



PEOPLE  
PROTECTING  
PLACES



# UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Online Toolkit

## Guide 7 Adding value through products, experiences and services



# Welcome to the UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit

Sustainable planning and management of tourism is one of the most pressing challenges concerning the future of the World Heritage Convention today and is the focus of the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme.

These 'How To' guides for World Heritage Site managers and other key stakeholders will enable a growing number of World Heritage Site communities to make positive changes to the way they pro-actively manage tourism.

## How to use this guide

These easily accessible 'How To' guides are focused on best practice approaches to sustainable economic development through tourism. The first of their kind, the 'How To' resources offer direction and guidance to managers of World Heritage tourism destinations and other stakeholders to help identify the most suitable solutions for circumstances in their local environments and aid in developing general know-how for the management of each destination.

The 'How To' guides bring best practice knowledge to the full WH community, so that site managers, tourism professionals, conservation professionals, and communities around the world understand the possibilities of sustainable tourism and what key issues have already been achieved.

These resources are a valuable asset to site managers in particular, who often lack the tools and know-how to effectively manage and maximise tourism benefits, while minimising its negative impacts.

Our series of guides have been structured as a step-by-step process for site managers.

Guides 1-4 establish the basic foundations for sustainable tourism (these are coloured yellow).

Guides 5-10 are tailored to more specific issues, which will have greater relevance at some sites than at others (these are coloured orange). We recommend that site managers explore each guide, however, as sustainable tourism is a holistic process, addressing all issues in a strategic manner.

### Strategic Foundations

Guide 1  
Understanding



Guide 2  
Strategy



Guide 3  
Governance



Guide 4  
Engagement

### Core Delivery (Only works if steps 1 to 4 are undertaken)

Guide 5  
Communication



Guide 6  
Infrastructure



Guide 7  
Value



Guide 8  
Behaviour



Guide 9  
Investment



Guide 10  
Monitoring

## Our Objective

The goal is to stimulate local solutions in communities through capacity-building in best practice. With the immense scale and variation of World Heritage Properties around the globe, coupled with scarce human and financial resources, this is now more important than ever. Site managers and other stakeholders in the tourism sector must have access to these types of innovative sustainability tools in order to develop and formulate their own successful results.

Ideally, site managers and other users will begin to navigate through this system by learning basic ideas and guidance. The system then enables the user to delve deeper into any given subject that falls in line with their local interests, needs, and aspirations.

Our objective for these guidance resources is to enable the growth and success of an entire community of World Heritage Properties, making positive changes to their local surroundings and pro-actively managing tourism in their areas. In parallel, by establishing this community, we aim to facilitate knowledge exchange of the most progressive ideas, and encourage their implementation and evolution.

The driving ethic for the 'How To' guides is to explain critically important ideas for sustainable tourism in World Heritage sites in a clear and concise manner, conveying the key knowledge and processes in a reading time of under 20 minutes per idea. Our goal is to make implementing the ideas of sustainable tourism easier to understand and put into practice for all parties involved.

## Getting started

We understand the complex range of different societies in which World Heritage sites exist, and the many challenges site managers face on a daily basis. While the intention is to encourage each site to undertake most, or at least many, of the tasks included in the guides, considering them together all at once may seem daunting and even impossible.

We have developed this tool as a source of guidance and inspiration. It is a menu of ideas from which you, the user, may choose to put into practice, helping your World Heritage site become more sustainable for its current and future visitors.

Getting to know these 'How To' guides will move your site towards better self-management and sustainability rather than demand a level of sophistication that might simply be unattainable for some World Heritage sites. We would urge all site managers to read through these resources thoroughly and begin to think about what positive steps can be taken to implement these changes. Again, we remind each user that results will differ for each site, and the circumstances of the local environment and community must always be taken into consideration.

Sustainability is a complex system to navigate. Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the information provided in the 'How To' guides, or send us your feedback. We are here to help.

## Guide 7 Adding value through products, experiences, and services

This guide will tell you how to think about developing products, services, and experiences as a key way to sustain the OUV of the site, enthuse tourists, and benefit local communities.

### Why this matters

Making tourism more sustainable often means changing the products, experiences, and services the destination offers visitors. We believe that **it is essential to offer the visitor a 'progressive alternative'** to the less sustainable options offered previously.

It is also important to **offer the host community and local businesses an enterprising and sustainable commercial vision of the future**, possibly replacing a current downward spiral towards bad choices and negative impacts.

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### 1. The four reasons why you should seek to add value to sustainable and authentic products, services, and experiences at your destination

#### Some products, services, and experiences are OUV critical.

Many World Heritage sites are 'cultural landscapes' that were created by and still sustained by traditional socio-economic systems (e.g. the Banaue Rice Terraces in Ifuago Mountains, Philippines). In these situations, **it is imperative that value is added to the products of such landscapes** so the system can be sustained and the OUV attributes preserved through its survival.

#### Some products, services, and experiences are community welfare critical.

Many communities living in or around World Heritage sites will depend on a relatively small number of products, services, and experiences to survive and feed their families. Even if their basic economic activities are not the OUV, **it is often critical** for good heritage management that **they are able to survive** and have a reasonable standard of living. People who are experiencing economic decline are more likely to make choices that can damage the natural or cultural heritage.

#### Keep in mind that 'distinctive', 'authentic', and or 'unique' sells.

People visiting some of the world's most special cultural and natural sites have a reasonable desire for products, services, and experiences they cannot get anywhere else. The perception of the quality of a destination is a serious matter, and one that can be helped in part by the products, services, or experiences it offers. Regardless of whether what is offered at the destination is important for the host community's livelihood or the OUV of the site, **it is often just good sense and good economics** that the opportunities provide good things to buy and do.

#### Diversifying the products, services, and experiences is inherently more robust and sustainable.

Many destinations have quite a narrow product range, which increases their fragility to risk. **By widening the product portfolio, you spread the risk** for the host community and businesses.

## 2. Identify the products, services, and experiences that can be or must be developed

Guide 1 (Understanding tourism) and Guide 2 (Developing your strategy) **should have helped you to identify** ways that the visitor experience and the tourism economy can be better exploited and enhanced for the good of the site, destination, and host community. **If those guides did not, go back and look over them again**, perhaps giving some additional attention to the case studies and resources supplied.

From this, you can ask: **What products, services and experiences are needed and appropriate to your destination?** Different destinations will have radically different answers to this question. For example, some may recognise that **rice or lemons might be crucial to sustaining OUV**, and therefore, find ways to add value to them (see the Cinque Terre in Italy or Ifugao Rice Terraces in the Philippines for example). **Other sites**, instead, **might want to focus on the quality of the guides** they employ, the quality of the existing accommodation, or forms of interpretation. Many sites have relatively inaccessible OUV narratives, so a combination of good guiding, good interpretation, and new forms of access can increase the value of this experience a great deal.

You also need to **control or prevent the development of inappropriate or destructive products, services, and experiences**. Some activities some tourists may wish to engage in – or which businesses may wish to offer – may simply be inappropriate or threaten the OUV of the site. **Create policy or negative publicity** to prevent them from happening.

“Invest in branding, marketing, and adding a provenance premium to key products. Affluent consumers across the world are increasingly willing to spend more on products that have a unique provenance, or story of origin. **Important products produced in a World Heritage site should be marketed and sold in such a way that consumers realise the importance of what they are buying.** However, do not expect the value of your products will be immediately obvious to consumers, or that they will automatically be willing to spend vast amounts of money on certain items.”

## 3. Add value to products, help them to secure market demand, and ideally create a premium over less sustainable products, services, and experiences

**Use the existing retail outlets for selling things.** Often opportunities for adding value are lost because people do not put together simple things, such as including the OUV critical product into the tourist information, the visitor centres, and museums. **Look for linkages** and places where this can happen and create marketplace opportunities for key products.

**Look to add new infrastructure if it helps to add value** to key products. Sometimes the future viability of production processes will require some degree of commercial modernisations. **For example**, wine production businesses will periodically need to invest in bottling machinery or new hygiene processes, but **such infrastructure will also be of great importance** to the future character of a community or potentially add to a site's OUV (See Guide 6 on Developing Tourism Infrastructure).

Look for sensitive ways to **lower the manufacturing costs of key products**. Some of the most effective World Heritage sites have invested in new technologies or mechanisation of certain processes to lower the costs of agricultural production. This can create issues around the appropriateness of interventions and whether they affect the authenticity of the site, but often **there are ways to help producers that do not undermine** the site's OUV.

**Invest in branding, marketing, and adding a provenance premium** to key products. **Affluent consumers** across the world **are increasingly willing to spend more** on products that have a unique provenance, or story of origin. Important products produced in a World Heritage site should be marketed and sold in such a way that consumers realise the importance of what they are buying (**see the case study of Vega, Norway** for a great example of value-added products). However, **do not expect the value of your products will be immediately obvious** to consumers, or that they will automatically be willing to spend vast amounts of money on certain items.

**Price products to reflect their importance in the site.** Many consumers are willing to pay a premium for certain products if they understand it is a way in which they can support the future of a globally significant heritage site. **The presentation of these products should help the consumer** to make this mental connection and an informed choice.

Work with the tourism sector to **make consuming key products, services, or experiences an essential and not-to-be-missed part** of the visitor experience. **Visitors often have a strong desire to do unique, authentic, or unusual things** when visiting a special place. They want to taste, smell, touch, feel, and hear things they do not at home. At its worst this can, of course, result in intangible cultural heritage and cultural artefacts becoming a rather false, plastic experience, clearly put on for, or taken over by, the visitor. However, **there are a great deal of places** where buying, consuming, or experiencing products is done in ways that respect a site and add value to the visitor experience.

Site managers need to **work with entrepreneurs and the community** to develop and offer products. As we set out in Guide 2, **it is essential that local people are part of identifying** and realising these opportunities. **For experiences to be authentic they need to be brought forth by the host community** in a way they feel is respectful, authentic, and beneficial to them, as well as to the visitor.

#### 4. Support entrepreneurs and the community to develop sustainable products, services, and/or experiences

**Hotels, restaurants, and shops can play a vital role** in encouraging visitors to buy key products, so **enlist their support**. This works in one of two ways:

By explaining why consumers might want to make purchases of these products, services, and experiences.

By embedding those products in what they offer guests

In this way, consuming local food or **experiencing the local culture becomes something that everyone is encouraged to do**, and most visitors understand they will have a better visitor experience if they do have the opportunity to experience a destination in this way.

#### 5. Be creative about the products, services, and experiences you can sell to raise revenue

We live in an increasingly global marketplace, so **take advantage of this global reach**. There are a growing number of affluent consumers who want to buy distinctive products with a unique provenance. **These consumers are less concerned about price and more concerned about the story behind the product**. They look for products, services, or experiences that are unique to a World Heritage site, so in order to secure a premium for products of this kind, **you may need to make the world your shop**. Use the Internet to reach out to prospective consumers and sell them not only the product, but also its story and ability to sustain a unique place and host community.

#### 6. Your 'intellectual property' (IP) may be your greatest asset; utilise it to generate revenue

**Look for opportunities to generate revenue from IP** (intellectual property). Many World Heritage sites will be globally iconic places, representing the most bio-diverse or beautiful natural sites and important examples of human genius and creativity. **There is often great commercial value for companies who associate with heritage sites**, and often sites will have intellectual property that can be commercialised to generate revenue. Museums around the world have already done amazing things in this arena. **For example**, replicating their collections into a range of marketable goods that generate funds be used to protect their collections in the future. Many World Heritage sites could do similar things and create souvenirs that people both want to buy, as well as supply funds towards their future management and protection.

Protect the intellectual property rights of the site, destination, and host community. **Ensuring that the IP is protected is critically important**. If it is not properly protected, **other people will use your ideas with no return benefit** to the local community – or worse, may seek to enforce control over it themselves through claims of usage.

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## Guide 7 Case study

### Røros Mining Town and the Circumference (Norway)

#### Baseline situation

Røros Mining Town and the Circumference is a clear case of a cultural landscape sustained by traditional socio-economic systems. In 2009 there were 21 active farms within the property and a number of redundant farms were still contributing to the preservation of the site's cultural landscape. However, **the agriculture found inside the property was considered to be more and more marginal – traditional summer grazing farms were falling into disuse and permanent closure was affecting the most marginal areas** due to different domestic and international agricultural policies. This development was seen as having major consequences for the Røros Mining Town and the Circumference cultural landscape, as well as an important cause of depopulation.

#### What did they do?

**A combination of national and local policies, funding and support schemes, together with the efforts of very proactive and united local stakeholders** and civic community, worked to promote traditional small farming and locally made products, with an shared innovative vision and strategy that included tourism as a key component.





## Strategic priorities

Increase profitability of small farming units and add value to traditional products and assets.

Promote ecological farming methods.

Support the traditional mowing of uncultivated meadows. Develop local niche, high quality products from traditional agriculture.

Facilitate the maintenance of the cultural landscape of the site and stop depopulation.

Create tourism products directly connected with local assets and identity.

## What worked?

Inside the buffer zone, government funding supported the traditional mowing of uncultivated meadows in the Sølendet nature reserve.

Domestic agricultural policies affecting the site rewarded production of local, high-quality niche products and ecological farming methods.

Farmers were very active, using traditional key raw materials (Røros cattle or Sami reindeer husbandry) to develop first-class, local specialties.

Some producers innovated with traditional recipes and combining traditional based designs with fresh packages appealing to a younger audience.

Small farmers made use of old collaborative networks – with deep roots in the area since 1800 – to achieve their new objectives.

Producers made efforts to coordinate a solid tourism offer that gave tourists the chance to live a mountain farming experience, at least during the summer season.

## What was tough?

Being mainly small, local producers, **some key activities** – such as development, financing, marketing and distribution of their products – **were key challenges**.

## How did they get buy-in?

**The strong and historically well-established cooperation spirit of local society and producers made the creation of cooperatives possible.** These allowed farmers to leave distribution and marketing efforts to their cooperative representatives. Positive government policies and innovation support helped to finance projects, enhance initiatives, and promote and distribute where the cooperatives failed. **Existing organisations, such as the Coop Norge** (approx. 900 supermarkets run by 215 cooperatives in Norway) or tourism companies such as Rica Hotels (80 hotels between Norway and Sweden), **were supportive of small local food producers**, distributing and serving regional and organic products.

## What are the results?

**Locally made food has become a badge of honour.** It created a successful niche food industry, both in the local and regional market, and strengthened Røros' brand. **Local food gastronomy has become a key part of the Røros tourism experience.** Rørosmat, a cooperative of over 20 active local food producers, has been created. It helps small-scale farmers to market their products, offering clients a wide and integrated portfolio of high-quality regional food products. **Local Food Safaris in the Røros region promoted by Destination Røros DMO** and publicised in the official Røros Tourism Guide 2014, **offers guided tours of the region's small farms** several times per month during summer months. Tourists can buy tickets online and through the tourist information office.

## What lessons can others take from this?

**The case of Røros is an example of key stakeholders understanding the fragile link between traditional economic systems and their historical landscape.** It shows how effective it can be when the local community takes advantage of established networks to achieve renewed objectives, as well as the importance of appropriate policies, frameworks, and funding support.

It is also proof of how, by mixing a region's unique traditional raw materials and identity with innovation, it is possible to create new high-quality products, economic opportunities, and tourism experiences that support traditional, local economic systems, identity, and welfare.

Finally, **it shows the potential of developing outstanding and inclusive tourism products** using the local assets and unique features that already exist.

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To read the complete toolkit visit  
[whc.unesco.org/en/tourismtoolkit](http://whc.unesco.org/en/tourismtoolkit)



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