



# Integrated Action Plan

City of Venice

## Enhancing sustainable tourism in Venice



Tourism Friendly Cities



## Contents

Contents .....	2
a) City context and definition of the initial problem/ policy challenge.....	3
b) Focus.....	7
c) Description of the process .....	8
b) Listed actions.....	11
c) Small Scale Actions (SSA) .....	14
d) Framework for delivery .....	14
e) Resourcing .....	15
f) Monitoring of the implementation .....	16
d) Risk analysis.....	16



## Introduction

This document outlines the specific actions that the City of Venice is going to implement within the Tourism Friendly Cities Action Planning Network to enhance sustainable tourism in Venice. Tourism-friendly Cities (TFC) is a project funded by URBACT in 2019 and led by Genoa Municipality. It aims at promoting a sustainable impact of tourism into integrated urban development. The 9 city partners will explore how tourism can be made sustainable in medium-sized cities, reducing the negative impact on neighbourhoods. Innovative governance and action models will be investigated to capture the social, environmental and economic dimensions of tourism.

The City of Venice is one of the 9 partners of TFC committed to sustainable tourism. At local level, the project was implemented by the Tourism Department, with the support of the EU Policies Department. The whole project implementation involved both transnational and local actions that support and nurture each other. As part of our participation in this network, the City of Venice developed an Integrated Action Plan for the sustainable Tourism in Venice. This Plan is built in synergy with the Plan for the Territorial Governance of Tourism, which the City administration adopted in 2017.

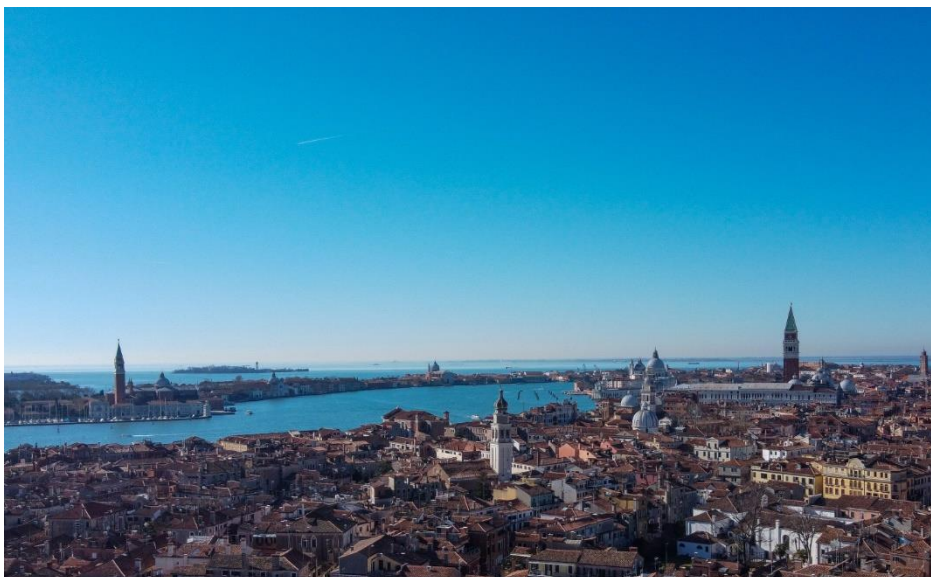
The elaboration of the Action Plan was supported by the local Destination Management Organisation (DMO), set up in Venice in 2016, in charge of the strategic management of the Venice territory and of the implementation of the Destination Management Plan. Some member of the DMO became our URBACT Local Group (ULG).

## Part 1 - Presentation of context and process

### a) City context and definition of the initial problem/ policy challenge

The site 'Venice and its Lagoon' has been inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1987 for its extraordinary cultural and artistic heritage integrated into a unique natural environment. Venice and its lagoon form an inseparable entity that comprises many different islands, each one with its unique history and identity, of which Venice is only the best known one. The mainland includes two large urban settlements, Mestre and Marghera, and some smaller ones.

The City of Venice today counts 260.520 inhabitants, divided into approximately 52.000 residents in the historic centre, 28.000 in the islands of the lagoon and 180.000 in the mainland.



*Credit: Gabriele Vattolo – Comune di Venezia*

Tourism represents a very important component of the local economy, both in terms of number of visitors and by the induced economic activities. There are about 112.000 employees in the municipal area and almost 1 out of 3 is employed in the

commerce and tourism sector. Tourism in Venice represents an incessant source of cultural exchange, an opportunity for economic growth and an important social resource for the development of the community. Before the Covid 19 Pandemic, in Venice there used to be around 13 million tourists and visitors per year on overnight stays. On 12 November 2019, Venice and its citizens were hit by an exceptional tide that touched a peak of 187 cm above the sea level, the second highest since 1966. This exceptional event was tragic for the city of Venice and its inhabitants and had a strong negative impact on tourism, also due to the lack of real knowledge of the phenomenon and the serious misunderstandings that ensued. Just a few months later, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the whole world causing an unprecedented global emergency, causing enormous damages especially to the economies mostly based on tourism, one of the sectors most affected by the pandemic crises, such as that of the city of Venice.

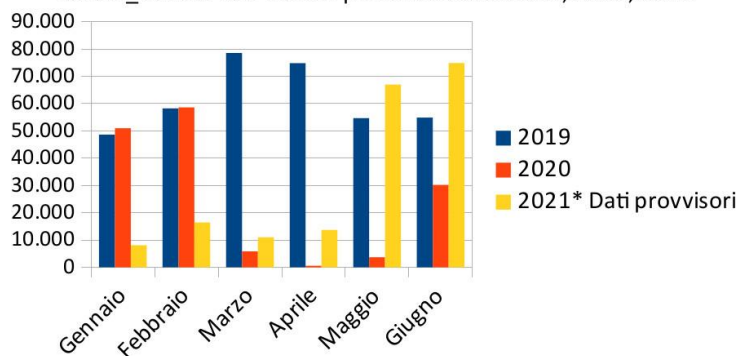
Based on the data published by the Regional Statistical Service it can be seen that in 2020 the City of Venice registered a drastic decrease in the influx of tourists: arrivals were 1.337.626 in total and presences 3.557.036. Compared to 2019, these values correspond to a decrease of -75.8% of the arrivals (4.2 million less than in 2019) and -72.5% of the presences (9.4 million less than in 2019)

<https://www.comune.venezia.it/it/content/studi>

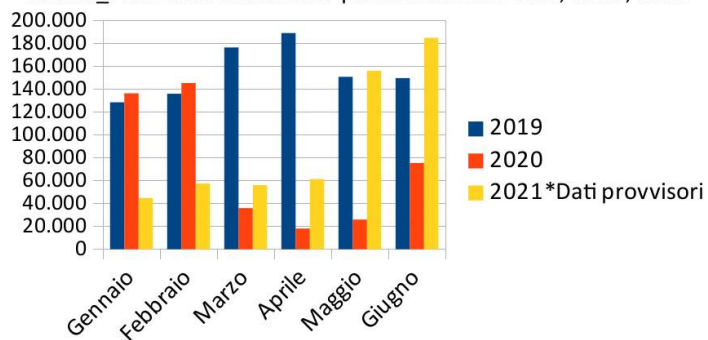
CITY OF VENICE	2019			2020			2021 (provisional data from January to October)		
	ARRIVALS	NIGHTS	AV. STAY (days)	ARRIVALS	NIGHTS	AV. STAY (days)	ARRIVALS	NIGHTS	AV. STAY (days)
HOTELS	3.767.713	7.832.369	2,51	886.226	1.974.505	2,22	1.078.650	2.582.065	2,3
OTHER ACCOMODATIONS	1.755.570	5.116.150	3,00	451.400	1.582.531	3,5	684.264	2.187.531	3,19
TOTAL	5.523.283	12.948.519	2,34	1.337.626	3.557.036	2,66	1.762.914	4.769.596	2,70



Italiani\_ ARRIVI dati mensili-primo semestre 2019, 2020, 2021



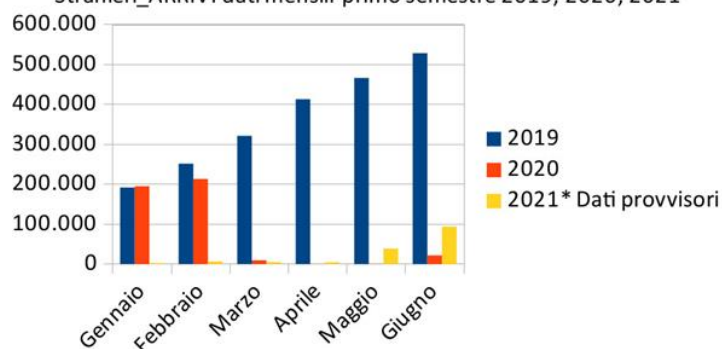
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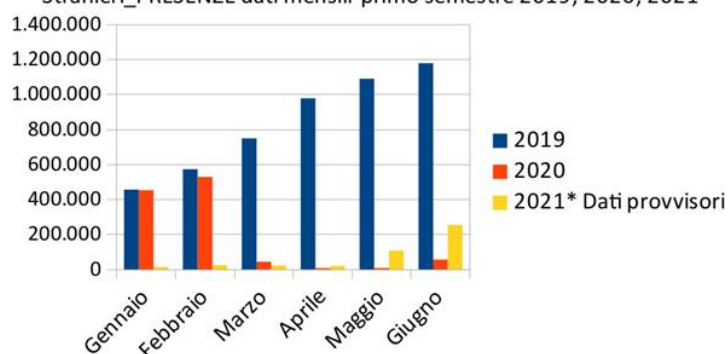




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In the second part of the 2021, thanks to a "less negative" contagion trend and a vaccination campaign, it was finally possible to plan the restart. The development of a sustainable tourism strategy is one of the priorities of the City. As the COVID19 pandemic has shown, this goal should be linked to the health safety of inhabitants and tourists, the City needs to find a balance between these issues and its vocation of remaining "open to all", being a Unesco World Heritage Site. The overall City goal is to invest and to promote sustainable tourism in order to share Venice uniqueness, while safeguarding its authenticity and the residents' quality of life.



In spring 2021, Venice started a process of enhancement of its cultural heritage with the broad involvement of the public and private sector in the celebrations of its 1600 years of history. Several actions were put in place to ensure an intelligent restart after the pandemic. These actions include the use of smart technologies for better managing the tourist flow. In particular, the setting up of the Smart Control Room, a hyper-technological and digital control station to improve the mobility and the safety, manage the emergencies, supporting the strategies and planning of the interventions.



The Smart Control Room, through the analysis of the big data representing the state of the city in real-time, will be used to inform city users and improve the offer through the visitor profiling.

Moreover, the MOSE, an integrated system consisting of rows of mobile gates to protect

the city of Venice and the Venetian Lagoon from flooding, started working in 2020. Venice, with the gradual completion of this engineering work, is preparing to overcome one of the most problematic effects of the sea level rising on the city, not only for the residents but also for the visitors.

## b) Focus

The City of Venice, through the TFC network built its IAP in synergy with the Plan for the Territorial Governance of Tourism, which the City administration adopted in 2017 and by effectively using the ULG approach to design measures with residents, tourism industry and tourists. The Plan is the result of a participatory process that the City has been conducting since 2016 with citizens, trade associations and economic and cultural groups, to identify a strategy with the greatest possible consensus on regulating and managing the tourist flows.

The “Plan for the Territorial Governance of Tourism in Venice sets the goals and the actions for the sustainable tourism. The idea behind the work is that Venice can innovate through sustainable tourism to enhance its urban dimension, while respecting its authenticity and uniqueness, sharing it with the world as a World Heritage Site. In line with the strategic vision expressed in the mayor’s mandate, the document outlines the specific actions to manage the tourist flows and make them compatible with the life of residents.

The Plan identifies four macro-objectives structured into specific objectives, actions and timing:

- a) Managing the resources;
- b) Protecting residents;
- c) Balancing the extra costs to enhance the valorization and development of the city;
- d) Innovate communications and marketing, educate towards responsible and sustainable tourism.



The Integrated Action Plan developed with the TFC project is meant to support effectively the implementation of the current strategy on tourism, developing tools for co-implementations of the strategic directions, also detailing actions in support of current policies.

The Venice IAP focused on one specific aspect of Sustainable Tourism: the improvement of the communication towards national, European and international tourists in order to enhance sustainability and decrease pressure on residents. Since 2017, in occasion of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development the City of Venice has been running an awareness campaign named #EnjoyRespectVenezia to raise awareness of tourist impact, with the belief that responsible traveling can contribute to sustainable development.



The ULG members collaborated to achieve common objectives and outcomes that an effective communication would bring in terms of social, economic, and environmental sustainability. The IAP defined timing and responsibilities, and it identified costs, and sources of funding for these actions. Funding of the IAP will come from local funds, as well as EU 2021-2027 funds. The IAP builds on the priorities set in the Plan for the Territorial Governance of tourism and the selected actions are included in the Tourism Department's plan of the strategic objectives

### c) Description of the process

In Venice, the URBACT Local Group partially coincides with the DMO (Destination Management Organisation), set up in Venice in 2016, in charge of the strategic management of the Venice territory and of the implementation of the Destination Management Plan.

The ULG coordinator is the Deputy Mayor for Tourism of the City of Venice, who was therefore constantly involved in the decision-making process related to the IAP and SSA. The ULG role was to create synergies and forms of cooperation between public and private stakeholders in the development of tourist products, with the aim of strengthening the supply system through unified management of tourist welcome, and promotion and commercialization of the destination's tourist products.

The current ULG members represents most of the main institutional stakeholders in Venice playing a role in managing the impact of tourism on different dimensions and able to take part to an integrated decision-making process on medium and long term, as required by the Urbact Programme. Their involvement in the TFC project enhanced and strengthened their collaboration on the governance of sustainable tourism. The ULG includes the following bodies:

Local utilities companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fondazione Muve (Civic Museums foundation)</li> <li>Vela Spa (ticketing and commercial services)</li> <li>Veritas (waste management),</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AVM Holding (transportation and mobility)</li> </ul>
Organizations representing the business sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AEPE, (Association of bars and restaurants in Venice)</li> <li>• ABBAV ( Hosts community in Veneto)</li> <li>• AVA, (Association of hotel owners in Venice)</li> <li>• CCIA (Chamber of Commerce of Venezia and Rovigo )</li> <li>• Confartigianato, (Association of artisan enterprises)</li> <li>• Confesercenti (Association of commercial enterprises)</li> <li>• Confcommercio Metropolitana di Venezia (Association of commercial enterprises)</li> <li>• Confindustria ( Association of industries)</li> </ul>
institutional bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veneto Region</li> <li>• City of Venice</li> </ul>

The active involvement of local utilities companies shows a clear connection between the action of co-design of the IAP and the impact on local services. The decisive role played by actors as AVM, the public mobility company, or by MUVE (The public foundations of civic museums) in the everyday life of the city makes them a crucial part of the local governance presence in the ULG.

The presence in the ULG of traditional but impactful actors makes the ULG the ideal place for the creation of policies having an impact for the economic growth, especially after the flooding and tourism crisis that affected Venice in the recent years. The involvement of public utilities on waste management and on public transport is a very positive element, which may contribute to highlight the impact of tourism on the management of services and involve all the actors of the ULG in finding collaborative solutions to topics particularly relevant for the Venice ecosystem.

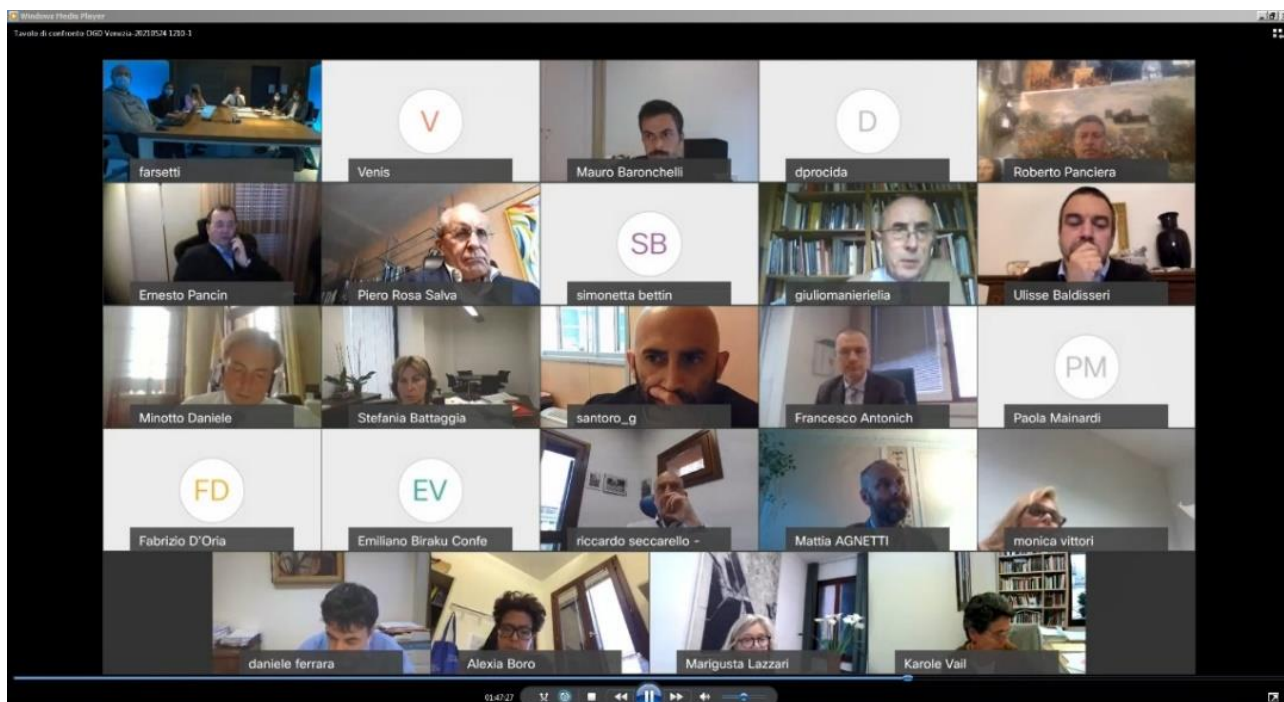
The ULG normally met regularly i.e. once every three months. The Covid 19 pandemic however had an impact on the ordinary schedule and some meetings were cancelled, and other were conducted on line. Over the period of the Tourism Friendly Cities project, the ULG met 4 times in plenary and a few other time in smaller groups. During these meetings, the members discussed the joint development of the IAP and agreed on the most effective actions to be implemented on a short and medium long term. The process of developing the road map for setting the focus and objectives for the IAP started at the meeting held on November 22, 2020.

At this meeting the focus of the IAP and the content of the SSA were discussed and agreed. It was also established to have one-to one meetings with some of the most relevant UGL members (most collaborative and strategic organizations that are members of the OGD) to define key messages and different methods to be tested for an effective communication on the high-tide phenomenon. 10 interviews with the stakeholders were conducted in April and May 2021 to identify the best methods and messages to inform tourists on how to deal with the city flooding and provide a clear and realistic picture on the phenomenon.

During the meeting held on May 24, 2021, the ULG approved the contents of the small-scale action and explored action ideas to be included into the Integrated Action Plan. In the following meetings, the ULG monitored the implementation of the actions . During one of the latest meeting, in April 2022 the ULG members approved the final version of the IAP.



Transnational meetings and other forms of exchanges within the TFC project were an important



source of knowledge. When possible and useful, ULG members were invited to take part in transnational meetings (core meetings) but the Covid-19 pandemic hindered their participation. The project team regularly participated in the network meetings and benefited a lot from taking part in such transnational context by learning from other cities' experiences to find new solutions.



## Part 2 - Action Plan

Promoting sustainable tourism is a challenge for the City of Venice, which finds itself in the balance between the need to attract more tourists for economic reasons, especially after the Covid 19 Pandemic, and the obligation to preserve its historical heritage and cultural identity. Many aspects of today's life in Venice historical centre concern the way in which tourist flows are managed. The measures described in the current IAP are in line with the priorities set in the Tourism Territorial Governance Plan and include specific actions to be implemented with the use of smart technologies. The actions were selected thanks to joint work with all stakeholders involved and are included in the Tourism Department's the strategic objectives Plan. In particular, the IAP builds on the following existing policy documents:

- Plan for the Territorial Governance of Tourism, which the City administration adopted in 2017
- Destination Management Plan developed by the Venice Tourism Destination Management Organisation

Main objectives:

Governing the tourist flows to make them compatible with the daily life of the residents by enhancing the traditional craftsmanship and cultural offer

Promotion of a strategy for the relaunch of the tourist offer of the city and its mainland

### a) Listed actions

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	
Governing the tourist flows to make them compatible with the daily life of the residents by enhancing the traditional craftsmanship and cultural offer	
ACTION A.1	A.1 Creation of alternative tourist itineraries
INTENDED RESULT	Based on the knowledge of the data on tourism flows, the City of Venice intends to create thematic itineraries to valorise and safeguard Venice heritage and cultural identity and promote an original and more sustainable way to get to know the territory. The action is in line with the growing trend of the slow and the so-called "experiential" tourism, which aims at promoting the uniqueness of a destination by focusing on values such as respect for local culture and tradition, authenticity, sustainability and support to local activities. The action will be carried out with the involvement of the ULG and the Tourists guides. 10 of these itineraries addressed to national and international tourists will be created within the EU project SLI.DE.S and will be focused on the valorisation of the excellence of Venetian traditional craftsmanship. An expression of interest addressed to Venice artisans and culture and creative industries was launched and was answered by 23 subjects. 6 other itineraries will be addressed to trade and congress tourism.
RESOURCES/ASSETS	€ 62.000 (ERDF funds from SLI.DE.S. project)
LEADER	City of Venice – Tourism Department
KEY PARTNER	ULG + 23 craftsmen that will participate in the action
TIMESCALE	24 months



Indicator	16 created itineraries
ACTION A.2	A.2 Monitoring of visitors and presences on the City territory
INTENDED RESULT	The City of Venice has developed a system for monitoring, analysing and forecasting pedestrian flows to estimate the number of presences in real time ("nowcasting") and create a predictive model ("forecasting") of presences in the city on a historical basis , to determine the movements of tourists and residents according to statistical curves of home-school-work routes (for residents) and of the movements from-to hotels, museums and other points of interest (for tourists) and movements to the workplace (commuters). The systematic monitoring of arrivals and presences into the City will be based on the visitor system in open field (GRAFANA), which collects data coming from 34 sensors located in the main accesses to the historic city plus the data coming from the telephone cells (BIG DATA) and extracted from the Smart Control Room
RESOURCES/ASSETS	€ 200.000 euro – Pact for Venice funds (Italian Government funds)
LEADER	City of Venice – Tourism Department and Smart Control Room staff
KEY PARTNER	Venis ( in-house ICT company)
TIMESCALE	24 months
Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Quarterly report of the overnight visitors presented to the City of Venice General Director</li> <li>• 1 weekly report on the daily pedestrian flows</li> <li>• 1 monitoring dashboard with the main data related to the city restart (proposal to be submitted to the General Director)</li> <li>• 1 data sharing protocol to be submitted to the data owner companies</li> </ul>
ACTION	A.3 Integrated project to regulate the entrance to the city: to finalise the introduction of the "entrance fee" which gradually will lead to the compulsory reservation for visiting the city
INTENDED RESULT	<p>To achieve a sustainable presence of tourists in the historic city and promote a better offer to the tourists.</p> <p>To identify concrete applicable solutions to improve the regulation of tourist flows and the overall mobility in the city by providing integrated services and different offers to the tourists.</p> <p>A working group will be established to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• elaborate technical-formal proposals to develop a system to encourage visitors to book and purchase their services ahead;</li> <li>• study the legal and administrative sustainability of the proposals;</li> <li>• submit the final project to the Municipal administration for its approval</li> </ul>
RESOURCES/ASSETS	€ 650.000 (City's own resources)
LEADER	City of Venice – Tourism Department
KEY PARTNER	City of Venice Legal Service, ULG members (ie. VELA spa.



TIMESCALE	24 month
Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 integrated project presented to the Administration (2022)</li> <li>Launch of the integrated project for the access (2023)</li> </ul>
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	
Promotion of a strategy for the relaunch of the tourist offer of the city and its mainland	
ACTION	B.1 Planning of the tourist offer of the city and its mainland
INTENDED RESULT	<p>Planning of the tourist offer of the city through punctual promotional interventions in relation to the real condition of the restart of international tourism through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collection and creation of editorial contents to be disseminated through newsletters and social media channels;</li> <li>restyling of the “VeneziaèUnica”, a multifunctional e-commerce platform</li> <li>strengthening of the collaboration with ENIT – National tourist Board;</li> <li>collaboration agreements with the most representative tourist guides</li> </ul>
RESOURCES/ASSETS	€ 200.000 Pact for Venice funds (Italian Government funds) and City’s human resources
LEADER	City of Venice – Tourism Department
KEY PARTNER	ENIT + ULG, VELA
TIMESCALE	Second semester of 2021 yearly promotion plan presented to the Deputy Major for Tourism
Indicator	1 yearly promotion plan presented to the Deputy Major for Tourism
ACTION	B.2 Improve the communication regarding the phenomenon of high tide in the historic centre of Venice
INTENDED RESULT	The goal of the proposed SSA is to give tourists the right perception of the phenomenon and therefore encourage the visit to the city in periods not traditionally crowded in the light of seasonal adjustment.
RESOURCES/ASSETS	€ 16.000
LEADER	City of Venice – Tourism Department
KEY PARTNER	Venice Tide and Forecasting Centre, ULG members (in particular: Ca Foscari University, Chamber of Commerce, Civic Museum Foundation, Tourist guides Associations) which will participate in the dissemination of the campaign through their own channels and websites.
TIMESCALE	6 months
Indicator	7 video messages produced and disseminated





## b) Small Scale Actions (SSA)

The small scale action proposed intends to test a specific aspect of the communication addressed to national, European and international tourists by focusing on the topic of better communicating the phenomenon of high tide in the historic centre of Venice to make tourists changing their perception about the high tide. The goal of the proposed SSA is to give tourists the right perception of the phenomenon and therefore encourage the visit to the city in the autumn period in the light of seasonal adjustment.

Therefore, the City of Venice engaged local stakeholders in identifying the best methods and messages to inform tourists on how to deal with the city flooding and provide a clear and realistic picture on the phenomenon. One-to-one meetings with some of the most relevant UGL members (most collaborative and strategic organizations that are members of the OGD) were held on-line between April and May 2021 to define the contents of the small-scale action. These institutions Ca Foscari University, Chamber of Commerce, Civic Museum Foundation, Tourist guides Associations replied to a set of questions aiming to define the best methods to communicate with the tourists and will have a specific and relevant role in the implementation of the action. During the meeting held on May 24, 2021, the ULG approved the contents of the small-scale action and the key messages. The ULG members agreed on the necessity to communicate specifically the nature, the duration and the consequences of the phenomenon passing the message that the city is safe and accessible even during the high tide season. They also decided that production and dissemination of short videos through the social media channels would be the most efficient and appropriate tool to communicate such messages.

The evaluation of the SSA will be done by counting how many views the video messages will have and by analysing if the video messages will bring to a reduction of the inquiries at the Tide Forecasting Centre during the taken period. ULG members, in particular Ca Foscari University, Chamber of Commerce, Civic Museum Foundation, Tourist guides Associations confirmed their willingness to collaborate in the dissemination of the campaign through their own channels and websites and invest more in institutional communication.

The SSA was developed according this timeline:

- July / December 2021 – development of strategic communication around risk mitigation for tourists around 3-5 pilot key messages.
- January / February 2022 – Test of the 5 key strategic messages and assessment of their effectiveness.
- February / July 2022 assessment of effectiveness of each pilot core message and transfer the learning to the stakeholder group described

The short video are visible at this link

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYsYhrOqLcl&list=PLERY4qF6--la\\_FCFBZhMqt2bRUIFsQcsH&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYsYhrOqLcl&list=PLERY4qF6--la_FCFBZhMqt2bRUIFsQcsH&index=2)

## c) Framework for delivery

The Department of Sustainable tourism of the City of Venice will have the main responsibility in delivering the actions and monitoring the implementation. This will be done in close cooperation with other city departments and the support of the EU policies Department. Municipality staff will team



up with experts from the ULG and other stakeholders depending on the action. The ULG will regularly meet to discuss and stir the implementation and monitoring. To draft the IAP, the department of Sustainable Tourism has benefited from the resources and knowledge acquired through its participation in the TFC network and URBACT e-university. Staff will attend also the next Urbact University session to learn more on the monitoring and evaluation and resourcing aspects of the IAP. Lessons learnt and tools acquired through the Network will support the Tourism department beyond the URBACT support.

#### d) Resourcing

The city of Venice has already invested in relevant projects to support and promote sustainable tourism and has allocated adequate human and financial resources on the implementation of the listed actions. Economic resources to finance these actions come mostly from ERDF Operational Programmes, National Funds and City's own resources.

The implementation of the actions requires a considerable commitment of human resources. The staff is made of the employees of the City of Venice mostly from the Sustainable tourism department, and the ICT service.

COSTS OF THE ACTION A1-A3	City of Venice own resources	ERDF FUNDS	National Funds (Pact for Venice)	Total of Funds
City of Venice internal Staff	Co-financing	32.000		32.000
Equipment/infrastructure	650.000		100.000	750.00
External services		30.000	50.000	80.000
Budget proposal	650.000	62.000	150.000	862.000

COSTS OF THE ACTION B1-B2	City of Venice own resources	ERDF FUNDS	National Funds (Pact for Venice)	Total of Funds
City of Venice internal Staff	Co-financing			
Equipment/infrastructure				0
External services		16.000	50.000	65.000
Budget proposal				65.000



## e) Monitoring of the implementation

The Department of Sustainable tourism of the City of Venice is responsible for steering and monitoring the implementation of the set actions. Implementation has already started and is in progress according to the set schedule. Some of the results have been achieved.

In the second semester of 2021 the City of Venice created 5 itineraries inspired by #EnjoyRespectVenezia campaign: 4 are dedicated to discover Venice districts and one dedicated to a bicycle ride between the mainland and the lagoon.

<https://www.veneziaunica.it/en/content/recommended-itineraries>

Between January and February 2022, the City of Venice created other 10 of the 16 planned thematic itineraries. The created itineraries are addressed to national and international visitors and they consist in 10 walks through the places of the artistic and traditional Venetian artisans to meet the craftsmen at work in their atelier and shops.

<https://www.veneziaunica.it/en/content/routes-venetian-craftmanship-and-creativity>

The Monitoring of visitors and presences on the City territory is being carried out on a regular basis through the analysis of the data coming from the Smart Control Room.

## f) Risk analysis

RISK	Description of Risk	type	Mitigation Measures
1	Delay in the implementation	medium	All involved subjects are highly committed to the action plan. All possible strategies will be activated to minimize any deviations. Strategies include partial adjustment of the actions, or of the schedule
2	Lack or poor participation of stakeholders in the participatory activities	low	The effort in the communication activities will be increased, providing the activation of direct contacts ULG members with key stakeholders in the area. Furthermore, a possible reorganization of the methods proposed for consulting citizens and stakeholders to better meet their needs may be taken into account
3	Delay in the execution of the SSA	medium	The success of the test is strictly dependent on the season and the project staff will do their utmost to avoid this situation. However, it will be possible to reschedule the test from the autumn season to the spring season