

THE HISTORIC
CENTRE
OF

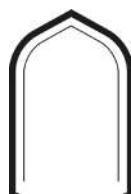
The word 'SHEKI' is rendered in large, bold, block letters. Each letter is filled with a detailed, colorful pattern of stylized flowers, leaves, and birds, reminiscent of traditional Persian or Azerbaijani miniature art. The letters are set against a plain grey background.

WITH KHAN'S PALACE

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020-2025



**State Tourism Agency of
the Republic of Azerbaijan**



**RESERVES
MANAGEMENT
CENTER**



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



**Historic Centre of Sheki
with the Khan's Palace**
inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 2019

Content

Foreword.....	3
---------------	---

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	4
------------------------------	---

1.1 Azerbaijan's Cultural Heritage and World Heritage List.....	4
1.2 Sheki Historical Centre and Khan's Palace.....	4
1.3 Site Management Plan.....	4
1.4 Current status of the Management Plan and its structure.....	5
1.5 Vision Statement for the Management Plan.....	5
1.6 Additional principles and concepts on cultural heritage management.....	5

Chapter 2: Description of the Site.....	8
---	---

2.1 General Information.....	8
2.2 Statement of Significance and OUVs.....	10
2.3 Attributes of OUV.....	12
• ATTRIBUTE 1. The Urban Form of Historic Sheki.....	12
• ATTRIBUTE 2. Sheki is an exceptional testimony to the feudal system of the Caucasian khanates.....	14
• ATTRIBUTE 3. Traditional houses of Sheki.....	15
• ATTRIBUTE 4. Spectacular natural forest setting of Sheki.....	16
• ATTRIBUTE 5. Intact visual integrity.....	17
2.4 Intangible Cultural Heritage of Sheki.....	18
2.4.1 OUV-related handicrafts.....	18
2.4.2 Chovqan.....	20
2.4.3 Cuisine.....	20
2.4.4 Natural resources.....	20

Chapter 3: Management of the Site.....	21
--	----

3.1 Ownership.....	21
3.2 Management Areas.....	23
• Conservation management.....	23
• Development management.....	24
• Land use and public infrastructure management.....	25
• Risk management.....	26
3.3 Responsible Institutions and stakeholders in management.....	27
3.4 Financial management.....	29
3.5 Grants and Incentives Funding.....	29
3.6 Planning, Policy and Legislative Framework.....	30

Chapter 4: Conservation of Cultural Heritage.....	33
---	----

4.1 Key Issues with OUV attributes.....	33
4.2 Craftsmanship.....	36

Chapter 5: Tourism Development: Opportunities and Issues.....	38
---	----

5.1 Introduction.....	38
5.2 Tourism Products and Experiences.....	38
5.3 Main touristic sites.....	39
5.4 Intangible cultural heritage assets and activities.....	40
5.5 Public events.....	41
5.6 Trees of Sheki: hiking routes, stories and activities.....	42
5.7 Accommodation facilities.....	42
5.8 Public Infrastructure: Transportation, public places, roads, parking.....	43
5.9 Tourism Marketing and awareness.....	43

Chapter 6: Risk Management.....	44
---------------------------------	----

Chapter 7: Management Objectives and Actions.....	45
---	----

A. Efficient Management structures.....	45
B. Conservation, Restoration and Understanding of the Site.....	46
C. Conservation and Development of intangible heritage value.....	47
D. Development of tourism potential and infrastructure.....	48
E. Risk management.....	49
F. Promotion and Communication of the Site's significance.....	49

Chapter 8: Action Plan.....	52
-----------------------------	----

Annexed documents to the Management Plan

Sheki Hiking routes map.....	60
Sheki Artisans map.....	61
Charter of the Reserve Management Center.....	62
Organizational Chart of RMC.....	65
Duties and Responsibilities of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan.....	66
Subordination Chart of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan.....	67



Foreword

Today, more and more people all over the world are becoming conscious for the universal outstanding value of the World Heritage. This consciousness brings more awareness from respective societies, national authorities and International organizations to safeguard the heritage and transmit it to future generations.

The Historic Centre of Sheki with Khan's Palace covers ancient parts of the Sheki city, one of the unique cities of Azerbaijan with centuries-long heritage. Here one can find a great number of mosques and minarets, caravanserais and craftsmanship workshops, museums and other historically important buildings. The historical and cultural heritage is duly preserved today in the city abound with dozens of art sites located en masse. The vast scale of social and economic progress has increased further the region's tourism potential that made it necessary to be extra cautious about the work carried out in the Site's territory due to the change of urban look that is triggered by new style buildings and the alteration of its specific architecture.

The Historic Centre of Sheki with Khan's Palace is inscribed on the World Heritage List of UNESCO in 2019. This is not only acknowledging the outstanding cultural significance of the city, but also gives great value to the people living here. It is an international appeal to safeguarding and preservation of ancient value of Sheki, its beauty and historical importance for future generations.

The inscription of the Historic Centre of Sheki with Khan's Palace (The Site) on the World Heritage List is a great contribution to sustainable development initiatives currently undertaken by the national authorities. It will intensify tourism competitiveness with adjacent areas, help develop promotional strategy, boost city profile and increase the number of both local and international visitors. At the same time, it will bring to a more careful and meticulous analysis of every interference into the architectural shape of the Site.

We would like to once more emphasize Azerbaijani authorities' commitment to full responsibility to follow the recommendations of UNESCO, relevant international treaties and conventions. We are confident that this Management Plan will prove to be a valuable tool for all those involved in the ongoing conservation and presentation of this unique and special Site.

Introduction



1.1 Azerbaijan's Cultural Heritage and World Heritage List:

According to the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Heritage List represents the best and the most significant examples of cultural and natural aspects of the global community. The places which become World Heritage Site (WHS) must demonstrate that they are fulfilling their obligations in respect of UNESCO's requirements in implementing the World Heritage Convention.

There are over 1000 WHS globally and Azerbaijan is represented with three sites in this list. The Walled City of Baku, with the Shirvanshah's Palace and Maiden Tower, and Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape were added in the World Heritage List in 2000 and 2007, respectively. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan has signed three executive orders during the last 8 years (in 2011, 2016, and 2019) on the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Site, and the successful implementation of the actions stipulated by each of the three documents has made indispensable contribution to the positive outcome of the process of nominating the Site to the World Cultural Heritage List. UNESCO World Heritage Committee adopted a decision on including the Site in the World Heritage List at the 43rd Session held in Baku on July 07, 2019.

1.2 Sheki Historical Centre and Khan's Palace:

The Site is situated in the central North of Azerbaijan along the southern edge of the Greater Caucasian mountain range. The city boasts vast cobblestone streets, ancient and medieval architecture, breathtaking landscapes, fine cuisine, and local handicrafts. It is divided into two parts – the northern part extending into mountains, and the eastern part along the Gurjanachay River. The city centre is dotted with an architectural ensemble of traditional houses, with high gabled roofs covered with brownish-red tiles. Traces of Savafid, Qajar and Russian building techniques can be seen throughout Sheki's architecture due to its location along important historic trade routes, such as the ancient Silk Road. The Khan's Palace as well as the various merchant's houses reflect the wealth generated by silkworm breeding and trading of cocoons in Sheki in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

The focal point of the city is Khan's Palace which is in the north-east of the town. It is built around 250 years ago when Mammad Hasan Khan, grandson of the Sheki khanate's founder Haji Chelebi, ordered the construction of a summer residence in the city centre. Dozens of skilled local craftsmen built the extravagant mansion with facade drawings depicting scenes of hunting and war. The two floors, six rooms, four corridors, and two mirrored balconies of the Khan's Palace were built fully from a wooden frame,

without using a single nail. All windows and doors to the palace are made of wood and millions of pieces of stained glass, or shabaka, a decorative art found throughout the Near East.

The Site's historic layout, architecture and cultural traditions, which continued in the new location after the destruction caused by the floods of 1772, have survived to the modern times. The Site has preserved its originality and aesthetic quality, within its beautiful natural context, also integrating new cultural and regional impacts starting in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These qualities can contribute to improving the living standards of people in the region, increase tourism, and create economic opportunities.

1.3 Site Management Plan

According to the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of World Heritage Convention (2017), each cultural heritage site included in the World Heritage List should certainly have an appropriate Management Plan or other documented management system which must specify methods and recommendations on how an Outstanding Universal Value of a Property should be preserved¹. The purpose of the Management Plan is to set out how the commitments of the World Heritage Convention, regarding the heritage sites will be applied and to ensure that they are delivered.

The Management Plan is a key planning tool for the development, conservation, use and preservation of the cultural heritage site. The main aim of the Management Plan is to describe the vision and mission for the conservation management of the Site for the future, and determine key targets and strategies, projects, action plans, and application tools for its preservation and sustainable development. The Management Plan also aims at identifying partners (stakeholders), responsible structures and institutions, as well as relevant sources for the implementation of the management process. The main objective of the Management Plan is to manage the heritage site in line with the requirements encompassing the history and paving the way for future opportunities while preserving the irreplaceable cultural heritage resource.

The Management Plan is a tool for the management and employees, as well as community members to carry out activities for conservation, planning and management of the territory of the Site in both the present and future. From this perspective, the Management Plan is also a strategic plan that ensures cooperation and coordination of activities and projects between the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (STA) and the relevant government agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations and all other stakeholders.

¹Each nominated property should have an appropriate Management Plan or other documented management system which must specify how an Outstanding Universal Value of a Property should be preserved, preferably through participatory means. The purpose of a management system is to ensure the effective protection of a nominated property for present and future generations."

1.4 Current status of the Management Plan and its structure:

One of the key recommendations in the above-mentioned decision of the UNESCO Heritage Committee was to ensure the revision and adoption of the Management Plan of the Site, which was developed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Azerberpa in 2016². An updated Management Plan was needed to manage the Site in an efficient manner after its inclusion in the World Heritage List.

This document is a fundamentally revised edition of the Management Plan for the Site, prepared by the STA and its subordinate institution Reserve Management Centre (RMC) in 2020 in accordance with the recommendations of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS.

The geographical scope of the Management Plan covers the Site itself, its setting and the buffer zone and can also be applied to the management of entire “Yukhari Bash” State Historical-Architectural Reserve (Yukhari Bash Reserve) since the entire area of the property (120 ha) designated as the WHS, as well as the buffer zone is located inside the Yukhari Bash Reserve. In terms of content, the plan mostly focuses on protection, conservation and transmission of attributes presented by OUVs of the Site. However, there are other significant values and heritage elements within the Reserve directly and indirectly related to OUVs and which are of great national and local importance. Therefore, the plan will take a holistic approach to provide broader framework of the management.

The Management Plan contains the vision, the main objectives and strategies, the proposed activities and projects for future development. The Management Plan also contains an action plan, identifying the relevant projects to be undertaken during the intended period of 2020-2024.

The Management Plan is based on the determination of the Yukhari Bash Reserve’s public and private stakeholders (relevant ministries, regional and local authorities, non-governmental and private organizations) to undertake the safeguarding and valorization of this heritage resource. The Management Plan contains an annual operating plan and identifies the necessary means to ensure the control and monitoring of the implementation of the activities. The plan serves as the basis for the management system.

The Management Plan consists of 8 chapters covering general introduction and context to the Management Plan (Chapter 1), describing and

evaluating the OUVs of the Site and their attributes (Chapter 2), current management structures and existing policy and legal framework in the cultural heritage conservation (Chapter 3). The main part of the plan focuses on identifying the key issues in various areas such as conservation, tourism development, risk management etc. (Chapter 4, 5, 6). Setting management objectives based on the key issues and identifying actions for these objectives are covered in detail (Chapter 7). The Management Plan also introduces an Action Plan with implementation and monitoring indicators (Chapter 8).

1.5 Vision Statement for the Management Plan:

Sheki is a region distinguished by its unique cultural traditions and the individuality in Azerbaijan. The Site reflects this individuality in every aspect. Since its inception, it has survived its initial appearance, architectural traditions. The cuisine and dialect, as well as its cultural and architectural traditions are distinguished by uniqueness in the territory of Azerbaijan. During its two-century history, the City’s historic part has not undergone significant changes against the background of numerous political and economic changes. Throughout its history, Sheki has been one of the biggest sericulture and craftsmanship centres. It hasn’t lost its importance at the present time. Sheki city is now a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, an association supporting the formation of a network with the aim of promoting international cooperation between cities. The city has been added in the City of Crafts and Folk Art category of the network. With the architectural and urban development traditions preserved in the Sheki Khan Palace, Shekikhanov’s House, Caravanserais and residential houses, Sheki is of the ancient settlements surviving up to the present day in the territory of Azerbaijan Republic. Given these factors, the project team has identified the strategic vision of the Site. The Site with Khan’s Palace will be an exemplar site for heritage management by achieving the followings:

a) The Outstanding Universal Values and all the related attributes, as well as historical and cultural individuality of the Site will be protected and conserved for future generations through mobilizing all available resources and involved parties.

b) World Heritage status of the Site will be effectively used and elaborated to boost economic and cultural life of the local community and improve the well-being of the community residents.

c) Captivated and compelling tourism experiences will be created inspired by the exceptional and unique historic, cultural and architectural values of the Site. This will promote the Sites significance while safeguarding its outstanding values.

d) Active participation of private and public institutions in heritage conservation through Incentive mechanisms and creation of new development opportunities.

1.6 Additional principles and concepts on cultural heritage management:

The recognition of something as heritage has evolved particularly in the recent years. One of the principal driving forces in this process has certainly been the 1972 World Heritage Convention. In 1992, the World Heritage Committee adopted the notion of “cultural landscape”, which has since become recognised across the world. Cultural landscapes are cultural properties and represent the “combined works of nature and of man” designated in Article 1 of the World Heritage Convention. They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal.

The World Heritage Convention should also be understood in the context of other UNESCO International Conventions and Recommendations. In 2003, UNESCO adopted the Convention on the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and in 2005 the Convention concerning the Promotion and Safeguarding of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In 2005, the ICOMOS General Assembly adopted the Xi’An Declaration on the

conservation of the setting of heritage structures, sites and areas. Here it is stated: The setting of a heritage structure, site or area is defined as the immediate and extended environment that is part of, or contributes to, its significance and distinctive character.

In the case of Sheki, an association with its natural setting is of critical importance for the management of the site. Therefore, the question is not only to recognise the visible mountainsides but to integrate them as a fundamental part of the management regime in order to maintain the visual integrity of Sheki. The Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, adopted by UNESCO in 2011, define the historic urban landscape as the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of “historic centre” or “ensemble” to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting. Management of this area has been defined as the **Historic Urban Landscape Approach**:

*The historic urban landscape approach aims at preserving the quality of the human environment, enhancing the productive and sustainable use of urban spaces while recognizing their dynamic character, and promoting social and functional diversity. It integrates the goals of urban heritage conservation and those of social and economic development. It is rooted in a balanced and sustainable relationship between the urban and natural environment, between the needs of present and future generations and the legacy from the past. The management aims at an active conservation and sustainable development of the Site, considered a heritage resource in all its significant elements and characteristics, including human activities, as much as the buildings, the spatial organisation and the surroundings. These actions can be identified as **Safeguarding and Valorisation**.*

² UNESCO World Heritage Committee, Decision No. 43 COM 8B.36, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7398>



Safeguarding means keeping the heritage resource in all its characteristics recognized of heritage significance. Safeguarding must be based on regular monitoring of the state of conservation of the heritage resource within its context. It includes all types of measures of *programmed maintenance*, *conservation* and *protection*, which are not included in actions of valorization.

Programmed maintenance means all direct and indirect actions taken on a regular basis to ensure the state of conservation of the heritage resource.

Conservation means all direct and indirect actions taken to eliminate pathogenic processes and indicating the basic operations needed to limit degradation of its recognised heritage qualities.

Protection means physical, administrative or legal measures aiming at a control and mitigation of potential or actual causes of alteration in the heritage resource or in its context, which can have a negative impact on its recognised heritage qualities.

Valorization means all the different types of initiatives aiming at the cultural and social- economic rehabilitation of the heritage resource. The scope of valorization is to restore and/or recover the historical, architectural, and traditional characteristics expressed in the building typology and urban morphology of the protected area as part of its culturally and environmentally sustainable development.

Urban Fabric: The heritage value of an historic town - or historic urban fabric - is associated with the material testimony of its stones and its structures, and often lies beneath their visible surface. This historical stratigraphy - the evidence and marks brought by changes in use over time, as well as the connections and continuity that make an individual building part of the urban context - constitutes the basis for establishing the criteria for its conservation. An historic town is a multi-functional organism with residential, social, political and economic activities. Since this is the essence of an urban organism, the historic area should be properly defined, and these aspects adequately considered and administered.

Integrated conservation: implies reconciling conservation requirements and town planning objectives, i.e., considering the values and interests of the existing historic fabric as equal in status to other factors in the general planning process. Integration also implies the involvement of the inhabitants in the decision-making process regarding the culturally and environmentally sustainable development of the area/region concerned.





Description of the World Heritage Site

2.1 General Information:

Official name of the Site: The Historic Centre of Sheki with the Khan's Palace

Location: "Yukhari Bash" State Historical and Cultural Reserve, Sheki city, Azerbaijan

Date of inscription as World Heritage Site: July 2019

Category of property: In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is **a group of buildings**. In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (July 2015), this is also an **inhabited historic town**.

History: Sheki is located on the southern foot of the Greater Caucasus ridge and is divided into a northern and southern part by the Gurjana River. While its northern and earlier part is situated on higher land, the southern part lies within the river valley. The history of the Site dates back at least two millennia but the current historic town of Sheki's oldest structures date to the year 1772. Almost thirty years after the establishment of the Sheki Khanate in 1743, the previous settlement was destroyed by flooding of the river Kish and the city was resettled and built at its new higher ground location at Gurjana River. It is for this reason that the city today appears homogenous in design and architectural style. The Site area corresponds to the historic core of Sheki and covers an area of approximately 120 hectares. It is surrounded by a buffer zone of 146 hectares.

The historic centre of the relocated Sheki is its fortress in the upper north-east built in 1790 by Huseyn Khan. Within is gated garden areal accessible via two gates lies the Khan's Palace, which is singled out in the title of the site. Built in 1797 during the reign of Mammad Hasan Khan, the palace complex is composed of the Khan's residence and seat of power, mosque, bath, pantries, stables, barns and other service buildings. The main architectural structure of the Khan's palace was designed by the Persian architect Haji Zainal Abdul as a two-storey structure with a dominant front of stained-glass windows. It is further characterized by artistic decoration, including paintings, stalactite niche decorations and decorated ceilings with floral patterns. The city surrounding the fortress is located on steep terrain with narrow and often dead-ended roads. One main road, the major trade route, passes through the centre alongside the citadel and creates the key reference point of trading activities. The main trading areas are located along this primary trade route in the vicinity of the Khan's Palace. The urban fabric is composed of traditional Sheki manor houses. Each of these is enclosed by a high abode wall

Key Facts

Inscribed in 2019

The population of WHS territory (7328 people) - 8% of the population of Sheki City and 40% of the Reserve population

UNESCO WHS is located within the borders of the current State Reserve territory

The WHS territory (120,5 ha) - about 40% of the Reserve area (283ha) and 5% of the Sheki City area

Around 50 historical and cultural monuments (palaces, residential houses, mosques, old bridges, springs, mills, etc.) located at WHS territory

Most of the buildings in the WHS area (almost 75%) are private residential houses

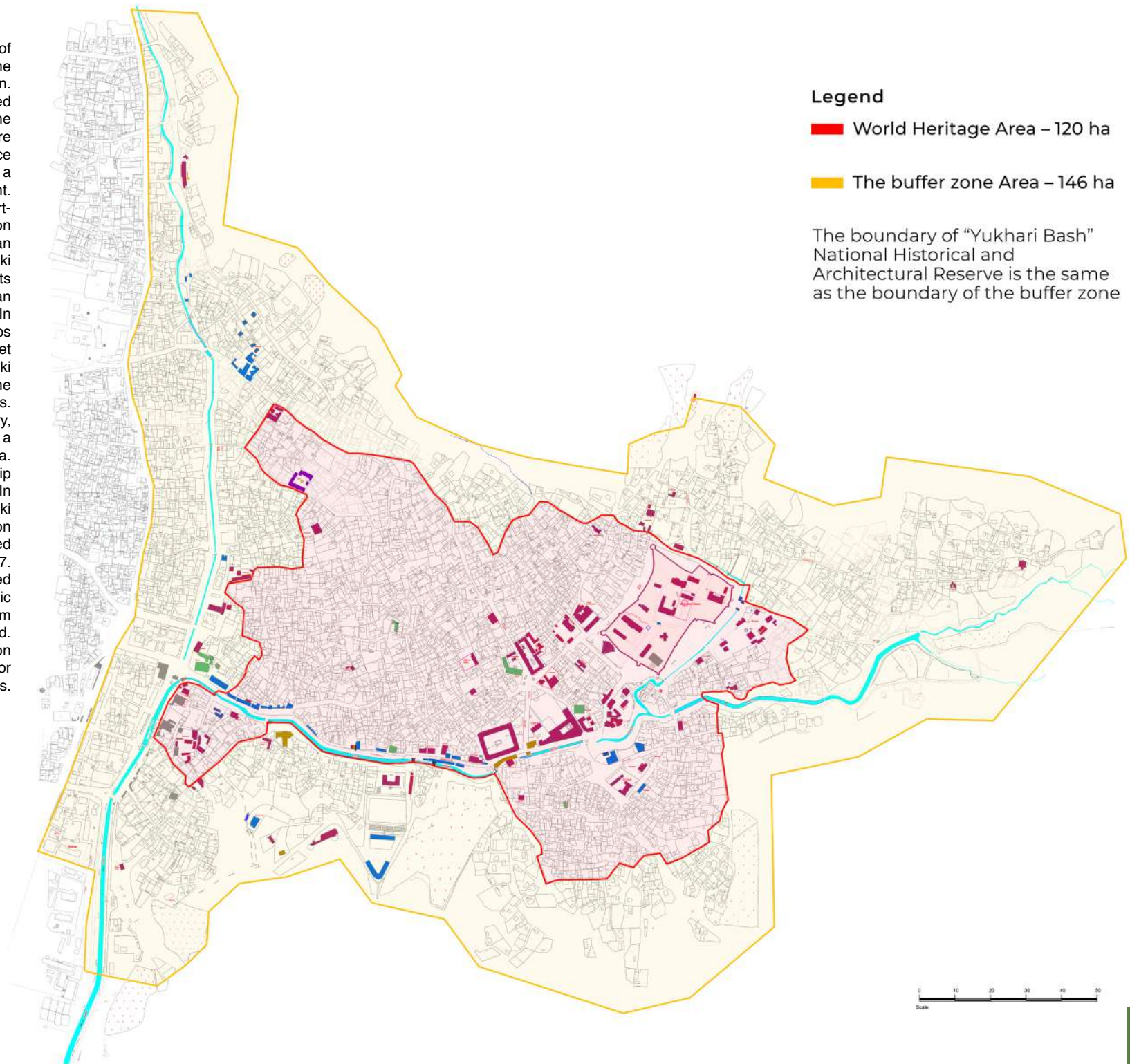
Located on the main tourism corridor in Azerbaijan

More than 100000 foreign and 200000 Azerbaijani visitors per year

and consists of a garden within the wall precinct and a brick and timber structured residential building, often placed in the centre of the garden. The houses all have deep verandas, so-called eyvans, facing in southern direction. The garden vegetation indicates the source of wealth of the city. Mulberry trees were the key nutrition for the silkworms bred in Sheki and their cocoons were sold and became source of the city's wealth. Sheki also became famous for embroidery products, very often silk embroidery. Besides the manor houses, Sheki's public buildings encompass religious structures, identified in the urban fabric by the vertical lines of the mosque minarets, public baths and caravanserais. The city appears strikingly green from a distance while from a pedestrian viewpoint it is characterized by adobe brick walls and cobblestone plastered streets. Its overall impression is influenced by architectural language of Safavid and Qajar origin with later features relating to traditions from territories under Russian rule.

The founding date of a settlement under the name of Sheki is unknown but archaeological records date it to approximately 2,700 years of age. At its present location Sheki was constructed in 1772 following the destruction of the earlier Sheki by floods of the river Kish. This occurred

approximately 30 years after establishment of the Sheki Khanate in 1743, which is said one of the most influential Khanates in the region. In its new location, the city soon prospered again through the wealth obtained along the trade routes, in particular through sericulture and the trading of cocoons. The Khan's palace built in 1797 and many manor houses are a direct expression of this wealthy environment. However, the reign in the palace was short-lived as merely 18 years after its construction the Khanate was abolished by the Russian empire. Throughout the 19th century Sheki remained a feudal trade town with its management transferred by the Russian government to a military commandant. In 1834 a devastating fire destroyed 369 shops and one caravanserai in the central market area. Per historic records of 1836, Sheki was composed of 2,791 houses at the time with a population of 12,586 inhabitants. Sericulture blossomed during this century, especially after Sheki was designated as a centre to strengthen sericulture in Russia. In addition to silk production craftsmanship and trade were further expanded. In the second half of the century Sheki expanded further based on population growth with 17,945 inhabitants recorded in 1852 and 26,286 inhabitants in 1887. On 5 May 1920 Soviet Power was established in Sheki. All major residential and public buildings as well as facilities for silkworm breeding and silk production were nationalized. In 1928 an additional silk production factory was built, which then allowed for silk production with spinning machines.



2.2 Statement of Significance and OUVs:

Brief Synthesis:

The Site, lying in a forested valley of the eastern Caucasian mountains, has ancient origins, dating back to the 6th century BCE. The current historic centre results from its reconstruction, after a mud flood in 1772, on higher ground in a mountain valley east of the previous site. Due to the natural limitations of the valley, the historic area has retained its overall urban form, but has expanded within the original building lots, following traditional typological patterns. The traditional buildings with their typical high saddle roofs, deep verandas and gardens are the key characteristics of the historic urban landscape, within the spectacular setting of the forested mountain slopes.

Being in contact with important trade routes, the region of Sheki has been subject to a variety of cultural influences. Christianity was here introduced as early as the 1st century CE, and Islam in the 7th century. During its recent history, it has been under various realms, including the Safavids, Ottomans and Qajars until the 18th century. In 1743, Sheki was established as the first and the most powerful of a series of Khanates in Caucasus, representing a new administrative system in the region. This was followed by Russian rule in the 19th century. These different cultures have also influenced the features of architecture, of which the Khan's Palace is an outstanding example, also reflected in many of the interiors of wealthy merchant houses such as fireplaces (bukharas), decorations, and a vernacular type of windows (shabaka) etc. The fortress, the Khan Palace, and the caravanserais, reflect the important administrative and commercial role of the city.

As a trading centre, in contact with Asia and Europe, and also as a part of Silk Road route, the principal economy of Sheki, from the ancient times, has been based on silkworm breeding, the trading of cocoons and raw silk, and the development of various crafts, which continue in the region. These activities were favoured due to its particularly suitable climatic conditions. At the same time, the morphology of the urban fabric and its growth patterns were a direct result of the topography of the site, and the economic developments and the activities related to the silk trade. Houses were built with high-pitched roofs for breeding the silkworms in the airy spacious attics. Extensive commercial relations with other regions that mainly included trades of silk products, triggered the building of new caravanserais, shops, public fountains, mosques, public baths, and storage buildings in a very short period after 1772.

One caravanserai and some shops are still used by local people for various trade purposes.

The urban pattern of the city of Sheki is determined by the water harvesting and management. The city is in the catchment area of the Kish river in a space drained by streams that have been intercepted and transformed into a network of channels over time. Added to this water supply are the waters from mountain glaciers and meteoric glaciers. The hydraulic network is diversified, distinguishing the fresh and less potable waters according to the different origins: spring, rainwater and torrent. An elaborate distribution system manages the water network up to the residential houses and productive gardens, structuring the urban plot and the division into neighbouring areas. The cultivated plots, each with a house on one side, are a distinctive character of the city of Sheki. The gardens partly comprised of mulberry trees combined with their residential houses constituted a production system based on the series of operations related to the feeding and breeding of the silkworm and its processing. Thus, a type of 'garden city' was created in which the elements of aesthetic and symbolic value were integrated with functional and utilitarian characters.

Justification for OUV Criteria:

Criterion (ii): As the major cultural and commercial centre in the region, the Site exhibits an important interchange of multiple cultural influences, which have their origin in its history over two millennia, but developed particularly under the Safavid, Ottoman and Qajar influences, and the later impact of Russian rule. Sheki in turn influenced a wider territory of Caucasus and beyond. The current urban form, which dates back to the new construction after the flood of 1772, continued earlier building traditions responding to the local climatic conditions, and the requirements of the traditional economy and crafts activities. In particular, construction elements and details of Sheki's domestic architecture, such as balconies, doors, arches, and fences, reflect oriental characteristics that later evolved under Russian influence. Sheki is also an exceptional testimony to the feudal system of the Caucasian khanates, which developed from 1743 to 1819, as expressed in the architecture of the Khan's palaces, the interiors of wealthy merchant houses, and the fortifications.

Criterion (v): Completely realized according to ancient rules, the Historic Centre of Sheki represents an extraordinary example of a planned



productive 'garden city', as exemplified in its hydraulic water system for driving mills and irrigation, productive structures related to sericulture, and the peculiar organization of the houses aligned with their cultivated fields, all set within a forested landscape setting.

Authenticity:

The historic centre of Sheki contains all the elements that justify its Outstanding Universal Value. Together with its setting, the settlement forms a coherent ensemble that has also retained its visual integrity intact. The boundaries of the property contain all the planned historical city with its productive garden houses, fortifications and monuments such as the fortress, the Khan Palace, and the caravanserais, that together reflect the residential, administrative and commercial role of the city. The water system, repartition in neighborhoods (mehelle) and many traditional activities are mainly still intact and efficient. These represent the complete range of the attributes of the property that reflect a planned productive 'garden city' capital of the Sheki Khanate and subsequent Russian rule. The integrity of the property is though vulnerable to new construction in the property and the lack of conservation of some historic buildings. Some newly built houses modified residential buildings, and buildings that are in a critical condition all require varying degrees of immediate intervention. The Conservation Strategy guided by Restoration Manual will address the current shortcomings soon.

Authenticity Integrity:

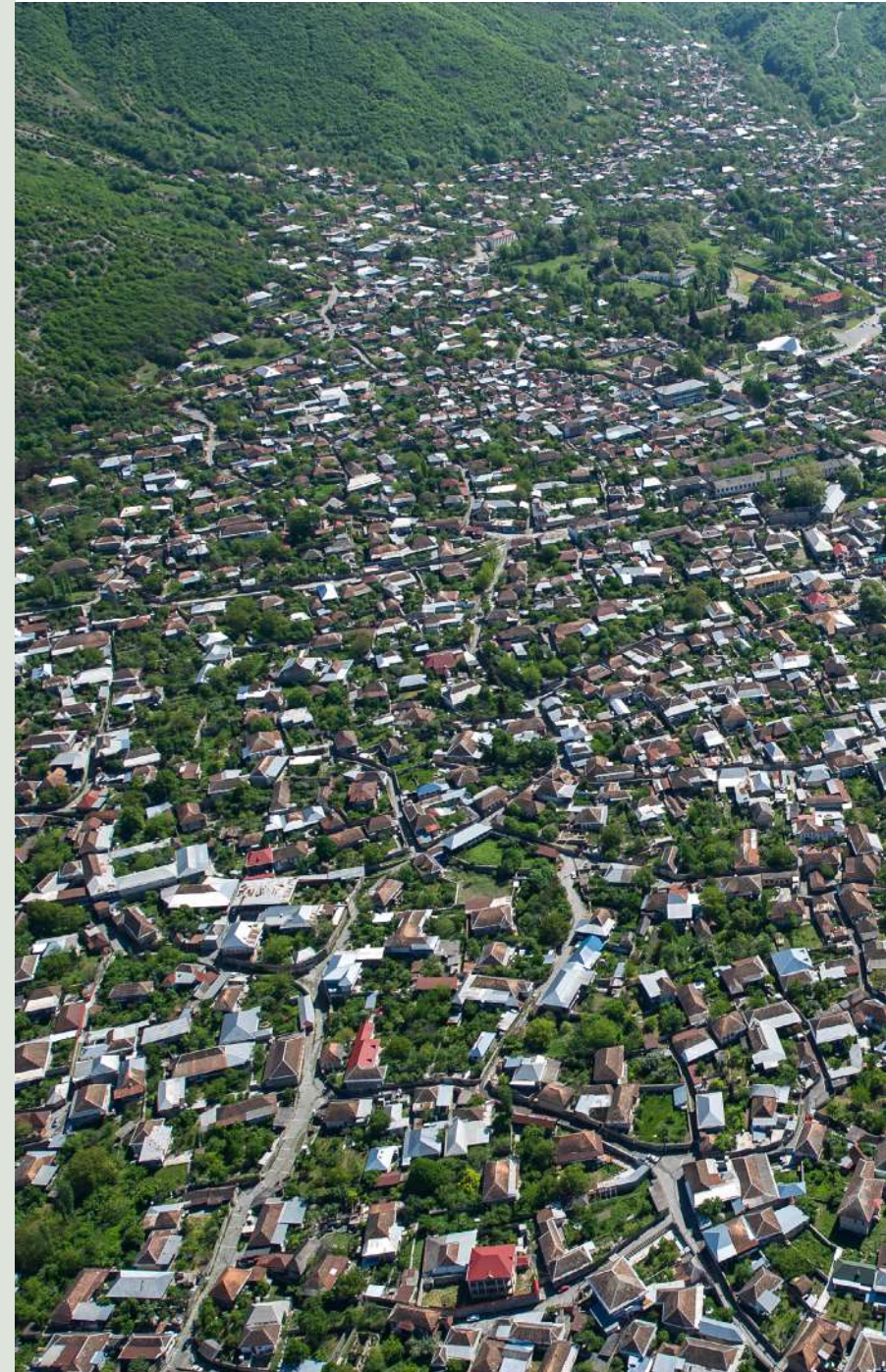
The historic centre of Sheki has retained its historical authenticity in relation to the intactness of its urban typology and overall form, and most private residences and some public buildings still reflect their former traditional use and functions. Sheki has also retained its traditional mechanisms for property maintenance and community involvement through neighborhood representatives and a

council of elders. The essential part of the monumental complexes is intact and are part of extensive conservation and restoration programs, carried out and in progress. Despite the existence of some inappropriate interventions and use of modern materials that affect authenticity, the Restoration Manual will set out required standards and the use of traditional materials. The residential houses of Sheki have been gradually restored, many following traditional typological patterns of growth, but not all interventions have respected the authenticity of traditional materials, processes and design. 1,933 houses (71.6%) out of the 2,755 residential houses inside the property and its buffer zone maintain their authenticity having evolved over time according to functional transformations that do not affect the architectural typology or materials, or have minor changes, such as extensions. All the houses will be subject to preservation, guided through a Conservation Plan and a Restoration Manual.

Protection and management requirements:

The Historic Centre of Sheki and the Khan's Palace (120.5 ha) has been protected since 1967 as part of the "Yukhari Bash" State Historical and Architectural Reserve (283 ha) under the Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments. It is also under strict protection within the general urban master plan of the city as a conservation area. The setting is protected at two levels, a buffer zone (146 ha) surrounds the property at up to 200 meters, and beyond that there is a much larger zone for terrain control. The buffer zone is legally part of the "Yukhari Bash" architectural reserve, while the zone for terrain control remains within the reserve's buffer zone which is also protected by the law. The forested setting of the property needs to be protected not just for its environmental value but also for its visual and cultural value, as a support for the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. The Historic Centre

of Sheki is under the management of the STA and its newly created Reserves Management Centre, together with other relevant stakeholders. The Action Plan on Conservation and Rehabilitation of Historical Centre of Sheki and the Restoration Manual are both resource and guidance documents, which will form the basis for the development of planning guidelines and stronger protection for individual buildings. This process must be carried out by involving private individuals and the population through incentives for the restoration carried out respecting the historical and architectural character of the place and the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value. An overall Conservation Master Plan also needs to be developed. A Management Plan drafted in English will be adopted, implemented and translated, as envisaged in the Action Plan, and this will include strengthening the mandate and resources of the management team. Future management should strengthen the role of traditional governance structures, such as the Council of Elders, and the neighborhood representatives in decision-making and management processes, and develop a tourism strategy to constrain the development of tourism facilities. There is also a need to develop a monitoring system focused both on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the Management Plan. As the property is in a zone of high seismic activity, its lower level is at high risk of serious floods, and its forested setting could be vulnerable to forest fires, a comprehensive approach to risk preparedness and mitigation needs to be developed in an Emergency Plan.



2.3 Attributes of OUV:

"The World Heritage Convention a property-based convention. Therefore, it is sites or properties that are inscribed on the List (not values or ideas) and those properties need to express OUV. The OUVs should be conveyed by respective attributes. Attributes are physical elements, and tangible or intangible aspects or processes of the property that make manifest OUV."¹

As evident from SOUV, Sheki historical centre satisfies criteria (ii) - exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design and criteria (v) - be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement and land-use, which is representative of a culture or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.

"To sustain OUV, correct understanding and care towards attributes of the property are necessary and the following steps are preliminary:

- accurate identification of relevant attributes making manifest OUV is fundamental for the future of the property;
- protection, conservation and management of the property must focus primarily on relevant attributes"²

The Site's outstanding universal values are reflected in the following attributes:

1. The Urban Form of Historic Sheki

2. Exceptional testimony to the feudal system of the Caucasian khanates

3. Traditional houses

4. Spectacular forest setting

5. Intact visual integrity

ATTRIBUTE 1. The Urban Form of Historic Sheki

Urban planning of historical Sheki city was influenced by the natural **environment and climate** as well as **cultural activities** of local people responding to these natural features. **Productive garden city** and **historical trade relations** were key to shaping Sheki's urban form.

Sheki city is located in a natural environment of great visual impact formed by a crown of mountains that degrade into a wide valley characterized from a network of rivers and canals of which Deyirman is made from different water intakes near Kish river (historically from Kish river), whose waters flow into the Gurjana River. The historical urban fabric extends around the fortress where the north-south water network was formed by the deviation of the waters of the Deyirman and the East-West river derived from the waters of the Gurjana. There is urban structure still following the old hydro-agricultural irrigation channels pre-existing to urbanization, but they are basically used now for directing surface waters in the city.

This was based on a technique of building, a network of tunnels that from water inlets over the rivers, which spread out like a fan on the banks following the incline lines and allowing the creation of irrigated fields. The road network follows this design by collecting and disposing of meteoric waters through roads-torrents that serve as routes in the seasons arid and from water conveyors to the fields in moments of rain.

Tajlyg and Hajjhasan water line coming from mountains supply one mahalla (Ganjali mahalla) with drinkable water as well as for irrigation purposes. In past, all the town population used to have drinkable water from mountain and water from rivers and channels for irrigation purposes. The latter does not exist anymore due to both degradation of productive gardens in modern time due to lack of demand as well as lack of water reservoirs due to dense population. The gardens are mostly abandoned both for the end of the silk processing, and for the low remuneration of gardens produced in small productions.

All the homes have a close relationship with agricultural production activities. With the silkworm breeding and the processing cycle of the precious fabric. The house is an integral part of this productive organization. It has one of the sides arranged along the road and the other open with one veranda towards the fields. A plot of housing crops and

historically, canals is realized which confers overall the extraordinary aspect of a garden-city.

The morphology of the urban fabric and its growth patterns were a direct result of the topography of the site, political and religious reasons, economic development, and related activities. Surrounding landscape and climate with abundant rainfall are also important factors for the general perception of Sheki.

The buildings have a plot with a garden, which was reflected in the general character of the town planning. Gardens form a coherent and distinctive visual integrity of historic urban landscape.

The city is divided by quarters. Each district, known as mehelle, have its own square (kimja places), mosque and hammam. Even the mills, near the canal Deyirman, supply grain to each neighborhood. Along with residential construction, there are workshops and shops, as well as farms, cooperatives and schools within the city.

Outside the partition of districts, there is the fortress, that dominates the city from the highest point. Sheki was born as a feudal town, surrounded by walls, with a moat around them, with the gates, mosques, shops, with developed production of sericulture and handicrafts. Inside these walls, there are many structures that, still today, have productive, civil, religious and commercial functions.

New buildings have been built on the territory of core and buffer zone over the last years and they cause damage to the original historical appearance of the historical town since they do not correspond to traditional buildings on a scale and style or fundamentally wrong located. Some historic buildings are adapted and used without compliance with initial designation and the laws of monuments conservation. Many of the buildings are monuments of architecture, badly in need of restoration. This issue is especially critical in respect of houses which are privately owned, and therefore their owners have to restore or repair them. The owners of these houses either often use modern materials which do not correspond to the materials used in the historical building, or do not have funds for repair.

The tourism has its influences on the development. There are several new hotels in the town and they do not correspond to the style and scales of historical trends. The buildings on the main highway have been repaired in the same style without taking into

consideration of the peculiarities of each individual building. Although this is a positive example from the point of view of tourism, but monotony of renovation works causes concern.

Construction is chaotic on the right side of the Gurjana river. Piedmont landscape reveals all the shortcomings of the nonscheduled construction of the new and nontraditional additions to existing traditional houses. Built-up density violates the centuries, old structure of the house garden.

The surface water supply system has been also degraded. In cases where this is maintained, interventions were introduced with the introduction of hazardous materials such as absentsos.

The road system (except for the main one) and the squares have been intervention, thus changed historic views. There is no continuous maintenance, necessary to preserve these types of roads made of stone or earth. The deterioration has undergone further growth due to the increase in urban traffic.

Variety of minor streets face the main street and the view of these streets spoil the impression of the historical nature of the main street. Restoration of houses and façades of the main street should be implemented together with related streets and blind streets.

Some fences and buildings that face the streets have discontinuity of materials and shapes, do not allow a uniform reading and urban integrity.

There are 28 traditional neighborhoods (mahallas) within the borders of the Site. The site has still mahalla committees (9 mahallas) which has administratively conserved traditional management system. However, mahalla system has lost its historical function, its subdivision into craft, ethnic and morphological districts.

These issues are discussed in the Conservation Master Plan (CMP) developed for the Site by RMC.

ELEMENTS:

productive garden city; urban morphology and its reflection on topography, silkworm breeding and trading of cocoon, organization of the houses with gardens; traditional urban typological patterns (street types and traditional public spaces, mahallas - traditional neighborhoods, water systems)

¹ (Meeting of the Mediterranean European Focal Points for World Heritage 16 - 19 September 2013, Florence, Italy. ICOMOS)

² (Meeting of the Mediterranean European Focal Points for World Heritage 16 - 19 September 2013, Florence, Italy. ICOMOS)



ATTRIBUTE 2. Sheki is an exceptional testimony to the feudal system of the Caucasian khanates

Though in the late 18th century Sheki was built as a centre for independent Sheki Khanate, it was a feudal town. It had traditional structure of feudal towns – fortress/citadel, the palace of the governor, and the division into the several blocks – mehelles. The town was growing along the citadel. New buildings were built according to the centuries-old traditions which obtained its final structure responding the local natural conditions during the period of Safavid reign. The location of the town on the Great Silk Road, development of trade and sericulture, mainly silkworm breeding and manufacturing raw silk had also an impact on the character of buildings. The establishment of trade relations, the succession of rulers of the khanate did not only affect the political and economic situation of the state, but also had an impact on the entire architecture of the town. In the early 19th century the decoration was renewed on the most important buildings of the town under the influence of the Qajar architecture prevalent during this period in Iran. Following conquest of Azerbaijan by the Russian Empire in the second half of the 19th century Russian architecture had also its impact on the architectural structures of the rapidly developing economy of the town.

Sheki Khan Palace is an exceptional expression of the feudal system of the Caucasus Khanate with its specific location in the city, the walls of the citadel it is surrounded by, the functions of the rooms for state and administrative purposes, the content of the frescoes on the walls and ceilings, the expensive materials used for the construction of the palace: Khan's Palace is built in the late 18th century. The palace was built on the highest place within the citadel walls. The reason for this was to ensure the security of Khan's administration place and ensure view of the events in the city from the highly located palace building. There was a whole ensemble of buildings within the walls which were part of the Khan's Palace – the harem, baths, pantries, a mosque, barns and other service buildings. The two-story building of the palace has a breathtakingly ornate interior and exterior. In the centre of the first and second floors there were state rooms of the palace – the halls with deep niches at the back walls. Khan was sitting on the throne in the central broad niche called "shahneshin". Mammad Hasan Khan specially invited an experienced architect who decorated interiors with paintings which gave a special glamor to the palace. Inside, its six rooms are entirely covered with elaborate frescoes depicting flowers, fauna, battles and hunting scenes. Russian wood, French strained glass,

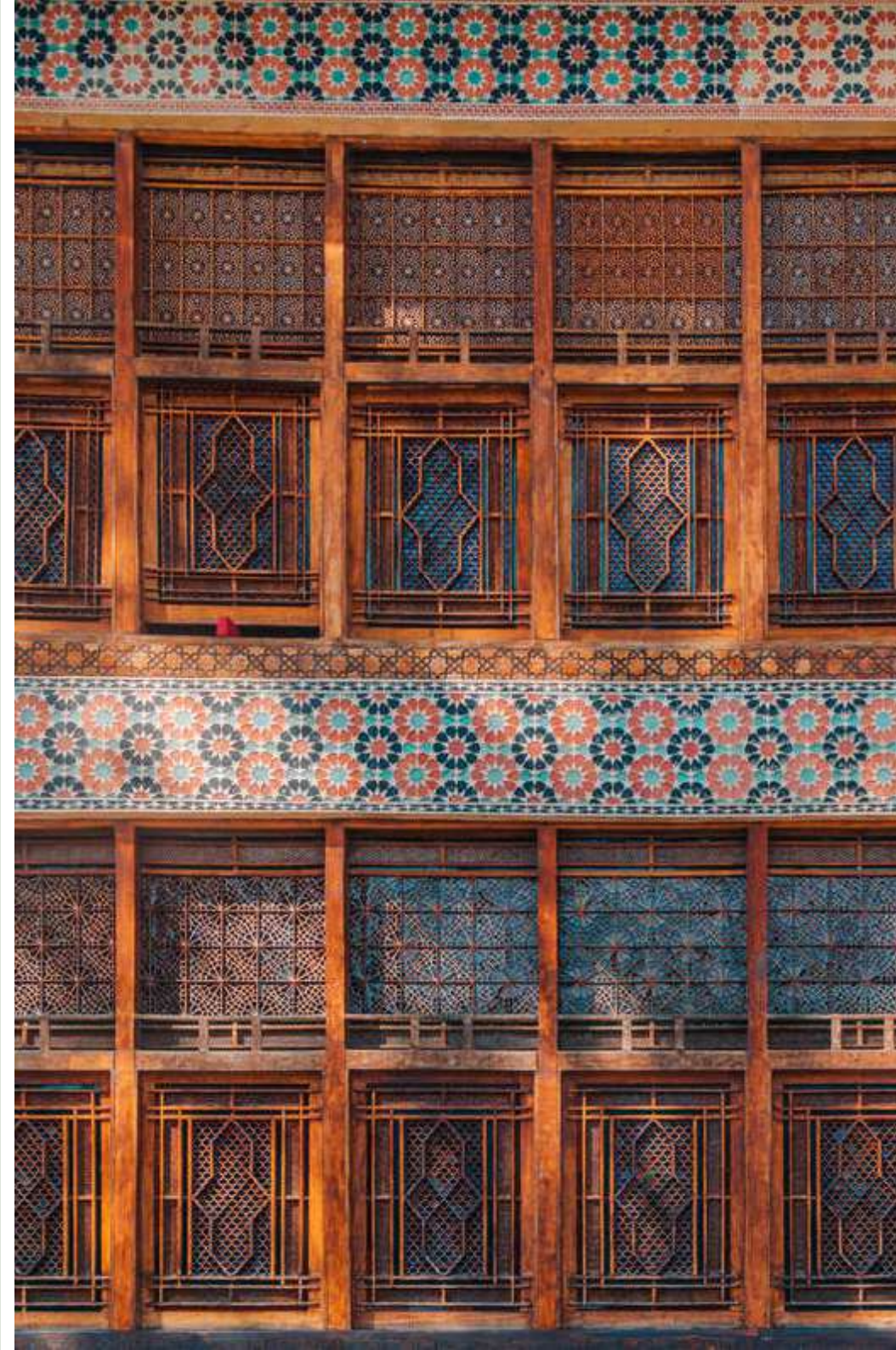
Ottoman ceramics and Iranian mirrorwork all went into the construction of this pleasingly picture-perfect and symmetrical masterpiece. The facade is covered in large part by a mosaic of multicolored glass set in a wooden lattice, called a shabaka, constructed without nails or glue. Examples of shabaka artistry can still be found throughout Sheki.

House of Shekikhanovs is a great example of Sheki architecture which also reflect the features of feudal system. This was a house where khan and his family lived. It is located outside the citadel walls. Rich decorative finishing of the hall turns it into a monument which is intermediate link between residential buildings and palaces of the region. The main artistic value of the house is finishing its inner surfaces. The rich paintings of traditional niches, stalactite belt supporting shelves, exquisitely decorated ceiling with intricate floral patterns, bukhara, use of shabaka and mirrors make it one of the most valuable examples of the residential architecture of khanate families.

Palaces and houses of the rich social stratum – merchants another element of reflection in architecture of khanate period. There are around 15 merchant houses within the borders of the Site built in XIX century during Russian Empire. The wealthy merchants who mostly were engaged in silk trade built their fabulous and scenic houses in the city's centre, around the city fortress. The houses distinguished from the ordinary houses with their rich exterior and interior design elements. Elements of architecture such as balconies (eyvans), doors and windows of these houses were representing art of decorations. High attic roofs, common for ordinary houses as well, reach the highest level of decoration and applied art in the houses of wealthy merchants. Picturesque bukhara, doors of niche places ornamented with beautiful shabaka installations, specific ornaments and frames on the walls, windows and doors of these houses made them peculiar and characteristic to the existing feudal Khanate system. These houses currently serve for various public purposes or remain abandoned with no specific use.

ELEMENTS:

Khan's Palace, House of Shekikhanovs, merchant houses, fortress walls, shabaka, bukhara, shahneshin, niches, stalactite, wall decorations, balconies, doors, windows.





ATTRIBUTE 3. Traditional houses of Sheki

A traditional Sheki house reflects an integration between production and architectural typology and is distinctive form of traditional buildings with typical high saddle roofs, deep verandas and gardens.

Local natural-climatic peculiarities, economic developments and construction materials had an influence on formation of traditional residential house in Sheki. All residential houses were adapted to agricultural production, especially sericulture and silk production. The traditional Sheki house was a small production system by itself. This function affects the architecture of Sheki's typological house, the ratio of the size of the yard to the size of the house, the structure of the garden in the yard, as well as the morphology and development structure of the city. The gardens partly comprised of mulberry trees combined with their residential houses constituted a production system based on the series of operations related to the feeding and breeding of the silkworm and its processing. The houses were built with high-pitched roofs for breeding the silkworms in the airy spacious attics. Thus, the production of silkworm cocoons began in private homes. Mulberry leaves, as the main food source for silkworms, were provided by planting mulberry trees in the backyards of private houses. The reason why mulberry trees in Sheki have become symbolic is the production of silk. With the mulberry leaves collected here, the silkworm was fed on the high attic roofs and cocoons were obtained in the result. The obtained cocoon was turned into silk in small home manufactures and taken to the trade street, where it was sold to merchants around the world.

Traditional houses have deep verandas facing the south or south-east. The wooden frame structure of a veranda gives the building an additional anti-seismic feature. The veranda was mainly used as a kitchen and dining area during the summer months. Vegetables are grown in the immediate section of the garden close to the water source to make the irrigation process easier and efficient. Fruit trees, primarily mulberry trees essential for sericulture, are planted in another section and they drink left over water from orchard irrigation. The edges of the garden are usually planted with taller trees that provide shade. Another section of the garden is used for keeping poultry and silkworms. And there is usually an open space place near the house for other household activities, such baking, dying, cooking, etc. Gardens are one of the most important components of urban fabric. Two-thirds of the city is still occupied by houses with gardens. Today, only some of them have retained their former economic function.

ELEMENTS:

high-pitch roofs, deep veranda, gardens, orchards, mulberry trees, silkworms, cocoons, irrigation.

ATTRIBUTE 4. Spectacular natural forest setting of Sheki

The forested setting of the property needs to be protected not just for its environmental value but also for its visual and cultural value, as a support for the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The historic centre is surrounded on three sides by mountain forests. The forests surrounding the city belong to the Kish forestry with a total area of 13,000 hectares. The part of this area that falls into the buffer zone is 67 hectares. The mountain-forest landscape surrounding the area extends far beyond the current reserve and its buffer zone. In other words, when we talk about the impact of forest areas on the historical part, we mean not only the forest area located in the buffer zone, but also the forests outside the buffer zone. All the forests visible from the reserve belong to one basin, and all the water collected from here flows into the Gurjana River.

The height of the forest setting varies between 1000m - 1900m and there is a clear vertical zoning. This means that the composition of trees and vegetation in forests varies. Eastern beech (*Fagus orientalis*), oak (*Quercus*), chestnut oak (*Quercus castaneifolia*) and hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) are the main trees in the area. In addition, valuable tree species such as maple (*Acer L.*), linden (*Tilia*), ash (*Fraxinus*) and ash (*Betula*), sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa Mill.*), wood hazelnut (*Corylus colurna*), common walnut (*Juglans*) are also in the area

Visual value of the forest setting: The forest setting plays an important role in the visual integrity of the Site. The town's location along the river, plenty of greenery in urban areas, red tile roofs, protruding silhouettes of minarets and other monuments are surrounded with mountain

forests and this create beautiful overall landscape of the Site located in the highlands.

Environmental value of the forest setting: The forests around the town plays an immediate role in natural regulation of many ecosystem processes such as water quality protection through natural filtration process, flood control, regulation of water flow, drought prevention, etc. Such regulations play an important role both in protecting the local population from natural hazards and in providing them with quality water. For example, natural filtration by plants and trees - especially oak trees which are abundant in the forests of Sheki and their soil significantly improves water quality in rivers and plays a major role in providing the population with quality water. Tajlig water source which is in the oak forest is an evident example of this case.

Forests and dense vegetation also prevent floods, reduce the risk of natural hazards in the area, significantly maintaining a larger percentage of rainfall in the basin. The calculation of the protective functions of forests and the impact of these forests on flood risk reduction are presented in the CMP and Emergency Plan.

Also, forests around the city play an exceptional role in regulating air temperature. These forests have a positive effect on lowering the temperature in the city during the hot summer months and mitigating the harsh heat. Consequently, not only the historical and cultural value of Sheki, but also its forest setting contributes to the development of tourism in the area.

Cultural value of the forest setting: The forest setting is closely reflected in community's socio-economical traditions of the local community as

well. Many of the plants found in the surrounding forests have been used for various purposes such as crafting, local cuisine and household as well as for folk and veterinary medicine.

Eastern beech (*Fagus orientalis*) is widespread in the forests of Sheki and widely used for different purposes. Because of its strong and firm wood, it is widely used in the manufacture of furniture. The famous Sheki "shabaka" is mainly made of beech and chestnut trees. In general, beech is widely used in Sheki for handicrafts and wood carving purposes. Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) is also one of the widespread trees in Sheki forests. It is also widely used in furniture and wood crafting. Its leaves are used in local cuisine for the famous "pip-dolma". Another example is "Saragan" bush with its great importance in local folk applied art. It is widely used in dyeing process of carpets and kalaghayi (local silk scarf).

Overall, the forests are considered to be an important recreation area for locals and visitors, as well as a source of water and nutrients, raw materials for many industries. In general, forest ecosystems have important functions that support tourism and recreation. Cool air, plenty of oxygen, opportunities for walking, access to clean water are important factors that can support the development of various types of tourism. These forests are also a source of health for the local population and play an exceptional role in climate regulation.

ELEMENTS:

Forests, trees and vegetation, springs, eastern beech, oak, hornbeam, saragan bush, aesthetic value and panoramic landscape view.





ATTRIBUTE 5. Intact visual integrity

Together with its setting, the Site forms a coherent ensemble that has retained its visual integrity intact. The boundaries of the property contain all the attributes of the WHS such as productive garden houses and the monuments like the fortress, the Khan Palace, and the caravanserais, that together reflect the residential and commercial role of the city. Most private residences and some public buildings still reflect their former traditional use and functions. The water system, repartition in neighborhoods (mehelle) and many traditional activities are mainly still intact and efficient.

The Site developed organically following the major flood that destroyed the older part of the town along the river Kish. The new town developed in a mountain valley in the surroundings of the fortified Khan's Palace Compound and was formed in the neighborhood (mehelle) structure that is still existing. A single scale of buildings and simultaneous construction of the town, limitation of the planning structure in its historical borders, abundance of greenery in the urban areas and surrounding mountain forest create an authenticity of the town with its surroundings.

The new urban form continued earlier building traditions responding to the local climatic conditions, and the requirements of the traditional economy and crafts activities. Construction elements such as balconies, doors, arches, and fences that remain to be integral part of the traditional house architecture. The construction was based on existing regional traditions, using mud brick and stone, and wide saddle roofs with traditional clay tiles. Later, fired brick was used in order to avoid damage from eventual floods or torrential rains. The land use developed spontaneously with large gardens allowing to grow mulberry trees as part of the silk production, the principal economy of Sheki until the early 20th century. As part of the evolution of the urban fabric, many of the building lots were gradually subdivided into smaller parcels according to family needs. The town has retained testimony to its historical functions and gradual development

from the 18th century. This includes not only the residential houses with the traditional tiled roofs, large verandas and fire places (bukharas), but also the various social and economic services, such as ancient churches, mosques, caravanserais, hammams, and silk factories along the curved streets and squares with cobble stone paving. Traditional crafting activities were restored and developed and still represent Sheki's one of the main commercial activities. While there does exist a small number of late 20th century buildings, the traditional fabric continues to represent an outstanding historic urban landscape within the intact mountain valley, which has well retained its visual integrity.

The historic building stock has largely retained its historic authenticity. The street pattern has developed organically along the hillsides, and new houses have been built by subdividing the lots according to family needs. Most of the buildings along the main street have been restored, following internationally adopted guidelines. The Khan's Palace with the richly decorated interiors have been subject to restoration in consultation with foreign experts. One of the caravanserais has continued its traditional hotel function, while the other has recently been restored and partly rebuilt in view of a new function, including conference facilities. One of the silk factories is still partly functioning, while others have remained vacant expecting to be rehabilitated in appropriate manner.

ELEMENTS:

forest landscape, neighborhoods, monuments, garden houses, earlier building traditions, traditional roofs, balcony, fence, gates, large verandas, social services, mosques, hammams, churches, caravanserais, water system, neighborhoods, fired bricks, clay, stones, crafting, silk factory

2.4 Intangible Cultural Heritage of Sheki:

The intangible heritage of Sheki is one of the major cultural assets of the whole country. Located on Great Silk Road, Sheki was always one of the important cultural and trading hubs at the whole Caucasus region. Geo-climatic location with beautiful natural surroundings, plenty of different type of raw materials- silk, clay, timber, river stone etc. influenced development of wide range of crafts. Different crafting techniques and knowledge were preserved and transmitted to nowadays through ages. The historical part of Sheki is a real example of the living old tradition of craftsmanship. Sheki artisans work on 34 fields of ancient hand-craftmanship, who work in different part of the city in their own workshops and rented spaces. With pottery, shabaka, copper casting and forging, art of weapon making, art of carpet-weaving and kelaghayi making (traditional woman scarf made from silk), jeweler's craft, wood carving, art of blacksmith, mosaics, leather making, art of artistic and piled embroidery, Sheki is one of the centres of decorative and applied art in Azerbaijan.

2.4.1 OUV-related handicrafts

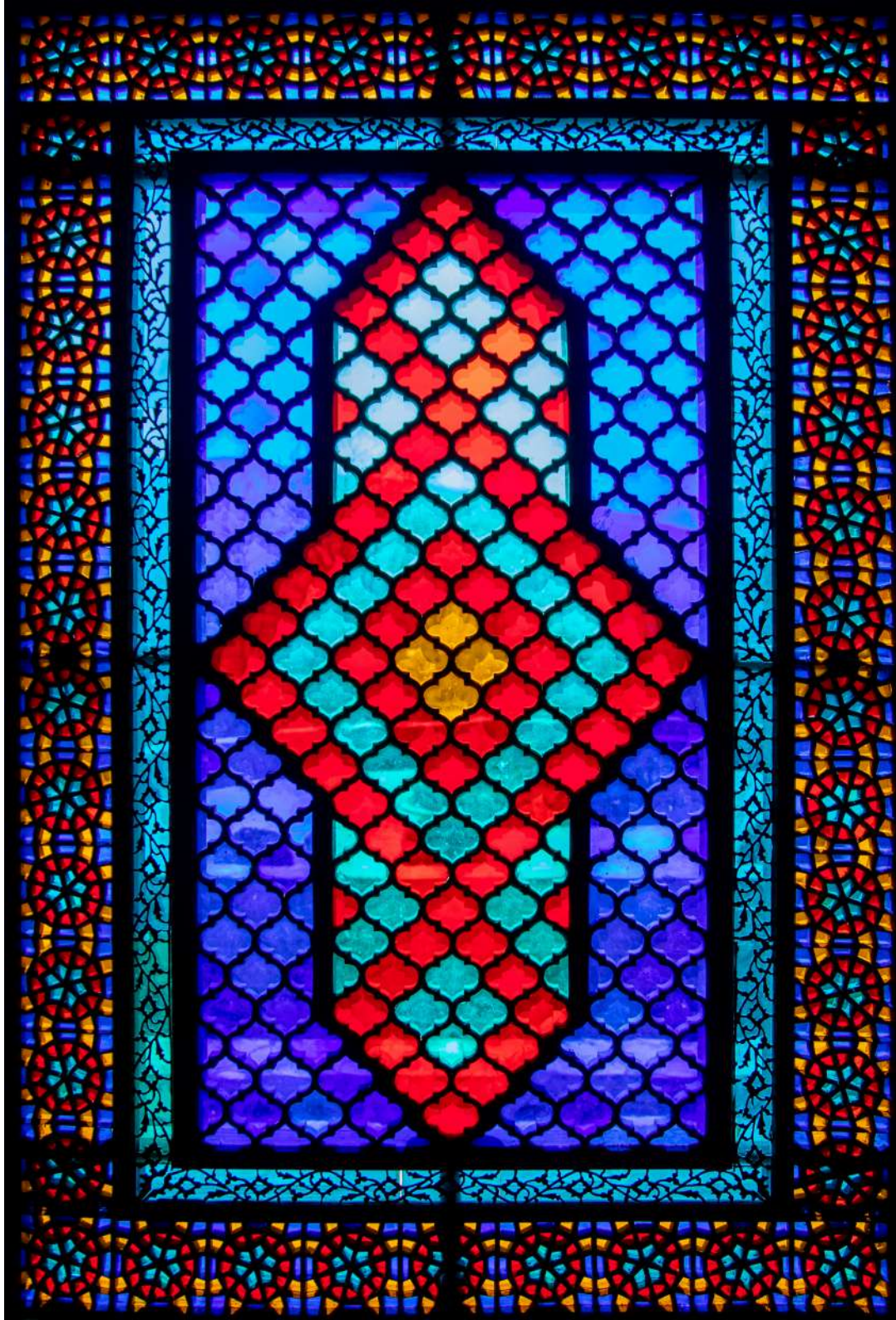
Shabaka: One of the most significant crafts represented in Sheki. This type of decorative-applied art, shabaka, which means “net” or “lattice”, is the transfer of small pieces of colored glass to stacked wooden parts with protrusions and indentations. Initially, shabaka were made of stone in Azerbaijan, which were found during archeological excavations dating back to the IX-XI centuries. In later times, this art was applied on local wood such as plane, oak, walnut, beech and colored glass coming from Venice. Shabaka art is used to decorate doors, windows, stair railings, as well as items such as curtains, lamps, chests, cupboards. The most impressive buildings of Sheki – Sheki Khans Palace and Shekikhanov's House are bright example of shabaka use. This craftship skill continues to develop in Sheki by 5-6 artisans despite of declining demand like many other traditional types of craft.

Embroidery: Sheki is the centre of tambour embroidery known as takalduz in which exquisite floral ornaments are added to dark velvet, cloth or leather. Sheki as one the main centres of silk production in whole Caucasus were producing naturally dyed silk fabrics and threads which were the key elements for decoration.

Pottery: Pottery tradition in Sheki is one of the heritage elements directly supporting the OUV criteria of the Site. The culture of making porcelain has long history of special features regarding the use of material and peculiar techniques which evolved since ancient times. Traditional tiled roofs and clay pipes of hydraulic water systems – famous “Tacliq suyu” and “Hacı Həsən suyu” spring waters running from the surrounding mountains which are equipped with these pipes and also different household items are the examples of various use of the clay in this region.

Ceramics are mainly used as roof tiles in Sheki thanks to the sericulture. It was reflected in architecture and household life of Sheki people who constructed their houses with steep attic roof covered by ceramic tiles and used the attic space to breed cocoon as the ceramic tiles were the best choice for the roof enabling cocoon to breath. This tradition of architecture caused to evolve ceramic production in Sheki over centuries.

There is “Duluslar” (Potters) neighborhood in



Sheki that were famous for its artisans. Especially from 19th century, roof tile began to be used more widely in the life of the population. In 1872, a man named Shahbazov built the first tile factory in Nukha (old Sheki). After that, the production of tile factories began to increase and for the first quarter of the 19th century, there were already 12 tile factories in Sheki.

According to the masters, there were period when locals could make around 50 different types of clay dishes in general although some have already disappeared. The proof of these words is the numerous pottery items that were found during archaeological excavations and which are exhibited different local museums at the moment.

Today's pottery traditions in Sheki mostly cover production of household items such as dishes, pitchers, flowerpots, kerosene lamps, decorative items. "Piti" pottery cup which is one of the attributes of Sheki's unique cuisine is still produced by the pottery craftsmen and is a living tradition.

As a central executive state organization, the STA has a holistic approach to promote ceramic culture in Azerbaijan as well as use this heritage resource in sustainable tourism.

Kelaghayi making: Kelaghayi is a square-shaped women headscarf made of thread silk. Silk production is known in Azerbaijan since ancient times. High quality kelaghayis were made in Karabakh, Tabriz, Ganja, Sheki, Shamakhi, Nakhchivan, and Basgal Settlement of Ismayilli Region. At present, the main location of the kelaghayi-making craft is Sheki. The Azerbaijan kelaghayi has been included in the UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Additional handicrafting: In addition to main attributed handicrafts, there are about 20 fields of ancient craftsmanship in Sheki. Currently, there more than 100 artisans in the mentioned crafts in Sheki, who prepare handicraft products, keep the craftsmanship alive as historic values and traditions, develop them, and protect the multi-year achievements of Sheki in this field. In no other part of Azerbaijan, there's such high concentration of various craftsmanship fields in a single territory. Also, many interesting and unique material and cultural samples artefacts, earthenware, kitchen and household items, jewellery made of non-ferrous metals such as gold, silver, bronze, brass, copper and of iron, war supplies and farm tools and other interesting samples have been found as result of



archaeological excavations carried out by both local and foreign experts in Sheki Region and surrounding areas for many years.

Below is the list of the traditional craftsmanship in Sheki that partially existing:

Jeweller's craft; art of tinker; art of weaving; tailoring; art of batik; trunk box art; stone carving; the art of calligraphy; art of ornaments; art of carpet weaving; hat-making art; tinman art; profession of blacksmith; leather-making art; shoe-making art; art of metal casting; the art of making musical instruments; art of iron forging; art of joinery; saddler art; art of dying; art of painting; mosaic art; art of making dolls; art of piled embroidery; art of artistic embroidery; art of blacksmith; art of weapons making.

2.4.2 Chovqan

The term “chovqan” or “chokan” has been used as “agajjiğ” in Azerbaijan. The name of the Chovqan Game was called with the name of the tool used in the game. It is a tool made of wood and called chovqan. Players play this game on horseback with the help of this tool. Chovqan games in teams emerged in the mid of the first millennium AD, and has existed over centuries in Azerbaijan, Central Asia, Iran, Turkey, Iraq and other neighbouring countries. Sources indicate the first international Chovqan competition among the riders of the Middle East countries held in the XII century, in Baghdad, which was one of the Islamic world's cultural centres. The fact that Chovqan competitions have been popular in Azerbaijan since ancient times is confirmed by many facts. It was popular in Karabakh region as well due to the region's world-famous Karabakh horse breed. The painting about Chovqan game on the glazed pot, which was found during archaeological excavations in Orangala is the visual evidence that this game was popular in Beylagan City in the ninth century. One of the facts proving Chovqan as an ancient Azerbaijani game is description of the game in Azerbaijan's miniatures over and over again and provided information about its playing rules in the written sources. Chovqan is included in the UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

2.4.3 Cuisine

Another fundamental element in the intangible culture of Sheki is the existence of a unique and rich local gastronomy that attracts tourists a lot. Sheki food, sweets and candies are special and famous for local and international tourists. Piti is traditional local food preparing in type of earthenware specially producing by craftsmen for this food in Sheki. Famous Sheki halva is one of the most popular sweets in the country.

2.4.4 Natural resources

Sheki's natural environment and natural resources makes it very special. The surrounding territory have a rich plant and animal life. The city is surrounded by mountains and forests, natural springs as well as caves. Plane trees growing inside the reserve are one of the most important natural and cultural heritages of Sheki. Two plane trees are in the courtyard of the Khan's Palace and they are believed to be planted around 1530. One of them is 42 metres high and has a trunk with a diameter of 13.5 metres; the other tree is 34 metres high and has a trunk of a diameter of 11.5 metres. These trees are much older than the Palace and play a vital role in the cultural landscape for protecting the Palace from wind, rain, and heat.





Management of the site

This chapter describes the ownership status, management and governance structure and control mechanisms of the Site. It lists all the responsible government and independent institutions involved in this structure and their role in the management of the Site.

In general, the management of the Site is complex due to various bodies and structures involved in respective area of responsibility. The chapter provides clear description of those areas and level of involvement in more comprehensive way.

The chapter also provides information about how the cultural heritage is legally protected and supported in national legislation through various laws and normative legal acts of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

3.1 Ownership:

The Historic Centre of Sheki with the Khan's Palace belong to a diverse group of public and private owners. Citadel walls, schools, kindergartens, factories and public offices within the property are registered as state property. The streets, squares, parks, graveyards, river outlets and 6 plots of lands with residential houses are property of the municipality. 5 public buildings are owned by private associations while 4 mosques and 1 madrasa belong to the religious property authority. About 75% of the area of the Yukhari Bash Reserve are privately owned, which includes a factory, newly built hotels, stores and shops as well as residential houses.

Overall, there are three forms of ownership in the Site and its buffer zone:

Private property	75% of the 2,773 buildings in the Yukhari Bash reserve (private houses, shops, hotels, etc.) are privately owned. Land available for construction and other economic activities is also in private hands.
State property	Lands and buildings within the city walls, dozens of administrative buildings, as well as public schools and hospitals are state-owned.
Municipal property	The municipality owns large plots of land (roads, streets, squares, cemeteries, riverbeds, etc.).

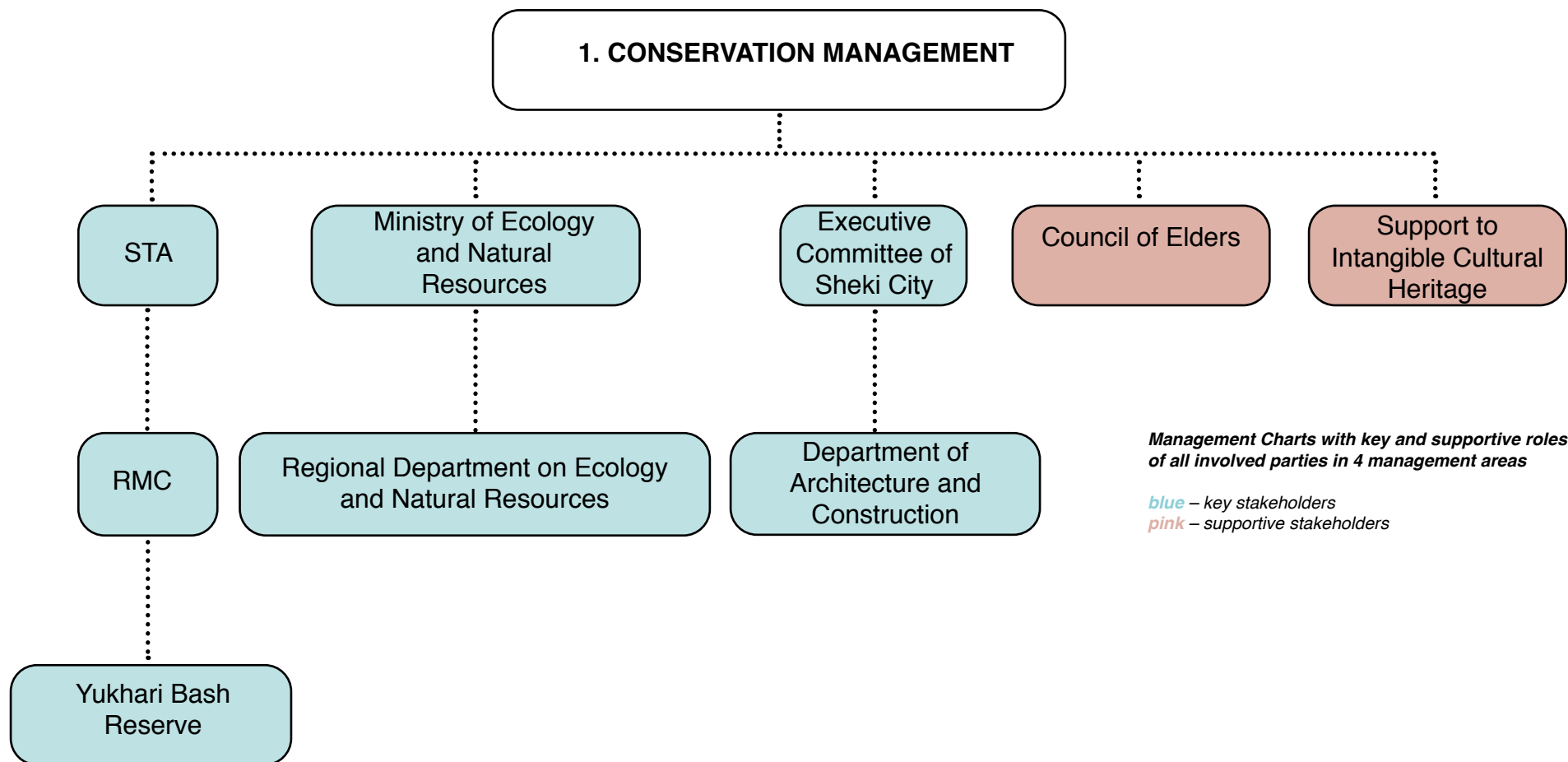
There are 25 monuments with state registration within the Site and its buffer zone. The ownership of and protection responsibility of most of those state-registered monuments belong to the Yukhari Bash Reserve Administration while few remain under the control of Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan (MoC). And some of the monuments are privately controlled and owned.

Ownership status and value level of registered monuments within the Site and its buffer zone

#	state inventory number	name of the monument	location	value	ownership
1	20	Khan's Palace	within the Site	universal	Yukhari Bash Reserve
2	327	Round Temple	within the Site	national	Yukhari Bash Reserve
3	329	Khan's Mosque and Cemetery	within the Site	national	Yukhari Bash Reserve
4	330	Narin fortress	within the Site	national	Yukhari Bash Reserve
5	331	Shekikhanovs' House	within the Site	national	Yukhari Bash Reserve
6	332	Yukhari Caravanseray	within the Site	national	Yukhari Bash Reserve
7	333	Ashaghi Caravanseray	within the Site	national	Yukhari Bash Reserve
8	334	Agvanlar Hamam	within the Site	national	Yukhari Bash Reserve
9	483	Khan's Garden	within the Site	national	Yukhari Bash Reserve
10	4979	Omar Afandi mosque	within the Site	local	Yukhari Bash Reserve
11	4980	Mosque minaret (short minaret)	within the Site	local	Yukhari Bash Reserve
12	4996	Taghli bridges (3)	within the Site	local	Yukhari Bash Reserve

13	5688	House museum of Akhundov's	within the Site	local	Ministry of Culture
14	1471	Old water pipe	Buffer zone	national	Yukhari Bash Reserve
15	4967	Branch of factory #1	Buffer zone	local	Private
16	4969	Farhadbayov's House	Buffer zone	local	Private
17	4970	Afandiyev's House	Buffer zone	local	Private
18	4981	Dara Hamam	within the Site	local	Yukhari Bash Reserve
19	5689	Afandiyev's House Museum	within the Site	national	Ministry of Culture
20	328	Minaret of Gilehli Mosque	Buffer zone	local	Yukhari Bash Reserve
21	4975	Underground Hamam	Buffer zone	local	Private
22	4968	Alicanbayov's House	Buffer zone	local	Private
23	4982	Minaret	Buffer zone	local	Yukhari Bash Reserve
24	5690	Memorial to victim of WW2	Buffer zone	local	Yukhari Bash Reserve
25	4978	Juma Mosque	Buffer zone	local	Yukhari Bash Reserve

In addition to the monuments registered by the government, there is an additional list of monuments prepared by RMC that is planned to be registered and protected at a state level. Among those additional monuments, there are 15 merchant houses attributed to the OUV criteria. Those houses are in private ownership and currently remain without state registration.

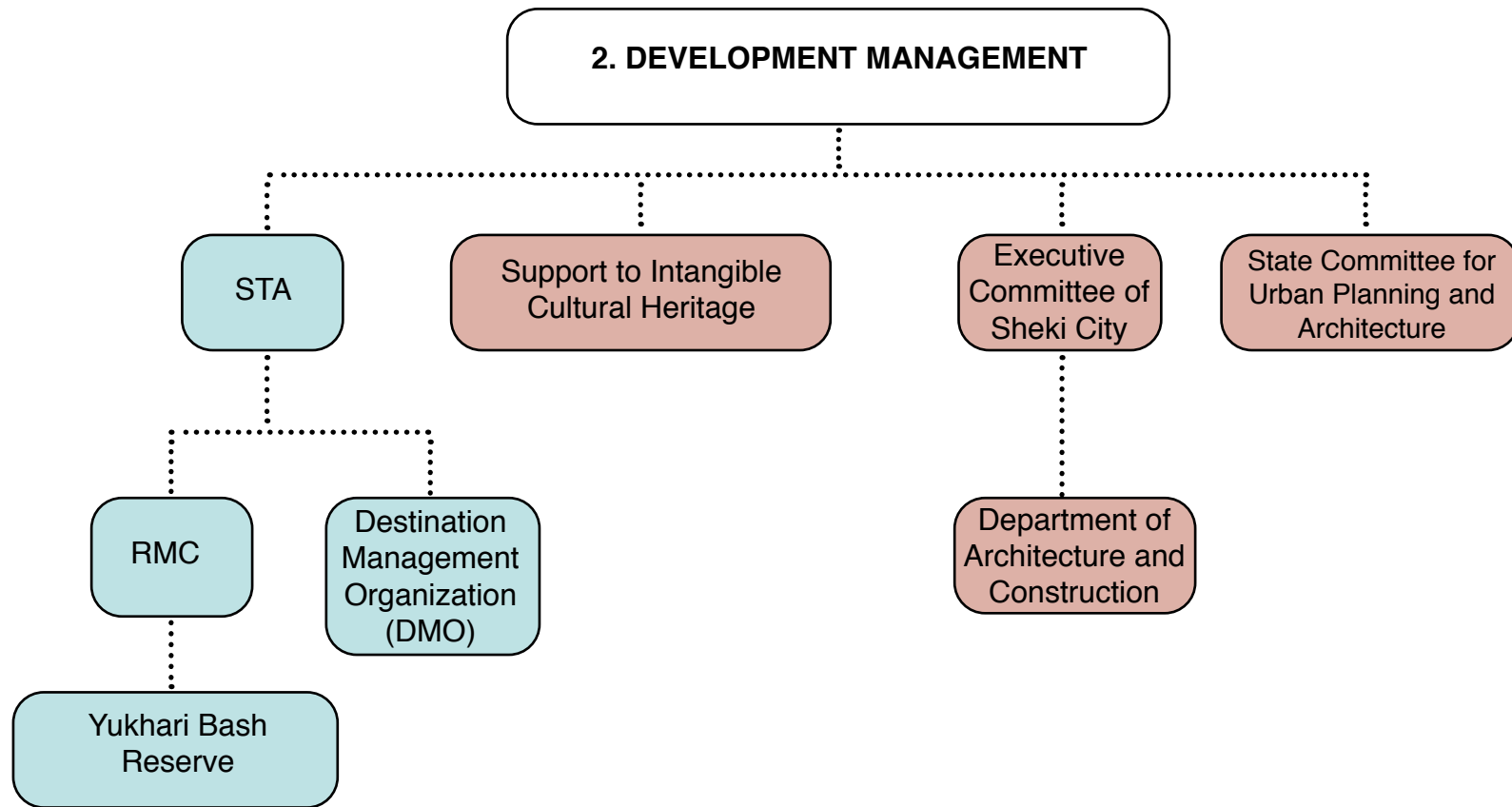


3.2 Management Areas:

To achieve effective management, it is essential to identify all areas of concern and have clear description of duties and responsibilities for each involved stakeholder in those areas. Considering all factors involved and the local context, there are 4 areas of management identified for the Site.

It is important to understand the heritage values and significance of the Site in detail and figure out how those values can be best conserved given the particular context of the place. The main task is to come up with the conservation policies to be applied to protect the significance in the face of change and identify the strategy by which the policies will be put into action. For this purpose, CMP will be used as a guiding document during the conservation process. A CMP is an important document to help all the stakeholders understand the heritage values of the Site in detail, and how those values can be best conserved given the context of the place. STA/RMC are responsible to:

- Create conservation policies
 - Identify the strategy for putting the policies into action
 - Control and monitor the implementation process
 - Ensure the further maintenance and development
- Two more government institution, the *Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources* and the local Executive Committee of Sheki city (ExCom of Sheki) will also play a key role in above mentioned processes by providing institutional, technical, infrastructural and expert support in respective areas of responsibility.

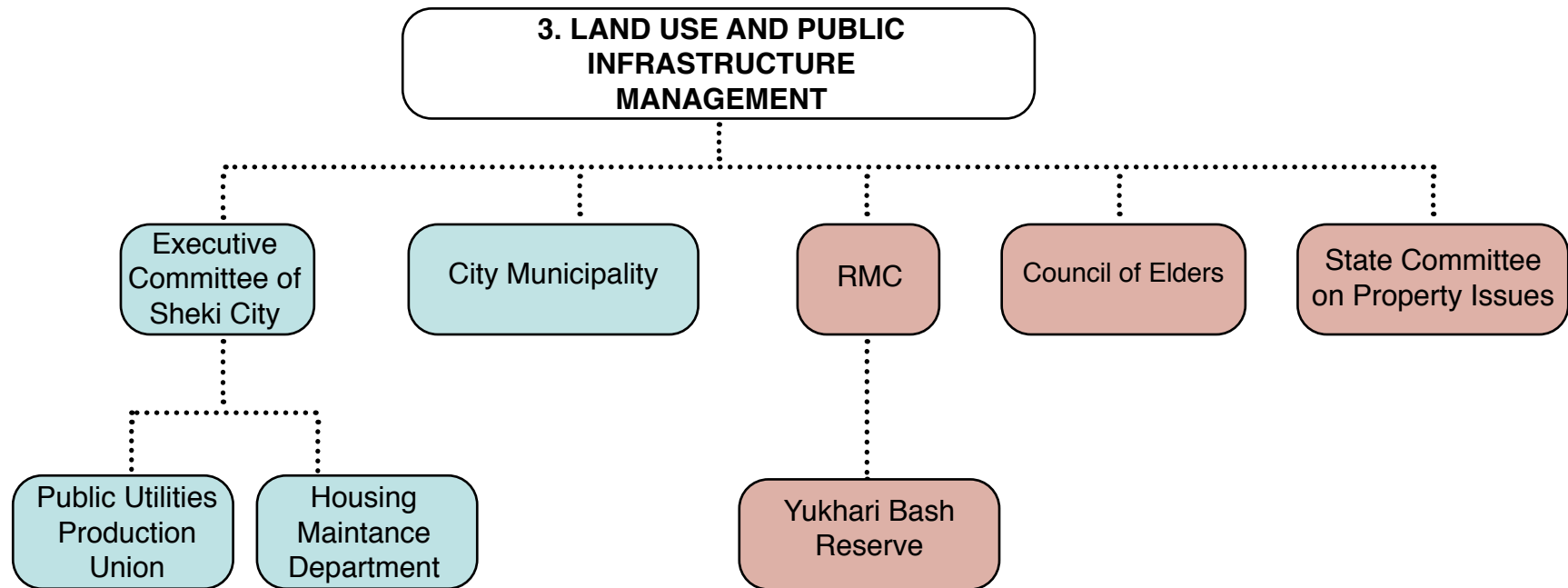


The socio-cultural and economical sustainability of the Site is envisioned by the introduction of new development projects and initiatives. These projects are expected to abide by the conservation policies of the heritage, respect the existing cultural and environmental context, at the same time add value to the economic growth of the Site community. Investment in the city and the introduction of new innovative projects, should add more value

to the city (economic, touristic etc) and at the same time respect the existing social, cultural and environmental context. Therefore, a strategy to find a good balance between heritage conservation, economic growth and social inclusion should be developed. RMC has prepared Urban Regeneration Plan (URP) for the Site which will be playing a primary role in coordination and implementation of the proposed development projects.

Management Charts with key and supportive roles of all involved parties in 4 management areas

blue – key stakeholders
pink – supportive stakeholders



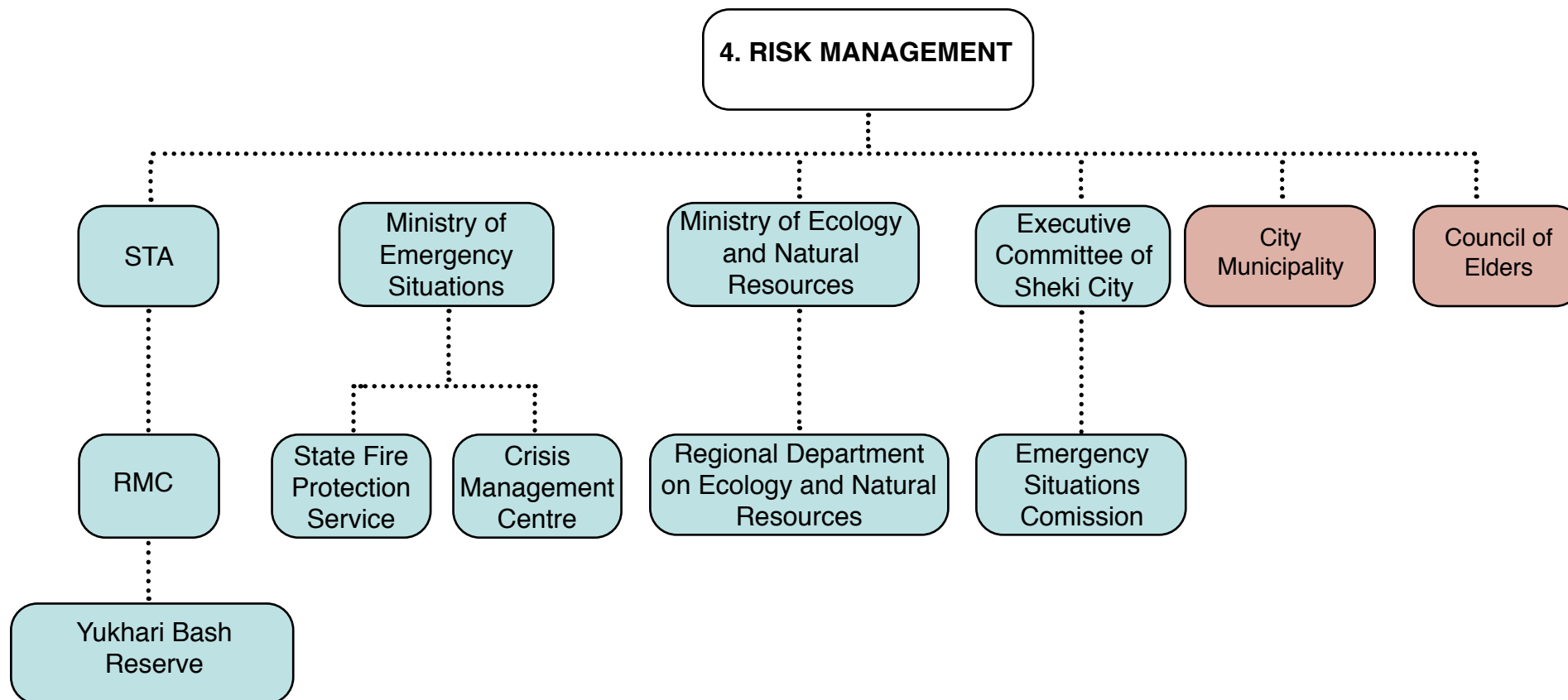
Land-use and Public Infrastructure management covers all issues related to critical public infrastructure for the population and land property within the Site area and its buffer zone. The Site is located in 120ha area with 146ha of buffer zone and the population size is around 7300 people in the Site only. To sustain human life in the community and meet their critical needs, there are government bodies which are responsible for management of certain areas in public infrastructure such as, construction of new buildings/houses, transportation and roads, energy, water,

public areas and lands, solid waste, etc. The ExCom of Sheki and the City Municipality are the relevant government bodies to play a key role in the management of all aspects of public infrastructure and land property in the Site area. STA/RMC plays a supportive role by providing consultations when the conservation of heritage is concerned. For instance, the collaboration between the local government bodies and STA/RMC is mostly needed for controlling the construction of new houses/buildings process.

Management Charts with key and supportive roles of all involved parties in 4 management areas

blue – key stakeholders

pink – supportive stakeholders



In order to identify, analyze and prioritize the main issues in Risk management, RMC has developed an Emergency Plan for the Site. The Emergency Plan addresses the main issues in protection of historical monuments from natural and man-made disasters and provides

solutions in disaster reduction and preparedness activities. There is a detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of all key and supporting stakeholders of Risk Management in the Emergency Plan.

Management Charts with key and supportive roles of all involved parties in 4 management areas

blue – key stakeholders
pink – supportive stakeholders

3.3 Responsible Institutions and stakeholders in management:

Stakeholders have different responsibilities and powers, as well as influence on topics and choices that will impact the cultural heritage itself or the heritage site covered by the Management Plan. There are two groups of stakeholders:

- **Key stakeholders:** They are interested in preserving and increasing the value of the cultural heritage site and have a high impact/authority/commitment on the territory of the reserve; they are directly involved in the decision-making process of the mentioned management areas.
- **Supportive stakeholders:** They are an interested party in the mentioned management area, but with limited involvement in decision making process. They support key stakeholders with consultations, active participation in the process, contribute to the final outcome of the issue, but with no specific and direct obligations.

State Tourism Agency (STA):

The Historic Centre of Sheki with Khan's Palace is located within the borders of **Yukhari Bash Reserve**. The reserve was under the control of the **Minister of Culture and Tourism** before the **STA** was established in 2018. Yukhari Bash Reserve was then passed to the subordination of STA by the Presidential Order.

STA is a body established by the order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on some measures to improve public administration in the field of culture and tourism. The Agency was established on April 20, 2018 as a result of restructuring the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the STA of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

STA is a central executive body implementing state policy and regulation in the field of tourism, as well as in the field of protection of historical and cultural monuments located in the territories of state reserves under its subordination.

Yukhari Bash Reserve is one of those subordinate entities of STA according to the decision no. 255 of the Cabinet of Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan. According to Articles 3.0.31-3.0.46 and 4.0.15 of the Regulations of STA of the Republic of Azerbaijan, it has the following rights and duties in relation to its subordinated reserves:

- to exercise state control and state monitoring delegated to its powers by law in the territories of reserves
- to organise efficient use of cultural, natural and historical heritage properties which are in the territories of the reserves and are tourist attractions;
- to prevent the violation of the protection regime in the territories of the reserves;
- to enter into protection agreements (contracts) with the owners and/or users of the listed historical and cultural monuments in the territories of the reserves on the protection of the cultural assets;
- to control the limited use of the listed immovable cultural properties;
- to give consent for the beautification works in the territories of the reserves, and the reconstruction works in the protection zones of the monuments;
- to develop tourism, to identify tourist routes, to develop, maintain and preserve tourism infrastructure in the territories of the reserves;

More detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of STA is provided in Annex.

Reserve Management Center (RMC)

RMC was established as a public legal entity under STA by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on December 20, 2018 in order to ensure the efficient management of the reserves subordinated to STA. RMC is a public legal entity engaged in scientific, historical and cultural study, promotion, purposeful use, preservation and development of historical and cultural heritage assets and monuments and increasing the tourism potential in the territories of the reserves subordinated to STA, including Yukhari Bash Reserve.

The areas of activities of RMC as:

- preserving historical and cultural monuments, and cultural heritage in the reserves;
- researching the monuments from historical and cultural points of view while ensuring their integrity and maintaining the protection regime for the territories of the reserves;
- ensuring tourism-friendly uses of the reserves;
- ensuring financial viability of the reserves, and seeking the diversification of funding sources;
- ensuring sustainable management of the reserves;
- participating in the implementation of the unified state policy concerning the reserves;
- organising planning, control and coordination of the activities concerning the reserves;
- organising their purposeful functioning of the monuments in the territories of the reserves;
- ensuring the preservation and integrity of the monuments in the territories of the reserves;
- organising development and management of tourism infrastructure in the territories of the reserves.

RMC is a main institution managing the Site from all aspects of the management including planning and controlling, administration and implementation under the subordination of STA. It has 44 staff members divided in Board Management with members and 7 departments: Department of Cultural Heritage and Research, Department of Projects and Investments, Department of Architecture and Design, Department of Construction, Tourism and Business Development Department, Administrative Department Financial and Procurement. Organizational Chart of RMC is provided in the Annex.

"Yukhari Bash" State Historical Architectural Reserve

The Yukhari Bash Reserve was established by the Decree No. 594 dated November 24, 1967 of the Council of Ministers of the former Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) and today it operates under STA and is managed by RMC. The reserve is guided in accordance with its latest Regulations adopted on December 12, 2019.

The Reserve is an organisation funded from the state budget, has the seal with its own name and the name of the STA of the Republic of Azerbaijan, respective rubber stamps and letterhead papers at the expense of the state treasury. The Reserve submits its semi-annual activity reports to RMC.

The Reserve is headed by the Director appointed and dismissed by the Chairman of STA upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Board of RMC. Currently, the reserve management has 39 staff members at the expense of special funds: one *director* and one *deputy director*, one *architect*, one *chief accountant*, two *researchers*, one *chief guardian of the collection*, one *artist-restorer*, eight *monument guardians*, three *guides*; and remaining employees are *caretakers*, *ticket sellers*, *secretaries*, *drivers*,

gardeners, *workers* and *security guards*. The Reserve is a main local executive office supporting STA and RMC in management, conservation and development activities. The detailed duties and responsibilities of the Reserve is provided in the Annex.

Executive Committee of Sheki City

Yukhari Bash Reserve is located in Sheki region which is a separate administrative territorial unit of the Republic of Azerbaijan and governed by the Executive Committee which is a leading executive body of the local government.

The activities of ExCom of Sheki concerning the management of cultural heritage assets are regulated by the Regulations on Local Executive Authorities approved by the Decree No. 648 dated June 6, 2012 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Paragraph 3.11.5-1 of the Regulations stipulates that in case any signs of cultural heritage are discovered during construction, the heads of local executive authorities have to inform respectively the State Service for Protection, Development and Restoration of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, or the STA of the Republic of Azerbaijan, or Icheri Sheher State Historic-Architectural Reserve in order to ensure the implementation of the measures envisaged by the Law on Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments. This is one of the main duties of the heads of local executive authorities in the areas of construction, architecture and urban planning. The activities and responsibilities of the departments and offices within the structure of the executive power in relation to the reserve are the followings:

Department of Architecture and Construction is responsible for repair works in the private houses in the reserve. Projects of repairs in private

houses are to be approved by the Chief Architect. The Department also controls the implementation of the works. Repair and beautification projects concerning the streets and public spaces are also developed and/or coordinated with the Department. Permits for construction work in the reserve are issued by the Department after the approval of the STA.

Department of Territorial Management plays a coordinating role between population and government agencies through the neighbourhood committees. Shaki City is divided into 30 neighbourhoods, and the reserve territory is overlapping with approximately the nine of these neighbourhoods. Every neighbourhood has its own public neighbourhood committee. The committee system was established in 1950s. The committee Chairs are chosen directly by local residents. The neighbourhood committees work closely with the executive authority and the municipality. The committees consider neighbourhood news and novelties, disputed issues, and problems of local residents. They also issue non-binding opinions on every new construction, and references (certificates) to local residents.

Housing Maintenance Department is responsible for maintenance of non-private (public) buildings in the reserve, collection of maintenance fees, issuance of certificates of registration to local residents and their registration at the place of residence.

Public Utilities Production Union is responsible for cleaning, garbage collection and beautification works in the reserve territory together with the reserve management. Installation and maintenance of communication and utility lines are undertaken by specialised entities separate from the Executive Authority:

- power grid by Azerishyg;
- water supply and sewerage by Azersu;
- gas lines by Azerigaz;

Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources

The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR) of Azerbaijan Republic is a governmental agency in charge of regulation of the activities in the country relating to ecology, environmental protection and use of natural resources of Azerbaijan. As seen from the Risk Management chart, MENR is one of the main stakeholders and responsible bodies in this area of Site management. The ministry owns 43.7 ha area out of the total forest lands within the Site and its buffer zone. MENR is responsible for the protection, conservation, control of natural settings and some of the attributes of the Site. Protected areas include most of all forested areas. The organization of fire protection works in the forests located in the territory of Sheki is carried out under the direct control of this ministry together with the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

The protection of the forest, which forms the surrounding landscape of the reserve, is undertaken by the Regional Department No. 7 of the MENR of the Republic of Azerbaijan. More detailed description of the role of the MENR and its local department is provided in the Emergency Plan.

State Committee for Urban Planning and Architecture

The State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture (the Committee) is a central executive body that conducts a unified government policy and regulation in urban planning, zoning, architecture, and related design. The Committee has been involved in a unified urban development policy-making and continues to implement the policy, develop the

zoning planning documents, performs regulatory activities in the relevant area. It also ensures the preservation of sensitive urban planning and national architectural traditions (heritage), and effective use of their territories together with the relevant local authorities taking into account the natural and local context of cities and their historically established communities. The Committee's activities include maintaining the urban-planning cadastre in accordance with the national legislation, ensuring the improvement of architectural planning solutions for buildings, installations, and facilities, overseeing their development in accordance with urban planning and construction standards and other areas defined in the legislation. In particular, the development of a regulatory framework plays a vital role in the Committee's activities.

RMC plans to coordinate urban regeneration projects within the borders of the Site with the Committee.

Sheki City Municipality

There are municipal properties in the Site's territory, and they are managed by Sheki City Municipality. The municipality has the right of ownership over its property, i.e. it freely owns, uses and disposes of its property. Municipal properties run a local budget formed from local taxes and fees, extra-budgetary funds, municipal real estate, as well as municipal lands, municipal enterprises and organisations, municipal housing and non-residential buildings, non-state and non-private roads, municipal educational, healthcare, cultural and sports facilities, and other movable and immovable properties.

The right of ownership over the municipal property is exercised by the municipality, and in cases provided for by the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan, directly by the population. In accordance with the law, municipalities may lease or rent municipal property to individuals and legal entities for temporary or permanent use, alienate it, as well as enter into other deals, and determine the terms of use

of privatised or commissioned facilities based on contracts and agreements. The municipality independently determines the rules and conditions for the privatisation of municipal property, and all proceeds from the privatisation go entirely to the local budget. The municipality can also determine the conditions for the use of lands within its boundaries for the benefit of the local population.

The municipality can use municipal properties only for the municipal duties stipulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the Law on the Status of Municipalities.

Using its material and financial resources, the municipality can procure the beautification of municipal territories, public utilities, construction and repair of social infrastructure, production of necessary goods to meet the household and socio-cultural needs of the population, provision of services and other works. The municipality may engage in economic activities for the benefit of the local population in the manner prescribed by law.

Ministry of Culture and its local department

The Regulations of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan were approved by the decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 119 dated June 6, 2018 on ensuring the activities of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Pursuant to Paragraph 1.1 of the Regulations, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan is the central executive authority enforcing state policies and regulations on culture, arts, preservation of historical and cultural monuments, publishing and filmmaking (hereinafter – the relevant areas). The activities of the Ministry are:

- participating in the development of the unified state policy in the relevant areas, and ensuring its implementation;
- undertaking norm-establishing activities in the relevant areas;
- undertaking the state regulation, state control and coordination in the relevant areas;
- undertaking the protection of cultural heritage, and the state control over the conservation, restoration, reconstruction, regeneration and technical upgrade of the state-protected historical and cultural properties (monuments) – except for the state reserves subordinated to the STA of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Icheri Sheher State Historical-Architectural Reserve Administration – and the project design of current and capital repairs through its subordinate entity, the State Service for Protection, Development and Restoration of Cultural Heritage.

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan regulates its activities in the regions, as well as in Sheki through its local departments. The responsibilities of the local units are:

- developing and ensuring the implementation of the programs and action plans for development and implementation of cultural policies in the city (district);
- undertaking comprehensive analysis and prognostication of the main directions of the development of the cultural sphere;
- organising large-scale cultural events, memorial events, theatre performances, concerts, conferences, consultations, seminars and meetings, fair and exhibitions, festivals, competitions and other events, as well as film screenings.

Sheki Destination Management Organisation (DMO)

The reserve is located in the territory covered by Sheki Destination Management Organization (DMO), which has been in operation since March 2019 under the aegis of the Azerbaijan Tourism Board (ATB).

ATB is a Public Legal Entity under STA. Its core tasks include promoting Azerbaijan as a holiday destination and develop domestic tourism industry. ATB runs regional tourism offices across the country and Sheki DMO is one of them. The main roles of DMO is to contribute to the long-term sustainable economic development and promoting the regions of Azerbaijan. Sheki DMO as the regional representative of STA and ATB coordinates the development tourism industry in four districts: Gakh, Sheki, Zagatala and Balakan.

Sheki DMO aims at achieving sustainable and continuous tourism development in Sheki-Zagatala region by awareness-raising and promotional activities, organising trainings, connecting the public sector with the private sector (public-private partnership). DMOs also have the authority to manage local tourist information centres or info points.

Sheki DMO is directly subordinated to ATB and undertakes the following activities:

- developing the regional database of the tourism industry;
- submitting proposals on tourism product development concepts and tourism routes;
- informing tourists and representatives of the tourism industry across the country on regional festivals and other festivities, and providing support for making these festivities more attractive to visitors;
- providing promotional and print materials, and information for the development of touristic maps;
- informing Tourism Information Centres (TIMs) and tourism

companies, as well as tour guides on new tourism products ready for promotion, and organising information tours to the region;

- providing Tourism Information Centres (TIMs) in the reserve with information and marketing materials, and obtaining and analysing data from TIMs;
- informing the representatives of tourism industry on the conservation and preservation rules, and connecting tour companies and hotels with tourism products and users of the reserve;
- providing support for the promotional tours for foreign representatives of STA and/or ATB, and for media shootings in the region.

Crafts Association

The Crafts Association of Sheki was established within the framework of the Community Development Program of the Cultural Heritage Protection Project funded by the World Bank and implemented in Azerbaijan since 2002.

The main mission of the Association is to develop various fields of traditional arts and crafts existing in Sheki, to raise the role of arts and crafts in preservation, development and promotion of cultural heritage, and to achieve solutions of socio-economic problems of artisans and craftspeople.

The former jail building in Yukhari Bash Reserve was restored in 2005 and turned into the first and only business incubator in Azerbaijan for the artisans and craftspeople under the name of the House of Artisans and Craftspeople. All favourable conditions were established, and tools, equipment and other auxiliary instruments were purchased within the framework of the project and donated for the use of the artisans and craftspeople. Each artisan or craftsperson working in the House paid 5% of his/her income into the account of the Association on the basis of a contract.

Today masters from 18 arts and crafts continue working in the House, producing handicrafts and offering them to tourists, and receiving and completing different orders. However, the Association has suspended its activities since 2012.

A new Public Association "Support to Intangible Cultural Heritage" is established with the support of RMC in order to cover the activities of all artisans and craftspeople working in the reserves subordinated to STA including the reserve in Sheki. The main purpose of the Association is to develop Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Council of Elders

Sheki Regional Organisation of the Council of Elders is a non-governmental organisation operating under the Sheki City Executive Authority on a voluntary basis since 2017.

Council members are closely involved in the socio-political life of the region; they promote public policies among older generation, deal with social and cultural matters, and develop proposals on the issues important to local population. The Regional Organisation currently unites about 700 elders living in the region. Membership to the Organisation arises on the basis of an oral and written appeal of the citizen. There is no membership fee.

The reserve informs the Regional Organisation about all the steps taken in connection with the development of new tourism infrastructure and the preservation of cultural heritage in the region.

3.4 Financial management

Appropriate management for the financial sustainability of the reserve:

The STA has introduced a new management mechanism for its subordinate reserves. The new management aims at improving the financial management and introducing transparency in order to reduce the dependence of the reserves on the state

budget and achieve sustainable financial development by ensuring the effective use of tourism potential and creating conditions for public-private partnership. The management of the reserve is financed from the state budget and other sources that do not contradict the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Revenues from cultural and tourism services provided for the development of the reserve, and other activities not prohibited by law, and state, public and other organizations, and activities delivered on a contractual basis are collected by the RMC. Collected revenue is used in an efficient manner for meeting the needs and funding the development of the reserve in accordance with the decision of the Chairperson of the Board of RMC adopted on the proposals of the Reserve management.

An integrated financial resource management system coordinating the relevant executive decision-making body (STA) and the people who implement these decisions on location is being introduced in order to ensure the financial methods and tools, as well as the objectives set in the field of financial stability and growth. A Financial Management Plan is currently developed for the implementation of the system, and the Plan will include financial policies providing for the effective use of financial resources in the short- and long-term, and the direction of financial services. This Plan will act as a reference document in financial management of the reserve along with the financial regulations of the superior bodies (STA and RMC).

Sources of financial analysis for the development of the Financial Management Plan are official reports of the state-funded reserve, statistical data, and comparison of seasonal revenues and expenditures. The objectives of the Financial Management Plan are ensuring the financial stability, maximising profit by minimizing costs, and attracting new sources of financing.

The reserve is financed from the centralized expenditure appropriated for STA in the state budget, and also from the income derived from its activities,

donations, grants, investments and other sources not prohibited by law. The income of the reserve is the funds received from other activities not prohibited by law, such as cultural and tourism services provided in accordance with its Statute, and joint activities with public and other organizations on the basis of cooperation agreements.

3.5 Grants and Incentives Funding

STA is currently engaged in the development and implementation of relevant legislative acts, development concepts and targeted programs to preserve and protect the cultural heritage in its subordinate state reserves. In order to effectively manage and implement the plans, it is very essential to involve local self-government authorities, legal entities and individuals, including the local population into the conservation and development activities. It is planned to carry out this task in two directions:

- conservation and protection of monuments of private and public property which are the samples of material, cultural and historical heritage;
- Revival, development and promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage

To achieve these goals, STA has developed a variety of incentive, administrative and educational measures to be utilized during 2021-2025.

Grants Program for the Tourism and Cultural Heritage Development of the STA

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated October 21, 2015 approved the list of organizations financed from the state budget of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which may grant funds to legal entities and individuals of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The STA was added to this list by another presidential decree dated December 27, 2018. Taking advantage of this privilege, it was

proposed to create a Grant Program for the development of tourism and the protection of cultural heritage.

STA's Tourism and Cultural Heritage Grant Program is a source which will grant funding for any technical, rehabilitation, research, training and development projects. The main purpose of the Grant Program is to protect and develop historical and cultural heritage, monuments, and elements of intangible heritage within STA's reserves including the Site.

Legal entities, regardless of their legal-organizational form, as well as non-governmental organizations, associations and individuals who propose projects on the following topics for the Site will be granted the funding:

- Cleanliness and environmental protection projects in the reserve area;
- Improvement of the main monument areas and tourist destinations;
- Cultural Heritage protection awareness activities;
- Providing necessary infrastructure and equipment for the work of local artisans;
- Demonstration of works by local artisans
- Strengthening business skills of local artisans;
- Providing support to female artisans;
- Measures for transferring the intangible cultural heritage to the younger generation;
- Conducting various cultural events - festivals, seminars, tours;
- Conducting scientific research on cultural heritage;
- Articles, books, and other publications related to cultural heritage

RMC Fund

RMC has developed a Restoration manual for Sheki Historic Center. However, there are certain challenges in implementation of these guidelines such as current non-compliance with the standards and rules established in the restoration manual. The construction materials required for reviving or maintaining the authenticity of the houses and monuments are more expensive than those modern materials easily available in the market. In order to compensate the difference in the construction cost to residents of the reserve, RMC plans to launch a new payment scheme. By imposing certain changes in its charter, RMC will be able to make direct payments to the residents to ensure that all the required standards are met during the construction.

The funding will be granted for the following purposes:

- Repair and restoration of private property in the territory of the reserve in accordance with the "Restoration Manual" established for the reserve;
- Reconstruction and restoration of public and private monuments existing in the territory of the reserve in accordance with the approved guidelines and rules;
- The fund will cover up to 70% of the restoration and repair works of the private properties that have cultural-historical importance in the reserve area.

An online portal will be created to manage the application process. Owners of the properties who need financial support for construction and/or restoration purposes will be able to register online and request funding. The owner will be providing the specifics of their request and the system will calculate the difference in the cost of construction materials. Only the calculated difference in the cost of materials will be granted to the owner. A Technical Advisory Body established by RMC will further control

and monitor the construction process to ensure compliance with the required standards.

3.6 Planning, Policy and Legislative Framework

The preservation of the cultural heritage has a major importance in the national legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The following normative legal acts exist in the legislative system of the Republic of Azerbaijan regulating the cultural heritage preservation:

1. The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
2. International treaties which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party of;
3. Laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan:
 - a. Law on Culture;
 - b. Law on Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments;
 - c. Law on Museums;
 - d. Law on Advertising;
 - e. Code of Urban Planning and Construction;
 - f. Criminal Code;
 - g. Code of Administrative Offenses;
4. Decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
5. Decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan
6. Normative acts of central executive authorities

The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan has the highest and direct legal power in the Republic of Azerbaijan and is the basis of the national legislation. According to Article 40 of the Constitution, everyone has the right to participate in cultural life, to use cultural institutions and cultural resources. Everyone should treat historical, cultural and spiritual heritage with due care and respect, preserve historical and cultural monuments. According to Article 77 of the Constitution, it is everyone's duty to protect historical and cultural monuments.

International treaties which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party of are integral parts of the legislative system of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Several UNESCO conventions on the preservation of cultural heritage have been ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Management Plan also refers to those documents. **The UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage** adopted in 1972 and ratified by the Resolution No. 764 of the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan on December 6, 1993, and **the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage** adopted on October 17, 2003 and ratified by the Law No. 134 of the Republic of Azerbaijan on October 2, 2006 are among these conventions.

Laws (acts of parliament) play an important role in normative legal regulation in the legislative system of the Republic of Azerbaijan. According to Article 93 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, normative legal acts of the Milli Majlis (the Parliament) of the Republic of Azerbaijan are adopted in the form of laws. Public relations referred to the powers of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan by Article 94 and Part II of Article 95 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan are regulated by laws. The following are a number of important laws regulating the preservation of the cultural heritage and the organisation of the activities of cultural institutions:

The Law on Culture: In accordance with Paragraph 1 of Article 94 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Law on Culture determines the goals and principles of state cultural policy, the rights and obligations of the subjects of cultural activity, legal, organisational, economic and social guarantees in the field of culture, and regulates relations arising from creation, accumulation, research, promotion and preservation of cultural values in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Law on Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments regulates the relations arising from the preservation,

research and use of historical and cultural monuments. Article 4 of the Law states that *"in case of the sale of state-registered and privately owned monuments the state shall have the exclusive right to purchase them"*. The law stipulates that *"the monuments in private ownership are registered by the state and the owner must inform the relevant executive authority when they are up for sale"*. Article 4 of the Law also states that *"it is prohibited to alter the appearance and internal structure of privately-owned architectural monuments of local significance and to undertake any actions that may be detrimental to their cultural and historical value"*. The law defines and classifies historical and cultural monuments, and regulates important public relations, such as ownership of monuments, preservation, restoration, listing, use, state registration and degrees of significance of monuments, state guarantees for the protection of monuments, and rules for the use of monuments, their research and study, as well as beautification of monuments, and reinforcement works carried out for protection purposes, and liabilities for violating the legislation on protection of monuments.

The Law on Museums defines the organisational, legal, and economic basis of the museums in the Republic of Azerbaijan and regulates the relations arising from these provisions.

The Law on Advertising regulates the placement of advertising signage on the monuments and their protection zones. Article 26.3 of the Law stipulates that advertising signage (any forms of advertising) can be placed on the territory, and/or the façades, walls, fences, and roofs of historical and cultural monuments only with the approval of the relevant executive authority, and any forms of advertising can be placed in the protection zones of historical and cultural monuments only with the approval of the relevant executive authority or the subordinate body established by the relevant executive authority.

The Code of Urban Planning and Construction of the Republic of

Azerbaijan: Article 4.1 of the Code defines the main purposes of the state policy regarding urban planning and construction as providing socio-economic development of territories and settlements; protecting of individual interests; preventing threat or damage to the life, health, and property of individuals, and property interests of the state; ensuring environmental protection and environmental conservation; and preserving historical and cultural monuments (cultural heritage). Article 93.1 of the Code requires all construction works to be halted immediately in case if any signs of cultural heritage are discovered during construction, and the respective information to be submitted to the competent executive authority (in cases of installation of any forms of advertising – to the competent executive authority and/or the body established by the competent executive authority). The decision to resume the construction works and/or to undertake other necessary measures is rested with the competent executive authority. Persons who do not comply with the requirements of Article 93.1 of the Code bear responsibility in accordance with the law.

Construction permits in the territory of the reserve is subject to the approval of the STA of the Republic of Azerbaijan in accordance with the Code of Urban Planning and Construction of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Reconstruction projects and other necessary measures for the houses in dilapidated and unsafe conditions and in need of restoration are to be coordinated with the STA.

It is prohibited by law to demolish or destroy the monuments in the reserve entirely or in part; to change their artistic and aesthetic appearance; to carry out repairs, reconstruction, economic and other activities that may pose a threat to them; and the proprietor who ordered the works is directly liable under the law. At the same time, people or entities, which violate the rules of protection of monuments, are subject to criminal, administrative, disciplinary and civil liabilities in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Azerbaijan: According to Article 231.3 of the Code, people who violate the requirements for the protection and use of cultural and natural heritage, including the historical and cultural monuments in accordance with the Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments are subject to warnings or fines – 50 to 100 AZN for individuals, 250 to 300 AZN for officials, and 1,500 to 2,000 AZN for legal persons.

The Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan: Under Article 246 of the Code any intentional destruction of or damage to state-protected historical and cultural monuments are punishable by a fine of 2,000 to 4,000 AZN or imprisonment for up to two years.

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan issues normative legal acts in the form of **decrees** in accordance with Article 113 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Typical normative legal acts issued by the President in the field of cultural and natural heritage include the decrees on the implementation of laws on culture, cultural heritage, preservation of historical and cultural monuments; decrees on supporting or enhancing the activities, or approving or amending the statutes or internal regulations of public bodies overseeing the preservation of cultural heritage. Some examples to such acts are the following:

- The decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the approval of the law amending the Law on Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments;
- The decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on improving the activities of the State Service for Protection, Development and Restoration of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- The decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the establishment of the RMC of the STA of the Republic of Azerbaijan;

- The decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on ensuring the activities of the STA of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan issues normative legal acts in the form of **decisions** on the bases of and for the purposes of implementation of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the acts of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and on the issues delegated to its powers by the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the acts of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Some of the important normative legal acts issued by the Cabinet of Ministers on the cultural heritage issues are:

- The Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Approval of the Categories of Immovable Historical and Cultural Monuments under State Protection; and the subsequent decision amending the first decision;
- The Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Approval of the Protection Guarantees for Owners of National Cultural Heritage Properties;
- The Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Approval of the Regulations for Preservation, Restoration and Use of Cultural Heritage Properties in the Republic of Azerbaijan;
- The Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Approval of the Regulations for Designating Underwater Cultural Resources in the Territorial Waters of the Republic of Azerbaijan as Underwater Cultural Heritage Properties and the Regulations for the Use of Underwater Cultural Heritage Properties;

- The Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Approval of the Statute of the RMC of the STA of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The central executive authorities can issue normative legal acts in the cases and within the limits stipulated by the acts of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic, and only on the issues delegated to their powers by the acts of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic. The central executive authorities which can issue decisions concerning the preservation of the cultural heritage, historical and cultural monuments are the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the STA of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Local Executive Authorities may adopt normative acts within their competences, but these acts must comply with the superior acts of the legislative system regulating the respective areas. **Local self-government bodies – municipalities** may also adopt normative acts which are mandatory for the residents and legal entities in their respective territories.

Decisions of the Parliament (*Milli Məclis*) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and executive orders of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Cabinet of Ministers and other central executive authorities can serve as **non-normative regulatory acts** concerning the preservation of cultural heritage, and historical and cultural monuments.

Legal framework of monitoring.

The STA instructs the reserve staff to conduct periodic field inspections in order to prevent any damage to cultural layers in archaeological sites during economic or agricultural activities; to take preventive measures when encountering potential threats and submit photos and reports to the management. The reserve management also takes the following actions in this direction:

- While developing and signing lease agreements for monuments in the property of other government agencies or municipalities, the reserve management have to take photos of and document their volumetric composition, appearance and structural elements, in addition to other relevant acts, and make respective notes on monument passports; monument guardians also co-sign these additional notes.
- In case some certain changes are observed in the monument or its parts, the reserve management as the institution undertaking cultural management of the monuments have to take photos of and document these changes and report them to the STA.
- Monument guardians periodically submit proposals to the reserve management for placing reliable protective screens on the surface of the monument in order to protect them from physical, mechanical and chemical impacts of the environment, taking measures to protect monuments from the ground water, and ensuring their integrity and preservation; and the reserve management forwards these proposals to RMC for evaluation.
- It is recommended to involve relevant specialists from the National Academy of Sciences in control and monitoring activities on a paid basis during reconstruction, reinforcement, beautification, conservation, restoration, rehabilitation, regeneration works undertaken on the monuments.

Current policy on scientific research

Specialised foreign (international) organisations may participate in scientific research, restoration, regeneration, reconstruction and conservation of the monuments in the reserve with the consent of the STA. The reserve management and RMC cooperate with universities, research institutes and other institutions, independent researchers and investigative journalists in the field of scientific research and provide them with assistance in several areas:

- Local and foreign researchers can have access to the artefacts and other materials in the scientific collection of the reserve with the permission from the reserve management.
- Archaeological artefacts and other material and cultural items from the scientific collection of the reserve have to be examined on the location and are not allowed to be taken out of the reserve. In case there is a need to transport any artefacts for research purposes, the process have to be undertaken with the approval of the STA and the National Academy of Sciences, and under the supervision of the scientific workers of the reserve.
- While doing research in the reserve, researchers have to get permission from the STA for taking photographs, videos and drone footage, and carrying out sociological surveys;
- While doing research on the architectural monuments in the reserve, it is necessary to obtain a written permission from the reserve management for taking samples from the monuments and carrying out capital measurements.





4 Conservation of Cultural Heritage

4.1 Key Issues with OUV attributes

HUL and Visual Integrity

Historic Urban Landscape of the Site is the most important and strategic quality of its visual integrity, and it needs to be one of the priority areas in management and planning of the territory and its context.

There are four distinct urban and architectural layers in Sheki developed over the time:

1. **Urban and architectural layer from the khanate period:** Sheki (then called Nukha) became the new centre of Sheki Khanate in 1772. Merchants and artisans settled in the city, and traditional arts and crafts and sericulture prospered;
2. **Imperial Russian period:** The city under the Russian administration added a new layer with Russian and European elements to its medieval core;
3. **Soviet period:** New public buildings were built in the city;
4. **Independence period since 1991:** New hotels and other public and private buildings were built.

Despite these diverse influences, the Site has preserved its original urban fabric due to the natural limitations of the territory (being surrounded by mountains on three sides). Traditional historic buildings still dominate the urban landscape against the backdrop of a mountain valley preserving its visual integrity.

The table shows the percentage of buildings per each historical period based on the data of 2,773 real estate units (residential buildings, public buildings, shops, hotels, etc.) in Sheki.

Total building stock in the Site and its buffer zone consists of 2,775 individual buildings. 1,015 residential houses (36.5%) still preserve their traditional fireplaces ("bukhari"). Field research in the reserve shows that 4.2% of public and private buildings remain from the khanate period (1748-1819). 60.3% of the buildings were constructed during the Imperial Russian administration (1819-1918) and Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920), 33.4% during the Soviet period (1920-1990), and 2.1% in recent years (1990-2015).

The current city was rebuilt using unburned bricks in a new territory after the flood of 1772. Development of silk production in the imperial Russian period attracted wealthy merchants and entrepreneurs to the city, the quality of life of residents increased significantly, and as a result, many clay huts were replaced with houses built from local stone

Construction period	Percentage in the urban fabric
1748 - 1819	4.2 %
1819 - 1920	60 %
1920 - 1991	33.4 %
since 1991	2 %

and unburned bricks. A next construction boom in Sheki occurred in 1960 during the Soviet period. Sheki became the centre of silk production in the Caucasus, and many public and residential buildings were built or reconstructed during this period. Tourism development in the region today has led to the construction of new hotels and public buildings from modern building materials. New construction norms are being developed in accordance with the features and typology of historical construction in Sheki in order to curtail these uncontrolled building activities. All future construction in the area will be regulated based on these new standards. This problem, like other problems that damage the visual integrity, will be addressed in the short- and medium-term goals of the Conservation Master Plan, and the nuances that damage the visual integrity of the city will be eliminated.

The territory of the reserve is an urban territory containing public, private, religious and industrial buildings constructed since 19th century. The area remains the centre of public and cultural life in Sheki. Small business entities are clustered along the high street (M. F. Akhundzade Avenue). There are no large stores or restaurants deep inside the neighbourhoods where small retailers sell mostly food and fast-moving consumer goods to immediate residents.

One of the dominant visual elements of the urban landscape of Sheki is its ceramic-tiled roofs (*kiramit*). The forms and materials of these traditional roofs especially highlight the specific urban landscape within the surrounding natural landscape. Traditional ceramic tiles are still present in many buildings (77.7% of total building stock) although their technical maintenance is very labour intensive. Some of the roofs (14.8%) are contaminated with modern materials such as aluminium sheets and red industrial tiles, which contrast with the traditional features. 5.7% of houses have roofs made of tin plates and 1.8% – of fibrolite.

The central streets were paved with large river stones in the past. Currently the high street (Akhundzade Street), the street along the Dayirmanchay River (Rasulzade Street) and Khoyski Street are covered with asphalt because they are considered main arteries of the city. The streets inside the neighbourhoods are still paved with river stones. Most of these streets need repair. The preserved structure of the city with winding narrow streets and still bustling central arteries forms the historical significance of the old city. Sheki as a vibrant city is indeed undergoing constant changes, but existing limitations of the territory prevents the city from sprawling growth, and its reserve status protects the historic centre from irreversible transformations.

There are 2,775 houses within the borders of the Site (both protected and buffer zones), and 1,255 houses or 45% of all housing stock have maintained their historic integrity. Basic structure and planning, as well as the façades of these houses have been preserved intact despite some additions such as outbuildings, or loss of some architectural details such as glass ornaments of balconies, handrails or wooden cornices. 738 houses (26.6%) have been subjected to minor changes such as new additions to the main historic structures with an aim of enlargement of the area of hallways, kitchens or balconies. 315 historic houses (11.35%) have been completely modified with addition of new rooms and balconies, and refurbished roofs. 361 houses (13%) in the reserve area and buffer zone are newly built. They were built using modern construction materials breaking with historical traditions. 84 houses (3%) are dilapidated and unsafe and need urgent intervention – these are historic houses which were vacated by their residents and were not subjected to any modifications. Consolidation and restoration of these dilapidated houses and restoration of their traditional roofs using conventional building techniques and construction materials are among the top priority issues planned to be implemented in near future according to the Action Plan. 28 buildings (1%) are multi-storey public buildings that cannot be adapted to the area; 22 houses (0.8%) have demised completely and their areas are currently vacant. These vacant areas are in private hands and their owners are planning to build new houses there.

Uncontrolled construction

Unfortunately, new buildings have been built on the territory of the Site and buffer zone over the last years and they cause damage to the original historical appearance of the historical town since they do not correspond to traditional characteristics from the style and location perspectives. Some historic buildings are adapted and used without compliance with initial designation and the rules of conservation for monuments.

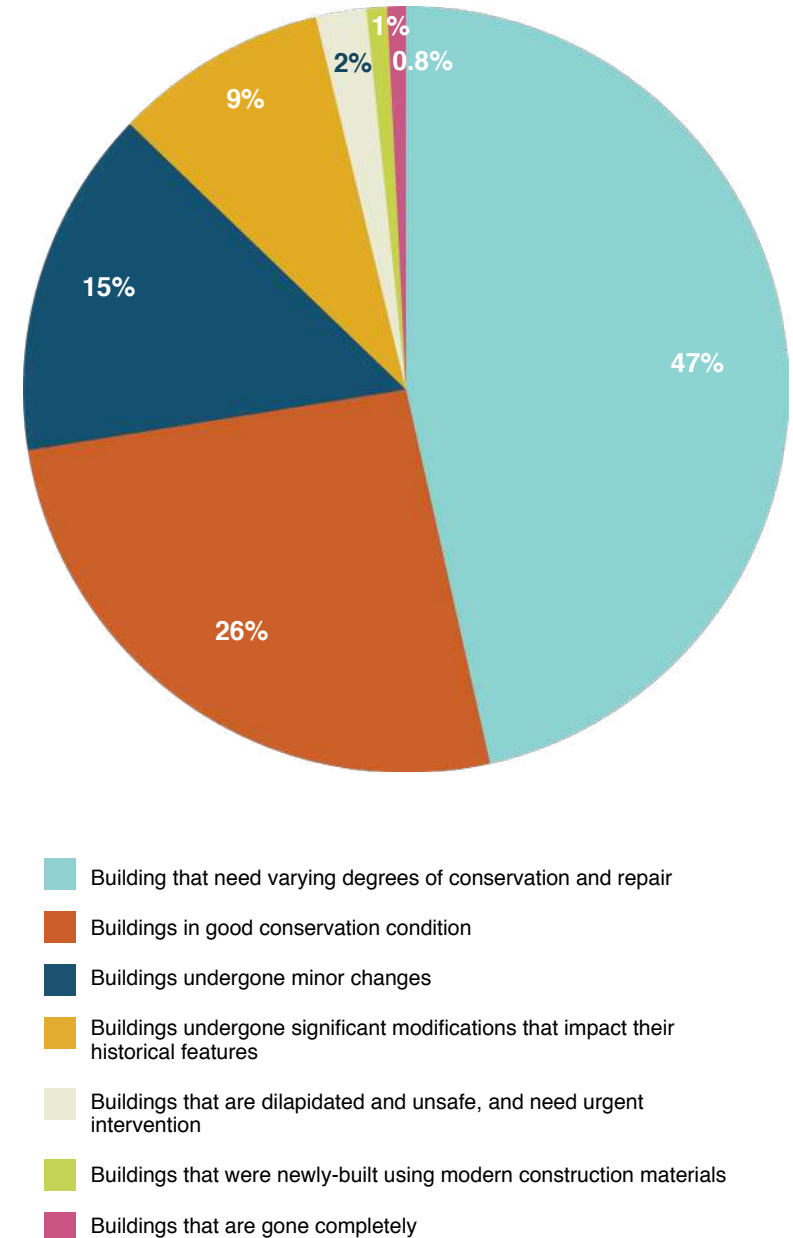
Tourism also has an impact on development. There are several new hotels that do not fit the historical style and scale of the city. Some buildings on the main road of the town were renovated in the same style, without considering the traditional specifics of the buildings.

Construction is chaotic on the right side of the Gurjana river. Piedmont landscape reveals all the shortcomings of the non-scheduled construction of the new and non-traditional additions to existing traditional houses. Built-up density violates the centuries-old structure of the garden houses. It is necessary to consider in detail the restoration of construction works and types of perception of the right-side street.

The following issues concerning irrelevant construction are listed below:

- Designs of projects for new buildings are often incompatible with the requirements, because designers of new projects are often not restoration specialists, nor they are familiar with the construction requirements of applied in the Site.
- Occasionally, buildings are constructed without any proper and initial design process. There are certain gaps in the construction control mechanism that leads to such cases. RMC is expected to establish better and effective coordination with the local authorities responsible for construction control.
- As mentioned above, there are quite a few buildings in the Site that are not incompatible with the style and scale of the city. Adaptation of those buildings to the authentic historical appearance of the city has been so far neglected. The new approach and the solutions for those buildings will be developed in CMP.
- Due to the natural limitations in expansion of the town, new houses are built on the backyard site of the gardens which brings to deformation of the house-garden ratio. There is official construction density coefficient rule by the construction law which must be strictly applied. The coordination with local authorities should be reinforced in this regard.
- Modern needs in construction such as water tanks, garage, air conditioner, boiler create problems of appearance and inconsistency. The CMP will introduce Infill Design rules for the buildings. According to these rules, the buildings will consider both the historical and architectural parameters of the city, as well as topographic and landscape dimensions and modern infrastructure needs.

Current condition of 2.775 buildings in Historic Centre of Sheki



Abandoned and unregistered buildings and monuments

There are some historical buildings which contribute to the OUV of the Site and they remain without an official state registration and some are even abandoned. Merchant houses, some historical buildings with public use and buildings within the citadel need more elaborate management approach to cover these issues.

Merchant houses: In many cases, private merchant houses have identical ownership problem. The merchant houses are usually inherited by two or more relatives in the family which often brings to discontent between them and complications in the maintenance, conservation and proper usage of the houses. Some of the merchant houses are in public ownership; they are mainly old buildings that also have maintenance and conservation problems.

Many merchant houses are not state registered as monuments. Considering their important role in contribution of the OUV of the Site, RMC plans to register those houses as monuments of national and international significance. The new status of these houses will enable RMC to better control in usage, maintenance and conservation. The CMP and URP will introduce more detailed policy and plans regarding merchant houses.

Public buildings: These are mainly the buildings that are not used due to maintenance problems. The use of uninhabited houses or public facilities is one of the priority management issues. Some of the former barrack buildings inside Fortress come at first in this list. The ownership problem of the barrack buildings has already been solved by RMC and they are on inventory balance of STA now. The barrack buildings on the territory of the fortress were used as medical institutions, now they are abandoned due to their current unfavorable and inconvenient state. The restoration and conservation plan of these buildings are included in CMP. One of the buildings is planned to be used as an administrative

building for the Yukhari Bash Reserve administration. The rest is planned for tourism purposes (museums, fairs, cafes and etc.). Their use will preserve the historical structure of the fortress formed at the end of 19th century and help avoid new constructions there.

There is a complex of old buildings outside the fortress walls which is used as a Child Hospital. The complex consists of a few old buildings and belongs to XIX century. They were built by a local wealthy man of that time. The Child Hospital Complex buildings and the yard are completely deserted. The valorization of the complex will be recommended in the URP.

Recommendations: Abandoned public buildings can be used for tourism purposes following proper restoration and adaptation process. For instance, empty houses in the territory of the old town can be used as residential houses of Bed & Breakfast type or the houses leased in accordance with negotiations with the owners. Also, the abandoned historical houses with yards can be chosen for café and teahouse places which are in great demand in Sheki. More detailed proposals and solutions will be introduced in the URP.

Forest setting issues

It is important to note that unplanned and uncontrolled human activities result in a partial reduction of natural values of the forest setting. As a result of the continuation of this behavior, the values and the elements of natural heritage may be endangered.

Uncontrolled use of forest materials and land: Residents of Sheki use forest materials in their daily living, crafts and construction activities. As a result, the number of some trees, especially oak, chestnut, beech and hornbeam get diminished.

Over the last 20 years, the use of oak trees in the construction industry (parquet making) around Sheki has reduced their total number and distribution area. Beech and hornbeam

forests have been severely damaged due to their extensive usage as wood fuel. They are also used in furniture making because of their strong wood. Due to all these factors, the density of the forest is declining.

Some of the rare plants in the forest setting of Sheki are very valuable and are widely used in local cuisine and crafts. They are also in danger of being uprooted.

Residents who engaged in livestock also damage vegetation and grass composition of the forest. Lack of grazing restrictions and lack of control in this area is a serious problem.

Usage for tourism purposes: Many businessmen build hotels, restaurants and various entertainment complexes in picturesque and aesthetically pleasing places. This, in turn, stimulates the development of unsustainable tourism - more tourists come to the area, the forest area is declining, and as a result, the value of the environment decreases. For example, even though the area near the Memorial to the Victims of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, which is known as a panoramic place, fell into the forest area, hotels and restaurants were built there and the area was occupied. To prevent this trend, work should be done with the local environmental department, the City Municipality and the Sheki ExCom, and the occupation of these areas should be completely banned. Detailed discussions about this are written in the section.

Impact of population growth: Population growth in recent years has shown that new settlements are expanding in the direction of forests. An analysis of satellite images from 2004-2019 to study the changing trends of forest landscapes in the area showed that there has been a gradual decline in forest area over the past 16 years, with a decrease of 47 hectares. Thus, the total area of urbanized area around the

historical part was 215 ha in 2004 and 262 ha in 2019.

Traditional garden house

The overall texture of the city still preserves the system of gardens and houses. However, there are issues that undermine the attributes of the WHS which should be identified and examined by the Management Plan.

Due to the natural limitations in expansion of the town, new houses are built on the backyard site of the gardens which brings to deformation of the house-garden ratio. As recommended in the "Uncontrolled construction" part of this chapter, it is essential to abide the rules of the Construction Density Coefficient which should be strictly coordinated with local authorities and reinforced in order to avoid deformation of the house-garden structure.

The general condition of the gardens as a separate unit is also in danger of being harmed. Reduction of sericulture activities and silk production, low profitability of garden orchards causes insignificance of the private gardens. The Management Plan envisages the revival of cocoon breeding by the private citizens and provide solutions for better income generation from the orchards to retain the functions of the gardens of traditional houses. Urban Regeneration Plan introduces solutions regarding the marketplace for "Garden City" products in more detail.

Sericulture:

There is a State Program for the development of sericulture and silkworm breeding in Azerbaijan for 2018-2025 years approved by the order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan issued in November 2017. This presidential order creates conditions for the effective use of the potential of this sector, increasing the employment of the population in the production of cocoons and silkworm breeding and further improving of

social welfare. To achieve this goal, the following tasks are envisaged within the Program:

- promotion of investments in cocoons and silk industry;
- formation of an effective economic support mechanism for entities and individuals engaged in silkworm breeding and cocoon production;
- enhancing specialization in areas suitable for the development of cocoons and silkworm breeding;
- to increase the productivity of mulberry trees by carrying out restoration and reconstruction works in the existing gardens;
- creation of new productive silkworm breeds and hybrids;
- organization of cocoon and silk industry on the basis of modern technologies;
- support and promotion of silk export

The program provides various grants, subsidies and other implementation mechanisms to incentivize the interested entities and individuals to engage in and benefit from silkworm breeding and silk production.

Currently, the "Sheki Silk Plant" OJSC (open joint-stock company) is operating in Sheki. Unfortunately, at the present there is no raw material for the production of silk thread. Therefore, the silk thread production workshop is not in operation, and the thread for silk production is imported from other countries, mostly from Uzbekistan and China. For the resumption of silk thread production, it's informed that annually 375 tons wet and 140 tons of dry cocoon are demanded. RMC plans to utilize the state program opportunities to revive the silkworm breeding by Sheki residents and thus continue sericulture traditions which support OUV.

Traditional water system/irrigation issues

The old irrigation system is no longer functioning. Only one of the water mills has survived to the present days. The city's traditional spring water supply remains in only one neighborhood which is coming through Tajlig and Hajihasan water pipes. The ancient water supply systems in the baths and mosques are not working either. Due to the high population density, the water shortage is compensated by the construction of additional water lines outside the city.

The surface water supply system in Sheki is also under threat. This is the result of improper interventions and the use of asbestos material. Asbestos materials become brittle and unstable as a result of environmental influences and break down. This creates dust and fibers that can contaminate waterways and cause cancer.

To foster the conservation and the maintenance of the existing water/irrigation system, RMC plans to take necessary measures to register Tajlig and Hajihasan water pipes on a state level as valuable elements of the Site. The official registration of the pipes will enable RMC to control the maintenance and the conservation issues in coordination with relevant government and municipality authorities.

Special recommendations and solutions for water pipes, springs and ancient irrigation system are provided in CMP and URP.

4.2 Craftsmanship

Archaeological findings discovered during excavations in the region show that Sheki was historically an important centre of arts and crafts. It is one of those small numbers of districts where traditional arts and crafts are preserved till now and they reflect the living heritage of the historic city. More than hundred artisans and craftspeople in Sheki continue traditions of 34 types of traditional arts and crafts.

Craft industry is increasingly endangered due to globalization and rapid economic development. Crafts being as a very valuable and protected intangible heritage elements, need to be preserved, developed and further on considered as a valuable element to sustain the OUV attributes as well as for economic empowerment of the local community.

There are some serious challenges concerning the traditional arts and crafts:

- Some craftsmanship types in Sheki have been in danger of extinction due to the decreasing demands for the handicrafts among locals and the lack of promotion of the products for the large audiences, such as international markets and tourists. Youth is mostly not interested in continuation of these traditions because of the lack of demand.
- Artisans have problem regarding proper facilities to work and exhibit their products to the customers and tourists. Additional designing skills for the artisans for promoting their products would be also helpful.
- Local traders selling foreign-made souvenirs as "local handicrafts" to unsuspecting tourists, thus damaging the sales of real handicrafts made by local artisans and craftspeople.
- Lack of soft loan opportunities and incentive mechanisms for local artisans and craftspeople.
- Insufficient export of local handicrafts to foreign markets, poor organisation of fairs and exhibitions;

The following table summarises the key features, key challenges and proposals of the reserve management concerning traditional arts and crafts in Sheki.

Key features	Key challenges
Artisans and craftspeople directly involved in the tourism industry produce items for visitors and sell them in their shops. They already know the needs of the tourism sector; they work not for the sake of arts and crafts but produce mostly souvenirs.	This area is difficult to control as most souvenirs are imported from abroad. These artisans and craftspeople also sell foreign-made souvenirs along with their own handicraft products.
Arts and crafts aimed at meeting the needs of local residents do not usually bring commercial products to the tourism market and are more associated with the continuity of local traditions (i.e., makers of dowry boxes or knife-sharpening services).	Certain products designed to meet the needs of the local population cannot be viewed as souvenirs. Dowry boxes or sharpened knives may not be attractive to tourists, but the process of production can be showcased in interactive workshops.
Artisans and craftspeople working for both the needs of tourism industry and local demand are best positioned to resist the influx of foreign-made souvenirs into the local market and adapt to the changing needs of the tourism sector (i.e., kelaghayi or hat makers).	These artisans and craftspeople work in workshops with poor conditions. They are not able to find suitable place to use their skills in full, nor do they have the financial means to regenerate their workshops.
Tourists are ill-informed on the local artisans and craftspeople, and their work.	Artisans and craftspeople have low level of foreign language skills, and as a result, there is weak direct communication with tourists.





Tourism Development: Opportunities and Issues

5.1 Introduction

Azerbaijan has immense amount of intangible heritage assets, historical monuments and buildings as well as astonishing natural landscapes combined with preeminent hospitality that are of interest for domestic and international visitors. As of today, this great potential in tourism is underutilized. Tourism investments are particularly suited for stimulation of the economy because the industry is labor-intensive, has extensive multi-sector supply-chains, strong foreign exchange earning potential, and high employment opportunities. Azerbaijan's tourism strategy is aimed at uncovering the tourism potential of the country on the long-term effect with a focus on sustainable actions and realistically achievable goals.

Chaotic development of the tourism industry in Sheki, especially in the Site's territory has left some undesirable impact on the historical and cultural heritage of the city. The main objective now is to develop tourism products and ensure sustainable development in the region while preserving the social and cultural traditions, historical and architectural monuments, visual and spatial integrity of the urban structure of Sheki.

Both tangible and intangible heritage of Sheki demonstrate its strong tourism potential. There are six historic mosques and two minarets without mosques, two church buildings, three bath houses, nine factories and one workshop, two caravanserais, seven museums, hotels, and several shops selling traditional craft products in Sheki.

Sheki also has strong tourist potential as a place where the living traditions of craftsmanship still exist. Many artisans and craftspeople work and sell their hand-made products in the reserve territory. Through the centuries, the region has been known for its qualified craftsmen who are skilled in pottery, copper work, silk production, painting, embroidery and many other traditional crafts.

Intangible heritage of Sheki includes its distinctive local cuisine and other cultural treasures such as UNESCO designated Chovqan games. Sheki hosts several important public events and festivals that contribute to the increased tourism potential of Azerbaijan (Sheki Confectionary Festival, Sheki International Silk Road Music Festival, Caucasus Motofest, etc.).

The region also serves some of Azerbaijan's tastiest and unique cuisine, with two of the most beloved being *Sheki halva* (baklava) and *piti*, a stew created with meat and potatoes and prepared in a terracotta pot.

5.2 Tourism Products and Experiences

The main reference document for the organisation of tourist visits to the cultural heritage sites is the International Cultural Tourism Charter adopted by ICOMOS in 1999. According to the Charter, the conservation and tourism planning for the cultural heritage sites such as the Site should ensure that the visitor experience here is valuable, satisfactory and entertaining. Charter recommends that visitors experience cultural heritage sites on location, but also calls for appropriate opportunities for the comfort, safety and well-being of visitors through tourism activities.

The Site is full of possibilities for new activities that could be commodified for visitors. In 2018, approximately 62.000 tourists from various countries visited Sheki mainly during spring-summer season. Due to the lack of tourism activities, services, accommodation, transport and catering facilities this number is under the real potential. Moreover, with more and better facilities the visitors could also lengthen their stay in Sheki.

The proposed tourist activities in Sheki are grouped as follows:

Cultural activities:

- History and cultural heritage: the tangible and intangible culture and the stories related to the different historical layers of Sheki
- Built environment: the unique Khan Palace and the old and well-preserved parts of Sheki
- People of Sheki: their attachment to the tradition and the permanent creative arts
- Learning to prepare local dishes/specialties
- Making traditional handicraft of Sheki

Natural activities:

- Hiking routes, trekking around the Yukhari Bash Reserve, discovering the historical and socio-economic importance of Sheki

5.3 Main touristic sites

The Khan's Palace and Shekikhanovs' House: The most important component that distinguishes the reserve from other destinations is the Khan's Palace, the pearl of the Azerbaijani architecture. Today a great many number of people travel to Sheki to visit this tourist attraction despite the underdevelopment of most elements of the tourism sector here. Shekikhanovs' House is also one of the main historical monuments of the reserve visited by tourists. The following activities will be carried out by RMC together with the reserve management in order to ensure tourism-friendly use of both monuments while preserving their heritage character:

- reorganization of visitor experience;
- installation of turnstiles and transparency of revenues;
- improvement of guide tours and organization of training sessions for guides;
- publication of special brochures and information on monuments;
- undertaking special measures related to conservation and restoration;
- beautification works at the monuments.

Baths: The tradition of public baths (*hamam*) in Azerbaijan dates back to the Middle Ages when city dwellers used to get washed and socialise in the baths. All three historical baths in Sheki – Dara bath, Underground bath and Aghvanlar bath have completely lost their functions and are not used for their intended purposes. STA has developed the conceptual project on long-term preservation, conservation, restoration and purposeful use of historical and cultural monuments in Yukhari Bash State Historical-Architectural Reserve in accordance with the executive order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on additional measures to preserve the historical section of Sheki (dated October 31, 2018). The implementation of this project will be undertaken in several phases. The restoration of the baths is planned in the first phase of the project implementation (2020-2021). The regeneration of the baths will be useful for both residents and tourists. The new tourism concept envisages that the baths will be restored by local entrepreneurs and used for tourism purposes. This will lead to the development of local entrepreneurship and the involvement of the local community in the heritage preservation.

The Khan's Mosque and adjoining cemetery: This historical-architectural monument of XVIII century (1745-1750) is listed under the title of "the Mosque and the Grave" with the registration number of 329. The monument is in the territory of Yukhari Bash State Historical-Architectural Reserve. The following state-protected historical assets are within the protection zone of the monument:



- The monument, popularly referred to as the Khan's Mosque for it was built by Haji Chalabi, the Khan of Sheki;
- The small cemetery with 10 graves belonging to the Khan family members;
- Five plane trees in the courtyard of the Khan's Mosque registered as natural heritage and protected by the state.

The above-mentioned concept document of STA also envisages the restoration of the Khan's Mosque and adjoining cemetery in the first phase of the project implementation (2021-2023).

Sheki Museum of History and Local Lore, Sheki Museum of Applied Folk Art and Sheki State Art Gallery: These museums inside the reserve territory have been transferred from the Ministry of Culture to the STA in accordance with the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan on August 14, 2019. New concepts will be developed for these museums integrating them to the tourism industry.

5.4 Intangible cultural heritage assets and activities

The intangible heritage of the Site is one of the major tourism assets. In order to commodify intangible heritage and make it accessible to visitors the RMC proposes the development and organization of the courses and workshops for interested visitors as outlined in the following.

The tourism development plan for Sheki proposes the relocation and clustering of specific workshops of craftsmen along the suggested pedestrian zone along the upper Caravanserai. As of today, Sheki's craftsman workshops are in poor conditions and spread around the city. The relocation is proposed in order to give the craftsmen better working conditions, better visibility for tourists and a better opportunity for common projects and collaboration among each other.

The resilience of the traditional handicrafts of Sheki in the globalizing world is a great advantage for Sheki tourism development. Their integration to the tourism flow will help to protect this part of the Azerbaijan's intangible heritage. Consultation with the local people showed that the craftsmen desire to get a better workshop to demonstrate their traditional skills to the visitors.

The following craftsman workshops are proposed to be relocated and/or commodified for tourism purposes:

Shabaka making: (the linden tree and nut tree importance for Sheki people) Shabaka making is a traditional branch of crafts in Azerbaijan which exists only

in Sheki city. Historically made of the local wood from surrounding forests, the Shabaka making is still alive in the Reserve area. The Sheki masters participated actively in the restoration processes in different parts of Azerbaijan. Shabaka masters have adapted their branch to the tourism flow and propose nowadays different souvenirs for foreign and local visitors. Rich people in Sheki command still to these masters which make them a very lucrative source of money for them. Considering all these factors RMC will encourage the adaptation of the Shabaka workshops inside the fortress to the tourism industry.

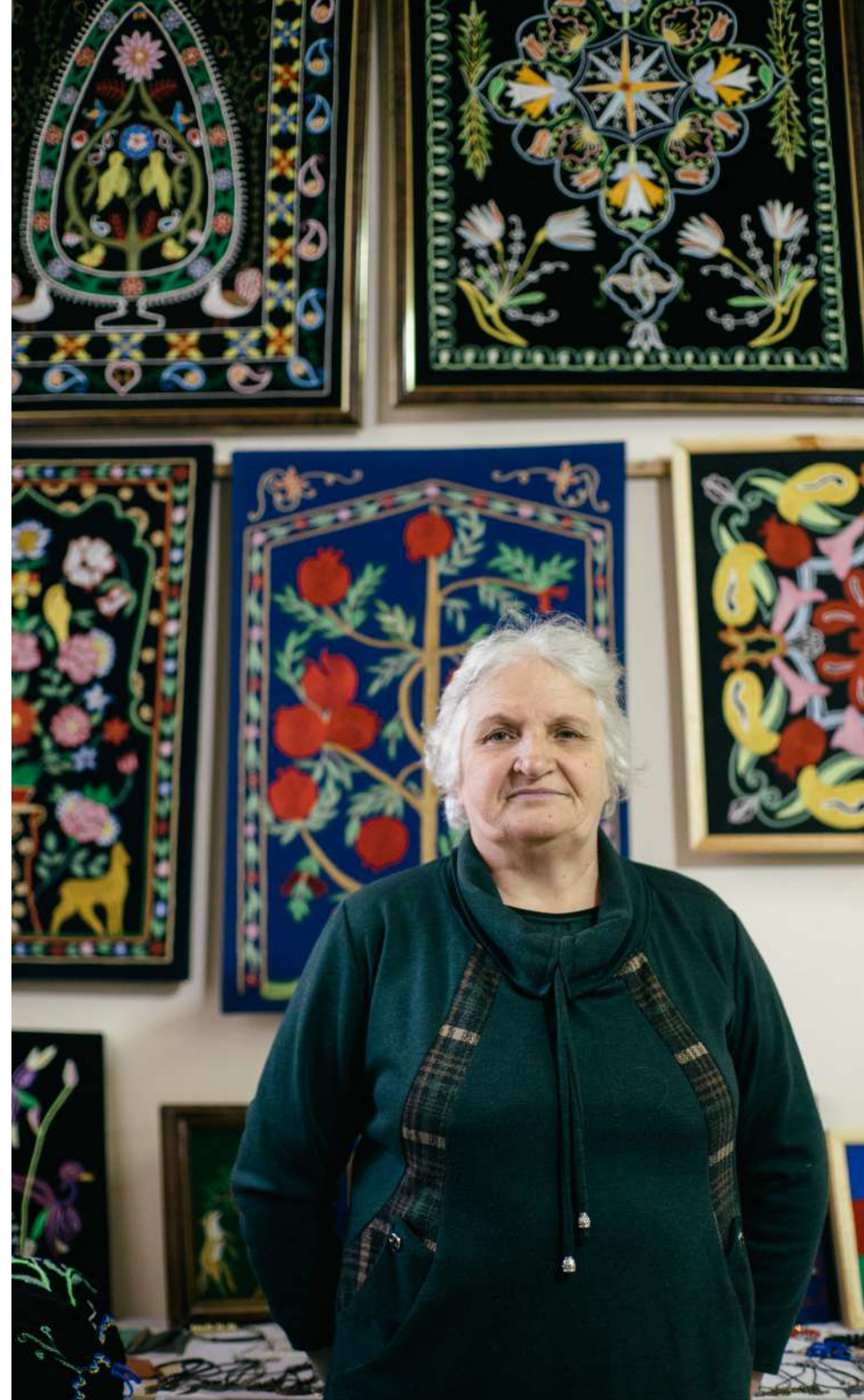
Takalduz workshop: Sheki was and remains the handicraft centre of tambour embroidery - takalduz, which is an exquisite floral ornament executed on velvet, cloth or morocco. In the middle of the 19th century, the products embroidered with a tambour seam, as well as gold embroidered seams, had wide sales not only in Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus, but also far beyond their borders. It is interesting that at the end of the XIX century in Sheki in special embroidery workshops exclusively male labor was used. Today, the art of embroidery is predominantly a woman's occupation. The main material for embroidery with a tambour seam is velvet dark - blue, black and red. Embroidery in the style of tapestry is performed on linen fabric. Embroidery with a tambour seam is a subtle and time-consuming art. Sometimes the production of one work takes 3-4 months. Embroidery uses silk threads.

Beeswax: The Linden tree (cökəğacı) is used as a source for honey-makers in Sheki. Except the natural honey tasting and sale of the natural honey, we can consider some related activities related to the tourism sector. The candle-making and figures prepared for kids are some of souvenirs that could be promoted. Beeswax was among the first plastics to be used and the tradition could be reactivated in Sheki:

- It will help the local honey-makers to gain more money by providing the beeswax for crafts and kids
- Beeswax will help also to increase attention to the local honey-makers and to their life
- Then, the tour operators could organize special visits to the honey-making places

Curing herbs experience: Medicinal herbs are widely used in the traditional Azerbaijani medicine. It has a very deep historical background. The Caucasus mountains are the cradle of many endemic plants which has been appropriated by local populations, including Sheki people. We propose to use this aspect of traditional know-how in the tourism experience:

- Special organic creams are already proposed in the local shops
- The herbal tea varieties are widely sold and used in the local shops



- The packaging process could be reorganized to allow the tourists to buy and bring abroad after tasting the local herbs in the tea shops

Box-making: The tradition of box-making is still alive. These boxes are made as dowry and the girls who are going to marry order usually these boxes. The art consists of two parts:

- The box-making: the masters use the local wood (nut and oak tree) to produce these boxes that have different sizes. The boxes made of the local wood in miniature could be sold as souvenirs;
- Decorative art related to the local marriage traditions, practiced on the boxes might be promoted;
- The box-makers will be relocated to the tourism cluster near the Upper and Lower Caravanserais

Pottery: The production of pottery, which served for the preparation and storage of food, and other products is relevant in Sheki. Sheki Pottery workshops produce and sell household utensils - dishes, pots for traditional meat dishes, pitchers, flowerpots, kerosene lamps, decorative items. In addition to the manufacture of standard products, the masters work on the order according to the original client sketches, and recreates the old ceramic products. It is not surprising that pottery products manufactured in this traditional way are environmentally safe, have a high aesthetic value and are in high demand not only among the local population, but also among numerous tourists visiting Sheki. The pottery workshop might function inside the fortress. An interactive form of workshop will be installed in order to attract the tourists.

Cooking master classes for Sheki pastry: Sheki halva is a local delight well-known in Azerbaijan. Its preparation is based on local recipes. All five ingredients come from a different village around Sheki city:

- Rose water: the rose is planted everywhere in Sheki district
- Rice flour: Rice was traditionally cultivated in the Zayzid village. The village has abandoned this tradition, but the locals confirm that they can resume in any time the production. The rice is grinded in local water mill inside the Reserve area. The water mills (the canal –Dayirmanarkh which constitutes the natural border of the Old Sheki means actually mill water) functions even today with the ancient system.
- Hazelnut flour: it is grinded in the pastry shop and it comes entirely from Sheki and neighboring villages
- Saffron: it is produced entirely by the local in Sheki district. Saffron is used in the preparation of Piti, traditional local dish, as well.

- Coriander seeds: Coriander is a favorite green vegetable largely used by Azerbaijanis. The seeds are also used to extract Coriander oil.

The traditional pastry – Sheki Halva and colored candies area prepared in tens of shops inside the Reserve area which is a very positive factor. Our field trip revealed that some shops are interested in opening their cooking process to visitors, which according them will increase the sale rates.

5.5 Public events

The reserve management will cooperate closely with all stakeholders and event organisers for the organisation, management and marketing of public events and festivals drawing from the local cultural heritage, and RMC will also provide support and assistance for the organisation of these events.

Some of the proposed public events in Sheki are:

Sheki Confectionary Festival will take place in the fortress territory and will attract all main producers of traditional confectionery in Sheki. Recommended timing is between June and August, during the high tourist season.

Sheki Chovqan Competition will be an open-door event. Recommended timing is between June and August, during the high tourist season.

Sheki Silk Festival will be held as an open-door event in the silk factory and showcase traditional silk production in Sheki. Interactive silk workshops can also be installed in the Events Hall near the Khan's Palace in the fortress territory. Main components of the festival will be: kelaghayi production and its symbolism, which included in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO; making of traditional dyes from smoke tree and other plants, and dyeing silk fabrics with traditional techniques; demonstrating the phases of silk filament production; master classes on sericulture and silk production, etc.

Arts and crafts fairs and exhibitions are planned to showcase the works of artisans and craftspeople living and working in Sheki. These will include master classes and interactive workshops where tourists can actively practice traditional production techniques. These fairs and exhibitions will develop fertile ground for both encouraging and promoting the work of artisans and craftspeople.



5.6 Five Trees of Sheki: hiking routes, stories and activities

Yukhari Bash Reserve is located in a mountainous area with beautiful nature and vegetation. There are various opportunities which are important both for environmental protection and the tourism development. One of the elements in the Site is a tradition of planting five types of trees by local population:

Mulberry – the reason for planting the tree is related directly to the sericulture, spinal column of Sheki economy. Practically, each house yard of the local people in Sheki have had Mulberry trees.

Plane tree – is a symbol of purity, power and domination. Currently, 24 of them are protected in the Yukhari Bash Reserve area – in the yards of the mosques, in some public places, and around Sheki Khan Palace. The plane trees in Sheki dates back to several centuries.

Tilia – is an ornamental tree when a mass of foliage or a deep shade is desired. Sheki people like very much this tree as it has fragrant and nectar-producing flowers and medicinal herb lime blossom. They are very important honey plants for beekeepers, producing a very pale but richly flavored mono-floral honey. The flowers are also used for herbal teas and tinctures; this kind of use was particularly popular in Azerbaijan and also used in every region of Azerbaijan as herbal medicine practice.

Smoke tree (Saragan tree) – used and planted essentially for the color extracts. This tree has been brought and planted all around the mountains in Sheki. The color extracted from this tree was used in Kalaghayi coloring and carpet weaving. Despite the fact that the sericulture was completely down since decades in Sheki region, the smoke trees continue to grow in the mountain slopes. Their colorful leaves give a wonderful view to the historical Sheki.

Beech tree and oak tree was widely used in construction process, especially to build the historical Sheki roofs. That's why it is preferable to use in landscape design these trees symbolizing each of them an activity in Sheki.

“Sheki: city of 5 trees” is a marketing concept for tourism in the Site:

- it comprises cultural and natural resources of Sheki
- it combines hiking routes with stories about Sheki
- it links the rural environment with the urban area of Sheki

The Yukhari Bash Reserve Administration together with the Sheki DMO will work together on the development and marketing of various hiking routes in and around Sheki. The hiking routes have different thematic content related to the 5 trees concept.

5.7 Accommodation facilities

The number of hotels and other accommodation facilities in Sheki has been rising steadily since 2003, thus the accommodation infrastructure has been meeting the need of growing visitor flow. However, the accommodation sector risks falling short of market demand in the coming years unless it keeps the paces with the growth rate of the total number of tourists visiting the city. Sheki accounts for only a small portion of accommodation facilities in Azerbaijan.

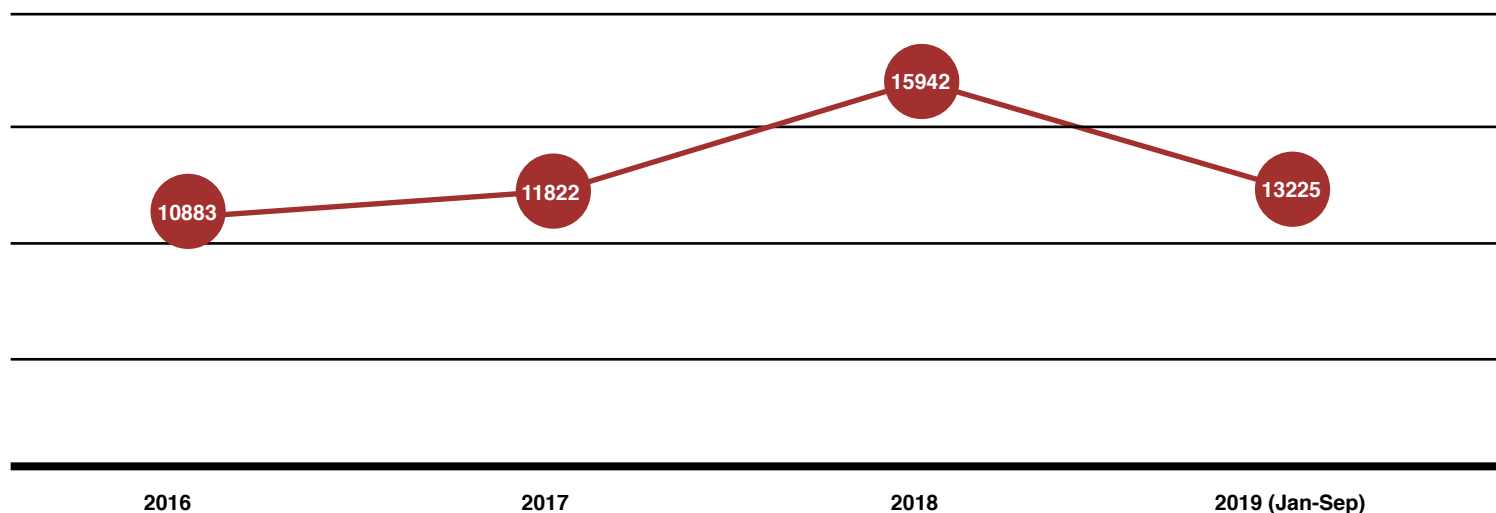
Most hotels in the reserve territory are in the centre and along the high street (Akhundzade Avenue). There are several hotels with modern facilities operating in the reserve, and new hotels are being built. Currently Sheki Vocational School No. 1 offers vocational training on hospitality, tourism and related services in order to prepare qualified personnel (such as hotel managers, bartenders, waiters, travel agents) for local hospitality and tourism businesses.

Some private residential houses in the reserve are also open to tourists looking for homestays.

The annual statistics of the number of overnight stays in Sheki is: 10,883 people in 2016, 11,822 people in 2017, 15,942 people in 2018, and 13,225 people until September 2019 (State Statistics Committee).



Number of guests at the hotels and other accommodation facilities in Sheki



The statistical data on overnight stays are from the data sets maintained by the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The data show the number of overnight stays at all hotels of Sheki city, not only the ones in the reserve territory. However, it is evident that most tourists come to the city mainly to visit the Site, and if it is taken into account that the reserve entirely covers the Site, the data can be assumed applicable also for the Yukhari Bash Reserve.

Number of guests staying at the hotels and other accommodation facilities in Sheki

5.8 Public Infrastructure: Transportation, public places, roads, parking

Sheki city is located at the 295th km of the Baku-Balakan motorway; and 387 km away from the capital city Baku if using the Hajigabul-Yevlakh motorway (based on the route of the ancient Silk Road). Sheki is connected Baku via road, air, and rail networks

Air connection: Sheki is accessible from three international airports: Baku Heydar Aliyev International Airport (300 km), Ganja International Airport (150 km), and Gabala International Airport (70km). There is another international airport in Zagatala city, 66 km from Sheki, but it is not in operation at present.

Road connection: The condition of the road connecting Sheki city with Khaldan village from the direction of Mingachevir city is not satisfactory. Therefore, it is recommended to use the road from the direction of Gabala city, which is in an excellent condition, and the journey from Baku takes less than four hours. Another motorway connects Sheki with the land border crossing in the north, in Balakan district, with Georgia. Intercity buses depart from Baku International Bus Terminal to Sheki on fixed schedule, but tickets are not available online. Sheki Bus Terminal is close to the reserve (1.5 km), but

there are no road signs to guide visitors in their 20-minute walk from the Bus Terminal to the heart of the reserve. Public transportation (mini-buses) is available from the Bus Terminal to the entrance of the reserve.

Rail connection: Sheki Railway Station is not located in the city proper, but in Kudurlu village a bit farther from the city. Train travel from Baku to Sheki takes around 8-9 hours, so it is not recommended for tour operators. There is no public transport available from the railway station to the city centre – only taxis.

Random development of tourism infrastructure: The tourism industry is developing in a random way in the historical part of Sheki. A coordinated urban master plan needs to be introduced in order to not impacted its historical-cultural heritage. Urban Regeneration Plan provides detailed description and solutions for the infrastructure problems mentioned below:

- Unsatisfactory public transport system
- Undefined and non-installed bus stops
- Undefined pedestrian routes
- Unsatisfactory state of roads
- Lack of pedestrian passages, public spaces and street furniture (benches, garbage bins)

- Incomplete and imperfect street illumination
- Absent of navigation signage (wayfinding)
- Lack of vision & planning instruments
- Poor waste management
- Visual pollution (names, advertisements etc.)

5.9 Tourism Marketing and awareness

There are some factors that hinder the proper organization of tourism. One of these is the lack of an effective strategic plan for tourism and marketing. At present, there is also lack of qualified guides to serve tourists. The interpreters to assist foreign tourists has not been organized properly. Foreign languages are widely spoken. Actually, the Yukhari Bash Reserve currently receives tourists in lower number than its potential. In this regard, it is obvious that cooperation with travel agencies is not properly organized. One of the reasons may be the lack of enough authority of the Yukhari Bash Reserve's leadership.

Proper promotional and advertising activities to attract tourists to the Yukhari Bash Reserve are important. Today, the targeted promotional activities of the Yukhari Bash Reserve inside or outside the territory of Azerbaijan are weak. Only Sheki Tourist Information Centre and separate travel companies participate in tourism fairs held in Azerbaijan. It's

important for the Yukhari Bash Reserve to have online sources of information to inform the public. Numerous events are held annually in the Yukhari Bash Reserve's territory, however promotional activities are not enough, although such activities are held in the country.

Considering all the above issues, it is obvious that the Yukhari Bash Reserve needs to have promotional and marketing plan for tourism activities. The increase in the quality of life in Azerbaijan lays the foundation for the development of tourism in the country. There is competition among regions of local tourism importance. Sheki Region is in need of promotional and tourism strategy, which can grant advantage in this competitive environment. In the framework of promoting awareness-raising about the Yukhari Bash Reserve in the territory of Azerbaijan Republic, it's important to achieve more strengthened relationships with schools and other educational institutions.



6 Risk Management

Sheki is located in the southern foothills of the Greater Caucasus Mountains. The city has a population of 63,000. The data shows that broad range of hazards of both natural and human origin occur in this city. Recent vulnerability assessment confirmed that the city of Sheki is very vulnerable to these hazards. Key hazards observed in the territory of Sheki are flash floods, debris flows, heavy rains, hails, earthquakes, landslides, and forest fires. Due to ongoing climate changes, it is likely that frequency and magnitude of these hazards will rise. Over the last decades, the scale of damage resulting from these hazards has significantly expanded which in its turn demonstrates low level of preparedness of the city. Therefore, an Emergency Plan has been developed in order to address all these risk factors. Risk preparedness and disaster mitigation will be one of the key components of the Emergency Plan.

The Emergency Plan for the Site is a framework document that the city will mobilize its resources against all possible threats and take the necessary steps to reduce disaster risks.

The presented risk assessment methodology allows the city's level of preparedness / vulnerability to natural and man-made hazards to be assessed on a regular basis and to determine what action can be taken in the required areas to reduce disaster risks.

In addition, the Emergency Plan confirms a coordinated response to the emergency situations, the mobilization of existing staff and resources in the city, and the involvement of additional resources if needed.

The Emergency Plan is applied as an instrument to support emergency and local services and officials in their emergency response activities to provide an efficient and effective responses to an emergency.

The plan outlines what local government offices, city offices, residents, schools, and other service providers in Sheki will do during emergencies, what they should do, and how to mobilize resources to reduce losses. At the same time, the plan shows how to reduce disaster risk during non-emergency periods.

In short, the objectives of the Emergency plan are set out as follows:

- Mobilize state and community resources to reduce disaster risks on a regular basis
- Improving preparedness for human and natural hazards in non-emergency situations
- Defining the roles and responsibilities of state and community organizations and the local population to reduce disaster risk during emergencies
- Identification of the main responsibilities of organizations and community groups, as well as owners and the population of Sheki during emergencies
- Effective management of crisis situations caused by emergencies
- Strengthen coordination between stakeholders to improve emergency preparedness
- Organize effective resource management to reduce losses during emergencies
- Mobilization of resources to eliminate complications after emergencies
- Mainstreaming DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction) activities into the future development plans of Sheki city

The Emergency Plan for the Site will be submitted along with the Management Plan.

7 Management Objectives and Actions

To achieve effective management, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the Site, its vulnerabilities and threats, and the opportunities arising from the Site status. This chapter sets out the objectives and actions identified to address the issues and challenges in main management areas stated in previous chapters.

The problematic areas determined as part of the Management Plan vision, the goals to tackle them and the actions to achieve these goals have been summarized under 6 main headings:

A. Efficient Management structures

B. Conservation, Restoration and Understanding of the Site

C. Conservation and Development of intangible heritage value

D. Development of tourism potential and infrastructure

E. Risk management

F. Promotion and Communication of the Site's significance

The following sections provide objectives and actions for each of these goal headings.

A. Efficient Management structures

For the successful implementation of the Management Plan, it's necessary to improve the management process and the coordination between the stakeholders. The Management Plan proposes to establish new organizational approach by creating the optimal commitment and authorization mechanism.

The Site faces mainly with the following problems from the management perspective:

- Clarifying responsibilities of authorities within the boundaries of the Site in most management areas;
- Lack of information about the OUVs and attributes of the Site among key managers and decision makers from various relevant government and public institutions;
- Similar projects implemented by the authorities and various stakeholders due to deficiencies in the inter-agency coordination.
- Yukhari Bash Reserve Administration Office needs upgraded level of financial and administrative management and human resources with improved skillset.

Objective A.1: Ensure that all stakeholders are fully aware of their direct and indirect responsibilities in all areas of the management as set out in the Management Plan of the Site.

Action A.1: Organize meetings with all relevant stakeholders to share the goals and objectives of the Management Plan of the Site and ensure the clear division of roles and responsibilities between them.

Objective A.2: Ensure that representatives of all the involved parties and relevant stakeholders are well informed of the OUVs and their attributes of Sheki Historical Centre.

Action A.2: to prepare presentation on OUVs and attributes of Sheki Historical Centre and deliver informational presentations to all the mentioned national and local authority representatives.

Objective A.3: Ensure that all the plans and projects to be implemented for the development of the Site are duly coordinated between the key and supporting stakeholders.

Action A.3: to establish a Coordination Commission which will involve members from all key and supporting stakeholders and organize regular meetings to coordinate on common issues of the Site.

RMC will be responsible for establishing the Coordination Commission. The Commission board will be represented by these institutions: RMC, Yukhari Bash Reserve Administration, The Executive Committee of Sheki City, Sheki Municipality, DMO, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Council of Elders and "Support to Intangible Cultural Heritage" Public Association. The Coordination Commission meetings will be held on a regular monthly schedule to ensure that all agencies jointly decide on common issues for full understanding and mastering of the Management Plan. It will help the elimination of inconsistencies, similarities, differences and shortcomings in the task of relevant institution and establish coordination between the Management Plan and other planning and designing works and ensure the integrity of the Plan.

In order to increase the efficiency of the local Reserve Administration, STA envisions certain development and capacity building actions for the Reserve Administration's management structure and its staff. For this purpose, the following objectives are set out:

Objective A.4: Ensure the establishment of more efficient and effective management structure of the Yukhari Bash Reserve Administration Office with relevant qualified staff.

Action A.4: Analyse the Yukhari Bash Reserve management structure, identify drawbacks and come up with solutions on improvements of financial and administrative structure of the management and send clear suggestions to the

government for further implementation.

Action A.5: Organize capacity building trainings for the Yukhari Bash Reserve's staff to increase their competencies and qualifications in relevant fields of conservation, research, tourism management, etc.

B. Conservation, Restoration and Understanding of the Site

There are several problems concerning the Site's understanding, conservation and restoration issues. The problems and issues have been mentioned in the Chapter 4 and need to be addressed in the objectives of the Management Plan accordingly.

Objective B.1: Ensure that all involved agencies are well familiar with the goals and objectives of the Conservation Master Plan and Restoration Manual to contribute to conservation, restoration and maintenance of Site's OUVs and attributes properly.

Action B.1: Share CMP and Restoration Manual with involved agencies and stakeholders and conduct trainings and session on their content and further implementation.

RMC will conduct series of meetings and sessions with all the institutions and agencies involved in the conservation and restoration of the Site and provide instructions for further implementation. As described in the Chapter 3, the ExCom of Sheki City plays a leading role in controlling and authorizing the new construction process in the town including the Site area. **Department of Architecture and Construction of Sheki ExCom** is responsible for repair works in the private houses in the reserve. Projects of new constructions and restorations in private houses are to be permitted by them after the initial check and approval by RMC architects' team. The Department also controls the implementation of the works. Repair and beautification projects concerning

the streets and public spaces are also developed and/or coordinated with the Department. Therefore, it is very important that the architects from this Department are fully aware of all the standards set out in CMP and Restoration Manual.

Sheki City Municipality will be engaged in involved in conservation and restoration of municipal property within the Site in coordination with RMC and will need to be familiarized with the standards of these manuals. **Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources** is a key stakeholder in conservation of the attributes related to overall natural and forest setting of the Site. To ensure the sustainable conservation of the forest setting and its elements, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and its relevant departments will be shared with the standards and rules of the CMP and Restoration Manual.

As mentioned in the Chapter 4, one of the main issues of uncontrolled construction is lack of knowledge and awareness of OUVs and its attributes and their conservation policy among the **local private construction and architectural solutions companies**. Their representatives are certainly in the target audience for RMC to increase the awareness and knowledge and share the new conservation and restoration standards with.

Objective B.2: Ensure that the community residents are aware of the OUVs and attributes of the Site and closely involved in conservation, restoration and promotion of them.

Action B.2: Prepare informational materials and brochures describing the OUVs and attributes of the Site and concise version of the Restoration Manual to distribute among the residents.

Action B.3: Conduct informational sessions for the residents to enlighten them and ensure active participation in

conservation and promotion of the Site heritage.

Objective B.3: Achieve implementation of conservation and restoration of monuments located within the borders of the Site phase by phase.

Action B.4: To conduct all preparation works including initial estimation, tendering, selection of the implementing agency, etc. and start physical conservation and restoration works.

CMP introduces an action plan on implementation of the conservation and restoration works divided into several phases. The first phase of the action plan includes the works of the monuments within the citadel and located along the main trade street, including overall 17 restoration projects. The preparation works for these projects started in 2020 and planned to be conducted for the following two years. CMP provides more detailed action plan on the following steps and phases of the conservation and restoration of monuments within the border of the Site.

Objective B.4: Ensure that new buildings and other developments do not harm the OUV of the Site.

Action B.5: Establish a Technical Advisory Panel for major assessing, approving and monitoring for development and construction applications/projects.

RMC plans to establish a Panel consisted of the members of relevant agencies: Architects from RMC, members of Department of Architecture and Construction of Sheki ExCom and Sheki City Municipality and members of Council of Elders. The Panel envisages collaborated decisions in controlling and monitoring of new construction developments for the purpose of safeguarding the OUVs of the Site. The panel members will ensure that all rules in the Construction Law and standards from the CMP are duly accepted and

applied. For instance, as mentioned in the "Uncontrolled construction" part of the Chapter 4, it is essential to abide the rules of the Construction Density Coefficient which should be strictly controlled and monitored by Technical Advisory Body members in order to avoid the construction of new houses in the gardens of the tradition houses which harm the OUV. Also, the Technical Advisory Body will ensure that all relevant new policy documents take full account of the Site and do not propose actions which would endanger the OUV.

Objective B.5: Ensure that untraditional buildings and urban fabric elements are restored not to further damage the visual integrity of the Site.

Action B.6: Work out incentive mechanisms to ensure the private participation in restoration of traditional "kiremit" roofs.

The general condition with the roofs and the scale of their damage is provided in Chapter 4. STA and RMC plan to carry out certain projects to meet these issues and some of them are underway.

- The Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan considers to subsidize the factory in Sheki to produce "kiremit" roof materials. According to preliminary discussions, these materials will be available to residents of the Site on a very acceptable terms which will enable them to follow them to the standards and replace the roofs.
- RMC Fund (Chapter 3) will consider granting certain amount of funds to the residents of the Site to cover roofing issues. The construction team of RMC has calculated the difference between the construction cost of the cheap roof materials and the "kiremit" and will cover the difference to the residents who will be constructing a new house. For those who already have improper roofing and need

to change them according to the new standards, will be covered the whole amount for the new roofing.

Action B.7: To prepare the list of irrelevant constructions that damage the visual integrity and provide solutions for them.

The list of irrelevant constructions that damage the visual integrity has been prepared and the problems and solutions for them are identified in CMP. These problems, like other problems that damage the visual integrity, will be addressed in the short- and medium-term goals of the CMP.

Objective B.6: Ensure that all unregistered and abandoned buildings and monuments in the area of the Site which contribute to the OUVs are on state protection and function properly.

Action B.8: To prepare a list of the unregistered buildings and monuments within the borders of the Site and submit it to the Cabinet of Ministers for state registration and state protection.

The process of state registration of unregistered buildings and monuments is underway. Around 15 merchant houses are among those buildings. There are also some abandoned public buildings which remain unregistered and unused. After being registered, some of these buildings can be used for tourism purposes following proper restoration and adaptation process. For instance, empty houses in the territory of the old town can be used as residential houses of Bed & Breakfast type or the houses leased in accordance with negotiations with the owners. Also, the abandoned historical houses with yards can be chosen for café and teahouse places which are in great demand in Sheki. More detailed proposals and solutions will be introduced in the Urban Regeneration Plan.

Objective B.7: Ensure that the traditional water system and the pipelines are well preserved and continue manifesting the OUV of the Site.

Action B.9: Implement conservation and restoration actions provided in the CMP related to Tajlig and Hajihasan pipelines.

Action B.10: Work closely with "AzerSu" to ensure their activities in the Historical Centre do not damage the traditional water sources and pipelines.

"Azersu" Open Joint Stock Company is an organization that provides consumers with drinking water and sewerage services. The Joint Stock Company organizes the collection, processing, transportation and sale of water from sources, and carries out wastewater treatment. Engaged in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of water reservoirs and water pipelines, their activities in the town leads to vanishing the natural springs and decreases the amount of water coming from the natural sources. RMC plans to work with "Azersu" to balance the provision of the water and thus contribute to safeguarding the OUV attribute.

Action B.11: to register Tajlig and Hajihasan water pipes as state monuments to ensure state protection.

To foster the conservation and the maintenance of the existing water/irrigation system, RMC plans to take necessary measures to register Tajlig and Hajihasan water pipes on a state level as valuable elements of the Site. The official registration of the pipes will enable RMC to control the maintenance and the conservation issues in coordination with relevant government and municipality authorities.

Objective B.8: Ensure efficient waste management

Action B.12: To collaborate with local entities responsible for waste

management to ensure the waste is collected in due time and order on a regular basis.

RMC plans to enter into a partnership agreement with Sheki Housing and Utility Services Office under the ExCom of Sheki and contract them for delivering waste management services within the borders of the Site.

Action B.13: To conduct awareness campaigns with residents to encourage them to follow the rules of hygiene and waste discharge.

Objective B.9: Ensure that the Site's significance is further studied and researched.

Action B.14: Conduct mapping of all potential archeological sites and work out archeological activities in identified sites.

RMC cooperates with National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Azerbaijan to work towards identifying the ways of further understanding of the Site and its OUVs. Mapping of potential archeological sites has already been conducted and 4 sites have been identified for archeological activities to be carried out during 2020-2025. One of the sites will be dedicated to researching traditional cultivation system and ancient waterpipes. Another archeological site will be set out for studying old trade traditions, streets and caravanserais that were lost due to the 1772 flooding.

Action B.15: To carry out certain activities to enrich the Heritage Fund of the Site.

Artifacts and different Items of cultural and historical significance that represent the OUVs of the Site will be collected to enrich the Site's Heritage Fund. RMC conducts negotiations with residents to make donations to the Fund. There is also a certain budget allocated by RMC for obtaining the relevant artifacts from residents.

Action B.16: To carry out activities and take certain measures to collect and

enrich the Site's archive.

Various archive materials such as documents, photos, letters, surveys, architectural plans of old monuments and other materials of cultural and historical importance are being collected in the archive of the Site.

C. Conservation and Development of intangible heritage value

One of the main parts of the cultural heritage in Sheki is the intangible heritage in within the border of the Site. The efforts for the revitalization of such intangible heritage elements, specifically those which support OUV, have been considered as an important part of the Management Plan. In this regard, the objectives are identified in the following areas:

Objective C.1: Ensure that intangible heritage elements continue manifesting the OUV of the Site.

Action C.1: To conduct awareness in the community to motivate the residents to use the elements of shabaka, wood carving, bukhara making, ornament drawings in the construction and internal design of the houses.

There is lack of interest in traditional home decoration among the population. Cheap and modern building materials are in higher demand than traditional ones. One of the reasons for that is residents' unawareness of the values and high cost of the handmade decorations. In order to improve the situation, RMC plans to promote and support the elements of traditional decorations and create better facilities for artisans to work and produce more efficiently. The awareness will happen through the informational campaigns with the community.

Objective C.2 Revive traditional craftsmanship activities by strengthening institutional support, initiating new projects and providing better facilities.

Action C.2: To launch newly established "Support to Intangible Cultural Heritage" Public Association's activities by strengthening its institutional and financial capacity.

Sheki Craftsmanship Association was established by World Bank in 2004 and stopped its activities after a few years for various reasons. Under the direction of STA, the RMC re-established the Association in 2020 and now plans to revive its activities in Sheki. The Association will be RMC's main implementing agency in Sheki for crafts and intangible heritage related projects and will be granted funding for individual projects. Overall, the main goal of the Association will be the protection of the Intangible Culture of Azerbaijan, its promotion and development.

Action C.3: To initiate and implement various projects which will contribute to the development of craftsmanship

In order to meet the issues and challenges mentioned in the Chapter 4 and to facilitate to their solution, RMC plans to initiate projects that will contribute to revival and sustainable development of the crafts industry in Sheki. These projects will be funded through STA's Grant Program and RMC Fund and implemented by "Support to Intangible Cultural Heritage" Public Association.

In a country with rich and unique cultural heritage like Azerbaijan, where the local artisans have created a rich and distinctive material traditions, ethnic products and souvenirs can be a sustainable source of income for a good percentage of the villages labor force. In addition, this industry requires small capital investment and provides high value added in comparison to other manufacturing sector. Within this context, the Sheki crafts can be integrated into national and international supply chains of the ethnic products and handicrafts and design items through increasing the competitiveness and market penetration opportunities.

The projects will target variety of objectives such as supporting entrepreneurial activities of artisans, passing the traditions to younger generations by better learning opportunities, creating sustainable income options, creating better marketing opportunities, organizing fairs and exhibitions, etc. Some of the sample project themes are:

Crafts and Design - Designer in Residence: Creative cross-cultural exchange between an expert designer grouped with some local designers to work with a group of local artisans in a selected craft type. Will focus on capacity building in designing and new product development of the local artisans.

Note: RMC is currently implementing a project with an experienced foreign crafts designer to boost the production of crafts with new design approach. The artisans will have an opportunity to produce newly designed products with traditional production system and materials. The project intends to create a unique ecosystem of resources, inspiration, and collaboration opportunities to grow new ideas, business opportunities and creative networking. This project will generate employment in the regions, empower local artisans and other segments of the tourism value chain, and finally, effectively promote intangible cultural heritage of Azerbaijan.

Boosting Business Skills of Artisans and Craftsmen: Though skilled in crafts making, many artisans lack skillset in making their small business visible, design and brand their product, its packaging, access additional market, etc. A training program with a strong focus on capacity building would facilitate the improvement from this perspective.

Social Enterprise in Crafts Industry: Awareness campaign in understanding the potential of crafts enterprise and its



impact at improving the general livelihood, financial and social well-being of the community by job creation, empowerment and cultural enhancement.

Note: RMC has implemented a project titled “Sheki Artisans Map” with the help of local partners. The informational map provides the names, contacts, type of crafts activity of artisans and their location in one brochure. The brochure intends to be distributed among the tourists for getting hands on experience which in turn generate better income for the artisans. See the map in the Annex.

Women Economic Empowerment through Crafts:

There are types of crafts exclusively made by women such as weaving, embroidery, etc. But with the current skills gap and shortcomings, social and cultural barriers, women particularly need to be trained in better designing their crafts and in management of their businesses.

Trainings for the local youth interested in crafts:

to support the young generation who is interested in learning the crafts making and developing their future small businesses based on this by organizing courses or trainings.

Annual Crafts Festival / Fair: Organize a festival or fair of crafts made by the local artisans to increase the motivation for creation and promote intangible heritage conservation and to pursue some profit-making goals for the crafts makers and artisans.

Action C.4: To provide local artisans with better working and marketing facilities

Today, the workshops of the artisans and craftspeople in Sheki are spread throughout the city and do not have a satisfactory material and technical base. Relocation and grouping of artisans’ workshops in one centre will allow them to join the tourism value chain. This relocation process is proposed to provide the artisans and craftspeople with better working conditions, easy access to tourists, and further opportunities to collaborate with each other. Urban Regeneration Plan provides detailed solutions on this issue.

Objective C.3: Revive the Silk production traditions – sericulture industry in Sheki

Measures should be taken for the development of sericulture: primarily, comprehensive measures to ensure the production of cocoons should be developed. In the scope of these activities, the residents should be encouraged to silkworm breeding considering its direct

relevance to one of the Site’s OUVs.

Action C.5: Collaborate with relevant government agencies for joint efforts in promoting sericulture activities in Sheki.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is a government program for developing silkworm and cocoon breeding in the country. It is essential that the residents of the Site are familiar with all the benefits and advantages of this program. RMC plans to conduct series of consultations with locals to explain the ways on how to benefit from the program.

State Agency of Small and Medium Business Development provides support and a range of services to SME entrepreneurs, as well as coordinates and regulates public services in this area. RMC in close collaboration with SME State Agency will ensure that the residents of Sheki benefit from the available government subsidies and other financial opportunities in order to start silkworm and cocoon breeding activities.

D. Development of tourism potential and infrastructure

Objective D.1: Ensure that the tourism development does not harm the heritage of the Site and its OUVs.

According to *ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter* “one of the primary reasons for undertaking any conservation works is to make the significance of the place more accessible to visitors and members of the host community, in a well-managed way.” “In the company of armed conflict, economic development and environmental pollution, tourism can be regarded as one of the major factors that places Heritage at Risk”. In order to minimize the negative effects of tourism on the Site, the following actions will be taken:

Action D.1: New touristic construction development will be closely controlled and monitored according to the standards and policies set out in CMP.

Action D.2: Carrying capacity in the touristic destinations will be strictly controlled based on the standards and policies set out in the CMP.

Action D.3: To prepare guidelines and instructions for tourists to follow during camping, hiking and other nature activities to ensure the safety of the forest setting of the Site.

Objective D.2: Ensure that the residents of the Site benefit from tourism development and that the cultural and economic life of the community gets better.

Community capacity building is widely acknowledged as an important tourism development strategy. Community capacity building is also a necessary ingredient for success of community development. Tourism development and building the capacity for local communities need to progress hand in hand. Community capacity building programs will help the community of the Site to improve their ability to participate in the tourism decision-making processes. One of the key objectives of the Management Plan is the empowerment of local community, to enable them to utilize their full potential to participate in economic and social activities and be part of tourism chain effectively. In order to place more emphasis on local participation in tourism development, community capacity building strategies may be a good start for the tourism industry in Sheki towards sustainable tourism development as it allows more community engagement in the management and control over their resources.

Community capacity building efforts will embrace various spheres such as developing entrepreneurial skills, gaining new tourism related expertise and additional trainings and education.

Action D.4: Organize entrepreneurship and business skills trainings for community members.

Opportunities for developing small businesses based on tourism chain will be explained and provided to the residents of the Site. RMC team will develop relevant program content in collaboration with business practitioners and SME State Agency.

Action D.5: Collaborate with educational institutions to actively recruit among Sheki residents for tourism related vocational education.

It is vital for the residents to understand the scope of impact that tourism is having on their community. Therefore, RMC will promote the opportunities of education in tourism fields and cooperate with Tourism College in Mingachevir to make presentations to the young generation of Sheki community about the available opportunities. Professions like guides, hotel managers, hospitality technicians, cooks, etc should widely be promoted.

Objective D.3: To create better tourism supply and tourism infrastructure facilities.

Action D.6: To implement solutions provided in Urban Regeneration Plan according to the action plan.

Action D.7: To develop and enhance private participation policy and mechanisms in development of tourism and public infrastructure.

STA envisages several tools of incentive mechanisms in enhancing private participation. For instance, STA's Grant Program will ensure funding for various projects targeting the development of tourism in regions as well as in Sheki. However, more sophisticated tools and mechanisms are planned to be drafted to ensure more efficient private participation.

Objective D.4: To create compelling tourism experiences and products based on the Site's heritage and its OUVs.

Action D.8: To work with DMO Sheki office to work out new tourist products and experiences.

Tourism products and experiences of Sheki will be based on its unique features of cultural heritage and outstanding values and will reflect history, cultural traditions, nature, landscape and environment. Variety of products or experiences that will make a positive contribution to cultural tourism of Sheki will be worked out and delivered to the market. RMC and Sheki DMO office will develop new experiences considering all the tangible and intangible elements described in Chapter 5. The new products will ensure that the values of the Site are well interpreted, explained and delivered to tourists.

E. Risk management

Objective E.1: To ensure that all involved parties in Risk Management of the Site are well acquainted with the Emergency Plan of the Site and its objectives and actions.

Action E.1: To present the Emergency Plan to the involved parties and conduct regular meetings and sessions.

As provided in the Emergency Plan and Chapter 3 of this Management Plan, the list of stakeholders in the area of Risk Management is long and complicated. The roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder as well as the main issues and objectives of

Risk Management of the Site are provided in the Emergency Plan. The proper acknowledgment of the main issues and implementation of the Emergency Plan requires well planned approach by all stakeholders. RMC will share the Emergency Plan with all involved parties and ensure the coordination in all risk preparedness and disaster mitigation processes.

F. Promotion and Communication of the Site's significance

RMC plans to create a communication and marketing plan that will help promote the OUVs and attributes of the Site to people of community, citizens of Azerbaijan and tourists. This plan outlines the basic steps of creating proper interpretation of the Site and includes various tools and techniques of marketing. RMC will apply several important principles and approaches in promoting the Site and its values. Variety of marketing tools such as technical, digital and printing materials, promotional programs and events, educational lectures and informational tours are substantial part of the promotional activities for the Site.

Objective F.1: Ensure that all the digital and printing marketing tools are in place and functioning for the promotion of the Site and its values.

Action F.1: To create a new brand for the Site.

RMC plans to create a new brand for the Site. The brand for the Site will outline its main values and deliver the message of respect and protection of the Site. The brand will ensure the promotion of the Site to different audiences, contribute to the development of tourism, as well as making sure that it is beneficial for the local society and businesses.

Action F.2: To create a new website and social media pages for the Site and ensure their effective running.

One of the most important heritage promotion techniques is creation of website and social media channels of the Site. It is very important to understand the best practices of using social media channels for promotion of the Site and to determine the main streams in the social media platforms. RMC plans to conduct a preliminary research on this area in order to build a right strategy. These channels are expected to be effective tools for correct interpretation of the Site's history and values, a visitor engagement, marketing events,

programs and exhibits, and attracting new visitors.

Action F.3: To work towards preparing a content for informational brochures, posters and leaflets and their distribution.

Printing materials are a great addition to digital marketing tools. RMC will prepare a content reflecting the Site and its values, history, general cultural heritage and traditions and will publish catalogues, brochures, leaflets for mass and targeted distribution. Placing information boards and posters in different points of Sheki and other regions of the country will also contribute towards the promotion of the Site.

Objective F.2: Ensure that public awareness through events and media outreach is provided.

Action F.4: To celebrate and support World Heritage Day with substantial promotional activities.

April 18 is internationally marked as the World Heritage Day. Monuments and Sites of international value are the main objectives of this day; their values are celebrated and honored all over the world. RMC will be organizing special celebration of this day in the Site annually and use this opportunity to manifest and demonstrate the Site's significance to the audience, educate public in protecting and conserving the attributes of the Site.

Action F.5: To work on preparation of various media and video materials and ensure their broadcasting through traditional media channels.

At the same time, it is very important to make educational and promotional documentary films to be broadcast in local and international media. STA runs strong media department which can broadcast such promotional programs and videos in the local media and TV channels. STA also regularly participate in international tourism and cultural fairs and festivals which plays a significant role in promotion of Azerbaijan's culture and its promotion as a destination to the international audience. This is another platform for distribution of the Site's universal values through print and video materials.

Objective F.3: Ensure that the OUVs of the Site is incorporated in the programs of educational institutions and schools.

Action F.6: To work with targeted higher education institutions for awareness purposes.

There is a list of universities that RMC plans to work with on specific promotion activities. Students and faculty from Azerbaijan State University of Architecture and Construction, Azerbaijan State Art and Culture University, Azerbaijan State Academy of Fine Arts, Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University will be closely involved in interpretation of the Site. Those are the educational universities providing an experts pool in different fields of architecture, conservation, art, cultural tourism. However, the Site and its universal values are not studied and contemplated by the students, researchers and faculty of these universities. Informational tours, lectures, case studies will be organized by RMC in collaboration with university administrations to cover this gap and ensure full acknowledgement of one of country's very few the Site.

Action F.7: To work with schools to ensure the proper understanding of history and values of the Site among children.

RMC plans to collaborate with the Ministry of Education in order to take series of educational and promotional measures regarding the Site and its values. A proposal will be drafted and submitted to the Ministry of Education for inclusion of informational materials about Sheki Historical Centre and its universal heritage significance into the curriculum of history, geography, social studies, and other relevant subjects taught in schools of Azerbaijan.

Informational tours will be organized to the Site for schoolchildren as an extracurricular activity during the school holidays and weekends.

Objective F.4: Ensure that guides are well trained on the OUVs and attributes of the Site in order to secure visitor awareness.

Action F.8: To work with Azerbaijan Tourist Guides Association (ATGA) to prepare a right content for guidebooks.

ATGA is a public association that unites about 350 tourist guides of Azerbaijan. It protects the legal status of tourist guides and aims to carry out the training / certification process. RMC in close collaboration with ATGA will prepare a guidebook and organize informational sessions for guides to ensure that the universal significance of the Site is well interpreted and delivered to all visitors.



TABLE OF OBJECTIVES

A.1	Ensure that all stakeholders are fully aware of their direct and indirect responsibilities in all areas of the management as set out in the Management Plan of the Site.	E.1	To ensure that all involved parties in Risk Management of the Site are well acquainted with the Emergency Plan of the Site and its objectives and actions.
A.2	Ensure that representatives of all the involved parties and relevant stakeholders are well informed of the OUVs and their attributes of the Site.	F.1	Ensure that all the digital and printing marketing tools are in place and functioning for the promotion of the Site and its values.
A.3	Ensure that all the plans and projects to be implemented for the development of the Site are duly coordinated between the key and supporting stakeholders.	F.2	Ensure that public awareness through events and media outreach is provided.
A.4	Ensure the establishment of more efficient and effective management structure of the local Reserve Administration Office with relevant qualified staff.	F.3	Ensure that the OUVs of the Site is incorporated in the programs of educational institutions and schools.
B.1	Ensure that all involved agencies are well familiar with the goals and objectives of the Conservation Master Plan and Restoration Manual to contribute to conservation, restoration and maintenance of the Site's OUVs and attributes properly.	F.4	Ensure that guides are well trained on the OUVs and attributes of the Site in order to secure visitor awareness.
B.2	Ensure that the community residents are aware of the OUVs and attributes of the Site and closely involved in conservation, restoration and promotion of them.		
B.3	Achieve implementation of conservation and restoration of monuments located within the borders of the Site phase by phase.		
B.4	Ensure that new buildings and other developments do not harm the OUV of the Site.		
B.5	Ensure that untraditional buildings and urban fabric elements are restored not to further damage the visual integrity of the Site.		
B.6	Ensure that all unregistered and abandoned buildings and monuments in the area of the Site which contribute to the OUVs are on state protection and function properly.		
B.7	Ensure that the traditional water system and the pipelines are well preserved and continue manifesting the OUV of the Site.		
B.8	Ensure efficient waste management		
B.9	Ensure that the Site's significance is further studied and researched.		
C.1	Ensure that intangible heritage elements continue manifesting the OUV of the Site.		
C.2	Revive traditional craftsmanship activities by strengthening institutional support, initiating new projects and providing better facilities.		
C.3	Revive the Silk production traditions – sericulture industry in Sheki		
D.1	Ensure that the tourism development does not harm the heritage of the Site and its OUVs.		
D.2	Ensure that the residents of the Site benefit from tourism development and that the cultural and economic life of the community gets better.		
D.3	To create better tourism supply and tourism infrastructure facilities.		
D.4	To create compelling tourism experiences and products based on the Site's heritage and its OUVs.		

Action Plan



ACTION PLAN

Efficient Management structures

#	Action	Responsible party	Funding Resource	Time period	Monitoring Indicator
A.1	Organize meetings with all relevant stakeholders to share the goals and objectives of the Management Plan of the Site and ensure the clear division of roles and responsibilities between them.	RMC	RMC Budget	2021	the notes, feedback report and photos of the meetings
A.2	to prepare presentation on OUVs and attributes of the Site and deliver informational presentations to all the mentioned national and local authority representatives.	RMC	RMC Budget	2021	the notes, feedback report and photos of the meetings; knowledge of the stakeholders on OUVs and attributes
A.3	to establish a Coordination Commission which will involve members from all key and supporting stakeholders and organize regular meetings to coordinate on common issues of the Site.	RMC	RMC Budget	2021	A list of the Coordination Commission members; reports from the meetings and feedback on discussed issues
A.4	Analyse the Reserve management structure, identify drawbacks and come up with solutions on improvements of financial and administrative structure of the management and send clear suggestions to the government for further implementation.	STA	N/A	2021	proposed new management structure of the Reserve; proposal to the Cabinet of Ministers
A.5	Organize capacity building trainings for the Reserve's staff to increase their competencies and qualifications in relevant fields of conservation, research, tourism management, etc.	RMC	Reserve Budget	2021-2022	the training syllabus; the notes, feedback report and photos from the trainings

B.1	Share CMP and Restoration Manual with involved agencies and stakeholders and conduct trainings and session on their content and further implementation.	RMC	RMC Budget	2021	the notes, feedback report and photos of the meetings	
B.2	Prepare informational materials and brochures describing the OUVs and attributes of the Site and concise version of the Restoration Manual to distribute among the residents.	RMC; Yukhari Bash Reserve	RMC Budget	2021	the copies of the brochures and shortened versions of Restoration Manual;	
B.3	Conduct informational sessions for the residents to enlighten them and ensure active participation in conservation and promotion of the Site heritage.	RMC; Yukhari Bash Reserve	Reserve Budget	2021-2022	the notes, feedback report and photos of the sessions	
B.4	To conduct all preparation works including initial estimation, tendering, selection of the implementing agency, etc. and start physical conservation and restoration works.	STA; RMC	State Budget	Investment	2021-2024	all tendering documents, project design works and carried out construction or restoration works
B.5	Establish a Technical Advisory Panel for major assessing, approving and monitoring for development and construction applications/projects.	RMC	N/A	2021	A list of the Technical Advisory Panel members; reports from the meetings and feedback on discussed issues	
B.6	Work out incentive mechanisms to ensure the private participation in restoration of traditional “kiremit” roofs.	STA; RMC	N/A	2021-2024	detailed description of mechanisms; list of restored roof:	

B.7	To prepare a priority list of irrelevant constructions that damage the visual integrity and provide solutions for them.	RMC	N/A	2021-2023	ongoing restoration works of the priority buildings	
B.8	To prepare a list of the unregistered buildings and monuments within the borders of the Site and submit it to the Cabinet of Minsiters for state registration and state protection.	STA; RMC	N/A	2021	list of newly registered buildings and monuments	
B.9	Implement conservation and restoration actions provided in the CMP related to Tajlig and Hajihasan pipelines.	RMC; EXCOM	State Budget	Investment	2022-2023	monitoring of implemented conservation works
B.10	Work closely with “AzerSu” to ensure their activities in the Historical Center do not damage the traditional water sources and pipelines.	STA; RMC	N/A	2021-2023	notes from coordination meetings	
B.11	to register Tajlig and Hajihasan water pipes as state monuments to ensure state protection.	STA; RMC	N/A	2021	state approval about the registration	
B.12	To collaborate with local entities responsible for waste management to ensure the waste is collected in due time and order on a regular basis.	RMC; EXCOM	RMC Budget	2021-2024	new mechanisms worked out for managing the wast	
B.13	To conduct awareness campaigns with residents to encourage them to follow the rules of hygiene and waste discharge.	RMC; Yukhari Bash Reserve	Reserve Budget	2021-2024	photos from the events, sessions, projects	
B.14	Conduct mapping of all potential archeological sites and work out archeological activities in identified sites.	RMC, Azerbaijan National Academy of Science	RMC Budget	2021-2024	reports about the archeological activities	
B.15	To carry out certain activities to enrich the Heritage Fund of the Site.	RMC, Yukhari Bash Reserve	RMC Budget	2021-2024	new artifacts obtained	
B.16	To carry out activities and take certain measures to collect and enrich the Site’s archive.	RMC, Yukhari Bash Reserve	RMC Budget	2021-2024	list of newly obtained archive documents	

C.1	To conduct awareness in the community to motivate the residents to use the elements of shabaka, wood carving, bukhara making, ornament drawings in the construction and internal design of the houses.	RMC; Yukhari Bash Reserve	RMC Budget	2021-2024	elements in the newly restored or constructed houses
C.2	To launch newly established Support to Intangible Cultural Heritage Public Association's activities by strengthening its institutional and financial capacity.	STA; RMC	RMC Budget	2021-2022	The Association's charter, its structure and projects
C.3	To initiate and implement various projects which will contribute to the development of craftsmanship	RMC; Crafts Association	RMC Budget; Grants programs	2012-2024	reports about the projects
C.4	To provide local artisans with better working and marketing facilities	STA; RMC	RMC Budget; Grants programs	2021-2022	the training syllabus; the notes, feedback report and photos from the trainings
C.5	Collaborate with relevant government agencies for joint efforts in promoting sericulture activities in Sheki.	STA; RMC	RMC Budget	2021-2023	reports from the meetings, project proposals

Development of Tourism Potential and Infrastructure	D.1	New touristic construction development will be closely controlled and monitored according to the standards and policies set out in CMP and Urban Regeneration Plan.	RMC	N/A	2021-2025	meetings of the Coordination Committee and Technical Advisory Body; new buildings' monitoring
	D.2	Carrying capacity in the touristic destinations will be strictly controlled based on the standards and policies set out in the CMP.	RMC	N/A	2021-2025	rules and instructions in the places;
	D.3	To prepare guidelines and instructions for tourists to follow during camping, hiking and other nature activities to ensure the safety of the forest setting of the Site.	RMC	N/A	2021-2022	rules and instructions in the places; informational leaflets, signs and boards
	D.4	Organize entrepreneurship and business skills trainings for community members.	STA; RMC	RMC Budget	2021-2023	the training syllabus; the notes, feedback report and photos from the trainings
	D.5	Collaborate with educational institutions to actively recruit among Sheki residents for tourism related vocational education.	STA; RMC	N/A	2021-2025	number of students enrolled for vocational trainings
	D.6	To implement solutions provided in Urban Regeneration Plan according to the action plan.	STA; RMC	State Budget; Budget	Investment STA/RMC 2021-2025	all tendering documents, project design works and carried out projects
	D.7	To develop and enhance private participation policy and mechanisms in development of tourism and public infrastructure.	STA; RMC	N/A	2021-2022	draft document on incentive mechanism for private participation
	D.8	To work with DMO Sheki office to work out new tourist products and experiences.	STA; RMC	RMC Budget	2021-2025	created products, experiences, photos and videos
Risk Management	E.1	To present the Emergency Plan to the involved parties and conduct regular meetings and sessions.	STA; RMC	RMC Budget	2021	the notes, feedback report and photos of the meetings

F.1	To create a new brand for the Site.	STA; RMC	RMC Budget	2021	brandbook
F.2	To create a new website and social media pages for the Site and ensure their effective running.	RMC	RMC Budget	2021-2022	social media pages of the Site
F.3	To work towards preparing a content for informational brochures, posters and leaflets and their distribution.	RMC	RMC Budget	2021-2022	copies of the brochures, leaflets, posters
F.4	To celebrate and support World Heritage Day with substantial promotional activities.	RMC	RMC Budget	annually	reports from the events and activities
F.5	To work on preparation of various media and video materials and ensure their broadcasting through traditional media channels.	STA; RMC	STA Budget	2021-2022	video and media materials; record of the broadcast
F.6	To work with targeted higher education institutions for awareness purposes.	STA; RMC	N/A	2021-2023	report of meetings with university faculty and students; student research paper about the Site
F.7	To work with schools to ensure the proper understanding of history and values of the Site among children.	STA; RMC	RMC Budget	2021-2025	reports from regular visits to schools; records of classes about the Site
F.8	To work with Azerbaijan Tourist Guides Association (ATGA) to prepare a right content for guidebooks.	RMC	RMC Budget		copy of the guidebooks

Annexed documents to the Management Plan

SHAKI

HIKING ROUTES M A P

-  Church
-  Accomodation
-  Garden
-  Bus station
-  Summit
-  Castle & fortress
-  Waterfall
-  Lake
-  Mosque
-  Cemetry
-  View point
-  Bazaar
-  Info point
-  Hiking route



Artisan locations

- 1 A. Ahmadov workshop
- 2 ABAD ceramics and applied art centre
- 3 Shebeke workshop
- 4 Craftsmen's House
- 5 Upper Caravanserai
- 6 Yahya halva shop
- 7 M. Mammadov home sale and workshop
- 8 ArtClub Cafe
- 9 Aliovsat halva shop
- 10 The Shoyuboglus' private shop
- 11 Aliahmad halva shop
- 12 A. Shamilov workshop
- 13 Azeripek silk factory
- 14 T. Hamidli home sale and workshop
- 15 R. Rasulova display of handicrafts and tea stop
- 16 Private hat shop
- 17 Old bazaar
- 18 V. Aliyev home sale
- 19 Teze Bazaar
- 20 Azizoglu sweetshop
- 21 Azizoglu halva workshop and sweetshop
- 22 M. Rahimov home sale
- 23 K. Abdulhamidova home sale

Tourism Information Centre

ATM

Landmarks

- 1 Sheki Khan's Palace
- 2 Sheki Museum of History and Local Lore
- 3 Museum of Folk and Applied Arts
- 4 Bakhtiyar Vahabzade House Museum
- 5 Gilehli Minaret
- 6 Mirza Fatali Akhundzade House Museum
- 7 Memory of Native Land Museum
- 8 Upper Caravanserai
- 9 Lower Caravanserai
- 10 Sheki Khan's House
- 11 Sabit Rahman's Museum
- 12 Underground Hammam
- 13 Juma mosque
- 14 Central library
- 15 Abdulkhalig Hammam

Sheki is one of Azerbaijan's true travel gems. A small city surrounded by the forested slopes of the Greater Caucasus Mountains, Sheki is rich in Silk Road history and renowned for its fascinating architecture, good food and friendly residents – who are also very skilled in a range of crafts.



Sheki DMO
Sheki Tourist Information Centre

Sheki Castle Walls Complex
Craftsmen house, 2nd floor
+994 26 244 60 95
sheki@tourism.gov.az
facebook.com/sheki.tic
azerbaijan.travel
sheki.heritage.org.az



Charter of the Reserve Management Center

1. General provisions

1.1. Resource Management Center of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (hereinafter - the Center) is a public entity engaged in activities in the field of provision, study, promotion, purposeful use, preservation and development of the reserves, increasing the tourism potential of the reserves.

1.2. The Center operates under the Agency.

1.3. The Center is guided by the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan, this Charter, decrees and orders of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, decisions and orders of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan and other normative legal acts.

1.4. The Center cooperates with state and local governments, international and non-governmental organizations, other legal entities and individuals in the performance of their duties and exercising their rights.

1.5. The Center engages in activities of public importance. The Center may engage in entrepreneurial activities to achieve the objectives set out in this Charter.

1.6. The center has an independent balance sheet, property, treasure and bank accounts, a seal with its name, proper stamps, blanks and logo.

1.7. Under the law, the Center has the right to conclude bargains, to acquire and exercise property and non-property rights on its behalf, and to act as plaintiffs or defendants in court.

2. Purpose and directions of activity of the center

2.1. The objectives of the Center are:

2.1.1. protection of historical and cultural monu-

ments, cultural heritage in reserves;

2.1.2. Historical and cultural study of the monuments, ensuring the inviolability of the monuments while maintaining the established regime for the territory of the reserve;

2.1.3. provision of tourist use of nature reserves;

2.1.4. Reserve management at its own expense and promoting diversification of financial resources;

2.1.5. provision of sustainable management of reserves.

2.2. The main activities of the Center are:

2.2.1. participates in the implementation of a unified state policy in the field of reserves;

2.2.2. organizes planning, control and coordination of activities in the field of reserves;

2.2.3. studies scientific, historical and cultural monuments located in the territories of reserves, and organizes their intended use;

2.2.4. ensures the preservation, inviolability of monuments in the territories of reserves;

2.2.5. organize and manage the tourism infrastructure in the territories of the reserves.

3. Duties of the Center

3.0. The tasks of the Center in accordance with the directions of activities defined by this Charter are:

3.0.1. to participate in the development and implementation of legislative acts, development concepts and targeted programs in the field of reserves;

3.0.2. to coordinate the activities of state bodies and agencies, local self-

government bodies, legal entities and individuals in the area of reserves;

3.0.3. carry out control in the area of preservation of historical and cultural monuments located in the territory of the reserves and preservation of the established protection regime for the territory;

3.0.4. organization of permanent protection of reserves, provision of functional designation, architectural-aesthetic appearance and longevity of historical and cultural monuments;

3.0.5. organization of effective use of cultural, natural and historical heritage, located in the territories of nature reserves and being tourist attractions;

3.0.6. to raise the issue of consent to carry out conservation, repair, restoration, reconstruction and regeneration works related to the specially owned monuments in the territories of reserves and control over the progress of work;

3.0.7. to raise the issue of the decision on restoration, conservation, repair, reconstruction, regeneration of state and municipal monuments in the territories of nature reserves;

3.0.8. to provide feasibility study and examination of budget documentation in the event of repair and restoration of state-owned historical and cultural monuments located in the territories of reserves;

3.0.9. preparation of design estimates for the restoration of state-owned historical and cultural monuments located in the territories of reserves;

3.0.10. immovable architectural monuments of national and local significance, state-owned or municipal property located in the territories of nature reserves, private real estate monuments and their parts (except archeological monuments) for lease for scientific, cultural, religious, service and tourism purposes. to submit proposals to the Agency for approval of the use program, adaptation and

restoration projects;

3.0.11. To submit proposals to the Agency for the issuance of permits for construction in the protected areas of immovable history and cultural monuments located in the state protected areas in accordance with the Code of Urban Planning and Construction of the Republic of Azerbaijan;

3.0.12. to organize the planning of activities in the area of the reserves and to ensure the sustainable development of the reserves;

3.0.13. scientific, historical and cultural study of monuments located in the territories of reserves, organization of their targeted use and preservation;

3.0.14. To ensure fulfillment of the obligations of the Republic of Azerbaijan on issues regulated by international treaties of the Republic of Azerbaijan and within the competence of the Center;

3.0.15. to coordinate the activities of enterprises and organizations responsible for the engineering and communication systems of the reserves in the field of conservation, planning, organization and control of the restoration and repair of monuments and structures;

3.0.16. to provide information on any improvement, restoration, reconstruction, regeneration and construction and repair works on the territories of the reserves without the consent of the Agency;

3.0.17. to take necessary measures, established by the legislation, to ensure the regime of use of historical and cultural monuments in the territories of reserves, protection of monuments, prevention of violations of the rules of their use and protection of natural resources, bringing the guilty persons to responsibility;

3.0.18. to detect signs of an administrative offense in the territories of reserves, to take measures in accordance with the Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan on

administrative offenses, and in the presence of criminal signs, to provide information on the relevant;

3.0.19. raise the issue of suspension of works related to the use, including the lease of monuments, without the consent of the Agency in accordance with the law;

3.0.20. to organize tourism and recreational zones, green areas, take measures to restrict or prohibit the movement of vehicles in the areas adjacent to or adjacent to the monuments;

3.0.21. to take preventive measures in accordance with the decision of the Agency in the event that there may be a threat to monuments within the boundaries of the reserves and in the protection zones;

3.0.22. development of tourism in the territories of nature reserves and ensuring the creation, management and protection of infrastructure in this regard;

3.0.23. to collect revenues from cultural and tourism services provided by the reserves for the purpose of development of reserves, other activities not prohibited by the legislation in accordance with the activities of the Center, state, public and other organizations, contractual activities, and the efficient use of these funds;

3.0.24. organization of bibliographic research and historical research in the area of reserves, attracting local and foreign experts to study the monuments located in the area;

3.0.25. to promote the scientific, cultural and historical significance of monuments, for this purpose, to organize exhibitions, photo stands, excursions, lectures, documentaries and short films, the publication of scientific literature, international and national symposiums and seminars;

3.0.26. to submit proposals to the Agency concerning the state registration, passporting and protection of historical and cultural monuments;

3.0.27. to provide construction and reinforcement and improvement works on the historical and cultural monuments, increase the efficiency and level of their adaptation to use;

3.0.28. to participate in the registration of archaeological works permitted in accordance with the law, to monitor the study of monuments and archeological excavations in the territories of reserves;

3.0.29. to organize legal awareness raising activities for the protection of cultural heritage in the territories of reserves, to file lawsuits in case of infringement of state property rights, to represent interests of reserves in court;

3.0.30. Creation of digital information and communication systems for the management of reserves, ensuring the application of scientific and technical achievements in this area, taking into account international experience;

3.0.31. organization of clerical work and reception of citizens in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legal acts, taking measures for further training and professional development of the Center employees;

3.0.32. To consider the appeals received in connection with the activities of the Center in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Appeals of Citizens", "On Administrative Execution" and "On Information Access" and to take measures in accordance with the law;

3.0.33. to provide public information about its activities, creation of a web site, placement of public information on the site and its information, the list of which is defined by the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On access to information", organization of information and security of the Center;

3.0.34. take measures to improve its structure and performance;

3.0.35. make proposals for the preparation of professional specialists in the relevant field and the development of training programs and participate in their implementation;

3.0.36. take measures to protect state and commercial secrets, as well as confidentiality;

3.0.37. Ensure efficient use of budget funds, loans, grants and other financial resources allocated to the Center;

3.0.38. To perform other duties specified by acts of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

4. Rights of the Center

4.0. The Center has the following rights in accordance with the directions of activity specified in this Statute:

4.0.1 to make proposals regarding the adoption of a draft legal act in the relevant field, making changes to the act, commenting on, suspending or annulling the act;

4.0.2. to organize conferences, meetings, seminars and other events related to the areas of activity;

4.0.3. to request state bodies and agencies, local self-government bodies, legal entities and individuals about the necessary information (documents) and obtain such information (documents) from them;

4.0.4. to submit proposals for the Republic of Azerbaijan's adherence to international treaties in the relevant field;

4.0.5. conduct research, establish working groups and commissions related to the areas of activity;

4.0.6. presenting state employees and other awards, taking measures to encourage them;

4.0.7. Representation of reserves at the international level, to cooperate with relevant international organizations, relevant state bodies (bodies) of foreign states in accordance with the legislation, to study relevant experience of foreign countries, to exchange experience with foreign reserves;

4.0.8. to provide opinions and suggestions on the directions of activity, to conduct analysis and generalizations, to prepare analytical materials, to conduct researches;

4.0.9. to submit proposals to the Agency for the consent of legal and natural persons to use the monuments in the territories of the reserves for commercial and non-commercial purposes;

4.0.10. Obtaining information on the study of monuments located in the territories of the reserves, to submit proposals to the Agency for the consent to carry out research on the newly discovered architectural monument;

4.0.11. to participate in the inventory of historical and architectural monuments and buildings located in the territories of the reserves, and to submit to the Agency proposals on the relevant list of monuments;

4.0.12. to involve independent experts and specialists in their activities in accordance with the legislation;

4.0.13. issue special bulletins and other publications in accordance with the legislation;

4.0.14. to generate income by carrying out cultural and mass activities in their territories, providing temporary and permanent services, participating in joint activities with private and government agencies, and providing a variety of services in accordance with their activities;

4.0.15. to attract one-time grants and investments from international organizations and funds for the development of reserves;

4.0.16. Provide paid training and development courses in accordance with the activities of the Center;

4.0.17. to conduct surveys among local residents and tourists in the reservation areas, to analyze the results of surveys and to make proposals for the development of the tourism potential of the reserves;

4.0.18. to collect statistical data, analyze them and submit the results to the relevant authorities;

4.0.19. to create or participate in museums, economic societies, non-governmental organizations for the purpose of performing their duties;

4.0.20. carry out targeted programs and projects financed by state bodies, international organizations, legal entities and individuals with the consent of the Agency;

4.0.21. To exercise other rights defined by acts of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

5. Center's management

5.1. The Center applies advanced corporate governance standards in its operations and management.

5.2. The governing body of the Center is its Management Board.

5.3. The Board of Directors carries out general management and supervision of the Center. The Chairman and members of the Board shall be appointed and dismissed by the Chairman of the Agency.

5.4. The Board of Directors consists of 3 members, including the Chairman.

5.5. If the Chairman of the Board is not interim, his powers shall be exercised by the person designated by the Chairman among the members of the Board.

5.6. The duties of the Management Board are:

5.6.1. to submit proposals to the Agency and submit documents (including quarterly, semi-annual, annual reports on the financial statements and activities of the Center) for exercising the powers of the founder;

5.6.2. Determine the strategic goals and plans of the Center;

5.6.3. To control the activities of the Center;

5.6.4. To approve the financial planning and budget of the Center with the Agency consent;

5.6.5. To approve the internal rules of activity of the Center, as well as regulations of branches, representative offices, statutes of subsidiaries;

5.6.6. Listening to the annual report of the Center;

5.6.7. Appoint an external auditor of the Center and receive the audit report;

5.6.8. take measures on the results of external audits and other audits;

5.6.9. To enter into a transaction with the Agency consent of more than 25% of the net asset value of the Center (special transaction) and 5% or more of the value assets with the related party;

5.6.10. to make a decision to conclude a transaction with a related party, the cost of which is 5% of the Center assets;

5.6.11. to monitor the activities of the Internal Audit Service and receive reports on its activities, as well as appoint and dismiss its members;

5.6.12. To organize the activities of the Center;

5.6.13. Monitoring the implementation of the Center strategic goals and plans, as well as the budget;

5.6.14. To ensure efficient use of budget funds, loans, grants and other financial resources allocated to the Center;

5.6.15. Deciding on the establishment or participation in the Center economic associations with the consent of the Agency;

5.6.16. Consideration of appeals of members of the Board of Directors and making decisions

5.6.17. take measures to address the issues provided for in Section 3.0.1 of this Charter;

5.6.18. To decide on matters not related to the powers of the Chairman of the Board.

5.7. Meetings of the Board shall be convened at least once a month. At the initiative of the Board of Directors meetings a member of the Board of Directors makes a speech. Meetings of the Board of Directors are authorized if more than half of the members are present. Decisions are made by a simple majority of votes at a meeting of the Board of Directors. Members are not allowed to abstain during voting. When the number of votes is equal, the vote of the Chairman of the Board (or any other member) shall be decisive.

5.8. Members of the Board of Directors shall be informed in writing of the time and place of the meeting, as well as matters included in the agenda, at least 3 (three) working days before the meeting, with the necessary documents attached.

5.9. When a matter of the Board of Directors is raised to the issue of the interests of any member of the Board, that Member shall be informed of the matter and shall not participate in the discussion and vote on the matter.

5.10. Issues that have not been included in the agenda or have not been requested before the meeting cannot be decided, except when all members agree.

6. Charter fund, property and financial activities of the Center

6.1. The authorized capital of the center is 500 000 (five hundred thousand) manats.

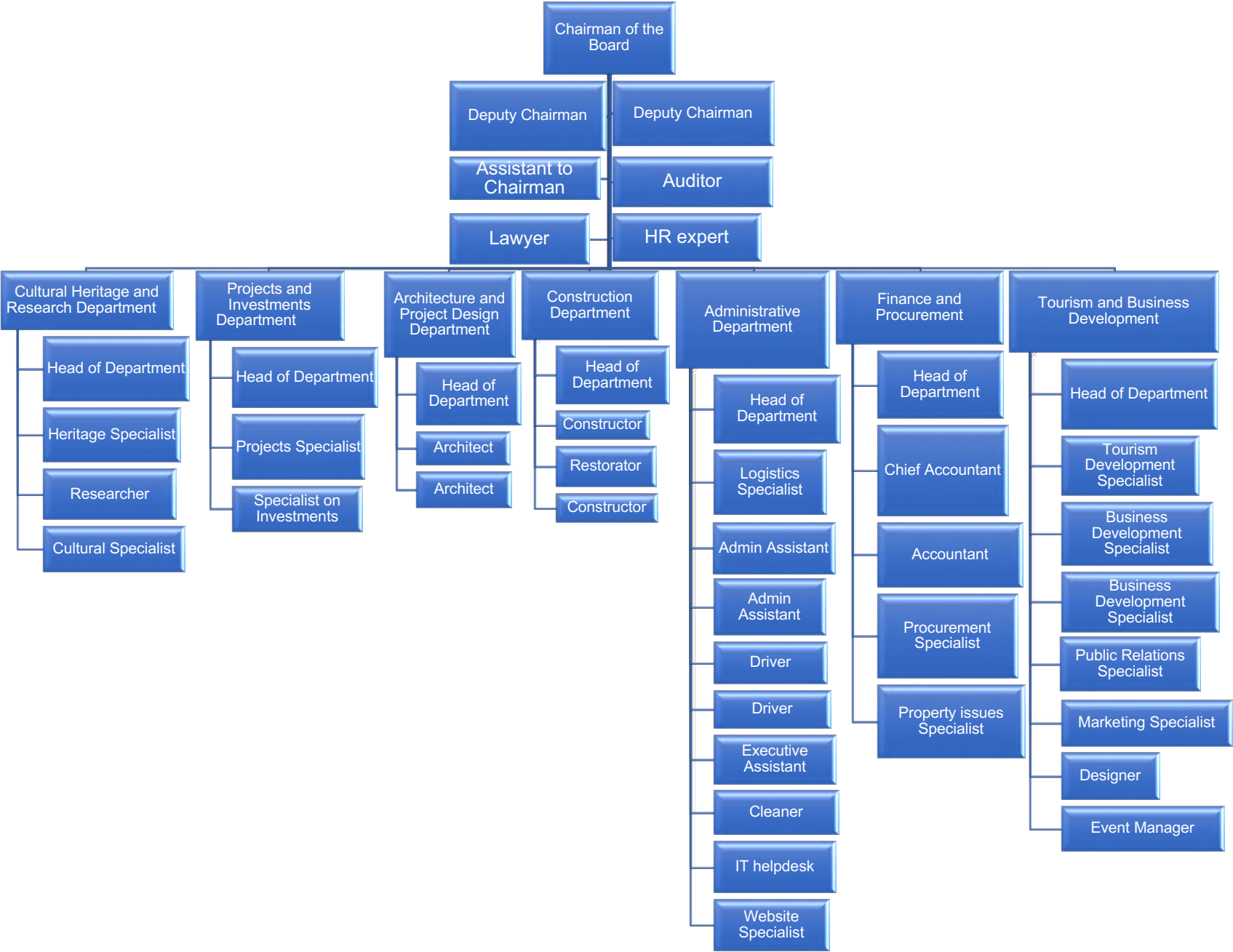
6.2. The property of the Center is formed from the charter capital, the property provided by the founder, as well as the funds allocated from the state budget, income from its activities, donations, grants, attracted investments and other funds not prohibited by law.

6.3. The Center shall use its property only for the purposes specified in this Statute. The Center implements its powers with respect to state property on the balance sheet in accordance with the legislation.

6.4. The Center has the right to dispose of taxes and other compulsory payments provided by law, in accordance with the established procedure, independently of the profit gained from the activities of the Center, reserves, business societies and other subordinate bodies.

6.5. The prices of the Center products (goods, works, services) do not apply to regulated prices (tariffs).

Organizational Chart of RMC



Duties and Responsibilities of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Paragraph 2.6 of the Decision No. 255 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated June 7, 2018 on the approval of the list of the subordinate entities not included in the structure of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan stipulates that Yukhari Bash State Historical and Architectural Reserve is one of those subordinate entities not included directly in the structure of the State Tourism Agency.

According to Articles 3.0.31-3.0.46 and 4.0.15 of the Regulations of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Agency has the following rights and duties in relation to its subordinated reserves:

3.0.31. to exercise state control and state monitoring delegated to its powers by law in the territories of reserves;

3.0.32. to organise efficient use of cultural, natural and historical heritage properties which are located in the territories of the reserves and are tourist attractions;

3.0.33. to give consent to the projects for the use, adaptation and restoration of the state- or municipality-owned immovable architectural monuments of national and local importance, privately owned real estate and their sections (except for archaeological sites) located in the territories of the reserves when they are leased for scientific, cultural, religious, service and tourism purposes on a contractual basis;

3.0.33-1. to authorise the relocation of monuments of local significance located in the territories of the reserves, and to relocate movable monuments from battle-prone areas and war zones in accordance with the Law on the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments;

3.0.34. to give consent to the privatisation of state-owned architectural monuments of local significance in the territories of the reserves;

3.0.35. to prevent the violation of the protection regime in the territories of the reserves;

3.0.36. to enter into protection agreements (contracts) with the owners and/or users of the listed historical and cultural monuments in the territories of the reserves on the protection of the cultural assets;

3.0.36-1. to control the limited use of the listed immovable cultural properties;

3.0.36-2. to give consent for demolition, deconstruction, decomposition, reconstruction, relocation and change of the appearance of cultural heritage properties which were assigned with preventive protection;

3.0.37. to give consent for the beautification works in the territories of the reserves, and the reconstruction works in the protection zones of the monuments;

3.0.38. to control the survey of the monuments and archaeological excavations in the territories of the reserves in accordance with the law, to register scientific research carried out in connection with the archaeological excavations and surveys, to demand reports on the research from persons (entities) carrying out (performing) these works, to demand the list of material cultural remains discovered during archaeological excavations;

3.0.39. to determine the protection zones of monuments in the territories of the reserves, to submit the information on the protection zones of the reserves for the inclusion into the information system of the electronic cadastral registration of lands;

3.0.40. to give consent for the installation of advertising devices (advertising) in the territories of the reserves, on the façades (walls, fences) of architectural monuments (buildings), roofs, and their protection zones in accordance with the Law on Advertising;

3.0.41. to enforce the regime of the use of historical and cultural monuments in the territories of the reserves, to take measures to bring to the liability the legal and physical persons who violate the rules of the protection of historical and cultural monuments;

3.0.42. to give consent for changing the function of the residential areas of the immovable historical and cultural monuments under state protection to non-residential area or vice versa;

3.0.43. to give consent for the construction in the protection zones of the immovable historical and cultural monuments in the territories of the reserves in accordance with the Urban Planning and Construction Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan;

3.0.44. to give consent for and control the implementation of the maintenance, repair, restoration, reconstruction and regeneration works in the privately owned monuments in the territories of the reserves;

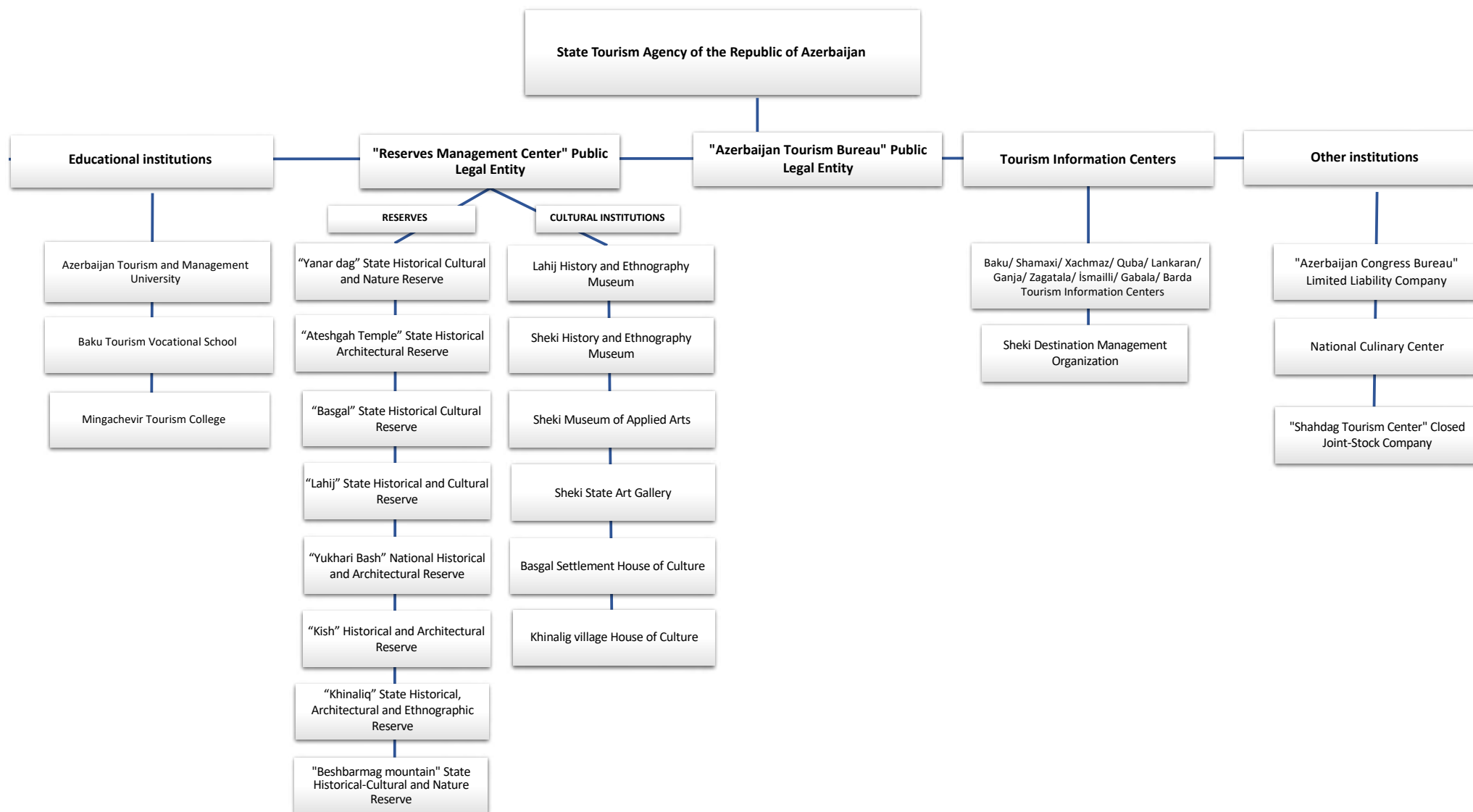
3.0.45. to make an inventory of the historical and architectural monuments and buildings in the territories of the reserves, to carry out technical certification within its competences, and to submit proposals for the relevant lists on the degrees of significance of monuments;

3.0.45-1. to compile the list of and state register the historical and cultural monuments in the territories of the reserves, to issue monument certificates (passports);

3.0.46. to develop tourism, to identify tourist routes, to develop, maintain and preserve tourism infrastructure in the territories of the reserves;

4.0.15. to make decisions on the conservation, renovation, restoration, reconstruction and regeneration of the state- and municipality-owned monuments in the territories of the reserves.

Subordination Chart of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan



**Reserves Management Center
under the
State Tourism Agency
of the
Republic of Azerbaijan**

2020

