



Project:
**Digital Agenda for New Tourism Approach in
European Rural and Mountain Areas (DANTE)**

Implementation Plan
June 2014



Chapter 1 - Introduction

a) State the aim, purpose and context of the implementation plan

As described in detail in the following chapters, the immediate goal of Dante project is strengthening the relationship between ICTs and tourism in the rural and mountain regions. Its ultimate objectives are, however, much more comprehensive, affecting crucial issues such as:

- improving the effectiveness of regional policies in the area of innovation;
- starting a general reflection upon the opportunities offered by the ICTs and the Internet and the strategies needed in order to seize them;
- improving the general approach of the local communities, and especially of their public bodies, towards the most innovative technologies and tools;
- improving the way local public and private actors relate to each other, making governance schemes more effective.

In order to effectively pursue such ambitious goals, the Dante project requires all partners to summarize all lessons learned and the consequently developed action strategy in the framework of an Implementation Plan, a comprehensive document which will:

- outline the long-term strategy (vision, mission and goals) for the integration of ICT into the regional rural and mountain tourism policy agenda;
- define objectives to be implemented for the ICT Tourism strategy in each rural or mountain partner area, on the basis, among others, of the knowledge and good practices transferred through the DANTE Project;
- define implementation steps and procedures;
- suggest relevant funding mechanisms to support targeted activities and to accommodate future activities.

b) Brief description of the methodology followed in the implementation plan (bottom up process with stakeholders etc.)

The Implementation Plan of the Province of Turin was developed according to the “Proposal of summary and methodology” elaborated by the Dante partnership and approved by all partners in the 6th Dante Workshop, which was held in Turin, in May 2013.



In order to draw up its Plan, the Province of Turin decided to adopt a bottom up approach, inspired by the methodology developed by the Dante Partner FUNDECYT (Foundation for the Development of Science and Technology, operating in the Spanish Extremadura Region).

The Plan was developed thanks to the contribution of a relevant number of stakeholders, involved since the project early stages, which represented a wide range of enterprises and professionals of both the tourism and ICT sectors, as well as the most relevant public players operating in the two fields.

Such opinion leaders were initially invited to support the assessment of the tourism and ICT sectors in the Province of Turin and in the Piemonte Region (Chapters 3 – 7).

The results of this analysis represented the basis for further discussion, aimed at the elaboration of the consequent implementation strategy, objectives and actions, summarized in the Chapters 8 – 9 of the Implementation Plan. The debate took into consideration, as well, the many good practices realized by the Dante partners in their respective areas, which were presented in detail during the study visits and international meetings.

In some cases, mainly when an extensive contribution concerning technical details was expected, the stakeholders were asked to take part in an in-depth interview. Generally, the debate took place in the framework of focus groups or meetings, described in details in Chapter 6.



Chapter 2 - General Common strategies

Considering that:

ICTs have been **transforming the tourism industry** since the 80's, but the exponential growth of the **Internet** since the second half of the 1990s and the emergence of the so-called **Web 2.0** since the second half of the 2000s has unleashed a revolution, which changed dramatically the market conditions for tourism organizations (a fact to reflect upon: according to *ITB World travel trends report*, the internet has by now clearly established itself as the main place to buy travel with 54% of bookings, well ahead of travel agencies which have slipped to 24%).

The entire process of developing, managing and marketing tourism products and destinations has been transformed due to the Internet, which empowers the interactivity between tourism enterprises and consumers to unprecedented levels, thus:

- altering economies of scale and barriers to entry, allowing even small businesses to compete on the global market;
- revolutionizing distribution channels;
- facilitating price transparency and competition;
- minimizing switching costs.

Customers saw an increase in their bargaining power, thanks to:

- instant access to information;
- the possibility to better understand market offers and conditions;
- a constant exposition to special offers;
- more choice and the possibility to make direct comparisons, which are rising their expectations and demands.

From the perspective of businesses, especially considering the tourism offer of rural and mountain areas, the emergence of Web 2.0 and social networking brought about both new opportunities and challenges. On the positive side:

- tourism suppliers are no longer obliged to entrust their distribution entirely to intermediaries, such as travel agents and tour operators;
- new opportunities emerged for SMEs and for niche tourism offer and destinations.

On the other hand, such evolution requires all tourism businesses, even the smallest ones, to gain and keep-up-to-date ICT vision and expertise, in order to successfully interact with customers, since, among others:

- customer satisfaction depends more and more on the accuracy and



comprehensiveness of information provided and on the ability of organizations to react instantly to consumer requests;

- it is much easier for unsatisfied customers to voice complaints, which can have a high visibility on the social media.

Twenty years from the emergence of this dramatic evolution, the public bodies entrusted with planning and development of the local tourism offer are faced with the **need for innovative policies**, which should enable the tourism businesses to effectively compete on the transformed global market, thus maximizing the opportunities for the local economies and communities.

According to this general need, the Dante Project aims to promote a new regional policy approach to designing knowledge-based plans for the tourism sector.

Considering also that:

The evolution affecting the ICTs and the Internet, so relevant for the tourism industry, is actually **deeply changing all aspects our lives**: the way individuals communicate and collaborate, the way entrepreneurs and corporations do business and the way governments develop policy and interact with their citizens. Among the most relevant aspects, the **social and economic impacts** are certainly to be mentioned.

Under the first point of view, access to knowledge and content has been widened to unprecedented levels in all sectors, including tourism. Participative knowledge production has gained growing importance, unleashing creativity and innovation. The Internet is even transforming **democracy**:

- allowing new forms of engagement, representation and deliberation;
- enabling, for example, collaborative mapping of issues and setting of priorities;
- providing the tools to bring transparency, responsiveness and accountability into traditional governance practices.

The **economic impact** has been huge as well: the Internet has proven to be an extraordinary platform for expanding existing business opportunities and fostering new ones, for enabling the flow of goods and/or services in dynamic ways, for encouraging competition, sustaining market presence and inspiring new business models. According to a study by the McKinsey Global Institute “*The great transformer: The impact of the Internet on economic growth and prosperity*”, in 2011, Internet-enabled business accounted for more than 20 percent of the GDP growth in mature economies and 7 percent in the large emerging economies of China, India and Brazil over the last 6 years.

In all industries, the Internet encourages entrepreneurs and end-users to innovate. The



ability, even for small firms, to offer products directly to a global market generates new paths to innovation and collaboration. The Internet also promotes competition, allowing new entrants to succeed and offering consumers a broader selection of products and services at lower cost.

All this has been possible thanks to some peculiar **features, which characterize the Internet from its origins** and allowed it to flourish. As summarized by the official document “What every policymaker needs to know about the Internet” published in February 2012 by the Center for Democracy & Technology (Washington, DC) the Internet:

- is decentralized by design: unlike previous mass media, its power is at the edges of the network. Any device can be attached to the network and interoperate with another device, with little regard for physical distance;
- is based on open and interoperable standards, which are the key to ensuring that the Internet remains a “network of networks”, interoperable and universally accessible. Without such standards, the risk is a set of fragmented and isolated “Internets”, unable to communicate among each other;
- is based on “net neutrality”, a principle which indicates equality among all information transported over the network: Internet service providers and governments should treat all data on the Internet equally, not discriminating or charging differentially by user, content, site, platform, application, type of attached equipment, and modes of communication;
- has low barriers to entry: traditional radio and television technology was bound by a limited technical capacity to exploit the electromagnetic spectrum. The Internet by contrast can accommodate an essentially unlimited number of points of entry and an essentially unlimited number of speakers. Its open platform accommodates “many to many”, “one to many” and “one to one” communication. Compared to the cost of a printing press, a TV station or a radio tower, the cost of launching a website is remarkably low — and that website can reach the entire world. Low barriers to entry and participation have led to a relative equality of voice and a democratization of expression. A new content or application provider can emerge from nowhere to become an extraordinary success with relatively low investment.

Such characteristics are, however, not a given, and requires support from all stakeholder groups. The **debate over the future of the Internet** is raging and the next few years will be crucial in order to see which development paths will prevail. Among the most relevant crossroads:

- the contrast between the ‘open web’ and a more governed form of the web: as an answer to the vulnerability and the limits shown by the Internet in many occasion in the last years, a generation of products emerged which are characterized by more security but less freedom. The iPad/iPhone or the XBOX are not easily modified by anyone except their vendors and their approved partners. These products do not allow unapproved third-party code to run on them, and are therefore more reliable



than some areas of the web;

- the principle of 'net neutrality' opposed to a 'tiered service model', which allows broadband providers to guarantee priority to specific data streams in exchange for higher fees. The possibility of regulations designed to mandate the neutrality of the Internet is subject to fierce debate, especially in the United States, at EU level no clear rules on net neutrality exist today.

A further dilemma of the Internet is that, while its ease of access is positive for fostering open debate and innovation, this raises questions about the **quality of information** available, which is extremely variable and often difficult to assess, thus limiting its usefulness.

Unlike in newspapers or television broadcasts, information available on the Internet is not regulated for quality or accuracy; therefore, it is crucial for the individual Internet users to be aware of the possible flaws and to be able to correctly evaluate the source or information. The issue is especially relevant in the medical field, where quality of information can be a matter of life or death, but is to be carefully considered in the tourism field as well. Access to a comprehensive and trustworthy information is becoming more and more a crucial element in order to provide a high quality service and guarantee a positive travel experience to the visitors, thus stimulating a growing need for objective, reproducible, widely accepted criteria that can be used to evaluate the quality of the information.

Even if the immediate goal of Dante project is strengthening the relationship between ICT and tourism in the rural and mountain regions, its **ultimate objective** is much more comprehensive and ambitious. Considering the huge impact which the above mentioned trends will potentially have on the socio-economic development of the partner areas, the projects aims at:

- improving the effectiveness of **regional policies in the area of innovation**;
- being an occasion to reflect on a general level upon the opportunities offered by the ICTs and the Internet and the strategies which could most effectively allow to seize them;
- improve the general approach of the local communities, with a special focus on the public bodies, towards the most innovative technologies and the connected tools.

The Partners of the Dante project commit to the pursuit of the following COMMON GOALS and implement the following actions:

1) Democracy/Accessibility of information.

Goals



The Dante partners will actively promote policies favouring:

- the development of new forms of active participation addressed to citizens, businesses and their associations;
- the bridging of the remaining digital divide, since access is a condition for participation in the digital age;
- the widespread availability of balanced, impartial information from a variety of sources. Choice between diverse opinions and trends, as well as pluralism will be pursued.
- the empowerment of citizens and businesses, through adequate competences and skills and the careful design and management of the ICT tools provided by the public sector;
- the exploitation of the full potential of the ICTs, in the development of a more open and inclusive society.

Actions:

- adapting the idea of “smart city” to the rural and mountain areas, with the creation of “smart territories”, where connectivity and free access to the web are the key to improving the quality of life of citizens, the services to the local businesses and the attractiveness of the region;
- promoting open data, the availability of a wide range of high-quality data-sets and their use by citizen and businesses for the creation of new services and job opportunities;
- favouring the widespread adoption of open source software and, in general, ICT solutions inspired by the idea of “open web”, especially where the purchase or development is supported through public funding. This principle will be regarded as a general guideline by the Partners, which will opt for proprietary software or ICT solutions in case of specific needs or requirements which could not be met through an open alternative (for example, in connection with reliability standards required for the management of specific public services).

2) Quality of information for citizens and enterprises.

Goals

The Dante partners will work towards the adoption of measures promoting:

- an increased awareness of citizens and businesses regarding the quality of information available on the Internet and its potential pitfalls;
- the improvement of their digital competences, with regards to their ability to produce and publish quality contents, to manage the ICT tools and to amend or reply to



incorrect or unfair information. Infact so far, there is still insufficient access to the latest information and communication technologies, preventing mountain people from developing indispensable services for tourists. Tourism operators need to adapt to these major changes and especially SMEs should be helped to learn how to use efficiently these technologies to attract visitors. Infact in mountain areas actually only a minority of operators has a website and is able to use social networks;

- the development of procedures and standards which will allow public bodies to publish data, which should not be just open, but whose reliability should be “certified”, as well. Such additional guarantee is needed for example, in order to allow the creation of new applications and services addressing the need of tourists for dependable information;
- the development of open sources and free software.

Actions

- developing schemes and procedures which will allow public bodies to certify the reliability of specific open tourism data-sets (for example: the georeferenced local network of hiking paths);
- providing the local tourism businesses with the digital skills and competences needed in order to effectively interact online (teach tourism operators to use a website and to manage it, updating data, using social networks etc., assess the quality level and reliability of different information sources; publish quality contents on the web and on the most relevant social networks, with specific regards to the opportunities offered by free or low-cost online tools; properly react to online incorrect information or criticism);
- promoting the wide spread of critical sensibility towards the tourism information (and in general the information) available online and the diffusion of digital competencies in the local communities, especially targeting the population segments with lowest ICTs skills;
- promoting open source.

3) An active and central role of tourists in the development of tourism strategies.

Goals

According to the Dante partners, the opportunities offered by the wide range of new ICT tools and communication channels, require the public bodies entrusted with the local tourism planning and promotion to develop innovative ways to communicate with visitors and potential visitors, integrating them and their recommendations in the tourism development activity.

Actions



- explore the possibilities offered by the web 2.0 tools and the social networks in connection with a more active and central role of tourists in the planning and promotion of the local tourism offer;
- define operational schemes allowing public bodies to effectively interact with tourists and citizens by means of these new media, respecting the specific communication style (public body interacting with users from a position of equality, short response time, need for constant update and production of new contents over an extended time frame).

Considering also that:

In mountain areas, ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) are more and more used by customers to prepare their travel and accommodations before their stay, to get practical information on their mobile during their stay and to share their impressions on the visited destinations during and after their stay, thanks to social networks notably. The customer's increasingly influential role in the tourism purchasing cycle has resulted in a constantly changing market place, in which the consumer/actor is becoming the most important player.

So far, there is still insufficient access to the latest information and communication technologies, preventing mountain people from developing indispensable services for tourists. Tourism operators need to adapt to these major changes and especially SMEs should be helped to learn how to use efficiently these technologies to attract visitors. Infact in mountain areas actually only a minority of operators has a website and is able to use social networks.

Then with reference to the European legislation to improve the use of ICT in the tourism sector, we recommend:

- To integrate **ICT and tourism in the Smart specialisation Strategies** and in the **Operational Programmes** of the regions, to allow structural funds to finance ICT and tourism projects.
- To integrate the **DANTE pilot web platform into the Tourismlink platform** developed at EU level to share good examples of integrated web platform, which can be easily transferred to all touristic destinations.
- To integrate into the Tourismlink platform some **specific training modules to help SMEs** of remote tourism destinations to learn how to develop and use ICT, how ICT can help to boost their destinations and depending of the context, which ICT could have the most impacts on visitors.
- To encourage the development of **innovative tourism products or services**, using for example ICT, interactive methods, new forms of interpretation at heritage, cultural and natural sites.



To develop the access to ICT tools, rural and mountain areas need to have high speed broadband on their whole territories. This is a key prerequisite to be able to develop new tourism websites, new mobile applications for tourists or new ICT tools (like on-line cameras or e-commerce to book tickets in advance).

Euromontana has signed the **Manifesto for a High Speed Broadband in rural areas** of the [ENGAGE project](#) to encourage the development of digital Infrastructure for European Competitiveness. As confirmed by the OECD report on Rural and Urban partnerships, rural areas “*have potential for growth*”¹, they can bring a significant contribution to the economic and social well-being of the EU and should not be left out of the digital revolution.

We consider that **high speed** broadband in rural and mountain areas is essential to develop attractive tourism destinations nowadays and to allow developing and exploiting ICT to improve tourism. One of the biggest improvements the EU can make to support the technological development and innovation in tourism is to help provide access to High Speed Broadband in the more remote, peripheral, sparsely populated and mountainous areas of the Union. The lack of equivalent broadband services in mountain areas compared to coastal and urban areas is a significant disadvantage and can completely mitigate much of the positive and innovative work some of our remote and mountainous communities are engaged in. Without making common standards of access to broadband a priority and providing funds and initiatives to make this happen the opportunity of having parity with Coastal and Urban areas in particular is lost. In addition to the development of Broadband access to mobile services and 3G/4G should also be consider for support. As more populated and easy to service areas gain access to mobile services, this leave the less populated and difficult to service territories at a significant disadvantage. Whilst paying to support these services may not be possible, supporting alternatives and uses of other services to provide an equivalent access for modern devices could be of great benefit.

In addition one of the main issues here is the time taken to prove market failure. While public subsidies can be made available to mountain areas the time lag before this is permitted can be to long for fast moving technology developments. 4G was already being rolled out in cities before there was acceptance of the fact that there was market failure and that public subsidy could be used to roll out 2G in rural / mountain areas. This process needs to be much quicker or rural / mountain area provision will always lag behind.

Thus, we strongly recommend:

- **To prioritise developing access to broadband and high-speed broadband, through either fixed or wireless technology, focusing first on the isolated and remote areas**, where public incentives should be more important than in highly

¹ OECD Rural Policy Review: Rural-Urban Partnerships: an Integrated Approach to Economic Development, OECD, 2013, p15.



populated areas where private actors are already encouraged to invest and guarantee sufficient connectivity

- **To suppress the roaming costs** in the whole EU to encourage tourists to use tourism mobile applications, even when they are not in their own country.

Finally we strongly recommend that European policies, especially in rural and mountain areas, should aim to:

1) facilitate access to ICT in rural and mountain areas, spreading the **“culture of ICT welcome”**:

- a) training of operators;
- b) promoting the wide spread of critical sensibility towards the tourism information;
- c) encouraging relationships with professional users (ie. bloggers);
- d) updating information in public databases and reinforcing links between public data bases;

2) create **“smart and inclusive territories”** for ICT open use:

- a) improving broadband and infrastructures;
- b) improving the open data initiatives;
- c) improving the open sources and free software use;
- d) improving the wireless free access;

3) **create new system of dialogue for improving the quality/democracy of information:**

- a) certification for giving data and information from Public to Private (schemes and procedures);
- b) “filter” criteria for receiving data and information from Private to Public.

The “ICT philosophy” will change the way of communicate and “have relations” each other and offers new opportunities to tourism policies to change the governance schemes and to tourism operators to change market approaches.

A philosophy encouraging to be:

- **OPEN:** the hierarchy of relationships change: the tourist is active (send pictures, open blogs, send tourism information to the community, it is also “blog-journalist”, he could interact at the same level with tourism operators), the operator should be able to use



ICT tools to keep and get in touch to tourists; public and private sectors could talk each others easier

- **IN (the event):** with ICT (social networks) is possible to comment a fact during the same time is happening and interact with it, then the speed of information and the “sensitivity” of the answers to the demand of communication increase, the answer has to be faster then in other media; the language change to adapt to the new media of communication
- **CLOSE:** ICT use encourages and develops a language “closer to emotions”, friendly, shared, in real time, in the event, closer to “normal life”
- **LOW COST:** the use of open source and free software (ex. “open street map”) and open data decrease the cost of information and increase its accessibility.

This new approach represent a “little revolution” that could affect positively local policies if this challenge is considered as an opportunity of increasing visions and strategies and not only the “tools box”.

The local policies in tourism and ICT, especially in rural and mountain areas, should seize this opportunity and face the challenge our world has to address without any hesitation.



Chapter 3 – Legislation framework on ICT and on tourism

A) European, legislation, programs, plans, guidelines

In this chapter, **we aim at recalling the European policies and actors in the field of tourism and ICT**, citing the most representative developments and initiatives taken at the European level.

A.1) Tourism policy at European Union level

Tourism is the third socio-economic activity in the EU. This industry is said to generate more than 5% of the EU GDP, with about 1.8 million enterprises, essentially SMEs, employing around 5.2% of the total labour force (approximately 9.7 million jobs). When related sectors are taken into account, the estimated contribution of tourism to GDP creation is much higher: tourism indirectly generates more than 10% of the European Union's GDP and employs about 12% of the labour force². At EU level, **DG Enterprise and Industry, Unit “Tourism”** is responsible for tourism.

Legal framework: Tourism, a new and limited competence of the EU

The Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties included tourism among the EU's objectives, but did not provide any specific instrument for its implementation. The EU had to wait for the Lisbon **Treaty to enter into force in December 2009** to have a specific legal basis on tourism. Thanks to **Article 6** “the EU has competence **only to support, coordinate and complement the actions of the Member States**” and according to **article 195**:

“1. The Union shall complement the action of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in that sector. To that end, Union action shall be aimed at:

- (a) encouraging the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings in this sector;*
- (b) promoting cooperation between the Member States, particularly by the exchange of good practice.*

2. The European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall establish specific measures to complement actions within the

Figures quoted in the 2010 Communication : [Europe, the World's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe](#)



Member States to achieve the objectives referred to in this Article, **excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States.**"

Europe, the World's n° 1 tourist destination

With 370 million of international arrivals and 1.4 billion of European travellers, the EU is the first touristic destination in the world, as outlined in the latest Communication of the European Commission, in 2010, "**Europe, the World's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe**"³. It defines a new action framework, which consists of the following four priorities:

- (1) Stimulate competitiveness in the European tourism sector;
- (2) Promote the development of sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism;
- (3) Consolidate the image and profile of Europe as a collection of sustainable and high quality destinations;
- (4) Maximise the potential of EU financial policies and instruments for developing tourism.

The enhancement of the competitiveness of the European tourism sector is also included in the recently adopted **Europe 2020 Strategy**, which intends to transform EU in a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy.

To encourage sustainable tourism, **DG Enterprise and Industry** has developed:

- a **European Charter on sustainable and responsible tourism**, which should be adopted in 2014, to have a common definition of sustainable tourism.
- The **European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS): for Sustainable Management at Destination Level**: a set of 27 core and 40 optional indicators to evaluate and monitor the progress towards a more sustainable management of the touristic destinations. A first pilot phase on 100 destinations will last from July 2013 till April 2014.
- The **European Tourism Quality Label (ETQL)**, should be published early 2014, to create an umbrella label for quality schemes to increase consumer security and confidence in tourism products.
- A **Virtual Tourism Observatory**, will be available in June 2014, to provide reliable, comparable and up-to-date information for tourism policy makers, stakeholders and researchers and to identify trends and developments in the tourism industry.

³ This communication follows the establishment of the Tourism Advisory Committee in 1986, the implementation of Agenda 21, the "Communication on a renewed EU tourism policy" in March 2006 and the "Communication on an Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism in October 2007.



In addition, **DG Enterprise and Industry** directly supports several actions such as Calypso to promote low-season tourism for disadvantaged people, including for senior people; the European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) to award sustainable tourism projects ; Cycling Roads to develop new cycling itineraries all throughout Europe or Crossroads of Europe to promote the European cultural itineraries.

Several other EU policies, linked to the free movement of people, goods and services, SMEs, consumer protection, environment, climate change, transport and regional development have direct or indirect impact on tourism. For instance, a new visa package should be adopted in 2014, amending the current Visa Code and will simplify the visa requirements and procedures for regular travellers, whereas first time travellers will benefit from clearer rules, which will facilitate tourism.

A.2) The Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) at EU level

The Information and communication technologies (further called ICT) represent 5.6% of EU GDP (670 Billion Euro) and 5.3% of total employment in 2007. Half of the EU productivity growth (1.1% between 2000 and 2004) comes from ICT and 25% of research expenditure (2002-2003) is dedicated to this sector.⁴

The European Union aims at encouraging cooperation between Member States and supporting their action. Within the European Commission, the responsibility for ICTs is shared between DG CONNECT (responsible for Digital Agenda for Europe and for Digital European Research Agenda) and DG Enterprise and Industry (for technological development).

Digital Agenda for Europe

The Digital Agenda for Europe (further called Digital Agenda or DAE) is one flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 strategy. It follows the i2010, eEurope 2005, eEurope 2002 and eEurope initiatives. Through 101 actions distributed in 7 pillars, the DAE aims at using ICT to help Europe's citizens and businesses to get the most out of digital technologies and foster economy.

Thanks to specific efforts on the broadband regulatory environment, new public digital services infrastructures, digital skills and jobs and cloud computing, the goals of the DAE are to extend broadband coverage to the entire EU by 2013, to reach 50% of the population buying online by 2015, to suppress the roaming costs, to increase the regular internet use up

⁴ DG Enterprise: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/ict/competitiveness/ict-brief/index_en.htm



to 75% by 2015 and to encourage e-government⁵. Progress against these targets is measured in the annual Digital Agenda Scoreboard.

The European Commission has estimated that the full implementation of this updated Digital Agenda would increase European GDP by 5%, or 1500€ per person, over the next 8 years. In terms of jobs, up to one million digital jobs risk going unfilled by 2015 without pan-European action while 1.2 million jobs could be created through infrastructure construction. This would rise to 3.8 million new jobs throughout the economy in the long term.

The European Commission also supports the emergence of a Digital European Research Area (ERA) where researchers, knowledge, and technologies circulate freely.

ICT standardisation: a voluntary process between stakeholders

Since 2004⁶, the European Union has encouraged the development of common technical specifications based on consensus among stakeholders, on a voluntary cooperation basis. Indeed, standards play an essential role for interoperability, privacy and accessibility thereby effectively supporting the use of ICT applications and services. The European Commission is also encouraging to include openness, transparency and web neutrality⁷ in ICT standardisation.

The new Rolling Plan for ICT Standardisation (2013) aims to give a non-binding multi-annual activity plan, listing key standardization sectors for the following years. Even if tourism is not quoted as such, all the standardisation work linked to web accessibility, e-skills and e-learning, accessibility of ICT services and products and e-invoicing could be of direct interest for tourism.

In DANTE, to further implement the pilot action, partners will have to use public procurement procedures. In 2012, the EU Regulation No 1025/2012 on European standardisation renews the possibility⁸ to allow technical standards in public procurement. In addition, public procurement could now refer to ICT technical specifications, to respond to the fast evolution in the field of ICT, facilitate the provision of cross-border services, encourage competition and promote interoperability and innovation.

⁵ DG Connect: 7 pillars and objectives of Digital Agenda: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/node/1505>

⁶ EU Communication "[The role of European standardisation in the framework of European policies and legislation](#)" and Commission's staff working document on [the challenges for European standardisation](#) (2004), and then [Commission White Paper of 3 July 2009 - Modernising ICT Standardisation in the EU: the Way Forward COM\(2009\) 324](#)

⁷ In September 2013, the Commissioner Nelly Croes has suggested [a telecom market reform](#) with the suppression of EU-wide and roaming-free mobile plans and the first-ever EU-wide protection of net neutrality. But, due to the European Elections in May 2014, this reform will be hardly adopted under the current EP's mandate.

⁸ Already given in the [Directive 2004/18/EC on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts](#)



A.3) Linking Tourism and ICT at EU level

The ICT and Tourism Business Action launched in 2013

DG Enterprise and Industry has well understood the importance to link ICT and tourism and thus has implemented in 2013, a specific programme called “ICT and Tourism Business Action”. This initiative has 3 main components:

- Policy component: a high-level group (HLG) of representatives from the fields of tourism, ICT and other relevant stakeholders will analyse market evolution, identify needs and make recommendations for future policy development.
- Technological component TOURISMLink: this demonstration project (2012 – 2014) aims at linking tourism professionals with the digital market, by facilitating ICT aspects of cooperation between companies located at different sections of the tourism industry's value chain, and ensuring that SMEs can easily participate in the digital value chain without having to bear heavy costs.
- Operational component Tourism-IT: a portal to assist businesses (mainly SMEs) in each step of their business processes. Its aim is to become the one stop shop, providing SMEs with relevant, practical information, including up to date ICT business tools, tutorials and training to help any tourism company set up, manage and promote their business.

A set of EU Funding schemes for the new programming period 2014-2020

In the previous programming period (2007-2013), the structural funds (ERDF, ESF), the 7^o Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, or the Competitiveness and Innovation Programmes (CIP) were the main EU funds supporting ICT and tourism projects, with some actions also being eligible under the Rural development Fund (EAFRD) through its economic diversification, broadband and LEADER measures.

In the new programming period (2014-2020), EU funds and instruments, including those already mentioned in this chapter will continue to support both ICT development and tourism and may help further implementation of strategies stemming from the DANTE project, linking ICT and rural tourism. The structure of funds has slightly changed from the previous period.

ERDF, ESF and EAFRD together with the Cohesion Fund and the Maritime and Fisheries Fund are now linked under a common **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)** umbrella. Implementation responds to a common provisions regulation with an annexed Common strategic framework (CSF) which has defined 11 thematic objectives for concentration of the use of EU funding in coherence with the EU 2020 strategy. ERDF funding must be concentrated on four thematic objectives, all four of which are relevant to



tourism and ICT: **innovation and research, digital development, SME competitiveness and low carbon economy**. Actions to be financed under the first two objectives are to be coherent with a **Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3)** to be defined at regional level. The RIS3 of territories in which DANTE partners are included should include a digital growth section if partners wish to fund ICT projects (for broadband or ICT services and products) through **ERDF or EAFRD, preferably mentioning the link to tourism**. **Interreg Europe** will help to exchange and implement good practices on ICT and tourism. **ESF** will encourage e-skills for workers and **EAFRD** will develop broadband and touristic infrastructures for renewal of villages in rural areas.

At EU level, businesses and entrepreneurs will be directly supported thanks to **COSME** (through grants, loan guarantee facility and the equity facility for Growth) to foster competitiveness of enterprises, including in the touristic sector. Mobility of young entrepreneurs will be encouraged through the **Erasmus for young entrepreneurs** programme.

Finally, at EU level, two funding schemes will directly focus on ICT:

- The **Connecting Europe Facility** will provide seamless cross-border public services such as eProcurement, eHealth, or Open Data.
- The new EU Research programme "**Horizon 2020**" will fund research activities, from fundamental research to close-to-market innovation. One dedicated work programme on ICT will focus on how to improve ICT technologies and the future internet thanks to cloud development, improvement of software development or wireless technologies.

For more details on the EU funding schemes for 2014-2020, please see the **Annex I: A set of EU funding schemes in the next programming period 2014-2020 for ICT and tourism**



B) National legislation, programs, plans

B.1) National legislation, programs, plans concerning Tourism

After the reform of the Section V, Part II, of the Italian Constitution (implemented with Constitutional Law n. 3, 18th October 2001) the **exclusive jurisdiction** in the tourism field belongs to the Regions.

National rules can be adopted only in order to guarantee:

- promotion, development and competitiveness of the tourism industry on the national and international level, as a fundamental resource for the Italian economy;
- reorganization and uniformity of the national tourism offer.

In case the national legislation should affect the regional jurisdiction, a confrontation is foreseen between national and regional level, through a specific procedure involving the “Standing Conference for the relationships among State, Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano” (so-called State–Regions Conference).

It is important to mention that such arrangement has proved to be a source of inefficiencies and delays more than once since its adoption: in the last 10 years, a relevant number of provisions were contested in front of the Constitutional Court and, in some cases, were declared unconstitutional, because the exclusive jurisdiction of the Regions had been violated.

The most relevant Law concerning tourism is the **Legislative Decree n. 79 /2011, “National Law on tourism organization and market”**, which was adopted in order to reorganize and unify the national legislative framework.

Among the relevant general principles, Art. 3 addresses the issue of accessible tourism: persons with all kinds of disabilities, even temporary, will have to be guaranteed the possibility to enjoy the national tourism offer autonomously and without restrictions, receiving the same services as the other customers without price increases.

Art. 4 and 5 give a definition of “tourism business” and “no profit tourism business”, including in the first category quite a wide range of subjects: all enterprises whose activity addresses the needs of tourists are to be considered “tourism businesses”.

Art. 6 gives a definition of “tourism professions”, including all professional services connected with tourism promotion, hospitality, assistance and guidance aiming at improving the tourist experience, also by means of a better understanding of the visited areas.

Art. 8 focuses on the accommodation facilities, providing a definition and a categorization scheme. Art. 9, 12, 13 and 14 further define the characteristics of each category.

Articles 18-21 regulate the activity of the travel agencies.

Articles 22-31 identify a range of tourism products which should be consistently developed



and promoted across the national territory:

- mountain tourism;
- sea tourism;
- lakes and rivers tourism;
- cultural tourism;
- religious tourism;
- green tourism;
- wine and food tourism;
- spas and wellness tourism;
- sport and golf tourism;
- convention tourism;
- youth tourism;
- tourism connected with the promotion of industrial and handicraft “made in Italy” products;
- arts and entertainment tourism.

The State-Region conference is entrusted with the identification of national excellence routes, products and thematic itineraries, which should connect different Regions across the national territory.

Art. 23 disciplines the Local Tourism Systems (previously introduced by the Law 135/2001). LTSs are homogeneous tourism contexts, possibly spanning over more than one Region, which were able to develop an integrated tourism offer. Such entities can be promoted by local public bodies as well as by local private subjects, adopting a participative planning approach.

Articles 32-51 set the discipline concerning contracts in the organized tourism industry, with a special focus on holiday packages.

Art. 57 describes the role of ENIT – the national tourism agency. ENIT was introduced with Decree of the President of the Republic n. 207 /2006, in order to guarantee a consistent promotion of the national tourism industry and favour its competitiveness on the international markets.

The relevant national legislation includes, as well, the **Law n. 96 /2006 “Regulation concerning agrotourism”** whose aim is to support the agricultural sector, through the promotion of adequate tourism forms in the rural areas. The new law abrogates the previous Framework Law n. 730 /1985. It includes some specific provisions which should be introduced by the Regions in their respective legislation.

Other recent **relevant provisions** are:



- the Law n. 71 /2013, which transfers the national competencies in the tourism field from the Council of Ministers to the Ministry for Cultural Heritage, which officially becomes the “Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Tourism” (Art. 1);
- the Law n. 97 /2013 “Adoption of obligations concerning the EU member states, year 2013”, which states that the tourism guide qualification is valid on the whole national territory and that European citizens which obtained a valid qualification in their own country can freely operate in Italy as tourism guides.

Among the most relevant **funding opportunities** at the national level, to be mentioned is the “Protocol for the implementation of projects of excellence” signed in June 2010. Admissible projects are assessed and selected for funding according to a list of “excellence criteria”, among which one of the most relevant is the use of ICT. Other criteria concern the number of Regions involved, the sustainability of the project, the effective integration with existing infrastructural and transport networks.

The projects are submitted by the Regions, possibly promoting initiatives devised by local authorities and public/private subjects. A specific agreement between the involved Regions and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism is also required. Funding of the selected projects, which have to be realized in a 36 months period, amounts to 90% of admissible cost.

Since the most relevant competencies for the development of tourism are entrusted to the regional level, the **lack of a strong national strategy** in the field is a strongly discussed issue. The reference document should currently be the “Strategic Plan for the development of tourism in Italy (Tourism Italy 2020)” adopted in January 2013, which identifies priorities and actions through which the strengthening and relaunch of the Italian tourism sector should be pursued. Anyway, after the collapse of the Government led by Mario Monti, which devised the Plan, it will not have legal relevance unless the new Government will officially adopt it.



B.2) National legislation, programs, plans concerning ICT

Legislation concerning the “Italian Digital Agenda”

The principles of the European Digital Agenda have been introduced into the Italian legislation with the adoption of the **Italian Digital Agenda** (Agenda Digitale Italiana - ADI), which has been:

- initially foreseen by the Law n. 35 /2012, converting into law the so-called Law-Decree “Decreto semplifica Italia” (February 2012);
- officially introduced with the Law n. 221 /2012, converting into law the so-called Law-Decree “Decreto sviluppo bis” (October 2012).

Other relevant Laws are:

- Law n. 134 /2012, converting into law the so-called Law-Decree “Decreto sviluppo” (June 2012);
- Law n. 106 /2011, converting into law the Law-Decree n. 70 /2011 (May 2011).

The ADI goals are coherent with the objectives identified at the European level: creation of jobs, increased productivity and competitiveness, social cohesion and, in general infrastructural and technological innovation of the whole country.

The implementation of the ADI has been entrusted to a newly created agency: the “Agenzia per l’Italia digitale”. Moreover, it has been foreseen that the Government will present each year a detailed report on the progress of the Agenda implementation.

Main operational priority of the ADI are:

- completing the broadband coverage (2 Mbps) and improving the ultrabroadband coverage (30 Mbps) on the whole national territory through the support of public funding;
- funding of projects in the field of “Smart Cities & Communities”: in the framework of some call of proposals innovative enterprises will have the possibility to submit projects addressing, through the use of ICT, specific needs of specific public administrations (such as: remote monitoring of clinical parameters of hospital patients or energy use in public buildings);
- improving and extending the use of ICT in the public administrations and the range of e-government services available to citizens, with a special focus on the following fields:
 - education, health system, justice;
 - national civil registry;
 - certified electronic mail;



- local transport, promoting a wider adoption of coordinated e-ticketing and m-payment solutions;
- e-invoicing;
- e-public procurement;
- open data;
- reuse of software;
- accessibility of public bodies websites;
- support to innovative enterprises (start-up), through funding of research projects, tax concessions and bureaucratic facilitations.

Another relevant legislative reference is the Legislative Decree n. 82 /2005, introducing the **CAD - Codice per l'Amministrazione Digitale (Regulations on the Digitalization of the Public Sector)**, with its successive modifications, among which the most relevant is the D.Lgs. 235 /2010. The CAD aims at a wider and better use of ICT in the public sector, focusing on issues such as accessibility of public data, e-government services and public sector IT systems. To be mentioned, in connection with the CAD, is also the Plan "DigitPA 2012-2014", which identifies the operational actions through which CAD goals should be pursued.

The CAD was approved well before the adoption of the ADI, which integrates and improves its contents, introducing some major modifications.

In order to comprehensively outline the national situation, it is essential to mention that at the end of 2013, one year after its official adoption, the **implementation of the ADI** is not fully under way: this depends mainly on the fact that the relevant legislation was for the most part not immediately applicable, requiring the further adoption of a great number of technical and detail regulations, which, with few exceptions, have not been approved according to the original deadlines. Other difficulties are connected with the internal organization of the Agency and the allocation of financial resources.

Many experts in the field voice the opinion that a stronger investment in the development of a consistent digital strategy for the country would be needed, while, on the contrary, it is still considered a sectoral issue and not an opportunity for the whole Italian economy. In the last months of 2013 the Government came to the resolution to give new impulse to the implementation of the ADI, focusing the efforts on three priorities: widespread adoption of e-invoicing, civil registry and citizen digital identity.

Not surprisingly the **Annual Report of the Digital Agenda Scoreboard** (assessing the progress in the implementation of the European Agenda) sees Italy in the last positions, and still losing ground, according to all assessment criteria, excluding the broadband coverage. The worst performances concern the:

- use of internet by the population;



- use of e-commerce by citizens and enterprises;
- availability of e-government services;
- ultrabroadband coverage;
- availability of widespread digital skills (while some peaks of excellence are to be found in enterprises, universities and research centres all over the country).

Open data

A specific mention should be devoted to the theme of **open data**, which could, potentially, have a huge impact on the tourism field.

The European Directive n. 98 /2003, firstly promoting the release of data collected by the public sector, has been adopted in the Italian legislation by means of the Legislative Decree n. 36 /2006, later modified by the Law 96 /2010. The adoption of the Italian Digital Agenda has introduced some important innovations:

- public data are to be considered “open” by default, unless specific reasons require it;
- the release of open data becomes one of the criteria upon which the performance of public managers should be assessed;
- a national agenda for the development of open data is foreseen, together with a governmental annual report.

It is also important to mention that, on the basis of the pre-existing CAD regulation (Legislative Decree n. 82 /2005), modified by the new ADI provision, in July 2013 the Agenzia per l’Italia Digitale has published a technical document which should become the main reference for all Italian public administrations releasing their data. The document, which contains guidelines on technical standards and procedures, as well as reference best practices, will be updated every year. It was written taking into account the previous experiences of a great number of relevant stakeholders, among which Regione Piemonte played a leading role (see further).

Italy has renewed its commitment towards the full opening of public data in June 2013, signing the Open Data Charter, defined in the G8 meeting. The charter affirms that open data are a huge opportunity for economic growth, it includes an expectation that all government data will be published openly by default, alongside principles to increase the quality, quantity and re-use of the data that is released. G8 members have also identified 14 high-value areas – from education to transport, and from health to crime and justice – from which they will release data by the end of 2015.

On the basis of these commitments, at the end of October 2013 the Italian Government has



approved the “Open Data Action Plan”, which identifies the key datasets to be published by the above mentioned deadline. The first four include:

- national statistics collected by ISTAT;
- electoral data;
- public bodies balance sheets

and, most relevant for the development of new services and applications in the tourism field:

- maps of the whole national territory on a 1:250.000 scale.

At the moment about 8.000 Italian datasets are available (published by national and local public administrations). The most part of the Italian open datasets is available through the internet national official portal: dati.gov.it

This marks a positive trend, considering that in September 2012 only about 3.000 open datasets had been published, nonetheless Italy still ranks as the least advanced among the countries signing the G8 charter, according to a report published by Open Knowledge Foundation during the G8 meeting. This is due mainly to the average poor datasets quality, which, in most cases is still lacking according to many technical criteria.

ICT and tourism

No specific legislation regulates the relationship between ICT and tourism in the Italian context. Anyway it is important to mention a recent **Protocol of Agreement**, promoted by the Italian Government **between ENIT and Expo2015**, which signed it in October 2013. Following this agreement, ENIT will develop the “**digital catalogue of the Italian tourism offer**”, according to the standards adopted by Expo2015 on the basis of widely recognized international standards. The respect of these standards will guarantee to all Italian tourism businesses the accessibility and interoperability of their data, allowing for an easier promotion and, on a general level, for a greater competitiveness of the national tourism sector.

The catalogue will be available for the first time inside **E015**, the digital platform created in the framework of the Expo2015 event.

According to its developers, E015 is a “digital ecosystem: an open, competitive, non-discriminatory and concurrent cooperation digital environment”: E015 is not a piece of software or an application, on the contrary it is a platform, based on shared standards, which enables and facilitates the development of software applications by different subjects and their integration.

The idea behind E015 is that “Expo 2015 will see the participation and involvement of millions of people who, as well as visiting the exhibition site, will utilise local services provided by companies, public bodies and other public and private entities”. E015 should



guarantee the possibility to integrate, inside each application or digital service which will be developed in connection with the event, all the information relevant for the visitors of Expo2015 (concerning the event, but also the different means of transportation, accommodation and catering facilities, tourism attractions, shopping opportunities...).

The E015 Digital Ecosystem aims to be one of the legacies of Expo2015 to the country. The agreement between ENIT and Expo2015 has been announced as the first action of a more comprehensive governmental plan for the digitalization of the tourism industry.

Free WI-FI hot spots

Finally, it is important to mention a specific Law which should positively impact the availability of free WI-FI hot spots, much less widespread at the moment in Italy than in other European countries. Their presence will be very important in order to provide foreign visitors with the possibility to fully exploit all available tourism applications and digital information channels, at least until the costs for internet navigation abroad will not go down.

The above mentioned provision is the Law Decree n. 225 /2010, converted into Law n. 10 /2011, which cancelled some obligations addressed to all subjects offering Internet access to the public. Such rules had been established with previous laws (such as, most relevant, the so-called “Decreto Pisanu”, approved in 2005). Among them the need to request a Police permit, the need to identify all subjects using the service and to keep tracks of all connections, which made impossible the set up of freely accessible wi-fi hot spots.



C) Regional and local legislation, programs, plans

C.1) Regional and local legislation, programs, plans concerning Tourism

Piemonte Region

On the regional level the tourism sector is regulated by the Regional Law n. 75 /1996 “Organization of tourism promotion, information and hospitality in Piemonte Region”

The first section lays down the role and functions of the Region and its Provinces.

The Region is entrusted with all activities connected with the direction, coordination and financial support of the sector, the drawing up of strategic yearly and multi-year plans, the organization and management of the Regional Tourism Observatory.

The Provinces are entitled with the promotion of the local tourism sector and the tourism resources, the coordination of the activities implemented by the Local Tourism Agencies (“ATL - Agenzie di accoglienza e promozione turistica locale”), the participation in the drawing up and updating of the strategic yearly and multi-year plans.

Articles 9 – 13 discipline the activities of the Local Tourism Agencies.

Articles 14 – 17 discipline the granting of regional contributions:

- to the Local Tourism Agencies for their institutional activities as well as for the implementation of specific projects;
- aiming at the promotion of specific tourism products;
- supporting the organization of events and promotional itineraries (periodic call for proposals);
- focusing on marketing of the tourism offer (periodic call for proposals).

In 2009, the regional tourism legislation was modified by the adoption of the Regional Law n. 38 “Adoption of the Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on services in the internal market”, whose articles 2 – 11 innovate the previous provisions concerning:

- accommodation facilities;
- travel agencies and tour operators;
- tourism professions.

Other relevant regional provisions:

- Regional Law n. 14 /1995 and further modifications “Classification of hotel facilities”;
- Regional Law n. 31 /1985 and further modifications “Regulation of non-hotel



accommodation”;

- Regional Law n. 38 /1995 “Regulation of agrotourism businesses”;
- Regional Law n. 54 /1979 “Regulation of open-air facilities”;
- Regional Law n. 8 /2010 “Alpine refuges and other mountain accommodation facilities”;
- Regional Law n. 50 /1992 “Regulations on the ski instructor profession”;
- Regional Law n. 41 /1994 “Regulations on the mountain guide profession”;
- Regional Law n. 33 /2001 “Regulations on tourism professions”;

In the near future the most relevant strategic document is going to be the the “**Strategic Regional Tourism Programme 2013- 2015**”, which should carry on the efforts undertaken with the previous reference document, the “Framework for promotion, information and hospitality actions – year 2012”.

The document is currently under development by “Sviluppo Piemonte Turismo” with the support of the Local Tourism Agencies, with a bottom-up and partecipative approach: since the end of 2012, discussion meetings are taking place in all the Piedmontese Provinces, involving a relevant number of public and private stakeholders. It is also possible to take part in the discussion online, through the discussion blog available under www.piemonte-turismo.it/dibattiti (section “Debates - Strategic Tourism Programme”), which addresses all the key issue of the future programme: tourism products, market and market segments, tourism businesses and professionals, hospitality and accessibility, sustainability, communication and promotion, meeting industry.

No **regional funding opportunity** are available at the moment of writing, but, as already mentioned, the Region periodically issues call for proposals supporting the implementation of interventions in the tourism field. The most relevant concerns:

- the requalification of the tourism offer and the accommodation facilities. The last calls for proposals were funded in the framework of the “Plan of interventions for the development and requalification of the Piedmontese tourism offer – Piedmont... you’re at home” (Piemonte... sei a casa)”. The reference legislation is the Regional Law 21/2006 “Interventions for the economic development in the post-Olympic period”. This opportunity is addressed to: Chambers of Commerce, trade associations, non-profit bodies and associations, Local Tourism Agencies and other public funded bodies. The funded interventions could include, among others, innovative actions focusing on ICT, mobile, web services. Other potential fields of action are: studies and development of tourism products, improvement of hospitality sector (information campaigns, enhancement of accessibility, promotion of the short supply chain and of the local agricultural products), strengthening competitiveness and marketing competencies of the local tourism businesses, through the adoption of quality labels and the creation of businesses networks.



- “regional interventions for the development, revitalization and qualitative improvement of regional tourism destinations”: the relevant provisions are included in the Regional Law 4/2000, main beneficiaries are public bodies and non-profit subjects;
- “advertisement and promotional activities in the tourism field”, disciplined by the Regional Law n. 75 /1996, art. 16. The activities must be implemented by public bodies or non-profit associations and should aim at promoting the tourism resources of the Piedmont Region and attracting relevant tourism flows towards specific destinations, through the organization of events and other initiatives.

Province of Turin

The Italian Provinces does not have legislative competencies, which means that no relevant provincial legislation exist, but it is important to take into consideration the existing relevant strategic and planning documents.

The most recent “ Tourism Plan for the Province of Turin” was elaborated in 2007, in order to support the unification of the three Local Tourism Agencies operating at the time in the area.

The Plan defines an integrated strategy for the development of tourism in the Province of Turin, identifying the following homogeneous sub-areas “Pinerolo and Waldensian Valleys”, “Olympic Mountains”, “Susa and Sangone Valleys”, “Turin Belt, Po river and its confluences” and “Canavese, Lanzo and Ceronda Valleys”.

The Plan has not been further updated, so the relevant reference document are:

- the “Relazione Previsionale e Programmatica 2011-2013” (RPP), the strategic document which identifies the objectives which will be pursued by the Province over a three years period, defining specific programmes and projects for their implementation and assigning specific resources;
- the Economic Management Plan (“Piano Economico di gestione” – PEG), which covers a 1 year time span.



C.2) Regional and local legislation, programs, plans concerning ICT

Piemonte Region has not yet officially approved its own Regional Digital Agenda. Until now this role was played by the “ICT Strategic Plan” (Piano Strategico per l’ICT) approved in April 2011, as a part of the more comprehensive “Regional Competitiveness Plan 2011/2015”. The ICT Plan is made up of two Axis, focusing on the innovation of, respectively, the Public Administration (and specifically the health and information systems) and the most relevant Piedmontese manufacturing sectors. For the implementation of the Plan, relevant financial resources, amounting to 150 millions Euro, has been allocated.

During 2013, in the framework of INTERREG IVC Project ONE (Observatory Network to Enhance ICT Structural Funds Absorption), the Region started the procedure for the writing up of a Regional Digital Agenda, involving a wide number of relevant stakeholders,

Piemonte Region is in the vanguard among the Italian Regions for its commitment towards a full exploitation of the ICT potential.

Most relevant are the efforts in the fields of:

- open data;
- open source software;
- open WI-FI;

which, in each case, brought to the adoption of a specific regional law.

Open data

The efforts in this fields started a few years ago with:

- DGR n. 11-1161 /2005, stated for the first time some important principles;
- DGR n. 31 - 11679 /2009, defined regional guidelines for the release of data, together with standard licenses for different data and user categories;
- DGR n. 36-1109 /2010, approved a revised version of the guidelines, extending the range of reusable data.

In 2011 a comprehensive Regional Law, the first in Italy, was approved: it is the Regional Law n. 24 /2011, so-called “Open data law”, concerning the “publication and reuse through internet of documents and data possessed by the regional administration”.

Accordingly to art. 5 of the new law, the above mentioned guidelines have been newly revised with DGR n. 22-4687 /2012, which foresees, among other provisions, that each Regional Directorate will have to issue an yearly plan of data to be published. A complaint



procedure has also been introduced.

The updated guidelines confirm, as well, the possibility for all Piedmontese public administrations to make use of the online platform set up by the Region in order to publish their data.

This tool is the Internet portal www.dati.piemonte.it, created by Region Piemonte in order to make available its public data. In October 2013, it already includes a wide range of datasets, among which, most interesting under the tourism point of view:

- the data concerning tourism flows, collected by the Regional Tourism Observatory;
- the list of accommodation facilities;
- the georeferenced data of the regional mountain paths.

The creation of the online platform was supported by the creation of a document defining a standard license for the release of data and an operational guide for the adoption of different license types, which were made available to all interested public administrations and represented a base for the drawing up of the national guidelines.

Open source software

The Regional Law n. 9 /2009, concerning “adoption of open source software and portability of documents in the public administration”, stated that, while purchasing software, Region Piemonte will give preference to open source options (art. 6).

The possibility to achieve substantial savings is one of the main reasons behind this decision, but not the only one: most relevant is also the idea that the adoption of open source software could have a positive economic impact, promoting the creation of new products and services by a wide range of subjects.

While the Law was cherished by the open source supporters, the Government contested it in front of the Constitutional Court as undermining fair competition. Anyway, the judgement n. 122 /2010 ascertained that the Law n. 9 is fully legitimate, since the “open source” requirement concerns a legal characteristic of the software, while not identifying a specific product or brand.

Open WI-FI

The goal of the efforts in this field is to provide the biggest number of local inhabitants, and tourist as well, with internet access, which is counted among the rights of citizens.

The relevant references in this field are the Regional Law n. 5 /2011 concerning “support to the creation of free WI-FI networks” (first in Italy of this kind) and its implementing regulation,



approved in November 2012, which foresees and establishes procedures for :

- granting contributions up to 500€ to:
 - subjects offering free WI-FI coverage in areas open to the general public (restaurants, bars and alike)
 - local authorities setting up WI-FI hot spots in public areas.

In order to combat the digital divide such interventions have to be implemented in Municipalities under the 5.000 inhabitants;

- opening of WI-FI networks in every seat of the regional administration in Piedmont (about 130). Free access without registration will be guaranteed to everybody;
- promotion of all newly available hot spots.

Regional ICT Observatory

The interest of Piemonte Region for a full exploitation of the ICT potential, is proved also by the existence of a regional ICT Observatory, which operates since 2004 supporting Piemonte Region in the strategic planning and assessment of policies and projects in the field of ICT.

The Observatory publishes an Annual Report, which has been the source of many information included in this report.



Chapter 4 – Organisation of tourist system at national/local level

National level

As already mentioned in Chapter 3, with the Law n. 71/2013 the “Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities” became the “**Ministry for Cultural Heritage, Cultural Activities and Tourism**” (www.beniculturali.it) and was appointed with the national level functions in the tourism field.

While describing the organization of the national tourist system, the Ministry has to be mentioned also in connection with its role in the planning, management and promotion of a wide range of resources which are fundamental tourist attractors: cultural heritage (including museums), landscape, arts.

ENIT – National Tourism Agency (www.enit.it), is a public body whose main function is the integrated promotion and marketing of the national and regional tourism offer on the foreign markets. Fields of activity of ENIT are: promotion of the Italy brand, support to marketing, drawing up of studies and researches.

ENIT is disciplined by the Law n. 80 /2005 and the Presidential Decree n. 207 /2006.

ONT – National Tourism Observatory (www.ontit.it) was created in order to study, analyze and monitor all social and economic trends which can be relevant for the development of the tourism industry. Its web site publishes: researches realized by ONT, as well as other Italian and foreign tourism studies; statistical data; international, national and regional legislative provisions and programming documents.

Regional and local level

As already described in Chapter 3, the Regional Law n. 75 /1996 entrusts **Region Piemonte** with some fundamental functions for the development and management of the regional tourism industry: the competences of the Region include all activities connected with the direction, coordination and financial support of the sector, the drawing up of strategic yearly and multi-year plans, the organization and management of the Regional Tourism Observatory.

Region Piemonte performs, as well, wide-ranging functions in the planning, management and promotion of resources which play a central role in the regional tourism offer. To mention some examples:



- **museums, cultural and architectural heritage:** the Region is active in the definition of standards, the drawing up of yearly and multi-year plans and projects, as well as the funding of requalification and enhancement interventions;
- **open-air museums:** Region Piemonte supports the network of the regional open-air museums (www.ecomusei.net/piemonte-ecomusei) providing coordination, specialized know-how and funding opportunities and realizing promotional and informational campaigns;
- **hiking trails:** Region Piemonte can count on a network of 16.000 km of mountain trails (www.regione.piemonte.it/retescursionistica/cms), further enriched by a relevant number of aided rock-climbs (*vie ferrate*) and climbing routes. The Region has significantly invested in the promotion of this huge heritage, in the framework of its institutional competencies which include: planning (the main references are the Regional Law n.12/2010 and the connected operational regulation n. 9/R/2012), requalification and maintenance, information and communication, creation and promotion of tourism products.

“Sviluppo Piemonte Turismo” (www.piemonte-turismo.it) is an in-house company created by Region Piemonte, according to the provisions of Regional Laws 13/2006 and 9/2007, in order to perform specific specialized functions in the tourism field. The main action fields are: Market research & statistics, Strategic marketing, Product development, Qualitative enhancement of the regional tourism offer, Internet & consumer services.

Among the many specific tasks entrusted to Sviluppo Piemonte Turismo:

- organization of the BITEG exhibition (International Trade Fair of Wine and Food Tourism);
- management of the internet site www.piemonteitalia.eu;
- currently: technical assistance to Region Piemonte for the drawing up of the Strategic Tourism Plan 2013 -2015 (see Chapter 3).

According to the Regional Law n. 75 /1996, the **Piedmontese Provinces** are entitled with the promotion of the local tourism sector and the tourism resources, the coordination of the activities implemented by the Local Tourism Agencies (“ATL - Agenzie di accoglienza e promozione turistica locale”), the participation in the drawing up and updating of the strategic yearly and multi-year plans.

The reference programming document for the **Province of Turin** (“RPP 2011-2013”, see Chapter 3) identifies the following fields of intervention:

- financial support to the Local Tourism Agency “Turismo Torino e Provincia”, which is participated by the Province of Turin (the contribution currently amounts to about 130.000 €/year);



- planning and realization of tourism products focusing on specific sub-areas of the Province of Turin (among the most recent “Land of Horses” for the drumlin hills area around Ivrea);
- set up of networks of tourism businesses and resources, in the form of thematic routes, established through Protocol of Agreements. Among the others: the Apple Route (rural area near Pinerolo), Gran Paradiso Route, Assietta Route, Colours and Flavours Route (rural area near Chieri), Wine Royal Route (all across the Province);
- development, maintenance and promotion of mountain trails suitable for multi-day hikes (Alta Via Canavesana, Glorioso Rimpatrio).

All goals are pursued by the Province with the employ of own financial resources, as well as in the framework of complex programmes and projects, often funded by EU resources.

Besides the DANTE project, where the Province of Turin plays the role of Lead Partner, other relevant projects are, for example:

- PIATTAFORMA TECNOLOGICA TURISTICA (Tourism Digital Platform), realized in partnership with: Communauté des Communes du Briançonnais (Lead Partner), Local Tourism Agency “Turismo Torino e Provincia”, in the framework of Interreg Alcotra programme 2007-2013 (total value: Euro 935.890);
- PROMOTERROIR, focusing on the promotion of local products, realized in partnership with: Pays de Haute-Provence (Lead Partner), Université européenne des Saveurs et des Senteurs, Slow Food, Conservatoria delle Cucine Mediterranee, in the framework of Interreg Alcotra programme 2007-2013 (total value: Euro 1.533.410).

The role and functions of the **Local Tourism Agency “Turismo Torino e Provincia”** are described in the Regional Law n. 75/1996 and subsequent modifications.

“Turismo Torino” was created through the unification of the three Local Tourism Agencies previously operating in the area (LTA 1 “Turin and its surroundings”, LTA 2 “Susa Valley and Pinerolo area”, LTA 3 “Canavese area and Lanzo Valleys”).

The unification process started in 2007 and was completed with the Regional Law n. 22/2009 (art. 49), which modified the Regional Law n. 75/1996 (art. 11), establishing that multiple tourism homogeneous areas can be promoted by the same Local Tourism Agency.

"Turismo Torino" is responsible for tourism promotion and information in the Province of Turin. All activities are implemented also through the Local Information Offices (IAT - Uffici di Informazione e Accoglienza Turistica) and are funded through public financial resources assigned by Piemonte Region and the other public and private subjects which participate "Turismo Torino": Province of Turin, provincial Municipalities, Chamber of Commerce, trade associations and private businesses.



The “**Government department responsible for architectural heritage and landscape in the Provinces of Turin, Asti, Cuneo, Biella and Vercelli**” (Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici e Paesaggistici) is the authority representing on the local level the Ministry for Cultural Heritage, Cultural Activities and Tourism.

Its functions revolve around the protection and promotion of historical, artistic and cultural heritage in the possession of public, private-public or religious bodies. Such functions can concern private assets and estates as well, if possessing relevant historical or artistic value.

Even if the main administrative activity of the **Turin Chamber of Commerce** is keeping the Register of Enterprises, its mission is much more comprehensive, addressing issues such as the growth of the local economy and its enhancement through effective and targeted initiatives. The Turin Chamber represents and promotes the about 200.000 companies listed in its Register of Enterprises, which fund its activity through their annual Membership fee, offering a wide range of target services, such as:

- training
- access to financing
- access to technological innovation
- information, consultancy and organization of commercial missions and opportunities for companies involved in foreign trade.

Among the many activities and projects concerning the tourism field, to be mentioned are:

- the development and management of the quality label “**Yes! Enjoy Torino Top Hospitality**”, which is awarded by the Turin Chamber of Commerce to the accommodation facilities belonging to specific categories (currently hotels, service flats, mountain refuges) which can prove the respect of quality parameters such as: courtesy, efficiency, cleanliness, ease of booking, environmental sustainability;
- the management of the quality label “**Ospitalità italiana**”, a certification scheme jointly promoted by all the Italian Chambers of Commerce and addressed to accommodation and catering facilities, which can prove the respect of a specific disciplinary;
- the project “**MADE IN TORINO - TOUR THE EXCELLENT**”, implemented in cooperation with the Local Tourism Agency "Turismo Torino e Provincia", which aims at promoting the local manufacturing businesses and their products as a tourism resource.

Important players for the development and implementation of local tourism strategies are also the **LAGs (Local Action Groups)**, public-private companies created in the framework of the Regional Rural Development Program, which regulates the use of the FEASR European Fund.



In the programming period 2007-2013, 3 LAGs were active in the Province of Turin:

- LAG “Valli del Canavese” (covering the northern mountain part of the Province);
- LAG “Valli di Lanzo, Ceronda e Casternone” (covering the three valleys departing from the town of Lanzo, between the remaining two LAGs);
- LAG “Escartons e Valli Valdesi” (covering the mountain area closer to Pinerolo, in the southern part of the Province).

Each LAG had to devise, through a bottom-up approach, its own development plan, which had to be implemented through funding of projects presented by local micro-enterprises or, in some cases, Municipalities and other public bodies. LAGs had also the possibility to support the enterprises in their areas involving qualified consultants and organizing specific training activities. According to the principles established at the European level, the focus had to be on promoting cooperation among local actors and especially enterprises, as a powerful way to boost their competitiveness.

For each of the three LAGs, tourism was an important part of the development strategy, even if the focus was different:

- LAG “Valli del Canavese” focused on the creation of a Consortium among its tourism business: this goal had been missed in the previous programming period and it was considered a crucial priority;
- LAG “Valli di Lanzo, Ceronda e Casternone”, which could count on an already existing and quite active Consortium, focused its strategy on the creation of a tourism offer “for all”, targeting accessibility as a way to achieve a general higher level of service standards;
- LAG “Escartons e Valli Valdesi”, introduced in its development plan many actions aiming at the promotion of some hiking itineraries, deeply connected with the local history and identity (for example the “Glorious Return” itinerary connected with the history of the local Waldensian Protestant Community in the XVII century).

More information about the role which the LAGs will play for the development of tourism on the local level in the programming period 2014-2020 will be available after the drawing up of the Regional Rural Development Plan and of the respective Local Development Plans, most probably not earlier than 2015.

Among their many competencies, most **Municipalities** are active in the tourist promotion of their territory, through the organization and communication of events, fairs and initiatives. Such activities are mostly organized and managed in cooperation with the Local Tourism Agencies and pro-loco (local associations promoting local culture and tourism, see further). The activities can also be managed jointly with other Municipalities, through specific agreements or more stable forms of cooperation (Unions of Municipalities).

The financial resources are sometimes found in the Municipal budget, but mostly acquired in the framework of regional, national or EU calls for proposals. Among the most relevant



funding opportunities in the recent past: Regional Law 4/2000, Measure 313.1 of the Regional Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 “Improvement of the hiking trails network”, Action 1.1, Axis 3, of the Regional Operational Programme of the European Regional Development Fund.

The **Pro Loco associations** are volunteer, non profit organizations whose aim is to promote some particular place, usually a Municipality, or a part of it, and its natural, cultural, historical, social and gastronomic resources. The Pro Loco operate in most cases, more at the service of residents than visitors, through the organization of events which target the local population. In some places though, the wider purpose of promoting the town's products or tourism has been taken on.

Region Piemonte disciplines the Pro Loco with the Regional Law n. 36/2000. Art. 6 entitles them to receive, upon request, specific regional financial contributions for the implementation of their activities.

More and more often, tourism initiatives are promoted also by the **Nature Parks**. The Province of Turin is home to 3 Regional Protected Areas "Turin Metropolitan Area", "Po river and Turin Hills", "Cotian Alps". Its borders include, as well, the southern part of the Gran Paradiso National Park. Finally, to be mentioned are 8 Provincial Parks, whose management is the responsibility of the Province of Turin.

Coherently with their institutional mission, the tourism initiatives promoted by the Parks, usually focus on the promotion of responsible and sustainable tourism and are often connected with didactical activities and the promotion of the hiking trails network. Some of these initiatives even brought to the adoption of disciplinaries and quality labels addressed to the local accommodation facilities or the local products.

The financial resources are derived from the Parks budget, or, often, from external funding opportunities (with a relevant use of Regional funds).

The description of the touristic system would not be complete without mentioning the subjects which take part in the programming and development of the tourism sector on behalf of the **offer side**.

Among the most relevant players, are the **sector associations**: organizations founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry. Some of the most relevant reference subjects in the Province of Turin are:

Sector of activity	Sector Associations
Hotel and non-hotel accommodation facilities	Federalberghi Torino



Bed & Breakfasts	Tourism Association “Bed&Breakfast Scopripiemonte” Association “Bed and Breakfast Torino Service”
Agrotourism farms	Association “Terranostra” (created by the agricultural sector association “Coldiretti”) Association “Turismo Verde” (created by the agricultural sector association “Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori – CIA”) Association Agriturist (created by the agricultural sector association “Confagricoltura”)
Mountain refuges	Association “AGRAP”
Restaurant industry	Ascom Torino – Epat (representing retail and catering businesses, with the main focus on restaurants. Created by the retail sector association “Confcommercio”). F.I.E.P.E.T. - Federazione Italiana Esercizi Pubblici e Turistici (representing retail, catering and tourism businesses. Created by the retail sector association “Confesercenti”).

In many provincial tourism sub-areas, an important role is also played by the **Tourism Consortia**, which brings together the local tourism businesses.

The main goal of these bodies is the joint marketing of the local tourism offer (products and services of the businesses taking part in the Consortium). In order to support their activities Tourism Consortia can benefit from specific regional funding opportunities (the most relevant are foreseen by Art. 17, Regional Law n. 75/1996, funding amounts to up to 50% of admissible costs).

Local businesses are, finally, aggregated and represented in the framework of different **promotional initiatives**, revolving, in many cases, around the implementation of **quality schemes** and labels. Among the many possible examples, for the Turin province area: “Yes! Enjoy Torino Top Hospitality” and “Ospitalità italiana” (already mentioned in connection with the role of Chamber of Commerce) and “B&B doc”, quality label developed and managed by the Province of Turin, addressing the local Bed&Breakfast accommodation facilities.



Contents 5 – Current situation on rural and mountain tourism in the region

Piemonte Region

Piemonte Region is a comparatively “young” tourism destination: with a long tradition in the manufacturing sector, it started to develop this new sector in the years 2000. The efforts were strongly intensified in 2005-2006, when Torino and its mountains hosted the XX Olympic Winter Games.

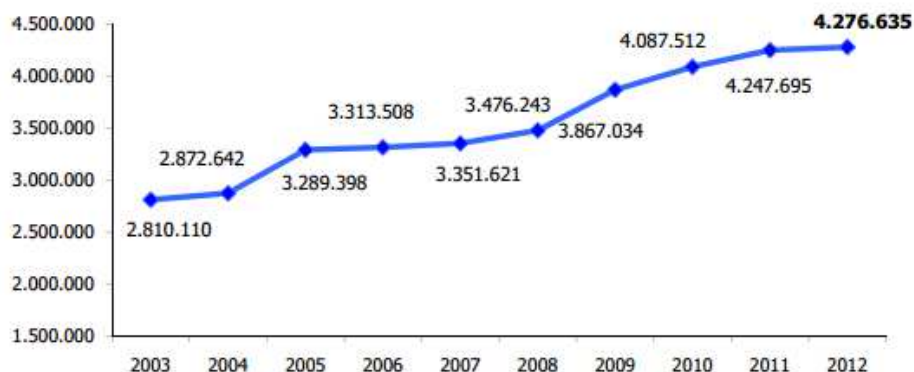
Since then tourism flows has been steadily growing, settling at over 12 millions presence and 4 millions arrivals in 2012.

The reaserch “Impatto economico, ricadute e redditività del turismo in Piemonte”, published by Sviluppo Piemonte Turismo in 2012, states that in 2010 the tourism sectore generated for the Piedmon Region 3.5 billion euro expenses (more or less equally divided among visitors from abroad, Italy and Piedmont), 5.5 billion euro added value and 167.000 jobs.

Tourist visiting Piedmont belongs mostly to the middle and middle-high classes, show a high education level and a good expense possibility.

The following graphics show the tourism flows from 2003 to 2012, steadily growing while most Italian regions have lost ground in the same period. The number of arrivals has grown from 2011 to 2012, the slight decrease in the number of presences is due to a strong decrease in the number of Italian tourists, while the foreign visitors continued to grow.

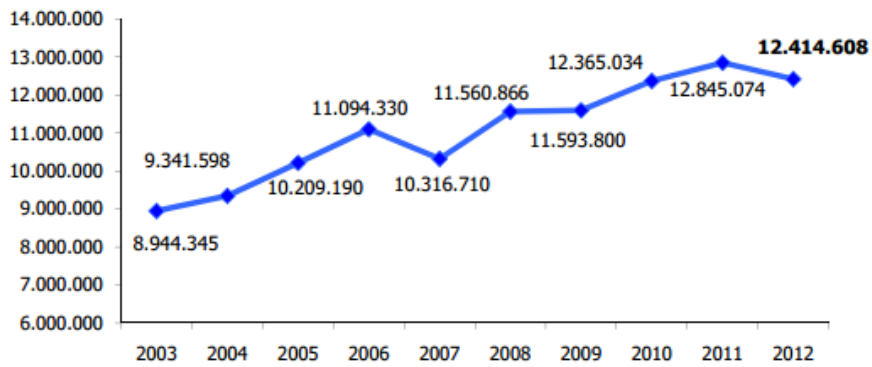
ARRIVALS, 2003 - 2012



Source: Regional Tourism Observatory



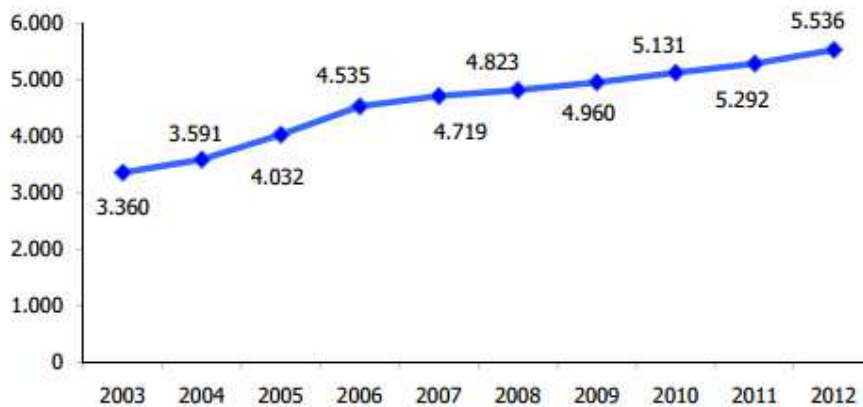
PRESENCES, 2003 - 2012



Source: Regional Tourism Observatory

Also steadily growing has been the number of accommodation facilities:

ACCOMODATION FACILITIES 2003 - 2012



Source: Regional Tourism Observatory



Such results are especially positive when considering that:

- since the Olympic Games in 2006, 2012 was the first year without big events which could stimulate relevant tourism flows;
- travel decrease in Italy in 2012 amounted on average to 8.3%, with a peak of 21.2% for the short-break segment, quite relevant for the Piedmontese tourism industry.

In the last year, foreign tourism flows increased by 20%, thanks to visitors from traditional European markets (Germany, BeNeLux, France, Great Britain, Scandinavia), as well as new markets (Russia, Cina e India), amounting now to 37% of the total number. This is very positive, since a recent study by Piemonte Region assessed that foreign tourists spend on average 71% more than Italian ones.

Ten years ago Piedmont certainly could not be considered a tourism destination, while today the tourism industry represents one of the fastest growing and promising economic sectors. This is confirmed by the statistics collected by the Internet site Trivago, which registered a 38% increase in the researches concerning “Torino” and 27% in the research concerning “Piemonte”, which ranked first in 2012 as “Italian Region with the best online reputation”. The European index Travel Sat shows that the strongest competitiveness factor for Piemonte is its enogastronomic heritage.

Province of Turin

Data concerning tourism in the Province of Turin can be better analyzed considering the three most relevant sub-areas, as in the following tables.

For the three sub-areas, results are positive in comparison to the pre-olympic period, even if a decrease happened in the last years, outside Turin metropolitan area, in connection with the economic crisis and the reduction of business travel and the absence of special events in 2012 (first year since the 2006 Olympic Winter Games).

Considering the arrivals in 2012, they are made up of: arrivals from Italy 76%, foreign arrivals 24% (mainly from: France, Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, Switzerland. First non-European country, on the tenth place, are the USA).

Arrivals	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Canavese e Valli di Lanzo	137,739	187,867	114,090	140,421	104,263	80,426	94,517	93,076	78,710	83,614
Valle di Susa e Pinerolese	317,308	434,093	479,160	491,767	298,917	279,880	221,938	264,246	232,118	236,383
Torino e area metropolitana	1,563,069	1,378,706	1,375,216	1,280,741	1,079,642	1,001,824	1,128,801	1,227,292	898,719	841,927
Nights spent	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Canavese e Valli di Lanzo	390,215	455,596	316,256	402,325	352,544	211,781	286,985	274,956	269,538	263,722
Valle di Susa e Pinerolese	1,283,470	1,913,183	1,920,950	2,038,101	1,939,064	1,278,658	1,481,637	1,206,754	1,036,746	1,002,406
Torino e area metropolitana	3,841,313	3,587,896	3,538,106	3,069,066	2,980,820	2,431,363	3,331,129	3,302,689	2,631,718	2,295,191



The following tables and charts, all basing on data from the Regional Tourism Observatory, show the type of accommodation facilities available in the two sub-areas "Canavese e Valli di Lanzo" and "Valle di Susa e Pinerolese", which hosts for the most part the mountain and rural tourism offer of the Province of Turin.

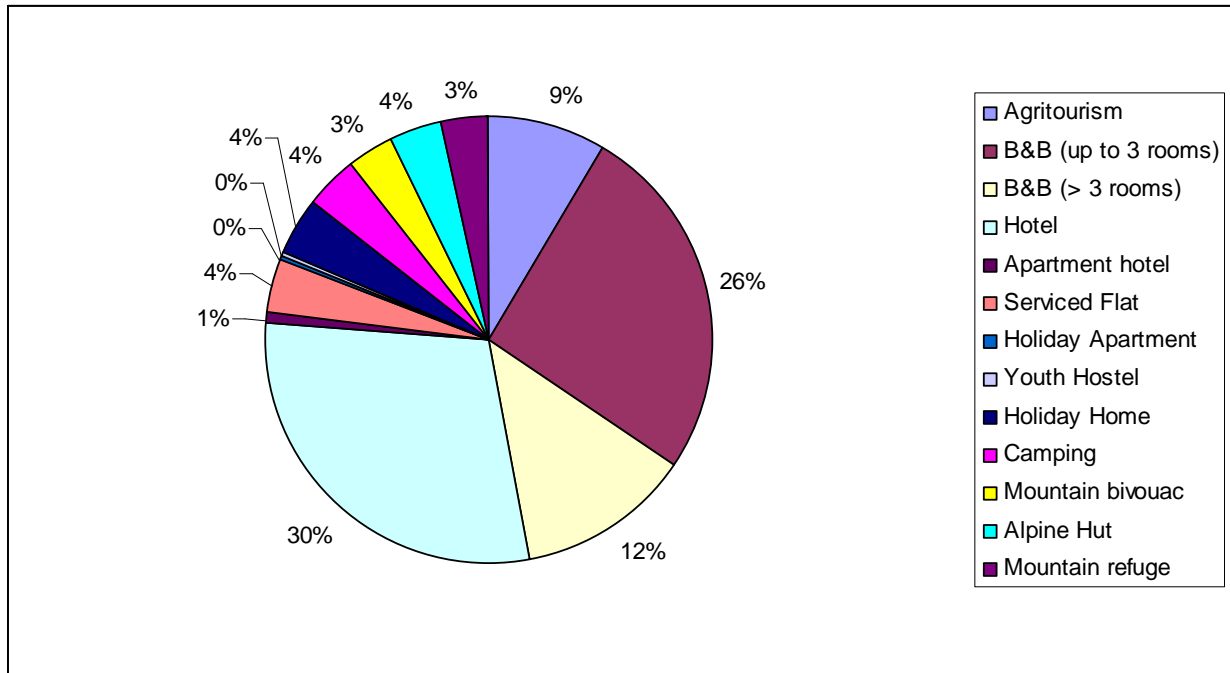
Area	Type of accomodation	Stars	Facilities	Rooms
Canavese e Valli di Lanzo	Agriturismo	-	29	111
	B&B (up to 3 rooms)	1	1	3
		2	57	124
		3	27	66
		4	1	3
	B&B (> 3 rooms)	-	41	182
	Hotel	1	13	169
		2	30	364
		3	46	977
		4	8	311
	Apartment hotel	2	1	13
		3	2	32
	Holiday Apartment	-	1	5
	Serviced Flat	-	13	87
	Holiday Home	-	14	259
	Youth Hostel	-	1	3
	Camping	1	3	183
		2	8	609
		3	2	84
	Mountain bivouac	-	11	11
Alpine Hut	-	13	54	
Mountain refuge	-	11	63	



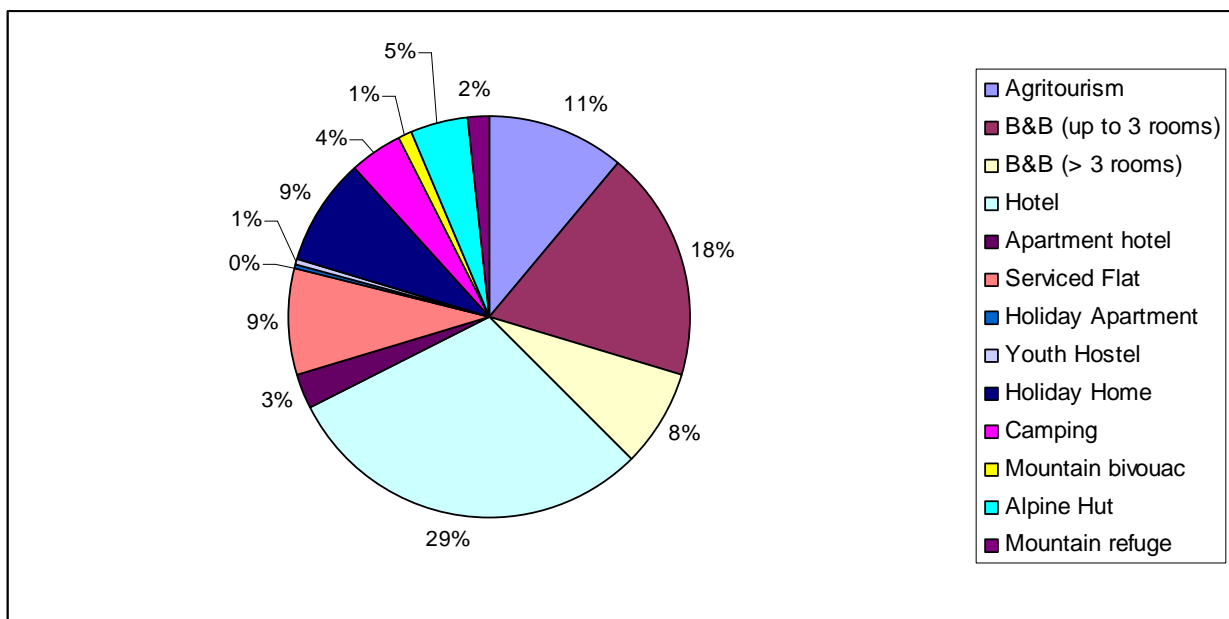
Area	Type of accomodation	Stars	Facilities	Rooms
Valle di Susa e Pinerolese	Agritourism	-	68	305
	Bed & Breakfast	1	6	11
		2	78	151
		3	26	59
		4	3	5
		B&B (> 3 rooms)	-	47
	Hotel	1	22	225
		2	44	902
		3	92	2696
		4	24	1703
	Apartment hotel	2	4	53
		3	12	333
		4	1	356
	Holiday Apartment	-	1	1
	Serviced Flat	-	52	401
	Holiday Home	-	52	1088
	Youth Hostel	-	4	51
	Camping	1	11	786
		2	9	1146
3		6	1039	
Mountain bivouac	-	6	6	
Alpine Hut	-	29	135	
Mountain refuge	-	10	54	



2012 - Canavese e Valli di Lanzo



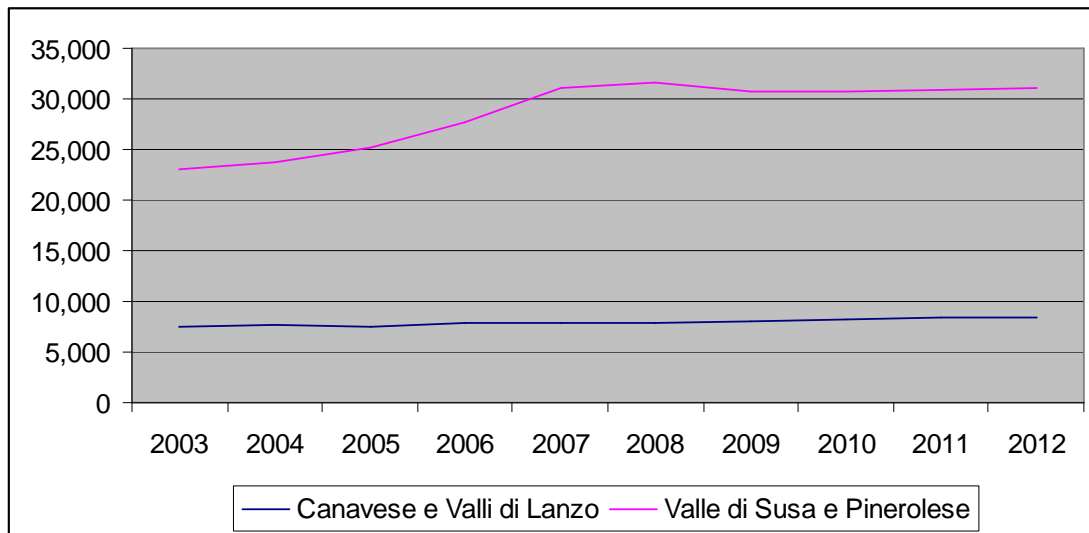
2012 - Valle di Susa e Pinerolese





Number of beds in the accommodation facilities

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Canavese e Valli di Lanzo	7,570	7,657	7,430	7,842	7,855	7,802	8,069	8,185	8,310	8,449
Valle di Susa e Pinerolese	23,118	23,773	25,178	27,713	31,155	31,664	30,695	30,790	30,818	31,157
Torino e area metropolitana	19,925	20,822	21,472	26,714	27,181	26,477	26,910	27,381	27,874	28,236



According to information collected by ATL Turismo Torino, the **target market segments have significantly changed** in the last years: the people interested in challenging mountain activities were for a good share substituted by a more **family oriented** target. This was due to the economic crisis, but it is also a trend in itself. This evolution was possible also thanks to the efforts of a relevant number of accommodation facilities, which were able to modify their offer in order to satisfy these new potential customers (for example: mountain refuges offering family rooms, instead of only dormitories).



ATL Turismo Torino saw an important increase in the requests concerning the most important **trekking routes** (Via Francigena and GTA, mainly) which could be the basis for a 3-7 days hiking. Such requests come for the most part (probably not less than 90%) from foreign tourists (mostly coming from European Countries which represent an established market for the Region - Germany, Austria, Switzerland, but also with a growing frequency from different Eastern European Countries). The demand is made up of single tourists, but also of small specialized tour operators. This new demand can be met with a good service standard also thanks to some projects implemented in the programming period 2007-2013, mainly with funds from the Regional Rural Development Plan, which allowed for the recovery of some critical points along the trekking routes and for the creation of new accommodation facilities in previously underserved areas.

Further investments are foreseen for the next programming period: ATL Turismo Torino has recently submitted to the Region a plan, which identifies a selection of "excellence hiking routes", whose maintenance will be specially guaranteed.

Concerning the winter season, an important and very positive trend is the rediscovery of the **smaller ski resorts** (Coazze and Prali, to mention two areas which had very positive results), due to the difficult economic situation, but also to the ability of the ski resorts to modernize their services, providing an appealing offer.

For example, quite appreciated was the possibility to hike along beaten tracks with snow shoes, which could be rented on the place.

An important part of the tourism offer in the Province of Turin is located in the **lower altitude mountain areas** or in the **rural territories**. Also in this case, ATL saw a relevant interest growth, coming mainly from families looking for new, and more rewarding ways, to spend their weekends (for example, as an alternative to spending time in shopping centres) or short breaks. This category of visitors seems to be mainly attracted by a mix made up of typical products, landscapes, material culture, blended in a "slow tourism" product. Their goal is "wellness", connected with a deeper knowledge of the areas they visit.

This kind of offer is quite attractive for the foreign tourists as well, but the demand is made up at the moment for the most part by Italians and visitors from Piedmont.



Chapter 6 – Stakeholders

The most relevant stakeholders have been identified and described in the section “Regional and local level” of Chapter 4 “Organization of touristic system”.

Chapter 6 will summarize the results of the meetings organized in the framework of Dante project, during which a panel of stakeholders were invited to assess the current situation as regards ICT and tourism in the regional / provincial context and to share their expectations.

The panel was made up of **subjects representing**:

- Piemonte Region
- associations of tourism service providers (accommodation facilities, restaurants, guides);
- specific tourism attractors (one nature park, projects concerning the promotion of specific sub-areas in the Province of Turin);
- companies operating in the ICT industry;
- one Tour Operator
- the Italian Alpine Club

The **main topics addressed** during the meetings were:

- ICT strategies and tools (social networks, internet sites, mobile apps, web cam) currently employed by each stakeholder;
- main obstacles to a wider adoption and a better exploitation of ICT solutions;
- current adoption of online booking platforms;
- current use of ICT tools in order to facilitate exchange of information and confrontation among tourism professionals and businesses;
- current use of ICT tools for market analysis;
- interest towards the possibility to access tourism databases;



- interest towards a wider use of QR Codes for tourist promotion (integration of QR codes into signs located along roads and mountain path, in order to promote tourist sites and attractors).

All the subjects taking part in the discussion have an **Internet web site**, which represents a fundamental tool in the framework of their commercial or institutional activity, being the only communication channel which allows reaching a wide audience with a very low investment (even if the time needed to create new contents and update information is quite relevant).

All of them are active on the **main social networks**, especially Facebook, but many of them are not quite convinced of the potentiality of these tools, which, in some cases, are considered just one passing trend. All participants underlined, as well, that a relevant effort is required in order to constantly update contents and moderate comments in an effective and professional way. Some of the participants even adopted specific mobile applications for the promotion of their projects or areas.

While addressing the **general situation** of the regional and local tourism sector, the stakeholders underlined that, according to their opinion, a large majority of the rural and mountain tourism service providers doesn't exploit at all the opportunities offered by ICT: a great part of them doesn't have an internet web site and many don't even use the most basic communication tools, such as the email. With a so low penetration rate, ICT policies cannot be effective: the priority is, thus, investing in training and empowerment of tourism service providers, in order to promote a more widespread adoption of ICT solutions.

The stakeholders also underlined that, even when an internet web site is available, in the most cases it plays just a promotional role, while, for example, the potential for a more effective marketing is underexploited (booking tools, web 2.0 tools, applications). On the contrary, fully taking the opportunities offered by ICT is crucial on the current global tourism market, which relies less and less on intermediaries such as travel agencies and more on the individual and autonomous choice.

A further critical issue is represented by the **broadband connectivity**, which is, in theory, guaranteed over the whole regional territory, but which actually proves to be poor or not constant in some more isolated mountain or rural areas, not reached by cable connectivity, hindering a wider adoption of advanced online solutions, such booking platforms or the promotion through rich multimedia contents (especially videos).

Concerning the use of ICT for the **communication among tourism professionals** and businesses, the group observed that it doesn't happen much through online tools (social networks, online communities, forums...), but mostly by means of traditional communication channels, such as phone or email. Sectoral forum or communities exist but are sometimes used in an unfair way or the privacy of participants doesn't seem to be sufficiently protected, so mistrust towards them is common.



One specific question concerned the use for tourism information of **QR codes**, which play a central role in the pilot action developed by the Province of Turin. Part of the stakeholders did not consider this possibility a relevant promotional channel, but such judgment is probably connected with a scarce knowledge of the tool. In some cases, this attitude is based on previous experiences, where QR codes were used as a channel for low quality contents. On the contrary, other participants see QR codes as an opportunity to innovate and enrich traditional communication tools, such as road signs, posters, brochures and leaflets or visiting cards, integrating them with online tools.

Concerning the **access to public data-sets or databases**, all stakeholders agreed that it would be a useful opportunity for the creation of new services or the improvement of the existing ones. Especially mentioned, were cartographic and georeferenced data (for example data concerning the regional network of mountain paths). The group was aware that the release of data often requires a relevant effort in order to “certify” their quality level and the dependability of the information and wished for a stronger commitment of public bodies in this field. They also wished for the release of data concerning statistics of tourism public web sites traffic, which could be a useful base for marketing analysis and the development of marketing strategies.

In general, the group:

- highlighted the fact that tourism **information** concerning the regional and local context is widely available on the Internet, but it is often **spread out** across too many unrelated web sites, which makes accessing and combining it very difficult;
- wished for a stronger **coordination** among sites promoting local tourism, with specific regards to the pages managed by public authorities. The regional and provincial public administrations should improve their communication with local public bodies, which, on their part, should strive for a better coordination of efforts on the sub-provincial level;
- required the public actors to support the development of technical “standards” and **guidelines** which could help small businesses owners to take correct decisions concerning ICT, which would otherwise require more and more advanced technical skills and competences (purchase of ICT tools and solutions, development of web sites...). The same guidelines could help, as well, the local public bodies in the set up of public procurement procedures (identify relevant tender requirements, correctly assess the value and future implications of IT solutions proposed by different vendors);
- underlined that improving the relationship between ICT and tourism should not mean just a wider employ of ICT tools in the promotion of the existing offer. On the contrary, stakeholders asked for the set up of actions focusing on the **development of new tourism services and attractors**, thanks to the opportunities offered by ICT tools. One specific



example concerned the use of smart cards in order to allow visitors to access tourism sites which are currently closed (a feasibility study focusing on three sites is currently under development in the provincial context);

- remarked that a wider exploitation of ICT potential in the tourism industry cannot be considered just a sectoral issue or goal: most ICT solutions require, in order to be effectively employed, relevant **innovation in the management and planning of the local tourism offer**. A relevant example is represented by the set-up of local booking platforms, which can be successful only if basing on an active and varied network of service providers, grouped with regards to their thematic or geographic connections and not just to their location inside of a specific administrative area. This is often currently not the case, since most existing tourism networks were developed with reference to administrative criteria, and not with the goal of developing and promoting a “tourism destination”.



Chapter 7 – Current situation, Environment and Trends

National level

On the national level, the digitalization of the tourism sector proceeds with a **slow pace**. Among the main reasons, to be mentioned are the absence of a strong central coordination and the structure of the Italian tourism industry, with catering and accommodation facilities, as well as service providers, being for the most part micro enterprises.

According to a research published at the beginning of December 2013 by Oxford Economics, upon assignment of Google, improving and widening the access to online tourism contents could boost the Italian economy by 1% (GDP value) and bring to the creation of 250.000 jobs.

In general, the promotional potential of the Internet is **under exploited**: the share of incoming tourism acquired through online channels amounts only to 26%, far below the EU average which reaches 49%. Even worse, bookings occur for the most part through foreign Online Travel Agencies (OTA) such as Expedia or Booking.com.

According to a PhocusWright research, in 2011 no Italian OTAs were included among the 30 most important ones worldwide: a quite relevant issue, considering that about 46% of the yearly e-commerce transactions (about 5 billion €/year) are generated from the tourism sector.

Even in the regions where tourism plays a central role in the local economy, Emilia Romagna, Toscana or Trentino, for example, only 30% of accommodation facilities provide a booking engine integrated into their website.

A further issue is represented by the **scarce interoperability of digital data**. As described in Chapter 3, the Italian Constitution entrusts the Regions with the planning and promotion of tourism: each Region has, thus, invested in the set-up of ICT solutions and in the creation of online tools which often base on different standards and technologies, not allowing an easy integration and exchange of data.

This trend is to be observed at the sub-regional level, as well, where a lack of coordination has often brought to an inefficient **duplication of efforts**.

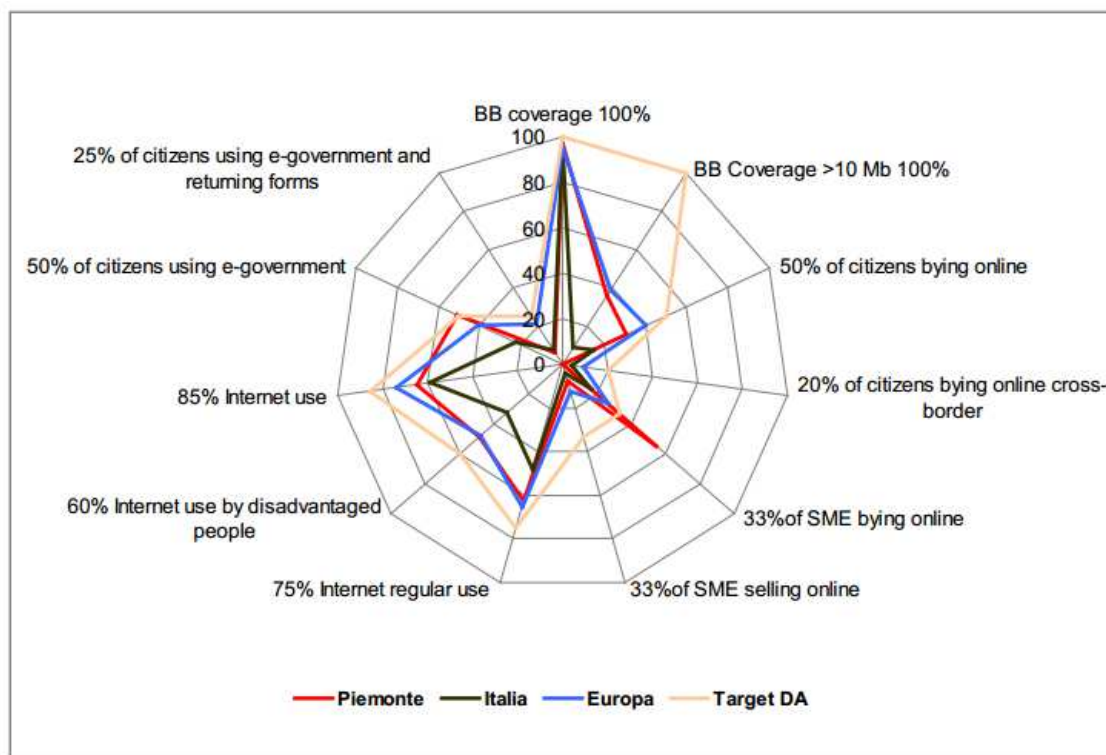
The first agreement aiming at establishing common standards for tourism data and online tools is quite recent, stemming from the organization of Expo2015, in cooperation with ENIT (see Chapter 3, for further details). Other relevant experiences, which aim at overcoming this obstacle in the regional or local context, are connected with the growing diffusion of the open data.



Regional level

The following chart, taken from the report “ICT and regional innovation strategies 2012”, published by the Regional ICT Observatory in May 2013, assesses the Piedmontese situation according to the **goals of the European Digital Agenda**.

The results are quite positive: even where the current value is far from the European Digital Agenda target, Piemonte scores quite close, or in some cases better, than the European average and much better than the Italian one.



Broadband coverage is a prerequisite for the effective exploitation of the ICT potential by the local tourism businesses. In Piedmont broadband coverage started in 2005, thanks to local, national and European funding. Many obstacles had to be overcome, because of the characteristics of the area, since:

- Piedmont has 1206 municipalities;
- 90% of the towns have fewer than 5,000 inhab. (51% fewer than 1,000);
- almost 74% of the territory is mountainous or hilly.



The efforts were channelled through the Regional project “WI-PIE”, which, in 4 years, with a budget of about 90 million euros, brought to the set up of 900 km of optical fibre and 11 access points, and wi-fi or satellite connection infrastructures to reach some of the least accessible areas.

The goal was not to directly provide connectivity to the citizens, but to create the conditions to attract private service providers in the areas which would not have been sufficiently attractive under a commercial point of view.

The project was especially innovative since it also focused on the set up of new ICT services (in the field, for example, of remote medicine), aiming at improving the quality of life in rural and mountainous areas, thus showing the ICT potential.

The **coverage of fixed broadband** connections was stable in the last two years, at around **98% of the regional population**. Satellite access is provided for the remaining population living in remote mountainous areas. As a result of the 2009 agreement between the Italian Ministry for the Economic Development (MISE) and the Piedmont Region, in 2011 an upgrade in the backhaul fixed network was carried out although the services are not yet available.

Progress in wireless connections was noticeable and reflects a certain vitality of the telecom sector.

By January 2013, half of the 1206 municipalities are covered by 2 or 3 Wireless Internet Service Providers. In one out of three there are 4 or more WISPs. The number of municipalities having access to only one WISP halved in the past two years.

The regional access point to the European backbone Internet, TOP-IX, had a 20% traffic growth in the last year and new links with European Ixs have been added to the Piedmont backbone.

In 2011, take-up of broadband connections (xDSL) among firms is relatively higher in Piedmont than in other Italian regions. Among households, the diffusion rate is as the Italian average.

Between 2010 and 2011, mobile connections, and in particular those by 3G mobile phones increased by 28%, compared with 11% in Italy. In Piedmont, 16% of Internet users in 2011 access wireless networks (WI-FI and mobile) by laptop and 6% by mobile phones.

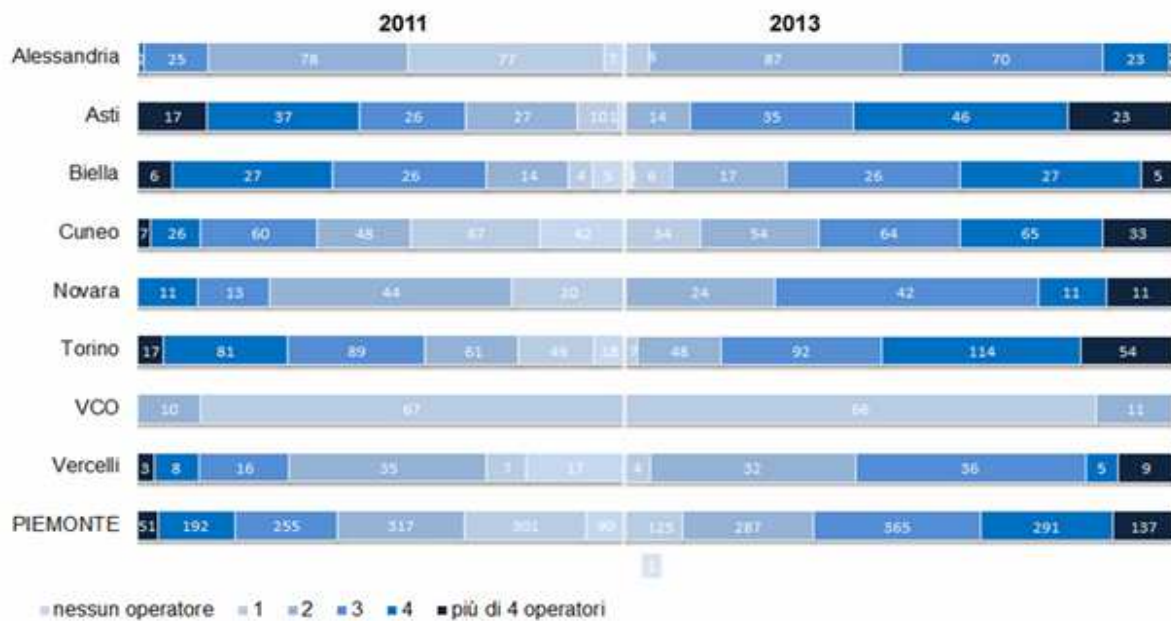


As shown in the following table, today whole Piedmont region has a basic broadband access.

Coverage	Municipalities	Citizens	Enterprises
xDSL+Wireless	886	4.114.470	522.591
xDSL	121	130.078	17.112
xDSL Partial	12	4.905	809
Wireless	132	90.815	11.763
Only SAT	55	12.560	2.454
Total	1.206	4.352.828	554.729

Source: "ICT and regional innovation strategies 2012", by Regional ICT Observatory (May 2013)

In the Province of Turin, almost all Municipalities are covered by more than one Internet Service Provider.



Source: Regional ICT Observatory, data from WI-PIE project (May 2011, January 2013)

Despite these positive results, some critical issues are still to be observed: a research realized in 2012 by IRES Piemonte, focusing on the climate of opinion of Piedmontese



population, has assessed that a growing percentage of citizens is not satisfied with the quality of the Internet connection (from 12% in 2011, to 16% in 2012), while the share of satisfied users is significantly reduced (from 39% to 32%). This trend has been confirmed in the framework of Dante project, where lack or scarce **quality of the available connectivity** where often mentioned by the tourism service providers as an obstacle to a wider adoption of ICT solutions and tools.

In order to specifically analyze the current level of **ICT integration in the regional tourism industry**, some in depth interviews were conducted with particularly relevant stakeholders, since statistical data concerning the issue are quite limited. The interviewees:

- Roberto Moriondo, Gabriella Serratrice: Directorate Innovation of Piemonte Region;
- Giovanni Ferrero: CSI Piemonte (public-owned ICT company, created by Piemonte Region), Top-IX - Torino Piemonte Internet Exchange Consortium;
- Danilo Bessone, Daniela Broglio: Local Tourism Agency "Turismo Torino e Provincia";
- Pietro Listello: Municipality of Condove and ICT professional;
- Barbara Oggero: travel blogger.

The first element to be mentioned is that, as already described in Chapter 5, in the last decade **Piemonte Region** significantly invested in becoming a tourism destination. The available resources were used, among others, for the creation of some high level ICT tourism promotion and management tools, such as, among the most relevant:

- the recently (autumn 2013) launched regional booking platform: **bookingpiemonte.com**
- the regional Internet portal promoting the Piedmontese outdoor offer: **www.piemonteoutdoor.it**
- the **Web-GIS tool** promoting the regional network of mountain paths: www.regione.piemonte.it/sentgis/jsp/cartografia/mappa.do
- the **mobile apps** (iOS, Android version) "TREK3 PIEMONTE Monviso Gran Tour" and "Bessanese Gran Tour".

On the provincial level, the range of ICT tools available to the Local Tourism Agency "**Turismo Torino**" is fully satisfying, as well:

- since 2009, the Agency can count on the Swedish **booking platform** "Citybreak", adopted by many important tourism destination all across Europe. According to Turismo Torino, currently the potential of this tool is exploited only for a small fraction,



because of regulation issues (in the Italian context Local Tourism Agencies can sell only their own services, which are quite limited in range, the offer of the local tourism service providers can be promoted, but not commercialized). The booking platform, fully integrated with Turismo Torino CRM, gives visibility to about 300 local accommodation facilities, out of the 1600 which are active in the Province of Turin. Data concerning availability of accommodation can be published and updated by each service provider, thanks to specific training and online support offered by Turismo Torino;

- Turismo Torino manages an own **Internet webpage** connected to many thematic websites, promoting different features of the local tourism offer;
- the Agency constantly interacts with tourist and potential visitors on the most important **social networks**;
- since March 2013, following an agreement with **TripAdvisor**, probably the most renowned tourism virtual community, Turismo Torino manages an own sponsored page (being the first Italian local tourism to experiment with this communication channel). It also regularly takes part in forums and discussions concerning Turin and its Province.

On a more general level, all most relevant players seem to be adequately equipped with ICT tools. The main issues are represented by:

- **lacking coordination**, which has brought in some cases to the duplication of efforts and investments and made more difficult for tourists to find, compare and integrate information;
- **need for a further standardization of data and contents**, under a technical point of view, which would allow a stronger integration among different websites and online services;
- in connection with the previous issue: strengthening the **connection** between websites and tools promoting the **most relevant provincial attractors** (the Venaria Royal Residence, just to mention one example), generating high volumes of online traffic, and the complex of the local tourism offer;
- devising appropriate procedures and schemes for the **maintenance of web sites and tools** set up thanks to specific funding sources (often EU programmes), after the end of the specific projects;
- providing all **public bodies** with adequate **internal competences** and skills, as well as **procedures**. Especially relevant is the revolution introduced by the growth of social networks: public bodies are forced to interact with visitors and citizens in a



new, more informal and equal way which is causing some difficulties, also connected to the fast pace of communication on such channels.

The assessment is quite different when the relationship between ICT and the **single tourism service providers** of the rural and mountain areas is concerned:

- broadband **connectivity** seems to be an enduring issue in some more isolated areas, but it concerns a very low number of enterprises. According to the stakeholders, a more widespread knowledge of the available tools and ICT solutions could help to overcome, at least partly, such obstacles;
- the **rate of ICT adoption** and the **level of specific skills** vary greatly: some very proficient entrepreneurs are to be found even in unexpected contexts (for example, among cheese producers located in high altitude mountain areas), while, on the contrary, a relevant number of businesses show a very low confidence even towards the most basic ICT tools, such as the email. Between the two extremes, the largest majority of enterprises could benefit from some support favouring the adoption of new tools and approaches, often hindered by the lack of time or confidence.
- in general a strong need for **training** is felt, concerning social networks and online communities. A large part of businesses which decided to be active on these communication channels don't manage their online presence according to professional standards (need for a consistent communication style which should be coherent with the general business identity; constant need for new contents over an extended time span; fast pace of comments, questions and answers...). Also essential, and not sufficiently widespread among local operators, are the competences needed in order to effectively monitor and reply to positive, and especially to negative, comments on the most relevant tourism virtual communities, such as TripAdvisor, which could greatly impact on the economic results of single service providers, as well as whole tourism destinations;
- a final remark is actually connected with a general communication issue, not specific to the ICT field: a relevant share of businesses rely on communication tools which offer information only in Italian. The problem concerns paper information materials, such as leaflets and brochures, but is much more critical when it concerns internet web sites: these channels, on the one hand, have the potential to easily reach people over the national borders, making **translation**, at least in English, a must. On the other hand, internet web sites can require frequent updates, with a significant effort in order to effectively maintain different language versions.



Contents 8 – Strategic integration of ICT into the rural and mountain tourism policy agenda of the region

A) The main goals of the Torino's province strategy for integrating ICT in tourism policies are:

- Adapting the idea of “smart city” to the rural and mountain areas, with the creation of “**smart territories**”, where connectivity and free access to the web are the key to improving the quality of life of citizens, the services to the local businesses and the attractiveness of the region;
- Promoting **open (linked) data**, the availability of a wide range of high-quality data-sets and their use by citizen and businesses for the creation of new services and job opportunities;
- Favouring the widespread adoption of **open source** software and, in general, ICT solutions inspired by the idea of “open web”, especially where the purchase or development is supported through public funding.
- Developing schemes and procedures which will allow public bodies to **certify** the reliability of specific open tourism data-sets (for example: the georeferenced local network of hiking paths) and **to receive data**;
- Improving **digital skills and competences (access to knowledge)** by providing the local tourism businesses effectively interact online (teach tourism operators to use websites in order to access and manage data; to publish quality contents on the web and on the most relevant social networks, with specific regards to the opportunities offered by free or low-cost online tools; properly react to online incorrect information or criticism ecc);
- To promote a **critical sensibility towards the tourism information available online** and the diffusion of digital competencies in the local communities;
- Explore the possibilities offered by the web 2.0 tools and the social networks in connection with a more active and central role of tourists in the planning and promotion of the local tourism offer;
- Define operational schemes allowing public bodies to effectively interact with tourists and citizens by means of these new media, respecting the specific communication style (public body interacting with users from a position of equality, short response time, need for constant update and production of new contents over an extended time frame)
- **Towards a “prosuming” approach:** from searching and booking functions to a “co-production” to a “co-innovation”



- **To prioritise develop access to broadband and high-speed broadband, through either fixed or wireless technology, focusing first on the isolated and remote areas**, where public incentives should be more important than in highly populated areas where private actors are already encouraged to invest and guarantee sufficient connectivity
- **To integrate into the Regional Digital Agenda, an indicator to evaluate the broadband coverage in each region (NUTS 2 level) to see how mountain regions, and in general remote areas, are covered**

B) The objectives to be implemented for the ICT Tourism strategy in rural or mountain territories are:

- 1) Make an easier access to ICT in rural and Mountain areas to spread the “**culture of ICT welcome**”:
 - training of operators (**trough Cyber Massif training operators methodology**),
 - promoting the wide spread of critical sensibility towards the tourism information
 - encouraging relationships with professional users (ex. bloggers) ,
 - updating information in public databases and reinforcing links between public data bases
- 2) Create “**smart and inclusive territories**” for ICT open use:
 - improving high-speed broadband and infrastructures and an evaluating and monitoring system
 - improving the open data initiatives,
 - Improving the open sources and free software use
 - Improving the wireless free access
- 3) Create **new system of dialogue for improving the quality/democracy of information**:
 - certification for giving data and information from Public to Private (schemes and procedures)
 - “filter” criteria for receiving data and information from Private to public



Finally:

- The “ICT philosophy” will change the way of communicate and “have relations” each other and offers new opportunities to tourism policies to change the governance schemes and to tourism operators to change market approaches.
- This new approach represent a “little revolution” that could affect positively local policies if this challenge is considered as an opportunity of increasing visions and strategies and not only a policies’ “tools box”.
- The local policies in tourism and ICT especially in rural and mountain areas should get this opportunity and **face the challenge our world has to afford without any hesitation.**



Contents 9 – Operational integration of ICT into the rural and mountain tourism policy agenda of the region

Actions

- To improve the use of ICT in the current touristic projects, in particular in mountain trekking itineraries, in alpine stations promotion, in B&B DOC project, in food and wine itineraries
- investing in training and empowerment of tourism service providers, in order to promote a more widespread adoption of ICT solutions. In particular a short training course with mountain operators will be organized to use the light pilot and to create an integrated platform of “users” managing about 10 selected mountain itineraries under the umbrella and coordination of Province. Following the financial availability other training courses will be organized addressed to touristic operators such restaurants, B&B DOC, typical products producers, oenogastronomy itineraries operators (Strada Reale dei vini torinesi, Strada delle mele, Strada dell’Asseiatta e alta viabilità alpina, Strada del Gran Paradiso, Strada dei colori e dei sapori).

Particular focus will be put on new ICT tools such as booking tools, web 2.0 tools, applications and online tools (social networks, online communities, forums...),

- To find financial resources on Rurale Development Plan of Piemonte Region 2014 – 2020 to improve the high speed **broadband connectivity in mountain and rural areas**, which is, in theory, guaranteed over the whole regional territory, but which actually proves to be poor or not constant in some more isolated mountain or rural areas, not reached by cable connectivity, hindering a wider adoption of advanced online solutions, such booking platforms or the promotion through rich multimedia contents (especially videos).
- To improve the use of **QR codes**, which play a central role in the pilot action developed by the Province of Turin. QR codes are an opportunity to innovate and enrich traditional communication tools, such as road signs, posters, brochures and leaflets or visiting cards, integrating them with online tools.
- To improve the **access to public data-sets or databases**, that is a useful opportunity for the creation of new services or the improvement of the existing ones. Especially mentioned, were cartographic and georeferenced data (for example data concerning the regional network of mountain paths). Particular interest will have the release of data often that requires a relevant effort in order to “certify” their quality



level and the dependability of the information and wished for a stronger commitment of public bodies in this field.

- To **improve the quality of network** with regional and local websites and a better connection because tourism **information** concerning the regional and local context available on the Internet it is often **spread out** across too many unrelated web sites, which makes accessing and combining it very difficult. Then we stress a stronger **coordination** among sites promoting local tourism, with specific regards to the pages managed by public authorities. The regional and provincial public administrations should improve their communication with local public bodies, which, on their part, should strive for a better coordination of efforts on the sub-provincial level.
- To support the development of technical “standards” and **guidelines** which could help small businesses owners to take correct decisions concerning ICT, which would otherwise require more and more advanced technical skills and competences (purchase of ICT tools and solutions, development of web sites...). The same guidelines could help, as well, in the set up of public procurement procedures (identify relevant tender requirements, correctly assess the value and future implications of IT solutions proposed by different vendors).
- To focus on the **development of new tourism services and attractors**, thanks to the opportunities offered by ICT tools. In particular the use of smart cards in order to allow visitors to access tourism sites which are currently closed (a feasibility study focusing on three sites is currently under development in the provincial context).
- To improve the quality of the insituinola websites with a more “touristic layout”. A wider exploitation of ICT potential in the tourism industry cannot be considered just a sectoral issue or goal: most ICT solutions require, in order to be effectively employed, relevant **innovation in the management and planning of the local tourism offer**. In particular we will improve the set-up of local booking platforms, which can be successful only if basing on an active and varied network of service providers, grouped with regards to their thematic or geographic connections and not just to their location inside of a specific administrative area. This is often currently not the case, since most existing tourism networks were developed with reference to administrative criteria, and not with the goal of developing and promoting a “tourism destination”.

Timelines

All the actions above described will be realised in 2 years (2015 – 2016).



ANNEX I

A set of EU funding schemes in the next programming period 2014-2020 for ICT and tourism

In the new programming period (2014-2020), several EU funding schemes could help to support further implementation of DANTE strategies, linking ICT and rural tourism.

The European Structural and Investment Funds and the Smart Specialisation at regional level

ERDF(**European Regional Development Fund**), ESF and EAFRD together with the Cohesion Fund and the Maritime and Fisheries Fund are now linked under a common **European Structural and Investment Funds** (ESIF) umbrella. Implementation responds to a common provisions regulation with an annexed Common strategic framework (CSF) which has defined 11 thematic objectives for concentration of the use of EU funding in coherence with the EU 2020 strategy. The EU has defined concentration levels for each fund with respect to these 11 objectives. ERDF is the most promising fund for financing implementation of DANTE strategies at regional levels.

At regional level, each region has to define a **Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3)**. This implies to identify the unique characteristics and assets, highlighting the region's competitive advantages. It aims at strengthening regional innovation systems, maximising knowledge flows and spreading the benefits of innovation throughout the entire regional economy.

This smart specialisation is a pre-condition for the implementation of ERDF in 2014-2020 (ex-ante conditionality) for two key policy objectives:

- Strengthening research, technological development and innovation (the R&I target);
- Enhancing access to and use of quality of ICT (the ICT target).

This means that Members States and regions must have Smart Specialisation strategies in place before their Operational Programmes supporting these investments are approved.

This RIS3 strategy should include a “digital growth section” stipulating budgeting and prioritization of measures; an analysis concerning the balancing of support for the demand and supply of ICT; measurable targets for the outcomes of actions on digital literacy, e-skills, e-inclusion, e-accessibility and e-health aligned with existing national or regional strategies in those fields; and an assessment of the needs for reinforced ICT capacity-building.

It is up to every region to define how they wish to use these different opportunities to link tourism and ICT in their specific context, depending on their own strategy: the regions have thus a real strategic role to play in defining their smart specialization. DANTE regional plans implementation will be facilitated by clear reference to tourism and need to foster digital development in relation to tourism in their Smart specialisation Strategies.

Each region has to define its Operational Programme for **ERDF (European Regional Development Fund)**, linking it with the RIS3 and establishing complementary between the



two documents. ERDF can fund “investment in infrastructure providing basic services to citizens in the areas of (...) ICT” and “investment in the development of endogenous potential through fixed investment in equipment and small-scale infrastructure, including small-scale cultural and sustainable tourism infrastructure, services to enterprises, support to research and innovation bodies and investment in technology and applied research in enterprises” Targeting more specifically ICT, ERDF should “enhance access to, and use and quality of, ICT by:

- (a) Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy;
- (b) Developing ICT products and services, e-commerce, and enhancing demand for ICT;
- (c) Strengthening ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, e-culture and e-health⁹.

In most of the regions, ICT will be one of the priorities defined in OP, allowing to fund ICT and tourism projects.

In addition, **Interreg Europe** (the cooperation territorial programme focusing on interregional cooperation) has defined 4 priorities. The first one aims at strengthening research, technological development and innovation and could thus target ICT. Touristic projects exchanging good practices on ICT and implementing them could be financed.

Two other ESIF (European Structural and Investment Funds) could also be very useful:

- The **ESF (European Social Fund)** can encourage the development of e-skills for tourist operators or help to improve the provision of public services using digital technologies. These actions could participate in “promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility” and “investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning”¹⁰.
- The diversification of rural economy, especially encouraging the development of tourism, can be funded by EAFRD (**European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development**) in rural areas. As EAFRD aims at “enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas”¹¹, this fund should be used to close the gap between urban and rural regions in terms of digital infrastructure and public services online. In particular, for the village renewal in rural areas, basic services in “broadband infrastructure, including its creation, improvement and expansion, passive broadband infrastructure and provision of access to broadband and public e-government solutions” and “investments for public use in recreational infrastructure, tourist information and small scale tourism infrastructure”¹² will be funded. In addition, local action groups can decide to implement such types of measures in the framework of their local development strategy financed through LEADER.

⁹ [Article 5 Regulation 1301/2013 establishing ERDF for the Investment of Growth Goal](#)

¹⁰ [Article 3 Regulation 1304/2013 establishing ESF](#)

¹¹ [Article 5, Regulation 1305/2013 on EAFRD](#)

¹² [Article 20c and e of Regulation 1305/2013 establishing EAFRD](#)

Other EU funds directly targeting tourism and /or ICT

Other EU funding schemes are directly managed by the European Commission or its Executive Agencies. Each year (or every two years for Horizon 2020), a work programme will define the annual priorities and will list the calls for proposals that will be published in the following months.

To support EU businesses and entrepreneurs, including in tourism and ICT sector, there will be two main EU funding schemes:

- The new **COSME** programme (Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises): COSME replaces the sub programme Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme of the former CIP (Competitiveness and Innovation Programme). It has the objective to “improve framework conditions for the competitiveness and sustainability of Union enterprises, particularly SMEs, including in the tourism sector”¹³. This will be done through grants, loan guarantee facility and the equity facility for Growth.
- Young entrepreneurs are encouraged to learn from other European entrepreneurs thanks to the mobility scheme: **Erasmus for young entrepreneurs**. This cross-border exchange programme gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other Participating Countries.

Two other EU funding schemes will be directing targeting ICT:

- The **Connecting Europe Facility** has a budget of 1 billion during 2014-2020 to facilitate the mobility of citizens and businesses by providing seamless cross-border public services such as eProcurement, eHealth, or Open Data. For broadband, the Connecting Europe Facility will only be able to provide seed funding for a limited number of broadband projects, together with the European Investment Bank (EIB).
- The new EU Research programme “**Horizon 2020**” replaces the Framework Programmes for Research and Technical Development (FP7), the innovation related activities (sub- programmes Intelligent Energy Europe and ICT Policy Support) of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the European Institute of Innovation and European Institute of Technology (EIT). It is built on three pillars (Excellent Science, Industrial Leadership and Societal Challenges) and it will fund research activities, from fundamental research to close-to-market innovation, for instance, helping innovative enterprise to develop their technological breakthroughs into viable products with real commercial potential. It has a dedicated work programme to fund ICT projects, focusing on how to improve ICT technologies and the future internet thanks to cloud development, improvement of software development or wireless technologies. Touristic projects linked to these types of technological improvements could be financed.

An example of ICT and tourism relevant initiative supported by the former CIP is Europeana, a collection 30 million digitized cultural and heritage content items to which more than 2,000 institutions across Europe have already contributed, including mountain national parks for

¹³ [Article 4 of Regulation 1287/2013 establishing COSME](#)



example. In the next years, the EU aims to increase this collection and to make the data available to the public to foster creativity and industries and services. European mountains and rural areas, some of them at least, host a lot of very valuable heritage and can be interested in participating in this platform to promote it through images for example.

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