

## **Action Group 2**

### **Report on “Heilkraft der Alpen, International symposium on evidence based health tourism**

#### **Objective:**

Tourism is a major engine for job creation and a driving force for economic growth and development in the Alpine area. Global trends like aspiration towards nature-based experiences and health hold considerable opportunities for Alpine tourism innovation. To fully benefit from this potential, access to innovation knowledge has to be improved and implementation tools have to be developed for policy-makers, Alpine regions and SMEs.

Tourism is a key Alpine sector for economic development and job creation. Growing market for nature-based tourism holds considerable innovation opportunities. Alpine regions dispose of location-bound natural health resources (e.g. thermal waters, biodiversity) with a high potential of developing unique health tourism services. Yet, the innovation capacity of the tourism industry is traditionally weak due to its spatial fragmentation, lack of knowledge access & little transversal cooperation.

Tourism based on natural health resources can act as innovation driver in Alpine regions. New value chains should include stakeholders from various sectors (e.g. health, agriculture, protected areas), thus providing new impulses for extending seasons as well as for peripheral destinations. To make full use of this potential, the scope of resources has to be analysed, framework conditions & tools for tourism development must improve and stakeholders from different sectors & levels have to be involved.

The objective to organise the international symposium “Heilkraft der Alpen” within the framework of EUSALP AG 2 was to build awareness of the unique health-promoting potential of the Alpine regions. Transfer tools, methods for visibility and knowledge of health-promoting Alpine assets were presented to an international audience. Recommendations for different policy levels as well as guidelines & implementation tools for product and service chain developed in European projects like the ARPAF project HEALPS or the Interreg projects Trail for Health Nord (Interreg Bavaria-Austria) or WinHealth (Interreg Italy-Austria) provided hands-on knowledge for the stimulation of SME- and destination driven innovation. Transnational & transversal knowledge transfer from academia to regions and SMEs was supported by a list of international speakers.

The symposium was a forum to network, to exchange and discuss possible further projects.



## Concept/Output:

The Symposium was co-organised with the Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg, the University of Applied Science Salzburg and the partnership of the Interreg Austria/Italia Project “WinHealth”.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2018, about 310 attendants joined “Heilkraft der Alpen” in Bad Hofgastein, Salzburg, Austria. <https://www.gastein.com/gasteinertal/kongresse/>

About 30 speakers from Italy, Switzerland and Austria were invited to assist in building awareness of the unique health-promoting potential of the Alpine regions. Transfer tools, best practises examples and panel discussions offered access to participants to high-level knowledge on evidence based tourism.

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