



Digitalisation represents a major opportunity for rural and mountain areas. The SmartCommUnity project aims to increase their attractiveness as places to work and live, compared to urban centres. **SmartCommUnity aims to create a transnational community to change both the practices and perceptions of smart rural areas.**

In close cooperation with the European Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP), the project partners will facilitate capacity building of rural areas and develop innovative and interactive digital tools to foster the "smart transition" of Alpine areas, taking into account community and

### Priority

Innovation and digitalisation supporting a green Alpine region

### Specific objective

SO 3.2 - Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities

**Start Date** 11/2022

**End Date** 10/2025

**Total eligible costs** 2.960.288 EUR

**ERDF grants** 1.882.601 EUR

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





## ABOUT THE SMARTCOMMUNITY PROJECT

The **SmartCommUnity** project intends to support Alpine rural areas, using all the benefits of digitalisation, embracing smart transitions and creating a functional transnational community within EUSALP. Interactive and user-friendly digital tools enhancing transnational matchmaking and leading-by example will empower new areas to follow more advanced areas, and territories will develop a community approach to create smarter, greener, more sustainable, resilient, and attractive rural areas. In particular the SmartCommUnity project aims to:

**Experiment innovative solutions** for the smart transition of the test areas and inspire additional areas in the partner and other Alpine regions to follow suit, via a strong regional approach of Lighthouse Test Areas working closely with selected Follower Test areas;

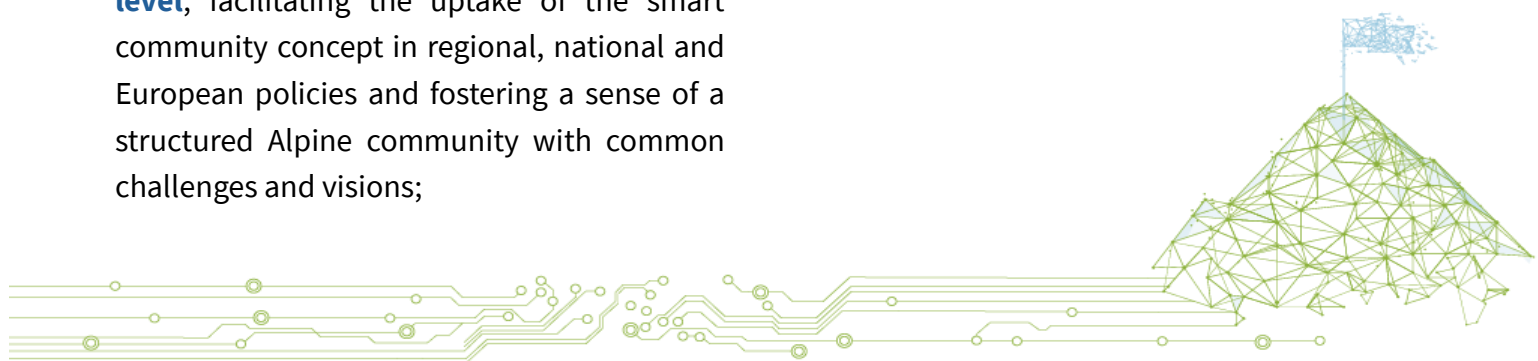
**Closely work with all Test Areas at EUSALP level**, facilitating the uptake of the smart community concept in regional, national and European policies and fostering a sense of a structured Alpine community with common challenges and visions;

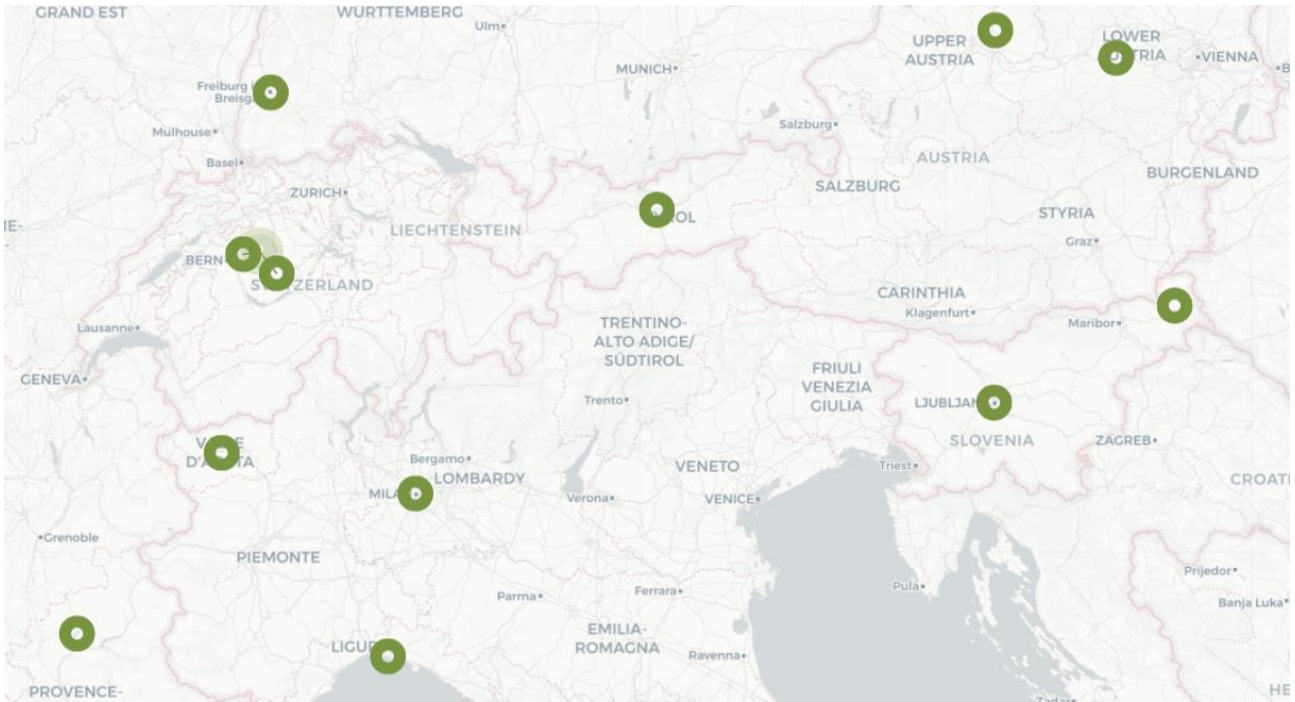
**Develop new digital tools** to facilitate matchmaking, networking, and engagement activities in search of locally-tailored and smart-led solutions, such as gamification and civic tech;

**Change perceptions and create a smart vision for the Alps**, and effectively communicate the opportunities and results in the Alps and beyond for more areas to join in.

## WHAT ARE SMART COMMUNITIES?

*The Project Consortium has identified the following definition: «Smart communities are communities of people, that want to become active players in owning and driving the changes that the future, and any digital transition, may entail. Smart communities are open to innovate, to learn and to inspire, and to work towards smart areas that make the lives of their citizens better».*





## THE PARTNERSHIP

The project consortium consists of 12 partners, coming from 6 Alpine countries (Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Slovenia), coordinated by the University of Ljubljana (SI) and uniting Public Authorities, Agencies, Research Centers, Interest Groups, and Business Support to ensure a diverse and comprehensive approach.

[University of Ljubljana - Lead partner \(SI\)](#)

[Poliedra - research and consultancy centre of Milan's Polytechnic University on environmental \(IT\)](#)

[Standortagentur Tirol GmbH \(AT\)](#)

[Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein \(DE\)](#)

[ITC – Innovation Technology Cluster Murska Sobota \(SI\)](#)

[Association for the networked development of territories and services \(FR\)](#)

[Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta \(IT\)](#)

[Swiss Center for mountain regions SAB \(CH\)](#)

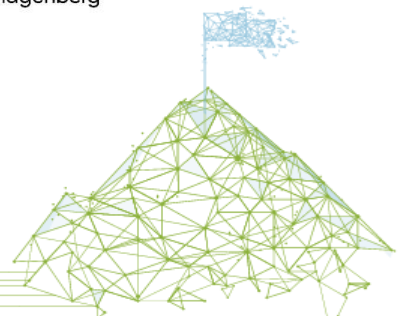
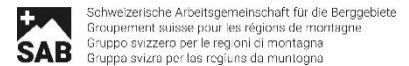
[Energy and Environment Agency of Lower Austria \(AT\)](#)

[Software Competence Center Hagenberg GmbH \(AT\)](#)

[REGION LUCERNE WEST \(CH\)](#)

[Anci Liguria \(IT\)](#)

Univerza v Ljubljani



Supported by the Interreg Alpine Space Programme 2021-2027 for a dynamic 3-year period, the SmartCommUnity project is **organized in three working packages:**

**EUSALP Uptake and Policy Integration (WPEU)** to create a network of smart villages (Smart Alps) that can spread a digital transformation of mountain and rural territories, exchanging information, tools and best practices. Thanks to synergies with other relevant projects, WPEU wants to promote the **smart community approach** and to integrate significant policies in EUSALP, also through the organisation of events, study visits and dialogue with young people (EUSALP Youth Council).

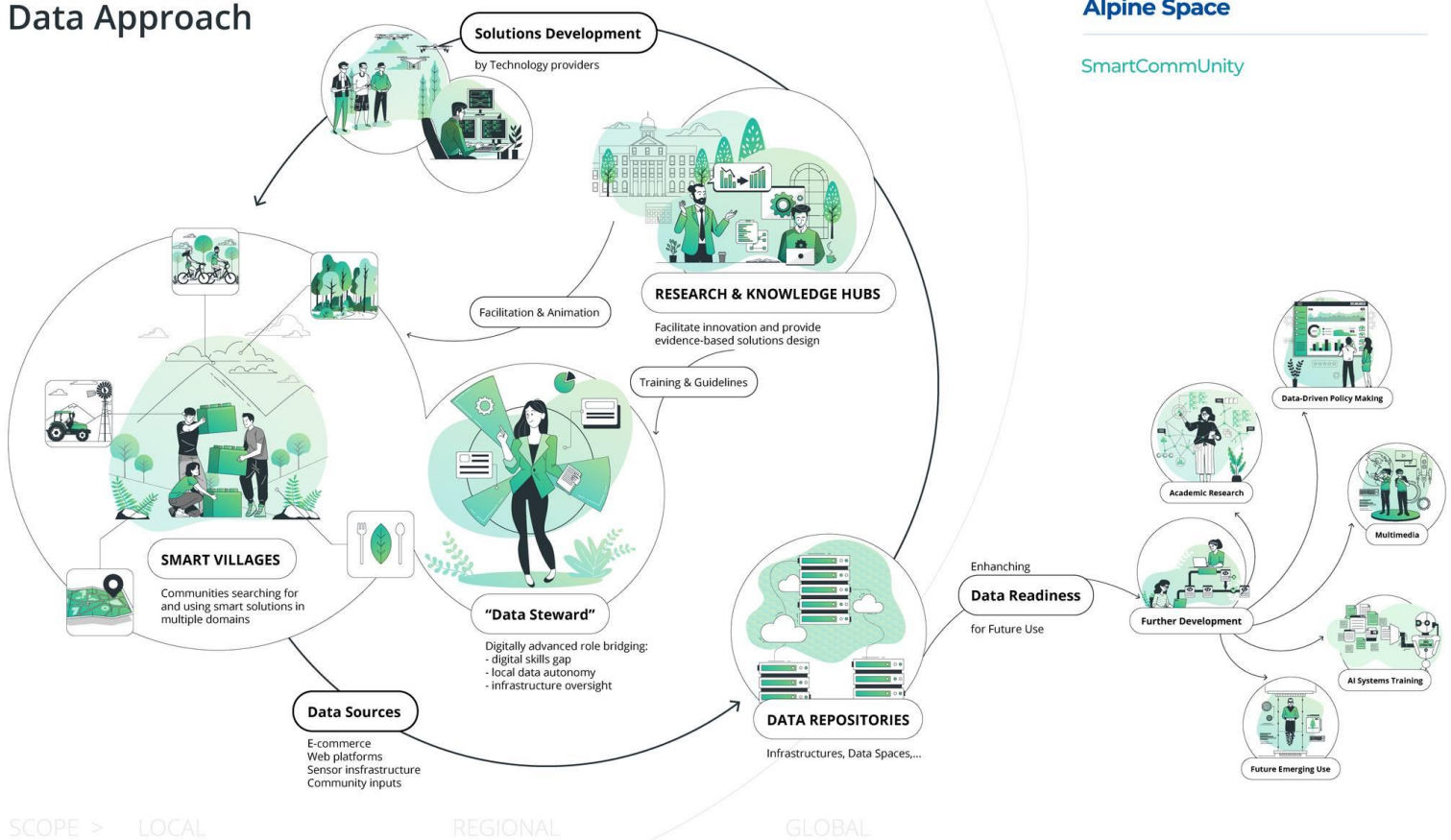
**Test Activities and Networking for SmartCommUnity (WPTAN)** to focus on smart community-led transition in Test Areas, creating networks between advanced and less advanced Test Areas in each country.

WPTAN sets to foster activities in the 6 Smartness Dimensions, for smart community-led transition in Test Areas, and to create national and regional networks between more advanced (lighthouse) and less advanced (follower) Test Areas in each country. All activities are designed to facilitate capacity building, community exchanges of best practices, lessons learnt and mobilization of community energies.

**Innovation Tools for SmartCommUnity (WPIT)** to enhance capacity building, community exchanges and mobilization of energies.

The **SmartAlps platform** will present not only the project's activities, the Smartalps network, the pilot areas and good practices, but also new smart tools for the pilot areas, with a gamified user experience.

## Community-Based Data Approach



Interreg  Co-funded by the European Union

Alpine Space

SmartCommUnity

## Discover the SmartCommUnity Test Areas (on the website's "pilot" section)

The Test Activities and Networking for the SmartCommUnity partnership, spanning 8 partners across 6 countries, unites Public Authorities, Agencies, Research Centers, Interest Groups, and Business Support, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive approach.

### PILOT ACTIONS

Improving access to housing and addressing the issue of demographic ageing and prevention of the isolation of vulnerable groups in the Communauté de communes du Guillectrois et du Queyras (FR)

Creating a Mobility Center Service in the Communauté de communes des Baronnies en Drôme Provençale (FR)

Green Point Living Lab in the Pomurje Region and Podravje Region (SI)

Löffingen (DE) as a successful practice for digitalization, to inspire FTAs

Elzach (DE) to become more digital and smarter

Create an Innovation Lab, and improve communication and inter-municipal cooperation in Winden im Elztal (DE)

Smart network to collect, store and visualize community data in Lienzer Talboden (AT)

Developing a smart and ecological connectivity in Lower Austria (AT)

Locally-led actions for smart mobility and smart economy, to face economic and demographic challenges in the Region Luzern West (CH)

Developing technologies to strengthen local Alpine identity in the Gran Paradiso National Park and Mont Avic Regional Park (IT)

Smart environment actions: a hub for training and educational initiatives in the Municipality of Cogorno (IT)



## NEWS&EVENTS



### The SmartAlps Webinars

*How to develop a smart community?* Within the SmartCommUnity project, partners have already organized three webinars on smart transitions of rural and mountain areas.

The most important contribution of the webinars is, that no matter the origin of the communities, they all share similar challenges, i.e. of how to involve different communities and stakeholders to work for the common goals, creating an atmosphere of trust and how to foster the type of governance which will enhance overall cooperation. In this manner, participants agree, that such events are key in developing smart and sustainable digital transformation in rural areas. SAB (Swiss Center for mountain regions), partner of the SmartCommUnity project, has organized, together with the whole partnership, three webinars that have addressed specific issues and challenges such as coworking activities and mobility.

During the webinar, participants had the opportunity to explore best practices and engage in “practical sessions” aimed to delving into methodologies and approaches linked to challenges related to governance, financing and planning activities.

### Digital Alps Conference

From 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 partners participated in the Digital Alps Conference. They attended workshops on empowering smart communities with data and AI in the face of climate and work pattern changes paired with a political vision on the future of digitalizing Alpine areas (EUSALP - Action Group 5) took place on the highest levels (3466 m altitude), just below the Monte Bianco/ Mont Blanc.



### European Week of Regions and Cities

The SmartCommUnity project was presented during a policy lab of the EWRC 2023 in Brussels. Elsa Vacheron from the SmartCommUnity partner ADRETS was talking on how their association interacts with local stakeholders in their test areas, forms smart communities and develops together projects. Peter Niederer from the SmartCommUnity partner Swiss Center for Mountain Regions presented the project in a panel on « the governance of fuzzy territories» organised by Lombardia Region. He underlined the role of communities of intention, as well as EUSALP to improve institutions rules and procedures they use to interact with citizens.



### SmartCommUnity project meetings

After two meetings, the first in Slovenia, hosted by University of **Ljubljana**, and the second in Switzerland (**Willsau**), hosted by Region Luzerne West, the third project meeting took place in Valle d'Aosta Region. From 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 the project consortium, stakeholders, school youth, members of the EUSALP Youth Council and members of other European projects met together to address the topic of smart communities' definition and approach, the state of the art of the activities in test areas and the strategies to implement a transnational and smart Alpine community. The **Valle d'Aosta Region** project partner proposed some "study visit workshops" with the introduction to "systemic reading" for in-depth understanding of case studies and good practices. Participants have discovered good practices and smart transition processes in the Gran Paradiso and Mont Avic test areas. A study visit on best practices in Cogne made it possible to raise awareness of the Aosta Valley smart communities, their needs, and

During the meeting in Aosta there was the opportunity to discuss with the international representatives and stakeholders of other European projects – "More than a Village" (Central Europe) and "Smart Era" (Horizon Europe) – which have a common ambition to make rural and mountain areas attractive again for the young people, also by using new technologies and the typical participatory approach of smart communities.



The school Youth from the "Montagna 4.0 – FUTURE ALPS" project, which includes 250 students from Valtellina (Lombardia Region), Valle d'Aosta Region, Trentino (Trentino Alto Adige Region) and Carnia (Friuli Venezia Giulia Region), presented the fruits of their training path in contact with local entrepreneurs dedicated to the themes of environmental sustainability, tourism, innovation in the mountain regions and dialogued with project partners on possible scenarios for mountain areas.



Interreg



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Alpine Space

SmartCommUnity



**Contact** Jure Trilar - University of Ljubljana [jure.trilar@fe.uni-lj.si](mailto:jure.trilar@fe.uni-lj.si)



[alpine-space.eu/project/smartcommunity](https://alpine-space.eu/project/smartcommunity)



Newsletter developed by ANCI Liguria