

The content is published under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 License.

Reviewed Article:

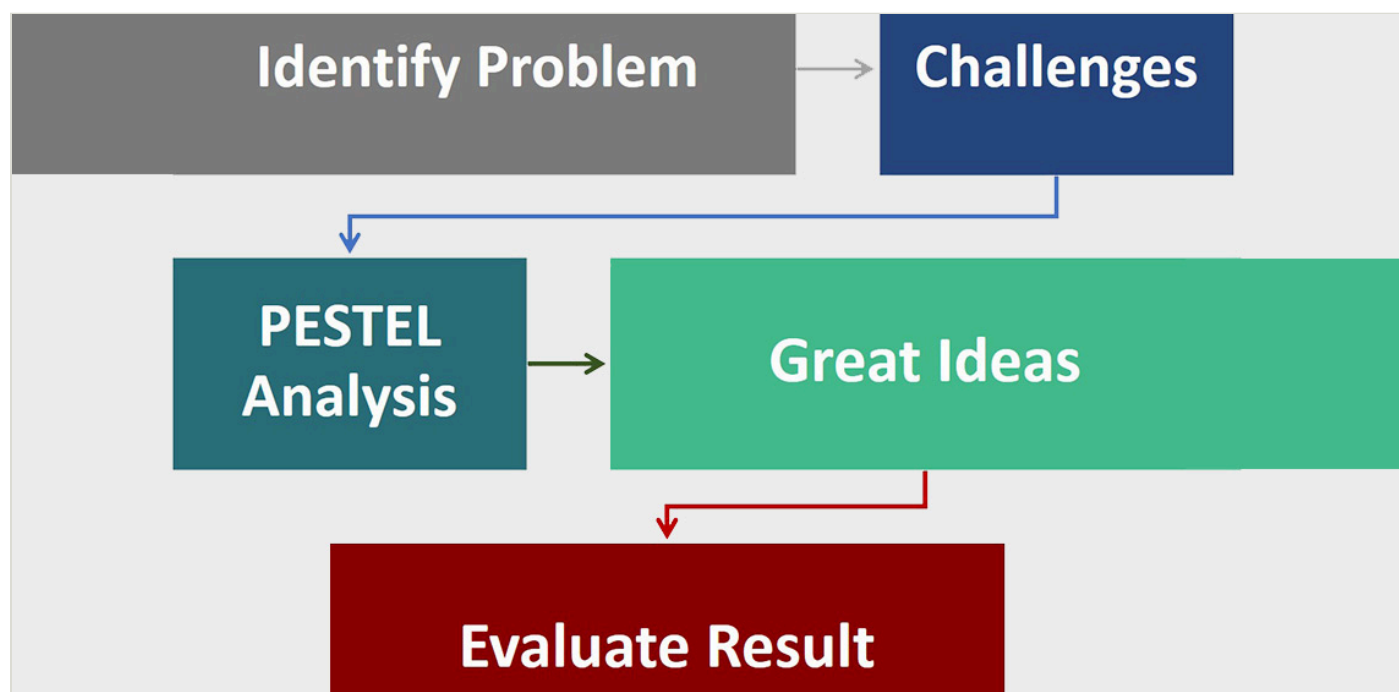
Strategy of Presenting Prehistoric Sites Like an Open-air Stand. Why and How and from a Sustainable Development Perspective

Persistent Identifier: <https://exarc.net/ark:/88735/10724>

EXARC Journal Issue 2023/4 | Publication Date: 2023-12-12

Author(s): Mona Abo Azan ¹ ✉

¹ DGAM_Sy, Damascus University, ICCROM, Syria



Archaeological excavations have revealed important sites from the prehistoric sites, with the cultural achievements of the early lithic tools of hunters-gatherers in the Palaeolithic, to the emergence of the farmer-village societies in the Neolithic, reaching on to urbanisation and the complex societies of the Chalcolithic. On the other hand, natural landscapes reveal the distribution of prehistoric sites near resources related to open-air lands or in caves. The

biggest asset of presenting prehistoric sites is in not only boosting tourism and local economy, but also diversifying cultural activities. This covers not only the preserving and restoration work on the original sites, but also a "Discovery Centre" by creating sites like "Open-air Stand" with a permanent exhibition, as well as indoor and outdoor spaces. These can be dedicated to workshops, conferences and temporary exhibitions, and allows visitors to learn and practice "Early Human Lifestyle" activities. Attracting visitors to prehistoric sites and museums complements the sites with new job opportunities via restaurants, gift shops and bookstores, in order to achieve prosperity and welfare within the partnerships. This paper comes into three directions and depends on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals "SDGs"; first, analysing the problem and challenges, second a more dynamic design of prehistoric sites, while the third is for the strategy's feasibility, refreshing and possible benchmarks.



The effective use of the strategy in cultural, social, touristic and economic feasibility have been seen via enhancement of quality research, education and intercultural communication. This ensures ethical responsiveness and social cohesion, attracts more visits to sites or museums and making the work in safeguard cultural and natural resources better and more competitive

(ICCROM, 2022, v).

Introduction

One of the heritage resources of prehistoric sites, where prehistory is a diverse and wide-ranging field of study, appears as the triple determination between geography and climate, humans and their type of social organisation. Prehistory has bequeathed us evocative monuments and landscapes from the earliest human occupation, spanning enormous environmental and technological changes, and including several human species. Thus, prehistoric sites have great meaning in both natural and cultural history.

Heritage Management exists to identify, protect and promote significant aspects of archaeological sites, monuments and buildings. *The international scope of Heritage Site Management Practices emphasises the importance of better conservation and management of cultural heritage, particularly with our world currently facing impacts from climate change, poverty, conflict and health pandemics, in order to highlight the need for multi-disciplinary and multi-skilled approaches to heritage conservation and management, including financial and legal issues. Today, the demands for better and sustainable solutions are even more paramount.*

Facing the growing threats to the archaeological heritage, has led to the setting out of priorities in heritage management and the necessity of developing appropriate management tools to improve its protection, conservation, and development (ICAHM, 1990). This requires the need to explore the characteristics and functions of heritage management with SDGs. Therefore, any plans or activities should include:

- Engagement of local communities to develop their understanding and care for their heritage;
- Develop practices, guidelines and methods to strengthen better management of heritage;
- Enable and promote sustainable and suitable options available to conserve archaeological heritage.
- Expanding and diversify the partnerships for the set goals.

The Problem Analyses

Identifying the Problem: highlighting the importance of prehistoric sites for tangible and intangible heritage, according to the finds such as faunal and botanical, artefacts, construction, and environmental and cultural features. In addition, the value of heritage-related sites goes back to the early appearance or evidence of artefacts and the modification of its tech (See Figure 1, Solve problem analyses)

The Challenges

- The rarity of specific studies in the management of prehistoric sites.
- Limited marketing of prehistoric sites and poor representation by field projects.
- An unclear meaning of prehistoric culture to most local communities.
- Poor infrastructure around prehistoric sites.

PESTEL Analysis

Political:	difficulties in setting priorities, difficulties in communication.
Economic:	low budget and lack of equipment.
Social and Cultural:	huge differences among different cultures/countries.
Technological:	limited access, need for skills.
Legal:	difficulties in communication between authorities.

The Great Ideas

Adopting heritage-related prehistoric sites as an educational resource; here the creation of publications, presentations or lectures, workshop and survey will spread the knowledge. Moreover, boosting the role of prehistoric sites for research and socio-economy benefits.

Evaluate the Results

- An acceptable result: Managing sites to apply to a wider range of tours and multiple experience opportunities for all people.

- A good result: Generating new jobs and works around the sites.
- An outstanding result: Developing and Sustaining our Heritage.

The Methodology

Emphasising the importance of prehistory to cultural heritage and its contribution to key policies such as sustainable development (Historic England, 2010, p.3) but also developing new approaches to prehistoric sites management should address the following points:

Evaluating Prehistoric Sites

The value of prehistoric sites lies in its information and the the level of access permitted by protection and safety considerations. Therefore presenting and interpreting the sites for the public will be available; *based on their research potential, integrity, rarity, threat, other special elements, and educational value. The description and evaluation of these criteria and the failure to reach agreement on their revision, vividly illustrate the complexity of decisions about conserving a representative suite of sites with future research potential* (Judge, 2008)

The information of prehistoric sites classified as¹ :

Environment:	<i>Climate. Topography. Geology. Biota; fauna and plants;</i> which make conceptions about the change of our planet.
Cultural Features:	<i>Settlement System. Community Organisation, Encampment, Dwelling, Housing;</i> which allows to the ability to follow-up the lifestyle aspect.
Anthropology:	<i>Human species. Population, Food, Health and Disease;</i> which explains the adaptation.
Economy:	<i>Food. Subsistence. Handicraft. Trade;</i> which highlights the means of source investment.
Industrial Arts:	<i>Utensils. Ornaments;</i> which highlight the conception of the level of inner mind.
Ritual:	<i>Burials. Anthropomorphic;</i> which makes clear facts about their beliefs.

There is a necessity to measure and keep the safety of the sites by: *magnitude of risk MR; apply the five sequential steps process (Establish the context, Identify, Analyse, Evaluate, Treat) and two ongoing activities (Communicate and consult, Monitor and review) of the risk management cycle. That may reduce risk to the heritage asset given a fixed set of resources* (Michalski and Pedersoli Jr., 2016, pp.17,20,158)

A more Dynamic Design of Prehistoric Sites

Here "Open-air Stand" is an institution that exhibits one or more prehistoric sites in its collections of finds and artefacts; which applied to re-erection the sites at outdoor settings,

either close to the original site or in settings of recreated landscapes of the past. Operates by exploring the early human lifestyle of people from all segments of society.

A Strategy of 'Big Data' seeks to describe the sites in general landscape, excavation or survey and the archaeological findings in order to share it with children, youths, researchers, visitors and all other people. (See Figure 2, Big data strategy)

The relationships within Strategy to Sustainable Development

This Strategy goes well with the 5Ps (People, Planet, Peace, Prosperity, Partnerships), Actions, SDGs and its targets² (See Figure 3, OCM toolkit) with common points as:

- Elevate human rights
- Create a strong team worldwide.
- Raising awareness and Building capacity.
- Exchange experiences.

Feasibility, Refreshing and Possible Benchmarks

The effective use of the strategy in cultural, social, touristic and economic feasibility have been seen via enhancement of quality research, education and intercultural communication. This ensures ethical responsiveness and social cohesion, attracts more visits to sites or museums and making the work in safeguard cultural and natural resources better and more competitive.

Digitisation and making publications, guidebooks, brochures and posters will be helpful in informing, with ongoing feedback to identify the changing requisites of the strategy; the development of responsive approaches, orientation, monitor, rate alternatives, environmental scanning and regular reports on progress. The strategy therefore will then be updated online.

Thus, the strategy will be benchmarked by UNESCO with its bodies, which have a lot of experience in education and in conserving and preserving heritage; and SAFE, which is a volunteer group, devoted to raising awareness of the world's endangered cultural heritage. In the same way, the strategy can also be benchmarked against UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organisation) and its ethical codes, principles and practices.

In this way of presenting prehistoric sites via open-air stands can help in managing the heritage within local and international levels.

Recommendations

Based on the above, the following recommendations are proposed. It should aid in enhancing the safeguarding of heritage more generally.

- Address the importance of prehistoric sites.
- Focus on community participation in the strategy.
- Establish a dedicated approach for heritage-related prehistoric sites.
- Support a clear method of cooperation with institutions or persons to coordinate measures at the national and international level.

Conclusions


The wide scope of the presenting prehistoric sites like "open-air stand" give additional value to heritage management. Not only in preserving archaeological resource, but also in its role in the wider world, that heritage-related prehistoric sites allows to reveal the past, develop the present and presage the future. Moreover, the suitability to all the environmental, cultural, ethical, social, tourist and economic fields, which reach inventively forward towards sustainability.

Acknowledgment

This paper comes under the project "ETHICAL TOURISTIC MANAGEMENT OF PREHISTORIC SITES IN SYRIA", therefore I am grateful to Dr. Amjad Alqadi, a prehistoric researcher at Geneva University, also I am so grateful for all the advices from ICCROM's team of our Collections Matter field projects. In addition, I would like to thank DGAM-Syria and Damascus University for their interest.

¹ See the topics of Peregrine and Ember, 2002.

² Have a look to ICCROM's online initiative Our Collections Matter field projects

 **Keywords** open-air museum
management
exhibition

Bibliography

Historic England, 2010. *English Heritage Thematic Research Strategies, Research Strategy for Prehistory, Consultation Draft, June 2010*. [online] Available at:

< <https://HistoricEngland.org.uk/research> > [Accessed 26 March 2023].

ICAHM, 1990. *Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage, Lausanne. ICOMOS*. pp. 1–5. [online] Available at:

< https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Charters/arch_e.pdf > [Accessed 29 April 2023].

Michalski, S. and Pedersoli Jr., J.L., 2016. *The ABC Method: a risk management approach to the preservation of cultural heritage*, [online] Available at:

< https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/risk_manual_2016-eng.pdf > [Accessed 23 November 2022] .

ICCROM, 2022. *Heritage Management Practices Voices from the Field* [online] Available at:

< https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/publications/2023-02/iccrom_en_heritage_management_practices_2022.pdf > [Accessed 23 April 2023].

ICCROM's online initiative Our Collections Matter field projects: [online] Available at:

< <https://ocm.iccrom.org/> > and < <https://www.iccrom.org/programmes/our-collections-matter> > [Accessed 28 November 2023]

Judge, C., 2008. The South Carolina Heritage Trust Program: Fifteen Years of Archaeological Site Acquisition and Management. In: F.P. McManamon, A. Stout and J.A. Barnes, eds., 2008. *Managing Archaeological Resources: Global Context, National Programs, Local Actions*. New York: Routledge. pp.195–204.

Peregrine, P.N. and Ember, M. eds., 2002. *Encyclopedia of Prehistory. Volume 8: South and Southwest Asia*. New York: Springer.

Share This Page

| Corresponding Author

Mona Abo Azan

DGAM Syria

Qasr el-Heir Street

Damascus 11_0100

Syria

[E-mail Contact](#)

| Gallery Image

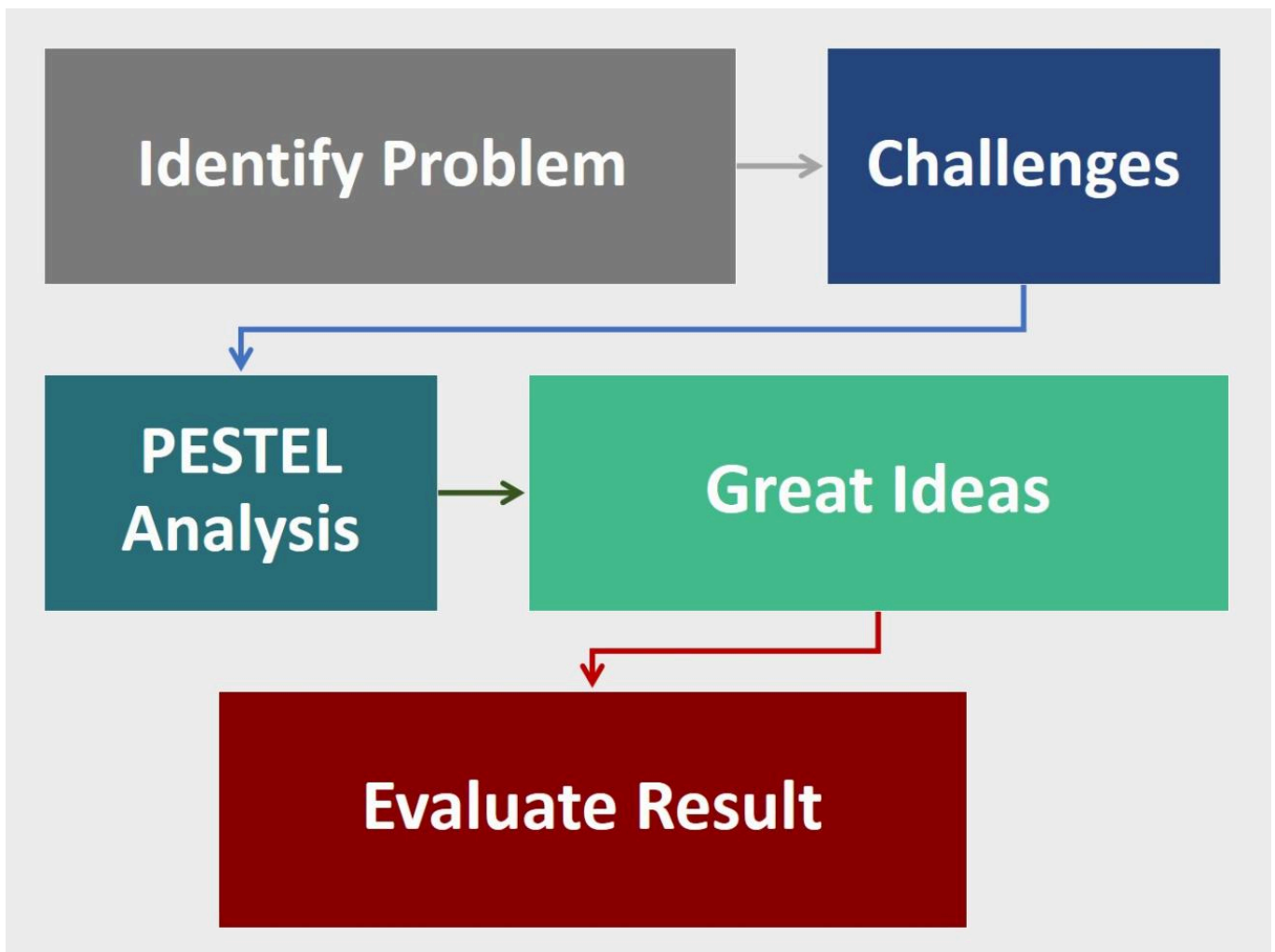


FIG 1. SOLVE PROBLEM ANALYSES. IMAGE BY MONA ABO AZAN

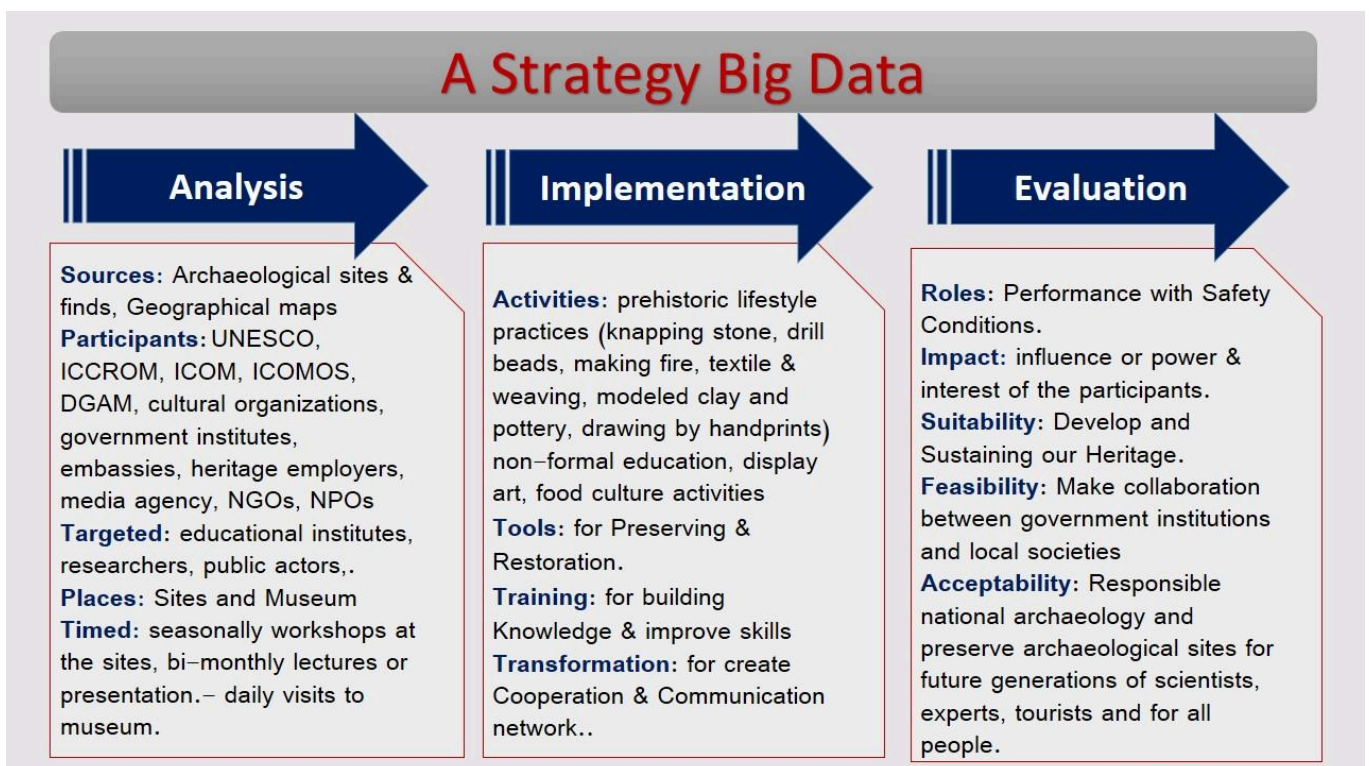


FIG 2. BIG DATA STRATEGY. IMAGE BY MONA ABO AZAN

Where would you like to start?

5Ps

PEOPLE

PLANET

PROSPERITY

PEACE

PARTNERSHIP

ACTIONS

Protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage

Learning and educational opportunities

Cultural participation/social inclusion

Sustainable tourism

Support research

Employment (recruiting, training, safety)

Energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions

Waste management and reduction

Transport forms of, energy use

Commercial activities including copyright and IP

Governance and management

Security, disaster preparedness, risk reduction

External partnerships and collaborations

SDGs

1 NO POVERTY

2 ZERO HUNGER

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

5 GENDER EQUALITY

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

13 CLIMATE ACTION

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

15 LIFE ON LAND

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

SDG Targets

GO

FIG 3. OCM TOOLKIT. SOURCE: ICCROM [HTTPS://OCM.ICCROM.ORG/](https://ocm.iccrom.org/)