



Hosts & tourists in the Bergamo Alps in a time of pandemic

University of Bergamo

Master Course in Project and Management of Tourism Systems

Academic year 2020-2021, Course on IT and Tourism Services

PMTS04 Workshop



The Bergamo Alps and the Covid-19 pandemic

- Between March and April 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic hit the whole province of Bergamo surprisingly hard: local tourism was a collateral casualty.
- Many strategies were adopted locally to help both the reputation and the economy recover during the summer, according to the gravity and the effects of the diverse situation.
- In Autumn 2020, it was time for the tourist destinations to decide how to handle the upcoming months, on which strategies to focus and how to face the needs of both hosts and tourists.

Our PMTS04 Workshop

Our workshop concentrated its work on the web communication of six stakeholders or territories:

- **Alto Brembo**
- **Bergamo B&B & Co.**
- **GAL Val Seriana**
- **Promoserio**
- **Val Vertova**
- **Visit Brembo**



After identifying their specific needs and following interviews and dialogues, varying contents and contributions have been produced under the supervision and with the cooperation of the representatives and the workshop's designer, professor Roberto Peretta.

Who we are / Our fields

PMTS04. Hosts & tourists in the Bergamo Alps in a time of pandemic. Web Strategies <u>And</u> Sharing Guidelines	
Connections	Participants with special responsibilities
Val Seriana, Val di Scalve, Promoserio > Martina Biffi - reteinfopoint@valseriana.eu > Serena Bonetti - comunicazione@valseriana.eu > Mario Romanelli - mario@datappeal.io	Laura Medeghini Diletta Zambaiti
GAL (Gruppo di Azione Locale) Valle Seriana > Chiara Tisat - chiaratisat95@gmail.com	Syria Savoldelli Matteo Marenzi
Alto Brembo > Andrea Paleni - info@altobrembo.it	Irene Iannino Federica Minonzio
VisitBrembo > Elena Riceputi - elena@emozioniorobie.it	Giulia Arnaboldi Lucia Rovelli
Bergamo B&B & Co. > Maria Grazia Mapelli - info@adelche.it	Laura Breda Giorgia Milesi
Val Vertova	Martina Cuomo Nguyen Quynh Nga Maria Riccardi (guest)

Alto Brembo. A new website

What is Alto Brembo?

Altobrembo is a **tourism promotion and territorial coordination association**, which includes 11 municipalities (Averara, Cassiglio, Cusio, Mezzoldo, Olmo al Brembo, Ornica, Piazza Brembana, Piazzatorre, Piazzolo, Santa Brigida and Valtorta).

Altobrembo's members are also tour operators, traders, artisans, farms and associations operating in the tourism sector at a local level.

What does Alto Brembo do?

Altobrembo deals with the **coordination of operators, planning and tourism promotion**. In particular, in the first 3 years of the Association's existence, the following projects were developed:

- Altobrembo Rurale
- MTB in Altobrembo
- Tourist Rentals in Altobrembo

Alto Brembo. A new website

Our contribution

Analyze the iconographic part of the new website, **removing the blurry and small photos** already present on the site, and **adding those made by professionals** which, on the contrary, were too big and heavy.

Modify the photos one by one using the **GIMP program**, transforming them into a size suitable for websites (**1024x765 pixels**), with a resolution of **72.000 pixels** and a size **between 235 kB and 300 kB**.

BEFORE



AFTER



Alto Brembo. A new website

COVID-19 initiatives

Altobrembo has proposed a program of initiatives able to:

- ❑ **enhance the most authentic and genuine resources** of the municipalities
- ❑ **make people experience a summer at a slow pace** between nature, culture and gastronomy of the Upper Brembana Valley.

Here are some of the proposals:

- I CHEESE TREKKING
- DOORS OPEN TO ART
- TREK & TASTE



What about the future?

- ★ **Understand** if the situation can improve, in order to plan the activities to be carried out in spring and summer
- ★ **Keep** the same line as last year
- ★ **Provide information materials** as appropriate as possible for the autonomous use of the territory.

Bergamo B&B & Co. Orienting guests



The association Bergamo B&B & Co. Was found in 2013 and its main objectives are promoting solidarity and collaboration among the operators, assisting them in the management of the activity. Our project consists of:

1. **INTERVIEWS:** we talked with three members of the association: Alice, Sonia and Maria Grazia. We collect some data about these realities.
2. **ITINERARIES:** we have created two itineraries for Maria Grazia, using Izi.Travel
3. **VIDEO PROMOTION:** our objective is to promote what generally is not considered



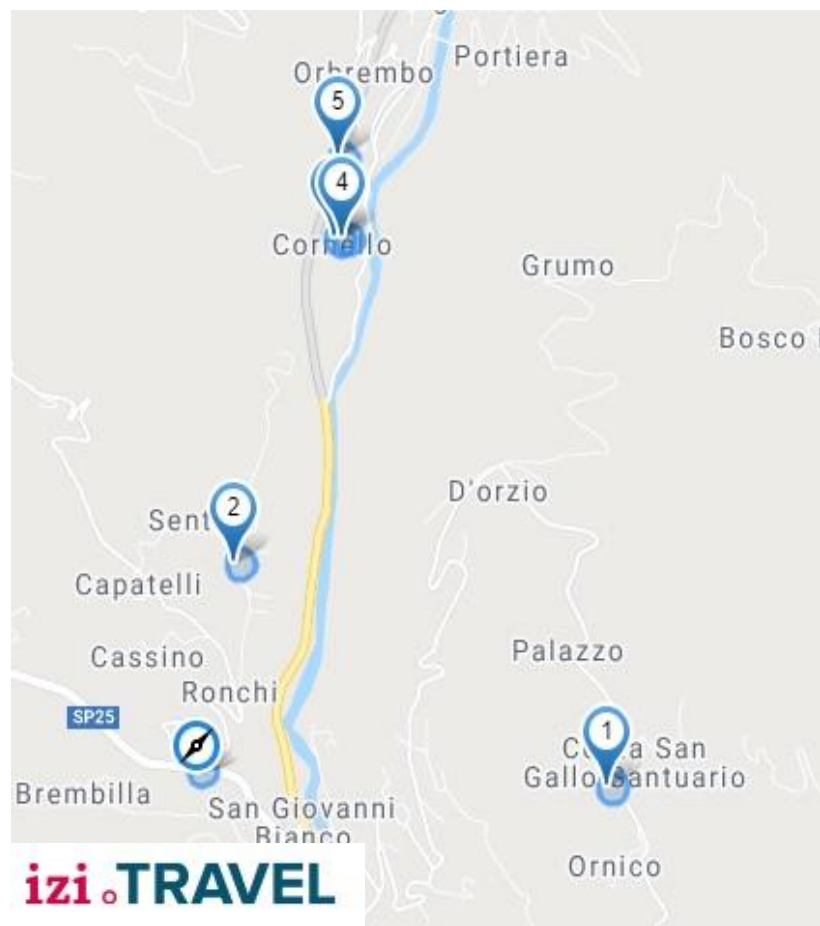
Bergamo B&B & Co. Orienting guests



One of our itineraries:
CLIMBING TOUR IN BREMBANA VALLEY



Bergamo B&B & Co. Orienting guests



One of our itineraries:
LOVING NATURE



Bergamo B&B & Co. Orienting guests

Our video **Brembana Valley: just go beyond**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiDp0wL5T1U&t=1s>



What about the future?

Our project with IZI.TRAVEL can be a support for creating a relationship between guests and host: before arriving at the destination, tourists will know what Brembana Valley can offer to them.

Collaboration is the key for growing and the real secret for having success but in this place is difficult to achieve because every stakeholder thinks about their own and they do not think to create a cooperation.



GAL Val Seriana. Residents matter



What is GAL Valle Seriana and Laghi Bergamaschi?

- GAL Val Seriana is a local action agency which operates according to PSL development strategy (Piano di Sviluppo Locale). Its ultimate goal is the integrated and multifunction valorisation of the territory, with particular regard to the rural areas in order to ensure an overall growth process of the implicated industries. The tourism offer is incorporated in the plan, and day by day the GAL defends and respects its production philosophy.

What are its main goals?

- 1) ethic intervene towards the environment therefore careful selection of some production methods above others
- 2) ensure the longest-term perspective for all the concerned parties and the satisfaction of the stakeholders
- 3) give a new face to some socially and culturally relevant places that otherwise would be left in the back burner.

GAL Val Seriana. Residents matter



Our contribution

Our ultimate task was the creation of two questionnaires incorporated into a bigger GAL project named **“Ascolto attivo del territorio”**. The questionnaires aim at identifying the needs of the territory and the degree of satisfaction of its residents by interrogating them actively. In particular, we focused on:

↪ **GAL Stakeholders:**

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc2kW8AQ7CAmVSb4v4SSIO53iOhMNRsqjm5762bVi1JKqU-Bg/viewform?fbclid=IwAR243UC93HuRutAYbNyTSL19jVb8aISWQQbR0bRufaEp1lB_UpMBzpmxn7Y

↪ **GAL Beneficiaries of Notices:**

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfmsSUIVFMI7H2mjPSKUX7ZaNO23l2zGxteRcA7ttVxMZVI3Q/viewform?fbclid=IwAR0s9odBcTqrCrGQX6BW0RSB7_0MQa81d1aN8BCyou8UcUp90vO0yEcR4Cw

GAL Val Seriana. Residents matter



Aim of the questionnaires

~> **GAL Stakeholders:** the purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate the actual needs of the territory of the Seriana Valley and the Laghi Bergamaschi in order to encourage development and growth processes.

~> **GAL Beneficiaries of notices:** this questionnaire is addressed to the beneficiaries of the GAL Valle Seriana e dei Laghi Bergamaschi and it aims at evaluating the offer of these courses.



GAL Val Seriana. Residents matter



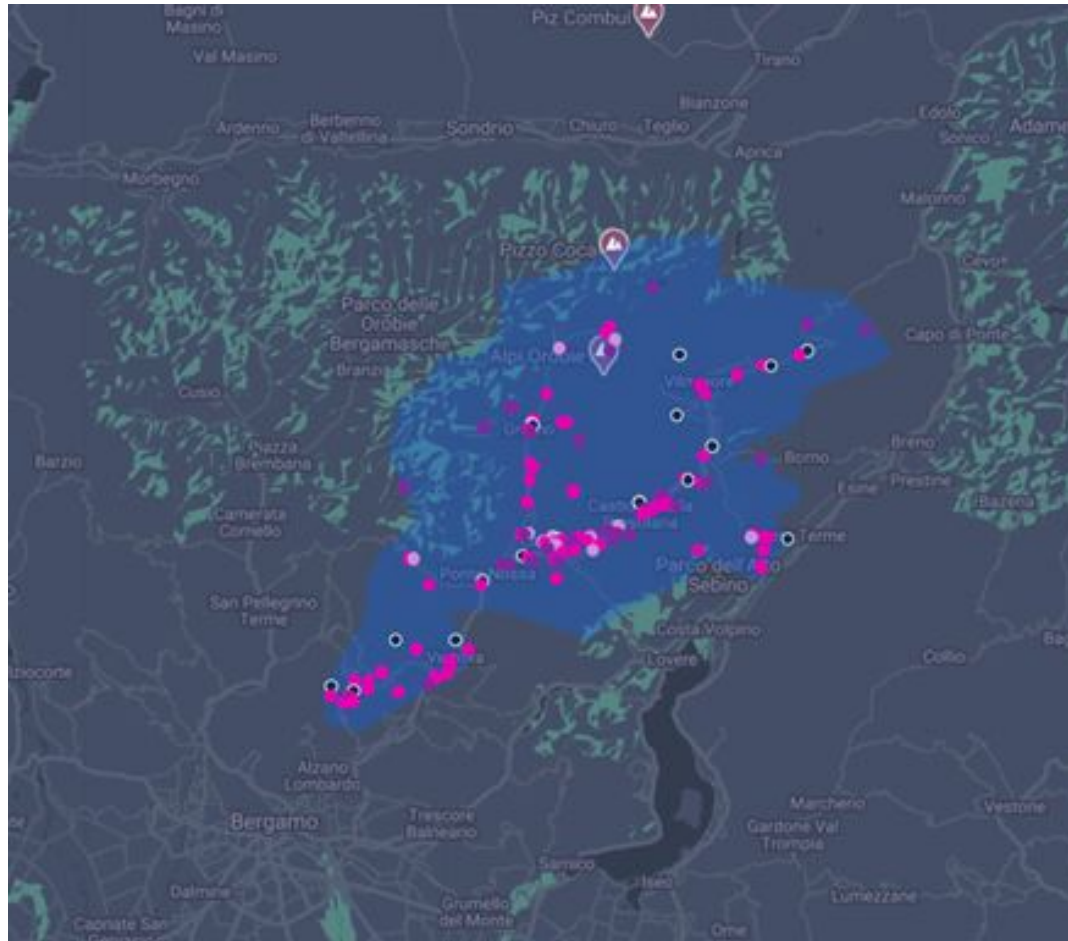
Covid-19 initiatives and conclusions



→ The goal of these questionnaires is to investigate and find out what stakeholders and beneficiaries think about all the activities, notices and various initiatives that are promoted by the GAL. They are also aimed at **evaluating**, and if necessary **improving, the communication channels** of the GAL. It is a hope that these questionnaires will be analyzed in the future..Understanding how to **use the European funds** they will receive for the recover after the pandemic is also a relevant question.

→ Tourists flows will have to be planned and managed in the post-pandemic period. Many people come from the big cities to Seriana Valley to do their **smartworking: high speed internet** connection together with the exploitation of **new suitable locations** are key topics to be considered.

Promoserio. Data analysis

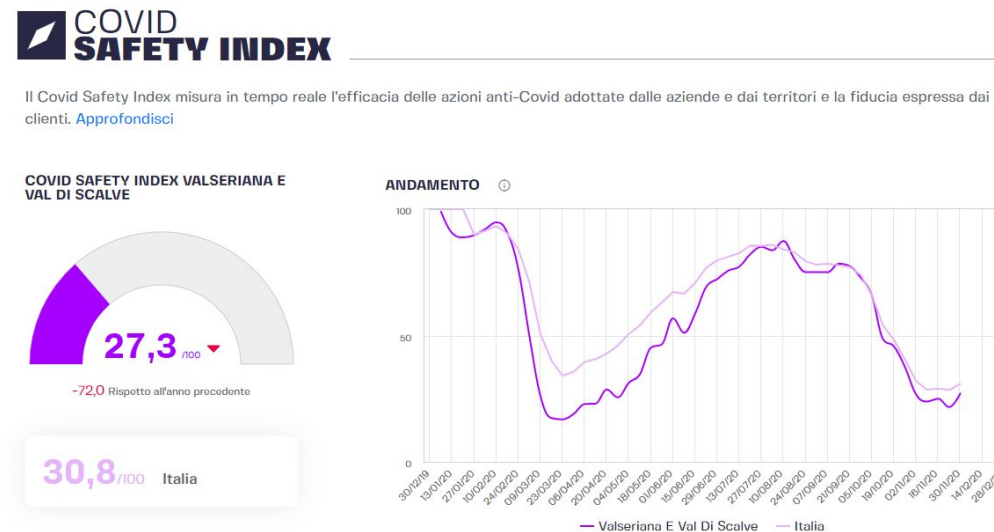


- **Destination Management Organization**
- Promoting and managing the territory of **Val Seriana and Val di Scalve**
- Since November 2010 → unifying the territories of lower and upper Val Seriana with Val di Scalve
- 42 municipalities

Sources: Data Appeal Company <https://datappeal.io/it/>
Val Seriana <https://www.valseriana.eu/promoserio/>

Objectives of the collaboration

- Analyse the data supplied by the **Data Appeal Company** and create a model of analysis.
- **Comparison** between summer 2019 and summer 2020.
- Focus on: impact of **Covid-19**, accommodation facilities, switching customer behaviour.



Source: Data Appeal Company <https://datappeal.io/it/>

Output

G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
Estate 2020 (1 giugno-30 settembre)								2019 vs 2020
	giugno	luglio	agosto	settembre	tot (Data Appeal)			
N. contenuti								Variazione percentuali
Locali e ristorazione	521	1000	2100	1200	4900			-15,52%
Ricettività	344	635	1300	787	3000			-16,67%
Attrazioni	97	275	443	187	1000			-47,37%
Affitti brevi	22	39	98	48	207			-55,86%
tot	984	1949	3941	2222	9100			-22,88%
Percentuale visitatori								Variazione punti percentuali
Domestici	95,6%	89,60%	91,70%	85,80%	90,30%			4,90%
Internazionali	4,4%	10,40%	8,30%	14,20%	9,70%			-5,00%
tot	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
 Mercati								
Italia	95,60%	89,60%	91,80%	85,80%	90,30%			4,90%
Germania	3,10%	5,40%	3,20%	4,30%	4,10%			0,30%
Francia	0,70%	0,60%	0,70%	0,30%	0,50%			-1,50%
Svizzera	0,70%	0,30%	1,50%	2,50%	1,40%			0,10%
Polonia	0,00%	0,00%	0,10%	1,60%	0,50%			-0,60%
Regno Unito	0,00%	0,60%	0,80%	1,40%	0,80%			-0,10%
altri	0,00%	3,50%	1,90%	4,10%	2,40%			
tot	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
Tipologie di visitatori								
Copie	42,10%	42,00%	44,00%	47,20%	41,40%			5,60%
Famiglie	27,60%	36,20%	37,00%	32,20%	37,70%			-1,40%
Amici/gruppo	21,10%	16,50%	12,20%	11,20%	13,40%			-1,70%
Singolo	9,20%	5,30%	6,80%	8,40%	7,20%			-0,60%
Viaggi di lavoro	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	1,10%	0,30%			-2,00%
tot	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%			

Visitatori domestici e internazionali giu-set 2020

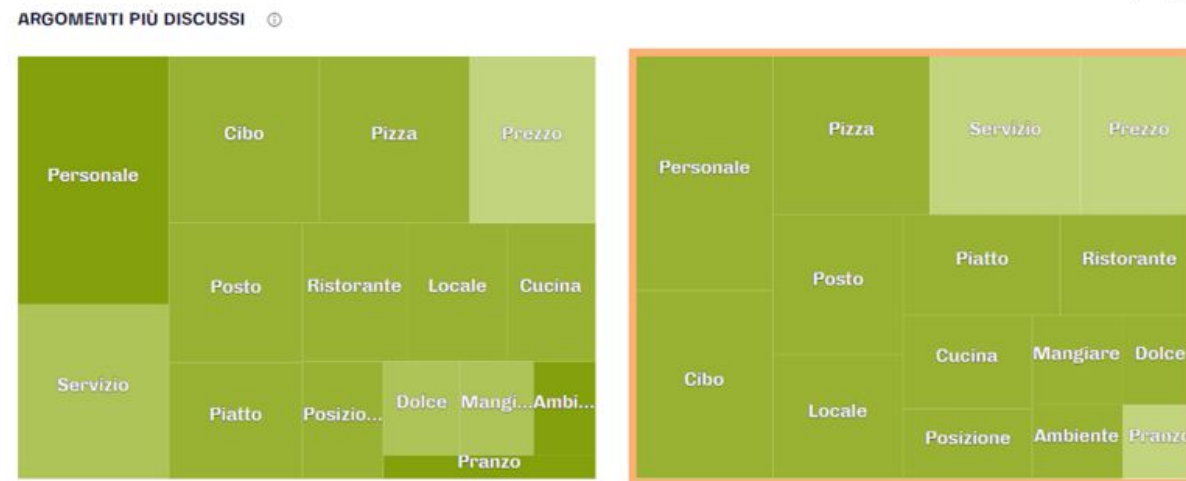


Legend: ■ Domestici ■ Internazionali

- 2 **Excel** files → comparison summer 2019-2020:
 - General analysis and analysis by subcategories (Food and beverage, hospitality, attractions, short term rentals)
 - Analysis by geographic area (8 geographic areas)
- 2 **reports** one for each excel file
- Method of analysis **paper**

Method: analysis development

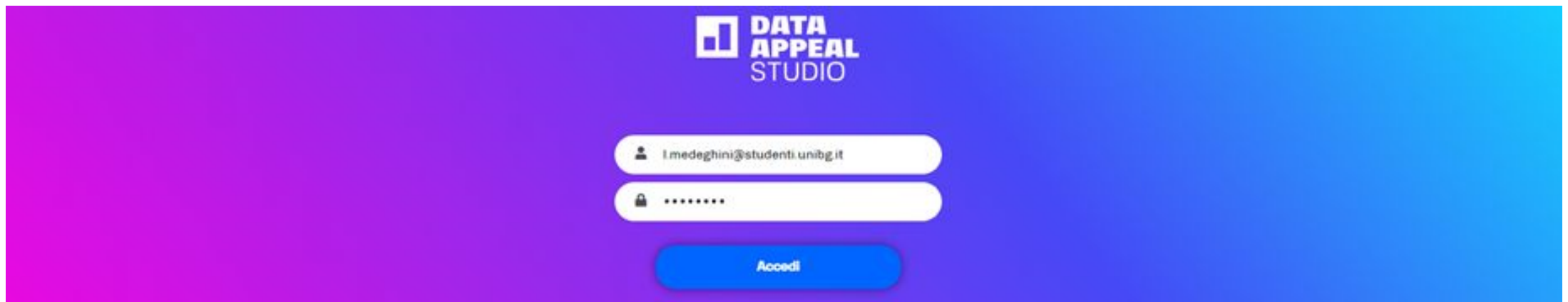
1. Apply the **filter** on Data Appeal
2. Report the data in an **Excel file**, juxtaposing data from different years.
3. Read through the data on the excel file and create a written **report** that compares different periods, sectors, markets, topics and highlights the most interesting changes.



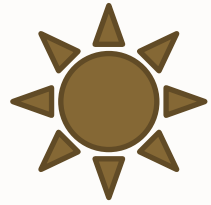
Source: Data Appeal Company <https://datappeal.io/it/>

Skills: competences acquired

- Understanding the effects of **Covid-19** in the Bergamo Alps
- Accessing **real data** provided by the Data Appeal company
- Dealing with a **Destination Management Organization**
- Understanding how data can be useful for **territorial management**



Source: Data Appeal Company <https://datappeal.io/it/>



Val Vertova

Position and Management

Val Vertova, a valley in the mid-Val Seriana, is known as “The Maldives of Val Seriana” because of its beauty from its “canyons” and natural waterfalls.



Photo: <https://www.valseriana.eu/en/sport-e-divertimento/val-vertova/>

Val Vertova is a valley about 12 kilometres long, completely included in the municipality of Vertova, whose mayor and town council are its main management agents

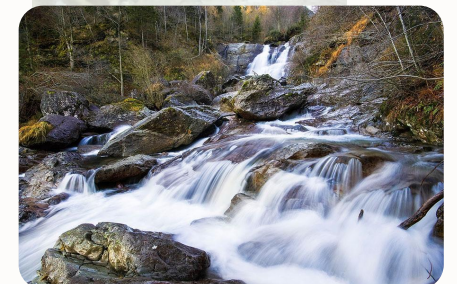
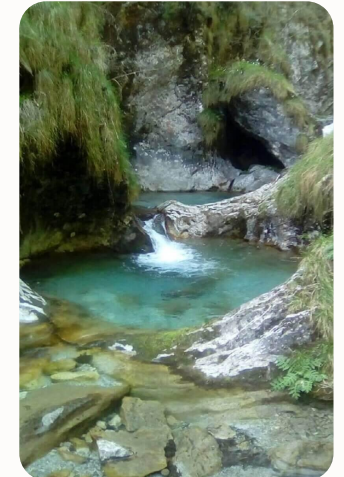
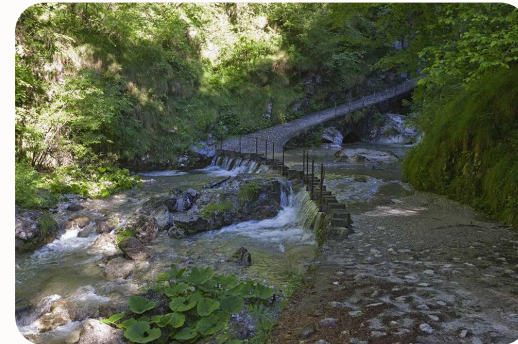
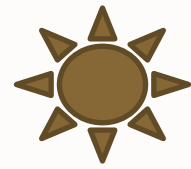




Photo: <https://www.valserriana.eu/en/sport-e-divertimento/val-vertova/>

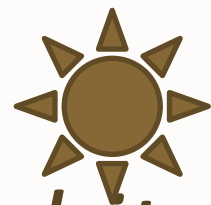


Val Vertova

Overtourism situation



- ❖ Unfortunately, their beauty attracts too many tourists, most of them are same-day visitors, who often do not contribute to the local economy but create difficulties for residents
 - *Problems related to parking space, litter, disrespectful and rude behavior, etc.*
- ❖ Unlike most other destinations, the visitors in Val Vertova increased more than double as compared to summer 2019 (at the end of summer 2020 they recorded 60 thousand presences).
 - Many people wanted to go to a nature-immersed destination which is not too far from home.
- ✗ Causing trouble to the small village
- ✗ The mayor had decided to stop the municipality-run shuttle bus



Val Vertova

Habitual and pandemic management

Up until 2019, the valley and its numerous visitors were not a very relevant issue for the municipality

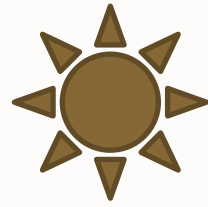
In 2019, the new mayor started a new and proactive approach in managing the flows

However, summer 2020 brought much more tourists than expected and caused overcrowding and administration problems

This has led to a new policy of access control, likely to be implemented from spring 2021.



Photo: <https://www.valsesia.eu/en/sport-e-divertimento/val-vertova/>

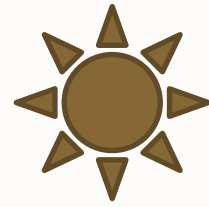


Val Vertova *Proposals*





Photo: <https://www.valsesia.eu/en/sport-e-divertimento/val-vertova/>



Val Vertova *Conclusions*



- ❖ Overtourism is a disputed and modern matter
 - No universal solution can be applied to all the problematic circumstances.
 - ❖ However, the village of Vertova has adopted a proactive and smart approach, focusing on both access control and the improvement of the local economy.
- ❖ Tourism will not be swept away, rather it will be channelled and reshaped
 - Residents will have potential economic benefits and will also be able to enjoy the nature again, while tourists will have less troubles (e.g., parking, crowdedness).
 - ❖ In the long term, overtourism might become just a memory for Vertova and its small valley.

Visit Brembo. Social networking

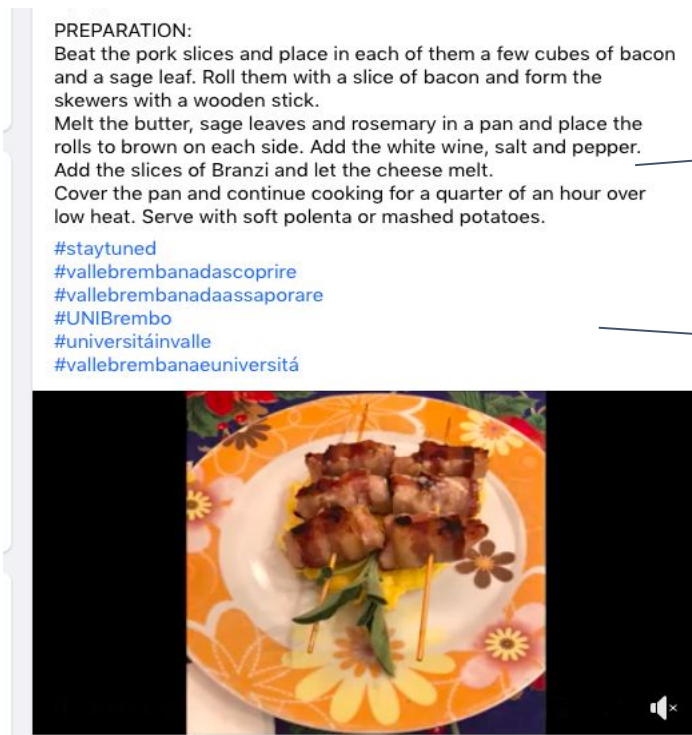


- **VisitBrembo** is the main tourist association of the territory of Valle Brembana; it involves both public and private organizations. It stands as representant of Valle Brembana in the bigger network of the province of Bergamo. Furthermore, VisitBergamo collaborates with them and it is an active member of the board.
- The primary aim of VisitBrembo is to promote the territory by rediscovering all its resources and richness and valorizing them through every touristic aspect of the valley, which cover a wide range of sectors such as culture, gastronomy, sport, nature and wellness.

Visit Brembo. Social networking

Our contribution

- From December 15th 2020 until January 6th 2021 we worked on a **Christmas-themed recipes column** which was published on social media pages of the association every Tuesday. It has been well-welcomed by the followers, as many of them saved, liked and commented the recipes.



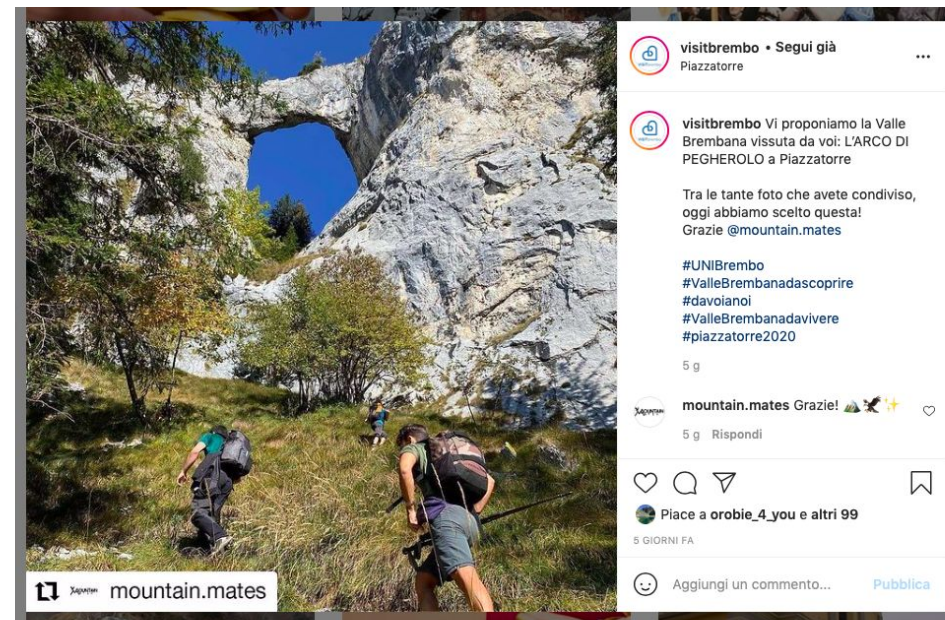
Also in the English version

We used the hashtag #UNIBrembo

Visit Brembo. Social networking

Our contribution

- We proceeded with improving an already-existing column, “**Da voi a noi**”. Every Thursday we choose a photograph published by a visitor concerning the activities proposed by the municipality of Piazzatorre during the summer season 2020 and we reshare it on VisitBrembo social media’s profile (Instagram and Facebook).



Visit Brembo. Social networking

Covid-19 initiatives

We analyzed the case of Piazzatorre, following a 20% increase in tourist presences during September. The main reasons are:

- several **sport activities** (bikepark, rock climbing)
- Italian Trial Championship
- strong **active presence** on social networks
- **local newspaper** L'Eco di Bergamo

Future projects

In order to manage the tourism situation during the pandemic in the future, VisitBrembo is working on some objectives:

- the importance of maintaining **continuous contact** with visitors
- create an image of a **safe valley**
- exploit **open spaces** and broaden the range of closed ones
- map many **paths** in the lower valley which are still unknown



What happened? What should happen?

Overall, the general situation of the valleys has shown how different stakeholders are well-coping with the Covid-19 situation, although there is still much work to be done.

Main objectives for the summer season 2021:

- Start working now with reservations and communication strategies, in order to be able to organize presences at best so as to prevent overcrowded areas and discontent for visitors. Collecting and comparing data in view of the future is a crucial issue.
- Improving web presence, which is a powerful aspect that should be taken into account by stakeholders when planning marketing strategies, both to attract tourists and to educate them to be respectful of hygienic and social distancing norms;
- Create more connections, both vertical and horizontal, between stakeholders: networking plays an essential role for the growth of territories and in order to distribute presences throughout the area.