

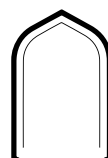
State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan
The Nomination of the
Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and
“Köç Yolu” Transhumance Route
Executive Summary



State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan
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State Tourism Agency
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Preface

The nominated property comprises the high-mountain village of Khinalig and yaylaqs, qishlaq areas in the lowland plains in central Azerbaijan, and the 200-km long K    Yolu seasonal transhumance route. The village of Khinalig is home to a unique semi-nomadic ethnic group – the Khinalig, whose main occupation is livestock breeding between the summer and winter pastures. The nominated property passes through five administrative districts and five landscape types, ranging from the alpine and subalpine meadows of yaylaqs to the semi-desert plains of qishlaqs.



Image 1 View of Khinalig village and the mountain behind is Qibladagh

The people of Khinalig have developed genius ways of adaptation to the extreme climatic conditions and scarce land resources. Located above the tree line, the village of Khinalig and its surroundings are devoid of trees and bushes, and the potential of agricultural activities is minimal. On the other hand, the lush alpine and subalpine meadows of these places offer rich fodder resources. Therefore, the clear strategy for these people has been transhumant animal husbandry, utilizing the mountain meadows as summer pastures and moving to the central plains of the country to escape the cold winter. Accordingly, semi-nomadism has become the defining feature of the culture and lifestyle of the Khinalig people, including their housing, family and communal networks, gastronomic choices, trade relations, belief system, indigenous knowledge, and traditions.

The people of Khinalig have erected their village on a steep mountain peak, adjusting to the extreme landform with their tiered architecture where the roof of one house is the garden on the other and houses built with local river stone and other construction materials. Houses are adjusted accordingly to accommodate the livestock who stay in the village throughout the year. Gravity-fed irrigation systems for haylands and artificial terraces on mountain slopes are brilliant examples of taming the mountainous landform for agricultural purposes. However, it is worth mentioning that today, the purpose of farming is to grow fodder for the livestock rather than the people's consumption. As the main economic activity, animal husbandry provides the people with meat and dairy products, as well as wool for making various clothing and household items for cold periods, *təzək* – animal manure bricks used for heating, and other commodities. Livestock and its by-products are also used as a means of exchange for objects that cannot be produced in the village, such as fruits, vegetables, household utensils, etc.

The people of Khinalig constitute a unique ethnic group who speak their own language – Khinalug. Khinalig people do not have any settlements outside their village. Their language is entirely unintelligible to any of the numerous other languages spoken in the Caucasus region, causing great interest of linguistic and history researchers. The culture, language, and belief system of these people are tied to their physical territories, which has resulted in the development of a detailed micro toponymy system and is deeply embedded in the belief system and indigenous knowledge of these people.



Image 2 Herds ready to start the autumn move to qishlaqs. Gibleadagh can be seen in the background

Khinalig is one of the few communities that have preserved their traditional way of life and economic activities characteristic of the high-Caucasus mountains. Also, according to some evidence, Khinalug is considered a relic language from one of the 26 ancient tribes of Caucasian Albania that existed in today's Azerbaijan in 3rd century BC-8th century AD. The people and the language of Khinalug are a rich source for the reconstruction of the wider historical concept of the Caucasus high-mountain lifestyle and the research on the origin of these people.

Country (and State party if different)

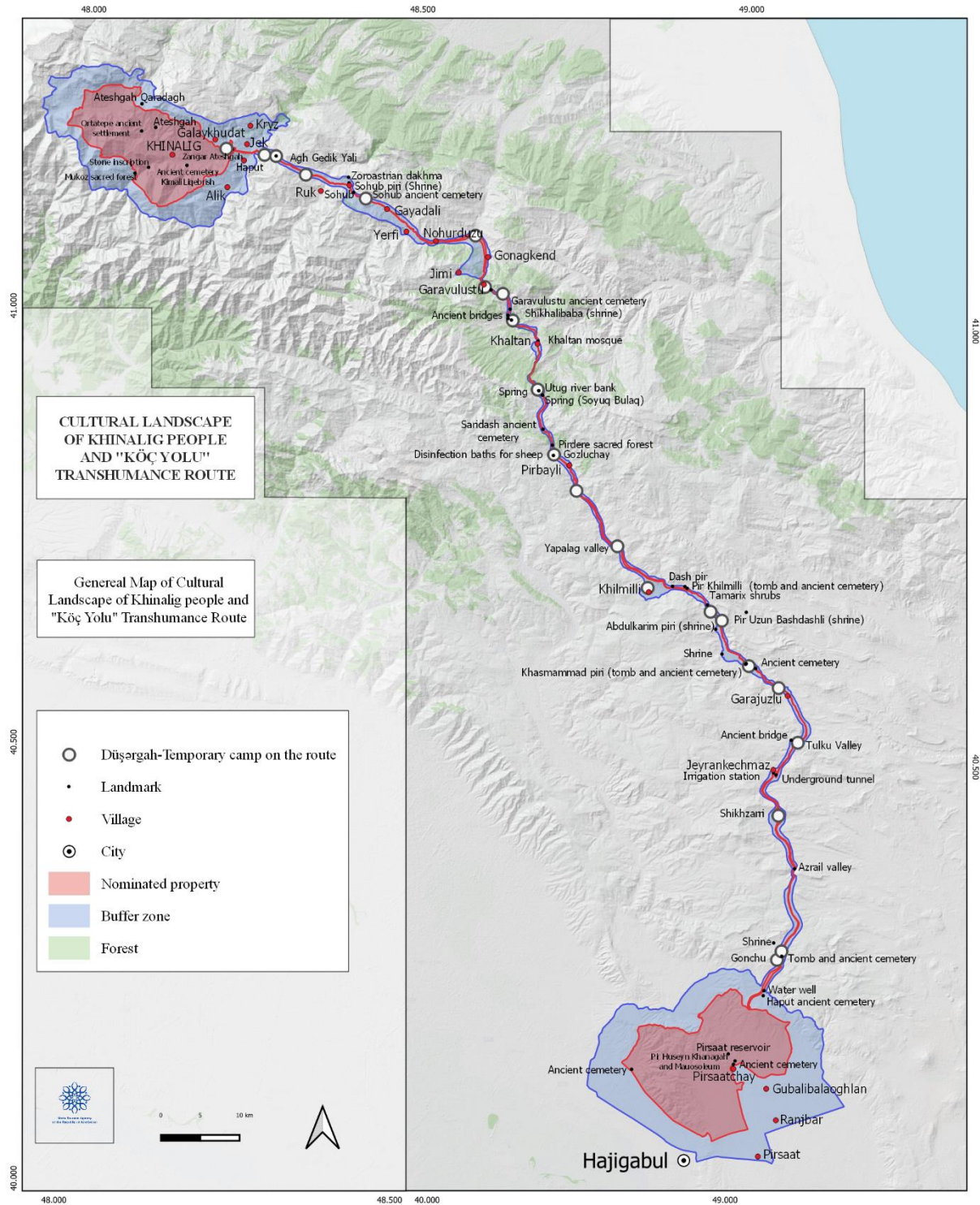
The Republic of Azerbaijan



Map 1 The Republic of Azerbaijan in the region and the nominated area

Name of the property

The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and "Köç Yolu" Transhumance Route



Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

North (Khinalig village)	41° 10.681'N, 48° 7.655'E
South (<i>qışlaq</i>)	40° 7.543'N, 48° 58.001'E
“Köç Yolu” transhumance route between <i>qışlaq</i> and <i>yaylaq</i> is located along the line in the following coordinates	41° 8.987'N, 48° 23.726'E
	41° 5.902'N, 48° 35.010'E
	40° 50.772'N, 48° 42.888'E
	40° 42.358'N, 48° 53.125'E
	40° 34.690'N, 49° 4.783'E
	40° 17.087'N, 49° 4.555'E

Table 1 Geographical coordinates of the nominated property

Textual description of the boundaries of the Nominated Property and Buffer Zone

Nominated property

The cultural landscape of Khinalig people consists of three central parts in which they live and practice their transhumant lifestyle: Khinalig village and *yaylaq*, “Köç Yolu” transhumance route, and *qışlaq*.

The *yaylaq* part starts from the height that is bordering Khinalig pastures from neighboring Alik village which is also sited Zangar ever-burning fireplace (N1). The property boundary runs with borderlines of Khinalig pastures in the southwest direction including Takharkhacdag mountain pick (N2-N3), continues with the same mountain ridge covering Khinalig *yaylaqs* (N4) and Khinalig mountain pick in the South (N5). It passes in the valley surrounding the Khinalig *yaylaqs* from the south direction toward the Southeast (N6-N8) and continues up to the Shah *yaylaqs* (N9-N11) near the political border of Azerbaijan with Russia, where people of Khinalig have historically grazed their animals. The beautiful Shah *yaylaqs* of Khinalig people are followed by the north boundary lines of Khinalig *yaylaqs* in the slopes of Shahdag mountain ridges as defined by the state (N12-N13), as well as those in between Shahdag and Gizilgaya mountains (N14-N16). This line is continued by the northern slopes of Gizilqaya mountain (N17-N18), in line with borders of pastures of Khinalig people till the edge of Galekhudat village (N19), turns to the southeast direction and goes down to Gudyalchay river (N20) and reaches to Zangar ancient settlement in the East (N22-N23).

“Köç Yolu” transhumance route starts from Zangar ancient settlement place, where Khinalig people usually have first *düşərgah* (temporary camp) nearby (N24), crosses Agchay river (N25), and continues along the ridges of Ag Gedik mountain as a path (N26) till the down Garachay river (N27). After crossing the river, the route runs up to and goes through Sohub village (N28), and follows the dirt road passing by Gayadali village (N29). It then crosses river branch of Babachay river and continues with the dirt road going by Yerfi village till Babachay river (N30). The

boundaries of the route continue along Babachay riverbed, turn right to the riverbed of Jimichay (N31), and continue in the Jimichay riverbed passing by Gonagkend village and turn left to the direction of Garavulustu village (N32), and follows the dirt road along the valley and passes by Shikhali baba shrine (N33), where not only people of Khinalig, but all transhumant people visit as a sacred place on the way. The route follows the dirt road until Utuq river crossing on two ancient bridges built by transhumant people. It covers the temporary camp area of the transhumant herders on the bank of Utuq river (N34). By crossing Utuq river, the route boundaries follow the dirt road up to the small Khaltan river (N35), continue with the Khaltan riverbed, and pass through Khaltan village, where the route narrows down to the width of the dirt road in the village (N36). After Khaltan village, the trail turns right to Khaladar forest (N37), intersecting with Shahdag National Park's territory (N38). Here it gets so tight due to the narrow width of the trail in mountain terrain. It runs to the south through the forest up to Khaltan height (N39). From the Khaladar height, the boundaries of the route follow the path in the valley down to the south (N40-N41) and continue with the valley of Saridash riverbed till joining to Gozluchay river (N42). It turns left to the riverbed of Gozluchay from where it follows the riverbed in the direction of river flow for a long distance passing by villages Pirbeyli and Khillmilli (N43-N45). Before reaching Khillimilli village, it exists from the riverbed of Gozluchay and turns slightly left path to deviate from entering hayfields (N42-N43). The route goes back to the riverside (N46) and then continue along with it for a long distance till Garajuzlu village (N47-N450), avoiding hayfields in a few places in the riverbed (N47, N48) and passing by several historical cemeteries and shrines of the transhumant people on the way (N49-N50). From Garajuzlu village, it takes a left exist of the dirt road to the south direction (N51-N53), passes through Garajuzlu village (N51), continues with the dirt road, and turns slightly to the right (N53) to Tülkü valley direction (N54), and continues with the riverside of Jeyrankechmez river towards the highway (N55). The route crosses Baku-Shamakhi highway via underway tunnel (N56), passes by Jeyrankechmez village, turns slightly left (N57) and then right (N58) to the south direction, and continues with the centuries-old transhumance route in the endless Gobustan steppes through the tens of mud volcanoes around. By following the dirt road to the south direction (N59), the route goes through the Absheron winter pastures areas (N60), turns slightly right to the dirty road of qışlaqs (N61), and continue in the direction of the centuries old Gonchu watering center (N62). From Gonchu, the boundaries of the route continue with the dirt road to the South, cover water wells and ancient cemetery of the transhumant people on the way (N63-N64), they exist from the dirt road and go directly to the south direction by foothills of Akhtarma mud volcano (N65) until the downland Khinalig qışlaqs.

The boundary of Khinalig qışlaqs coincides with the south of Akhtarma mud volcano hill. It runs in the east direction along with the borderlines of qışlaq parcels defined by the state (N65-N66), then turns right to the south following the borderline of qışlaq No 96 until the irrigation ditch (N67-N69). It continues by irrigation ditch to the West, takes slight right and goes along dirty road covering the south boundary of the qışlaq No 99 (N70-N71), turns to the left side and continues toward the south of Pirsaar reservoir (N72), goes by Pir Huseyn Khanagah (N73) and Pirsaat Reservoir by avoiding the cultivated areas of neighboring Gubalibaloglan village (N74-N76). From Pirsaat Reservoir, it continues to the South by dirty road (N77), keeps tracking the borderline of No 59 qışlaq, continues by the dirt road to the South (N78), then turns to the right (N79) and then right again (N80) following the borderline of the qışlaq No 62. The foothills of the Shahdag hill are the south-western boundary of the Khinalig qışlaqs that continue up to the borderline of qışlaq

No 50 (N81-N82), turns to the right to Shahdag hill (N83), and keep tracking the borderline of the qishlaq No 50 defined by the state (N84-N85). It turns left, crosses the Pirsaat river (N87), continues up to the north direction by borderline of the qishlaq no 101 (N87-N88), turns left (89), and goes back to the Akhtarma mud volcano (N90).

Buffer Zone

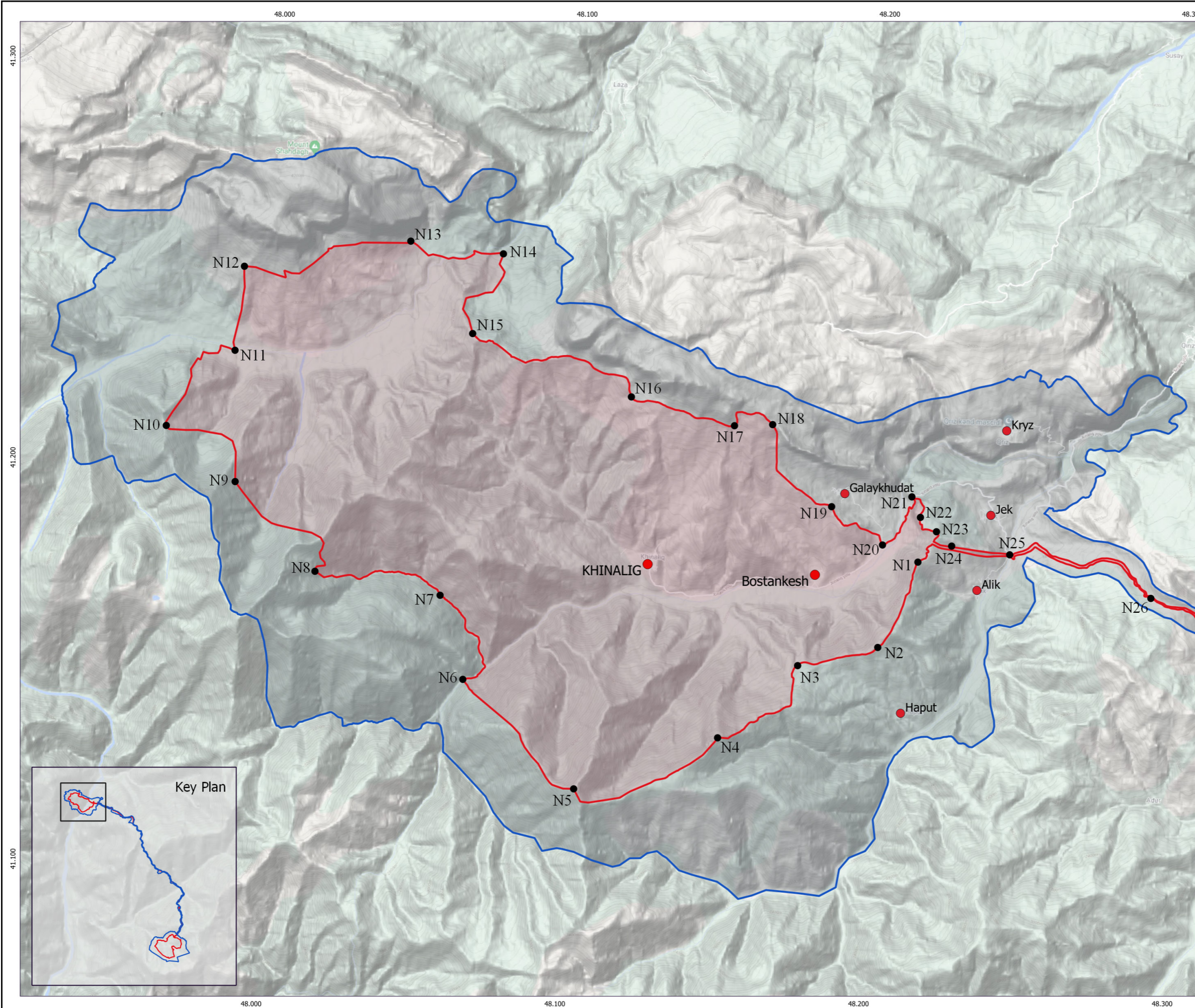
The buffer zone is a cultural boundary of the property and is for providing protection for the surroundings of the cultural landscape of the Khinalig people. It covers unique minority villages nearby, such as Kryz, Alik, Haput, Jek (B1-B2, B10), as well as all yaylaqs surrounding the property in the Shahdag area near the political border of Azerbaijan and Russia (B5-B6). It includes Mount Tufandag in the South West (B7), Mount Shahdag in the northwest (B4), Gizilgaya mountain in the North (B3), Kryz canyon in the North East (B2), and yaylaq areas of the neighboring villages in the South (B8-B9).

The Buffer Zone line of the “Köç Yolu” transhumance route includes the cultural and historical sites near the transhumance route, including sacred forest fragments, medieval transhumance cemeteries, and shrines. In some places, the Buffer Zone boundary line enlarges to cover villages within or by which the route passes since these villages have had symbiotic relationships with transhumance herders for centuries and get influenced each other from cultural and economic points of views.

The buffer line of the “Köç Yolu” transhumance route runs from the Agchay river in parallel heights of the valley in which the transhumance trail passes, encompasses Sohub village, including Zoroastrian Dakhma on the top of the Sohub mountain (B11), and stretches to Sohub and Yerfi sacred forests (B12), including Yerfi (B13), Gonagkend (B14), and Jimi (B15) medieval villages. It embraces Garavulustu village near the route (B16), Shikhali baba shrine and cemetery (B17), and the village of Khaltan (B18), but shrinks and runs very close to the boundaries of the nominated property in Khaladar forest due to restricted roadway condition in the mountainous area (B19). The buffer zone lines stretch down riverside of Saridash, then turns left to the direction of Gozluchay and continues by the riverside of Gozluchay in a similar manner to the property lines (B21). It includes Pirbayli village (B21) and Khillmilli village (B22), Pirkhillmilli shrine (B23), Garajuzlu village (B26) as well as other shrines and medieval cemeteries in between (B24-25).

The parallel buffer zone lines continue by covering historical bridge built for transhumance migration in Tulku valley (B27), Jeyrankechmez village (B28), a mud volcano in Gobustan steppe (B30), and units to the qishlaqs right after the historical water well of the transhumant people (B31).

Buffer zone lines of downland qışlaq areas cover winter pastures of other transhumant people in the Northwest (B32), crosses Pirsaatçay river (B33), embraces mud volcano in the western side of Shahdag hill (B34), and continues with the winter pastures of local people in the West (B35). It includes the cultivated areas from the Southwest that is close to the Khinalig yataqs and continues till Hajiqabul city (B36-37). It runs with the highway in the South embracing Pirsaat village (B38), Gubalibaloglan, and Rangbar villages (B39), turns to the right to the East (B40) and then turns to the left to cover other yaylaqs of Haput people in the East and Northeast (B40-B42).



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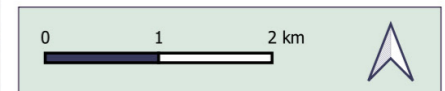
**CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
OF KHINALIG PEOPLE
AND “KÖÇ YOLU”
TRANSHUMANCE ROUTE**

**IDENTIFICATION OF THE
NOMINATED PROPERTY**

**Geographical Coordinates of the
Nominated Property**

Point	X	Y	Point	X	Y
N1	48.215	41.1814	N14	48.0749	41.2548
N2	48.2027	41.1598	N15	48.0656	41.2347
N3	48.1764	41.1547	N16	48.1187	41.2203
N4	48.1508	41.136	N17	48.153	41.2139
N5	48.1039	41.1221	N18	48.1656	41.2145
N6	48.0662	41.1485	N19	48.186	41.1946
N7	48.0578	41.1693	N20	48.2031	41.1854
N8	48.0162	41.1742	N21	48.2123	41.1977
N9	47.9889	41.1958	N22	48.2159	41.1898
N10	47.9655	41.2092	N23	48.2216	41.1883
N11	47.9874	41.2285	N24	48.2222	41.1859
N12	47.9895	41.2496	N25	48.2452	41.184
N13	48.0442	41.2572	N26	48.2922	41.1742

— Nominated property
— Buffer zone
● Village



Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 39N
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: WGS 1984
 Units: Meter
 Date: 1/13/22

Nominated Property



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of the Republic of Azerbaijan

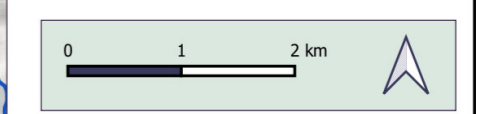
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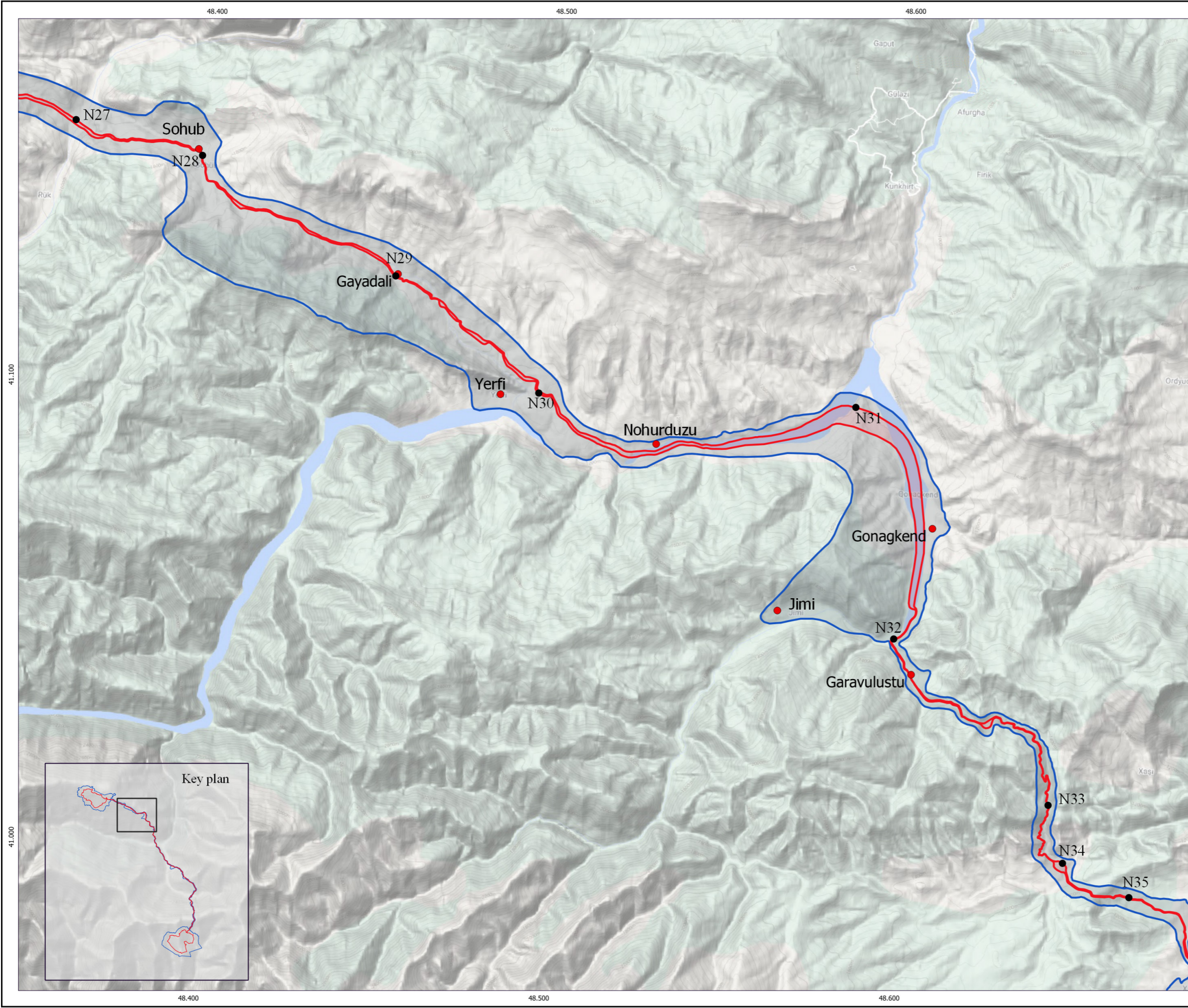
Geographical Coordinates of the Nominated Property

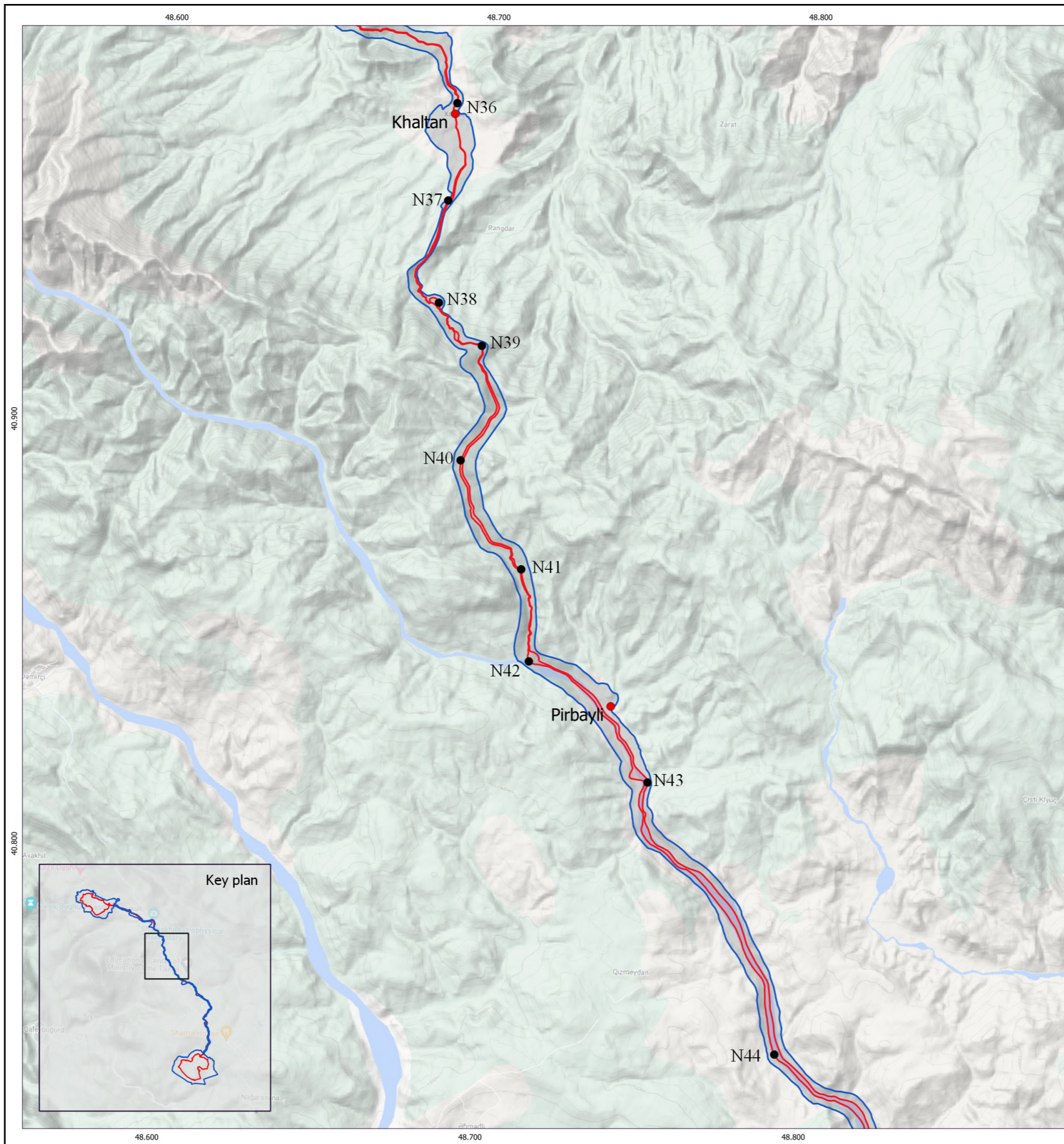
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N28	48.3969	41.1486	N33	48.6439	41.0132
N29	48.4532	41.1237	N34	48.6485	41.0007
N30	48.4951	41.0993	N35	48.6677	40.9937
N31	48.5859	41.0981			

- Nominated area
- Buffer zone
- Village



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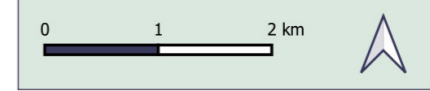
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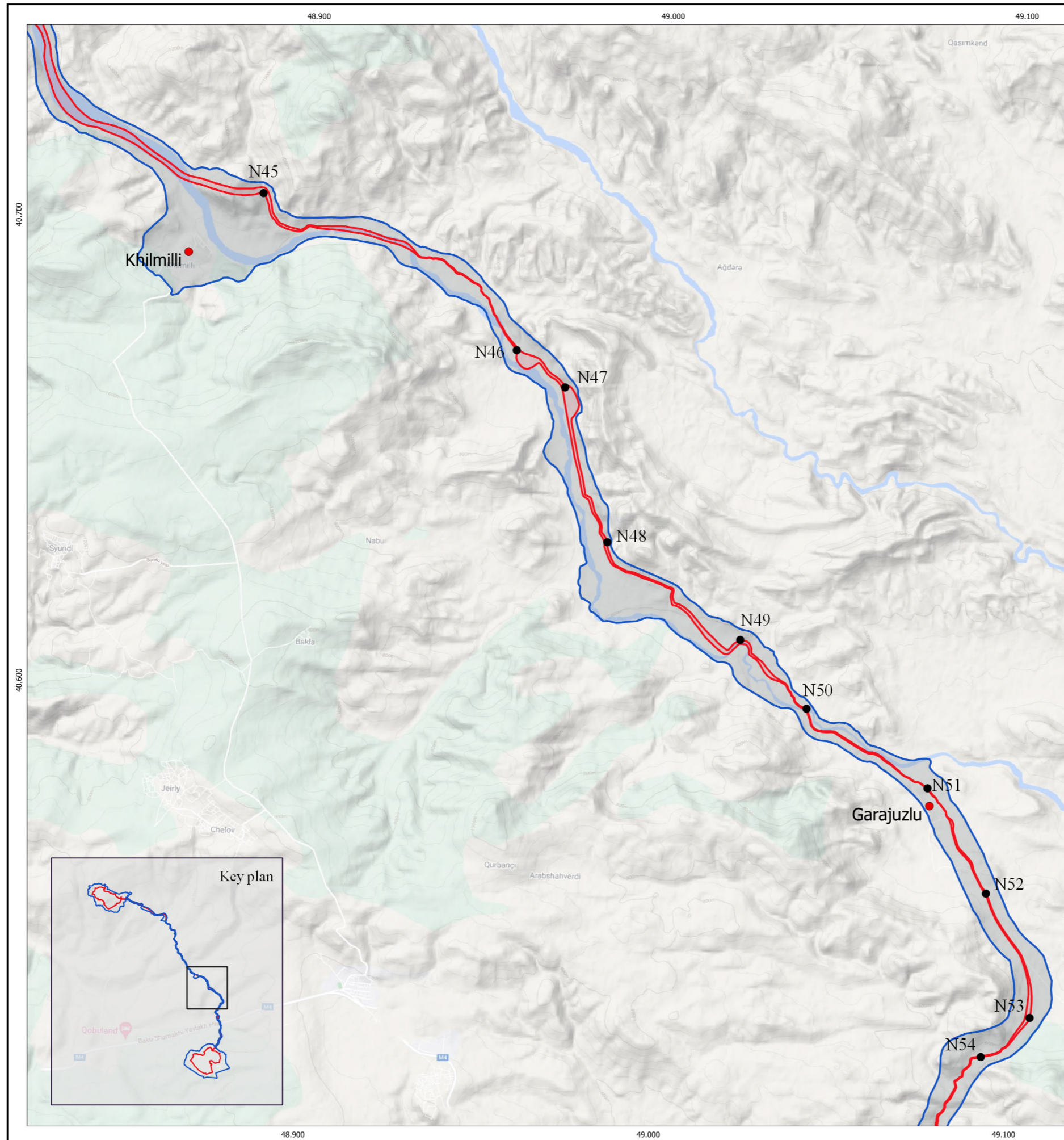
**Geographical Coordinates of the
Nominated Property**

Point	X	Y	Point	X	Y
N36	48.6877	40.977	N41	48.7113	40.8677
N37	48.6857	40.9541	N42	48.7145	40.8461
N38	48.6837	40.93	N43	48.7522	40.8183
N39	48.6973	40.9201	N44	48.7936	40.755
N40	48.6917	40.893			

- Nominated property
- Buffer zone
- Village



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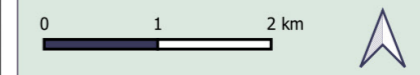
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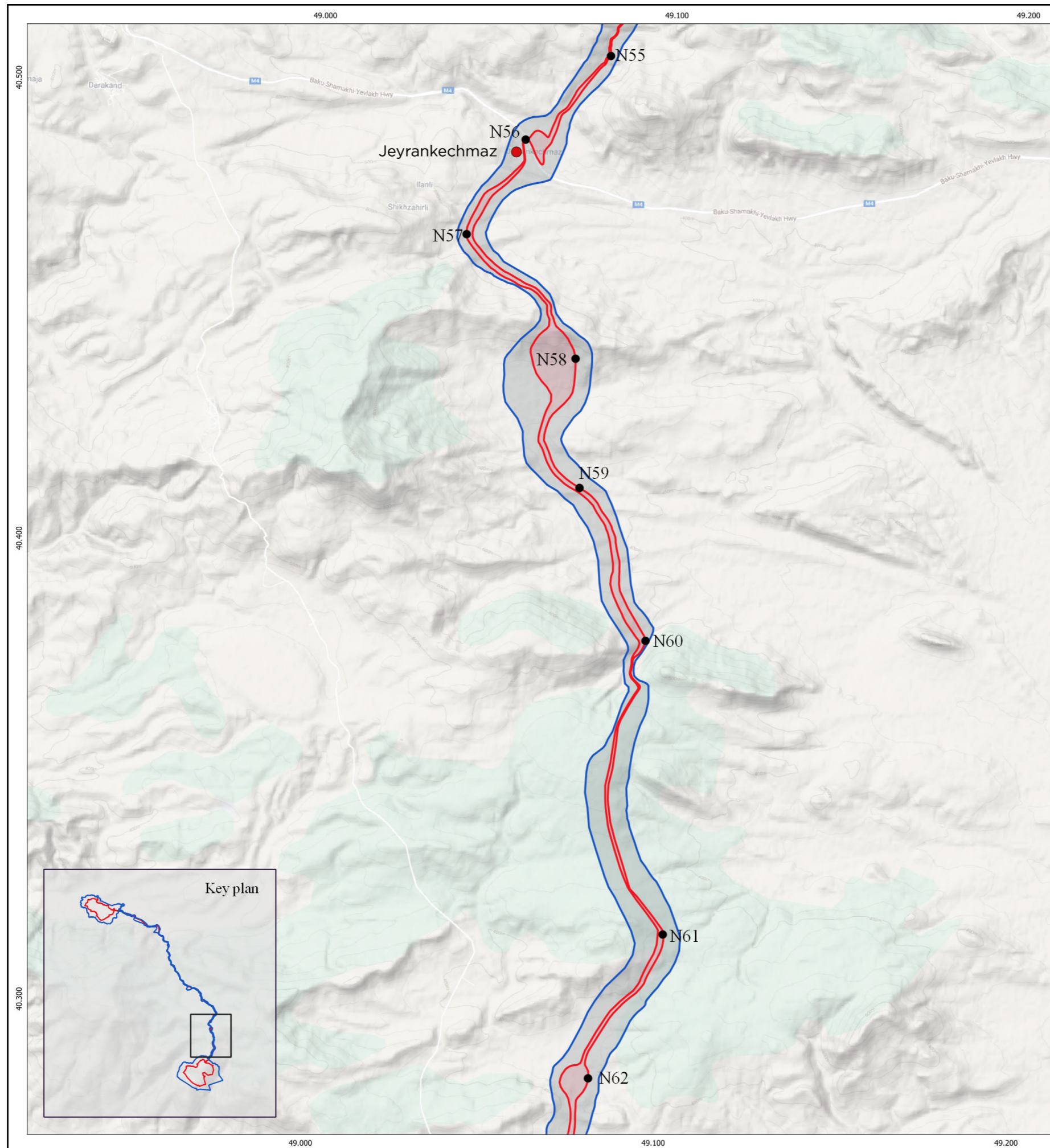
**Geographical Coordinates of the
Nominated Property**

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N45	48.8854	40.7059	N50	49.0419	40.5978
N46	48.9579	40.6734	N51	49.0765	40.5813
N47	48.9718	40.6657	N52	49.0936	40.559
N48	48.9847	40.6326	N53	49.1067	40.5325
N49	49.0228	40.6123	N54	49.0932	40.5238

- Nominated property
- Buffer zone
- Village



Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 39N
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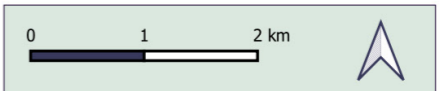
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Point	X	Y	Point	X	Y
N55	49.0814	40.5075	N59	49.0752	40.4136
N56	49.0577	40.489	N60	49.0948	40.3807
N57	49.0415	40.4681	N61	49.1015	40.3171
N58	49.0732	40.4416	N62	49.0812	40.2855

- Nominated property
- Buffer zone
- Village



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Nominated Property



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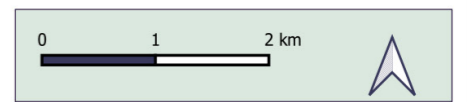
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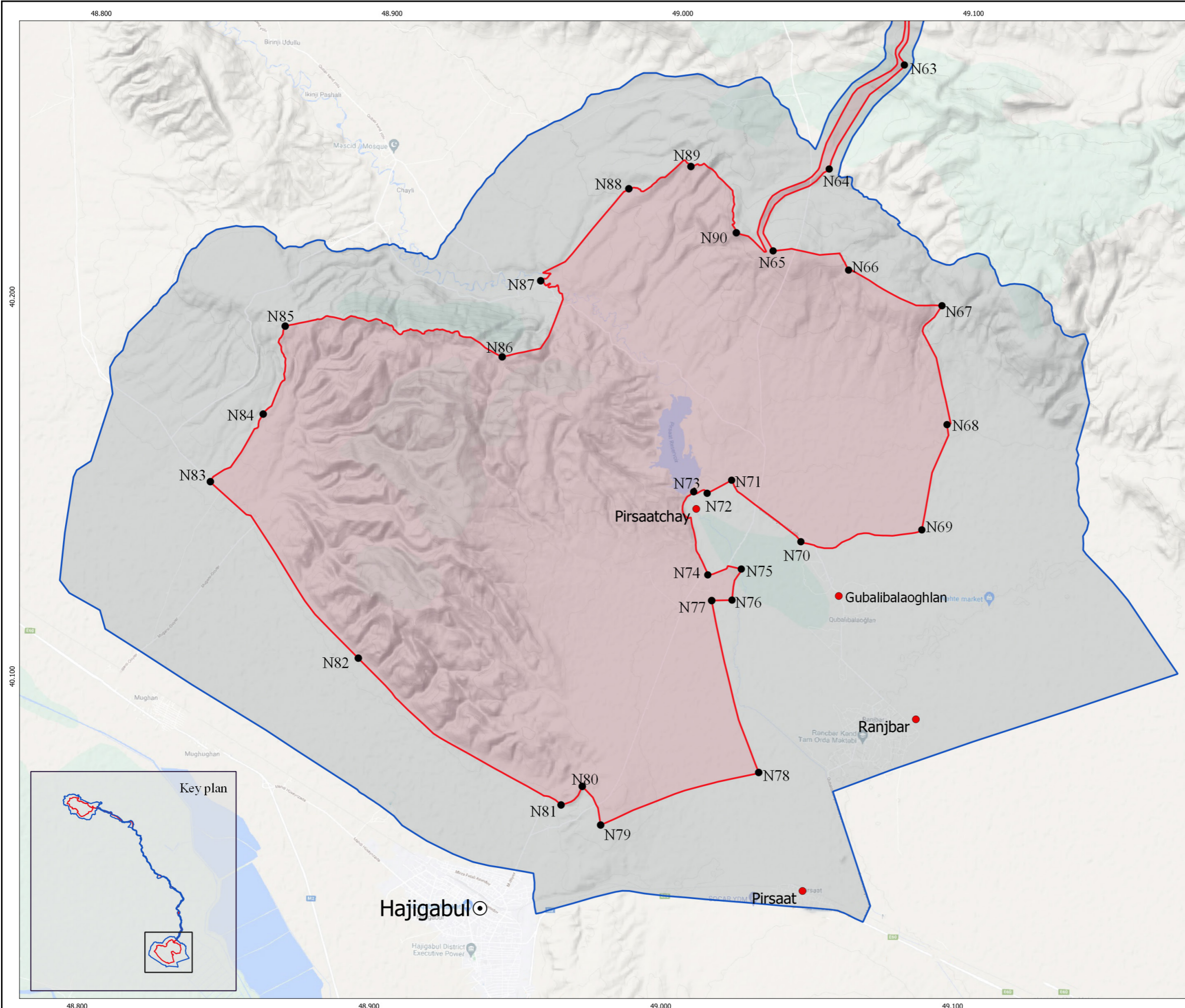
Geographical Coordinates of the
Nominated Property

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N64	49.0515	40.2387	N78	49.0318	40.0793
N65	49.0328	40.2168	N79	48.978	40.0645
N66	49.0589	40.2122	N80	48.9714	40.0746
N67	49.0912	40.2033	N81	48.9643	40.0696
N68	49.0938	40.172	N82	48.8936	40.107
N69	49.086	40.1442	N83	48.8414	40.1526
N70	49.0445	40.1404	N84	48.8589	40.1707
N71	49.0203	40.1562	N85	48.8658	40.194
N72	49.012	40.1526	N86	48.9406	40.1873
N73	49.0074	40.1529	N87	48.9532	40.2076
N74	49.0128	40.1311	N88	48.9827	40.2323
N75	49.0243	40.1328	N89	49.0039	40.2385
N76	49.0214	40.1246	N90	49.02	40.2214

- Nominated property
- Buffer zone
- Village
- ⊙ City



Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 39N
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48.800 48.900 49.000 49.100

40.200

40.100

48.800 48.900 49.000 49.100

Buffer zone



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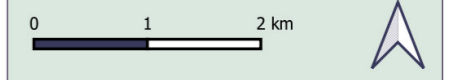
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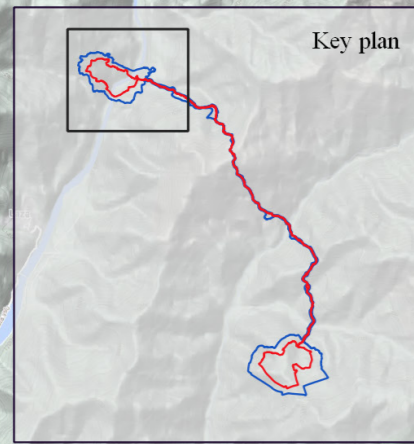
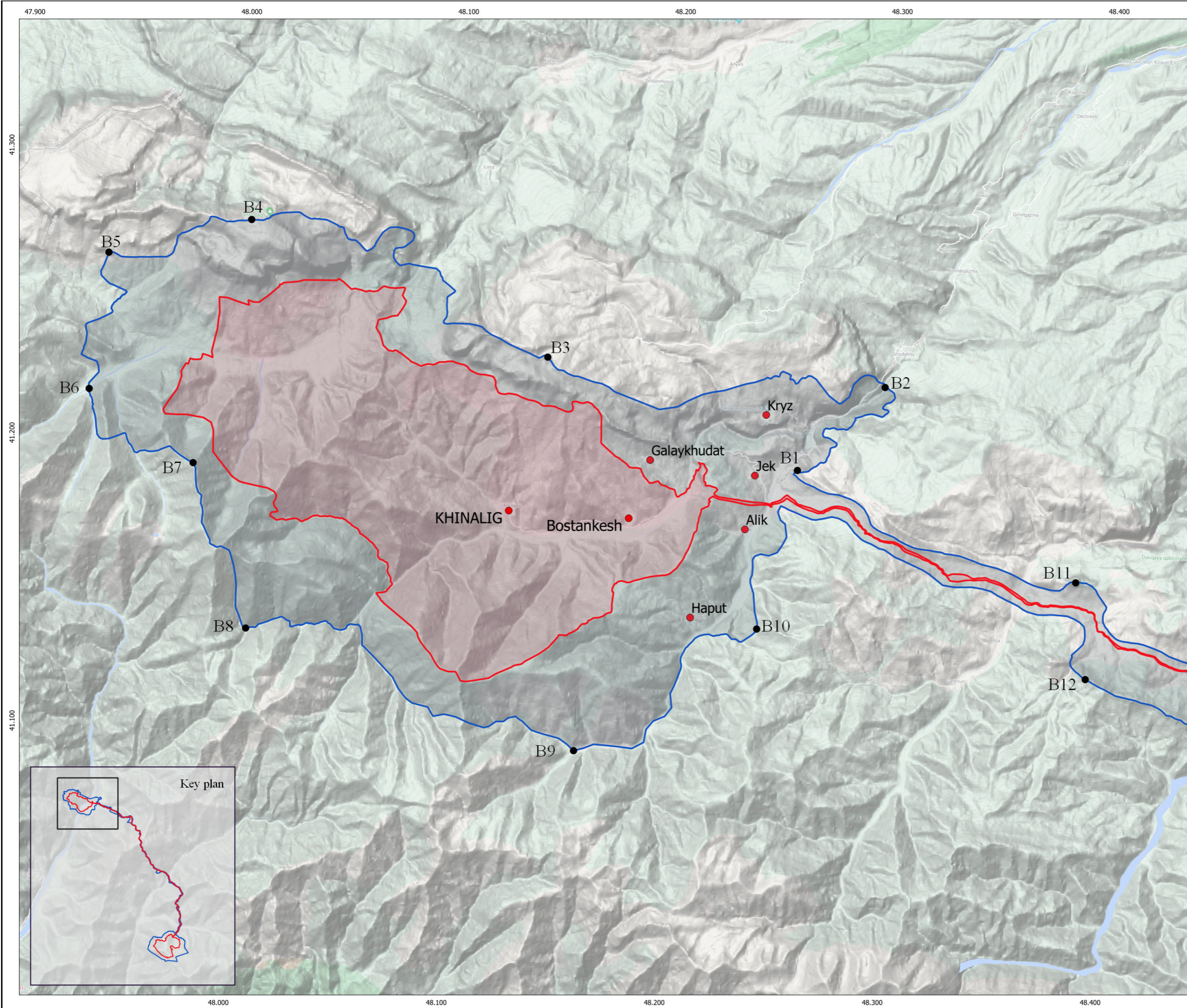
**Geographical Coordinates of the
Buffer Zone**

Point	X	Y	Point	X	Y
B1	48.2581	41.1959	B7	47.9799	41.1917
B2	48.2973	41.2257	B8	48.0067	41.1349
B3	48.1415	41.2325	B9	48.1593	41.0961
B4	48.0031	41.2768	B10	48.2416	41.1404
B5	47.9378	41.2638	B11	48.3877	41.1598
B6	47.9309	41.2162	B12	48.3934	41.1263

- Nominated area
- Buffer zone
- Village

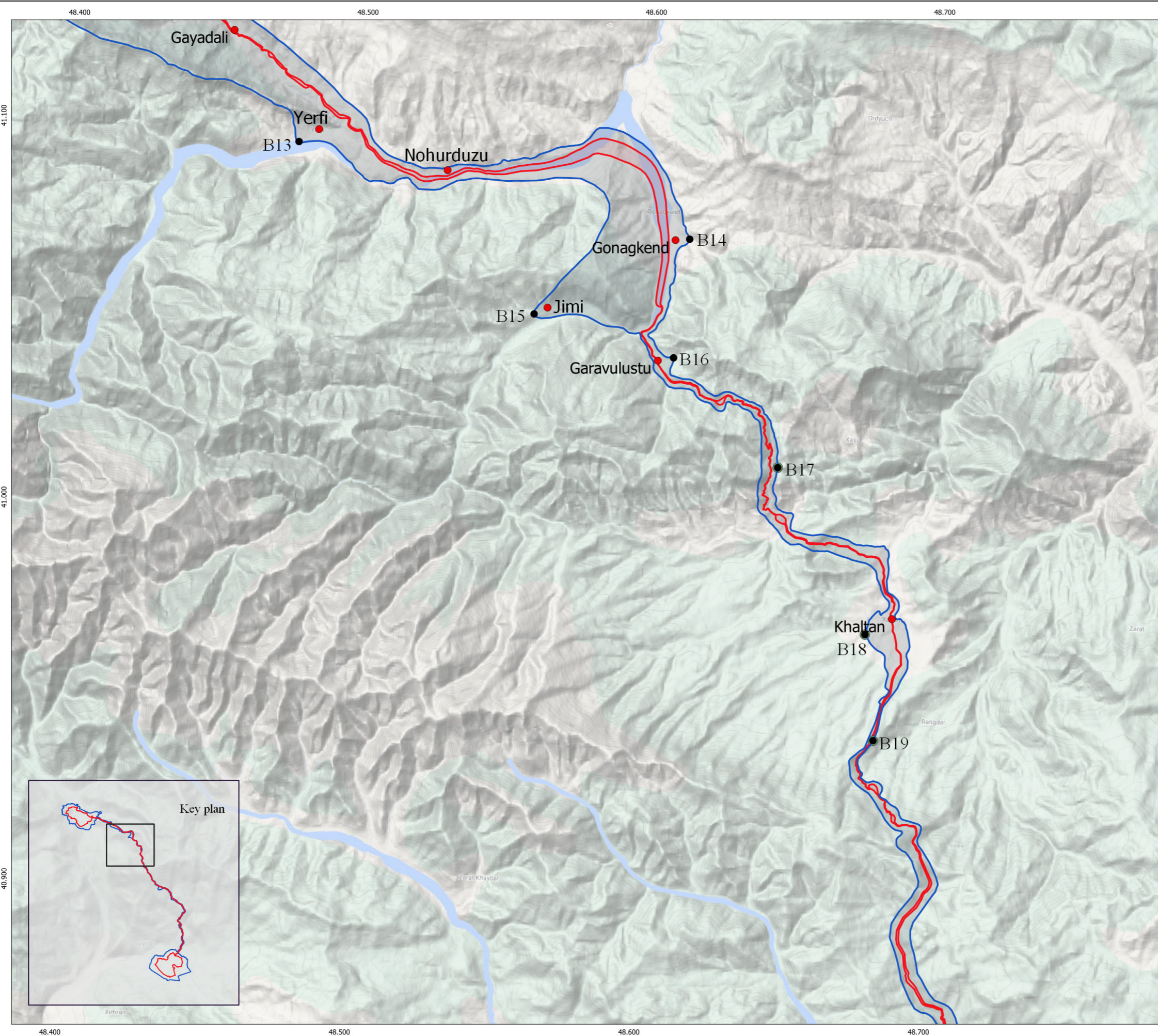


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Key plan

Buffer zone



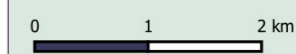
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**IDENTIFICATION OF THE NOMINATED
PROPERTY**

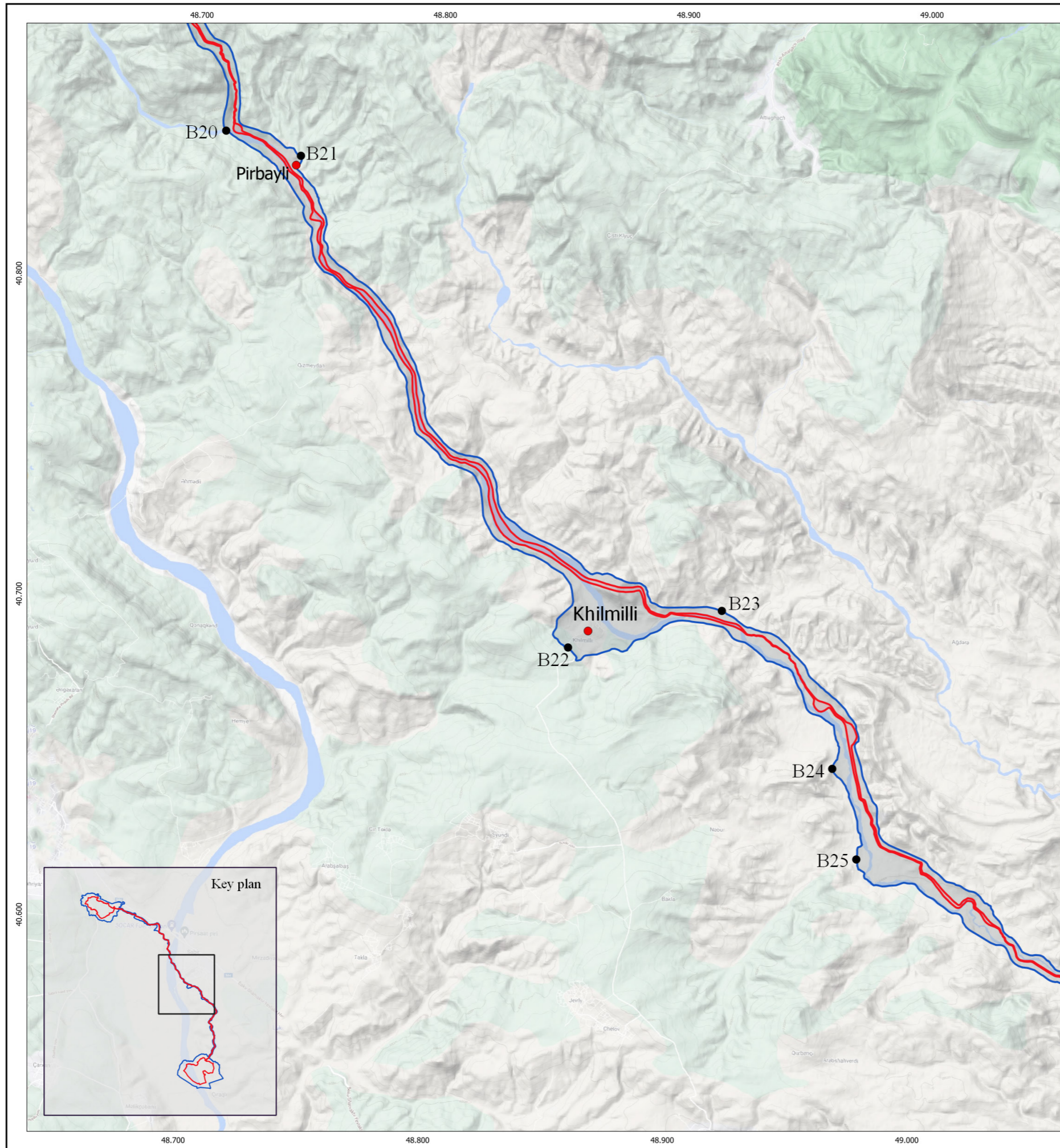
**Geographical Coordinates of the
Buffer Zone**

Point	X	Y	Point	X	Y
B13	48.4773	41.0954	B17	48.6463	41.0134
B14	48.6136	41.0727	B18	48.678	40.9703
B15	48.5604	41.052	B19	48.6817	40.9425
B16	48.6092	41.0415			

- Nominated area
- Buffer zone
- Village



Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 39N
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: WGS 1984
 Units: Meter
 Date: 1/13/22



State Tourism Agency
of the Republic of Azerbaijan

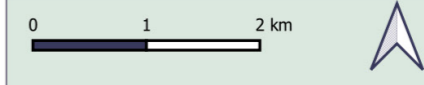
**CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
OF KHINALIG PEOPLE
AND "KÖÇ YOLU"
TRANSHUMANCE ROUTE**

**IDENTIFICATION OF THE NOMINATED
PROPERTY**

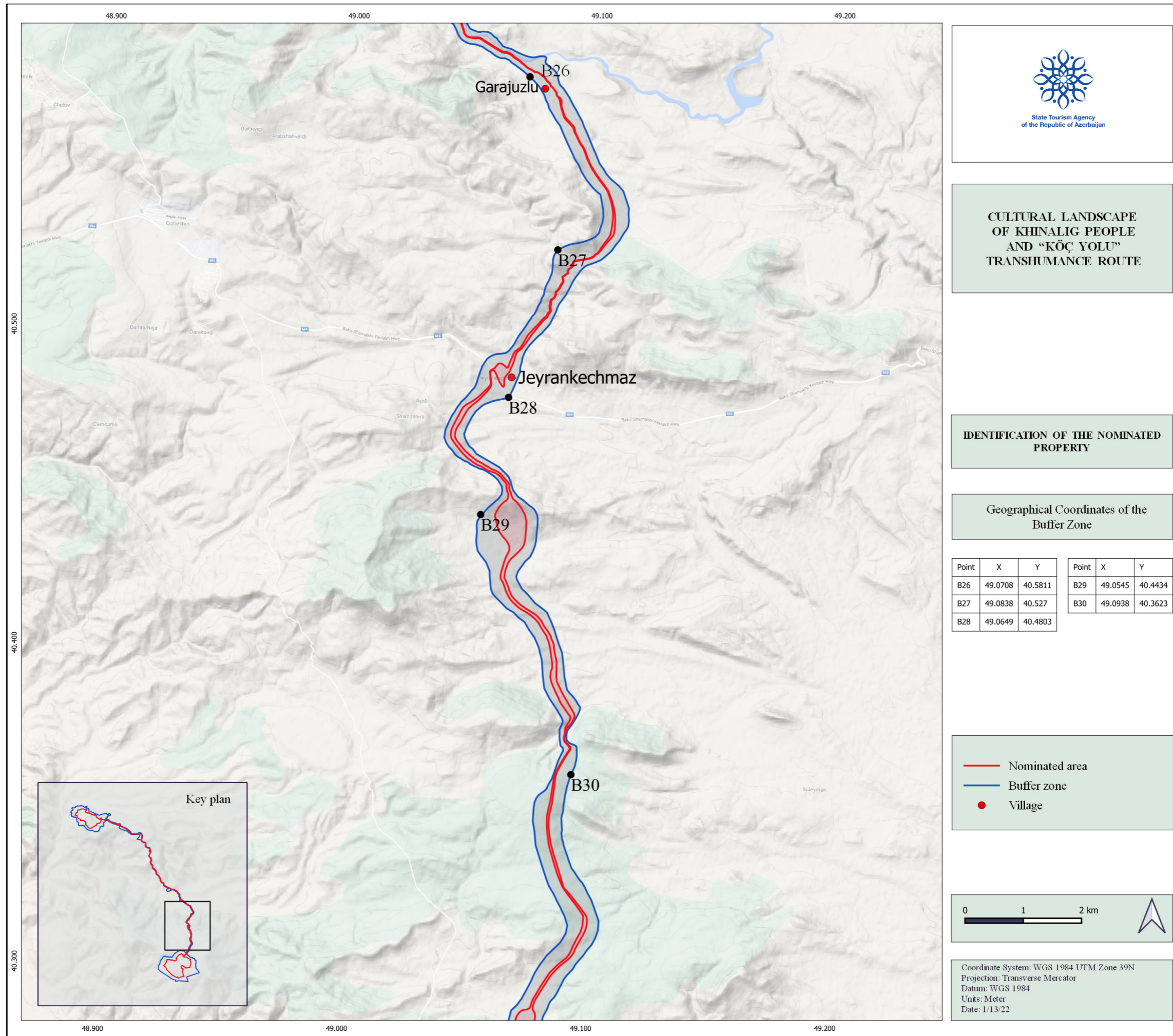
**Geographical Coordinates of the
Buffer Zone**

Point	X	Y	Point	X	Y
B20	48.7111	40.8461	B23	48.9194	40.7002
B21	48.7421	40.8389	B24	48.9661	40.6517
B22	48.8567	40.6876	B25	48.9768	40.6236

- Nominated area
- Buffer zone
- Village



Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 39N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: WGS 1984
Units: Meter
Date: 1/13/22



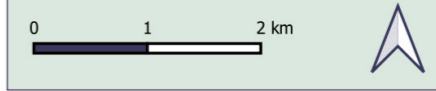
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF KHINALIG PEOPLE AND “KÖÇ YOLU” TRANSHUMANCE ROUTE

IDENTIFICATION OF THE NOMINATED PROPERTY

Geographical Coordinates of the Buffer Zone

Point	X	Y	Point	X	Y
B26	49.0708	40.5811	B29	49.0545	40.4434
B27	49.0838	40.527	B30	49.0938	40.3623
B28	49.0649	40.4803			

- Nominated area
- Buffer zone
- Village



Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 39N
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
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Buffer zone



State Tourism Agency
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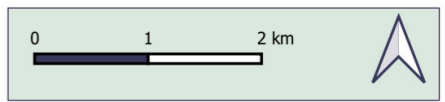
**CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
OF KHINALIG PEOPLE
AND “KÖÇ YOLU”
TRANSUMANCE ROUTE**

**IDENTIFICATION OF THE NOMINATED
PROPERTY**

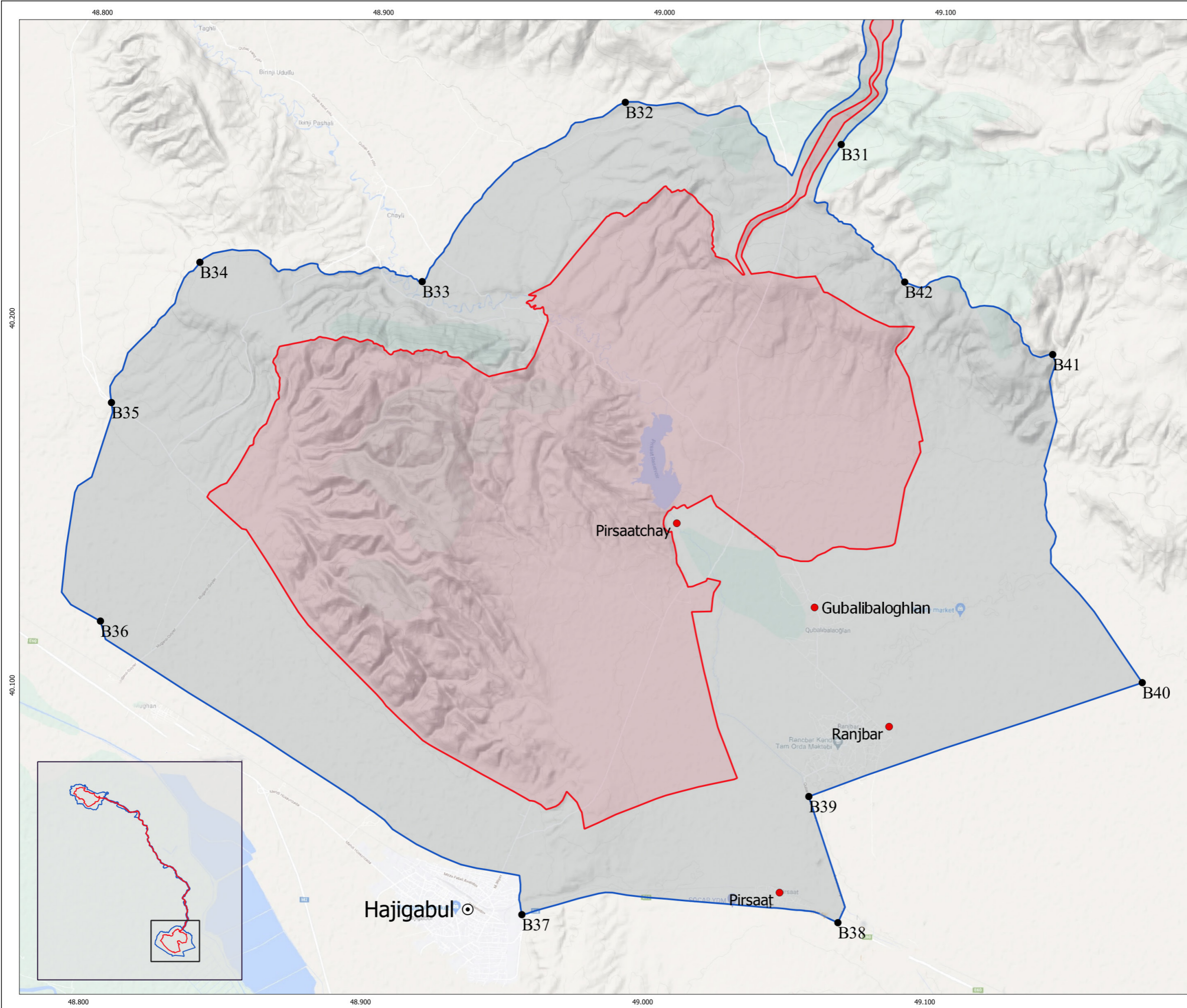
**Geographical Coordinates of the
Buffer Zone**

Point	X	Y	Point	X	Y
B31	49.0638	40.2526	B37	48.9565	40.0408
B32	48.9867	40.2628	B38	49.0687	40.0405
B33	48.9159	40.2126	B39	49.0574	40.0747
B34	48.8367	40.2165	B40	49.1749	40.1077
B35	48.8065	40.1776	B41	49.1406	40.1966
B36	48.8046	40.118	B42	49.0875	40.2155

- Nominated area
- Buffer zone
- City
- Village



Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 39N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: WGS 1984
Units: Meter
Date: 1/13/22



Criteria under which property is nominated

The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig people and the “Köç Yolu” transhumance route is nominated to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a continuing cultural landscape based on criteria (iii) and (v).

Criterion (iii): “to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization, which is living or which has disappeared”

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

State of Outstanding Universal Value

a) Brief synthesis

The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig people and *Köç Yolu* transhumance route is an exceptional living testimony to the uninterrupted vertical transhumance culture of the Khinalig people practiced over millennia. It bears witness to the development of a sustainable eco-social system adapted to various climate and environmental conditions, which continues to be the leading socio-economic activity of these semi-nomadic people. The seasonal migration between summer pastures (*yaylaq*) in the highest altitudes of the Great Caucasus mountains and winter pastures (*qışlaq*) in the semi-desert Shirvan plainlands have formed the culture of Khinalig people. The strong ethnic identity and unique language of these people enable transferring the ancestral knowledge about the transhumant way of life and the spiritual beliefs.

The nominated property encompasses all elements of the ancient vertical transhumance pattern. The seasonal migration of Khinalig people and their livestock still follows the whole stretch of the ancient Köç Yolu transhumance route where shrines and worship places witness the continuity of cultural interchange of the nomadic as well as with the sedentary cultures. Temporary dwellings in the summer and winter pastures are still in use, besides the permanent stone houses in Khinalig village, located on the steep slopes on the highest altitudes of the Great Caucasus. The medieval character of the living Khinalig village is preserved in its tiered architecture and settlement structure with flat roofs which function as shared spaces. The communal management system ensures that traditional practices in the village and the pastures are maintained.

Khinalig people's transhumant knowledge of livestock breeding in a diversity of environments has become a factor in maintaining the ecosystem balance. Transhumance has played a major role in the cultural development of the region as the primary migration vector of goods and services, knowledge, skills, symbolism and spiritual beliefs. The ability to regulate economic activities in accordance with the changing conditions of nature and climate is a risk emergency planning ability of Khinalig people and one of the main elements of sustainable use of resources that has enabled the Khinalig to maintain the transhumance sustainable economy.

b) Justification for Criteria

The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig people and the "Köç Yolu" transhumance route is nominated to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a continuing cultural landscape on the basis of criteria (iii) and (v).

Criterion (iii): "to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization, which is living or which has disappeared"

The nominated property Cultural Landscape of Khinalig people and the "Köç Yolu" transhumance route bears exceptional testimony to the uninterrupted transhumance culture of Khinalig semi-nomadic people practiced over millennia. The nomination encompasses all tangible and intangible features and processes of the ancestral vertical transhumance culture.

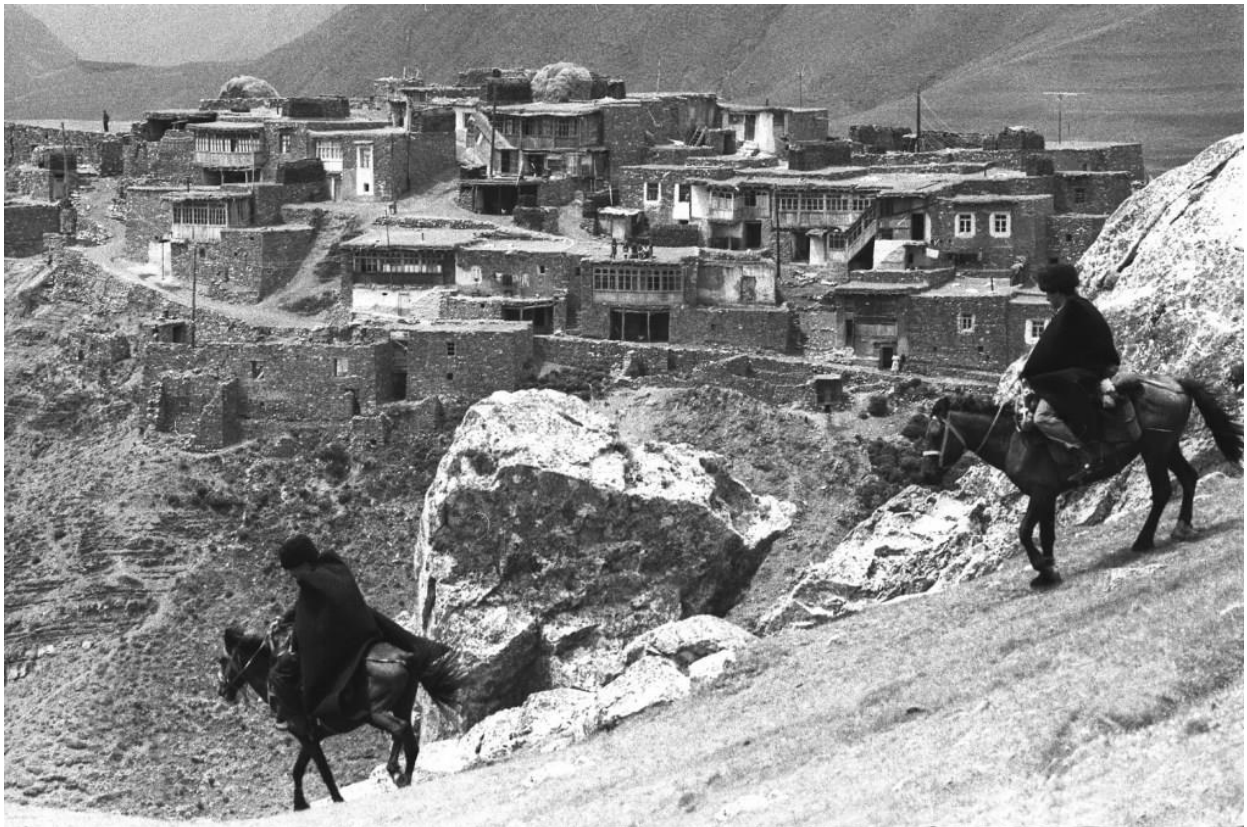


Image 17 Old Khinalig (1970s)

The continuity over thousands of years of the seasonal vertical migration of livestock of Khinalig people between summer pastures (yaylaqs) on the highest altitudes in the Great Caucasus mountains and winter pastures (qishlaqs) in semi-desert lowlands using the ancient Kōç Yolu transhumance route has formed the culture of Khinalig people and their unique language.

The seasonal migration components between summer and winter pastures on the traditional Kōç Yolu route of the living village Khinalig have preserved their authentic landscapes and settlement structures testifying to a sustainable adaptation to a diversity of environments. The property provides outstanding living testimony to the traditions and belief systems of an ancient transhumance culture developed over millennia.

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



Image 18 Khinalig in winter

The Cultural Landscape of the Khinalig people and the Kōç Yolu transhumance route is an outstanding example of land use representing the continuous semi-nomadic Khinalig culture and the uninterrupted human interaction with the environment. It bears witness to developing a sustainable eco-social system adapted to extreme environmental conditions, which has served to build and retain transhumance as the dominant sustainable and resilient economy.

The culture of Khinalig people is built around notions of sustainable use of resources and respect for the environment. The morphology of the medieval Khinalig village is a brilliant example of the efficient use of scarce land and other resources. The yaylaqs and qishlaqs are systematically divided into plots of land, allowing optimal use of fodder resources while keeping the environmental risk factors like erosion and overgrazing under control. The water management systems in all parts of the nominated property allow accessing drinking water under all conditions.

Throughout history, the people of Khinalig have generated thorough indigenous knowledge and adaptation skills. This ability to regulate economic activities is a risk emergency planning ability of Khinalig people.

c) Statement of Integrity

The continuing cultural landscape of the Khinalig people and the Köç Yolu transhumance route represents an outstanding testimony to the vertical transhumant practice that the semi-nomadic Khinalig people have developed over millennia. The nominated property includes tangible elements of the historical environment like cemeteries, shrines, bridges, springs, and other buildings with preserved functional and visual integrity. Pre-Islamic nature-related beliefs and rituals on the transhumance route (related to specific mountain peaks, the forest fragments considered sacred, etc.) constitute a strong living heritage. Intangible elements (crafts like wool processing and weaving, gastronomy, vestimentary, etc.) and processes intrinsically related to the vertical transhumance practice are well preserved and convey their significance. The ancestral indigenous knowledge about transhumance, seasonal plant, and fruit gathering, natural resource management solutions, ancestral skills as rotational grazing, and communal management of pastures witness strong living semi-nomadic traditions. The temporary dwelling structures, artificial ponds (nohur) to collect rainwater in arid areas, and irrigation ditches on the steep terrains have been mostly conserved.

The functional integrity of the nominated property is conserved owing to the uninterrupted transhumance practice that maintains the use of the ancestral summer and winter pastures and the transhumance route. The semi-nomadic lifestyle follows the ancient model where 4-6 families together form a small production unit, live in sub-terrain houses (qazma) and traditional tents (alaçiq), and herd their flocks of sheep within the defined borders of a single summer and winter pasture plot. The temporary dwellings and other constructions and infrastructure related to the animal husbandry in yataq and arxac preserve their structural and functional integrity. Traditional land use and resource management methods ensure the perfect eco-social system and serve to its sustainable development.

The nominated property is protected from urbanization and industrialization and remains mostly intact. The entire continuing landscape derived from the interaction between semi-nomadic people and nature encompasses the whole visual setting of the transhumance elements from the high mountain to semi-desert settlements. The typical yaylaq and qışlaq landscapes with yataq and arxac areas, subterrain houses, barns, temporary tents, artificial irrigation ditches and ponds, and grazing pastures without fences and borders are well preserved. The cultural landscape of the Khinalig village on steep slopes of the Great Caucasus at an altitude of 2300 meters retains

its visual integrity. The traditional Khinalig houses, with their usual organization of the space and use of local riverstone and soil roofs and the compact urban fabric remain intact.

d) Statement of Authenticity

The continuing cultural landscape of the Khinalig people and Köç Yolu transhumance route retains an exceptionally high degree of authenticity expressed by tangible and intangible attributes which are related to all elements of their vertical transhumance practice dating back to the Bronze Age. The property illustrates all aspects of the Khinalig people transhumance practice and demonstrates the authenticity of use and function, materials, location and setting, management systems and traditions and lifestyle. The intangible aspects of the Khinalig people's unique language and belief systems are maintained due to the continuity of the transhumance practice.

The seasonal migration of the Khinalig village families with their livestock follows the millenary Köç Yolu transhumance route and the continuity of the use of summer pastures (yaylaq) on the highest levels of Great Caucasus and winter pastures (qishlaq) in lowland semi-desert landscape is maintained through millennia.

The authenticity of the traditional morphology and architecture of the Khinalig village is preserved and monitored by communal management. The use of traditional building techniques is maintained in Khinalig village tiered houses and in the seasonal reconstruction of qishlaq winter settlements. The nominated property encompasses the cultural landscape of Khinalig where traditional management systems are still used for the maintenance of the pastures, dry-stone terraces, and irrigation systems. The cultural and natural high mountain landscape and its fauna are protected by traditional practices and beliefs.

e) Requirements for protection and management

The nominated property is subject to various protection and conservation measures. The legal norms and standards applied to the nominated property comprise the Constitution, laws, and codes of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers, state programs, and international agreements that Azerbaijan is a part of. Together, they form an integrated system of conservation and safeguarding the heritage and the environment to ensure property management.

The proposed property is under protection through various legal instruments. Currently, there are two groups of protective mechanisms in the nominated property. They concern the protection of cultural heritage assets and control and administration of the land plots, animal husbandry, including transhumant livestock breeding.

The responsible state institutions protecting cultural heritage in the proposed property are the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the State Tourism Agency (STA) and its subordinate bodies – Reserves Management Center and the Khinalig Reserve.

The responsibilities concerning the control and administration of the land plots, and animal husbandry, including transhumant livestock breeding within the nominated area, are shared by Local Executive Authorities of the districts, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, local municipalities, Ministry of Agriculture, and State Service on Property Issues under the Ministry of Economy.

The local legislation acknowledges the buffer zone of cultural heritage reserves. The heritage reserve regulations apply to their buffer zone too. According to the legislation, the construction of industrial facilities and exploration works that can harm the buffer zone's functional, structural, and visual integrity is prohibited. Any development projects in the buffer zone must be carried out according to the state-approved master plan in a manner that is not harmful to the property's OUV, integrity, and authenticity.

A draft proposal for additional regulations about the buffer zone conservation regime has been submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan and is currently being discussed.

The state party proposes a new integrated protection mechanism for the nominated area by expanding the border of the existing Khinalig reserve and including the entire nominated property in a single administrative unit. The planned reserve under the subordination of the STA will handle all conservation and protection issues concerning the property's cultural heritage, monuments, and landscapes. The new Reserve is planned to be established in 2023.

For the effective management of the New Reserve, an integrated management structure including the local community representatives will be applied.

STA has worked out certain modifications to the Land Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan related to the relevant assignment and use of land plots in cultural heritage sites and submitted them for approval to the government. The approval process is expected to be finalized by the summer of 2022.

It is intended that the monitoring committee will hold monthly meetings and develop quarterly and annual reports. Dissemination of all reports among all responsible agencies and the public is also planned.

Name and contact information of official local institution/agency

Reserve Management Center of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Mrs. Sadaqat Davudova, Deputy Chairperson

Nizami st., 96E, Landmark I

AZ1010 Baku, Azerbaijan

Website heritage.org.az

Tel/Fax +994 12 505 87 04

Email sadaqat.davudova@tourism.gov.az



Image 19 The Gudyalchai valley and the herds crossing the river



Image 20 Khinalig village in early spring



Image 21 Herds on the way to Khinalig village



Image 22 Wool is in Khinalig village



Image 23 Traditional flatbread making in Khinalig



Image 24 A shepherd and the herd on K  ç Yolu



Image 25 Sheep flocks on the migration route



Image 26 Herds on Köç Yolu making a night stop in a dushargah near Khyzy



Image 27 "Köç Yolu" seasonal movement route



Image 28 Sheep stocks on Köç Yolu seasonal movement route



Image 29 Sheep shearing in qishlaq, Gobustan



Image 30 Image 1 Sheep stocks in yaylaq



Image 31 Yaylaqs of Khinalig



Image 32 Qazma house interior in qishlaq; women serving tea