

**Recognizing and rewarding best practice in management of World Heritage properties**

**State Party:** SPAIN

**Title proposed World Heritage property:** ARCHAEOLOGICAL ENSEMBLE OF MÉRIDA. Ref: 664.

**Brief description of the property:** [you may use the Brief description provided through <http://whc.unesco.org>]

The Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida (Extremadura, Spain) has its origins in the year 25 BC, when the emperor Augustus at the end of the war against the Cantabrians, founds the Colony of Augusta Emerita. The city was designated the capital of Lusitania. The remains of the Roman city compound the most complete and representative enclosure of Hispania due to the number, diversity and well state of preservation. The remains include two bridges, one if the is considered to be the longest of Roman world (over Guadiana River), walls, an amphitheatre, a theatre, a wide circus, an extraordinary water supply system with three aqueducts, stately mansions, a temple, a triumph arch, etc.

The archaeological ensemble offers an excellent example of the old capital city of a Roman province in the Imperial Times. The inventory of the archaeological monuments of the Ensemble includes 29 elements, including most of the archaeological elements from the old Roman colony, and other times such as Prehistory with a Dolmen, or Middle Age with buildings from Visigothic and Muslim times, and three museums: the National Museum of Roman Art and the Visigothic and Prehistoric collections. Most of the elements are located inside Roman walls, but some of them are outside these walls, such as water dams, aqueducts or the medicinal Roman baths of the town of Alange.

**Please answer the questions below demonstrating the successful management and sustainable development of the World Heritage property and why it is an example of a best practice.**

| Topics for demonstrating best management practice:   | Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practice in relation to the topic:  |
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| <p>1. <b>Conservation:</b></p> <p><i>What innovative management practices or strategies are being applied in order to ensure the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property (e.g. better resource management, restoration and rehabilitation, addressing various man-made or natural threats and challenges, etc.)?</i></p> | <p>The Consortium “Monumental, Historical-Artistic and Archaeological City of Mérida” (hereinafter “the Consortium”), as managing body of the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida, assumes from 1996 its protection and ensures the conservation of its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) through a COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY, carried out by the so called COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ENSEMBLE OF MÉRIDA.</p> <p>This Management Plan includes the following characteristics:</p> <p><u>1.- Institutional Union and Collaboration.</u></p> <p>The Comprehensive Management Project covers all the actions that the different Administrations take within the Archaeological Site. It has been possible thanks to the creation of the Consortium itself, an entity which brings together all those relevant entities on Historic Heritage: The Central Administration (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport), the Regional Government (<i>Junta de Extremadura</i>), the Provincial Administration (Provincial Deputation of Badajoz) and the Local Administration (City Council of Mérida). Due to that, the Consortium acts in a coordinated way with all these institutions, what facilitates the management of heritage and speeds up the actions, because the Consortium channels the resources devoted to the Site. Before 1996, it was impossible to coordinate all the actions taken by the different relevant administrations.</p> <p><u>2.- Citizens Involvement and Awareness.</u></p> <p>The different citizen’s associations interested in Heritage take part within the Management Bodies of the Consortium through different representatives, therefore they participate in Site management. This way, the collegiate bodies of the Consortium (Advisory Board and Executive Commission) include representatives from associations which defend the heritage, constructors, architects, merchants, workers and neighbours associations. Therefore the actions taken over the Site gather the biggest possible consensus. The work carried out by the Consortium has risen the citizenship awareness over the importance of heritage and turned the Archaeological Ensemble into the main economic engine of the city. Before the creation of the Consortium, the citizens’ association were not directly represented within the management bodies of heritage.</p> |

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|  | <p>3.- <u>Comprehensive Management Environment.</u></p> <p>The Site management covers all the necessary environment of actuation in order to get the final end to preserve and improve the Archaeological Site of Mérida:</p> <p><b>Administration:</b> the Consortium assumes all the administrative competencies with regard to heritage, which affect the Archaeological Ensemble with the aim to assure its legal protection, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Authorization of Urban Works to protect the heritage,</li> <li>- and the authorization of Archaeological Interventions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Intervention:</b> the Consortium executes and/or monitors all the archaeological actions that take place within the Site: prospections, monitoring, test drillings and excavations. In these sections we may point out an action taken by the Consortium since its foundation in 1996: the creation of an archaeology service which carries out free excavations for those citizens who build up houses with no profit aim, what enables the execution over excavations and, therefore, the documentation, research and improvement of the Archaeological Ensemble.</p> <p><b>Documentation:</b> the Consortium has created its own documentation system based on three premises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Methodological unit of archaeological register.</li> <li>- Consideration of the city as a “single site”.</li> <li>- Extending the documentation to all the historical sequence.</li> </ul> <p>These three aspects are vital and are closely related. The whole city of Mérida is a single site. Therefore it is “obvious” that all the archaeologists (belonging to the Consortium or to members of private archaeology companies) shall use the same documental register. The aim is to “operate” in the subsoil in the same way with the same criteria. This way all the documentation about the Archaeological Ensemble is at the disposal of researches, enabling the knowledge about the Site and its presentation to the public.</p> <p><b>Research:</b> we shall highlight the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creation of the Archaeology Institute of Mérida in 2004, in cooperation with the Regional Government of Extremadura and the Superior Council of Scientific Research (<i>CSIC, Consejo Superior de Iniciativas Científicas</i>. Body that coordinates and manages the national research).</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This centre has three lines of research: on one hand the archaeological research of the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida; then, a regional approach focused on the Region of Extremadura and finally a national and international approach since it is a single institution which depends from the CSIC, which is exclusively devoted to archaeological science.</li> <li>- Edition and Publication of the magazine <i>Memoria. Archaeological excavations</i>, where all the reports from archaeological interventions in the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida are kept.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conservation:</b> One of the main pillars in Consortium management is to grant the conservation of the Archaeological Ensemble declared as Heritage. This task is carried out according to the European Council's Guidelines, applying the concept of <i>Integrated Conservation</i>, the group of measures aimed to assure the preservation of cultural heritage, the maintenance within the framework of a suitable environment and its use and adaptation to the needs of the society.</p> <p>The Consortium, within the management model of this urban site, carries out a series of actions aimed to achieve the before mentioned goals, within the general concept of "<b>Building a city</b>", understanding that all the monuments, archaeological remains, buildings and infrastructures "aren't in the city" but "are the city". Therefore we try not to isolate the archaeological remains using walls that could avoid seeing the remains from the street and we try to give the maximum of accessibility to be part of the urban reality of our time, getting closer to the citizens so they can feel the remains are something that belong to their daily life. It is essential that the inhabitants of Mérida feel they are the owners of the sites declared as Heritage.</p> <p>The archaeological heritage is a legacy that may be increased with the incorporation of new elements, but with the challenge to make them compatible with the development of the actual city and the preservation of the remains. In this sense, what do we do with the archaeological remains that we find along the continuous archaeological interventions? Once the excavation of the plot where a building company pretends to construct, the Consortium issues a binding report for the City Council of Mérida, indicating the treatment of these archaeological remains. These may be classified in 2 types: the conservation of the remains, covering them again, modifying, if it is necessary the foundations of the new building, or the integration inside or outside the new building compensating the owner with a better buildability according to the General Plan of Urban Distribution. However it is important to point out that for us the preservation of the structures is ALWAYS the priority, either if at the end they are visible or not, or if they are visitable or not.</p> |

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|   | <p><b>Diffusion:</b> the Consortium recovers the Historical Heritage of Mérida for the society to use and enjoy it. The citizen is the purpose of all the actions, as managers of public funds. Because of that, the Consortium, through the Department of Didactics and Diffusion, pays special attention to the social diffusion of Mérida Heritage and to projects which contribute to improve the sight of the monuments. Therefore we may highlight actions such as the issuing of city guides, monographics of monuments, interpretative panels within the visitable archaeological elements, creation of tourist tours with museological criteria. Apart from educative programs and publications, we also carry out yearly workshops for young people and adults.</p> <p><b>Training:</b> The management model of the Consortium includes training, with the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Summer courses for University students, considered to be among the most prestigious of the Peninsula. In 2012, during its 16<sup>th</sup> edition, the summer course will be carried out together with the University of Oxford.</li> <li>- Collaboration program with the SEXPE (Regional public employment institution). Allows the execution of professional training courses to qualify unemployees as specialized assistants in archaeology (singular case in Spain).</li> <li>- Heritage Workshop School: in cooperation with the City Council of Mérida, we carry out a training and employment program of archaeological heritage which gets a double aim: to carry out adding value actions on heritage and to train young unemployees as archaeology assistants.</li> </ul> <p>All these heritage management possibilities must be linked to the modern concept of heritage management which defines the role of the institutions as receivers of a heritage that they must recover and give back to the society for its use and enjoyment.</p> |
| <p>2. <b>Local People:</b></p> <p><i>What exemplary practices are you using in order to effectively address the needs of local stakeholders</i></p> | <p>The Project of Comprehensive Management carried out by the Consortium of the Monumental City of Mérida has become the economic engine of Mérida. According to the data from the City Council, the heritage means approximately 40% of the local incomes.</p> <p>The management of historical and archaeological heritage implies, firstly, several activities related to the Archaeology of the Monumental Ensemble, what means the existence of several jobs directly related to heritage. The Consortium has a total of 90 fix workers with qualification of archaeological heritage and numerous temporary employees according to financed projects.</p>   |

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| <p><i>within the management system for the property, and enable their full and active participation?</i></p> | <p>On the other hand, the archaeological heritage of Mérida becomes an essential local tourism element, which attracts about 500,000 people every year towards a city of 57,000 inhabitants, what needs the existence of a tourist service infrastructure (restaurants, hotels, tourism professionals, etc.).</p> <p>The historical heritage itself became the main reason for Mérida to be appointed as the capital city of the region in 1983, what allowed the enlargement of the city and its consolidation as a services city.</p> <p>But the main incomes source and possibility of future as jobs niche is linked (directly and indirectly) to cultural tourism, therefore the archaeological heritage must be presented with renewed, didactic and heterogeneous criteria (Classical Theatre Festival, Youth theatre, Annual celebration of Greek and Roman games for young people, recreation of daily life in Roman times (EMERITA LVDICA), -based in citizen participation-, etc.). We develop many activities along the year in order to attract visitors (this year an important exhibition of finds from excavation will take place in the National Museum of Roman Art), explaining the visitors that they should come back from time to time to visit the new finds.</p> <p>But as it is an urban site, located within a living city, entails the need of mechanisms to combine the urban development and the heritage protection.</p> <p>With this situation, the Consortium points out thanks to the following participation practices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.- Sustainable Urban Development:</b> the Consortium and the institutions that make part of it implemented a sustainable urban development model which allows the development of the city preserving and protecting the archaeological heritage. It's achieved thanks to the application of a Special Protection Plan which will be described within the following section.</li> <li><b>2.- Citizens participation:</b> as is has been explained previously, the inclusion of representatives of the different citizen groups within the Consortium ensures the participation of all the local agents in the preservation of the heritage and the OUV of the site included in the World Heritage Site List of UNESCO.</li> <li><b>3.- Economic development of the city:</b> the Project of Comprehensive Management of the Site allows the Consortium to carry out lots of actions to create and maintain direct and indirect employment (archaeology, tourism, hotels, restaurants, museums, etc.). And the raising of necessary funds to cover the financial needs of the preservation of the OUV of the Archaeological Ensemble.</li> </ol> |

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|  | <p><b>4.- Activities program to get the involvement of locals into the historical heritage preservation</b> (regardless of the age): initiatives such as the program Mecenaz (developed within the last section), the Escuela Adopta un Monumento program <i>-the School adopts a monument-</i>, (with the participation of 22 education centres, for the knowledge and protection of the assigned monument and meetings with the rest of centres included in the program), “Eméritos del Patrimonio” (cooperation with retired people in favour of heritage protection and diffusion) or the association “Emerita Antiqua” of volunteers to recreate the Roman past during the activity of Emerita Lvdica (using the Roman monuments as stage).</p>  |
| <p><b>3.</b></p> <p><b>Legal framework:</b></p> <p><i>What special measures have you taken to ensure that the legal framework for the World Heritage site is effective in maintaining the OUV of the property?</i></p> | <p>Taking into consideration a property such as the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida formed by a series of archaeological elements located in a city, we had to include two legal measures in order to allow the maintenance the OUV of the property.</p> <p><b>1.- Consortium’s Articles.</b></p> <p>About the administrative organization of heritage, we had to create a legal framework which could allow the execution of the Comprehensive Management Project based on the administrative coordination, the citizen consensus and the optimization of resources.</p> <p>And this framework became a reality thanks to the creation of the Consortium through a collaboration agreement signed by the institutions that are part of the Consortium since 1996 and the passing of its Articles (published through the Decree 10/1996, of 6<sup>th</sup> of February, in the Official Gazette of Extremadura No 18, of 13<sup>th</sup> of February and modified in 2000 (announcement of 17<sup>th</sup> of April of 2000, Official Gazette of Extremadura No 60 of 25<sup>th</sup> of May).</p> <p>Consortium’s Articles include the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating a body with own legal status (and non profit) which coordinates all the institutional activity devoted to preserve and improve the archaeological heritage of Mérida: the Consortium of the Monumental City of Mérida.</li> <li>- Attributing to the Consortium all the administrative competences with regard to archaeological heritage and the property management.</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing the body with Management board allowing the institutional and citizens' involvement within the preservation of the property.</li> <li>- Providing the Consortium with necessary economic resources for the property preservation.</li> </ul> <p><b>2.- Special Plan for Protection of the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida.</b></p> <p>About the Site preservation, in 2000 the Consortium and the institutions created a Special Protection Plan which was passed within the framework of the General Plan of Urban Distribution of Mérida.</p> <p>The Special Plan was inspired by a philosophy of coexistence among the urban development and the preservation, and the improvement of the archaeological heritage declared as Heritage. This philosophy allows that on every occasion in which we can carry out an urban action in the city, we carry it out a previous archaeological process along all the stages of the excavation, documentation, preservation, research and diffusion, ensuring the preservation of the values. It also creates different preservation and integration possibilities for the remains, but always considering constructive solutions so not to stop the growing up of the city and compensate the owners and works developers the possible lost because of the necessary heritage preservation.</p> <p>This Site management model has allowed innumerable archaeological interventions, some 100/year (some years even more) which have contributed to document, preserve, research and spread the Site, putting new elements at the disposal of citizens.</p> <p>The actuation environment of the Consortium is not just restricted to Mérida, but to the whole local territory, what means that the heritage protection covers the rural environment.</p> <p>Among other tasks, the Consortium shall protect vernacular architecture of the city; with this aim the City Council and the Consortium agreed certain levels of protection for houses.</p> <p>Since the approval of the Plan in 2000, around 2,000 archaeological interventions have been put in practice in the Site following a legal regulation that ensured legal security for citizens together with the improvement of the site World Heritage discovering new archaeological remains.</p> |

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| <b>4.</b>   | <p><b>Boundaries:</b></p> <p><i>What innovative ways of dealing with the boundaries of the property, including for management of the buffer zone do you have in place, to effectively to manage the site and protect its OUV?</i></p>              | <p>In this regard, and bearing in mind the archaeological nature of the site, the public ownership of mainly all of the elements of the Ensemble and their management by the Consortium; the boundaries of the property is reduced to the environment management of the elements or the area buffer zone. However there are not limitations to the preservation of the OUV due to the site owner.</p> <p>The adopted measures by the Consortium, as manager body of the site, are legal measures included in the Special Site Protection Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On one hand, a buffer zone or environment has been described for each of the elements that are part of the site, including the limitations of the Maps included in the before mentioned Special Protection Plan; according to the established by the National and Regional Regulations of Historical Heritage, every work pretended to be done in this zones has to be authorized by the Consortium in order to ensure the values of the site.</li> <li>- On the other hand, legal protection of all of the elements of the Site declared as Heritage has been reinforced, including it within the Catalogue of Protected Archaeological Elements, in order to ensure that every work pretended to be carried out by owners shall be aimed to preserve its values.</li> </ul> <p>Until the execution of these measures in 2000, the buffer zones or environments were not described, what avoided its protection.</p> |
| <b>5.</b>   | <p><b>Sustainable finance:</b></p> <p><i>What effective strategies have you developed and implemented to assure adequate and sustainable financial resources for implementing the management measures required to maintain the site's OUV?</i></p> | <p>In this section we highlight two measures that affect the property:</p> <p><b>1.- Creation of a manager body</b>, the Consortium of the Monumental City of Mérida, which channels and generates all the financial resources devoted to the preservation and improvement of the property, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the contribution from the institutions included in the Consortium (what means a 20% of the incomes)</li> <li>- the incomes from the economic activities: archaeology, merchandising, touristic activities, etc. (30% of incomes)</li> <li>- And the incomes from the Monumental Ensemble management (ticket offices), that are the base of the entity maintenance and means 50% of the incomes.</li> </ul> <p>With this financial model, all the incomes generated by the site since 1996 are devoted to its preservation and no other aims.</p>  |

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|   | <p><b>2.- Creation of an own private sponsorship model:</b> the so called Programa Mecenás. It is an original sponsorship way which allows the citizens and entities to take part in Mérida heritage protection and recover social spaces. The characteristics of this Programa Mecenás are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Citizens' participation.</i> The citizens may become members of this program paying a small fee and they may decide democratically, through votes, in which project to invest every year the annual budget, among three preservation and improvement proposals to carry out by the Consortium.</li> <li>- <i>Final destination of the contributions.</i> The contributions received by the citizens and companies are just devoted to the execution of the annual project for the improvement of the Site. Finally, the members of the Programa Mecenás receive information about the use done to the contributions.</li> <li>- <i>For all the citizens, companies and associations.</i> Aimed to rise social awareness about the importance and need to protect the historical and archaeological heritage, the Programa Mecenás have been designed to get the maximum participation: citizens, companies, merchants, social associations and groups, SMEs, etc.</li> </ul> <p>Thanks to the contributions from Mecenás members, several heritage spaces have been recovered: Columbarium park (with integrated Roman graves), the recovery of a monumental Roman fountain and turn into a public square, the consolidation and improvement of a part of the Milagros aqueduct (with a settling basin); the recovery of Roman baths next to San Lázaro aqueduct, the adaptation for visit of the Early Christian basilica Casa Herrera; the creation of the Documanus Hall (with remains integrated in an exhibitions and conferences hall for Mecenás members) or, the most recently musealization of public Roman baths next to Pontezuelas street which are now part of a public square.</p> |
| <p><b>6. Staffing training and development:</b></p> <p><i>What approaches and strategies have you developed and</i></p> | <p>In this section, within the framework of the Comprehensive Management Plan, the Consortium carries out the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development and Execution of Annual In-house Training Plans, for the staff of the Consortium of the Monumental City of Mérida, to improve its professional qualification in regards to heritage.</li> <li>- Development and Execution of External Training Plans, to train and qualify unemployed in different</li> </ul>   |

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| <p><i>implemented to assure that the human resources are adequate to manage the World Heritage property?</i></p>   | <p>categories of heritage: archaeologists, archaeology draftsmen and archaeology assistants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approval of a new Working Agreement on Training, which covers different measures in order to improve staff training.</li> </ul> <p>We did not have specific training before on heritage for Consortium staff. From the starting point of these plans in 2002, the Consortium plans every year an In-house Training Plan (for Consortium staff) and External Training Plan (for unemployed). As a consequence of the execution of these Plans and Agreements, everybody who provides services to the Archaeological Ensemble are dully qualified.</p>  |
| <p><b>7. Sustainable development:</b></p> <p><i>What are the effective mechanisms in place to ensure that resource use permitted in and around the World Heritage site is sustainable and does not impact negatively on OUV?</i></p> | <p>The Comprehensive Management Plan of the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida include the following actions in order to ensure that the application of the Site resources in a sustainable way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interventions and preservation actions taken within the different elements of the Ensemble: elaboration and execution of STEERING PLANS for each monument (Roman Theatre and Amphitheatre, Fortress, Diana Temple, etc.), which are executed according to the Annual Plans passed by the Consortium depending on the resources of every year.</li> <li>- About the visits, we have created, passed and implement a list of PUBLIC VISIT RULES for the monuments.</li> <li>- Finally, about the use of the monumental spaces, RULES FOR THE USE OF MONUMENTAL SPACES have been elaborated, passed and implemented.</li> </ul> <p>The STEERING PLAN ensures the preservation of Site values and plans the coherent way to take actions in favour of the monument and guarantee values preservations. Nowadays, the Consortium has steering plans for every property located within the enclosures subject to public visit, which are the most sensitive.</p> <p>The VISIT AND USE RULES FOR MONUMENTAL SPACES ensure that the use and visits to the different elements of the Archaeological Ensemble take place in a tidy way without putting the OUV at risk. These rules are applied to the Monumental Ensemble since 2001. Since its implementation, the visits and the use of the monument is carried out in a tidy way and the public counts on the necessary legal security because is aware of its rights and obligations as visitor or user of the monumental spaces.</p> |

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| <p>8. <b>Education and interpretation programmes:</b></p> <p><i>How do the education, interpretation and awareness programmes you have developed and implemented significantly enhance the understanding of OUV of the site among stakeholders?</i></p> | <p>We highlight in this section the following practices carried out by the Consortium within the framework of the Comprehensive Project and within the aspect of diffusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programa Mecenaz: This program includes the diffusion of heritage designing and executing an annual activities pan aimed to spread the OUV of the Archaeological Ensemble among the more than 1,000 members of the programme. From the beginning of this practice in 2003, the level of citizen compromise with the heritage has risen a lot, and all the members consider themselves active part of the heritage. Now, they consider themselves as owners about what they consider before as users.</li> <li>- Volunteers programme: “Eméritos del Patrimonio”. Set up in 2011, allows free citizens collaboration in different areas related with heritage, aimed to promote the understanding of the OUV of the Ensemble and the need to preserve it. This programme allows lot of people, mainly seniors to play an active role in these tasks.</li> <li>- Programme: “La Escuela Adopta un Monumento” (School Adopts a Monument). Set up in 2011, it allows students to take part and preserve the OUV. 22 education centres joined along the first year. Each centre adopts a monument to promote its knowledge and protection among the students.</li> <li>- Programme of Works in Community’s Benefit. Since 2009, the Consortium together with the Ministry of Justice, develops this programme which allows the execution of works in favour of heritage preservation by condemned people by the Court.</li> <li>- Bulletin “Foro”. Since 1996, the Consortium issues and freely distributes among the citizens this magazine to inform about the activities carried out in the Archaeological Ensemble in terms of archaeology. Thanks to this initiative we achieved to change the general idea that the citizens had about the archaeological heritage: what was considered before as a nuisance for the development of the city, now is considered to be its most important treasure.</li> </ul> |

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| 9.   | <p><b>Tourism and interpretation:</b></p> <p><i>What innovative plans have you designed and successfully implemented to ensure that visitor management does not negatively impact on the maintenance of the property's OUV?</i></p> | <p>This section has already been answered in section 7. In order to ensure the visit takes place in a tidy way, the Comprehensive Management Project carried out by the Consortium includes the following steps:</p> <p><b>1.- Steering Plan.</b></p> <p>Each element which compounds the property subjected to public visit, has a Steering Plan which includes the following aspects to this respect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improvement works and services planning in order to facilitate the public visit.</li> <li>- Tours designings for the public visit.</li> <li>- General criteria for space management (human resources, services, schedule, capacity).</li> </ul> <p><b>2.- Visit and use rules.</b></p> <p>Visit and use rules implementation ensures, as it was mentioned before, the visit to be developed in a tidy way so not to put the Site OUV at risk.</p> |
| <b>Additional comments:</b>                        |   |  |
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**Brief description/ summary of the best practice, including a statement on how it can be useful for other sites (max.600 words)**

The Consortium “Monumental, Historical-Artistic and Archaeological City of Mérida”, as managing body of the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida, assumes from 1996 its protection and ensures the conservation of its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) through a COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY, whose development can be considered an example of good practice:

The Consortium, brings together all authorities with responsibility for Historical Heritage, what facilitates the comprehensive management of the property, carrying all the actions in a coordinated and agile way. Also different citizen’s associations take part within the Consortium, thus participating in the management of the property and gather the biggest possible consensus

The comprehensive management of the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida covers all the necessary scopes of actuation in order to get the final objective to preserve and improve the Ensemble for the use and enjoyment of the society. These scopes of actuation are:

**Administration:** the Consortium assumes all the administrative competencies with regard to heritage, which affect the Archaeological Ensemble with the aim to assure its legal protection, including the Authorization of Urban Works and the authorization of Archaeological Interventions

**Intervention:** the Consortium executes and/or monitors all the archaeological actions that take place within the Ensemble. we may point out the creation of an archaeology service which carries out free excavations for those citizens who build up houses with no profit aim, what enables the execution over excavations and, therefore, the documentation, research and improvement of the Archaeological Ensemble.

**Documentation:** the Consortium has created its own documentation system based on three premises: the Consideration of the city as a “single site”, the establishment of a Methodological Unit of archaeological register and Extending the documentation to all the historical sequence. This way all the documentation about the Archaeological Ensemble is systematized and at disposal of researches, enabling the knowledge about the property and its subsequent presentation to the public.

**Research:** we shall highlight the creation of the Archaeology Institute of Mérida in 2004. This centre has three lines of research: the archaeological research of the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida; a regional approach focused on Extremadura and finally a national and international approach. It is also exemplary, the edition and publication of the magazine *Archaeological Excavations*, where all the reports from archaeological interventions in the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida are kept.

**Conservation:** the Special Plan for Protection of the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida elaborated in year 2000 by the Consortium, allow the coexistence among the urban development and the preservation and improvement of the property because previously to every urban action in the city, we carry it out the archaeological process along all the stages of the excavation, documentation, preservation, research and diffusion, ensuring the preservation of the values. It also creates different preservation and integration possibilities for the remains, but always considering constructive solutions so not to stop the growing up of the city and compensate the owners and works developers the possible lost because of the necessary heritage preservation.

Since the approval of the Plan in 2000, around 2,000 archaeological interventions (about 100 per year) have been put in practice in the site ensuring legal security for citizens together with the improvement of the World Heritage property discovering new archaeological remains.

**Training and capacity building:** since 2002, the Consortium carried out a Training Plans for Consortium staff in order to improve its professional qualification, and for external unemployed workers, thus ensuring that all workers providing services in the Archaeological Ensemble, are properly qualified.

**Diffusion and Education:** the Consortium recovers the Historical Heritage of Mérida for the society to use and enjoy it. Through the Department of Didactics and Diffusion, we elaborate city guides, monographics of monuments, interpretative panels within the visitable archaeological elements, tourist tours, newsletters, annual meetings or workshops, etc. It have also launched other initiatives for education and citizen involvement such as the programme “Mecenas”, an annual plan of activities focused to spread the OUV of the property; the Volunteers programme: “*Eméritos del Patrimonio*”, directed mainly to retired people to allow them play an active role in these tasks; the programme “The school adopts a monument” which allow students participation in the conservation of OUV; and the programme of “Works in Community’s Benefit”, which allows the execution of works in favour of heritage preservation by condemned people by the Court.

**Finance:** the property has adequate financial resources for management and maintenance of the OUV, and not rely solely on the contributions of public institutions but also on the incomes from the economic activities, from the Monumental Ensemble management (ticket offices), and the creation of a sponsorship program for businesses, citizens and groups

The comprehensive management of the property, has allow not only the preservation of its OUV, but also it has become the main economic engine of Merida, contributing 40% of city incomes, either by the number of jobs generated by the management and conservation of heritage (the Consortium has a permanent staff of 90 people and a variable number of temporary jobs depending of projects funded) as the income generated over half a million annual tourists who visit the property.

In short, a management model that can serve as a model for other properties because it is an example of comprehensive management, Institutional Collaboration and citizen participation, that is allowing the incorporation of new recovered and musealized elements with the final objective to assure the preservation of cultural heritage, the maintenance within the framework of a suitable environment and its use and adaptation to the needs of the society.

Finally, please provide us, if possible, with up to ten images of the concerned World Heritage property that can be used free of rights in UNESCO publications (commercial and/or non-commercial), and on the UNESCO website. Please provide the name of the photographer and the caption along with the images (he/she will be credited for any use of the images).

Note. All the images belongs to the The Consortium “Monumental, Historical-Artistic and Archaeological City of Mérida”



**1.- Roman bridge over Guadiana River and dike of the Arabian Fortress. Night view**



2.- Roman Circus



**3.- Roman Theatre**



4. Theatrical performances at the Roman Theatre



**5.- Roman Amphitheatre**



6.-Representation of the *Via Crucis* during the Holly Week in the Roman Amphitheatre.



**7.- Classical music concert at the Diana Temple**



8.- Diploma ceremony of the programme "The School adopt a Monument"



9.- Programme "Mecenas": presentation of the Project "Termas de Resti"



**10.- Guided tours to excavation sites and monuments**