

Incorporating archaeology in coastal urban planning, Pafos coast - CY

1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Preserving coastal environment (its functioning and integrity) to share space
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment

2. Key Approaches

- Integration
- Ecosystems based approach
- Socio-economic
- Technical

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

In coastal areas with rich historical and cultural heritage, sudden tourism development can be a major threat. Efficient and effective planning and infrastructural provisions are essential tools to balance protection of the heritage and the needs for development.

4. Overview of the case

The area under the jurisdiction of Pafos Municipality covers 17 km². Until the 1980's, Pafos was a small town, mainly a rural area, with hardly any tourist development. Development pressures have merged in the mid 80's, prior to infrastructure planning and provision. Archaeological sites are spread almost everywhere in the area, since Pafos was inhabited non-stop since the Neolithic period (it is included in the official UNESCO list of cultural and natural treasures of the world's heritage). The rich archaeological heritage was under imminent threat from tourism expansion in the early 80s. Hotels have been constructed over ancient ruins and control was neither sufficient nor efficient. The Department of Antiquities and the Town Planning Department tried several protection schemes, before ending in the present "hard" protection model.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

Today, Pafos is a typical example of a coastal area with conflicting uses and dense tourism development. The share of tourist accommodation (beds) of Pafos coastal area is 23,768 beds, i.e. 27.0% of the tourists beds of the island and almost 600,000 tourists per year. At the same time, the population of Pafos Municipality has increased by 56% from 13,100 inhabitants (1982) to 26,252 inhabitants (2001).

In the early 1980s, the Town Planning Department introduced strict regulations for the protection of the archaeological areas in Cyprus, through the Urban Plans. However, since the entire area of Pafos was actually an open archaeological area, ruins were discovered in most of the excavations for the construction of buildings, especially in the coastal area. It was often that the excavations were carried out during night and the concrete for the foundations of the new buildings was poured immediately, in order to avoid control by the Department of Antiquities.

b) Objectives

In the mid 1990s, the Town Planning Department with the co-operation of the Municipal Urban Planning services and the Department of Antiquities, proceeded to create the “archaeological park of Pafos”, by implementing very strict regulations. The objective was to protect the important archaeological sites of Pafos from tourist development.

6. Implementation of the ICZM Approach (i.e. management, tools, resources)

a) Management

The “archaeological park of Pafos” was planned, implemented and is managed by the Department of Antiquities, supported by several other relevant governmental and local authority organisations.

b) ICZM tools

The park includes a network of important archaeological sites: a unique area of the Mosaics- Faros of 87 ha., by the west coast of Kato Pafos, the area of the Tombs of the Kings and more smaller-sized archaeological areas, spread in the area. The protection and management plan implemented measures to create a network of protected archaeological sites in the area of Kato Pafos. In total, the protected archaeological sites cover 8% of the land which is under the jurisdiction of Pafos Municipality (i.e. 136 ha.). The park (or network of protected archaeological sites) was incorporated in the official Urban Plans for the Development of Pafos in 1995 and the archaeological sites were characterised as a “protected area”. Thus the main tools that were implemented for the achievement of the protection scheme, have been legislative. The protection scheme also included some “hard” measures: the areas have been fenced and infrastructure has been created with pedestrian roads, viewing areas etc. In this way, at least a significant part of the archaeological heritage of Pafos was protected.

7. Cost and resources

The protection of the significant archaeological sites of Pafos was achieved. The areas were “upgraded” concerning infrastructure, pedestrian roads, efficient protection of the Mosaics, the ancient floors etc so visitors cannot step on them, even by mistake! As soon as the unification of the archaeological areas of Pafos became part of the Town Planning Law (official Urban Plans of Pafos 1995) the construction of the infrastructure started and was completed on time, the management plans were enforced and the whole plan started operating.

8. Effectiveness (i.e. were the foreseen goals/objectives of the work reached?)

The cost is not known. The whole project for the protection and unification of the archaeological sites of Pafos was funded by the Republic of Cyprus.

9. Success and Fail factors

There was a strong protest from the residents, who until then, were free to walk among the ancient sites, to have them as part of their everyday life. With the fences, the residents felt that they have been violently expelled from areas that were part of their life since the ancient years! It took years for the locals to accept the “fenced hostages” as they were calling the ancient park and the ancient sites. The infrastructure, especially the pedestrian path along the fence (outside from the Mosaic site, by the sea) was a great tool to make people accept the regulations. This path is used by thousands of locals, who just shifted their afternoon walk, out of the ancient sites, but still at the same area. The fact that the area was declared a “protected area” under the official plans of the Government, and for several years afterwards there have been no “relaxations”, i.e. no special treatment for any developer, was supportive for the acceptance by the locals. The fact that the area became a UNESCO site of cultural and natural treasure of the world’s heritage was an additional pressure on the decision-makers to proceed with the more strict and efficient protection.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

After 10 years of protection, with controlled circulation of visitors in specific pathways, the endemic and other species of flora and fauna have returned. This resulted in including part of the area (87 ha.) of Mosaics/Faros as a NATURA 2000 area (CY4000013): it is a very important bird site: 23 birds of Annex I of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) can be found here, 2 of which are endemic, an important flora site with 6 endemic species, IUCN and CITES flora species and rich in endemic and protected reptiles (by Bern Convention). So, in addition to the protection of the archaeological sites, there was also nature conservation.

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13. Sources

- NATURA 2000 Sites in Cyprus, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, 2005
- Urban Plans of Pafos 1995, by Town Planning Department