Western Silk Road Brand Italy - SWOT Analysis:

Key Findings

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SWOT Analysis Summary

**S**
- Wide Italian cultural heritage related to the Silk Road
- Silk Road-related experiential tourism activities
- Opening of Italian industrial and manufacturing firms to tourism
- Silk Cycleway
- Marco Polo committee within Italian Cultural Routes Board
- Marco Polo’s brand image recognition

**W**
- No integrated knowledge about Silk Road heritage
- Low awareness of Italy as Silk Road destination
- Low formation of local tourism industry with reference to eastern markets
- Low experience in cultural routes as tools for tourism promotion

**O**
- Cultural differentiation in mature/overcrowded destinations
- Development of new upward trending markets
- Cooperation with academic institutions
- Existing initiatives promoted by local associations
- Coherence with Italian Strategic Tourism Plan
- Most famous cities as gateways to marginal areas

**T**
- Risk that classic Italian destinations will stand out without valorising the less-known heritage
- No linear route pattern = more difficult to implement a Network of the sites
- Fragmentation of tourism supply
Strengths

SILK ROAD CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Evidences in many cities involved in the trades with the East (Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Ravenna..)
- Silk Museums and Silk Road exhibitions
- Intangible cultural heritage

SILK ROAD TOURISM EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES

- Local artisans, visits to ancient silk factories, sailing excursions, oriental atmospheres tours
- Provided by local tourism operators that would benefit from the WSR Initiative

Fondaco dei Turchi, Venice

Workshop in an ancient spinning mill, Treviso (picture from VivoVenetia.com)
Strengths

SILK CYCLE ROUTE
- From Venice to Livorno, crossing Ferrara, Bologna, Lucca and Pisa
- Built around the Silk production and distribution heritage in Italy
- Gpx track available, official signage in one direction
- Cycle tourism is a booming market

MARCO POLO BRAND IMAGE RECOGNITION
- Tourists’ significant awareness of the connection Venice-Silk Road and Marco Polo is the most recognised personality associated to Venice
- Build communication and narrative
Opportunities

SILK ROAD-RELATED EXISTING INIATIVES

- “Venice - Beijing: Cultural Hub”: camper caravan round trip, involving tourists and entrepreneurs along the Silk Road (by Aikal and Overland)
- VeroTour: Venetian sailing routes

STRATEGIC TOURISM PLAN 2017-2022

- Transregional routes to innovate cultural tourism and elaboration of themed tourism products
- Improve infrastructure network
- Foster the integration of tourism supply and business networks
## Opportunities – Venice focus

### OVERCROWDING MANAGEMENT AND CULTURAL REQUALIFICATION

- Opportunity to make tourism in Venice more sustainable and valorise cultural assets outside the “touristic triangle”
- Destination image restyling
- Fill the gap between tourists’ low awareness and high interest in a set of Silk Road related activities
- Positive perception and active commitment by accommodation sector in developing a Western Silk Road product together with other operators and in providing tourists with on site information

### COOPERATION WITH ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

- Ca’ Foscari University in Venice: Programmes in Eastern Languages and Culture
- Projects involving students in online/offline linguistic mediation for small/medium tourism businesses
- A replicable model to help operators in meeting the expectations and needs of Eastern markets’ tourists.
To conclude...

- Need for a wider analysis on the whole national territory of the Silk Road tangible and intangible heritage assets and their integration within a shared database

- A great effort of “trans scalar” coordination should be foreseen

- Updates from “Marco Polo Network” within Italian Cultural Routes Board
Thank you for the attention.