URBAN
AGENDA
FOR THE EU

WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER CITIES

CULTURE / CULTURAL HERITAGE

FEEL FLORENCE

Urban Agenda for the EU

Data collection and smart use applied to the management of tourist flows

Action 7

November 2021
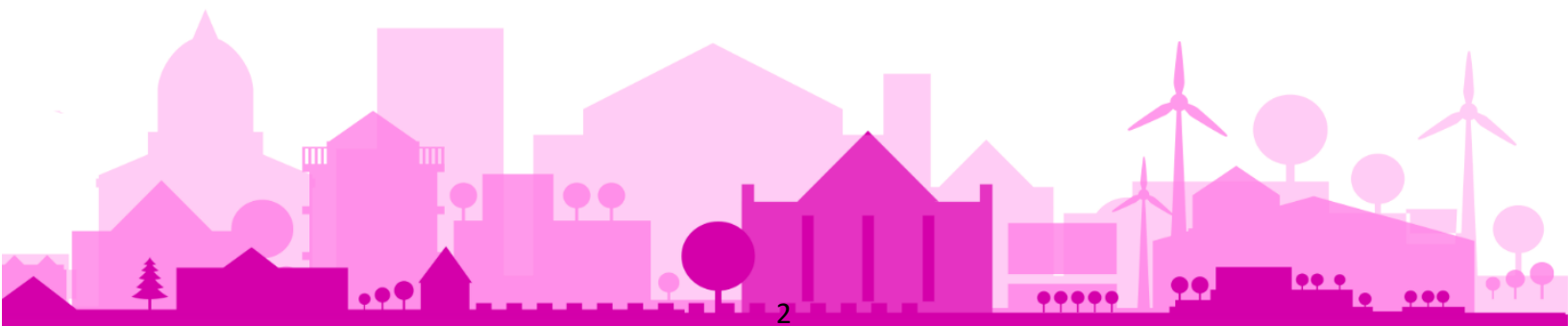
Action 7

Data collection and smart use applied to the management of tourist flows

1) Who we Are

Action Leader:

City of Florence

Action Group Members

Joint Research Center, MiBACT, Coimbra Region, City of Murcia

Other bodies involved

University of Florence, Centre for Tourism Studies of Florence

2) Background context

In recent decades, the main objectives of tourism promotion were to maximize the number of visitors and increase the tourism industry. However, limited attention was placed on the capacity to receive and manage incremental inflows since the beginning. The lack of strategic planning of tourism destinations and the huge increasing number of international travelers with positive trend years after years have quickly contributed to step up **overcrowding** and brought a strong impact on local populations. The key issue is to promote sustainable tourism, that brings benefits to communities and cities, while preserving the cultural heritage and environment. That can be achieved working on **strategies and tools based on data driven solution** aiming at balancing touristic flows between major tourist hubs and less visited sites.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically impacted on the tourist flows in cities and as a consequence on tourist industry, and the cultural sector in general (e.g. in the city of Florence: Arrivals -78,9% and Presence -80,4%; industrial production - 19%; lost jobs 37.706. Most effected sector: tourism - 40%,)

These unique circumstances brought to rethink the way we live, enjoy, and shape our cities and offered the opportunity to re-focus our approach. One of the main priorities is now to revamp this tourist sector turning valuable sites into **Smart Destinations** by promoting a sustainable and "safe" tourism. In this context, the tourist flows management to balance overcrowded destinations/less visited sites is more than ever needed, not only as a tool to ensure sustainability, lower impact on residents' lives and to tailor the visitors' experience, but also to contribute to guarantee health and security.

3) *Objectives*

BETTER KNOWLEDGE

Data collection and analysis are key factors for implementing monitoring systems of tourist flows and increase the knowledge base is the preliminary condition for Smart Destinations planning. This Action reflected on existing indicator sets for measuring the tourism sustainability (e.g. ETIS toolkit) and their integration with qualitative performance data to set a KPIs' framework for sustainable incoming tourism.

NEW IT TOOLS BASED ON DATA ANALYSIS

On the ground, ICT tools are essential to promote the Smart Destinations tourism offer and to increase the ability to orient/manage visitor's flows using data to reach different targets, personalize the user-experience and ensure a safe and liveable staying thanks to a real-time detection of a crowed areas. The pilot experience of **FeelFlorence** can be considered as a best practice and inspire other cities/sites facing the same challenge.

FeelFlorence is a new tool initially conceived to orient visitors flows from crowded destinations to less visited ones through a **push notification system on real time data** and suggesting unusual itineraries to bring people closer to local experiences.

Welcome | Feel Florence
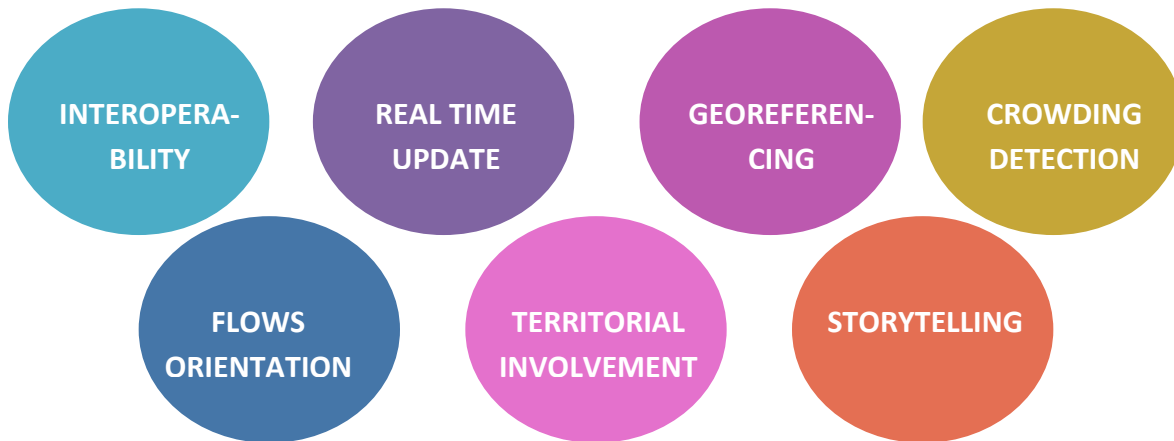

DOWNLOAD THE FEELFLORENCE APP

TO ORGANIZE YOUR TRIP

4) Results and main outcomes

SELF-EVALUATION TOOLKIT

With the purpose to fill the knowledge base gap, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre contributed with a study supporting local authorities in designing policy for sustainable tourism in European cities and regions. Starting from the issues European cities are facing also in relation to Covid-19 emergency impact a self-evaluation toolkit was proposed to be used by local authorities to identify fields in which they can intervene to support sustainability in the tourism sector.
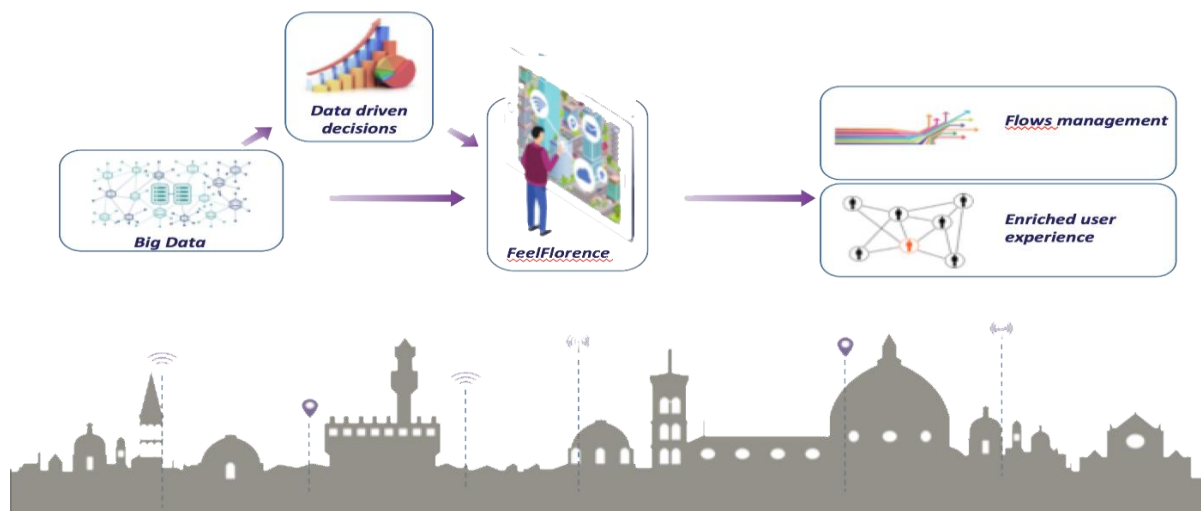
FEELFLORENCE PILOT

FeelFlorence allows tourists and residents to better enjoy the city, being aware on what is moving and going on around the city in a more sustainable way thank to a better management of tourist/city users flows. It suggests unusual itineraries in the city, in the neighbourhoods and in the metropolitan area, to bring tourists closer to local experiences and to get to know the city and its typical features better, promoting a form of sustainable tourism and offering also a tool to stay updated on events and initiatives.

INTEROPERABILITY
REAL TIME UPDATE
GEOREFERENCING
CROWDING DETECTION
FLOWS ORIENTATION
TERRITORIAL INVOLVEMENT
STORYTELLING

Furthermore, FeelFlorence is a mobile app and a website connected to a Content Management System and a BigData platform, the smart city control room, monitoring the real-time detection of the presences in certain areas of the city. This tool provides real time alert notofications on the most congested areas allowing the tourists to avoid overcrowed destinations and better organize their stay and their visit schedule.

FeelFlorence is also an example of territorial cooperation since it involves different actors who share data and collectively implement contents and information. For this purpose, a Metropolitan Area Agreement was signed among the main public/private stakeholders (included international accommodation big players), a shared editing system was established for the update of data and information and high professional training was provided for tourist operators.

TUSCANY REGION
CITY OF FLORENCE
41 MUNICIPALITIES OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA
TOURIST DESTINATION STAKEHOLDERS
TOURIST INFORMATION AND PROMOTION OPERATORS

5) *Observations/Remarks/Recommendations*

For handling tourist flows, preventing the risk of overcrowding (with respect to the specific carrying capacity of each local context) and guarantee a safe and healthy staying it is essential to accurately **detect the real number of tourists**.

To ensure tourism sustainability (whatever the scale – urban, metropolitan, regional, national, EU) we need a shared calculation system and a common semantic definition at European level capable to really represent the tourism pressure **integrating the official statistic with other sources, included real time data and big data for a predictive action and management.**

With existing technologies, real-time data collection is possible and simple. The difficulty lies in the need of interoperability among the existing database and the access by public authorities to data collected also by private companies which is very often limited/denied with the justification of GDPR or privacy rules.

Taking the opportunity of the Digital Service Act Commission's proposal and the B2G data sharing workshops, we intend to recommend the EU to **facilitate the access for public authorities to data** (also private ownership) for public interest (in anonymous and aggregate form) to allow better planning as well as predictive analysis in order to manage the phenomena more efficiently and to call for interoperability to guarantee the correct data exchanges.

The added value goes beyond the scope of this Action, as **the approach can be applied to all sectors/levels**. Specifically, the issue of access to data by public administrations for public interest is useful at all scales of government in all areas. In addition, a common European framework will **allow comparison and benchmarking at European level**, making more effective the replication of successful experience in different contexts, thus expanding the impact potential of local pilots and European policies.
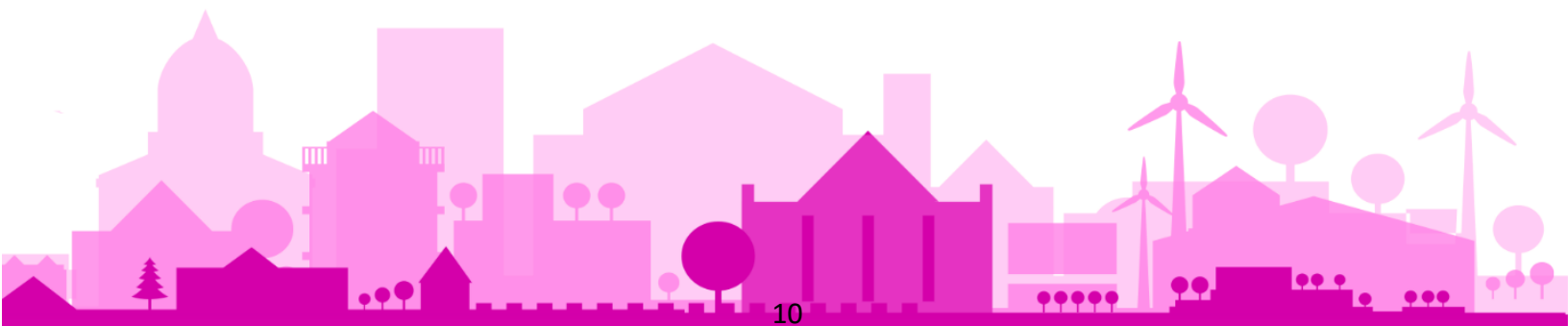
A QR-code will link to your outputs (e.g. handbook, toolkit, app, report) if applicable. Please name them and send them to the Coordinators.

Please include visuals, e.g. photos, drawings, diagrams and other communicative elements (for each page) to illustrate the content, process and outputs of your Action, as well as two images representative of the whole Action for the front and the back cover pages. Please ensure you have the copyright for the visuals, and please state the copyright information for each image. Please also ensure that the resolution of the visuals is sufficient.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all people involved…

Co-ordination

Germany

Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community

Italy

National Governmental Agency for the Territorial Cohesion

Ministry for Culture (MIC)

WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER CITIES

07
RT USE ON TOURISM MANAGEMENT

CULTURE / CULTURAL HERITAGE

Official members

- **Cyprus - Ministry of Interior**
- **France - Ministry of Culture**
- **Spain - Ministry of Development and Public Works**
- **Greece – Ministry of Culture & Sports**
- **Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region (SI)**
- **Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region (PT)**
- **Kazanlak Municipality (BG)**
- **Flanders Heritage, Flemish Region (BE)**
- **Dutch Federation of Cultural Heritage Cities (NL)**
- **Katowice City Hall (PL)**
- **Alba Iulia Municipality (RO)**
- **Municipality of Nagykanizsa (HU)**
- **Marshal's Office of the Silesian Voivodeship (PL)**
- **City of Berlin (DE)**
- **Canary Island, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (ES)**
- **Bordeaux Metropole (FR)**
- **City of Espoo (FI)**
- **Jurmala City Council (LV)**
- **Úbeda City Council (ES)**
- **City of Florence (IT)**
- **European Commission (DGs REGIO, EAC, RTD, DEVCO, AGRI, CLIMA, JRC, SG, EASME)**
- **European Committee of the Regions**
- **European Investment Bank**
- **ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability**
- **Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage**
- **Eurocities**
- **URBACT**