



## Implementation plan

### Cybermassif

Cybermassif was founded by the UCCIMAC (Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the Massif Central) and aim at developing ICTs appropriation and use in the companies of the Massif Central (mountainous area).

For that, Cybermassif develop and entertain with the local economic stakeholders (CCI, MEDEF, CGPME...) and local authorities (department, conurbation communities, town...) an ICT Resource Centers network, physical spaces grouping material, software and human skills together.

In 2012, Cybermassif is a network composed of 17 Resource Centers dedicated to ICTs and present in 4 regions of the Massif Central: Auvergne, Limousin, Languedoc-Roussillon, Bourgogne.

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## 1. Introduction

### Aim, purpose and context of the implementation plan

Dante's project implementation plan aims at improving the effectiveness of the regional policies by enhancing the key enabling role that Information Society can play in the tourism economy of rural and mountain areas.

The idea is to promote new regional policies to design a knowledge-based plan for the tourism economy of the rural and mountain territories.

This implementation plan was built thanks to the sharing of good practices between several regions of Europe concerning tourism and ICT integration in remote areas.

In a more global perspective, Dante's project support eight European Regional and Local Governments to define an effective plan able to address the challenges of the tourism economy in their rural and mountain areas with the adoption of ICT.

The Implementation plan aim at enabling local and regional policy actors to better define and mobilize the potential of ICT into tourism policies dedicated to rural and mountain areas. That is why it is necessary:

- Raise the awareness of stakeholders on how ICT tailored measures can effectively improve the tourism offering/services in rural and mountain areas, where business and SMEs are not always in a position to adapt rapidly.
- Unlock the ICT potential for EU entrepreneurship in these areas, as the vast majority of tourism businesses are SMEs.

## 2. Current situation on rural and mountain tourism in the region

### Current situation on tourism in the region

Big hopes are expected in what concerns tourism for the Massif Central. But the impact in terms of employment is not homogeneous. There are inequalities among the different regions of the territory because of the landscape or because of infrastructures. Most developed places in terms of tourism activities: Volcanoes of Auvergne, lakes in Limousin, Haut-Allier et Haute-Ardèche, valley of Lot et gorges of Tarn, Cévennes et Grands Causses. Also we could add the eastern territories that benefit from their proximity with Lyon: Lyonnais, Forez, Velay and Vivarais.



The territory has a strong potential in the thermal sector : Auvergne is ranked at the fifth place for its thermal resources at the national level with spa towns like ([Vichy](#), [Le Mont-Dore](#), [La Bourboule](#), [Châtel-Guyon](#), [Royat](#)) which do not adapt equally to the new market rules (medical or leisure). Generally, medium-altitude mountain suffers from a low customer potential (accessibility, remoteness) and sometimes from a lack of funding or initiatives. Moreover, capacities, equipments and accomodations are rare in some places and some are not renovated correctly to welcome an international clientele. This does not include winter sports resorts (Le Mont-Dore, [Besse](#), [Le Lioran](#)) which benefit from good equipments and facilities but are not that profitable and cross-country skiing practice is deceiving when you compare it with the Jura territory. The attendance is not homogeneous and changes according to the sites, the actors or the nature of the equipments.

The clientele that does not come from the region is modest: some parisiens, vacationers of the West or from the South and a lot of people that have their roots in the region and come back during the summer.

Evolution is obvious, it seems that it comes from the fact that the territory is less and less remote thanks to “exterior” elements and not only thanks to the tourism agenda and policies’ strategies. Those exterior elements are: the opening up of the Massif Central which stimulates tourism activities with equipments and engineering structures that constitutes real attractions (Viaduc of Milliau). Also those evolutions can be the result or new needs brought by new people in the territory. Leisure parks present on the territory tend to give a more modern vision of the area too. Another advantage can be the short journey market or leisure trips, because the region can be visited in an active way (hiking, canoe...) or in a contemplative way (patrimoine, culture, landscapes). Tourism in the Massif Central can have several faces, and goes further the image everyone can have of it, wich is the image of rural tourism. As a territory behind the mediterranean coast, with cultural sites of quality, opened to the exterior thanks to new equipments and infrastructures, the Massif Central has several tourism advantages and is not only represented by the volcanoes and by the image of the “Deep France”.

### Present the current situation on rural and mountain tourism in the region

Massif Central has a strong potential. Cultural and natural heritage makes it a rich territory and is attractive for tourists. It integrates a national park (Cévennes),, six natural regional parks (Volcans d'Auvergne and Livradois-Forez in Auvergne, Morvan in Bourgogne, Millevaches in Limousin, Causses du Quercy et Grands Causses in Midi-Pyrénées) and parts of four others (Pilat, Monts d'Ardèche, Haut-Languedoc and Périgord-Limousin).

Development of outdoor nature tourism and wellness tourism (thermal stations) are strengthes.

The territory has an important capacity of accommodations (550 000 people) above all in Cévennes, massif du Sancy (thermal stations of La Bourboule and Mont-Dore) and in Morvan. The population of some areas can double during the summer. However, Massif Central suffers from the low amount of “high standing” accommodations. 3 or 4 stars hotels only represent 22 % of the capacity against 35 % average in other parts of France. For open-air accommodations, this segment represents 53 % of the campsites (against 59 % for the rest of the country).



Development of tourism potential is a big challenge for rural and mountain areas. To promote an new image of the territory, we have to focus on other sites of interests (not only the Chaîne des Puys), new offers have to come out to show the diversity of the territory. It will enable to have sustainable offers in the area.

### Analyze the main strategic parameters influencing the current situation on rural and mountain tourism in the region

- Tourism policies
- Tourism professionals
- Green tourism
- Family tourism
- Tourism of proximity
- Ski-Hiking
- Reasonable prices
- Security
- Professionnalization/qualification/networks (Gîte de France)
- Local production and short channels
- Word of mouth
- Accessibility (for disabled people)
- Turnover of the tourism professionals
- Number of visitors
- Tourism project's indicators (CRDTA)
- Regional Councils
- Feedback of the tourists

### Current tourism policies in the region

Tourism activity is booming and social demand is rising permanently. Tourism is special because it needs actors from the public and private sectors.

### **Favor the position of the Massif Central on the market**

Identify markets in which the territory can have a strong and indispensable position. The strategy elaborated must integrate support dispositives for the actors in order to help them to implement the processes correctly, efficiently, in accordance with the partners policy. Several types of customers can be targeted, which offer to the potential tourists several « enter gates » to the Massif Central: customers from northern Europe with a big purchasing power, can be seduced by territory with a strong identity and authenticity ; customers that live close to the territory, while building quality tourism products for short stays ; young people, who



bring a dynamic, fresh image of the territory; people with reduced mobility, often abandoned by tourism operators. Recharacterization of accommodations, holiday resorts, improvement of the services' quality is indispensable to meet the expectations of northern Europe population in particular.

Massif Central is a territory developed by several institutional actors, operators use them as support to organize as network in order to develop and make more profitable their tourism offers. Funded on geographic, cultural, historic, natural parks and interregional identity territory constitutes somptuous touristic destinations such as Aubrac or the Lot valley The local integration of tourism engenders a coordination between the different actors of this industry and the other actors of the territory. Sectors selected are: active nature, gastronomy, savoir-faire, wellness and fitness. Developing for operational actors, a dispositive of support is important because providers lead traditional actions of promotions instead of comparting a single market place for « Massif Central tourism » products as it was done in the Tourmassif project (<http://www.bandeapart.fr/index.php?id=45>)

### **Be different, stand out of the package**

Other European regions have similar potential as our region. It is important to try to export the image of the Massif Central, and to take into account the specificities of the territory comparing it to these other regions, know the advantages and disadvantages of the competing destinations.

It is important to know the territory, the offer, then gather and if possible federate similar networks in other regions of the European space. That could facilitate the adaptation of the tourism professionals to the market evolutions.

### **Leading operations of market researches**

Operations of market researches must target the investors but also the managers. They must be conducted in partnership within the Massif Central:

Pooling of the means, optimization of the networks, better read for the potential prospects. Policies are funded in the respect of :

- sustainable development,
- partnership public/private,
- projects complying specifications established to take into account local partners priorities

These propositions are a complement to the regions skills and offer a complement of possible choices. With a good support of the professionals' networks, with an help to build competitive offers, the actors of the Massif Central want to promote and develop the economy of the territory at the European level.

### **Current rural and mountain tourism policies in the region**

The six Regions of the Massif Central and the State signed a Massif Interregional Convention (CIM). The territory is the largest mountainous area of France (85 000 km<sup>2</sup>, 3,7 millions of inhabitants). It covers entirely 2 regions (Auvergne and Limousin) and encroach



upon the territories of 4 more regions Rhône-Alpes, Languedoc-Roussillon, Midi-Pyrénées and Bourgogne.

This interregional Convention has been signed for the 2007-2013 period and this Convention is inspired by a precedent convention signed in 2000 and that enabled the territory to receive European funds in 2004.

This new Convention represented a total amount of 62 million of euros for the State, as much for the Regions and 40 million euros for the Europe.

Three main lines used the resources of the convention: welcoming of new populations, promotion of economic assets (agriculture, tourism, wood sector...) and improvement of digital technology accessibility.

An innovative system of governance was put in place, each region is the lead partner in a specific field. As an example, the field of services is managed by the Rhône-Alpes region. The region handles the files with the State and then transmit it to the Programming Committee co-presided by the prefect and the President of the Auvergne region.

### Analyze the main strategic parameters influencing the effectiveness of the rural and mountain tourism policies in the region

- Involvement of the tourism professionals
- Number of visitors
- Tourism projects
- Regional Councils and local authorities
- Feedback of the tourists
- Promotion of the territory (CRDTA)

### 3. Stakeholders

Stakeholders that will and could take part into this implementation plan are economic actors of the Massif Central organizations and local authorities.

- Cybermassif (management/governance)
- Cybermassif network (management/audit)
- Macéo (beneficiaries/management/governance?)
- General Council of Auvergne (beneficiary/influencer)
- Tourism providers (users)
- Tourists (beneficiaries/influencers)
- Blogmeter (supplier)



It is expected to have new sources of information in terms of tourism in our territory. No dispositive like this exists so the goal is to provide to all the key actors of the region but also to the tourism professionals a feedback on the trends and the situation of tourism in our region. Local authorities and managers of this implementation plan will have the opportunity to disseminate the findings of this new project to guide and train the tourism actors in the good way.

So we expect an increase of new offers fitting the desires of the tourists and this will lead to an increase of the tourists' flows.

- The Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan will communicate about the length of the project and register the relevant company data. The resource centers of Cybermassif will be in charge of this aspect of the project as they will follow the companies directly in the process.

#### 4. Current situation, Environment and Trends

- SWOT analysis for rural and mountain tourism in the region

*Tourism is a lever of economic development for the Massif Central. With spa towns, natural sites, museums and other interesting resources, thi territory has several attractive features. But it is important to add value and promote it.*

The Massif Central, counts more than 17 spa towns but most of them lack of promotion, only Vichy and La Bourboule are well-known by a large audience. However, only some land settement and infrastructure settlement would be sufficient as well as a younger and dynamic image of these sites to attract more tourists and make known those places and their richness in terms of touristic potential.

##### **Dust off the image of this territory**

The entire sector has to be organized. On the side of the hotels and restaurants, it means providing a free Wifi access, investing in new equipment, to attract a new clientele, a foreign clientele or premium clientele.

Tourists are generally looking forward new trends: yurts, shacks, barges... Those new types of accomodations are becoming more and more popular and need to be developped. A lot of customers are also looking for eco-constructions in terms of accomodations or museums. The respect of the HQE or BBC norms can be an advantage for some tourists.

##### **A diversified offer**

The territory benefits from a large and diversified cultural offer and welcomes international events. In what concerns museums, Clermont-Ferrand opened the "Michelin Adventure", Moulins is famous for its theatre and cinema costumes museum and the museum of the Mines makes the city of Saint-Etienne feel proud. In Languedoc-Roussillon, numerous tourists go to visit -Guilhem-le-Désert or go hiking in the Causses and in the Cévennes. In





the region Rhône-Alpes, many routes lead to the Mont Gerbier de Jonc. And in Bourgogne, the basilica of the Vézelay attracts History and architecture buffs. The Viaduc of Millau or even Vulcania, are real enter gates for the territory. In 2008, 18 sites get each one more than 100 000 visitors.

Paper industry in Ambert, cutlery industry in Thiers, tapestry in Aubusson... the Massif Central can also bet on its identity savoir-faire and the products of its terroir like cheeses.

However, tourists do not come that easily and are not that numerous. It means that some work has to be done. To attract them, we need to make our territory more visible in national and international fairs, and sing the praises of our land.

### **Develop and promote the outdoor tourism**

With a large number of regional and national natural parks, the Massif Central is the biggest protected space of Europe, which is a huge advantage for the outdoor tourism. Promotion of those parks should step to the next level in order to attract more people.

In 2010, a survey had been realized in order to offer different and original routes alongside the Dordogne River like for example, green ways. Also several events exist to celebrate the trip of Stevenson (Scottish author) between the Puy-en-Velay and Alès.

### **Welcome all the customers**

Social tourism needs to make some adjustments in terms of infrastructures. To add value to those destinations, labels like "Tourism and Handicap".

A lot of types of accomodations and kind of tourism are present on the territory. Since 2011, farmers even welcome people in their farms, this project aims at welcoming people experiencing financial, physical or social difficulties thanks to an innovative way of going on holidays.

### **What are the actions that can support tourism?**

To promote tourism, the Massif Central established for 3 objectives: build specific offers for the territory, establish a network of the different actors and adapt the infrastructures for the social tourism. Several actions can still be financed to attract more visitors. Moreover, our territory has all what it takes to become the leader of sustainable tourism in France.

- [The extend of current ICT integration in rural and mountain tourism services in the region](#)

Tourism programs with ICT integration were realized in the region in cooperation with the CRDTA (Regional Council for the Development of Tourism in Auvergne) such as « E-tourism from a to z ». This program was informative but also developed to train the tourism providers on how to use and implement ICTs in their businesses. Several themes and several aspects of tourism and ICT combination have been developed during the curse of this program.

5 principal themes:

- Start correctly your digital development



- Have an attractive, interactive and visible website
- Market your offer efficiently and legally
- Succeed in your e-marketing strategy
- Mobile Internet and tourism

This campaign registered a lot of good results in terms of attendance to the meetings or even individual meetings. Companies of the region were satisfied and the programme found its audience.

In a more general way, the CRDTA is in charge of tourism and promote tourism in Auvergne. Each region of the Massif Central which is our territory has its own organization in charge of tourism.

#### Identify key fields in the rural and mountain tourism services' value chain for improving the ICT integration

- ICT providers' communication
- New innovative projects to involve the tourism providers and obtain their confidence
- More trainings for the tourism professionals to make them realize that ICT is an easy way to develop their activities and to gain more visibility
- Meetings between providers and tourism professionals: organize concrete meetings and try to have a more active cooperation between the local authorities, tourism professionals and providers.

#### Describe the key success factors for the improvement

Key factors for the improvement of the touristic offer can be a better promotion of the territory at a national level, but also a better cooperation between providers and tourism professionals. The training of the professionals of this sector is also really important because they are often to step up to the next level.

- The resource centers will be the active stakeholders of the project, they'll work in the territory to help the companies reaching their goals. Cybermassif will then collect the results and disseminate them to enlarge the project to other territories.

### 5. Strategic integration of ICT into the rural and mountain tourism policy agenda of the region

- Outline the long-term strategy for integrating ICT into the regional rural and mountain tourism policy agenda: Outline the vision, mission and goals

This strategy should be a common one between all the referent organizations. The idea is not to do the job of the other organizations but to integrate the different skills of each partners into a common project and this can be done thanks to this implementation plan as we are looking forward working with different actors. Our mission is to develop the tourism



potential of our region by developing first the skills of our tourism professionals. The goal will be then to manage this project and make more people come to our region and see them leaving satisfied and ready to come back.

- Define objectives to be implemented for the ICT Tourism strategy in their rural or mountain territories that will be specifically identified in the respective plans.
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This implementation plan sets several objectives:

- Implementation of a listening platform
- Observatory of the social networks
- Observatory of the e-reputation of the tourism professionals
- 1 sample group per Resource Center : Cybermassif has 17 resources centers spread on the territory of Massif Central
- Use of Blogmeter
- Training and support of tourism professionals
- Present the knowledge and good practice transferred through the DANTE Project

The good practice to be transferred in our territory is the one of the listening platform because Cybermassif and its partners found it interesting, this idea can bring added value to the existing policies and project already developed in our territory. This practice has a great potential because it can bring new tools and informations to the tourism organizations and tourism providers. As a rural and mountainous area, tourism needs to be promoted efficiently and this good practice can bring necessary information and data that we will be able to collect. Then by meetings and trainings of the professionals it will be possible to spread the results and the information efficiently and to the largest audience.

## 6. Operational integration of ICT into the rural and mountain tourism policy agenda of the region

- Actions and timelines for the implementation of the ICT Tourism strategy in the regional rural and mountain tourism, define the implementation steps and processes

The idea is to create an observatory of the e-reputation for the territory of Massif Central for the tourism sector. The idea is to replicate the good practice of the CSI Piemonte called “Listening Platform” and to adapt it to our territory. It will be expected to have a feedback on the present offers to be able to adapt it and develop it in the good way.



In a first period of time, each Resource Center of Cybermassif will contact tourism professionals to get a sample group and information from different sources will be collected to feed the analysis process. Then tourism professionals will receive trainings and the feedback of the analysis to better structure their offers.

- **Intended beneficiaries and expected benefits created by the above initiatives and actions**

Beneficiaries will be the tourism professionals of the Massif Central but also all the organizations involved in tourism projects. This listening platform will be a new tool available for the partners involved in the project. As the aim of Cybermassif is to share and disseminate knowledge in the territory, the project will turn into a common tool which results and analysis are to be shared.

To measure the effectiveness of the project, reports will be realized every months to follow the implementation of the project and to improve the implementation as well.

- number of participant companies
- satisfaction survey
- indicators of results
- time framed project

- **Relevant funding mechanisms to support targeted activities and to accommodate future strategic actions**

The idea is to propose, submit this project to the regions, the funding entities and the UE to get the funding support necessary to implement this program.

- **Monitoring implementation and evaluating the effectiveness**

Cybermassif and its partners will be in charge of monitoring the project