

PILOT ACTION REPORT

PILOT 7

Ferrara pilot action report:

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MUNICIPALITY OF FERRARA

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1. Main focus of the HICAPS goals in the pilot action

The pilot action developed by the Municipality of Ferrara well responds to the general objective of the HICAPS project:

- to contribute to strengthening capacities of public and private sector for use and protection of natural and cultural heritage resources for sustainable growth of regions in Central Europe, focused on historical gardens by developing strategies and tools which will provide public and private sector with necessary skills.

Thanks to the revitalisation of the Linear Park along the Este Walls, the Municipality of Ferrara has indeed contributed to the enhancement of a relevant area of the city, daily used by citizens but not fully exploited yet for tourist activities.

The development of new signs contributed to increasing the identification system, and - at the same time - the enhanced interest on the biodiversity existing in the park, achieved thanks to the actions carried out within the HICAPS project, paves the way to a new strategy for protection and implementation of preservation measures. The pilot run in Ferrara developed new knowledge and create a good practise that can be used as a model and replicated in other Central Europe areas.

The pilot action run in Ferrara also achieved the two specific objectives of the HICAPS project:

- Consensus building of public and private sector about protection and revitalisation of historical parks;
- Improved quality of life for the citizens of CE

In particular, it contributed to building consensus around the protection and revitalisation of historical parks, creating new services immediately visible to citizens and tourists, as well as providing them with tangible tools that can be reused by other public and private organisations operating close to the Linear Park.

The specific interest given to the valorisation and preservation of the existing biodiversity in the park also contributes to improving the quality of life for the residents of Central Europe areas, providing the citizens of Ferrara with new places to spend free quality time in historic landscape, accessible to all.

2. Specific goals on the pilot action

The pilot action run in Ferrara took place at the Linear Park along the Este Walls, 9 km surrounding the historical centre, accessible on foot, bicycle. Surrounded by trees and meadows, the Walls represent a wide green area, where citizens and tourists can rest and attend the cultural events taking place here.

Thanks to HICAPS, the City of Ferrara has created new cultural and historical itineraries, together with a promotional video presenting the outcomes of HICAPS. 75 pieces of information on 28 educational signs placed along the entire route of the walls (with text both in Italian and in English) provide the visitors with information about the natural and



cultural heritage present close to each sign, together with a QR code offering a direct link to the web pages where more details are given to the visitor.



The Linear Park of the Este Walls, surrounding the Ferrara historical centre



Different views of the Linear Park



Different views of the Linear Park



Different views of the Linear Park



Different views of the Linear Park



Different views of the Linear Park



3. Implementation of the pilot action

The analysis carried out during the first half of the HICAPS project has confirmed the location originally identified, within the park area around the Linear Park of the Este Walls: 9 km of walls, almost totally accessible, surrounding the historical centre of Ferrara, accessible on foot, bicycle, on top of the embankment and in the downwards. Surrounded by green trees and meadows, the Walls represents a wide green area, where citizens and tourists can rest and meet thanks to many cultural events taking place there throughout the year. It is an open-air museum for everyone, free of charge. The interventions made during the pilot action are fully respecting the original historical and architectural structure of the wall, according to the protection directives set-up by the local, national and transnational institutions (Ferrara city centre is one of the World Heritage sites identified by Unesco).

Thanks to HICAPS, the City of Ferrara had the opportunity of enhancing the historical and environmental heritage of one of its most important monuments. The pilot action created new cultural and historical itineraries addressed to citizens, tourists and students with a focus on increasing fruition and accessibility. Through the provision of 75 pieces of information displayed through new educational didactic signs placed in 28 suitable locations identified along the entire route of the walls (with text both in Italian and in English), visitors are taking a step back in time and relive customs, destinations, legends belonging to the historical heritage and Renaissance. They can learn history from its origins until today, as well as receive information about the natural and cultural heritage present in the proximity of the sign. A QR code also provides a link to the web pages of MuseoFerrara (<http://www.museoferrara.it/>), where more details are present.

In this way the intervention has enhanced the current destination of the park, and tested the educational and accessible tools developed by the HICAPS project directly on spot.

In particular the single items present in the pilot action designed by the Municipality of Ferrara include the following key topics:

- focus on the development of historical-cultural tools, targeting students, citizens and tourists, also presented through an educational video;
- installation of new signposts all along the circuit of the Este Walls, providing information on tourist opportunities, memories and past traditions, stories and legends of famous people, recreating the key moments of the city history, from the Renaissance to the XX Century;
- full synergism with the Museo Ferrara portal, that provides information about locations and events of tourist interest;
- enhancing the biodiversity assets of the Este Walls, arising citizens and tourist awareness about the relevance of respecting and protecting the environment.

Based on the technical and environmental specifications of the area involved, the realization includes: A. Route signposting; B. Identification signs.



A. Route signposting

These are tables with directions and route map located at the most significant and useful points for orientation. The path is quite linear and therefore the number of these tables has been limited: five new tables with dimensions of 40x85 cm gave been developed.

B. Identification signs

These are the information tables, which present area specific information with texts and images. The developed stages are 28, each one containing 3-4 sets of historical-artistic and naturalistic information, with dimensions of 40x196 cm (as the previously existing signs).

The following pictures present the layout of the signs:



The total costs of the investment concern the design, construction and installation of the 28 educational signs providing 75 pieces of cultural and naturalistic information -



concerning the linear Park of Este Walls. The total amount is equal to 40.000 Euro, VAT included.

The original plan to create an App, providing the visitor with information concerning the place where he/she is standing, has been revised, since it has been judged to be obsolete. For this reason, the additional costs planned for services connected with the pilot actions have been spent for the preparation of an educational video, presented within the HICAPS communication and dissemination events planned in Ferrara, which will also become the main window for making potential visitors aware of the new services and tools developed within the project. The total amount of these costs is equal to about 20.000 Euro, VAT included.

The Landscape Accessibility Tool defined by the City of Ferrara within its activities in the Hicaps project is focused on the Action Trail “Mens Sana in Corpore Sano”.

The Este walls are one of the most important tourist attractions of Ferrara. They are a favourite destination for tourist guides. More and more these cultural itineraries are open to people who like sport activities (jogging and biking) and now some bicycle tours are offered all along the whole walls’ circular route. Even if the original target beneficiaries of these services were mostly tourists and visitors,



many initiatives are now targeting the citizens and the schools, providing them with the opportunity to merge physical activities with a better fruition of the many cultural opportunities present along the city walls.

The tool was born by reflecting that there are many guided tours by bike. Following the ancient bicycle traditions of Ferrara, the bikes are always present in the streets of the city: the distances are short and the historic centre is free from cars. Cyclists can move easily through cycle paths, in the large area with limited traffic that includes all the main monuments and along the picturesque path on the green embankment of the ancient Este walls. Several types of bicycles are offered: from the convenient city bike to man or woman to a sportier bike with the gearbox. Children's bikes are also available, as well as many accessories - such as front and rear seats to allow the use of the bicycle to people of all ages.

Many bicycles are also equipped with a basket that can hold bags or backpacks, making the sightseeing tour less tiring. The rental also includes the delivery of safety chains to protect the bike in case of stop.

Many opportunities for jogging and running along the Este Walls are also available to citizens and tourists wishing to train themselves in a cultural landscape environment. The 9 km of walls embrace the historic centre of Ferrara and can be covered on foot discovering the turrets, gunboats, doors and passages that witness the different defensive techniques developed over the centuries. Immersed in the green of trees and meadows, the Walls today constitute a huge garden, a place of rest and meeting for the inhabitants of the city. Several competitions are also organised all over the year, e.g. Ten-miles, Four-



miles, Half-mile-for-children, 5:30am, all of them proposing routes along an evocative urban trail, which extends along the walls of Ferrara and the most interesting places of the city.



Every year, on May 1st, the foot tour of the walls is also organised. This event, that was the first race on the walls of Ferrara and still involves many families, proposes a non-competitive walking, flanked by a more challenging one to be done with the Nordic Walking technique on the distance of twelve kilometres. Finally, the Este walls are also equipped with tools for motor activities, allowing Free Gym at Open Air and promoting physical activity for quality aging.

No special infrastructure is necessary to implement the tool, since basic materials and opportunities for bike renting already exist. The added value offered by Ferrara comes from the cultural opportunities offered by the linear park of the Este walls, that is hosting many of the most important cultural containers of the city. They are aggregation spaces for different typologies of target public and, while carrying out their core activities, bring thousands of people to the walls every year. Some of them are:

TEATRO OFF - A cultural association that manages a theatre, designed to be a reference point for the community and offering children, teenagers and adults several courses and workshops for theatre, dance and art. It also offers weekly shows open to all, with special discounts for students and teachers;

MUSIJAM - Artistic association that aims to spread the musical culture as a possibility for growth, personal expression and intercultural exchange, open to public of all the ages;

Sonika - It is the largest and most accessible rehearsal and recording studio in the Ferrara area. It also offers "extra services", such as the processing of Intellectual Property Rights practices, the creation of photo books, music videos, supply of gadgets;

JAZZ CLUB - Winner of the Jazzit Awards as the "Best jazz club of Italy" and declared "Great Jazz Venue" by the American magazine Downbeat. The prestigious stage of the Torrione hosts many of the key protagonists of the national and international jazz community.

Terraviva - This association promotes biodynamic agriculture, Waldorf pedagogy (based on artistic and manual activities), consumer protection in food, art and environment. They welcome both children and adults, involving them in summer camps and manual activities, such as painting or carded wool, carpentry and sculpture;

GARDEN OF THE CAPINERE - The garden is a host for animals arriving from the territories surrounding Ferrara. It also has an Educational Centre, fully accessible to people with disabilities, providing information and suggestions to visitors who are fond of local wildlife.

Among the services currently offered and involved in the pilot action in Ferrara, the City Museum of Natural History, in cooperation with the Didò Association, proposes educational and information activities. In particular, here some of the initiatives taking place within this context:

- An intensive study of a semi-natural urban area, targeting the High Schools in the city, took place between late October and early November. The activity was aimed at gathering, in a few hours, as many information as possible on the biodiversity of the area located at the "Biopastoreria Terraviva". During the first meeting, the students under the guidance of the Didò Association, the Civil Service Boys and the experts of the City Museum of Natural History, presented a research protocol for monitoring of smaller fauna in order to detect the state of the health of the environment. The data collected in real time were recorded on the online "Inaturalist" platform for monitoring fauna and flora at international level. The activity aimed to raise awareness and enthusiasm of young people to participate in the research activities of Citizen Science. The second meeting took place at the City Museum of Natural History. Students were engaged in the analysis of materials collected from the traps placed during the first meeting and from soil samples. Through the use of microscopes, stereoscopes and appropriate identification manuals, students have identified and separated the small invertebrates.


- In May, teachers of primary schools can carry out activities on ecosystems. During the first event, the children identify and analyse the flora and fauna of the Linear Park, then in the classroom they observe and compare the samples; the data collected were used to help children reflect about the health of the environment and whether the man influences it.
- Two events for families are named after the "Small inhabitants of the Walls". The aim of the activity is to involve parents and children in the search for arthropods of the park, by using small nets and containers for collecting and observing the first layer of soil, also using magnifying glasses and trays. The operators, using the online platform "Inaturalist", enter the real-time sightings and made parents and children part of the Citizen Science projects launched by the City Museum of Natural History of Ferrara.


- An activity targeting primary and secondary schools consists of a two-days course called "Biodiversity for All". The first meeting consists of a walk in an environmental area chosen by the teacher (lawn, forest, river, retting-ground, etc.) for observation, sampling and entry into the "Inaturalist" platform of collected data.



The second meeting is run at the Museum to analyse samples and findings collected, and discuss the state of health of the environment visited.

For the Linear Park of the Este Walls it is important to strengthen the role it can play in the territorial ecological network system, which is part of the Structural Plan of the Municipality of Ferrara. The park is a green infrastructure that, due to its circularity, can exchange animals and plants from and to all directions. It is therefore an important link between the different natural environments present around the city walls, allowing biodiversity to get around the obstacle of urbanized land. At the same time, we must not forget that the walls also border the precious green areas located within the city, in particular the area known as "countryside inside the Walls", i.e. several private and public gardens and parks, including not used public areas full of vegetation. In many cases these areas have remained almost unchanged for several centuries and are a reservoir of relevant species, sometimes protected, creating many small ecological corridors within the city.

It is also necessary to stop the expansion of exotic species, in particular the most invasive and infesting, such as the ailanthus (*Ailanthus altissima*), the paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), the honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) and others. Control can be carried out by adopting even drastic strategies, borrowed from management experiences in some Life projects run by the City.

In the revitalisation of the Walls it is necessary to remember the important ecological role played by interspaces, holes and fissures of the Walls, as a shelter for vulnerable animals such as swifts (*Apus apus*) and bats: where necessary, the closure of these spaces must be accompanied by the installation of compensatory structures.

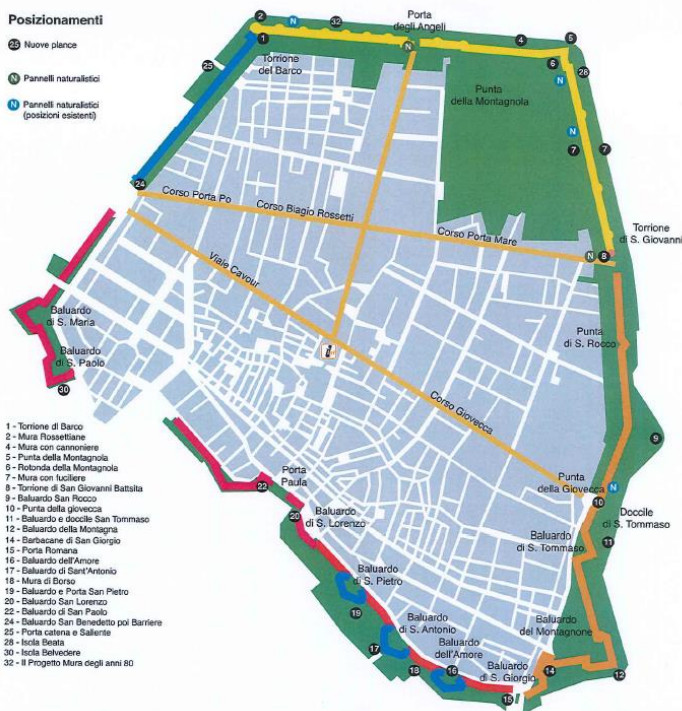
4. Main achievements of the pilot action

Thanks to the pilot action run within the HICAPS project, the Municipality of Ferrara could achieve many benefits:

- improving the existing tourist policy of the City

Through the pilot, the City has created new historical-cultural thematic routes, addressed to students, citizens and tourists. Thanks to the HICAPS project, new signs have been placed along the route of the Walls, providing information on tourist opportunities, memories and uses of the past, on the stories and legends of famous people, from the Renaissance to the twentieth century.





A new route has been created (“Mura”, the Walls), focusing on the whole set of walls around the city centre. Together with the two other interventions carried out outside the Hicaps project: recovering the Love Rampart, and opening the new Historical Documentation Centre at the Paola Gate, it gives the opportunity to increase knowledge about a key landmark of Ferrara, covering a period over more than 300 years. The Mura route crosses existing pathways (the green route at the Angels gate, the yellow route at the Perspective, the red route at the Saint Peter gate, and the blue route at the Paola Gate), and expands a first prototype about the Walls initiated in 2009.

- developing new tools, services and knowledge

The tangible outcomes of the pilot action include:

- Route signposting: tables with directions and route map located at the most significant and useful points for orientation. The Wall path is quite linear and therefore the number of these tables has been limited. Just 5 tables with dimensions of 40x85 cm have been developed.
- Identification signs: These are the information tables, which present the specific information with texts and images. 28 stages (24 historical, 4 naturalistic) have been located, each one containing 2-3 pieces of information, with dimensions of 40x196 cm (as the already existing signs). 28 new signs have been installed: this number is smaller with respect to the original number of signs, in order to reduce the environmental impact, by merging some signs into a single one.
- Each Sign includes a QR code providing additional information through a link to MuseoFerrara (www.museoferrara.it), a project born from the collaboration between the Municipality, local development agencies, museums, research institutes, cultural associations and local companies.



It is enriched with web sites dedicated to specific topics. The first sections have been dedicated to the Jewish Ferrara, to the Metaphysics Art, to the Ariosto legacy, to skyscrapers, to the Street Art, and to the history of Cinema. Others will be added during and after the HICAPS activities



- ensuring the resources necessary for the short, mid and long-term period and fostering the sustainable economic growth and employment

The HICAPS project gave the opportunity to involve several sectors of the Municipality of Ferrara (culture, environment, tourism, education) and to press them to work together, due to the interdisciplinary dimension of the project objectives. The relevance of this approach within the strategy to be implemented by the City in the ongoing years has been also underlined by the members of the City Authority Council who welcomed the partners of the HICAPS project during the latest partners' meeting held in Ferrara last 10-11 September 2019. They have remarked that:

“It is significant that one of the first transnational initiatives of the new City Council that has been administering the Municipality of Ferrara for just a few months is precisely in the field of cultural heritage, which has given so much to our city over the centuries. And it is even more significant that this takes place in a project that addresses both the historical-artistic and environmental-naturalistic aspects, combining the two aspects that have earned Ferrara the recognition of UNESCO as a city hosting a World Heritage Site. You know better than me, that the most important period of the entire HICAPS project is starting right now, when the research run, the new knowledge acquired, the experiences developed and circulated within the group of partners are finally leading to the realization of those activities and services that further enrich the accessibility and use of the gardens and parks of our cities.

In particular, the works carried out in the area identified in Ferrara, relating to the Linear Park that surrounds the Este Walls, were well married to the objectives of our Municipality, which wants to safeguard the legacy and riches that come from our past, but on the other hand also wants to improve the use of what information technology is providing to enrich and make unique the experience of visitors coming to Ferrara. They are renewing and expanding the visitor opportunities to discover, learn, and love more and more a city that never ceases to amaze us for the vastness of the beauties it can offer and for the imagination of its citizens and cultural and tourist operators.



The last months of the project, which will end next May with a final conference in which we hope to contribute to the best of our ability, are also those in which the political strategies and action plans necessary to make the generated benefits permanent will be defined from HICAPS. It is here where our political role must be combined with the excellent work done so far by the cultural, scientific and technical staff of the Municipality of Ferrara, in order to make the best use of the opportunities offered by this project to make our cities even more beautiful, and create that network of collaboration between the Italian, Slovenian, Polish and Croatian cities and regions that participated in HICAPS. It is with this commitment, and with the promise of the Municipality of Ferrara's willingness to forge new collaborations with all of you who visit our beautiful city today, that I offer you the best wishes of the Giunta for a meeting full of ideas and new ideas, of course that the program of visits that we have organized will allow you to have an



unforgettable first impression of Ferrara, which we hope will leave you the desire to come back to learn more about the riches we can offer you.”

- raising awareness about importance and potential of cultural heritage

The final activity of the pilot action consist of the development of a new video, to be presented within the HICAPS communication and dissemination events planned in Ferrara, which will become the main window for making potential visitors aware of the new services and tools developed within the project.

A new brochure focusing on the Este Walls is also going to be developed (with the City of Ferrara own resources outside the HICAPS budget).

Finally, an official event to present the activities and outcomes of the HICAPS project is planned in the week-end on 25-27 October, during the wider festival “Ferrara Monumenti Aperti”, co-organised by 60 towns all over Italy. This event has the double objective to show the new route, as well as to mobilise and involve the cultural associations that can take profit of the outcomes of the HICAPS project to design new activities and services.

5. Lesson Learnt and Conclusions



The process of revitalisation of the Este Wall park has found a central pillar in the first set of outcomes and knowledge developed by HICAPS. The project has allowed to point out the key assets that are going to be considered in the definition of the revitalization strategy: the maintenance strategy that the Municipality of Ferrara has to follow for taking care of trees and flora present in

the Este Walls Park, in comparison with the other “traditional” parks of the city; the renewed model of fruition of tourist services by visitors who more and more are interested in a diversified and complex offer, not based only on culture, or history, or environment, etc.

As far as the proposed solutions for the park of the Este Walls in Ferrara, the vision of the Municipality addresses a set of actions aiming to involve citizens, cultural operators, schools and tourism professionals (tourist guides, hotels, restaurants, bicycle rental, small business, etc.). This strategy is actuated in HICAPS through two main pillars: improving the existing information sign network (Este Walls, Jewish town, architecture of XXth century, etc.), and developing a video and web-based tools, so allowing interested people to have the necessary information at home and when visiting the city. It must be stressed the relevance of involving all the local stakeholders in these activities, since cooperation among them is able to increase the impact of each single action.