



CULTURE

for Cities and Regions

Coaching visit report and roadmap

Coaching visit
Friuli Venezia Giulia
16-18 February 2017



Document prepared by the coaching team after the coaching visit and completed by the host city

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Introduction

Based on the documents and information provided by Friuli Venezia Giulia in their needs assessment, and following a webinar hosted by EUROCITIES on 24 February 2017, the coaching team drafted a short paper outlining their interpretation of the key needs and priorities for coaching. This reflective analysis outlined key hypotheses prior to the on-site coaching to focus the session around clear objectives. This paper was shared with the coached region and opened for comments/amendments, so that objectives were clear and shared by facilitators, peers and the coached city.

This exchange process served the purpose of establishing a more accurate understanding of the coaching needs of FVG, and helped refine the agenda of the coaching visit.

This report is now prepared as a follow-up to the coaching visit hosted by Friuli Venezia Giulia. The report includes recommendations from the coaching team to the region of FVG. This paper will be shared with the host for comments.

This report also includes the next steps and key actions FVG wishes to undergo to make the coaching team's recommendations more concrete.

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Executive summary

The coaching needs

The overall aim of the coaching visit is to help local culture resources (notably an archaeological site in Aquileia) to become a driver of economic and social development in the region (rural area) by formulating concrete strategic actions.

The visit aims to advise public authorities and provide concrete ideas on:

- The regional governance framework notably the interaction between the Fondazione Aquileia (FA), ERPaC (the newly created regional structure to protect and enhance the regional cultural heritage), the Italian Ministry of Culture and local stakeholders (communities, businesses, public authorities)
- Good practices in managing heritage sites with the objective of making the territory more attractive and to enable economic sustainability.
- Integrating heritage site management in an overall cultural policy strategy that supports other forms of cultural expressions (cross sectoral perspective)

The objectives of the coaching visit were identified as follows:

1. to understand:

- The economic and social potential of the local cultural resources;
- The local economic, social and cultural context and identify the specificities of the territory (with neighbouring territories);
- The political vision;
- The existing organisation and management structure;
- The content of the recent legislative reform and its aim;
- The financial resources and existing strategic plan devoted to implement the new framework;
- The competences of relevant management bodies and the political context;
- The position of the respective stakeholders (public, private, associations) with a cross sectoral and holistic perspective (tourism, business, culture, education).

2. to formulate policy ideas notably on:

- methodologies to build a strategy inclusive of local stakeholders to encourage participation and endorsement/implementation of the strategy;
- possible policy actions based on the result of the fact-finding mission and by analogy with good practice scenario in the management of heritage sites or more generally cultural resources.

Initial key hypothesis


- The region wishes to make its cultural assets a key driver of its development policy.
- There is political support for such objective.
- Cities, the region, management organization and national government work hand in hand and in coordination on the development of such policy.
- Local stakeholders (artists, cultural operators, creative community, businesses, citizens) are ready to contribute.

Programme of the visit

Culture for cities and regions – coaching visit Friuli Venezia Giulia Region

	February 15 th , 2017 – Trieste, Regional Department for culture, sports and solidarity (Via Milano 19, fifth floor)		February 16 th , 2017: Aquileia – Town Hall (Council meeting room, piazza Garibaldi 7) Field visit		February 17 th , 2017: Trieste, Regional Department for culture, sports and solidarity (Via Milano 19, fifth floor)
AM	Arrival of coaching team	8:15	Pick-up in Piazza G. Oberdan (Trieste) – transfer to Aquileia	9:00 – 10:30	Review findings from visit so far Prepare rough first draft of recommendations
		9:45 – 12:00	Aquileia – ancient heritage, new challenges: coaches and hosts explore local challenges and needs, and possible solutions	10:30 – 11:30	Present / discuss draft recommendations with key local officers
		12:00 – 13:00	Site visit to the archaeological area and the museum	11:30 – 12:45	Revise and finalise recommendations
13:00 – 14:30	LUNCH with team members present	13:00 – 14:30	LUNCH (all)	13:00 – 14:30	LUNCH with team members present
14:30 – 15:15	Final update meeting (<i>coaching team and Regional Dep. for culture</i>)	14:30 – 17:00	ERPac – a single tool for an integrated vision of development: coaches and hosts explore local challenges and needs, and possible solutions (continued)	PM	Departure of coaching team
15:15 – 15:45	Briefing by the Regional Dep. for culture: 'Our local situation and objectives'				
15:45 – 17:00	Summary of needs analysis with key local officers: key challenges to be addressed				
17:00 – 17:30	Presentation of programme and interviews				

Initiatives presented

<p>Title</p>	<p>The Aquileia Archaeological Site and Fondazione Aquileia</p>
<p>Description, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context - Objectives - Implementation - Key actors involved - Budget 	<p>Presentation of the Fondazione Aquileia, set up in 2008 to manage and maintain the archaeological site of Aquileia and to promote and finance research and excavation activities.</p> <p>Meeting in the form of a workshop with the Director of the Fondazione, the Mayor of the Aquileia municipality and discussion with local archaeologists, representative of the Ministry of Culture, the director of culture for the Region. The aim was to gather views on the management of the site, the opportunities and problems. A visit of the site took place.</p> <p>Aquileia was one of the biggest cities of the Roman Empire founded by the Romans in 181 B.C. The archaeological site contains the luxurious monuments of the imperial city, the wonderful floor mosaics of the Basilica, of the basement Oratory, of the very rich Domus, the small everyday objects. Since 1998 it is a UNESCO site.</p>  <p>The members of the Fondazione are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ministry of Culture and Tourism (no contribution to the budget of the Fondazione but owner of the archaeological areas given for free to FA, with the condition that FA manages and promotes them from 2008 to 2018 + ev. renewal); o Region Friuli Venezia Giulia (2 Mio. € p.a.; main funding institution);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Provence of Udine (100.000 € p.a.); o Archdiocese of Gorizia (100.000 € p.a.); o Municipality of Aquileia (no contribution to the budget, but providing for free the headquarter of the Fondazione); <p>The Fondazione is funded by the Region at the level of 2 million Euro / year. The financial resources are mainly spent - besides for personnel -for the enhancement and valorising of the existing excavated parts of the archaeological site. For further excavation activities, there is just a low budget. Besides, some excavations are conducted by the Ministry/Superintendence and several Universities with their own funds. So far, Fondazione Aquileia experienced quite some issues in its decision-making process, mainly linked to management and advisory bodies having no adequate awareness of what the strengths and weaknesses of the territory are, despite being expression of the local community.</p>
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Title	ERPAC Activities
Description, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context - Objectives - Implementation - Key actors involved - Budget 	<p>Presentation by one of the manager of ERPAC, a newly formed organisation to manage cultural projects at regional level. A series of initiatives funded and managed by ERPAC were presented in the field of fashion (museum), artists' residency, etc.</p>

All presentations are available [here](#).

Recommendations made by the coaching team

Considering the above the coaching team (CT) would like to make the following recommendations:

The archaeological park of Aquileia represents an extraordinary opportunity for economic and social development considering the historical value, the state of preservation, the size and uniqueness of the heritage site.

The site has an enormous touristic potential clearly underexploited considering the geographical position (near Grado, Trieste and Venice major touristic destination) close to the Adriatic coast (1 million tourists during peak season). It will be quality tourism aimed at visitors' interests in history and art. It is felt that the site's remoteness makes it unlikely to be victim of mass tourism. Today it is suffering from lack of awareness on its existence (despite being a UNESCO world heritage site and having been awarded by the EU prize for Cultural Heritage - Europa Nostra Award in 2015).

The development and implementation of the Region Smart Specialisation strategy is a unique opportunity to integrate the cultural heritage site in an overall economic and social development policies associating incubation programmes aimed at culture and creative industries. The region is willing and has the authority to carry out the strategy provided this ambition is shared by the Italian Ministry of Culture as well as the local municipality. This ambition has to be spell out in a policy document that should be developed in coordination with all stakeholders to ensure a sharing of objectives and collaboration to implement the set objectives overtime.

As the discussion focused on the mission of the Fondazione recommendations relate exclusively to the management of the archaeological park.

Experts felt that the Fondazione (established in 2008) in charge of the development of heritage site has problems carrying out its mission for the following reasons:

Lack of coordination and joint strategy

- The members of the Fondazione (ministry, region, municipality, church) do not seem to share the same objectives and are often contributing as to protect their respective competences rather than in the interests of the development of the site.
- Relevant parts of the archaeological site are managed by 4 different bodies. This complicates the coordination of activities/development of the site:
 - o Most archaeological areas and buildings: managed by Fondazione

- Some archaeological areas and buildings (not/partially open to public): managed by local Superintendence (Ministry of Culture), - casa Bertoli with a local cultural Association
 - Museums ((National Archaeological + Early Christian Museum): managed by a different institution of the national Ministry of culture and tourism, responsible for four museums in the region.
 - Basilica: managed by Archdiocese of Gorizia
 - Urban development: managed by the municipality
- Efficient coordination and joint decision-making structure about activities of relevance for the archaeological site is not in place. At the moment, relevant activities for the archaeological site are not automatically presented and coordinated in the board/Fondazione. Decisions about such activities are often only taken in the responsible institution alone without discussing/coordinating it within the other member institutions; but in recent times it is improving.
 - No joint/coordinated plan/strategy for the development of the site, which is linked with the development of the municipality.
 - Tourism experience needs to be improved; it is not clarified who is/should be responsible for that or which tasks.
 - The board consists mainly of politicians, which have not the sufficient professional understanding to discuss/coordinate the further development of the archaeological site.
 - President and director are appointed by the same political entity (the Region).

Lack of cooperation with the citizens

- Partly opposition of the local population against the further development of the archaeological site due to past errors from public authorities: expropriation of land and buildings dating back from the '60s (with financial compensation), which had been important for the archaeological site (partly buildings were demolished). Before, these pieces of land were used for agricultural purposes.
- Poor involvement and interest of the community in developing the archaeological park (cultural heritage perceived as a constraint rather than an opportunity by the local population).

Therefore, policy efforts should be undertaken as a priority to build trust at two levels:

- the local community / citizens / local businesses (1);
- the public institutions (municipal, region, ministry) that are represented in the board of the institutions to achieve a more efficient collaboration (2).

1. Proposed policy actions aimed at building trust with the local community.

Such policy actions are key for citizens to understand the potential of the site. It seems that citizens are insufficiently informed on the potential economic benefit through the further development of the archaeological site. Information sessions and workshops should be organized to present and work out the economic opportunities for the citizens. In addition, positive impact of cultural heritage investment in other places in Europe should be presented. Cultural investment is often perceived as a waste of resources by citizens (culture still perceived as elitist and non-essential). Evidences show the contrary.

The following **policy actions** are suggested:

- coordinate joint activities with the population from which they benefit; which connect their daily life with the archaeological site and make them proud of the heritage (organize competition, set up friends' group, give grants to interesting initiatives, develop a leaflet in a collaborative spirit);
- Develop objectives and actions with the citizens (i.e. through future workshop) related to the development of the archaeological site, which are benefitting them, so that areas of the archaeological site are also of direct use for the citizens i.e. picnic site, romantic place during sunset;
- reflect on a better representation of the community in the structure of the Fondazione;
- Make the tasks/responsibility of the Fondazione clear to the citizens, and also for which they are not responsible; explain who is responsible for the other issues;
- Appoint a mediator or person of contact within the Fondazione, reporting to the Director in charge of liaison with the citizen;
- Coach the Fondazione in managing co-creation workshops (inspired by techniques of citizen's engagement in living labs);
- Identify target groups within the citizens you want to reach and work with. Identify ambassadors / multipliers that work / are accepted as contact person by these target groups (i.e. for children, youth, seniors, religious group, etc.). Through them make the contact/ activate the target groups;
- Find a person in town who dominates social media and develop a "social media campaign" about the archaeological site to reach the citizens;
- Develop projects with kindergarten and schools.

The effect of such action is to increase the self-esteem of a population for the latter to see the interest and benefits of being associated in the development of the park. Citizens may feel that they have been dispossessed from their territory. They need to perceive that this is not the case and that they are the key actors of future development. Weakening scepticism will take time but the Fondazione needs to be identified as an ally rather than an enemy. The Fondazione should no longer be perceived as a nest of conservationists and archaeologists but as an economic development agency working to support local stakeholders.

2. Proposed policy actions to make the Fondazione structure more effective

Experts felt that the forthcoming negotiation between the region and the Ministry of culture should be the opportunity to address the role of the Museums, the affectation of empty properties bought by the State, as well as the respective responsibility of Rome and the superintendent in supporting the Fondazione.

The drafting of the archaeological site development plan is the opportunity to put all strategic elements on the table. This development plan should be coordinated with the development plan of the municipality. Linkages (and conflicts) between the development of the archaeological site and the development of the municipality should be elaborated and coordinated. It should be elaborated how the development of the archaeological site can be of benefit for the municipality and vice-versa. A joint vision, objectives and actions should be developed. In the long-run the archaeological site and the municipal areas should be perceived as ONE.

- More efficient structural organization of the Fondazione to be able to manage effectively the site with limited bureaucratic interferences, in particular to coordinate the activities of the member institutions of the Fondazione. Put an end to a silo approach and establish a true partnership.
- The needs of the member institutions have to be made clear / understandable to each other. Build up trust between the member institutions.
- As the board is rather responsible for the political running of the Fondazione, the Scientific Committee could be extended to be the "coordination and exchange body" on the operational level. Here ideas and activities of the member institutions, which might be of relevance for the archaeological site, are presented and coordinated. Because of that, the committee needs to a certain extend decision-making power or the right to make recommendations to the board and the member institutions. Thus, the tasks and responsibilities of the Committee have to be clarified and officially agreed by the member institutions.
- Members of the committee should be persons that have the professional knowledge to prepare and coordinate activities for the further development of the archaeological site and the development of Aquileia. The committee should be chaired / moderated by a neutral person, which is not part of one of the member institutions, who also allows to think out of the box.
- Personnel management (skills should take precedence over political posturing).
 - o Recruitment of expertise in "destination management", business development and communication (notably social media).
 - o Recruitment of an executive director by the region independent of political interference but based on professional expertise (Call for Tender)
 - o the ability of the executive director to recruit his own staff (today staff are civil servants detached by the region)
- coordination with the tourism office activities and existing Museums or the Basilica that are out of control of the Fondazione but managed respectively by the Ministry of Culture and the Church.

- Link activities of the start-ups in the region with the further development of the archaeological site i.e. by organising a hackathon (as example check hackferrara.wordpress.com/; hackathon in Ferrara).
- Revenue generation beyond public support - establishment of a business plan.
- Infrastructure investment (mainly to sign post and welcome visitors - information centre, facilities, guiding, parking ...)
- Excavation investment plan to increase value of the site over time (to ensure constant flow of visitors and realise the full potential of the city).
- Development of professional attractions capable of raising the profile of the site in the media (activities such as the historical reconstitution or the archaeological film festival) but also to involve local interests in the development of the project.
- Communication and social media strategy.
- Development of indicators to measure impact of policy measures and to evaluate impact of investment decisions on employment, business growth, social cohesion as well as territorial attractiveness.
- Implement regular satisfaction survey with the local community as well as visitors.
- Consider synergies with ERPACT - the newly established organization in charge of managing cultural initiative in the region (notably its artist in residence programme).

List of accompanying documents:

- Destination management plan info:
https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/Documents-Library/documents/England-documents/dm_plans_guiding_principles.pdf
- HerO: Heritage as opportunity. Guidebook on how to produce Integrated Cultural Heritage Management Plans for the development of heritage sites
www.urbact.eu/file/10654/download?token=jUu7u8hU
- Heritage and Community Involvement: Conference report and documentation of the “Scientific day”
- Cultural heritage and identity (article)
- Involving stakeholders (article)

Next steps and actions *identified by the host city*

The potential of the “UNESCO” label should be further stressed in order to enhance the attractiveness of Aquileia

ORGANISATIONAL POINT OF VIEW

- As far as the Museum(s) and other national, underutilised assets are concerned, the institutional tasks of the Ministry prevent these from being included in the mission of FA, as well as the related logistical consequences
- It would be useful to plan team-building activities involving the staff of the Regional Tourism Board and the Regional Department for Culture
- It is necessary to define FA activities on the basis of a long-term planning, therefore assessing long-term results and impacts both from an economic and social point of view

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIP

- The report underlines how the members of FA board encounter difficulties in separating their institutional (i.e. derived from the institution they represent) goals from the objectives related to the valorisation of the archaeological areas; with specific regard to the Ministry of culture, the roles of authorities at central and Superintendence/local level should be clarified so that their relationship with FA is more consistently reflected in the representation within FA board
- FA intends to strengthen its relationship with the Regional Tourism Board - PromoTurismoFVG

FUNCTIONING POINT OF VIEW

- The coordination among FA partners needs to be improved as well as coordination among initiatives carried out by each of them, which would be ideally integrated within a joint development strategy
- The stressed need for management to be more independent from the political level, if possible resulting in the Director autonomously selecting its own staff, is not in line with how recruitment procedures work in the public sector
- The reasoning on an independent role to be recognised to the Scientific Committee, with broader decision-making powers, deserves to be further developed; the opinion that the body needs an official recognition and more horizontal tasks can be shared

INTERACTION WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY

- More initiatives with and for the local community will be carried out, including schools and youth associations; new channels to better communicate FA activities to the citizens need to be identified and eventually tested

- Suggestions made by the coaching team would need to be tested in order to assess the actual involvement of the local community: single players may also implement such actions in a coordinated way
- Bottom-up actions coming from the citizens will be encouraged; specific guidelines on how to evaluate and, if this will be the case, finance them according to their degree of consistency with FA's mission may also be adopted
- FA and its activities may also open to a wider territory (adjoining municipalities) as well as to the scientific community and cultural organisations, even if not local

PTFVG is going to:

- Organise training courses for museums and other cultural and historic institutions focused on training program for front-office staff (Visitor Services) to satisfy visitors' expectations and to create a good customer service experience. The course, organized by the Regional Tourism Board, is starting in April 2017 and involves Aquileia cultural institutions as well
- Conduct a customer service satisfaction survey: PROMOTURISMOFVG - tourist office of Aquileia is involved in a quality process to evaluate both services and products (quality evaluation of the organized guided tours, audio guides walking tours, services of the tourist card - FVGCard)