



# PILOT ACTIONS FINAL REPORT

D.T2.5.1 - PP01 - Emilia-Romagna Region -  
Po Delta Regional Park

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## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.1. Participatory processes .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.2. Developed Strategy .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Pilot Action Design Phase .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.1. Monitoring Activities.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.2. Forecasted Managing Activities .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.3. Expected results.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.4. Pilot Action Workplan .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3. Pilot Action Implementation Phase.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.1. Monitoring activities and achieved results .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.1.1. 2018 monitoring activity .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.1.2. 2019 Monitoring activity.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>3.1.3. Discussion .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.2. Implemented Managerial Activities .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3.3. Relationship with Action Plan activities .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3.4. Deviation from the forecasted workplan activities .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>4. Achieved Results .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>4.1. Touristic pressure reduction .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>4.2. Tourist experience improvement .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>4.3. Socio-Economic Benefits .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>5. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>27</b>



## 1. Introduction

Thanks to the involvement within the Interreg CEETO project, the Po Delta Park has started, in a more structured and decisive way, a process of awareness of its role within the sustainable tourism development of the entire territory. In fact, the Park has never undertaken tourism development strategies in the strict sense, because it is not among the tasks that are assigned to it and for lack of internal capacity. Through this project, instead, the Park did not want to take decisions from above, but, through the participatory process, to identify the strategies and actions most appropriate and consistent with the territorial context.

For this reason, the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan has seen as a key element the participation and involvement in the monitoring actions chosen: the analysis of strategic flows of visits, supported by the collection of data from visitors and questionnaires.

In fact, the objective of the pilot action in the Po Delta is:

- extend the seasonality of the visit, which is currently concentrated in a few moments throughout the year,
- increase the number of places visited on the Park's territory.

In fact, the meetings have shown that tourists are concentrated mainly in some moments of spring and summer, in some specific areas such as the Mesola Wood and the Cervia Salt Pan, while others are almost totally unknown.

Starting from the fact that the Park had a poor knowledge of the tourist phenomenon, the methods used allowed to build a first profile of the tourist, both because this technique responds to the need to know the characteristics of the existing tourist flows in the area of the Cervia Salt Works and the Mesola Woods, in order to better manage them, reducing their impact, encouraging a better distribution throughout the territory of the Park (even to those areas that are almost unknown) and throughout the year.

### 1.1. Participatory processes

In the development of the pilot action, the participatory process was fundamental throughout the process because it allowed, not only to involve stakeholders, the primary objective of this activity, but also to create in them awareness of the role and importance of sustainable tourism and the possible synergies and collaborations that may arise. In fact, many of them had never sat around the same table to address this type of issues. For this reason, the participatory process, especially in the part concerning the analysis of strategic flows of visits, has been structured as a crescendo in the level of interaction. We started by providing the necessary information to start the process of involvement and enter into the logic of "participation" thanks to the two workshops on the spot. In the first meeting of the chosen monitoring activity we focused on the tourist flows that affect the territory and their description thanks to the comparison between the different experiences of the participants. In the second meeting we discussed what actions are necessary to better manage the identified flows, reducing their impacts on the environment. In the last one, besides finalizing the actions, it was given a priority.

A second level of involvement is that of the Visitor Centres, which played an important role as they are involved in the monitoring phase through the collection of data on visitors in their respective structures and in the distribution and collection of questionnaires.



Despite the participatory process can be considered in the case of the Po Delta as a single path, in the description that follows will be divided into several points to better highlight how it was structured.

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

1. The identification of «under pressure», «hidden» and «fragile» areas during **workshop on the spot**;
2. The **analysis of strategic tourist flows**;
3. The development of the **Sustainable Tourism Action Plan**:
  - a. Five-years strategy;
  - b. Actions.
4. Manager of visitor centres were involved in:
  - a. **Data collection**, available up to 2018 were requested, whereas daily data were requested in 2019;
  - b. **Questionnaires collection** both in 2018 and 2019.

For the **Workshop on the spot**, two meetings were organized to start the participatory planning process aiming to introduce the following activities:

1. Meeting in Mesola, held in 08.10.2018, 23 participants;
2. Meeting in Cervia, held in 11.10.2018, 21 participants.

The participatory activity followed the CBW Session 2 - Participatory Mapping methodology, allowing an inter-subjective reading of the territory, useful to put the basis of the Sankt Gallen Methodology. The participants had been asked to work in groups (composed by 5-7 persons each) on a physical map of the territory of the Park, identifying with different colours areas and toponymics:

- **Green**: fragile places to preserve and protect from tourism pressure;
- **Red**: mature tourism places, touched by high tourism pressure, in which it is necessary to re-think the existing tourism offer;
- **Blue**: hidden and not yet known places, suitable for the development of new and more sustainable type of tourism

The implementation of the **analysis of the strategic visitors' flows** within the framework of the pilot action of CEETO in the Po Delta Regional Park, has been designed to define the CEETO Strategy and Action Plan shared with the local tourist stakeholders to understand and improve the management of tourist flows in the pilot areas, areas gravitating around the Woods of Mesola (Boscone della Mesola in the Northern area of the Park) and the Cervia Saltpans (Saline di Cervia in the Southern area of the Park), as main area came out from the workshop on the spot.

The participatory process for the Analysis started on the 30th October 2018, during the morning in Mesola (8 participants) and in the afternoon in Cervia (14 participants). This workshop started the identification and analysis of the existing tourist flows that characterized the areas indicated in the first workshop as "under pressure", as well as those related to "hidden places" according to the chosen methodology.

For each visitors' flow the participants identified:

- different tourist profiles;
- the transport routes taken;



- the definition of the flow on the map;
- the identification of the leading player and the influencers;
- identification of the major characteristics of the flow such as working components, improvements to be made and possible solutions;
- the current development phase;
- the seasonality;
- the degrees of environmental impact;
- the level of behaviour appropriate to the place;
- the economic potential;
- the potential interest in other areas.



Fig. 1 - Example of maps developed during the Workshop.

On the 20th November 2018, the morning in Cervia (8 participants) and the afternoon in Mesola (6 participants), continued the mapping activity of the flows set in the preceding meetings. Moreover, during those workshops started the identification of several measures to improve the management of the mapped



tourist flows, that is, to guarantee simultaneously the conservation of the habitats and a sustainable development of tourism.

These measures were then analysed, grouped and illustrated at the last meeting held on the 4th of December (during the morning in Mesola (6 participants) and in the afternoon in Cervia (5 participants)), where stakeholders gave their opinion and consensus.

During these 8 participatory meetings organised (4 in Mesola and 4 in Cervia) attended a total of 37 different stakeholders joined by about ten private stakeholders interested in the topic.

The stakeholders who participated in the meetings in Mesola were:

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

The stakeholders who participated in the meetings in Cervia were:

- Local authorities:
  - Municipality of Cervia;
  - Municipality of Ravenna.
  
- Local enterprises and trade union:



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

## 1.2. Developed Strategy

The important level of interaction that has guided the whole participatory process has also allowed to collect the necessary elements for the elaboration of the strategy. In fact, the method chosen for the analysis of the strategic flows of visits required the stakeholders involved to describe the flows identified, outlining their main characteristics. It is from these dialogues, therefore, that the five-year CEETO strategy could be elaborated because it must be able to respond not only to the needs of the tourist targets, but also to reduce the possible negative externalities.

All the meetings held were managed by a group of facilitators, which made it possible to extract the information needed to build CEETO's five-year strategy and which is reported below:

- Guarantee a sustainable development of tourism in the Park by safeguarding environmental and cultural qualities of the Po Delta (which are also elements that attract tourists), while maintaining its ecological characteristics and aesthetic qualities.
- Reduce the overall environmental pressure generated by tourism on the territory, by supporting local authorities in territorial planning and in particular by promoting a more effective environmental management of mobility, waste, water and energy consumption.
- Contribute to transforming the Po Delta into a destination of excellence in terms of sustainable tourism and ecotourism, especially by encouraging the development of forms of "slow" fruition and mobility (such as trekking, cycling, canoeing) that allow an immersive experience in the area of the Park and a connection between the various locations and natural emergencies encompassed.
- Stimulate and support local tourism operators so that they understand and follow the principles of sustainable tourism, both by qualifying facilities and services from the standpoint of eco-efficiency, and by characterizing their offer on the naturalistic and cultural values of the Po Delta.
- Promote the deseasonalisation of tourism and a more balanced distribution of tourist flows on all areas of the Park, so that sustainable tourism can become a significant economic sector for the local community.
- Encourage the visit to the Po Delta by visitors eager to live ecotourism experiences offered by the territory



- Strengthen the link between the Park's environmental education functions and activities and sustainable tourism development. Environmental awareness and education to tourists can be a major vehicle to convey the principles and values of sustainable development and the importance of conservation of Protected Areas to tourists. In fact, by promoting the qualification of the experience of visiting the natural areas of the Po Delta in terms of knowledge of ecological values, tourists will be more sensitized and involved in the objectives of conservation of these values, thus becoming "important allies" for the proper management of protected areas.
- Inform and engage visitors on the behaviour and the code of conduct to be observed in the Park (by detailing the differences between the various areas) in order to minimise the impact on the ecosystems and the biodiversity existing in the Po Delta.
- Track and understand how the effects of climate change can affect the Po Delta also in terms of tourist fruition, thus favouring a process of adaptation and resilience of local communities and tourism operators

As mentioned in the previous chapter, from the work carried out with the analysis of the strategic visitors' flows a series of actions emerged in response to seasonal adjustment or to the redirection of tourists, especially during peak moments, when the naturalistic emergencies of Boscone della Mesola and Salina di Cervia (Cervia Salt Pans) are under higher touristic pressure.

The measures were then divided into:

- **Strategic actions:** are those measures that will be implemented throughout the area of the Park as they are considered fundamental for a sustainable development of tourism that can ensure the preservation of natural excellence. They refer to needs that have emerged in both areas in which the participatory process has been carried out. Strategic actions defined are:
  - Training of Visitor centres' staff and Tourist Information Offices in the Park;
  - Training of tourism offices;
  - Monitoring and profiling of visitors by the visitor centres of the Park;
  - Coordination among the Visitor Centres of the Park;
  - Communication campaign on behaviours;
  - Geocaching around "hidden places";
  - Tourism table;
  - Communication campaign on "hidden sites";
  - Masterplan for sustainable mobility;
  - Bike-Park;
  - Gastronomy tourism;
  - Influencers in "hidden places".
- **On-spot action:** refer to particular needs related to a location in the Park and thus require interventions that are more specific. On-spot actions have been identified among those concerning sites considered as "under pressure" or "hidden" during the first workshop. In this section there are:



- 5.3. On-spot actions for “areas under pressure”:
  - Saline di Cervia1: Code of conduct in the Salt Pan of Cervia (Saline di Cervia) during peak periods;
  - Saline di Cervia2: Cyclo-pedestrian link between the Salt Pan and the city centre;
  - Saline di Cervia3: Seasonal thematic paths;
  - Saline di Cervia4: Birders tower hides;
  - Saline di Cervia6: The SalinaBus;
  - Saline di Cervia7: Communication campaign to raise awareness of the attractions at other times of the year;
  - Boscone della Mesola1: Code of conduct in the Boscone della Mesola during peak periods;
  - Educational programme: packages specific for the low season;
  - Boscone della Mesola3: Communication campaign to raise awareness of the attractions at other times of the year;
  - Boscone della Mesola4: Improve the direction panels to reach the Boscone della Mesola;
  - Boscone della Mesola5 Physical accessibility;
  - Pomposa Abbey1: Intercept the potential flows that stop at Pomposa Abbey;
- On-spot actions for hidden locations:
  - Pineta di Classe1: Signalization of the Cervia-Ravenna cycling route;
  - Pineta di Classe2: Map of the cycling route Cervia-Ravenna;
  - Ancient Harbour of Classe1: Innovative tools of fruition;
  - Ancient Harbour of Classe2: Connection with Ravenna;
  - Bevanella1: Enhancing accessibility;
  - Bevanella2: Signalization;
  - Bevanella3: Fruition of the visitor centre;
  - Mesola Castle1: Events that link the castle to the territory;
  - Dunes of Massenzatica1: Inclusion in the Park's communication tools;
  - Dunes of Massenzatica2: Tools for landscape interpretation;
  - Goro1: Navigation routes;
  - Dindona Valley and Island of Mezzano1: Birdwatcher route;
  - Valle Dindona and Island of Mezzano2: Birdwatcher route.



## 2. Pilot Action Design Phase

### 2.1. Monitoring Activities

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

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

This methodology was also supported by a phase of data collection, especially on visitors to the Visitor Centres and the collection of questionnaires about the characteristics of the tourist.

Within the Pilot Action design phase, we forecasted two kind of monitoring activities.

For the first monitoring activity in **2018**:

- Analysis of strategic visitor flows with local stakeholders related to tourism activity;
- Questionnaires collection during the month of July for a first tourist profiling;
- Data collection available to have a picture of the seasonality. In 2018, the various Visitor Centres were asked to send us the data available at that time and they each presented themselves in different ways (the monthly or annual data, a cumulative data or data divided between normal entries and students, for example, etc.).

For the second monitoring activity in **2019**:

- Daily data from Visitor Centres from march in 2019 to September have a complete view on the seasonality of visitor flows in visitor centres starting from March 2019. In 2019 we structured an ad hoc data collection module for each Visitor Centre, but equal to each other, so as to have a consistent and comparable data in different periods. The module will also be used by the Visitor Centres after the end of the CEETO project.
- questionnaires collection all year long to improve what emerged during the first phase of collecting questionnaires in 2018, thus improving the knowledge of who is the tourist who visits the territory of the PA

### 2.2. Forecasted Managing Activities

One of the aspects that characterizes the main naturalistic hotspots within the Po Delta Park is the fact that it is not allowed to enter freely within these areas. In fact, many of these places can only be accessed if accompanied by nature and/or environmental guides.

For this reason, the actions carried out as part of the pilot action, refer more to the objectives of the CEETO project in the Po Delta, expand the seasonality and the places enjoyed by visitors. Therefore, we have mainly communication, information and awareness actions, not only external towards tourists but also towards the operators of the territory.



	2018				2019				2020	
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II
<b>Implementation of specific actions</b>										
Installation of information panels										
Creation of information materials to be distributed in accommodation facilities and visitor centres										
<b>Implementation of strategic actions</b>										
Awareness campaign										
Information campaign										
Tourist operators training										

Tab. 1 - Pilot Actions Management Activities Workplan.

## 2.3. Expected results

For the structure of the CEETO project and the timing, the methodology identified by the Regional Park of the Po Delta and considering its starting point with respect to the knowledge of tourist flows in the area, the expected results are:

- to create awareness in the tourist about the place, protected area, in which they are located;
- to create awareness among local stakeholders on the issue of sustainable tourism;
- to encourage the emergence of actions involving public and private entities, guaranteeing respect for and protection of the environment;
- have a greater knowledge of the tourist phenomenon and, specifically, of the type of tourist who frequents the territory of the Park to identify actions and solutions to reduce impacts on the environment.

## 2.4. Pilot Action Workplan

The pilot action has been structured in such a way as to respect the development times of the activities of the stakeholders of the territory and the tourist flows that are present there.

Thus, for example, the participatory process was organised between October and December, i.e. a period of relative tranquillity for the operators of the territory.



	2018				2019				2020	
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II
<b>Monitoring</b>										
First visitor survey/data collection										
Survey and data Analysis										
Second visitor Survey/data collection <sup>1</sup>										
Evaluation result										
<b>Sustainable Tourism Action Plan</b>										
Workshop on the spot (Cervia)										
Workshop on the spot (Mesola)										
Participatory process to realise the tourist flows analysis										
Definition of the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan										
Implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Pilot Action										

Tab. 2 - Pilot Actions Activities Workplan.

## 3. Pilot Action Implementation Phase

### 3.1. Monitoring activities and achieved results

#### 3.1.1. 2018 monitoring activity

In the 2018 monitoring activity we managed to reach all the forecasted activity:

1. We have implemented the analysis of strategic visit flows which allow us to understand the type of tourist with which participants get in contact during their daily experience which results can be found in the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan and briefly reported in this report in the preceding paragraphs.
2. We have collected data available from visitor centres, focusing on the last three years. We also obtained data from other natural sites within the Park, but not directly managed by it or visitor centres.
3. We collected about 330 questionnaires from visitor's centres with a first low definition of the tourist profile and knowledge of the park.

<sup>1</sup> Data collection will continue after the end of the CEETO project.

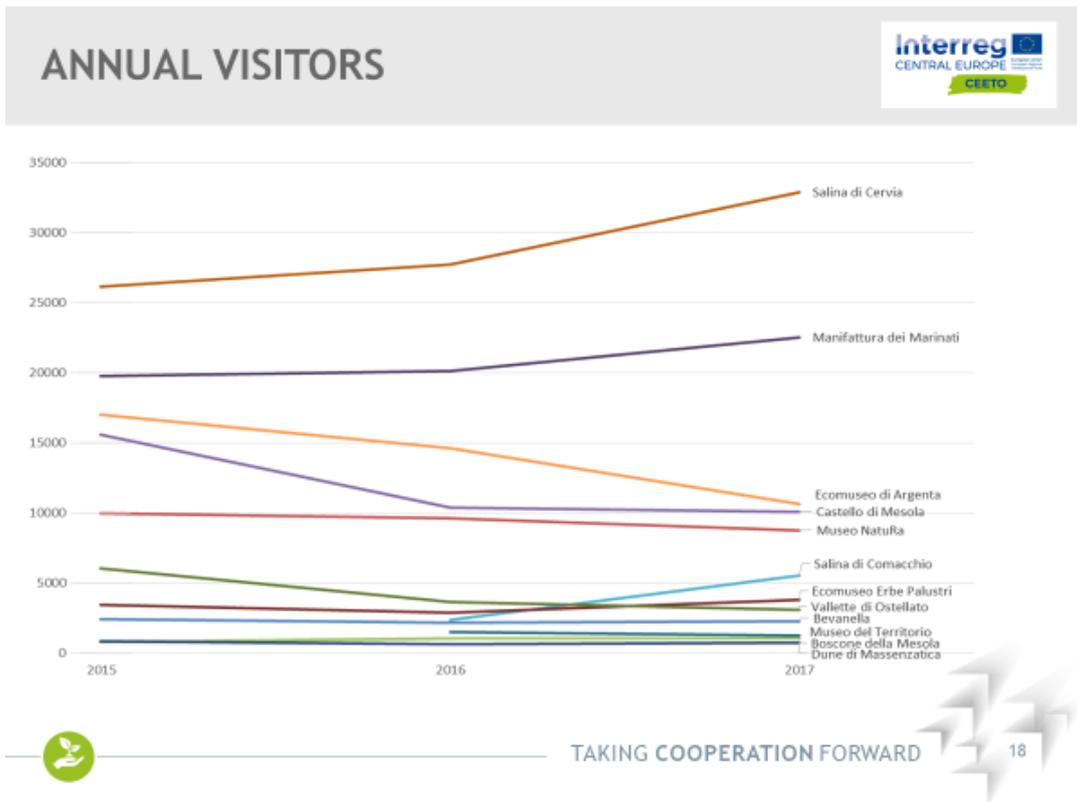


Fig. 2 - Number of Annual visitors in the Park's Visitors Centres.

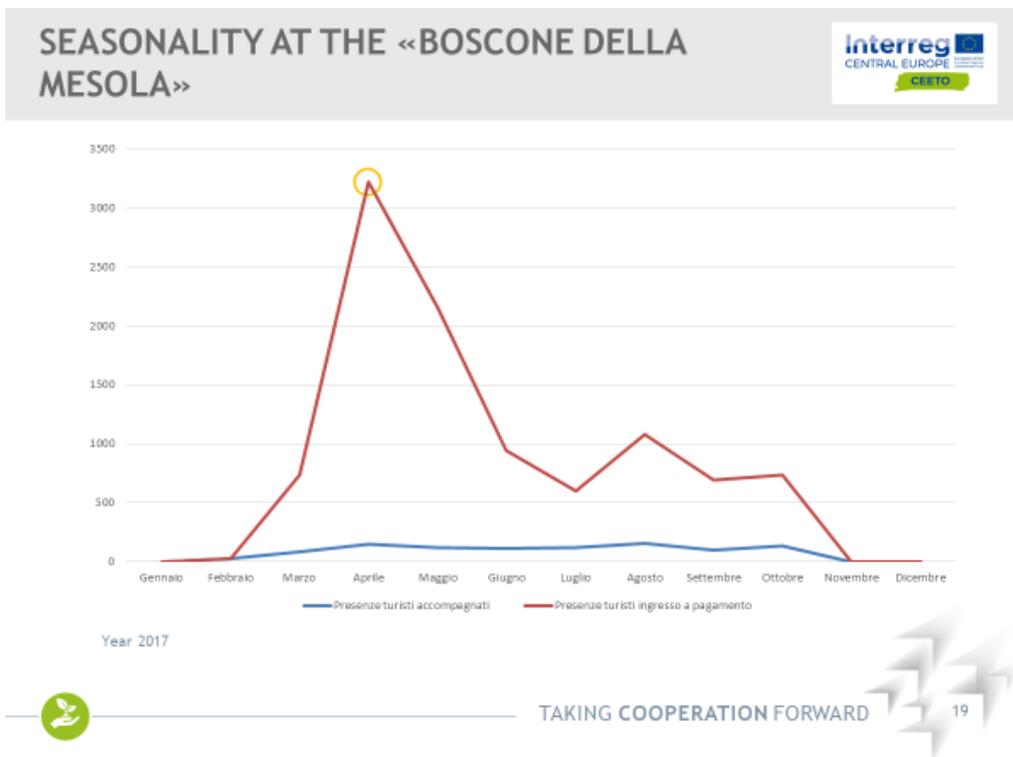


Fig. 3 - Seasonality of visits in the Boscone della Mesola Visitors Centre.



  
**PARCO DELTA DEL PO**  
ERRELA-ROBBIANA

  
**Questionario per valutare la conoscenza delle  
eccellenze naturalistiche del Parco del Delta del Po**

  
**Questionnaire to evaluate the knowledge of the  
naturalistic excellences of the Po Delta Park**

  
**Interreg**  
 CENTRAL EUROPE  
 European Union  
 European Regional  
 Development Fund  
**CEETO**

Eccellenze Naturalistiche <i>Naturalistic excellences</i>	Lo conosci? <i>Do you know it?</i>		Ci sei già stato? <i>Have you been there?</i>		Ti piacerebbe andare? <i>Would you like to go?</i>	
	Si/Yes	No	Si/Yes	No	Si/Yes	No
Dune Fossili di Massenzatica						
Punte Alberete						
Boscone della Mesola						
Bosco di Santa Giustina						
Valli di Comacchio						
Salina di Comacchio						
Salina di Cervia						
Torre Abate						
Faro di Goro						
Garzaia di Codigoro						
Pineta di San Vitale						
Pineta di Spina						
Pineta di Volano						
Dune della Puja						
Pinea di Classe						
Pineta di Cervia						
Bevanella						
Vallette di Ostellato						
Boscoforte						
Sacca di Goro e Valle di Gorino						
Bassarone						
Campotto						
Valle Santa						
Oasi di Cannevié						
Riserva Naturale di Alfonsine						
Ortazzo						
Ortazzino						

**Quanti anni hai? *How old are you?***

< 18

18 – 35

36 – 50

50 – 70

> 70

**Come stai viaggiando? *How are you travelling?***

Da solo/*alone*

Con un gruppo di amici/*with a group of friends*

Con la famiglia/*with the family*

Con un gruppo organizzato/*with a organized group*

Altro/*Other*: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nazione/*Nation***

\_\_\_\_\_

Se italiano, indica la provincia

\_\_\_\_\_

Fig. 4 - Questionnaire used in the 2018 survey campaign.

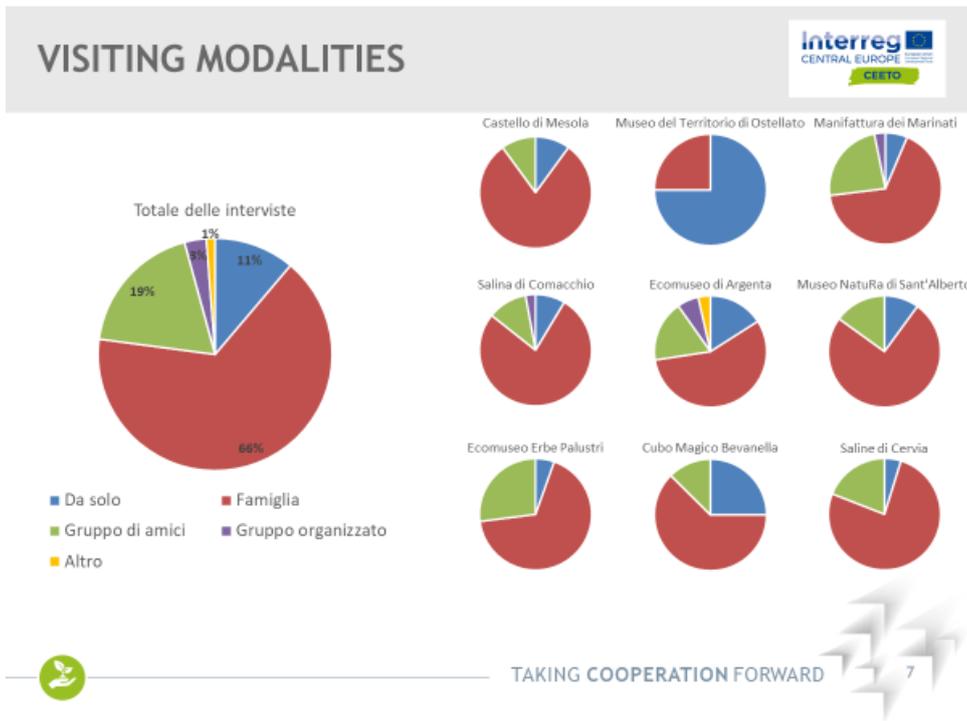


Fig. 5 -Results of visits modalities, from the 2018 survey campaign Questionnaire. The chart on the left is the overall result while on the right, the results of the different Visitors Centres.

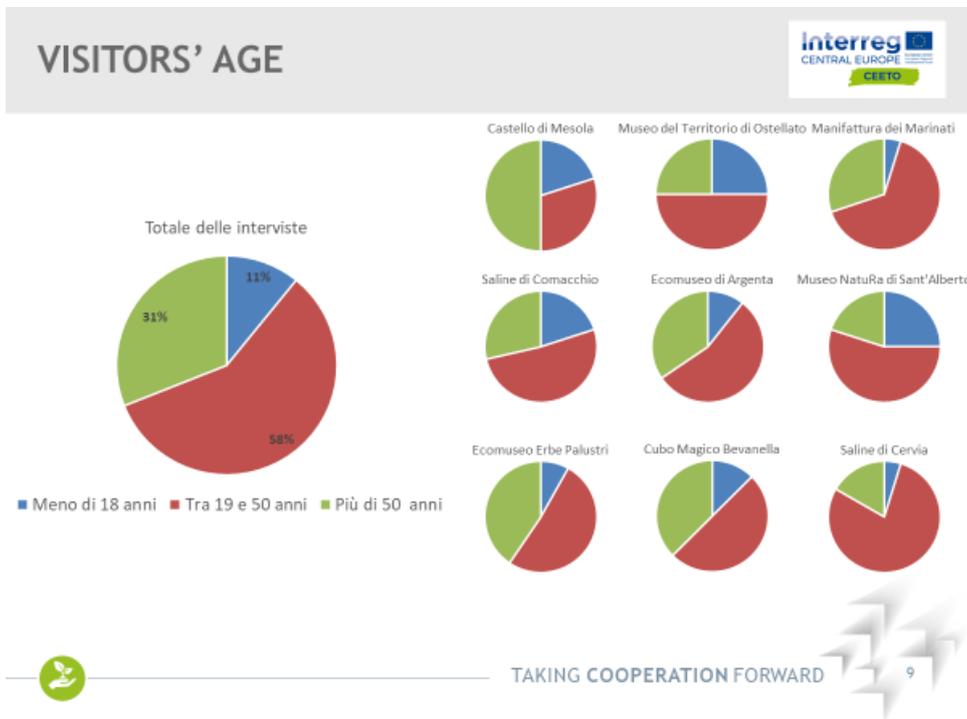


Fig. 6 -Results of visitors age, from the 2018 survey campaign Questionnaire. The chart on the left is the overall result while on the right, the results of the different Visitors Centres.

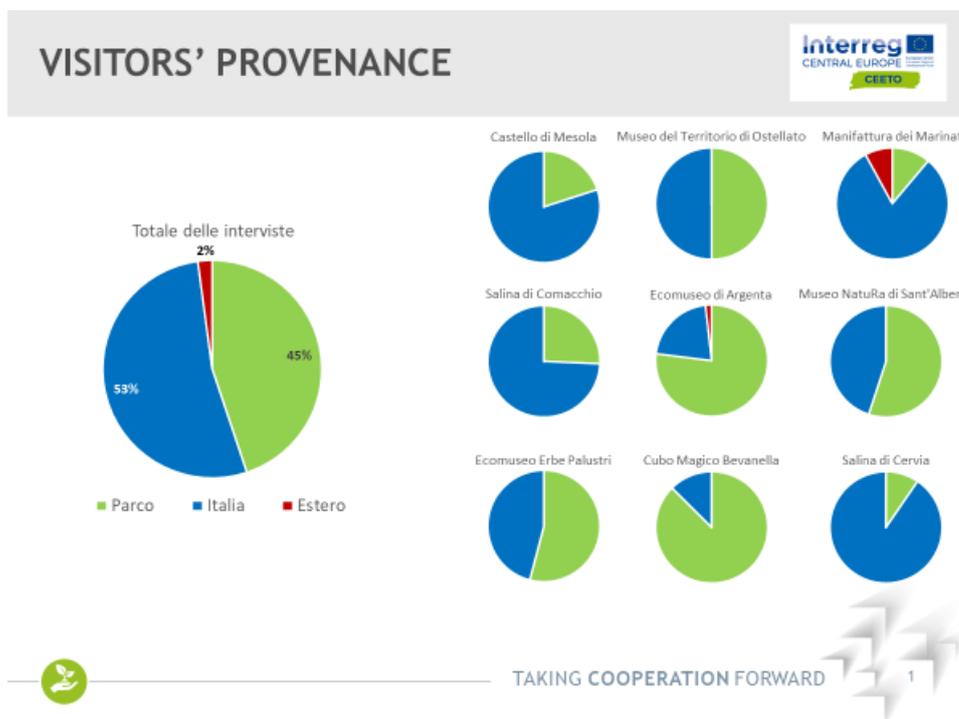


Fig. 7 -Results of visitors Provenance, from the 2018 survey campaign Questionnaire. The chart on the left is the overall result while on the right, the results of the different Visitors Centres.

The "Analysis of the strategic visitors' flows " was chosen according to the "Handbook of successful and innovative practices for a Sustainable Tourism inside Protected Areas" (D.T1.2.3), as this technique responds to the need to know the characteristics of the existing tourist flows in the area of the Cervia Salt Pan and the Mesola Woods, in order to better manage them, reducing their impact, encouraging better distribution throughout the Park (even to those areas that are almost unknown) and throughout the year.

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

The second monitoring mode was the Analysis of strategic visit flows, discussed earlier in the section on the participatory process (1.1) where you can also see some examples of maps resulting from the participatory process.

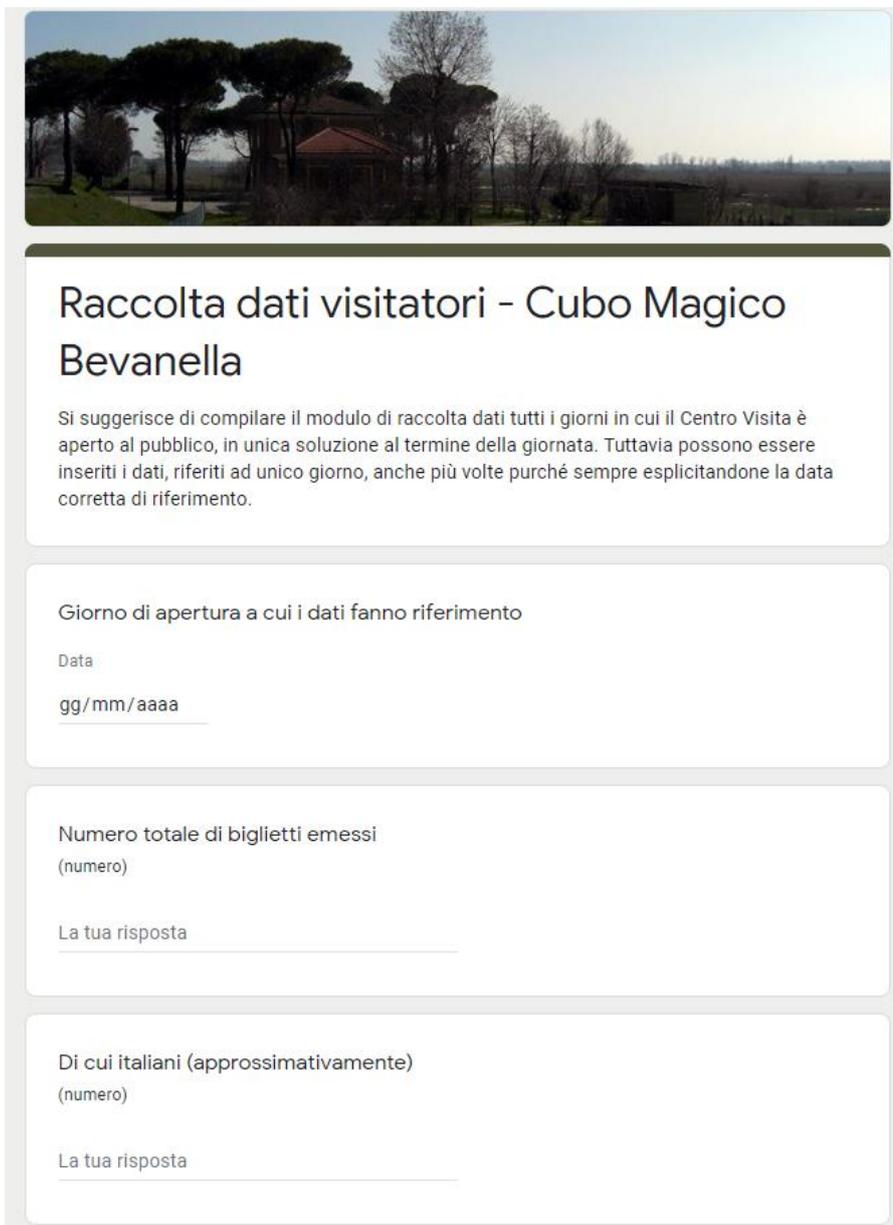


### 3.1.2. 2019 Monitoring activity results

We focused on Visitor Centres because they have a strictly connection with the Park, as the manage sites thanks to conventions and agreements directly with the latter. Here we bring a summary of the processing. For all information please refer to the excel files that contain all data and graphs.

Regarding the aspects of collecting number of visitors in each Visitor Centre:

- Common tool to sign number of visits, with information also if they were groups and how they were organized, type of ticket issued (full, reduced, free) and origin (Italian, foreign). Here will be put just an example of the results coming from questionnaires. For all charts we attached the Excel file with all data and elaborations



**Raccolta dati visitatori - Cubo Magico Bevanella**

Si suggerisce di compilare il modulo di raccolta dati tutti i giorni in cui il Centro Visita è aperto al pubblico, in unica soluzione al termine della giornata. Tuttavia possono essere inseriti i dati, riferiti ad unico giorno, anche più volte purché sempre esplicitandone la data corretta di riferimento.

Giorno di apertura a cui i dati fanno riferimento

Data  
 gg/mm/aaaa

Numero totale di biglietti emessi  
 (numero)

La tua risposta

Di cui italiani (approssimativamente)  
 (numero)

La tua risposta

Fig. 8 - Example of an online version of the data collection form.

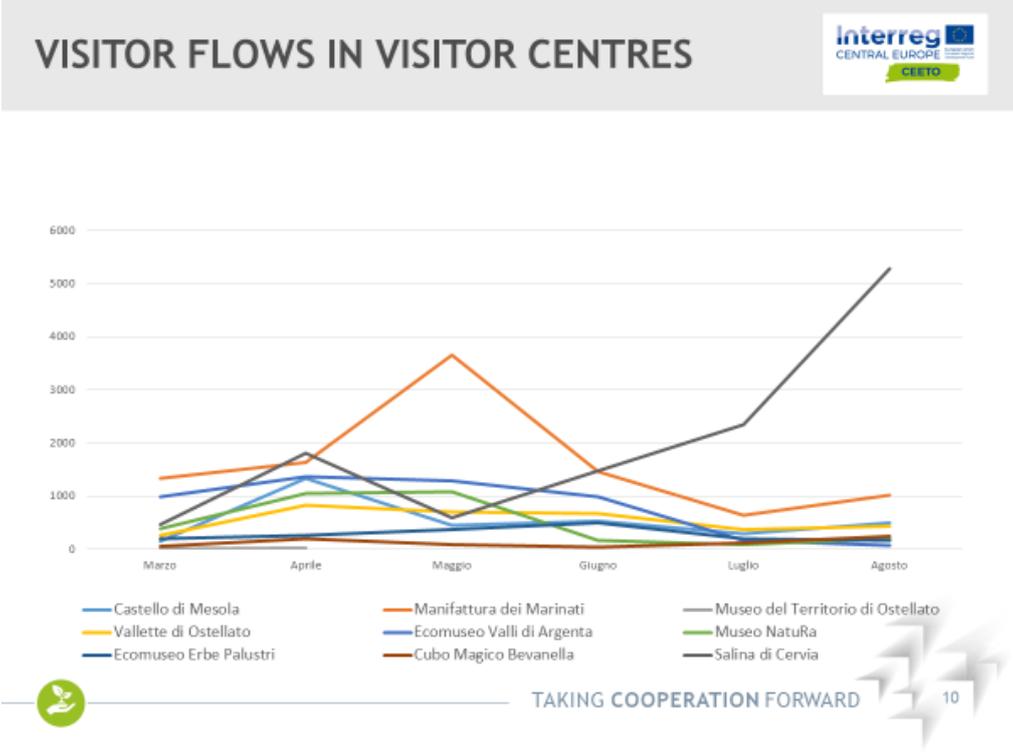


Fig. 9 - Number of Annual visitors in the Park's Visitors Centres - Data of year 2019.

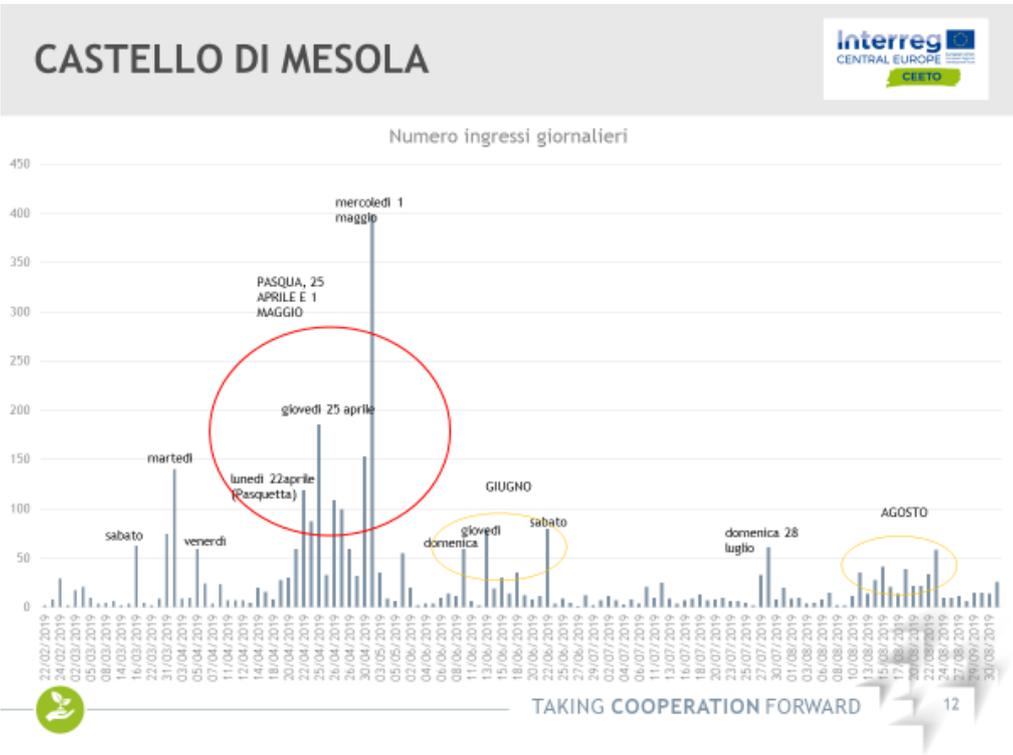
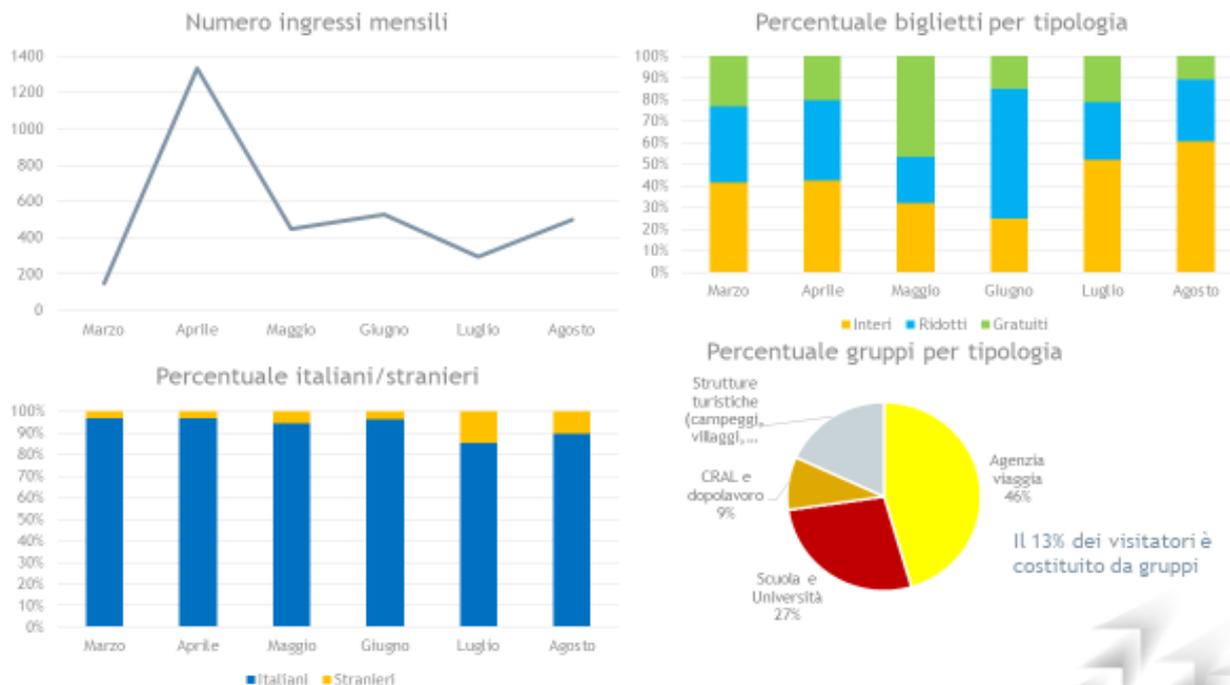


Fig. 10 - Detail of 2019 visitors in the Mesola Castle Visitors Centre.



## CASTELLO DI MESOLA



TAKING COOPERATION FORWARD

1

Fig. 11 - Further Detail of 2019 visitors in the Mesola Castle Visitors Centre, aggregated by month.

Concerning the questionnaires, we put two more question, about the awareness of being in a Park and the other type of activities they had during their visits to Po Delta those are the results. Here will be put just an example of the results coming from questionnaires. For all charts we attached the Excel file with all data and elaborations.



Questionario per valutare la conoscenza delle  
eccellenze naturalistiche del Parco del Delta del Po  
*Questionnaire to evaluate the knowledge of the  
naturalistic excellences of the Po Delta Park*



Quanti anni hai? *How old are you?*

- < 18
- 18 – 35
- 36 – 50
- 50 – 70
- > 70

Nazione/*Nation*

\_\_\_\_\_

*(if Italian)* Se italiano, indica la provincia

\_\_\_\_\_

Durante la tua vacanza del Delta del Po quali esperienze hai fatto? *What experiences have you had during your holiday in the Po Delta?*

- Enogastronomia/*Enogastronomy*
- Birdwatching/*Birdwatching*
- Balneare/*Seaside*
- Escursione in bicicletta/*Bike excursion*
- Escursioni naturalistiche/*Nature excursion*
- Visite a siti culturali/*Visits to cultural sites*
- Attività sportive/*Sports activities*
- Escursioni in barca/*Boat excursion*
- Partecipazione ad eventi/*Participation in Events*
- Pescaturismo/*Fishing-tourism*
- Altro/*Other*: \_\_\_\_\_

Come stai viaggiando? *How are you travelling?*

- Da solo/*alone*
- Con un gruppo di amici/*with a group of friends*
- Con la famiglia/*with the family*
- Con un gruppo organizzato/*with a organized group*
- Altro/*Other*: \_\_\_\_\_

Sai di trovarti nel Parco del Delta del Po dell'Emilia-Romagna? Conosci le sue regole?

- Sì e ne conosco le regole
- Sì, ma non ne conosco bene le regole
- No

*Are you aware to be in the Emilia-Romagna Po Delta Regional Park? Do you know its rules?*

- Yes and I know its rules*
- Yes, but I don't know its rules*
- No*

Fig. 12 - First page of the questionnaire (in two languages).



<b>Eccellenze Naturalistiche</b> <i>Naturalistic excellences</i>	<i>L'ho visitato</i> <i>I visited it</i>	<i>Lo conosco, ma non l'ho</i> <i>mai visitato - I know it,</i> <i>but never visited</i>	<i>Non lo conosco</i> <i>I don't know it</i>
Bosco di Santa Giustina			
Boscone della Mesola			
Torre Abate			
Dune fossili di Massenzatica			
Sacca di Goro e Valle di Gorino			
Garzaia di Codigoro			
Faro di Goro			
Oasi di Cannevié			
Pineta di Volano			
Dune della Puja			
Vallette di Ostellato			
Valli di Comacchio			
Salina di Comacchio			
Pineta di Spina			
Campotto			
Bassarone			
Valle Santa			
Boscoforte			
Punta Alberete			
Valle Mandriole			
Riserva Naturale di Alfonsine			
Pineta di San Vitale			
Ortazzo			
Ortazzino			
Bevanella			
Pinea di Classe			
Pineta di Cervia			
Salina di Cervia			

Fig. 13 - Second page of the questionnaire (in two languages).

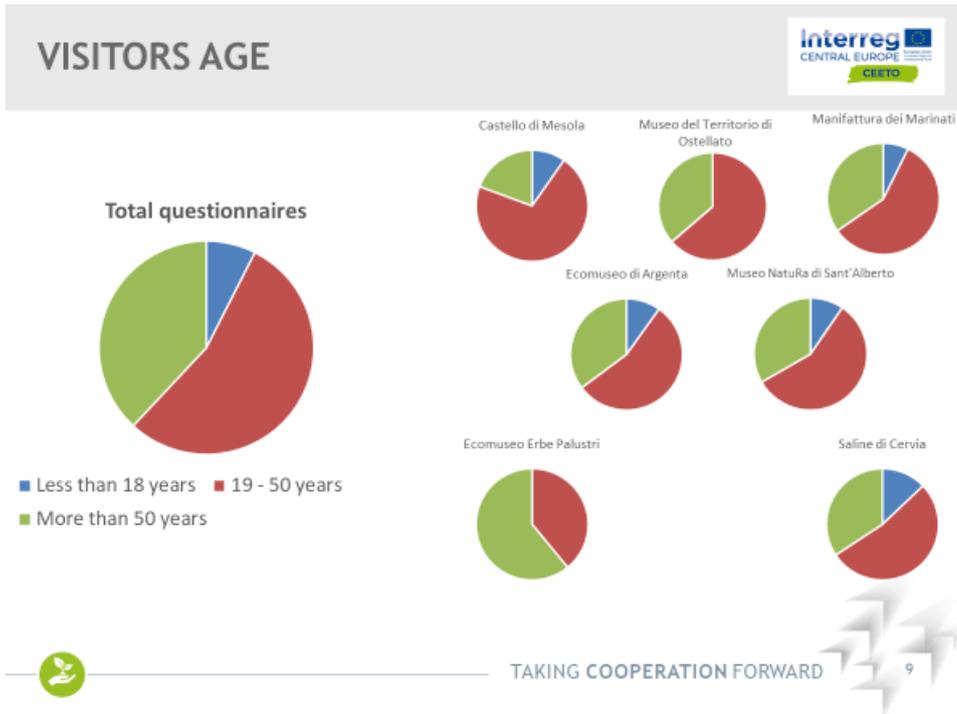


Fig. 14 - Results of visitors age, from the 2019 survey campaign Questionnaire. The chart on the left is the overall result while on the right, the results of the different Visitors Centres.

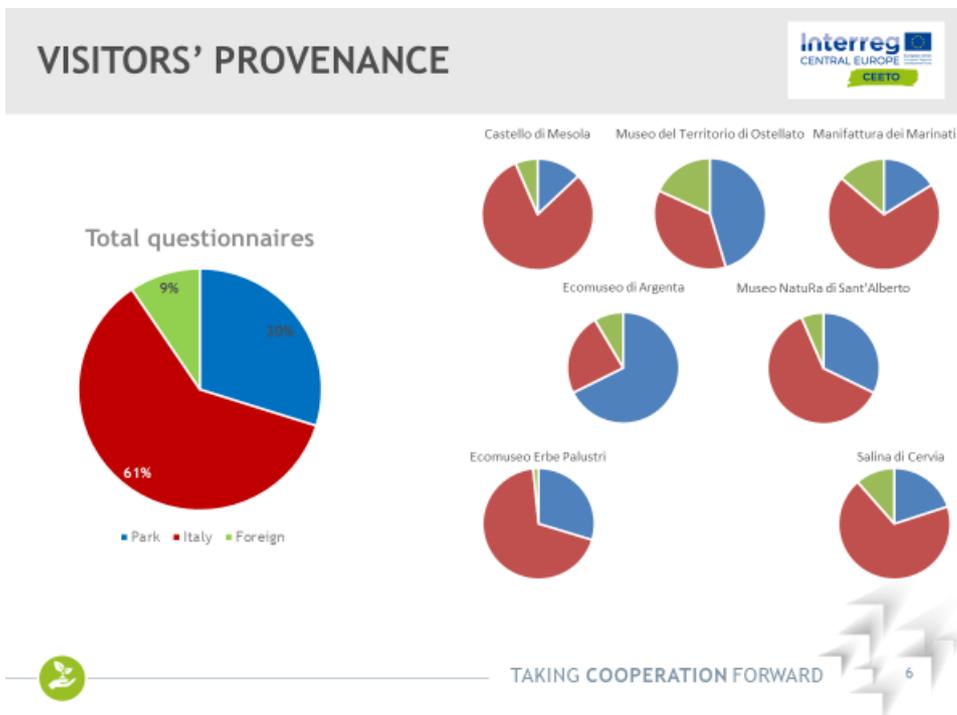
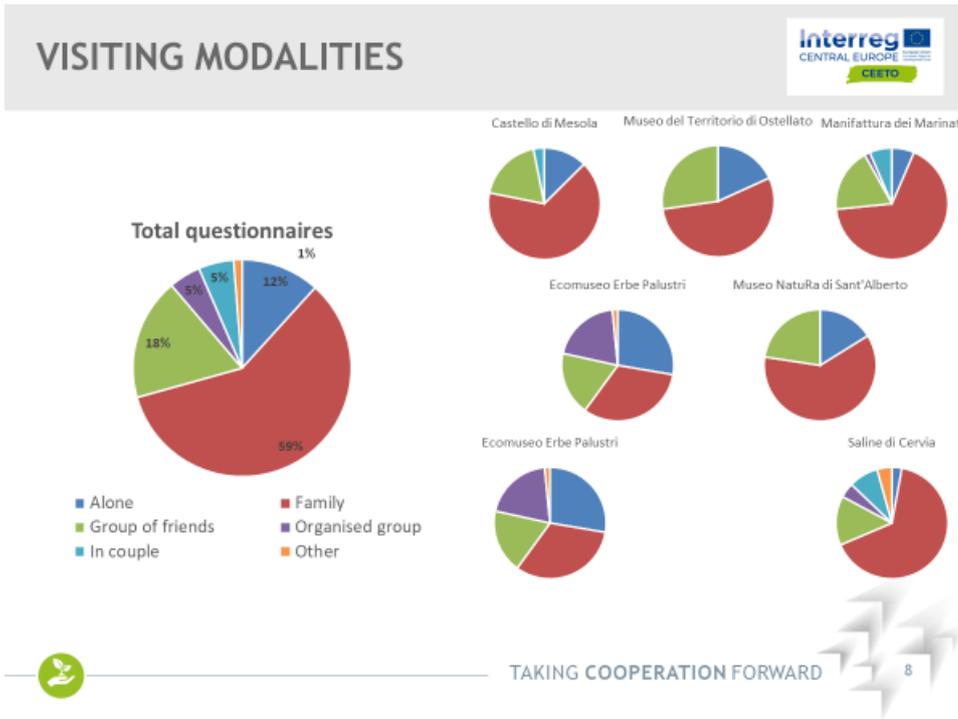
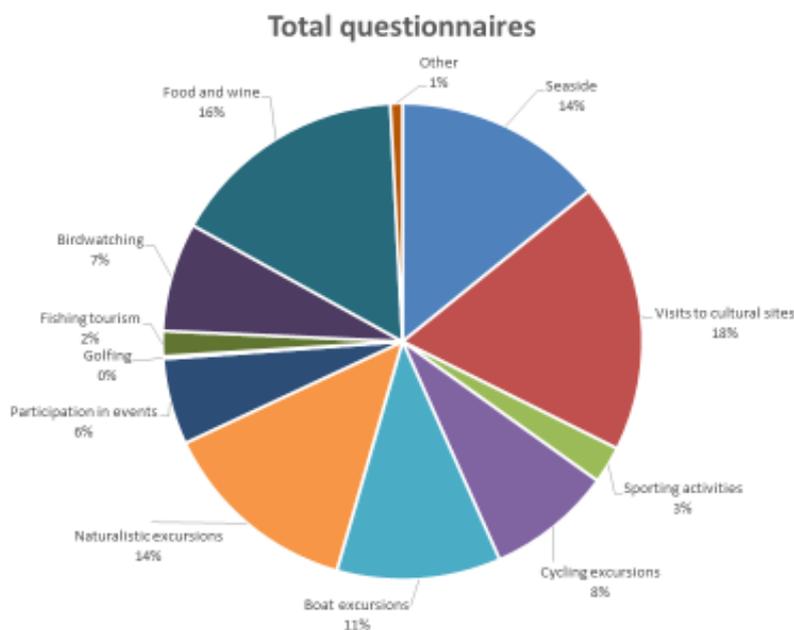


Fig. 15 - Results of visitor's provenance, from the 2019 survey campaign Questionnaire. The chart on the left is the overall result while on the right, the results of the different Visitors Centres.





## ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES



TAKING COOPERATION FORWARD

7

Fig. 18 - Type of leisure activity carried out by visitors in the park, from the 2019 survey campaign Questionnaire. The chart on the left is the overall result while on the right, the results of the different Visitors Centres.

### 3.1.3. Discussion<sup>2</sup>

At the end of September 2019 we carried out a first analysis of the data collected by the Visitor Centres on the number of visitors that allowed us to identify and better specify the peak points of visitors with a daily rate accuracy, allowing us to understand, for example, how much the Easter period influenced the number of visits, as well as the bad weather condition that, despite it's usually a low season period, at the end of August in some days there were peaks of visitors that searched for alternatives to the beach bathing.

Before this information was deductible based on the experience of the operators, but there was then a "scientific" basis of counting to support.

Aggregating the data is also possible to produce analysis chart like that of fig. 19, that shows, for each Naturalistic Hotspot of the Po Delta Regional Park, the level of knowledge of the tourists that visited the different Visitors centres. In fig. 19, for instance, we can see that people attending the Saline di Cervia or

<sup>2</sup> All data, elaborations and charts will be



Cubo Magico Bevanella visitor's centres, are almost completely unaware about the existence and characteristics of the Boscone della Mesola naturalistic excellence. Further, the overlap of the 2018 and 2019 chart, can give us evidence of the education, sensibilization, promotion activities, carried out by the Park during the time.

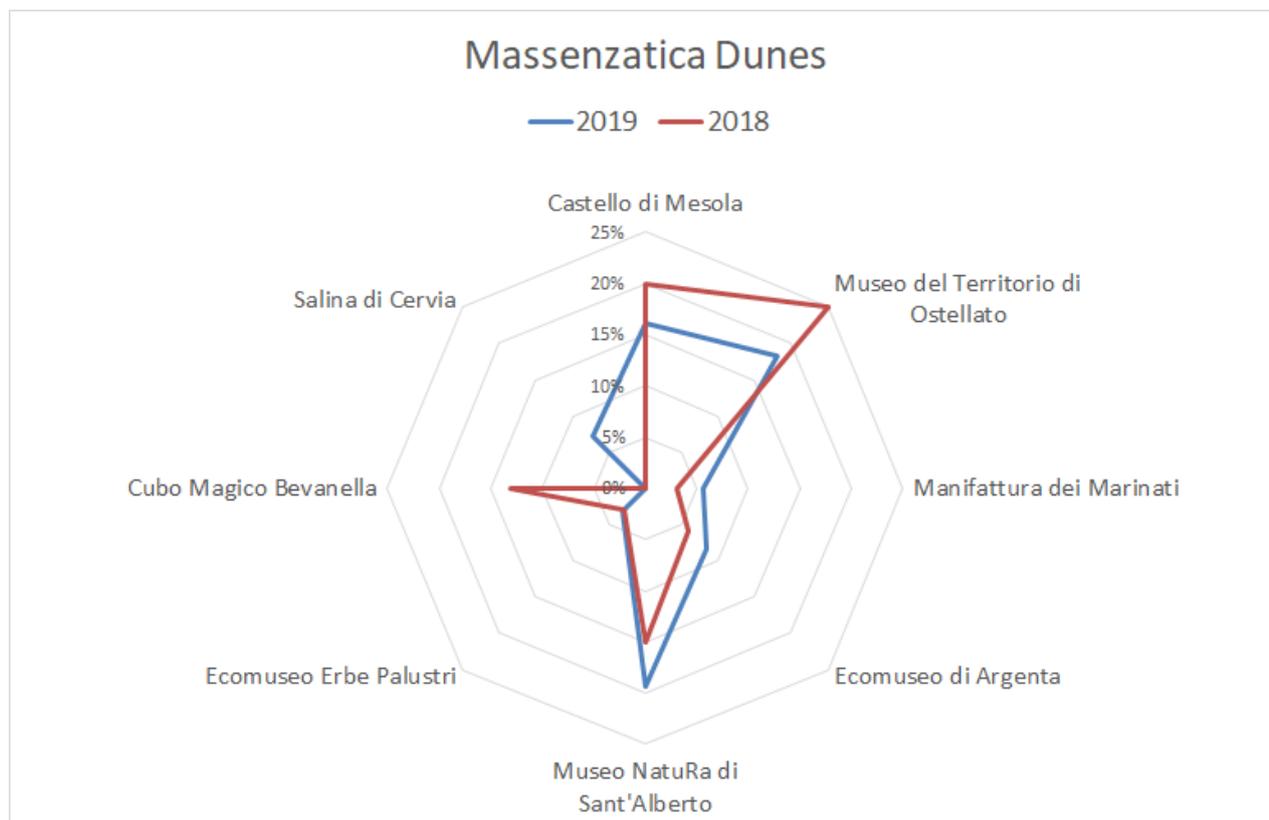


Fig. 19 - Level of knowledge of the Massenzatica Dunes by the tourists that visited the different Visitors centres of the Park. Comparison of 2018 and 2019 questionnaires.

The analysis (and comparison) of the 2018 and 2019 data, makes it possible to highlight that<sup>3</sup>:

- families and groups are the main type of tourists in the visitor centres, also confirmed by the main age group which is 19 - 50 years old.
- almost all visitors are Italian, with one third coming from the two provinces where the park is located (Ferrara and Ravenna). The number of foreigners is growing at 9% (2% in 2018).
- the main reasons why visitors come to the Po Delta are: visit to cultural sites, food and wine, seaside and visit to nature sites as can be found in the chart “Activities and experiences” Ch 3.1.2.
- In general, respondents know that they are in a nature park, but in some cases, they do not know the rules and behaviour to be followed.

<sup>3</sup> In attached the excel files with the processing of information.



From the analysis of the data coming from the Visitor Centres it emerges that<sup>4</sup>:

- the seasonal peaks are in springtime, between April and May, while some also have August (the Cervia salt pans).
- in relation to what was stated earlier, namely that families are the main visitors to the Visitor Centres, there is also the type of ticket sold, which is often reduced, precisely because of the discounts that families generally have

### 3.2. Implemented Managerial Activities

In the framework of the pilot action, following the activities foreseen in the five-year action plan for sustainable tourism, the following management activities have also been carried out:

- Training of Visitor centres' staff and Tourist Information Offices in the Park (one topic a day), starting from the importance of a regular monitoring of visitors, up to the amount/quality of information the can give to the visitors themselves (for example in April 2019 al VC had high number of visits due to Easter and National holidays), to aspects connected to the territory of the Park.
- Coordination among the Visitor Centres, to homogenise the mode of visitor's information collection.

In these actions we focused on the Visitor Centres of the Park because it is essential to build a solid knowledge framework (in terms of data collection, quality of provided information, involvement of the local operators) to be able to build and implement a sustainable tourism strategy and consistent with the characteristics of both the territory and tourists. Initially this common basis was not present, because each VC had a different way of working. We have therefore started a process of unification of the methodology of the data collected with a special online form. In the future this will allow the Park management body, to have a more comprehensive viewpoint about the tourists attending the 8 VCs and, as such, to improve the effectiveness of the management/governance activities.

### 3.3. Relationship with Action Plan activities

In all these actions the main role was played by the Park, because of its commitment in the development of a better promotion and management of the sustainable tourism in the area. The focus goes from the easiest actions, up to the more complex ones such as the application for the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism. So, the actions that have been implemented in the framework of the pilot action and the Action Plan are:

- Communication campaign on behaviours have been made on Facebook and Instagram of the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve with suggestion on the behaviours that tourists should adopt to be sustainable.
- "Tourism table"<sup>5</sup> we conducted during the development of the application for the European Chart of Sustainable Tourism granting. In the next future, with the same stakeholders we want to organise workshop and meeting to improve their involvement in the activities of the Park.

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<sup>4</sup> In attached the excel files with the processing of information.

<sup>5</sup> From the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan "The Park is encouraged to set up a "sustainable tourism roundtable", i.e. a "place" where public and private subjects involved in tourism in the Park's territory can meet to discuss strategies and projects. This roundtable shall have the dual aim of promoting the Park's tourist appeal and at the same time guaranteeing the conservation of its environmental values and an overall reduction in the impacts of tourism. The "sustainable tourism roundtable" will also be an opportunity for the Park's tourism operators to get to know each other and foster possible collaborations."



- “Tools for landscape interpretation” and “Park’s communication tools” at Massenzatica Dunes that are going to be set up in next months, with the provision of information panels, useful to understand this very particular area that, although it is now 13 km from the coastline, it is the river delta of “only” 5500 years ago and that, for this reason, there are the so called “fossil dunes”. They are very important because part of the history of the transformation of this territory but hard to understand without correct information.

### 3.4. Deviation from the forecasted workplan activities

With respect to the planned activities (D.T2.2.2), we were not able to carry out some activities with tour operators and the publication of tourist information materials. This happened because, during the implementation of the pilot action, the Park of the Po Delta of Emilia-Romagna, together with that homonymous park of the Veneto Region, was given the opportunity to start the candidacy for the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism, which has therefore absorbed resources (especially in terms of employees time) for the implementation of other activities. This was, however, an opportunity to give shape and concreteness to the tourism tables initially provided for in the CEETO Action Plan drafting.

Another slight change happened in 2019, was the necessity to include the collection of paper questionnaires during the summer, in addition to the online collection already active since March, because the latter were not giving the expected results in terms of number of compilations.

## 4. Achieved Results

### 4.1. Touristic pressure reduction

With respect to the purpose of the project, it is not feasible to identify real effects in terms of environmental impacts reduction. However, as part of the pilot action was carried out an important social communication campaign, through the Facebook and Instagram pages of the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve on the correct behaviour to have in a protected area, with the aim of creating (or raising) tourist awareness.

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

### 4.2. Tourist experience improvement

The Commission’s proposal for a Directive on the tourist experience improvement, can be mentioned in two main actions:

- the first refers to the creation of information panels at the Fossil Dunes of Massenzatica. These tools, in fact, are essential to ensure a correct and complete enjoyment of the area and to understand the significance and value of these geomorphological uniqueness.
- The process to improve the coordination between the Visitor Centres, to ensure uniform communication and information throughout the Park’s territory. The objectives were these:



- That each Visitor Centres have the same base level of information about the peculiarities of the Park, even those very far from the visitors centre;
- improving the quality of the information given to the tourists, reaching a good level not only on the hotspots surrounding the VS but also on the most far areas,
- giving the operators the ability to advise tourists about the most suitable places to visit, according to the tourist preferences and depending on the moment of the year (avoiding the most congested places, those where the access is temporarily forbidden because of the nesting of some important birds species and so on).

### 4.3. Socio-Economic Benefits

The socio-economic benefits cannot be concretely calculated within the pilot action because the period analysed is not long enough. However, important repercussions in terms of awareness and participation of local stakeholders have already been evident during the workshops organised and the Visitor Centre managers who have also been involved in other activities have understood the important repercussions that CEETO can have on the territory if the five-year Strategy and the Action Plan are carried out and implemented. Awareness that has been capitalised with ECTS. In fact, CEETO was fundamental to create a starting point for public and private operators to work with when it was proposed to start the application process for the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism.

In fact, Among the socio-economic effects connected to the CEETO project there is the application process for the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism which has allowed to create an important public-private involvement on the territory of the two Regional Parks of the Po Delta.

Within this path 91 projects have been collected, from more than 20 different subjects, where 60% are public, 30% private, and the restorative mixed public-private. The activities in the ECST Action Plan as a whole have a capacity target of over €30 million spread over all 5 years. Some of the actions incorporated in the ECTS Action plan are:

- New Salt Pans Cycle Path;
- Renewal of the Park posters;
- Getting to know the Po Delta Park;
- Personal training Park and Visitor Centres;
- Analysis of strategic flows of visits.

## 5. Conclusion

The development of the pilot action and, in general, of the CEETO project has been a challenge for the Po Delta Park with respect to the activities that are normally attributed to it, related to the protection and conservation of the territory (landscape, biodiversity, environment).

Thanks to the CEETO project, the Park has understood that it has a very important role for the development of tourism and that the operators were waiting for this awareness.



The steps taken so far, represent the beginning of a path with the awareness of the capabilities to professionally present a type of offer already present in the territory, but also of the amount of work that has still to be carried out.

From the participatory process emerged the need to extend the tourist seasonality (deseasonalisation) and the places frequented by tourists (spatial delocalization), today too much concentrated in space and time, where the Park's managing body must support the actions already started at local level. In fact, the main requests refer to communication and information activities that are currently very low, starting from the internal ones, the visitor centres, the tourist offices and the operators that often show a limited knowledge of the territory. For this reason, the first actions started from here, from the coordination of the VCs that will continue in a more structured way in the coming years and from the communication campaigns, both of the places and in the participatory process have been defined as "hidden" and concerning the appropriate behaviours to reduce environmental impacts.

With CEETO we have begun to understand who are the tourists visiting the Po Delta areas with greater accuracy, in terms of both numbers and quality. So, we know that we have above all families, who carry out very different activities (cultural, environmental, food and wine, ...) but united by the same territory, the Po Delta.

CEETO has also opened the opportunity, then seized, to start the candidacy for the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism, which is a real tool for managing tourism in the area and that has allowed to continue the participation started and to be able to continue in the future. Moreover, ECTS represents also a formal commitment of other subjects, besides the Park, to reach the objectives of sustainable tourism development.

The CEETO project has therefore represented for the Po Delta the awareness of the opportunities related to sustainable tourism, but also of the related risks that have to be properly managed.

## 6. Attachments

For more information on graphs and tables, please attach:

- Responses to questionnaires 2018;
- Responses to questionnaires 2019;
- data from visitor centres and other nature hotspots 2018;
- data from visitor centres 2019.