

Cross-fertilisation guidelines

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Abstract

The HISTORIC project was characterised by an important assumption: the North Adriatic's archaeological heritage can become a powerful lever for developing sustainable ways of enjoying tourism.

This means, in the first place, extending the tourist season, decompressing the summer peak. Furthermore, from a geographical point of view, it means alleviating the tourist pressure that is concentrated on the coast, involving the hinterland in tourism development paths.

Culture is certainly an important vector in creating interest in visitors. However, the archaeological heritage, although extremely rich in charm and historical importance, is often not very accessible to a large segment of the population.

Several barriers act in limiting access to archaeological sites: some barriers are physical and mainly affect those with physical or cognitive limitations and impediments. Others are cultural and concern the channels and ways in which cultural heritage is promoted and presented to the general public.

The Interreg Italy Croatia HISTORIC project has made it possible to develop several practical solutions to test different approaches aimed at making archaeological sites, which are located near seaside tourist areas and large tourist centres, more accessible and attractive.

Five pilot sites were selected for this purpose, three of them in Italy and two in Croatia.

The sites in Italy concern pre-existing Archaeological, National and Civic Museums at which improvement and extension works were carried out. In particular, they are the **National Museum and Archaeological Area of Altino**, managed by the Italian Ministry of Culture, and the **Provincial Museum of Torcello**, owned by the Metropolitan City of Venice. Both are located in the Province of Venice, respectively 16 and 10 km from the Rialto Bridge in the San Polo district of Venice, one of the most famous tourist resorts in the world.

The third Italian pilot site is instead in the Municipality of Rovigo, about 75 km south-west of Venice and 40 km away from the Adriatic coast. Specifically, the project intervention focused on the **Civic Museum of Great Rivers**, an archaeological museum tracing 3500 years of the history of the Middle and Upper Polesine territory owned by the municipality.

The two interventions in Croatia were of a different nature. There, two Small-Scale Infrastructures were realised to build Archaeological Parks from scratch.

The first intervention was named **History Park Banjole** in Medulin near Pula, Istria. The second is called **Archaeological Park Colentum** in Murter, Dalmatia, in the region of Šibenik and Knin. The archaeological area is owned by the Municipality of Murter-Kornati.

At the end of the project (between 6 and 8 October 2023), the partners promoting the pilot interventions met remotely and in person in Medulin with the aim of mutually illustrating the interventions carried out and comparing the results obtained and the critical issues faced.

This document is the fruit of that round table discussion. Therefore, the pilot interventions carried out will be briefly illustrated and the salient elements of the experience will be enunciated in points, with suggestions for the replication of these experiences in conclusion.



Localisation of pilot interventions.

National Museum and Archaeological Area of Altino



Partner: PP2 ESU Venice

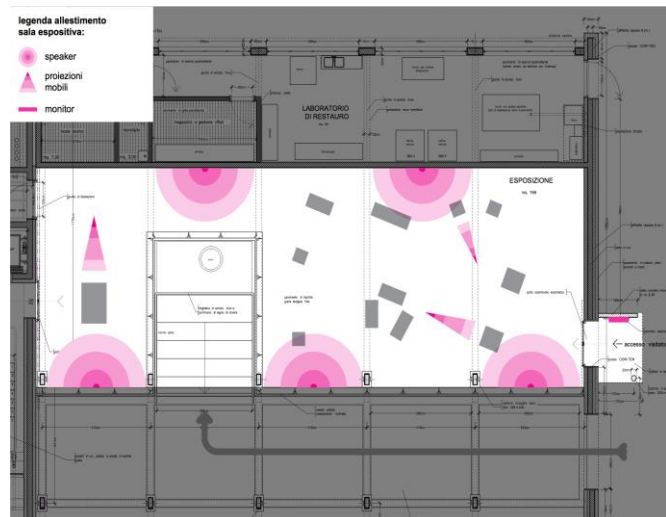
Venue: Altino, Venice - Italy
Owner: Italian Ministry of Culture

Intervention: Permanent Exhibition
Aim: To improve the sensorial experience within museum.

Video: <https://bit.ly/3LXjQL8>

The new museum, recently inaugurated in a typical renovated rural complex, is located in the vast archaeological area where the pre-Roman settlement and then the Roman city of Altinum first developed, on the edge of the northern lagoon of Venice.

In April 2020, thanks to the HISTORIC project, the exhibition "Altinati Antenati" was created, which exhibits a selection of Altinate funerary sculpture from the Roman age, already part of the Guarienti private collection.



The visitor has the impression of walking along one of the ancient streets leaving Altino, flanked by funerary monuments. It is the "Altinati ancestors", depicted in these monuments, who narrate their own story, involving the visitor in first person, through a multimedia installation.

A second design intervention, which took place at the end of 2021, and called Stratigrafie Sonore, further embellished the permanent exhibition. The funerary sculptures that tell their own story in the rooms of the Museum are offered in a new guise, through the artistic reading of the video installations and sound stratigraphies, which will accompany the visit itinerary.



The artists of the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, Samir Sayed Abdellattef and Giacomo Vidoni, with the teachers Stefano Marotta and Roberto Russo, have interpreted with originality and elegance the sense of the ancient that the sculptures communicate.

The installation contributes to experimenting with a different approach to the sculptures on display, with the involvement of a sense, hearing, which is not normally involved in archeology exhibition situations.



At the exhibition Antenati altinati in Altino a type of direct communication was chosen, different from the more traditional one at work in the Museum, leaving the word to the sculptures; after having organized the itinerary with the explicit intention of evoking the arrangement of funerary monuments along one of the Roman roads leaving the ancient city of Altino, now the contemplative silence of museum use is challenged, adding sounds in a place where one usually has to be silent . The sound, however, is not annoying noise, but - precisely - a sound stratification, which accompanies those who let themselves be guided by the imagination towards a deeper identification with the spaces, visual languages and sound evocations of the past.

Key features of the tested innovations:

- Involvement of the Academy of Fine Arts with collaboration of professors and students;
- Use of audio and video equipment for an immersive, multi-sensory experience;
- Direct and discursive language that creates a dialogue between visitor and cultural asset in a conversation between past and present;
- Use of music to accompany the visit and ensure a more engaging emotional experience.

Provincial Museum of Torcello



Partner:	PP2 ESU Venice
Venue:	Torcello, Venice - Italy
Owner:	Metropolitan City of Venice
Intervention:	Realisation of cultural events; Installation of panels for the external and internal visual identity.
Aim:	Improve accessibility and make it easier and more interesting to visit.
Video:	https://bit.ly/3Zla20b

The Torcello Provincial Museum is an archaeological and medieval-modern art museum located on the island of Torcello in the northern lagoon of Venice.

Inside the museum, owned by the Metropolitan City of Venice, is a collection of archaeological finds and works of art documenting the great history of the island and the Venetian lagoon, including the origins of the city of Venice itself.



The museum is located in a historical and artistic context of considerable prestige, on an island that is a treasure chest of art when one considers that the few meters that make up Torcello's square are overlooked by no less than four historical and religious buildings of high cultural value such as the Basilica of Santa Maria Assunta with its bell tower, the church of Santa Fosca, and the two Palazzi del Consiglio and the Archives, in which the provincial museum is housed.



During the difficult months of the pandemic, the Island of Torcello, immersed in the quiet of the lagoon became a symbol, restored meaning and value to the fate of places, which in history alternate between human presence and uninhabited solitude. Inhabited even before Venice, crossed by many voices with its own emporium, Torcello is today immersed in silence, inhabited by memory.

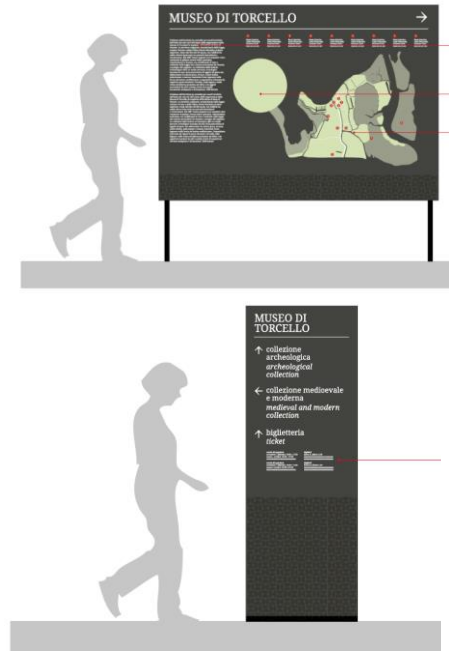
The pilot intervention carried out as part of the Historic project took the form of a cultural and artistic journey aimed at animating and transforming the place through unprecedented and cross-media artistic works.



The initiative was named *Silenzio Lagunare* (Lagoon Silence) and was led by ESU Venice, a partner in the Historic project, in agreement with the Academy of Fine Arts and the Metropolitan City of Venice, which owns the Museum.

Throughout 2021 and until mid-2022, poets Antonio Riccardi, Gian Mario Villalta, Davide Rondoni, Paolo Ruffilli, Giovanna Rosadini, and literary critic Roberto Galaverni, have animated cultural events and on the sidelines of the meetings have donated valuable unpublished work inspired by this place. In this way, the Historic project bequeaths to the Torcello Museum a precious testimony of the encounter between art and poetry.

Today the texts come to life in the precious form of a dialogue between voices and silences, words and images, accompanied by the engravings of artists Giovanni Turria, Andrea Serafini, Elena Molena, and Paolo Fraternali become an exclusive art edition printed in the workshops of the Venice Academy of Fine Arts and accompanied by original artwork.



In addition, to improve the visual identity, both external and internal of the Museum, five large sign panels were conceived and designed: four of informative type, arranged along the route from the boat landing on the island, to the arrival in the museum site; the other, of directional type, in the center of the site, aimed at offering spatial indications and guiding visitors to discover the area.



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Civic Museum of Great Rivers



Partner: PP1 Municipality of Rovigo

Venue: Rovigo, Rovigo - Italy
Owner: Municipality of Rovigo

Intervention: Realisation of a brand new Hall dedicated to the Amber
Aim: Surprise, entertain, stimulate the visitor

Video: <https://bit.ly/3JOA1rq>

The Great Rivers Museum, set up in the rooms of the former Olivetan Monastery in Rovigo, is an archaeological museum dedicated to past civilizations that developed along the banks of major European rivers. It is distinguished by the choice of scenographic installations, three-dimensional reconstructions and reproductions of ancient materials that accompany the materials displayed in the showcases to offer a broader view of history, linked to the particular environmental conditions of the land between the last stretches of the Adige and Po rivers, in relation to the great European civilizations.



Thanks to the HISTORIC project, a new exhibition section has been created in the Museum of the Great Rivers that recounts the exceptional discovery of Campestrin (Grignano Polesine), the oldest amber processing site from the Baltic. The amber on display at the museum is the result of major archaeological excavations at various locations in the province: Fratta Polesine, Villamarzana, and Grignano Polesine. Frattesina, in the Bronze Age, was a well-known center of craft production. The late Bronze Age settlement brought to light an incredible quantity and variety of objects from the province's most distant past.



The tour of the new section begins with an immersive, multimedia experience in which the myth of Phaethon is recounted and then winds its way through stations on the history of the excavations, the finds and their context of use, highlighting the exceptional nature of the discoveries related to the site and amber processing.



The scientific project was supervised by Paolo Bellintani, archaeological officer of the Soprintendenza per i Beni archeologici della Provincia di Trento, and Professor Ursula Thun Hohenstein of the University of Ferrara. The itinerary, designed to fit into the historical and monumental context of the museum, is the work, on the other

hand, of the Laura Bello Architectural Studio and was built by the firm Space.

The layout is marked by maximum accessibility: tables at standard heights for visitors in wheelchairs, EasyReading texts, reproductions of exhibits for tactile experiences.

An immersive, wall- and ceiling-mounted multiprojection was created based on the myth of Phaeton, whose fall into the Po River and the weeping of his sisters who became amber is recounted. The animation was made in 3D graphics and computer graphics, with an acted sound created by professional speakers in two languages. Visitors can choose the language of the projection before entering the room, thanks to a simple button system.

The station, which introduces the exhibition section, tells the story of archaeological research in the Polesine territory with a looped sequence of images. To allow easy updating of the contents in relation to the continuation of the studies, the station is connected to a content management system.

The multimedia stations, integrated into the display cases and exhibition tables, consist of touch screen monitors for browsing in-depth fact sheets on the finds, galleries, educational content and games. For the interactive station on amber, we made an experimental archaeology video, reproducing the operational chain for making an amber bead for jewelry.



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History Park Banjole



Partner: PP4 Municipality of Medulin

Venue: Medulin, Istria – Croatia
 Owner: Municipality of Medulin

Intervention: Territorial landmark, educational and tourist park.
 Offer a starting point for the cultural exploration of the territory.

Video: <https://bit.ly/3ISYSIF>

One of the most important activities of the Municipality of Medulin within the HISTORIC project was the construction of the Historical Park of the Municipality of Medulin in Banjole. The Banjole Historical Park represents a kind of outdoor museum-gallery, presenting the cultural, historical and natural heritage of all settlements of the Municipality of Medulin.

The park was created in Banjole on the area near the Banjole Community Center and covers an area of about 970 m².



The goal was to create an additional tourist offer for all tourists and visitors to the Municipality of Medulin and to raise awareness of the need to preserve cultural heritage, as well as to popularize cultural heritage by educating the local population, especially children and youth, about the native heritage of their local community.



The park area was set up, in cooperation with the expert associated with the project Kristina Džin. The path recreated in the infrastructure allows for a kind of walk through the history of the Municipality of Medulin, and the conceptual arrangement of the park is based on so-called insulae (open-air rooms), each of which represents a separate theme. A total of six islands have been created. Four stands will represent the attractions of all the settlements of Medulin Municipality, one shows the seabed with archaeological finds and wrecks, and the sixth is decorated as a Mediterranean garden with characteristic plants.

The park also includes educational and urban equipment, such as litter bins, benches, bicycle racks, lighting, horticulture, shade pergolas, and the like, along with two prefabricated buildings, an information point, and a prefabricated multifunctional educational or multimedia facility.

The park is fully adapted for people with disabilities and people with limited mobility, as well as the blind and visually impaired, containing Braille and sound interpretations. The trail is also usable in multi-languages. Particular attention in the organization of the park is paid to the arrangement of green areas, so visitors can enjoy it throughout the year with the colors and smells of bougainvillea, vines, pomegranates, laurel, pittosporum, roses, oleander, myrtle, boxwood, heather, thyme, marigold, oregano, lavender and rosemary.

The construction work was carried out by the company Vladimir Gortan d.o.o. according to the design of the company Alter Lego Studio d.o.o. and under the expert supervision of primum Ing d.o.o. The company Studio 8 d.o.o. from Osijek is responsible for the design and production of aluminum tables with photographs and text in four languages and Braille. In addition, this company has created a smartphone application in which an animated character from the history of Medulin guides visitors through the history of the Municipality of Medulin.



The park is also enriched with a relief map of Medulin Municipality, linked by audio hardware in four languages, showing the land and sea of Medulin Municipality with some 40 landmarks made in a 3D model.

The park was opened in May 2021, before the start of the tourist season, providing another additional offer to locals and visitors to the Municipality of Medulin.

During the final event in October 2022, project partners were able to visit Banjole Park and there attend a cultural performance open to the public.

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Archaeological Park Colentum



Partner: PP5 Municipality of Murter-Kornati

Venue: Murter-Kornati, Šibenik-Knin County – Croatia
Owner: Municipality of Murter-Kornati

Intervention: Excavation, recovery and valorisation of the littoral archaeological site.
Aim: Creating a tourist destination that integrates entertainment, sport and culture.

Video: <https://bit.ly/3z97S9z>

The island of Murter was already inhabited in prehistoric period, as well as during the existence of Illyrian tribes. Both Liburnians and Romans, who lived on the island, left clear traces of their presence. Remains of Roman architecture, seaport devices, and mosaics narrate about the island’s significance during the period of Antiquity. The Liburnian and Roman town of Colentum is considered to be one of the most significant archeological sites in the area.



As one of the first activities of the HISTORIC project, the largest archaeological and conservation works in the history of the Colentum site were carried out already in 2019. Thus, the 1,100-square-metre area of the beach was explored, where 22 ancient walls were discovered and a total of 210 metres of newly discovered ancient walls were preserved. In addition, an attractive promenade, partly above and partly below sea level, was organised as the backbone of Croatia's first archaeological beach, namely the Colentum Archaeological Park.

Eleven information and educational panels have been installed on the shoreline, a stylised Roman column as a recognisable symbol of the site. Braille and relief representations of the site have been applied to the information panels so that everyone can experience ancient Colentum. Showers, benches, rubbish cans and bicycle racks are also installed on the shoreline. In front of the newly unearthed and preserved ancient walls, 12 stone signs with engraved Roman numerals have been placed, which are linked to a multimedia guide and information panels, and each allows visitors to access the knowledge that has been gathered through the project.

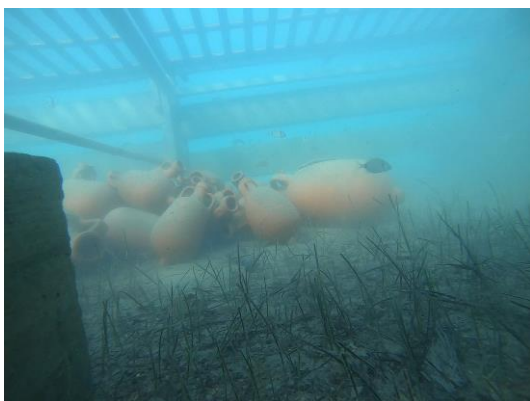
To support the visit, a bilingual (Croatian and English) educational multimedia guide has been created. Using a tablet, it can be accessed through an interactive multimedia application with a multitude of popular and educational content, which can be downloaded in advance at the office of the Murter-Kornati Tourist Board. It is a tool that provides easy and entertaining access to the discoveries of the archaeological site, unique in Croatia, and experiences a piece of life in an ancient city.



The multimedia guide gives access to twenty topics on information panels and stone tags. Seven of them are realised using augmented reality technology. In this way, one can 'meet' the owner of the villa on the coast and the port warehouse, Quintus, Lucius Claudius, the Captain and the dockers. Particularly attractive is the virtual tour of the Roman villa through which users can take a closer look at the details of

the villa by moving tablets, from the floor to the frescoes on the walls, from the vault to the exterior. The guide contains videos with visualisations of the Liburnian and Roman Coletum.

For sea lovers and recreational divers, two large cages with 80 replicas of amphorae of different sizes have been placed under the sea in front of the beach, and swimmers can easily find the locations of the cages and other important underwater artefacts, such as giant groups of ballast stones, with the help of large buoys.



A significant role, support and knowledge was provided by the Museum of the City of Šibenik, with which the Municipality of Murter-Kornati cooperates closely in terms of all activities at the archaeological site of Colentum. However, the realisation of the project was also thanks to the cooperation of the Argonauta Association, the Kornati Agricultural Cooperative, the Šibenik-Knin County Development Agency, the University of Zadar, the Vinko Bek Educational Centre, the Murtela service company and many others.

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Conclusions

In conclusion, in the 46 months of project implementation, very diverse ways of promoting and enhancing archaeological assets were tested.

Overall, there were considerable operational difficulties, caused by many factors, among which we should mention:

- the Covid-19 pandemic, which paralysed the progress of physical work and greatly altered the behaviour, expectations and needs of travellers;
- the scarcity of materials and the inflationary pressures that characterised the economic recovery at the end of the two-year pandemic period, which made supplies laborious and increased the costs of operations;
- the rapid evolution of digital technologies that made hardware-based solutions just 6-12 months old obsolete;
- the authorisation processes, even in the presence of public property, in the availability of the implementing parties, which characterise interventions on protected and listed heritage.



However, the interventions have identified effective solutions to the aforementioned critical issues and achieved the expected results.

Common features of the HISTORIC model

In particular, the pilot actions have in common the:

- Use of digital technologies in order to increase interaction with users and make the visit more immersive and emotional;
- Integration of diversionary elements and accurate dissemination information;
- Inclusive approach with a specific focus on an audience of different ages, including children, and the use of technical and technological solutions to increase the accessibility of content also to people with disabilities;
- Development of connections between present and past and between different locations connected by common historical routes;
- Contamination between different cultural backgrounds and artistic styles for an innovative and engaging experience.

Critical Success Factors:

In the light of the experiments carried out within the HISTORIC project, the following should be considered as critical success factors:

- Institutional leadership of the promoting public authority with the support of the economic and social partners in the area;
- Scientific support provided by universities and specialised research centres;
- Accurate preliminary and executive planning in terms of conceptual design and technical solutions to be applied;
- Involvement of specialised companies capable of carrying out interventions of high technical complexity.

Credits: Lorenzo Liguoro – Infrasrtutture Venete srl 31.10.2022

