



# **Destination SMEs project Fondation Grand Paradis**

**Action plan  
04/2019 – 03/2021**

## Action plan

During Phase 1 of Destination SMEs project (April 2016 – March 2019), all partners identified interesting practices and initiatives which could be inspiring enough to lead to an improvement of public policy, or to the duplication of this experience in their territory.

Following these three years, a two years long second phase of the project is starting, when project partners will improve their policies and use the outcomes of the project. This document is the road map of this second phase.

## Table of contents

<b>1. General information</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Improvement of the target policy</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.1. Action 1</b>	<b>6</b>
A. Relevance to the project	6
Description of the problem to be faced	6
The source and essence of the project	7
B. Nature of the action	10
Definition of a marketing strategy and a technical coordination for its implementation	11
Creation of a territorial network and improvement of the offer	12
Implementation of the Communication Plan and promo marketing	13
Creation of a territorial network and improvement of the offer	14
Governance	16
C. Stakeholders involved	17
D. Timeframe	18

E. Indicative costs	19
F. Indicative funding sources	19
<b>3. Other results of the Project</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1. Good practices transferred	20

# 1.

## General information

**Partner organisation:** Fondation Grand Paradis

**Other partner organisations involved** (if relevant): /

**Country:** Italy (ITALIA)

**NUTS2 region:** Valle d'Aosta / Vallée d'Aoste

**Contact person:** Luisa Vuillermoz

[luisa.vuillermoz@grand-paradis.it](mailto:luisa.vuillermoz@grand-paradis.it)  
+39 0165 75301

# 2.

## Improvement of the target policy

### Target policy:

Investment program for the growth and the occupation 2014/20, Priority axis 3, Investment priority 3.b), Action 3.3.2

### Nature of the target policy:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

### Name of the managing authority of the target policy:

Aosta Valley Autonomous Region

### Further details on the policy context and the way the action plan should contribute to improve the policy instrument:

The present action plan contributes to the improvement of the policy instrument identified for what concerns the networking objective of both the policy and the action plan and the complementarity between local resources.

Indeed, the project identifies among its general objectives also the "Networking: governance, the key to the success of the strategy", which is one of the goal of the Regional strategic framework of the Regional Development Policy 2014/20 of the Aosta Valley.

It also aims at overcoming a sectorial and fragmented vision, by strengthening the complementarity between territorial resources (cultural, natural, infrastructures, services, etc.) and the business system in order to build a unique tourism product that responds to the needs of the targets.

## 2.1. Action 1

### A. RELEVANCE TO THE PROJECT

#### ***Gran Paradiso: give value to nature***

The project "Gran Paradiso: give value to nature" aims at reinforcing the attractiveness of the internal area of the Gran Paradiso by creating a unique tourist destination that will collect all the municipalities of the "Espace Grand Paradis".

In the framework of the regional cohesion policy 2014-2020, Italy paid attention to the "Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne - SNAI" (National strategy for inner Areas) as a development tool for the country and this strategy is the engine of the project "Gran Paradiso: give value to nature".

The preparation of a marketing strategy for the area will allow, on the one hand, to define the methods of integration of the many projects already implemented and currently in progress and to interconnect the results, on the other hand to identify the necessary actions for the sustainable development of the tourism system.

At the same time, an animation activity of the territory, of sensitization and involvement of local actors will lead to the creation of a network among operators, citizens and institutions that will elaborate tourist proposals able to satisfy the demand.

### **Description of the problem to be faced**

The project area includes the municipalities which are part of the Unité des communes valdôtaines Grand-Paradis. They are: Cogne, Rhêmes-Notre-Dame, Rhêmes-Saint-Georges, Saint-Nicolas, Valgrisenche and Valsavarenche.

Over 50% of the project area is an environmental reserve and includes the Aosta Valley side of the Gran Paradiso National Park. More generally, the whole territory is characterized by an important biodiversity. The morphological feature of the area, characterized by lateral valleys that flow into the central plain, contributes to its isolation and makes the connections between valleys particularly difficult since the valleys have no outlets in the headlands (except from a hiker / mountaineering point of view) and it is not possible to go from one valley to the other if not through the valley floor.

Agriculture (mainly based on the milk supply chain) plays an important role, however the lack of generational turnover, of diversification of activities and of synergy with the tourist sector does not allow this sector to be profitable and to continue to play an important role in the local economy.

The craftsmanship is not sufficiently valued (albeit the woolen fabrics of Valgrisenche, the bobbin lace of Cogne and the long-standing woodwork in Saint-Nicolas).

The presence of the Gran Paradiso National Park has not yet been sufficient to relaunch the tourist sector which, despite being the main guarantee for the permanence of the population, suffers from a marked seasonality and a strong territorial diversification, with some municipalities more dynamic than others which still have to exploit their potential.

In the past years the Gran Paradiso National Park carried out a survey aiming at exploring the tourist flows of visitors in the Park on the basis of methodologies based on telephone data (Big Data methodologies). From this analysis the marked seasonality of the tourist presences (especially for the Italians), the origin of the tourist flows (neighboring countries, France in the first place, and, for Italy, the North-West regions), the visit length (a day for Italian customers while several days and repeated visits for foreigners) emerged.

## The source and essence of the project

In the Gran Paradiso area there are many factors that can contribute to the local development; however, what often prevented the success of the area was the lack of collaboration between actors and municipalities. Traditionally, the valleys of the Gran Paradiso are not easily connected, indeed, even from the tourist point of view, each of them tried to emphasize their own identity. The drive to "connect" comes today from an external factor: the tourists' request to use the natural and cultural offer of the internal area in an integrated way, discovering sometimes within a few days both the natural beauties and the rich cultural activities in the different valleys. Operating on the connections will allow to maintain the diversification of the offer while creating an integrated system able to be competitive on the market.

Numerous attempts to reverse the current trend of depopulation and economic decline have been carried out in the Espace Grand Paradis and, more generally, in the whole Aosta Valley Region. The SMEs involved in the cooperation strategy of the Karelian project have found a unique way to combine local culture, food and nature in their products. The tours are nature-friendly and sustainable. The cooperation is based on trust, same values and vision. These values are the essence of the project "Gran Paradiso: give value to nature" as well.

The activities carried out by the "GAL alta Valle d'Aosta" during the previous programming of European funds have allowed the start of a collaboration: this is demonstrated, among other things, by the creation

of "Tascapan", one of the subjects with which to create a network of local actors, together with others such as the Les Tisserands Cooperative of Valgrisenche, the Dentellières of Cogne, the Cave de l'Enfer, Les Amis du Bois, the consortium of Cogne tour operators, all the accommodation facilities represented by ADAVA, nature guides and alpine guides, ski instructors. Most of these subjects have already collaborated, for example in the Leader Programme, for the creation of tourist offers dedicated to the discovery of the rural territory. Fondation Grand Paradis is also of particular importance as an institution that can contribute to the integrated enhancement of tourism with natural and cultural aspects thanks to the events and initiatives it organizes and which also involve economic operators.

In particular, Giroparchi is a tourist integrated product in the park territories of the Aosta Valley (Gran Paradiso National Park and Mt. Avic Natural Park): it is a trekking in the heart of the Gran Paradiso National Park, dedicated to young people from the Region and focused on the knowledge of protected areas and the learning of English.

Together, all these initiatives have certainly contributed to the strengthening of the area vocation, perhaps the first regional destination for nature tourism, but have failed to integrate the various offer factors and to present in an "appealing" way the potential of the internal area, also deriving from the great variety of landscapes, the cultural richness and the natural diversity of the different valleys.

Some important cross-border cooperation projects have also been launched in the Espace Grand Paradis, which will be perfectly integrated with the development of this action; all the projects are in fact consistent in the purposes and themes. Each project enhances a particular tourist offer linked to nature and culture; the development of these individual aspects can only enrich the overall offer of the Gran Paradiso area. Also, in the implementation methodology of these projects there is coherence: all of them intend to encourage the creation of the network between operators and the population. Every single initiative can only contribute positively to the creation of a network of the entire territory. These projects are: Trek Nature (Interreg V-A Italia Francia Alcotra 2014/2020), PACTA (Interreg V-A Italia Francia Alcotra 2014/2020), MiMo (Interreg V-A Italia Francia Alcotra 2014/2020) and SONO (Interreg Italia-Svizzera 2014/2020). The area will also benefit from some interventions that will be carried out within the PITER and PITEM of the ALCOTRA cross-border cooperation program.

Potential solution to these challenges came from ideas and good practices identified within the Destination SMEs project and that Fondation Grand Paradis brought to the working table of the project



"Gran Paradiso: give value to nature" and that are described in the actions section below.

## **B. NATURE OF THE ACTION**

The specific objective of the project is the creation of a unique integrated tourist product "Grand Paradis" characterized by the Gran Paradiso National Park as an attraction factor and based on an increased collaboration among all the local operators.

The product must be characterized by an offer based on "customer tailored" services, in which operators are encouraged to respond to the specific needs of different tourist targets, exploiting current trends, highlighting a culture of hospitality and facilitating the accessibility to the various proposals by different categories of users.

### **Actions:**

"Gran Paradiso: give value to nature" foresees several actions to be implemented through the project.

## Definition of a marketing strategy and a technical coordination for its implementation

The marketing strategy will focus on the following aspects:

1. collection of information on the ongoing projects and on tourist products, analysis of the positive effects and the critical issues
2. analysis of the tourist demand and offer of the area;
3. identification of the distinctive features and strength of the area to be "stressed" for its positioning on the market;
4. study of the best and most effective ways of structuring the integrated offer;
5. definition of the communication and promotional marketing plan and the strategy guidelines of the area through specific activities, sales channels, targets and tools, the interventions scheduling and the division between actions based on the budget. The plan will also have to describe the technological necessary tools for the

implementation of the strategy (website, DMS, APP, etc.) which allow better management of the Gran Paradiso destination, in particular of the marketing and promotion of the integrated, and at the same time diversified and personalized, tourism offer.

The technical coordination will manage the relationships between the subjects involved in the communication, the creation of IT tools for the promo marketing, the realization of events and other marketing activities identified and between these subjects and the client.

The technical coordination will also monitor the activities and make any changes and additions to the strategy in agreement with the client.

The marketing strategy of the project "Gran Paradiso: give value to nature" took inspiration from the **Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism**: a tool developed at national level for enhancing and measuring sustainability in tourism and at the same time certification programme for destinations and tourism service providers. Under the SLOVENIA GREEN umbrella brand, it brings together all efforts directed towards sustainable development of tourism in Slovenia, including tools for destinations and providers for evaluation and improvement of their sustainability endeavours and promotion. Slovenia is mainly characterized by unspoilt nature and more than 1/3 of this country is a protected area, so the development of a marketing strategy aiming at increasing sustainable tourism within the Gran Paradiso National Park, the first national park established in Italy, got inspired from this strategy. The Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism shows its achievements of sustainable performance through its brand SLOVENIA GREEN which its ultimate goal is to make Slovenia 100% green. The same will be with the definition of a marketing strategy of the Espace Gran Paradis, aiming at creating an integrated and sustainable destination offer.

In the framework of the initiatives promoted in recent years in the Espace Grand Paradis, there is also the *Quality Label of the Gran Paradiso National Park*, created to promote the environmental quality experiences in the agri-food and tourism sectors present within the protected area. The brand is a wish of the Park to find a meeting point between the local economic reality and the image of authenticity and naturalness linked to the Park itself, and the need to maintain local activities that are compatible with the extreme sensitivity and value of the natural resources of the area. The Park brand allows companies to obtain the recognition to companies based within the Park boundaries. The brand is becoming an appreciated distinguishing factor on the market and many hoteliers are using it to give quality to their image. For other subjects, such as farms, the brand is also a stimulating factor for an internal reorganization of the production cycle oriented towards a

strong environmental compatibility. Getting to know the brand strategy of the Slovenian Tourist Board gave important ideas for the realization of the marketing strategy of the action plan project and in particular for the improvement of the *Quality Label of the Gran Paradiso National Park* and the "Gran Paradiso National Park" brand in general.

Slovenia is fully involving itself in a national tourism strategy, organization & marketing of Slovenian tourism based on the concept of "green". The global green strategy can be applied to the Gran Paradiso area too because, as the first Italian National Park, it needs, as Slovenia did, to invest on and communicate a destination for demanding guests seeking a diverse and active experience, peace and personal well-being. The Slovenian strategy is based on the experience and specifics of tourism, development of competitive advantages and promotion of systemic solutions.

Fondation Grand Paradis presented this Slovenian brand strategy during the implementation of the marketing strategy of the "Gran Paradiso: give value to nature" project. This strategy managed to inspire the network because once applied to the territory it will allow to maximize the assets of the Espace Grand Paradis: nature, outdoor, culture, sustainability and hospitality under a common and coherent message.

One of the goals of the marketing strategy action is to collect information on the projects and tourist products currently ongoing or just achieved. This collection of information will allow an analysis of the positive effects and the critical issues of what is going on. The identification of the Finnish good practice "**Rural Finland project**" allowed to deepen this topic and to foster the action. Indeed, Rural Finland is a national project (EAFRD) that promotes the efficient and effective targeting of project funds with tourism developers and financiers as its target group aiming at ensuring two-way flow between national strategies and regional actors, intensify national and regional cooperation and convey information needs from the field to researchers and financiers. The project has collected data of regional strategies, projects, development tools and good practices relating to entrepreneurship in rural areas and gathered it on their website in order to avoid overlapping work and to share their knowledge. The huge amount of collected and accessible information is a key point to the project and "Gran Paradiso: give value to nature" is getting inspired by it. Such tool avoids overlapping of projects and increases the efficiency of public funds.

## Creation of a territorial network and improvement of the offer

On the basis of the indications coming from the marketing strategy, the economic operators of the territory will build, with the support of a facilitator, tourism proposals that meet the needs of the demand which will subsequently be commercialized.

During many study visits of the Destination SMEs project, Fondation Grand Paradis saw different examples of local networks, such as the **"From guesthouse to guesthouse cooperation"** which has been one of the source and essence of the action plan project. In this Finnish context, small guesthouses located in rural areas of North Karelia have founded a network to improve their competitiveness. Such a network has been a clear source inspiration for the creation of the Espace Grand Paradis network among operators in order to improve the local tourist offer. As happens in North Karelia, rural SMEs here have to overcome many challenges to succeed - for example, the lack of good transportation connections is a big problem that has to be faced though a networking among providers, otherwise the destination may appear less attractive to customers.

As Finland, the Espace Grand Paradis has to face depopulation too and the example of this guesthouse to guesthouse cooperation is an important inspiration factor. To go into details, in North Karelia, four guesthouses have cooperated for over 20 years in order to bring the Karelian culture and traditions known to travelers. Through cooperation they have improved their competitiveness and accessed bigger customer markets. The guesthouses collaborate on marketing, product design and trail maintenance. They have developed a Guesthouse to Guesthouse product family that includes various tours in all seasons with activities close to nature. These tours take travelers from one guesthouse to another. The distances between the inns are travelled by bike, canoe or cross-country skis. At the guesthouses guests can enjoy local food prepared by the innkeepers and take part in activities, such as herbal treatment workshops, yoga lessons and Karelian pie cooking classes. One of their star products is Silent Moments at Karelian Guesthouses that makes good use of silence in the countryside and offers relaxation for both body and mind.

Another successful initiative that Destination SMEs partners have identified as good practice and that has been a source of inspiration to the action plan project is the **SMEs network in Victoria**. It is an informal network of craftsmen and shop owners based in Victoria, the capital city of the island of Gozo, very similar to the informal network of

Introd (a selected good practice of Fondation Grand Paradis). This small but dynamic cluster is the key to the further development of the city centre, following the huge investment made on the citadel.

The idea of network strengthens cooperation and mutual communication and promotion among members. Also, it gives new ideas to each member about what to offer to visitor within the region and allows businesses to benchmark with others and continuously improve. It is recognised as a strong tool for SMEs to highlight the importance of local natural and cultural heritage and to create tourist attractions, therefore it is one of the main actions of "Gran Paradiso: give value to nature".

## Implementation of the Communication Plan and promo marketing

Creation and management of new operational tools for the promo marketing of the area: IT, promotional images and videos, opening of information points on the territory in the municipalities that do not have them.

Promotion activities: web marketing (social campaigns, adwords...), press activities (purchase of pages in Italian and foreign magazines, participation in television broadcasts, press releases...), promotional activities for journalists and travel agencies (hospitality, educational tours...), promotional events of the territory and its products.

The communication plan of the project took inspiration from a good practice of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes partner: **Nattitude**.

Nattitude is a regional policy aiming at supporting tourist accommodation SMEs committed to respect the environment and the regional values and identity. This good practice focuses on tourist accommodation, aiming at creating a range of accommodation choices in line with both the natural qualities of Auvergne, and the expectations of today's clientele. It represents an outstanding best practice, because it is more than a label itself, it is a policy built on the values of the territory: on one side it is a promotional tool, but also a tool for raising the quality of tourism offer and services in the region. The process is transferable and can be used as an example how to raise, build and promote its own tourism assets.

Nattitude developed specific promotional tools which helped it to spread and reach all stakeholders and possible customers. It uses paper and web-based promotion, fairs and marketing actions in France or abroad.

In the Gran Paradiso National Park there is a recognizable brand which is the *Quality Label of the Gran Paradiso National Park* and the Park itself represents a clear and widespread label. Nevertheless, Nattitude best practice is a good example of inspirational policy.

Also, the **Wild Atlantic Way** helped to define an efficient communication plan of the project.

It is a national strategy implemented by Fáilte Ireland and it is Ireland's first long-distance touring route (2,500 km.) which has been successful in achieving greater visibility for the west coast of Ireland (including Cork) in overseas tourist markets. The national tourism authority thus identified a single, connecting route along the entire west coast of Ireland, from Donegal to Cork. It was deemed that this would create the necessary scale and singularity required for a brand that would be visible in key overseas markets, re-branding the Western region of Ireland, resulting in generating incremental international tourists, increased revenue and job creation.

This strategy, financed by a long-term public grant scheme, involves the tourist companies and provides them with promotional tools.

The Wild Atlantic Way allows to connect various territories along the coast under a same brand. This idea of "fil rouge" is inspiring the Espace Grand Paradis when it comes to connect the various valleys of the area.

## Creation of a territorial network and improvement of the offer

The "Espace Grand Paradis" will be present at the Aymavilles venues with the opening of a point of presentation of the territory and its products.

The **Ta' Dbiegi Crafts Village** is the oldest crafts centre in Gozo which showcase the traditional crafts making and artisan products in an area of 6,500sqm. The cluster is made up of 17 operators that includes lace making, pottery, local stone, woollens, paintings, and traditional foods. This public and private collaboration was mainly created to provide an attractive space for local artisans to showcase and sell their products, and to provide visitors with an authentic experience of the crafts being created. The objectives of gathering craftsmen and SMEs in one place are to create a stream of tourists/customers to help these SMEs to develop as well as tours organized by local agents by providing a place where various traditional crafts skills and products can be found. The

Crafts Village attracts tourists to the westernmost part of the island, and locals, tenants and visitors all benefit from this activity.

The “Gran Paradiso: give value to nature” project wants to replicate such a space, obviously of a smaller size, where visits and meetings dedicated to the promotion of local know-how and traditions will be proposed.

The point of presentation of the territory in Aymavilles has been inspired by the Slovenian good practice **Podčetrtek** as well.

Podčetrtek is a tourist micro destination which is an example of how even in deep rural area various and supplementary supply may be attractive enough for customers. Out of typical agricultural area in relatively short period it has developed into an important tourist destination. On the basis of use of natural resources tourism infrastructure and tourism offer has developed significantly and represents today one of the most important tourist destinations in Slovenia.

Podčetrtek represents an example of good cooperation between different tourism actors, local community and businesses that brought to fast, but sustainable tourism development.

Namely Olimia Thermal Spa is generating the tourist contingents which enabled development of other tourism accommodations and tourism products. Olimia spa resort with several hotels, apartment village and camp is offering its services on areas of relaxation, health, beauty and well-being and is achieving fast development of new services, based on tradition, nature and herbs.

Family based nature friendly boarding house (from reconverted stables) and wine business Amon Estate is one of the oldest in Slovenia. They obtained special certificate for ecological farming, so cooks in the restaurant get ingredients for bio menus directly from their own vegetable and fruit gardens which are complemented by local organic food suppliers. Amon Estate has also a small, 9 holes golf course and training ground which is treated in ecological friendly way and the same is with the vineyards.

Another example of farm tourism in the destination is “Jelenov greben” (Deer’s Reef homestead) which is famous for deer and mouflons which move freely over 8 hectares of land in large herds. It offers a rustic style tavern with authentic local specialties, possibilities for many sport activities, presentations in the shaping of ceramics on a potter’s wheel and painting techniques.

Very interesting is also the diversification in highly recognizable craft business since they offer laser engraving and have a production of conserved products.

Combination of these activities created an image of famous brand in Slovenia as also abroad.

Chocolatier Olimje with years long tradition and Olimje Monastery with the third oldest pharmacy in Europe round up the well-connected tourism offer in Olimje destination.

The Deer's Reef homestead and the Chocolatier Olimje are good examples of how to present the territory and its products. Podčetrtek municipality is a tourist destination with different kind of businesses which coexist without any problem.

## Governance

For the implementation of the strategy and to ensure its sustainability over time, a control room consisting of a smaller number of network participants, such as representatives of the operators, institutions and local and regional authorities will be set up. It has the task of giving information about the territory, making all the participants active, proposing the joint offer of the area and being the subject capable of implementing the strategy over the long term.

Karelia Expert Tourist Service is a good tool to engage SMEs and local stakeholders and also a good example for the Espace Grand Paradis concerning the governance of the project. Indeed, the project network is made of both private and public bodies which has to cooperate and be able to implement the strategy.

In details, **Karelia Expert Tourist Service** is the regional Destination Management Organisation (DMO) responsible for regional tourism marketing and product development. Its subsidiary company VisitKarelia Sales Ltd. rents holiday cottages and sells programme services and packages to groups, companies and individual clients. Karelia Expert Tourist Service is currently going through a renewal phase which will affect both its tasks and funding. Karelia Expert is currently funded by Regional Council of North Karelia and some municipalities in the region. From 2019 onwards half of the organisations' budget will come from all regional municipalities (14) and the other half from project funds.

North Karelia has a Destination Marketing Organization (Karelia Expert, on public funds), and also a Destination Marketing Company (Visit Karelia, in charge of selling tourist products, private funds). Both



organizations are strongly interrelated which makes it an interesting and inspiring example of public-private cooperation.

The decision of creating a control room composed of a restricted number of different actors of the network came also from the identification of the French good practice: **Les Cheires / Pessade Outdoor activities resort**. It is a private and public "association" with a large range of activities (Acrofun, biathlon...), also open in low season, based on an efficient governance with public investment to create a building and a practice site opened to SMEs.

This multi-level governance and cooperation between the public and private sectors are interesting for the governance of the project.

Also, this micro-destination based on diversification with particular and renewable offer can importantly widen the tourism seasons and especially tackle the problem of lack of snow, thanks to SMEs involvement and local tourist board management.

## C. STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

The project is headed by the Unité des communes valdôtaines Grand-Paradis which is a shareholder of Fondation Grand Paradis.

Fondation Grand Paradis has been deeply involved in the preparation of the project by taking part to numerous meetings, as a stakeholder of the project.

The project will involve:

- a multiplicity of subjects: representatives at regional level (Politica regionale di sviluppo, the Coordinator of the structural policies and EU affairs Department), of internal area (the Presidente of the Unité des communes valdôtaines Grand-Paradis) and individual municipalities (Cogne, Rhêmes-Notre-Dame, Rhêmes-Saint-Georges, Saint-Nicolas, Valgrisenche and Valsavarenche), private and public entities belonging to different sectors;
- integration between public and private subjects: the control room will be composed of public and private subjects. Furthermore, it is envisaged to make the managers of the strategy interact with the local operators in order to make the ideas expressed by the public sector converge with the operational needs of the local network;
- integration between sectors: tourism, agriculture, crafts, cultural activities and local tradition (Tascapan, Cooperative Les Tisserands of Valgrisenche, Les Dentellières of Cogne, the Cave de l'Enfer, Les Amis

du Bois, the Consortium of tourist operators of Cogne, the tourist accommodation represented by ADAVA, Alpine and nature guides, ski instructors);

- integration with project initiatives that may involve other territories: the interventions carried out in the project area will be integrated with the activities of the strategic area and with the initiatives being implemented by the Region;
- a Steering Committee composed of public - private bodies will also be created (the President of the Unité des communes valdôtaines Grand-Paradis, as the project leader; the Coordinator of the Department for Structural Policies and European Affairs, as head of the Control Room of the Regional Development Policy; the Director of the Regional Development Program Structure, as Managing Authority for the 2014-20 Growth and Jobs Investment Program (ERDF); the Director of the Office of Tourism, as head of the Aosta Valley tourism system; the president of the Gran Paradiso National Park and the president of Fondation Grand Paradis, as reference subjects for the tourist / nature valorization actions).

## D. TIMEFRAME

**Estimated start date:** summer 2019

**Main milestones:**

- **Definition of a marketing strategy and a technical coordination for its implementation:** a public procurement will be issued during winter 2019 and delivering the results by July 2020
- **Creation of the territorial network:** starts to build in winter 2019 and will last until the end of the project
- **Implementation of the communication plan and promo marketing:** starts at the delivery of the marketing strategy in summer 2020 lasting until the end of the project
- **Creation of territorial network and improvement of the offer:** a month later than the communication plan lasting until the end the project

**Estimated Approval / enforcement date:** summer 2019

## E. INDICATIVE COSTS

500.000 EUR

## F. INDICATIVE FUNDING SOURCES:

Investment Program for the Growth and the Occupation 2014/20

*Priority Axis 5* - Preserve and protect the environment and promote the efficient use of resources

*Investment priority 6C* - Conservation, protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage

*Action 6.7.1* - Interventions for the protection, enhancement and networking of cultural, material and immaterial heritage, in areas of strategic relevance that consolidate and promote development processes

The target policy of the present action plan is the Investment program for the growth and the occupation 2014/20 of the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region. The Priority axis selected in the application form is Axis 3, Investment priority 3.b), Action 3.3.2, whereas the funding sources of the action plan will come from the Priority axis 5, Investment priority 6C, Action 6.7.1. The reason of the choice of a different Priority axis comes from the fact that the action plan is based on the "Strategia nazionale per le Aree interne (SNAI)" (National strategy for inner Areas) coordinated by the Italian Agency for territorial Cohesion, which selected Axis 5 (Preserve and protect the environment and promote the efficient use of resources) due to the extent of the project which is based on the protection of the environment.

# 3.

## Other results of the Project

Thanks to the Destination SMEs project, many interesting practices, initiatives and policies were observed. Some of them offered inspiration to improve the main policy instrument tackled by the project as presented in part 2 of this action plan.

But these learnings can also benefit to other policy instruments or local and regional strategies. Destination SMEs partners intend to make use of as many interesting learnings from the project as possible, to make the most of this project.

This is the reason why, in addition to the actions presented in Part 2 dedicated to the main policy instrument target, we tried to identify all possible contributions from our project to improve other regional, national or EU policies in one hand (paragraph 3.1), and transfer effective practices in the other hand (part 3.2), of course always in relation to the main topic of the project: Destination management.

### 3.1. Good practices transferred

- *Name of the transferred good practice and region of origin:*

**Biathlon Loisir**

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

- *Name of the owner of the good practice*

Biathlon Attitude – M. Didier Predon

- *Description of the good practice*

An interesting cooperation experience arose between two realities connected by the Destination SMEs project: the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region and the Gran Paradiso area. Both regions consider sustainable outdoor activities one of the leverage for the diversification of the tourist offer, its de-seasonalisation and for the increase of tourist flows.

One activity that has been noted, considered a good practice and therefore exported to the Gran Paradiso area is the surprising

experience of "Biathlon Loisir" spread in Southern and Central Europe by Mister Didier Pradon, a mountain guide, ski instructor and MTB instructor who founded Biathlon Attitude.

The Biathlon Loisir is an original activity for everyone who wants to try this sport not only on the skis. The quality laser rifles are used without any danger because they have no projectiles and they are as precise as the competition biathlon rifles. They can be used at a distance of 10 m from the target and on different kind of terrains (natural sites, playgrounds, indoor sport halls).

- *Name and location of the organization implementing the transfer*  
Fondation Grand Paradis – Gran Paradiso National Park (Aosta Valley – Italy)

- *Description of the transfer (is the practice fully transferred, or only part of it?)*

This activity raised the interest of Fondation Grand Paradis because it is not meant only for the winter, but it transfers this sport in different seasons.

The two French-speaking regions, the Aosta Valley and the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, exchanged this good practice and Fondation Grand Paradis invited Mister Pradon to bring this experience to the Gran Paradiso by organizing a funny Biathlon Loisir competition.

Indeed, Fondation Grand Paradis organized 3 days to discover the biathlon in the municipality of Cogne (14th April 2017), Rhêmes-Saint-Georges (15th April 2017) and Valsavarenche (16th April 2017) during the Easter long weekend. The participants were guided by the expert and they experienced a unique and amusing activity by testing their shooting skills.

The experience intentionally took place in these three different location of the Gran Paradiso in order to show how this activity is adaptable and flexible. In this case, Fondation Grand Paradis organized it during spring time at different altitude. In Rhêmes-Saint-Georges at 1.200 m.a.s.l. and in Cogne at 1.500 m.a.s.l. the sport took place on the spring meadows, whereas in Valsavarenche at about 2.000 m.a.s.l. the participants used cross country skis.

After the introduction to the discipline and a shooting test a race was organized. Up to 5 people at a time could challenge themselves with shooting and running or cross-country skiing.

The audience was heterogeneous and made of sport lovers, beginners but also experts and ski instructors. The latter showed their interest for both a play and professional use of this activity to train the ski and biathlon teams.

This best practice exchange is a good example on how interesting activities can be exported in different EU regions with similar characteristics. The hope is that it will be able to generate new ideas and inspiring new activities.

Given the success of the 3-day Biathlon Loisir activity organized in 2017, Fondation Grand Paradis is going to replicate this good practice again.

- *Players involved*  
Fondation Grand Paradis

The Municipalities of the Espace Grand Paradis

Biathlon Attitude – M. Didier Predon

- *Expected timeframe of the transfer*  
Spring 2020

Spring 2021

- *Costs*  
8.000 EUR

- *Funding sources*  
Fondation Grand Paradis budget

Event participation fee

Potential sponsors / partners

Date: 16/10/2019

**Name of the organisation:**

UNITÉ DES COMMUNES VALDÔTAINES  
GRAND-PARADIS

**Signature of representative of the relevant organisation:**

