

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON GREENWAYS, MOBILITY, LEISURE AND TOURISM

Disused railways to improve the realization of greenways

Ilaria Maggiorotti, Rete Ferroviaria Italiana (Italy)

30 September, 2021



The recent past: Italian Tourism Mobility Plan 2017-2022

The Italian Tourism Mobility Plan, approved by the *Ministry of Infrastructures* and the *Ministry of Culture*, provides for support for "safe and sustainable tourism", through the development of the network of cycle-pedestrian routes, in which the disused railway lines to be converted can be framed.

The Plan, with the involvement of local authorities, is for realization of the National System of Tourist Cycle Routes: a total of 6000 km to be designed and built, with investments for over 374 million euros.

Some of these 10 cycle paths cross our disused railway sites.



The Italian law on cycling (No. 2/2018)

This law contains a set of useful measures to increase the use of bicycles in Italy, both as a means of transport and for recreational purposes.

With this law a General Cycling Mobility Plan was adopted which identifies the national cycle network (integrated in **EuroVelo**) and with the objective to realize:

1. overall development of no less than **20,000 kilometers**;
2. integration with other infrastructure networks including existing cycling networks;
3. connection with the largest possible number of protected natural areas, areas of significant tourist interest, with particular attention to the network of paths and trails, bridleways, tourist railways and river and lake routes;
4. priority use of existing minor roads and **the grounds of disused railways**;

All municipalities where there are railway stations, must provide for the construction of **velostations**, consisting of adequate centers for guarded storage, technical assistance and any bicycle rental service.



RFI-4-Greenways: the reuse of the Italian disused railway lines

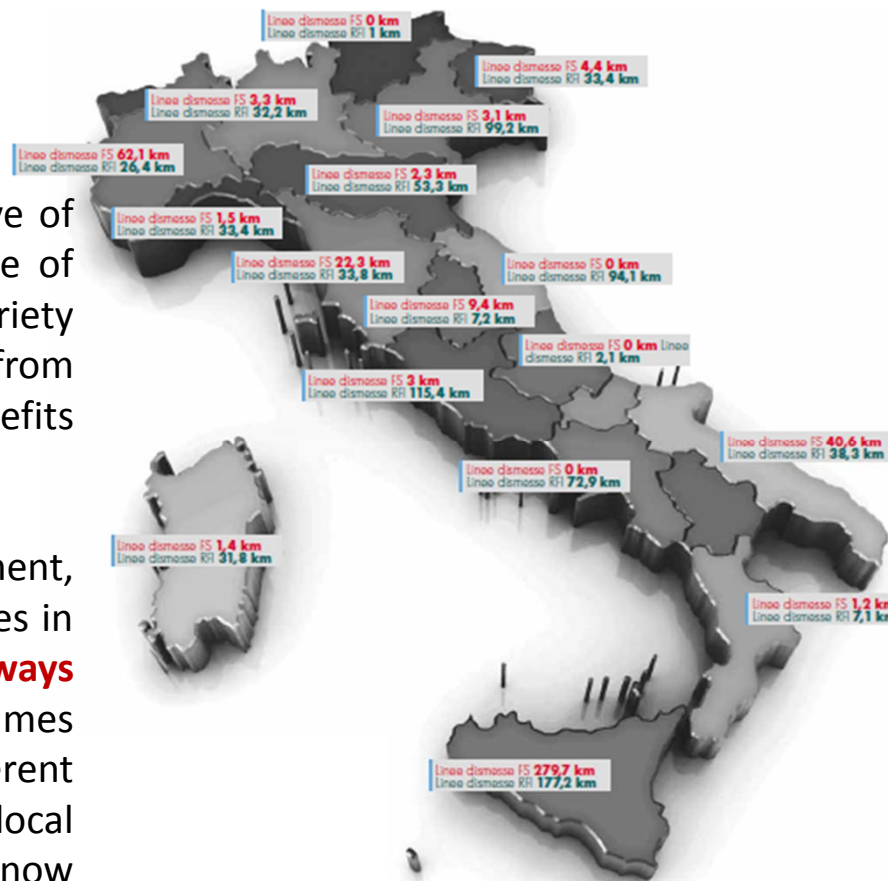
RFI S.p.A. and FS S.p.A. (the Holding), are the owners of most of the Italian disused railway lines, with **1,293 km of network**.

The problem

In Italy, greenways have so far been created mainly on the initiative of local authorities, without a national strategy to promote the reuse of disused railways as greenways. The existing greenways present a variety of technical solutions, signage and services are often very different from each other, limiting the spread of the greenway identity and the benefits for the country.

The solution

RFI was the first national organization, and the only one at the moment, that has tried to fill this gap, replacing the competent national bodies in the promotion of a unified vision of the issue. With the **RFI-4-Greenways** initiative, RFI has compiled, for the first time in Italy, three volumes containing all the disused lines of FS Group and all the different greenways realized, thus reaching a wider audience and also local authorities facilitating any future projects. RFI (and the holding FS) is now the reference player at national level on the theme of the recovery of disused railways as greenways.



Linee dismesse FS	434,3 km circa
Linee dismesse RFI	858,7 km circa
Linee dismesse totali	1293 km circa

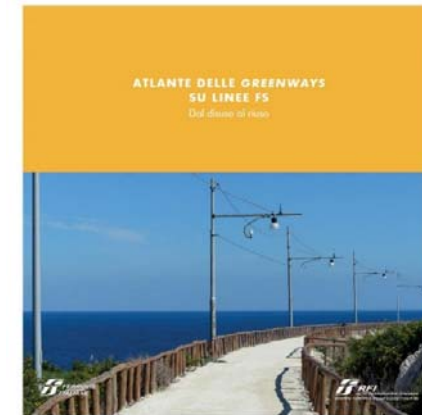
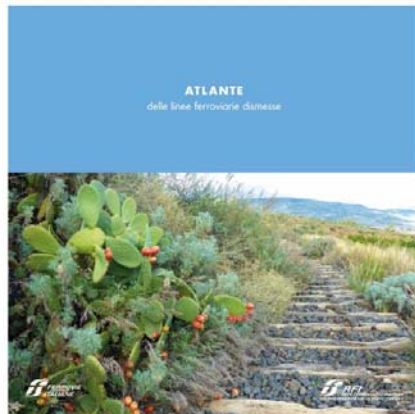
RFI-4-Greenways: the project

“**RFI-4-Greenways**” is the communication project implemented by Rete Ferroviaria Italiana in order to:

- promote the heritage of the disused railway lines
- spread the knowledge about this heritage
- spread the knowledge about the advantages for the communities of the conversion of disused railway lines into greenways.
- create interest in Local Administrations about advantages coming from developing transformation plans of local greenways
- encourage people to use and enjoy greenways cycling and/or walking.

These five goals are included in the **current Industrial Plan of the FS Group**

The **main action** of the communication strategy is the publication of atlases, three until now, distributed free of charge in paper format and downloadable in digital format from the RFI and FS Group website (www.rfi.it; www.fsitaliane.it):



RFI-4-Greenways: the project

The initiative was launched in **2016** with the publication of the first book, the “Atlas of Disused Railways” (182 pages), and then presented at the “**Ecomondo**” fair in November 2016 and at the “**General States of New Mobility**” in September **2017**. In October 2017 the first edition of the “Travel Atlas along disused railways” was published (250 pages), and then presented at the “**Ecomondo**” fair in November 2017 and at the “**Fa’ la Cosa Giusta**” fair in March **2018**. The Atlas was updated and expanded in **2019**.

In December 2019 the third book, the “Atlas of Greenways on FS railways” (160 pages), was published, and then presented at the “**COSMOBIKE**” fair in February **2020**.

An expanded version of the third Atlas and an updated edition of the first Atlas are expected to be published by the end of **2021**.

The “**RFI-4-Greenways**” Initiative has included a variety of other actions such as:

- presence of the news relating to the publication of the Atlases on the home page of the institutional website, for a period of 1 to 3 years;
- presentation of the Atlases at local events related to sustainability and/or cycling;
- periodic publication of articles in the monthly magazine “La Freccia”, distributed free of charge on the high-speed trains;
- periodic publication of news on the institutional news website of FS Italiane (fsnews.it);
- periodic publication of articles in the major national newspapers as well as in large circulation magazines and news agencies;
- participation in national and international conferences.

RFI-4-Greenways: promoting the policy of the reuse

To promote the policy of the reuse of the lines we have participated in many big public events (*Ecomondo, Fa La Cosa Giusta, Bike Forum, etc*) and also in exclusive events held by associations involved in this sector including universities, local authorities and research institutes.



November 2016, Rimini President Claudia Cattani gives a copy of the *Atlas of Disused Lines* to the Deputy Secretary for Transport, S. Zunarelli



November 2016 in Rimini, President Claudia Cattani and Ilaria Maggiorotti, with the Repubblica page that illustrates the release of the Atlas of Disused Lines



November 2017, Rimini Ecomondo, the Working Group of RFI

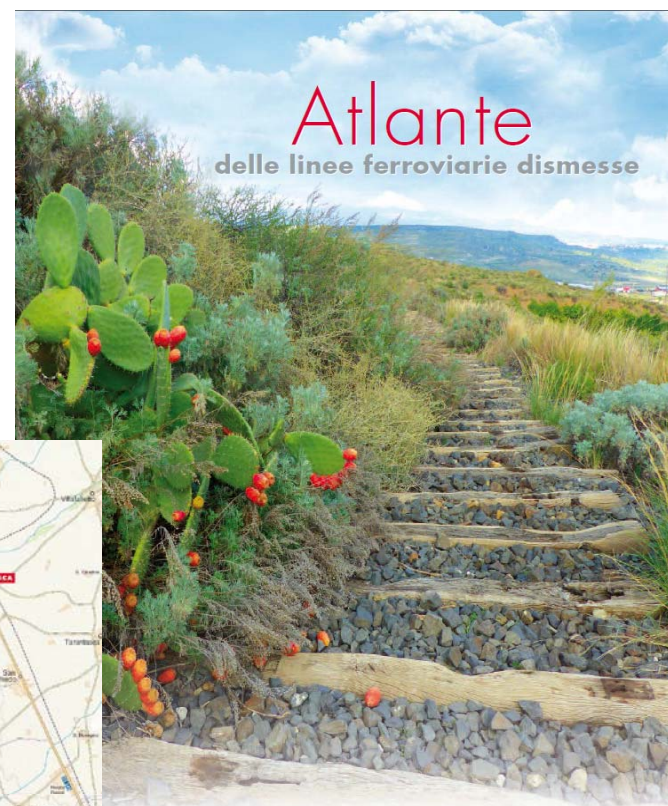
RFI-4-Greenways: promoting the policy of reuse

Hundreds of articles about our Atlases were written in major national newspapers (La Repubblica, Il Corriere della Sera, Il Messaggero, Il Sole 24 Ore) as well as in local newspapers and in weekly or monthly magazines (Oggi, Dove, Rivista Liffgate, Rivista Intelligenza artificiale) and online sites (Ansa, La Stampa.it, QuiFinanza). We printed over 7.300 copies of the volumes, and received millions of views on the FS site. In this way we were able to raise awareness about the Atlases and the possibility to transform the disused lines into greenways.



The Atlas of disused railway lines (2016)

The **Atlas of disused railway lines** describes the properties of the FS Italian Group: it contains files accompanied by technical data on the number of tunnels and bridges and buildings present, historical notes on birth and dismissal of the lines, photos taken along the routes and detailed maps.



- ✓ *Regional location*
- ✓ *History and current situation of the line*
- ✓ *Photographs of buildings, tunnels and bridges*
- ✓ *Railway track*
- ✓ *Data Sheet*

LINEA DISMESSA
Busca-Dronero

PROPRIETÀ
FS SpA

La linea Busca-Dronero, costruita all'inizio del secolo scorso e aperta all'esercizio nel 1913, fu richiesta fortemente dal Comune di Dronero per realizzare un collegamento in corrispondenza della stazione di Busca con la linea Cuneo-Saluzzo, al fine di assecondare l'isolamento della zona della Val Maora favorendone così lo sviluppo economico. Caratterizzata da un traffico non rilevante, dal 1986 non fu più effettuato il servizio viaggiatori; rimase l'utilizzo per il trasporto di merci e a scopi militari, fino alla chiusura definitiva della linea nel 1987 e alla dismissione definitiva avvenuta nel 1987.

La Busca-Dronero si innestava sulla linea Cuneo-Saluzzo-Savigliano, tuttora in esercizio, a circa 600 m dalla stazione di Busca. La linea ha una lunghezza di circa 12 km a una pendenza media del 10 per mille. L'armamento è stato in gran parte asportato. Parte del sedime risulta ricoperto da vegetazione. Sono presenti 23 passaggi a livello totalmente rimossi. Il tracciato della linea interessa i Comuni di Busca e Dronero, entrambi in Provincia di Cuneo. Nel tempo si è provveduto all'alienazione di alcuni fabbricati. In particolare per gli edifici della stazione di Dronero, di una certa rilevanza, si sta procedendo con attività finalizzate alla vendita. Negli anni 2000 la linea è stata oggetto di iniziative per la promozione del recupero dal tracciato con finalità turistiche e culturali; tra queste, l'Associazione Amici della Ferrovia Turistica della Valle Maora ha proposto di attivare la circolazione di veicoli leggeri o pedale del tipo veloval, sfruttando i tratti di binario che risultano ancora integri e in opera sul sedime della linea. Interessante in generale la possibilità di riuso per la migliore fruizione delle strutture storiche e artistiche della Val Maora; da segnalare ad esempio la presenza nella zona limitrofa di percorsi ciclabili già realizzati che potrebbero essere interconnessi con il sedime della ex linea.

Foto: dall'alto a basso
La stazione di Dronero
La nuova locomotiva di Dronero
La casa contadina a Busca

32

SCHEDE TECNICHE

Linea di confluenza (in esercizio)	Savigliano-Saluzzo-Cuneo
Regione	Piemonte
Lunghezza della linea	12 km
Dimensione definitiva	D.M. del M.I.T. prot. 0000229 del 20 maggio 2014
Proprietario	FS SpA - Voti privati
Presenza di binari e/o tecnologie	Binari in tratti - No impianti tecnologici
Fabbricati viaggiatori e/o altri fabbricati	4 fabbricati viaggiatori - 9 case contadine
Rilevanti opere d'arte	1 sottovia - 1 ponte

33

The Atlas of disused railway lines

This set of assets can become a driving force for initiatives to enhance the territory, a real opportunity for our country, for the economy and for the rich, cultural, historical, architectural and landscape heritage that unfolds along the same lines.



North Area

The Atlas has been divided into 4 geographical areas



Islands Area



Central Area

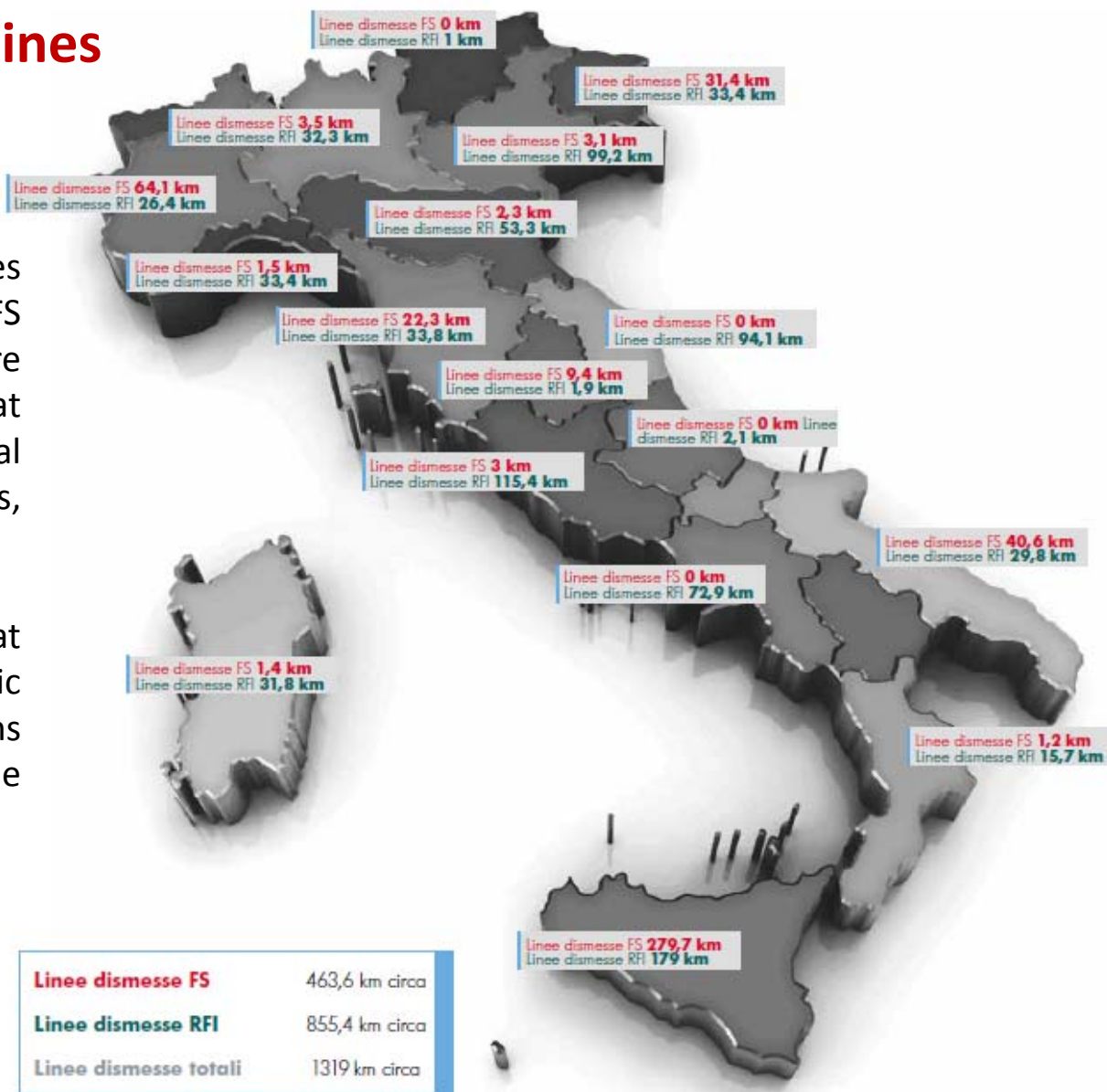


South Area

The Atlas of disused railway lines

Although decommissioned, the Atlas lines remain today properties of the FS Group (FS S.p.A. and RFI S.p.A.) and as such require adequate management which is aimed only at their maintenance; instead, it would be ideal to give new life to these infrastructures, envisaging their future reuse.

This is why the Atlas is aimed in particular at those involved in territorial policies, public administrations, as well as those associations that act as spokespersons for the communities concerned.

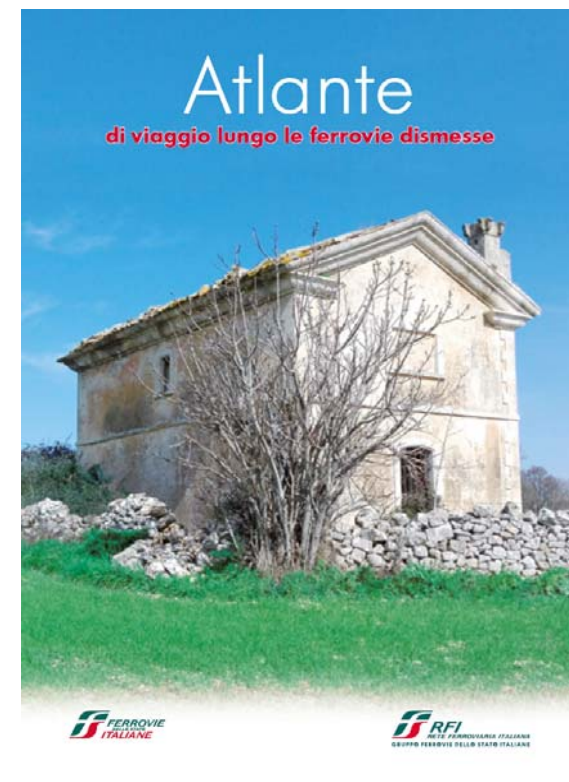
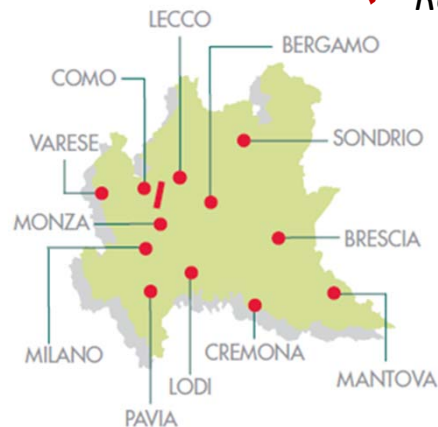


The Travel Atlas along disused railways (2017)

RFI, with the aim of establishing a fruitful dialogue with public administrations, has created a new Atlas of disused lines, highlighting the peculiarities of the territories crossed. The Atlas describes the natural beauties, the historic villages, the archeological sites together with the already existing cycle paths, the most important paths and greenways that relate to the disused paths.

✓ Buildings for redevelopment/for sale

✓ Regional location



✓ Attractions list of the area

Vicenza	Città di Vicenza
Vicenza	Santuario M. Berico
Padova	Città di Padova
Vigodarzere (PD)	Certosa di Vigodarzere
Provincia di Padova	Parco Reg. dei Colli Euganei
Teolo (PD)	Abbazia di Praglia
Abano Terme (PD)	Santuario Madonna della Salute
Battaglia Terme (PD)	Castello di Cataio
Revere (MN)	Palazzo Ducale

The Travel Atlas along disused railways (2017)

For the Travel Atlas, some simple pictograms have been created to indicate archaeological sites, attractions, nature reserves, infrastructures present and all other facilities. All this information illustrates the tourist potential of the disused line.



Centro storico di notevole interesse

Centro storico molto interessante

Centro storico interessante

Castello, Torre, Palazzo Storico

Museo, Monumento

Rudere, Scavi archeologici

Santuario, Chiesa, Complesso religioso

Parco naturale, Riserva, Oasi protetta

Panorama

Spiaggia, Area Balneare

Porto turistico

Greenway

Pista Ciclopedonale

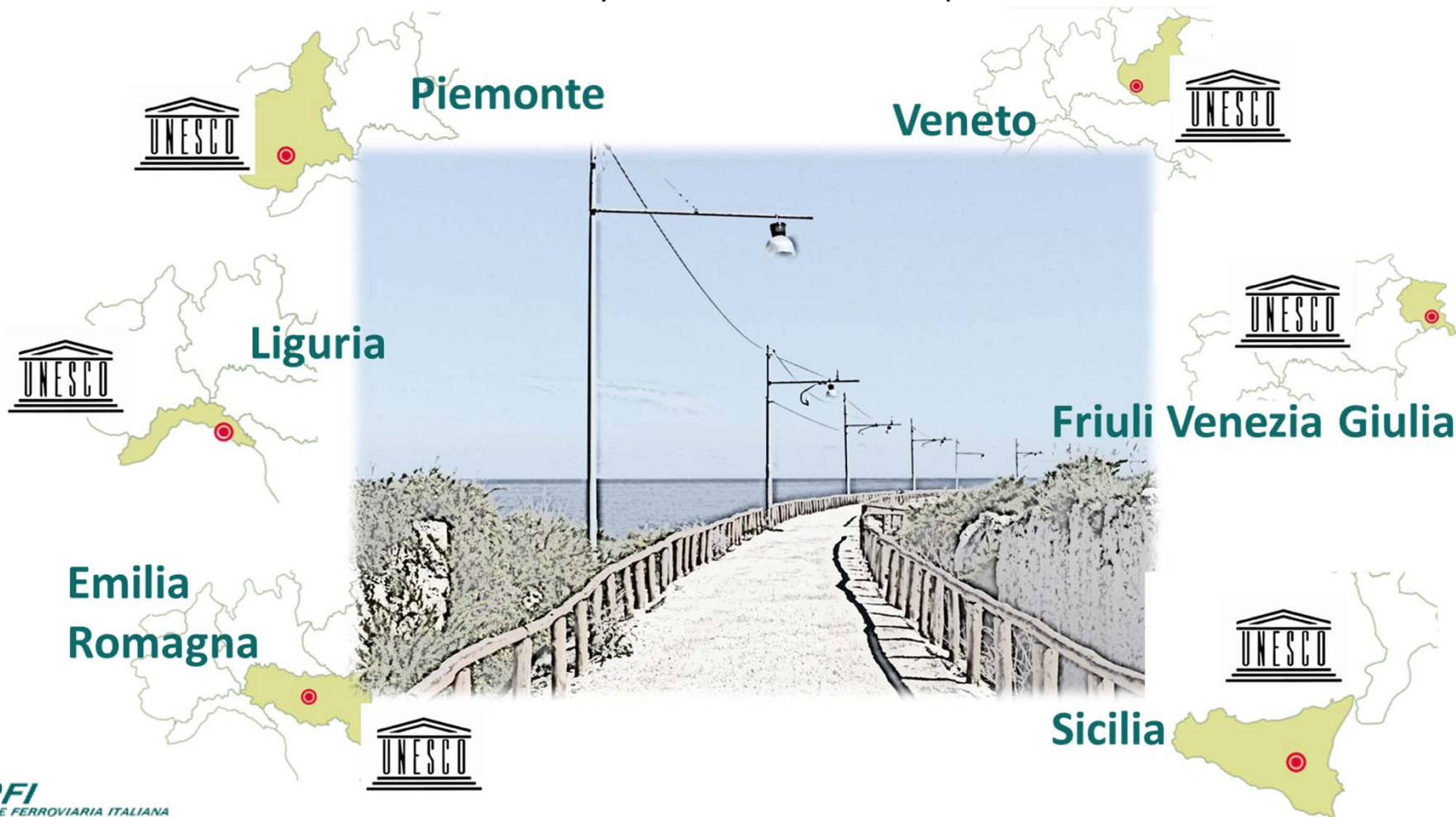
Itinerario Bicitalia

Cammino

Greenway su ferrovia dismessa

Unesco sites along the disused railways (2017)

The Unesco sites, which are located in the vicinity of our lines, are also reported in the Atlas.







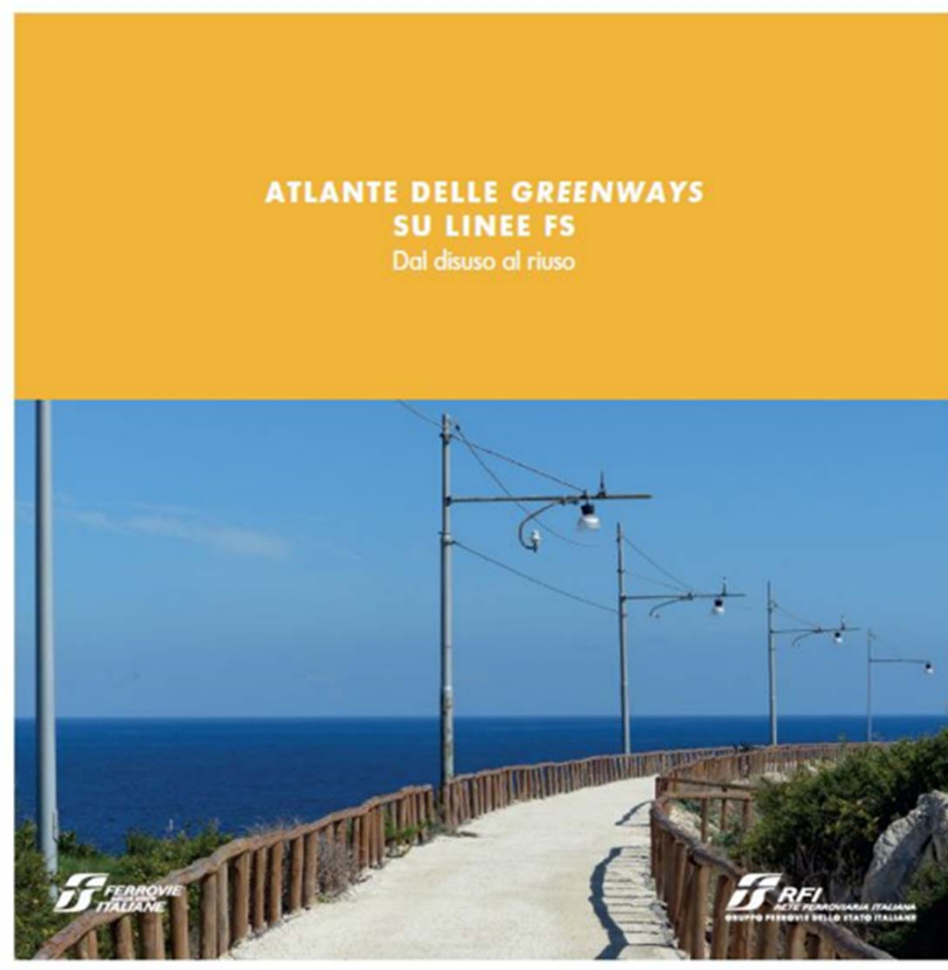
Atlas of Greenways on FS lines - From disuse to reuse (2019)

To date local authorities have transformed approximately 475 km of lines into greenways.

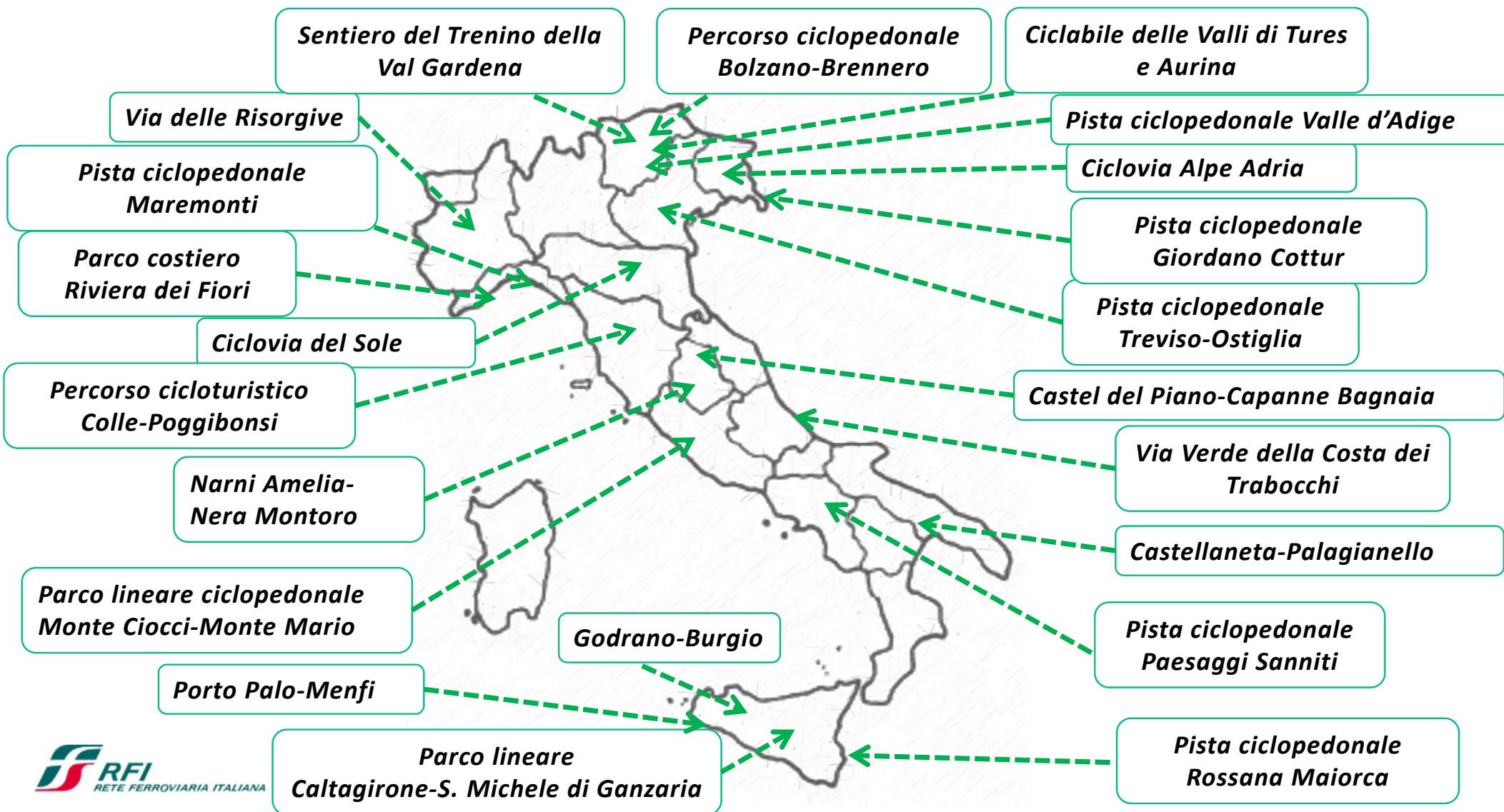
Other sites have already been sold (approximately 100 km) which will be ready in the not too distant future.



-  LUNGHEZZA DELLA GREENWAY
-  ANNO DI APERTURA
-  PAVIMENTAZIONE DELLA GREENWAY
-  INTERCONNESSIONE CON ALTRI ITINERARI DI MOBILITA' DOLCE



The disused lines already transformed into cyclepaths: 475 Km



From disused railways to greenways: the advantages

- ✓ Regular and modest **slope**, ideal for soft mobility
- ✓ **Interconnection** with other public transport services
- ✓ **Availability** of infrastructure with only one owner
- ✓ **Opportunities** for routes physically separated from the road network
- ✓ **Possibility of traveller service** buildings along the route
- ✓ **Appreciation** of the historical and environmental heritage connected to the route
- ✓ **Development** of local economies



Greenways projects: transformation operations

With a few steps the regeneration process gives new life to disused paths



1. Railroad track Treviso-Ostiglia



2. Elimination of sleepers, rails and rail fastenings



3. Ballast crushing



4. Track ready for use

Atlas of Greenways on FS lines - From disuse to reuse (2019)

In the final part of this Atlas there are some disused lines which should be transformed into greenways, because:

- ✓ *They are ideal as an extension of existing greenways*
- ✓ *They intersect with other soft mobility itineraries*
- ✓ *They are located in close proximity to important natural and cultural heritage sites (Unesco sites)*



<p>LOMBARDIA LINEA CALOLZIOCORTE O.-CERNUSCO MERATE</p> <p>13,5 km</p> <p>Possibile trasformazione in greenway per la quasi totalità della sua lunghezza. Possibile collegamento alla pista ciclopedonale lungo il fiume Adda.</p>	<p>EMILIA ROMAGNA LINEA MODENA-RUBIERA</p> <p>8,2 km</p> <p>Il Comune di Modena ha manifestato l'intenzione di acquisire il sedime per trasformarlo in pista ciclopedonale integrandolo nella rete di mobilità dolce della città. Presenti 3 CC.</p>
<p>VENETO LINEA PC DOLCÈ-DOMEGLIARA S. AMBROGIO</p> <p>7,8 km</p> <p>Il sedime si presta alla riconversione con la possibilità di collegamento alla Ciclopista del Sole già realizzata. Presenti 2 IV.</p>	<p>PUGLIA LINEA GIOIA DEL COLLE-PALAGIANELLO</p> <p>28 km</p> <p>La linea si presta all'eventuale prolungamento della pista realizzata creando un collegamento con la Ciclovía dei Borboni e Via dei Pellegrini. Presenti 2 IV e 5 CC.</p>

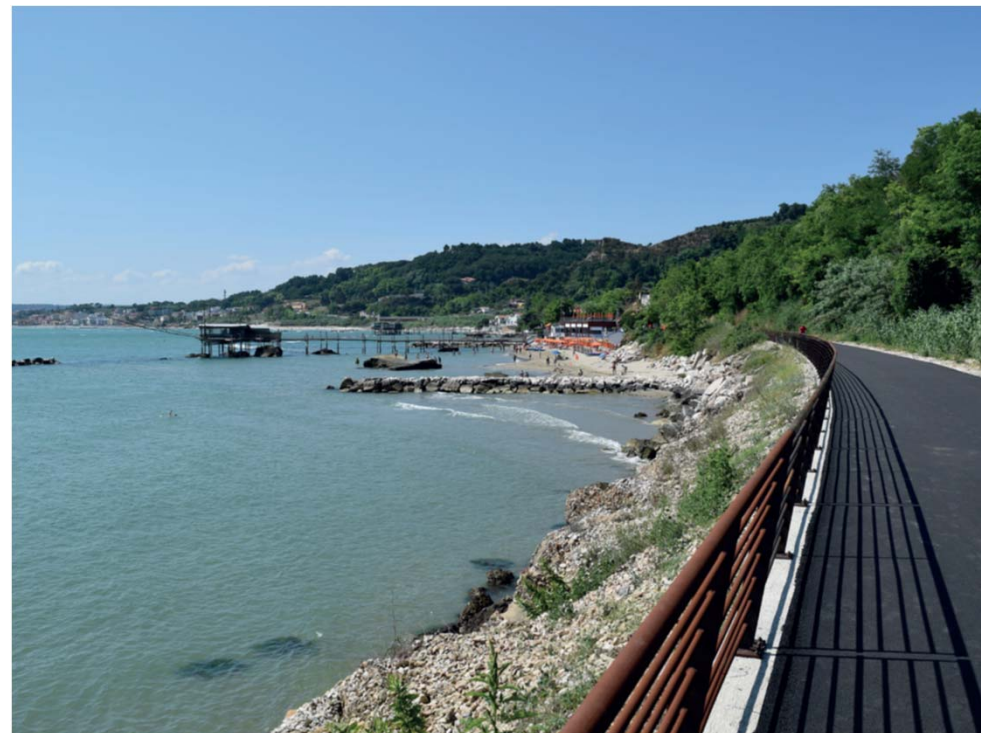
An example: the Via Verde della Costa dei Trabocchi

from Ortona to Vasto

Location: Abruzzo, between Pescara and Foggia

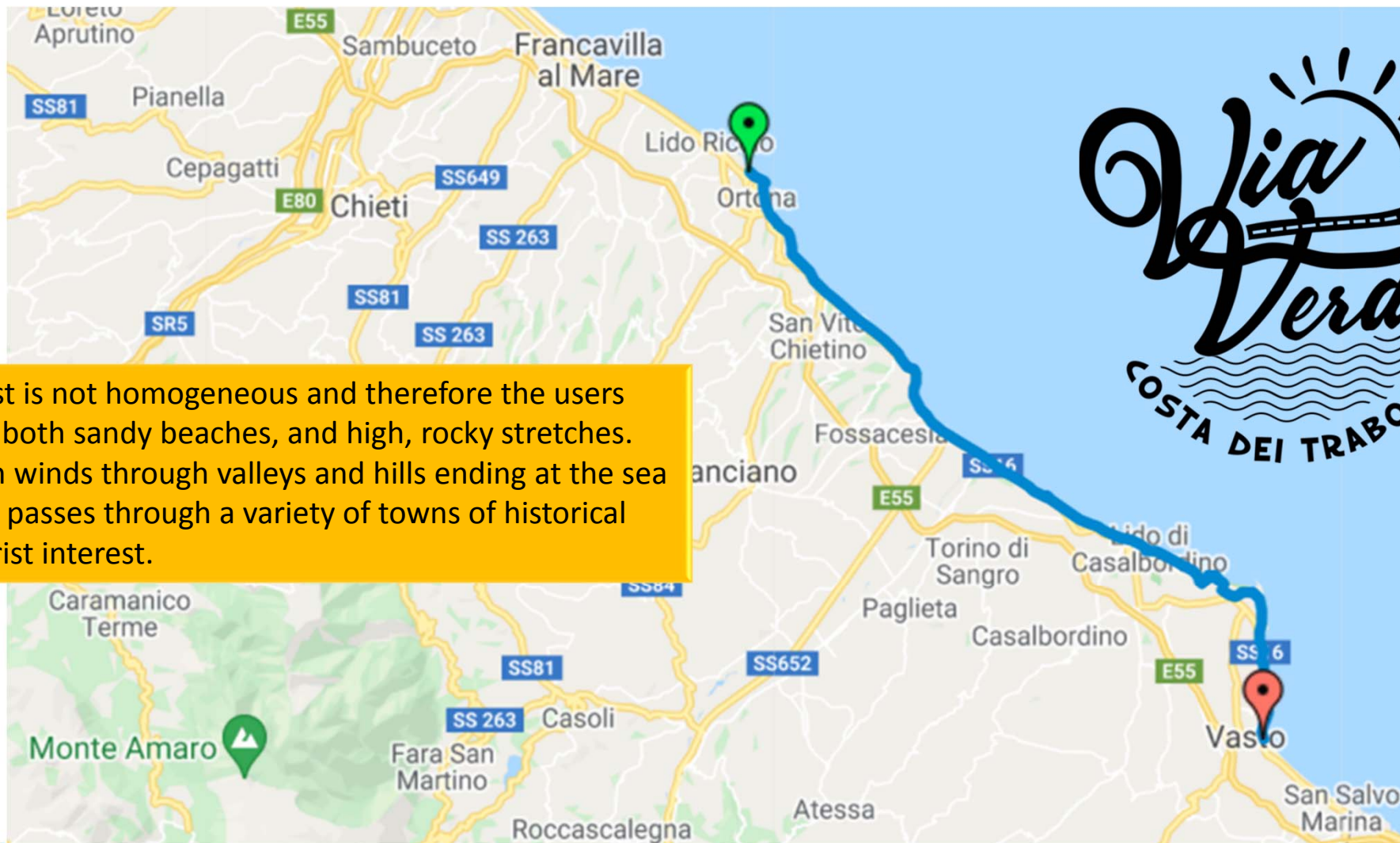
Length: 43 Km ca.

Manager: Provincial authorities of Chieti



The entire route (75% is on the former railway site and the remainder is on rural roads), is set in a beautiful landscape, mainly along the sea. Its construction required an investment of about € 8 million and involved the reuse of all bridges and tunnels present along the disused railway section.

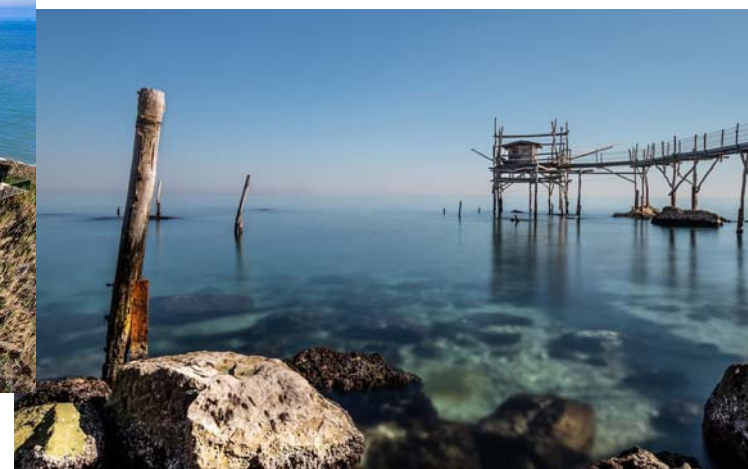
The inauguration of the Via Verde - Costa dei Trabocchi is underway



The coast is not homogeneous and therefore the users can find both sandy beaches, and high, rocky stretches. The path winds through valleys and hills ending at the sea and also passes through a variety of towns of historical and tourist interest.

The inauguration of the Via Verde - Costa dei Trabocchi is underway

To date



9 municipalities involved

42 km in total

16 «trabocchi» to visit

The Via Verde Costa dei Trabocchi is for "slow" cyclists who want to enjoy the landscape. It is a path that runs along pine forests, beaches, protected areas including the Trabocchi, that are old piers built by fishermen where "fishing machine" are located ; the piers now are often reused as restaurants on the sea.

Future Prospects



Working together with other bodies to obtain a greater number of transformations of disused lines into greenways.



*We are currently working, together with other organizations, on a **national soft mobility atlas** which will include all the soft mobility infrastructure all over Italy*



RFI is working to realize urban cycle paths which connect train stations to universities and we hope the Recovery Fund could facilitate other projects.

Thank you for your attention !

