



Information and Communication Technologies supporting tourism in rural and mountain areas

Good practice guide



► Collection of good practices implemented
in the regions participating in the DANTE project

Final version

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Digital Agenda for New Tourism Approach
in European Rural and Mountain Areas



**DIGITAL AGENDA FOR
NEW TOURISM APPROACH
IN EUROPEAN RURAL
AND MOUNTAIN AREAS**



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8 European good practices on how to use ICT to develop tourism

At the start of the DANTE project, the partners have identified and studied 8 good practices showing how ICT can be used to support the development of tourism activities. They have been classified in the three following categories:

Good practices for the promotion of local tourism using traditional technologies in an innovative way

- Boosting the cultural sector by Cultural Tourism Development Plans (Podbeskidzie Region, Poland)
- The mobile Tag system for promoting and networking alpine skiing stations (Province of Turin, Italy)
- Extremadura Vista: Axis Network Cameras to promote Historic, Natural and Cultural Heritage of Extremadura (Spain)

Good practices in which the actions of the customer are involved with innovative methodology (development of new softwares)

- Listening Platform of the tourist users' needs (CSI Piemonte, Piedmont Region)
- Arcipelago Campano project by Lauro Group (Napoli, Italy) and Forthcrs (University of Crete, Greece)

Good practices to improve the capacities of the tourism operators

- Innovation acceleration for new business and service development by peer learning and idea creation in an uncertain world (Inknowcom, The Netherlands)
- New product and service development for rural tourism on farms (Bauernhofferien, Germany)
- Tourisma'TIC Suivez le guide — Tourism'ICT Follow the guide (Cybermassif, France)



Boosting the cultural sector by introducing ICTs in Cultural Tourism Development Plans

Podbeskidzie Region, Poland

The initiative focuses on the **promotion of the cultural assets of Podbeskidzie Region on the basis of prepared and implemented Cultural Tourism Development Plans**. The preparation and evaluation phase joined together local authorities, stakeholders and SMEs operating in the field of tourism. The Regional Development Agency of Bielsko-Biała was in charge of the organization and of the running of the Cultural Tourism Information Centre in Cieszyn.

Objectives

The main goal of the practise was **to generate a positive impact in terms of competitiveness** by introducing **better access to information** for cultural visitors, signposting of cultural assets and promotion of cultural heritage for attracting tourism and extending the tourism period where appropriate. The implementation of the ICT technologies in the form of **web portal** presentations, preparation of the new projects implementing virtual dimension technologies were included.

Location

The geographical area covered by the practise was initially the county of Bielsko-Biała (Żywiec, Cieszyn). The area of the territory is 2 227 km² with 625 000 inhabitants. Beskidy region was from mid 60-ties of the last century recognized as a tourist destination to the inhabitants of the Upper Silesia industrial region.



Detailed description of the practice

Context and origin

The development of the **Cultural Tourism Development Plans** was one of the goals towards wide **activities focused on promotion of the regional assets**. This required engagement of all regional actors dealing in the field of tourism and SMEs as well. That kind of strategy is not common in rural and mountain areas. The spatial plan is an innovation for most regions in Eu-



rope as there is no such statutory procedure, but it can be integrated to existing national and regional planning systems.

Additionally to Cultural Tourism Development Plan, the practise covered also **Visitor Information Centres development focused on cultural heritage** of the region. The project generated a positive impact to regional cohesion through the economic, employment and social inclusion expected benefits that are usually associated and expected from tourism development, particularly cultural tourism.

To fully utilise the potential of the regional culture, the City of Bielsko-Biała started a project to **cover the area of the city with modern internet infrastructure** to ensure wide-band access of the local institutions to the new ICT technologies (CHIRON project). This will enable instant access for 175 000 inhabitants of the Bielsko-Biała city and surroundings.

Timescale

The CHIRON project had **started in 2005 and lasted till August 2007**. The preparations of the project took one year mainly because of the partnership composition which required involvement of the different partners from central and south Europe.

Process and content of the practice, technology and infrastructure used

The region is situated on the border of Poland, Slovakia and Czech Republic, and represents a **mixture of cultures** of those three countries. The process of identification of the most valuable cultural heritage to identify the best known and also lesser known assets required extensive research and consultation. Based on these results, apart from Cultural Tourism Development Plan, three other measures were implemented:

- The elaboration of **Cultural Tourism Guidebook** for the Podbeskidzie region;
- The preparation of the **web portal** for promotion of the regional cultural assets and heritage;
- The opening of the **cultural tourism information point**.

The idea behind that action was to promote not only very well know heritage and culture assets of the region like folk art international Beskid festival “Beskid Culture Week”, but also unique trails of industry historical sites, religious architecture jewels, handcraft and art masterpieces. Based on that and some earlier regional experiences, a **Touristic Cluster combining all major tourist and regional institutions** is being developed to enhance further sectorial development.

Changes required to implement the practice and changes planned to improve it

The implementation of the project was the first step towards better promotion and preservation of the regional cultural heritage and required involvement of different regional actors. The results of the action has shown that the implementation of the new promotional tool is required,



mainly the wider utilisation of the ICT technologies in the form of **better web promotion**, better implementation of the new technologies like virtual dimension tools. This is especially important in case of material assets of regional culture presented in museums and other institutions. As a result, **digitalisation of the assets is the way to start preparation of the virtual tours** to present those most valuable pieces of arts, which are not accessible on daily basis or are not easily accessible, especially by handicapped people. **Virtual tours** will bring those to all interested and will be easily accessible.

Financial framework

The preparation of the Cultural Tourism Development Plan, Cultural Tourism Guidebook for Podbeskidzie region and creation of Cultural Tourism Information Centre was implemented via **Interreg IIIB CADSES co-financed project**. The budget of the project was 133 000 € of which about 25% was dedicated to the implementation of Cultural Tourism Information Centre in Cieszyn.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries are the **local and regional authorities, local tourism organizations, stakeholders from tourism sector, tourism agencies and associations, local community**. The centre was established in the City of Cieszyn, a touristic city which is located on the border triangle with Czech and Slovak Republic. Thousands of tourists visiting the City every year have got another possibility to explore richness of the Beskidy culture. Preparation of such a plans is also targeted to widely promote cultural assets not accessible to the audience on regular basis, such as most valuable or remote pieces of art and architecture. One of the goal is also planning to include digital 3D scanning and preparation of virtual tours with the aim to enable better access to those values also by the handicapped tourist. This is being implemented recently whith one of the projects developed by Bielsko-Biała District Authority (virtual tour).





Transferability

The practise can be **transferred to any other destinations from mountain and rural areas**. The only **condition is to adopt and include Cultural Tourism Development Plan in Local Strategies**. The implementation of such practice requires the **involvement of different regional and local tourist sector actors** and develop a common understanding of the need to include cultural tourism within promotional and investment activities and projects. This also require to **focus on available ICT technologies** such as virtual dimension tools.

Synergy and integration

Implementation of the regional project with cooperation with international institutions from central and southern Europe resulted in **established connections between different organizations and institutions**. **Common projects of cultural exchanges** were implemented. Involvement of different regional actors and tourism sector resulted in many common **regional project strengthening development of regional touristic products** such as : Beskid Pass – common polish-slovak cross-border touristic product currently developed, and establishment of the regional touristic cluster joining majority of tourism actors from the region.

Impact of the practice, possible demonstrated results and Multiplying effect of the practice

The project activities were expected to generate a **positive impact in terms of competitiveness** by introducing better access to information for cultural visitors, signposting of cultural assets and promotion of cultural heritage for attracting tourism and extending the tourism period where appropriate.

The project generated a positive impact to regional cohesion through the **economic, employment and social inclusion expected benefits** that are usually associated and expected from tourism development, particularly cultural tourism.

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The mobile Tag system for promoting and networking alpine stations

Province of Turin, Italy

The **tag system for mobile phone** was experimented in Torino in **13 mountain stations**. Mobile tag is a two-dimensional image encoded with information. It is decoded using a camera -phone application. These tag reader applications are able to scan tags and react accordingly based on the patterns within the image.

Objectives

The practice aims to **connect and promote 13 minor alpine stations** of the Province of Torino **using the smart tag system**.

Location

The **mountain area within Torino's Province**: Prali, Coazze, Chiomonte, Viù, Usseglio, Ala di Stura, Balme, Chialamberto, Groscavallo, Alpette, Locana, Ceresole Reale, Valprato Soana.



Detailed description of the practice

Context and origin

The **mountain tourist attraction in Torino's Province** is twofold: the Olympic area (Sestriere etc), very well promoted and the “**minor**” **alpine stations** that need to be promoted and connected . The **smart tag system equipment** was launched in Torino city in 2010 **to promote museum and historical sites network** by Turismo Torino e Provincia, the organisation promoting the province of Turin as a tourist destination. That innovative technology can successfully be applied in the alpine network.



Timescale

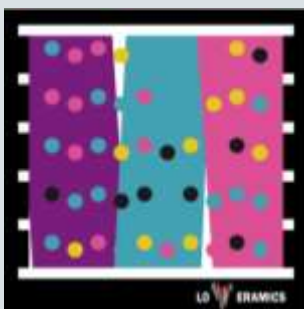
The action started in February 2012 and will be completed by June 2013.

Bodies/organisations involved in implementation

- **Province of Torino**
- **Turismo Torino e Provincia**, the governmental institution for tourism, promotion and information in province and regional territory
- **The 4 Mountain Communities** (Valli di Lanzo, Ceronda e Casternone, Valle Orco e e Soana, Valle Susa e Val Sangone, Pinerolese), 13 municipalities concerned by the alpine stations named above. A Mountain Community is a local authority /government established by national law for the development and improvement of mountain areas.
- **Local associations promoting tourism**

Process and content of the practice, technology and infrastructure used

Based on the **information contained within the smart tag**, the tag reading software can **perform a variety of functions** including the display of text or images, hyperlinking to specific URLs, linking to video content and providing contact information. Information can be encoded into two-dimensional images in multiple ways. More than 70 different types of tags have been developed over in the past decade, each with associated applications built to identify their specific method of encoding.



Examples of smart tags

Microsoft Tags create a connection between real life and the digital world. Compared to every other system (for example QR code), Tags offer some advantages such as **monitoring and business intelligence tools, and colours and shapes to code the information**: no more black and white graphical elements with no visual impact, but objects related to the communication code of a brand. In addition to that, the ThinkTag platform includes other features: flexibility and the possibility to manage communication mobile operations, advertising, gaming, video streaming, social media strategy, contests and instant win.



The steps to read a tag with a smartphone using an application downloaded from gettag.mobi

When the Tag is scanned with a smartphone, it automatically opens a webpage, dials a phone number, gives access to interactive contents such as photos, mp3 and videos, or unlocks a discount, promotion or instant win. Tags can disclose **different contents** depending on where they are being snapped **thanks to geo-location**. Scanned tags are automatically saved, so that users can revisit information several times again, or share it. The Tag creator can easily update the contents the Tags lead to with a Content Management System [CMS].

By delivering rich video experiences and location-specific content, mobile tags can help potential travellers get a better understanding of unfamiliar places. National, Regional and Local information can be instantly available anywhere, especially via tags on promotional flyers, postcards, travel material and smart cities installations.

The idea is to allow tourists / visitors to collect and display touristic information about the area in which they are, pass this information on the mobile phone by means of a tagged object that creates and maintains a link with the territory.

Brochure with a tag included in the page

Changes required to implement the practice and changes planned to improve it
 The aim is to use tag system for Destination experiences that can be brought to life through point-of-view videos and live webcam previews of actual locations. The application of this system to alpine stations means to **put a certain number of tags in strategic touristic locations** so that tourists/visitors can tag with mobile phones accessing to all the existing information system. The information system is already existing.



Financial framework

Public funds: 20.000 Euros

Beneficiaries

Tourists / visitors, excursionists, etc. can get immediately the information they need.

Transferability

The practice is fully transferable but requires a **good internet connection**.

Synergy and integration

The practice is connected with the Province's policy of promoting those 13 alpine stations and the ICT policies of Torino and Province concerning the "Tagged city".

Impact of the practice, possible demonstrated results and Multiplying effect of the practice

At this moment, it is very difficult to provide figures regarding the added value. From a qualitative point of view we can say that the practice allows to put in relation these less developed areas. The expected result is **to promote the local tourism** and to encourage people **to move from the city to less known mountain areas**.

Lessons learnt from the practice

The **involvement of local actors** is important **to identify the points of placement of the tags** in the area, not necessarily in mountain areas (eg shelters) but rather in **places of great affluence** such as railway stations, shopping centers, Museo della Montagna.

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Extremadura Vista: Axis Network Cameras to promote Historic, Natural and Cultural Heritage of Extremadura

Fundecyt, Spain



extremaduraVista
BETA

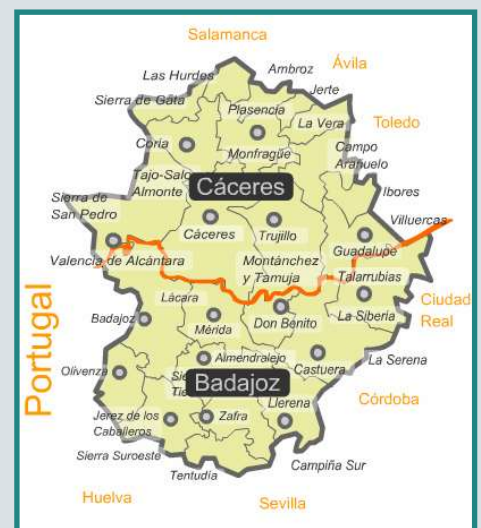
This best practice tackles the **tourism from the inspiration point of view**, and the information and communication technologies as the tools to spread the historic, natural and cultural heritage of Extremadura. Concretely, the use of **Digital Contents as a Communication Strategy**.

Objectives

The final objective of this project is to **show the Natural and Cultural Heritage** of the Region of Extremadura with 119 rural cities and villages, and 10 Protected Natural Spaces through the installation of a set of **129 cameras** around the most interesting places in Extremadura, which offering at real-time images of this Regional Heritage.

Location

The geographical area of the project is the **Region of Extremadura**. Concretely, 134 places in the region of Extremadura: **119 cities and villages** and **10 natural spaces**.



Detailed description of the practice

Context and origin

The Regional Government has been developing (2008) a regional **strategy to incorporate the Information Society into the Society** with the aim to **foster several socioeconomic sectors** in the region through the integration the ICT both in the productive process as in the educative, social, and cultural areas, in order to transform the economy of the Region of Extremadura in a economy based on knowledge.

In this context of development of new uses of ICTs, the **creation of digital contents** is very important, and these contents have the objective of **spreading the image of Extremadura** through the digital networks in an easy way.

Moreover, the total protected surface in Extremadura represents 1,8% of the total surface in this region. The Natural Spaces in this region are composed by: 1 National Park and Biosphere



Reserve, 2 Natural Parks and Reserves, 1 Protected Landscape, 4 Natural Monuments, 4 Special Conservation Spaces, 10 Spaces of Birds Conservation.

For this reason, the final motivation of this project is to **spread the Natural and Cultural Heritage of Extremadura region around the world.**

Timescale

The schedule of the project was 2 years.

Bodies/organisations involved in implementation

- General Directorate of Modernization and Technological innovation of Extremadura, in charge of project.
- New Initiative Centre (CNI)
- Private Company: AXIS Communication: <http://www.axis.com/es/>

Process and content of the practice, technology and infrastructure used

During a two-year period and based on a study of the neighbouring environment, a **pre-selection was performed of the most representative and favourable locations for installing the cameras**, focusing on places affording open views without being intrusive for residents.

The methodology used in this project was the following:

Phase 1: Study

In this phase, all locations were studied. The **criteria for choosing the best locations** were:

- Easy to join to the regional intranet.
- Best view of the landscape, monuments, etc.
- Best illumination
- Less impact on the heritage or landscape.

Phase 2: Installation

In this phase, it is included the **cameras installation as well as the rest of components and testing and publishing** the pictures, videos, etc.

There were three types of installation:

- Fixed installation
- Wireless installation (This kind of installation needs Wifi connection with the Regional Intranet)
- Isolated installation (This kind of installation needs external power by solar panel or accumulator, and Wifi connection with the Regional Intranet)

Each **camera installation** followed the following protocol:



- Configuration and testing of the platform.
- Testing of the whole system.
- Publication in online testing
- Testing of the publication system

Moreover, a **weather station** was incorporated in every cameras which send information to regional weather information centre in the Region of Extremadura.

On the **project website**, the people/tourist can choose the place they are more interested in and vote for the most beautiful place in the Region.



*View from a location in Extremadura
Source: Extremaduravista*

Changes required

The **main problems were found in choosing where to install the cameras**, due to the fact that, in some localization, there was no good panoramic of the cultural or natural heritage to disseminate. In some cases, the access to the installation was not the optimum.

Financial framework

The total budget was contributed by the Regional Government of Extremadura

Beneficiaries

The final beneficiaries of the project are two following groups:

- **tourists**, who will be able to know the region from their houses, and they would prepare the trip in a better way.
- **tourism companies** can use the cameras to promote their situation and the places near to them.

And some **TV stations** also used these live cameras to comment on the weather situation.

Transferability

All components involved in the project can be transferred. Some of these components are the following:

- INTRANET: The best practice uses the Regional Telecommunication Network.
- Platform based on Free Open Source Software.
- Webcams (some of them 360° degree).
- 130 AXIS 221 Day & Night Network Cameras.
- 20 AXIS 232D+ Network Dome Cameras.



The methodology is also transferable thanks to the three kinds of installations; the cameras and the rest of components are available easily. The unique **point to take into account is the availability of access to a connection with broadband** in rural areas (by cable or wifi).

It is necessary to set up such project to have a **good relationship with a large number of stakeholders** (Museums, Villages, etc.), due to the fact that the project needs the permission of different agents to access to the best localizations.

Synergy and integration

The project was included in the **Regional strategy of information society in Extremadura**. The connectivity was possible thanks to the **regional broadband intranet** created at the beginning of 2000. Besides, the used technology for servers is based on the software distribution from Extremadura, GnuLinex.

It also has to be noted that the data, images, and videos generated by the cameras, are considered as "**Free Knowledge**", **under Creative Commons licenses**, and can therefore be used freely by stakeholders.

Lessons learnt from the practice

- The project was carried out before the boom of social networks, the **combination of Extremadura Vista, social networks and communication 2.0 will improve the results** achieved.
- The **possibilities to use these videos, images, pictures by the private sector** related with tourism **could be a future improvement** of this project.

Demonstration video

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FCKLNnN_TM&feature=player_embedded

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www.extremaduravista.es;
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Listening Platform of the tourist users' needs

CSI Piemonte, Piedmont Region

The good practice is based on the following considerations:

- it is important to understand what tourists want when they go to a place on holiday;
- culture and tourism are getting more and more interconnected to technology;
- technology provides many ideas to innovate in tourist areas, especially for mountain and rural places, through different experimentations.

Bringing innovation in a tourist area means using new technologies to improve existing policies and services that are already provided, thus capitalising on the resources of the territory and trying to improve the customer experience.

Objectives

The principal objective of CSI Piemonte good practice in the Piedmont Region was to **'listen to the users' needs'** on tourism services in a specific area, in order to **find out whether new technological solutions increase tourist inflow**. Visitors' comments on social networks (Internet provides new sources of data, informal data, like blog, forum, etc.) and all information 'left' by tourists were used to improve tourist services (public and private).

Location

Piedmont Region measures 25,399 km² and has about 4 million three hundred thousand inhabitants. It borders France, Lombardy and Valle d'Aosta, Liguria and Emilia-Romagna. It's the second largest Italian region.

This good practice focused on the **Turin area**, more involved in the 'Holy Shroud Exhibition' event, but also took into consideration data from the whole regional territory.





Detailed description of the practice

Context and origin

The Holy Shroud Exhibition is a recurring event in Turin, but it had never been interpreted and analyzed as a tourist phenomenon. In 2010 CSI Piemonte proposed to the Piedmont Region to **collect data to understand the tourist groups** that were coming to Turin for the event and **what are their needs and requirements**. The **'Listening Platform'** identified what areas of Piedmont and what accommodations tourists selected to spend the night during their stay.

The Platform also **highlighted where and when people talked about** the Holy Shroud, and made it possible to analyze in an integrated way the various information clusters and point out the strength and the weaknesses of the tourist proposal of Piedmont territory. This provided insight on how to plan and promote future events.

Timescale

The **Listening Platform** was implemented for the first time for the **2010** Holy Shroud Exhibition in Turin (10 April – 23 May 2010), but **data and information had been collected from 2009**, when the booking system for the event was launched.

The booking system for the Holy Shroud Exhibition was developed by CSI-Piemonte and launched in the last quarter of 2009, and CSI-Piemonte proposed to use the resulting data to develop the Listening Platform. The **development of the project took about one month**, during which the methodology was developed, the appropriate data basis were identified, analysed, and fed to the engine to produce the reports.

The Platform also integrated data from the Piedmont tourist flows, that had been collected for many years and were used as reference for comparisons purposes.

Bodies/organisations involved in implementation

- CSI PIEMONTE (technical role)
- REGIONE PIEMONTE (coordinator of public tourist promotion)
- COMITATO SINDONE (organizer of the Holy Shroud exhibition)

The Piedmont Region, that was one of the members of the Committee for the Holy Shroud Exhibition, officialy encharged CSI-Piemonte to implement the official Holy Shroud Exhibition Portal, booking system and the Listening Platform to follow the event from its start to its end.

Process and content of the practice, technology and infrastructure used

Through the platform, it is possible to **'listen' to different kind of sources**, such as public data available on tourist flows, the contents of e-mails sent to and by tourist offices, conversations about tourist and cultural topics on blogs, forums, newspaper web sites (both specialised and general topic websites). To **safeguard the privacy** of the data contained in the messag-



es, the system does not extract from the on-line communication, any personal detail and reference, and only focuses on text elements (both objective and subjective) in which tourist evaluate the tourist services or reservation data .

The Platform also **analyzed ‘implicit’ system data** (such as data recorded by the information system that are not structured but have some tourist relevance, for ex. accesses to a tourist site) and **digital contents generated directly by the users** (images, video, highlights, contacts ...). All this information entered input for an analysis methodology, through the Blogmeter technological platform.

The **Blogmeter Word of Mouth Analysis methodology** is an interactive process of listening, understanding and analyzing, that allows to **measure the effectiveness of the company’s communication strategies**, both from a qualitative and a quantitative perspective. In detail the process comprises a series of consulting activities, aimed at identifying the relevant places of discussion and the analysis drivers, as well as a proprietary semantic analysis engine that provides an automatic retrieval of the main elements in the conversations expressed in natural language.

Changes required to implement the practice and changes planned to improve it

The Platform merely **‘listens’ to information already collected by the offices** involved with tourism, the call centers which collected the reservations, all public and private institutions that participated in the event, so no changes were required in public and private processes. However operators awareness was increased on the need to **collect information in a more standardized way** to facilitate the elaboration of reports.

The project was developed on 3 main components:

- **Data collection:** according to the methodology developed, information can be collected using any software system, it is not necessary to install a specific solution. Indeed, CSI-Piemonte used the tools that had already been developed to manage the regional information systems (SAS, Oracle). However, the data format was standardized so that the data from different sources could be integrated in to a single system.
- **Methodology:** CSI-Piemonte adopted a methodology that defined rules on the the data typography to be read by the system, and ‘semantic’ rules on how to read and interpret the data.
- **Interpretation:** the Listening Platform integrated a solution called BlogMeter, installed at CSI-Piemonte, that provides the final reports.

The Listening Platform already pointed out areas where improvements could be made, to be up-to-date with tourist standards evolutions.

Financial framework

The setting up of the Listening Platform and the analysis required to identify relevant data



sources was an investment made by the Piedmont Region and CSI Piemonte as a pilot project. The approximate cost of the pilot was 30,000€ (staff cost to standardize the collected information and staff cost to analyse the data)

This total does not include the specific software costs, as the tools has already been adopted by CSI-Piemonte and were at disposal for the project.

Beneficiaries

The Piedmont Region and all Piedmont public administrations dealing with tourist issues gained **more insight on how to better target new public policies on tourism.**

The reports from the Platform also gave **insight to private companies on which services** it is better to invest in for future tourist events.

Transferability

CSI Piemonte good practice is transferable. The essential requirement is to identify a **rich heritage of web information** (social network- forum, ...) to analyze. Moreover, if a territory already has other structured information (data bases) connected to tourism and tourist flows, these would provide added value to the analysis.

The methodology and the search engine produce reports for decision makers to make more informed decisions to better target investment and more effective policy developments in the future.

Synergy and integration

The good practice is developed in the Piedmont region where there are very rich databases of information, updated by the shared activity of various public and private entities.

The Listening Platform tool and methodology has also been adopted to **analyze other topics**, such as Smarty City policies and services for the Municipality of Turin, to **evaluate the degree of attention of the Municipality and the citizens on a new concept of innovative services.** This is an example of the fact that the **Listening Platform may be used in any context in which it is necessary to analyze the impressions, the evaluations and the opinions** that customers and citizens express on the Net on the quality of services that are offered (Transports, Culture, Health, etc...).

However it is **not always easy to integrate all these information**, as information is often present in a wide range of formats (at times not compatible with another) and as they also need to be cleansed to avoid repetitions and errors and this takes time and funds.

The data already collected by other systems (the calendar of Piedmont public events, the booking systems for cultural events and museums, etc.) have been included and interpreted to



have a more comprehensive understanding of the tourist phenomena. These data will make it possible better target and improve future tourist policies in the Turin metropolitan area.

Impact of the practice

There was a greater attention to the needs of tourists and the increase of proposals appropriate to their individual desires. This is also demonstrated by a **steady increase of tourist flows** in various areas of Piedmont territory.

One example was the fact that many tourists complained about the difficulty to find logistic information on how to move around the town. As a result of these complaints, the official site of the Holy Shroud Exhibition was modified to **include more information on tourist itineraries and maps, thus improving the overall tourist experience.**

Following CSI Piemonte good practice, **tourism offices have monitored more carefully** the comments made on social networks by tourists during and after their stays. They have also animated **online discussions and asked for suggestions** to those who had spent their holidays in the Piedmont territory.

CSI Piemonte good practice was useful to demonstrate that:

- **all information is important, both structured (databases, etc.) and unstructured (documents, emails...).** Tourism promotion should be based on observation of tourists needs;
- such **sources of information can be collected and analyzed** on a regular basis, to create a Listening Platform;

the Platform may **provide useful tips** to develop new services or to improve existing ones and to direct policies on tourism promotion. Indeed, if decision-makers are aware of a particular need that may be highlighted by the Listening Platform, they are able to better target future policies and services.

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Arcipelago Campano project by Lauro Group (Napoli, Italy) and Forthcrs (Greece)

University of Crete, Greece

The initiative proposed the **combined promotion of different tourism and transport services, through dynamic B2B and B2C portal engine**. Until now, tourists did not have the ability to plan their visit to islands in the area of Napoli, at once, through a single unified interface. For Napoli the practice needs to be marketed stronger while for Greece it will be complete until spring 2013.

Objectives of the practice

- To **promote tourism in an area where multiple services can be combined** including accommodation, ferry transport, inland transport.
- To **appeal individual tourists** who want to build their travel solution on their own.
- To **promote all types of tourism** in the area.

Location

Napoli, Ischia, Capri



Detailed description of the practice

Context and origin – starting point and motive for action

The main motivation from the project was the fact that **individual tourists could not book their whole trip, including transport and accommodation** for their visit to the broader areas of Napoli and islands. **Multimodal transport and tourism services should be combined** through an integrated booking platform in order to build custom-made packages sold either directly online (B2C) or through travel offices. This was a main challenge for local enterprises as well as for a major transport operator who took the initiative to bring this project into life.

Timescale

Action started in 2010. Preparation lasted more than 6 months. **To be launched commercially within summer 2012**.

Bodies/organisations involved in implementation:

- Lauro Group main transport operator/project coordinator



- Forthcrs technology provider
- Local travel offices and hotel enterprises

Process and content of the practice, technology and infrastructure used

The main activities carried out include:

- **Informing** the local enterprises and local actors about the project aims and the expected benefits
- **Integration** of different booking systems
- **Development** of the core booking platform
- **Registration of data** into the electronic platform
- **Training** of people, presentation to travel offices, local marketing



Origin	Destination	Departure	Arrival	Duration	Transp. modes	Int.Hops	Est. Price
Manchester	Naxos Port	03/10 08:10	04/10 13:20	-27h	✈️ 🚗 🚶	Manchester Heathrow, London Defterios Vrezos Intl, Athens	N/A
Make Trip Details							
Seqm.	Origin	Destination	Departure	Arrival	Duration	Mean of Transport	Est. Price
1	Manchester	Heathrow, London	03/10 08:10	03/10 09:15	-1h	✈️	N/A
2	Heathrow, London	Eleftherios Venizelos Intl, Athens	03/10 11:50	03/10 17:30	-3h	✈️ Aegean Airlines	N/A
3	Athens Airport	Athens Airport Metro Station (to Athens)	03/10 18:30	03/10 18:35	-5min	🚶 - WALKING	N/A
4	Athens Airport Metro Station (to Athens)	Plakentias (to Athens)	03/10 18:35	03/10 18:55	-18min	🚇 URBAN RAILWAY LINE 1	N/A
5	Plakentias (to Athens)	Doukissis Plakentias (to Monastiraki)	03/10 18:55	03/10 19:04	-11min	🚶 - WALKING	N/A
6	Doukissis Plakentias (to Monastiraki)	Monastiraki (end of Line 3)	03/10 19:04	03/10 19:23	-19min	🚇 METRO LINE 3	N/A
7	Monastiraki (end of Line 3)	Monastiraki (to Piraeus)	03/10 19:24	03/10 19:30	-6min	🚶 - WALKING	N/A
8	Monastiraki (to Piraeus)	Piraeus	03/10 19:30	03/10 19:47	-16min	🚇 URBAN RAILWAY LINE 1	N/A
9	Piraeus Port	Naxos Port	04/10 07:00	04/10 13:20	-6h	🚢 SEA JET'S SUPERJET	N/A

Views of the intermodal travel planner developed in the framework of the project

Changes required to implement the practice and changes planned to improve it

The main changes that are planned are related to the **integration of the booking system of the international railway network** and the activation of an **aggressive marketing plan, mainly based on online advertising means.**

Financial framework

Development and integration costs are more than 150kEuros, 90% is senior software development costs.

Private funded project by Forthcrs S.A. (development) and Arcipelago Campano S.p.A. (content development and web site integration)

Beneficiaries

Travel offices and tourists are the main beneficiaries, as well as the local enterprises who



are promoted under the umbrella of a destination marketing concept.

Transferability

The practice can be transferred to other places and areas. Appropriate condition is to locate the necessary motivated organisation who has the will and capacity to coordinate variant local actors and enterprises, playing the role of a Destination Marketing Entity.

Synergy and integration

The practice **works hand-by-hand with local transport operators and tourism enterprises**. The practice by its nature involves **cooperative thinking about transport operators, hotels, travel offices** which have a common interest and vision to promote the area of Napoli as a single destination of choices.

The practice should be monitored by all these actors in terms of measurable results so that an improvement plan can be constantly live. A **Monitoring Board of key actors** should be responsible to monitor and assess the progress and the results of all efforts.

Impact of the practice, possible demonstrated results and Multiplying effect of the practice

The practice is evidently supporting the local economies of the islands of the Napoli Gulf. However, tangible results and effects are not yet recorded since the practice will Go Live this summer (2012). **Increase of visitors, and increase of level of satisfactions are the most important benefits expected.**

Lessons learnt from the practice

- **Coordination** of local actors is very important. Workshops and motivation through local advertising means are the proposed ways to achieve it.
- **Destination branding** is a key to increase accessibility and visibility of rural areas. All areas are part of a destination which should be well branded.
- Although the project is not a technological innovation, **integration of multiple vendors and systems is a challenging task**, not easy enough, and some times is depending on commercial policies and decisions. **Bringing various actors onto the same discussion table** to show mutual benefits through potential cooperation is the most effective way to foster the development of synergies.

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Conceptuation method: innovation acceleration for new business and service development by peer learning and idea creation in an uncertain world.

Inknowcom, The Netherlands

The early phase of innovation is a chaotic process especially for SME's. This Good practice provides a **method for structuring, accelerating and increasing the effectiveness of processes in the early phase of innovation in order to achieve successful innovations** in the market. This method can be applied for every domain, including issues related to ICT.

Objectives

Accelerate new business and service development by entrepreneurial peer learning and structuring the early phase of innovation.

Location

This method is **independent from location** and can be used by SME's in the EU. The method is **developed and prototyped in the NW-European region** (Niedersachsen, Germany and the Netherlands).

Detailed description of the practice

Context and origin – starting point and motive for action

Farms and small enterprises are in rural areas an important social, ecological and economical factor. Rural areas face **major challenges** caused by changes in the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU, emergence of new markets and an ageing population. This **requires new product and business development, repositioning in (inter)national networks, and new relationships** between provider and consumer. **Innovation is the critical success factor** for building the next generation competitive businesses which are either specializations or diversifications of existing (farming) businesses in rural and mountain areas.

InKnowCom has developed **two services for applying the conceptuation method**. One service is to **develop new services and/or products for organisation(s) by organising conceptuation workshops** with these organisation(s). Two or three workshops are usually needed for a typical new product development. The second service is to **train the conceptuation method for organisations who want to apply the conceptuation method**. A conceptuation training course consists of three theoretical seminars and three workshops

Timescale

InKnowCom started the development of the conceptuation method in close cooperation with the University of Groningen in 2007. The preparation of the good practice lasted five years.



The conceptualization method was developed in co-creation with participating organisations and companies. Several companies and organisations have already developed successfully new products or services with the conceptualization method. **A typical process takes about 1-2 months.** The conceptualization method is still being improved by learning from executed workshops and from (scientific) literature.

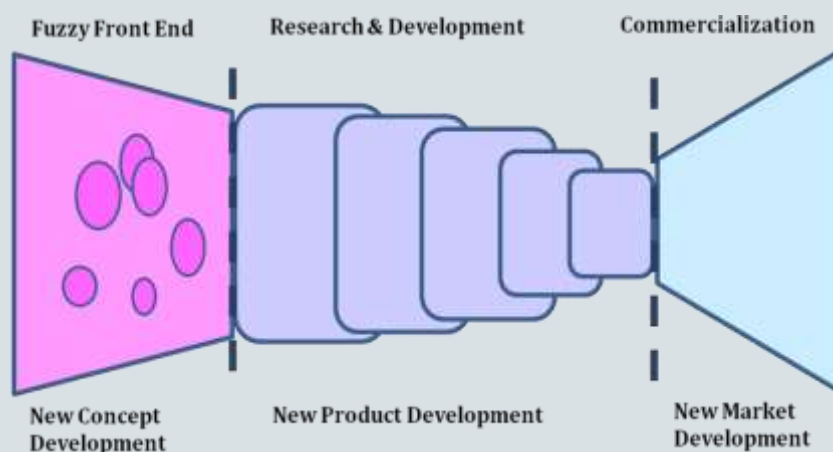
Bodies/organisations involved in implementation:

- **Small and medium sized enterprises** in industry and rural areas

Process and content of the practice, technology and infrastructure used

Innovation is something new with added value put into practice. The innovation funnel is an often used metaphor for the innovation process. Ideas are collected in a funnel, selected and subsequently developed into new products and services which are introduced on the market. The innovation funnel has three characteristic phases: concept development, product development and market development. **The early phase of innovation or the fuzzy front end determines for almost 80% the success of the results while only 20% of the resources are allocated to this phase.**

Relative little attention is given to this early phase of innovation in most public and commercial organizations because of its **unstructured and often chaotic process.** Market success can be increased and costs and resources can be saved by **paying more attention to the fuzzy front end of innovation.**



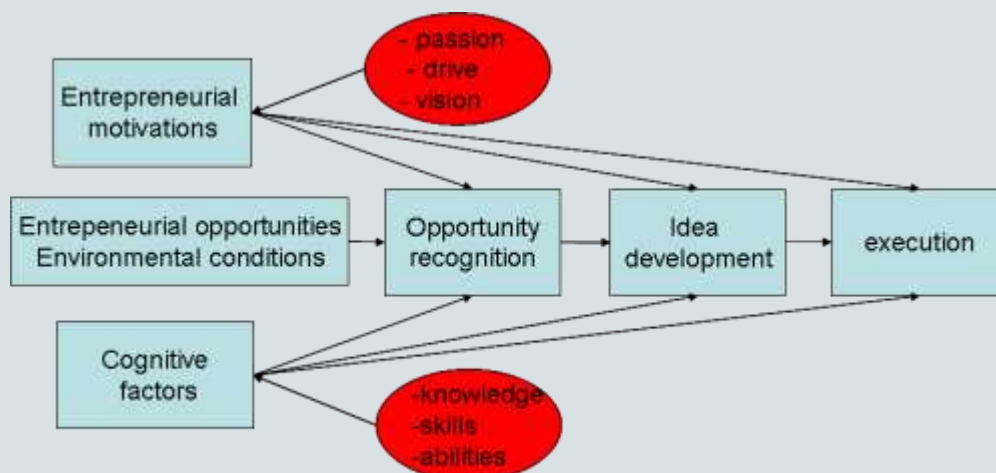
Innovation funnel with the three innovation phases

Usually, only few entrepreneurs, businesses or community groups feel the need to change while the remainder continues with business-as-usual despite the urgency to cope “external” developments. By definition **is entrepreneurship the process by which opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated and exploited.** The entrepreneurial process is the willingness and ability to act on opportunities (Shane et al, 2003). Human



motivations influence entrepreneurial decisions and hence the decision to adapt or to stay with business-as-usual. These definitions apply to entrepreneurial decisions made by entrepreneurs but also by community groups and by professional (civil) community servants. Especially the development of new services based upon community-business collaboration and community self-help is thought to be the inspiration for further entrepreneurial activities.

Knowledge and the proper skills and motivations for requiring knowledge are prerequisite for opportunity recognition, idea creation and subsequently innovation. Learning of entrepreneurs, community groups and communities is therefore an important aspect in the change and innovation process. **Only a few businesses or community groups feel the need to learn in order to acquire the right knowledge for facilitating the business or community transition and innovation.** By fostering reflection processes of persons and groups in communities, the learning motivation can be improved and hence the required knowledge level for facilitating the change and innovation process. Most entrepreneurs act upon their world of experience, skills and intuition, the know-how. This knowledge can be shared in trusted communities where participants learn from their peers through observation, imitation, and practice.



Adapted from: Shane et al 2003 Human resource Management Review 13: 257-279

Innovation process

Peer learning and innovation

Research of InKnowCom and the cluster New Business Development and Knowledge Management of the University Groningen has shown that **good performing small SME's (<3 people) in rural areas distinguish themselves from others by their learning strategies and their active participation in social networks.** Entrepreneurs from good performing SME's have the ability to learn from each other, from their peers, and to ask actively for help. They also have the motivation to learn and adapt to new situations based upon appreciation of their efforts by their peers and others in the rural community. This finding is the core of the "good practice" proposed for the DANTE project and links directly the early phases of innovation.



Conceptuation method

The “conceptuation method” is developed based upon the above mentioned theories, research and approaches. This method is developed and prototyped in practice with several companies, regional and national authorities and knowledge institutes. This results in a robust operational approach where new concepts can be created in an entrepreneurial setting. The conceptuation method consists of **three major steps opportunity, idea and concept**. Within these steps we apply **divergent and convergent thinking patterns** as in the Creative problem Solving method developed by Osborn and Parnes.

The conceptuation method has the following activities:

- 1) **Opportunity identification and analysis**
- 2) **Idea creation and selection**
- 3) **Concept creation and description (scoping)**

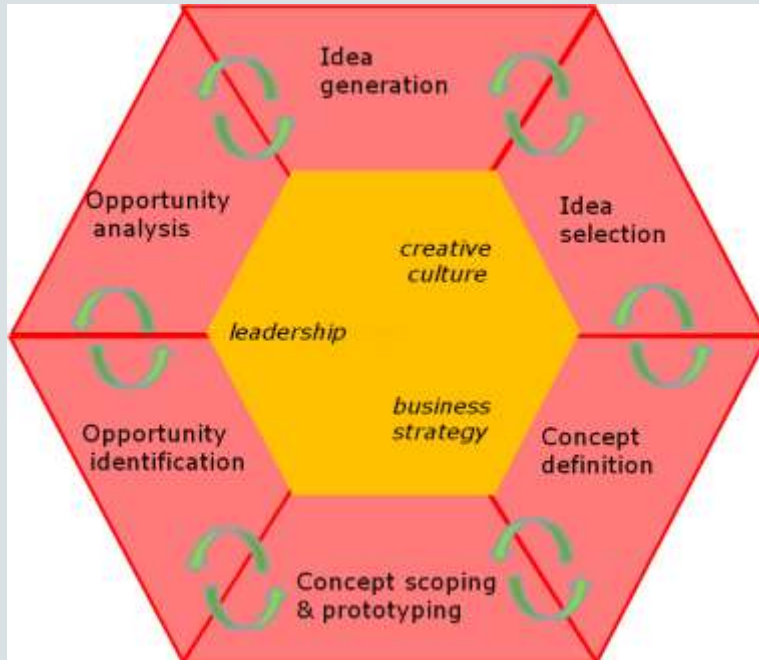
Each activity has its own **specific tools**. The tools for the opportunity identification and analysis are sensing the voices of customers, peers, future, product, competitor, technology, society and voice of staff. The tools for idea creation and selection are creative techniques. The tools for concept creation and selection are the standard financial techniques combined with PESTEL (Political, Economical, Societal, Technological, Ecological and Legal evaluation of business case) and portfolio management tools.

The **conceptuation starts with a lead or a question** (from the market) and **ends with a portfolio of different detailed concepts** for further business development by entrepreneurs.

The **analysis phase** consists of **identifying and analyzing possible opportunities** by analyzing existing products (voice of product), existing customers (voice of customer), emerging technologies (voice of technology) or from possible future developments (voice of future). **The result of the analysis phase is the inspiration**, the starting points for the idea phase.



The DANTE partners testing the conceptuation method during a meeting in Germany



Conceptuation method for the Fuzzy Front End

Changes required to implement the practice and changes planned to improve it

The **conceptuation method needs to be improved and simplified**, especially for the analysis phase and concept creation phase. The analysis phase can be improved by **adopting modifications of the sequential outlook questionnaire** in order to obtain a footprint of the organizations involved. The concept creation phase can be improved by **developing ICT tools for portfolio analysis** geared to the tourism sector. The analysis phase and conceptuation phase can also be improved by **intensifying the interaction with participants** in these phases. Participants from organisations have information without knowing they have this information. This information is important for new product or service development. Specific elicitation procedures with users/participants will be developed for these needs.

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New product and service development for stimulating rural tourism on farms

Bauernhofferien, Germany

Rural touristic services must be continuously innovated for preserving touristic attention and for increasing touristic visits to rural areas. The Rural Leisure Association has therefore developed a **procedure for bottom-up innovation by intensive exchange among all members for new products and services**. This good practice helps the members of the Association to **create new touristic services and products together or individually**. The new developed products and services are **supported by the ICT infra-structure** and by the staff of the Association.

Objectives

Development of new leisure and holiday services for farm holidays in the rural area with ICT. New insights and results are constantly conformed in accordance with the needs of members and guests. All members should recognize the importance of orientation towards target groups. (...the current type of guest is not similar to the one 40 years ago!)

Location

Bauernhofferien (Federal Society for holiday and rural tourism of Lower Saxony, in short: Rural Leisure Association) has its members in the federal state Lower Saxony in Germany. Members can be found throughout the whole country, in the regions North Sea, Emsland, Oldenburger Münsterland, Osnabrücker Land, Altes Land to the Lüneburger Heath, the Harz mountains, Weserbergland, Elbtalauen Wendland, Region of Hannover, Mittelweser. Bauernhofferien covers several touristic landscapes which attracts **different kind of tourists ranging from mountainous area (Harz) to coastal plains and beaches** (North Sea coast and islands).

Lower Saxony consists of an area of 47.613 km² and counts about 8 mio. inhabitants. In the north, you can find the North Sea, in the west, it borders on the Netherlands, in the south on North Rhine Westphalia and Hessen, in the East the Elbe is the border river towards Saxony-Anhalt, in the Northeast towards Hamburg and Schleswig- Holstein. The capital of the federal state is Hannover. **Tourism is an important economic sector** in Lower Saxony: it employs about three-hundred and forty-thousand people and it has a turnover of EURO 15 billion.

Detailed description of the practice

Context and origin

Rural touristic services must be continuously innovated for preserving touristic attention and for increasing touristic visits to rural areas. **Improvement and diversification** of touristic services is a continuous process, especially for matching the increasing competition in holiday



and leisure destinations. **Bauernhofferien** has experience with the **bottom-up approach for successful continuous incremental and disruptive innovation of touristic services**. Touristic entrepreneurs develop new touristic services by themselves and share these within trusted working groups of Bauernhofferien. The new service is adopted as a **new holiday concept** for and by the Association when there are expressions of interest by other members of Bauernhofferien, and marketed through different channels like internet, brochures, special fairs and press-activities.

Karin Müller, Founder of Bauernhofferien

Wir sind die Ersten die sich zusammengeschlossen haben, von unten, von den Bauern aus,

We were the first who organized themselves, bottom-up, starting with the farmers

Increasing rural tourism can counteract decreasing activities and income from primary agricultural sources in rural areas. Tourists bring life and purchasing power into the rural area., The younger generation in rural areas gets future perspectives and new economic possibilities. Therefore small villages can be preserved, regional consciousness gets stronger, traditions can be lived and given to next generations. The migration to cities is counteracted.



Concept Bed and Box (www.bettundbox.de): consumer driven concept to accommodate the increasing demand of guests for riding holidays with horses and to use empty buildings of members.

The first catalogue for holidays with horses was presented in 1998, summed up with the words "Bed and Box". This theme was further developed in many workshops and interested members had the opportunity to obtain training sessions for implementation of this concept on their farm. In the beginning only 10 members joined the training sessions. Now, about 100 enterprises are involved in this market segment. There are additional box stalls for guest horses, paddocks were installed. Networking with blacksmiths, riding trail stations and riding guides were initiated.

This ensured the existence of more than 100 firms, and about 300 new workplaces were created. Bed and Box inspired new products and services, e.g. short term holiday with horses, tracks from one riding farm to the next riding farm were made usable for riding. The attention of the public and possible touristic customers was gained by many reports in the press, in broadcasting and television .

ICT services are an important tool and marketing-channel for members of the Association as well as for (potential) visitors-tourists. ICT is of strategic importance for the Association and therefore the **Association is prepared to invest time and resources into development of new ICT tools and applications.**

- The essence of the continuous development of new rural touristic business concepts is:
- **Bottom-up approach:** trust based innovation begins and ends with the rural entrepreneur (family farm)
 - **Peer-learning:** facilitate peer learning processes between entrepreneurs
 - **Continuous Co-creation:** facilitate open innovation processes by creating together (triple-helix) new business concepts for rural entrepreneurship



- **Open source:** developed (ICT) infrastructure is for facilitating business development and free for sharing

Bauernhofferien works nationwide, in cooperation with all relevant political interest groups at all levels. The intensive cooperation with media, press, broadcasting and TV help in strengthening the projects developed by Bauernhofferien. As a result, Bauernhofferien is very successful in its approach. The members of the Association provide together **about 820,000 nights stay in the rural area** which generates direct economic effects with an annual turnover 42 mio€ and indirect economic effects with an annual turnover 25 mio€. Bauernhofferien contributes therewith considerably to the liveliness and liveability of the rural area.

Timescale

Bauernhofferien was founded on 13th of November 1972. Since that, Bauernhofferien has several times **adapted itself to new and changing circumstances by developing new touristic service concepts.** The purpose of Bauernhofferien is to provide to its members the possibility of developing projects together, invent offers to target groups and be present on the market all together. From the beginning, the main aspect has always been the exchange as well as the networking between members. Through this exchange of insight and experiences in rural tourism an enormous knowledge could grow up which is the basis of the continuous innovation practice.

The first internet-portal of Bauernhofferien was open at the end of the 90's and is since then constantly developed in cooperation with the members. The members instigate on evaluating new technical possibilities when these become available and when these have proven to be effective, the members instigates on using them. At this moment Bauernhofferien is **experimenting with online booking systems, self-employed data care and independent, up-to-date presentation. Developing and using open source software is the next step** in this process.

Bauernhofferien **cooperates within alliances**, such as www.landsichten.de since 2007 for improving ICT tools and increasing ICT knowledge within the community. Landsichten is a federal state initiative which unites the individual states. It was started for the following reasons:

- High pressure of innovation in online marketing
- High need for investment in professional databases and internet solutions (independent of the number of hosts)
- Heterogeneous structure of hosts and commitment to members
- Marketing of tourism in rural areas has to be referred to a topic; destination is of second-importance

The Landsichten.de approach is successful. Bauernhofferien intends to bring this initiative to



the next level of innovation by developing license-free open source ICT tools and by developing new touristic service concepts and its related marketing tools including social media.

Bodies/organisations involved in implementation

Bauernhofferien has always **closely cooperated together with many stakeholders on regional, national and federal level**. The cooperation is with the Ministry of economical affairs of Lower Saxony, Ministry of food production and consumer protection, The German farmers association, German agricultural chamber and many others. Bauernhofferien has always a **large network of interested stakeholders organized around the concepts**.

Process and content of the practice, technology and infrastructure used

The Rural leisure association Niedersachsen. (www.bauernhofferien.de) has developed a **new touristic open information and service portal for marketing, information and internal/external services for members and customers**. This portal facilitates peer support for members for service application and development.

This is a three step method which is a **combination of social and soft technologies in an open structured ICT environment**:

- 1) ICT: Individualized sharing (market) information through telephone and internet
- 2) Social: Organising regular meetings for updating market and trend information
- 3) Social: Organising workshops for concept development for new services and products.

This portal is under development: <http://www.landsichten.de/niedersachsen/>.

IT components:

- 1) Information is shared by email services,
- 2) Information and booking services for the rural leisure association are through internet services.
- 3) GIS component (interactive map options)

Innovative aspect of the Good Practice:

The innovative aspect is the combination of social and ICT technologies. The workshops are **creativity enhancing workshops for innovation of products and services** where individual members of the association (entrepreneurs) cooperate together with the staff members of the association in order to create new concepts for sustainable business development. The concepts are extended in

Concept HayHotel www.heuhotelferien.de: sleeping in the hay.

This concept is about spontaneous and cheap sleeping, also for one night and big groups. This concept is specially developed for hikers, bikers, and school classes who want to wander from one region to the other, from one farm to the other farm.

About 50 farms have adopted the HayHotel concept.





interaction with staff members and association members and result in an economical evaluation of the concept.

Changes required to implement the practice and changes planned to improve it
Rural entrepreneurs can be present in the new Portal Landsichten Lower Saxony. All touristic regions are listed in special articles/ pictures, which was made in cooperation and with support of the prevailing touristic areas throughout Lower Saxony. This **process is going to be constantly developed further on**. In future, interactive maps will be installed to show more rural holiday and leisure offers. According to the wishes of the user, offers will be put together with just one click.

Concept Cooking Festival, Kochfest: bi-annual one day event on a member farm where 30 farmer member families give life-cooking demonstration and locally produced products for about 10,000 visitors.



This event is organized in cooperation with the national radio station (NDR, North German Broadcasting company). Many national and regional rural societies and associations present themselves on this event. This event is reported in many national and regional newspapers and magazines. The biggest attraction is the life-cooking minister of agriculture of Lower Saxony. The cooking festival results in many new touristic customers for the holiday farms.

The members are **trained regularly** to gain the use of new technical possibilities. The members that need technical or personal help are also supported by the office in Verden. For members that do not have the technical possibilities because of their rural environmental situation, **Bauernhofferien can take the responsibility for the administration as well as for the presentation of their internet homepage**. This offer also is available for members that need personal support.

Financial framework

The finance plan of the project – total sum: 161.936,00 EURO

- Staff 55.300,00 EUR
- Administration 6.636,00 EURO
- Travel and accomodation 17.000,00 EURO
- External expertises and services 83.000,00 EURO

Single parts split up: Management & coordination 41.200,00 / Communication & dissemination 26.200,00 / exchange, good practice 73.336,00/ Light Pilot 21.200,00

Bauernhofferien is about **50 % financed by fees of members and 50 % by public funds**.

Beneficiaries

Members of Bauernhofferien, e.g. owners of holiday guest houses, holiday cottages and flats in rural areas of Lower Saxony



Transferability

The practice is **transferable in other European regions because of its bottom up base**. The interactive cooperation in the region itself and between the regions let this process grow stronger. Especially positive influence can be gained by respectful behaviour among all members. **The esteem of every single person and every region is an important precondition for successful transfer**. The projects gain a lot of the cooperation between elder and younger, small- sized and taller members, traditional and modern aged, experienced and new members and all other groups - in a very special way. The total range of the rural population is part of this project.

Synergy and integration

Every rural tourist brings life and money into the region. This strengthens **self-respect of the residents**, the **economy of the rural areas** and keeps up or lead to the construction of **infrastructure**. Also, the daily offers for guests are more and more used by regional inhabitants, the esteem of their own region increases enormously. All together this has **positive effect on life quality for the whole rural population**.

Bauernhofferien served as an **example for many new initiatives** in Lower Saxony. Practices from Bauernhofferien are adopted by the regional authorities in order to facilitate the improvement of touristic services and to attract more people into the rural area

Impact of the practice

The Good Practice of Bauernhofferien has resulted in a **successful ICT strategy and successful rural touristic service concepts**. Each concept is accompanied with an ICT strategy and facilities for dissemination, marketing and booking.

Lessons learnt from the practice

- Gain success by **cooperation and networking**. Cooperation strengthens and increases range of offer.
- Always **follow up a good idea** provided by anyone and **polish it** until its shines
- **Avoid conflicts** with different interest groups and stakeholders, reverse a disadvantage into an opportunity and share this with all

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Tourisma'TIC—Suivez le guide (Tourism'ICT—Follow the guide)

Cybermassif, France

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Very Small Businesses (VSB) were still **late as regards the use of the ICT**, in France and especially in our rural region. **Tourisma'TIC offers new solutions** in order to solve this problem.

Objectives

The practice aims at **helping companies to take greater advantage of ICTs in their activities, while improving the management** of their business, **increasing the visibility** of their structure with the development of their communication tools (internet, e mailing, social networks) and offering new services to their clients (WIFI,...).

Location

This Good Practice was implemented in the region of the **Massif Central** and first in the department of Allier and Lozère.

Massif Central : - 85,000 km²
- 3,8 millions of inhabitants



Detailed description of the practice

Context and origin

840 000 SMEs and VSBs were still left entirely outside of the digital economy and only 15% of it fully benefitted from the potential that offer ICTs. According to the Arthalys survey of June 2005 (link : http://www.polen-mende.com/dl/dossier_veille/12-rencontres_tourisme_internet/04-e-tourisme_massif_central.pdf), 22% of the Allier **hotelkeeper questioned have a website** (44% in the Cantal, 39% in the Aveyron, 34% in the Puy de Dôme and in Lozère). It was found that those professionals **needed to get some help in order to develop their business**. Here is the role of Cybermassif.

Moreover, the use of ICTs is increasing really fast among the general public in the tourism industry.

Timescale

The programme Tourisma'TIC started in June 2006 and came to an end in June 2008. It was a two-year project.



Organisations

11 partners were involved in the project.

- **Cybermassif network**, leader of the project. Cybermassif is a network, composed of 17 resource centers. Its role is to help the different tourism providers involved in the Tourisma'TIC programme. Being present in several places in the region is important to drive efficient policies and projects.
- Project partners 2 to 11 (public and private partners): Tourism ministry, UCCIMAC, 3 CCI (Chambers of Industry and Commerce), UDOTSI Allier, Logis de France, Gîtes de France, UMIH, AGORATECH – CEFAC

Tourism professionals receive the help of Cybermassif to develop their activity thanks to training sessions and the financial resources provided by the programme.

Process, content, technology and facilities

The project had two main parts.

Part 1 – Inform and increase awareness:

Organisation of specific **information meetings about E-tourism**



Meeting in Mende, Lozère, March 2009

- 6 meetings in Allier in 2006 and 2007 within the 3 ICT Resource centers
- 23 presentation meetings in the rural *cantons* of Allier
- 5 meetings in Lozère (2006)
 - Creation and animation of E-tourism resources cluster in The Atelier in Vichy (document resources, softwares, materials...)
 - Setting up of a mailing list (emails+fax)
 - Creation of a Practical Guide for tourism professionals
 - Setting up of a media plan and communication tools
 - Organisation of an E-tourism show and award ceremonies in 2008



Part 2 – Support during the implementation:

- Free individual **pre-diagnosis** to evaluate the current situation of the company: their equipments, their expectations, their current knowledge about ICTs – 30 assisted company projects
- Setting up of call for proposals **awarding the most innovative** companies' projects
- Setting up of an ICT use “**watchdog**” (observatory)
- Individual and /or collective **trainings** : modules to constitute according to the needs collected during the first year; ICT training, specific subject training according to the needs of the participants.

► Objectives:

- Support the **development of e-tourism** in each department
- **Pool the product and tools** thanks to pilot actions in Allier and Lozère, labelled by the Ministry of Tourism

Role of the final users in the design and adaptation of the practice

The different companies involved in this programme participated in its different actions. **Tourism companies were the final users** of the practice. There were collective actions like: meetings, fairs but also individual actions that could be described as training sessions that permitted to know more about the expectations. Satisfaction surveys were also used to find out what were the recommendations of these professionals.

Advertising for a Tourisma'ICT meeting



Changes

Example of infrastructure: Allier Wireless programme and Lozère Wireless.

The Allier Wireless programme is a local network of high speed hotspots in which all Allier tourism professional can have an access with a wireless access point in order to have a high speed connection for its clients.

Financial framework

Global budget : 330,000 euros

Budget for 2 years and two departments and coming from public funds from the following sources:

- 97,500 euros : Convention Inter Massif Central - 35%



- 50,000 euros : DATAR Call for projects - 18%
- 48,000 euros : Tourism ministry - 17%
- 39,650 euros : The ICT's workshop – 14%
- 21,164 euros : Polen – 8%
- 10,000 euros : Moulins Communauté – 4%
- 10,000 euros : Montluçon Communauté – 4%
- 4,900 euros : Certic – 2%
- The region, via the CRT (Regional Tourism Committee), assumed all or part of the awareness campaign in Auvergne.
- Departments and local authorities financed the guidance of the project on the territory.

Beneficiaries

The target of this project are the **tourism/hotel/restaurant professionals**. Tourism professionals can also be understood there as leisure parks, leisure activities (bike rental, karting, quad biking, canoeing,...).

Transferability

The practice is **absolutely transferable** as it does not involve any national particularity. The only condition would be **to apply it in a rural or mountainous territory** where **tourism is not fully developed** and where the tourism **professionals are looking for more visibility**. The only condition is **to have sufficient funds** to implement the good practice.

Synergy and integration

In Lozère, e-tourism is one of the local policies priority. Indeed, local policies benefit from the expertise of Cybermassif as a tool that gathers and shares knowledge and experience. Moreover, associations use the knowledge that Cybermassif developed in this project. No links between tourism and other economic sectors were developed, the only link that we can underline is the one created between ICT providers and tourism professionals. **Tourisma'TIC enabled to develop the presence of ICT in remote areas.**

Impact

As the programme was a success, it was decided to **replicate it in the other territories of the Massif Central**: in Haute-Loire, Corrèze, Ardèche and Bourgogne. The practice supported the local economy as more than 500 companies became aware of the importance of ICTs, secure Wi-Fi solutions were put in place, and a watchdog of e-tourism was created. It supported the local economy as it allowed **keeping hotels running and maintaining jobs**, as we know the growing importance of ICT to develop marketing, sales and promotions. Without a website or without knowing anything about ICTs, an enterprise cannot survive. It needs visibility and Internet is the key point. Hotels and other tourism professionals involved in the programme **improved their performances** thanks to Tourisma'TIC.



Moreover, this programme gave some **work to the ICT providers** of the region.

Some statistics on visitors of the Tourisma'ICT website are presented in the following table:

Tourismatic.fr	Visitors	Pages visited
2006	321	1375
2007	13308	29231
Total	13629	30606

It is interesting to know that more than 11% of the Internet users spent more than 15 minutes on the website and that 17% of them spent more than 10 minutes on it. It showed that they were looking for that kind of information and were interested in it.

Lessons learnt

- At the beginning of the programme, it was hard to **get the tourism professionals involved**, but after several efforts of the Cybermassif network, they finally realized that this project will be a huge opportunity for the future development of their structures. And still nowadays, they ask the Cybermassif network for all their request regarding ICT issues.
- This programme helped the tourism professionals a lot as they are ahead of other industries concerning ICT appropriation. **Tourism professionals are e-marketers and it helped them to be more dynamic.**

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Next step for DANTE

A reflection based on an academic approach

A **research carried out by the University of Ljubljana** on the factors of innovativeness in mountain areas provides hints on how to go further in the analysis of the practices implemented in rural and mountain areas.

One of the highlighted factors is **pro-activeness**, mainly related to **strategy and the use of technology**. The results can be extrapolated to rural areas which make us conclude that tourism stakeholders must be aware of the **potential of ICTs** and **include them in their development strategy** to develop their activities. The prerequisite is that **tourism stakeholders or rural areas must be well informed**, in order that they can develop new ICT initiatives linked to their tourism activities.

The research and its results, presented in the following pages, suggest that it is possible to **assess the practices from the point of view of the factors of innovativeness**. Such approach will be further studied and developed by the DANTE project in the next steps of the project.



A research to determine factors of mountain destination innovativeness

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Tourism suppliers face increasingly fierce global competition in an era of constant change and globalization. **To keep pace with other destinations, to remain competitive, and to develop properly, tourism professionals must be innovative.**

Tourism literature is progressively starting to focus on destinations as units of analysis. This is due to the fact that **a destination is perceived as an entity in the eyes of growing numbers of tourists** who are increasingly starting to demand an integral destination experience. This is why **tourism providers at a destination should acknowledge that their core competition lies within tourism providers from other destinations, not their own.** They should cooperate and share their knowledge to increase destination innovativeness. In this way, a destination will be able to serve the greater interest of all its stakeholders and improve its competitiveness and development.

Slovenia: Tourism destinations are perceived as an entity by visitors



Despite the fact that much research has been done in the last decade regarding destinations and their competitiveness and development, literature on mountain destinations is still lacking to create and test a model that takes into account mountain destination innovativeness. This research **fills this gap in literature by identifying important elements and factors of mountain destination innovativeness.**

Methodological elements

First, a **literature review** was performed in order to identify the theory-based elements and factors of mountain destination innovativeness. Mountain tourism research, destination innovativeness research, and destination competitiveness models have been taken into account. All stakeholders and aspects of destinations have been considered. This provides strong foundations for the identification of elements and consequential factors of innovativeness that contribute to destination competitiveness and development.



Secondly, a **web-based survey** was conducted on an **international sample** of researchers, lecturers and consultants from the field of tourism and all stakeholders in mountain destinations, such as destination managers, local tourism organizations, ski area operators, event management companies, local governments, hotel management companies, non-governmental organizations, tourism agencies, attraction management companies, international organizations, transport companies, chambers of commerce, convention centre management companies, catering companies and other organizations. The survey was conducted **to identify important elements and factors of mountain destination innovativeness**. They were determined with exploratory factor analysis, and can contribute to a better understanding of the underlying dimensions of mountain destination innovativeness.

The results: factors of innovativeness in mountain destinations

The results show that **innovativeness in mountain destination build on socio-cultural sustainability and stakeholder participation, environmental sustainability** (natural environment) **and proactiveness**.

Socio-cultural sustainability and stakeholder participation

Innovativeness in socio-cultural sustainability is crucial: the support from local population is needed, and this population must have the capacity to change. The participation of all stakeholders in tourism planning is also required. The collaboration of local population in decision-making processes is crucial as well. Therefore, the **interests of the local community should be taken into account and an organizational structure that supports involvement of all stakeholders should be developed**. Destinations have to respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities (conservation of cultural heritage and traditional values) and start offering local products in combination with experiencing local craftsmanship. One should also **not neglect the availability of knowledge resources and education**, which has been identified as an important element of socio-cultural sustainability and stakeholder participation.

Environmental sustainability (natural environment)

Another factor of innovativeness that was identified in the research is the environmental sustainability. Innovativeness in this regard incorporates the **optimal use of environmental resources**, introducing **environmental policies** that promote sustainable development and **energy policies** that support usage of alternative sources of energy. **Transportation policies** that favour alternative transportation modes, including public transportation have also been identified as important. Implementing new practices in environmental management, maintaining ecological processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity while adapting to and exploiting opportunities created by changing climate conditions have also been identified as elements of the factor environmental sustainability.

Proactiveness



The last factor within the construct of innovativeness in mountain destination is proactiveness, which is mainly related to **innovativeness in strategy and technology**. The formation of an **innovation strategy for the destination** and the creation of a **distinctive image and innovative vision of the destination**, while having **tourism products and logistics adapted to changing demand** (last minute reservations, increased price sensitivity, new reservations systems, etc.) are important elements of proactiveness that influence mountain destination innovativeness and development. The respondents also believe that **ease of access to information** through a highly developed communication system, having dynamic content on web portals and providing rich user experience are important elements of proactiveness for increasing mountain destination innovativeness and development.

Overall, a greater focus on socio-cultural and environmental sustainability elements

A shift towards sustainable development has occurred in the recent years, and the respondents to the survey have indicated the **need for the inclusion of socio-cultural and environmental sustainability elements**. In the framework of DANTE, this implies that the project partners will have to keep those elements in mind when preparing local implementation plans.

How can the results be used in DANTE

Generalisation of the model to rural areas

The results of the research have practical implications, as they provide knowledge for destination managers and other stakeholders in mountain destinations. Many mountain destinations are having problems developing tourism properly and adapting it to changing conditions. Attracting and retaining tourists has also proven troublesome for some. **The identified elements and factors can facilitate the improvement of a destination's overall condition, as well as the performance of some specific sectors** within the destination.

The **model has potential for generalizability** and, with some changes to the model, it could also be used to evaluate innovativeness in some other types of destinations, especially in rural destinations. However, additional research is required to analyse each new type of destination, in order to determine the elements specific for chosen kind of destinations.

Evaluating the state of innovativeness of activities

Mountain and rural destinations involved in the DANTE project can use **the identified important factors and the corresponding elements to evaluate the state of their innovative activities**. They can grade the performance of factors and elements of mountain destination innovativeness in combination with their importance. The partners can **evaluate the performance of their destinations in comparison to an average competitor** on a Likert scale (1 = Much worse, 2 = Worse, 3 = Somewhat worse, 4 = About the same, 5 = Somewhat better, 6 = Better, 7 = Much better). This provides the means for identifying and possibly improving the problematic areas at destinations. **The destinations can reinvent themselves by improving**



attractiveness, IT, management and marketing. Evaluation and the improvement of important factors and elements of innovativeness can **enable decision makers at destinations to prioritize, modify and adopt actions to provide pleasurable vacation experience** to tourists and hence, advance destination development.

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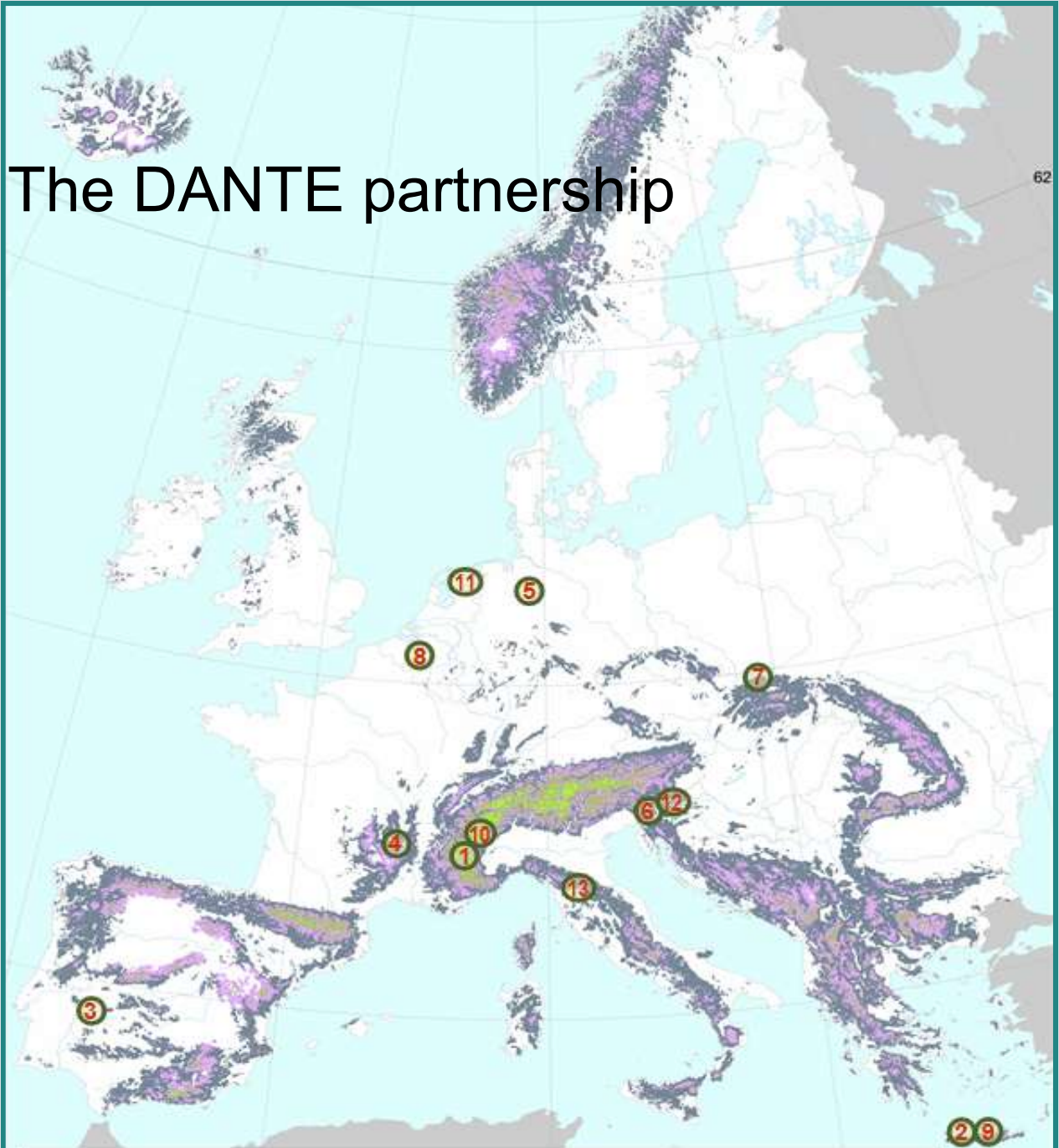


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The DANTE partnership



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|--|------------------------------------|
| 1/ <u>Provincia di Torino</u> , Italy | 8/ <u>Euromontana</u> , Belgium |
| 2/ <u>University of Crete</u> , Greece | 10/ <u>CSI Piemonte</u> , Italy |
| 3/ <u>Fundecyt</u> , Spain | 11/ <u>Inknowcom</u> , Netherlands |
| 4/ <u>Cybermassif</u> , France | 13/ <u>Metropoli</u> , Italy |
| 5/ <u>Bauernhofferien</u> , Germany | |
| 6/ <u>University of Ljubljana</u> , Slovenia | |
| 7/ <u>Regional Development Agency Bielsko-Biala</u> , Poland | |
| 9/ <u>Decentralised administration of Crete</u> , Greece | |
| 12/ <u>Development center Litija</u> , Slovenia | |

Map desigend by:





The DANTE project

Digital Agenda for New Tourism Approach in European Rural and Mountain Areas

Tourism already plays a great role and is the main economic sector in some rural and mountain areas. Its place can be further enhanced in all rural and mountain regions **if supported by access to information and communication technologies (ICT)**, the driver of the knowledge economy.

Currently, adoption of ICT applications in SMEs and in mountain and rural territories remains relatively low. **DANTE** aims to **promote a new regional policy approach to design a knowledge-based plan for the tourism sector**.

DANTE will

Improve the effectiveness of regional policies in the area of innovation,

Enhance the role of ICT in tourism industry in rural and mountain areas,

Promote a knowledge sharing process through an Interregional European cooperation framework.

To reach its objectives, the project optimises innovative good practices that demonstrate the benefits of Information Society for competitiveness of the tourism sector in disadvantaged areas.



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