# TOURiBOOST

## REORIENTING TOURISM EDUCATION WITH DIGITAL, SOCIAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES TO SUPPORT LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS TACKLE STRATEGIC INNOVATION IN HERITAGE TOURISM

KA2 - COOPERATION FOR INNOVATION AND THE EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICES
KA203 - STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



# M02: ATTRACTON PLANNING
## PART 04: EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITY STRATEGY

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# 1 EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITY STATEGY

## 3.1 Key Experiences

While the term "experience" is used interchangeably with the term "activity," they are two different concepts. The Local Attraction Plan (LAP) designs situations where cultural consumers and visitors at heritage places may interact with the different assets through activities. Effective planning anticipates the reaction and kinds of memories a visitor is likely to have. These are interpretive opportunities. Interpretation helps visitors to reflect on their experience, as it happens in real time, so that they come away with a deeper understanding about themselves. For example visitors might have a greater sense of confidence about themselves after boating down a river or feel they have a greater connection with nature after exploring a geotrail, or a deeper sensitivity to rural lifestyles in an interpreted agritourism context; or have a greater sense about place that performs in the eyes as resourceful and resilient with speaking objects instead of fossilized units from the past.

The experience of visitors at heritage places is a complex and personal interaction between an individual and the heritage environment they visit, natural, built or intangible. The completeness and quality of the experiences is influenced by the visitor's expectations, the setting, social interactions, degree of active participation (passive through to active), levels of immersion (emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual engagement), and associated memories.

Communities and the cultural heritage industry benefit from protected area visitor access and facilities. This is underpinned by the provision of infrastructure and services, such as roads, safe drinking water, walking tracks, signage, interpretation and education programs, guided tours, campgrounds, toilets, car parks, picnic sites of brochures, and websites. It is important to maximise the accessibility of these services for people with disabilities as well as of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It is a significant challenge to manage visitor infrastructure to contemporary standards. In planning for interpretive products and services, there is a need to identify appropriate and inspirational experiences which meet current and future visitor expectations now and in the future. Key considerations are:

1. The Pilot Project Area has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural heritage assets that together represent distinctive aspects of local heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed as such an assemblage through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and

sometimes noncontiguous heritage assets and active communities;

2. The Pilot Project Area reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folk life that are a valuable part of the national story;

3. The Pilot Project Area provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and/ or scenic features;

4. The Pilot Project Area provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities;

5. Heritage assets that are important to the identified theme or themes of the area retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation;

6. Residents, business interests, non-profit organizations, and governments within the proposed area that are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants including government, and have demonstrated support for designation of the area;

7. The proposed management entity and units of government supporting the designation are willing to commit to working in partnership to develop the heritage area;

8. The Local Attraction Plan (PLAN) is consistent with continued economic activity in the area;

9. A conceptual boundary map is supported by the public and the heritage management entity that accepted the implementation of the plan.

**Fig. 28**: Castel Lagopesole, Visitor Experience with storytelling multivision at the Courtyard. Courtesy: Aldo Di Russo

# 3.2 Creating Experience Opportunities

Each individual has a Customer Journey Map within each Local Interpretive Project, which involves travelling prosumers into developing the required and customized services they wishes for). By understanding the different cultures (e.g. German, British, Italian, Greek etc.) a new cultural consumer profile evolves each time and heritage entrepreneurs are guided to develop new business models in the philosophy of the Local Interpretive Project not projecting their own wishes into the service, but listening to customer and asking for the views of cultural heritage consumers. When the latter is understood, then the time is ripe to map the territory for new services and enhance existing services.

The Local Attraction Plans trace the territory for opportunities and trains local actors' onsite, so that interpretive services developed with the new business models adopted, are launched to the global-local market. Producers may have different solutions or/and different services and/or the same services with different solutions: Local Interpretive Project are monitoring in real time what is the interaction and the feedback of clients in the new services created in participation by

- **local actors**, preferably women and young, chronic unemployed, artists, people with physical disabilities

- **creative consumers** (the tourist, the traveler, the visitor, the learner etc.),

- **multilingual emotional maps** through the use of mobile technologies (smart phones iPads), that are the right tool to document the clients' emotional maps and the experiences made at heritage place level, so as to benefit the businesses by spreading and disseminating the branded image of place products and services virally at global level virally in real time.

New mobile technologies enable visitors to map their emotions and perform viral marketing for the sake of places. The Local Attraction Plan implements a 30 geo-location Connectivity Map with the immaterial assets of a given place and the services attached around them: In the course of the time places change and evolve significantly and every new layer added as a result of the specific evolution, transforms and hides the previous one.

Active participation of connected consumers gains new significance, as the objective is to reclaim their hidden memories of hidden assets and put them together to provide a deeper understanding of the environment that surrounds them (rural, urban, coastal), enriching thus their overall place experience. At the same time, the use of the QR codes gives the opportunity to interact with the territory and its history by using smart apps.

The Local Attraction Plan enable Project Partners and trainees to learn how to create personal codes so that they can transform personal experiences into digital content, connecting themselves with the assets and services of interest across the Project Area. In this way assets and services selected become fully accessible by the online platform, via computers or mobile phones, with the streetscape playing protagonist roles in the experience framework. The benefits for both producers and consumers are multiple:

- Get to know places and create collective experiences for a greater understanding of contemporary times.

- Create a dialogue between technology and society

- Promote citizens interactive participation with social and anthropological components

- Offer citizens a comprehensive and motivating image of the city they live in.

- Create new ways of virtual and real communication

The Local Attraction Plans (LAP) shall also identify what business opportunities can be created in a given place by originating a new race of entrepreneurs defined as **heritage entrepreneurs**, who can handle (mobile) business highly customized for (connected) consumers offering services that the Tour Operator by definition cannot offer. The LAP shall:

1. - select geo-locations.
   Think about the experiences you have in the Pilot Project Area e.g, a rural community with culinary traditions, a spectacular view and scenery, historic buildings, World-Heritage listed areas, unusual nature, accessibility, outback etc.

2. - always strive to deliver something unexpected.

3. - provide tips on other attractions, things to do, places to see in your Pilot Project Area e.g. at a B&B – local tours, local attractions, nearby cafes/restaurants/bars.

4. *-think of your 'competitor' as your ally and not as your enemy:* this is a first step to create an effective stakeholder map.

5. -provide 'new news'.
   *Keep your cultural heritage product offerings fresh. Think that an asset, if not signified, might perform as old and insignificant in the eyes of the end users, visitor, tourists, or cultural consumers.*

6. Offer cultural consumers of any type the opportunity to become involved in various aspects of local businesses or advise them of activities that are available either through you or nearby e.g. on a farm stay, offer them the opportunity to shear a sheep or muster cattle, collect fruits, participate the wine harvest, make a great outskirts or indoors opportunities.

7. Remember to offer immersive, interactive, active and adventurous experiences.

8. Provide an opportunity for cultural heritage consumers, visitors and tourists to meet the locals.

9. Provide easy-access to activities that will allow cultural heritage consumers, visitors and tourists to immerse themselves in the people, the lifestyle and the environment.

10. **Highlight the unique selling point of your product.**
    *Perhaps there's something so unique about your product that it cannot be experienced anywhere else in the world?*
    *If so, promote it!*

## 3.2.1 Active Participation

**Heritage Experience Seekers do not passively observe the culture and the lifestyle like through the flatscreen TV or the museum exhibit.**

Therefore the LAPs should:

- incorporate the cultural history of the area into the final product offering – interactive experiences that help the visitor understand the culture and learn. E.g. wild life tours, traditional cooking courses using traditional ingredients, hunting with the hawk, medieval ghost tours, language learning, and embroidery courses, bungee jumping and flying like at the Volo d'Angelo Scenic Trail in Basilicata, Italy etc.

- Utilise the local geography and the nature as a unique selling point – link with local experts, e.g. a park ranger interacting with nature and animals, planting trees, tagging birds, sharing the history of the flora, fauna and tangible heritage assets form the built environment.

- Share your unique skills and create an interactive learning experience.

- Given that Heritage Experience Seekers exploit the chance to learn about the product and how it is made, the process, e.g. cooking schools, wine blending, grappa distillery, wildelife tours, how to surf, scuba diving, how to catch and fry the fish.

- Talk about everyday activities like schooling, medical, housing, transport, holidays, sporting events, festivals and connect thus the selected heritage assets of the territory to the local community

- Environmentally sustainable and responsible cultural consumption and tourism is becoming a major concern for Global Experience Seekers. Demonstrate to the selected audiences how your Local Pilot Project is protecting the environment through recycling, solar energy, recycled or tank water, alternative energy uses. Highlight it and promote it in the local marketing strategies and materials.

**https://www.volodellangelo.com/**



**Fig. 29:** Volo Dell'Angelo, Basilicata, Italy
Source: Project SEE/B/0016/4.3/X SAGITTARIUS

### 3.2.2 Provide for Authenticity

**Heritage Experience Seekers enjoy authentic personal experiences they can talk about. They are sociable and enjoy engaging and interacting with the locals.**

Therefore the LAP shall:

- Provide an opportunity to meet locals, e.g winemakers, chefs, the local fishing guru (best fishing spots, bait to use for local catch).

- Employ local stakeholders who can share their knowledge and stories with guests.

- Give the audience the chance to meet and learn from experts like a park ranger in a natural reserve or the local archeologist, the story teller, the youth and inspire the audience to co-creation of contents within the Roving Museum.

- hare local secrets, like places of interest in the periphery of the Local Pilot Project such as picturesque picnic spots, bushwalks, local /secluded beaches, hidden restaurants, biofood restaurants and market places.

- Create opportunities to get the audience involved in local events, like, food and wine festivals, music events, local trade fairs, religious ceremonies and processions, historic re-enactments.

- Source products locally, e.g. locally made soaps, candles, foods and handicrafts etc. Sell locally made products or be able to advise where they can be purchased, so that local communities profit from the Local Interpretive Product.

### 3.2.3 Provide for Adrenaline

**Heritage Experience Seekers are adventurous and travel to challenge themselves – physically, emotionally and mentally.**

Therefore Local Pilot Projects shall:

- Provide 'new news'. Keep the Pilot Project's offerings fresh!

- Global Experience Seekers are early adopters: they want to be the first, so if you have something new, make it possible for them to experience it.

- A new aspect can be something old made new. Be creative and think outside the square.

- Specialise or develop products for smaller groups on different days at different times, e.g. wildlife watching groups, special menu with a guest appearance by the chef, special treks.

- Highlight the unique selling point of your product. Perhaps there's something so unique about your product that it cannot be experienced anywhere else in the world? If so, promote it!

- Deliver something unexpected.

## 3.2.4 Provide for Variety

**Heritage Experience Seekers travel to experience the differences rather than similarities and look for contrast from their day-to-day lives.**
Therefore the LAP shall:

- Offer a contrast to normal life. Eg different food, physical activities, relaxation activities.

- Sell the unique aspects of your product. Eg activities that provides a physical challenge or unusual photo opportunity, cultural and natural assets, local insights, different foods, quirky facts, something new, something you can make or be involved in such as blending wine.

**Heritage Experience Seekers enjoy a variety of unique and personally compelling experiences on any single trip.**

Therefore Local Pilot Projects shall be offering:

- multiple experiences and activities that incorporate the natural/ historical/ cultural aspects of each participating region

- Pilot Project narratives shall not miss a chance to tell end users, consumers and visitors interesting facts about the area even if it is not expected (like a bike tour could include information on local culture, nature etc.).

**Heritage Experience Seekers place high importance on value for money and hence critically balance benefits with costs.**

Therefore Local Pilot Projects shall:

- exceed the usual consumer expectations.

- create a *"Woohh!"* factor or/and *"Aha!"* effect through strong customer service and cognitive engagement of the audience

- allow the co-creation of contents and the adding some personal touches, as planned within the Multiplier Events or elsewhere

- Offer only what you can promise to deliver.

- Collect feedback and quotes from the selected audiences, informally and formally so you can see if you're delivering what the cultural heritage consumer expects (The Visitor Survey). After the completion of TOURIBOOST information can be obtained form the audiences in a "special occasion context" like have staff conduct informal surveys while serving dinner or at the checkout counter.

- Think about and reappraise product and/or businesses of the Heritage Sector around the Pilot Projects. Look at how a commodity, product and a service can be translates into experiences. Look at the concept of 'bundling'. Ask yourself:

- What 'experiences' does the region offer?

- What is unique to the heritage business or region and the related asset?

- What can your region promote as a unique sales proposition?

- What experience category can the Pilot Project offer?

Look at opportunities to connect the LAP with the local tourism businesses, heritage agencies and operators and to 'bundle' the regional products together with others and promote a stronger experience offering. To stimulate even greater interest and in turn ensure the success of the heritage industry, it is vital we understand the characteristics and 'needs' of the Heritage Experience Seekers, who are more informed, interested and curious about cultural heritage and the related experiences. When we 'connect' with them they will hunger for more of our offerings.

**Fig. 30** Sille Ethnological Museum
Visitor Experience with photo story telling (rotating boxes)
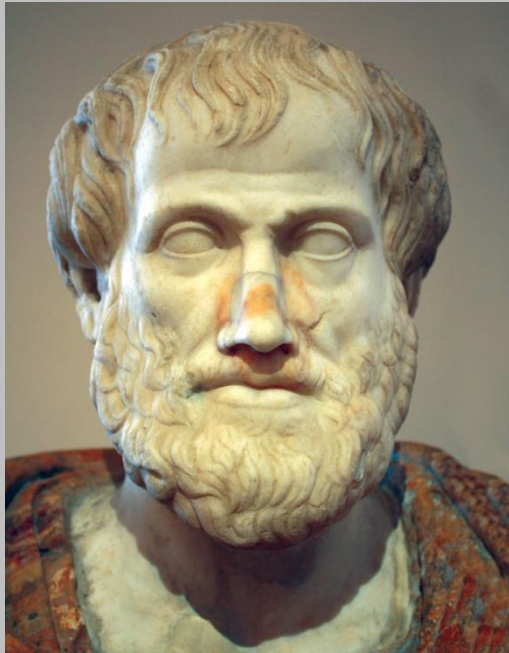Source: 2018-1-TR01-KA203-058344 TOURIBOOST Project Record

## 1.2.5 Bridging Time-Distance



To understand and appreciate the cultural heritage environment the audience needs to bridge the tangible form of a monument to its intangible dimensions, symbols and meanings. are The Local Attraction Plan (LAP) uses interpretation as a tool to bridge the spatiotemporal distance that prevents access to cultural heritage phenomena, whereas cognitive distance is bridged through appropriate cognitive load management. Aristotle formulates that Hermeneutics is a systems logic that derives from the ability of humans to think in abstract and taxonomic categories, naming it categorical knowledge. Cognitive scientists refer to

this inherent quality of human thought as the general cognitive ability g. Aristotle's text "de Interpretando", a part of Organon, is a logical Grammar, examining the structure of the judgment. Being governed by cognition Aristotelian Hermeneutics reject any expression that cannot be verified as true.

**Fig. 31:** Aristotle, the founder of Western thinking.

Cultural consumption at heritage places may very well broaden the audience's horizons by offering *distinctiveness* and *authenticity*, but at many heritage places a constant war takes places: the one between *perception and understanding*, which is both of emotional and cognitive nature. Visitor endurance in the first phase of the visit is high due most to intrinsic motivation, but an acceleration of interest loss in the middle visit-phase is to be observed, due to work memory fatigue to process significant amounts of novel elements. Finally working memory loads and other location-related inconveniencies accumulate visitor-fatigue in the last visit-phase, rendering the visit to an unsuccessful event. To defeat time and distance decay, e.g. to offer contemporary visitors the chance to understand historically and/or geographically remote cultures and mentalities new tools are required.

## 1.2.6 Perception Versus Understanding

The Local Attraction Plan is an attempt to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place. Among these conditions are, crucially, prejudices and fore-meanings in the mind of the interpreter. Understanding is therefore interpretation, which uses

one's own preconceptions so that the meaning of the object can really be made to speak to us. Understanding is thus a productive process, since interpretations keep changing during the process of what and when is being understood.

Another important condition in which understanding takes place is temporal distance: present and past are firmly connected and the past is not something that has to be painfully regained in each present, **if** the interpreter has the tool to decode it. Cultural consumers are heterogeneous groups with multi-generational members and not always historically

"self-aware". One of the main problems visitors face is how to distinguish 'true prejudices', by which we understand, from the 'false' ones, by which we misunderstand. Promoting historical self-awareness, the Local Attraction Plans, enable the audience and individuals within an audience, to abandon the own prejudices and evaluate an object on its own.

## 1.2.7 Meanings

Capturing and keeping their attention high up during and possibly after the visit means to create bridges between the inherent values of phenomena selected for presentation, and the audiences. Far beyond the dissemination of factual information, cognitive accessibility aims to create meanings, so that visitors can put a phenomenon into personal perspective and identify with it in a way that is more profound and enduring way. Meaning should create in them *the* sense of the place or the resource. Meanings are contextual in nature, including a linguistic, spatial and a social context. To understand the meanings of given items is to understand those meanings within the given context.

Communicated through the use of language, meanings are embedded in language and culture. Being culturally and socially constructed they are shared by all who access them, but not by those who are unable to decode them. One of the most significant contexts of meanings is the spatial context, the sense of the place. Meanings extracted from a visit to a place, heritage or natural site, collection etc. constitute the high added value experience a visitor takes away in memory. In this vein, meaning *is* the experience- the only experience any visitor has with a place,\ (see Chapter 4.5).

## 1.2.8 Provide for Quality

The quality of heritage products and experiences influences visitor satisfaction, which flows through to repeat visitation and word of mouth marketing. In the development context of the Local Interpretive Project, quality refers primarily to quality of onsite experiences along the Transnational Attraction Cluster. This relates to visitor perceptions of the cultural heritage tourism product along the Transnational Heritage Trail in terms of the appeal, intellectual challenge and raised level of visitor interest. The overall quality also

encompasses associated experiences such as catering, cleanliness of toilets and ease of parking among others. Experienced quality is relative to price, the expectations of visitors and comparisons with similar ventures.

One of the most important determinants of quality is interpretation, which is considered separately in this report. Successful practices include obtaining visitor and end-user feedback, recognizing product driven by value and interpretation theming of

Local Projects, careful adherence to authenticity. The following issues relate to quality and authenticity of heritage products and experiences:

- design and presentation of interpretation

- amenities provision

- regulation of visitor flows so as not to detract from quality of

experience and minimise visitor site impacts

- standardizing the quality of the experience to provide a consistent and reliable interpretive product

- management of experiences and emotions to inspire the co-creation of contents

**Fig. 32:** Venice, Italy, overwhelming experiences at heritage places
**Fig. 33:** Rhodes, Greece, mature destinations

## 1.2.9 Provide for Authenticity

Authenticity is a core value in heritage interpretation and central to the quality experience. Authenticity in heritage is connected on a asset that is fragile and non-renewable. Authenticity from a conservation management perspective may mean being as historically accurate as possible in the scientific representation of historical events and artefacts. In development context of the Transnational ATTRACTION CLUSTER (IO3), visitors play an active role in the experience of heritage, rather than simply being a passive recipient of historical knowledge. It is of crucial importance to realize that the audience is not only seeking knowledge but also enjoyment through interacting with the past. Presenting original assets and dry knowledge disconnects the audience from the experience vehicle and leads to an 'in vitro image of the departed

**Fig, 33:** Konya, Archaeological Museum, the Neolothic Bath
Source: 2018-1-TR01-KA203-058344 TOURIBOOST Project Record

past'.

Authenticity relates both to the representations of the past combined with visitor perceptions of authenticity and how they make sense of the heritage experience. Observed issues and those identified along the process of developing the Transnational Heritage Trail include:

- Too many visitors can have an impact on authenticity of cultural experience—both in terms of material conservation, but also impact on atmosphere (Venice, Rhodes, Istanbul Historic Peninsula, Santiago di Compostela etc.)

- Artefacts not part of heritage site can be disappointing (Black Forest Freibug, animal decoration in coffee shops)

- Opening all daylight hours has implications for services such as maintenance, mowing, garbage collection etc. impinging on the cultural experience

- Elaborated and 'exciting' but inaccurate interpretations contradict agreed goals/messages

Successful practices included:

- Real stories and people's connections with assets (Pierre d' Aubusson saves Fort St. Nicholas in Rhodes Greece; Giacomo Casanova's escape from the prison of the Palazzo Ducale in Venice)

- Products sold are locally made and relevant (Murano, Burano, Italy, Black Forest, Germany)

- Catering can be themed with heritage (Black Forest, Germany.

- Historic re-enactment can be valued by visitors (Freiburg, i.Br.)



**Fig. 34:** Freiburg, i.Br. Historic Re-enactment
Source: Project SEE/B/0016/4.3/X SAGITTARIUS

# 1.3 Heritage Interpretation as an Experience Opportunity Strategy

Interpretation is a means of communicating ideas, feelings and values that helps people enrich their understanding of natural and cultural values. Information is factual material that conveys or imparts knowledge and is generally designed to reach a broad audience. Education is a formal process of teaching skills, knowledge and concepts that lead to greater understanding of natural and cultural values. It generally targets students, teachers and others with a commitment to learn. Interpretation is the art and science of connecting visitors, such as recreationists, tourists, guests, clients, and customers with ideas, heritage assets, and opportunities for engagement and learning. At its best, interpretation is:

- **A mission-based communication process** that engages visitors and helps them make a meaningful connection with the agency and the heritage assets they manage.
- **A service** that considers the needs, wants, and interests of the visitor to enhance cultural experiences before, during, and after their visit
- **A management strategy** that can be used to increase visitors' appreciation of and sensitivity to site heritage assets.

Interpretation is the way organizations facilitate connections between visitors and heritage assets. For example, land management agencies across the country use signs, exhibits, publications, tours, and other media to connect visitors with natural, cultural, and recreation heritage assets. Interpretive planning includes planning for visitor centers; kiosks or bulletin boards with information, education, or safety messages; publications such as educational brochures, booklets, checklists, or flyers; exhibits and exhibits labels; guided walks, talks, tours, or interpretive demonstrations and programs; Orientation and way-finding information such as directional signs and maps, interpretive signs and waysides; safety information, rules, regulations, and use policies; educational programs or activities for families, school groups, or other visitors. Within TOURIBOOST interpretive planning will deliver the Local Attraction Plan (LAP), which shall consider six major planning parameters:

## Situation (The Pilot Project Planning and Dissertation Template):

- What is our current situation?
- What is the mission of the Interpretive Plan?
- What is the need for the Interpretive Plan at this place?
- How can the Interpretive Plan support the mission and strategic goals of the heritage agency and the specific area?
- What is the benefit of this area to the taxpayer and area partners or stakeholders?

## Purpose – (The Pilot Project Planningadn Dissertation Template):

- What do we hope to accomplish with the Interpretive Plan?
- What planning considerations need to be acknowledged?
- What specific goals do we have for Pilot Project Area?

## Inventory - (The Pilot Project Planning Template):

- What heritage assets, facilities, and expertise do we currently have?
- What, if any, management issues are we facing?
- Who are our current audiences, and what do we know about them?
- Is there interest in attracting more, less, or different audiences?

## Analysis – (The Pilot Project Planning Template):

- What does the Heritage Assessment tell us about possible options for Interpretive Plan?
- How do we align what we have with the goals we have for this area?

## Options – (The Pilot Project Planning Template):

- Based on the inventory and analysis, what specific interpretive options are best for this area?
- What specific recommendations are appropriate?

## Action – (The Attraction Design Tool)

- What specific actions are necessary to develop our interpretive recommendations?
- What schedule is appropriate for implementing those options?
- What heritage assets will be required for successful development of our recommendations?

- Do visitors have enough information to make necessary orientation and way-finding decisions? Is there any evidence to suggest that visitors are confused or frustrated in finding their way to or around your area?

- What, if any, evidence exists to suggest that they understand area regulations?

- What common or obvious questions do visitors ask about your area?

- Have you collected frequently asked questions that might help inform orientation, way-finding, or safety information in the future?

- Will you eventually need to collect this type of information?

- Are there interpretive facilities or not enough facilities for reasonable and satisfying cultural experiences? Are the existing facilities being used or not?

- Are they being used appropriately? How will you find this out?

- What is the overall effectiveness of existing programs, media, and staffing?

- Have you conducted any observations, evaluations, or research that might shed light on this question? If not, what anecdotal information might be available to suggest change?

- What media or programs might be needed to enhance cultural experiences based on the area's natural/cultural heritage assets?

- Have there been any changes in the heritage assets, or in their management, that should be interpreted?

**TOURiBOOST**
Reorienting tourism education with digital, social and intercultural competences
to support local stakeholders tackle strategic innovation in heritage tourism
2018-1-TR01-KA203-058344

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