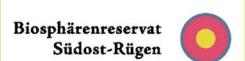




# INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF PILOT ACTIONS

D.T3.2.1 - PTSCLAS Spa

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## 1. Introduction

This document intends to evaluate the effectiveness of the work carried out by the Protected Areas with the Pilot Actions of CEETO project and within the wider perimeter of design and experimentation defined by the Work Package 2 - Testing.

To this end, the document aims to:

- retrace the methodological and operational steps carried out from March 2018;
- define the evaluation design in terms of subject of the investigation, specific evaluation questions and selection criteria of the reference indicators;
- draw up an analysis of the qualitative and quantitative effects achieved and an assessment of the benefits generated by the priority actions identified by each Protected Area within the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan;
- describe any opportunities seized by the Protected Areas, alongside the problems faced, the foreshadowed risks and the solutions adopted to overcome them.

In the light of the observations made and as a final summary, the Report ultimately provides for a contribution report to the drafting of the CEETO Guidelines (Thematic Work Package 3 - Guidelines, D.T3.4.1).

## 2. The methodological and operational approach

In introductory terms, the activities carried out for the purposes of the independent evaluation were the following.

1. The accurate analysis of the documentation produced in the context of the Thematic Work Packages 1 - Diagnostic and 2 - Testing, that is:
  - “Inventory of planning/management/monitoring tools and success stories for sustainable tourism in PAs” (D.T1.2.1);
  - “Handbook of successful and innovative practices for a sustainable tourism inside Protected Areas” (D.T1.2.3);
  - “Capacity Building Work Plan for Protected Areas” (D.T2.1.1);
  - “Report of the on-the-spot assistance workshops on Action Plans elaboration and implementation” (D.T2.1.3);
  - “Consulting body - Stakeholder Forum” (D.T2.2.1), “Workplan/Roadmap sustainable tourism Action Plan” (D.T2.2.2), “Sustainable tourism Action Plan” (D.T2.2.3), “Pilot Action monitoring workplan” (D.T2.4.1) and “Report on monitoring workplan implementation” (D.T2.4.3) for every Protected Area;

in order to master:

- the primary and secondary goals and the intervention strategies;
- the best practices of reference for the tourist flows management and monitoring in Protected Areas, with a view to the sustainability themes and with a specific attention to the most innovative experiences;
- the project Partners and the stakeholders involved in the 8 Protected Areas to be tested;
- the network of relations among the same actors (management and stakeholders), and the degree of participation to the planning process started in the 8 Protected Areas;



- the Pilot Actions defined for each Protected Area and the specific purposes;
  - the proposals articulated in the monitoring plans, as well as the Sustainable Tourism Action Plans.
2. The drafting of a summary sheet for each Protected Area, dedicated to highlighting critical elements, purposes, contents and timing of the realization.
3. The direct dialogue with the local Partners, during a first inspection carried out between June and July 2019 and aimed at:
- the supervision of the Protected Areas and the interventions underway and/or in progress within the framework of the CEETO project;
  - the verification of the correctness and completeness of the contents of the same sheets;
  - the understanding of the logical and functional links between the monitoring actions and the management actions;
  - the improvement, if necessary, of the monitoring tools and management actions in light of the development objectives that originated the Pilot Actions (for example, the contents of the questionnaire to visitors, the organization of a shuttle service for tourists in the summer period, the provision of information panels at the less known attractors, the provision of an adequate campaign to promote the areas subject to the Pilot Action), with a specific attention to restraint the phenomenon of over-tourism, if suffered;
  - the definition of quali-quantitative indicators of the results achieved and the identification of final objectives, as a stimulus for the Protected Area to conduct the planned activity with an appropriate planning;
  - the sensitization of the local actors about the start of a monitoring plan of the same indicators in the period June-September 2019, aimed at collecting timely information for the preparation of the final Independent Evaluation report.
4. The drafting of the intermediate Independent Evaluation report, aimed at describing the Pilot Actions, indicators and targets as defined during the first inspection in the Protected Areas.
5. The realization of a second inspection in each Park (October and November 2019), in order to:
- collect information on the final values of the indicators identified during the first inspection in the Protected Areas, for the purpose of drafting the final Independent Evaluation report;
  - evaluate the compliance or the deviation from the pre-set targets, that is the quantitative and qualitative values expected with the implementation of the Pilot Actions;
  - understand the reasons and analyse the consequences of these differences;
  - suggest possible solutions for the implementation or the improvement of the interventions.

### 3. The evaluation plan

#### 3.1. The subject of the evaluation process

The topic of the independent evaluation activity was twofold and concerned:

- Pilot Actions carried out by Protected Areas within the CEETO project;
- the complex of activities carried out in Work Package 2 - Testing.



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In particular, a clarification must be made on the first theme, since the external evaluation of the Pilot Actions has affected all the monitoring and management activities identified, organized and implemented by the Protected Areas.

In theory and according to a rigorous approach, the two types of activity should have been connected in functional terms, following each other with these steps:

1. a first monitoring phase, aimed at photographing the state of the main critical aspects of the Park according to what emerged during the participatory process, that is during the dialogue with local stakeholders which led to the drafting of the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan;
2. the identification, on the basis of the evidences emerged, of appropriate activities of management of the Protected Area, oriented to correct the initial emergencies;
3. a second monitoring phase, aimed at verifying the effectiveness of the governance actions implemented for the purpose of solving, in whole or in part, the initial critical issues.

According to this approach, only the actions of management should have been considered Pilot Actions in the proper sense of the CEETO project, while the monitoring activities would play an instrumental role, that is of measuring the goodness of the choices made to improve the governance of the Parks.

In practice, and how it will be observed in the continuation of the report, this relationship of subordination has not found a univocal application among the Parks; in order to enhance the planning activity carried out by all the Protected Areas and bring the results achieved to a common heritage, it was decided to analyse the two types of actions (monitoring and management) in parallel and complementary terms, highlighting the functionality of the former to the latter in the cases where a Protected Area has actually complied with the more coherent application.

### **3.2. The evaluation questions**

The independent evaluation of the Pilot Actions considered by the Protected Areas as part of the CEETO project and, more generally, of the complex of activities carried out in Work Package 2 - Testing was based on the following questions.

1. Are the Pilot Actions consistent with the purpose of solving the criticalities identified in the Protected Areas?
2. Were the Pilot Actions implemented in line with the schedule and the contents agreed during the first inspection?
3. With reference to the indicators agreed during the same inspection, which qualitative and/or quantitative results were achieved by the Pilot Actions? And, if defined, have the corresponding targets been reached?
4. Which new management opportunities, not covered by the Pilot Actions, have been seized by the Protected Areas?
5. Which problems or risks occurred during the implementation of the Pilot Actions?
6. Do the activities defined as Pilot Actions appear effective for the implementation of the following Sustainable Tourism Plan?
7. Has the social and economic local network been effectively involved in the definition of the Pilot Actions and, more generally, in the definition of the Sustainable Tourism Plan of the Protected Area?
8. Which environmental benefits have been achieved with the Pilot Actions?



### 3.3. The criteria for the selection of the evaluation indicators

As illustrated in the next paragraphs, in order to reach a complete answer to the evaluation questions, specific measures of qualitative and quantitative nature have been identified, meeting the requirements of:

- relevance, or adequacy to verify the change pursued by the CEETO project;
- effectiveness, that is the significance of the measurement;
- identity SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-based), that is in line with the need of:
  - sensitivity to the intervention policies defined by CEETO;
  - measurability and clarity;
  - public availability of data;
  - statistical robustness;
  - possibility of a timely collection.

More precisely, the evaluation plan provided for the adoption and the application of indicators of:

- realization, aimed at measuring what is directly produced through the Pilot Actions (for example, the number of paths traced as an alternative to the most popular itineraries and the number of surveillance devices installed in a Protected Area);
- result, which provide information on the change that the project induces in the territory subject to intervention (for example, the number of people attracted by the private car to the public shuttle);
- impact, oriented to grasp the cycle of socio-economic effects in the surrounding area (for example, the reduction of polluting emissions and the degree of participation in the design process of the local community).

## 4. The evaluation of the Pilot Actions in the Protected Areas

### 4.1. The themes of intervention and the consistency of the Pilot Actions

The Pilot Actions identified by the Protected Areas involved in the CEETO project focus on seven central themes and were built with the aim of solving the elements of internal weakness considered to be a priority; in light of this definition process, it is possible to clearly affirm the compliance with the criterion of coherence between Pilot Actions and development purposes of the Parks.

The intervention themes identified by the Protected Areas are, in detail, the following:

- Accessibility
- Portrait of the visitors
- Behaviour of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities
- Tourist fruition of the territory
- Tourist offer
- Impact of the tourist pressure on nature and environment
- Network of collaboration among the local actors.



More precisely, the structure of the thematic areas of intervention, the criticalities identified, the activity aims and the Pilot Actions defined within the CEETO project is as follows.

### Accessibility

Critical points	Purposes of the Pilot Actions	Pilot Actions
Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles)	To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car	Shuttle service Public transport (bus) service E-bikes Restoration and securing of paths New parking rules InfoPoint Open days Communication of the alternative mobility services by: - press - posters - brochures/ leaflets - web - social network
Low accessibility and inclusion for visitors with disabilities	To enhance the possibilities of fruition of the territory by visitors with disabilities	Open days

### Portrait of the visitors

Critical points	Purposes of the Pilot Actions	Pilot Actions
Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behavior, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct	To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities	Survey Manual counting of visitors Electronic people counters Electronic car counters Analysis of summit books and counting of signatures Video cameras Video Content Analysis (VCA) system

### Behavior of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities

Critical points	Purposes of the Pilot Actions	Pilot Actions
Inappropriate behavior of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value	To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behavior, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct	Open days InfoPoint Communication through: - press - brochure/ leaflets - the website of the Park - social networks - audio guide - educational video - placemats Interactive map Waste bins Training and coordination of the Park Visitor Centres and Tourist Information Offices



## Tourist fruition of the territory

Critical points	Purposes of the Pilot Actions	Pilot Actions
Relevant concentration of the Park visitors in few sites	To promote the visit to less known and less frequented sites within the Park	Open days InfoPoint Communication through: - brochure - social networks Training and coordination of the Park Visitor Centres and Tourist Information Offices Panelling and information tools
Partial knowledge by visitors of the overall tourist offer of the Protected Area	To improve the tourist promotion by informing on the global offer (sports and recreational activities, accommodation, restaurant, paths)	InfoPoint Communication through: - brochure - 3D map

## Tourist offer

Critical points	Purposes of the Pilot Actions	Pilot Actions
Perfectibility of the overall tourist offer of the Protected Area	To enhance the possibilities of fruition of the Protected Area according to environmental sustainability criteria	Plan for the local territorial development and technical study for the infrastructural services New signs for trekking Search and rescue routes

## Impact of tourist pressure on nature and environment

Critical points	Purposes of the Pilot Actions	Pilot Actions
Limited knowledge of the actual impact of the tourist pressure on the Protected Area	To inspect and analyse the effects of the touristic presence on the natural environment and habitat	Swarovski telescope (Spektiv) and rescue equipment Monitoring of the naturalistic and environmental conditions by specific indicators

## Network of collaboration among the local actors

Critical points	Purposes of the Pilot Actions	Pilot Actions
Low participation of the local stakeholders in designing the tourist offer of the Protected Area in concerted terms	To create opportunities for local public and private stakeholders to meet and discuss, in order to promote participatory planning processes	Saint Gallen method Training and coordination of the Park Visitor Centres and Tourist Information Offices Working groups between inhabitants and stakeholders



## 4.2. The results in the Protected Areas

The following paragraphs illustrate the evidence that emerged in the final evaluation of the activities carried out by each Protected Area in the context of the Pilot Actions and, more generally, of the planning and design process outlined by the Work Package 2 - Testing.

The reflections are intended to answer the evaluation questions 2-8 proposed in the section 2.2, referring to the Annex "Independent Evaluation. Critical Map of Pilot Actions" a summary representation of the evolution of the planned activities, the opportunities taken, the problems and risks faced, and the measures identified for their resolution.

### 4.2.1. The Tuscan-Emilian Apennine National Park

#### PIANA di LAGDEI

<b>1 PILOT ACTION</b>	<b>Providing shuttle service between the towns of Cancelli and Lagoni, with a tour guide on board; new parking rules</b>
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#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility;*
- *Behaviours of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles);*
- *Inappropriate behaviours of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value.*

#### PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car;*
- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behaviours, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct.*

#### DESCRIPTION

The service was provided in compliance with what had been set out in the course of the preliminary on-the-spot inspections, namely in collaboration with the municipality of Corniglio, and was available for free in July (starting from the 7th of July) and August including Sundays and public holidays, from 10 am to 6 pm. For the time of the tours the road connecting the towns of Cancelli and Lagoni was reserved for non-motorized vehicles like bicycles, for horses and walking; access by car was allowed until 10 am with the possibility to park for free at Lagoni sanctuary parking (subject to availability), while parking on the road was forbidden.

The tour guide on board who was supposed to provide the hikers with necessary logistical information and information regarding the environment was replaced by InfoPoint in Cancelli town, managed by Pro-loco of Bosco and having a wider range of functions like:



- informing about the new public transport service and other eco-friendly alternatives (walking, cycling, horse riding);
- raising awareness regarding the conservation of the Protected area and the necessity to observe the rules of conduct;
- promoting the tangible and the intangible heritage of the area.

## 2 PILOT ACTION

### Introducing new parking rules

#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles).*

#### PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car.*

#### DESCRIPTION

The action, implemented in compliance with what had been set out in the course of the preliminary on-the-spot inspections involved:

- access by car to the free parking area of Lagoni sanctuary (subject to availability) until 10 am on days on which the shuttle service was to be operated;
- setting up parking spaces (against payment) in the town of Lagdei in cooperation with the tourist association Pro-loco of Bosco, starting from Sunday, July 14th. In weekdays the use of the parking spaces remained free of charge in compliance with the previous provisions.

## 3 PILOT ACTION

### Installing devices to count people and vehicles

#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behaviour, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

#### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*



## DESCRIPTION

The two actions, initially provided for as the Pilot Actions and aimed at monitoring the presence of people and vehicles in the area of Lagdei Plateau, have not been implemented due to the subsequent more specific assessments, namely:

- unreliability of the readings of the people counter due to the variety of access roads to the area, which would make it impossible to get accurate results;
- the decision to provide a paid parking lot in the town of Lagdei, as outlined in the previous Pilot Action. In fact, the number of parking tickets sold is an indicator of significant importance as far as the tourism pressure in this area is concerned.

<b>4 PILOT ACTION</b>	Realization of themed Open Days
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## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility;*
- *Behaviour of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities;*
- *Tourist fruition of the territory.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles);*
- *Inappropriate behaviour of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value;*
- *Relevant concentration of the Park visitors in few sites.*

## PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car;*
- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behaviour, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct;*
- *To promote the visit to less known and less frequented sites within the Park.*

## DESCRIPTION

Compared to what had been defined in the course of the preliminary on-the-spot inspections, the action was downscaled by holding just one Open Day dedicated to the lakes of the Park, taking place on 31 May and 1 June 2019.

Instead, the following objectives:

- informing people about the shuttle service;
- encouraging people to use other forms of sustainable mobility (walking, cycling or horse riding);
- raising awareness in relation to the environmental respect of the Protected Area the necessity to observe the rules of conduct;



- providing information about the tangible and the intangible heritage of the area;

were delegated to the InfoPoint facility, in charge of organising the experimental public transport service days.

Moreover, the downscaling of the Open Day proposals made it impossible to implement the initiative of making the visitors use e-bikes, which had been initially planned during the first appraisal.

<b>5 PILOT ACTION</b>	Carrying out a survey
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#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behaviour, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

#### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

#### DESCRIPTION

The survey was carried out among the visitors of Lagdei Plateau in line with what had been outlined at the initial stage when the Pilot Action was launched; hard copy questionnaires were distributed in the period from 3 July to 30 September 2019:

- at the shuttle bus stops on Sundays and on non-working days;
- at the huts, tourist facilities and visitor centres of Lagdei Plateau, throughout the period, in order to find out:
  - the identity (the age, the gender, the country /city of origin);
  - the tourism behaviour (a one-day visit or an overnight stay, if one is not a local resident), the accommodation choices (location and accommodation facility) and the duration of stay;
  - whether the visitor was alone or with a partner, the family, how many times they visited the area and the main reason for visiting;
  - information channels;
  - the transportation means used to reach Lagdei Plateau and whether or not the visitors knew about the availability of the shuttle service and how to actually use it;
  - the awareness of being in a Protected Area and the existence of a specific code of behaviour;
  - the activities usually carried out during the visit to the Protected Area and the kind of experience they expect;
  - the level of satisfaction with the touristic offer provided by Lagdei Plateau and suggestions for its improvement (if any).



## PIETRA di BISMANTOVA

### 1 PILOT ACTION

Shuttle service between the city centre of Castelnovo ne' Monti and Dante Square

#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles).*

#### PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car.*

#### DESCRIPTION

The shuttle service on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays from 9 am to 7 pm, from 23 June to 30 September 2019, was provided in compliance with what had been set out in the course of the preliminary on-the-spot inspections.

### 2 PILOT ACTION

New parking rules

#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles).*

#### PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car.*

#### DESCRIPTION

In compliance with what had been set out in the course of the preliminary on-the-spot inspections, starting from 23 June 2019 till 30 September 2019 both on working days and non-working days from 8 am to 8 pm the parking lot in Dante square, located in close proximity to Pietra di Bismantova, became subject to a charge depending on the duration of the stay (one hour, half a day, the whole day).



### 3 PILOT ACTION

Spreading information regarding the new options to access the area (shuttle bus and pay parking)

#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles).*

#### PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car.*

#### DESCRIPTION

The action, implemented in compliance with what had been set out in the course of the preliminary on-the-spot inspections, involved spreading printed and online information regarding the new options to access the area (shuttle and pay parking).

### 4 PILOT ACTION

People counters installation

#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behaviour, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

#### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

#### DESCRIPTION

The action, initially provided for as the Pilot Action and aimed at monitoring the presence of people in the area of Pietra di Bismantova, has not been implemented due the unreliability of the readings of the people counter due to the variety of access roads to the area, which would make it impossible to get accurate results.

### 5 PILOT ACTION

Realization of Open days

#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility;*
- *Behaviour of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities;*
- *Tourist fruition of the territory.*



## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles);*
- *Inappropriate behaviour of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value;*
- *Relevant concentration of the Park visitors in few sites.*

## PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car;*
- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behaviour, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct;*
- *To promote the visit to less known and less frequented sites within the Park.*

## DESCRIPTION

Contrary to what was agreed during the preliminary on-the-spot inspections, the Park has not promoted the Open Days dedicated to:

- the events, meetings and guided tours to find out more about the natural habitat of Pietra di Bismantova;
- raising awareness in relation to the environmental respect of the Protected Area the necessity to observe the rules of conduct;
- informing people about the shuttle service;
- encouraging people to use other forms of sustainable mobility (walking, cycling or horse riding);
- the possibility to try to use the e-bikes.

The aims of promoting the new sites inside the area of Pietra di Bismantova and of raising the hikers' awareness regarding an appropriate behaviour during their visit were reached with the help of the activities of the local environmental guides like Guide della Pietra Association, a stakeholder directly involved in the development of CEETO project.

## 6 PILOT ACTION

### Carrying out a survey

## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behaviour, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

## PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*



## DESCRIPTION

The survey was carried out among the visitors of Pietra di Bismantova in line with what had been outlined at the initial stage when the Pilot Action had been launched; hard copy questionnaires were distributed in the period from 3 July to 30 September 2019:

- at the shuttle bus stops on Saturdays, Sundays and on non-working days;
- at the mountain huts, the tourist facilities, the main commercial establishments, IAT (Information and Tourist Accommodation Office) and CAI (the Italian Alpine Club) and with the help of the same environmental guides throughout the period,

in order to find out:

- the identity (the age, the gender, the country/city of origin);
- the tourism behaviour (a one-day visit or an overnight stay, if one is not a local resident), the accommodation choices (location and accommodation facility) and the duration of stay;
- whether the visitor was alone or with a partner, the family, how many times they'd visited the area and the main reason for visiting;
- the information channels;
- the transportation means used to reach Pietra di Bismantova and whether or not the visitors knew about the availability of the shuttle service and how to actually use it;
- the awareness of being in a Protected Area and the existence of a specific code of behaviour;
- the activities usually carried out during the visit to the Protected Area and the kind of experience they expect;
- the level of satisfaction with the touristic offer provided by Pietra di Bismantova and suggestions for its improvement (if any);
- the knowledge of the alternatives to the main track that starts in Castelnovo ne' Monti, in Dante square;
- whether these alternative tracks are actually used, and if not, the reasons why.

## EVALUATION

The shuttle service, provided both in Lagdei Plateau and Pietra di Bismantova, has turned out to be useful in terms of redefining the visitors' choices of transportation means.

As far as the Protected Area is concerned, although the data regarding the number of passengers, who find the new kind of public transport more appealing than travelling by car, the success of the initiative is evident from the daily number of tickets to access the pay parking in Lagdei as well as the records of Pro-loco of Bosco, involved in the management of the InfoPoint during the days on which the shuttle service was operated and, in particular, the activities aimed at raising the awareness of the importance of use of eco-friendly means of transport. This success is also confirmed by the occupancy rate of the vehicle and the level of satisfaction with the service shown by the passengers at the end of the experience.

A key aspect, which turned out to be essential for a favourable outcome of the initiative, was the constant presence of the well-trained staff members of Pro-loco, who managed to provide information related to the logistics as well as the timely suggestions regarding the possibility of a better use of the local territory and the information regarding the appropriate behaviour while visiting the Protected area.



In brief, the Pro-loco of Bosco committee allowed to complete the functions attributed to the tour guides on the shuttle bus, which had been established in the initial project, approved during the preliminary discussion, with some additional objectives related to the promotion of the local tangible and intangible excellence.

The second reason why the offer was so successful, were the adequate support conditions created, like closing the access road to Lagoni town, providing alternative, exclusively eco-friendly ways of moving around (walking, cycling, horse-riding), limited parking options (subject to availability only till 10 am in Lagoni and subject to charge in Lagdei).

Unlike the service in the area of Lagdei Plateau, created and managed by the Tuscan-Emilian Apennine National Park independently, the shuttle service to Pietra di Bismantova was supervised by the municipality of Castelnovo ne' Monti and the technical committee, the members of which were all the local authorities, among which there was the Tuscan-Emilian Apennine National Park itself. The shuttle service creation benefitted from the extensive networking with the territory, established since the early stages of discussion of the CEETO project and, in particular, from the developments in the course of planning based on the Plan of Sustainable Tourism in the area.

In particular, such large coalition has allowed to inform the visitors about a new public transport service through press reports, websites in addition to the posters at the bus stops indicating the shuttle bus timetable.

On the other hand, as far as Pietra di Bismantova area is concerned, the main difficulty was to introduce the new parking rules due to the objections of the local salespeople who were afraid that their earnings would be affected and thus were unwilling to collaborate in terms of the shuttle service promotion and in distributing the survey questionnaires to the tourists. Therefore, there are some noticeable weak points in terms of management of local relations due to the major bargaining strength of the parties involved in the project compared to that observed at Lagdei site.

The Open Days defined during the preliminary visit were substituted by the InfoPoint in the area of Lagdei Plateau in order to boost the effects of the activities carried out. As for Pietra di Bismantova, hardly any activities were carried out by the Tuscan-Emilian Apennine National Park. This was partly compensated with the help of some local entities already involved in the development of CEETO project, among which Guide della Pietra Association who were promoting greater tourist fruition of the territory and the actions aimed at raising awareness of the visitors regarding an appropriate behaviour during the visit.

Along with the failure to organise an Open day in the way it had been initially defined, the visitors also lacked the opportunity to try out the e-bikes; on the other hand, as far as Lagdei Plateau is concerned, the Apennine National Park points out dedicating one day to promote such experience back in 2018, using their own e-bikes as well as their recent decision to grant the bicycles to the private entity in the municipality of Bosco to rent them to the visitors of the area.

As for the survey, although the quantitative outcome significantly differs from the targets forecast during the first inspection (102 and 90 compared to 400 and 500 respectively), the results show:

- in the area of Lagdei Plateau, 69% of those interviewed were informed about the shuttle service, 35% of those interviewed claimed to have been informed about the service and to have used it and to be keen on using it, instead 42% were not aware of the existence of the service;
- in the area of Pietra di Bismantova, 51% of those interviewed knew about the service, 21% were informed about the service, actually used it and were interested in using it, instead 40% claimed to know nothing about the offer.

These data reveal the efficacy of the ways to inform people about the new service, in particular in the area of Lagdei Plateau and suggest encouraging the visitors to use the service by means of persuasion, that



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involve various events and concerts held with the help of the territory stakeholders and in particular, the tour operators.

Moreover, the questionnaires help to deduce that almost all the visitors are aware of being in a Protected Area (87 and 90%) and of the requirement to comply with a specific code of conduct inside of it (90 and 92%).

Generally speaking, by conducting a survey, the Apennine National Park was able to improve the understanding of the features, choices and the level of awareness of the visitors regarding the peculiarities of the landscape of the areas of Lagdei Plateau and Pietra di Bismantova; it is worth pointing out that this information will allow the Park to define better the profile of their visitors, which is fundamental for implementing a range of activities provided for in the Sustainable Tourism Plan.

As for making the territory part of the whole process of identification, definition and planning of the Pilot Actions and, more in general, of the Sustainable Tourism Plan, the participation of the local public and private entities at the early stages of CEETO project continued at the stage of implementation of the Pilot Actions, as outlined above.

Socio-environmental benefits obtained, represent the reduction of the acoustic and atmospheric pollution, greenhouse gases, traffic congestion and parking spaces, the risk of the accidents and the cases when the cars impede the emergency services path as a consequence of a limited use of the private vehicles in favour of the shuttle bus as well as the alternative forms of mobility like walking, cycling or horse riding. Car users might find the public transportation means appealing because of the reduced journey time thanks to the easing the traffic congestion as well as time wasted on searching for a free parking space.

Lastly, as for the activities carried out by the InfoPoint in the area of Lagdei Plateau, the environmental benefits derive from raising awareness of the tourists regarding the frailty of the sites they visit and, consequently, the importance to abide by the rules of conduct.



#### 4.2.2. Central Emilia Parks

##### Lake Santo Modenese

<b>1 PILOT ACTION</b>	<b>Establishment of a shuttle service from Tagliole and new parking rules</b>
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##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles).*

##### PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car.*

##### DESCRIPTION

The action was carried out in line with the contents defined during the preliminary inspection, providing a free connection from 10th to 25th August 2019, every day of the week, starting from 8.30 am.

Compared to the initial commitments, the service has been enhanced:

- in temporal terms, with a frequency of 30 minutes per direction of travel and the extension up to 6 pm;
- in spatial terms, using two 9-seater shuttles instead of a 9-seater and an 18-seater buses, in order to guarantee a greater connection flexibility.

The service joined the parking area in Tagliole di Pievepelago with the pay parking at the Lake Santo Modenese.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the Municipality of Pievepelago, during the shuttle service days, characterized by a high tourist pressure, the access road from the village of Tagliole to the parking lot at the Lake Santo Modenese was closed, in conjunction with the exhaustion of the parking spaces.

<b>2 PILOT ACTION</b>	<b>Promotion of the use of e-bikes</b>
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##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles).*

##### PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car.*

##### DESCRIPTION



In line with the contents defined during the first inspection, 3 days of e-bike rental were scheduled in Tagliole (11th and 25th August, 8th September 2019), with the possibility of using them to reach the Lake Santo Modenese, returning with the same bicycles, shuttle or on foot. On 8th September, on the other hand, it was not possible to maintain the service due to adverse weather conditions.

<b>3 PILOT ACTION</b>	<b>Restoration and securing of the path that connects Tagliole to the Lake Santo Modenese</b>
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#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles).*

#### PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car.*

#### DESCRIPTION

The path was reopened at the end of July 2019 and is currently practicable in its overall length (3.5 km); with the help of the CAI, to which belongs a part of the route, maintenance and tabulation interventions were carried out.

Unlike what was hypothesized during the preliminary inspection, the installation of an electronic people counter at the entrance of the path, in Tagliole, aimed at monitoring the number of hikers, was not carried out.

<b>4 PILOT ACTION</b>	<b>Creation of an InfoPoint</b>
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#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility;*
- *Behaviour of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities;*
- *Tourist fruition of the territory.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles);*
- *Inappropriate behaviour of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value;*
- *Partial knowledge by visitors of the overall tourist offer of the Protected Area.*



## PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car;*
- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behavior, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct;*
- *To improve the tourist promotion by informing on the global offer (sports and recreational activities, accommodation, restaurant, paths).*

## DESCRIPTION

In line with what was defined during the first inspection, the Park provided for the activity of an InfoPoint at the Lake Santo Modenese in the summer season, dedicated to communicating:

- mobility initiatives (shuttle and e-bike) and the proposal of the new hiking path from Tagliole to the Lake. Regarding that, the Central Emilia Parks Authority has realized specific posters, available at the information point, and has managed a dedicated communication by press and social networks;
- the awareness of being in a Protected Area, the need to comply with a distinct code of respect for the natural habitat and the rules of behavior to be adopted within the Park;
- the material and immaterial excellences of the territory, not only of environmental and naturalistic kind, but also of a cultural, artistic, gastronomic and sporting typology, with the aim of promoting the traditions and the forms of hospitality of the entire Tagliole Valley.

The following opening time-table has been confirmed:

- in July, Saturdays and Sundays, starting from 7th, from 9 am to 5 pm;
- in August, every day, from 3rd to 31st and with the same schedule of July.

## 5 PILOT ACTION

### Conduct of a survey

## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behavior, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

## PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

## DESCRIPTION

The survey was realized among the Lake Santo Modenese visitors in line with the contents defined during the first inspection; the questionnaires were distributed on paper in July, August and September 2019 at:

- the InfoPoint located near the Lake Santo Modenese;
- at the shuttle service stops;



- the headquarters of the Central Emilia Parks Authority of Pievepelago, envisaging the possibility of downloading them from its website ([www.parchiemiliacentrale.it](http://www.parchiemiliacentrale.it)),

with the aim of understanding:

- the identity (age, sex, residence);
- the tourist behavior (same-day or overnight stay, if not living there), choices in terms of accommodation (location and type of accommodation) and the length of stay;
- the mode of transport used to reach Lake Santo Modenese and availability to make use of alternative methods (shuttle, e-bike or hiking trail);
- the appreciation of the shuttle service;
- the awareness of being in a Protected Area and the existence of a specific code of conduct;
- the activities usually carried out during the visit to Lake Santo Modenese.

There have been incentives to compile, such as the gift of a canvas bag, marked with the Park and CEETO Project logos, and a pen for those who answered the questionnaire during the shuttle journey.

### Salse di Nirano

1 PILOT ACTION	Implementation of a Video Content Analysis (VCA) system
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#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors;*
- *Behavior of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behavior, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct;*
- *Inappropriate behavior of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value.*

#### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities;*
- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behavior, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct.*

#### DESCRIPTION

The Pilot Action was carried out in full compliance with the contents foreseen in the preliminary inspection.

The VCA system was installed in the Salse di Nirano area at the beginning of July 2019; data recording is active from 19th July, in the time slot between half an hour before sunrise and half an hour after sunset, due to the local availability of natural lighting.

The purpose of the Pilot Action is monitoring the transits along the access road to the Salse di Nirano and the presences in Zone A (integral protection zone).



The system is equipped with 3 video surveillance cameras, installed on a pole and connected in a closed circuit by cable to a processing unit, equipped with Artificial Intelligence, which took care of analysing the images and extracting the numerical data on the people, the vehicles and animals present.

In short, the service provided, with spatial and temporal precision, the following information:

- the number of people, broken down by mode of transport, and the number of cars traveling on the Via Rio Salse municipal road near the Cà Rossa locality, with distinction, where possible, of the direction of travel. In particular, the system allows data to be aggregated on an hourly, daily, weekly, monthly and overall basis, with reference to the entire monitoring period;
- the maps of density of use (heat map) of the paths of visitors to Zone A of the Reserve;
- the numerical and temporal evidence of episodes of overcoming physical barriers and invasion of Zone A;
- video recordings of overcoming events, for their entire duration and with the automatic distinction between incursions of people and animals, divided by size;
- time-lapse video of the areas framed for the seasonal evolutionary reconstruction of the landscape and the morphologies of the lutivoma apparatus.

The presence of the VCA system has been signalled with a special signage, in which the same CEETO Project is described; for the purpose of an extensive communication to the territory of the initiative, moreover, a video demonstration of the potential of the VCA system has been realized, disseminated on the website of the Central Emilia Parks Authority and shared on public occasions.

<b>2 PILOT ACTION</b>	Organization of an Open day
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#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Behavior of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Inappropriate behavior of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value.*

#### PURPOSES

- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behavior, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct.*

#### DESCRIPTION

The event, dedicated to raising awareness of the territory and the hikers on the environmental and landscape specificities of the Salse di Nirano and to the communication of the appropriate rules of behavior during the visit, was realized in line with the plan defined during the preliminary inspection.

The Open day, organized for the day of 1st September by G.E.Fi., Ecosapiens and Ideanatura in collaboration with the Municipality of Fiorano Modenese, included a guided tour of the Salse area and the Reserve Visitor Centers. On this occasion, the presence of the VCA system was briefly explained, describing its objectives and operating methods and showing a short promotional video.



## **EVALUATION**

The activity carried out at the Lake Santo Modenese has several aspects of excellence, that can be summarized in:

- the achievement of the targets initially set for the Pilot Actions;
- the Park's ability to seize new project opportunities for the sustainable development of local tourism, pursuing important synergies with the initiatives contemplated in the five-year Action Plan of the CEETO project;
- the ability to strengthen the cooperation network with local stakeholders.

The first issue of best practice concerns the implementation of the shuttle service; in operational terms and with respect to the start-up schedule, the Park has in fact enhanced the connection program:

- in temporal terms, extending the service until 6 pm, with a double frequency (every half an hour instead of every hour);
- in terms of vehicles availability, preferring the use of two 9-seater shuttles instead of a bus with 9 seats and another one with 20.

The choices related to the fleet, in particular, allowed:

- a greater flexibility of the service during the peak hours and days, facilitating an effective management of congestion episodes;
- a better affordability, in light of the lower running costs of a 9-seater bus compared to a 20-seater shuttle.

As for the involvement of local stakeholders, in line with the consultation process already started in the early stages of the CEETO project, the Park has been able to develop new synergies through:

- the involvement of a local entity for the supply of shuttles and the driving staff;
- the stipulation of a loan contract for the use of a land in Taglione for parking;
- the opening of a virtuous dialogue with the managers of the refuges located near the lake, who, initially wary, finally proved to be an important driving force for raising awareness among visitors about the new transport opportunities. This change in attitude resulted, in particular, from the direct appreciation of the benefits of the shuttle service in terms of reducing road congestion, containing environmental pollution and increasing the flow of hikers, with a consequent improvement of the accessibility to the Lake Santo Modenese area, its tourist usability and the profits of the operators themselves.

The presence of an InfoPoint:

- dedicated to the joint and integrated promotion of the shuttle service, the correct rules for visiting the Park and the wider local tourist heritage;
- strongly oriented to a dynamic and participatory approach towards local visitors;
- active according to a predefined time-table, stable and correctly modulated with respect to the actual need of a supervision of the area, with a different presence in the months of July and August;
- strengthened in the communication of the new shuttle service by displaying a specific information material (4 roll-up panels, 2 posters and 5 stickers) and by the distribution of press releases and contributions on social networks;

has allowed the achievement of an excellent result in terms of demand attracted by the private cars to the collective transport.



According to the evidences of the Park, the filling rate was 100%, with 288 passengers on holidays (4) and 144 on weekdays (12), for a total of 2,880 passengers transported; in particular, the attraction from the cars to the shuttle resulted in environmental and socio-economic benefits, related to the reduction of the atmospheric and noise pollution, the production of greenhouse gases, the road and parking areas congestion, the risk of accidents and episodes of obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles.

In particular, with reference to congestion and impact on the climate, considering that:

- the distance between the Tagliole car park and the Lake Santo Modenese is 4 km;
- the average filling rate of cars stated in the survey responses is 2.7 passengers;
- the introduction of the shuttle involved the removal of 1,077 private vehicles from the local road,

the application of the unit cost parameters described in the document "Update of the handbook on external costs of transport" (Ricardo-EEA, European Commission DG Move, 2014) allows to estimate an overall benefit of 3,500 Euros for the only month of experimentation of the new collective service.

The attraction of users from the car to the shuttle also leads to the assumption of shorter travel times due to both the less road congestion and the decrease in the time spent looking for a free parking area; the saving of round-trip time was estimated in 5 minutes per passenger. Applying the time value indicated in the document "Guidelines for the evaluation of investments in public works in the sectors falling within the competence of the Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport" (Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport, 2017) for free time movements, equal to 10 Euro/h per passenger, an overall benefit of 2,400 Euro is estimated.

The survey was conducted among the area visitors in line with the contents, criteria and times illustrated during the first inspection; on the other hand, it was not possible to reach the predefined target, due to the difficulties encountered in administering the questionnaire on the shuttle and the adverse weather conditions of September, which substantially limited the tourist presence. Compared with a target of 200 total responses, the number of compilations stood at 120.

Regarding the shuttle service, the most interesting responses concerned:

- the interest in its future use to reach the Lake Santo Modenese, stated by 66% of interviewees;
- the judgment on the actual use of the service, which in 71% of the cases was positive or very positive;
- the indication of a strengthening of the connection, through a greater frequency and more capacious means of transport.

The survey also made it possible to appreciate the effectiveness of the raising awareness activity of the Park visitors about the delicacy of nature and local habitat, carried out in particular through the InfoPoint function; in this regard, 95% of respondents said they were aware of being in the Frignano Park, while 73% said they knew the related rules of conduct.

Finally, it is important to underline that, in light of the success of the experimentation of the shuttle connection, the Park has already started a reflection on its future implementation in a tariff integration perspective between transport and parking services, assuming a total amount of 2 Euros by car.

The Pilot Action regarding the promotion of e-bikes, albeit missing in its last day for purely exogenous reasons, that is the unfavourable weather conditions, must be considered a further successful experience, since:

- it was carried out with the involvement of a local entity (Straydog), with rental points in Pievepelago and Tagliole, enhancing its physical equipment and managerial skills and laying the foundations for a future increase in the demand for bicycles in the area with the empowerment of the related supply system;



- 
- following the example of the hiking path connecting Taglione to the Lake Santo Modenese, created by the Park in collaboration with CAI, it suggested the realization of a route dedicated only to e-bikes and therefore launched a project process within CETS, compatible with the complex of interventions included in the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan.

Lastly it should be noted that the evidences emerged during the survey phase allowed to acquire a detailed knowledge of the visitors of the Lake Santo Modenese, constituting the basis for the implementation of the activities envisaged within the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan.

As for the Pilot Actions realized at Salse di Nirano, the VCA system proved to be:

- reliable, as the activity suffered a single interruption, between 12th and 19th September 2019 and for external reasons, attributable to connectivity works in Cà Rossa;
- effective, since the system has made it possible to detect both presences and intrusions in the Protected Area, revealing a progressive scaling of the latter. The improvement mainly concerned the number of transgressions detected by video camera 1, which appears to be more than halved between the entry into operation of the plant and 30th September 2019.

The Open Day of 1st September saw the participation of 20 people and proved to be a good opportunity to communicate the presence of the VCA system; during the event its purposes and operating methods were illustrated, and a short promotional video was played.



#### 4.2.3. Regional Park of the Po Delta

##### 1 PILOT ACTION

Application in experimental terms of the Saint Gallen method

##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Network of collaboration among the local actors*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Low participation of the local stakeholders in designing the tourist offer of the Protected Area in concerted terms*

##### PURPOSES

- *To create opportunities for local public and private stakeholders to meet and discuss, in order to promote participatory planning processes*

##### DESCRIPTION

The Action Plan was developed according to the contents defined during the first inspection and led to identify, determine and plan, in concerted terms and with the involvement of public and private, local stakeholders, the activities to be pursued within the Park's Sustainable Tourism Action Plan, foreseen in the CEETO Project.

On the basis of this process, which intends to go on in the medium and long term, and which therefore finds its first opportunity for testing in the Pilot Action, it was intended to encourage the participation of the actors of the territory in designing the tourist offer of the area of the Park, according to the logic of sustainability, the expansion of the period of visit, the enhancement of the attractiveness of smaller sites and the communicative innovation.

In this regard, the Park organized 8 events in Mesola and Cervia, of which 2 workshops and 6 operational meetings, with 24 and 15 stakeholders.

The outcome of the Saint Gallen method implementation is to be identified in the actual preparation, according to an innovative methodology, of the five-year Action Plan of the Delta del Po Regional Park, whose approval took place on 2nd July 2019.

##### 2 PILOT ACTION

Monitoring of the visitor flows in the Park area

##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behavior, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

##### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities;*



## DESCRIPTION

This Pilot Action, inspired by the participatory planning process conducted with the Saint Gallen method and already started in 2018, consisted of two activities:

- counting of flows in Visitor Centers (Mesola Castle, Museum of the Territory of Ostemato, Manifattura dei Marinati, Ecomuseo delle Valli di Argenta, Museo NatuRa Sant'Alberto, Ecomuseo delle Erbe Palustri, Salina di Cervia and Cubo Magico Bevanella) and in Vallette di Ostellato, that constitute an area of the Po Delta with regulated access;
- the proposal of a questionnaire to visitors in the same Visitor Centres, by the local operator, in Italian and English.

In 2018 the counting of flows was carried out at three times of the year, in correspondence with the peaks of tourist presence and with the aim of observing different types of visitors:

- April and May, during weekends;
- August, throughout the entire monthly arc;
- October, on weekends.

In 2019 the same counting activities have been implemented:

- in the frequency, which has become daily;
- over the time horizon, which extended continuously from March to October;
- in the detection method, which has become computerized and common to all Visitor Centres.

In practice, the cash desk operator directly entered the visitor information in the digital template, distinguishing the type of ticket purchased (full, reduced or free), the membership group and, in line with his perception, the origin (Italian/foreigner). The surveys are organized on a daily basis.

The interview with questionnaires has been aimed at acquiring information about:

- the identity of the visitors (age and residence);
- the experiences carried out during the holiday in the Po Delta;
- travel arrangements (alone, with a group of friends, etc);
- the knowledge and the visit, in the past, to specific sites within the Park;
- with reference to the 2019 edition only, the awareness of being in the Po Delta Park of Emilia Romagna and the existence of a specific code of conduct.

A first phase of surveys with questionnaire was carried out in July 2018 and collected 332 questionnaires, which highlighted the preference of the visitors for the Boscone della Mesola and Saline di Cervia sites, thus suggesting the potential for the enhancement of less known areas.

The survey has been repeated in 2019, between the months of July and September, including the Dune di Massenzatica among the distribution points of the questionnaire.



### 3 PILOT ACTION

#### Realization of Open days

##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Tourist fruition of the territory.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Relevant concentration of the Park visitors in few sites.*

##### PURPOSES

- *To promote the visit to less known and less frequented sites within the Park.*

##### DESCRIPTION

On 22th May 2019, on the occasion of World Biodiversity Day, the Management Authority for Parks and Biodiversity - Delta del Po 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).

The sites were chosen on the basis of their naturalistic interest and in the light of the evidence emerged from the answers of the questionnaires completed in the summer of 2018, with reference to the knowledge and the visit, in the past, to the different places of the Park; according to these answers, in fact, the two areas appeared little known and, therefore, with a wide margin of enhancement, also in order to reduce the tourist pressure in the main attractors of the Park.

The visits were carried out for free and with reservations required, defining in each site a visit in the morning and one in the afternoon. The promotion of the event took place on the web and, in particular, through the Park's Facebook page; the communication campaign was addressed to the residents of the Municipalities of the Biosphere Reserve as well as Ferrara, Ravenna, Bologna and Rovigo, with a specific attention to the age groups between 19 and 24 years old and over 55 years old.

### 4 PILOT ACTION

#### Creation of web marketing campaigns

##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Behavior of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities;*
- *Tourist fruition of the territory.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Inappropriate behavior of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value;*
- *Relevant concentration of the Park visitors in few sites.*

##### PURPOSES

- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behavior, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct;*
- *To promote the visit to less known and less frequented sites within the Park.*



## DESCRIPTION

According with the contents defined during the preliminary inspection, the web marketing campaigns were realized on Facebook and Instagram, addressed to the foreign visitors and aimed at:

- describing the less known places of visit within the Park, in particular in conjunction with the Open day;
- inform about the code of conduct to follow during the visit. In detail, the communication campaign on the correct behavior lasted 14 days and focused to reach all the people present in the territory of the Municipalities of the Park.

<b>5 PILOT ACTION</b>	<b>Implementation of training and coordination activities of the Park Visitor Centres and local tourist information offices (IAT)</b>
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## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Behavior of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities;*
- *Tourist fruition of the territory;*
- *Network of collaboration among the local actors.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Inappropriate behavior of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value;*
- *Relevant concentration of the Park visitors in few sites;*
- *Low participation of the local stakeholders in designing the tourist offer of the Protected Area in concerted terms.*

## PURPOSES

- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behavior, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct;*
- *To promote the visit to less known and less frequented sites within the Park;*
- *To create opportunities for local public and private stakeholders to meet and discuss, in order to promote participatory planning processes.*

## DESCRIPTION

In line with the previous statements, the 24th September 2019, at Manifattura dei Marinati in Comacchio, the Park realized a meeting with the Park Visitor Centres and local tourist information offices (IAT) aimed at encouraging:

- communication of information and suggestions for visiting the Park;
- awareness of the rules of behavior within it;
- promotion of lesser known sites.

The themes envisaged have been:

- the collection of paper questionnaires completed by the visitors in the Visitor Centres;
- a common assessment of the progress of the survey;



- the presentation of the main evidences collected;
- listening to the opinions, needs and advices on the management of the tourist flows in the Park and, in particular, their orientation towards the less known sites.

## 6 PILOT ACTION

### Installation of landscape interpretation tools at Dune di Massenzatica

#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Tourist fruition of the territory.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Relevant concentration of the Park visitors in few sites.*

#### PURPOSES

- *To promote the visit to less known and less frequented sites within the Park.*

#### DESCRIPTION

The Pilot Action provided for the installation of panelling and information tools in order to communicate to the tourists the origin and the peculiarities of Dune di Massenzatica and arise their interest in a guided tour.

The activity has not been completed and is currently underway; by 2019, the cooperation between the Park, which will take care of the graphic representation, and the CEETO project, which will finance the production of the information tools, will lead to their effective installation.

## EVALUATION

The activity carried out by the Park in order to create a collaboration network among the local actors constitutes a reference best practice within the CEETO project.

The application in experimental terms of the Saint Gallen method, identified as the primary Pilot Action, first of all inaugurated a system of stable and solid relationships between the stakeholders of the territory, generating:

- the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan of the Park, that defines the short- and medium-term strategy for the socio-economic development of the area;
- some minor Pilot Actions, described above, which will find a continuation within the same Plan.

The strength and breadth of the cooperation network launched are testified by:

- the number of meetings (8) and, in particular, the events organized with an operational ambition (6);
- the number of participants (24 in Mesola and 15 in Cervia);
- their typology, public (60%), private (30%) and mixed (10%), which brought together Municipalities, Pro-loco, IAT, Tourist Consortia, Federations, social cooperatives, accommodation facilities, catering establishments and cultural associations.

In addition to testing the Saint Gallen method, the purpose of facilitating the creation of a local network was also pursued through the organization of a training and coordination meeting of the Park's Visitor Centres and the local IAT offices, aimed at raising the awareness of the frequenters on:



- the specificities of the Park and the need to adopt a correct behavior;
- the possibility of visiting lesser attractions, with the aim of alleviating the tourist pressure on the most well-known sites;
- the visiting opportunities in alternative periods, such as autumn and midweek days.

The meeting gathered a total adhesion from the invited actors and therefore allowed to approach the proposed themes, whose strategic development will be the subject of the Park's Sustainable Tourism Action Plan, by all the managers of the Park's Visitor Centres, the Vallette di Ostellato, the IAT offices of Argenta and Mesola, and Turismo Ravenna. Overall, 6 stakeholders were involved (Ecomuseo Erbe Palustri, Atlantide Coop. Soc., Soelia, Aqua Delta Po, Municipality of Ravenna and Po Delta Tourism), representing 11 local players.

As regards the enhancement of minor sites, the Park's ability to plan the following steps in a logical and effective sequence is noted:

- the survey on the tourist presences, by counting and questionnaire, aimed at understanding the distribution of the flows among the internal areas, as well as the degree of knowledge and past experience of visiting the different sites of the Park;
- the identification of the strongest attractors (Boscone della Mesola and Saline di Cervia);
- the choice of the minor attractors on which to start a valorisation activity oriented to the future redistribution of the tourist flows (Massenzatica Dunes and Mouth of the Bevano torrent );
- the definition of specific Pilot Actions for the attraction of visitors to the less known sites (Open day, web marketing campaign, training and coordination of Park Visitor Centres and local IAT offices);
- the testing, in preliminary terms, of the Pilot Actions, with the aim of refining and strengthening them during the phase of implementation f the Park's Sustainable Tourism Action Plan.

The outcome of the survey was positive in the number of questionnaires completed in both 2018 (332) and 2019 (402); in the last year, moreover, the target set at 350 answers was largely achieved by the park.

The Open day gathered an adhesion of only 50% (29 participants out of 60 available places), despite the fact that communication of the event via Facebook was effective in reaching a large audience (50 thousand people) and generating interactions (more than 5,400). The use of the same social network was also successful in communicating the correct visiting behavior of the Park's attractors; the publication of dedicated posts on Facebook has in fact reached 600 thousand people, with about 330 thousand clicks, while Instagram has recorded an incidence of clicks on the number of recipients equal to 75%.

The answers to the questionnaire distributed to the Park visitors allow us to appreciate the effectiveness of the activities carried out in terms of sensitization to an adequate behavior while enjoying the naturalistic sites. It should be noted that in the 2019 edition of the survey:

- 37.5% of the interviewees said they were aware of being in a park and knowing its rules of conduct;
- 50% of recognizing of being in a park, but not knowing its code of conduct;
- only 12.5% of not being conscious of both the aspects.

Lastly, it should be noted that the environmental benefits of the Pilot Actions developed by the Park derive essentially from the activity of sensitizing the tourist presences to the delicacy of the places visited and from the redistribution of the flows for the benefit of the minor attractors.



#### 4.2.4. Biosphere Reserve Salzburger Lungau

1 PILOT ACTION	Creating tourist information brochures
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##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility;*
- *Behavior of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities;*
- *Tourist fruition of the territory.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles);*
- *Inappropriate behavior of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value;*
- *Partial knowledge by visitors of the overall tourist offer of the Protected Area.*

##### PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car;*
- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behavior, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct;*
- *To improve the tourist promotion by informing on the global offer (sports and recreational activities, accommodation, restaurant, paths).*

##### DESCRIPTION

In compliance with what had been set out in the course of the preliminary on-the-spot inspections, the Park planned to create specific brochures dedicated to the area of the lake Preber in relation to the summer season and aimed at informing the visitors about:

- the natural habitat characteristics, the local history and traditions;
- the specific plant and animal life in the area;
- sport and leisure options for summer and winter seasons;
- accommodation and dining facilities;
- accessibility, featuring specific information regarding the public transport from Tamsweg and Krakau (stations, timetable and prices) and suggestions to opt for a bus ride instead of using a private vehicle on the rush days, in order to ease the congestion issues;
- the code of conduct in the Protected Area;
- the map of the area.



## 2 PILOT ACTION

### Conducting a survey

#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behavior, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

#### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

#### DESCRIPTION

The Pilot Action was implemented as two editions according to a pre-established calendar and featuring a random choice of people to interview: the first one taking place between 21 August and 12 September 2018, the second one taking place between 26 August and 4 September 2019. The objective of the survey was to help better understand:

- the choice of transport options (a means of transport used and a starting point of the trip), the reasons for using or not using the public transport, the knowledge of the bus links and options (including timetables and costs) and willingness to use them, the level of satisfaction with the public transport offered and suggestions for improvement (if any);
- the awareness of visiting the Biosphere Reserve, the quality of information obtained and the knowledge of what it represents;
- the identity (the age, the gender, the origin), the tourism behaviour (a one-day visit or an overnight stay, if one is not a local resident), whether the visitor was alone or with the partner, the family, how many times they visited the area).

## 3 PILOT ACTION

### Development and implementation of new sustainable options to reach the area

#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles).*

#### PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car.*

#### DESCRIPTION

This Pilot Action envisaged in the previous documents drafted for CEETO project in the event of compliance of the parking system management and the improvement of the public transport supply has not been



implemented for the reasons attributable to the change of political structure on the local territory (municipal elections in March 2019). This Pilot Action is expected to be implemented before summer 2020.

#### 4 PILOT ACTION

#### Promotion of communication related activities

##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Behavior of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Inappropriate behavior of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value.*

##### PURPOSES

- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behavior, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct.*

##### DESCRIPTION

In compliance with what had been set out in the course of the preliminary on-the-spot inspections, the Park had planned:

- to create a website and increase the online presence on social networks (Facebook and YouTube). This activity has been launched and will continue in September 2019; at present the initiative represents the description of the offers of the CEETO project, spreading of the principles of Eco friendliness (accessible to everyone) based on trips to the natural reserves and the distribution of the video “A sustainable journey”;
- to publish the articles dedicated to the Protected Area in the press (local and/or national);
- to create an interactive map aimed at informing the residents and the visitors to the territory about the existence of the Biosphere Reserve and the code of conduct inside of it. The activity was launched by carrying out the preliminary activities (research on the computer systems available and the possible media content) and will continue in September 2019 in the light of new funding opportunities offered by Bundesministerium Digitalisierung und Wirtschaftsstandort.

#### 5 PILOT ACTION

#### Holding information events

##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Behavior of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Inappropriate behavior of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value.*

##### PURPOSES

- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behavior, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct.*



## DESCRIPTION

The Pilot Action was carried out in the course of three occasions to explore the territory:

- the first one, taking place from 5 to 6 October 2018, was an academic meeting complemented with the guided tours to Salzburger Lungau Biosphere Reserve. About 80 people took part in the event;
- the second one was held on 25 May 2019 in Murinsel St. Michael. Approximately 400-500 people participated, both the local residents and the external visitors, benefitting from attending the local celebration. On this occasion the guided tours were organised and the information about the local fauna and flora, typical local specialities and hiking tours was provided;
- the third one was held on 30 August 2019 and featured a guided tour of the lake Preber with the explanation dedicated to the star system, the life of the wild animals during the night, light pollution, its effects and possible ways of preventing it.

## EVALUATION

The objectives of the Pilot Actions can be summarised as follows:

- raising awareness of the visitors regarding the natural and environmental frailty of the Protected Area and informing them about the appropriate behaviour while visiting it (by handing out tourist-information brochures, by enhancing communication activities and by holding information events);
- getting better knowledge of the characteristics, the behaviour, the mobility choices and the awareness of the visitors as for the peculiarities of the Protected Area (by conducting a survey). Such exploration will be the basis of the new tourist facilities in the context of the Sustainable Tourism Plan of the Park;
- local heritage promotion (tourist information brochures);
- creating stable and strong networking relationships among the local public and private stakeholders; this process already started at the initial stages of CEETO project thanks to the information events held).

The topic most efficiently developed by the Park was related to raising tourists' awareness regarding the frailty of the natural spots being visited and the necessity to comply with the code of conduct; in order to reach this objective, the Park:

- printed 2.500 copies of tourist information brochures dedicated to the summer season (of which 500 were in English) and distributed almost all of them (2.300 compared to the initial target of 1.250);
- launched production of a similar brochure for the winter season, not envisaged during the preliminary site visit;
- started creating a 3D map, on which various areas making part of the local Biosphere Reserve (core, buffer and transition) as well as the areas of major sensitivity to human presence, will be identified. This activity is also expected to be enhanced compared to the initial agreements;
- organised the third, additional information event compared to the two meetings initially envisaged as a target;
- provided extensive promotion of CEETO project, of the three information events, of the video "A sustainable journey" and of the promotional film on the Biosphere created in collaboration with the Lungau Tourism Entity. More specifically, the communication campaign consisted of:
  - new website creation containing specific articles (the total of 5.000 users and 6.700 page views since May 2019);



- 
- increased online presence on Facebook (1.000-1.828 group members) and YouTube (up to 111.200 views);
  - interactive map creation involving the residents and the visitors.

It is important to note that the extra activities related to the creation of the 3D map and the tourist brochure for the winter season should be taken into account alongside the awareness raising tools targeted at the visitors of the Protected Area and the new means of promotion of the local heritage. In fact, both will provide information in relation to the main sights of the Park, the sport activities available, the rest spots, the local public transport stops and the characteristics of the Biosphere Reserve.

In the course of the survey 149 replies were obtained in 2018 against 150 replies obtained in 2019, which is in line with the initially established targets. The most interesting findings related to 2019, comprise:

- the use of the local public transport to reach the area of Preber lake increased by 13%, compared to the previous year (initial target was 10%);
- the number of people who claimed not having received comprehensive information about the Biosphere Park decreased by 10%.

As far as the Pilot Action regarding the compliance of the parking management system and the improvement of the public transfer availability in the area of the lake Preber is concerned, the lack of positive outcome makes it possible to identify the following impediments:

- the public transport system is managed by an external public entity, in this case represented by Lungau Municipality;
- the service is subject to the change of the political situation, e.g. the local elections.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the social and the environmental benefits of the Pilot Actions mainly derive from the activities aimed at raising awareness of the tourists towards the frailty of the area being visited and from promoting the active networking among the local stakeholders through distributing the tourist information brochures, by boosting communication activities and by holding specific local events.



#### 4.2.5. Sölktäler National Park

<b>1 PILOT ACTION</b>	Electronic people counter installation
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##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behaviour, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

##### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

##### DESCRIPTION

In compliance with what had been set out in the course of the preliminary on-the-spot inspections, the devices were installed at the four main entries to the hiking trails: St. Nikolai, Deneck, Mössnakar (replaced by Breitlahn, due to the insufficient use) and Kleinsölk- Köckalm (replaced by Tuchmoar).

The people counters were installed just beyond the car park. The devices are bi-directional and detect the number of people entering and leaving the Park; due to the fact that the device is unable to recognize two people walking side by side, the bicycle or the car, the statistics collected might contain a margin of error.

Sölktäler Natural Park arranged the electronic counting data in .xls files, which enable accurate processing of the data and its graphic representation alike; in particular, the statistical information gathered, makes it possible:

- to identify the days and the weeks of the greater tourist pressure;
- to compare the annual flows;
- to compare the number of people detected on the four main valleys of the Park;
- to establish close collaboration with the regional di Schladming-Dachstein tourist office.

The operation of the people counter had been initially envisaged from August to November 2018 and from July to November 2019; in 2019, on the other hand, due to unexpected snowfall, the Park interrupted the counting process earlier.

<b>2 PILOT ACTION</b>	Manual people counting
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##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behaviour, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct;*



## PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

## DESCRIPTION

The Pilot Action was related to the two entries to the hiking trails: St. Nikolai and Kleinsölk (at the Schwarzensee toll station), located just beyond the parking lot. The focus was on the flow of people, buses and cars entering the Park and, specifically, the groups of visitors were taken in consideration.

The data collection was carried out exclusively during the summer season, from August to September 2018 at St. Nikolai trail by the local students and only in September at Kleinsölk by the employees of the toll station; in 2019 the decision not to repeat the survey was taken due to the administrative issues and low reliability of the data collected during the previous year.

### 3 PILOT ACTION

Summit book analysis and signatures counting

## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behavior, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

## PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

## DESCRIPTION

The Pilot Action was related to the tracking of tourist attendance of the peaks of Sölktäler National Park; this activity was carried out in September 2019 and allowed to evaluate the overall tourist pressure in the areas of particular environmental sensitivity and the tourist attendance frequency over time starting from August 2018.

### 4 PILOT ACTION

Handing out the questionnaires and brief information notes

## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behaviour, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

## PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*



## DESCRIPTION

The questionnaires and the brief information notes were printed on placemats and handed out to the tourists and visitors at the mountain huts and the restaurants of Sölkäler Natural Reserve. The questionnaire was aimed at better understanding of:

- the age and the country of origin of the visitors;
- the duration of stay and whether the visitor was alone or with the partner, the family, etc.;
- the reasons of visiting the area (the adrenaline rush, trying out new activities, recreation and relaxation, silence and seclusion, etc.) and the activities carried out during the day (trekking, cycling, observation of nature);
- suggestions to improve the offer.

The last part of the handout features some interesting facts about the local plant and animal life aimed at raising awareness regarding their protection as well as the information about the biodegradability of some types of waste.

The action was implemented in August and September 2018; instead in 2019 it was implemented but there was no return of placemats from the local stakeholders involved in the placemat's distribution.

### 5 PILOT ACTION

#### Realization of tourist booklets for winter tourism

## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Behavior of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities;*
- *Tourist fruition of the territory.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Inappropriate behaviour of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value;*
- *Relevant concentration of the Park visitors in few sites.*

## PURPOSES

- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behaviour, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct;*

## DESCRIPTION

The activity aimed at informing the tourists about ski routes, winter habitats, demand of wildlife in winter and the new recreation areas of wildlife. It was completed in line with what had been agreed upon during the preliminary meeting. In particular, the booklets, printed in 10.000 copies, will be distributed during the next winter seasons (2019-2022).



## 6 PILOT ACTION

**Provision of a device monitoring the impact of the human presence on the local animal life**

### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Impact of the tourist pressure on nature and environment.*

### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the actual impact of the tourist pressure on the Protected Area.*

### PURPOSES

- *To inspect and analyse the effects of the touristic presence on the natural environment and habitat.*

### DESCRIPTION

As part of CEETO project, Sölkäler Natural Reserve purchased Swarovski telescope (Spektiv), aimed at a remote observation of some specific animal species (chamois, ptarmigans and black grouse) in the areas, which historically have been characterised by a significant presence of the trekkers. Alongside the appropriate visual equipment, the Reserve has also provided for, as one of the Pilot Actions of CEETO project, the purchase of the rescue equipment to rescue the people missing due to the avalanche, to make the observation of the natural habitat during the winter season safe.

Due to the high risk of the avalanches in winter 2018-2019 (avalanche risk 5) the first measurements of the previous season were impossible to carry out.

## 7 PILOT ACTION

**Holding meetings between the local residents and the stakeholders**

### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Network of collaboration among the local actors.*

### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Low participation of the local stakeholders in designing the tourist offer of the Protected Area in concerted terms.*

### PURPOSES

- *To create opportunities for local public and private stakeholders to meet and discuss, in order to promote participatory planning processes.*

### DESCRIPTION

In response to the need to raise awareness of the local entities towards the area development according to the principles of the environmental sustainability, the Sölkäler Natural Reserve has promoted the rounds of meetings referred to as “The future dialogue” and “Gemeinsam drüberschaun”.

As for the former, the Pilot Action envisaged the dialogue with young people, aged between 11 and 25 years, aimed at getting their opinion regarding the matters they consider important for the local territory and the things that might make them stay or come back to live in the area, thus creating the economic value; due to low meeting participation, the Reserve decided to hand out the questionnaires. The results were summed up in the document, which represented the starting point of the next stage, the dialogue with the stakeholders.



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In particular, 16 people, invited to share opinion regarding the topics of interest, emerged at the previous stage, took part in the meeting with the local public and private stakeholders, which took place on April 12, 2019.

The workshops called “Gemeinsam drüberschaun” took place in the period from 9 November 2018 to 3 October 2019; the topics discussed were related to the traditional manufacturing. The objective of the workshop was to spread the knowledge and to involve the local community in the common development project.

## **EVALUATION**

The objectives of the Pilot Actions carried out by the Reserve can be summarised as follows:

- acquiring better knowledge regarding the characteristics, the choices, the preferences and wishes of the visitors (electronic and manual people counters, summit books analysis, signatures counting, the questionnaire printed on the placemats). Such knowledge will be the basis of the development of the new promotional activities of the Reserve within the framework of the Sustainable Tourism Plan;
- raising awareness of the trekkers regarding the natural and environmental frailty of the Protected Area and informing them about the appropriate behaviour while visiting it (by handing out the information notes printed on the placemats and the tourist-information brochures and ski tour booklets). The efficacy of this initiative will only be verifiable in the nearest future with the help of Swarovski telescope, used to observe the natural habitat remotely;
- informing the visitors about the new alternative winter ski itineraries and the new staging points for the winter season (tourist leaflet). The positive outcome will be verifiable during the future tourist seasons by analysing the ski tracks on the snow, the mountain top visits, registered in the summit books as well as the evidence obtained by using Swarovski telescope;
- creating stable and strong networking relationships among the local public and private stakeholders; this process has already started at the initial stages of CEETO project (“The future dialogue” and “Gemeinsam drüberschaun” meetings).

The main focus of the activities implemented by the Reserve is related to this last issue. In fact, the round of meetings “Gemeinsam drüberschaun”, dedicated to the local residents of the area, envisaged 9 meetings with a maximum of 31 participants, who provided extremely positive feedback, while 16 people took part in the final part called “The future dialogue”. The collaboration with the territory was carried out by means of cooperation with the local tourist office following the monitoring activities of the visitors’ flow to the Protected Area and sharing the main evidence emerged.

The outcomes of the meetings held within the framework of “The future dialogue” and “Gemeinsam drüberschaun” as well as those held with the local tourist office will merge in the Sustainable Tourism Plan of the Park providing possible ways of improving the socio-economic situation and in particular enhance tourism in the area.

On the other hand, there were the activities carried out in collaboration with the mountain huts managers and the restaurants of the Park in terms of distributing the placemats featuring questionnaires and the information notes regarding the local nature and the habitat; in 2018, 160 placemats were handed out, of which 72 were given back with the survey section filled in, in 2019 there was no return of leaflets at all, thus no feedback was received due to the lack of motivation to repeat the experience.



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Although the summit books analysis and signatures counting were carried out successfully, there were some logistics-related issues due to the loss of some of the documents or the difficulty to read them because of the bad weather.

To the contrary, the promotional activity launched by handing out the tourist brochures dedicated to the winter season, was successful; one-third out of 10 000 copies printed, were handed out.

Finally, it is noted that the social benefits of the Pilot Actions developed by the Park derive from the activities aimed at raising awareness of the tourists towards the frailty of the areas they visit by handing out the information notes, printed on the placemats and by promoting active networking among different stakeholders of the territory.



#### 4.2.6. The Biosphere Reserve Southeast-Rügen

##### 1 PILOT ACTION

**Electronic people counters**

##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behavior, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

##### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

##### DESCRIPTION

The Pilot Action was aimed at monitoring the flow of visitors entering and leaving the area at two main entrances of Zicker Berge. The data revealed by the electronic counters were automatically uploaded to the online server of Ecocounter company, the supplier of the equipment, with the help of a mobile card; the data were subsequently converted into .xls files to carry out specific evaluation activities and/or for their graphic representation.

Two people counters were installed on 26 July 2018; the monitoring activities were launched directly after the installation and continued till the end of October 2019.

##### 2 PILOT ACTION

**Manual people counting and handing out the questionnaires**

##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behavior, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

##### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

##### DESCRIPTION

This Pilot Action was implemented with regards to the visitors of Zicker Berge in line with what had been defined during the preliminary on-the spot inspection, namely by:

- counting the visitors and flash interviews conducted by the rangers. More specifically, the counting was made by distinguishing the types of the visitors (the trekkers, the trekkers with the dogs on a leash, the trekkers with the dogs loose, the mountain bikers/the cyclists on their bikes, the mountain bikers/cyclists who are pushing their bikes, the joggers) in order to monitor the behaviour that violates the rules of access to the Protected Area (e.g. cycling or having the dog loose);



- the detailed interview was aimed at collecting information about:
  - the general profile of the visitors (age, residence, qualification, employment situation);
  - tourist behaviour (resident/ trekker/tourist spending night on Rügen island/ tourist staying overnight in other locations, the frequency of visits to the area, duration of the visit to Zicker Berge, means of transport to reach it, tracks they follow in the area, whether they are members of a group, distance from the final destination of the day);
  - reasons for the visit and the spots considered to be the most appealing;
  - their awareness regarding the specific characteristics of the nature of the Biosphere Reserve Southeast\_Rügen , in particular Zicker Berge, the current protection regime and the existence of the code of conduct to protect the Reserve;
  - the frequency of use and particular interest towards the Biosphere Reserve;
  - the knowledge of the reference terms used to identify the Protected Areas;
  - the level of satisfaction with the visit, particular attention being paid to the tourist pressure.

From 11 July to 9 October 2018 the collection of data regarding the number of visitors to Zicker Berge was carried out one or two times a week on different days; in 2019 this activity was carried out in the period from the third week of March to the end of October by repeating the frequency and the options opted for during the previous edition in order to obtain comparable results.

The interview was supposed to consist of two alternate parts, each lasting 30 minutes, during which the rangers were supposed to give the visitors a short or a more detailed questionnaire; this dynamics was not followed though, by choosing instead the manual counting with the quick questions asked in the course of the day of the survey (from 10 am to 4 pm) and by providing those interested with a more detailed questionnaire.

The detailed questionnaires handed out starting from 10 July 2019 featured two extra questions aimed at checking if the visitors knew about the audio guide for trekking in Zicker Berge area, accessible with the help of the app izi.travel and if the visitors actually used it; in case in which the visitors knew nothing about it, the objective was to inform them about the availability of such information resource.

The data collected was stored as .xls file for processing and graphic representation.

### 3 PILOT ACTION

#### Audio guide for trekking

#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Behavior of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Inappropriate behavior of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value.*

#### PURPOSES

- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behavior, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct.*



## DESCRIPTION

This tool was completed and uploaded on the net on July 8, 2019 according to the deadline agreed upon during the preliminary meeting. The audio guide is available in the app **izi.TRAVEL** and its objective is to provide information about Zicker Berge area; in particular, it is currently possible to listen to the stories about the local stakeholders in German.

In order to promote the use of the tool, the following information channels were taken into account:

- press release;
- posting on social media managed by the partners of the Biosphere Reserve Southeast-Rügen, like TZR, im Jaich, KV Mönchgut, Aust/Offermann Facebook, Kompetenzzentrum 4.0;
- website posting;
- spreading printed and electronic QR Codes through these channels;
- placing QR Codes on the billboards along the tracks of Zicker Berge;
- promotional postcard printing.

<b>4 PILOT ACTION</b>	<b>Creation and positioning of new waste containers</b>
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## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Behavior of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Inappropriate behavior of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value.*

## PURPOSES

- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behavior, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct.*

## DESCRIPTION

The Pilot Action comprised installing the new containers in Zicker Berge area, designed by the pupils of the local school in order to improve the existing system of waste submission by the visitors.

<b>5 PILOT ACTION</b>	<b>Introducing new trekking signs</b>
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## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Tourist offer.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Perfectibility of the overall tourist offer of the Protected Area.*

## PURPOSES

- *To enhance the possibilities of fruition of the Protected Area according to environmental sustainability criteria.*



## DESCRIPTION

Before July 2019 new signage was created and positioned in the area of Zicker Berge, which had been provided for by the Reserve during the preliminary inspection.

### 6 PILOT ACTION

#### Creating search and rescue routes

## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Tourist offer.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Perfectibility of the overall tourist offer of the Protected Area.*

## PURPOSES

- *To enhance the possibilities of fruition of the Protected Area according to environmental sustainability criteria.*

## DESCRIPTION

The Pilot Action was launched and completed in the area of Zicker Berge by identifying 3 search and rescue routes featuring fluorescent signs.

## EVALUATION

The main praiseworthy achievement of the Reserve is the implementation of different kinds of activities identified as complementary compared to the main objective of raising awareness and providing information regarding the safe and respectful use of the area of Zicker Berge by the visitors.

First of all, the creation of the audio guide was completed in a short time. The audio guides featured 11 stories about the local residents compared to 5 initially set up as a target and the local stakeholders were involved in the process of writing and proofreading. Extensive promotion of the new tool was planned from the very beginning and comprised:

- printed materials (an article, followed by another one due before the end of 2019);
- posting on social networks managed by the partners of the Park, such as TZR, im Jaich, KV Mönchgut, Aust/Offermann Facebook, Kompetenzzentrum 4.0;
- publishing on two websites (BR und KV Mönchgut and TZR in Arbeit);
- placing QR Codes on the billboards along the tracks of Zicker Berge (16 billboards instead of 11, set up as initial target);
- printing 2.000 copies of promotional postcards, which is twice as much compared to the number provided for during the preliminary meeting.

Instead, contrary to what had been planned:

- the QR Code was not distributed neither in printed version nor online;
- the audio guide is only available in German now, while the English version, planned to be available within the same deadline, will only be completed at the beginning of 2020.



The efficacy of the new device is confirmed by comparing the number of people using the app and the number of people who entered the area Zicker Berge, according to the readings of the electronic people counters. In particular, considering that in the period from 8th July to 11th November 2019:

- the total number of visitors to the area Zicker Berge amounted to 37.616;
- the number of people who used the app amounted to 4.770;

12,5% of visitors used the app, compared to the initial target of 5-10%.

As well as providing a new digital tool, the intention to raise awareness of the visitors regarding the natural frailty of the territory Zicker Berge by making them feel responsible for their conduct, was implemented by placing three waste containers in the area (the initial target was 2). It is worth pointing out that just like in the case of the audio guide creation, while implementing this Pilot Action, the Reserve managed to encourage networking among the local stakeholders starting from the initial stages of CEETO project by involving the children from the local school in designing the new containers.

The success of these two initiatives aimed at raising the visitors' awareness regarding the appropriate behaviour while visiting the area of Zicker Berge, is confirmed by the claims made by some local stakeholders (a ranger, a farmer, a guide and a volunteer), according to which the issues related to the rubbish in the Protected Area have gradually improved.

Within the framework of the abovementioned actions, the activities related to the improvement of the trekking signs system in the area of Zicker Berge as well as creating the search and rescue routes in collaboration with the Fire Department and the local shepherds, clearly show that the Reserve is willing to improve its own tourist offer by creating new possibilities of use in compliance with the environmental sustainability.

As for the activities related to the tourist flows monitoring, the people counters detected 62.369 visitors starting from July 2018 and till the end of October 2019. The Reserve claims that certain inaccuracy might be due to the fact that the system is unable to distinguish people walking side by side and tell a bicycle from a person. The same problem appears when the local farmers access the area on their tractors. On the other hand, the information provided by these same farmers made it possible to make the readings more accurate and provide a more reliable estimate of the tourist flow.

The results of the manual people counting are the following:

- 2.815 flash interviews and 338 detailed interviews were carried out in 2018;
- 3.183 flash interviews and 332 detailed interviews were carried out in 2019.

In particular, in the course of both seasons the following criteria were met:

- at least 6 flash interviews, supervised by a ranger, were carried out daily at each tracking station;
- the time needed to fill in the questionnaire, did not exceed 10 minutes.

There are four objectives reached as a result of the manual tourist flow detection activities in the area of Zicker Berge, namely the external interviews:

- first of all, these activities made it possible to collect basic information regarding the identity, the characteristics, the behaviour, and the wishes of the tourists;
- secondly, by filling in a detailed questionnaire or by taking part in the educational activities organised by the rangers, the visitors became better informed about the environmental sustainability and the existence of a specific code of conduct in the Reserve;



- in addition, the Action allowed to verify the efficacy of the campaign aimed at informing the visitors about the new audio guide dedicated to trekking as well as to promote it. In this regard, it can be pointed out that according to the data collected by the Reserve after 18 August 2019, about 30% of visitors were informed about this digital tool;
- finally, it allowed to get new ideas regarding the development of the Plan of Sustainable Tourism at the Reserve in terms of enhancing its touristic value and the local resources.

As for involving the territory in the process of identification, definition and implementation of the Pilot Actions, and in general of the same Plan of Sustainable Tourism, the participation of the local public and private stakeholders has been continuous since the very early stages of CEETO project, as described above.

The environmental benefits essentially derive from the activities focused on raising awareness of the tourists regarding the frailty of the area being visited with the help of the audio guide and by placing the new waste containers and consequently by following the rules of appropriate behaviour in the Protected Area.



#### 4.2.7. Medvednica Nature Park

##### 1 PILOT ACTION

##### Vehicle counters and video cameras installation

##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behaviour, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

##### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

##### DESCRIPTION

In accordance with what had been decided during the preliminary meeting, the Park installed two types of devices in the area in order to:

- estimate the number of vehicles and visitors to the area;
- guarantee the continuous supervision of the car parks;
- receive timely information about the congestion on the internal roads and the availability of the parking spaces at the car parks.

Precisely, in November 2018 the Park installed two electronic vehicle counters and three video cameras, operating continuously throughout the year, in different places.

The vehicle counters feature radar sensors and a GSM/GPRS modem. The first vehicle counter was installed in a close proximity to the Park office, on the main road, to monitor in the direction leading to the entrance to the Protected Area and in the direction of the “peak zone”; the second one is bi-directional and was placed in the “peak zone”, close to the ski tracks and along the main road leading to Krapinsko - Zagorska county.

The video cameras are full colour and allow to broadcast the images in real time; the video cameras supervise:

- the car park by the main entrance to the Park next to the information point "Bliznec";
- the car park adjacent to the hotel “Tomislavov dom”, in the “peak zone”;
- the crossroads in the same “peak zone”, subject to heavy traffic and characterised by three different travel directions.



## 2 PILOT ACTION

### Conducting a survey

#### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

#### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behaviour, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

#### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

#### DESCRIPTION

The survey, targeted at the frequent visitors of the “peak zone”, was aimed at collecting information about:

- the identity (the age, the address, the employment situation);
- the behaviour in terms of mobility (the origin, the means of transport used and the reason of such choice, if they arrived by car, which car park was opted for and the number of passengers and children, if any);
- the tourism behaviour (the frequency of skiing in the “peak zone” and the days of increased use of the ski area);
- the way they learnt about the ski area and the reason why they decided to visit Medvednica Nature Park;
- the level of awareness of being in a Protected Area and of the adverse impact on the local area and the impact of the traffic congestion in particular;
- the overall opinion about how the skiing area is managed, the preferences regarding the different possible options to access the “peak area” and the readiness to pay daily parking in the proximity to the skiing facilities.

The survey was conducted in a direct and indirect manner and is now completed.

The direct survey was carried out from January 26 to February 17, 2019 with particular attention paid to the periods of increased attendance of the “peak zone” (the weekends, night skiing, competitions); the paper-based field interviews were focused on the visitors of the pilot areas adjacent to the restaurants, skiing equipment rental points and the path leading to the ski slopes.

The indirect survey was carried out by means of:

- distributing the questionnaires at the ski clubs and the restaurant facilities of the area, aimed at those who intentionally visit Medvednica area in winter;
- online survey, in order to collect feedback from the potential visitors of the “peak zone”.



### 3 PILOT ACTION

#### Realization of an Open day

##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behaviour, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

##### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

##### DESCRIPTION

On 2 June 2019, from 10 am to 5 pm, in the proximity to the main entrance of Bliznec, the Park held the Open Day activities dedicated to the topics of accessibility of the area for the disabled guests.

Several local institutions, involved in the activities related the integration of the disabled people, participated in the event and put forward their initiatives; in particular, among these organisations, there were The Association for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities (APEO), Croatian Association of the Apiarists "Pčelinjak" and "Propolis", the Institute of Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities through Professional Rehabilitation and Occupation (URIHO), the Silver Rehabilitation Centre, the Association of Blind People of Zagreb, the Mali Dom-Zagreb (the public institution that operates as a kindergarten providing rehabilitation for children and the young) and the Rehabilitation Centre Ilika.

Moreover, the Open Day featured a guided educational tour for the disabled visitors along the Bliznec forest path, during which short lessons on environmental protection and the habitat of the Protected Area (the subterranean fauna, the bats and the crabs) were held.

With the topics of accessibility for the disabled guests Public institution tries to encourage regular guests and visitors to use public transport or even more to reach PA by foot.

### 4 PILOT ACTION

#### Supervising the environmental conditions in the “peak zone”

##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Impact of the tourist pressure on nature and environment*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the actual impact of the tourist pressure on the Protected Area*

##### PURPOSES

- *To inspect and analyse the effects of the touristic presence on the natural environment and habitat*

##### DESCRIPTION

As described during the preliminary on-the-spot inspection, the analysis was carried out by comparing the characteristics of a part of the skiing area and its buffer zone. The indicators taken into account to carry out the analysis, are as follows:



- the indicators of natural value: the records related to flora and fauna of the streams and the springs, the biodiversity of the meadows and the birds, the indicators of the invertebrates;
- environmental indicators: hydrological, those related to the soil and the climate.

The supervision activities started in June 2019 and were carried out in September 2019 with a view to complete the observation of the local snow and water conditions conducted by the Natural Park of Medvednica annually, in January and April after the FIS Cup and after closing the ski facilities.

## **EVALUATION**

The Park made a difference by carrying out unique activities within the framework of CEETO project, aimed at gaining information and subsequently supervising the impact of the tourists' presence on the part of the territory used for skiing. In particular, the Park launched the process of integration of the observations, conducted in the past in relation to the local snow and water conditions, the topics of nature and environment, so that the best reference practices for studying the impact of the human activities on the Protected Areas could be identified.

As for the Pilot Actions aimed at collecting information about the identity and the profiles of the visitors, that is the installation of the vehicle counters and the video cameras and conducting a survey among the frequent visitors of the "peak zone", the results obtained allowed to launch the process of raising awareness of the local public and private entities regarding the over-tourism issue. Thus, these results will be the basis of future dialogue aimed at implementing a radical change to solve the congestion issues together, by enhancing the currently existent road public service from Zagreb to the skiing resort, managed by the municipality of Zagreb.

In this respect, it should be highlighted that by 2020 the cable car, currently under construction, connecting the city and the "peak zone", will be completed. The cable cars service might be complemented by the shuttle service as an additional option compared to the traditional road public transport and the funicular during the periods of increased tourist flow.

In particular, despite the fact that starting from February 2019 and till the end of construction of the funicular, on weekdays from 9 am to 4 pm, the road to access the "peak zone" was closed to traffic, thus featuring a partial information coverage on tourist demand, the results obtained with the help of the electronic counters and the video cameras allowed to inform:

- the Public Administration of Zagreb and, generally speaking, the local stakeholders in order to make it easier to choose the adequate measures to control the traffic;
- the visitors by using the main information channels (TV, radio, magazines, YouTube);

regarding the high risk of congestion on the access roads to the "peak zone".

In the course of the survey, a considerable number of replies were collected (406) due to the choice to offer the questionnaire in a direct (276) and indirect (130) way, by providing a paper based and online versions of the questionnaire alike. The decision to involve the ski clubs and the restaurants of the area in the distribution of the questionnaires was equally useful because it allowed to further promote networking started at the initial stages of the project.

Specifically, the questionnaire on the mobility options and the awareness of the visitors regarding the frailty of the "peak zone" and the need to protect it turned out to be an efficient tool aimed at communicating the alternative transportation means available and make people feel responsible for their behaviour while visiting the Park. In fact, the feedback obtained reveals that:



- the car is the main mobility option used (69% of those interviewed), while the public transport is not sufficiently used (10,7% of visitors coming from Zagreb);
- almost all the people interviewed are aware of the need to protect the area from the possible adverse factors (96,6%);
- there are too many cars (80,8%) and the visitors (31,8%), which represent the main threat for the future of the Park.

Broadly speaking, it can be claimed that:

- all the evidence collected in the course of implementing the Pilot Actions will be the basis of the development of the new promotional activities within the framework of the Sustainable Tourism Plan;
- as for making the territory part of the whole process of identification, definition and planning of the Pilot Actions and, more in general, of the Sustainable Tourism Plan, the participation of the local public and private entities at the early stages of CEETO project continued at the stage of implementation of the Pilot Actions, as outlined above.

The survey might have had some socio-environmental benefits like the visitors' opting for more sustainable mobility options to reach the "peak zone" and more appropriate behaviour during the visit as well as their being better informed about the alternative transportation options and less harmful tourism patterns.



#### 4.2.8. Strunjan Natural Reserve

<b>1 PILOT ACTION</b>	Handing out questionnaires and brief information notes
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##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behavior, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*

##### PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

##### DESCRIPTION

During the summer seasons, in July and August of 2018 and 2019, the Reserve conducted, according to what had been defined during the preliminary meeting, the research on the profile of the frequent visitors of the Belvedere Terraces and provided information about the peculiarities of the Protected Area and the behaviour the visitor is supposed to comply with; this Pilot Action consisted in handing out the brochures featuring a questionnaire and the information notes, by the bar located besides the Belvedere Terraces.

The questionnaire was aimed at better understanding of:

- the gender, the age and the country of origin of the visitors;
- the reasons of visiting the Terraces and the possibility of coming back;
- the awareness of being in a Protected Area and the existence of a specific code of behaviour;
- the transportation means used to reach the Terraces;
- the level of satisfaction with the different aspects of the tourist offer;
- suggestions to improve the offer.

The main idea was that the information provided in the notes would encourage people to fill in the questionnaire about the awareness regarding the code of conduct in the Reserve, both being useful tools in raising awareness and providing information; the person interviewed could keep the notes and give the filled in questionnaire back instead.

<b>2 PILOT ACTION</b>	Manual people counting
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##### THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Portrait of the visitors.*

##### CRITICAL POINTS

- *Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behavior, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a Protected Area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.*



## PURPOSES

- *To acquire a better knowledge of the characteristics, choices and level of awareness of visitors regarding the naturalistic specificities.*

## DESCRIPTION

The activity, launched in 2018 at the Belvedere Terraces, was not repeated in 2019 due to the fact that the Reserve failed to guarantee a continuous presence of those in charge of people counting.

3 PILOT ACTION	Creation and distribution of an educational animated video
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## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Behavior of the visitors and awareness of the local specificities.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Inappropriate behavior of visitors, due to a lack of knowledge of the particularities of the Protected Area or an insufficient respect of its natural value.*

## PURPOSES

- *To increase the knowledge of the visitors about the specificity and the nature delicacy of the Protected Area and to empower visitors about their behavior, by an adequate information on the correct rules of conduct.*

## DESCRIPTION

The video was completed before September 2019. It is about the characteristics of the Reserve and its specific protection scheme. Contrary to what had been established during the first preliminary meeting, the video has not been spread publicly yet; the Reserve is supposed to complete this action soon as well as organise the film screening:

- at the visitor centre located on the territory of Strunjan Natural Reserve, after purchasing the necessary technological devices;
- at other hospitality facilities of the Reserve;
- on the website and on the Facebook page of Strunjan Reserve;
- on the website dedicated to CEETO project.

Subsequently, there will be the possibility to distribute this same video at the entry points described in the Pilot Action 4.

4 PILOT ACTION	Belvedere Terraces Development Plan implementation and conducting a technical study regarding the infrastructure
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## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Tourist offer.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Perfectibility of the overall tourist offer of the Protected Area.*



## PURPOSES

- *To enhance the possibilities of fruition of the Protected Area according to environmental sustainability criteria.*

## DESCRIPTION

Belvedere Terraces Development Plan was issued by ENOTA d.o.o. ([www.enota.si](http://www.enota.si)) in October 2018 on commission of the Reserve. The document, inspired by the environmental sustainability principles and the idea of glamping (glamour + camping), implies the improvement of the services, currently provided in the area of the Terraces and, more specifically, the creation of:

- a hotel, constructed directly on the terraces by digging the soil;
- glamping facilities;
- a wellness centre;
- a restaurant and a coffee shop;
- event venues;
- a picnic area;
- a beach;
- funicular connection between the lower and the higher part of the Terraces by moving the car park first.

As for the objective to raise awareness of the area users towards the frailty of the places they visit and the need to comply with the code of conduct, the Plan provides for:

- creation of an entry point featuring the eco-friendly infrastructure, as well as the educational and performance-related content both at the entrance to the funicular located upstream from the Terraces and at the entrance to the Natural Reserve of Strunjan;
- construction of a playground inspired by the topics related to the Reserve.

After completing the project plan, the Reserve carried out a technical research on the infrastructure needed to implement the development plan of Belvedere Terraces; the document was issued in collaboration with 2M INVEST d.o.o. in June 2019.

5 PILOT ACTION	Shuttle service to the access points to the main sights of Strunjan Natural Reserve
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## THEMES OF INTERVENTION

- *Accessibility.*

## CRITICAL POINTS

- *Unsustainable accessibility, with consequent negative externalities (congestion of the road and parking areas, environmental and acoustic pollution, impact on climate, violations of the rules of the road, obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles).*

## PURPOSES

- *To promote sustainable accessibility, instead of the private car.*



## DESCRIPTION

Among the Pilot Actions the Reserve launched the initiative provided for in the Sustainable Tourism Plan, namely by introducing the public transportation service in the area, provided by two electric minibuses with carrying capacity up to 17 people, already tested during the summer season.

The transportation means were provided by the municipality of Pirano and were put in operation on 1 August 2019 in the area of the Reserve, where the main facilities like three hotels and a campsite are located; the latter actively collaborated for a successful implementation of the project by giving financial contribution. The public transportation service was created to be provided free of charge and remained in operation till September 30, daily, running every 20 minutes from 8 am to midday and from 4 pm to 8 pm.

The bus connected the city centre of Strunjan and the beach of Strunjan with intermediate stops at the main natural sights of the Reserve (the salt mines, the visitor centre, the lagoon, the natural coast with the cliff, the cultivated landscape).

It should be pointed out that within the framework of a five-year Action Plan it is planned to provide the transportation service reaching the highest areas of the Reserve where the Belvedere Hotel, the Belvedere Terraces and the second camping area are situated.

Before the end of September 2019, the Reserve managed:

- to fit the buses with the logos of the National Strunjan Reserve, the CEETO project, the municipality of Pirano and the facilities that collaborated to implement the project;
- install the necessary equipment along the road, like the stops;
- draw up, print and hand out the shuttle timetable at the tourist accommodation facilities;
- create and transmit the audio in Slovenian, Italian and English languages during the trips, aimed at promoting the touristic value of the territory and raising the visitors' awareness regarding the rules of behaviour in the Protected area.

## EVALUATION

The solutions implemented by the Reserve qualify as the best practice from many different points of view.

First of all, with the help of the owners of the accommodation facilities in handing out the brochures, 160 replies were obtained in 2019 against the initial target of 150; when comparing this result to that of 2018 (100 replies), the efficacy of the choice to involve the main local stakeholders in carrying out the Pilot Actions, becomes evident.

The success of such activities allowed the Reserve to obtain important information regarding its visitors' profile in terms of the characteristics, choices and wishes, that are valuable at the stage of implementation of the activities provided for in the Sustainable Tourism Plan; namely, the evidence that the car is the main means used to reach the Belvedere Terraces and the greater environmental awareness of those who reached the area on foot thanks to the numerous information boards installed along the way, which goes through the Protected Area and leads to the Terraces.

In addition, handing out the brochures featuring the information notes, made it possible to raise the visitors' awareness regarding the frailty of the area and promote appropriate behaviour in the Protected Area.

The same objective was reached by creating an educational animated video, the efficacy of which is based on choosing the right graphics, content and the pace of storytelling, appreciated by the viewers of all ages; in order to reach to the youngest, the Reserve plans to screen it during the school trips to the Protected



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Area and in particular, at the visitors centre. As far as the networking enhancement among the local entities, already launched at the beginning of the CEETO project, is concerned, the video was created by a local stakeholder.

Another topic, the Reserve excelled in, is related to its foresight while defining the strategies of development of its own touristic offer in terms of sustainability like the implementation of the development plan of the Belvedere Terraces and the technical study on the necessity to enhance the infrastructure, in order to implement in a complete and exhaustive way the new forms of accommodation in terms of accessibility, raising awareness towards the environmental peculiarity of the Protected Area. It should be highlighted that the two researches were conducted by the local societies (ENOTA d.o.o. and 2M INVEST d.o.o.); this choice confirms the willingness of the Reserve to promote project networking on its territory within the framework of CEETO project.

The last successful initiative is related to the topic of accessibility, which shows, yet another time the ability of the Reserve to seize the favourable and unexpected opportunities and make many different stakeholders collaborate on one mobility project. In fact, besides the Reserve itself, the shuttle service implementation involved:

- the municipality of Pirano, which provided two electric buses, equipped the route with the bus stops and provided the drivers, bearing half of the operating costs;
- local public transportation company, in charge of the technical implementation of the service;
- 3 hotels and a campsite, which provided financial and operational contribution to the project by distributing the plan of bus connections, prepared and printed by the Reserve.

The same institution was also in charge of:

- fitting the busses with the logos of the National Strunjan Reserve, the CEETO project, the municipality of Pirano and the facilities that collaborated to implement the project;
- broadcasting the audio during the trip.

The efficacy of the shuttle service is confirmed by the total number of passengers, estimated by the Reserve (12.000-15.000 users in two trial months).

As for making the territory part of the whole process of identification, definition and planning of the Pilot Actions and, more in general, of the Sustainable Tourism Plan, the participation of the local public and private entities at the early stages of CEETO project continued at the stage of implementation of the Pilot Actions, as outlined above.

Socio-environmental benefits obtained, represent the reduction of the acoustic and atmospheric pollution, greenhouse gases, traffic congestion and parking spaces, the risk of the accidents and the cases when the cars impede the emergency services path, as a consequence of a limited use of the private vehicles in favour of the shuttle bus. Car users might find the public transportation means appealing because of the reduced journey time thanks to the easing the traffic congestion as well as time wasted on searching for a free parking space. Lastly, the environmental benefits derive from the increased awareness of the tourists regarding the frailty of the sites they visit with the help of the brochures and the audio transmitted on board of the shuttle bus, and, consequently, the importance to abide by the rules of conduct in the Protected Area.



## 5. The overall evaluation of the Work Package 2 - Testing

This chapter aims to evaluate the overall planning and design process carried out under the Work Package 2 - Testing, with reference to the following criteria:

- effectiveness, concerning the ability of the results obtained to contribute to the achievement of the initial objectives;
- consistency, regarding the adequacy of the activities carried out with respect to the purposes of the Pilot Actions;
- efficiency, that is the ability of the activities envisaged in the testing phase to achieve the expected results at a reasonable cost;
- added value, intended as the production of greater results than the complex of resources used;
- sustainability, corresponding to the ability of the benefits obtained to persist at the conclusion of the Pilot Actions, with a specific attention to the sense of belonging to the project developed by the beneficiaries, the socio-cultural impacts, the environmental effects and the degree of institutional involvement.

The reflections are developed according to three thematic areas, considered in the following chapters:

1. research and monitoring;
2. decision making process;
3. management and planning.

### 5.1. Research and monitoring

A first theme of analysis refers to the principle of coherence and considers the ability of the testing phase to design the monitoring activities in purely instrumental terms with respect to the Pilot Actions, dedicated to management interventions, that is measuring the effectiveness of the choices made for the improvement of the governance of the Parks. According to an academic and disciplined approach, in fact, the complex of activities envisaged in Work Package 2 should have consisted in:

- a first phase of monitoring, aimed at knowing the state of affairs of the main critical elements for the Protected Areas, according to what emerged during the participatory process, that is in the phase of comparison with local stakeholders which led to the drafting of the Sustainable Tourism Plan;
- the identification, based on the evidence that emerged, of adequate management actions of the Protected Areas, aimed at correcting the initial weaknesses;
- a second monitoring phase, aimed at verifying the effectiveness of the governance actions implemented with the intent of a resolution, total or partial, of the initial gaps.

The observation of the actual design dynamics in the testing phase returns a different evidence compared to this operating flow, witnessing to the substantial absence of a functional relationship, temporally and logically consequential, between the monitoring actions and the management actions developed by the Parks.

As a consequence of this methodological weakness, and as already highlighted in the previous paragraphs, in order to enhance the design activity carried out by all the Protected Areas and to lead the results achieved to a common heritage, it was decided to analyze the two types of actions (monitoring and management) in parallel and complementary terms.



A second aspect of evaluation concerns the type of monitoring tools adopted in the testing phase and the ability to experiment with new methods of research and collection of qualitative and quantitative information to support the design of the Pilot Actions and the verification of the results achieved.

If from the point of view of the effectiveness and efficiency of the choices made, the judgment is positive, as the monitoring tools identified by the Parks have made it possible to photograph the phenomena investigated with relevance and accuracy, adopting economic solutions also due to the limits of financial resources of the CEETO project and of the Parks themselves, the willingness to favor innovative tools has proved to be rarer.

With the exception of the Central Emilia Parks Authority and the choice to install a Video Content Analysis (VCA) system at the Salse of Nirano, the monitoring tools adopted were substantiated in the creation of surveys, in the use of manual or electronic people counters, in the positioning of electronic car counters at the parkings, in the analysis of the summit books and in the counting of the related signatures, and in the installation of video cameras. The limits that determined the choice of traditional tools by the Protected Areas are first and foremost endogenous to the CEETO project and can be seen in:

- the scarcity of economic resources made available to the Parks for research and monitoring actions;
- the substantial delay in the implementation of the CEETO project, in particular the test phase, with the reduction of the time horizon available for carrying out the monitoring;
- the experience of the management bodies of the protected areas in adopting and applying innovative monitoring solutions;
- the weakness of the preliminary technical assistance provided to the Pilot Areas in the choice of innovative monitoring tools in terms of flexibility and specificity with respect to the context analyzed.

## 5.2. Decision making process

The involvement of the territory in the overall process of identification, definition and design of the Pilot Actions and, more generally, of the Sustainable Tourism Plan, has been fully declined with the participation of local subjects, both public and private, since the early stages of CEETO , continuing in the implementation phase of the Pilot Actions.

The general objective of the first part of the project testing phase (Work Package 2), coincided with:

- the modification of the more traditional territorial planning and programming paradigm within the Protected Areas;
- the evolution from a top down approach, in which local communities are passive receivers of what was decided by the overning Bodies and local Administrations, to a more modern, democratic and inclusive bottom-up approach, in which the community is called to actively participate in the definition of objectives, strategies, activities and related implementation methodologies to be realised in its own territory.

This approach, enshrined in the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST), guarantees:

- a better view of the state of affairs and of the critical issues in the area;
- a greater sharing of the strategic objectives;
- more ideas and solutions as well as development scenarios from which to choose the best development options;



- a greater involvement of local communities, which feel part of the cause in the development of their territories and, consequently, a lower risk of conflict and manifestations of dissatisfaction with the management Body.

The final intent of the path envisaged in the WP 2 corresponded to the preparation of the five-year Action Plan by the eight Protected Areas management Bodies involved (D.T2.2.3), within which objectives, strategies, methods and project activities have been identified; these variables, with the related workflow, were in fact the basis for the development, in the medium term, of sustainable tourism in the Protected Areas.

The Action Plans, after being shared with the local communities (D.T2.1.3) have been formally adopted by the management Bodies (D.T2.3.1). Some preliminary activities, called "Pilot Actions", developed during 2018 and completed by September 2019, were selected from the same Plans as part of the CEETO Project; these activities were used as "testing" of the wider set of interventions included in the five-year plans.

The participatory design process, attributable to living labs and innovative in the experience of the Regional Park of the Po Delta, with the application of the Saint Gallen method, facilitated the achievement of some fundamental objectives for the success of the overall project, intended as a flywheel of a local socio-economic development. In detail:

- to encourage virtuous and creative relationships between the subjects involved, of which the development projects carried out in other thematic areas will also benefit;
- to further strengthen the identity of the local community;
- to facilitate the dialogue with the local actors, by sharing objectives, actions and tools of the entire development project of a Sustainable Tourism Action Plan;
- to create opportunities for a choral development and, therefore, shared and perpetual benefits, with a view to the tourist growth not only in a short term, but also in a medium and long term.

The living lab moments were anticipated and completed by a desk design activity, which started from the examination of virtuous experiences of creation and management of Protected Areas.

The main reasons why the inclusion of the local community has led to better decisions than the design alternatives centralized by the Parks can be summarized as follows:

- it has promoted a combination of expert and profane knowledge;
- it led to an improvement in the management of the resources, through an environment suitable for coordinating actions with a limited presence of conflicting elements;
- it generated a more responsible behaviour in the actors involved.

As regards, first of all, "The Future Search" activity, each Partner and each stakeholder involved focused on reviewing their perceptions on the future of the local territory, canceling the limits currently perceived and starting a process of shared imagination of new prospectives. For the purposes of the CEETO project, "The Future Search" phase proved to be useful to:

- define the common vision at the basis of the entire Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism, that is the axioms of the strategy of the Plan itself;
- predict the negative and positive impacts of the tourist flows in the Protected Area.

The next activity, called "The Ideas Factory", identified a first list of possible actions to be included in the Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism, detailing the objectives, times and contents of the Pilot Actions of the Protected Areas.



"The World Café" phase also made it possible to:

- define indicators, implementation and monitoring times, economic resources, possible partnerships of the Pilot Actions and/or all other possible actions to be included in the Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism;
- present and discuss any integrated technical solutions for the various actions outlined in priority terms (Pilot Actions) or subsequent (interventions foreseen in the five-year Plan).

### 5.3. Management and planning

A theme of excellence regarding the management activities concerns the social and environmental sustainability of the Pilot Actions carried out by the Protected Areas, through:

- the start of project reflections within the network of local, public and private stakeholders, regarding new forms of tourist reception;
- the testing of public and eco-sustainable accessibility services (in particular, electric shuttles and e-bikes), demonstrating the ability to bring together around a common mobility project several stakeholders (in addition to the management Bodies of the Protected Areas, the public Administrations, the local transport companies and some private bodies, which have supported the project both financially and operationally, with the distribution of the transport connections plans);
- the sensitization of the tourists about the naturalistic specificities and the adoption of a correct behaviour to protect the places visited.

The socio-environmental benefits generated were substantiated in:

- the facilitation of the dialogue, the comparison and the participation of the local subjects, both public and private, in the definition of a common vision of sustainable development of the territory and in the design of the strategic lines of implementation of the Pilot Actions and, more broadly, of the Sustainable Tourism Action;
- the reduction of the air and noise pollution, the production of greenhouse gases, the road and parking areas congestion, the risk of accidents and episodes of obstacle to the passage of emergency vehicles, as a result of the limitation of the use of the private car in favor of the shuttle;
- the reduction of the travel time due to a lower road congestion and a reduction in the time spent searching for a free parking area;
- the sensitization of the tourist presences to the delicacy of the places visited, through the initiatives of Infopoint, Open day and a wide range of communication means (press, brochures and dedicated flyers, the Parks website, social networks, audio guides, educational videos and placemats at the refuges).

Furthermore, according to an added value criterion, the activities described have produced greater effects in terms of social cohesion and reduction of negative environmental externalities than the complex of the used resources, since the assumption of the sustainability criterion to inspire the testing phase has allowed to experiment strengths and weaknesses, risks and opportunities, laying the foundations for the implementation of the activities subsequently envisaged in the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan.

Among the most relevant management issues, the communication of the contents of the Pilot Actions was realized in articulated forms, upgradeable within the five-year Action Plan by multiple and complementary channels:



- publishing, through brochures and illustrative leaflets, whose future distribution must consider all the promotional points in the area (proloco, tourist information offices, etc.), the local or external tourist agencies involved in the distribution of the local offer packages and the participation in fairs, events and educational tours;
- media, with the preparation of press releases for the local newspapers and the production of promotional videos. In this regard, it is suggested that all the press releases are archived and made available within the Park's website, in a public review space. Furthermore, with a specific reference to the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan, it should be noted that the reputation of the local tourist offer could be amplified through the activation of advertising campaigns on the traditional and online media channels, both generic and specialised, which express the identity of the Park territory, its heritage and any thematic itineraries. It would also be interesting to provide for the dissemination of specific promotional messages via e-mail, addressed to a public of selected subjects, setting up a direct sensitisation activity, which could be followed by recall actions;
- the Park's website, in which in the future it is necessary to provide for the possibility of consulting and downloading the illustrative material (brochures and welcome maps), accessing promotional videos and expressing comments and suggestions in direct terms;
- social networks, activated by the Protected Areas in order to share their proposals on the main channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube), amplifying their promotion in the territory.

As regards further forms of enhancement of the promotion of the tourist offer of the Protected Areas, with an emphasis on the local development process in terms of sustainability, it is finally suggested the organization of educational trips for the communication of the activities defined in the five-year Plan. The creation of a short fam-trip, that is a familiarization trip, represents a particularly effective channel for the tourism promotion of a territory, since it allows an immediate verification of the compatibility between the needs of the supply and the demand; the fam-trips could mainly be aimed at selected journalists, both domestic and foreign.

A further element of evaluation concerns the timing of the planning of the activities envisaged in the testing phase of the CEETO project and the degree of definition of the same actions; with respect to this point, it is necessary to underline a significant delay in the implementation of the project steps envisaged in WP T2, with a consequent contraction of the time available for carrying out the Pilot Actions. The reasons for this weakness are primarily endogenous and are to be found in a problematic direction of the project, with margins for both technical and operational improvement.

Lastly, what is important to highlight is the ability of the managing Bodies of the Protected Areas to involve, also in the management of the testing activity, the local actors, in the belief that a path shared by all those who are, albeit in a different way, interested in an initiative, produce results that are simpler to implement and longer lasting in their effects. In fact, the involvement of local public and private stakeholders has generated trust, capacity, skills and aptitude for cooperation in the communities, making them capable of facing other challenges, both individually and collectively, and allowing the identification of design solutions more in line with their needs also in the context of the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan.