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MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE GELATI MONASTERY

2017

Table of Contents

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	5
1. INTRODUCTION.....	6
1.1. Aim of the Management Plan.....	6
1.2. Relation with other studies.....	6
1.3. Scope and approach.....	7
General.....	7
Management principles.....	8
Approach.....	9
1.4. Objectives of the management plan.....	10
Preparation of a spatial plan for the project area.....	10
Protection and conservation management.....	10
2. INFORMATION.....	12
2.1. General.....	12
The management area.....	12
Geographic data.....	13
2.2. Cultural Heritage.....	14
Brief history of the Gelati Monastery.....	14
Monuments within the property.....	16
Evidence and results of study.....	22
Present protection status and management.....	24
Conservation and rehabilitation.....	25
Sites and monuments in the Buffer Zone.....	28
2.3. Landscape and nature.....	32
Landscape.....	32
Relief.....	32
Air and climate.....	35
Water and hydrological regime.....	36
Vegetation, flora, and fauna.....	36
Human Influences.....	37
2.4. Threats and natural hazards.....	39
2.5. Social and economic aspects.....	39
Land tenure and ownership in and near the Gelati Monastery.....	39
Land and resource use in the Buffer Zone.....	42
Demography and economy.....	44
2.6. Governance and Management.....	45

Legal framework.....	46
Law enforcement	49
3. INTERACTION WITH STAKEHOLDERS	51
3.1. General.....	51
Public Sector.....	51
Private Sector	51
Civil Sector	51
3.2. Stakeholders in the project area	51
General.....	51
Monastery	52
Public Sector.....	54
Private Sector	56
Civil Sector	57
3.3. The Role of National Agencies	57
General.....	57
Public Sector.....	58
Private Sector	58
Civil Sector	58
4. ASSESSMENT	59
4.1. General.....	59
4.2. Zoning	60
4.3. Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site and other values	63
Cultural value	63
Justification for criteria	63
Authenticity and integrity	64
Religious value.....	66
Tourist value.....	66
4.4. Cultural value of monuments in the Buffer Zone.....	66
4.5. Value and functions of nature.....	67
Site values and functions.....	67
Environmental assessment	68
Use value	69
4.6. Issues facing the WHS and its Buffer Zone	71
Threats to the buildings of the Monastery	71
Potential for air pollution and severe weather events	72
Potential visitor pressure	72
Potential for natural disasters.....	73
Potential for fire	75

Quarry traffic.....	76
Potential need for accommodation for increasing numbers of monks	76
Risk of impact by military conflict	76
Environmental risks to the Buffer Zone	76
4.7. Potential for economic development.....	77
Government priorities.....	77
Civil sector activities.....	78
Agriculture.....	78
Industry and crafts	79
Sustainable tourism.....	80
4.8. Risk assessment	83
4.9. Responsible agencies	83
4.10. Ongoing activities and projects.....	84
5. INTERVENTIONS	86
5.1. General.....	86
5.2. Management issues	86
World Heritage Site	86
Nature	87
Society.....	87
5.3. Programmes.....	88
6. GOVERNANCE AND SITE MANAGEMENT	90
6.1. Management Committee	90
6.2. Legal basis and budget	93
7. IMPLEMENTATION. MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	94
7.1. General.....	94
7.2. Monitoring.....	95
7.3. Evaluation.....	96
BIBLIOGRAPHY	97
LIST OF ANNEXES.....	98

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Maps

- Figure 1. Kutaisi and Tkibuli Municipalities
- Figure 2. Boundaries of the management area
- Figure 3. Listed monuments and monuments proposed for listing in the environs of the Gelati Monastery
- Figure 4. Topographical Map
- Figure 5. Land ownership around the Gelati Monastery
- Figure 6. Land-use map
- Figure 7. Registered plots
- Figure 8. Map of territorial functional units
- Figure 9. Earthquake hazard around the Gelati Monastery
- Figure 10. Landslide hazard around the Gelati Monastery
- Figure 11. Wildfire hazard around the Gelati Monastery

Tables

- Table 1. Structure of the Management Plan
- Table 2. Geographic data
- Table 3. Georgian National Legislation related to Preservation of Cultural Heritage
- Table 4. Stakeholders in Management of the Gelati Monastery WHS and its Buffer Zone
- Table 5. Framework for environmental planning
- Table 6. Assessment of landscape and nature
- Table 7. Interaction matrices
- Table 8. STBT diagram for project area
- Table 9. Ongoing activities and projects
- Table 10. Action programmes
- Table 11. Organogram of management structure
- Table 12. Process framework for environmental management
- Table 13. Key indicators for monitoring state of conservation

Photos

- Photo 1. Gelati Monastery seen from the south-west
- Photo 2. Church of the Nativity of the Virgin. Interior view looking east
- Photo 3. Academy, Church of St Nicholas, and bell-tower
- Photo 4. Tombstone of king David the Builder
- Photo 5. Vaulted passage adjacent to the Academy excavated in 2008
- Photo 6. Motsameta Monastery
- Photo 7. General view of the plain
- Photo 8. Tskaltsitela River in the Gelati plain
- Photo 9. Tskaltsitela River near Motsameta
- Photo 10. Dokhora Mountain with the Gelati Monastery
- Photo 11. Petty trade near the entrance of the Gelati Monastery

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aim of the Management Plan

The Gelati Monastery has been part of the serial property *Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery* in Georgia, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994 (Ref. 710) under criterion (iv). The World Heritage (WH) status of the Gelati monastery became threatened when the extensive reconstruction works began on the Bagrati Cathedral in 2009. As a result of this restoration, the World Heritage Committee and Georgian government, on the recommendation of ICOMOS, agreed in 2013 to remove the Bagrati Cathedral from the World Heritage property and to propose a major boundary modification to redefine the site as the Gelati monastery.

The update of the documentation requested by the Committee also requires the development of the Management Plan for the Gelati Monastery proper and the adjacent Buffer Zone. The present document has been prepared in compliance with this requirement. It was carried out by the George Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation in line with the UNESCO Operational Guidelines. Expert and community groups, the Church, and relevant government bodies contributed through consultations during drafting. This was important in integrating differing views and developing the shared vision for the Site.

The Management Plan was prepared in 2014 and 2015 with the support of the Municipal Development Fund of Georgia. In January 2017, it was updated to take into account the comments suggested in the ICOMOS Technical Review dated April 2016.

The Management Plan for the Gelati Monastery covers the period from 2017 to 2021. It is intended to provide a clear strategy for managing the site and a mechanism for maintaining close co-operation between the local community, the Church, and government agencies to ensure its effective implementation. The Plan aims at protecting and preserving the Outstanding Universal Value and other values of the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone. It provides information on various aspects of the management policy for the Gelati Monastery, including conservation and presentation, enhancement of the setting, threats and hazards, visitor management, legislative protection and the development considerations necessary to protect the site in the future. It also explains the social and economic importance of the site to local communities and wider communities of interest.

1.2. Relation with other studies

In 2008, the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sports of Georgia prepared the Conservation Master Plan for the Gelati Monastery, that was reviewed and approved in 2009 by UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, and relevant National Agencies. The Conservation Master Plan is a formal framework for conservation management of the World Heritage Site. It provides full documentation of the site components, rehabilitation projects

for each of the architectural components as well as plans for archaeological excavations and conservation of wall paintings. In 2015, the Conservation Master Plan was updated to reflect new realities and meet current and future needs of the Site.¹

In 2014, a management plan was prepared for the Imereti Protected Areas. The draft plan includes the valley and canyon of the Tskaltsitela River, that has the status of protected monument, IUCN category 3, and a number of karst caves that have a protected status. The conclusions and recommendations of these two studies have been incorporated in the present management plan².

In 2014 the Georgian National Tourist Administration has issued the Imereti Tourism development strategy³ that has been used as a basis for the assessment of the potential for tourism in the project area.

1.3. Scope and approach

General

Management of cultural heritage has changed over the years. It has changed from a conservation approach, aiming at conservation of cultural heritage, to a value-led approach that includes landscape and cultural values and uses an environmental management framework. These changing objectives result in a more diversified group of beneficiaries and stakeholders, a larger area that should be included in the scope of the Plan, together with related changes in the management structure and processes and the legal base and institutional setting.

The changes also require a different approach. Integrated management of the environment requires a wider approach with a need to delineate and describe the spatial units on a scale of square kms, which is in fact a form of zoning. The WHS is in this approach a unit with a high cultural value. Conservation of individual monuments requires a more detailed approach (spatial scale m) to describe and conserve the cultural attributes which may be single structures or even parts of structures. In the environmental management approach cultural conservation is “nested” in the global spatial plan.

The UNESCO WHC publication “Managing World Cultural heritage”⁴ describes the new approach in more detail and gives recommendations for planning and management within this new context. The IUCN guidelines for Protected Landscapes⁵ have a similar goal. Both publications are used as a basis for the present Management Plan.

In Georgia, the integrated approach as recommended by UNESCO is still in its infancy. At this stage planning and management has to be based upon the governing laws and existing

¹ Gelati Monastery Conservation Master Plan (Tbilisi, 2015)

² Tourism Development and Management Plan for Imereti Caves Protected Area (Purkersdorf, Austria and Tbilisi, 2014), http://tjs-caucasus.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/PA-Imereti-caves-Strategy_final.pdf

³ THR Innovative Tourism Advisors, TBSC Consulting, Imereti Tourism Development Strategy (Barcelona/Tbilisi, 2012).

⁴ UNESCO, Managing World Cultural heritage (Paris, 2013).

⁵ Phillips A., Management Guidelines for IUCN Category V Protected Areas Protected Landscapes/Seascapes. IUCN (Gland, Switzerland, and Cambridge, UK, 2002).

institutional setting. This Plan gives recommendations; however, laws and management structure may need to be adapted to give a legal basis for implementation of the MP in compliance with the UNESCO recommendations.

Management principles

The present management plan provides the overall policy framework for the integrated management of the whole World Heritage Site and its Buffer Zone, and focuses on multiple-resource and multiple-use management. It is based upon the following principles:

- It protects and enhances the cultural value of the manmade landscape and its historic cultural heritage; this is obviously of special importance in the project area where both the historical-cultural and architectural values of the Monastery ensemble are recognized through its status as World Heritage Site.
- It recognizes the strategic importance of renewable resources for present and future generations; this implies that the environmental carrying capacity should be defined and that cultural and natural resources should be consumed at a rate commensurate with the production capacity of the ecosystems.
- It protects and enhances the integrity of ecosystems and accepts limits on the use of its resources; this implies that in some areas restrictions may be imposed on the use of space and natural resources.
- Achieving a proper understanding of the dynamic interactions between man and nature that created the present landscape and that will give it its future shape; achieving a proper understanding of the governing cultural, social, and ecological processes and using these processes to improve conditions for survival and to mitigate the negative effects of threats. Without this understanding cultural and ecological damage is likely to occur. Environmental education and training are the means to avoid this in future.
- Multiple uses of resources and promotion of complementary activities; regulation/separation of conflicting uses. Also, in the project area various users compete for space and limited resources; use conflicts occur and resources are being depleted. Spatial planning is a means to separate conflicting uses and allows complementary activities. Within each spatial unit regimes should be enforced that protect functions and values and facilitate sustainable use of cultural and natural resources.
- It ensures multi-sectoral and multi-level integration in decision-making, linking broad scale decision making to local level interventions. The management structure is a means to achieve this through participation of all stakeholders in the planning process. Information sharing and public hearings are the instruments to inform the stakeholders; consultation and cooperation are the means to involve them actively in the process thus creating public support and a feeling of ownership.
- Development of an effective system to implement the Management Plan through establishing efficient coordination between the stakeholders and creating new implementation structures.

- Having in place measures for monitoring the effectiveness of the Management Plan and the condition of the assets that are being managed. Regular monitoring is essential to collect data and provide full information on the effectiveness of the Plan as well as on the physical condition of the World Heritage Site.

The present Management Plan is, therefore, based on the understanding that

- World Heritage properties may support a variety of uses that are culturally and ecologically sustainable and which may contribute to the quality of life of communities concerned.
- The Management Plan as well as additional legislative mechanisms that may be applied by the State Party should ensure that such sustainable use or any other function does not impact adversely on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.
- The Management Plan supports the understanding, valorization and protection of both cultural and natural resources bearing in mind that the Gelati Monastery is located in a sensitive cultural landscape with diverse cultural and natural values.
- The Management Plan should encourage the enhancement of the existing conservation, maintenance and repair policies and regimes for all attributes and features of the WHS.

Moreover it is recognized that

- The Gelati Monastery is a living religious site, taking note of the authenticity of that function and its contribution to the Outstanding Universal Value of the site.
- The plan should provide a platform for co-operation between the State and the owner of the site – the Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Georgia as a necessary condition for sustainable protection, conservation, management and presentation of the property.
- The plan should ensure the active participation of the local communities and stakeholders concerned.

Approach

As shown in the WHC publications, an effective management system should include a cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and feedback. Management planning is a dynamic process and does not stop with the production of a Management Plan. Results of the evaluation may lead to changes in the objectives, the management structure and the process.

The IUCN has proposed a framework for plan preparation that shows the main components of planning: description of the site, evaluation of values and functions together with identification of opportunities and threats, preparation of a spatial plan with related zoning and definition of a management regime for conservation of environmental values and functions.

The Plan is based upon this framework proposed by IUCN and is structured accordingly as shown in Table 1.

ASPECT	General	Culture	Nature	Risks and threats	Social and economic aspects	Governance
Introduction	1.					
Information	2.1.	2.2.	2.3.	2.4.	2.5.	2.6.
Interaction	3.1.	3.2., 3.3				
Assessment	4.1., 4.2.	4.3., 4.4.	4.5.	4.6., 4.8.	4.7.	4.9., 4.10.
Interventions	5.1., 5.2.	5.3.	5.3.			5.4
Integration						6.
Implementation						7.

Table 1. Structure of the Management Plan.

The columns define the management aspects whether general or specifically related to nature, culture, socio-economic factors and governance. The rows show the various phases of plan preparation: A general “introduction” is followed by the chapters “information”, describing the various aspects of the site, “interaction”, where the input of the stakeholders is described, and “assessment”, where the data are analyzed and evaluated. Together the last two chapters provide the input to the following chapter “intervention” where management issues are defined and measures and strategies are presented to address these issues. The chapter “implementation” contains an action plan and related programmes to implement these measures. A fuller statement of the Action Programmes is attached to the Management Plan as an annex. These describe in more detail how high priority issues should be addressed.

This is of course the **first** Management Plan for the Gelati Monastery WHS and its Buffer Zone. It therefore to some extent responds to, and adopts, other plans and actions that were already ongoing. It is possible in some cases to provide much more detail and certainty than it is for others. This is not uncommon in such circumstances and reflects the evolutionary nature of this planning approach. The next iteration of the Plan, due in 2021, will have had the benefit of several years of joint working among the stakeholders.

1.4. Objectives of the management plan

Preparation of a spatial plan for the project area

The spatial plan is the basis for environmental management. It allocates functions to their appropriate location. It combines compatible functions and separates conflicting activities.

Protection and conservation management

The Management Plan describes the management regime in the various spatial units, to ensure protection and conservation of cultural and natural values and sustainable use of such resource for economic development.

Conservation of cultural heritage values

As stipulated by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the protection and management of World Heritage properties should ensure that their Outstanding Universal Value, including the conditions of integrity and authenticity at the time of inscription, are sustained or enhanced over time. A regular review of the general state of conservation of properties, and thus also their Outstanding Universal Value, shall be done within a framework of monitoring processes for World Heritage properties, as specified within the Guidelines.

Thus, the main goal of the Management Plan is to ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the Gelati Monastery, its authenticity and integrity are sustained and enhanced over time, including the functional viability of the property as a living religious site as well as a key cultural and historical monument.

The Gelati Monastery Conservation Master Plan approved in 2009 and updated in 2015 is the main framework document dealing with conservation policies and regimes for the architectural monuments, sites, and archaeological deposits within the WHS. Since its adoption an extensive works have been carried out according to the Plan, revealing numbers of new challenges and providing valuable information for further improvement of the proposed conservation policy of the Gelati Monastery.

The present Management Plan should ensure smooth implementation of the Conservation Master Plan and regular monitoring of its conservation policy in the context of new realities.

Conservation of natural values

The Outstanding Universal value of the Gelati Monastery is enhanced by its setting and the landscape. Therefore the present document focuses on the Integrated Environmental Management approach to ensure conservation and restoration of all aspects of the landscape with a focus on the aspects of importance for the OUV of the monument.

Sustainable use for social and economic development

The area is scarcely populated and population is concentrated in the villages Kursebi, Gelati and Motsameta. Most of the area is state owned; the Monastery is owned by the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia and parts of the area inside and outside are private property. The remaining area is used for settlements and agriculture.

The per capita income and the level of public services is low. The Management Plan focuses on improving the standard of living through the further development of tourism that traditionally is a significant asset to the local economy as well as through improved agro-technology and the development of new economic activities.

2. INFORMATION.

2.1. General

The project area falls in the administrative boundaries of the Tskaltubo Municipality (See Figure 1). The administrative community Kursebi includes the villages Kursebi, Gelati and Motsameta.



Figure 1. Kutaisi and Tskaltubo Municipalities.

The management area

The Management Plan covers the Gelati Monastery, as well as the Buffer Zone of the property as defined by the Ministerial Decree #03/5 09.01.2014 and proposed in the draft Major Boundary Modification Document for the Gelati Monastery and Bagrati Cathedral World Heritage site submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre in February 2014 (see Figure 2).

The Buffer Zone reflects the request of the World Heritage Committee (37 COM 7A.32, 2013) to the State Party to prepare and submit the Major Boundary Modification document for the Bagrati Cathedral and the Gelati Monastery in order to allow the Gelati Monastery to justify the criterion on its own. According to the Committee, "...the Bagrati Cathedral has been altered to such an extent that its authenticity has been irreversibly compromised and that it no longer contributes to the justification for the criterion for which the property was inscribed".

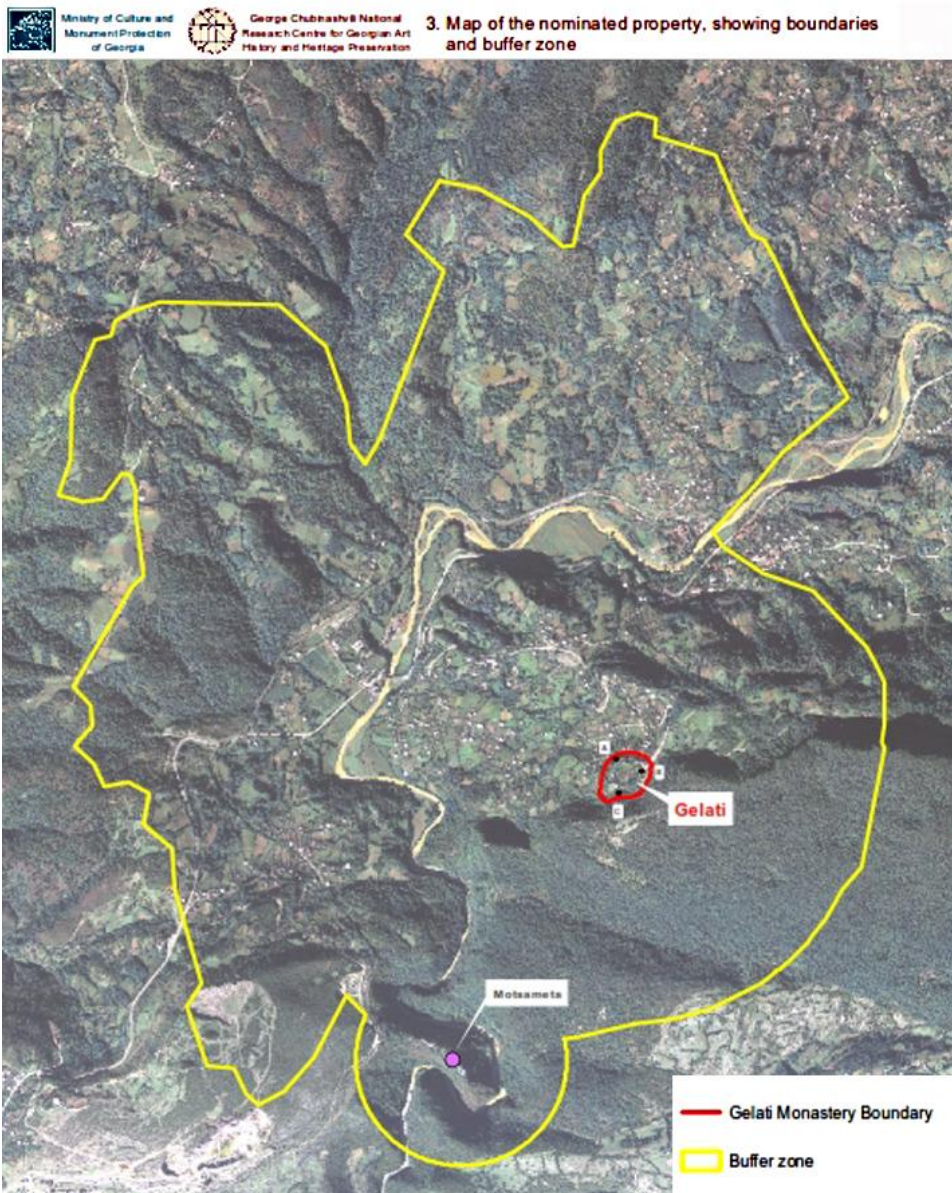


Figure 2. Boundaries of the management area.

Geographic data

The Gelati Monastery WHS is located in West Georgia, 11 km north-east from the city of Kutaisi. The particulars of the complex are shown in the Table 2 below.

Name	Administration	Coordinates	Area	
			Core	Total
Gelati Monastery	Village Gelati, Kursebi Community, and Tkibuli Municipality	E 42° 17' 40.58 N 42° 46' 05.62	4,1 ha	12,46 km ²

Table 2. Geographic data.

2.2. Cultural Heritage

Brief history of the Gelati Monastery

The revival of Georgian culture that started with the unification of the country in 980s continued in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, resulting in great works of art, architecture, and literature. In 1089, David IV, later named “the Builder”, was crowned the king of Georgia. His reign is the beginning of the “Golden Age” of the Medieval Georgia that lasted until the reign of Queen Tamar (1184-1213). The nearly 120 years between the reigns of these two rulers was a period of a complete stabilization, political strength and economic growth. Georgian culture flourished unhindered and bore fruits of abiding value.



Photo 1. Gelati Monastery seen from the south-west (2013)

The Gelati Monastery and Academy, both established in 1106, were the favourite creations of King David and the most vivid reflections of cultural and intellectual development in the Golden Age of Georgia. The Monastery was not intended to be a merely religious foundation. King David wanted to create a centre of knowledge and education of the highest international standard of his times. He established an academy in the Monastery and made every effort to gather there the most eminent Georgian theologians and philosophers, both living in and outside his kingdom. Contemporaries were enraptured with the newly established Monastery and Academy. Georgian chroniclers described the history of their

foundation as an exceptional event in the life of the nation. "This is now a foreshadowing of the second Jerusalem in the whole East, a school of all virtue, an academy of instruction, another Athens but much superior to it in divine doctrines," wrote the royal chronicler of King David. The allusion to Athens and Jerusalem must have stressed the importance of the Gelati Monastery as the centre of both secular and ecclesiastical knowledge, philosophy and theology.

The construction of the Gelati Monastery took place in the 12th and 13th centuries. The main church dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin was built between 1106 and 1130. The Academy and the southern gate date from the same period, as well as the earliest building layer of the recently unearthed passage to the north of the Academy. In the 13th century, the churches of St George and of St Nicholas and a bell tower were built and in the early 14th century the eastern porch was added to the Academy.

From its foundation, Gelati was a royal monastery. It possessed vast lands and rich treasure that contained a number of marvellous icons and other objects, including the well-known Icon of the Virgin of Khakhuli (now kept in the Georgian National Museum). The icon itself was created in the 10th century, but David the Builder decided to set it in a large and exceptionally rich tripartite frame adorned with cloisonné enamels and chased decoration. This work was executed in the reign of David's son King Demetre I (1125-1156) by three skilled masters in the goldsmiths' workshop of the Monastery. Gelati also had a scriptorium where monastic scribes copied manuscripts. Among several books created there the best known is an amply illuminated 12th century gospel, which is kept in the National Centre of Manuscripts (No Q-908).

In his will, David the Builder expressed his desire to be buried in Gelati and made it a burial of the Bagration royal family. Since then, the Gelati Monastery was a burial place first of Georgian and then of Imeretian (West Georgian) kings and queens.

The Golden Age of Georgia was followed by a long period of decline that started with the invasions of Tamerlan around 1400 and lasted four hundred years. After the disintegration of Georgia in the late 15th century, the Monastery became the property of the kings of Imereti (West Georgia). At that time, the Academy had already been closed. Later monks used its building as a refectory. In 1510, the Gelati Monastery was burnt down by the invading Turks. The fire particularly harmed wall paintings of the main church and that of St George. King Bagrat III restored the buildings and in 1519 established there an Episcopal See. Between 1565 and 1578, the See of the Catholicos of West Georgia was moved from Bichvinta (in Abkhazia) to Gelati. The Church of St George became a Catholicate Cathedral.

In 1759, the Monastery was set on fire by the horde of the Lezghians. In 1770s and 1780s, King Solomon I made efforts to restore it. He imported copper sheets from Russia specially to cover the main church of the Monastery.

After the conquest of the Kingdom of Imereti by the Russian Empire in 1810, the Russian authorities decided to put an end to the ecclesiastical independence of West Georgia as well. They abolished the Catholicate of West Georgia in 1814 and the Gelati Episcopal See in 1820.

The Monastery was functioning until the Soviet occupation of Georgia. In 1923, it was closed and turned into a branch of the Kutaisi Museum. The major buildings of the Gelati Monastery, except for the Academy, were in a relatively good condition. Conservation and restoration work was conducted in Gelati in 1962 and 1963. A new roof covering of tin plates was made above the churches and the bell tower. The Academy was partly restored (without roof).

Religious service and monastic life resumed in Gelati in 1988.

Monuments within the property

Location in a picturesque natural setting on the gentle slope of the hill adds to the beauty of the Gelati Monastery. Monastic buildings stand on a natural terrace with a scarped edge on the western side. Below the Monastery, the village stretches down the hill to the riverside while the upper part of the hill is covered with deciduous forest.

The overall planning concept of the site is clear. High domed buildings, i. e. the churches and the bell-tower occupy the centre of the enclosure with the main church rising in the very middle while the lesser buildings stand – and apparently stood in the early times of the Monastery - around its edge.

The Church of the Nativity of the Virgin is the largest building and the main church of the Monastery. Its construction was begun by King David the Builder in 1106 and completed under his son, King Demetre I in 1130. The church is inscribed-cross in plan, with dome resting on the corners of the apse walls and two massive piers. The facing of the church is of smoothly finished yellowish limestone blocks, some of which are very large. According to tradition, the largest blocks were placed there by King David the Builder himself. The east façade has three pentagonal apses projecting in pentagons. The façades are decorated with blind decorative arches, which are echoed in the window frames. Carved ornamentation was made only on certain elements of the façades, e.g. on a decorative boss under the middle window of the sanctuary.

On the west, the church has a narthex from which three large doors lead to the church. The arched baldachin in the southern part of the narthex was built around 1660 as a commemorative chapel of King Alexander III of Imereti (West Georgia). A porch was added to the southern entrance of the church around 1140. The chapels of St Andrew and St Marina respectively to the east and to the west of the porch date from the same period; however the latter was reconstructed in the 13th century. The northern porch and the chapel of the Saviour to its east date from the early 13th century. The second chapel of St Marina to the west of the northern porch and adjacent chamber were added in the mid-13th century. The façades of the later chapels and porches have ashlar facing of the same yellowish limestone and are in harmony with the external appearance of the church.

The airy space of the church is lit up by sixteen windows in the drum and twelve large windows in the cross arms and sanctuary. To the west, the church has a gallery at first-floor level, the northwest and southwest corners of which are provided with two stairways. The apse is flanked by side chambers, a prothesis and diaconicon. The episcopal seat on the High

Place in the sanctuary was made in 1519 by the order of Bishop Melchisedec Sakvarelidze. The baldachin over the episcopal throne to the east of the north pier was commissioned by Metropolitan, later Catholicos, Joseph Bagrationi in 1760.



Photo 2. Church of the Nativity of the Virgin. Interior view looking east

The interior of the church is a marvellous marriage of architecture and wall painting. Upon entering the church, the viewer's glance is directed to the mosaic which occupies the most important place – the conch of the apse. The mosaic executed between 1125 and 1130 is an outstanding monument of Medieval Georgian art. It shows the Virgin with Child flanked by Archangels on a glittering gold background that is radiating all over the interior and forms excellent setting for the images. At present, the mosaic occupies the conch of the apse (almost 50 m² area). Its lower part had been damaged in the fire of 1510 and was replaced with painting in the following decades. The mosaic was composed mostly of small smalts that are extremely rich in tints and shades. Natural materials extracted near Gelati - sandstone and limestone of various colours and jet (black amber) were also used.

The wall paintings of the narthex, also executed between 1125 and 1130, are remarkable for their iconography. The centre of the vault features the Ascension of the Cross by the Archangels, the vault and the upper registers of the walls display the seven ecumenical councils, and the window has St Euphemia's Miracle at the Council of Chalcedon. The murals, characterized by monumentality, soft modelling, refined colour and the individuality of the images, are ranked among the best examples of 12th century Georgian wall paintings.

The majority of the paintings in the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin date from the period after 1510, the year when Gelati was set on fire by the Turks. The murals were executed in several stages during the 16th century. Painting of the dome representing Christ Pantokrator with apocalyptic symbols and the prophets in the drum belong to 1520s. Representations of the Divine Liturgy and the Communion of the Apostles in the apse and of the scenes from the life of the Virgin in the chancel bay date from the 1550s. The Great Feasts in the north and south arms and the Passions in the west arm were painted in 1550s and between 1565 and 1578. The murals also contain numerous donor portraits of royal persons and high clerics. In the lower register of the north wall, along with the kings of Imereti, David the Builder is represented as well. Though dated from the 16th century, the portrait is very important since it is the only preserved medieval image of the king.

Murals can also be seen in the chapels and porches of the church. Among them the most significant is the wall painting of the Chapel of St Andrew commissioned by the King David VI Narin and dated from 1291 and 1292. It contains the double portrait of the king. Wall painting of the first Chapel of St Marina belongs to the so-called "folk trend," which prevailed in West Georgia in the 16th century. The murals of other chapels date from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries.

Church of St George was constructed to the east of the main church in the mid-13th century. Actually, it is a reduced copy of the main church, though it shows some departures from the original, such as more elevated proportions, which affiliates it with 13th century Georgian architecture. Unlike the main church, it has no upper gallery. The dome rests on the corners of the apse walls and two round monolithic columns. On the west, there is a three-arched narthex. Façades have more lavish adornment that includes carved ornamentation of window frames. The church was damaged during the 1510 invasion by the Turks and was renovated by King Bagrat III (1510-1565). The small chapels arranged at the south and north edges of the narthex are of that period. A painted sculpture of St George carved by the priest Ioanne Bakhtadze (†1850) can be seen on the west façade of the narthex.

Originally, St George's was built as a "Queen's church," i. e. a praying chapel or a burial place of the queens of Georgia and later those of Imereti. Under Catholicos Evdemon Chkhetidze (1557-1578), after the transfer of the see of the Bitchvinta Catholicos to Gelati, the church became a cathedral, rather than the main church of the Monastery.

The church of St George was painted between 1565 and 1583 by order of the Catholicos Evdemon I Chkhetidze and King George II of Imereti. The programme of the murals highlights the importance of the church as a cathedral and royal burial place: the dome is taken up by the theme of the Glory of Christ; the conch depicts the Virgin flanked by the apostles Peter and Paul; the apse and the chancel bay feature the themes of the eucharistic sacrifice and the resurrection. Along with the extended cycle of the Great Feasts, scenes from the life of St George are also displayed. Among the figures of the prophets and saints, the Georgian martyrs David and Constantine Mkheidze are depicted. The lower register of the paintings is almost fully occupied by the portraits of the kings and queens of Imereti.

The murals of the Church of St George are among the best examples of Post-Byzantine art. They owe much to late Palaeologan art; however, the relatively laconic representation and tectonic compositional structure are indicative of local artistic traditions.



Photo 3. Academy, Church of St Nicholas, and bell-tower

The Church of St Nicholas, standing 10 meters to the west of the main church, dates from the late 13th century. The church is two-storied, which makes it almost unique in the Georgian church architecture. All four sides of the lower storey consist of arches, supported by corner piers. For this reason, in old records, the building is referred to as a “four-columned church” The upper storey is a small domed church, cruciform in plan, but with very short cross-arms. The altar apse, adorned with blind arches, projects sharply with a pentagonal exterior. The windows have neatly profiled frames. Originally, the church must have been accessed through a wooden staircase. Later a stone stairway was built to the northern wall.

In 1650, when Russian ambassadors arrived in Gelati, the church had already been neglected. In 1770, it was restored by Catholicos Joseph Bagrationi.

Bell-Tower. A pool and a spring to the northwest of the main church, dating from the time of the foundation of the Monastery, receive water from outside the Monastery. The pool was covered with a square structure, open through arches on three sides. The building was altered in the second half of the 13th century to accommodate a bell-tower above it. This is one of the oldest bell-towers in Georgia. A stone stairway leading to the arched octagonal belfry was made in the wall. The first floor, above the spring, shelters a low, vaulted room with a fireplace and two windows, which was sometimes used as a prison in the late Middle Ages. In the last years of his life, Catholicos Joseph Bagrationi (†1776) enclosed himself in this room as a protest against the disreputable activity of his brother, King Solomon I.

Both the churches of St George and St Nicholas and the bell tower have ashlar facing of the same yellowish limestone as the main church, which contributes to the integrity of the architectural ensemble of the Monastery.

Academy. A large, oblong hall of rectangular plan, standing to the west of the Church of St Nicholas fits well into the Monastery ensemble. According to established opinion, it housed the Gelati Academy, founded by David the Builder, and must be dated to the foundation of the Monastery. The Academy is built of coarsely dressed stones. The west wall rising from the edge of a cliff is pierced with eight large arched windows, which command a spectacular view of the area. The east wall has three doors, the central one being the largest. A stone bench runs along the walls, above which niches can be observed.

In the early 14th century, an arched porch covered by a richly ornamented scalloped vault was added to the central eastern entrance of the Academy. The arches of the porch rest on low quatrefoil piers topped with wide, massive capitals, the north-eastern of which bears the carved image of a lion on its western face. An ornamental rosette, framed with a thick fillet, can be seen above the arch on the east façade of the porch. The academy used to have another porch to the west, of which only ruined walls remain.

In the 16th century, the hall was converted into a refectory, in which in 1651 Alexander III, king of Imereti, arranged a feast for Russian ambassadors. In the early 19th century the building collapsed, after which it was neglected. Conservation and partial restoration works were carried out in 1962 and 1963. In 2009, the hall was restored once again and covered with a timber roof.

Excavations conducted in 2008 and 2009 revealed a previously unsuspected basement under the Academy building. In the late Middle Ages, it was divided into two chambers. The larger one served as a wine cellar and the smaller one as a cold store.

Structural remains adjacent to the Academy. As a result of the excavations of 2008 and 2009, the remains of a large structure were unearthed to the north of the Academy, immediately adjacent to the northern wall of its basement. The structure was formed as a result of several building periods dating from the 12th to the 19th century. It consists of a long passage running from south to north with chambers of various sizes on both sides. A small portion of the barrel vault of the passage survived in its northern part. The discovery suggests that the subsidiary buildings from the Academy northwards may all have been linked by vaulted passages.

To the north of these remains, a small rectangular structure built of rubble stone can be found, which probably served as an oil press. Its roof is missing.

Circuit Wall and Gates. The monastic precinct of more than four hectares is enclosed by a wall built of coarsely dressed stones. The wall, presumably of the same age as the Monastery itself, was repaired under the guidance of Isidore Berekashvili in 1895 and 1896. It also serves as a retaining wall in the north and, partly, in the west.

The wall circuit has two gates. The smaller one on the north-eastern side has served as the main entrance to the Monastery ever since the 17th century. Originally, however, the road led to the southern gate that dates to the early years of the Monastery. Having undergone numerous alterations, it has taken the shape of an elongated vaulted passage with wide

arches to the north and south. In the centre of the passage is the grave of David the Builder, whose huge tombstone is carved with the following inscription: “This is my resting place forever: here will I dwell for I desired so.” The stone is positioned so that those who wish to enter the gate have to step onto it. Tradition holds that this was the wish of King David himself.

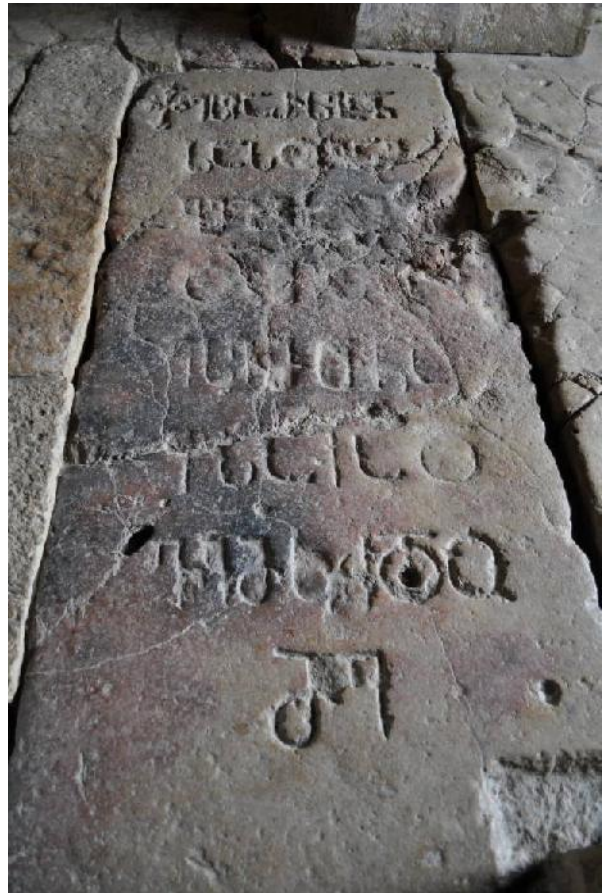


Photo 4.
Tombstone of king David the Builder

Preserved in the gate is an iron door which, according to its Arabic inscription, was made in 1062 by the blacksmith Al-Hadad Ibrahim by order of the Emir of Gandza Abu-I-Asvari. The Georgian king, Demetre I took it as a trophy in 1139, during a campaign in Gandza, and presented it to the Gelati Monastery.

In the late Middle Ages, the southern gate served as a Chapel of St Demetre and was painted. Together with the separately standing figures and the Great Feasts of the Nativity and the Raising of Lazarus, the representations of the miracle of the Calming of the Sea by Christ and the Tree of Jesse can be seen in the preserved fragments of murals that date from the later half of the 17th century.

Houses. To the west of the southern Gate, there is a single-storey house built for the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze in 1890s after the design of the architect Vertsinsky, under the guidance of Isidore Berekashvili. It stands over the ruins of a medieval structure.

Another single-storey house standing to the east of the southern gate (south of the main church) was constructed by master builders from the Berakashvili family in 1882. In the outer right corner of its veranda, a fragment of a medieval round column and its capital are inserted.

To the east of this house, there was an 18th-century wooden house, a good example of a western-Georgian village dwelling. Since 2000s, it was used by monks. On November 9, 2014, it was completely burnt in fire (for details see Section 4.6.)

A single-storey house to the north of the main church dates from the late 19th century. At present, it serves as the dwelling of the abbot. Its high basement contains the remains of a 12th or 13th-century building that consisted of several rooms.

Graves. The Gelati Monastery was a burial place of the Georgian royal family of the Bagratians. According to written sources, apart from David the Builder, the monarchs of Georgia Demetre I, George III, Queen Tamar, George IV, Queen Rusudan, Vakhtang II, David IX, and Bagrat VI are buried there, but their graves are lost. The grave of David VI Narin is in the chapel of St Andrew. Also, the graves of the kings of Imereti (West Georgia) Rostom I, George III, Alexander III, George VI Solomon I, and Solomon II are to be found in the main church and its chapels.

Evidence and results of study

History

The earliest description of the Gelati Monastery can be found in the account of the Russian ambassadors Tolochanov and Ievliev, who visited the kingdom of Imereti from 1651 to 1652. Among other sites, they paid particular attention to the Gelati Monastery and provided important notes on its buildings and treasures that were kept there. In the 19th century, the Gelati Monastery was visited and described by Johann Anton Güldenstädt, Christian Martin Frähn, Frédéric Dubois de Montpéreux, Karl Edward Eichwald, George Avalishvili, etc.

Archaeology

The first archaeological investigation in Gelati was conducted by G. Tsereteli in 1880. He excavated graves from the Antique period and found some coins there. From 1940 to 1960, extensive excavations were carried out in the Gelati Monastery. On the initiative of the director of Kutaisi Museum M. Gogsadze, the interior of the Academy was cleared in 1939. In 1945, under the leadership of S. Kauhkhishvili clearance of the south-west corner and the porch of the Academy was performed. During conservation and restoration works conducted in Gelati in 1962 and 1963, test trenches revealed original benches of 0, 5 m width behind the late Medieval wide benches in the interior of the Academy. In 1968, V. Tsintsadze conducted restoration works at Sokhasteri, a group of Medieval structures located about 250 m north-east of the Gelati Monastery. During these works, parts of the Sokhasteri church were unearthed and cleared under the supervision of V. Japaridze and L. Jikia.

Further extensive archaeological study of the territory of the Gelati Monastery started in 2007 in connection with planned conservation works. Excavations carried out between 2007 and 2014 by the team of the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve led by R. Isakadze gave significant results both for the conservation of the Monastery buildings and for the better understanding of its history.

According to the evidence of 15 archaeological and 32 geological trenches, archaeologically sensitive sections have been identified and mapped in 2007 and 2008. Findings supported a

suggestion made earlier on the basis of the study of written sources about the existence of early Medieval buildings in Gelati. Glazed tiles of different colours discovered through the excavations served as a guide for the colours of new tiles, which were made for roof repair works at the churches of St George and St Nicholas and the bell-tower.

Archaeological investigations conducted in 2008 in the building of the Academy revealed original benches in the interior of the Academy; a wine cellar that has two archaeological layers, one dating from 12th to 15th centuries and the other from 16th to 17th centuries; a cold store of the 17th or 18th century; and a vaulted passage that connected the Academy with other buildings of the Monastery. The results of the archaeological investigations formed the scientific basis for the rehabilitation project of the Academy building.

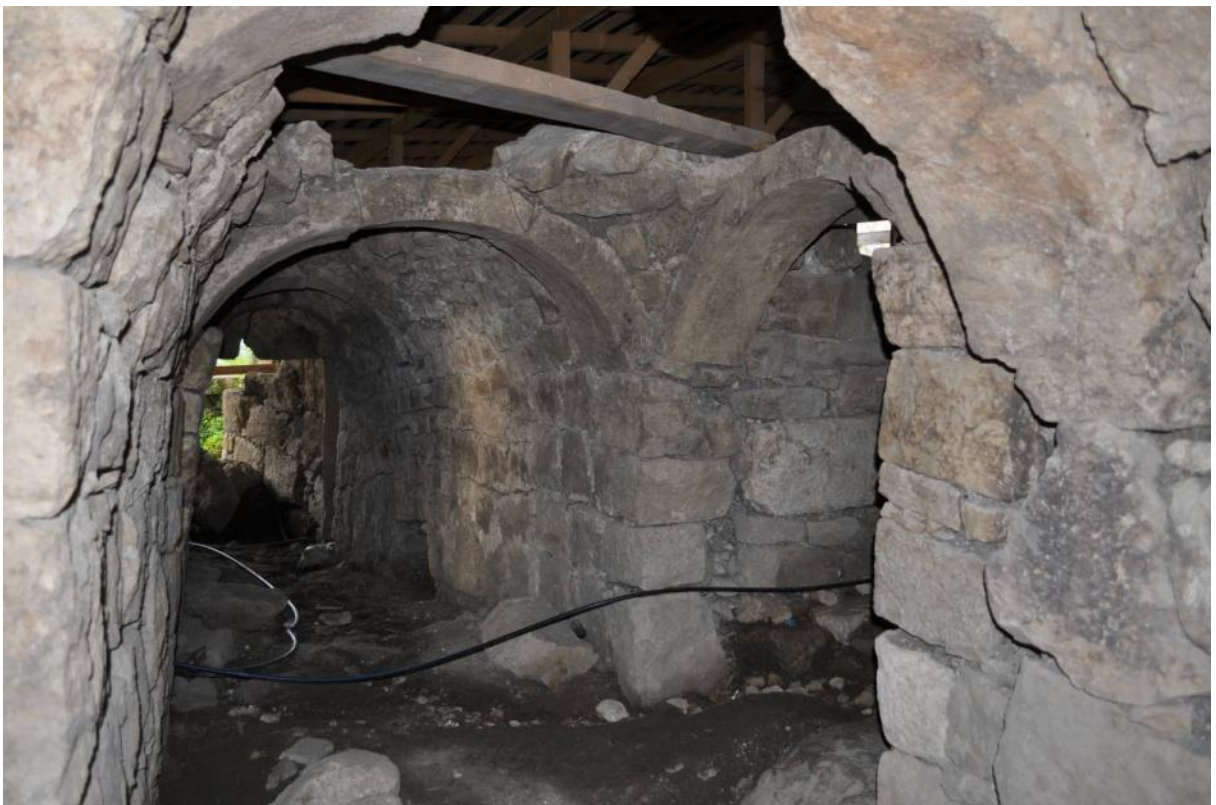


Photo 5. Vaulted passage adjacent to the Academy excavated in 2008

In 2009, excavations were carried out to the north of the Academy. They led to the discovery of a large building complex that consists of a long passage running from south to north with chambers of various sizes on both sides. Building layers dating from the twelfth to the early twentieth centuries have been revealed in a stratigraphic sequence. In view of possible future archaeological exploration, the site was mapped and divided into a network of squares.

In 2010, archaeological work was focused on the southern gate of the Monastery, which is also known as King David the Builder's Gate. At least three archaeological layers were identified on the site. Excavations unearthed the 12th century footsteps leading from the grave of David the Builder to the south, to a paved road. A gravestone of an unknown person, with *Asomtavruli* Georgian inscription "Adai, the son of Nerchi", was revealed next

to the lower footstep. The stone dates back to the early years of the Monastery. Again the results of the archaeological work provided valuable data for the conservation of the Gate.

Architecture and Wall Painting

The first publications on the Gelati Monastery were largely confined to general reviews and descriptive records. Systematic academic research began in the 1950s and was conducted by art and architectural historians from the George Chubinashvili Institute for Georgian Art History (now the George Chubinashvili National Research Centre), the State Museum of Georgia, and Kutaisi State Historical Museum. These studies made it possible to establish a chronology of construction and embellishment of the Gelati Monastery, to assess its historical and artistic significance, and to identify and explain stylistic, iconographical, and technical peculiarities of monastic buildings and their murals.

Books, albums, and a great number of articles have been published about the Gelati Monastery (see bibliography). The Monastery has been the subject of study not only by local but by foreign scholars as well. A number of Ph.D. and doctoral theses concerning one or other aspect of the Monastery has been written.

Key works about Gelati include a monograph on the history and architecture of the Monastery (R. Mepisashvili, *Architectural Ensemble of Gelati*, Tbilisi, 1966 - in Russian), special studies of the 12th century murals (T. Virsaladze, "Fragments of Old Mural Painting of the Main Church in Gelati," *Ars Georgica* 5, Tbilisi, 1959; reprint: T. Virsaladze, *Selected Works*, Tbilisi, 2007 – in Russian) and the mosaic (L. Khuskivadze, *The Mosaic of Gelati*, Tbilisi, 2005). The most complete book on the Gelati Monastery was published in 2007 by the George Chubinashvili National Research Centre. This is a bilingual Georgian-English volume, which summarizes current knowledge of all aspects of the Monastery.

In all, hundreds of research papers, articles, and books have been published on various aspects of the Gelati Monastery including its history, archaeology, architecture, wall painting, and objects of art. The great majority of them are written in Georgian and some of them are in Russian thus being unavailable for a wide international public. There is still a lack of publications in Western languages.

Present protection status and management

The Gelati Monastery has been a Listed Monument of National Significance since the Soviet period. Currently it is listed in the national register of monuments by the presidential decree from 07.11.2006.

The Gelati Monastery was inscribed in the UNESCO list of World Heritage in 1994 together with the Bagrati Cathedral (Ref. 710) under criterion (iv). As a result of the extensive restoration of the Bagrati Cathedral, the World Heritage Committee and Georgian government, on the recommendation of ICOMOS, agreed in 2013 to remove the Bagrati Cathedral from the World Heritage property and to propose a major boundary modification

to redefine the site as the Gelati monastery. The Major Boundary Modification Document was submitted by the State Party in February 2014.

The Gelati Monastery has both physical and visual protection areas. The latter has recently been extended to provide an adequate buffer zone. The new Buffer Zone is defined by the Ministerial Decree #03/5 from January 9, 2014 and proposed in the major boundary modification document.

In accordance with the Constitutional Agreement concluded between the State of Georgia and the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia in 2002, all ecclesiastic buildings in Georgia, the Gelati Monastery among them, are owned by the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia.

The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia is the main body to define the general strategy, develop policies on protection of cultural heritage, and coordinate their implementation. The National Agency for Cultural Heritage of Georgia, a subordinated body to the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, ensures the protection of the visual integrity of the site within its designated protection zone and undertakes the physical conservation of the property.

Both the Church and the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia are involved in the management of the Monastery. The Monastery administration is responsible for day to day management of the site, general upkeep of the territory, ensuring safety, basic cleaning and maintenance within the precinct. Gelati is open for visitors and there are no special regulations established.

On the side of the State, the management of the property is implemented by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia and its structural unit - the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve. The Agency is responsible for monitoring and maintaining good state of conservation of the site, providing proper methodology for interventions and issuing permits, providing a general management framework as well as visitor facilities and information. The agency also acts in case of illegal or inappropriate intervention (penal actions; criminal proceedings), ensures the proper documentation and recording of the site and reports to World Heritage Centre as appropriate.

Conservation and rehabilitation

The components of the Monastery are preserved in an authentic state. The state of conservation of the components varies from component to component. Restoration works had been conducted on different buildings of the Monastery already in the late Middle Ages and in the 19th century. However, major conservation works were implemented in the 20th century that included roofing of the churches and the bell tower, cleaning and conservation of the murals in the Main Church and its narthex and chapels, cleaning and conservation of the mosaic, and cleaning and partial restoration of the Academy.

Conservation Master Plan

The Conservation Master Plan for the Gelati Monastery was developed in 2008 on the initiative and with the support of the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sports

(now the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection) of Georgia. In 2009, The Master Plan was approved by the State as well as by the Patriarchate of the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia. Both parties are committed to its implementation. It has also been reviewed and approved by UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. In 2015, the Conservation Master Plan was updated to reflect new realities and meet current and future needs of the Site

All conservation and rehabilitation works since 2008 have been conducted in full conformity with the Master Plan. Despite having no legal status, it provides a formal framework for the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation to implement conservation works on the site on a sustainable basis. The Conservation Master Plan provides full documentation of the site components, rehabilitation projects for each of the architectural components as well as plans for archaeological excavations and for conservation of wall paintings.

The development of the Conservation Master Plan was an important step forward towards the improvement of the state of conservation of the site. The intensive research and archaeological works enabled the development of the individual rehabilitation projects for different components of the site. The Master Plan provides a full set of updated documentation and research material to plan the long term conservation of the monastic buildings. It guarantees the preservation of the authenticity of the site; conservation and rehabilitation of all its components and at the same time its presentation to visitors and its utilization by the clergy.

Apart from specific conservation aspects, the Master Plan deals with issues such as proposals for zoning of the territory of the Monastery to ensure the privacy for monks and enough space for visitors; plans for infrastructure within the Monastery (water supply, sewerage, electricity, heating, ventilation, drainage, etc); designs for interpretation boards and other visitor facilities (benches, lighting, etc.); and designs for the visitor centre outside the walls of the Monastery. Also, based on the possible needs specified by the Monastery administration, the Master Plan provides the plan for new cells in case the number of monks should exceed the capacity of their present dwellings and the need for the extension arises.

The following works have already been completed at the site:

- Conservation and restoration of the Church of St Nicholas
- Conservation and restoration of the Academy building and reconstruction of its roof
- Conservation and restoration of the bell tower
- Conservation and restoration of the bishop Gabriel Kikodze's house
- Cleaning, conservation and restoration of the south gate
- Restoration of the east gate
- Conservation of the wall paintings in the Church of St George
- Conservation of the wall paintings in the dome of the Main Church
- Roofing of the dome of the Main Church
- Roofing of the dome of the Church of St George
- Stone conservation on the dome of the Main Church
- Installation of a structural belt in the dome of the Main Church

Ongoing projects include:

- Cleaning and Conservation of the chapels of the main church
- Conservation of the socle of the main church
- Roofing of the chapels of the main church
- Conservation of wall paintings in the Main Church and its chapels
- Conservation of mosaics in the Main Church
- Roofing of the lower parts of the Main Church
- Roofing of the lower parts of the Church of St George

The methodology of works was based on *Minimum Intervention* principles and was normally limited to: dismantling and re-assembling the loosened stones, fixing and plastering with lime, cleaning the stones, infilling the missing stones, replacing with traditional tiles the tin roof coverings installed in 20th century.

Information on the abovementioned projects has regularly been submitted to the WHC in 2009-2016.

Sources of funding for conservation

The main sources for funding conservation and rehabilitation works in the Gelati Monastery are the state budget, grants and donations. The state budget has supported most conservation and restoration works, as well as elaboration of the Conservation Master Plan. The budget is allocated to the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation, which, according to the rules of state procurement, plans and manages implementation of different conservation activities at the site. The Conservation Master Plan and the decisions of the World Heritage Committee serve as the basis for defining the annual action plan and the respective budget. The state funding for the conservation of the Monastery has been stable and mostly adequate for the last 10 years. The figures below give the information on the budget of the National Agency over the last seven years:

2008	475,604.00 GEL
2009	533,514.00 GEL
2011	170,775.00 GEL
2012	68,000.00 GEL
2013	51,990.63 GEL
2014	39,957.16 GEL
2015	59,830.00 GEL

The Georgian Historical Monuments Protection and Rescue Foundation is another major source of financing for the cultural heritage sites in Georgia. In 2010-2011 it allocated the total amount of 210,000.00 GEL for the different rehabilitation projects in the Gelati Monastery.

In 2012, agreement was reached with the World Bank to ensure necessary financing for the conservation and research works in the Main Church as well as for the construction of the

visitor centre within the scope of the Second Regional Development Project for the Imereti Region. The overall amount estimated for these works is USD 600,000.

As early as 2003, the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) funded diagnostic investigation of the murals of St. Marina Chapel of the Main Church. In 2012, AFCP supported the conservation of these murals by a USD 40,880 grant. In 2013, the project of the architectural rehabilitation and conservation of the Main church was supported by USD 600,000 grant from AFCP. The project is expected to be completed in 2017. It is implemented by the Tbilisi State Academy of Fine Arts and the Georgian Arts and Culture Centre. In 2014, the U.S. Embassy announced an additional donation of USD 50,000 for the conservation of mosaics in the Main Church. In 2016, additional USD 150,000 grant was confirmed for the stone conservation of the main church.

The Swiss National Science Foundation supported a two-year (2010-2011) project that aimed at developing the stone conservation programme at the site. The project was implemented by the Restoration Faculty of the Tbilisi State Academy of Fine Arts in partnership with the Lugano University. It included student exchange and on site workshops with the guidance of international specialists.

Compared to the allocations from the budget of the National Agency and the donor organizations the financial contribution of the church administration to conservation-restoration of the Gelati Monastery is rather modest. The church provides funds mainly for the operation of the Monastery. However the work that is being undertaken by the monks – cleaning, providing basic security, etc. is a very valuable in kind contribution to the overall conservation of the property.

Sites and monuments in the Buffer Zone

The environs of the Gelati Monastery are dotted with remains of antiquity (see the map on Figure 3). The most important monuments in the immediate vicinity of the property are described in this section.

Church of the Virgin, known as “the Spring of Life” stands 180 m north-east of the eastern gate of the Monastery, on the side of the road. It was built in the 17th century and was renewed in 1903. The facades, faced with hewn blocks, are plain. The church has its only door in the west. A well leading down to the headwork of the underground aqueduct is about 10 m to the south of the church. The aqueduct is probably of the same age as the Monastery. It still supplies the Monastery with fresh water that flows through 200 m long pipes from the headwork to the spring located in the ground floor of the bell-tower. The aqueduct was repaired and medieval pipes were replaced with glazed ceramic ones during the renovation in 1903.

Sokhasteri. A group of structures, commonly called Sokhasteri, is located on a slope 250 m north-east of the Monastery. It is assumed that originally it served as a shelter for the deceased and, according to the chronicles, had been founded by king David the Builder. Later, a separate monastery appeared there. Sokhasteri has two yards encircled by a wall. To

the west of the large yard, there is a 12th century single-nave church faced with hewn stone. It has side chapels to south and north and a narthex and exonarthex to the west. A three-storey residential tower stands 5 m to the east of the church. In the 19th century, Sokhasteri was abandoned and ruined. Between 1968 and 1972, the church and the tower were cleaned and partly restored.

Church of Holy Archangels is a small single-nave structure standing to the north of the Monastery. It was built in 2003 over the ruins of an old church, which may have been the church of the Holy Archangels built long before the foundation of the Gelati Monastery and destroyed during the invasion of the Arabs led by Murvan-Ibn-Muhammad from 735 to 737.

Remains of a two-storey church are found on a slope, 50 m south of the southern gate of the Monastery. The lower storey, which served as a burial vault is now completely buried and is therefore in a better state of preservation. It has no windows and is lit only through a door made in the west wall. The upper floor used to be taken up by a chapel, of which only several stones have survived.

To the south-east of the Monastery, on the slopes covered with forests there are three churches. At present, all three are branches of the Gelati Monastery and are used by monks. **Church of St Saba** is the closest to the Monastery. Presumably it was built in the 12th or 13th century. This single-nave church is faced with large stone slabs. Three plain crosses are carved above the east and south windows and on the west door lintel. Inside, the largest portion of the floor is taken up by graves. **Church of St Elijah** standing about 400 m from the Monastery is of the same age as St Saba's. It is a single-nave church with annexes to north and west. The regular masonry of neatly cut stone of its façade and the adornment of the west door should be the result of the 19th century restoration. The walls of the church were painted in the 16th century by Giorgi Jokhtaberidze, a master of the so-called "vernacular trend" of the late Medieval Georgian painting. **Church of St Nino** is the furthestmost from the Monastery. It stands among the remains of medieval structures that cover a large area. They include fragments of a circuit wall and a cistern. The small, single-nave church is built of coarsely hewn stones. Its vaults and upper portions of walls had collapsed in the late Middle Ages and were fully restored in 2007. A large complex of monastic structures was built close to the church in recent years.

A fort and a watch tower, ascribed to the king David the Builder by tradition, stand on the David's Cape, 300 m south-west of the Monastery. Having a strategic location, this fort was used to control the main road running along the Tskaltsitela Gorge. It consists of a round watch tower built of large stones, a vaulted compartment for storing food and a small rectangular cistern lined inside with waterproof mortar. It is assumed that the fort was destroyed during the invasion of Lezgians in 1759.

Bridges. Out of the nine old bridges preserved in different shapes in Gelati environs, five are on the Tskaltsitela River, three on the Korena River and one on the Sakira brook. A 17th century three-span bridge on the Tskaltsitela, renewed around 1850 by the priest Ioane Bakhtadze, is distinguished for its size; however only its pillars have been preserved. A single-span bridge on the Korena, 3,5 km north-west of the Monastery, is in a better state of preservation and is remarkable for its picturesque natural setting.

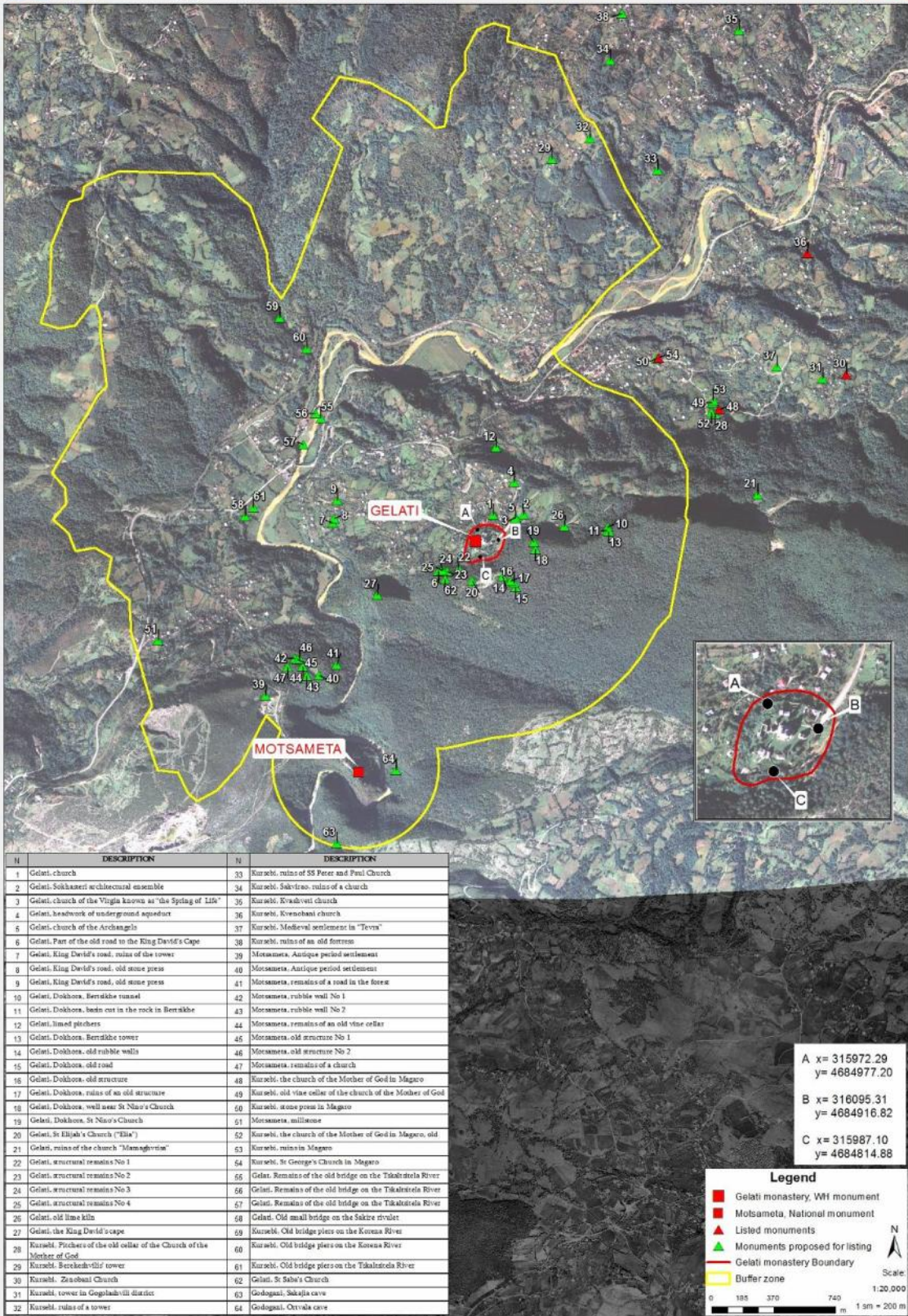


Figure 3. Listed monuments and monuments proposed for listing in the environs of the Gelati Monastery



Photo 6. Motsameta Monastery

Motsameta Monastery is located about 1,5 km to the south-west of the Gelati Monastery. It stands on a high and narrow cape projecting into the Tskaltsitela Canyon. In the early Middle Ages, there were on this site a fort and the Church of the Annunciation, which were destroyed by Arab troops led by Murvan-ibn-Muhammed. The princes of the Argveti Province David and Konstantine, martyred during the invasion, were buried in the crypt of the ruined church. King Bagrat IV (1027-1072) built a monastery on this site and made a burial of the martyred princes in its church. Later it was called Motsameta, i. e. [the Place] of Martyrs.

In the 19th century, the Motsameta Monastery underwent significant renovation. The main church assumed its present-day appearance after reconstruction conducted in 1840s and 1860s by master builders from the Berekashvili family. The church is an inscribed cross in plan with the dome rested on two piers and the sanctuary projections. The church is unusual

owing to its altar being located on its north side. The shrine, with the graves of St David and Konstantine, stands by the east wall, on a place elevated by five steps. In front of it can be seen two wooden sculptures of lying male lions (produced in 1840). Below the shrine is a passage for prayers. In the sanctuary, the 16th-century murals are preserved. The external stone-carved decoration of the church makes use of the elements of Medieval Georgian architecture, which is typical of the craftsmanship of the Berekashvili family.

A two-storey bell-tower, standing 1,5 m to the south of the church, was built between 1845 and 1847.

The gate of the monastery courtyard is a square room covered with a dome on pendentives. It forms the ground floor of a tower built in the 16th or 17th centuries. The gate links to a long closed corridor leading to the monastery. Remains of the circuit wall preserved on both sides of the gate display the masonry of large stone blocks, which can be dated back to the early Middle Ages. Outside the monastery, there are the remains of a late Medieval inn and a 16th century three-storey tower.

The rich history and beautiful natural setting make Motsameta a popular tourist destination. Besides, it is a living monastery. It attracts many pilgrims due to the relics of St David and Konstantine buried there.

2.3. Landscape and nature

Landscape

The landscape in the Buffer Zone is a cultural landscape characterized by both natural features and human influences. According to the UNESCO classification, it is an organically developed landscape that contains both relicts of past development and areas that are still in development (continuing landscape).

The project area encompasses the Gelati Plain, part of the Kursebi Plain, and the basin of the River Tskaltsitela, the elevation varies between 140 and 600 m above MSL. According to the geomorphologic map of Georgia, the project area is part of the Okriba hilly and low mountainous region, located in between the higher mountains of Georgia. The plain is a continuing landscape that is used for agriculture and settlements; the foothills are covered by forests and are more natural. The Monastery, old churches and traces of prehistoric inhabitants in the caves are the relicts of past development.

Relief

General

The following geo-morphological formations can be distinguished in the project area:

- The plain in the centre. This includes the Gelati Plain (length – 3, 5 km, width – 2, 5 km) and the Kursebi Plain (length – 2, 5 km, width – 2 km), which are separated by the Tskaltsitela River.

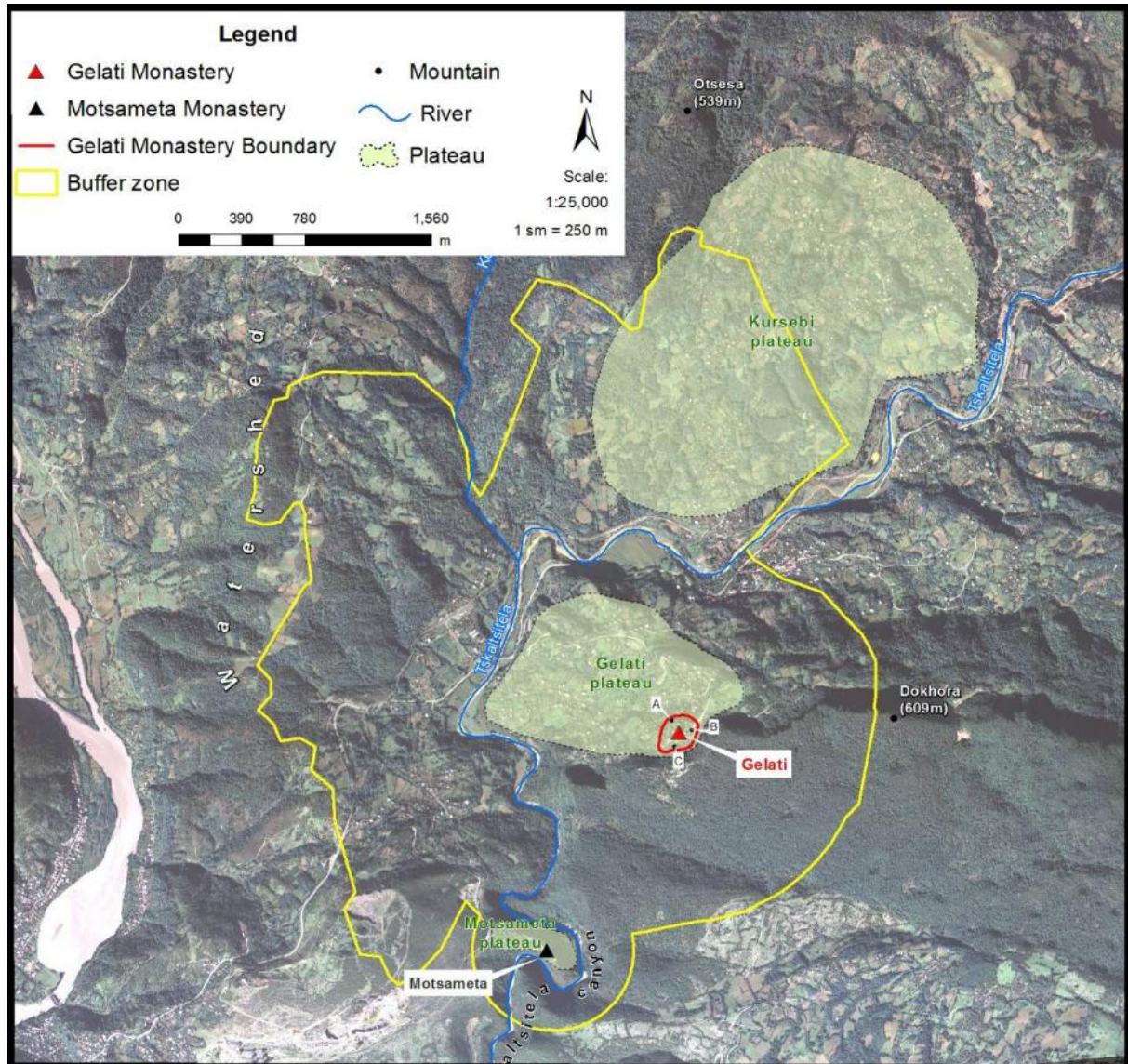


Figure 4. Topographical Map

- The Tskaltsitela River and its valley and gorges.
- The low mountains and cupola shaped hills around the plain with the following conspicuous points in the hinterland:
 - In the east part, the Dokhora (609 m) and Sakolavi (713 m) mountains.
 - In the southern part, the Motsameta Plateau with the Tskaltsitela Canyon.
 - In the northern part, the Otsesa Mountain (539 m) with adjacent hills.
 - In the western part, the east slope of the watershed of the Tskaltsitela up to the watershed divide between the Rioni and Tskaltsitela basins.

The characteristics of the natural and manmade landscape are to a large extent determined by this geo-morphological division. It is therefore used as basis for the Territorial Functional zoning and the related management strategies and measures. The characteristics of these spatial units are described in more detail below.

The plain

The Gelati and Kursebi Plains were formed in the Jurassic period from clays and sandstones, which are easily eroded. Erosion created a gently sloping, shallow concave plain (depression) that was modulated by local landslide-erosion and by deposition of clays, sandstones and diluvial proluvial sediments. This created landslide steps, shallow landslide gullies and ridges, eroded canyons and clefts that are characteristic for the relief on the Gelati and Kursebi Plains.

Higher up, alluvial fans mark the end of ancient river valleys, and along the Tskaltsitela, from 5-50 m above the river-bed, various old terraces can still be seen, that were formed in the past by erosion and accumulation.

The valley of the Tskaltsitela River

The Tskaltsitela River is a dominant landscape element in the project area. It starts at the Nakerala Mountain in Racha, it enters the territory near the village of Kursebi in the NE and leaves the area in the SW near Motsameta. The total length of the river is about 49 km; the length within the project area is about 8 km. In the first 4 km the river meanders through a floodplain with sandy islands that are constantly changing due to changing erosion and deposition patterns. Here the bottom of the river valley has a width of 500 to 700 m. in some places.

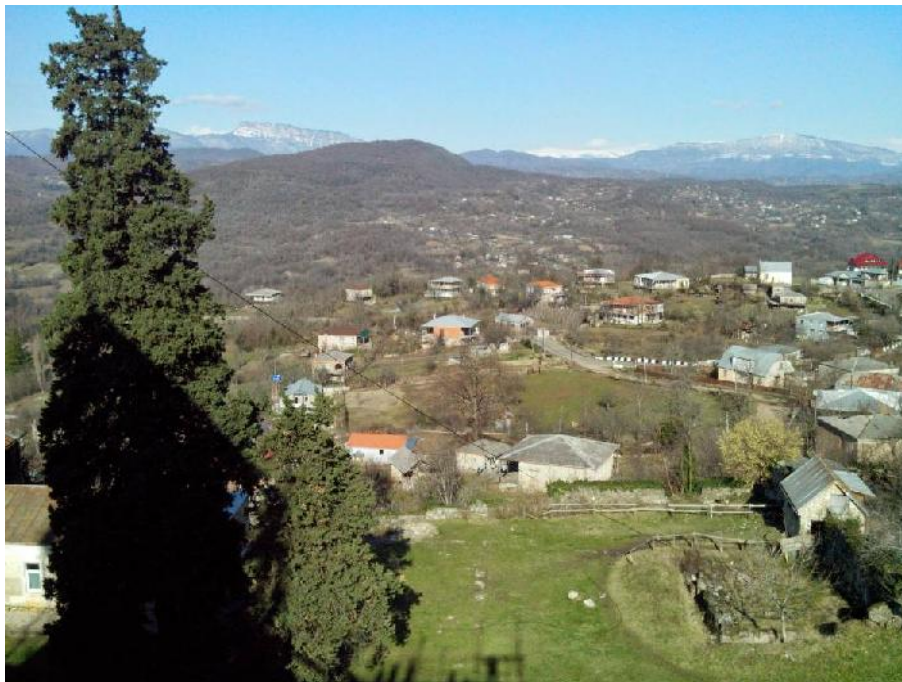


Photo 7. General view of the plain

Further downstream the river enters the mountains where it has carved a box shaped profile in the calcareous rocks. The width of the riverbed fluctuates here between 5-20 m. Near the villages Motsameta and Godogani the Tskaltsitela river flows through a canyon with a characteristic crest line and profile with karst funnels and karst cave, some of which have a protected status. One of these protected caves, the Sakajia Cave is located within the project

area. The mountainous area east of the river, up to the division between the watersheds of Rioni and Tskaltsitela, forms the west border of the project area. This part of the river has the status of a Natural Monument.



Photo 8. Tskaltsitela river in the Gelati plain



Photo 9. Tskaltsitela river near Motsameta

The low mountains and cupola shaped hills

The Northern part of the area consists of hard rock (tesenite) of intrusive (volcanic) origin. Here we find a sharp relief, with dome shaped mountains and hills (Otsesa Mountain and other) typical for this formation.

The Dokhora-Sakilavi, a limestone massif of the Jurassic period, dominates the south-east part of the project area. It is well known for its steep slopes, karst funnels, karst wells and niche shape formations. Along the steep north slope of the Dokhora Mountain at an elevation of 350 m above MSL an erosion plain was formed, presumably in the upper Pliocene or lower Quaternary. Here the Gelati Monastery was built.

Air and climate

The climate is temperate and humid, due to the proximity of the Black sea and the sheltering of the Caucasus Mountains in the north. According to the data from the Kutaisi, Orpiri, and Tkibuli meteorological stations, the average annual temperature fluctuates between 12,4 and 14,7 °C. The average temperature in July is 21,2 to 23,3 °C, and in January 1,8 to 4,8 °C. In summer the temperature reaches a maximum of 40 to 41 °C, the minimum in winter fluctuates between -19 and -27°C. The relative humidity of the air fluctuates between 70 and 75 %.

During the year the prevailing winds are easterly, but they are weak and often modulated by local effects, such as land-sea breeze effects and by geographic features such as mountain ridges and gorges. In summer, Westerly (marine) winds predominate. The average annual wind speed is 3-4 m/s.

The annual precipitation is 1300 to 1800 mm. Summers are dry; snow is common in winters although winters without snow may occur. A snow cover has an average thickness of 10 to 30 cm and may stay from mid-December to April. On average the amount of the days with a permanent snow cover is 25 to 35 per year.



Photo 10. The Dokhora Mountain with the Gelati Monastery

Water and hydrological regime

Winds from the Black sea carry humid air to the land. The Caucasus Mountains force the wind to flow upward where the water vapour condenses into water or snow; this is the source of the rivers that run through the area and create the characteristic valleys in the quaternary deposits in the plain.

The Tskaltsitela River is the main element of the hydrological scheme of the Gelati area. On the way down the discharge increases as smaller tributaries join the main artery. The Tskaltsitela River and its tributaries are nourished mainly by rainwater. The discharge is high in spring, and low in winter. The average annual discharge of the Tskaltsitela in its lower part, where it joins the Kvirila River, is 7,56 m³/sec. Flashfloods are common, they may occur more than 10 times per year. Extreme flashfloods occur when intensive rainfall and melting of snow coincide. In that case, the discharge reaches a maximum of 242 m³/sec and the water level can be 5 m higher than the average annual level. In such cases some parts of the territories next to the riverbed are inundated and strongly eroded.

Vegetation, flora, and fauna

Vegetation

The natural conditions of the project area - the low altitude, the gently sloping plain and the temperate and humid climate –are favourable for development of the broadleaved Kolkhic type forest (*Quercus iberica and Carpinus orientalis*). In the early Middle Ages the main part of this area was covered with these forests. Due to the mild climate and fertile soils there was a rich variety of plants that in turn attracted a wide range of fauna species.

Human activity has changed this natural landscape into a cultural landscape. Settlements, arable land, pastures, vegetable and fruit gardens and secondary bushes replaced the forests. However, isolated patches survived with close to natural conditions where remains of the original vegetation still can be found. As conditions for self-restoration are favourable these traditional flora species can be protected and preserved and more rare and endangered species may return in these niches. A strict protection regime for these patches in combination with a sustainable development regime for the cultural components of the landscape should be enforced, however.

Flora

Typical species of the Kolkhic type forest are *Quercus iberica*, *Carpinus caucasica*, *Carpinus orientalis*, *Tilia caucasica*, *Alnus barbata*, *Picea orientalis*, *Pirus caucasica*, *Malus orientalis*, *Sorbus torminalis*, *Acer loetum*, *Acer campestre*, *Frangula alnus*, *Cornus mas*; the following red data species can be found: *Quercus hartvissiana*, *Acer ibericum*, *Taxus baccata*, *Ulmus minor* and *Castanea sativa*. In the areas around the Gelati Monastery and in the yards of the churches individual exemplars of *Zelkova caprinifolia*. This was widespread in the past but is now rare and included in the Red data list. Also in the understorey typical species can be found such as: *Coypus avellana*, *Crataegus pentagyna*, *Crataegus monogina*, *Rubus caesius*, *Mespilus germanica*, *Rhododendron luteum*, *Cotinus coggygri* and the Red data species *Rhododendron ponticum*, *Staphylea colchica*, together with lianas *Smilax excelsa*, *Hedera colchica* and other. In some places bushes of the rare species *Buxus colchica* can be found.

Fauna

As the area is densely populated wild life is scarce. Still some fauna species can be found: *Canis lupus*, *Canis aureus*, *Vulpes vulpes*, *Felis silvestris*, *Lepus europaeus*, *Clethrionomys glareolus* (endangered, included in the Red data list), *Microtus maiori*, *Microtus arvalis*, *Apodemus mystacinus*, *Apodemus agrarius*, *Martes martes*, *Martes tiona*, *Mustela nivalis*, *Melis melis*, *Erinaceus europeus*, *Talpa orientalis*, *Sorex areneus* and other.

The following bat species have been found: *Nictalus noctula*, *Myotis nattereri*, *Plecotus auritus*, and *Rhinolophus hipposideros*.

The following bird species have been observed: *Turdus merula*, *Dryocopus martius*, *Upupa epops*, *Garrulus glandarius*, *Anthus trivialis*, *Accipiter gentiles*, *Accipiter nisus*, *Sanius cristatus*, *Luscinia luscin*, *Strux aluco* and other.

Human Influences

General

The area has been inhabited at least since the first millennium BC. For centuries, the natural landscapes within the boundaries of the area suffered from the negative impact of human activity. Over the years human activities had a strong influence on the landscape. This influence is felt in all components and has an effect on all ecological and morphological processes.

Effect on relief

As a result the relief and the appearance of the landscape changed; forests were cut and land was used for settlements and agriculture. In the last 50 to 70 years unsustainable land-use practices caused surface erosion and instability of slopes. This ultimately led to the development of hazardous geomorphological processes such as landslides and mudflows.

The stability of the slopes in the project area is a point of concern. Many slopes consist of dense deposits (diluvial, alluvial-proluvial, clays, shingle-clays and weathered sand stones). These deposits are almost impervious and show thixotropic behaviour, which implies that minor changes in external loading may cause liquefaction and loss of natural stability resulting in landslides, mudflows, and erosions. The constructing of roads on slopes changes the external loading and may cause such instabilities.

In other sections, where retaining walls are used to stabilize the roads, groundwater pressure may build up behind the wall that reduces the resistance against sliding. When not drained properly this may also cause slope instability and landslides. These landslides are shallow and occur in small areas however (average 0,2-1,0 ha). The same phenomena may occur near residential areas, built on steep slopes. As there is no sewage system, domestic wastewater is discharged in open field and may leak into the subsoil. This may cause instability of the subsoil and local landslides.

The relief was further degraded by wasteland. In the Northwest part of the Gelati plain coloured layers of Jurassic deposits were left unattended and developed into wasteland. In other areas deserted quarries and heaps of mine waste destroyed the relief. Map 10 (see annex) shows the location of these quarries. All quarries within the buffer zone are now abandoned, there is only one active quarry left in the vicinity of the village Gelati and other – in village Kursebi both are located outside the buffer zone and have no direct influence on the World Heritage Monument.

Most quarries are found in areas along the river valleys where denudation and erosion had removed the quaternary sediments and cretaceous layers surfaced. This is the area where the building blocks for the houses and churches were excavated: teschenite, porphyritic diorite and limestone. Especially the borders of the rivers Rioni-Tskaltsitela and the slopes of the Tskaltsitela canyon and adjacent territories were degraded. Here the mining and processing of the limestone took place and the natural relief is destroyed. Mining of teschenite almost completely destroyed the natural environment around the village Kursebi. Only huge heaps of mine waste and piles of unprocessed blocks are left. Also the Motsameta plain has been seriously degraded due to the mining activities. The mining activities has affected the appearance of the landscape in some parts of the buffer zone but it had no direct effect on the World heritage monument itself.

Effect on climate

Human activities had little effect on the local climate but global climate changes may also affect the management area. According to the European directive on Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) changes may affect large-scale pressure distribution and associates winds, rainfall patterns and the frequency of extreme winds and rainfall. Presently no data are available, however, on possible local effects of climate change.

Effect on hydrology

The large scale deforestation in the catchments of rivers has a strong effect on the hydrological regime. It reduces the storage of groundwater in the forests and increases the surface run off and related soil erosion. This increases the frequency and intensity of floods.

Effect on ecology

Forests, the main component of the ancient landscape, disappeared and were replaced by arable land. Especially in the vicinity of the villages Motsameta, Gelati, Kursebi, Sormoni, Naboslevi, the natural forest cover was almost entirely destroyed; in other parts, forested areas are sparsely preserved. Patches of forests still exist but uncontrolled woodcutting is still threatening the remaining forests. Important ecological functions (erosion control, slope stabilization, regulation of surface run off) were lost that increased the risk of mudflows, landslides and floods.

Wood is used for households. In future, a new gas pipeline will supply gas to the villages that will reduce the need for fuelwood. The fertile soils, the mild climate and the abundance of water create good conditions for restoration of degraded forests if an environmental management plan is enforced. The new forest code should provide the legal framework for such a plan. Since 2015 the draft law is being discussed in public hearings, it is as yet (2017) not clear when the law will be enacted in the parliament.

2.4. Threats and natural hazards

The UNESCO publication “Managing risks of World Heritage Sites”⁶ gives a list of potential risk factors for WH sites. Risk is the damage caused by unforeseen events that are the results of natural hazards or human actions. Risk is calculated by multiplying the probability of exceedance of a given damage level with the value of damage. Values are calculated from statistical data on the occurrence of the event and the damage caused by the event. There are a number of potential risks within the area. These include earthquake, lightning strike, fire, air pollution, and even military conflict. The risks are described and assessed in more detail in Section 4.6 and proposals for developing a risk management plan are contained in 4.8.

2.5. Social and economic aspects

Land tenure and ownership in and near the Gelati Monastery

Gelati Monastery

According to the Constitutional Agreement between the State Of Georgia and the Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church approved by the Parliament on October 22, 2002, (the “Concordat”) (art 7), the state recognizes ownership of the church over orthodox churches, monasteries (functioning and not-functioning), their ruins and land plots where they are located all over Georgia. Based on this provision, the ownership of the Gelati

⁶ UNESCO, Managing Disaster Risks for World Heritage (Paris, 2010).

Monastery is attributed to the Georgian Orthodox Church, however such ownership right is not yet registered in the Public Registry and therefore it does not exist as far as third parties are concerned. Further to the Article 183 of the Civil Code of Georgia (1997) acquiring ownership of an immovable thing requires execution of the transaction in writing and subsequent registration in the Public Registry of the ownership right determined by such transaction. So registration of the ownership in the Public Registry is mandatory. The registration procedure and necessary documents are defined by the law on Public Registry (2008) and Instruction on Public Registry approved by the Decree #4 of Minister of Justice (2010). Cadastral map WGS 84 coordinates will define physical and legal boundaries of the Gelati Monastery. One of the reasons for not registering the cadastral map in the Public Registry and defining exact boundaries of Gelati Monastery is the necessity to agree on boundaries with private owners of adjacent plots and the State. This is urgent task as since 2013 several newly defined land plots have been registered to private owners adjacent to the land occupied by the Gelati Monastery. At the moment except physical boundaries (fence) and cadastral maps of the adjacent land plots, there are no reference points to define the territory of the Gelati Monastery, and consequently, the church property. There is a risk of registration of new land plots adjacent the property and a risk of possible intrusion and overlaps on areas historically occupied by the Gelati Monastery. Not registering the cadastral map and ownership right in the Public Registry creates legal uncertainty and associated risks in addition to the lack of ownership right over the property.

Cemetery

The cemetery of the Gelati village, located close to the Monastery, is still in use. The cemetery is fenced with a low stone wall. Its territory is almost fully utilized and there is a need to find a new territory for the cemetery. As the villagers wish to have the cemetery close to the Monastery there is conflict of interest between the development of the tourist infrastructure, the possible extension of the Monastery, and the cemetery. It is recommended that the limits of the present cemetery are clearly defined and registered in the Public Register and that an alternative site suitable for the cemetery is identified by the local municipality as it is the exclusive competence of the municipality to do so (see Art. 16.2 of the Code on Local Self-Governance).

Private land plots

The cadastral map shows that the Monastery is surrounded by several plots, urban as well as agricultural land, that are owned by the local population. Some of the land plots are not registered in the Public Register, but as they are the ancestral properties of the local families their ownership is disputed neither by the state nor by the church.

It should be noted that even in case where the plots are registered, their actual boundaries are not adequately represented on the cadastral map. Often there is a problem of overlapping. Some parts of the ancient paths leading to the Monastery are also located within the boundaries of these private land plots.

The list of the registered land plots adjacent to the Monastery wall and their owners is given below:

#39.07.31.006. Owner: Joseph Kipshidze
#39.07.31.019. Owner: Roma Tugunidze
#39.07.31.022. Owner: Tsitsino Duladze
#39.07.31.012. Owner: Rusudan Togonidze

Access to these land plots may become necessary when installing the lights for the Monastery wall, undertaking restoration-conservation works, etc. In such cases a written agreement with the owner should be negotiated which will provide the possibility of utilization of his/her land.

Some of the land plots, such as the one adjacent to the southern gate of the Monastery, are not registered but are used by local residents. For the time being the agricultural activities do not pose any inconvenience to the functions of the monastery. Neither has it hampered rehabilitation works. Nevertheless in case of the development of the tourist infrastructure or the extension of the Monastery the issue of the ownership should be solved. It is recommended that such deficiencies as overlapping of the boundaries of the registered parcels are dealt with and the clear ownership of those parcels which are not registered is defined. The most important is registration of the land plot where the Gelati Monastery is located. This is one of the conditions to facilitate to the management of the site.

The State owned land

All the land that is not registered formally as private, is considered state owned land until it is privatized. There are also plots which are registered under state ownership. Such is the land plot adjacent to the eastern gate of the Monastery (registration #390731032) constituting 5150 sq. m. The territory includes the parking area as well as the area where the stalls for souvenirs are currently located. There are several land plots adjacent to the above property, which are also registered into state ownership: 30.07.31.057; 39.07.31.007; 30.07.31.092; 39.07.31.029; 39.07.31.015.

This is the territory where the visitor centre is to be located as defined by the Conservation Master Plan and the “Integrated Revitalization of Gelati Monastery” subproject of the World Bank’s Second Regional Development Project. According to the preliminary agreement, the territory is to be managed by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia. That might be reason for granting tenure right to the National Agency of Cultural Heritage Protection over the above land plots.

Even if formally it is not required, it is recommended that the Agency and the authorized representative of Patriarchate agree on the principles of management of the land plots adjacent to the eastern gate so as to consider the needs of the Monastery as well as cultural heritage preservation and presentation of the property to visitors. It is recommended that all traders currently using the territory operate based on legal agreement with the Agency.

Private land registered within the walls of the Gelati Monastery

The land plot located within the walls is in possession of the Jagavadze family who served as keepers of the monument for nearly a century. The land plot is located within the ancient walls and is separated from the rest of the territory with a new wall. The land is not registered in the public registry, but there is a document proving the ownership kept in the Tkibuli Municipal Archive (#147, 27.06.1990).

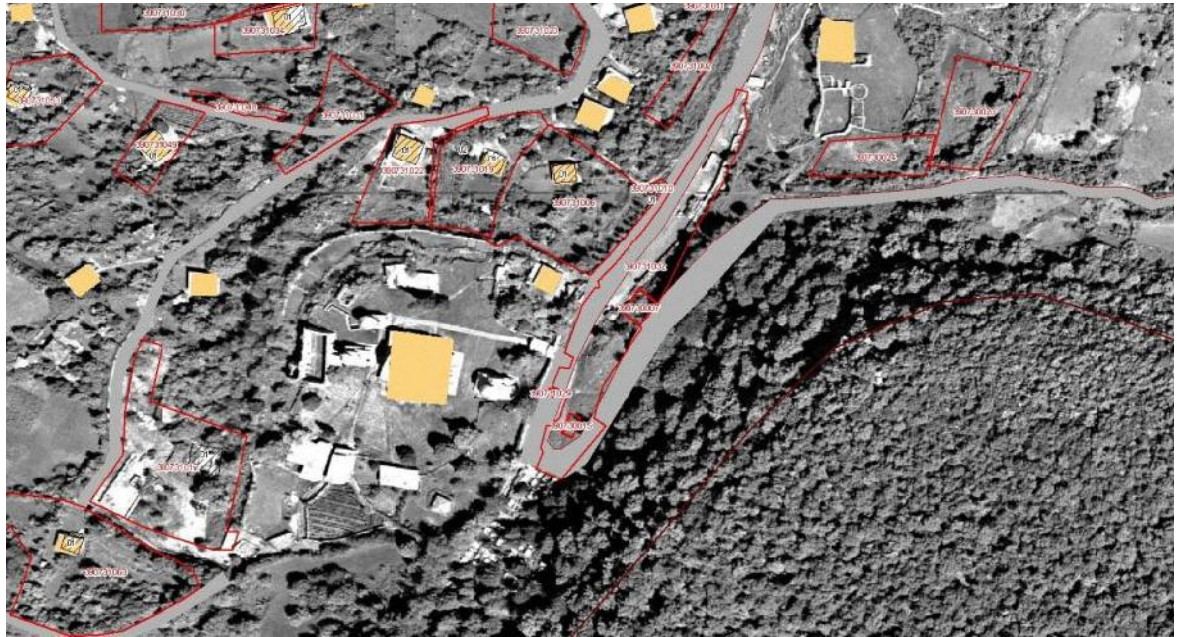


Figure 5. Land ownership around the Gelati Monastery

Land and resource use in the Buffer Zone

The river and the forests are state owned. Some of these forests are degraded as they are used for fuel wood. The present land use is shown on Figure 6.

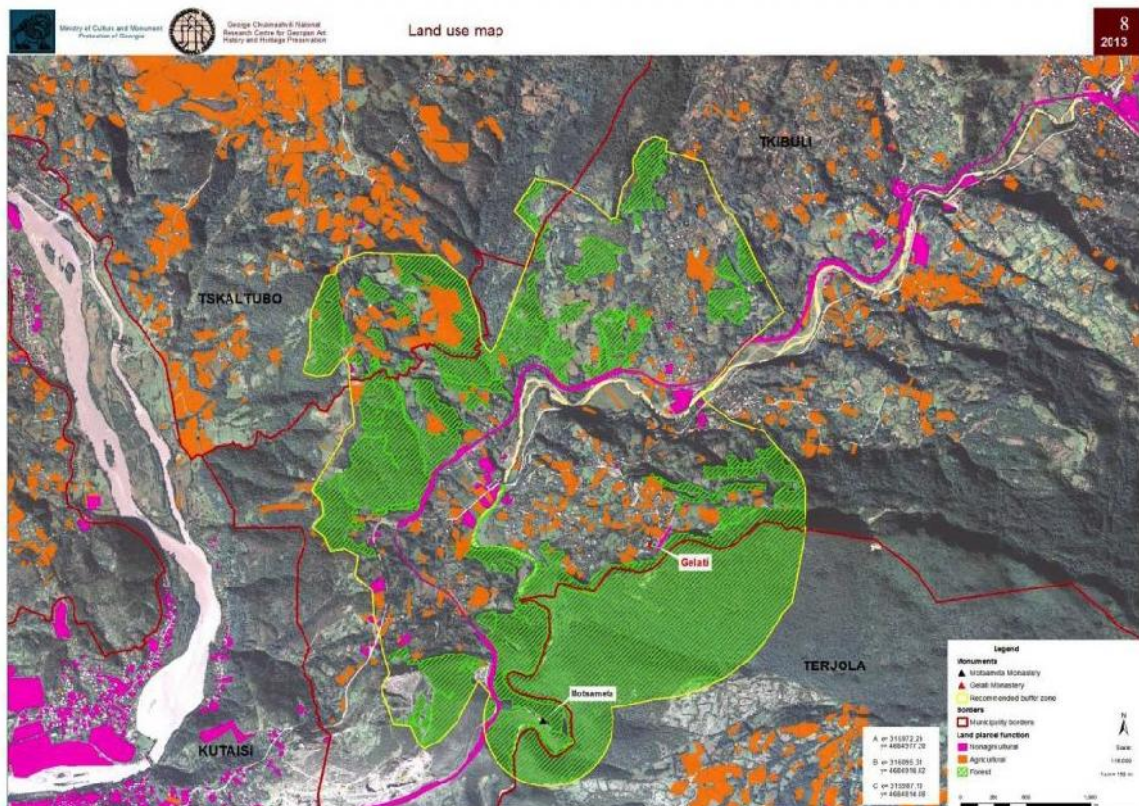


Figure 6. Land-use map

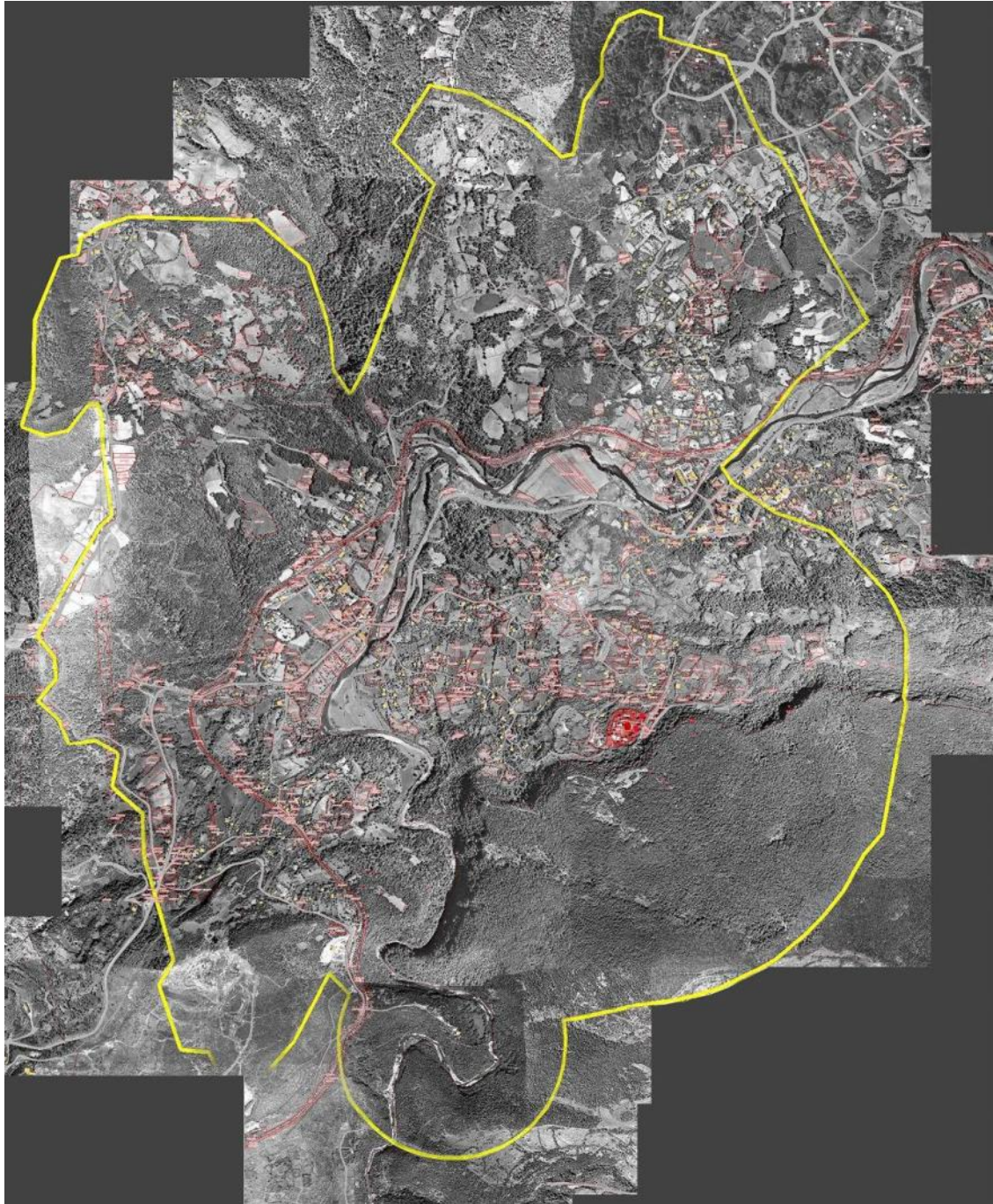


Figure 7. Registered plots

The eastern half of the Kursebi Plain is used for housing and arable land. The West part is covered by the remains of forests and pastures that are used for grazing and haymaking.

Also the Gelati Plain is almost entirely used for settlements up to the foothills and north slopes of the Dokhora-Sakilavi Massif. It includes the village of Gelati (130 households with about 860 inhabitants) and the Monastery complex. The slopes of the hinterland are covered with forests that are used for fuel wood.

The registered plots in these areas are shown on the cadastral map on Figure 7. A detailed map is attached as an annex.

There is an active stone quarry near the Gelati area. The Motsameta Plateau in the south includes the village Motsameta (about 210 inhabitants) and the well-known Monastery of Motsameta. In the past, the area also was used for mining; open air quarries were used to excavate the calcareous deposits. This has severely degraded the landscape.

Demography and economy

Demography

The project area is a part of the Tkibuli Municipality that has 30,132 inhabitants (Census 2002), of which 17,000 are living in rural areas. The regional community of Kursebi, 2,722 inhabitants, is the administrative centre of the project area and includes the two villages, Gelati with 860 inhabitants and Motsameta with 210 inhabitants.

Agriculture

Almost all of the villagers in Gelati are engaged, to greater or lesser extent, in agricultural activities – including those with permanent employment in public sector or private companies. However, for the majority of them the main source of livelihood is not from farming. They practice subsistence agriculture producing a range of crops and livestock needed by the family for domestic use. Only a small proportion of the villagers produce agricultural products for market.

Industry

There are a number of craftsmen in Gelati and neighbouring villages. The most prospective sector is the production of jet objects. Locals made jet crosses, rings, beads, pendants, earrings and other ornaments, which are sold by petty traders at the entrance of the Gelati Monastery. The most successful of the masters sell their handicrafts in Kutaisi and Tbilisi and even abroad, mostly in Turkey.

In the past, mining was an important economic sector; now all mining activities within the buffer zone have stopped, only one stone quarry near the village Gelati, outside the buffer zone, is still in use from time to time.

Tourism

Tourism is important for the local economy. According to the estimate made by the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve, about 200,000 tourists visit the area annually. Some 80% of these are Georgians. The remaining 20 % are foreigners, half of whom stay overnight and half visit the area on a day trip. Some 30 households are getting income from stalls near the Monastery selling food, beverages and souvenirs. Tourism is concentrated in the summer months from April to September. In 2015, the private sector included 5 family hotels and 3 restaurants located in Gelati and Motsameta. Many new facilities are built.

The Strategy for tourism development in Imereti has defined three clusters with a potential for tourism development. The project area is located within the so-called “Heart of Imereti” earmarked as an area with the highest potential. The development of this potential needs further marketing, it requires diversification of the tourist product and services and improvement of the tourism sector in terms of organization, human resources and facilities.

Several Small Business Enterprises have now (2017) applied for grants under the programme Empowering Vulnerable Communities and Micro-entrepreneurs in Georgia Tourism Sector. These include house hotels, handy craft and souvenir shops, vine producers and tourist agencies.

2.6. Governance and Management

The management domain includes the core area – the Monastery complex – and the surrounding Buffer Zone defined by the Ministerial Decree in January 2014. The area falls in the administrative boundaries of the Tkibuli Municipality. (See Figure 1). The administrative Kursebi Community covers the Gelati and Motsameta villages as well. These territories are administered by the trustee appointed by the Tkibuli administrator.

The national Law on **Principals of Spatial Planning and Urban Construction** (2005) regulates the general spatial and infrastructural development of settlements, considering settling, cultural heritage preservation and environmental protection needs. It defines the competences of the State Government Agencies and Municipalities in the above field. The Ministry of Economic and Sustainable Development approved main principles of usage of settlements territories and construction regulation on the bases of above law (July 8, 2008 # 1-1/1254).

In a number of provisions of the Law protection of cultural heritage is addressed as one of the milestones in spatial planning and urban development: One of the aims of the Law is protection of cultural heritage (Art.4.2.f): Cultural and Environmental heritage shall be considered as one of the foundation of the development of the state. (Art.5.1.m): protection and development of cultural and environmental heritage inter alia belongs to the public interests and if spatial planning and urban construction contradicts public interests, such actions shall be ceased. (Art.6.1): It shall be considered that urban construction by definition adopted in the law also covers development of village settlements.

The law defines the competence of Local municipalities to manage spatial-territorial development of settlements in a two stage system (Art. 23):

- a) Land usage master plan, which includes a zoning map of the land usage rights;
- b) Construction regulation plan, which includes detailed zoning maps of whole territory or parts of the settlement territory.

The Law defines cases when a construction regulation plan may substitute for a land usage master plan and adoption of the latter is therefore not necessary, as the construction regulation plan is the more detailed document.

The land usage master plan determines the main parameters of usage and development of settlement territories, spatial conditions of protection of environment and cultural heritage, transport, engineering and social infrastructure, defines spatial aspects of economic development and settlement issues. (Art.2.1)

The Construction Regulation Plan sets land usage zones (subzones) and/or clarifies the characters of separate units, architectural planning and spatial volumes, placement of buildings, their planning, clarifies immovable real estate protection and development

indicators, landscaping and infrastructure development. (Art.2.m) Cultural protection zones shall be reflected in the Construction Regulation Plan further to the law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage.

The Tkibuli Municipality has not adopted either a land usage master plan or a Construction Regulation Plan (which is more appropriate taking into consideration the scale of settlement) for Gelati village. Creation and adoption of such a plan will be beneficial for the preservation of the Gelati Monastery and better presentation of the property to visitors as it will regulate settlement infrastructure, new forms and volumes to be built in the village and safeguard from building inappropriate buildings in the Gelati Monastery. It will further insure proper implementation of the protection granted to the Monastery by the law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage.

Legal framework

General

The Monastery has the status of a National Monument and is managed in accordance with the Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage Protection. This Law defines the rules and procedures of interventions on the monuments as well as protective regimes in the Buffer Zone (i.e. Individual Physical and Visual protection areas as stipulated in the Law). The law however regulates mainly aspects related to cultural heritage. The conservation and protection of the natural values of the surrounding landscape are the subject of the Forest Code of Georgia, the Law on Soil Protection, the Law on Environmental Protection and the Water law that constitute the legal framework for the management of the forests and the rivers in the area.

Protection of Cultural Heritage

The Gelati Monastery has been a Listed Property of National Significance since the Soviet period. Currently it is listed in the national register of monuments by the presidential decree no 665 07.11.2006.

As an immovable listed property of national significance, the Gelati Monastery is protected by the Law of Georgia on Cultural Heritage (2007). The law provides for three levels of listed buildings: a listed property, an immovable listed property of national significance, and a listed property inscribed in World Heritage List. While the general conservation approach remains the same, the different levels have different scopes of territorial protection that attaches higher priority to national and international monuments.

The system of protection zones of cultural heritage is given under Chapter 8 of the Law on *Cultural Heritage Protection Zones and Regimes Applied Thereto*.

The Law determines two types of protection zones - (a) individual and (b) general. Individual protection zones, on their part, consist of physical and visual protection areas. These types of zones enter into force automatically, upon granting a status of an immovable listed Property to the object.

The extent of the above-mentioned areas is determined by law as follows:

1. For a listed property, no matter their category, the area of physical protection is determined with the following distance – height of a listed property multiplied by 2, but the law limits this radius to 50m.
2. The visual protection area is measured beyond the physical protection area boundary according to the following distances:
 - a) For listed property – with 300 meter radius;
 - b) For listed property of national significance - with 500 meter radius;
 - c) For listed property inscribed in the World Heritage List– with 1000 meter radius.

The visual protection area can be extended by the decree of the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection. In the case of orthodox churches and monasteries such extension shall be agreed with the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia. This was the case for the Gelati Monastery, where the visual protection area was enlarged to meet the needs of the WHS buffer zone by the #3/5 Decree of the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection, dated January 9, 2014.

Law prohibits (Art.36.3) any activity in the area of physical protection which would damage or pose threat of damage to the site or would worsen its perception or usage, including:

- a) such activities which would cause significant vibration or deformation of ground;
- b) storage of chemical, highly inflammable and explosive materials;
- c) construction of such facilities which do not serve protection of the site or improvement of its surroundings;
- d) planting species of plants in a way which may damage the site.

In visual protection areas, activities are prohibited which would damage the historically established environment of the site, hinder the optimal view of the site, its complete perception or reduce its significance (Art. 36. 6)

Specific obligations can be found in Art. 35 that prohibit installation of large-scale billboards, electricity and telephone pylons, television aerials and other large scale superstructure engineering and technological equipment within the space of active visual interpretation of listed properties in protected zones, which may induce fire and pollution of water basins. Furthermore, the law stipulates that urban planning policy and management principles in protected areas should be oriented towards purposeful and planned reduction of the volume of transport and development of pedestrian infrastructure.

The law on Cultural Heritage provides the possibility for the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection to address relevant state authorities with a formal appeal to halt inappropriate activities within the cultural heritage protection zones (art. 44).

Cultural heritage law also determines the general protection zones which may be:

- a) Historic development protection zone;
- b) Development regulation zone;
- c) Historic landscape protection zone;
- d) Archaeological protection zone.

Regulation	Name of the code
Preserving cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Georgia, 1995 • Law on Cultural heritage, 2007 • Code on Museums, 2001 • Law of Georgia on Culture, 1997
Ownership over churches and monasteries, communication between State and Orthodox Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional agreement between the State of Georgia and the Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church, 2002
Enforcement of legislation on cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative offence law, 1984 • Criminal code of Georgia, 1999 • Product Safety and Free Movement Code, 2012
Fiscal policy concerning cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax code of Georgia, 2010 • Code on local duties, 1998 • Code on licensing and permission duties, 1998 • On State Fee, 1998 • Law on Competition, 2012 • On State Budget (adopted annually)
Privatization and land planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on State property, 2010 • Law on recognition of right of the property on real estate owned by physical and public legal entities, 2007 • Code on Ownership over Agricultural land, 1996 • Law on Principals of Spatial Planning and Urban Construction, 2005 • On Public Registry, 2008 • On Oil and Natural Gas, 1999
Issuing licenses and permissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code on licensing and permissions, 2005 • Law of Georgia on Environmental Impact Permits, 2007
Competences of self-governmental institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Georgia, 1995 • Code of Georgia on Local Self-Government, 2005
Environmental Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Water, 1997 • Forest Code, 1999 • On Management of Forest Resources, 2010 • On Protection of Environment, 1996 • On Protection of Soil, 1994 • On System of Protected Territories, 1996

Table 3. Georgian National Legislation related to Preservation of Cultural Heritage
(Source: Online database of Georgian “Legislative Bulletin”)

The methodology of establishing such zones and the regimes applicable within their borders is specified in the respective articles of law in details. None of these are legally established at the moment around the Gelati Monastery, even though some draft proposals were prepared as until now the visual protection area has been sufficient in providing necessary protection for the site.

In 2012 the state took an initiative to study in depth the need for a **buffer zone** for the Gelati Monastery. The works were undertaken by an interdisciplinary group of experts based on GIS technologies. The works were based on the study of earlier zoning documents existing during the Soviet period as well as the proposals elaborated in the recent years. The significant part of the work comprised field observation and inventory, as well as GIS modelling. The study of historical context and social and cultural links with the setting, wider environment and with Kutaisi was also provided to give additional argumentation.

The comparative visual analysis of the existing visual protection area of the Gelati monastery and the nearby monuments played an important role in defining the Buffer Zone. The graphical representation of the automatic visual protection area clearly showed the need for modification and adaptation to the specifics of the topography of the site. The analysis of the terrain in GIS revealed those areas that are crucial for maintaining the visual integrity and setting of the Monastery. Based on the analysis of all factors mentioned above, the boundary of the Buffer Zone was drawn to include the part of the river valley where the Monastery is located. An average 3 km, the distance allowing identification of an architectural object by the human eye, was used to establish the border, where the visibility from or to the Monastery was too large. The nearby Motsameta Monastery with its visual protection area, as well as minor satellite chapels of the Monastery, the David's watchtower and other historically significant places in the surroundings were integrated into the Buffer Zone as they form an integral part of the Gelati cultural landscape.

As a result, the proposal for extension of the boundary of the visual protection area of the Gelati Monastery as a buffer zone was approved by the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection after consultations with the Georgian Orthodox Church as mentioned above

Regulations on Heritage and Related Spheres

The basic laws, which directly or indirectly affect cultural heritage, are provided in Table 3 (previous page).

Law enforcement

The regulations implied by the visual protection area, i.e. the Buffer Zone are provided in the law on Cultural Heritage. **The law defines responsibility of the owner of the listed property (legal user).** According to the Art. 30, owner of listed property can be fined when the terms of a permit or agreement with the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection are violated.

The Criminal Code of Georgia lists crimes against Cultural Heritage and stipulates that perpetrators of illegal archaeological fieldworks and/or damage of archaeological site can be fined or imprisoned for up to two years (Art. 259¹). Intentional damage or destruction of cultural heritage can be punished by fines imprisonment (Art. 259²). Violation of the regime

of monuments physical protection zone, that significantly deteriorates visibility or usage of the monument, reduces its historical-cultural value or creates risks of its damage or destruction can be fined or imprisoned as well (Art. 259³). Art. 259⁵ stipulates liability for international crimes concerning Cultural Heritage. Administrative Offence law Art. 88 sets the liability for violating rules of archaeological fieldwork for the amount of 5,000 GEL for physical person and 10,000 GEL for legal entities. Misconducting rules and regimes of protected territories and its territorial-functional zones may be fined of 60 to 90 GEL.

According to the Product Safety and Free Movement Code, the following actions can be subject to fine:

- unauthorized construction and/or reconstruction activities within an area of special construction regime as well as within cultural heritage protection areas, resort and recreational areas
- violation of and/or non-compliance with permits conditions determined under the construction documentation and construction regulations within an area of special regime as well as cultural heritage protection areas.

Fines for described actions vary from 200 GEL to 10,000 GEL.

3. INTERACTION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

3.1. General

Stakeholders are public and private bodies and individuals that are in some way affected by the outcome of the management process. In order to achieve public support for the Management Plan, initiatives and acceptance of its outputs, participation of stakeholders is essential. Information sharing, consultation through public hearings and involvement in community based projects are means to ensure stakeholder participation.

Public Sector

The public sector comprises the general government sector plus all public corporations. The public sector is responsible for legislation to administer, preserve, and protect cultural heritage. It is also responsible for providing professional judgment through skilled experts on behalf of the public.

With the increasing complexity of problems related to the protection of cultural and natural resources, the public sector is forced to examine alternative avenues for management. As a result, the public sector now cooperates with private and civil sectors to create greater awareness for the cultural heritage and for the environment. In the present project this cooperation includes also the community in the Monastery and the Patriarchate.

Private Sector

The private sector comprises private corporations and non-profit institutions serving households. Traditionally it is the main user of natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable. Important user groups of non-renewable resources include mining (minerals and aggregates) whereas the agro industry, forestry and fishery organizations are main users of renewable resources. Fiscal incentives for new technologies and quotations are means to enhance the sustainable use of resources by the private sector.

Civil Sector

The civil sector comprises the general public as well as civil organizations in which members of the society voluntarily organize themselves to safeguard a wide range of interests and ties. These can include community-based organizations, groups of indigenous people and non-government organizations (NGO). The civil sector also includes the religious organizations and academic institutions that can help to establish a scientifically sound management process.

3.2. Stakeholders in the project area

General

The various stakeholders of interest for the project are listed in Table 4. The rows of the table show the stakeholder categories listed above with their specific interests. The

columns indicate the spatial extent of these interests. In order to identify the stakeholders and to survey their interest a reconnaissance trip was made and representatives of church and society were interviewed. The results of the interviews are used as input for the Management Plan.

Monastery

The Gelati Monastery is a part of the Kutaisi-Gaenati Eparchy of the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia. The personnel of the Monastery supervises the monument and performs small-scale maintenance activities. All major decisions with regard to the site are coordinated with and reviewed by the Centre for Architecture, Art, and Restoration of the Patriarchate and its academic board.

The Bishop, as a representative of the Monastery, welcomes any initiative that improves the cultural value of the Monastery as a monument without jeopardizing its functioning as a religious centre. The Monastery is not in a position to assess the effects of the proposed changes for the outside world but emphasizes the religious and spiritual importance for both the religious community and the outside world.

The Monastery offers values and functions for a diversified group of users. It serves as an active religious centre that is based upon the old values of the church but applies modern techniques and tools for management. At the same time it is a World Heritage Site that should be conserved in accordance with the UNESCO Operational Guidelines⁷. This may conflict with the requirements of its religious functions and with the need to meet the standard of living for the monks resident in the monastery.

The status as a World Heritage Monument attracts a large number of tourists from Georgia and abroad. The visitor flow needs to be managed both in space and time. Certain areas should be reserved for private use and religious services and should be closed to the public. Moreover places of worship may have to be closed for certain periods in order not to disturb the religious services.

The monastic ensemble is of national and international interest for academic community. Its cultural value is the subject of research and restoration work albeit that the cultural heritage still suffers from lack of maintenance. The area is also of archaeological interest. Management should also include a realistic programme for research that reflects the interests of both the scientists and the Monastery.

The Monastery hopes that the management plan will make it possible to achieve a proper balance between the interests of the religious community and the other interest groups, the UNESCO WHC, the academic community, and the tourists.

⁷ UNESCO *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, Paris 2013

CATEGORY	STAKEHOLDERS		
	Monastery and Buffer Zone	National agencies	International agencies
Public sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Administration of Imereti - Tkibuli Municipality - Kursebi Territorial Unit (Community) - Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve (NACHP) - Imereti Caves Protected Areas Administration (MoE&NR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection - National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation - Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection - Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure - Municipal Development Fund - National Tourism Administration - Agency of Protected Areas - National Forestry Agency - Public Registry - National Statistics Office 	UNESCO WHC
Private sector	Local entrepreneurs (family hotels, restaurants, tourist agencies), farmers, stonemasons, petty traders near the Monastery	National agencies of entrepreneurs; National tourist organizations	
Civil society	NGOs		
Inhabitants	Individual local		
Religious organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kutaisi-Gaenati Eparchy - Monasteries 	Patriarchate of the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia	
Educational and academic institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools - Akaki Tsereteli State University of Kutaisi - Museums of Kutaisi - Local experts 	Specialized experts	

Table 4. Stakeholders in Management of the Gelati Monastery WHS and its Buffer Zone

Public Sector

Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia is the main body to define the general strategy, develop policies on protection of cultural heritage, and coordinate their implementation. The inter-ministerial Advisory Council to the Minister provides advice to the Minister in special circumstances, where the processes require higher level coordination and commitment by different state authorities. By the Decree #66 of the Government of Georgia on February 19, 2015, Consultative body of **Georgian National Commission for UNESCO** was assigned to ensure active participation of Georgia in programmes conducted by UNESCO and to promote programmes corresponding priorities of UNESCO.

National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia is a subordinated body to the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection. In 2015, a number of authorities related to issuing administrative and legal acts prescribed by the Law on Cultural Heritage were delegated by the Ministry to the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation. Since then, the Agency has been the main body to ensure the protection of the visual integrity of the site within the designated protection zones of the property.

The Agency provides mandatory advice to the local municipality on all development projects and construction activities. The recommendation of the Director General of the Agency is mandatory by law on Cultural Heritage and forms part of the process of issuing a building permit by the local municipal services. Applications for new constructions or reconstructions including the infrastructure and earthworks within the Buffer Zone require the approval of the **Cultural Heritage Protection Council – Section for Cultural Heritage Protected Zones and Urban Heritage** of the Agency. The Cultural Heritage Protection Council is an advisory body to the General Director of the Agency, which considers applications, submitted from the municipality and prepares recommendations to the Director General. The Agency is in full control of the process and acts to guarantee harmonious integration of new developments with the cultural landscape of the area, ensuring that the OUV of the property is maintained.

The physical conservation of the property is undertaken by the Agency as well. According to the Law, the Agency issues a permit for all types of conservation-restoration works on the listed buildings, including the Gelati Monastery.

Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve was established in 1981 and covered all historical and architectural monuments and sites located in Kutaisi and in the Tkibuli Municipality. In 2008, it was merged with the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation and at present constitutes its branch. The Museum-Reserve participates in planning and implementation of conservation and research activities. Together with the Agency, it is directly responsible for monitoring the state of conservation and maintenance at the Gelati Monastery WHS. The local staff provides technical consultation and advice to the monks on minor repair works at the site. Together with the **Cultural Heritage Inspection Unit** of the Agency, the Museum-Reserve is in charge of monitoring of activities in the area and, in the event of illegal interventions, putting in place necessary legal procedures for immediate halting of the activities.

The broader scope of management as advocated by UNESCO requires that a larger number of stakeholders is involved in the decision making process. From the stakeholder analysis it is clear that the existing communication system needs significant improvement as a

number of significant governmental agencies and institutions, whose participation would be beneficial for achievement of the goals of the Management Plan, do not take enough part in management process. These are:

- **Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia:** manages implementation of state policy of protected areas, develops and approves documents of environmental norms and rules, implements inter-departmental coordination and international contracts; also implements state policy in the sphere of natural resources; establishment of protection zones of rivers and forests; monitoring, exploitation and regeneration of various natural resources, operation of regional power facilities and networks and creation of new facilities and networks;
- **Agency of Protected Areas of Georgia:** a subordinated body to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, which establishes the boundaries of protected areas, regimes applied there, forms of actions, tourist routes; develops projects, oversees their implementation, monitors the situation. Its local branch is the **Imereti Caves Protected Areas Administration**, which is responsible for the management of the natural monuments located close to Gelati including Sataplia Nature Reserve (330 ha), Sataplia Managed Reserve (34 ha), and Prometheus Cave Natural Monuments (46.6 ha).
- **National Forestry Agency:** a subordinated body to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources that takes care and preserves forestry, monitors and coordinates information and data concerning the forestry, plans actions to prohibit illegal usage of forest, in case of unlawful action calculates damages in order to compensate.
- **Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia:** takes care of development and implementation of infrastructure projects, establishes the relevant normative and guiding documentation, implements large-scale regional development programmes, development and rehabilitation of transport and engineering networks, solid waste management.
- **Municipal Development Fund:** aims at strengthening institutional and financial capacity of local government units, investing financial resources in local infrastructure and services, improving on sustainable basis the primary economic and social services for local communities. The Fund is responsible for the implementation of the World Bank Second Regional Development Project for the Imereti Region. One of its sub-projects “Integrated Revitalization of Cultural Heritage Site of Gelati Monastery” was designed to improve tourist infrastructure and water supply system of the Gelati Monastery. A number of other activities related to the Gelati Monastery have also been funded within the framework of this programme, including rehabilitation and conservation works, and the preparation of the present Management Plan.
- **Georgian National Tourism Administration:** implements development of tourist industry, creates new tourist routes, develops tourist service facilities; collects statistical data on tourists; trains specialists and manages informational policy.
- **Public Registry of Georgia:** Collects and, as required, submits exhaustive information on land plots, concerning their owners, areas, registration, changes and the issues under the competence of other register.

- **National Statistics Office of Georgia:** studies and submits information on demographic, social, economic, cultural and other sectors. It has one of its regional offices in Kutaisi.
- **Regional Administration of Imereti:** implements communication and coordination among central and local administration bodies in the issues related to management and maintenance of the Gelati WHS, participates in development of various projects and their monitoring.

The project area is under the jurisdiction of the **Tkibuli Municipality** and is part of the **Kursebi Territorial Unit (Community)**. Within their competence, the municipal and local authorities participate in development of various programmes and projects and perform supervision of their implementation; In agreement with central authorities, they review and approve urban development documentation and supervise the implementation of regime established in the Buffer Zone. The local government takes part in the maintenance of the WHS in a fragmented manner, mainly when the issues relate to transportation, roads, solid waste management, etc.

Private Sector

The first group in this segment includes owners of food stalls and petty traders near the complex, selling local handicraft, souvenirs etc. Presently some 30 persons are active in this segment; most of them are active in Gelati while a smaller number works in Motsameta. This group is a direct beneficiary of the heritage value of the Monastery as they earn the revenues of tourism. Although the volume is low in economic terms this sector is important for the traders and their families as a means of subsistence. There is little potential for growth in volume; however, profits may increase if products with higher added value are sold also.



Photo 11. Petty trade near the entrance of the Gelati Monastery (2013)

The second group are the travel agencies and tourist guides. The present volume of trade is unknown but this segment has potential to grow if services are promoted nationally and internationally.

The third group includes hotels, hostels, and guesthouses to accommodate group and individual tourists that stay overnight. Presently most hotels are run by families. This group has a potential to grow and some guesthouses have been refurbished with micro credits and small grants from donors. Courses are organized to train people.

Civil Sector

The local inhabitants see two main problems that should be addressed. The first is the need to improve water supply and sanitation, one of the millennium goals of the UN. The present situation threatens the health of people, degrades the landscape and nature and has a negative effect on tourism. Moreover it hampers proper functioning of nature: the production of natural resources and the regulation of air and water quality. The second threat is uncontrolled use of fuel wood that is now obtained from nearby forests which has a negative impact on the landscape and nature in the Buffer Zone. There is an urgent need to provide alternatives for fuel wood. As stated above, the Government is presently constructing facilities for water supply and sanitation and is extending the gas pipelines up to the project area.

There is some concern, though, that the new arrangement may impose restrictions on economic activities such as land and resource use and may impose restraints on plot sizes and building activities for inhabitants.

3.3. The Role of National Agencies

General

As stated above, national stakeholders play a key role in implementing the Management Plan. Managing the project area requires cooperation between the government and the Patriarchate. Moreover sustainable management of the Buffer Zone should involve input from various governmental agencies, dealing with culture, environment and economic development.

It is obvious that not all stakeholders can exercise the same power in this process. Global conventions and agreements and bilateral covenants between Georgia and international agencies such as UNESCO and donors as the World Bank are binding for national governments.

In view of the centralized governmental structure in Georgia, national governments have more decisive power than local governments. By the same token, government agencies generally have more power than the civil society unless the latter are organized in strong interest groups. And as stated above the Patriarchate plays a distinctive role, both at the national and local level, as the monasteries are both national cultural monuments and religious centres.

Broadly speaking, the role of the central agencies should be to define policies and strategies, to provide resources for their implementation, to approve implementation plans and to check the results. The role of the local agencies is to provide input for the plan preparation and to execute these plans. Obviously this should be enacted through appropriate legislation and should be enforced through binding regulations.

Public Sector

Presently the following institutions participate in the management process of the Gelati Monastery WHS:

The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia is the main body to define the general strategy, develop policies on protection of cultural heritage, and coordinate their implementation. The inter-ministerial Advisory Council to the Minister provides advice to the Minister in special circumstances, where the processes require higher level coordination and commitment by different state authorities.

The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia is the main body to ensure the protection of the visual integrity of the site within the designated protection zones of the property. The Agency provides mandatory advice to the local municipality on all development projects and construction activities. The recommendation of the Director General of the Agency is mandatory by law on Cultural Heritage and forms part of the process of issuing a building permit by the local municipal services. The physical conservation of the property is undertaken by the Agency as well. According to the Law, the Agency issues a permit for all types of conservation-restoration works on the listed buildings, including the Gelati Monastery.

Private Sector

National trade organizations and the agency for tourist development are important in this segment.

Civil Sector

The Patriarchate of the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia is involved in the process as the owner of all Orthodox Christian properties in the country. The consent of an owner is formally required by law before the permit for restoration/conservation is issued by the National Agency. The academic board of the Centre for Architecture, Art, and Restoration of the Patriarchate is chaired by the Patriarch. On behalf of the church, it co-operates with the National Heritage Agency as well as the Ministry, and advises the church authorities at all levels on what interventions are appropriate.

4. ASSESSMENT

4.1. General

Assessment includes the evaluation of the environmental characteristics with a view to

- Prepare a spatial plan with territorial units that can serve as a basis for conservation management and development plans.
- Perform an environmental assessment to define the issues that should be addressed in the conservation plan.
- Assess the potential for economic development.
- Define lead agencies for management action.
- Identify ongoing projects.

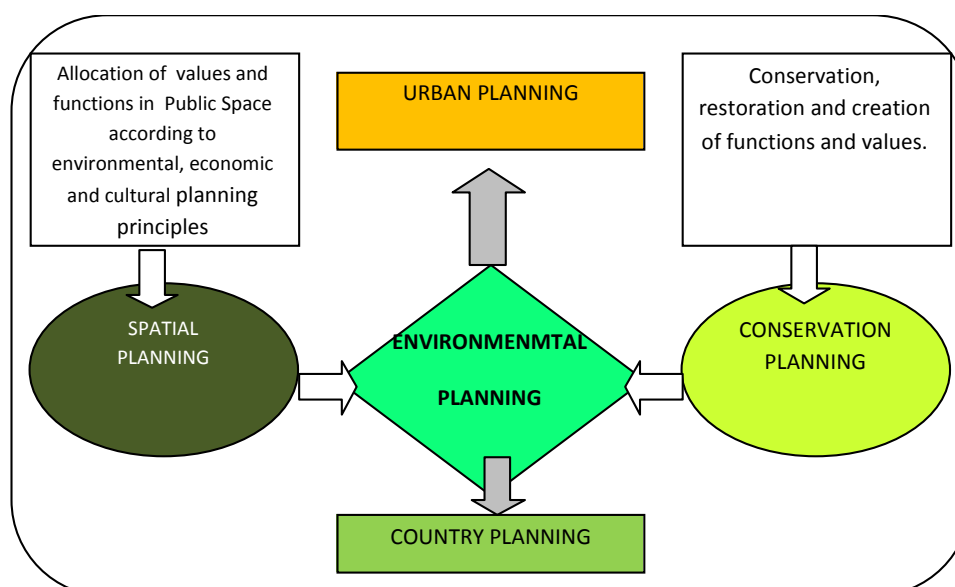


Table 5. Framework for environmental planning

The European Landscape Convention defines a landscape as an area whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. Landscapes are the visual appearance of the underlying environmental system. A simplified system analogy may help to describe these factors and to understand their interaction.

The approach to landscape planning as advocated by the ELC is shown in Table 5. The rhomb in the middle represents landscape or environmental planning. It includes spatial planning and conservation planning. Spatial planning describes the structure of the landscape and assigns environmental functions to the various landscape elements.

Conservation planning describes the attributes of the various spatial elements and assesses the related natural, cultural, social, and economical values as a basis for management.

This approach is followed in the present study; results are described in the following sections.

In urban areas planning focuses on social and economic aspects (urban planning), in rural areas aspects of culture and landscape are often of more importance (country planning). Given the rural character of the project area, the latter approach is followed in the present study.

4.2. Zoning

Environmental systems consist of natural and manmade *elements*, each with their specific functions that define the value of the landscape as a whole as well as its natural, cultural, social and economic values. The principal natural elements are the air, the water and the land, together with the flora and fauna in these elements. Important manmade elements are the cultivated areas, the built environment and the physical infrastructure.

The site description was used to define appropriate spatial units that can be used as a basis for zoning. Geo-morphologically the area consists of the river, the plain and the surrounding foothills. These geo-morphological features determine to a large extent the vegetation and human use.

The plain is used for settlement and agriculture, the forests and meadows on the lower slopes of the foothills are used for grazing, hay making and woodcutting whereas areas forests at higher altitude are still more natural. This leads to the choice of the territorial functional units shown in Figure 8.

Attributes are parameters to define the existence and use values of these elements; integrity and authenticity are criteria to evaluate these attributes. The IUCN has defined a set of attributes to evaluate the state of nature; UNESCO has prepared procedures to assess the value of relevant cultural attributes. The social and economic attributes are expressed in indicators such as population per sq. km, per capita income, GNP of the area and value of the assets.

Environmental systems are dynamic, values change over time as a result of processes within these elements and **interactions** between the elements.

Natural processes produce resources and regulate the natural environment. Man used these resources for survival and to build the man-made environment, part of which is still conserved as historic-cultural heritage. Today man still uses these resources for its social and economic activities but population growth and technological developments have caused an exponential growth in the consumption of resources and related discharged of waste products into nature.

Today, the interaction between nature and culture has mainly negative effects as it causes weathering of monuments and damage due to natural hazards. These effects are clearly visible in the project area and are addressed in the Conservation Master Plan for the WH monuments.

Interactions between nature and man are more complex. The effects are in general positive for man as they provide resources and regulate living conditions. If managed properly nature may even create new opportunities for sustainable growth. As long as human use is

sustainable, negative effects on nature will be insignificant; in many instances however uncontrolled use of resources created depletion of resources and degradation of ecosystems.

Illegal woodcutting and uncontrolled discharge of waste water are examples that have degraded the ecosystems in the project area.

Finally social and economic activities may have a negative effect on the integrity, authenticity and use of monuments; however the effects for society are positive as monuments also create incentives for new social, religious and economic activities. The WH monument illustrates this; groups of visitors may disrupt its function as a religious centre. But at the same time tourism is an important source of income for the local community.

The above interactions originate inside the project area and should be addressed in the management plan. However, interactions with the area outside the project area may cause cross border effects that are outside the control of the management proper.

They include large scale phenomena such as pollution of water flowing into the area, dust and pollution transported from elsewhere by rain and wind and earthquakes. It also includes social and economic linkages between the project area and neighbouring areas and directives from national and regional agencies.

These are examples of **direct interactions**. In many instances **indirect interactions** may also occur. They are often less apparent and it takes time to see the effects. Examples are air pollution caused by human activity elsewhere which may have negative effects on the integrity of monuments. Wood cutting by man may change the stability of slopes and the hydrological regime of rivers that may cause landslides and flash floods.

A. The core area/property, the Monastery complex (cultural zone). This area has the status of a World Heritage Site.

B. The Buffer Zone with the following components:

1. Areas where human use is intensive and the socio economic value is high (orange):

- The east side of the Kursebi Plain (residential and agricultural area, 1,54 sq. km)
- The Gelati Plain (residential area and agriculture, 1,99 sq. km)
- The Motsameta Plateau (residential area and lime stone quarries, 1,89 sq. km)

2. Areas that have both natural and socio-economic values (light green):

- The mountain slopes west of the Tskaltsitela (forests and pastures, 2,18 sq. km)
- The west side of the Kursebi Plain (forests and meadows, 1,31 sq. km)
- The Gelati forests (foot hills and slopes of the Dokhora Massif, 1,98 sq. km)

3. Areas with special natural features that need special protection (dark green):

- The River Tskaltsitela.(0,84 sq. km)
- The Motsameta Canyon and hinterland (geological formation and scenic landscape, 0, 73 sq. km). The Sakajia Cave in this area has a protected status. The canyon and part of the Tskaltsitela River have the status of a natural monument, category III of the IUCN classification of protected areas.

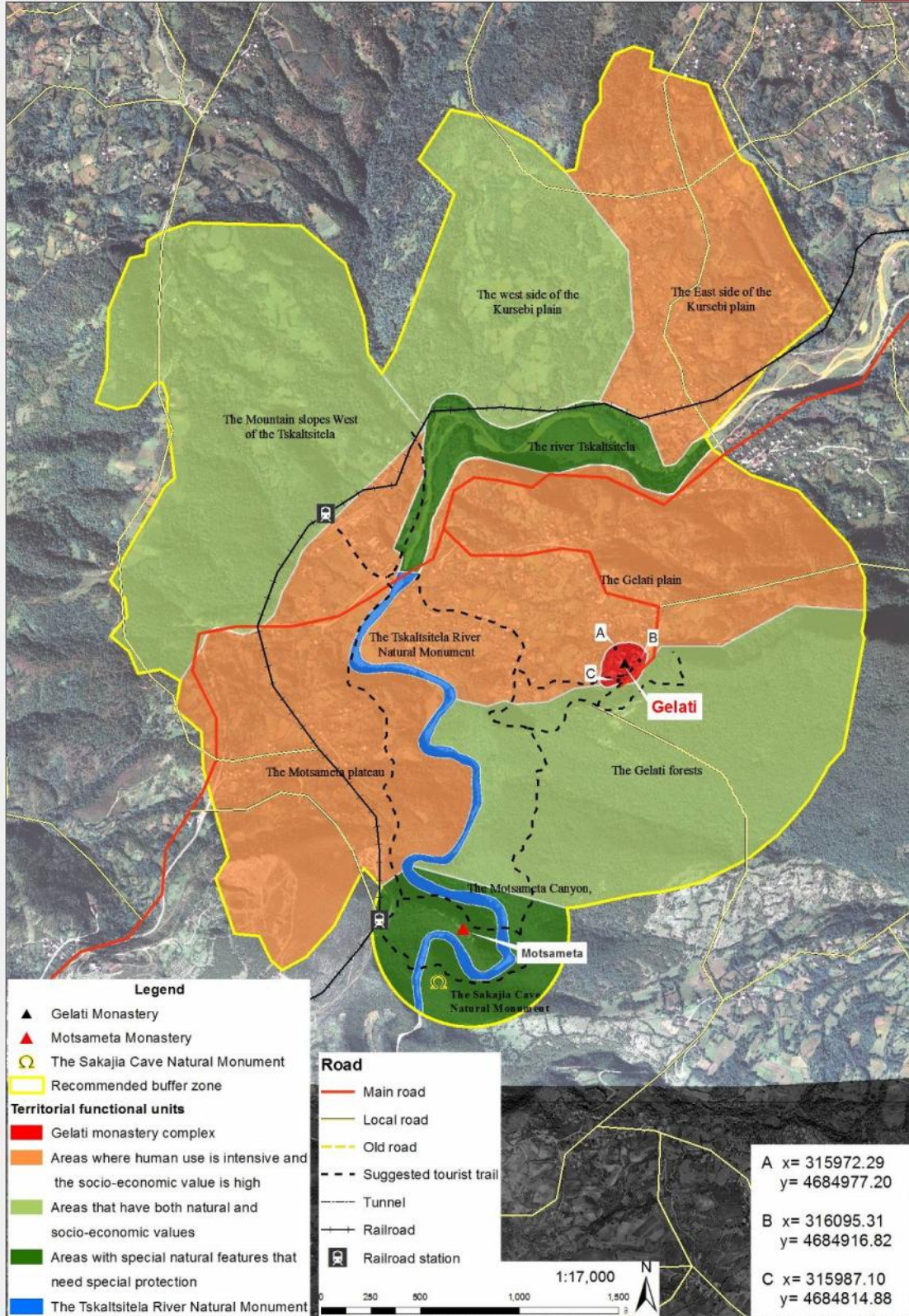


Figure 8. Map of territorial functional units

4.3. Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site and other values

Cultural value

The principle cultural value of the property is the basis for its inscription on the World Heritage List. The following text is based on the Justification of Outstanding Universal Value contained in the dossier for the Major Boundary Modification.

The Gelati Monastery is the highest expression of the artistic idiom of the architecture of the Georgian “Golden Age”. It is distinguished for its harmony with its natural setting, a well thought-out overall planning concept, and high technical and artistic quality of its buildings and their decoration. In the whole, this magnificent architectural ensemble illustrates the Georgian appropriation of the Imperial idea of power.

The Gelati Monastery is the most vivid reflection of cultural and intellectual development in the Georgian “Golden Age”, which was a significant expression of the power and high culture of Eastern Christianity at this time. The Monastery was not intended to be a merely religious foundation. King David wanted to create a centre of knowledge and education of the highest international standard of his times. He established an academy in the Monastery and invited there the most eminent Georgian intellectuals, both living in and outside his kingdom. Contemporaries compared the Gelati Monastery with Athens and Jerusalem thus stressing its importance as the centre of both secular and ecclesiastical knowledge, philosophy and theology.

Justification for criteria

The Gelati Monastery illustrates cultural and intellectual developments of the Middle Byzantine period in general and of the “Golden Age” of Georgia in particular. It is the masterpiece of the architecture of the “Golden Age”, the best representative of its architectural style characterized by the full facing of smoothly hewn large blocks, perfectly balanced proportions, and the exterior decoration of blind arches. The main church of the Monastery is one of the most important examples of the inscribed cross (cross-in-square) architectural type that had a crucial role in the East Christian church architecture from the 7th century onwards.

Gelati is one of the largest Medieval Orthodox monasteries, distinguished for its harmony with its natural setting and a well thought-out overall planning concept.

The main church of the Gelati Monastery is the only Medieval monument in the larger historic region of Eastern Asia Minor and the Caucasus that still has a well-preserved mosaic decoration. The apse mosaic depicting the Virgin with Child flanked by archangels is of an outstanding artistic quality comparable with the best Byzantine mosaics. In addition, churches and chapels of Gelati have the largest ensembles of paintings of the middle Byzantine, late Byzantine, and post-Byzantine periods in Georgia. They represent more than 40 portraits of kings, queens, and high clerics. Murals of the narthex of the main church contain the earliest depiction of the seven Ecumenical Councils.

Having had the role as a political statement of King David's firm royal authority over his Kingdom, the Gelati Monastery provided the architectural expression of the Georgian appropriation of the Imperial concept of power. It is the most powerful visual symbol of the "Golden Age" of Medieval Georgia.

Authenticity and integrity

Statement of Integrity

The integrity of the Gelati Monastery, its wholeness, completeness, and the extent to which it suffers from the adverse impacts of development, has been assessed in accordance with the proposed definition of the Outstanding Universal Value for the property. This assessment shows that Gelati has a high level of integrity.

Gelati is a large monastery, the largest in Georgia and one of the largest in East Christian world. It consists of the main church, the two other churches, the bell tower, the two gates, the Academy, and a number of dwellings and subsidiary structures. The monastic buildings stand in the vast precinct surrounded by the wall circuit.

The whole monastic precinct is included in the nominated property, which fully meets the notion of wholeness. The boundaries of the property are sufficiently large to represent features necessary to convey its significance and outstanding universal value.

No important original feature of the property has been lost during the centuries. The main buildings of the Monastery – the three churches and the bell tower, all constructed in the 12th and 13th centuries, are preserved almost intact, apart from repairs of their interior fittings and roofs that occurred both in the Middle Ages and modern times. Recently excavated archaeological areas adjacent to the Academy contain well-preserved structural remains. The only building that experienced essential damage in the late Middle Ages and 19th century, was the Academy. It had lost its timber roof, which was restored in 2009 in order to prevent deterioration of the building. In the whole, there have been no substantial changes to the integrity of the property since its inscription on the World Heritage List in 1994.

The mosaic of the main church has come to our days in a good condition. At present, the mosaic occupies the conch of the apse (almost 50 m² area). Its lower part had been damaged in the fire of 1510 and was replaced with painting in the following decades. Conservation work to stabilize and fix the mosaic was conducted in 1985 and 1986. The 12th- and 13th-century wall paintings in the narthex and the Chapel of St Andrew of the main church are partially damaged. Late Medieval paintings in the main church and in St George's are preserved better.

Gelati is a site of a national significance. Since the declaration of Georgia's independence in 1991, it has always been favoured with particular attention by state, society, and church, though it does not mean that care has always been provided properly. At present, general maintenance of the Monastery is provided by monks, which is not always sufficient.

Sometimes petty problems (e. g. replacement of a broken window) are only solved after a delay.

In general, the physical fabric of the property is in a good condition. Pressures exist, but the processes are under control. Heritage values of the property are respected in all decisions and actions affecting the site. The level of threats is low. None of the important features of the property runs the risk of being substantially altered, impaired, or deteriorated. No large-scale agricultural developments or inappropriately sited buildings that could harm the visual integrity of the property are planned.

Statement of authenticity

Despite the fact that Gelati has and continues to be a living site - a home to monks, a place of worship, and a popular visitor attraction, - the architectural heritage features central to the expression of the site's Outstanding Universal Value have been fully preserved.

Form and Design. All of the main buildings of the Monastery dated back to its foundation in early 12th century have survived and are in good physical condition, as well as the buildings added in the 13th century. In the main church, original mosaic decoration of the apse and wall painting of the narthex are preserved.

Murals painted between 16th and 18th centuries in the main church and its chapels and in the Church of St George are integral to the history of the Monastery, illustrating its development in the turbulent late Middle Ages.

Extant historic features which reflect the authenticity of design and form of the Monastery include: the main church dedicated to the Nativity of the Virgin, the Academy, the southern gate, the churches of St George and of St Nicholas, the bell tower, and excavated remains of the passage to the north of the Academy, all dated from the 12th and 13th centuries. The layout of the Monastery has undergone no essential alterations since the 13th century.

Since the inscription of Gelati on the World Heritage List in 1994, the only significant change in the authentic fabric of the architectural ensemble was the restoration of a timber roof over the Academy in 2009. It was made after a thorough study of the preserved wall pockets and gables, in order to prevent deterioration of the building. The roof is reversible.

Materials and Substance. All buildings of the Monastery are built of stone. The churches and bell tower have an authentic full facing of smoothly hewn large limestone blocks. Some of them are superficially weathered.

As witnessed by archaeological finds, initially the monastic buildings had roofs covered with glazed tiles. Presumably, they were repaired several times during the Middle Ages. In 1770s and 1780s, a new roof of copper plates was made over the main church. In 1962 and 1963, a new roof coverings of tin plates were made above the churches and the bell tower. They did not fit the Medieval architecture of the Monastery and besides soon showed signs of rusting thus being in danger of leaking. The damage of the roof and accumulation of humidity in the north-eastern part of the church was observed by the UNESCO Mission in June 2008. During conservation works carried out between 2007 and 2016, the domes of the main church, the churches of St George and St Nicholas, and of the bell tower were covered with new glazed

tiles which were made according to Medieval tiles found in the Monastery. The methodology of this work was positively assessed by ICOMOS.

Function and Usage. Gelati was the largest monastery in Medieval Georgia. It has had an uninterrupted monastic life over the last 900 years, from foundation to the present, except for the Soviet period (1923-1988) when the Monastery was closed. In 1988, it recovered its previous function.

Location and Setting. The Gelati Monastery has always been in the same location. It occupies the same area as it did in the 12th century. Borders of the precinct enclosed by the stone wall circuit have not been changed over the centuries. The natural setting of the Monastery has generally been preserved including the deciduous forest on the hill to the east and south of the Monastery. To the west and north, there are one and two- storied houses of villagers. Standing much below the Monastery, they do not cover its authentic view. There are no elevated buildings in the vicinity of the Monastery.

Feelings and Spirit. For Georgians, Gelati was and still is a national symbol, an architectural manifestation of the Georgia's "Golden Age". The Monastery still keeps its Medieval spirit that is emphasized by the presence of monks, i. e. by the authentic function and use of the property for its original purpose.

Thus, the key attributes that contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Gelati Monastery meet the conditions of authenticity. The buildings within the property have a high level of surviving authentic fabric and the spatial planning and layout of the property is authentic. The majority of the elements of the property (churches, bell tower, houses, and gates) are still used with the same function as they did in the Middle Ages.

The WHS also has other cultural and related values in addition to the reasons for which it has been inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Religious value

The Monastery is a religious centre of national and local importance. An increasing number of visitors may affect its value and functioning as a religious centre. This aspect should also be addressed in the management plan.

Tourist value

The Monastery is a major tourist attraction. About 200,000 tourists visit the area per year (it is a corrected figure provided by the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve. The annual figure of 70,000 given in the dossier for the Major Boundary Modification is out of date).

The number of tourists is still growing and may exceed the carrying capacity, which would need a regulation of the visitor flow. This aspect needs further attention in the Management Plan; the new visitor centre may be instrumental in this respect.

4.4. Cultural value of monuments in the Buffer Zone

Several monuments in the Buffer Zone of the Gelati Monastery WHS have a high cultural value. These monuments are:

Sokhasteri, a group of structures, located 250 km north-east of the Gelati Monastery, is a historically important site as it is associated with the most famous ruler in the Georgian history and the founder of Gelati the king David IV the Builder. What adds to its cultural and historical value is that it is the only preserved Medieval asylum in Georgia.

Small churches located to the south-east of the Gelati Monastery, on the slopes covered with forests, were historically closely linked with the Monastery. They are an inseparable part of its history. The most interesting among them is the **Church of St Elijah**. Its cultural value is enhanced by its murals painted in the 16th century by Giorgi Jokhtaberidze, a master of the so-called “vernacular trend” of the late Medieval Georgian painting.

A fort and a watch tower located on the David’s Cape are also traditionally ascribed to the king David the Builder. They are significant for their architecture and historic function of controlling the main road running along the Tskaltsitela Gorge. It is the only well-preserved example of fortification architecture in the immediate environs of the Gelati Monastery and in the Buffer Zone in general.

Motsameta Monastery is one of the most important sacred places in the country as it contains the burials of the martyrs St David and Konstantine who are widely revered in Georgia. The Monastery is associated with the dramatic events of the Georgian history such as the invasion of Arab troops led by Murvan-ibn-Muhammed in the 8th century and the turbulent reign of King Bagrat IV in the 11th century. Its present-day appearance provides an interesting example of 19th-century Georgian church architecture with its search for national style. Its rebuilders, the masons from the Berekashvili family used the elements of Medieval Georgian architecture, which is typical of their craftsmanship. Also, the Monastery is distinguished for its spectacular location on a high and narrow cape projecting into the Tskaltsitela Gorge.

There are not so many preserved Medieval bridges in Georgia, which determines a particular cultural value of the **bridges** in the environs of Gelati. The bridge on the Korena River, 3,5 km north-west of the Gelati Monastery, is especially remarkable for its good state of preservation and picturesque natural setting.

4.5. Value and functions of nature

Site values and functions

The Tskaltsitela River and the mountain slopes west of the Tskaltsitela

The Tskaltsitela River is a dominant element in the landscape, the length of the river in the project area is about 8 km, and the legal borders of the river are determined by the water law but change due to morphological processes. Its economic value is low but the natural value as a landscape element is high. For that reason the river has the status of a natural monument that should preserve its natural characteristics.

The forest patches in the watershed west of the river are degraded due to woodcutting (fuel wood) but the forests still have ecological value. Reforestation will improve the natural value and the future production capacity.

The Motsameta Canyon and hinterland

The canyon near the villages Tchakhata, Motsameta and Godora, with its characteristic geological (Karst) formations has a high natural value and has the status of a natural monument. As the area is strongly degraded restoration and landscaping is needed, however, to reinstate the original landscape. This may create possibilities for ecotourism in combination with a visit to the Motsameta Monastery. The same applies for the areas further downstream where abandoned quarries should be filled and the heaps of mine waste should be removed.

The Gelati forests

The forests on the Dokhora massif are used for fuel wood. Reforestation and rehabilitation may restore the landscape value and can also improve the stability of slopes where landslides may occur in the future.

The Gelati and Kursebi Plains and Motsameta Plateau

The natural and landscape value of the remaining part of the project area is low. The socio-economic importance is high, however, as the area is mainly used for settlements and agriculture. The eastern half of the Kursebi Plain is used for settlements and arable land. The west part is covered with the remains of forests and pastures that are used for grazing and haymaking. A sustainable use regime for land- and resource use in combination with rehabilitation of the remaining forest patches in the west part appears to be the best strategy here.

The Gelati plain is almost entirely used for settlements up to the foothills and north slopes of the Dokhora-Sakilavi Massif. Measures to support sustainable use of land and resources should also be enforced here.

The Motsameta Plateau is partially used for agriculture and settlements. In the past, it produced also calcareous stone from quarries that enhanced the economic value. Now mining activities have stopped and the quarries are abandoned, but heaps of quarry waste are spread all over the place. This reduces the natural value considerably and a plan should be made to reinstate the original character of the landscape.

Landscaping in combination with a sustainable use of land and resources may be the best management strategy here. Possibly there are opportunities for tourism in combination with cultural and eco-tourism. When restored properly some quarries can possibly be used as an open-air museum, illustrating the geological history of the area and its relation to the cultural monuments that have been built with its geological resources. Mining waste may contain fossils; in Europe this attracts groups of geological tourists that search for rare specimens.

Environmental assessment

The conservation strategy for the natural landscape depends mainly on its natural and socio-economic values. Natural values are based upon the existence value (the aesthetic, scientific and spiritual values) and its functions (resource production, regulation of living conditions).

The socio-economic value is defined by economic indicators like population density, pro capita income and value of assets. These aspects have been evaluated qualitatively, results are shown graphically in Table 6. The horizontal axis shows the socio-economic value of a spatial unit, the vertical axis gives the corresponding ecological value. For each axis a value low, medium and high is used as a qualitative rating for these values. The spatial elements are shown in the graph as circles, the figure in the circle shows the area of the unit in km². The total area of the Buffer Zone is 12.4 km².

The colour indicates the proposed management regime. Units with a high natural and cultural importance (dark green) should be protected and human activities should be restricted or even prohibited. Degraded areas with significant natural value (light green) should be restored or should recuperate using a restricted use regime. In areas of great socio-economic value (brown) sustainable use is allowed, as long as this does not interfere with the visual appearance and physical protection of the WH monument. Finally a multiple use regime may be applied in areas where both natural and socio-economic values are important (green-brown).

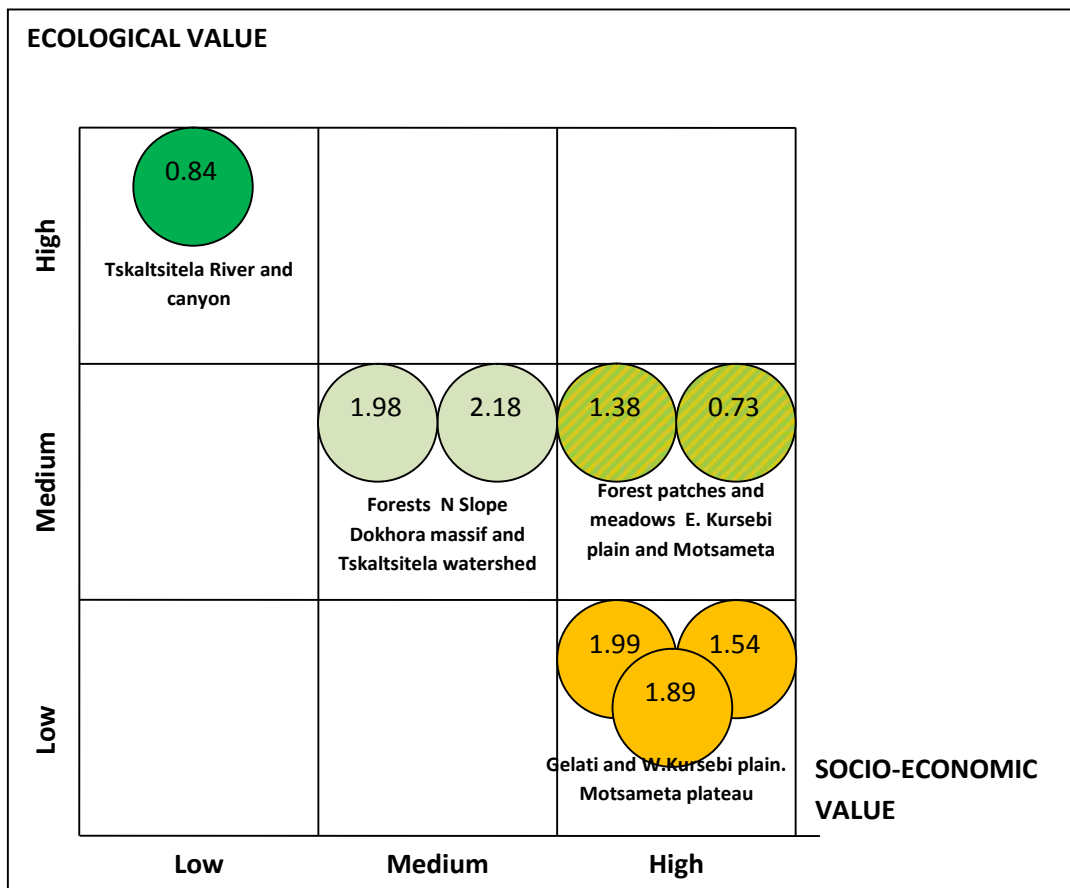


Table 6. Assessment of landscape and nature

Use value

Table 6 shows the present state of the area. Use of the natural resources changes the state of the environment. In particular the impact of human activity is important as shown in section 2.3. It dramatically changed the appearance of the area over time.

		INTERACTION	Impact on		
			Nature	Culture	Man
RIVER and MOTSAMETA CANYON	Man and nature		Water pollution Littering Degradation river banks and forests		Water supply Potential eco-tourism
	Nature and culture		Value as a cultural landscape	Natural setting for monuments (Motsameta church and village)	
	Man and culture			Impact of human activities on monument (Motsameta)	Physical protection and visual appearance of WH monuments Symbiosis of religious and cultural function (Motsameta church) Integrated eco-cultural tourism
		INTERACTION	Impact on		
			Nature	Culture	Man
FORESTS	Man and nature		Degradation of forests(woodcutting) Reforestation and slope stabilization		Use of meadows Potential eco-tourism
	Nature and culture		Value as a cultural landscape	Natural setting for monuments (Gelati)	
	Man and culture			Impact of human activities on WHS	Value as a cultural landscape. Integrated agro-cultural tourism
		INTERACTION	Impact on		
			Nature	Culture	Man
RURAL AREA	Man and nature		Pollution of soil and groundwater Inappropriate land and resource use Environmental Impact quarrying		Opportunity for organic farming Opportunity for alternative energy Opportunity to facilitate tourism
	Nature and culture		Landscape value, cultural landscape.	Setting of monuments in inhabited areas Integrity of archaeological sites Integrity of architectural monuments	
	Man and culture			Impact of human activities on WH monuments	Physical protection and visual appearance of WH monuments

Table 7. Interaction matrices

These processes are still active and interactions between man and its environment continue to change the cultural landscape.

Impact matrices are used to assess the impact of these interactions. For the impact analysis territorial functional units with a more or less similar management regime have been clustered into the following categories:

- River and canyon
- Forests
- Rural area

Results are shown in Table 7.

The results of the Environmental Assessment and Impact Analysis are the basis for the conservation and development plan. Tourism is of particular importance for the area. For that reason the possibilities of sustainable tourism is evaluated in the next section.

4.6. Issues facing the WHS and its Buffer Zone

Threats to the buildings of the Monastery

The natural environment of the Gelati Monastery has a very high humidity all year around. Consequently, the main threat to the wall paintings, mosaics and stone masonry is moisture. Without regular maintenance, grass and minor plants grow on the walls of the monuments which may lead to damage to facing stones.

Due to the natural climatic conditions and lack of regular maintenance, biological growth is intensive on the walls of the oil press building and enclosure; small shoots of fig tree, moss and ivy can be seen on the walls of different buildings of the Monastery including the south gate and the main church.

Pigeons threaten the wall painting of the main church by leaving guano on its surface.

The buildings of the Gelati Monastery WHS face the following threats:

- Main Church of the Nativity of the Virgin - Main threat to the wall painting and interior mosaic is moisture. Some of the stones of the cornice are damaged (fractures, fissures, detachments and lacunas) because of the impact of rain and wind. Also, they show deposits of soil and particulate and slight biodeterioration on their surface.
- Church of St George - Main threat to the wall painting is moisture.
- Church of St Nicholas - Moisture; Grass on the south façade of the first floor.
- Bell tower - Moisture; Minor plants on the west façade.
- Academy - No threat is identified as of today.
- Basement storey of the Academy and adjacent structural remains – Conservation works have not been done on the recently excavated structural remains. There is a threat of their gradual deterioration.
- East Gate - No threat is identified as of today.
- South Gate - No threat is identified as of today.

- Oil press - The building stands without a roof and exposed to precipitation. The interior is completely covered with plants that damage the walls of the building.
- Monks house north of the main church - The vaults are partially ruined. The supporting walls have deteriorated. There is a risk of collapse.
- Monks house south of the main church - There is no risk to the building identified as of today.
- House of the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze - There is no risk to the building identified as of today.
- Enclosure wall - Biological growth.

Potential for air pollution and severe weather events

Gelati is located close to the urban-industrial hub of Kutaisi, second largest city in Georgia with about 180,000 population where the air pollution is one of the highest in Georgia. However, Gelati remains sufficiently isolated from the urban area in its natural environment to avoid the direct impact of pollution.

In the village itself, the main source of air pollution is tourist traffic on the main village road. The Traffic Management Programme of the present Management Plan provides a plan to make a new coach park for long and medium-size tourist buses outside the village and restrict their entrance into the village and the area adjacent to the WHS. It will significantly limit traffic and thus contribute to reducing air pollution in the village and the WHS.

Another source of air pollution is heavy loaded trucks of the mining companies that pass close to the WHS. At present, this problem is partly solved (see below, sub-section “Quarry traffic”).

The risks of damage to the interior paintings due to air pollution may be a subject of particular attention in future. Special attention should be given to studying potential impacts of the global climate change in general and severe weather events and significant temperature changes in particular. The Risk Preparedness Plan, which is to be developed in the present Plan period (2017-2021), should address these issues together with other risk factors.

Potential visitor pressure

Gelati is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Georgia. Despite being a living monastery, Gelati is open for visitors and there are no special regulations established. The visitation pattern is diverse – it is a must see site for both Georgian and foreign travellers; it is commonly visited by schools and university excursions; it is a favourite wedding place for residents of Kutaisi, Tkibuli and nearby villages. Since the collapse of the Soviet regime, the restored monastic function has added to the site significant numbers of religious visitors from all over Georgia. Thus the typical pattern consists of both individual and organised tourists (both international and domestic) wedding parties, religious practitioners, and visitors with special interest (academics, church representatives, authorities, etc).

The visitor number in Gelati can be only generally estimated as there are no exact statistics on the visitors at the site. According to the information provided by the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve, the Gelati Monastery WHS has an estimated average

200,000 visitors per year, which makes it one of the most visited sites in Georgia. (it is a corrected figure. The annual figure of 70,000 given in the dossier for the Major Boundary Modification is out of date).

The general state policy prioritizing tourism development may have an impact in terms of raising the number of tourists in the long term. The potential effects on the site of uncontrolled access by large numbers of visitors are not recognized. There is neither an official guide service established nor a full time caretaker employed. Monks are responsible for day-to-day management of the site, visitor monitoring, general upkeep of the territory, ensuring safety, basic cleaning, and maintenance inside the churches as well as for the whole area within enclosure walls. This is not enough for proper management of the site especially during peak periods such as important religious holidays and weekends.

Relevant Programmes of the present Management Plan provide a plan to regulate visitor access and thus to reduce risks of deliberate or accidental damage to the WHS that may be caused by an influx of visitors. It also provides a new traffic management plan that will solve the problem of traffic jams and help to manage the visitor flow inside the WHS. These measures are essential not only for protecting the WHS, but also for keeping its tranquillity and dignity.

Potential for natural disasters

Most of the natural hazards are uncommon in the WHS area and its Buffer Zone. According to the *Portal of Natural Hazards and Risks in Georgia*,⁸ the risks of wildfire, landslide, rock fall, mudflow, snow avalanche, inundation, and severe storms are low (see figures 9, 10, and 11).

Georgia is situated in a seismically active zone defined as a region of medium seismicity. Earthquakes with a magnitude of 7 and a macro seismic effect up to 9 points are possible in this region, which are attested both by historical and instrumental data. However, in the WHS area and its Buffer Zone the earthquake hazard is relatively low. A violent earthquake in the neighbouring region of Racha in 1991, with an intensity of VIII–IX on Mercalli scale, caused the destruction of a number of Medieval buildings not only in Racha, but also in Shida Kartli and Imereti regions, but did not cause any damage to the buildings of the Gelati Monastery.

Despite the fact that in the WHS area and its Buffer Zone the earthquake hazard is low, in planning and assessing rehabilitation measures of the property the need for sufficient structural stability has to be considered. The joint ICOMOS/World Bank Advisory Mission (January 21-25, 2015) recommended the state party “to undertake a historical analysis of the seismic action of the micro-zoning of the region of the monument, including the systematic recording of the characteristics of this action (magnitude, intensity, epicentrum, and frequency) and the relevant results.” Following this recommendation, an electronic monitoring gauge has been installed on the dome of the main church for monitoring the seismic activity.

There have been no registered cases of lightning strike in Gelati despite the fact that none of the monastic buildings has a lightning conductor. The Risk Preparedness Plan should deal with the necessity of the installation of lightning conductors. In recent years, the Board for Religious Art and Architecture of the Patriarchate considered their appropriateness as well.

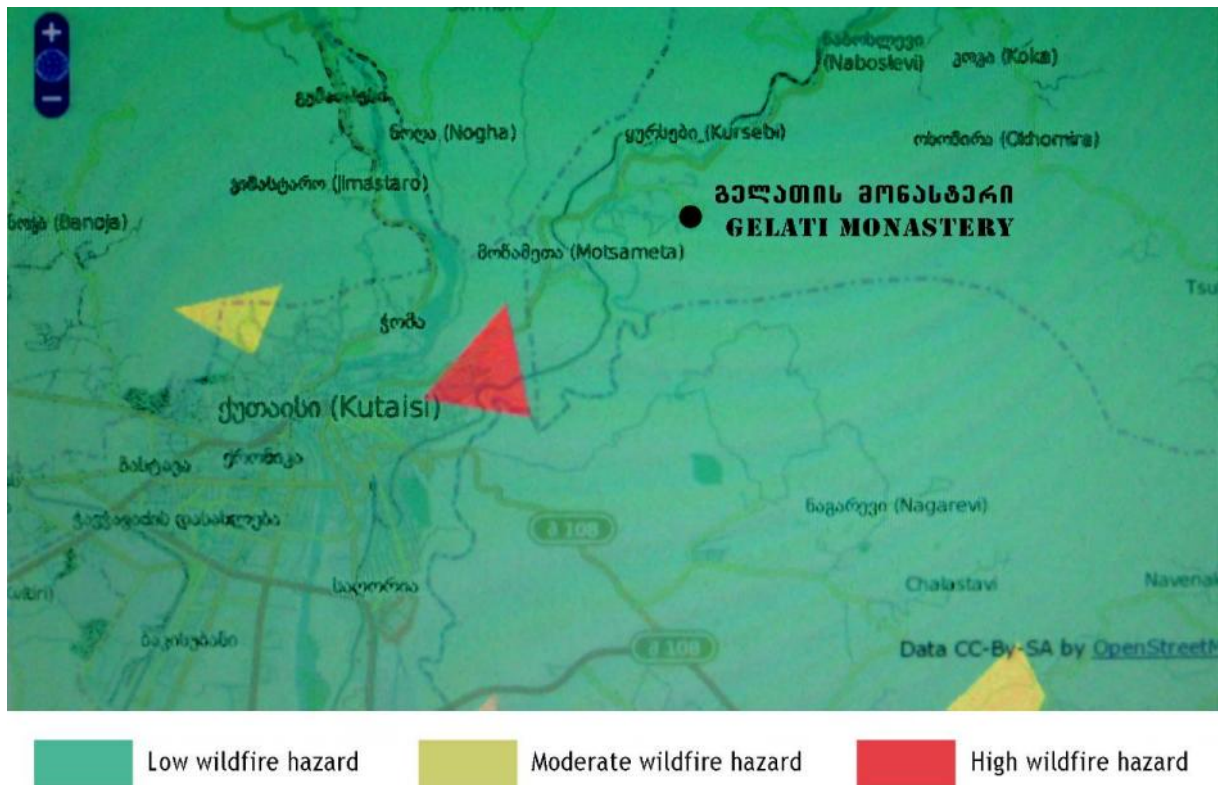
⁸ www.drm.cenn.org/index.php/en-community-profile. Geoportal of Natural Hazards and Risks in Georgia.



Figure 9. Earthquake hazard around the Gelati Monastery (according to the Portal of Natural Hazards and Risks in Georgia)



Figure 10. Landslide hazard around the Gelati Monastery (according to the Portal of Natural Hazards and Risks in Georgia)



**Figure 11. Wildfire hazard around the Gelati Monastery
(according to the Portal of Natural Hazards and Risks in Georgia)**

Potential for fire

The risk of fire in the Monastery was perhaps the most serious hazard in recent years. On November 9, 2014, a fire broke out in the eighteenth-century wooden house located to the south-east of the main church, which had been used as a dwelling of monks since 2000s. The fire occurred because of a short circuit caused by damaged wiring. Nobody was hurt but the wooden house burst into flame quickly and by the time a fire brigade came from Kutaisi it was completely burnt down.

This fire revealed grave shortcomings in fire safety in the Monastery. In the following months, they have partly been eliminated, but in general fire safety management at the WHS is still poor. It should be taken into consideration that there are several other buildings in the Gelati Monastery vulnerable to fire due to their timber elements (Academy, house of the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze and two houses of monks to the north and south of the main church).

The Management Plan requires the following fire safety measures to be taken immediately:

- the whole wiring system in the Monastery must be checked; its damaged parts must be replaced and new wiring must be installed;
- the WHS must be equipped with a sufficient amount of fire extinguishers;
- both the Monastery brethren and the Museum-Reserve staff must be trained in fire safety;
- strict regulations must be established for using all kinds of heaters, stoves, and fireplaces.

Fire safety measures should be expounded in more details in the Risk Preparedness Plan that is to be developed in the present Plan period (2017-2021)

Quarry traffic

There is an active stone quarry near the Gelati area. It is being operated on the basis of the license issued by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, in accordance with the law on the licensing and permissions. In any case, the quarrying activity does not have a direct physical impact on the WHS. However, there is an indirect impact of heavy loaded trucks that pass close to the WHS causing noise and pollution. In January 2015, a Memorandum of Mutual Cooperation was signed between the Municipal Development Fund and the quarry operator to limit the movement of heavy vehicles in the area adjacent to the WHS to early morning and evening hours (before 10.00 and after 19.00) in workdays and to stop it completely on weekends and religious feasts. The volume of traffic is in any case low - typically one or two trucks per day.

Potential need for accommodation for increasing numbers of monks

In recent years, the Monastery was growing slowly. At present, it is impossible to predict whether the number of monks in the Monastery will increase significantly in the Management Plan period (2017-2021) and, accordingly, whether the need for additional accommodation will arise. This issue is balanced due to the fact that some of the monks are and will be based around the nearby chapels of St Saba, St Elijah, and St Nino that are the branches of the Gelati Monastery. Should additional accommodation be needed in the future, new one-storied cells can be constructed outside the property, to the south of its circuit wall, on the plot that belongs to the Monastery. This plan has been endorsed by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation.

Risk of impact by military conflict

Georgia is a country with the painful memory of the war of 2008 as a result of which 20% of its territory is occupied. Recent events in Ukraine showed that the risk of military conflict is still an unfortunate reality in the region, which the Gelati site management should also address. The issues related to such risks (evacuation, protection, etc) should be considered in the Risk Preparedness Plan.

In this context it is important that Georgia has ratified the Hague Convention and its Second Protocol. The Georgian National Committee of the Blue Shield was established in 2012 and is active since 2013.

In case of the growth of international tension in the region, the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia should prepare a candidacy application for the Gelati Monastery WHS for enhanced protection from UNESCO.

Environmental risks to the Buffer Zone

The Tskaltsitela River is a dominant element in the landscape in the Buffer Zone of the WHS. The forest patches in the watershed west of the river are degraded due to woodcutting (fuel wood) but the forests still have ecological value. Reforestation will improve the natural value

and the future production capacity. The river also faces hazards of water pollution and littering.

The canyon near the villages Tchakhata, Motsameta and Godora, with its characteristic geological (karst) formations has a high natural value and has the status of a natural monument. As the area is strongly degraded, restoration and landscaping is needed to reinstate the original landscape. The same applies for the areas further downstream where abandoned quarries should be filled and the heaps of mine waste should be removed.

The forests on the Dokhora massif are used for fuel wood. Reforestation and rehabilitation may restore the landscape value and can also improve the stability of slopes where landslides may occur in the future (at present the landslide hazard is assessed as low, see above, "Potential for natural disasters").

4.7. Potential for economic development

Presently the area has a weak economic structure. The Management Plan focuses on improving the standard of living through the further development of tourism that traditionally is a significant asset to the local economy as well as through improved agro-technology and the development of new economic activities.

Government priorities

Agriculture, tourism and environmental protection are priority areas of the "State Strategy on Regional Development of Georgia for 2010-2017" - the medium term document, which determines the main principles, objectives and tasks of the regional development policy of Georgia.

These priorities have been taken as a basis for the Second Regional Development Project designed for Imereti Region by the World Bank and Georgian Government. It was approved on November 6, 2012. Closing date is June 30, 2017. Total project cost is USD 37,500,000, with the commitment from the World Bank of USD 30,000,000. The Municipal Development Fund of Georgia (MDF) has been designated as an implementing entity for the Project.

The project objective is to improve infrastructure services and institutional capacity to support the increased contribution of tourism to the local economy of the Imereti Region. One of the components of the project is the development of the Imereti tourism circuit. Upgrading and improved management of the six most attractive cultural heritage sites in the proposed circuit includes the Gelati Monastery, Vani Museum and the surrounding archaeological site, the Ubisa Church, the Katskhi Church, the Katskhi Column Monastery, and the Motsameta Monastery. This envisages improving urban landscaping and public parking, construction of information kiosks, improving access roads, and preservation of selected cultural heritage sites.

The goal of the project is to attract private investments, promote public-private partnerships, revitalize local business activity, and develop regional tourism circuits. Owing to these improvements, the population of the region is expected to see an enhanced quality

of life. The project is expected to generate employment, both temporary jobs during construction and permanent quality jobs following the project completion.

Civil sector activities

In recent years, there is growing activity of the civic sector to support the development of small entrepreneurship in the area. Tkibuli District Development Fund, a Georgian non-profit organization established in 2008, gained funding from international donors for a number of projects that aimed at supporting local entrepreneurs in the agricultural and tourist sectors. Among these projects were:

- “Strategic Tourism Development in Tkibuli” (2012) – Its objectives were: to expand the region’s tourism potential in order to create favourable conditions for small business development; to support small and medium-sized entrepreneurs based on local traditions and available resources; to increase the influence of the small entrepreneurs on local policy. The project was supported by the Education for Democracy Foundation (Poland).
- “Tea as a local product of Tkibuli – Small Entrepreneurship Promotion” (2013) - the project was implemented in partnership with the Polish Eco-Development Foundation (FER), by a grant from the Polish organization “Education for Democracy” (RITA). The local tea industry was selected as a pilot programme. Training was provided for stakeholders who are actively involved in the process of making and selling tea. On September 21, 2013, on the day of the village festival of Gelati, an eco-fair was organized in the area adjacent to the Gelati Monastery to promote local agricultural products (not only tea, but also honey, cheese, jams, dried fruits, etc).

The Tkibuli District Development Fund, Polish Development Cooperation Programme, Polish Aid, and FER were co-founders of the Association “New Okriba” that pays particular attention to the development of agriculture and local crafts. Its members are entrepreneurs of the Tkibuli Municipality including residents of Gelati. Through small grants received from the Polish Embassy and USAID, “New Okriba” has helped farmers in purchasing livestock and equipment.

Gelati and its area are in the sphere of interest of the Biological Farming Association Elkana, which advocates the development of sustainable organic farming. Gelati has a special place in the “Tea and Honey Tours” organized by Elkana for local and international tourists.

Agriculture

Agriculture is an important economic sector in the area. Almost all of the villagers in Gelati are engaged, to greater or lesser extent, in agricultural activities – including those with permanent employment in public sector or private companies. However, for the majority of them the main source of livelihood is not from farming. They practice subsistence agriculture producing a range of crops and livestock needed by the family for domestic use. Only a small proportion of the villagers produce agricultural products for market. They sell their production, mainly honey and matsoni (Georgian kind of yogurt) in Kutaisi and Tkibuli. The

most successful among them produce up to 300 kg honey and 5,000 l matsoni per year for sale. These quantities can be doubled in case of demand.

Main local products that have good market potential are:

- Chestnut, lime tree, and acacia honey, which has an established reputation not only in the region, but in the whole country;
- Dairy products, especially matsoni and local sorts of cheese;
- Mushrooms;
- Berries, especially strawberry, blackberry, and medlar;
- Tea (in neighbouring villages).

The Following actions can contribute to the revitalization of agriculture in the area:

- Support farmers engaged in production of agricultural products for market through grants and/or soft loans;
- Develop projects with the aim of supporting environment-friendly systems of farming through developing organic production methods and reducing the use of synthetic petrochemical fertilizers and pesticides in Gelati area;
- Promote development of short food supply chains, which will give farmers the possibility of keeping a bigger share of the value added within the farm and within the local economies;
- Develop special training programmes in sustainable agriculture;
- Develop a plan for creating and managing sustainable agriculture in the Gelati area.

Industry and crafts

At present, industry in the area is limited to a low-scale quarrying and mining activity. There is an active quarry in the vicinity of the Gelati Monastery.

There are a number of craftsmen in Gelati and neighbouring villages. The most prospective sector is the production of jet objects. Local jet is considered to be of the best quality in the whole South Caucasus region. It has been mined and used since ancient times. The earliest jet artefacts discovered in the area date back to the Bronze Age. Locals easily mine it without any special equipment in Kursebi and Orpiri. They made jet crosses, rings, beads, pendants, earrings and other ornaments, which are sold by petty traders at the entrance of the Gelati Monastery. The most successful of the masters sell their handicrafts in Kutaisi and Tbilisi and even abroad, mostly in Turkey.

If promoted and supported, the jet handicraft industry can become a significant source of income for villagers. Already now, there are several families which completely subsist by this craft.

Sustainable tourism

SWOT analysis

The cultural and natural value of the area is high and especially the cultural monuments attract many visitors. Sustainable tourism development should have a high priority, therefore. It meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It requires, however, management of natural and cultural values in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, and biological diversity and life support systems. In order to ensure sustainability negative effects of an increased visitor flow should be mitigated.

The potential of tourism as a means to enhance the standard of living was assessed by means of the *Sustainable Tourism Benchmarking Tool (STBT)*⁹. Results are summarized in this section. The method is based on a modified SWOT analysis and uses a number of parameters to characterize the strong and weak points of the area and the opportunities and related threats of tourism.

The results are presented in a polar diagram with 6 axes that characterize the parameters of the SWOT analysis. The results for the Buffer Zone are presented in Table 8. The upper half of the diagram, the blue boxes, represents the internal conditions, the strength and weaknesses, characterized with the key words Assets and Attractiveness, Sustainability (both cultural, ecological and socio-economical) and Infrastructure.

The lower part, the pink boxes, symbolizes the external factors, the tourism activities and related aspects characterized by the key word activities (number and category of tourists), leakage, the spillover of revenues to other areas and linkage, the added value of tourism for inhabitants and other economic sectors.

The rating is shown by the position of stars in the diagram and the colour of the stars. Results are discussed in detail in the following sections and should be used as input for the management plan. The results are in line with the outcome of the evaluation published in the Strategy report for Imereti as a whole.

Assets and attractiveness

The presence of a rich cultural heritage and a landscape of high environmental value is a competitive edge that attracts inbound tourists. This aspect gets a green star in the diagram. Protection and conservation of the protected areas is of prime importance as it is the basis for tourism development in these areas. It is the responsibility of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation together with the Ministry of Environment and Protection of Natural Resources to facilitate this.

The present assets appeal to a narrow sector of tourism. In order to attract more tourists, the product portfolio should be more diversified. Possibilities for prolonged stay should be improved or created and activities should be organized to entertain overnight visitors. New products have to be developed for these emerging markets. The new visitor centre can act as a catalyst for these developments.

⁹ L. Cernat, J. Gourdon, *UNCTAD Sustainable Tourism Benchmarking Tool (STBT)* (Munich, 2005).

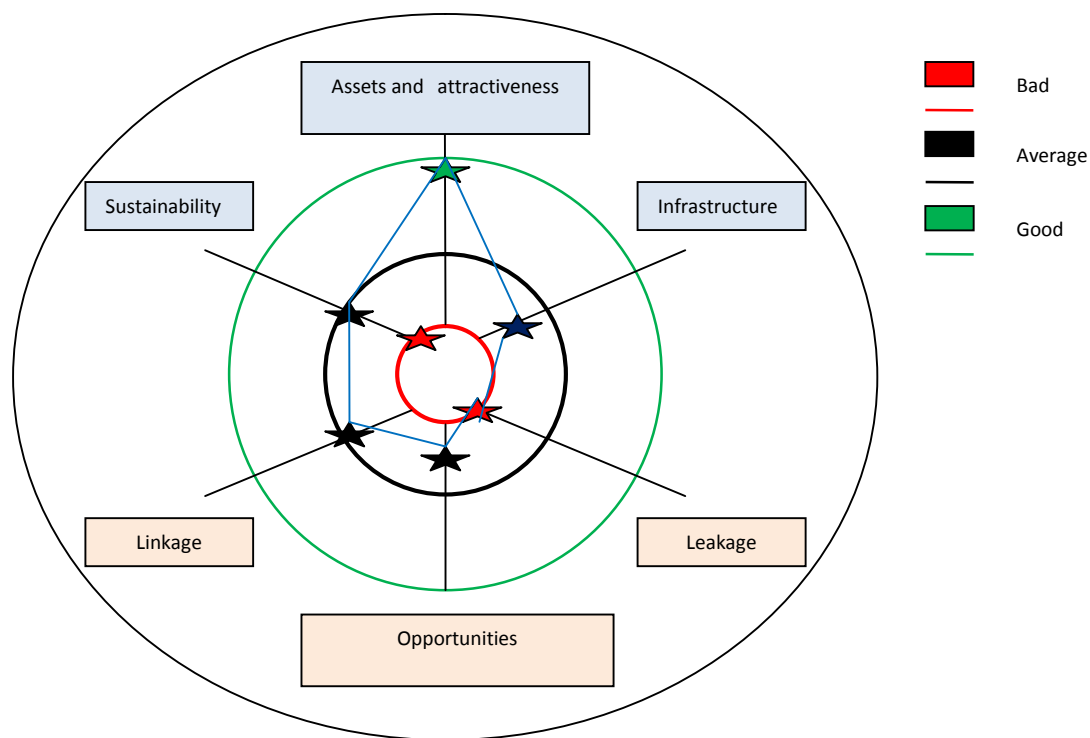


Table 8. STBT diagram for project area

However, the poor organization of the tourism sector, the low quality of tourist infrastructure, the lack of high quality accommodation and skilled personnel will hamper the growth. Cooperation within neighbouring areas, within the framework of a regional tourism development strategy may be the way to address these problems.

Sustainability

Presently large areas of the forests are degraded and improper use of land and resources threatens the remaining part of the area. If this continues the ecological sustainability cannot be guaranteed. The climate conditions in the area are suitable, however, for restoring and maintaining a healthy ecosystem. If a strict management regime is enforced sustainability can be assured, resulting in a black star in the diagram.

The number of tourists can be increased in future without endangering the cultural monuments and threatening the environmental quality, provided a strict management regime is enforced and measures are taken to avoid negative impacts on nature and monuments and their use as a religious centre.

The socio economic sustainability is, however, more critical. In the present situation the quality and quantity of the labour force is adequate to cope with the inflow of tourism but needs improvement with a growing number of tourists. In the present situation, it is difficult to obtain funding for investment for upgrading the tourist infrastructure. Moreover, the economic feasibility of such investments will be questionable if the number of tourists will not increase. The attitude of the population is positive, however, so the social acceptance of changes will be assured. Overall the situation is not favourable, resulting in a red star in the diagram.

Infrastructure

The area is easily accessible and existing infrastructure is adequate to cope with the present inflow of tourists, but the tourism infrastructure should be improved if the number of visitors increases.

The attractiveness of the area for tourism is endangered by the lack of proper public facilities (gas, water, sanitation) that threatens the quality of the natural environment and may become a health risk for tourists. The Government has started a long term project to upgrade the public amenities so the situation will be improved in future. This results in a black star in the diagram.

If traffic increases in future, traffic regulation may be required and alternative modes of transport should be explored. Upgrading the train services between the project site and Kutaisi might be considered.

Opportunities

About 200,000 tourists visit the area per year, mainly in summer. The majority are domestic tourists, the foreign tourists mainly come from neighbouring countries, both groups arrive by car. Other foreign tourists visit the area as part of package tours and arrive by bus. Although the number of tourists to Georgia is steadily increasing, the Imereti region and the project area do not benefit from this increase.

Georgian tourists are important in number. They visit the area for a day trip by car but do not spend much on food and beverages. They may however buy local products on their way home, which increases the multiplier. Improving facilities may attract a larger part of the group for overnight stay.

The school camps are an interesting segment with a low profit but with a high multiplier as many sectors are benefiting. Presently the socio-economic situation limits the possibilities for expansion.

Most international tourists are coming from neighbouring countries; the number of tourists from Israel has increased rapidly in recent years. Most of these tourists come for the sea resorts in summer and for skiing in winter. A small part may visit the project area in summer on a day trip. In spite of the fact that their number is small they bring in foreign currency and may spend more than the average Georgian. The multiplier is low, however.

Foreigners from Europe normally visit the area as part of a trip to Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. They will stay for a few hours but are willing to spend more than the other groups. The multiplier is low and most of their expenditure is spent elsewhere.

A marketing plan has been prepared to address these problems at a regional level. It envisages targeted actions to open new markets, development of new packages for existing markets and measures to improve the attractiveness for the area for a variety of target groups. The potential is rated between poor and average resulting in a black star in the diagram.

Linkage and leakage

In the present situation only a small group of local inhabitants benefits directly from the revenues of tourism. A black star rates this. Selling local products and offering guided tours in the area may increase the multiplier of the visit to the Monastery.

Tourists visiting the Monastery spend only a small percentage of their overall expenditure on site. The larger part is spent elsewhere (leakage). This is rated by a red star. Leakage may be reduced by improving facilities for overnight stay (internal leakage) and by negotiating a higher share in the income from guided tours (external leakage).

4.8. Risk assessment

Risks to the Monastery and the area are discussed in more detail in Section 4.6. There are clearly considerable numbers of potential threats and urgent action is needed, for example, to reduce the risk of fire within the Monastery.

The possible preparation of a Risk Preparedness Plan for the WHS Gelati Monastery was discussed in the framework of the World Bank Project for Imereti Regional Development; however it has not been done yet. Obviously, more work needs to be done to identify potential risks to the WHS and its Buffer Zone as a whole and ways to counteract or mitigate them. **During the Management Plan period (2017-2021), a priority should be to extend this work. A commitment to develop the appropriate Risk Preparedness Plan is confirmed by the State party. This should have high priority.**

4.9. Responsible agencies

Presently the following institutions are responsible for the management process of the WHS Gelati Monastery:

- **Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia** and its **Kutaisi-Gaenati Eparchy**;
- **Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia**;
- **National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia**, a subordinated body to the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, and its branch **Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve**;
- **Sakrebulo and Gamgeoba (municipal administration) of the Tkibuli Municipality**;
- **Sakrebulo (local administration) of the Kursebi Territorial Unit (Community)**

There is also a number of governmental agencies and institutions, who participate more or less actively in the management of the WHS and its Buffer Zone. It would be beneficial for achievement of the goals of the Management Plan if their participation increases.

For detailed description of roles and responsibilities of various agencies and institutions see Section 3.3.

It is proposed to establish a Management Committee of the Gelati Monastery WHS, with representatives of strategic stakeholders, to appoint for each spatial unit a governmental agency that is responsible for conservation management and to appoint a local stakeholder as lead agency for projects.

4.10. Ongoing activities and projects

As environmental protection and regional development are high priority areas for the Government, activities have started to achieve these goals, The World Bank funding is instrumental in this respect.

Presently, conservation of cultural and natural resources is the responsibility of the **Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection** and **Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection**. These Ministries are mainly active in the WHS, the natural monument and the forests. State funding is used to finance their “core business” but external funding is used for outsourcing of services and financing of major investments, such as the execution of the Conservation Master Plan and the improvement of the WHS infrastructure. These ongoing activities and projects are shown in the first three rows of the Table 9.

Spatial component	CONSERVATION ASPECTS			Responsible agency
	Culture	Nature	Society	
WH Site	Culture conservation. Conservation Master Plan		Visitor centre	National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation
Natural monument		Imereti protected areas Management Plan		Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (Agency for Protected Areas)
Forests		Annual operational plans		Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (Forestry Department)
Rural area			Infrastructural projects (roads, gas, water); Tourism Development Strategy; Imereti RAP projects; Refurbishing guesthouses; Agritourism.	Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure Tkibuli Municipality Kursebi Community National Tourism Administration

Table 9. Ongoing activities and projects

The situation in the rural area is more complicated as there is no clear division of tasks and responsibilities. The Ministry of Regional Development, the Imereti Region, the Tkibuli Municipality and the administrative community of Kursebi are the public agencies that should facilitate conservation and development activities. However, state financing is insufficient for this and private financing is difficult to obtain. The WB financing for regional development of Imereti provides funding for some major infrastructure projects, such as the construction of a network for water supply and gas. A Strategy for tourism development in Imereti was made, financed by the World Bank. The Georgian National Tourism Administration will play an important role in the implementation of the plan but funding is as yet uncertain. Presently small projects are financed by WB (RAP) and other donors through small grants and micro credits.

5. INTERVENTIONS

5.1. General

Management interventions are required:

- to protect and preserve the cultural and natural values and functions in the spatial units, taking into account the dynamic processes and interactions within the elements;
- to ensure a sustainable use of these environmental functions;
- to develop opportunities for sustainable economic growth;
- to mitigate negative impacts of these developments on the cultural heritage, nature, and society.

Results of the Environmental Assessment supplemented by the input from the stakeholders were used to define management issues and related measures and strategies. Programmes are presented for those measures that can be implemented within the next 5 years.

5.2. Management issues

World Heritage Site

Managing the cultural value

The Gelati Monastery is a World Heritage Site. It is a conspicuous and important spatial element in the Gelati landscape. The Conservation Master Plan of the Monastery made in 2008 was updated in 2015. It is used as a basis for conservation. The plan lists the interactions with nature and man that need attention. This is the basis for a global zoning to separate various functions, and for a conservation plan. The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation is the responsible agency but there is as yet no clear management structure to guide and control their implementation. A first priority issue is to complete the ongoing implementation of the plan and to strengthen the project management.

Conservation requires qualified and skilled staff. Education and training of the technical staff has a high priority therefore.

Finally, Management should also foster research and dissemination of results through scientific publications and cultural education.

Facilitating tourism

The Gelati Monastery is an important tourist attraction and a spiritual centre that attracts around 200,000 tourists each year. With a proposed targeted marketing strategy this figure will probably increase in future. This has implications for management.

The level of tourist services should be enhanced, qualified staff should be recruited and trained and safety and security should be assured for both the monument and its visitors. Managing the visitor flow is an important aspect.

The new visitor centre is instrumental in this respect and a plan should be developed for its operational use.

Facilitating the religious function

The Monastery has a religious function. The nature of religious heritage calls for mutual understanding and cooperation between the religious communities concerned and all other stakeholders, who must work together to preserve the significance of cultural heritage associated with the sacred site. On the other hand, facilities are required to accommodate the monks and religious visitors and to perform religious functions.

Plans for addressing these issues have been developed in the programme for the religious functioning of the Monastery

Nature

The main spatial elements in the Buffer Zone are the natural monument and the forests. Conservation of nature and environmental education are the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia, more in particular the Agency for Protected Areas and the Forestry Department.

Restoring the quality of degraded forests should be a high priority issue for the next years to increase their attractiveness for tourists in the future. The government is planning to supply natural gas to the villages so there is no need to cut fuelwood; this will greatly reduce illegal wood cutting. However construction has not started as yet (2017). The new forest code, once enacted, will provide the legal framework for sustainable management and will be the basis for forest management in future.

In the areas where old quarries and mine waste are damaging the visual appearance of the landscape, plans for landscaping and reinstatement should be made. In some areas opportunities exist for attracting geological tourists, this should be further developed.

Tourist trails are a means for environmental education and provide opportunities for tourism. A tourist circuit connecting the Monasteries of Motsameta and Gelati that uses existing ancient roads and connects historic monuments and spectacular karst caves has a great tourist value. This concept should be further developed.

The monuments in the natural setting should be protected and safeguarded and where possible restored.

Society

Presently the area has a weak economic structure, agriculture is the important sector for subsistence but tourism has a potential for growth. A wise use of land and resources is needed to ensure sustainable growth of these activities.

Together with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, a sustainable use regime for meadows and pastures should be developed and the use of the natural and cultural components for eco-cultural tourism should be promoted, one of the means to improve the social-economic situation in the project area.

Sustainable tourism development should have a high priority. It requires management of natural and cultural values in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, and biological diversity and life support systems. In order to ensure sustainability negative effects of an increased visitor flow should be mitigated.

Spatial component	MANAGEMENT ASPECT			
	Culture	Nature	Society	Strategic actors
WH Site (Chapter 2)	Facilitate Cultural resource management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and education • Training • Monitoring Facilitate tourism	Protect visual appearance WHS	Manage traffic and visitor flow; Manage use as religious centre	Patriarchate. Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection. National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation
Natural monument and forest (Chapter3)	Protect cultural monuments	Facilitate natural resource management; Conservation and rehabilitation Tourist trails	Develop circuit of nature trails; Promote and enforce sustainable resource use	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection
Rural area (Chapter 4)	Protect cultural monuments and archaeological sites.	Protect visual appearance and physical integrity WHS	Promote sustainable agriculture	Tkibuli Municipality
Site management	Monastery; Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve	Local Administration of Imereti Caves Protected Areas	Kursebi Administrative Unit Local inhabitants	Governance and communication between the Management Committee and site working group (Chapter 5)

Table 10. Action Programmes

5.3. Programmes

Based upon these recommendations, a list of programmes has been made that should be completed within the next 5 years. After this period, the plan has to be revised and updated. The programmes are summarised in Table 10. They are described in more detail in the Action Programmes annexed to this Management Plan.

Programmes are made for all spatial units shown in the first column. They address conservation of culture and nature, as well as social and economic development. The cells in the matrix define the topics that are elaborated in the programmes.

The right-hand column lists the owners and/ or responsible agency for the spatial unit; together they form the Management Committee of the WHS Gelati Monastery. The bottom

row represents the operational actors responsible for the execution of the work; together they form the site working group. The last cell in the matrix, where the Management Committee of the WHS Gelati Monastery and site working group meet, symbolizes the coordination and communication between the two groups. These aspects are discussed in the next chapter.

6. GOVERNANCE AND SITE MANAGEMENT

6.1. Management Committee

The Management Committee of the WHS Gelati Monastery (The “Committee”) will be formed further to Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (WHC. 13/01 July 2013), and on the basis of Article 9 of the Charter of the Ministry of Culture and Monument protection, adopted by the Government of Georgia on 16 July, 2010, by Decree #197.

Thus, the Management Committee will have the status of an advisory organ of the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection (the “Minister”) and will work in close cooperation with the Cultural Heritage Strategy, Organizations Coordination and Permissions Department and the Advisory Committee on World Cultural Heritage created by the Order of the Minister #3/37 on 27 February 2007 with more general scope.

The regulations contained in Article 9 mentioned above, give the Minister the possibility to include in the Committee officials of other governmental bodies as well as representatives of civil society and experts (with their consent). This should include and facilitate procedures for horizontal coordination of the contribution of the various ministries and agencies. In this way the Committee can ensure that the management objectives are achieved and interests of all stakeholders at local and national level are taken into account in the decision making process. Necessary expertise should be provided by involvement of external experts.

The management structure should represent the multi-sectoral character of management and the related broad spectrum of interests at national level, but should also ensure an effective and efficient site management. This calls for a functional division between central and local components, linked by proper procedures for coordination and communication.

A possible organizational set up is shown in Table 11.

Main functions of the Committee should be the following:

- Takes care of quality control. Approves annual plans and programmes;
- Carries out short term and midterm planning of implementation of the management plan;
- Establishes procedures for horizontal coordination;
- Manages and supports implementation of the management plan;
- Analysis of the current conservation and management problems affecting the property;
- Issues quarterly reports to the Minister of the Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia and other stakeholders;
- Examines periodically the results of the implementation of management plan and makes mid-term and a final evaluation.

The Minister approves the Charter of the Committee. The Committee elects a chairperson and a secretary. Chairperson shall convene the Committee at least twice a year.

The members of the Committee are appointed by the following agencies:

- Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia

National Agencies

- Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia;
- National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia;
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Protection of Georgia;
- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia;
- Georgian National Tourism Administration.

Local Government and community:

- Regional Administration of Imereti;
- Tkibuli Municipality;
- Local community;
- National agencies of entrepreneurs.

Members should be mandated to take decisions in the above-mentioned tasks.

Site working group

The Committee forms a Site working group which:

- Is responsible for the execution of plans through ad hoc project groups;
- Prepares annual plans;
- Performs day to day management;
- Enforces rules and regulations;
- Communicates with local stakeholders;
- Prepares monthly reports to the secretary of the Committee.

Representatives of the following groups will be invited to participate in Site working group:

- Monastery;
- Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve;
- Tkibuli Municipality;
- Representatives of local community;
- Representatives of entrepreneurs.

The Committee Chairperson appoints a chairperson of the group. The group convenes monthly or more frequently if required.

Project groups

These consist of members of local stakeholders and external contractors retained for execution of specific tasks. These tasks are part of the annual programme as approved by the Management Committee of the WHS Gelati Monastery. The chairperson of the project group should be mandated to sign the contract and to approve payments.

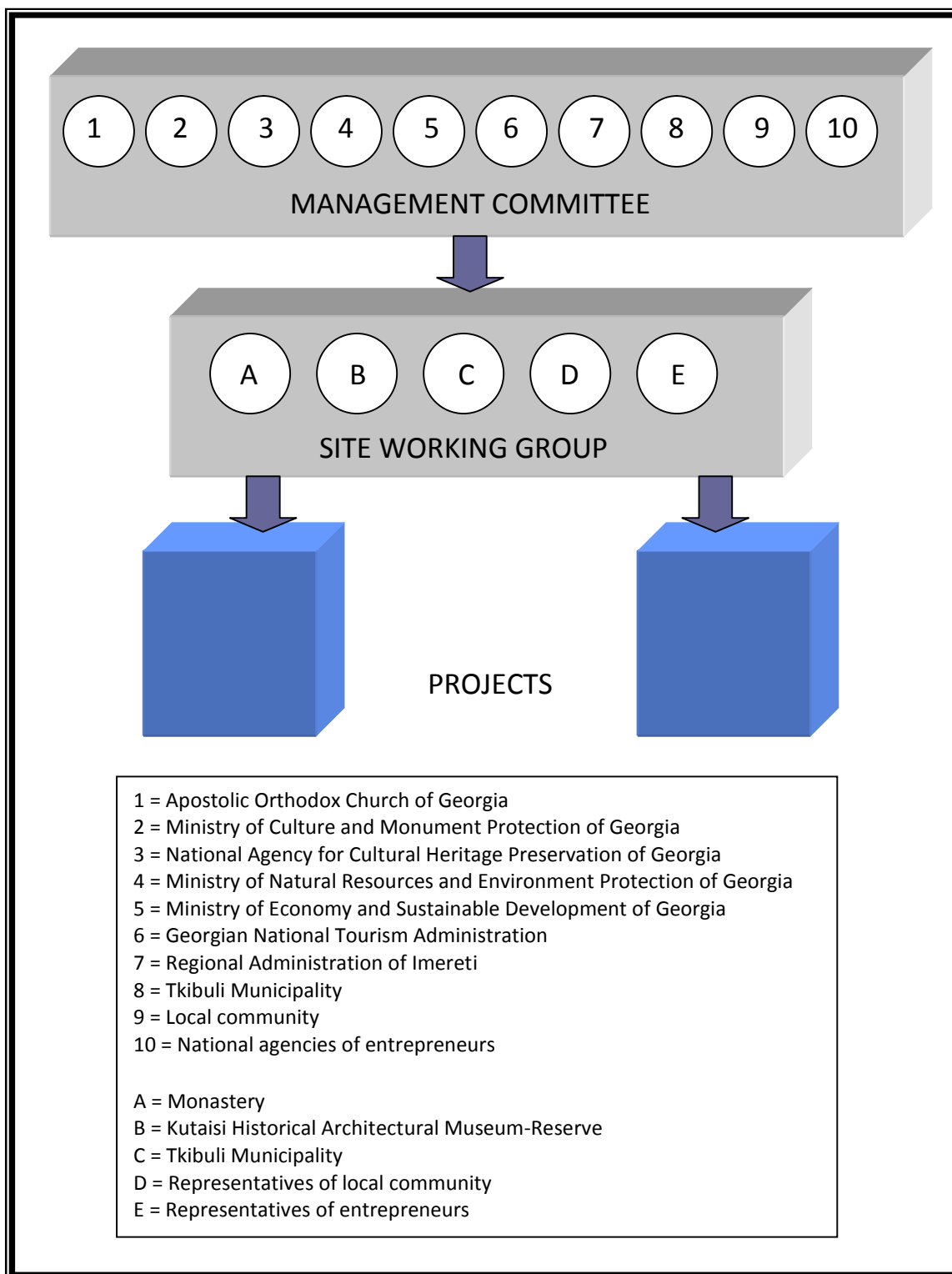


Table 11. Organogram of management structure

Communication and coordination

The secretary of the Management Committee and the chairperson of the management group are responsible for the communication between the management group and the Management Committee. The secretary also takes care of information sharing within the Committee.

6.2. Legal basis and budget

The place and role of the Management Plan in the hierarchy of documents related to monument protection, as well as its goals, objectives and methods of implementation, need to be stipulated by the law

The law shall stipulate sources of financing and rules and principles of budgeting for the Management Plan. According to legislation in force, the Management Plan budget may be formulated by revenues gained from local economic activity, state budget subsidies, credits, grants and donations.

Article 5.1.h of the Law on Cultural Heritage provides authority for the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection to develop and implement task oriented and / or State programmes aiming to protect and promote cultural heritage. The Gelati Management plan aims to protect and promote The Gelati Monastery site, therefore it may be regarded as a task-oriented long term state programme, undertaken to fulfil State obligations under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. On the basis of above regulation, the Management Plan may be approved by the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection under the current legislative framework. After the above approval, the Management Plan becomes operable and enforceable by the Ministry with active participation of the Management Committee.

7. IMPLEMENTATION. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

7.1. General

The management plan gives directions how to manage the area in order to achieve the strategic objectives listed in section 1.4. Management is a dynamic process that can be schematized by the process framework shown in Table 12.

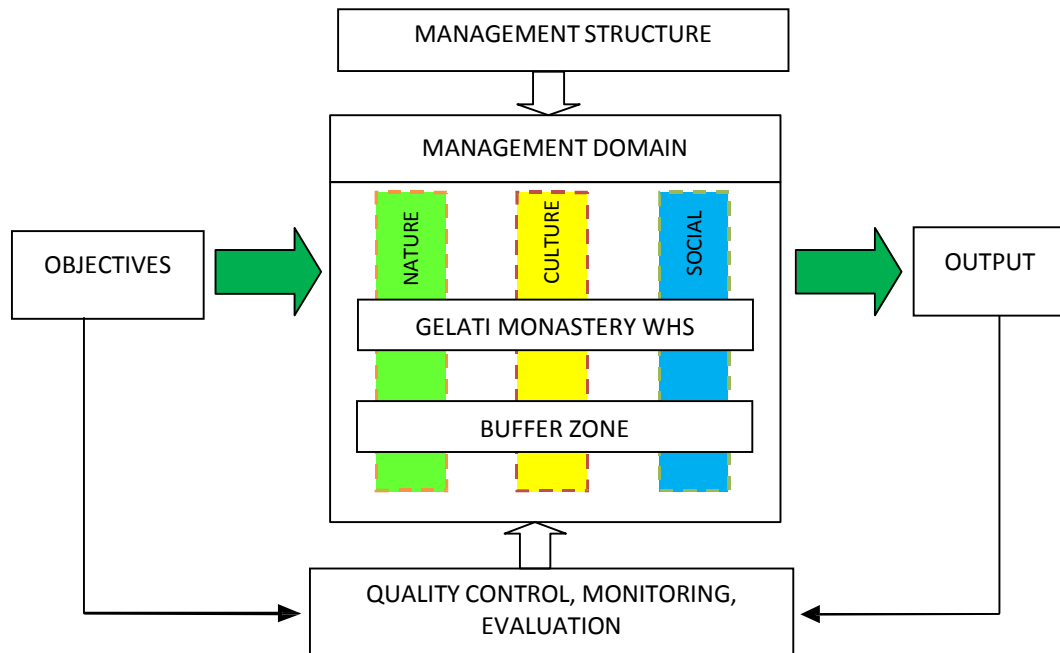


Table 12. Process framework for management

The framework shows:

- a. The Management area is schematized as a box in the centre of the Table 12. This represents:
 - The spatial elements of the area (horizontal bands) and the related cultural, natural, social and economic attributes and values (coloured vertical bands);
 - The required management actions and programmes;
- b. The objectives;
- c. The primary process shown by the horizontal green arrows (input, the required actions and the expected output);
- d. The Management structure. This includes:
 - the national committee and the site management team,
 - The legal framework, the staff and facilities that are needed to facilitate the primary process).
 - The commitment and support of local stakeholders;

- e. The Quality control cycle, the procedures used to monitor, evaluate and control the process and the outcome. This includes:
 - Monitoring the output and the process
 - Evaluation of the result
 - Corrective actions if needed.

These aspects are described in the present chapter.

7.2. Monitoring

Methodology

The quality of the output and the process is monitored by means of a set of indicators.

Indicators are attributes that are representative for the state of the various components. Following “SMART” criteria apply for their selection. Indicators should be **Specific** for the attribute that is monitored, the indicator should be **Measurable** and results should be **Achievable** with the resources available. Finally the outcome should be **Representative** for the objective that is evaluated and **Timely**, so it can be used as input for the evaluation

Output indicators: Indicators for the cultural component should represent the integrity and authenticity of the monuments as prescribed in the Operational Guidelines of UNESCO. Natural values and functions should be evaluated through the biodiversity of representative plots. The natural monument within the area may be used for that purpose. The effectiveness of restoration and recuperation of woodlands may be assessed through the thickness of the canopy, the biodiversity of the understory and the fauna population. Finally the social and economic effects of sustainable land use and tourism development may be derived from micro economic indicators, such as income of households, and from interviews with local stakeholders.

Process indicators: Process indicators are used to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the management process. Tracking tools are used to monitor the progress of work. Aspects that are monitored include the effect of externalities (force majeure), the planning and execution of activities mentioned in the management plan, the availability of human and financial resources and the decision making process and information flow.

Monitoring the condition of the WHS

National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia, through its structural unit Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum–Reserve, implements the periodical monitoring of the property. The Monitoring expert is obligated to present short monitoring reports to the National Agency Central Office monthly. The report is compiled from textual and photo documentation.

The interdisciplinary group from the Central office implements the monitoring of the property once per 3 months, to evaluate the different issues of the state of conservation. On the basis of the short periodical reports, the annual report on state of conservation of the property is elaborated by the UNESCO and International Relations Unit at the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

On the basis of periodical reports, the short and long term strategies are planned to maintain and improve the state of conservation the property.

In line with this, the special council established at the National Agency implements the periodic monitoring of the ongoing works of the Property. The periodicity of this monitoring depends on the specification and duration of the particular project.

Indicator	Periodicity	Location of Records
Cleanness and order of the site and the buildings	Continuous maintenance records; seasonal and yearly reports on the state of conservation	Local manager, monitoring expert, National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation
Rate of change in the condition of the structures, the exterior ashlar, roofs and fittings, and interior wall surfaces	State of conservation report every five years, including photographic records	Local manager, monitoring expert, National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation
Rate of change in environment and surrounding landscape, taking into account planning and development trends in the setting	Yearly reports	Local manager, monitoring expert, National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation
Changes in use of the site, visitor facilities, site presentation, numbers of visitors	Yearly reports	Local manager, monitoring expert, National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation

Table 13. Key indicators for monitoring state of conservation

7.3. Evaluation

Monitoring results will be evaluated in two ways. If external or legal standards are available these will be used as reference. This is often the case for environmental parameters such as water quality and air pollution.

In case such standards do not exist internal reference values should be defined for each objective.

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Hundreds of research papers, articles, and books have been published on various aspects of the Gelati Monastery including its history, archaeology, architecture, wall painting, and objects of art. The great majority of them are written in Georgian and some of them are in Russian thus being unavailable for a wide international public. There is still a lack of publications in Western languages.

Here is the list of the major publications in Western languages fully or partly dealing with the Gelati Monastery:

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LIST OF ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: ACTION PROGRAMMES

ANNEX 2: MAPS

The following A3 size maps are attached:

1. Map of Georgia, 1: 1 000 000.
2. Map of the Tkibuli Municipality and the environs of the city of Kutaisi, 1: 100 000.
3. Map of the nominated property and its Buffer Zone, 1:15 000.
4. Map of the nominated property, 1:750.
5. Map of the nominated property and Buffer Zone showing listed monuments and monuments proposed for listing, 1:20 000.
6. Map showing proposed boundary modification, 1:30 000.
7. Topographical Map, 1:25 000.
8. Map of territorial functional units within the Buffer Zone, 1:17 000.
9. Map of land use within the Buffer Zone, 1:15 000.
10. Map of the location of quarries, 1: 30 000.



**MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE
GELATI MONASTERY**

**ANNEX 1
ACTION PROGRAMMES**

2017

Contents

ABBREVIATIONS USED.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. PROGRAMMES FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE	6
Preface.....	6
Cultural Heritage Conservation Programme	7
Monitoring and Maintenance Programme	10
Academic Studies Programme	14
Training Programme.....	19
Visitor Management Programme.....	22
Educational and Public Awareness Programme.....	29
Programme for the religious functioning of the Monastery.....	33
3. PROGRAMMES FOR NATURAL MONUMENT AND FORESTS	37
Preface.....	37
Natural Resources Protection Programme	38
Eco Tourism Programme	42
4. PROGRAMMES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	46
Preface.....	46
Sustainable Tourism Development Programme	47
Traffic Management Programme.....	56
5. GOVERNANCE AND SITE MANAGEMENT	62
Preface.....	62
Implementation of the Management Structure	63

ABBREVIATIONS USED

MoC&MP- Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia

MoE&NR- Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia

MoE&SD - Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia

MoRD&I - Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia

MoF - Ministry of Finance of Georgia

NACHP - National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia

GNTA - Georgian National Tourist Administration

APA - Agency for Protected Areas

FD - Forestry department

1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 of the MP gives a complete review of issues and related management actions that are needed to achieve the management objectives. Based upon these recommendations a list of programmes has been made that should be completed within the next 5 years (2017-2021). After this period, the plan has to be revised and updated. The programmes are shown in Table 1 (reproduced from Table 10 in Chapter 5 of the Management Plan).

Spatial component	MANAGEMENT ASPECT			
	Culture	Nature	Society	Strategic actors
WH Site (Chapter 2)	Facilitate Cultural heritage management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conservation • Research and education • Training • Monitoring Facilitate tourism;	Protect the setting of the WHS and its visual appearance	Manage traffic and visitor flow; Manage use as religious centre	Patriarchate NACHP
Natural monument and forest (Chapter3)	Protect cultural heritage monuments	Facilitate natural resource management; Conservation and rehabilitation; Tourist trails	Develop circuit of nature trails; Promote and enforce sustainable resource use	MoE&NR
Rural area (Chapter 4)	Protect cultural monuments and archaeological sites	Protect visual appearance and physical integrity of the WHS	Promote sustainable agriculture	Municipality Tkibuli
Site management	Monastery; Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum Reserve	Local Administration of Imereti Caves Protected Areas	Administrative Unit Kursebi Local inhabitants	Governance and communication between the Management Committee and the site working group (Chapter 5)

Table 1. Action Programmes

It should be noted that the programmes in this section of the Management Plan are at different stages of development. They vary from some projects which are fully planned, costed and resourced to others which at this stage are aspirational, and need much more work to provide necessary detail. This means that it is possible to provide more detail and certainty on timing for some of them than for others.

As time goes on, the more aspirational programmes will become more detailed and more concrete and it will be possible to update the Action Programmes accordingly. The Action Programmes will continue to be developed through the life of the Management Plan as one of the responsibilities of the World Heritage Site Management Committee.

2. PROGRAMMES FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Preface

As stated in the first paragraph of section 5.2. of the MP, the first priority issue is to complete the ongoing implementation of the Conservation Master Plan and to strengthen the project management.

Conservation requires regular monitoring and maintenance and qualified and skilled staff. Education and training of the technical staff has a high priority therefore.

The WHS is both a cultural monument and a religious centre; its religious functioning should be protected and safeguarded.

Finally, Management should also foster research and dissemination of results through scientific publications and cultural education.

Cultural Heritage Conservation Programme

1. Rationale

The Gelati Monastery Conservation Master Plan has been elaborated in 2008 and was approved by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in 2009. Since then all conservation interventions were carried out according to the Plan. Initially it was designed as a package of proposals: for rehabilitation/restoration plans of separate architectural sites, archaeological research, conservation of wall painting, stone conservation, zoning of the property area for different functions etc. Extensive works already undertaken within the planned activities have revealed a number of new challenges and provided valuable information to be considered. In 2015, the Conservation Master Plan was updated to reflect new realities and meet current and future needs of the Site.

In 2015 a joint ICOMOS/WB mission was invited to visit the site in order to improve further parameters for treatment and safety measures for the overall structural stability of the Gelati Monastery Complex. The Mission has reviewed the existing documentation on the ongoing works in the Gelati Monastery and provided recommendations for additional measures; establishment of a permanent monitoring system of the dome of the Main Church was considered an absolute and immediate necessity.

This particular issue and some other measures concerning the wall consolidations were combined with the ongoing project “Architectural Rehabilitation of the Church of the Virgin at Gelati Monastery” that is implemented by the Georgian Arts and Culture Centre financed by the US Ambassador’s Large Grants programme and the programme “Rehabilitation and Conservation of the Stone Surface and Structure of the Church of the Virgin at Gelati Monastery” to be funded by the MDF/ World Bank.

2. Location

The programme is carried out within the compound of the Gelati Monastery WHS.

3. Description of the works

a. Conservation and consolidation

The following conservation works will be carried out in the years of the present Management Plan:

- Cleaning and Conservation of the chapels of the main church;
- Conservation of the socle of the main church;
- Roofing of the chapels of the main church;
- Conservation of wall paintings in the Main Church and its chapels;
- Conservation of mosaics in the Main Church;
- Roofing of the lower parts of the Main Church;

- Roofing of the lower parts of the Church of St George;
- Conservation of the old cobbled path and integration into the hiking trail;
- Conservation of old pavement of the Monastery courtyard;
- Conservation of the perimeter defence wall of the Gelati Monastery one of the characteristic features of the old, external appearance of the Monastery ensemble;
- Conservation and protection of archaeological deposits and remains;
- Repair of the old rainwater drainage system alongside the foundation of the Main Church;
- Improving the structural stability of the Main Church based on the recommended studies; this also includes construction of a permanent monitoring system on the dome of the church.

The identified works are described in details in the updated Conservation Master Plan.

b. Updated Master Plan

The updated Conservation Master Plan

- included the evaluation of the results of the works carried out;
- presented new technical information that became available;
- presented results of new archaeological discoveries;
- summarized the recommendations of the report by joint ICOMOS/WB Advisory Mission to the WH Property in 2015.

Moreover, the conservation policies for separate components have been described and a broader conservation vision has been presented that covers the maintenance strategy, preventive conservation measures, monitoring, conservation of excavated archaeological remains, prioritization of the archaeological study components. Implementation of some specific and urgent recommendations is already under way.

4. Responsible Agency

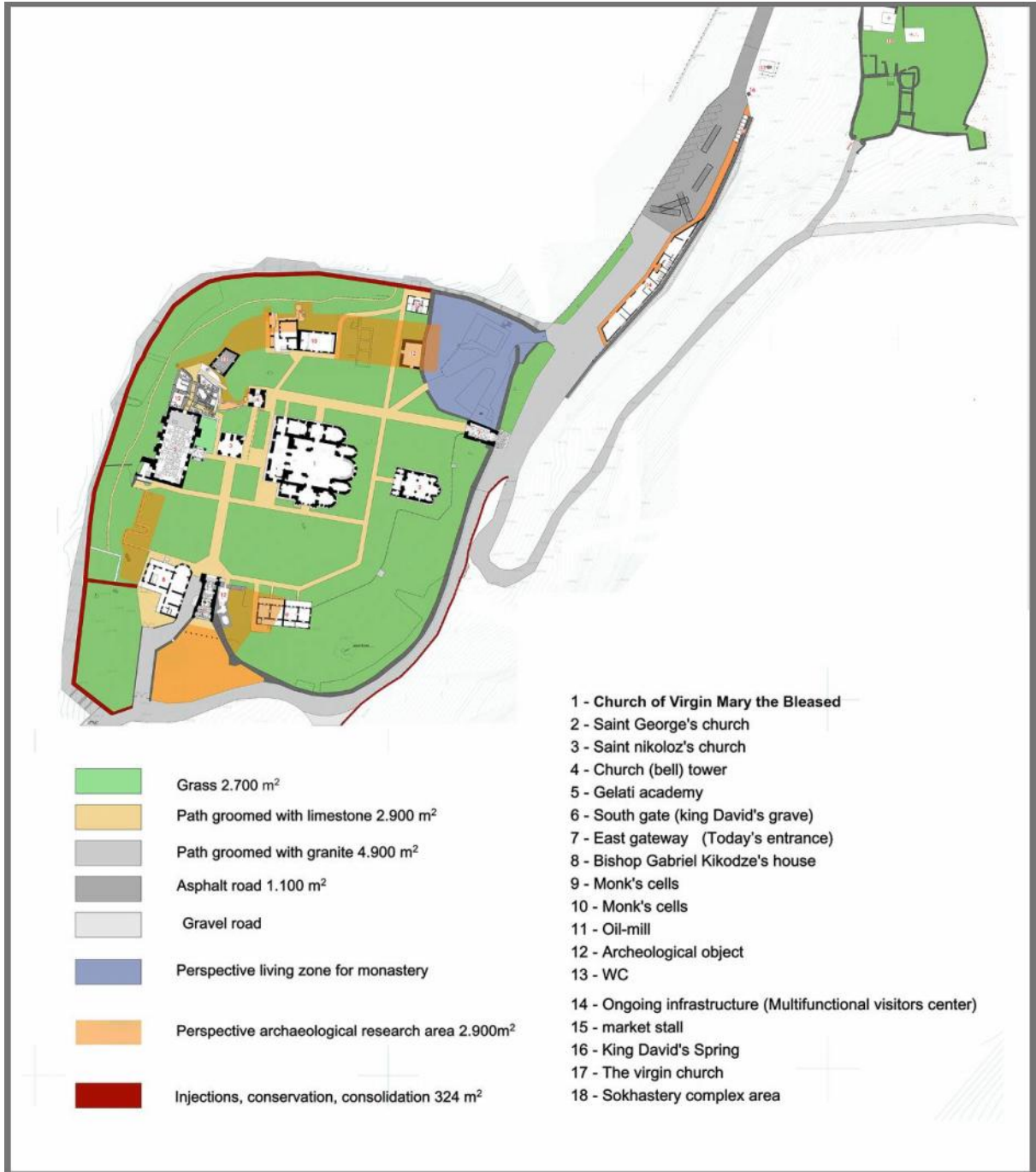
The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia in consultation with the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia.

5. Execution

Conservation and rehabilitation works will be carried out by Georgian Arts and Culture Centre (NGO), “Georgian Heritage” (NGO), Department of Conservation and Art History of the Tbilisi State Academy of Fine Arts, construction engineering company “Ikorta” (Ltd), and conservation company “Gorso (Ltd). Present and potential future donors include USA Ambassadors Fund’s Large Grant Programme, the World Bank through the Municipal Development Fund of Georgia, and the National Agency of Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

6. Expected output

The works planned will improve the state of conservation of the site and its authenticity and ensures the long-term protection of the WHS.



Infrastructure development plan from the Conservation Master Plan (2015)

Monitoring and Maintenance Programme

1. Rationale and objective

Gelati is a large monastery that consists of the main church, two other churches, the bell tower, the two gates, the Academy, the three dwellings, and the oil press building. The owner of the site is the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia.

Conservation of the monuments requires monitoring of their status, regular maintenance and repairs. The Master plan updated in 2015 is presently implemented and includes major restoration works. However, monitoring and regular maintenance are as yet not included in the programme.

The potential effects on the site of uncontrolled access by large numbers of visitors are not recognized. There is neither an official guided service established nor a full time caretaker employed. Monks are responsible for day-to-day management of the site, visitor monitoring, general upkeep of the territory, ensuring safety, basic cleaning, and maintenance inside the churches as well as for the whole area within enclosure walls. This is not enough for proper management of the site especially during peak periods such as important religious holidays and weekends. Measures should be taken in order to provide the public with information on the site and reduce the risk of deliberate damage to the monuments.



School excursion on the site

The large numbers of visitors to Gelati create problems in terms of litter, illegal trading, begging, and need for increased security, toilet facilities and parking.

2. Location

Regular maintenance and repair is not only required for the WHS but should include also other monuments within the Buffer Zone.

3. Description of work

a. Monitoring

The components of the Monastery are preserved in an authentic state. Monitoring and maintenance of both the WHS and nearby monuments are of major importance. Structures in the Gelati Monastery compound should be monitored on a regular basis (once every three months).

b. Mitigate effect of threats

Natural threats

The natural environment of the Gelati Monastery has a very high humidity all year around. Consequently, the main threat to the wall paintings, mosaics and stone masonry is moisture. Without regular maintenance, grass and minor plants grow on the walls of the monuments that may lead to damage of facing stones.



Shoots of fig tree on the west wall of the south gate



Biological damage of the stone surface

Due to the natural climatic conditions and lack of regular maintenance, biological growth is intensive on the walls of the oil press building and enclosure, small shoots of fig tree, moss and ivy can be seen on the walls of different buildings of the Monastery including the south gate and the main church.

Pigeons threaten the wall painting of the main church by leaving guano on its surface.

The following measures should be taken to protect the monuments from the natural threat:

- it is necessary to install climate control and to monitor the humidity by hygrometers both inside and outside the main church and the church of Saint George. in order to protect the frescos, mosaics, and curved stones from damage by the high humidity.
- it is proposed to install bird spikes on the projected areas in the interior of the main church. to protect mural painting from pigeon roosting.



The oil press covered with plants

Human threats

Pollution and littering is a major problem. The sanitary facilities are unsatisfactory and the monks are unable to clean the garbage left by the visitors. Lack of litterbins and toilets complicates proper maintenance of the site. Particularly the grassland around the monuments and excavated structural remains adjacent to the Academy are constantly littered and the courtyard needs regular maintenance.

In order to address the problem of pollution and littering, structural measures are required:

- Garbage cans should be put and regularly cleaned. The present number of monks is insufficient to cope with this.
- It is recommended to outsource these services during summer and to appoint a person, with the additional advantage that begging will reduce.

4. Responsible agency

Two main bodies are involved in the management of the Gelati Monastery. The Orthodox church of Georgia and the State represented by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia and its unit the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve.

5. Execution

The Monastery administration is responsible for day-to-day management of the site, visitor monitoring, general upkeep of the territory, ensuring safety, basic cleaning, and maintenance inside the churches as well as for the whole area within the enclosure walls.

The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia is responsible for monitoring and maintaining a good state of conservation of the site, providing a proper methodology for interventions and issuing permits, and also providing a general management framework as well as visitor facilities and information.

The Agency also acts in case of illegal or inappropriate intervention ensures the proper documentation and recording of the site and reports to World Heritage centre as appropriate.

The Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-reserve is responsible for monitoring of the state of conservation of the monument. The local staff provides technical consultation and advice to the monks on minor repair works at the site.

6. Expected outcome

The following outcomes are expected:

- Reduced risk of damage due to natural threats such as humidity, vegetation and birds;
- Well-kept and clean environment and a more attractive visual appearance of the WHS;
- Opportunities for community involvement by employing local labour.

Academic Studies Programme

1. Rationale

This section deals with the main priorities of the academic study of the Gelati Monastery World Heritage Site. The research framework is designed to provide a better basis for management decision-making. The objectives set out below should be achieved by the end of the management plan in five years time (2017-2021).

It is generally accepted that the site is better managed when its historic and cultural significance is well understood and its research and educational values are properly acknowledged. Therefore a sustained archaeological investigation within and around the monument as well as research of the architectural ensemble and wall paintings of the Gelati Monastery is essential for the management of the site in an appropriate way.

The Gelati Monastery has eight centuries of continuous history and human activity. The Monastery was of major significance throughout the Medieval period. It still keeps its authentic function and continues to have an important place in spiritual and religious life of Georgia.

The Gelati Monastery is internationally significant for its architectural ensemble, outstanding mosaic and wall paintings. It is an iconic monument of Georgian medieval art and architecture, the most vivid reflection of cultural and intellectual development in the Georgian “Golden Age” (12th -13th c). It is the only medieval monument in the larger historic region of Eastern Asia Minor and the Caucasus that still has well-preserved mosaic decoration comparable with the best Byzantine mosaics, as well as the largest ensemble of wall paintings from the 12th- to the 17th centuries.

Thus the Gelati Monastery still retains a huge potential for research. The academic study programme identifies priorities for new research and explains how the objectives set out in the programme will be fulfilled.

2. Description of work

a. Inventory and database of the site

The inventory should cover all buildings of the Monastery and their wall paintings, archaeological evidence and movable artefacts (kept at present both in the Monastery and in museums, but created in the Monastery or having belonged to it). Also an inventory of sites and monuments located in the Buffer Zone of the WHS should be carried out.

The results of the inventory will be stored in a database, which will be prepared in the framework of the research programme as it should be based on the results of the past and current academic study and on the existing documentations of the site.

At present, textual and visual documentations of the site, such as inventory cards, reports of archaeological excavations and conservation activities, drawings, and photos (including historical photos taken in late 19th and early 20th centuries) are kept in various research

institutions, archives and museums in Tbilisi and Kutaisi. It is important to link all existing materials to provide a “one-stop-shop” that enables access to the full information by the public, researchers, conservationists, stakeholders, and data curators. The database should be kept under regular review and should be updated as knowledge advances.

b. Reinterpretation of the history of the Gelati Monastery

More than 50 years have passed since the publication of the monograph on the history and architecture of the Gelati Monastery. Since then, our knowledge has been increased. Archaeological excavations have revealed new structures and cultural layers thus making topical the task of dating or re-dating discovered structures as well as existing buildings within the Monastery and of identifying construction phases of the Monastery. Technical investigation of the wall paintings exposed earlier layers of the paintings in some parts of the main church of the Monastery. This new data change our vision of the building phases, the chronology of the execution of the wall paintings and the history of the site. New data raise several important questions such as who were the donors of these initiatives etc. Special attention should be focused on the early history (Classical antiquity, late Hellenistic period, etc) of the site. Therefore a reinterpretation of the history of the site is vital for our understanding of its significance.

c. Archaeological research within the site

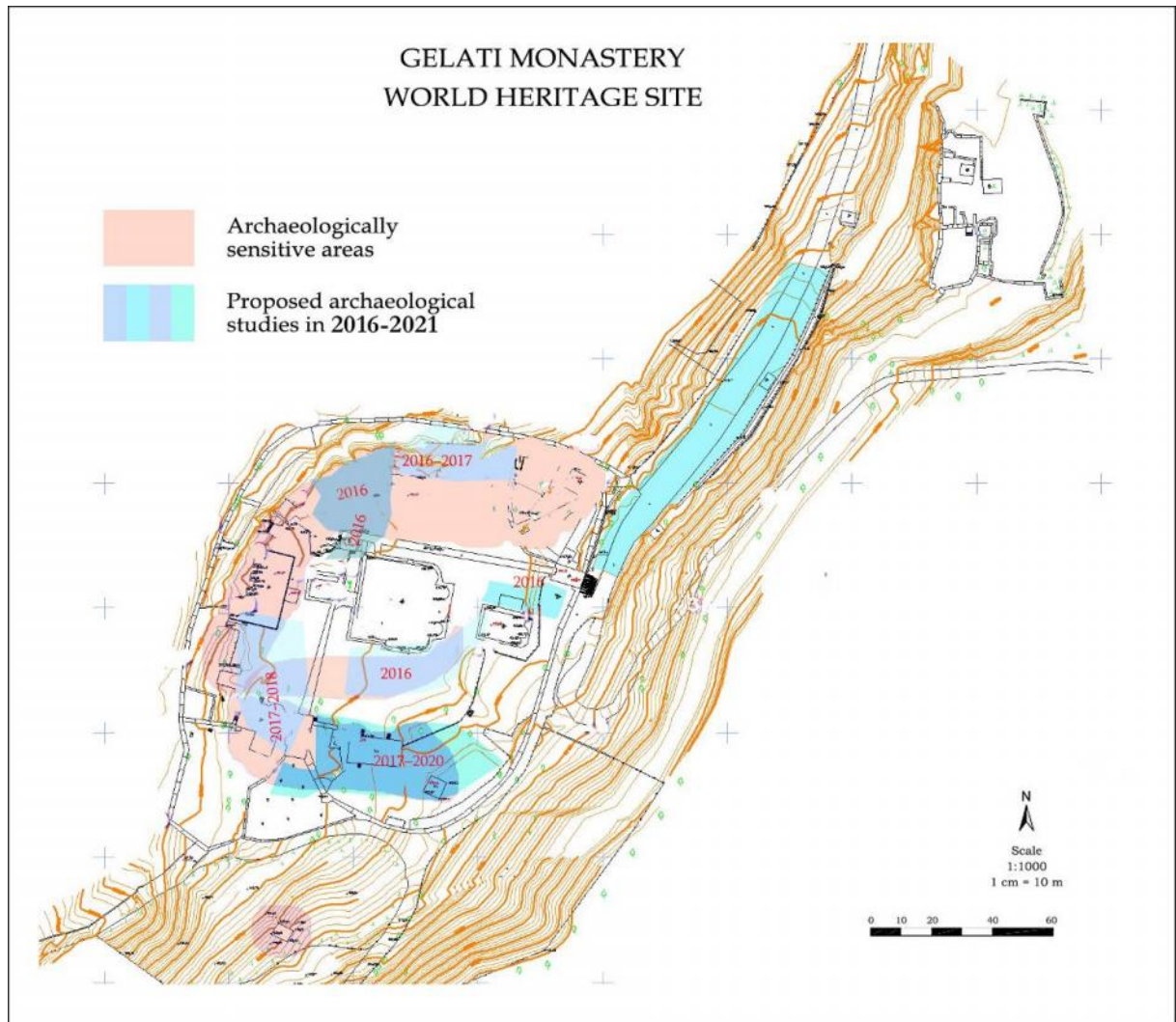
Since a potential for new discoveries is high, continuation of archaeological research in previously identified sensitive areas is a priority of the academic study programme. Both for management of the site and for research aims, it is important to:

- Set up a scientific base for the conservation approach that will protect the upstanding buildings and the ruined or buried structures of the WHS;
- Complete photographic survey of all the archaeological features;
- Monitor all archaeological structures within the Gelati Monastery on a one-year cycle;
- Carry out assessment of the condition of each of the structures outside the walls of the WHS on a one-year cycle.

The following excavation works are scheduled in the next five years:

- Archaeological monitoring will be undertaken during the implementation of the infrastructure project outside the walls of the Monastery;
- In 2017, excavation works will be conducted on the areas adjacent to the main church, the church of St Nicholas, the bell tower, and the oil press; cleaning of both the natural (arranged in the rock clefts) and artificial water collectors will be monitored by archaeologists;
- in 2017 and 2018, archaeological study will be conducted in the basement floor of the monks’ house standing to the north of the main church, which contains remains of a Medieval vaulted structure. The rehabilitation project of the house will be based on the results of the study;

- In 2017 and 2018, archaeological investigation will be conducted on the territory located between the Academy building and the house of the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze. The basement of the house will be excavated;
- Between 2017 and 2020, archaeological excavations will be carried out to the south and east of the southern gate. According to preliminary data, these areas are archaeologically sensitive and may contain the remains of fortification, the auxiliary gate, and the fountain.



Topographic map of the Gelati Monastery and location of archaeological sites

d. Multidisciplinary research

A multidisciplinary study of the site should be one of the major tasks of the academic study programme. A comprehensive study of the cultural heritage of the site means to research and evaluate all aspects of the monument - written sources, architecture, wall paintings, archaeology, movable artefacts (icons, manuscripts, etc) that were created in Gelati or belonged to the Monastery for centuries and that are stored at present in different museums and archives of Georgia. It should take into account also the monuments - fortresses and churches together with their murals that are located near the Monastery and

are linked to it. This study must be implemented by scholars of different fields – historians, art and architectural historians, archaeologists, archivists, etc.

e. Publications

The results of the research works should be published. The materials obtained during the academic study of the site will form a basis for scholarly research (monographs, papers, etc) as well as for albums, educational materials, guidebooks, etc.

Publications for the needs of everyday visitors are particularly important. At present, actually, there are no guidebooks, booklets, leaflets, etc on Gelati meeting contemporary international standards.

3. Research Strategy

The research strategy should be accomplished in a responsible way. The academic study must be based on the highest academic level and should be an important contribution to the management of the site. The research work on the site such as archaeological excavations, geological investigations (if needed), investigations of the stone and technical investigation of the wall paintings (if needed) must be undertaken at the highest standard avoiding any destructive process and at all cost should be compatible with WHS values.

4. Responsible agency

The objectives of the academic study must be brought into effect through national research organizations and individual scholars. An Advisory Committee will be established that will set priorities of academic study and will guide and advise the research to be undertaken on the site.

Archaeological studies in Gelati will be conducted by the joint team of the Kutaisi Historical-Architectural Museum-Reserve and Kutaisi State Historical Museum.

Study of the architecture and art of Gelati will be carried out by a number of research institutions, universities, and museums. The key role will be played by the George Chubinashvili National Centre, which is the leading research organization in Georgia for the study in the history of Medieval Georgian art and architecture.

The relevant body for the programming and publishing guidebooks and booklets is the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation, with participation of experts from the George Chubinashvili National Centre.

An essential role in the study of various aspects of the Gelati Monastery belongs to the new Gelati Academy, a non-governmental research organization established in 1990s as a spiritual and intellectual successor of the Medieval Academy. It unites eminent scholars of different fields. The new Gelati Academy has particularly contributed to the study of numerous Medieval documents related to Gelati.

5. Expected Outcomes

The main outcomes of the academic study programme will be: an enhanced awareness and knowledge of the Gelati Monastery, its historic, spiritual and cultural features; the promulgation of the research results and a greater understanding of the research value of the monument and of better management of the Site.

Results of academic study will extend our understanding of the history and development of medieval Georgian architecture as well as of the wall painting from the 12th to 17th centuries; will highlight new scientific problems such as characteristics of Georgian architecture and wall painting at different stage of its history and its relationship with Byzantine culture, the activities of royal and ecclesiastical donors in the Monastery.

The results of academic study will be of great use not only for historians, art historians and medievalists but it would be applied in educational curricula. The data of academic programme will be of great importance for conservation activities on the site in future.

Training Programme

1. Rationale

The Gelati Monastery is one of the most important historical and architectural sites in Georgia. Both local and foreign tourists visit it all year around. As a living monastery it hosts monks and at the same time it is a place where researchers and conservationists work together.

Experienced staff should be available to provide information and support these user groups. This may include employees of the Kutaisi Historical-Architectural Museum Reserve and monks living on the premises, depending on the task that should be performed.

Conservation, interpretation and visitor services require knowledge and skills. The staff and the monks involved in these activities should meet high professional standards. Education and training of staff is essential therefore.



*Training on site management at the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation.
October, 2014*

In order to ensure the integrity and the authenticity of the Monastery and its cultural values restoration and maintenance is required. The Restoration Faculty of the State Academy of Fine Arts of Georgia provides a special source of expertise and training, particularly for wall painting conservation. This faculty, through its international contacts, has been successfully involved in Gelati conservation issues for the last decade.

Thanks to the co-operation with the Restoration Faculty, it was made possible to produce glazed tile in order to roof monastic buildings. The professional conservationists were trained in producing glazed tiles according to Medieval technique.

Within the frame of the Twinning project supported by the European Union (GE11/ENP-PCA/OT/13), a training courses on Site Management and Museum Collection Management were held at the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia on 6-10 October 2014.

It is essential, however, that the existing staff and new employees can get adequate training on a continuous basis to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills that are required for their tasks.

2. Location

The new visitor centre offers the facilities for teaching and practical demonstrations on site; courses will be organized on the premises.

3. Description of work

The programme includes the following phases:

Inventory of needs. It is proposed to set up a working group work to make an inventory of needs and to prepare a programme for the various categories of staff: conservation, interpretation and visitor services. Apart from professional skills, attention should be given to other aspects such as safety procedures, communication- and language skills. Moreover it t is important to clearly define responsibilities of staff and monks and to ensure that those working and living in the Gelati Monastery have the necessary background information on their living environment.

Preparation and organizing courses. Once needs have been identified courses should be developed in cooperation with scientific and educational organizations that can provide the required education and training in compliance with UNESCO recommendations. Attendance at the courses should be compulsory and courses should be completed before an employee starts a job.

Following actions should be taken:

- Set up a working group that will define all training needs;
- Develop an introductory programme for all staff, volunteers (if any) and contractors working in the Gelati Monastery to familiarize them with the background of the WHS and safety aspects;
- Develop a training course for guides on the Gelati WHS in cooperation with the Georgian National Tourism Administration;
- Develop a course in restoration and conservation in cooperation with scientific and educational organizations;
- Train monks and the museum-reserve staff in safety procedures, emergency plans and maintenance;
- Assess and control regularly the quality of the courses.

4. Responsible agency

The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

5. Prioritization

The quality of management and staff of the tourist sector needs to be improved to meet international standards. The same applies for the skills of the staff responsible for the WHS. For that reason the training programme has a high priority.

6. Expected Outcomes

Regular training practices will ensure following outcomes:

- Inventory of training needs;
- Prepared WHS training guidelines;
- Safe environment for all staff, monks and visitors;
- Adequately prepared staff and monks;
- Professional guides who will provide proper information on the WHS.

Visitor Management Programme

1. Rationale and Background information

The Gelati Monastery is an important tourist attraction and a spiritual centre that attracts around 200,000 tourists each year. With a proposed targeted marketing strategy this figure will probably increase in future. This has implications for management.

The level of tourist services should be enhanced, qualified staff should be recruited and trained and safety and security should be assured for both the monument and its visitors. The new visitor centre is instrumental in this respect and a plan should be developed for its operational use.

Gelati is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Georgia. Despite being a living monastery, Gelati is open for visitors and there are no special regulations established. The patterns of visitors are diverse – it is a must see site for travellers to Kutaisi for both foreigners and Georgians, it is commonly visited by schools and university excursions. Since the collapse of the Soviet regime, the restored monastic function has attracted a significant number of religious visitors from all over Georgia. Thus the typical pattern consists of the wedding parties from Kutaisi and nearby villages, religious practitioners, international and domestic tourists and church representatives.



Visitors entering the site

The programme addresses the problems related to these activities. The programme is related to the Monitoring and Maintenance programme and the Traffic Management Programme.

2. Location

The programme focuses on the visitor flow within the Monastery complex but is also important for other components of the Buffer Zone.

3. Description of work

a. General

The programme includes the following components:

- Managing visitor flow
- Visitor services, the role of the visitor centre
- Accessibility
- Other monument
- Visitor infrastructure
- Recruitment and training of staff.

b. Managing visitor flow; carrying capacity

The Carrying Capacity is defined by the World Tourism Organization as “The maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction”. Carrying capacity is the point at which a destination or attraction starts experiencing adverse effects as a result of the number of visitors.

Visitors to the Gelati Monastery include different categories: school excursions, domestic and international tourists and people attending religious ceremonies. Their pattern of arrival, the duration of stay and the anticipated quality of satisfaction is different.

The visitor number and patterns in Gelati can be only generally estimated, as there is no updated statistics on the visitors at the site. Gelati is one of the most-visited sites in Georgia with an estimated average 200 000 visitors per year. Most tourists visit the area in the summer months May, June, July and August

The maximum number of visitors that can fit on the site at any given time and still allow people to be able to move is normally assumed to be around person per 1m². The property of the Gelati WHS, i. e. the Monastery compound within its enclosure has an area of 4 ha, about half is open space and the physical carrying capacity of the area as a whole is no problem. Congestion may occur in the principal building, the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin with a main hall of about 400 m², Assuming a max density of 1 person/m², the carrying capacity here is 400 persons.

If we assume a duration of stay of 0.5 h for an average tourist, 400 persons should arrive and leave in a period of half an hour in order not to exceed the carrying capacity. The maximum visitor flow is then 800 persons per hour.

Presently the number of visitors is well below this number. Available data are estimates, however. The numbers per tourist category, the distribution of visitor flow over the day and over the year are unknown. These data are required a basis for a visitor management plan.

It is proposed therefore:

- to count the number of visitors in three months in summer
- to update the carrying capacity calculation with new data.

c. Tourist services; the role of the visitor centre

Tourist services

There is inadequate information for tourists who want to reach the site. Apart from the standard sign at the access road to the Monastery that indicates the presence of the Monastery, there are no road signs indicating direction on the way from Kutaisi to the Gelati Monastery. The borders of the WHS are not marked and visitors do not know that they are travelling through the WHS.

Inside the Monastery there is no information for tourist that they can also visit nearby sites and monuments along with visiting the Gelati Monastery. There are only a few Information panels at the site and there are no official guides to provide adequate information and interpretation.

The role of the visitor centre

At present the lack of high quality information and publicity hinders proper understanding of the WHS both among residents and visitors. Improved public relations have a fundamental role to play in successful interpretation of the Gelati monastery. Personnel capable of and responsible for providing appropriate information about the site to all interested visitors will raise awareness on the importance and value of the WHS.

The new visitor centre has been built within the framework of the Regional Development Project of the World Bank for the Imereti region. Its construction was completed in 2016. It is a one storey building, with a total area of 286 sq. m. located along the access road 50 meter away from the Monastery entrance. The centre will start operating by summer 2017. It will be equipped with facilities such as an exhibition room, a conference room, a restaurant, toilets, and toilets for people with limited mobility. It will provide information through professional guides, audio guides, leaflets and booklets.

Proposed actions

To promote the interest towards the Gelati Monastery it is necessary to:

- Improve directions for visitors how to reach the site
- Upgrade the information on the site

- Appoint professional guides
- Publish high quality books, booklets and leaflets about the site;
- Organize exhibitions;
- Establish a website.

d. Recruitment of staff and training

Presently the staff consists of the following:

1. Manager
2. Museum Collections Keeper Site Manager for the Geguti fortress
3. Site Manager – for Historical Architectural Museum (in Kutaisi)
4. Monitoring Specialist - archaeologist
5. Monitoring Specialist– art historian
6. Monitoring Specialist - historian
7. Educational Programme Specialist
8. Technical Support Specialist
9. Exhibition Supervisor
10. Security Guard of the Geguti Fortress.

The present capacity is insufficient

Proposed action

- to contract at least a one full-time site supervisor and one English- speaking guide;
- to encourage local people to get training as professional guides. This may create new opportunities for employment in future.

e. Accessibility

It is difficult for visitors with disabilities to access the monuments of the Gelati Monastery ensemble. Special arrangements should be made in order to facilitate accessibility for wheelchairs.

The WHS is a public place and must comply with the applicable law on disabled access. The Gelati Monastery itself and all monuments on its territory are only accessible by climbing several flights of steps, while movement by wheelchairs on the territory of the site is not limited due to the flatness of the courtyard. The need to provide access is a sensitive issue in ancient places and especially in Gelati architectural ensemble containing several buildings.

Steps towards resolving the problem include:

- To make temporary arrangements for wheelchairs to access the Monastery and its individual monuments;
- To elaborate a permanent infrastructural concept for wheelchairs.

f. Access to other monuments

The number of visitors to the Gelati Monastery and its surrounding monuments each day is not limited. Visitors are always admitted free of charge to all monuments. Filming and photography at the monuments are not restricted.

The landscape of Gelati Monastery is not only limited to the WHS but it bears the imprint of many successive centuries of human cultural activities. The environs of the Gelati Monastery preserve numerous historical sites. Examples include:

- The church of the Virgin known as “the Spring of Life”;
- A group of structures, so-called Sokhasteri;
- The Church of St Elijah;
- The Church of St Saba;
- Ruins of Medieval fortification on the Cape of David.

Current public awareness of and access to heritage assets in the wider WHS landscape is generally low. Attention is firmly focused on the Gelati Monastery themselves, with little appreciation of the surrounding monuments. Visitor should be given a chance to enjoy walking around wider area.

Proposed actions:

- Provide information on the surrounding landscape of the WHS;
- Install road signs around the WHS.

g. Visitor infrastructure

At the moment, there are few visitor facilities and related infrastructures. Outside the present north entrance, there is a small parking area. Trading stalls and toilets are located on the territory of the parking.

The current arrangements for visitors in the Gelati Monastery are unsatisfactory. They will be significantly improved in summer 2017 when the new visitor centre starts operating. Further improvements are planned in the Conservation Master plan.

4. Responsible agency

Two main bodies are involved in the management of the Gelati Monastery. The Orthodox church of Georgia and the State represented by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia and its unit the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-reserve.

5. Execution

The Monastery administration is responsible for day-to-day management of the site, visitor monitoring, general upkeep of the territory, ensuring safety, basic cleaning, and maintenance inside the churches as well as for the whole area within the enclosure walls.

The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia is responsible for monitoring and maintaining a good state of conservation of the site, providing a proper methodology for interventions and issuing permits, and also providing a general management framework as well as visitor facilities and information.

The agency also acts in case of illegal or inappropriate intervention ensures the proper documentation and recording of the site and reports to World Heritage centre as appropriate.

The Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-reserve is responsible for monitoring of the state of conservation of the monument. The local staff provides technical consultation and advice to the monks on minor repair works at the site.

6. Prioritization

The priorities are identified in the Table below.

	Effectiveness and culture conservation	Availability of financial resources	Availability of human resources	Priority
Managing visitor flow		Municipal Development Fund	Staff info centre	Low for short term, high for long term
Visitor services, the role of the visitor centre	High	Municipal Development Fund and GNTA	Staff info centre	High
Accessibility	Moderate	Core financing MoC&MP	External contract	High for temporary measures
Promote other monuments	Moderate	Core financing MoC&MP	Staff info centre	Moderate
Visitor infrastructure	High	Municipal Development Fund	Eternal contract	High
Recruitment and training of staff.	High	Core financing MoC&MP and Monastery	Outsourcing	High

Table 1. Priorities of Visitor Management Programme.

7. Expected outcome

The outcomes from the programme will be:

- Well-equipped visitor centre, which can provide all necessary information to visitors;
- Highly-qualified staff able to meet needs of visitors;
- Improved public access having the quality to welcome all visitors and provide access both spiritual and physical;

- Adequately arranged pathways enabling visitors to enjoy both the WHS and the wider area;
- Developed infrastructure that will mitigate risks of damage on the WHS and represent the site in more attractive way;
- Improved public relation that will raise public awareness about the importance and value of the Gelati Monastery.

Educational and Public Awareness Programme

1. Rationale and objective

Education and training has internal-and external dimensions. The internal component aims at developing the knowledge and skills of the staff working on the World Heritage Site and in the Buffer Zone. This aspect is covered in the vocational training programme and the visitor programme. The present programme focuses on the external component. The external component is used to make people aware of the importance of the WHS and as well as cultural and natural monuments of its Buffer Zone and to promote and support the sustainable use of those resources. It is necessary to increase public awareness of, and interest in the entire Buffer Zone, and to promote its educational and cultural value, not just the WHS.

The Gelati Monastery is an important site to learn and understand the history and culture of Medieval Georgia at local, national and international level; the Monastery has a history of eight centuries of continuous use and related human activities that demonstrates the intellectual and artistic development of the country and its historic and cultural relationships with the Eastern Christian world.

The World Heritage Site provides, therefore, educational material for people of different age: children at primary and secondary schools, undergraduate students of archaeology and Medieval history, post-graduate and doctoral students. This has the potential successfully to promote learning and development by teachers and school or university leaders within the Georgian educational context.

This should be achieved through

- courses and hands on trainings for targeted groups such as local residents, stakeholders and schools and
- workshops for teachers and university staff involved in these teaching and training programmes.

Both the MoC&MP and the MoE have developed educational programmes that emphasize their role in cultural and environmental management. NGOs and associations also play a leading role in training activities to promote sustainable use of land and resources. However, there is a need to develop a coordinated approach that integrates the various aspects of environmental education: conservation of culture and nature together with sustainable use of natural resources. The objective of the present programme is to make an inventory of ongoing educational activities and to integrate them in a programme for cultural resource management and environmental education. The Management Plan for the Gelati Monastery provides a global overview of these components in a coherent way and is a good base for the development of such a course.

2. Location

The educational activities may be performed in the new visitor centre, which must be equipped with the required audio-visual equipment. The Agritourism Development Centre

“Korena”, which operates several guest-houses in the village Gelati, may be used to provide accommodation for participants from outside the area.

3. Description of work.

a. General

The proposed programme includes:

- An inventory of ongoing activities;
- Preparation of a framework for integration of these activities, using the present management plan as a basis;
- Development of a teaching and training programme for the various user groups.

b. Ongoing activities

Interpretation and presentation are powerful means of raising public awareness and appeal. The guided tours, the wide range of literature and the information panels on site all contribute to public education and the interpretation of the cultural and natural monuments of the World Heritage Site. Presently, public awareness of the Gelati Monastery as a WHS is generally low and only a few of the most famous cultural and natural monuments in its Buffer Zone are known.

In order to provide a platform for improving public awareness and understanding of UNESCO’s goals and objectives the course will be based upon relevant publications and guidelines of IUCN, UNESCO and ICOMOS that deal with education about cultural heritage. Presently the following ongoing activities have been identified:

- In 2014, the Supplementary Manual for Teachers: *Schoolchildren Introducing Young People to the Presentation of Heritage Sites and Historic Cities* was published. Publishing of the supplementary manual became possible with the assistance of the European Union’s Eastern Partnership Culture Programme – “Regional Cooperation for the Development of Cultural Heritage” realized by ICOMOS Georgia. A digital version of the Georgian version is available for all concerned on the website www.rcchd.icomos.org.ge , as well as on the Teachers Internet Newspaper www.mastsavlebeli.ge and a website of the Association of History Teachers www.imsa.ge . Copies of the printed version of the book will be distributed to all public schools.
- The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia is implementing two educational programmes *Cultural Heritage to Children* and *Archaeology for Kids*. The latter takes place at Samtavro Archaeological Site in Mtskheta, which is also a WHS. A similar educational programme can be developed for the Gelati Monastery.
- Different events are organized annually in the Tkibuli Municipality by the association “New Okriba”. The aim of the association is to promote local cultural and eco-tourism and development of small enterprises in the region.

c. Framework for the course

Both UNESCO and IUCN have proposed a logical framework for plan preparation (the process) and have developed tools and techniques to apply this framework in practical cases (the contents). The MP is based upon this framework and includes the following phases:

- *Information*, describing the site and its landscape, characteristics and the cultural, socio-cultural and natural attributes;
- *Assessment of data* with a view to define management objectives;
- *Interventions*, the measures that should be taken to achieve the objectives. This part is mainly theoretical and should be adapted to the level of the target group;
- *Implementation*, the ways to carry out the proposed actions. This part is theoretical and practical and includes fieldwork and training targeted to the requirements of the respective groups.

It is proposed to structure the course along these lines.

d. Curriculum

The proposed curriculum addresses the contents of the various phases. It is proposed to use a modular approach. Depending on the requirements of the target group different modules can be combined to create a curriculum that is tailored to their requirements. The importance of cultural and historical value of the Gelati Monastery is not doubtful, but it is necessary to increase public awareness toward the Monastery and its Buffer Zone as a World Heritage Site. Educational courses should make all target groups understand that protection of authenticity of the World Heritage Site and its setting is vital for the monuments inscribed in UNESCO's list.

e. Educational programme at local level

The Gelati Monastery has the potential to become once again a leading educational centre in the region. It provides important opportunities for:

- Local community;
- Local schools (the village Gelati, nearby villages and Kutaisi);
- Staff of the WHS;
- Monks of the Monastery;

Courses should cover history, archaeology, and the cultural and natural environment of the WHS. Engagement of local community in the educational programme is vital in order to increase general educational standard and the sense of responsibility toward the cultural and natural heritage of the region. It is important also for better management of the site.

f. Educational programme at national and international level

It is very important to broaden the educational role of the Monastery at national and international level and to reach a new audience. It provides good prospect for:

- Educational activities for school children and students of the country;
- Summer schools in archaeology, art history, conservation, monuments protection;
- Both national and international level Conferences and workshops.

4. Responsible agency

The MoC&MP, being the linking pin with UNESCO should take the lead, the courses should be prepared in close cooperation with ICOMOS and other stakeholders.

5. Project team

Courses should be prepared and should be given by experts in the various fields; this requires contribution from the MoC&MP, NACHP, Kutaisi University, GNTA, Georgian Association of Guides and etc.

6. Prioritization

There is an apparent need to improve public awareness towards the cultural and natural heritage of the WHS. This course is an effective way to realize this. The management plan is a good starting point for the first course and qualified staff of the various agencies are capable of presenting the underlying theoretical base. The required funds are limited, therefore, and the first course can start when the new visitor centre is ready. If needed, an earlier start is possible using facilities of the Monastery itself or facilities of Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-Reserve.

7. Expected outcome

- The programme will increase public awareness and will strengthen the feeling of stewardship and ownership of the local population;
- The course will improve the quality of education on cultural heritage in schools of the region;
- The WHS can be used as a venue for local, national and/or international cultural and educational activities.

Programme for the religious functioning of the Monastery

1. Rationale and Background information

Following the recommendations of the International Seminar on the Role of Religious Communities in the Management of World Heritage properties, organized in Kiev, Ukraine, in November 2010, the World Heritage Committee requested the World Heritage Centre, to elaborate a thematic paper regarding the management of their cultural and natural heritage of religious interest and to invite States Parties to provide voluntary contributions to this end." (Paragraph 7, Decision 35 COM 5A).

The document emphasized that the continuing nature of religious heritage calls for dialogue and mutual understanding between the religious communities concerned and all other stakeholders, who must work together to preserve the significance of cultural heritage associated with the sacred site.

The Gelati Monastery has the status of a WHS and is a sacred site that kept its authentic religious function and use of the property throughout the years. Tourists of all walks of life visit the WHS yearly, and since 1988, when the Monastery restored its monastic function, considerable numbers of religious visitors, domestic and international church representatives visit the Monastery. At present 5 priests, 12 monks and 4 lay brothers live and act at the Monastery.

The Gelati Monastery experiences many of the problems mentioned in the above declaration:

- Uncontrolled visitor flow that interferes with the religious function of the Monastery and the private life of the monks;
- Inadequate facilities to accommodate the priests, monks and lay brothers living in the Monastery and scholars and religious visitors coming to the Monastery;
- Lack of finances and human resources to maintain the premises;
- Need for education and training.

The present programme addresses these problems and proposes actions within the framework of the above UNESCO recommendations.

2. Location

Activities should be carried out within the Gelati Monastery.

3. Description of work

a. General

The programme includes:

- Controlling visitor flow;
- Improving accommodation and living conditions within the Monastery;

- Social and economic issues
- Improving the social and economic conditions;
- Education and training.

b. Controlling visitor flow

Presently the Monastery is open all year around and there are no restrictions for visitors. This openness can be considered as a continuation of the openness to laymen peculiar to the Medieval Gelati and should be preserved as a valuable tradition. However, visitors should respect the *typicon* (regulations, rules) of the Monastery. The Visitor management Programme described in section 2 will help to improve the situation, but in addition following measures are proposed to protect the religious functioning of the Monastery:

- Enforcing code of conduct. This implies:
 - ✓ Respectful behaviour on the territory of the Monastery;
 - ✓ Silence in the churches during religious services;
 - ✓ No littering and no picnics on the territory of the Monastery.
- Restricted visiting time for large groups of tourists. They should not be allowed into the churches during religious services without permission of the Monastery administration.
- Coordination of the Monastery life and scientific investigations and construction works. In order to avoid disturbance of the normal functioning of the Monastery, these activities should be coordinated with the Monastery. This implies:
 - ✓ The Monastery should be informed about planned conservation works a month before starting the works. The project must be approved by the Council of Architecture, Art and Restoration under the Georgian Patriarchy.
 - ✓ The Monastery should be informed in advance (a week before) about forthcoming research works and monitoring of the site.
 - ✓ The library of the Monastery should get copies of published material about Gelati.

Also, it should be taken into consideration, that the Gelati Monastery attracts many religious tourist and their number will most likely increase in the future. As a rule, religious tourists state their strong desire to attend the liturgy. The monastic community should be able to meet this desire.

c. Improving accommodation and living conditions within the Monastery

This includes the following activities:

- Inventory of the required improvements of the quarters of the monks and the residential house;
- Restoration of the living quarters of the Monastery. If new accommodation is required, this should be located outside the compound, on the area south of the Monastery. Monastic cells must be single-storey and should harmonize with the existing buildings and natural environment;

- Construction of toilet facilities for visitors;
- Internal zoning of the compound of the Monastery. A zoning should be applied, separating areas open to the public from private territory, where monks are living and where public access is prohibited. These areas should be clearly marked on the site. Such places are the area around the monastic cells and the backyard (behind the Bishop Gabriel Kikodze’s house). Moreover, the following should be considered:
 - ✓ Construction of roads and paved paths in both the public and private areas;
 - ✓ Planning of a “green curtain” in front of the monastic cells in order to provide a peaceful and quiet surrounding.

Within the framework of the “**Integrated Revitalization of Cultural Heritage Site of Gelati Monastery**” sub-project of the World Bank’s Second Regional Development Project for Imereti Region, it is planned to make a new water supply system for the Gelati Monastery. The work will be done in 2015-2016.

d. Improving social and economic conditions

There are several ways to generate additional income that could help to improve the social and economic situation. The following list is indicative and not exhaustive. Suggestions of the religious community are welcomed and will be discussed with other stakeholders.

- To get a share of the income from tourism and commerce (form of tourist tax);
- Income from selling monastery products: honey, wine, candle; When a separate information centre is built near the bridge as proposed, regular business may be shifted to that location and only church related activities will remain near the Monastery;
- Establishing an atelier for icon-painting, wood-carving etc., where monks together with invited artists can create and sell their own work;
- Revenues from renting facilities for local and international scientific and theological conferences;
- Fees for specialized interpretation and information services for specialized groups (religious and scientific).

e. Education and training

The monks of the Monastery are one of the target groups of the educational programme described in section 2. To make monks aware of the importance of the WHS as well as of cultural and natural monuments of its Buffer Zone, the following activities should be undertaken:

- Courses that cover history, archaeology, art and architecture as well as cultural and natural environment of the WHS with a view to
 - ✓ Explain UNESCO’s goals and responsibilities for the monument inscribed in UNESCO’s WH list;
 - ✓ Improve the understanding why the authenticity of the WHS should be protected;

- ✓ Increase the awareness of the importance of National Acts for monument protection and international legal mechanisms for protection of the WHS.
- Training in day to day maintenance and monitoring of the state of preservation with relevant reports to the responsible bodies;
- Safety and first aid training.

4. Responsible body

Two main bodies are involved in the management of the Gelati Monastery. The Orthodox church of Georgia and the State represented by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia and its unit the Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-reserve.

5. Execution and monitoring

The Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-reserve together with the Gelati visitor centre and the Gelati Monastery will work on regulation of the visitor flow to the Monastery.

The Kutaisi Historical Architectural Museum-reserve will perform the educational programme.

The National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia will be monitoring the execution of the programme.

6. Expected outcome

The outcomes from the programme will be:

- Dialogue between the religious communities concerned and all other stakeholders and improved mutual understanding;
- Controlled visitor flow and entry regime that respects the monastic life;
- Improved living quarters and sanitary facilities for monks and visitors;
- Zoning and improved infrastructure for the Monastery compound;
- Initiatives to improve the social and economic situation;
- Programme for education and training of monks and the Monastery personnel.

3. PROGRAMMES FOR NATURAL MONUMENT AND FORESTS

Preface

As stated in sub-chapter two of section 5.2. of the MP, nature conservation is important as the visual appearance of the WHS and other monuments strongly depends on the integrity of the surrounding nature.

Restoring the quality of degraded forests should be a high priority issue for the tourist potential of the area as it enhances the attractiveness of the area for tourists in future. The natural setting of the monuments in the forests should be protected and safeguarded and where possible restored.

Tourist trails are a means for environmental education and provide opportunities for tourism. A tourist circuit connecting the Monasteries of Motsameta and Gelati that uses existing ancient roads and connects historic monuments and spectacular karst caves has a great tourist value. This concept is further developed.

Natural Resources Protection Programme

1. Rationale and objective

The MoE&NR has developed a national Forest Concept for Georgia that will be the basis for the management of the National forests. At the regional level the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Protection is preparing a Management Plan for the Protected Areas in Imereti. The plan includes the lower reaches of the Tskaltsitela River, that has a status as a Natural Monument, and the neighbouring karst caves that are part of the Buffer Zone.

Nature protection is discussed in the MP, a spatial landscape plan is presented and recommendations are given for conservation and protection of nature.

The objective of the programme is to develop a programme for protection of the natural environment within the framework of the above documents

2. Location

Activities should be performed in and around the Buffer Zone of the Gelati Monastery. Activities will be concentrated in the following landscape components, identified in section 4.2 of the Management Plan:

1. Forests that have both natural and socio-economic values:
 - The mountain slopes west of the Tskaltsitela (forests and meadows, 2,18 square km);
 - The west side of the Kursebi Plain (forests and meadows, 1,31 square km).
2. Forests with special natural features that need special protection:
 - The Tskaltsitela River (0,84 square km);
 - The Motsameta Canyon, Nabambrevi and hinterland (geological formation and scenic landscape, 0, 73 square km). The Sakajia Cave in this area has a protected status. The canyon and part of the Tskaltsitela River have the status of a natural monument, category III of the IUCN classification of protected areas.

3. Description of work

a. Forests

These areas have the character of a Multiple Use Territory, however, natural interests prevail here and human activities should be controlled and restricted where needed. The forests in the area have a high landscape value as they define the visual appearance of the WH monument; moreover they are an important landscape element for the natural monument as the forests on the Motsameta plateau and the west bank of the watershed of the river form the East border of this cultural and natural monument.

The management of the area as a whole is governed by the Law on Protection of Cultural Monuments; management of state owned forests is governed by the Forest Code that makes a distinction between forests in protected areas and other forests. It is not clear whether the Buffer Zone is a protected area in the context of the forest code.



Light forest on the Dokhora Mountain used also for grazing.

Internationally there is agreement that the following aspects are key elements in sustainable forest management:

- The extent of forest resources;
- Biological diversity and presence of rare and endangered species;
- Forest health, vitality and resilience (recuperation potential);
- Production function;
- Regulation function;
- Use and non-use values;
- Management regime.

The following activities should be performed to implement a sustainable forest management:

- Detailed mapping of the area.
- Inventory of flora and fauna with a view to define a biodiversity index for the various forest complexes.

- Assessment of the health, vitality and resilience of the various areas and selection of homogeneous complexes with similar management requirements.
- Preparation of a sustainable forest management plan for each complex that includes restoration, recuperation, protection and conservation. All forests should be protected and preserved.
- Forests on the Motsameta Plateau have been degraded due to woodcutting and mining and need to be restored. The forests on the foot hills and slopes of the Dokhora Massif, behind the Monastery, have also cultural and spiritual value due to the presence of small churches and remains of earlier convents. These should be safeguarded.
- Forests bordering the Kursebi and Gelati Plains are used for grazing and hay making. A strict resource use regime should be enforced here.
- Implementation of the plan and monitoring.

b. The natural monument

The Natural Monument and its hinterland should be managed as a strict natural protected area. The management of the Natural Monument is governed by the Law on the System of Protected areas. It should be managed in accordance with the Management Plan for the Imereti Protected areas. It is proposed to apply the same regime for the surrounding forest area within the Buffer Zone.



The Motsameta Canyon

The higher reaches of the river between the East border of the Buffer Zone and the Natural Monument have no protection status. The management should comply with the directives of the Law on Water. Monitoring of hydrological parameters (water level, discharge) and morfodynamic parameters (erosion) is recommended. Sanitation and sewage treatment are needed to improve the water quality.

4. Responsible agencies

The work should be initiated by the MoE&NR and should be carried out by its Forestry Department, seconded by external experts where appropriate. The Ministry is also responsible for enforcement of the governing laws and regulation.

5. Project team

It is proposed to separate stakeholder involvement at national level from the site management. The Management Committee, with representatives of National Agencies and the Patriarchate, should be responsible for long term planning and approving annual plans and budgets. The site management groups representing local stakeholders are responsible for the coordination and execution.

6. Prioritization

Most of the proposed programmes are urgent but their effectiveness and appropriateness for reaching the management objective may differ. Moreover, the viability depends on the available financial and human resources. Together these factors determine the priority. This is shown schematically in Table below.

	Effectiveness and appropriateness for nature conservation	Availability of financial resources	Availability of human resources	Priority
Forests	High	Included in state budget of forestry department	Local staff of forestry department and external experts	Ongoing activity, high priority for rehabilitation of degraded areas
Nature protection area.	High	Included in budget of Agency for Protected Areas	Local staff of agency and external experts	Ongoing activity within the frame of Management Plan for Imereti Protected Areas

Table 1. Priorities of natural resources protection programme

7. Expected outputs

The expected output is an improved quality of the natural environment and related improved quality of living for the local population. These factors are important for the visual appearance of the natural and cultural monuments in the area.

Eco Tourism Programme

1. Rationale

One of the objectives of the MP is to make people aware of the historic-cultural values and the value of nature. Tourist trails are a means to achieve this. The project area has a network of paved and unpaved roads; some are remnants of the ancient road of King David. They run through typical parts of the landscape with protected natural sites and along many of these roads remnants of other historic monuments remained. These roads can be upgraded and be used as part of a network of tourist trails. Viewpoints and resting places should be made in scenic points and information panels should provide information on historic-cultural and ecological aspects.

Part of the circuit can also be used as an alternative for reaching the monasteries by car and should be integrated in future in a more environmental friendly transport system for the project area that is described in the Traffic Management Programme.

2. Location

Activities should be performed in and around the Buffer Zone of the Gelati Monastery as defined by the presidential decree 03/5 09.01.2014. The proposed trail is shown on Figure 1 below. It will be possible to connect the trail to a long distance network of trails in Imereti.

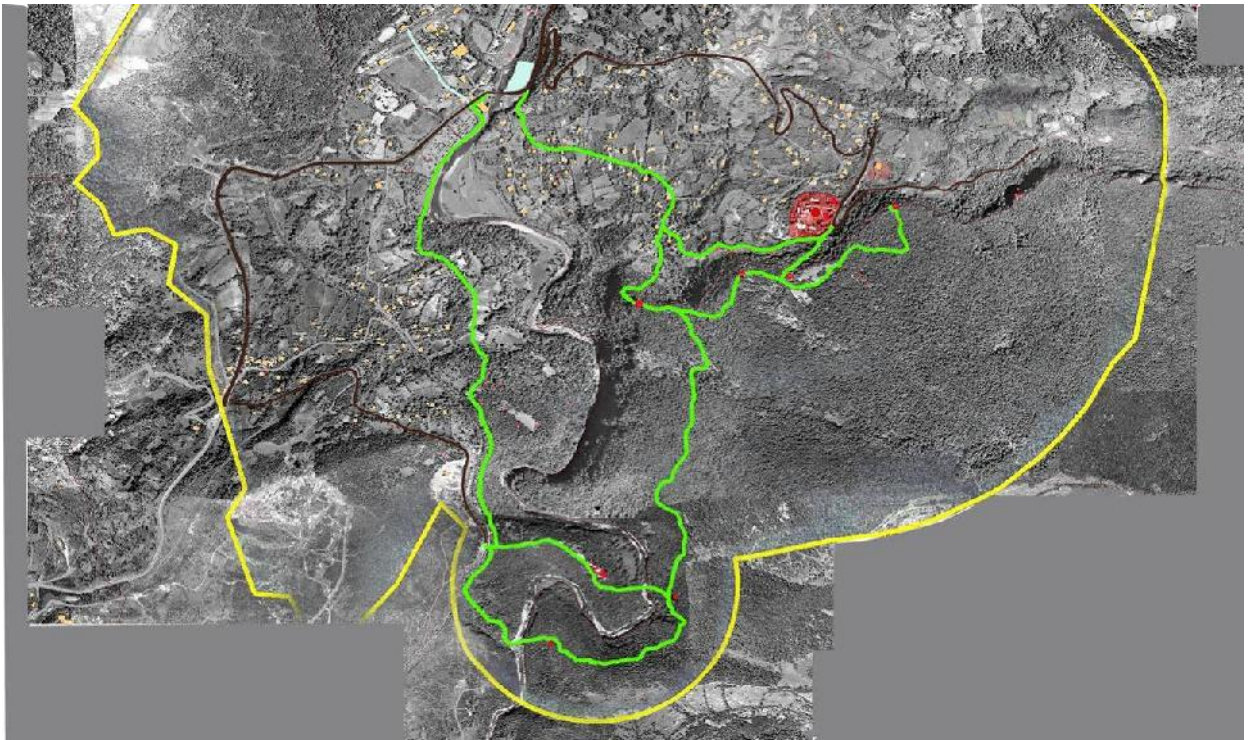


Figure 1. Proposed tourist trail

3. Description

The proposed trail consists of a number of circuits connected at numbered nodal points. It is proposed to use the European system of nodal points used for trails. Numbered nodes link different trails, at each point signs show the direction of the nearby nodal point. The network, the nodal points and the distances between the points are shown on a map and a trip is planned by connecting the points. Maps are placed at important points, copies can be obtained from the visitor centre. Apps for smart phones should also be prepared.



Trail leading to the Monastery



Buxus forest along the trail

The trail consists of a main circuit that runs along both sides of the Natural monument and connects the bridge in Gelati with that near the monastery in Motsameta. A new parking place should be constructed near the bridge in Gelati and an information booth should be located here. The place is easily reached by foot from the Gelati station.

From here the trail runs through the village of Gelati and through the forests on the Dokhora Mountain, it continues on the left bank of the river and along the Canyon. Here it crosses the river south of the canyon and returns to the parking area along the right bank of the river.

The main circuit is connected to a tourist circuit that follows old roads along the churches of St Saba and St Elijah and the Cape of King David. From this circuit the archaeological sites near the Monastery and St Nino's church on the mountain can be reached.



Typical information panels (Sataplia PA)



Typical nodal point (Netherlands)



Fencing along steep slopes (Sataplia PA)

A second tourist circuit is projected south of the canyon. It connects The Motsameta station with the Motsameta church and the Sakajia Cave Natural Monument located in this area. The caves along the main circuit can also be visited and Sataplia Strict Nature Reserve and Jason Cave Natural Monument, some 5 km outside the Buffer Zone, can also be reached from this circuit. Resting areas are projected near scenic areas and viewpoint. Information panels will inform tourists about the area.

In the trail between Motsameta and Gelati on the right bank a resting area with pick nick facilities is planned that is also accessible from the main road.

Minor infrastructural measures have to be taken. The trail follows existing old roads and paths that have to be upgraded and the footbridge near Motsameta should be improved. An access road to the caves should be made and measures have to be taken to protect the cave and to ensure the safety of visitors. Information panels should be placed along the trail and resting places should be provided. The larger part of the trail is not suitable for wheel chair users.

The total length of the main circuit is 4 km, the two secondary circuits are about 2 km each. An extension is proposed that runs along the Cornea River with a number of Historic bridges. This trail can be reached easily from Gelati but runs outside the Buffer Zone and is not part of the management programme. As it largely enhances the tourist value of the area it is included as one of the (nearby) objects that could be included in a visit to the area.

4. Responsible agencies

As the larger part of the trail crosses forest and the natural monument, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, in particular the Agency for Protected Areas and the Forestry Department should be the lead agency.

The site management group representing local stakeholders is responsible for the coordination and execution of the work. The work will be executed by local stakeholders and/or external consultants under supervision of the site management group.

5. Prioritization

Construction of tourist trails is an efficient way to enhance the tourist value of the area. Trails are relatively cheap and the staff of the MoE&NR can take care of planning and can supervise constructions. For that reason the project has a high priority.

6. Expected output

The larger part of tourists that visit the area are Georgians. Improved tourist facilities may persuade them to prolong their stay or to stay overnight in guesthouses near the trail.

4. PROGRAMMES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Preface

Agriculture, tourism and environment protection are priority areas of The Strategy on Regional Development of Georgia for 2010 – 2017. As explained in section 5.1 of the MP Tourism and environment protection are aspects that can be addressed at a regional and/ or local level. As the presence of the WHS is a Unique Selling Point for tourism, sustainable development of its potential for tourism was earmarked as a priority area. Other sectors should be addressed within a regional development policy. The third paragraph of section 5.2 of the MP defines the aspects of a sustainable strategy for tourism.

Sustainable tourism development requires management of nature and cultural values in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, and biological diversity and life support systems. In order to ensure sustainability negative effects of an increased visitor flow should be mitigated. For that reason the visitor flow within the Monastery should be controlled and an overhaul of the existing traffic system is proposed. Buses and cars of tourists should be banned from the area. Tourists can use the proposed circuit of tourist trails or an eco-friendly shuttle service to reach the monasteries. A parking area near the bridge, with tourist information centre and stalls for local vendors, is also foreseen.

Sustainable Tourism Development Programme

1. Rationale and objectives

With the support of the World Bank, a Tourism development plan was prepared for the Imereti region. The Gelati and Motsameta Monasteries are earmarked as priority areas for tourism development in this region. The site specific aspects are discussed in the MP and recommendations for action are given.

The Ministry of Environment Protection has prepared a Management Plan for the Protected Areas in Imereti. The plan includes the lower reaches of the Tskaltsitela River, that has a status as a Natural Monument, and the neighbouring karst caves that are part of the Buffer Zone. These sites may become tourist attractions.

The second Regional Development Project of the World Bank has provided financial support for regional development projects within the Imereti region. The Gelati and Motsameta monasteries were eligible for funding and plans for improvement of infrastructure and building of a visitor centre were approved. The construction of the new visitor centre was completed in 2016. The objective of the present programme is to prepare an action plan for tourism development, within the context of the above regional strategies.

2. Location

Activities should be performed in and around the Buffer Zone of the Gelati Monastery as defined by the ministerial decree 03/5 09.01.2014.

Tourist attractions in the vicinity that are of interest for visitors of the Buffer Zone have also been include although they are outside the official borders.

3. Description of work

a. General

The results of a SWOT analysis presented in the management plan are used as a basis for tourism development in the project area. **Strong** internal points are the presence of the Monasteries, the forests and the protected areas (natural monument, karst caves) in the Buffer Zone. The area is easily accessible by rail and road. The **weak** points are the low level of tourism *infrastructure*, the *lack of a clear development strategy*, the *quality of staff and management* and *uncoordinated actions*. Moreover the poor economic conditions and frequent infringements of laws and regulations of nature protection hamper sustainable development.

The increasing numbers of tourists that visit Georgia provide **opportunities** to improve both the volume and quality of the tourist sector. Related sectors may also benefit due to *linkage*

that creates added value to the revenues of tourism. However, these revenues are limited due to *leakage*, the money spent outside the project area due to *absence of adequate facilities* such as accommodation for overnight stay and restaurants or other attractions that may prolong their stay.



The Gelati and Kursebi Plain

Increasing numbers also provide **threats** as tourism may conflict with other aspects, such as the religious function of the church, the protection of cultural and natural resources and the daily life of inhabitants. Moreover, roads and parking facilities will be inadequate to cope with an increasing flow of tourists. The uncontrolled and illegal petty trade will disturb the visitors and the increasing numbers of visitors inside the church will exceed its “carrying capacity”. These aspects are addressed in separate programmes but should be taken into account when preparing a programme for tourism development.

The MP gives a review of strategic issues that are important for tourism development. This is shown in Table below.

New markets and products should be developed, the quality of staff and infrastructure should be improved and negative impacts of tourism should be mitigated. The various aspects are discussed below.

TOURIST SEGMENT	MARKETING	PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	INFRASTRUCTURE	HUMAN RESOURCES	SECURITY
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Marketing for prospective product/ market segments to increase the number of visitors</i> • <i>Incentives to increase the length of stay</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Protect and conserve LNC values and functions.</i> • <i>Develop new products by combining religious-cultural and ecological assets</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improve public utilities (energy water supply and sanitation</i> • <i>Improve access by road and rail</i> • <i>Develop alternative mode of transport within buffer zone</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Recruit qualified labour</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Implement tight security and safety measures</i> • <i>Recruit qualified guards and security staff</i>
Trade		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Produce and sell local products.</i> • <i>Increase purchases per visitor (added value):</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Refurbish or replace stalls near Monastery</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Train shop keepers</i> • <i>Improve language skills</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discourage illegal petty trade</i>
Tourist services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide guides or other services</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Create tourist trails</i> • <i>Build information centres</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Train guides</i> • <i>Improve language skills</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Train and educate guards</i>
Lodging		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide lodging.</i> • <i>Host events</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improve accommodation</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Train hotel staff. Improve language skills.</i> 	
Benefits for society		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increased quality of life</i> • <i>Increased environmental awareness</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Better amenities and infrastructure</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increased standard of living.</i> • <i>Improved language skills</i> • <i>Understanding intercultural differences</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Security and low crime rate</i>

Table 1. Measures to facilitate tourism development.

Green = Government, **Blue** = Unions of entrepreneurs, **Red** = Local entrepreneurs

b. Marketing

Marketing is required to develop new markets, to interest customers to visit the site and to provide incentives to prolong their stay. Activities should be initiated by the local tourist sector, seconded by the regional tourist agencies and should be coordinated by experienced consultants. The marketing plan for the Imereti region is a leading document in this respect.

c. Products and services

Cultural tourism: visit to the Monastery

The main asset is the Monastery, the main product a visit to the Monastery. The new Visitor Centre offers possibilities to broaden the scope of tourist services. Guided tours by qualified guides may be organized, information on specific scientific issues can be provide and thematic exhibitions can be organized.

At present, a serious problem visitors face is the lack of guidebooks, booklets, brochures, leaflets, etc on the Gelati Monastery. Despite high demand for this kind of printed products,

the offer is scarce. Actually, there are no guidebooks and booklets meeting contemporary international commercial and cultural standards. They should be published and be available in a shop at the new visitor centre.



New visitor centre near the entrance of the Monastery (December 2016)

Religious tourism

Religious tourism is a booming sector of the travel market. Places like the Gelati Monastery attract more and more people all over the world. Actually, Gelati is already a popular destination for religious tourists; however, it has a good potential to develop into a more significant centre of religious tourism owing to its rich religious history and traditions, churches, the tomb of king David the Builder (canonized by the Georgian Orthodox Church), etc. The nearby Motsameta Monastery that is the burial place of the eight-century martyrs Sts David and Constantine additionally attracts religious visitors and pilgrims.

Therefore, the preparation about the type of tourism that is expected to grow should be carried out. It may become an important development factor stimulating various sectors of the local economy. Along with basic tourism services such as transportation, catering, and accommodation, it may promote development of workshops, both in the village and in the monastery itself, producing religious souvenirs (icons, crosses, embroidery, etc) and traditional crafts.

Ecotourism

Cultural heritage and religious importance are the classical Unique Selling Points of the Gelati Monastery; along with cultural and religious tourism, eco-tourism should be developed and should be integrated with these traditional products. The natural monument and the forests around the Buffer Zone are assets that have not been fully used. Facilities for eco-tourism (hiking and biking) should be developed and local guesthouses should be improved to provide board and lodging.

The project area has a network of unpaved roads and paths that were used in the past by the inhabitants but are now abandoned and have been replaced by new roads. In a few of these roads architectural monuments and old bridges remained. These roads can be upgraded and be used as part of a network of tourist trails. This is further elaborated in section 3.3. The Ministry of Environment should initiate this action.

Package tours

The area around the Buffer Zone offers also opportunities for tourism. Local tour operators should develop packages for trips to neighbouring attractions such as Sataplia and Prometheus Caves. These packages should combine visits to the Monastery with a visit to other tourist attractions in the neighbourhood and should include overnight stay in or near the project area. Such packages can be sold directly by local entrepreneurs but can also be sold to national operators as a means to reduce the effect of leakage. The prolonged (overnight) stay also offers opportunities to sell local products, thus increasing linkage.

Cultural and scientific events

Another possibility to make overnight stay attractive is to organize thematic events around local traditions (food) or historical sites (historic excursions). The restored Academy within the Monastery offers the possibility to organize scientific conferences and religious events.

d. Human resources

All developments offer opportunities for employment but require also training of staff and upgrading of tourist facilities. The quality of staff and management and the tourist facilities are presently below international standards. The first priority of the Georgian National Tourist Administration is to provide training courses for managers and staff working in the tourist industry. Entrepreneurs in the different sectors should subsequently provide vocational training and education tailored to the needs of their branch. This has already been initiated in certain areas with the support of international donors but should be continued at a larger scale.

e. Infrastructure

Public amenities

Presently the public amenities (energy, water, sanitation) are inadequate or not existing. In order to enhance the quality of services the Municipality and Region should endeavour to

improve the level of public utilities within the project area. With financial support from the World Bank, the network for the supply of gas and water is now under construction. Facilities for sanitation and sewage treatment are as yet not available but are urgently needed. Experience in other scarcely populated mountainous areas should be reviewed to define a proper system for this area.

Access roads

The present level of the infrastructure is adequate to cope with the visitor flow. An increase in the number of visitors may damage the access roads and will cause pollution; this is harmful for both the monuments and the environment and creates a health risk for the local population. Moreover visitors arrive at random that causes traffic jams and parking problems during peak hours.

Alternative modes of transport should be considered that minimize these effects. Upgrading the train service between Kutaisi and Motsameta may be a possibility to regulate domestic traffic, if combined with environmental friendly local transportation within the Buffer Zone eco (mini) buses. Parking areas near the monasteries should be abandoned and replaced by a parking area outside the Buffer Zone. From there the eco (mini)buses will bring the tourists to the monuments.

A conceptual design for a revised traffic system is described in the Traffic Management Programme.

Another disturbing factor is the transport of stone from the nearby quarry. In January 2015, a Memorandum of Mutual Cooperation was signed between the Municipal Development Fund and the quarry operator to limit the movement of heavy vehicles in the area adjacent to the WHS to early morning and evening hours (before 10.00 and after 19.00) in workdays and to stop it completely on weekends and religious feasts. The volume of traffic is in any case low - typically one or two trucks per day.

f. Accommodation

Presently the available tourist accommodation does not meet the standards of international tourism. Existing guesthouses should be upgraded and new facilities may be created by restoring existing old houses in the area. Due to the rural character of the area no major tourist complexes or resorts can be allowed here, however. The private sector should initiate this action, government should develop incentives to facilitate and support these developments through grants or soft loans with extended grace period. With the help of international donors some guesthouses have already been upgraded and other projects will follow as part of an ongoing project to improve economic conditions and create opportunities for employment.

g. Negative impacts, pollution, safety and security

Safety and security are aspects of importance for tourists. Moreover surveillance is required to safeguard property and protect people against negative effects of tourism. It is the first

priority of the Government to implement and enforce the relevant laws and regulations for the region as a whole. Noise, pollution and littering are foreseeable negative impacts that have to be addressed in a timely way. Also the visitor flow within the Monastery should be regulated and measures should be taken to guarantee the safety of visitors and the integrity of the monuments.

An increasing traffic flow may cause problems in and around the monument and congestion and traffic jams. For the medium term the overall transport infrastructure should be redesigned to cope with increasing visitor flow. Access to the area by rail and road, internal transport within the Buffer Zone and visitor flow inside the monuments should be reviewed within an overall town development plan.

The Traffic Management Programme describes a more environmental friendly approach that includes improved railway connection with Kutaisi and replacing the private cars and buses by environmentally friendly modes of transport together with the new visitor centre that can provide information for tourists and can act as an outlet for local products. From here visitors can be transported to the Monastery by environmental friendly shuttle buses. The visitor centre is also the pivoting point in the network of tourist trails that can be used to reach both Motsameta and Gelati by foot.

Implementation and enforcement of the Laws and regulation is an aspect of concern. The Municipality is responsible for law and order in the area and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources will be required to accomplish this task. The Laws and Regulations regarding the Protection of Cultural Monuments should be implemented and enforced by the Ministry of Culture and Monument protection. Safety of visitors in the Monasteries and security of the monuments are important aspects in this respect. These aspects are described in the Visitor Management Programme.

4. Responsible agencies

The agencies responsible for action are indicated in colour in Table 1 above: blue are actions that should be carried out jointly by selected groups of beneficiaries, red are action carried out by individual entrepreneurs. Green are obligations of the government.

Obviously this correlates with the mode of financing: red private financing with governmental support or incentives, blue private financing or public private initiatives partly financed by government and green financed by regional or national government.

5. Project team

As stated in the management plan, it is proposed to separate stakeholder involvement at national level from the site management. The Management Committee, with representatives of National Agencies and the Patriarchate, should be responsible for long term planning and approving annual plans and budgets. The site management groups representing local stakeholders are responsible for the coordination and execution. Plans will be executed by local stakeholders and/or external consultants under supervision of the site management group.

	Effectiveness and appropriateness for tourism development	Availability of financial resources	Availability of human resources	Priority
MARKETING	High	Financed by National Agency of Tourism and donors	Outsourcing	High, urgent need for coordinated marketing. Can be outsourced if funding is made available
PRODUCTS				
Visit WHS	High	Monastery and MoC	Staff of the visitor centre supplemented by contracted guides	High, can start if local funding is made available
Eco tourism	High	Staff MoE	Staff of MoE	High
Package tours	Moderate	Local tour operators	Private funding and public private partnership	Moderate
Events	Moderate/low	Donor funding	Local entrepreneurs	Low
INFRASTRUCTURE				
Road and rail, public transport. Public amenities. Gas, electricity, water, sanitation	High	Infrastructure and public amenities financed by central and regional government.	Staff of local government and external contractors	High, ongoing as part of regional development project
Feasibility study and implementation of alternative modes of transport	High	Imereti region with donor financing	Subcontract	High
Tourist trails	High	Ministry of Environment with donor financing	Contractor	High
ACCOMMODATION				
Guest houses	High	Private financing , grants and micro credit facilities	External contractors	High, ongoing. To be continued if funds are available
Visitor centre	High	Donor financing	Georgian National Tourist Agency, Local entrepreneurs	High, will help to solve problem with vendors near monastery
HUMAN RESOURCES				
Recruitment and training of staff	High	Financed by National Agency of Tourism. Vocational training financed by local tourism entrepreneurs.	Outsourcing	High, can be outsourced if funding of Tourism Development Project is available.
NEGATIVE IMPACTS				
Pollution	Medium to high	Municipality	State budget	Medium for short term
Traffic regulation	See Traffic Management Programme			
Visitor flow	See Visitor Management Programme.			

Table 2. Priorities of Tourism Development Programme

6. Prioritization

Most of the proposed programmes are urgent but their effectiveness and appropriateness for tourism development may differ. Moreover, the viability depends on the available financial and human resources. This is shown schematically in Table 2 .

7. Expected outputs

The expected output is described in the above sections. The benefits for the local society are shown in the lower row of the table. The direct output is a better product for the tourism sector and a higher turnover for the tourism industry. The indirect effects are a higher standard of living due to reduced unemployment, better public facilities and higher income. Moreover, the new visitor centre may help to solve the problem with vendors near the Monastery.

Traffic Management Programme

1. Rationale and objectives

Traffic has an adverse impact on the WHS Gelati Monastery. The number of cars and buses is steadily increasing over the year; noise and pollution become a problem and traffic jams and congestion occurs during peak hours. There are problems associated with parking, road safety concerns, and limited public transport provision to and from the WHS. These issues have reduced the quality of experience and tranquillity when visiting the WHS. Roads and parking area will not be able to cope with increasing numbers of cars and buses in future. A key aim of the Traffic Management Programme is to solve these problem respecting principles of sustainable tourism and approaches to traffic management.

Most visitors arrive at the WHS by car or bus. Local residents use the minibuses that operate from Kutaisi to Gelati. There is no direct public transport available from nearby villages to Gelati. Buses and minibuses from Orpiri, Jvarisa, Tsitskhvati, and Tkibuli follow the main road; bus stops are located 3 km far away from the Monastery.

The programme presents an outline of a traffic management plan to cope with these problems. In this plan, long- and medium-size tourist buses (longer than 6 meters) will not be allowed to enter the village and the area adjacent to the WHS. They should park in a new parking area near the bridge over the river. For minibuses, cars, and motor bikes parking on this area will not be mandatory.

From the new parking area, visitors can use a shuttle bus to go to the WHS. Electrical or hybrid buses will be used for transport to minimize air pollution and noise. Lovers of hiking can reach the Monastery by foot, using the projected tourist trails. A cableway was suggested as one more option to reach the WHS from the proposed parking area. It can significantly reduce traffic on the village road and increase income from tourism; however, its infrastructure may be inappropriate in the vicinity of the WHS. Decision concerning the construction of the cableway must be made only after consultation with the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia.

The plan includes the construction of a waiting area, a café, and toilet facilities in the new parking area. All facilities will be accessible for wheelchairs. Solar panels on the roof of the buildings will be used to generate part of the power. Commercial activities will be concentrated here and facilities near the Monastery will be used for visitor services only.

2. Location

The proposed activities aim at improving conditions within the WHS. This includes a revision of the internal transport system and the construction of a new parking area.

The proposed parking area is located on the left bank of the Tskaltsitela River near the bridge and opposite to the road that leads to the Gelati Monastery. The size of the proposed plot is 4400 m². It is easily accessible from the road. The terrain is gently sloping toward the river and is liable to flooding during high water. Land fill is required to protect facilities against inundation.

The plot belongs to Levan Tkabladze, a resident of the village Gelati. It was registered to him on 05 June, 2014 (registration No 882014291935). According to information provided by local authorities, he agrees to sell his plot though details of sale have not been discussed yet. Estimated price of the plot is about 250 000 GEL (about 110 000 USD as for April 2015).

The proposed activities include also recommendations to improve the possibility to reach the site by public transport. As these actions are outside the scope of the MP they are not further elaborated.



Proposed location of the new parking area

The photo shows the location of the proposed parking area. The road to the right is the access road to the Monastery.

3. Description of work

a. General

This section gives a conceptual plan of the proposed set up and includes the following:

- General outline of traffic system;
- Conceptual plan of the parking facility;
- Proposed future actions.

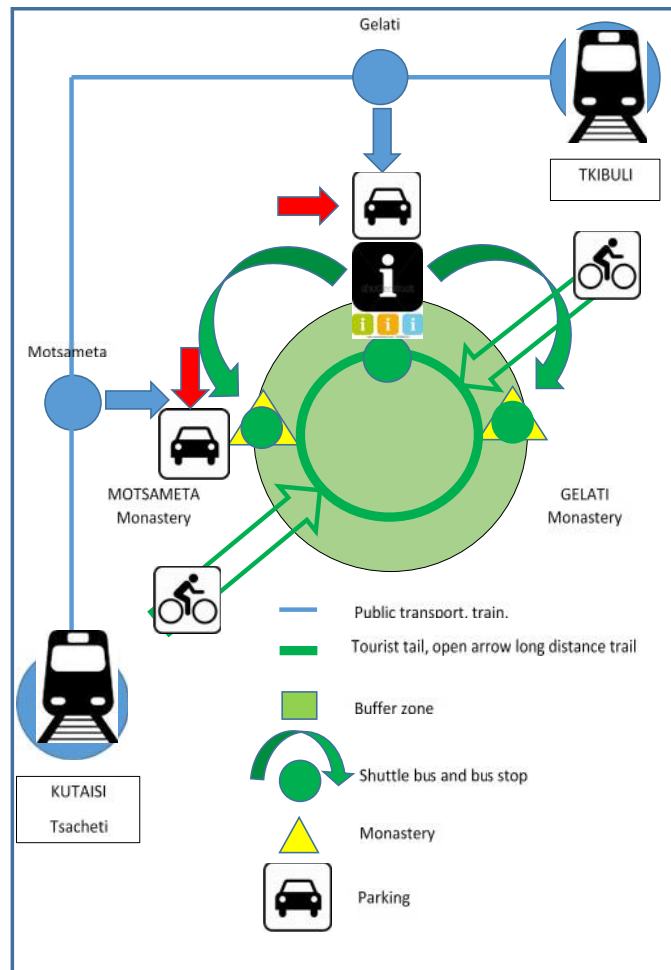


Figure 1. Traffic system

b. Outline of traffic system

A schematic diagram of the proposed traffic system is shown on Figure 1. The green area in the centre symbolizes the Buffer Zone; the two yellow triangles represent the two monasteries, Gelati and Motsameta. The green circle is the tourist circuit described in section 3, “Eco Tourism Programme”. The circuit is connected to a proposed long distance tourist bicycle path that links Kutaisi with the Gelati Monastery.

The trails can be reached from the parking near Motsameta and Gelati (red arrows) and can easily be reached from the stations in both places (blue dots). Shuttle busses run between the monasteries and the parking (semicircular green arrows).

c. Conceptual design

Figure 2 shows schematically the proposed plan of the parking area. The low area near the river is used for (future) parking of cars. This area can only be used in summer. Parking area for buses, the waiting area, the café, the toilet facilities and parking of shuttle buses are situated in the higher area near the road. A land fill will be used to increase the height up to the level of the road; the riverside of the landfill should be protected against erosion during high river discharge.

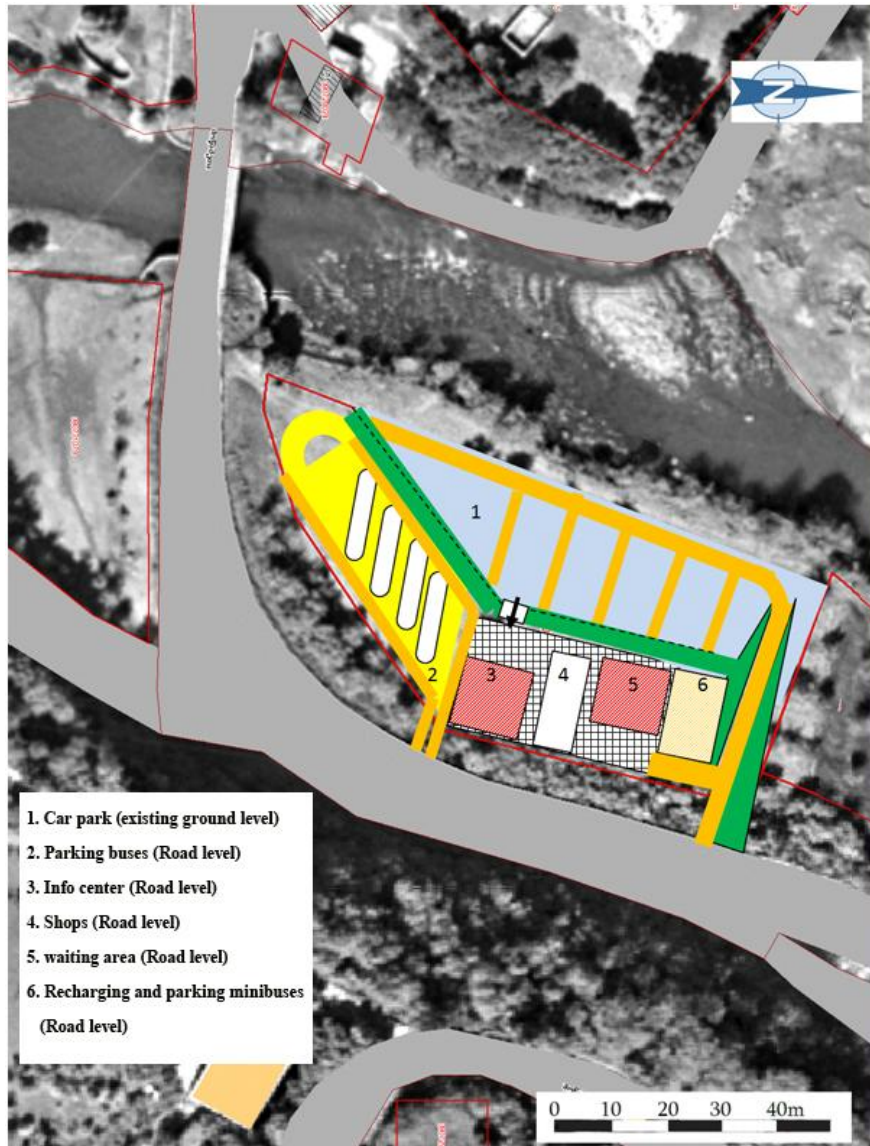


Figure 2. Conceptual design of parking

The minibus parking and recharge station is planned next to the entrance opposite to the road that leads to the Monastery. Bus passengers pass the shopping area and the waiting room while moving from the parking to the shuttle buses. Wheel chairs can easily move from the buses to the shuttle bus stop.

Passengers of cars can offload their passengers near the shuttle bus parking before parking the car. A foot path and stairs lead from the parking to the waiting area.

d. Proposed actions

The proposed traffic system is of regional importance and requires actions of the Tkibuli Municipality, the town of Kutaisi and the Kursebi and Gelati communities. Moreover the national Railways should be involved to improve the connections by rail between Kutaisi, Tkibuli and the Project area.

The present programme elaborates the actions related to the revision of the internal transport within the WHS. This includes:

- Feasibility study and design of transport system;
- Acquisition of land for new parking area;
- Design and construction of infrastructure and buildings;
- Purchase of shuttle buses;
- Recruitment and training of operational staff.

4. Responsible agency

The Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure should be the lead agency for all aspects of the project, in cooperation with the Imereti region. The actions related to the revision of the internal transport within the WHS should be coordinated by the local site management group.

5. Execution

The project is multi-sectoral and many stakeholders are involved. In order to secure funding, financing from various agencies and donors may be needed. The Management Committee and site management group as proposed in the MP are useful instruments to coordinate these activities in the preparation and execution phase. External input from consultants and contractors will be required for various aspects of the project.

6. Priority and phasing

	Activity	Availability of financial resources	Availability of human resources	Priority
Phase 1. Preliminary design and feasibility studies.	Technical feasibility study of transport system and environmental impact assessment.	To be financed by MoRD&I.	Outsourcing	High, can start if funds are available
Phase 2. Design and engineering	Inventory of user requirements and design of facilities.	To be financed by MoRD&I	Outsourcing	High, can start if funds are available
Phase 3. Acquisition of land and construction of infrastructure and buildings.	Implementation of plan for use by the beneficiaries.	Public, private and donor financing.	Municipality, contractor	High but can only start when funding for investments is secured
Phase 4. Purchase of shuttle buses and other equipment	Preparation for operational use, training.	Public, private and donor financing (Public private partnership)	PPP to lease buses and operate service.	Same investment can be phased in time
	Operation.	To be financed by PPP	PPP	

Table 1. Priorities of traffic management programme

The project should be divided in phases that can be funded separately depending on the availability of financial and human resources. This is shown in Table 1 above.

7. Expected outputs

As the project has a multiple objective the expected output is of interest for different user groups.

- It will help to restore the tranquillity and dignity of the WHS, respecting principles of sustainable tourism and approaches to traffic management;
- It will solve the problem of traffic jams, which occur frequently because of the congestion of long buses on the present parking area close to the WHS;
- It will help to manage the visitor flow inside the WHS, as the flow towards the WHS can be regulated;
- It will support the vendors as the new location offer ample opportunity to expand the business. Not only tourists but also transit traffic along the road may stop and buy local products;
- It will protect nature as air pollution will be reduced;
- It will protect the monuments as air pollution and vibration due to heavy traffic is reduced;
- It increases the quality of life for local inhabitants as noise is reduced and traffic jams are avoided;
- It will reduce the risk of transport accidents on the village road.

5. GOVERNANCE AND SITE MANAGEMENT

Preface

The governance should ensure that the management objectives are achieved and interests of all stakeholders at local and national level are taken into account in the decision making process. Chapter 6 of the MP gives a blueprint of a possible set up of the management structure.

The management structure should represent the multi-sectoral character of management and the related broad spectrum of interests at national level but should also ensure an effective and efficient site management. This calls for a functional division between central and local components, linked by proper procedures for coordination and communication. This should include procedures for horizontal integration of the contribution of the various ministries and vertical coordination between levels of government.

The legal and institutional context for management is complex. The Law on protection of monuments gives a number of restrictions for the Buffer Zone with a view to protect the integrity of the monument. It does not give directions for conservation and development of the Buffer Zone proper. Protection, conservation and development are the responsibility of various institutions and are not properly coordinated.

Implementation of the MP should, therefore, go hand in hand with the development of an adequate legal framework and management structure. A possible structure is described in chapter 6 of the MP. Chapter 7 describes the aspects related to the implementation of the MP. These aspects are further evaluated in the present programme.

Implementation of the Management Structure

1. Rationale

The management plan gives directions how to manage the area in order to achieve the strategic objectives listed in section 1.4 of the MP. Management is a dynamic process that can be schematized by the process framework shown in Figure 1. The framework shows:

- a. The objectives described in section 5.3.
- b. The **Management area**, schematized as a box in the centre of Figure 1.

This represents:

- The spatial elements of the area (horizontal bands) and the related cultural, natural, social and economic attributes and values. (Coloured vertical bands) as described in section 3.3. of the MP;
 - The required management actions and programmes described in chapter 5.2 of the MP.
- c. The **primary process** shown by the horizontal green arrows (input, the required actions and the expected output).
 - d. The **Management structure**.

This includes:

- the Management Committee and the site management groups;
 - The legal framework, the staff and facilities that are needed to facilitate the primary process);
 - The commitment and support of stakeholders.
- e. The Quality control cycle, the procedures used to monitor, evaluate and control the process and the outcome.

This includes:

- Monitoring the output and the process;
- Evaluation of the result;
- Corrective actions if needed.

The programme describes in greater detail how these aspects should be addressed in the implementation phase.

2. Location

Activities will focus on the WHS but actions are required both on site and in Tbilisi.

3. Description of work

a. General

The programme focuses on three important elements:

- The legal basis;
- The management structure;
- The quality control system.

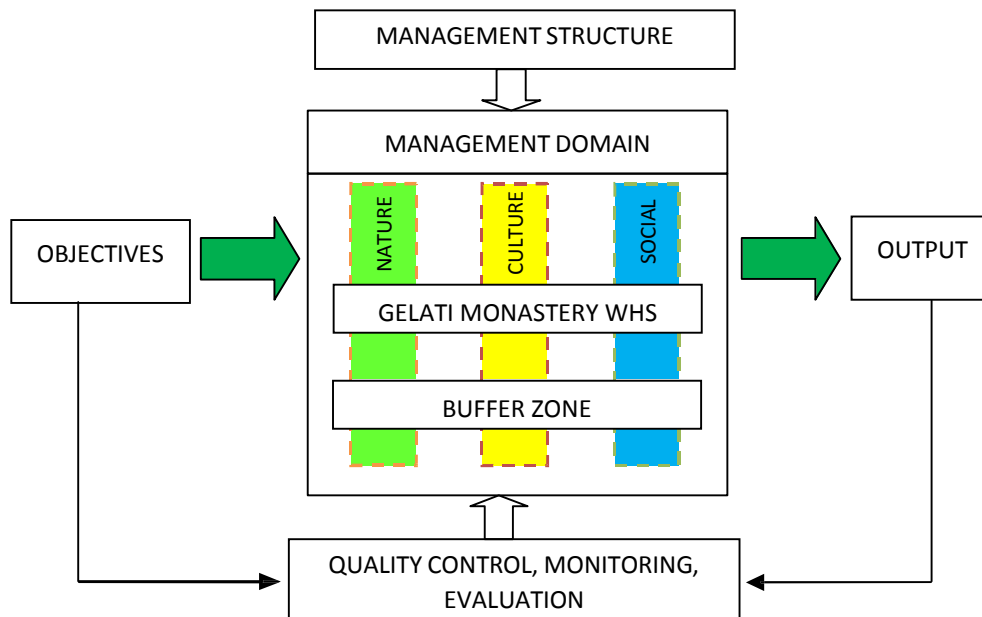


Figure 1. Process framework for environmental management

b. Legal basis

Article 5.1.h of the Law on Cultural Heritage provides authority of the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection to develop and implement task oriented and / or State programmes aiming to protect and promote the cultural heritage. The Gelati Management plan aims to protect and promote the Gelati site, State obligations under the UNESCO convention. On the bases of the above regulation the Management Plan may be approved by the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection under the current legislative framework. After the above approval the Management Plan becomes operable and enforceable by the Ministry with active participation of the Management Committee.

A Management Committee for the World Heritage Site - Gelati Monastery (The "Committee") will be formed as stipulate in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (WHC. 13/01 July 2013), Annex 8 and on the basis of Article 9 of the Charter of the Ministry of Culture and Monument protection, adopted by the Government of Georgia on 16 July, 2010, by Decree #197. The Managements Committee will have the status of an advisory organ of the Minister of Culture and Monument Protection (the "Minister") and will work in close cooperation with the Cultural Heritage Strategy, Department Organizations Coordination and Permissions and the Advisory

Committee on World Cultural Heritage created by the Order of the Minister #3/37 on 27 February 2007 that has a more general scope.

The Minister approves the Charter of the Committee and appoints a chairperson and a secretary. The chairperson shall convene the Committee at least twice a year. The Committee may form Site working group. The Committee Chairperson appoints a chairperson of the group. The group convenes monthly or more frequent if required.

c. Management structure

Presently there is no example of a management structure for managing a WHS in Georgia. Pending a formal enactment of the management plan and the setup of the related management structure, this programme has a provisional character. The regulations contained in Article 9 mentioned above, gives the Minister the possibility to include in the Committee officials of other governmental bodies as well as representatives of civil society and experts with their consent. This should include and facilitate procedures for horizontal coordination of the contribution of the various ministries and agencies. In this way they can ensure that the management objectives are achieved and interests of all stakeholders at local and national level are taken into account in the decision making process. Necessary expertise should be provided by involving external experts.

Implementation should be based upon the so called 7 S model developed in the end of the previous century by Mc Kinsey (see Figure 2). It shows the important component of an organization and schematizes the complicated formal interactions between these elements.

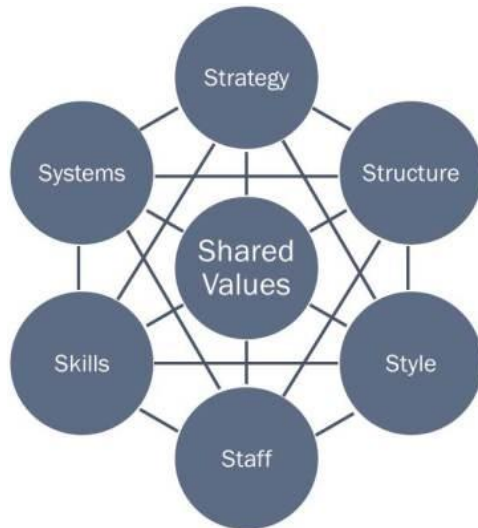


Figure 2. Elements of management structure

All actions are grouped around the central theme "shared values". All activities should aim at a common goal that is accepted by all parties in the management process. In the present case the MP plays that role, but feeling of project ownership and support should be developed in the initiation phase and should be fostered in the following phases of Table 1.

The following cluster of elements includes the "hard" elements of management, the structure (organization) and systems (the facilities, the rules and regulation and the financing). These aspects are main activities in the planning phase.

The second cluster combines the “soft” elements, the staff, their skills and the management style. Human development, recruiting and training of staff, are linking these three elements. These aspects require continuous attention but should start in the implementation phase when legal aspects are settled, facilities are in place, staff is appointed and financing is secured.

d. Quality control

Monitoring

The quality of the output and the process is monitored by means of a set of indicators. Indicators are attributes that are representative for the state of the various landscape components. Indicators should comply with the so called “SMART” criteria. They should be **Specific (S)** for the attribute that is monitored, the indicator should be **Measurable (M)** and results should be **Achievable (A)** with the resources available. Finally the outcome should be **Representative (R)** for the objective that is evaluated and **Timely (T)**, so it can be used as input for the evaluation. Details are shown in the box below.

Output indicators.

Indicators for the WHS should represent the aspects that determine the integrity and authenticity of the monuments as prescribed in the operational guidelines of UNESCO.

Natural values and functions may be evaluated through the biodiversity of representative plots. The natural monument within the area may be used for that purpose. The effectiveness of restoration and recuperation of woodlands may be assessed through the thickness of the canopy, the biodiversity of the understory and the fauna population.

Finally the social and economic effects of sustainable land use and tourism development may be derived from micro economic indicators, such as income of households.

Process indicators

Process indicators are used to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the management process. Tracking tools are used to monitor the progress of work. Aspects that are monitored are:

- the effect of external factors;
- the adequacy of the management structure for the planning and execution of activities mentioned in the management plan;
- the availability of human- and financial resources;
- the political commitment and adequacy of the decision making process and information flow.

Evaluation

Monitoring results can be evaluated in two ways. If normative standards are available these should be used as reference. This is often the case for environmental parameters such as

water quality and air pollution. In case normative standards do not exist project standards should be defined for each indicator.

4. Responsible agency

The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, as signatory of the treaty with UNESCO, should be the lead agency at National level. The Tkibuli Municipality should coordinate the activities at the site.

5. Execution

Preparing the legal base and set up the required management infrastructure is a process that will take time. The phasing and the key issues are shown in Table 7. The process includes the following phases:

- Initiation, the preparation of a work plan;
- Planning, the development of the required instrument (law, facilities, staff);
- Implementation, enactment, institutional setting, financial and human resources.

KEY ISSUE	INITIATION (YEAR 1)	PLANNING (START YEAR 2)	IMPLEMENTATION (START YEAR 3)
Communication	Convene meeting with stakeholders; establish the Management Committee; set up information system	Prepare strategy and annual plans	Secure funding
Consultation	Establish advisory group; request expert input	Consult experts	Quality control
Cooperation	Establish site management group	Consult stakeholders	Execute plans with stakeholders
Empowerment		Prepare legal basis and institutional setting for management	Enact legal status; empower the Management Committee and site management group

Table 1. Phasing and key elements of the programme

The key issues are listed in the first column and are elaborated in the cells of the following columns. The first step is communication and information sharing. All stakeholders should be informed about the plans and their comments and suggestions should be included. After these meetings, members of a provisional management committee will be selected.

The next step is to consult experts on issues that need further elaboration and to develop a draft law that regulates the legal status and the responsibilities of various participants.

The final step is empowerment. This gives the management agency its legal status, empowers the participating institutes to perform their assigned tasks, and secures financial resources for core activities (staff and facilities).

It is expected that the whole process may take three years. In the first three years stakeholders should finance the activities directly. Available budgets and donor financing will dictate the priorities. If the MP and the Management structure have got a legal status and money is available, internal priorities will be the basis for allocation of money.

6. Prioritization

Presently ongoing activities in the WHS are poorly coordinated. The broader scope on management as advocated by UNESCO makes management even more complicated. As proper management is one of the key elements for the nomination as a WHS there is an obvious need for the programme, therefore.

7. Expected output

More effective and efficient management, improved quality of the output that may ultimately lead to an upgrading of the present status of endangered monument.