



Article Small Towns Recovery and Valorisation. An Innovative Protocol to Evaluate the Efficacy of Project Initiatives

Emanuela D'Andria, Pierfrancesco Fiore 🗈 and Antonio Nesticò *🕩

Department of Civil Engineering, University of Salerno, 84084 Fisciano, Italy; emdandria@unisa.it (E.D.); pfiore@unisa.it (P.F.)

* Correspondence: anestico@unisa.it; Tel.: +39-089-964318

Abstract: In many Countries, the depopulation of small towns is a significant phenomenon, which is causing the disappearance of a vast material and immaterial heritage, the beating heart of national identities. However, in recent years, with the environmental and metropolitan crisis, a gradual change of trend is taking place in which small towns play a crucial role in rebuilding the city-countryside relationship. The sustainable development of territories is possible, but in order to achieve it, it is essential to reverse the gaze and consider small municipalities as the main driving force for a radical change. Nevertheless, too often administrations are inadequate in dealing with the complexity of small realities, defining strategies and funding projects that are inconsistent with the real and varied local needs. This work deals with the issue of the recovery and valorisation of small towns through multi-criteria analysis schemes able to capture not only the specific characteristics of the small municipality, but also its relations with the territory and with neighbouring medium/large cities or other surrounding small towns (city-villages network or small municipalities network), also with reference to the multiple infrastructural components. The aim was to identify the critical points of intervention actions and to effectively address future investments. The idea was to propose a technical-economic evaluation protocol structured on social, economic, environmental, and historicarchitectural components. The study of the criteria, divided into several sub-criteria, led to the proposal of innovative datasets of evaluation indicators. The model was applied to a case study. The results showed the validity of the investigation protocol, which can be an important tool for prioritising the interventions to be implemented, thus optimising the processes of resources allocation-both public and private-according to the principles of sustainable development, with relevant effects in terms of economic policy.

Keywords: small towns; recovery and valorisation; sustainable development; multi-criteria evaluation

1. Introduction

Small town depopulation is a widespread phenomenon that involves many countries in the world. However, in the last decade, something has been changing. As the environmental crisis progresses and the city-countryside relationship is gradually torn apart, there is a growing awareness about the importance of rediscovering inland urban realities [1]. Added to this, the current health emergency testifies to the urgent need to change modern lifestyles.

In this scenario, repopulating small towns can represent a concrete chance for the sustainable development of territories. The aim is to rebuild a dialogue between man and nature, recover local and national identities, encourage urban decongestion, and reduce land consumption: "for the first time these territories [are] beginning to be seen not only as a problem, but also as an opportunity" [2] (p. 5).

It is obvious, therefore, that the enhancement of small towns is an increasingly discussed topic and many international initiatives are underway. In this regard, it is important to highlight the role of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD), which supports and disseminates rural development programmes, sharing information, best



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Copyright: © 2021 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https:// creativecommons.org/licenses/by/ 4.0/). practices, and knowledge on the valorisation of inland areas and small towns. Among the ENRD projects, the one on Smart Villages is significant: it aims at overcoming service and employment deficits through the use of digital technologies and new forms of collaboration between different stakeholders (small municipalities, local actors, authorities, farmers, craftsmen, etc.) [3–5].

Some recent ESPON studies are also relevant, such as Small and medium sized towns in their functional territorial context [6]. This study investigated the role and relational characteristics of small and medium-sized towns with neighbouring cities, analysing their development potential in the light of the social, economic, institutional, environmental, and cultural issues of their territorial contexts.

With regard to the link between small towns and rural areas, of particular interest is the EU project, called H2020 ROBUST (Rural-Urban Outlooks: Unlocking Synergies), which identifies, analyses, supports, and strengthens policies and governance systems aimed at encouraging mutually beneficial relationships in the rural-periurban-urban axis.

Furthermore, the European project ESPON ESCAPE (European Shrinking Rural Areas: Challenges, Actions and Perspectives for Territorial Governance) addresses the issue of rural depopulation, outlining its causes and consequences, with the purpose of proposing integrated strategies and actions based on the opportunities offered by these territories [7].

The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) is a worldwide association which, through the Ecovillage model, promotes ecological and shared lifestyles [8,9]. To date, there are approximately 2000 communities in the United States, 250 in Great Britain and Ireland, 100 in Germany, 33 in France, 13 in the Netherlands, 30 in Scandinavia, and 23 in both Spain and Portugal [10].

In addition, the joint goal of many countries is to valorise the small towns in order to rebuild a link between the metropolises and the more inland territories.

In this respect, a relevant example is France, which in 2015 adopted The city-countrysid e reciprocity agreements aimed at promoting inter-municipal partnerships to encourage cooperation between large, small, and medium-sized towns, villages, and rural areas. The intention is to reduce the economic and social gaps between the different parts, strengthening those most disadvantaged.

Still in France, the Plan Nos ruralités was drawn up by the new Rural Interministerial Committee in order to reorganise "the various national and local strategies, starting from the city-villages (intermediate Municipalities with a population of less than 10,000 inhabitants) and then extending to rural areas" [11] (p. 11). The Plan brought funds to carry out experimental valorisation programmes in 54 carefully selected small Municipalities.

Spain is probably the European Country that is most affected by the depopulation of its inland areas. In fact, the area surrounding the region of Madrid has just over seven million inhabitants in an area of 270,000 km². As data from the National Statistical Institute testify, the 'empty Spain' [12] lost 61,684 inhabitants between 2017 and 2018, registering only 15% of the population living in half of the national territory [13]. In order to address this problem, the Programa Experimental de Recuperación y Utilización Educativa de Pueblos Abandonados was set up in 1984, with the aim of revitalising small towns through cultural and educational projects. The activities of the Nuevos Senderos association, which selects job offers in rural areas and proposes them, with appropriate training, to immigrant families, are also relevant. A similar initiative has been taken by Ireland with Rural Resettlement Ireland (RRI), which provides free services to anyone who wants to move to the countryside [13].

Germany, on the other hand, has taken a different path, choosing to invest in renewable energy production for the enhancement of small municipalities. With this aim, the Bioenergy Villages strategy was born and currently involves 120 small towns where farmers and local cooperatives manage, produce, and distribute sustainable energy [13].

In Italy, a significant step forward has been taken by the Strategia Nazionale per le Aree Interne (SNAI). The Strategia has mapped marginal territories on the basis of the travel time needed to reach the pole-cities. The goal is to promote the development of these places by upgrading basic services (mobility, health, education). For the first time, a geography of "shrinkage" on a national scale has been given, which has undoubtedly ignited the debate on the future of inland areas and the role they could play today in rethinking the country's territorial organisation [14]. This has led to the development of numerous studies on the subject. For example, those carried out by the Associazione Riabitare l'Italia, which examines not only the causes of demographic decline, closely linked to historical and economic trends, but also the projects and policies in progress, providing a constantly updated overview [2]. The Associazione Nazionale Borghi del Respiro (National Association of Breathing Villages) aims to promote human health through safe lifestyles that combine respect for nature and the reduction of land consumption. In this context, the recovery of small towns plays a key role, as it offers the possibility of living in unpolluted places, practising outdoor, leisure, and socio-cultural activities.

In addition, there are also research projects carried out by universities and public institutions. Among these, of particular interest is Riabitare i Paesi. Strategie Operative per la Valorizzazione e la Resilienza delle Aree Interne (RI.P.R.O.VA.RE), recently funded by the Ministry of the Environment and Land and Sea Protection. This project, which involves three Italian universities (University of Campania 'Luigi Vanvitelli', University of Salerno, University of Basilicata), proposes a reflection on the classification and perimeter criteria of inland areas, as well as on the tools useful to assess and strengthen their resilience. The purpose is to elaborate possible development strategies aimed at combining the improvement of basic services, the mitigation of risks, and the enhancement of local resources.

Mention should also be given to the actions of organisations such as I Borghi più belli d'Italia (Italy's Most Beautiful Villages) or the Associazione Borghi Autentici (Association of Authentic Villages), which promote local beauty through an information network aimed at involving and sensitising communities on the issues of abandonment and depopulation. There are also those carried out by I Borghi della lettura (The Reading Villages), which assign culture a key role in promoting the knowledge of small towns. In addition, these actions are flanked by other intervention strategies. It is useful to mention the "Alberghi Diffusi", the "Health Villages", the "Artists' Villages", and the "Music Villages" [15-17]. In this context, it is necessary to underline that the above-mentioned strategies are addressed to municipalities whose resident population does not exceed 5000 inhabitants or whose establishment was the result of the merger of several municipalities each with a population up to 5000 inhabitants. This threshold, established by Law No 158/2017 (Measures for the support and enhancement of small municipalities, as well as provisions for the redevelopment and recovery of the historic centres of the same municipalities), defines the Italian 'small town'. Such a stringent limit does not reflect the cultural, economic, environmental, and historical complexity of a small town, thus risking the exclusion from funding of a large number of small municipalities which, despite having a higher population, are experiencing a strong and constant demographic decline.

However, intervening in small towns is a complex matter: "it is [...] a question of carrying out assessments [...] which allow problems and resources to be highlighted so that policies can then be drawn up, with a view to integrated planning" [18] (p. 77). In fact, the strategies adopted have not always achieved the desired outcomes. The reasons for this failure are to be found in the mostly punctual approach of the actions, which are the result of 'top-down' wills, unrelated to the real needs of the places. In addition, social, economic, environmental, and cultural issues are usually neglected and administrations are generally unprepared to deal with the multiple factors that characterise small realities.

There is a need to take action not just on building reuse, but also on environmental and landscape protection, as well as on social cohesion and infrastructure rehabilitation. Thus, it is evident that the revitalisation of small municipalities is feasible with a view to the territories' sustainable development, as there is a clear need to take into account social, economic, environmental, and cultural issues. Consequently, any project should necessarily be guided by the sustainability principles. In the light of the above, it is evident that there is the necessity to develop operational tools that combine multiple factors and that guide local administrations and experts in selecting the most effective valorisation interventions to be implemented in a small municipality. This selection must be carried out considering several assessment criteria: social, economic, environmental, and historic-architectural. This can be achieved by using multi-criteria analysis models (MCDA).

The multi-criteria analysis helps the decision-maker in solving complex problems that require the formulation of convenience judgments on numerous investment alternatives in the light of multiple and heterogeneous parameters [19,20]. The multi-criteria methods are largely used in different fields, from construction and project management to quality management, and from soft computing to sustainability and energy-environmental [19,21–30]. The widespread use proves their remarkable flexibility, which is translated into the ability to deal with the variability of existing situations, showing "a [...] use versatility especially in reference to questions characterised by the lack of univocity that are expressed in the proposal of a set of solutions usually [marked] by the presence of antagonistic interests" [29] (p. 11).

With these considerations, this paper addressed the issue of valorising small towns in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, i.e., considering together social, economic, environmental, and historic-architectural aspects. These questions do not refer exclusively to the small municipality, but are always read on a broader scale in which the infrastructural, social, and cultural fabric of the whole reference territory is examined, as well as the spatial relations between the poles-cities and the small towns.

2. Aim of the Paper

The work aimed to characterise a multi-criteria analysis model for the technicaleconomic assessment of strategies for the recovery and valorisation of small towns. Based on the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) logic, the model proposes to detect the criticalities of the intervention actions and to compare different project ideas in a rational way in order to optimise the allocation processes of both public and private resources.

In particular, the model's structure is made up of evaluation criteria, sub-criteria, and indicators, organised in new datasets available to the operators: the social, economic, environmental, and historic-architectural components of the small town outline the analysis criteria, further broken down into 15 sub-criteria; each sub-criteria is associated with one or more evaluation indicators, collated from the literature and also integrated with specifically defined indices.

The criteria and sub-criteria panel and the datasets of evaluation indicators are the innovative elements of the research.

The paper is structured in the following sections: reference materials and methods; general structure of the investigation protocol; application to a case study; exposition of results and discussion; conclusions.

3. Materials and Methods

In view of the different tangible and intangible elements that distinguish the small towns, and considering the need to carry out organic programmed interventions, it is useful to prepare technical-economic tools aimed at selecting effective recovery and valorisation strategies. The reference criteria must be social, economic, environmental, and cultural, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. These principles lead towards economic growth without forgetting the objectives of reducing poverty, promoting social solidarity, supporting policies aimed at strengthening the sense of community, and protecting the environment from harmful human activities: the environmental goal is to maintain the reproducibility of natural resources, guaranteeing their quality and protection; the social one intends to invest in human well-being, starting from the concepts of equity and equality; and the economic one prefigures the increase of employment opportunities [31].

In line with the principles of sustainable development, investing in the enhancement of small towns favours the efficient use of resources, limited land consumption, and the preservation of a vast tangible and intangible heritage: "The villages recovery [should not be understood] only and necessarily as a maintenance and restoring operation [of the pre-existences] [...], but it means going back to inhabiting the territory to re-establish a link with nature [...]. From this perspective, the memory of people and buildings is fundamental in order not to lose a cultural and knowledge heritage indissolubly bound to the artificial and natural environment [...]. Keeping the villages alive with their houses and their people means not losing [the] traditions" [14] (pp. 13,14) from which the countries can restart. Moreover, the regeneration of these places guarantees social, economic, environmental, and cultural dynamics in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda: good health and well-being (goal 3), quality education (goal 4), employment (goals 8, 9), reduced inequalities (goal 10), and sustainable cities and communities (goal 11) [32].

The study topics must carefully consider the peculiarities of small towns.

Although it is appropriate to remember that "each village represents a history of its own, linked to its traditions, its conformation, its relationship with the territory but also to its current conditions and its potential for transformation" [14] (p. 15), it seems reasonable to group together some generally recurring characteristics. As reported in the literature [2,13,14,17,18,33], small municipalities are usually located in disadvantaged areas, far from the bigger cities, and are marked by inadequate infrastructure and an ineffective basic service system. These conditions lead to their social, economic, and cultural isolation. However, while the gradual depopulation of these areas has caused their abandonment, it has also favoured the preservation of the original urban layout, as well as the typological-constructive features of the architectural artefacts. The strength of the *genius loci* is still visible in the strong relationship with the landscape and in the productive vocations of the neighbouring territorial contexts [34]. All these prerogatives can be synthetically translated into specific evaluation criteria and sub-criteria organised according to the hierarchical structure of the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). Compared with other multi-criteria methods, the AHP allows:

- Breaking down decision problems according to a multi-level organisation (goal, criteria, sub-criteria, possible alternatives);
- Comparing quantitative and qualitative data;
- Managing and evaluating criteria, sub-criteria, and indicators;
- Consciously planning the actions to be implemented [29,35,36].

In the evaluation process, each element at the same level is compared in pairs with each element at the higher level. Judgments are expressed according to Saaty's fundamental scale, in which: 1 expresses same importance between two elements perceived to be equally relevant; 3 indicates moderate importance, i.e., the evaluation is moderately in favour of one element compared to another; 5 indicates strong importance, the assessment is highly in favour of one item compared with another; 7 very strong importance, the assessment is even more strongly in favour of one element over another; 9 extreme importance, the assessment is extremely in favour of one element over another; and 2, 4, 6, and 8 give intermediate values between two evaluations [36].

The literature on the tangible and intangible components that distinguish small towns, the principles of sustainable development and the corresponding approaches for the multi-criteria analysis of villages' recovery and valorisation projects, as well as the Analytic Hierarchy Process' logical structure provide reference materials and methods for the research.

4. Interventions for the Recovery and Valorisation of Small Towns. An Innovative Evaluation Protocol

In the light of the above, the need to implement actions for the recovery and valorisation of small towns clashes with the difficulty of resolving complex and closely related issues: the territory's economic growth, which is essential to give future generations prospects of stability; the protection of the natural and built environment, which is more and more important in a sustainable development perspective; and the respect of local cultural and social traditions, a heritage that must certainly be safeguarded.

It immediately follows that any project must be assessed from a technical and economic point of view in the light of several criteria, which must consider the peculiarities (the "invariants") of the small towns that are to be recovered and enhanced. Each criteria then needs to be broken down into its many constituent elements, the sub-criteria. At this point, it is required to: (a) identify appropriate evaluation indicators, each able to express the capacity of the initiative to pursue the objective according to the corresponding criteria; and (b) assign the right weight to individual judgements, depending on the economic policy aims of the decision-maker.

Based on the above-mentioned logical sequence of phases, evaluation model shown in Table 1 was formulated, which is a useful reference for a comprehensive analysis of the criticalities and potentials of the strategies aimed at recovering and valorising small municipalities.

	MODEL CHARACTERISATION
Step 1	Definition of evaluation CRITERIA
Step 2	Analysis of the small town' INVARIANTS
Step 3	Definition of SUB-CRITERIA
Step 4	Construction of the evaluation INDICATORS datasets
Step 5	WEIGHT assignment

Table 1. The 5 steps for the analysis model characterisation.

It is a sequence of five steps which outline a real operational tool for examining intervention projects for villages. Each step is illustrated in detail in the following sub-paragraphs: criteria, invariants, sub-criteria, evaluation indicators, and weight assignment.

4.1. The Evaluation Criteria

The definition of criteria is carried out in the light of the sustainable development different components (social, economic, and environmental) and according to the relevance of the cultural dimension in the recovery and valorisation strategies for small towns.

In fact, the technical and economic evaluation of the interventions poses issues: *socioanthropological*, related to local traditions, to the strong sense of belonging to the places, to the human and cultural background of the communities; *economic*, on the strengthening of infrastructure systems and the productive fabric of the territory; *environmental*, with reference to the quality of air, water, and soil, and the protection of fauna and flora; and *cultural*, because of the need to properly consider the great material heritage of small municipalities, including churches, historical palaces, and other buildings of particular value and interest that significantly contribute to delineate the charm, identity, and memory of 'marginal areas' [37].

From these considerations, it is clear that any regeneration action must necessarily consider this great potential, safeguarding and preserving it. Thus, any evaluation cannot disregard to consider:

- Social criteria,
- Economic criteria,
- Environmental criteria,
- Historic-architectural criteria.

4.2. The Small Town's Invariants

The second step of the study protocol consists of analysing the small town's 'invariants', i.e., the recurring features [38].

The small municipalities have a wide variety of oral, gastronomic, and religious traditions that enrich the identity profile of places, including issues related to local history and culture. In addition to this, there is the presence of a huge valuable material heritage,

which can be found in the quality of the existing buildings, using traditional techniques and specific typological-constructive features. Spontaneous architectures answer to the climatic and morphological conditions of the territory in which they are located, offering a concrete solution to the most urgent housing needs. Moreover, the original urban layout is generally still readable, being marked by a limited and compact built fabric, efficiently organised and easily accessible in all its parts.

The small towns are characterised by a rationalised, productive organisation, which promotes air and water quality as well as functional land use.

On the other hand, in inland areas there is a widespread shortage of infrastructure (parking areas, roads, railways, etc.), accompanied by a deficiency of basic services, including health care, schools, and groceries. These factors strongly influence the trend of demographic decline in small municipalities, which experience a constant state of uncertainty and abandonment.

Thus, the analysis of the sector's literature [13–15,39–42] makes it possible to identify 11 specific characteristics—the invariants—of the small towns:

- Presence of local traditions and identities;
- Lack of services;
- Presence of typical productive activities;
- Distance from the major cities;
- Lack of adequate infrastructure;
- Environmental quality;
- Insertion in a natural context;
- Limited and compact extension of the built fabric;
- 'Human scale' dimension of the built fabric;
- Quality of the built heritage;
- Site-specific typological-constructive characters.

4.3. The Sub-Criteria

The invariants were translated into one or more evaluation sub-criteria, following the correspondence shown in Table A1.

Once the sub-criteria were defined, all elements of the decision problem were hierarchically organised (Table A2).

As can be seen from Table A2, both environmental and historic-architectural subcriteria were broken down into the three layers, territory, urban core, building, in order to deepen the relationships between the three systems and to facilitate the examination of the strategies on several scales of intervention.

At the territorial level, the environmental issues include the components of the local flora and fauna, the water, the air, and the soil. At the urban core scale, the green spaces' composition, texture, and quality are analysed. As for the building, its bioclimatic characteristics are investigated.

With regard to the historic-architectural sub-criteria: the territory scale includes the relationship between landscape and village; for the urban core, the spatial and visual link between the historic centre and the administrative context is considered (the public green and equipped areas are evaluated along with circulation spaces, i.e., alleys, streets, stairs, covered passages, etc., and together with aggregation spaces, such as squares, open spaces, etc.); finally, the building is analysed both in its formal relationship with the whole small town and in its typological-constructive characteristics.

4.4. New Datasets of Evaluation Indicators

Once all elements were set up according to the hierarchical structure of the Analytic Hierarchy Process, appropriate evaluation indicators were associated with each sub-criteria.

This followed the study of datasets addressing the issues of 'urban sustainability', 'sustainable urban mobility', 'valorisation of the historical-cultural heritage', 'territorial cohesion', 'rural development', and 'landscape'.

Thus 470 indicators were selected from 15 international studies [43–56]. Table A3 lists the 15 works, indicating the authors, years of publication, and panel titles.

From the 470 selected evaluation indexes, a further selection of indicators specifically linked to social, economic, environmental, and historic-architectural issues of small municipalities was made.

This second moment of selection was conducted in the light of the five principles [57,58]:

- Focus, in order to identify those indices that exclusively measure what you need to measure;
- Relevance, in relation to the ongoing research;
- Accessibility, with regard to the facility to access the requested data;
- Clarity, as it is necessary to adopt clear indices, the measurement of which does not allow ambiguities of interpretation;
- Frequency, so as to favour those indicators that recur most frequently within the examined panels.

According to these requirements, four datasets of evaluation indicators were proposed: for the social criteria (24 indexes); for the economic one (42 indexes); for the environmental one (34 indexes); for the historic-architectural criteria (38 indexes).

It should be noted that all four datasets also include new indicators, defined to consider specific impacts that the investment project may have on the territory.

The proposed four panels are useful tools for all operators involved in the technicaleconomic evaluation of interventions for the recovery and valorisation of small towns in inland areas [59].

Tables A4–A7 show the datasets in detail. For each sub-criteria, several indicators are provided, among which the decision-maker can choose the indexes considered most appropriate to solve the specific evaluation problem.

4.5. The Assignment of Weights

Once the four panels of evaluation indicators were set up, the problem was to assign weights to the decision elements. According to the common practice, there is a general trend to assign the same weight to the criteria. At this level, in fact, the judgement is strongly conditioned by political decisions, rather than by technical evaluation rules. Therefore, by giving the same weight to the social, economic, environmental, and historic-architectural criteria, the idea is to defer to the political goals a decision that does not seem to find a different value assignment now.

This is different for the sub-criteria. Here, weights can be coherently attributed on the basis of the results of questionnaires administered to experts, who compare the sub-criteria with each other in order to assess their level of mutual importance.

5. The Case Study

The analysis model proposed in the previous section was applied to the Well-being Village project for the Riccia Municipality, a small town of 5068 inhabitants in the Province of Campobasso (Italy).

Riccia is a typical Italian small town affected by depopulation, recording a percentage change in the resident population of -11.5% between 2001 and 2019 (ISTAT data, 2019) and a population loss of about 40% from the last century to date (years 1936–2020). Although the municipality is not far from the city of Campobasso (about 35 min by car), it does not have adequate infrastructure systems and lacks a railway station. On the other hand, the historic centre is characterised by narrow alleyways, stone stairways, load-bearing masonry buildings, and wooden and clay tile roofs. The architectural heritage includes many monuments (a castle, churches, and museums) and valuable buildings. These, in some cases, are marked by ancient family coats of arms or historical shop signs. Local traditions are still tangible in craft activities, food and wine festivals, and religious celebrations. However, as in many Italian municipalities, urban sprawl, although very limited, records the presence of new reinforced concrete buildings and prefabricated warehouses.

This is the context in which the Riccia's Well-being Village project was set, whose tourist and residential purposes pay particular attention to protecting the health care of senior citizens. Financed by \notin 1,142,644 from national Funds for Development and Cohesion (29%) and European Funds for Regional Development (71%), the investment includes the actions listed in Table 2 (documents of Riccia Municipality, Italy). Figure 1 shows the location of the interventions aimed at recovering and valorising the Riccia village.

Table 2. Historic-architectural criteria: dataset of indicators. The interventions and actions foreseen in the Well-being Village project (documents of Riccia Municipality, Italy).

Main Intervention	Single Actions
Recovery of buildings (for a total of 1043 m ² of net surface area) to be converted into social assistance and tourist-residential facilities for the elderly	 Replacement of inter-floor and roof slabs (in cases where it is no longer possible to recover the original ones) Floor renovation/restoration Lifts installation Laying of underfloor heating systems and photovoltaic panels, as well as water, electricity, gas, and telephone networks New furniture
Renovation of the two main squares in the historic town centre (Piazza Sedati and Piazza Municipio) next to the recovered buildings	 Spatial-functional re-design of squares Creation of green areas New urban furniture Resurfacing of pedestrian areas with local stones
Rehabilitation of footpaths and streets in the historic town centre	 Restoration of the original pavement Safety of the road surface for cars Renovation of the public lighting system using energy-saving techniques
Free Wi-Fi to cover the entire historic town centre	-
Creation of community vegetable gardens	• Recovery of unused green areas to be converted into public gardens for the use of residents
Creation of the Wellbeing Path (via Trono and via Portella)	 Safety of paths with fences and restoration of rammed-earth flooring Creation of equipped areas for outdoor gymnastic
Creation of common areas for guests	 Reception Offices Aggregation spaces Restaurant/Canteen Wellness centre
Recovery and valorisation of the Santa Maria delle Grazie Church	 Securing the building structure Exhibition and conference space Small movie theatre
Zero Waste Project	• Construction of an ecological island with a composting plant



Figure 1. Interventions foreseen in the Well-being Village project (Source: Municipality of Riccia. Re-elaboration by the authors).

The model implementation requires the selection of indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions planned in the Well-being Village project.

Given the social, economic, environmental, and historic-architectural criteria, the related sub-criteria were first investigated, and appropriately weighted through the use of questionnaires administered to experts. From the answers provided, pairwise comparison matrixes were built which, once normalised, returned the weights of each sub-criteria (Tables A8–A10). It was obtained that:

- With reference to the social criteria, in Riccia, traditions and secondary urbanisation works (schools, health centers, theatres, libraries, sports facilities, etc.) are more important (0.40) than assistance services for foreigners (0.20);
- According to the economic criteria, infrastructures (roads, public lighting, water, gas, electricity, sewage, broadband, etc.) and the productive vocations of the place (tourism, agriculture, livestock farming, crafts, etc.) are equally important;
- Under the environmental criteria, there is a higher incidence of both the bioclimatic quality of buildings (0.39) and the quality of water, air, and soil (0.32). The characteristics of flora and fauna as well as the state of preservation of green areas are of the same relevance (0.145).

The only exception was for the six historic-architectural sub-criteria, which were assigned the same weight (0.16) in view of their equal importance in the recovery and valorisation of the Riccia village.

At this point, depending on the available data and the specificities of the case study, the assessment index of the interventions was selected from Tables A4–A7 for each sub-criteria.

Tables A11–A14 show the correspondence between sub-criteria and the selected indicators.

Each indicator measures the project's ability to achieve the goal represented by the corresponding sub-criteria. This is carried out according to a scale of scores from 1 to 5, where: 1 = very bad; 2 = insufficient; 3 = sufficient; 4 = good; 5 = excellent.

These judgments were made taking into account not only the effects of the strategy in the specific sectors at which the project is directed, but also other complementary actions aimed at improving the area's reception capacity, redeveloping public spaces and making them more accessible to tourists by providing street furniture, parking and rest areas, and visitor and thematic routes (documents of Riccia Municipality, Italy). Additional information useful to assign values to the indicators are based on: application of the formulas already shown in Tables A4–A7; questionnaires administered to the population; and references from legislation.

The values assigned to the indicators are in Tables A15–A18. The score *S* of each indicator was multiplied with the weight *W* of the related sub-criteria in order to obtain the weighted score S_w .

 S_w was compared with the maximum weighted score S_{max} relating to the reference indicator with the highest value, i.e., 5. The comparison between S_w and S_{max} allowed the verification of the acceptability of the project in relation to the sub-criteria under examination. In particular:

- If S_w ≥ 0.6 S_{max}, the project is effective in achieving the goals of the sub-criteria (accepted);
- If $S_w < 0.6 S_{max}$, the project does not achieve the goals (not accepted).

Thus, 60% of S_{max} is assumed as the acceptability threshold on a 0–100 scale.

It should be noted that in some cases a 'composite' indicator was introduced. This means that the sub-criteria were evaluated by using a combination of two or more indicators, able to capture different components of the problem that the sub-criteria represent. In this case, S_w is the product of the average of the scores assigned to the indicators and the weight given to the sub-criteria.

For example, with regard to the economic criteria, a composite indicator was considered for the sub-criteria Productive vocations, evaluated through: (1) Agricultural land use; (2) Skills recovery. Scores were given to these two indicators:

 $S_{Agricultural \ land \ use} = 4;$ $S_{Skills \ recovery} = 1.$

Therefore, the weighted score $S_w = 1.25$ for *Productive vocations* is the product of the weight 0.50 of the sub-criteria and the arithmetic average 2.5 of scores 4 and 1.

This approach makes it possible to highlight the project's ability to affect the individual components Agricultural land use and Skills recovery, which are essential for an effective interpretation of the Productive vocations sub-criteria. Obviously, for Productive vocations the value $S_{max} = 2.5$ is the product between the average value S = 5 of the two indicators Agricultural land use and Skills recovery with maximum score and the weight W = 0.50 of the sub-criteria. From the comparison between $S_w = 1.25$ and Smax = 2.5, it follows that $S_w = 50\% \cdot S_{max}$. Thus, the 60% threshold is not satisfied; with regard to the sub-criteria Productive vocations, the Well-being Village project is not acceptable and must be integrated and/or modified.

A composite indicator is also associated with the sub-criteria Primary urbanisation works, described through: Quality of the street and sidewalks cover; Percentage of houses with communications (including electricity, water, sewage, gas, heating, internet, phone lines); The number of public Wi-Fi places.

6. Results Analysis

The achieved results are as follows.

- Social criteria. The Riccia's Well-being Village project was accepted with regard to all the three assessment social sub-criteria. The project succeeded in valorising Local traditions and identities, effectively acting on Secondary urbanisation works and Social assistance service. Table A15 gives percentage values of S_w compared to S_{max} above the 60% threshold for all the evaluation indexes. Specifically: $S_w = 80\% \cdot S_{max}$ for Local traditions and identities; $S_w = 80\% \cdot S_{max}$ for Secondary urbanization works; $S_w = 100\% \cdot S_{max}$ for Social assistance service.
- Economic criteria. The project was accepted with respect to the sub-criteria Primary urbanization works, while for the Productive vocations component it did not reach the required sufficiency. Table A16 shows the percentage values of S_w compared

to S_{max} for both the sub-criteria: $S_w = 100\% \cdot S_{max}$ for Primary urbanization works; $S_w = 50\% \cdot S_{max}$ for Productive vocations. Thus, the model identified Productive vocations as a critical issue in the Well-being Village strategy. This means that the recovery and valorisation actions did not effectively look at the territory's traditional productive activities.

- Environmental criteria. Here all the assessment sub-criteria were accepted. The Well-being Village project paid particular attention to the Flora and fauna, Environmental quality, Green areas, and Bioclimatic quality components, recording the highest percentage values: $S_w = 100\% \cdot S_{max}$ (Table A17).
- Historic-architectural criteria. The project was accepted with reference to the subcriteria Integration with the natural environment, Visual image, Dialogue between the historic urban fabric and its context, Empty/Full relationship and equipped green space system and Formal relationship between building and urban core. In fact, as shown in Table A18, the percentage values of S_w were respectively: $S_w = 100\% \cdot S_{max}$; $S_w = 80.72\% \cdot S_{max}$; $S_w = 100\% \cdot S_{max}$; $S_w = 90.36\% \cdot S_{max}$; $S_w = 100\% \cdot S_{max}$. On the contrary, the Typological-distributive and formal characteristics of the building recorded the percentage $S_w = 50.60\% \cdot S_{max}$. It follows that the 60% threshold was not satisfied for this sub-criteria. This underlines the inadequacy of the project actions with regard to the fruition of the recovered architectural heritage.

The model therefore identified two main criticalities in the *Well-being Village* strategy of the Riccia Municipality: one of economic order; the other one with respect to the historic-architectural heritage.

On the economic issue, with particular reference to production vocations, it emerged that the inclusion of local craftsmen during the planning and execution phases of the works was limited, with certainly negative effects. The involvement of local craft workers is crucial to rebuild an 'original atmosphere', including old manual traditions passed down from generation to generation. The workforce could be employed not only in the production of furniture and objects, but also in the manufacture of floors and finishing elements. As shown by other valorisation strategies (the Albergo Diffuso of Santo Stefano di Sessanio in Abruzzo, the Ecovillage of Torri Superiore in Liguria, the Artists' Village of Calcata in Lazio, etc.), the use of ancient manufacturing knowledge is decisive in 'enlivening' a small municipality and rebuilding its identity and historical culture. Aiming at the productive vocations of a place means creating employment opportunities, but also investing in potentially profitable sectors, especially if reinterpreted in an original and modern key.

With regard to the reuse of the buildings, the developed model highlighted the project's lack of attention in defining the correct uses for the historic-architectural building heritage. Thus, the building interventions, although they delayed the degradation of the existing heritage, did not produce advantages in the works management phase.

In this sense, the weakness of Riccia's Well-being Village project can be traced back to the lack of a larger-scale approach able to relate the municipality to the neighbouring context. This means adopting an integrated strategy that strengthens the relations with surrounding cities in order to redefine the identity of the municipality in accordance with a territorial network of interdependence. Recent European projects (see Section 1) underline the need to re-include small towns in their reference territories through effective reciprocity and interconnection policies. In this respect, in the 2014–2020 territorial cohesion policy programme, the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3), is a valuable tool for identifying investment priorities in the research and innovation sectors. Through a multi-level and multi-stakeholder analysis of a territory's production potential, the Smart Specialisation Strategy sets out medium- and long-term sustainable development paths.

In view of these considerations and of what has emerged from the tool's application to the Riccia case study, it is clear that intervening on the single small municipality is not enough, but it is essential to rethink the role of these places in relation to the territorial dynamics in which they are inserted. Therefore, in the light of the findings, it comes out that there is the capacity of the technical-economic assessment tool to investigate the criticalities of the Riccia's Well-being Village strategy, so as to guide the public decision-maker towards a more correct allocation of the available resources.

7. Conclusions

The valorisation of small towns has many advantages: reduction of urban decongestion, re-proposal of identity and social values, rehabilitation of the existing built heritage, less land consumption, reintroduction of typical productive activities, and promotion of local traditions.

Nevertheless, the multiple factors that characterise small municipalities make the effectiveness of the actions complex, requiring them to face significant social, economic, environmental, and cultural challenges. The risk is to invest resources in mostly punctual projects, which are not in line with the soul of the places and the real needs of the territory. Therefore, there is no doubt that the effectiveness of interventions lies in the ability to address, understand, and resolve issues of different natures within organic recovery projects. It is essential to extend the action field to the social (local traditions, 'genius loci', secondary urbanisation works, assistance services), economic (productive activities, primary urbanisation works), and environmental components (flora, fauna, air, water, soil, building bioclimatics) of the small towns, as well as to the historic-architectural aspects (visual-infrastructural-landscape connection between the village and the administrative context, formal correlation between the building and the urban cores, and typologicalconstructive characteristics of the architectural artefact). This is in view of the need to strengthen the relationship between small municipalities and the facilities of the territory to which they belong in order to guarantee an "information transfer" that can enhance the characteristics of each small town within a large-scale territorial network.

In view of the above, the paper outlined an innovative multi-criteria analysis tool in order to detect the criticalities and qualities of valorisation strategies. The proposed datasets of evaluation criteria, sub-criteria, and indicators may be used by stakeholders to assess investments, optimise project contents, and effectively guide future actions.

As it is set up, the model can be used not only to express a judgement on the 'post operam' recovery and valorisation interventions, but also on the 'ante operam' ones, foreseeing their repercussions in the social, economic, environmental, and historic-architectural fields both on small municipalities and on neighbouring territories.

Research prospects concern: the implementation of the model in hierarchical analysis schemes for the comparison between project alternatives; and the application to other case studies to test its full effectiveness and propose specific integrations to the datasets.

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Appendix A

Criteria	Invariant	Sub-Criteria	
	Presence of local traditions and identities	Local traditions and identities	
Social	Lack of services	Secondary urbanization works	
	Lack of services	Social assistance services	
	Presence of typical productive activities	Productive vocations	
Economic	Distance from the major cities	Primary urbanization works	
	Lack of adequate infrastructure	Timary urbanization works	
		Flora and fauna	
Environmental	Environmental quality	Environmental quality (water, air, soil)	
	1	Green areas	
		Bioclimatic quality	
	Insertion in a natural context	Integration with the natural environment	
	histrion in a natural context	Visual image (evocative force)	
	Limited and compact extension of the built fabric	Dialogue between the historic urban fabric and its context	
Historic-architectural	'Human scale' dimension of the built fabric	Full/empty relationship and equipped green space system	
	Quality of the built heritage	Formal relationship between building and urban core	
	Site-specific typological-constructive characters	Typological-distributive and formal characteristics of the building	

 Table A1. Correspondence between invariants and sub-criteria.

Table A2. Hierarchical diagram with goal, criteria, and sub-criteria.

Goal	Small Towns Valorization				
Criteria	Social	Economic	Environmental	Historical-architectural	
	Local traditions and	Productive vocations	Territory	Territory	
identities Secondary urbanization works (kindergartens, schools, health facilities)	(agriculture, craits, industry, commerce, tourism) Primary urbanization works (roads, parking lots,	Flora and fauna Environmental quality (water, air, soil)	Integration with the natural environment		
		electricity network, teleph.	Urban core	Urban core	
Sub-criteria	Social assistance services (services for the elderly, for disabled people, for Sub-criteria immigrants)	network, gas network, public lighting, water network)	Green areas	Visual image Dialogue between the historic urban fabric and its context Full/empty relationship and equipped green space system	
			Building	Building	
			Bioclimatic quality	Formal relationship between building and urban core Typological-distributiye and	
				formal characteristics of the building	

Author(s)	Year	Title	N. Indicators
Mega V., Pedersen J.	1998	Urban Sustainability Indicators	16
European Commission	2008	European Green Capital Award	12
Mameli F., Marletto G.	2009	A selection of indicators for monitoring sustainable urban mobility policies	14
Vallega A.	2009	Indicatori per il paesaggio	37
European Environment Agency	2010	EEA Urban Metabolism Framework	15
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)	2011	Transport for sustainable development in the ECE region	17
Volpiano M.	2011	Indicators for the Assessment of Historic Landscape Features	12
Swiss Confederation	2012	Ufficio Federale dell'Ambiente UFAM – Paesaggio: Indicatori	11
EU Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development	2013	Rural Development in the European Union - Statistical and Economic Information, Report 2013	59
European Spatial Planning Observation Network	2013	KITCASP - Key Indicatorsfor Territorial Cohesion and Spatial Planning	20
Phillips R. G., Stein J. M.	2013	An Indicator Framework for Linking Historic Preservation and Community Economic Development	29
Valtenbergs V., González A., Piziks R.	2013	Selecting indicators for sustainabledevelopment of small towns: the case of Valmiera municipality	73
European Environment Agency	2014	Digest of EEA Indicators 2014 - Core Set of Indicators (CSI)	42
UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme	2016	MEASUREMENT OF CITY PROSPERITY - Methodology and Metadata	39
Bosch P., Jongeneel S., Rovers V., Neumann H-M., Airaksinen M., Huovila A.	2017	CITYkeys list of city indicators	74
		ТОТ.	470

 Table A3. International reference studies.

	SOCIAL CRITERIA			
Sub-Criteria		Indicator	Description	
		Sense of place/identification with place/attachement to place	The way people perceive the resources and historical environment of their community. There is an identity linked to the place that evokes a special sense of place. This indicator requires a direct survey among the inhabitants of the historical sites.	
		The number of cultural events	n. of cultural events. Did the implemented strategy safeguard and/or support cultural events? YES/NO.	
	iture	The number of visitors in cultural events	n. visitors in cultural events.	
	Indicated by litera	Taste's places	It is evaluated by the level at which the "taste's places" enter into landscape valorization policies $I = \frac{G_c}{G_t} \times 100$ G_c expresses the number of "taste's places" subject to interventions and measures included in the territorial plans, aimed at enhancing their value in relation to the landscape. G_t expresses the total number of "taste's places" existing in the considered territory.	
		Event places	the perception of the landscape and are enhanced through ad hoc measures $I = \frac{E_c}{E_t} \times 100$	
Local traditions and identities			E_c expresses the number of event places subject to interventions and measures included in the territorial plans, aimed at enhancing their value in relation to the landscape. E_t expresses the total number of "event places" existing in the considered territory.	
	Nu passodos reli os gas d fest ma	Number of traditions (fables, historical events, music) / religious traditions / gastronomic traditions / festivals, exhibitions and markets	n. of oral, religious, gastronomic traditions, festivals, fairs, and markets. Has the implemented strategy safeguarded and/or supported local traditions? YES/NO.	
		Land Use Mix	Land use diversity per square kilometre, within a city or urban area (residential, commercial, and services, industrial, public facilities, and public spaces).	
		Land use change	% of total (building, roads, domestic, green space, agricultural, woodland, water, etc.).	
		Access to services (hospitals and schools)	Travel time (minutes) to hospitals/schools.	
		Access to basic health care services	% of people.	
		Access to local/neighbourhood services within a short distance	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed the distance in km to reach the nearest services.	
		Unemployment structure	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed the % of unemployed residents.	
		Social Justice Indicator	Percentage of the population affected by poverty, unemployment, lack of access to education, information, training, and leisure.	
		Development of service sector	This indicator measures the share of Gross Value Added (GVA) in the services sector in a region.	
		Access to public amenities Access to commercial amenities	% of people % of people	
		Access to educational resources	Likert's scale. Wherever possible, the use of the percentage of the population accessing educational resources is suggested.	
		Number of public libraries	Number of public libraries per 100,000 people (n./100,000 people) or No. public libraries/Total libraries. Did the strategy include new public bookshops/libraries? YES/NO.	

Table A4. Social criteria: dataset of indicators.

		SOCIA	AL CRITERIA
Sub-Criteria		Indicator	Description
	ure	The number of assistance centers	n. of assistance centers.
	, litera	Net migration	It's the ratio of net migration during the year to the average population in that year. It is also possible to use: n./1000.
	ited by	Average number of assistance hours per year	Average number of assistance hours per year.
Proposed Indica	Indice	Percentage difference between the offered services level and the standard services level	Percentage difference between the offered services level and the standard services level.
	Quantitative level of benefits	To be estimated on the most appropriate evaluation scale, depending on the available information framework.	
	Proposed	Percentage of those who benefit from social assistance services on the resident population	% of population benefiting from social assistance services/total resident population.

Table A4. Cont.

Table A5. Economic criteria: dataset of indicators.	•
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ECONOMIC CRITERIA			
Sub-criteria		Indicator	Description
Sub citicitu		Forest areas extensively	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed the
		exploited	surface in m2 of extensively exploited forest areas.
		Agricultural areas	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed the surface in km2 of agricultural areas.
			economic activities on certain goods and services $H = \sum_{n=1}^{N} S^{2}$
		Economic specialization	S_i^2 is the employment share in the city's industry. This share is expressed with a number and not a percentage. <i>N</i> is the total number of industries.
	<i>e</i>	Structure of the economy	 H varies from 1/N to 1. A value of H greater than 0,25 indicates a high concentration. % GVA by branch (primary/secondary/tertiary sector.
	teratur	Land use efficiency	make use of expert judgements, from which a quantitative evaluation algorithm can be deduced.
	Indicated by lii	Distribution of businesses and employed by industries	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed the number of employees in the industrial sector.
		The number of tourists	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed the number of tourists per year.
		Foreign Direct Investments	Capital/Earnings.
		Accomodation load	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed the accommodation capacity of the structures (hotels, hostels, b&b, etc.) as number of beds.
		Dynamics of foundation and dissolution of local businesses	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. An economic indicator is proposed, depending on the level of information available.
		The number of guest nights	Number of guest nights.
		Economic enhancement of historical-cultural heritage networking Agricultural land use	It is proposed to evaluate this parameter according to the specificities of the case study.
			% of Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) in arable land/permanent pasture/permanent crops.
		Economic development of non-agricultural sector	GVA (million EUR) in secondary and tertiary sectors.
		Tourism infrastructure in rural areas	Total number of bed places in tourist accommodations (%).

ECONOMIC CRITERIA			
Sub-criteria		Indicator	Description
		Tourism intensity	n./100.000.
		Local food production	% of tonnes.
		Green jobs	% of jobs.
			% of total (building, roads, domestic, green space, agricultural,
		Land use change	woodland, water, etc.).
		Skills recovery	Has the strategy promoted the recovery of local skills? YES/NO.
		Real estate value increase	% increase in real estate value driven by strategy.
		Prevailing cultivation	% of cultivations.
		Length of mass transport	X // 000 000 1
		network	Km/1,000,000 people
		Length of bike route network	% in km
			Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed the
		Public transport network length	route length in km (tram, trolleybus, bus).
			Number of street intersections per one square kilometer of urban
		Street intersection density	area $(n./km^2)$.
		Character Learnin	Number of kilometers of urban streets per square kilometer of land
		Street density	$(\mathrm{km/km^2}).$
		Infrastructure density	km of roads per 1,000 inhabitants.
			Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed the %
		Infraction characteria	of road surface that is asphalted or in good condition (no holes,
		Infrastructure quanty	cracks, depressions, spalling, bulges) over the total existing road
			surface.
		Percentage of houses with	
Primary urbanization di	communications (including	% of houses equipped with electrical system, water system,	
		electricity, water, sewage, gas,	purification system, gas, heating, internet, telephone line.
	nn ⁴	heating, internet, phone lines)	
	erai	The number of public Wi-Fi	Number of public spaces equipped with Wi-Fi
	lit	places	
	hq	Public and private services	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. The indicator should
works	itea	accessibile via telephone and	be chosen according to the data availability.
	tice	computer	0
	Ina	Iransportation mode split	
		(percentage of each mode of	% of each transport mode (public, private, cycle, walking).
		nublic bigueles pedestrians)	
		public, bicycles, pedestrians)	It is the ratio between the total number of Internet users in a situ
		Internet access	and the total population of the same city $\binom{9}{2}$
			Percentage of families owning household computers compared to
		Home computer access	the total number of families in the city (%)
		Internet infrastructure	Families with DSL coverage (%)
		internet initiotracture	Families with a broadband connection contract (% of families with
		Internet take-up in rural areas	at least one member aged between 16 and 74 years).
		Access to electricity	Percentage of families connected to the national network.
		Access to public transport	% of people
		Access to high speed internet	#(n.)/100
		Access to public free WiFi	% of m^2
		Public transport use	# (n.)/cap/year
		Land occupied by transport	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. A percentage
		infrastructures	evaluation is proposed.
		Quality of the street and	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed the use
		sidewalks cover	of expert judgements (scoring scale).
	bəs	% of public transport	%
	sodu	Sewerage meters in good	Did the strategy include the replacement of degraded sewer
	Prc	condition	sections? YES/NO.

Table A5. Cont.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA						
Sub-Criteria	Indicator	Description				
	Territory					
	Land cover Protected forest	% area in agricultural/forest/natural classes. Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed an evaluation based on the extension in m ²				
	The number of protected animal and plant	n. of protected animal and plant species.				
	Percentage of preserved area/reservoirs/waterways/parks in relation to total land area	% areas, reserves, rivers, protected parks in relation to the total territorial area.				
	Species and habitats of European interest	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed the use of a numerical or percentage data.				
	Number and status of protected European habitats and species	Number and Conservation Status (EU defined status of Natura 2000 sites—SACs and SPAs and Annexed species).				
	Designated areas	km ² , %, number of species and habitats listed by the Habitats Directive.				
	Land take	Hectares or km ² % of land that is converted from natural and				
	Urban land take	semi-natural areas (including wooded and agricultural areas) to artificial land used for urban and economic purposes.				
Flora and fauna	Proportion of protected areas	Not specified in the bibliographical reference. It is proposed the % of protected natural areas on the total number of existing natural areas.				
	Biodiversity: Tree species composition	Area of forest classified by number of free species occurring and by forest type (%).				
	Biodiversity: Protected forest	_ Change of FOWL area protected under MCPFE classes (ha)				
	Forest ecosystem health	% of sampled trees in defoliation classes 2–4 (all trees/conifers/broadleaves).				
	Protected areas and elements	Surface extension. Level of environmental protection. Number of protected elements. Other specific indicators.				
		% of surface area subject to ecological protection measures in relation to the total surface area $I = \frac{S_p}{S_t} \times 100$				
	Ecologically protected areas	S_p is the area in hectares (ha) subject to protection measures.				
		s _t is the total area, expressed in nectares (na), of the considered territory.				
		% of protected plant and/or animal species in relation to all existing plant and/or animal species $L = \frac{S_p}{100} \times 100$				
	Protected species	S_p is the number of species, belonging to the wild vegetation, subject to protective measures. S_t is the number of species, belonging to spontaneous vegetation, existing at the time the survey is				
		carried out.				

Table A6. Environmental criteria: dataset of indicators.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA					
Sub-Criteria		Indicator	Description		
Territory					
		Renewable energy production (wind, hydro, biomass, etc.)	Megawatts and % by renewable energy type.		
		Greenhouse gas emissions	Tonnes CO_2 eq. per individual.		
		Water quality	Specific quality indicator.		
		Water quality status	Absolute values on the actual status or objective met/failed (as per WFD for groundwater, rivers, lakes,		
			estauarine, coastal).		
	ne i	Air quality	Specific quality indicator		
Environ-	atı.	Emissions of main air pollutants	Specific indicator.		
mental qual-ity (water, air, soil)	by liter	Exposure of ecosystems to acidification, eutrophication and ozone	Specific indicator.		
(water, all, soll)	cated l	Exceedance of air quality limit values in urban areas	Specific indicator.		
	Indi	Atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations	Specific indicator.		
		Green growth and eco-innovation	Specific indicator.		
		Global Climate Indicator (GCI)	Emitted total CO_2 , CH_4 , N_2O and CFC and halons.		
		CO ₂ emissions	Specific indicator.		
_		pollutants	Specific indicator.		
	Proposed	Presence of treatment systems	YES/NO.		
Urban core					
Cara an anna a		Green area per capita	Green surface per capita.		
Green areas		Green space	Hectares/100,000 or m^2 of green space per inhabitant.		
		Building			
	q	Shape and orientation	Type of shape. Building orientation.		
	ose	Ventilation quality	Presence/absence of internal ventilation. Ventilation		
Bioclimatic	rop	ventuation quanty	level.		
quality	Р	Energy class	Level.		
		Use of photovoltaic or solar panels	YES/NO.		

Table A6. Cont.

		HISTORIC-ARCHITECT	TURAL CRITERIA
Sub-Criteria		Indicator	Description
		Territor	у
		Exceptionality of the historical-cultural characteristics of the landscape	Score scale.
		Fragility of the historical-cultural characteristics of the landscape	Score scale.
		Designation of rural areas	«[] If more than 50% of the total population lives in rural grid cells, the region is classified as predominantly rural. Regions where between 20% and 50% of the population lives in rural grid cells are considered intermediate, while those with less than 20% in rural grid cells are predominantly urban» This indicator consists in 4 sub-indicators:
		Importance of rural areas	 % territory in rural areas; % population in rural areas; % Gross Value Added in rural areas; % employment in rural areas.
		Protected areas and elements	Surface extension. Level of environmental protection. Number of protected elements. Other specific indicators. Urban penetration units per km2 of landscape (DSF/km2)
Integration with the natural environment	Indicated by literature	Settlement dispersion	Alternatively, it can be replaced with an urban sprawl index $IS_{i} = \frac{\left[urb_{i,t+n} - \left(urb_{i,t} \times \left(\frac{pop_{i,t+n}}{pop_{i,t}}\right)\right)\right]}{urb_{i,t}} \times 100$ <i>i</i> refers to an urban area. <i>t</i> refers to the initial year of investigation and <i>t+n</i> to the final year. <i>urb</i> refers to the built area (in terms of land consumed) expressed in km ² within administrative boundaries. <i>pop</i> is the total population of the municipality.
		Landscape value of skyline	Visual and aesthetic impact produced by human presence and activities on the skyline (linear/areal impact coefficient) $I = \frac{L_i}{L_b}$ $I = \frac{S_i}{S_c}$ L_i expresses the overall length of the lines drawn by human works (roads, railways, and so on) engraved on the skyline, measured on the outline of the territory that appears from the photographic vision and/or cartographic representation. L_b expresses the baseline length delimited by that portion of the skyline. S_i expresses the total surface area of the area engravings produced by human communities on the outline delimited by the skyline. S_c expresses the surface area limited by the skyline. Representative indices of human impact on the landscape
		Injured landscape	$I = \frac{A_f}{A_t} \times 100$ A_f represents the sum of the surface area, measured in hectares (ha), of areas occupied by landfills and quarries, as well as areas degraded due to hydrogeological instability. A_t represents the total suburban area of the considered territory.
	Proposed	Landscape infrastructures (religious itineraries, transhumance routes, protoindustrial architecture paths)	km of paths and trails recovered and/or valorized.

Table A7. Historic-architectural criteria: dataset of indicators.

	HISTORIC-ARCHITECTURAL CRITERIA				
Sub-Criteria		Indicator	Description		
		Urban co	re		
		Historic preservation element/plan and integration with community planning Fragility of the historical-cultural	not have a historic preservation plan as part of its overall plan (the community masterplan). Score scale.		
Visual image (evocative force)		characteristics of the landscape Significance/Typicality of the historical-cultural characteristics of the landscape	Score scale.		
		Landscape perceived beauty	Average score given through questionnaires on the beauty of the landscape in a specific municipality (1 = not corresponding at all; 5 = corresponding in full). Visual and aesthetic impact produced by human presence and activities on the skyline (linear/areal impact coefficient) $I = \frac{L_i}{L_b}$ $I = \frac{S_i}{L_b}$		
	Indicated by literature	Landscape value of skyline	$L_i = \frac{1}{S_c}$ expresses the overall length of the lines drawn by human works (roads, railways, etc.) engraved on the skyline, measured on the outline of the territory that appears from the photographic vision and/or cartographic representation. L_b expresses the baseline length delimited by that portion of the skyline. S_i expresses the total surface area of the area engravings produced by human communities on the outline delimited by the skyline.		
		Panoramic sites	<i>S_c</i> expresses the surface area limited by the skyline. Relevance of panoramic sites in the perception of the landscape and in the preservation of its quality $I = \frac{P_d}{P_b + P_d} \times 100$ <i>P_b</i> indicates the number of panoramic sites that can offer views of the surrounding landscape. <i>P_d</i> indicates the number of panoramic sites that have deteriorated as a result of improper interventions on the territory. Visual impact dimension of car parks on the landscape		
		Parking pressure	$I = \frac{L_p}{L_c} \times 100$ $I = \frac{S_p}{S_c} \times 100$ $L_p expresses the length, calculated in km, of linear developments which, at times of maximum frequency, are assumed by vehicles aligned along lines relevant from the landscape point of view. L_c \text{ expresses the length, calculated in km, of the relevant country lines developing in the territory concerned. S_p \text{ expresses the surface area, calculated in hectares (ha) of the spaces that, at times of maximum frequency, are car parks within the territory considered. S_c \text{ expresses the surface area, calculated in hectares (ha), of the territory characterized by the landscape to be safeguarded.$		
	pəsodor	Visual interference (or the presence of illegal building and/or architectural artefacts out of scale with respect to the pre-existing built fabric)	m ³ of illegal building and/or architectural artefacts out of scale with respect to the pre-existing built fabric.		
	I	Hydrographic ponds	N. of existing or designed hydrographic elements (natural or artificial).		

Table A7. Cont.

	HISTORIC-ARCHITECTURAL CRITERIA						
Sub-Criteria		Indicator	Description				
Dialogue between the historic urban	Indicated by literature	Perceived quality of the landscape around the own home Panoramic sites	Share of interviewees who were "not at all satisfied" (0) to "very satisfied" (5) with the quality of the landscape around their home. Relevance of panoramic sites in the perception of the landscape and in the preservation of its quality $I = \frac{P_d}{P_b + P_d} \times 100$ P_b indicates the number of panoramic sites that can offer views of the surrounding landscape. P_d indicates the number of panoramic sites that have deteriorated as a result of improper interventions on the territory.				
context	Proposed	Urban morphology (intended as the aggregation mode of settlements that define their form. The elements that structure an urban core are considered: streets, buildings, open spaces, green areas) Level of the relationship between the small town and its context	How much the project proposal alters the way the settlement is aggregated (score scale).				
Full/empty		Preservation of relation systems	Score scale.				
		Accessibility to open public areas Green, Public space and Heritage Indicator (GPI)	Percentage (%) of urban area that is located less than 400 m away from an open public space $100 \cdot \frac{population \ less \ than \ 400m \ away \ open \ public \ area}{city \ population}$ $100 \cdot \frac{urban \ area \ less \ than \ 400m \ away \ open \ public \ area}{total \ urban \ area}$ Percentage of green or public spaces and local heritage to be enhanced.				
relationship		Public outdoor recreation space	m ² /cap				
green space		Green space accessibility	% of total population within 500 metres of public managed green areas (active and passive).				
system		The number of green space reconstruction projects	No. of green space reconstruction projects. YES= score 5; NO= score 0.				
		Urban pedestrian areas	Urban surface area pedestrianized in relation to the quality of the landscape $I = \frac{P_e}{5} \times 100$ P_e indicates the extension, measured in hectares (ha), of existing pedestrian spaces. <i>S</i> indicates the extension, measured in hectares (ha), of the total urban area.				
		Valuing of urban public parks and gardens	It provides an evaluation of the green spaces' function within the urban landscape $I = \frac{S_a + S_n}{S_a} \times 100$ S_a indicates the area, measured in hectares (ha), of existing green spaces in the urban environment at the present time. S_n indicates the area, measured in hectares (ha), of the green spaces that should be realised.				

Table A7. Cont.

HISTORIC-ARCHITECTURAL CRITERIA					
Sub-Criteria	Indicator	Description			
	Revitalization of historical urban spaces	Relationship between the urban spaces that have benefited, or are benefiting, from architectural recovery and cultural valorization in a single city, or in a complex of cities, and the complex of historical urban spaces existing in the urban context considered $I = \frac{S_R + S_r}{S_t} \times 100$ S_R expresses the surface area, measured in hectares (ha), of the city's historical spaces that have benefited from architectural restoration and cultural heritage valorization. S_r expresses the surface area, measured in hectares (ha), of historical spaces which, at the time the indicator is calculated, are subject to architectural restoration and cultural valorization. S_t expresses the total area, measured in hectares (ha), of the city's historical spaces taken into account.			
	Building				
Formal relationship	State of preservation of built heritage with reference to characterizing elements	Score scale.			
	Historic preservation element/plan and integration with community planning	It is important to note if the local government has or does not have a historic preservation plan as part of its overall plan (the community masterplan)			
	Historic fabric	Measures the amount (%) of historical fabric in a specific community. This is done by dating the structures from the foundation of the settlement to the present day.			
Typological- distributive	Preservation of the assets	It is proposed to evaluate this parameter according to the specificities of the case study (score scale).			
and formal	Use of historical-cultural heritage	Percentage of buildings in use.			
characteristics	Preservation of cultural heritage	Likert's scale.			
of the building	Ground floor usage	% of m ²			

Table A7. Cont.

Table A8. The social sub-criteria weights.

		SUB-CRITERIA				
		Local traditions and identities	Secondary urbanization works	Social assistance service	Sub-criteria weights	%
	Local traditions and identities	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	40%
SUB- CRITERIA	Secondary urbanization works	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	40%
	Social assistance service	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	20%

Table A9.	The econo	mic sub-o	criteria	weights
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		SUB-CRITERIA			
		Productive vocations	Primary urbanization works	Sub-criteria weights	%
	Productive vocations	0.50	0.50	0.50	50%
SUB-CRITERIA	Primary urbanization works	0.50	0.50	0.50	50%

			SUB-CR	ITERIA			
		Flora and fauna	Environmental quality	Green areas	Bioclimatic quality	Sub-criteria weights	%
	Flora and fauna	0.14	0.17	0.14	0.13	0.145	14.5%
SUB- CRITERIA	Environmental quality	0.28	0.33	0.28	0.37	0.32	32%
	Green areas	0.14	0.17	0.14	0.13	0.145	14.5%
	Bioclimatic quality	0.43	0.33	0.43	0.37	0.39	39%

Table A10. The environmental sub-criteria weights.

Table A11. Social criteria: correspondence between sub-criteria and assessment indicators for the Riccia's Well-being Village project.

SOCIAL CRITERIA					
SUB-CRITERIA	SELECTED INDICATOR(S)				
Local traditions and identities	The number of cultural events				
Secondary urbanization works	Access to local/neighbourhood services within a short distance				
Social assistance service	• The number of assistance centers				

Table A12. Economic criteria: correspondence between sub-criteria and assessment indicators for the Riccia's Well-being Village project.

ECONOMIC CRITERIA					
SUB-CRITERIA	SELECTED INDICATOR(S)				
Productive vocations	Agricultural land useSkills recovery				
Primary urbanization works	 Quality of the street and sidewalks cover Percentage of houses with communications (including electricity, water, sewage, gas, heating, internet, phone lines) The number of public Wi-Fi places 				

Table A13. Environmental criteria: correspondence between sub-criteria and assessment indicatorsfor the Riccia's Well-being Village project.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA				
SUB-CRITERIA	SELECTED INDICATOR(S)			
Flora and fauna	• Urban land take			
Environmental quality	 CO₂ emissions Presence of treatment systems 			
Green areas	Green space			
Bioclimatic quality	• Energy class			

Table A14. Historic-architectural criteria: correspondence between sub-criteria and assessment indicators for the Riccia's Well-being Village project.

HISTORIC-ARCHITECTURAL CRITERIA					
SUB-CRITERIA	SELECTED INDICATOR(S)				
Integration with the natural environment	• Exceptionality of the historical-cultural characteristics of the landscape				
Visual image	Landscape value of skyline				
Dialogue between the historic urban fabric and its context	Panoramic sites				
Empty/Full relationship and equipped green space system	Preservation of relation systems between assetsThe number of green space reconstruction projects				
Formal relationship between building and urban core	• State of preservation of built heritage with reference to characterizing elements				
Typological-distributive and formal characteristics of the building	Preservation of the assetsUse of historical-cultural heritage				

Table A15. Weighted scores for social sub-criteria.

Sub-Criteria	Weight (W)	Assessment Indicator	Score (S)	Weighted Score (S _w)	Maximum Weighted Score (S _{max})	% S _w Compared to S _{max}
Local traditions and identities	40%	- The number of cultural events	4	1.6	2	80% > 60% ACCEPTED
Secondary urbanization works	40%	- Access to lo- cal/neighbourhood services within a short distance	4	1.6	2	80% > 60% ACCEPTED
Social assistance service	20%	- The number of assistance centers	5	1	1	100% > 60% ACCEPTED

Sub-Criteria	Weight (W)	Assessment Indicator	Score (S)	Weighted Score (S _w)	Maximum Weighted Score (S _{max})	% S _w Compared to S _{max}
Productive vocations	50%	- Agricultural land use	4	1.25	2.5	50% < 60% NOT ACCEPTED
		- Skills recovery	1			
		- Quality of the street and sidewalks cover	5			
Primary urbanization works	50%	- Percentage of houses with communications (including electricity, water, sewage, gas, heating, internet, phone lines)	5	2.5	2.5	100% > 60% ACCEPTED
		- The number of public Wi-Fi places	5			

 Table A16. Weighted scores for economic sub-criteria.

Table A17. Weighted scores for environmental sub-criteria.

Sub-Criteria	Weight (W)	Assessment Indicator	Score (S)	Weighted Score (S _w)	Maximum Weighted Score (S _{max})	% S _w Compared to S _{max}
			Territory			
Flora and fauna	14.5%	- Urban land take	5	0.725	0.725	100% > 60% ACCEPTED
Environmental quality	32%	- CO ₂ emissions	5	1.6	1.6	100% > 60% ACCEPTED
		- Presence of treatment systems	5			
			Urban core			
Green areas	14.5%	- Green space	5	0.725	0.725	100% > 60% ACCEPTED
			Building			
Bioclimatic quality	39%	- Energy class	5	1.95	1.95	100% > 60% ACCEPTED

Sub-Criteria	Weight (W)	Assessment Indicator	Score (S)	Weighted Score (S _w)	Maximum Weighted Score (S _{max})	% S _w Compared to S _{max}	
			Territory				
Integration with the natural environment	16.66%	- Exceptionality of the historical- cultural characteristics of the landscape	5	0.83	0.83	100% > 60% ACCEPTED	
		ì	Urban core				
Visual image	16.66%	- Landscape value of skyline	4	0.67	0.83	80.72% > 60% ACCEPTED	
Dialogue between the historic urban fabric and its context	16.66%	- Panoramic sites	5	0.83	0.83	100% > 60% ACCEPTED	
Empty/Full relationship and equipped green space system	16.66%	- Preservation of relation systems between assets	5	0.75	0.83	90.36% > 60% ACCEPTED	
		- The number of green space reconstruction projects	4				
Building							
Formal relationship between building and urban core	16.66%	- State of preservation of built heritage with reference to characterizing elements	5	0.83	0.83	100% > 60% ACCEPTED	
Typological- distributive and formal characteristics of the building	16.66%	- Preservation of the assets	4	0.42	0.83	50.60% < 60%	
		- Use of historical- cultural heritage	1			NOT ACCEPTED	

Table A18. Weighted scores for historic-architectural sub-criteria.

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