

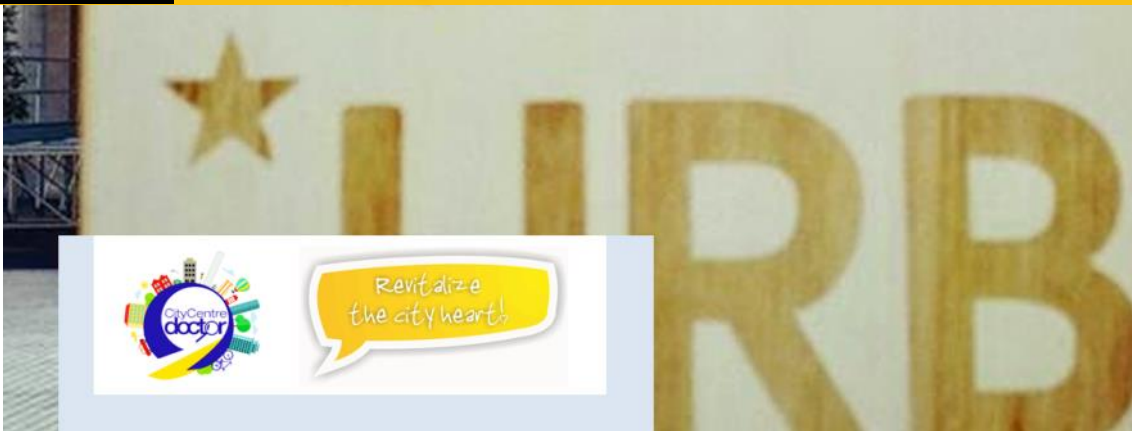


SAN  
DONÀ DI  
PIAVE

## INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN



Revitalize  
the city heart!





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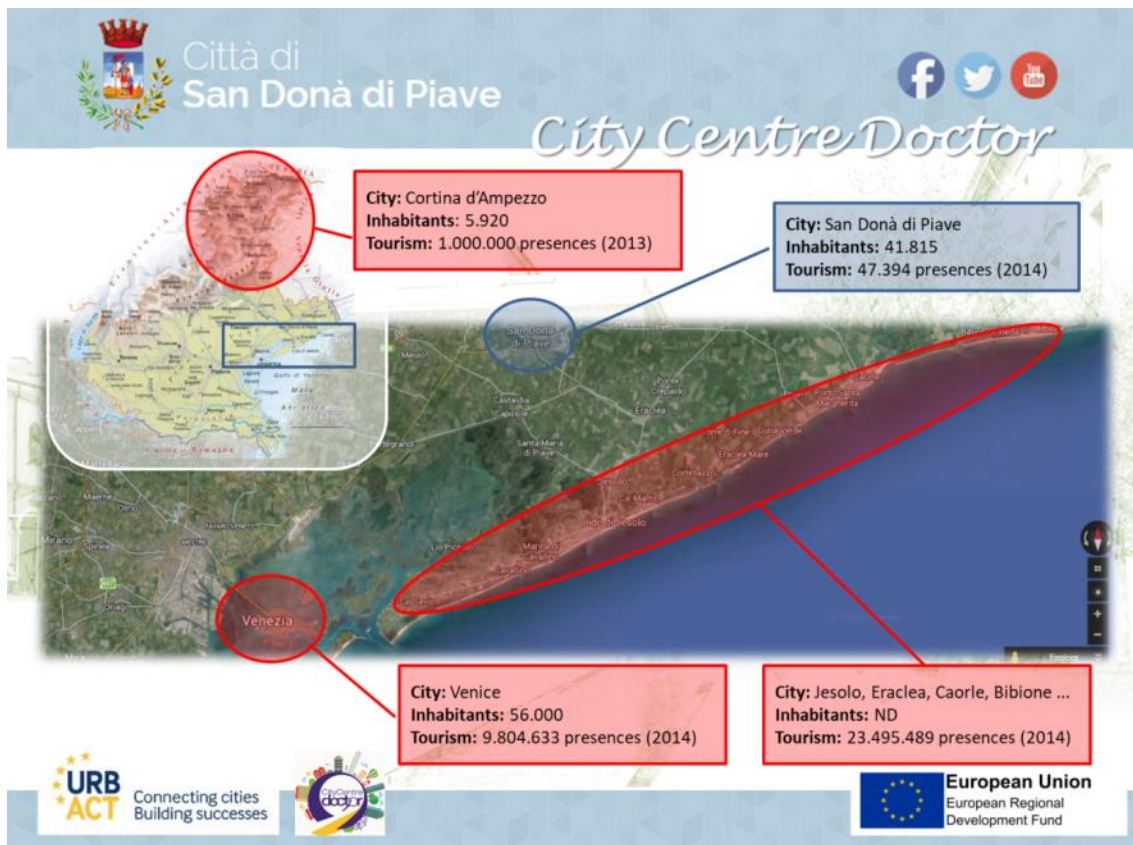
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## 1. San Donà di Piave: City Centre Context and Place Analysis

San Donà di Piave is a city in the province of Venezia, Veneto, in the North-East of Italy. Despite being one of the historical centers in the area, the city was heavily damaged during the first world war and was completely reconstructed. The city's geographical location and the transformations due to the war have had important repercussions on the development of the city itself and on the vocation (potential and current) of its centre.

On the one hand, the city insists on very important and attractive touristic locations such as Venice and sea side cities and towns attracting millions of visitors every year, such as Jesolo, Caorle and the neighboring beaches of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region. Such a positioning makes it a potential hub for services to the touristic destinations surrounding it. Nonetheless such an evolution is still contended and not completely mature.

Fig. 1: San Dona' di Piave – its location and the surrounding touristic destinations



On the other hand, the reconstruction of the city in the 20<sup>th</sup> century made it quite dissimilar from neighboring cities whose historical center was preserved, modifying profoundly both the appearance of the center and its functions.

Recent developments of the economic and social fabric of the territory posed further challenges to the structure and vocation of the city center. Major retail players opened large commercial structures in the outskirts of the city and in neighboring towns. These structures posed relevant challenges to the identity of the city center, that went through two main transformations: in the 90s the city center became home for a variety of tertiary activities—banking and financial

activities in particular—that triggered the growth of the service sector and the burgeoning of the construction industry. In the last 10 years—corresponding to the unfolding of the global financial crisis— these transformations were reversed and the center still struggles to develop a clear identity given the difficulties encountered by financial institutions and the difficulties in feeding a new generation of retail firms.

Despite such difficulties, San Donà di Piave and its center still represent a location which is perceived as desirable for a number of new citizens attracted by its infrastructures, the comfortable logistics and the strategic positioning, as well as for the quality of life it offers. San Donà is in fact a crucial point of the transport infrastructures between Veneto and Friuli Venezia-Giulia, it is located at the crossroad between the industrial development zone in the area of Treviso and the tourist attractions of Cavallino-Treporti, Jesolo, Eraclea and Caorle.

URBACT City Centre Doctor was crucial in making sense of these transformations and trends. Urbact method of analysis and framing of potential developments for city centres, in fact, allowed to coalesce a variety of stakeholders to frame an identity of the city centre that might trigger a repopulation of the centre and a redefinition of its functions. This document illustrates the point of departure (place analysis), the steps undertaken, the measures and initiatives adopted and their potential developments, together with an analysis of the critical issues related to the governance of local stakeholders and interests.

## 1.1 The city at a glance

San Donà di Piave is located 35 km from Mestre; 40 km from Venice; and 40 km from Treviso. Its population was 41883 inhabitants at the beginning of 2017. The city is part of an integrated regional economy of the recently formed Venice Metropolitan City. Approximately a quarter of the city's population commute out of the city daily for work or study purposes.

The city is very well positioned in the metropolitan economy, even though its vocation has witnessed radical transformations in the last few years. In particular the opening of large, attractive commercial hubs in the outskirts of the city and in neighboring towns questioned the identity of the city centre as a lively hub for retail and service activities. The global financial crisis was felt by the city in the form of a dramatic shrinking of the construction sector that was burgeoning until 2006. Despite the hardships brought about by the global economic and financial crisis, the city showed a certain resilience and its economy exhibits encouraging signs of dynamism. Recent figures from the chamber of commerce (2018) show that new firms are being created and that the hemorrhage of extant ones, together with the associated jobs, has stopped. In 2017 the number of local companies grew for the first time, after seven years of negative performances (-2.3% since 2009). The birth of new firms—+0,8% in the last year—brought the total number of stablished companies in the area to 4415 units. The vast majority of them are not commercial branches of firms located elsewhere: 80% of these productive activities are rooted in the territory and have their headquarters in the city or in neighboring areas.

Even though still weak as measures of newly found dynamism, these figures suggest that we are observing not just a turn in the economic cycle, but a larger redefinition of the economic and social fabric of the city. New firms in sectors and segments that were not a strength of the city show tangible signs of such transformation: activities related to tourism and or to the restaurant and hospitality business are growing (+23%), while the number of touristic presences in the city

has surpassed the number of inhabitants for the first time last year. Overnight stays in the city more than doubled since 2009 and grew 20% in the year 2017, arriving at 65 thousand. Traditional specializations of the city witnessed the signs of a major—and sometimes hard—restructuring: firms in the agricultural and construction industries diminished, respectively, of 24 and 16% since the beginning of the crisis.

As far as jobs are concerned, one of the main critical issues of the city has been the attractiveness of close cities such as Venice and Treviso, determining the existence of a strong share of commuters in the local population. Commuting represents a critical factor for the rethinking of the city centre, given the absence of a large portion of active population during the days of the week. Despite these structural problems, job creation came back to positive figures starting from 2014. In 2016 the number of new jobs outgrew lay-offs (870 units).

Logistically, the city is particularly fortunate: it is well connected to major centres in the region by an efficient rail and road public transportation systems. Two international airports (Venezia and Treviso) are located no more than 30 minutes from the city centre. Culturally, socially and from the point of view of safety, the city is particularly well-equipped. Nonetheless, it does not have the allure of nearby Treviso or Padua, given the relatively unattractive architectural heritage deriving from the 20<sup>th</sup> century reconstruction.

## 1.2 Place Analysis

According to URBACT's methodological and operational directions, the ULG (Urbact Local Group) embarked in a place analysis aimed at understanding the main challenges the city centre faces and will face in the future.

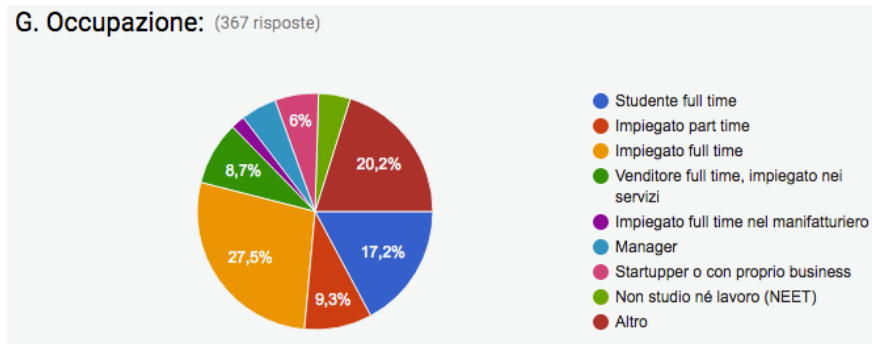
The analysis was performed through two streams of action. First, a survey was elaborated and distributed to inhabitants of the city. The survey focused on their perception of the city centre and aimed at collecting their ideas and suggestions to redefine the city centre. Second, an active observation of flows and activities in the central part of the city was conducted, with methods and approaches resembling an ethnographic observation. The analysis was operationally performed by a sub-group of the ULG that organized the activities as follows:

1. Development of an online survey that was distributed via Google Forms. The target, in terms of respondents, was set to 250 contacts. The survey was taken by 367 citizens;
2. Observation of closed and open spaces (an ethnographically-informed type of observation). The sub-group coordinated as to have at least two observers in 6 main areas of the city centre.

The following sections summarize the main results of the place analysis.

As far as the respondents are concerned, their professional status was quite heterogeneous, with individuals representing all the potential occupations present in the city. While employees in office jobs represented the larger share of the respondents, representatives of a variety of other professions and occupations took part into the survey, with a relatively modest participation from individuals working in the manufacturing sector (see fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Survey, respondents

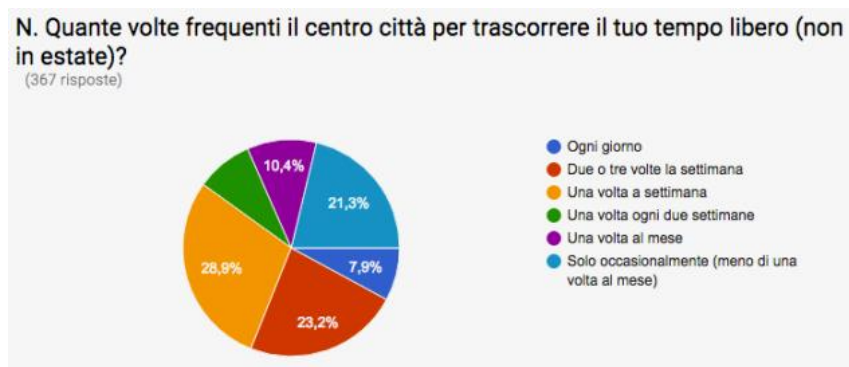


As far as age is concerned, more than 60% of respondents were aged 18-44, with citizens under 18 years of age and elders with more than 65 years being under-represented. Almost 50% of the respondents have at least a secondary school diploma, while 40% had a tertiary education credential. Even though the sampling was not purposeful and the tools used did not allow to obtain a perfectly representative sample of the city population, the correspondence between the composition of the sample and the general structure of the population was perceived as satisfactory by the ULG.

The main results of the survey show that the city centre is perceived by citizens as substantially safe to live and walk, especially when evenings and nights are concerned. Overall, 60% of the respondents believe that “walking at night in the city centre” is safe (35%) or very safe (25%). These results tend to be encouraging, given the recent priority taken in the national and local political agenda by preoccupations related to a perceived increase in insecurity.

As far as the fruition of the city centre is concerned, the survey showed a series of critical issues. The city centre is not the typical destination for citizens of San Dona’ on a daily basis. Probably, and given the importance of daily commuting for a large share of inhabitants, the centre is not lived as it should or could be (see fig. 3). 69% of the respondents visit the city centre less than once a week, with 21% of the respondents visiting it less than once a month.

Fig. 3: Free time spent in the city centre



As far as shopping is concerned, the survey highlights the tensions and pressures coming from neighboring large retail structures established by national and international groups in the

outskirts of the city. Shopping is performed in the city centre only occasionally: 70% of the respondents do shop in the city centre less than once a week. As far as leisure and free time is concerned, a vast majority of the respondents said they pass it outside of the city centre, with 35% of respondents saying they prefer to visit other cities in the region. Overall, 36% of the respondents claim that the city centre is satisfactory in terms of free time and leisure offerings. These apparently contrasting trends suggest that the centrifugal forces that bring a large portion of inhabitants outside of the city tend to shade the cultural and social offerings it has and suggests the need for a strong effort to change the city perceived attractiveness.

The survey was a useful instrument to collect suggestions from the population. The main areas of improvement that were singled out thanks to the survey were the following:

- Improve the quality of mobility in the city centre;
- Increase the chances and opportunities to bike around the city and the city centre;
- Rationalize the parking system;
- Extend and complete the recently created pedestrian zone that currently is discontinued and only partial;
- Increase the opportunity to make Piazza Indipendenza, the largest square in the city, more attractive and enjoyable;
- Increase the quantity and improve the quality of cultural events in the city centre. The neighboring cities as well as the commercial structures are organizing their own cultural offerings; these events are competing alternatives to events organized in the city centre;
- Increase the availability of spaces for the younger generations;
- Provide for the presence of a supermarket which is largely felt as missing by the population.

The observations, meticulous and undertaken in a variety of occasions, brought to identify specific critical issues for the city centre, in particular the following:

- The city might be, and is currently, perceived as “clean” and well maintained;
- Nonetheless what catches the attention of citizens and observers is the visible presence of empty (commercial) spaces;
- Green areas, public gardens and parks are perceived as abandoned and not really “lived”;
- The city is “grey” in that it does not have colored buildings and particulars;
- Closed commercial spaces and buildings transmit a sense of abandonment and absence of care and life.

The results of the place analysis were taken in deep consideration by the ULG. Thanks to interactions with stakeholders, the public administration and a variety of actors, the ULG tried to formulate a diagnosis of the problems that were found. The causes of the underdeveloped potential of the city centre can be summarized as follows:

1. Neighboring towns and the outskirts of the city host more than 20 large commercial parks, some of them are located at a 5 km distance from the city centre. Clearly these structures tend to be perceived as comfortable, clean, safe;
2. Despite the presence of a lively cultural fabric in the city, cultural events are perceived as being scarce and not always of a satisfying quality. The absence of a palimpsest of engaging cultural events in the city centre represents a minus in terms of attractiveness and discourages actors willing to establish retail activities in the centre given the erratic nature of flows;



3. The city is close to very attractive cities and towns: Venice, Treviso, but also pleasant and history-laden small towns near San Dona' tend to offer a set of highly pleasurable alternatives to dwelling in a city centre which is perceived as grey and deficient in terms of cultural offerings;
4. The city does not have a clear identity. Having a clearly defined identity and a set of precise and clear vocations for the city centre might be an attractor for foreigners and people living in other cities. In turn, the presence of outsiders might trigger the birth and development of novel economic activities in the city centre and thus encourage the curiosity of the City's inhabitants towards a lively and populated central area.

## 2. The process of action planning

In the framework of City Centre Doctor, the steering individuals and groups aiming at redesigning the city centre identity, vocation and, eventually, its developments were continuously engaging with a variety of stakeholders. The main aim in the consultations of stakeholders and in the constitution of the ULG was that of providing the city with an ensemble of facilitators that might be instrumental not only in the provision of novel ideas and triggers for short-term actions but most of all to provide the city with the capacities needed to facilitate a continuous evolution and to ignite a continuous innovation cycle. Such a cycle is meant to be as participated and as democratic as possible and is imagined as relying on the activation of a larger community of stakeholders in San Donà. Such an endeavor resonates with the city being part of a Horizon 2020 Project (WeGovNow, further details in the following sections) aimed at facilitating distributed and democratic issue signaling and collective decision making processes on the future of a city.

Since inception, the ULG has devised a flow of actions and initiatives to revive the city centre that pivoted around two main objectives:

1. making the city centre the hub for an ecosystem conducive to novel forms of "young" entrepreneurship;
2. Reviving the city centre and making it a place for daily life, *vis-à-vis* its current situation characterized by more utilitarian uses.

An Urban Local Group (ULG) was created thanks to the inclusion of a variety of stakeholders in the city (representatives of younger generations, business organizations, retailers, experts and representatives of the public administration). The group was established on the basis of voluntary and free participation and complete openness to contributions coming from the relevant constituencies of the city. From October 2015 to December 2016 nine meetings of the ULG were held. Each meeting has been participated by an average of 15 people.

These meetings aimed at fostering the conditions for effective networking and to create opportunities to engage heterogeneous groups in the process of planning and delivering novel initiatives to revive the city centre. The ULG was open to further contributions thanks to a variety of means, first among them an open Facebook page aimed at increasing the awareness of the ULG activities among the population and at igniting debates and constructive interactions. The ULG developed in parallel to the participation of San Dona' di Piave to the European Project We Gov Now (as detailed in chapter 6), a project aimed at the development, deployment and exploitation of a digital platform to increase citizens' participation in urban level decision making processes and to foster digital democracy.

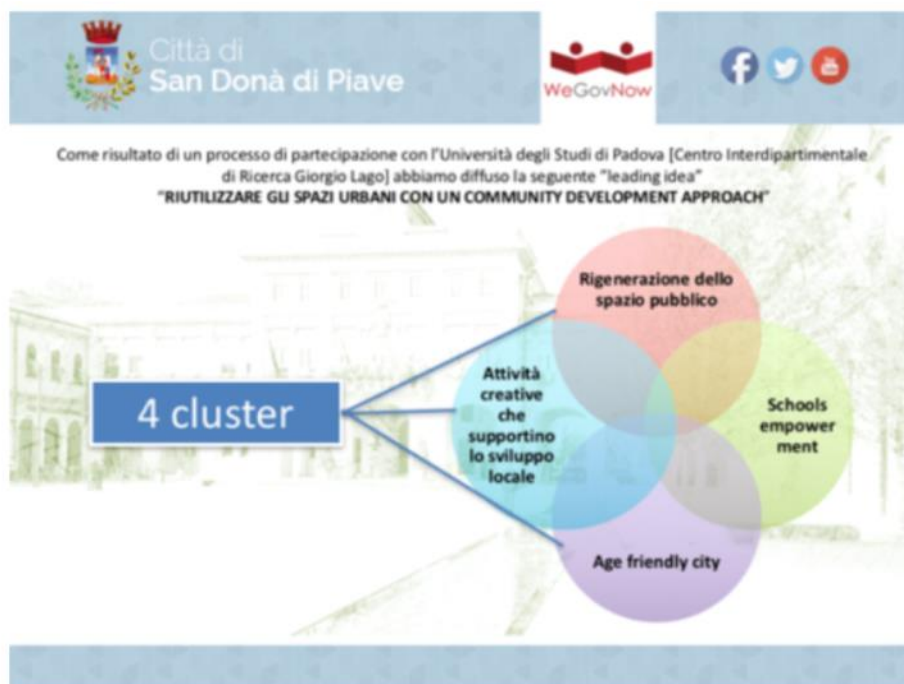
In the meetings, the ULG has constantly pondered the problems of the city centre and has thought about possible solutions. Several methods were used, from brainstorming to mind maps, Swot analyses and many others. The purpose of using data and different points of view is to make sure that there is a constructive debate. The discussion of the problems concerning the collected data had been facilitated by the ULG Coordinator and always supported by an expert facilitator. An important part of the process for the participants has been active listening to each other's perspectives.

The posture kept by all the participants was one that privileged constructive proposals and building on others' suggestions and perspectives. What was carefully avoided was the stark opposition among perspectives and lingering on the responsibilities for the current state of affairs. The ULG was organized in small thematic groups that then reported to a plenary. The objective of such an organization was to present a richer picture of detailed issues and problems. Plenary discussions were key of the coordinators and the facilitators to clarify the challenges the city had to face and to trigger the planning of activities and initiatives to revive the city centre. Key tools in these discussions were the problem tree, the place diagram and a traditional Swot analysis, all suggested by the Urbact method toolkit.

### 3. Focus and objectives of the Integrated Action Plan

The entire process of action planning represented an iterative, participated and open effort in the collective design of the evolution of the city centre. Using a variety of tools as those recalled earlier and others as the Placemaking scheme, the group arrived to a shared view of the leading idea and of the underlying challenges (see fig. 4). Such a shared perspective on the city centre evolution was reached thanks to the collaboration with the University of Padova, and in particular the Research Centre Giorgio Lago, an institution specialized in producing research and consultancy concerning the transformation of the North East of Italy by mixing tools, methods and perspectives from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds.

Fig. 4: a representation of the "leading idea"



The leading idea might be synthetically defined as “**re-using urban spaces according to a community development approach**”. The idea revolves around **four main thematic clusters**, four conceptual pillars that constitute the backbone of the integrated action plan for the city. In particular, the four clusters might be summarized as follows:

<p>1. <b>Regenerate urban spaces</b> with the aim of fostering the birth and growth of <b>creative activities and firms</b> that might support local economic development;</p>	<p>2. <b>Regenerate public spaces</b> to foster <b>novel occasions of sociality</b> and opportunities to re-appropriate the city centre;</p>
<p>3. <b>Empower schools as a way to engage young students and talents</b> in the process;</p>	<p>4. <b>Regenerate the city centre</b> with the view of making it friendly for different typologies of individuals based on their <b>age</b>.</p>

The main challenge identified by the ULG resonates with recent directions taken by the local administration aimed at redefining the economic and social structure of the city and at reviving its economy in a more environmentally and socially sustainable way. The current local administration has developed directly, or has inherited and developed further, lines of action and policy aimed at reconsidering the nature and functions of space in the city.

In particular:

1. It stopped land consumption trying to incentivize the restoration of extant real estate, the revitalization of extant buildings.
2. It has targeted the image of a city surrounded by country parks as the direction to go in terms of urban development;
3. It connected the development of the city with the completion of a major intermodal transportation hub that connects San Dona’ to Venice, the Eastern regions, the lagoon system and crucial nodes in the area.

These trajectories intersect with already launched or ready-to-launch projects of recovery of extant spaces that are not necessarily located in the city centre but interact with it geographically and functionally.

The places are:

1. A former military base (Tombolan Fava) now being handed over to the municipality where the development of activities related to leisure, research, logistics and agriculture will be established. The base is located at the entrance of the city for traffic coming from the Northern and East quadrant of the region;
2. The restoration of the tank located at the main entrance of the city, in front of the main bridge (Ponte della Vittoria) that is the first artifact that can be seen by traffic entering the city from the main arteries connecting it to Venice, Treviso and Mestre. Such a restoration aims at making it a social hub for entrepreneurial and social ventures launched by, and nurtured by, young talents of the city;
3. The restoration of a large former complex dedicated to the production of wines (Ex Cantina Sociale-former Social Winery) that aims at hosting innovative retail firms and

spaces to collect and connect young inhabitants of the city by providing a multifunctional area for cultural and social activities. The building is located in the same area of the previously mentioned multi-modal transportation hub.

Given these premises and main challenges, the Integrated Action Plan aims at:

1. Coalescing actors—firms, public administrations, potential entrepreneurs and service providers—that might support the creation and growth of novel entrepreneurial firms in the city;
2. Influence local policy-making in the direction of incentivizing the use of extant—and often empty—spaces to foster novel entrepreneurial or cultural activities;
3. Work with residents, businesses and other stakeholders insisting on the city center to recover the centre’s vitality, making it a social hub, a cultural engine and a place to live, as opposed to the current centrifugal forces that brought citizens to inhabit eminently peripheral areas of the city;
4. Support such a transformation of the city centre through revised strategies for mobility.

The picture here below may help in visualizing the Integrated Action Plan vision:

#### 4. Actions and schedule of the integrated action plan

Resulting from the place analysis and from the ongoing work of the ULG, stakeholders involved in the project developed an action plan that aims at reviving the city. Such an action plan is currently being deployed in the city with beta actions that were initiated or will be initiated in the near future. The present section of the document illustrates the actions, the beta actions and develops reflections on those actions that need to be reformulated as a result of preliminary pilots and experimentations.

### Specific objective: 1. More people in the city centre

Action description	Delivery/lead Team	Key partners	Timescale	Assets/resources	Key output indicators
<p>Action 1</p> <p><b>Organization of a recurring palimpsest of cultural events mixing arts and music, exhibitions of local and external creatives</b></p>	4 members of the ULG Team	<p>Municipality;</p> <p>Crunchlab; (a Fablab located in the city);</p> <p>Business associations;</p> <p>Artists.</p> <p>Bands.</p>	From beta action (April 2017) to the end of the project	<p><i>European Funding:</i></p> <p>Creative Europe (small scale for structured cultural associations, with a very innovative approach)</p> <p>Cross Borders Cooperation (Italia Slovenia), in the field of CCI and cultural heritage (Axis 3), Regional Funding (for creation of cultural and creative enterprises, ERDF).</p> <p>Other funding:</p> <p>GAL Veneto Orientale (specific calls), funding for volunteering activities (especially by mixing cultural and social issues), Calls of Foundations (Culturability, Enel Cuore, etc),</p> <p>Private funding:</p> <p>Specific private sponsorship (in an organized, municipality-driven way)</p> <p>Increasing dimension (and audience) of some existing event, to make it self-sustainable</p>	<p>Number of citizens taking part into the events</p> <p>Number of new ideas emerging from these events</p> <p>Partnerships and collaborations among local firms and artists.</p>
<p>Action 2</p> <p><b>Organization of a palimpsest of events involving artisans and food professionals</b></p>	4 members of the ULG team	<p>Municipality</p> <p>Business associations</p>	From beta action (April 2017) to the end of the project	<p>European Funding:</p> <p>Cross Borders Cooperation (Italia Slovenia), CCI and cultural heritage (Axis 3), PSR (Rural Development Funds), Regional Funding for SMEs (ERDF, network of SMEs)</p> <p>Other funding:</p> <p>GAL Veneto Orientale (specific calls), Intersectorial Funding (Artisan's Associations like Confartigianato, Retail's Association like ASCOM or Confesercenti, etc...), Regional Funding (for the creation of innovation in retail)</p> <p>Private funding:</p> <p>Specific private sponsorship (driven by the municipality)</p>	<p>Number of citizens taking part into the events</p> <p>Partnerships and collaborations among local firms and artists.</p>

The first actions undertaken to make the first specific objective concrete (bringing people to the city centre) consisted in the planning and execution of a variety of events aimed at re-qualifying the perception inhabitants had of the city centre as a destination for their everyday life and especially as a social hub.

The palimpsest was populated by a variety of events that mixed arts, culture and food. In particular, the following event formats took place:

1. Dinners in music in the central square (in collaboration with local restaurants and bars and local musicians);
2. Local markets for artisanal products of the region. These markets interacted with the existing weekly “organic food” market that is being held in the square since 2014;
3. Artistic exhibitions in the spaces controlled/owned by the municipality in the central square, where emerging artists were allowed to show their works and to interact with arts connoisseurs;
4. Laboratories and events dedicated to having young children familiarize both with the city centre and with the local creative firms and associations (such as the Crunchlab, a Fablab located in the city).

These beta actions allowed to define a timeline for the next three years, especially in terms of funding. In particular the types of activities and initiatives, adequately scaled up, might be—and will be—the object of proposals presented in European funding schemes such as Creative Europe and Cross-Border Cooperation (Italia-Slovenia) with particular reference to cultural and creative industries and culture and heritage. Beyond European funding, the ULG will steer the stakeholders, including the local administration, to look for funding in other areas, such as Foundations aiming at sustaining local economies through cultural and creative firms (e.g.: EnelCuore, the no-profit foundation established by the Italian Leading company in electricity, Enel, that annually launches calls for financing of cultural and creative activities and Culturability, an annual call for projects of urban regeneration launched by the Foundation of Unipolis, the Italian insurance and banking group). With the aim of providing immediate funding and opportunities to scale up to these projects, the ULG will also try and coordinate stakeholders in having the public administration orchestrate local funding initiatives by private sponsors.

The main challenge for these types of events resides in their growth: the more they will be able to scale up in dimensions and thus will be attractive to larger shares of public, the more they will become financially self-sustaining, thanks to increased potential for sponsorships, ticketing and collateral revenue streams.

## Specific objective: 2. Recovering empty and/or degraded spaces and places in the city centre

Action description	Delivery/lead Team	Key partners	Timescale	Assets/resources	Key output indicators
<p>Action 1</p> <p><b>Bookcrossing station located in Gallerie Vidussi</b></p>	3 members of the ULG Team	<p>Writers;</p> <p>Artists;</p> <p>Local owners of new shops in the gallery (see next action);</p> <p>Slowfood and sommeliers.</p>	Start was presumed to be in September 2017. The station actually opened at the beginning of 2018. The action is a test that will be monitored for 6 months.	<p>Fridge sponsored</p> <p>Books donated</p> <p>Various collaborations for micro projects linked to bookcrossing</p> <p>Sign up at the Bookcrossing Network</p> <p>A dedicated Facebook page opening</p>	<p>Amount of books running / used</p> <p>Number of events connected to bookcrossing</p> <p>People participating in the events</p>
<p>Action 2</p> <p><b>Regeneration of Gallerie Vidussi through the re-use of empty spaces to host novel firms in the cultural and food industries initiated by local young professionals and entrepreneurs</b></p>	Municipality	Municipality Owners of the spaces	From beta action (2017) to 2021	<p>Spaces conferred by the owner for free in exchange for their renovation;</p> <p>Startuppers;</p> <p>New Regulation by the municipality aimed at allowing young entrepreneurs to inhabit and revitalize empty private spaces.</p>	<p>Number of startups</p> <p>Number of stakeholders involved</p> <p>Increase in the perception of safety and liveliness of the gallery which is currently semi-abandoned.</p>

The second specific objective targets a very sensible area of the city, a gallery that once was one of the pulsating social “hearts” of the city and now is semi-abandoned since the shops and spaces located there have been empty for more than a decade. The action plan aims at revitalizing the gallery by making it a destination in the city. To do so, the ULG worked synergistically with the municipality in order to obtain the opportunity to make the commercial spaces in the gallery available to young entrepreneurs for a discount. In particular, owners will confer their spaces to entrepreneurs for free for three years in exchange for the renovation of the spaces by entrepreneurs.

As we are writing the beta action is being undertaken and ***two startups entered the process of being located there***: one is an artisanal pastry, the other an independent bookshop. Both the activities will work synergistically to produce cultural and culinary events in the gallery as a way of revitalizing it. The initiative is part of a larger set of similar measures that will be encouraged by the fact that San Dona has become the first city in the Veneto Region to adopt a regulation that allows owners of spaces to confer them to novel activities with the aim of revitalizing spaces and then—after a period of three or more years—re-locating them on the real estate market. The municipality and the Urbact ULG act as fundamental brokers in the process by bridging owners of real estate and prospective entrepreneurs.

The other action that has been undertaken in the same area is the ***opening of a book-crossing station***, aimed at attracting readers and people interested in culture, given also the coming revitalization of the gallery. The line of action does not require particularly elaborated searches for funding. The idea is that of reviving specific angles of the city by mobilizing people and young inhabitants of the city through simple events and initiatives. Concurrently, the Administrations’ measures enabling young entrepreneurs to obtain empty spaces at reasonable costs should trigger the process of repopulation of these spaces.



### Specific objective: 3. Exploit the value, image and brand of the Piave River

Action description	Delivery/lead Team	Key partners	Timescale	Assets/resources	Key output indicators
<p>Action 1</p> <p><b>Adventure River Fest. A three-day festival dedicated to outdoor activities, sports and lifestyle.</b></p>	<p>One member of the ULG</p> <p>Adventure Outdoor Italia ASD</p> <p>Forcoop Cora</p>	<p>Athletes</p> <p>Sports teams</p> <p>Cultural associations</p> <p>Local businesses and sponsors</p> <p>Municipality.</p>	<p>September 2017</p> <p>Recurring yearly event.</p>	<p><i>European Funding:</i></p> <p>Erasmus Sport (EU level sport events), Cross Borders Cooperation (Italia Slovenia), in the field of “nature and culture” (Axis 3), Alpine Space Programme (difficult to manage), URBACT (working on “river economies”)</p> <p><i>Other funding:</i></p> <p>GAL Veneto Orientale (specific calls), Funding on Social Policies (Regional) for raising awareness about the benefits of sport for citizens (prevention of diseases)</p> <p><i>Private funding:</i></p> <p>Specific private sponsorship (in an organized, municipality-driven way, targeting sport and extreme sports related enterprises); Increasing dimension (and audience) of some existing event, to make it self-sustainable</p>	<p>Number of visitors</p> <p>Number of athletes participating in the events</p> <p>Number of firms presenting their products/offering</p> <p>Number of sports/outdoor teams and associations with a stand</p>
<p>Action 2</p> <p><b>Fiume Festival and other cultural events connected to (and celebrating the) Piave river.</b></p>	<p>Municipality</p> <p>Local associations</p> <p>Local owners of restaurants and bars</p>	<p>Municipality</p> <p>Local firms</p> <p>Local cultural associations</p> <p>Research and education institutions in the Region</p>	<p>From 2016</p> <p>recurrent event</p> <p>(annual)</p>	<p><i>European Funding:</i></p> <p>Creative Europe (small scale for structured cultural associations, with a very innovative approach) Cross Borders Cooperation (Italia Slovenia), in the field of CCI and cultural heritage (Axis 3), Regional Funding (for creation of cultural and creative enterprises, ERDF).</p> <p><i>Other funding:</i></p> <p>GAL Veneto Orientale (specific calls), funding for volunteering activities (especially by mixing cultural and social issues), Calls of Foundations (Culturability, Enel Cuore),</p> <p><i>Private funding:</i></p> <p>Specific private sponsorship (in an organized, municipality-driven way); Increasing dimension (and audience) of some existing event, to make it self-sustainable</p>	<p>Number of startups</p> <p>Number of stakeholders involved</p> <p>Increase in the perception of safety and liveliness of the gallery which is currently semi-abandoned.</p>

The Piave River represents a fundamental asset for the city and city centre, since the park surrounding it is at walking distance from the central square of San Dona' di Piave. The large green area is fit for a variety of open-air activities, it is provided with parking spaces and during the warm months it has also a restaurant/café operating for visitors. The identity of the city is strictly connected to the history of the River and the recent attention of the administration for outdoor/bike tourism activities make it a fundamental asset to build a novel image and identity for the city itself.

Two actions were performed to capitalize upon this asset. The first is a three days festival dedicated to outdoor activities and sports that attracted visitors and enthusiasts from all over Italy and from neighboring countries. Demonstrations, education to outdoor sports and activities, cultural events related to outdoor life were the fundamental elements of the Adventure River Fest. The second action is an action undertaken by the municipality in the last three years that represents a template to coalesce cultural associations, businesses and representatives of the world of research on environment and urban development and it is called the Fiume Festival. The Festival takes place at the end of summer and gathers hundreds of visitors interested in the relationship between rivers, taken as examples of natural assets, cities and novel sustainable lifestyles.

Clearly the River and its parks represent a crucial asset for the future of the city. These beta actions have the potential to make the river a strong attractor and thus to generate traffic in the city centre. Funding, in particular European funding, will be key in allowing these experiences to scale-up and to become full-fledged events able to enlarge their attractiveness. As for the specific objective 1, lines of funding such as Creative Europe, Erasmus Sports and Cross-Border cooperation Italia Slovenia are the main targets the ULG has identified. The challenge resides in the mobilization of the local administration and local partners in drafting robust projects to compete for these funds. As far as the Adventure River Fest is concerned, though, the type of event and the increasing interest for outdoor activities in the Region suggest that private sponsorships might be a complementary stream of revenues.

#### Specific objective: 4. A greener city: mobility and cycling

Action description	Delivery/lead Team	Key partners	Timescale	Assets/resources	Key output indicators
<p>Action 1</p> <p><b>Promoting the culture of moving by bicycle</b></p>	<p>Members of the ULG</p> <p>Fiab (bikers association)</p> <p>Municipality</p>	<p>Municipality</p> <p>Associations.</p>	<p>2018 - onwards.</p>	<p><i>European Funding:</i> Cross Borders Cooperation (Italia Slovenia), in the field of reduction of carbon emissions (Axis 2), Regional Funding (ERDF, for creation / empowerment of tourism-related SMEs = bike sharing, bike managing, etc...), URBACT (about green mobility), Central Europe (green cities), etc...</p> <p><i>Other funding:</i> National calls (Ministry) for green mobility (connection with national-level bike routes), GAL Veneto Orientale (specific calls), Veneto Region (specific calls on tourism and mobility)</p> <p><i>Private funding:</i> Specific private sponsorship (in an organized, municipality-driven way); Increasing dimension (and audience) of some existing event, to make it self-sustainable</p>	<p>Increase in Bike traffic</p> <p>Number of commutes by bike</p> <p>Participation to events related to biking</p>
<p>Action 2</p> <p><b>Promoting the culture of walking</b></p>	<p>Municipality</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Associations</p> <p>PArents</p>	<p>Municipality</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Associations and groups of parents</p>	<p>From 2016 onwards</p>	<p><i>European Funding:</i> Health 2014-2020 (promotion of healthy lifestyles), Territorial Cooperation (acting on "thematic walking paths", religious or food-related, pilgrimages, etc...)</p> <p><i>Other funding:</i> Funding of Local Health Units, Funding for the Volunteering Sector (example: Walking Groups for Seniors, Pedibus, etc...)</p> <p><i>Private funding:</i> Specific private sponsorship (in an organized, municipality-driven way)</p>	<p>Increase in pedestrian traffic</p> <p>Increase in walking home to school commutes</p> <p>Growth of organized walking groups</p>

The objective consists of a series of actions aimed at promoting a novel and more sustainable way of thinking to urban mobility and to the way in which the city is lived. The actions are inserted in a series of major results and initiatives taken by the municipality, such as the creation of specialized (and specially signaled) routes for disabled people in pedestrian roads, in strengthening and making bike lanes more secure, and in empowering local associations of bikers and walkers. The promotion of such a culture rests also on recognitions given to the city as a Bike city and on the ***plans of the municipality to create further bike and walking lanes*** especially in the city centre. ***The city has also adopted a Bikeplan***, a strategic plan aimed at making the bike the preferred means of transportation in the urban area. The ULG has, in this action, supported and encouraged experimentations by associations of bikers that are promoting the culture of biking and associations of parents that are volunteering to support kids in going to school by walking. The major investment in this action is inserted also in the larger promotion of bike tourism in the Region thanks to the European and Regional investments and funding that are making San Dona' a crucial hub in major bike tourism routes. In 2018, a concrete sign of the up taking of such a trend, one major hotel located in the city centre re-novated its structures with the aim of becoming a bike hotel for international and national tourists.

Currently, these projects are partially sustained by the Interreg Project Italia-Slovenia Energy-Care (ENERGY efficiency actions and low-Carbon strategy for public buildings and sustainable mobility through local community engagement). The municipality is a partner in the project, led by Ater Trieste, that has a specific line dedicated to the development pedestrian and biking mobility systems. Major European lines of funding will be sought for, in particular Cross-Border Cooperation funding schemes and other dedicated to healthy lifestyles and novel mobility solutions. The ULG will also act as a catalyzer of such projects to address them to Regional and local healthcare actors and authorities, in search for endorsement and networking that might bring to the consolidation of the actions.

## 5. Resources and delivery mechanisms

The actions illustrated earlier represent the pilots of larger initiatives aimed at reviving the city centre. Each of the actions is inserted, or will be inserted, in funding schemes and attempts at attracting resources to allow their scaling up and their continuity.

In particular:

1. As far as the actions aimed at populating the city centre are concerned, the availability of funding and resources given in kind by local associations of businesses and firms will be crucial. Funding schemes at the European level and regional level aimed at urban revitalization will be targeted and the ULG has already identified potential avenues for further development (see specific objective 1). As stated earlier, being able to help these event scale up will be crucial to allow them to become attractive both in terms of insertion in European projects and in terms of private sponsorships;
2. As far as the actions aimed at capitalizing upon the Piave River as an asset is concerned, the ULG has already devised a series of strategies. The Adventure River Fest will be re-proposed thanks to the commitment of sporting equipment firms willing to sponsor the event, the sponsorship of the municipality and the attempt to attract European funds (FESR) related to tourism. On the other hand, the Fiume festival, a cultural/intellectual kermesse, will rely eminently on the coalescing of funds, services and sponsorships coming from local businesses (see specific objective 3). Also in this case, scaling up will enable these initiatives to become attractive for larger audiences, thus making them desirable for sponsors and adequate to European projects;
3. As far as the actions related to novel entrepreneurship to be hosted in the city centre are concerned, the ULG already has tackled specific avenues to attract funds and resources. In particular, the regulations promoted by the municipality that allow owners of building to reconvert their assets by lending them at discounted prices for a certain number of years has been a fundamental driver in the establishment of the first two firms and will certainly be stimulating in the near future. Besides private resources being available, the ULG will continue to coalesce especially representatives of youth organizations and associations and partners such as universities, schools and close startup incubators and accelerators to provide novel businesses with services and support to grow and establish (see specific objective 2);
4. Finally, when green mobility is considered, the municipality will be the main driver in attracting funds that will allow to revisit the infrastructures of the city and its mobility. The participation of associations (formal, such as Fiab and informal, such as the groups of parents promoting the culture of walking) will be key in working on the “soft” assets of such an endeavor (see specific objective 4).

## 6. Adherence with the Municipality's Plans

The above mentioned ideas and activities fits with the strategic action of the municipality of San Donà di Piave. In fact, the ULG activated an intense relation with the municipality's operators (directors) in different fields (urban development & planning, social, youth and sport policies, productive activities, etc...) in order to develop ideas and plans aligned with the local policies.

In particular, 2 important “regulations” approved by San Donà Municipalities are directly connected with the City Center Doctor project and with the ULG’s work:

1. Deliberazione n° 65 del 03/08/2017 OGGETTO: APPROVAZIONE DEGLI INDIRIZZI PER L’ATTIVAZIONE DI POLITICHE URBANE DI RIUSO TEMPORANEO DI SPAZI ED IMMOBILI PUBBLICI E PRIVATI FINALIZZATE AD INNESCARE PROCESSI VIRTUOSI DI SVILUPPO CULTURALE, SOCIALE ED ECONOMICO DELLA CITTA’: the aim of this regulation is “the activation of urban policies for the temporary re-use of spaces and buildings, public and private, in order to generate positive process of development of the city in cultural, social and economic fields” and it quotes the following sentence: *“as demonstrated by the experience of the URBACT European Project, in which San Donà is the lead partner, in absence of a strong commercial and real-estate plan, a lot of spaces and abandoned areas may attract and inspire informal economies and new self-organized services for the city. Often abandoned, waiting for a final destination, they can be used temporary for specific uses, for a time that sometimes is measured in years”*;
2. Deliberazione n. 240 del 22/09/2016 OGGETTO: NUOVI SERVIZI A FAVORE DEL LAVORO E DELL’INCLUSIONE SOCIALE – APPROVAZIONE DI SCHEMA DI CONVENZIONE: the aim of the measure is to disseminate a call for interest to local associations, cooperatives and other stakeholders to define innovative projects to relaunch the local Job Center as to promote services and initiatives that might encourage the creation of novel startups by young talents as a means to revitalize the city centre.

The alignment of the Integrated Action Plan co-created by the Municipality of San Donà di Piave with the ULG in the framework of City Center Doctor project with the other ongoing actions and initiatives, especially with reference to other international projects actually running in the area, is clear:



### **We.Gov.Now Project**

*Towards #WeGovernment: Collective and participative approaches for addressing local policy challenges*

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We.Gov.Now is a Horizon 2020 project establishing citizens as partners in the delivery of public services. A new type of citizen engagement platform, expanding the viability of and capacity for citizen coproduction in the public sector.

WeGovNow and its 12 partner organisations are building upon earlier research and development by further developing existing solutions and integrating them within a single community engagement platform. This platform will allow people to report problems and suggest improvements, to discuss their relevance, explore ways to fix problems through collective action, find solutions to compensate for resource shortages affecting the quality of publicly provided services, debate topics of strategic nature, and develop and vote upon concrete suggestions for local policy action.

<http://www.wegovnow.eu/>

#### **Adherence with City Centre Doctor Project:**

This project is not specifically linked to one of the Specific Objectives of the Integrated Action Plan, but can be considered as a tool to promote the URBACT approach to cities management: a bottom-up and participated approach, where citizens are the key players of the decision making process.

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## D-Basket Project

*Basic Skills, Entrepreneurship,  
Treasures of Diversity*

The project's General objective is to promote and share - through exchange of good and innovative practice and *joint development - interdisciplinary educational methods and paths that foster basic and transversal skills through entrepreneurial attitudes and the appraisal of social, linguistic and cultural diversity*, in order to improve teachers' competences to work with diversified learners and address low achievement and exclusion from an early stage of education. Lead partner: ISTITUTO COMPRENSIVO ROMOLO ONOR (San Donà di Piave). Partners: Zaklada za poticanje partnerstva i razvoja civilnog društva, Elementary school Veli Vrh, City of Pula, Tandem Plus, City SAN DONA DI PIAVE, Associazione 2050, The city of Koper, Elementary school Antona Ukmarja Koper, Kulturno izobraževalno društvo PiNA <http://www.civilnodrustvo-istra.hr/en/projects-detailed/dbasket-basic-skills-entrepreneurship-treasures-of-diversity>

### **Adherence with City Centre Doctor Project:**

This project fits perfectly within the "Specific objective: 2. Recovering empty and/or degraded spaces and places in the city centre", where it states that the plan of San Donà di Piave includes actions aiming at the "Regeneration of public spaces through the re-use of empty spaces to host novel firms in the cultural and food industries initiated by local young professionals and entrepreneurs".

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## ENERGY CARE Project

*Local Community in Public Buildings Energy Efficiency  
Improvement and Sustainable Mobility*

ENERGY CARE project is part of the Interreg V-A Italy-Slovenia 2014-2020. The overall objective of the project is *the reduction of the CO2 emissions, the energy consumption and the energy poverty* within the Programme area, with a focus on the areas of City of Trieste, Koper and San Donà di Piave Municipalities. Three main investments will be implemented during the ENERGY CARE project: the building of a cycle path in San Donà di Piave. The cycle path will connect the city center with the War Memorial Retirement Home, the provincial pole of high school and the secondary school. <http://trieste.aterfvg.it/index.php?id=58957>

### **Adherence with City Centre Doctor Integrated Action Plan:**

It is clearly in line with "Specific objective: 4. A greener city: mobility and cycling", where it states that one of the mission of the San Donà di Piave is to promote the culture of moving by bicycle and by walking. This is also in line with the objectives of other City Center Doctor's cities (Medina del Campo, Radlin, Nort sur Erdre, etc...) and oriented to ensure greener and more sustainable way to reach the city center.

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The commitment of the city of San Dona' di Piave to move towards the above mentioned scenarios, with a multi-funding and integrated approach, resulted in a very important Prize (the SMAU Prize for Innovation:

<https://www.smau.it/padova18/>)

delivered by SMAU servizi: this prize is the demonstration that acting in a strategic way towards specific objectives (= making the City more sustainable, innovative and participative) is a win-win game. Within this prize, City Centre Doctor and WeGovNow played their part in making San Dona' a reference point for innovation in city management.





## 7. Risks and lessons learned

The main risks entailed in the follow-up to the actions hereby recalled and described are related to the lack of funding and emerging difficulties in participating into national, regional and European calls for projects aimed at reviving city centres or at fostering novel entrepreneurship especially in the cultural and creative industries.

Clearly, such a risk is difficult to be assessed. The city, and especially the administration, has a good track record in terms of attraction of European funds and key stakeholders represented in the ULG do possess adequate experiences and network capabilities to draft convincing plans and to create European coalitions of partners.

Nonetheless, as emphasized in the tables describing the specific objectives, the ULG has opted for a two-level strategy: on the one hand target European funding schemes and build European partnerships to chase them; on the other hand it has devised strategies to mobilize local–municipal, regional and national–sources of funding, from foundations to private sponsors.

One of the key elements in such a strategy is the pivotal role of the administration. The ULG counts in the capabilities of the administration to orchestrate and facilitate the coalescing of resources and interests. The imminent elections might be another source of risk from this point of view.

As far as the monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan is concerned, the ULG has defined the key performance indicators for each action (see the previous tables) and is in the process of defining a governance structure aimed at allocating the responsibilities of each line of action on different actors and constituencies in the city.