Introduction to the Management Recommendations

- Context of the Management Recommendations

The CultTour project aims to implement strategies to preserve and valorise cultural garden and open space heritage sites by giving them a contemporary use in tourism and at the same time conserving their "genius loci". As part of the CultTour project, the IMC University of Applied Sciences developed a re-utilisation process model for cultural garden and open space heritage sites.

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, the model outlines the steps that need to be considered in order to analyse the future touristic development potential of a site in a holistic way.

Once the assessment of the site with the garden and open space analysis tool highlighted areas of development, the management recommendations presented here are the activities to be carried out in order to identify actions that need to be implemented. Further follow-up activities include the creation of a re-utilisation concept draft, its integration into regional planning processes and the development of business plans.

- Objective and Use of the Management Recommendations

The management recommendations are based on the results of the garden and open space analysis tool where the situation of an individual site has been assessed. For each indicator where gaps between the actual and the target states are noticeable, the site manager can consult the corresponding article provided here. These recommendations are either provided for each indicator or on a grouped level when indicators need to be considered together for a better understanding.

Designed as a toolbox for improvement, the recommendations are not particularly referring to the four categories of the assessing scale of the analysis tool: each garden or open space heritage site will select the most relevant measures in relation to its own context. Furthermore, as the recommendations proposed are addressed to practitioners, they cannot be considered as an extensive review of literature. Their goal is to highlight key issues that have to be examined in the decision making and illustrative ideas of measures that can be concretely implemented. They are neither universal nor exhaustive but reflect practices considered as successful in relation to the current environment and market trends.

Lastly, these online recommendations articles are meant to be a space for sharing knowledge. We therefore invite all practitioners who would like to share their own experience to enrich the value of the content provided here.
Below, the indicators are presented on an element level and by clicking on an element you are linked to the corresponding indicators:

II. Micro Environment
   II.1. Population
   II.2. Regional Integration
   II.3. Tourism
   II.4. Regional Infrastructure

III. Site Management
   III.1. Organization
   III.2. Sustainable Management
   III.3. Marketing & Branding
   III.4. Human Resources
   III.5. Infrastructure
   III.6. Financial Investment

IV. Site Characteristics
   IV.1. General Aspects
   IV.2. Garden/Open Space Heritage Site
   IV.3. Site Maintenance
   IV.4. Site Infrastructure
   IV.5. Accessibility
   IV.6. Visitor Services
   IV.7. Visitor
II. Micro Environment 1. Population

II.1. Population participation
II.1.2. Attitude of locals towards tourism
II.1.3. Availability of qualified personnel in the region

II.1.1. Population participation
Population participation in tourism management is a vital indicator focusing on the importance of the socio-cultural aspect of sustainability. Particularly for the sustention of cultural heritage, it is regarded as essential to empower the community through effective participation in the planning process (Leslie, 2006, p. 133).

The following measures are recommended for the involvement and participation of the population:
- Development of a membership program,
- Development and activation of a sponsorship scheme for public organisations and private companies,
- Volunteering for community residents,
- Regular round tables for information updates,
- Establishment of workgroups for specific topics.
- Reinforcement of the role given to locals (European Commission, 2000):
  - Take part in consultation meetings and surveys organised by the public authority as part of the design, implementation and monitoring of the integrated quality management approach,
  - Play an active part in improving visitor care through their attitudes, friendliness and helpfulness to visitors,
  - Abide by and help to implement the measures and regulations drawn up by the public authority in areas such as cleanliness, rehabilitation of buildings, respect for the environment, use of public transport and security.

See also: Volunteers; Attitude of locals towards tourism; Transparency of decisions; Employee participation; Public participation in decisions on change of historic substance.

References and further information:
II.1.2. Attitude of locals towards tourism

In relation to the level of population participation, the attitude of locals towards tourism is seen as an important aspect for managing tourism as it affects the way that tourists are treated and their impression of the community (Wilson et al., 2001).

Strategies to enhance successful tourism development and positively foster the attitude of locals towards tourism include (Stead & Stead, 2004; Wilson et al., 2001):

- Good communication between persons in the tourist industries and the public,
- Educating the public about the importance of tourism (especially about its economic impact locally),
- Involving local government in helping educate the public about the importance of tourism,
- Establishing training programmes for locals (language, service quality, managing guests, customer interactions),
- Philanthropic contributions,
- Investments into the community,
- Regulatory compliance.

See also: Population participation; Staff attitude towards visitors; Employee from the region; Quality management system; Qualification of personnel.

References and further information:

II.1.3. Availability of qualified personnel in the region

The availability of qualified personnel in the region is a crucial issue as it has an influence on the number of local people who are employed at a site.

In order to find qualified personnel from the region, the following measures are recommended (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2009, pp. 105-112):

- Advertisement:
  - In local or regional newspaper,
  - Professional trade magazines,
  - Internet job sites,
  - In regional tourism office,
o On community websites,
o On your own website.
- Public employment assistance agencies,
- Private employment assistance agencies,
- Tourism education providers (school, universities, etc.): contact them to advertise a job or internship placements.
- Establish partnerships between tourism providers in the region (seasonality as an opportunity).

See also: Qualification of personnel; Employees from the region; Cooperation with other tourism providers.

References and further information:
II. Micro Environment 2. Regional Infrastructure

1. Public transport system/shuttle services

The availability of a public transport system is part of the overall touristic infrastructure in a region and particularly important for the accessibility of a site in a sustainable way (Kozic & Mikulic; Lozano-Oyola et al., 2012).

Although it is difficult for an individual site to directly manage the availability of public transport in a region, the following measures can be taken to foster sustainable accessibility by means of public transport:

- Establishment of a shuttle service together with a local bus operator,
- Establishment of a shuttle service together with other tourism providers in the region,
- Provision of information on accessibility by train or other means of public transport on the website or printed material of the site,
- Lobbying at a local/regional level for:
  - Better infrastructure provision (e.g. public transport network, train hours),
  - Integration of various transport means within tourist destinations (Giaoutzi et al., 2009),
  - Improvement and development of enhanced public transport information systems, including real time information (Giaoutzi et al., 2009),
  - Offering e-bikes to commute within the destination/between sites.

See also: Parking facilities for bikes; Cooperation with other tourism providers; Parking facilities for vehicles; Degree of need for investment in infrastructure; Employees from the region; Tourism infrastructure.

References and further information:
II. Micro Environment 3. Regional Integration

II.3.1. Strategic fit between site and its business environment

II.3.2. Cooperation with other tourism providers

II.3.3. Support sustainability measures by regional stakeholders

II.3.1. Strategic fit between site and its business environment

The strategic fit describes the matching of a site with its business environment and the use of its resources in line with its external environment. It also indicates how well the site strategy and its internal structure fit the dynamics of the business environment as well as how much rivalry exists among organizations in a specific field (Stead & Stead, 2004, p. 68).

The following questions are relevant for assessing the strategic fit between the site and its business environment and defining management recommendations (Lynch, 2012, p. 76):

- What is the market size of my business?
- How is the market growing?
- What is my current market share?
- How likely is the business environment to change? How easily can such changes be predicted?
- Is the internal structure of my site flexible enough to adapt to these potential evolutions? How can they be anticipated?
- What do the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal environments of the site look like (“PESTEL Analysis”)? Is my organisation in line with their respective requirements?
- Who are my main competitors and how do they operate? Is my positioning relevant regarding their strategy?
- Based on the answers to the previous questions, how can I adapt the strategy to the current dynamics of the industry in order to maximise the use of external resources?

See also: Organizational strategy; Distinctiveness.

References and further information:

II.3.2. Cooperation with other tourism providers

Tourism requires cooperation as it generates intertwined relations between different types of businesses such as shops, hotels, restaurants and tourism attractions (Wilson et al., 2001, p. 135).

The following recommendations for various stakeholders can be defined (French & Runyard, 2011, pp. 134-139):

- Local tourism boards and tourist information centres:
Try to find out in which promotions and trade fairs the tourism board is involved in and how you can actively participate.

Get in contact with the tourist information centres and local libraries as they are also a good contact point to arrange for your printed material to be distributed.

- **Hotels and accommodation establishments:**
  - Establish a relationship with hotels and accommodations providers as they are a good contact point to display your leaflets and to participate in promotions.
  - Head porters, concierges and desk staff are furthermore useful contacts in hotels as they can make recommendations on what to see and do.

- **Tour and coach operators:**
  - Think of tour operators as a cooperation partner.
  - Remember that they plan and price their services one or two years in advance and are specifically interested in group discounts when visiting a site.
  - Contact specialist group travel organisers such as garden tour operators as they might include your site within one of their programmes.

- **Tourist guides:**
  - Get in contact with professional guides and tourist guides associations for small groups and individuals in order to provide updates on your attraction and forthcoming events.
  - If the carrying capacity of your site is rather low, you might decide to have certain days or times reserved for groups only.
  - Try to make sure tour guides have information in advance if they do not know your site well.

- **Transport providers and taxi drivers:** consider the option of including them in a familiarization tour through your site to make them aware of it.

See also: [Tourism infrastructure](#); [Packages](#); [Regional tourism theme](#); [Market reach](#); [Awareness of historical value by stakeholders](#).

References and further information:

---

**II.3.3. Support of sustainability measures by regional stakeholders**

Support by the local government and relevant stakeholders is essential to tourism development and promotion (Wilson et al., 2001, p. 134). To foster sustainable regional development and integration, support for sustainability measures is particularly important.
The following steps are recommended in regards to sustainability measures:

- Analyse possible support measures by the government or regional stakeholders. Support measures could be found in the following form (Roberts & Tribe, 2008, p. 587):
  - Guidelines or environmental policy statements,
  - Environmental assessments,
  - Management supportive (consulting) of policy,
  - Financial and non-financial incentives for sustainability measures,
  - Subsidies,
  - Funds,
- Evaluate the options that would fit your site best,
- Decide on the implementation measures or how you could obtain support/funds,
- Apply for funds, implement the measures and market the implementation of measures.
- Review and optimize.

See also: Population participation; Public transport/shuttle service; Waste management; Energy Management; Event management; Water conservation.

References and further information:
II. Micro Environment 4. Tourism

II.4.1. Tourism infrastructure
II.4.2. Regional tourism theme

II.4.1. Tourism infrastructure
The tourism infrastructure consists of tourism suppliers which provide travel products that are consumed by tourists during their trip (Inkson & Minnaert, 2012, p. 99). They are part of the overall visitor experience and form the basis for a complete tourism offer (Schulz et al., 2010, p. 29).

In regards to the tourism infrastructure of your region, the following questions lead to management recommendations:

- Accommodation/Catering:
  - How many providers are in the region of my site?
  - What type of accommodation/catering services are they?
  - What is their level of quality (category, labels, etc.)?
- Transport:
  - How is the transport sector structured in the region?
  - How can visitors arrive at my site?
- Visitor Attractions:
  - What other visitor attractions of a similar kind exist?
  - What other visitor attractions of a different kind exist?
- Tourist Information Centre:
  - Is there a tourism information centre in the region?
  - If not, where is the closest one?

See also: Regional tourism theme; Cooperation with other tourism providers and stakeholders; Public transport/shuttle service.

References and further information:

II.4.2. Regional tourism theme
A theme can be defined as the subject matter, the topic, or the unifying or dominant idea behind for example a work of art. Regional tourism theme refers to a theme upon which a region can be presented and branded, which is essential for the overall tourism experience and the identification of the region.

The following questions should be addressed regarding the regional tourism theme:
• Is there a main common tourism theme in the region under what marketing activities take place?
• If so, what is the domain of the theme (e.g. history, religion, fashion, politics, psychology, physical world, popular culture, arts, agriculture, folklore…)?
• How can the theme be related to the site?
• If there is no common tourism theme, is there some theme in preparation for my destination? What could a possible regional tourism theme be?
• What could the field of the theme be?
• How could the theme be integrated to my own site?

See also. Guiding theme; Distinctiveness; Cooperation with other tourism providers.

References and further information:
III. Site Management 1. Organization

III.1.1. Organizational strategy

Piloting a strategy is more than communicating a mission statement: it has to be reflected at the organisational level.

For the implementation of a comprehensive strategy, the following steps are relevant (Tribe, 2010, pp. 8-12).

- Define the strategic purpose: what is your organisation trying to achieve? What is its purpose/aim? What are you trying to head for in the medium to long term?
- Carry out a strategic analysis: what are the major influences upon the achievement of these goals, in terms of operating environment, use of resources and products and services offered? Is there a strategic fit between the site and its business environment?
- Identify strategic choices. Which option needs to be selected to gain a competitive advantage: should the prices be lower than the competitors, the service standards higher or both? Is there any characteristic that make your site unique?
- Plan the implementation: an action plan needs to turn the selected option into scheduled activities (as shown for instance in the Ontario Garden Tourism Strategy).
  - How will the action plan be designed (Tribe, 2010, p. 239)?
    - Resource planning (physical, information & technology and human resources),
    - Coordination plan gathering all major logistical considerations in a Gantt chart,
    - Organisational chart to identify the changes necessary in the organisation structure.
  - Does the plan clearly indicate who is responsible for which role?
  - What are the consequences in terms of timeframes, financial management and organisation structure?
  - How will the strategy be monitored? Are targets measurable and achievable?
- Articulate the strategy to the internal organisation:
  - Which document presents the overall approach?
  - Does it show how the different steps are articulating with each other?
  - Was it communicated to the whole organisation (meetings, trainings, etc.)?
  - Is it reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it is actually implemented and still fits with the evolution of the external environment?

See also: Strategic fit between site and its business environment; Financial Investment; Qualification of personnel; Distinctiveness.
References and further information:

III.1.2. Quality management system

Standard ISO 8402 defines the quality of a service as “the totality of characteristics that bear on its ability to satisfy (the) stated and implied needs (of the user)”. As the needs of the visitors are constantly evolving, quality management cannot be considered as a capital asset but as a continuous task closely linked to the concept of on-going improvement.

Key issues related to management recommendations are:
- Deciding on a non-accredited or accredited quality management system: should you opt for a self-assessing process which is not recognised by external organisations or do you aim at complying with standards/norms thanks to an accredited system (Williams & Buswell, 2003, pp. 148-150)?
- Focus both on internal and external quality (European Commission, 2010):
  - The value that tourists receive throughout the chain of experiences on your site (internal),
  - Sustainable tourism dimensions with a rational and renewable use of resources (external).
- Anticipate in your service delivery the process zones where visitors’ tolerance may be exceeded by bottlenecks as these punctual elements impact on the whole perception of your site (Cooper et al., 2008, p. 530).
- Integration of several quality categories (Cooper et al., 2008, pp. 527-528):
  - Tangibles (appearance of physical facilities, surrounding, personnel and equipment),
  - Reliability (accuracy of billing/charging, data collection and confidentiality, performing the service on time such as opening and closing hours in line with information provided),
  - Responsiveness (channelling flows, reactions and willingness to help such as changing the itinerary on request during the garden tour for instance),
  - Competence (contact skills, courtesy and knowledge about the services of the personnel),
  - Empathy (rewarding returning visitors, adapting the site to specific needs and target groups, providing individualised activities such as small workshops and others).
- Employees training and empowerment: front-line personnel need to be trained for taking quick decisions during crisis/peak situations and customers interactions (Williams & Buswell, 2003, pp. 196-197).
- Feedback options: ensure the complaints are acknowledged, addressed and followed up by assigning the tasks to a specific department/employee of your site.
III.1.3. Transparency of decisions

As nowadays all organizations – especially in the tourism field – are accountable for their impact on the socioeconomic environment, the communication of the decision making process and its outcomes to employees and users is crucial to ensure that the site meets the requirements of corporate social responsibility.

To increase the transparency of decisions, the following is recommended (Ferell et al., 2011, pp. 47-49):

- Identify your key internal decision making processes: which decisions need to be taken in relation with your employees and users? Who is responsible for taking them?
- Determine the corresponding stakeholders and their respective issues: amongst the employees, tourists and residents, which groups should be informed of the decisions in progress and will be impacted by them? Note that in the public sector, pressure groups and influential citizens have to be taken into account carefully as they have a political influence.
- Select the most relevant communication channels (mail, email, information board at the entrance, website dedicated section, meeting)?
- Gain feedback about the decisions taken (formal meetings; informal discussions; satisfaction surveys; observations; scanning of stakeholder-generated content such as discussion spaces, blogs, websites, social media).
- Integrate the stakeholders to your site governance: who should be consulted before taking an essential decision?

See also: Employee participation; Public participation in decisions in change of historic substance; Population participation.

References and further information:

References and further information:
III.1.4. Employee participation

Involving your employees in the decision making process has the advantages of enhancing consensus regarding the company’s strategy, decreasing resistance to change and motivating employees by involving them further in your activities (Ferell et al., 2011, pp. 143-145).

Management recommendations for employee participation include the following steps:

- Determine which issues should be discussed in priority with your employees (mission statement, values, objectives, action plan or punctual issues).
- Identify the process to engage dialogue (round table with the employees’ representatives, a session gathering all employees, several sessions organised for each department separately)?
- Reach an achievable agreement that should be clearly communicated and integrated in the final decision. Monitor its implementation to ensure the commitment is kept.
- Use this opportunity to ensure service quality with an increased commitment to the company’s missions and its continuous improvement (Williams & Buswell, 2003, pp. 196-197).
- Enhance collaborative decisions in the daily practice (encouraging site managers and supervisors to pay more attention to interpersonal exchange and subordinates’ suggestions).

See also: Transparency of decisions; Qualification of personnel; Personnel development; Quality management system.

References and further information:

III.1.5. Public participation in decisions in change of historic substance

The involvement of users and more broadly local residents in the management of their cultural heritage is an essential factor to maintain a degree of local control, which is the basis for sustainable community tourism (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Roberts & Tribe, 2008).

Several measures can guarantee a sufficient level of public participation:

- Remain vigilant to changes that would impact on the authenticity of your site and threaten the historic coherence of its design and architectural elements (new constructions, renovations where the original substance cannot be reproduced),
- Anticipate early in advance the information campaign in order to give enough time to all stakeholders to get the information and formulate their opinion,
- Raise awareness about the need for participation reaching not only users of your site but also the entire local community and highlight the importance of the debate (related to the cultural heritage conservation),
• Work in close cooperation with political instances to spread the information and organise public discussions,
• Reach an achievable agreement that is clearly communicated and integrated in the final decision. Monitor its implementation to ensure the commitment is kept.

See also: Transparency of decisions; Employee participation; Population participation; Public image; Public awareness.

References and further information:
III. Site Management 2. Sustainable Management

III.2.1. Waste management
III.2.2. Energy management
III.2.3. Event management

III.2.1. Waste management
Waste management is a key issue to limit the environmental impact of tourism and leisure activities in particular to ensure the sustainability of a garden or open space heritage site.

Several measures can be implemented (Roberts & Tribe, 2008):
- Measure the waste generated by the site (solid and liquid):
  - Make sure the site has no impact on sea, rivers or ground water around,
  - Identify which kind of waste is being disposed by visitors,
  - In case no waste management system is established yet, refer to the communal system if available.
- Elaborate a recycling strategy:
  - Estimation of the percentage of collected waste that can be recycled,
  - Identification of the options for sorting the waste,
  - Possible reuse of items, for instance paper products generated by the administrative activities or avoiding disposable tableware (Cooper et al., 2008, p. 363),
  - Facilities for composing the organic waste.
- Design and follow-up a waste management plan based on the previous steps, with:
  - Achievable objectives,
  - 3 phases: collection, storage and disposal of the waste,
  - Frequency of collection taking into account the issues of odour emission or animal enticement that could negatively impact on the visitor’s experience,
  - Responsibilities assignment: is the site, the city/community or a private company responsible? For which activities?
- Implement your waste management plan:
  - Systematic disposal and separation of degradable and non-degradable waste,
  - Environmentally-friendly and non-polluting system,
  - Visibly mounted waste receptacles with a common size adapted to the users,
  - Special processes when the site is hosting an event, if necessary,
  - Low impact on the site’s landscapes.
- Rise environmental awareness:
  - Highlight the necessity of managing the waste generated by the activity,
  - Engage the support of the employees and the visitors,
  - Consider organising community clean-up activities or participating to them.
- Communicate with all your employees and visitors:
  - Encourage them to sort waste and support your sustainable waste management,
  - Identify and anticipate potential obstacles: resistance to change, belief that sustainable management is a temporary trend, low interest in environmental
issues, differences linked to the country of origin, etc. (Swarbrooke, 2011, p. 308).

- Make sure that your communication has an impact monitoring the variations of the energy consumption and adjusting your strategy if necessary.

See also: Composting; Energy management; Event management; Events; Water conservation; Support of sustainability measures by regional stakeholders.

References and further information:

III.2.2. Energy management
In line with waste management, energy consumption needs to be examined carefully in order to identify rooms for improvement. This will have the double advantage of adopting a sustainable approach and alleviating your budget.

Several measures can be recommended (Roberts & Tribe, 2008):

- Select energy efficiency measures:
  - Reducing energy use in close areas:
    - Improved insulation,
    - Use of energy saving bulbs,
    - Limited heating/air-conditioning use,
    - Open gates by hand and without using electrical power,
    - Automatic switching off systems or motion sensors for intermittently used areas,
    - Limitation of the number of areas enlightened during the night,
  - Installing renewable energy production devices for local energy production:
    - Photovoltaic machines for selling tickets in the parking zone or at the entrance,
    - Clean energy vehicles for the maintenance,
  - Implementing other energy saving devices in your site,
    - Using laptops instead of than desktop computers (on average they use 10% less energy),
    - Preferring inkjet printers to laser printers.
- Educate your staff on the benefits of energy efficiency (environmental and financial).
- Develop an energy conservation plan:
  - Identify the different types of energy used and their level of consumption before the implementation of the plan,
Select the measures and planning for the implementation (timeline, responsible, logistics),
Monitor the use at all facilities of your site.

Communicate with all your employees and visitors:
Make them be aware of your energy conservation activities and support them,
Identify and anticipate potential obstacles: resistance to change, belief that sustainable management is a temporary trend, low interest in environmental issues, differences related to the country of origin, etc. (Swarbrooke, 2011, p. 308).

Make sure that your communication has an impact monitoring the variations of the energy consumption and adjusting your strategy if necessary.

See also: Waste management; Water conservation; Event management; Qualification of personnel; Support of sustainability measures by regional stakeholders.

References and further information:

III.2.3. Event management
As cultural garden and open space heritage sites increasingly offer different types of events for visitors, sustainable event management is another crucial indicator in the field of sustainable management. “Green meetings or events” incorporate environmental considerations to minimize negative effects on the environment.

When organizing an event, the following measures are recommended:

- Identify and respect the carrying capacity of your site: “the maximum number of people who can use your site without an unacceptable alteration in the physical environment and without an unacceptable decline in the quality of the experience gained by visitors” (Mathieson & Wall, 1982 in Cooper et al., 2008, p. 221).
- Ask transportation providers from and to the event to:
  - Comply with the principles of an environmentally responsible maintenance and use re-refined oil,
  - Recycle operation’s waste (used oil, vehicle batteries, antifreeze and tires),
  - Minimize wasting and the use of air conditioners, especially when no passengers are in the vehicle.
- When offering catering or in-house food and beverage for the event:
  - Provide participants with products that are:
    - Locally grown/in season,
    - Organic,
    - Fair trade,
    - And/or appealing vegetarian alternatives,
- Arrange to have leftover unserved food donated to a local food bank or soup kitchen or separate it for composting,
- Use re-usable linens, dishes and cutlery,
- Purchase and serve water, beverages, condiments and other food items in bulk or with as few packages as possible.

- For marketing & communications activities:
  - Communicate your sustainable approach to attendees and stakeholders,
  - Reduce paper usage as much as possible by using online tools to promote the event, offering electronic registration and providing the event itinerary online,
  - For materials that need to be printed, print out double-sided, post-consumer recycled paper using vegetable based inks.

- For the event management in general:
  - Implement measures for managing waste and energy in a responsible way,
  - Start or expand the on-site recycling program to capture paper, cardboard, metals, glass, plastics and separate organic materials for composting,
  - Contract with a private recycling company if the local government will not collect recyclables.

- After the event, evaluate the impact and assess which recommendations were followed and/or could be improved.

See also: Waste management; Energy management; Events; Support of sustainability measures by regional stakeholders.

References and further information:
III. Site Management 3. Marketing & Branding

III.3.1. Public image
III.3.2. Public awareness
III.3.3. Awareness of historical value by stakeholders
III.3.4. Market reach
III.3.5. Website
III.3.6. E-marketing
III.3.7. Printed material
III.3.8. Admission fee
III.3.9. Presence in travel guides
III.3.10. Packages

III.3.1. Public image

Public image is defined as the opinion or concept of something that is held by the public (The Free Dictionary, 2013). Amongst residents and tourists, a general perception of your site exists based on opinions, reviews, critics and actual experiences with the site. Although it cannot be completely transformed via marketing activities, it is important to understand and measure how positive or negative this perception is in order to better adapt your communication and marketing strategy (French & Runyard, 2011, pp. 259-261).

The following management recommendations can be suggested regarding public image:

- Scan online and offline information: visitors’ direct feedback, on-site surveys, online reviews (on travel or garden tourism platforms), articles or comments from all media channels, travel guide descriptions and others.
- Include in your evaluation the tourists as much as the residents’ perceptions as well as those who have not visited your site before. If possible, measure your image both for specialized and general public as they can vary significantly.
- Carry out on-site observations: how satisfied/dissatisfied your visitors look during their visit?
- Understand the factors impacting on the positive/negative evaluation of your site using focus groups (a discussion with several customers together) or in-depth interviews (a face-to-face discussion) with several members of your target groups.
- Consider the option of a “hall test” inviting residents (regular and new attendees) to experiment the visit and assess your site. Remember to reward their contribution with some refreshments or other special gift.
- Also review your pricing policy: is your price corresponding to the service and experience quality?
- Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of your site in terms of image based on the various sources of data collected.
- Finally, consider the use of promotional tools to maximise your assets or correct some negative aspects: can some activities (advertising, personal selling, public relations or sales promotion) improve your public image (Colbert et al., 2001, p. 171)?
See also: Public awareness; Distinctiveness; Feedback systems for visitor; Website; E-marketing; Admission fee; Presence in travel guides.

References and further information:

III.3.2. Public awareness
Making tourists and residents aware of your offer is a key challenge to reach as many potential visitors as possible and therefore secure the activity in the long run. It is also essential that locals are able to guide easily any person willing to access it.

Public awareness needs to be fostered with the following management recommendations:

- Scan online and offline information for tourists (travel or garden tourism platforms, travel guides) and residents (local forums and leisure tips). Is your site on the tourism and local maps?
- Develop actions within the framework of a communication plan based on several guiding questions (Colbert et al., 2001, pp. 181-183):
  - What is the current perception of your site and the one you desire to foster in the future (who is addressing the campaign)?
  - What advantages will motivate your target groups to become visitors? Having a pleasant day out, relaxing, spending quality time with family and friends, enjoy the garden’s scenery or just being outside (Bauer-Krösbacher & Payer, 2012)? Adapt the message to the most relevant motive for visit, taking into account the distinctiveness of your site.
  - To whom: which segment do you address? Who will take the final decision?
  - How: which media and other promotional tools can reach your targets, with which codes and appeals (renown, prestige, accessibility, novelty…)?
  - When is the best timing for the communication campaign (season, day of the week, time during the day)? What are the deadlines to keep?
  - Which results will be achieved: increase in ticket sales, in visits or in new/returning visitors, image amelioration or others?
- Consider options for a raising awareness campaign more specifically (French & Runyard, 2011, p. 169):
  - Planned 4-6 month in advance,
  - Totally supervised by one responsible employee and supported by your volunteers,
  - Using an existing network (European Heritage Days, regional or local opportunity) or creating a special event?
o Providing photos and videos opportunities for local and regional media (assess media coverage),
o Supported by all other marketing tools: website, e-news and print media.

See also: Public image; Market communication, Website, E-marketing, Printed material; Presence in travel guides; Distinctiveness.

References and further information:


III.3.3. Awareness of historical value by stakeholders
To ensure that the site is perceived not only as a recreation area but also as a part of the cultural heritage of a destination, awareness needs to be raised on its historical value amongst all stakeholders related to the site (Roberts & Tribe, 2008). It is also associated with the important issue of site preservation.

The historical value can be taken into account considering several perspectives:

- **Visitors:** provide information on the historical importance of the garden/open space not only on-site but also online. Detailed information is for instance provided on the website of the Kew Royal Botanic Gardens, United Kingdom, divided into the sections “Timeline”, “People”, “Places” and “Plants”.

- **Employees:**
  o Include information on the site history during the trainings designed for the employees including those for new staff members or organise an information meeting for other employees having no undergoing trainings.
  o Highlight consequences on the performance of their daily tasks (specific areas to be maintained more carefully, special techniques).
  o Provide information about history in the break rooms or on the intranet.

- **Suppliers:**
  o Include information about the history of the site in the preamble of the contracts signed with your suppliers.
  o Consider specific clauses on the precautions that need to be taken if applicable.
Residents:
- Provide information to locals about the past of the site in cooperation with the municipality and regional instances to spread information.
- Work with non-profit organizations promoting the appreciation of cultural and historic heritage at the local level.
- Use these communication opportunities to attract volunteers.

Local businesses:
- Highlight the historic assets of your site during meetings and networking events with other local businesses including with your competitors.
- Initiate partnerships with local entrepreneurs to give more visibility to the historical value of the site (customized products, design, storytelling…).

Local and regional authorities: organise an event focusing on the historical dimension of your site to increase awareness amongst state representatives.

See also: Historical value; Significance of cultural history; Qualification of personnel; Volunteers; Interpretation material on site & plants; Interpretation: Guided tours; Educational workshops.

References and further information:


III.3.4. Market reach
It is of importance to monitor the market reach of the site, i.e. its catchment area and types of tourists: it can help diversify visitors in terms of their origin. As the site is less dependent on a specific market, the intensity and duration of the activity can be increased.

Management recommendations for the expansion of the market reach include several steps:
- Identify which types of visitors are concerned: local residents; school/college groups; day-trippers; domestic/foreign holiday-makers (Swarbrooke, 2011, pp. 125-126).
- Select indicators to identify their origin: city and postal codes gathered in the purchasing process or in surveys conducted on-site, demographics of the website users, languages asked for or used regarding the interpretation material, etc.
- Implement measures to optimize the market reach at each level.
  - Regional/local reach (French & Runyard, 2011, pp. 128-129):
    - Plan programs with local schools to attract children and teenagers who may then return with their families or friends,
    - Promote courses and special events for residents,
    - Set up a convivial area for social activities (café, snack or restaurant) to attract more returning visitors,
    - Encourage your volunteers to increase the word of mouth and personal recommendations about the site.
National reach:
- Identify transport connections with other destinations for day trips,
- Research and address the needs of these potential visitors,
- Develop packages to attract visitors from other regions for a short stay (a weekend for instance),
- Cooperate with the tourism board of your city/region to integrate your offers to their activities.

International reach:
- Identify target countries and develop material adapted to their language or at least in English (website, interpretation, on-site signage),
- Develop packages and further cooperation within your destination to attract international visitors.
- Participate to travel or education trade shows and inform relevant special interest groups (French & Runyard, 2011, p. 104).

- Closely articulate programming efforts with promotion activities to better inform target markets about the new offers developed to attract them.
- Monitor the selected indicators on a regular basis in order to adjust the strategy.

See also: Socio-demographic information about visitors; Website; Presence in travel guides; Packages; Cooperation with other tourism providers.

References and further information:

III.3.5. Website

An inexpensive tool, a website allows great potential particularly for small attractions (Swarbrooke, 2011, p. 230). As many people plan their leisure activities and especially their travel online, it is crucial to be present on the internet displaying all information needed.

The development of a quality website contains several steps (French & Runyard, 2011, pp. 95-97):

- Identify who is responsible for the website development: set up an internal working group, involve volunteers or experts in a process of shared competences.
- Consider competitors and equivalent sites' websites: what are their strengths and weaknesses? Compare with your own website (existing/in preparation).
- Define a simple set of goals for your website in line with your overall strategy and marketing plan. What do you want to achieve with this website: informing, promoting, selling entrance tickets, interacting with visitors, retaining them into a community?
- Make a project plan including a budget and the trainings of the employees or volunteers concerned (consider also online trainings). Create a timeline to ensure your progress step by step until the update or the launching of the site.
• Develop a relevant and meaningful content:
  o Before entering into detail, focus on the overall structure so that the navigation is easy and the information well organised.
  o Depict your garden/open space site and what makes it attractive for a visit.
  o Understand what practical information each segment of visitor needs. Make sure that information (opening periods and hours, transportation) is up-to-date.
  o Provide some special highlights: pictures, videos, virtual tour, favourite places of interest in the site, news stories or visitors’ experiences, list of plants and flowers and flowering calendar for each month or season (like Le Vasterival Garden, France, for instance).
  o Include a section for tourism stakeholders with a route planner, packages offers, groups and tours information, a description of the destination and a link to the destination’s tourism board website (French & Runyard, 2011, p. 140).
  o Increase community building with gardening tips or ideas of themes for new amateur gardeners (as offered on the website of Keukenhof, Netherlands).

• Create a maintenance calendar to ensure the content is updated regularly and the upcoming activities are announced sufficiently in advance. Monitor closely customers’ feedback as questions and negative reviews (especially) need to be answered fast.

• Link your website with others: tourism boards, city and region websites, garden and open space inventories or travel websites to generate more traffic and improve your visibility on the ranking of search engines results.

• Integrate the website to your other marketing activities: add the URL address in all other communication tools, display QR (quick response) codes in the printed material which will directly link to the website thanks to smartphones and anticipate post-visit engagement (newsletter subscription and links towards social media).

• Monitor closely your traffic and all the information about the use of your website and carry out necessary adjustments.

See also: E-marketing; Packages; Periods of accessibility; Hours of accessibility.

References and further information:
III.3.6. E-marketing

Having a website is only one of the numerous opportunities that the internet is offering to promote a garden or open space heritage site online. Several options can be considered depending on your strategy and the time you want to dedicate to e-marketing activities.

The management recommendations related to this topic therefore include several formats:

- **E-news/newsletters** (French & Runyard, 2011, p. 140):
  - Integrate hyperlinks with headlines and hints leading to the website where further information is provided.
  - Create a pre-designed template that will generate coherence between the different editions and facilitate the production.
  - Distribute them on a regular basis announced in advance.
  - Gain consent of all recipients to the use of their email address (subscription on a voluntary basis and opt-out option).
  - Use a specialized program if a high amount of recipients is targeted in order to accurately follow up the success of the distribution.

- **Social media.** Predefine goals and rules to stay efficient as social media activities can be time-consuming and require a real commitment, under several possible forms:
  - Networks: use the Facebook, Twitter, Google+ or other pages to support all other marketing activities and remember that it is not only young people using these platforms. Measure closely the campaigns (including demographics).
  - Content sharing platforms: Wikipedia for information on the history and identity of the site, Flickr or Pinterest for pictures, YouTube for videos…
  - Blogs: consider amateurs and professional bloggers as key opinion leaders to creatively diversify the audience you reach with special interests groups.
  - Reviews: monitor the evaluations given by visitors to other potential customers on all platforms where reviews can be shared. Define your answer policy: react only to negative reviews; acknowledge also very positive ones; answer to all reviews?

- **Travel forums and websites:** make sure your site is mentioned in travel tips related to your destination, in cultural portals and in gardens and open space inventories in Europe and in your region.

- **Location-based services:** enrich the content available about your site on Google Maps and Google Earth incorporating data, content, pictures and other multimedia information (Cooper et al., 2008, p. 627).

- **Online sales:** with ICTs support,
  - You can make ticket sales available to all visitors that will not need to queue on your site, efficiently combining information and reservation (Swarbrooke, 2011, p. 230).
  - If you have a shop, consider the option of selling your products online to increase your revenues. You can promote this e-shop via all your other communication channels.

See also: Website; Market reach; Printed material; Presence in travel guides; Packages.
References and further information:

III.3.7. Printed material
Considered as a traditional method for promoting a site, print communication remains important but needs to be well defined to limit marketing costs and environmental impact.

Therefore, you should ask yourself the following questions (French & Runyard, 2011, pp. 100-102; Swarbrooke, 2011, pp. 224-228):
- Are the distribution channels adapted to your target groups? If you want to reach tourists for instance, create partnerships with tourist information centres or hotels. For residents, libraries or supermarkets should be preferred.
- Which formats do you need: print advertising in newspapers or magazines (national/regional), flyers, leaflets, brochures or posters? Consider this issue in relation to the success of your e-marketing activities: do you still need offline communication?
- Are different brochures (format, size, content and design) needed to fit each purpose of use and target group?
- Is the information provided relevant? It has to be detailed enough to address your potential visitors' needs but make sure it will not become outdated before you actually distribute all the edited material.
- Is printed material connected to online communication?
  - Integrate in your brochures, leaflets and posters the website URL address in order to provide an access to up-to-date information.
  - You can also integrate in your material barcodes so that smartphones can directly access online information (Quick Response codes).
- Is an appropriate print runt chosen in relation to the distribution system? Enough printed material should be provided at the right times of the season – but this parameter should not be overestimated to limit costs.

See also: [Website; E-marketing; Public awareness; Public image](#).

References and further information:
III.3.8. Admission fee

Impacting both on the demand and the long-term viability of the site, admission fee should be considered very carefully in relation to the pricing of each activity of the site.

Several recommendations can be suggested regarding pricing (French & Runyard, 2010, pp. 91-93):

- Consider the following parameters (McLean, 1997, p. 159):
  - The environment (economic, political and social),
  - The customers (the level of demand and the benefits provided by the site),
  - The market, analysing the prices of your competitors and comparable sites. The hidden costs for the visitor (transportation, parking on site…) should be included in this comparison.
  - The organization, adjusting the prices to the marketing objectives and to the costs (for the shop, café and restaurant especially).

- Evaluate the following options in order to diversify the prices:
  - Price segmentation for different types of visitors (families, student, groups…),
  - Charges for special areas (with some highlights reserved to paying visitors),
  - Discount/added value for promotional activities: discount rate, two-for-one promotion; special visit add-ons (a free guide for instance); packages,
  - Season tickets to increase the number of returning visitors,
  - Dynamic pricing, with lower admission fees for entering at the end of the day or for people booking well in advance to anticipate visitors’ affluence during the peak periods.

- Select the measures and plan their implementation:
  - Updating all communication tools (online and offline material),
  - Changing the on-site signs,
  - Communicating with your business partners,
  - Training your employees if needed.

- Implement the new pricing strategy and monitor closely its impact on the number of visitors and on the incomes. Adjust the strategy if necessary.

- Collect information on the visitors’ profile analysing the segmented offers and make use of them in terms of marketing strategy.

- Review the sales at the end of each season and conduct further research to optimize the pricing of the next season/year. For instance, monitoring the season’s tickets through the admission system or surveys will help you find the frequency of use and optimize the pricing for the following year.

See also: Shop: Price performance ratio of products; Café/Restaurant: Price performance ratio; Packages; Website; E-marketing; Printed material; Presence in travel guides.

References and further information:
III.3.9. Presence in travel-related material

Being present in travel guides, magazines, platforms or inventories is essential to be on the tourism map and increase the customer reach of your site. However, it is not an easy task as the sources of information for tourists are highly fragmented online as much as offline.

You therefore need to follow several phases to increase the presence of the site in travel guides:

- Assess your current situation step by step for each offline and online channel, creating an inventory of all travel-related material where the site is mentioned:
  - Where are you visible (individually/as the part of a package)?
  - Is the image of your site positive or negative?

- Identify other online and offline publications where you want to be present, depending on your current position and your strategy for your future development: guidebooks, travel tips, advice for tours or trails, garden and open space lists, destination’s assets inventory at the local, national or international level. These new channels must be relevant (adapted to the target groups of the site) and reliable sources.

- Add the information yourself when possible (it is the case for many online inventories), otherwise contact the author(s) with some promotional material so that they see the quality of your site and consider getting more information about it.

- In the case of annual guides and yearbooks, make sure that the information provided will not be outdated within the year (Swarbrooke, 2011, p. 226).

- Invite some key opinion leaders to discover your site in person. Accompany them during their visit or provide them with a guide so that they fully benefit from the experience.

- Remember that travel topics are not only mentioned in tourism-related material and can be included in other specialized publications: lifestyle, women or news segments (French & Runyard, 2010, p. 151).

- Consider the option of press trips especially for increasing the national and international reach: cooperate with your destination partners (tourist board, local authority and other attractions) to create an attractive itinerary for a press trip including less renowned attractions (French & Runyard, 2010, pp. 164-166).

See also: Market reach; Packages; Website; E-marketing; Printed material; Socio-demographic information about visitors.

References and further information:
III.3.10. Packages
Offering tickets for the site is not enough to attract tourists. If you want them to actually visit your site, the overall destination needs to be attractive and reachable. It is therefore vital to develop packages that create connections between the destination assets and make the planning easier for your visitors.

Management recommendations regarding packages include several providers (French & Runyard, 2010, pp. 134-139):

- **Local/national tourism board or department:**
  - Contact institutions in charge of the promotion of your destination to to take part in destination packages, cards or other co-pricing activities they develop (accommodation/visit of several attractions).
  - Try to include your site in temporary packages designed for special promotional campaigns with a higher visibility.

- **Transportation providers:**
  - You can combine a ticket for transportation and the entrance to your site in order to facilitate the purchasing process or decrease costs for your visitor.
  - As they can also promote a destination to increase the amount of users on a specific itinerary, build close business relationships to make sure the site will be included in the design of the offer.

- **Hotels and accommodation establishments:**
  - Provide a list of recommended accommodations under the section dedicated to tourism on your website and ask these partners to distribute your printed material in return.
  - Create partnerships where local hotel customers systematically benefit from a ticket entrance to your site or get a preferential rate negotiated with the providers.

- **Tour and coach operators:**
  - Identify the companies operating in your destination and offer them group discounts to be included in their circuits and itineraries (Swarbrooke, 2011, p. 388).
  - Also search for specialised garden tour operators.

- **Tourist guides:** via professional tourist guides associations, network with local tour guides that are defining their tour themselves and offer them special rates for their groups.

See also: [Presence in travel guides](#); [Website](#); [Public awareness](#); [Market reach](#); [Cooperation with other tourism providers](#).

References and further information:
III. Site Management 4. Human Resources

III.4.1. Qualification of personnel

Competent employees are essential to assure not only maximum individual contributions to the site but also its overall development. Learning on-the-job is indeed not enough to make your employees acquire the short and long-term knowledge and skills they need. It is also an effective way to cope with a high turnover rate or motivation issues.

Qualification of the personnel can be improved thanks to the following recommendations (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2009, pp. 188-208):

- Identify needs for improvement regarding your personnel qualification:
  - Consider your operating costs: can productivity be increased thanks to multiskilling, where staff members are trained to perform different tasks to better optimize their working time (Swarbrooke, 2011, p. 282)?
  - Consider the sources for visitors’ dissatisfaction and your personnel’s inputs (especially the supervisors). Are your employees familiar with:
    - Sustainable tourism (Roberts & Tribes, 2008)?
    - Interactions with visitors?
    - Safety and first-aid procedures?
    - The use of new technologies implemented on site/new maintenance equipment?
  - Suggestions boxes are also a good way to receive open feedback from your employees.
- Where improvements are required, conduct a position analysis preparing the list of the tasks and the correct way to perform them in relation to the performance standards required.
- Based on the gaps between the actual performance of the position and the target level described in the position analysis, identify clear training objectives.
- Develop training plans:
  - Format, such as (Swarbrooke, 2011, pp. 259-260):
    - Mentoring, between an experienced and a new staff member (especially relevant for sharing the tacit knowledge of gardeners),
    - Group problem-solving, especially for quality management issues,
    - Short on-site courses, face-to-face or online,
    - Off-site courses for longer trainings.
  - Reasons and objectives for the training,
  - Content overview and then details for each session (including methods, time and resources). Progress from general to specific and build on your trainees’ and trainer’s experience.
Develop/purchase training resources (presentations, videos, handbook…) relevant to the tasks.

Inform and prepare your trainees: communicate about the benefits of the program, schedule the sessions and address their concerns before the training begins. May they have language or reading problems? Do they expect some advancement opportunities?

Evaluate the training: where the objectives reached? How satisfied was the training for the participants? What exactly they appreciated and what should be improved?

See also: Quality management system; Safety & security system; Staff attitude towards visitors; Sustainable Management; Availability of qualified personnel in the region; Information & Communication Technology; Maintenance equipment.

References and further information:

III.4.2. Premiums & incentives
Within the tourism and leisure industry, performance-based pay is becoming increasingly common as they help the employees focus their efforts and motivation on strategic issues. When designed carefully, they can significantly improve the quality level of the services (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2009, pp. 279-280).

Management recommendations for premiums & incentives include the following:

- Pinpoint key tasks that are essential to reach your organisational strategy.
- Link these identified tasks with the responsibility and roles of your employees.
- Define quantitative indicators that enable a fair and transparent measurement of the performance. They have to be easily understandable by all your employees.
- Decide the scope of each incentive: should it be based on the individuals, teams, departments, on a specific operation or project or on the whole site? For instance, you can decide to dedicate the financial incentive to your shop staff only, with a percentage of increase in the sales profits as they are directly responsible for the shop performance (Swarbrooke, 2011, p. 258).
- Determine the budget you can allocate to each incentive and evaluate the distribution in order to define sub-targets (financial package for each entity selected during the previous step).
- Discuss the system with your employees or their representatives to obtain agreement before the implementation.
- Monitor the distribution gaining feedback from the employees or their representatives and from supervisors in order to review the system and improve it for the following
You can also complete your reward system with non-financial incentives by opting for personnel development that is often considered as long-term oriented.

See also: Personnel development; Qualification of personnel.

References and further information:

III.4.3. Personnel development

Many companies complete their compensation programs by including intrinsic rewards designed to enhance employees’ positive feelings about their work and themselves. Although it involves fewer direct costs than financial incentives, it can have a powerful impact on the motivation of the employees and their contribution to your site.

The following ideas can therefore be selected to support the personnel development of the employees (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2009, pp. 288-290; Swarbrooke, 2011, pp. 258-259):

- Identify the respective career goals of your employees and eventually make them match with your succession planning (promotion opportunities).
- Provide job security with a long-term recruitment instead of a temporary contract.
- Support the employees’ skills extensions by accepting a training topic suggested from their side.
- Enable their participation in the decision making to increase their learning possibilities.
- Develop their personal autonomy and responsibilities. Your site can also benefit from this empowerment in terms of quality management and optimization of the tasks as supervisors will then have more time to dedicate themselves to other critical issues.
- Enrich their job description with a diversification of the tasks (Roberts & Tribes, 2008) or job rotation to decrease monotonous tasks on a regular basis.
- Make the performance recognised by the supervisors, thank you collective notes, personal note showing appreciation to a specific employee, attendance certificates, employee awards…. all these activities can give confidence to your employees recognising their contribution and allow them to broaden their perspectives.
- Foster community building: group work, employees’ outings after work or for lunch time (in a restaurant or having a picnic), birthday programs, cap or shirt embossed with your site name or logo.

See also: Premiums & incentives; Qualification of personnel; Employees from the region.

References and further information:
III.4.4. Employees from the region

It is highly important to integrate local people into all levels of the site management. Indeed, sustainable tourism is based on the recognition of the contribution that people, communities and customs make to enrich the tourism experience. It therefore has to be ensured that local people can reap the socio-economic benefits from the tourism activity (Roberts & Tribe, 2008).

The following recommendations can be identified regarding this topic:

- Gather and centralize data from all your employees including their place of residence.
- Determine the share of employees that come from the region over the total work force of your site.
- If less than half of your employees are not from the region, identify the reasons. Is this situation due to transportation issues, a lack of qualifications in the region, recruiting processes or the way information about vacancies is disseminated?
- Define measures to improve the situation in your human resources processes:
  - Make the visitors’ shuttle available for employees is the site is isolated,
  - Defray the costs of transportation partly or completely,
  - Research about the availability of qualified personnel in the region,
  - Ensure that vacancies are communicated via regional channels,
  - Analyse your recruitment criteria to verify that they do not disadvantage candidates from the region,
  - Consider the option of recruiting local volunteers.
- Consider the benefits for the visitor’s experience: are visitors aware they are in contact with locals when interacting with your employees? Does their presence help promote local cultures and enable a mutual understanding between tourists and residents (Roberts & Tribe, 2008)?
- Monitor closely the figures to anticipate any changes in the employees’ structure.

See also: Volunteers; Public transport/shuttle service; Availability of qualified personnel in the region.

References and further information:

III.4.5. Volunteers

Although voluntary organisations in the cultural and heritage field often start as informal get-togethers led by a few enthusiastic individuals, they can become essential to expand activities related to the development of a site.

The following measures can be considered to gain volunteers (French & Runyard, 2011, pp. 200-201; pp. 210-213):

- Support the creation of a Friend or Member status and select volunteers’ benefits that are cost-effective (discount on the entrance fee or shop products; site publications/partner magazines; hands-on programs; off-site trips, appreciation dinners or other social activities).
- Determine various areas of activity and regularly train volunteers on these topics. The Rutgers Gardens (New Jersey, USA) for instance offer the following activities:
  - Children's after school, education or social programs,
  - Fundraising events organisation,
  - Garden or greenhouse maintenance,
  - Information points, shop or office assistance,
  - Guiding tours/Activities for people with special needs.
- Set clear cooperation parameters to avoid conflicts in the site management.
- Communicate with your volunteers regularly through formal meetings and informal updates. An e-news network supervised by one volunteer collaborating with one staff member could also be an option.
- Encourage your employees to have a positive and helpful attitude towards volunteers. Invite key volunteers to presentations or board and management meetings.
- Attend volunteers’ events to share news and build lasting relationships. Install a dedicated bulletin board in the place where volunteers meet.
- Encourage your volunteers to be your site advocates.
- Use the occasions of public participation events and residents visits to increase awareness regarding the needs of the site in terms of volunteering workforce.
- Consider the option of becoming a partner site of international organizations arranging volunteer heritage restoration works.

See also: [Qualification of personnel](#); [Interpretation for people with special needs](#).

References and further information:
III. Site Management 5. Infrastructure

III.5.1. Information & Communication Technologies

The development of digital tools can significantly enrich and facilitate the strategic and operational management of tourism organisations and therefore need to be taken into account.

In order to optimize the use of ICTs, the following areas of improvement can be identified for the management of your site (Cooper et al., 2008, p. 635):

- Online promotion: does your site make use of e-marketing possibilities?
- Partnership coordination: do you share any digital process with your business partners? For instance, can they search for the availability of a workshop or event organised at your site in real time?
- Internal communication: do you use ICTs for information exchange (such as an intranet)? Can your employees access a shared workspace overcoming the division between the different departments to access all the information they need to perform their tasks?
- Site management: are activities of accounting, billing and supplies management, financial and operational control and resource planning supported by ICTs?
- Online services: do you offer an online process for the purchase of your entrance ticket? Do you provide feedback possibilities for customers? Is an email address available and regularly checked for any visitor’s request or question?
- Visitor experience: are videos, audio-visual shows, audio-guides or QR (quick response) codes provided as interpretation tools?
- Marketing analysis: are indicators identified in the promotion and admission systems to monitor the activity of the site? Can the ticketing process deliver detailed information about the visitors? Which demographics are highlighted by your website visitors’ data?
- Strategic fit: is priority set between the areas mentioned above in close relation to your site strategy (for instance online booking to increase the number of visitors)?

See also: Website; E-marketing; Interpretation material on site & plants; Organizational strategy; Qualification of personnel; Socio-demographic information about visitors.

References and further information:
III.5.2. Maintenance equipment

As a site poorly maintained could have negative consequences in terms of visitor experience, heritage conservation, staff performance and security issues, the maintenance equipment needs to be monitored closely.

Management recommendations can be defined based on following guiding questions.

- Adequacy: do employees using the equipment consider it as optimal to perform the tasks attributed to them? Do they have all they need?
- Training: are employees trained to use and maintain the equipment (especially for new, historic or sustainable techniques)? Who is directly responsible for the equipment maintenance?
- Equipment diversity: are vehicles, machinery as much as tools taken into consideration?
- Conditions of conservation: are storage and maintenance provided to maintain the equipment quality (dry area to limit rust, hanging racks for moisture prevention)?
- Safety & security: does the equipment comply with a safe use and storage both for visitors and employees?
- Sustainability: Is the equipment used optimal in terms of energy saving and waste reduction (clean energy vehicles, biodegradable packaging…)? Does it respect the historical and natural dimensions of the site?
- Resource planning: does a plan exist to anticipate the needs for replacement of outdated equipment?

See also: Degree of need for investment in maintenance equipment; Maintenance condition; Safety and security system; Qualification of personnel; Waste management; Energy management.
III. Site Management 6. Financial Investment

The following indicators are considered together as they are closely interrelated:

III.6.1. Degree of need for investment for infrastructure
III.6.2. Degree of need for investment in maintenance equipment
III.6.3. Degree of need for investment in personnel
III.6.4. Degree of need for investment in marketing

Investments are crucial in all sectors of the tourism industry. They can help your business to take off implementing new visit standards or secure the sustainability of your site by diversifying its activities and therefore its income. As they project the company into the future and imply a long-term orientation, they need to be considered very carefully.

Management recommendations regarding financial investment include the following issues:

- **Fit with strategic goals:** money should not be spent without a global vision of what needs to be reached. Individual investment projects should reflect the vision and overall development strategy. For instance, the vision and the mission statement serve as a basis for the development of strategic business plans in the Kew Royal Botanic Gardens, United Kingdom, for the period 2012-2017.
- **Scope of the investments:** is each project of limited or large scale? Is there a way to distribute the investments over several years to avoid the need for massive funds in the same time?
- **Investment prioritization:** projects where security and safety are at stake need to be implemented first. Prioritise the other investments according to the site strategy and the available resources.
- **Holistic approach:** considering the various areas of investment that are needed, an investment chain should be created to visualise the order dependencies. For instance, if the main infrastructure of the site is under renovation, it is suggested to launch an active marketing campaign only when the site has been renewed.
- **Added value and return on investment:** ensure that the operations you are investing in will generate enough revenues to be profitable by estimating how and when the break-even point is reached.
- **Options for funding sources:**
  - Internal financial sources (e.g. cost savings or additional revenues such as an updated pricing strategy, membership or new commercial activities).
  - Business sources with bank credits or corporate sponsorship. Support in kind or with shared competences can also help you to make an investment with considerably reduced costs.
  - Public sources with municipal, regional or national grants supporting the development of a specific goal that could meet your own objectives. European programs could also be considered if your project meets one of the different funds’ requirements.
  - Private sources with family foundations or individual contributions should not be neglected. If your investment is related to a mobilizing theme such as
saving a part of cultural heritage or the community identity, crowdsourcing on the internet can also be an option.

See also: Organizational strategy; Additional use of facilities; Condition of site infrastructure; Renovation of site infrastructure; Site Maintenance; Human Resources; Marketing & Branding.

References and further information:
IV. Site Characteristics 1. General Aspects

IV.1.1. Design concept for the site

Creating and implementing a design concept is essential to root the site identity not only in marketing activities but also in its infrastructure and visual appearance. It is a necessary precondition to confer on the visit its uniqueness.

The following management recommendations can be followed:

- Conduct a site analysis providing a summary of the opportunities and constraints (topography, location of existing services, buildings and heritage assets, vegetation type, views to, in and from the site).
- Analyse your environment: what are your competitors or other equivalent sites having as a design concept? What is the tourism theme of your region/your destination?
- Define the overall concept objectives in relation to your organizational strategy, your guiding theme, the type of historic design of your site if applicable and its distinctiveness.
- Consult the relevant stakeholders on the design concept: employees, visitors, community, municipality or others.
- Elaborate a design concept based on different possible inspirations:
  - Geography (for instance a garden typical from a country/region such as the oriental gardens of the Monte Palace Tropical Garden in Madeira),
  - History (such as Baroque or Renaissance),
  - Art and culture (with a specific material used all over the site such as glass or the exclusive use of one specific colour),
  - Personality (tribute or remembrance gardens and open spaces),
  - Concept (the roof garden of the Museum of Modern Art in New-York is based on the concept “camouflage”, for instance).
- Consider the implementation of the concept in various tangible dimensions of the site:
  - Structure and symbolism of the space and the forms,
  - Colours of all visual components,
  - Materials employed: element, type, use/presence of water, recycled materials,
  - Elements of decoration: works of art, special cutting shapes,
  - Design for facilities, paths, bridges, railings, seats, lights/lanterns, etc.,
  - Specific plantings or animals,
  - Shop, café/restaurant and other infrastructure dedicated to visitor services.
- Get professional advice from landscape architects, heritage specialists or design experts, depending on the positioning of the concept.
- Assess your final concept by measuring if it enriches the visitor experience and enables (Lockwood, 2010, p. 66):
Differentiation: does it make the appearance of your site unique?
Integration: does it generate coherence and unity in the site infrastructure?
Transformation: does it bring some new element in your site atmosphere?
Added value: is it likely to increase your sales and the visitor experience?

- After adjusting if necessary, identify the costs and the investment needed.
- Implement the design concept and gain feedback about it.

See also: Guiding theme; Type of historic design; Distinctiveness; Degree of need for investment for infrastructure; Shop: Availability.

References and further information:

**IV.1.2. Guiding theme**
A theme can be defined as the subject matter, the topic or a unifying and dominant idea (for instance the overall meaning behind a story). Especially gardens are usually designed around a particular theme that often expresses the vision of the creator of the garden.

In order to make the site not only better understandable but also more interesting for both the visitor and the staff the following questions can be recommended:
- What is the purpose of the site? How is it used (e.g. utilitarian or strolling area)?
- In case of a historical site: What was the vision of the creator of the garden when establishing or developing it (taking into account the different phases, owners and engaged artists)?
- What does the garden/open space represent? What is shown?
- How can the garden/open space be experienced? What is the fundamental experience of the garden/open space?
- How can these previous elements be summarized and explained in a few sentences?

As a source of inspiration, different feature gardens were described at the Canada Blooms 2013 exhibition:
- Elite Environments: “A natural setting where family and friends can come together to enjoy each other on a warm summer night.”
- Hope Springs Eternal: “(…) a journey of hope, through 3 distinct landscape areas. The middle area water wall is the climax to this journey (…).”
- Asian Influence: “The intent of this garden is to show how effective simplicity can be, as influenced by the subtle, exacting details of Japanese Design.”
How can this theme be integrated in the different channels of the communication strategy (site presentation, description of the services, pictures, offer of products in the shop etc.)?

See also: Design concept for the site; Type of historic design; Distinctiveness; Significance of cultural history; Shop: Offer of products that go with the theme of the site.

References and further information:

IV.1.3. Type of historic design
As a part of the cultural heritage of your site, the type of historic design needs to be considered carefully.

From this perspective, several requirements need to be met:
- Do not destroy parts of the historic design during conservation or renovation work.
- Read literature on garden history/studies upon this period/from the respective period of garden art to develop an understanding of the value of the overcome preserved historical elements and their genuine position in the garden.
- Inform stakeholders on the value and meaning of the historic design to foster a general understanding of the place.
- Take into account the type of historic design when defining the design concept and the guiding theme for the site.

See also: Significance of cultural history; Awareness of historical value by stakeholders; Interpretation material on site & plants; Design concept for the site; Guiding theme.

IV.1.4. Distinctiveness
As there is fierce competition not only within the field of built cultural attractions but also within the area of nature based cultural attractions it has become imperative to think about the question of what differentiates your site from others.

Management recommendations regarding the distinctiveness of the site include:
- Address the following question: what makes the visit of your garden/open space unique? Uniqueness is defined as “unusual”, “extraordinary”, “unparalleled”, or “being the only one of its kind”. What cannot easily be copied by another site?
- Consider the following dimensions to formulate the answer:
  - Tangible aspects: plants, collection, facilities, design concept for the site, etc.
Intangible aspects: location, history of the site or type of historic design, services provided for visitors, interpretation, personnel, guiding theme, etc.

- Take into account the distinctiveness of the site when defining the guiding theme, the marketing strategy and the overall organizational strategy.

See also: Organizational strategy; Design concept for the site; Guiding theme; Type of historic design; Awareness of historical value by stakeholders; Marketing & Branding.

References and further information:
IV. Site Characteristics 2. Garden and Open Space Heritage Site

IV.2.1. Significance of cultural history
Understanding the role of your site in the past is an essential approach to define and respect its identity as much as to promote it in an authentic way.

The following management recommendations can support the understanding of the significance of cultural history for your site:

- Gather all information already available to study the past of your site.
- Assess the importance of the events and historical figures connected to your location: Did they have an impact on the history of your destination? How were they related to the cultural and historical context of their times?
- Research further information to enrich the knowledge you have about the past of your site at each level: local/regional/international. Is there any link with key historical figures or events out of your region? Did representatives of neighbouring countries happen to visit the site? Are some events (battle, public gathering) that occurred at your site worth mentioning for international visitors?
- Document these researches with as many details as possible, if necessary with the help of history specialists, experts in regional/local culture or the local population.
- Share with your visitors the importance of culture and history with interpretation material provided on site especially for the infrastructure visible for the visitors. It can also serve as a basis for the theme of the site.

See also: Guiding theme; Historical value; Interpretation material on site & plants; Awareness of historical value by stakeholders.

IV.2.2. Initial inventory
Having a quality initial inventory is a key element to conserve the site heritage, preserve its identity and share it with the visitors.

In order to integrate this dimension into the processes of your site management, different guiding questions related to this topic have to be addressed:

- What is/are the trigger/reason(s)/use for establishing an inventory?
- Who is responsible for the recording and documentation?
- What criteria are used for documentation? And in what depth and what rigour?
- Is everything documented in the inventory or just selected objects?
- Is the inventory split according to types of object (seating possibilities, planting, etc.)?
If no initial inventory can be found, are some reliable historical representations of the site providing details about its initial inventory available (written document, sketch, engraving or painting)?

- Are the several phases of the site’s development respected as equal historical evidence?
- Is the initial inventory consulted when planning further development of the site/as part of the study on the gardens and open spaces history?
- Do you help the visitor understand and appreciate the diverse appearance of your site as evidence of its long history?

See also: Significance of cultural history; Interpretation material on site & plants; Historic planting plan; Historical garden elements; Plant inventory.

---

**IV.2.3. Historic planting plan**

The historic planting plan of a garden or open space is vital to understand the vision of its creators and preserve its identity through the centuries.

Suggestions regarding the historic planting plan include the following:

- Examine which plans already exist and if additional documentation is needed. Are all epochs documented consistently? Where could you find further plans?
- Provide adequate storage facilities for conserving the plans collected, especially for original pieces. What is the condition of the plans? Could they be digitized to ensure their permanent conservation?
- Interpret the historic planting plan to identify plants of your site that remain from different epochs (e.g. geophytes or trees). When identified, ensure that they will not be removed: they are remaining “original historical material” under any circumstances (as described in the Florence Charter of 1981).
- Communicate clearly to your employees the historical plants identified and define special precautions for maintaining the areas concerned.
- Make use of the original historical planting plan to inform the visitors on site.
- Consider how to share these plans to a broader extent: who has access to them? Can they be viewed by the public? Are museums informed about their existence and can they exhibit them? Can your research enrich garden’s history documentation?

See also: Significance of cultural history; Interpretation material on site & plants; Historical garden elements; Initial inventory; Plant inventory; Awareness of historical value by stakeholders.

References and further information:

IV.2.4. Historical garden elements
As a garden or an open space is a mix of natural and built heritage, it is essential to focus the attention not only on the plants but on all the historical garden elements.

In this context, several recommendations can be followed:

- Based on the initial inventory, identify which historical elements are still available in your site and assess their condition.
- If historical elements have disappeared, consider if a (partial) reconstruction could be possible.
- Do not remove or destroy any historical garden elements in line with the Venice Charter of 1964 and other relevant international charters, recommendations and guidelines.
- Consult experts to decide on the techniques to conserve/maintain the preserved elements adequately.
- Inform employees and the public on the existing elements and their historical value.

See also: Significance of cultural history; Interpretation material on site & plants; Initial inventory; Historic planting plan; Plant inventory; Awareness of historical value by stakeholders.

References and further information:

---

IV.2.5. Plant inventory
To preserve the authenticity of the site and ensure its preservation in the long run, it is of importance to elaborate and update a plant inventory for your site in line with the following questions:

- In relation to the initial inventory, what plants still exist? What are their conditions?
- Where did the plants come from? Where could you get them from in the current context?
- What is the value of the existing plants in your site?
- Which alternatives can you identify in case the plants you need to replace cannot be obtained?
- Is collaboration with botanical experts needed? It may provide significant benefits for the garden or open space if some special botanic varieties are preserved.

See also: Historic planting plan.
IV. Site Characteristics 3. Site Maintenance

IV.3.1. Maintenance condition
IV.3.2. Use of fertilizers and plant protection
IV.3.3. Water conservation
IV.3.4. Recycling of biological waste
IV.3.5. Composting

IV.3.1. Maintenance condition
Maintenance is a crucial condition not only to give your visitors an optimal experience but also to preserve your site’s heritage in the long term.

To ensure the site is well maintained, several issues have to be addressed:

- Is a maintenance plan available for all employees with the following elements?
  - List of tasks required to integrally maintain the site,
  - Number of employees and material/tools needed for each task,
  - Frequency and moment of the day/month to perform each task,
  - Employee assigned to each task,
  - Time schedule allocating precisely the tasks to the employees (specifically loud maintenance operations during closure time if possible)
  - Storage facilities and maintenance to keep the equipment in good condition.
- Is a park maintenance manual available?
  - Describing precautions that need to be taken by employees for the maintenance of the historical heritage.
  - Taking into account the different levels that are necessary (vegetation, paths, walls, architectural elements, benches).
- Are employees competent for completing the maintenance tasks assigned? Do you provide staff with adequate maintenance training (techniques, organization and knowledge in the value of the garden)?
- Who is responsible for the supervision of the maintenance tasks? How often do you ensure that the tasks are performed correctly and without any damage on the natural and cultural heritage?

See also: Qualification of personnel; Hours of accessibility; Maintenance equipment; Degree of need for investment in maintenance equipment; Awareness of historical value by stakeholders.

IV.3.2. Use of fertilizers and plant protection
It is essential that plant protection is performed in a sustainable way to ensure the site is not having a negative impact on the environment.
The following recommendations need to be followed:

- Ensure that fertilizers and plant protection products are indispensable in all situations where they are currently used in your site and minimize their use to the lowest possible level.
- Use as an alternative to products the “integrated plant protection” technique: plants are planted site-specific and are professionally maintained in order to provide healthy living conditions.
- For situations where products turn out to be indispensable, use organic and biological products as much as possible.
- Use the compost produced at your site as a fertilizer.

See also: Composting; Recycling of biological waste; Water conservation; Waste management; Energy management.

IV.3.3. Water conservation
As gardens and open spaces generally have a high level of water consumption, a water conservation plan needs to be implemented.

Water consumption should therefore be managed in line with the following actions:

- Develop a strategy to use water responsibly: scheduled water consumption, monitored water conservation measures especially for the maintaining of green areas.
- Install facilities to drain away rain water and plant watering water at the site (no drainage to the canalization).
- Select and implement additional measures for water conservation:
  - Install automatic taps in the facilities of visitors and employees,
  - Make sure that no taps can stay open for a long period of time in a zone that is not monitored,
  - Avoid unnecessary evaporation,
  - Use cisterns for collecting rain water,
  - Ensure your system is leak-proof: verify all pipes, plumbing fixtures and storage tanks and repair them if necessary.
- Communicate with all your employees and visitors to make them be aware of your water conservation activities and support them.

See also: Waste management; Energy management.

IV.3.4. Recycling of biological waste
A critical dimension of sustainability in a garden or an open space is the recycling of biological waste. It not only helps to collect waste on reserved areas (instead of being disposed of anywhere) but also to reduce the amount of waste generated within the community in the long run.
Several actions have to be taken regarding this aspect:

- Precisely define what belongs to biological waste: integrate chopped straw, leaves and other plants, in respect with their individual lifecycle.
- Inform and train your employees so that they are competent for these specific issues.
- Install organic waste bins in the garden and visitor services areas (kitchen) to collect the organic/biological waste.
- In areas that are not sensitive from a historical heritage point of view, use biological waste for producing energy or for nature conservation activities such as the construction of hedgehog mounts or deadwood-hedges.
- Use this self-produced compost for fertilization.

See also: Composting; Use of fertilizers and plant protection; Water conservation; Waste management; Energy management.

IV.3.5. Composting
Gardens and open space areas provide a perfect opportunity for reusing waste for natural purposes and therefore enable a sustainable management of the operations.

Suggestions regarding composting include the following steps:

- Create the compost out of all the green waste generated by the maintenance of your site and the biological waste disposed of by your visitors, with regular maintenance.
- Determine the location of the composting system: Is it better to install it within an adequate area of the site or outside your site? Which space could be available without impacting the visitors’ experience?
- Consider the option of sub-contracting with a local garden centre/gardener to make the composting instead of self-doing it.
- Define who makes the rules and regulations based on which observations (yearly plan regarding organic waste).
- Inform staff and visitors on the functioning and value of composting to collect more biological waste.

See also: Use of fertilizers and plant protection; Recycling of biological waste; Water conservation; Waste management; Energy management.
IV. Site Characteristics 4. Site Infrastructure

IV.4.1. Historical value
The infrastructure and other tangible elements of the site are a decisive part of its cultural heritage.

Therefore, it is crucial to assess its historical value, addressing the following questions:

- Which elements of the infrastructure keep traces of the history of the site? It can be the architecture of the building, the design of the site, the traces of some special historical or cultural events/traditions, some special landmarks of the site, etc.
- How significant are these elements for the history of your destination, region or country?
- Are you in possession of reliable sources to document the historical value of these tangible elements? If not, elaborate a study on the historical development of the site infrastructure by an expert trained in garden history – to find relevant material in archives, libraries or through oral history documentation.
- Does the historical value of tangible elements support the definition of the site identity (design concept, guiding theme or distinctiveness)?
- Are adequate storage facilities provided for conserving the documents gathered, especially for original pieces?

See also: Significance of cultural history; Design concept for the site; Guiding theme; Type of historic design; Distinctiveness; Condition of site infrastructure.

IV.4.2. Condition of site infrastructure
To optimize the visitors’ experience as much as their security on site, the condition of the infrastructure needs to be examined on a regular basis.

Management recommendations regarding this indicator include the following:

- Review and list characteristics of the infrastructure of your site: buildings, roads, seats and benches, paths, bridges and all other built elements.
- Document their date of construction and/or renovation(s) undertaken.
- Assess the condition of each item with an inspection of your site, information given by the personnel and visitors feedback. All elements should be taken into consideration.
- Do not neglect in your monitoring system energy, water and waste management infrastructure.
Does the review include shared infrastructure? Monitor in the same way infrastructure surrounding your site that visitors experience on their way in or out (such as the road leading to your parking zone for instance). Use networking and lobbying to improve this type of external infrastructure.

- Define and update a calendar for checking the condition of the infrastructure, depending on your site characteristics (for each month or season).
- Update your infrastructure review after any extreme weather condition, as outdoor sites are more exposed to deterioration.

See also: Renovation of site infrastructure; Degree of need for investment in infrastructure; Design concept for the site.

---

**IV.4.3. Renovation of site infrastructure**

In order to distribute the works through time and allocate the expenses they will generate, it is of importance to pay attention to the renovations needed in your site and anticipate them.

The following recommendations should therefore be taken into account:

- Based on the observations you gathered to monitor your infrastructure, define an order of priority for the renovation needed.
- Treat as a priority infrastructure related to security and safety issues.
- To hierarchize other renovations, consider their impact on your site operations and on the visitor’s experience, as much as the expenses involved as the funding possibilities related to each project.
- In case of a historical garden: consult the park maintenance manual for advice on the development of the site infrastructure and ensure the use of adequate materials and techniques for renovations.
- Plan the signage system carefully and ensure a nice integration in the garden/open space site surrounding in terms of design.

See also: Condition of site infrastructure; Degree of need for investment in infrastructure; Design concept for the site.

---

**IV.4.4. Current use of existing facilities**

In terms of offer and strategic development, it is essential to consider the proportion of your site that is actually used. This will give you a clearer picture of the areas of growth in the future for the present condition of your site, which requires less investment than the creation of new infrastructure.

Several guiding questions can here be addressed:

- Which are the facilities available on site (buildings, kiosks, glass-roofed passageways and other sheltered areas, flat zones where additional material could be installed…)?
• Which use is currently made of each facility: visitors’ services (entrance, information point, café/restaurant, shop, etc.), site administration, maintenance area, storage zone, event activities or other?
• What is the frequency and duration of the use of each facility in terms of seasons and time of the week/day?
• Considering all these elements, what is the share of facilities used at their maximum potential over the total amount of facilities in your site? Remember to include here time variations as they can be considerable.
• Create new options for using your existing facilities in case they are totally available or underexploited.

See also: Additional use of facilities; Design concept for the site; Guiding theme; Type of historic design; Distinctiveness.

IV.4.5. Additional use of facilities
As gardens and open spaces are adaptable areas, they have the significant advantage of offering several potential uses in the same time.

Ideas for further uses should be generated and elected with the following process:
• Before developing new infrastructure projects, always review existing facilities that could be renovated or rearranged.
• Identify the facilities you want to use:
  o What are their physical characteristics?
  o Are they available for a permanent or only temporary use?
  o Is their condition good enough for new uses without consequent investment?
  o Do they contain any historic substance that need to be respected?
• Based on the facilities identification, consider new purposes of use related to:
  o Nature: collective vegetable/flower gardens, reserved areas for individual gardening, animal farm (even with ordinary animals such as ducks, hens, birds or pony's/horses), etc.
  o Food & beverage: temporary or mobile stands, kiosks or trailers fitting with the identity of the site and providing traditional sweets, snacks, drinks or other takeaways. A shop can also be considered.
  o Recreation: dance, sports areas with nets or goals at disposal, lanes for running, bicycles, rollerblades or skateboards, climbing wall or spider web climber, water activities (canoe, kayak, rowing boats), etc.
  o Relaxation: meditation zones, hammocks.
  o Creativity: tree-house building, workshops related to various topics.
  o Entertainment: mazes, game areas such as playgrounds or a giant chessboard, rental of pedal-boats/cars for children as much as for adults.
  o Rental for individuals’ events (wedding, birthday and other private celebration) and corporate events under sheltered areas/tents put up for the occasion.
  o Other temporary events: fashion shows; food or other type of market; gardening, sports or arts workshops; children theatre; open-air film
projections; night parties or celebrations; concerts or festivals; and low seasons offers.

- Remember to select only site areas that are not vulnerable and will not suffer from an irreversible degradation. Avoid all zones with an easily reachable heritage object for activities where you expect a high amount of visitors or particularly intense activities.
- All new options should not jeopardize the site’s conservation and its identity in the long run: it is necessary that they fit into your overall site strategy.

See also: Current use of existing facilities; Events; Workshops; Shop: Availability; Café/Restaurant: Availability; Design concept for the site; Guiding theme; Type of historic design; Distinctiveness; Offers during low seasons.

IV.4.6. Use of local materials
It is important to use local materials in your site to ensure that local communities benefit from your activity as much as to preserve the local identity and authenticity of your garden or open space.

Several steps should enable the internal processes to comply with this key dimension of sustainability:

- Review your site materials and gather data about their origin in order to assess the proportion of materials that come from the region over the total.
- Remember to take into consideration materials used in your shop, café/restaurant or other food and beverage facilities.
- Identify the reasons for the use of non-local materials and examine their relevance. Are they specifically needed or an equivalent can be locally produced with the same conditions and quality?
- Inspect your procurement processes:
  - Do employees in charge of the procurement integrate the requirement for local materials in their activities?
  - Are your regular suppliers aware of this obligation and do they meet this criterion in daily practice?
  - Assess the openness of these procurement processes: can businesses from the region access all the information they need to make an appropriate offer and potentially become your supplier?
- For special operations requiring the delivery and the use of extra material (renovation, new infrastructure or other):
  - Make sure that all stakeholders involved are informed about the necessity of using local materials.
  - Clearly state this requirement in the quote requests/calls for tenders communicated for the site operations to base business partnerships on this necessity as early as possible.
  - State the requirement for local materials in the contract you define with your suppliers to ensure a binding commitment.
Facilitate daily cooperation between your site and local businesses with a good communication and sharing of information. Build lasting relationships with quality business owners from the region to secure in the long run your procurement of local material.

See also: Shop: Offer of products that are regional; Employees from the region; Availability of qualified personnel in the region.

References and further information:
IV. Site Characteristics 5. Accessibility

IV.5.1. Periods of accessibility

IV.5.2. Hours of accessibility

IV.5.3. Accessibility for people with special needs

IV.5.1. Periods of accessibility

It is essential to consider the seasons of the year when the garden/open space is open for public visitation to ensure an optimal access to the site and therefore reach the highest number of potential visitors.

The following guiding questions need to be addressed regarding this topic:

- Is the site open at periods which are attractive to most potential visitors? This might be during certain months of the year and is determined by the geographical location of the site.
- Do the periods of accessibility meet visitor needs as far as possible?
- Are they reviewed on a regular basis?
- Are they clearly communicated on the website and at the entrance?
- During the closure period (the winter months for most of the gardens), could it be interesting to open at selected days for special low season events?

See also: Hours of accessibility; Offers during low seasons; Website; Socio-demographic information.

References and further information:

IV.5.2. Hours of accessibility

Similar to the periods of accessibility it is important to find out the times of the day when the garden/open space is open for public visitation.

The following guiding questions can be answered in relation to this topic:

- Is the site open at times convenient to most potential visitors?
- Do the hours of accessibility meet visitor needs as far as possible (including evenings, weekends or on public holidays)?
- Are the opening times reviewed on a regular basis?
- Are they clearly communicated on the website and at the entrance?
- Are site preservation issues taken into account? Most of the gardens or open spaces indeed close during the night to protect the site.
- Is closure time used for special maintenance operations when visitors are away in order to decrease the negative impact on the visitor experience?

See also: Periods of accessibility; Maintenance condition.
IV.5.3. Accessibility for people with special needs
People with special needs include children, parents with babies, elderly people, physically disabled people (e.g. visually impaired, with hearing difficulties, in wheelchairs) or with mental disabilities. They have special needs that have to be taken into account.

The following should therefore be provided in the garden/open space:

- Special parking areas (closest and largest),
- Outdoors walkways for people in wheelchairs or with walking difficulties,
- Ramps, lifts and extra-wide doorways and spaces,
- Handrails,
- Seating possibilities,
- Specially designed lavatory facilities,
- Interpretation material:
  - Sufficient, legible and well positioned signing for partially sighted visitors,
  - Braille letters within hand reach and at an appropriate level and angle (including for the orientation tables),
  - Aural or tactile landmarks to assist blind/partially sighted visitors,
  - Special programmes for children.

See also: Availability of sanitary facilities; Availability of facilities for children; Interpretation for people with special needs; Orientation map.

References and further information:
IV. Site Characteristics 6. Visitor Services

IV.6.1.1. Shop: Availability
IV.6.1.2. Shop: Offer of products that are regional
IV.6.1.3. Shop: Offer of products that go with the theme of the site
IV.6.1.4. Shop: Price of products
IV.6.1.5. Shop: Presentation of products
IV.6.2.1. Café/Restaurant: Availability
IV.6.2.2. Café/Restaurant: Offer of regional products
IV.6.2.3. Café/Restaurant: Quality of food
IV.6.2.4. Café/Restaurant: Price performance ratio
IV.6.3. Availability of sanitary facilities
IV.6.4. Availability of parking facilities for bikes
IV.6.5. Availability of parking facilities for vehicles
IV.6.6. Availability of lockers
IV.6.7.1. Orientation map
IV.6.7.2. Signage
IV.6.7.3. Interpretation material on site & plants
IV.6.7.4. Interpretation: Guided tours
IV.6.7.5. Interpretation for people with special needs
IV.6.8. Staff attitude towards visitors
IV.6.9. Seating possibilities
IV.6.10. Availability of facilities for children
IV.6.11. Events
IV.6.12. Educational workshops
IV.6.13. Offers during low seasons

The following indicators are considered together as they are closely interrelated:

IV.6.1.1. Shop: Availability
IV.6.1.2. Shop: Offer of products that are regional
IV.6.1.3. Shop: Offer of products that go with the theme of the site

If managed well, shops can generate sustainable additional revenue for heritage sites. They also provide visitors the opportunity to get additional information about plants and gardens and to take home a souvenir.

The following management recommendations can be suggested:

- Define a clear purchasing policy in line with the overall mission and strategy of the site with the objectives of the shop and the corresponding range of goods (Ambrose & Paine, 2012, pp. 84-87).
- Include products that come from the garden or which are produced from ingredients from the garden if possible (flowers, plants, vegetables, seeds, homemade jam, etc.).
- Stock items that move quickly rather than gathering dust on the shelves and choose items with high profit margins (Swarbrooke, 2011, p. 278).
- Emphasize regional products, with:
Links to local farmers and creative industries,
The organization of markets (if possible on a regular basis). It is a way of making the site a place for social gatherings for local people and also to get people into the garden/open space that would normally not come in.

- Make sure that items are of good quality and relate to the garden and its theme (Swarbrooke, 2011, p. 278). The design of the shop should also match the design concept for the site infrastructure.
- Think about carrier bags and other packaging being in line with the communication policy of the site and having the logo on it.

See also: Shop: Price of products; Shop: Presentation of products; Guiding theme; Design concept for the site; Socio-demographic information.

References and further information:

### IV.6.1.4. Shop: Price of products

The pricing policy is crucial to ensure that the shop contributes effectively to the attraction’s income.

Therefore, the following steps should be considered:

- Get information on the prices of equivalent goods sold in other stores.
- Ensure that the prices correspond to the level of satisfaction of the customers (including quality and value for money). There should be something in the shop to suit the taste and pocket of every market segment (Swarbrooke, 2011, p. 278).
- Define the pricing depending on:
  - What percentage mark-up on the wholesale prices of stock the shop will charge;
  - The target audiences the shop is seeking to reach;
  - What the associated overheads are;
  - What level of sales the shop needs to make to meet its operational costs and provide a net profit.
- Think about special promotions that help to draw attention to specific goods.
- Provide regular reports on the shop’s performance to the director of the site.

See also: Shop: Offer of products that are regional; Shop: Offer of products that go with the theme of the site; Shop: Presentation of products; Admission fee.

References and further information:

**IV.6.1.5. Shop: Presentation of products**

As the arrangement of the products sold in the shop can strongly impact on the customers’ willingness to pay, the shop presentation has to be considered very carefully.

Factors you need to consider regarding the layout and presentation of products in the shop include the following (Ambrose & Paine, 2012, pp. 84-87):

- The shop should be well-designed and aesthetically pleasing to support the shopping experience;
- It should be clean and tidy;
- Products should be clearly labelled and priced;
- Regular change can help to refresh what is on offer;
- High value items need special protection (e.g. expensive books, vases, etc.).
- Friendly and courteous service is needed as shops are an important point of direct personal contact with visitors: special training can be considered for staff members or volunteers.

See also: [Shop: Offer of products that are regional](#); [Shop: Offer of products that go with the theme of the site](#); [Shop: Price of products](#); [Qualification of personnel](#); [Volunteers](#).

**References and further information:**


The following indicators are considered together as they are closely interrelated:

**IV.6.2.1. Café/Restaurant: Availability**

**IV.6.2.2. Café/Restaurant: Offer of regional products**

**IV.6.2.3. Café/Restaurant: Quality of food**

**IV.6.2.4. Café/Restaurant: Price performance ratio**

The café/restaurant has nowadays an important role in the experience of a garden or open space heritage attraction. The spectrum is a wide one and leads from provision of drinks only to a restaurant with waiter service. Cafés and restaurants are a way of improving customer service at your site, generate additional income and are relevant for additional use of facilities.

Management recommendations for the site café/restaurant include the following actions (Ambrose & Paine, 2012, pp. 88-90; Swarbrooke, 2011, pp. 278-279):

- Organize the café/restaurant using the attraction’s own staff or through franchise, licensing or a trading partnership.
• Provide a welcoming atmosphere where people can enjoy their food/drinks, making sure that staff is friendly and competent (staff members as much as volunteers).
• Make sure the location is well chosen that also people can come in who do not visit the garden/open space heritage attraction,
• Create a special theme for the café/restaurant that relates to the site (its guiding theme and design concept) and is reflected in the decoration, layout and design of menus, foodstuffs and even staff dress,
• Provide cleanliness and hygiene of the facilities,
• Reduce food wastage through sensible buying, good storage and preparing the right quantities of fresh food each day,
• Emphasize local products and the use of fresh vegetables, herbs, fruits from the garden in the sense of from the garden on the table,
• Select the food offered so that it is attractive to the market segments which the attraction serves. Provide offers for vegetarians and those who are health-conscious.
• Ensure that the prices correspond to the level of satisfaction of the customers and provide good value for money – if prices for food and drinks are too high you risk that people bring their own.

See also: Additional use of facilities; Guiding theme; Design concept for the site; Socio-demographic information; Qualification of personnel; Volunteers.

References and further information:

IV.6.3. Availability of sanitary facilities
Sanitary facilities can be regarded as the ‘business card’ of any service provider. Therefore, the sheer provision of them is not enough. If they are not clean it leaves behind a bad impression though the site might be overwhelmingly beautiful.

Therefore, the following can be suggested regarding the sanitary facilities:
• Provide enough toilets, depending on the size of your site and the number of visitors. As an absolute minimum there should be two toilets for male and female with separate water basins for each for a middle-sized garden/open space, preferably four or six.
• Locate sanitary facilities where they can easily be reached,
• Provide specially designed toilets for disabled visitors,
• Provide baby-changing facilities,
• Make sure that they are cleaned on a regular basis – minimum once per day,
• Provide a list at sanitary facilities which date and time the toilets got cleaned last to make supervision visible,
• Employ extra personnel particularly during peak hours or in case of hosting big events in order to improve general hygiene and cleanliness in the toilets and to make sure that soap and toilet paper is provided
• Make sure the sanitary facilities are clearly indicated on the orientation map and the signage on site.

See also: Accessibility for people with special needs; Orientation map; Signage.

The following indicators are considered together as they are comparable.

IV.6.4. Availability of parking facilities for bikes
IV.6.5. Availability of parking facilities for vehicles

As the first and last point of contact, parking is an important element of customer satisfaction with the visit of a site, (Robbins, 2005, p. 88).

For parking facilities the following issues are important:
• Provide sufficient parking facilities especially when the garden/open space is located in a remote area and when it is hard to get there by public transport.
• Depending on the types of visitors specific parking lots should be thought of for:
  o Coaches,
  o Bikes (with lockers in parallel),
  o People with disabilities.
• Maintain the parking facilities in good condition and ensure that enough signage is provided for arriving and leaving visitors.
• Take into account security issues.
• Keep in mind that public transport is however important for attracting international visitors who do not come to the holiday destination by car.

See also: Public transport system/shuttle services; Availability of lockers; Signage; Orientation map; Accessibility for people with special needs; Safety and security system.

References and further information:

IV.6.6. Availability of lockers
The provision of lockers is regarded as an important additional service for the visitors. It can indeed add an extra element of comfort to the experience if people can leave things, which they do not want to carry around with them – especially in an outdoor attraction.
Regarding lockers the following can be suggested:

- Provide enough lockers (at least 15 to 20). The number depends on the size of the site and the space where they can be placed.
- Locate them on a central point of the attraction, usually at the entrance.
- Take into account security issues, especially for the protection of the lockers against thieves.
- Indicate the position of the lockers on orientation maps and signage.

See also: Orientation map; Signage; Safety and security system.

**IV.6.7.1. Orientation map**

Orientation maps are crucial to ensure the physical orientation of the visitor in your site and therefore guarantee an enjoyable visitor experience.

The following management recommendations can be suggested for an optimal use of the orientation map:

- Indicate on the map all important facilities (various areas and visitor services such as restaurant/café, shop, toilets, exits and parking facilities).
- Decide which orientation material is suitable for your site: tables or leaflets or a combination of both. Leaflets can be taken home by the visitors.
- Provide the orientation map under the form of a table or a billboard already at the parking space so that people find their way easily and at the entrance of the site. This gives visitors an overview of the site at one glance when they are deciding on the first direction to follow.
- Spread orientation tables around the site that clearly indicate the very location where the visitors are standing so that they can quickly and easily check where they are. This is an important aspect to give them a sense of security.
- Provide maps in Braille or three-dimensional mini-models for visually impaired people.

See also: Availability of sanitary facilities; Availability of parking facilities for bikes; Availability of parking facilities for vehicles; Signage; Accessibility for people with special needs.

References and further information:

**IV.6.7.2. Signage**

As much as orientation maps, proper signage is essential to make a site user-friendly (Swarbrooke, 2011, p. 166). Furthermore, they are important because they give visitors a sense of security when they know their way around the site.
Therefore, the following management recommendations need to be taken into account:

- Ensure proper signposting of routes to and from the attraction for both roads and footpaths alike: are visitors able to find the attraction easily?
- Provided signs, information boards as well as leaflets in order to help visitors to orientate themselves once they are arrived and also when they are inside the attraction.
- Regularly give a quick overview on the directions leading to the different highlights within the site as well as the location of the toilets, the restaurant/café, the shop, the exit(s) and the way to the parking facilities.

See also: Orientation map; Availability of parking facilities.

References and further information:

IV.6.7.3. Interpretation material on site & plants
Effective interpretation can make significant differences in the quality of the visitor experience and has therefore the potential to significantly raise visitors’ satisfaction with your site.

Management recommendations regarding interpretation include the following considerations:
- Decide how much interpretation you want to provide for visitors as too much information can overwhelm them. Can simply the fact of being at your particular site be meaningful (Hughes & Morrison-Saunders, 2005, p. 162) or some plants, species or features need further explanation?
- Decide which form of interpretation best suits your garden and the costs: leaflets, comprehensive guidebooks, plant lists, labelling of plants – or a combination of these.
- Opt for forms that do not compromise the visual appearance of the garden/open space, especially in the case of plants labelling (Mackellar Goulty 2003, p. 63).
- Ensure the following general rules for written and visual forms are adhered to:
  - Text panels/labels should be waterproof,
  - Text panels/labels should be short and telling (people get tired from reading long texts),
  - Text panels/labels should be immediately recognisable, i.e. well located,
  - Font should be easy to read and the font size should be big enough,
  - The design should be aesthetically pleasing.
- Consider the option of new interpretation material forms including videos, audio-visual shows, audio-guides and QR (quick response) codes (Bauer-Krösbacher, 2013), if visitor numbers are sufficient to guarantee cost effectiveness.
- Ensure the interpretation material meets the need of the different customer segments (for instance, special worksheet for children who do not need as much information as adults).
- Revise regularly interpretation materials.
IV.6.7.4. Interpretation: Guided tours

Providing visitors with a person who guides them in the language of their choice and interprets the site, guided tours allow for interaction and can significantly increase the visitor experience.

Quality standards for a guide include the following:

- Very thorough knowledge about the garden/open space: its heritage and plants etc.
- Flexibility. Guides can bring out different aspects of the site in response to the interests of different groups (Mackellar Goulty, 1993, p. 60).
- Good communication skills (language).
- Passion about the site. Especially if some site areas are under restoration, guided tours can be particularly interesting during the visit and result in an increase in local support and frequent return visits by those eager to see how work progresses (Mackellar Goulty, 1993, p. 60).
- Good social skills including the right attitude with respect to service, willingness to help, respect, empathy, etc. Visitors should feel free to ask questions which are personally relevant for them. Hence, such tours represent a pro-active form of communication as opposed to text based media, a passive form, where visitors must extract meaning on their own (Hughes & Morrison-Saunders, 2005).

See also: Interpretation material on site & plants; Guiding theme; Historical value; Awareness of historical value by stakeholders; Significance of cultural history; Guided tours; Socio-demographic information; Interpretation for people with special needs; Staff attitude towards visitors; Qualification of personnel.
IV.6.7.5. Interpretation for people with special needs
People with special needs include children, parents with babies, elderly people, physically disabled people (e.g. visually impaired, with hearing difficulties, in wheelchairs) or with mental disabilities.

Interpretive planners should take the needs of these people into consideration, especially regarding the following issues:

- Height of labels, text panels and graphics above ground,
- Font size,
- Contrasts of colour and tone,
- Poisonous or irritant plants need be indicated as such,
- Adequate lighting,
- Touch exhibits/handling opportunities for blind or partially sighted visitors,
- Special training for live guiding as they can be more flexible and responsive to the special needs of visitors. At the same time, consideration should also be given to the site’s policy of employing disabled people as staff or volunteers (Ambrose & Paine, 2012, pp. 51-55).
- Adapted learning programmes. For example at the Botanical Garden in Padova/Italy an itinerary for visually impaired people was developed. Also museums offer innovative programmes to cater for different segments of people with disabilities.

See also: Guided tours; Awareness of historical value by stakeholders; Accessibility for people with special needs; Volunteers; Educational workshops; Qualification of personnel.

References and further information:

IV.6.8. Staff attitude towards visitors
People who work in the garden/open space heritage site can add to the quality of the visitor experience to a great extent.
Therefore the right attitude is important which includes the following:

- Making visitors feel welcome,
- Being friendly and courteous,
- Being patient when visitors ask questions,
- Being helpful,
- Showing empathy,
- For all contact points where visitors meet members of the staff:
  - At the parking space and at the reception area,
  - During a guided tour,
  - When they stroll through the gardens and meet gardeners and maintenance staff,
  - At the café/restaurant and at the shop.

See also: Quality management system; Feedback systems for visitors; Guided tours; Qualification of personnel; Premiums & incentives.

---

**IV.6.9. Seating possibilities**

When people wander around your site they want to take a rest and sit down here and then, especially elderly people.

Regarding seating possibilities the following can be advised:

- Provide enough seating possibilities. In terms of their number it depends on the size of the garden and visitor numbers at peak time to determine an adequate number. In any case, they should not be too far away from each other.
- Position them well such as:
  - On vantage points,
  - Besides the water (if available),
  - On particularly beautiful places,
  - Romantic spots,
  - Not only in sunny areas but also shady ones.
- Choose material of the seating possibilities (usually wooden benches) that is resistant to all sorts of weather conditions.
- If possible you can offer special picnic areas with tables and benches.
- As many people, of course, simply like to sit on the grass so you need to tell them if they are allowed to do so or not.

See also: Accessibility for people with special needs; Condition of site infrastructure; Renovation of site infrastructure; Design concept for the site; Degree of need for investment in infrastructure.
### IV.6.10. Availability of facilities for children

The more an attraction is welcoming to children the more families will visit. Children also represent the visitor of the future. Therefore facilities for children should be provided and the heritage attraction should be designed with children in mind.

To welcome children the following issues should be considered:

- Are there places where they can run around and let off steam? Physical discovery and exercises are indeed more satisfying for children than mental discovery (Pierssené, 1999, p. 143).
- Is there a special children’s section?
- Is there special interpretation for children (e.g. guided tours, guidebooks, worksheets)?
- Can the grounds be visited using pushchairs and baby buggies?
- Is there a room where babies’ nappies can be changed?

See also: Additional use of facilities; Availability of sanitary facilities; Interpretation for people with special needs; Guided tours; Accessibility for people with special needs; Educational workshops.

References and further information:

### IV.6.11. Events

Events have become extremely important also for gardens and open space heritage sites as an essential additional source of income. Events are a great tool to bring people in which would otherwise not visit your site.

The following issues need to be addressed concerning events:

- How can the event be used to promote and market the site itself?
- Are there special regulations from the municipality/province for events?
- Which events can be staged that go with the overall theme of the garden (e.g. weddings, music concerts, theatre performances, dance performances, light shows, craft fairs, wine receptions, cocktail parties, barbecues, full-moon parties, open-air cinema, lectures, meetings, corporate events, gatherings etc.)?
- How many people can be hosted?
  - What is the carrying capacity of your site? It needs to be meticulously monitored for not destroying the grounds and plants - the very essence of the attraction.
  - How can the security of all people be guaranteed (security plan)?
  - Does your site have adequate support facilities such as cloakrooms, toilets and car parking?
- What are the costs of the event? It is advisable to have a specific financial plan including all staff and set-up costs.
- How much can be charged for the event? The financial plan should be used to calculate the fee which has to be charged in order to make profit.
- When will the event take place and how long should it last?
- How can the cleanliness be guaranteed after the event (waste management)?
- How and when can the event be promoted best? It needs to be promoted well in advance as people, especially during the summer months, usually have a choice of many events at their disposal.

See also: Public awareness; Market reach; Event management; Additional use of facilities; Guiding Theme; Waste management; Offers during low seasons; Availability of sanitary facilities.

References and further information:

IV.6.12. Educational workshops
Due to changing consumer demands ‘alternative’ tourism experiences, which increasingly include a number of learning aspects and combine education and entertainment, are more and more searched for (Williams, 2010). Educational workshops can contribute to these ‘alternative’ touristic experiences and increase the overall visitor experience at your site.

The following considerations should be made when implementing educational workshops as part of the services offered at your site:
- Who do I want to target? There is a difference between:
  - Local people: e.g. children, school classes, garden owners,
  - Tourists.
- What should be the maximum number of participants?
- Which types of workshops will be provided?
  - Workshops on garden themes,
  - Workshops on other topics: yoga, painting, other creative activities.
- What is the aim of the workshop? This could be for example:
  - Learning about the different plants at the site,
  - Using the plants/herbs for cooking classes,
  - Offering garden practice workshops (e.g. cutting roses),
  - Being creative in painting workshops.
- How long should the workshop last?
  - 2-3 hours,
  - Half a day,
  - A day.
- Who will conduct the workshop? Educational workshops need to be conducted by professional people who have the specialist knowledge and are trained in giving
workshops. These can be people who work for your site (guides, gardeners) or external experts who are hired for that special purpose.

- Where should the workshop be held?
- How can education be combined with entertaining aspects? (particularly for children e.g. in the form of scavenger hunts)
- How can I get feedback on the quality of the workshop?
  - Brief questionnaire at the end of the workshop or by e-mail,
  - Direct verbal feedback.

See also: Feedback systems for visitors; Additional use of facilities; Guiding Theme; Availability of facilities for children; Interpretation for people with special needs.

References and further information:

IV.6.13. Offers during low seasons
Gardens, by their very nature, have the most attractive time for visitation from spring until usually October (in continental Europe). Some garden attractions, however, have come to offer also activities during winter time. Distributing these offers over the silent winter months can make your site an interesting place to see, to learn and to enjoy. The site can be open for some announced days and reduced opening-hours only.

Possible activities/offers during low season include:
- Special events such as Christmas markets or a winter light shows,
- Plant sale like Viscum Album or Christmas trees,
- Special guided tours through the site,
- Workshops or lectures,
- Focus on glass house(s) (if available) and plants shown there as well as animals such as butterflies.
- Based on the flowering calendar, focus on special plants like Ilex or other evergreens which have their best effect while others are 'sleeping'. Some plants even bloom in winter such as Jasminum Nudiflorum.

See also: Additional use of facilities; Workshops; Events; Website.

References and further information:
Safety and security must be a major consideration of any attraction to protect visitors and staff alike. If something goes wrong the site managers can be held legally responsible for not fulfilling safety and security requirement. Therefore, any risk must be minimised (Pierssené, 1999, pp. 151-152).

Management recommendations related to this topic include the following issues:

- Always put safety and insurance considerations on the planning agenda.
- Get expert advice from the Fire Service, Ambulance Service or Health & Safety Executive.
- Limit the number of people who use the facility at any one time in line with the carrying capacity of the site, i.e. how many people can the site hold to guarantee safety for each of them.
- Ensure that all staff, whether full- or part-time, paid or voluntary, are trained and briefed about safety and first-aid procedures.
- Carefully select the location of dangerous machinery so that it does not pose a threat to visitors, particularly children, or to the operating staff.
- Lay out the site so that potential fire risks are not located next to each other or adjacent to naked lights and sources of heat.
- Ensure that fire and emergency exits are easy to find and use and that fire extinguishers are available.
- Design car parks and lockers that are protected and discourage thieves. In addition locate pay desks and safes so that employees do not have to walk about carrying large amounts of money, thus making them a target for thieves.
- Make sure that stairs and footpaths are designed and built in materials that will make it less likely that people will slip on them. Also provide hand rails alongside ramps and steps.
- Choose carefully the plants with specialist gardeners as some might be irritating or poisonous. Remember that the site will be visited also by children and people with special needs such as visually impaired people.

See also: [Availability of lockers]; [Interpretation for people with special needs]; [Events]; [Event management]; [Qualification of personnel]; [Maintenance equipment].

References and further information:
IV. Site Characteristics 7. Visitor

IV.7.1. Socio-demographic information about visitors
IV.7.2. Feedback system for visitors

IV.7.1. Socio-demographic information about visitors
Socio-demographic information provides important knowledge about your visitor (age, gender, occupation, education and residence/origin of visitors). This knowledge will help you to better target your market and understand motivations and behaviours of your visitors.

Management recommendations regarding this dimension are the following:

- Gather information through a visitor survey including the questions listed below.
  - How old are you?
  - What is your gender?
    - Male ☐
    - Female ☐
  - What is your occupation?
    - Managerial position ☐
    - Supervisor, clerical position ☐
    - Semi/un-skilled, casual worker ☐
    - Skilled manual ☐
  - What is your educational background?
    - Grade school/Primary school ☐
    - Apprenticeship/Vocational training ☐
    - Secondary/High school (without A-level/Leaving certification) ☐
    - A-level/Leaving certification ☐
    - University ☐
  - Are you accompanied by somebody?
    - No, come alone ☐
    - Partner/spouse ☐
    - Kid(s) below 14 years ☐
    - Friends ☐
    - Kid(s) above 14 years ☐
    - Other family members (parents, aunt, etc.) ☐
    - Coach/bus party ☐
    - Other organised group ☐
  - Others:...........................................
  - What is your country of origin (Country and Postal Code)?
    ............................................................
  - How often do you visit a cultural garden or open space heritage site?
    - Less than 1 time per year ☐
    - 1-2 times per year ☐
    - 3-5 times per year ☐
☐ More than 5 times per year

○ Did you visit the site before?
  ☐ Yes ☐ No

○ Which sources of information did you use when planning your visit to this garden?
  (Multiple answers possible)
  ☐ Recommendation (by friends, family)
  ☐ Radio
  ☐ TV programme
  ☐ Newspaper
  ☐ Special interest magazine
  ☐ Guide book
  ☐ Travel agency
  ☐ Tourist brochure
  ☐ Hotel/Accommodation
  ☐ Tourism Information Centre whilst on holiday
  ☐ This attraction’s website
  ☐ Other website
  ☐ Spontaneous visit while en route/no planning
  ☐ Others:…………………………

○ Please rate the overall satisfaction with this site.
  ☐ Very satisfied
  ☐ Somehow satisfied
  ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
  ☐ Somehow dissatisfied
  ☐ Very dissatisfied

○ Will you visit this garden again in future?
  ☐ Yes, definitely
  ☐ Probably yes
  ☐ Neither yes nor no
  ☐ Probably not
  ☐ Definitely not

○ Will you recommend this garden to your friends and family?
  ☐ Yes, definitely
  ☐ Probably yes
  ☐ Neither yes nor no
  ☐ Probably not
  ☐ Definitely not

- After surveys are filled in, analyse the data collected.
- Provide an overview of the key findings that can be communicated to all relevant stakeholders (as provided by Bauer-Krösbacher & Payer, 2012).
- Adapt your marketing and branding strategy based on the findings.

See also: Feedback system for visitors; Marketing & Branding.
References and further information:

IV.7.2. Feedback system for visitors

Feedback systems for visitors are an important tool for managing the quality of the visitor experience at your site and to engage with the visitor. Feedback systems should provide you with information about what visitors liked and disliked and how satisfied they were with their visit.

For the implementation of a feedback system the following steps need to be considered:

- If in place, analyse the current feedback system for visitors and the output received so far.

- Evaluate possible options of a feedback system:
  - Talking to visitors informally and asking for direct feed-back,
  - Formal face to face in-depth interviews,
  - Self-completion questionnaires at the exit of your site,
  - Online feedback and review system incorporated into the website of the site,
  - Observations at the site,
  - Focus group discussion with voluntary participants,
  - Feedback possibilities on Social Media platforms (e.g. Facebook).

- Decide on a set of questions that visitors should be asked. These can include for example:
  - Please rate your overall satisfaction with this site.
    - □ Very satisfied
    - □ Somehow satisfied
    - □ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
    - □ Somehow dissatisfied
    - □ Very dissatisfied
  - Will you visit this garden again in future?
    - □ Yes, definitely
    - □ Probably yes
    - □ Neither yes nor no
    - □ Probably not
    - □ Definitely not
  - Why/Why not? (please state):
    ..............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................
Will you recommend this garden to your friends and family?
- Yes, definitely
- Probably yes
- Neither yes nor no
- Probably not
- Definitely not

Why/Why not? (please state):

Do you have any suggestion to improve the visitor experience at our site?

- Implement the feedback system.
- Review and optimize the feedback system.

See also: Quality management system; Information & Communication Technology; Socio-demographic information.

References and further information: