

Fostering Well-being, Sustainable Tourism, and Ecological Values: the Case of Sicily's Regional Plan

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Abstract

The dynamic challenges of our era -encompassing climatic, economic, and socio-spatial dimensions- demand the adoption of innovative tools, even within established and effective planning frameworks.

In Sicily, Southern Italy, this approach is being implemented as part of the Regional Territorial Plan (PTR), which is currently in the planning phase under the direction of the Regional Government, with support from the Planning Departments of the region's leading universities. Drawing on this planning experience, the contribution briefly emphasizes the need to redefine development policies within the regional planning framework, with a particular focus on integrating well-being, sustainable tourism, and the enhancement of environmental and landscape values at a regional scale.

Specifically, this study highlights the innovative strategies adopted by the PTR in designing and implementing measures to strengthen non-motorized mobility networks and promote active tourism. These initiatives reflect a planning approach, where environmental considerations take center stage in the planning process.

The primary objective of this research is to demonstrate the role of regional planning in advancing non-motorized mobility and active tourism at a regional scale while addressing challenges related to ecosystem health, landscape conservation, and cultural heritage preservation. To ensure non-motorized mobility is permanently embedded in landscape and regional planning tools, the research aims to develop a systemic planning approach that integrates regional strategies with efforts to enhance networks for non-motorized mobility and active tourism.

A key aspect of the PTR is its emphasis on integrating non-motorized mobility networks with ecological corridors through a planning approach tailored for application across natural areas, farmlands, and other non-urbanized zones, particularly those linked to primary ecological infrastructure. This strategy aims to reinforce ecological connections, preserve landscape values, and promote active tourism.

The outcomes of this contribution include the development of sustainable planning models and tools that balance environmental protection, economic growth, and social well-being. Additionally, these results offer valuable insights for future planning efforts, paving the way for more effective policies and strategies oriented to enhance regional resilience, foster non-motorized mobility and sustainable tourism, and safeguard natural ecosystems.

Author Biography

Luca Barbarossa, ph.D in Town and Regional planning, is Assistant Professor of Urban Planning at the Syracuse School of Architecture and Cultural Heritage, University of Catania. His research primarily focuses on urban sustainability, land-use management, and the interaction between land use and transport planning, adopting a holistic approach with a strong emphasis on environmental concerns. He has authored numerous studies published in international scientific journals, as well as books, book chapters and conference papers.