

# HERIT DATA PROJECT



## SITGES, SPAIN



Best practice,  
case study

### EXISTING NEED/ISSUE

Sitges is a Mediterranean coastal destination within the province of Barcelona that attracts visitors for its beautiful beaches its hectic cultural and event agenda. This municipality and its city centre are famous for a series of events. There are several iconic sites in the city centre, which are very popular among local and external event promoters, who every year celebrate events and traditional festivities in those iconic sites. This situation, combined with Sitges' renowned nightlife, had generated some complaints by residents regarding noise, mobility restrictions and littering.

### DECISION MAKING PROCESS

In order to face this situation and to work towards sustainability in the destination, the city council embarked on measuring before taking any action in order to make data based decisions. Sitges desired to better understand the impacts of tourism in the destination in order to be able to address them.

### METHODOLOGY

The main studies conducted in order to gather data were a noise study of a defined area where most events and nightclubbing occur, a survey to understand residents' perception of tourism activities in their city and an analysis, via telecom data, on mobility patterns during the day and at night of same-day visitors and tourists. Since these studies highlighted some issues to be addressed but were not offering a holistic view of the destination, the city council took the decision to measure the carrying capacity of the area of study, around the Fragata beach. The aim of this study was to identify what needed to be addressed and recommendations on how to do so. The results, among many other key findings, showed that the residents embrace the active nightlife, event calendar and cultural activities, they embrace visitors, second home dwellers, they are proud of that. They request managing it to reach a balance.

### MEASURES TAKEN

Once the recommendations were obtained, the decision was to develop a Tourism Strategic Plan for Sitges, so that the changes identified in the carrying capacity study would have the budget and political back up needed to implement them.

Most of the changes recommended and incorporated in the strategy imply changes in governance structures of the destination. Among the key actions there is a screening of the events happening in the city in order to prevent excessive use of the same areas. Other actions concern changes in the marketing logic, working on a year-round tourism perspective, developing new products and further highlighting culture. Concerning implementing the recommendations and the strategic plan, these are taking longer, and as in any other destination, there is a significant resistance to change. However, steps are being taken particularly in the matter of the internal workflow and screening process to approve events, define when and where to host them, and decide whether to financially support them.

Entity behind this case study: Sitges City Council

HERIT DATA  
Pilot site



## ANCIENT OLYMPIA



### EXISTING NEED / ISSUE

Due to its global importance, as the birthplace of Olympic Games, Ancient Olympia represents a unique and attractive destination for visitors from all around the world. The temporal and spatial imbalance of tourism flows caused by tourism seasonality, which is essentially experienced not only at the specific destination but all over Greece, greatly affects both tourism experience and infrastructure. Each year, from June to September, Ancient Olympia is flooded with visitors entering the area via land and sea (from the nearby cruise port of Katakolo). The need to protect this UNESCO cultural heritage site and at the same time to facilitate a high-quality experience for visitors, is of the utmost importance.

### DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The phenomenon of overtourism, particularly during summer season, and its impact on natural and built environment has long been identified as an issue of concern for the city of Ancient Olympia. Apart from sporadic initiatives, there has not been much collaboration between policy makers at the local and regional level to address the issue in a holistic and long-term manner. Participation in the HERIT-DATA project was a turning-point, since it facilitated the transferring of "know-how" between destinations facing the same concerns and fostered the generation of innovative ideas about the sustainable management of visitors' flows. For the first time, during the project's implementation, overcrowding at this destination was being studied and useful indicators aiming to aid policy decision-making were being developed.

### METHODOLOGY

Given the lack of available real-time geospatial data on visitors' flows, it was inevitable to start from the beginning and build an infrastructure that would collect and analyse relevant data in a consistent way. Thus, seven sensors (counting cameras) were installed at key points within Ancient Olympia (4 cameras) and the port of Katakolo (3 cameras). Real-time data on visitors' flows (such as time spent in a particular site, number of visitors per day and time zone), together with other available and relevant secondary data (such as museum admissions and hotel occupancy), are now fed-in the snap4city platform which, in turn, displays the data through user-friendly dashboards.

### MEASURES TAKEN

Plans for the strategic use of the insights provided by the snap4city platform are under development. Tools created through this project will support current efforts in advancing the destinations' competitive advantage and its promotion as a "smart" destination, while at the same time enhance protection over the cultural and natural environment of Ancient Olympia and its surrounding area.

Entities behind this pilot site: Region of Western Greece & Local Authorities

For more information on the project, click [here](#)

