

WP 4 output 4.1.4

INNOVATIVE REVITALIZATION PACKAGE

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NOVALESA, A VILLAGE WITHIN A VILLAGE

Pilot project for integrated cultural enhancement, social development and enterprise

1. ANAMNESIS

1.1. Description

Novalesa – a village with 560 residents situated at an altitude of 900 metres above sea level in the Valle di Susa – is considered to be a system combination of restricted “beni faro” (leading attractions) and widespread historical-naturalistic assets: the famous Abbey, founded in 726, the parish church with canvases by Rubens and from the School of Caravaggio, the Old Town, with clear architectural evidence of its past role as a transit station – like the urban plan, developed along the sides of a long main street, or the Inn with its 14th century frescoes –, as well as traces of the Via Francigena and the Route Royale passing through the neighbouring Colle del Moncenisio, keystone in the crossing of the Western Alps during medieval and modern times.

There is also the Book restoration laboratory and the recent Archaeology museum housed in the Abbey which, having been purchased by the Province of Turin, has been subject to extensive restoration work, financed in part by banking foundations like Compagnia di San Paolo.

The Municipal Administration and the Parish have also activated numerous collaborations with the Superintendence, the Province of Turin, Turin Polytechnic and the Diocesan Cultural Centre, adhering to the “Piano di valorizzazione Valle di Susa. Tesori di Arte e Cultura Alpina” (Plan to enhance the value of the Valle di Susa. Treasures of Art and Alpine Culture) for the recovery and promotion of the local environment.

There are artistic-historical assets, some of which have been restored and are usable, but they have still to be incorporated into an organic project/process for enhancement of the value and narration of the place. All the elements listed above have, in the recent past, been subject to interest and to individual project actions, but always in an isolated way and without a comprehensive historical-landscape context, an analysis of interactions with the social dimension and attention to the economic and development-related effects.

Now the administration and part of the population and operators in the cultural and tourism sectors, have matured the need to go further, drawing up innovative projects in which the definition of the local historical

landscape as an “unicum” can allow Novalesa to become a laboratory of experimentation of practices to enhance the value of its heritage, closely entwined with actions to revive the social and economic aspects of the place, generating a virtuous project for local enterprise.

Value enhancement, integration, social development and enterprise become the keywords of a single project which has never before been developed in our region.

The novelty lies mainly in the fact that the lever of this plan, which is not merely instrumental but completely incorporated into the value enhancement process, is the development of the community by training people and creating jobs. It is the entire community that, by taking the project to heart, becomes the driving force behind the Novalesa Laboratory. A method already launched in terms of actions for the requalification of the houses of the old town, which has already led to the recovery of two privately-owned buildings and the renovation of the exterior of the old town hall and the post office situated in the village’s main street. This is an interesting action because not only is it configured as an aim, it also represents a way to rebuild the community and consolidate new types of know-how, thanks to an authentic process of learning by doing. In this way, heritage, village and community are made to coincide in a single “cultural representation”, essential to the entry into operation of an integrated project.

A project which simultaneously envisages tangible and intangible actions, starting with the project for the recovery of an emblematic building: Casa Quarsot, a 16th century structure – privately owned by people with whom the Diocesan Cultural Centre signed a purchase agreement following a declaration of historical intent by the Superintendence – which retains its original interior architectural features. Compared to the overall project, the aim of which is community development, Casa Quarsot represents the catalysing fulcrum and propagator of different actions. It will become the model of structural-architectural recovery with a view to value enhancement and will house the entrepreneurial and reception activities, web base and services, temporary exhibitions and workshops, tourist welcoming facilities, etc. of the entire project.

The Municipality of Novalesa also won the GAL Escarton and Waldensian Valleys tender in support of tangible interventions for the requalification of cultural heritage and, in summer 2013, it worked on the renovation of the exterior of the former town hall and post office, situated in the old town.

The working method employed in the Plan to enhance the value of the Valle di Susa. Treasures of Art and Alpine Culture, set up in 2003, represents an essential precedent which inspired the organisation of work among those involved in this project proposal.

Ten years on, today the 37 Municipalities of the Valle di Susa, the Natural Parks, 20 voluntary cultural associations, schools, tourist consortia and numerous operators in the food and wine and accommodation sectors have signed the protocol of intent, rightfully joining those committed to the integrated plan.

The themes around which the presentation of the cultural heritage within the spheres of the environment, sport and food and wine, has been organised are:

- Religious Art
- Archaeology
- Fortifications
- Tangible culture

1.1.1. Governance

From an organisational point of view, the choice made by the partners was not to create new bodies, and to generate a system with a lightweight governance network, applying just a few simple rules, established on the basis of past experience in the area.

The starting point for the explanation of the philosophy and strategic aims of the value enhancement project was the Protocol of Intent, with which those who sign it undertake, each in relation to their own area of competence, to operate in compliance with the guidelines of the protocol, acting according to a Valley System rationale.

1.1.2. Organisation of the integrated project

The work method envisage three levels of participation:

The Committee for the general coordination of the project representing the different stakeholders in the territory.

The Direction, flanked by the organisational secretariat, provides operational support guaranteeing the link between the work teams, preventing the danger of breakdown and ensuring the passage of information from one work team to another.

The Work Teams represent the second level of participation and operate in relation to the different themes around which the territory has to organise its historical-cultural and landscape-environmental heritage.

The Organisational Secretariat on the other hand is the technical body which has to support the Work Teams, offer cultural mediation and “maintain” the networks, also playing the role of system promoter, specialised

more in human relationships than in cultural heritage and responsible for working on the network and keeping it alive.

In short, the value enhancement plan:

- favours the aggregation of different players (public bodies, associations, owners of cultural assets, business operators, individual members of the public, etc.) around a shared development plan;
- promotes sustainable development actions aimed at generating value from the local cultural heritage;
- facilitates the local activation of processes for the on-line management of the cultural heritage;
- promotes the development of forms of sustainable tourism development.

1.2. The current situation: the Abbey

The abbey complex of Saints Peter and Andrew was founded in 726 by Abbo, the French governor of Moriana and Susa, along an important road used by pilgrims, becoming an important step on the Via Francigena. In Carolingian times (9th century), the abbey reached its finest splendour, housing more than five hundred monks in the main building and annexes.

At religious and cultural level, even today the figure of Saint Abbot Eldradus, head of the abbey between 820 and 845, continues to be of vital importance.

The structure was abandoned at the time of the Saracen incursions, towards the middle of the 10th century. On this occasion, the monks took refuge in Turin, then moving to Lomellina, where they built the Monastery of Breme.

The abbey was rebuilt in the first half of the 11th century in compliance with the wishes of Gezone, abbot of Breme. A group of Benedictine monks led by the architect Brother Bruningo, returned to Novalesa to renovate the ancient monastery, which subsequently formed, with the villages of the Val Cenischia (Ferrera, Venaus and Novalesa), an independent ecclesiastic district which survived for several centuries. Therefore, the history of Novalesa is connected — through Bruningo and Gezone — to the reconstruction of Saint Andrew's Church in Turin (now known as the Santuario della Consolata), of which the imposing bell tower erected by abbot Gezone, as reported by the "Chronicon Novalicense", between 980 and 1014, still exists today.

In 1646, the Benedictines were replaced by the Cistercians, who remained in the Abbey until 1798, when they were expelled by the French revolutionary government.

In 1802, Napoleon entrusted the management of the hospice on the Mont Cenis Pass to abbot Antonio Gabet and to other Trappist monks from Tamié (Savoy), to assist French troops during their transfers. After the defeat of Napoleon, the monks re-founded the Abbey and, in 1821, joined the Italian Cassinese congregation.

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Following the introduction of the law of suppression issued by the Piedmont government on 29 May 1855, the monks were forced to abandon the Abbey once again. The buildings were sold at auction and transformed into a hotel offering spa treatments, while the manuscripts were transferred to the State Archive in Turin.

From 1884, ownership of the monastery passed into the hands of the “Convito Nazionale Umberto I”. Under these owners, the monastery complex became a holiday place for students from Turin. During this period, the care and keeping of the buildings was entrusted to the people of Novalesa. With the last war, the former monastery was abandoned and lost all dignity.

In 1960, solicited by the Local Committee of Novalesa, the Superintendence for the Monuments of Piedmont began to carry out its first surveys and on the 5th of October 1961, the mayor of Novalesa, Giuseppe Franke, resolved to ask the State Property Department to grant use of part of the Abbey (the church, three chapels and park) for 99 years, in exchange for payment of a symbolic fee of one lira a year. Despite the failure of this attempt, it was clear that there was a strong desire to restore life to the ancient monastery. Again in 1963 the Chapel of the Saviours was renovated and saved from decay, becoming the shrine of the Unknown Soldier of the Second World War, holding the remains of a soldier who lost his life at the Albanian front.

Slowly and thanks to the contribution of numerous players in the area, including “Segusium” (the Society for Research and Studies of Susa Valley), Novalesa regained the attention of the media and the interest of the public. The efforts of Professor Giuseppe Ferrero, then president of the Local Committee, who believed more than everyone else in the possible rebirth of the Abbey, were fundamental.

In 1973, the monastic complex was bought by the Province of Turin, which entrusted it to the Benedictine monks who came from the island of San Giorgio in Venice.

At architectural level, the complex now consists of the church, rebuilt in 1712 by the architect Antonio Bertola, the cloister, refurbished in the 17th century, and four chapels devoted to the Holy Saviour, Saint Michael, Mary Magdalene and Saint Eldradus, all of which frescoed in the middle of the 11th century.

Novalesa Abbey Archaeology Museum, which was inaugurated in 2009, is housed in the rooms of the ancient refectory of the monks and under the portico overlooking the ancient courtyard of the novices. It reveals many of the most significant finds which have emerged during the digs within the monastery complex from 1978 to the present day, as well as two sections dedicated to monastic history and book restoration. The first museum nucleus is located in the covered portico, closed by glass windows and set on the east side of the novices' courtyard; here there are larger stone materials, such as the bases of Roman columns, a Roman milestone, capitals and fragments of columns from the ancient structure of the abbey church. The first section also

displays a significant nucleus of Roman bricks, bearing witness to the presence of people here before the monastery was founded.

The first room houses the section dedicated to book restoration, an art which is still practiced today in the workshop annexed to the abbey. It illustrates the type of writing materials, the evolution of writing, engraving and printing techniques and restoration techniques. The same room also houses the section dedicated to the History of monasticism and to monastic life, with reproductions of the act of foundation of the monastery as of the “Chronicon Novaliciense”, as well as a selection of ceramics, glass vases and tableware, which bear witness to the daily life of the monastery between the Middle Ages and the 18th century.

The third room, located in the south wing of the cloister, which once housed the monks’ refectory, now houses the largest number of finds: grouped together in different chronological bands, they testify to the various types of objects and are dated between the days of the Late Roman Empire and the Gothic period. Fragments of statues, funerary inscriptions, parts of sarcophagi and architectural elements from ancient times and the Dark Ages stand out in the collection, but there are also everyday items, such as a bone hair comb dating back to the days of the Longbards, and fragments of frescoed pictorial decorations attributed to Antoine de Lhony from Toulouse, painted in the second half of the 15th century.

1.2.1. Data on flows of visitors

Between January and October 2013 the Museum was visited by 11740 people.

This figure can be broken down as follows:

on weekdays, the museum was visited by 1880 individual visitors, 1696 as part of groups and 32 Museum Subscription holders, for a total of 3608 visits.

On Saturdays and Sundays, with standard opening during winter too, the museum received 4050 individual visitors, 3954 as part of groups and 128 Museum Subscription holders, for a total of 8132 people.

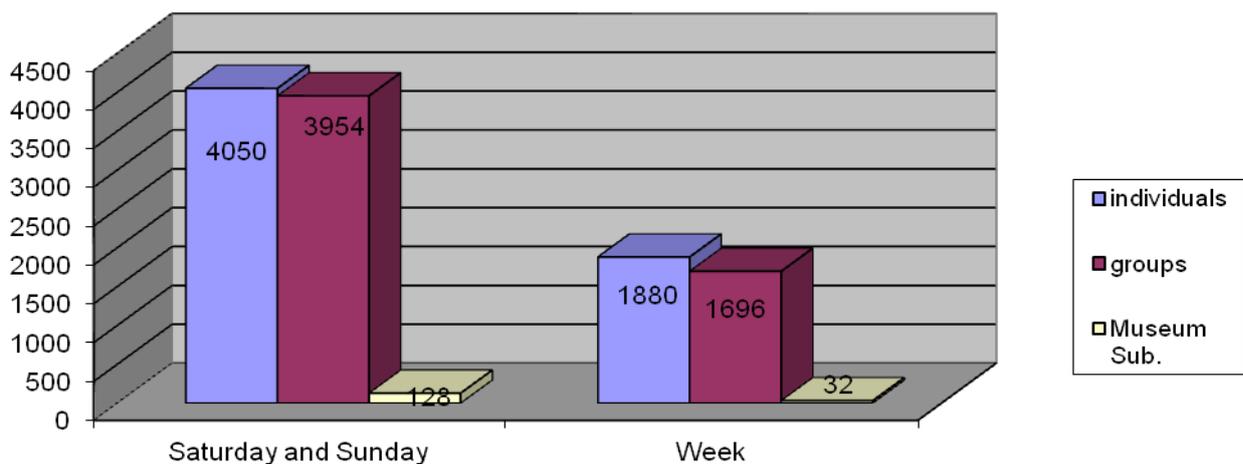
The total number of holders of the Torino Piemonte Museum Subscription that visited the museum was 160.

As far as school tourism is concerned, most of the groups booked come from Junior High Schools, followed by High Schools and Primary Schools. Most of these groups come from within the region but there are also good inflows from Lombardy and Liguria. Other, more occasional, groups come from foreign schools taking part in cultural exchanges with local schools. High School teachers show considerable interest in the Book Restoration Workshop and Archaeology Museum: many have expressed their willingness to plan specific educational workshops on both subjects. During May in particular, there was a good flow of students from the

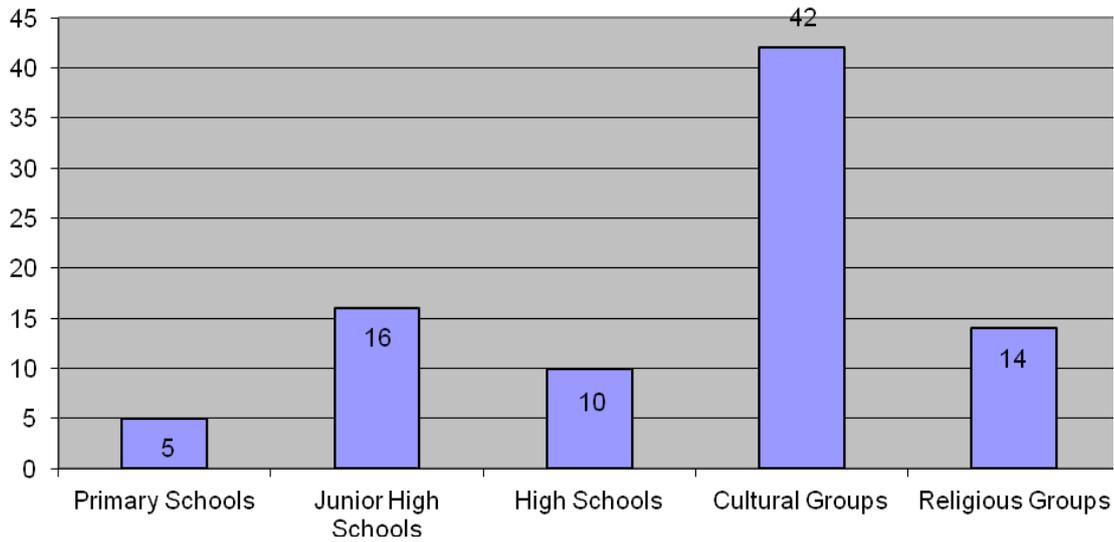
Junior High Schools in the provinces of Turin and Cuneo. One of the main interests shown by students is a desire to know and understand the life of a modern-day monk.

Visits by groups of adults, both from churches and cultural and sporting associations, indicate the marked interest in visiting the abbey complex and the external chapels, but have also revealed the importance of the museum as the completion of the external visit. These groups come from all over the place and while most of them are from Piedmont, there are also lots from Lombardy, Liguria, Tuscany, Emilia Romagna, Veneto and Friuli. Visits by groups from Central and Southern Italy (primarily Apulia) are more occasional but, nevertheless, significant. There is also a consolidated presence of foreign groups, sometimes from as far afield as Australia and South America.

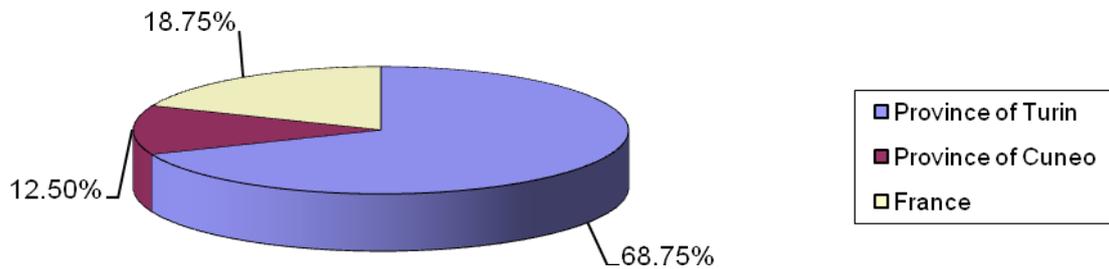
Visitors to Novalesa Archaeology Museum



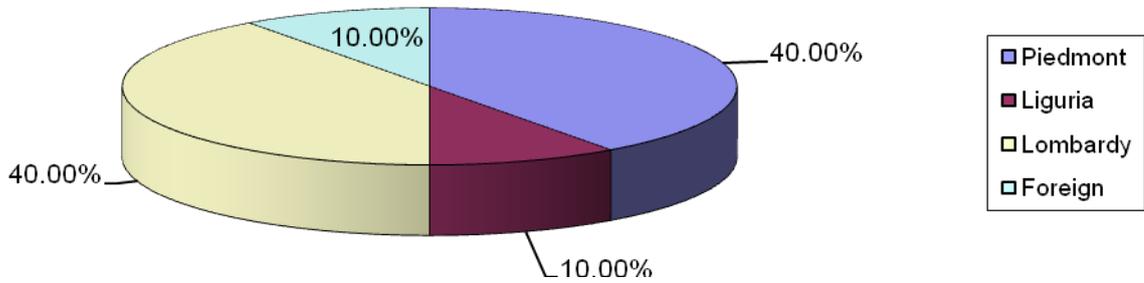
Breakdown of groups



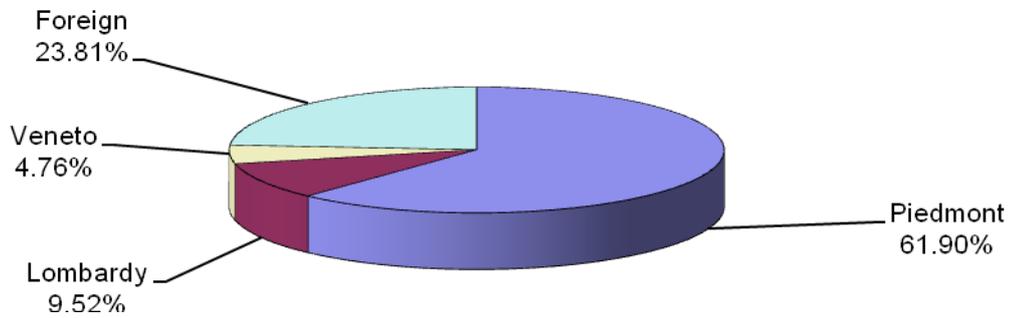
Origin of Junior High Schools

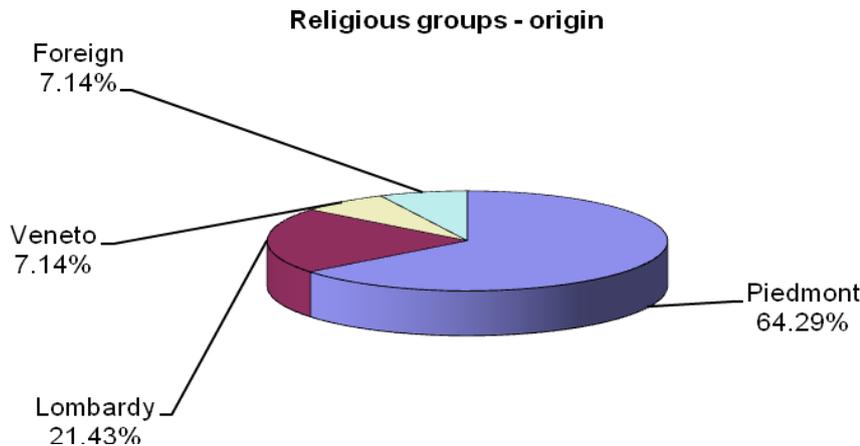


Origin of High Schools



Cultural groups - origin





1.2.2. Potential

The Archaeology Museum is an excellent place to analyse the complex historical and religious history linked to the abbey and the logical completion of the visit to the chapels guided by the monks and San Benedetto voluntary association.

School groups are very interested in the documentary and archaeological aspect developed by the museum and it might be a good idea to prepare a specific visit programme for these groups, together with educational activities. With this in mind, we have contacted the Giachino Agency in Turin, specialised in school tourism, which has expressed an interest in including the Archaeology Museum and Novalesa Abbey in its annual catalogue.

Individual visitors and groups of adults, on the other hand, tend to be more interested in a more analytical visit and also seem to be very interested in other visits throughout the area, to enjoy on another day. Particularly in consideration of this aspect, we feel that Novalesa Archaeology Museum can become an effective centre for the interpretation of the territory.

In general, the informative brochure printed in view of the summer opening is widely appreciated.

1.2.3. Weaknesses

The groups booked, particularly those coming in from France, mostly elaborate their visit to include the abbey complex only, being unaware that the Museum is open. However, there have been some groups (especially

UNITRE, local schools and holders of the Torino Piemonte Museum Subscription) that have specifically planned the visit to the Museum. All the groups, both those that were aware of the Museum and those that weren't, visited the exhibition space, but the latter were able to take part in a shorter (and consequently less detailed) visit due to the lack of time.

There was confirmation of the tendency by individual visitors, especially holders of the Museum Subscription, to plan a complete visit, as they arrive at the abbey complex, either during the week or at the weekend, already informed of the existence of the Archaeology Museum. However, we ought to clearly specify the differences between the opening times of the Archaeology Museum and those of the abbey complex, as people often confuse them. At general level, a clear indication (a window sticker for instance) should state "Archaeology Museum", in order to help tourists upon walking into the entrance yard.

Another weakness lies in the difficulties in respecting the established closing times, because the flow of visits is constant throughout the day and tourists often arrive well after the time indicated. This phenomenon has been accentuated since the pole indicating the visiting hours has been moved to the new parking area, where it is not clearly visible. It might be a good idea to move the post currently situated in the carpark to the bridge next to it, in a clearly visible position. At the abbey, the opening hours are posted at the entrance to the guest area, but tourists often avoid that particular area because, seeing that the door of the abbey church is closed, they feel that they should not try to enter the guest area. Moreover, in recent months the guest area has been difficult to access due to the archaeological digs in progress.

The rules on vehicle access should also be indicated more clearly. As there is no type of supervision or barrier on the bridge over the River Bar, tourists arriving in their cars often ignore the ban on transit by unauthorised persons and park in the small clearing in front of the abbey; vice versa, coach drivers are often unaware of the fact that they can park in the new carpark so they set down their groups at the bridge over the Cenischia, leaving them with a long way to walk, thus shortening the time available for their visit.

We would also like to point out that, during summer 2012, a mobile barrier was installed next to the clearing in front of the abbey complex, but it is rarely used.

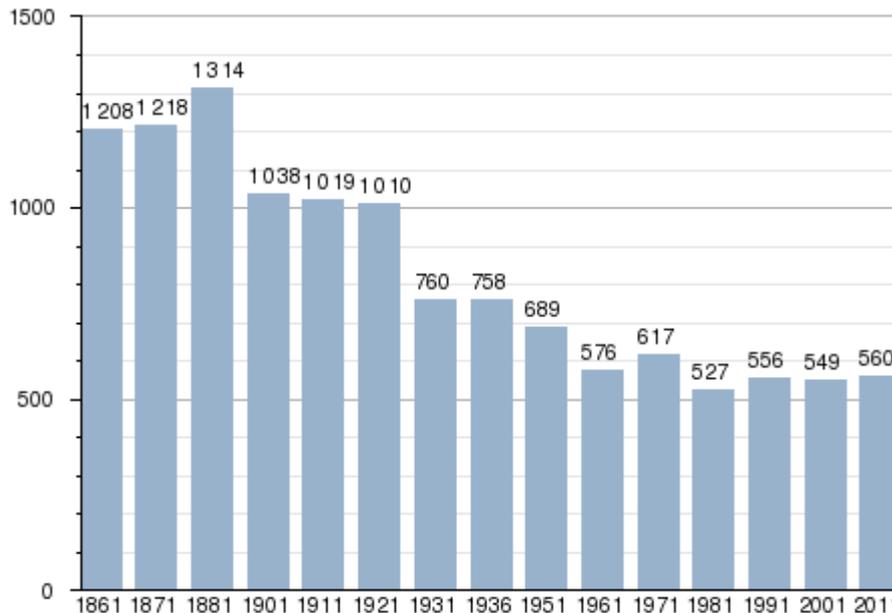
Only a small number of visitors, both individual and groups, know and visit the village of Novalesa, despite its numerous attractions, such as the parish church, the Museum of Alpine Religious Art, the Ethnographic Museum of Mountain Life in Val Cenischia and the House of Crests. In the summer there was an increase in the use by visitors of the reduced-price ticket for admission to the Diocesan Museum of Sacred Art of Susa. Ninety people made use of this opportunity. Some visitors, after asking museum staff for information, also

visited other cultural sites in the Valle di Susa such as the Chapel of Saint Lorenzo in S. Giorio di Susa, for example.

1.3. The current situation: the village of Novalesa and its Community

The name Novalesa appeared for the first time in 726, when Abbo, governor of Moriana and Susa, founded the Abbey for the treatment of the sick and to offer assistance to pilgrims who used to travel along the road to a from France at that time. The name Novalesa probably comes from the Latin term *novalis*, which indicates the land made suitable for cultivation by man. The history and development of Novalesa after the early centuries of life lived in the shadow of the great monastery, were closely linked to the presence of the road which, climbing the course of the River Dora Riparia followed by the Cenischia, crossed the Alps on the Colle del Moncenisio. The stop-off was compulsory, as it was necessary to pay the *marron* (Alpine guides), dismantle the carriages and load the various pieces onto the saddles of the mules, then wait for the weather to allow the crossing of the pass. The development of trade and traffic along this road developed and expanded Novalesa's economy until a new road for France was built under rule by Napoleon, cutting of the Val Cenischia and, consequently, Novalesa. Today it is a holiday destination, the ideal place to stay all year round, surrounded by splendid mountains and immersed in nature, at an altitude of 900 metres above sea level. In 2011, the population amounted to 560 people.

1.3.1. Demographic evolution



At occupational level, for many centuries, as already mentioned, Novalesa built its economy on the high numbers of people that travelled along the road to Moncenisio. Hotels, rest homes, restaurants, hospitals and everything that revolves around accommodation were the mainstays of the work of the village inhabitants and those of the entire Val Cenischia.

With the construction of the new Napoleonic road, built further upstream of the village, the life of the community changed considerably. The village quickly became poorer and many families abandoned it due to a lack of work.

The remaining residents adapted to the new condition, converting their activities into the breeding of livestock and the cultivation of the land, but this was only to meet the needs of the village's inhabitants.

During the winter, many people emigrated to France: the women going into domestic service and the men taking jobs in factories or mines.

With the onset of the 20th century and the settlement in the Valley of numerous industries, especially in the textile sector, a considerable number of residents found employment in the factories, like FIAT after the Second World War, and began the experience of doing two or even three jobs: factory workers, farmers and livestock breeders.

During these years of severe crisis and industrial transformation, people are looking for a new way to survive and remote work along with a renewed and intelligent tourist strategy could sustain the new generations living and working in Novalesa.

At agricultural level, only the land on the valley floor is suited to various intensive crops, as it is possible to carry out farming operations like ploughing, sowing and threshing using mechanical equipment. The mountainous slopes make farming expensive and not particularly profitable, although the inhabitants have done their best to mechanise farming practices and transport as much as possible by building roads in place of the mule tracks, in order to save time and energy.

The farms in the area are all directly run by the members of the family, varying in number between two and four people. The stalls, vegetable gardens and hay production are taken care of mainly by women. Over the past few decades, the number of farms has fallen due to the decrease in population and the abandon of the countryside by young people, who are drawn elsewhere by prospects of employment in more profitable sectors.

Small and medium farms manage to survive because they are run by their owners in their spare time, when they come home from the factory, which is why we see the figure of farmer-factory workers today. The traditional houses consist of several rooms, with characteristics deriving from their use to store a variety of products. In the past, grapes used to be grown in Novalesa and consequently the wine cellars are of particular importance. They are built in the basement of the building and usually have a barrel vault made of stone. In some buildings there are two or more underground rooms on top of one another, some of which are dug into deposits of clay, which were used to store potatoes and other foodstuffs in winter.

With regard to the tourist accommodation sector, the village has two hotels and three restaurants, offering a total of about 50 rooms. However, in recent decades no economic resources have been invested in the architectural renovation and in the professional qualification of those who work in them. Five years ago these businesses were joined by two bed and breakfasts.

At cultural level, there are some places and works that are particularly noteworthy, like the Parish Church of Saint Stephen, built towards the end of the 16th century, on the site of an older building, and subsequently renovated. Devoted to Saint Stephen, it can be admired by walking along the main street of Novalesa. It houses various valuable works of art, including some precious canvases from the school of Caravaggio (The Crucifixion of Peter and The Deposition of Christ), the school of Rubens (The Adoration of the Magi), François Le Moyne (The adoration of the shepherds) and Daniele da Volterra (The deposition), transferred, by order of

Napoleon Bonaparte, from Paris to the hospice of Moncenisio and from there to Novalesa. The parish church also houses the splendid reliquary urn of Saint Eldradus, a masterpiece of 12th century Mosan-Rhenish silver, a 15th century wooden crucifix and the late 15th century polyptych portraying the Nativity and the Resurrection, with Saints Peter, Paul, Eldradus, Arnulf and the donor, attributed to Antoine De Lhony from Toulouse.

The Ethnographic Museum of Mountain Life in Val Cenischia was set up in 1972, based on an idea by Professor Giuseppe Ferrero, who proposed the realisation of a “local ethnography” exhibition dedicated to the country and domestic life of days gone by. The first place to house the exhibition was the Abbey of Novalesa, then, in 1974, it was taken to the village and set up in the rooms of the Town Hall. Here it was able to take on its more authentic aspect of “home”, ready to welcome those who want to take a step back in time and relive the emotions experienced by our grandparents and ancestors centuries ago.

The Novalesa Museum of Alpine Religious Art is part of the Diocesan Museum System of Susa, together with the centres in Susa, Giaglione, Melezet and San Giorio. Created with the aim of preserving and enhancing the value of the numerous and very important pieces of artistic heritage kept in the parish church of Novalesa, the museum is home to collections from different periods of history, starting from the Romans and continuing with the Longbards, Carolingians through to the Napoleonic period.

The Museum is housed in the rooms of the chapel of the Confraternity of the Holy Sacrament, adjacent to the parish church of Saint Stephen, in the heart of the village.

1.3.2. The path of the frescoes in the village of Novalesa

Along the ancient main street, which is still the heart of the community today, there were numerous hotels, inns and places of reference for travellers who stayed here.

Traces of the rich past of Novalesa can still be seen, not only in the traditional architecture, represented by the houses lining the central street of the village and in the lanes that open up parallel to it, and by the historical buildings, but also by an outstanding system of frescoes which embellishes their façades, making the whole effect very beautiful.

Walking up the main street, just after the entrance to it, there is a painting of the “Madonna of Pilgrims”, dating back to the 18th century, on the outer wall of a private house. It occupies a very particular position, as it is clearly visible while walking up Vicolo Ghetto, which was the antique road leading into the village.

Continuing along the street, next to the parish church there is a cycle of frescoes portraying the Vices, Virtues and Infernal Sufferings, by Gioffrey, dated 1714. The fresco extends across three overlapping registers: at the top, we see the Virtues, which correspond, on the lower levels, to the Vices and Infernal Sufferings which

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counterbalance them. The outer wall of the parish church also features a fragmentary cycle dedicated to the Passion of Christ, of which the scene of Christ before Pilate, datable to the 16th century, remains. Beneath this a fragment of an older macabre dance, dating back to the 15th century, also emerges.

Walking further ahead, on the opposite side of the church, is Vicolo della Curia, at the end of which we find the ancient parish house, the exterior of which is decorated with a beautiful Crucifixion datable to the 17th century. As we continue along the street, on the left there is a big building, in which we find a broad staircase with wooden balustrades: this is the antique hotel Ecu de France / Epée Royale, where Napoleon Bonaparte is known to have stayed.

Also on the left, not far off, we find the the Casa degli Affreschi (House of Frescoes), another antique hotel which has recently been restored by the Municipal Authorities, on the façade of which there is a beautiful series of crests of the Royal House of Savoy and the other European States of the time, dating back to the 14th century.

A little further along the route is the façade of a private house which houses, under the roof gables, a large portrait of Sant'Antonio abate (Anthony the Great), recently brought back to the light and datable to the 14th century. It is flanked by a shield of the Royal House of Savoy with a crest.

Also in the same area, on the right, is Casa Chiapusso, a house which was once owned by the solicitor, Felice Chiapusso, delegate of the Kingdom of Italy and local historian, who lived between the 19th and 20th centuries. Once again, this was probably an antique hotel, which still retains the typical structure of the inns of Novalesa. A portico leads into an immense courtyard surrounded by loggias and equipped with a well, at the rear of which were the stables. Outside, the façade of the house is decorated with a fresco portraying the Madonna and Child with Saint Giovannino, Saint Rita, Saint Lorenzo, Anthony the Great and Saint Caterina d'Alessandria, datable to the 18th century.

At the top of the street, on the right-hand side, is a building characterised by the presence of a sturdy central stone column. Until 1828, this was the hospital, which welcomed and offered shelter to pilgrims. A little further ahead, on the left, we can see an area set below street level, on the other side of a watercourse: this is the area of the antique lazaretto, where people affected by epidemic disease or subject to quarantine were relegated. At the top of this area, where the path ends, is the chapel of Saint Sebastiano, which probably dates back to the 17th century and has been rearranged several times during the centuries. It currently hosts the permanent artistic nativity of Novalesa.

1.3.3. The environmental dimension

In Novalesa valley, the wide variety of environments and plant species provides an ideal habitat for an equally varied fauna. There are roughly 80 nesting species of birds alone, with a high percentage being native to the Alps. We find numerous birds of prey, including the Northern Goshawk, Sparrowhawk, Buzzard and Kestrel, while two pairs of Royal Eagles nest regularly here. Among the nocturnal birds, in addition to the Tawny Owl, which lives at lower altitudes, it is possible to hear the song of the Eurasian Eagle Owl and, in the pine forests, that of the Boreal Owl, which nests in holes dug by the Black Woodpecker, the biggest woodpecker in Europe. Two tetranoids also nest in the area, the White Partridge and the Black Grouse which, together with the Rock Partridge, are the symbol of Alpine birds. Also worth signalling is the presence of the Spotted Nutcracker, closely associated on the Alps with the presence of the Swiss pine, due to the fact that it feeds on its pine nuts. Mammals to remember are hares (common and alpine), squirrels and lots of other small rodents, the fox and the mustelidea (ermine, weasel, marten, stone marten and badger).

The presence of four species of ungulate is important, these being the chamois goat, which has always lived in the area; the wild boar, the genetic component of which has almost disappeared due to hybridisations and cross-reproductions; the deer and roe deer, introduced in the early 1960s by the Provincial Administration for Hunting and which, due to the absence of natural predators, have enjoyed a real demographic explosion, causing considerable damages to the forests in the whole Valley.

The great variety of environments allows the presence of over 600 plant species, including all the most important forestry species of Piedmont.

On the edges of the meadows on the valley floor, we find a fair presence of broad leaf trees, including ash, birch, maple and alder, with small beech woods and some small nuclei of yew.

As we climb in altitude, we enter the kingdom of the conifers. In the driest, sunniest areas, and on particularly superficial and rocky ground, we find the Scots pine, sometimes covered with big bushes of mistletoe. Between 1300 and 1800 in altitude, white and red firs dominate absolutely. Towards the top of the fir forests is a transition band, where larch and Swiss pine begin to appear, taking over completely at altitudes above 2000.

1.4. Relationship between the Abbey and the village/community

The community of Novalesa has always had a very close relationship with the abbey, both from a civil and religious point of view. From the civil viewpoint, the monastery maintained feudal jurisdiction over the

communities of the Val Cenischia (including Novalesa) until the French Revolution, entitling the abbot to manage small legal affairs.

From the religious point of view, the abbey enjoyed jurisdiction “nullius”, meaning that it answered directly to the Vatican and managed its parishes independently of the bishop’s jurisdiction in Turin. This situation continued until 1772, when, with the institution of the Diocese of Susa, the parishes dependent on the Abbey of Novalesa came under the jurisdiction of the new authority.

The religious link between the village of Novalesa and its abbey has remained very strong over the centuries. It never wavered, even when religious life at the monastery had been suppressed, and received a new boost following the return of the Benedictine monks in 1973.

This close relationship shows itself particularly through the worship of the abbot Saint Eldradus, whose funerary urn is kept in the parish church. Every year on the 13th of March, a solemn procession leaves from the parish church and proceeds to the chapel devoted to the Saint in the abbey enclosure. Worshippers from all over the Valle di Susa and beyond take part.

When the monks returned in 1973, the people spontaneously offered food, furnishings and money to the monastic community for years, sustaining its everyday life, and the monks have always taken part in the major religious celebrations of joy and pain held in the parish church in the centre of the village.

The new arrangement consolidated the relationship between the Province and resident religious order, which is working hard to disseminate knowledge of the Abbey’s ancient spiritual, cultural and social tradition. The religious community, in its role as keeper of Novalesa, is responsible for reporting the needs for ordinary and extraordinary maintenance of all the premises, furnishings and surrounding grounds.

The recovery programme completed at the beginning of the new millennium was concentrated on the reorganisation of the spaces necessary to the life of the monastic community and for relations with the outside world, to which the community has opened up in recent years.

At the moment, the people of Novalesa do not see the Abbey as being capable of generating cultural tourism with economic benefits also for the community of Novalesa. Both the receptive players and the administration have yet to succeed in activating an overall strategy capable of uniting the monastery and the village in a single project for local development. In this sense, this project has what it takes to activate a virtuous mechanism for the transformation of this situation.

1.5. First elements of transferability

The analysis of the transferability of policies, measures or solutions relating to this project is a key factor to the development of similar sustainable systems in Europe. There is a tendency to consider the example provided by others as a quick, cheap and easy way to solve one's own problems without having to "reinvent the wheel". As the number of cases in which innovative transport solutions are tested and implemented is increasing, the importance of understanding how to transfer them successfully becomes fundamental.

Transferability is the process in which knowledge of interventions developed during a certain period and in a specific place is used to develop policies, define operations and implement solutions in another place. In conceptual terms this is easy, but practically speaking it is full of difficulties.

For the transferability of a project to work, it is necessary to consider the context, all the different configurations and the implementative process to support the transferral of knowledge. It is necessary to have an adequate knowledge of the context of origin and that of destination. The alternatives have to be assessed on the basis of the specific needs of the area, the characteristics and expectations of the stakeholders. The development of a correct transferability analysis has to involve the stakeholders and assess cultural and psychological aspects as well as those relating to public health and safety.

From the experience developed in this project, we propose the following list of seven questions to formulate an understanding of transferability:

1. What has to be transferred?
2. Why do the stakeholders want to transfer a solution?
3. Who are the other stakeholders to involve in the transferral process?
4. Where does the knowledge come from?
5. What are the different possible degrees of transferral?
6. What can restrict or simplify the transferral process?
7. What are the possible factors of success or potential risks of failure?

Together with the transferability comprehension process indicated above, the pertinent methodological matter is also analysed.

Transferral process

1. Diagnosis of problems. Structured analysis of the situation in which it is necessary to intervene and assess needs.

2. Characterisation of the territorial context. Detailed identification of the geographic, structural, demographic, cultural features, etc.
 3. Analysis of the context and implications of the problems identified. It is necessary to define a sort of profile of the context to help with the search for similar cases, which have the same problems or needs, but which also have similar features. It is also necessary to understand the role played by the problems found with respect to the aims of the context.
 4. Search for similar contexts. An effort is made to seek situations with similar features, with the same kind of profile as the receptor context. It is important to define the concept of similarity, which will have to contemplate the various characteristic aspects.
 5. Selection of successful examples in similar contexts. There is a focus on practices in the similar contexts identified, which have been adopted to solve problems similar to those in the receptor context.
 6. Selection of potentially transferable solutions. This phase is the authentic transferability analysis. The solution has to be subject to a feasibility analysis.
 7. Characterisation of the solution to be transferred. It is also necessary to consider the possibility of adopting a package of solutions, characterising each solution and understanding how it works in combination with others.
 8. Ex-ante assessment of the solution to be transferred. It is necessary to assess the potential effect of the solution with the aims of the receptor context, in order to understand the extent to which the solution will be effective.
 9. Identification of the needs for refinement. Reviewing the conditions for transferability, it will be possible to assess the need to refine the solution. It is necessary to compare the situation with that of other external institutional and non-institutional subjects.
 10. Implementation and monitoring of results. It is necessary to draw up a series of indicators to constantly monitor the solution implemented, in order to check how successful it is.
- It would be helpful to identify a tool, such as an observatory, to conserve and monitor the main results of the project and the development prospects, good individual practices and all the useful contacts at international level for their transfer.
- The transferral of information and project-related actions is the link between the good practices and development policies to be implemented.

The network can, in this sense, be the supporting structure, the environment in which this transfer can take place.

One of the necessary ingredients for a successful transfer is the desire to think outside of the box.

The innovation deriving from a good practice and its adaptation to other situations require creativity in terms of ideas, projects and applications.

The success of a transferral depends largely on the quality of the practice to be transferred, its tangible positive impact on the quality of life, the existence of a partnership between two or more public/private organisations and the sustainability of its social, environment, economic and cultural components.

The experience acquired in terms of good practices has shown that partnerships are key components to making actions more sustainable; the process for the construction of a shared vision is a factor of cohesion and strengthening of local community; the know-how gained from the lessons in good practices is an effective tool for the formation of the capacity to get things done.

Transferral is a complex action that cannot be traced exclusively to the sphere of technical skill. The transferral of social practices, which affect everyone's interests, requires the support of a specific organisation which is capable of tackling all the pertinent aspects and taking on responsibility for the divulgation of good practice, in order to transfer it to all the institutional subjects it refers to.

2. THE DIAGNOSIS

2.1. The analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the relationship between the Abbey and the village/Community

2.1.1. Description

The Alpine civilisation and, consequently, that of Novalesa, is closely linked to the history of its territory, its reference cultures and the path that has characterised its development processes.

In these times of crisis, with all the difficulties inherent in finding univocal solutions for the future, research plays a discriminant role: the most important analytical themes that solicit the intervention of technicians, scholars and political and economic operators to identify tools to help govern a valuable and delicate territory. There is a need to develop economic-cultural development proposals within the scope of enhancement to encourage tourism without compromising environmental values.

The Thetris project represents a tangible opportunity for the transnational experimentation of good practices for the development of cultural-tourism itineraries based around religious attractions.

The activity of creating, researching, collecting and exchanging good practices related to the themes covered, with a view to transferring them to other contexts, different from ours, turned out to be particularly characterising for the project.

The researches and surveys carried out in conjunction with the Polytechnic and European partners laid the foundations for the guidelines to the recovery and enhancement of architectural assets at local political level.

The commitment to increase awareness of the importance of the Thetris project development aims represented the preparatory phase for the collection and transferral of good practices at local and regional level.

The population's initial diffidence was the challenge to be undertaken, working on the promotion of actions aimed at achieving renewed self-awareness and on offering tangible and verifiable opportunities for economic growth to the community that still lives in Novalesa.

The activities relating to this first analysis phase were organised as follows:

the preliminary analysis containing the geographic, historical-cultural and socio-economic characterisation, the legislative instructions and those for territorial planning, as well as identification of the strengths and weaknesses in the study area;

the survey on constructive traditions and on the customs and everyday practices in the area examined, aimed at recovering knowledge of the ancient construction features in the architecture of Novalesa and everyday life in the community;

the creation of a catalogue of the buildings that overlook the village's main street, a matter discussed with the owners and completed thanks to their cooperation;

meetings with the community to gather elements useful to their perception of the Abbey of Novalesa and its relationship with the village;

the preparation of a book of memories, containing texts, appeals and pictures collected during the meeting with every family in Novalesa, completing the search made in the historical archives to document life in the community over the last three centuries;

the handbook of good practices for the recovery of the urban building heritage, containing the characterisation of the buildings, the typological analysis and the plans and ideas for recovery;

the guidelines discussed with the Administration and the population, containing suggestions for the recovery of the architectural heritage.

The preliminary analysis highlighted the socio-economic characteristics of the context considered, the cultural aspects and the historical characteristics of this area. Traditional activities linked to production building structures, potential connected with the recovery of properties, particularly Casa Quarsot, and legislative aspects at various levels (construction, town planning, etc.)

The data collected was used to identify the strengths and weaknesses (SWOT analysis).

The weakness, for example, included farming activities, with the consequent loss of control of the land, which is very important to guarantee the maintenance of the territory, and, consequently, the lack of development of the structures and infrastructures connected with these lost activities. The lack of awareness of the importance and exceptional nature of the cultural and environmental heritage which is hosted by and characterises Novalesa.

The strengths include the presence of a cultural and environmental heritage of quality and an urban structure which has to be recovered but is still substantially complete.

This heritage guarantees great development potential, as it is possible to rely on a valuable endogenous heritage and, consequently, on the economic effects linked to naturalistic-cultural tourism.

The catalogue and the handbook of good practices contain a wide range of constructions. Within the scope of the document, a method for cataloguing the buildings has been defined, based upon a detailed analysis of the

typologies present in Novalesa and the Valle di Susa. This method can also be useful to register and catalogue buildings outside the study area. The planning ideas that apply this method also explore a procedure to be followed to document the historical and compositional components of the buildings.

The guidelines, on the other hand, regard the criteria for the protection of the buildings from the viewpoint of urban and environmental instructions and look more specifically at the relationship between building and context.

2.1.2. The offer (places and/or functions)

Currently, Novalesa has no high quality accommodation system, no shuttle service linking it regularly to Susa (9 km) and to the Abbey (1.5 km) and no tourist information point.

At the moment, tourism seems to be the only sector capable of allowing the launch of new micro enterprises. The accommodation and hospitality capacity is not enough to cope with demand for holidays focused on relaxation and on the privacy that it is possible to enjoy here, as well as the opportunity to discover a land rich in history starting way back in Roman times and progressing through the Middle Ages to the present day.

The infrastructures seem to be inadequate. The existing country roads are unable to cope with the area's development requirements and this is a factor of territorial weakness that also prevents use of the environment.

The possibility for development, compared with the human capital available in terms of know-how, for the most representative age groups, should be classed as medium-high, as long as training and information relating to business, investment and innovation are held in due consideration.

Strategy chosen to tackle strengths and weaknesses

Knowledge of the characteristics of the territory, considered as a dimension in which economic, social and environmental elements act, and of the fragilities on which to intervene in order to stimulate endogenous development processes, represents the necessary foundation for local development policies.

The indications suggested by the initial assessments of the area's structural and socioeconomic conditions have made it possible to focus on certain fundamental requirements of the territory.

From the participative path taken, the need to sustain the enhancement of the rich cultural heritage has merged clearly.

In this sense, meetings with the operators have highlighted how the cultural and environmental heritage relating to Novalesa and its territory is considerably underestimated in terms of tourism.

Themes	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Territory and structure of the farms	Family businesses with the availability of flexible labour	Hard for businesses to adapt to safety, health and hygiene regulations Businesses are undersized in relation to the capital implicated	Diversification of income with new production activities	Tendency to abandon farming areas and activities Reduction of employment in agriculture
Business class	Significant know-how of operators in the production sector	Limited management skills among businessmen Lack of generational turnover Little capacity to innovate and adapt business activity in order to remain competitive on the market	Training and information policies Policies to stimulate generational turnover and investment in hospitality businesses in order to innovate	

Structure of the economy	<p>Mainly family run farms, artisan and commercial businesses, with flexible labour</p> <p>Territory particularly suited to the development of tourism and farm tourism, as well as the diversification of businesses</p> <p>Territory with infrastructural access routes</p>	<p>Limited capacity for innovation</p> <p>Limited availability of accommodation structures</p> <p>Territory lagging behind in terms of digital networks</p>	<p>Support targeting an increase in labour efficiency</p>	<p>Rise in unemployment</p> <p>Abandon of the territory</p> <p>Increase in delays and competition for the territory and its businesses</p>
Potential of human resources	<p>Improvement in education and a constant increase in inclusion of university graduates in the administrative and business context</p> <p>Presence of sites with high cultural, landscape and natural value</p>	<p>Lack of enhancement of cultural aspects</p> <p>Lack of searches for other important cultural testimonies of the territory</p>	<p>Opening up to new generations to encourage changes in society</p>	<p>Segregation, with the administrative provisions, between the needs of the territory and those of its population, to the detriment of economic and social growth</p> <p>Loss of cultural identity and diminished vocation of the territory for tourism</p>

	<p>Considerable adherence to the process</p> <p>Very active participation and commitment by loyal players</p> <p>Considerable participation in general forums</p>	<p>Long times for the entire process and complex organisational management</p> <p>Limited active participation in relation to considerable formal adhesion</p>	<p>Education in participation and creativity for a more active role in decision-making processes</p> <p>More awareness and responsibility of the overall problems and solutions</p> <p>Creation of a greater sense of identity and joint responsibility</p> <p>Construction of new partnerships between different players for shared projects to achieve aims of sustainability. The process has favoured collective intelligence, the pooling of know-how, techniques and relationships which make it</p>	<p>Discontinuity of commitment and enthusiasm</p> <p>Conflict with and mistrust of certain groups of players (lack of guaranteed tangible effects in relation to proposals)</p>
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2.1.3. The tourist package: the current offer

Since 2003, thanks to the Plan to enhance the value of the Valle di Susa. Treasures of Art and Alpine Culture, work is being carried out to structure processes to enhance the value of the cultural heritage of the Valley, and Novalesa is a fundamental nucleus in this development process. Every summer, an informative booklet containing itineraries and the tour opportunities available in the area, is published and distributed throughout the region. In addition to this, every year, two days of knowledge and visits of the territory, linked to religious festivities and farm shows, are promoted.

Since 2008, the website www.vallesusa-tesori.it has enabled the online publication of holiday packages for adults and educational trips for youngsters and schools. The response has been encouraging, indicating the public interest in the Abbey of Novalesa and its history.

In all of this, two weaknesses have been noticed and should be highlighted:

the lack of training of the staff accompanying groups during the visits, especially with regard to the modification of the style used to communicate, depending on the type of audience present;

the lack, up to now, of an agency in Novalesa and the Valle to promote tourism in the territory and to incoming visitors.

2.1.4. Involvement of local stakeholders

The term stakeholder identifies those who can influence an economic initiative, whether it is a business or a project.

The stakeholders have been split into three macro-categories:

public institutions: the municipality of Novalesa, mountain community of Valle Susa and Val Sangone and Turin Polytechnic

organised groups: territorial associations, Plan to enhance the value of the Valle di Susa. Treasures of Art and Alpine Culture

non-organised groups: citizens and members of the public, local population actively involved in the project for the supply of services, with a sense of belonging to the territory and with professional and operational choices at local level. The involvement of these stakeholders is a key element of our project. The aim of their involvement is to give them the chance to participate in the decision making process, express their points of view and influence the solutions adopted.

The project has been formulated to guarantee the greatest possible fulfilment of expectations within the territory (economic growth in the context of sustainable development and creation of new professional and occupation opportunities) and outside it (targeting users of new types of cultural and environmental products characterised by outstanding typicality which do not belong to the usual circuits).

The outside targets that our attention is focused on are:

schools at all levels, within and outside the region and, at a later date, coming from all over Italy and Europe, which are interested in learning about a territorial “unicum” set in an artistic and historical context of considerable importance. In this sense, proposals are calibrated for various levels and degrees of interest depending on age, education and training;

organised groups, from within and outside the region, all over Italy and Europe, involved in cultural exchange programmes and attracted by the price-quality ratio of what is offered: religious groups, work-related social clubs, service clubs, cultural associations and organisations;

extemporary users involved in thematic proposals that cater for their individual requirements (culture, worship, art, environment, history, food and wine, country life, exclusiveness, innovation, location) via media publicity;

cultural tourism seen as a new type of “education trip”, based on the exploration of places and of social and cultural contexts to grasp their real essence; profound living enriched by the particularities of the places and environments, maturing those experiences that arouse unique emotions and are characteristic of the place in question.

2.1.5. Infrastructures

The project, as mentioned earlier, envisages the accompaniment of the phases of cataloguing and structural recovery of the buildings situated along the main street in the old part of the village, but one building will become emblematic of the entire local development process: Casa Quarsot.

Casa Quarsot will be the place of reference and coordination of the entire project and services connected to it. A tourist-cultural infopoint will be set up for the management of bookings and visits, along with a space for the sale of locally produced foodstuffs and crafts, books and documentary material on Novalesa and the Valle di Susa. The same building will also house a little restaurant with annexed guesthouse, a library-documentation centre for residents and visitors and a hall destined for holding meetings between residents and for workshops and training activities linked to the whole value enhancement business project. The professionals required to perform the above-listed services will revolve around Casa Quarsot: info-point, shop staff, restaurant-guesthouse staff, managers of the library-documentation centre, guides for tours of Novalesa and the Abbey,

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people to accompany visitors by car/shuttle along the journey between Susa-Novalesa-Abbey, staff for the regular maintenance of the public spaces in the old town and neighbouring green areas.

Thanks to the support of the Polytechnic, the recovery of Casa Quarsot will be carried out with innovative planning methods, in order to reconcile the recovery of the historical element with contemporary architectural research. The methods that are going to be applied here have been partially tested on certain privately-owned buildings on the same main street, but will now be applied systematically and on an integrated basis in a single building: Casa Quarsot, which will become emblematic of a recovery method to apply and replicate in the old town, generating renewed attention to aware forms of requalification of the heritage by the owners of the buildings and the creation of job opportunities for local professionals and businesses.

Moreover, the increase in the number of tourists will lead to an overall increase in work for the accommodation structures of Novalesa, and the products that will be sold in the shop (wine, cheese, honey, potatoes, vegetables and wooden craft items) will encourage new forms of local enterprise, from the reuse of abandoned land for farming to craftsmanship.

In short, we could describe the Casa Quarsot project as a sort of “village within a village”, in which multiple activities, forms of knowledge and active energies can be made to interact. The project proposed is characterised by a high level of innovation, there being nothing like it in the Western Alps at the moment, and has such particularities as to be the ideal ground for testing the latest proposals on cultural policy at Italian and European level.

2.2. Portability elements

The Thetris project answers to the territory need to share common strengths and weaknesses in order to reach good development strategies.

In particular, each single case could be a starting point in order to analyze:

- local population suspicion in decision made by politics and administration;
- low awareness of territorial sources and potentiality of places and goods;
- depopulation trend of the rural and no-one land;
- increasing of unemployment;
- and places with high cultural, landscape and environmental value.

3. THE CURE

3.1. Description

3.1.1. Aims

The strategic aims in terms of the boost of recovery and development are:

Involvement and participation: improving knowledge and awareness by the community of the village's cultural heritage within the context of the Valle di Susa, in order to mature a sense of joint responsibility for maintenance and value enhancement – not just tangible but also in terms of significance – of the artistic assets throughout the area.

Innovation and replication: articulating the various planning experiences entered into in Novalesa within a single method that can place all these practices in a system and enable their replication in other villages and town in Valle di Susa and elsewhere;

Value enhancement and Integration: strengthening the integration of Novalesa with the “Valle di Susa System”, by improving the Valley's network of cultural heritage and the relationships between institutions and associations, with over 400 volunteers, in order to enhance the tangible and intangible historical-artistic heritage, using the Abbey of Novalesa as the starting point, with Casa Quarsot, for trips to Novalesa and in the Valle di Susa.

Business: the community is experiencing a severe crisis and many young commuters who worked for the companies that used to supply Fiat now find themselves unemployed. The project intends to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people of Novalesa by developing cultural and environmental tourism within a system rationale between public and private, between cultural sector and hospitality business sector.

This is a project in which the involvement and active participation of the population, the launch of new business and economic activities, the possibility to offer educational moments of excellence to different interlocutors by virtue of the experience of recovery of the local heritage, etc., can and must become fundamental.

3.1.2. The involvement of local stakeholders

The projects is focusing on institutional sustainability, without targeting the creation of new authorities but strengthening the management capacities of the public and private bodies that belong to the group and are

involved in the project. This will offer more effective and efficient management, defence, enhancement and promotion of the heritage.

In this sense, the economic effects are linked to the increased capacities for management, protection and enhancement of the cultural heritage also in terms of tourism, and the territorial policies proposed will be aimed at improving the cultural offer, along with its visibility and usability, which will generate an increase in the level of enjoyment by tourists and, consequently, to a growth in income. In a system rationale, revenues will contribute to sustain the costs of enhancing and promoting the cultural resources, which will be easier to defend and manage.

The effect at social level will also be assessed on the greater awareness of the people of Novalesa with regard to the historical value of the cultural heritage and their involvement in the conservation and enhancement of places of art and history, starting with volunteers, families and young people.

3.1.3. The requalification of the village of Novalesa

The project works on the development of the identity that Novalesa would be able to express if its many cultural elements were included and narrated in a single reference framework. It is not an easy task to bring out the identity of a territory, as it is necessary to draw directly on your empathy and love for your territory. Only operators with mature cultural identities can develop and defend their territory, enhancing its identity, which will then be easily recognisable by potential visitors too, contributing to the sustainable development of the territory and its cultural re-elaboration.

To achieve these aims, a close interaction with the community is necessary to strengthen its sense of belonging to the territory, simultaneously accelerating integration with the other sectors of the local economy. Starting with these founding elements, the project to be proposed intends to consolidate and improve the cultural appeal of Novalesa which, in consideration of its location, has a series of elements that can help to make it strategic at national and European level. Such elements are: its geographic position along the Via Francigena, an itinerary promoted on the leading search engines and crossed every year by numerous pilgrims travelling on foot or by bicycle; the presence of a monumental complex of international importance as the Abbey of Novalesa, visited by more than 30,000 people every year who do not, however, know the village; the connection with the plan to enhance the value of the Valle di Susa, which manages a powerful and articulate website and comprises all the municipalities, major cultural voluntary associations and dozens of hospitality and food and wine operators. Moreover, its proximity to international winter sports resorts, an excellent road and rail infrastructural network and the high number of holiday homes in the Valle di Susa are

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all elements that allow the belief that a project like that proposed has the characteristics to consolidate and increase the cultural offer of the area, offering a space capable of orienting tourist flows and elements of interpretation, as well as artisan products and foodstuffs sought after by Italian and foreign visitors to the territory.

3.2. Tools and aims

3.2.1. Participative planning

In the Valle di Susa over the past decade – partly as a result of the big infrastructural projects in the area: the systems of the Turin 2006 Winter Olympics, the doubling of the Frejus motorway tunnel and the TAV railway – the capacity of its communities to pool their energies and exchange opinions on the territory's problems has also grown, despite difficulties and tension. This is valid not only for infrastructural matters, but also for those linked to the culture of this Alpine area where, in 2003, it was the first territory in Piedmont to have a prototype for what are now referred to as plans for culturally-oriented integrated value enhancement.

The working method conceived made it possible to highlight the cultural features that identify the Valle di Susa, shared by the inhabitants and capable of offering a clear and concise picture to the many visitors that come to the area every year.

The value enhancement plan is capable of feeding communication in the community of the Valle di Susa and helping it to “breathe” the territory narrating, its history, its cultural treasures, traditions and potential, respecting the complexity of its historical links, entwined with contemporary problems.

The challenge now consists in making this great work capable of generating economic development too, building partnerships with the worlds of sport and tourism which have elements of excellent in the Valle di Susa, but which are still self-referential and not very attentive to proposing the territory.

Novalesa is the place where, finally, the effectiveness of the partnership between players and integration between the actions begun in the Valley years ago can be systematically applied and put to the test.

In relation to the actions indicated in the project, different work teams will be involved in order to enhance the value of Novalesa's environmental and cultural heritage, from a supra-local territorial viewpoint.

The governance method tested at Valley level, which enabled the attainment of good results thanks to the involvement system, is expected to undergo consolidation by way of an inclusive method, along with an increase in responsibility via continued management of cultural assets by the individual bodies.

This project intends to favour the production and issue of assets and services with a view to constant exchange with the local community. In this sense, relevant aspects are the community-type organisation system, the link with the mission's partners and the capacity for personal mobilisation. The operating methods bring into play the aggregative experiences already present in Novalesa and the Valle di Susa and promote the various forms of participation configured in a marked internal cohesion between the players of the project, with a high level of aim sharing, so as to obtain a better opportunity to gain the consensus and approval of the local community. The capacity for the mobilisation of resources and the active involvement of the addresses will make it possible to achieve in-depth collaborative integration with reduced costs and flexible management. Participation will be completed with the signing of a service agreement which will involve the operators present in the territory.

3.2.2. Recovery and restoration: definition of the guidelines

First of all, the project, drawn up with the collaboration of the Department of Architecture and Design of Turin Polytechnic, envisaged the preparation of guidelines for the restoration/renovation of the assets, an action which was developed in the following phases:

1. Registration of the buildings existing along the main street

Starting from the preparation of a datasheet, the historical buildings (of which there are about a hundred) situated along the main street were all mapped. Each individual building unit was recorded on a datasheet.

The datasheets contain the following materials and information:

- identification of the building on the cadastral plan of the old town;
- photographic documentation of the building (overall scale and any individual details);
- notes on the history and typology of the building;
- evaluations and consideration with the visual assessment of the characterising architectural, constructive and decorative elements and those of historical value;
- any iconographic materials (historical photographs, architectural findings, etc.).

This work has a dual aim:

- to create a documentary base with which to put together operations for the requalification and conservation of the historical heritage;
- to acknowledge recurrences and the typological and architectural uniqueness of the existing heritage.

The involvement of the municipal administration, individual people and cultural organisations like the Diocesan Cultural Centre of Susa was important in order to carry out this “mapping” activity in the best way possible, with the collection of all the documentary elements (iconographic and archival) existing.

2. Definition of guidelines for the recovery of the architectural heritage

In line with the needs of the municipal administration, which requires direction for the correct recovery of the heritage, guidelines for the buildings on the main street were drawn up to converge with the municipal building regulations.

These guidelines, which are necessarily brief and process-based considering the extreme variety and articulation of Novalesa’s architectural heritage, were separate in relation to two large groups of buildings:

- historical buildings presented in their original state or having undergone changes which did not irreversibly alter the historical nature of the construction;
- historical buildings that have been profoundly altered or those built recently.

For these two systems of buildings, written and graphic indications were given with regard to the following themes:

- the treatment of the roof (materials of the mantle, structure, etc.) and of the overhang in relation to the façade;
- the treatment of the façades (materials, colours decorations, highlighting of historical elements, etc.);
- the treatment of openings (geometry, materials, doors and windows, shutter and security systems, decorative bands, etc.);
- the treatment of balconies and loggias (design, materials, type of parapets, etc.)
- the treatment of the “attachment to the ground” of the façade (materials, design, etc.).

3. “Accompaniment” of projects to enhance and recover the heritage

The extreme articulation of the existing heritage and the difficulty in focusing on detailed and specific responses until we are able to see the actual “consistency” of the existing building on site, make it impossible to draw up a really “all-inclusive” handbook of directions.

For this reason, the research unit of the Department of Architecture and Design of Turin Polytechnic performed a consulting and accompanying service for designers and commissioning parties in the practical pursuit of the individual recovery sites, in order to assess the correct steps to take when – removing plasterwork, etc. – it became possible to observe the real historical and “stratigraphic” value of the building.

This accompanying operation is being configured via a series of meetings with the local population and on-site inspections together with the commissioning parties and designers who intervene on the buildings in the old town.

3.2.3. Architectural consulting

1. The project for recovery and architectural enhancement of the old town

The more the project for the recovery and enhancement of the old town physical heritage is characterised as an all-round operation for economic and social revival and “reinvention of the place”, the more it will be possible to attract not only economic, but also human and cultural resources, know-how and participation.

The moment of recovery of the historical heritage has to be just “one” of the actions in a more ambitious and general project, which could candidate Novalesa for the role of mountain workshop for the years to come.

A project in which the involvement and active participation of the population, the launch of new business and economic activities, the possibility to give life to excellent training activities open to the outside world by virtue of the experience of recovering the local heritage, etc., can and must become fundamental.

From this point of view, the Turin Polytechnic research unit proposed, obviously interacting with other cultural and institutional subjects, to sustain the reality of Novalesa in putting together an innovative project to bring the place back to life.

Through the recovery and enhancement of the old town, the intention is to recovery and enhance points of historical and architectural interest of great beauty and rarity, capable of highlighting the way of living and working of an alpine village at the foot of a great pass and alongside an important abbey. Offering new integrated products to the cultural tourism market.

In this sense, the project can contribute to creating an eco-friendly historical and cultural tourism offer which complements that existing today, founded mainly on religious heritage and connected to the excursionist and sporting use of the territory. This can trigger an increase in the presence of tourists and in the exchange of national and international tourism, with an economic effect on local hospitality and commerce and the possibility for new occupational opportunities for young people who intend to continue living and working in the mountains.

2. Widespread interventions

The first aim of the project was to encourage and then guide various recovery operations throughout the urban fabric of the old town, particularly along the main street which, as mentioned earlier, is the backbone of the settlement system of Novalesa.

At the moment, six operations have been completed and one is in the final stages, with three of these regarding public buildings owned by the Municipality of Novalesa (Casa degli Affreschi, the Post Office and the former town hall, which now houses associations and the health centre) and one owned by the parish (Chapel of Saint Sebastian). One of these operations was possible thanks to collaboration with the Superintendence for Architectural and Artistic Heritage (Casa degli Affreschi), while three of the other operations (both public and private) were financed partly thanks to contributions obtained through candidacy of the revitalisation project for the G.A.L. tender 2012.

These operations are joined by other recovery projects which are in the preparatory stages. There are about ten manifestations of interest by private owners of buildings in the old town, who have adhered to and share the aims of the architectural enhancement programme.

The philosophy that had led these operations – on the basis of the guidelines and datasheets drawn up for the Municipality – was to seek, particularly in the most severe situations, to free the building from the unnecessary additions and damage suffered over the years as a result of operations carried out with little respect for the historical heritage, to reinstate the characterising features and elements of historical, artistic and decorative value.

This operation was carried out with great attention on the basis of historical-documentary surveys and stratigraphic analyses carried out on the walls of the buildings, with a view to enhancing the overall effect that each individual operation brings to the building system, always prioritising a complete vision of the old town as a whole.

3. Creation of a new polarity

The second aim of the enhancement programme is to recreate a new centre of activity along the main street, the nerve centre of the old town, restoring it to the role of “heart” of local social and cultural life.

The project envisages the requalification of a building in the old town of Novalesa – called Casa Quarsot – with the installation of new cultural, tourism and accommodation activities, with the aim of collaborating in the process of social and economic revitalisation of the village that has been taking place during the last few years.

In addition to the consolidation and recovery of the building’s existing structure, the operation will envisage the inclusion of new areas and volumes to house the new functions planned: spaces for cultural activities (exhibition space and library), for welcoming tourists (info point), for the sale of local products, restaurant activities (café, restaurant, wine store, tastings, etc.) and for accommodation (guesthouse, etc.).

The project, developed during the study phase starting from an educational experience carried out at Turin Polytechnic, was subsequently shared with and refined by all the players with whom the old town architectural and tourism-cultural requalification project was launched, namely the Diocesan Cultural Centre of Susa, the Municipality of Noalesa and the Department of Architecture and Design of Turin Polytechnic. The preliminary project was outlined in detail in a subsequent phase in order to satisfy the requirements and the functional framework necessary to launch the activities planned.

4. Other strategic interventions

In addition to the all-round recovery of the architectural heritage, a series of coordinated operations were launched in relation to the accessibility and use of public space and the village's artistic and architectural heritage.

In particular, there were interventions for the requalification of open space, with the creation of parking areas and access to the village, restoration of the road surface and the installation of new urban furnishings, restoring and replacing signs and the lighting system.

In terms of cultural communication, a display is planned inside the recently restored Casa degli Affreschi, in order to create a point for the interpretation and communication of the village's history and culture inside the building.

A last intervention consists in restoring the ancient inscriptions in the old town that state the local place names in Franco-Provençale.

3.2.4. First sustainability elements

The analysis and detailed knowledge of the area and the community was one of the first goals to achieve, but knowledge and analysis of the problem is not enough. The project developed aims to lead research towards the definition of tangible tools for intervention which also allow the update of construction and town planning regulations, as well as an opportunity to create information and training programmes for the community in general and particularly for operators in the accommodation and food and wine sector.

The aspects considered in the development of the project regard architecture, landscape, town planning and alignment with social policies.

The work team that developed the survey consists of a multidisciplinary pool of technical and experts who worked with local and regional administrations in compliance with an approach based on working side by side and comparing notes and ideas constantly. All the activities were carried out with the involvement of the

community and this made it possible to understand the real needs of the territory and any developments over time, with the aim of involving all the local stakeholders.

In order to strengthen the dissemination of information and the awareness among members of the community about the planning activities, informative seminars and workshops were organised to share the preliminary results, attracting participation by all the stakeholders (owners, administrations, general stakeholders and technicians).

The meetings were organised periodically throughout the development of the project, with the dual purpose of presenting the results as they were progressively achieved and of checking and comparing the directions taken by the work against direct feedback from participants.

All the activity carried out within the scope of the project, from the research and investigation phases to the dissemination activities and creation of awareness amongst operators and the population, provides fertile material on which to reflect and compare ideas, both in a political context and in terms of planning and programming. Of primary importance is the new town planning document, which has been in the preparatory stages for years, as it can incorporate many of the recommendations that have emerged from the project.

In this sense, the role played by the public authority in providing incentives for the results of the project is fundamental, in that it will have the possibility to reform its town planning tools, rewriting rules and regulations to consider the principles contained in the work carried out.

The role of the town planning regulations should not be underestimated when drawing up a policy for the recovery of the old town and the social development of the community.

It is necessary to envisage specific indications for architectural heritage, especially for buildings situated in the old town, on the basis of specific parameters.

Interventions on the road infrastructure and visual impact are extremely important. It is necessary to consider the provision of subservices, subordinating the possibility of recovering buildings to the respect of the environmental quality of the operations, obliging the use of bio materials and energy supplies.

The experience matured so far encourages the choice of a “community observatory” at Casa Quarsot, in which to employ the skills of the Polytechnic and the Diocesan Cultural Centre. It could work as a centre for the documentation and issue of general recommendations on matters of community development.

What has been achieved so far indicates the importance of intervening with recommendations and suggestions presented before the various projects, sharing specific skills with all the players that become involved.

A local documentation point could be useful to collect and catalogue the recovery projects and the iconographic and documentary material gathered over time, maintaining lively cooperation with the population and continuing to involve it in the construction of its own image.

The planning of the structural and functional recovery of Casa Quarsot is fundamental, because it demonstrates the finalisation of the project-based reflection towards tangible actions of social development, in order to create over time a strongly attractive nucleus alongside the main attraction (the Abbey) to encourage visitors to the village.

The role played by the local administration and parish has been important, in that they have promoted structural recovery projects for some important buildings in the old town (former town hall, post office, Chapel of Saint Sebastian). This decision has convinced the population of the feasibility of the ideas behind the project and several private owners are now setting to work on their properties.

Also of interest is the documentary and iconographic dimension, which has allowed the population to look at its urban heritage with greater awareness, being in possession of more information on the history of the transformations that have taken place, particularly over the past 150 years.

Description of the profiles and occupational levels required, both during the development phase and when the services and/or products to be developed are up and running

The occupation profiles required fall within the category of socially useful jobs and are aimed at people receiving unemployment benefit or who have been made redundant, as well as people looking for their first job or who are currently unemployed.

The analysis of the professional profiles allows us to reconstruct a picture of the distinguishing features of the job opportunities available:

the functions envisaged:

- no. 1 operator for the commercial unit (shop/infopoint);
- no. 2 waiters/waitresses for the restaurant;
- no. 1 cook;
- no. 2 cleaners for the Casa Quarsot complex;
- no. 1 maintenance operator for the green areas near the old town;
- no. 2 tourist guides;

- no. 1 driver for the Susa –Novalesa – Abbey shuttle service;
- no. 1 coordinator of the cultural-tourism activity of Casa Quarsot.

the organisation contexts of operation;

These are actions to enhance cultural tourism planned around the recovery of Casa Quarsot and they fall within the more extensive project for urban requalification and social development of Novalesa in the context of national and international tourism. A skills centre will be generated, which could have epigones in other towns and villages in the valley

- the work organisation methods;

The hub of the project will be Casa Quarsot where a cooperative will organise services. The project will develop over a period of three years: the first two for the recovery of the building and the third for the start-up of the activity. The staff will be employed with flexible working hours that will change according to the season and the flow of visitors determined by specific events such as fairs or organised visits

- the professional training and refresher courses for the position;

Thanks to the support of the Plan to enhance the value of the Valle di Susa. Treasures of Art and Alpine Culture, which works synergically with the Tourism Consortia in the Valley, Turin Polytechnic and the Province of Turin, a series of training courses will be organised for the operators to be employed at Casa Quarsot. Meetings and informative days are also envisaged with operators working in the hospitality sector in the Valley and neighbouring French areas to exchange good practices.

How the project uses the web and new technologies

The project intends to launch a partnership with the Plan to enhance the value of the Valle di Susa. Treasures of Art and Alpine Culture to use its website, creating a section for the project to be developed in Novalesa, where information on the actions taken and the cultural enhancement programmes can be used with:

Tablets and mobile phones, Android/IOS

Using the style of the Lonely Planet and Trip Advisor Apps, there will be a guide dedicated to discovering the territory, with a simple yet thorough language. Maps, points of interest and proximity researches on the basis of Gps localisation: these are the services guaranteed by the application, conceived mainly as a guide to download also for use offline where there is no 3G coverage.

Web + mobile extension

Discover the territory through a videogame, to guarantee a playful approach to the heritage of cultural, artistic and landscape assets. The most effective and involving formula is believed to be that of role playing, organised on the basis of a sort of “treasure hunt”, broken down into content-based themes and capable of taking the player along different paths (thematic and temporal) thanks to a choice of different menus. In short, the player will be assigned “missions” with different and progressive levels of difficulty, allowing him/her to move within the map of the territory to find clues and answer the questions correctly.

Contacts with high school students will be fundamental to the development of the videogame, as they are capable of providing valuable suggestions to increase the enjoyment of the web game, conceived to guide visitors to discover the territory.

Technological innovation is essential for the effective communication of the project and the enhancement of the heritage, but it is, nevertheless, just a tool: the goal is social innovation.

How the project creates new skills and professionalism

Until the recent past, the reaction of Novalesa’s community to the huge cultural and economic potential linked to the presence of an artistic heritage of such high quality and a cultural and natural landscape that is still more or less unspoilt, has been largely passive. The people proudly acknowledge the characteristics described above but they do not use them in a strategic and integrated way. They are testimonies of an illustrious past but people do not think that they can become effective tools for generating new cultural and economic life.

The project, which has always intended to involve the community, wants to stimulate the numerous enthusiasms that now fuel the population, guiding it towards a new way of approaching culture, overcoming the hesitancy and embarrassment often generated in Italy when an attempt is made at promoting strategies to create economic opportunities from culture.

Novalesa has all the elements required for economic development from culture. All that is needed is comprehensive management to bring the growth progress together and direct it.

It is not just a matter of increasing employment in Novalesa, but also, and most importantly, of renewing the skills and professionalism of those who already work in the cultural-tourism and hospitality sector to make serious and conscious economic use of the wealth possessed by the village.

It is with these aims that we intend to activate an agreement with the tourist consortia of the High Valle di Susa and a partnership with Turin Chamber of Commerce for participation in specific training courses in the commercial and tourism sectors, particularly with regard to the production of products and relations with the public.

The managers of the territorial cultural enhancement programme have also declared their willingness to organise a course of knowledge of the natural and historical artistic heritage of Novalesa and the Valley, together with activities to learn useful narrative methods, so that the operators become capable of being “narrators of the territory”.

How “weak” groups such as young, unemployed, non-European and socially disadvantaged people can be involved

One of the project’s aims is to increase the economic wealth of the territory, and weaker groups in particular could benefit from the increase in the presence of visitors to the museums and to food and wine/hospitality structures, which will require more staff for ordinary and everyday maintenance of the sites, as well as staff for restaurant dining rooms and kitchens.

The perception of the landscape as a cultural asset and as a tourism product, according to the characteristics that have been expressed, will facilitate the signing of agreements between public administrations, cultural operators and social-assistance and economic consortia for hiring staff for cleaning and maintaining the roads and public green areas in the old town and local parks.

In particular, a partnership will be activated with a social cooperative that already operates in the Valley, for the accomplishment of income support activities, arranging jobs that offer people prospects for re-employment and re-motivation, restoring their self-esteem and social ability.

The agreement includes the provision of work packages for the unemployed, managed in conjunction with the local social assistance consortium, aimed at “on-the-job training” in Novalesa.

The project can offer opportunities to people who are under the supervision of the local social services of the territory, in possession of a series of requirements, as follows: long-term unemployment, bigger family burden, lack of involvement in other job-seeking programmes, older age.

These people will be identified thanks to a programme which will start with the supply by the Territorial Services of the names of potential beneficiaries to the cooperative. The operators of the two organisations will assess the possibility of including them in the workforce together.

Monitoring the project

Different tools, in line with the numerous actions and activities included in the project, will be used to check that the expected results are achieved:

Spot checks on economic and other subjects in the local tourism sector;

Statistics;

Questionnaires;

Estimates of tourist flows to the area and to the structures destined to promote cultural heritage;

Interviews on the level of satisfaction and perception of the network by tourists;

Analysis of training requirements;

Training attendance register;

Training appreciation forms;

Copies of the promotional material produced: maps with theme-based tourist itineraries, multimedia materials, etc.

Video documents;

Photographic documentation of approach and proximity signs;

The **progress and results achieved** will be published on the website.

3.2.5. Portability elements

The way to define revitalization and a development

Citizen involvement in social-politics decision by:

- definition of shared procedures between citizen and administration
- choices and knowledge sharing
- valorisation of local voluntary association

requalification of the cultural heritage by:

- guidelines for the architectural buildings renovation;
- public building renovation ();

public strategic planning by:

- definition and following of public strategy in short-medium term

support and tutoring public activity of the local private business community by:

- select orientation and helping in definition of public strategic necessities;
- incentive of public/private linked actions;
- tutoring and consulting in European public competition;
- local system and net incentive;
- local business community training;

Definition of special touristic suggestions by:

- potentiality analysis;
- referential target identification;
- communication strategy definition
- assimilated governance tools;

Meetings with citizen in order to know their perceptions about the Novalesa Abbey and its relationship with Novalesa town.

Writing of a memory book through pictures, tales, memories, papers from each Novalesa family, in order to complete with the historic archives aid the description of the community life in the last 3 centuries;

Good practice handbook for the rehabilitation of the urban building heritage, in which find the buildings characterisation, the codification analysis and the design ideas for the rehabilitation;

Guidelines shared between Administration and Population about advices on the architectonic heritage rehabilitation;

The preliminary analysis highlights the social-economic features of the background, the cultural and historical aspects of Susa Valley, the traditional activities linked to the productive building structures.

Documents annexed:

Polytechnic thesis on Casa Quarsot

Map of Via Maestra (the main street)

Historical datasheets on the village

Datasheets on the restoration of the Casa degli Stemmi

Manual of good practice

Guidelines

Book of memories