Al-Ahsa Oasis: An Evolving Landscape

Heritage Place Lab | Summary

Contents

1. Methods of the collaborative process
2. Key Management Issues and Research Focus
3. Outline of the Research Agenda
4. Research questions per priority

Collaborative Process

The collaborative process included exchanging knowledge between the site management and research teams

Workshop 1 and 2: Heritage Place

- Complete EOH Toolkit 2.0 worksheets
- Review and discuss different management or research-based documents related to the priority issues
- Plan and discuss progress with the research agenda

Workshop 3: Building Collaborative Research Agenda

- Literature review
- Questions & Responses
- Identifying research gaps and priorities in context of Al-Ahsa Oasis

Workshop 5: Climate Change and Indigenous, local and Traditional Knowledge

- Review of the management plan
- Mapping actors per component in Al-Ahsa
- Linking the identified research gaps and priorities to the management plan of Al-Ahsa
- Cross-referencing with ongoing or planned projects related to the Al-Ahsa property (including projects on the revision of the Site Management Plan, developing a Site Interpretation Plan, and the Climate Change Toolkit)
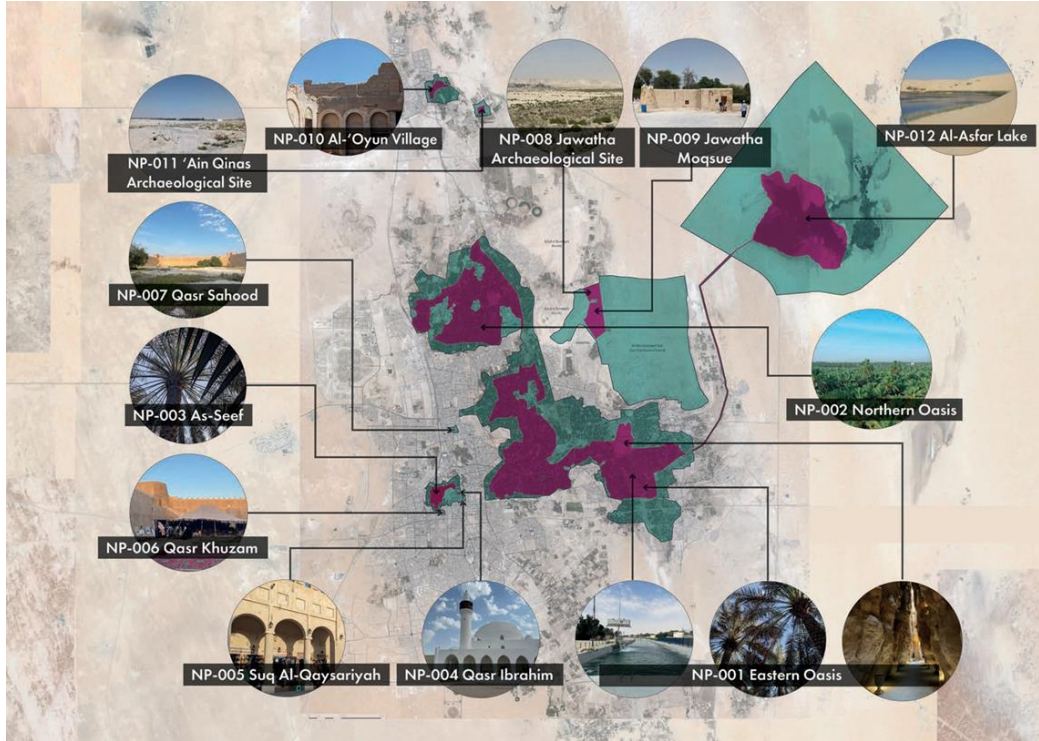
Working through shared collaborative documents

Focused workshops and meetings for the research - practice team

Synchronous & asynchronous working methods

Management Challenges

Key Management Issues and Research Focus

Key Management Issues:

Urbanization and Development Pressures

traditional irrigation systems

Agricultural Challenges

Impact of Climate Change

Awareness

Integrity of heritage sites

Traditional Practices

Community Involvement

Research Agenda Outline

Outline of the research agenda: Explaining concisely the research priorities identified by the team

Investigation of Oasis Evolution in a World Heritage Context

▼
▼

Defining "Evolving Cultural Landscape" conceptually and practically in relation to the values and attributes of Al-Ahsa Oasis.

Evolving Landscape to a Resurgent Landscape in Al Ahsa

▼
▼

Weaving local and traditional knowledge systems in the context of site management.

Building Climate Resilience in Al-Ahsa: Weaving Plural Knowledge for a Sustainable, Inclusive, and a Just "Evolving" and "Resurging" Cultural Landscape

▼
▼

Evaluating how Al-Ahsa Oasis can strengthen its resilience to climate change by integrating inclusive governance, plural knowledge systems, and long-term visioning, enabling it to adapt to shifting climatic, socio-economic, and environmental conditions while safeguarding its cultural and ecological integrity as an evolving landscape.

Research Questions Per Priority

Research priority 1. Investigating Oasis Evolution in a World Heritage Context

Research Questions: Defining "Evolving Cultural Landscape" conceptually and practically in relation to the values and attributes of Al-Ahsa Oasis. How can defining "Evolving Cultural Landscape" establish parameters to ensure effective site management?

Research questions to guide this process:

- How can we define an 'evolving cultural landscape' from a theoretical perspective?

- How do other World Heritage-listed cultural landscape engage with evolution and change and its tension with conservation? What are their components, attributes and narratives and what are the differences and similarities with Al-Ahsa Oasis?

- What are the practical parameters of evolution and how are they related to the values of the property? May they become an instrument for managing development pressures and mitigating risks in Al-Ahsa, especially those which are not contributing to the values of the site? What are the appropriate mediums for employing the concept of evolution in terms of processes, guidelines or tools (e.g., Heritage Impact Assessments)?

- In the context of Al-Ahsa, what does 'evolving' mean for different components and attributes from the perspective of different stakeholders, including local communities?

- How can local knowledge inform the understanding of an evolving cultural landscape?

- How does the uncertainty of climate change inform the development of parameters to guide 'an evolving cultural landscape'?

Research Questions Per Priority

Research priority 2. Evolving Landscape to a Resurgent Landscape in Al Ahsa

Research Questions: Weaving Local and Traditional Knowledge Systems in the Context of Site Management

Research questions to guide this process:

- What is the relationship between the Al-Ahsa World Heritage property and local ICH practices in terms of OUV?
- How can local knowledge systems enhance site management processes including understanding factors affecting the property?
- What can be learnt from other WH sites' engagement with local/Indigenous knowledge?

Research Questions Per Priority

Research priority 3. Building Climate Resilience in Al-Ahsa: Weaving Plural Knowledge for a Sustainable, Inclusive and Just "Evolving" and "Resurging" Cultural Landscape

Research Questions: Evaluating how Al-Ahsa Oasis can strengthen its resilience to climate change by integrating inclusive governance, plural knowledge systems, and long-term visioning, enabling it to adapt to shifting climatic, socio-economic, and environmental conditions while safeguarding its cultural and ecological integrity as an evolving landscape.

Research questions to guide this process:

- How are plural knowledge systems (Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Cultural and Historical Knowledge, and Scientific Knowledge) currently woven to manage climate impacts and risks in Al-Ahsa Oasis, and how do they contribute to both the evolution and resurgence of the landscape?

- How can Al-Ahsa develop a comprehensive, inclusive, and locally driven framework that engages multiple management structures, stakeholders, and rights-holders to assess climate change impacts and risks while ensuring justice, equity, and fairness in the governance of its evolving cultural landscape?

- How can climate change impacts be assessed, monitored, and integrated into long-term heritage management to ensure resilience in a landscape constantly adapting to environmental and socio-economic change?

- What are the key hazards, exposures, vulnerabilities, and adaptive responses within Al-Ahsa's cultural landscape, and how are these shaping the observed and perceived present impacts in Al-Ahsa?

- How can long-term visioning (spanning the next 50-100 years) be effectively integrated into short-term management processes (5-10 years) in Al-Ahsa to ensure a balanced approach that addresses immediate challenges while fostering future resilience, sustainability, and justice in adaptation strategies?

- How can adaptation strategies for Al-Ahsa be effectively planned, implemented, and evaluated through a dynamic Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework to ensure continuous improvement and long-term resilience?

- How can diverse, plural knowledge systems be effectively woven into climate risk management, adaptation strategies, and heritage management plans to strengthen resilience in Al-Ahsa's evolving and resurging landscape, ensuring they remain flexible and responsive to the continuous transformation of its cultural, ecological, agricultural, and urban identity?

Thank you