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**I-SPEED**


*Information Society Policies  
for Sustainable European  
Economic Development*

Access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has played an important part within the knowledge economy. Developing ICT innovative solutions for public services and spreading them across all European Regions could also be a valuable asset for the economic development of the tourism sector, given the way ICT services and the Internet influence market and consumers' behaviours.

In this sense, I-SPEED tackles information society policies with the aim to foster competitiveness and sustainability of Tourism Economy. More precisely, the overall objective of the project is to enable regional and local authorities to develop and improve their policies and instruments through an efficient use of ICT-based public services.

The consortium is made of 10 regional and local authorities covering a wide EU area and being directly responsible for defining policies.

The partnership is coordinated by the City of Venice (Italy) and composed of 9 partners from 9 European countries: the City of Warsaw (Poland), the City of Plovdiv (Bulgaria), Parkstad Limburg (The Netherlands), the Region of Crete (Greece), the Region of Hedmark (Norway), the Region of Galicia (Spain), the City of Bucharest (Romania), the County of Powys (Great Britain) and the Province of Rome (Italy). >



&gt; Venice Connected

## INTERREG IVC Programme



INTERREG IVC Programme was established for the new programming period 2007-2013, under the third Objective of the Structural Funds policies - European Territorial Cooperation.

The Programme covers the whole European Union territory within its scope and it is participated by 27 partners from the European Union Member States and

from Norway and Switzerland. It finances up to 85% or 75% (depends on the Member State in which the partner's seat is located – cohesion or competitiveness region) eligible activities within carried out projects.

The programme budget amounts to EUR 321 million (only European Regional Development Fund's resources).



Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Norwegian Funds

The Programme provides support to activities aimed at improving efficiency of regional policy through promoting innovativeness and knowledge-based economy (Priority, 1) as well as environmental protection and risks prevention (Priority 2). The exchange, sharing and transfer of policy experience, knowledge and good practices is the sense of the INTERREG IVC functioning. Programme is mainly addressed to public institutions and public law entities e.g.: local and regional authorities; public institutions and organisational units appointed to provide services within the scope of environmental protection, natural and

cultural heritage preservation, public transport; regional development agencies; higher education institutions; science and research centres; technology parks; entrepreneurship incubators.

In order to get more information about INTERREG IVC Programme please visit its official website: [www.interreg4c.eu](http://www.interreg4c.eu).

Description elaborated on the basis of INTERREG IVC website [www.interreg4c.eu](http://www.interreg4c.eu) and English version of Polish European Funds Portal <http://www.ewt.gov.pl/english/Strony/Introduction.aspx>

*Karolina Iwinska, City of Warsaw*

Partners are working on of the identification, analysis, and transfer of good practices related to the use of ICT-based services. Workshops, study visits and awareness-raising actions among policy-makers on the need to develop innovation policies in the field tackled are thus being organised.

The effective involvement of policy makers in the project will be guaranteed by the setting up of a Political Steering Group, composed by at least one politician per partner.

By exchanging experiences at policy level, I-SPEED intends to improve regional and local policies for the development of ICT-based public services, responding to the need of improving productivity and competitiveness of businesses and entrepreneurs. The co-operation will also lead to an increased capacity of local and regional administrations across Europe to roll out ICT services and to exploit the possibilities offered by the information society. The main strategic outputs, which consist of a good practices guide, transferability report and policy recommendations, will be made available to any interested local and regional authorities or organisations outside the partnership.

*ISPEED Team, City of Venice*

## Project structure and methodology



## Calendar of project's events

Kick off meeting	Venice (Italy)	18 February 2010
1 <sup>st</sup> workshop "Exchange of experiences"	Hamar (Norway)	26-27 May 2010
2 <sup>nd</sup> workshop "Identification of good practices"	Heraklion (Greece)	September 2010
1 PSG "Political debate on identified good practices"	Powys (UK)	January 2011
3 <sup>rd</sup> workshop "Good practices analysis"	Plovdiv (Bulgaria)	July 2011
2 <sup>nd</sup> PSG meeting "Policy Recommendations and Transferability"	Warsaw (Poland)	January 2012
4 <sup>th</sup> Workshop "Development of Strategic Guidelines"	Parkstad Limburg (the Netherlands)	April 2012
Final Conference	Galicia (Spain)	September 2012

## Project kick off meeting

The project kick off meeting took place in Venice on 18 February 2010 with the presence of Luana Zanella, Deputy Mayor for European and International Relations of the City of Venice, who welcomed the participants and explained the European policies strategies for the local government.

A first session was dedicated to the Venetian experience giving the opportunity to Maurizio Carlin, Director Planning and Control of the City of Venice, and Valter Baldassi, General Director of Venis spa, to present the main ICT projects and services developed by the City of Venice.

During the press conference Vincenzo Sabato, general director of the City of Venice, Luana Zanella and Paola Ravenna, project supervisor, explained the I-SPEED project objectives to the journalists. Gian Paolo Manzella (Province of Rome) and Arnfinn Nergård (Hedmark Region) presented their institutions

information society policies and the next workshop.

After the political panel (*see the article below*), in the afternoon session, Kjetil Norheim, Responsible Officer for Tourism in Hedmark County Council, and Francesco Loriga, ICT Director, Province of Rome, presented some good ICT practices for a sustainable and Competitive Tourism Economy.

Teresa Caldarola, representative for the Economic Development Directorate of the Toscana Region, presented objectives and partners of Necstour, a European network to promote sustainable and Competitive Tourism Economy.

Technical solutions for ICT projects and a detailed study on tourism in Venice were presented by Marco Bettini, Venis SpA, and Isabella Scaramuzzi, COSES



➤ I-SPEED team

## First Political Steering Group meeting - synthesis

The political panel fully confirm an uneven situation in the partners' areas: the ICT literacy is very high and diffused in some areas and not so much, not yet, in others; furthermore it is different also the use of intranet in public administration. Some partners need a strong promotion of ICT learning. All partners take in account the social and educational side of ICT improvement, along with the role of ICT for tourism industry and tourism production (supply, marketing, packaging). Most of partners stressed the e-government, the e-council, and the teleworking as important fields of development and strategic policy.

In the areas with low residential density, the opportunities for developed carried by the broadband seem to be

larger than in other situation, as regard as people education (i.e. e-university), information and dialogue with PA. The



➤ Political Steering Group Participants

coming of age of the population (a general trend in UE) seems to be another issue to which pay attention, for the re-

maining digital divide and, on the contrary, for the limits of physical mobility. It seems that ICT are considered transversal to economic and social sectors, not a specific business branch standing alone but a prerequisite for any other development.

Tourism sector is seen as strictly linked (or likely to be linked) with culture sector and multimedia activities. The so called *knowledge or creative industry seems to be an eligible area of development*, supported by ICT and vice versa. The tourism system has been stressed as major factor for local development, almost by all the partners. A good sentence was: we need ICT for *selling knowledge about our region*. Along with information, the partners indicated as ➤

strategic activities for tourism: marketing and packaging; alternative products; mixing tourism-heritage and culture. In the following section there are resumed some highlights from the partners' interventions at the Kick-off Meeting of the I-SPEED Project.

- **Hedmark County Council** (Norway) has identified ICT as a prerequisite for economic development and the most important source for economic growth, the increase of efficiency and the transformation of public sector in order to digitalize the public administration and to involve people by using e-consultations. Hedmark County Council has the aim to start a new strategy for the creative sector - which includes tourism, culture and multimedia - to facilitate the changeover from an industrial economy to a knowledge economy.

- **In the City of Warsaw** (Poland), tourism economy really could influence the development in connection with three important events: the Chopin's bicentenary celebrations in 2010, the Presidency Semester of the EU in 2011 and the European Championship in 2012 (with Ukraine). Tourism development is really related to ICT one and the Administration is elaborating a tourism long-term strategy (10-15 years) with the aim of a better connection between tourism economy and ICT.

- **The Municipality of Plovdiv** (Bulgaria) has pointed out some goals about several strategies in terms of economic growth and conservation of natural and cultural heritage. The priorities are: the realization of accessibility infrastructure, a competitive and knowledge-based economy growth, broadbanding opportunities for development and new employment, the improvement of innovative management processes and of attraction and quality of Plovdiv as a tourism destination (in-

frastructures, marketing campaigns, web information and innovation).

- **The Region of Crete** (Greece) recognizes ICT as a very important tool for enhancing the competitiveness and the sustainability of tourism sector. In-



➤ Political Steering Group meeting

ternational trends show a clear shift in the use of ICT for the supply side of tourism products and the consumption side. Therefore, Crete considers the use of ICT as a fundamental pylon of the regional development strategy and as a public good (ICT applications lead to improve quality of life), which must allow access to everyone, everywhere and at all times.

- **Powys County Council** (United Kingdom) - according to a survey that identified a different behaviour of tourists who research information on the internet before the trip - has elaborated a tourism development strategy which reduced - or privatised - the number of tourist information centres directly operated by the County Council. The surplus

resources have been invested to provide services elsewhere - like initiatives in destination management and marketing and new ICT solutions to promote Powys tourist attractions.

- **The Regional Government of Galicia** (Spain) has started a lot of regional and local initiatives concerned with ICT programs with an approximate budget for 2009 of 269 million €. The aim of the Government is to develop the possibilities that ICT offer in relation to the market tourist products and to improve the collaboration between PA and private sector: marketing and packaging, registry of tourist companies and activities, use of enterprise content management, destination studies.

- **Parkstad Limburg** (the Netherlands) has connected, with kilometres of optical fibre, all the governmental institutes and it's focused on new out-coming ICT technologies, like mobile internet. With the cooperation among a large number of actors, these projects have obtained to promote all kinds of activities through different media: digital thinking and movie applications, IT tourism attractions (interactive digital city-guides, coupon and discount systems, dinner tours) and ICT systems for new forms of interactive digital events possible in theatre places.

- **The Province of Rome** (Italy) has a firm political commitment on innovation and it has started a lot of projects to foster creative industry whereby promote links between research and enterprises and internet access. Rome has a strong economic connection with the tourism sector and the ICT industry and the Administration has in the aim to foster tourism through the diffusion of ICT and new technologies.

*Giovanni Santoro, COSES*

## First workshop - Hamar

The first work shop aims to increase the knowledge about participating regions in the project among the partners. This will mainly be done by that each partner region will present a SWOT analysis which as been carried out since the kick off meeting in February.

The SWOT analysis will also be the fundament for the coming work in the project. SWOT analysis model or method is

a quick, easy and initiative way to focus on key issues and to audit competitive positions and the relationship with its context.

During the first work shop the project will also start the identification of "best practice". The partner regions SWOT analysis are informative and tells us about what kind of actions regions have been taking in order to avoid threats

and/or diminished weakness and of course how they increased strengths and exploited opportunities.

During the two days in Hamar, the partners will discuss the results from the SWOT analysis and but also listen to successful projects and actions from Hedmark. For instance how Hedmark has been able to achieve a high level of broad band access (99.8 %) ➤

and a example of successful public and private partnership in the field of tourism. Additional successful ICT projects from Powys, Wales and Parkstad, Nederland will presented and discussed. The workshop ends by a site visit at the Museum Domkirkeodden (The old Cathedral).

Eva Lundin, Hedmark County

## Partners

City of Venice

[www.comune.venezia.it](http://www.comune.venezia.it)



City of Warsaw

[www.um.warszawa.pl](http://www.um.warszawa.pl)



Municipality of Plovdiv

[www.plovdiv.bg](http://www.plovdiv.bg)



Region of Crete

[www.crete-region.gr](http://www.crete-region.gr)



Powys County Council

[www.powys.gov.uk](http://www.powys.gov.uk)



Regional Government of Galicia-Regional Ministry of Innovation and Industry Tourism

[www.conselleriaiei.org](http://www.conselleriaiei.org)



Municipality of Bucharest

[www.pmb.ro](http://www.pmb.ro)



Parkstad Limburg

[www.parkstad-limburg.nl](http://www.parkstad-limburg.nl)



Province of Rome

[www.provincia.roma.it](http://www.provincia.roma.it)



Hedmark County Council

[www.hedmark.org](http://www.hedmark.org)



➤ Museum Domkirkeodden (The old Cathedral)

## Hedmark presentation

Hedmark County is situated in the south of Norway. The regional centre is Hamar situated 120 km north of the capital Oslo and one hour by train from the international airport Gardemoen. In 1994 Hamar hosted the Olympic Game together with Lillehammer. The Vikingship where the skating competing took place has become a landmark for Hedmark and Hamar. Hedmark has a total population of 190 000 inhabitants and is very sparsely populated region, 7 persons pr. Km<sup>2</sup>. The county is dominated by mountains, forests and to some extent farmland in the south.

During the Viking age the area around Hamar was considered one of the most important power centers in Norway. The Hamar region strengthened its position during the middle ages and a cathedral was built and became a major landmark. Economically Hedmark is on most indicators in better state than most

European countries/regions. The unemployment rate is low and Hedmark have been relatively unaffected by the international economic downturn the last two years. One reason could be that the trade and industry in Hedmark consist mostly of small and medium size companies within various sectors. Thus the tourism industry is becoming increasingly important in the rural areas. The tourism and creative sector employs 4 500 persons which is 6 % of the total employment and it is estimated a total tourist consumption of 300 mill euro per year. 70% of the tourists are domestic. But to Trysil which is Norway's biggest ski destinations, visitors arrive from all Nordic countries and beyond. The ICT industry in Hedmark employs ca 2 500 persons (3% of the total employment) Despite the quite low number there are several ICT companies with relevant competence for the tourism industry.

As in all parts of Norway there is a high access to internet through broadband.

## Other info:

➤ Paola Ravenna, I SPEED supervisor, presented the project objectives during the workshop “Smart Cities” organized by the Major Cities network ([www.majorcities.org](http://www.majorcities.org)) and held in Venice on 8 and 9 February 2010.

➤ The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on “Tourism and Environment” with a special session of NECSTouR Universities was held in Florence, Italy, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of May, 2010.

See: <http://www.necstour.eu/necstour/events.age?eventId=284>

➤ The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the two-yearly International Forum on Tourism Statistics will be held in Lisbon on 22 and 23 November 2010. The event is organised jointly by the Statistics Portugal

(INE), Turismo de Portugal, the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

➤ EU Member States continue to improve their innovation performance, according to the 2009 edition of the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS), and the difference between the leaders and the catching-up countries is narrowing. Although the majority of available data predates the beginning of the recession, there are signs hinting that the good progress of recent years may now be faltering.

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*Giuseppe Mella, City of Venice*



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