself on the Green Line. Its inhabitants made their complete return to the village thank to the strategic political initiative of their *mukhtar* (local chief), Hassan Mustapha. After the Jordanian-Israeli Armistice Agreement (1949), a progressive separation of the village from Jerusalem began, with the closure of the Battir Railway Station.

Since the Fifties of the past century, the village started to turn into an increasingly “Bethlehem oriented” village, with the construction of its main road, a pathway historically not used, leading to Bethlehem.

The transformation of the agricultural and socio-economic life of the village is directly linked to and affected by the Israeli policies in the area, especially after the construction of new infrastructures, including settlements and by-pass roads, during the Oslo Accords and post-Oslo era. The encirclement of the village and its territory during these periods, the new mobility system through tunnels and separation of roads, were all elements reinforcing the “enclavisation” of the village, which has led to an increasing socio-economic crisis.

In early 2000s, the Government of Israel decided to build a “Separation Barrier”, made of a concrete structure called “the Wall”, which actually surrounds the Bethlehem urban area and therefore further separates and isolates Battir from Bethlehem. Another segment of the “Wall” is planned in the area west of Bethlehem affecting the western villages surrounding Battir and their connection to Bethlehem infrastructures and services.

The entire property, within the West Bank territory, is under Israeli Military Occupation since 1967. In such a context, after the Oslo Accords[[7]](#footnote-7) and the transfer of authority to the Palestinian Authority, the Battir Village Council has the full mandate of administrating the territory under its jurisdiction (Area B), although Area C, the majority of the land (app. 68%), is contested within the property.

The division of Palestine in separated areas resulting from the Oslo Accords II (1995) has contributed to the fragmentation of the territory and has been an impediment towards a holistic approach to heritage conservation. In Area A (comprising the largest Palestinian urban centres and 17% of West Bank land) the PA was given security and civilian control; in Area B (smaller Palestinian population centres outside the urban areas) the PA was given civilian control whereas Israel retained security control. In Area C (comprising more than 60% of the West Bank) Israel was given full civilian and security control. Due to the non-contiguous geographical nature of the A, B, and C areas, the C areas physically disconnect the territory under PA jurisdiction. This limited and fractured autonomy has made it very difficult for the PA to govern and implement effectively heritage policies, even more so since the beginning of the Second Intifada (see Geopolitical Map).

**2.1.3 Ownership**

The property of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir is composed of:

*Private property*: parcels of private land owned by the people of Battir (3,967 inhabitants according to the census of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007) as well as, for a smaller portion, parcels of private land owned by the people of the neighbouring village of Husan;

*Public property*: land plots owned by the Islamic Waqf (Ottoman titles: i.e. railway road), land and buildings owned by the Palestinian Authority, Ministry of Awqaf (PA Waqf properties: i.e. mosques) as well as public land of key socio-cultural importance (i.e. water sources, public squares, etc.).

**2.2 The Core area**

**2.2.1 Natural Components**

***Climate***

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem - Battir, situated at the core of the Palestinian Central Highlands, has a [Mediterranean climate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_climate) with long, hot, rainless summers and relatively short, cool, rainy winters. The climate is as such due to its location between the [subtropical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subtropics) aridity of the [Arabian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian) deserts (the Judean Desert, or Jerusalem Wilderness, is at circa 15 Km on the East), and the subtropical humidity of the Eastern Mediterranean (the Mediterranean coast is at circa 45 Km on the West). The climate conditions are slightly variable within the area and modified locally by altitude (considering that there are circa 500 meters’ difference from the bottom of the lower valley to the top of the highest hill). January is the coldest month with average temperatures ranging from 6 to 15 °C, and July and August are the hottest months at 22 to 31 °C, on average. More than 70% of the average rainfall falls between November and March; June through September are usually rainless. Rainfall varies from season to season and from year to year, with averages from 500 to 550 millimeters annually. Precipitation is sometimes concentrated in violent storms, causing [erosion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erosion), and [flash floods](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_floods) in the bottom of the valleys. In winter, precipitation often takes the form of [snow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snow) at the higher elevations.

***Geology – Soil***

The topography of the property is characterized by a system of valleys and hilltops, typical of the Palestinian Central Highlands. They consist of Cenomanian, Turonian, Eocene and Senonian limestones. The exposures in the area of Battir include marine sediments, mainly dolomite and limestone, as well as chalk, clay, marl, phosphorite, chert, and porcellanite. The beds are folded into an *anticlinarium*.

A general geologic map for Israel at a scale of 1:250,000 include also the occupied Palestinian territory. Several geological maps at different scales are available (see Geological Map).

In the Central Highlands region, the main soil type is Terra Rossa. This is the most typical soil in the Battir area and is the product of the Mediterranean climate and soil formation on hard limestone. Its soil reaction is generally neutral to moderately alkaline; and it has a high content of soluble salts. Both the high iron content and the low organic matter are responsible for the red colour. They are mainly of loamy texture.

In addition to the Terra Rossa soils, mountain marl soils and alluvial soils are also present in the area. Mountain marl soils are formed from the chalky marls of Senonian and Eocene age; they are covered with Light Rendzina soils. These soils are well distinguished from the Terra Rossa as far as the vegetative cover is concerned. They are not very fertile because of their poor water holding capacity and the high lime content.

In the Battir area, the main soil constraint is erosion in uncultivated hills. Terracing the moderately steep hills with considerable amount of soil is the best possible solution to this problem. Yet, dumping sites causing soil pollution are another constraint.

A soil map at a scale of 1:250,000 for Israel is published by Dan et al. in 1992. The West Bank is included in this map.

***Surface waters***

The main drainage channel is Wadi Battir, which bounds the property to the North. Wadi Battir is a tributary of Sorek River, which empties in the Mediterranean Sea, circa 13 Km south of Jaffa. Wadi Battir flows from the East to the West for about 3.7 Km long. Secondary valleys, emptying their watercourses in the Wadi Battir, are Wadi Ein Jam’a (about 1.3 Km long) and Wadi Abu Ni'ma, which is called Wadi Halas and then Wadi Mahrour on the West end (totaling about 4.2 Km long). Both tributaries have second level hierarchical order (see Map of Hydrographic System).

The area is also characterized by the presence of thirteen water springs (although only seven are still active), from which seasonal watercourses originate and allow the cultivation of the land, being at the root of the inhabitation of the area. The regimentation of waters is at the basis of the agricultural practice and one of the main features of the Battir cultural landscape.

***Natural vegetation***

The natural vegetation of the area is made of Mediterranean *maquis*. Forests (xeric aspect) dominated by the sclerophyllous evergreen [*Quercus calliprinos*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=QUECAL) and the deciduous [*Pistacia palaestina*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=PISPAL) grew on hard limestone with Terra Rossa soil, together with *Ceratonia siliqua* and Cercis *siliquastrum*. Mesophytic components rarely occur in the maquis of the Central Highlands. In the driest maquis stands, [*Rhamnus lycioides*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=RHALYC) *subsp. graecus* is the only arboreal companion of [*Quercus calliprinos*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=QUECAL). Typical vines in these maquis are [*Rubia tenuifolia*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=RUBTEN)*,* [*Lonicera etrusca*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=LONETR)*,* [*Asparagus aphyllus*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=ASPAPH)*,* and [*Ephedra foeminea*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=EPHFOE). This is in fact a steppe-forest, which developed on hard, fissured limestone. The common dwarf shrub companions are [*Artemisia sieberi*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=ARTSIE)*,* [*Astragalus bethlehemiticus*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=ASTBET)*,* and [*Argyrolobium crotalarioides*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=ARGCRO)*.*

Marly-chalk is a common rock type within the area, with high moisture retention; it is covered with Light Rendzina soil. The aeration of the rhizosphere of trees and shrubs, whose roots penetrate into the soft rock, is poor; thus, only specially adapted plants developed in these conditions. Much of the nitrogen in this soil consists of ammonium ions, whereas in Terra Rossa it is in the nitrate state. The vegetal cover of the Light Rendzinas on marly-chalk is poor in comparison to Terra Rossa's. On this substratum, only a few annual companions are found in the maquis stands. In sites characterized by rock with high clay content and low aeration, the tree [*Arbutus andrachne*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=ARBAND) dominates. Symbiosis between the tree's roots and fungi (mycorrhiza) seems to be key to the tree's success. The only arboreal companion here of [*Arbutus andrachne*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=ARBAND) is [*Pinus halepensis*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=PINHAL); its mycorrhizal fungus (*Suillus granulatus*) is the most common edible winter mushroom species. On sites with low clay content, [*Pinus halepensis*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=PINHAL) grows on marly-chalk without [*Arbutus andrachne*](http://flora.huji.ac.il/browse.asp?action=specie&specie=ARBAND).A detailed list of plant species is attached as an annex).

***Current vegetation coverage***

Cultivated plants have replaced the spontaneous trees in most of this area. A few thousand years ago, local population of the Central Highlands started clearing natural vegetation in order to create agricultural land. Trees such as olives (*Olea europaea*) and almonds (*Amygdalus communis*) were domesticated from the spontaneous flora of the area. The timber taken from the forests and maquis was used for the construction of houses, for agricultural tools, and for fire fuel. During the past few millennia, shepherds burned large woodland areas to open paths for domestic animals, and the pasture quality was improved as trees and shrubs were replaced by more palatable herbaceous plants. Fruit trees such as figs (*Ficus carica*), vines (*Vitis vinifera*), apricots (*Prunus armeniaca*) and peaches (*Prunus persica*) are also largely cultivated, jointly with vegetables and other types of crops like wheat and barley.

After cultivated soil is abandoned, it becomes populated for dozens of years by colorful herbaceous plants and later by low lignified plants. This vegetation formation of Mediterranean semi-shrubs has been known locally since early times as "batha". At present, after thousands of years of deforestation and agricultural and urban development, large parts of these areas resemble mosaics of seral communities. They feature semi-shrub communities dominated by *Sarcopoterium spinosum, Coridothymus capitatus,* and *Cistus species*. Formations of taller shrubs (garigue) such as *Calicotome villosa* and *Salvia fruticosa* replaced the *Sarcopoterium*-dominated bathas (see Map of Prevalent Land Cover / Land Use).

It is reported the colonization of non-indigenous species, such as *Pinus nigra* in the valleys of Battir, notably in the WH property and its Buffer zone. The colonization of pine trees derives from the afforestation of the zones bordering the Green Line, implemented by Israel after 1948. The colonization of *Pinus nigra* represents a criticality, since this species usually prevails over the indigenous oaks, and the other local vegetation.

***Fauna***

Fossils of prehistoric fauna were found in the [Levant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levant) region, including [elephants](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephant), [rhinoceros](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhinoceros), [giraffes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giraffe) and [wild Asian water buffalo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_Asian_Water_Buffalo). Today, the largest land animals found in the property are mountain gazelles, wild boars, foxes, jungle cats, Nubian ibex, rocky hyrax and the rarely seen leopards, hyenas, jackals and wolves. These wild animals usually come from the surrounding areas to drink water from the existing springs. Avifauna is particularly rich in the area: the bulbul and songbirds such as sylvia warblers and goldcrests nest here year-round. A number of raptor species - among them spotted eagles, falcons, hawks, sparrow hawks, kestrels and long-legged buzzards - make their home in the Central Highlands. Only few amphibian species exist in the highlands today. They breed in rain pools and small ponds. Reptiles are better represented: they comprise many native species, among which the poisonous Palestine viper. In totality, land based fauna counts with 730 species including mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds. Furthermore, Palestine is as a major pathway for migratory birds.

**2.2.2 Cultural Components**

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir refers to the second category of cultural landscapes, notably the organically evolved landscape, falling under the two sub-categories:

- Relic (or fossil) landscape,

- Continuing landscape.

The property is characterized by a variety of elements that refer to it historically, culturally, socially and economically. In its territorial framework, the traditional cultivation of olive trees represents an essential component of the historical development of the local natural and cultural landscape systems, and incorporates multiple functions and meanings, at the environmental and agricultural as well as at the socio-cultural and symbolic levels. The practice of olive culture is identified by the local populations with the roots of the history and identity of the place and of its community. Olive was domesticated during the Chalcolithic period, while the history of olive oil production can be tracked back to more than 5,000 years, based on the results of archaeological excavations in the Middle East. The significance of olive cultivation transcends therefore the mere economic and agricultural value, as attested by the fact that for many contemporary traditional olive farmers of the village, sentimental and cultural reasons are important drivers, and their ability to take care and work in their olive groves is regarded as an important aspect of quality of life, even when income is secured by other activities.

The historical significance of this cultural landscape is strictly integrated into the system of dry-stone terrace walls that characterize the landscape arrangement of the roughed topography of the area.

***Topography***

The topography and geomorphology of the territory represent important landscape characterizing elements, which had a fundamental influence on the processes of adaptation and transformation of the territories into specific typologies of historical landscapes, at the visual, ecologic and agricultural levels. The territory of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir, located along the deep, long Valley connecting Beit Jala to Jerusalem (Wadi Mahrour), is characterized by the roughed topography of the valley, and by the steep gradient of most of its slopes: moving from the southern part to the northern part of the village, the elevation drops sharply from about 900 m to about 500 m above sea level. The jagged profile and the peculiar configuration of the territory present peculiar geological formations and are of impressive scenic value. Hilltops often host plateaus that offer vast panoramic views on the village and on the valley.

***Agricultural land use***

Agricultural activities constitute a core element of the local territorial system; they are deeply rooted into the history of the places and organically integrated in their deep territorial framework.

The agricultural system within the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem - Battir is characterized by rich agro-biodiversity and by the abundant cultivation of irrigated crops, such as green vegetables and aromatic plants, and pomes trees (apricot, fig, walnut, apple, plum), that used to be marketed in the neighbouring urban centres, such as Jerusalem and Bethlehem, where they were renowned for their excellence. Land planted with irrigated green vegetables are mainly located in the lands laying along the valley and around the springs, where water is abundant and the soil more fertile. Most of the irrigated crops are planted on irrigated agricultural terraces located on the hills’ slopes below springs, along or across the profile of the territory - as the lands below the spring of *‘Ein el Balad*, on the northern border of the historical centre of the village, and the ones adjacent to *‘Ein Jama’* spring, to the west. The terraces, according to their various typologies, depending on the topography and hydrography, are divided in parcels that are called *mishkaba* and planted with seasonal fresh vegetables, fruit trees and crops.

Within the property, the productive function of the agrarian landscape played different roles in different historical periods. Representing an integrated element of a complex agricultural system characterized by rich agro-diversity and by the significant production of irrigated crops, olive trees cultivation fluctuated from primary to subsidiary functions specially in rapport of the broader socio-economic and territorial context, itself characterized by a high level of dynamism due to the proximity of two cosmopolitan urban centres such as Jerusalem and Bethlehem, that represented an excellent market for the green vegetables and the fruit produced in the village. The construction of the Jerusalem-Jaffa railroad and of the Battir train station at the end of 19th century consistently contributed to the expansion and consolidation of a durable and wealthy small scale market based on the specialized production of irrigated vegetables, and in particular of a specific variety of eggplant known as *Betanjan Battiri*. In this frame, olive trees cultivation represented more and more a secondary, although essential, agricultural activity, associated as complementary in respect of other productive sectors – old (irrigated vegetables) and new (railroad services) – an inserted in a socio-economic dynamic of increasing complexity. After 1948, as a consequence of the restriction of movement and of the expropriation of the railroad that followed the Israeli occupation, olive cultivation, needing low input labour and resources, progressively increased again its relevance in the agricultural production, also for its strategic use for avoiding land confiscation.

The territory presents significant portions of uncultivated land and open spaces that are characterized by the presence of rich biodiversity in their wild flora and fauna and by a high scenic value.

In the area under consideration, open spaces and forests represent over the 40% of the total area and are characterized by their great visual beauty. Located mostly in the northern and north-eastern parts of the territory, they are characterized by the presence of a very high degree of biodiversity: the jagged configuration of the *wadi* and its surroundings, the presence of forests, open land and water resources has encouraged the abundant wild fauna to live in the area and has provided better conditions for flora to grow and spread. Moreover, the restricted uses of land and movement of people on the borders between the West Bank and Israel has provided safe habitat for wild animals and native species. This rich biodiversity is currently under the disastrous threat represented by the new plans for the construction of the Segregation Wall, unilaterally decided by the Israeli Government.

*Traditional olive tree cultivation*

The type of traditional olive trees cultivation of Battir can be defined as extensive, with low-density plantations of old and very old trees, sometimes planted in an irregular pattern, with low yield levels, low labour and material inputs, and manual harvest. Some cultural operations such as tillage and pruning are not performed on a regular basis. Most of the olive trees plantations are rain fed and promiscuous, often associated to other crops such as fruit trees and field crops, and occupy extensive hilly and mountainous areas that are susceptible to soil erosion due to water runoff. The agricultural activities related to olive cultivation are usually managed on a familiar base, and the olives and oil product used prevalently for self-consumption.

The present extension of land cultivated with olive trees in the area under consideration is of circa 200 hectares, which represents the 28% of the total territory and the 54% of the cultivated land. Also in Battir the prevailing variety of olive tree planted for productive purposes is the *Nabali*, which is called by the local olive farmers *Baladi*. A consistent part of the olive trees of the area are old and very old, with the presence of multi-centenary monumental olive groves distributed in different parts of the territory, often in proximity of the historical built up area. The multi-centenary trees are called as well *sajar romani* and attest of the deep roots of olive cultivation in the historical framework of the territory and in the processes of its definition. A well-preserved and aesthetically relevant multi-centenary olive grove is situated on the hill top and above terraced land in the proximity of the remains of *Khirbet el-Yahoud*.

Although in Battir the olive landscape is identified by local population as a defining element of the natural and historical arrangement of the territory, the specific and characterizing rural and cultural identity of the place is rather locally perceived and represented as defined by the presence of springs and abundant water resources, and by the cultivation of high quality fresh vegetables. This fact is also revealed by the recurrence of topics, themes and element related to water and to the cultivation of irrigated vegetables in the traditional oral narratives, such as songs and folkloric tales about the local history.

The presence of monumental olive trees in the proximity of important archaeological sites attests of the antiquity of this type of plantation. The olive landscape of Battir is inserted in a context of high agro-diversity, where the cultivation of irrigated crops, in particular fresh vegetables, represents the characterizing element of the local agrarian system. Despite detaining an important role in the agricultural system and economy of the place, the production of olive oil is mostly finalized to self-consumption and small-scale marketing.

***Hydrography and traditional water systems***

Comparing to the average water availability in the West Bank, the territory of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir is characterized by the abundance of surface and ground water, its seven springs representing a defining element of the history, economy and identity of the place. The diversity in the amount of water resources is reflected in the agrarian system of Battir, well known for the production of irrigated crops, such as fresh vegetables and pomes fruit trees.

In this area, in terms of historical and cultural landscape formation and development, water resources and water system can be seen as a central environmental factor in the historical processes of formation, shaping and development of the local cultural landscape. A part of the exceptional abundance, the water of Battir, and in particular the water of ‘Ein Jama’, is considered of being a superior quality and of having digestive and depurative properties. Until few decades ago, the water from ‘Ein Jama’ was even sold on a small-scale market with Jordanian buyers. At the socio-anthropological level, strategies of communal use and sharing of water resources played a great role in the process of shaping the socio-cultural identity of the local community, which is historically characterized by high level of cohesion and cooperation. Collective action required investment not only in the construction and maintenance of hydraulic infrastructure, but also in collective decision-making processes and enforcement mechanisms. The description of the traditional system of water resources sharing is still in use. The traditional spring ﬂow allocation system is organized around the main unit of the local social system, the *hammulah* or extended family. An elder of the *hammulah* is in charge of distribution among the families and among the family members within each family. With a wooden stick of around 70 cm of length that is regularly notched with as many notches as there were water recipients, he would measure the decreasing water level in the pool and order the opening and closing of the pool gates. The space between one notch and the next one corresponded to a unity of measure locally called *ma’dud.*

***Rural dry-stone vernacular architecture***

Dry stone rural architectural heritage, in its different functional and structural typologies and sub-typologies (walls, terraces, agricultural constructions), represents one of the main structural and functional components of Palestinian historical rural landscapes. Directly connected to the geomorphology of the territory, vested of important environmental functions - such as soil erosion prevention, maintenance of soil moisture, reduction of rain waters run off, consolidation of slopes - it detains an important role in Palestinian material culture and in the definition of the territorial structure of the local historical agrarian landscapes (see Map of the Dry-stone Masonry System).

Being deeply rooted into popular environmental and traditional knowledge, dry-stone vernacular architecture represents an element of continuity and permanence of the culture and of the identity of many local rural landscapes: it testifies of the ancestral human activity that progressively modeled - and still models – what can be considered as a specific unit and typology of landscape: the dry-stone landscape, vested everywhere with aesthetic, historic, symbolic and ecological values which go far beyond their original practical function.

Visible sign of the dynamic relation between humans and landscape, deeply integrated into the landscape visual a morphological trim, living marker of the history and development of the traditional constructive techniques of the territory, dry-stone architectural heritage represents one the most evident element of the process of landscape humanization, embodying the materialization of a multi-centenary complex of abilities, knowledge and modes of production. The construction and maintenance of dry-stone landscapes require a great amount of social voluntary cooperative and collective work, called *al ‘aona* in the Levant, which is an essential dynamic component of the local agrarian systems and landscapes and of the socio-cultural processes, detaining a core role in the processes of socialization and of transmission of knowledge and abilities.

The dry-stone architectural heritage represents an extensive component of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir, and is made up of different constructive typologies and sub-typologies of manufactures, detaining different functions that imply different types of intervention and modification of the territory and different degrees of constructive complexity. A first main division of functional and structural typologies consist of the distinction between the broad category of dry-stone walls and terraces, itself internally divided into many sub-typologies, and the one of dry stone agricultural constructions, known as watchtowers, or agricultural palaces, and spread in the agricultural fields in association with specific plantations and seasonal agricultural activities. These rural buildings, constitute important infrastructures of the local agrarian systems, and - used mainly for seasonal or temporary residence during summer agricultural activities – represented a space of intense interaction not only in terms of labour socialization, but also for the rest of social and cultural activities that were taking place during the evening and night hours, such as singing of songs and storytelling.

*Terraces*

The different typologies that make up the diversified category of dry-stone walls and terraces can be defined following different criteria, varying from their morphological features and their type of integration in the territory, to their functional and constructive characteristics. Strictly associated with the adaptation, systemization and maintenance of the territory for agricultural functions, they vary from very simple manufactures that imply a minimum degree of modification of the territory (such as the stone piles locally called *rujum,* created from the clearing of agricultural land from rocks and stones), to dry-stone division walls (locally called *senasel* and built in flat areas and smooth slopes to divide plots, mark land ownership and prevent animal to enter plantations) and pocket terraces (circular or semi-circular short walls built around single trees, often associated with olive trees cultivation, called *midwath*), upto complex systems of dry and/or irrigated terraces and retaining dry-stone walls (the terrace is called locally *habale*) that are deeply integrated into the local geomorphology and detain essential multiple primary and secondary functions (consolidation of slopes, prevention of soil erosion, optimization of rain water drainage, adaptation of slopes for agricultural uses, reduction of rain water runoff) in the maintenance of the territorial and eco-systemic integrity of the landscape.

In the area of Battir, due to the roughed and steeped geomorphology prevailing in the territory, most of the agricultural land is densely terraced, the most pervasive typology of dry stone manufacture being therefore represented by contour retaining terraces, often in association with olive trees cultivation, and cross channel terraces (*Khalle*), built at the intersection of hill slopes and cultivated with different types of plantation, including irrigated terraces. In the study area of the Battir Cultural Landscape Plan, the survey carried out during the UNESCO-led project mapped 554,000 meters of dry-stone walls, totaling roughly 200 million stones. Retaining walls and contour terraces are indeed a defining component of this territorial system, detaining important structural functions in the processes of adaptation and maintenance of the local natural and cultural landscape. They are made up of two main components: the soil bed that constitute the terrace (*habale*), and the dry stone retaining walls (*senasel*) at the bottom and at the top border of the terrace. In the local agrarian systemization of Battir many of the dry-stone agricultural terraces are planted with historical consociations of cultivations that include olive trees, vineyards and fruit trees. The dry field agricultural terraced planted with these cultivations are called *karm*, and are divided in three different parts that are reserved each to a different plant: the front part, called *el* *rahma*, is planted with vines; the central plot is called *ras el mahna* and is planted with fig trees; the third part, adjacent to the upper dry stone retaining wall, *el* *zarb*, is planted with olive trees. A peculiar terrace typology characteristic of this dry stone and agrarian landscape is constituted by contour and cross channel irrigated terraces, located in the lands below spring sources and cultivated with fresh vegetable and fruit orchards, and connected to the spring pools by a complex system of hydraulic channels. Enclosure walls and terraces recur on plateaus, often in association with vineyards and fruit orchards, serving also as windbreaks to protect the plantations. Pocket terraces around single trees and stone piles are also encountered in the agricultural lands, especially in association with olive cultivation.

*Watchtowers (Agricultural palaces)*

Another significant component of the dry-stone heritage of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir is represented by vernacular agricultural constructions known as watchtowers, or agricultural palaces, and locally called *qasr*, *menthar, arish* or less frequently *skifa.* Associated to specific types of cultivation - such as field crops, pomes trees and vineyards - and agricultural seasonal activities, they are spread in the agricultural lands, particularly in the Wadi Mahrour near Beit Jala within in the property, far from the residential areas and originally designated to these types of plantations. They are usually located in the higher parts of the agricultural fields, in order to offer a vast view on the territory and on the plantations to consent their survey (for this reason are also called agricultural watchtowers), and absolved different functions depending on the season and on the type of cultivation and of agricultural activity they were serving. Their use was very intense during the summer season, and especially during the harvest of the crops, when they offered shelter to the farmers and their families that used to move temporarily in the fields. During other times of the year they were used as a storage room for agricultural tools and as a shelter for sheep and goats.

Within the area, there were two different types of agricultural palaces in use, characterized by different constructive characteristics and specific functions. The one locally called *skifa* or *areej* was of small proportions, having a square or sometimes circular shape and a roof made of a wood called *tarqwis* and taken by the cut branches of cypresses, and of *shrubs*, called *natish*. The roof was seasonally substituted and repaired with new branches, while the old ones were carried to the village and used as wood in the house during the winter. The internal part of stonewalls, as well as floor, were plastered with a mix of mortar and straw. Outside of the *skifa* there was often a flat rock that was used to dry fruits, called *masatyia* or *Nasarat* ‘*eineb*. These constructions were associated to the cultivation of field crops and vineyards, and were often built in the type of agricultural terrace called *karm*, described above, and absolving to the same functions mentioned above (seasonal residence, animal shelter, storage). On the other hand, the other type of agricultural palace locally called *menthar* or *qasr* - typical of the historical agricultural landscape of the area of Wadi Mahrour and Beit Jala – was characterized by a much more complex and permanent architectural structure, having two floors, stairs and windows and a stone vault roof. It is important to notice that in the case of the *areej* is not correct to talk of dry stone architecture, since the constructive materials are not limited to stones, but include also the use of mortar for the consolidation of the structure, similarly than for the construction of the traditional village houses. The stones for the construction of this type of *menthar* were cut and refined by specialized artisans, while the construction was conducted under the supervision of at least one professional builder. The average height of these buildings varies from 5 to 7 m. The lower floor was used as animal shelter and storage room, while the upper room was used for residential purposes. This type of construction was often used as a permanent residence for farm labourer employed by wealthy landlords to survey, supervise and cultivate their lands throughout the year. Just outside the building it is often present a flat rock, called *el rukbah* or *derdas,* that was used for crashing small amounts of olives or other fruits.

*Limekilns*

Another interesting manufacture that used to be present in the landscape and is not included in the category of the dry stone is represented by the traditional limekilns, called *qabbara* or*lattoun,* that until few decades ago the local population used to produce lime mortar, locally called *khallale*, from local lithic and soil materials. The traditional limekilns were not permanent, but constructed in areas were the material needed to produce the lime mortar was abundant, and then they were dismissed when that material was worn out, to be rebuilt in other areas. Traditional limekilns were constituted of wide holes dug in the soil, on hills slopes usually, and covered by a dry-stone dome like dry stone roof having a small opening on the top. The mortar was produced by lighting a big fire, bringing and keeping it to a high temperature for at least 5 or 6 days, until the lime mortar was ready. The material produced was used locally by the villagers to build and maintain the houses of the village. In the Battir village, around the end of 19th century a permanent limekiln was built at a short distance of the village core. This limekiln, built on the western slope of Wadi Abu Ni’ma, is of big dimensions and has a square shape. It is constructed with bricks, stones and mortar, has a lower furnace and a higher room surmounted by a vault roof with a central hole. It rested in use and productive until the end of the 1940s, when it was dismissed as a consequence of the Israeli-Arab war.

***Historical road network and railway***

The historical road network is an essential component of the deep structure of the property and is strictly connected with the historical development of the cultural landscape, especially in relation to its economic relations with the broader regional context in its agricultural and productive characterization.

Battir’s historical road network runs along the profile of the eastern slopes of a long system of valleys, connecting the village with Bethlehem through Beit Jala, and to the southwest to Jerusalem.

The road to Jerusalem was following the *wadi*, passing through *‘Ein el-Hanie* and ‘*Ollek* villages, then reaching a place called *El-Malha*. From there the pathway was passing through *Katamon* reaching finally the walled town of Jerusalem through *Bab el-Amoud* or *Bab el-Khalil*.Since ancient times the marketing of fresh vegetables represented a fundamental element of the local economy, contributing to the stabilization of the characteristic agricultural system of Battir. The historical road to Beit Jala, still in use, runs along the middle slopes of Wadi Mahrour, and is characterized by a surrounding panorama of impressive beauty. In modern history of the village, the completion of the construction, in 1882, of the Jerusalem–Jaffa railway contributed to the further expansion of the commercial and socio-economical network with the surrounding cities, providing both access to the city's opportunities as well as to direct income from passengers who would disembark when the locomotives stopped to take on water, and from job opportunities in the railroad services and maintenance. The railway station, called *el* *Mahatta* or *el Bakhri* (the ship) and that included a water and coil filling station, represented a lively social and economic space: when the trains stopped for supplies, the passengers used to disembark to buy fresh vegetable and other agricultural products on the square in front of the station, where the farmers used to put up a temporary market. The construction of the railroad had the negative consequence of reducing drastically the forested area and the tree population of the area, because of the cutting of many trees, both for clearing and preparing the path, both for constructing the binary. Following the accounts of some of the key informants, also many big olive trees were cut during this period.

***Archaeological heritage***

Presence of archaeological ruins and remains of different periods (Canaanite, Roman, Byzantian, Mamluk, Ottoman) attests of a long history and of the presence of different layers of civilisation and of different phases of domestication of the local landscape, the relevance and state of conservation of the archaeological heritage of the property is high. It includes significant sites (such as the ruins of a fortress called Khirbet el-Yahoud) and infrastructures (such as the spring pools and the hydraulic infrastructures and system started during the Roman period and further developed through the Islamic one, including spring pools and canals) that are of great historical value and represent essential components of the village living landscape. The landscape is also characterized by the presence of scattered rock-hewn tombs (generally dating back to Roma and Byzantine periods), which nowadays constitutes sometimes the water reservoirs for irrigation purposes.

***Typical forms of settlement***

*Architectural features*

In addition to the rural dry-stone vernacular architecture, as described above, architectural features are present in the urban area only. They consist in a variety of typologies resulting from the combination of the three main types, as represented in the Map of the Human Settlement System:

A: Traditional masonry structure unit, vault ceiling, and bearing stonewalls.

B: Mixed structure unit, reinforced concrete slab, and bearing stonewalls.

C: Reinforced concrete structure unit, reinforced concrete slab, and reinforced concrete columns.

*Forms of settlements*

The historic centre of Battir village, and in particular the core of the residential neighbourhoods, was almost completely destroyed in the course of the early 1980s. The explanations and information given from diverse informants about the reasons and dynamics of the demolition differ amongst them: initially, we were told that the village was demolished by the Israeli forces as a collective punishment. Other informants specified that the action of the Israeli was not direct, because the demolition followed an official decision taken by local corrupted authorities entertaining relationships with Israeli businessmen interested in the reconstruction. Following the accounts of informants, the early phases of the construction of the village started around four centuries ago with the restoration and re-adaptation into houses of stables and storerooms attributed to the Roman period and called *boubaryiat*. One of the key elements of the village core was the spring pool of ‘Ein el Balad, that was serving the villagers for their domestic water needs. The spring and the space around it represented the centre of intense social interactions and encounters. Close by the spring there was the old Omari Mosque, today not visible anymore, and beside the spring pool there is a sort of bathing room that was used by the villagers for ablution before prayers. Few big trees, and in particular an impressive mulberry tree, where hosting under their shade the men who gathered to talk and play traditional games in the evening hours, or after prayer. Despite destroyed, the historical village core is considered and represented as an important element of the landscape, and it is deeply rooted in the collective representations of the local identity, especially in rapport of its historical roots and development. In the local narrations and oral history, it emerges frequently as a sort of “invisible architecture” that is the map and the signpost of a time of peace and harmony. The demolished part of the village is still known as *El Haraji*, and it was constituted by a dense cluster of small traditional houses – called *skifa*, like the local typology of agricultural palace also known as *arish. –* and of bigger and more complex buildings.Houses were built with local materials: stones and rocks, and lime mortar produced locally. In the centre of the *Haraji* there was a neighbourhood known as *Hosh el Dabub* because of its central location: *dabub* in fact is a term used to identify the small piece of dough that is left after you finish cooking bread in the traditional oven, the *taboun* and that is placed to cook right at the centre of the oven, in the middle of the other bread cooking. Another neighbourhood was called Seven Widows because there was a concentration of widows amongst the inhabitants. In the *Haraji* there were also few buildings, with a court in front, that were called *saha* and that belonged each to a different *hamula*. The *saha* represented essential male social and cultural spaces, where men used to gather to perform different recreational collective activities, such as storytelling (old story are called *hazaziz*), riddles, singing and playing. Amongst the different *saha* of the village, there was always a more important and prestigious one, that was belonging to the most influential *hammula* of the time, and that was attended by almost all the males of the village, not only form the members of the extended family. The main *saha* was serving not only recreational functions, but also administrative and communal, as popular tribunal, space of conflict negotiation and resolution etc. The location of the main *saha* was therefore moving and migrating to different places depending on the historical and sociological frame, following the movement of the political and economic power. The expansion of the village started to accelerate around the early 1920s, with the British Mandate.

In Battir the development of the new built up area was and is heavily influenced by the geopolitical zoning of the territory. Concentrated along the actual main road connecting the village to Beit Jala through El-Khader, it is also characterized by a negative visual impact on the landscape, due to the of the absence of an organic master plan (see Map of the Human Settlement System).

**Aesthetic qualities**

An important element of excellence of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir is represented by its high scenic and aesthetic value, which has a strong impact on the visual characterization of the local landscape. Due to the high degree of agro-biodiversity and to the traditional agricultural practices, characterized by its division into terraced patches and by promiscuous cultivations, the visual characterization of the landscape presents the features of a mosaic, within which olive landscape represents an element of continuity in the frame of diversity. The mosaic typology of traditional rural landscape is characterized by the presence in the same field of different types of cultivations, such as olives, vineyards, orchards, cereals, vegetables, meadows and shrubs, arranged in patches and divided by different types of fences, such as dry stone walls or shrubs hedges. Consequently, the landscape takes on the appearance of a “mosaic” of crops, plantations and open spaces. The aesthetic value of the historical landscape is enhanced by the roughed and articulated topography of the territory, and by its arrangement in the complex system of different typologies of dry-stone terraces (see Map of Natural and Cultural Landmarks).

The high scenic value of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir should not be underestimated, since the very aspect of experiencing the landscape and its visual attraction can be in many ways considered as one of the basic and essential features of a landscape. Moreover, the aesthetic experience of landscape is the quality that should be of utmost significance for landscape visitors, and can be therefore associated with considerations about the possibilities for tourist and recreational activities in the landscape. In this perspective, this cultural landscape can be seen as an important resource associated with economic activities other than agricultural. The aesthetic experiencing of landscape is by all means a complex phenomenon, depending not only on the cultural landscape features, although physical and visual characteristics of a scene are an external basis on which each visitor builds his own specific aesthetic experience. The latter, of course, means that it is not possible to achieve a full agreement on which physical features of landscape are the basis of aesthetic experience, which means that there are no objective criteria for this particular landscape feature. By means of a detailed classification and a gestalt understanding of physical landscape characteristics it is, however, still possible to discover more basic generators of aesthetic experience of a more general validity and significance for the majority of observers.

**2.3 The Buffer zone**

The Buffer zone, identified by the preparers of the nomination dossier around the core area of the terraced landscape, aims at ensuring the protection of the property and its values. It encompasses the historic core of the village, its urban expansion, as well as the barren slopes of Wadi Mahrou and of Wadi Ein Jam’a.

In order to better protect the values and attributes of the WH property, a redesign of the boundaries of the Buffer zone might be considered.

**3. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**3.1 Criteria for inscription on the World Heritage list**

Two criteria were used to justify the Outstanding Universal Value of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem – Battir, in the emergency nomination file submitted in 2014. They read as follows:

*(iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history*

“The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir encompasses various cultural heritage elements, which are built of stone available in the area, such as dry-stone walls, agricultural watchtowers, traditional footpaths, and olive oil presses. These represent an outstanding example of a landscape that illustrates the development of human settlements near water sources, here the springs that dot the mountainous area, and the adaptation of the land for agriculture. The village of Battir, which developed on the outskirts of this cultural landscape, and was inhabited by farmers who worked and still work the land, attests to the sustainability of this system and to its continuation for the past 4,000 years. Battir has always been considered the vegetable garden of Jerusalem due to the abundance of springs in the area. This led to the development of a system of irrigation that permitted the development of agricultural terraces in a very steep mountainous landscape fed by a complex irrigation system that is managed by the eight main families inhabiting the village. It is simultaneously a simple and complex system, and is still in use today. The traditional system of irrigated terraces within the nominated property is an outstanding example of technological expertise, which constitutes an integral part of the cultural landscape. The methods used to construct the terraces illustrate significant stages in human history, as the ancient system of canals, still in use today, dates back to ancient times.”

*(v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change*

“The strategic location of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir and the availability of springs were two major factors that attracted people to settle in the area and adapt its steep landscape into arable land. Since the twelfth century, Battir has been one of the main producers of vegetable products for the central part of Palestine, and in particular the city of Jerusalem. The property is an outstanding example of traditional land-use, which is representative of thousands of years of culture and human interaction with the environment. This human-made landscape has become vulnerable under the impact of socio-cultural and geo-political transformations that may cause irreversible damage. The agricultural practices that were used to create this living landscape embody one of the oldest farming methods known to humankind and are an important source of livelihood for local communities.”

**3.2 Integrity and authenticity**

The property owns an ascertained “authenticity”, as the continuity in creating and maintaining this landscape, that continuously evolved since at least three millennia to present times, is an evidence that clearly emerged through the research work carried out in the framework of the UNESCO-led project. The little degree of alteration to the physical structures of the landscape (the terrace walls as well as the watchtowers) testifies of a suspension in the transformation of the elements of the land that characterize this landscape.

Other considerations shall be applied to the concept of “integrity” of this landscape, where extensive phenomena of abandon are witnessed, starting with the Nakba (the forced migration of 1948), which resulted in a large number of refugees, and still continue, due to the main reason of people’s despair, notably the Israeli occupation. The lack of a proper management of the territory, determined by the geo-political zoning resulting from the Oslo Accords, as well as by a structural unpreparedness of the Palestinian institutions (in terms of law-making, planning and distribution of financial resources) significantly affected the integrity of the territory in the past two decades. However, the recent developments in the area, started with the UNESCO-led project and continued with the establishment of the “Battir Landscape Eco-museum”, are giving encouraging signals of an inversion of the trend. The Landscape Eco-museum project invested significant resources for the clearance of various dump-yards in the valleys as well as the rehabilitation of pathways and terraces in both the stones and the plants components, according to international standards of conservation and restoration.

The statements of Integrity and Authenticity of the emergency nomination file submitted in 2014 read as follows:

*Integrity*

The unique setting of dry-stone terraces and all of the other various vernacular architecture elements, the olive trees, vines and orchards and the ancient pools and irrigation canals, attest to the effectiveness of a 4,000-year-old agricultural system that is still in use until today. Local farmers still use the same traditional agricultural practices and irrigation methods, creating a picturesque scene that still retains its integrity to a considerable extent.

The commitment of the local community towards the site and their dependence on it as major source of income, supported by the fact that the olive tree is a holy tree in Palestinian culture and traditions, are considered major factors in the protection and management of this unique landscape.

The property suffers from various threats, which have contributed to the decision to submit this nomination dossier as an emergency nomination. These factors include the construction of the illegal Israeli Wall and the settlements, which will negatively affect the integrity of this picturesque landscape. There are also geo-political factors that prevent the implementation of plans that would contribute to preserving the property, such as a sewage network and treatment plant, and a water network that would prevent the loss and contamination of the spring water. In addition, these geo-political factors prevent farmers from maintaining parts of their agricultural lands and watchtowers. These factors threaten, both directly and indirectly, the sustainability and integrity of this cultural landscape.

Tourism is foreseen as a factor that shall contribute to the sustainability of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, and enhance the economic situation of the local community.

However, in order to protect the property from future development that may result from tourism, the Battir Village Council has worked to establish a visitors’ information centre and to refurbish a traditional building to be used as a guesthouse. Also, being located close to the city of Bethlehem, which has around 5,000 hotel beds, development pressures are seen as minor issues.

*Authenticity*

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir has witnessed 4,000 years of history and has born witness to the adaptation of the hilly mountains of Palestine as arable land, and the development of human settlements near sources of water. The property is a unique cultural landscape that is composed of terraces that are supported by dry-stone walls, agricultural watch towers, olive oil presses, ancient irrigation pools to collect the water flowing from the springs, ancient irrigation canals, and the remains of human settlements.

The continuous use of the irrigation system, which is based on collecting the water of the springs in the pools and distributing it through irrigation canals to the fields near the village is another important component of this landscape that continues to be in use to this day. The distribution of the water between the eight families of Battir demonstrates the sustainability of the system, and its ability to fulfil the needs of the farmers who continue to use it.

The property, which is located 7 kilometres to the south of Jerusalem, continues to be a major source of livelihood for the people of Battir, who carry on cultivating and maintaining it using traditional methods and techniques, which have retained their authenticity to a considerable extent.

The commitment of the farmers has contributed and continues to contribute to the sustainability of this cultural landscape. In addition, olive trees and vines are represented, in narrative and metaphor, in the Quran, in the Bible, and in the teachings of Jesus. The olive is a symbol of peace and is, therefore, a particularly apposite tree. Ancient olive trees along Wadi Al-Makhrour and Battir, and the olive presses there, also reflect the continuous growing of this holy tree in the area.

**3.3 Outstanding Universal Value**

The “Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem - Battir”, within the larger Cultural Heritage feature called “Land of olives and vines”, was included in the “Inventory of cultural and natural heritage sites of potential outstanding universal value in Palestine”, issued by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in 2005 and it was formalized as Palestine’s Tentative List in 2012. The “Land of olives and vines” is defined by the historic landscape characterized by agricultural terraces (*senasel*), including archaeological features (*qusur*) and sites (*khirbet* and rock-hewn tombs) dating back to the Bronze Age, as well as human settlements continuously inhabited since early times. The “Justification for the Outstanding Universal Value”, as included in the above-mentioned *Inventory (Tentative List)*, reads as follows:

“Olive trees and vineyards are characteristic, and deeply symbolic, features in the Palestinian cultural landscape. While both of course grow elsewhere, separately and together they are highly representative of the identity and character of the Palestinian landscape throughout history and of the ways that people have worked the land. They represent good examples of adapting to nature and making productive steep and uneven terrain. They are very clear testimonies of the continuous history of human settlement in the region over the past four thousand years. Furthermore, both feature strongly, in narrative and metaphor, in the Quran, in the Bible and in the teaching of Jesus in particular. The olive is of course a symbol of peace and would, therefore, be a particularly apposite tree to include in a nomination from Palestine when that becomes possible”.

This is how Prof. Peter Fowler, World Heritage specialist from UK and author of numerous publications on cultural landscapes, described the property and its value and significance, after a field visit undertaken in February 2010:

“This is a landscape produced by centuries of hard work; it could be destroyed in days by ill-considered actions. Within it are kilometers of hand-built terrace walls, necessary to hold the shallow soils on steep, stony slopes; vegetables once grew on these terraces, now they provide the slopes for row of olives. Olives also grow in groves. This visually spectacular landscape also contains many other elements: a prehistoric hilltop, fortifications, roman graves, villages of ancient origin, fields of many different type and date, irrigation system and the features that made the landscape work for people struggling to gain a livelihood from it. Old tracks, contemporary with the fields, wind between them; among the fields and terraces are stone-houses, watchtowers, clearance cairns (*rujoum*) and steps and ramps between the terraces. Overall, these things form a cultural landscape of considerable scientific interest and beauty. Especially is this so in a Palestinian context where extents of such quality landscape have become quite rare under the pressures of modern development. A carefully selected part of this landscape, especially one characterized by the tree of peace, the olive, could almost certainly meet the criteria of a world heritage cultural landscape as envisaged in the “Inventory of cultural and natural heritage sites of potential outstanding universal value in Palestine” (PA Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and UNESCO, 2005). A well-informed and sensitive management of the area would seek to respect its values and fragility”.

Eventually, the OUV statement, as included in the emergency nomination file submitted in 2014, reads as follows:

“The village of Battir, to the south of Jerusalem, was historically considered to be the *jinan* of Jerusalem, that is the garden of Jerusalem. Battir lies almost at the centre of a system of very deep valleys that are very well supported by the yearlong availability of spring water that permits the cultivation of vegetables and fruit trees. In the areas along the slopes where water is not abundantly available, olives and vines were planted. The cultivation of these plants, on the very steep sloping sides of the valley, was only possible due to the creation of terraced fields with the use of dry-stone walls all along the valley. The terraces, together with a multitude of archaeological and architectural remains, testify to the presence of man in these green valleys that have been settled for at least 4,000 years.

The spring water is controlled by a unique system of distribution among the families of the village, using a very unique system of measurement to make sure that water benefits all the community.

In areas of the valley that are far from the village, watchtowers or “palaces” were built for protection of the terraces. The olive trees, some of which are many hundreds of years old, are a testimony to the cultivation of olives in Palestine. Grapevines were also cultivated, though to a lesser quantity.

The continuous dependence of the inhabitants of the area on agriculture as a major source of income has indeed contributed to the sustainability of this significant and harmonious landscape, which is evidence of the adaptation of the steep mountains into arable land. Also, their commitment to and hard work in maintaining the hundreds of metres of dry-stone walls has preserved a landscape that is thousands of years old as a spectacular testimony to an ancient agricultural tradition. Farmers continue to tirelessly plant their land with seasonal vegetables and aromatic herbs, to take care of the vines and fruit trees and irrigate them using the Roman pools and irrigation channels, in addition to taking care of their olive trees, the symbols of peace.

The terraces are still in use today, despite the fact that the so-called 1949 Armistice Line marking the boundary between Palestine and Israel cuts right through them, ignoring the natural contours of the valley. The emergency status of this nomination is linked to the fact that there is a plan in advanced stages to start the construction of the Israeli Wall, which would cut through this pristine valley landscape, marring this cultural landscape and cutting off farmers from fields they have cultivated for centuries. A railway link between Jerusalem and Jaffa, still in use today, winds its way along the lowest part of the valley. The people of Battir have always respected this link. There is therefore no need for the Wall to be constructed here.

Battir is rightly considered to be the green heart of Palestine, even though its links with Jerusalem are not as strong as in the past. This dossier is the first of the serial nomination of Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines, which will present the agricultural and cultural landscape of Palestine in all its variations of landscape.”

It is recommended that the State Party will draft a final version of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) for the property, as requested by the World Heritage Committee.

**4. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

**4.1 Purpose of the Conservation and Management Plan**

A good definition of the purpose of a CMP is found in Kate Clarke (English Heritage, 2005):

“A Conservation plan is simply a document which explains why a place is significant and how you will sustain that significance in any new use, alteration, repair or management. It is based on a very simple thinking process which starts with describing what is there, why it matters, what is happening to it and the principles by which you will manage it and then sets more detailed work programmes for maintenance, management, access, use or other issues. A plan helps you care for a site by making sure you understand what matters and why BEFORE you take major decisions”.

The British Columbia Heritage Branch, *Conservation planning methodology* [www.for.gov.bc.ca/heritage] defines the purpose of a CMP as follows:

“to set the guidelines for the safeguarding of a cultural heritage property and develop its conservation policies, defined as follows:

* A Conservation Plan and Management is a succinct synthesis of the significance of an historic place, its contemporary context, and policy to guide the retention of heritage values through effective interventions.
* It is based on a simple thinking process that considers what is there, why it matters, what is happening to it (or is being contemplated) and the principles by which conflicts between physical change and significance (heritage values) are mitigated.
* A Conservation Plan facilitates sustainable stewardship decisions by requiring an understanding of what matters, and why, before major decisions are made”.

**4.2 Relationship to other existing planning tools**

The proposed CMP shall interact with other existing planning tools, such as the Battir Master Plan, which has been recently elaborated by the Ministry of Local Government (Planner and Team Leader: Dr. Rassem Khamaiseh). The undersigned did not have access to this Plan, which mainly focuses on the upper part of the village, notably the sprawl area which developed along the road linking Battir with Road 60 and Bethlehem. It is advisable that the Master Plan will be made available for further analysis, so that to harmonise the two instruments.

**4.3 State of Conservation / Ongoing interventions**

Since inscription of the property in the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2014, the State Party has carried out the following actions:

1. The topographic data of the World Heritage property and its Buffer zone has been rectified, geo-referenced and updated,
2. Legal support to the Municipality of Battir concerning the court-case before the Israeli High Court of Justice has been provided,
3. An advocacy campaign combating the expansion of colonial settlements in the southern part of Jerusalem and the military occupation of the West Bank has been promoted,
4. Awareness concerning the safeguarding of the property as a World Heritage site has been raised locally and internationally,
5. The programme and the activities of the Landscape Eco-museum have been carried out and a new revitalization plan for the eco-museum is being prepared. In particular, a number of grassroots initiatives have been implemented, in line with the spirit of the Eco-museum, such as: organization of summer camps for children and youth, creation of hospitality, both accommodation and food and beverage services, tour guiding, farmers’ markets, promotion and support of short-chain handicraft,
6. A CMP has been discussed and will be finalized, in accordance with the Operational Guidelines for implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

In addition, a number of projects (donor-funded or self-funded projects) have been or are being implemented at the level of infrastructural improvement and urban regeneration. Among others, we mention the following:

* Ain Al-Balad rehabilitation (British Council)
* Bus parking (Self-funded)
* Valley-bottom road in Wadi Abu Naima (Sef-funded)
* Baab El-Skak road (Self-funded)
* Al-Jinan terraces rehabilitation (USAID)
* Landscape rehabilitation (DEVCO-NEAR).

**5. STAKEHOLDERS**

It is generally agreed that the involvement and the support of stakeholders are crucial components to creating and sustaining fruitful local coalitions and to ensuring the long-term viability of policies, plans and programmes. Consideration of stakeholders is also needed to assess and enhance political feasibility, especially when it comes to articulating and achieving the common good.

Specifically, stakeholder analyses can make important contributions to creating value through their impact on the functions or activities of strategic planning and management. Said differently, planning and management processes that employ a reasonable number of competently done stakeholder analyses are more likely to meet mandates, fulfil missions and create public value, than those that do not. Moreover, an accurate stakeholder analysis and classification can help selecting and involving the appropriate key actors in rapport of specific projects, initiatives and set of objectives.

An accurate process of identification and analysis of stakeholders and the predispositions of mechanisms for their active involvement represent, therefore, essential preliminary steps for the development of Battir WH site’s CMP, which can help in ensuring its feasibility and sustainability. Attention to stakeholders shall be maintained throughout the planning and implementation process of the WHS’s CMP, because 'success' for public initiatives depends also on satisfying key stakeholders according to their definition of what is valuable.

**5.1 Stakeholders Identification**

The identification and analysis of key stakeholders have been implemented using different sources, methods and techniques. At a first level, the working team has drawn to the direct knowledge of the territorial network of local and international stakeholders developed and consolidated during many years of action-research, participated planning and community animation in the site. From this first layer of stakeholders, through a process of nomination, we identified new typologies of stakeholders, both locally and internationally. The work done on the field was complemented by the research and study of the available documentation.

The stakeholders so far identified have been divided into four main categories:

* Public authorities
  + Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
  + Municipality of Battir – Battir Landscape Ecomuseum
  + Municipality of Beit Jala
  + Joint Service Council for Tourism Development of Bethlehem Governorate
* Grassroots organisations
  + Battir 2020
  + Women Committee / Heritage Kitchen
  + Traditional Farmers Cooperative
  + Dar el-Salaam Committee
  + Hassan Mustafa Cultural Centre
  + Battir Sports Club
  + Battir Charity
* Private sector
  + Sultan Shami Souvenirs, Sultan Shami
  + Café El Jinan, Hasan Muammar
  + Traditional farmers
  + Entrepreneurs in responsible tourism sectors of Bethlehem Governorate
  + Owners of land within the WHS
* International agencies and donors
  + UNESCO Office in Ramallah
  + Other UN agencies
  + The British Council
  + USAID
  + Italian Cooperation
  + Tuscany Region / Confservizi Cispel Toscana
  + Umbria Region / FELCOS

**5.2 Stakeholders participation**

Although the notion of stakeholder participation continues to gain acceptance, there is no standard that constitutes “best practices” in this field. Because social, economic, and political conditions vary across settings, standardized and prescriptive stakeholder participation methods are likely to be inappropriate and ineffective. Therefore, stakeholder participation should be viewed more as a general principle applied in varied settings than a specific technique for generalised application.

This is particularly true in the context of Battir WHS property, which falls prevalently in Area C and is therefore subject to a series of serious restrictions in terms of land and heritage management and use. The exceptionality and volatility of local geopolitical conditions and the limited possibilities of direct interventions in area C have negative repercussions on stakeholders’ attitude and opportunities for involvement. This fact should be taken into account in the development of the CMP, since it demands for the development of mitigation measures.

To ensure the effective involvement of key territorial actors it is necessary to understand how specific stakeholders - either separately, in coalitions, or in co-aligned groups - might be inspired and mobilized to act in support of the successful management and valorisation of Battir WHS. This requires the design and implementation of effective and flexible approaches and procedures aiming at understanding the needs and constraints of different stakeholders’ groups and at facilitating their participation in the design and implementation of Battir WHS’s CMP. Specific attention shall be paid to development of a strategic framework for minimising the impact of Israeli occupation policies and security measures on local, national and international stakeholders’ opportunity for involvement.

Ideally, expert and public input shall be integrated throughout the CMP elaboration process, but one or the other may play a leading role at different times. Although their respective roles may vary through the planning process, useful stakeholder participation approaches will aim at engaging decision makers and stakeholders at all planning stages:

* *Sharing of vision.* Stakeholders should be fully informed and agree upon the vision and guiding principles framing public initiative in the context of WHSs.
* *Problem formulation.* Problem formulation should involve stakeholders, including the affected public, interest groups, agency officials, and scientific or technical experts.
* *Process design.* This involves establishing key parameters in the planning process, such as the appropriate scale that captures the full impact of a project and the full range of affected stakeholders. Experts can play important roles in identifying the appropriate scale of analysis by applying scientific theories to answer different types of questions.
* *Selecting options and desired outcomes.* This can be done by identifying trade-offs among alternative solutions and by referring them to the publicly held values that underlie the development of Battir WHS CMP. Trade-offs may entail conflicts between fundamental and legitimate differences in values, and may require conflict transformation activities. It is especially important to recognize, respect, and deliberate on these points early in the study process.

**6. METHODOLOGY**

The methodology adopted in Battir lies on two key principles: the on-site surveying and the community participation. The integration of the two made it a winning model.

**6.1 On-site surveying (quantitative and qualitative analysis)**

The on-site surveying is rooted in the thought and practice of the pioneering architect and planner Giancarlo De Carlo. When he was designing the Master Plan of Urbino, he said:

“It began with an interpretation of places, extending the horizon as afar as possible and, at the same time, focusing on the more specific characteristics. If one is able to read the great palimpsest of town and countryside, one discovers everything: events that occurred in the past, history, social and cultural development, the meaning and role of organizational systems and architectural forms. But to be able to read, you need to be able to look deep into the different layers, discover and critically select significant markers, make plans. [...] Our planning is tentative, in the sense that it aims not for black-and-white solutions but to compare the place of the project with concatenations of hypotheses that reveal its substance and open the way for its transformation; at the same time, they lead it into temptation and cause it to say something about its capacity to resist change, about how it can be changed so as to arrive at structures and forms appropriate to the circumstances and in keeping with expectations”.

Therefore, the landscape conservation and planning methodology proposed in this document stems from the detailed analysis of the cultural landscape’s components and the relationship between the human settlements and the environment. This analysis is based on a significant storage of data to be collected through direct survey with the site. Field surveys are key to guarantee the accuracy of the maps and the significance of constituent components.

This methodology addresses the issue of landscape planning and conservation and management of cultural heritage assets through the elaboration of a knowledge framework. The methodology values the understanding of the site as a leverage to propose suitable actions. Knowledge has to be acquired using all means; resources and researches should be collected and made across the different phases and scales of the process. A repository of data that document all kinds of maps, photos, studies, and reports is built and continuously updated. The deeper knowledge can only be acquired through direct contact with reality in and around the locality. Field survey is the tool that provides the direct contact with the site and leads to build storage of data that simplifies the development of proposals along the plan process.

This methodology was aimed to get its “legitimacy” not just on an in-depth knowledge of the context acquired via field survey, but also on the environmental structure and on a clear system of relationships. It includes a “laboratory of ideas” that is linked with the interesting experiences of people through active participation elaborating a bottom-up strategies based on shared decisions. An attentive strategy based on recording suggestions able to enrich the plan helps the team taking a step further in the exploration of a problem that today seems vital: the problem of how to re-establish harmonious relationships between human beings and architectural space.

This working methodology aims at deciphering the code of the Palestinian landscape through the definition of landscape units; the minimal homogeneous unit that is found in the landscape. This was associated with the deep understanding of geology, environmental and ecological systems as well as human activities that shaped the terrain over millennia. This systematic analysis deeply explained how systems that were traditionally developed in simple manners yet with efforts can survive for centuries just because every single component is in full harmony with its surrounding. Once again the deep knowledge about site and people guarantee the right analysis and the right action.

**6.2 Community participation**

According to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, the declaration of a site as a WHS is part of an overall strategy aimed at recognizing, protecting and valorising the site. As such, the accumulated local knowledge and sense of belonging to a certain place should help the community to live in harmony with the values associated with the site. Conservation efforts are therefore incomplete if they do not include and lead to an awareness of the conservation process and practices, as well as to interpretations that enhance public understanding of the social dynamics, history, environmental and cultural values associated with the WHS. This shared awareness represents an indispensable prerequisite for building and ensuring the active participation of local communities to the WHS conservation and management processes and for the sustainable development of WHS destinations in the future.

In the context of WHS management and sustainable tourism development, community participation is to be intended as an empowering process involving all tiers of stakeholders (i.e. local government, local residents, civil society organisations and private enterprise), and creating a virtuous circle such that problem identification and decision-making are shared, and stakeholders have a collective interest in ensuring the sustainability of the site development. Intended as a relationship established by the members of the community through their collaboration in achieving common goals and making the community a better place in which to live, community participation is a process of working together for the collective benefit. In such an arrangement, the connections and interactions between community members are important for establishing strong bonds and relationships and for creating a shared vision and a sense of belonging, trust, and credibility amongst the community.

Numerous studies attest to the important and multifunctional role played by community participation in the management of WHSs. Establishing current cooperative interactions and bonds, it can assist in clarifying the concept of heritage among community members and can help addressing conflicts between the economic and developmental interests of the community and the need to conserve the WHS destination as a precious resource. The perception of benefits in the inscription of a site as a WHS can serve to encourage residents to participate in sustainable tourism development and WHS conservation, while reinforcing their sense of belonging and inculcating a greater appreciation and understanding for the value of the local area. In addition, their participation contributes toward improving their quality of life and, at the same time, to the sustainable conservation of the heritage site itself. Therefore, their direct involvement in economic activities and the increase of their benefits from sustainable tourism initiatives best achieve the seemingly competing objectives of conservation and sustainable development.

WHS conservation and tourism development processes, though, are characterised by interdependence and tension. The inscription of a site as WH enhances its international visibility, thus serving to attract tourism development, which in turn has the potential for attracting the public and financial support for the conservation of the heritage site. Nonetheless, it is important to develop the site and its surrounding area while, at the same time, prioritising sustainable conservation programmes to maintain the integrity of the site itself. Local communities, due to their historical knowledge of how the inhabitants adapt to change and being the groups most affected by tourism, should be actively involved in WHSs management and in tourism planning processes, especially given the expectation that they will achieve a direct benefit from them. Furthermore, community participation in the planning process can help to mitigate some of the negative impacts of tourism, while maximising the positive ones.

Notwithstanding, the participation of local communities in WHS conservation and responsible tourism development is contingent upon a variety of factors that may either facilitate or hinder their involvement. First of all, local communities must be aware of the value of the WHS in which they inhabit and have the necessary knowledge and skills with which to take advantage of conservation opportunities and tourism development. Battir residents - exposed to many years of action-research and participated planning processes that led to the nomination of Battir as WHS and to the establishment of the Battir Landscape Eco-museum - have generally developed and reinforced a sharp awareness about the values of their cultural landscape and of the concrete opportunities that its maintenance and sustainable valorisation can provide at the geopolitical, socio-economic and environmental levels. That said, some incentives might be necessary to motivate, support and build the capacity of local inhabitants to continue engaging with conservation processes and sustainable tourism development, lest these opportunities are allowed to pass them by.

Residents’ community participation attitudes and preferences are contingent upon a number of influencing factors, amongst which a crucial role is played by their motivation, their opportunity and their ability to participate. Motivationcan be taken as the driving force behind a person’s decision-making process and it is crucial within any decision to participate. It concerns residents’ willingness and interest to become involved in the development/management process. In the context of WHS destinations, motivation affects residents’ perceptions, WHS inscription, and subsequent tourism development impacts. Focusing on the perceived positive impacts of tourism encourages the community to participate in tourism activities and heritage conservation programmes and to support tourism development, whereas focusing on the perceived negative effects reduces their support for tourism development and heritage conservation.

Within the context of WHS management and of tourism planning opportunity can be defined as circumstances that facilitate public involvement in the participation process. It occurs when public bodies and planners adopt a participatory approach and provide a supportive framework for community participation. Furthermore, participation in WHSs management and tourism development cannot occur without an open channel of communication between the community, decisions makers and planners. It is therefore important the early establishment of straightforward channels of communication as a first step to community participation.

Finally, the ability of a community to participate in planning processes can be seen as a complex entity that includes a combination of factors such as awareness, experience, knowledge, skills, accessibility to information, favourable policies and financial resources. Even though community members have the right to participate, and are motivated to seek out opportunity, they may lack the ability to do so. Hence the importance of planning and predisposing strategies and programmes for the reinforcement of the capacities and abilities of the residents’ community at different levels, in order to facilitate the inclusion of all the motivated community members.

If on one side community participation in WHS management and tourism development processes depends on the concerns, interests, and perceptions of residents regarding the impacts of conservation programmes and tourism development, on the other side the extent to which local political structures allow for and facilitate the participation of community members constrains the participation of local residents. Eventually, the shape that community participation takes in each site depends on the approach and level of commitment of local public bodies responsible for the conservation and sustainable development of the WHS, and on the socio-economic and cultural circumstances of each site.

Despite representing a challenging goal, requiring a strong political will and a great degree of flexibility, the active participation of the residents in the WHS’s planning and management processes are essential for the success of the WHS conservation programme and for a successful and durable implementation of the CMP, and should be encouraged and facilitated by local public bodies and stakeholders. Heritage conservation is only sustainable with the participation of the community, which can be considered as essential for reviving WHS destinations and for sustaining their development into the future.

**7. KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORK**

**7.1 Historical maps**

Historical maps are an essential knowledge tool to understand the territory’s structure and its evolution as a cultural landscape. It is recommended that a thorough research will be conducted in the framework of the preparation of the CMP to ensure an adequate archive of historical maps.

**7.2 New cartography**

A new updated cartography, stemming from aerial photography and ground surveys in the scale of 1:2000, was crafted during 2009-10, within the framework of a UNESCO-led project. The maps, later on, have been rectified, georeferenced and published.

In addition, cultural maps have been developed during a number of activities. Among the various maps, we quote:

- 2009: Battir Landscape Atelier: community and cultural mapping (children and youth; traditional farmers; inhabitants at large),

- 2010: Project *Pour un observatoire palestinien des paysages,*

- 2012 : Project *La cartographie comme moyen de l'utopie.*

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**7.4 Photographic materials**

Photography is an essential tool for documenting the transformation of the cultural landscapes. During the Battir Landscape Plan project, the working team has documented the 12 sq km of the study area, which comprises the WHS. It is paramount to continue the documentation of the territory within the WHS to support the monitoring towards conservation and management of the property.

**8. STRATEGIC PLANNING**

**8.1 The vision of the Battir Landscape Plan**

The Battir Landscape Plan shall integrate a holistic vision and an inclusive approach to WHS conservation and management and, more in general, to local development. The Plan shall combine the goal of preserving natural and cultural assets and values of the WHS and the need of promoting local territorial sustainable growth for the benefit of local communities.

Reconciling conservation and development by defining a precise normative and operational framework. Since a WHS CMP is more a process than a project, flexibility will be a requirement due to a variety of factors.

Community participation and involvement of key stakeholders represent crucial factors for a successful management of the WHS and for the sustainability of the CMP in the medium and long terms. Multiplier effects of community and stakeholders’ participation consist of stronger consensus around the CMP vision and a greater residents’ awareness of local environmental and cultural values. Therefore, the WHS CMP should be oriented towards a pluralistic and collegial management system.

**8.2 Definition of Land Units**

This CMP lays its foundation on the notion of knowledge framework. The territory of the property under consideration has been divided into Land Units, according to the methodology developed by Zonneveld in 1989 (*The land unit - A fundamental concept in landscape ecology, and its applications)*. The Land Units, along with the categories of landscape, are the palimpsest of the territory (see paragraph 9.4.2 below).

**8.3 Buffer zone**

In the case of the cultural landscape of Battir, the Buffer zone is of critical importance. In this WHS, the Buffer zone is basically occupied by the urban fabric of the village, and its sprawl. It is key to monitor the urban development and expansion in order to guarantee that the cultural assets that determined the OUV are not jeopardized by uncontrolled expansion which may result in encroachment.

**8.4 Battir Landscape Eco-museum**

Introduced by the French museologist Hugues de Varine in 1971, the word *eco-museum* refers to a set of alternative museum theories and practices developed in the last fifty years circa departing from the ideas of George Henry Riviére and the experimentations of the French movement *Nouvelle Muséologie*. Over the years the eco-museum phenomenon has grown dramatically worldwide, with no one eco-museum model but rather a peculiar vision and approach to heritage that has been adapted for use in a variety of contexts and situations.

At the core of the diverse experiences embed in the notion of eco-museum relies the determination of opening the space of heritage and museums to new socio-cultural forces and actors and to a wider range of historical and political experiences, bringing forward the need of democratizing and decentralizing cultural processes of heritage representation, valorisation and fruition. In respect of other alternative museum experiences, eco-museums are characterised by their primary focus on the local dimension and on dynamics of re-territorialisation based on bottom-up processes of rediscovery and re-evaluation of the territorial heritage characterising the unique identity of each place.

In the definition of the European Network of Eco-museums, (2004), an Eco-museum “is a dynamic way in which communities preserve, interpret and manage their heritage for a sustainable development. An Eco-museum is based on a community agreement.” Due to the programmatic priority accorded to local territories and communities, eco-museum practices and experiences cannot be reduced to a reproducible standard: each eco-museum represents a unique dynamic reality, which specific articulation depends on the nature of local resources, history and socio-cultural circumstances.

Since their establishment, community involvement has been a defining characteristic of eco-museums, and much of eco-museology, shifting the emphasis from heritage objects to the conditions under which heritage is defined, focuses on valorising the role of local communities in heritage preservation and community development. An approach also found in more recent theories of landscape, placing landscapes at the intersection of natural heritage and the communities that inhabit an area. Such kind of community involvement does not only preserve artefacts or territorial assets, but also protects and creates its own physical environment in the form of landscape.

This means that eco-museums are not institutions aimed just at preserving and valorising local heritage, but they also incorporate heritage in strategies of sustainable community development, acting as platforms for the involvement of communities in decision-making processes - and thus a wider concept of involvement is necessary. In this perspective, eco-museum practices represent a sound operative tool, intrinsically political, for local communities at large to gain control over the transformative processes involving their territory.

The ambition of eco-museum practices, tough, is not the one of realizing a closed self-referential ideal model, which could encourage the insurgence and solidification of aggressive and exclusive forms of localism. Rather, the horizon of eco-museum practices is defined by a pluralistic constellation of localities, a polycentric network of places and communities animated by cooperative and reciprocal relations within a shared system for the active safeguarding of common goods.

As instruments of innovative social technologies promoting virtuous processes of heritage conservation and valorisation, eco-museums and parental institutions provide local public bodies with sound institutional and operational instruments in support of inclusive models of territorial governance, reinforcing their capacities of preserving and developing local tangible and intangible resources, including human resources, in the framework of environmental and socioeconomic sustainability.

The Battir Landscape Eco-museum (BLE), established in November 2013, is the result of various years of action/research, territorial animation and participatory planning processes promoted by UNESCO and implemented at different levels by various local and international actors. Arising from the decentralization and bottom-up re-appropriation of means of cultural production, its establishment is the expression of a local project aiming at safeguarding the local historical and cultural identity while promoting sustainable processes of territorial development and transformation.

One of the first steps toward its realisation was the comparative action/research *Research and documentation of the tangible and intangible elements of olive cultural landscape in Palestinian highlands: the villages of Battir and ‘Asira el Shamalyia (oPt)*(Cancellotti, Cirino, Harb, 2008-2009)*.*Adopting a participatory methodology, this interdisciplinary study involved a significant number of Battir residents in systematic processes of tangible and intangible heritage identification, mapping and interpretation.

The alliance and combination of expert and local perspectives and knowledge resulted in an enriched and enlarged vision and representation of Battir’s natural and cultural landscape, and produced abundant and relevant information and documentation. Moreover, through various initiatives of territorial and community animation, it contributed to widen and reinforce the interest of local residents toward their natural and cultural heritage and its management and valorisation.

The main findings of the above-mentioned action/research were eventually publicly presented and discussed during the participatory workshop*Battir Landscape Atelier,* an initiative that, held in Battir in November 2009, involved local residents in the analysis and re-interpretation of their natural and cultural landscape. The activities undertaken, coordinated by a pool of experts, maximised the valorisation of local human resources while involving stakeholders at all levels – local, regional, national and international – in the de elopement and implementation of a program rich of different activities: public forums, participatory mapping workshops, site surveys, presentations in the schools, focus groups with farmers, women, youth etc.

This experience, which had great resonance in the village and contributed to its visibility in the region, led to the emergence of the conceptual core of the Battir Landscape Eco-museum project, a bottom-up initiative for the participatory conservation and valorisation of local natural and cultural heritage. In the following two years, also thank to the support assured by the Landscape Office, established in Battir by UNESCO in 2009, and to the scientific and technical assistance of experts in different disciplines, the initial BLE project concept was further discussed and developed through the implementation of numerous initiatives of territorial animation, cultural exchange, capacity building and training, participatory landscape research and mapping, cartographic documentation.

The main outcomes expected by the implementation of the BLE project were designed departing from the specific context of Battir and were eventually concertedly identified in the followings main points:

* Creating a territorial and landscape presidium against external (i.e. Israeli occupation) and internal threats (de-territorialisation), and in support of good practices of natural and cultural heritage management;
* Setting up an operative platform for the promotion and facilitation of community participation and bottom-up re-territorialisation processes, including resources and initiatives for building capacity at different levels;
* Encouraging and supporting the development of sustainable rural tourism through the realisation of quality services, infrastructures and opportunities of cultural enjoyment;
* Acting as a dynamic mnemonic device that could encourage the re-emergence of a sense of identity – individual and collective - arousing from the lived experience of a place, in its many dimensions (social, spatial, ecological, symbolic…).

The final step toward the BLE project implementation consisted in the elaboration and finalisation of the project proposal and in the research of the funding sources needed for its execution, which were eventually identified in the PMSP - Palestinian Municipalities Support Programme of the Italian Cooperation, which in June 2010 approved the BLE project proposal and provided the funds for its implementation, started in November 2010. The PMSP funded initiative engendered significant outcomes at the level of infrastructures development, landscape rehabilitation, capacity building and training and eventually led, in November 2013, to the official establishment of the Battir Landscape Eco-museum, owned and managed by the Battir Municipality. The BLE project main outputs consisted of the followings:

* Restoration and refurbishment of the BLE Guesthouse
* Realisation of a network of eco-cultural trails
* Training and capacity building of BLE management personnel
* Training and capacity building of BLE facilitators
* Preliminary interventions for minimizing the impact of illegal waste dumping in sensitive areas
* Reinforcement of partnerships with Italian public bodies.

Nonetheless, by underestimating the crucial role of community participation and of local stakeholders’ involvement, the BLE project eventually failed in reinforcing the cooperative networks at its base and in providing the Eco-museum with a management system and structure able to guarantee its medium and long-term sustainability. These deficits resulted in the progressive downtrend of the Eco-museum process and activities, up to the current stagnation.

Eco-museums, in fact, do not consist necessarily of physical infrastructures and/or of tourism related services, nor are containers for the display of territorial heritage. Rather, they are complex and dynamic organisms providing resources and opportunities for connecting inhabitants, heritage and territory in a virtuous circle of re-territorialisation that combines the values of conservation with the needs of sustainable development. An eco-museum exists only if the inhabitants identify with it, and its mission is to improve people’s knowledge upon heritage, landscape and environment and their capacity of using them as socio-economic resources for the community.

Despite the Battir Landscape Eco-museum is currently dormant, lacking of funds for sustaining management structures and plans, the process that led to its establishment produced important developments at the community level, contributing significantly to increase the local social capital and reinforce the motivation, opportunity and ability of residents to actively participate in the safeguarding and sustainable development of their territorial heritage.

Through the participatory processes of heritage identification and landscape analysis realised during the Eco-museum planning and implementation, Battir residents’ community generally developed a greater awareness of their territorial heritage and improved their capacity of interpreting, protecting and promoting it. At the same time, the sharing of experiences and the cultural exchanges occurred during community animation activities contributed to expand and reinforce social networks and to shape and widen a vision inspired by a set of shared values.

This fact is attested by the recent bloom of bottom-up initiatives based on criteria of self-sustainability, environmental respect, cultural diversity and socio-economic equity. These include the informal but successful organisation and promotion of rural tourism activities and services (i.e. hiking trails, guided visits, summer camps for children and youth), the start-up of small-scale farm-to-table catering services, the establishment of grassroots committees (i.e. rural farmers; women) for the experimentation of short marketing chains of local horticultural products, the development of accommodation facilities.

Coming from a spontaneous and assertive engagement in processes of sustainable valorisation and development of Battir’s WHS, these initiatives improvedresidents’accessibility and enjoyment of their landscape and heritage while attracting visitors from Palestine and abroad, and currently constitute an important engine of sociocultural and socioeconomic animation. They should be therefore encouraged, assisted and canalised by local public bodies and national and international stakeholders through a participatory approach to local governance.

The re-launching of Battir Landscape Eco-museum could represent an important step in this direction, which could provide a sound operative platform for elaborating, experimenting and testing inclusive and democratic policies and strategies for the conservation and management of the WHS and for its future sustainable development. The BLE revitalisation and further improvement could reinforce community involvement and encourage cooperation between public bodies, private actors, civil society and grassroots organisations and national and international stakeholders, providing local public bodies with a multifunctional instrument in support of the WHS’s MCP implementation and success.

Widening and reinforcing the opportunities for community participation, consenting the regulation of stakeholders’ interests and the rationalisation and harmonisation of grassroots initiatives with the vision of the WHS MCP, the Battir Landscape Eco-museum could therefore stand in support of its present feasibility and future sustainability, accomplishing its programmatic mission of landscape presidium and laboratory of territorial sustainability and governance.

The first step to take toward BLE revitalisation is the one of purposely and explicitly redefining and re-establishing a collective vision and a set of shared principles of territorial and heritage management, while defining a sustainable and participatory policy governance for the eco-museum. Agreed-upon and inclusive management systems, in fact, can aid greatly local public bodies in guiding sustainable and decision making processes, creating consensus about programmes and plans and helping to transform and solve conflicts.

The management structure of an eco-museum should consist of a cooperative network between volunteer, associations, public and private actors and professionals, and should guarantee delegation and balance between different stakeholders. In this framework, public bodies should not act as merely authoritative organizations, but as agents promoting and facilitating the sharing of governance and the harmonization and partnership of public and private initiatives.

The development of a clear policy for the governance of the Eco-museum will help in guiding the definition of the appropriate relationships between the different agents and actors involved in the eco-museum process - such as the public bodies owning it, its management board, local stakeholders, civil society and the community at large.

The establishment of policy governance and management structures needed to reinstate for the BLE should take into account some crucial specific requirements, such as:

* An acceptable constitution for the governing body, which must be purposefully negotiated throughout all stages of its development. The management structure will be more fluid in early stages of the operations, but should be explicitly defined before the initiative achieves critical mass;
* Proper management arrangements establishing responsibility, limitations of authority and accountability for resource use and programming, modes of community participation and of stakeholders’ involvement;
* Satisfactory arrangements for the ownership and management of the ecomuseum heritage resources, the preservation of the WHS property and the protection of local history and territorial identity;
* Sound financial basis taking into account long term funding sources and fundraising, which should be measured against the projected needs of planned programmes and organizational development;
* Forward plan, including statement of purpose, key aims, specific objectives and spending plan;
* Clear and transparent staff employment and management procedures, and staff appropriate in numbers and experience to fulfil responsibilities;
* Access to scientific and technical assistance and to professional advice and input to policy development and decision making;
* Compliance with the WHS’s CMP and with other relevant legal, safety and planning regulations.

The achievement of a consensual governance and management system for relaunching the BLE requires the promotion and implementation of different activities of territorial animation and community participation, which could be effectively promoted and realised by local authorities through the valorisation of existing community networks and of the previously trained personnel of the BLE, with the assistance of national and international experts.

The management capacities of the ecomuseum personnel and personnel of Local authorities shall be strengthened to enable the museum to act as a driver of local development. It is expected that the ecomuseum will be able to coordinate and promote actions by local authorities and by private actors and grass-root organizations to promote rural development in the area through eco-tourism and other sustainable rural economic activities. In this sense, a participatory mechanism to bridge gaps between public authorities and private/grass-root organizations shall be implemented through the ecomuseum, and it is expected to set up public-private partnerships for rural development.

The reinforcement and relaunch of the BLE could represent a substantial factor in favour of a successful implementation of the MCP of Battir WHS. It could facilitate local territorial virtuous processes and provide local authorities with innovative governing and planning tools, enabling them to endorse inclusive and sustainable policies and initiatives. Moreover, it could act in support of local communities by widening their opportunities for socio-economic development and for heritage enjoyment through the development of rural and heritage tourism initiatives.

**9. BATTIR CULTURAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**9.1 Landscape vulnerability**

The cultural landscape of Battir as inscribed in the WH property presents a number of vulnerabilities. The property presents criticalities deriving from internal and external factors that are affecting negatively the quality of the landscape at the visual, ecologic, socio-economic and cultural levels.

Internal factors related to conservation and management:

The increasing demographic Palestinian pressure over the property and the socio-cultural transformations of the local way of life are threatening the integrity of the property. The lack of adequate landscape protection and management measures – often indirectly resulting from the geo-political constrictions, but related also to a scarce attention to the necessary environmental and landscape policies – caused the proliferation of multifaceted threats to the local cultural landscape of Battir, as follows:

* Crisis of the local agricultural economy and productive system that brought to the abandonment of significant portions of agricultural land, to the progressive loss of important environmental knowledge and agrarian abilities and to a general dramatic economic and sociologic impoverishment of local communities;
* Lack of environmental awareness of local population, specially youth, due to the alienation of the inhabitants form their territory caused primarily by the devaluation of agricultural activities and agrarian abilities (employment in other sectors rather than agriculture, high rates of unemployment) and to the absence of compensative comprehensive initiatives of environmental education and sensitization;
* Absence of coordinated policies and of organic operative actions oriented toward landscape planning, environmental protection and sustainable development, resulting in uncontrolled urban expansion and encroachment; uncontrolled solid waste; water, air and soil pollution;
* Deterioration of the local socio-economic and cultural fabric due to the general impoverishment and to the vanishing of important collective spaces and occasions of cooperation and socialization in the frame of landscape maintenance and agricultural activities. These phenomena determined a loosening of the social cooperative bonds at the base of the local social and cultural dynamics;
* Loss of popular spaces and forms of expressions, such as traditional songs and narratives, the creation and performance of which was strictly associated to agrarian activities and which embed the intangible aspects of the local social and collective memory of the place.

External factors related to conservation and management:

Since 1967, intensive Israeli activities of settlement expansion are threatening the property. The increasing construction of housing units, infrastructures, roads and other various kinds of services for the exclusive use of settlers, has resulted in the progressive *enclavisation* of both the territorial area and the inhabitants of Battir, severely threatening the integrity of its landscape and the sustainability of its ecological and environmental equilibrium. These substantial historical, spatial and political transformations affected the landscape that has become one of the core critical issues of the region. At the same time, these processes determined a progressive erosion of the traditional relationship between the rural inhabitants of Battir and their cultural spaces, as well as deep socio-economic transformations, as follows:

* Direct effects of the Israeli occupation and its possible expansion representing the main threat in respect of any type of developmental plan implying landscape planning; their repercussions on the integrity and functionality of the local economic, agricultural, environmental and socio-cultural systems;
* Stagnation of the local economy due to the reduced freedom of movement of people through the space and to the heavy limitations in the possibilities of circulation, marketing and exchange of goods due to Israeli occupation;
* Limitations and restriction in the access and possibilities of land use and risk of significant confiscation of significant parts of the land from Israeli forces;
* Encroachment of Israeli colonial settlements on the property.

The distortions caused by the Israeli occupation accelerated the processes of abandonment of agricultural practices, already increased by the expansion of the dynamics of economic and cultural globalization that affects many other rural places and spaces of the world. The combination of these two macro scale factors impacted negatively on the functionality of the landscape, with progressively increasing disruptive effects on its integrity.

**9.2 Risk factors**

The following chart highlights the level of the risk factors and their mitigation:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **THEME** | **THREAT/RISK** | **LEVEL OF THREAT/RISK** | | | **POTENTIAL FOR MITIGATION MEASURES TO BE TAKEN WITHIN 5 YRS** |
| **LOW** | **MED** | **HIGH** |
| **Legal framework** | Culture of historic preservation relatively new |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Lack of activation of the national normative |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Lack of mechanisms able to enact the legislation / bylaws |  |  |  | **LOW** |
| Delay in the finalization of the CMP |  |  |  | **HIGH** |
| Delay in finalization of Master Plan |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| **Documentation** | Lack of first hand studies carried out with scientific techniques |  |  |  | **HIGH** |
| Lack of historic data (baseline). The first survey was carried out in 2009 |  |  |  | **HIGH** |
| **Conservation** | Seismic risk / Landslides |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Presence of abandon of dry-stone terraces |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Lack of sewerage in the village |  |  |  | **LOW** |
| Lack of trained personnel in landscape conservation (professionals) |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Lack of skilled and semi-skilled labour in landscape conservation |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Lack of specialized contractors |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Dismissing of traditional knowledge and practices of landscape conservation |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| **Maintenance** | Lack of maintenance, state of decay of a number of landscape features |  |  |  | **HIGH** |
| Lack of a culture of maintenance |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Lack of maintenance of urban fabric |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Dismissing of local knowledge and practices of landscape maintenance |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| **Visitation and interpretation** | Impact of tourists |  |  |  | **HIGH** |
| Proximity to Bethlehem and Jerusalem: subsequent dependence on hotel and other forms of hospitality nearby |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Inoperativeness of the Battir Landscape Ecomuseum |  |  |  | **HIGH** |
| Lack of an Interpretation centre dedicated to the cultural landscape |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| **Research** | Lack of historical data / resources |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Lack of academic research |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Lack of scientific publications |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| **Facilities, services, infrastructures** | Lack and/or inadequateness of infrastructures for hospitality |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Threat of construction of Separation Barrier |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Presence of dump sites |  |  |  | **LOW** |
| Presence of Israeli settlements |  |  |  | **LOW** |
| Lack of services/infrastructures/signage for disables |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Lack of parking for visitors |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| **Public awareness, education and participation** | Lack of public awareness initiatives |  |  |  | **HIGH** |
| Lack of educational programmes on cultural heritage |  |  |  | **HIGH** |
| Low participation by local population |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| **Funding** | Unpredictability of local investment |  |  |  | **LOW** |
| Volatility of funding sources |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Donor-funded approach |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |
| Lack of Private-Public Partnerships |  |  |  | **MEDIUM** |

**9.3 Recommendations**

Following the analysis of the territory and the landscape carried out in the past ten years, the report encourages the key stakeholders to adopt and implement the following recommendations:

* + Undertake the mapping of ongoing and foreseen projects,
  + Select and harmonize institutional and grassroots projects,
  + Implement the Corrective measures, as required by WHCom decision, as follows:

1.A Agreement to dismiss plans of the Wall

2.A Agricultural terraces conservation, including watchtowers

3.A Irrigation system restoration

3.B Sewage system development

4.A Conservation and Management Plan

4.B Local community and stakeholders’ involvement

5.A Development and implementation of monitoring system

5.B Set-up of sustainable management structure

* + Activate Public-Private Partnerships,
  + Reinforce socio-economic sustainability (progressive decrease of donor-funded initiatives),
  + Improve the solid waste management and environmental protection,
  + Foster the integration of intangible heritage to the WHS,

- Reinforce LAs capacities and resources for landscape conservation, management and strategic planning,

- Revive the Eco-museum as a tool of Territorial Approach to Local Development, as it was conceived through a recent project proposal: this can provide an important technical-scientific support during CMP development and implementation, foster community participation, support stakeholders involvement and stand as a presidium of the WHS after CMP is completed,

- Enhance the cooperation between the local actors and finalise the CMP, taking into considerations participatory processes.

**9.4 Guidelines and norms**

**9.4.1 Guidelines for the Safeguarding of Systems and Sites**

Definition of Landscape Statute: traditional terraced agricultural landscape, persistent and resistant, enclave surrounded by deeply transformed landscape (landscapes of urban sprawl and reforestation).

***Characteristics of the Landscape Statute***

- the structure: the symbiosis between physical components and human use defines the key elements of the landscape, which constitute the territorial frame;

- the shape of the sites: already known or to detect, search for the definition of shapes and elements in evolution;

- the dynamics (biotic and non-biotic): continuity and coherence within the actions of maintenance, reproduction, transformation;

- the biodiversity: warranty of continuity of the internal flows and flows from/to the external, positive dynamics of evolution;

- time and ways for the evolution: control and orientation of the relationship between territory (defined as features of physical-human space) and transformations (defined as sum of activities and consequent results);

- performance warranties: capability of resistance to transformations (about territorial scale and materials which constitute the territorial structures), capability of regeneration or adaptation to ongoing processes.

***Systems / Accessibility, Pathways and Stations***

The articulation of this system foresees the correlation of different levels and modalities of fruition of the Battir territory – through:

- Connections/accesses to the territorial road system, linking Battir to other territorial systems (mainly Beit Jala, Bethlehem);

- Internal connections within the urban area of Battir;

- A series of territorial pathways enhancing agricultural but also visiting activities – cultural, leisure time, etc. These pathways represent the “connective tissue” of the whole area and they have to allow the fruition and the perception of both the wider and smaller scales of territory. The pathways will be located along the crests, hillocks and valley bottoms, and they will cross the widest number of landscape units;

- Thematic pathways related to specific places and activities – green paths, water paths, archeological paths, etc.;

- Stations and meeting points.

***Systems / Cultural Tourism Valorization***

The “Territorial Museum System” project of Battir has to valorise the historical, environmental, archeological and cultural heritage of the area. The project has to uphold:

- The knowledge of this heritage through an exhaustive reconnaissance. This will help to understand the qualitative and quantitative consistency of the different sites and architectural heritage;

- A planning strategy for different interventions of rehabilitation and valorization of the places, also through the promotion of specific events;

- The optimization of the economic resources, adopting an holistic vision of the whole system of historical-cultural resources, and with specific and targeted interventions in terms of time and modalities.

- The harmonization of different forms and modalities of communication through images, signs, promotional materials, etc.

Considering the different characteristics of the environmental, historical and cultural sites, and the foreseeable objectives, it is possible to envision the creation of a “Museum of the Memory of the Landscape”. The Museum could explain the evolution of the “human landscapes”, from their creation, through their transformations, until the contemporary landscapes. The system will have to be founded on the following criteria-guidelines:

* Flexibility to the continuous evolution of the archeological findings and to the transformations of the needs of both the visitors and the economic operators;
* Historical, social, environmental, landscape contextualization of the heritage, in order to enhance the comprehension of the heritage to a vast and variegated audience;
* Synergy between the different – socio-cultural, natural, typical and traditional – resources of the territory, in order to broaden the cultural-touristic offer of the area;
* Discretionality to be left to the visitor in the creation of his path of fruition. This can be done through a support of knowledge and proper technologies to be put at disposal of the Museum system.

The structure of the territorial museum system is based on the construction of a material and immaterial network (virtual and territorial paths, internet connections, videoconferences, marketing, etc.), and on nodes – of different function and relevance – that constitute the Poles, the Strongholds and the Presidia of the Museum system.

The Museum Pole: its characterization consists in the organization of functions of higher level, at the service of the whole territorial museum system: didactic activities and research, congresses, professional training. Its location could be within the urban tissue of Battir, helping its requalification and valorization. The choice of the location has to be consistent with the accessibility and territorial resources systems, as well as with the local social expectations and economic resources.

The Strongholds can be thought as thematic exposition sections, as “portals” of access to thematic territorial paths, or as “virtual paths” organized in connection with the other museum strongholds.

The Presidia are definable as structures for services and valorization. Their location has to be chosen according to the needs of single areas or goods.

**9.4.2 Norms for the Conservation and Management of the Land Units**

These set of norms represents only a preliminary suggestion for the CMP. Their definition stems from the pioneering work carried out in 2009-10 by the Battir Landscape Plan working team, and lie on the classification in 10 categories, including Land Units, as follows:

1) AGRICOLTURAL CATEGORY: LANDSCAPE OF OLIVE TREE GROVE-WOODOED TERRACED SLOPES (LAND UNITS OF REFERENCE: LU4 / LU3)

This category includes the slopes of the landscape which still are cultivated on artificial terraces of various shape and entity, mainly cultivated with olive tree groves. Within the comprehensive landscape arrangement, the different typologies of agricultural terraces display several semblances of landscape, which are distinguishable and classifiable as:

- landscape of continuous terraces, characterized by regular plant and morphology, following the topography levels;

- landscape of discontinuous or fragmented terraces, often characterized by irregular plant and built along the slopes;

- landscape of terraces mixed with olive tree groves, interrupted by areas of spontaneous scrubs and woods (this category is found in areas where “natural dynamics” are overlapping with agricultural and human activities in decadence).

Guidelines for single components

Agricultural setup

- To reinforce the thickness of the ground, within the terraced areas, through the creation of systems of stabilisation of the vegetal grounds;

- To conserve the traditional agricultural practices;

- To avoid the use of the mechanisation of working and harvesting activities;

- To conserve and re-propose native genomes and cultivars;

- To promote the planting of trees fruit (almond trees, cherry trees, apricot trees, fig-trees, grapes, citrus trees).

♣ Naturalistic setup

- To control and orient the dynamics of naturalisation;

- To limit the natural vegetal dynamics that are in conflict with the agricultural practices and with their related manufactured products;

- To safeguard and enforce the areas of natural vegetation that reached a certain level of maturity.

Hydrological setup

- To protect the ground from the erosion;

- To develop the exploitation of the water sources and the rainwater (development of the

hydric reserves).

Settlement setup

- To rehabilitate and conserve the agricultural/residential structures, the factories and the systems of water collection and irrigation;

- To rehabilitate and conserve the traditional paths and the accesses to the terraced fields;

- To realise new manufactured products aimed to support agricultural and socio-cultural activities.

2) AGRICULTURAL CATEGORY: LANDSCAPE OF BUSHY, TERRACED SLOPES (LAND UNITS OF REFERENCE: LU14 / LU15)

This category includes mainly slopes south/south-eastern oriented. Their orientation, combined with climatic features and declension, define a situation of particular frailty for these structures, which are exposed to erosion of agricultural plots, thinning of the superficial layer of humus and a major difficulty in maintenance operations.

This leads to a trend of frequent abandon of the anthropic structures, which means: renaturalization of the olive tree groves, landslide and burst of terraces, colonization by spontaneous vegetation which, due to the quality of soils, develops in spots of bushes, without evolving into woods.

In some particular territorial contexts, the combination of these phenomena created “natural niches”, ecotypes which can be considered close to biotopes or geotypes, suitable for researches and experimental activities focused on the local environmental and economic improvement.

Guidelines for single components

♣ Agricultural setup

- To re-propose agricultural activities in the areas that are able to sustain – according to their conditions and dynamics – the recovery;

- To renew the existing agricultural system, where this is possible, with new crop setups;

- To facilitate new cultivar more suitable for the modifications intervened within the context.

♣ Naturalistic setup

- To limit and control in general the dynamics of naturalisation;

- To identify those areas already structured by spontaneous vegetal formations;

- To identify those areas in which there is cohabitation of agricultural setups and spontaneous vegetal formations.

♣ Hydrological setup

- To identify those areas characterised by geomorphologic (ruined areas, landslides etc.) and potential vulnerability;

- To rehabilitate the terraced structures as fundamental condition for impeding phenomena of erosion or landslide; to augment the deposit of vegetal grounds and to regulate of the surface water.

♣ Settlement setup

- To protect and conserve of the already existing agro-pastoral architectural heritage (or manufactured products with specific functions);

- To limit the transformation of the already existing architectural heritage, in particular the modification of their use (i.e. from agricultural to residential use);

- To limit the opening of new roads (especially if for cars or motored vehicles);

- To regulate the paths, limiting the number of links connecting valleys and plateaus.

3) AGRICULTURAL CATEGORY: FLAT “ENCLOSED-FIELDS” LANDSCAPE (LAND UNITS OF REFERENCE: LU1 / LU2)

These areas of territory are located where topography, quality of soils, and a better accessibility gave birth to a specialized and highly productive agricultural set-up, which is characterized by a fragmentation which is more pronounced than in the other surrounding agricultural areas.

This framework generated an “embroidery” of irregular fields, planted with trees mixed with vegetable gardens, surrounded by dry-stone walls and a thick net of paths and often provided with small shelters for the farmers and stockyard for domestic animals.

Guidelines for single components

♣ Agricultural setup

- To facilitate the return to traditional agricultural activities, keeping the variety of the setup;

- To keep, in cases of unifications of properties, all the connotative elements of the landscape (plotting of the fields, elements of delimitation, building structures and manufactured products).

♣ Naturalistic setup

- To control and limit the dynamics of formation of spontaneous vegetation and naturalisation of the area;

- To promote dynamics of naturalisation in proximity to the urban area, in the areas of transition and in the areas in which the agricultural activities are difficult and not much remunerative.

♣ Hydrological setup

- To rehabilitate the rainwater systems of drainage;

- To facilitate and promote those activities finalised to the maintenance and reinforcement of the cultivated lands.

♣ Settlement setup

- To rehabilitate the heritage used for agricultural (existing) activities, the dry-stone walls and the paths of access;

- To limit the production of new fabric.

4) AGRICOLTURAL CATEGORY: FLAT BUSHY LANDSCAPE (LAND UNITS OF REFERENCE: LU6/ LU7 / LU8 / LU9)

Similar to what happens for the terraced bushy slopes, also in the case of the flat areas the main trend is that of the abandon of agricultural structures, which leads to a progressive renaturalization of them. In this case, the process has been reinforced by the quality of the superficial layers of soil, which usually lay on deeper, rocky ones and are held by the artificial terraces. The lack of human activity led back to the original conditions, which are anyway hybridized with the signs of ruined terraces in a landscape which is definable as “carsic/anthropic”.

Guidelines for single components

♣ Agricultural setup

- These areas are potentially the most suitable for intensive agricultural activities and the areas in which it is possible to diversify the agricultural setups (better accessibility and possibility of enforcing the production by using mechanical means);

- The intervention will have to promote the creation of factories oriented towards the agro-alimentary production.

♣ Naturalistic setup

- To cultivate those natural areas characterised by shrub formations (garigue and Mediterranean *maquis*);

- To enforce those natural areas characterised by their agricultural marginality and which are not necessary in order to keep the hydrological stability and the ecological continuity.

♣ Hydrological setup

- The interventions will have to keep and regulate superficial waters, to impede landslides, avoid the formation of areas characterized by emerging rocks, and keep the dry-stone wall and terraced structure of the cultivated areas.

♣ Settlement setup

- Given the fact that these are transition areas between the urban area and the agricultural territory, the plan has to follow some fundamental objectives: to contain the existing building trends and the transformation of rural buildings into residential buildings; to contain the use of improper materials for the rehabilitation of the agricultural buildings; to create a road system and other structures functional to the needs of the agricultural production; to create new plants for the production of both low-cost and ecologically sustainable energy.

5) AGRICOLTURAL CATEGORY: TERRACED LANDSCAPE OF VALLEY BOTTOM (LAND UNITS OF REFERENCE: LU1/ LU3 / LU5)

The area of Battir has two different kind of terraced valley bottoms: the primary valley bottom and the secondary one. This distinction is defined according to: the width of the valley, the inclination of mountainsides, the techniques and variety of cultures on terraces, and the orientation. A further distinction comes from the kind of partition of the valley itself: the highest part is much more rough, not suitable for vegetable gardens and human settlements; the morphology of the intermediate area, also because of its better accessibility, hosts easily mixed agricultural plantations; in the lowest part vegetable gardens use to prevail, the terraced system is rarified, giving away to a huger concentration of built areas.

Guidelines for single components

♣ Agricultural setup

- These are the areas with a clear vocation to the production of vegetables, due to the thickness of the ground and the abundance of water; the setups and the modalities of use are diversified in relation to the accessibility, the size and the orientation of the valley bottom.

♣ Naturalistic setup

- To control and orient the dynamics of the natural vegetation;

- To identify situations that for their complexity and value could be classified as special sites (biotype, genotype, etc.)

♣ Hydrological setup

- These are the most crucial areas because of the fact that all the landslide phenomena converge on them, from the adjacent slopes: accumulation of solid materials due to landslides and streaming phenomena; landslides caused by the absence of maintenance of the slopes; erosion caused by sudden meteoric precipitations;

- A specific attention has to be reserved to waterways and water springs located along the valley (to safeguard and restore the hydraulic functionality).

♣ Settlement setup

- Excluding the large bottom valley, the other bottom valleys are not characterised by the presence of settlements, apart from some manufactured products destined to specific activities – like mills or shelters that will have to be rehabilitated;

- A particular attention will have to be reserved to the system of paths (principal and secondary) running along the valleys and connecting the valleys with the slopes and the plateaus. The system has to be restored in order to grant the accessibility and the fruition of the areas.

6) URBAN CATEGORY: SPARSE URBAN LANDSCAPE (LAND UNITS OF REFERENCE: LU14 / LU15)

It is hardly possible to draw precisely the physical borders of these areas, because of their intrinsic features, which consist of low density of the built-up areas, un-organic urban fabric, existence of a specific social landscape. These are areas are in phase of urban development and characterized by frequent urban voids (empty plots waiting for building permit or used as vegetable gardens) and jagged, discontinuous borders. This framework produces several uncertain locations, fragments which lost their original meaning and hardly find a proper personality into a urban context that becomes – more than else – a sequence of singular entities sprawled on the territory. This kind of territorial limbo leads to social diseases, often combined with environmental criticalities which usually decrease the local biodiversity.

Guidelines for singular components

♣ Agricultural setup

- To promote vegetable gardens and gardens at the service of houses;

- To maintain the productive agricultural plots existing within the built-up areas.

♣ Naturalistic setup

- To improve the layers of biodiversity through the insertion of “elements of rural landscape” within the urban contest;

- To detect locations (environmental corridors, enclaves, etc.) able to connect the rurale areas with the urban organism.

♣ Hydrological setup

- To control the potential factors of soil and water pollution (sewage systems, dump yards, deposit for polluting materials, scrap deposits);

- To collect and reuse rainwater for civil purpose.

♣ Settlement setup

- To improve the quality of urban environment, building typology and open spaces;

- To adopt “environmentally friendly” technologies for the satisfaction of energy needs;

- To identify possible areas to be involved into policies of densification of the urban fabric.

7) URBAN CATEGORY: DENSE URBAN LANDSCAPE (LAND UNIT OF REFERENCE: LU12 / LU13)

The intrinsic features of this category entail the urgency of a priority intervention which should be carried out in order to retrain the existing urban fabrics (buildings, collective and public spaces); a second ambit would be that of the areas touched by urban expansion policies or public and central ones, suitable for “strategic plans” which should engage the aim of sewing up the urban organism, creating spatial and physical connections and dialogue between the urban organism and the territory.

Guidelines for singular components

♣ Physical-natural setup

- To improve the biodiversity and the environmental quality through the realisation of “green areas”;

- To promote the plantation of trees into private properties;

- To create green areas, in order to compensate the urban impact on environment.

♣ Hydrological setup

- To reduce the impermeable areas;

- To size the landwaste;

- To decrease the pollution of soils and water.

♣ Settlement setup

- To promote the adoption of bioclimatic technologies and alternative systems for the production of electricity;

- To promote the collection of rainwater;

- To reskill urban borders;

- To reskill the viability net, rearranging its gerarchy and providing thematic, protected pathways.

8) LOCATIONS: REAFFORESTATION AREAS (LAND UNITS OF REFERENCE: LU10 / LU11)

These areas are very rare in Battir, differently from what happens on the Israeli side. They’re defined by activities of reforestation, carried out with native species, pine and fir trees with the aim of improving the mass of woods and occasionally regulate the hydro-geological decay.

It is possible to summarize the criticalities of those areas as follows:

- incongruousness with the native vegetation setup and the concerning landscape;

- difficult reconnection with the traditional landscape of Battir;

- necessity of a strategy of intervention on these areas, in order to attribute them a functional purpose within the territorial system.

Guidelines for singular components

♣ Forestal setup

♣ Naturalistic setup

♣ Hydrological setup

9) LOCATIONS: BATTIR’S VEGETABLE GARDENS (LAND UNIT OF REFERENCE: LU1)

This category is defined by two main features: the system of connections between Battir’s old core, which demarcate the valley’s morphology, and the complex of vegetable gardens below; the terraced vegetable gardens which do not follow the network of paths and water ways.

Guidelines for singular components

The suggested activity is an organic plan, which can be able sew up and implement open spaces within the urban area, involving:

• recommendations for agricultural setup:

- vegetable groves

- green railings

- stony railings

- terraced structures

- trees pattern

• recommendations for the hydraulic dam:

- system for the capitation

- system for the collection

- system for the distribution and delivery

• recommendations for the naturalistic setup:

- management of spontaneous vegetation

- management of organized vegetation put up

• Recommendations for the hydro-geological setup:

- natural water flows

- morphological drops

Urban fabric:

- accesses and viability net

- public and private spaces

- spaces for the community (with particular attention to the cemetery)

Activities of cultural promotion (training – research – didactic) and leisure:

- spaces and cultural activities

- itineraries

- proper areas

10) LOCATIONS: BATTIR’S ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREA

The archaeological site is located on the tip of the main crest which crosses the territory of Battir. The area is covered by ancient olive trees, partially situated on terraces and partially enclosed by dry-stone walls.

It is in this very site that the village of Battir of the pre-roman age is located. Its position, higher than the actual old core of the village, allows the control and surveillance of the main Wadi. The archaeological excavation, that at present are suspended, discovered the crown of the ancient urban nucleus, built with dry-stone technique and monumental walls.

**9.5 Maps**

A detailed cartography, developed from aerial photography and ground surveys in the scale of 1:2000, has been prepared, rectified, georeferenced and published. This cartography constitutes the base on which the CMP can developed its maps.

**10. ACTION PLAN**

**10.1 Monitoring (State of Conservation Reports for the WHS)**

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities is mandated to prepare State of Conservations reports for the WHS in Danger every year. The Ministry submitted two reports, notably in 2016 and 2017.

A Monitoring Unit will undertake the regular monitoring of the property and its Buffer Zone in conjunction with the Department of Antiquities (MoTA). The monitoring exercise will take into account the following key indicators for measuring the state of conservation of the property. The key indicators included in the table below are designed to enable the monitoring of the WHS and contribute to the protection of the assets in the WHS and its the Buffer Zone through conservation and maintenance works in compliance with international standards. Key indicators will measure the state of conservation against the baselines set in 2017.

The monitoring shall be implemented according to the following indicators, as highlighted in the chart:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Key indicator** | **Periodicity** | **Location of Records** |
| i. | Number of technical and/or managerial personnel hired by the responsible bodies to ensure adequate protection of the property | Biennial | MoTA and Municipality of Battir |
| ii. | Number of training courses for the personal as per point (i) above in landscape conservation, restoration and management | Biennial | MoTA and Municipality of Battir |
| iii. | Number of request of permits processed according to a new systematized licensing procedure to be included in the CMP | Annual | MoTA and Municipality of Battir |
| iv. | Number of rehabilitation projects surveyed (as per international standards) | Annual | MoTA and Municipality of Battir |
| v. | Number of landscape conservation and/or maintenance works carried out meeting international standards | Annual | MoTA and Municipality of Battir |
| vi. | Overall state of conservation of the terraces, canals and other elements characterizing the cultural landscape | Annual | MoTA and Municipality of Battir |
| vii. | General overview of the state of conservation of the landscape in the WHS and in the Buffer Zone, including recommendations for improvement | Annual | MoTA and Municipality of Battir |
| viii. | State of Conservation reports | Annual | MoTA and Municipality of Battir |
| ix. | Number of local and domestic tourist visiting the property | Bi-annual | MoTA and Municipality of Battir |

\* Bi-annual cycle is twice a year; biennial is every two years.

**10.2 Phasing of conservation interventions**

An Action Plan shall be devised as an integral part of the CMP. It is recommended that the conservation interventions will be carried out according to phases. This will guarantee that lesson learned will be drawn from each phase, so that to inform the next one.

**10.3 Public-Private Partnerships**

Recent years have seen a marked increase in cooperation between the public and private sectors for the development and operation of infrastructure for a wide range of economic activities, especially for meeting the challenge of sustainable development. The acronym PPP is currently being used in development discourse worldwide to identify very different types of arrangements between public and private actors, and there is no universally agreed definition of the term. In the context of this document, we refer to forms of cooperation between public authorities and the private sector that aim at ensuring the socio-economic sustainability of Battir WHS and its successful management and maintenance.

PPPs present a number of recognized advantages for the public sector to exploit. These include the ability to raise additional finance in an environment of budgetary restrictions, make the best use of private sector operational efficiencies to reduce cost and increase quality to the public and the ability to speed up infrastructure development. Moreover, PPPs encourage the direct involvement of local stakeholders in processes of territorial management and sustainable development, contributing to the socioeconomic resilience of local communities. The implementation of context-sensitive, tailor made models of public-private partnerships (PPPs) could therefore represent an important instrument in support of the valorisation and sustainable development of Battir WHS.

However, PPPs are complex instruments, requiring specific skills for their design, implementation and management. In order to profit from the advantages of PPP, all potential participants must enhance their understanding of the different approaches and the optimal methods to structure such arrangements. PPPs should only be considered if there is an effective implementation structure in place and if the objectives of all parties can be met within the partnership. To this end, it is essential to focus on five key issues:

* Stating clearly the vision and mission of the public bodies promoting the PPP
* Ensuring fair competition rules amongst different private actors
* Assessing the most effective type of PPP for a given project or initiative
* Protecting the public interest and maximising value added of PPP initiatives
* Defining the optimal level of grant financing to realize a viable and sustainable project and to avoid any opportunity for windfall profits from grants
* Designing an effective legislative and control framework for each partner to recognize the objectives and needs of the other.

There are different categories of PPP structures, each with specific degrees of private sector involvement. PPP arrangements may take many forms and are an evolving concept that needs to be adapted to the individual needs and characteristics of each project contexts and project partners. A PPP must be regarded as an active partnership requiring a degree of flexibility from each side. However, the extent of flexibility must also be clearly defined to ensure that project boundaries are clearly known.

The management of public grants imposes transparent rules on how private sector partners can be selected, how financing can be used and the benefits that parties can expect from the project, together with performance and quality requirements. Users and consumers’ opinions must also be integrated and given the power to influence PPP design and operation. This ‘bottom-up’ influence is crucial to the sustainability of the PPP approach and will require coordination with local NGOs, consumer associations and the public.

In order to work successfully with the private sector, public bodies need to be clear about the vision and the fundamental principles and objectives behind PPP. Effective legal, regulatory and contractual conditions are crucial to PPP success but can only exist if supported by an efficient institutional structure, which both facilitates PPP development and provides clear boundaries to protect the interests of all parties.

**11. RESOURCES**

**11.1 Human resources**

The organizational structure for the implementation of the CMP, provided that the Eco-museum is reactivated and fulfills its role as Local Management Unit, shall rely on a minimum of 11 human resources, as follows (6 Technical staff and 5 Administrative and support staff), as follows:

T1 Director, Senior level official, in charge of overall coordination of project activities from technical and administrative point of view,

T2 Expert 1 (cultural heritage conservator), Expert hired for the management of the WHS,

T3 Expert 2 (natural heritage conservator), Expert hired for the management of the WHS,

T4 Tourism management expert. He/she will be in charge of overall coordination of community activities at local level, as well as of the networking initiatives,

T5 Networking officer, Middle level officer. He/she will be in charge of networking and community animation activities,

T6 Community participation facilitator, Expert in charge of community participation activities. He/she will be entrusted with the task of working for ensuring community participation from local stakeholders,

A1 Programme assistant, Junior official tasked with the assistance to the Director,

A2 Communication officer, Junior position to ensure a proper communication of the action,

A3 Accountant, Middle level official,

A4 Financial officer, Project Officer in charge of overall financial management, verification and approval of expenditure and support to project partners in financial reporting duties,

A5 Secretary, Junior staff (JSCTD), tasked with clerical and logistics affairs.

**11.2 Financial resources**

The financial resources for the sustainability of the action shall be secured through public funding, donations and self-sustainable activities.

**12. CONSERVATION PILOT PROJECTS**

**12.1 Rehabilitation of Ain Al-Balad**

The rehabilitation of the water spring, which is located in the hearth of the village, and is the origin of the landscape palimpsest of the Jenan terraced area, is long due. Hassan Mustafa contributed to its renovation in 1950s and since then no intervention was made. A local committee, under the auspices of the Municipality of Battir, launched the idea to rehabilitate the spring and its surrounding space. A rehabilitation intervention, carried out by the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation and funded by the British Council, is ongoing. The project needs to be complemented in order to better integrate the spring with the terraces nowadays cut off by a road. The intervention addresses design and implementation.

Strength: 3

Budget: Medium

**12.2 Hiking trails in Wadi Mahrour**

The hiking trails in the Mahrour valley were designed during the UNESCO-led project and implemented through the PMSP project. They need to be maintained, better indicated and reactivated. Some sections are in need of substantive intervention. Dump yards along the trails should be cleared from garbage and rubble. The intervention shall address dry-stone wall restoration, opening and clearance of pathways, creation of rest places, clearance of the dumping sites.

Strength: 3

Budget: Flexible (Sections of the trails)

**12.3 Terrace rehabilitation in the Jenan**

The Jenan terraces, originated by Ain Al-Balad water spring, are a masterpiece of agricultural engineering. The perfect integration between the use of water and the cultivation of the vegetable gardens made of this area the centre of the historic landscape. The intervention entails a comprehensive survey, conservation plan and implementation of the design.

Strenght: 2

Budget: High (possibility to phasing intervention)

**12.4 Community-based tourism in Battir**

The Tourism sector in Palestine, and in particular in the Bethlehem area, is oriented to pilgrimage tourism. Battir is the second WH site in Palestine and offers a concrete viable alternative (or integration) as a destination. This pilot project aims at developing community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives to provide Battir with a dedicated programme. The Battir Landscape Eco-museum, developed within the PMSP project, could be the basis for the development of this activity. The reviving of the Landscape Eco-museum could be the target of the project.

Strength: 4

Budget: Low

**12.5 Educational activities**

Education is the foundation of each and every developmental initiative. Supporting educational activities in Battir shall contribute to guarantee that the other initiatives being carried out currently and in the future, be sustainable. The students of the schools of Battir have been already exposed to a number of extra-curricular activities concerning cultural heritage, landscape and environmental protection, territorial mapping and orienteering, etc. School teachers in Battir are well trained and committed to continue in this track. This pilot shall build on previous experience and develop new educational programmes.

Strength: 4

Budget: Low

**12.6 Intangible Heritage and Oral History Project**

Intangible Heritage and Oral History are key component and an indispensable asset of the life of Palestinians. Linking the intangible aspects of heritage with the physical manifestation of the territory of Battir, embedded in the notion of cultural landscape, is a powerful tool to preserve local identity and transmit its values to the youth and to the future generations. This pilot activity, built on the various experiences already carried out in Battir, especially with children and youth, targets new forms of expressions and social cohesion to enhance resilience among the inhabitants of the area.

Strength: 4

Budget: Low

**12.7 Other projects**

The unique position of Battir, being situated on the Green Line, may also favour cross-border initiatives, e.g. quality agro-production, rationale use of water, etc.

Strength: 2

Political implications

*NB: The strength is calculated in relation to the feasibility and budget implications (1 to 5, where 5 is the strongest).*

**13. ILLUSTRATIONS**

**13.1 Photographic documentation**

See attached photographic documentation.

**13.2 Aerial photographs**

See attached aerial photographs.

**13.3 New cartography**

See attached maps.

**14. ANNEXES**

- MOTA: WH Nomination document (2013)

- WH Committee: Decision WHC-15/39.COM/19 (pp. 45-46)

- WH Committee: Decision WHC/16/40.COM/7A (pp. 29-32)

- MOTA: State of Conservation for the WH property (2016)

- MOTA: State of Conservation for the WH property (2017)

**15. APPENDICES**

- UNESCO/Cancellotti, Cirino and Harb: Final Report and Appendices (2009)

- Barone P.: I paesaggi di Battir (2009)

- Melina Mercouri International Prize nomination dossier (2010)

- Barone, Fontana Antonelli *et al*.: Criteria and Guidelines for the Safeguarding of Systems, Areas and Sites (2010)

- Al-Quds University/Bard Honors College: Space, rights and landscape transformations in Battir (2010)

- Cancellotti C.: Battir Landscape Atelier, Final Report (2010)

- La Drache: Sources et ressources. Un itinéraire à Battir (2011)

- L’Atelier Volant: Réflexions sur la mise en place d’un observatoire des paysages (2012)

- WMF: World Monuments Watch nomination dossier (2013)

- Fontana Antonelli, G.: Palestine 2004-2014. Inhabited landscape, human rights and resilience (2017).

1. In July 2005, in Durban, at the 29th session of the World Heritage Committee, the Palestinian Delegation presented the “Inventory of cultural and natural heritage sites of potential outstanding universal value in Palestine”, which included the theme “Palestine: Land of olives and vines”, encompassing cultural landscapes. After UNESCO’s General Assembly voted to admit Palestine as a full member of the organization on 31 October 2011, the ‘Inventory’ was officially renamed Palestine’s Tentative List (The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem - Battir was included in the Tentative List on 25 May 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Information regarding the projects carried out in Battir from 2006 to 2010 is enclosed in G. Fontana Antonelli (2017) *Palestine 2004-2014. Inhabited landscape, human rights and resilience***,** in Boschiero, P. (ed.) *Curare la terra. Luoghi, pratiche, esperienze/Caring for the land. Places, practices, experiences.* Treviso: Fondazione Benetton Studi e Ricerche & Antiga Edizioni. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Separation Barrier, which the Palestinians refer to as “the Wall,” is the result of the annexation policy adopted by recent Israeli governments. Justified on security grounds in order to reduce the number of suicide attacks on Israel, the Barrier is designed to stretch the Israeli border defined by the Armistice Line in 1949, to include most of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank. This unilateral operation, which has been condemned, amongst others, by the International Court of Justice at The Hague, in effect shifts the border between the two countries, reduces Palestinian territory and causes dramatic consequences for the local population, not to mention the environmental damage, the destruction of archaeological sites and the permanent harm done to the landscape. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The two court cases would be merged in one court case at a later stage. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Watch is an initiative by the New York-based organization World Monument Fund to raise awareness on the most endangered sites in the world. The inscription of Battir on the World Monument Watch was announced in October 2013 [http://www.wmf.org/project/ancient-irrigated-terraces-battir]. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See ICOMOS, Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir (Palestine) no. 1492, available on whc.unesco.org/archive/ advisory\_body\_evaluation/1492.pdf, p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. In 1993, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) began negotiations in Oslo that resulted in the signing of the Declaration of Principles and subsequent Israeli-Palestinian agreements, collectively known as the Oslo Accords. As a result of the Oslo Accords, the PLO formed a Palestinian Authority (PA), made of a President, Cabinet of Ministers, and a legislative body and, in 1996, organized its first parliamentary and presidential elections. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)