

MaxiGreen

breathing new life into open spaces



Enabling access to green heritage

Toolkit

MaxiGreen
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www.maxigreen.eu



“Investing in your future”

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Foreword

This good practice guide on transport has been made as part of the MaxiGreen project.

MaxiGreen is a group of European authorities and organisations that are working together to improve a collection of green spaces and heritage areas that have been neglected over the years. The project is being funded through the EU Interreg programme.

The project focuses on a number of areas close to the North Sea and English Channel and is tackling issues such as poor access to the designated green and heritage areas, their negative images both locally and further afield and landscapes that have been neglected.

The projects are:

- Essex County Council - South Essex Marshes: www.maxigreen.eu/about-south-essex-marshes/
- Southend Borough Council and Essex Wildlife Trust- Living Landscape: www.maxigreen.eu/about-LivingLandscape/
- Ville de Marck en Calais - la Ferme des Aigrettes: www.maxigreen.eu/about-laFermedesAigrettes/
- Rupel Province of Antwerp - Strategisch Project Rupel: www.maxigreen.eu/about-StrategischprojectRupel/
- City of Rotterdam - Water Square Benthemplein: www.maxigreen.eu/about-Water-Square-Benthemplein/
- Province of West-Vlaanderen - Raversijde West Flemish Heart: www.maxigreen.eu/about-Raversijde-WestFlemishHeart

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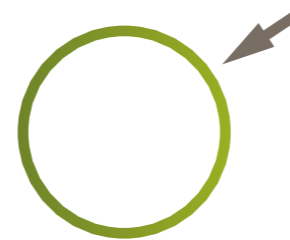


Introduction

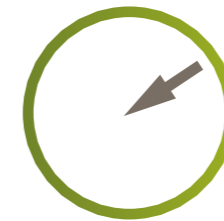
This guide is part of work package 3, increasing access, which focuses on physical access to the green and heritage site.

In this guide we describe four kinds of access:

- Going to the sites
- Finding your way at the entrance of the site
- Ambling the site
- Knowing and leaving the site.



Going to the site



Finding your way at the entrance of the site



Ambling on the site



Knowing about the site

Beside these four kinds of access MaxiGreen also focuses on connecting different sites. Connecting different sites and/or activities is one of the key factors that contribute to a greater use of green and heritage sites.

This guide is to help those managing heritage sites with questions such as "How do I let people know I exist?" or "Can people easily access/reach me?" or even "Where and how to optimise signage"

This guide aims to provide suggestions to help you answer these questions. This guide can also be used as a check-list for the transport plan for your specific site.

A questionnaire can be found in the appendix, which you can use to circulate to provide you with useful feedback about how you work. The feedback from the questionnaire can help you find solutions for problems you may face. This guidance is not exhaustive, however we tried to include as many situations as possible. These may sometimes be obvious but can act as an extra reminder.

This guide is divided into three chapters that correspond with the different parts of the questionnaire:

- before getting to the site
- traveling to the site
- ambling in the site.

For each question this guide identifies examples which can provide answers regarding site accessibility. This guide includes examples of accessibility to green heritage sites.

One important factor that you often have to bear in mind when planning the accessibility to your site is : "What would I like things to be like when I visit ?" then "What would be the easiest/cheapest way to solve this problem" Once you ask questions like this, half of your problems will be solved; for the second half please refer to the following pages!

Chapter 1

Before getting to the site

Chapter 1

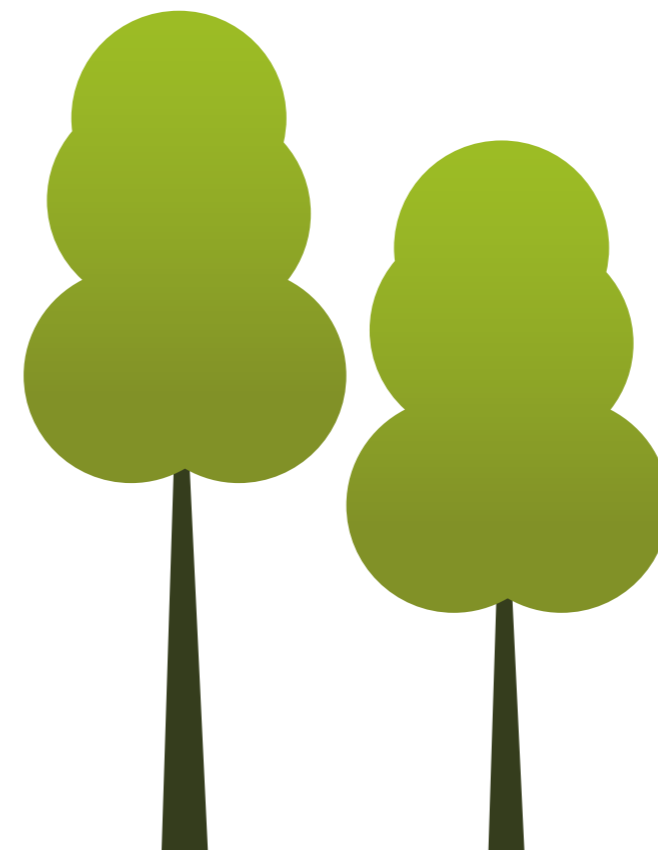
Before getting to the site

People can hear about your place in a variety of ways. Most of it would be the result of word of mouth or through local media and social media. Now that you have people coming to the site how do they prepare their visit in terms of accessibility?

This chapter is about the following questions:

- What kind of information do I need to provide pre-trip?
- How do I promote access through my branding and communication strategy?

If your site is large enough it might be helpful to make a traffic and transport plan (it might even be obligatory). This guide does not provide rules in how to make a comprehensive transport plan. It is limited to suggestions to help you make a start.



What kind of information do I need to provide pre-trip?

Once the decision is made to visit a site the next question will be the decision on the mode of transport. Sometimes the decision is made on the basis of availability of transport to and from the site. Providing good information about the way to travel to the site is therefore essential, through information on your site's website and in leaflets and other communication resources.

As a heritage site manager transport might be an extra task to worry about. Although if you manage to reduce car dependency and increase access to the site by public transport or for cycling, it will improve your overall accessibility.

In many countries there is an online public transport planner. The growing availability of more and more transport data as open data will improve, along with the possibilities and accuracy of multi-model trip planners. Such a planner can be included on your website or in a similar application. If possible, include multi-modal trip options, e.g. a combination of car travel and public transport – Park & Ride (P+R).

Other options to consider, for example, are a link to a car-sharing website and the availability to announce their visit to the site on social media. This may provide the opportunity, when other people know that they are planning to visit on the same day to share a car.

How do I promote access through my branding and communication strategy?

Besides having a leaflet and a website with information about how to reach the site what else can be done in the marketing and branding of your site to increase accessibility?

It is recommendable to add your location on a digital (online) map such as Google Maps see: <https://www.google.com/mapmaker> or Open Street Map (openstreetmap.org). Open Street Map and Google Maps are also used for a lot of mobile trip planning applications, by placing your site to the map, your site will also be easier to find within applications and search engines.

Also think about other types of maps (i.e. offline/ printed) in the area. Check with transport companies if it is possible to add your site to the public transport maps. If there are city maps (and your site is not shown) then speak to Tourist Information to ask if the site could be included in the next edition.

Gateway to the South Essex Marshes



Tips

- provide information about public transport and bike accessibility.
- provide information about making a multi-model travel to the site

Going further

The new Thames Estuary Path (TEP) is easily accessible by train linking six railway stations on the London Fenchurch Street and Southend line on one of the most attractive railway lines through the South Essex Marshes. These railway stations were identified as the priority gateways and ECC in collaboration with C2C the local train provider have been working together to promote these gateways. New signage with a distinctive logo, such as fingerposts and pavement stencilling has been installed at each of the six railway stations signposting people from the station to the new Path and local attractions.

Hard copies of the TEP map are available from the railway stations and the train provider will be promoting the new path and South Essex Marshes attractions through their marketing programme, such as posters on their trains, articles in their passenger e-bulletin and newsletter, as well as information on their website.

La Ferme des Aigrettes - Ville de Marck en Calaisis



Tips

- include a travel planner on your website
- place your site on the online maps
- Place your site on the offline maps

Going further

There are various ways that visitors can discover what your project is and what it has to offer. It is therefore very important to have a broad communication strategy, having a common branding that would be on your communication tools and also your partners.

We managed to make our partners use the farm on their plans and maps, making our structure truly publicised within the area.

Chapter 2

Travelling to the site



Travelling to the site

When your visitors are on their way, why not give them a little help to find your site? In this chapter we will provide some suggestions through asking the following questions:

- How can visitors find your site when they are on their way?
- Can my visitors travel to the site in a sustainable way?
- Can we do something extra to help visitors to travel to the site in a more sustainable way?

How can visitors find the site when they are on their way?

At minimum your access road should be signed. Depending on the size of your terrain and expected number of visitors additional signage on the main routes around your site may be required. If that is the case, signposting should be part of a traffic and transport plan that addresses the handling of traffic flows to and from your site.

Near to your site it might be possible to add signposts specific for your site. However it depends on the local regulations on what is generally accepted and allowed. You might consider marking your terrain in some way with a landmark but make sure you do not overdo this as it should be relevant to the site. For example in the province of West Flanders there were plans to install a radar installation to mark the Raversijde (war-heritage) area which would be a nice addition to the site and relevant to their theme.

Most planning laws require the allocation of 'enough' parking spaces. Think about how you want to accommodate parking and how this will influence the visitor's experience. For example, it is not a very enjoyable experience or good first impression when visiting a heritage site to have to park on a large concrete terrain. If a lot of parking is needed then consider separating parking, walking and cycling traffic and access traffic flows.

To understand how easy it is to travel to your site and to provide good travel advice to your visitors it is recommended that you try all modes yourself. For example try to go from a main station to your site and you might find locations where it is appropriate to provide information and advertise your site.

The Belfairs and Daws Health Living Landscape – Green Hub



Going further

The Green (transport) Hub enables people to consider alternative methods of travel from cycling to the local bus. It also aims to help visitors to understand their impact on the environment. Information on sustainable travel can be found on the new Belfairs mobile phone app and further visitor information, such as location, directions, public transport, opening times and facilities are available on the Essex Wildlife Trust website:

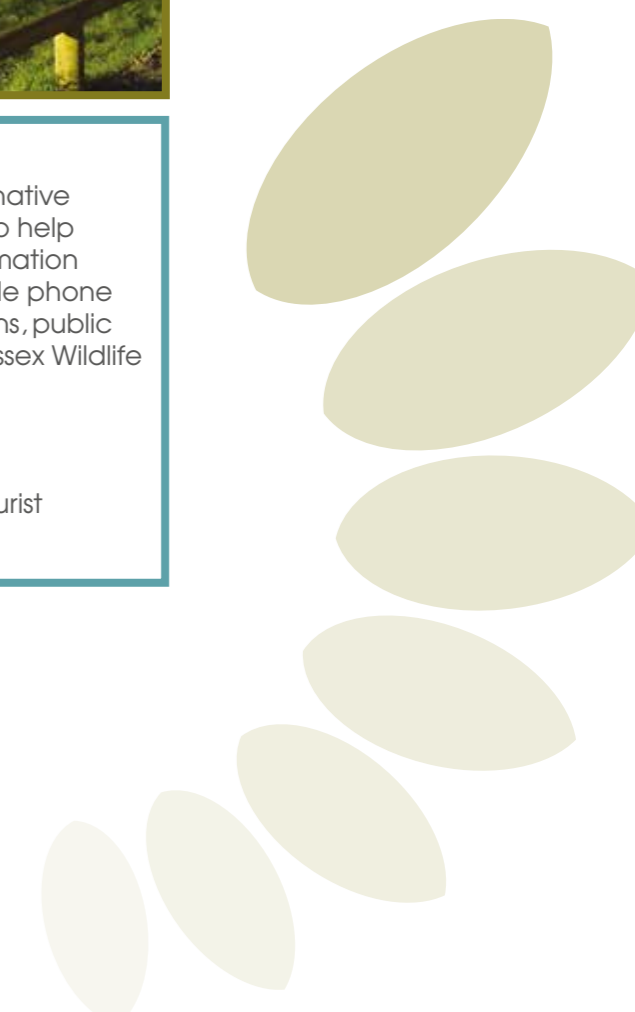
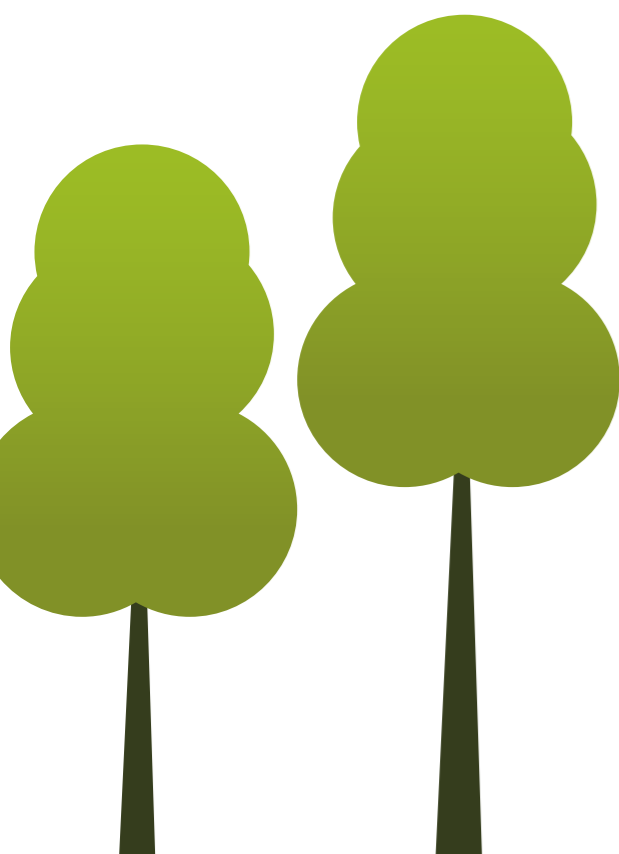
(www.essexwt.org.uk/reserves/belfairs).

Other online information can be found on Visit Southend (Tourist Information website).



Tips

- Signpost in the close vicinity of the site
- Try to get to your site on different transport modes and experience first-hand how easy, or hard, this is to do
- check existing services and try to make connections to those where possible



Can my visitors travel to the site in a sustainable way?

If there are more interesting sites or attractions nearby, why not suggest a combination of visits to different sites to your public? Studies have shown that when visiting different sites in one day the travel between and to the different sites is more sustainable.

People that travel to your site by bike or on foot are likely to have their trip origin in the nearby vicinity (5 – 10 km). If possible and applicable try to signpost, in cooperation with the authority responsible for signposting in the direct vicinity of your terrain. Also think about the routes from and to the bus stop and/or station.

Also check existing transport facilities available. For example if there is already a bike hire system in place try to include a bike hire station at your site or nearby. Also provide a link to the system on your website.

Make sure you identify missing links. This is often called the 'last mile problem' - where there is good transport so far and then a walk, so the last part of the trip (from the station to the site) could be regarded as problematic. Check if there are good walking routes between the regular serviced bus stop/ railway station and your site. If there is not a good route, talk to your local authority to see if it is possible to make improvements.

In some cases parking regulations can reduce the number of car trips to the site. In new developments sometimes local building regulation require a minimum of parking spaces.

Gateway to the South Essex Marshes



Going further

Our mobile app has a link to train times to and from nearby train stations. However access to the Marshes can be made by four transport methods: train, road, walking and cycling. It is the train access that has the greatest potential as a sustainable system with the least impact on the Marshes themselves.



Tips

- Provide information about cycle routes and public transport services to the site;
- Include a public transport and/or cycle planner in the locations' website.
- Provide information about P+R facilities or maybe park and bike.

Can we do something extra to help visitors travel to the site in a more sustainable way?

If there is an entry charge for the site then a combination of both public transport tickets and entrance fee can be a good trigger to encourage visitors to come to your site by public transport. It should be easy to buy these tickets directly from your site, or provide a link to the places where these tickets can be bought. Another option is to include 'free' public transport for ticket holders or sell tickets that are reduced for public transport travellers.

Do not only think about the walking infrastructure, as there are other opportunities. For instance, most public transport vehicles now have automatic next stop announcement systems. It is a great service (and gives some exposure as well) if your site is announced on the public transport system or even if the stop has the same name as your site.

Here are some examples that will give cyclists and pedestrians more comfort when visiting sites:

- Sufficient bike racks or enough space to park bikes where necessary.

- A pump for bicycle tires
- Bicycle repair set
- A covered shelter
- Bike lights
- A water tap (to refill bottles)
- Information about cycle routes
- Allocated foot and cycle paths

The Belfairs Woodland Centre



Tips

- Provide information about P+R facilities or maybe Park and bike.
- Ask local transit companies to be included in the automatic (bus) stop announcement system
- Provide combined entry and public transport tickets.

Going further

The Belfairs Woodland Centre is a Bike Friendly Café and so welcomes cyclists and cycling groups with provision for water refills, puncture repairs and electric bike recharging.

Electric vehicles are also welcomed with specially provided bays equipped with an electric vehicle charging unit.

Walking is encouraged and walk leaflets are provided detailing interesting walks across the landscape. Key routes have also been waymarked and artwork and information has been provided in key locations to interpret the landscape and enhance the visitor experience.

To help inform people's travel options, details of all this information is provided on an information board at the site showing a map of the area and the location of paths, cycleways, bus stops, parking, refreshments, toilets and amenities.

Chapter 3

Ambling on the site



Ambling on the site

Upon arrival to the site, people will have to be informed of the variety of activities available and how each of them can be accessed. The main objective of every site manager is to make sure every visitor can find the information they need to navigate their way around and that every activity available on site is properly indicated and made easily accessible. Thus there are three challenges for you:

- How to welcome and introduce your site to the visitor?
- How to make it easy to navigate around the site and the different areas?
- How to make the site accessible for everyone?

How to welcome and introduce your site to the visitor?

“Man has only one chance to make a good first impression!” It is the same for every visited site. A good site is where new visitors can feel at home straight away. Thus it is important to offer him as soon as possible a broad view of the site, where at first glimpse it can be possible both to locate oneself from the entrance(s) and to identify the variety of areas.

It is ideal to have a real person in charge of welcoming the public. This person must be fully aware of every aspect of the site and a full list of what is available must be provided and updated (ideally with any discourse to tell the public).

The starting point(s) of the visit(s) must be clearly identified. This must be at the start of their experience with a “taste” of everything they are going to see during their time.

As a complement and/or instead of a real person, a paper map/ leaflet or an onsite downloadable smartphone (geolocated) application can be designed as a welcoming gift for the public.

Raversyde - Provincie West - Vlaanderen



Tips

- Welcoming panel with a map and informative information
- Reception desk with efficient and trained receptionist
- Easily comprehensive paper map/ leaflet or smartphone app.

Going further

Information on Raversyde is available on the West - Flanders Provincial website. Information includes:

- museum's opening times
- disability access
- admission prices
- groups and schools admissions
- events calendar
- public transport and route planning information

Leaflets are available in some of the key visitors' locations in the coastal area, promoting and providing information on the project.

How to make it easy to navigate around the site and the different areas?

Once the "experience" of the site has started, it is important that the public do not feel lost whilst navigating the site. Signage and way-marking arrows is the most common way to indicate places and remains efficient. However there are other methods such as coloured way marks, lines to follow or wildlife tracks. Searching for clues to find your way can be part of the experience provided it is not too hard. Avoid giving the navigator too many choices on their route. Bear in mind that not everyone is capable of reading a map, therefore your way-finding tools must be very efficient and easily understandable. Avoid too much detail and focus on key important information.

You can also use a mascot as a permanent guide. Each mascot must be selected on purpose in

accordance with the topic it refers to. A mascot is a relevant and friendly message for the whole family. It is also a good way of explaining the rules inside your site ("do not feed animals", "do not throw rubbish").

It is always useful to complete your offer with onsite maps detailing specific areas and location "You are here". Indication of walking time and distance can also be very useful to help the visitor.

Also the printed map/ leaflet or smartphone application can be useful and add value to your tour.

There must be homogeneity (colours, ideograms, words) between panels and documents, and clear distinctive references, with a basic vocabulary for the spatial features onsite and within the communication tools.

La Ferme des Aigrettes - Ville de Marck en Calaisi



Tips

- Be innovative, try to move away from the use of traditional standard arrow signage
- A friendly mascot/ identity is more engaging and memorable
- Provide homogeneity and coherence in signage

Going further

We focused on promoting several spotted points of interest (sensorial labyrinth, temporary exhibition, eco-museum, farm animals) to encourage visitors to experience the farm at their own pace. However we also provide every visitor with a map explaining the 45-minute track we designed for them to discover the area.

Children from our nature club drew a map of the farm which is shown at the entrance of the site.

To ease access inside the site, we worked on making every space fully accessible bearing in mind that the more accessible, the more attractive. Screens that were only accessible on the first floors were duplicated on the ground floor to ensure everyone could view them.

How to make my site accessible for everyone?

It is now mandatory for your site to comply with equality and disability laws and regulations.

Thinking about disability requires common sense. Providing disability access is also providing easily accessible access to everyone. It also means improving security and avoiding unnecessary risks. To avoid massive expenditure you could think of alternative on-demand modes of transport for those with a disability (Joëlette, Randoline...)

To explore opportunities for disability access it is worth approaching your local charities and Non-

Government Organisations (NGO) that work with disabled members of the public. They could provide great advice of the issues around disability access.

Last but not least, you should try the disability facilities implemented for yourself. This will provide you with an understanding of the difficulties people may have to access and amble your site.

Raversyde - Province West - Vlaanderen



Tips

- Follow the rules! Providing better access for disabled customers will benefit everyone.
- Ask for help from your local organisations and charities working with disabled members of the public
- Experiment yourself to experience the ease of accessibility to and around your site.

Going further

Visitors are guided towards the domain through the installation of signage on crucial roundabouts. Teasers and icons will be placed near the domain to increase the visibility of Raversyde within the neighbourhood. Whilst, the tram offers high visibility, as one of the coastal trams was painted according to the house style to promote the domain and raise the awareness of Raversyde.

And Now?

Now you have read this leaflet you can start to increase the accessibility of your site. The first thing you could do is send or hand out the questionnaire in the Appendix to visitors, any person that you think will provide constructive criticism and who can independently judge the accessibility of your site.

This specific element of MaxiGreen was devoted to physical access and we kindly advise you to refer to the work in MaxiGreen on interpretation of heritage. We hope this guide proved to be helpful in advising you about the full range of services you should consider when opening your site to the public.

Find more information on our website: www.maxigreen.eu

Photo credits

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Annex 1

Site Name: _____

Site Location: _____

WP3 – ENABLING ACCESS TO GREEN HERITAGE

Case study – Questionnaire for assessing the accessibility of greensites

This questionnaire is part of the Interreg IV A - 2 seas program called Maxigreen. It is designed to assess the easiness of how visited sites are reachable and accessible in order to provide recommendations to each partner on lessons learnt from cross border activity to increase access for their beneficiaries. It is based upon collective work from cross-border experience and aims at identifying good and improvable practices. It is divided into three parts. The first part concentrates on how to find out about the site, to identify it and easily find where it is, before moving into the site. Secondly how easy it is to go from the place where you live to that site; and how easy people get directed within the site and how fluid can the amble be, even for disabled people.

Before getting into the site

1.1 Was information on the place available at other neighbouring places?

Yes / No

If yes, how many?

1.2 How clear is it from the leaflets / brochures / posters to find the location of the place, on a scale of 1 to 5?

Very Clear	Clear	Fairly Clear	Not Clear	Very Poor
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

1.3 On a scale of 1 to 5, how easy is from the address only to find out the exact location (i.e. Google maps)? Please circle your choice

Very Easy	Easy	Fairly Easy	Not Easy	Difficult
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

1.4 Is there a webpage on the place?

Yes / No

If yes, on a scale of 1 to 5 how easy is it to find from the research engine (i.e. Google rank)?

Very Easy	Easy	Fairly Easy	Not Easy	Difficult
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

1.4 a. Is there a map locating the site in the webpage?

Yes / No

If yes, how easy is to find the map from the website front page?

Very Easy	Easy	Fairly Easy	Not Easy	Difficult
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

1.4 b. How many clicks to find the map? Please tick one

0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5+ <input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

1.5 Please rate how detailed the website was on giving the directions and information on the following:

Excellent	Good	Ok	Poor	Very Poor	Not Applicable
-----------	------	----	------	-----------	----------------

Travelling by Car

Travelling by Bus

Travelling by Train

Walking

Cycling

Opening Hours

Disability Access

Car Parking

1.6 In what other languages is the information on the website provided? Please select all that applies

- Dutch
- English
- Flemish
- French
- German
- Other (please state)

1.7 Please rate how detailed the leaflets were on giving the directions and information on the following:

Excellent Good Ok Poor Very Poor Not Applicable

Travelling by Car

Travelling by Bus

Travelling by Train

Walking

Cycling

Opening Hours

Disability Access

Car Parking

In what other languages is the leaflet available? Please select all that applies

- Dutch
- English
- Flemish
- French
- German
- Other (please state)

Forecast investments concerning how to get into the site

Other comments:

2 Travelling to the site

2.1 Is the site available on GPS?

Yes / No / Do not know

2.2 On a scale of 1 to 5, how well is the place signposted?

Excellent Good Ok Poor Very Poor
 1 2 3 4 5

Other comments on the signposting and types available:

2.3 Please indicate for each of the following (where possible) the distance (m) to the:

Furthest road sign
 External bike-path
 Closest public transport stop
 Horse riding pathways
 Easily accessible parking

2.4 Please indicate for each of the following (where possible) the number of

Car parking spaces
 Bike - parking spaces
 Disable parking spaces

2.5 Is there access for coaches?

Yes / No

2.6 Is there access for camping cars?

Yes / No

Forecast investments concerning how to travel to the site

Other comments:

3 Ambling on the site

3.1 How would you rate the location of the parking to the main reception / entrance on a scale of 1 to 5?

Excellent	Good	Ok	Poor	Very Poor
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

a. If known please indicate the distance

Other comments:

3.2 How would you rate the level of safety between the site and the parking on a scale of 1 to 5?

Excellent	Good	Ok	Poor	Very Poor
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Other comments:

3.3 On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the accessibility of disabled parking?

Excellent	Good	Ok	Poor	Very Poor
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Other comments:

3.4 Are there the following site information available to visitors?

Paper maps	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/>
Panel sign maps indicating location	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/>
Way marks	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please state



3.5 Is the whole site accessible to those with a disability? Yes / No

If no explain

.....

.....

Forecast investments concerning ambling on the site

Other comments:

Partner Logos



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