02. Digitize Dialog INT

04. February 2026 10:00 - 11:30 Uhr

Presented by Digitize the Planet e.V.

Protocol

1.Participants

1	Merdin	Purišić	Municipality of Plav (MNE)	Montenegro
2	Silvan	Kaspar	Outdooractive AG	Germany
3	Bjørn Åge	Jenssen	National Park Municipalities of Norway	Norge
4	Jakub	Zmrzlik	Mapy.com	Czech Republic
5	Lucia	Prieto Fustes	IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation	Spain
6	Sofia Basse	Gøbel	Senja Kommune	Norge
7	Radka	Jandová	Mapy.com	Czech Republic
8	Steen	Kobberø-Hansen	European Hiking Federation (ERA)	Danmark
9	Marta	Donoro	Consorci del Parc Natural de la Serra de Collserola	España
10	Michael	Werner		Germnay
11	Øyvind	Stensrud	Besøkssenter Ytre Hvaler nasjonalpark	Norge
12	Isabella	Lazioli	ERSAF	Italia
13	Marketa	Kostrikova	NCA CR	Czechia
14	Nadja	Bernhard	Netzwerk Schweizer Pärke	Schweiz
15	Stephanie	Blutaumüller	Nationalparks Austria	Österreich
16	Karin	Patenge	Oracle	Germany
17	Britt	Dalland	Forge	Norway
18	Alex	Weiss	Alex Weiss	South Africa
19	Veronika	Kührová	Alpdest	Czech Republic
20	Christian	Pichler-Scheder	Kalkalpen National Park	Austria/Upper Austria
21	Giulia	Costa Domingo	IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation	Spain
22	KOKU SELOM	AGBAVITO	ONG AVES (Association des Volontaires pour l'Enviro	Togo
23	Lotte	Meuleman	Visit Flanders	België
24	Marika	Arabi-Onnela	Réseau des Grands Sites de France	France
25	Bjørn Åge	Jenssen	National Park Municipalities of Norway	Norge
26	Johanna	Breyne	Parc National Esem	Belgium
27	Eva	Forkel	Tourismus-Agentur Nordsee GmbH	Germany
28	Martin	Soutschek	Outdooractive AG	Germany
29	Matteo	Marcandella	Parc naturel du Pays des Collines	Belgique
30	Dino	Burzić	National park Una	Bosnia & Herzegovina
31	Tom	Alary	Parc national des Ecrins	France
32	Samuel	Chevrier	eco-counter	France
33	Frédéric	BIEBER	Alsace Destination Tourisme	France
34	Kevin	Baker	RouteYou	Belgium
35	Alexis	Zrimec	Slovenian Environment Agency	Slovenia
36	Stanislava	Dešnik	Javni zavod Krajinski park Goričko	Slovenija
37	Alberto	Pastorino	Parco naturale Mont Avic	Italia
38	Ivy	Adamakopoulou	Hellenic federation of Mountaineering and climbing	greece
39	Tom	Alary	Parc national des Ecrins	France
40	Martina	Niederberger	IFAU	Austria
41	Camille	Monchicourt	Parc national des Ecrins	France
42	michele	oggioni	ersaf	italy
43	Marta	Donoro	Consorci del Parc Natural de la Serra de Collserola	España
44	Veselin	Bajceta	Camping assocaiation Montenegro	Montenegro
45	Merdin	Purišić	Municipality of Plav (MNE)	Montenegro
46	Martin	Reichhart	Austria Tourism | Österreich Werbung	Austria | Österreich
47	Thorsten	Unseld	Digitize the Planet	Germany
48	Tom	Müller	Digitize the Planet	Germany
49	Thomas	Richter	Digitize the Planet	Germany

2.Purpose and Context of the Event

The event brought together more than 40 participants from 15 European countries to discuss the current status, expansion, and cooperation opportunities of **Digitize the Planet (DtP)** at the European level.
The goal of DtP is to build a **Europe-wide open-data platform for nature conservation information**, especially related to protected areas, rules, restrictions, closures, and conservation purposes.

3.Current Status of Digitize the Planet in Europe

- **6,390 protected areas** are currently recorded on the Digitize Platform.
- Main focus so far: **German-speaking countries** (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein).
- Cooperation exists with **European outdoor and nature networks**.
- The platform is already available in **English**; additional languages such as **French** are planned.
- Key challenge: the **"chicken-and-egg problem"** – the platform only grows if national conservation authorities actively contribute data. In turn, richer data makes the platform more attractive for additional distribution channels.

Question

Eva Forkel – North Sea Tourism Agency
"Hi, I'm Eva and I work for Tourismus-Agentur Nordsee in Germany. How can tourism organizations provide support?"

DtP Answer

- Integrate DtP map applications and data into websites/apps
- Encourage web service providers to integrate DtP data
- Convince policymakers and authorities to adopt the DtP standard
- Become a member

4.European Funding Projects & Cooperation Opportunities

Digitize the Planet is currently planning and developing **EU-funded projects**, including:

Ongoing Project Initiatives

- **EcoSportHub** – Development of a European data standard for conservation and outdoor information
- **Knowledge Hub** – A knowledge platform for **Digital Visitor Management** in protected areas (target group: protected area staff)

Future Funding Opportunities

- **LIFE Programme** (last possible funding cycle)
- DtP is still searching for **funding topics and project partners**

Why selecting DtP as a Project Partner

- Digital open-data expertise
- Experience with APIs, pilot projects, and EU networks
- Strong focus on environmental and nature protection

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5. IUCN – Tech4Nature (Contribution by Lucía Prieto)

Tech4Nature is a global IUCN and Huawei initiative scaling digital technologies for nature conservation.

Focus Areas in Spain

- Monitoring visitor flows in national parks
- Protecting sensitive species (e.g., Bonelli's Eagle)
- Use of cameras, acoustic sensors, GPS tracking
- Analysis of climbing, hiking, and cave tourism
- Development of low-cost technology solutions

Additional Focus

- Development of **ethical and legal guidelines** for technology use in protected areas
- Data protection, visitor tracking, monitoring regulations
- Creation of **EU-wide best-practice guidelines**

Cooperation with DtP

- Digitization of protected-area rules in two pilot regions
- IUCN plans to host a seminar for all Spanish protected areas to present the DtP platform

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6. Structure of Nature Conservation Authorities in Europe

- Major differences between countries (e.g., Germany's **federal structure with 16 states**)
- DtP requests support in **mapping responsible authorities** across European countries
  (Participants are asked to fill in the table for their respective country)
- Goal: make **contacts, decision-makers, and governance pathways** more transparent
- Planned: **round tables** between authorities, tourism, protected areas, and DtP
  → Participants are invited to suggest partners and initiate round tables
- Open invitation for **country representatives** to get involved

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Question

Martin Reichart – Austria Tourism
"How does Digitize the Planet work together with or differ from INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community)? What added value does DtP offer compared to INSPIRE?"

DtP Answer

We are basically building on top of INSPIRE. We use INSPIRE sources as well as many others and harmonize the data across borders, making it easily accessible via our API.
We also focus on rules and regulations for leisure use and conservation purposes, which are usually not part of INSPIRE.

Question

Alexis Zimec
"How does Digitize the Planet work together with or differ from INSPIRE? What added value does DtP offer?"

DtP Answer

We work with authorities to collect information and with outdoor and tourism platforms to distribute it to end users.
Our platform serves mainly as a showcase of collected data.
If you already collect similar data, we can integrate it automatically. Providing authority contacts is also very helpful.

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7. Data Flow: Input & Output

Data Input

- Only **verified authorities** can upload data
- Content includes: **rules, protected area boundaries, closures, conservation purposes**
- Data is structured and made **machine-readable**
- Partial use of **AI support**, with strong focus on quality assurance

Data Output

- Provided via **API (Version 2)**
- Integrated into **outdoor apps, map platforms, and tourism portals**
- New feature: **digital integration of conservation purpose** (fauna, flora, habitat)

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8. Best Practice Examples of Data Use

Outdooractive (Germany)

- Deep integration into routing, maps, and protected area display
- Automatic avoidance of closed zones
- Display of rules, seasonal closures, and visitor guidance
- Multilingual support (13+ languages)
- Heatmaps for visitor management and impact analysis

Mapy.com (Czech Republic)

- Integration of protected-area rules and seasonal closures
- Linked with OpenStreetMap & Wikidata
- Improved navigation safety
- Support for sustainable tourism
- Contribution to improving global map data

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9. Key Insights & Discussions

- Language barriers are a major factor in European expansion
- Tourism funding offers strong financial potential
- Digital visitor management is seen as a key strategic topic
- Open-data nature conservation is recognized as a strategic lever for environmental protection and outdoor safety

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10. Closing & Outlook

- Invitation to join DtP and cooperate
- Announcement of additional dialogue formats
- Goal: strengthen a **European network for digital nature conservation**
- Shared mission:

“We all contribute to the problem — let’s become part of the solution.”

Impressum

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