

eXtraBO is a project created to promote green tourism around Bologna, a multifunctional information hub dedicated to outdoor tourism. In such a hectic world, we chose to focus on slow activities not only in the historic centre, but also in Bologna's surroundings.

Currently, it represents not only the first outdoor info-point in Italy, but, above all, an integrated tourism management project of the metropolitan area of Bologna, a crucial element in the development strategy of territorial tourism policies. The attention paid upon the quality of hospitality, an essential feature in the territorial management program as well as a key economic driver, makes this project even more innovative.

eXtraBO gathers together, in one single place, the attributes of an info-point, with maps, brochures, paths credentials; a shop selling outdoor-related experiences; an event lobby and a set of co-working spaces with different professionals, representing three areas: the Apennines, Imola, the Lowlands, able to convey the territory's features at 360°.

Its creation was prompted by Bologna Welcome, Bologna's DMO in December 2019, in collaboration with the Municipality. Located in the very heart of the medieval town, where tourists converge to admire ancient buildings and squares, eXtraBO serves as an unexpected gateway for visitors to the outdoor treasures of Bologna - such as the centennial trail Via degli Dei (Bologna-Florence); a quirky and extravagant Alhambra-style castle in the mountains, and a trove of natural parks and oases. Moreover, it is precisely from eXtraBO that hikers start their 6-day walk to Tuscany along the Via degli Dei, together with 100+ additional experiences in the wilderness, all of them to be enjoyed "car-free". At an organizational level, eXtraBO can be regarded as a hybrid venture. While designed and hosted by the County's DMO, which provides tech and promotion, the space is co-run by three consortia of local Tours-And-Activities providers, based in different sub-areas of the Metropolitan City, who provide personnel and the actual experiences to be sold at the hub. They represent the Apennines (Appennino Slow), Imola area (IF - Imola Faenza Tourism Company) and the Lowlands (Sustenia, an oases management body). [<https://extrabo.com/all-activities/> for a snapshot of the products currently available].

Started few months before COVID-19, the project aimed at showcasing the "green side" of Bologna to both tourists and locals. At that time, the idea of dedicating one of the busiest spots of the historic city to outdoor and green travels could be considered a bizarre bet. But the advent of COVID-19 forced both visitors and locals to reconsider their habits and attitude towards green, slow and outdoor experiences. And as hikes, cycling and open-air experiences became mainstream, eXtraBO proved to be much more than a bet: it was indeed anticipatory of the trends to come and can now benefit from them.

For these reasons, in 2021 it was able to respond to the demands of the business and leisure market at both national and international level, while resting on the natural and cultural highlights that over time have become real must-haves of the territory (Via degli Dei, Ciclovia del Sole and Rocchetta Mattei) and offering different experiences such as e-bike excursions, taste tours and group sports activities.

A real example of efficient marketing and crisis management, with a creative, dynamic, and varied project team, attentive to environmental, social and economic sustainability. A demand-oriented staff fully complying with the ever-changing measures against the spread of the pandemic.

In the first half of 2022 more than 17.000 customers visited the point -30% of them tourists- and requests for products and credentials are booming. New hostels, STR and travel-related ventures are popping up along hiking and cycling routes, as the "green side" of Bologna is getting more and more relevant.

Next, our “physical” offer was digitalized. <https://extrabo.com/> is an experiential website aiming to showcase the vocations and interests of each area. Sure enough, the metropolitan territory is presented through itineraries that visitors can undertake independently or through experiences specifically designed by the territory’s passionate operators (100+ every year). The website is supported by other communication channels, such as printed material, dedicated newsletters and social networks ([Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#)) where the outdoor storytelling is shared in creative ways. Finally, the webapp [MyBologna](#) has been launched, targeted both to future tourists and visitors already in the city.

All this led the project to be awarded with the **international recognition of Skift as 2022 “In-house Innovators”**.

eXtraBO has built its own brand within the DMO Bologna Welcome, representing a new way of doing tourism that pairs well with the European Green Deal, but also with a desire to be economically and socially sustainable. In fact, as we support touristically lesser-known areas, our primary goal was to decongest the historic center and distribute the flows throughout the metropolitan area, as well as to strengthen the social and economic fabric of all these realities by actively involving local operators. Furthermore, it has been fostering urban contexts struck by depopulation and natural disasters, creating new jobs opportunities. An example thereof are the Apennines, repopulated by young entrepreneurs following the establishment of important trails, such as the Via degli Dei or the Via della Lana e della Seta. On the other hand, the areas of the Bolognese Lowlands found in the Ciclovia del Sole a veritable new beginning after the 2012 earthquake.

eXtraBO is a project that costs on the whole about € 190.000 per year, an investment that produces an exponential effect on the territory, acting as a multiplier.

There are three main reasons why eXtraBO represents an innovation:

First: it proposes an effective hub model, one that brings together information, shopping experience and events, run by young people living in metropolitan Bologna

Second: with eXtraBO, Bologna made a major bet, investing on outdoor tourism in a city that was mainly reputed for food and culture, and won big, anticipating a profound trend in travel and lifestyle.

Third: because it provides an innovative organizational and financial model, converging the active efforts of public and private bodies on an equal basis.

Some data:

Opened in Dec. 2019	2020	2021	2022
Accesses	6.000 people	12.000 people	17.000 people
Hosted events	2	37	50
Municipalities involved	48	52	52
Market trends	proximity tourism	national / European tourism	tourism international too (mainly Americans): in 2022 month of July 90% of tourists
Fairs attendance	eXtraBO staff didn't attend directly in fairs, the Bologna DMO presented it during fairs (online)	eXtraBO staff participates directly in national and international workshops and fairs: 6 events	eXtraBO staff is present at national (Italian Bike Festival; Salone del Camper, Liberamente) and international workshops and fairs dedicated to France, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavian countries, Denmark: 11 events. It has direct relationships with American and European tour operators (B2B and B2C), too
Newsletter subscribers	there was no newsletter	from second two quarters: 660	1.404
Bologna Welcome eXtraBO staff	1	2	5 (with 2 stagiaires)
External staff (consortia)	6	10	10
BW indirect staff working on the project	6	10	12
External indirect staff (supporting the consortia)	6	6	11
Institutions involved	11 (Metropolitan City of Bologna, Municipality of Bologna, 6 Unions of Municipalities, 2 Parks Authorities, GAL - Gruppo di Azione Locale dell'Appennino Bolognese)	12 (Metropolitan City of Bologna, Municipality of Bologna, 7 Unions of Municipalities, 2 Parks Authorities, GAL- Gruppo di Azione Locale dell'Appennino Bolognese)	12 (Metropolitan City of Bologna, Municipality of Bologna, 7 Unions of Municipalities, 2 Parks Authorities, GAL- Gruppo di Azione Locale dell'Appennino Bolognese)
Local private tour operators involved divided into sub-areas: bike hire, tourist associations, consortia	3	10	40
Private partners involved (e.g. Villa owners; Family businesses)	3	30	50

NAMING: Which one for the info point

FIRST PROPOSAL



Green meant as suburban, but also as harmony, balance and love for an area

SECOND PROPOSAL



Visually identifying the "E" of the Latin word "naturae" to enhance the concept of connection to the city and to enhance nature around and within Bologna

THIRD PROPOSAL



The "X" as an identifying sign on a map or route. Extra in the sense of going beyond and eXtraordinary



The choice was the third option, which was used as the basis for the development of the final logo

Information hub



Information hub

2019

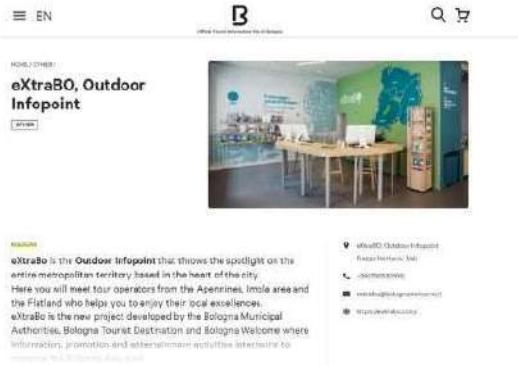


2022



eXtraBO - online

2019



eXtraBO has a dedicated area on the Bologna Welcome website

2022



eXtraBO has its own website

EXTRABO DID NOT
HAVE A NEWSLETTER



Institution and local stakeholders involved

2019



48 Municipalities

represented by 3 organizations



2022



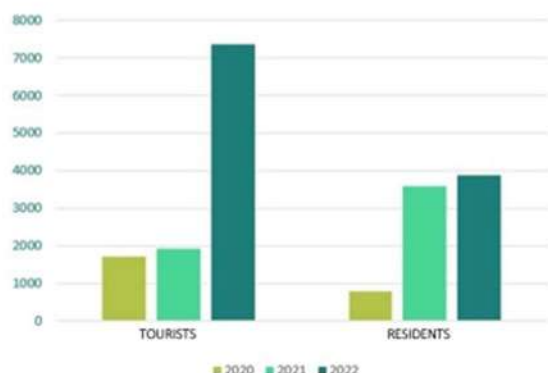
52 Municipalities

represented by 3 organizations

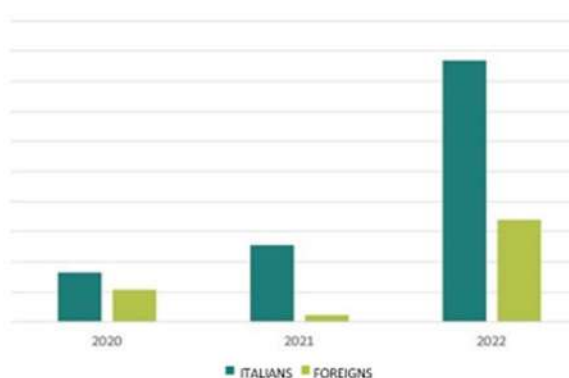


Tourism flows at eXtraBO

Residents/Tourists Trend 2020 - 2021 - 2022



Ratio Foreign and Italian tourists 2020 - 2021 - 2022



In the analysis of the data relating to the tourism flows at eXtraBO from 2020 to today, it has been noticed a continuous increase in the attendance at the info point, flanked by strong **growth in international tourist flows**

The phases of the pandemic saw an audience consisting mainly of residents and proximity tourism, which in the last year have given way to wider range of tourists, included international ones

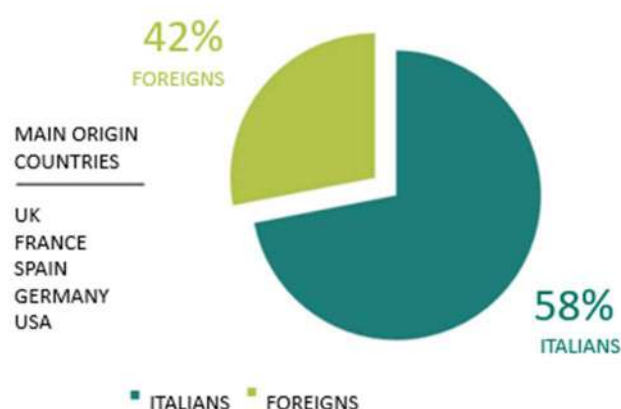
Tourism flows at eXtraBO

The observed increase of international tourists shows a prevalence of German, Spanish and English tourists

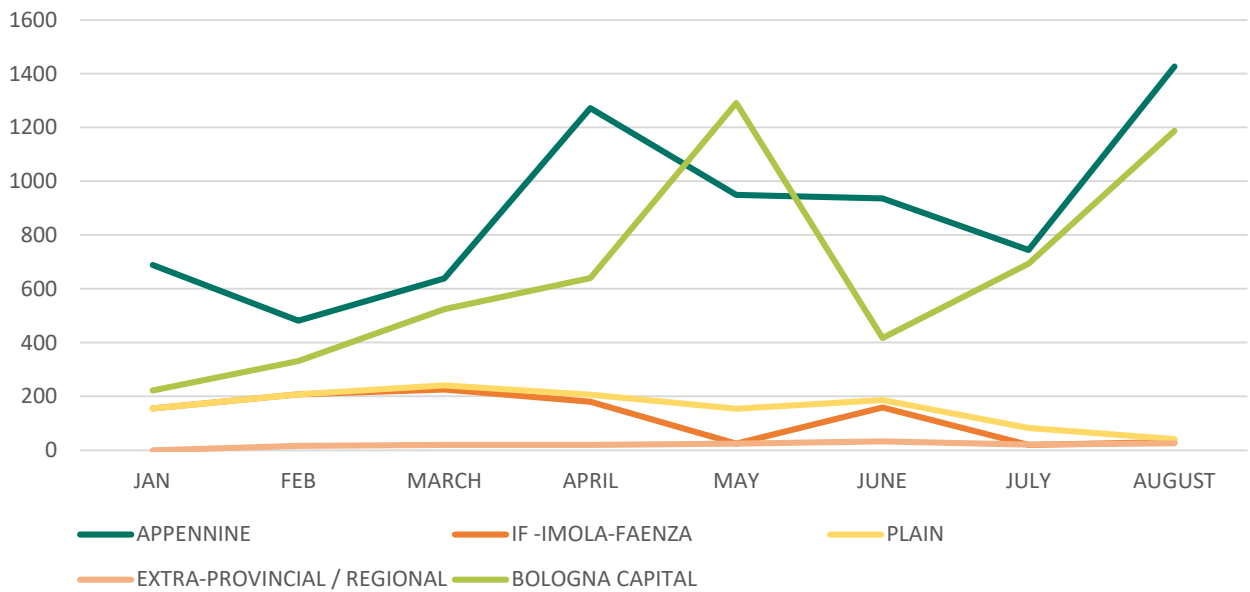
There is also a return of US tourists, especially for medium / long term stays

Tourists from Spain turn out make the longest overnight stays

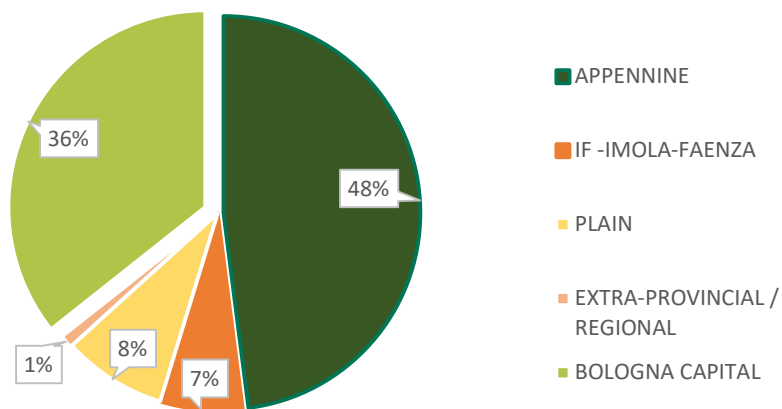
Tourists by countries Jan-Aug 2022



eXtraBO 2022 - Areas of interest



eXtraBO 2022 - Areas of interest



eXtraBO 2022 - Quantity and type of requests

