



## VAL GRANDE NATIONAL PARK

# Commonlands



## Cultural community mapping in alpine areas



### Participatory Governance

## Challenge

Val-Grande National Park is shared between 10 mountain communities located in the remote alpine area in the Piedmont region. Low production capacity and depopulation are two pressing challenges for local communities. These socio-economic changes put at risk both tangible and intangible vernacular heritage including oral history and traditions, dialects, and architectural and crafting techniques no longer transmitted to younger generations.

## Solution

Through extensive collaborative efforts, the 250 inhabitants from 10 municipalities triggered a sustainable bottom-up process to co-design and manage cultural and tourist initiatives. The participatory approach enabled local communities to re-appropriate natural and cultural heritage as a source for local development and sustainable tourism. In the medium-long term, the project is expected to lead to the creation of a Commonlands Ecomuseum.

## How ?

- 1 In November 2016, the 10 municipalities engaged residents in a community mapping of cultural and natural heritage features of their territory through interviews, collection of images, videos, documents and objects.
- 2 The mapping resulted in one comprehensive Commonlands Map and 10 individual maps for each of the communities. All the sources have been incorporated in a shared digital archive.
- 3 Awareness raising facilitated dialogue across communities and tourists including more than 60 meetings (public presentations, workshops, focus groups). Locals were involved in planning, managing and delivering 'Community Walks' as guides, showing the most iconic assets accompanied with personal stories reaching more than 1,500 participants.
- 4 Almost 200 plaques indicating QR-codes create a thick signalling system of the cultural identity. On-site activities are complemented by [www.comuniterrae.it](http://www.comuniterrae.it), a digital-storytelling platform which makes available the digital archive and the community maps to a larger audience for awareness raising in sustainable local development at national and international level.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ACTION

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## Budget/Financing

€ 100,000

The total budget of the initiative is €100,000:

- The project is an initiative of ARS.UNI.VCO Association and Val Grande National Park which both supported the action (25% each).
- The Region of Piedmont contributed to funding the initiative, thanks to a call for projects enhancing the regional intangible cultural heritage (25%).
- The Verbanio-Cusio-Ossola Foundation, a local NGO, sustained the project thanks to a call for projects targeting historical heritage (25%).

## Management

- The 10 Alpine communities sharing the Val Grande National Park (Premosello Chiovenda, Trontano, Beura Cardezza, Vogogna, San Bernardino Verbano, Miazina, Cossogno, Intragna ed Aurano) drive implementation in cooperation with local stakeholders.
- The local NGO ARS.UNI.VCO and Val Grande National Park are crucial management partners.
- The Piemonte Region offered financial support to the initiative for the year 2017-2018.
- Additional support is provided by research centres and local associations.

## Transferability

- Consider your project as a long-term journey: co-creation of bottom-up engagement tools is not a one-off endeavour but requires continuity to stimulate locals' collaboration towards common goals, trust and empathy.
- Do not be afraid to use digital storytelling and narrative tools to promote your territory to a wider audience.
- Engage with as many sectors as possible to ensure shared and integrated territorial development opportunities.

## Impact

- Increased local participation in heritage.
- Improved collaboration between local authorities, local people and stakeholders in co-designing culture and sustainable tourism initiatives.
- Improved data collection and mapping.
- Co-creation of innovative narrative tools and community-based tourism initiatives for sustainable territorial promotion.
- Improved awareness raising and activation of social responsibility in sustainable local development.
- Improved knowledge-sharing on local culture and heritage.
- Enhanced valorisation and discoverability of territorial gems.

## Link

<http://www.comuniterrae.it>

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