URBAN II Evaluation
Case Study: Carrara
1.0 **Introduction**

This section describes the main socio-economic characteristics of Carrara at the time the programme was initiated, the main challenges, and their evolution during the programme’s life. After this, we describe how the programme has operated and the main aims of the URBAN II programme.

The territory of the Municipality of Carrara\(^1\) extends along a restricted strip of land hemmed in between the Tyrrhenean Sea and Apuan Alps. Carrara is physically divided between the original historic nucleus of the area found towards the mountains and the area towards the sea that has seen significant development during the last 20 years. At the start of the programme the two areas presented very strong disparities in terms of economic and urban development.

**Figure 1 – Carrara Urban II area**

![Carrara Urban II area](http://urban2.comune.carrara.ms.it/)

Source: http://urban2.comune.carrara.ms.it/

In particular, the historic centre was affected by serious environmental problems and related social unease, tension and depopulation, while the administrative districts towards the sea were

\(^1\) The Municipality of Carrara is situated in the Region of Tuscany in the Province of Massa Carrara, covers a total surface area of 70.97 km, and has a resident population of 65,692 inhabitants. The target area corresponds to 39% of the municipality’s territory on which lives 53% of the total population (data ISTAT 1998).
characterised by expanding economic activity and a growing population that were also encouraged by urban planning and zoning policies favouring this area.

“The great ambition of the CIP Urban II Carrara was to re-launch Carrara ancient vocation of “City of Marble”.

The strong point of the Municipality’s economic activity has historically been the entire filière of the marble industry from quarrying the blocks in 80 quarries located in the mountains, to the transformation, marketing, and transport of the material. 600 companies are involved in this activity and employ a total of 4,000 workers (only 800 in extraction). The structural changes in this sector have crucially influenced the urban development of the city and have caused the main problems that then led to the decline of the historic centre.

In fact, in recent years running up to the start of the Urban II Programme, the marble industry recorded a fall in employment (-10% in 1998) and a structural reduction of transformation activity in favour of commercialisation and transport not only of the marble blocks but also and above all of waste and rubble. In particular, this structural change has been caused by the relatively recent practice of using the marble waste and rubble to obtain calcium carbonate, an important substance in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, located outside the territory.

Table 1.1 Lorry traffic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MARBLE</th>
<th>HARD ROCK SCALPINGS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From</td>
<td>To</td>
<td>Lorries</td>
<td>One lorry every minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.59</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.59</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.59</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.59</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The 2000 data indicates that compared to the 1 million tons of stone material, there were 3 million tons of waste and rubble.
### Table 1.2 Socio-economic indicators of the target area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>URBAN AREA</th>
<th>CARRARA</th>
<th>TUSCANY</th>
<th>ITALY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (Unit)</td>
<td>34,635</td>
<td>65,692</td>
<td>3,497,806</td>
<td>56,923,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (%)</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate for women (%)</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Authors processing of CIP Urban II data.

---

1 Data ISTAT 2000 (Italian National Institute of Statistics).
The unemployment rate for women was particularly relevant. The lack of job opportunities available in the area also affected the social dimension for the worse, with alcoholism occurring among the marginalised young people.

In addition to protests and demonstrations, the strongest manifestation of the discomfort suffered by the resident population was the progressive abandonment of the historical centre and the relocation of entire families outside the target area.

1.1 Characteristics of the Programme

Given this context, the Municipality’s administration was already aspiring at pursuing a significant strategy of urban regeneration and economic and productive stimulation in those areas of the city’s historic centre affected by a process of physical, social, and economic decline.

The Carrara Urban II Programme arose out of the need to stop this decline and to activate a process of urban regeneration that would lead to repopulation and increase in productive activities in these areas. It was clear that decongestion of the historic centre and the improvement of physical assets of the city had to be the immediate aim of the Carrara Urban II Programme. For this reason the highest share of funds were addressed to physical regeneration measures (see Table 3). The second thematic priority was transport, which included the urban bypass construction.

Table 1.3 Resources allocation deployed under URBAN II in terms of thematic priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Priority</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Budget allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical and environmental regeneration (P)</td>
<td>1.1 Rehabilitation of urban sites and recovering of public spaces</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 Interventions aimed at improving the cultural heritage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 Support to activities concerning the craft, trade and tourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport (T)</td>
<td>1.2 Transport infrastructure</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 Infrastructure for urban mobility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship and employment (E)</td>
<td>2.1 Initiatives aimed at promoting the tourism and the culture</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Inclusion (S)</td>
<td>3.1 Infrastructure addressed to the social inclusion and equal opportunities</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 Interventions aimed at overcoming the social exclusion problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Assistance (TA)</td>
<td>4.1 Local technical assistance</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Figure 1, the highest proportion of resources, 57% of the total budget, was reserved for the Axis I “Polyfunctional and ecocompatible re-urbanisation of urban spaces”, while Axis II “Entrepreneurship and culture” was allocated 32% of all the resources. This figure also shows the lower financial provision for Axis III “Strategy to fight discrimination and exclusion” (6%) and Axis IV “Technical Assistance” (5%).

Figure 2 – Carrara Urban CIP II – Share of the total cost for each Axis of operation

Source: The authors

To all intents and purposes the urban bypass project was the pillar of the regeneration agenda provided for in the Programme and formed the premise for all of the other regeneration initiatives and upgrading of the historic centre. Furthermore, in financial terms Measure 1.2 “Transport infrastructure” was the most important operation (see Table 4). Of a total outlay of € 27,165,000, approximately 35% (€ 9,400,000) of the Programme’s total resources were allocated to building the urban bypass.

“The 2003 terrific flood caused a re-thinking of strategic priorities and new more urgent needs emerged”.

However, following the 2003 flood that caused the River Carrione to overflow this strategic priority was partially revised. Confronted with the emergency of repairing the historic centre and making the areas damaged by the flooding safe, thanks to the synergy from the support of SPD Tuscany 2000-2006 that allocated the resources to complete the urban bypass, the Municipality’s administration reviewed the financing of the measures in the CIP, transferring part of the funds allocated to the urban bypass (that did not suffer any resizing thanks to the funds provided by SPD Tuscany 2000-2006) to the clean up operation in Measure 1.1. The resources allocated to clean up
neglected urban sites and to the restoration of public spaces were therefore tripled as a result of the re-planning of the budget. However this transfer of resources at the measure level did not influence the breakdown of resources among priorities Axis initially provided for.

**Table 1.4 Division of financing between the Programme’s priorities before and after the remodelling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total cost</td>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>% ERDF/Total cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Axis I</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyfunctional and ecocompatible re-urbanisation of urban spaces</td>
<td>15,590</td>
<td>4,230</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1</strong> Improvement of decayed urban sites and rehabilitation and renewal of public spaces</td>
<td>2,685</td>
<td>1,072</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2</strong> Transport infrastructure</td>
<td>9,400</td>
<td>1,756</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.3</strong> Infrastructure for urban mobility</td>
<td>3,505</td>
<td>1,402</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Axis II</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise and culture</td>
<td>8,645</td>
<td>3,458</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1</strong> Initiatives promoting tourism and culture</td>
<td>2,765</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.2</strong> Improvement of the cultural heritage</td>
<td>3,520</td>
<td>1,408</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.3</strong> Support for artisan craft trades, commerce, and diffusion of</td>
<td>2,360</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Axis/Measure</strong></td>
<td>Total cost</td>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>% ERDF/Total cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tourism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Axis III</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy to combat discrimination and exclusion</td>
<td>1,420</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Infrastructure for social inclusion and equal opportunities</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Action to overcome exclusion</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Authors on CIP Urban II data*

### 1.2 Realisations on the ground

All of the actions planned in the Carrara Urban II Programme had been carried out by the end of the Programme in June 2009. All targets were achieved, and exceeded in some cases.

The programme managers in their interviews revealed how the programme had a slow implementation in the beginning. The first actions taken were the more traditional ones since, as they had already been carried out in the past, did not need a great deal of planning. In particular, events promoting tourism and culture already active in the area and de minimis schemes helping the tourist-hotel industry which had already been set in motion by 2001.

The substantial part of the operations was carried out after 2003 for a specific decision of the administration to meet two needs, the first technical and the second strategic:

- work on the infrastructural heritage (building renovation and transport infrastructure renewal) required more time to plan than more traditional action. In particular, the rule of “n+2” concentrated the administration on a great planning effort in the initial years that once the work was begun would reduce the risk of the unexpected and delays.

---

1 The programme was given a six month extension beyond its official deadline of the 31 December 2008.
2 According to all that is stated in article 32, paragraph 2 of EU regulation no. 1260/1999, the European Commission automatically release the quota of financial resources, which had not been used at the end of the second year following the commitment.
• Several regenerations and renovations of space in the historic centre had to be completed before other initiatives that functionally depended on these operations to be started. Furthermore, it was felt that the work to build the Urban bypass should ideally represent the true launch of the programme in terms of visibility to the townspeople. What now follows describes the work carried out and results obtained in detail.

1.3 Axis I – Polyfunctional and ecocompatible re-urbanisation of the urban spaces

The most important intervention of the Axis, the first lot (the urban bypass) of the so-called Marble Road, was completed, as was all the planned work to regenerate urban sites and renew public spaces.

Table 1.5 Carrara CIP Urban II – Axis I Output achieved as at 30 June 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>% Spent/ budget</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Output Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure 1.1 Improvement of decayed urban sites and rehabilitation and renewal of public spaces</td>
<td>96.57</td>
<td>– Cleaning, refacing, and resurfacing of several streets and piazzas (including Piazza Duomo), pavements brought up to standard – Renewal and restoration of bridges and other monuments – Services: construction of public swimming baths, kiosks, street lighting – Others: repair and consolidation of the river banks, improvement of the La Padula park, repair to sections of the River Carrione</td>
<td>Number of urban renewal projects supported Target: 12 Actual Value: 40 Public spaces created or renewed Target: 1500 m² Actual Value: 21,548 m² Green spaces Target: 1200 m² Actual Value: 95,000 m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 1.2 Transport Infrastructure</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Construction of the urban bypass (Lot I of the Marble Road)</td>
<td>Road constructed Target: 1.5 km Actual Value: 1.5 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 1.3 Infrastructure for urban mobility</td>
<td>100.92</td>
<td>– Automated management of public transport – Laybys and pedestrianisation in 6 sections</td>
<td>Number of infrastructure projects completed Target: 5 Actual Value: 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data monitoring system management

The initial budget for the construction of the urban bypass was € 9,400.00 (of which 19% came from the ERDF) but was halved in the 2003 remodelling. Notwithstanding the fact that the project was to meet an urgent need, it was not initiated immediately. The work only began in September

1 In fact, various initiatives promoting culture or social inclusion were held in places and buildings subject to Urban interventions.

2 In fact, the remaining resources used to finance the road were provided by the SPD Tuscany 2000-2006.
2003 and was completed in February 2007. The result of this work is a 1.5 km long artery that has made a partial contribution to keeping heavy goods vehicles out of the historic centre. The urban bypass is only lot 1 of the Marble Road (see Box 1) and was composed of the route to be followed to access the quarries while the heavy goods vehicles exiting the quarries still had to pass along Via Carriona. The problem of congestion in the historic centre caused by these goods vehicles will therefore only be fully resolved when lot II of the Marble Road is completed in 2011 (with other funding).

Box 1 – The Marble road

The need to modernise the transport of marble from the quarries to the sea goes back to the mid-nineteenth century. At the end of the year 1800, 30 km of the so-called Marble Railway connected the quarries to the saw-mills, and signalled the start of a period of economic growth in the area. The Great Depression of the 1930s and the Second World War had serious repercussions on the takings of the company that managed the Railway due to the decrease in traffic using the railway. As it was too exacting to operate, the railway was dismantled in the 1950s and replaced by road transport.

The transport of marble through the city of Carrara caused nuisance and pollution that had become insupportable by the 1990s. The construction of the Marble Road, a special route outside the city for transporting the marble, was prevented for a great deal of time by lack of funds and only began in June 2003 due to the Urban II initiative. Today the work continues apace and the completion of the whole arterial road is expected in 2011.

In terms of the amount of work and financial resources consumed, the most important measure in the Axis was composed of the renewal of important piazzas, the resurfacing of large parts of the historic centre, the repair of paths along the course of the River Carrione, the restoration of historic and architectural remains, and the creation of lay-bys and covered car parks for the benefit of the historic centre. Particularly interesting among the restoration and repair work along the river were the resurfacing and restoration of several historic bridges.

Box 2 – Restoration of the Historic Bridges

The regeneration and restoration of Carrara’s historic centre included the repair of two bridges across the River Carrione, the Ponte delle Lacrime and the Ponte Baroncino. These are two of the city’s historic bridges whose parapets and arches are made from solid marble. The bridges were in a serious state of disrepair. The most evident signs were caused by significant attack from biotic agents (not only moss and lichens but also flowers and small plants) that in addition to changing the esthetic appearance of the surface, had caused the disconnection of several blocks of marble, and elements such as hooks and nails used by the people for various reasons (the banks of the river near the bridges had also been used to lay washing out to dry in the past). A wastewater conduit had even been placed in the space in front of the arch of Ponte Baroncino.

The work to renew the piazzas not only involved resurfacing but also upgrading of the existing street lighting. The fountains, monuments, and kiosks in the main piazzas of the historic centre were also restyled.
The work initially involved a study to measure both the extent and depth of attack from the biotic agents and using historic photographs to identify what the original bridge looked like. After extensive analysis of the condition of the bridges, the disfigurations were removed, the marble parapets repaired, the surface remade, and the structure covered with protective substances to prolong the life of the restoration.

The resurfacing and restoration of Ponte Lacrime costed €122,500 and that of Ponte Baroncino costed €89,000. In both cases the ERDF part-financing was 27% of the total cost.

### 1.3.1 Axis II – Promotion of enterprise, tourism, and culture

Axis II included initiatives to promote tourism and culture (Measure 2.1), to improve the cultural heritage (Measure 2.2), and in support of commerce and artisan craft trades (Measure 2.3).

#### Table 1.6 Carrara Urban CIP II – Axis II output achieved as at 30 June 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>% Spent /budget</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Output indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure 2.1 Initiatives to Promote Tourism and Culture</td>
<td>101.39</td>
<td>– XII Biannual International Sculpture Exhibition – International Sculpture Symposium – Promotion of sculpture and other promotional events</td>
<td>Number of events held Target: 6 Actual Value: 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 2.2: Improvement of the cultural heritage</td>
<td>106.19</td>
<td>– Regeneration of urban routes – Regeneration of Piazza Battisti, Via Cavour, and the San Martino area – Restoration of archaeological finds – Fitting out and improvement of the Museum of Marble – Fitting out, acquisition of works of art, and setting up of Museum of Sculpture</td>
<td>Museum space increased Target: 3 Actual Value: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 2.3 Support for Artisan Craft Trades, Commerce, and Diffusion Of Tourism</td>
<td>96.63</td>
<td>– Distribution of help to commerce, to public enterprises, and organisation of hotel and non-hotel accommodation – De minimus contribution to neighbourhood commercial enterprises and artisan marble craft working – Contribution to initiatives to upgrade and stimulate the city</td>
<td>Companies given grants Target: 50-60 Actual Value: 98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Data monitoring system management*
In its promotion of tourism and culture aimed at raising the profile of marble (Measure 2.1), the Urban II Programme promoted the following three events: the Biannual Sculpture Exhibition, three editions of the International Sculpture Symposium, and the Drawing Marble project (Drawing Marble). Certainly the most successful in terms of visibility (including resources invested, approximately 60% of the funding available for this measure) was the XII Biannual International Sculpture Exhibition\(^1\). The event was successful because of the artistic quality of the scientific project, the exhibiting artists, and the work of the Organising Committee (the Municipality, Cassa di Risparmio di Carrara s.p.a. and the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Carrara) and certainly due to the fact that the events and exhibitions also took place in urban spaces whose regeneration was financed by Urban II, above all the former convent of Saint Francis. For example, the section themed “Sculpture Marble”\(^2\) saw seven international artists compete against each other in one of the streets in the historic centre repaved as part of Measure 1.1 where the artists worked throughout the events in sculpting works of marble. The works produced were then placed together in Padula Park, which itself was also subject to Urban renewal.

Of the work aimed at improving the cultural heritage (Measure 2.2), particularly interesting was the fitting out, upgrading, and acquisition of works for the Museum of Sculpture in the space available in the former convent of Saint Francis, which was specifically opened to coincide with the XII Biannual\(^3\).

In addition to promoting cultural events and improving the cultural heritage, Axis II was also successful in supporting commerce and artisan craft industries (Measure 2.3) for which more companies were given grants than originally forecasted (98 rather than 60). The support provided by this measure partly financed (up to 40% in the initial calls for tenders, and 50% in the later ones) improvements to the infrastructure such as buildings, plant design, and purchase of consumer durables for the restoration and upgrading of the beneficiary structures\(^4\).

Support was initially only given to artisan craft trades (marble laboratories and shops selling marble art) and tourism (Bed & Breakfast)\(^5\). After the first four calls for tenders (two for B&B and two for artisan craft companies working with marble), it was clear that there was scant demand for these measures and that they would not use all the resources earmarked for them.

\(1\) The total cost of all the work connected to the Biannual (that was composed of various initiatives) was 1,680,070.34 Euro, of which 40% came from ERDF part-financing.
\(2\) The total cost of this event was 55,736.33 Euro.
\(3\) The total cost of the work was significant (1,069,179.15 Euro of which 40% came from ERDF part-financing).
\(4\) The initial calls for tenders financed investments up to a total of 100,000 Euro while the eligible costs were much lower (20,000 Euro) for the later calls for tenders.
\(5\) This decision was based on the desire to consolidate tourist niches connected to city’s marble production and working (the so-called ‘marble tourism’ that attracts foreign tourists, mainly from Germany).
The involvement of local partnerships improved the effectiveness of this measure by identifying potential beneficiaries with greater needs. The support was directed to other types of beneficiaries, resulting in four more calls for tenders1.

### 1.3.2 Axis III – Strategies to fight social exclusion

Interventions for social inclusion also had positive results. Ten training courses were held compared to the seven originally planned and the development of new infrastructure to support the most disadvantaged groups in the area (women, the old, and the young) almost doubled compared to that initially planned.

**Table 1.7 Carrara Urban CIP II – Axis III output achieved as at 30 June 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>% Spent/ budget</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Output indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Measure 3.1 Infrastructure for Social Inclusion and for Equal Opportunities | 102.1 | Fitting out, start up, and management of:  
– Outreach counselling service for disadvantaged women  
– Gender based centre for female inclusion  
– A young people’s centre  
– “Carrara Dignitas “ old age research centre | Number of activities supported  
Target: 6  
Actual Value: 9  
Actions financed  
Target: 6  
Actual Value: 12 |
| Measure 3.2 – Action to Overcome Exclusion | 100.48 | 9 training courses:  
Linguistic literacy, Information technology, Entrepreneurship, Graphics, Cultural assets, and others | Courses held  
Target: 7  
Actual Value: 10 |

Source: Data monitoring system management

The attention given by the programme to the social dimension arose out of the municipality administration’s knowledge that the environmental and urban decay of the target area had also been having significant repercussions on the residents’ social life and relationships.

Various actions specifically aimed at the young, old2, and women1 with problems were taken to favour processes of socialisation and to include disadvantaged groups in the reference area’s population.

---

1 These measures, aimed at commercial activity, were set in motion within the wider framework of a project promoted by the Regional Government of Tuscany supporting municipal initiatives to develop publications promoting historic shops and markets (the so-called “Botteghe e Mercati storici”).

2 Among these were the restoration of the “ex Mulino Forti” Centre for the Elderly – a meeting place for the elderly as well as being used for numerous training courses provided by the Programme – and the youth club located in the renovated Aurelio Saffi elementary
As with the cultural events, these initiatives were held in public buildings restored using funds from Measure 1.1 or 2.2. Furthermore, the management of the centres for the old, young, and women was entrusted to associations of volunteers already active in the municipality, identified by a competitive selection procedure.

Ten training courses were also held for women and for the young2.

### 2.0 Impact

#### 2.1 Main changes to the target area

Initially the municipality administration intended the URBAN II Programme to promote the complete rebirth of the city and relaunch its original vocation as a city with a tradition and knowledge of working Marble. The strategic objective was to stop the depopulation of the historic centre, rehabilitate and renew its infrastructural heritage, and create new employment opportunities.

The 2003 flood and the consequent re-planning of the budgets led to partial resizing of the programme’s strategic ambitions, focussing on the most urgent and limited priorities. As such, the regeneration of the physical and infrastructural heritage as a precondition for later successful relaunching of productive activity and the historic-cultural vocations in the city was confirmed as a more realistic and pressing strategic objective.

The opinions from the field indicate that, although the actual renaissance of Carrara as ‘City of Marble’ has still to take place, on a more realistic vein the Carrara URBAN II Programme effectively helped to stop the process of decay and formed the basis for the renaissance of the target area in terms of repopulation and increase in commercial, productive, and tourist activity. In fact, the interviewees confirmed that the incisive and extensive work, never before seen to this extent, functioned as a driving force behind a series of other regeneration schemes and the relaunching of the city. Anecdotes of some nuclear families from other parishes relocating to the historic centre were provided.

“Carrara URBAN II Programme effectively helped
to stop the process of decay and formed the basis
for the renaissance of the target area in terms of repopulation
and increase in commercial, productive, and tourist activity”.

Several changes produced by the URBAN work are already clearly visible. Creating the urban bypass has not only contributed to improving the liveability of the area in terms of reducing urban traffic and transport times for the stone materials but has also had repercussions on commercial activity localised in the historic centre. Data provided by the Management Authority shows that dust pollution fell by 32.4% and transit of heavy goods vehicles through the historic centre by 22.2%. This data confirms that the complete drop in traffic and pollution will only be possible when the construction of lot II of the Marble Road has been completed, expected in January 2011.

Other evident results can be observed in the urban regeneration that has improved many areas of the historic centre. This work is the most visible to the inhabitants and has certainly aesthetically improved places in the historic centre, it has made them more usable and it triggered a wider process of urban improvement in which synergy with the wider urban regeneration policies of the municipality has also played a part (see the next chapter).

To this end, however, it is worth noting that the field visits revealed the persistence of an important cause of decay: the advanced deterioration of private buildings, including those in several of the spaces that have benefited from Urban II¹. As long as this situation continues, the complete improvement of these places will obviously remain incomplete. The municipality’s administration is fully aware of this limitation, and had in fact allocated own resources specifically for this purpose in the past, which were actually diverted after the 2003 flood to address the damage suffered. The municipality is currently evaluating the possibility of allocating new financial resources² so that this urgent regeneration and renewal can start.

However, the complete renovation of the city, above all economically and in terms of employment, evidently needs more time and different instruments, as also recognised by the municipality’s administration. Lastly, it should be noted that the global financial crisis has intervened and increased the economic problems in the target area. Notwithstanding the removal of some of the causes of stagnation in productive activity in the historic centre, a strong economic upturn has yet to occur.

2.2 Impact

In order to evaluate the contribution made by the urban bypass and more generally the effect the regeneration and renewal work has had, the municipality’s administration³ recently commissioned

¹ The municipality’s administration would have been willing to use the Urban Programme’s resources for this purpose but the eligibility rules of the programme do not include refacing the facade of private buildings.
² The financial need is estimated at approximately 500,000 Euro.
³ The study was financed by Urban resources.
a study of a sample of more than 3% of the inhabitants in the target area who were asked if they intended to remain living in their current area of residence for the next five years. According to initial results (still provisional) approximately 96% of the resident population’s answers were positive.

Regarding the economic impact on commercial activities that benefited from the Urban funds, the interviews reveal how the Programme contributed to accelerating the change and improving the quality of the work that would nevertheless have been carried out at a lower specification. In cases where the financial support had a greater effect, this contributed to a significant relaunch of the beneficiary’s activities, while smaller projects contributed to a smaller degree to the modernisation and aesthetic improvement of the structures (see Box 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3 – Examples of impact on the productive activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The “Nino” Bar benefited from a grant in the first call for tenders in Measure 2.3. The opportunity to benefit from the Urban funds (of a total investment of € 100,000 36% was provided by the Urban II) in this case not only meant the anticipation of the interventions required but also more important work than would certainly otherwise have been possible. The renovation work (plastering, electrics and plumbing, furniture) completely transformed and modernised the bar and according to people interviewed (also confirmed by several clients), it has had a significant economic impact given that the number of customers has almost doubled in about five years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, much less important economically was the impact on the historic Bajni bookshop that was established in the centre of Carrara 109 years ago. The bookshop benefited from the final call to tenders that had a smaller total amount of expenditure than the initial calls for tender (ERDF average contribution from € 3,000 to 10,000, covering 50% of the total investment cost). The total investment, € 8,000, was used to replace the existing rolling shutter with a window and the lighting was replaced with equipment that meets EU energy consumption regulations. In addition to anticipate the interventions needed, the Urban Programme made it possible for a better quality investment to be made. The result is a structure with a more attractive appearance and on that makes an appreciable energy saving.

In contrast, while the first call for tenders in Measure 2.3 was aimed at the non-hotel accommodation in the target area, its impact was slight. Opinions canvassed in the field confirm how non-hotel accommodation entrepreneurship was not sufficiently mature at the time to receive this help.

The impact of actions aimed at promoting cultural events to increase the profile of Marble is less tangible. Some initiatives such as the Biannual Sculpture Exhibition or the Symposium were already a tradition present in Carrara and the net impact of Urban II is thus less evident if not in terms of improving the quality of the event, then in the benefit of new exhibition sites developed for the occasion. According to evidence gathered in the field, several projects financed by Urban II will contribute in time to recovering the image of Carrara as the city of Marble. The main project among
these was the restoration of the Museum of Marble, aimed at rebuilding an identity that had been in crisis for some time.

A significant impact and one strongly perceived by the local community was produced by the projects aimed at social inclusion. In particular, the action aimed at protecting women refocused attention on the phenomena of domestic violence and alcoholism.

A certain degree of satisfaction was also perceived for the impact of the training courses promoted by Measure 3.2. In order to find out how effective these courses were in helping people to find work, the municipality’s administration commissioned telephone interviews of the successful students six months after the end of the course. The study found over 48% of the successful students had found work in the relevant sector.

One of the most evident and certainly unexpected effects of the entire Programme was the increased ability of institutions to plan and manage such complex programmes in synergy with each other (see programme management section).

\[1\] However, those interviewed of the municipal authorities felt that an incentive for employers to take on students from the courses, similar to the measurement model used for ESF and SPD Tuscany 2000-2006, would have increased the impact. This survey has been financed with Urban resources.
3.0 Link with other programmes and policies

Within a wider strategy of urban regeneration and economic renewal of the city, the Carrara Urban CIP II was conceived in strict coordination and synergy with aims and content of other instruments of urban redevelopment at local, national and EU level.

The logic that guided the Managing Authority in formulating a hierarchy of objectives for the Urban CIP II was based on the assumption that this was a more suitable instrument to meet the needs of the re-launched urban target area while the wider and more general aim of improving the productive and employment situation was able to find a place in the SPD of Objective 2 that covered the whole target area.

The main connection between the two strategies set in motion respectively at local and regional level was the Integrated Local Development Project (ILDP) “Development of the productive system by completion and upgrading of the infrastructure and consolidation of the local business system” included in the SPD Tuscany Objective 2 in 2003.

As the ILDP was an instrument of integrated planning, the local Administration aimed to carry out work complementary to and synergistic with that planned by the Carrara Urban CIP II. An example of synergy between the work financed by the ILDP and that provided for in the Urban Programme is the renovation of the bridges along the River Carrione. In all five bridges were renovated, three financed by the ILDP and two by the Urban Programme.

Another example of synergy between SPD Objective 2 and the Carrara Urban Programme 2 was the Marble Road. In 2004 this project was inserted in the wider regional strategy aimed at increasing the infrastructure’s potential and the Region’s receptiveness. Measure 2.4 – Infrastructure for productive sectors – of SPD Tuscany Objective 2, provided financial resources for the first lot of the urban bypass, matching funds with Measure 1.2 of the Urban II Programme.

Statements gathered in the field have also shown how the Carrara Urban CIP II integrates perfectly with the initiatives promoted by the municipality’s administration to develop and relaunch the city. In particular, various actions to redevelop and surface the historic centre specifically affected these areas that were then transformed into pedestrian areas by the UTP (Urban Traffic Plan) and the Layby and Parking Plan¹.

¹ This is the case for example of Piazza Alberica, one of the main piazze in the historic centre. The funds granted under Measure 1.1 of the Urban CIP II “Improvement of Urban sites and public spaces” upgraded the lighting system in the square. The UTP then pedestrianised the area. After these two interventions the area looks completely different and renewed.
4.0 Factors of success

The perception of the municipality’s administration and the inhabitants of the target area, confirmed by the opinion of the evaluators, is that the Carrara URBAN II Programme initiative was successful and achieved praiseworthy results in terms of projects carried out and impacts produced.

The shared opinion is that the initiative’s success was underpinned by the combination of the following factors:

- The work of the Programme aimed at solving real and urgent problems. This perfect correspondence between need and action effectively and efficiently met the specific needs of the target area.
- The needs and priorities were widely shared among the institutional, economic, and social parties involved, accelerating planning and work schedules, and improving co-ordination.
- The Programme benefited from the support of a strong political will throughout each phase of the work in spite of the succession of three mayors.
- The great deal of integration between the various measures were also favoured by the setting up of an intersector project unit that not only created synergies between each individual project but also obtained a positive and improved perception of the programme by the inhabitants of the target area.
- The flexibility of the Urban II Programme and its ability to integrate with other community programmes (especially SPD Objective 2) made not only a revision of the Programme’s financial plan possible during its implementation but also the fine tuning of the planned interventions according to the specific needs of the inhabitants of the target area.
- The ability of the municipality’s administration to quickly gain knowledge of the Programme’s planning and implementation mechanisms and the development of a high degree of internal co-operation had a positive effect on the management of the programme.
- The rigorosity of the municipality’s procedure and the need to respect the rule of “n+2” helped the planning of the work and contributed to all the work being carried out in the planned timeframe (greater attention to the deadlines).
5.0 Integrated approach

An element characterising the Carrara URBAN CIP II was its integrated approach, a crucial factor in its success. The integration of the infrastructural dimension with the social, economic, and cultural aspects not only resulted in a greater impact but also improved the positive perception the inhabitants of the target area had of the programme.

The administration feels that the regeneration and improvement of the piazzas and streets in the historic centre was a precondition for commercial, productive, and tourism activity to flourish. And indeed, the combination of infrastructure and cultural events resulted in greater impact in terms of visibility for example achieved through the XII Biannual International Sculpture Exhibition localised inside the restored site of the former Convent of Saint Francis. In this case the combination of work to promote culture and the improvement of the infrastructural heritage improved the quality of events that have been part of Carrara’s tradition for years.

Another example of this type of synergy was the “Drawing Marble” exhibition inside the restored venue of the Aurelio Saffi elementary school, which was planned in measure 2.1 “Initiative to Promote Culture and Tourism”. This intervention aimed at improving infrastructure and was planned as a site for the Youth Club in measure 3.1 “Infrastructure for social inclusion”.

---

1 Another example of this type of synergy was the “Drawing Marble” exhibition inside the restored venue of the Aurelio Saffi elementary school, which was planned in measure 2.1 “Initiative to Promote Culture and Tourism”. This intervention aimed at improving infrastructure and was planned as a site for the Youth Club in measure 3.1 “Infrastructure for social inclusion”.
6.0 Programme management and Partnership

“We learned a lot with the Urban II and now we are ready to manage new Programme for the development of our city”.

The municipality's administration was responsible for the planning, management, and implementation phases of the Carrara Urban CIP II. This undoubtedly contributed to increasing the Programme’s ability to confront the challenge at the local level.

Evidence gathered in the field confirmed that management of the programme was not simple. A notable effort was required at the beginning in order to overcome the criticalities connected with managing the programme. One of the main problems was that the EU administrative procedure was an addition to and not a substitute for the Italian ones. This led to literally a duplication of each administrative act that has to be produced once according to the EU requirements and then according to the Italian ones, slowing the progress. Furthermore, several problems were caused by the frequent change (three times during the whole period) in the EU Commission’s rapporteur that slowed the process down and made interaction with Brussels less effective.

However, all things considered, the problems met while managing the programme were perceived by the local administration not only as an opportunity to improve its own ability to plan and schedule but also to familiarise with EU initiatives.

The elements developing and improving the management of the programme were the following:

- Having a much greater knowledge of the target area and its main problems, the Managing Authority used the Urban CIP II to meet specific and real needs in the area. In this regard, one of the main strong points of the local management was the continuous involvement of institutional actors and local stakeholders in both the planning and the implementation phases so that the real needs of the local population could be understood.

- The high degree of cooperation and integration between the municipal officials was certainly a strongpoint as they worked together to plan and carry out the programme’s projects in a synergistic manner. This synergy between the various services was favoured by the setting up of an inter-sector programme unit within the municipality that co-ordinated the timeframes, methods and procedures used to carry out the work. The unit performed the function of technical assistance and included two employees with EU planning expertise working full-time on the Urban Program. The presence of this unit also oversaw and guaranteed continuity in the strategy in spite of a succession of three different administrations running the municipality.

- The interviewees confirmed that the improvement of the local administration’s ability to plan and carry out the work was also positively affected by the “n+2” rule. This not only helped in the planning phase but also made sure the deadlines were actually met.
Partnership made a great contribution to the success of Carrara Urban II CIP. The continuous involvement of the social and economic institutions during the planning and implementation of the Programme enabled the Managing Authority to use the EU initiative as an instrument to respond to the actual problems in the target area.

In addition to the institutional stakeholders, numerous trade associations (from industry, artisan craft trades, small businesses, commerce and tourism) as well as NGOs were involved in the Urban partnership. With the exception of the industrialist’s association whose needs were perhaps a little different from those the Carrara Urban II Programme was intended to meet and less interested in making an active contribution, all the partners actively participated in all phases of the programme. In particular, the widely shared priorities for the work accelerated the time taken over this initial phase.
From the point of view of the diffusion of best practice, the Carrara Urban CIP II adhered to the URBACT initiative. However, belonging to this network did not produce the expected benefits. In fact, the evidence collected in the field confirms that as an instrument for sharing best practices the URBACT had several weaknesses that obstructed the achievement of its objectives in one way or another:

- Above all, the URBACT participants were coming from very different realities, with widely varied needs. This heterogeneity caused not a little difficulty in facilitating co-operation between the members of the network.
- Another weakness of the URBACT network was the lack of a dedicated operational structure to co-ordinate and animate the work of the network and to be a point of reference for the members.
- Lastly, the ability of the URBACT Programme to influence the Urban II programmes was limited by the fact that its very late start took place after the Programme’s strategies had been defined.

All of these factors limited the transfer of good practice from one city to another in one way or another.

No other networking experiences were recorded.
8.0 Sustainability and Legacy

The insertion of the Carrara Urban CIP II within a wider policy of urban regeneration and renewal proved to be a good basis for sustaining the work carried out.

The evidence collected in the field confirms that since the activation of the Programme, the local administration has assumed responsibility for ensuring the sustainability of the Urban II Programme. Some actions were taken in order to ensure the continuation of the effects after the Programme end:

- One of the main challenges for sustainability was the completion of the Marble Road. In order to guarantee that this project activated by the Urban II initiative progressed, the municipality’s administration entrusted the management of the workers to a limited company that would also be responsible for the construction of lot II financed with other sources.
- On the other hand, the sustainability of services aimed at social inclusion was based on entrusting the management to Voluntary Associations already active in the area and completely managerially and financially autonomous.
- As far as the cultural events enhancing the marble tradition and preserving cultural works (e.g. the Museum of Marble), they require a larger effort from the municipality’s administration in order to ensure sustainability for the future. However, the decision from the very beginning to hold quality and functional events explaining the geography and history of the area has guaranteed the sustainability of this work, at least in the short term.

Nevertheless, the main guarantee sustaining the effects produced by the Urban Programme was a new urban development programme promoted by the municipality’s administration and financed by EU funding for the period 2007-2013. In fact, the real heir of the Urban Programme is the Sustainable Integrated Urban Development Plan (SUIDP)\(^1\) for Carrara “Development of the Mountain Villages – City Centre Urban System” within the 2007-2013 ROP. This project formed part of the process of improving the mountain administrative districts and renewing the historic centre activated by the Carrara Urban CIP II. SUIDP in fact aims to increase commerce, culture, and tourism in these areas through projects that would act synergistically and integrate with the regeneration initiatives promoted by the Urban II programme.

---

\(^1\) The SUIDP (Sustainable Integrated Urban Development Plan) is the instrument activating Axis V of POR “regional competitiveness and employment” of the Region of Tuscany financed by the ERDF in the period 2007-2013 and is based on an integrated and inter-sector approach of various types of improvement, redevelopment, reconversion, and value increasing work on the existing urban heritage in order to promote economic development and urban regeneration of the affected area.