



REPORT ON MANAGEMENT TOOLS IMPLEMENTATION

D.T2.3.2 - Emilia-Romagna Region (PP01)
Tosco Emiliano Apennine National Park

Ver. 1.2
12/2019

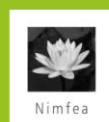




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1. General information

1.1. General introduction to the Action Plan and strategic objectives

It's well known that tourism is one of the main economic sectors able to create positive effects, both direct and indirect, on local communities. In a territory characterized by a strong culture and territorial traditions, tourism can support positively the development, enhancing and relaunching the traditional activities and businesses and, at the same time, maintaining a balanced demographic arrangement of local communities through the development of job opportunities. On the other side tourism can become a threat, when it suddenly and severely upsets the local way of living and running businesses, changing the use of the natural and cultural resources and threatening their conservation. To avoid this, it is necessary to find the right policies and share them with the local stakeholders to define a common model of touristic development that must be sustainable both for the environment and the traditional culture. According to this model, citizens are involved in the decision-making process, in the management of tourism activities and in the reaping of the socio-economic benefits of tourism. Since the project beginning, the National Park has been in touch with the local stakeholders, discussing and creating partnerships. The purpose was working on the development of a specific strategy, aimed on establishing a touristic culture, based on the local features of the area and able to catch the new requests of a continuously evolving market.

The National Park is in a peculiar geographical area and its boundaries were defined according to a strategy of safeguard and promotion of sustainable development, based on the recognition of homogeneous natural and ecosystemic features of this part of the Apennines. Particularly, the climatic border between the European and continental climate in the northern side of the Park (Emilia-Romagna Region) meets the Mediterranean climate of the Southern slope of the Apennine (Tuscany Region) on the ridge of the Apennine, defining natural habitats and ecosystems but also influencing the human presence, activities and culture. Tourism represents the most innovative chance for a social and economic development in the National Park. Actually, in the near past, tourism was not one of the primary factors of economic development on this area and it was only a "seasonal" resource (for example in summer or winter time). It is quite clear that this area is not naturally devoted to tourism. The aim of the Park is to create a sustainable and multi-seasonal tourism district, renovating these old models and building partnerships with the local stakeholders who are ready for this new step. The idea is to "exploit" the richness of the National Park in terms of nature, history, culture, food, local products and gastronomy to make the Apennine more attractive for different kind of tourists in different periods and seasons of the year.

The local touristic enterprises should exploit this richness to create a complete offer and touristic packages. Unfortunately, now they used to work by themselves, without any connection/relationships with other local stakeholders and without creating a network. That's why this strategy can be useful to create new opportunities for the stakeholders to meet each other's and, this way, to create a complete and multi - seasonal offer also for new kinds of tourists and tourisms such as horse riding, hiking, biking, gastronomy and local products and so on. The process of involvement of the stakeholders in the creation of the strategy and of the Action Plan was born thank to a close relationship between the National Park and the local stakeholders. The strategy of the Park wants to strengthen some touristic sectors with high tourism potentialities for this area such as biking, horse riding and hiking/trekking.

Becoming a UNESCO MaB Reserve has been useful to develop a mature awareness on the aspects related



to sustainable tourism and to a more general sustainable development and relationship between man and nature. The perspective used to face these themes was to see this area as a laboratory for sustainable development, being at the same time guarantee of safeguarding the ecosystems and driving force for the development of local communities. These two functions are strictly connected because the conservation can be really successful only with the involvement and support of local citizens and, on the other side, local communities can have a new chance of economic and social renewal through the understanding and enhancement of the peculiarities of their own territory, in all the aspects.

In order to define the actions to be implemented in the framework of the CEETO Project and to harmonize them with the ECST renewal actions (that, de facto, constitutes a new five years Action Plan), the National Park Managing Authority usually organizes meetings with local stakeholders. The Action Plan reflects the strategy of enhancing the sustainable tourism in the area of the Tosco Emiliano Apennine National Park. This will be done through several actions of supporting sustainable activities with the measurement of the results and at the same time facing the challenges of the territory. The CEETO pilot actions will be developed in this framework.

1.2. Forum (update)

Two different forums have been built for the CEETO project, one for the Pietra di Bismantova and one for the Lagdei plain.

After the two workshops on the spots realized in July 2018, the relationships with the components of the forums had been maintained during the development of the actions according to the schedule of the activities, such as the distribution of the questionnaires (together with the explanation of the instructions about their compiling), the realization of the open day, etc.

Furthermore, for the Pietra di Bismantova, there is a special round table: The National Park, the municipality of Castelnovo ne' Monti and other stakeholders of the area are involved. In this way, also this table is informed about the CEETO project.

1.3. Stakeholders involvement in the Action Plan

The reading of the Action Plan shows that a lot of local stakeholders are involved in sustainable tourism still today in different ways. Sometimes they are directly responsible for the action, sometimes they work in partnership with National Park to realize it. According to the strategy, the stakeholders belong to different fields: - hospitality (refugees, hotels, restaurants); - outdoor activities (environmental guides, adventures park, bike rental, summer camp with donkeys); - transports (private and public companies that rent buses with drivers); - local producers (farmers, dairies, spelt producers, shepherds and similar). At the same time, the local community participate thanks to some special experiences, such as the community cooperatives (cooperative di comunità), or thanks to the activities related to environmental education (schools, universities, centres for environmental education, teachers/professors, experts/technicians). Even the pro-loco associations are involved in the actions (CEETO project) and/or informed of the development of the actions.

The municipalities are always informed on the strategy and action plan development, when they are not directly involved in the activities. For the CEETO pilot actions they participated actively into the development of the project. The regional offices for nature conservation and parks, sustainable development and tourism are informed on the activities they are interested in.



2. Sustainable Tourism Action Plan

2.1. How would you assess your overall progress towards in sustainable tourism, bearing in mind where you started?

The development of the CEETO action plan has been useful to strengthen the relationship between the National Park and the local stakeholders, thanks to the sharing decision process. The action plan is strictly connected with the ECST action plan and the action plan of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve: this demonstrate that sustainable tourism is one of the main themes developed in the Tosco Emiliano Apennine National Park.

The pilot actions of the project are very useful for the detailed data collected while developing them: these are the confirmation of some “first impressions” we had about the visitors of the two pilot areas (the Pietra di Bismantova and the Lagdei plain). For example, we have the confirmation that visitors are mainly coming from the neighbourhoods and that they usually spend here one day. For this reason, we want to work on new offers to encourage new visitors from others places to come and visit our area and at the same time to allow people to stay for more than one day.

For the future the general idea is to go on with the development of the most positive aspects of the pilot actions, such as the shuttle bus at Lagdei plain and the payment parking system both at the Lagdei plain and at the Pietra di Bismantova.

2.2. Have the actions provided for in the plan so far been implemented? If not, why?

Referring to the whole action plan, we can say that there are some actions developed every year but for a short period of time (maybe some months according to the activity and the season), while other are continuously developed throughout the year. This allows us to develop the strategy during the whole years and in the future as the framework of the action plan.

It was not possible to submit the questionnaires for visitors in 2018 because of the short season and the impossibility to create the right format of the questionnaires.

2.3. What were your most positive achievements? And the main challenges you still face?

The first most positive achievement was the confirmation of the “impressions” we had about the visitors’ profile, such as that they are mainly local, and they come mostly for a one-day trip. The challenge is to create offers to maintain people here for more than one day.

The stakeholders have been involved since the beginning: this reinforce the network of the stakeholders and at the same time the relationship with the National Park. The comment about local restaurants are good for the two pilot areas, so we had the confirmation of the quality of the restaurants.

The shuttle buses were appreciated and also the payment parking system, especially at the Lagdei plain. At the Pietra di Bismantova there were some “wild parking” along the main access road, so we



have to continuously work about that (despite the creation of the shuttle bus service and the parking payment system).

2.4. Describe the monitoring you have undertaken of the results of your Action Plan.

The main goal was to understand the behaviours of the visitors (both locals and tourists), during their stay inside a protected area.

The main obtained results refer to the collection of data on the visitors' profile, both for the Pietra di Bismantova and the Lagdei plain. They highlighted:

- the knowledge of the visitors about the fact that they were inside a protected area;
- their consciousness on the right behaviours they must adopt inside a protected area;
- if they know that there were sustainable ways to access to the two pilot areas (the activities of the CEETO project mainly but, especially for the Pietra di Bismantova, also other ways of access);
- age/sex/provenience of the visitors;
- the reasons of their visit.

The collected data underline the local provenience of the visitors, that they were well informed to be inside a protected area and that there are some specific behaviours to adopt.

The comments in the questionnaires generally expressed positive comments on the shuttle bus service.

Other information are available in this documents: D.T2.4.3 and D.T2.5.1

2.5. Updating strategy and actions, the process(es) and timetable(s), making reference to the Forum and the involvement of local stakeholders.

The activities of the CEETO project had been a good opportunity to meet the local stakeholders in order to renew the ECST. In this way, we obtained the results of a double involvement of the local stakeholders in both projects, considering the CEETO actions as central in the action plan. Even the two action plans were developed at the same time with specific focus on sustainable access to protected areas and the development of actions on sustainable activities (such as bike tours) and projects (center "man and forests").



3. Management tools/procedures

3.1. What management tools/procedures have you used? (not only in your Pilot Actions)

The actions were shared with the stakeholders of the two pilot areas since the beginning of the CEETO project. This has been useful also to reinforce the ECST strategy (which last 5 years): previous meetings had been held to discuss sustainability in the Appennino Tosco Emiliano National Park.

The questionnaires for the visitors' survey were distributed to:

- accommodations and restaurants services at the Pietra di Bismantova;
- accommodations and restaurants services at the Lagdei plain;
- the InfoPoint at the Lagdei plain.

We collected useful information also from the parking payment system in both the pilot areas and from the shuttle bus service. The shuttle bus service at the Pietra di Bismantova was held during the weekends from June to September, while the shuttle bus at Lagdei plain ran every Sunday of July and August 2019 (plus the national public holiday of the 15th of August). At the same time at Lagdei plain the main road access had been closed to leave the shuttle bus move freely in the area. The parking payment system was active every Sunday of July and August (plus the national public holiday of the 15 of August) at Lagdei plain, while the payment was active for the whole summer at the Pietra di Bismantova.

An Open day had been realized at the Lagdei plain talking about sustainability (with special focus on waters and mountains), sustainable tourism and activities starting from the CEETO project. After a public meeting we organized a hiking to the Gemini lakes near Lagdei plain.

At the Pietra di Bismantova information had been shared about alternative ways of access compared to the main access road, that is usually very used during the high season (spring and summer).

All the activities were focused on changing the wrong behaviours of the visitors, building (when and where required) or reinforce (when and where required) their consciousness about protected areas.

Most of the actions of the Action plan activities had been developed during the 2019 with the main objective of creating consciousness about sustainability among the local citizens and the visitors.

- Public meetings had been organized to share information on the centre "Man and Forests" and on the problem of climate change
- Many tourists/visitors had used the e-bikes in organized tours and events (550 bikers in 30 tours/events)
- Local products and restaurants participated actively to the development of the actions referred to high quality gastronomy as one of the excellences of the territory
- An educational tour for the stakeholders of the Apennine had been organized in partnership with the Alpi Ledrensi and Judicaria Biosphere Reserve (Italy)

The CEETO project and the ECST are developed inside the strategy of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (which lasts 10 years).



3.2. Cooperation with other competent bodies in the implementation of management activities

According to the two different pilot areas, cooperation with different competent bodies has been developed thanks to the CEETO project.

Pietra di Bismantova: municipality of Castelnuovo ne' Monti, local stakeholders referring to tourism and transports field and environmental association. For example, the municipality of Castelnuovo ne' Monti had played an important role in the development of the shuttle bus service and in the following data collection.

Lagdei plain: municipality of Corniglio (which decided to close the main access road to allow the shuttle bus service to move freely), local stakeholders referring to tourism and transports field, private pro loco association.

Regarding the Pietra di Bismantova there is also a specific round table that works simultaneously on the management of the site and that had been informed of the CEETO activities. Even for this reason the municipality of Castelnuovo ne' Monti had played an important role in the development of the shuttle bus service and in the following monitoring. The collected data have been shared between the municipality and the National Park because of the good, productive and durable partnership between the two.

For the shuttle bus service at Lagdei plain a private company provided the shuttle bus, while the local pro loco offered the guides on the bus and the InfoPoint service.

The municipality of Corniglio closed the main access road in partnership with the National Park to allow the shuttle bus service.

The parking payment system was developed in partnership with the two municipalities in both the pilot areas.

3.3. Assessment of strengths/weaknesses about management tools/procedures used

The survey allows us to understand that there is a good knowledge and consciousness of the visitors about the protected area and the behaviours they have to adopt. There is also a confirmation of the quality of restaurant service of both areas.

The communication of the project with the open day at Lagdei plain was very useful thanks to the flyers and gadgets (bags) of the CEETO project.

By the way, there is still a lot of work to do, referring to sustainable access to the pilot areas. For instance, visitors appreciated the shuttle buses but they still prefer using private cars (even if at the same time they complain the wild parking).

3.4. Have you identified other innovative tools/procedures?

No



4. Implemented Action(s)

4.1. Action 1 - Pietra di Bismantova

A) Brief description of the action (tools/procedures)

This pilot area is subjected to high frequencies in a very short period of time during the year. The convenience of access by car creates parking and mobility problems. The place is seen mainly for its recreational use, not considering the natural value and the impact tourism is causing. In particular, the following activities had been implemented during the days identified:

- introduction of an hourly/fixed cost for access to the upper (Piazzale Dante) car parking;
- starting of the shuttle bus service from the village of Castelnovo ne' Monti;
- improvement of the communication to the tourist of alternative routes (paths, thematic routes, etc.), and other attractions of the area around the Stone both in the website and in the square and access roads.

B) Strategic reference objective

The main problem is the behaviour of visitors which is not always adequate. There is a need to try to control these tourist flows and to distribute them a broader period (seasonal adjustment) of time and not only in the proximity of the Pietra, but also in the whole surrounding area.

C) Monitoring tools and management procedures activated

A statistical survey was also carried out, by survey questionnaires, to monitor the motivations, expectations and characteristics of visitors.

The collected data have been used to monitor the effectiveness of the pilot action to create a permanent working-table for traffic flow management between the Municipality of Castelnovo ne' Monti and the Park Authority, to regulate the access with motorized vehicles, to the Pietra's parking square, during the most critical days.

D) Stakeholder involvement

Private local stakeholders (restaurants, accommodations) were directly involved in the activities since the beginning with the workshop on the spot, in distributing the questionnaires and giving information about the shuttle bus.

The local municipality was the leader of the activity related to the development of the shuttle bus service, participating at the workshop on the spot and at the specific round table dedicated to this site.

E) Specific results

92 questionnaires were filled and described the visitors' profile, confirming some ideas/impressions we already had about them. People are still debating on the parking payment system and the shuttle bus service: they appreciate the bus but at the same time they want to access by cars to the Pietra di Bismantova. This means that we have to implement this kind of activities for sustainable access and tourism. People declared that they would have used "alternative"/others paths/way of access when properly informed: that's what the Park is doing providing visitors and tourism stakeholders with flyers, maps and other information tools.



4.2. Action 2 - Lagdei plain

A) Brief description of the action (tools/procedures)

Reducing the access to private cars and at the same time changing the visitors' behaviours inside a protected area. As for the Pietra di Bismantova, this place is subjected to high frequencies, mainly during fall and summer weekends. The convenience of access by car creates parking and dust-related problems for walkers. The place is seen mainly for its recreational use, not considering the natural value. The main problem is the behaviour of visitors which is not always adequate. There is a need to try to control these tourist flows and to distribute them a broader period (seasonal adjustment) of time and to develop some activities that promote a conscious use of the territory and its environmental peculiarities

In particular, the activities realized had been:

- closure of dirt roads to vehicular traffic, allowing access only on foot or by bicycle;
- organization of open days, guided tours, related to the slow discovery of nature;
- shuttle bus service on Sundays of July and August;
- InfoPoint when the shuttle bus service was provided.

B) Strategic reference objective

Monitor and Manage the tourist flows that affect the area of Piana Lagdei, trying to distribute them over a longer period of the year and sensitizing visitors to a more careful use of the area.

C) Monitoring tools and management procedures activated

The Park commits to carry out a monitoring activity of the flows that currently affect the area of Piana Lagdei, involving the Refuge (already Park Visitor Centre) and the other accommodation and catering facilities in the area in the administration of questionnaires specifically designed to collect data on the number, type, preferences and behaviour of visitors.

D) Stakeholder involvement

Private (restaurants, accommodations) local stakeholders were directly involved in the activities since the beginning with the workshop on the spot, in distributing the questionnaires and giving information about the shuttle bus.

The local pro loco was involved in giving information about the CEETO project on the shuttle bus and at the InfoPoint dedicated to the project at the main bus stop.

The local municipality was in charge for the closure of the main access road in order to avoid traffic and to allow the shuttle bus to move freely.

E) Specific results

People appreciated the shuttle bus service, asking for next year to implement the distance of the service since the small village of Bosco di Corniglio (3 or 4 km far from the Lagdei plain). This means that this activity responds also to a practical need of people to reach easily the Lagdei plain when they don't have the car.

The public attending at the open day was good as the group that participated to the trip to the Gemini lakes.

