

Awards for tourism projects in the mountains of the Rhône-Alpes region

Rhône-Alpes is a mountainous region in the South of France, which is characterised by two features. It is an attractive region in terms of innovation and also in terms of mountain tourism.

Background

Despite the crisis, half of the regional SMEs have innovated between 2008 and 2010, more than the national average. Consequently, the region is considered as attractive for the most innovative activities; it is in the 9th place in the European Union ranking for patent applications.

On the other hand, thanks to its 150 ski resorts and 2,300 lifts, Rhône-Alpes is the first mountain tourism destination in France. It registers 60 million overnight stays per year. In 2012, this kind of tourism generated over six billion euros. However, this economic model can be severely impacted by global warming.

Development of "Convention of valleys stations" to encourage innovation in mountain tourism

Being aware of this threat, the region is committed since two years in a forward-looking approach "Mountain 2040" bringing together politicians, professionals, associations and residents. It has been materialized with a new method of supporting medium hill stations, which takes over the former "sustainable resorts Contracts".

Regional politicians adopted in January 2015, the principle of "Conventions of valleys stations" and "Clusters of nature". Thus, they expanded the scope of intervention by linking stations to valleys. Claude Comet, councilor in charge of tourism and mountains, explained that *"the agreements will be established on four priority themes including:*

- the particular mobility for holidaymakers to reach their place of residence and then in the station;
- the accommodation, with the renewal of the existing fleet with a view to expand the customer base and land sobriety;
- raising the skills of tourism professionals
- and the diversification of activities, based on the agricultural, craft or cultural valuation."

The awards for innovation and tourism

The awards for innovation and tourism recognize the original, creative and unusual achievements. During the 4th edition, which took place in January 2015, ten initiatives were selected. Among them, the famous "Pas dans le vide" at the top of the Aiguille du Midi, the "prehistoric" rooms in the gorges of Ardeche, igloos and other "[Alti-domes](#)" made by local artisans in Upper Savoie, [raw wood log cabins](#) lit by oil lamps in Savoy or the aviary of lories, the [bird park of Villars-les-Dombes](#) where the visitor is in direct contact with birds.

The example of "Pas dans le vide"

"Pas dans le vide" is a room made entirely of glass, including the floor and the ceiling. This transparent building is located on the upper terrace of the Aiguille du Midi, at an altitude of 3842 meters and has been dubbed "the highest attraction of Europe." It allows visitors to have a unique experience, enhanced by the vacuum of over 1000 meters, which stands directly under their feet. This attraction allows discovering in an original way the natural landscape of the Aiguille du Midi.



For more information about "Pas dans le vide", please click [here](#)