

BRAND EU PROJECT

MUNICIPALITY
OF IMOLA

brand.eu

ACQUIRING PLACE
BRANDING
COMPETENCES AT
WORK THROUGH
CONTINUING VET TO
INCREASE THE
ATTRACTIVENESS OF
EUROPEAN CITIES

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THE STRATEGY OF IMOLA

STRATEGY AREA: BRANDING AND TOURISM ATTRACTION



The town of Imola is the second largest municipality by number of inhabitants of the Metropolitan City of Bologna.

The residents are 70.008 (31/01/2021) on an area of 203.94 sq. km.

The town of Imola is part of the association of municipalities “Nuovo Circondario Imolese” together with the neighbouring Borgo Tossignano, Casalfiumanese, Castel del Rio, Castel Guelfo, Castel S. Pietro Terme, Dozza, Fontanelice, Medicina, Mordano. The total population of the 10 Municipalities of the territory of Imola is 133.180 inhabitants (31/12/2020).

The economic and productive structure of Imola and Nuovo Circondario Imolese is very complex. There are important social economy firms (cooperatives), innovative SMEs, and dynamic craft businesses. In the industrial field most of enterprises are concentrated in the mechanical, ceramic and building fields. There are also important companies operating in wood, food farming, paper and printing, and plastics-processing fields.

The services include companies active in large-scale retail, health and social sector, financial and insurance companies. There are moreover important examples of public-private collaboration in the field of environment and services to the community. Social farming is already applied in some cooperatives. There is a didactic farm, the well-known Scarabelli Higher Education Institute which is teaching agriculture since the eighteen century and the local annual Agriculture Fair, managed annually by the Municipality in mid June, that organizes seminars and events to promote farming.

The municipality of Imola has undergone a major political crisis in the last three years and this has not allowed the construction of a long-term strategy in the field of place branding which was the basis of this project.

Since September 2020 the Municipality of Imola has a new Administration that will run for 5 years and together with stakeholders is developing new methodologies to increase the attractiveness of the city from a tourist point of view, thanks to what it learned through participation in the BRAND-EU European project.

Thanks to its geographical position and the opportunities that the area offers, Imola has decided to invest in tourist attractions by making the racetrack and sport the key points of its place branding strategy, placing the city in the broader frame of the Motor Valley.

Imola is known around the world above all for its F1 circuit which is again an important contributing factor to tourist and business attraction. In 2020, 15 years after the last Grand Prix, F1 races returned to Imola and the city took this new opportunity to launch the TERRE&MOTORI brand (LANDS&MOTORS)

INVOLVED ACTORS

NUMBER OF ACTORS INVOLVED:

The training seminars of the Brand Eu project and the exchange of experiences with other partners have allowed us to understand that the first step is to work on the THINK part, to create a common vision of our municipality so that we can communicate it externally (local identity and external image)

And the second step was the creation of a team consisting of:

- officials and town councillors of the Municipality of Imola
- experts from the Tourist Board (IF Imola Faenza Tourist Compagny)
- Con.Ami Consortium
- Formula Imola Spa

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION OF THE PEOPLE INVOLVED:

(for ex. municipal administration, networks, enterprises, associations,...)

Municipal Administration

Consortium - a multiutility providing public services to 23 Municipalities of our Area

Enterprises

ROLE OF THE INVOLVED ACTORS:

The creation of a work team with the task of developing a project around the new TERRE&MOTORI brand has shown how working together can bring concrete results.

THE ACTORS INVOLVED WORKED ON THREE MAIN ACTIONS:

- starting to investigate what is authentic with your place and what makes citizens and visitors love it.
- forming a brand strategy that expresses these values and reshape all communication in order to build a unique brand.
- involving all actors of the destination in delivering "one brand"

ROLE OF THE OF THE MAIN PERSON IN CHARGE OF / RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STRATEGY

The Town Councilor for Tourism plays the role of responsible for the Branding strategy of the city of Imola. Thanks also to the lessons learned through the Brand-Eu project, this new strategy aimed at creating a project team to define together the identity of the city and the brand around which to develop future planning for the tourist attraction.

With reference to the history of the city and its famous racetrack, Imola has launched the TERRE&MOTORI brand which brings together the territory, traditions, art, culture, food and wine, motor races and outdoor activities.

CONDITIONS AND OPERATIONAL MODALITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION:

The Municipality has given prominence to the F1 Circular Track as the main brand of the city and it intends to develop the tourist attraction of the city around sports and outdoor activities.

It was decided to structure a place branding plan on the Santerno Valley in its entirety, in coordination with the other municipalities of the Valley, proposing Imola as a link between the Valley and the tourist flows from Bologna, also thanks to the new cycle path that will run for over 40 km along the river and will connect the city to the hills. To get a deep understanding of our place, its customers and their perception of the place.

The goal is to make Imola and its Racetrack the reference point of the Motor Valley, thanks to the the birth of the TERRE&MOTORI brand that was officially born on the occasion of the 2021 Formula 1 Grand Prix, and eagerly awaited automotive event during which millions of connected viewers around the world could see the word TERRE&MOTORI and the website, advertised in the stands and infrastructures.

The work team made up of the Municipality of Imola, Formula Imola and Consorzio Con.Ami in 2021 developed the first action of this new strategy: the "Eco-sustainable Racetrack" project to transform the Racetrack into an example

of sustainability, in accordance with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, and configure it as a tourist and business attraction brand of the 23 Municipalities belonging to the Con.Ami.

For the development of the strategy, we started from the analysis of the impact that the Racetrack has on the surrounding environment, with the aim to reduce and/or to compensate the emissions. To strengthen its functions, concrete answers must also be given in terms of eco-sustainability, in relation to coexistence with the city and its inhabitants.

The Imola racetrack has always been the city's brand for tourist attraction. It helps to define the brand identity, through a narrative that includes the authenticity of the experiences and the sense of pride and involvement of citizens of belonging to an internationally recognized place. A strong local identity among citizens that led them to be credible testimonials.

Being physically located in the heart of the city, it is of primary importance to make it more compatible with environmental needs and with the needs of citizens.

The Imola Racetrack today is more than a circuit...is rather the most important element of TERRE&MOTORI brand.

It should be emphasized that the circuit not only hosts car races, but many other events. To name a few: about 50 days per year open to the public for the use on foot, by bicycle and other non-motorized vehicles, concerts of international importance (including Guns N' Roses in 2017 and Pearl Jam due to 2022), cycling and running races and events organized in collaboration with the Institute of Montecatone – Rehabilitation Hospital, Center of high specialty for the intensive rehabilitation of people affected by spinal injuries.



CONTINUITY:

Around the TERRE&MOTORI brand strategy, a cluster of actions will be developed aimed at raising the qualitative element of the tourist offers as a whole, through collaborative forms between the players to increase the economic impact on the territory and attract Italian and foreign tourists during the year. A collaboration and synergy between the 23 Municipalities that are part of the Con.Ami consortium to be able to transfer this opportunities directly to the territories. A magnifying glass capable of enhancing the multiple assets of an area renowned for the quality and variety of its artistic, cultural and gastronomic offer with a particular focus dedicated to sport enthusiasts, such as motorsports and cycling but also outdoor activities in general.

For example, one of the first projects of this new brand strategy, the “Eco-sustainable Racetrack” has developed the following actions: active and passive mitigation of noise deriving from car and motor races through the construction of noise barriers; the production of electricity with photovoltaic panels; the construction of ecological stands; plastic-free policies for events and for the daily management and a bike-sharing service to promote sustainable mobility to and from the racetrack. The overall project has already brought the first results, that is the recognition of a star, assigned for compliance with the FIA (International Automobile Federation) Sustainability Program which involves the International Racetracks. The Imola Racetrack has thus become one of only 4 circuits in the world to meet this requirement.

This result is a good asset in the new brand strategy of the Municipality of Imola.

ELEMENTS CHARACTERISING THE STRATEGY:

RESOURCES USED:

As the tourist attraction strategy is a work in progress, we used ordinary economic and personnel resources. And we benefitted from the economic resources of the Brand Eu project as per learning seminars and exchange of experiences with the other partners which helped us a lot.

EFFECTIVENESS:

One of the most important factor was the creation of a working group and this has shown how working together can bring concrete results. The strength of our strategy was to work together with the Con.ami Consortium and therefore, indirectly, with the 23 Municipalities around the Municipality of Imola. The results will be positive for all the Area.



EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY:

We know that the challenge for the future will be the sustainability. And so we decided to aim at this goal. One of the main focus of our strategy is attract a kind of tourism more and more sustainable. The Eco Sustainable Racetrack and the cycle path along the Santerno river are examples of this strategy. The local companies will benefit from more sustainable tourism.

TRANSFERABILITY:

We worked in strict collaboration with the Con.Ami Consortium. That means that the results will be directly available to the 23 Municipalities which are members of Con.Ami. This will therefore allow to develop a virtuous circle, as all the goals in the tourist strategy is obtainable for each involved partner in the local society.

CHANGES INTERVENED AS A RESULT OF THE PRACTICE

The most important result has been a change in our way to work. We improved our communication system and we developed good vibes in working together as a team. We will use our experiences to be even more efficient in the future.

EVALUATION TOOLS OF THE PRACTICE

Within the next 2 years after the covid pandemic it will be possible to analyze whether there have been variations in the tourist flows, in terms of numbers and types of tourists, in order to verify the impact of the new strategy.

POSSIBLE WEAKNESSES OF THE PRACTICE

The main difficulty is the political discontinuity that the city has had to face in the last three years. The idea of relaunching the tourist attractiveness of the City of Imola through a brand that brings together the tradition linked to motors with sports and outdoor activities, to enhance a rich territory from a naturalistic, cultural and food and wine point of view, was already in our minds for many years, but only now with a new Administration that will run the city for the next 5 years it has been possible to realize this goal.

