

3. FEASIBILITY STUDY

3.1 Introduction: feasibility objectives

The feasibility study is another key stage in designing the LAP because it is providing an **evaluation of the viability** of your future archaeological park, with an emphasis on identifying existing assets and their potential, as well as possible problems and ways of solving them. Therefore, its results should aim to inform in a systematic manner the designing and implementation of the LAP through the identification of the legal, administrative, scientific, technical and financial requirements of the future archaeological park. A reliable feasibility study should be able to indicate the most appropriate solutions to achieve the proposed short-term and long-term objectives of the LAP (see subchapter 1.1) by taking into consideration the existing local social and economic conditions and possibilities.

From the financial point of view, these solutions should also include not only estimates of the costs of designing and implementing your LAP, and of the annual operational budget needed to run your future archaeological park, but also all possible funding sources that have to be realistically assessed in terms of accessibility and reliability.

Therefore, the feasibility study has to find answers to the following fundamental questions:

- Is the local archaeological park worth establishing (if you have none), or enhancing it (if you have one that needs improvements)?
- Are there sufficient human and financial resources available to develop and run the archaeological park?
- Is the local community interested in the park and has the capacity to support it?
- Are there any other stakeholders interested in supporting the park?

In order to answer these questions, the feasibility study has to be conducted in an objective and rational manner, outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the existing local situation, as well as all possible opportunities and obstacles. A comprehensive, objective feasibility study should provide a solid base for the designing and implementation of a successful LAP.

Thus, your first step should be the identification of the legal and administrative framework within which your archaeological park will operate. This is a key aspect that will influence not only the design and implementation stage, but also the way in which your park will be managed in the near future. For the next step, you will need to examine the available options for designing, developing and managing the park based on the findings of the assessment study and the local urban planning policies. This will also be an occasion to estimate the length

of time and the funds required to design the LAP and develop the archaeological park. The analysis of your options should also address the potential social, economic, ecological and cultural impact of this initiative. That means you will need to identify the target public (local and visitor), their more likely interests and expectations, and your ability to fulfil them, while also attracting interest and gaining acceptance at both local and wider level.

3.2 Identification of the legal and administrative framework

As mentioned above, the **legal and administrative framework** is a key aspect of your plans to design the LAP and develop the archaeological park, so it should not be taken lightly. Your project as a whole, irrespective of its objectives, activities and methodologies, will need a legal basis to operate. Therefore, you will first have to consider the most suitable **legal form of organization** for your park, whether it will be a regular business entity, a cooperative, a subsidiary or branch of an existing cultural institution (e.g. a museum) or a not-for-profit organization. Each of these options is governed by laws and regulations which are differing from one country to another, and each has advantages and disadvantages. It is the task of your feasibility study to assess all options and propose an optimal solution. The institution which is going to sponsor your initiative both financially and administratively will also most likely want to have a say in this matter.

At the same time, your park will have to follow all of the national and European laws and charters concerning the preservation, conservation, restoration and enhancement of archaeological heritage, as well as those concerning the management of cultural tourism attractions. Thus, when the form of organization is established officially, you will also have to include all laws and other regulations that are applicable to your situation in the respective section of the LAP, as well as in the park's organizational statutes. Likewise, you will have to consider all of the applicable environmental rules, especially if your park is connected in one way or another with a nature reserve or natural park, and also if you want to develop the archaeological park in a sustainable manner, to have a minimal impact on the environment (e.g. ban on single-use plastics, recycling, pedestrian-only access etc).

From the administrative point of view, it is equally important to identify the provisions of the local urban development policies that are relevant for your project. The best ways of integrating the archaeological park into the local urban planning will be outlined in a dedicated subchapter (4.1) from your LAP, but the feasibility study has to identify first the local conditions and rules that have to be followed by your design and planning, in order to find the most suitable solutions.

You will also have to check whether there is a local, regional or national master plan for developing cultural tourism. This kind of plan will normally include helpful legal and administrative provisions and pathways for projects like yours, on the condition they subscribe to a number of basic rules and objectives.

Another aspect which you will have to take into consideration is the **legal ownership status** of your site, including land, structures, access routes etc. Some of the site, or all of it, could be located on public land, and that could perhaps make your situation a little bit easier, while a more complex ownership consisting of both public and private entities will bring you some more legal obligations, especially the need to conclude written agreements with all relevant parties. However, irrespective of the type of ownership in your area, you are bound by law to consult the landowners and even involve them in the designing and implementation of your LAP, though the exact legal provisions could differ from one country to another.

3.3 Design and development options

Generally, a feasibility study is looking at the practicalities of developing a project by analysing the existing assets, the objectives or values to be attained and the costs and other means necessary to attain them. The main characteristics of your asset, that is your archaeological heritage, have been analysed in the assessment study, which has provided an inventory of the existing archaeological remains and identified their most likely significance for a variety of local stakeholders. Based on these findings, your next step would be to decide:

- The objectives of your LAP and therefore of your archaeological park;
- The best ways of attaining them;
- The resources (technical, financial, human, scientific etc) needed to attain these objectives.

The analysis will help you to identify which parts of the site would be worth developing into an archaeological park and why, and will also inform the LAP designing process. Accordingly, you will have to take into consideration a number of characteristics of the site, or of the part of it that should be developed, and its social and economic environment:

- Its current state of preservation;
- The impact (positive or negative) of your interventions;
- The local social and economic conditions and potential;
- The existing tourism-related businesses and infrastructure;
- The degree of local support for your idea.

In order to provide an accurate and desirable design of your LAP, you will therefore need to look into different issues which could arise from turning the local archaeological heritage into a valuable touristic asset without compromising its preservation and conservation. In economic terms, you will want to find out whether you have a market for your asset, as well as what it takes to create a functional link between them, that is to develop a **marketing strategy** for your archaeological site. This marketing strategy has to be visitor-oriented and take into consideration the existing trends in cultural tourism. Therefore, besides the basic findings of the assessment study, you will want to conduct some more targeted surveys, to identify the local economic potential and the existing tourism-related businesses and infrastructure.

Another important aspect that has to be analysed is the existence of relevant **human resources** required to design and implement the LAP, and then to manage the future archaeological park. Due to the nature of your proposal, you will need to have access to a number of experts and other professionals (see subchapter 1.3). More staff will also be needed to run the park once it is established. Some could be perhaps already part of your organization, while others need to be hired. Your feasibility study should indicate what kind of expertise you will more likely need, as well as the most appropriate structure of your work team for both the LAP designing and implementation stage and the management of your future park. Depending on your situation, these options could influence the designing and implementation of your LAP in terms of its objectives, costs and duration. If your site still requires a lot of research and conservation work, or new urban infrastructure, or other kinds of major interventions, you might want to consider a phased development planning of your archaeological park over a number of years, which would be more manageable both technically and financially. In this case, you will have to adapt your LAP accordingly.

It is also important to propose a realistic **timetable** for the designing and implementation stage, based on the LAP objectives, the existing conditions on the site, the financial support and the required expertise. Mitigation means should also be designed to overcome any possible delays.

Another important aspect concerns the **economic, social and cultural impact** of your archaeological park on the local community and also on the wider area, basically what kind of values the project will bring in. The best way to gather this information is to conduct a number of targeted surveys and market research. The surveys should target the following aspects:

- Degree of interest and support for your proposal within the wider local community, the business environment, and the tourism industry;
- The existing local and regional cultural tourism attractions and the options to connect with them into a wider network;
- The willingness of local administration to support the park from the LAP design to the park opening and running, and the type of support they could offer.

At the same time, the market research will examine two key aspects concerning the marketability of your park:

- The **economic marketability** of your park, based on your objectives and the current economic and social conditions, i.e. the ability of your park to bring in economic value for you and your partners.
- The **cultural marketability** of your park, again based on your objectives, but also on the perceived cultural value of the local archaeological heritage, which is largely created by consumers (Keuschnigg 2015). This kind of marketability is strongly influenced by cultural trends which in turn are informed by factors like degree of familiarity, reputation, degree of engagement, common sharing of experiences etc.

In both cases, the market research will be able to support the feasibility study in recommending solutions to achieve your LAP objectives timely and efficiently. Normally, this kind of study is conducted by market research specialists, so you will probably need to contract an external service provider for that, thus raising the costs of your feasibility study.

3.4 Estimated implementation and maintenance costs; potential funding options

Another factor that has to be considered when designing and implementing your LAP is the **estimated costs** of all required work, and the same applies to the management of your future archaeological park. The estimations have to be realistic and in concordance with your objectives and the existing local conditions. If the total estimated costs seem to be too high for what you want to achieve and for your financial resources, you may have to reconsider both your plans and your resources.

On the other hand, depending on the local legislation and your form of organization, your park might be entitled to tax exemptions or reductions. There are also other ways of offsetting your costs, like sponsorships and volunteer work. It is worth mentioning that sponsorship could come in various forms besides money, for example, the in-kind sponsorship of your staff equipment or of the consumables required for educational activities and workshops would ease your budgetary burden (see subchapter 4.8). Likewise, the involvement of volunteers from the LAP implementation to running the park will lighten your staffing budget (see subchapter 5.4) significantly.

Therefore the feasibility study should identify all possible sources of funds and the ways of accessing them for each stage of your LAP, from designing to implementation. However, you should not be overoptimistic and believe that you will actually be able to access all of them, so a healthy dose of caution should be included in your budgeting.

This is a list of possible funding options that you should consider:

- Direct funds allocated by the municipality in the form of an annual operational budget or targeted subventions;
- Annual allocations or targeted subventions from the national budget;
- National or international grants won through open competition;
- Cooperation agreements, for example with research and development or educational institutions;
- Sponsorship by public and private entities and individuals;
- Special fundraising events; these could be perhaps organized with the help of a dedicated not-for-profit association, e.g. “The Friends of ... Archaeological Park”;
- Entrance and other fees paid for various visitor services offered by the park; these will only be available once the archaeological park is up and running;
- Other earnings: leasing fees, paid for activities, sales from book, crafts and souvenir shops, food and drink stalls, branding and advertising etc.



Figure 3.1. Sremska Mitrovica (Serbia), Roman bread baked by a private baker for the Sirmium Roman Festival (photo Jasmina Davidović).

The ticketing structure and strategy should be carefully considered in order to maximize your earnings without hampering access. So, certain categories of visitors should perhaps pay a reduced entrance fee or be exempted from that, e.g. students, small children, pensioners, jobless people etc. Family and group tickets should also be available. Depending on your other sources of funds, you might even consider providing free access to your park, while only charging visitors for additional services or activities. You may also offer special passes, for example all inclusive annual passes, or tickets valid for a number of different attractions in the region over a set period of time, or including one-day public transportation, or discounts to crafts and souvenir shops etc.

FESTIVALUL ROMAN APULUM

ALBA IULIA,
CETATEA ALBA CAROLINA
28 APRILIE - 1 MAI 2017





CEL MAI MARE FESTIVAL
DIN DACIA ROMANĂ

EVENTIMENT ORGANIZAT DE:



Primăria Municipiului Alba Iulia

CU SPRIJINUL



Asociația Culturală pentru Istorie Vie

EVENTIMENT SPONSORIZAT DE:



Muzeul Național al Unirii Alba Iulia




Figure 3.2. Alba Iulia (Romania), poster of the Apulum Roman Festival organized in cooperation with a local not-for-profit organization (photo Vertical Graphic, <https://verticalgraphic.com/portofoliu/festivalul-roman-apulum-2017/>).

3.5 Identification of the target public and their expectations

Another important objective of your feasibility study should be identification of the categories of public which you should attract to your park, and of the most suitable ways of attracting them, based on their expectations. This will help you to design the activities and services which will be offered by your park, as well as the best interpretive and communications materials, all being part of your LAP.

You can use different methods to identify your public and its expectations, the most common being:

- Targeted questionnaires;
- Public workshops and lectures with a Q&A approach;
- Test events;
- Media campaigns.

The same type of investigation will help you to see whether there is some form of opposition to your plans within the local community or among the stakeholders. If this is the case, the feasibility study should also take into consideration possible means and mechanisms that will help you to defuse potential conflicts of interests or to allay the justified concerns of the opposing parties. You should also consider involving the local stakeholders in the designing and implementation of your LAP as a way of gaining acceptance and support.

