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Smart Webservices for Mediterranean Islands

Publishable Summary



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<http://www.SMART-ISLANDS.eu>

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1. PUBLISHABLE SUMMARY

This is the publishable summary of the SMART-ISLANDS project for the final reporting. Substantial efforts have been made and the project fully completed achieving its objectives. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the condition of the project and the work performed until its official closure.

1.1. Summary Description of project concept and objectives

In recent years, world markets have made devices with excellent performances accessible to people at affordable prices. The introduction of this type of equipment, especially in the mobile sector, combined with low cost "flat" Internet connections has created a new type of market, the so-called market of mobile applications or Apps Market, whose expansion goes in parallel with the diffusion of smartphones and tablets.

The need and possibility for the final user to have ubiquitous access to any kind of information on any topic, is constantly increasing, and a sector that has particularly benefited from this kind of technology is the tourism domain where users are mostly looking for in-place information about their surroundings. The youth of this market is likely to provide geo-applications in a primordial state of development.

SMART-ISLANDS integrates multiple services for tourism, transportation, environment, civil protection & other, under the SMART-ISLANDS Platform which constitutes of a 3D Tablet and PC interface. "Smart-Hydra" is the first pilot released to the Apple Store and Android markets for investigating the market. According to the DoW, a total number of 14 Mediterranean islands will benefit from the SMART-ISLANDS project.

Mediterranean islands are small, numerous, lacking infrastructure whilst impacted by seasonal tourism, being far from the definition of smart cities. Current spatial data infrastructures (SDIs) for islands and smart services do not cover the main characteristics of a "Smart-Island" since geographic datasets and databases are not integrated or harmonized for services. A "Smart-Island" provides its inhabitants and visitors with services based on ICT/IST in a variety of sectors such as mobility, tourism, leisure, real estate, weather, yachting, environment and others constituting of a free of charge 3D Tablet (iOS, Android) and PC interface. The motto of the SMART-ISLANDS product is "be there before you are there!" enhancing tourism development, a crucial sector of development due to the economic crisis in the Mediterranean area.



Figure 1: SMART-ISLANDS Tablet Application

1.2. SMART-ISLANDS Pilots and functionalities

Here is the list of all available and released SMART-ISLANDS applications on the market (Apple Store and Google Play), covering a significant amount of Mediterranean countries.



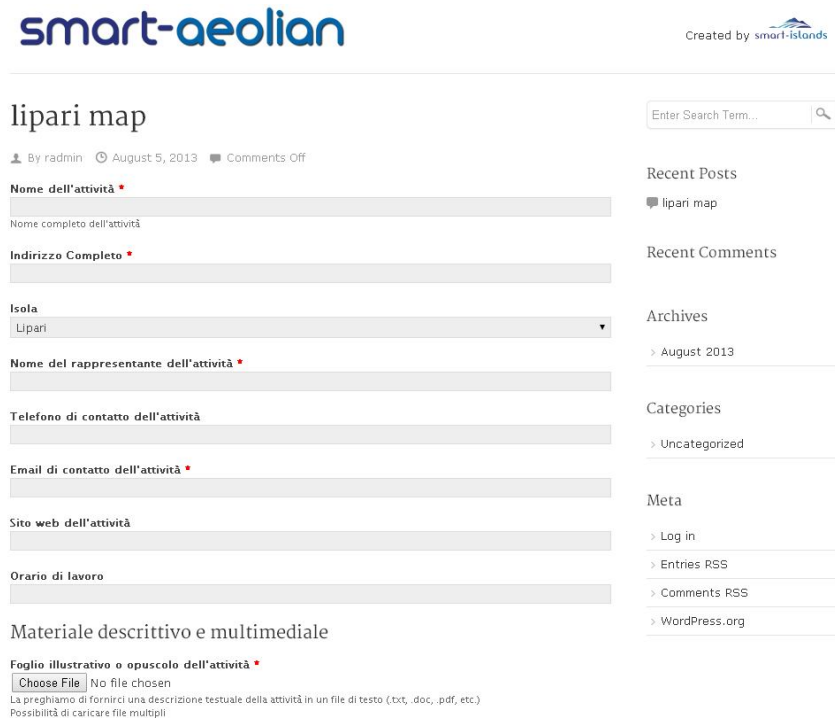
Figure 2: Released SMART-ISLANDS applications

Apart from the tablet applications, SMART-ISLANDS provides added value on-line services developing exactly the same applications' functionalities simply and freely available through the Web for the end-users. For each pilot island, a dedicated website has been developed which promotes the tablet and the web functionalities directly to the end-users and third parties.



Figure 3: SMART-ISLANDS dedicated website

Moreover, the SMART-ISLANDS Platform features a web-application interface in order to retrieve open-data information from third parties and establishes an update mechanism of the smart-applications along with the feedback form integrated inside the applications and users are able to evaluate the product online. This mechanism has been used in the Aeolian Islands (Smart-Lipari, Smart-Alicudi, Smart-Panarea, Smart-Filicudi, Smart-Vulcano, Smart-Stromboli, Smart-Salina) as a test-bed attempt in order to evaluate the commercialization of the SMART-ISLANDS product under the EEIG.



The screenshot shows the 'smart-aeolian' web application interface. The main heading is 'lipari map'. Below it, there is a search bar with the placeholder 'Enter Search Term...'. The form includes several input fields: 'Nome dell'attività', 'Nome completo dell'attività', 'Indirizzo Completo', 'Isola' (with a dropdown menu showing 'Lipari'), 'Nome del rappresentante dell'attività', 'Telefono di contatto dell'attività', 'Email di contatto dell'attività', 'Sito web dell'attività', and 'Orario di lavoro'. To the right of the form, there are sections for 'Recent Posts' (showing 'lipari map'), 'Recent Comments', 'Archives' (showing 'August 2013'), 'Categories' (showing 'Uncategorized'), and 'Meta' (showing 'Log in', 'Entries RSS', 'Comments RSS', and 'WordPress.org'). At the bottom of the form, there is a section for 'Materiale descrittivo e multimediale' with a 'Foglio illustrativo o opuscolo dell'attività' field, a 'Choose File' button, and a note: 'No file chosen. La preghiamo di fornire una descrizione testuale della attività in un file di testo (.txt, .doc, .pdf, etc.) Possibilità di caricare file multipli'.

Figure 4: SMART-ISLANDS update mechanism

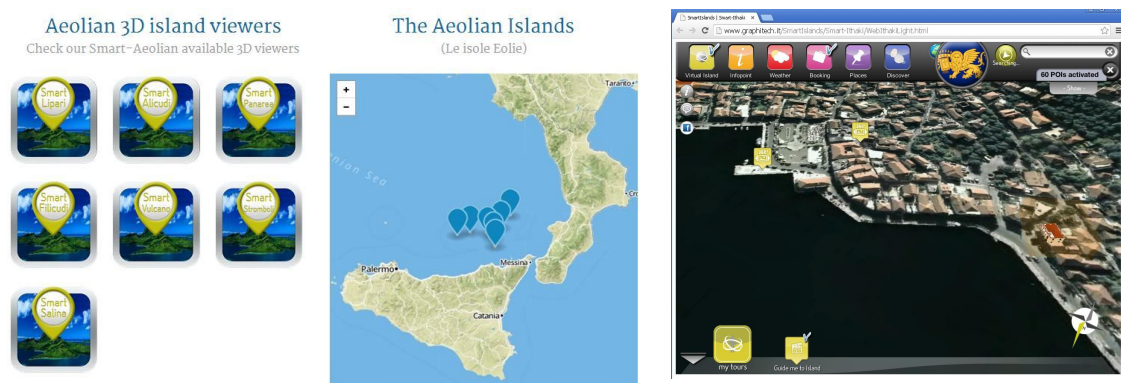


Figure 5: SMART-ISLANDS Web Applications

The Consortium has done a tremendous effort to accomplish affiliations with remarkable success verified with the linkage with key players on the tourism industry sector, such as www.booking.com and www.airtickets.gr. In this context, SMART-ISLANDS Consortium agreed to an affiliation with booking.com and airtickets.com and integrated an online booking functionality to the applications, through which users can book online a hotel and the Consortium will collect a small percentage of the fee paid by the customers.

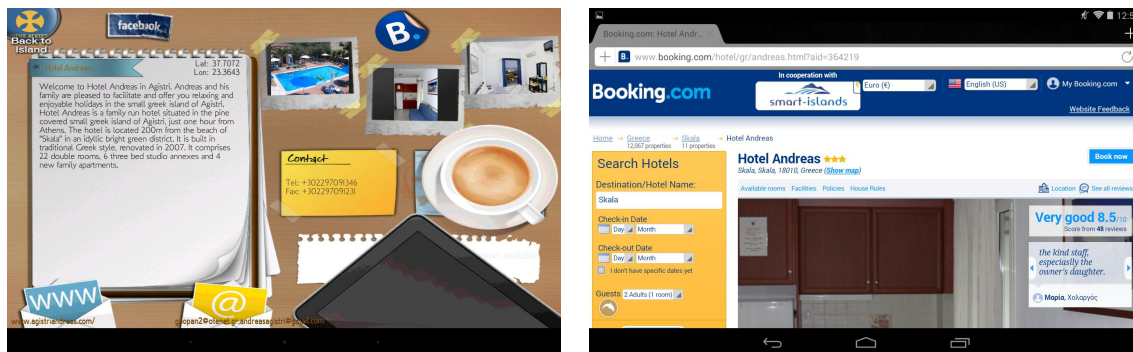


Figure 6 : Affiliation with www.booking.com

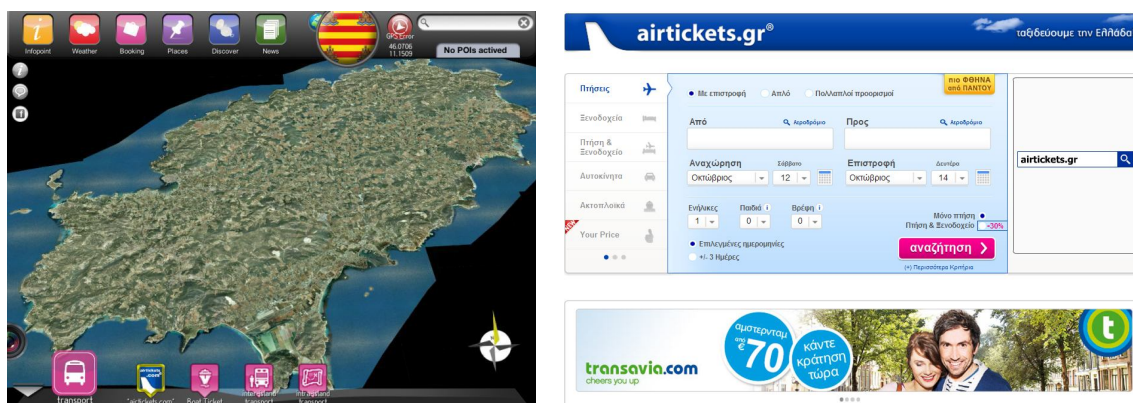


Figure 7: Affiliation with www.airtickets.gr

The SMART-ISLANDS applications' functionalities include the following features:

- Explore all island facilities and services via a single touch
- Plan your stay in one of the SMART-ISLANDS. The SMART-ISLANDS database of first-hand island information is the most reliable and complete source available, containing information about numerous attractions, events and festivals for everyone to enjoy.
- Provision of tours and routes through 3D high resolution map integration
- Discover shops, restaurants, events, news and many more
- The ideal solution to enjoy your holiday to 360 degrees. Walk through the little streets with shops and beautiful gardens. Discover events, tours and much more.
- Smart Islands feature up-to-date information on attractions, hotels, restaurants, nightlife, travel tips and many more





- Stunning 3D navigation
- A powerful multi-platform interoperable 3D geobrowser for a stunning navigation experience over the island
- Integration of existing weather forecast services in a 3D environment, using techniques and methods of intuitive representation and animation.



- booking.com integration
- Access the booking.com portal or the specific booking.com page of a selected hotel within the app
- Book your flight, boat and mooring



- Get impressive landmarks and POIs information
- The SMART-ISLANDS have not just crystal clear sea and white beaches but also history, art and culture, for those who prefer a break from sunbathing



- Panoramas, videos, social networks integration, GPS Detection
- Enjoy high quality panoramic photos and videos that to give you the feeling of being there. Contact us on social networks and get GPS Detection.

1.3. Description of work performed

The first year of activities of the project have mostly dealt with the compilation of the revised workplan through which the SMART-ISLANDS consortium offers to the EC a “full iPad app” capturing all benefits of the eight applications (yachting, aerodrome, leisure, real estate, statistics for planning, forest fire management, retailing, weather) and by delivering a product to the Apple Store and Google Play.

For this purpose, the Consortium investigated and completed the definition of requirements (e.g. user requirements, definition of use cases, system architecture, database requirements and modules requirements) in order to enable the development of the platform and the pilots applications.

Then, the platform for the prototype application of Smart-Hydra was developed and the iOS and Android module were completed and the application was tested and validated for the island of Hydra where the relevant data and services have been collected.

Afterwards, all partners spent effort to collect the remaining data and services for CY, IT, MT, ES and rest GR islands in order to integrate them to the SMART-ISLANDS application.

Finally, all SMART-ISLANDS mentioned above were made available on Google Play and Apple Store, as well as on web browsers.

Specifically for the Smart-Aeolian islands, the Consortium completed the collection of Points of Interest, without any text or photos. Photos and texts are going to be collected involving the local stakeholders, inviting them to fill-in the missing information and/or to update the information already collected by means of desk analysis, using an ad-hoc web based application created by the Consortium, increasing project visibility and evaluating the SMART-ISLANDS business model. Also, further actions have been made by both the Consortium and local authorities for the dissemination campaign to start in September 2013, aimed at involving the local community (basically owners of the businesses) to self-update the information of their POIs.

1.4. SMART-ISLANDS Technology

In order to develop the above mentioned applications it was needed to create a complete SDI consisting of several datasets, such as (i) the Digital Elevation Model (DEM) of the island (5m), (ii) the orthophotos of the island (Geoeye-1 or IKONOS) and (iii) the POIs collected on site or via the web-based end users' application developed based on a harmonized data model in order to retrieve open-data information from third parties and establish an update mechanism of the smart-applications. The innovative applications are developed using the unity3D SDK.

SMART-ISLANDS is not an RTD project in the strict FP7/ICT/PSP context, rather it is a *product* to be freely available via the Apple™/Android™ stores and a web platform. This product requires state-of-technology development for its production, whilst technology enters into the product as “background RTD” in contrast to “foreground” RTD assumed in the FP7/ICT/PSP projects.

The development of an iPad/Android application focus on real-time information is of paramount importance for the tourist industry. SMART-ISLANDS will depict all possible available information for a given island displayed on 3D-background.

Currently, there is no such application which simultaneously provides vast relevant tourist and citizen information. Through SMART-ISLANDS the tourist and the citizen receive information on travelling, history, accommodation, entertainment, leisure, safety, public health, public issues, and other.

SMART-ISLANDS is adaptable to any tourist region, but it was applied on Mediterranean islands first because of their special weight on the tourist industry and the needs of their population. The providers of tourist and public services will have the opportunity to advertise their facilities and services in a virtual reality environment and at the same time to receive orders for booking. Furthermore, potential tourists will fulfil their needs in ‘one stop-shop’ achieving the best cost for value. SMART-ISLANDS could become a main portal for the Med-tourist industry.

1.5. SMART-ISLANDS final results and statistics

A total of 14 SMART-ISLANDS applications have been released on Apple Store, Google Play and web platform, whereas 6 more Smart-Aeolian Islands are only available in the web platform which includes the feedback mechanism from the stakeholders.

A number of 4.231 downloads for iTunes and 621 from Google Play is recorded for the SMART-ISLANDS project, resulting to a total of **~5.000 downloads**.

Most downloads originate from Greece, Italy, Great Britain, China and United States.

Smart-Hydra is the most-downloaded application, as it was the first application released and it already counts almost 18 months on the market.

Below the downloads per month and per country are presented for both Apple Store and Google play covering the period from February 2013 to 1st of September 2014.

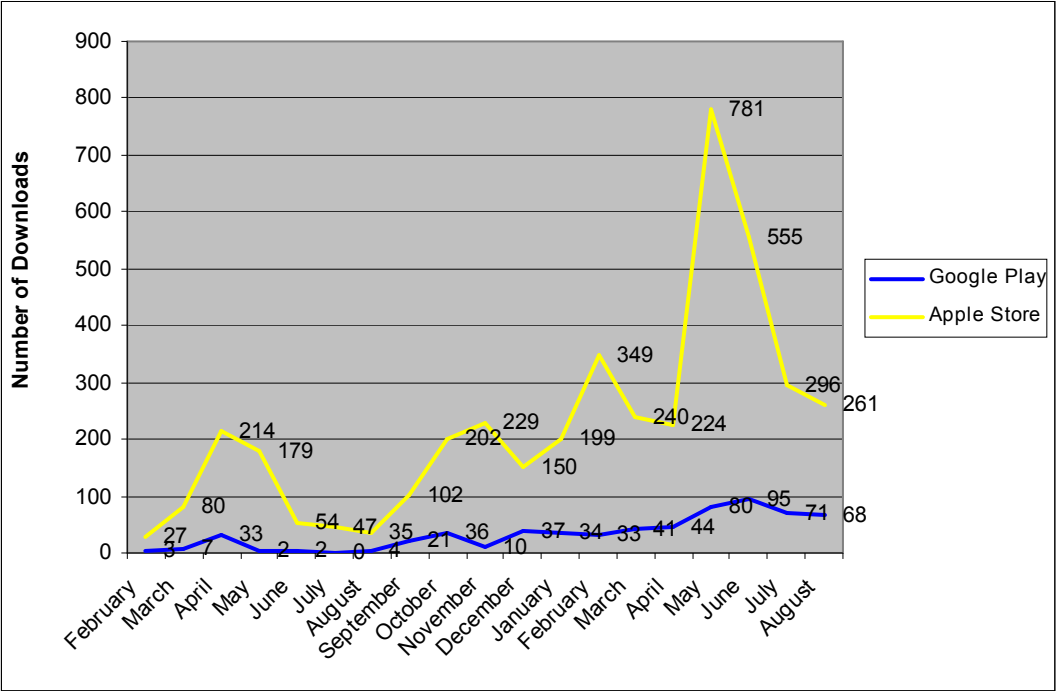


Figure 8: Google Play and Apple Store Downloads per month

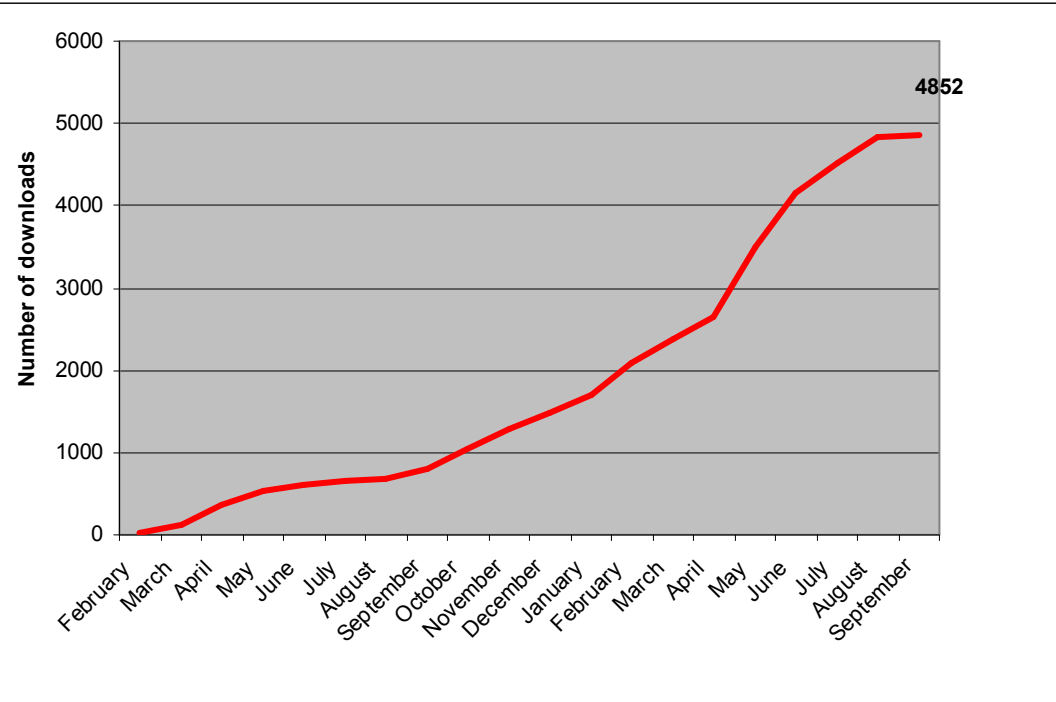


Figure 9: Total Downloads per month

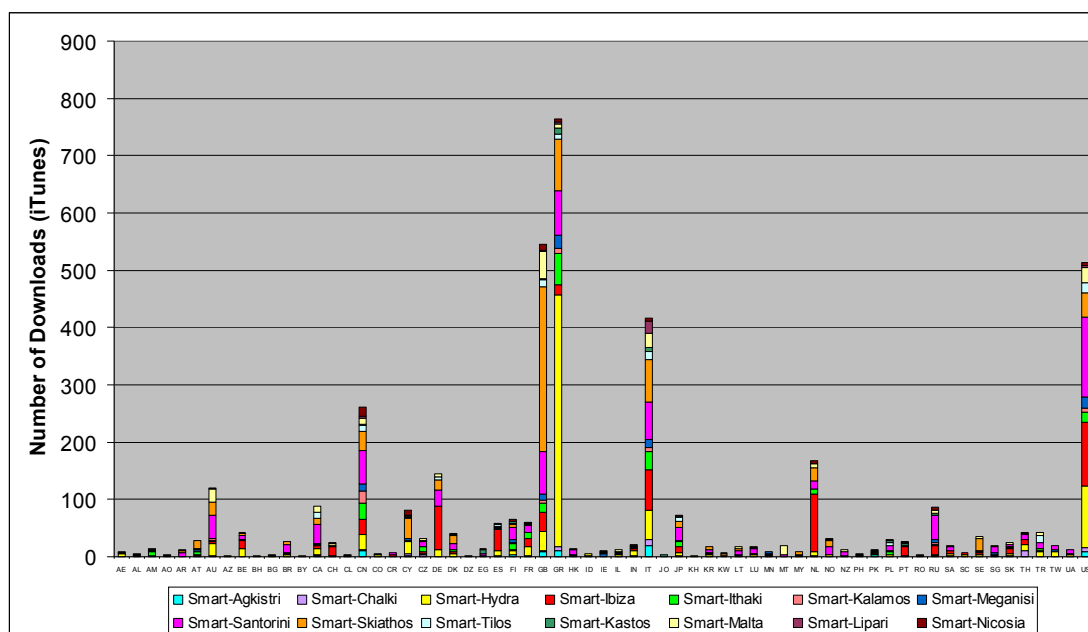


Figure 10: All SMART-ISLANDS – Apple Store - Number of downloads per country

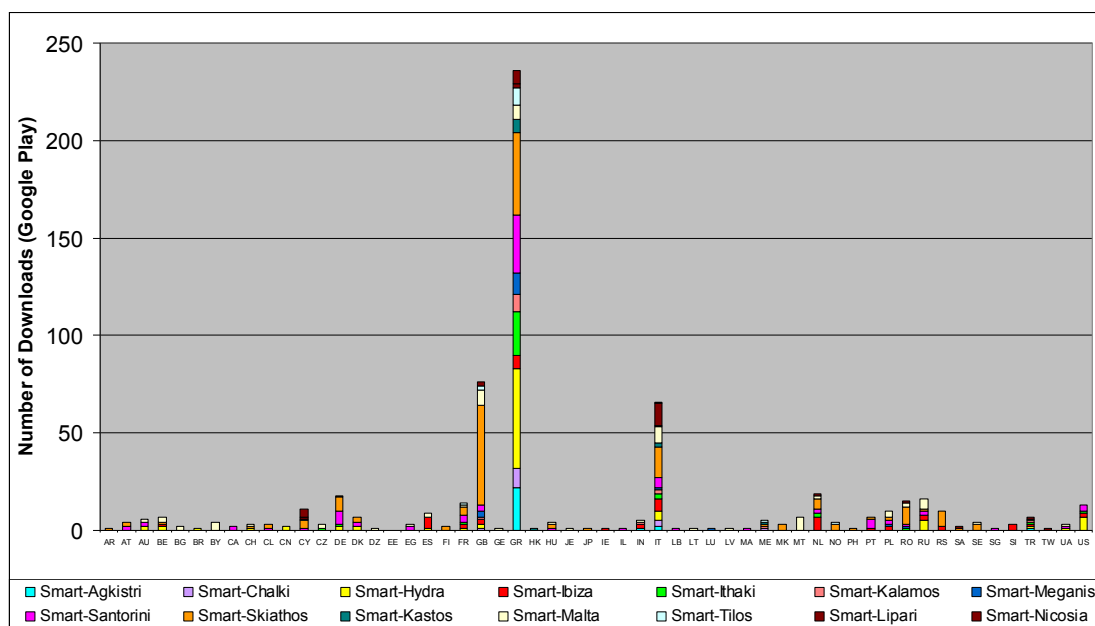


Figure 11: All SMART-ISLANDS – Google Play - Number of downloads per country

1.6. SMART-ISLANDS Commercialization and Marketing

SMART-ISLANDS project commercialized (i.e., via true marketing) the platform for “revenue/profit making” after the end of the project via the establishment of an EEIG located in Trento, Italy.

The Company “SMART-ISLANDS EEIG”, was established in May 2014, in Italy (address: Via alla Cascata, 56/C 38123 Trento, Italy). The initial capital is 10.000€. Company’s members are:

- EPSILON INTERNATIONAL SA – 22%
- FONDAZIONE GRAPHITECH – 22%
- EPSILON ITALIA SRL - 22%

- GISIG - GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL GROUP ASSOCIAZIONE – 12%
- HELLENIC SMALL ISLAND NETWORK – 22%

The commercialization of SMART-ISLANDS is a profitable engagement, which at the same time may contribute to the growth of tourism in the Mediterranean islands, as world-wide tourists will have instant access to updated information on islands. The SMART-ISLANDS Consortium insisted in commercialization in order to recover its 50% investment and to also demonstrate that “Smart Islands” can exist¹ as profitable business after having received the EC funding and the EC multiple support (e.g., the fact for being funded by the EC).

Marketing next to the sale from the Apple and Android stores, is a key issue for the success of the product. Marketing next to dissemination, foresees on-line procedures via a portal, a printed portfolio, newsletters, social media activation, press releases, publications, and an effective monitoring with special relations with the customers for a product price to be discussed.

1.7. Project Website

The project website is available at www.SMART-ISLANDS.eu



Figure 12: SMART-ISLANDS Website



Figure 13: SMART-ISLANDS website – Apps Map

⁽¹⁾ Bonazountas et al (Dec. 2011, p.20): www.europeanenergyinnovation.eu