




**FONDATION
GRAND PARADIS**


Digitourism
Interreg Europe

 European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

DIGITOURISM Project

Fondation Grand Paradis

Action plan

08/2021 – 05/2023



Action plan

During the Phase 1 of the Digitourism project (June 2018 – May 2021), all partners identified interesting practices and initiatives which could be inspiring enough to lead to an improvement of public policy, or to the replication/transfer of a policy in their territory.

Following the first semester of the project, a two years long second phase of the project is starting, where project partners will improve their policies and implement the outcomes of the project. This document is the road map of this second phase for partner Grand Paradis Foundation (P2).

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Executive Summary

This Action Plan for the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region was prepared by Grand Paradis Foundation within Digitourism, an Interreg Europe Project that involves 9 partner organizations (regional and local authorities, development agencies, private non-profit associations and universities) from 8 countries (FR, IT, HU, UK, NO, ES, PL, NL)

1. Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Tourism, France (Lead Partner)
2. Grand Paradis Foundation, Italy
3. University of Pécs, Hungary
4. Surrey County Council, UK
5. Oppland Fylkeskommune, Norway
6. Aragon Institute of Technology, Spain
7. Innovalia Association, Spain
8. Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship, Poland
9. Breda University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands

The project focus is to improve policies of the partner regions (structural funds and regional policies), in order to foster a tourist channelled innovation in the Digital Realities sector.

The aim of this Action Plan is to inspire the reference policy instruments, still in phase of definition, demonstrating the potential impact of virtual reality technologies applied to tourism still few developed in Aosta Valley Region, monitoring the process that will bring to the definition of the new policy as discussed in Part II of this document.

The document starts with general information in Part I, then define the Policy Context in Part II. Part III is dedicated to the good practices, while Part IV to the Action Plan with the definition of the Actions and Activities with relevant outputs.

Last part of the document presents possible indicators and tools to evaluate the effectiveness of the Action Plan.

1.

General information

Project: DIGITOURISM

Partner organisation: Fondation Grand Paradis / Gran Paradiso
Foundation

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

+39 0165 75301

2.

Policy context

Target policy:

Investment Programme for Growth and Jobs 2021-2027

Programmatic Objective 5 "Valle d'Aosta più vicina ai cittadini"

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

2.1. Policy description

The policy that the action plan will address is the Investment Programme for Growth and Jobs 2021-2027. The policy will be developed in the framework of the Regional Development Strategy (Quadro Strategico Regionale di Sviluppo Sostenibile 2030¹) that will shape all of Aosta Valley Autonomous Region's new policies, even the POR FESR. The Regional Strategy Programmatic Objective that will define the guidelines relevant to our Action Plan is the Programmatic Objective 5, which main goal is the re-thinking of the touristic sector, through seasonal adjustment and digitalization. The programmatic objective aims to use transborder

¹ The "[Quadro Strategico Regionale di Sviluppo Sostenibile 2030](#)" has been approved by the Regional Council of the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region on July 2021. The document could be revised/integrated with adjustments/corrections proposed by the Permanent table for the partnership discussion on the regional policy of development 2021/2 7. The Director of Grand Paradis Foundation is member of this consultation group.



and transregional cooperation as a way to overcome geographic marginalization. New technologies implementation is fostered not only for the touristic sector but also to organize services capable to attract and hold new activities on the territory.

The presence of natural, cultural, and environmental resources, which characteristics of uniqueness and quality are globally recognized, constitutes one of the Aosta Valley region's main strengths, being an environmental richness as well as a source of attractiveness which, in some cases, still needs to be properly valorised.


The policy that Grand Paradis Foundation has addressed during phase 1 (Investment Programme for Growth and Jobs 2014-2020) is now over and to define the new policy, the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region has set up different working groups dedicated to five strategic integrated goals and permanent table for the partnership discussion on the regional policy of development 2021/27, involving Grand Paradis Foundation as one of the partner organisation of this consultation table. Grand Paradis Foundation, even not being the owner of the policy, has thus a multiple access to the policy designing process: it has a political role, being the President of Grand Paradis Foundation a member of the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region Regional Council (policymaker and stakeholder of Digitourism) and a technical role, being part of the working group discussion tables of the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region.

3.

Good practices

Digitourism Project outlined several interesting, good practices. For this Action Plan, Grand Paradis Foundation chose Good Practices related to digitalization of the touristic sector, especially concerning new technologies and VR/AR experiences.

Grand Paradis Foundation has been inspired by different interesting, good practices identified during the first phase of Digitourism, all using digital technologies (mainly, but not only, VR and Video 360°) to allow enjoying a new and different experience or to enhance existing ones with a 'digital touch'. An



important set of these good practices have in common is that they use digital technologies for giving access to touristic places/attractions/experiences, sometimes not easily accessible to everyone. This concept may not be only due to the touristic destination/experience itself but also to specific user categories (as kids, elderlies, people with disabilities that may not be able to access those concrete experiences). Such technologies allow to capture the attention of different people interested in deepening the knowledge of different touristic destinations and experiences.

Grand Paradiso Foundation acquired inspiration from several good practices identified in Digitourism study visits. Among them, four good practices have been identified as the most relevant for the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region:

- Outdoor 360 shows very good use of 360° video technologies, used with immersive devices as Odoxo Glasses (allowing also VR capabilities), for experiencing some so-called extreme sports in natural environments.
- Agroverzum is a very valuable sample of digital (AR/VR) technologies used for both educational and leisure purposes, specifically in the agriculture research sector. The choice of each technology tries to be adapted to the content and the objective pursued.
- Ad Hoc 3D solutions proposed efficient technological solutions (e.g., VR headsets and joysticks) to transform traditional virtual practices into interactive experiences, in which different people can interact experiencing the same virtual environment at one time.
- Culture in Range 2.0 is relevant for Aosta Valley, being a small region with a high dispersion of natural and cultural sites. The proposed platform could in fact facilitate the networking among the different sites and the integrated access to the information, that could be very useful. It could be an inspiring practice for the stakeholders and an example of application could be the implementation of similar tool to facilitate the networking and the integrated fruition of the Aosta Valley castles.
- Ecotour is a relevant practice for the Gran Paradiso territory, being devoted to the application of innovative virtual technologies to enhance the natural heritage and to raise the awareness on local environmental fragility and biodiversity conservation.

Good Practice 1: Outdoor 360°

Title of Good Practice	Isère Outdoor 360°
GP owner	Isère Departmental Council
Description of the Good Practice	In a "sports health" approach, the Youth and Sports Service of the Isère Departmental Council wanted to encourage the general public to practice outdoor sports in an innovative way. Using a series of 360° videos of different disciplines (kayaking, caving, mountain biking, via ferratta, etc.), and equipped with a mobile virtual reality booth, the department offers immersive experiences at major sporting events in Isère as well as in schools. Virtual reality helps create genuine empathy, with a safe approach to certain sports that are sometimes unjustifiably considered extreme. The booth, accessible free of charge, is equipped with 12 helmets and requires an average of 3 permanent operators.
Potential for transfer	We will import the idea of making people experience extreme sports using virtual reality, we will test if implementing virtual experiences in the offer of a territory can enhance tourists' attraction.

Good Practice 2: Agroverzum

Title of Good Practice	Agroverzum
GP owner	Centre for Agricultural Research, Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Description of the Good Practice	The interactive permanent exhibition of the Agroverzum shows some of the phenomena that are being dealt with in the Centre for Agricultural Research Centre. They include the research of soils, plant breeding, establishing the scientific basis of pest control, and research required for the management of healthy livestock and eliminating animal diseases. You can use interactive tools, watch animations, movies and try yourself in various games. You can have a glance at scientific research work. There are spectacular multimedia touchscreens, augmented and virtual reality applications, as well as an indoor and outdoor tour guiding mobile application besides Hungary's digital terrain desk. 15 IT-based attractions (including an indoor and outdoor mobile application, touchscreen/AR/VR terminals, 3D layout).
Potential for transfer	we will adopt the concept of "virtual exhibition", which allows

increasing the offer of a visitor center beyond its physical spaces

Good Practice 3: Ad Hoc 3D solutions

Title of Good Practice	Ad Hoc 3D solutions
GP owner	Ad Hoc 3D Solutions s.r.l.
Description of the Good Practice	<p>Ad Hoc 3D is a highly specialized company founded by PhDs in the fields of Geomatics, Surveying and Design at the Polytechnic of Turin and Milan. In 2014 it incorporated SIR srl, the first Italian geomatics spin-off (2006).</p> <p>AdHoc Virtual Reality software enables the immersive fruition of 3D models. Users, alone or cooperating with other people, move inside the 3D model, take measures, access reports about the items they meet. Thanks to a modular structure, custom functionalities can be quickly developed.</p> <p>Ad Hoc 3D solutions proposed efficient technological solutions (e.g. VR headsets and joysticks) to transform traditional virtual practices into interactive experiences, in which different people can interact experiencing the same virtual environment at one time.</p>
Potential for transfer	We will import the idea of using VR ambients for didactical purposes in different areas

Good Practice 4: Culture in Range 2.0

Title of Good Practice	Culture in Range 2.0
GP owner	Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
Description of the Good Practice	<p>The aim of the project is to provide all people interested (mainly residents of the region) with tools for active participation in cultural events in the region, as well as the digitization of the resources of cultural institutions, which will allow to preserve the regional heritage for future generations.</p> <p>The priority objectives of the Project will be achieved through a number of tasks involving an increase in the scope of application of information and communication technologies in the sphere of public services through digitisation, publication and reuse of regional heritage resources held by cultural institutions.</p> <p>Project activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- supply of equipment and external services necessary for

<p>Potential for transfer</p>	<p>the digitalisation of resources and provision of electronic services,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - implementation of new IT systems (virtual museum, virtual guiding platform), - provision of training. <p>The proposed platform could in fact facilitate the networking among the different sites and the integrated access to the information. It could be an inspiring practice for the stakeholders and an example of application could be the implementation of similar tool to facilitate the networking and the integrated fruition of the Aosta Valley castles.</p>
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Good Practice 5: Ecotour

Title of Good Practice	Ecotour
<p>GP owner</p>	<p>3DKUMO, Canary Island</p>
<p>Description of the Good Practice</p>	<p>Ecotour aims to enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the coastal zones of protected areas of the Canary Islands, Azores, Cape Verde, Mauritania and Senegal, through the promotion of ecotourism activities, using virtual 3D modelling. 3DKUMO realized the 3d models of 10 different animal species and make them available to the public online, in order to provide ecotourists with a way of watching and studying the animals with zero impact on nature.</p>
<p>Potential for transfer</p>	<p>Ecotour uses 3D technologies to improve and enhance the natural heritage, contributing to raise the awareness on biodiversity conservation. This practice represents an inspiring tool for the Gran Paradiso territory, hosting the first Italian national park. Moreover the application of similar virtual technologies is a key element for P2 Pilot Action.</p>

4.

Actions

4.1 Action 1 – Provide inputs and suggestions for the policy definition process

A. RELEVANCE TO THE PROJECT

The Regional Strategy that will address the policy: Investment Programme for Growth and Jobs 2021-2027 plans to use as one of its transversal strategic approach the “Smart Villages”, developed within EU-Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP). Digital Technologies allow new solutions for the organization and distribution of services on the territory, and they turn out to be particularly useful in those territories characterized by a strong presence of remote areas and communities.

The main steps toward the distribution of the “Smart Villages” approach within the definition process of the policy will be:

- The identification of good practices (Digitourism practices described in the present document could contribute to inspire the definition process of the policy) and the definition of indicators for the realization of smart initiative in alpine territory
- The developing, in the context of sector plans, of “smart” initiatives and solutions which implement new technologies
- The endorsement of pilot actions at a local level
- The dissemination, at a regional level, of the “Smart Villages” methodology and its adaptation to local needs

Grand Paradis Foundation as member of the permanent table for the partnership discussion on the regional policy of development 2021/27 has a technical role in the consultation for the designing process of the policy.



Moreover, the coordinator of the “Smart Villages” strategy is one of the stakeholder of Digitourism project.

B. NATURE OF THE ACTION

During Action 1 Grand Paradis Foundation will follow the policy impact on the broadcasting of the “Smart Villages” approach within the definition process of the policy. The objective will be achieved through the following steps:

- The definition of indicators of impact (possible indicators are proposed in section 5 of the present document)
- The observation of the policy development
- The analysis of policy impact through the previously defined indicators
- The constant exchange with the working group discussion table of the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region

C. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVED

Aosta Valley Autonomous Region will be involved as stakeholder and policymaker.

D. TIMEFRAME

The action will follow the development of the policy. The starting date is therefore foreseen around January 2022.


Milestones:

- Definition of indicators of impact (January – June 2022)
- Monitoring of the policy and analysis of the policy impact (July – December 2022)
- Report of the evidence at the working group discussion table (January 2023).

E. IMPACT EVALUATION

Possible impacts of action 1 on the target policy could be identified in two different steps:

Step 1 – during the definition of the policy, addressing the focus of the forthcoming calls for project funded by the ERDF policy on the basis on the feedback of the Action Plan.



Step 2 – after the definition of the policy, providing suggestions to the regional authority to evaluate AR and VR technologies as one of the possible eligibility criteria for the funding assignment.

During the action, P2, being not the policy owner, will remain in constant contact with the regional stakeholder, providing relevant information and suggestions to contribute to inspire and address the target policy towards virtual innovation as means to improve the touristic offer and the attractiveness of Aosta Valley.

F. INDICATIVE COSTS

Internal cost

G. INDICATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

Internal cost

4.2 Action 2 - Better distribution of policy funds

A. RELEVANCE TO THE PROJECT

In case of approval, the second action of this action plan will be the Pilot Action: **"HARD TO REACH - GRAND PARADIS (H2R-GP): AR/VR solutions to make the Gran Paradiso accessible to everyone"** that Grand Paradis Foundation sent to the Joint Secretariat for examination.

The Covid-19 crisis strongly impacted the tourism sector and innovative solutions will be necessary to adapt to the new normal. People can travel less or with restrictions and places become less accessible. However, it's a primary desire of people to escape from reality and dream of far away places. AR/VR are high-potential technologies to be implemented to design remote and virtual experiences.

Moreover, because of its geomorphology, the territory of the Gran Paradiso is not easily accessible, and people cannot benefit from its beautiful natural heritage. Therefore, the development of digital realities in this area would allow everybody to virtually experience its outstanding landscapes and heritages. There is a high potential for digital innovation and there is now a strong need to bring evidence of the success of innovative projects, in particular in the tourist sector which has a strong economic potential in the region.

Going into detail, the precise nature of the activities to be performed will be to check the impact of AR/VR/Video 360° 'virtual visits' on different types of tourists (e.g. mountaineers, students, researchers, elderly people, etc...). On one hand, the virtual visits have in common to be 'hard-to-reach' places/experiences. On the other hand, the selected virtual tourists are a sample of high potential consumers of those 'hard-to-reach' digital experiences.

B. NATURE OF THE ACTION

The proposed 'H2R-GP' pilot action intends to create immersive digital experiences to enhance natural, cultural, and landscape elements. The defined goals are:

- addressing people remotely in the choice of their holiday destinations or on-site to live virtual experiences that could deepen future visits
- making "Hard to reach" places more accessible to everyone: tourists, families, elderly people, and people with motor disabilities, but also providing people with specific interests in those sectors, as experts, students, and researchers with relevant experiences.

Proposed technological solutions will foresee:

1. the making of 360° videos accessible remotely from YouTube, accessible with virtual devices or 3D glasses.
2. the making of 360° interactive videos to be experienced through VR headsets and joysticks and with the leap motion system (low-touch alternative) This technology will improve the immersion of the experience and its didactic power.
3. the implementation of the technology needed to include these virtual innovations in the offer of Grand Paradis Foundation natural and cultural sites network.

Some of the proposed virtual experiences will be:

- Climbing of an iconic Alpine peak
- Experiences with Park guards to attend to the sedation, capture, monitoring, and release of the Alpine ibex for research and conservation purposes
- Visit of Roman heritage bridge and medieval crypt in the Gran Paradiso Valleys.

Such experiences, which contents will be developed by Grand Paradis Foundation, will be interesting for example for tourists who want to deepen their knowledge of the territory but also for climbers who want to check a track before climbing it, for experts who want to know more about cultural or natural sites accessing rare experiences. These technologies will provide services for the people and improve the territory's attractiveness. Moreover, they will make smarter a territory having already a smart village vocation.

Such technologies will allow reaching the Pilot Action's goals, testing on the territory the impact of VR technology, and inspiring the addressed policy. In case of success of the Pilot Action, results will be shared with the policy makers as example of positive application of AR/VR technologies.

Existing facilities (visitor centers of the Gran Paradiso National Park in Cogne Rhêmes-Notre-Dame and Valsavarenche, cultural sites as Introd Castle, Saint-Léger Crypt, Châtel Argent, outdoor spaces...) will be used for testing the content with VR headsets in the municipalities of the Gran Paradiso Area.

The results of the Pilot Action will be discussed with the opinion leader of the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region.

C. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVED

Aosta Valley Autonomous Region will be involved as stakeholder and policymaker.

D. TIMEFRAME

Start Date: September 2021

Milestones:

- In-depth best practices and virtual solution analysis and detailed workplan of H2R-GP Pilot Action (September 2021 – February 2022)
- Design of the virtual H2R -GP solution (September 2021 – February 2022)
- Development of the H2R-GP experiences (March – September 2022)
- Testing phase, impact evaluation and validation, final report (March – September 2022)

E. IMPACT EVALUATION

Sitting at the working group discussion table on the regional policy of development 2021/27 Grand Paradis Foundation will be able to bring evidence of the success of the pilot action directly to the policymakers, providing them with data about the impact of innovative technologies on tourism. This will raise their attention to such themes as innovation in cultural tourism, VR and AR technologies. In case of success of the pilot action, Grand Paradis Foundation is planning to influence the policy suggesting the adding of innovative technology implementation in the touristic sector as eligibility criteria for the calls, with the final goal of better orienting the distribution of policy funds and increasing the use of new technologies in tourism, still few developed in Aosta Valley Region.

F. INDICATIVE COSTS

The indicative cost of the action will be 54.000 €

G. INDICATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

The action will be fund by Interreg EU program within Digitourism project

5.

Monitoring

The implementation of the Action Plan will be monitored by the responsible partner, P2, during phase 2 of the project in the period from September 2021 to May 2023. The herewith below indicators and impact evaluation operates to possibly identify a successful outcome of the action plans:

Indicators

- numbers of new projects with digital technologies applied to the tourism sector within the "Smart Villages strategies"
- numbers of stakeholders/SMEs involved in new digital tourism projects within the "Smart Villages strategies"
- Accessibility of end-users who are hard to reach: at least XX end users have seen the 'H2R-GP' online
- Financial impact of new call:
 - Amount of available funds for new projects in the field of digital innovation?

Impact

- Has the Policy Instrument been impacted by Digitourism good practices?
- What type of influence has Digitourism had on the Policy Instrument?
- Have we been able to influence a path for a new innovation technologies applied to tourism sector in the region?
- Have the innovation technologies and Digitourism good practices inspired the new call ?

Endorsement:

Date:

16/12/2021

Name of the organisation:

VALLÉE D'AOSTA AUTONOMOUS REGION

Signature of representative of the relevant organisation:

Luca Vigi



