Interreg

Co-funded by the European Union

Alpine Space

SmartCommUnity

# SmartCommUnity

## Project Synopsis

Building on the concept of Smart Villages towards a transnational and EUSALP-integrated Smart Community in the Alps

SEP/2025

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SEP/2025



**“Our aim is to empower Alpine rural areas to fully use the benefits of digitalization, turning smart transitions into tangible actions that create more sustainable, resilient, and attractive communities.”**

**Dr. Jure Trilar,**
**University of Ljubljana,**
**Lead Partner for the SmartCommUnity project**

SEPT/2025

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DEFINITION OF

# SMART COMMUNITY

**Smart communities are**

"communities of people, in mountain or rural areas, that are proud and aware of their identity, their territory, their craftsmanship, their products and their close-knit social fabric, and that want to become active players in determining their own future, owning and driving the changes that the future, and any digital transition, may entail. Smart communities are open to innovate, to learn and to inspire, and to work holistically towards smart and green rural and mountain areas, that are lively and lived, that aim to become carbon-neutral and that can be or become attractive to live and work for all age groups."

by Gianluca Lentini





# Introduction

The Interreg Alpine Space SmartCommUnity project (2022-2025) was launched to address the persistent challenges facing Europe's rural and mountain areas: a growing digital divide, economic strain, and the need for sustainable transition pathways. Moving beyond traditional top-down solutions, the project's core mission was to build a vibrant, functional transnational community capable of driving smart, green, and resilient bottom-up development. By leveraging the lessons of past initiatives like SmartVillages and forging a strong link with the EUSALP AG5 Smart Alps Network, SmartCommUnity has successfully established a new framework for empowering local actors and fostering tangible, data-driven innovation.

The key achievements of the SmartCommUnity project are presented in this booklet and are structured according to the official project framework:

- Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects: The project successfully implemented a diverse array of community-led pilot actions across its Test Areas. These hands-on initiatives addressed local needs and demonstrated the practical application of smart solutions. These actions are now compiled in the project's Catalogue of Good Practices, providing tangible and replicable models for other communities.
- The central technical achievement is the SmartCommUnity Innovation Platform (SCU IP), an integrated digital ecosystem designed for civic engagement and providing a clear pathway for other organizations to replicate and scale these successes in their own territories This output consolidated and expanded previous tools into a comprehensive platform featuring as a tool to connect pilot areas, a component for data analysis providing community managers with a unified dashboard to monitor engagement and platform performance with data collection through gamification to incentivize participation and foster a more interactive and rewarding user experience.
- Seamless link with EUSALP AG5 SmartAlps: A key strategic output was the strengthening and expansion of the Smart Alps Network. By establishing clear governance, formalizing membership, and integrating the project's Test Areas, SmartCommUnity has ensured the network's long-term sustainability and its central role in the EUSALP policy landscape.

This booklet provides an account of these outputs and results, showcasing how the SmartCommUnity project has built a durable framework for empowering rural and mountain communities to lead their own digital and sustainable transitions.

# SmartCommUnity Project

The SmartCommUnity project is dedicated to building a transnational network to reshape the way rural areas are perceived and supported in the Alpine region. This initiative is carried out in close cooperation with the European Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP). By fostering innovation, promoting digital tools and solutions, and ensuring the sustainable development of communities, the project aims to empower rural areas to face the challenges of the modern world.


Interreg Alpine Space
**SmartCommUnity**

Building on the concept of Smart Villages towards a transnational and EUSALP-integrated Smart Community in the Alps

**Priority:**
Innovation and digitalisation supporting a green Alpine region

**Specific objective:**
SO 3.2 – Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities

| | |
|---|---|
| **Project ID:** | ASP0100041 |
| **Start Date** | 11/2022 |
| **End Date** | 10/2025 |
| **Total eligible costs** | 2.960.288 EUR |
| **ERDF grants** | 1.883.351 EUR |

Project information sheet

## Partnership

UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI
University of Ljubljana
Poliedra
POLITECNICO DI MILANO
Tirol STANDORTAGENTUR TIROL
Verband Region Südlicher Oberrhein
Planen. Beraten. Entwickeln.
ITC
INOVACIJSKO TEHNOLOŠKI GROZD
INNOVATION TECHNOLOGY CLUSTER
ADRETS
Région Autonome Vallée d'Aoste
Région Autonome Vallée d'Aoste
SAB
eNu
scch { software competence center hagenberg }
REGION WEST LUZERN
ANCI LIGURIA

# Connecting Communities for Housing and Social Well-being

**Communauté de communes du Guillestrois et du Queyras, France**

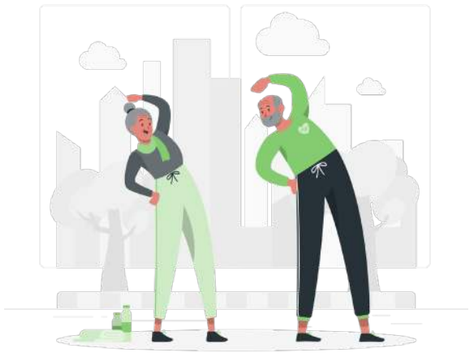
This pilot solution addresses the dual challenges of housing shortages and social isolation. It creates two interconnected networks: one brings together housing professionals and homeowners to unlock rental opportunities and boost economic vitality through matchmaking events.
The other builds a community support system for the elderly and the most vulnerable people in the area (homeless people, people with health issues, etc.). Through a digital platform connecting various community professionals (local representatives, social services, associations, volunteers, etc.), the idea is to build an attentive and responsive community to prevent situations of social isolation. Both initiatives aim to make the territory more attractive and
resilient by fostering stronger community bonds and addressing critical service gaps.

## What are the success factors?

Success hinges on a highly collaborative, co-development approach. Engaging a diverse range of stakeholders—from public officials and real estate agents to secondary homeowners, the elderly, and young volunteers—is crucial. The solution's design directly addresses clearly identified local needs, such as the high rate of vacant secondary residences and demographic aging. By building on existing community assets and fostering direct communication, the initiative ensures that the developed solutions are relevant, supported, and sustainable.

## How it can be replicated

The model is highly replicable in territories facing similar housing and demographic pressures. The key is to first map specific local challenges and then build targeted networks of relevant actors to co-design solutions. This approach was tested in the LTA/FTA pairing between the Communauté des communes des Baronnies en Drôme Provençale (LTA) and Guillestrois-Queyras (FTA), demonstrating that the principles of professional matchmaking and community-led support can be adapted to different contexts by sharing good practices and lessons learned through the network.



"I really enjoyed being part of this working group and sharing some great memories together, while advancing two key issues in our community: housing and support to the most vulnerable."

A local elected representative

# Connecting a Rural Territory: A Digital Hub for Services

**Communauté de Communes des Baronnies en Drôme Provençale, France**

This pilot addresses the challenges of a vast, sparsely populated territory by creating a central information hub for essential services. The solution has two pillars: a partly digital Mobility Center that consolidates all public and collaborative transport options (buses, carpooling), and a Digital Mapping System that increases the visibility of health and other public service providers. This integrated approach makes it easier for residents, tourists, and workers to access vital information, improving connectivity and overall quality of life across the region.

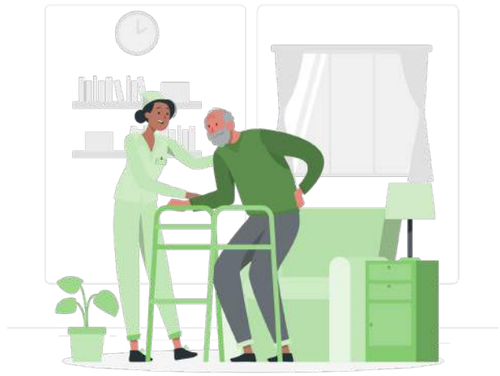


## What are the success factors?

Success is rooted in a co-development process involving a dedicated Regional Stakeholder Group. The project effectively identifies and consolidates fragmented information from various providers. By targeting a diverse audience—from elderly citizens needing transport to access public services (to access public services (doctors, shops, etc.) to youth accessing public transports to study—the solution is tailored to real-world needs. Strong collaboration between public authorities and service providers is essential for gathering the data needed to make the hub a reliable and comprehensive resource for the entire community. In order to collect data, the population was also engaged hrough a mobility tour to collect data at a sub-level that is not accessible in general databases.

## How it can be replicated

This model is ideal for other rural regions facing similar challenges of fragmented services and large distances. Replication begins with a thorough mapping of existing transport and service providers. A central digital platform can then be created to make this information accessible. In the SmartCommUnity project, the experience of the Communauté des Baronnies (LTA) is shared with the Communauté de Guillestrois-Queyras (FTA). This LTA/FTA exchange provides a clear framework for replicating the process of stakeholder engagement, data consolidation, and tool development.



"For us, the question of attractiveness through access to mobility or the developpement of housing solutions is a guarantee that our region will be liveable in the future."

A local elected representative

# Developing citizen participation by training elected officials

**Communauté de Communes des Baronnies en Drôme Provençale & Communauté de communes du Guillestrois et du Queyras, France**

One of the observations made between the two pilot territories was the challenge rural elected officials face in developing a structured approach to citizen participation processes. A training tool consisting of MOOCs was therefore developed, using AI to create a training programme tailored to the realities of each territory.

Available at https://communservice.cc/?FormationParticipation



**What are the success factors?**

Success hinges on a highly collaborative, co-development approach. Engaging a diverse range of stakeholder success is rooted in a co-development process involving a dedicated Regional Stakeholder Group. The solution's design directly addresses clearly local needs identified in a first step of co-design solutions. One other key of success is the role implemented by the partner to facilitate the knowledge and collaboartion between the two TAs (regular meetings, study visits, etc.) and by with the support of experts in participatory approaches.

**How it can be replicated**

The model is highly replicable in territories facing similar governance issues. For such a tool to be relevant, it is necessary to clearly identify the demands and needs of the area and adopt a 'try-and-error' approach, so that different versions of the tool can be tested within communities by various stakeholders (elected officials, associations, residents) until a widely deployable version is developed.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# Green Point: A Collaborative Model for Sustainable Food Systems

**Pomurje Region, Slovenia**

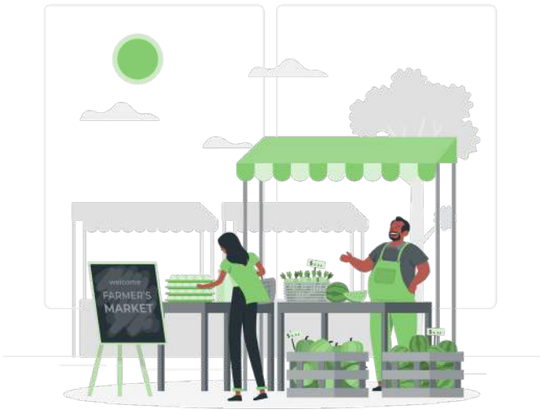
The Green Point Living Lab transforms the Pomurje region's largest short food supply chain into a dynamic innovation ecosystem. Using a Multi-Actor Approach, it brings together over 100 farmers, consumers, public authorities, and tech providers to co-create solutions. Local food production, blockchain traceability system and circular business model are tackling critical challenges such as supply chain transparency, food waste and loss reduction, and enhancing food safety, are building more resilient and circular agri-food system for the region., short food supply chains, and traceability systems in creating a more resilient and sustainable food system.


## What are the success factors?

Success is driven by its Living Lab approach, which actively involves a diverse range of stakeholders in the co-creation process. The initiative builds upon the strong foundation of an existing, fully operational food cooperative, providing the scale and trust necessary for piloting new technologies, products and services. A clear focus on solving tangible challenges like food loss and traceability ensures that innovations deliver practical, real-world value. The formal recognition as an registered ENoLL Living Lab provides a structured framework for innovation and collaboration.

## How it can be replicated

The Green Point LL model is replicated through the SmartCommUnity Lighthouse Test Area (LTA) / Follower Test Area (FTA) framework. In this project, the Pomurje Region (LTA) mentors the Podravje Region (FTA). Replication involves transferring knowledge via workshops, identifying the follower region's specific challenges, and assisting in introduction of digital technologies and LL approach. FTA adapts the multi-stakeholder approach to co-develop solutions tailored to its own unique context, fostering local innovation and sustainable practices.




"I see the LL as a vital space where research meets real life — it offers the environment to translate complex scientific findings into everyday language that farmers and consumers can relate to, and just as importantly, it brings their voices back into the research process."

Tamara,
Human Interaction Specialist
at Green Point Living Lab

# A Lighthouse for Rural Digitalization: Connecting People to Public Services

**Löffingen, Germany**

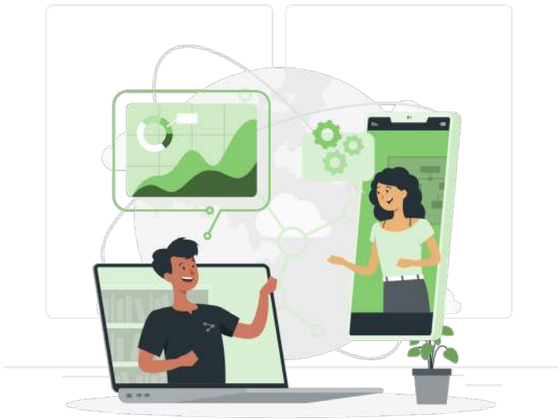
This pilot solution leverages Löffingen's advanced position as a Lighthouse Test Area (LTA). Having already implemented a digital strategy and several "smart" projects under the previous SmartVillages initiative, Löffingen's role is to serve as a blueprint for success. The core activity of Löffingen as a role model community involves a structured knowledge transfer, sharing practical experience in digitization with FollowerTest Areas (FTAs) to accelerate their own smart transitions.


### What are the success factors?

The key success factor is Löffingen's proven track record and existing assets, including a drafted digital strategy, a citizen app and a citizen car. This provides a credible and practical foundation for the FTAs, who can learn from real-world, tested solutions rather than theoretical models. Success also depends on the structured framework for exchange and knowledge transfer, allowing for the direct transfer of lessons learned. This procedure helps the follower communities to avoid common pitfalls and implement effective strategies more efficiently.

### How it can be replicated

This mentorship model is inherently designed for replication. Any region can adopt it by pairing an advanced municipality with less advanced ones that share similar challenges. In this project, Löffingen (LTA) serves as the role model for the municipalities of Elzach and Winden im Elztal (FTAs). Through targeted knowledge transfer, Löffingen shares its journey and best practices, providing a role model for a clear and supportive pathway for the FTAs to develop and implement their own successful digitization projects.



# Citizen App for Enhanced Community Life

**Elzach, Germany**

This pilot focuses on enhancing community connectivity and accessibility through a diverse suite of digital solutions. The centerpiece is a Citizen App, a user-friendly platform for communication between residents and the city administration. This is complemented by a platform for local associations which is linked to the Citizen App where they can plan and promote their events. Additionally, projects like a series of events for improving digital skills among citizens helped (older) people to get to know and use the internet and digital tools safely. A potential and location analysis for a co-working space in Elzach addressing local businesses and tourism was also conducted. This helped to initiate paving the way for local access to modern working places in a rural region.



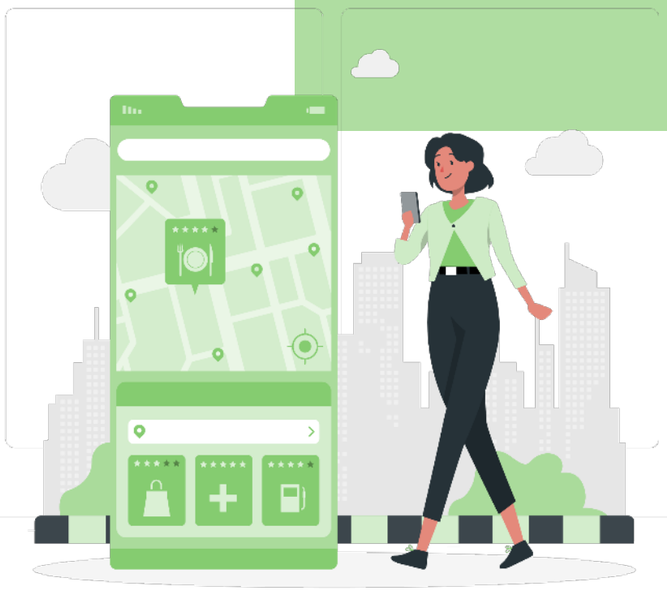



## What are the success factors?

The pilot's strength lies in its multi-faceted approach, which addresses the specific needs of various community groups - from the elderly to remote workers to local associations and tourism.By developing a range of interconnected digital tools, the solution provides practical answers to everyday challenges. Success depends on strong engagement with local government, civil society and entrepreneurs to ensure the tools are user-centric and effectively integrated into the community's daily life, enhancing communication, accessibility and overall quality of life for all.

## How it can be replicated

This model is highly replicable for communities seeking to use digital tools to improve public services and citizen engagement. The key is to first identify distinct user groups and their specific needs, then develop a tailored set of solutions. As an FTA, Elzach benefits from the experience of the LTA, Löffingen. A collaborative framework is provided for sharing best practices and adapting successful digitization strategies, ensuring that the development process is efficient and effective.



"Digitalization is the most important step for the future that a rural town like Elzach needs to take."

Roland Tibi
Mayor of Elzach

# The Civic Center for Community and Digital Life

**Winden im Elztal, Germany**

The goal is to enhance quality of life, broaden access to knowledge and information, promote local economy/tourism sights, and improve access to digital tools for all residents. This pilot addresses different needs of its community by creating a forest trail with digital elements for all age groups, with a special focus on children. The forest trail seamlessly integrates physical and digital educational aspects of learning. It acts as an opportunity for different target groups (e.g. children or tourists) to enrich their learning experiences on many different levels. This also highlights a synergy effect with the Digital Competencies event series, that was also held for the citizens of Winden im Elztal. This helped that all age groups were empowered to make use of the digital elements of the forest trail. Additionally, local tourism is strengthened as they can promote the new forest trail of their community to the many tourists that visit the Black Forest every year.


### What are the success factors?

The pilot's success depends on creating various services that serve diverse community needs. By combining physical infrastructure with a range of events and tools, the solution provides comprehensive support for different groups, including older adults, tourists, and young people. The active involvement of local government representatives, entrepreneurs, and civil society is crucial for ensuring that the services offered are relevant and effectively implemented, fostering a stronger, more connected, and digitally adept community.

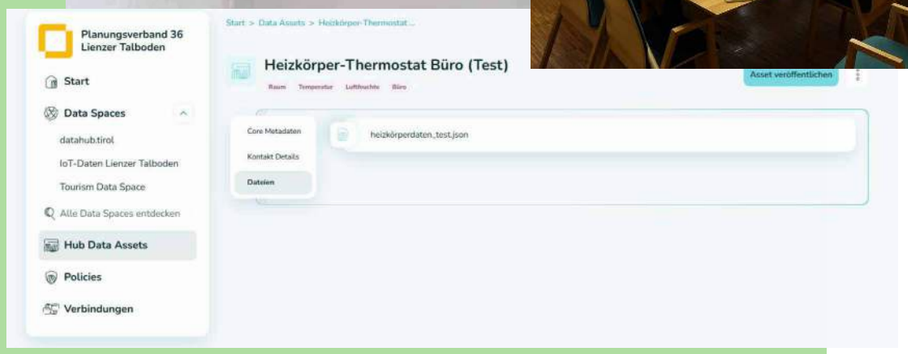
### How it can be replicated

These implementations are highly replicable in other rural areas seeking to widen their services and improve digital access. The first step is to identify key community needs and then develop ideas supported by a tailored set of (digital) tools and events. This implementation projects provide a practical roadmap for starting a digital ecosystem in a structured and sustainable way.

# A Sensor Infrastructure for Smarter Community Management

**Lienzer Talboden, East Tyrol, Austria**

This pilot solution establishes a regional LoRaWAN sensor network to collect and visualize real-time data from community buildings across 15 municipalities. By gathering crucial information on factors such as energy usage and environmental conditions, the network provides municipal decision-makers with a robust, data-driven foundation for action. This enables a more cost-efficient and effective smart transition, allowing leaders to manage public resources and services with greater precision and foresight, directly addressing the region's need for modern development.

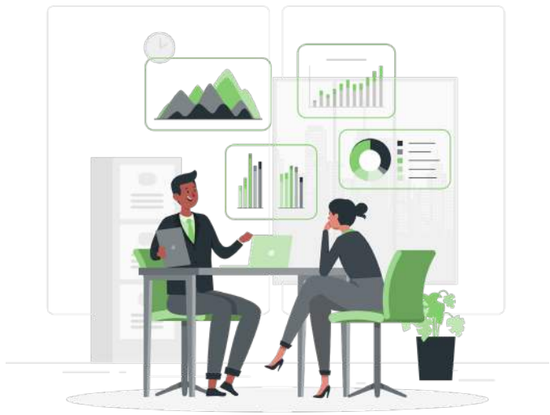



## What are the success factors?

The primary success factor is the strong collaboration among the numerous municipalities involved, guided by a shared goal of enhancing smart governance. By establishing a unified data collection infrastructure, the project creates a common operational picture for the entire remote region. Success also depends on the selection of appropriate, scalable technology (LoRaWAN) and a clear focus on producing actionable data. This provides mayors and public employees with evidence-based insights, fostering trust in the system and driving data-informed policy.

## How it can be replicated

This data-driven governance model is highly replicable in any group of municipalities seeking to improve decision-making through shared infrastructure. The approach can be scaled by first identifying common regional challenges and then deploying a sensor network to collect relevant data. While this pilot did not have a pre-defined LTA/FTA pair, it serves as an excellent LTA model itself. It could be paired with a follower region to transfer knowledge on network setup, data management protocols, and the use of analytics for cost-efficient public service management.



# Building Climate Resilience Through a Regional Network

**KLAR! Regions in Lower Austria, Austria**

This pilot addresses the pressing challenges of climate change by strengthening the existing KLAR! (Climate Change Adaptation Model Regions) Network. The solution focuses on equipping communities with the knowledge and tools to cope with heatwaves, heavy rainfall, and water shortages. Activities include a comprehensive communication strategy with regular newsletters, best practice guides, and explainer videos. The core goal is to consolidate existing climate adaptation content into a single, accessible web platform, empowering citizens and municipalities to take informed action.

### What are the success factors?

The pilot's strength lies in its ability to leverage the established and trusted KLAR! Network. By engaging local government officials, businesses, and community organizations, it ensures that the solutions are relevant and directly address the diverse impacts of climate change on agriculture, biodiversity, and daily life. The creation of practical, easy-to-understand resources like "Climate-Fit" action guides and explainer videos makes complex information accessible to a broad audience, fostering widespread awareness and motivating community-led adaptation projects.

### How it can be replicated

This regional network model is highly replicable for any area looking to coordinate a unified response to climate change. The key is to establish a central platform for sharing best practices and to facilitate regular communication between different communities. Within the project, the KLAR! Regions function as an interconnected LTA/FTA system, where more advanced regions mentor others through regular meetings and shared reports. This structured exchange allows for the rapid dissemination and adaptation of successful climate resilience strategies across the entire territory.

"Thanks to the project, we were able to develop smart adaptation measures for rural areas in all of my municipalities – in close cooperation with local representatives and the population."

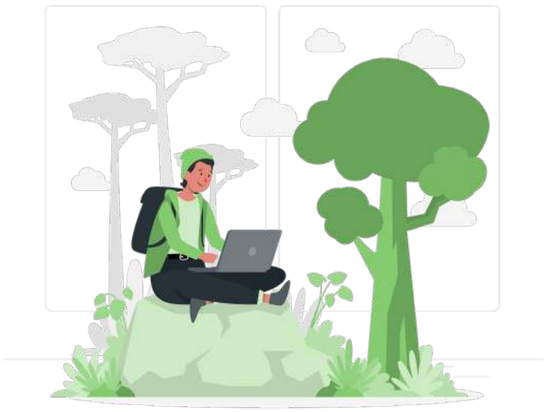
Elisabeth Höbartner-Gußl
Regional Manager (LTA KLAR! Waldviertler Kernland)

# Strengthening Alpine Identity Through Digital Innovation

**Gran Paradiso National Park, Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta, Italy**

In the Gran Paradiso National Park, the SmartCommUnity pilot features "La SIBILLA del Gran Paradiso", a generative AI Digital Human designed by Fondation Grand Paradis to enhance visitor experience. Speaking naturally with voice and text, the AI system offers multilingual information enriched with multimedia content—available anytime. Inspired by mythical sibyls, this virtual guide combines cutting-edge technology with a human-like presence, inviting visitors to explore the park through an engaging and interactive dialogue.

In the Mont Avic Natural Park, a follower area in Valle d'Aosta, a virtual reality system was developed to enhance accessibility, building on the work already carried out in the Gran Paradiso lighthouse area. Through an immersive 360° VR experience, users can explore the scenic beauty of Mont Avic and access detailed information via enriched multimedia content.

## What are the success factors?

The success of the pilot lies in its ability to blend digital innovation with a deep respect for local identity, nature, and culture. Central to this achievement was the strong partnership between the Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta and Fondation Grand Paradis, which combined strategic oversight with deep territorial knowledge and long-standing experience in EU cooperation projects. The structured involvement of a broad Regional Stakeholder Group—including municipal representatives, park authorities and local action groups—ensured that the process remained rooted in the community. The bottom-up approach adopted included participatory mapping of needs and a shared prioritization of interventions. The integration of immersive VR experiences and the first experimentation of generative AI in tourism proved particularly effective, demonstrating how cutting-edge tools can be harnessed to strengthen community pride, attract new audiences, and promote environmental stewardship.

## How it can be replicated

This pilot offers a clear and adaptable model for other Alpine or rural regions seeking to embrace digital transition while reinforcing local values. The key is to first identify the unique heritage and challenges of the area and then co-create a set of complementary digital solutions. Digital technologies such as VR and AI can be successful when they are closely tied to the specific cultural and environmental features of a place—whether through immersive storytelling in heritage sites or AI-assisted visitor services in national parks. The Lighthouse–Follower Test Area pairing, exemplified by the Gran Paradiso and Mont Avic parks, further enhances replicability: it creates an internal transfer mechanism where more advanced areas guide others through shared tools and facilitation strategies. This model can be scaled and tailored to fit a variety of local contexts, ensuring that innovation does not override territorial distinctiveness, but rather amplifies it.

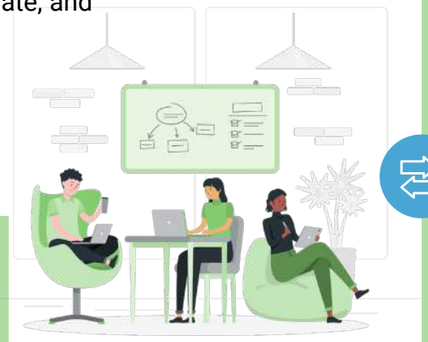
"The Sibyl of Gran Paradiso aims to be an example of what human intelligence can do to multiply itself, offering a sense of the enormous opportunity that the AI revolution is giving us. It is a tool for empowerment, capable of expanding our knowledge, helping us rediscover the value of questions, cultivating the art of critical thinking, and recognizing the beauty of shared and accessible knowledge."

Luisa Vuillermoz
Director of Fondation Grand Paradis

# Gamified Job Orientation for Green Careers

**Fontanabuona Valley & Cogorno, Liguria, Italy**

The SMART LAB is an innovative orientation system designed to guide secondary school students toward technical careers in environmental sustainability. Hosted at the “Water Portal,” a new eco-sustainable hub in Cogorno, the pilot uses gamification, virtual reality, and augmented reality to create immersive educational experiences. This engaging approach helps prevent school dropout, supports students in choosing “tailor-made” training paths, and aligns their skills with the needs of the local labor market, particularly in the carpentry, slate, and agri-food sectors.

## What are the success factors?

Success is built on the strong partnership between the Villaggio del Ragazzo training center and schools throughout the valley. The use of innovative technologies like gamification is crucial for capturing the interest of young students, making career exploration an interactive and engaging process. The dedicated “Water Portal” hub provides an ideal physical space for these activities, while the co-creation of the tools with stakeholders ensures the program is directly relevant to both student aspirations and regional economic needs.

## How it can be replicated

This model is highly replicable for connecting a central training provider with a wider network of schools. The Municipality of Cogorno (LTA) acts as the hub, developing the SMART LAB tools and hosting activities. The model is then extended to students across the Fontanabuona Valley (FTA), the designated follower area. Replication involves identifying a central partner, co-designing gamified content with local schools, and establishing a physical or digital hub to bridge the gap between education and industry.

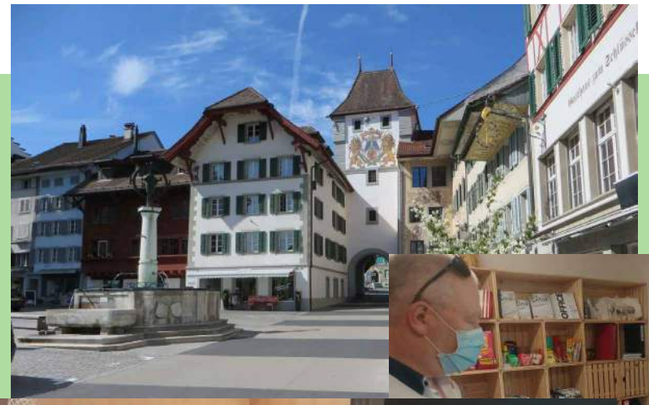
“Gamified Job Orientation for Green Career is an innovative way to encourage young people not to leave their territory, but, on the contrary, to launch a challenge to make it even more attractive and friendly for new families”

Gino Garibaldi
Mayor of the Municipality of Cogorno

# Revitalizing Village Life: Smart Mobility and Smart Economy

**Region Luzern West, Canton of Lucerne, Switzerland**

This pilot solution addresses the dual challenges of tourist-driven traffic congestion and the economic decline of village centers. The approach is centered on organizing two distinct series of workshops. The first set focuses on co-designing smart mobility solutions for the Napfbergland area to better manage tourist flows and provide sustainable transport options for locals. The second set targets all 27 communities in the Region Luzern West, aiming to develop innovative strategies for a smarter economy, with a particular focus on reviving empty stores and revitalizing village centers.



## What are the success factors?

The pilot's success is built on a highly participatory model that brings together local populations, tourists, and the regional stakeholder group ("Arbeitsgruppe Verkehr"). By focusing on clearly defined challenges—mobility and economic revitalization—the workshops can generate practical, community-driven solutions that are tailored to the specific needs of the region. This collaborative process ensures strong local buy-in and leads to the development of concrete, actionable projects that address both environmental pressures and economic opportunities.

## How it can be replicated

This workshop-based approach to problem-solving is easily replicable in other regions facing similar issues. The key is to clearly separate thematic challenges and engage the relevant communities and stakeholders in targeted co-creation sessions. The LTA/FTA pairing is structured with the smaller, more tourist-focused Napfbergland area acting as a Lighthouse Test Area for mobility, sharing its findings with the broader 27 communities of the Region Luzern West (FTA), which then adapt these lessons to foster wider economic and social revitalization.

## A NETWORK FOR SMART TRANSITION IN THE ALPS

# SMART ALPS NETWORK

The SmartAlps Network is an initiative of Action Group 5 of EUSALP. It brings together mountain and rural municipalities and regions that are working to harness the potential of digitalization in their territories through a participatory approach. Many of the SmartCommUnity project's test areas have already joined the growing SmartAlps Network.

## The Smart Alps Network's goals are to:

- Disseminate the Smart Villages approach and foster the smart transformation in mountain and rural areas in the Alpine arc.
- Encourage the exchange of information and experiences among Smart Villages and Smart Regions within the Alpine area.
- Transmit a modern image of mountain and rural areas.
- Foster contacts with similar networks and initiatives for mountain and rural areas all over Europe.

The network is guided by a steering committee, but its structure is highly participatory. Most decisions are made collectively by members through surveys. SmartAlps is strongly committed to fostering the exchange of good practices and innovative initiatives among its members and partners. This exchange takes place regularly through webinars, study visits, personal contacts, and the SmartAlps digital exchange platform.

For more information visit: https://smart-alps.eu/smartalps-network/
or contact peter.niederer@sab.ch and a.pastorino@regione.vda.it

**Stay tuned — and join us!**

VISIT WWW.SMART-ALPS.EU

# THE INNOVATION PLATFORM

## SMART-ALPS.EU

The Smart-Alps.eu Innovation Portal serves as the central digital ecosystem for the SmartCommUnity project and the broader Smart Alps network. It integrates various tools, resources, and community features designed to support stakeholders through the different stages of their smart transition journey. It acts as the primary interface for accessing structured approaches, engaging with peers, finding inspiration, and utilizing practical tools for analysis and co-creation.

The key functionalities and components integrated within the portal are listed on next pages.






### INTERACTIVE GUIDE

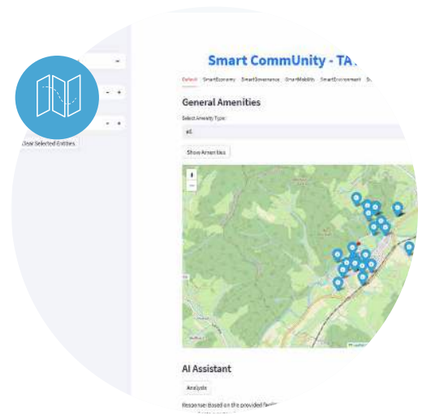
A structured learning and guidance resource designed to inspire and train users with Smart Community tools. It incorporates steps like “Know,” “Define,” “Inspire,” and “Involve,” using gamification elements (karma points) to encourage engagement and progression during the usage and teaching process.


### SMART TOOLBOX

A component supporting participatory processes. It includes questionnaires and structured methods to help communities define their specific needs, suggests appropriate co-creation techniques, guides stakeholder involvement, and links to relevant good practices.


### SMARTNESS ASSESSMENT:

A diagnostic tool enabling communities to evaluate their current “smartness” level across various dimensions (e.g., economy, mobility, environment, living, governance, people). This helps identify strengths, weaknesses, and potential areas for intervention.




### TEST AREA ANALYSER

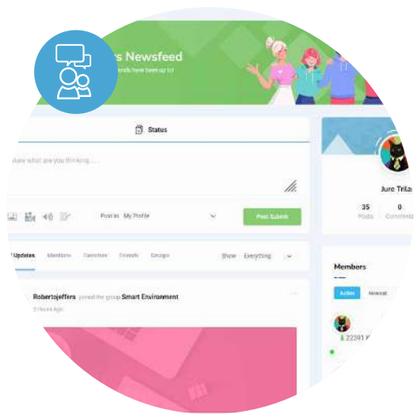
Tool is designed for analysing and potentially visualizing data related to or generated by the project’s designated Test Areas (TAs), supporting the understanding of local contexts and the monitoring of pilot activities using existing Open Street Maps datasets and additionally supports the summarisation of results by AI with general or 6 smartness dimensions focus.


## GOOD PRACTICES

A repository or catalogue showcasing successful Smart Village initiatives and solutions from across the Alpine region and potentially beyond. It includes map-based browsing and functionality for users to submit their own examples, fostering knowledge sharing and inspiration.

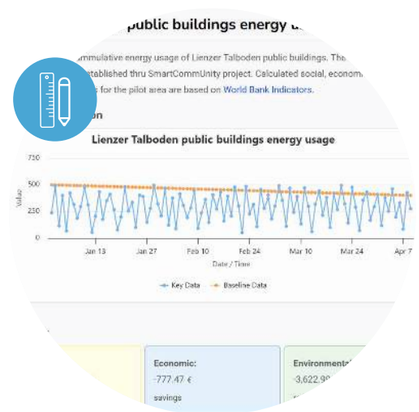

## AI KNOWLEDGE BASE

A chatbot, trained on SmartVillages and SmartCommUnity materials, provides access to information, resources, and answers related to Smart Villages concepts, tools, and project activities.




## ONLINE COMMUNITY

Facilitating networking and collaboration among users (PPs, RSGs, pilot representatives, other interested stakeholders) and includes features like a newsfeed for updates, dedicated groups for specific topics or regions, user profiles (potentially with 'friends' functionality), and forums for discussion.




## IMPACT DATA SHOWCASE

Data Community component serves as the primary digital interface for this process, transforming impact measurement from a conceptual requirement into an actionable and visible outcomedemonstrations.

The tools form a comprehensive digital environment is aligned wiht the cocrative methodologies (Goals, Stakeholders, Co-create) by providing resources for understanding context (Smartness Assessment, TA Analyser), finding inspiration (Good Practices), structuring engagement (Interactive Guide, Toolbox), and facilitating collaboration (Online Community). The portal thus acts as the essential backbone for applying the Smart Community approach in a structured, informed, and collaborative manner.

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# POLICY

# RECOMMENDATIONS

SmartCommUnity wokrpackage on EUSALP uptake and integration at policy level provides the common vision to be disseminated through strengthened and expanded collaborative networks that facilitate cross-border learning. It is essential that future policies are informed by a systematic collection of existing best practices, while promoting an integrated, cross-sectoral approach.

For long-term viability and relevance, these local and regional initiatives are aligned with broader macro-regional strategies and ensure the active participation of youth in the policy-making process.





To foster a successful digital transformation in Alpine rural and mountain territories, a coordinated multi-level governance approach is essential. Evidence from the SmartCommUnity project test areas across the Alpine region highlights three core needs:

**investing in foundational digital infrastructure and skills,**

**simplifying administrative frameworks to support local innovation, and**

**creating sustainable, long-term support systems for digital solutions.**

The recommendations on next pages provide concrete, implementable actions for policymakers at the local, national, and macro-regional levels to build a thriving, digitally-enabled Alpine Space. The key is to empower local actors through community-led initiatives like “Living Labs” while ensuring strategic alignment and support from national and EU-level programs.

These recommendations are included from ‘Detailed Policy recommendations FOSTERING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN ALPINE RURAL AND MOUNTAIN TERRITORIES’ by Action Group 5 Connectivity and Accessibility for EUSALP - EU Strategy for the Alpine Region.

## LIST OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

**P1. Recognise and Scale Community-Led Smart Transformation:** acknowledge the proven potential of community-driven initiatives (e.g., SmartVillages, SmartCommUnity projects) as catalysts for the smart transition of rural and mountain areas. Formalise their role at local, regional, national, and EU levels, ensuring they are embedded in strategic frameworks and supported through capacity-building, facilitation, and governance mechanisms. Promote bottom-up innovation by empowering municipalities, associations, and local actors to co-design solutions that reflect territorial needs and cultural identity.

**P2. Build Foundational Infrastructure and Skills: s**upport investments in reliable, high-speed internet access and resilient connectivity as a baseline for digital transformation. Complement infrastructure with digital literacy programs for residents, SMEs, and public administrations. Launch regional academies and voucher schemes (via EDIHs or similar) to train municipal staff and businesses in digital skills, project management, and data/privacy compliance. Engage youth through gamification, VR/AR, and school partnerships to foster local pride and reduce outmigration.

**P3. Strengthen Smart Region Hubs and Simplify Access to Innovation:** establish or reinforce a network of Smart Region hubs and Living Labs (e.g., Smart Alps network) to provide shared platforms, reusable toolkits, and thematic workshops (e.g., climate & mobility exhibitions). These hubs should act as facilitators for co-creation, enabling municipalities to reuse assets and scale solutions across borders. To accelerate uptake, introduce micro-grants and light-touch procurement for small pilots, and provide ready-made framework contracts and templates so small municipalities can procure services quickly and legally.

**P4. Ensure Responsible Data Use and Shared Learning:** adopt concise "Smart Community Data Charters" to clarify ownership, privacy, and sharing rules for municipal and community-generated data. Promote open access to non-sensitive datasets to foster transparency, innovation, and inclusive societal benefits. Support citizen apps and tourism tools that leverage open data responsibly. In parallel, implement a light KPI set (e.g., participants reached, SMEs engaged, schools involved, app users, satisfaction) and maintain a shared Alpine repository/newsletter of good practices to enable replication and continuous improvement.

## IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

**General Implementation Guidelines:** for these recommendations to succeed, a strong emphasis must be placed on a **multi-stakeholder, bottom-up approach.** Implementation should build upon pre-existing trust and networks within communities.

**Identification of Responsible Actors:** success hinges on collaboration between a wide range of actors, including municipalities, local associations, universities, private companies (especially SMEs), and regional development agencies.

**Potential Enablers:** the most powerful enablers identified across all pilot projects are **strong local support and active stakeholder engagement.** Providing clear alignment with existing high-level policies gives local projects legitimacy and direction.

**Resource Requirements:** implementation requires a smart allocation of resources, prioritizing foundational needs like reliable internet infrastructure and widespread digital literacy programs. A combination of public funding from regional, national, and EU sources, complemented by private investment, will be necessary.

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**Additional resources:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Official Alpine Space website | www.alpine-space.eu/project/smartcommunity/ |
| Innovation portal | www.smart-alps.eu |
| Instructional videos | www.youtube.com/@SmartCommUnity-AlpineSpace/ |

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**Visual sources:**
Standortagentur Tirol - AV Media Productions, Alpine Space Programme toolkit, Project partners pilot area archive photos, Freepik.com

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Alpine Space

SmartCommUnity

Building on the concept of Smart Villages towards a transnational and EUSALP-integrated Smart Community in the Alps

Priority 3: Innovation and digitalisation supporting a green Alpine region

Specific Objective 3.2: Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities

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