



**Ecological and Sustainable Innovation in VET for  
Entrepreneurial initiatives around the Rivers  
landscapes**

**ESIVER**

**2023-1-ES01-KA220-VET-000153584**

**Desk Research on national  
eco-entrepreneurial activities in  
Italy**



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## Information

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## Consortium



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## Introduction to the report

Eco-entrepreneurship is thriving in Italy, driven by a commitment to sustainability and innovation. Rooted in the country's cultural heritage and natural beauty, eco-entrepreneurship spans sectors like renewable energy, sustainable fashion, organic agriculture, and eco-tourism.

Italy's dedication to sustainability is evident in its environmental awareness, supportive policies, and evolving consumer preferences. Despite challenges such as regulatory hurdles and funding constraints, success stories abound, showcasing the transformative potential of eco-entrepreneurship.

As Italy continues its journey towards sustainability, eco-entrepreneurship will play a central role. By fostering innovation and collaboration, Italy can lead the way towards a more sustainable future, inspiring positive change on a global scale.

## National eco-entrepreneurial initiatives

Sustainable tourism in Italy encompasses diverse initiatives aimed at preserving natural resources, cultural heritage, and promoting responsible travel practices. This includes river tourism, a niche segment within Italy's broader sustainable tourism landscape.

Italy's extensive network of rivers, canals, and waterways offers unique opportunities for travelers seeking eco-friendly and immersive experiences. River tourism in Italy often involves exploring historic waterways like the Po River, traversing picturesque landscapes and historic towns in northern Italy. Sustainable practices in river tourism focus on minimizing environmental impact while maximizing socio-economic benefits for local communities.

Initiatives include the use of eco-friendly vessels, cultural heritage preservation, local community engagement, and environmental education. Ultimately, sustainable river tourism



in Italy aims to balance environmental conservation, cultural enrichment, and socio-economic development, providing travelers with experiences that respect and preserve the country's natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

## **Definition, characteristics, and national statistics of different derivations of the eco-entrepreneurship in the country**

Italy's performance in eco-innovation and circular economy is generally positive, thanks to dedicated policies. However, challenges like resource scarcity and dependence on other countries make Italy vulnerable to economic fluctuations and global crises. Italy's Overshoot Day in 2021, occurring on May 13th, highlights the unsustainable consumption patterns, requiring 2.7 times its land area to meet demands. This reliance on imports exacerbates environmental deficits, contributing to global resource depletion. Transitioning to a circular economy is crucial to reduce resource exploitation and dependency on imports.

Italy faces a critical challenge in decoupling GDP growth from materials consumption to achieve better circularity in the economy. Although efforts have been made to promote eco-innovation and circular economy policies, acceleration is needed to address this issue. Italy ranks 8th in the 2020 Eco-Innovation Index, with a score of 120, surpassing the EU average. This positive performance is attributed to policies focusing on ecolabeling, waste management, bioeconomy, and green industry. Italy excels in waste management, resource productivity, and reuse rate, ranking first in these areas. Despite progress, barriers like low R&D investments and regional disparities persist, hindering further advancement in eco-innovation.

## **Ecotourism in river landscape surroundings**

Italy's rich tapestry of cultural heritage and scenic landscapes extends beyond its renowned landmarks and historic cities to embrace its picturesque waterways. From the meandering Po River in the north to the iconic canals of Venice and Florence, Italy's rivers and watercourses offer travelers a unique perspective on the country's captivating beauty and storied past. Below are some of the primary destinations for river tourism in Italy:





**Po River:** Italy's foremost watercourse, the Po River, traverses the northern expanse of the country, offering an evocative journey through verdant landscapes and historic settlements. Riverine excursions along the Po afford travelers an immersive encounter with the region's natural splendor and cultural patrimony.

**Venetian Lagoon:** The Venetian Lagoon, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, epitomizes the allure of aquatic exploration in Italy. Embarking upon gondola rides through Venice's labyrinthine canals or ferrying across the lagoon to the islands of Murano, Burano, and Torcello, visitors are enveloped in a tapestry of Venetian artistry and maritime history.

**Tiber River:** Wending its course through the heart of Rome, the Tiber River presents a veritable aquatic thoroughfare to the city's storied past and architectural grandeur. Navigating the Tiber's waters unveils a panorama of iconic landmarks, including St. Peter's Basilica, Castel Sant'Angelo, and venerable Roman bridges.

**Arno River:** Florence's Arno River, an emblem of the city's Renaissance legacy, offers a tranquil vantage point from which to behold its artistic treasures. Boat excursions along the Arno provide panoramic vistas of Florence's architectural marvels, from the iconic Ponte Vecchio to the resplendent Duomo.

**Navigli Canals in Milan:** Milan's Navigli district, characterized by its historic canals, beckons travelers to embark upon a voyage through the city's cultural tapestry. Boat tours along the Naviglio Grande and Naviglio Pavese canals afford an immersion into Milan's vibrant urban landscape, replete with cafes, boutiques, and artistic enclaves.

### **Limitations of the desk research, if any**

Not applicable.

### **Good practises of eco-entrepreneurial initiatives**

After extensive research conducted throughout Italian firms and organizations committed to sustainable river tourism, a series of case studies and best practices has been enlisted as follows.







I Love Piave

*Date of development*

2016

*Implementation Organization*

I Love Piave

*Purpose*

I Love Piave is a project aimed at promoting excursions along the Piave river through 60 kms of navigable ways, from Salgareda to Cortellazzo, or through the so called "Piave Vecchia".

*Description*

The entrepreneur project was financed by the Veneto Region under the POR-FESR 2014 Programme with the aim to foster local sustainable entrepreneurship in the Piave River.

*Sustainability*

The organization is still operating.



**I LOVE PIAVE**



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## Barbasso Nature Culture

### *Date of development*

1995

### *Implementation Organization*

Barbasso Nature Culture

### *Purpose*

Barbasso Nature Culture aims at promoting its 3 fundamental values:

1. Generating economic value to strengthen the services of ecosystems protection and preservation through a nature-oriented culture.
2. Promoting the value of Nature and incentivising knowledge and consciousness through scientific dissemination and recreational activities.
3. By treating our guests as as guests and not only as customers.

### *Description*

Barbasso Nature Culture is a group outdoor and nature professionals born within a Veneto Region project financed by the POR/FESR 2014/2020 fund.

The organization consists of tour operators and naturalists with more than ten years of experience which work revolves around:

- Preservation and sustainable development of nature, planning and dissemination.
- Sustainable tourism, planning and development of territories and products.
- Guided tours through natural landscapes.

### *Sustainability*

The organization is still operating.



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## Onda Selvaggia

### *Date of development*

1995

### *Implementation Organization*

Onda Selvaggia

### *Purpose*

Onda Selvaggia was born from the passion for the kayak and outdoor activities of its two founders: Chicco and Sonia.

From 1995, the group has been continuing widened and now it includes a wide range of professionals that go from kayak teachers from the Italian Kayak Federation, to rafting and hydrospeed instructor as well as naturalistic and alpine guides

### *Description*

Onda Selvaggia is based on the Brenta's shore, green area that provides a beach, pic-nic areas, food services and historical and naturalistic itinerary to be traversed by foot or by bike.

Additionally, Onda Selvaggia offers a wide range of outdoor activities such as kayaks, rafting, hydrospeed and canyoning

### *Sustainability*

The organization is still operating.





## VeGAL

### *Date of development*

2009

### *Implementation Organization*

VeGAL

### *Purpose*

The Association was born in 1995 in order to manage the European Commission's Leader Programme II in the frame of rural development politics. In 2000 VeGAL became a Development Agency with the aim of connecting local stakeholders in the rural development of Veneto Region by adopting a bottom-up governance approach.

### *Description*

VeGAL's main activities are:

- territorial analysis;
- scenarios development;
- local governance;
- economically sustainable planning.

VeGAL's main partners are: municipalities, EEPs, trade unions, universities and research institutes and the cultural sector.

### *Sustainability*

The organization is still operating and right now is managing a series of project related to sustainable river tourism:

- GiraLemene: a cycle-pedestrian tour along the Lemene river that goes through 4 municipalities: Gruaro, Portogruaro, Concordia Sagittaria and Caorle. Programme: PSL Axis 4 Leader PSR 2007-13.
- GiraLivenza: a greenway along the Livenza river through an itinerary that comprehends the municipalities of Torre di Mosto and Caorle. It also aims at completing the Livenza docking site. Programme: Leader+.
- GiraTagliamento: an itinerary that connects the Tagliamento outlet with the Alvisopoli wood through the Park of Tagliamento and the so called "Prati delle Pars" in





the municipality of Fossalta di Portogruaro. Programme: PSL Axis 4 Leader PSR 2007-13.



# VeGAL

## Il Mondo di Fortunato

### *Date of development*

2005

### *Implementation Organization*

Il mondo di Fortunato

### *Purpose*

To offer a series of sustainable activities and services on the Lake of Corlo.

### *Description*

Il mondo di Fortunato is a flourishing touristic facility on the Lake of Corlo (Belluno) that offers a wide variety of outdoor activities and services, from restaurant services to picnic areas, kayak and paddle boat renting and paragliding adventures

### *Sustainability*

The organization is still operating.



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## Veneto Rivers Holiday

### *Date of development*

2016

### *Implementation Organization*

Veneto Rivers Holiday

### *Purpose*

The company's purpose is to facilitate sustainable and immersive river tourism experiences, allowing travelers to explore the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the Veneto region while fostering environmental stewardship and local engagement.

### *Description*

Veneto Rivers Holidays provides guided boat tours, eco-friendly cruises, cultural excursions, and educational programs focused on environmental conservation along the rivers of the Veneto region.

### *Sustainability*

The organization is still operating.



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## VENETO RIVERS HOLIDAY

### Conclusions

In conclusion, the Italian river landscape offers a good variety of touristic experiences through some of the main itineraries, but it seems quite clear that more efforts might be put in order to widen the range of localities involved in sustainable river tourism throughout the entire Italian territory.

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