Study Tour Evaluation Report

On the last day of the Albanian delegation’s study tour to Rome and Pompeii, which took place from 4-10 April 2011, participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire (Appendix A) and thus to provide feedback on their tour experience. This brief report summarizes the ten participants’ comments, highlighting which aspects were considered positive and negative, which lessons and ideas participants took home to Albania, and how future study tours could be improved.

The overall feedback for this study tour is clearly positive. Participants evidently enjoyed their visits to the selected archaeological sites – Via Appia, Ostia Antica, Forum Romanum and the Palatine Hill, Vulci National Park, and Pompeii – and identified various parallels between the administrative challenges faced by Italian and Albanian park managers. The questionnaires show that participants were particularly keen to learn about examples of public-private collaboration and the sharing of responsibilities for an archaeological area between the State, regions, and private stakeholders. The second most-mentioned topic concerns the self-financing and self-administration of archaeological parks, which was evidently regarded as highly important by the Albanian delegates. Participants noted that they appreciated learning about the financial and legal administration of parks as well as to be told about concrete means of income-generation. They also took interest in the technological systems used by Italian park managers regarding, on the one hand, electronic ticketing, and on the other hand, security devices such as cameras and fences. Some participants felt that they could learn from Italian systems to protect archaeological heritage, including their rigorous anti-trafficking policy. Finally, several participants admired the use of simple materials such as wood, iron and glass, which were employed to make parks accessible to tourists without damaging or distracting from the archaeological structures.

The list of negative aspect is distinctly shorter. Some participants argued that the context in which Italian and Albanian archaeological parks operate is very different and that these parks consequently cannot be managed in the same way. They noted that some of the systems and practices presented during the study tour were clearly not applicable to their cases, for instance, because private conservation specialists are lacking in Albania. Further, the questionnaires provide evidence that some tour guides were better prepared than others and that Italian-Albanian interpretation services sometimes did not meet expectations.

The questionnaire asked participants which ideas they would take back to Albania and which concrete activities they would try to implement within the next 100 days. The most frequently mentioned area of activity is the design of educational and outreach programs to better communicate the value of
cultural and archaeological heritage. These activities were mentioned alongside the plan to create more and better marketing material as well as to improve visitor services, for example, by offering audio and video guides. One participant wrote that he sought to implement an electronic ticketing system, especially since this “would lead to an elimination of income abuse by people responsible for the ticket office”. A delegate from Butrinti Archaeological Park noted that he would promote the computerized catalogization of archaeological finds. Other participants thought about building new paths for visitors and improving their illumination systems. Inspired by the examples of public-private collaboration in the maintenance of archaeological sites such as Ostia Antica, a number of delegates said they would seek to involve more stakeholders and strengthen their links with regional governments.

To improve the experience of future study tours, the following lessons can be drawn from the Albanian delegation’s feedback: Study tours could be longer and involve more varied sites to challenge taken-for-granted ideas about archaeological park management. The questionnaires clearly show that participants are interested in concrete, hands-on practices: They want to learn about specific methods of excavation, restoration and conservation, about management in practice, about how to best promote an archaeological site through printed and online publications, about how to train touristic guides, and about how to best develop a legislative framework. They are looking for a complete picture of the organization and functioning of individual sites.

Taking this feedback into consideration, it could be fruitful to organize future study tours around topics rather than sites. Among the themes that participants seem to be most interested in are the financial self-administration of archaeological sites, methods of excavation, best practices for conservation and restoration, collective administration of parks, promotion of cultural heritage, means of protection and security, and the use of innovative technology.

Report written Daniel Siekhaus, Intern, Executive Office
10 August 2011
Appendix A: Questionnaire

MDG-F Joint Programme “Culture and Heritage for Social and Economic Development” for Albania

Study Tour to Rome and Pompeii
for Albanian Archaeological Park managers and experts
10 April 2011

Final Questionnaire

1. Of the various sites visited and topics discussed throughout the study tour, please name the top three lessons learned or good practices that you feel should be a priority for Albania and/or your park/institution to begin implementing. Please clearly state why this is a priority and what are the steps you think are necessary for it to be applied to the Albanian case.

A.

B.

C.

2. With the human and financial resources currently in place at your institution and/or archaeological park, which are the good practices / lessons learned that you think you could personally apply in the next 100 days?
3. Please rank the sites visited in order of the most relevant and useful for the Albanian case (1 is the most relevant):

__ Via Appia (Tomba di Cecilia Metella, Castrum Caetani, Villa dei Quintili)  
__ Ostia Antica  
__ Vulci  
__ Foro Romano and Palatino  
__ Pompeii  
__ Other: ____________________ (please specify)

Please elaborate further in the space below (optional):


4. Please rank the topics discussed and presented in order of the most relevant and useful for the Albanian case (1 is the most relevant):

__ Governance and legal frameworks  
__ Institutional and management arrangements  
__ Financial and fiscal applications  
__ Visitor management and services  
__ Communication and marketing  
__ Educational programming  
__ Community outreach  
__ Conservation practices  
__ Risk Management and mitigation strategies  
__ Cataloguing and data management  
__ Security and protection of sites  
__ Other: ____________________ (please specify)

Please elaborate further in the space below (optional):


5. Regarding the logistics of this study tour, please place an “X” in the appropriate box to rate how the following aspects met your expectations:

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6. If this study tour was to be organized for other peers, what are some other topics you would like to see being covered:

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<td>Restaurants selected and meals offered</td>
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