



e-CREATE

Cultural Routes Entrepreneurship
and Technologies Enhancement

Implementation Plan

**Approved by
the Steering Committee of the Province of
Modena**

D.G. n. _____ date _____

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Highlights

- ❑ Province of Modena is promoting the qualification and innovation of information services for tourists in the whole territory, through coordination of local administrations and financial support.
- ❑ The aim is to provide the tourist with innovative services, easy to access, exploiting as much as possible the potentials of ICT.
- ❑ Province of Modena is partner of a national project led by the Municipality of Maranello (where the Ferrari sports car firm, the exhibition and the race track are located). The aim of the project is the enhancement of motor sports tourism in the whole country, through the launch of a restyled marketing strategy. Partnership involves 3 Provinces and 19 Cities (e.g. Turin, Modena, Bologna and Florence). The action plan promotes the same tourist information strategy supported by the Province of Modena and in particular the application of ICT on this field. The project, which gained the first prize of a national contest and obtained a financial support of € 500.000 (government contribution), is underway: fruitful interactions with e-CREATE might be studied and shared.
- ❑ Projects for the qualification of information and of services for tourists – tailored to territorial areas of tourism interest – represent an ideal field for the implementation of purposes and results of the e-CREATE project (the specific policy is suitable to interact with the e-CREATE purposes)
- ❑ ICT applications are seen as crucial to face the evolving needs of information and to capture the interest of young generations both as tourist and as entrepreneurs (in order to generate start-ups, especially in rural areas)
- ❑ ICT application can actually support the creation of new jobs and private investment in the field of tourist information services

SWOT overview

Here we consider the most important factors related to the e-create strategy in terms of goals and future activities for the application and development of ICT in tourism information and services. We are therefore far from an overall analysis of the whole regional tourism sector, concerning its features and dynamics.

Strengths

A) Local factors

- ✓ Consolidated cooperation between public authorities and private operators on tourism information strategy and on the assistance of the tourist
- ✓ Local projects aiming at setting up organized system of information for tourists in the places of destination have already achieved their objectives and entered further stages. First experiences are now followed by other local systems as emulation of success models.
- ✓ Use of mobile apps and web services are always means and goals included in ongoing projects to support and organize information services for tourists through innovative approaches, involving also retailers and small firms;
- ✓ Public and private relevant investments on big/visible structures and events of tourist interest (e.g. Ferrari sport cars museums and expositions, International annual festival of philosophy, UNESCO cultural heritage site), with communication plans including social media interactions, web services (e.g. video-clips and audio-guides for downloads, maps) and full information
- ✓ Promotion of tourism offer enforced by qualification of welcoming, assistance and hospitality

B) Exogenous factors

- ✓ Italian Government issued recently guidelines (to be converted in law) aiming at fewer legal restraints for the wi-fi access in the entire nation. The measure can boost the use of apps and other ICT applications by economic operators of commerce and tourism sectors (the ones who more than others host customers in their locals, offering free wi-fi service)
- ✓ Emilia-Romagna Region launched a prototypal app framework (named TAPPER) including among its functions a mapped network of points of interest (CH sites more other tourism attractions) and others functions for visitors (e.g. upcoming events calendar)
- ✓ The European Commission is proposing to eliminate or reduce mobile phone roaming charges across Europe as part of a raft of measures to reform the telecoms market.



Weaknesses

- ✓ Regional tourism sector started last year to experience a serious drop in receipts and employment; reduced perspectives of job creation for young workers
- ✓ the average time duration of the stay is still too short if compared to other destinations and despite the considerable amount of arrivals

Opportunities

Many of the opportunities here listed consist in what we learnt from local stakeholders meetings and mostly represent their recommendations and requirements

- ✓ Province of Modena has started a collaboration with Region Emilia-Romagna in order to test the prototypal app-framework (TAPPER) through a pilot app providing services for tourist, including POIs interactive map linked with upcoming cultural events and web sites: results (facts and figures about functioning and users' approach) will be at disposal in few months for the further implementation of the pilot project of e-CREATE.
- ✓ Province of Modena is partner of a national project led by the Municipality of Maranello aiming at the enhancement of motor sports tourism through the launch of a new (restyled) product and related tourism marketing. Partnership involves 3 Provinces and 19 Cities (out of which: Turin, Modena, Bologna and Florence). The action plan promotes the same tourist information strategy supported by the Province of Modena and in particular the development of ICT. The project, which gained the first prize of a national contest and obtained a financial support of € 500.000 (government contribution), is underway and fruitful interactions with e-CREATE might be studied and shared.
- ✓ ICT are considered by stakeholders an important factor of the development of tourism, especially to approach new market segments and to apply niche marketing strategies (biking, hiking, etc.).
- ✓ Local experiences of activities concerning extension and qualification of the assistance, the acceptance and the tourist information in cultural tourism focused the attention on the importance of training for operators. Coordinated projects and training can in fact raise cooperation between diverse sectors of the local economy (such as tourism accommodation, commerce, typical food production).
- ✓ Stakeholders' general expectation is that the pilot project can reach a real implementation of techniques and methods concerning organization and cooperation.
- ✓ Stakeholders queried therefore a steady involvement of enterprises and associations during the next phases of the e-CREATE project. They wish to collaborate in particular in the development of a local information network connected with the whole web and they charged the public administrations with coordination tasks.
- ✓ Stakeholders believe that any kind of innovation must be rooted on an ever-updated market strategy for the tourism sector.

- ✓ ICT should be seen as a mean to achieve goals defined in policies for the local development (ICT can't play by themselves the role of policies, instead).
- ✓ Any innovation in the tourism offer should start from the capacity of operators in the creation of new products, through an effective market approach.

Threats

- ✓ The lack of a strategic vision can weaken ICT positive effects.
- ✓ Organization is considered the key factor. Stakeholders will commit on the basis of a wide arrangement, involving public administration and private sector. Stakeholders are in fact interested more in the organization methods and solutions than in technologies, because they believe that technologies are rather easy to get. They in fact observed that we shouldn't be obsessed with technologies, because to reach goals planned in the adopted policies is more a matter of clear objectives and cooperation in the regional economic system than a matter of what technologies are needed.

The policy to be implemented: the development of the network of info-point for tourist information and assistance.

In the territory of the Province of Modena, the supply of information and assistance has been mostly represented for a long period only by “institutional” tourism offices.

The main nine institutional tourism information offices and city tourist boards, already located throughout the whole territory and core structure of the whole system, have been integrated by almost one hundred and fifty new info-points.

The result has been achieved by the involvement of SMEs in the enrichment and territorial extension of the information network.

The specific project aimed - in fact - at make selected economic activities functioning as information offices and therefore make them an integration and an extension of the institutional service in terms of accessibility, opening hours, territorial network (gaining more capillarity of the service).

The enrolled SMEs operate mainly in the accommodation sector and in commerce: so, for instance B&B, small hotels, but also retailers such as traditional shops, small dairy firms with retail or personal services shops. The info-points are located mostly where there are sites and environmental factors of tourist attraction; but also where tourist is invited to go, because every private info-point belonging to the network is signposted and publicized.

The main experiences has been developed in the capital town (Modena) and in a large area covered by three important communes (Maranello, Fiorano and Formigine) in the south side of the province. The latter area involves a relevant part of rural territories with important and diverse tourist attractions.

Recent and ongoing experiences include the use of apps as travel guide for the territory visit and the stay, by providing up-to-date information and hospitality. Apps for mobile devices offer information on activities and places of interest. The applications already realized contain maps and descriptions on museums, parks, hotels, restaurants, places of interest, tourist information offices and reception, as well as events and itineraries. Apps can be downloaded for free and are available in Italian and English.

Past projects are entering further stages.

The same policy is to be extended to the mountain area of the province, starting from an upcoming project aiming also at development and strengthening of the infrastructure for wi-fi connection.

The mountain is in fact partially underserved by wide band connections. Market failed to deliver high-speed internet services because the scarce amount of potential users doesn't grant revenues to private investments.

Therefore, the area is targeted by the just started project with wi-fi spots located on sites of tourist interest, exploiting as much as possible the broad band infrastructure of the public administration. Anyway, a further increase is needed. The action to strengthen the broad band is one of the key targets and lies within the objectives of the next programme for the application of the European Common Strategic Framework Funds (CSF Funds: ERDF, EARDF).

Key actors and drivers

- Province of Modena: guidelines and financing
- Municipalities: projects definition and coordination activities + co-financing
- Private Associations: coordination and organization
- Companies and S.M.E. : participation in the network, operative tasks, attendance at coordination meetings and training courses (commitments)

Foreseen actions (to be implemented)

1. provide the tourist information offices with more information and services: purchase of tickets for cultural sites, museums, sport and cultural events, recreational events, entertainment ...
2. extend the network of info-points to:
 - ❑ sites most frequented by tourists
 - ❑ S.M.E.s operating in economic sectors connected with tourism
3. Organise and equip the network for better accessibility to information and higher visibility
4. Development of ICT solutions is seen as a means to:
 - ❑ Connection of info-points
 - ❑ Facilitate the access to information through wi-fi devices (hot spots)
 - ❑ Use of apps as guide for tourist info-points and social media connection

Methods

Activities concerning the above points 3. and 4. might greatly benefit from exchange of experiences, best practises and results coming from e-CREATE.

The purpose of the Province of Modena is therefore to maintain a close relationship between the identified policy and the course of e-CREATE.

Additional activities:

- ❑ International workshop in Maranello inside the national project for the development of sports car tourism:
 - focused on web marketing, social media strategy of communication and mobile apps;
 - including a presentation of e-CREATE about achievements and goals on the ICT application (opportunities, innovative applications, etc.)
 - invitation extended to all partners



- ❑ exchange of experiences between experimentation of apps frameworks (pilot project and Tapper)

Other collateral activities to be implemented are oriented to:

- ❑ Improve the competitive capacity of actors through Social Media Strategies and implementation of Social Media Marketing
- ❑ Enhance Social Media competences among public institutions, SME, NGO through training
- ❑ Implement pilot action for joint social media marketing
- ❑ Qualify the actors involved in the “tourist process” through learning activities

