

## Towards Universal Accessibility in Cultural Heritage Sites of Ávila (Spain)

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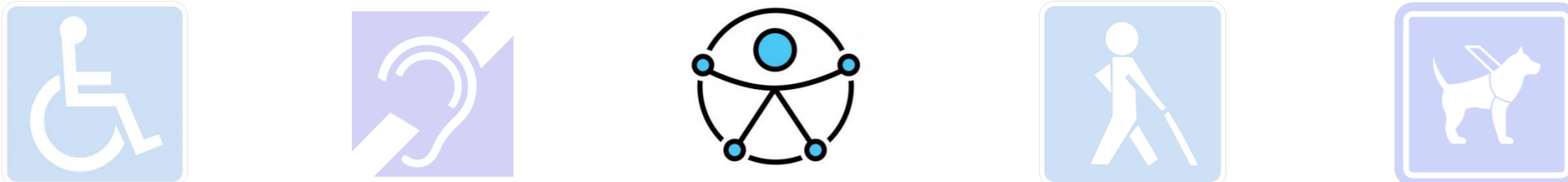
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### INTRODUCTION & AIM

Historic urban environments are central to collective identity, yet they frequently present physical, communicative and cognitive barriers that limit inclusive participation.

Ensuring universal accessibility in cultural heritage sites is essential for achieving sustainable and socially equitable cities aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 10 and 11.

Ávila (Spain), a UNESCO-recognised historic city, provides a relevant case study to explore the tension between heritage preservation and inclusive access.

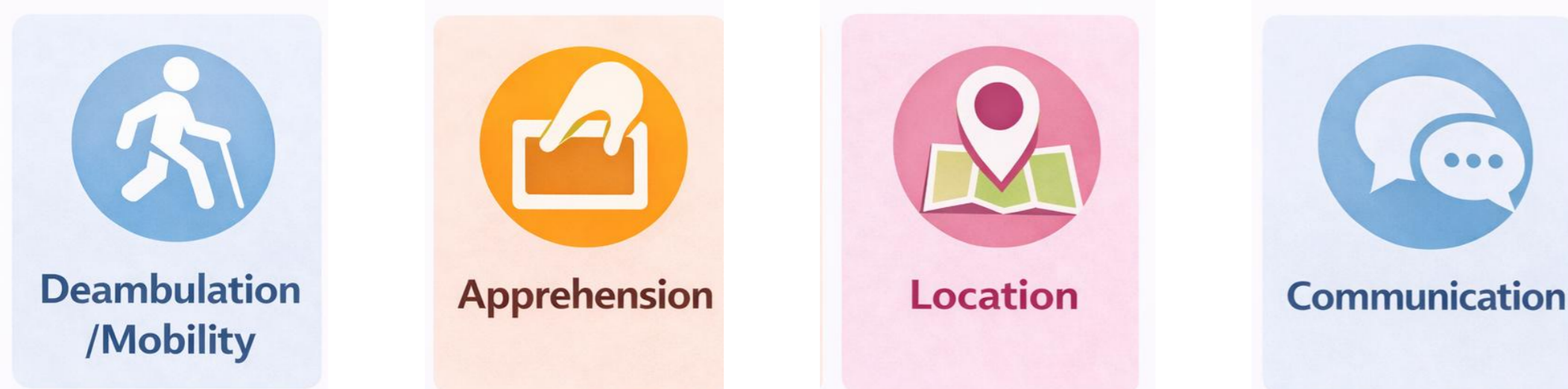


This study aims to comprehensively assess accessibility conditions across Ávila's historic urban fabric and to propose context-sensitive, reversible interventions compatible with heritage conservation principles.

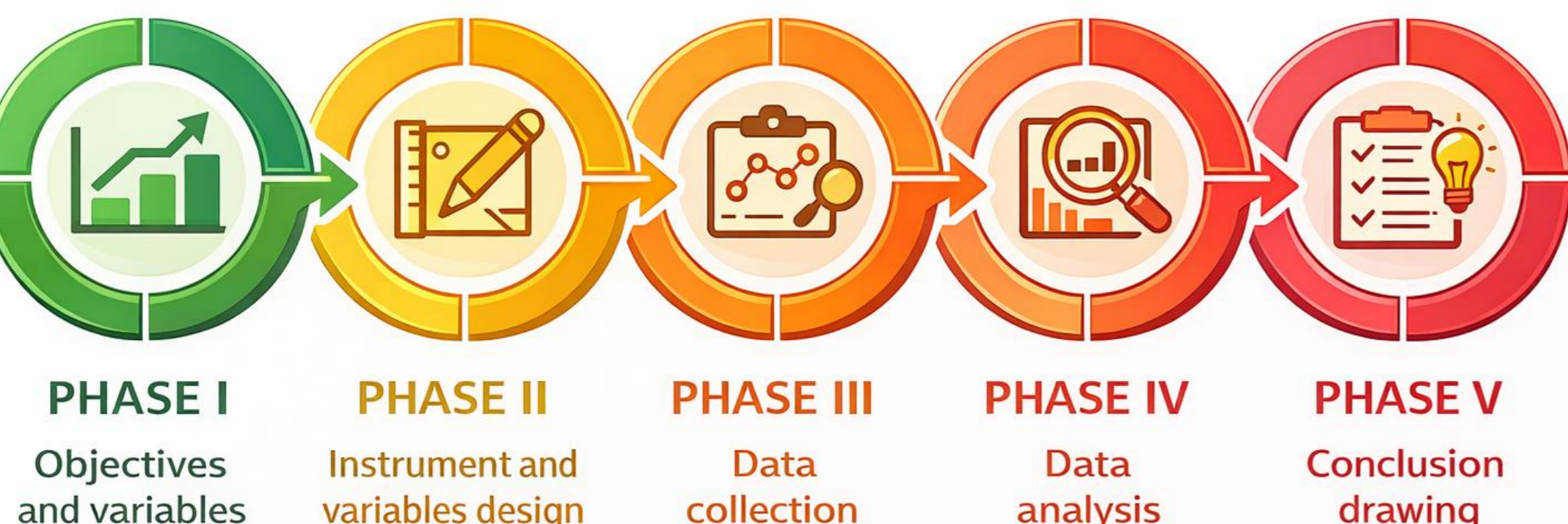
### METHODS

The research adopted a multi-layered evaluative framework combining systematic field observation, site visits and qualitative input from local heritage managers.

Accessibility was analysed across four core dimensions (DALCO):



Quantitative pattern identification was integrated with descriptive qualitative evidence to detect recurring barriers, opportunities and systemic trends across different site typologies within the historic centre.

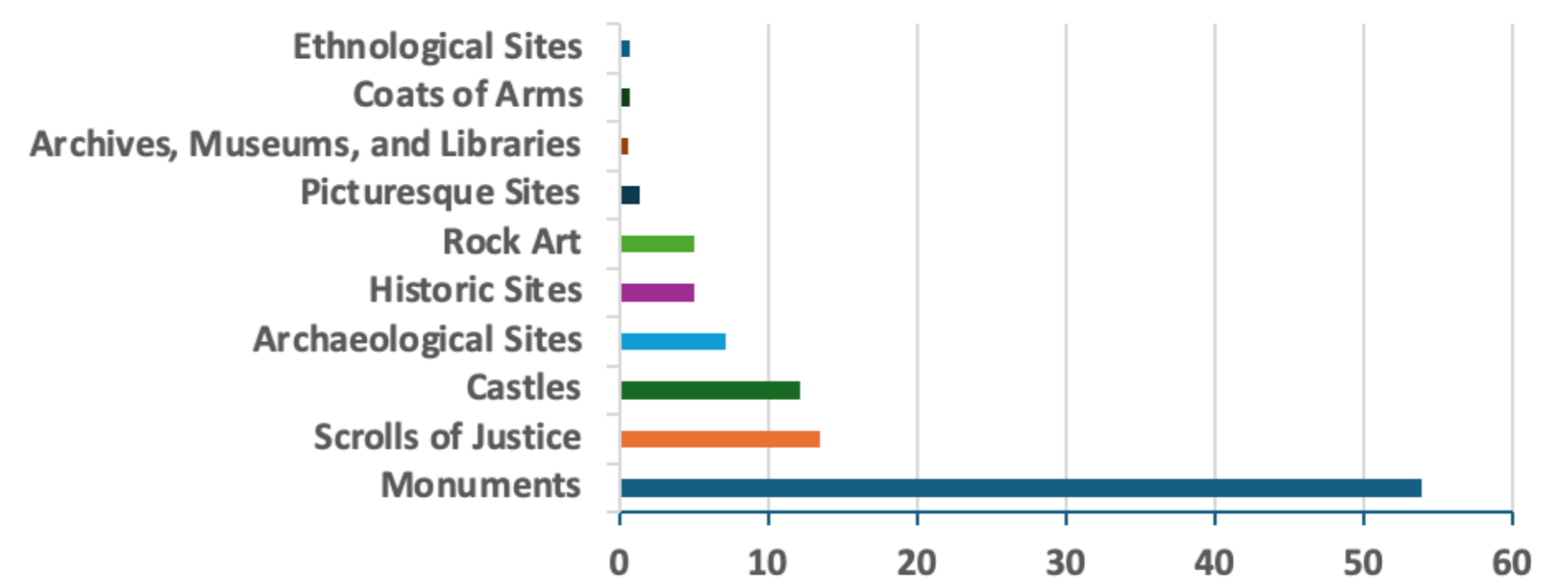


### RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Moderate progress in physical accessibility, particularly through architectural adaptations that respect heritage integrity.

The distribution of Assets of Cultural Interest in the province of Ávila is strongly dominated by monuments, suggesting that accessibility interventions are concentrated in monumental heritage contexts, where conservation requirements often limit structural adaptations.

Distribution of ACIs in the province of Ávila by category



Recurring barriers include irregular pavements, insufficient signage systems and limited use of inclusive communication formats.

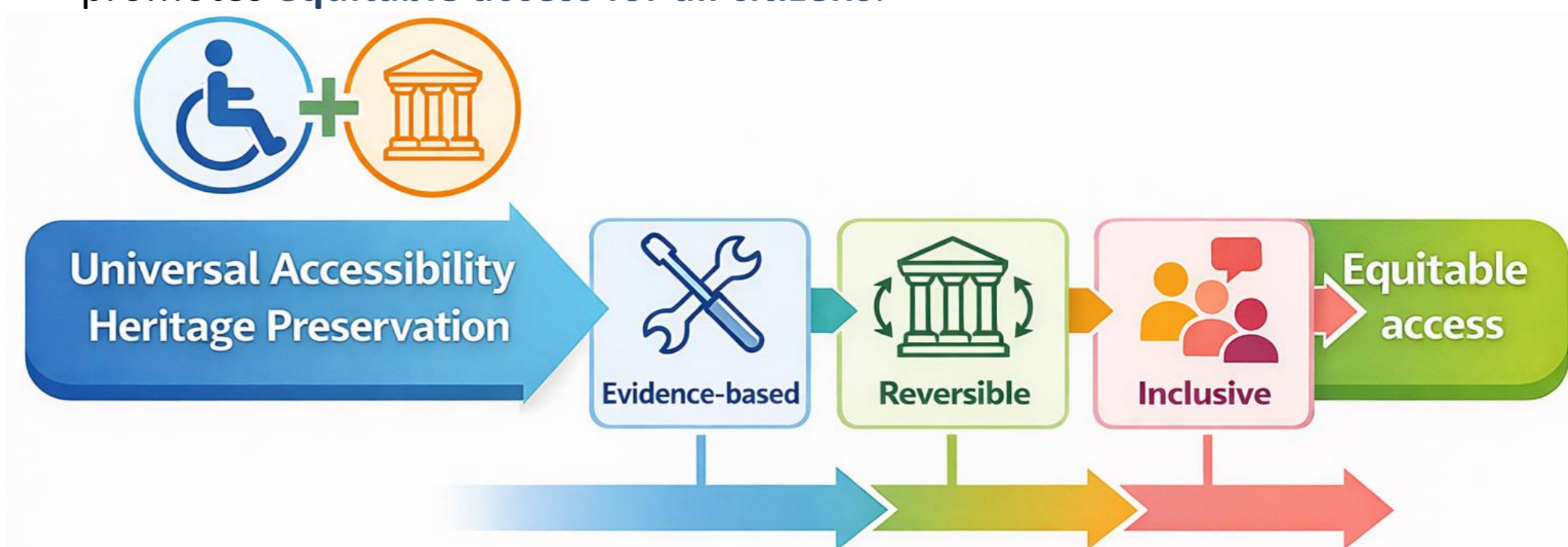
#### Positive Practices



The results demonstrate that accessibility in heritage contexts requires a systemic approach rather than isolated interventions.

### CONCLUSIONS

- The study demonstrates that universal accessibility and heritage preservation are compatible and mutually reinforcing objectives when supported by evidence-based, reversible interventions.
- The proposed framework offers a replicable model for improving inclusive urban environments.
- This approach contributes to sustainable cultural management and promotes equitable access for all citizens.



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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