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OUTLINE

1. UNESCO Designations and Visitor Centres

2. First Regional Workshop (Palermo, 2018)

3. Visitor Centres' functions

4. Visitor Centres' potentialities

5. Recommendations

6. Follow-up



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UNESCO DESIGNATIONS: CULTURE & SCIENCE SECTORS

UNESCO Designations



Shared Objective

Contribute to the
mandate of the
Organization in
fostering **Peace &
Sustainable
Development**



Shared Challenges

Education
and
awareness-
raising

Management

Tourism

Community
engagement



Visitor Centres can play a key role in
addressing these challenges



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UNESCO'S ACTIONS TO DEVELOP THE POTENTIAL OF VC

Representatives from
20
designated
sites in
Europe



Objective 1:
Exchange
knowledge and
good practices
by existing VCs

1st Regional Workshop on

The role of Visitor Centres
in UNESCO Designated Sites

Hosted by
Palermo, Italy
on 30
September to 2
October 2018

Objective 2:
Enhance the
functions,
capacities, &
contribution of
VCs to
designated sites

Theme 1

Theme 2

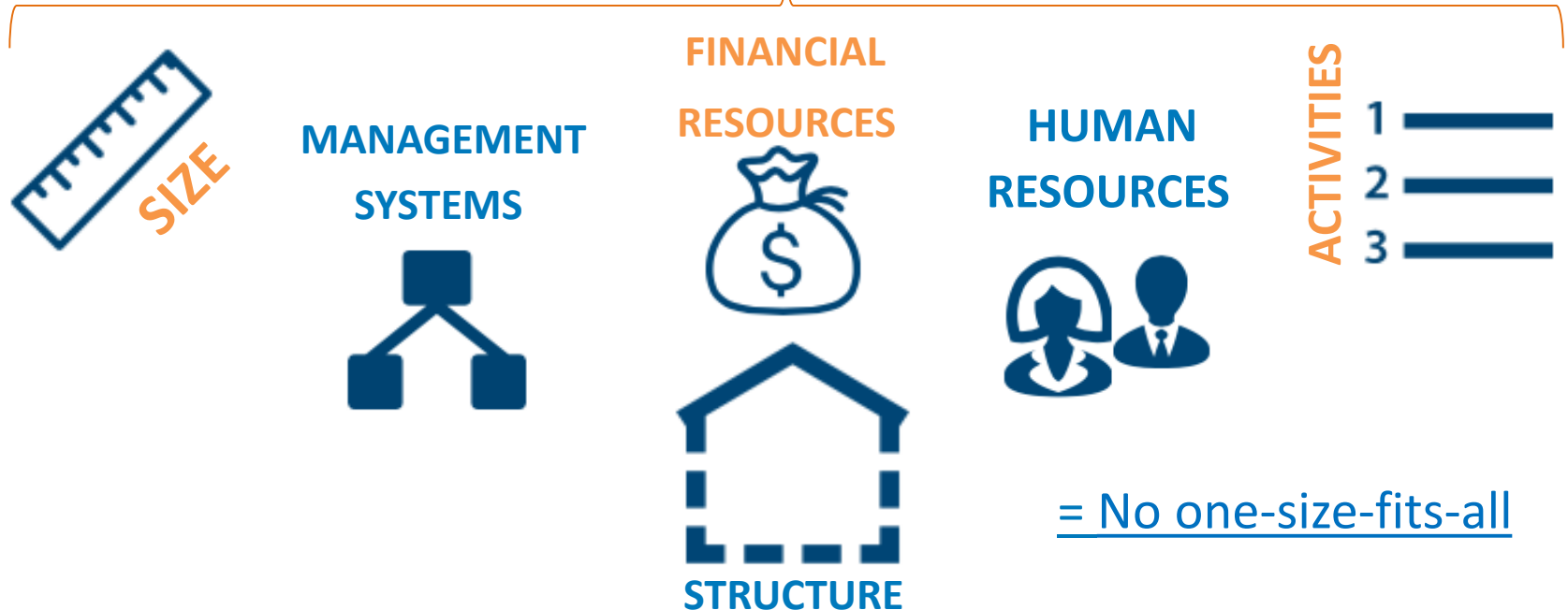
Theme 3



DIVERSITY



The state of the art shows **great differences** in terms of:





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DIVERSITY

Big		Small
New building		Reuse
Centralized		Decentralized
Large staff		Basic staff
100% subsidized		Self-sustainable
One funding source		Very diversified
One single designated site		Multidesignated area
One complex or monument		Vast territory
Physical access		Virtual access
Mostly visitors-oriented		Mostly community-oriented

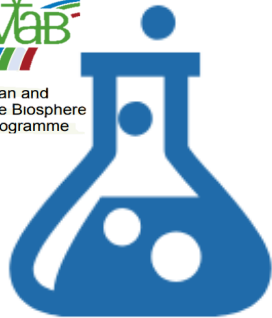
Site-specificity



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VISITOR CENTRES' ROLE



To support the management and enhance the appreciation of cultural and natural values, with a direct **transformative impact on visitors and communities**



Playing a major role in three fields of action:

1. Interpretation of heritage and educational services

2. Tourism sustainability and visitors management

3. Community engagement and community-oriented services



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COMMON BASIC FUNCTIONS

Produce and provide information

1. Present the site's values to facilitate their knowledge, understanding, and appreciation
2. Connect specific site values to broader social-historical-cultural territorial context
3. Highlight the "UNESCO status"

Regulate access

1. Facilitate accessibility to the sites (including virtual, if access is limited for security or conservation reasons)
2. Develop itineraries or other specific visit modalities

Support education on and through heritage

1. Host school visits
2. Offer activities for schools



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THREE FIELDS OF ACTION

1. Interpretation of heritage and educational services

- Increase **understanding** and **appreciation** of the **complexities** of UNESCO designated sites (vs. inaccurate and inappropriate interpretation)
- Communicate and uphold broader **values** related to UNESCO's mission
- **Contextualize** the designated sites in their broader territorial and social settings
- Support **education** on and through heritage values

2. Tourism sustainability and visitors management

- Contribute to a **high-quality visitor experience**
- Promote fruitful **interaction with communities and the environment**
- **Manage flows** (access, seasonality, distribution, etc.)
- **Protect the values and attributes** of the sites (DOs and DON'Ts)
- **Collect data** on visitors (who? How many? Why? Etc.)

3. Community engagement and community-oriented services

- **Promoting local ownership** through understanding and appreciation
- Encouraging **active involvement** (voluntaries, etc.)
- Acting as a **community centre** for events, courses, etc.
- Generating **income** and supporting local **employment**

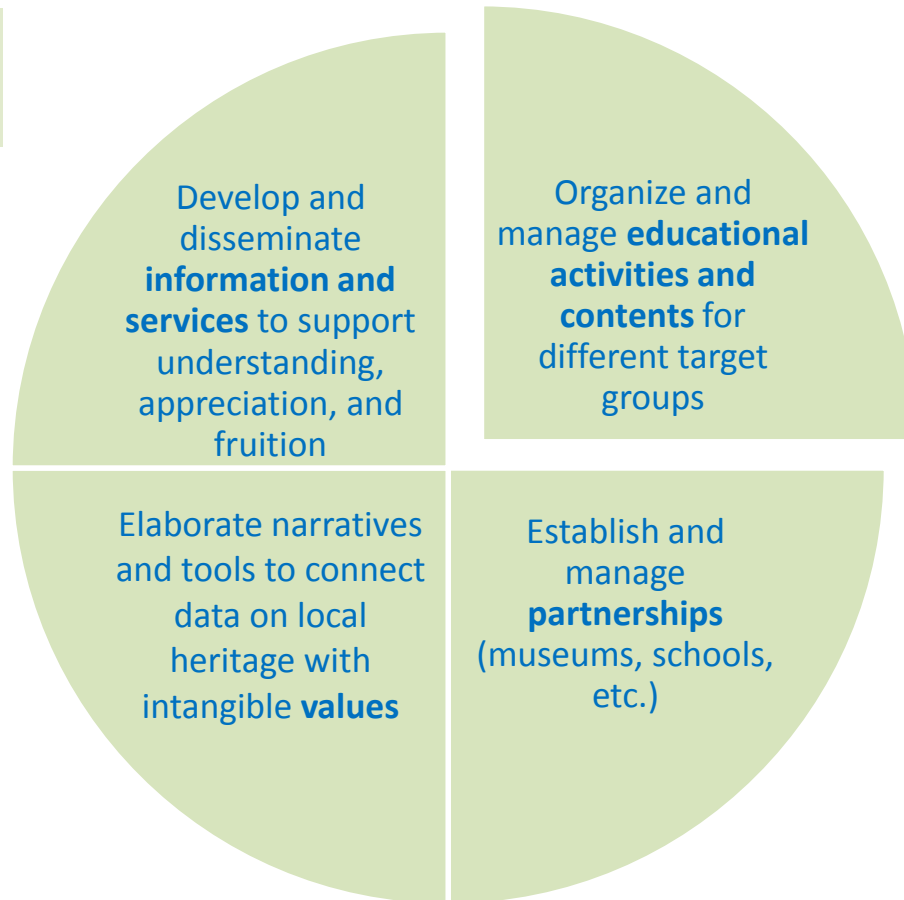


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FUNCTIONS (1)

1. Interpretation of heritage and educational services



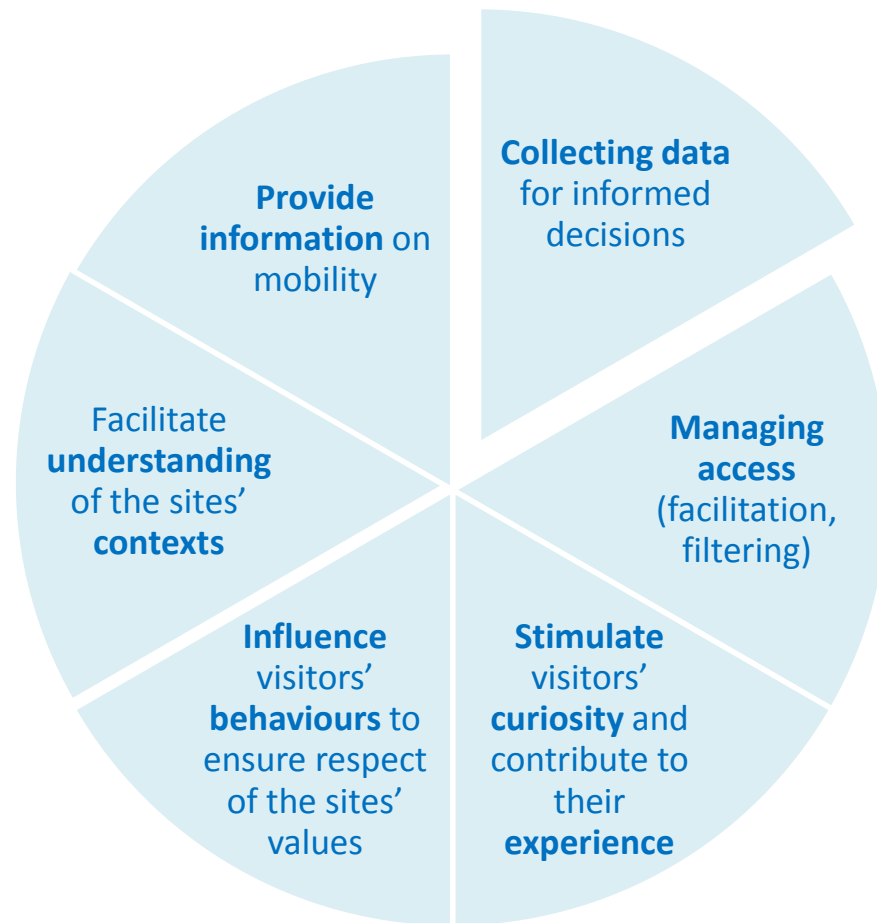


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FUNCTIONS (2)

2. Tourism sustainability and visitors management



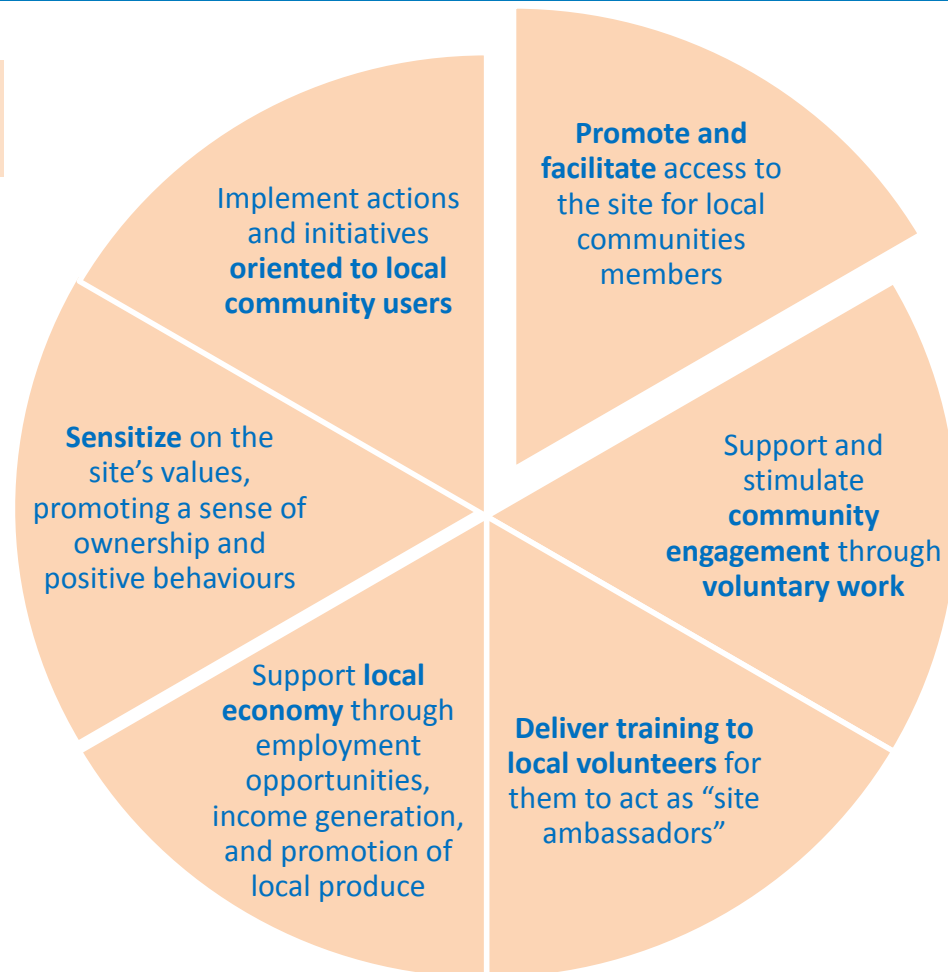


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FUNCTIONS (3)

2. Community engagement and community-oriented services





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POTENTIALITIES

POTENTIALITIES

Act as an **interfacing platform**

1. Contribute to reciprocal knowledge and understanding between community and visitors
 2. Facilitate negotiation between community and visitors' needs, interests and expectations
-

Promote **integrated management approaches**

1. Support inclusive, participative approaches to improve site governance, serving as a clearing house between different stakeholders involved in the site's management
 2. Encourage better integration of the site (and its management) within broader territorial promotion and planning initiatives.
-

Be a model of **sustainable development practices**

1. Develop, practice and uphold the values of sustainability
 2. Stimulate and propose creative thinking and innovation for the management, conservation and promotion of the site and its broader territories
 3. Serve as ambassadors not only of the sites', but also of the Designations' and UNESCO's values
-

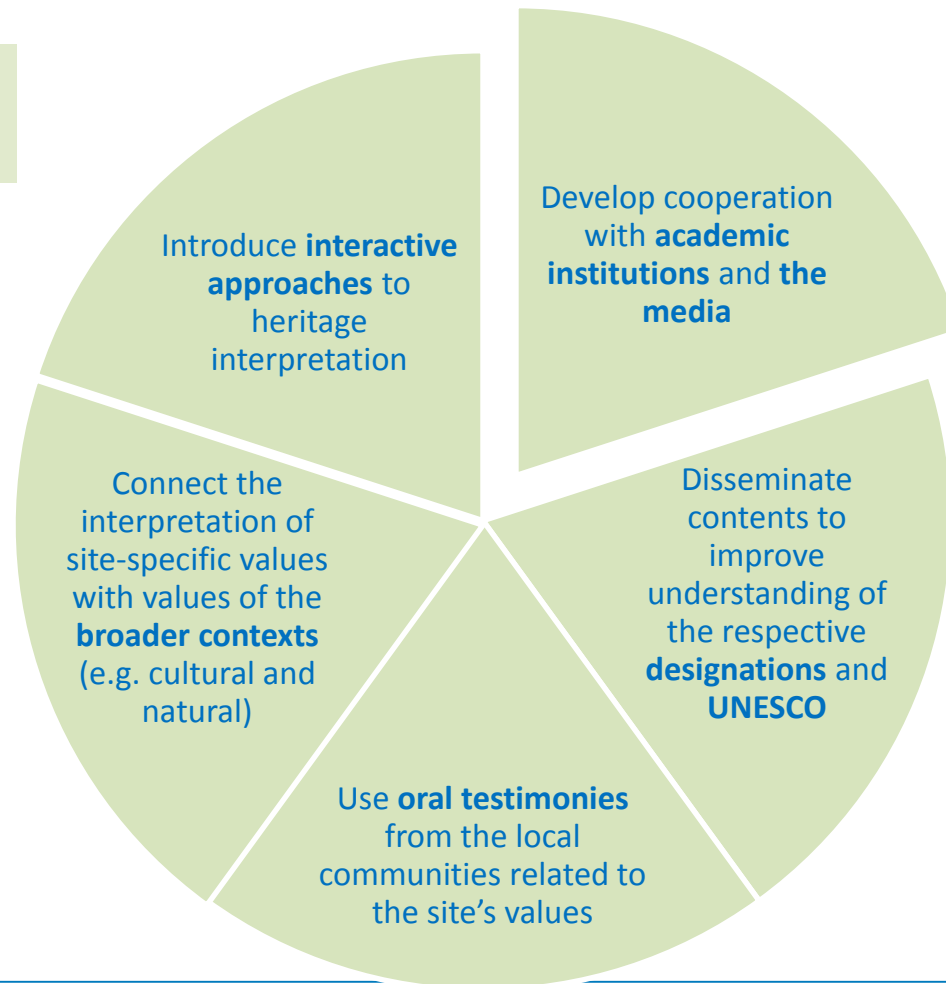


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POTENTIALITIES (1)

1. Interpretation of heritage and educational services



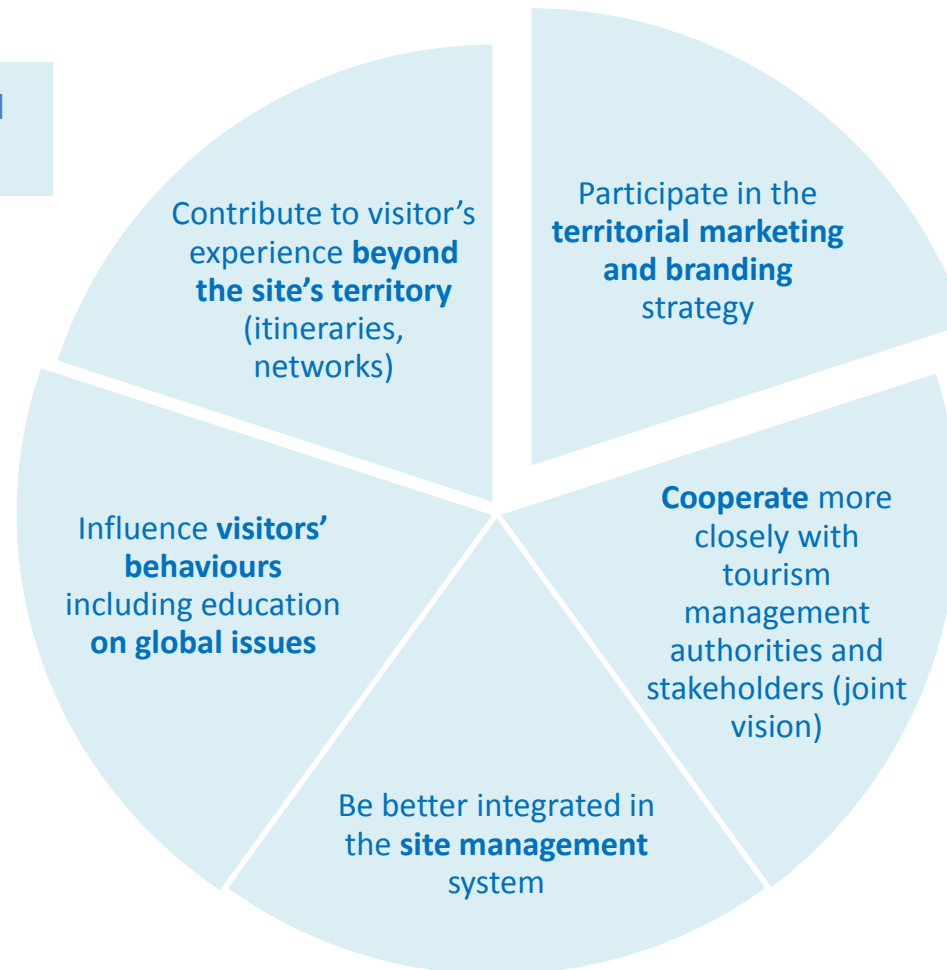


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POTENTIALITIES (2)

2. Tourism sustainability and visitors management





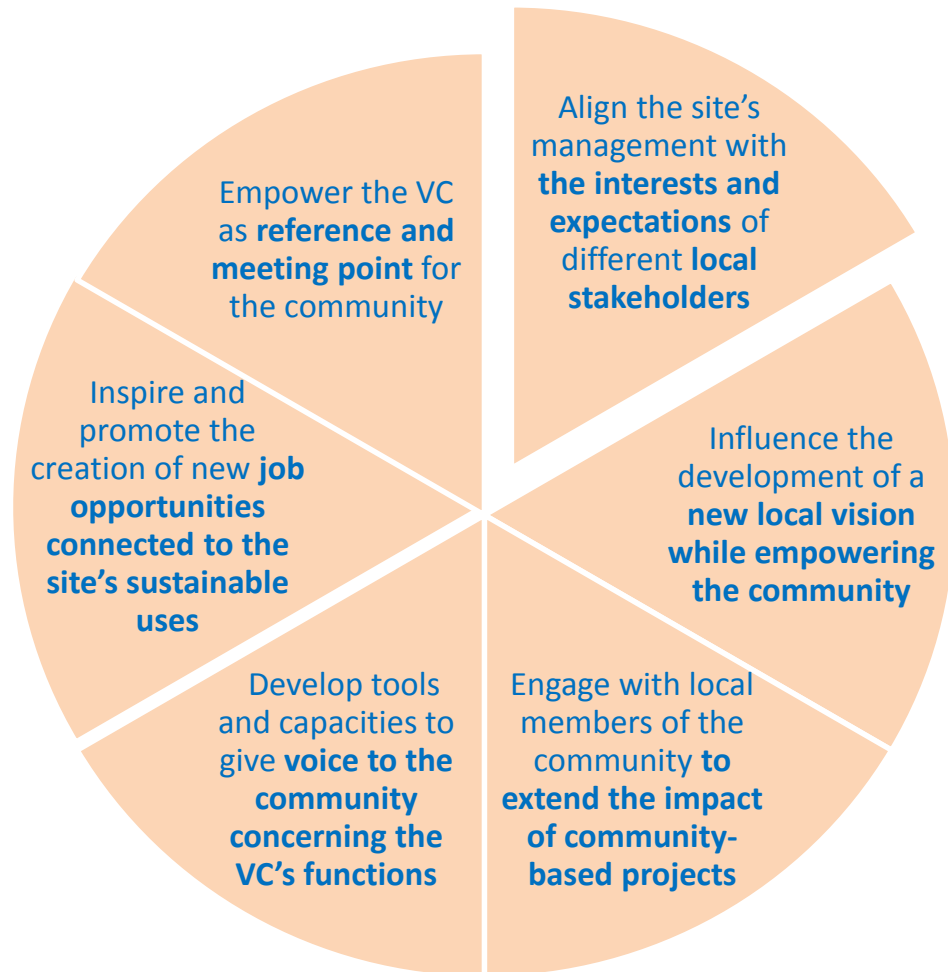
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POTENTIALITIES (3)

3. Community engagement and community-oriented services

«Visitor» centres?





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RECOMMENDATIONS



ACTIVITIES



**HUMAN & FINANCIAL
RESOURCES**



**CAPACITIES &
COOPERATION**



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RECOMMENDATIONS



ACTIVITIES

- **The VC's activities shall be defined according to the site's specificities, resources, and governance framework/objectives**
- The VC shall elaborate interpretation contents/services that link the site's values with other associative values from the social, cultural, environmental and economic dimensions of the site's broader territorial context
- **VC's activities shall consider different target groups (visitors / local communities; adults / children; superficial / in-depth engagement; etc.), as part of a coherent vision/strategy**
- Besides site-specific values, VCs should disseminate contents on UNESCO's core values and UNESCO designations
- **While considering the expansion of their scope of action, VCs shall not lose sight of their core mandate and identity**



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VC: RECOMMENDATIONS



GOVERNANCE

- **The VC shall be integrated in the overall site's management system and its activities should be conceived as functional to the site management vision**
- VCs should be connected with broader local systems for sustainable development and territorial promotion, which in turn can lead to fund-raising opportunities
- **VCs' governance systems should include mechanisms that ensure the widest possible participation of stakeholders**
- Budget diversification (reducing the dependence on public spending) can facilitate sustainability, reinforce legitimation, and increase the capacity of adaptation to emerging challenges/opportunities
- **Possible income-generating activities should be aligned with the VCs' public and non-profit functions, and with the sustainability of the site's values**
- VCs shall consider foresight, monitoring and adapting as essential actions to secure effective and sustainable planning, and the necessary financial and human resources for the long-term maintenance of new projects
- **As VCs operate in a fast-changing context, internal capacity-building should be ensured on a regular basis**



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RECOMMENDATIONS



CAPACITIES & COOPERATION

- **There is no one-size-fits-all model for VC: different circumstances require context-specific solutions**
- When establishing a new VC, decisions on location and facilities will determine the centre's future development. Such decisions should be taken based on a clear and shared strategic vision on the centre's role
- **The application of innovative solutions through the use of new technologies should always be need-driven, with an eye to sustainability**
- Capacity-building activities on specific priorities, including: heritage interpretation; community engagement; integration of tangible and intangible values; public communication (with special focus on the use of social media as emerging challenge)
- **Regular exchange of knowledge, lessons learned, reinforcement of networking and engagement in collective thinking are highly encouraged between VCs, to define innovative solutions**
- Partnerships are key to develop and sustain VSc, and to enhance their effectiveness, with special focus on: schools; universities and research centres; civil society organizations; territorial development agencies; tour operators; museums; etc.



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CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

1st Regional Workshop on The role of Visitor Centres in UNESCO Designated Sites

FUNCTIONS

DIVERSITY

POTENTIALITIES

1. Interpretation of heritage and educational services

1. Tourism sustainability and visitors management

2. Community engagement and community-oriented services

NEXT WORKSHOPS:



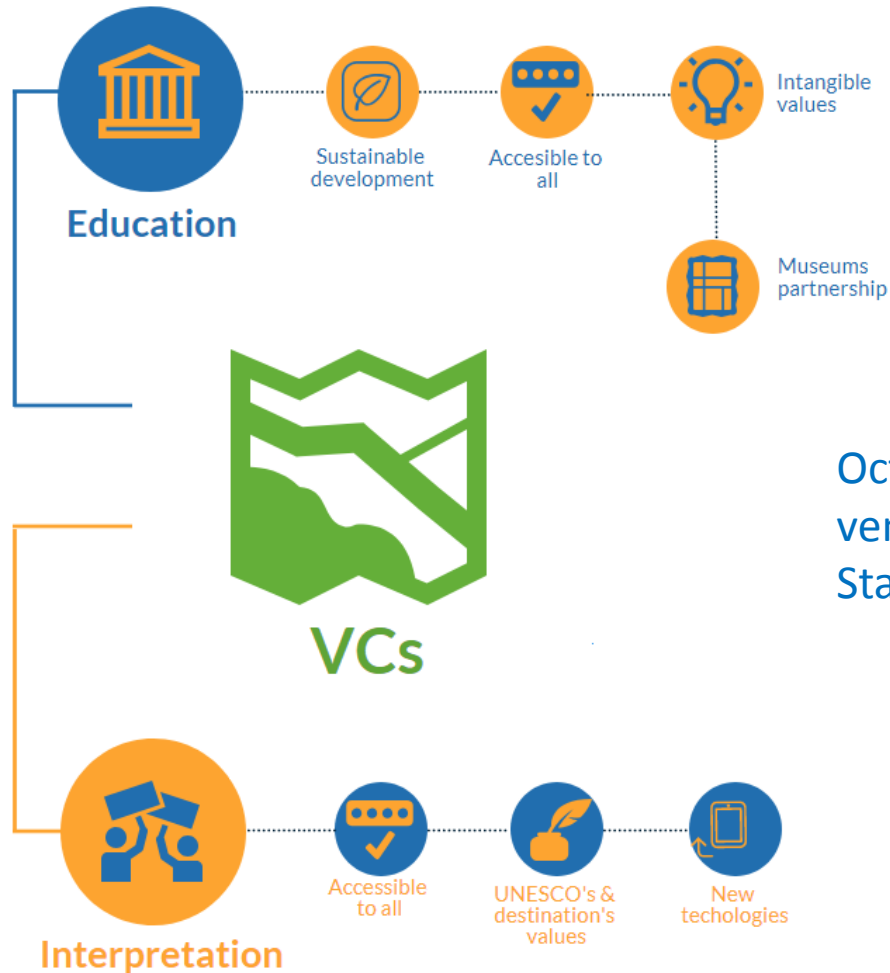
CAPACITY-BUILDING



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WORKSHOP 2019: INTERPRETATION & EDUCATION



October 2019,
venue to be defined
Stay tuned!



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THANK YOU!