



FORMAT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF
STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORTS
BY THE STATES PARTIES

(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the *Operational Guidelines*)

Golden Temple of Dambulla

1. Executive Summary of the report

The Golden Temple of Dambulla is a private property that belong to the Asgiriya Chapter of Buddhist monks that appoints a senior monk of the same Chapter as the Custodian of the temple. The property is a 'Protected Monument' under the Antiquities Ordinance, according to which the Department of Archaeology (DoA) is vested in with powers to look after the conservation and preservation aspects of the property. Prevalence of an amicable relationship between the temple authorities and the State Party is therefore necessary to carry out the conservation-preservation-monitoring activities.

At the time of the visit of the ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission, the relationship between the temple authorities and the State Party, namely and the Department of Archaeology (DoA) and the Central Cultural Fund (CCF), remained in a poor condition. However, as a consequence to the change of the custodianship of the temple to a new monk in early-2016, the relationship improved remarkably. The state of conservation of the property outlined in the present report reflects this positive change of environment to work together towards a constructive partnership to achieve the conservation-preservation goals outlined in the present report to sustain the spirit of the World Heritage Convention.

The (DoA) and the (CCF) are preparing the records of previous conservation treatments to be used for comparison of the previous state with the current state of the paintings and sculptures. Causes and sources of water dripping have been discovered through scientific research. Further research is underway to find out the most appropriate ways to control the situation. The DoA, the CCF, and the Temple Authorities (TA) have agreed on the composition of a governance structure and lines of responsibilities.

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The DoA's commitment to collaborate with local universities to carry-out multidisciplinary research to find solutions to preservation-related problems is considered a 'best practice'. Another important development is the emergence of an environment where the State Authorities have been able to work together with the Temple Authorities to revise and update the Management Plan. As a result, the DoA, TA, and the CCF have been able to work together to establish a new Site Management Committee soon.

The dire need to establish a Tourism Management Strategy has been recognized by all parties. The assistance of an international expert on the subject with experience will be sought for this purpose. Flash photography will not be banned as there has no scientific evidence on its harmful effects on paintings. However, a survey will be carried out to learn its negative effects on pilgrims and other tourists. The Management Committee that will be set up in the near future will consider the suggestion of installing a system for security checks.

There are no other issues than what is described in the report that may affect the OUVs of the property. Also, there are no other interventions within the property or in the buffer zone that have the potential to affect the OUVs.