

4 Defining, assessing and improving heritage management systems

More on outputs and outcomes

Outputs are usually a good measure of productivity but a poor measure of the broader performance of a management system. Outputs represent the products or services produced by the management system.

For example, a site manager may judge his performance by the number of new itineraries (outputs) offered to visitors at a property. But the new visitor itineraries may:

- be delivered late and miss the peak tourist season (timeliness),
- be unsuited to visitor interests in terms of thematic content (customer satisfaction),
- provide imprecise information about the property (accuracy),
- be too long for site wardens to supervise and visitors to complete (quantity and scope),
- be incompatible with conservation needs, concentrating visitor wear and tear excessively (quality).

These aspects, together with the number of itineraries, can be quantified to define the effective success of the process (creating new itineraries) and its outputs (the new itineraries themselves), and are known as 'indicators'. (see 4.3, Process 3: Monitoring).

But to establish the real effectiveness of an initiative, the site manager should take a step back and judge performance by:

- how the knowledge and attitudes of visitors have changed, thanks to the new visitor itineraries,
- whether this has led to the property's heritage values being better recognized and attracting support for its care.

In other words, with the new visitor itineraries has the site manager delivered those outcomes that achieve the broader objectives of the management system? Outcomes are a better measure of achievement. They might be a direct result of a heritage process or a by-product of an output of the management system.

Monitoring and assessing outputs and outcomes delivers feedback, the knowledge of those corrective measures needed to improve the management system and reach all management objectives more efficiently.

Result 1: OUTCOMES (achieving objectives)

Overview

The management system as a whole works towards achieving certain objectives, known as 'outcomes'. Outcomes are often intangible achievements that relate to heritage values or have repercussions for society (increasingly known as 'heritage benefits'). They usually emerge through the effect of outputs, the specific actions accomplished and products and services delivered by heritage processes (Result 2, see p.104).

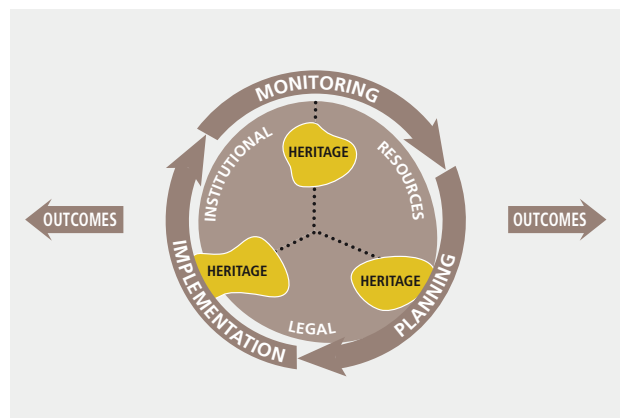


Diagram 15: Outcomes of a management system