

About ICOMOS

ICOMOS is an international non-governmental organisation of heritage professionals engaged in the conservation of places of cultural value and dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites. The bureau of ICOMOS Netherlands functions in all cases as *trait d'union*: between members and board, between national members and ICOMOS International, and between Netherlands and the world.

A holistic perspective

Protecting, preserving and maintaining monuments starts with identifying the stakeholders. One might categorise these as:

- Primary stakeholders: direct users, owners, the local community.
- Secondary stakeholders: indirect users (customers, visitors, tourists), employees and service providers.
- Tertiary stakeholders: those who (can) exert influence, such as governmental and non-governmental organisations, universities and investors.ⁱ

The current understanding of heritage is holistic and systemic: researchers and professionals know that cultural heritage is “a social and political construct encompassing all those places, artefacts and cultural expressions inherited from the past which, because they are seen to reflect and validate our identity as nations, communities, families and even individuals, are worthy of some form of respect and protection”ⁱⁱ requiring a multi-disciplinary approach.

Tourism has been one of the fastest growing industries worldwide for several years now. International tourist arrivals grew 6% in 2018, totaling 1.4 billion according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.ⁱⁱⁱ Incoming tourism to the Netherlands increased with 7% in 2018 in comparison with the previous year.

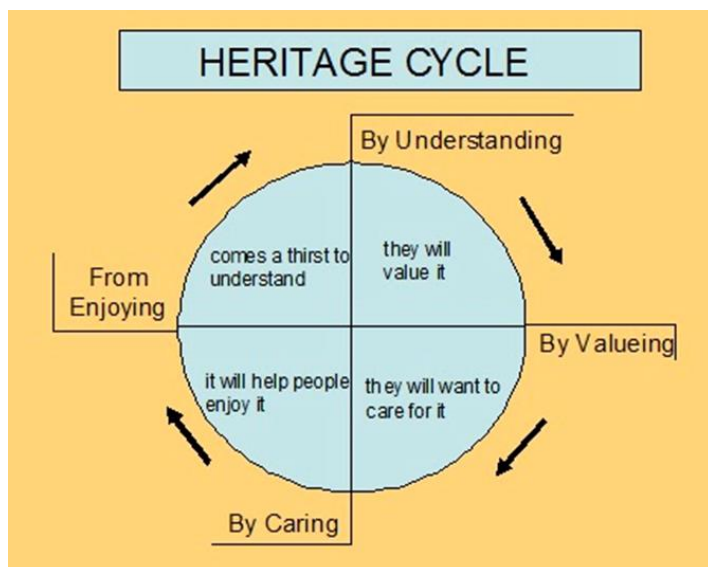
The relationship between heritage and tourism is a dynamic and multi-layered one. Appreciation of the value of heritage for tourism and tourism for heritage has resulted in a closer collaboration at an international level between, for example, UNWTO and UNESCO, and between stakeholders at a national, regional and local level, resulting in more integrated strategies incorporating all interests. (UNITWIN Chair) researchers and professionals exchange knowledge and experiences at an increasing number of conferences and forums and through a vast growing body of scientific journals and handbooks.

Relevant in this context are also:

- ICOMOS' International Cultural Tourism Charter 'Managing Tourism at Places of Heritage Significance' (1999) and its objectives.^{iv}

- The United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals by ICOMOS in its mission^v, by UNWTO and many other heritage and tourism related organisations and companies.
- Influential works such as *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre & Every Business a Stage* by economists Pine and Gilmore (1999) that recommend the engagement with visitors on “a personal and memorable way”^{vi} to create memories and therefore value for the customer. This requires working in a structured way on creating authentic, meaningful and memorable encounters the visitor enjoys and values. As monuments and sites do not have an intrinsic meaning, they need to be endowed with meaning and memory. Tourism fosters memorable experiences which in turn fuel a sense of place, the competitive identity of a destination and the appreciation of its heritage.

The conservation of places of cultural value, historic monuments and sites requires that attention is being given to *all* stakeholder relationships and the co-creation of shared value and values. This includes studying the dynamics between heritage and tourism, gathering knowledge of best practices in management and communication, and excellence in combining visitor experience development with conservation.



Source: Thurley (2005)

Thurley categorises the benefits of heritage tourism into three groups:

- **Economic benefits** include the creation of jobs, businesses, events and attractions which helps diversify the local economy and promotes the active preservation and protection of heritage.
- **Social benefits** include the promotion of preservation of local traditions, customs and culture; helping to improve community image and pride; creating enjoyable opportunities for both local residents and visitors attracted to arts, history and preservation; boosts local investment in heritage.

- **Environmental benefits** include the encouragement of a culture of preservation: local residents and visitors being mindful about their impact on the natural and built environment.^{vii}

The unprecedented growth of the industry, however, requires attention for the social, economic and environmental impacts too and has resulted in research into and development of “conscious”, “slow”, “sustainable”, “regenerative” forms of travel and tourism.

Focus theme ‘Heritage and Tourism’

In tune with ICOMOS’ policy and trends and developments described above, and following the advice of its members, ICOMOS Netherlands has chosen ‘Heritage and Tourism’ as one of its ‘focus themes’ for the coming years. In particular, the organisation will seek to optimally use the expertise within the ICOMOS Netherlands network to contribute to two interrelated fields, namely, to identify critical success factors for heritage interpretation and visitor experience development plans. These in turn will contribute to appreciation and preservation of heritage and heritage and tourism being a most fruitful combination.

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To receive updates on activities of the working group, please subscribe to the ICOMOS-NL newsletter on www.icomos.nl.

Acronyms and definitions

CBS	Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek
DMO	Destination Management and Marketing Organisation
ETC	European Travel Commission
HTHIC	Heritage, Tourism and Hospitality, International Conference
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNITWIN	The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme
UNWTO	UN World Tourism Organization

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Notes

ⁱ Adapted from Ripp (2018).

ⁱⁱ Labadi and Logan (2015): xiii.

ⁱⁱⁱ UNWTO (2019).

^{iv} ICOMOS (1999).

^v ICOMOS (2018).

^{vi} Pine and Gilmore (1998).

^{vii} Thurley (2005).