



PILOT ACTION AREA	Po Delta Regional Park in Emilia-Romagna Region, Italy
REASONS FOR STARTING THE PILOT ACTION	<p>Touristic pressure in Po Delta Regional Park is caused by the concentration of a very high number of tourists in few specific areas of the Park, like Boscone della Mesola and Cervia Saltpan. Both areas are very sensitive areas with Sites of Community Importance (SCI) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) within their boundaries. On the other side, there are many areas of the Park with high natural and aesthetic value which are not visited by tourists as they could be.</p>
MAIN OBJECTIVES	<p>The main objectives of the pilot action were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to extend visitation season in lateral periods (winter and autumn) with respect to central ones (spring and summer); 2. to extend tourist visitation to the whole territory of the Park, especially to places which are less known and visited by tourists. <p>To reach those objectives the Park management planned to move visitors flow both with respect the visitation period and the territory. This is possible due to the fact that most of the natural hotspots of the Po Delta Regional Park are regulated so that conservation aspect is guaranteed at all times.</p>
MONITORING TOOLS USED	<p>The Park management used the analysis of strategic visit flows (for example tourist coming from Venice to Ravenna and stops at Pomposa Abbey, birdwatchers at the Comacchio Saltpan, etc.) because of the lack of knowledge about the type of tourists arriving in the Po Delta. This method allowed to understand who the tourists of Po Delta are by putting together the experiences of different stakeholders. The Park management combined the “quality” information, coming from the analysis of strategic visit flows, with monitoring activities regularly implemented by the Park’s visitor centres. Those monitoring activities are: i) simple questionnaires for tourists in order to know their profile (where they are from, how they were travelling) and knowledge of the territory of the Park, and ii) gathering data on the number and the type (group, free entry, etc.) of visits to visitor centres, based on the type of tickets sold.</p> <p>From questionnaires emerged that only a few specific sites are known (Cervia Saltpan, Mesola wood etc.) while the others, like Massenzatica dunes and mouth of Bevano, are completely unknown.</p>
MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES	<p>Several activities have been defined in the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training of visitor centres’ and tourist information offices’ staff in the Park on various themes, starting from the importance of regular monitoring of visits and the type of information they collect and interpret, to aspects related to the territory of the Park. 2. Monitoring and profiling of visitors through questionnaires which visitor centres in the Park fulfil daily and questionnaires for tourists. Questionnaires contain questions about the origin and type of visit, the awareness of being inside a Park and knowledge of naturalistic hotspots of the Park.



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Coordination of visitor centres in the Park in order to have a unique way of collecting information about the number of visitors. 4. A communication campaign on Facebook and Instagram in relation to behaviours in the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve with suggestion on action tourists can make to be sustainable. 5. Organisation of the Tourism table during the development of the application form for the European Chart of Sustainable Tourism. With those stakeholders workshop and meeting will be organised to involve them more in the activities of the Park. 6. Setting up tools for landscape interpretation and their inclusion in the Park's communication tools, especially at the Massenzatica Dunes. Interpretative panels will be set up to raise knowledge about this very particular area that represent the ancient delta and the history of the transformation of this territory.
<p>USE OF ACQUIRED DATA</p>	<p>Data coming from each visitor centre and other naturalistic hotspots will be shared with all visitor centres and tourist information offices in order to give them tools for the implementation of a tourism strategy which is coherent with the type of tourists arriving to the area. This will be all the more efficient if regularly integrated with updates of the analysis of the strategic flows of visits made at the beginning of the route.</p>
<p>CONCLUSION</p>	<p>The involvement and collaboration with all possible stakeholders that are in contact with tourists is very important, because each of them has a different awareness, know-how and point of view on the tourism in the area. By combining all this elements, an area can develop a unified and coherent strategy, having the strength and power to make it sustainable. For example, the Park management worked closely with visitor centres and tourist information offices, hotels, tourist guides, naturalistic guides, municipalities, some private firm of local products and artisans, cultural associations, etc.</p>