

# LAG Valli del Canavese - Accessible tourism for the development of a mountain area in northern Italy

Adapting hospitality and tourism services to the needs of disabled visitors in the Piedmont region.

## EAFRD-funded projects

**Location:** LAG Valli del Canavese area, Italy

**Programming period:** 2014-2020

**Priority:** P6 - Social inclusion and local development

**Focus Area:** Local development

**Measures:** M19 - LEADER CLLD

**Funding:**

Total budget:	2 631 920 (EUR)
EAFRD:	748 518 (EUR)
National/Regional:	567 442 (EUR)
Private/Own:	1 315 960 (EUR)

**Timeframe:** 04/2018 - 12/2023

**Project promoter:** LAG Valli del Canavese

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## Summary

The LAG Valli del Canavese in the north of Italy has experience in tourism projects, having promoted several new hiking routes, as well as a joint initiative with other LAGs. These projects demonstrated the social and economic benefits of supporting the adaptation of existing and new tourist activities to the needs of disabled people. This experience has proved to be among the few initiatives that could also be profitably developed in a mountain area. The project, 'Accessible tourism', was designed to provide advice and funding support to small tourism operators across the Piedmont region to invest in adapting their hospitality and tourism services to the needs of disabled visitors. The project included the provision of dedicated consulting advice to participating enterprises. A total investment of over EUR 2 million was made, and 16 new jobs were created.

## Project results

- The project supported a total of 20 small tourism enterprises (mainly non-hotels) across 13 different municipalities.
- Overall, the number of beds was increased by 72 new spaces, creating 16 new full-time jobs.

## Key lessons and recommendations

Providing a professional advisory service to project participants has proven to be very effective, and has contributed significantly to the overall success of the project. This service provided participating enterprises with tailored advice on how to improve the accessibility of their tourism offers in a cost-efficient manner, while focusing on creating the most user-friendly and welcoming service as possible for their customers.



## Context

The LAG Valli del Canavese operates in the north-west of the Piedmont region in Italy, at the border of the French Alps. It encompasses 53 municipalities and has a population of 72 000 inhabitants. Farming, in this mountainous area, is no longer perceived as a viable option for income generation. However, over recent years, the work of the LAG with local stakeholders has shown that focusing on accessible tourism could represent an important revenue-generating opportunity for small rural operators.

An earlier Rural Development Programme (RDP)-funded project demonstrated the positive economic impacts of adapting tourism services to the needs of disabled people. This project was carried out jointly with two neighbouring LAGs, and included awareness-raising activities on accessible tourism opportunities. The idea was then to implement a similar project in the Piedmont area.

## Objectives

The project aimed to increase the income of small tourism operators by improving the range of tourism services on offer for disabled visitors. The expectation was that this would help increase the number of local jobs in the area of the LAG. A further objective was to support the area in qualifying as a highly specialised hub for accessible tourism.

## Activities

Project activities included:

- The project began with a period of conducting awareness-raising and training events targeted at local enterprises in the tourism sector in April 2018. The main purpose of the information provided was to inform enterprises of development opportunities and of a forthcoming funding call to support the adaptation process of both existing and new services for disabled people.
- Launching a call for assistance to support the following activities:
  - Providing dedicated design services for making an entire tourism enterprise accessible to people with disabilities.
  - Supporting the funding of tourist equipment and services to improve access for disabled people.

Activities were only eligible for funding when they demonstrated a good fit with the aims and objectives of the LAG local development strategy for sustainable tourism.



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## Main results

- The project supported a total of 20 small tourism enterprises (mainly non-hotels) across 13 different municipalities.
- Due to the support provided, the number of beds was increased by 72 new spaces, creating 16 new full-time jobs.
- Most of the supported enterprises are now able - for the first time - to provide hospitality and various other tourist services that are adapted to the needs of disabled people. This includes access to spa, wellness centers, and game and play areas, making available tactile maps for blind people, and providing disability-bikes (with or without a guide).

## Key lessons and recommendations

- Providing a professional advisory service to project participants has proven to be very effective, and contributed significantly to the overall success of the project. This service provided participating enterprises with tailored advice on how to improve the accessibility of their tourism offer in a cost-efficient manner, while paying attention to creating the most user-friendly and welcoming service possible for their customers.
- In addition, the service supported the implementation of small interventions to address specific needs, including for disadvantaged groups (e.g. installing alarm lights for deaf people).



## Quotes

*“The provision of a dedicated advisory service for the design of accessible tourism facilities proved extremely valuable to beneficiaries; it turned out to be very appealing to other professionals who requested us to organise specific training courses.”*

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*“Our smooth relationship with the RDP regional authority greatly helped to implement the project.”*

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*“We are part of an active network of LAGs operating in the region, and we benefit from sharing experiences and materials that can help us to successfully implement various administrative procedures.”*

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## Additional information:

<https://galvallidelcanavese.it/chi-siamo/#>

[www.facebook.com/GALcanavese](http://www.facebook.com/GALcanavese)

