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HERITAGE

Guidelines for COVID-19



International alliance
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in conflict areas

HERITAGE

Guidelines for COVID-19

Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen

By

Rene Teijgeler, Isber Sabrine, Yoldez Halleb,
Mahmoud Barakat and Elisabeth Korinth

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Correspondence: isber.sabrine@heritageforpeace.org
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PART 1
HERITAGE

Heritage Guidelines for COVID-19

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Introduction

This chapter sets out the general situation of the archaeological sites in the target countries of these guidelines as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will begin by describing the situation, before suggesting advice for archaeology staff responding to the crisis, with links to further resources. It is primarily aimed at staff of archaeology, or those interested in the effects of the pandemic on the archaeological sites of these countries.

Archaeological sites are exposed to a variety of threats worldwide related to both human activities and natural hazards. Even before the outbreak of COVID-19, most of the archaeological sites in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region were at risk, and lacked sufficient funding. The coronavirus has laid another burden on the archaeological field, and restricted, stopped, or even reversed previous restoration and support efforts in war-torn societies. Archaeological sites have been directly affected by the global pandemic and will continue to experience extreme disruption. These Guidelines compile information and recommendations to help those responsible for archaeological sites to ensure that their site remains secure and in a good state of preservation, and that both staff and visitors remain safe and healthy. The following sections include various ideas other sites have implemented that have proved to be successful, as well as ideas and recommendations for activities that could be undertaken while sites are closed during lockdown, and for reopening measures. They seek to cover all activities needed in order to ensure that - despite the emergency situation - management plans are in place and effective. Several organisations, listed below, have been quite active in developing measures and recommendations which they keep up to date. Given the difficulties caused by the current pandemic, it is natural that not all measures can be implemented at your site: it will depend on the structure of the site and the resources available. Therefore, choose the recommendations that fit your site best and which are possible to implement. We recognize that knowledge about COVID-19 continues to evolve, which may require you to adapt, so keep following the regular updates from professional organisations, keep your staff informed, and adjust the measures you put in place whenever it is appropriate.

Lockdown

Due to the threat to public health posed by the spread of COVID-19, many archaeological sites have been closed, and the related cultural institutions, research centres, and companies that provide services or goods for archaeological sites have had to pause their work, in most cases for an indefinite period. Upcoming events and conferences have been cancelled, postponed, or shifted to virtual platforms. Numerous sites have lost essential sources of income due to the drop in tourism, events, and field excavations and many people working on archaeological sites or in a position related to a site have lost their jobs and have been forced to look for other income opportunities. There is a danger that they will not return to their former positions and consequently the sector will lose their experience and expertise. While excavations are on hold and guards do not get paid and/or have left their jobs, the security of archaeological sites is at significant risk.

Although the closure is temporary, i.e. until COVID-19 is under control, many sectors have chosen to ask their staff to work remotely, requiring them to carry out new or different work. For many archaeologists, on the other hand, working remotely is nothing new and much can be done in the field of research while excavations are halted. However, the top priority of any archaeological site should be the health and safety of their staff and the communities they serve.

Communication

It is essential to stay in touch with those you serve: communication is key in these unprecedented times in order to maintain a connection with the public. Keeping your local community connected to your site and updated about what is going on, will help them to understand the current changes and prevent any loss of connection. Ensure your staff remains well-informed, and, ultimately, confirm an easy return to work and a smooth reopening for your site. Therefore, stay in touch with your staff on a regular basis, especially regarding their health situation. While the site remains closed, put up physical signs on the entrances of your site that communicates the reason for the closure. If you have a digital presence, you are advised to put COVID-19 resources, including updates and the local regulations, on your home page. Update all of this information regularly, but also explain why the closure is important, what it means for the community, how you are protecting your staff, and how you are planning to protect visitors if and when they can return.

Be aware that the current crisis is posing big challenges for local authorities and governments who are currently overwhelmed with work. Archaeologists will need to be involved in the development of meaningful and sufficient COVID-19 policies to ensure the protection of archaeological heritage. Staying in contact with local authorities is therefore vital. Discuss your needs and share ideas on how sites can be reopened when possible. Share contact information to give people the opportunity to contact you with questions, concerns, or even ideas. This information should be available directly at the entrance to the site, and on online platforms such as your website, tourism websites that share information about archaeological sites, and social media platforms. Make sure the information telephone number is adequately staffed. (See for more information below at *Resources Lockdown Heritage Foundation*, - *Crisis Communication for Leaders* and Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*).

Activities

The coronavirus has developed and spread differently around the world, so each country experiences the pandemic differently and reacts with different measures depending on their resources, capacity, and availability of reliable information. It is recommended that each archaeological site management team undertakes their own site assessment in order to develop specific actions that are related to the nature of the site, its size, and the way it is organized and managed. Sharing the results with others can be helpful in exchanging experiences and can help distribute important information on how strategies can be implemented and what has helped to keep costs as low as possible.

A crisis can sometimes be an opportunity and staff can still work on alternative tasks during a lockdown, such as conducting overdue maintenance and completing essential conservation tasks. It may also be a good time to provide extra training for staff, and to encourage them to diversify their responsibilities and experience by learning about and taking on essential tasks like security, site monitoring, or public relations. Switching tasks can give staff a chance to learn more about the work processes of the site, which can be very advantageous for the whole team.

In addition, while a site is closed, the management team can make new plans and design new strategies related to running the site, develop and update the site's online presence, evaluate data collected on visitor experiences and respond to feedback, develop educational material relating to your site, or even plan future excavations that need to be done. Make sure to start an awareness campaign, so that people become aware of what you are doing, how important your work is, and about the role of archaeological heritage in society. (For more information see Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools*). This is also the time where long overdue research can be finished. (For more information, see below in **Resources** Lockdown Cultural Heritage Agency - Guidelines for Building Archaeological Research). Listen to the needs of the local community (some additional suggested methods are detailed below) and get engaged in developing ways to help both them and the local authorities in their work. Even if it does not relate to heritage work, providing such support can sometimes help to strengthen bonds with the surrounding community, which will have a positive effect on their relationship with the site. Offer other possibilities like online activities to show that you are taking deliberate action to still serve. We have collated some suggested activities that can be done during lockdown for you to consider.

Online activity

Although archaeological sites are closed, online communications with community groups is still possible. Whilst heritage sites are closed as part of the coronavirus response measures, many have started to increase their online activity in order to remain in communication with their audience and offer new ways of engagement with their visitors. This can be a great opportunity to enlarge your own audience and to stay in touch with your community. Social media platforms offer virtual spaces for people to create networks around shared interests and are of great help in times of lockdown when sites must close. You could ask visitors online if they are interested in doing non-essential activities. Social media activities are easily planned and implemented. There are three main purposes that social media can be used for under the present circumstances.

Active community participation and involvement

Community should be at the heart of any activity in the heritage field, as it was *by* people that heritage was created, and it is *for* people that heritage is preserved. Social media platforms give a unique insight into what people are generally interested in, as you can study what questions people have and what content they find interesting. Engage your community in the work of your site - for example, invite them to send you questions about what they have always wanted to know. Ask them what they would like to see in the future when the site reopens. Also, include your audience in the decision-making processes, if possible, and integrate community perspectives in your work. Often, people are more likely to help when they realize they can be part of the solution. This can be done simply, by posting questions on your social media platform and asking people to respond in the comments section. Or you could create a poll with pre-determined options and invite people to participate. Listen to their views and try to incorporate them.

Knowledge dissemination

Social media platforms can help to disseminate knowledge about heritage in general and archaeology in particular, its importance, and about various aspects of safeguarding archaeological heritage. Develop content that encourages audiences to learn and explore your site from home. For example, share pictures and material from your site to show aspects that are rarely seen.

Also, share your activities during lockdown to keep the audience updated about your work, and show you are still there. Or simply share interesting articles that can inform people about your archaeological site.

Raising awareness

Take advantage of social media tools to explain to your audience why archaeological heritage is important, what threats it is currently facing and to create awareness and sensibility. Education about threats can actively change the way people will interact with archaeological heritage in the future. One way, for example, is to share pictures of threats – like decay, vandalism, or illegally dug holes – with explanations of how these directly impact the site and its surrounding community in a negative way. Start meaningful discussions with your audience on how this could be prevented and what role community and society can play in it. Use relevant hashtags in order to be visible to communities of the same interest. Hashtags like #protectheritage, #cultureunderthread, #culturalracketeering, #climateheritage or #unite4heritage are campaigns to raise awareness about the threats facing heritage worldwide; using them can help to enlarge your audience and engage in online discussions.

Forming digital partnerships and collaborations

As the main purpose of social media platforms is to create networks of shared interests, use your platforms to get in touch with other archaeological sites, people, and organisations that work in the same field to exchange information and experiences, and actively support each other. This can be done by directly contacting pages, liking their page, sharing their posts, or tagging them in your posts that might intersect with their work. Engage in online discussions and be available for people to contact you. Follow and contribute to hashtags to join important conversations and share your perspective to enrich the debate. (See Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools* to get more information on the various social media platforms and how to use them. See **Resources** [Lockdown - Digital heritage](#) for a list of helpful online sources as well as *Social Media Examiner* for guidance in social media related questions.)

Many institutions have started to upload virtual tours and videos on online platforms to enable visitors to engage with sites from home. Even if professional camera equipment or other software is limited, videos are easily made with a smartphone and can take online communities on a personal journey through a site while it is closed, letting them engage with the staff as well as the site. (See more information below at **Resources** [Lockdown - Digital Heritage](#) - Archaeological Institute of America – Virtual Tours).

Institutional cooperation

In times of global challenges, it is necessary to seek (inter-)national allies and develop collaborative networks that are able to help each other when it seems impossible to receive outside aid. For example, it is possible to start crowdfunding campaigns by engaging people in the protection of archaeological sites. As many archaeological sites are facing similar problems, it can help to network with other sites and exchange practices or jointly plan protective measures. This exchange of help and experience not only helps in the short term but can encourage and strengthen institutional cooperation at a time when the pandemic closure measures are separating people and communities. Select an archaeological institution of your choice that can be contacted for assistance and that can serve as a reliable and trustworthy partner in times of uncertainty. One possible helpful international institution might be ICCROM Sharjah in the UAE, for example. (For more details, see **Resources** [Lockdown - ICCROM Sharjah contact and Networks](#) for possible partners and groups.)

Safety

The safety and well-being of people should always be a priority. It is utterly vital to place the health and safety of staff at the forefront of decision making. Stay well-informed about their mental and physical health and support them where you can from home. In crisis management the health of staff is often overlooked. Establish health and safety protocols for staff and volunteers, and stay in touch on a regular basis while the archaeological site remains closed. (See more information on how to protect yourself and others at ***Resources Safety – WHO - Protection measures.***)

Follow local guidance for hygiene and social distancing. Share and keep your staff up to date with recent advice from your government or local authorities regarding changes to health, safety, and work practices affecting personnel, and changes to employment conditions. Do not forget that work is more than “just-a-job”; socializing on the work floor is an important part of any labour force, so consider ways for staff to socialise online, and try and consider safe ways for them to socialise at work. Digital tools can also be used for online social gatherings. (See Part III of the Guidelines - *Basic Digital Tools.*) To stay informed on the latest on the COVID-19 virus, see the updates of your national or regional authorities and at ***Resources Safety - World Health Organisation – About Covid-19 and World Health Organisation – Health Alert on WhatsApp (Arabic).***

Physical health

The most common way to contract the COVID-19 virus is, as we know, from other people. In order to stop the coronavirus from spreading, it is therefore necessary for staff (and visitors) to frequently wash their hands, clean used surfaces and equipment, and keep a social distance recommended by the World Health Organization. Make sure that soap and, if possible, antiseptic hand gel, are available for use. Wearing a face mask or using barriers or screens to separate people from each other is important in order to prevent the virus from spreading through sneezing, coughing, or strongly exhaling air. A “back-to-back” or “side-to-side” working arrangement may be recommended in offices with multiple people. Visitors and staff that do not feel well should stay at home and should not enter the heritage site. Vulnerable groups who are at higher risk, such as people with severe illnesses, compromised breathing (like asthma), or who are over the age of 60 should remain at home in order to lower their risk of infection. (To stay informed about the latest updates regarding the COVID-19 virus, see updates from international, national, or regional authorities at ***Resources Safety - World Health Organisation – About COVID-19 and Health Alert on WhatsApp (Arabic).*** Several institutions have offered guidance on safety measures at working places including archaeological sites. See ***Resources Safety*** below for helpful sources. For more on masks see ***Resources Safety - Aga Khan Development Network - COVID-19 information - Information on homemade and disposable masks and Science Advances (07 Aug 2020) - Low-cost measurement of facemask efficacy for filtering expelled droplets during speech.***

Transmission through surfaces is less likely than person-to-person contact in an enclosed space for a long period of time, which is believed to be the primary way to catch the coronavirus. However, the possibility still exists that the virus could be spread by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your nose, mouth or eyes. The longest survival of the coronavirus found so far has been three days on glass, steel and plastic (e.g. plastic-based materials such as CD’s and DVD’s). It survives for shorter periods on porous surfaces like cardboard, textiles, and wood. On cardboard, it survives 24 hours and on copper surfaces for just 4 hours. Generally, the harder the surface, the longer the life of the coronavirus.

The influences of the environment on the life span of the COVID-19 virus have not yet been researched well enough. Presumptive evidence shows that, in general, cool temperatures (4-6°C) prolong viral persistence while very warm temperatures (60° C and above) result in rapid loss of virulence. Low relative humidity (20-30%), also prolongs virulence, but may reduce surface to surface transfer. Dust raised in such dry conditions can be problematic as it re-aerosolizes attached viruses. As elsewhere (such as shopping) these days the advice is: if you wash your hands several times a day, particularly after handling objects that others could have touched, the risk of transmission is significantly lower from an already low risk of transmission. It is therefore vital, to keep surfaces clean and sanitize tools after they have been used. It is consent to not touch archaeological objects without gloves and even more essential in times of a pandemic.

Mental health

Stress and anxiety are normal reactions in unfolding crises that severely affect the way people work and live. Violent conflicts and political instability have already claimed much of people's resilience. Daily routines are broken, shopping is difficult, children must stay in cramped rooms, and discharge or salary cuts leave families with less income or, in some cases, none at all. Regular health services, including mental health care, have often stopped and people are not treated. Mental disorders from before COVID-19 are now getting worse. Clearly, the badly needed psychosocial support is seriously lacking. It is therefore vital to pay attention to one's own health and the health of others. The Reference Center for Psychological Support of the Red Cross recommends the following —To Do's:

- Fact-check any news that is being consumed and self-educate with accurate information
- Maintain a daily routine to remain structured
- Acknowledge your own fears and feelings of helplessness without denying what is going on
- Actively stay in touch with friends and family virtually in order to maintain strong relationships; seek help from others and offer them help if they need it
- Take care of your own physical and mental health

(See more at ***Resources** Safety – World Health Organisation – Resources on mental health and The Reference Center for Psychological Support of the Red Cross*).

Security

Threats

The situations of archaeological sites differ in each country but - in times of violent conflict - it is clear that they are all extremely weakened as a result of previous neglect, underfunding, damages, and other pressures. In observing press releases since the pandemic began, and from talking to various actors in the region, several factors have been identified as key threats to archaeological sites during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are mostly related to a lack of physical protection measures and a lack of physical presence on the sites. In addition, the widespread increasing economic difficulties faced by many people, combined with the opportunities presented by the site closures and reduction in site security, has resulted in an increase in illegal activities threatening cultural heritage such as vandalism, burglary, looting, and illicit trafficking.

A variety of factors impact the protection of sites. In order to understand the various threats, their context, and their impact on sites, the example of World Heritage sites can give clarity. The World Heritage Center has implemented one of the most comprehensive monitoring systems of any international heritage convention,

collecting and analysing data on the conservation of World Heritage sites properties since 1979. Data analyses from 2018 identified a variety of peacetime and conflict factors that represent major threats to heritage sites including:

- building activities and development
- further development of transport infrastructure and utilities
- pollution, resource extraction
- war related destruction
- illegal activities such as looting, burglary and illegal trafficking
- climate change
- natural disasters or other sudden natural events
- cultural use of heritage (impact of tourism, local community use)
- lack of efficient management.

There is no disputing that the COVID-19 pandemic has already caused a great shift in the extent to which these factors impact heritage sites in the MENA countries, and that the most remote sites will be hit the hardest. However, whilst these very specific threats to heritage might be diminished by the closure of sites and tourist companies, the lack of visitors simultaneously results in a dramatic drop in the financial resources through tourism that is so vital for the survival and protection of these cherished places.

Vandalism and destruction

The lack of protection at sites leaves properties exposed to deliberate destruction or abuse. The pandemic lockdown represents a big challenge for archaeological sites with regards to their security. Several countries in the MENA region have reported an increase in vandalism on archaeological sites as many of them are not protected by a fence or security guards to restrict and ensure proper usage of the space; they are simply open for people to enter the property.

Burglary and looting

While the actual loss of heritage during the pandemic will only be assessable when the situation will be back to normal, it is expected, that there has been an increase in burglary and looting at closed archaeological sites around the globe. In most cases, looters and thieves took advantage of distracted authorities, and the lack of security guards and antiquities police, to break into buildings; such attempts are thought to be strategically planned. However, in the face of the economic fallout and increased social instability resulting from the pandemic, many people are forced (once again) to turn to subsistence looting. However, the involvement of organised crime in looting and burglary, and the ensuing illicit trafficking of cultural objects remains a serious consequence.

In April 2020, cultural ministers from different countries expressed their concern to UNESCO on the lack of protection of archaeological sites around the globe.¹ Limited or no surveillance measures at all have left most archaeological sites in the MENA region unprotected and open for looters. This includes the closure of the World Heritage sites in the 167 countries that have properties on the World Heritage List.² While archaeological sites within or near cities usually receive more attention and protective measures, sites in remote areas are heavily affected by looting. While there have been many individual reports of the destruction of sites, the extent of the loss remains unknown due to the lack of any systematic monitoring during this unprecedented crisis. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that illegally excavated objects are harder to trace as they have never been documented or registered.

Illicit Trade

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, several organisations - such as the ATHAR Project, who monitor the sale of artefacts via online platforms such as Facebook groups - have reported an increase of activities. The ATHAR Project (Antiquities Trafficking and Heritage Anthropology Research Project) is carrying out investigative studies led by a group of heritage experts on organized crime with a focus on illegal trafficking of cultural property and its linkage to financing terrorism. In 2019, a research study by the project revealed over ninety Facebook groups in which a total of approximately 1.9 million members shared tips for looting ancient sites and sought to sell their findings. Currently, the organisation is monitoring 120 Facebook groups: the largest group has over 300,000 members and a daily post rate of around 175 posts. In many cases, the sellers advertised their stolen goods with videos showing footage of the actual looting in order to prove the authenticity of their wares. Responding to these reports, as part of a new set of standards, Facebook and Instagram changed its policy in June 2020 to ban the selling of historical artefacts and attempts to encourage trade on their platforms.³ However, many have expressed concerns that these regulations will not be followed due to a lack of enforcement.

Overall, COVID-19 has had both positive and negative effects on illicit trade. The closing of borders and forced lockdown initially hampered transnational trafficking and increased the chance that traffickers would be caught or forced to pause transporting cultural objects over borders, especially at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. However, the lockdown has forced archaeological sites to close, often leaving them unprotected and open for looters. At the same time, insecure job situations are increasingly encouraging people to turn to crime to generate income for their families. Criminal groups have now adapted to the new pandemic regulations. The Alliance to Counter Crime Online and the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, for example, are currently examining the relationship between the health emergency and the illicit trafficking of cultural property after reports of health emergency workers who were caught trafficking objects. In some cases, police found fake money, weapons, and drugs alongside stolen antiquities. The findings, yet again, confirm the interlinkages between antiquities trafficking and other types of organized crime. Criminal groups may be strategically targeting health workers to take advantage of their ability to move freely. (See more at [*Resources Security*](#) - The ATHAR Project and Alliance to Counter Crime Online and Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime)

Preventive measures

To provide the best protection, it might be helpful for staff managing a site to start with a general site security assessment to identify the site's vulnerabilities, and the potential threats to it. (For more information about site security assessments, see below at [*Resources Security*](#) - *ASIS Foundation Research Council*, - CRIPS Report, which presents a helpful case study and introduces different methodologies as well as possible actions that can be taken). As most archaeological sites face similar challenges, it might be worth working in closer cooperation within a network of sites in which challenges, suggested practical solutions, and help can be exchanged.

However, the most effective strategy to hinder looting on a site is to obstruct or prevent people from entering the site, and/or to counteract the reason why people loot or vandalise. As the former is easier, it is recommended to evaluate possible ways in which archaeological sites can remain guarded and protected during a lockdown. The first step is to seek ways to implement a physical presence on the site, either by ensuring there are civilian guards,

or requesting that police, or even military forces, to protect the site. The assignment of human resource needs, of course, should be assessed in close cooperation with local authorities and health organisations following public regulations on work and travel during this time, and organized in line with governmental regulations on COVID-19. As humanitarian aid is redirected towards fighting COVID-19, institutions should research other possibilities to pay guardians on the site. A few organisations have established emergency funds in order to provide financial help for heritage preservation workers and institutions struggling under the pandemic. (For funding possibilities, see below at ***Resources Security - Funding possibilities.***)

If physical surveillance is not possible, you could resort to closed-circuit television (CCTV) or other electronic monitoring systems. Bear in mind that during the coronavirus crisis, it will probably be difficult to have it installed if it isn't already; besides, it is very costly. However, such systems may deter criminals, or allow you to catch them and recover your collections if it records them. In addition, it may allow you to detect whether someone has placed your facility under surveillance to check your security – however you will need to either monitor your premises in person, or check your CCTV feed regularly to see if you are being watched. Bear in mind, once you notice an irregularity, you need to have a follow-up plan in place – who do you warn? You should work with the emergency response services to develop procedures to handle such situations, and ensure all staff is aware of them. Nevertheless, even with electronic or in-person site-monitoring, some risks will remain, such as vandalism, burglary, lack of maintenance, and the standard threats to collections.

While the site is still closed to visitors, take the time to undertake security measures such as fixing fences, and checking doors, windows, gates and alarm systems. If the site is not directly protected from the outside, take this time to set up clear boundaries to define the protected area. If necessary, build a fence around the site to clearly separate the archaeological area from other public spaces. (For more information, see below at ***Resource Security - ASIS Foundation Research - CRIPS Report and WikiHow - How to Protect and Preserve Archaeological Sites.***)

Lastly, while the site is closed due to the pandemic measures, make sure that objects and working material, such as tools for archaeological excavations, are stored in a safe place to limit opportunities for theft. It might be helpful to transport material from unprotected excavation houses to a space that is more secure until excavations take place again, as excavation houses are often targeted in conflicts and times of insecurity.

A summary of measures to take for the exterior include a regular check on:

- close all external doors, windows, blinds and shutters and make sure they remain closed and secured
- check gutters and drains for potential blockages
- store sensitive materials and equipment, and ensure safe storage is maintained (including checks on flammable materials, power stations, and external equipment for air conditioning)
- check exterior devices for fire and security alarm systems
- clear debris, dust bins and food stuffs, and clean the gardens, so as not to attract rodents and other pest hazards
- demonstrate that the building is being monitored by maintaining walkways and landscaping

For the interior, you should check the following:

- check the window coverings (for example, are blinds down/closed or up/open)
- deploy glass security film which will slow down the perpetrators
- ensure lights are turned off except for security lighting
- ensure power is turned off where appropriate
- remove all fresh food from the premises - empty refrigerators and leave the door open;
- check the climate control, including remote controls, temperature and relative humidity
- remove high-risk items from display, and make sure any items on loan, returned items and valuable items are placed in (and remain in) secure storage
- secure valuables (cash boxes, computer screens, laptops and other electronic equipment)
- secure important sensitive documents and information
- test fire and security alarms
- ensure fire doors are closed
- make sure flammable materials are stored in fire protective storage
- cover collection items that may be vulnerable to light damage
- cover objects on open display/storage with dust sheets
- make sure water taps are turned off and dehumidifiers are turned off and emptied
- check for mould infestations and rodents and check pest traps
- clear debris and empty dust bins
- and as you leave, make sure doors and windows are closed correctly (that is, are they locked, closed against dust, or unlocked, ajar or open)

In all instances, it is of the utmost importance to check the procedures both before leaving the premises, especially in case of emergency. Additionally, make sure to establish a means and process to record and share the results of security checks between relevant colleagues.

Proactive measures for return of stolen objects

Despite institutional attempts to keep properties guarded and secure, in the midst of chaos, objects might still be stolen. It is therefore important to strategically plan for this eventuality in order to increase the chance that stolen objects might be traced back to their origin.

To do this, the object either needs to be marked with a permanent sign or recorded in such a way to demonstrate proof of ownership.

Visible marks on objects are often scratched out or washed away. Recognising this, the SmartWater Foundation, in close cooperation with Iraq, the University of Reading and RASHID International (Research, Assessment and Safeguarding of the Heritage of Iraq in Danger), has developed an innovative way to mark heritage objects with a stable invisible colour ink, called SmartWater. The liquid can be applied to inorganic materials, such as glass, stone, metal, pottery. The result of this marking method is still under discussion (See more at [**Resources Security** - SmartWater Foundation](#)).

However, labelling objects is not the only measure that should be undertaken. All objects owned by a site should be clearly documented (with photos) and labelled, and all the information should be stored in inventories of the objects(see Object ID for standards), ideally with backup copies stored off site. As well as having significant day-to-day management benefits, it allows collection managers to see quickly what is missing in the event of a theft. Furthermore, many laws relating to the restitution of objects from foreign countries require the objects to be inventoried so that an institution can prove ownership before objects are returned, such as the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), which is signed by 140 states.⁴ (See more at [**Resources Security** – Object-ID](#)).

Monitoring

If physical surveillance is not possible you could resort to closed-circuit television or other electronic monitoring system. However, not all sites will have acquired such a system and during the Corona crisis it will probably be difficult to have it installed; besides it is very costly.

Information is everything. Even if sufficient protection measures could not be implemented, it is vital to gather as much information as possible on what is happening on the sites and document any activity that is recognized. If staff is shifting their workplace to their homes, this might be a chance to shift tasks to online monitoring measures in order to learn more about the systems of online trade markets. While in the past, looting was often not documented, the increase of viral videos of looters and online groups makes it easier to document illegal activities and increases the chance that looters can be caught in the future. Staff can be of great help in detecting online platforms, reporting suspected illicit activity to local authorities, and observing and documenting online activities related to heritage sites. This documentation can be reported to, for example, the ATHAR project, to enhance their work in the field of combatting illicit online trafficking.

Set up a hotline for, or nominate someone willing to offer contact details to, the local community for them to report illegal activities on archaeological sites so that you can monitor and document what is happening around sites. These reporting measures usually not only contribute to gathering information about current threats, but simultaneously help to actively engage the local community, and raise awareness about the various threats heritage can be exposed to. Awareness-raising campaigns over social media platforms can also help to educate people on the harm of illicit trafficking.

Community Engagement

Many sites around the globe have started to actively engage their local community as guardians and keepers of cultural heritage. Several cases from Iraq show how sites are effectively protected when they are part of community's identity and people feel responsible for their well-being and conservation for future generations, even during war. Local communities can play an active part in monitoring measures and are great communicators to raise awareness about the importance of archaeological heritage. Even if physical meetings are prohibited, institutions can start online groups on various online platforms and engage local communities or even communities from far away.

In the UK, for example, a research team at Exeter University was able to discover a range of archaeological sites from prehistoric, Roman, and medieval times by engaging volunteers who were willing to contribute from home. The volunteers identified these ancient sites using aerial survey. Sites like Terrawatchers also offer the opportunity for volunteers to get involved and track damage across the MENA region using satellite imagery. Volunteers are given sites at random and take an online tutorial to learn to recognise type of damage. (See more at [*Resources Security - Terrawatchers*](#)).

While many students face uncertainty due to the postponement of their educational courses, some cultural institutions have the capacity to offer educational programmes in which students can continue their studies in different formats. It may be useful to develop new innovative formats that can respond to the current crisis in ways that do not only seek solutions that support your own institution, but provide support at a broader societal level. It may also help to get in touch with universities to exchange ideas on how institutions can help each other in these times and what an archaeological site can do for students who are trying to grow in the heritage field.

Digital Security

Billions of people are stuck inside their homes due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the world is becoming increasingly dependent on the internet.

The race towards a connected world was already in full swing, and the outbreak has further highlighted the potential of the internet for tackling problems in the 21st century. Long-term impacts of the coronavirus outbreak have, essentially, pushed people to become more comfortable with technology and the risks associated with it. Nowadays, a modern citizen requires some form of digital literacy to access information and making archaeological material and information accessible online play a key role in this.

In the rush to migrate workers to remote work during lockdown and offer services online, data privacy and security sometimes get lost. Unfamiliar settings, new routines, and increased reliance on third party technology all puts data privacy at risk. It is of the utmost importance that your organisation is aware of the risks, both for data exchange within the organisation network and data entering the network from outside. Thus, take the necessary precautions to mitigate these risks. In the chapter *Basic Digital Tools* (Part III of the Guidelines), we have collected brief information on social media, digital communication services, digital filesharing, virtual workspaces, virtual private networks (VPNs) and decentralised solutions; we have also touched on privacy and security problems.

Preservation

The strict regulation of many activities as a part of the coronavirus response means that archaeological sites may be less vulnerable to threats from development (such as building works, road creation, and the placement of associated infrastructure like laying gas and electricity cables), as well as mitigating negative impacts of tourism. However, important ongoing preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation work will also have been interrupted. The closure of archaeological sites not only affects the protection of the site, but stops any financial provision to employees who were dependent on the work. This can severely prolong the process of recovery for societies already drained from years of conflict.

If staff is not granted access to sites different online activities that can be carried out, discussed above in the section **Lockdown**. In case staff is allowed to access the site under certain regulations, undertake repair work and other measures related to the security of the building, Archaeological sites are usually located outdoors, without protection from the weather: try to cover archaeological surfaces to prevent, or at least limit, the negative impact of weather conditions and erosion, such as laying down tarpaulin or erecting shelters. (For more information, see **Resources** Preservation - *WikiHow*, How to Protect and Preserve Archaeological Sites). Heritage for Peace has compiled helpful resources on preservation and restoration measures for all sorts of materials and building structures. (See more information at **Resources** Preservation - *Resources on Monuments and Archaeological Sites* and other sources on the list below. For funding conservation and rehabilitation work see below at **Resources** Security - *Funding Possibilities*).

It is important that the state of conservation of the archaeological site is regularly monitored and documented. Set up a consistent monitoring plan that provides relevant data for you, allowing you to react to observed site needs. It is important to make a checklist of all actions concerning preservation. Keep control at all times, consult with staff, and divide the tasks. In this regard, the role of communities is often overlooked. Communities and neighbourhoods can play a vital role in both conservation and preservation measures, including monitoring procedures. There are many sources that can inspire and

help you to develop more meaningful involvement of communities. For example, the Getty Conservation Institute has publications exploring different approaches around conservation and community planning, and community asset mapping. (For more information, see below at *[Resources Preservation - Getty Conservation Institute](#)*).

Reopening

Simple protective measures when reopening

Archaeological sites may have advantages when reopening, as outdoor spaces often allow staff to work outside, keeping them safe, and the public to visit in relative safety, if tourism is appropriately managed. In countries that have eased their lockdown regulations, outdoor activities are favoured by visitors. Several archaeological sites in Greece and Italy reopened in May, 2020 and the UK opened its sites in June, 2020 operating under specific health regulations that are adjusted according to the current requirements to protect staff and visitors. Here are some tips other heritage sites have implemented to ensure the protection of the premises, staff and visitors that may help you in preparing reopening scenarios:

- Simple floor markings on the ground are easily prepared and can help to guide visitors through the property and remind them to keep a social distance of a minimum of 1.5 meters. This is especially important in waiting lines, or any narrow areas. They are easily set up with simple material such as labelled adhesive strips.
- Visitors should be required to wear face masks in all indoor areas, and all areas that may be congested, and should be asked to frequently use antiseptic hand sanitizer – especially in gift shops, or when interacting with site staff (for example, at the entrance).
- Sites should consider how many visitors they can accommodate safely while maintaining social distancing: this may be far fewer than were allowed in before.
- Areas that are touched by many visitors, such as seats, handrails, cafes, and toilets must be cleaned regularly with antiseptic cleaner.
- It may be necessary to close some areas if they cannot be opened safely and kept clean.
- Visitors should be asked not to touch objects in the gift shop unless they intend to buy them.
- Staff who meet visitors (at the entrance desk, guides, or café staff) should wear masks, and remind visitors to keep a safe distance from them.
- A shift to so-called “slow tourism”⁵ is recommended. This gives archaeological site staff the chance to develop more personally-oriented content for their visitors.

Staff areas

Staff should be healthy before returning to work and be tested for COVID-19. Areas that are restricted to staff should also follow the strict regulations given by local authorities. Break rooms, canteens, and other settings that people may spend time in, may need to be closed in order to avoid staff socialising in groups. Outdoor spaces can be used to replace indoor meeting rooms. Staggered breaks on a schedule for employees may help to strategically plan break time frames for groups of people, in order to avoid bigger gatherings. Offering hand sanitizers and soap for cleaning hands and tools wherever possible, is essential to prevent the virus from spreading.

Cafes and restaurants at archaeological sites

Cafes and restaurants are places with a high contagion risk as visitors spend a period of time in a closed room and are usually sitting close to each other with various spots that are usually touched by visitors. The reopening regulations for these places might differ to those for the general reopening of archaeological sites.

Here are some recommendations in case the state allows the reopening of restaurants and cafes:

- Ensure a distance of at least 1.5 metres between tables; this may require you to reduce the number of tables.
- Reduce the number of seats around each table to ensure that larger groups do not sit together.
- Offer antiseptic hand gel for visitors when entering the restaurant or café as well as enough soap in rest rooms for cleaning hands.
- Meet visitors at the entrance and guide them to their seats, ensuring that most areas in the room remain untouched (such as door handles and menus).
- Either cover menus in plastic so that they can be cleaned or have many copies so that each visitor receives a new menu. Menus should not be reused for at least 2 days.
- Make sure café and restaurant staff wear masks when they interact with customers.
- Encourage visitors not to pay in cash. Document visitors' contact details, including recording the date of their visit: this will allow the tracing of transmission of the virus in case a visitor tests positive for COVID-19 after a visit. Clean tables and chairs after each group of visitors have left.
- It may be necessary for the café or restaurant to serve take-away food and drink, rather than allowing people to sit inside.

Sites intending to reopen should stay in close contact with local authorities to ensure that state regulations are strictly followed when protective measures for staff and visitors are being designed. However, as the archaeological sector does not often receive rapid or direct attention, contact local authorities proactively in order to discuss the possibility of reopening. Propose various scenarios implementing regulated safety measures under which working could be possible and staff and visitors are protected. Overall, the health of people and the safety of the archaeological heritage sites should remain priority in all planning processes while keeping visitors and staff informed about all changes that relate to them.

Resources

Lockdown

- *ALIPH Foundation (International Alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas)*. E-learning resources from the web for general heritage e-learning: <https://elearning.aliph-foundation.org/3/>
- *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*. Coronavirus advice and information: <https://www.archaeologists.net/practices/coronavirus>
- *Cultural Heritage Agency*. Guidelines for Building Archaeological Research: <https://english.cultureelerfgoed.nl/publications/publications/2009/01/01/guidelines-for-building-archeological-research>
- *Heritage for Peace Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH)*. Resources on archaeological sites and monuments: <https://www.heritageforpeace.org/resources/monuments-archaeological-sites/>
- *Heritage Foundation*. Webinar on Crisis Communication for Leaders: <https://www.heritage.org/event/webinar-crisis-communication-leaders-guidance-responding-covid-19-and-other-crises>
- *ICCROM*. Webinar series on issues related to COVID-19: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ICCROM07>
- *The Heritage Alliance*. COVID-19 Guidance Hub: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1p4w-6tGao9SmwDAfSB9yOY5482Tvmgz9miZyfn8XnNQ/edit>

- *UNESCO. COVID-19 impact and response tracker:*
<https://en.unesco.org/news/culture-covid-19-impact-and-response-tracker>

Digital Heritage

- *Archaeological Institute of America*
 - Multimedia Education Resources:
<https://www.archaeological.org/programs/educators/media/>
 - Virtual Tours: <https://archaeology-travel.com/virtual-travel/>
- *British Archaeological Jobs Resource (BAJR). BAJR Guides (eLearning):*
<http://www.bajr.org/BAJRread/BAJRGuides.asp>
- *Archaeology Skill Passport. Training Guidance for Future Career (Learning):*
<http://www.archaeologyskills.co.uk/project/core-skills/>
- *Archaeology Podcast Network:*
<https://www.archaeologypodcastnetwork.com/>
- *Arts Marketing Association (AMA). Digital Heritage Lab:*
<https://www.a-m-a.co.uk/digital-heritage-lab/>
- *Charity Digital. Heritage Digital:*
<https://charitydigital.org.uk/heritage-digital>
- *DigitalLearn*
 - Use a computer to do almost anything: <https://www.digitallearn.org/>
 - Tools and Resources for Trainer: <https://training.digitallearn.org/>
- *Heritage Fund. Digital resources for heritage organisations:*
<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/digital-skills-heritage-digital-resources>
- *MediaTrust. Digital Marketing Strategy Toolkit:*
<https://mediatrust.org/resource-hub/digital-marketing-strategy-toolkit/>
- *Nonprofit Tech for Good. A Fundraising and Social Media Blog for Nonprofits:*
<https://www.nptechforgood.com/>
- *Social Media Examiner. A Guide to the Social Media Jungle:*
<https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/>
- *The Institute for Digital Archaeology. Publications on The Future of Digital Archaeology – overview of technologies, philosophy and ethical considerations:*
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54d141f5e4b032ab36c35a29/t/56c6234a2b8ddedda8543765/1455825741243/IDA+World+Government+Summit+Report.pdf>

Networks

- *Arab Network for Safeguarding Cultural Heritage (ANSCH) Facebook group:*
<https://www.facebook.com/ANSCH-110334927271070/>
- *Archaeology in Iraq Facebook group:*
<https://www.facebook.com/ArchaeologyInIraqOfficial/>
- *Archaeology in Libya Facebook group:*
<https://www.facebook.com/Archaeology.in.Libya.AiS/>
- *Archaeology in Syria Facebook group:* <https://www.facebook.com/Archaeology.in.Syria/>
- *Archaeology in Yemen Facebook group:*
<https://www.facebook.com/Archaeology.in.Yemen.AiS/>
- *Cultural leaders:* <https://www.weforum.org/communities/cultural-leaders>
- *Cultural Heritage Conservation Science. Research and practice LinkedIn group:*
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/140198/>
- *Heritage for All Facebook group:*
https://www.facebook.com/groups/214091372432295/?ref=br_rs
- *ICCROM Sharjah* <https://athar-centre.org/>

Safety

- *Aga Khan Development Network. COVID-19 information* - Information on homemade and disposable masks:
<https://www.akdn.org/publication/covid-19-information-homemade-and-disposable-masks>
- *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). Prospect's COVID-19 site working advice (fieldwork):*
<https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/Prospect%20Archaeologists%20COVID19%20Working%20Advice%20V1%2004MAY20.pdf>
- *Construction Leadership Council. Protecting your workforce during coronavirus Site Procedures:*
<https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Site-Operating-Procedures-Version-4.pdf>
- *Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers Ltd (FAME). Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Archaeology – Health and Safety:*
<https://famearchaeology.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-and-archaeology/>
- *Safety measures of Greek archaeological sites after reopening:*
<https://news.gtp.gr/2020/05/18/visiting-greek-archaeological-sites-post-covid-19-safety-measures-rules/>
- *Science Advances (07 Aug 2020). Low-cost measurement of facemask efficacy for filtering expelled droplets during speech:*
<https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/08/07/sciadv.abd3083>
- *The Reference Center for Psychological Support of the Red Cross*
<https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/steps-to-help-cope-with-evolving-coronavirus-situation.html>
- *UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. Working safely during the coronavirus – guidance on construction and outdoor working environments:*
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work>
- *World Health Organisation*
 - About COVID-19:
<http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/about-covid-19.html>
 - Health Alert on WhatsApp (Arabic): wa.me/41225017023?text=
 - Protection measures:
<http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/protect-yourself-and-others.html>
 - COVID-19 questions and answers:
<http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/questions-and-answers.html>
 - Resources on mental health:
<https://www.who.int/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/healthyathome/healthyathome---mental-health>

Security

- *Alliance to Counter Crime Online. Facebook group:*
<https://www.facebook.com/CounteringCrime/>
- *ANSCH. Sources on Archaeological Sites and Monuments:*
<https://www.heritageforpeace.org/resources/monuments-archaeological-sites/>
- *ASIS Foundation Research Council. CRIPS Report: Security of Archaeological Sites:*
https://www.asisonline.org/globalassets/foundation/documents/crisp-reports/archaeological-clunia_crisp-report.pdf

- *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)*. Coronavirus advice and information: <https://www.archaeologists.net/practices/coronavirus>
- *Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime*: <https://globalinitiative.net/>
- *Object-ID*: <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/objectid/>
- *SmartWater Foundation*: <http://www.smartwaterfoundation.org/>
- *Terrawatchers*. TerraWatchers provides web-based, crowdsourced satellite image monitoring for critical missions related to current events: <https://terrawatchers.org/>
- *The ATHAR Project*:
 - Project website: <https://atharproject.org/>
 - 2019 Report: <http://atharproject.org/report2019/>
- *WikiHow*. How to Protect and Preserve Archaeological Sites: <https://www.wikihow.com/Protect-and-Preserve-Archaeological-Sites>

Funding Possibilities

- *ALIPH Foundation (International Alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas)*. ALIPH supports a wide variety of projects to protect heritage that is endangered, under threat or which has suffered from negligence brought about by conflict. <https://www.aliph-foundation.org/>
- *British Council. Cultural Protection Fund*. It is aimed to help to create sustainable opportunities for economic and social development through building capacity to foster, safeguard and promote cultural heritage. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development/cultural-protection-fund>
- *Gerda Henkel Foundation. Funding Initiative Patrimonies*. The Patrimonies funding initiative considers projects that focus on the preservation of historical cultural heritage first and foremost in crisis regions and, in some cases, should for the first time enable scientific research in the fields of history, archaeology, and art history. <https://www.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/en/patrimonies>
- *Global Heritage Fund. Global Heritage Solidarity Fund*: Putting people first in our response, we protect cultural heritage now — and ensure that coming generations will survive to protect heritage in the future. <https://globalheritagefund.org/global-heritage-solidarity-fund/>
- *International Institute for the Conservation of Museum Objects (ICC). Opportunities Fund*. Helping to create a sustainable and resilient conservation community. You need to join ICC first. <https://www.iiconservation.org/about/awards/opportunities>
- *Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development. Cultural Emergency Response (CER)*. Is cultural heritage threatened in your area? We may be able to help through our Cultural Emergency Response programme (CER). <https://princeclausfund.org/save-heritage-now>
- *UNESCO. Heritage Emergency Fund*. The fund is meant for UNESCO member states, thus government organisations, to enable the Organization to respond quickly and effectively to crises resulting from armed conflicts and disasters caused by natural and human-made hazards all over the world. <https://en.unesco.org/themes/protecting-our-heritage-and-fostering-creativity/emergencyfund2>
Also see http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/hef/pdf/Iraq_2016-2018.pdf

- *World Heritage Fund*. The World Heritage Fund provides about US\$4 million annually to support activities requested by States Parties in need of international assistance. It is, therefore, only for governments and for World Heritage sites.
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/funding/>
- *World Monuments Relief Fund*. No information available.
<https://www.wmf.org/world-monuments-relief-fund>

Preservation

- *Archaeopress*. Archaeological Heritage Conservation and Management:
<http://www.archaeopress.com/ArchaeopressShop/Public/displayProductDetail.asp?id={1F475AC3-ABB7-4642-A3FF-3BEBBD037DEE}>
- *Archaeological Institute of America*. Site Preservation Resources:
<https://www.archaeological.org/programs/public/site-preservation/resources/>
- *Getty Conservation Institute*. Conservation, Community Planning and Community Asset Mapping:
http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/teaching/cs_tn_community.pdf
- *Heritage for Peace*. Resources on Monuments and Archaeological Sites:
<https://www.heritageforpeace.org/resources/monuments-archaeological-sites/>
- *ICCROM*. A Laboratory Manual for Architectural Conservation:
https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/ICCROM_11_LabManual_en.pdf
- *National Park Service (NPS)*. Archaeology and Historic Preservation:
https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_0.htm
- *WikiHow*. How to Protect and Preserve Archaeological Sites:
<https://www.wikihow.com/Protect-and-Preserve-Archaeological-Sites>

Reopening

Visitors

- *Archaeology Travel*. Guidelines for Visiting Sites & Monuments during the Coronavirus Pandemic:
<https://archaeology-travel.com/travel-tips/guidelines-for-visiting-sites-museums-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>
- *Safety measures of Greek archaeological sites after reopening*:
<https://news.gtp.gr/2020/05/18/visiting-greek-archaeological-sites-post-covid-19-safety-measures-rules/>

Archaeological excavations and working environment

- *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)*. Prospect's COVID-19 site working advice:
<https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/Prospect%20Archaeologists%20COVID19%20Working%20Advice%20V1%2004MAY20.pdf>
- *Construction Leadership Council*. Protecting your workforce during coronavirus Site Procedures:
<https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Site-Operating-Procedures-Version-4.pdf>
- *Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers Ltd (FAME)*. Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Archaeology – Health and Safety:
<https://famearchaeology.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-and-archaeology/>
- *UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy*. Working safely during the coronavirus – guidance on construction and outdoor working environments:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work>

For further resources, please see the resource section for archaeological sites and monuments of the Heritage for Peace website: <https://www.heritageforpeace.org/resources/monuments-archaeological-sites/>

¹ [News] (23 April 2020). More than 130 Ministers call for support to culture sector in COVID-19 crisis response. *UNESCO World Heritage Centre* <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2106>

² [News] (17 August 2020). Monitoring World Heritage site closures. *UNESCO World Heritage Centre* <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2103>

³ Harris, Gareth (24th June 2020). Facebook and Instagram ban trading of historical artefacts. *The Art Newspaper*. <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/facebook-bans-trading-of-historical-artefacts>

⁴ <https://en.unesco.org/fightrafficking/1970>

⁵ Slow tourism is based on the concept of speed. It involves travelling for a prolonged period of time at a slow pace, allowing the tourist a deep, authentic and cultural experience. It is a sustainable tourism that faces the over-tourism of the last years.