The Strategic Planning for the Promotion of Cultural Tourism in a Wide Area of Calabria: The Armeni Valley

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Abstract. The study, second phase of an applied research on a wide area of the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, aims to identify, within the framework of strategic planning, the best actions for the enhancement of the tourist-cultural offer of specific territorial contexts, such as inner areas. The contribution reports some reflections on the evaluation tools suitable for the selection of strategies and the related actions to favor changes of strategic-cultural value and the triggering of an intelligent, sustainable and inclusive development of the territories. In the hypotheses proposed, actions and tools converge capable of borrowing the methodology of strategic planning by applying it in a sectoral way to Cultural Heritage.

Keywords: Strategic Planning · Economic-Estimative Evaluations · Cultural Heritage · Inner Areas · Local Development · Cultural Tourism

1 Introduction

The paper illustrates the methodological approach and the first application results of a research activity conducted by the UNESCO Med Lab of the Mediterranea University on a wide area of the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria on the following topics:

- Strategic Planning focused on Cultural Heritage as a tool for the development of specific territories, such as inner areas;
- the contribution of economic-estimative evaluations to the selection of actions and to the identification of the most suitable tools for estimating the impacts.

The study introduces a path of strategic planning of a wide area focused on the valorization of cultural heritage (material and immaterial), useful not only for political decision-makers but also for local communities, for a better identification and solution of problems.

The research proposes some actions and tools capable of transforming territorial planning into "cultural planning of the territory", and of expressing a multi-development, locally based and competitive on the market since it is woven on the specific evolution of places. The proposed strategy converges in the direction of attributing a strategic value

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to the territorial quality and cultural identities of local contexts, of interpreting them as resources to be known, interpreted, conserved, valued and communicated.

The case of the Armeni Valley in Calabria (IT) is analyzed, identifying the features of the strategic planning at the basis of the revitalization of the territory. It is an ongoing process that cannot be separated from a research question that focuses on identifying the optimal strategies closely related to resources, for the revitalization of local economies.

The paper illustrates the methodological approach and the results of the first activities already carried out on the case study.

2 Strategic Planning: State of the Art

Strategic planning for territorial development is one of the topics on which the sector literature has paid the most attention in recent years. The basic idea is that at the local level it is necessary to read the territory, select sustainable intervention priorities and guide public and private resources around these, building a shared vision and a path that takes into account the general interest of the community [1].

On this bases, strategic planning is understood as the process that mobilizes a plurality of subjects in the reconstruction of a territory "vision of the future" starting from the representations expressed by the local actors who contribute to redefine its identity; it is a framework which, describing the goal and outlines strategies, actions and tools to achieve it [2]. It is also an action of continuous verification and monitoring of results and of reviewing actions according to the changes that can affect the local or extra-local context [3].

The construction of territorial policies based on strategic paradigms has become established at all levels of planning. But, while at the level of the municipal and implementation plan the regulatory aspects retain their prescriptive importance, at the supra-municipal level strategic planning has become increasingly incisive [4]. In fact, the concept of territory has recently undergone a radical transformation: from a material resource susceptible to exploitation, a controllable space where diversity is seen as resistance to transformation, we have come to an interpretation in which the relational and uncertain characteristic of a complex system. Consequently, planning requires new approaches: the challenge of complexity can be successfully addressed through a greater conception of multiple and intelligible responses [5].

In recent years, with reference to the dynamic and procedural nature of the Strategic Plan, it has been underlined how the latter lends itself well to processes of continuous innovation, both as regards the theoretical-methodological reflection and the implementation phase [6]; on the other hand, referring to urban and territorial contexts that are also very different from each other, it is highly heterogeneous in terms of content and design. Despite, a substantial homogeneity of objectives, aims and methodologies emerges with equal clarity [7].

In relation to the other territorial regulatory tools, the new 2030 Agenda proposes pursuing sustainable development objectives in the EU territory by leveraging the resilience capacity (circular economy, green economy), as a methodology for dealing with the new economic, social and environmental, but above all as a tool to create employment and lasting development without altering the territorial characteristics.

This territorial development model can also be adapted to Italian inner areas, mostly concentrated in the South [8]; areas that have represented in the past a point of reference for large segments of the population and whose crisis appears as an alteration of the network of relationships between the economic and social structures [9]. Indeed, it is known how much the latter need to revitalize their economies, as well as demographic structures, through diversified actions based on processes of regeneration and self-sufficiency [10, 11].

Because of that, the Strategic Plan can constitute a tool which contrasts the ongoing centralization of decision-making with the practice of comparison and polycentrism on an inter-municipal basis with the objective of sustainable development of local economies [12].

It is in these contexts that interesting reasoning related to a "cultural planning of the territory" can be conducted. For some years it has been addressed in a large part of Europe no longer as a sector or as a simple qualitative attribute of development, but as the matrix of all development sustainability: constitutional, cultural, managerial and economic sustainability, considered as fields of opportunity for the protection and enhancement of the cultural fabric of places [13]. What has been investigated is the dual role of the cultural framework of the territory as a matrix of the identity of places and as a strategic and priority line of local development, starting from some fixed points of a renewed declination of sustainable development: the whole territory is seen as a cultural system, as the result of processes stratified over time and as a creative opportunity for new interpretations, compatible interventions and economic values put by history and culture on the table of competition [14].

To date, this approach is finding a decisive and new impetus also in Italy; in recent years, the attention given by national institutions and ministries has transformed into a progressive development project for the country, which has found a moment of strong convergence in the Piano di Sviluppo Turistico 2017–22 - *Italia paese per viaggiator*i, which declines the theme of sustainability by making cultural heritage a development tool [15].

Strategic actions based on these assumptions can give life to local growth processes capable of combining economic-employment development with the protection and enhancement of the heritage, the environment and typical products, producing widespread and non-selective effects and guaranteeing visibility to smaller territories that is perceivable by potential visitors and investors.

3 Methodology

The study, second phase of an applied research on a wide area of the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria, intends to offer an innovative framework in the Strategic Planning of a wide area focused on the enhancement of the Cultural Heritage of specific contexts subject to phenomena of marginalization, such as inner areas; objective is the promotion of sustainable and quality tourism based on endogenous resources for the development of territories with unexpressed cultural potential.

The research analyses the proactive function of valorization, conservation and reuse of cultural heritage in the planning process. The main objective is to identify and evaluate the existence of conditions that demonstrate the function of cultural heritage and cultural production as a driver of strategic regeneration of territories.

The contribution intends to provide guidance on how to set up an effective strategic planning process, which derives from a process of rethinking and relaunching territories; a reflection on the possible evolutions of planning is proposed, and then a strategic choice process is introduced, whose procedural, interactive and flexible character allows to overcome some limits of traditional planning, deriving from a linear and hierarchical vision, setting up a holistic vision and a parallel character of specificity of the interventions aimed at particular problems, thus overcoming the opposition between plan and project.

Therefore, the application of this process in the Armeni Valley in Calabria (IT) is proposed, as a test bed to experiment with the themes outlined above.

The study also introduces the first reasoning on the identification of the most appropriate evaluation techniques for the selection of strategic actions, useful not only for political decision-makers but also for local communities, for a better identification and solution of problems.

The methodology followed includes four distinct phases (see Fig. 1):

– Phase 1 - The study context (completed)

  1.1 - The Territorial System (TS)
  1.2 - The Cultural System (CS)
  1.3 - Reconnaissance of the Strategies implemented in the territory
  1.4 - The listening procedure - Territorial laboratories
  1.5 - SWOT
  1.6 - Good Practices

– Phase 2 - Elaboration of the Strategy (subject of the paper)

  2.1 - Strength Idea
  2.2 - Objectives and Actions

    2.2.1 Infrastructures
    2.2.2 Economy
    2.2.3 Tourism

– Phase 3 - Development of Evaluation Tools (in progress)

  3.1 - Construction of action selection criteria
  3.2 - Use of the *SostEc Model* to verify feasibility/sustainability
  3.3 - Identification of tools for impact assessment

– Phase 4 - Application to the case study (subject of the paper, in progress)

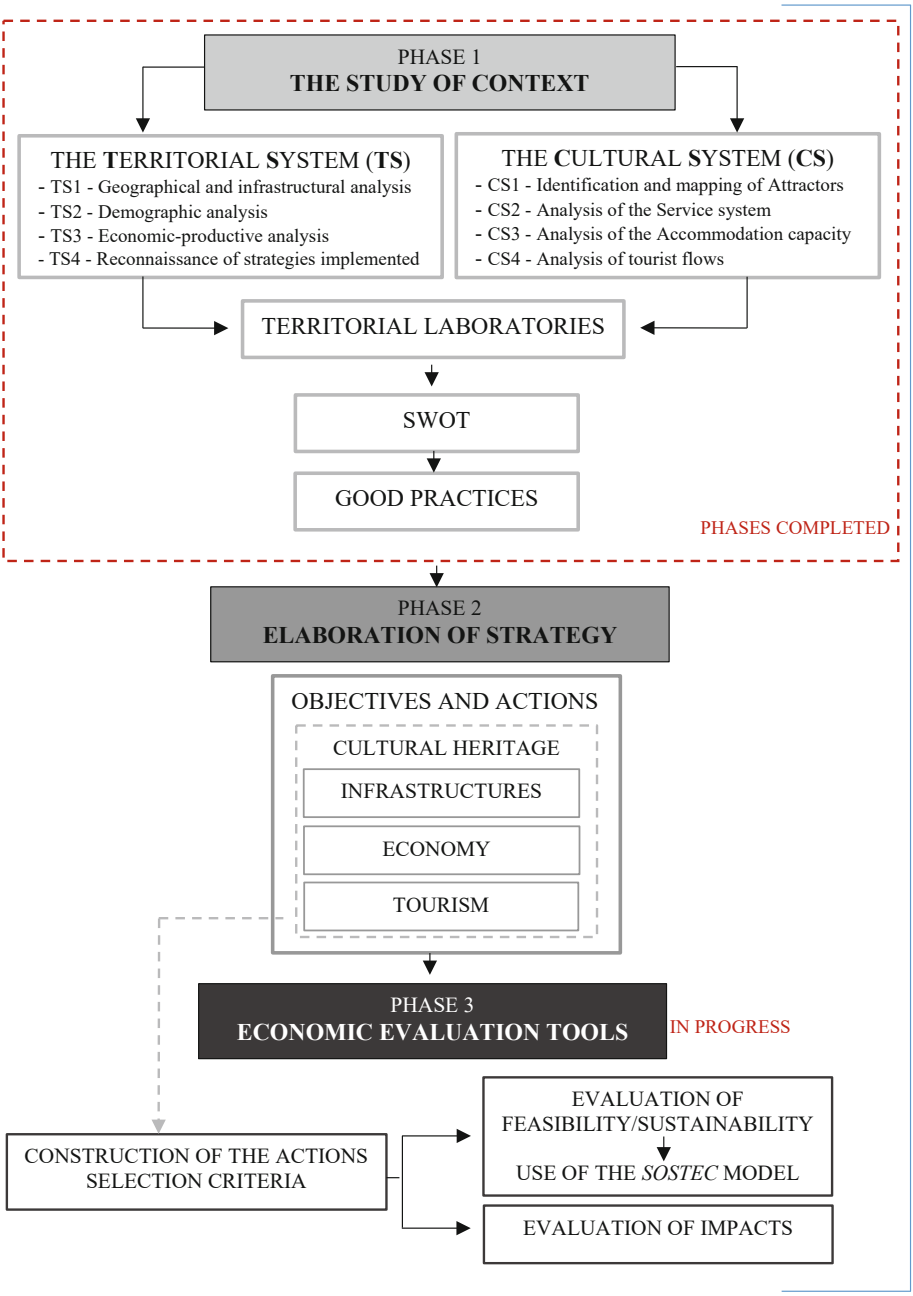

Fig. 1. Methodological approach. Elaboration by the authors, 2023.

With regard to Phase 3, the paper reports the first reasoning on the identification of the most appropriate evaluation techniques for the selection of strategic actions through an integrated approach (use of monetary and non-monetary techniques), deepening in particular the multidimensional evaluation of the effects overall in terms of economic development and revitalization of social and territorial contexts such as inner areas, of changes in social welfare (see point 6).

The paper also reports the initial application results of the proposed methodology (Phase 4) illustrating some experiences already conducted or in progress relating to the strategic actions identified (see point 5.2).

The proposed strategy starts from a resource centered vision, in which local resources are rethought from a vocational perspective, avoiding "patchy" actions. However, this also poses numerous methodological problems, three among all: scale, aggregation, subsidiarity [16].

Therefore, the definition of the area under study was inherent to the scale of the actions that the research intends to undertake. An area of action that was too small would have entailed the risk of an insufficiently incisive impact of the planned strategic actions and attractive capacity. For this reason, reference was made to the wide scale of the Armeni Valley, as representative of an excellent example of a sub-provincial scale with municipalities with very heterogeneous internal characteristics but with some elements in common that could act as a link from an inclusive point of view (see point 4). Within the framework of this complex territorial system, Cultural Heritage is presented as a growing trend and the possibility of outlining development trajectories for marginal destinations, such as inner areas.

The summarized studies are the result of a process that saw the authors as an integral part of a process solicited by the public administrators involved towards the potential of a planning hinged on local resources, then in the complex mediation between different parts and needs.

4 The Study Context

With reference to the case study examined, identified in the so-called "Armeni Valley" of the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria (Municipalities: Brancaleone, Bruzzano Zeffirio, Ferruzzano, Staiti), the hypothesis of a new planning strategy is based on the enhancement of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage and on the implementation of related activities (tourist-accommodation and refreshment services; complementary services; sustainable mobility; trade in typical products). A strategy that aims, on the one hand, to activate resources not only related to the tourism-cultural sector, on the other hand to play a significant role in building a network of territorial socio-economic relationships.

To this end, the cognitive analysis of the area in question was preliminarily conducted (Phase 1 - see point 3), already illustrated in more detail in other contexts, which specifically concerned (see point 4.1):

– 1.1 - The analysis of the Territorial System (geographical-infrastructural, demographic and economic-productive analysis)

- 1.2 - The Analysis of the Cultural System (Identification and mapping of material and immaterial Attractors, Analysis of the system of services, accommodation capacity and tourist flows)
- 1.3 - The recognition of the Strategies implemented in the territory
- 1.4 - The listening procedure - Territorial laboratories
- 1.5 - The SWOT analysis
- 1.6 - Good Practices

The Territory - Summary Information. The Armeni Valley (see Fig. 2), is an area not particularly developed from a tourist point of view but characterized by the presence of a valuable material and immaterial cultural heritage and landscape. The analyzes revealed a strong concentration of resources, including the variety of assets of archaeological, architectural (fortification systems and signs of rurality linked to the economies of the hinterland such as the over 160 MiC-Ministero della Cultura registered millstones-*palmenti*) and naturalistic (two municipalities out of four fall within the Aspromonte National Park: Staiti, Bruzzano Zeffirio; two municipalities out of four have a SIC-Sito di Interesse Comunitario: Ferruzzano, Brancaleone; three municipalities out of four fall within the "Costa dei Gelsomini" Regional Marine Park: Ferruzzano, Brancaleone, Bruzzano Zeffirio).

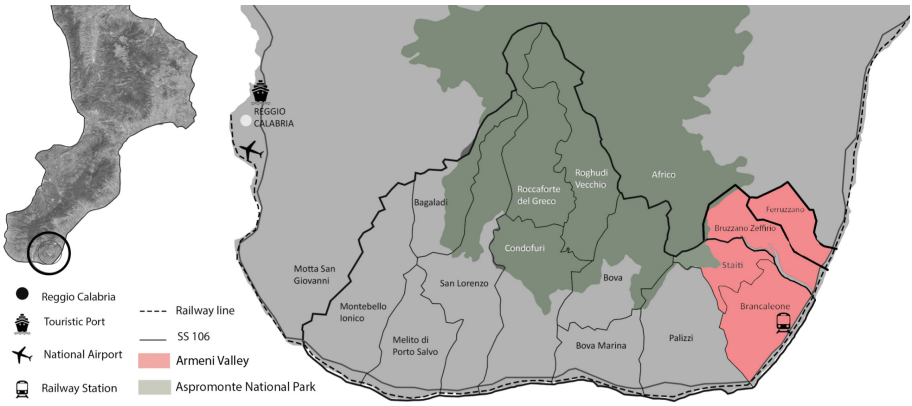

Fig. 2. The context of study - Armeni Valley (RC). Elaboration by the authors, 2023.

The socio-economic situation is mainly characterized by activities related to the tertiary sector and services, and to vocational ones connected to agriculture and the richness of biodiversity of its wine heritage (over one hundred vines with a unique genome currently kept in the Kepòs Conservation Field, Ferruzzano), eleven wineries surveyed by the authors in 2023, with quality productions appreciated on the national and international market connected to the enhancement of local varieties (three certification - D.O.C., I.G.T., D.O.P.).

The flows in the area are mainly connected to summer seaside tourism and return tourism in the June-September period.

The accommodation is characterized by the presence of some structures (hotels, B&Bs) mainly located along the coast, in addition to villages and campsites close to the beaches.

The Listening Procedure. Throughout the process, the participation of stakeholders was taken into account through the organization of local workshops (Phase 2.5), understood as an opportunity to identify the interests of the various actors involved and to enhance their contribution in the co-planning co-construction of the plan.

Territorial listening saw the collection of information from the population, groups, associations and stakeholders through interviews and open dialogues between the parties, which made it possible to understand the different needs, concerns and expectations (see Table 1). This process was essential for defining the strategy (see point 5).

In this scenario, the UNESCO Med Lab and local administrations have used participation as a mechanism to create a critical mass of resources and will to be directed towards a fair, inclusive and sustainable strategic vision.

Table 1. Actors involved in the planning process. Armeni Valley (RC).

Territorial Laboratory	
Coordinator: UNESCO Med Lab	
Municipalities: Brancaleone, Bruzzano Zeffirio, Ferruzzano, Staiti	
Partners: Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria; MiC - Ministero della Cultura (Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio RC-VV); F.L.A.G. dello Stretto	
Artistic-cultural entertainment - Conservatory F. Cilea of Reggio Calabria - Wine Museum of Bianco - House Museum *Zephiros*	*Tourism Sector* - Tour operators - Transport services providers - Touristic Guides - Accomodation providers (n. 8) - Complementary services (n. 2)
Education and research - Mediterranea University of Reggio Calabria - IIS Euclide, Bova Marina - FISAR (Federazione Italiana Sommelier Albergatori e Ristoratori) - *Kepòs* Conservation field	*Associationism* - Rudìna Association - Ferruzzano - Citizen committee *Io ci provo* - Ferruzzano - Pro Loco Bruzzano Zeffirio - AGESCI Gruppo Scout Brancaleone 1
Production sector (food and wine) - Farms (n. 7) - Winery (n. 6) - Food service activities (n. 10)	*Other* - individual personalities who have made their stories and/or skills available (actors, musicians, writers, artists)

SWOT Analysis. The integration of the information gathered from the listening procedure with the surveys conducted by the authors in Phase 2, led to the elaboration of the SWOT analysis (see Table 2) structured on three thematic sectors connected to Cultural

Heritage (Infrastructures, Economy, Tourism). The analysis revealed a great endogenous tourism potential that requires, however, the elaboration of a homogeneous and integrated development project that produces a lasting valorization.

Table 2. SWOT Analysis. Elaboration by the authors.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Cultural heritage			
Infrastructures			
- Limited distances between centres	- Geographical isolation (Infrastructures and services, public transport) - Decline of rural areas in the absence of support interventions - Progressive abandonment of the centers - youth emigration	- Creation of infrastructures that connect the different nodes	
Economy			
- Quality gastronomic and artisan products	- Low level Standard of services - Seasonality of employment in the cultural sector - Access to resources - Insufficient capacity of entrepreneurship to use the financial resources of public policies - Difficulty of entering national and international commercial circuits - Low level of coordination between actors	- Intersectoral integration of food production and valorization of local artisanal productions - Diversification of the economy - Creation of employment opportunities	- Growth of competition, including traditional wine-growing and agricultural productions of the area - Perception of the local economy as a specialized theme and a sectoral policy - The multiplicity of services as a strength, in the absence of adequate coordination, can produce fragmentation and difficulty in monitoring the evolutionary scenarios of needs

(*continued*)

Table 2. (*continued*)

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Cultural heritage			
Tourism			
- Tangible and intangible heritage of high cultural value - Natural heritage - Vine-growing landscape - Rooted sense of hospitality as a behavioral culture of the communities	- Modest valorization of the territory - Few presence of tour operators - Seasonality of tourist flows - Community maturity (low heritage awareness) - State of conservation of the heritage	- Growing interest in cultural tourism - New trends in the tourism market towards the search for niche products, quality, culture and well-being - Cohesive local area network - Rationalization and renewal of the offer	- Competition and globalization of the tourism market - Prevalence of return and transit tourism and of nearby seaside resorts on the coast - Heritage and environmental emergencies

Good Practices. These considerations include numerous examples of creative planning and possible tools through which to plan on the basis of the enhancement of cultural heritage.

In the national territory (IT), the experiences of the *Sistema Puglia* are particularly interesting. In this case the Wide Area Planning, in line with the provisions of *Documento Strategico Regionale 2007/2013* and of the FESR European Programme, has had a strong development into the *Strategic Plans of Wide Area* (Piani Strategici di Area Vasta) of ten territorial aggregations (Lead institution: Bari, Brindisi, Foggia, Lecce, Taranto, Casarano, Gravina, Barletta, Comunità Montana Monti Dauni Meridionali, Monopoli); these plans outline specific and shared objectives by addressing human and economic resources in the same direction (*Linee Guida per la pianificazione strategica territoriale di Area Vasta - NVVIP Regione Puglia*). These aggregations include the cases of:

– TARANTINA WIDE AREA (twenty-eight municipalities). Strategic objectives of the Plan: construction of a new identity and a unitary image of the territory; promotion of a renewed economic and productive mission; development of an integrated infrastructure system.
– WIDE AREA OF MURGIANA CITY (six municipalities). Strategic objectives of the Plan: to strengthen municipal cooperation; ensure the protection and enhancement of the heritage; open up to the world by improving internal and external accessibility.
– VISION 2020 WIDE AREA (ten non-contiguous municipalities of the new polycentric BAT Province). The vision is based on seven creative cities and visions that represent as many theme-places, proposed as "territorial intuitions", which interpret the themes and opportunities for the development of the territory and its evolution: the City of Rurality; the City of Typical Production; the City of Art; the City of the Sea; the City of Design; the City of Entertainment; the City of Government.

5 Development of the Strategy: The "Armeni Valley" Plan

5.1 Strength Idea

Many inner areas of the South, despite the wealth of natural beauty, history and culture, suffer from economic and development problems due to a lack of strategic planning that takes into account the specificities and potential of the territories, and that is able to attract investments for the incentive of entrepreneurship as a response to the demand for work (contrast to emigration especially among young people). The strategy, therefore, considers the territory in its unexpressed tourist peculiarities as a value, such as traditions, sense of hospitality, events, typicality. Unexpressed peculiarities as, although they are identifying characteristics of the area, they do not represent resources strategically put into the system with a view to enhancing attractiveness.

The "Armeni Valley" Strategic Plan takes the form of a territorial cultural project, based on the so-called "virtuous circle" resource/project/territory [17], which develops a real network of cultural resources and services in the area. This strategy, representative of local interests, is the result of a concerted activity (see Table 1) and of the close connection with the SWOT analysis (see Table 2). For some time now, the administrations involved in the study have launched and fine-tuned a policy of interventions for the recovery and enhancement of excellence, with the aim of starting a significant cultural and economic intervention, on which to base a significant part of the local development policy alternative to those already tested (as of 2021 year before the planning process) (see Table 3). To this end, the four Municipalities entered into a memorandum of understanding in 2022 for technical-scientific support with the UNESCO Med Lab research laboratory active at the PAU Dept. of the Mediterranea University of Reggio Calabria, concerning the strategic planning of the territory connected to the enhancement of the cultural heritage.

Table 3. Implemented Strategies in the cultural sectors (2018–2021). Sources: Open Cohesion, Amministrazione Trasparente of municipalities. Elaboration by the authors, 2023.

Armeny Valley Implemented Strategies - 2018–2021	
Cultural heritage sectors	Expense
Investments on infrastructure	€ 1.754.857,31
Investments on tourism	€ 3.453.395,10
Investments on company incentives	€ 86.981,00
Tot. Investments on cultural sectors	**€ 5.295.233,41**

On the basis of these considerations, the network of the plan was built starting from links in which the role of a center does not depend on its size but on the ability to enter not only economic, but also environmental and cultural exchange circuits (Brancaleone: environmental and economic pole; Ferruzzano: environmental pole; Bruzzano Zeffirio and Staiti: cultural poles), summarizing the complexity of the links present at the local level and their horizontal and vertical dimension.

5.2 Objectives and Actions

The "Armeni Valley" Strategic Plan (see Fig. 3) outlines the Vision of the future of the municipalities involved, through four Strategic Guidelines (SG):

SG1. Community Infrastructures → objectives: to improve the quality of life in inland areas;
SG2. Regeneration of the existing → objectives: reappropriation of spaces and places through alternative uses, creation of identifiable and recognizable polarities;
SG3. Identity Economies → objectives: to create job opportunities to counter youth emigration, discovering, launching and supporting resources and excellence;
SG4. Cultural Tourism → objectives: protection and enhancement of heritage, attraction of investments.

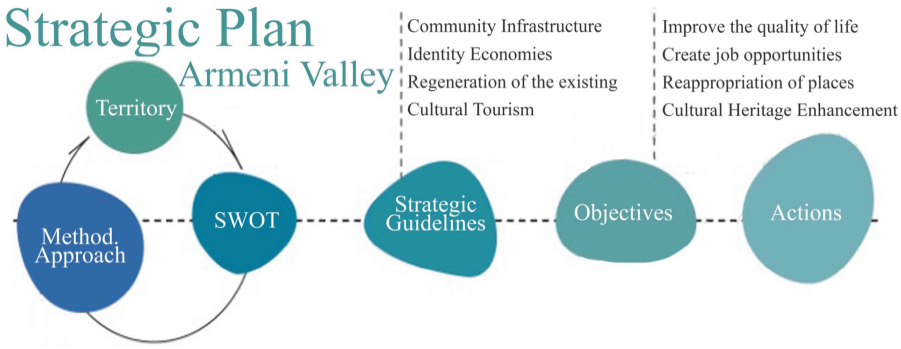

Fig. 3. Armeni Valley Strategic Plan. Elaboration by the authors, 2023.

On the basis of the characteristics of a strategic plan compared to other territorial and urban planning instruments, and with reference to the SWOT analysis, the possible strategies and the desirable actions and open options have been defined, rather than setting certain objectives and outlining a pre-established future; therefore, a unitary body of concepts and procedures was not defined, but rather a field of experiments and experimentation. For the realization of the future scenario, the Strategies listed below have been outlined with the related Actions (see Table 4), adapted, during construction, to the indications of local, national and European policies in order to make the Strategic Plan instrument of service to be able to identify the right opportunities given e.g. from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

The envisaged actions include some activities consolidated in recent years and others in progress or in the planning and experimentation phase, each pertaining to one or more project partners, coordinated by the UNESCO Med Lab and assisted by the administrations (see Table 5).

Table 4. Strategies and Actions. Elaboration by the authors, 2023.

Sectors		Weakness (W)	Strategic Guidelines (SG)	Objectives (O)	Actions (A)
Cultural Heritage	Infrrastuctures	W1. Geographical isolation (Infrastructures, services, public transport) W2. Progressive abandonment of inner centers	SG1. Community Infrastructures SG2. Regeneration of the existing	O1. Improving the quality of life O2. Reappropriation of spaces and places O3. Creation of identifiable and recognizable polarities	A1. Recovery and maintenance of public spaces and buildings with historical-cultural value for localization of local productive activities or community services A2. Improvement of public/private transport
	Economy	W3. Low level of standard services W4. Seasonality of employment in the cultural sector W5. Insufficient ability of business to access resources W6. Difficulty of entering commercial circuits W7. Low level of actors' coordination	SG3. Identity Economies	O4. Generate investment and job opportunities O5. Countering youth emigration O6. Relaunch and support resources and excellence O7. Encourage forms of collaboration (public-private)	A3. Implementation of partnership forms A4. Building a territorial e-commerce platform A5. Design of composite packages of services
	Tourism	W8. Modest enhancement of the heritage and resources W9. Seasonality of flows W10. State of conservation of heritage	SG4. Cultural Tourism	O8. Protect and enhance the Heritage O9. Attract investment O10. Seasonal adjustment of flows	A6. Design and implementation of knowledge tools A7. Territorial marketing, development of a communication plan A8. Enrollment to national and international circuits

Table 5. Plan Actions to march 2023. Elaboration by the authors, 2023.

Actions (a)	Projects (p)	Fund	Timing	Expense
Cultural heritage sectors				
Infrastructures				
A1. Recovery and maintenance of public spaces and buildings with historical-cultural value for localization of local productive activities or community services	P1. Multifunctional Urban Park "Nature&Health"	PNRR, Mission 5, Component 2, Investment 2, Intervention line 2.2	2022	€ 1.500.000,00
	P2. Parco Inclusivo "Play for All"	PNRR, Mission 5, Component 2, Investment 2, Intervention line 2.1	2022	€ 650.000,00
	P3. Widespread hotel, Brancaleone	to locate	2022	€ 1.140.000,00
	P4. Accommodation and spa project "Il Palazzo delle Essenze", Cundari Palace, Brancaleone	to locate	2022	€ 1.340.000,00
	P5. Accommodation project "Stay It!", Musitano Palace, Staiti	to locate	2022	€ 3.130.000,00
	P6. Community social infrastructure "Fare Spazio all'Accoglienza"	PNRR, Mission 5, Component 3, Investment 1, Intervention line 1.1	2023	€ 550.000,00
	P7. Community social services "Fare Spazio all'Accoglienza"	PNRR, Mission 5, Component 3, Investment 1, Intervention line 1.1	2023	€ 450.000,00
A2. Improvement of public/private transport	P8. Car Sharing Armeni Valley	to locate	ongoing	€ 268.000,00
Economy and Services				
A3. Implementation of partnership forms	P9. Armeni Valley Network	Self-financing of partners	ongoing	€ 15.000,00
A4. Building a territorial e-commerce platform	P10. Armeni Valley web-site	Public subjects involved and commercial operators	ongoing	€ 100.000,00

(*continued*)

Table 5. (*continued*)

Actions (a)	Projects (p)	Fund	Timing	Expense
Cultural heritage sectors				
A5. Design of composite packages of services	P11. Construction of cultural routes integrated with territorial services	Public funds of involved municipalities - (Agreemen with UNESCO Med Lab)	2022	€ 30.000,00
Tourism				
A6. Design and implementation of knowledge tools	P12. Information and dissemination "The Armeni Valley storytelling"	Public funds of involved municipalities - (Agreemen with UNESCO Med Lab)	ongoing	€ 20.000,00
	P13. "Seguici! A passo lento" Support measures for Libraries and Public Historical Archives	POR CALABRIA FESR-FSE 2014–2020, Action 6.8.3	ongoing	€ 60.000,00
A7. Territorial marketing, development of a communication plan	P14. Sea Museum "MUSAMA" Communication Plan, Brancaleone	to locate	ongoing	€ 80.000,00
	P15. Museum of Italian-Greek Saints Communication Plan, Staiti	to locate	ongoing	€ 40.000,00
	P16. Kepòs conservation field, Ferruzzano	to locate	ongoing	€ 200.000,00
A8. Enrollment to national and international circuits	P17. Candidature to CoE Cultural Route "Iter Vitis"	Public funds of involved municipalities	2022	€ 15.000,00
TOT. INVESTMENTS STRATEGIC PLAN				€ 9.588.000,00

Below are the specifications of the most advanced Actions (see Table 5).

Actions A.1–A.8. Actions A.1 and A.8 were matched by a series of interventions, for a total amount of €8,760,000.00, aimed at:

– recovery of public spaces (P.1–2) for the construction of infrastructures to support the quality of life and well-being (in connection with the Aspromonte National Park) of citizens and tourists;

– recovery of public buildings or buildings of public value of particular historical-architectural value for the location of tourist services (P3–5: accommodation businesses, educational laboratories, wellness and spa) and for the community (P6).

Action A2. The theme of accessibility and mobility is one of the transversal critical elements to development (see Table 2) and represents one of the major problems for the permanence of the populations, above all for the communities residing in the more inland areas. Action A.2 includes a feasibility study on the "Armeni Valley Car Sharing" project which envisages, in support of the local infrastructure serving citizens and tourists, the purchase of seven electric cars and the installation of five electric columns and relative stalls in correspondence with the main cultural attractions and infrastructural nodes (Railway Stations) for a total amount of € 268,000.00 (see Fig. 4).

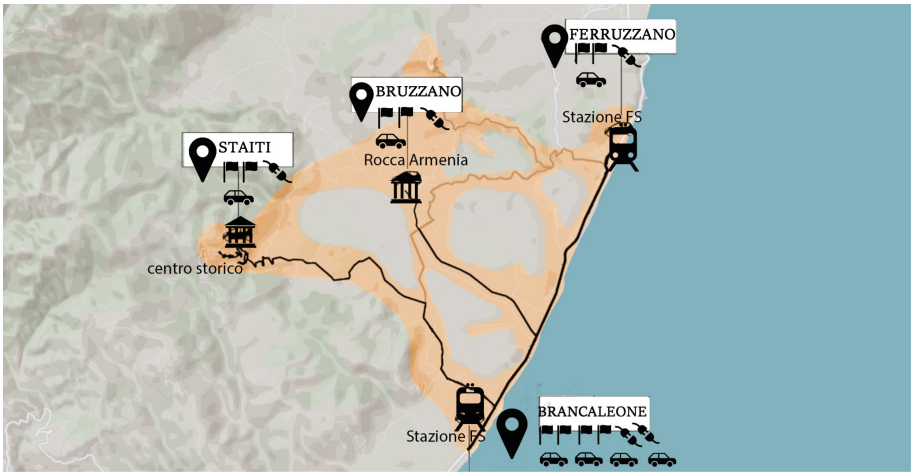

Fig. 4. Car Sharing project. Elaboration by the authors, 2023.

Actions A.5–A.7. The planned actions concern the specific potential of the territory and are aimed at developing innovative ways of interpreting and re-proposing them, through effective communication and the provision of a Territorial Marketing Plan and individual resources (P14–15–16). These actions are expressed in a new tourist strategy of integrated and seasonally adjusted services, expressed in thematic itineraries built by the UNESCO Med Lab, based on the quality of the offer and oriented towards a new way of experiencing tourism, cultural tourism.

Action A.8. Specifically for action A.8, we report the process conducted by UNESCO Med Lab, within the framework of the Institutional Agreement, which led to the candidacy and inclusion of the Armeni Valley in the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe Iter Vitis "Les Chemins de la Vigne" [18], inserting its heritage, not only wine, in an international circuit.

The objective of the itinerary is to safeguard wine biodiversity, promoting its uniqueness as an important part of the European and Mediterranean economy.

The main evaluation criterion for joining is demonstrating the presence of a wine-growing production tradition, ancient native vines and an art/archaeological heritage linked to viticulture [19].

In the candidacy project, the first choice to be made was the area of intervention, from single places part of the route (e.g. Santa Maria De' Tridetti, Staiti) to larger portions of the territory (e.g. Aspromonte National Park, Regional Marine Park "Costa dei Gelsomini", Bosco di Rudìna, millstones/palmenti of Ferruzzano) to the common connecting elements (the wine landscape); hence the use of an approach that did not envisage buffering with the creation of a territorial corridor in conflict with the assimilation of the itinerary to territorial networks [20].

The "Iter Vitis" brand has proved to be a powerful catalyst; while not wanting to diminish the value of the founding phases, the territorialization of the brand was the moment that decreed a concrete implementation of the itinerary instead of its being reduced to a brand with no repercussions on the territory, to a logo to be associated.

6 First Conclusions and Research Perspectives in the Field of Economic Evaluation

Given the many expectations placed on development opportunities connected with the enhancement of cultural heritage in the framework of strategic planning, and considering that the promotion of places necessarily passes through the activation of public investments, it is important to evaluate the expected impact of these operations (see Table 4) and the measurement of the increase in competitiveness and attractiveness of a territory through the identification of specific synthetic indicators [21, 22].

On this theme, the study includes some reasoning in progress which make the different theoretical perspectives operational, which will be the subject of subsequent insights (see Fig. 5).

The selection criteria of Actions will be identified on the basis of:

- feasibility/sustainability evaluation;
- evaluation of effectiveness.

Specifically, to verify the economic-financial feasibility/sustainability of the projects relating to the actions (see Table 5), the SostEc Model was used, conceived and tested by the authors in other contexts [23, 24]. The model includes the verification of the organizational-management models assumed through the construction of the Economic and Financial Plan (E.F.P) and the Discounted Cash Flow Analysis (D.C.F.).

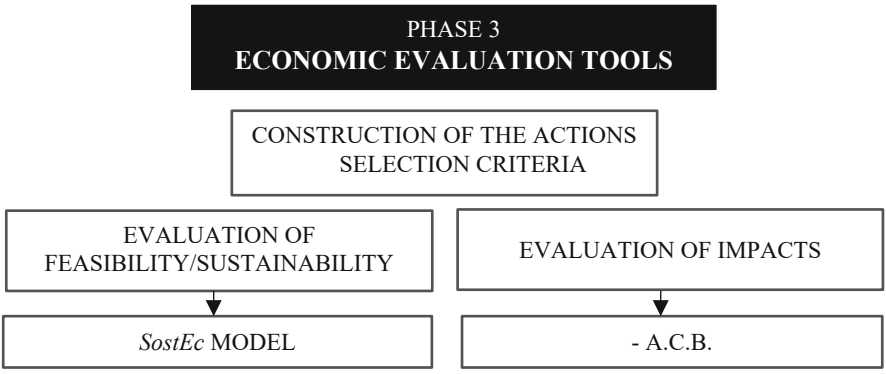

Fig. 5. Phase 3. Elaboration by the authors, 2023.

With regard to the evaluation of effectiveness, on the other hand, the first reasoning connected to the estimation of impacts through an integrated approach (use of monetary and non-monetary techniques) is underway, investigating in particular [25–27]:

– the multidimensional evaluation of the overall effects generated, in terms of economic development and revitalization of social and territorial contexts such as Internal Areas, of changes in social well-being [28, 29];
– the identification of the system of public and private conveniences and of the economic mechanisms for balancing them for the purposes of feasibility and sustainability, in a long-term time horizon [30].

The research carried out has allowed, on the one hand, to recognize the necessary value of communities in development, offering possible guidelines and a framework of strategic choices that outline various opportunities for the territories concerned [31].

A process on a wide area scale which is characterized by an economic, social and territorial interdependence of the municipalities which does not necessarily coincide with an administrative border, in which each center assumes a specific role according to the relationship it develops with the strategies identified and the role of signifier that it assumes in the local context, reading the different levels of the existing relationships with the territory on a thematic basis (infrastructural, cultural, economic). Innovation consists in starting the choices concerning the development of the territory from the enhancement of the Cultural System through a vision of the system. The peculiarity of the approach used is that of considering the active role of local subjects, who are called to play a leading role in planning and in a radically innovative governance practice for the context.

At first glance, however, the process of co-construction of the plan is still incomplete. In fact, another line of research was launched in parallel, which concerns the strengthening of the attractiveness of the territory through the construction of a network with other areas of the province; hence the current integration strategy of the municipalities of Bivongi, Bova and Camini.

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