

## 4 Defining, assessing and improving heritage management systems

The changes, products or services that make up outputs can themselves be 'measurable' results (i.e. indicators), for example, extensions to the buffer zone area, expressed in square metres. But a series of indicators (rather than one only) is usually more effective for quantifying and qualifying an output.

- a. Where possible, output indicators will be quantified in terms of:
  - Physical outputs (e.g. number of security cameras installed, number of brochures produced or distributed and number, total area and value of roofing repairs completed),
  - The volume of work (e.g. number of meetings held with local communities or the number and value of external partnerships activated),
  - Users (e.g. the annual number of visitors or rentals, audio guides used or answers given to enquiries).
- b. Output indicators may sometimes qualify the impact of an output by offering data that show statistical trends relating to:
  - The effectiveness of physical outputs, e.g. the relative lifespan of roofing repairs,
  - The quality of work done, e.g. the national diversity of partners, or the opinions of external target groups,
  - The profile of users, e.g. the distances travelled by visitors to the property.
- c. Output indicators will sometimes assess work in financial terms – actual versus planned expenditure – in order to provide financial information for the purpose of accountability to management authorities, donors and others.

### OUTPUTS FOR HERITAGE IN GENERAL

#### GOOD TIPS

- ▶ In industry and commerce, outputs are only produced (or should only be produced) because there is a 'customer' of the process who specifically wants them. Although not directly applicable to the heritage sector, this way of thinking helps to differentiate between achieving concrete results (outputs) and broader objectives (outcomes), and recalls the importance of ensuring that annual work programmes do target genuine needs.
- ▶ Indicators chosen to assess outputs should be the fewest necessary to determine success, measurable in a consistent way and, above all, 'SMART' (a popular mnemonic used to set management objectives):<sup>75</sup>
  - Specific to the product or service they are supposed to measure
  - Measurable (either quantitatively or qualitatively)
  - Attainable in terms of cost and consensus (buy-in from stakeholders)
  - Relevant to the information needs of managers
  - Time-bound – so we know when we can expect the output to be achievedIndicators will assess specific outputs but the choice of indicators for each output will be influenced by the broader outcome (or outcomes) to which the output is contributing.
- ▶ National or international control standards might offer objective criteria for qualitative indicators (management quality,<sup>76</sup> environmental). Moreover, the development of internal monitoring protocols can help to standardize approaches and maintain quality and credibility.

75. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART\\_criteria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART_criteria)

76. The ISO 9000 family of standards published by the International Organization for Standardization ([www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)), and available through national standards bodies.