Università della Svizzera italiana

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization · UNESCO Chair in ICT to develop and promote sustainable tourism in World Heritage Sites · USI – Università della Svizzera italiana · Lugano (Switzerland)

Comune di Morcote

Arbostora Heritage Destination

Engelbert Ruoss[1], Anđela Šormaz[1] & Jürg Schwerzmann[2]

Heritage destinations are particularly sensible to changing visitor flows and increasingly suffer negative impacts from overtourism. The pandemic has led to a shift from real to virtual travel and correspondingly, an increase in digital processes. Future sustainable tourism needs to consider the interwoven physical and digital environments and the changed - "digical" - mobility of people.
During participatory processes, the project defines Arbostora's products and services and their sustainability values, it uses digital media as a management tool in all travel phases (before, during and after) to adopt a balanced flow of visitors. The final step is the creation of an Arbostora-card application that covers all tourism-related facilities and incentivizes stakeholders and visitors offering and choosing sustainable tourism products and services. By interconnecting similar heritage destinations into a network, the visitors can profit from the bonus from sustainable offers for their future travels.

Photo: Heinz Plenge

1. The Project
- Duration: 2023 – 2027
- Arbostora Area: Municipalities of Morcote, Vico Morcote, Melide and Lugano (Carona)
- Lead Partners: USI-Università della Svizzera italiana, USI UNESCO Chair & Comune di Morcote
- Cooperation: Ticino Turismo, Lugano Region, ipeak infosystem Steinhausen

2. The Project Area
The project focusses on the creation of sustainable tourism destination for the Arbostora mountain area with Morcote at its southern slope. Morcote, awarded as the most beautiful village in Switzerland, is inscribed in the Federal Inventory of Heritage Sites of national importance (ISOS) and protection of heritage sites. Arbostora is a half island surrounded by the Lake Ceresio and Lugano, facing towards south to the Monte San Giorgio UNESCO World Heritage site.
The main villages have around 4000 resident population, during the main season the population increases up to 10 times. In the historic center of Morcote and Carona the hit-and-run tourism dominates. Travelers arrive mainly by car or bicycles, although the public transportation by train, bus and boat is well organized. Hospitality infrastructure and services have high seasonal variability.

3. Project Aims and Objectives
The main aim of the project is to take care of the delicate balance between heritage, digital and physical travel, and inhabitants and visitors while preventing negative impacts on the social and natural systems.
- Establish a heritage stewardship destination combining the three dimensions of governance and management – bottom-up, top-down, outside-in.
- Develop and introduce a sustainability incentive system and build quality tourism based on local resources
- Introduce "digical" mobility and offers
- Interlink with the heritage destinations network (especially the Monte San Giorgio WHS)
- Improve locals and visitors' experience and awareness towards heritage

The dimensions of the integrated concept of territorial governance and management system

4. Methodology
The Sustainable Development Implementation (SDI) method, related to territorial management and participatory processes, is a three-dimensional governance and management model - *bottom-up, top-down, outside-in* – that was established, refined and verified in national and international projects.

5. Phases of Implementation
➢ Identification of destination's products and services
➢ Classification of the sustainability of products and services
➢ Common digital media platform and Arbostora application
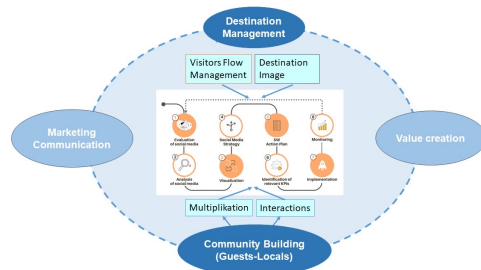
Components of the tourism management cycle in heritage destinations with a Social Media Action Plan.

➢ Sustainability Incentive System

An incentive (e.g. bonus) system is an extension of a loyalty program in which travelers and providers of tourism products and services are rewarded and thereby receive or create added value. These bonuses can be redeemed on the next trip to the same destination or to destinations in the competence network. Alternatively, they can be donated for the conservation of natural and cultural heritage within the competence network.
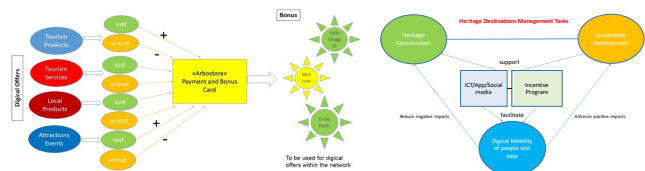
The Arbostora and its interrelation to the heritage network (left) and the management tasks of sustainable heritage destinations (right)

References
Ruoss, E. 2007: Methodological Handbook. – INNOREF: Innovation and Resource Efficiency as Driving Forces for Sustainable Growth. – EU INTERREG programme 2004 – 2007. – Final Project Report (2004 – 2007) 30 p.
Ruoss, E..& Alfarè, L. 2013: Sustainable Tourism as Driving Force for Cultural Heritage Sites Development: Planning, Managing and Monitoring Cultural Heritage Sites in South East Europe. Venice and Rome: National Research Council of Italy, 162 p.
Ruoss, E. and Alfarè L.T. 2020: Linking Governance and Management of Conservation Sites to Local Evidences. In: Alfarè L.T. & Ruoss E. (eds) 2020: Governing Future Challenges in Mediterranean Protected Areas. CNR Edition 2020, 13 – 22. DOI: 10.26383/978-88-8080-402-4.
Ruoss, E. and Sormaz, A. 2020: Social Media and ICT Tools to Manage Tourism in Heritage Destinations. In: Luger, K. & Ripp, M. (Eds) World Heritage, Place Making and Sustainable Tourism - Towards Integrative Approaches in Heritage Management. Studien Verlag Innsbruck Wien: 247 – 259.
Ruoss E., Sormaz A. 2022: The disintermediation role of social media to manage and monitor visitor flows in heritage sites. In: De Ascaniis S., Cantoni L. (eds) Handbook on Heritage, Sustainable Tourism and Digital Media, 314-331, https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/gbp/handbook-on-heritage-sustainable-tourism-and-digital-media-9781788970075.html
Sormaz A. 2020: Social Media and ICTs as Tools for Visitor Flow Management in Heritage Destinations, Master thesis, Università della Svizzera italiana. http:// www .parcs .ch/ wja/ mmd/fullentry.php ?docu id = 41534

[1] USI-Università della Svizzera italiana, UNESCO Chair in ICT to develop and promote sustainable tourism in World Heritage sites
[2] Comune di Morcote