Re-utilisation Process Model for Cultural Garden or Open Space Heritage Sites

by

IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems

CultTour

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1 Introduction

Within the frame of the European INTERREG IVB CultTour project, the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems developed a re-utilisation process model for cultural garden and open space heritage sites. The re-utilisation process model is a set of several activities which are based on different types of analyses as well as practical recommendations and the development of plans. These activities have been elaborated in prior stages of the project and are now combined in order to obtain a holistic overview of a re-utilisation process for cultural garden and open space heritage sites.

The re-utilisation process model aims to provide a guideline for owners, operators and/or consultants of cultural garden and open space heritage sites to develop their site for tourism purposes, taking into account important analysis and management aspects for such sites.

2 Re-utilisation Process Model

Based on the various activities which have been undertaken as part of the CultTour project, the IMC University of Applied Sciences proposes a re-utilisation process model for cultural garden and open space heritage sites. The model outlines different steps which need to be considered in order to analyse the future touristic development potential of a site in a holistic way, and based on the results take management actions and develop business plans. Within each step, certain tasks need to be completed. The IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems provides different resources which help to accomplish the steps. These resources (templates, tools, process descriptions) such as the indicator evaluation tool or the pool of management recommendations can be found at the project website of the project. The single steps of the analysis are outlined in the following chapter and guide users through the process.

As aforementioned, the re-utilisation process model was created for tourism managers, managers of tourism attractions including a garden, owners/operators of cultural garden or open space heritage sites as well as consultants.

2.1 Description of the Process

The re-utilisation process model comprises six different steps which are depicted in the following figure.

Figure 1: Re-utilisation process model

Source: Author's figure

The first step includes the definition of the vision of the cultural garden or open space heritage site. An environmental analysis then investigates the surrounding within the frame of a PESTEL (Political – Economic – Social – Technological – Environmental – Legal) analysis. The indicator evaluation in an Excel sheet is the next step. This tool

constitutes the core of this re-utilisation process model. Based on the outcome of the indicator evaluation tool, management recommendations are reviewed, taken into consideration and prioritized. This prioritization and the results of the previous steps are combined in a first draft of the re-utilisation. It is a summary of the most relevant aspects of the re-utilisation concept including a first financial assessment and serves as the basis for the next steps. Within the step of 'regional integration' the external environment of a site is again taken into account to ensure a proper integration of the re-utilisation concept. Finally, a complete business plan is developed on the basis of the re-utilisation draft and the feedback from the regional integration step. As the dotted arrow indicates, after the development of the business plans and its implementation, the indicator evaluation tool can again be applied. This is seen after a two to four year period to check whether the prior defined target state has been reached.

Each step is described in more detail further below for an accurate application.

2.1.1 Vision

The starting point of the re-utilisation process model is the development of a vision statement by the organisation which is in charge of the cultural garden or open space heritage site. The task in this step is to find out where the organization sees itself in the future and what it would like to achieve with the development of the site. These considerations are formulated in a vision statement and are crucial for all further processes as the statement serves as a direction for future decisions.

2.1.2 Environmental Analysis

In a next step, an environmental analysis needs to be conducted. This analysis is already part of the analysis tool where information needs to be completed in the sheets 'main data' and 'macro environment'. However, further information about a site on a macro level is noted. This is done in the form of a PESTEL analysis. Hereby the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal situations of a site are taken into account and important facts as well as developments noted down. Moreover, a stakeholder and competitor analysis and an analysis of regional planning aspects, including legal issues and current development plans, need to be done to obtain a complete picture of the external environment.

2.1.3 Indicator Evaluation

The Indicator Evaluation in the excel sheet comes next in the re-utilisation process model. Different indicators regarding the micro environment of a site, the site management and site characteristics are evaluated considering their actual and desired future target state.

2.1.3.1 Actual State

After having obtained and clarified general aspects, the actual state of the site according to different indicators is evaluated in the analysis tool. Hereby users decide on a 4 point hierarchical scale where their garden heritage or open space site is at the moment. The chosen category is selected from a drop down list next to each indicator. In total 88 indicators can be evaluated. However, not every indicator might be applicable to the site and users can therefore decide to neglect some indicators. Moreover, if users wish to only evaluate certain dimensions or elements they can also prioritize by selecting only the needed categories in the table.

2.1.3.2 Target State

In a second step, the actual state of the site is evaluated. The goal is now to define target values within the scale that the site wants to reach in a timeframe of three to four years. These target values are defined with the most important stakeholders of the site in order to develop a common understanding.

2.1.3.3 Visualization of Potential

The actual state is then compared to the target values. This comparison is visualized in the form of a so called spider web where the two states of the individual indicators are compared (see picture on the next page). The spider web illustrates how much development potential each indicator has and serves as basis for prioritization.

Figure 2: Marketing & Branding Spider Web Illustration
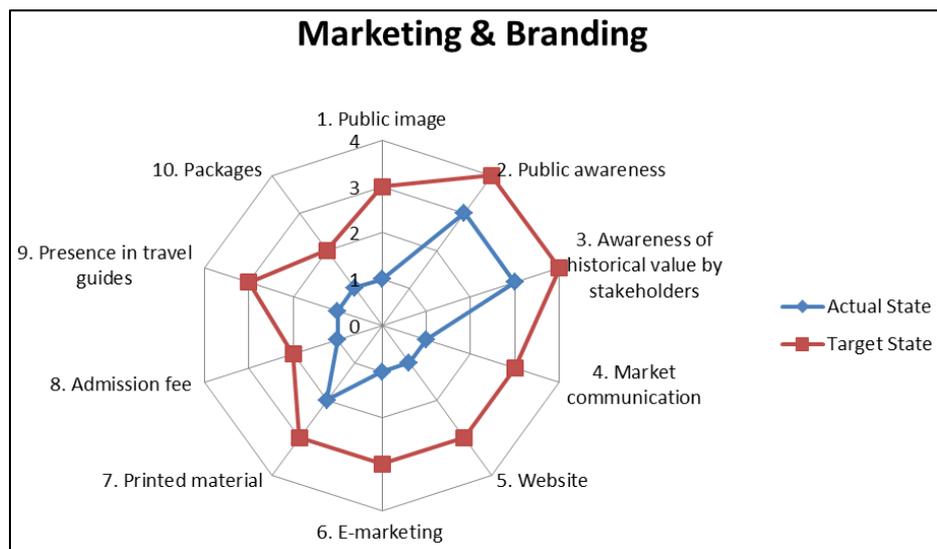
Source: Author's illustration

2.1.4 Management Recommendations

In order to reach defined target values and to use the development potential, generic management recommendations are given after having evaluated the actual and the target state. The management recommendations are provided for each indicator. The sum of the recommended actions per indicator compromises the overall development strategy for the site. Based on the recommendations, users decide on the measures that are to be realised now and at a later stage and prioritise them. The recommendations include guiding questions and recommendations for actions. It is important to notice that the management recommendations are given on a general level and that they need to be adapted to the destination by the user of the re-utilisation process model.

2.1.5 Draft of Re-utilisation Concept

Based on the prioritised measures and the results of the previous steps, a first draft of the re-utilisation concept is developed. This draft includes the most relevant information of the development of a site on the four levels of macro environment, micro environment, site management as well as site characteristics. Additionally, a first financial assessment of the re-utilisation is made. In order to facilitate the development of the draft the IMC University of Applied Sciences provides a template

with the necessary elements that need to be completed by the user. Moreover, a template for a financial assessment is given.

2.1.6 Regional Integration

After drafting the re-utilisation concept, the integration of a site into the region is crucial. In this connection it is important to communicate the draft to the most important stakeholders which have been identified at the beginning. Furthermore, legal frameworks such as existing development plans for a region need to be considered and plans adapted accordingly. Moreover, regional integration from a tourism point of view ought to be taken into account in this step. In a recommendation paper on this topic, which has also been developed by the IMC University of Applied Sciences, an emphasis is put on destination management as well as co-operations in the tourism sector.

2.1.7 Business Plans for Re-utilisation

Within the last step, concrete business plans are developed for the re-utilisation of the site. The business plans are based on the first draft of the re-utilisation concept and the financial assessment. The financial assessment however is conducted in more detail in order to come up with a realistic concept for the re-utilisation of the site. An illustration of a business plan for a cultural garden heritage site is given on the example of the CultTour pilot site "Brukenthal Palace" in Avrig, Romania.

After the development of a business plan and after the first outcomes of the initiated activities can be seen, the indicator evaluation tool can again be consulted. The new evaluation takes into consideration the past activities and the desired target state of indicators therefore changes.