

### **Seminar TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY** in upland areas



















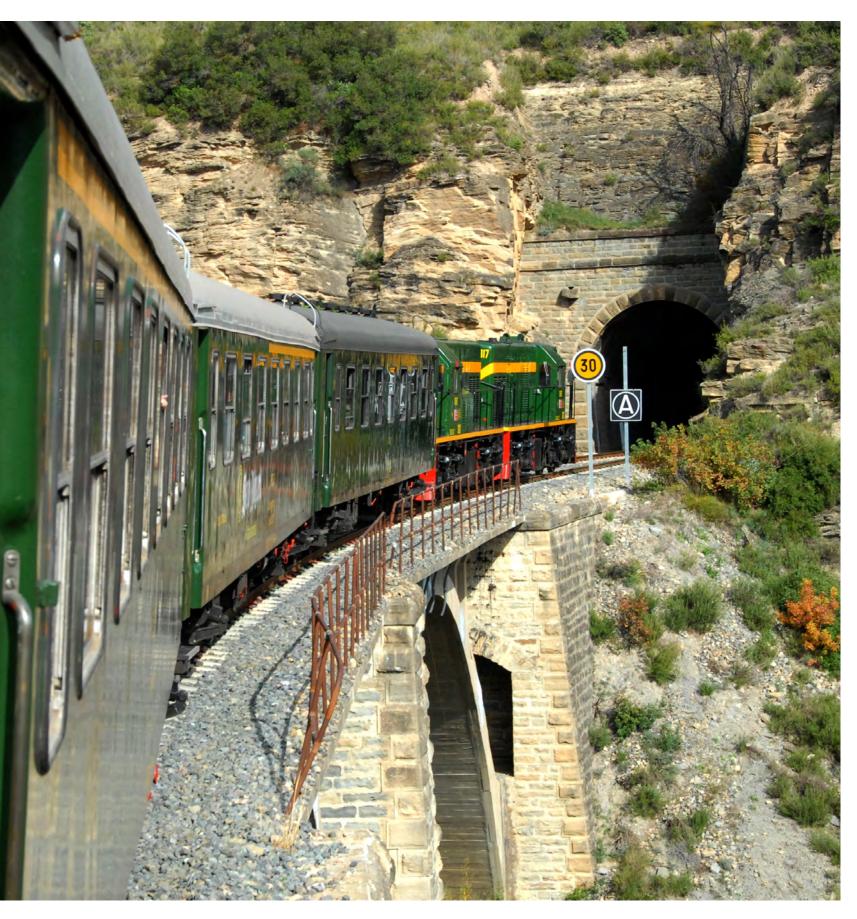




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# **Background**



Under the auspices of the programme Treball a les 7 comarques (Work in the 7 counties), over the last few years public and private bodies alike in Pallars Jussà have collaborated on a programme aimed at stimulating the local economy and local tourism. This programme has been successful in promoting public-private cooperation and in placing some of the county's most singular tourist products on the tourist circuit.

As part of this process, sustainable mobility has become one of the central elements of the tourist development strategy devised for Pallars Jussà and a number of related initiatives have sprung up that include the creation of tourist products linked to the **Tren dels Llacs** (Train of the Lakes)

This train line sets Pallars Jussà apart from most other mountain regions in Catalonia and has become a highly popular tourist attraction in itself. There are thus all kinds of products - including discovery activities, walking, ecotourism and school visits - that use the Tren dels Llacs to move around Pallars Jussà and to enjoy its stunning natural landscapes. The

train is a significant part of the tourist experience for many visitors and gives Pallars Jussà an edge over other similar destinations. Moreover, both the stations and a number of other sites situated along the railway line offer possibilities for tourism-based activities.

The tourist products linked to Tren dels Llacs generate economic benefits for the region and help create work for various groups of people including young jobseekers. It is also helping Pallars Jussà to become well known amongst walkers, cyclists, eco-tourists and other specialized groups looking to get to know the region. In the last couple of years, a number of travel writers have taken an interest in the area's tourist potential and, above all, in the product La Ruta del Cinquè Llac (the Route of the Fifth Lake) that has featured in several European publications (The Times in the UK, Outdoor Welten in Germany, Grandes Espacios in Spain and Vrijetijdmedia in the Netherlands) and attracted the attention of specialized operators from a number of different countries.

Nevertheless, this train is not the only sustainable means of transport in Pallars Jussà. The Sallente-Estany de Gento cable car in the Vall Fosca is another unique mode of transport. It takes passengers up to 2,000 m and is an ideal starting point for numerous walks that head into the Aigüestortes i l'Estany de Sant Maurici National Park.

**Background** 

Local public administrations are also investing in the promotion of a network of footpaths known as the Camins del Jussà, to be managed by the local county council, and in the creation of new routes that take in some of the county's most attractive sites (e.g. the reservoirs of Terradets

and Sant Antoni). Innovative products based around some of these sites have already been created and have been well received by the tourism sector.

Other elements to be taken into consideration include the promotion of nautical activities on the local reservoirs and the creation of links with the flourishing tourist activity in the county of Pallars Sobirà associated with the river Noguera Pallaresa. This latter activity would involve connecting the Noguera Pallaresa above the Sossís dam to the Sant Antoni reservoir.

Other sustainable ways of getting around Pallars Jussà include road and mountain bike routes (www.pallarsjussa.net) that are adapted to all levels and fitnesses.

Even so, there is still a lot of work to be done. The area's potential will be even greater if the work carried out so far can be integrated into a broader-based strategy linked to sustainable mobility in collaboration with other regions, as has occurred in other, above all upland, European regions.

Of note too is the project set up by local tourist entities called Vine al Pallars, Viu el Jussà that offers visitors a varied and wide-ranging programme of guided visits, routes, walks, snow-shoe excursions and other activities that revel in the best local scenery, the best of its food, and so forth.

With this as a background, the seminar Tourism and Sustainable Mobility in Mountain Areas was held on 19 February 2015. Around 120 people attended the event representing a number of different territories. The main results of the seminar are described below and constitute the main conclusions of this report.



Oriol Clavera, Patronat de Turisme de la Diputació de Lleida

Press release for the seminar "Tourism and Sustainable Mobility in Mountain Areas"

# "GREAT INTEREST IN THE TOURIST SECTOR OF PALLARS JUSSÀ IN CONTINUING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY STRATEGY FOR TOURISM IN THE AREA"

Over 120 people representing both the public and private sectors attended the first seminar Tourism and Sustainable Mobility in Mountain Areas held on Thursday, 19 February in the Epicentre in Tremp.

In his inaugural address, Joan Ubach, president of Pallars Jussà County Council, ratified the desire to continue advancing in sustainable mobility in cooperation with other regions with similar characteristics.

Albert Alins, territorial delegate of the Catalan Government in the High Pyrenees and Aran Valley, and Oriol Juncadella, director of the Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya–Operadora (Catalan railway network), spoke of the investment being made in the Lleida-Pobla de Segur rail line, which includes the acquisition of new trains that foreseeably will enter into service in 2016.

Joan Ubach expressed his gratitude above all to the representatives from Alpine Pearls (its president, Peter Brandauer, and managing director, Karmen Mentil) for attended the seminar. This network is based in Austria and embraces 27 municipalities in five different European countries. Joan Ubach also described some of the contacts made with various projects and experiences in France.

The seminar was organized by Pallars Jussà County Council and was funded by the Catalan Employment Service as part of its project Work in the Seven Counties.

Both the number of people who attended and the quality of the presentations were very high. All expressed their satisfaction at the smooth running of the seminar, which will reinforce the region's bid to promote sustainable mobility in tourism and open doors to future European-scale cooperation projects.

LINKS TO REPORTS OF THE SEMINAR FROM VARIOUS WEBSITES

REVISTA DESCOBRIR NACIÓ DIGITAL

TURISME PALLARS JUSSÀ

**COMUNICATUR** 

PIRINEUS TELEVISIÓ

# The seminar

"The seminar was held on 19 February in the Epicentre (Tremp) and was attended by over 120 people representing 64 public and private entities".

The seminar was held on 19 February in the Epicentre (Tremp) and was attended by over 120 people representing 64 public and private entities.

The programme was divided into a number of thematic areas. The first was linked to opportunities for financing tourist projects with EU funds and looked at examples of tourist development and sustainable mobility in mountain areas.

The second block centred around the Tren dels Llacs (the Train of the Lakes) and a number of different projects linked to sustainable mobility. Much interest was generated by the presentations made by the Alpine Pearl network, projects linked to the promotion of tourist trains in France and the development of the project Itinerànnia.

The third block was devoted to the presentation of local projects set up in recent years, some of which are directly linked to the **Tren dels Llacs.** 

The seminar finished with a chance to taste a

number of local products and a networking space in which participants were able to exchange information and make contacts.

Participants' satisfaction with the seminar was manifest given the high quality of the presentations and the region's decision to promote sustainable mobility in its tourism.

All participants were able to follow the seminar thanks to two professional English-Catalan simultaneous interpreters working from a cabin with the centre's technical staff. Sixty audio-guides were provided for participants, and the association APAT (Pallars Association of Tourist Professionals) provided the catering service that included a morning coffee break and a buffet lunch based on local products.

The introductions to the different presentations were made by Josep Ardanuy from Pallars Jussà County Council. The following is a resume of each presentation:



### **Welcome and start**

### OF THE SEMINAR

Was made by

### Joan Ubach

President of Pallars Jussà County Council

#### Albert Alins

The Catalan government's delegate in the High Pyrenees and Aran valley

### Oriol Juncadella

director of the Catalan railway network Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya-Operadora

In his address, Joan Ubach, President of Pallars Jussà County Council, ratified the desire to continue advancing in sustainable mobility in cooperation with other regions with similar characteristics. Albert Alins, the Catalan government's delegate in the High Pyrenees and Aran Valley and Oriol Juncadella, director of the Catalan railway network, spoke of the investment being carried out to improve the Lleida-Pobla de Segur railway line, which includes the acquisition of new trains that foreseeably will enter into service in 2016.





Oriol Clavera, Patronat de Turisme de la Diputació de Lleida

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### **Tourism, soft mobility**

### AND FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

for the European Union in 2014–2020

Was made by

### **Cristina Prat**

Director of Comunitat de Treball dels Pirineus

#### Jordi Escribà

(European project consultant), partner of the consultants Blink BCN, specialized in the preparation and management of European projects

This block discussed three subjects – tourism, soft mobility and financial opportunities – from a European Union standpoint and assessed the opportunities offered by an international cooperation project such as the one that has been underway in Pallars Jussà for a number of years based on sustainable mobility and tourist promotion in mountain areas.

Two experts in the field, Cristina Prat, director of Comunitat de Treball dels Pirineus (management authority of Interreg Spain–France–Andorra) and Jordi Escribà (European project consultant), partner of the consultants Blink BCN, specialized in the preparation and management of European projects, were invited to the seminar.



### The Tren dels Llacs

### AND OTHER TOURIST PROMOTION PROJECTS

in mountain areas.

Was made by

### **Emili Monsó**

n charge of the Tren dels Llacs railway line for the Catalan railway network (FCG – Ferrocarrils de Generalitat de Catalunya)

Emili Monsó – in charge of the Tren dels Llacs railway line for the Catalan railway network (FCG – Ferrocarrils de Generalitat de Catalunya) – described how the Tren dels Llacs is run and how his organization is working to promote tourism in mountain regions.

The Tren dels Llacs runs from Lleida to La Pobla de Segur via Balaguer, and passes through a spectacular landscape replete with four lakes/reservoirs, rivers, gorges, cliffs and mountain ridges. For 2015, 26 trips are planned, beginning at Easter and running until the end of October (but with a halt from mid-July to mid-August).

The preservation of these train lines as tourist attractions is an increasingly valid concept. As mobility in Europe becomes an ever-more important aspect of sustainable development, and as new ideas in the field of sustainable tourism are beginning to take root, the restoration of these train lines as tourist activities and projects is an opportunity not to be missed



Oriol Clavera, Patronat de Turisme de la Diputació de Lleida

### **Tourism experiences**

### AND SOFT MOBILITY

in mountain areas.

The following block of presentations included the presentation of a number of examples of tourism and sustainable mobility in mountain areas in Europe and Catalonia.





# Presentation by **ALPINE PEARLS**

Was made by

#### **Peter Brandauer**

President of Alpine Pearls and Mayor of Werfenweng (Austria)

#### Karmen Mentil

coordinator of the network Alpine Pearls

The presence of Peter Brandauer, president of Alpine Pearls and Mayor of Werfenweng (Austria), along with Karmen Mentil, coordinator of the network Alpine Pearls, was a great boon for the seminar.

Alpine Pearls is an organization that represents 27 tourist destination in the Alps that are all committed to sustainable mobility and responsible tourism. These areas, in Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Slovenia and Switzerland, are regarded as models at a European scale in this field and in 2011 were awarded the prestigious Tourism for Tomorrow Award as one of the best examples of sustainable tourism in the world.

Representatives of Pallars Jussà County Council visited the town of Werfenweng in September 2014 to learn more about the network and how it works, as well as to discuss possible future cooperation. During the visit, Peter Brandauer, mayor of Werfenweng, a town that has been part of this network since 1997, and president of Alpine Pearls since 2006, and some of his colleagues were invited to attend the seminar to be held in Pallars Jussà.

# TO SCENIC TRAINS AND OTHER INITIATIVES OF MOUNTAIN AREAS IN FRANCE

During the work to create and establish a European cooperation project, contacts were made with a number of regions in France that already have scenic tourist trains.

Although he was unable to attend the seminar, Josep Capellà, director of DCB Turisme i Desenvolupament Local and expert in the field, was able to present and describe a number of examples from France, including Val d'Azun, the Train de la Rhune and the Train du Pays Cathare.





# Presentation of ITINERÀNNIA

Was made by

### **Adriana Ramon**

The project's coordinator ITINERÀNNIA

Itinerànnia is a project whose aim is to restore historical hiking trails as a tool for promoting tourism. It consists of a network of 2,500 km of trails in the Ripollès, Garrotxa and l'Alt Empordà counties in Catalonia that connects the high mountains of the Ripollès to the Mediterranean, and which is currently being used by tour operators from throughout the world.

Adriana Ramon, the project's coordinator, explained the main features of the project and the impact that it has had on the economies and tourist sector of the territories through which it passes.

# **New tourism products** IN THE PYRENEES

This final block was devoted to the presentation of local - but by no means any less interesting - projects. Both public and private tourist agencies in Pallars Jussà have opted to support sustainable mobility, mainly via the creation of tourist products based on the Tren dels Llacs and the local network of footpaths. These products are very important on a local scale and have helped set up and maintain a number of local micro-businesses and jobs and in many cases young jobseekers have benefitted. Furthermore, these products help halt rural depopulation and lengthen the tourist season.



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### **BENVINGUTS**

Walkers Welcome project

Was made by

### Juli Alegre

from the regional tourist board (Patronat de Turisme de la Diputació de Lleida)

Juli Alegre from the regional tourist board (Patronat de Turisme de la Diputació de Lleida explained the main features of the project Walkers Welcome, a quality label for establishments that are set up and prepared to welcome walkers and cyclists



Vine Al Pallars,

### **VIU EL JUSSÀ**

Was made by

### **Conxita Serrano**

President of Pallars Rural Tourism Association

### Josep Palau President of APAT

Vine al Pallars, Viu el Jussà is a programme of cultural and open-air activities set up conjointly by Pallars Jussà Rural Tourism Association, APAT (Pallars Association of Tourist Professionals), Pallars Jussà County Council, 10 municipalities, 29 tourism establishments (hotels, hostels, mountain huts and camp-sites) and 40 other businesses (restaurants, producers and outdoor-activities).

The presentation was made by Conxita Serrano, president of Pallars Rural Tourism Association, and Josep Palau, president of APAT.





### **EL CINQUÈ LLAC**

Was made by

#### Mireia Font

President of the association Margues de Pastor.

El Cinquè Llac is a circular, mid-altitude long-distance footpath in the Vall Fosca that can be walked in five days. It was designed using criteria of responsible tourism and social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Despite being an initiative originating in the private sector, El Cinquè Llac receives support from public authorities. The presentation was made by Mireia Font, president of the association Marques de Pastor.



Telefèric de

### LA VALL FOSCA

Was made by

### Sílvia Coll

From Torre de Capdella Town Hall

The Telefèric de Sallente-estany Gento is a cable car in the northern-most part of the Vall Fosca that takes passengers up to an altitude of 2,000 m, which is a perfect place to start walks in the Aigüestortes i l'Estany de Sant Maurici National Park.

It dates back to the building of the 'reversible' HEP station at Sallente in the 1980s. Until then, the only way to reach Estany Gento was on foot. Today, the cable car, which offers splendid views over the surrounding mountains, takes just 13 minutes to climb 450 metres in altitude.

The presentation of the cable car was made by Sílvia Coll from Torre de Capdella Town Hall.



Pirineu Emoció.

### **EL TREN DELS LLACS**

visites de clients de proximitat

Was made by

#### **Núria Martí**

Director of the travel agency Pirineu Emoció

Pirineu Emoció is a local travel agency that designs and commercializes tourist products related to the Tren dels Llacs and other local tourist attractions. Some of these products – for example, El Cinquè Llac, which received a prize for Responsible Tourism in Catalonia in 2013 in the category 'Best contribution to the local economy' - have been awarded important accolades.

The presentation of the agency was made by its director, Núria Martí.

### **Tasting of local products**

### A VISIT TO THE EPICENTRE AND NETWORKING

Today, gastronomy is regarded as an important tourist attractions in many regions and Pallars Jussà, which can boast many high-quality local agricultural products, has little to envy any other region in this regard.

Thus, participants in the seminar were invited to taste some of the county's star products, prepared especially for the occasion by APAT (Pallars Association of Tourist Professionals).



The presentations

The presentations can be downloaded here

video

The following link is to a video of part of the seminar.

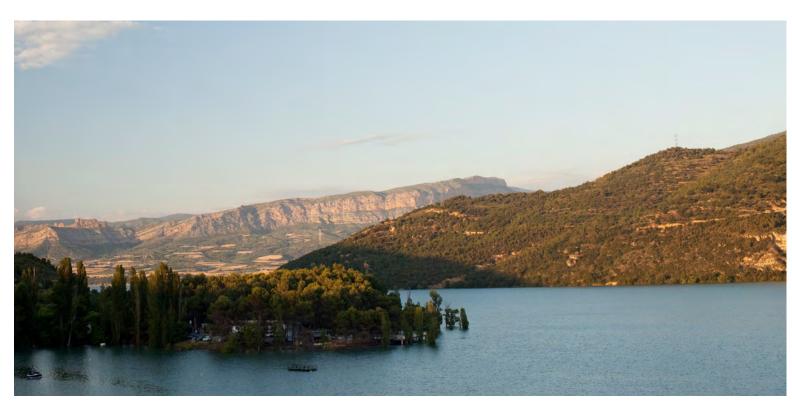
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# Justification TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY PROJECTS

## in Pallars Jussà



Oriol Clavera, Patronat de Turisme de la Diputació de Lleida

Climate change and global warming are two factors materially affecting economies and societies the world over that are having a serious impact on tourism. It has been calculated that tourist activities contribute 5.3% of the world's emission of greenhouse gases, the principle culprit being transport (75%). On the brighter side of things, the increasing awareness of the importance and potential of the so-called 'green economy' is providing tourism with a chance to adapt and contribute to the boom in 'green' jobs, which are now recognised as an important component of world growth in future years.

Changes in consumer behaviour such as the widespread setting up of voluntary or obligatory CO2-offset schemes are beginning to operate as responses to climate change. Possible changes in how transport facilities are used and the increase in demand for responsible environmental behaviour are new challenges that both established tourist destinations and the businesses that operate there will have to confront in coming years.

### **General aims**

The general aim of the project is to encourage economic and tourist promotion in Pallars Jussà based on cooperation and collaboration between public and private local entities, with 'soft-mobility' promoted as one of the singular features of local tourist attractions and as a key element in the model of sustainable tourism development.

### **Specific objectives**

Analyse the experiences of other regions that have used sustainable mobility as the central pillar of a tourist promotion strategy, which can then be used as points of reference in local economic development.

Strengthen cooperation with the neighbouring county of Pallars Sobirà to improve connectivity for tourists and facilitate their access to all the region's (in a broad sense) resources and tourist attractions.

Contact representatives from these other regions and, if necessary, visit them to learn in detail how their tourism-related sustainable mobility projects work, and to establish lasting working relationships that will be of use in projects for territorial cooperation.

Contribute to creating new tourist products that incorporate sustainable mobility in their design, and help promote and marketing them.

Keep abreast of possible of sources of funding for new projects from both national and European organisms.

# Possible lines of work

### Programme for the upkeep of the 'soft mobility' infrastructures.

To ensure that the walking, cycling and mountain bike networks and all associated infrastructures are competitive from a tourist point of view their signage, infrastructures and surroundings must be well maintained.

Agreements reached between Pallars Jussà County Council, local town councils and private businesses must ensure that footpath networks are well managed, correctly maintained and that incidents can be properly dealt with.

Complementary services and infrastructures must be encouraged to increase tourist flow and facilitate sustainable mobility.

These complementary services and infrastructures must be linked to existing services such as the Tren dels Llacs and the Vall Fosca cable car that provides excellent access to the Aigüestortes National Park.

### Support for the creation of tourist products

A further objective is to continue working on a range of specialized products aimed at market segments in the main countries of origin of the tourists that visit the Spanish state. These products will promote active and discovery tourism based on the territory's natural, environmental, gastronomic and ethnological values, and will be backed up by the local 'soft mobility' network and a combination of different types of transport.



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On the basis of products targeting both international and local markets activities designed to promote tourism can be organized.

### Adapting services

An increasingly important aspect of the creation of specific products is the adaptation of local establishments to the requirements of the users of these products. Throughout Europe, most accommodation, activity companies, restaurants and other types of businesses are currently adapting their services to certain pre-determined needs in what represents a new work ethic and different way of thinking about communication aimed at satisfying these requirements.

This has led to the creation of networks of establishments that specialize in special interest groups such as walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and eco-tourists.

The aim of this project is to:

- Identify and analyse existing initiatives aimed at adapting establishments to the markets.
- Prepare data sheets describing the requirements of visitors that can be discussed with local companies.
- Set up training and observation programmes in companies.

### Identification and monitoring of grant programmes and project preparation.

Numerous ideas have been proposed and it is essential that priorities are established based on:

- The time-scale of each project.
- The possibility of obtaining external funding that will ensure that the project is properly carried out in both the present and the future.

Thus, it is essential to identify what funding is available from public (provincial councils, ministries of autonomous regions, national ministries, European programmes, etc.) and private (foundations run by banks and other large corporations/businesses) bodies, and the type of activities that can be carried out via corporate social responsibility.

We are working on the idea of promoting networks connecting different European regions that will give us access to a new period of funding (2014–2020) from the European Union.

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