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**Editors**

Colin M. Gray, Estefania Ciliotta Chehade, Paul Hekkert, Laura Forlano, Paolo Ciuccarelli, and Peter Lloyd



# BOSTON

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RESISTANCE · REFLECTION  
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NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY  
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# Proceedings of DRS2024 Boston

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Design Research Society International Conference

Northeastern University  
Boston, Massachusetts, USA,  
23–28 June 2024

**Editors:**

Colin M. Gray  
Estefania Ciliotta Chehade  
Paul Hekkert  
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Peter Lloyd



## **Proceedings of DRS2024 Boston**

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## **Design for Policy and Governance Practice**

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Università Iuav di Venezia, Italy

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# Qualitative mapping and design strategies for taking care of marginal areas.

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**Abstract:** The study targets the municipality of Quero Vas (Belluno, Italy), an area characterized by historical heritage and demographic decline. Employing a qualitative mapping from Raffaella Fagnoni methodology (Traces, Stories, Actions, Events, Imaginary) the researchers identified that the environmental heritage is one of the main strategic local contexts on which the designers can operate. This heritage is locally considered by two perspectives: the governance, committed to regeneration, frames the landscape as a resource for economic growth through tourism; the communities of hikers and climbers, frame the landscape as a resource for sharing experiences. The two perspectives currently don't engage citizens, who are excluded from a relationship with both. In this context of territorial design and marginal area enhancement, the study proposes a project centered on providing cultural enrichment for citizens. It aims to bridge the gap between economic and recreational values while promoting the collective care and preservation of the territory.

**Keywords:** environmental heritage; communities enhancement; design for territories; inland marginal areas;

## 1. Introduction

The contribution is contextualized in one-year research grant (October 2022/October 2023) "Quero Vas: Active Itineraries among Traces of Memories" co-funded by the Municipality of Quero Vas and the Department of Architecture and Arts of Università Iuav di Venezia, a university entirely oriented towards training and research in design, at different scales. The study investigates the territory through a collaborative process involving institutions, professionals and citizens in a mapping process aimed at identifying different types of heritages to be enhanced in order to promote the municipality and the territory from its specificities. The municipality of Quero Vas, created in 2013 from the union of the boroughs of Quero and Vas, and inhabited by 3054 people, is spread over a mid-mountain area of



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45.92 km<sup>2</sup>, and its extension mostly unfolds along the valley of the Piave river.

The municipality, from which a large emigration phenomenon has been occurring since as early as the end of the 19th century, has historical-geographical characteristics of national importance for having been at the center of the Italian-Austrian front during the First World War. With the reconstruction, the urban layout of the town of Quero was also completely disrupted (Dalla Caneva, 2019), and in the years of the economic boom, the building of State Road 348 Feltrina along the Piave river cut through the territory, isolating the towns that were eccentric from the main infrastructure.

The area is characterized by mountain pastures and grazing lands, that in the past were the basis of the economy and subsistence of several small towns. Today the housing clusters are fragmented in several areas, some very close to the major town centers some very remote, and the economy is mainly revolving around the activities outside the municipality. The status of Quero Vas Municipality well represents the current widespread complexity of the existing urban cores in the inland areas of the Italian territories, where territorial abandonment coexists with an active and willing governance that recognizes the need to identify opportunities and to develop plans that can generate new attractiveness by enhancing heritage. Another point to address is that unlike the administrations of large urban centers, whose resources consist of full-time politicians as leaders, technical experts, administrators and communicators, the human resource base on which smaller localities can rely is significantly reduced. When local officials, often engaged in their own profession as well as community administration, project their localities into new development, they consciously need tools and expertise from outside.

In recent years, the enhancement and regeneration of marginal inland areas have been funded by international institutions and governance with numerous projects. Among the different programs, NEXTGeneratioEU, the Piano Nazionale Borghi, National Villages Plan there are common funding lines for promoting tourism, that stem from the recognition that, in light of the frequent overcrowding at tourist attractions in major art cities, many small Italian historic centers (villages) represent a significant potential for sustainable slow and alternative tourism. Land regeneration research programs have been carried out by municipalities through training of its employees at specialized institutions and by specialized consulting firms.

To better offer a detailed description of the enhancement and regeneration of marginal inland areas, this paper provides an overview of the process that was adopted in the territory of Quero Vas for documenting and underlining the effects of the design research for governance. The paper makes two contributions: first, it contextualize Fagnoni (2018) methodology as a mapping tool for design research that allows a comprehensive analysis of the territory; second, it highlights potential opportunities and challenges in future research in design for public cultural policy by providing the description of the cultural framework designed to link both visitors, sport communities and citizens to natural heritage. This aspect must be further framed in the small territorial and local government scale. Although the possibility of building design environments strongly linked to the identification of spatial

policies is emerging in the current literature, (Kim et al. 2022, Kimbell et al. 2022) the project in question is located in a small municipality. The case study is in line with a perspective on new community spaces outside large urban areas (Schröder et al. 2018) by combining enhancement processes on different scales and involving different spaces for citizenship. In this sense, the research refers to the periphery not only as a geographical sphere as opposed to the metropolis but as a condition of social and cultural indeterminacy (Bonsiepe, 1995). The scope of intervention was structured through the framework of Parente and Sadini (2017) in between the areas of Design for Territorial and Local Development and Design for Cultural Heritage. Even if, as explained in the paper, the case study doesn't address cultural heritage as its main area of intervention but most prominently the environmental heritage. The project perspective was instead addressed by using the framework developed by Schröder (2023) that classifies the possibility of design in a territorial dimension between explorative, visionary, coordinative, human-centered, multi-scalar, projective. The research team identified that the collaboration could positively impact with an explorative, visionary and multi-scalar approach. This choice was made in order to achieve the objectives of capacity mapping, define design visions for the governance and create networks between territorial areas.

The need and willingness of local officials to provide strategic public policy direction capable of going beyond the provision of adequate public services and meeting the ordinary demands of the citizenry led, in the case of the Quero Vas Municipality, to the activation of collaboration with the University. The Quero Vas Municipality's working team, consisting of the mayor and consultants with expertise in architecture and engineering, as well as cultural promoters, confronted our research team from the design area. Four researchers with different backgrounds and related and complementary areas collaborated on the project: identity enhancement of cultural heritages; design for the territory; strategies and development of cultural processes. The characteristics that best qualify the research program oriented to the identification and systematization in a strategic plan of opportunities capable of generating new attractiveness from existing heritage are: the willingness to listen to the citizens, governance included, for a deep understanding of the state of affairs and the perception on which to graft the critical analysis and the project; the willingness to collaborate in processes of enhancement of heritages not yet the subject of intervention; the intention to work in a teamwork on a strategic plan that even after collaboration with the University can have concrete application because it is shared and feasible. The ultimate goals of the project are thus identifiable in the desire for long-term intervention directed at repositioning the identity of the municipality through the discovery or rediscovery of heritages that can offer different types of sources of local economic and social development and the consolidation of best practices that can also involve citizens at different stages of the process.

## 2. Method

Given the state of the art deepened through comparison with the literature related to the topic of regeneration of marginal areas in Italy, verified with site visits and a field research phase the numerous activities promoted by the municipality and local associations and the willingness of the governance and volunteers who are part of the organization to cooperate, the research team based the project on finding the relationships between the different stakeholders and on the deep qualitative observation of the heritage.

The conduct of the research program was characterized by the adoption of different methodologies and practices that significantly guided the different phases of the project:

- Qualitative territorial observation → practices used to identify different types of heritage that need to be enhanced;
- Mapping territorial evidence → the analysis methodology used to systematize and interpret the collected data;
- Negotiating a collaborative approach → the modes of confrontation adopted to relate in a more participatory way to governance.

### 2.1 Qualitative territorial observation

The wide-ranging willingness shown by the staff of the municipality of Quero Vas toward finding a development direction for the specific community resulted in the need to proceed with a problem-finding approach. Three types of actions were used to collect data: desk research, testimony collection, and direct experience.

The desk research made it possible to collect a set of documents of submitted projects, ongoing activities, and planned initiatives and events. The analysis of the resources reveals an active context towards touristic development and outdoor activities in harmony with what is being promoted by territorial tourism agencies and foundations for the preservation of the landscape, as well as collaboration with professional associations such as the architectural association of Belluno (for many years the municipality has been engaged in seeking local development strategies as seen in Dalla Caneva 2019). Among these, the planning document submitted by the municipality for the NextGenerationEu program (P.N.R.R.) highlights how the development of manufacturing activities in the area and the economic well-being generated by them have marginalized the cultural, natural and landscape values of the village of Quero. These values, now managed by numerous entities and not fully exploited, constitute the pivot on which design can leverage to regenerate the cultural, social and tourism quality of the village and the entire territory pertaining to it. On the other hand, the collection of information and testimonies through interviews with town staff, staff of the main associations in the area, and most active citizens in the town, underlined the strategic potential of a research project aimed at improving residents' quality of life. In fact, citizens feel only partially involved in urban planning projects for strategic development, but at the same time they have expressed the need to rediscover the cultural,

historical and landscape heritage in which they live and to enjoy new spaces and services for new and differentiated forms of entrepreneurship related to tourism and services. Desk research and informal interviews (a total of 18 made during the first 6 months of the project) returned a rich and articulated picture of which the research team was able to have direct experience of both citizen networks and heritage. It was also crucial the participation of the researchers in already scheduled cultural initiatives, planning meetings and focus groups on cultural and tourism programming carried out also in collaboration with regional representatives and the Dolomiti Bellunesi Destination Management Organization. An additional level of knowledge of policies in the area was participation in the rich cultural offerings of the Bice Lazzari Center oriented to different types of audiences: artists, artisans, architects, and tourism entrepreneurs, often invited to build a public debate.

## *2.2 Mapping territorial evidence*

Excluding any overlap with the activities of the municipality, the method qualitatively maps the emergencies of Quero Vas to identify opportunities that are currently little or not at all exploited and to prospect the impact of specific solutions on the community. The approach is that of Community Centered Design grafted to methodologies of scenario creation and strategic plans and diverges from solutions related to tourism identity such as place branding (Anholt, 2010; Baur, Thiery, 2017, Bonini Lessing, 2009; Sinni, 2021).

Within the collaboration with local governance, the design team is framed as a critical observer and mediator capable of proposing confrontational activities that have as their ultimate goal the reconstruction of virtuous relationships between territory and community, on which to subsequently base economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable projects (De Varine, 2005; Manzini, 2019; Tamborrini & Stabellini, 2018). This desire to anchor and base the project on the specificities of the area led the research team to exclude analysis methodologies commonly used by consulting firms that make use of tools from the area of marketing-of which the most common is certainly the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis-and which over the years have helped to define and consolidate a standard process that can be repeated on areas with common characteristics. Instead, the methodology adopted is the one proposed and used by Raffaella Fagnoni (2018): the process, aimed at the production of social value for heritage, is circular and identifies in some keywords, Traces, Stories, Actions, Events, Imaginary, elements for the mapping of a territory starting from its material and immaterial capital. Paraphrasing Fagnoni, the process considers Traces the signs and remnants we find in place, be they memories, objects, architecture, crafts, art, food, traditions. The discovery of traces enables the reconstruction and telling of stories that can shape places and give life to actions that in turn give meaning to events. Traces, Stories, Actions and Events form the Imaginary that, closing the circle, constitutes and gives life to heritage.

If Fagnoni uses keywords as steps in a circular process of design for the territory, the

research team working on Quero Vas adopted the same words as generators for a reading grid to critically analyze each type of the heritage in the territory.

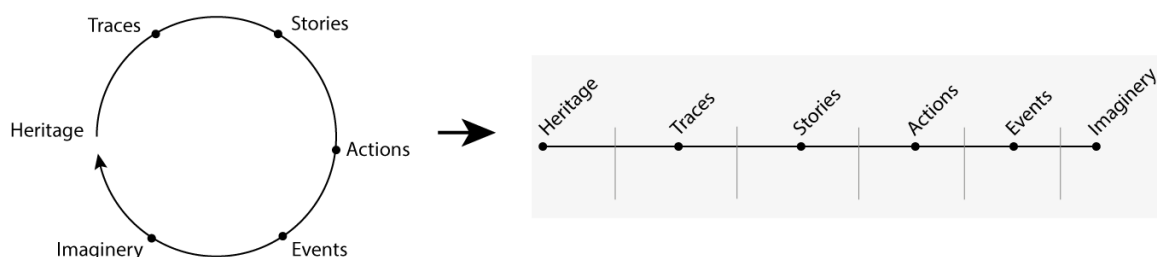


Figure 1 From Fagnoni's circular development design strategy a linear research framework

Integrating the methodology by including new categories such as Zone, Typology (environmental, cultural etc.), Actors, Season, Beneficiaries completes the reading with the identification of the specific area of intervention, the type of assets, the possible seasonality, and goes on to identify the beneficiaries of the existing infrastructure. Adding these keywords results in a mapping that is more faithful to the reality of the area and makes it easier for governance and non-experts to understand the possible effects of project actions on the area.

ZONE	Typology	Heritage	Traces	Stories	Events	Actions	Imaginery	Actors	Season	Beneficiaries
Quero	Environmental	Schievenin Natural Rock Gym	Online community with digital route mapping and site reviews, signs and some routes secured and equipped on site	Together with Santa Felicita, it is one of the best known historical gyms. It is particularly popular with Venetian and Treviso climbers who hold the 'rock courses' of the numerous CAI mountaineering schools here.  Nearby is a very special church inside a large natural cave: Santa Barbara. The place is undoubtedly very evocative, especially right next to the little church, at the confluence of the Vai dell'Inferno and the narrow Sassumà valley.	spontaneous gatherings of climbers, climbing courses seasonal	MAINTENANCE (?)  Books and route guides	Sport. challenge, contact with nature	Online Climbing Community Bar H, Municipality	Spring, Summer	climbers, local Bar

Figure 2 Sample excerpt of the table used for the qualitative reading of the tangible and intangible heritage of the municipality of Quero Vas. Columns from left to right: Zone, Heritage's Typology, Heritage, Traces, Stories, Events, Actions, Imagery, Stakeholders, Season, Recipients

Figure 2 represents one of the heritages mapped through the use of this methodology: the natural climbing gym in the village of Schievenin. Recreational and natural heritage for which Quero is known, the climbing gym was decoded by going to understand what are the Traces that define it as a resource, i.e., the devices that define its physical and digital presence, the narratives that identify its Story(s), the Events that are associated and associable to its frequentation, the Project Actions that the Actors of the place, local community and online climbers, develop determining the shared Cultural Imaginery as well as factors such as Seasonality and Beneficiaries of the same heritage.

### 2.3 Negotiating a collaborative process.

This phase, based on the need to involve governance in a direct confrontation with the university researchers, presupposed the scheduling of a series of meetings designed to

communicate more precisely the working method aimed at gaining awareness of the existing heritage and to verify its validity with local governance itself. In the first sharing meeting with the municipality, which followed the first three months of site visits and project analysis, the need for mediation between the scientific and academic knowledge of the researchers and the professional knowledge of the municipality's staff was immediately verified. At the same time, it became clear how the meaning attributed to the key words and their use (i.e., Traces, Stories, Actions, Events, Imagery), needed to be transformed into targeted interventions that would allow a more direct comparison with other projects already initiated by the municipality and thus be identifiable by a certain concreteness. The methods of approaching knowledge among the main partners involved and negotiating the methodology with local governance were:

- Sharing a mapping system of the territory in order to consciously define a series of activities to be carried out later, supporting a possible vision of the future of the country and the territory.
- Presentation and discussion of some case studies identified by the researchers as interesting examples for the development of cultural identities.
- Suggesting a scenario for a communication identity and possible development of a cultural identity. A concrete attempt was made to suggest how events in the area could adopt a recognizable visual languages but in the end it was not implemented.
- Construction of timeframes to visualize the future evolution of each strategic project in 1 year, 5 years, 10 years so that each contribution clearly communicated long-term goals; short-term goals; tasks to be planned; prospects to be framed.

*Table 1 Summary of the actions and negotiation steps that occurred during the course of the project, making explicit requests received from governance, answers from the research team and recipients of the projects.*

	<b>request from governance</b>	<b>answers from the research team</b>	<b>recipient</b>
November 2022	Visions of town's future - I	Mapping all possible heritage investigation on online communities and their use of heritage	governance

February 2023	List of actions to be implemented in the near future	Presentation and discussion on possible case studies connected with heritage mapping	governance
April 2023	Contribution toward a new visual identity of a local festival	Exploration of visual language taking into account the richness of natural landscapes and environment	governance, cultural associations, consultants
June 2023	Contribution to local area touristic development	Identify a system for managing local cultural circuit, that can include the local festival	governance, cultural associations, citizens
July 2023	Visions of town's future - II	5 timeframes for the 5 strategic action plans addressing mobility, cultural, industrial legacy generational shift	governance
September 2023	Assistance over finding funds for further development of the area	Converting ideas and research lines into NextGenerationEu actions	governance

From the process of ongoing exchange between the researchers and governance, the need emerged to define five lines of research and action on which to organize the future development of the area and on which to work collaboratively. Each line of research was developed in a timeframe that perspectives both the actions to be taken by governance and the expected effects in different periods. This made it possible to identify axes of work and directions on content, methods, actors involved and timeframes in a very defined way. The lines of action for the enhancement of the territory are:

1. Enhancing local collective memory – Collective memory in Quero Vas is usually addressed as memory of WWI. There is the potential to create cultural festival for more sharing images and visuals of more recent events celebrating the contemporary community.
2. Live and experiencing river Piave and the mountains – Create a new relationship between visitors, guest, and environmental heritage by adopting a shared culture of care.
3. Supporting entrepreneurial spirit – Quero Vas will soon have to face a generational shift in the local SMEs, it would be positive to create events and programs supporting entrepreneurial visions for younger generations



4. The gateways to the Town – the town is set in a Valley and it is completely hidden from the visitors view that might cross the territory without noticing the presence of the town. There is the opportunity to create spaces for both visitors and commuters to meet in the two nearby train stations as places for exchange of services and information.
5. New Mobility – Most of the citizens commute alongside the river Piave. There might be possibility for design services to enhance the mobility and carpooling.

From the active discussion with governance, in July 2023 it was chosen to explore lines 1 and 2 in depth for the remaining time of the project, and in this paper the cultural ecosystem envisioned for intervention line 2, which focuses on environmental heritage, is explored.

### 3. Enhancing Environmental Heritage

The environmental heritage of Quero Vas is a vast and articulated patrimony and it extends between the different village centers. The area has a widespread environmental heritage consisting of mountains, hills, rivers. Some of the elements are already valued in part (Zandonella Callegher, 1972; Zandonella Callegher, 1978, Garobbio, 1977; CAI Bassano, 1985): a rock climbing wall in the village of Schievenin , numerous hiking trails, some trails along the Tegerzo and Piave rivers, and experimental projects for access to this heritage that include trails and bike sharing services. The researchers made the choice to address two of the less valued typologies of natural heritage, especially in the relationship to the town citizens: the heritage constituted by the mountainous reliefs of the Grappa massif and the heritage related to the Piave and Tegerzo rivers.

#### *3.1 Framework and community views.*

To define the environmental heritage, the outcomes of the field research from the three perspectives considered most representative are summarized: governance, online communities, and citizens.

- **Observation of governance general development plans over environmental heritage.** The heritage linked to the mountains is currently being enhanced by the administration through a series of pilot projects concerning the preservation of the agricultural traditions of the alpine pastures and the maintenance of high altitude pastures (in collaboration with FAI - Fondo Ambiente Italiano and Quero Vas). In addition, the municipality of Quero Vas has recently conducted a project to secure most of the climbing routes made by the sports community that frequents the area. Meeting points with mountain bike and hiking equipment rental services have also been planned, and governance has established numerous collaborations to develop projects related to bicycle tourism. In terms of river-related assets, the municipality focuses primarily on securing riverbeds, rather than building trails or services related to waterways. Analysis of the municipality's internal documents also revealed a

planned bicycle path along the Piave river, which crosses the municipality from north to south, further enhancing the opportunity for bicycle tourism. There was a glimpse of an opportunity to suggest that governance should act on these territories not on the basis of creating new infrastructure but by building new relationships with heritage.

- **Tracing Online communities activity over territory.** The mountain territory is frequented by a diverse community of climbing enthusiasts and experienced hikers who come from all over Italy, and who are fond of the areas around Quero. From interviews collected with different actors, this sort of community sees in the mountain territory the idea of challenge and exploration of one's limits in addition to the pleasantness of being in contact with nature. The value of online communities for the territory stems from the fact that members voluntarily map the territory using different platforms on an ongoing and constant basis, including through the construction of fact sheets dedicated to each trail; they review difficulty and maintenance of trails and indicate the conservation status of climbing routes. The data collected constitute a constantly updated database of information: a collective and procedural process that can be framed as a form of spontaneous enhancement of places and territory.
- **Report of citizens relationships to river Piave and the mountains around Quero Vas.** Several interviews were conducted by both interviewing shop owners, city planners, guestrooms owners and people that use the area along the waterways as a green park. Values and potentials have been grasped from the interviews: "it is a pity that the river does not become a public park" "as you see here there are many people running and exercising near the river but all the paths are spontaneous" "the Piave is for its whole valley very important for its connection with Venice and all the timber that supports the structure of Venice passed through our places. We never get to tell these stories." The most common aspect that emerged was the desire for a more structured fruition: "we go for some hikes but the trails are not always visible" "we have organized concerts and events in the middle of the woods but unfortunately these are initiatives that always start from the will of volunteers" "it would be nice to be able to activate a more direct connection with the mountain huts, to make people perceive that the village is not just the four houses that make up the urban space." In addition, the interviews reported anecdotes regarding World War I and attributed the morphology of the land to the complete destruction of the different villages. The stories often revealed a dramatic past, but also need to move away from that imagery.

### 3.2 Project overview

The processed outcome of the field research is a scenario for new actions for environmental heritage and the design tool shared with the governance is a timeframe summarizing milestones and goals to be achieved in 1, 5, and 10 years. The timeframe enables governance toward a process of a repositioning of the identity of the Municipality of Quero Vas that does not match with territorial branding. In particular, it addresses the possibility to build a bridge between the governance, land use and enhancement put in place by online communities and the expressed attendance needs of citizens. Three checkpoints are proposed to governance as recurrent milestones:

- discover and understand environmental resources
- taking care of environmental heritage
- promote environmental heritage

The checkpoints were defined accordingly to the different perspectives of land conservation, use and frequentation of different of stakeholders. The timeframe was designed to suggested governance to intervene in these territories not through the further creation of new infrastructure, but by catalyzing new relationships between different groups of people and environmental heritage.

Table 2 Timeframe

	Who	What	How	When	For who
<b>2024</b>	Quero Vas Municipality	Workshop on education on natural resources and ecosystems of the mountains and the Piave river	Local experts, Workshops, guided exploration by people or artifacts	Summer	Residents, young visitors
<b>2028</b>	Quero Vas Municipality and nearby towns, cultural associations, mountain explores associations (CAI)	Season of events and educational workshops on natural resources and ecosystems in the mountains and the Piave river	Participatory processes, local experts and regional partners, guided exploration by people or artifacts  Coordinating all the cultural circuit	Spring, Summer, Autumn	Residents, visitors, explorers
<b>2034</b>	Quero Vas Municipality and nearby towns, cultural associations, mountain explores associations (CAI)	Permanent observatory on the human-nature relationship in the mountain and Piave ecosystems	Participatory processes, permanent exploration	All year	Residents, young visitors, explorers, scientists

From the implementation of these actions, governance obtained a by step-by-step process that supports repositioning the identity of Quero Vas in strong relationship and correspondence with the places and territory it occupies. The project activates a network of relationships between governance, external experts and visitors that promotes the recognition of the place by making it unique in the enhancement of the shared environmental heritage.

The timeframe enables the vision to involve local secondary high school students and the young entrepreneurs residing in the area interested in developing receptive activities related to sustainable tourism. In parallel, tourists and guests will find cultural and entertainment initiatives focused on environmental heritage. This program schedule also involves the various cultural centers in the area, proposing in-depth studies in line with the peculiarities of the enhanced environmental heritage. In this sense, the project is configured as a Community Centered Design initiative with zones of interaction between governance, residents, and visitors.

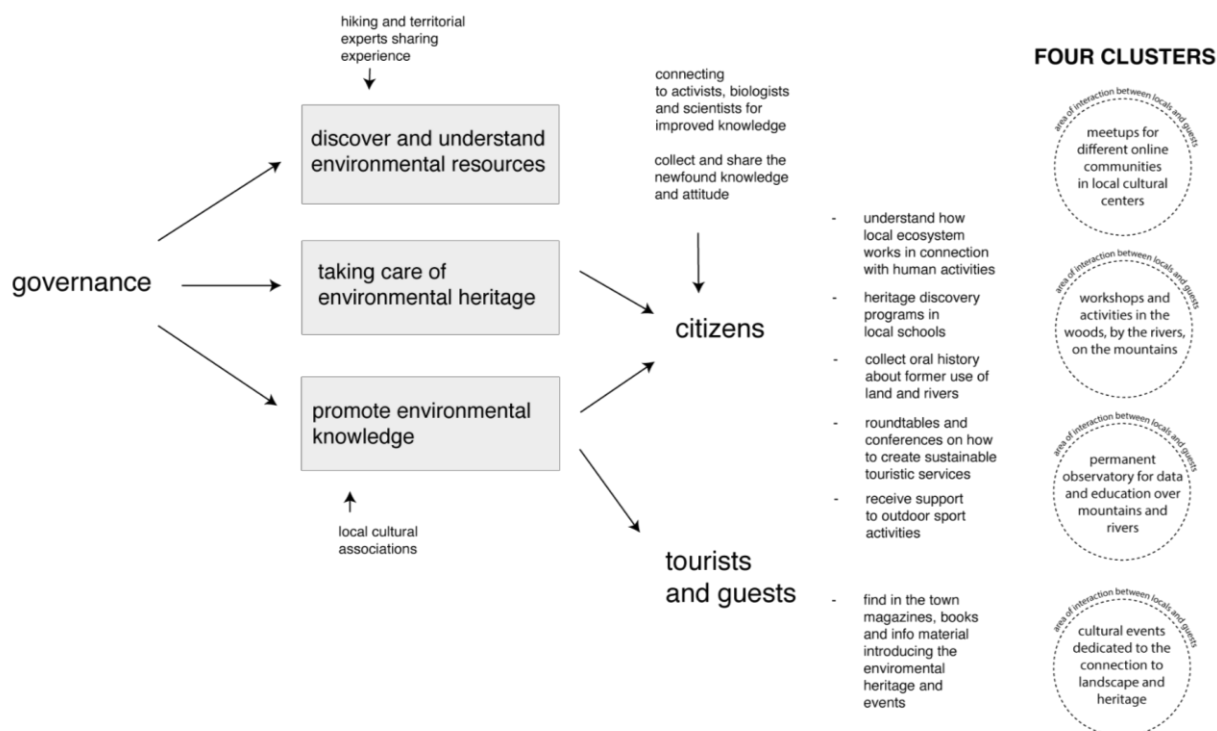


Figure 3 The diagram represents the main actions and stakeholders of the projects and depicts a multi-faceted approach to understanding and promoting environmental awareness, structured around a central flow that emphasizes the interplay between governance, environmental resources, citizens, and guests.

To further help the governance to envision the whole process the research group draw Figure 3 scheme. In the scheme, the governance is invited to play an active role in "discovering and understanding environmental resources." The discovery process will be facilitated by activities by territorial experts who share their experiences for example in the

local biosphere. Secondly a continuous process of "taking care of environmental heritage" encompasses a commitment to maintain the rich ecological and historical legacy of the environment. Citizens are the main stakeholders and are encouraged to understand how the local ecosystem operates, especially in terms of its relationship with human activities. The third checkpoint "promoting environmental knowledge" is a bridge between citizens and visitors / guest. On the right part of the image, four clusters describe further interactions among communities of both residents and guests. These include meetups for different online communities of hikers and climbers and citizens in local cultural centers, workshops and activities situated in natural settings like woods and rivers, a permanent observatory for data and education regarding the mountains and rivers, and cultural events echoing the main theme of environmental connection to the land. Overall, a multi-scalar (Schröder 2023) approach is emphasized where governance, local citizenry, and tourists are all key stakeholders in understanding, preserving, and celebrating environmental resources.

## **4. Discussion and Conclusions**

The project "Quero Vas: Active Itineraries among Traces of Memories" co-funded by the Municipality of Quero Vas and the Department of Architecture and Arts of Università Iuav di Venezia is an example of design policy developed on a local scale, in internal and marginal geographical areas of Italy. The method and work results highlight some issues that may be of more general value, considering the extensive impact, within a few years, that funding opportunities like European-as in Next Generation Eu/ P.N.R.R.) and then national and regional plans for spatial regeneration throughout Italy are intended to have. The introduction illustrated some of the limitations of these plans, which do not consider the local governance structures of small villages and boroughs, characterized by a paucity of full-time professionals dedicated to spatial planning and the preparation of funding calls. On several occasions, where small municipalities have adequate financial resources, this entails the ad hoc insertion of several professionals, from different sectors, who serve in limited time and with limited objectives. Design for territories in such small-scale scenarios might deal with choices on how establish the relationship both with governance and citizens also by understanding that, in the digital age, territories and their communities might not be local ones. In the section "Method", the paper highlights the methods and content in which qualitative observation, mapping territorial heritage and negotiating the open research process with the governance can make a significant contribution both to the definition of the problems that policies must address (problem finding), and to the development of intervention strategies and scenarios, through the use of tools and devices with which to interact on a physical and emotional level (Bason, 2014a; Kimbell, 2016). In the third part of the paper also showed how the local environmental heritage needed to be analyzed from different point of views by collecting not only data about the use from different stakeholders but also about how these different communities aren't put in contact with each other through the heritage. In contexts such as our case study, design, which is a relatively young

discipline, must first gain credibility and accreditation with local community governance, which most frequently interfaces with other professionals (engineers, planners, architects, etc.). A common risk of actions in which design is involved is that it is preemptively left to little contribution to decision making, recognizing the usefulness of creative processes to only downstream aspects of policy (e.g., designing regulations or services), to the exclusion of their usefulness and ability to address those further upstream (e.g., agenda setting or problem formulation) (Peters & Rava, 2019). For this reason, one of the relevant contributions of this paper is to offer the overview of the two tools, the timeframe, and the diagram, that were used to introduce a design perspective in the local governance. Those two tools could have been transformed into more refined design tools such stakeholder maps and ecosystems map, but the differences between the perspectives between the research team and the governance underlined the need of simpler visualization tools. Even if this choice of simpler tools was not introduced as part of the methodology, this paper might address the resistance other researchers might confront with in marginal and inland areas, and, the subsequent tools choices to be made in those contexts. The introduction of participatory approaches focused on understanding the needs of beneficiaries and on the involvement of all stakeholders proved, in our case study, to be useful in encouraging the creation of effective and efficient policies (Kimbell, Richardson, Mazé & Durose, 2022). Each of the project phases outlined in the paper underlies careful work on the objectives, methods, tools, and keywords used. The overall result of the case study outlined implies that the steps, content, and words themselves might be designed to connect with governance from different backgrounds by creating interdisciplinary bridges for taking care of marginal areas.

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