



REPORT ON MANAGEMENT TOOLS IMPLEMENTATION

D.T2.3.2 - Emilia-Romagna Region (PP01)
Po Delta Regional Park

Ver. 1.2
12/2019

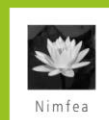




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1. General information

1.1. General introduction to the Action Plan and strategic objectives

The Po Delta Regional Park has never defined its own specific strategy for the sustainable development of tourism, although in recent years several projects have been carried out on this subject. Taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the CEETO project, a reflection on the objectives that the Park intends to pursue as a matter of priority in relation to the development of tourism in the area has therefore begun. Although these objectives cannot be defined as a real strategy, they guide the activities within the CEETO project and are pursued by the Po Delta Regional Park in the development of its functions.

The Park Authority later decided to concentrate the pilot actions on two specific areas: the Cervia Salt Pans and the Mesola Woods. These are two environmental emergencies characterized by short periods of intense tourist use and with long periods, instead, where this is more limited. Moreover, these are two areas that are located in the vicinity of other naturalistic emergencies of potential tourist value, but which are little known and frequented to date.

It was decided to use the "Analysis of strategic flows of visits" according to the St. Gallen method, as this technique responds to the need to know the characteristics of the existing tourist flows in the area of the Cervia Salt Works and the Mesola Woods, in order to better manage them, reducing their impact, encouraging a better distribution throughout the territory of the Park (even to those areas that are almost unknown) and throughout the year.

1.2. Forum (update)

In addition to the meetings organised for the monitoring action and for the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan, no other Forums were organised in the strict sense.

However, the tables opened on that occasion were the basis for building the participatory process for the candidature for the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism where 3 other meetings were organized (8 May 2019 in Comacchio, 9 May 2019 in Cervia, 7 June in Ravenna, 11 June 2019 in Argenta).

1.3. Stakeholders involvement in the Action Plan

Stakeholders were involved in all the development of the pilot action:

1. The identification of «under pressure», «hidden» and «fragile» areas;
2. The analysis of strategic tourist flows;
3. The development of the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan:
 - a) Five years strategy;
 - b) Actions.
4. Manager of visitor centres were involved in:
 - a) Data collection;
 - b) Questionnaires collection.



Including the two workshops and the monitoring tool chosen, the "Analysis of strategic flows of visits" we have realised 8 participatory meetings organised (4 in Mesola and 4 in Cervia) attended a total of 37 different stakeholders joined by about ten private stakeholders interested in the topic.

The stakeholders who participated in the meetings in Mesola were:

- Local authorities:
 - Municipality of Mesola,
 - Municipality of Comacchio,
 - Municipality of Codigoro.
- Local enterprises and trade union
 - Atlantide soc. coop.sociale p.a.,
 - COPEGO
 - AQUA SRL
 - C.A.D.F. S.p.A
 - B&B Penelope Mesola
 - Il Bosco Officinale,
 - Locanda degli Este,
 - Spiaggia Romea srl,
 - Oasi Canneviè,
 - Navi Mondo,
 - Ostello bar Gorino,
- Local and national association
 - Birding Italy,
 - Associazione culturale studiod'archeologia didattica museologia,
- FederParchi,
- Schools:
 - Istituto Comprensivo Codigoro,
- Tourist promotion
 - Pro Loco Codigoro,
 - Consorzio Visit Ferrara,
 - Fattorie del Delta,
 - Pro Loco di Mesola
 - Tourist Information Office Porto Tolle
 - Tourist Service Municipality Goro,
- Local Action Group DELTA 2000,

The stakeholders who participated in the meetings in Cervia were:

- Local authorities
 - Municipality of Cervia,
 - Municipality of Ravenna,
- Local enterprises and trade union:
 - CNA Cervia
 - Confartigianato
 - Assohotel Cervia
 - Atlantide soc. coop.sociale p.a.
 - Hotel Eros Residence,
 - Simpatia srl,
 - Ascom Confesercenti Cervia,
- Local and national associations
 - Ecomuseo delle Erbe Palustri
 - Associazione Festa,
 - Associazione WWF Ravenna
- Tourist promotion
 - Argenta Tourist Information Office,



- Federparchi

Meeting in Mesola: 8/10/2019, 30/10/2019, 20/11/2019, 04/12/2019

Meeting in Cervia: 09/10/2019, 30/10/2019, 20/11/2019, 04/12/2019

The meetings had both the purpose of:

- monitoring action as defined by the “Handbook of successful and innovative practices for a Sustainable Tourism inside Protected Areas” (D.T1.2.3)
- implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan



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 progress made in the field of sustainable tourism as a subject Park has been very important. In fact, at territorial level some embryonic experiences of sustainable tourism were present, but through CEETO also the Park has become fully aware of the importance of addressing this issue to reap the benefits in terms of socio-economic development of the territory, but at the same time to be able to manage it in order to ensure the protection and conservation of the most sensitive areas.

To this is added the importance of the awareness gained during the path of CEETO of how important it is to work in synergy with other territorial subjects, because it is only by networking that it is possible to achieve the objectives for a sustainable tourism development.

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

In the course of this year, since the Plan was also adopted as a resolution by the Park's management body, several actions have been implemented, which are briefly listed below.

- Training of visitor centres' and tourist information offices' staff in the Park on various themes, starting from the importance of regular monitoring of visits and the type of information they collect and interpret, to aspects related to the territory of the Park.
- Monitoring and profiling of visitors through questionnaires which visitor centres in the Park fulfil daily and questionnaires for tourists. Questionnaires contain questions about the origin and type of visit, the awareness of being inside a Park and knowledge of naturalistic hotspots of the Park.
- Coordination of visitor centres in the Park in order to have a unique way of collecting information about the number of visitors.
- A communication campaign on Facebook and Instagram in relation to behaviours in the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve with suggestion on action tourists can make to be sustainable.
- Organisation of the Tourism table during the development of the application form for the European Chart of Sustainable Tourism. With those stakeholders' workshop and meeting will be organised to involve them more in the activities of the Park.
- Setting up tools for landscape interpretation and their inclusion in the Park's communication tools, especially at the Massenzatica Dunes. Interpretative panels will be set up to raise knowledge about this very particular area that represent the ancient delta and the history of the transformation of this territory.
- Open day during the World Biodiversity Day on 22nd of May 2019 to promote less known corner of the Park, also with the support of an online communication campaign.

The other actions contained in the Action Plan will be implemented on the basis of the availability of resources in the future, which is currently not easily programmable.



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

The aspect that has been both a source of satisfaction and criticality is participation. It has been very satisfactory in that, considering the starting point where there was no involvement of stakeholders in the territory, a good level of response has been obtained. At the same time, however, this has required and requires a continuous work of solicitation that risks becoming challenging in terms of time if done constantly.

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

Following the order of actions contained in the Action Plan used in paragraph 2.2:

- A meeting was held on the 24th September 2019 with the Visitor Centres to share with them the monitoring tools and the results, as well as to identify ways to increase collaboration between Visitor Centres:
- number of questionnaires collected, 402 in 2019, 332 in 2018 and related processing;
- creation of a common tool to collect daily the number of visitors entering a Visitor Centre and their processing;
- results of the Facebook and Instagram campaign on correct behaviour in a protected area. The communication campaign on correct behaviour lasted 14 days and its objective was to reach all the people who were in the territory of the Park Municipalities. About 600,000 people were reached, with about 330,000 clicks on the post. It worked best on Instagram (between 70 and 80%);
- Four meetings held for the preparation of the dossier for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (Comacchio, Argenta, Cervia e Ravenna), and one final in Mesola with all the stakeholders.
- creation of 5 information panels inside the Dunes of Massenzatica which are described within the deliverable D.T2.4.2 “Report on the purchase of thematic equipment necessary for pilot actions”.
- The Park organized four guided visits to the Dunes di Massenzatica, in the Municipality of Mesola (FE), and to Mouth of the Bevano torrent, in the Municipality of Ravenna (RA), with 29 participants out of 60 available places due to the bad weather. The online campaign had reached more than 50000 people, with more than 5400 interactions.



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

It has not yet been possible to organise an update of the strategies and actions identified as the time elapsed has not been sufficient to highlight any necessary updates.

However, a series of specific meetings will be organized with the new programming of the Park's activities in 2020 and will be an opportunity to address also the issues related to the development of CEETO actions.

3. Management tools/procedures

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

Description of the planning/management/monitoring tools used in relation to the CEETO Inventory (D.T1.2.1)

The methodology applied for the development of the CEETO pilot action in the Po Delta Park has been chosen among those indicated by the project in the Handbook on successful/innovative practices in Europe (DT1.2.3).

The "Analysis of the strategic visitors' flows " was chosen according to the St. Gallen method, as this technique responds to the need to know the characteristics of the existing tourist flows in the area of the Cervia Salt Pan and the Mesola Woods, in order to better manage them, reducing their impact, encouraging better distribution throughout the Park (even to those areas that are almost unknown) and throughout the year.

The analysis of the strategic visitors' allows to collect a large amount of information involving the tourist stakeholders of the territory that, thanks to their knowledge of the visiting behaviour of tourists, can draw on maps the movements and activities that they perform within an area. By drawing tourist flows on the maps, stakeholders also bring out information both of a qualitative nature (such as the characteristics of visitors, their travel motivations) and of a quantitative nature (such as maturity or seasonality). The experience of stakeholders and the mutual comparison that the application of the method allows, also allows to highlight evaluations on services related to flows as the critical points and possible points of improvement.

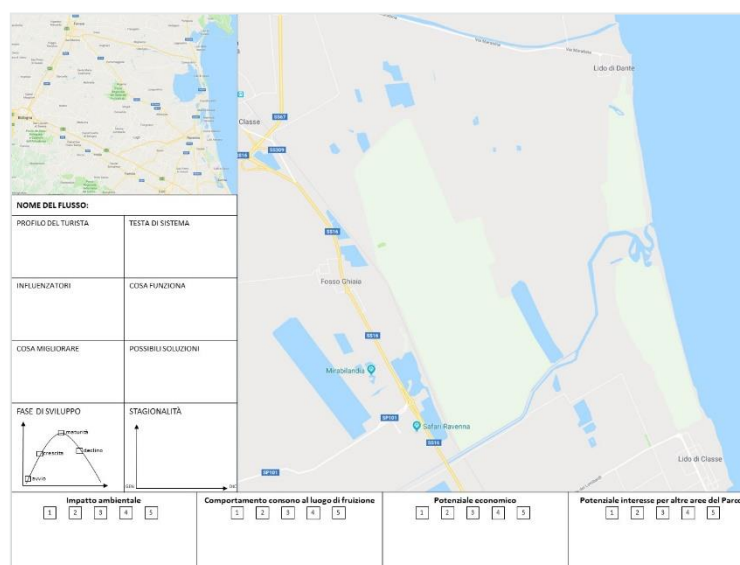


Fig. 1 - Example of a map to work on during the workshops.

On the maps, available on different scales to allow to represent both "macro" flows (which concern and cross a very wide territory) and "micro" flows (often connected to emergencies or specific activities), stakeholders had the opportunity to describe, for each flow, the resources and territorial services



required by guests, actors and operators involved in the provision of services, but also the challenges related to that particular flow and possible interventions to improve the visit experience.

On the basis of the information obtained from the maps in which the main tourist flows have been drawn, it is therefore possible to obtain information and stimuli that can allow to build the CEETO Action Plan to improve the management of tourist flows.

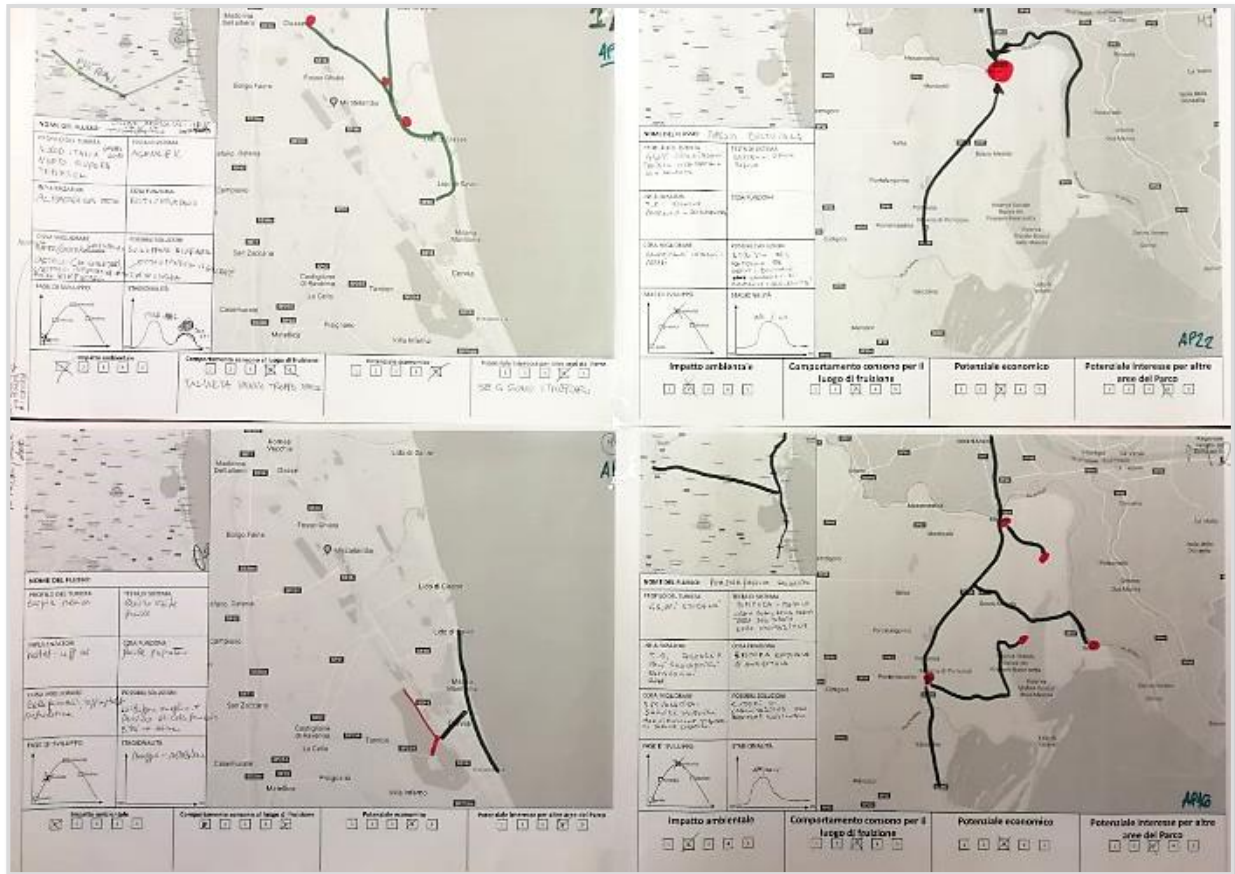


Fig. 2 - Example of maps developed during the Workshop.

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

There was no need to cooperate with other public decision-makers in the implementation of the activities. We cooperated with the forest carabinieri to collect the visit data of an area under their management, while for other places, mainly managed by private individuals, we cooperated directly with them.



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

Strengths:

- Collection of large amounts of information involving the stakeholders;
- Drawing on maps the movements they make within an area.;
- Providing of qualitative information such as the characteristics of visitors, their reasons for travelling, etc.;
- Providing of quantitative data such as numbers and seasonal flows;
- evaluations such as the criticality of a given sector (ranging from transport to the situation of paths, etc.) or on the general tourist situation;
- useful when investigating large areas.

Weakness:

- good knowledge of tourism by local stakeholders;
- it can take a long time for the final processing of the results;
- it needs a good ability of facilitators to manage both groups and schedules.

3.4. 3.4 - Have you identified other innovative tools/procedures?

In this short period, we couldn't identify other innovative procedures.



4. Implemented Action(s)

4.1. Action 1: S1 Training of Visitor centres' staff

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

The complete action as described in the Action Plan also included tourist information offices, but in this first phase the focus was on Visitor Centres. The training actions concern the capacity of the structures to provide information on the whole territory of the Park and not only on the areas that are already widely known and visited.

B) Strategic reference objective:

- Guarantee a sustainable development of tourism in the Park;
- Promote the deseasonalisation of tourism and a more balanced distribution of tourist;
- Informa and engage visitors on the behaviour to have in the Park;

C) Monitoring tools and management procedures activated:

- Meeting with Visitor Centres;
- Constant relationship and listening to the visitor centres.

D) Stakeholder involvement:

- Manager of Visitor Centres.

E) Specific results:

- Wider knowledge and awareness of the territory and the Park and its characteristics .

4.2. Action 2: S3 Monitoring and profiling of visitors by the visitor centres of the Park

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

This action is also part of the pilot action of monitoring by counting visitors visiting the Visitor Centres and filling in questionnaires. Within this action a data collection form common to all the Visitor Centres of the Park has been realized (before each one collected it and reported it in a different way) in order to have it:

B) Strategic reference objective:

- Guarantee a sustainable development of tourism in the Park;
- Reduce the overall environmental pressure generated by tourism.

C) Monitoring tools and management procedures activated:

- Common access data collection module between all Visitor Centres .

D) Stakeholder involvement:



- Manager and employees of Visitor Centres.

E) Specific results:

- More precise knowledge of the number of tourists who carry out eco-tourism activities in the area;
- uniform collection of information;
- data comparability;
- more in-depth knowledge of the number and type of tourists entering the Visitor Centres.

4.3. Action 3: Coordination among Visitor Centres of the Park

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

During the workshops it became clear that there is not enough coordination between the Visitor Centres to ensure full and complete dissemination of information.

B) Strategic reference objective:

- Contribute to transform the Po Delta into a destination of excellence in terms of sustainable tourism and ecotourism.

C) Monitoring tools and management procedures activated:

- Meeting with Visitor Centres.

D) Stakeholder involvement:

- Manager and employees of Visitor Centres.

E) Specific results:

- Greater uniformity of services offered by the Visitor Centres.

4.4. Action 4: S5 Communication campaign on behaviours

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

Promotion of a communication campaign on the core values of the Park and the correct behaviour to be adopted within the naturalistic attractions. This campaign focused on periods of tourism peaks, i.e. during the most critical moments for the conservation of the environment.

B) Strategic reference objective:

- Guarantee a sustainable development of tourism in the Park;
- Reduce the overall environmental pressure generated by tourism;
- Inform and engage visitors on the behaviour and the code of conduct to be observed in the Park;

C) Monitoring tools and management procedures activated:

- Communication campaigns.



D) Stakeholder involvement:

- None: online campaign.

E) Specific results:

The communication campaign on correct behaviour lasted 14 days and its objective was to reach all the people who were physically present in the territory of the Park's Municipalities. About 600'000 people were reached and the post received about 330'000 clicks. It worked better on Instagram (between 70 and 80%) than on Facebook.

4.5. Action 5: S7 Tourism table

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

During the "analysis of strategic visitor flows" phase, the need to set up "tourism tables" similar to those already carried out for CEETO emerged, so to meet and discuss strategies and projects. The first opportunity to activate these tables was the application process for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, launched and completed this year.

B) Strategic reference objective:

- Contribute to transform the Po Delta into a destination of excellences in terms of sustainable tourism and ecotourism;
- Stimulate and support local tourism operators so that they understand and follow the principles of sustainable tourism.

C) Monitoring tools and management procedures activated:

- Participatory process and focus group.

D) Stakeholder involvement:

- Public and private stakeholders of the territory.

E) Specific results:

- Application to the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism.

4.6. Action 6: Dunes of Massenzatica2 Tools for landscape interpretation

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

The complexity of the environmental and geological value of the Dunes of Massenzatica is such that the visitor does not always understand their value and meaning, thus sometimes leading towards visitor's disappointment.

B) Strategic reference objective:

- Guarantee a sustainable development of tourism in the Park;
- Reduce the overall environmental pressure generated by tourism;
- Inform and engage visitors on the behaviour and the code of conduct to be observed in the Park.



C) Monitoring tools and management procedures activated:

- Number of panels installed
- number of people not following the route

D) Stakeholder involvement:

- Manager of the Dune of Massenzatica.

E) Specific results:

Better knowledge and awareness of the place you visit in order to appreciate its naturalistic peculiarities.

4.7. Action 7: Po Delta International School on Birdwatching and Ecotourism

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

In the context of the UNESCO MAB recognition as a Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, a school has been organized on the theme of birdwatching and ecotourism, two sectors in which the Po Delta has much to give, but much still to learn. The week was attended by young people from the territory of the Biosphere Reserve, both from Italy and abroad. The aim of the course was to understand how these two sectors can be tools for sustainable tourism development. From a training point of view, both experienced teachers in their respective fields and local operators who live and work in this territory every day. (more information <http://www.biosferadeltapo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Po-Delta-International-School-on-Birdwatching-and-Ecotourism-call-for-application-1.pdf>)

B) Strategic reference objective:

- Guarantee a sustainable development of tourism in the Park;
- Contribute to transform Po Delta into a destination of excellence in terms of sustainable tourism an ecotourism
- Promote the deseasonalisation of tourism and a more balanced distribution of tourist;

C) Monitoring tools and management procedures activated;

- Number of participants
- Lectures
- Experiences on the territory

D) Stakeholder involvement:

- Local stakeholder both in the organisation and with practical experiences

E) Specific results:

To make both young people and operators understand the importance of continuing to work and further develop the ecotourism and birdwatching sector and how the UNESCO MAB recognition can help in sustainable development.



4.8. Action 8: Teachers' Day

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

As part of the activities of the Biosphere Reserve, on the occasion of the UNESCO World Teachers' Day, a meeting is held dedicated to them to let them know and discover the whole territory of the Po Delta Park and the opportunities related to environmental and sustainable education that can be done in the field, activities that can be carried out even out of season. In this way the aim is to expand the territory and the activities that school groups do every year, increasing the didactic offer and the knowledge of the territory.

B) Strategic reference objective:

- Promote the deseasonalisation of tourism and a more balanced distribution of tourist;
- Strengthen the link between the Park's environmental education functions and activities with sustainable tourism development.

C) Monitoring tools and management procedures activated;

- Number of participants to the meeting
- Number of private subjects involved in proposing their educational offers

D) Stakeholder involvement:

- Local stakeholder offering education activities
- Schools

E) Specific results:

Show the variety of activities that can be carried out in the Po Delta territory throughout the year and how they can be integrated with classroom activities, becoming also an opportunity to learn more about your territory and respect it.

4.9. Action 9: European Chart of Sustainable Tourism

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

the candidacy for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism was made together with the Veneto Delta Po Park and involved the whole territory of the Po Delta Park, with a series of meetings also very punctual with different stakeholders, going to expand the path made with CEETO

B) Strategic reference objective:

- Guarantee a sustainable development of tourism in the Park;
- Contribute to transform Po Delta into a destination of excellence in terms of sustainable tourism an ecotourism
- Promote the deseasonalisation of tourism and a more balanced distribution of tourist;

C) Monitoring tools and management procedures activated;

- Number of participants to themeetings and the Forum



- submission of application Experiences on the territory

D) Stakeholder involvement:

- Local stakeholder both public and private.

E) Specific results:

For several years now, both Parks have been carrying out projects related to sustainable tourism development. The European Charter of Sustainable Tourism is an efficient tool to put all the work done into practice, to lay the foundations to improve it in the future, focusing on collaboration and cooperation.